

BOXSCORE

A Publication of the Indiana High School Basketball Historical Society

IHSBHS was founded in 1994 by A. J. Quigley Jr. (1943-1997) and Harley Sheets for the purpose of documenting and preserving the history of Indiana High School Basketball

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Dues are \$8 per year. They run from Jan. 1 - Dec. 31 and include four newsletters. Lifetime memberships are no longer offered, but those currently in effect continue to be honored. Send dues, address changes, and membership inquiries to

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2013 Spring Issue

EDITORIAL POLICY

The opinions expressed in Boxscore by individual authors do not necessarily reflect the views of IHSBHS as an organized entity.

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EDITOR'S CORNER

By Cliff Johnson

Greetings, fellow IHSBHS members! Welcome to another new year and four more stimulating issues of Boxscore stories. I've recently agreed to assume the responsibilities of editor for this newsletter, with all the generally presumed "fun and thrills" it entails. It'll be sort of a challenge for me though, since I reside in California, nearly 3,000 miles away. But returning home to Indiana quite regularly every summer allows me to catch up on the

latest Hoosier happenings in basketball. Besides that, the technological magic of those marvelous inventions, the internet and the e-mail, can remedy that distance handicap fairly effectively.

Harley Sheets, my close friend and one of the original co-founders of IHSBHS, was pressed back into service as Boxscore editor about 16 months ago when the regular overseer, Tom White, suffered a stroke and was hospitalized. Harley proceeded to perform valiantly in this role, in spite of the difficulty he's had with the new age of computer technology. At times it was a struggle, but he personally developed and, along with Rocky Kenworthy, distributed the last five issues of Boxscore. Just like the U.S. mail service, our newsletter deliveries must always go through! Thanks, Harley! He and Rocky plan to continue handling some editing along with the distribution and mailing chores.

Remember to pay your annual \$8 dues soon if you haven't already done so. Extra donations of course, no matter how small, are also welcomed to assure that IHSBHS can meet all its advertising and operating expenses. Dues and donations are to be mailed to our Treasurer, Rocky Kenworthy, at 710 East 800 S, Clayton, IN 46118.

Send me any basketball stories, personal or general, that you have to offer for future Boxscore content. We should remember that the nature of this publication is mainly anecdotal. Input

based upon past or personal on-court or off-court experiences is what we most enjoy sharing with our fellow readers. So let me hear from you. My personal e-mail address is cliffjohns36@hotmail.com and my postal mailing address is 16828 Fairburn Street, Hesperia, CA 92345. Thanks for your continuing interest and patronage.

NEW IHSBHS MEMBERS

We want to welcome several new subscribers into our membership beginning this spring quarter. We're sure they will all enjoy becoming part of an ever-widening assemblage of folks who have a common interest in the history of Hoosier high school basketball. These new members are: Cal Grosscup, Jr. of Ocean Springs, MS; Michael Vincent of Cool Ridge, WV; Nick Bilskie of Bedford, IN; Gene Racht of Dallas, TX; Scott Waggoner of Loogootee, IN (re-joined); and Ron Barsh of Kokomo, IN (re-joined). Very nice to have you all with us.

PREZ SAYS

By Roger Robison

In the spring of 1926, the NORTH CENTRAL CONFERENCE (NCC) was established with ten members. It was the first boys' basketball conference in Indiana, and competitive play among those ten teams began in the fall of

1926. The nucleus of the Conference was built around the "gas belt" cities of Anderson, Muncie, Marion and Kokomo, but widespread interest almost immediately widened the sector. Nine of the ten cities were connected by the interurban electric trains which had been developed in Anderson in 1893.

Now, in 2012, there are 46 conferences for boys' basketball and 352 of the participating schools belong to one conference or another. There are currently 53 independents and 9 non-members of the IHSAA, for a total of 414 Indiana high schools that participate in basketball. The peak year was 1938 when there were 805 schools and 787 of them were entered into the boys' IHSAA State Tourney.

Of the 46 conferences, the NW (Gary) Conference has just 3 participating members, and the Great Lakes has only 4. Six conferences have 6 members; eight conferences have 7 members; and twenty-one conferences have 8 members. Six other conferences have 9 members; two have 10 members; and the NE Corner Conference has 11 members. The top rated conference (according to Sagarin's rankings) is the Metropolitan Conference with its basketball teams ranked numbers 2, 3, 4, and 7 in the state. The venerable NCC had teams rated 5, 12 and 17. The lowest rated conference may be the Mid-West, with eight teams rated from 193rd to 411th, and four of those rated in the last fifty. The Pioneer Conference was near the bottom of the rankings, with its six teams rated 229th to 401st.

The Independent school rankings are led by Indianapolis Cathedral, as #9, and Bowman Academy, as #11. Bringing up the rear of the Independents were Cannelton at #409, Gary Lighthouse at #410, and New Harmony at #413. Among the non-members of IHSAA was LaPorte LaLumiere which was hard for Sagarin to evaluate because of its multi-state schedule. It was followed by eight Christian schools ranked from 125th to 414th.

Most state newspapers give us the NBA and NHL conference standings *daily*, but—God forbid—there'd be any mention of our high school basketball conferences that contain 352 schools around the state.

BOB WHALEN'S DEATH

Robert W. "Bob" Whalen, 85, former IHSBHS officer, passed away Tuesday, Feb. 12, 2013 at 2:47 p.m. in the Crawfordsville Lane House Nursing Home. Bob was born Aug. 7, 1927, in Goshen, Indiana. At age 4 his parents moved to Crawfordsville, so Bob was essentially a lifelong resident of that city. He was a 1945 graduate of Crawfordsville High and then attended Wabash College for a year. He was well known in Montgomery County as the founder and first president of the Montgomery County Basketball Hall of Fame. He was also well known as a researcher and writer of local history, composing and publishing more than 200 articles that appeared in various journals and publications, including those printed by the Indiana Basketball HOF and IHSBHS.

RECENT IL/IN BB RESEARCH

By Doug Bradley

The recent emergence on the internet of Illinoishsglorydays.com makes those of us who engage in Indiana basketball history look bad. Take a peek when you have a chance. We need to organize an indianahsglorydays.com. The reasons why will be immediately evident.

I once won an argument with a Ball State baseball player who grew up in Illinois by showing him Dave Pert's Indiana Basketball Handbook—the little orange book. The question was "High school basketball is most important in which U.S. state?" But now, Illinoishsglorydays.com makes such an argument a draw.

