

District 87 Timeline of Events

1857

District 87 Established

A group of Bloomington citizens selected Judge Owen T. Reeves to prepare a bill for the incorporation of the city into a single district and provide for the establishment of a school district. This bill was passed by the Illinois State Legislature and went into effect February 16, 1857 and established District 87 as one of the first school districts in the State of Illinois. The first Board of Education was formed on the first Monday in April and Bloomington High School officially opened on September 23.

Abraham Lincoln hired by Board

Friday the 19 day of May the board met. Present were all the members of the board except the Secretary.

The following preamble and resolution was presented to and passed - whereas the City Council, have declined by resolution of said Council, performing the duties assigned them by the act to establish and regulate a System of public Schools in the City of Bloomington.

Therefore Resolved - That the superintendent be instructed to employ Hon. A. Lincoln to take the necessary steps to procure from the Circuit Court, a writ of mandamus, to compel said City Council to levy the Tax as required by them by Section eight of said School law."

Our First Day of School

On the morning of September 23, 1857, Bloomington High School officially opened its doors for its first group of students. Classes were held on the top floor of the Wilkins Academy located on the corner of Main and Olive Streets. Under the supervision of Principal J.A. Johnson, subjects taught included English, Latin grammar, arithmetic, algebra and Parker's philosophy. This building was used for just one year, as BHS moved to the basement of the Christian Church the following fall.

1858

BHS moves to second location

In 1858, Bloomington High School moved from the second floor of the Wilkins Academy to the basement of the Old Christian Church located on the corner of Jefferson and West Streets. This location would serve as Bloomington High School until the fall of 1858 when The Fourth Ward School (later renamed The Number 4 School and later Emerson School) was built on the corner of Taylor and Evans Streets where BHS held classes on the second floor.

1st building constructed

Emerson School was built in 1858 for about \$6,000. Originally named The Number Four School (after its City Ward), it was later renamed Emerson School in honor of Ralph Waldo Emerson. It was the first constructed building in our new district. The new building contained primary and intermediate rooms in the basement, two grammar rooms on the first floor, and the high school was housed on the second floor with another room for recitation work. It was located on Taylor and Evans Sts. in what was then referred to as the "the extreme southeastern part of the city." Today, this neighborhood is known as Dimmitt's Grove. This building served our district until 1907 when a new Emerson School was built south of this site on the corner of Bell and Clinton Streets.

1859

Corporal punishment banned

Corporal punishment is banned in Bloomington Public Schools.

1861

The effects of the Civil War

The social and economic effects of the Civil War greatly affected Bloomington Public Schools. Male teachers were scarce, as many enlisted in the Union Army. In September, 1861, Superintendent Ira Bloomfield would enlist, along with Board member Dr. Edward Roe and acting BHS principal Henry M. Kellogg. Together, they served in Company C of the Thirty-third Regiment, also known as Normal Regiment, the Teachers Regiment, the School Masters Regiment and the Brains Regiment, as many of the members were students or educators. On May 20th, 1863, Kellogg led a charge at the Battle of Vicksburg and, according to Bloomfield, "fell, pierced through the head with a musket ball."

Latin introduced into curriculum

1862

John Hull becomes Principal of BHS

Hull would later serve as President of Southern Illinois (State Normal School) University.

1864

BHS holds first Graduation Ceremony

The political and financial conditions of the country and the effects of the Civil War greatly affected enrollment at

our high school. As a result, our first graduating class at Bloomington High School consisted of just two members - Lucretia Billings and Sarah W. Flagg. The next class to graduate from BHS would take place in 1871.

1865

Building Principals hired

Building principals were hired for the elementary level.

1867

Franklin School opens

Franklin School was built in 1867 at a cost between \$35,000 to \$40,000. Originally named The Number One School (after its City Ward), it was later renamed Franklin School in honor of Benjamin Franklin. Its capacity was six hundred pupils and it housed Bloomington High School as well as all elementary grades from 1867 to 1869. It was located on the corner of Park and Empire Streets. In 1900, a new Franklin School would be built to replace this structure.

1868

BHS gets its own building

Bloomington High School's first dedicated building was built in 1868 on the corner of Lee and Oak Streets. This building was constructed for \$30,000 plus the cost of the cupola. Although it was the fifth site that housed Bloomington High School, it was the first such structure used exclusively to educate Bloomington's high school students. Enrollment was increasing, and just 30 years later, a larger structure would be necessary. Shortly afterwards, this building would temporarily serve as the McLean County Courthouse which was consumed by the great fire of 1900.

1869

Sheridan School opens

Sheridan School was built in 1869 for \$28,000. Originally named The Number Six School (after its City Ward), it was later renamed Sheridan School in honor of Civil War General Phillip Sheridan. It was located on 1305 W. Walnut Street, the same location as the present Sheridan School.

1870

Irving School opens

Irving School was built in 1870 at a cost of \$29,000. Originally named The Number Three School (after its City Ward, it was later renamed Irving School in honor of Washington Irving. It was located on West Mill Street near its current site. This building would be replaced in 1905 with a new structure.

Hawthorne/Bent School opens

Hawthorne School was built in 1870 at a cost of about \$19,000. Originally the site of the Old Barn School, this building was first referred to as The Number Five School (after its City Ward). It was later renamed Hawthorne School in honor of Nathaniel Hawthorne. In 1872, Hawthorne School was the first school in Bloomington to become integrated. This building served our district until 1923 when it was razed to make room for a new and larger elementary school. At the same time, its name was again changed from the Nathaniel Hawthorne School to the Horatio C. Bent School in honor of the District's long-time business manager. Hawthorne School was located on the current site of the Bent Elementary School playground on Walnut Street between Roosevelt and Lee Streets in Bloomington.

