

**The Masonic Temple built in 1912,
Camden Library on first floor**

their home ever since. At that time John Broderick was Grand Master. At the present time Carl Wardlow is the Master of the lodge.

Whenever an Odd Fellow Lodge appeared in a town it was usually followed by a Rebekah Lodge. This was true in Camden, but at a much later date. Somers Rebekah Lodge was instituted in 1880. Ruth Overholtz is the present Noble Grand.



Camden Chapter #443 of Eastern Star 1937

**Compliments of Shank's Variety Store 1911 -...?.... — Camden
Stephenson's Feed & Grain — West Elkton
A. C. Barrett Contractor — Camden
Beckett Barber Shop — Camden**

In 1921 the Oxford Chapter of Eastern Star instituted the Camden Chapter #443 of Eastern Star. Mrs. Naomi Randall was the first Worthy Matron and Howard Pattison the first Worthy Patron of this lodge. Now it is Grace and Emerson Unzicker who fill these offices.

The same year that the Eastern Star was organized in Camden the Daughters of America Lodge was installed. A team from The Pride of Richmond Council instituted Somers Council #213 and Mrs. Mary Shields was elected the first counselor—which office is now held by Mrs. Mattie Faye Barber.

Eight years ago the Camden Masonic Lodge sponsored the first chapter of Demolay in Preble County. It was instituted here in 1960 with 35 members. Jack Cox was the first Master Councillor. At the present time this group is inactive.

The Camden Assembly Order of Rainbow Girls was also instituted in 1960 with 57 charter members. This group was sponsored by the local Eastern Star. Cynthia Matt was the first Worthy Advisor. At the present time Linda Cole holds this office.

Four other fraternal organizations, the Knights of Pythias Lodge, the Pythian Sisters, Order of Redmen and Junior Order of United States Mechanics have been at one time active in Camden but now are non-existent.

CAMDEN SCHOOLS

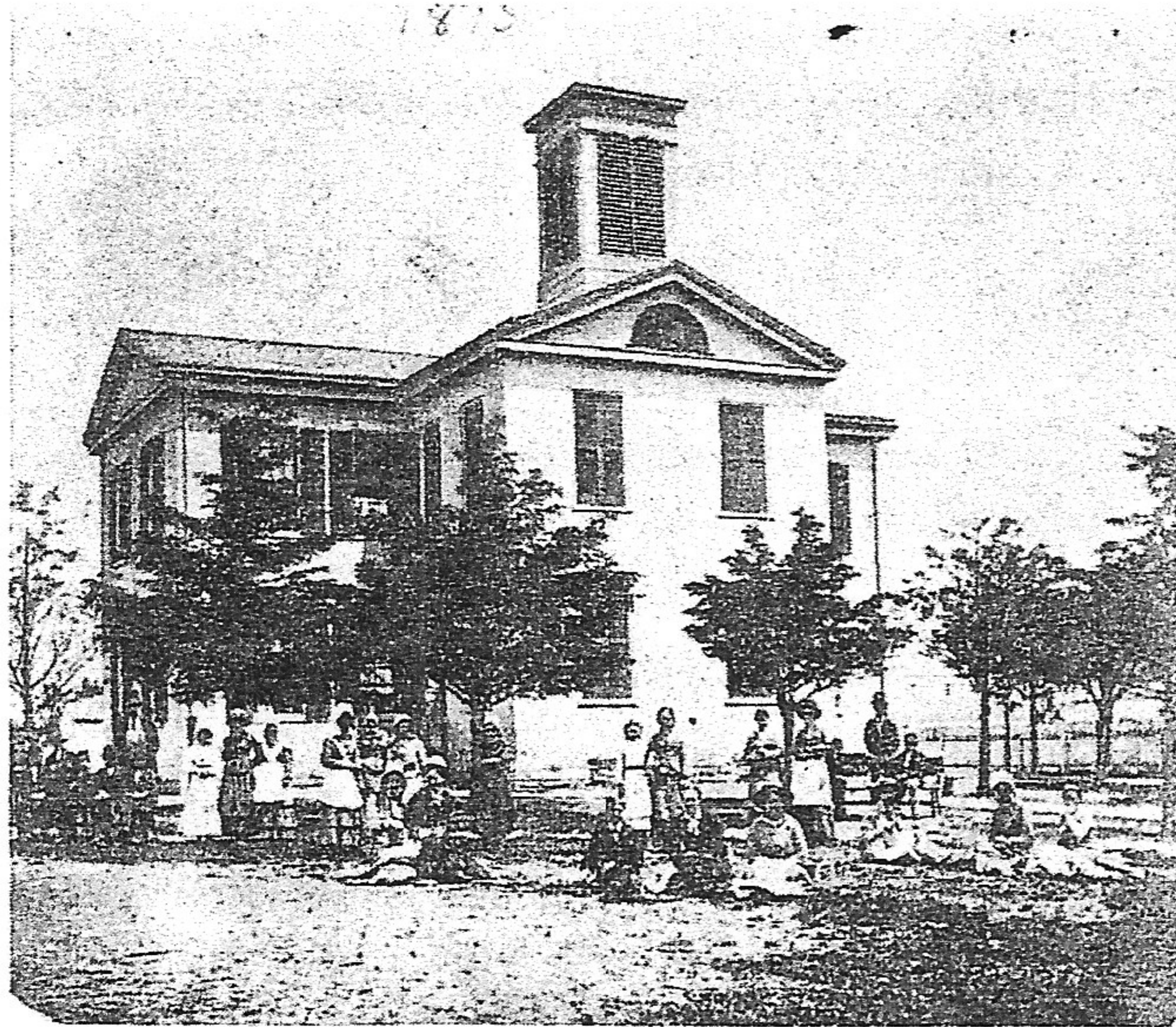
The same indomitable spirit that urged the pioneer in Camden to build churches and to start other cultural organizations helped him evolve an educational program which was quite adequate at the time.

