

Harvard schoolhouse which occupied the corner where Smith & Green's is now. House in background also used as

school rooms. 1870's.

Schools Expand Through The Years

The Harvard Schools

Pioneers of the Harvard area were interested in education in spite of hardships and handicaps. Shortly after the settlement of the section began, a school house was built in what is now Dunham Township in June 1839. This school was a log cabin built on the Jerome farm and was taught by Miss Helen Diggins. It was used for many years as school, church, and a place for political meetings. During the troublous times before the Civil War, it was the scene of Abolitionist meetings, some not at all peaceful.

A school was built in Chemung on Section 24 in Dolp Hutchinsons district in 1840 which was also a log cabin. There is no record of the first teacher or the number of pupils. It is known that this log school was used until 1859. A Harvard school was opened in the summer of 1859, in the store building belonging to Hall and Julius, the principal being J.E. Young, assisted by Miss Mary Ballow.

The first building to be built in Harvard for school use was built in 1860, on the lot that is now Smith and Green Hardware. The building was enlarged several times, a wing being added in 1871, and the district bought the house directly north fitting it up to be two grades in 1880. Prior to 1876, H.B. Coe was principal, followed by William H. Knox until 1880. C.C. Grand was principal in 1880 and '81, then Mrs. C.G. Hayner, R.E. Cutler, and in 1885 Ed Sweeney had assumed this task. At the time, there were nine teachers and an average daily attendance of 457.

At one time children went to school in four houses, on the block where Central now stands. One of the houses we know as the Mary D. Ayer Apartments, now moved across the street. Howard Ferris went to school there. This school was supplanted by Central school which was built in 1888. An

interesting fact is that the first school bell was moved to the Central School where it was used into the 1950's to call Harvard children to school. Central served the town as both grade school and high school for many years. The first high school class graduated in 1881 after a four year course. There is no record of who the first Superintendent was, or who the first teachers were, and graduations were held in livery stables, the Opera House, churches and Saunders Hall.

The first mention in official records of a Superintendent of Schools was Charles W. Grons who served for the school year 1896-97. Grons served as principal of the high school division and Anna M. Morrow of the grade school.

The Board of Education at that time was: J.D. Clark, President; W.D. Truax, Secretary; D. Davidson, Milo Munger, H.H. Megran, A.J. McCarthy, R.J. Marshall.

John A. Brazier was the next superintendent and served from 1897 until 1902. He was succeeded by R.G. Jones who served five years. Some of the teachers at that time and the subjects they taught in the high school were: Minnie L. Jones, Latin - Lella Kelsey, English - Helen Jones, Science - Bertha Higman, Mathematics - and Margaret Salisbury, Music.

R.A. Folk became superintendent in 1907, and was followed in 1910 by J.H. Light. School population had so grown that Central was no longer large enough to hold the students. After a long and lengthy debate between the North and South sections of the town as to building on to Central school or building a new school, it was finally resolved to build a school in the south section of the town so that children from that section would not be forced to cross the Northwestern railroad tracks.

Ground was broken in 1910, and Washington School was opened in September 1911. The staff of the school system at that time was:

J.H. Light, Superintendent

John E. Alman, Principal of the High School

Margaret L. Duncan, English

Elizabeth A. Timme, Mathematics

Matilda T. Pinkerton, Latin and Physics

Alda Dewitt, German and Biology

In the Central Grade School the staff was, according to the grade taught:

1st Cora Whittleton

2nd Belle Peters

3rd Gertrude O'Brien

4th Nora Howard

5th Alice Cook

6th Elizabeth Nolan

7th Lulu Hagan

8th Fannie Webster, Principal

At the new Washington school the first staff was:

1st Anna Conway

2nd Nellie Hurlstone

3rd Mayme Greene

4th and 5th Lucy McCarthy, Principal

Bessie Ferris, Drawing

Georgia Ford, Music and Grammar

The upper grades from 6 up still attended Central School.

