

A HISTORY of *BEALS SCHOOL*



Cover Photo Courtesy of Henry Meike

BEALS BEAVER GAZETTE

IT ALL STARTED WHEN . . .

FLASH! BEAVER FINDS DIARY!

I was chatting with that nice old School Spirit about his plans for the future. He mentioned something about a diary. I just laughed, not knowing what he was trying to tell me.

The next day I returned to the same spot. I would tell you where it is, but it's a secret (the Spirit and I like privacy). I searched and searched for him. All I found was a note. I jumped with joy for the Spirit had planned a treasure hunt for me!

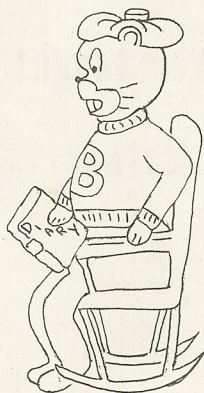
I wandered from clue to clue. Finally I found myself in the school attic. As I wearily crossed the creaky floor, I spied an old weather-beaten trunk that fit the description of the last clue. I opened it and peered in. Whoops! Oh-o-o-o, my head. The lid fell, and I slid into the trunk. I felt something under my hand. I grasped it firmly as I climbed out.

In my hand was an old, old book. I leafed through the pages and discovered it was a diary of Beals School. I looked back to see whose

it was. What a surprise! The author was old Spirit Beals! Not only had he written in it, but also his father and even old Granddaddy Spirit, too!

I have an idea. Why don't you read on to learn of Beals' past and present while I put an icepack on my head.

Beals Beaver



OUR HALLOWED HALLS

THREE SCHOOLS IN THE BEGINNING

In 1887 the young city of Omaha expanded its boundaries westward. The ancestors of Beals School were included in this new area of Omaha. Ambler, West Side, and Eckerman Schools were in the Omaha school system in 1887, and they were later consolidated to form the Beals School District.

Ambler School was a two-room frame building located at 43rd and Castelar. This district extended east to the Belt Line tracks, south to the city limits (Grover), west to 48th, and north to Center. The beginning enrollment was 37 pupils. There was one teacher who also served as principal. By 1890 the enrollment had increased so that there were two teachers.

West Side School, another two-room frame building, was located at 48th and William. This district was bounded on the north by Leavenworth, on the east by 42nd, on the south by Center to 48th and by Pine to the city limits (52nd), and on the west by the city limits. There were two teachers (one as principal) in 1887 to take care of 98 pupils.

Beals' third ancestor, Eckerman School, was a one-room frame school house, once known as District 6 before it was annexed in 1887. It was located on 54th & Center. Children came from an area bounded on the east by 48th from Pine to the city limits on the south, on the south and west by the city limits, and by Pine on the north. There was one teacher for 33 pupils in 1887.

TO WHOM WE OWE A LOT

Samuel Dewitt Beals (sometimes called Professor Beals) was born and educated in New York State. He tried to become a farmer, but he was forced to give up this idea because of poor health. He then became a teacher.

In 1861, at the age of 35, he moved west to Omaha. He began a private school in the old State House on Ninth Street. He started with 7 pupils, but by the end of the year there were 90. However, the school was discontinued in 1867 because of high rent.

Mr. Beals was appointed State Superintendent of Public Instruction from 1869 to 1872. During the school year 1871-1872, he graded the schools in Omaha, and he was a principal in Omaha the following year. From 1873 to 1874 he was the Douglas County Superintendent of Public Instruction.

For the following six years (1874-1880) he was Superintendent of the Omaha Public Schools. In this office he prepared a course of study for teachers and wrote monthly examinations for pupils. Upon leaving this office in 1880, Mr. Beals returned to teaching in the Omaha High School until his death in 1900.

Since our school was started at the time of Mr. Beals' death, it was appropriate that his name be given to the new school. The first teaching staff raised money by selling aprons to buy a picture of Mr. Beals to hang in the building.

BEALS COMES INTO EXISTENCE

In 1900, the Ambler, Eckerman, and West Side School Districts were consolidated to form the Beals School District. Five lots were purchased in West Side Addition at 48th and Walnut. The Ambler and West Side school houses were transported to this site, and a new two-room building was built. The new building was 22 feet by 100 feet, and the other two buildings were 22 feet by 40 feet. The three were arranged in a "U" shape. An outdoor pump was in the open space. The playground was dirt and gravel with wooden sidewalks. Heat was provided by stoves.

The Beals District extended north to Leavenworth, east to the Belt Line tracks, and south and west to the city limits. From this area came 210 pupils who registered during the first school year 1900-1901. The principal and three teachers made up the first teaching staff. A woman janitor took care of the buildings.

Cornfields and pasture land around Beals gradually gave way to houses as Omaha moved westward. The main streets (dirt) at the time Beals was started were 42nd, 48th, Leavenworth, and Center. Between 36th and 42nd were the county poor farm and an institution for contagious diseases. A farm later to be developed into Morton Meadows extended from 45th to 48th from Center to Woolworth. Pasture land lay south to Bancroft. A dairy farm was located south of Center to 43rd. An early housing development called Ambler Place was started near Castelar, but it did not prosper. Leavenworth Heights grew on the north and West Side Addition on the west.

A ravine lay between Walnut and Center where the present playground is today. A creek flowed parallel to Center Street. There were bridges across the creek at 48th and 49th. Where the present west building now stands was a small tar-paper house surrounded by cherry trees.

FIRE DESTROYS MOST OF BEALS

The school year 1902-1903 saw a change of enrollment at Beals, the beginning of kindergarten in the school, and an event that led to a new building.

The school's boundaries were changed in 1902. This reduced the enrollment to only 91. This included 26 kindergarten children. Previously only pupils in grades one to eight made up the school's population.

During the night of February 3, 1903, a fire destroyed the main building and the north wing of the school. Since Beals was outside the water limits (a hydrant was 10 blocks away), the two buildings could not be saved. A north wind spread the fire. The third building was scorched. The windows and doors were wrecked. Furniture from the two burned buildings was saved, however. The origin of the fire was undetermined.

The children in grades 3-8 were transferred to neighboring schools of Columbian, Windsor, Mason & Pickard. Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grade had classes in the one remaining building for the rest of the year and the following school year.

There are 24 families at Beals today in which parents and sons and daughters have attended our school.



