Pictures of Grade School Students
Nichols Public School, Nichols, Iowa
1879 to 1942

The Mirror yearbooks published by Nichols High School from 1944 to 1961 included student classes in the grade school. Digital copies of all 18 volumes are viewable as part of the NHS Digital Archives.

The pictures of grade school students assembled in this PDF file are the presently existing historical photographic record for the period prior to 1944 that have thus far been discovered as of 2019.

Don Smith (Class of 1950)
Editor, NHS Digital Archives
A plat map of the Town of Nichols in the 1874 atlas of Muscatine County shows the Nichols Public School at exactly the same location in the north end of Nichols as the building shown in this picture. The following abstract of Nichols history is from page 581 of the 1879 History of Muscatine County, Iowa: “The present fine two-story ... schoolhouse was built in the summer of 1872. ... The present attendance averages seventy-four scholars. The present teachers are Franklin Gilbert and Mary E. Gilbert, the former’s wife.”

There are 77 persons in the picture above and two of them appear to be teachers. The woman at the right end of the back row may be Mary Ellen Gilbert (age 37) and the second man to her right (with a mustache) may be her husband, Franklin Gilbert (age 46). The single small tree in this 1879 picture and the multiple mature trees in the 1908 picture in the upper right corner are consistent with a 29-year time span. These circumstances are all consistent with an estimated date of 1879 for this picture.

Nichols, Iowa, Public Elementary School Building and Student Body Circa 1879
Leona Hintz (Heath) 1st Grade (NHS 1909) — Alma Felton (Hazen) 1st Grade (NHS 1909) — Charles W. Elder 1st Grade (NHS 1909)

Picture of 36 Students in “Primary Room” (1st, 2nd & 3rd Grades) with their Teacher, Anna Schmitt, during the 1898-99 School Year

Picture is taken in front of the two-story wood frame schoolhouse at the north end of Nichols as originally constructed in 1872 with DUAL ENTRY DOORS. Sometime between 1899 and 1907 the front of the schoolhouse would be remodeled to provide a single entry door and allow for more classroom space.

Nichols Public School, Grades 1-2-3, 1898-1899

Photo Source: Barbara Elder
Madge Babbitt of Conesville was the Primary Room teacher (Grades 1-2-3). On December 24, 1906, she married Cecil Bangs, the Nichols High School Principal. Frances Kirchner (Elder), a third-grade student in Row Five, recalled having Madge Babbitt for her teacher for grades 1-2-3 (school years ending 05, 06 and 07).

Mrs. Madge Babbitt Bangs (Teacher) and Her 42 Students in 1st, 2nd and 3rd Grades
During the 1906-07 School Year at Nichols Public School in Nichols, Iowa.

Row 5: Susie Jameson - Mary Stephens - Frances Kirchner - Mava Hamilton - Esther Borgstadt - Benjamin Nichols
Row 3: May Lewis - Cloyde Davidson - Russell Watkins - Ralph Renshaw - Willard Rice - Ira Renshaw - Joe Pratt - Walter Elder
Row 2: Glen Van Tuyl - Mabel Artz - Robert Nolan - Myrtle Fetterman - Earl Trautman - Mable Fulmer - _____ Winn - Emil Browning
Harry Nugent - __________ - Frank & Walter Hollenbeck - Albert Smith - Elsie Nodine - Mildred Hummel - Wilma Briggs
Row 1: John Artz - _________ Ames - Chancey Smith - Floyd Bickford

Photo Source: Barbara Elder
Frances Kirchner Elder
Preservation of Early Nichols School & Town History

1896.circa  Robert & Mary Black build a large new home in the southeast section of the Town of Nichols as seen in the upper left margin.

1898.0615  Nannie Black, daughter of Robert & Mary Black, marries Bernard A. Kirchner, a dry goods store merchant in Nichols.

1899.0425  Frances Kirchner is born in Nichols to Nannie & Bernard Kirchner.

1899.0500  Photograph of Grades 1-2-3 includes in the 1st grade Charles W. Elder, future husband of Frances Kirchner.

1900.0000  A three-year high school curriculum is established with Professor Thomas Eland as the “Principal” and sole teacher.

1901.0326  Nannie Black Kirchner, mother of Frances, died in Nichols at age 21. Their widowed son-in-law and their granddaughter Frances move into the home of Robert & Mary Black.

1904.0900  Miss Madge Babbitt will teach grades 1-2-3 for three years.

1904.0900  Miss Mayme Foley will teach the intermediate grades for 48 years.

1904.0900  Miss Babbitt & Miss Foley will be lodgers at the Black house.

1907.0500  Frances Kirchner completes Grades 1-2-3 with Miss Babbitt. Picture of 42 students in Grades 1-2-3 includes Frances Kirchner in 3rd grade.

