

A Brief History of Elwood Schools

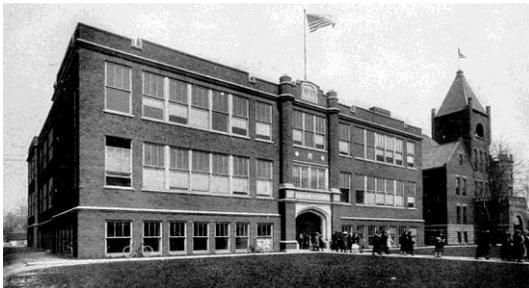
In 1852, the first school house for Elwood was opened one mile north of town. Wooden planks served as desks, benches for student seating, and one teacher. A second school was started the same year in a log cabin on the south end of town.



A central school building was opened in 1876 on the corner of 18th and Main streets. The first high school was organized in 1888 by then Superintendent Herman Willkie. The high school started as a two year course and was lengthened to a four year course in the first nine years of operation.



Five new schools were built during the span from 1892 to 1899. The elementary schools were named Edgewood, Linwood, Osborn, and Washington. The last of the five buildings was a new Central building replacing the previous central school at the same location.



In 1915, the high school was moved out of Central into the new Main Street High School erected next door. A major



addition was constructed in 1927 and a gymnasium was built adjoining the addition in 1936. The high school was renamed to “Wendell L. Willkie High School” in 1944.

A new Edgewood Elementary was constructed on the north side of town in 1955. In 1957, Oakland Elementary was constructed on the south side and two of

the older elementary buildings were closed. A vocation school opened in 1968 which was later renamed to John H. Hinds Career Center.



In 1973, Elwood Community High School was opened just north of the vocational school. With a new high school, the junior high school moved from the old central building into the Wendell L. Willkie building and the old Central building was closed.



A new Elwood Middle School was completed in 1988 adjacent to the high school. The middle and high school were joined allowing shared facilities including art, music, swimming pool, and an auditorium. The same year of 1988 saw a large fire destroy the Wendell L. Willkie and the old gymnasium buildings. In the aftermath, the site that had once been dominated by school buildings since 1876, was razed and became the location of a new YMCA and the Elwood Public Library.