

City's Junior High Sch

Mansfield's John Simpson and Johnny Appleseed Junior High Schools are 30 years old this month.

Built shortly before World War 2 with the help of federal money, the two schools were opened Jan. 29, 1940 and dedicated two months later after work on them was completed.

Until the two schools were ready to use the old John Simpson building at Fourth and Bowman was the lone junior high school in the city. Now there are three, including the John Sherman building on Springmill Rd. They have a total enrollment of more than 2,700.

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Comparative costs of school buildings 30 years ago and today provide a graphic example of the way construction costs have skyrocketed.

The two junior high schools opened in 1940 cost \$450,000 each. A recent addition to the John Simpson

The Mansfield That Was

By VIRGIL A. STANFIELD

building required \$480,000 in school funds, \$30,000 more than the entire original building cost.

The city's junior high system, as it is known today, came into existence in 1927 when the million-dollar Senior High School was opened. Until that time pupils went directly to the four-year high school from the elementary schools.

A survey of the city's school needs made in 1938 by Dr. T. C. Holy, Ohio State University research specialist, convinced the board of education that more junior high facilities were needed.

A \$550,000 bond issue was voted in 1938 and the federal government added \$450,000 to make it possible to build the two junior high struc-

tures, a shop addition at Senior High School and improvements to two of the older grade schools.

There were complaints when the Cline Ave. site was selected for one of the buildings because a lot of Mansfielders thought it was too far away from the downtown district.

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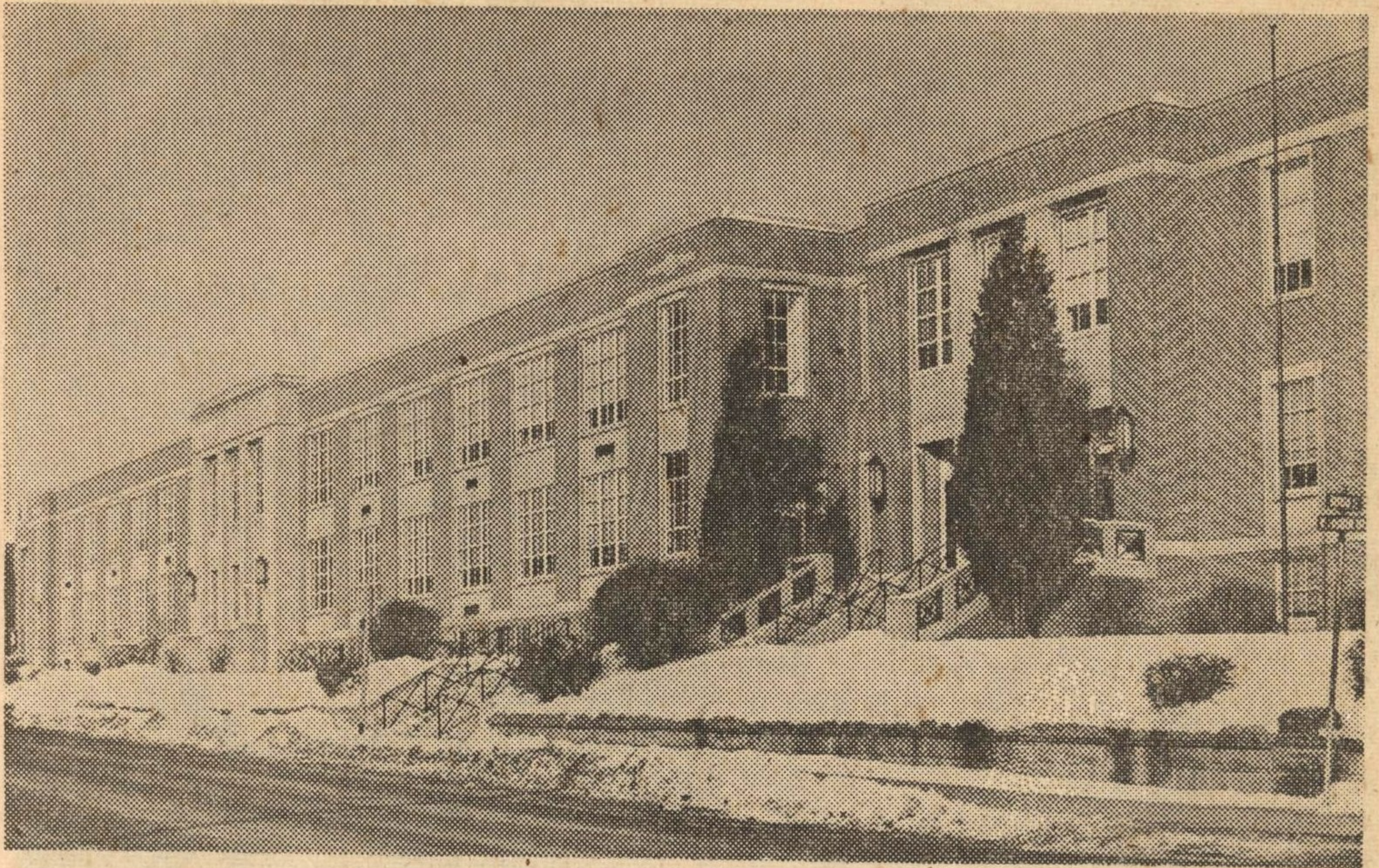
The protest then, however, was nothing compared to the one that flared in 1890 when the old John Simpson building site was announced.