1909.0500  Charles W. Elder is one of nine graduating 11th graders at Nichols High School. The 1909 class picture is the earliest class picture found.

1910.0500  Frances Kirchner completes Grades 4-5-6 with Miss Foley.

1913.0500  Frances Kirchner completes Grades 7-8-9 at Immaculate Conception Academy in Davenport, Iowa.

1916.0606  Frances Kirchner completes grades 10-11-12 and graduates from St. Katharine’s School in Davenport, Iowa.

1917.1019  Frances Kirchner married Charles W. Elder. They would have five children all of whom graduated from Nichols High School: Kathryn Elder Vaupel (1936), Jeanne Elder Poulter (1937), Charles Elder Jr. (1938), Betty Elder Bieri (1941) and Alice Elder Grable (1941).
Nichols Public School, Grades 6-7-8, 1909-1910

Front Row: 24.____ 25.____ 26.____ 27.____  
Photo Source: Mike Appleby
Nichols Public School, Intermediate Room, Grades 4-5, 1910-1911

Front Row: 1-6_________________________ 7. Velora Meisky (Hummel) 8. ________

Teacher: Miss Mayme Foley, who would be the intermediate room teacher for 48 years (school years 1905-1952)

Photo Source: Keith Mills
Nichols Public School, Grades 6-7-8, 1910-1911


Photo Source: Nichols Iowa Centennial Book 1884-1984, Page 50.
Nichols Public School, Grades 6-7-8, 1911-1912


Photo Source: Alberta Metcalf Kelly Papers, Iowa Women’s Archives, University of Iowa
Nichols Public School, Grades Primary-1-2-3, 1914-1915

This picture was taken by photographer William Crozier of Riverside, Iowa, on November 5, 1914, at the rear of the two-story wood frame schoolhouse constructed in 1872. The ladders on the wall served as fire escapes for the second floor. This was the first year for the addition of the Primary grade to the grade school curriculum. It was also the school year in which the schoolhouse would be destroyed by fire on January 27, 1915. Under a normal progression the students in these four grades would graduate from NHS in 1923, 1924, 1926 and 1927. There was no graduating class in 1925 as the high school curriculum was increased that year from three years to four years.


SOURCE: Picture and names from the Nichols Iowa Centennial Book 1884-1984, page 52.
Nichols Public School Building, Nichols, Iowa

The white two-story wood frame school building erected on the north side of Nichols in 1872 was destroyed by fire on January 27, 1915. In May, 1915, a contract was awarded to the Hopp Construction Co. of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, to erect a new three-story brick and stone school building at a new site on the east side of Nichols. Construction of the new building, as pictured above, was completed in November, 1915. November 29, 1915, was the first day of school in the new building. The first senior class to graduate from the new building held its commencement exercises on June 2, 1916.
Nichols Public School, Grades P-1-2-3, 1915-1916

The new three-story brick Nichols Public School building was erected in 1915 and was occupied for its first day of school on the Monday after Thanksgiving, November 29, 1915. This classroom is in the new brick school building and this picture was taken during the 1916 school Year by photographer William Crozier of Riverside, Iowa, as confirmed by his sequential serial number that appears near the bottom of the picture.

The teacher is Alice Gerry Billing. She was on the Nichols Public School faculty only during the 1916 school year.
Nichols Public School
PRIMARY ROOM
Iowa
1916

A. GERRY BILLING,
Teacher

School Officers
V. B. Nichols
R. T. Shannon
H. Kirchner
W. R. Schmitt
F. Schmitt

Pupils

Opal Norris
Vivian Lilja
Marguerite Brugman
Elmer Browning
Howard Rummells
T. R. MacDougall
Leland McClure
Robert Fox
Ray Miesky
Modena Farley
Edna M. Rummells
Marguerite F. Kirchner
William Quimby
Clifford C. Cantwell
William Dale
Cecil Hintz
Raymond Paul Butler
Bernard J. Bekker
Bernard Mapes
Robert T. Chown
Miriam Richter
Bernice Nash
Emma MacConaghy
Gladys Hintz
Lila C. Browning
Henry P. Hamilton
Duane H. Duncan
Gilbert S. Cantwell
Carrol Hanson
Robert W. Schmitt
Edward Nolan
Harry Fox

The three-page (3”x5”) REMEMBRANCE booklet (May, 1916) that is displayed above lists the 33 students enrolled at Nichols (Iowa) Public School during the 1915-16 school year in the following grades: Primary-1st-2nd-3rd. NPS had occupied temporary facilities (churches, opera house) after fire destroyed the two-story wood frame schoolhouse on the north side of Nichols January 27, 1915 until November 29, 1915, when NPS occupied its new brick schoolhouse on the east side of Nichols. During the 1914-15 school year, the 8-grade elementary curriculum was expanded by adding the Primary grade. The students listed above, which include the 2nd enrolled Primary class, were spending their first school year in the new brick schoolhouse (1915-16).

