

The history of Pierre High School goes back to the earliest organization of Hughes County. One of the greatest concerns of those early settlers was to provide facilities for good education. That feeling remained through all the years of development of the community, and still is one of its chief concerns. Without waiting for the process of election, a County Superintendent was appointed in 1880, and the county was divided into school districts for managing school affairs.

Although some high school classes were held in the early school houses, the first high school building stood on the present site of the Wegner Auto Company. It was a two story frame building---a real fire hazard---with an outside stairway. The County Superintendent's report for 1883 shows 129 students enrolled in Pierre High School. The year 1888 boasted eight graduates.

In 1889, a new building called Central Building was erected on the present site of "West Junior School". It was a fine brick structure and housed the elementary grades of that district as well as the high school. About this time there were added courses in science, languages, bookkeeping, choral music and some physical training. The library contained several hundred volumes.

In 1910, crowded conditions forced the providing of a separate building for the high school. This building, located just east of Central School, was ready for occupancy in the spring of 1911. It made possible the beginning of vocational education: Home Economics, Shop, and a Commercial Department. The added space and available new facilities brought growth in all regular courses. New school activities flourished. For the first time Pierre High School had a gymnasium and shower rooms. Although choral music was listed among the earliest courses for high school, and persisted all through the years, it was at this time that it first gained recognition. The Pierre High chorus has now grown to outstanding importance in the school, in the community and in

state as well.

A fire in the spring of 1927 destroyed Central Building, and arrangements were made at once to replace it, on the same site, with a new high school building. This was known as Senior High School. At this time, crowded conditions and the need for economy brought the decision for a reorganization. The ninth grade was fused with the seventh and eighth grades of the entire city to form a Junior High School. These students and those of the elementary grades of the district were housed in the High School, now known as "East Junior High School".

Classes were begun in the new "Senior High School" in January of 1928, but changes in the reorganized schools came a bit slowly.

In Senior High School, added space made possible a splendid expansion of the traditional courses and the addition of new ones. It also brought many new activities. The new gymnasium provided for inter-school ballgames, and enthusiasm for school athletics increased. A band was organized during 1932-33 claiming about twenty members. From this small beginning, there has grown a splendidly performing and very enthusiastic group, even known in state contests. During this same period of re-organization the home-room student council was begun, giving the students some participation in determining and controlling some school activities. Out of this organization has come added importance to the student council. The National Honor Society, organized in 1929, keeps growing in numbers and in significant influence throughout the school.

Growth in population again forced a move, and Riggs High School was the answer. In 1958, Senior High students were moved into the fine, new, modern building which it now occupies. Since that date, there have been added the auditorium-gymnasium, band and chorus rooms and an enlarged shop department.

Since moving into Riggs Building, changes have been many and far-reaching. The new building and its well-trained and specialized faculty have made possible new courses and enlarging of the traditional ones. More significantly, it has

brought diversification within courses which offer wide and important choices to individual students.

The new auditorium-gymnasium has helped to establish increased association with the community as well as to offer new possibilities for activities to the student body. On-the-job training has provided an additional contact with the community.

All these improvements and modern instructional aids have combined to contribute a great deal to the fine spirit at Riggs High School and to the growth and development of the students themselves.

No history of Pierre High School would be complete that did not include school athletics. At first there was only football. There is no early record of names. Almost anyone could play. There were no regulations, there was no coach, there were <sup>no</sup> uniforms. The boys wore an assortment of football, baseball, tennis or hunting equipment, acquired from interested oldsters. Expense for travel was met out of receipts from games, and hopefully enough for meals! The first coach was hired in 1908, and it was his job to coach boys who hardly knew what a line-man was. But the boys played football with the same determination and enthusiasm which has always characterized our sportsmen. From this inauspicious but enthusiastic beginning, Pierre High School has developed an enviable athletic department. It now has diversified sports: basketball, football, tennis, track, golf and wrestling, with qualified coaches, expert performers, unquestioned community support and recognition throughout the state.

The history of Pierre High School points to a fine combination of loyalty, interest, enthusiasm and support from students, faculty and citizens.

Miss Georgia Morse