

THE ADVANCE OF EDUCATION

Free education for the youth was a novel idea before the state of Wisconsin was admitted to the union in 1848. When it was first proposed in the territorial legislature in the mid-1840s it was turned down, and, while the principle of a free education was incorporated in the state constitution of 1848, a considerable struggle was to follow before elementary students were assured of an education supported by the taxes of all citizens whether they had children or not.

From 1849 to 1862, reading, writing and arithmetic, traditionally taught "to the tune of the hickory stick," was in the hands of the town board on the local level. Town superintendents, who ran for office with other town officials, hired the local teaching staff. That their qualifications were largely political is amply demonstrated by the misspellings and grammatical errors which appear in the certificates issued by the various town superintendents of Portage County. Meanwhile, the Wisconsin Teachers' Association carried on a campaign to eliminate town superintendents and replace them with county superintendents which was realized in 1862.

The first mention of a school district within the limits of modern Portage County appears in the county commissioners sessions dated April 6, 1847 when Mathias Mitchell, James M. Campbell, John Campbell *et al* petitioned for a school district in Town 24, Range 8. The petition was approved for a school district "designated and known as Stevens Point School District Number Two and that the clerk issue notices for an election to be held at the House of A. H. Bancraft in the town of Stevens Point on 17th April. . ."¹ The pur-

¹ *Proceedings, County Commissioners Sessions, Vol. I, p. 96.*

pose of this election is uncertain, but the fact that the Stevens Point district is referred to as "Number Two" suggests that another existed as "Number One" which in fact it did. The Grand Rapids School District No. 1 in Town 22, Range 6, was organized Jan. 6, 1847, the first in greater Portage County.

Early pioneer accounts seemingly agree that Miss Mandana Hale was the first school teacher in Stevens Point, and, as the school district referred to in the above was established in April 1847, it is reasonable to assume that Miss Hale was the teacher, probably during a summer session. As the system of tax-supported schools had not been adopted, this school was supported by private subscription. It was probably located on the east side of 2nd Street north of the Public Square (Frank's Hardware Store).

According to legendary accounts, Phillip D. Bangle was leaving for Belvidere, Illinois, to purchase badly needed supplies, and a number of citizens begged him to engage a school teacher, too. In Belvidere, Bangle approached Miss Hale who agreed not only to teach, but to drive back a wagon load of supplies, probably by oxen team, while Bangle presumably took the lead team. The headstone of Mandana Hale Bliss in Union Cemetery reveals that she died in 1907 at the age of 81 which means that she was about 21 years of age at the time she drove the wagon north. In Stevens Point she met Nathaniel F. Bliss whom she later married. From this union came five sons and four daughters. Geraldine, the eldest (mother of Ray Clark of Stevens Point), was born July 26, 1849 and was probably the first white girl born in Stevens Point.

It was not until Jan. 3, 1850 that the lot for a new school building was acquired for \$10 by the "Stevens Point School House Building Committee of Middletown. . ." From the description, the building was to be located on Clark Street where, in fact, it was built at No. 420 and still stands more than a century later. (In 1958 its preservation was being considered by the Common

¹ *Deeds, Vol. A., p. 460.*

Council.) The was the first tax-supported school in Stevens Point. It was vacated as the district school in 1858 when a two-story building was completed between Water and Elk Streets, popularly known as the "White School." Most of the future citizens of Stevens Point attended school here, and in 1904 the alumnae organized the Old White School Association which was open to all who had attended previous to 1877 as well as those who taught there before that date.

A reunion was held in 1905 when some 100 former pupils and teachers assembled to hear speeches, letters from those unable to attend, and a long poem written by Helen G. Sharman, nee' Wilmot, called "*To My School Friends of '59 and '60.*" At a dinner banquet, Byron Park, acting as toastmaster, declared that, "We are the product of pioneer days. Whatever tendency there is for good, whatever tendency there is for evil, in us and each of us, is the result of the environment and teachings of the old days. Our fathers and mothers came to Stevens Point and to the Wisconsin Valley, and out of the wilderness they hewed a civilization of which we are justly proud. They were a great, brainy, sturdy lot of pioneers, fearless of hardship and ever ready and willing to work and labor that the future might bring assurance of peace and plenty. . ."

One alumnus, John H. La Vaque, was unable to attend but sent a letter which appears in the souvenir booklet of the association. Among other matters touched upon, La Vaque had this to say: "Oh, it (the school house) was a beauty, and it had desks in it too, but we, the scholars, had to furnish our own chairs, for Mr. Maloney (J.C.F.) the first male teacher in 1854, would not allow the trustees to put in benches. . . How well I remember starting out every morning from my home across the slough, and out on the plank road and carrying my chair and carrying it back again after school, for we needed it at home. . ."

