

# Built To Last The Test Of Time

by Lynne Belluscio

This year as high school seniors prepare for graduation from LeRoy High School, it should be noted that 100 years ago, the first class of seniors to receive their diplomas from the “new” school were preparing for graduation.

In 1911, the new school on Trigon Park had finally been completed and in the early spring, classes were moved across the street from the old school behind LeRoy House. It had taken longer than planned to finish the school. In 1908, the discussion of building a new school reached a peak. The *Gazette* included a long article about the state regulations for a school. There were six essential conditions that had to be met. It was necessary to provide 30 cubic feet of fresh air per minute per child. The state also mandated (times haven’t changed much) that each pupil should have 15 square feet of floor space and 200 cubic feet of air space. Rooms were to be arranged so that sufficient light through the windows should come to the back and left of the students. It was mentioned that if the light conditions had been met in the old school, fewer students would need glasses. The school board also wanted to have a fire proof building with better sanitary conditions.

Eventually plans for a new building were adopted. The architect was E.E. Joralemon from Niagara Falls. The cost of the building was not to exceed \$76,000. It was described as French renaissance in style, built of yellow brick with Indiana limestone trim. (A “sister” school, designed by Joralemon, was built about the same time in Ashtabula, Ohio. The building was abandoned several years ago and about three years ago was razed.)

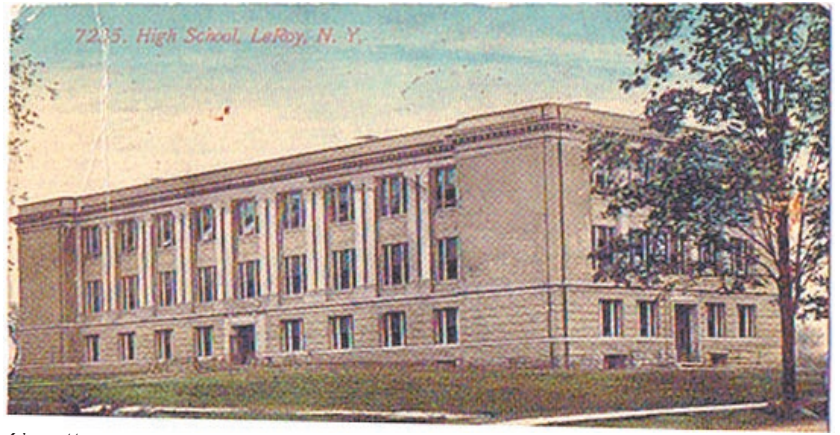
There was a lot of discussion about the name of the school. Some suggested “LeRoy High School”. Others preferred “LeRoy Union School” and still others suggested “Ingham Union School.” (The next time you drive by, you might want to check to see what they decided. You’ll also notice that the school

is dated 1909, the date of the beginning of construction.)

In April 1909, the old brick Ingham Dormitory was demolished. The brick was used as fill at the west end of the 1909 Main Street bridge. It took almost two years to complete the new building.

In January 1911, the *Gazette* noted that seats in the auditorium were being installed. (not the auditorium that was built in the 1950s.) The boys’ entrance was on the east end of the school and the girls’ entrance on the west end. The lower grades occupied the first floor. The high school was on the upper floor. The flooring on the first level was southern pine and the upper floors was maple. The door and window casings were oak. The walls were left in a rough grayish color, but there were plans to decorate the walls with water colors. The cost of the building was \$4,000 over budget and the cost of the site preparation was \$17,500, which brought the total to \$97,500.

In March the classes began to move to the new school. The desks from the old school



(now the Jell-O Gallery) had to be moved room by room, so it was necessary to move one class at a time. First the fourth grades moved and another grade moved into their old room at the old school, while those desks were unscrewed from the floor and moved into the new building. The third grades had already moved out of the old school and were meeting in the school on Myrtle Street. The high school classes were moved over the weekend.

Twenty one seniors graduated in June 1911 - the largest class in the history of the LeRoy School District. For ninety two years, the “new school” served the community, even after the Wolcott Street School was built and the school became the high

school. In 2003, a “new” high school was built on South Street Road, but the Board of Education decided to retain the now “old” high school and utilize it for the district offices and classrooms.

This year, the Oatka Festival will commemorate the Centennial of the school on Trigon Park. It will be featured on the Festival T-shirt. The Historical Society is looking for the oldest alumnus or alumna, probably someone who graduated in the early 40s. Call the office 768-7433 if you know of someone who might be eligible for this honor. At the Oatka Festival Site we will have a registration book with pages for each year and we hope you’ll stop by and sign in. We also hope to have alumni ribbons available and a display of yearbooks.



Graduating Class of 1911 of Le Roy High School.

Top row from left to right—Esther Steverson, Mary T. Muller, Elsey W. Larkin, (Julia M. Connor, teacher), Arthur E. Selden, Lillian G. MacDonald, Ruby Artman, Henry E. Scott, Mary M. Kemp, Gertrude A. Wells, Agnes L. Gleason, Florence E. Pestle, Hazel P. Empie.

Middle row from left to right—Martha A. Shepard, Dorothy Gillett, Reid Marcellus, Ida S. Radley, Anna E. Kurtz, Ethel M. Lewis.

Lower row from left to right—John E. Kelly, Irving R. Wilder, Francis J. Kemp.