The Reedsville Graded School

This brick building was begun in 1891 with the west half being built. The east part was built about 1903.

Reedsville Public School

The Reedsville School District has a rich and interesting history, with great support for education through the years. The first grade schools in Reedsville were Lutheran and Catholic grade schools.

The original school district was formed in 1861 by order of John Cannon, town superintendent of schools of the town of Maple Grove. The new school district included areas in Maple Grove and Rockland. It was called Joint District 10 until 1892 when Reedsville became an incorporated village. Then it became Reedsville Jt. 1. In 1931, the areas outside of the Reedsville village withdrew due to above average taxes and formed the new school districts of Rockland 1 and Maple Grove 5. The Reedsville village school was then designated the Reedsville school district.

Evidently, the first school site was leased to the school district for it was not until July 5, 1889, that the land east of Mud Creek was purchased. More land was bought from J. E. Schultz in 1891 and from Herman Boettcher in 1946.

The first public grade school was built in 1877 where the present post office and drug store are housed. It was a frame building, long rectangular with the usual windows on three sides. The only teacher was Goff Morrissey. The school was furnished with the
usual "blackboards", crude seats and desks, benches, water pail, dipper and wood box. The heating plant consisted of a box stove. Boys had to saw and split the firewood.

Goff Morrissey remembered that by 1891, the enrollment was so large that he used to send about 45 of the little primary children home at 2 o'clock so that he could do some work with the upper grades until 4 o'clock daily. For his services, Mr. Morrissey received the sum of $50 monthly.

During the 1880's, the little frame building was constantly overcrowded. Records in the Manitowoc County office show that in 1884, there were 128 pupils enrolled for the year. Enrollments of above 100 were common up to 1890. Because of the overcrowded conditions and because the first school was badly in need of repairs, the voters at the annual meeting in 1890 appointed a committee to look into a new building. They were James Noble, Joseph Dumass, and Louis Falge.

In 1891, a new two-room brick building was erected at the cost of about $4,400. The part built at that time was the west half of the building. About 1903, the east half of this four-room building was built for about $6,000 by Emil and August Berkholz.

After establishment of the high school in 1916, the school was continually being remodeled in order that the increasing enrollments might be properly housed. A room in the attic was fitted up for a classroom while the basement was partitioned off so that indoor lavatories could be installed.

The first annual Commencement of the Reedsville Graded School was held on Thursday evening, June 28, 1900. Eight persons graduated. They were Fred Hagenow, Will Mueller, Fred Ottelien, Lydia Reichert, Alfred Reineman, Olga Saeger, Ida Schasse and Laura Schulz. Population of the village at this time was 555.

After the erection of the brick building, two teachers were employed. The first principal was Goff Morrissey while Clara Salomon was the first primary teacher. They taught the first eight grades. About 1904, ninth and tenth grades were added to the course. The three teachers then employed were Principal O. H. Falge, Zeralda Buerstette, and Winifred Meany. Four teachers for the ten grades were employed by 1906. The eleventh grade was added in 1915 and the 12th grade in 1916. The first high school class graduated in 1918 with B. A. Delaney as principal. In 1948, the faculty consisted of a principal, five high school teachers and one elementary teacher.

There is no record of the enrollment in the first school before 1871, but by that year 78 pupils were enrolled for the summer and winter sessions. By 1894 there were 128 pupils attending but then the enrollment decreased so that by 1890 only 95 pupils were enrolled.

Reedsville must have had an influx of settlers for in 1893 the village clerk's report to the county superintendent listed 145 pupils in school. Thereafter the enrollment fluctuated between 100 and 140 yearly until 1906 when 4 teachers were employed.

The families of Noble Brothers, Zahn, Hagenow, Schultz, Reinemann, Stelling, Rusch, Krueger, Barnard and Novak were early residents of Reedsville. Early school board members from 1871 to 1906 were Fred Buboltz, John Jantz, William Bornefeldt, Hugh Mulholand, Peter Reinemann, Herman Schmidt, William Zahn, Fred Lawrence, Henry Noble, John Hickey, F. Maertz, Joseph Dumass, J. Schultz, Christ Hagenow, Anton Fritsch, Robert Luedtke, Emil Schultz, Louis Falge, and W. C. Otto.

The list of teachers from 1872 to 1906 is as follows: John E. Garry, Jere Lemkuhl, John Martin, Aurelia Lawrence, J. P. Martin, Annie Lawrence, Emma Schneider, Alice Kennedy, G. M. Morrissey, Clara Salamon, Principal M. H. Hewitt, Ida Eberhardt, Principal William O'Hara, Principal M. M. Guhin, Winifred Meany, Principal F. H. Seidl, Principal O. J. Falge, and Zeralda Buerstette.

Former teachers who became prominent were M. J. Gehun, Superintendent of schools in South Dakota, J. E. Meany, a physician in Manitowoc, Frank Seidl, a prominent businessman in St. Paul, Minnesota, O. J. Falge, attorney at Ladysmith, and G. M.
Goggins, County Judge of Calumet County.

High school education for every eighth grade graduate was becoming a common policy after 1935. To make high school education possible, a program of expansion and service was inaugurated by the district after 1943. Bus service was offered to eighth grade graduates living outside the Reedsville area.