It is believed the first school was started in 1818 shortly after the town was laid out and was conducted in a log building on North Main Street, where the residence of Mrs. C. E. McKinley now stands. Undoubtedly, the early teachers were paid by the parents of the pupils because the first gen-

eral Ohio school law was not passed until 1821. This law sanctioned, (but did not require local taxation for the building of a school), the collection of school rates and free tuition for children whose parents were unable to pay their share of the assessment.

The support of a school system was accepted in 1825 as a state obligation. No longer was the tax optional in each locality but the County Commissioners were required to assess a tax for school purposes. This law also provided for a County Board of Examiners to pass on the qualifications of teachers. Thomas Pollock, a Camden teacher was one of the examiners from 1874-1880 and O. T. Corson, another Camdenite teacher was an examiner in the 1880's.

In the late 1830's the log school house was abandoned and the village constructed a small school building on East Cross Street (now known as E. Central Avenue) near the Depot. This building was used until 1853 when it was replaced by a large and commodious brick structure on West Cross Street at a cost of \$4,000. This was one of the finest schools in the county. While it was under construction classes were held in the woolen mill



Camden School Building 1875 —
Central and Lafayette St.

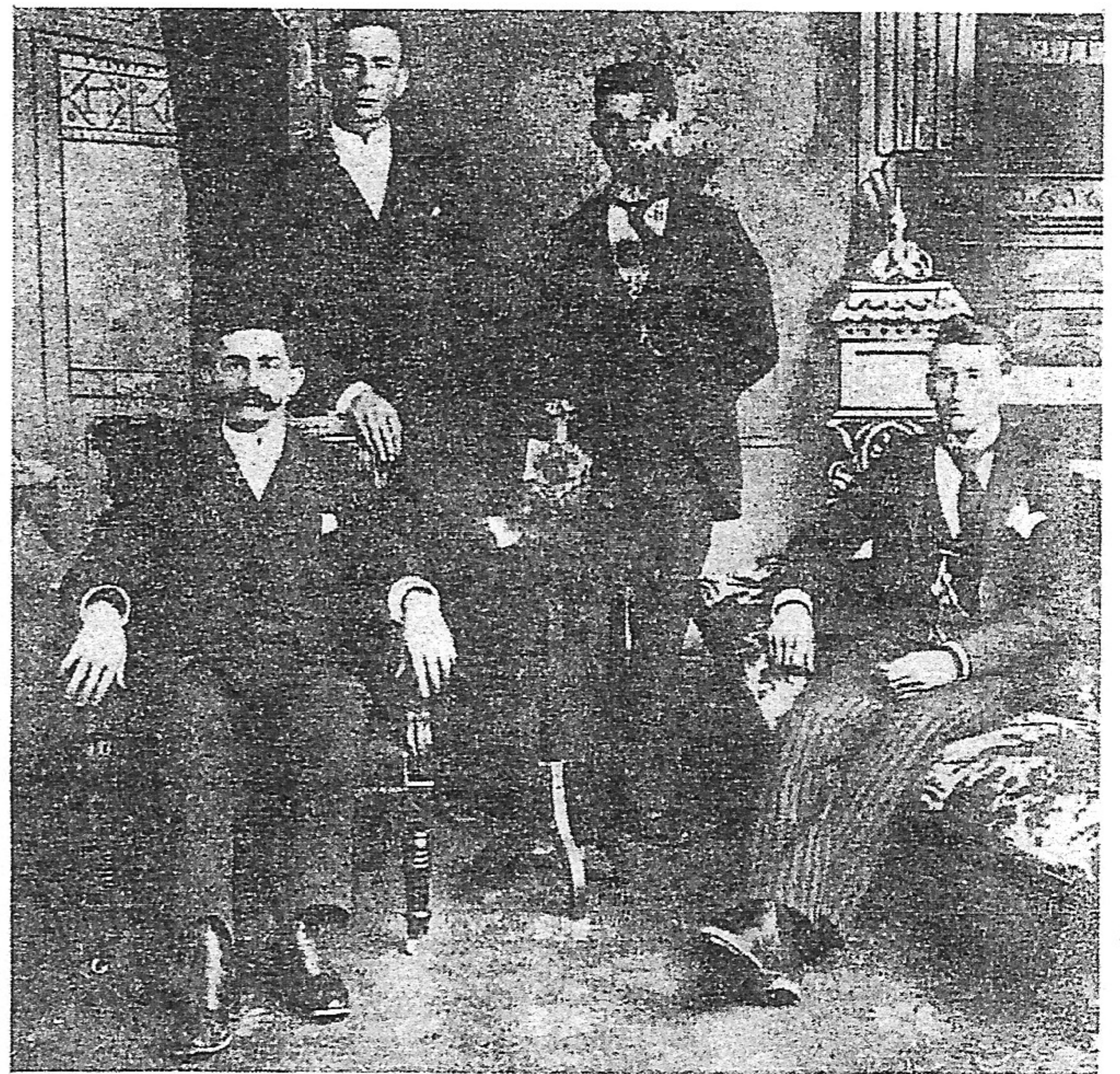
*Compliments of Camden Locker Plant
Don's Central Service — Camden
Eikenberry Insurance Agency — Camden
Groves Trucking — Camden*

on S. Main Street. This building was used for 51 years.

After the compulsory education law went into effect in 1877, the school attendance became more regular. There were 108 children enrolled in school in 1881 with four teachers on the faculty. The first record of a truant officer was in 1890 when Mr. J. T. Fowler was appointed as such for \$3.00 per month. At least once in the history of Camden, the office was filled by a woman—Miss Matilda Miller. A wing was added to the building to accommodate increased enrollment in 1882.

In 1886 for the first time the pupils who had finished the 8th grade were given cards signifying that they had been graduated. Mr. Frank Shuey organized the first high school and in the spring of 1890 was quite proud to see Camden's graduating class—Harry Fornshell, Corwin Brown and Samuel Acton receive their diplomas. The next year there were nine graduates.

