



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 21st 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 9: DUR Brings Changes

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
Daniel Whitfield School 1852 – 1894
Daniel Whitfield School 1894 – 1927
Was There A Hammond School?
Whitfield School 1927 – 1991 Closing
Fond Memories of Principals
Mary and Her Little Lamb Painting – Roy Gamble

Section 8. The Keego Harbor School

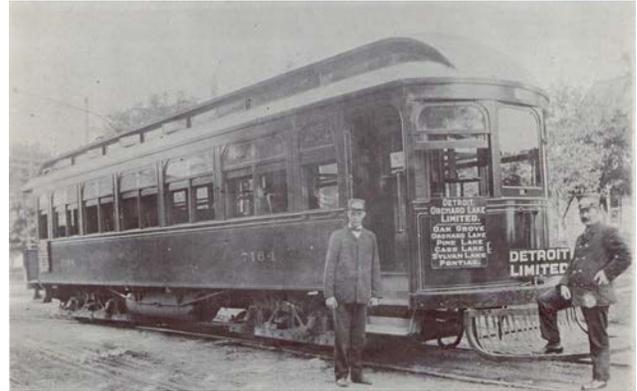
Little Community Needs School 1914 – 1920s
Post-8th Grade Education
What Every Good Teacher Must Know 1912

Section 9. DUR Brings Changes

Section 10. Farming In West Bloomfield

DUR Brings Progress To The Area

The turn of the century brought the DUR (Detroit United Railway), an electric streetcar service that had a profound effect on rural West Bloomfield. It opened the area to an increasing number of "week-enders" from Detroit and Pontiac. The trolley was also used by Pontiac merchants who commuted each day on the car known as the "businessmen's special" and carried up to 49 people. It was noted for its speed, reaching 50 mph along the Woodward corridor. This form of transportation was clean and safe and provided a necessary function at the time.



Soon the auto industry grew and there was no longer a need for public transportation because everyone wanted their own auto. People would rather ride in comfort of their new automobile than ride in a streetcar, thus the interurban and streetcars became obsolete. The last street cars operated in the city of Pontiac in 1931.

“Later, milk in 10-gallon cans was taken to the DUR (Detroit United Railway) station at the corner of Orchard Lake and Maple for delivery to Wilson Dairy in Detroit. The station was named St. Johns, as Maple Road was named, in honor of John Voorheis, John DeConick, John Bettie and John German.



“The DUR line ran from Farmington to Pontiac; from St. John’s it continued along Orchard Lake Road around the east shore of Sylvan Lake to Huron Street.”

Source: Leona Mason Heitch, daughter of William Mason Farm owner.

The 1800s saw a marked increase in summer cottages in the township. By 1903 there had been five major hotels opened but they had all closed by 1915 perhaps due to the lack of year round business.

Besides packages, dairy farmers used the interurban trolleys to get their products to Detroit or other creameries. Because there were no refrigeration cars, milk had to be delivered to the creamery on a daily basis. The interurban freight motorcar would pick up the milk on its way to Detroit.



Top Photo: Summer residents and weekenders enjoyed the area's lakes 1903.

Bottom Photo: Real Estate developers began to market lake property to people seeking full time residency. Source: GWBHS post cards