By 1953 the district was an integrated common school district operating a school for the education of children from grades 1 through 12. The district served an area of approximately 8 miles square for high school purposes on a tuition basis. At this time many of the surrounding small districts did not operate high schools.

By 1953 the public school children were housed in three units, the first of which was erected in 1877. It was an old building of brick, three stories high, the third story housing the commercial facilities. This area was never meant for classroom purposes and was poorly lighted and ventilated. The hot lunch facilities were in the basement of the building which was cold and damp. Teachers ate in the furnace room right around the furnace.

The first gym was built in 1940 and for years provided adequate housing for physical education, athletics and assembly purposes. It was used by the community for many of its activities. It was built at a cost of $28,000. John Nespor was the janitor for many years and he guarded the beautiful wood floor very carefully.

Agriculture was added to the curriculum in 1946, and after the war many veterans took farm training under a veterans farm training program. Leslie Moede was the veteran farm training teacher. A building unit was added onto the gymnasium and provided a home economics room and agriculture classroom and shop at a cost of $60,000.

The Reedsville basketball team won the State Basketball championship in 1946 by beating Eau Claire by a score of 48-39. The trophy is still in the trophy case along with a picture of the players, and the banner is still in the gymnasium holding a place of honor.

High school enrollment was 87 pupils.

In 1955 it was estimated that the high school facilities could accommodate 140 boys and girls. At that time there were 181 in high school and 41 in elementary school with a probable enrollment in 1955 of 250 students. Only 32 high school students were residents of the district. The rest were tuition students.

An annual budget of $90,000 is voted annually with a tax levy of $25,000. District indebtedness is to the full extent of the law, 5% of the assessed valuation. At this time the approximately 380 electors of the district have shown excellent local effort in the support of education. They have taxed themselves to the limit of the law consistently during the ten years preceding reorganization.

In 1955 reorganization of the school district took place and the area formerly served by tuition became part of the Reedsville District. Many rural schools ceased to operate, but where enrollment warranted, the schools were maintained.

The electors in 1955 voted to build a 4-room addition to the old building because of an influx of high school students. This structure was completed at a cost of $85,000 including equipment.

With the enrollment still increasing, the people of the district saw a need for additional facilities, and again voted for the construction of an addition in 1958. This addition was built and equipped at a cost of $380,000. The valuation of the district jumped from under $1 million to $13,000,000.

Final construction on this site was approved by the electors of the school district in 1962 at a cost of $650,000 completely equipped. The cornerstone ceremony took place on October 13, 1962, with dedication on April 21, 1963. To make space for this building, the old building was demolished along with the 1940 gym and 1947 Agriculture and Home Economics area. Much nostalgia accompanied the razing of these buildings.

Construction at this site took place in three stages, the oldest part of the building
having been completed in 1955. Total cost of the entire high school complex including all equipment is $1,115,000. Valuation of the district in 1962 is $17,700,000.

Football was introduced into the curriculum in 1951, and had been played for many years in the outfield of the village baseball diamond. Track also became a well-accepted sport along with Cross Country. A need for an athletic field became obvious to the residents of the school district, and in 1972, approval was given by the electors for the construction of a standard football field surrounded by an eight lane bituminous tract. The field was subsequently completed in 1973 on a five acre plot of land to the south and east of the village park at an approximate cost of $35,000. The Reedsville Athletic Association assisted with some of the costs and planning. The Reedsville State Bank provided the lighted scoreboard and the American Legion donated the flagpole.

Enrollment was still increasing in the Reedsville District, and all elementary and high school students were crowded into the same building. On February 1, 1975, a new Kindergarten through Sixth elementary school was completed on a 40-acre plot of ground at the south end of the village next to a new subdivision of homes. It was built at a cost of $840,846 and contains 39,707 square feet of teaching space. The building has 17 teaching stations with a capacity of 425 students.

This handsome one-story brick building contains 13 classrooms, an Instructional Materials Center, a multi-purpose room with a seating capacity of 585, boys and girls showers and lockers, a health room, a faculty work room, a special education office and two general offices.

The need for a new school was created by growing elementary enrollments. In 1953 the Reedsville district had 41 elementary school children. This enrollment increased to 95 in 1960 and 193 in 1965. Present enrollment is 400 children. Mrs. Evelyn Moede is principal of the new school. Members of the Board of Education are: William J. Ebert, president; Vernon Marsicek, clerk; Herman Sprang, treasurer; Lester Chorney and Dale Barnard, directors. John E. Worachek has been Superintendent of Schools since August 1952.

Mr. Ronald Zenke is principal of the junior high and high school.

Some interesting high school enrollment figures are as follows:

- 1947 — 87 students
- 1951 — 123 students
- 1954 — 181 students
- 1955 — 214 students
- 1958 — 275 students
- 1960 — 300 students
- 1962 — 320 students
- 1975 — 400 students

The history of the Reedsville School District is rich and varied. Much more could be written about the reorganization, the elementary rural schools which have now been all closed, curriculum development, prominent names of principals and superintendents, and names of school board members who gave much of their lives to make education in Reedsville what it is today. These are some of the events that have influenced the Education System at Reedsville.