1872

Bloomington Schools are integrated

Until 1872, African-American students attending Bloomington Public Schools attended the Number 8 School, also known as The African School. When their parents decided to test the "separate but equal" Illinois law and sent their children to the more convenient Number 5 School (later named Hawthorne then Bent). Superintendent E.M. Etter had the children ejected, and the school board decided to solve the issue by erecting a more convenient small school for the two or four African American students.

The parents were not happy with the Board's decision and brought the case to court. Judge Thomas Tipton heard the case brought about by the parents and declared the side-by-side schoolhouse approach a "fraud on the taxpayers." The Illinois Supreme Court agreed with him. Bloomington Schools were integrated in 1872, and Sarah Raymond reported twenty years later that "the old prejudices of ante-bellum days soon disappeared and our young friends seemed to be very happy in their new relations."

German language introduced into curriculum

German language was first offered to students. It was offered until 1918 when it was discontinued due to "the ill wills engendered by WWI."

1873

Jefferson School opens

Jefferson School opens at the corner of Clinton and Jefferson Streets at a cost of \$8,245.

Sarah E. Raymond becomes principal of Bloomington High School

Raymond is the first female to hold the position of Principal at BHS.

1874

1st female elected to serve on Board of Education

Miss Georgiana Trotter was elected to serve on the Board of Education in 1874 – nearly 20 years before women were even allowed to vote for candidates in local school board elections. Trotter also served on the Withers Library Board, was a successful businesswoman (with brother John Trotter) in the lumber, grain and coal business and had served in the Civil War as a nurse. With her friend, Superintendent Sarah E. Raymond, she was considered a "power in the education affairs of Bloomington." The two women, along with Sarah Withers, were the driving force behind raising funds and establishing the "Withers Public Library" – now known as the Bloomington Public Library. Trotter served fifteen years on the Bloomington Board of Education before retiring because of illness.

References to Trotter are still present in downtown Bloomington as the Trotter Family Fountain remains at the former site of the Withers Library (now Withers Park at Washington and East Streets). Trotter's likeness also appears on a mural located on the corner of Monroe and Center Streets in Downtown Bloomington.

Miss Sarah E. Raymond hired as Superintendent on August 18

Miss Sarah E. Raymond was born in October 1842 in a portion of LaSalle County, Illinois, that would later become part of Kendall County. After graduating from high school, Raymond attended Illinois State Normal University, graduating in 1866.

She came to Bloomington Public Schools in 1868, where she taught "Second Primary" (now called junior high) at the so-called "Old Barn School." The following year, she was made Principal of that school. The following year, she was appointed principal of a new eight room building, in what became Sheridan School. The principalship at Hawthorne (now Bent) School followed the next year where she oversaw the inclusion of African American students. Two years later – in April 1873 – Raymond was named Assistant Principal at Bloomington High School. Raymond became the principal of Bloomington High School in April 1874, when Dr. E.P. March resigned to return to his medical career.

Four months after she was named Principal of BHS, Raymond was summoned by the Board on August 18 and was asked to accept the position of Superintendent of Schools – at once.

Raymond held the position of Superintendent of Schools for eighteen years.

1876

Student work displayed at the Centennial World's Fair

Superintendent Sarah E. Raymond displays photographs of Bloomington school buildings and classrooms, as well as examples of student work, at the Centennial World's Fair in Philadelphia.

One of nation's first licensed physicians graduates from BHS

Katie N. Post graduated from the University of Pacific Medical Department (later the Cooper Medical School) in 1879 and was not only Nevada's, but one of our nation's, first licensed physicians. She practiced in Virginia City, Nevada (a booming mining town) and later married a Van Orden and practiced in California.

1878

Stevenson elected to Board - would later serve as nation's Vice President

Adlai Ewing Stevenson was elected to serve on the Board of Education in 1878. Just fifteen years later, Stevenson was elected to serve as Vice President of the United States (1893 to 1897) under President Grover Cleveland.

Stevenson was born in Christian Co., Ky. He practiced law at Bloomington, Ill., and was twice (1874, 1878) elected to the U.S. Congress as a Democrat. He was First Assistant Postmaster General during Grover Cleveland's first term (1885–89) and Vice President during his second. In 1900, Stevenson again ran for Vice President on the Democratic ticket, this time with William Jennings Bryan. After losing this election he later ran (1908) for governor of Illinois but was defeated. He was the grandfather of former Illinois Governor Adlai Stevenson and former actor McLean Stevenson (M*A*S*H), both of whom attended Bloomington Public Schools.

1879

Pawnee Bill graduates from BHS

Gordon M. Lillie was also known as "Pawnee Bill." After graduating from BHS, Lillie ran away from home to the Indian Territory where he later worked for Buffalo Bill. He eventually left Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show to run his own show known worldwide as "Pawnee Bill's Wild West Show." The show operated from 1888 to 1913 and gained success throughout Europe and the U.S. His former ranch is now known as the "Pawnee Bill Ranch site" and is operated as a museum by the State of Oklahoma.

Labor advisor to President Theodore Roosevelt graduates from BHS

Patrick Morrissey became the Assistant VP of the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad. He was often summoned to discuss labor issues with President Theodore Roosevelt

Lizzie Irons graduates from BHS

Lizzie Irons graduates from BHS and becomes a court reporter for the Pantagraph. She left her job to move to New York City and would later receive the Society of Arts and Sciences *O Henry Award* in 1924 for her short story, "Towers of Fame." The story appeared in the August 1923 issue of McClure's magazine. At the time, she was writing under the name, Elizabeth Irons Folsom.

