

# 1896 Central School

Life in 1896

## Background Information

### United States:

**President:** Grover Cleveland is the 24<sup>th</sup> President of the United States from 1893-1897. He is the only president to serve two non-consecutive terms.

Grover Cleveland~22<sup>nd</sup> President-1885-1889

Benjamin Harrison~23<sup>rd</sup> President-1889-1893

(Harrison defeated Grover Cleveland's bid for re-election in 1888.)

Grover Cleveland~24<sup>th</sup> President-1893-1897

**Number of states in the Union:** 45

Utah just entered the Union on January 4<sup>th</sup> as the 45<sup>th</sup> state.

### State of Illinois:

\*Illinois has been a state since December 3, 1818, the 21<sup>st</sup> state to join the Union.

### Mount Prospect:

\*There is a train station located in town.

\*St. John Lutheran Church is the only church in town.

\*St. John Lutheran School has been operating since 1850.

\*The Moehling General Store has been open a few years.

\*The John Meyn Blacksmith Shop has been operating since 1883.

\*Mount Prospect is not yet an official village. (1917)

\*In 1896 the town's population is less than 100.

## **Central School:**

\*Central School is the first public school in Mount Prospect (not the first school, though).

\*The schoolhouse was built in 1896, by William Wille, on land donated by William Wille and William Busse. William Wille was authorized to build a basic one-room schoolhouse. He added a girls' cloakroom and boys' cloakroom and paid for them himself.

\*William Kirchhoff was also an early Mount Prospect resident who worked with William Busse and William Wille to found Central School.

\*Central School was located on the corner of Main Street and Central Road, facing west.

\*In the beginning, students had to sit on nail kegs. That would not have been very comfortable!

\*At first, the schoolhouse was heated by a potbelly stove, a round stove with a bulge in the middle.

\*The bell in the tower came from one of the last steam trains that traveled along the Chicago Northwestern tracks. There used to be glass inside the tower, but the glass was shattered by the loud noise when the bell rang.

\*District 57 got its start in Central School. ALL of the students in the district attended this school!

\*Students were expected to bring firewood to school to heat the school.

\*Mastering the 6-set McGuffey Readers was considered a complete education.

\*The teacher would ring a hand bell at recess time and if the children could hear the bell, they were considered a safe distance from school.

\*Shoes were not required in school.

\*The schoolmarm or schoolmaster took turns living with families during the school year.

\*A student was considered done with public school when he or she finished all six McGuffey's Readers.

\*In 1896 there is no high school.

\*Students were grouped according to their reading ability and not their age.

\*John W. Pohlmann was one of the first five students to attend Central School.