



Anna District
Historical Society
Anna • Kettlersville • McCartyville

Skipping Village Gazette

Anna Local Schools The Earthquake Era

*Information taken from Paul Workman's 2008 Anna School Before
and After the 1937 Earthquake Project
Written by Carol Wentz*

Monday, March 2, 1937 began as most Mondays in Anna began. Adult residents began another week of work, children were busy attending their school classes, and the shops and stores in the village were open for business. But at 9:48 that morning, all normalcy disappeared as a strong earthquake tremor rocked Anna which was the epicenter of a 4.9 magnitude earthquake on the Richter scale. Residents from four surrounding states and as far away as Canada also felt the tremor.

David Elsass (who later became Emeritus Dean of Education at Bowling Green State University), recalled his earthquake experience as a sixth grade student at Anna in this way:

"Classes were proceeding according to schedule, and especially so in the sixth grade arithmetic class when decimals were the subject matter for the day. From the outside of the building came the apparent sound of a train in the distance, which seemed to be gaining momentum rapidly. Then it suddenly dawned upon us that this was not a train, as it kept coming closer and closer until it seemed certain to strike the building. Fear grasped the children and the teacher as they sat helplessly in that small room. And then, suddenly, it bit us, as though a switch engine had backed into its string of cars with the vibration rebounding back through the entire train of cars.

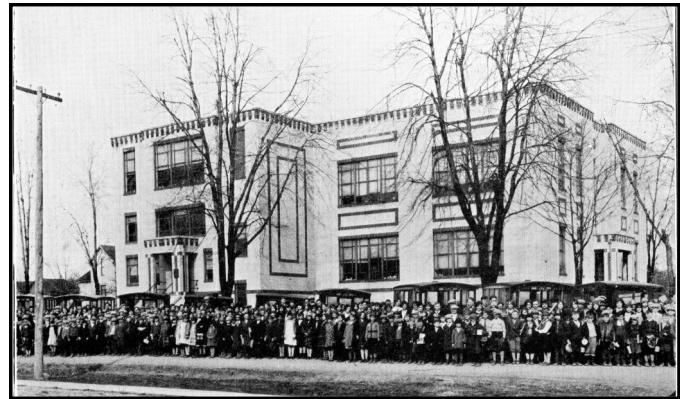
Never will I forget that terrifying moment with the great concussion

New ADHS Members...

Margie Bensman Zwiesler

Victor Heilers

***Thank you for your generous support of the
Anna District Historical Society.***



Affectionately known as "The White Brick School," it was damaged beyond repair by the 1937 earthquake after being in use for only 10 years.

of solid meeting solid, the loudspeaker bouncing on its pedestal above the teacher's head, the dust and plaster falling from the ceiling, the shaking and trembling of the walls, floor, and ceiling, the frightened and speechless expressions on the faces of the children and the teacher."



Superintendent George Rilling points out one of the cracks in the school gymnasium caused by the March 2nd earthquake.

Damage in Anna mostly consisted of items being thrown to the floor, some damaged chimneys, broken windows, and structural cracks in the walls of several public buildings, including the school. The 360 school children were evacuated from the building after noticeable cracks appeared in the walls. School officials, fearing for the safety of the students, called off all classes until the damages to the building could be thoroughly inspected. The decision was made to resume classes the following Monday in the Lutheran and Methodist churches until repairs could be made to the school.

For one day, March 8th, the entire student body was housed in the Sunday School rooms of the two local churches. At 12:45 early on Tuesday morning, March 9th, a second and stronger earthquake hit the town (5.4 on the Richter scale). Both churches sustained significant damage after the second quake and could not be safely used to house the village's school children.

School did not resume until March 18th, when classes were held in the living rooms, dining rooms, or offices of 14 of Anna's homes near or on Main Street. The entire system was united by a public address system which was taken from the old school and installed house to house by teachers Howard (Cobb) Pfaadt and Luther Fogt. This arrangement continued until the school year was completed on May 28th. Below, students travel from class to class on Main Street.