1882

State Board of Health mandates vaccinations for all students attending public schools

At a special meeting of the State Board of Health, held in the city of Chicago, on Tuesday, November 22, 1881, the following resolution was unanimously adopted: Resolved, That by the authority vested in this Board, it is hereby ordered, that on and after January 1, 1882, no pupil shall be admitted to any public school in this State without presenting satisfactory evidence of proper and successful vaccination.

1883

Raymond publishes Manual of Instruction

Prior to Sarah E. Raymond's Superintendency, schools in the district acted somewhat independently of one another with each school having separate policies, curriculum, etc. Raymond later wrote: "A course of study largely promulgated from term to term by word of mouth, was a hard one to catch."

Raymond quickly sought to establish cohesiveness throughout the district. As a result, her nearly 300-page Manual of Instruction was first published in 1876 as a district-wide guide that outlined rules and regulations for all employees and students, and most importantly, established a uniform curriculum throughout the district.

The Manual of Instruction to Teachers and Graded Course of Study of the Bloomington Public Schools was much sought after by superintendents throughout the country and world, as the Commissioner of Education of Brazil made a special trip to Bloomington to study Raymond's methods and results. The Manual of Instruction was reprinted in 1883 and 1887.

1884

Jeanette Loudon graduates from BHS

M. Jeanette Loudon graduates from BHS. Loudon trained for several years in Europe and later taught at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. She was the pianist for Chicago's Beethoven Trio for many years.

1885

Henninger becomes BHS Principal

John W. Henninger becomes principal of BHS. He would later become the President of Western Illinois (State Normal School) University.

1888

Stevensonville/Raymond School opens

Stevensonville School (later renamed Raymond School) was built in 1888 at a cost of \$5,000. It contained four rooms and a basement and was located in the southwest part of the city named "Stevensonville" on Stevenson Street (near Euclid and Grove Streets) The school's name was later changed to Raymond School in honor of former Superintendent Sarah E. Raymond. This building was replaced in 1931 with the help of the Works Progress Administration (WPA). Its present location sits just one block south from its original location – on the corner of Olive and Magoun Streets.

"The Voice" graduates from Jefferson School

Minnie Saltzman-Stevens was born in Bloomington in 1874 and graduated from the 10th grade at Jefferson School in 1888, where her mother, Mena, was the janitoress and where they both resided in the basement. Saltzman-Stevens was acclaimed in both Europe and America as a great artist of the operatic stage. Her stunning debut in England, at the Covent Garden in 1909, caused even the orchestra to leap to its feet in ovation. Saltzman-Stevens returned to repeat her triumphs as a member of the Chicago Opera Company. Her voice had a range of four octaves and Saltzman-Stevens always referred to it in the third person, as "the voice." Helen Keller was a fan, as was Florence Fifer Bohrer. Unfortunately, World War I put a temporary end to performances of Wagner in Europe, and Saltzman-Stevens retired and never returned to the stage.

1890

BHS adopts school colors of Purple and Gold

BHS students adopt the school colors of "Purple and Gold" out of respect for Don Murray, a classmate who drowned. Murray's favorite flowers were purple and gold pansies.

1893

Horatio Bent begins service to Board

Horatio G. Bent began serving on the Board of Education. His term lasted until his death in 1931. Bent School is named in his honor.

Diphtheria and Scarlet fever reaches near epidemic

An outbreak of diphtheria and scarlet fever hits the city. Janitors and their families are asked to stop living in the basements of our schools due to health reasons.

1895

Lincoln School opens

Lincoln School was built in 1895 at a cost of about \$18,000. Originally named The Number Seven School (after its City Ward), it was later renamed Lincoln School in honor of Abraham Lincoln. This building was replaced in 1935. It was located on the corner of Miller and Koch Streets.

1896

Washington School opens

Washington School was built in 1896 at a cost of \$9,000. Originally named The Number Nine School (after its City Ward), it was later renamed Washington School in honor of President George Washington. This four-room building opened its doors to 150 students in grades 1 through 5 for the first time on September 14, 1896. The building was considered to be "thoroughly modern in every respect, well lighted, well heated, thoroughly ventilated and supplied with excellent slate blackboards, automatic flushing closets and other conveniences."

Rapid growth of this part of town soon made it necessary to add another section to the school, so the school's original bell tower was razed in 1905 to make room for additional classrooms. Except for the bell tower, the original building is still in use and proudly sits on the corner of Washington and State Streets.

Girls Basketball team is formed at Bloomington High School

In 1896, the first organized girls' basketball team was formed at Bloomington High School – just five years after the sport was founded. The BHS girls competed against teams from Illinois State Normal University and Illinois Wesleyan University. Just three years later, interest among female students at the school was so high, four teams were formed.

Physical Education added to the curriculum

As a result of the popularity of the 1896 Athens Olympics, physical education classes are first offered.

1897

Bloomington High School moves into larger building

The sixth site of the high school was erected on the corner of Monroe and Prairie Streets at the cost of \$55,000.

Bloomington High School publishes newspaper

Bloomington High School students begin publishing the Aegis, the school's newspaper. Rates are 50 cents per year or 10 cents per copy.

Bloomington High School begin competing in athletic events

BHS students began competing with outside schools in both football and basketball.

1899

Basketball fever hits BHS

Basketball was played in the high schools gymnasium twice each week by the boys and twice by the girls. Interest among female students at the school was so high, four teams were formed.

Bloomington High School claims State Championship in football

From the December 1899 edition of the Bloomington High School Aegis:

Bloomington Wins The State Championship - Thanksgiving Day - Rockford 6 - Bloomington 6

On Thanksgiving Day, 1899, Bloomington High School's football team traveled to Rockford, Illinois to decide the State Championship. It was quite unusual for a high school team to go more than sixty miles for a game, but Rockford felt so certain that the Purple and Gold would be vanquished by the Maroon and Black, that they guaranteed the expenses of our team to meet them on the Rockford grounds on Thanksgiving Day. Bloomington accepted.