The class of 1908-1909 started the custom of having Class Night exercises as a regular part of Commencement activities. This continued until the



First Graduating Class 1890 — Samuel E. Acton,
Corwin D. Brown, Frank E. Fornshell, Frank G.
Shuey, Supt.

middle of the twenties. At the first class night program began the custom which is still continued of presenting a class memorial or gift to the school.

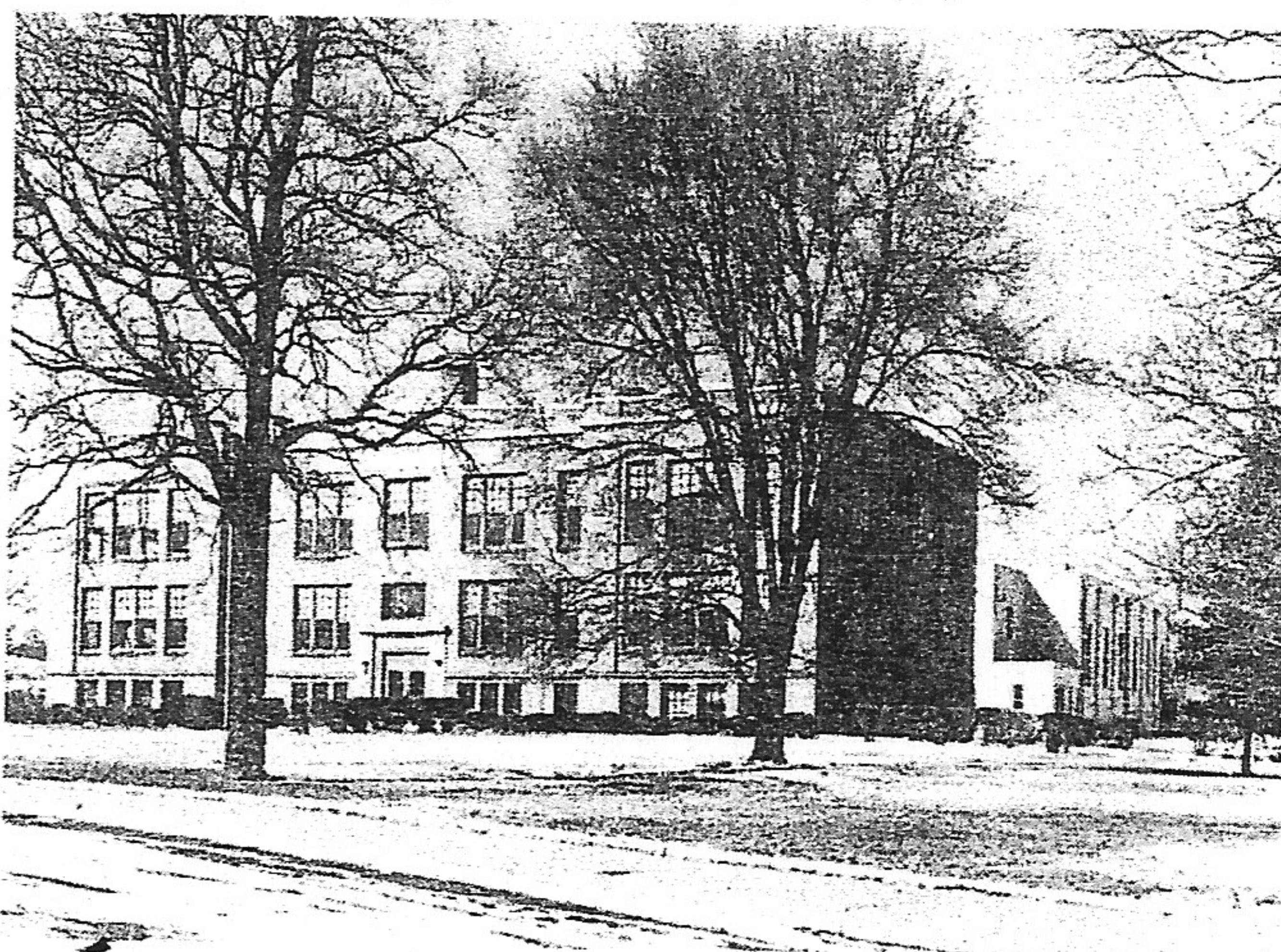
A Music Department in the school was started in 1889 and Mr. R. P. Conrad was the first music instructor. After 1910 Camden had no music teacher or organized Music Department until 1925. Since then there have been full time music instructors with a program planned for both the elementary and high schools.

