

Information on Kearney High School

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[Questions and answers specifically requested for the book. Questions were underlined in the original file so I'm guessing from memory.]

1. Name of School - **Kearney High School**
2. County and District Number - **Buffalo County Dist. #7**
3. Location - **3610 6th Ave., Kearney, NE**
4. Years of operation - **March 8, 1872 as a grade school. From 1881-1894 the high school classes were "junior", "middle", and "senior". In 1885 the fourth high school grade was added. (Still open)**
5. School colors - **Royal Blue & Gold**
6. School Mascot - **Bearcat**
7. School Song -
8. Year of first graduating class - **May 29, 1884; The first 12th grade graduation was held in 1885.**
Number in class - 7 (in 1884)
Names of members first graduating class - Sara Tupman Conner, Mary Augusta Crissman, Lydia Ellen Mitchell, and Florence Alberta Wilson, Grace Aurora Jackson, and Luella Augusta Pingree.
9. Year last class graduated - 1991
Number in class - 234
Names of members last graduating class -
10. Sports championships - **The first football team played in 1894.**
11. First school board members -
12. Famous Graduates - **J. E. Morey, superintendent of Kearney Schools and the coach of the first football team later taught at Kearney Normal School**
- 13.

When the district was organized the first classes were held on the main floor of the newspaper building. There were no desks, only benches around the edge of the room. The clatter of the printing presses could be heard coming from the second floor of the building.

The first school house was a two-story frame building located at what is now the corner of 1st Street and Ave. A. In 1880 the first the Whittier Building was completed. This building housed both the grade school and the high school for the next 10 years. The building was named after James J. Whittier, a member of the school board. But the name also had a literary connotation, John

Greenleaf Whittier, and so the trend was set. Each new building erected in the Kearney school system through the end of the century except one was named for a literary great of the time - Hawthorne, Alcott, Bryan, Emerson and Longfellow.

The first graduation exercises were held on May 29, 1884 at the Presbyterian Church. Mr. M. F. Miller was the first superintendent and a teacher at Whittier. He is also reported in one source to be superintendent when the first class graduated in 1884. Another source lists Miss M. I. Stewart as superintendent of schools when the first class graduated.

In 1890 a new high school building named Longfellow was constructed beside the old Whittier building. In 1912 an addition was added to Longfellow. In 1935 it was completely remodeled. It served as the site of Kearney High School until the present building was constructed in 1960. Longfellow was torn down in 1969. Graduates who attended school at Longfellow hold a strong emotional attachment to that building.

"Old Whittier" served as a grade school until 1920-22 when the new Whittier building was built on the same block. The grade school moved to the new building and the old one served as a junior high until the new junior high was built in 1925, also on the same block. Then Old Whittier was remodeled and on January 29, 1929 it was rededicated as the Manual Arts building for the high school. Music classes were also held in this building.