

HISTORIC BAKER SCHOOL

The first public school building in the Inland Empire was erected on this site in 1866.

Prior to 1862 there had been no public school organization in Walla Walla, though a superintendent of schools had been appointed by the Washington Territorial Legislature in 1859. In 1862 Walla Walla School District #1 was organized, a room was rented, and a teacher appointed. Progress lagged until the fall of 1864, when there was a school-age population of 203, only ninety-three of whom were enrolled. A tax was then levied for the erection of a wooden building, and the District paid \$200 for the block bordered by Sumach, Spokane, Cherry & Palouse streets. The original school erected here at a cost of \$2,000 opened in March, 1866, the first public school building in the eastern part of Washington Territory.

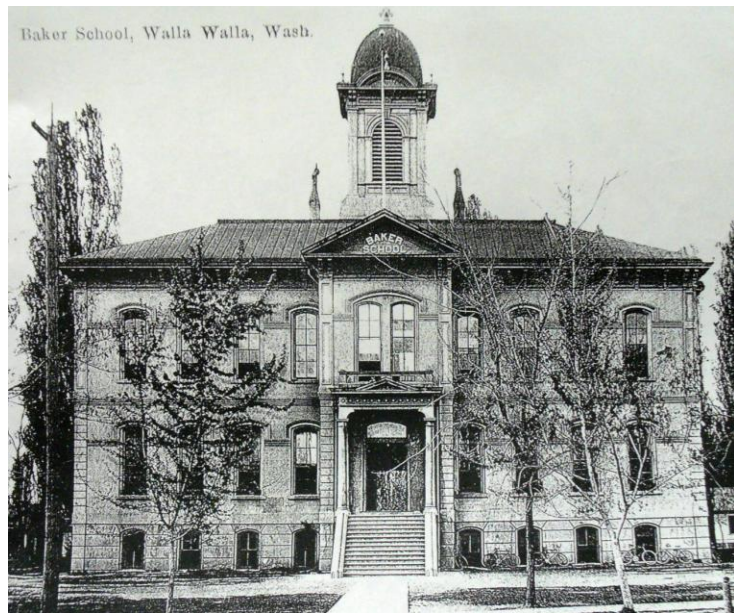
In 1882, by vote of the District, a much more ambitious building plan was adopted, and a tax of \$17,000 was levied

to erect a larger, more substantial building here named for donor Dorsey S. Baker, since additional public donations were required to enable the school to be built of brick.

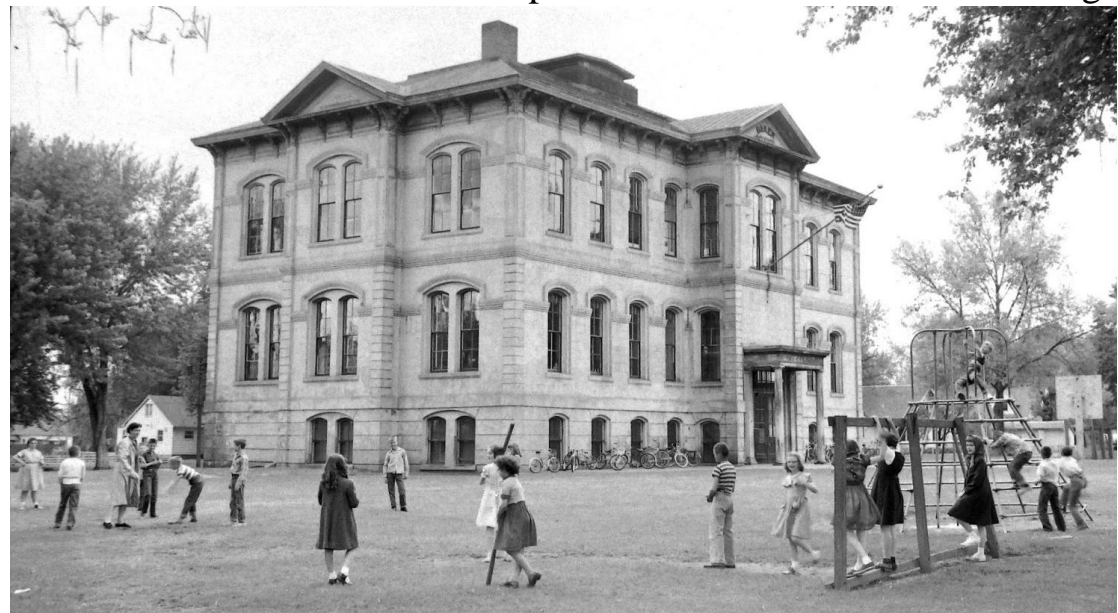
In 1889, the District offered secondary classes for the first time, and Baker School housed Walla Walla's first high school students. The following year the high school students were transferred to Paine School, erected in 1888, now known as Lincoln School, where a third floor was completed for high school purposes.

The Walla Walla School District's first high school class graduated in 1893. By 1900 the total number of graduates was eighty. In 1917 Walla Walla High School had 821 day students, and another 127 studied at night.

Baker School was remodeled in 1931, and continued to serve elementary school students in Walla Walla until 1955, when the land was sold at public auction. In 1957 the building was razed.



Original brick building, 1883



1931 remodel



L to R, Misses Russell, 4th grade, Messegee, 3rd gr, Prendergast, 6th gr, Howland, 2d gr, Mr. York, custodian, Misses Thomas, principal, Purinton, 5th gr, Preston, 1st gr, & Ramsdell, 7th gr, circa 1918



May 1933



Circa 1910

Sign placed by Walla Walla 2020 Historic Sites & Markers Project

More information on Baker School and other historic sites in the Walla Walla area is available online at www.ww2020.net/historic-sites.