



West Bloomfield, the township of lakes and gentle hills, is one of transformation from wilderness beginnings and the domain of the Indian for some 12,000 years to agricultural prominence, to vacation dreams and summer resorts, to now established suburban living. The natural beauty and resources of its residents have played a key role in its growth.

Since its earliest settlement, these residents have been deeply committed to education as the key to passing on their heritage and preparing their children to shape the future of our township. *Peal of The Bell* chronicles the community's history to carry that mission into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

This report includes a virtual exhibit of photos and documents of the history of the schools serving children living in West Bloomfield, Michigan. Like other more traditional museum exhibits it combines original artifacts and primary documents with text, captions, and analysis to help the reader understand the importance and significance of these items.

This presentation allows you to enlarge images for closer inspection or readability because we believe that a picture is worth a thousand words. You might want to focus on people's faces to see if you recognize them or to examine their expression. Perhaps you want to study clothing styles, penmanship, or advertisements of the day. These images also help you to visualize the environment of the scene and place yourself within it. Many of the pictures in this exhibit are actual original documents and artifacts produced by the people who made the history of West Bloomfield Schools. Examining them will bring you one step closer to the events that shaped our current school system.

# Part 1: Peal of the Bell: 1800s to Early 1900s



## You are reading Section 5: Green Elementary School

Be sure to read the entire Part 1 report covering these early years:

### Section 1. History of the School System

Early Commitment to Education  
Territorial Commission of 1805  
School Districts – Full and Fractional  
Laws Establish Schools  
Education from 1820 – 1900  
Rules For Teachers 1827

### Section 2. Pine Lake Elementary School

Early Settlers Drawn To Pine Lake  
First Schoolhouse Near Pine Lake - 1828  
Second Pine Lake School 1855 – 1948  
Pine Lake 1958 – 2011 Close  
Pine Lake Sabbath School

### Section 3. Scotch Elementary School

First Scotch 1829 – 1853  
Second Scotch School 1853 c. - 1926  
Third Scotch School 1926 – 1950s

### Section 4. Walnut Lake Elementary Schoolhouse

Residents Wanted Their Own School 1872  
New and Larger 1936 – Close

### Section 5. Green Elementary School

Green Family Influences A Community 1866 – 1900  
Green School: Lessons To Learn  
School Days at Green 1900s  
A New Green School 1948

### Section 6. Early Years: Other Schools -1800 – 1900s

Children Could Attend Many Schools  
Hosner School  
Pennell School  
Ward Eagle School  
German Stone School  
Levi Green School

### Section 7. Daniel Whitfield Elementary School

Fractional District 6 Established 1851  
Daniel Whitfield School 1852 – 1894  
Daniel Whitfield School 1894 – 1927  
Was There A Hammond School?  
Daniel Whitfield School 1927 – 1991 Close  
Fond Memories From Principals  
Mary and Her Little Lamb Painting – Roy Gamble

### Section 8. The Keego Harbor School

Little Community Needs School 1914 – 1920s  
Post-8<sup>th</sup> Grade Education  
What Every Good Teacher Must Know 1912

### Section 9. DUR Brings Changes

### Section 10. Farming In West Bloomfield

# Green Elementary School

## Green Family Influences Education 1866 – 1900



Green School 1920

It was the very beginning of agricultural prominence in West Bloomfield when, in October 1824, one of the first settlers, William Annett, received a deed from the Government for 320 acres @ \$2.50 per acre. It was the east half of section 22, near Walnut Lake Road and Orchard Lake Road, signed by President James Monroe. Mr. Annett was one of only five families living in this area that did not become a township until 1833.

William Annett married Sarah Capen of Franklin in 1826. She died just five years later when their only surviving child, Mary Jane, was three years old. Mary Jane lived with relatives in Franklin until she was 13 years old when her help was needed back at the farm. She did her fair share of work around the log cabin until her father's death in July 1850. Her only company during the day while her father was working the farm were wild animals and Indians still living in the area at the time. The closest neighbor was five miles away.

Mary met her future husband, Hartwell Green, while visiting a cousin in Corunna, Michigan. They were married in 1852 and moved to her farm in West Bloomfield. They had four children: Ada, Will, Myrta and Albro. They were all born in the same log house where their mother was born, built by William Annett. Mary deeded the farm to Hartwell Green in 1860. The same year, they built a new house down at the curve on Green Road.