Among the 33 students listed above are 11 who would graduate from NHS. Their names (with class year indicated) are as follows: Harry Fox (1924), Miriam Richter (1924), Bernice Nash (1924), Carrol Hanson (1926), Gladys Hintz (1926), Marguerite Kirchner (1926), William Quimby (1926), Edna Rummells (1926), Robert Fox (1926), Cecil Hintz (1927) and Beula Nash (1927). There was no 1925 class graduation as the high school curriculum was extended that year from three years to four years. Prior to 1925 all students graduated from the 11th grade. After 1925 all students graduated from the 12th grade. Some of the 11th grade graduates would enroll for the senior year at West Liberty or Muscatine High School and earn a four-year diploma.
Grades 6-7-8, Nichols Public School, Nichols, Iowa, 1915-1916 School Year


Photo Source: Barbara Elder

Editor’s Note: The photographer was William Crozier of Riverside, Iowa. His serial #12089 appears in the lower left corner of the picture. That this is a 1916 photo of grades 6-7-8 is confirmed by closely related serial numbers of other pictures taken at the same time: 1916 photo of Grades P-1-2-3 (#12090) and 1916 photo of the NHS grades 9-10-11 (#12094).
Nichols Public School, Grades Primary - 1st-2nd-3rd, 1916-1917

This picture was taken by photographer William Crozier of Riverside, Iowa as evidenced by his sequential serial number etched at the bottom of the picture. The teacher is Miss Verna Swain of West Liberty, Iowa, who would teach only this one year in the Nichols Public School. The picture shows 35 students in the four grades taught by Miss Swain. The classroom is in the new brick school building that was erected in 1915.

Robert Chown entered Primary grade in the school year ending in 1915. In this picture he is in 2nd grade. To his right in the picture is Wilma Kirchner (Mills). She is also in the 2nd grade. This is Wilma’s first appearance in the grade school pictures indicating she started in a Nichols rural school. In their progression to the 8th grade in 1923, Wilma and Robert provide excellent markers for establishing and confirming the dates of other pictures.
Photo of Entire Student Body (K-11) & Faculty in front of the new public school building in May 1917 after the USA declared war on Germany at 5 April 1917 as evidenced by the American flags in the school windows.

Photographer: William Crozier of Riverside IA

Photo Source: Barbara Elder
Faculty & Students photographed in May, 1917, in front of the new Nichols Public School Building.

Nichols Public School, Grades 4-5-6, 1916-1917


Nichols Public School, 8th Grade Class Graduation Picture, June 30, 1921

Back Row: Harry M. Fox, Jr. (NHS 1924) – Carrol S. Hanson (NHS 1926)
Front Row: Bernice Nash (Hadley- NHS 1924) – Frances Wieskamp (Lindle-NHS 1924)
           Miriam Richter (Banhagel-NHS 1924) – Neva McCullough

Photo Source: Grossheim Studio Muscatine, Iowa; Image Provided Courtesy Musser Public Library
Nichols Public School, Grades 7-8, 1921-1922

Photo Source: Kay Chown Cline
Nichols Public School, 8th Grade Class Graduation Picture, June, 1922

Photo Source: Sara-Jane Ramsay Gilb
Nichols Public School, Grades 5-6, 1924-1925

Middle Row: 8.__________ 9.__________ 10.__________ 11.__________ 12.__________ 13. Doris Poole (Chown-1932)

Photo Source: Karen Chown Cline
Nichols Public School, Grades 3-4, 1926-1927


Photo Source: Randall Elder
Nichols Public School, Grades 4-5-6, 1935-36

The Teacher in the upper left corner is Miss Mayme Foley.
Four students at the back of the group are identifiable from the 1936 school band picture.

Photo Source: Kay Chown Cline
Nichols Public School, Grades 7-8, 1935-1936


Photo Source: Randall Elder
Nichols School Band Members – May 1936


Photo Source: Randall Elder
Nichols Public School, Grades P-1-2, 1937-1938


24. George Stych.

Photo Source: Keith Mills
93 Rural Eighth Grade Pupils To Be Graduated

Ninety-three rural eighth grade pupils will receive graduation certificates entitling them to high school admission at the 33rd annual commencement of the common schools of Muscatine county to be held Wednesday at 8:15 p.m. in the Wilton high school.

The Rev. Theodore A. Mansen, pastor of the Wilton Presbyterian church, is to be the principal speaker, and various program numbers are being arranged.

The graduate list, announced today by County Supt. E. D. Bradley, includes:

Evelyn Marie Adams, 76 township.
Mary Louise Adams, 76 township.
Robert G. Allbee, Fulton.
Wayne D. Bangert, Montpelier.
Barbara Lee Batchelor, Sweetland.

