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Chapter VII

HISTORY OF THE SCHOOLS

In the fall of 1973, an important educational institution in the community closed its doors after almost ninety years of service. This was Argentine High School. The new J. C. Harmon High School was completed and began operations. The new high school is a combination of Argentine and Rosedale High Schools. The old high school buildings became middle schools for grades six through nine. Many wonderful memories were connected with the old high school. Generations of Argentineans received educational instruction. The new J. C. Harmon High School will continue to carry on this rich tradition.

This heritage had its beginnings in 1884. A two year high school course was begun in what was then the Lowell Grade School located on Elmwood near the southeast corner of 2nd Street. The first graduates from the program were Ella Erwin and Alta Turple, who graduated in 1886. Later, Miss Turple, whose married name was Greer, taught at Emerson Grade School in Argentine.¹

In those days, two years of high school education was sufficient preparation for becoming a teacher.

By the fall of 1889, the high school had been moved to two rooms upstairs in the Bruce Grade School. This school was located on Strong Avenue near the corner of 4th Street and was the elementary school for the town's colored children.

The high school term was eight months. There were only two teachers. One of these was Helen Keinknecht, who was also the principal. The other was Frank Agrelius who later taught for many years at Kansas State Teachers College of Emporia.²

Within a few years, the two-year program was extended to four years. On June 5, 1891, at the Noakes Opera House in Argentine, the first ceremonies were held for a four-year graduate. The first graduate was Bertha May Bell.³

The school's enrollment grew with the town. By 1901, eighty-eight students attended the high school. The enrollment had doubled in the three years. The graduating class that year consisted of two boys and four girls.⁴

Beginning in 1902, the school system suffered a brief setback. The silver smelter's fortunes had declined and shortly it went out of business. The town's population declined. Some students left school for financial reasons, others moved away. In 1902, the enrollment had decreased to seventy-three pupils. There was a serious drop-out problem. In the academic year of 1902-03, twelve students quit school.⁵

The 1903 and 1904 floods also resulted in a steep decline in enrollment. Many families were flooded out and eventually left the community. For these reasons, the enrollment in the early 1900's fluctuated between about 70 and 188.⁶

The two floods heavily damaged the Emerson Grade School in which the high school classes were held. Consequently, the high school was forced to seek new quarters. Temporary housing was found in an old brick building at the corner of 24th Street and Silver Avenue. Classes were held at other times on the second floor of the City Hall Building above the jail and workhouse.

The people of Argentine decided to build a permanent school house. A location was found at 22nd Street and Elmwood. Elmwood as such no longer exists as an actual street. Thus, a more precise location for the school is 22nd and Ruby Avenue. When the school was constructed, seven homes and the Ruby Avenue Congregational Church were located in the area between Elmwood and Ruby. Later, over the years as the school expanded, these buildings were removed.

¹ Hattie E. Poppino, "History of the Argentine Community and Argentine High School," (unpublished essay of eleven pages found in the Kansas Room Collection of the Kansas City, Kansas Public Library, 1965), p. 5

² *Ibid*

³ *Ibid*

⁴ *Ibid*

⁵ *Ibid*, p. 6

⁶ Argentine High School, Argentine Mustang Yearbook, vol 20 (1973), p. 17

The original high school building consisted of six classrooms and a small auditorium. There were 100 students and six teachers. Eleven students graduated in 1908 and in that year an athletic program was introduced.⁷ A teacher doubled as the athletic coach.

Minnie J. Oliverson was the first principal of the newly constructed school. She started as principal in 1905 and was to remain as principal until 1910. Before coming to Argentine, she taught at the Kansas City High School which was later renamed Wyandotte High School.

<http://www.kckps.org/disthistory/openbuildings/wyandotte.html>

At the time, the school system of the town was run by the Argentine Board of Education. School rules and curriculum were quite different than they are today. The common course of study was eight years in duration. Regular promotions were made at the middle and at the end of the year under the direction of the superintendent. The daily work of the pupil largely furnished the basis for his promotion to a higher level. If a pupil was able and willing to do the work of the class ahead of him, he was promoted. Special promotions could also be made at any time if the pupil had proven himself ready for advancement.