When and where was the first county basketball tournament in Indiana? If I remember correctly from my research, Hancock County and White County began their tourneys in 1920. Somewhere I have a program from a Marion County tournament that may show that it was earlier than the other two. Broad Ripple claims to have been the Marion County champion in 1912, but I don't know if that was the result of a tournament. The Indianapolis Star didn't cover it if there actually was a tournament.

Other research is needed. Are there more nicknames like those of Monroe

City and Akron? Monroe City's team (an article appeared about M.C. in the previous Boxscore issue—editor's note) was known as the Apollos a dozen or so years before it became the Blue Jeans. Akron's team was known as the Pirates a few years before the NuGrape advertising plane flew over and it was changed to the Flyers. There are bound to be others that I've never heard about.

Which school was first to have a nickname? And when did it happen? Columbus was first called Bull Dogs (it's always been two words) just before the First World War by a newspaper whose printed copies have not survived. I once thought that Columbus got its team nickname late, but over the years I've found that schools in the majority of counties didn't have nicknames until the late '20s. Sandcreek was probably the last public school to play basketball without a nickname. After Letts (in Decatur County) sent its kids to Westport, the newly consolidated school's team was referred to in the Greensburg Daily News as the "Snipers." The following year however the school decided to use the name "Indians."

Other early team nicknames include the Wabash Thomcats, Greensburg Stroblers (later Pruitt's Pirates), Shelbyville Camels, and Center Grove Swedes. There must be others like these that I've never heard about. More and better research is needed.

For any question you can ask, someone should be able to find an answer. And also for any question you can ask, someone else is probably wondering the same thing.

TIDBITS

By Harley Sheets

Some Long Ago History

The debate and discussion on lay (non-school) coaches has been somewhat controversial. When I first took an interest in this paradigm of our basketball obsession most comments seemed against the hiring of such individuals, but more recently they have taken a more positive direction. While observing these opinions on the HickoryHusker and John Harrell websites, it brought to mind an article I

had long ago copied from microfilm of the Greencastle newspaper at the height of my basketball researching days. It had to do with another coaching controversy.

The other day I decided to search through boxes full of a plethora of unorganized newspaper articles, clippings and folders. Finally, the long lost item appeared. The hullabaloo had nothing to do with lay coaches, but did show that Arthur Trester was quite dictatorial. It also lent credence to the fact that he did CONTROL THE BOARD OF CONTROL as noted in Roger Robison's accompanying article herein about the 1914 state tournament.

The coaching situation in 1937 at Putnamville High School involved the brother of Naismith Hall of Fame inductee Cliff Wells. Lloyd Wells was employed as a clerk at the Putnamville State Farm. It seems evident that the high school had no coach at the beginning of the school year because the article (Greencastle Daily Banner, March 1, 1937), states that, "*Mr. Wells spent his own free time and money developing a basketball squad at Putnamville into the local Wabash Valley Tournament (WBT) champions. To be clear, the team did not win the WBT – the key word is local. However, the team did win the local prelim that got them into the final 16 round in Terre Haute. There were 105 tourney entrants. It is also evident from the article, that because of the excellent job Wells was doing, someone wanted him dislodged as coach. The article goes on to say, "Wells tells us that his coaching was protested after Putnamville won the prelims in January. Maybe somebody couldn't take it [Wells winning the prelim]. We don't know, but we hate to see a man who has given freely of his time, money and experience to help a bunch of boys without a gymnasium learn the fundamentals of basketball, then be told to step down and out just when the boys need him most."* The reasoning Trester used to oust Wells was that he needed to be a regular employee of the school. This is how Lloyd Wells' expulsion was stated in the Banner. "*Wells, a clerk at the Indiana State Farm, who worked with Putnamville's "Gymless Gems" has*

been ordered to stay away from the squad by A.L. Trester, commissioner of the IHSAA. It seems that a coach must be a regularly employed member of the school faculty and despite the fact that Wells has a license to teach and has taught and coached in past years, the Czar of the IHSAA rules that someone else must direct the Putnamville netters or the school will be placed on probation or kicked out of the association." Henceforth, it doesn't seem that Trester viewed Wells' benevolence toward the Putnamville community as something positive. This action though seemingly unreasonable should have been no surprise, knowing that during his 30 year reign, he was instrumental in keeping black and Catholic schools out of the IHSAA. For years my opinion has been that the IHSAA was remiss in connecting the name Trester to the Mental Attitude Award.

A Death in the Family

Some sad news came to me belatedly. Bob King, a Hall of Fame inductee and native of my hometown Lebanon, passed away on January 21. Bob was a friend and lifetime member of IHSBHS. Bob was the kind of person I've always wanted to be. Go to 1070thefan/oneononewithmarkmontieth and you will hear a couple of people describe him as a person who never had a bad thing to say about anyone. Montieth's interview with Bob is one of the best I've ever heard, because Bob dispenses a lot of excellent anecdotes both recent and past.

Next, Google Bob King-Purdue coach, then go down to Bob King: 1920-2013 Purdue University Athletics. These sites portray and give insight into Bob's life and career so much better than I ever could.

THE 1914 INDIANA STATE TOURNAMENT

By Roger Robison

Prelude to the 1914 State Tournament (Part 1 of 2)

Editor's note: References, [], will appear at the end of Part 2, next issue.

The story of the 1914 tournament is quite complex because it was the largest

two day tournament ever held in Indiana. It has been simplified to a final four in order to make it easier to understand, but we assume that the readers of Boxscore would rather have an accurate account of the ugly truth. There was no "Final Four" but a "final 5" that did not include Rochester as other publications have indicated. It did include Centerville and New Richmond, [1, 2].

By 1914 Indiana basketball was gaining momentum. The Indiana High School Athletic Association (IHSAA) membership had increased from 222 in 1911 to 314 by 1914. The 1911 and 1912 tournaments were by invitation only and had involved only 5% of the membership. In the open tournaments of 1913 and 1914, the entrants jumped to 15% (38 of 258) and 25% (77 of 314), respectively. The IHSAA Board of Control (BC) and the Indiana University Booster's Club (IUBC) shared responsibility and the former graciously allowed the latter to do the financing. The BC was made up of three volunteers and a paid Permanent Secretary (SEC), [3].