Beals - 1903
Courtesy of Mrs. John Schmidt

A BRAND NEW BUILDING FOR BEALS

After the fire during the winter of 1903, in which Beals lost two of its three frame buildings, blueprints were drawn for a new brick building, the present east building. It was begun during 1903 and completed the following year.

The new building was built closer to 48th Street than the location of the three original buildings. On the first floor were 3 rooms, 2 on the south and 1 on the north. Upstairs were also 3 classrooms plus the principal's office. In the basement were 2 rooms to the south and the boiler room on the north. Stoves were used for heat until 1906 when a coal furnace was installed.

By 1904 kindergarten through 4th grade pupils had classes in the new building. All six classrooms were in use the following year. There were 219 pupils registered. The principal, 5 teachers, and a teacher training student made up the staff. A man janitor took care of the building.

MORE ROOM IS NECESSARY

The growth of the Beals neighborhood was seen in the increase of pupils registered. By 1908 the two basement rooms were put to use to take care of 234 children. By 1909-1910 there were 289 pupils.

An addition was necessary, so the east and west wings on the north side of the building were constructed. Two rooms on each floor (northeast and northwest) plus the lavatory rooms and storerooms in the basement were added. Beals now had 10 classrooms.

Kindergarten, 1st, 2nd, 3rd grades and a manual training room were on the first floor. A movable wall between the kindergarten (the north center room on the first floor) and the neighboring room could be raised to make a large assembly room. Grades 4 through 8 occupied the second floor. The principal's office remained on the second floor. The basement rooms were used as lunchrooms. The main entrance was on the south. A utility entrance was on the north. Doors on the east and west ends led to playground areas.



Beals - 1912
Courtesy of Omaha Board of Education

DISASTER STRIKES IN 1913

On March 23, 1913, a tornado touched ground near 51st & Center about 6:00 PM and moved on northeast to 39th & Farnam, to 15th & Manderson, to Carter Lake, and on across the Missouri River.

The damage done to Omaha was unbelievable. There were 170 persons instantly killed, 600-700 injured, almost 600 houses totally destroyed and 1,620 badly damaged, 11 churches and 8 schools destroyed, and property damage amounting to 6 million dollars.

Beals School was in the path of the tornado which moved from southwest to northeast. As a result, the roof was torn off and the upper walls damaged. Since the tornado struck on Easter Sunday there were no children in the school. However, one Beals pupil was killed at her home. An unusual thing was that her desk was the only one completely demolished by a fallen beam.

An unoccupied tar-paper house just west of the school building was completely untouched by the storm.

Even though damaged, Beals School served as a relief station for the injured and homeless. Teachers helped with the relief work. No school was held for several weeks; and when classes were finally resumed, they were held outdoors. Bricks were replaced in the damaged walls, and the roof was repaired.

BEALS EXPANDS WESTWARD

Enrollment at Beals had reached almost 500 by 1925. Housing areas were being opened up east and north of the school. West Side, Twin Ridge, Morton Meadows, and Standard Place were being developed. About this time 48th Street was paved.

Additional lots west of the building were purchased in 1916. The hill behind had been graded down and the dirt was used to fill and level the school property. The remaining lots to 49th Street and the lots along Center were purchased in 1925.

5

The present west building was started in November, 1925, and it was finished by September, 1926. Seven classrooms, including a large kindergarten room, were added. A principal's office, a health unit, a multi-purpose room, a teachers' room, a gymnasium-auditorium, and a furnace room completed the new building. A two floor corridor connected the two buildings. The lunch room remained in the basement of the east building.

Now with two buildings, Beals has a total of 17 classrooms plus a gymnasium. Soon after the new building opened, the enrollment reached 600.

THE GROUND ON WHICH WE STAND

Beals School covers a land area of four and a half acres. It extends from 48th to 49th and from Center to an alley behind the houses facing Hickory Street.

The first piece of land was purchased by the Board of Education on August 9, 1900. There were 5 lots, each 50 feet along Walnut and 132 feet along 48th. On this land were placed the three frame buildings in 1900 and the present east building in 1904.

The next purchase was made in 1910. It was 50 feet along Center and 132 feet north to Walnut. Six years later the land on which the present west building stands was purchased. It consisted of 4 lots, each 50 feet by 132 feet.

The year 1925 completed the buying of land for our present grounds. In March 3 lots, each 50 feet by 132 feet along Walnut, filled out the northern part of our land from 48th to 49th. The remaining 11 lots between Center and Walnut were purchased also in 1925.

6

Also in 1925, the closing of Walnut Street between 48th & 49th added an area 66 feet by 600 feet to our playground.

Center Street was widened in June, 1925, so the Board of Education deeded 7 feet of the land along Center to the city for this purpose.

Thus, Beals' property is 600 feet by 323 feet, covering an area of 193,800 square feet, or four and a half acres. All of this land is in West Side Addition.

HURRAY, RECESS!

Would you believe it? Sixty-six years ago our playground was just about 1/4 of its present size. Cinders and dirt covered the play areas east and west of the east building. There was a gentle slope down to Walnut, and across the road was a ravine where children were taken by their teachers for nature study. It was a wooded area with birds and flowers.

In 1925 when the rest of the lower playground area was purchased, the land was cleared and the ravine filled. A fence was placed around the lower grounds later. When the west building was completed in 1926, all the children used the larger playground plus some smaller areas directly east and west of the two buildings.

In grading the land, the present slope between the upper and lower grounds was developed. Steps and sidewalks were added. Later various pieces of playground equipment were provided by the P.T.A. and by the World Herald. The children enjoyed swings, slides, and a jungle gym.

In 1954 the east fence along 48th on the upper grounds was added. During the 1960's all old playground equipment considered unsafe had to be removed. The P.T.A. provided money to blacktop the playground east of the building in 1964.

OUR TREES HAVE A STORY

There is a history behind the many trees surrounding Beals.

Soon after the east building was completed in 1904, the sycamore trees lining the upper bank in front of that building were planted.

After the west building was finished, pupils and parents planted many trees and shrubs around the new school. The elm trees around the lower playground were planted by 8th grade classes from 1927-1932.

Several trees were planted by classes and Scout Troops on Arbor Day. In 1928 three maples were planted at the west end of the new

building. An 8th grader dedicated the trees by saying, "As these trees grow and spread their branches, so we too will grow and spread our influence in this world". A box containing information about Beals was buried under one of these trees.

