



JUDGE J. T. COOPER  
Justice of Seventh District Court

Judge J. T. Cooper began his career in Fredonia as principal of the high school in 1888-'89, and although he gave up teaching because of his preference for law, he did not give up his interest in Fredonia's boys and girls. While his law practices and his duties as district judge absorb much of his energy, Judge Cooper still takes time to consider the problems of the students.

Fredonia High School claims Judge Cooper with pride.

## The First Half Hundred

1888—the day of horse drawn carriages and high top hats, of bustles, and gay silk parasols, of whalebone reinforcements and elegant reserve. 1888, when there was no superintendent of Fredonia schools, but at each building a "professor" to supervise the work in such time as he could spare from his teaching.

1888—and Fredonia was a new town on the prairie, with spindly young elms set out, and a brave new school house topping the ground swell at the base of East Mound. From the two year high school in that building graduated the first class of Fredonia High School; Minnie Whitbeck, Anna Herron, Charles Rench, Laura Paulen, Mary Dudrow, Percy Willets, Ira Cantrell, Mary Flaherty, and Jennie Foster. The nine young graduates were gentle and intent as they posed for their commencement photograph, and all held in their hands the stiff little nosegays that were fashionable at that time.

In 1889 a third year was added to the high school and there was no graduating class.

L. L. Hanks, Professor Gray, and J. T. Cooper headed the high school those first years. The course of study included Latin, philosophy, metaphysics, and mental arithmetic. Each summer a teachers institute for Wilson County teachers was held in Fredonia, and city teachers conducted many of the classes. Mr. Gray held the only life certificate in the state of Kansas while he was teaching in the Fredonia Schools.

Many young ladies graduated from high school and were elected to positions in Fredonia's grade schools soon after graduation. Among them were Miss Beulah Wood (Ervay), Miss Lena Koch (Flack), Miss Blanche Loomis (VanDuser), Miss Fannie Butts, and many others.

In its early years the school made no provision for athletics; it had no library, and its music department was equipped with one wheezy organ whose pedals and keys did not synchronize. The English course did not include the study of Shakespeare, and students interested in his work organized a study club which met at night.

Graduation was a very long affair, for each graduate gave an oration as his share of the final program. The exercises were usually held at the Hudson Opera House which, on such occasions, was lavishly decorated with class colors, flowers, and plaques bearing the class motto. The class motto of 1898 was, "Remember the Maine!" Only one class, 1892, omitted the orations, and that was because the class was too large for such a commencement program. Old class pictures show the graduation dresses, especially beautiful with their finely wrought yokes and berthas of lace, and their graceful, ruffled skirts.

In 1904 a fourth year was added to the high school, and the class of 1905 was the first to graduate with full sixteen units of work. It was in 1905, too, that the first place cards ever used in Fredonia graced the junior-senior banquet tables.

In 1906 the condition of Lincoln school became so dangerous that the building was condemned and all classes were held at Mound, the grades in the morning and the high school in the afternoon. In 1907 a new Lincoln building was erected. 1907 also saw the last of the commencement orations for the classes had become so large that two nights would have been required for the delivery of all speeches.

Three years later a new course of study including chemistry, botany, English history, solid geometry, economics, and English IV, was adopted by the high school. In 1911 the school purchased new physics laboratory equipment with an experimental table large enough for ten people, and with all the new gadgets built into it.

