

Glimpses of  
early Colorado:

# Bryant School

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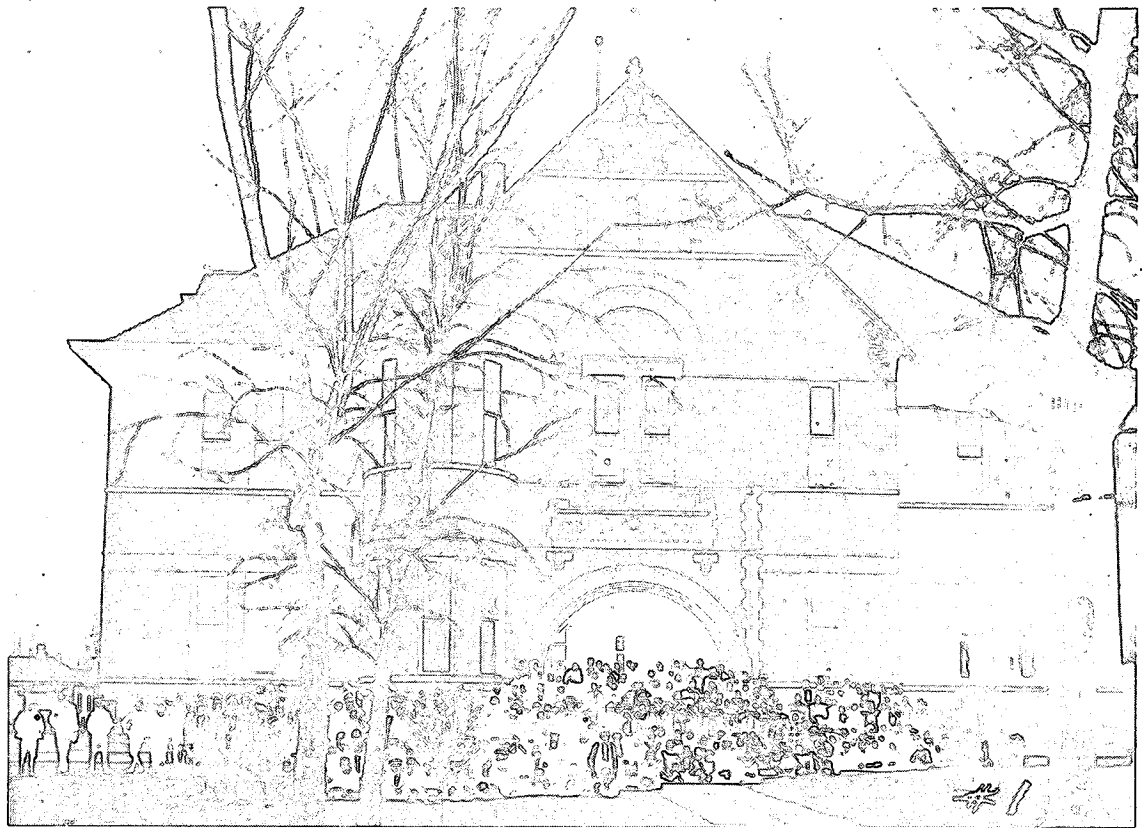
"May Bryant School rest in peace." So ended a centennial edition Times-Call article on Longmont schools, stating Bryant's position as the only school building not still in use by the system on the town's 100th anniversary, March 1971. It was demolished in 1959, after being sold to private interests who built apartments in its place.

On the north side of Seventh Avenue, now Longs Peak Avenue, between Collyer and Emery streets, Bryant was built in 1891. At that time, students in the primary grades had so overflowed Central School that space had to be rented at the Presbyterian College building at 546 Atwood St., and even at the Dickens Opera House.

In time, Bryant's original four large classrooms were partitioned to accommodate further growth in the elementary grades. For example, Bryant had two first grades in the 1905-06 school year, besides grades two through five, while Central had extra second and third grade classes along with regular grades one through seven. Furthermore, high school students had to make room for Linda Oviatt's fourth graders in their new building.

Calling it the academy, the Longmont school system continued the use of Presbyterian College for overflow classrooms. During the 1905-06 school year it assigned seventh-grade teacher Zetta Bashor and eighth-grade teacher and principal Grace E. Curtis to the academy building.

With the construction of Columbine School in 1906, the pressure for elementary student space eased. However, the academy was soon sold to St. Joseph's Catholic School, so Bryant Elementary was passed into duty as the citywide junior high. Beginning in 1915, this phase lasted until both junior and senior highs were



The May Bryant School, its students and teachers, during the early 1900s.

Photo provided by the Longmont Museum

combined in the expanded high school building in 1926.

So much for the vital statistics, let's take a closer look at Bryant School itself, and the lively group flowing out its widely arched doorway. A magnifying glass will give a greater appreciation of the intricate brick work accomplished under contractor M.W. Barb. The half circle entrances seemed to be designed to encircle the students with friendliness. The parquet design above both arches symbolized how bits and pieces of information finally fit together as a solid base of knowledge.