Three divisions or levels existed in the school system. The primary level was made up of grades one through four. The grammar school consisted of the fifth through eighth grades. The highest level was the four years of high school.⁸

Discipline was rigidly enforced in those days. Straps and whips were the most common forms of punishment. Straps and whips were the most common forms of punishment. Often a naughty student would be ordered to go outside and cut a branch from a tree for use as a whip.⁹

In 1910, Argentine as a town ceased to exist as it became a part of Kansas City, Kansas. The Board of Education was dissolved, and by 1913 the community's schools were a part of the Kansas City, Kansas, Public School District 500. M. E. Pearson was the Superintendent of the Kansas City schools.

Also in 1910, Frank D. Tracy became the Principal of Argentine High School. Tracy was born on February 10, 1869 in Montgomery County, Kansas. He graduated from the Kansas State Normal School of Emporia. Before coming to Argentine, he was the supervisor of several grade schools in Kansas City, Kansas. He left Argentine in 1915 and became an instructor of mathematics at Central High School in Kansas City, Missouri.¹⁰

Clarence Thornton Rice became the new principal and was to stay until 1919. Earlier he had been the superintendent or principal of several schools in Bonner Springs, Kansas, and later a math teacher at Wyandotte High School in Kansas City, Kansas. After leaving Argentine, Rice again returned to Wyandotte where he became the principal. He is also well known as the founder of the Anchor Savings and Loan Association of Kansas City, Kansas.¹¹

These two men played a prominent part in the rapid growth of the high school during the years before the First World War. In 1913, the school library already had a reported 680 books. That year also saw Argentine High School become accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. In 1918 the school embarked on the project of cataloging the books in the library.¹²

In 1919 an athletic coach was added. A winning tradition was established that first season. Seven out of ten football games and twenty-five out of twenty-eight basketball games were won. The basketball team went into the finals of the state tournament and won second place.¹³

In another respect, 1919 was a memorable year for the high school and the community. Frank L. Schlagle became the principal and would remain principal until 1924. Under Schlagle's leadership in 1920 a Parent-Teacher Association was organized. Mrs. Mary Helmreich was elected the first president on October 4,

⁷ Poppino, "History of the Argentine Community and Argentine High School," p. 7

⁸ Marye Ruth Webster, "History of Emerson School," (unpublished report found in the Emerson Grade School file of the Board of Education Office of the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools), p. 9

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 9

¹⁰ Argentine High School Junior Class of 1973, "Argentine H-Lites," (a short history of the high school compiled by students and published by the high school's journalism class, 1973), p. 5

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Wesley Channell, Beckie Fabian, and Mary Jo Williamson, "And Then Came Argentine," (unpublished paper done by Argentine High School students in 1961, provided through the courtesy of Robert Allison, Counselor of Harmon High School), p. 35

¹³ "A Quarter Century of Progress," (unpublished report found in the Argentine file of the Board of Education Office of the Kansas City, Kansas Schools, 1933), p. 2

1920. This was the first P.T.A. organized in Kansas City, Kansas and may have been the first one organized in the state.¹⁴ National and state honors were won in journalism and music. The school placed third in a scholarship contest at Emporia in 1923.¹⁵

A rich typing tradition was also begun at the school. Under the leadership of G. C. Brink, a typing teacher at Argentine for forty-five years¹⁶ the school was credited with having the best department of business of any school in the state. The business department had such a local reputation that business establishments in the Kansas City area were calling the school in search of prospective employees. The author's mother secured a position with the Pierson and Williams Insurance Company in Kansas City, Missouri, in this manner.

Fourteen straight state typewriting championships were won. The Kansas trophy was won for sixteen years and district championships were won for an equally long period of time.¹⁷ In 1921, Catherine Murray, a student at Argentine, set a new world record in typing for high school students with the almost unheard of time of seventy-two words per minute.¹⁸

The Journalism Department of Argentine High School under the direction of Miss Frances Taylor also won many honors. Miss Taylor devoted her entire teaching career to the high school. She started there in September of 1903 and remained there until 1952. She was considered an outstanding Journalism teacher. The school's yearbook won national honors for many years. The school newspaper also won many awards.

Many schools activities were added during the 1920's and 1930's. The A Club was organized in 1918. This was an organization of students who had won one or more varsity letters in a sport. In 1927, the Mustang was adopted as the school symbol, and in 1932 the Mustang Club was formed as a type of pep club.¹⁹ The "Buzzer" was the school paper until 1922. Thereafter, the Argentine Journalism Staff put out a school newspaper from 1923-1972.²⁰ A school yearbook was also added in the late teens.