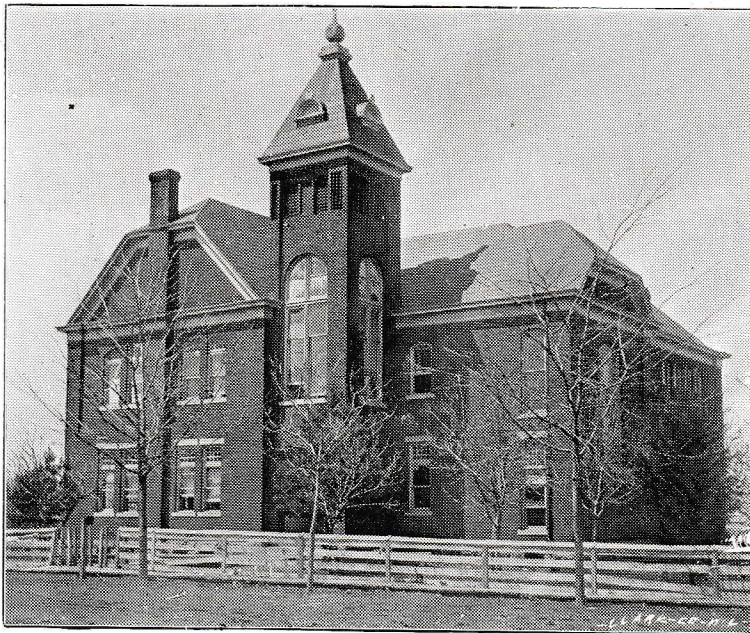
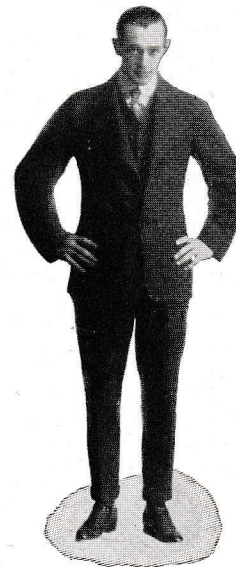
In 1909, 1910, 1911, and in preceding years the school authorities made no provision for athletics. Baseball, football and basketball teams played matched games, but the groups were self selected, coached and equipped, and made their own seasonal schedules. In 1911 a group of live students who had found the pull of football stronger than the pull of classes throughout their high school careers, felt it necessary to purchase additional equipment. In spite of the veto from the office they put on an "entertainment whingding" which was successful financially, but which brought down the decision from the office, "Athletics are out!"

John Gilmore, George Wiley, Joe Pierce, Roy Thomas and others in the group of sports enthusiasts, organized the Twin Mound Athletic Association. This group continued to manage the sports of Fredonia High School students for several years.

In 1911, John Gilmore, one of Fredonia's outstanding athletes, captain of the baseball team, manager of the Twin Mound Athletic Association, and champion singles tennis player, graduated. He returned to Fredonia from the College of Emporia, and became editor of the Wilson County Citizen in 1913. In that year and in 1914, 1915, and 1916, he coached the football team. In 1917 and 1918 Fredonia High School boys were away at war, but in 1919 and 1920 John Gilmore continued to build characteristically fine football teams.

After 1920 a ruling came into force that the football coach must be a full time faculty member. Robert Wellborn of Baker University was elected as new director of athletics.

John Gilmore graduated in 1911 but because of his interest in the school returned and coached the football team for several years. He laid the foundation for one of the most outstanding teams in the history of the school, the team of 1915.



*Old Lincoln Building*

*Mr. Wesley I. Matthews*



MR. WESLEY I. MATTHEWS

Wesley I. Matthews served as principal of the high school for many years and was a dominating influence in school affairs. He was a beloved teacher and one of the most prominent men in the history of Fredonia High School.

The bond issue for a new building with modern equipment, space for manual training and home economics was defeated 2 to 1 in 1911.

In 1912 the senior class returned to the old style of commencement orations. There were but nine graduates that year.

In 1913 the ruling was made that all students participating in athletics must carry successfully at least three subjects. At this time the need for a new building was so pressing that citizens began an earnest campaign. Dr. A. C. Flack wrote: "In every town where a modern high school has been erected the enrollment has increased. To build a small building would be a mistake. It would be far better to get along with rented rooms somewhere around town. A modern, adequate high school building will attract the attention of both parents and students. Let us build for the future!"

