

# HISTORY OF COLDWATER EXEMPTED VILLAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT, COLDWATER, OHIO

[The following history was written by Al Pax with assistance from Gene Weber; both individuals are now deceased and this compilation is being kept updated at the request of Mr. Pax prior to his departure as treasurer of Coldwater Schools in 1995.]

## ABOUT THE BUILDINGS

The first school built in the area to serve the children of Coldwater was north of the village and opened on December 8, 1848. The teacher for this one room school was Mr. D. Franks.

The first school built within the village was a frame building consisting of one large room and erected at the corner of Second St. and North St. This building was erected, during the summer of 1864.

On July 21, 1880, construction started on a two-room brick school building on the corner of Market and North Streets (the present site of the Methodist Church). The first teachers in this two-room school were J. L. Weiser and H. C. Fox.

The first High School classes, a few years later, were held on the second floor of the Old Town Hall, on the corner of First St. and Walnut St. This was unsatisfactory, so in 1898 the citizens made the decision to erect a High School building. This building was erected adjacent to the 1880 building at the site of the present United Methodist Church. It was expanded again in 1921 and last expanded and fully modernized in 1933.

Earlier, in 1882, Joseph L. Heis started construction of a privately owned Coldwater Normal School between South Street and College Street along First Street. Before the building was completed, he sold it the Ben Hoying, Peter Haubert, and Peter Wagner, who completed the building and opened it for instruction on the first Monday of September 1883. The instructional staff on consisted of Thomas O. Farrel, H. F. Mooney, P. Biovenac, L. N. Wagner and P. C. Fox. The college continued for six years, then in 1889 the Normal School moved to Portland and was incorporated into the Portland Normal School and Business College. The building was destroyed by fire in 1896.

In 1913, after the great increase in the size of Coldwater due to the growth of New Idea, the Holy Trinity Catholic Parish decided to form their own school. Construction of their building started in 1913, but the school started operations before the building was built. Sisters of the Precious Blood from the Maria Stein convent provided the teachers, and rooms were rented from the Public School, and also the Hall of the Knights of St. John was used. The first teachers were: Sister Innocentia, principal; Sr. Alodia, Sr. Adalinda, and Sr. Illuminata. In 1914 the school moved into their new building located north of the Holy Trinity Church at the corner of Second and North Streets. The building had six classrooms and an auditorium. Later the auditorium was converted in classrooms, as was the basement area. In 1935, the Holy Trinity school system

ceased operations, and the building was rented by the Public School system as East School. The students became public school students.

From 1913 to 1935 Holy Trinity Parish supported an elementary building next to Holy Trinity Church (East Elementary). With the passage of the Ohio State Sales Tax and the beginning of the State Foundation support of local schools, Holy Trinity Parish chose to discontinue their parochial schools in Coldwater and to rent the "East" building to the Coldwater Public School. In 1954 the "West School" was built by the parish and also rented to the public schools. The current ten-year rental contract between Holy Trinity Church and Coldwater Exempted Village Schools extends through June 30, 2006. The rental of the East building was discontinued after the 89/90 school year due to opening in September 1990 of the new addition authorized by the November 3, 1987 bond issue which resulted in construction of a new high school art room, gym, kitchen, commons, and twenty-four elementary classrooms and the remodeling of the old industrial arts area into central offices for the school district. This excellent addition and remodeling is a credit to Superintendent Wayne E. Miller and the Board members who served with him.

In 1938, after a very close election decided by one vote over a 65% majority, the citizens of Coldwater began the erection of a new High School, which was opened in 1939. The new school was built on North Second Street on the west side of the street and north of Elizabeth Street. The old high school on the site of the Coldwater United Methodist Church was razed.

In 1953, the members of Holy Trinity Parish built a new elementary school on First and Elizabeth Streets, which was rented to the Public School. An addition was constructed to this building in 1960.

Both Philothea and St. Anthony School Districts chose to join the Coldwater Exempted Village School District in the late 1950's as a result of state legislation requiring all school districts to offer twelve years of schooling. At this same time Cranberry and Burkettsville joined St. Henry and Montezuma voted to join the Celina School District. At first, elementary students in Philothea and St. Anthony continued to attend school in those communities. However for the 1961-1962 school year Philothea elementary students began attending school in Coldwater. The Philothea School and grounds were sold to the Philothea Civic Association at a public auction on October 12, 1994 for \$1,000. The Civic Association was the only bidder.

Meanwhile, in 1955, an addition was built on the North Side of the High School, also for elementary purposes, complete with multi-purpose room and cafeteria kitchen. An addition to the High School was completed in 1964, and another addition to the north side in 1967.

These additions were necessary not only because of the growth of the village, but also, under Ohio's changing laws, from 1930 on rural one room schools were closing and students were being transported into Coldwater's schools.

