



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 8: The Keego Harbor School

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

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Territorial Commission of 1805
School Districts – Full and Fractional
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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
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Pine Lake 1958 – 2011 Close
Pine Lake Sabbath School

Section 3. Scotch Elementary School

First Scotch School 1829 – 1853
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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
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A New Green School 1948

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Children Could Attend Many Schools
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Fractional District 6 Established 1851
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Daniel Whitfield School 1894 – 1927
Was There a Hammond School?
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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-8th Grade Education
What Every Good Teacher Must Know 1912

Section 9. DUR Brings Changes

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The Keego Harbor School

A Little Community Needs A School 1914 - 1920s



In the 1800s the area which would later be called Keego Harbor was settled by John Strong (1836), Salistine Martition (1853) Augustus Baldwin (1860), Byron (1860) and Wilbur (1899) Stout, and D.C. Dean (1863). The Stout property was first called “My Lake Farm” and its acreage ran along the north shore of Cass Lake. Byron Stout was a judge and lawyer from Pontiac, so the farm was probably not his year-round residence. Still, other farmers and tradesmen along with their extended families, were the only residents in the area.

In the early 1900s the DUR (Detroit United Railway) interurban trolley and the lure of the beaches brought many people from the cities to enjoy the area's lakes: Cass, Orchard, Sylvan and Pine. By then the farm families began to sell off property and land developers saw the opportunity to sell plats of lakefront and lake access property with the hopes of establishing subdivisions. Originally a resort area with few year round residents in cottages, the community began to settle with permanent homes and year 'round residents. While most of the land in West Bloomfield was still working farms, tradesmen, laborers, merchants and factory workers brought their families to reside in the area. The growing community developed the face of an actual city. Thus, the need for a local school was evident.

Prior to 1912, children living in farms along Middlebelt Road and in Keego Harbor probably attended the Daniel Whitfield School. However, there are no early records of the names of children who attended Whitfield or Scotch.

Byron Gray Stout was a dedicated man and had a long history of service to the community and state. He was a State Representative, State Senator, and US Congressman. He served as President of the Oakland County Bank and was Supervisor and Principal of Pontiac High School in 1853/54. His 160-acre farm along Cass Lake was first called “My Lake Farm” and after acreage was sold off, “Evergreen Farm.” He bequeathed \$8,000 to build the first Library in Pontiac, currently an art center.

Local leaders such as Lloyd Strong – who did attend Whitfield in 1897 as a 7th grade student received the township's approval to start their own school district. A residential home (thought to be owned by the Deleamers or Robinsons located on the former Cherry Street, then called Spruce Street, now South Cass Lake Road, south of Orchard Lake Road) was rented and two teachers were hired, Mrs. Ethel Patterson and Sylvia Rutherford.

Lloyd Strong, Edward Skinner, and George Clark comprised the first school board. By 1913 “Pops” Strong was president of the School Board, with John Hagerman as secretary and Fred Skrine, treasurer. A \$6,000 bond was sent out to construct a new school for the increasing number of children living in the area. The name “Keego Harbor” had already been given to the little town located in what used to be farmland and just a stopover on the way to the lakes. (*See Joseph E. Sawyer biography on the GWBHS website: GWBHS.org*)

In 1913 Pontiac lawyer and real estate developer Joseph E. Sawyer donated the land where the first school was built. It sat on the corner of Orchard Gravel Road (Orchard Lake Road) and Pridham Streets, “around the big curve.” It was named Keego Harbor School and was the third such Standard school built in Oakland County. It reportedly cost \$8,500 to build, contained just two large rooms and two playrooms, and boasted of indoor plumbing. Mrs. Patterson taught grades 5 – 8 and served as principal. Miss Rutherford taught

grades 1 – 4.



Keego Harbor School.

Dedicated September 22nd, 1914, as a Standard School (the third Standard School in Oakland County.)

Keego Harbor School, as seen in real estate literature produced by Joseph Sawyer 1912 c.

“The school housed 68 students under the watchful eye of these two teachers and offered classes up to the 8th grade. Those students wishing to continue their education would have to travel to the city of Pontiac to attend high school. A tuition fee was required. Two such children who graduated from Keego School and went on to graduate from Pontiac High School were Vern Bush and Charles Dix.”

Source: Roosevelt High School Class of 1944 reunion booklet, written in 1994; Roosevelt School Homecoming Souvenir Program, 1999; pamphlet produced by the Roosevelt Wall Committee. 2005.