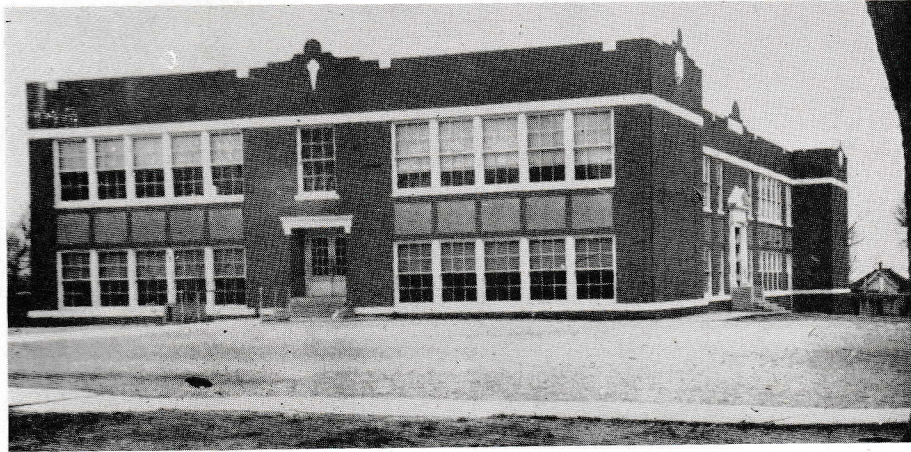
Through the efforts of Dr. Flack and others the bonds for the new high school were voted, and the new manual training and home economics courses were assured.

1914—We quote from the high school column in the Wilson County Citizen one year later, "Times are somewhat changed. In the past years the temperature of the high school was anything from zero up, however, now in the new building things are different." Mr. A. I. Decker was superintendent of schools in 1914, and W. I. Matthews was principal of the high school. That spring the elocution department pantomimed in tableau the "Seven Ages of Man", taken from Shakespeare's "As You Like It".

In 1915 the bitter European struggle seemed far away, but vibrations of it came through with increasing violence. In 1915 the Hon. Charles F. Scott of Iola spoke to the student body in the high school auditorium on the "Plight of Belgium", but to the student body the famous 1915 team which made football history in this part of Kansas was even more important than the war. Lettermen of that team were Capt. Verchere, Mount, Harshfield, Mussett, Weimer, Mellon, Wilson, Stivers, Cook, Whiteside, Sanders and Cornett. In two more years many of those boys were drawn into the war, but in 1915 none of them would have believed it possible.

Fredonia High School's first annual, "The Black and Gold" was published in 1916 and the staff cleared enough from the sale of books to buy the picture, "The Coliseum at Rome" as a farewell gift to the school. The staff of the first annual was: Edgar Hollis, editor; Mary Hart, associate editor; Prof. W. I. Matthews, advisor; Goldie Jones, associate editor; Charles Weimer, business manager; Lois Lingenfelter, society editor. That spring it was rumored that next year there would be a school orchestra.

1917. The high school library was increased by one hundred dollars worth of new books. War songs were in the air, and boys fell into step as they whistled "Over There". In the spring and on into early summer Fredonia boys joined Captain Ben Hudson's Company E, 137 U. S. Infantry, 35th Division, later to see active foreign service, or drifted away to other units. The school in 1918 was absorbed in the activities which were the home



*New Lincoln School*

*Built in 1919*

manifestation of war. Girls learned to knit, to roll bandages, and to make batches of fudge which they sent away to the boys.

Early in the morning of October 4, Lincoln School burst into flames, and was completely destroyed. So much time was lost in the adjustment to new conditions that the last week's special festivities were omitted and the time spent in make-up work. That spring a plague of grass-hoppers came upon the country.