After Bloomington tied the score at 6, an ensuing punt was fumbled by Rockford deep in Bloomington territory. It is unclear who recovered the fumble as "the players were crowded upon by outsiders who wanted Rockford to have the ball."

The crowd seemed determined to settle their way or to continue the wrangle. The police tried in vain to clear the field and thus permit the officials to make a decision and the timekeeper was compelled to close the game. The score stood 6-6 with less than twelve minutes remaining.

Since our team has not been beaten and since Rockford did lose one game, Bloomington High School believes that it is fairly entitled to the state championship."

Rop, rop, rop. Rip, rip, rip.

We have got the championship.

Was it easy? Well I guess.

We are the boys from B.H.S.

1900

Franklin School receives new building

The second Franklin School building was completed early in February 1900 at a cost of \$25,041.25. It replaced the original Franklin School which was built in 1867 and was in very bad condition. The new school was a brick building two stories in height with ten rooms. Its distinctive features were wide and roomy hallways, light from the left side only, and a system of heating and ventilation which insured a constant supply of pure air at a uniform temperature. The building was considered "handsome and an ornament to the northeast part of the city." Franklin School would serve our district until 1970 when the building was sold to Illinois Wesleyan University. The building is no longer standing.

1901

J.K. Stableton becomes Superintendent

In May 1901, John K. Stableton (always referred to as "Professor" Stableton), was elected the new Superintendent of Schools. Stableton was 42-years old and formerly served as the Superintendent of the Charleston, Illinois schools. A graduate of Ohio Wesleyan University, he had taught in schools in Ohio and Nebraska. Stableton would lead the Bloomington Schools for nineteen years and, on his retirement, would receive a heartfelt tribute. For almost twenty years, he would lead the schools through curriculum changes and new buildings (including a new high school).

1902

Future Nobel Prize winner graduates from BHS

Clinton Davison graduates from Bloomington High School. He received his Doctorate in Physics from Princeton University and, in 1937, won the Nobel Prize for his work in the field of Physics

1903

Edwards School receives new building, relocated to new site

Edwards School was built on the corner of Market and Allin for a cost of \$51,000. It closed around 1967.

1904

Irving School receives new building

The original Irving School was demolished and replaced at a cost of \$68,000.

1906

BHS debuts first yearbook

BHS' first yearbook, the 1906 Aegis, contained 202 pages of text and 45 pages of advertisements. The yearbook contained no photos of students, rather historical reviews of the district and high school from alumni and administrators and remembrances from former BHS students.

Pictured on the cover was an illustrated drawing of the Class of 1864 – the first BHS graduating class. Members included Lucrecia Billings and Sarah Flagg.

1907

Emerson School receives new building, site

The second Emerson School was funded by a bond issue that also included the construction costs for new Irving and Edwards Schools and an addition to the recently completed Washington School. The bond issue was approved by the voters on April 6, 1903.

The 1907 Emerson School was constructed for \$75,000 on a new site – located on the corner of Bell and Clinton Streets – next to what would become Emerson Park. The school served the district until the early 1970s.

1910

1st Basketball game between BHS and Normal

The following passage appeared in the February 1910 issue of the BHS student newspaper, the Aegis:

Bloomington High 24; Normal High 19

For the first time in the history of the two high schools, the Bloomington team lined up against Normal in basketball. It was a hard, rough game, full of many disagreeable features. Sutherland, of BHS, received a very ugly

injury to his eye. The game did not amount to a great deal so far as the sport goes, but Normal was defeated by a score of 24 to 19, thus establishing a precedent for the future history of the game between the two rivals.

BHS wins State Basketball Championship

BHS beat Rock Island High School, 34-25, to claim the State Championship. The team finished with a 14-2 record.

1911

BHS forms Drama Club

BHS' yearbook now published annually

1915

BHS wins State Basketball Championship

Immediately after the close of the football season, Mr. Earl McClure issued his call for basketball which was answered by about fifty candidates. This number was soon thinned out until about fifteen or twenty of the most promising were left. Three team members would eventually be named All-Staters. Bloomington won the district tournament and two weeks later fulfilled all hopes and expectations by defeating three of the strongest teams in the state tournament and took the State Championship, beating Robinson High School, 25-16.

One of nation's first federally appointed female judges graduates from BHS

Faye Bentley was appointed to the Juvenile Court Bench in Washington D.C. by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. She was one of our nation's first federally appointed female judges. Bentley was also a member of the White House Conference on child health and protection.

1917

BHS gets new building

The seventh site of Bloomington High School was built on the corner of E. Washington and McLean Streets for \$750,000. The architect was Arthur Pillsbury.

1918

Male faculty resign to serve in WWI

Ten male BHS faculty members, including the principal, resigned in order to serve our country during WWI.

On account of the War, the Illinois High School Athletic Association announced there would be no spring athletics.

1921

BHS' Girls' Athletic Association, French Club, Freshman Girl Reserves and Hi-Y Clubs were formed.

Kindergarten was first offered to students at Emerson and Edwards Schools.

BHS' swimming pool is sanitized using the recent discovery of utilizing ultraviolet rays to kill bacteria in the water.

BHS' Baseball and Track teams take the field after being disbanded since 1914.

BHS holds its first Homecoming.

1923

Kindergarten classes become available at each of the district's elementary schools.

BHS coach hired by New York Giants baseball team

Guy Morrison, Social Science teacher, football and baseball coach, resigns to help coach the World Champion New York Giants baseball team.

