

Fort Lupton school: 1894-95 session

School Days: 1894-5
by Cleon Roberts
In the spring of 1895, these two buildings served the needs of School District No. 8 of Fort Lupton. Located near the present Buddhist Church, the building on the right had been built in 1885. Growth of the town gave rise to the need for additional classroom space, and another building came under construction in 1893.

E. E. Carl of Fort Lupton did the carpentry work on the new building for \$600, and agreed to do the plastering for \$12.50. The same architecture was used for the second building, with only minor variations. It too, had a belfry, but rather than having a second bell, they installed a flag pole up through the belfry.

The school board met during the summer to purchase furniture, slate for the blackboards, and to see that the finish work was completed on time. They accepted a bid for coal at \$2.50 a ton, delivered, ordered curtains for the windows and ordered a few books. In July they hired "Professor" Herbert G. Heath of Greeley to be the principal for \$60 a month.

Everything was ready for the new term—everything, that is, except for the teacher. Mrs. Elizabeth

Dwyer Irvin had taught the year before, and would eventually serve the district for 35 years before retiring, but in the fall of '94 she caught typhoid fever in an epidemic that was sweeping the area, and was out of most of the year.

By October the school board was getting desperate. The town had to have a teacher. In October, President I.L. Monson, Treasurer John Hayes, and Secretary Ed St. John, held a special meeting at the post office to interview a prospective teacher from Greeley.

Miss Virginia Currier agreed to teach for five months, but only on the condition that she would not have to do any of the janitorial work. She drove a hard bargain, but the directors knew that she had them over a barrel. School was scheduled to begin October 15th.

Mrs. Jeanie Goodnight took over the janitorial duties, agreeing to dust and sweep the rooms and to build a fire each morning, for ten cents a day. With the help of Reverend Chase of the Methodist Church acting as substitute teacher, they launched a successful school year.

The school bell rang once more, and according to



Fort Lupton school children sit quietly at their desks in teacher Herbert G. Heath's room. Heath is standing in the back of this picture taken about 1895.

stories, the teacher was drenched more than once from pulling the bell rope in the vestibule. Kids went to extra effort to haul buckets of water to the roof. After

turning the bell upside down, and filling it with water, the trap was set. Many other pranks were pulled by the students but none so representative of that period of history.

In those years, there was no high school in Fort Lupton. Those wishing more advanced work had to attend boarding school in Denver or Golden. In 1896, the district held its first graduation ceremony for the district with three graduates from the eighth grade.

The next year, the ninth grade was added to the curriculum, then later the tenth. Districts 8 and 9 consolidated in 1912, giving them enough students to build a consolidated high school, and the first graduates were the class of 1916.

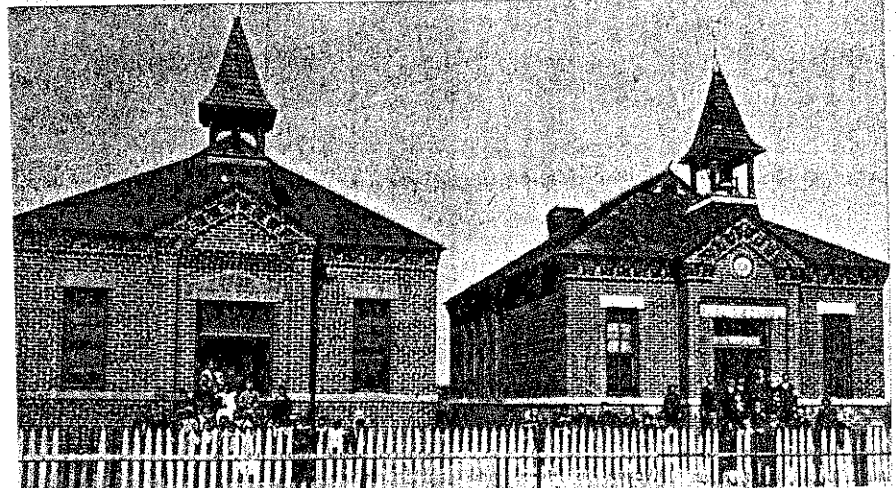
The entrances of the buildings shown here, led through a vestibule or cloakroom into the main room of the building. A chandelier of coal-oil lamps can be seen in one picture. On the slate blackboard over the teachers head,

appears a drawing of an holding a pennant which reads: "Two it takes to make a quarrel; one can always end it." In the center of the blackboard the message reads: "Now our work over. And we are going home. Goodbye, Goodbye. Be always kind and true."

We do not know if the district had pre-planned modular concept of constructing schools or if it worked out that way. Around the turn of the century, the two buildings were joined together, and a second story was constructed over them.

In 1916, the Japanese Association rented, then purchased the two-story building to use as a Japanese Language School, and as a Buddhist Church, until a church was built. The building was eventually torn down sometime in the 1940's.

Information supplied from contemporary records of the school board minutes, from notes in the Ogilby Collection, and from discussions with people in Fort Lupton.



The two Fort Lupton public school buildings were quite similar, although the one on the left had a flag pole running through the belfry rather than the school bell. Students and teachers are shown on the steps of

the two buildings located in the 700 block of Main Ave. in this 1895 picture. Photos Courtesy of Greeley Municipal Museums

*This is the building that was in
where the Buddhist Church is*