

**Walnut Grove Memories**



**WALNUT GROVE REUNION**

**April 24, 1971**

**7:00 P.M. - Invocation**

Rev. Tom Burgess

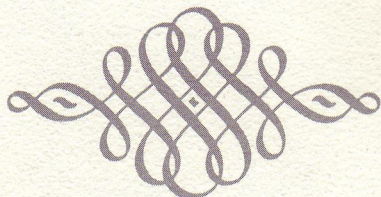
**7:05 P.M. - Group Singing**

**7:15 P.M. - Introduction of Speaker**

Mr. Loftie Stringer

**8:00 P.M. - Reminiscing of Memories**

**REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED IN THE CAFETERIA**



**WALNUT GROVE SCHOOL SONG**

Fight fight for old Walnut Grove  
Here's to the team that's on the go  
Here's to the old red and the white  
Here's to the team that's ready to fight  
What tho' our foes be great or small  
Walnut Grove School will win over all  
Hurrah for our own school.



## THE HISTORY OF WALNUT GROVE

In the early years of Madison Township one room schoolhouses took care of the teaching needs of the local children.

During these years, Madison Township had six one room schools. On the back cover you can see the location of each of the schools, all of which are still standing. Two of the school houses were of wood frame construction and four were brick.

The Centenary School was moved across the road after it was abandoned for school purposes. The Olleman School was moved from Mann Road to Smokey Road to its present location. The Map on the back cover shows where all the schools were located when they were being used. It shows our forefathers put a great deal of thought into the location, for each school was located so as no child should have to walk over two miles to get to school. Each child was to go to the school nearest his home.

The mode of transportation to the one room schools varied from walking, riding ponies, or riding in buggies. Each of the one room schools had a fuel shed (for storing wood & coal). Behind that shed was another building for you to park your pony or horse in to keep him out of the weather. Of course the plumbing consisted of outside privies and had pumps for water. The buildings were heated with pot bellied stoves that did not seem too efficient. If you sat near it you scorched, and if you sat in the back of the room you froze. It seemed the best and most comfortable spot was somewhere about half way in-between.

Trustee Reuben Ely, and advisory board members Lawson Brown, John Kitchen, and Ellsworth Stokesberry met at 3:00 P.M. the 11th day of May 1920 and declared and ordered all of Madison Township's one room schools consolidated. There was to be a new school built on a tract of land called "The Shepard Tract" across from Mt. Gilead Church on Kitchen Road.

The new school plans were drawn and approved, and the contract to build was awarded to the lowest bidder . . . . Mr. Jake Mann. Mr. Mann started construction sometime shortly after the 13th of July 1920. Mr. Mann furnished all materials and labor, and had the school completed by Jan. 1, 1921 . . . . all for the price of \$28,860.00. Of course, new furniture and fixtures had to be purchased and installed. As best records show, the new school "Walnut Grove" opened in the fall of 1921.

During the first years the school started operation, Madison Township purchased two Oldsmobile school trucks and two school



wagons to haul the students to school. This worked pretty well until later years when enrollment continued to increase.

In 1923 the first hot meals were prepared and served by a lady by the name of Emma Shepard. She would come to school with her own pots and pans and cook vegetable soup two days a week. I have been told it was short of vegetable, but it was hot and at 3¢ per bowl it tasted pretty good.

In 1923 Mr. C. L. Fix, the first principal, went to Mooresville and bought a new basketball and other equipment for \$11.23 and Walnut Grove started its long string of basketball teams. We took on such arch rivals as Waverly, Mooresville, West Newton, Paragon, Monrovia, and Green Township in basketball as well as softball and baseball. Certainly winning more than we lost!

Up to the early 1930's, Walnut Grove had its own electrical generating system as electric lights had not gotten out this far yet. Many a child, I bet can still hear that soft muffled rhythm of the gasoline engine running, making electricity for the lights in the school, hoping all the time it would run out of gas or break down.

In 1935, Trustee Lorris Olleman ordered that running water, rest rooms, and a new heating system be installed to modernize the Walnut Grove facilities. Up to this time the children and teachers had to use outdoor privies and a hand pump for water. I am told however, when a child was excused to go to the rest room the teacher didn't have to worry about him hurrying back to class. You see, in the winter time those outside privies were pretty cold and they were located quite some distance from the school building! Anyway, the school was made modern and this made most everyone happy.

Up to about 1935, it was up to each child to find his own way to Mooresville for high school. The usual way was to pay someone about \$1.00 per week to ride. Normally either a student or parent ran the route to and from Mooresville High School.

