

Fifty-one graduate in Class of 1934

By MARYLOU OLSON
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The country was in the depths of the Depression when 51 members of the Decatur Community High School Class of 1934 graduated 75 years ago at the Oberlin City School auditorium.

Dr. R. R. MacGregor, a native of New Zealand and head of the English department at Fort Hays State University, gave the commencement address.

A story in *The Oberlin Herald* after com-

mencement stated, "Dr. MacGregor said a lot of good things, but made the mistake of reading his address and 40 minutes is too long, anyway, to attempt to interest a bunch of high school graduates, or their fond and doting parents and other relatives."

Elwood M. Brooks, president of the Board of Education, presented the diplomas to seniors, who are pictured on the front cover of this section.

Richard Bowles was valedictorian of the class and Dean Blickenstaff, salutatorian. Other

honor students were Louise Anderson, Naomi Griffith, Joyce Wilson, Kenneth Norton and Ralph Pavlicek.

The class was welcomed into the alumni association at the annual banquet at the grade school a week later, which drew nearly 300. Officers elected included: Uriel Goodrich, president; Neil Reeves, vice president; Fausta Vernon, secretary; and Ralph Brown, treasurer. Ted Addleman led the group in singing the "Alma Mater," to close the meeting.

Ironically, a large full page ad in *The Oberlin*

Herald the week that the 1934 class graduated announced the opening of a new and complete fountain service featuring Franklin XX ice cream at Addleman Drug Store.

This month will mark the closing of the drug store after faithfully serving the area for 103 years by three generations: Dott Addleman; his son, Ted Addleman; and Rusty Addleman, serving as its pharmacists. Ted continued for many years in leading the school song at the alumni banquet.

1939 wrestling team first in league, state

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"Captain" Lloyd Emerson, as he was called for years after graduating in 1939 from Decatur Community High School, said that among the biggest thrills he had in high school was being a part of the wrestling team that captured first not only in the Northwest Kansas League, but at state his senior year. Their coach was Jack Cronk.

"I only went out for wrestling as a freshman because Tommy Townsend, a senior, insisted that I do so. One match I witnessed my freshman year was when Elmer Hackney pinned his opponent in the heavyweight class in 16 seconds at State.

"In 1941, I was a part of a team that won the AAU Tournament and Oberlin raised money to send the team to the Detroit National Wrestling competition. After that trip, I was offered a wrestling scholarship to Oklahoma State University but World War II ended that dream."

Other members were Pete Everist, Bob Fraker and "Shorty" Roberts, he said.

He remembers that when not involved in sports, dating in high school consisted of walking around town and talking to other classmates. No one had a car.

"Movies cost 10 cents so we could only afford to go occasionally. I married a classmate, Virginia Landau, in 1941," he said.

"As I look over the past 70 years, I can't believe the many changes that have occurred," said Dorothy (Olson) Jackson.

"My family moved to Oberlin in August of 1930 from McPherson and my dad, Nathan Olson, started a shoe repair shop in the present location of Oberlin Mercantile Co., which is part of the LandMark Inn. Since money was so short, we lived in the back of the shop. There were many adjustments to be made as we had attended a country school, but we soon became acquainted with many.

"The first three years that our class was in high school were spent in the old high school, the present location of Decatur County Good Samaritan Center. At the beginning of Christmas



1939 CLASSMATES, above, filled the back of a farm truck and headed for Sappa State Park and lake for their graduation party.

vacation in 1938, each student carried their desk and chair to the new high school. After Christmas we attended school in the new school and were the first class to graduate in the new building."

The new \$272,000 modern high school was dedicated on Jan. 5, 1939, followed by an open house. Superintendent was Harry G. Mahon.

"It was the time of World War II so several members of our class entered the service, some losing their lives," Mrs. Jackson noted. "Many other changes have occurred — some good and some not so good."



SEVERAL CLASSMATES of the 1939 graduating class enjoyed viewing the water on the spillway at Sappa Park during their senior graduation party.

"At junior-senior prom, there were no outside dates. The boys and girls were divided in two rooms and as each went out a door, that was your prom date for the evening. There were no programs or parties for the kids.

"We had 100 band members and they went to the National Band Contest at Colorado Springs," she said.

According to the April 10, 1939, *Decatur Dictator*, at regional music contest at Norton, Arris Johnson received a Highly Superior on his baritone, and Gloria Benton won top honors in high voice. Those earning Superior were Zola Maggard, twirling; Gertrude Morrish, flute; Mark Cleland, French Horn; Oren Hughes, trombone; and Dale Wickham, bass horn.

The class was the largest up to that time and commencement was held in the new auditorium, which held 700.

Valedictorian was Carol Stevenson, and Maxine Walker was salutatorian.

Other honor students included: Jimmy Anderson, Glenyvyn Hayward, Florence Johnson and Freida Schmoker.

Officers were Jimmy Anderson, president; Dennis Nelson, vice president; Helen Geisinger, secretary-treasurer; and Arris Johnson, prom marshal.

Welcome

In honor of Decatur Community High School alumni weekend, the staff at *The Oberlin Herald* has teamed up with graduates and businesses to offer an alumni section.

The section features stories on the 10-year anniversary classes starting with 1939 and ending with 1999.

On the cover is the class picture of the 1934 class, which is also included in the section. This is the 75th anniversary for the class.

Thanks to all the graduates for sharing

their old pictures and memories of high school with the staff at the newspaper and to the businesses who sponsored the section.

A special thanks to Dave Bergling, who sold the ads, Karla Jones, for putting the section together and Mary Lou Olson and Kimberly Davis, for writing and proofing.