



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 7, Daniel Whitfield 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 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 Stone School  
Levi Green School

### Section 7. Daniel Whitfield Elementary School

Fractional District 6 Established 1851  
Whitfield School 1852 – 1894  
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

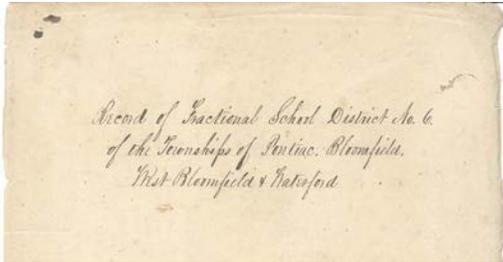
# Daniel Whitfield School

Orchard Lake Road Sylvan Lake, Michigan

## Fractional District 6 Established 1851

Daniel Whitfield School was Fractional School District No. 6 from 1852 to 1947. The school area consisted of the Townships of Pontiac, Bloomfield, West Bloomfield and Waterford. In 1947 a vote was taken to include Daniel Whitfield School with Pontiac Public Schools.

Taxpayers were informed of the formation of a fractional school district:



*the house of Henry Windiate in said district on Monday the 15<sup>th</sup> day of December A. D. 1851, at 6 o'clock P.M. and you are hereby instructed, in pursuance of the law relating to primary schools, to notify every qualified voter of said district, either personally or by leaving a written notice at his place of residence, of the time and place of said meeting for the election of officers and the transaction of such other business as may be necessary. Dated at Pontiac this 1<sup>st</sup>. day of December 1851.*

*E. H. Whitney*

*Clerk of the boards of school inspectors*

*I do hereby certify that I notified all the qualified voters of the within named district on or before the 8<sup>th</sup> day of December 1851.*

*Hiram H. Hunter*

*Filed & Recorded December 18<sup>th</sup> A. D. 1851*

*A. G. Smith Director"*

### Transcription of Notice to Taxable Inhabitant:

*"Sir you are hereby notified that the school inspectors of the townships of Waterford, West Bloomfield, Bloomfield and Pontiac have formed a fractional school district in said townships, numbered and bounded as follows: Numbered "Six", Bounded as follows, containing the following described lands, "to wit," The whole of section 31 of Pontiac. The whole of section 6.*

*Ah1/4, and W 1/2, of LW1/6, of section 5, of the town of Bloomfield. The whole section one, and the E 1/2 of 4E 1/6, of section 2. Of West Bloomfield and the LE1/6 of section 36 of Waterford.*

*"The first meeting of said district will be held at*

**Daniel Whitfield School  
1852 – 1894**



original Daniel Whitfield School  
at Orchard Lake and Ward Roads

*Daniel Whitfield School 1852-1894*

### **Daniel Whitfield School History:**

Mrs. Hazel Seeley (C. E.) DeMond, granddaughter of Daniel Whitfield wrote the history of the three Daniel Whitfield Schools about 1929. The histories were placed in the cornerstone and discovered when the building was razed in 2003.

*“On the first day of December 1851 at 6 o’clock P.M. the first meeting of the qualified voters of Fractional District #6 was held at the home of Henry Windiate.*

*“James J. Hunter was called to the chair and Hiram H. Hunter chosen secretary. The following officers were elected for the ensuing year “to wit”*  
*James J. Hunter     Moderator*  
*A. G. Smith         Director*  
*Daniel Whitfield    Assessor*

*“It was moved and carried that a schoolhouse be built in said district. That said schoolhouse should be a frame building 24 by 30 feet in dimension, the cost of which was not to exceed \$300.00.*

*“The schoolhouse was planned for a parcel of land leased from Daniel Whitfield and comprising one-half acre. This building was a one-room, one-door school painted two coats of white lead on the exterior and one coat of drab inside.*

*“The opening day of school was May 22, 1852. The first teacher was Samuel Rod. He was hired*

*for a term of four months for the sum of \$18 per month. This month consisted of twenty-four days, the teacher being allowed his choice of teaching every Saturday forenoon or every other Saturday.*

*“At the annual school meeting September 1, 1894, it was voted to build a new school on the old site, and after serving for forty-two years the old building was sold to Charles Hotchkiss for \$13.00. The new building committee consisted of John B. Whitfield, Sherman J. Brodie and A. Hammond.”*

