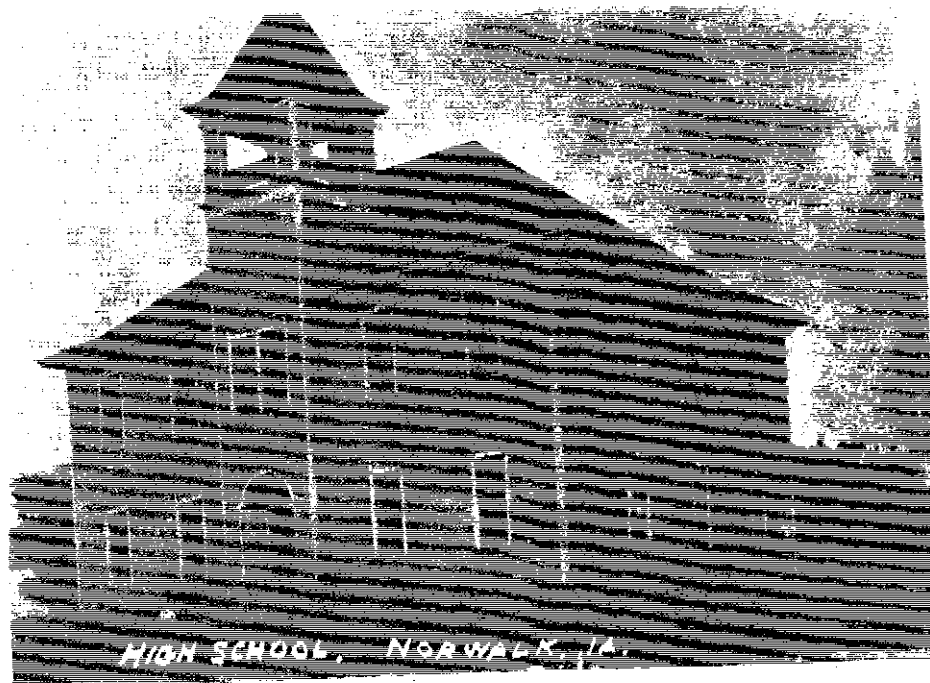


NORWALK INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT  
1893 to 1915



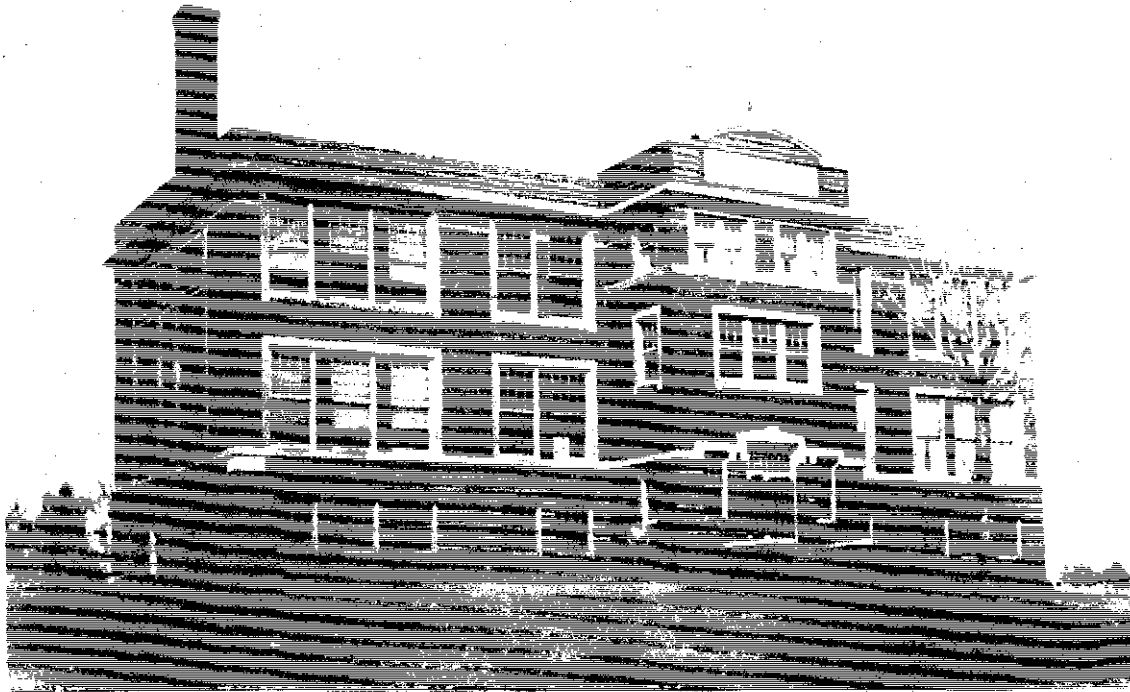
This is believed to be a picture of the first high school in Norwalk after it had been remodeled. A Warren County Superintendent of Schools report in July of 1907 stated that the Board of Education had authorized a two-year high school in 1893. However, the first class did not graduate until 1901. The first graduates were LULU STIFFLER, ANNA HARTLEY, and EDITH ALLEN. The following article appeared in the "Norwalk Free Press", December 25, 1907 with the above picture.