In 1913-14, Arthur L. Trester became the SEC at \$25.00 a year. While other educators came and went, "King" Arthur (1878-1944) remained for 30 years and CONTROLLED THE BOARD OF CONTROL until his death in 1944. After being superintendent at Alexandria, LaPorte and Martinsville, he became the full time SEC at \$5,000 a year in 1922. In 1928 his title was changed to Commissioner and his salary was bumped up to \$6,500 per year. In 1930 the IHSAA office was moved into the art-deco Circle Tower on Monument Circle in Indianapolis [3]. Such was his stature that he was enshrined into the Naismith Hall Fame's third class of 1961 [3, 4].

The IUBC had started the tournament in 1911 to try and improve recruiting for the I.U. basketball team. Since 1901, they had enjoyed only three winning seasons and were 4-22 versus Purdue (PU). From 1909-14 they were 0-11. And in the last two of those years were dead last in the Big 10. However, things were looking up on March 3rd, 1914 as I.U. beat P.U. in a five-minute overtime for its first conference win in two years.

BIG TEN STANDINGS: Champs*

1911	1912	1913	1914
PU*	WI*	WI*	WI*
MN*	PU*	NW	OSU
CHI	CHI	CHI	CHI
ILL	MN	PU	ILL
IA	ILL	ILL	NW
IND	IND	OSU	MN
WI	IA	MN	PU
NW	NW	IA	IA
		IND	IND

There was more good news for I.U. It was the senior year of Elmer Q. Oliphant (Indiana's version of Jim Thorpe), the phenomenal Washington/Linton/Purdue athlete, who would matriculate to West Point for the next four years to solidify his position as one of the most educated undergraduates of his time. In addition to his twenty-two monograms at P.U. and Army, Ollie was a consensus All-American (AA) at forward in basketball in 1914 at P.U. At Army he was 1st team AA in 1915 and 2nd team AA in 1916. Then add consensus 1st team AA in football at halfback in 1916 and 1917 [5].

He would end up as a successful insurance salesman in New England and never return to Linton. As a consequence his relatives [supposedly] there were instrumental in re-naming the football field for someone else [6].

The Big Ten was, at this time, actually the Big Nine. In 1908, Michigan dropped out in protest over limiting eligibility to four years instead of six. Ohio State joined up in 1912. The conference bigwigs in 1913 rejected bids by Nebraska, Marquette and Notre Dame for admission. The officials surmised that "It would create too large a group--too far away and too cumbersome" [7].

Some rule changes in 1913 and 14 were: (1) A free throw attempt could not take more than 10 seconds, and (2) the out-of-bounds rule was separated from its rugby (and Naismith) origin. The out-of-bounds ball now belonged to the team not touching it last instead of the team that did [8].

The IUBC, at this time, was leading a push for a new gymnasium. Northwestern and Purdue had the newest and best. Purdue Memorial Gymnasium was dedicated to the

memory of the 20 football players killed on their way to Bloomington in a Monon Railroad accident [9, 10].

GYM	PURDUE	I.U.	[10]
Built	1908	1895	
Cost	\$100,000	\$12,000	
Bldg.	lime stone	frame	
Floors	three	one	
Size	160 x 80	70 x 35	
Seats	2,600	1,500	
Showers	35	12	
Pool	60 x 30	28 x 20	
Baseball	yes	no	
Track	14 laps=1 m	21.5 laps=1 m	

As early as January 7, 1914, the IUBC was alerted to expect fewer than 50 entries for this second open tournament. It was to be a three-day elimination (March 12-14). But by March 6th, 70 plus entries had been received and the event was reduced to two days! The games were shortened from 15-minute to 10-minute halves. President Bryant of I.U. was worried about over-taxing the teenagers [11]. In 1913 all tournament games had been reduced from 40 to 30 minutes. Another year like 1914 and the games might have been reduced to 20 minutes!

I.U. was obliged to furnish room, board and entertainment for 75 teams of eight guests each - seven boys and a team manager - 600 altogether. All the IUBC had on hand was \$21.07. Nevertheless, it went ahead with a \$200 order for an embossed brass shield mounted on ebony for the championship team along with solid silver half-basketballs on watch fobs for the boys.

Bloomington, at this time a city of 10,000, was expecting 1,500 fans based upon the preceding year's attendance. Instead, there were 2,000 the first day and 4,000 the next. The roads, cars and service stations were primitive. The travel was usually by rail - either the Monon or the Illinois Central. The latter line, joined Indianapolis to Morgantown to Bloomington to Bloomfield to Effingham, Illinois [11]. In 1913 the IUBC had found difficulty coping with 37 teams and 1,500 fans. Nine fraternities and eleven social clubs had housed 21 teams (someone must have housed 2) and 15 went to boarding houses. For 1914 the same frats and social clubs such as Alpha Chi Sigma (chemistry) and Phi Beta Pi (medical)

while hosting took one or two teams each. The Organization of Unorganized men (an oxymoron) took 15 teams. The rest went to boarding houses or girls dormitories (relax, readers, the gals went to the sorority houses). Three hundred cots were leased and placed in the student's Union Building. Future U. S. Chief Justice Sherman Minton was the current president.

The Poolitsan family owned the Neopolitan Club, the Greek Candy Store and, on campus, The Gables. On March 6th, the Poolitsans were threatening to sue I.U. for student vandalism after I.U.'s overtime win over Purdue. They threatened to raise prices for visitors to cover their losses [11].

With the expansion to four floors it was necessary to add more officials. Merle Abbott (Indianapolis YMCA) Bert Westover (Purdue) and A. E. Guedel returned and were joined by James Kase (I.U. coach, 1911-12) who became the new fourth official, and Maurice Judd the fifth. Judd had coached Bloomington High School during the 1912-13 season while a student editor at the Indiana Daily Student. He was now employed at The Indianapolis News. A single official acted as the referee for all games until the final five. At 3 p.m. Saturday, two officials were available - a referee and an umpire. Kase and Judd officiated the Lebanon-New Richmond game, while Guedel and Abbott did the other three [11].

