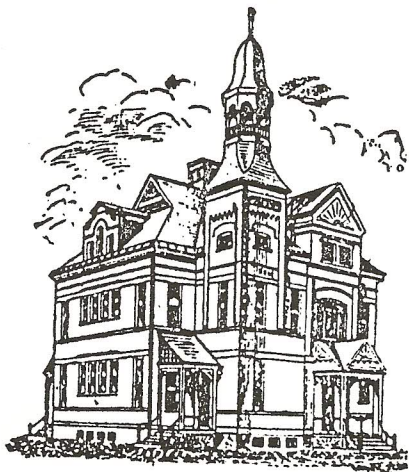


McKINLEY SCHOOL

McKinley School was built in 1886 along with Grant, its twin school on the west side. The schools were designed by Chicago architect Charles Stiles, who was born and raised in Elgin.



McKinley was originally a substantial four-room, two-story brick building with high ceilings, steam heat, and outdoor privies. Total cost including the outbuildings was \$18,666.70. Construction was rapid in a time of 10-hour work days, requiring only six months from contract to completion.

Originally called Prospect Street School, McKinley was built to relieve overcrowding at the New Brick School on Kimball Street, and its attendance area included all students residing on Elgin's east side, north of Summit. It was renamed McKinley in 1901 in honor of the assassinated president. There were four instructors in each school, one to a room. The most experienced of the four was designated as school principal. McKinley's first principal was Clara O. Balch.

Classes were large, averaging 43 pupils to a teacher, and pay was low. Ms. Balch was paid \$60 per month, and the salaries of the other three teachers ranged from \$30 to \$45 a month.

McKinley was substantially enlarged in 1919, and has had periodic remodeling and modernization since. Its very cramped play space was broadened with the purchase of adjoining lots in 1936.

Big changes came in the 1990s -- a large playground was built in 1998, using community funding and volunteer labor. Ruth Munson, now a City Council member, was instrumental in getting this "Common Grounds" community building program started, and overseeing the playground project to completion.

An 8-classroom addition was completed in 1992. The latest construction project (completed this week, pardon the dust!) has given the school a multi-purpose room, library and new gymnasium. With the closing of Grant School, McKinley is now Elgin's oldest public school in continuous use, and it is thriving. ❖

-Contributed by Mike Alft

TOUR SITES & HOMEOWNERS

Scott & Chauna Bowers
326 River Bluff

Keith & Susan Farnham
1045 Spring

Jackie Harper
833 Spring

Julie & Joe Karakas
464 Douglas

Kim Mache
630 Congdon Unit I

Mark & Nancy MacLeod
202 Lovell

Steve & Sue McCracken
560 Douglas

Brigitte & Martin Nobs
50 River Bluff

Valerie & Tom O'Neal
624 Congdon

Fred & Judy Steffen
13-15 Douglas

McKinley School -- Tour Headquarters
School District U-46