



Desks from the old school days as early as the 1800's

# Throughout the years...

*Antioch Community High School has come a long way from its roots.*

The County Superintendent of Schools approved the establishment of Antioch Township High School-District 117 on May 5, 1915. With a class of six graduates, Walter Adams, teacher and principal at that time, did not have as much responsibility as Mike Nekritz, current principal at ACHS, who deals with 1550 students today.

According to Dan Mikal, head of science dept. at ACHS, there were many different rules to follow than we have today. Teachers were not aloud to drink alcohol outside of school and if they choose to, then they must do it outside of Antioch. None of them were aloud to attend movie theaters, or play cards, and it was uncommon to have a married female teacher. Gym classes did not become coed until 1978. "The biggest changes are the building reconstruction, and the size of each class," said Mikal. "The school even had a smoking lounge for students, but ended it after a few years."

Previous to 1915 a four-year high school course was offered at Antioch Grade School. The school has had over eight renovations in order to accommodate the growing population within the community. Stephen Young, graduate of ACHS in 1951, had stated that there were only 312 students enrolled at the time.

"The only part of the school that still remains is the south gym," said Young, "Antioch was a farm community so all boys wore blue jeans and a clean shirt, while the girls wore long skirts and big sweaters." Young, as a student, taught archery and photography to other students. "I was been appointed this because no one was interested in teaching it so I did," said Young. Before electrical heating, the school was heated with a coal furnace. Young remembers the winters were cold.

The location was chosen in June of 1915, and the bonds for \$18,000 were sold to construct the building. Due to the small number of classrooms, and teachers, about 5-7 classes were offered to each student compared to today's choices of over 50 classes available. The first year students attended ACHS, only three teachers were there.

For admission to the high school, students were admitted with satisfactory proof of the completion of eighth grade. Strange school activities that no one would think of re-establishing today may have been the Farmers Club FAA, the glee club, and the pep club. Girls' basketball was played in such a way that girls could bend most of the rules established today because it was believed the women would become fatigued faster.

According to Young, the high school was a former sight of the Lake County Fair Grounds during the 1940's. "The old football field, and around the school was where the fair was set up," said Young. Looking back on the very first building and how it was ran, ACHS has soared in both academics, and population.

From 1836 to 2006, the little town of Antioch has blossomed into a thriving municipality.

# History of Antioch

## Antioch myths revealed

**S**mall towns dot the face of the United States, each one has its own unique sense of history. Antioch is a small town with residents that are not even aware of its history.

Founded on a cold December day in 1836, Darius and Thomas Gage with friend Thomas Warner had followed old Native American trails to a place just south of the Wisconsin/Illinois border. The Gages built the first log cabin in April 1837 along the banks of Sequoit creek.

Due to the religious majority of the settlement, the town voted on the name Antioch.

In the early days of the town, Native Americans roamed among the people. Even with the signing of the treaty of 1832, many Native Americans were still pushed to the west of the Mississippi by 1836. The Iroquois and the Potawattamie were some of the tribes that moved. In the early years, lotus blossoms covered Grass Lake. The blossoms disappeared when the McHenry dam was built. This caused the Lake to rise and pull the bulbs out from the bottom of the lake.

In the 1920's, Antioch boomed with tourists arriving to the Chain of Lake area. People from Chicago would take the train down and enjoy the resorts on the lakes. The trains also brought in many well-known gangsters. "Bugs" Malone, the infamous racketeer lived along Bluff Lake and Al Capone lived by Fox Lake.

During the Prohibition, Antioch was used as a harbor for gangsters to hide their liquor and slot machines.

In spite of the popular belief that there are tunnels connecting one side of the town to the other, there were underground bunkers in which liquor and slot machines were concealed.

Millburn church played a large role in

the Underground Railroad, which is another reason as to why there are bunkers under the town.

The schoolhouse was built in 1892 and was used as a one room schoolhouse until the larger school was built in 1941. After the new school was built, the old schoolhouse was used as a band and choir room until it was shut down.

It was then used for storage, and was made into what is now the Lakes Historical Society Museum; the high school was built in 1915.

There were three great fires in the town of Antioch. In 1892, the east side of Main Street was set on fire. Another two fires swept through town destroying the Opera House and the Antioch Theatre in 1894, 1901 and 1903. Years later, when workers dug to expand the road, they came across the remains of the old Opera House and Theatre.

During the Depression, sources of entertainment helped Antioch pull through the difficult times. The Theatre and Opera House held affordable shows. Local restaurants also reduced their food prices. During the World Wars, Antioch lost its share of young men.

The *Gold Star Mothers* was founded by mothers who lost sons in the Vietnam War. Medals and old uniforms that the soldiers wore are on display in the old meetinghouse on Rt. 83.

Antioch has changed through the years and along with the people that lived in the town. While Antioch is changing one thing will remain the same, for those who have lived here, it will always be home.

Information and pictures were obtained through the Lakes Region Historical Society. Additional information provided by Ainsley Brooks and Wendy Maston, current members of Lakes Region Historical Society.



Main street 2006



Main street 1916

## Methodist Church 1900



Methodist Church 2006



The Vault Restaurant 2006



First National Bank (The Vault) 1925

# Timeline of historical events

1836 Antioch Township is Built	1881 Antioch News is Founded	1886 Measles Surge through Antioch Causing Schools to Close	1892 First School House Erected	1893 Street Lights put into Antioch	1894 Fires Burn Down East Side of Antioch	1896 Fires Burn Down East Side of Antioch	1907 First Water Tower is Built	1915 Antioch Township High School is Built	1926 First State Bank of Lakes Opens	1950 10 p.m. Curfew goes into Effect for Children Under 16 years-old
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