The Reflector, Fredonia High School's newspaper, was first published on October 19, 1919. Carolyn Edmundson was editor; Hall Hibbard, associate editor; Geneva Hollis, alumni reporter; Violet Butts, senior reporter; Helen Long, junior reporter; Helen Davis, sophomore reporter; Walter Carpenter, freshman reporter; Cecil Carr, cartoonist; Byron Short, business manager.

That year Fredonia voted \$65,000 in bonds to replace Lincoln School, and E. A. Elliott was superintendent of schools.

In 1920 the girls in domestic science class served a banquet which was given by the school board in honor of the football team. Dr. Flack presented letters to fourteen players. The music department gave a concert that year.

A new course, journalism, was offered in high school in 1920. Miss Sylvester was the teacher, and under her direction the journalism class published an excellent paper. May 27, 1921, The Reflector placed third in a state contest conducted by Kansas State Agricultural College at Manhattan.

Many ambitious high school students enrolled in the Fredonia Business College for courses in penmanship, shorthand, typewriting, bookkeeping and business arithmetic for which they received high school credit. Established in 1908, the business college was not a part of the high school but always cooperated fully with the high school in its educational efforts until its founder, Miss Ella T. Sheedy (McGarth), closed it in 1937.

A Boost Club to raise money for athletics and a Girls Athletic Association were organized in 1921.

April 4, 1922, Fredonia High School was admitted to the accredited list of the North Central Association.

A flood which inundated the Verdigris and Fall River valleys, the highest water since 1895, came in 1922.

Protests against the costs of maintaining the schools began.

**Remember when in**

**1938** the crowd did the Big Apple at the Junior - Senior Banquet? And how the senior class president's feet looked like Charlie Chaplin's, all turned up at the toes, when he was called on to "shine"?

Fredonia's first declamation contest was held that year and Miss Mildred I. Russell won the contest by her rendition of "The Finger of God". Frances Patterson was valedictorian of the class of 1922, and Viona Ewalt was salutatorian.

Mound School, after so many years of faithful service, was in bad condition. In 1924 the building was closed and experts, after a careful inspection, reported that it could be repaired. Walls were strengthened and braced, and loose cornice stones over windows were set firmly in place. The students, crowded into a small space, had a hilarious time while repair on old Mound School was under way.

"Old Gold and Black", high school annual, in 1924 placed second at Manhattan in a year book contest sponsored by the state college. It was an 88 page annual, with an Indian motif carried out in color on the title and division pages. The school and its activities were well presented. Carroll Shelton was editor, Donald Hibbard, business manager, and R. H. Ricketts, faculty advisor. Glenn Beal, the most popular boy, and Thelma Shafer, the most popular girl, were featured in the popularity section.

Fredonia schools had a new superintendent, R. C. Hunt, in 1924.

Miss Edith Kanode organized a chapter of the National Honor Society in Fredonia High School in 1925.

That year the new requirements for graduation were set forth by the State Board of Education. Algebra and geometry were not electives, and work in the high school was divided in groups: English, history, mathematics, science, foreign languages, and vocational and fine arts.

Fredonia High School had a new principal in 1926, H. C. Scarborough.

In 1926 Fredonia High School won many honors in music. She placed first at the Kansas-Oklahoma meet at Winfield, second in a south-eastern Kansas meet at Parsons, and chartered a train for the entire department to go to Pittsburg where F. H. S. placed fourth.

In 1927, the year of Charles Lindbergh's heroic solo flight across the Atlantic, Fredonia school district added a million dollars to its property valuation, and the school's yearly income was greatly increased.

Fredonia was selected as the headquarters of the National Oratorical Contest in 1928, and the same year Wilma Faye Scott ranked second in shorthand at the Tri-State meet held at Kansas State Teachers College, Pittsburg. In this contest 1008 participated.

A music cup, won the year before, was presented to the Boys Glee Club and Quartet. The 1928 football team was the first in the history of F.H.S. to bring back the championship trophy of the Verdigris Valley League and the class of 1928 presented the school a case for all its trophies.

