

Cornerstone For Teaneck Education

The cover photograph this week shows former Board of Education President Chris D. Sheffe laying the cornerstone for the Teaneck High School on May 30, 1928, using the memorial silver trowel provided by the architects of the gothic style building.

Sheffe, on June 30, 1942 was named to positions as United States manager of London Assurance and president of the Manhattan Fire and Marine Insurance Company. Previously he had been assistant manager of the London Assurance and vice president of the Manhattan firm.

He had served on the board for seven years during the period of the largest growth in the school system.

By 1927, when the plan for a Township of Teaneck High School was advocated, children from the community were attending high school in Englewood, Bogota, and Leonia. Englewood had served notice that it would cease taking students in 1929, and Hackensack had stopped taking students several years before.

The projections were that 750 students would attend the first year, but the school was constructed to handle 1,100 students with a potential of a maximum of 1,300 in preparation for future growth.

In the dedication program published for the occasion, President Sheffe pointed out that because of research before the approval of the structure the Teaneck High School was considered by Trenton as one of the best in the state.

He added, "The present unit is only one-third of the complete plan. It has the capacity of over eleven hundred and is capable of thirteen hundred pupils. The auditorium at present has nearly twelve hundred seats and when extended to its ultimate size will seat upward of fifteen hundred.



"With this dedication the Board of Education enters into what is to them a new field, the development of a High School in keeping with the best traditions of secondary school education. In doing so, the Board is ever mindful that the citizens of Teaneck will not be satisfied with less than the best," he said.

The \$726,000 bond issue for the construction of the building was placed onto the April 21, 1928 ballot for approval and members of the board lobbied strongly among the citizens for approval of the measure. Sheffe made many public statements at the time calling upon the people to vote regardless of whether they supported or objected to the plan.

The structure was designed by Hacker and Hacker of Palisades who used, according to a press report at the time, "Steropticon slides in describing the building and plans and showed an intimate knowledge of the many details for a modern high school."

Into the box under the cornerstone of the building Sheffe is shown cementing on the

cover, were placed the offerings of the various schools in the township as well as a Bible, a list of the current members of the Board of Education and commemorative coins from various organizations in town. All of the material was laid on a bed made of the American Flag.

A news report from Thursday, May 31, 1928 pointed out that no members of the governing body had been invited to the ceremony. The report said, "No invitation had been sent to the Teaneck Township Committee, but fortunately one was present and at the last moment wrote the names of the governing body on a slip of paper and it was added to the deposits in the stone."

By 1933 the Township was seeking funds from the federal government under the Public Works Administration to construct an addition to the building claiming it was handling nearly 1,800 students because of a population explosion in the 1920's.

Sheffe, writing from his 550 Warwick Avenue home in West Englewood in 1933, said proudly, "We were able to conduct the school affairs and spend money with an eye wholly on the welfare of the community obtaining maximum value at minimum cost without waste, graft or extravagance."

CORRECTION

In an article published on page 9 last week in *This Week In Teaneck*, concerning the extension of school days for primary and elementary school children, the hours for Whittier School were incorrect. The correct hours are from 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., not 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. as reported. *This Week* regrets the error.