Hawthorne School replaced by new structure, name of school changed to Horatio Bent School

The Horatio G. Bent School was built on the corner of Roosevelt and Walnut Streets by architect Arthur Pillsbury. Bent School replaced Nathaniel Hawthorne School, which was located on the site of the current Bent School playground. The school was replaced and named for Horatio G. Bent, the District's long-time business manager. The school is proudly in use today.

1924

Muggs and Skeeter cartoonist graduates from BHS

Wally Bishop was the creator and illustrator of "Muggs and Skeeter", a popular comic strip that ran in newspapers from 1927 to 1974. Mr. Bishop worked briefly for an advertising agency in Chicago until King Features syndicate awarded him a contract at the age of 19. He was elected as a fellow of the Royal Academy of Arts in London. Mr. Bishop was a founder of the St. Petersburg Museum of Fine Arts and was a member of the National Cartoonists Society.

1925

Vic and Sade creator graduates from BHS

Paul Rhymer created and wrote the comedy, Vic and Sade for NBC. It was the most popular radio series of its kind, reaching 7,000,000 listeners in 1943, according to Time Magazine.

1930

BHS' Boys Basketball team places 2nd at State

BHS reaches the State Championship game, but loses to Peoria Manual, 25-38, to claim the State Runner-Up trophy. The team finished with a record of 20-4.

1932

Jefferson School destroyed by early morning fire

On the morning of March 7, 1932, Jefferson School burned to the ground. The school originally served as Bloomington High School from 1897 through 1917. When the high school moved to its new location on the corner of Washington and McLean Streets, the high school was converted and used as Jefferson School. After the fire, Jefferson School was rebuilt and served as an elementary school until the 1970s, when it was converted into the district's administration and Board office.

1935

James Lindsay becomes Superintendent

James Wilmour Lindsay was a New Jersey educator who assumed the office of Superintendent on August 1, 1935. Lindsay was chosen from among 75 applicants. He held an undergraduate degree from the University of Colorado and a doctorate from New York's Columbia University.

One of Lindsay's first acts was to undertake a complete review of Bloomington's educational programs. He would advocate the use of standardized tests, expansion of adult learning opportunities, as well as changes to the curriculum which would include training in "contributing citizenship, parenthood, money management, the pre-school child" and retraining of workers who had lost their jobs. All of these ideas required money not available in the strict budgets cuts of the time.

Generally, the Superintendent's contract was renewed each April. Lindsay was not rehired in April 1937 and, in fact, not until July 26, 1937 was he "re-elected," with the provision that either party could terminate the contract at the end of the first semester. This Lindsay did, submitting his resignation to the Board on December 15, 1937 to be effective January 21, 1938.

Lincoln School receives new building

Sheridan School receives new building

Sheridan School opens a new 10-room building for its students.

1937

BHS grad receives Nobel Prize in Physics

Clinton Davisson was the Nobel Prize winner in the field of Physics in 1937 for his discovery of electron waves. In 1927, Davisson and Lester H. Germer found that a beam of electrons, when reflected from a metallic crystal, shows diffraction patterns similar to those of X rays and other electromagnetic waves. This discovery verified quantum mechanics' understanding of the dual nature of subatomic particles and proved to be useful in the study of nuclear, atomic, and molecular structure. More info [HERE](#).

James Shirk, founder of Beer Nuts® founder graduates from BHS

In 1937, Arlo Shirk, (Russel's brother), and his father, Edward G. Shirk, purchased a small confectionery store in downtown Bloomington and with it the recipe for a special glazed peanut. Called the Caramel Crisp Shop, the business sold glazed nuts, popcorn, peanut brittle, caramel apples, and orange drink. The ancestors of today's BEER NUTS Peanuts were known as "Redskins" because they were prepared with their red skins intact. Shirk occasionally packaged "Redskins" for the National Liquor Stores in Bloomington. The product sold well under the label "Shirk's Glazed Peanuts." Shirk teamed up with a local distributor to see how the product would sell, the first target being taverns and bars in the nearby community and surrounding areas. It was then that the product was officially dubbed "BEER NUTS" Peanuts and the now well known trademark was registered.

1943

Sororities and Fraternities banned at BHS

Membership in sororities and fraternities, clubs that were "invitation only", was prohibited by the Illinois School Code. Popular sororities at BHS included the "Mitzis" and "Tridettes."

Chalmers "Bump" Elliott graduates from BHS

Elliott was a three-sport letter winner for Purdue in 1943 as a Marine trainee. Following his military service, Bump joined his brother Pete at Michigan in 1946. In the Wolverines' national championship season of 1947, Elliott was named as an All-American and selected as the Big Ten's Most Valuable Player. Bump was named Michigan's 13th head coach in 1959 and holds the rare distinction of both coaching and playing for Big Ten and Rose Bowl

championship teams during his football career as a Wolverine. He directed the 1964 Michigan team to a 9-1 record and a Rose Bowl victory over Oregon State, 34-7.

1944

Peter Elliott graduates from BHS

Besides quarterbacking Michigan's 1948 national champions, Pete became the only Michigan athlete to earn 12 letters - in football, basketball, and golf. He played on four championship teams, two in football, and one each in basketball and golf. He came to Michigan in 1945 as a Navy trainee, starring as a runner and passer. When Pete shifted to quarterback, his blocking and defensive strength became invaluable. Peter later served as head coach at Nebraska, California and Illinois, and later enjoyed success in the building business and as a sports commentator.

1945

Future "Voice of the Oakland A's" graduates from BHS

Bill King was the radio voice of the Oakland Athletics for twenty-five years (1981-2005), the longest tenure of any A's announcer since the team's games were first broadcast in Philadelphia in 1938. Prior to joining the A's, he had been the radio play-by-play announcer for the Oakland/Los Angeles Raiders football team and the San Francisco/Golden State Warriors basketball team for many years.