Students of the Keego Harbor School 1915 c.

The Keego Harbor School was the only educational source for the children living in the immediate area until the early 1920s, when the community saw the

need for a larger more modern educational offering for its children.

Long time Keego Harbor resident, community activist and historian Wilma Webb recalls in her publication, *“This I Remember.”*

“The (Keego Harbor) school opened in September of 1914. Only the two rooms upstairs were used at first. The south room was used for grades one through four, with Miss Rutherford teaching, and the north room was used for grades five through eight, with Miss Patterson as teacher and Principal.

“The new school boasted of inside plumbing, which was unheard of in those days, with drinking fountains both upstairs and down, and eight indoor toilets, four for the girls on the right side, and four for the boys on the left side.

“In the beginning, the two downstairs rooms were used as playrooms during recess and lunch hour, when the weather was bad, but by 1916 or 1917, the Keego Harbor School had become a four-room school, with two grades in each room. The downstairs rooms were for the first four grades and the upstairs rooms for the higher four grades. The district included the north and west shores of Pine Lake and the south and east shore of Orchard Lake.

“By 1920, the school was bursting at the seams and it was decided to build a new school on Cass Lake Road. It was named the Roosevelt. School. I believe they opened the doors in September of 1920, with only one grade per room. During 1920 and 1923 there were only eight grades. In 1922 they added the ninth and each year after, they added another grade. The first (Roosevelt) graduating class was in 1925.

“The old Keego Harbor School was still being used for a grade school when needed.”

"The first step to greatness is to be honest."—Johnson.

PARENTS OR GUARDIANS PLEASE READ

All the class of each individual, this report will be sent to you for inspection. We hope you will give it the most careful attention and if possible you will give it the year encouragement of the child for better work will greatly increase his interest. It is well to confer with the teacher on the marks that are unsatisfactory.


The influence of the home and the school must work toward the same end, that of doing the greatest good for each child. We shall do it our utmost for the present and ask you to frequently visit our school for the present year will be an inspiration and help to both child and teacher.

SIGNATURE OF PARENT
I HAVE EXAMINED THIS MONTH'S REPORT AND AM HELPING THE CHILD REGULAR IN ATTENDANCE

1st Mo. *One M. Whitmore*
2d Mo. _____
3d Mo. _____
4th Mo. _____
5th Mo. *One M. Whitmore*
6th Mo. _____
7th Mo. _____
8th Mo. _____
9th Mo. _____

Certificate of Promotion
THIS CERTIFIES THAT
Bobby Whitmore
has completed the work of the preceding grade and is hereby promoted to the _____
Grade of the Public Schools of the County
Oliver S. Garner Teacher

OAKLAND COUNTY
Public School Report



Name *Bobby Whitmore*
Township *Bluff* District *5*
Grade *1st* Year *1925* to *1926*
Oliver S. Garner Teacher

"Education is a better safeguard of liberty than a standing army."—Everett.

EP Please keep this report neat and clean. I may wish to examine it when I visit your school. When you enter school next term, please present it to your teacher for inspection.

E. J. LINDBLE, Commissioner of Schools.

Printed by Everett, Printer, Birmingham, Ala.

The rapid growth of school-age children in the township forced officials look at the future. Parents wanted more than just an 8th grade education for their children. In 1920 a new and larger school was built in Keego Harbor and was named Roosevelt. It contained six rooms and an office, and grades 9 and 10 were added.

The Keego Harbor School continued to offer an educational setting throughout the years even after the new Roosevelt School opened. It often was used to handle the overflow of students throughout the years. The building was the home of the Cass Lake Women's Club library and was used by the local church for Saturday catechism classes. In the mid 30's the Veterans of Foreign War used the building and regular BINGO games became the favorite of local residents. Remembers Loren Deacon:

"During the Depression BINGO night drew many people to the old Keego School. There were so many gamers that callers had to be used to shout out the drawn numbers playing in all the rooms. The prizes were baskets of food and that was quite a thing in those days to win."

Method of Grading	A - Excellent		B - Good		C - Fair		D - Poor		E - Failure		F - Absent from instruction		G - Incomplete	
	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	13th	14th
Attendance														
Citizenship														
Studies														
Times Tardy	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Days Absent	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Days Present	25	19	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
Citizenship														
Reading	A	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
Orthography														
Spelling	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C
Writing	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
Arithmetic	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
Geography														
Physiology														
Language	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
Grammar														
English														
Agriculture														
History														
Algebra														
Geometry														
Science														
Stories														
Bookkeeping														
Music	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C	C

The schools kept detailed records of health and academic progress for each student.



