

The Development of Education in Chetek

As a general theme for our 1932 Pine Cone, we have chosen the development of education in Chetek. In the developing of this theme, we have referred to the past history of Chetek Schools.

The territory which now makes up Barron County was once a part of Polk County; but in 1859, by a special act of legislature, it was detached and was called Dallas County. After a period of ten years, the name of Dallas County was changed to Barron County in honor of the judge of our judicial district, Henry D. Barron. At this time a school superintendent and three trustees were appointed by the governor. The trustees had power to hire teachers and had jurisdiction over all the school buildings.

At the foot of what is now Dunsmoor's hill, Chetek built its first school house in 1871. In 1878 another building was erected not far from the other building. All eight grades were housed in this new building until 1883, when it became too crowded. Moore's hall was then rented and used for two years.

In 1884, a four room frame building was constructed where our present grade building now stands. At first only the two lower rooms were used, but later the upper rooms were finished and used as high school and grammar rooms. The first class to graduate from this high school was a small one of three pupils. In 1902 the building became so crowded that it became necessary to build a two room addition. When these two rooms had been in use only a short time, fire, caused by a defective chimney, completely destroyed the building.

Meanwhile, school was conducted in the Methodist and Presbyterian churches, while plans for a new fireproof building were started. In 1903 the brick building that is now the grade was completed. It originally contained six rooms, but it was later remodeled. The basement was made into two grade rooms.

During 1917 the number of students became so large that it became necessary to lease the store room which is now Mr. Larson's store, for the purpose of housing the eighth grade. This building was used for both the seventh and eighth grades until 1921.

In 1920 plans were made for a new brick and tile building on the western side of the school grounds. This fireproof building was completed in 1922. At present this building houses the seventh and eighth grades and the high school.

A commercial course was added to the regular high school course in 1927. In 1930 music instruction was started, and this school year, 1931, home economics and manual arts were added to the curriculum. In this manner, our institutions of learning have developed in Chetek until now we have an educational system of which we are justly proud.