

McLean County Museum of History

**Walker School
(Bloomington Township)
Collection**

Reprocessed by
Brigid R. McBride
Spring 2009

Collection Information

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	One box
COLLECTION DATES:	1847-2002
RESTRICTIONS:	None
REPRODUCTION RIGHTS:	Permission to reproduce or publish material in this collection must be obtained in writing from the McLean County Museum of History
ALTERNATIVE FORMATS:	None
OTHER FINDING AIDS:	None
LOCATION:	Archives
NOTES:	

History

Located in Blooming Grove (Bloomington Township section 22), Walker School is generally recognized as the first school in McLean County. Residents of Blooming Grove organized a subscription school (the tuition was \$2.50 for the four-month school term), and Delilah Mullin held classes at the Dawson cabin. Area residents erected the first log schoolhouse in 1827, and formally organized a school district in 1834. William Walker donated a half-acre lot (hence the school name) and the district erected a small frame schoolhouse. In 1848, the school moved to a lot at Thomas Orendorff's sugar camp, and there the district built the county's first brick schoolhouse (see Folder 1 for transcription of Walker School building fund subscription roll). In 1903, a new brick structure replaced the fifty-year-old school. Today, the 1903 schoolhouse survives as a single-family residence.

The most important primary source documents in this collection are the attendance rolls for 1847 (Folder 2), 1848 (Folder 3), and 1853 (Folder 4). Each folder contains the original manuscript together with a photocopy of the original and Milo Custer's 1919 transcription. These three originals are in extremely fragile condition and patrons should consult the photocopies and transcriptions.

Recent interest in Walker School dates to the presidency of George Herbert Walker Bush. One of the school district's early residents was George E. Walker. While he was not related to the school's namesake, he became the great-great grandfather of the nation's forty-first president (and thus the great-great-great grandfather of George Walker Bush, the forty-third president). George E. Walker arrived in McLean County in 1838 and established a farmstead south of Bloomington. Walker and his wife, Harriet Mercer Walker, are buried at Woodlawn Cemetery. Harriet Mercer is the sister of Ann Mercer, mother of Judge David Davis of Eighth Circuit / Lincoln / U.S. Supreme Court fame.

The Walkers had ten children including David Davis Walker (born 1840 in Bloomington; married 1862 in St. Louis, MO; died 1918 in Kennebunkport, ME). David Davis Walker's son George Herbert Walker (1875-1953) had a daughter Dorothy Walker, who married Prescott Sheldon Bush. From Prescott comes George Herbert Walker Bush.

Scope Note

This collection contains three nineteenth century attendance rolls; information on the school's history and connections to the Walker and Bush family lines; as well as reunion materials dating to the twentieth century.

Folder 1: General Information

- 1.1 “The Walker School: No. 9, ‘The Brick School-House in Blooming Grove’ ” by Milo Custer, seven-page MS, May 15, 1910
- 1.2 1847 Bloomington Township map (photocopy of detail) showing section 22, location of Walker School
- 1.3 Walker School history from *The Story of McLean County and Its Schools* by William B. Brigham (1951), p. 129
- 1.4 Six-page booklet, transcription of Walker School records, copied by Milo Custer from F. M. Williams, April 21, 1919
- 1.5 Walker School Building and Subscriptions; 1848
- 1.6 Teacher’s Schedule, Walker School, 1847 (for original MS, see Folder 2)
- 1.7 “Common School Taught by Thomas W. Lawrence, 1848” Names of Pupils (for original MS, see Folder 3)
- 1.8 “School taught by R. D. Minard, 1853” Names of Pupils (for original MS, see Folder 4)
- 1.9 Walker School reunion postcard, September 26, 1948.
- 1.10 “Duly Dedicated,” *Pantagraph*? January 16, 1904.
- 1.11 “All Day Program Sunday to Mark Homecoming for Walker School,” newspaper, and date unknown.

Folder 2: Attendance Roll, 1847; John F. Adams teacher; Walker's District

- 2.1 Photocopy of Custer’s transcription (for booklet, see Folder 1)
- 2.2 Photocopy of original
- 2.3 Original document

Folder 3: Attendance Roll, 1848; Thomas W. Lawrence teacher; Walker’s District

- 3.1 Original document

Folder 4: Attendance Roll, 1849; John A. Helman teacher; Walker’s District

- 4.1 Photocopy of Custer’s transcription (for booklet, see Folder 1)
- 4.2 Photocopy of original
- 4.3 Original document

Folder 5: Attendance Roll, 1853; R.D. Minard teacher; Walker’s District

- 5.1 Photocopy of Custer’s transcription (for booklet, see Folder 1)
- 5.2 Photocopy of original
- 5.3 Original document

Folder 6: School History / Custer

- 6.1 “History of the Walker School” by Milo Custer for the Illinois State Historical Society; undated, nineteen-page, typed MS (for original, see: [Custer, Milo Collection, Box 6](#))

Folder 7: Walker / Bush Family

- 7.1 1850 McLean County Census excerpt with George E. Walker family entry
- 7.2 “The Roots of President George Walker Bush in Bloomington, Illinois,” March 23, 2002 history exhibit by Kathryn Rees, Tri-Valley Middle School; seven-page MS

Folder 8: Walker School Pupils History Paper, 1942

- 8.1 "History of McLean County" by Walker School pupils, 1942, under the direction of Waneta Catey, teacher.

Folder 9: Alumni Addresses and Letter

- 9.1 Walker School Alumni Addresses for the 1936-1944 reunion
- 9.2 Letter to Walker School Alumni, 1936-1944, by Norma Ashbrook, October 31, 1999

Folder 10: Reunion Register, 1931-1961

- 10.1 Walker School Reunion Register, 1931-1961, names of attendees, 91 pp.

Folder 11: Reunion Minutes, 1934-1961

- 11.1 Walker School Reunion Minutes, 1934-1961, outline of reunions