

Clarence Bee Article – January 2019

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Clarence Center Elementary 80th Anniversary

Last week the students, staff, and community celebrated the 80th anniversary of the Clarence Center Elementary School, the oldest and most historically rich building in the school district. The current building was constructed in 1938 for \$80,000, about half of which was funded by a federal grant, while the community approved a bond for the other half of the cost. The building was designed by Bley and Lyman Architects of Buffalo and Gambin Construction was the general contractor.

The very first school in Clarence Center was built in 1825 at a different site in Clarence Center and was used as a school during the week and a church on the weekends. In 1879 the old Clarence Center School was constructed on the site of the current elementary school. It stood in the same location for sixty years. The old Clarence Center School had 70 students and it was open to students who did not live in the area for a tuition rate of 35 cents per week. The original building in 1938 had four classrooms, a teacher's lounge, a principal's office, a space that served as an auditorium and gymnasium and a kitchen. Those original structures still exist in the building today. The old school was built for a total cost of \$4,000. The original headstone of the old building is currently on display in the Clarence Center library. The first principal at Clarence Center was Doris Roszman Ebersole who served until 1971. Mrs. Ebersole's great, great nephew is a fourth grader in the building today.

One of the defining architectural elements of the Clarence Center Elementary School is the bell tower. The bell that sits in the tower dates back to 1879 and was used in the old Clarence Center School. The students at Clarence Center Elementary continue the longstanding tradition of ringing the bell on the on the last day of school with fifth graders and they've instituted a new tradition of ringing the bell on the first day of school with kindergarteners.

In 1950, four additional classrooms were added to Clarence Center Elementary, and in 1962 ten additional classrooms were constructed. More classrooms were added in 1970 when renovations were completed that mark the footprint of the building as it stands today.

In 1988, the 50th anniversary celebration culminated in opening the time capsule that was placed behind the cornerstone of the original 1938 building. It was replaced by a new time capsule that is set to be opened in 2038.