*Source: Mrs. Hazel Seeley (C. E.) DeMond, granddaughter of Daniel Whitfield*

**Daniel Whitfield School  
1894 – 1927**

*“At the annual school meeting September 1, 1894, it was voted to build a new school on the old site, and after serving for forty-two years the old building was sold to Charles Hotchkiss for \$13.00. The new building committee consisted of John B. Whitfield, Sherman J. Brodie and A. Hammond. The building was a very modern structure at that time. It was a large one-room frame building on a cement foundation. Two large entries or coatrooms were on either side in the front of the building and each had a large front porch and small rear porches. None of the equipment of the old building was brought into the new with the exception of the bell, which was the pride of the whole community. For the time the school was the most modern and best equipped of its kind in the state. Two large bookcases, an oak desk, globes, maps, charts and a new organ that was the pride of all, were purchased. The first teacher in the new building was Miss Edith Bradon whose contract read for a ten months school at \$20.00 per month.*

*“The school enrollment had outgrown the original old building and quarters were again too small. In the spring of 1916 we again found our schoolroom too crowded. The building was stuccoed and an addition of one room added at the rear.*

*“The next was the addition of two temporary buildings that cared for our needs until 1926 when a bond issue was floated to cover the cost of erecting the \$75,000.00 brick structure of which we are all so proud.”*

*Source: Mrs. Hazel Seeley (C. E.) DeMond, granddaughter of Daniel Whitfield*

## **Was there a Hammond School?**

Wilma Webb refers to a Hammond School in her memoir, but we can find no other verification of Whitfield being called any other name: **“When we moved to the Cass Lake area, there were no schools there. The nearest school was the Hammond School, located on Orchard Lake Road, where the main part of Daniel Whitfield School now stands. It was a wooden-sided, one-room building, painted yellow, and very dingy inside. I started school there, in 1912, in the first grade. All of the children from the Sylvan Lake, Cass Lake, and Dollar Lake area went there. A week or two after school started that year, a diphtheria epidemic broke out, and the school was closed indefinitely.”**

*Source: "This I Remember" by Wilma Webb, written 1986 circa*

**Whitfield School  
1927 – 1991 Close**



In 1926 a bond issue was floated for \$75,000 for the erection of seven classrooms, an office, and a clinic. Charles A. Fisher designed this one floor, brick building.

On October 16, 1929, the corner stone was laid for a brick addition consisting of a library, music room, auditorium-gymnasium, with a dining room on the basement level.

Addition of a high school was frequently discussed but all authorities agreed that it would be exorbitantly high for this small community to attempt to provide a building and a course of study comparable with those providing high school opportunities to the majority of the youth in our metropolitan area.

With the increase of population in this area in recent years, coupled with tax limitations, it became difficult for many large schools to accommodate the number of tuition students from small outlying districts seeking high school opportunities. The natural result was that these districts that had been taxing themselves for the support of their overcrowded high schools began closing their doors to non-resident students. At this same time the State Department of Public Instruction, in an effort to bring about more nearly equal educational opportunities for all the children of Michigan, began to campaign actively for the elimination of all school districts not providing high school training. To make certain that our boys and girls would have the opportunity to attend high school, it became imperative that we unite with some other area in providing that activity. Throughout the winter of 1945-46 and the following spring, a thorough investigation of the possibility of consolidation with several of our neighboring school units was made. Considerable interest developed on the part of several districts, but further action along this course

was stopped by a negative vote in one of the adjoining areas.

When the Board of Education of the School District of the City of Pontiac expressed a willingness to accept us as a part of their district in the spring of 1947, it was decided to present the question to our voters. At the election on April 24, 1947, the vote was:

Favoring annexation to the School District of the City of Pontiac	209
Opposed	113

In line with this vote the Board of Education brought the affairs of District 6 Fr., Bloomfield Township to a close on June 30 and the territory formerly lying in that district has been a part of the School District of the City of Pontiac since July 1, 1947.

Until its annexation to Pontiac, Whitfield School consisted of Kindergarten through eighth grade. Mr. Glen Husted, who had served as Superintendent from 1927 – 1947, continued as Principal until August 1948.

In September Miss Margaret Luther was appointed Principal. At that time the enrollment in Kindergarten through sixth grade was approximately 188. As homes continued to be completed in the Washington Park area between Orchard Lake Avenue and Golf Drive, membership rose to 338 making it necessary in September of 1952 to re-furbish the library into a second grade classroom and the music room for a first grade.

During 1952 the Pontiac Board of Education awarded contracts totaling \$149, 623 for a six-room addition to Whitfield School. Bundy Construction Company won the general contract. Mr. William Zimmerman served as architect. The building was completed in August 1953 and the six classrooms were occupied in September.

With the opening of Sylvan Manor subdivision at Middlebelt and Orchard Lake Roads, enrollment increased rapidly to 417, again making it necessary to equip the small music room for a second grade to be used in the fall of 1954.