The most noteworthy individual to coach in the 1914 tournament was undoubtedly Edwin P. Hubble (1889-1953), the internationally recognized astronomer. He had been an all-around athlete at Wheaton, Illinois High school, excelling in basketball and track & field. In 1906 he set a state record in the high jump. Continuing on as a star athlete in college, he graduated with honors from the University of Chicago in 1910, and then on to Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar. Around this same time his family moved to Louisville, Kentucky. When his father died in 1913 Hubble went to Louisville. He spent the 1913-14 school year teaching Spanish, physics and math along with coaching the boy's basketball team across the Ohio River at New Albany High School (8-0). At season's

end he returned to the University of Chicago where he earned a PhD in astronomy in 1917. After serving as a major in World War I, he was hired by G. E. Hale at the Mount Wilson Observatory in California and worked there until his death in 1953 [12]. The most famous basketball coach with a team in the 1914 tournament was Ward Lewis "Piggy" Lambert (1888-1958), in his second year at Lebanon (13-3). He would coach Purdue from 1916-17 to 1945-46, except for one year of World War I service (1917-18). Lambert would win 11 Big Ten titles, a record equaled later by Bob Knight but never surpassed. His 1932 Purdue team was voted by Helms as the mythical national champions and was the second group selection of the Naismith Hall of Fame in 1960 [13, 14].

At Crawfordsville (7-5), L. J. C. Brandy Freeman from the first Wabash College "Wonder Five" was the coach. The region powerhouse was Whiting at 14-1, coached by Ken Stockton, a 1912 Weyand All-American. He was a starter on Purdue's 1911 and 1912 Big Ten champions [14, 15]. Rossville (19-2) had demolished Delphi (53-0) and Michigantown (104-9). The Indianapolis School Board had barred Manual and Shortridge from interscholastic competition but allowed them to select intra-mural all-star teams to enter the tournament. At Wingate, Jesse Wood who coached the school to the 1913 title had been replaced by Leonard Lehman about whom little can be found! Wingate returned four of its starting five from 1913. The lone non returnee, Forest Crane, was replaced by Lee Sinclair. Age was not yet a limiting factor. Blacker of Wingate was apparently born in 1892 and must have been 21! Lebanon had lost five seniors from its 1913 squad. Lambert usually played six or seven and rarely only five. Lebanon in 1912 and Wingate in 1913, having won the two previous championships, were probably the favorites with Wingate having a slight edge. Ironically, Lebanon had beaten Wingate in both the regular seasons of 1913 (44-25) and 1914 (26-22). Following are both teams' 1914 regular season tabulations. All of Wingate's games were away.

WINGATE (13-5)	LEBANON (13-3)
64-47 Williamsport	45-09 Noblesville
35-28 Cutler	12-23 Thorntown (L)
50-12 Advance	34-09 Marion
25-17 Rockville	25-12 Pendleton
42-13 Waveland	39-07 Pendleton
23-12 Advance	62-05 Rushville
33-13 Kokomo	26-22 Wingate
22-26 Lebanon (L)	20-22 Kokomo (L)
15-16 Thorntown (L)	27-20 Lafayette
18-21 Bloomington	20-27 Crawfville (L)
21-23 Anderson (L)	39-21 Kokomo
23-12 Clinton	25-14 Thorntown
64-07 Veedersburg	44-19 Shelbyville
41-10 Rockville	32-30 Crawfordsville
64-13 Pendleton	53-24 Marion
34-37 Bluffton (L)	40-30 Lafayette
43-25 Swayzee	
76-10 Waynetown	

All of Lebanon's losses were avenged in the regular season. Wingate would avenge two losses in the tournament. In Part 2 (next issue), we'll check out the goings on of this 1914 event.

JUST ANOTHER BASKETBALL SEASON

By Cliff Johnson

(This is a slightly edited re-print from an article that appeared sixteen years ago in the Fall, 1997 issue of the HOF's Indiana Basketball History—and just before Indiana's entry into multiclass basketball)

Just a few country miles from the cradle of high school basketball in Indiana are marked the rectangular boundaries of Howard County, Indiana. Although I've now resided in California for half a lifetime, I grew up there and remain to this day a Howard County Hoosier at heart. As was the case in the other 91 counties of the state, much of Howard's residency routinely fired up its collective psyche as the first chilly days of the winter season rolled in and heralded a new basketball season. I've sometimes wondered if the added body heat generated by everyone's basketball enthusiasm and nervous tension might have been an important complement to the numerous steam furnaces that propelled some warmth through the airy gymnasiums back on those cold winter game nights. We certainly needed any extra heat we could get.

Anyway, the setting for this little story was the year 1944, and the month was November. I was eight. Generals Eisenhower and Patton had engaged in

the Battle of the Bulge several months earlier on a beleaguered continent 10,000 miles to the east, and the push to end World War II was on. Consequently, the will to "win" that fall, whatever the activity, seemed feverish and contagious. There was no immunity from that sensation in the basketball camps of Indiana. While Evansville Bosse was the defending basketball champion from that previous spring, every one of the other 775 high school entries was going to get a chance to dethrone Bosse at the conclusion of the new season.

Kokomo, our county seat just 12 miles from my home town of Russiaville, fielded a team that had nearly won the crown that previous season. The Wildkats had succumbed to Bosse's Bulldogs by just four points in the final game of the 1944 tournament. While most of Kokomo's first five had graduated, the team was still expected to be a powerhouse during the 44-45 season. Its rising underclassmen were actually seasoned veterans who had been weaned from an early age on the city's classy church league basketball. This was a "feeder system" that assured Kokomo's success as a stout competitor nearly every year. The Bosse team, on the other hand, was returning all but one of its iron warriors from 43-44, so hardly any Hoosier BB fan doubted that they'd repeat to the Final Four.

That year I was a third grader at Russiaville, a town of 812 population (1940 census) way at the southwest corner of the county. But already I was thinking of myself as a disciplined young basketball "veteran." My dad and uncle, both rough and tumble players on the Bronco teams at nearby West Middleton in the early '30s, broke me in at age five with a laced ball that seemed almost as large as I was. They nailed up an open-ended tomato hamper to an out-of-use privy behind our family garage. My mother joined us in an outdoor scrimmage. On the first "give and go" play I ever helped execute, my uncle accidentally split my left eyebrow wide open with his elbow. That required a brief break in the action to allow Doc Evans, just a block down the street, to sew it closed with three stitches. That scar is still today a

personal identifier. Both family roughnecks then went off to help fight the war before I even started to school. Now, a few years later, here I am in the third grade practicing some of the things they had taught me, like for instance STAYING WELL CLEAR OF FLYING ELBOWS.