The school's enrollment climbed rapidly. By the fall of 1921, there were 10 teachers and 285 students, of which 53 were seniors, 54 juniors, 64 sophomores, 97 freshmen and 1 post-graduate student.²¹

The high school was becoming crowded. The following paragraph appeared in the school newspaper, October 5, 1922.

Because of crowded conditions the seating in the auditorium has been changed. What was formerly the senior section was not large enough to accommodate the fifty-three seniors enrolled so the other classes were crowded back to make room for them.²²

By 1923 an addition had been made to the high school building. Eleven classrooms and the much-needed auditorium were added. A couple of years earlier, a gymnasium and a small cafeteria were built. The school was also changed from a senior high into a junior and senior high school. Enrollment that year was 557. This total was comprised of 47 seniors, 78 juniors, 84 sophomores, 103 freshmen, 117 in the eighth grade and 123 in the seventh.²³

In 1924, Schlagle left the high school to become the Assistant Superintendent of the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools. Then, in 1932, the superintendent, M. E. Pearson, retired. Schlagle was named to succeed him, and was to remain as the superintendent for thirty years until his retirement on August 31, 1962.

J. C. Harmon succeeded Schlagle as Argentine High's principal and was to remain as the principal until his retirement. Harmon was born on December 9, 1886, on a farm in Montgomery County, Missouri. He received a B.A. degree from Central Wesleyan College and his M.A. degree in School Administration from the University of Missouri at Columbia.²⁴

¹⁴ "Argentine Hi-Lites," p. 6

¹⁵ Poppino, "History of the Argentine Community and Argentine High School," p. 7

¹⁶ "A History of Argentine High School," (unpublished paper found in the Argentine file of the Board of Education Office of the Kansas City, Kansas Schools, 1940), p. 3

¹⁷ "Argentine Hi-Lites," p. 42

¹⁸ Poppino, "History of the Argentine Community and Argentine High School," p. 7

¹⁹ "Argentine Hi-Lites," p. 43

²⁰ Ibid, p. 21

²¹ "A History of Argentine High School," (Board of Education Archives), p. 2

²² Ibid

²³ Ibid

²⁴ J. C. Harmon, personal interview held in his home at 1424 Ruby, Kansas City, Kansas, January 7, 1974.

Harmon was in the field of education for forty-four years, yet was never a classroom teacher. His career began as a principal in Martinsberg, Missouri in 1912. During the school year of 1915-1916 he attended the University of Missouri. There he met another student, Miss Mary Yancy, who shortly thereafter was to become his wife. From 1916 until 1918 he was the principal of the High School in Moberly, Missouri. In 1918, he moved to Nevada, Missouri, where he became the superintendent of schools until 1920. Then, he became the President of Cottey Junior College, a girls' school, until 1924 when he came to Argentine.²⁵

Harmon's tenure was to be a memorable era for the school and the community as well. Argentine High School continued its growth. Junior high school graduation exercises were begun in 1927 and would continue until 1957. By 1930, the school's library had increased to 2,211 books.²⁶

By 1930, the enrollment had increased to 809 students.²⁷ A new building was added south of the old stone structure and connected to it by corridors. The new building contained a new gymnasium and eight classrooms.²⁸ It was also about this time that students in the western end of Armourdale, just across the Kaw River, were given the option of attending either Wyandotte or Argentine High School. Many new students began attending Argentine High School and by 1935 the enrollment had risen to 1,130 students. Twenty-nine teachers comprised the faculty.²⁹

The 1930's brought a new emphasis on vocational training and a great enlargement of the curriculum. When the high school first began operations, the courses were naturally limited. Algebra, Plane and Solid Geometry, four years of Latin, two years of German, English, Botany, Physics and Chemistry were offered. On alternate years a student might be able to take American History, Ancient History and General Science.³⁰ A total of fifty-seven courses were offered by 1935. Vocation courses had been introduced. These included Mechanical Drawing, Freehand Drawing, Woodworking, Foods, Metal Shop, and Shop Mathematics.³¹

Vocational training was a relatively new concept in high school education in the 1930's. The only high school specializing in this curriculum in the Kansas City area was Manual High School in Kansas City, Missouri. Argentine High School was to become a pioneer among Kansas schools in this endeavor.