Miss Luther continued as principal for 13 years

until 1961 when Mrs. Vida L. Walker was named principal. During the time that Mrs. Walker served as principal, the enrollment grew to 640 students and 21 regular staff members.

A classroom was renovated and fully equipped under the N.D.E.A. (National Defense Education Act) to serve as a science room. A course in conversational French was added to the curriculum and educational television was added while Mrs. Walker was principal. Mrs. Walker remained at Whitfield until 1967, when Mr. William E. Neff was named principal.

*Source: Mrs. C. E. DeMond, granddaughter of Daniel Whitfield*

Daniel Whitfield School was closed in June 1991. The building was raised in 2003. Charles Johnson, demolition contractor found the cornerstone from 1929 during the razing of the building.

#### **Whitfield School Cornerstone:**



#### **Contents of the Cornerstone:**

1. A Bible – From Sylvan Lake Sunday School, Oct. 16, 1929
2. Names of pupils and teachers at Daniel Whitfield School, Oct. 16, 1929
3. Pictures of the previous buildings
4. Program of Dedication – August 24, 1928
5. Program of Commencement – June 6, 1929
6. Names of Board Members, Architects, and Contractors
7. History of Daniel Whitfield School, written by Mrs. C. E. DeMond
8. The Pontiac Daily Press, Tues., Oct. 15, 1929, cost two cents  
Scholarship and Attendance Records 1892 – 1910

## **Fond Memories From Whitfield Principals**

The following comments were made at the 2012

#### **Whitfield School Reunion:**

##### **Mr. Glen Husted**

**1928 - 1947 Whitfield Superintendent**

**1947 - 1948 Whitfield Principal**

Daughter, Sharie Husted VanGilder shares:

*“I guess I would have to say that my dad loved teaching, enjoyed making a difference in children's lives and watching them grow with the experiences. Daniel Whitfield school and Sylvan were such intermingled entities that he often thought of them as one. Every day teaching was a different experience and he learned as much as the kids did.*”

*“He enjoyed the lifetime friendships of the students and their families and was pleased to have a continued relationship with many of them long after their school days were over. I think he looked upon his "Whitfield kids" as part of his extended family.*”

*“The Whitfield School gave Dad the flag that had flown over it for years. It flew over our house til it disintegrated!! He got a little weepy that day..”*

##### **Miss Margaret Luther**

**1948-1961 Whitfield School Principal**

In September, 1948, Miss Margaret Luther was appointed principal and the enrollment in Kindergarten through sixth grade was approximately 188. Miss Luther continued as principal for 13 years.

##### **Mrs. Vida L. Walker**

**1961 – 1967 Whitfield School Principal**

Mrs. Vida L. Walker was named principal in 1961 and continued for 13 years. The enrollment grew to 640 students and 21 regular staff members. A classroom was renovated and fully equipped under the N.D.E.A. (National Defense Education Act) to serve as a science room. A course in conversational French added to the curriculum and educational television was added while Mrs. Walker was principal.

##### **1967 – 1976 Mr. William E. Neff, Principal**

*“I became aware of the need for major renovation in the main/oldest building. A new roof, new flooring to 7 classrooms, office and teacher*

*lounge, new tile and paint was completed over Christmas break.*

*“Major changes occurred as a result of court ordered integration of schools to reflect Pontiac's racial makeup. Whitfield was paired with Franklin Elementary and changed from a K-6 "Neighborhood School" to a K-4-5-6 configuration. Franklin changed to a K-1-2-3 format and students in both schools exchanged students for a three-year period.*

*“A second change involved the transfer of teaching staff from both Whitfield and Franklin to accommodate the change in grade configuration.*

*“A third change was the consolidation of Whitfield/Irving principal ships. I now served as principal for two schools for a two-year period. The school district created a "Head Teacher" position in each school to assist with administration/problems. Mr. Donald MacQuarrie and Mr. John Colbert served in that role.*

*“In my thirteen years at Whitfield the students, staff and parents provided me with an excellent work relationship and from those groups came many life long friendships. I left Whitfield for Clarkston Schools for an Assistant Superintendents position, a larger salary, and the opportunity to work where our children attended school.”*

### **Mr. Howard Caldwell**

**1976 – 1980 Whitfield School Principal**

Unfortunately, Mr. Caldwell passed away several years ago and his family has moved from the area.