The Greens soon realized a school was needed for their children and others in the area. In 1866, Mr. Green donated a portion of his land on Green Road and Savoie Trail for a one-room schoolhouse, complete with a bell. The classroom measured 20' by 34.' One teacher taught all eight grades. The students ranged in age from five to eighteen years old.

***“Boarding round’ was a hardship on teachers but the custom obtained in the Greene District as late as 1888. The teacher had the fires to build and frequently the wood to furnish and cut, all for \$12.00 - \$15.00 a month, which was raised by the rate bill prior to 1850. Children were assessed pro rata on the number of day’s attendance at school. So many of the boys had to work in the fall and in the spring that school was kept only three months in the year.***

*Source: Michigan Trailmakers, H. Severance, pub. 1930*

Each week one student, almost always a male, was designated “fireman,” and his job was to stoke the wood stove. In 1883, records show that school district voters agreed to purchase ten cords of wood at \$1.50 a cord. Six parents supplied the school, over the period of 1865-1892, with an average 10.5 cords per year. There were about 200 homes and buildings in West Bloomfield at this time and it has been estimated they were reducing the township forests by about 5 acres per year. By 1900, the “fireman” was shoveling coal instead.

Some of the rules established in 1864 by the District Board were:

- ☒ Room temperature never above 65° F
- ☒ Windows opened for ventilation should be lowered from the (to keep sick air out and rambunctious students in)
- ☒ Teachers shall counsel students to such sports as may be healthful and innocent
- ☒ Any child whose clothes need cleaning shall be sent home for proper repairs
- ☒ Always be busy about your duties
- ☒ Regard the schoolroom as sacred to study at all times
- ☒ Students should never wear hats or caps in the schoolroom
- ☒ Be careful to keep feet quiet while studying, or if it be necessary to move them, to do it without noise

Detailed records were kept about the students and their progress at the school:

*“Being a farm community subjected to spring planting and the ever-present ague sickness, school attendance depended on the seasons. During the 1878 Green School winter season with J.F. Goodrich, an itinerant male teacher earning \$112 for 18 weeks, the average student’s age was 12.1 years old. In the following spring session, Marie Cole, a neighbor girl, was hired at the same \$1182 for 18 weeks to teach students averaging three years younger at 9.4 years old. A plot of 1878 winter attendance verses age shows that age had little effect on attendance that year. However, the same plot of data for 1880 total year shows that no one over 14 attended, and that there was a significant difference between 6 year olds*

*averaging 150 days attendance and 14 year olds averaging 50 days or almost two months less schooling.”*

*Source: Record of Proceedings of School District 6 Meetings, 1878*

*This 150 pound bell was purchased for \$15 in 1878 and was used to call children to Green School. It was donated to the Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society's museum by Gertrude and Fred Prince. It was mounted on a moveable platform by an Eagle Scout in 2009. Visitors to the museum are encouraged to ring the Green School bell.*



Green School classes, 1925 and 1939

### GREEN SCHOOL LESSONS TO LEARN

- ☒ When we are alone we have our thoughts to watch, and when in company, our tongues to watch, when in families we have our tempers to watch.
- ☒ Love all, trust none, do wrong to no one.
- ☒ Tis more brave to live than to die.
- ☒ Bad habits gather by unseen degrees.
- ☒ Life is never too short but what there is always time for courtesy.
- ☒ Attempt the end and never stand in doubt.



- ☒ Nothing is so hard but search will find it out.
- ☒ Books are the best things, well used.  
Abused, among the worst.
- ☒ Salt your food with good humor, season it with wit, and sprinkle it all over with the charm of fellowship.
- ☒ Friends, like books, should be few and well chosen.
- ☒ Dare to be true: nothing can need a lie.
- ☒ Bad men excuse their faults, good men correct them.
- ☒ The greatest of faults is to be conscious of none.
- ☒ The man who minds his own business, will always have business to mind.
- ☒ Habit is deepest law of nature. We first make our habits, and then our habits make us. The chains of habit are generally too small to be felt, until they are too strong to be broken.

## School Days at Green 1900-1948

Green School was a wood frame structure, painted white. On the front of the building were two entryways, one for the boys and one for the girls, though there was no hard and fast rule about which you could enter. This is where all of the children's coats and galoshes were held. On top of the school there was a bell purchased from Geneva, New York. It was one of three bells the school had. One of those bells was destroyed when someone turned it upside down and filled it with water. The water froze and cracked the bell. How it ever came to be on the ground is a mystery.



