



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 6: Early Years: Other Schools 1800 – 1900s

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 School 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 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?  
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

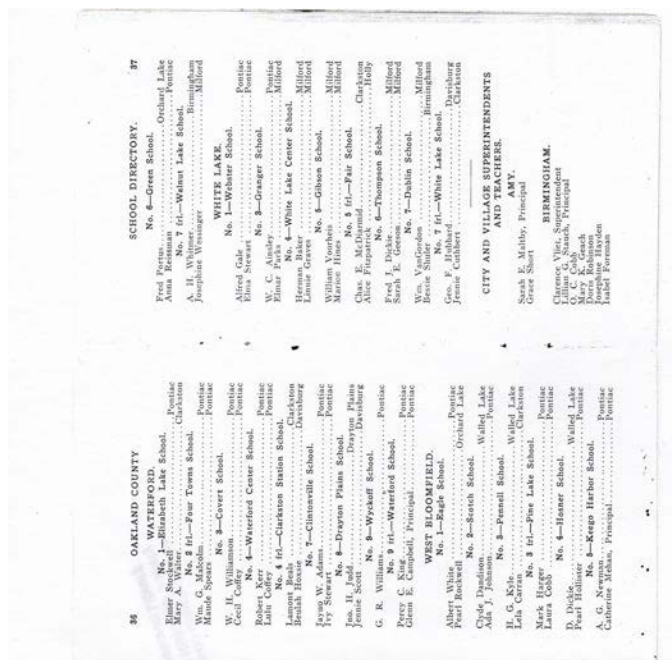
### Section 10. Farming In West Bloomfield

# Early Years: Others Schools 1800 – 1900s

*Oakland County School Directory lists seven schools in the West Bloomfield District in 1916.*

Other schools located outside of the township proper where students could attend included:

- Wing Lake (1824)
  - Franklin (1828)
  - Hoyte (1834)
  - University of Michigan – Pontiac (1837)
  - Pontiac Schools: Baxter, Whittier and Jefferson (1837)
  - Birmingham Old Red Schoolhouse (1837)
  - German Stone School (1837)
  - Walled Lake Stonecrest (1837)
  - Malcolm (1837)
  - Commerce (1837)
  - Green (Levi) (1837)
  - McGill (1837)
  - Dublin (1837)
  - Four Towns (1840)
  - Walled Lake (1895)
  - University of Michigan (1841)
  - Pontiac Central High School (1872)
- Source: GWBHS school history flyer



## Hosner School

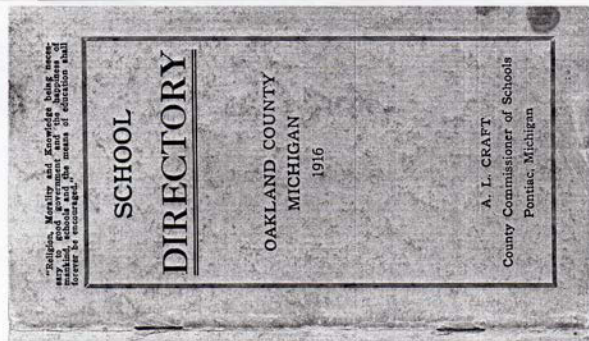
It was located at Farmington and 14 Mile roads, on the Almon Hosner property. Several Hosner family members are listed in the West Bloomfield 1850 Census. Almon died in 1925.

Small schools such as Hosner served not only as the main educational setting, but also as the center of social activity for the community. Here's an example of some community rivalry, all in fun:

**“The District Schools made a specialty of spelling. The Hosner School, three miles north and east of the Greene School, confident that their spellers were superior to those spellers in the Greene School, challenged them. The Greene School accepted the challenge and drilled every day for the event. The schools met at the Hosner School on a frosty moonlight night in January. Both districts were well represented. It was an event similar in interest to our football games and was a real social event. On the Hosner side were the Forbushes, Andrews, Bachelors and Hosners. On the Greene side were the Murrays, Stilsons, Phelps and Severances. The line of spellers extended around two sides and one end of the room. The teacher of the Hosner School**

## Children Could Attend Many Schools

There were a number of short-lived schoolhouses within the township or located near its borders. Often named after local families who built them, these schools had relatively short histories or were assimilated into other school districts:



presided and pronounced the words. Easy words first, then he launched into polysyllables: *separate, transmigrate, government, Presbyterian*. Very soon, only six on a side were left standing, then came: *subsidiary, unnecessary, heterogeneous*, and Charles (L. Severance) was standing alone, having won for Greene School. Among the Hosner girls who came forward to congratulate him was a striking, black-haired girl with bright sparkling eyes. She made a strong impression on Charles." Note: Charles later married the girl." -

*Source: Michigan Trailmakers by Henry Ormal Severance, pub. 1930. Note: the author spells the school "Greene" and it is not known if he means the Hartwell Green School or the Levi Green School, in Farmington.*

In 1919 Hosner School accepted children from Pennell School since there were not enough children in that district to keep it open. The children were transported by horse and buggy to the Hosner School for one year. In 1954 - 55, Hosner enrollment was 31 children, with just one teacher to handle grades one through eight.

The minutes of the regular meeting of the Board of Education, December, 1956 read:

*"Mrs. Harris, 5950 W. Maple, would be willing to give us \$500 for the Hosner School. She would move the building and use it for a chicken house."*

## **Pennell School**

It was located in Fractional District No. 3, east side of Halstead, ¼ mile north of Maple Road.