### **Mr. Jack Colbert**

**1980 – 1985 Whitfield School Principal**

Mr. Colbert taught 6<sup>th</sup> grade at Whitfield in the 1960's. *“You had to practically fight to get to teach at Whitfield. It was a wonderful place to work. “*

As Principal, Mr. Colbert remembers the weekly assemblies with students and the dedicated staff. He had a great office staff: Marie Ciavarella, June Leonard, and Joanne Hubbard. *“Whitfield had the best student body in Pontiac. The parents were very involved in the school.”*

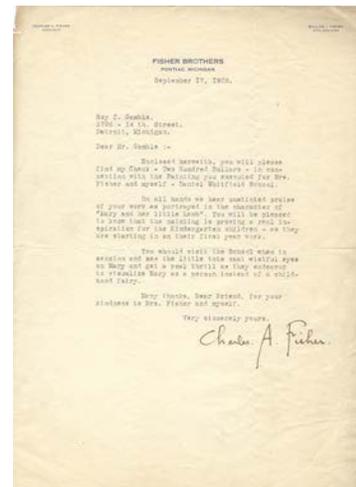
### **Mr. Don Ostrander**

**1985 – 1991 Whitfield School Principal**

*“Children were bussed from around Pontiac during this time. I'm sorry to say that from 1985 – 91 there was little connection between the school and the Sylvan community. As for the “Mary and Her Lamb” mural, “never give up”.*

**Don MacQuarrie - Head Teacher in the 1970's**  
*“The nine and one-half years that I was fortunate enough to teach at Whitfield were full of wonderful memories. The professionalism of the staff, the parent participation which was second to none, the students eager to learn, the sixth grade camping program which provided outdoor learning opportunities, the annual student - staff baseball game, and of course the lunches prepared by Rose in the kitchen to mention a few. It is obvious that the heart of a school is not the building itself, but the learning, the memories and the lasting friendships developed while being a part of the school community.”*

## **Mary and Her Little Lamb Painting by Roy Gamble.**



*Mr. & Mrs. Charles Fisher commissioned Roy Gamble to paint the picture of “Mary and Her Little Lamb” on September 17, 1928.*

The painting hung over the fireplace in the kindergarten room in the center of the school from 1929 to 1991.

*“Mary and Her Little Lamb”  
over the fireplace in the classroom.*



*“Mary and Her Little Lamb” by Roy Gamble  
about 55” square*

*GWBHS President, Jim Laarman removed the  
canvas from the wall.*

The Oakland Press DOUG SALAMAN

**Jim Laarman, a local historical society president, peels a corner of Roy Gamble's printing off a wall**

## Gamble pays off for Mary and little lamb

By TOM MURPHY  
Of The Oakland Press

It took chisels, a 10-pound mallet and a lot of sweat, but a local historian managed to preserve a 63-year-old painting by a prominent Michigan artist.

“Mary and Her Little Lamb,” by Roy Gamble, had graced the wall of a classroom in Whitfield Elementary School in Sylvan Lake since 1928.

When the Pontiac school district announced plans to close Whitfield as part of a cost-cutting plan earlier this year, Carol Samulow, who taught kindergarten in the classroom, called the Greater West Bloomfield Historical Society for help in saving the painting.

Problem was, they couldn't remove the canvas from the wall because an extra-strength adhesive was used to mount it directly to the plaster.

Samulow and West Bloomfield Township artist Heiter Hertling tried two months ago to peel the painting from the wall but barely got past the corners. Even a wallpaper steamer didn't help.

“I called the DIA (Detroit Institute of Arts) and talked to an art restorer, and he said the edges will come off easier because they've been exposed,” Hertling said. “But he said the center would be very difficult.”

It was, until historical society President James Laarman showed up at the school Friday with his tools and a resolve not to leave without the painting.

Laarman was going to cut the plaster from the wall, but he changed his mind when he found that the plaster was several inches thick.

So he resorted to his mallet and chisel and broke away chunks of plaster behind the painting. Slowly, the canvas peeled away from the wall.

It sustained some damage in the process, he Hertling said he will clean the painting and restore it to its original state. He can even touch the lamb's fleece from a dingy brown to wht as snow.

Last week the historical society's board approved spending up to \$30 on the preservation effort.

The painting will, however, remain property of the Pontiac school district until school officials decide what to do with it, said Paul Rothrock, assistant superintendent for operations.

Gamble, who was born in 1867 and grew up in Detroit, studied at the Detroit Fine Arts Academy, then at the Art Students' League in New York and Julian Academy in Paris.

Upon returning to Detroit, Gamble earned commissions for paintings depicting the early history of Detroit. For the next 50 years, Gamble was one of Michigan's premier portrait painters. He was noted for his paintings of children. Gamble died in 1972.

He is believed to have lived in Keego Harbor for a short time and did paintings of several people living there, Laarman said.

*Oakland Press article from 1991*