A few weeks after School District No. 2 was established in Stevens Point, the county commissioners on May 24, 1847 heard a petition from the citizens of the

town of Plover for a school district and "it was therefore ordered that said township be organized as a School District and designated and known as 'Plover' School District No. 3 — and that the clerk of this (next two words illegible) notices for the election of the (word illegible) officers at the House of Messrs. Mitchell and McDill. . ."

School in Plover may have been conducted in private homes for a time as the next mention of a school in the village does not appear until March 31, 1853 when the County Board agreed to lease one-half an acre of ground for 20 years to "School District No. 1" with "the privilege of building school house thereon." From the description, it appears that this school house was to be located east of the Public Square originally platted by Moses Strong in Plover. The fact that the County Board acted on this matter suggests that this land was county-owned, or part of the Public Square property. No other references are made to school organization by the County Board because after the incorporation of the townships of Plover and Middletown in 1849, these matters were handled on the township and city level.

After most of the townships were organized in the 1850s, school districts and rural schools were established throughout most of the county, usually about two miles apart. How many of these were painted red is uncertain, but after a log house was built for Alban School in the early 1870s it was sided and, according to Henry Anderson, an alumnus, painted red. Most of the school clerk's records on these rural schools have been lost, but a few years ago the original records of the Pipe School in Sec. 1 (NW-SE) of Lanark were discovered in the attic of the house occupied by Ray Pipe. As this is the earliest school record available in the county, it is possible to follow the proceedings of the school board and note the several teachers and their salaries from 1857 to 1867.

When School District No. 1 was organized, the quali-

¹ *Proceedings*, County Commissioners Sessions, Vol. I, p. 101.

² *Proceedings*, Board of Supervisors, Vol. I, p. 206.

fied voters were notified to meet at the house of John G. Severance on Dec. 16, 1856 at five o'clock. This entry in the record book was signed by William W. West, town superintendent of schools, and by H. E. Dudley, district clerk. Severance was also responsible for notifying personally H. E. Dudley, Horace Dewey, Jr., A. Foster, H. Ciperlie and Mikel Clinton of the meeting.

On Dec. 20 it was decided to make this a joint meeting with the citizens of Amherst township and form a joint district, and on Jan. 20, 1857 it was voted to build a school 18 by 24 feet, to have a three-month school in the summer, to raise \$130 for the building and \$15 for the teacher. Adaline Severance became the first teacher but apparently managed to get a little more money as her contract was made out for \$2 a week commencing May 25. Her pupils were five girls and four boys.

In 1858 Charles Hewitt became town superintendent of schools for Lanark and Miss Eliza Ann Jeffers applied for the teaching job at Joint District No. 1. Hewitt certified that he had examined her qualifications "and do *believe* that she is qualified in regard to *morul chraracter*, learning and ability to teach a common school in this town for one year from the date hereof." Miss Jeffers agreed to teach for \$1.50 a week for four months. She was followed by an Amherst girl, Miss Azuba A. Webster, in 1859, who agreed to teach four months at \$6.25 a month beginning May 16. She taught 18 children which means that in two years the enrollment had doubled.

In the annual report signed Aug. 13, 1859 it is revealed that the school was using Sanders' *Spelling Book*, McGuffrey's *Reader*, and Thompson's *Arithmetic Series* and Davis' *Arithmetic Series*.

It was not until a school meeting held on Sept. 26, 1859 that the district "voted the teacher board among the scholars" which means that the teacher was to spend some time with each family during the four months of the school term to equalize the cost of supporting her. Her pay was to be \$15. This suggests that no teacher was willing to come for the same arrangements as in

1858. Almira Childs accepted this offer for the summer term of 1860. At the annual meeting held Sept. 24, 1860 it was agreed to have two months of winter school and three months of summer school and to raise \$25 for the teacher's wages and \$25 to repair the school house and other purposes. Miss Cordelia Thayer taught the winter term which began on December 27. For textbooks she was using a Sanders' *Reader*, a Sanders' *Speller*, Thompson's *Mental and Practical Arithmetic*, Cornell's *Geography* and Clark's *Grammer*. The school had one blackboard.

At the annual meeting on Sept. 23, 1861 the teacher's salary was raised to \$20 although it was voted to have six months of school, three in the summer, three in the winter. In addition, each pupil was to provide half a cord of wood and "every man that does not get his wood shall pay the money to J. G. Severance 50 cents per cord."

In 1862 the teacher was not examined by the town superintendent of schools, but by a county superintendent of schools who in this case was George W. Hulce, the first to serve in this capacity.