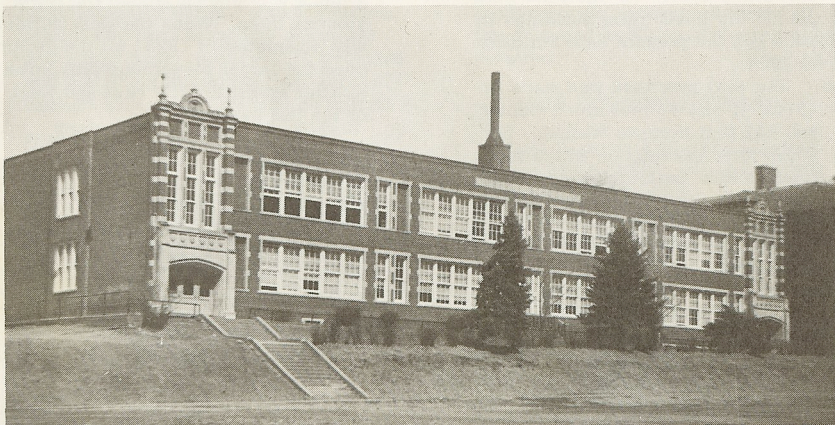
Shrubbery was planted by the P.T.A. around the new building. Included were bridal wreath, Japanese barberry, elder, dogwood, lilac, and Black Hill spruce.

In 1945 a gingko tree was presented to Beals by a Girl Scout troop. It stands in front of the west building. Two redbuds were planted by the P.T.A. during the 1950's. A flowering crab was given by three classes in 1962.

The newest shrubbery was planted by the P.T.A. along the east side of the east building. This was done at the same time the east playground area was blacktopped.

All of the trees and shrubs have made our grounds pretty the year round.

Beals - 1926
Courtesy Beals P.T.A.



RENOVATIONS GIVE US A NEW LOOK

Beals has undergone two major renovations in its history.

During the summer and fall of 1950 painting, sanding of floors, and new lighting gave the school a new and fresh look. The dark wood-work and the walls were painted in light, restful colors. Incandescent light fixtures were replaced by fluorescent lighting. The floors were sanded and varnished.

In 1953 new desks were placed in the rooms. The old kind of desk was screwed to the floor. It had a folding seat. Books were stored in an opening below the writing table. The new desk had a lift-up top. It was not fastened to the floor, so that the pupil could move it in any position he wanted.

Again in 1963 the school was renovated. All the rooms and halls were painted pastel colors. New cupboards and bulletin boards were constructed. The old coal furnaces were replaced by two gas furnaces with standby oil accommodations.

The main event in the 1963 program was the remodeling of two rooms adjoining the gymnasium into a kitchen. The gymnasium was converted to a multi-purpose room which included dining facilities.

The old cafeteria and dining rooms in the east building are now used for music, art, and adult education.

There are two families at Beals today in which grandparents, parents, and sons and daughters have all attended our school. They are the Ralph Andersen and Raymond Voycheske families.

LUNCH TIME THEN AND NOW

Our lunch program like the rest of the school has an interesting history.

It all started in 1900. The children who lived far away brought their lunch pails and ate lunch sitting on long benches. After the east building was built, lunch was eaten in the basement rooms, the girls in one room and the boys in the other. When these rooms had to be used for classrooms, the children sat on benches in the hall.

After the P.T.A. was organized in 1924, this group did many things for the lunch program. Malted milk, milk, and ice cream were sold to the lunch pupils. Jitney hot lunches were prepared on occasion. A stove was purchased and placed in the basement, a serving counter was built, new dishes were purchased, and the lunch room was generally renovated. A hot lunch was prepared more regularly for the children. They paid from 15¢ a week to 10¢ a day for a hot plate. A cook was hired for this service.

Beginning in 1938, the hot lunch program was under the sponsorship of the Board of Education. A broader cafeteria program was developed, with kitchen personnel being provided by the Board. The Omaha Public Schools began participating in the federal lunch program in 1947.

When the hot lunch program began, one room in the basement of the east building was used as a dining room at first, but as the enrollment increased, the second basement room was also used. The kitchen occupied a room in between the dining rooms.

In 1963 a new kitchen was equipped with electric stoves, refrigerator, steam tables, and dishwasher.

Children today can purchase a balanced meal plus milk for 30¢. Ice cream may also be bought.

BEALS' FAMILY TREE

OUR VARYING POPULATION

Through the years Beals has grown from a beginning population of 200 to a peak enrollment of over 800 during the 1930's. A leveling-off in recent years has brought our number to around 600. Reasons for our ups and downs are found in our history.

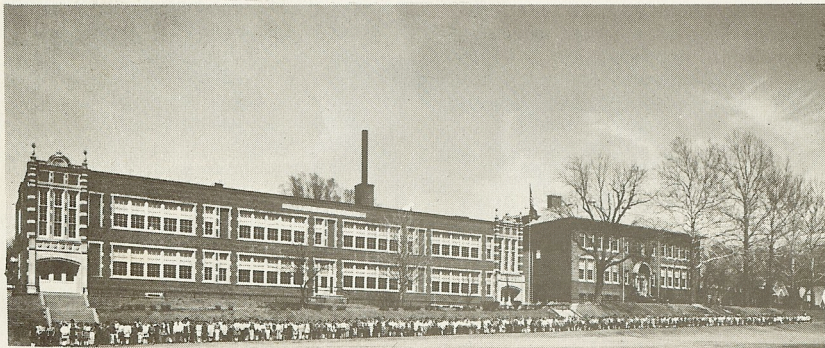
When Beals School was begun in 1900, 210 pupils registered during the year for grades one through eight. In 1902 the boundaries were changed and the enrollment decreased to less than 100. Kindergarten at Beals was started in 1902. After the fire in 1903, only kindergarten through 2nd grade pupils were left to occupy the one building not destroyed, but by the 1904-1905 school year, part of the new building was ready for kindergarten through 4th grades. All eight grades plus kindergarten for a total of 219 occupied the finished building in 1905.

The basement rooms were put into use in 1908 as the number of pupils began to rise. Mid-year classes began in 1909. The north wings were constructed in 1910, and by 1911 our enrollment was over 300. As new housing developments opened up north and east of the building during the 1920's, our population grew close to 500.