About 100 feet from the front schoolyard outdoor basketball court where the “big” kids regularly played a game or two before the school bell rang at 8 a.m., we tiny tots congregated at about the same time in the mornings to play our wet tennis ball version of the game. We didn’t have a regular basketball to play with, and even if we had had one, there was no second goal to shoot at anyway. So we contented ourselves with the wet tennis ball game. Simply put, a smooth well-used tennis ball was rolled across a patch of dew-covered grass by one of us in order to get its entire surface soaked prior to the startup of our game. The “goal” was the schoolhouse cornerstone (dated 1904) having a light cement surface area of about a square yard. A two point field goal was quickly acknowledged whenever the tennis ball was thrown at the cornerstone and left a visible wet spot within its perimeter. There were very few arguments since—well, the wet evidence was right there staring you in the face. Any dispute had to be settled quickly though, before the spot dried.

You can imagine how, with a game like that, many of us were motivated to grow up as fast as we could in order to get into that other schoolyard game with the real cowhide ball and the real metal hoop. And eventually it happened, for some of us. I left the old cornerstone area and never looked back. The only time I recall being in that area again was when my best pal Billy Ayres got his tongue stuck on that old winter nemesis of the schoolyard, the frost-covered flagpole—in this case it might have been a maypole—I can’t really recall. Anyway, Billy’s tongue was firmly planted on the metal. He couldn’t even cry out but we eventually did hear a few grunts and groans. Upon hearing those, some of us immediately sprang into action and notified a young substitute teacher inside the schoolhouse. Being

sympathetic yet not trained in medical emergencies, she came out with a teakettle of boiling hot coffee water and splashed it onto Billy’s tongue. That freed him from the pole of course and at that point his cries of anguish became clearly audible. Yet most of us finally felt better about his overall situation. It took awhile for him to regain comprehensible speech, but he did recover. I eventually lost track of Billy after his family moved to Chicago. I don’t know if he’s the same Bill Ayres who later became notorious as a Weatherman (and later still as President Obama’s close friend—editor’s note), but if he was—that would certainly put a good cap on this story.

But back to the Kokomo Wildkats of 44-45. In the prior year of 43-44 the Kats’ team was comprised of its famous L-S-M-F-T boys. Those letters not only referenced the first letters of the names of its starters Leslie, Schwartz, McFatridge, Farrington, and Turner, but also was a play on the well-known Lucky Strike tobacco commercial that was popular back then, “Lucky Strike Means Fine Tobacco.” Six-foot-Five Tom Schwartz was the sole returning starter for that team, but the Kats were expected to once again be threats for the state title or at least win the North Central Conference championship. Ultimately, they failed at the former but succeeded at the latter.

We third graders at Russiaville knew the names of Kokomo’s squad members when we probably didn’t even know our own schoolteachers’ names (or much of anything else, for that matter). My young buddies bestowed the name of Tom Schwartz on me during our wet tennis ball battles. It was the supreme compliment, I thought.

We cheered on our Russiaville Cossacks, too. By the way, the “Russia” part of the town’s name for those of you who don’t already know, is not pronounced the same way it looks and has nothing to do with the Soviet Union or Siberia. Instead, it is the French pronunciation of an early settler named John Richardville, with the pronunciation being something like “Roosh-a-ville,” similar to the ou sound in “should.” The Cossacks were “our” team, and our parents (mostly just the

mothers because of the war) took us to as many home games as possible in the coal-stoked gym behind the schoolhouse. Fridays were always the best when, after the pep rallies in the upstairs study hall at 3 or 4 in the afternoon, we little kids downstairs would be exposed to the thunder of 100 sets of high school feet descending down the staircase and a like number of voices singing the Cossack fight song. That was generally the signal too that school hours were over, and at that point we really couldn’t muster enough brainwave energy for anything but thoughts about the game that night anyway. Gene Parks, a member of that 44-45 team, is still a regular correspondent and close friend of mine back there. He is a current member of IHSBHS. The old school principal, Richard Rea, also still writes to me occasionally and I visit him whenever I return to Indiana during the summers. Russiaville is now a part of the Western Consolidated School System that I attended while in high school and the system now embraces the entire Southwest quadrant of Howard County.

The basketball season’s excitement at the other nine schools in our county back then was no less intense than ours. By the time the sectional tournament arrived, everyone was primed for their local school to do its best, though it would be a major shock if any school but Kokomo were to survive. We loved it that way though. It was the challenge that really mattered. We would continue to root for the Wildkats the rest of the way if indeed they won the sectional, as all of us expected.

Herman Keller’s Evansville Bosse team lived up to its billing that season, winning all its regularly scheduled games but two. Strangely enough though, the final AP sportswriters’ poll placed Jasper at the top ahead of Bosse, with Kokomo voted as third best in the state after winning the NCC title.

There were several small school “people’s choices” that year, each with an outstanding season record. Included in that group were Leo, Eden, Waynetown, and Hope. Like Milan’s Indians nine years later, any one of those teams had a chance to win the whole thing because with the right

breaks they were each good enough to get the job done. It's probable also that each of the teams had at least one player just like Bobby Plump who acted out a final shot scenario over and over again on his school playground to win an imaginary state championship game. I know that I did. What separated Bobby from the rest of us was that he did it in real life. What a thrill for him—and for us too when he did it, because we were all essentially unfulfilled Bobby Plumps.

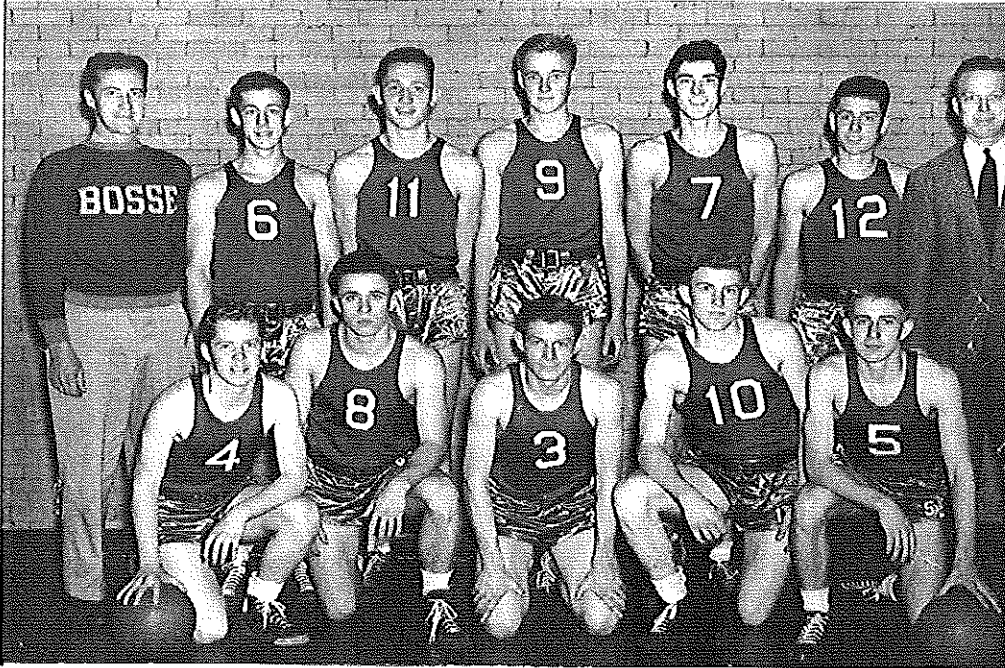
350-pound radio play-by-play announcer for the Wildkats exclaimed as Wilhelm popped the ball through the net to end the Wildkats quest for the state crown, "That's all, brother!!" Tiny Joe used that phrase often, but it never had more meaning than it did that time.