Wages skyrocketed during the Civil War and at the annual meeting held Sept. 28, 1863 it was voted to pay the teacher, for six months of school, the sum of \$56. In Item No. 10, voted on at this meeting, it was also decided "to *bild* a back house 4 by 8 ft" for \$6. William H. Ciperlie, treasurer of the school district, got the nod to build it.

The first indication that a teaching certificate was required is given on April 16, 1863 when Superintendent of Schools Hulce certified that Almada M. Bostwick had passed a satisfactory examination upon all points required by law for a third grade certificate and was licensed to teach in the towns of Belmont, Sharon, Lanark, Amherst and New Hope for one year unless the certificate was sooner annulled. She was graded in the several branches upon a scale of ten in the following manner: orthography 6, reading 7, mental arithmetic 8, written arithmetic 6, primary grammar 5, and geography 9.

The first male teacher, Nils J. Swan, was hired for 1864-65 at \$12 a month to teach six months.

At the annual meeting held on Sept. 26, 1864 it was decided that each pupil should bring a quarter of a cord of wood instead of half a cord to keep the stove going.

At the annual meeting held Sept. 25, 1865 the teacher's wages were raised to \$75 for six months of school, three in winter, three in summer. In the report of this meeting, one line states: "Move schoolhouse a tie no vote," which indicates that an effort was made to win support for the removal of the schoolhouse to another area but failed on a tie vote.

The next teacher was Miss Martha King of the town of Belmont who was hired at \$17 a month for the three winter months beginning November 1865. She was followed in 1866, for the summer term, by Miss Lucy Childs who agreed to teach for \$14 a month, probably the difference between the comforts of teaching in summer as compared to winter when the teacher was expected to build her own fires. Apparently the stove burned more than expected, for in a report dated Sept. 24 (presumably for 1866) it was resolved that "each *schollar* to bring $1\frac{1}{2}$ cord of wood before school commences." At this meeting it was also resolved to raise the sum of \$155 for teacher's wages. Thus in less than ten years the wages of a teacher had risen from \$2 a week without board, to more than three times this figure, probably as a result of inflationary times following the Civil War. Nothing is said about boarding the teacher in the several years preceding 1866.

On Dec. 1, 1866 James Morison, "a qualified teacher of the town of Plover" was hired to begin teaching on the first Monday of December. As this entry was dated Dec. 1, it appears that Morison was hired on a last-minute notice and as a result got \$30 a month to teach the three winter months. More inflation.

A new county superintendent of schools, W. R. Alban, had examined Morison's qualifications and stated that, "The following is his standing in the several branches upon a scale of 10: *orthoephy* 8, reading 8, mental arithmetic 7, *geograpy* 5, English *grammer* 5, orthography 6,

written arithmetic 5, penmanship, fair, United States History 4, theory and art of teaching, fair." Morison was weak in American history but the one who made this entry spelled orthoepy with an extra "h", geography without an "h", and grammar with an "e".

In the summer term of 1867, Miss Elizabeth Swan agreed to teach for three months at \$13 a month beginning May 27. Deflation had commenced.

The last entry in this interesting document of an early country school reveals that Miss Elizabeth Swan had been given a third grade certificate to teach in the town of Lanark for four months from April 22, 1867. Her penmanship was considered "passable" which may be of some comfort to students of the 20th Century who may wish to recall that there were many in the "old days" who could not write well and some not at all.

In the above proceedings, it may be noted that a vote was taken to move the school house which failed on a tie vote. In another part of Lanark, the process of democracy had temporarily taken a different turn. A school located in the northwest corner of the township, probably organized in 1858, was considered too far away for some taxpayers, and, while others slept, the former moved the school house away from its original foundation to a new site. The next year it was allegedly moved back, only to be pulled to a new site the following year by the members aggrieved. The pupils were no doubt fascinated by this change of venue but around 1862, Bradley Rice, a member of the school board, assisted by an anonymous Irishman from the southern part of the school district, allegedly used his oxen to pull the school house to its present location in the southwest corner of Sec 8 where succeeding frame buildings have stood, known before the turn of the century as the "Carey Corner School" and later as the Valley View School. The legend ends with the story that the school was not moved again because Rice took the precaution of filling the walls with brick and placing it on a solid foundation. There is probably more to the story than this legend suggests because the moving of the school house occurred, as

far as can be ascertained, within the limits of two forties of land and could not have made that much difference in walking distance.

Another fairly comprehensive school record has been preserved of School District No. 1 in Buena Vista beginning with 1867. By this time, four months of school in winter and four in the summer was becoming accepted. The school board also attempted, whenever possible, to get a male teacher for the winter session and a female for the summer which appeared to be a general practice in the county, presumably because shoveling snow, carrying wood and firing a primitive stove was a job for a man, although it is well known that women accepted winter positions too.