The west building was opened in 1926, and by 1927 we had topped the 600 mark. Continued growth of the Beals' community caused the school to reach an all-time high of 824 during the 1935-1936 school year. About this time, the building of Holy Cross School took some of our pupils, so that in the following year of 1936-1937, we numbered 675.

By 1940 our enrollment was 569. After the war the areas south and west of Beals developed. Children from the Pickard School began attending Beals because their school was overcrowded.

Beals - 1966
Courtesy of Beals School



In the 1952-1953 school year, we were again a large number - 726. From 1953 to 1959, 7th and 8th graders from Belle Ryan and Jefferson (beginning in 1956) attended Beals. We had an enrollment of 672 during the year of the last 8th grade graduation (1959).

Since the opening of George Norris Jr. High in 1959, our population has varied from 488 in 1959 to 630 in 1962 to our present 604. Children from the Prairie Center District now attend our school. Their school was torn down for the Interstate. While a new school was being built in the Oak Valley District, some of these pupils attended Beals during the years 1961-1963. When Columbian School was closed in 1965, some of these pupils transferred to Beals. Our boundaries have been changed to include the Prairie Center and part of the Columbian Districts.

SHIFT OF BOUNDARY LINES

Beals has had its boundaries changed several times during its 66 year history. We have in general grown more to the southwest and to the northeast.

In 1900 the boundary lines were Leavenworth on the north, the Belt Line tracks on the east, the city limits on the south (Grover) and on the west (52nd). Our district had a rectangular shape except for the east slant of the tracks.

In 1902 the boundaries were basically the same except for the northeast corner which was cut like three "steps". The steps were made by going south from Leavenworth on 48th to an alley between Marcy and Mayberry, east to 44th, south to Poppleton, east to 42nd, south to Lincoln (as far south as Shirley is today), and east to the Belt Line tracks.

Fifty years later the boundaries were much different. Instead of three steps on the northeast, there were only two. The line went from Leavenworth and 48th, south to Mayberry, east to 44th, south to Pacific, and east to 42nd. One big step was seen in the south boundary. From 42nd the line went west on Bancroft to 48th, south on 48th to Spring, and west on Spring to 52nd. The west boundary was 52nd and the Belt Line tracks to Leavenworth, the north boundary.

With the addition of the Prairie Center District and a part of the Columbian District, the pattern has an odd triangular shape with three steps on the southeast and a rectangular attachment on the southwest. The top of the triangle is the joining of the Belt Line tracks near Farnam. Follow the Belt Line tracks southeast to Center. The steps are west on Center to 42nd, south to Bancroft, west to 48th, south to Spring, west to 50th, and south to F. The rectangle is formed by 50th, F, 72nd, and Spring. The rectangle doesn't quite close because the line goes north on 52nd through the cemetery to the Belt Line tracks which are followed to the joining of the other tracks near Farnam.

BEGINNING OF BUS PUPILS

The first pupils to be brought to Beals by bus were from Pickard School in 1946. They were 7th and 8th graders.

The yellow school bus has been used to transport pupils from the Prairie Center area since 1959. The bus travels as far west as 72nd and Grover to pick up pupils.

Oak Valley 5th and 6th graders were also brought to Beals by school bus from 1961 to 1963.

WE POINT WITH PRIDE

Do you know that there have been only twelve principals during Beals' 66 year history? The length of service has varied from one semester to 17 years.

Two principals served each a semester during the year 1913-1914. Three principals served over 10 years. They were Miss Virginia White, 1903-1913; Miss Helen Longsdorf, 1921-1938; and Miss Maren Rasmussen, 1941-1953.

From 1934 to 1953 the principal at Beals was also principal of Pickard School.

Miss Rasmussen was an 8th grade teacher at Beals before returning later as principal. One of her pupils was Miss Ermagrace Reilly, who later was principal of Beals from 1953 to 1961.

NUMBER OF TEACHERS INCREASES

As our school grew in numbers, the number of teachers grew also. There have been as many as 20 teachers on the staff. This number included special teachers of art, music, and physical education.

The principal served as a teacher during the early years of our school. She was also responsible for the classroom experience of the teacher training student assigned to her during the years 1905 to 1915.

The first kindergarten teachers were called kindergarten directors. As kindergarten classes grew in number, an assistant (a trained teacher) was assigned to this room.

There were sometimes several sections assigned to a room, such as: 4A, 3B, and 3A or 4B, 5B, 6A, and 6B. The A and B referred to the first and second semesters of a grade.

According to the enrollment or funds available, special teachers of music, art, and physical education have usually been on the staff, either full or part time.

There was a manual training department here from 1910 to about 1925. This teacher sometimes had 2 schools.

A special writing teacher visited Beals regularly until the 1930's.

School nurses began work in the Omaha schools in 1916. Speech correction teachers began in 1922. A nurse and a speech therapist have always been assigned to Beals at least once a week.

An exchange teacher from England taught at Beals during 1948-1949.

STUDENT TEACHERS AT BEALS

An early program of student teaching was provided by the Omaha Public Schools. For 2 years the student was enrolled in the Teacher Training Class. Lectures were given at the Board of Education office once a week. For 4 days the student received practical teaching experience under the supervision of the principal of the school to which she was assigned. At the end of the 2 years, the student was ready for a classroom of her own. Teacher training students were assigned to Beals from 1905 to 1915.

Since that time, student teachers have received their instruction in colleges and universities. They take one or two semesters of student teaching under the supervision of a classroom teacher. Beals has had students from the University of Omaha, Creighton, Duchesne, the College of St. Mary, Wayne, Dana, Peru, and Nebraska.

CUSTODIAL, CAFETERIA HELPERS

Equally important in the growth of Beals have been the custodial and cafeteria helpers.

Our first custodian or "janitor" was a lady. She took care of the three frame buildings which formed the first Beals School. When the east building was built, the service of a man janitor was needed. After the west building was completed, there were two janitors to take care of the two buildings. The word "custodian" came into common use by the 1930's.

Now Beals has an engineer who has had special training in operating the two gas furnaces. Two assistant custodians help in the maintenance of the two buildings and the grounds. One serves also as a bus driver.