In 1931 when the hardest of the business depression had just begun, an adult sewing class was organized at the high school. In March, 1932, the teachers accepted a 10 percent salary cut.

In August, 1932 Mr. H. F. Wilson, of Kansas City, Kansas, became the new superintendent of city schools.

The debate team of 1933, Pauline Schloesser and LaVerne Wharton, affirmative, and Joe Sheedy and Charles Lee Wilson, negative, came through their regional tournament with first honors and journeyed with their coach, Principal H. W. Speer, to Lawrence where they placed third in their district.

New musical instruments were purchased for the orchestra in this same year.

Again in 1934 Principal Speer's debate team was outstanding. The Fredonia team, after defeating its district, met Coffeyville. This team was: Pauline Schloesser and Rex Lafferty, affirmative, and Gilbert and James Kennedy, negative.

Many subjects and new departments have been added to the curriculum of Fredonia High School since 1932. In that year home economics for boys was first offered; in 1934 a department of vocational agriculture was added, and the subjects, Bible literature and radio. In 1935 the department of physical education placed several new subjects before high school students, and the subject of French was added to the language department. With the opening of the commercial department in the high school in 1933 a great many additional credits were allowed the high school. In 1938 speech, vocational homemaking for girls, and mechanics and safety education will be given as Shop IV.

In the spring of the first year that vocational agriculture was taught in Fredonia, the livestock judging team, Arlin Russell, Guy Tuis, and Don McPherson, ranked first in the state contest at Manhattan. In October the judging team had its expenses paid to the American Royal Stock Show in Kansas City by the Santa Fe railroad, and ranked eleventh in the national livestock judging contest. Guy Tuis ranked second in the judging of hogs, Arlin Russell placed sixth in the judging of sheep, and Donald McPherson ranked eighth in the judging of horses and mules.

The livestock judging team placed second at Emporia in 1936. At the vocational agriculture judging and farm mechanics contests at Manhattan in 1937 Loren McDonald placed as the highest individual, rating over 252 competitors. Loren McDonald and Allen Honeyman were selected State Future Farmers, a group taken from the upper two percent of the state Future Farmer membership.

At the state contest at Manhattan in 1938 the judging team, consisting of Max Timmons, Paul Maxwell, and Charles Stover, ranked seventh, competing with 86 teams. The competition was in judging livestock, farm crops, poultry and dairy. In these divisions Fredonia ranked fifth in grain and tenth in livestock. There were 256 individual contestants and among these Paul Maxwell ranked fourth. The shop team, consisting of John Brambick and Emerson Colaw, ranked eighth among 51 competing teams. John Brambick ranked third in roof framing, and seventh in sheet metal skill among 102 individual contestants. Max Timmons was chosen as one of the State Farmers.

In the summer of 1934 a manual arts building was erected at Lincoln school with ample room for the junior and senior high school manual training classes, and a domestic science room was equipped in Lincoln Building.

A course in radio, one of the few courses in that subject in the state, was given in 1934 by William R. Lynn, a government commissioned amateur radio operator. The study group was recognized by the Federal Communications Commission and granted a permit to establish and operate a transmitter under the call letters W9THA. On April, 1935, the following members of the group were authorized by the Federal Communication Commission to own and operate transmitting equipment on amateur channels of communication: Glenn Jump, W9UDS; Robert Higgenbottom, W9UDB; and Allie Pound, W9UDQ.

On May 18, 1934 Fredonia voted, two to one, bonds for a \$45,000 auditorium. This building was completed and dedicated in 1934. It has a seating capacity of over 2000. The stage is ample for large productions and there is no finer basketball court in the state of Kansas. A new physical education department was established with Cecil Pryor and Miss Aline Elliott as instructors. The work in physical education is three-fold and includes classes in theory and practical instructions for daily living, floor work, and activities and sports such as hiking and tennis.