Richard Fred Bierman, Fruitland.
William Bixby, Pike.
Ruby Pauline Brockert, Bloomington.
Jackie D. Broders, Fulton.
Kenneth Oliver Broders, Fulton.
Arthur Joseph Bryant, Fruitland.
Robert Clifford Buster, Sweetland.
Ross Eugene Buster, 76.
Ben Eugene Cogodan, Pike.

William Arthur Calvelage, Sweetland.
Wesley Junior Carter, 76.
Duane Christoffel, Pike.
Fred Ernest Dahl, Jr., Fulton.
Virginia May Donovan, Cedar.
Eugene Dulaney, Cedar.
Robert Elshoff, Lake.
Mildred Joy Fairley, Montpelier.

Sarah Belle Fischer, Cedar.
Helen Shirley Foster, Lake.
Mary Loue Gann, Muller, 76.
Bernard L. Gerlach, Wilton.
Willie Edward Heinrich, Fulton.

Marie Hester, Lake.
Willbur Lewis Hetzer, Sweetland.

Dorothy Mae Heyden, Stockton.
Edgar Gilbert Hildebrand, Goshen.
Laura Lorene Horgan, Moscow.
Virgil Earl Jarrett, Goshen.
Betty Mae Jones, Sweetland.
Kathleen Kaulberg, Waspie.

Robert Arnold Kaulberg, Pike.
William Kappoher Jr., Fulton.
Edgar Kemper, Montpelier.
Raymond Lindy Knutsen, Fruitland.

Julius Joseph Lamber, Fulton.
Viola Mae Lanier, Bloomington.

Leonard Lewis Lenz, Waspie.
Alvin Paul Loebe, Fruitland.
Dorothy Marine, Goshen.
Laura Josephine McClean, Wilton.
Esther Jean McFadden, 76.
Donald Dean McGillivray.

In addition, the list includes:

Arline Ann Meier, Wilton.
Eldred Albin Meier, Wilton.
Ramona Bernetta Middagh, Lake.
Clark Miller Jr., Sweetland.
Wayne Arthur Miller, Sweetland.
Robert Clyde Minder, Lake.
M. June Mohr, Cedar.
Richard Earl Needham, Fulton.

Arlette Ruth Nelson, Lake.
Phyllis Orr, Fruitland.
Shirley May Pauz, Bloomington.

Lucille Ruth Pelton, Fruitland.
Charles Perkins, Waspie.
Elsie Mae Potter, Waspie.
Rose Mary Powell, Montpelier.
Verna Puckett, 76.
Janet Marie Quigley, Fulton.
Cecelia Maxine Reiland, Goshen.

Alfred Henry Richter, Sweetland.
Darlene Jeanette Richter, Montpelier.
Laura Jean Richter, Montpelier.

Wayne Riessen, Fulton.
Kathleen Margaret Russ, Waspie.

Lucille H. Ruhser, Wilton.


Henry Stephen Schaapveld, Waspie.

Little A. Schlakohler, Wilton.
Patricia Jean Schnack, Stockton.

Jerald Dwight Schroeder, Montpelier.

Leda Anna Elizabeth Seebeek, Sweetland.
Bernard Gilbert Seggernsm, 76.

Andre Alvin Seligman, Fulton.
Russel D. Shoppa, Fruitland.
Kenneth Lyle Smith, Goshen.
Betty Jean Stagg, Waspie.

Vera Jean Stalks, Pike.

Melvin Jay Steen, Waspie.

Harriet Lorraine TeStryke, Sweetland.

George Wesley Toyne, Sweetland.

Dolores Faye Tyler, Stockton.
Betty Josephine Wagner, Cedar.

John Waltz, 76.

Mildred Lotene Weinard, Waspie.

Sue Ellen White, Fruitland.
Betty Jean Wince, Fruitland.

Keith E. Ziegenhorn, Lake.
Four Rural 8th Grade Graduates in 1942 Will Be Nichols High School Graduates in 1946

Students completing the elementary grades in the rural township schoolhouses of Muscatine County and also passing the county superintendent’s exam would receive a graduation diploma and be invited to the annual 8th grade graduation ceremony. Following WWII the improvement of roads with all-weather surfaces, the appearance of the iconic school bus and state-wide school consolidation policies soon led to the disappearance of the one-room rural schoolhouse.

Four of the graduates in the picture above, with the numbers 1 to 4 appearing on their left or right shoulder, will attend Nichols High School and graduate in the class of 1946. They are: 1-Vera Stalkfleet 2-Robert Kaalberg 3-Charles Perkins 4-Kathleen Kaalberg. Number 5 is the Muscatine County Superintendent of Education, E. D. Bradley.

Photo Source: Linda (Kaalberg) White, Daughter of Robert Kaalberg.