None of the State Final games that March was spectacular, but all three were well played. The Rockets of Indianapolis Broad Ripple were nicked by Bosse's Bulldogs 37-35 in the

and Whitehead were all exceptional ballplayers, and Tilley, Buck, and DeGroote backed them up. This squad was unusually deep in talent for a high school team.

However, 1944-45 was just another basketball season in Indiana, much like any other, with its fair share of thrills, upsets, and historic moments. It just happened to be the first season I can clearly recall as a kid. Today, as an aging self-proclaimed sports historian, I find that I must gather archival materials to supplement a straining memory. It's not good to allow yourself or your fellow sports lovers to forget the things that provided enjoyment in youth, even when it comes to the minor details. That's why I've rattled on in this article, hoping that some readers can joyfully identify with my own experiences.

While there was only one state champion that season of 1944-45, there were really 776 winners. They were all winners simply for having the audacity to challenge for a single state crown. That was high school basketball at its best, the likes of which—because of the pending changeover to a multi-class system—might possibly never be seen again in the future. THE END



Evansville Bosse, 1945 State Champions. Front row left to right: Bryan (Broc) Jerrel, Jack Matthews, Alfred Buck, Norman McCool, Don Tilley. Back row: Coach Keller, Gene Whitehead, Julius (Bud) Ritter, Bill Butterfield, Norris Caudell, Jim DeGroote, Assistant Coach Kilpatrick.

As expected, Russiaville was wiped out in the second round of the local sectional—but not by Kokomo. Little Howard Township did the honors, in turn getting slaughtered by Kokomo. The Wildkats then knocked off Greentown in the sectional final. The Kats made it all the way to the sweet sixteen that year but were bumped off in a cliff-hanger 29-28 by an upstart Huntington Vikings team in the afternoon at the Muncie semi-finals. Ivan Wilhelm, a sophomore substitute, later to star for Tulane University, netted one from twenty feet, a la Bobby Plump, although there was about a minute and a half left to play. But no further scoring. Anyway, that shot won the game for the Vikings. As "Tiny" Joe Jordan, our

afternoon, while a strong South Bend Riley team (ranked 8th in the final AP poll) put away Huntington 39-28. Bosse took out Riley in the final game, 46-36. Herman Keller's team was quite solid once again in every aspect of its court play to repeat as state champs, duplicating the feat of the Washington Hatchets just three years earlier. It was nearly accomplished 17 years earlier by the Martinsville Artesians, the high school team on which John Wooden first performed his on-court superlatives as a player.

Back-to-back state championships have since been won five more times in the past 53 years, with Marion achieving a triple in 1985-86-87. This Bosse team was a great one though, without a doubt. Bryan (Broc) Jerrell and Gene Schmidt (the only departed 1943-44 starter) went on to star at Texas Christian University and many of their teammates played stellar college ball as well, notably Norris Caudell, Julius (Bud) Ritter, and Jack Matthews. McCool, Butterfield,

RALPH HAMILTON—THE SOUTH SIDE SNIPER

By Cliff Johnson

You'd need to be at least an octogenarian by now to recall any of the hardwood exploits performed by Ralph Hamilton in the 1940s. Ralph was the younger brother of Dale Hamilton, an earlier star player on the 1937-38 Fort Wayne South Side Archers' state championship team. Both Hamilton boys were destined to ultimately play ball in the NBL and BAA, forerunners to the present-day NBA. Burl Friddle, a former member of the old Franklin Wonder Five of 1920-22, coached both Hamilton boys. Friddle's 1939-40 team, with 5' 11" Ralph as its exciting senior star forward, finished its regular season with a record of 17-3 against some of the stoutest competition in the state. The Archers had attained the #1 ranking in the final statewide AP poll and were favored to capture the IHSAA tournament crown in March.

The path to the state championship couldn't begin with any greater obstacles, however, than were prevalent in the Fort Wayne sectional at the beginning of the 1940 tournament. All four major Fort Wayne schools had successful seasons. North Side and Central each had outstanding records, with the North Side Redskins being selected as #1 in the AP poll at a point late in the season, just before the Archers took over the top spot. Central's Bears, on any given game night, were themselves capable of turning back either the Archers or the Redskins, as they had proven during the regular season. Even Fort Wayne Central Catholic's purple & gold Irish stood out during the 1940 season. That team went on to win the national Catholic schools championship in the spring after giving the other Fort Wayne teams all they could handle during the regular season. The South Side vs. Central Catholic post-Christmas match-up in late December, for example, was a standing-room-only, knock down and drag out, affair. South Side eventually prevailed at 34-32 in a wild overtime, with Ralph scoring both the tying and winning field goals for the Archers. I need to mention that it was not until 1943 that Indiana's Catholic schools were permitted by the IHSAA to participate in the state tournament, so Central Catholic, unfortunately, was ineligible to compete in the sectional against the strong locals it had earlier exhausted and occasionally conquered during the regular season.

Aided by stellar, and occasionally miraculous, performances from the younger Hamilton brother, South Side managed to prevail in its sectional, eking out late wins against its mighty city foes only by the narrowest of margins. Ralph was acclaimed the school's hardwood hero after that, but he would not be content to rest on his regular-season and sectional heroics. His subsequent performances during the regional and semi-final tournaments were equally praiseworthy. The Archers reached the Final Four, just as the AP had earlier predicted. By now their record had improved to 25-3.

