

## History of Tallmadge High School Alumni Association

F. E. Lawrence, a member of the Class of 1912 who is now deceased, was the historian for the city of Tallmadge as well as for our alumni association. The follow history – taken from F. E. Lawrence's writings and a Tallmadge School Chronology written by Tallmadge High faculty member Harriett McEuen and published in 1979, the centennial year for Tallmadge High School – presents you with some historical facts about Tallmadge High School and the Tallmadge High School Alumni Association which is one of the oldest active high school alumni associations in the United States.

- 1810: First log school.
- 1814-15: Frame building housed the common school and academy. District schools as needed from 1810 to 1916.
- 1870: Center School district formed June 11.
- 1871: Center School built.
- 1876: Center School burned in January and reopened September 5. Housed three levels, one of which was the high school under the tuition of Miss Martha Maltby. Tallmadge Academy discontinued.
- 1879: The first class to graduate from Tallmadge High School. Following the commencement ceremony for its eight graduates (Louis Atwood, Fannie E. Kerr, Ida B. Limbert, Lottie Limbert, Nettie Peck, Anna Seward, Francis L. Sperry and Hattie Webb), a reception was held at which time the Tallmadge High School Alumni Association was organized. Minutes of the association exist from as early as 1889.
- 1884: Eighteen graduates, one of the largest classes in the first 50 years. Commencement ceremonies were held in the historic Congregational Church on the Tallmadge Circle. Music was provided by an all-brass band. The ceremonies were divided into two sessions from 10 AM – noon and 2 – 4 PM. Every student delivered an essay or oration which they had written and memorized. This class was the only one to have an all-day commencement ceremony due to this fact. The practice of presenting essays and orations continued for another 30 or 40 years.  
  
In 1884, commencement activities lasted an entire weekend. Following the commencement ceremony on Friday, there was a reception on Saturday, church on Sunday, and an alumni meeting on Monday. The alumni meeting was held as part of the commencement activities and for many years, an unwritten rule existed that all graduates were to attend this meeting and be welcomed into the THS Alumni Association. In 1884, the alumni traveled by an evening train to the Windsor Hotel in Akron for dinner followed by the alumni meeting.
- 1889: The 10th year reunion of the Class of 1879 and the 10th anniversary of the THS Alumni Association was celebrated by meeting at the Congregational Church on the Circle. After 10 years, the association membership totaled 78. The celebration began on Friday, July 26, 1889. Among the 41 people who attended was Miss Martha Milby, the first principal of Tallmadge High School. She was also the organizer of THS Alumni Association. Alumni members traveled to Silver Lake in hayrack wagons for dinner. Following dinner, each member was called by name and responded by reciting a personal quote. Those were the days before Silver lake had electrical lights, so, as darkness rapidly approached, the history of the eight graduating classes was read and the meeting was hastily adjourned. Since 1892, all alumni meetings have been held in Tallmadge.

1890: The Class of 1890 had eight graduates. The alumni meeting in that year had 48 alumni present, and the THS Alumni Association membership then totaled 101.

1891 – 1910: The schoolhouse was situated on North Avenue, just north of the Circle. It was an old, two-story, four-room building. The main room was heated by a big pot-bellied stove which "roasted" the five seniors seated next to it, while the other classes froze. The schoolhouse had to be extensively repaired twice in 1891 and 1910. During these repairs, classes were moved to the town Hall. As a result, the Classes of 1891 and 1910 finished their high school careers at the Town Hall.

1902: The smallest class to graduate was in 1902 having only one graduate. Keeping with tradition, the school still held a commencement ceremony with music furnished by the orchestra, but had no reception. The graduate gave his oration, and the president of Buchtel College (now the University of Akron) presented the diploma. Unfortunately, the graduate died in 1903 at the age of 20.

1911: New Central building, build of brick, occupied November 7.

1915: School reorganization provided eight elementary grades and four high school grades.

1920: School wired for electricity.

1923: New high school building completed on North Avenue.

1926: District had six horse drawn school wagons and seven motor buses.

1930: Radio purchased for the school.

1931: Party-line telephone placed in principal's office.

1932: Because of the Depression, school was held for eight months for elementary students. High school continued for nine months, but the teachers taught two weeks without pay.

1933: First school newspaper, "The Rambler".

1935: Purchase of motion picture projector for school.

1936: Tallmadge Township became an incorporated village.

1940: Bell telephone system installed.

1946: Band Boosters organized and band wore uniforms.

1949-50: Overdale athletic field opened in 1949, HS stadium dedicated in 1950.

1950: Dunbar School opened.

1951: Tallmadge became a city; Tallmadge City School District established.

1953: Overdale School opened.

1960: High School at 484 East Avenue dedicated.

1962: Jean Pierre Behrin arrived as first foreign exchange student. Munroe School opened.

1964: Central Junior High building dedicated.

1966: David Bacon School dedicated.

1974: Commencement ceremonies moved from Tallmadge to E. J. Thomas Performing Arts Hall.

1979: Centennial Class of 1979 graduated 323 seniors.

From 1879 – 2012, 14,010 students have graduated from Tallmadge High School.

The Tallmadge High School Alumni Association's stated purpose is:

- To arrange for an annual meeting of members.
- To foster fellowship among former classmates.
- To provide a vehicle for recalling old high school days.
- To offer a special occasion for reports by the 25 and 50 year classes.
- To memorialize those alumni who have died in the past year.
- To learn of the progress and aspirations of the current Public School System (Tallmadge School System).
- To promote the education of youth through studies, reports, scholarships, etc.
- To keep a running account and history of proceedings by publishing an annual report.

All persons who have completed the course of study prescribed in the Tallmadge High School and received their diplomas are members of the Tallmadge High School Alumni Association. Husbands and wives of Alumni members, Superintendents, Principals, Senior Class Advisors and High School teachers are honorary members.

Current meetings of the Tallmadge High School Alumni Association are held the first Saturday in June after graduation. Since 1985, we have given a scholarship to a deserving graduate or graduates each year.