In 1934, and every year since, the gym-auditorium has been selected as the scene for the high school regional Class A and Class B basketball tournament. The tournament this year, managed by Vice-Principal L. E. Moody was most successful. The past tournaments have been managed by Principal H. W. Speer, 1934 and 1935, and Vice-Principal William R. Lynn, 1937.

Many concerts, oratorios, commencement exercises and school parties have been held in the auditorium since its erection.

Fredonia High School, ever interested in music, began a period of real

achievement under the direction of Denton Rossell. In 1934 at the Chanute music contest Fredonia students won firsts in: flute, Elizabeth Ann Viles; French horn, Frances Brockway; contralto solo, Erma Bridgman; Boys Glee Club and Mixed Chorus; seconds in: bass solo, Douglas Taylor; orchestra and Girls Glee Club; thirds in: cornet solo, Bob Wiley; Girls Quartette. Again in 1935 F. H. S. had high ratings at the Pittsburg contest. Bill Hollis ranked first in clarinet, and Jeanne Darby second in soprano solo, Erma Bridgman, contralto solo, and John Blankinship, oboe. The music festival at Pittsburg in 1936 brought added fame to Fredonia High School. First honors were won by Erma Bridgman, contralto solo; second, Class B, mixed chorus, third Elma Jean McKinney, piano solo, third orchestra and band.

In 1937 Mr. Paul Marts became director of music. At the 1937 contest in Emporia, Bill Hollis placed first in clarinet; Beth Warner, second in baton twirling; Elma Jean McKinney, third in piano solo. In 1938 at the Chanute contest the ranking of excellent was given the Girls Glee Club and orchestra; the ranking of average to mixed chorus, vocal solo, Marceil Latimer; vocal solo, Maxine Warner; and violin solo, Grace Esther Stone. At the Pittsburg contest the rating of superior was given the band, Girls Glee Club and mixed chorus. The orchestra ranked excellent. At Emporia Ruth Gayle Eflin was rated superior in violin solo.

The clarinet trio, composed of Bill Hollis, Roy Matthews, and James Newmann, which qualified at the Chanute Music contest, entered the National Regional Music contest at Omaha on May 12, 1938. Here they won the ranking of highly superior, the highest ranking that can be given. Mr. Paul L. Marts, director of music, accompanied the boys. This is the first time that Fredonia High School has been represented at a National Regional Music contest which is the highest in the United States.

Three musical events of great importance are connected with the history of Fredonia High School in the past four years. When the new auditorium was completed in 1934, it was dedicated with a concert by the orchestra and glee clubs of the Kansas State Teachers College, Pittsburg. On March 31, 1935, Pittsburg artists under the direction of Walter McCray, a former Fredonian, presented the "The Messiah" in the new auditorium to an audience of over 2,000. The chorus included former Fredonia High School students, Miss Lola Stewart, Reuel Griffin and Warren Edmundson. On November 30, 1938, Thurlow Lieurance, a former music instructor in Fredonia and well known Indian composer, returned to his old home town for a concert of symphony music rendered by his chorus and orchestra. The fall of 1935 saw Fredonia with its first uniformed high school band.

The department of commerce became a part of the Fredonia High School in 1936 when Clyde H. McCoy and Miss Maudene Davis were employed to act as instructors for the new department. A course in advanced domestic art, and a course in home relation for boys in which they study cooking, budgeting, good manners, first aid, clothing, and the ethics of the home were added.

In the summer of 1937 the old high school gymnasium was no longer needed for athletic purposes and was converted into a vocational agriculture department, consisting of a classroom, shop, tool room, and showers, making this one of the best vocational agriculture setups in the state. In that same summer beautiful white porcelain stoves, sink cabinets, and steel enameled cupboards were purchased for the kitchen which is one of the most beautiful and efficient work rooms in any Kansas high school. At the same time a commercial department equipped with new typewriting and bookkeeping desks and modern lighting equipment was installed.

