

At a meeting at Lima, June 20, 1952, Dr. Carl Leech proposed a seven district jointure as recommended in the survey made by the Pennsylvania Economy League. The purpose of the jointure was to provide a unified administration to carry out common objectives and policies in the school program, kindergarten through twelfth grade. On July 15, 1952, Dr. Leech set forth plans for the jointure to include Media, Chester Heights, Bethel, Concord, Edgmont, Middletown, and Upper Providence.

Members of the Jointure Committee were to be Leedom Tuckerman, Media; William Willits, Concord; George W. Feldman, Bethel; Harold Hormann, Edgmont; Robert F. Engle, Middletown; John Burkland, Upper Providence; Mrs. Oleta Ramage, Supervising Principal, Concord; Dr. Fred Tanger, Superintendent, Media; J. Earl Mast, Supervising Principal, Middletown; and Donald Snively, Supervising Principal, Upper Providence.

At this July meeting, Dr. Leech called attention to a chart which indicated that the population of the area according to the 1950 census was 21,934: 1,960 were of elementary school age, 672 of junior high school age, and 484 of senior high school age. The projected school figures for 1956 were 1,030 junior high pupils and 763 senior high pupils.

As the seven-district committee studied the cost of a new high school, lack of accord among the members of the committee became increasingly apparent, and Upper Providence went on record as favoring a jointure with Middletown even if the other five districts failed to reach an agreement.

On April 21, 1953, at Media High School, the master agreement involving 2,600 pupils in seven districts was signed. With this signing, the largest school unit in Delaware County - the Central Delaware Joint School Board - was officially inaugurated.

A week later, this joint Board elected as its officers Leedom Tuckerman, Media, President; Robert Engle, Middletown, Vice President; and Mrs. Margaret Cowdright, Secretary. In June of 1953, the tentative budget for the jointure was \$832,714.00, and the final budget adopted three weeks later was \$898,650.00. Dr. Fred Tanger was named chief administrator of the Central Delaware County Joint Schools, and Earl Mast, Donald Snively, and Oleta Ramage were named administrative assistants.

The purpose of the jointure proposed by Dr. Leech was a unified administration. This seemed to have been achieved. Economic efficiency obviously was not a major concern of Dr. Leech. The joint Board, however, expressed their concern when the members learned that it would cost \$25,000.00 more per year to operate the combined districts than it would to operate seven separate districts. Despite this realization, the Board continued with plans for a new high school, and in August of 1953, the Ballinger Company was commissioned to design a high school building. In September, the go-ahead was given for preliminary plans for the high school, and in November of 1953, the Pennsylvania Department of Education approved Project 614, as the school proposal was called in Harrisburg. The Department set a cost limit of \$2.5 million with a room schedule for 1,000 students in grades ten, eleven, and twelve. The cost

was acceptable to the Board, and an authority was formed to finance the construction of the new building. (At this time, the Central Delaware County Joint Schools employed 105 elementary teachers and fifty-three secondary teachers.)

The smoothness with which the jointure was proceeding ended in April of 1956 when a controversy arose concerning the site for the new school. Chester Heights refused approval on the basis that a gas line ran beneath the proposed area. Difficulties increased in May, and the jointure was in serious trouble. Finances seemed to be the major stumbling block.

Middletown, Upper Providence, and Edgmont members of the jointure began to talk of the possibility of continuing as a unit without the other four districts. By June, the jointure seemed headed for dissolution. Edgmont, Middletown, and Upper Providence, certain that they could continue successfully, attempted to save the authorization to build a high school for themselves. In July, the request of the three-district group received tentative approval from the State, and G. Baker Thompson, the County Superintendent of Schools, and J. Earl Mast, the Business Administrator of the Central Delaware County Joint School District, went to Harrisburg and there received permission to proceed with the high school plans pending changes in room schedule and a revised financial program.

The remaining four districts made plans to withdraw from the jointure which was now operating illegally because of its failure to pass on a budget. Media, though still one of the seven-member jointure administration, now operated as an independent unit. It was the only district with its own high school; pupils of high school age in the other six districts attended Media High or other neighboring high schools. This means of educating high school students continued until Penncrest High School (serving Edgmont, Middletown and Upper Providence) and Garnet Valley High School (serving Chester Heights, Bethel, and Concord) were built.

