

## ***Old Ohio Schools - The Narratives of Thomas Harvey High School***

As many know, I am interested in the stories of Ohio's lost schools. As a retired teacher, I have come to appreciate the memories, the hallowed events and the love that each edifice elicits from former students, staff, parents and colleagues. Those shared times in the schools or on those grounds are now lost to time. This month, we'll share the many narratives that connect **Harvey High School** to Painesville. I hope this brief look at **167 West Washington Street** does it justice.



### ***The School Property***

First attempts at educating Painesville's children began in Abraham Tappan's pioneer log cabin near the Grand River at the Painesville Flats. For a brief three years, 1803-1806, this area was known as New Market. Twelve students were part of this Painesville School history. The first truly organized schooling endeavors began on the Washington Street property in

the 1820s. The **Painesville Educational Society** purchased and established the **Painesville Academy** which shone brightly for 20 years. Following a period of substantial decline, the site was deeded to the town of Painesville. Realizing the necessity for formal education, a town-wide tax was enacted to reopen the Academy as a free public high school. The year 1860 marked a pivotal point. The original Academy was demolished, and a new, larger two-story building was constructed at a cost of \$13,000. By the 1890s, the **Old Academy Building** served as a grammar and high school until the early 1920s. It was razed to permit the 1922 construction of what would become **Harvey High School**. It formally opened in 1925. The older building served as **Champion Junior High** until it faded into history in a 1952 demolition.



## Thomas W. Harvey

A noted Ohio educator and one of four Ohioans considered to be the most influential in the development of the State's public schools, Thomas Harvey was born in 1821 in New Hampshire. His family moved to Concord Township in 1833, but his brief foray into farming was unfulfilling. At age 15, he left for Painesville and took a position in a publisher's office. For six years he labored for the **Painesville Republican**, later known as the

**Telegraph**, learning the print trade.

Harvey even briefly served as editor. In 1844, he earned a teaching certificate at the **Western Reserve Teacher's Seminary** in Kirtland. Harvey founded **Geauga High School** in Chardon in 1849, and later became a school superintendent in Massillon in 1851.

He returned to Painesville as school superintendent in 1865 and remained in charge through 1871. He was appointed **State Commissioner of Schools** by President



**Rutherford B. Hayes**, a position he held for three years. Once again, he returned to Lake County in 1879 and served in various positions including trustee at **Lake Erie College**. During the years before his death in 1892, he founded **NEOTA (Northeast Ohio Teachers Association)**, advocated for teacher union policies and organized Lake County School standardization practices. Harvey will be best remembered for his revisions of **William McGuffey's readers**; as well as authoring several grammar books including the renowned **Harvey's English Grammar** in 1868 and **The Graded School Primary Speller** in 1875.

The Painesville community recognized his contributions to the town/city and its school students. They invested \$300,000 to construct a new **Painesville High School**, one of the best equipped institutions of the day. A name was needed for the new building. The choice was evident. Harvey High School, named after Thomas W. Harvey, was dedicated in November 1922.



## School Spirit: The Rest of the Story

The history of **Painesville Academy** and **Painesville High School (Harvey High)** is not without some interesting, little-known tidbits. On the negative side, a property extension on the eastern end of the school hit



a snag when the Washington Street Cemetery blocked the proposed expansion effort. Painesville City's first formal cemetery had burials until 1869; and many of Painesville's legacy citizens were interred there. Do the





street names Moodley, Avery, Seeley, King, Paine, Tracy, Burroughs, Wood, Sterling, Mathews, Babcock, Gray and others resonate? These families were ordered to remove gravesites in 1879, with most relocating their ancestors to Evergreen Cemetery. Even the triangle of land across from Lake Erie College was impacted by this event when it was discovered that the graves of General Edward Paine and his relatives had been left behind.

From the positive side, Harvey High did undergo some expansions in its later years. In 1952, a new east side wing was added after **Champion Junior High School** was razed. In 1965, a cafeteria and addition were built. Remodeling was done in 1968, and 1972 saw a two-phase construction. Another 1972 improvement made a third-story addition. Finally in 1976, new offices, a vocational wing and gymnasium upgrades followed. But to meet the evolving instructional needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century students, an entirely updated school building was constructed at 200 West Walnut Ave.

Dedicated in December 2009, it carries on the work of educating the community's children. The **West Washington Street** structure served students and the community faithfully until Spring 2010 when it was lost to time forever.

Throughout its 100-year history, **Harvey High School** has educated the children of locals, as well as immigrants from every corner of the globe and from every walk of life. We offer a heartfelt salute to each Painesville school and its contribution to Lake County's children through their faithful service! Special thanks to Rose, a Painesville native, Harvey High School Class of 1958.



**Sources:** [www.oldohioschools.com](http://www.oldohioschools.com); **Gazette Newspaper** (Rose's column, 20 Nov 2009); **News-Herald, Local Lore** (7 Feb 2011).

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