J. C. Harmon was to become the driving force behind the new concept. The author had the privilege of interviewing Mr. Harmon and these are his recollections about the foundings of the vocational program:

The initiation of the Vocational Program was probably the most important change in all my years at the High School. The High School, for many years, was primarily for the bright book-minded boys and girls. We had to realize that not everyone has the ability, the ambition, or the opportunity to go on to college. All we offered at the time, however, was a strictly academic program.

However, only a few of our students continued their education beyond the high school level. Furthermore, only a very small percentage of their parents had even completed high school. Almost all went out and acquired a trade of some sort. It has always been my philosophy that the schools should serve the needs of everyone. Therefore, it was paramount that we added new courses to serve our students' interests and needs. The Vocational Program was to aide in this respect.

I remember that there had been a fire in the gymnasium of the Kansas City, Kansas High School at 9th and Minnesota Avenue. What shop equipment they had was moved to the new gymnasium that was built. They said that they could not find enough students interested in a shop program. I asked the Superintendent of Schools if I could have their equipment and he gave me the okay.

Then I went down to O. C. Smith, the President of the Kansas City Structural Steel Company, and asked him if he would help support a vocational program at the high school. Next I got on the phone and talked to the members of the Board of Education. I said, "It's a budget time and don't forget Argentine High School."

²⁵ Ibid

²⁶ Channell, Fabian and Williamson, "And Then Came Argentine," p. 36

²⁷ "Argentine Hi-Lites," p. 43

²⁸ Argentine Mustang Yearbook, vol 20 (1973), p. 17

²⁹ "Argentine Hi-Lites," p. 43

³⁰ Clyde E. Swender, "Building a Vocational Education Program for Argentine High School," (unpublished Master of Science Thesis, Kansas State Teachers College of Emporia, 1936), p. 2

³¹ Ibid, pp. 21-23

Shortly, we received the funds necessary to initiate our program. The school got a shop unit complete with a machine shop and much auto mechanical welding, and electrical equipment. For girls there was typing, sewing, shorthand, business machines, and foods processing classes.

A work-study program was started in which a student worked a few hours a day at a local business establishment and received on the job training. We were the first school in the state to have such a program. Ruth Schlatter was the first student to take advantage of this program. She began working part time for the Industrial State Bank and has been there ever since. Other students began working for Thompson's Cafeteria on Minnesota Avenue on the Kansas side and at the Myron Green Cafeteria in downtown Kansas City, Missouri.³²

The vocational program was a tremendous success. Many Argentine students received the vocational skills necessary to enable them to secure employment with businesses in the community. The whole community thus benefited from the vocational program initiated at the high school. This program, which later became known as the Smith-Hughes program, became a model for other school systems to adopt.

<http://skyways.lib.ks.us/genweb/archives/wyandott/history/1911/volume1/380.html>

<http://skyways.lib.ks.us/library/leavenworth/govdoc/EdVoEd.htm>

<http://www.fhsu.edu/agriculture/history.htm>

<http://ktwu.wuacc.edu/journeys/scripts/2002/1504a.html>

<http://www.technical-vocational-schools.net/technical-schools/kansas.html>

Funds continued to be appropriated for this program. In 1940 a shop addition was built onto the school. The Federal Works Agency of the Public Works Administration aided by giving a grant of \$123,317.³³ The total cost of construction was \$500,000. Four classrooms, one science laboratory, one instrumental music room, one chorus room and seven shop rooms were built. The new building capacity was now enough for 1,500 students in forth-two classrooms.³⁴

In 1938 construction was begun on an athletic field at 22nd and Lawrence. This location, about one mile south of the high school, is on a high, winding hill overlooking the valley.

The concrete stadium as completed in 1939 at a cost of \$10,000. The field was sodded at an additional cost of \$1,000. The seating capacity of the stadium is 2,700 people.³⁵ Dressing rooms are at each end of the stadium. The stadium quickly played an important part in the school's activities. The field has since been used for football games and track meets. For many years the senior high graduation exercises also took place in the stadium.