After the withdrawal of Media, Chester Heights, Bethel, and Concord from the jointure, Edgmont, Middletown, and Upper Providence, through the agency of the Ballinger Company, submitted revised high school plans for State approval. Project 614 (still its official designation) was again approved on September 21, 1954, with the deletion of the proposed auditorium and the reduction of the cost limit by \$0.5 million.

The disintegration of the jointure enabled Middletown to put into action what had been planned provisionally as early as 1953, to join officially with Upper Providence. Because of the rapport established with Edgmont, Middletown and Upper Providence agreed to include that township in the smaller jointure. The citizens of Middletown, delighted with the position Harrisburg had taken regarding Project 614, and to show their approval of the action of their Board members, spurred a drive to ally the township with Upper Providence and Edgmont in a three-district jointure by signing the agreement to dissolve the seven-district jointure. The Middletown Board voted four to one to join with Upper Providence and Edgmont.

EMU was selected as the alphabetical designation for the newly-formed Central Delaware County Joint School District, and the acronym now identified the new jointure. Mast, appointed to head the new district as supervising principal, noted that the emu is the second largest bird in the world, native to Australia and, though characterized by its lack of flight, is very fast on its feet.

Principals in the new district were Florence Shields, Edith Cooper, and Hanna Carr. The task of coordinating all seventh graders was assigned to Mary Smyth.

Although the jointure had been reduced to three members, contention over the site for the new high school continued. Some members of the jointure Board wanted to institute condemnation proceedings since the Balderston's, owners of the land, had posed objections to its use. It was decided to continue negotiations rather than to move on condemnation. The Balderston tract was approved as a site on October 9, 1953. On November 16, State approval was extended to May of 1955, and in October of 1954, forty acres of this land were purchased for \$46,000.00.

On March 12 of the following year, Henry Hofmann was appointed principal of the proposed new school. * Five days later, the EMU Board approved the plans for the junior-senior high school and the hiring of teachers for the district at a starting salary of \$2,850.00. Final plans and specifications for the school were approved by the State on March 16, 1955, and contracts were awarded on May 17, two weeks before the State-set deadline. The ground-breaking took place on May 26 with Harold A. Hormann representing the Edgmont Board, Andrew McClure representing the Upper Providence Board, and John W. Kriebel representing the Middletown Board.

The fall of 1955 saw EMU junior-senior high students housed at the Lima School. The 377 students in grades seven, eight, and nine were taught by eighteen teachers. The thirty members of the first senior class to graduate from Penncrest in 1959 were ninth graders at this time.) The courses of study were the traditional offerings of college preparatory, business education, general education, plus homemaking and industrial arts. In November, parents and pupils chose Penncrest to be the name for the new school despite the Balderston's protest that this was the name of their estate and could not be used. According to George Thompson, the EMU solicitor, there were no legal grounds for the Balderston's objection, and, consequently, Penncrest became the official school name. The architect assured the Board in December that Penncrest would be completed in time for occupancy in the fall of 1956. In September 7, 1956, a caravan of trucks and cars was organized to transport furniture, books, laboratory equipment, and other impedimenta needed in the process of education from Lima to the partially completed Penncrest building to prepare for the arrival of the 750 students in grades seven to

*This did not conflict with Mast's position inasmuch as the duties that he performed were those of superintendent.

ten, inclusive. (The 1957-58 enrollment was to include grades eleven for a total of 950 and 1958-59 school year, with the first senior class, the enrollment would total 1,100 students.) Four weeks later, the building was still unfinished, and the Board warned the contractors to complete the work by October 22 or be in default.

On April 7, 1957, the date of Penncrest's dedication, EMU already faced classroom shortages at all levels. The thirty-nine classrooms, shop facilities, library, cafeteria, and gymnasium/auditorium had been planned to house 1,000 pupils, and the projected enrollment figures far exceeded that number. One thousand, two hundred, and thirty-two pupils in grades seven to twelve was the number released by Mast for the school year 1958-59, and officials, he said, estimated that the 1959-60 enrollment would be 1,500.

In May of 1958, the Board of Directors of the Rose Tree Union School District* maintained an educational system comprised of 3,200 pupils and a faculty of 142. Their responsibilities included five elementary schools and one junior-senior high (Penncrest). The junior-senior high enrollment was 1,400 housed in a building meant for 1,000.

Concerned by the need for more classroom space, the Board appointed a committee to recommend an architect for a new junior high school. The name of an architect was submitted and, moving rapidly, the Board approved him and his plans for a building with thirty-two teaching stations, art, shop, and music facilities, a library, and a gymnasium. The building was to accommodate 700 pupils and to cost an estimated \$2 million. Bids went out and the construction of the new school at the corner of Middletown Road and Indian Lane was soon under way.