When the Omaha Board of Education began the hot lunch program in 1938, cooks were hired to prepare the menus that were planned in the main offices. There have been 2 or 3 cafeteria workers on the Beals staff. One is the cafeteria manager.

There are three former families of Beals in which grandparents, parents, and sons and daughters have all attended our school. They are the Fred Dohse, John Schmidt, and C.O. Schneiderwind families.

A father and son have served Beals on the custodial staff. In 1912 Frank Hammond began work at Beals, and about 30 years later, his son, Arthur Hammond, was assigned to our school.

THREE CHEERS FOR BEALS P.T.A.

The Beals Parent-Teacher Association was organized in 1924 with the help of the Henry W. Yates P.T.A. There were 48 members in the beginning.

The P.T.A. has done many things for our school. They have purchased playground equipment, audio-visual equipment, athletic supplies, music instruments, two stage curtains, furnishings for the teachers' room and for the lunchroom, and patrol equipment. Other items included shrubbery, sodding, playground surfacing, outside lettering, and floodlights for the playground.

The school library, the hot lunch program, and the Center Street traffic light were projects started by the P.T.A. Summer recreation programs, kindergarten round-ups, adult education classes, and legislative work are continuing projects of our parent-teacher group.

Teas and coffees have been planned for various occasions. A party to honor student patrols has been a tradition of the P.T.A. During the years 1944-1946 a school newspaper was sponsored by this group. Scrap metal and paper drives, knitting classes, Red Cross work, and projects for the Servicemen's Center were done by both parents and children during the war.

To carry on their work, P.T.A. members had many types of money-raising projects, such as plays, concerts, movies, dances, card parties, bake sales, jitney lunches, ice cream socials, and carnivals. Now there is just one fund-raising project a year, the annual carnival.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN IN SCHOOL TODAY?

CURRICULUM THROUGH THE YEARS

Nature study, penmanship, drawing, history, and geography are terms from the past; but the subject matter is found today in science, handwriting, art, and social studies. Curriculum over the 66 years at Beals has covered the same areas of learning, but there has been new information to be learned.

Reading for many years was taught to the whole class using the same book. Today reading readiness skills are taught in kindergarten, and group reading instruction is given in the grades. Many books are used.

Penmanship was the "Muscular Movement Writing System". A special writing teacher visited the classrooms often, awarding those who made the most progress. Manuscript writing is begun in the first grade today, and in the third grade pupils learn how to make connecting strokes to form cursive writing.

The basic arithmetic facts have always been learned. Kindergartners learn the numerals to ten today. First and second graders learn how to add and subtract. Third graders begin multiplication and division. Common and decimal fractions are learned in fifth and sixth grades.

Today history and geography are combined into social studies. Pupils first learn about their family, and then about their school, the community, state, United States, and neighboring countries.

Nature lessons on plants and animals were expanded through the years to include astronomy, chemistry, weather,

electricity, machines, etc. Besides seeing things around us, we also experiment to see the how and why of things.

A study of physiology or facts about the body has been expanded to include good health habits and proper nutrition.

The study of grammar consisted of knowing how sentences were put together. We still study punctuation, capitalization, parts of speech, and proper usage, but we learn English in practical ways, such as writing letters, stories, and reports.

Spelling was once learning long and tricky words. Now we learn words that we will use often. We still like to have "spelling bees".

Physical training of the past included exercises or calisthenics and team sports. Physical education today still stresses exercises, and physical fitness tests are given twice a year. Many organized games are learned as well as skills in soccer, football, volleyball, basketball, and baseball.

There was a manual training room at Beals for about 15 years. Pupils were taught how to work with wood and clay. Bench work and sewing were also taught. These activities are now included in our art program, as well as the earlier subject of drawing. We also work with many kinds of materials and produce many kinds of creative work.

Learning to read music, learning to sing well, and knowing about famous composers and the instruments of the orchestra have always been part of our music lessons.

MACHINES COME TO BEALS

Many types of audio-visual aids have helped pupils to learn over the years. As early as the 1920's Beals had a film projector and screen. Slides, records, radio, and television have been added to make learning more interesting.

Early radio programs during the 1940's covered health, current events, and literature. Educational television, which started in 1965, covers art, music, literature, science, social studies, current events, and health.

There are many other teaching aids found in the classrooms. They include flannel boards, creative play equipment, flash cards, reading games, arithmetic and science equipment.

Along with their regular class assignments, classes still plan assemblies, have exhibits, and go on field trips as a part of their learning.

MUSIC SOUNDS ALL AROUND

The sounds of music have always been heard at Beals. As early as 1910 there was an orchestra organized. Individual instrumental music lessons were begun in 1925. Pupils paid for these early lessons, but in 1936 such lessons were provided free by the Board of Education. Tonettes and song flutes have been taught by the classroom teacher.

By 1954 Beals had the largest grade school orchestra in Omaha. It numbered 97 with pupils from grades 4 through 8. They wore red and white uniforms, and they took part in city-wide musical events.

Today our orchestra is made up of pupils from grades four, five, and six. There are beginning and advanced groups.

UPPER GRADERS ON THE MOVE

For 59 years Beals had 7th and 8th graders. With the opening of George Norris Junior High School in 1959, pupils in these grades have attended that school. Beals has only kindergarten through sixth grade classes now.

During the first half of our history, the seventh and eighth graders were taught in a self-contained room, which meant having all subjects taught by one teacher. However, during the 1930's these pupils were put on the move by organizing a departmentalized program for them. They went to different rooms for social studies, English, and arithmetic. Physical Education, art, and music were taught by special teachers.

After a return to the self-contained plan during the early 1940's, the departmentalized program was resumed in the late 1940's with science as an added subject taught by one teacher.

Just before the opening of the junior high, the core program was tried in order to prepare the upper graders for the new school. This program included English, social studies, spelling, reading, and writing taught in one block of time. The other subjects were taught in special periods.

FROM A SMALL BEGINNING

Our library was started by the P.T.A. during the 1930's. Books were selected by the teachers and paid for by the P.T.A. This beginning provided a source of library books until the Omaha Public Schools started elementary school libraries throughout the city in 1947.

Today our collection of over 3,000 books is found in the northwest room on the second floor of the east building.

ALWAYS THERE WITH A HELPING HAND

WE LEANED ON EACH OTHER

Through the years Beals and fellow schools, in a sense, have leaned on each other.