Because more and more students were continuing on to high school it was decided in 1935 to add a school bus to take the students from Madison Township on into Mooresville. This first bus was a new 1935 Ford owned and operated by Lee Head. Several more buses have now been added to accommodate the many students.

From the time the school opened to about 1949, there were only four teachers required as each teacher taught two grades with the 7th and 8th grade teacher acting as principal. There were only four classrooms used upstairs in the old part. The cafeteria was



where the 6th grade now is taught and the auditorium was where the cafeteria is now.

The old auditorium had a nice big stage with a roll-up curtain. The scene painted on the stage curtain was a stream running through a meadow with mountains in the background. There were many plays and programs put on that stage . . . one example . . . in the summer of 1938 a theatrical group from the Methodist Church in Mooresville came out to Walnut Grove and put on a comedy play. That evening the auditorium was packed to capacity and the play was such a huge success the group later went on to perform in Monrovia.



Loren and Iva Griggs taught at Walnut Grove the longest of any teachers. They started teaching in the fall of 1935 and taught through the spring of 1952. Mr. Griggs was the 7th and 8th grades teacher and principal. Mrs. Griggs taught the 1st and 2nd grades. More than one pupil had his hands slapped by Mrs. Griggs for playing in the sand box when he wasn't supposed to.

During the 30's, 40's, and early 50's when Mr. Griggs was principal, Walnut Grove was host to a pretty elaborate graduating ceremony every year for the 8th grade class. The boys would come to school in their Sunday best and the girls would wear white dresses. Then these good looking boys and girls would be graduated before the entire school assembly receiving a diploma. Then Mr. Griggs would take these new graduates to Indianapolis for dinner at a nice restaurant and to a movie at the Indiana Theater. This was certainly a treat that none of the past graduates of Walnut Grove will ever forget. This was one way Mr. Griggs let these young people know they were growing up.





On the 30th day of April 1951, Trustee Chester Francis, advisory board members Don Dorsett, Virgil Turner, and Horace Gregory met and decided with the increased enrollment of the past few years, it was necessary to add an addition onto Walnut Grove. The lowest bid to build the addition, \$41,636.00, was awarded to Gerald Prather and Eugene Fields on Dec. 21, 1951. The new addition was open and operating in the fall for the school year 1952-53.

For a period of about two years classes had to be held in what now is the cafeteria. This was during the school period of 1950-51 and 1951-52. During this period we had no auditorium. When the new addition opened it gave us all room to spread out again. The cafeteria was moved from the room the 6th grade is now in to where it is located at present. The 6th grade was moved from upstairs to where it is now.

With the new addition and auditorium, plays and programs got started again. I will never forget Mr. Loftie Stringer's 6th grade class dancing the box waltz and singing "Let Me Call You Sweetheart" for the PTA in 1952-53. How could anyone forget that embarrassment?

The fore-runner to the 4-H (The Farmers Institute) was held annually at Walnut Grove so the children could display their summer's work. Of course, ribbons were awarded to the kids for the best products displayed. Usually it was a big day topped off with a big dinner, games and a lot of fun.

About 1953, even square dance lessons were given here one winter. I can remember the new auditorium was filled with 5 sets, live country music, and Herman Perry teaching and calling.

These were but a few functions Walnut Grove played host to over the past 50 years. The Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts along with other local organizations are still meeting at Walnut Grove at the time of this closing.

In August 1956, Madison Township along with Harrison Township (Waverly) consolidated with Brown Township and Mooresville into the Mooresville Consolidated School Corporation. When this happened the 7th and 8th grades were moved to Mooresville because we were fast running out of room again. In the fall of 1957 the 7th grade was moved back for a year or so, then moved back to Mooresville to stay. That left just six grades at Walnut Grove up to this closing.

During the late 1950's and into 1971, basketball again was the activity of the day. Now though, the 4th, 5th, and 6th grades had



to take up the banner. There was one trip made in the late 60's with two bus loads of children to Nineveh to play basketball. The main rivalry however developed with our new school, North Madison. Most of the games between the two schools were played at the Junior High Gym in Mooresville.

All the preceding has taken us up to now . . . . . 1971.

During the 50 years of Walnut Grove from 1921 to 1971 many, many, children have passed through these halls, gone up and down these stairs, and went in and out these doors. As best I can tell these 50 years represent over 12,000,000 teaching and learning hours. Over 150 teachers have taught here.

At the cost of the original building (old and new), the cost breaks down to about \$1,409.92 per year. I doubt we can match that price in this day and age.

WALNUT GROVE . . . . . YOU'VE SURE BEEN GOOD TO US  
THANKS



The information mentioned here includes only a small fraction of the experiences and life that went on at Walnut Grove for 50 years. The memories stored in this building could fill volumes.