Cobb Pfaadt (on ladder), Eddie Fridley, and Lewis Zimpfer
repairing wires for the public address system



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Single Membership - \$20 yearly _____

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Lifetime Membership - \$500 _____

Mail to: ANNA DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY, P.O. Box 133, Anna, OH 45302

Contact Susan Bertsch at 937.394.3072 for more information on leveled giving.

On August 13, 1937, the War Department of the United States granted the use of the CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) barracks located in Sidney to the Anna Board of Education. The 14,600 square feet of buildings were then transported to Anna where they were arranged on the school playground where the agriculture building sits today. These barracks were made into 18 classrooms and were ready for students and teachers to use on the opening day of the fall term, September 7, 1937.



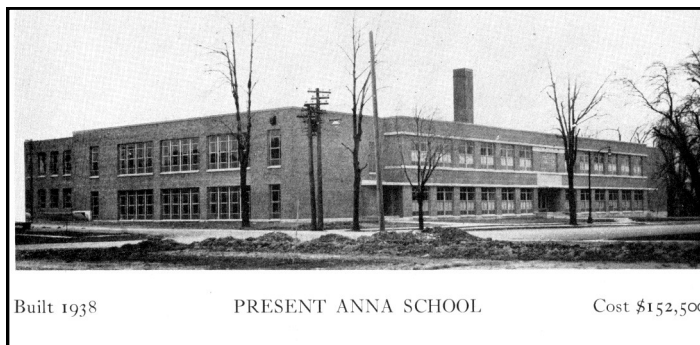
Above, CCC Barracks arranged into 18 classrooms. Below, a picture of students inside a classroom in the barracks.



All basketball practices and games, as well as the 1938 graduation ceremonies were held in the McCartyville school gymnasium. Plays and operettas were given in both the McCartyville and Kettlersville schools.

Due to the foresightedness of board member Dr. Delphis Milliette, the earthquake insurance policy that he insisted the board purchase, the Anna Board of Education received \$30,000 from the insurance company (the earthquake insurance had been in force for only four and a half years, and had only cost the board \$90 in premiums). This payment, along with \$67,000 received from the Federal Government through the Public Works Administration, and a \$55,000 bond issue voted in by the community allowed work to begin on a new school building that December.

The following September, only nine months after the construction began, the new school, although not completely finished, was opened to students and teachers for the beginning of the 1938-39 school year.



The original building which is still in use was unusual in many ways. The structure was built to withstand tremors which occasionally affect the Anna community. The footers are exceptionally heavy and of reinforced concrete; the lower walls are seventeen inches thick and tied together with header courses of brick work; all steel girders and joists are securely anchored. While our school has been remodeled and added onto several times, the old 1938 part of the school has been in continuous use for the past 86 years. It stands as a testament to the substantial design of the structure and the care that it has received over the years. The pride our community takes in the Anna Local Schools is evident and is expected to continue with the education of generations of students to come. These future students will enter the building by the three original entrances which still bear these fitting inscriptions:

**KNOWLEDGE IS POWER
ENTER TO LEARN - LEAVE TO SERVE
LIVING IS LEARNING**

Looking ahead...

- Another wine and cheese event is in the planning stages for this coming summer when a slideshow of many other pictures as well as original video from the earthquake era will be presented.
- The office area upstairs in the Packer Historical Center is nearing completion and will soon be open for use.
- New displays will be in place sometime late in the spring or early summer.

Anna District Historical Society

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Demolition of the White Brick School



Rev. Felix Mitemmaier, pastor of Anna's St. Jacob Lutheran Church in 1937, showing damage to a baptismal font at the front of the church. Components of the font were tossed as far as eight feet.

Anna District Historical Society

112 W. Main Street, P.O. Box 133

Anna, OH 45302

Phone: 937-646-0011

The Packer Center is now open by appointment only. Call 937.646.0011 to schedule a private tour.



After being removed from the White Brick School building following the earthquake, Anna's beloved old bell was reinstalled and used at the temporary barracks school. Today, this bell is found in the gazebo located near the high school office.