In 1903, for instance, when a fire burned part of the three frame buildings, the pupils in grades three to eight went to Columbian, Windsor, Mason, and Pickard until the new building was finished.

In the 1940's Pickard's enrollment became too large for its building, so some of these pupils came to Beals. When Belle Ryan opened in 1953, the Pickard children went to that school except for the seventh and eighth graders who continued at Beals.

Jefferson School also sent seventh and eighth graders to Beals for three years before the junior high opened.

The building of the Interstate closed Prairie Center in 1960, so that district became part of Beals.

During the years 1961-1963 pupils from Oak Valley were brought to Beals by bus. These fifth and sixth graders were from an area where a new school was being built.

And finally, Beals was able to repay Columbian School for its help in 1903. When that school closed its doors to pupils in 1965, many of the children came to Beals. Our district now includes a part of the Columbian area.

ALWAYS AN IMPORTANT JOB

Beals School organized its first Safety Patrol in 1926. It consisted

of 15 eighth grade boys. The officers were captain, sergeant, and corporal. Belts, badges, and raincoats were provided by the P.T.A.

Since 1959 the sixth grade have been responsible for the job of seeing that children cross the streets safely. There are two squads, each headed by a captain and lieutenant.

Beals has been recognized for several years on the National Safety Council's School Safety Honor Roll for its safety education activities.

OTHER KINDS OF SCHOOL HELPERS

The earliest school helpers were eighth grade pupils who formed a Student Helpers group to assist the teachers and principal during the 1920's. There was also a Speakers Bureau formed of eighth grade girls who visited the rooms to talk about school projects.

The first organized patrol at Beals was the Safety Patrol. In later years patrols for the playground, the halls, fire drills, and office duty were organized for upper grade children.

Other services provided by children today include cafeteria helpers, chair patrol, nurse's assistant, bell ringers, attendance card distributors, and Junior Red Cross representatives.

During the 1940's the P.T.A. held an entertainment for all school helpers. It is continued today as Honor Day.

EVERYONE HELPED DURING HARD TIMES

The students, teachers, and parents of Beals have always been ready to help during hard times in our country. The depression and war are such cases.

The drought and depression had its effects upon the Beals' community during the 1930's. Parents and teachers helped collect food and clothing for the needy. Government W.P.A. workers found employment in our school doing such jobs as painting, carpentry, and bookbinding.

During World War II everyone helped the war effort by doing these things: buying stamps and bonds; collecting scrap metal, paper, and clothes; preparing bandages for the Red Cross, providing food and other items for the Servicemen's Center; knitting articles for soldiers; helping on the rationing board; and planting victory gardens.

Planting victory gardens was an exciting event for children and adults alike. Beals' pupils formed a Victory Garden Club which won the top prizes in a city-wide contest one year.

MONEY IN THE BANK

Bank Day at Beals during the late 1920's was a program to teach thrift.

Once a week pupils brought their savings money to school and gave it to the teacher who recorded the amount in each pupils' bank book. The money was then sent to a local bank where it was credited to the pupil's account.

If the pupil wanted to withdraw some money, the teacher filled out a withdrawal slip, and the parents took the child to the bank to get the money.

During the war years boys and girls practiced thrift and helped their country by buying stamps and bonds.

PAPER PEDDLERS

For 30 years paper sales were held at Beals to raise money for needed school items or to help the war effort. Old newspapers and magazines were brought to school and later sold to a paper dealer.

Sometimes the paper drives were organized into teams, and prizes were given to the winners. In 1945, for instance, the two buildings competed against each other. The winner was entertained by the loser. In this contest every four-inch stack of magazines and every eight-inch stack of newspapers was a "bomb". Ten bombs entitled one to a paper trooper badge, and each five additional bombs entitled one to a stripe.

In other drives a Flying Tiger patch was given as a prize. A free gym period was the reward another time.

When the price of paper decreased, it was not profitable for the school to hold drives any longer, so the practice was dropped.

SPRING CLEANING AT BEALS

On a spring day each year Beals' pupils brought rakes, baskets, wheelbarrows, and wagons to school. It was "Clean-up Day".

The entire playground was raked and cleaned. Sometimes dirt was hauled in to build up low areas. Flowers such as violets and iris were planted.

The rooms inside were also included. Desks were cleaned, cupboards made tidy, woodwork washed, windows washed, and floors waxed and polished.

Beals was shining and spotless after its annual spring cleaning.

HAPPINESS IS . . .

MAY DAY FESTIVITIES

What excitement there was on those gay May Days during the 1920's and 1930's. Boys and girls dressed in their best to dance around the Maypole.

At first Beals pupils joined pupils from other schools at Hanscom Park for this activity, but later it was held on our own playground. A May Queen was selected by students and teachers, and a very pretty crowning ceremony was held. Every class then performed a dance around a decorated Maypole.

ALL KINDS OF SPORTS

Intramural sports were an exciting part of Beals when 7th and 8th graders were here. Our boys' and girls' baseball and basketball teams played neighboring schools. Soccer, volleyball, and football teams also played.

Not only children, but the teachers as well enjoyed sports. A famous bowling team known as the "Beals Bungles" won the city championship for two years.

SCHOOL PARTIES

The plan of the two annual school parties that we have today started in 1955. Instead of celebrating birthdays at school, Halloween and Valentine's Day were set aside as school party days. A costume parade is held in October, and valentine boxes are made for a valentine exchange in February. Pupils pay for refreshments which are served by the room mothers.

AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Many kinds of activities have always been available to boys and girls during their free time.

The Junior Forestry Club during the 1940's was a class as well as an after-school activity. Pupils studied trees. They even banded trees for protection against insects.

Beals ranked second in the city in 1946 for its number of Girl Scout and Brownie troops. We still have Girl and Boy Scout troops, as well as Camp Fire Girls, Bluebirds, Brownies, and Cub Scouts.

ICE CREAM SOCIALS

As early as 1927 there have been ice cream socials at Beals. This has been a way for the P.T.A. to raise money.

A musical cake walk added fun to the event. The socials were usually held during the fall. They are now part of the annual carnival.

CARNIVAL TIME

An annual fun event for the Beals neighborhood since 1957 has been the September carnival sponsored by the P.T.A.

Indoor carnivals were held during the 1930's and 1940's. The present carnival idea had its real beginning in 1956 with an expanded ice cream social. The Saturday afternoon carnival began in 1957. Games, booths, rides, contests, parades, and food are some of the activities that go to make up this money-raising project.

