

Class History

As written by Elsie M. Richards

Newark High School, Class of 1931

On September 12, 1927, war was declared and the class of "31" entered Newark High School as freshmen. There were 97 of us all husky and healthy and in sound mind. We were not the usual green, scared-looking mob that quivers when it meets an upper classman. We were vital – we were real and we have become more so as time has gone on. Our class was the first class in the history of our high school to receive diplomas at the end of the 9th grade for the completion of three years of junior high school work. We are like that, always starting something!

On September 10, 1928, our Sophomore year began and we kept up our good work only better. We were rapidly winning everybody's respect and admiration. On November 2 the Home Economics girls had a Halloween party out in "Vi" Frazer's barn with a straw ride going and coming and heaps of fun all around – on; those were the days, there's no doubt about it. The days wore on until it was picnic season and we had our first class picnic at Charlestown on June 13, 1929 and a huge hot dog roast over a wonderful bonfire ended our Sophomore year.

On September 9, 1929, our Junior year opened with a terrific bang for we were upper classmen now and no longer to be looked down upon! This year we were condescendingly kind to the freshmen, we couldn't be bothered with hazing; we were too far above that sort of thing! This year our class advisors were Mrs. Hancock, Miss Gallaher, and Mr. Gillespie and our class president, Grover Surratt.

On November 8, 1929 we had our first class party at Hawthorne's dance hall in Ogletown. The room was decorated with yellow and white crepe paper and with corn shocks and pumpkins. Mrs. And Mrs. Pease and Mrs. Danby were our chaperons. The music came from a beautiful rented radio and our refreshments were most appetizing. The night before the party a self-appointed committee went out to decorate and found a pair of boxing gloves there. The committee appropriated the gloves and a second Dempsey – Tunney fight was staged much to the amusement of the onlookers. The fight was called off because the participants pulled each other's hair.

That fall our boys with the seniors and some sophomores succeeded in winning the state football championship from Seaford on Thanksgiving day. This was the first time in many years that Newark had won this honor and were we proud! People who didn't even know what a football looked like turned out to see that game and supported our team like nobody's business! Oh, it was a wonderful feeling! Along in April there followed many hectic and hurried class meetings in which we fought and kicked and blackened each other's eyes over the matter of class rings. At one meeting 7 salesmen were present with their rings and by the time each one got through telling us how wonderful his ring was, our heads were swimming about and we didn't know which way to turn. Finally it was thrashed down to two rings and the winning ring won by a majority of 10. On May 1 they came and those of us who had been the most displeased with the selection were the most anxious to get their rings and everybody was satisfied.

The next big event was our Junior prom. By giving two very successful bakes earlier in the year we raised \$130 and gave a prom. May 9 was the big night and talk about busy. One committee made

hurried dashes to Wilmington to get the decorations and another committee mixed tea and ginger ale and various and sundry other things to form a delicious punch. Caruso's orchestra was engaged and the gymnasium was decorated like a Chinese New Year with dragons and lanterns and pagodas and cherry trees. The floor was waxed to the texture of glass as was noticed that night by the amount of slipping and falling around that was done. It was the most wonderful prom that was ever given or will be given in the future with all due apologies to this year's juniors.

After the prom there was a general let-down feeling until we began talking about a class picnic. This we decided must be held at "White Crystal Beach" on June 16, 1930. We took up a collection and bought hot dogs and rolls etc; and after swimming and basking in the sun we had a big fire and the Class of '31 roasted hot dogs, spilt mustard all over itself, burned its fingers at the fire and choked on pickles until it was time to go home. At commencement on June 17, 1930 the Junior class attracted much attention for the gallant manner in which it escorted the seniors to their places. This Commencement marked the end of our glorious Junior year.

On September 8, 1930 – 63 seniors descended on Newark High with a force that startled the place, we meant business for there was much to be done. Our advisors this year were Miss Thompson and Mr. Gillespie. The football team again won the State championship amid the shouts and cheers of the joyful side lines. Charles Schwartz was our football captain.

Hardly to be mentioned in the same breath – the girls' hockey team had an unusually successful season under the captaincy of Louise

Fulton. Basketball followed with Joan Fletcher captain of the girls' team and Charles Pie', the boys.

All of a sudden the seniors became very serious and thoughtful looking. Mysterious goings on after school hours were reported in Miss Thompson's room. Our seniors began acting queerly falling into attitudes of rapture or despair by turns. Queer mutterings escaped their lips when in study hall and they carried important looking little brown books around to every class. The seniors were learning their parts for the senior play! For some six weeks then, if there wasn't hurrying and bustling about! Queer noises were heard coming from the gymnasium in the evening – wild shouting and stamping of feet and at a certain time every night was heard a loud shrieking and the faint tinkling of a piano which was shortly followed by wild weeping and wailing. What could it mean, thought the citizens. In order to find out, they purchased tickets for one Thursday night, April 30, 1931 to see the gigantic, sensational, glamorous production, "Nothing But the Trust" presented by the class of 1931 of the Newark High School.

We gave a dress rehearsal in the afternoon open only to the pupils of the first nine grades. This went over without a hitch anywhere and prepared us for the grand performance in the evening. Then if there ever was a thrill, that was it – to peek through the curtain and see the theatre filling up to see the seniors behind the scenes getting their war paint on and to know that in a few minutes the curtain would rise on our senior play! Whew, the breath-taking moment occurred – every senior's heart gave a leap into the air and stayed there the rest of the evening.

For the next few days we lived on pins and needles to know if we had made enough for our Washington trip and when it was finally settled we took in \$822 -- \$600 of which was clear money and when added to our class dues made up the necessary amount to take us to Washington and \$52 left over!

Things happened fast and furiously after that for we were going to Washington exactly one week after the senior play. Girls rushed back and forth to Wilmington and Philadelphia, returning laden with new hats, shoes, and dresses while boys visited cleaners and tailors and incidentally, the 5 & 10.

At last the great day came and with it such a downpour of rain as they hadn't had since the Ark. All of Newark was crowded under the roof of the B & O station to see us depart. Amid shouts and cheers and whooping and yelling, the train pulled out and we were off. For what happened after that you will have to use your imagination to understand what perfectly glorious fun we had. We stayed at the New Colonial Hotel -- that is -- when we stayed. We were on the go every minute sight-seeing everything in town and out. Our password was Hey-ey! And Washington's stately avenues rang with that cry when Newark was abroad. It really was a good thing we came home when we did because we were about ready to collapse from foot trouble as it was. How different the return trip was from that going down! This time the car resounded with hearty snores and the only moving about to speak of was when somebody rolled over and resumed his snoring in a different key.

No sooner had the Washington trip died down than Alice Sheldon gave us a class party out at her house on May 15, which we all

appreciated and enjoyed immensely. Then came Senior day on May 21. The under classmen stared in respectful amazement and the good citizens of the town got stiff necks from turning to look every time a Senior went past. For one short day we went back to those dim distant days of our childhood when we wore short clothes and socks and hair ribbons, carried dolls, and licked lollypops. All of this we did on senior day besides singing “School Days” and reciting slightly lisped nursery rhymes in assembly.

On May 26 the Junior class gave us our prom and class loyalty prohibits me from saying just how good that prom was – the Juniors certainly did themselves proud on that little job.

Now we have come to the end of our last year in high school – we have done everything anybody ever did in school and have had twice as much fun as anybody ever had. Our record can go down on the pages of history as one of the best lived and best enjoyed high school careers in the world and we wish all the other classes the same good fortune we have had.