In the spring of 1903, the State Inspector condemned the school building and the Board of Education decided it would be better to erect a new one rather than repair the old building. Consequently, \$15,000 worth of bonds were issued and the construction of an eight-room brick building was let. The next spring the old building was torn down and the new one erected 30 feet in front of the previous one. Since the new school wasn't quite finished in time for classes to start in the fall, classes were held in the Odd Fellows Hall for nine weeks. Dedication services for the new school were held in November 1904. The next year the Superintendent and Board of Education improved the course of study so that Camden became a four-year high school. This year also fire drills were introduced as a precautionary measure. The building was emptied in exactly 45 seconds on the initial test.

A remarkable change came to the Camden School after the people voted at an election in 1915 to dissolve rural school districts of Somers Township and consolidate with the Camden Village School District. Four years later Camden Schools were again increased when the Preble County Board of Education transferred parts of the Gasper Township School District to Camden. The consolidation of the schools brought forth immediate problems. The first of these was transportation. Ten horse drawn busses were obtained and it wasn't until 1920 that the first auto school bus was used.

Housing was another problem and a new building for the upper six grades was the only solution.

Ground was purchased on Bloomfield Street, bonds were sold and construction started. During the school year of 1916-1917 high school classes were held in the Nonpareil Building. When the school was ready for use, several new subjects were added—athletics, industrial arts and a domestic science department for girls.



Camden High School 1950, built in 1917

The high school facilities were augmented in 1941 when an Industrial Arts Building was built through the Federal Security Agency known as the National Youth Administration. By this plan federal funds paid for labor and supervision and the School Board furnished all of the material for the fireproofing of the shop.

For 31 years the high school building was used without any changes but increased enrollment made an addition necessary. A bond issue for this purpose was passed in 1947. This addition included a science room, cafeteria, kitchen, gymnasium and auditorium combined.