The School Board at the time of the building of the Washington School had B.F. Manley, President; E.L. Axtell, Secretary; E.P. Felbeck, F.C. Smith, J.H. Vickers, H.L. Ferris, and A.J. McCarthy as members.

Gertrude O'Brien was made principal of the Washington School in 1913, a position she held until retiring in 1954. Miss O'Brien held the longest tenure as a teacher in the history of our school system, beginning at Central in 1909.

Charles Haskell became Superintendent of the Harvard School system in 1918. He had been employed as Principal of the High School in 1916, also teaching Math and Physics. During his term a new High school district was voted in by

the public. The state legislature passed the law allowing the formation of separate High School districts in 1918, and Harvard voters voted to create the new district on November 27, 1919; a bond issue was approved in 1920, and ground was broken for the new high school in the spring of that year. The first classes were held in the new building in October of 1921.

Mr. Haskell served as Superintendent of Schools and as principal of the High School. Haskell must have been a forward looking educator for he brought about many innovations during his term of office. When the new school opened he added a Commercial Department, Household Arts, Agriculture and French to the curriculum.

The first new high school faculty was:

Charles Haskell, Principal

Clifford Rice, Commercial

Marjorie Hagan, Commercial

Adolph Brown, Mathematics

Dorothy Harridge, Mathematics

Jesse Adams, Agriculture

Alice Harlow, Science

Sarah Hardin, Science

Ruth Allen, Latin

Marie Beilenberg, French

Vera Pence, History

Bertha Duerkop, English

Marian Olbrich, Household Arts

Adaline Brainard, Music

After a year as Superintendent and Principal, Haskell hired William W. Meyer to serve as principal in September of 1922, a job he was to hold until he became Superintendent of the system in 1926. In 1922, the Board hired Dan Horne as sports director and Biology teacher, a job he held until his retirement in 1964.

A band and orchestra was added to the school program in 1925, and Mr. Haskell employed Carl Huffman as director. Mr. Huffman was one of the best band men that could be found. A standing joke in the community was that Carl could get music out of a block of wood, and when you saw some who played in the band, the case was proved. Mr. Huffman led the Harvard Band for many years and was an outstanding and capable band leader.



Central school -- note how young the trees are!



Sister M. Virgilia and upper classes at St. Joseph's school 1921.

William W. Meyer became superintendent in 1926, and brought another memorable man in to be principal, Leslie Bourn. "Les", as he was affectionately called, now served as principal until his death in 1950. Though a firm disciplinarian, he was well liked by the students and held a very special place in the hearts of the people in town. At his death, a Les Bourn memorial fund was started and resulted in the Les Bourn Baseball Field being added to the school grounds.

With his death in 1950, Mr. Wayne Ely became high school principal. He was a much loved figure in the school and was affectionately known among students and public as "Pops Ely". Mr. Ely held the position of Principal until he retired.

Mr. Meyer or "W.W." as he was better known, served from 1926 until 1946 as superintendent. He was an able school man and raised the educational standards of the school to an all time high. Under his leadership the school became outstanding scholastically and was a source of pride to the entire community. Mr. Meyer left the Harvard system to join the faculty at Loyola University in Chicago, becoming a Professor of Education.

Richard L. Tazewell became Superintendent in 1946, following three years as principal and served until 1949 when he became Superintendent of McHenry County Schools. Virgil McAllister was principal these three years. He (Mr. Tazewell) was succeeded by Floyd King who remained in the position until he retired in 1964. Mr. King was a most ardent business manager and knew school finances.

Consolidation of the rural schools started in 1949-50 when the district transferred seventh and eighth grade pupils to the high school building. South Dunham school was operated for grades 1 through 3, and Carmack for grades 4 through 6.

All rural schools, except Big Foot, housed three grades in 1951-52. Big Foot school had in addition the fourth grade. Most rural schools closed entirely when a new Washington school building opened November 1, 1953. Jefferson school opened in March 1954, and all rural schools were abandoned at this time.

With the closing of the rural schools the district became a transportation system and a new larger bus garage housing a fleet of 14 busses was built in 1952.