*Green School 1940 c.*

The one-room Green School continued to serve the educational needs of District #6 for many years. Until the 1940s much of the area was still farmland.

Children walked to school. There were no school buses in those days. Those east of Orchard Lake road would cut through the Green's apple orchard but were told by their parents to never pick apples off the trees. And they didn't.

One thing that never changed over the years was saluting the American Flag and repeating the Pledge of Allegiance.

***“Every morning we put the flag up the pole on the top front of the school, and took it down at close of school. We were very careful that it didn't touch the ground. We were taught to be respectful in such matters. I recall Miss Leet playing the phonograph and the music was “The Stars and Stripes Forever”. She taught us how to march to that music. That instilled something good in young children.”***

*Source: West Bloomfield Memories 1916 – 1936, by Joyce Young Matteson*

Mary (Doherty) Noel who attended Green School in the early 40's wrote:

***“Every day we raised the flag on the pole out front, reciting the pledge and singing “God Bless America” or “My ‘Tis of Thee.” We said the Lord’s Prayer too, with the Catholics dropping off to let the Protestants use “their” ending.***

Both recalled recess time. There were two 15-minute recesses and one hour for lunch. They played ball, pom-pom pull away, jumped rope, played Fox and Geese in the snow, slid down Green road on sleds brought from home, or skated on a nearby pond. On rainy days they played in the big old shed which in earlier times was where people tied up their horses while visiting the school or going to church services or meetings held there. It was also shelter for the wood and coal for the stove that kept the schoolroom warm.

***“At recess we all played together. You couldn’t have a baseball game without the first-graders; there weren’t enough children. A ball over the fence was an out in our game, but we still had to climb over the stile to look for the ball among the cow flops after a good hit.”***

*Source: Mary (Doherty) Noel*

Some features of the one-room Green School Classes took turns at the recitation bench in the front of the room and behind it there were five rows of desks. The first row was for the first graders and the desks were small. The next row was a little larger and had more desks than the first row. The very last row had the largest desks where the eighth graders sat.

The original Green School had its own heating system; a round furnace type stove in the back corner of the room. In the early days local wood, supplied by the students families, was used for fuel. Later, coal would be used. The teacher would put coal in the stove from a coal scuttle the older boys kept filled. The coal was brought in from the shed where there was a special enclosure for it.

In its early days, the bathroom at Green School was an out-house. The girls' out-house was on one side of the shed and the boys on the other. The children had to get permission to use it. They would raise one hand and show two fingers. In the winter the children had to put on winter coats and hats or snowsuits just to go to the bathroom. There was a well with a pump not far from the shed, where the drinking water came from. A pail sat in the entryway of the school with a dipper for drinking. There was a pan with soap for washing hands. In later years, the one-room Green School had indoor toilets and running water.

included a raised platform in the front of the room where the teacher’s desk sat. There was also a cupboard in the front where the encyclopedias were kept. Glass-fronted bookcases lined the sides of the room. The alphabet ran across the front wall close to the ceiling. The letters were white with a black background. Also there were maps that could be rolled up and down to be shown to the students who were taking geography.

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## New Green School 1948

Population had outgrown the original Green schoolhouse by 1948. A new four-classroom building was constructed of fire proof cinder block and steel at the present site on Walnut Lake Road. It was equipped with an oil furnace that supplied radiant heat. The new building had two 28 x 30 foot classrooms for the six grades. Two smaller rooms were used for shop and domestic science. The new school had a capacity of seventy students, grades K through 6, and was now one of two elementary schools in the area. The building is still in use today. Just west of the present Green (Sheiko) School, it is known as "Little Green" and housed the West Bloomfield School District Media Center until 2011. It is now the home of the Civic Center TV Channel 15 - public access programing.

A school bus covered a four square mile area twice a day to bring 50 children to and from the new school. A music teacher, A.H. Stecker, visited the

school once a week to teach music appreciation, singing and rhythm band. This new modern building was a far cry from the old one-room Green School.

Florescent lighting and germicidal health lamps lit the classrooms in addition to the natural light from large windows on the south side of the building. New green "blackboards" and walls eliminated eyestrain and glare.



*Green School on left and Howard Green home on the right, 1940 c.*



The Young girls at the second Green School. Source: Joyce Young Matheson Collection.