PENCILS, PAPERS, AND CLIPBOARDS

OUR FIRST NEWSPAPER

The publishing of Beals' first newspaper is not only a historic event for our school but also for Omaha. In 1926 The Beals Bugle was the first elementary school newspaper in Omaha.

This paper was prepared by the 8th grade class. They sold advertisements to defray the cost of printing. The staff included an editor-in-chief, an assistant editor, a business manager, and reporters.

The motto of the paper was "Sees All - Knows All". Stories included room news, all-school activities, reports written by pupils, and P.T.A. news. The paper continued until 1932.

A BEETLE WRITES

Who said a beetle can't report? We know a little beetle who wrote and edited the Beals Beetle from 1944 to 1946. This little character's name was Alexander S. Beetle.

Alex went from room to room gathering information, and with the help of stories contributed by the children, he would write the newspaper at night in the principal's office. He had columns, such as, "Three Cheers", "In My Mailbox", "Parents Page", and "In the Classrooms". He wrote about victory gardens, paper sales, Scouts, summer recreation, and graduations.

Alex had some help in publishing the nine issues of his newspaper. A P.T.A. group headed by Mrs. Bernard Combs assisted with this delightful newspaper.

BANNERS AND BEACONS

The school newspaper had two names during the 1950's. A Beals Banner was published by the eighth grade in 1950, and the Beals Beacon was published by the upper graders from 1952 to 1959. The sixth grade continued it until 1961.

The Banner contained news of school activities, some creative writing, and sports news. There was an illustrated cover.

A contest was held in 1952 in which the name Beals Beacon was chosen as a new name for the school newspaper. In 1957 another contest was held for a cover design. The winning sketch was a drawing of Beals School in the background with the paper's name superimposed on the picture.

PAPERS OF THE 1960's

Since 1963 there have been three different titles for the school newspaper. Two had been used before.

A second Beals Banner was published during the 1963-1964 school year. It was prepared by a combination fifth-sixth grade class. There were 2 issues.

Another Beals Bugle was published by a fifth grade class in the 1964-1965 school year. In one of the three issues a contest for a school mascot was held. Beals Beaver was chosen.

A fifth grade class in 1965-1966 have used the mascot in the title of the newspaper -- the Beals Beaver Gazette.

WITH OUR BEST FOOT FORWARD

A WEEK HONORING EDUCATION

Open House is a tradition of American Education Week.

The first mention of Open House at Beals was made in 1937. Parents visited the rooms and attended a program in the gymnasium.

Recent Open House activities have been planned to be entertaining as well as informative. For instance, a treasure hunt with a "Pirates' Cave" and a travel tour on "Route 61" led parents to many interesting places in the building. Open House 1963 featured a "sidewalk superintendent's" view of the new cafeteria under construction at that time.

CHRISTMAS TIME AT BEALS

Christmas has always been a time for singing at Beals. Boys and girls have gathered around a Christmas tree to sing carols or they have formed a "living" Christmas tree themselves by special seating and lighting to sing their prepared songs.

In 1926 "An Evening with Charles Dickens" was given. Later program titles were: "The Littlest Shepherd", "Christmas in Many Lands", and "A Time of Hope".

EIGHTH GRADE HONORS

From 1927 to 1959 the Rotary Club chose four boys on the basis of leadership, scholarship, and character each year to be honored at a luncheon and presented a remembrance of the event.

Two outstanding eighth grade girls were similarly honored by the Omaha Business and Professional Women's Club during the 1940's.

A GRAND AFFAIR

Do you know that there were eighth grade graduations at Beals for 55 years? Yes, the first was in 1901, and the last was in 1959.

The graduation exercises were very grand affairs. In 1911 the eighth grade class put on a Shakespearean play, A Midsummer's Night Dream. Other classes had operettas or other special programs. There were class prophecies and class wills for the light touch. School officials presented diplomas to the graduates. Early classes even wore caps and gowns.

Some eighth grade classes took "class day" trips to places of interest. Many classes left gifts at Beals in the form of trees, shrubs, and pictures.

NATIONAL CONVENTIONS

Beals pupils participated in programs held for two national conventions meeting in Omaha.

In 1958 the seventh and eighth grades presented choric speech at the National P.T.A. Convention. Some lower grade pupils were also in a playground scene in the program.

During the National Association for Childhood Education Convention in 1961 selected children took part in a playground scene for "Omaha Night". Members of the orchestra played in a city-wide orchestra.

A CENTENNIAL PARADE

In 1954 Omaha had a celebration on its 100th birthday. In honor of this event there was a Youth Education Parade held in April, which consisted of 75 floats and 69 marching units.

Beals contributed a float showing a three-layered birthday cake with fifty candles. Beals' first brick building was 50 years old then.

A bicycle squad carrying the school colors of red and white rode in the section called "Schools of the 1900's". The girls' basketball team marched in the section called "Physical Education and Teamwork".

In addition to participating in the centennial parade, Beals also presented a pageant, which was written by two of the teachers. It consisted of 13 scenes covering Omaha's 100 years of history.

ALUMNI GET-TOGETHER

At the age of 59, Beals School put out a call for all former pupils, teachers, principals, and patrons to come back for a visit. Nearly 800 responded to the invitation at a grand reunion on April 8, 1959.

An elaborate program based on the history of Beals was planned. Four stage scenes were entitled "School Daze" (1910), "Lunch-time" (1920), "May Queen" (1930), and "A School Day Begins" (1959). Special events such as the 1903 fire, the 1913 tornado, the Beals Bungalows, and the centennial parade were described.

Displays of old school articles and class pictures drew much attention. There was much reminiscing among the alumni, and groups continued to meet from time to time following the reunion.

SPECIAL FLAG DAYS

Do you know on what day the battle of Lexington took place? Do you know when Cornwallis surrendered to Washington?

In the early days of our school, there were special flag days to recognize these and other days. In all there were 18 special days when the janitors were instructed to display the flag over school buildings.