The possibility of closing the St. Anthony building was discussed at the June 11, 1974 meeting of the Board of Education of the Coldwater Exempted Village School District. At the July 9, 1974 meeting of the Board, Winner moved and Harting seconded the motion: "That to extend

equal and expanded educational opportunity to all children in the district, that the Superintendent be authorized to transfer grades 7 and 8 from St. Anthony Elementary to Coldwater North Elementary effective August 24, 1974 and in view of the ADM reduction resulting therefrom, that (1) cook (Mrs. C Wendel) not be replaced and that Superintendent arrange for announcement of these decisions and arrange for Board appearance at a P.T.O. meeting if parents wish it and to promulgate the academic and financial advantages accruing from these actions or otherwise coordinate these changes with community and parents served by the St. Anthony Elementary satellite, immediately, "Voting Yes: Winner, Hartings, Kemper, and Slavik. Voting No: None. Motion carried.

The Coldwater Board voted on July 15, 1975 to move the twelve St. Anthony kindergarten students to Coldwater effective September 1, 1975. A resolution at the April 20, 1976 meeting of the Board said that St. Anthony would stay open for the 1977-1978 year unless enrollment dropped below 60 and that no further consideration to close St. Anthony would be entertained prior to March 1978.

The Coldwater Board of Education upon recommendation of Superintendent Miller and Treasurer Froning voted on April 11, 1978 to close St. Anthony School and to transfer teachers and students to the Coldwater site. Enrollment at St. Anthony had dropped to below 70 students. Better, yet more economical education was the stated goal of this action. The motion carried four "Aye" and one "Nay." Prior to this action over the years, a number of St. Anthony parents had requested that their children attend school at Coldwater for music, sports, or religion reasons. All were denied. If an open enrollment policy had been in effect, I feel that the people of the St. Anthony area rather than the Board of Education would have closed St. Anthony School.

After Holy Trinity Church chose to discontinue their parochial school in 1935 under the leadership of Fr. Louis H. Yauss, Pastor of Holy Trinity for 42 years (1915-1957), 435 elementary students were immediately added to the public school roster. The Coldwater Board of Education rented the East Elementary School building from the church from 1913 to June 1990. In 1954 the church constructed West Elementary school and built an addition to the building in 1960. The public school began renting this school immediately and has a lease for use of this "West" building through June 2006. This building is used as a public school during the normal school day but retained by the church for religious instruction prior to and after the normal school day.

The Sisters of the Precious Blood-all certified by the State of Ohio to teach in public schools-who had taught in the parochial school prior to 1935 were hired to teach in the Coldwater Public Schools. Sisters of the Precious Blood continued to teach in the Coldwater Schools through the 1982-1983 school year.

Some citizens of the school district preferred that their children not be taught by Catholic nuns. In 1955 the Board of Education constructed an addition to north side of the high school to accommodate these wishes. This was known as the "North" Elementary School. Enrollment was small. Rooms often had two grades per teacher. North principal, Jim Davison, in 1964 presented a petition to the Coldwater Board of Education to merge the North Elementary non-catholic students with the East and West School students. The petition favored such a merger 46

to 10 by North School parents surveyed. An additional ten parents did not sign the petition because of absence (6) or for other reasons (4). The Coldwater Board of Education acted to merge all elementary students on January 16, 1967 effective the 1967-1968 school year.

In 1990, the Coldwater Exempted Village School district residents dedicated a new addition to the school facility. Classrooms were added to the north elementary portion of the building, high school building, and Tri-Star (vocational) classrooms were added. In addition, a new gymnasium, commons, kitchen art room, restrooms and locker rooms were added to the south end of the facility.

In 2000, the Dayton Power & Light property, just to the south of the district's property on North Street and St. Rt. 118, was acquired for \$250,000 for a central office facility and a kindergarten center. In 2001, the district purchased the existing junior high building for a purchase price of \$300,000.

In 2002, district residents approved the addition and renovation of the buildings through the Ohio School Facilities Commission/State of Ohio. District residents will pay 22% and the State of Ohio will pay 78% of the cost of the new addition and renovations. The project is estimated to cost slightly more than \$31 million, and is anticipated to be completed for the 2006-2007 school year. Construction is began April 2004 and the facility was open for the 2006-2007 school year.

Presently, the Coldwater School district stretches west to the Indiana border. The 1913 building as well as the 1956, 1967 and 2000 additions serve as the elementary (1-5), the buildings built by Holy Trinity in 1953 and 1960 serve as the junior high (6-8) , and the High School consists of the 1938 building with the 1964 addition and the 1990 addition. The central office and kindergarten center is in the facility formerly owned by Dayton Power & Light.

The Coldwater School System became an Exempted Village School District on July 1, 1952, which made the system independent of the Mercer County School System.

