Banner covered progress, dedication of memorial

Although the memorial fountain at Hastings High School was paid for by students from several grades, the installation and dedication ceremony for the World War II monument were of great community interest. The following articles were printed in the Hastings Banner in the days leading up to and following the dedication:

May 5, 1949

MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN DEDICATION RITES PLANNED FOR MAY 27

Work on the erection of the memorial fountain at Johnson Field is progressing rapidly, Superintendent D.A. VanBuskirk said yesterday, and the dedication ceremonies are being planned for Friday, May 27.

The stone work on the fountain, located on the north end of the athletic field, is being done by John Young.

The name of Morton Young, John Young's son, will be on the memorial plaque, along with 30 other former Hastings High School students who gave their lives in World War II.

A large portion of the money for the erection of the Memorial was earned by students — even those in the fourth and fifth grades — during the war years through scrap paper collections.

May 19, 1949

HASTINGS STUDENTS TO DEDICATE HEROES' MEMORIAL MAY 27

Hastings High School students Friday, May 27, will dedicate to the memory of the former students who gave their lives to their country in World War II a memorial fountain which they caused to be erected through funds raised by themselves.

The memorial fountain, construction of native field stone, is designed to accentuate the bronze plaque in the center, which contains the names of those who gave their lives during the last conflagrations.

It is located on the north end of beautiful Johnson Field, just south of the tennis courts.

The memorial is in keeping with the high purpose for which it was erected and it fills a need at the athletic field where the Saxons of today are keeping fit just in case they may be called to follow in the footsteps of those who will be honored at the ceremonies May 27.

... Plans for a memorial to Hastings High students engaged in World War II took shape during the war years. During that period, gate receipts from a football game and a basketball game were earmarked for the memorial fund and entertainments added to it.

Members of the Hi-Y contributed $100 that they raised through endeavors such as their annual pencil sale.

But the bulk of the money was raised by children from as low as the fifth grade who collected waste paper for sale as a war measure. The youngsters, and high school students also, gathered 66 tons of waste paper and earned $800 for their memorial.

Plans for a memorial fountain were formed about two years ago, and Hubert Cook, former member of the board of education, designed it. The stone work was done by John Young, noted throughout the area for his work. The name of his son, Morton, is on the 18-by-24-inch plaque, too.

Lyle Ingram [believed to be John Young's son-in-law] was also one of the contractors on the project.

June 2, 1949

HASTINGS STUDENTS DEDICATE MEMORIAL FOUNTAIN FRIDAY

Hastings young people were reminded Friday afternoon, by the very memorial they caused to be erected on Johnson Field, of their obligations.

The reminders were brought about appropriately in the brief talks made at the ceremonies dedicating the Memorial Fountain — the result of five years of labor and planning — in which both the student and adult speakers recognized the debt owed to the 31 former Hastings High School students and to the other soldiers and sailors who gave their lives during World War II.

Beneath overcast skies, while the entire student body formed a half-circle south of the invited guests — mostly families of the boys who died in the nation's armed forces — and the choir and band with the native fieldstone fountain centered by the flags and standards of veterans' organizations, the speakers paid tribute to the fallen heroes and pledged to work to keep what they died for.

Superintendent of Schools D. A. VanBuskirk, who like most of the people in the audience knew well the boys whose names are enshrined on the bronze plaque, said it was highly fitting that, "Our memorial is placed in the setting of this beautiful field, dedicated to the improvement of the physical bodies and mental attitudes of our youth."

Superintendent VanBuskirk said the memorial is where "you, the youth of Hastings shall often be reminded of the debt you — the youth and we the older ones — owe to these and all the other heroes who helped make possible the opportunities we now enjoy."

The educator said, "Daily we need to ask ourselves the question, 'What have I done in the past?' 'What can I do to deserve such sacrifices?'

The local school head continued with quotations from Abraham Lincoln's classic dedication address at Gettysburg to answer the questions.

Supt. VanBuskirk added that a task today still remains. "We must bind not only states but nations together. We must reconcile not only peoples, but races. We must raise leaders for the task.

"These leaders must come from you, the youth of today." VanBuskirk continued. "In this audience are some whose training must be for leadership. We must select and train them and then follow their leadership.

"Our daily prayers must rise to heaven that we may be given wisdom and strength and courage to meet our great responsibilities with the same devotion to right and truth as those we honor here today possess in so large a measure."

The ceremony opened with Stanley Pierce sounding "To the Colors" as the same flag that had shrouded the casket containing the remains of Sgt. Cleo E. Card as they were lowered into the grave in the U.S. Cemetery Henri-Chapelle in Belgium, was raised by Boy Scouts.

The high school band then played the "Star-Spangled Banner," followed by the invocation by the Rev. Don Gury, rector of the Episcopal church.

Rev. Gury entoned " Grant, O Lord, we pray Thee, that the offering of their lives may not have been in vain: that we and all Thy people may hear the call to nobler living and clean sportsmanship that sounds in our ears from the graves of those who have died that we might live; that as we dedicate this fountain to this memory, we may

dedicate our lives anew to the work of bringing in They kingdom upon earth ..."

After the invocation, the high school choir, under the direction of Warren Williams, sang "Our Flag," and "Battle Hymn of the Republic."

The memorial was then formally presented by Robert Smith, mayor of the high school, who thanked everyone who aided in the project. The acceptance, on behalf of the people of the community, was made by Mrs. Homer Smith, president of the board of education, who also mentioned the appropriateness of the fountain at the athletic field.

Following VanBuskirk's address, which was titled, "We will remember them," the rifle squad composed of members of the various veterans' organizations, fired volleys, followed by Benediction by the Rev. Gury.

The program closed with Stanley Pierce sounding taps.