*The Norwalk School building was remodeled and rebuilt three years ago and it is doubtful it is surpassed by any school building in any town the size of Norwalk. It is 42 by 54 feet with four large sized rooms besides cloakrooms, with spacious halls and stairways all heated by a furnace. It is located on a fine lot, which rolls to the southwest, making it an Ideal location for a school building.*

*The school opened this fall on Monday, September 2, 1907 with W. A. Morrison as Principal, Mrs. W. A. Morrison, Intermediate department and Miss Eulalie Gruthrie as Primary department.*

*The enrollment at the high school department was 25, Intermediate department was 23 and the Primary department was 29, making the total enrollment of 77 for the present term.*

NORWALK CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL  
1915 to 1936



This was the new high school building completed for the 1915/16 school year. It was located just to the east of old school that was torn down when this one was completed. This building was dedicated in 1915 and served the district as classrooms until the 1960s and since, administrative offices.

The front of the dedication program

The transportation department of the  
Norwalk Consolidated School 1915

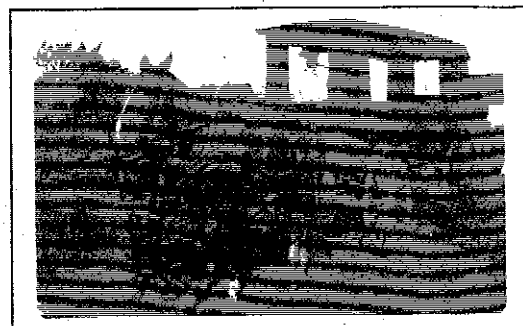
**Dedication Exercises**

of the

**Norwalk Consolidated School  
Building**

**Monday Afternoon, December 6th**  
**Nineteen Hundred Fifteen**

**High School Auditorium**



Driver- Louie Shultz

NORWALK CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL  
1936 to 1967



A gymnasium was built on the east end of the high school 1936. It was first used for the 1936/37 basketball games. This WPA project gave Norwalk the honor of having the largest gym in the county for a school of that size for a few years. It was the "home" of the Norwalk basketball teams from 1936 until 1967. It also served many times as an auditorium for class plays, school dances, and at times a "community playhouse", as well.

These three school buildings served as the educational institution for the first, second and in some cases third generation of the families who have four or more generations of graduates for Norwalk High School. See the next seven pages.

# CHAPTER 1

## The History of Norwalk High School The Facilities

The place where students and teacher meet to conduct the business of becoming educated is the beginning of a school. Before trying to trace the development of the Norwalk School facilities, it seems appropriate to trace the development of the town of Norwalk. This history was developed from various sources such as "History of Warren County", newspaper stories, and stories passed down. The following seems to be the generally excepted history of Norwalk. The first settlers to the area, the Samuel Crow family, arrived in 1846 and built a cabin near North River. In 1852, Samuel Synder built a log cabin on the present site of Norwalk. As more families settled around the Synder cabin, a post office was opened on 18 June 1856 with the name of "PYRA". In 1859, businessman, George M. Swan who had built a hotel, laid out the basic town plat and renamed it Norwalk. This was to honor his hometown of Norwalk CT. and a newspaper he had worked for in Norwalk OH.

By 1882, the town was served by a narrow gage railroad that ran from Des Moines to Cainsville, MO. This railroad brought the supplies for the general merchandise store/s, the lumberyard located in what is now the SW corner of the cemetery. It also transported livestock to and from the stockyard that was in the southeast corner of present day North Ave. and Cherry. The depot was on the northwest corner of that intersection. This railroad was improved to standard gage in 1890 and served Norwalk until the 4<sup>th</sup> of June 1947. A flood washed out the North River Bridge and the "Toonerville trolley" as it was often referred to ceased operation. It was considered uneconomical to rebuild the bridges as well much damaged track. Although by this time, it was not the major source of transportation for merchandise to and from Norwalk. It did, however, provide a way for people with out cars and non-drivers to get to Des Moines.

Information about the first schools in the Norwalk community is very sketchy. The history of the very early years is more an accumulation of facts from various sources such as newspapers, accounts written by former teachers, and the passed down stories. In the above mentioned book, it listed the following schools in the general area of Norwalk; Dowells School-Greenbush, Stiles School, Linn Grove School, Blake School-Norwalk, and Burkhead School. The schools followed by a dash may have been its location.