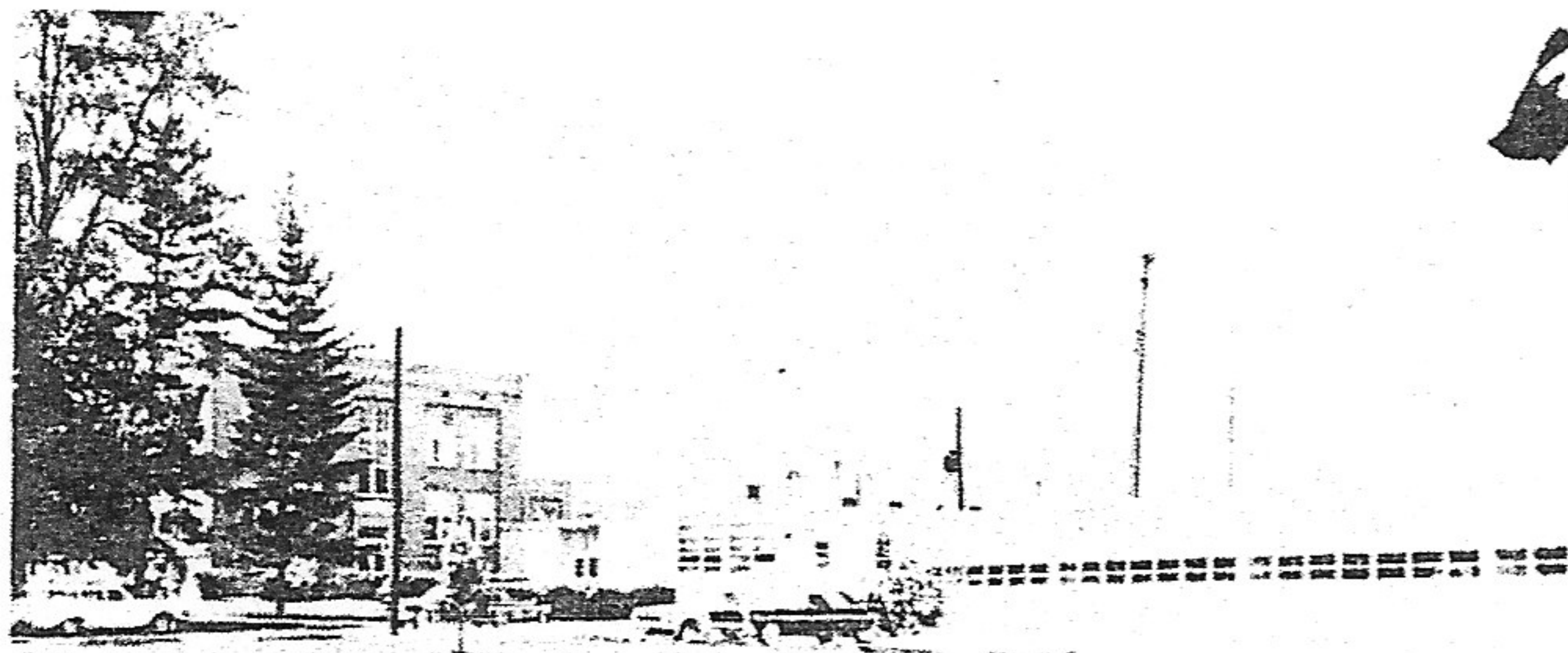
Except to install electricity, no improvements were ever made in the 1904 elementary building until 1937. At that time modern restrooms and drinking fountains were added. The following year a new furnace was installed. In 1950 the grade building was fireproofed. This included the construction of a fireproof enclosure for the heating

*Compliments of Mary's Jewelry — Camden
Michael Plumbing & Heating — Camden
Neff & Fry Co., Inc. — Camden
Superior Hardware — Camden*

plant and replacement of two wooden stairways with concrete ones.

A major change came to the school in 1956 when Camden and West Elkton consolidated and became known as Shawnee Local School District.

In 1957 because of the increased junior high and high school enrollment due to consolidation, a new elementary building was erected. This structure located east of the high school contains a large multi-purpose room, library, clinic, office and fourteen class rooms. This made it possible to use the elementary building of 1904 for the junior high students.



Shawnee Elementary School, built in 1957

Seven years later—1964—another change came to the local school system when the Gratis School merged with Shawnee Local to form the Preble Shawnee School District. Since the mergers, each community has retained its elementary school; all junior high students of Preble Shawnee attend school in Gratis, all middle grades (6th and 7th) attend classes in Camden's old elementary school and all senior high students are enrolled in Preble Shawnee High School.

