

A History of Red Bank High School and Middle School

Personal recollections of Laura Crane, RBHS Class of 1982
February 2022

Before 1937, the the land between Morrison Springs Road and the Dayton Plaza [now Plaza North] was a farm owned by the Sliger family. The Dayton Plaza property was owned by the Crisman family.

The original Red Bank High School was built as a wooden building that sat in front of the original Red Bank Elementary School on the corner of Dayton Boulevard and Morrison Springs Road. It was made rather small with a coal bin at one end. The white wooden structure was home to both the high school and middle school. Around 1935-36, the coal bin caught fire and the whole building was lost. The upper classes were handed trolley tickets to attend class at Central High School for the rest of the school term. The lower classes attended class at Red Bank Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

In 1937-38, the foundation for the new school was planned out and set. The new building sat on West Leawood Avenue, a block from where the former high school once sat. In 1939, the first portion of the building was completed. It housed the original gym, classrooms, offices, auditorium and cafeteria. In 1939-40, the high school/middle school was opened, and the first graduation class was 1940.

The building was starting to grow. A section of classrooms, made of wood and glass, that was added later made the building campus shaped like a square “U”. It, too, caught fire and the wing was lost. Students again found themselves going other places to attend class.

In the late 1940s the campus was expanding by leaps and bounds. The Dayton Boulevard side was taking shape. By the 1950s, the campus added a new auditorium. In 1956, a local Red Bank gentleman designed the “Brick Boy and Girl.” He borrowed a sheet of graph paper from his daughter who herself went to Red Bank High School. The timeless treasure of the community of Red Bank was made. Their official title was “Mr. and Ms. Red Bank High School” to represent the young men and women who attend the sacred halls of Red Bank High School.

The football field was a gem of the community. At first, Red Bank’s football team traveled to play every Friday night. The football stadium did not have lights until the late 1940s to early 1950s. It was named for former Hamilton County School Superintendent Albert Rankin.

Throughout the decades, Rankin Field would hold championship games and exciting events like homecoming and band competitions. In 1978, Gallatin came to play the Red Bank Lions in the 5AAA state title game. Unfortunately, the Red Bank Lions would not win the state title until the 2000 season.

The 1970s brought a new gym on the far end of the campus. The campus was finally completed.

From 1938 until 1982 the campus was the home of Red Bank High School. In 1982, the plans were finalized for the high school to trade campuses with the Red Bank Junior High School that was built in 1960 on Morrison Springs Road. The senior class of 1982 was set to be the last class to graduate from the Dayton Boulevard campus. The last week of school, faculty and staff prepared for the big move. A lot of traditions were lost.

In the spring of 1982 was the first Red Bank Jubilee Arts and Crafts Fair. Red Bank High School held a walk-a-thon to raise money for the new football stadium. Then Tennessee governor Lamar Alexander and his wife Honey walked with the community. Later that year, Red Bank Community Stadium was built on the new Red Bank High School campus on Morrison Springs Road. Later on, the field was re-named "Tom Weathers Field" in honor of Red Bank High School football coach Tom Weathers.

When 2012 came in, the plans were completed to tear down the old school campus at 3715 Dayton Boulevard. Before the building met the end, a group of alumni started a program to save the beloved "Brick Boy and Girl." With hard work and \$5,000 later, local construction owner and Red Bank High School alumnus of 1981 Marty Green came to the rescue. His company took the mosaic piece and removed it from the building. They cleaned the bricks and put them up at the new Red Bank High School campus.

In 2013, the property at Dayton Boulevard and West Leawood Avenue met its fate. A company came in with construction machines and started tearing down our beloved building. Numerous alumni showed up to grasp anything of the building before it came down. Numerous alumni gathered bricks from the old structure. Within a few months, a once proud campus sat in rubble. Within a year, the land was bare, as if a building never sat there.