From entries of the annual meetings of the Buena Vista school, clues appear, in the rather formal minutes, which suggest that school meetings caused equally as much spirit among the neighbors then as they were to do a century later in the consolidation of school districts. Whenever a major issue had to be faced in the Buena Vista school, such as the need for a pump on the school grounds, or a new paint job, or even worse a new school, a vote by ballot, not by any show of hands, was usually demanded, and the ballot of any elector who might not be qualified was at once challenged. At a meeting held in 1916, six votes were withdrawn as a result of challenges over the question of who was to act as chairman of the meeting. John Dineen defeated George Newby 110 to 95.

In 1892 the school year in the Buena Vista District No. 1 was advanced to nine months, three in the spring, two in the fall and four in the winter, a description which fails to explain the sequence of months or vacation periods. At the same annual meeting, Frederick Huntley, long active in town politics, presided, and District Clerk William A. Clark entered these minutes, *inter alia* (the author's italics):

"Moved and *caried* to raise \$5.00 to build one half the fence between the school house ground and Mrs. Jones place Moved and *caried* that we *rais* \$35.00 to paint the

school house Moved and *caried* that it be left with the *bord* to get it done as cheap as they can and to have it done in a good workman like *maner* and to have good material used Moved and *caried* that we hire a man teacher if they can without too much *truble* Moved and *caried* that we *dont allow* any scholars of age out of the district to *atend* our school."

School District No. 1 did not get a pump until 1896 when \$55 was appropriated for digging a well and installing a pump. A pump for the school house here and elsewhere in the county was considered a luxury. Water, when required, was carried by the pupils or the teacher from the nearest neighbor. It may be assumed that little was used in the winter months when the water pail, in any event, was bound to freeze during the night. Even the ink bottles were unsafe. At the Saumer School in Alban, Oscar Nelson, an alumnus of the 1890s, recalls that in zero weather the pupils buried their ink bottles every night in the warm sand at the base of the wood stove.

In addition to his or her duties as school teacher and keeper of the wood stove, the rural school teacher of Portage County was asked to report annually on the titles of books used for reference reading. For the years 1895 to 1898, Joint District No. 1, (Stockton and Amherst) the following books were purchased for the school: 1) *Young Folks Cyclopedia of Common Things*, 2) *Young Folks Cyclopedia of Persons*, 3) *Benjamin Franklin*, 4) *Farmer's Institute*, (donation from state) 5) *Child Life*, 6) *Grandfather's Chair*, 7) *Youth's Companion*, 8) *King of the Golden River*, 9) *Stories for Young Children*, 10) *Stories of American Life and Adventure*, 11) *Cats, Dogs, and Other Friends*, 12) *When Molly Was Six*, 13) *The Sea and Its Wonders*, 14) *Winter Fun*, 15) *Beautiful Joe*, 16) *Little Men*, 17) *Boy Emigrant*, 18) *Queer Little Princess*, 19) *Melody*, 20) *The Story of Patsy*, 21) *Little Pilgrims' Progress*, 22) *Stories (of) Transatlantic Travels*, 23) *Juan and Juanita*, 24) *Jack and Jill*, 25) *Ice Queen*, 26) *Left Behind*, 27) *Dora's Housekeeping*, and 28) *Washington's Young Aids* (probably *aides*).

In Joint District No. 2 of Stockton the teacher appears to have picked more interesting books. In addition to

the encyclopaedias above, this school in 1896 purchased the following books: 1) *The Seven Little Sisters*, 2) *The Seven Prove (?) Sisterhood*,¹ 3) *Boy's Workshop*, 4) *Principles of Agriculture*, 5) *Hans Brinker*, 6) *Glimpses of the Plant World*, 7) *Robinson Crusoe*, 8) *Swiss Family Robinson*, 9) *Speech and Manners*, 10) *Footprints of Travel*, 11) *Green Mountain Boys*, 12) *George Washington*, 13) *Farmers' Institute*, (donation) 14) *Youth's Companion*, 15) *Child Life*, 16) *Grandfather's Chair*, 17) *Household History*, 18) *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, 19) *Life of Lincoln*, and 20) *Little Lord Fauntleroy*.

From the limited evidence on other district schools in the townships of the county before 1900, there appears to have been little variation from the titles listed above, and nearly all the schools of Stockton, at least, carried the encyclopaedia of things and persons as well as the *Seven Little Sisters* and *Seven Prove (?) Sisterhood*. Several of the schools had *Black Beauty*, apparently one of the all-time favorites and still being used in most grade schools of the county.