To alleviate the problem of overcrowding while the new junior high was being built, it was necessary to hold double teaching sessions at Penncrest during the 1958-59 and 1959-60 school years. Class size was held under thirty and there were six periods of instruction during each session. Senior high students met from 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., and junior high students from 12:30 to 5:00 p.m.

*On April 4, 1957, the proposal that EMU become the Rose Tree Union School District received favorable consideration from the Edgmont Board. Middletown had already agreed to the idea, but it was not until August that Upper Providence approved the proposed union. The proposal also provided for the reduction of the number of Board members from nineteen to seven over a period of several years. Meetings were scheduled to permit discussion of the pros and cons of a union district, and residents voted in favor of the issue on November 5, 1957. After five stormy years as members, first of an ill-fated, seven-district jointure, then a three-district one, Edgmont, Middletown, and Upper Providence had become Rose Tree Union, a third-class district with a tax rate of 39 mills. In May of 1959, the number on the Board was still nineteen, but by 1963 had reached the goal of seven, set six years earlier. One director was elected from Edgmont, one from Middletown, one from Upper Providence, and four were elected at large. All directors were elected for six-year terms.

Two principals were to share this experience: Cyrus Rothberg and Louis Scott. In 1958, Hofmann, named Director of Secondary Education, relinquished the principalship of Penncrest to Rothberg; a year later, Scott became principal of the school. His appointment to this position was an excellent one as twenty-five years of uninterrupted leadership have attested.*

In the first years as principal, he had no assistants; but as the school population grew and his responsibilities increased, he was able to find and to retain able men as assistants. At the present time, Daniel Loose is Assistant Principal for Instruction; Ronald Fertel, Assistant Principal and Dean of Eleventh and Twelfth Grades; and Foster Nowell, Assistant Principal and Dean of Ninth and Tenth Grades. Their assistance, however, does not relieve him of over 100 evening events a year which he attends, events which stretch many of his work days to ten hours.

During his years as principal, Scott has seen Penncrest change from a junior-senior high to grades nine through twelve, to ten through twelve, and back to nine through twelve. Attitudes of the students changed too, reflecting changes occurring in society. The years which proved most difficult were the early '70's when, across the nation, students were going through a period of unrest. The pendulum has swung once again to relative stability and conservatism, and Mr. Scott has come through the difficult years unscathed, his sense of proportion, sense of humor, and belief in young people intact.

Building progress of the junior high continued according to schedule and in September of 1960, plans were made to move into the new structure on October 12. The name Indian Lane was adopted by the Board, the cornerstone was ready to be set, and on December 1, 1960, school opened with all thirty-two rooms in use and housing the 781 pupils that had been bused with their homeroom teachers from Penncrest. After room assignments were completed, teachers and pupils were given a tour of the building. Following the tour was an assembly which formally initiated them into their new venture. Double sessions were at an end.

The official dedication of Indian Lane took place December 5, 1960. Cyrus Rothberg, who had been hired as a social studies teacher for the junior-senior high in 1956, was named Indian Lane's first principal, a position he held until his untimely death in November of 1969. Rothberg nurtured a love for the school in most of his staff, and they respected him as a principal and as a friend.

His death left Indian Lane without a principal, and David Leibig was named to serve as temporary principal. He performed the duties of principal until September of 1970 when he relinquished them to Foster Nowell. With Nowell principal of Indian Lane, Leibig served as assistant principal, and so things remained until Springton Lake was built.

*Attrition rate among secondary school principals is high, and in Delaware County, few other principals can count more than fifteen years' service in the same school.

On the tenth anniversary of Indian Lane's opening, a portrait of Cyrus Rothberg was unveiled and presented to the school in his memory. This portrait now hangs in the Penncrest library.

In the elementary grades, a similar situation of overcrowding was remedied without double sessions by the addition of fourteen rooms to Roosevelt School in 1958. To minimize the dislocation of pupils in the elementary and secondary programs, the Rose Tree Union Board planned the following building program: (1) Rose Tree Elementary School was to be enlarged by the addition of six classrooms and a multi-purpose room at an estimated cost of \$313,000.00. Completion was set for September of 1960. (2) An entire school (Glenwood) consisting of twelve classrooms and a multi-purpose room, was to be built in the Lenni-Riddlewood area. (3) Consideration was to be given to the enlargement and improvement of the Edgmont School.