Another construction project was in the immediate future of the high school. Part of this was credited to the flood of 1951. Several schools in the Argentine and Armourdale sections of Kansas City, Kansas, were heavily damaged. A \$6,500,000 bond issue was passed in Kansas City, Kansas to renovate the school system. Approximately \$1,500,000 of this was given to the Argentine school district.³⁶ Most of this money was to be used to enlarge the high school. The school was becoming overcrowded. Much of the school, dating back to 1908, was old and in need of remodeling.

In the summer of 1954, the original building of 1908 and other portions were razed. Also, the Ruby Avenue Congregational Church and several residences facing Ruby Avenue and 21st Street were torn down leaving the school that entire square block. While construction was being completed, students attended half-day sessions during the 1954-1953 school year.

In another respect, the summer of 1954 marked the passing of an era and a beginning of a new one. J. C. Harmon, after forth years as principal, retired. Wesley R. Channell became the new principal. Previously, he had been in Wyandotte High School's guidance program.

By mid-1956, the new building was completed with an auditorium, office, library, cafeteria, health clinic, and sixteen new classrooms. The new main office had two guidance rooms, a waiting room, an office for the

³² Harmon, personal interview.

³³ "Argentine High School Dedication Program for the Shop Addition, January 23, 1940," (unpublished report found in the Argentine High School file of the Board of Education Office of the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools), p. 1

³⁴ Channell, Fabian, and Williamson, "And Then Came Argentine," p. 36

³⁵ Argentine High School Yearbook, 1944 (Argentine Yearbook Staff, 1944), p. 53

³⁶ Channell, Fabian, and Williamson, "And Then Came Argentine," p. 37

activity director, and a private office for the principal. The new auditorium seated 1,200 students compared with a seating capacity of only 950 in the old one. The new cafeteria could serve 420 people instead of the former 100. The kitchen was praised as one of the most modern in the state.³⁷

The enrollment of Argentine High School did not increase to any great extent for the next twenty years. By September of 1972, the average enrollment was 1,332 students. The faculty was comprised of sixty-one classroom teachers, two vice-principals, three guidance counselors, a nurse, a librarian, and four office employees.³⁸

W. R. Channell put in a distinguished nineteen years as principal. Gradually, however, the new addition to the school aged. Once again the building was becoming inadequate for the community's growing needs. The school's parking lot was too small. Classrooms were becoming overcrowded. The athletic field was too far away for convenience. These are some of the reasons that the Board of Education began contemplating the building of a new high school.

For several years plans had been formulated for the building and equipping of this and other schools in Kansas City, Kansas. In January 1970, the voters of Kansas City, Kansas approved a \$24,500,000 bond issue. Over 5,762,000 of this money was to go for the construction of the new high school in Argentine.³⁹

A location for this school was found in the vicinity of 2400 Steele Road. The new high school was to be called the J. C. Harmon High School in honor of the man who had served as principal of Argentine High School for thirty years.

The J. C. Harmon High School was part of the largest school construction program ever undertaken throughout Kansas and the Kansas City metropolitan area. It opened in the fall of 1973. The area of the building is 196,834 square feet covering 33.36 acres. The architects were Marshall and Brown of Kansas City, Kansas. They won an award for their design. Lehr Construction Company of St. Joseph, Missouri were the general contractors.⁴⁰

The new high school has many outstanding building features. A large two-story high space exists in the center of the building around which the other parts of the school are grouped. This area serves as a social gathering place, dining hall, auditorium, gymnasium, and lobby. Flexibility is another characteristic. Almost all areas of the building are built as large open spaces which are subdivided by semi-permanent partitions. These partitions can be rearranged to meet new requirements. The building is also departmentalized with classes and laboratories grouped according to subject matter. A small "mini" auditorium is ideally suited for instructing large groups or can be used as seating capacity for the staging of school performances. A large modern school library, with conveniently located "mini" libraries, also serves the new school. The modern kitchen is designed to serve the entire student body and provides service daily for 2,500 elementary school children in the Kansas City, Kansas area. Food is prepared in the high school kitchen and is catered to all the elementary schools.⁴¹

The old Argentine football stadium at 22nd and Lawrence, which is about forty years old, has been remodeled. The track was widened, and improvements were made on the dressing rooms and the lighting of the field.⁴² The stadium was also renamed the Art Lawrence Stadium in honor of Mr. Arthur Lawrence, a distinguished coach and teacher at Rosedale High School for thirty-six years.