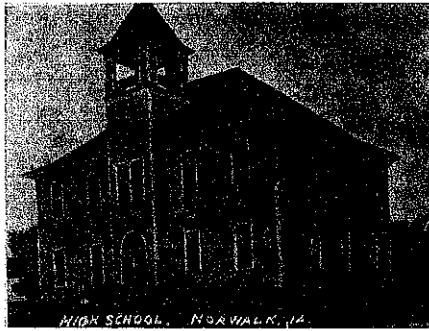
Stories placed the first school in Norwalk on the north side of Wright Road and west of Main Street. Could this have been the Blake School? A problem in identifying these one-room schools is that sometimes they were referred to by the teacher's name rather than the official name. Stories suggest that this school building was moved to 904 South Street about the turn of the century. When the building was razed in 1967, a daily schedule was found on a black board that had been covered by lathe and plaster. The teacher's name was Elsie Wells



An article in the "Norwalk Free Press" dated December 25, 1907 along with this picture identifies this as the first school building of the Norwalk Independent School District on this site with grades 1 through 10. The

board of education had authorized a 2-year high school in 1893, however that first class would not graduate until 1901. The following is the "Norwalk Free Press" article:

*The Norwalk High School building was remodeled and rebuilt three years ago and it is doubtful it is surpassed by any school building in any town the size of Norwalk. It is 42 by 54 feet with four large sized rooms besides cloakrooms, with spacious hall and stairways all heated by a furnace. It is located on a fine lot, which rolls to the southwest, making it an Ideal location for a school building.* (The approximate location of present MAC school annex). The Warren County Superintendent of Schools report in July of 1907 stated the value of this building was \$3500. This building served the Norwalk Independent School District through the 1914/15 school year. According to several stories, the building was torn down immediately after school ended in May 1915.

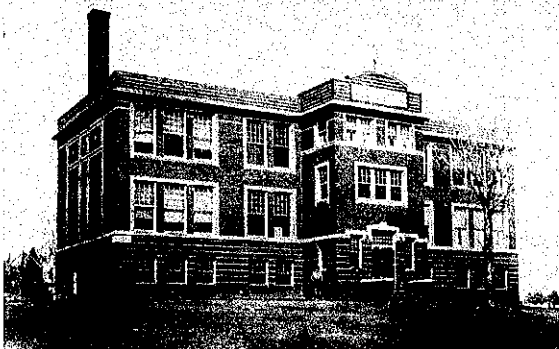


*Note: This recently found picture*



If the date is correct, then the first high school was still standing until at least spring of 1916. This also removes any doubt of where it was located

A new high school building was started in 1912 or 1913 and was ready for the start of school in September of 1915. The above-mentioned stories also told of the task of hauling bricks and other building materials from the railroad depot to the new school, mostly by mule teams. The railroad served as the main method of transporting these materials from Des Moines to Norwalk. With a school building large enough to accommodate many more students, Norwalk Independent School District joined five other independent districts to become the Norwalk Consolidated School. The names of the five other districts are unknown.



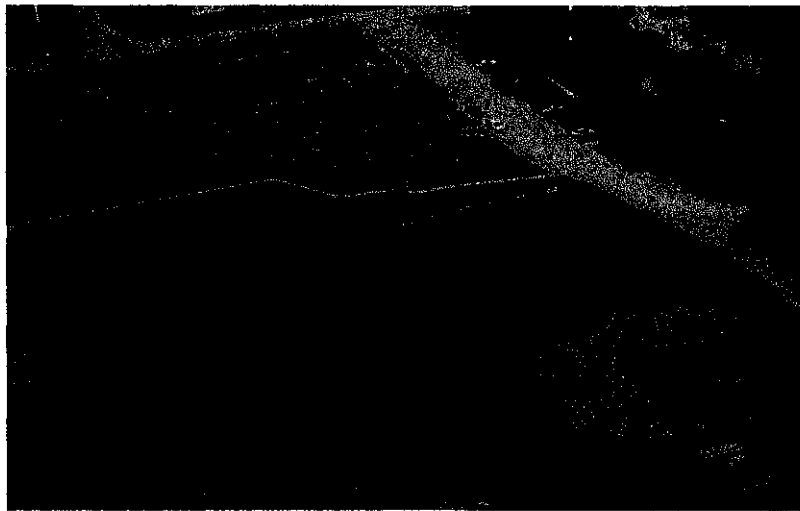
A gymnasium was added to this building in 1937 (first year used) to make this one of the best facilities in the county for several years. It would serve as the home of the Norwalk Basketball teams until 1967. It also served as an auditorium for class plays, school dances, and at times a community "playhouse".

This facility served the Norwalk community until the post war baby boom forced the District to prepare for an increasing student population. By the year 2002, the Norwalk Community School District facilities consist of 5 major education centers requiring 7.5 acres of roof to cover them.

The picture on the left is the school until 1952 when the only addition to this facility were added to the southwest corner. Picture on the right shows the addition. The cost of this addition was \$40,000 and housed the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and 1 section of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade.



Since it appeared impractical to expand this facility, a site west of Main Street was selected for a second building and to accommodate a new baseball/softball field. This building, known as the West Elementary was completed in 1954 and housed K through 3. This building consisted of 8187 square feet. Additions were made in 1977, 1991, 2001 and 2002. The building now consists of 76,029 square feet, the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest facility in the District. In 1988, the name was changed to Oviatt Elementary in honor of Don Oviatt who served as superintendent from 1965 until 1988.



With the completion of a new high school in 1961, this building became known as the Norwalk Junior High School. In addition to the 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> grade, it was still used by the high school for Home Ec., Industrial Arts, P. E., and Art & Music. A shuttle bus moved the students between buildings.

The first phase of a new high school was completed for the 1961/62 school year at a cost of \$87,941. It had a capacity of 145 students. This view is of the east side of the new school