At that time the west side of the city was thinly populated and the residents of the east side of town were boiling mad. They demanded resignation of the school board members. When the board refused to quit, there



Johnny Appleseed Junior High School, opened in January, 1940, was built to serve the fast-growing south side of the city. The building cost \$450,000, same as the John Simpson building, opened the same month and year. (Photos by Otto Schmidt.)

Schools Mark 30th Year



Named for an outstanding Mansfield educator, John Simpson Junior High school occupies the site of the high school which served the city from the 1890s to 1927. The building opened just 30 years ago.

was talk of impeachment proceedings.

The board apparently found someone to plead its case effectively for the storm subsided and construction was started.

The first John Simpson building was erected at a cost of \$52,407. Additions in 1903 and 1922 pushed the cost to almost \$200,000.

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The school was named for the man who headed Mansfield schools from 1873 to 1893 and was widely known for his ability as an educator.

When the new building was completed in 1940 it retained the John Simpson name.

First of the two junior high structures to be dedicated in 1940 was Johnny Appleseed, which of course was named for the pioneer nurseryman whose colorful life story is familiar to Mansfielders.

The dedicatory ceremo-

nies and open house were held March 5 of that year with Dr. C. B. Allen, professor of education at Western Reserve University, as the main speaker. More than 6,000 persons viewed the new building.

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First principal of the school was Glenn G. Rohleder, who had previously headed the Hedges School. Later he was to become principal of Senior High School.

Since the Appleseed building was placed in use there have been additions costing \$345,000. They included a music room, a cafeteria addition, a library, and five classrooms. The school now has an enrollment of slightly more than 1,000.

The John Simpson building was dedicated March 15 of the same year. Dr. Karl Leebrick, president of Kent State University, delivered the address. Harry Dotson was the school's first principal.

The Simpson enrollment was about 800 at the start and it has remained at about that figure because the newer John Sherman school also serves the north side of the city.

An addition to the John Simpson school, completed last year, includes a band and choral shell and a library.

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For more than 20 years after the John Simpson building was dedicated, the auditorium was a popular meeting place and the home of plays and concerts. Civic Music and Mansfield Symphony concerts were held there as were the Amvet Minstrels, dramatic productions, political rallies and lectures.

When the new Malabar School was built it afforded a larger stage and a parking area so it has become the city's home of music and lectures.