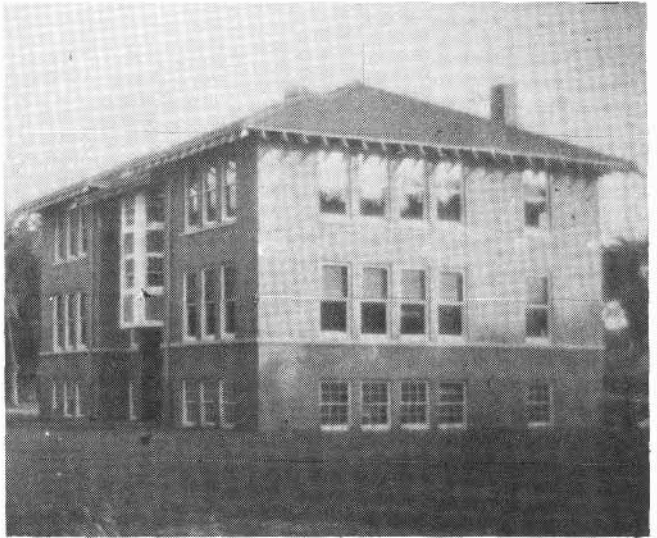
These years of the 1950's were trying years for the Board and the voters. Population had increased, and the closing of the rural schools added numerous students so that the problem of room was of major importance, but several elections were needed before new schools were approved. The board in 1949-50 voted to close the Delehanty, Manley, King, Cash, Island, Stone, Barrows, Dunham, and Burr Oak Schools and placing the buildings up for sale. The schools that remained open were, in the words of the State Superintendent, "in poor condition," and in February 1950 Assistant State Superintendent Finley stated, "If you continue to operate all present rural centers, some improvements must be made in several of them."

The best solution to the problem seemed to bring the rural students into the two schools where facilities were better and the cost less. This program met with opposition from rural dwellers who did not want their children on busses. Consequently, animosity developed and opposition was evident in the number of referendums held to carry the plan to completion.

In March, 1951 the Board went to the voters of the district and proposed that the Board be permitted to:

1. select a High School site
2. purchase a High School site
3. build an addition to the present High School building.
4. issue Bonds in the amount of \$435,000 for a High School addition
5. select a Grade School site
6. construct a Grade School building
7. build a new Grade School
8. issue Bonds in the amount of \$415,000 for a Grade School building.

The outcome of the election was that proposals one and five were accepted and all the rest refused.



The old Washington School.

Again in 1952, 709 voters approved a new addition to the High School, but voted down the \$480,000 bond issue by 631 nay votes.

On the proposition to build a Grade School, 688 voters favored the building idea but defeated the \$410,000 bond issue with 627 negative votes. Voters recognized the need for both an addition to the High School and the need for a new Grade School, but refused to give the Board necessary funds to do it.

In May 1952, the Board decided to return to the voters with the following proposition:

1. to issue bonds in the amount of \$480,000 for a High School addition, \$410,000 to build a grade school on the high school grounds, and a new school at Washington for \$242,000.

With the help of an educational program conducted by the Board, the P.T.A., high school students, the local newspaper and other interested citizens, a special election was held and the high school bonds were accepted.

Now the Board was faced with the problem of going back to the voters and asking for a bond issue of \$652,000 for the two grade schools. This time, after an intensive educational program, the proposition was put to a vote on August 23, 1952 and carried.

In September 1952, the Board decided to tear down Washington School and build a new school on the site, the new

school being opened November 8, 1953. Completion of the new Jefferson School on the High School grounds in March 1954 permitted closing the remaining rural schools and in April 1954, the final sale of rural schools was completed.

In 1960 the number of students in the school system had again over taxed the space. The Board, in December 1961, went to the voters with the proposition to build a new Junior High School. They asked the voters to pass a bond issue for \$650,000, which was approved but with the rising cost of building, the Board had to go to the voters on June 9, 1962 for \$150,000 to complete the Junior High School. The voters refused.

The next year voters were asked to approve a bond issue of \$90,000 to complete the building and again refused.