1946

McLean Stevenson graduates from BHS

McLean Stevenson wrote comedy bits for Tommy Smothers and was a minor player on TV sitcoms in the 1960s, but it was his stint as Lt. Col. Henry Blake in the Korean War sitcom M*A*S*H (1972-75) that made him famous. As played by Stevenson, Blake was a goofy, not-too-efficient commanding officer in a lure-covered fishing hat. M*A*S*H was one of TV's top-rated shows for more than a decade, but Stevenson left the CBS series after three seasons to sign a long-term contract with NBC. Stevenson also guest-starred in shows such as Square One TV, The Love Boat, Diff'rent Strokes, Match Game, Hollywood Squares, and The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson. His screen credits include the Disney movie The Cat from Outer Space.

1948

Driver's Ed added at BHS

Driver's Education is added to the high school curriculum.

1949

Oakland School opens

Oakland School was built at 1605 E. Oakland Street for \$222,017.

1951

Oakland School receives addition

Oakland School addition costs \$170,790.

1952

BHS' Girls Tennis Team debuts

1953

BHS' Boys Baseball team finishes 2nd at State

Coach Howard Saar led his baseball team to a second place finish at State, eventually losing to Maywood Proviso, 7-3.

1953-54

BHS Wrestling team makes debut

As a result of the intense interest shown in intramural battles, Coach Oscar Siegel organized the school's first wrestling team. The newly formed team met three foes and participated in the Big 12 meet. They beat the U-High Pioneers, 33-15, and then dropped their two final meets due to forfeitures in several weight divisions.

1957

Centennial School

Centennial School was completed at the cost of \$361,195. It was built on the corner of Colton and Empire Streets. The school was partially torn down and replaced with the current Bloomington Junior High School in 1990.

1958

One of the most important postmodernist abstract artists of our time" graduates from BHS

Elizabeth Murray is considered to be "one of the most important postmodernist abstract artists of our time." Murray has exhibited extensively for the past three decades. Her works may be found in the collections of the Art Institute of Chicago, the Smithsonian Institution, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum and the Whitney Museum of American Art, among others

1959

BHS receives new high school

The eighth and current site of Bloomington High School was completed at the corner of Locust and Towanda Avenue for roughly \$3,000,000. The former building on E. Washington St. was used at the District's junior high school until 1990. BHS opened its doors to 963 students in grades 10, 11 & 12 in September.

1960

District 87 offers Summer School classes

1964

District 87 voters turn down referendum

On Saturday, May 16th, District 87 voters turned down a proposal to purchase a 25-acre site for future building needs at a cost of \$92,000. Voters also refused to fund an 18-room school in Fairway Knolls, an eight-room school south of Oakland Avenue on the State Farm site, and a four-room addition to Sheridan School.

Bloomington's Golf Team wins State Championship

Bloomington, a six-shot leader after the opening 18 holes, finished with a 640 total to edge pre-tourney favorite Waukegan by two shots. It was BHS' first State Championship since the Boys' Basketball team won in 1916.

District 87, Unit 5 Merger proposed

A possible merger between District 87 and Unit 5 is proposed by the Pantagraph. Neither district supported the proposal.

1965

BHS' Boys Golf team wins State...again

Bloomington ran up a comfortable lead of eight strokes during the opening rounds and then held on to defeat Rockford East High School by eight strokes.

McDavid named Superintendent

Fred McDavid was named the new Superintendent on January 7, 1966. McDavid served as the superintendent of Richwoods Community High School in Peoria Heights. He replaced George Wells, who retired after serving 21 years as Superintendent.

1966

Elementary students allowed to stay on school grounds during noon lunch hour

Students in Bloomington's elementary schools were allowed to eat lunch at school, provided that their parents file a statement with the principal explaining the reason for the child remaining at school during the noon lunch period. Applications for lunchroom supervisors were sought.

Board votes to allow pregnant students the right to attend high school

Quite controversial at the time, the decision to allow pregnant girls, married or unmarried, to continue their studies at BHS was passed unanimously and without discussion by the Board of Education.

1967

District 87 voters approves additions to BHS, Sheridan School, funds for new elementary school, raises for teachers

On March 17th, voters approved a \$5.3 million building bond referendum. The bond called for a \$3,045,000 addition to BHS to allow ninth graders to attend, a \$980,000 addition to Sheridan School and a new \$1,185,000 elementary school on an east side site still to be selected. This school would become Adlai E. Stevenson II School. The bond also asked for a hike in the Educational Fund to cover the cost of teacher's salaries.

BHS holds its first After-Prom

Mrs. Harriet Rust petitioned the Board of Education to allow the junior class to host a 12:30 to 4:00 a.m. After-Prom party at the high school gym. The party was to begin immediately after the Junior-Senior Prom on June 2nd. This suggestion came under great scrutiny of the Board, but Rust was able to secure a one-year trial basis for the After Prom by stating that "it is better to have the students in one place than having them in cars on the highways going to Peoria or Decatur."

Area Vocational Center approved

The Board of Education approved a \$522,000 Area Vocational Center at Bloomington High School. The school was opened in 1969. The school accepted students from LeRoy, Normal, Colfax, Gridley, Bloomington, Tri-Valley, Lexington, Chenoa and Central Catholic High School. Tentative courses would include data processing, machine drafting, auto mechanics, health occupations and food services.

Giant, data-processed report cards appear

Computerized 8 by 11 inch report cards were offered to parents, eliminating the confusing double-letter grades. The new cards had only one letter grade for each subject and a space for teacher comments. The cards were produced using IBM machines at the Measurement Research Center, Iowa City, Iowa.

