

Northern Kentucky Views Presents:

History of Germantown School

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HISTORY OF GERMANTOWN SCHOOL

Back in the days when Kentucky was a wilderness, a band of hardy Dutch from Pennsylvania came down the Ohio River in canoes and flat-boats to land on the south shore of the river and settle Limestone, which is now known as Maysville. Later, in about 1784, when others came, they pushed farther inland and settled in and about what is known as Germantown.

These people who came from Pennsylvania wanted the best for their families. They were interested in education and started schools as early as 1855 which were presided over by a Master. Every child had the opportunity of attending, but the school term was only for a few short months.

As the village grew, first one and then another of the houses, was used for a schoolhouse. As far back as 1855, Germantown School was taught on the second floor, in what is now known as the Old Town Hall.

As it became evident that the building and ground were unsuited for school purposes, they decided to sell them and buy and build elsewhere. The property was sold to the Masonic Lodge and the City of Germantown for the sum of \$250 and transferred by a deed signed by Elijah Williams, J. R. Humlong, and Evan Lloyd, who were the Trustees at that time.

The present site was purchased and a two story four room wood structure was erected by funds received from the sale of the old building, augmented by a special tax levied for that purpose. The new building was erected under the supervision of J. R. Humlong, Evan Lloyd, and John Elliot in 1879.

The school was an outstanding school and people from many other communities attended Germantown School.

Through the unselfish efforts and business abilities of such men as J. R. Walton, Dr. C. C. Coburn, C. C. Erwin, H. L. Pepper and others, the creditable school was maintained on the meager common school funds augmented by a private subscription fund which was solicited and collected and to which they very liberally contributed. The school was operated this way from 1879 to 1909.

As the subscriptions became smaller, funds to operate the school were insufficient. In 1909, the school became a graded school. A forty cent tax levy supplemented the private subscriptions. Four teachers were employed under this system. A new room was added to the rear of the structure to meet the needs of the growing community.

The graded school, which was maintained eight months each year, provided children with the advantage of a high school education at a minimum cost. In 1911, the courses of the school were lengthened and it became a first class four-year high school.

Josephine Coughlin, Maurice Guy, Ethel Henson, and Raymond Hanson were members of the first graduating class of Germantown School in 1915.

In 1921, sidewalks were poured in front of the building with 16 iron horse rings embedded into the concrete and G. H. S 1921 imprinted in the sidewalk. Fourteen of the original 16 iron horse rings are still there.

Due to student overcrowding and fire hazard in the wooden structure, a four room new brick building was constructed in 1939 by the Public Works Administration. Those rooms are now the front of the present structure.

The school continued to operate as an independent district until the fall of 1936, at which time it became a part of the Bracken County School System. Bracken County consolidated its many one-room schools located at Sharon, Parina, McKibben, Stonewall, Bridgeville, Hillsdale, Dutch Ridge, Beech Grove, Pea Ridge, and Tangletown to become a part of the Germantown School.

In 1939, the Van Construction Co. built the back part of the present school, which consisted of five classrooms, a stage, and a gymnasium. John F. Wilson was the architect for this part of the building.

During this construction, the sixth through the twelfth grades were located in the four rooms that were built in 1939. The first five grades attended school in the first floor of a three story building on main Street owned by the Knights of Pythias.

The last class to graduate from Germantown High School was in 1939. In 1940, the county high schools were consolidated and the tenth through the twelfth grade students were sent to Brooksville High School. Later, in 1956, the ninth grade from Germantown was taken to Bracken County High School.

In 1960, .88 of an acre of land was purchased from Herman Stapleton by the Bracken County Board of Education to enlarge the playground.

At the beginning of the school term in 1966, a library was established at Germantown School and the librarian came to the school one day a week. Before this time, small libraries were located in each classroom.

St James Parochial School at Brooksville, Kentucky was closed in 1968 and their students from the Germantown district began attending Germantown School in the fall of 1968.