Thus to finish the building, for the first time in the history of the district, the Board was forced to go into deficit financing. The building was finished out of building funds and other funds and the result was a deficit in these funds and an existence on tax anticipation warrants.

W. Kent Robinson was Superintendent from 1964 until 1967 when Loren Lemmon became Superintendent.

In the elementary school section of the district, after Gertrude O'Brien's retirement in 1954, Lauretta Scott became Principal of the grades and served in the position for two years. In 1949, V. David Fredrick was hired as Elementary School Supervisor to oversee all grade schools in town and the rural areas. When the country schools were closed, Mr. Fredrick became the Principal Supervisor of all the grades in the district replacing the former principals. When the Junior High School was built in 1962, Mr. Fredrick became Principal of the new Junior High School and his position as Elementary Supervisor was replaced by Kenneth Johnson. Robert Camp took his place in 1965, a position he presently holds.

In the high school, Daniel Moore was Principal after Mr. Ely's retirement and remained for two years. John Coil was principal for a year after Mr. Moore and Robert Iftner became principal in 1964, a position he still fills.

The Harvard District is indebted to many men who served on the school board without pay but with a sense of public duty. To list all these names would be impossible. However, there are certain people who because of their length of service must be mentioned.

From 1921 when the new high school district was voted in, the district had two separate boards, one for elementary schools and one for high school. This dual board continued until the establishment of the Community Unit District in 1949.

Among the men who served on this elementary board for many years are: R.J. Keeley, William Hall, C.E. Backus, C.S. Burkart, R.D. Rings, and J.E. Hancock. Mr. Burkart, served as president of the board for many years and Mr. Rings was secretary.

On the High School Board, some of the outstanding members were: T. Merle Paul, who was secretary of the Board for many years. Raymond Olbrich served both as a member and as president of the Board for years. Another member of the community who served a long span of years was Peter Breen. Lyle Wakeley, Arthur Schutt, Laurence Crone, and Harold Hildreth also served for many years and the whole community is indebted to these and the many other men who served on the Board.

Any school is as good as its teachers. No one will ever be able to replace certain memorable teachers. Long after they are dead and gone the names of Fannie Webster and Gertrude O'Brien are remembered with love and affection. There are others who hold a warm spot in the hearts of the students they have taught and no history of the school could be finished without including in this list Dan Horne and M. Pearl Broderick. George Minot spent his lifetime teaching in Harvard until retirement. Teachers who have served a long period of time and are now retired include:

Hazel Barrett, who taught first grade in the district for 34 years;

Francis Fardig was associated with the district for thirty-two years and known as Mr. Music. "Fran" taught choral in the High School for many years and has done outstanding work among the young people of Harvard;

Esther Herrick, sixth grade teacher, 30 years;

Ellen Howard, second grade teacher, 26 years;

Elizabeth Orr, second grade, 42 years;

Grace Forbish, kindergarten, 20 years;

Lucille Maguire, third grade, 22 years;

Virginia Moan, Business Education, 23 years;

Lauretta Scott, first grade, 23 years;

Arnold Welker, High School History, 21 years;

Claude Richardson (deceased) High School Civics, 23 yrs.;

Marcella Nordvig, Anton (Papa Tony) Cervený, and Curt Van Loon are some other "more than a score" teachers.

Mention must be made in any Harvard school article of a real act of heroism. On April 21, 1967, a tornado swept between Harvard and Marengo and on east, doing a half million dollars worth of damage, happening just as one of District 50's school busses approached the jog on Route 23, halfway between the two towns. Seeing the twister coming, the bus driver, Boyd Jones, stopped, guided the children into the ditch, where the older children and Jones covered the smaller ones with their own bodies while the tornado tore over them. Although their bus was wrecked, only four of the children were injured, two of them being hospitalized for a week, two for shorter times.

One of Harvard's greatest prides for many years has been the school music department. For years State Sweepstakes Winner; invited to and a resounding hit at the Vienna Music Festival; giving generously of their talents at home and away; gathering honors on every side, music becomes a very real part of a large segment of our school population's life. For this we honor: Carl Huffman, Francis Fardig, Anton Cervený, and Sharon Keene.