Where was the inspiration for Bryant School's name? Might it have been beloved American poet, William Cullen Bryant, whose death in 1878, was barely a decade before the school's conception? Could the poet's creative freedom have, in turn, inspired the asymmetrical design

with vignettes of architectural details splashed here and there? Note the tilted globe at the pinnacle, showing North and South America surrounded by oak leaves in bas relief. What a great subject for a charcoal rubbing!

Timewise, we see Bryant and its pupils and teachers during Rae Kitley's superintendency from 1905 to 1914. In congratulating Kitley on his appointment in June, the Longmont Ledger noted he was "well fitted for this position." Taking a jab at the selection process, editor Boynton continued, "The only objection seems to be that he is a Longmont boy."

Indeed, Kitley knew Longmont schools from the inside, out. He had been student, teacher and principal. Father, Wm. J., was a school board member, broadening his interest in educating his own family of eight for the benefit of the whole com-

munity. The elder Kitleys even chose their home site at Ninth Avenue and Collyer Street for the proximity to the high school then housed in the academy.

Again, with the aid of a magnifying glass, you may be able to spot teachers in their familiar shirtwaist and skirt "uniforms" standing in the background. Kitley's assignments to Bryant Elementary his first year as superintendent were: Mae Plumb, first grade; Lillian Coon, also first grade; Sara Herron, second grade; Vinnie Cole, third grade; Florence Newby, fourth grade; Cora Lilley, fifth grade.

The photographer did quite a job arranging students by height, even having boys in the front lay down; if only he could have arranged all in front of the bushes! Seeing the boys at far left, who are halfway between knickers and long pants, are the kids inside so different from today's?

# Bryant Cornerstone Mentions McKinley

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Editor's Note — This is the second part of a three part series on the history of Longmont schools written by Miss Katherine Greenamyre, a teacher at the Longmont High School for many years. In the first part, which ran June 19, Miss Greenamyre recounted the story of the first school in Burlington and in the colony of Longmont. One of the early schools built in Longmont was Central School, originally known as Franklin School.

Other schools were built a few years after Franklin. The high school was organized in 1884, moved from Central School to Presbyterian Academy, and 1901 saw the completion of the present south wing of the building on Main Street, this to be added to in 1911 and again in 1926. Bryant School had been built in 1891 at a cost of \$12,045. (The only one of the old schools for which the original cost is easy to find.)

Do you remember Bryant? It looked like a small but dignified old stone castle. Handbooks of that time tell us that Silver-Burdett readers were included

books stated, "Teachers are expected to enter heartily into every plan calculated to elevate the standards of the schools." Another rule stated, "Janitors before beginning to sweep shall see that all ink wells are closed."

The opening of the cornerstone of Bryant School, which was razed in 1959, revealed that at the date of construction McKinley had been nominated for Governor of Ohio, this article in a copy of the old Longmont Times.

A copy of "Rules and Regulations" of the "Board of Education," dated 1882, gave the following rule for corporal punishment: "Not to be resorted to except in extreme cases of flagrant, persistent violation of important rules and then not until the session following the commission of the offense and after its nature has been fully and kindly explained to the pupil."

The Board of Education from District 17 from 1890-1930 included Dr. J. A. Matlack and E. J. Coffman. Rae Kiteley was superintendent in 1901. In 1905 D. S. Swan was principal of the high school to be replaced by C. C. Casey in 1905. D. W. Spangler, who had been in the

system since '96, was assistant.

Old timers will recognize the names of Edith Murray, principal of Central, and Mae Plumb, first grade teacher at Bryant and later principal of Bryant and Columbine. Her nephew, Jerry Plumb, recalls most happily the personnel of Columbine School, especially a kindly, grey-bearded janitor named Copeland who stood on the front steps at recess and with his trusty pocket knife sharpened the pencils children handed him. No wonder school equipment cost less in those days!

In 1892 advanced students were offered two new courses — vocal music and drawing.

In 1920-21 Charles C. Casey was superintendent and John C. Casey, principal of the high school. Among the teachers some will recognize names of W. C. Pittenger, Lillian Richart, Mrs. Angeline Adkisson, Mrs. Nellie Townley, Julia Criswell, Margaret Davis, Ruth Biddle, Uarda Nesbitt, Bessie Forsyth (principal of Central), Bessie Rayl, principal of Lincoln, and Dorothy Dunn, who was called to Longmont to organize and teach the first kindergarten.

The school census of 1931 showed 2402 pupils. A handbook of the schools for that year lists W. D. Blaine as superintendent, Kent L. Sanborn, high school principal, and among the teachers Albert E. James and John Krill. Dr. Willard White was a board member at that time, as was Mrs. E. M. Payne,

who was secretary for many years and through many school boards.