The new J. C. Harmon High, serving the Argentine, Rosedale, and Armourdale communities, is designed for 1,500 students from grades ten through twelve. The old Argentine and Rosedale High Schools have been turned into middle schools for grades six through nine. William Todd, the former principal of Rosedale High School, has taken a similar position at the new J C Harmon High School. W L Channell, after nineteen years of service, left the Argentine school district to become the principal of the F L Schlagle High School at 2214 North 59 Street in Kansas City, Kansas. The Schlagle High School also opened in the fall of 1973.

Lawson Roberts, formerly the principal of West Junior High School in Kansas City, Kansas is the principal of the Argentine Middle School. Lawrence Chaney is the vice-principal. The average enrollment of

³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 38

³⁸ "Argentine Hi-Lites," p. 43

³⁹ Kansas City, Kansas Board of Education, "Facts About New Schools in Kansas City, Kansas" (pamphlet circulated by the Public Information of the Kansas City, Kansas Board of Education, 1972), p. 1

⁴⁰ Kansas City, Kansas Board of Education, "J. C. Harmon High School" (pamphlet circulated by the Public Information Office of the Kansas City, Kansas Board of Education, 1973), p. 7

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 5

⁴² Kansas City Kansas Board of Education, "Facts About New Schools in Kansas City, Kansas", p. 7

the four grades is around 900 students. There are thirty-eight classrooms in operation with faculty of thirty-six teachers.⁴³

Many fine elementary schools have served the Argentine community. Presently there are three of them: Emerson, Stanley, and the new Silver City Elementary School. Three former grade schools are Lincoln, Franklin and Lowell. The Lowell Grade School was the first school built in Argentine. It was only in operation for a few years at 22nd and Ruby. When the high school was started at that location, the grade school was used as part of that facility.

<http://www.kckps.org/disthistory/openbuildings/argentine.html>

<http://www.kckps.org/disthistory/openbuildings/harmon.html>

<http://www.kckps.org/disthistory/openbuildings/emerson.html>

<http://www.kckps.org/disthistory/openbuildings/newstanley.html>

<http://www.kckps.org/disthistory/openbuildings/silvercity.html>

http://www.kckps.org/disthistory/closedbuildings/lowell_arg.htm

<http://www.kckps.org/disthistory/closedbuildings/lincoln-argentine.htm>

<http://www.kckps.org/disthistory/closedbuildings/franklin.html>

<http://www.kckps.org/disthistory/closedbuildings/bruce-arg.html>

<http://www.kckps.org/disthistory/openbuildings/nobleprentis.html>

Another early school was the Bruce Grade School located in the Mulvane Addition to Argentine, which is now the corner of 24th and Strong. Constructed in 1888, it was later named the Lincoln Grade School. The Argentine School District was segregated until about the mid-1950s. Negro youths of high school age attended Sumner High School in Kansas City, Kansas. For almost eighty years, those of elementary age attended the Lincoln Grade School. The original building consisted of four rooms and eight grades. John Smith was the first principal. Other early principals were W F Bufkins, Tom Collins, P K Brown, L V Grant, Woodie Jacobs, Rhoda Johnson, and Dale Boggess. The members of the first faculty were Lena Brown, Ethel Stafford, and W D Holmes. The first PTA was organized in 1916 with Mrs. Martha McReynolds as president. In 1965 the school was retired from active service. At that time, it was the oldest building in the Kansas City, Kansas School system. The building was razed in 1969.⁴⁴

The Franklin Grade School is also no longer in use. It was phased out in 1972. Former students now attend the Noble Prentis and the Emerson Grade Schools. Franklin has an interesting history. In the 1800s and 1890s, children of the east end of Argentine attended Lowell and it quickly became overcrowded. Land was purchased in 1898 from the Kansas Town Company for the building of a new school.