St. Joseph School

St. Joseph's School was dedicated in July 1916 and opened that autumn with a faculty of four grade school teachers and a music teacher. The school has been in continuous operation these pasty sixty years. For many years each nun taught two grades, and enrollment was at times over two hundred fifty pupils. Children were prepared to enter the Harvard High School, where they were on an equal basis with the public school students.

Since the shortage of teaching nuns has become acute, the school is staffed with a lay faculty and due to the moderate sized classes each teacher has, instruction is excellent. The building was remodeled about fifteen years ago, and grades are now separate. Mrs. Robert Rich is principal.

ATHLETICS IN HARVARD HIGH SCHOOL By DALE POSTELWAITE

In the early days little was offered for athletics. Farm children went to small, one room schools that were scattered about the area. They played baseball during recess and at noon (there are still people in Harvard who got their early education in the one room school and a few teachers who built the fires in the stove in the school). When the students finished eighth grade, they went to the county seat for examination to pass into high school, where they would pay tuition.

Until 1921 Central school was both high school and elementary school. Before the Central school was built, there was a frame building used as a high school and a frame building on the corner of Hart Boulevard and Diggins Street for first and second grades.

In the early 1900's the boys would practice track and football on the north side of Central School which was covered with grass instead of with blacktop as is present today. The underclassmen would play baseball at noon and recess using the trees as bases. One local boy broke his wrist twice on the trees!

High school boys would get together and practice football at the south side race track. They played with schools from Walworth, Woodstock, and Marengo. Transportation was the horse and buggy or the early Model T's. Many players walked. Few farm boys were able to play as they had to work on the farm.

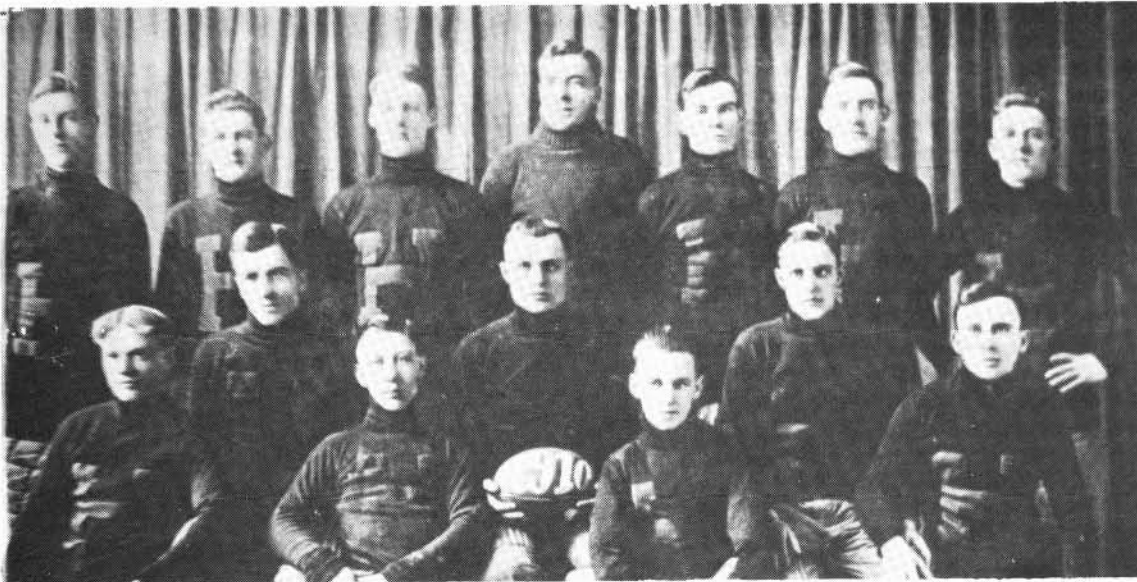
According to Earl Stafford, there were outstanding baseball teams in 1911 and 1912. Some of the early players were Louis Stafford, Vern Palmer, Otis Manley, Paul Galvin, Ralph Clark, and Glen Bauder. Allman was their coach. Another team was under the guidance of Bob Springsteen. They had an undefeated team. Two of the players were George Hawley and Louis Lush.