#### ABOUT THE STAFF & STUDENTS

The superintendents of the Coldwater Schools have been: 1907-1916, August H. Bernard; 1916-1936, Hugo J. Antony; 1936-1953, Perry N. Noll; 1953-1963, Thomas M. Ryan; 1963-1975, Hugh D. Rossi; 1975-1977, Walter J. Schrof; 1977-1992, Wayne E. Miller; 1992-1994 Clete Biersack; 1994 Marlin Thompson (interim); 1994-1999 John Frye; 1999-2000 Barbara Kremer; 2000-2003 Eric Hofmann, 2003-present Rich Seas.

In 1904 Coldwater graduated its first Class of 4. In 1978, 168 were graduated, while in 2002 125 students graduated.

In 1938 Coldwater won the first County Basketball Tournament Trophy. The baseball championship was also won. Since then, numerous state titles have been won by the school sports teams in baseball, basketball and track.

The Coldwater Board of Education voted in January 1972 to discontinue competing in sports in the Western Buckeye League effective the 1973-1974 school year. This action was largely due

to the fact that the WBL had voted to expand from eight to ten members while continuing to insist that all members play every other member each year in all league recognized sports. Coldwater Principal, Alfred C. Pax, who was president of the WBL at the time, tried repeatedly to prevent the requirement that each WBL team play every other WBL team each year, pointing out that the "Big 10" college conference had no such requirement. His aim was to reduce excessive travel and to keep good receipt games on the Coldwater schedule with Versailles, Parkway and Marion. His efforts were not successful.

The Coldwater Board formally joined the newly formed league, the Midwest Athletic Conference (MAC), in the fall of 1973 with league competition to begin the 1974-1975 school year. The Coldwater Board also formally approved the MAC Constitution as drawn up by the MAC Constitution Committee consisting of Art Brophy – St. Henry High School Principal, Jim Hess – Marion Athletic Director, and Alfred C. Pax – Coldwater High School Principal. The MAC now has a very successful history. Competition and gate receipts have been very good. Team and fan travel requirements have been much less than would have been required had Coldwater stayed in the Western Buckeye League.

Also in 1938, Coldwater presented the first operetta, *The Sunbonnet Girl*. Coldwater's debating team won the County Championship. The band made the highest rating at the state contest in Columbus. In 2002, the band currently has a high school enrollment of more than one hundred students and is successful in band performances.

Coldwater's first Annual, called *The Telescope* as published in 1937. The next annual was in 1938. No further annuals were published until 1946. Since 1948 an annual has been published each year. In 1948 the name of the annual was changed to *Cavalier* and is still called that to this day.

The first Coldwater High Newspaper was printed at Coldwater High School when Hugo Antony was superintendent. Type was set and copy run by high school students in the print shop from 1916 thru May 1936. The first name was *The Comet*. Later the name was changed to *Cavalier* and was printed by the *Mercer County Chronicle*, and is still printed to this day in the *Mercer County Chronicle*.

Soon after implementation of a 1937 study on Mercer County school district reorganization, Butler Township, Dahlinghaus Special school districts, and parts of Franzer-Uppenkamp and Oakland districts became a part of Coldwater District. In September 1946, part of Burntwood became part of Coldwater and the larger remainder was assigned to Celina Exempted Village. In September 1950, part of Washington Township district joined Coldwater, and in 1958 Philothea Local became part of Coldwater. In 1958, also a corridor of land to the West was transferred out of the newly created Southwest Local School District to Coldwater, which enabled St. Anthony (combined in 1937 with Loughridge) to join Coldwater in that same year.

Enrollment peaked in school year 75/76, in which it was 1874.

The Coldwater Teachers Organization (CTO) was first recognized as the sole bargaining agent for Coldwater Teachers on April 14, 1964. Prior to this recognition there had existed a

Coldwater Teachers Association (CTA). The CTA was primarily a professional and social unit for teachers and administrators. In 1964 this organization was reformed into the CTO. Administrators and supervisors were excluded and focus was on negotiations with the Board and Administration. Some of the early presidents of the CTO were: Mary Lehman, Ron Mendenhall, Karen Noll, Diane Sielski and Larry Lee. Approximately twenty individuals "opt out" of membership with the union under a "Fair Share" agreement with the CTO/OEA/NEA. Current CTO president is Dan Pohlman.

Current administrators and board members for the 2011-2012 school year are:

Dan Rose, Linda Steinbrunner, Todd Bills

Joe Eichler, Gene Homan

Board of Education members

Rich Seas

Sherry Shaffer

Steve Keller

Eric Goodwin

Wade Spencer

Casey Nuttle

Paula Byers

Lynn Rinderle

Pat Naveau

Superintendent

Fiscal Officer

HS Principal

HS Assistant Principal

Elementary Principal

Technology Director

Supervisor of Student Services/

Specialized Education

Food Service Director

Director of Gifted Services

For the 2010-2011 school year, there were 94 teaching staff members, 45 non-teaching staff members, and 10 administrators/directors. Current enrollment is approximately 1,400 students. For the 2010-2011 school year, the general fund had revenue of \$12,388,652, expenditures of \$12,382,428 and an ending cash balance of \$2,380,485.