The school's name has an unusual origin. The Argentine Board of Education proposed four names for the new school. All were the names of distinguished Americans: Franklin, Greely, Irving, and Whittier. It was decided that the townspeople would vote on the new name. A five cents poll tax was paid. This money was used to purchase a flag for the school.⁴⁵

Franklin was the chosen name of the school. It opened in 1898 and consisted of four rooms and four teachers. Miss Alice Beckwith was the first principal. The first PTA was organized in 1912 with Mrs. George Drake was president. In 1914 ground was donated and a six-room addition was constructed.⁴⁶

The Stanley Grade School is one of the schools currently in use. This school was built in 1889 on land purchased from the legal guardian of George Washington, who was the son of a Shawnee Indian woman named Mary Whitefeather. The original school was called the Gibbs and Payne School and consisted of four rooms and three teachers.⁴⁷ This structure burned on September 5, 1912. Two portable buildings were temporarily used, as was a small one-room school at the corner of 37th and Powell. Some students were sent to Franklin and Emerson.⁴⁸

⁴³ Lawrence Chaney, personal interview held at the Argentine Middle School, 22nd and Ruby, Kansas City, Kansas, on March 12, 1974

⁴⁴ "Lincoln School History" (unpublished report of 1940 found in the Lincoln Grade School file of the Board of Education Office of the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools), pp. 1-2

⁴⁵ "Franklin Grade School History" (unpublished report of 1940 found in the Franklin Grade School file of the Board of Education Office of the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools), p. 3

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 1

⁴⁷ "Stanley Grade School History" (unpublished report of 1940 found in the Stanley Grade School file of the Board of Education Office of the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools), p. 3

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 1

The new building was completed in 1915 at a cost of \$40,000. An addition was made to the school in 1923.⁴⁹ Presently, the Stanley School, located at 36th and Metropolitan, has 22 teachers with an enrollment of around 400 students in 18 classrooms. It is presently classified as a Title I school and has an Extensive Learning Program with two instructors in some classrooms.⁵⁰

Emerson Grade School was built in 1887. Originally it had six rooms with sixty-four seats in each room.⁵¹ The author believes the school was named in honor of Ralph Waldo Emerson. In 1903, the school was used to house flood refugees. Water, in fact, reached the first floor of the building. In 1908, an addition of six rooms was built. In 1910, the Emerson Park and playground was built around the school. This area had been a swamp before and people were permitted to fish in it. A board sidewalk was built over the swamp to Strong Avenue. For many years, a saloon was located near the school at 29th and Strong, but it was torn down when Emerson Park was started.⁵² A large addition to the Emerson School was made in 1961 at a cost of \$430,000. Eleven classrooms, a stage, an office and a library were built.⁵³

The Noble Prentis Elementary School has also served the Argentine community. Though it is actually in the Rosedale School District, students from Argentine, at various times, have attended this school.

Ground was donated for this school by a Mr. Roe in 1910. Construction was begun in 1911, on a two-room school. Two rooms in 1914 were added above the original school. The first principal was Abigail Newton and the school was originally called the "Yellow Hammer School." The first teachers were Serlena Wilhite and Abigail Newton. The first PTA was organized December 11, 1914.⁵⁴ Several additions to the school have been made. The latest addition was within the last few years.

The newest elementary school in the Argentine community is the Silver City Elementary School, located at 2515 Lawrence Avenue. It opened in 1971 and is the first "open spaced" school to be built in Kansas City, Kansas. This means it has large open spaces with semi-permanent partitions. Thus, the school can be adapted to changing enrollment and educational requirements. Also, there is a large library, sound-proof rooms, and work rooms for teachers.⁵⁵

The school has a capacity for 250 students. It has 25,172 square feet and cost \$553,445 to build. Students from former portions of the Emerson, Noble Prentis and Franklin areas attend this school.⁵⁶

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵⁰ Frank Scott, personal interview wheld with the principal of Stanley Grade School, 36th and Metropolitan, Kansas City, Kansas on March 12, 1972

⁵¹ Mary Ruth Webster, "History of Emerson School," p. 1

⁵² Ibid

⁵³ Emerson Grade School File, newspaper clipping from the Kansas City Kansas, April 30, 1961

⁵⁴ "Noble Prentis Grade School History" (unpublished report of 1940 found in the Noble Prentis Grade School file of the Board of Education Office of the Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools), p. 1

⁵⁵ "Silver City Elementary School," (pamphlet circulated by the Public Information Office of the Kansas City, Kansas Board of Education, 1973), pp. 1-5

⁵⁶ Kansas City Kansas Board of Education, "Facts About New Schools in Kansas City, Kansas," p. 4