Basketball players practiced on the third floor of the high school (Central) and played on the second floor of the fire engine house which is now the Odd Fellows Hall.

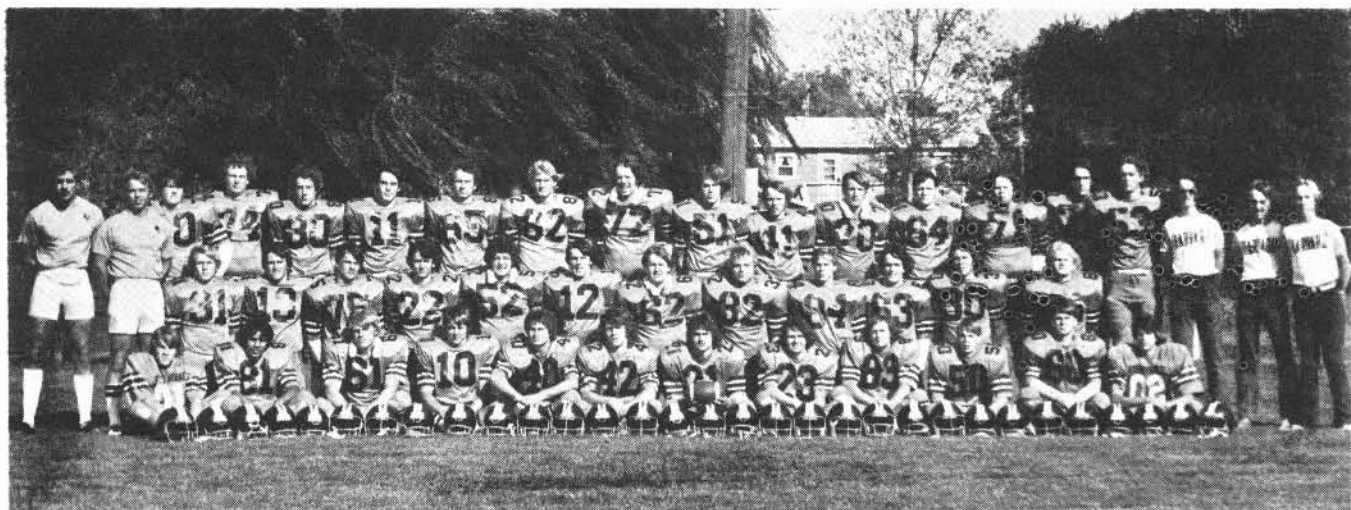
The players on the 1912 baseball team are in the picture. According to records, Louis Lush (the late Ray Lush's brother) was president of the Athletic Association in early 1912 and captain of the football team. Most of the first football teams were put together without much supervision.

The Harvard schools became crowded before the present high school was built and they had to have half day classes in each of the grades. The first class graduated from the present high school in 1922. There are some people in Harvard that were in the first graduating class such as Mr. and Mrs. Ed Schutt, Grace Forbish, Ruth Smith, Art Palmer, Stella Burke, Elizabeth and Herb Orr, Gwen Danner, Glen Lincoln, and Ken Burritt.

Some of these people can recall trips made in a Reo station wagon to various basketball games from about 1920. A couple of trips to Hebron by bobsleigh must go into any annals of Harvard. Mr. and Mrs. Mongerson (he was a teacher and she his bride) chaperoned a trip when the sleigh tipped over and everyone walked part way; one in 1926 very nearly had tragic results. It had turned very cold during the game and for the sake of keeping blood flowing after another upset sleigh, teachers were trying to keep everyone walking. Two of the girls (Dorothy Roach and Isabel Hancock, perhaps?) finally reached that stage when they wished to lie down and sleep in the snow. Jack Shepard kept them going. He pushed, slapped and cursed them but he kept them on their feet, and eventually everyone on the trip did get home, frost bitten but safe. The next day a girls father called at Shepards to thank Jack for saving his daughter's life, but Jack hid, sure that the father wanted to punish him for "cussing" girls!