The curriculum was much improved by the addition of two special programs. In the fall of 1965, Special Reading was added and in 1967, Special Education was implemented with a half day program until 1980 when it became a full day program.

In 1968, the lot behind the post office, which was known as a portion of the Hiaett Polloch lot was purchased from the Russell Fryman family.

In 1973, a kindergarten was begun and was continued until present, except for two years of 1978-1980 school terms. Students attended Taylor Elementary at Brooksville during that time. Kindergarten was held in a trailer that was purchased and placed on part of the lot purchased in 1968.

Other programs were introduced to aid special students. In 1975, a speech van was purchased and a speech teacher was employed to work with students. Two new programs, migrant math and art were begun in the fall of 1977. The art program was for one semester a year with each classroom having art one hour every other week. This program was discontinued in 1979 due to a shortage of funds and was placed in the hands of the classroom teacher.

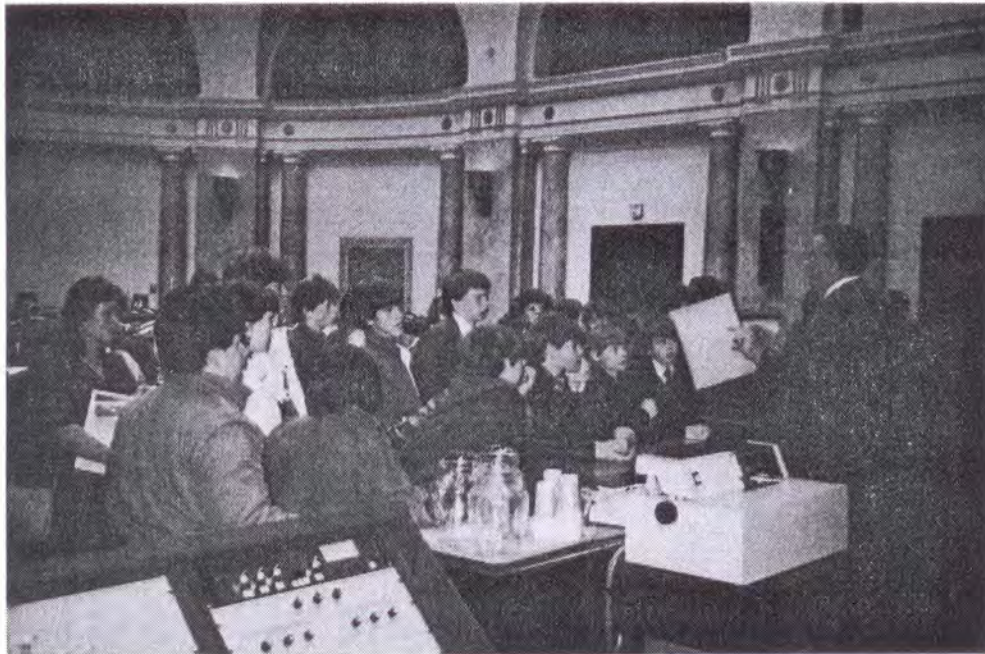
In May of 1981, The Kentucky Heritage Commission designated Germantown School A KENTUCKY LANDMARK and deemed it worthy of preservation.

The Germantown School is the oldest school still in existence in Bracken and Mason counties. It is on the original site of the first school building built in Germantown, Kentucky.

From the Announcement of the Germantown Public School, 1899-1900, the following statement was taken:

Our design is to furnish a line of work that shall give special opportunities to prepare for colleges, for teaching or for any of the practical duties of life. We strive for the discipline that enables pupils to think and do for themselves. At the same time, we aim to give prominence to the thoughts and habits that mould character.

Many teachers and staff have taught at Germantown Elementary School. This has been and still is the aim of the Germantown School faculty and staff.



Government class being taught by State Representative Pete Worthington during a 1986 visit to Frankfort.