District buys "automated processing machines" for business office

The purchase of six automated processing machines was approved by the Board of Education on November 8. The Unit Record Equipment included an accounting machine, a printing summary punch, a card sorter and a collator, verifier and key punch. These "punch cards" machines would be used primarily to get out the school district's payroll, perform budget accounting and produce expenditure checks. The accounting machine weighed in at 3,000 pounds.

1968

District 87 sets mandatory retirement age at 65

The Board of Education voted to make the mandatory retirement age for school employees at age 65. Under the new policy, employees already 65, or to become 65 before the next school term, will not be issued contracts. This policy is no longer in place.

Homebound students offered "electronic classrooms"

Bloomington Public Schools initiated a school-to-home telephone system to enable students with long-term illnesses to tune in and participate in classroom discussions. The devices were hooked up to private telephone lines in the homes and each of the classrooms were wired with speaker jacks.

School bus service grows

All students living 1.5 miles or more from school and within District boundaries became eligible for bus service to and from school. Previously, only seven buses transported students throughout the district. Twenty-two buses were added to the fleet in 1968.

New east-side school to be named "Adlai E. Stevenson School"

The "Adlai E. Stevenson Elementary School" topped a list of six names selected by the Bloomington Advisory Council for a new \$1.1 million grade school in the Lincolnwood Subdivision. Eleven council members favored that name among other suggestions. They included: Stevenson Memorial Elementary School, J.W. Scott Elementary School, Carl Sandburg Elementary School, Lincolnwood Elementary School and Carl Vrooman Elementary School.

BHS becomes a four-year school, holds split sessions

At the beginning of the 1968-69 school year, BHS underwent the split-shift plan with junior and senior students attending school from 7:30 a.m. to 12:35 p.m. and sophomores and freshmen attending school from 11:40 a.m. until 4:45 p.m. The schedule was designed to relieve crowded conditions at the junior high school and will place approximately 986 juniors and seniors at BHS during the morning, and 1,050 freshmen and sophomores in the

building during the afternoon. BHS was currently undergoing an addition at the same time that added classroom space to the rear of the building (off Empire) as well as the South Gym.

BHS' 1968 edition of Aepix offered for free for last time

The BHS yearbook will cease to be free for students after the 1967-68 school year.

1969

Stevenson School opens

Stevenson Elementary School opens its doors to 540 K-6 students on August 30th. The school cost \$1.2 million.

Sheridan School's addition opens

Sheridan School's \$900,000 building addition opens for students.

Merger talks reappear

The Board of Education brought up the issue of a District 87/Unit 5 merger at the August meeting. Bloomington Board favors merger; Unit 5 does not.

Five BHS boys suspended for "wearing hair too long"

Superintendent McDavid suspended five BHS students for violating the school code by wearing an "extreme" hairstyle. Two of the boys were later expelled for not complying to the rule. The BHS dress code at the time called for "dresses and skirts with blouses or sweaters" for girls. Boys were to wear slacks with sport shirts or sweaters, but not shirts bearing numerals or emblems other than BHS. Sweatshirts were forbidden and shirttails were to be tucked in. T-shirts were considered undergarments and required a shirt to be worn over it. Four months later, the two expelled boys won a court case allowing them to remain in school with their long hair. The Circuit Court of appeals stated that "the right to wear one's hair at any length or in any desired style is an ingredient of personal freedom protected by the United States Constitution"

1970

Computers now used to complete student's schedules, grade reporting and class lists

General Telephone Company's data processing department provided the class schedules of BHS students using their IBM No. 36 computer. Hand scheduling, which took weeks to complete, would now be completed in about 4 hours. The computers also provided nearly 14,000 cards for use in grade reporting and printed class lists for each teacher.

Teacher's Union refused - later accepted by Board of Education

The Bloomington Education Association's (BEA) request to become the exclusive negotiating representative for teachers was initially refused by the Board in December 1969. Ninety-one percent of the district's 408 teachers had voted for the BEA to represent them in professional negotiations. The Union was a result of the Board of Education's refusal to grant teacher pay hikes in September. The Board later voted to recognize the BEA starting in the 1970-71 school year.

Computers purchased for classroom instruction

Electronic data processing machines were purchased for course offerings at the Area Vocational Center. Leasing of the machines would cost \$13,668 annually, but after federal, state and local reimbursements, the district's share would be \$5,126. Courses to be offered at the AVC during the fall included office practice, secretarial practice, accounting II, office occupations, marketing and key punch and tab operators practice.

BHS' expansion complete - school doubles in size

BHS' \$3.1 million expansion and remodeling project was completed in January and split shift scheduling ended. The school doubled in size as a two story addition was added to the south, the Area Vocational Center was added to the south-east and the school's South Gym was added just south of the original gym. Two new all-weather outdoor tennis courts were located in a sunken in area between the North and South Gyms. Just over 2,000 students were enrolled.

BHS Dress Code removes rules regulating hairstyles

The Board of Education removed the regulating of hair styles from the high school dress code by unanimous vote during a special meeting on January 21. On February 11, the school's entire Dress Code would be abandoned and replaced with guidelines for dress and grooming - which were not mandatory.

Superintendent McDavid resigns

Superintendent Fred McDavid resigns his superintendency on March 1 in order to work on his post-doctoral degree at Southern Illinois University.

Donald Henderson named Acting-Superintendent

Donald Henderson, who was the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, was named Acting Superintendent by the Board of Education on February 2.

State Law requires free lunches for needy students

State and Federal reimbursements would total 30 cents for each lunch.