Harvard High football team, 1910.



Harvard High Football team, 1976.

A.A. Brown, the Physics teacher, helped with the first football team in the Harvard High School.

It was in 1922 that Mr. Horne (Mr. Football) came to Harvard from the University of Wisconsin. Through him a complete, supervised football team was assembled for Harvard.

Mr. Bourn came to our high school as a math teacher and Assistant Football Coach. He helped Mr. Horne for a few years until Mr. Ecklund came from Lombard College as a teacher and coach, and continued until his death on December 9, 1943. Mr. Bourn became principal but quit and began working for Dean Milk Company.

Football was much different in the early days. There were eleven men on offense and defense. The players played both. A player taken out of the game could not be put back in the same quarter. The quarterback ran the team, without help from the coach. Sometimes the coach and quarterback would use signals, but the quarterback called plays and formations.

In those days some of the best football players were farm boys. They had to sacrifice to play, milking and doing chores before and after school, and it was usually dark when they got home from football practice. Sometimes Mr. Horne would have to go out to the farm to get players from filling silo to play (one such player was Everett McFarlin).

Mr. Horne and luckier boys who had cars would provide transportation for the players to out of town games, and it seemed a lot of games were played in snow storms.

During the coaching career of Mr. Horne, Harvard played in several different conferences, the team being victorious in the North Six in 1925. In the early days there was only one referee, sometimes a nearby farmer.

As football progressed nationally, so it did in Harvard. The Substitution Rule became more lenient. The ball would be passed to a backfield man to carry the ball. The quarterback carried some end rounds and also sneaked. The huddle was adapted. More students got to play. The two platoon system was initiated.

In Dan Horne's forty years of coaching, he gave out some one thousand letters to his players. Harvard was McHenry County champion in 1928 through 1930, North Four Champion in 1934, North Six Champions in 1941, 1944, and 1945, SWANI

Champions in 1950 and 1951, and SHARK Champions 1954, 1955, 1957, 1959 and 1961.

Mr. Horne said his first year as coach in Harvard he had fifteen boys out for football. When they played Marengo many of the boys walked there to play.

Some outstanding players of Horne's years as coach were: Robert Camp, Dick Vance, Floyd Schnitke, Ray Hookstadt, Albert Bowman, Frosty Odell, Joe Warren, Vernon Townsend, Hugh Deneen, Robert Mulvenna, Gordon Postelwaite, Bruce Vierck. Outstanding managers were Herbert Mitchem and John Manley.

In 1950, the team adapted the name of Hornets in honor of Coach Horne.

In Mr. Horne's early years in Harvard, he also coached basketball. There are still men in Harvard who walked to Hebron to play basketball. Athletes in Harvard, as well as in other schools, had to endure hardships to compete.

During Mr. Horne's basketball career of twenty-seven years, he had a few outstanding basketball players such as Ted Strain (Strain's Grocery), Robert Deneen, now with the F.B.I. (brother of Attorney Hugh Deneen), and Robert (Bud) Cook.

In later years the football field was named Dan Horne Field, the band became the Harvard Hornet Band and a scoreboard was erected in honor of Mr. Horne. Every player that played for Coach Horne always remembers him as a fair and outstanding gentleman.

The 1975 team of Harvard High School was one of the best in many years, winning the conference and going on to play in state playoffs. Much success goes to coaches: Mr. Stevens, Mr. Carlson, Mr. Holtfreter, Mr. Hagenbruch, Mr. Swengel, and Mr. Moore.

The Harvard High Wrestling Team has had a most successful season under the guidance of John Sciacca. The boys seldom lost a match.

In the early days (1920's) another Harvard boy became quite a wrestler at the University of Illinois. He was George Minot who later became a coach and teacher in Harvard.

Harvard has shown its strong athletic abilities in the past and surely its success will continue in the future.