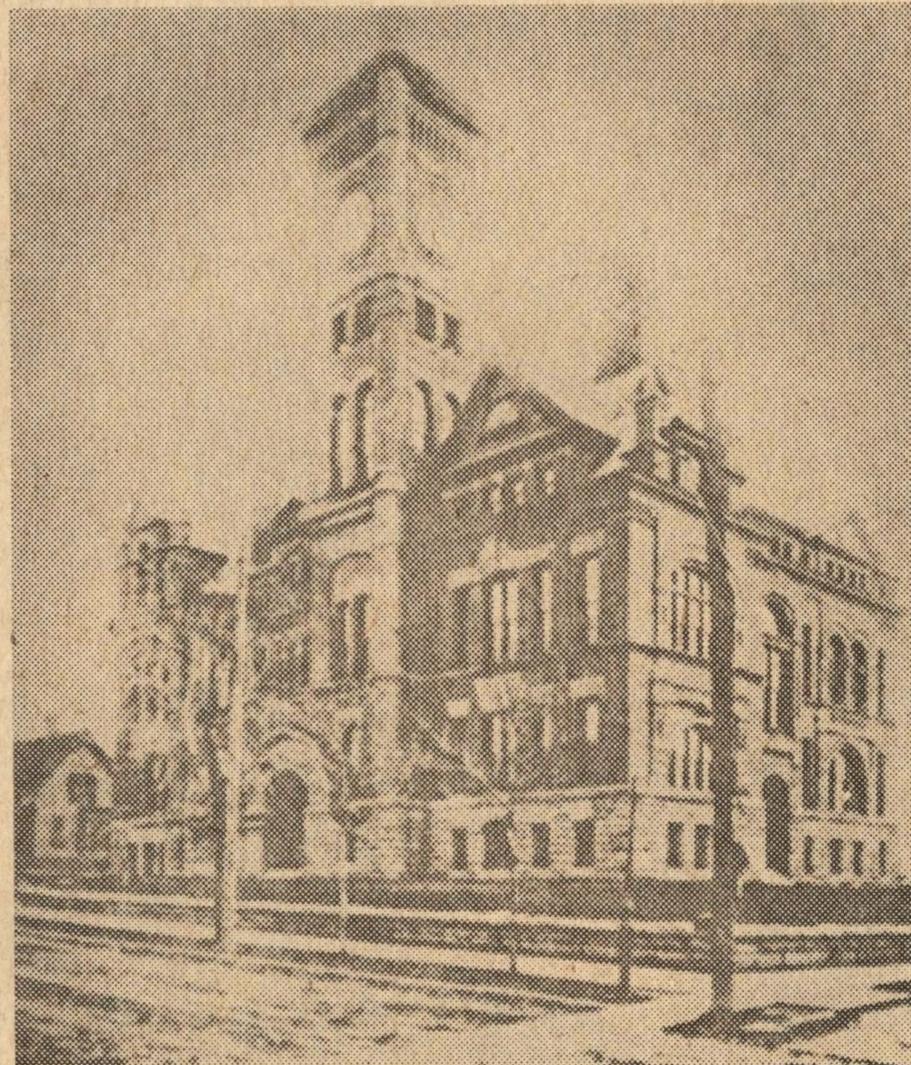


Simpson High School Completed in 1892

The Mansfield That Was

By VIRGIL A. STANFIELD



The old John Simpson building at Fourth and Bowman served as Mansfield's high school for 35 years. For another 12 years it was a junior high school. The new building on the site was opened in 1940. The handsome old structure was once considered one of the finest high schools in the state.

Miss Katharine Ink was the valedictorian and school officials learned that in her talk she was going to criticize some of the teachers and call on the board of education to make some changes at the school.

Supt. Simpson told her if she insisted on going ahead with her valedictory she could not graduate. She finally settled for reading an essay.

At that time it was the custom for graduates either to read an essay or give an oration. Commencement exercises in the 1890s were held in the Memorial Opera House and they usually were in the afternoon.

The John Simpson district goes back to 1846 when it included the city's near west side and apparently that part south of West Fourth St. At the time there were 300 young people in the district ranging in age from six to 21.

Voters that year were asked to approve a \$600 tax levy to build school.

That early school must have served all grades since the Carpenter school, which became the city's high school, wasn't opened until about 1870.

When the new Senior High

School was opened in 1927, the old John Simpson building became the city's junior high school. It served until the new Johnny Appleseed and Simpson buildings were dedicated in 1940.

The original John Simpson building was enlarged in 1903 when it was only 11 years old. Two other additions were built, the last in 1922.

As the enrollment increased and school standards improved, much of the handsome old structure became outmoded and was considered a fire hazard. The site was still considered one of the best in the city although there was little parking space.

In the 1930s when a major school modernization and building program was mapped, it was decided to retain the Simpson site and the newer portion of the building.

While construction was under way in 1939, the Simpson students were moved to the Warner Brothers building on North Main St. and a large garage on Bowman St.

The new \$450,000 structure was opened for limited use in late January 1940 and was dedicated March 16 of that year.

The eight-room annex which was built in the early

1920s was incorporated in the new Simpson building. It is used now for classes.

For several years after the school was opened the superintendent's office was located there and the board of education met in a second-story room at the east end of the building.

The Simpson auditorium became more popular than the Senior High auditorium for concerts, plays, and lectures. When the Malabar school was built, however, much of the activity moved to the auditorium there.

The Simpson school now has about 800 students and Robert Jackson is principal.



Dr. Simpson, for whom the school was named, was superintendent of the Mansfield school system from 1873 to 1893, a long period of service.

A Richland County native, Dr. Simpson was graduated from Jefferson College in Pennsylvania and was an instructor in the old Hayesville Institute in the 1860s. He later was made president of the institute. He left there in 1871 to join the Mansfield schools. Two years later he was named superintendent.

He was widely recognized as a stern and efficient administrator. The University of Wooster honored him with a doctorate while he was superintendent in Mansfield.

This is high school graduating class reunion time, and quite a large number of the men and women who are gathering at these parties to reminisce recall their happy school days at the old John Simpson building at Fourth and Bowman Sts.

That stately building, which somehow looked like a high school should, served Mansfield's high school pupils from 1892 to 1927. Previously the high school had been at the old Carpenter building on West First St.

When the new building at Fourth and Bowman was opened in 1892 it was named for Dr. John Simpson, superintendent of the city schools at the time and one of Ohio's leading educators.



The school had 11 rooms and a faculty of six. Miss Martha Barrett was principal. Others on the faculty were Miss Mary Conrath, Miss Abigail Hill, Mrs. Anna M. Mills, Miss Rossina O. Phillips, and Mrs. Helen Cornell.

The building was considered an ideal high school structure by the state and scale models were made to show to other boards of education considering the construction of buildings.

While the building seems close to the downtown area now, it was pretty far out when the site was selected and there were loud protests. Some Mansfielders

even suggested that the board of education should be ousted.

The class of 1893, apparently the first to graduate from the new building, had 19 members. One of the graduates was a woman who became well known to Mansfielders, Rebecca Grubaugh. She read an **essay on** the study of English. She

was an educator here for many years and an elementary school was named for her.

The class of 1892, the year the school opened, was the 30th graduated here. It had 20 members and one of them apparently was a young lady ready to speak her mind — if she had been given the opportunity.