Besides the familiar days of Lincoln's Birthday, Washington's Birthday, Nebraska's Admittance to the Union, Arbor Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Columbus Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas, the flag was also flown on:

January 1 - Emancipation Day
April 9 - Surrender of General Lee
April 19 - Battle of Lexington
Sept. 17 - Adoption of Federal Constitution
Sept. 18 - Surrender of Quebec
October 7 - Battle of Saratoga
October 19 - Surrender of Cornwallis
Dec. 20 - U.S. Flag Raised over Louisiana.

One former Beals family has set a record for the longest consecutive attendance at our school. Members of the Hannibal family (brother and sisters, sons and daughters) were enrolled here from 1918 to 1957.

In memory of Mrs. Maude Bloomer, a former teacher at Beals, this history of our school is dedicated. Also in remembrance of her many years of service at Beals, the P.T.A. has presented a lectern for use in the gymnasium, and the teachers and pupils planted a flowering crab tree on Arbor Day.

THE END OF THE BEGINNING

HOW TO WRITE A HISTORY

Knock! Knock! Knock!

"Oh, it's those reporters again", said Beals Beaver.

"Sorry to bother you, Mr. Beaver, but we just heard you wrote a new book How to Write a History," a reporter began. "Please fill us in on the details."

"It's based on the facts of this issue of the Beals Beaver Gazette, but I'll have to admit I had some help from Miss Brown and her class," replied the Beaver.

"We had about 20 people to interview to begin with, but one thing led to another, and soon we had over 50 interviews. We interviewed past students, teachers, principals, and patrons. We also received other information from the Board of Education's records, school newspapers, books, and P.T.A. records and scrapbooks," he continued.

"What did you do with the information that you got from all these sources?" asked another reporter.

"Once we gathered the information, we recorded it on cards and filed it by decades."

"What are some of the steps you followed in making the book?" inquired another.

"In writing the stories, we outlined our facts, made a good beginning sentence, wrote the facts in order, and, of course, proofread our work."

"What were the final preparations, sir?"

"Titles for the chapters and for the stories were written. Pictures were drawn. The final draft was typed

and sent to the printer," he ended.

"Thank you very much for your cooperation, Mr. Beaver. We'll be back for another story," the reporters said upon leaving.

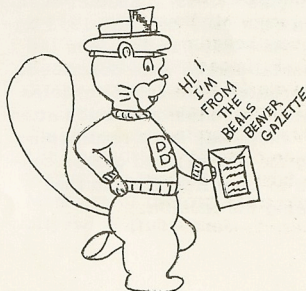
BEALS BEAVER GAZETTE STAFF

Editors

Kristin Menke Gregg Hoffmeister

Reporters

Michael Abbott	Douglas Holsclaw
Linda Adams	Karen Jensen
Marc Beck	Jamie Johnson
Mark Carnevalo	Marilyn Kelley
Janice Collier	Larry Kramolisch
Jody DiMauro	Peggy Kunes
Sharyn Ellis	Cheryl Larson
Bruce Erftmier	Marsha Mommsen
Charles Faulk	Terry Morgan
Kathleen Fotoplos	Leslie Parkerson
Kirk Frost	James Riha
Kevin Goldin	Bretton Rihanek
Debora Good	Gearrell Scherer
Chris Goodrich	Karen Solheim
Rexann Gruber	Bruce Spidell
Gary Grzebielski	Janet Toler
Roy Guthrie	Lloyd Trout
Ronald Handke	John Volk
Terry Harmsen	Ray Voycheske
Kevin Waterman	



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THANK YOU SO MUCH

Mrs. Jean Allen
 Mr. Carl A. Andersen
 Mr. Ray Backman
 Mr. William H. Bahnke
 Mr. and Mrs. Richard Barna
 Mrs. Nellie Bebb
 Mrs. Jessie Bryant
 Mr. Floyd Carlsen
 Mrs. Sandra Charron
 Mr. Barry Combs
 Mr. R. W. Davis
 Mrs. Sam DiMauro
 Mrs. Fred Dohse
 Mrs. Helen Dole
 Mrs. A. E. Downs
 Mrs. Theodore Drdla
 Miss Gaynelle Fay
 Miss Ruth Faulk
 Mrs. Douglas Gaines
 Mr. William L. Gift
 Mrs. Zorah Graham
 Mr. Russell Hannibal
 Miss Ethelwyn Hodge
 Mr. Gunnar Horn
 Mrs. Marilyn Horner
 Miss Maude Hughes
 Mr. Henry Jensen
 Mrs. Norma Jackson
 Miss Lucille Jalas
 Mrs. Louise Kidd
 Mrs. William Kirk
 Mr. Maurice M. Loomis
 Dr. Robert Lovgren
 Mrs. J. F. Lucas
 Mrs. Lydia Middleton
 Mrs. George Morgan
 Miss Mabel Morrow
 Mr. George Morton
 Omaha Board of Education:
 Secretary's Office
 Superintendent's Office

Division of School Construction
 Division of Food Services
 Health Service
 Professional Library
 Department of School Libraries
 Omaha Chamber of Commerce
 Omaha City Planning Commission
 Omaha Public Library
 Mr. Kenneth Parker
 Miss Anna Paulsen
 Mr. William Paulsen
 Mrs. Joan Peterson
 Mr. Bert Rapp
 Miss Maren Rasmussen
 Miss Ermagrace Reilly
 Miss Marguerite Reynolds
 Mr. Albert Schlueter
 Mrs. John Schmidt
 Mrs. Meta Schmidt
 Mr. W. O. Schneiderwind
 Dr. Lynn Thompson
 Mr. Merwin Tilton
 Mrs. Lois Voycheske
 The present staff of Beals:
 Miss Harriette Egan, Principal
 Mrs. Mary Ann Atkinson
 Mrs. Darline Blotzer
 Miss Maureen Brady
 Mrs. Amy Damme
 Mrs. Bernice King
 Mrs. Phyllis Mains
 Mrs. Myra Ochsner
 Mrs. Peggy Price
 Mrs. Florence Raffety
 Miss Margaret Rasmussen
 Mrs. Brenda Summerside
 Mrs. Mary Thompson
 Mrs. Sandra Trevarrow
 Mrs. Vivian Uehling
 Mrs. Joyce Wagner
 Mr. Charles Chrystak, Engineer
 The Beals P.T.A., Mrs. Glenn Goodrich,
 President.



TEACHING STAFF

1966

*Compiled by
the Fifth Grade Students
under the direction of
Miss Dorothy Brown
Beals School
Omaha, Nebraska
1966*