



Sheyenne River Academy, c. 1968.

Photo courtesy of Dakota Conference Archives.

Sheyenne River Academy

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Sheyenne River Academy (SRA) was established in 1903 on 160 acres of property donated by the citizens of Harvey, North Dakota. The instructions were to "build a school to accommodate at least fifty pupils and operate it for a minimum of five years."¹

The first term began November 3, 1904.² It was called Harvey Industrial School until 1906 when the name was changed to Sheyenne River Academy.³

The most unique feature of the academy's curriculum was undoubtedly its three separate departments, which taught in Russian, German, and English respectively. This greatly contributed to the learning successes of students who were first- or second-generation immigrants and not fluent in English.⁴

The haphazard nature of frontier education created problems for the academy staff. Students frequently arrived without the prerequisite elementary preparation. Although the school apparently offered classes from seventh grade through high school, grades five and six were added to accommodate these challenges.⁵

The first graduate with a "four-year academic curriculum" was Regina Litwinenco in 1912. Another student, Marian Edwards, graduated in 1913, returning after a year at Union College to teach at the newly formed church school on the SRA campus. Although there were no academy graduates in 1914, the school subsequently produced graduates every year from 1915 until its closure.⁶

The influenza epidemic of 1918-1919 that claimed the lives of 500,000 Americans also affected the academy. Shortly after opening for the 1918-1919 school year, the academy was forced to close when about fifty of the seventy students enrolled contracted influenza. Two of those students, Martha Peetz and John Miller, died from the disease. A lonely, undesignated grave on the abandoned Sheyenne River Academy property marks the resting place of Martha Peetz, an orphan who was working her way through the academy. Dr. R. C. Reimche, an Adventist physician from Harvey who treated the academy's ailing students, also succumbed to the disease.⁷

The greatest challenge to Sheyenne River Academy throughout the years was the periodic downturn in the agricultural, commodity-driven economy upon which the state of North Dakota was based.

By the 1960s, most of SRA's aging infrastructure needed remodeling or replacing. An offer of a \$1,250,000 donation toward the building of an entirely new school came in 1970.⁸ When the South Dakota Conference agreed to join in the building of a new academy, land was purchased a few miles north of Bismarck, North Dakota. Dakota Adventist Academy began accepting students in September of 1977, although the building project was not complete.⁹ Proceeds from the closure and sale of Sheyenne River Academy contributed towards the construction of Dakota Adventist Academy.

Principals

C. L. Kendall (1904-1906), N. W. Lawrence (1906-1909), J. F. Simon (1909-1910), C. V. Bond (1910-1911), A. F. Schmidt (1911-1913, 1916-1919), H. Haughey (1913-1916), A. G. Goude (1919-1922), J. C. Harder (1922-1924), R. M. Falk (1924-1925), R. R. Neuman (1925-1935), R. W. Fowler (1935-1942), A. Rudy (1942-1943), I. E. Anunsen (1943-1945), R. O. Stone (1945-1948), L. G. Barker (1948-1951), L. S. Davis (1951-1954), J. H. Lantry (1954-1956), V. L. Bartlett (1956-1959), M. C. Torkelsen (1959-1961), J. R. Siebenlist (1961-1962), H. C. Reile (1962-1964), Lyle Hamel (1964-1965), N. V. George (1965-1968), Robert Martin (1968-1969), R. H. Hoffman (1969-1973), James K. Herman (1973-1974), William Fuchs (1974-1976).

SOURCES

DuPuy, Robert K. *Nothing to Fear*. Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing, 1983.

Kendall, C. L. "Harvey Industrial School." *Northern Union Reaper*, April 17, 1906.

"Sheyenne River Academy." *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*. Vol. 11. Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1996.

"Sheyenne River Academy Established in 1903." *The Harvey Herald*, June 16, 1955.

NOTES

1. "Sheyenne River Academy Established in 1903," *The Harvey Herald*, June 16, 1955, Harvey Frontier Days Edition in Three Sections, Section 2, 13.
2. C. L. Kendall, "Harvey Industrial School," *Northern Union Reaper*, April 17, 1906, 3-4.
3. "Sheyenne River Academy," *Seventh-day Adventist Encyclopedia*, vol. 11 (Hagerstown, MD: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1996), 603.
4. Robert K. DuPuy, *Nothing to Fear* (Boise, ID: Pacific Press Publishing, 1983), 87.
5. *Ibid.*, 86.
6. *Ibid.*, 88-89.
7. *Ibid.*, 90.
8. Letter on file at Dakota Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, Bismarck, ND, dated January 14, 1976.
9. "Merger with South Dakota," Conference Executive Committee Minutes, March 11, 1974, 30-74.

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