Aware that the junior high building just completed would not meet future needs if the census projections were reliable, the Board approved the purchase of twenty-seven acres of ground between Providence Road and Sycamore Mills Road at a cost of \$80,000.00. This land was to be the site of a future second junior high.

In May of 1972, Hofmann, who had been Penncrest's first principal and had served the district in a variety of other positions, submitted his resignation. He was leaving to accept the post of superintendent of the Garnet Valley School District.*

When his resignation became official in August, J. Preston Barry became Assistant Superintendent for Instruction (Hofmann's post at resignation), and John K. Baillie, a newcomer to the district, filled Barry's prior position as Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services. Three years later, the Rose Tree Media Board appointed Henry T. Nacrelli, then principal of Springton Lake, to replace Baillie who was going to the Morgantown School District as superintendent.

The appointment of Nacrelli was another step upward for a man who had devoted his educational career to Rose Tree, a career he began in 1961 as a social studies teacher at Media High School, following his discharge from the U.S. Marine Corps. He became a guidance counselor and later assumed the duties of principal of Media Junior High when Donald Meehan left that post. In 1972, Nacrelli transferred to Springton Lake Junior High as its first principal.

Needing a new principal for Media Junior High, the Board moved Foster Nowell to this position from Indian Lane where he had been principal since 1970. David Leibig, Dean of Student Affairs at Indian Lane, was named principal there on Nowell's departure. For three

*In June of that same year, the district lost another administrator, a veteran of twenty years; Edith Cooper, who had come to the district as principal of Roosevelt Elementary School in 1952, retired.

years, Joseph Haviland (now Assistant to the Superintendent for Instruction) was assistant principal at Indian Lane, and William Gamble, during these same years, assisted Leibig in various capacities.

It was also in 1972, at their January meeting, that the Board adopted an educational design calling for six K-4 grade schools: Carr, Lima, Glenwood, Roosevelt, Media, and Rose Tree; and two 5-6 Centers: Glenwood and the former Media Junior High.

In the very years that Springton Lake Junior High was under construction, and during the next decade, population patterns across the nation were changing. The "baby boom" of the '40's and '50's had ended and sociologists were using a new catch-phrase, "Zero Population Growth," to explain the phenomenon of the declining birth rate. Rose Tree Media School District mirrored what was happening in the rest of the country. In fact, the first signs of a declining birth rate in the district had been noted by astute administrators as early as 1971. In September of that year, pupil enrollment in the district was 6,096, a drop of 117 from the previous year. Kindergarten was down by eighty-five; the first grade by fifty-one. *Through the decade, enrollment continued to drop from a high of almost 6,300 in 1969-70 to approximately 3,400 in 1981-82.

The decrease in enrollment, noticed in the early '70s, set into motion a domino effect that was soon felt throughout the district. It was apparent to members of the community that the school district no longer needed the same number of buildings to house and educate a diminished number of pupils. To study the problem and to make recommendations, FUCOM I was devised in 1977. This Facilities Use Committee, composed of community residents, faculty representatives, and administrative personnel, considered the current educational needs of the community and the way in which the buildings could be used to meet these needs. After weeks of examining the question and possible answers, the committee presented its findings to the community during a School Board meeting. These findings were debated during scheduled public meetings and resulted in these changes in building use. The Board voted in 1978 to: (1) close Lima Elementary School and sell it, (2) close Indian Lane Junior High School and rent it, and (3) consolidate parts of the Media building for rental purposes.

The changes which FUCOM I brought about could not help affecting pupils and teachers. With the closing of Indian Lane, all junior high pupils attended Springton Lake; elementary pupils from Lima now attended one of the remaining elementary schools. Indian Lane teachers, with preferences taken into account, were reassigned to Springton Lake or to Penncrest; Lima teachers, to other elementary schools. Administrators were assigned to the same positions they had held in the closing schools when these positions existed in the schools to which they moved; when they did not, new duties were assigned to them.

*Hofmann attributed the decline to the birth control pill which had become popular five or six years earlier.

In September of 1981, the district was reorganized into a pattern of five K-5 schools: Rose Tree, Roosevelt, Glenwood, Hanna Carr, and Media; one middle school, (grades six to eight) Springton Lake; and one high school, (grades nine to twelve) Penncrest.