1920 graduating Class of the Keego School
Back row: Enid Jackson, Lyle Dusenbury, Carl Schincheck, Harold Evans. Middle row: Nellie Dusenbury, Laura Thiery, unknown, Wilma Webb, Harold Sherman, Elizabeth Lane.
Front row: Mildred McGinnis, Grace Armstrong, Teacher Catherine Meehan King, Winona Lewis, Charlotte Claflin Tucker, Letna Link.
Photo courtesy of Wilma Webb

During WWII the building was used as a recreational center and held dances for local youth. The building was sold by the school district to real estate developer Sam Warwick in 1957 but was still used as late as the 1960s by the school district.

"I remember in 1960 when I was a sixth grade student at Roosevelt Elementary School. We all walked up to the old Keego School to use the library. We had to climb up the stairs to get to the library. By that time, it was a very old building - the stairs and rooms were damp and musty smelling. I had no desire to go back there."

Source: Anonymous

Warwick sold the property in 1963 to Shell Oil company and the Keego Harbor School was demolished that same year. Unconfirmed reports say the huge stone walls of the Keego Harbor School were hauled away and used as lakefront property fill in the Shady Beach Subdivision off Old Orchard Trail.

Post 8th Grade Education

Perhaps it was because of the lack of full-time residents, sparse population with predominately agricultural focus, or a lack of an established village or town in West Bloomfield, but children had to seek a post-8th grade education in other towns if they wanted a higher education experience. They had to find their own mode of transportation to the nearest high school, usually in the City of Pontiac or in Birmingham, and had to pay tuition.

“When it came to pass the 8th grade, we had to go into Pontiac for exams . . . that was quite an experience for use. After all, rural young people are somewhat intimidated when they are outside the country area. . . The five of us attended Washington Junior High School in the 9th grade and then went on to Pontiac High School for the 10th, 11th and 12th grades. - Joyce Young Matteson interview, GWBHS

“I remember walking to Pontiac High School (from his home on Greer/Hiller Road) down the muddy roads. One of the teachers lived nearby and drove his car (on Hiller) to get to school. He sometimes would pick me up. Often, he got stuck in the road ruts and I would have to go back to the barn and get the team (of horses) and pull the car out of the mud.” - Walter Oliver interview, GWBHS

Wendell Green went to school at the old Green School. There were 8 students, up to 8th grade and Walled Lake schools had not started yet. After Green, he attended Pontiac High School. He walked 3 ½ miles to Orchard Lake Road and 14 Mile Road to get picked up at the Norris Depot and caught the DUR to Pontiac High School.

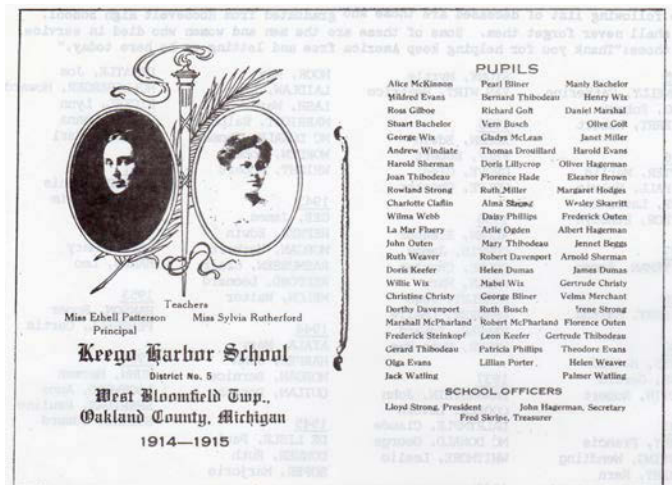
“We had a full car full of kids. There were dedicated teachers there.”

Other students rode in an automobile owned by Howard McCracken. Green School district paid the tuition to Pontiac Schools for 2 years.

“Father then said he had to earn the money for the tuition (1924) so he got a job for \$5 a day at Forest Hill Haven Memorial Park (it failed during the Depression) mowing and trimming the grounds.”

Green graduated from PCH and attended Michigan Agricultural College. He was a successful orchard farmer for many years.

Source: Wendell Green, oral interview, GWBHS



Keego Harbor School program 1914 - 1915