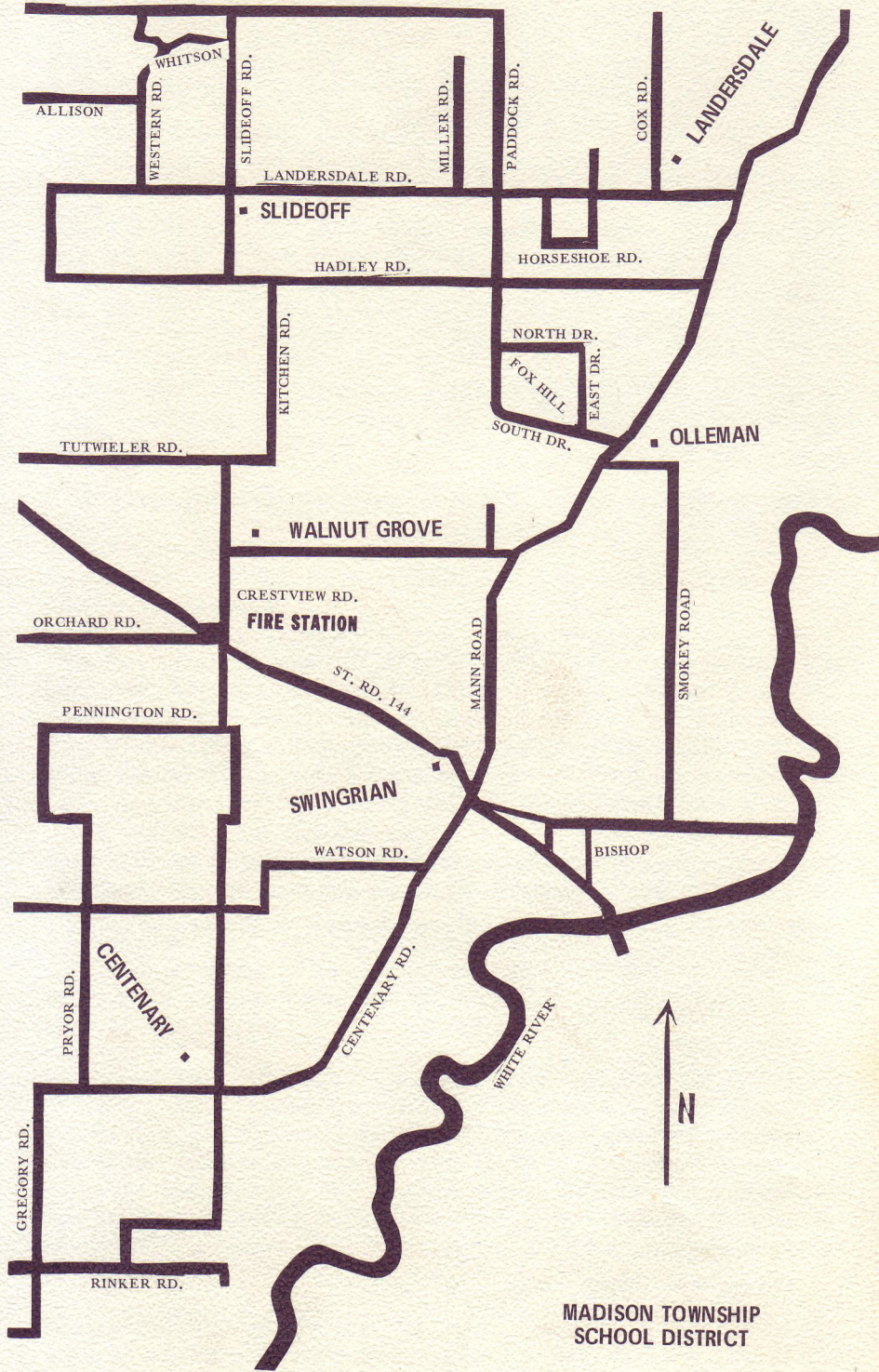
There are so many people deserving mention personally in this pamphlet but space doesn't allow us that privilege. However, there are the following who helped so much in the giving of information so freely:

- Loftie Stringer
- Gene Swope
- Frank Hill
- Iris Brown
- Roberta Swinney
- Herman Perry
- Jesse Hammons
- Howard Ringer
- Keith Brown
- and my wife Sandy . . . . .

JACK L. PERRY



COUNTY ROAD



MADISON TOWNSHIP  
SCHOOL DISTRICT







walnut grove consolidated

page 326

FROM THE COLLECTION  
OF  
REBECCA ROMINE HARDIN  
1908-1995  
IN HER MEMORY