By 1917 the rural schools were equipped with fairly standard appointments which, aside from electric lights adopted after REA lines came through in the 1930s, have remained more or less the same. Many, of course, have closed. A document made out for Keene School in District No. 10 by W. M. Scribner, school clerk, in 1917 describes what appears to be a typical rural school, and which in 1958 was still functioning. The building is described in this report as being 36 feet long, 24 feet wide, and 13 feet high, with two by six studding and rafters sheeted up with matched lumber, papered and sided with No. 1 pine and painted white. The inside is back plastered, lathed and plastered and hard finished with a floor of hard maple. There are three windows on the north and south sides, and two windows in the cloak room. The building has a belfry with bell and a flag pole in the yard. It was heated by a system, approved by the state, with a jacketed stove having a 12 inch fresh air pipe and an 11 inch foul air pipe.

The school room at the time had one black board

¹ There is no record of this title in the Wisconsin Traveling Library.

three feet high and 23 feet long, with the following pictures hanging on the walls: "Sir Galahad," "Can't You Talk?" "George Washington," (and several other presidents of the United States) "The Gleaners," "The Horse Shoer," and "The Angelus."

The furniture was described as 24 double seats, one bookcase, an organ and stool, one clock, six lamps, one card catalog, one wash stand and sink, one porcelain water cooler, a dictionary stand, teacher's desk and three chairs, a globe, a Portage County map, a state map, and a case of maps.

In summation, Scribner writes: "The school house is beautifully located on an eastern slope with plenty of shade trees, two excellent closets, a good wood shed with plenty of good dry hard oak wood, pump and pump house [and] the school grounds occupy an acre of ground."

At one time it was apparently a custom for rural school teachers to present to a graduating pupil a souvenir card which contained a picture of the teacher with a quotation from poetry on one side, and on the reverse, the year, and names of the pupils with a place to write in the name of the pupil to whom the card was being presented. One of these survive from School District No. 11 in the town of Stockton dated 1897-1898.¹ The names of the pupils are listed as well as the school board, namely Peter Doyle, clerk; William Leary, director; John O'Keefe, treasurer; Stacia Livingston, county superintendent; and below, the name of the teacher, E. G. Higgins. A short poem on the reverse side reads:

"Ah me! those joyous days are gone!
I little dreamt till they had flown
How fleeting were the hours."

The first Portage County Teachers Institute was held in the White School in Stevens Point on May 21, 1860. The program on the first day was as follows:

A.M.

Second hour — Roll call at which each mem-

¹ In collection of Mrs. Grace Leary, Stevens Point, Wis.

ber present is to respond with a quotation from the Bible.

Third hour — Arithmetic, by Mr. Allen.

Fourth hour — Geography, by Mr. Packard.

Fifth hour — Theory and Practice of Teaching, Mr. Allen.

P.M.

First hour — Roll call, members to respond with quotations and sentiments.

Second hour — Lectures on "Schools and Education."

Teachers from Stevens Point, Plover, Almond and Hull townships attended the institute and on May 25 the *Pinery* said: "The Teachers Institute under the direction of Hon. J. L. Pickert, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Prof. Allen, has been in session at this place the past week. We are grateful to note this fact as it betokens a disposition on the part of Educational officers to render the cause of Education more popular by fixing more firmly in the minds of the people the principles of our state system of Public Instruction."

A fact of early rural life in American schools was the advanced age of elementary school pupils usually referred in old texts as "scholars." Photographs taken of school classes in Portage County in the 1880s and 1890s suggest the advanced age of many of the pupils. Many of the young folks who were not financially able to attend higher schools of learning, or the academies and institutes, continued to attend grade school, particularly in winter terms even after they had been graduated. The teacher, often scarcely older than some of the pupils, did his or her best to keep them occupied with books available and, if nothing else, to inspire them.

Rural school teachers were also faced with another problem in Portage County, namely, the choice of spell-

¹ *Pinery*, May 18, 1860.

ings for the names of children of immigrant parents, especially among the Polish and Norwegians, many of whom had not decided on the proper spelling of their own name in English. Mrs. W. F. Owen, who taught in or near Amherst Junction before the turn of the century, relates that when Helen Werachowski entered school the first day she was asked to give her name. Mrs. Owen, who admits she was "innocent of all foreign names except a few Irish ones" asked the new pupil to repeat her name and after several unsuccessful attempts at spelling Werachowski, wrote down "Verhusky." Years later the pupil still wrote her name the way her teacher spelled it for her and apparently someone else was also influenced by this spelling as the Amherst township tax roll for 1895 carries the name "J. F. Veryhuski."