Bell Dodge Green (Mrs. Albo) writes in "Addition to School History District No. 3" 1929:

**"The original land was loaned by Mr. Williams Johnson from the 40 acres he had taken from the government in 1833. The first school was built probably about 1838 . . . regulation style of the early pioneer days with a fireplace for heating, etc. As was customary in those days the wood was furnished by the different families according to the number of children they sent to school. The seats were crudely made from slabs of logs and placed between the windows, the children were seated facing the walls, backs to the**

**schoolroom with no opportunity of looking outside. When a benchful was called upon to recite, the right-about face movement must have been a interesting bit of school gymnastics.**

**"Sometimes late, probably in the (18) 50's the log schoolhouse was replaced by a frame building on the same ground, but the land was never owned by the District until 1895, when the land was purchased from Mr. Carey for the school district. In 1922, District No. 3 consolidated with the Walled Lake Schools and in 1924, the old schoolhouse and grounds were sold to a Mr. Smith, formerly of Detroit, at the present time of Walled Lake, and has never been used for school purposes again.**

**"The frame schoolhouse was furnished with a long box stove, one the the pupils stated that his father cut the poles for wood, then handed the axes to his son for them to cut the desired length to fit the stove, and instructed them to "go to it."**

**"This building was furnished with long plank benches, desks before them, seating from four to six pupils on one bench, facing the front of the room and the teacher's desk. Mr. McCarroll gave the history of this period thinking it the greatest ever. (Here, Mrs. Green refers to remembrances of Mr. John McCarroll about Pennell School, 1929) Could it have been more so than the latter part of the 70's and 80's? When the next generation attended school, sitting on those old inherited benches, desks hand carved and notched by the pocket knives of the pupils of the previous generation, however the last generation that attended the school had the more modern equipment."**



*Pennell School Picnic, Halsted Road, May 1922*

and it was named in his honor.

In their book, 'Our History & Remembrances of Pleasant Lake" pub. 1997, Gina and Robert Gregory write:

**“From Pennell School reports we see that fourteen students, ranging from ages six through fifteen attended the fall semester of 1911. Sixteen students were enrolled in the semester ending in July, 1914 . . . Teacher Mary G. Dickie taught 180 days over nine months and was paid \$495. Eight grades were taught. There were 144 volumes in the library. The school had globes and maps. Two students graduated. Three (school board) officers were Frank Dickie, director; Frank Pennell, moderator; and George W. Long, Treasurer.”**

Mrs. Green continues on to say that by the 1920s the school *“was named “Pennell Academy” and offered a strict education of the era: children were taught the Palmer Method of handwriting while the older students studied physiology.*

*“The school population dropped in 1919, but picked up in 1920, when Miss Crumb was hired as teacher. The teachers often boarded with families who had children in attendance, as did Miss Theda Pittenger from the Wixom-Milford area, who replaced Miss Crumb in 1921. She roomed with the Long family, who had children in attendance.”*

Pennell lasted until 1922 when the Walled Lake Consolidated School District was formed and assimilated the school. By 2003, Walled Lake Schools would have the largest enrollment in Oakland County and included students coming from Farmington Hills, Novi, Commerce, West Bloomfield, Orchard Lake, Walled Lake, Wixom, White Lake

## Ward Eagle

It was located on 14 Mile Road and Middlebelt and was named after Ward Eagle, owner of the surrounding property and leader of the Michigan Milk Producers Association. He also served as Justice of the Peace and was a member of the Farmington Township Board, including as Supervisor. A teacher and farmer, he never married. He acquired the land where the school sat in 1902



*Eagle School students 1918*

## German School

It was located on Middlebelt Road in Farmington and is now a part of the Hillel Day School. Still standing today at 32200 Middlebelt Road, the stone-constructed German School also served students from the east side of our township. The farmer that owned the property (whose home was in West Bloomfield) was a descendent of the John German family.



*German Stone School 2013*

## Levi Green School

This school was named after Levi Green, a Revolutionary War Hero and was located in Fractional District 4. Students came from West Bloomfield, Farmington, Novi and Commerce townships. This building stands today.

**“Levi Green was a relative of the Greene Family Farm which existed on either side of 14 mile Road, just west of Halstead. The schoolhouse is still there today. It's the little home on the south**

side of 14 Mile, at the bottom of the hill next to the guardrail. It was the schoolhouse for Fractional School District No. 2. It was built and maintained by Commerce Township. In the 1940's there was a request by the townships of Farmington, West Bloomfield and Novi to re-establish separate districts. However, since Commerce Township paid to have the schoolhouse built and maintained, they refused to give in. That's why students living in the northeast corner of Farmington Hills, the southwest of corner of West Bloomfield, the northeast corner of Novi and the southwest corner of Commerce all go to Walled Lake Schools.”

*Source: Brian Golden, Farmington Historian*

### *The Little Old Schoolhouse on the Hill*

*“When we pause and roll backward the leaves of the book of years and look back to the more rugged days when we met in the little schoolhouses from which went forth boys and girls who developed into men and women of staunch and forceful character. Many passed on to the higher education, scattered all over this broad land and in foreign countries filling nearly every position in life. Perhaps here was developed the talent that gave the students their line up for their future work. So if today is yesterday's pupil, we may justly pay tribute to our beloved Alma Mater: The influence that lived with us, and for us, in the little old school house on the hill.”*

*Source: Bell Dodge Green, 1929, speaking about the Pennell Academy*