



# Glen Elder, KS -- Heritage & History

## A Brief History Of Glen Elder Schools

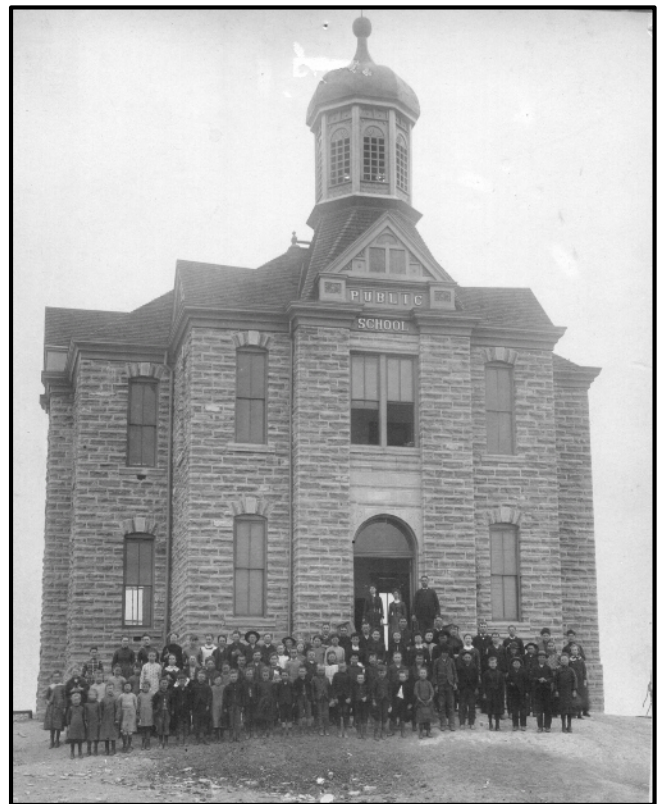


Home of the  
**BEARCATS**  
1887-1971

**Glen Elder High School**  
Glen Elder, Kansas

Home of the Black & Gold Bearcats, Glen Elder has long been proud of its schools dating back to the construction of the first school, built from native limestone rock, in 1887. This public grade and high school was considered to be one of the most magnificent buildings in the area. And, from its vantage point on the hill just west of town it was possible to see both Cawker City and Beloit.

The Grellet Academy was organized in 1878 by members of the Glen Elder Friends Church that had settled in what was then known as "Pleasant Valley." Grellet Academy was built in 1881 and chartered by the state in 1883. Located three miles southwest of Glen Elder, the Academy was open to all denominations; however, the requirement to enter the academy was a good moral character and cheerful obedience to the rules of the institution. To accommodate the students, a boarding hall was built. By 1887 students were coming from Nebraska and six counties in Kansas. By 1884 the Academy had an enrollment of over sixty.



Grade School Children in front of the school, c. 1912

In 1895 the Academy was destroyed by fire, supposedly caused by some chemicals left in the laboratory. Since there was now a high school in town, the Academy was not rebuilt.

Education was a major concern of the early pioneers. Schools were started in dugouts and homes then, later, one room country schools dotted the prairie in large numbers. The first frame school in Glen Elder was located across the street south of the Christian Church. This building was also used for many other town activities. Another frame school was located east of where the lumber yard now stands.

A modern two-story structure was built on the hill above Glen Elder in 1887 as a public school, for attendance by both grade and high school students. It was known as one of the grandest buildings in the country and from the top of the building could be seen both Cawker City and Beloit. Then in 1917 a new building for the high school was constructed across the street east of the Christian Church on the corner of Hobart and Allen St. Elementary students continued to use the old structure until 1937, at which time a new grade school was built on Nash Street. The school on the hill was torn down in 1938. In turn, Ernie Norris used some of the stone in other construction.



Stone cutting and piles of native limestone rock used to build the 1897 school.

The Glen Elder "Bearcats" served their school and town well, as they not only had a full education schedule, but were active in sports, speech, drama, music, woodworking, and many other activities, leading their school on to victory. The grade school continued in the building on the hill until 1938 when a new building was constructed a block north of the high school.



Glen Elder High School, constructed 1917



Glen Elder Grade School & Jr. High

Glen Elder High School and Glen Elder Grade School ceased to exist in the spring of 1971. That same spring Cawker City Schools also closed. In the fall of 1971, the two town's schools unified and became the Waconda East Vikings.