On May 20, 1882 District No. 5 School, later Violet, was organized in Sec 27 of Carson. According to Mrs. Fred Zimmerman of Carson, this was a log building, that is, logs "flatted" or hewed on two sides with a broadax. But the hewed log school was already on the way out and probably the last one in the county, Runkle School, was built in the spring of 1887 in Sec 23 of modern Eau Pleine township. The contract in the clerk's book called for a building "18 x 28 feet of timber *flated* (flatted) on two sides to compose the body of the house, with a good shingled roof & double floor, & sealed overhead with a ship-lap & the gable ends boarded & *batened* (battened), chinked & plastered on one side together with a good *cornish* (cornice) & six full windows & one door." W. C. Pitt was given the contract for \$225. For an extra \$50 he was to enclose half an acre of ground with board fence, four boards high with cap board on top, and he was to build a double out-house, 6 x 12 feet, with shingled roof "and two good doors." Miss Jessie Sager of McDill was hired as the first teacher at \$24 per month for three months of school beginning June 27, 1887.

There is no contemporary evidence of any rural school being organized in the county before 1855, although the Portage County treasurer's ledger carries an entry

¹ *History of Amherst*, Red and White School Association, 1912, p. 38.

dated June 5, 1853 "paid Almond School money \$8.64" which indicates that a school existed in Almond township on that date. One of the first rural schools was organized by George W. Morrill on July 9, 1855 in the town of Stockton covering Secs 1, 2, 11, 12 and the east half of Secs 3 & 10; in other words, this district lay about half way between modern Custer and Amherst Junction. Morrill, who pioneered on land in Sec 30 of Stockton on the old Air Line Road, was a school teacher by profession and when the town of Stockton was incorporated in 1855, became its first school superintendent. A school, called Morrill, is identified on the 1876 and 1895 plats in the southwest corner of double section 30 where, in fact, it is still located. It may have been organized before 1855 as it was part of the community known as Stockton, probably the first to develop east of Plover.

Most of the rural schools in the county were organized between 1855 and 1895, only a handful later. Thus by World War I the peak in rural school expansion had been reached and by 1926 two had already closed. The only available directory of rural schools in the county covers the school year of 1926-27 when Marion E. Bannach was county superintendent. As many of these schools have been consolidated since that time, and no doubt more will follow, it is fitting that the names of the schools and their teachers in 1926-27 be recorded. They were:

ALBAN township: Saumur, Hazel Evenson; Simonis, Violet Smith; Alban, Everett Martin; Lake View, Ruth Leklem; Brown, Alice Lee; and Hamilton, Lorena Kiloran.

ALMOND township: Lone Pine, Luman Precourt; Mehne (school closed and pupils transported to Almond); Hetzel, Kathryn M. Cobb; Spirit Land, Alice I. Peterson; Prairie View, Fern E. Manley; Geo. F. Schilling, Helen Peterson; and Boelter, Arloine Krohn.

AMHERST township: Wm. V. Fleming, Leola B. Allen; Lysne, Mona Aanrud; Black Oak Grove, Sarah Dwinell; Hie Corners, Grace Allen; and Fountain Grove, Mamie Gelman.

BELMONT township: Brookside, Cora Washburn; Pioneer, Edna Oestrick; Sunny View, Bessie Parsons; Dopp, Lelah Dalziel; Neale, Mildred Mathe; Lincoln, Katherine Doyle; and Pickerel Lake, Ethel Bowers.

BUENA VISTA township: Liberty Corners, Alice Sweitzer; Pleasant Valley, Myrtle M. Barden; Stewart, John Wentworth; Keene, Esther Newby; Sunny Side, Olivia Adams; Coddington, Mrs. H. Sumpter; Polly, Mayme Swetalla; and McKinley, Ruth Tess.

CARSON township: Rocky Run, (school closed, pupils transported to Training School at Stevens Point Normal School); Green Meadow, Vincent Slusarski; Lieut. Mallory, Thos. Keithley; Violet, Jessie Finnessy; Lake View, Laura Lewison; Sunset Valley, Henry Dorhorst; Grover, Doris Martin; Cary, Lawrence Beaudin; Lone Elm, Florence Albert; Victory, Myrl Clark; and Oak Hill, Mrs. Julia Day.

DEWEY township: Wilson, Carl Kitowski; Liberty Bell, Leona E. Polar; Thorun, Mrs. Minnie Yanke; Rockland, Mrs. S. Firkus; Cartmill, Delphia Siem; and Bruski, Julia E. Lemancik.

EAU PLEINE township: Maple Valley, Esther Ernst; Marion, Evelyn Nichols; Whitehouse, Julia E. Tormey; White Lily, Gilman M. Coombs; Runkles, Ruby Mae Parsons; and Wolfe, Edna Martin.

