SCHOOL DAYS
Information and pictures supplied by Joe Wikrent and John Roever

THE FIRST SCHOOLS

In 1854, the first one-room school was taught by Mr. Heskit in the old St. John's Church. The location moved to the village hall the next year. The first school building was constructed on Buchanan Street in 1866. This log structure was replaced in 1885 when a new city hall-school building was built on the present site of the fire department.

6.29 RK The first high school in Schlesingerville, built in 1910.

Besides offering a basic curriculum, the high school also fielded both boys and girls basketball teams as early as 1916. The boys team won the eight-team Tri-County tournament championship in 1923. Cardinal and white were adopted as the school's colors in 1930.

2.35 MS The 1922 gymnasium and classroom addition.

An addition was completed in 1922 that included a gymnasium and more classrooms. Slinger beat Campbellsport, 81-10, in the first game played in the new gym (which today is the elementary gymnasium). Six more additions to the building were added between 1948 and 1989 to form the present Slinger Elementary and Middle School complex.

The first high school building was completed in Schlesingerville in 1910, eliminating the need for older students to travel to Hartford. The school received its charter from the state in 1914 and held its first graduation in spring, 1915. The original high school building is still in use today, housing a variety of elementary and middle school classes.

1.19A The public school graduation class of 1909 posed for pictures after receiving their eighth grade diplomas. Seated, left to right, are Lester Reichart, Walter Kratz, Elda Kalser, Carrie Thiel, and George Mertz. Standing are Principal William O. Meltahn, Edwin Kratz, Frances Schodron, Elmer Baehling, Amanda Geneman, and Anna Theisen.

6.5 RK The second public grade school building in Schlesingerville. It was constructed in 1885. The building was also used as the city hall and was located at the present site of the Slinger Fire Department.

8.12 SS The 1955 and 1957 elementary classroom additions.
Among the first principals were William O. Meilahn, W. E. Clark, Walter Schuman, E. Grant Schnyder, Harry Shesky, and Carl Eisemann.

**CONSOLIDATION**

The State of Wisconsin consolidated schools in this area in the late 1950's, creating the current School District of Slinger, with a total enrollment of over 1,000 students districtwide. A number of smaller one- and two-room schools were closed and a new Allenton Elementary opened in 1964. Because of continuing enrollment growth, the Allenton building was doubled in size in 1989.

The district currently serves all or part of seven municipalities, including the Towns of Addison, Hartford, Polk, Richfield and West Bend and the Villages of Jackson and Slinger.

The first administrator to be named as superintendent was Gus Boll in the 1950's. Stanley Sprehn and Ron Rueckl led the district from the 1960's until 1989 when Mark Heyerdahl, the current district administrator was appointed.

Among the principals who previously guided various schools have been Richard Nowicki, Pat Hoffman, and Terry Taylor. Kevin Bacon is the current middle school principal, Sarah Bernhard leads Slinger Elementary, Michael Hohner is in charge at Allenton Elementary, and Joe Wikrent is the high school principal.

**THE NEW HIGH SCHOOL**

High school classes moved to the present high school building in 1964. New outdoor athletic fields and a track were added in 1965 and were some of the best in the Scenic Moraine Conference which Slinger belonged to from 1958 to 1980. Previously, football and baseball games were played at the Community Park "downtown" when the high school played in both the 4C and Southeast Conferences.

The present high school facility was recently remodeled and expanded, adding an additional 126,000 square feet, including a new combined gymnasium and auditorium facility. The Owls have played in the Parkland Conference since 1980. Pewaukee High School has been one of the Owls' fiercest rivals in all of the conferences dating back to the 1930's.

The 1993-94 high school enrollment was 660. With the smallest class in the district of only 130 students, high school enrollment will grow to over 700 this year and is projected to be over 900 in the late 1990's.

Among the more successful programs at the high school is the Academic Decathlon team that regularly finishes among the top schools in this statewide academic competition. The team finished third in 1994. The music department is also noted across the state for its excellent large group ensembles, as well as individual musicians. Athletic teams have also won recent Parkland Conference championships in cross-country, football, track, and volleyball. Girls cross-country and track teams dominated the conference in the 1980's.

**CONTINUING GROWTH**

The district is currently building a new 900 student middle school on a 40 acre site owned cooperatively by both the school district and the Village of Slinger. The site is located on the eastern edge of the village, north of Highway 60 and west of Lovers Lane on the old Karius farm. Construction is slated to be completed by August, 1995. The current middle school building will house elementary students.

Washington County is the fastest growing county in Wisconsin. Located only 30 miles from Milwaukee, the district is now within easy commuting distance of the entire metropolitan area. The district is also experiencing a similar residential construction boom.

Directly related, there was a record enrollment in the school district of over 2,400 students in 1993-94, served by a staff of over 200 teachers and support staff members, and funded by a budget of nearly $12 million.

Besides the buildings in Allenton and Slinger, the district also leases the former Catholic school in St. Lawrence for an early childhood center, where approximately 100 students are
provided with special education or other programs to better prepare them for success in first grade.

The district has grown by over 5% per year over the past five years. Yet the tax rate has remained one of the lowest in the county.

Despite the enrollment growth, the schools remain firmly in touch with the communities that they serve. Many new residents mention the school system as a major reason why they have relocated here. The schools still boast of providing a quality educational program at a reasonable cost to the taxpayer. Recent standardized testing at all levels, regular DPI and SEC audit results, positive parent surveys, and successful extra-curricular activities all verify the continuing success of the Slinger Schools.

By: Michael Schuetz

Dancing was the primary source of enjoyment for most people in our village years ago. The ten-member Schlesingerville Cornet Band performed for many years in this area. Between 1929 and 1934 the Schaefer Orchestra played in Slinger and Hartford. The Roth and Schaefer families dominated the music scene in Slinger from about 1880 to 1935. We must give the award for the most longevity to Skipper Leone and Her Deck Hands. She started in Slinger in the summer of 1934 and continued into the 1970’s.

All the local bands played at Roth’s dance hall which was built in 1862. Food was served in the room above the dance hall. The dancers kept their horses in the basement. Basketball was played there and movies were shown regularly.

Two of Wisconsin’s most famous resorts were located in Slinger’s own back yard:

In 1919 Jake Gonring built a 100 ft. circular dance hall at his resort. Along with his two hotels, free Sunday afternoon concerts, and a bathing beach complete with a large waterslide, Jake was sure to show you a good time.

In 1893 the Rosenheimer family purchased the Cedar Lake Park Resort from the Wisconsin Central Railroad. They built a special depot, north of Arthur Road, to serve their resort. The

Kletti brothers livery met the 1:00 p.m. train to take the passengers to the lake. On the other end of town, the Urban livery met the Milwaukee Road at the Slinger Station.