A continued decline in enrollment occasioned the commissioning of FUCOM II in the fall of 1982. The committee, again composed of community citizens, Board members, and administrators, once more studied the perennially decreasing school population and recommended that the five elementary schools be consolidated to two by 1985. Hanna Carr and Roosevelt were to close by 1983-84, and Media Elementary in 1984-85. Springton Lake Middle School would add all fifth grade pupils, and Rose Tree and Glenwood would remain as K-4 elementary schools.

In the course of the two centuries of education in the district, academic offerings, at first limited to reading, writing, arithmetic, and spelling, expanded to include subjects found in nearly every high school in the country. The most recently introduced tool for teaching has been the computer.

The district has always adhered to a policy of providing a curriculum which met State mandates and served the needs of the community. It was in keeping with this policy that the Board, in 1962, created the position of Superintendent for Educational Programs. The primary duty of the person holding this position was supervising curriculum development in the district.

Despite efforts of administrators to provide the best possible curriculum, an occasional misunderstanding can arise concerning a particular subject or the manner in which it is taught. A law suit was once filed against the school district charging that it failed to comply with the laws of the Commonwealth in the teaching of U. S. History and Pennsylvania History. The litigation was dropped when the district was able to show that, although specific courses in State and U. S. History were not offered in the way that earlier generations of students had studied them, this material was still being taught, sometimes at age levels differing from the traditional ones.

Concomitant with changes in courses of study were those changes which took place in other areas. New programs were instituted in sports; the number of different sports was increased, and this increase enabled more students to participate. Offerings today include football, baseball, basketball, soccer, track, cross-country, tennis, skiing, swimming, wrestling, gymnastics, and golf.

In addition to the large number of opportunities to take part in competitive sports, the district inaugurated, in 1973, a program called New Horizons designed to afford a chance for students, in limited numbers, to test themselves by participating in two or three-day expeditions such as canoe trips, rock climbing, cave exploring, Lamping, bicycling, cross-country skiing, and similar events. The purpose of this program is to develop skills and confidence which the participants may lack.

Always alert to the needs of its students, the school district agreed to two other programs in 1973. It allowed a group of academically talented students to meet in evening seminars once a week. Motivated by sheer interest (no grades were given for the work), these students presented for critical discussion papers based on their readings and research. These relatively informal courses proved so successful that they became part of the regular high school curriculum.

The second program addressed the needs of students who, for one reason or another, were unable to work successfully in the day program. For them, the district approved the creation of an Alternative Evening School at Penncrest. Unlike the evening seminars, the Alternative Evening School gave its participants, who met twice a week, a chance to earn credits and to graduate.

Perhaps one of the more important changes which has taken place in the Rose Tree Media School District in the last score of years has been the setting up of chairmanships on a K-12 basis. Within each school, a building coordinator or head teacher serves as liaison between chairmen and other staff members. For the most part, busy with curriculum concerns, textbook selection, and other tasks involved with running a department, chairmen did not teach in the classroom. That situation has changed, however; at the present time, many chairmen teach one or more classes per day at some level in the system.

In July of 1982, Henry T. Nacrelli became Superintendent of the Rose Tree Media School District, replacing Joseph Lapchick, who chose not to seek another contract. Mr. Nacrelli is the first superintendent of the district who has come from its own ranks.

Though it is not the purpose of this history to spotlight particular individuals engaged throughout the two centuries in the educational process in our school district, not to include John K. Barrall beyond a brief mention of his being principal at some time would be remiss.

When Media merged with Rose Tree in 1966, John had already spent thirty-three years of his life in education, twenty-seven of them as teacher of Latin and department chairman. In 1941, he was named principal of Media High School and remained in that position until 1966, the year Media High ceased to exist. He became principal of the newly-created Media Junior High and filled this role until his retirement in 1968.

Mr. Barrall's interest in youth extended beyond the classroom. He was an avid sports fan, had played championship tennis, and encouraged a vigorous sports program in the school. A firm believer that an educator has a responsibility to his community, John was a member of the Media Rotary Club, the Board of Directors of the Media-Upper Providence Library, superintendent of Church School, and Elder and Clerk of Session of the Media Presbyterian Church. Although he had all these commitments, he found time to attend Media High's athletic and other extracurricular events as well as those at the Media Boys' Club.

Teachers who were on the faculty under John's principalship will aver to his fairness in dealing with them and with students. His mild manner and soft speech put even the novice at ease. Chaucer's words admirably suit Mr. Barrall:

He never yet any vileness said in all his life
to whatsoever wight;
He was a truly perfect, gentle knight.

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