GRANT township: Kellner, Irene Medenwaldt; Clover, Harry Timm; Oak Park, Helene Rathke; Major White-side, Carolyn Knuteson; Meadow View, Ruby Brien; and Quentin, Mrs. Erma Smith.

HULL township: Nugent, Isabelle Welch; Pulaski, Mane Simonis; Casimir, Bernice Bruse; Ark, Johanna Wroblewski; Plover Hills, Evelyn Rybicke; and Glinski, Esther Peickert.

LANARK township: Gen. Irwin, Anna Lawrence; Oakdale, Marion Robinson; Pipe, Evelyn Smith; Valley View, Coral Atkinson; Madley, Helen McTigue; and Badger, Irma Stedman.

LINWOOD township: La Follette, Mary Ann Treder; Riverside, Esther Peterson; River Valley, Phyllis Pike;

Woodville, Cresent I. Britz; and John Francis Sims, Wilma Strauss.

NEW HOPE township: Peru, Loretta Kussman; Garfield, Tecla Damask; Loberg, Thelma Gullikson; Rhinehardt, Leila Aanrud; Oak Grove, Ethelyn Wrolstad; and Malloy, Alice Burant.

PINE GROVE township: Bluff, Belle Peterson; Schenck; (school closed, pupils transported to Bancroft); Williams, Iva Bender; and Harris, Esther Lowe.

PLOVER township: Maine, Beulah Isherwood; McDill, Hazel Isherwood; Worzella, Mary Rosenthal; Meehan, Winifred Wells; Pine, Clarence Teske; Whiting, Mrs. Roy Cartmill; Roosevelt, Lucy C. Doyle; and Isherwood, Gertrude Scribner.

SHARON township: Twin Lakes, Mrs. Flossie Schulist; Geo. Washington, Grace Isidor; Polonia, Agnes Repinski; Edison, Catherine Sikorski; Tomorrow River, Martha Studzinski; Gen McGlachlin, Deloma Valentine; Madison, Cecelia Wiczek; and Pine Island, Margaret B. Bricko.

STOCKTON township: Prairie, Edith Parks; Arnott, Edith Heasty; Heffron, Lucy Higgins; Town Hall, Gladys Kussman; Stockton, Gertrude Doyle; Custer, Emil Bannach; Harper, Helen Saeger; Paderewski, Florence Berry; J. Hosmer Felch, Veretta Pratt; Fancher, Nellie Clark; Morrill, Florence Beaudin; Hillcrest, Carl Scheider; and Oakland, Marion Lukasavitz.

In addition to the rural schools in 1926-27 there were grade schools in Amherst Junction, known as the Amherst Junction; the Junction Public school in Junction City; and the Jerome Nelson school in Nelsonville. The grade schools in Almond, Amherst, Bancroft and Rosholt were combined with the local high school.

The lowest salary for a rural grade school teacher during this period was \$75 per month and the highest \$120. The average was about \$100.

Up to 1947 town, village and city boards had power to consolidate school districts, but little was accomplished along this line in the rural areas owing to the conflict of interests between one township and another. As a

result the state in 1947 enacted legislation which made it possible for each county to create a school committee on the county level which would deal not only with the conflict of township and urban interests, but also with neighboring counties. Before action on any consolidation was taken by the school committee, hearings were held in the district to learn the views of interested citizens. These meetings in the county, especially from 1948 to 1950, were often featured by moments of tense excitement as the taxpayers fought, each for his own reasons, to stay in one district or keep out of another.

The first to be consolidated in Portage County under the new establishment was the Tomorrow River School District No. 2 which brought several rural schools under the Amherst village school system effective July 1, 1948. By June 30, 1957 the number of school districts in the county had been reduced to 37 of which 24 were still one-room school districts. But with modern roads and bus travel, the one-room or "country" school had become an anachronism and what was good enough for father is no longer good enough for his son who is being challenged not only on the home front by a "technological explosion" but in outer space by *sputnik zemli* (satellite of the earth).

One ceremony which goes largely unchanged through the years is the high school commencement exercise. The main speaker of the evening usually advises the graduates how to face up to life, to follow the Golden Rule, and not to forget the lessons taught them by their parents and teachers. The practice of adopting a class motto may have been first used in the late 1870s, while class colors and flower came later. The first graduating class of 1881 at Stevens Point High School had as its motto *Esse non Videri* (to be not to seem) but had no class color or flower. George B. Nelson, addressing the Stevens Point High School graduating class of 1930, stated that when he graduated in 1894 in a class which numbered 14 pupils, the class failed to adopt a motto on a tie vote of seven to seven. In 1899 Plover High School included class colors, which were maroon and gold, a

class flower, the red carnation, and their motto "Today we anchor, tomorrow we sail."