Racial tension increases at BHS; African American students boycott school, ask for changes

About 60 African-American students boycotted one period of school on February 26th due to apparent false accusations in the newspaper that "black girls had been smoking in toilets and not allowing other students their use." Students also objected to a lack of a black studies program and also wanted more black teachers employed at the school which, at the time, employed two. The Afro-American Culture Club presented Principal Wheeler with suggestions the following week. They included a photo of the Club in the school's yearbook; a black studies program; inclusion of soul food in the cafeteria; Silent Prayer to honor the late Dr. Martin Luther King on January 15 during a pep club assembly; more black students on athletic teams regardless of grades or hairstyles; two homecoming queens - one black, one white; an equal number of black and white varsity cheerleaders; and an investigation of school employees to determine racism. Shortly after the suggestions were offered, a plan to add a black studies course was added to the fall curriculum; soul food (chitterlings, greens, hominy grits, black-eyed peas and corn bread) was added to the lunch menu; and a photo of the Afro-American Culture Club was taken for the yearbook. However, many white students were upset over these demands and racially charged fights erupted at the school during the next several days. Tension was aroused again in early April, when the school's counselor for black students was asked to resign. Riot police appeared in May when fighting between 70-75 students again erupted.

George Stimeling is hired as the Superintendent of Schools

Stimeling, 40, most recently of Chicago Heights, received \$24,000 for the first year of his contract and \$26,000 the second year.

Teachers strike

The first teachers' strike in District 87's history occurred after Bloomington Education Association members voted 259-66 to strike. The next day, only 93 of the district's 418 teachers showed up for classes. The BEA was asking for a \$8,000 starting salary for first year teachers and for increases of between \$254 and \$286 for teachers at the top salary tier.

Judge orders Teachers to return to work

On Friday, September 4th, Bloomington Circuit Judge Walter A . Yoder ordered all 418 Bloomington teachers to return to work on Tuesday, September 9. The following Tuesday, Judge Yoder issued a 10-day injunction against the Bloomington Education Association. School opened for 7,450 students.

Board of Education ends salary talks, sets salaries

Wednesday, September 30: The Board of Education adopted a new teachers' salary schedule, ending six months of

negotiations with the Bloomington Education Association. Beginning teachers would receive a \$7,350 base pay - up \$1,000. Individual pay raises would range from \$1,000 to \$1,459.

Another vote for a strike called

Friday, October 2: Bloomington Education Association members announced that a vote for a strike would occur on October 4th. On the 4th, teachers voted 207 to 86 in favor of not striking.

BHS' Booster Club is formed

On Tuesday, October 14th, BHS' Booster Club is formed. Dr. Wilson Baltz was elected President.

1971

First African American elected to Board of Education

Eva Jones, a secretary at the Firestone Tire and Rubber Co. is elected to a four-year term on the Board of Education. Jones, a graduate of BHS, was also a graduate of the Cortez-Peters Business College in Chicago. Jones was re-elected to the Board of Education in 1974 and would later be elected to serve on the Bloomington City Council.

1974

Alternative School opens

The Alternative School was founded to meet the needs of students who may have otherwise dropped out of school. Classes were held at Morgan Washington, Sunnyside, Western Avenue and Miller Park Pavilion.

1976

Cooper Hewitt National Design Award finalist graduates from BHS

Suzanne Tick is the creative director of KnollTextiles, NYC. Tick's work has appeared on HGTV and in the Chicago Tribune, Metropolitan Home magazine (May 2002). In 2003 she was nominated as one of three finalists in product design category for the Cooper Hewitt National Design Awards. Tick has been named by Metropolitan Home magazine as one of twenty-one noteworthy designers to watch in the 21st century.

1977

Harvard Business School professor/author graduates from BHS

Nancy Koehn, a professor/author at Harvard Business School, teaches the MBA elective in business history, The Coming of Managerial Capitalism, one of the School's most popular courses. She has appeared on "Good Morning

America," CNBC's "Moneywheel," "Nightly Business Report," and "Street Signs," "The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer," A&E's "Biography," CNN's "Money Line" and many other television programs. She is a frequent commentator on National Public Radio

1990

Bloomington Junior High School opens at its new location. It is located on the corner of Empire and Colton Streets.

Sheridan School's annual "Back to School Parade" debuts.

Bloomington Junior High School wins the 8AA Boys Basketball State Championship/

1992

BHS' annual Writers Stage debuts on May 6.

1996

Daily breakfast is offered to our students.

Washington School appears on "Good Morning America" to celebrate the school's 100th birthday.

Sheridan School's "Poetry Place" is officially opened on October 11.

1997

BHS student, Jenni Harms, is named Chicago Tribune Student of the Year.

2000

All Day Kindergarten is offered at Irving and Sheridan Schools.

Wrestler Seth Livingston wins the IHSA State Championship in the 275 lb. weight class.

Bloomington Junior High School wins the 8AA Girls Track State Championship.

2001

BHS student, Lisa Hutmacher, is named Chicago Tribune Student of the Year.

BHS student, Quinn Bernier, scores a perfect "36" on the ACT.

Bloomington Junior High School wins the 8AA Boys Basketball State Championship.

2002

Dr. Robert Nielsen is named "Superintendent of the Year" for the State of Illinois.

Bloomington Junior High School wins the 7AA Boys Basketball State Championship.

2003

BHS student, Anthony Gardner, scores a perfect "36" on the ACT.

Bloomington Junior High School wins the 8AA Girls Basketball State Championship.

2004

Bloomington Junior High School wins the 8AA Boys Track State Championship.

Bloomington Junior High School wins the 7AA Girls Track State Championship.

2005

Bloomington Junior High School wins the 8AA Boys Basketball State Championship.

Bloomington Junior High School wins the 8AA Boys Wrestling State Championship.

Bloomington Junior High School wins the 8AA Girls Track State Championship.

2006

BHS' Science Olympiad team wins the State Championship.

BHS senior, Kristina Warren, scores a perfect "2400" on the SAT.

2007

BHS' Chess Club wins 3A State Championship.

BJHS' Wrestling team wins the State Championship.