Then, pitted against a 24-5 team from Mitchell in the second afternoon game

of the Saturday finals, the Archers shooting game suddenly went ice cold. The team managed only 7 field goals out of 71 attempts (less than 10% accuracy). Mitchell's shooting was nearly as miserable at 14%, but the Bluejackets managed to squeeze out a 23-20 win. Ralph led the Archers' scoring, as usual, with four FGs and four FTs for 12 points, in the losing effort. The turnovers and errors in this game, however, were reportedly awful. In fact, the contest was considered by some seasoned sportswriters who watched it to be one of most poorly played in the history of IHSAA Final Four games. That night, Mitchell was soundly thumped by Hammond Tech, 33-21.

Disappointed, Coach Friddle, Ralph, and the Archers team all took the long quiet drive back to Fort Wayne the next morning. The singular redeeming realization by everyone during the trek back home was that it had been a great season despite that final loss.

Ralph Hamilton always had the mindset of a winner. It ran in his family. Both he and his older brother Dale participated in a wide variety of athletic activities at Fort Wayne South Side High School. They were handsome, intelligent, and admired as teenage students. Either could have his pick of the prettiest girls in school for dating purposes, whenever they wished. Ralph, for one though, focused mainly on competition, often at the sacrifice of a reasonable social life with the fairer sex. He philosophized that there would undoubtedly be plenty of time later in life for that. Besides basketball, he regularly engaged in varsity golf, softball, football, volleyball, and any other sporting function that caught his fancy from time to time.

Born Ralph Albert Hamilton in Grandview, Iowa, on June 10, 1921 to the family of Brice and Helen Hamilton, he began school in the Fort Wayne area after the family relocated there in the late 1920s. His father and mother parted ways sometime after the move and the two brothers remained with their mother. Helen supported the broken family by designing and tailoring household draperies. By the time Ralph became a high school student, he knew that sports was in his blood and that it

probably would play a major role in his life. South Side High School had already made a name for itself in major sports competition in Indiana, and by his sophomore year his brother Dale had gotten his name engraved on a trophy that recognized South Side as the champions of Indiana high school basketball. Ralph strived to attain that same distinction two years later, when his team very nearly succeeded. But the Archers came up two games short of the championship. Nevertheless, Ralph had set a new scoring record for the state tournament and was recognized on the All-State player ballot list.

After graduation, Branch McCracken, head basketball coach at Indiana University, offered a scholarship to Ralph, which was readily accepted. Ralph was acutely aware that McCracken's teams were perennial winners, and his "must win" attitude was bound to be a good fit there. The Hurryin' Hoosiers had even brought the 1940 national championship trophy back to Bloomington from the finals staged in Kansas City during Ralph's senior year at South Side. He enrolled as an I.U. freshman in the late summer of 1940.

By his sophomore year at I.U. during the 1941-42 season, Ralph had grown two inches in height to 6' 1" and became a varsity starter at forward. The Hoosiers finished the year at 16-5 and Ralph played in 20 of the 21 games, scoring 124 points for a 6.7 ppg average. Not bad for a sophomore, especially during the early '40s of comparatively low game score results. But the next year (1942-43) the Hoosiers set the Western Conference (aka Big Ten) aflame with lightning ball movement, firehouse fast breaks, and a blazing offensive attack. Ralph led the team in scoring with 247 points and a 13.0 ppg average. He was selected for all-conference honors. The Hoosiers finished at 18-2 and nearly won the Conference championship as well, but lost that title to the neighboring 17-1 nationally top-ranked "Whiz Kids" of Illinois by just a single game. The Hoosiers were ranked #5 nationally, but many fans believed that Indiana would have beaten Illinois in a heads-up match had only such a game been scheduled that season. Unfortunately one wasn't.

Ralph spent the next three years in the U.S. Army, helping the allies bring defeat to the axis and end WW II. Basketball was always a favorite recreational adjunct to the armed forces during the war, so Ralph fully participated and was able to further hone his court skills during that period. He was 25 years old by the time he finally returned to the I.U. campus in the fall of 1946 to complete his education and college basketball career. Once again he led I.U. to a winning season in 1946-47. The Hoosiers tied for second place in the Big Ten that year. He again elevated his scoring total from three years earlier to 261 points and a 13.7 ppg average. And this time he was rewarded with consensus first team All-America honors, as his college career closed.

Ralph's basketball days were not yet completed with his graduation from college. He was recruited to play professional ball in the fall of 1948 by the Fort Wayne Zollner Pistons of the NBL. He immediately became the team leader, alternating at a forward and guard position, whichever suited the game plan of coach Carl Bennett. Ralph played in 49 of the Piston's 60 games, being out of commission with a leg injury for a part of the season. He still managed to score 387 points for just under an 8 ppg average. The Pistons finished the year with a 40-20 W-L record and third place in the league.

The following season he was traded to the newly formed Indianapolis Jets of the Basketball Association of America. With his leg injury still an issue, he nevertheless was able to score 289 points in 48 of the 60 games played, for a 6.0 average at a guard position. This turned out to be his final year on the professional courts. His overall point total for the two years he performed professionally was 676 which resulted in a 7.0 ppg average. This will not agree with all the data published by pro basketball statistical sources on record for Ralph Hamilton, but it has been cross-verified with sources I believe to be exceptionally reliable. Thus I have the utmost confidence in the accuracy of the numbers cited above.

Ralph Albert Hamilton, a basketball All-American, passed away on June 3, 1993 at age 71.

THE LAST HURRAH

By Doug Bradley

It's sad to report the last hurrah for a very good friend. Three friends, really.

Friday, January 25 at about 10:30 AM, workers for the Klenck Co. of Evansville were torching the legs that supported the 275-foot top beam of the skeleton of Roberts Municipal Stadium. The legs were to fall like dominoes after all 16 were cut halfway through. Instead, while the sixth was being torched, the frame rotated slightly clockwise. The top beam fell into the nearly 30-foot cavern that had been the seating area, dragging legs down with it.

Unlike the 1958 collapse during construction of the 200-foot New Castle Fieldhouse, this one injured no one. It was one last surprise delivered by the building, whose success in hosting capacity crowds during the first half of its life far exceeded the expectations held by anyone during its conception.