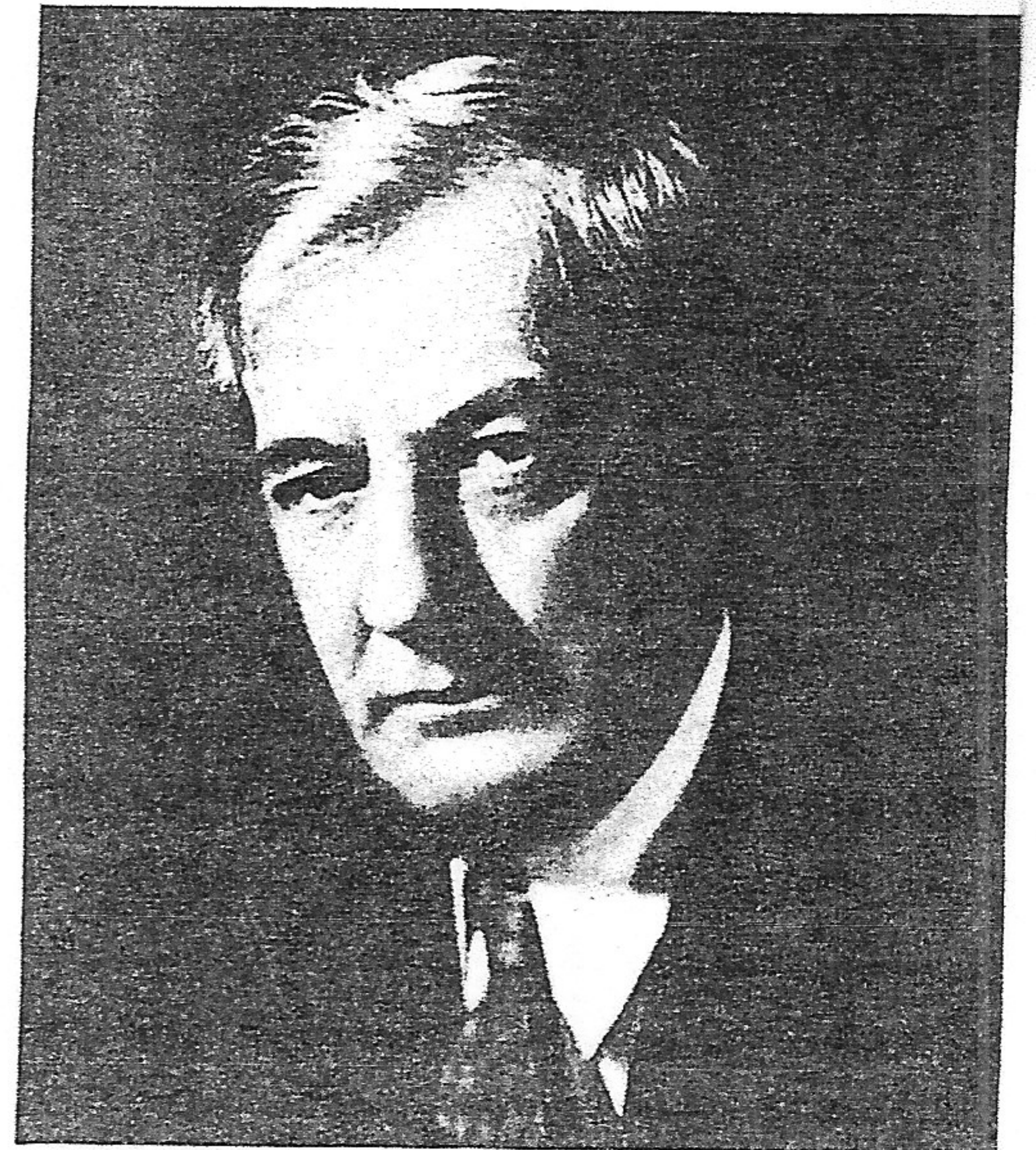
Camden has been quite fortunate in having citizens in the community that have been interested in the progress of the schools. Not only ideas but concrete evidence of improvements have been seen in the school through the efforts of such organizations as Parent Teachers Community Club, Parent Teach-

ers Organization, Parent Teachers Assn. and the present Home and School League; also the Band Parents Organization and the Preble Shawnee District Athletic Club.

Certainly during the last century great strides have been made in Camden's school facilities, opportunities and advantages. This has been no accidental development, but it has taken time, service and money. Let us trust that those who, in the future, have any connection with the school will cast aside selfish motives and cooperate for even a better school system.

FAMOUS PEOPLE

The cultural and educational facilities of Camden have influenced the lives of hundreds of people. Many Camdenites have gone from their local community and become quite illustrious in their special fields. Some have become well known statewide and others have become nationally known figures. Camden has many citizens and former citizens who have brought honor and fame to their town but there are five persons who have become more widely known than others: O. T. Corson, a



Sherwood Anderson — Author — Member of National Academy of Arts and Letters 1876-1941

*Compliments of Past Time Pool Room — Camden
The Lamp — Camden
Wilma's Beauty Shop — Camden
Concrete Pipe & Tile — Camden*