Through the years the high school had been flourishing. In 1898 a Canadian, F. H. Lang, had launched the idea of football. In 1903 track representatives upheld the reputation of L.H.S. at Windsor. In 1905 adequate facilities made possible courses in "Domestic Science" and "Manual Training." Because of a donation to the school in 1913 eight new Remington typewriters were installed, and students were allowed to elect a business course.

The junior high, organized in 1915, was housed first at Bryant and moved to the new high school in '26.

Troymen were world champions in football in 1908 and again in 1909, Peter Nelson being captain in 1908 and John Donovan in 1909. A tragedy occurred in 1913 when Acton Schrontz, captain of the Longmont team, was killed in a game at Loveland. Football helmets were not as sturdy then as now — in fact a man could roll up his helmet and carry it under his arm.

The tragic death of young Schrontz caused Rugby to be substituted for football all through the Northern Conference for the next three years. Rugby was about as exciting to football player or to a football fan as tiddly-winks is to a bridge expert.

Gradually people forgot about

the tragedy at Loveland and schools returned to football. The family of Acton Schrontz didn't forget, however. They had lost another son in a thin-ice-skating episode and it is not surprising that the third son was never allowed to participate in sports.

The squad won state championship in '21 and again in '41. The basketball team won state championship twice, once in '41.

The year after Pearl Harbor ('42) high school pupils contributed to the war effort by helping to harvest sugar beets, by collecting paper and scrap metal, by investing two thousand dollars in stamps and bonds, by studying such subjects as pre-flight aeronautics and first aid, some leaving for military service, some fighting on far-flung battlefields.

The superintendent at this time was Kent L. Sanborn, the high school principal, Kenneth A. Rawson; the assistant principal, L. B. Adams, now serving on our school board.

# Opening of Bryant School Cornerstone Brings To Light Variety of Historical Items

A dozen items of historical importance were brought to light this week with the opening of the cornerstone from the old Bryant School. The cornerstone originally was cemented in place by E. L. N. Foster, grand master of the Colorado Masonic lodge, in early July, 1891. Sixty-seven years later the now abandoned school is being wrecked to make room for multiple dwelling units. The building was located on Seventh Ave., between Collyer and Emery Sts.

The memorial marker itself was cut from blue sandstone quarried at the old Coffin quarry, a few miles southeast of Longmont. The stone measures 18 inches by 18 inches by 17 inches.

Inside the stone was a cavity containing a metallic box which had been sealed with lead solder.

The metallic box was further protected by a sandstone top placed over it and then mortar filled in above it.

Inside the air-tight container were the following:

1. An 1891 directory of the membership of the St. Vrain Masonic Lodge No. 23 listing 62 members.
2. A copy of the proceedings of the Grand Lodge of Masons, dated 1870.
3. A three-page handwritten history of Longmont School District No. 17 prepared by John A. Buckley, president of the board. Buckley, proprietor of a plumbing shop, was the grandfather of John Harold Buckley, for whom the local American Legion Post later was named.

4. An issue of the old Longmont Times dated June 24 1891. In it, Editor R. F. DeArmond had a front-page story announcing that the "Republicans in Ohio had just nominated McKinley to the Governor."

5. A 20-page booklet containing the Rules and Regulations of the Course of Study in the Longmont City Schools. Greek was among the courses taught, but the greatest stress was placed on the "three R's" — reading, writing and arithmetic.

6. A copy of the School Law of the State of Colorado containing the acts of the legislature through Colorado's 7th general assembly in 1863. On its title page was

an instruction to school authorities instructing them to pass this book along to their successors.

7. In connection with a long-established hope the leaders of this community had founded and were sponsoring a college — the Longmont Academy, near 6th Ave. and Atwood St. Accordingly, included in the relics was an Academy manual which said of Longmont's climate: "To those familiar with Longmont and the surroundings, little need be said of the attractiveness of the location."

8. A copy of the July 2, 1891 issue of the Longmont ledger.

9. The bound "Rules and Regulations of the Board of Education, City of Longmont," dated Jan. 27, 1892. On the subject of corporal punishment the rule read:

"Corporal punishment shall not be resorted to, except in the most extreme cases of flagrant, persistent violation of important rules, and then not until the session following the commission of the offense, and after its nature has been fully and kindly explained to the pupil."

10. An issue of the Burlington Free Press, Vol. 1, No. 1, dated April 26, 1874. This paper was printed in the original community located across the St. Vrain River from the present site of Longmont. In its columns of news reported about colonists from the East coming to establish their homes in the community which today is Longmont.

11. Included also were two old coins and a 25-cent currency bill dated 1863. One of the coins apparently was of French origin and bears the title "Napoleon Empereur," dated 1855. The other coin is believed to be a bartering coin minted in 1747 and bearing the words: "Marien Gros", with the figure one and a hole drilled near the top.

Local historians said they believed Bryant School had been constructed for \$12,045. On April 1, 1891, the School history relates that a contract was made with M. W. Barb to build the original four-room structure.

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**The May Bryant School, its students and teachers, during the early 1900s.**

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