In 1934 the class in dramatic art and Bible literature were added. Next year, 1938-1939, courses in speech, vocational homemaking for girls and mechanics and safety will be given. In 1938, for the first time in the history of the school, twelve months of musical instruction will be available to F. H. S. students.

In the interstate scholarship contest in 1936 held at Pittsburg in which over 600 students took part, Margaret VanDuser won first place in the Spanish contest and received a year's scholarship to attend K. S. T. C. at Pittsburg. Miss Olive Anderson was her instructor.

In 1937-1938 Fredonia High School produced the first undefeated football team in its history. Coach Armstrong and Assistant Coach Moody and their men were honored with a banquet at which Bob Owens was chosen captain and Max Timmons, co-captain.

In 1938, a \$10,000 bond issue for a stadium and athletic field was carried in the community by a 4 to 1 vote. This is a W. P. A. project and the completed work will cost \$31,500, \$21,000 of which will be financed by the government. With the completion Fredonia will have one of the most modern and complete school systems in the state of Kansas.

The 1937-1938 debate season opened with the first team bringing home a trophy for second place from Pittsburg. The members of the team were: affirmative, Doris VanDuser, Margaret Sias; negative, Bill Hollis, Grace Esther Stone. This same group attended the tournament in Topeka. Coach Charles Lafferty is a graduate of Fredonia High School. This is his first year of teaching, his first year of coaching. The debaters in January went to Wellington and there ranked fourth with Luella Myers replacing Grace Esther Stone on the negative team. After winning their regional tournament the team was eligible for the state tournament at Lawrence. Here they were defeated in the third round. This was the second time a Fredonia High School debate team has been eligible for a state tournament.

The Fredonia annual Homecoming Day celebration, Oct. 8, was the best ever. A record breaking crowd of several thousand attended. Mound School placed first in the grades with their Safety float and Lincoln School second, with a "Miss Fredonia" float.

On December 21, 1938, Santa Claus Day, delighted thousands viewed the Christmas parade, which was planned and presented by the Fredonia Ad Club and the Fredonia City schools. The Christian banner and the men of Bethlehem were followed by thirteen beautiful floats which represented characters and stories of childhood. After the parade a Christmas pageant, features of which were the chorus of 200 voices, and the 100 piece orchestra made up of Wilson County students and conducted by Mr. Paul Marts, was given at the auditorium.

Members of the Board of Education in 1934 when the new gymnasium auditorium was financed and built were I. M. Fink, Dr. F. L. Ervay, R. L. Brinegar, E. D. Mikesell, Dr. A. C. Flack and W. B. Latimer. In the summer of 1934 E. D. Mikesell, Dr. Flack and W. B. Latimer resigned, and Hobart Koch, Fred Rettig, and Dr. H. J. Davies were appointed to fill their places. The newly appointed members were on the board when the new manual arts building at Lincoln was voted. Newest member of the board is Don Cook, a Fredonia High School graduate who made a place for himself in the F. H. S. Roster of Fame because of his prowess in football and mathematics. Mr. Cook became a member of the board when Ira M. Fink resigned and was an active member when the stadium was financed and planned.

1938—The day of streamlined automobiles, anklets, and the Big Apple, of swing, cockeyed hats, and the eternal joy of youth.

1938—and Fredonia is a staid old town with great elm trees meeting in green arches across the streets, and hiding the face of the town clock on the Court House tower; a town of great civic pride and interest in its schools. The ninety seniors who will graduate this year make up Fredonia High School's largest class. At the commencement exercises Supt. Wilson and the Board of Education will present members of the class of 1888 with diplomas in remembrance of the first half hundred years of Fredonia High School's growth.

Note: The facts for this history were gleaned from the files of The Wilson County Citizen, edited by John Gilmore. Many of the older papers were so fragile that they had to be handled with exceptional care. We wish to thank Mr. Gilmore for making the accuracy of this history possible.

The Editor.