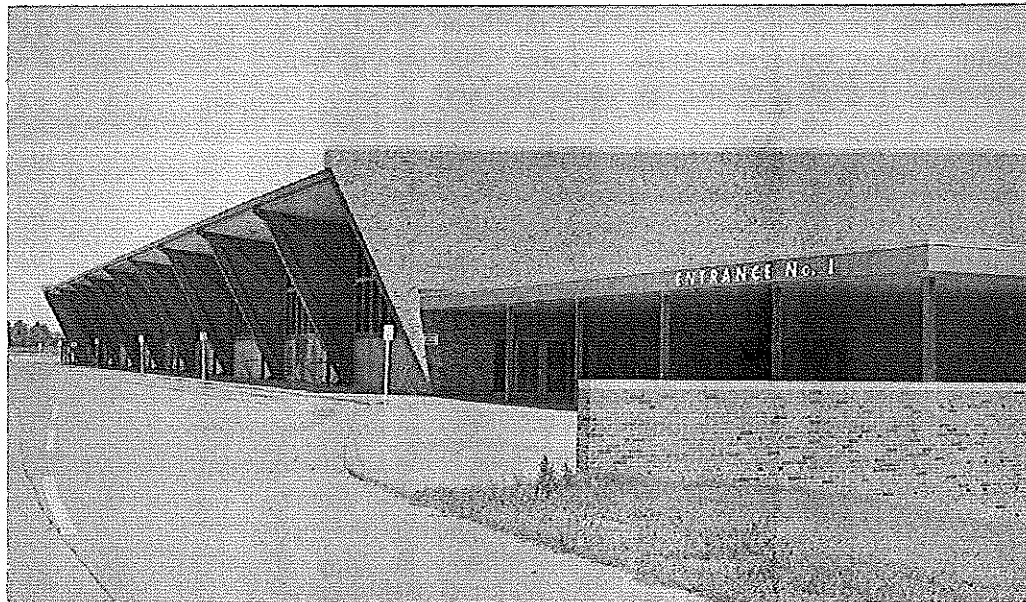
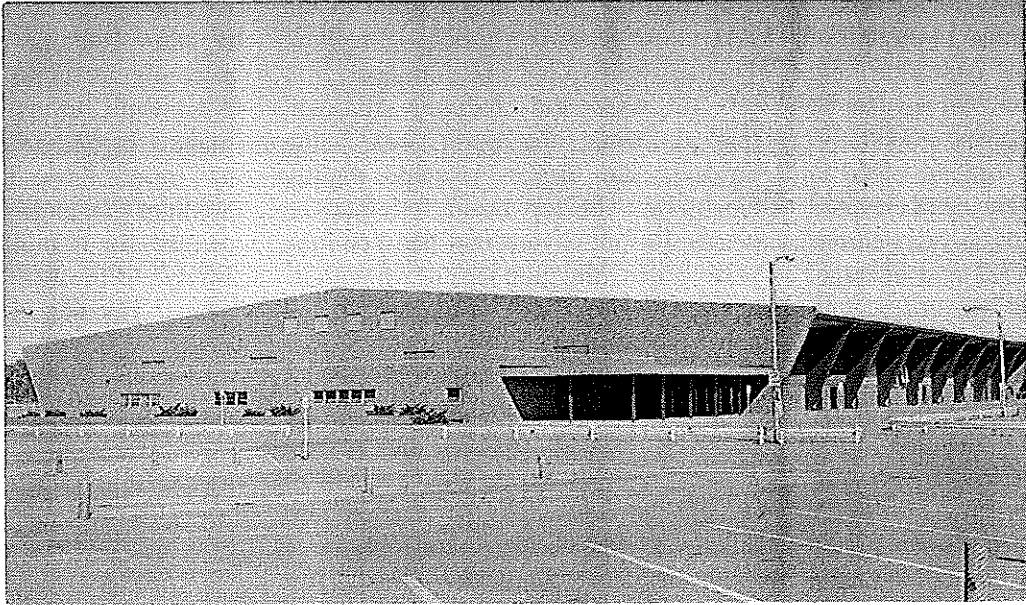
Owensboro, Kentucky, had just opened its 5,000 seat sports center across the Ohio River. Mayor Hank Roberts - the stadium was named in his honor - saw to it that Evansville had the construction of the 7,500 seat stadium underway before he left office. The section of his 1951 platform calling for the stadium probably had little to do with his election. However, his defeat in the Republican primary in 1955 was arguably due in large part to what The Evansville Press called "Hank's Tank." The majority of voters thought the cost excessive because Evansville couldn't/wouldn't consistently fill such a large arena.

The revolutionary underground design of Evansville architect Ralph Legeman was first executed for the high school in Herrin, Illinois, in May of 1949. The 21st and last designed by Legeman was dedicated in Muskegon, Michigan, by presidential candidate Richard Nixon a week before the election of 1960. At least 26 other gyms in Illinois, Indiana, and Kentucky copied Legeman's design. The Pit at the University of New Mexico is a copy (probably unintentionally) as well.

New Castle's fundraising campaign for THE LARGEST AND FINEST HIGH SCHOOL FIELDHOUSE IN

THE WORLD was titled "Gym Now." I have spent literally every day for more than three years researching the history of Legeman's gymnasiums. Roberts Stadium is the first of the 47 to be torn down even though four others are no longer used for basketball. I will continue to call my project "Gym Forever" because the Ford Center that replaces Roberts will not, cannot, be remotely as important to Evansville's inhabitants, to its high schools, or to Indiana basketball as this iconic edifice has been. I was in Roberts Municipal Stadium (see page 10) only once, taking pictures for 30 minutes with the building empty. I'm sure I can, with a lot of other Hoosiers, say HAIL AND FAREWELL, OLD FRIEND!

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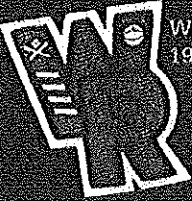
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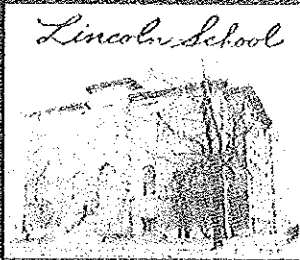
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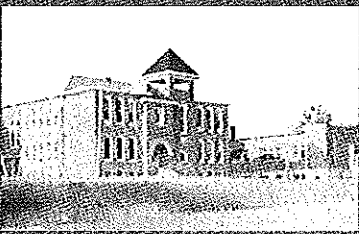



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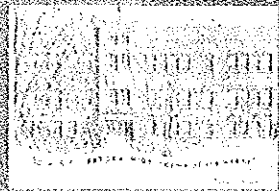
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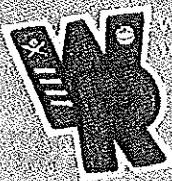
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