Nelson spoke on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the first commencement held in connection with the 1930 exercises at Stevens Point High School then located between Clark and Ellis Streets, in 1958 used for vocational school classes. Among the honored guests on this occasion were two members of the graduating class of 1881, Mrs. W. B. Buckingham, nee Bertha A. Scott, valedictorian in 1881, and Mrs. Mary E. Wing, nee Mary E. Clements. The others were deceased. On hand in 1930 to give out the diplomas to the 144 "promising young men and women [who] graduated with all the advantages that modern academic education can bestow" was Mrs. Emmons Burr, nee Jennie Ferriss, assistant principal in 1881 and a teacher of Mrs. Buckingham and Mrs. Wing who, as the authorized representative of the school board, had handed out the diplomas to the graduating class of 1881. A sentimental touch was added when Mrs. Buckingham, on behalf of the graduating class of 1930, presented Mrs. Burr with a copy of their annual, "*The Tattler*," dedicated "to those men and women who preceded us as students in the Stevens Point High School. . .", even as a copy of Milton's complete works had been presented to her at that long-ago commencement of 1881.

The first high school commencement exercises were held at McCulloch's Hall on Main Street, Saturday evening, July 2, 1881. The program for the class of nine pupils was as follows:

PRAYER

MUSIC — "Greeting Glee"

SALUTATORY — "The Russian and the Turk,"

Frank E. Gilchrist.

ESSAY — "Our Country" Belle H. Brown.

MUSIC — "Slumber Dearest"

ESSAY — "The Quaker Poet." — Mary E. Clements.

ORATION — "Scholars in Public Life." — Charles

M. Chamberlain

ESSAY — "The Philosophy of Colors." — Carrie L.

Wade.

¹ *Stevens Point Journal*, June 13, 1930.

MUSIC — "Echoes"

ESSAY — "American Literature" — Abbie F. Wheelock.

ORATION — "Antagonism." — Carl F. Phillips.

MUSIC — "Nearer Home."

CONFERRING OF DIPLOMAS

VALEDICTORY — "The Last Days of Pompeii".
Bertha A. Scott.

MUSIC — "Good Night."

Only one member of the graduating class of nine failed to appear on the program, namely, Arnold D. Slutts.

The nine pupils who graduated in 1881 were probably enrolled in the freshman class of the first high school built in the county at Stevens Point in 1876-77 under the provisions of the free high school act of 1875. Built of Menasha white brick, it stood at the northeast corner, one lot east, of Clark and Church Streets. F. L. Green served as the first principal.

The high school was badly damaged by fire on Feb. 15, 1892 and eventually a new high school was built farther east on Clark Street between East Avenue and Reserve. This was enlarged in 1925 by a connecting building which became Emerson Grade School when still another high school, named after P. J. Jacobs of Stevens Point, was built on east Main Street and occupied in 1938.

With the organization of the first high school in Stevens Point, the school board named a city superintendent of schools, J. K. Mc Gregor, who served one year from 1877-1878. He was followed by William Weston, F. L. Green, F. W. Cooley, H. A. Simonds, J. W. Simmons, Edmund J. Vert, F. F. Showers, John N. Davis, J. E. Roberts, H. C. Snyder, Paul M. Vincent, and in 1956 by the incumbent, Albert Moldenhauer.

While a board of education presumably ruled the city schools before 1873, there is no record of it and the first known board of 1873 included G. L. Park, president; A. G. Hamacker, clerk; and E. D. Brown, treasurer. Serving on the board of education in 1958-59 were Alf Anderson, Gordon Hanson, Leo Larson,

Edward Hoppa, Francis Roman, Leo Ohlert, H. Bartig, Fred Klingbail, Ted Holthusen, Dr. W. G. Wochinski, Leslie V. Courtney, Milton Sorenson, Robert H. Pederson, Jr., Dr. F. Reichardt, and O. A. Dehlinger.

A city-wide system of parochial schools, mainly of Roman Catholic denomination, originated with the first parochial grade school established in 1873 in connection with St. Stephen's Church in Stevens Point and since known as St. Stephen's. Others established since 1873 are St. Peter's, St. Joseph's and St. Stanislaus. Several grade schools are also maintained in the county by Catholic parishes. Two Catholic high schools completed and operating in 1956, were Maria High School for Girls and Pacelli High School for Boys. Maria High is an outgrowth of St. Joseph's Academy for Girls established in 1922, and is the only all-girl high school in the county. Pacelli is the only all-boy high school.

Only one Protestant parochial grade school is presently in operation, namely St. Paul's Lutheran Church School in Stevens Point which opened in 1955, although parochial school classes have been held intermittently by this church since 1889.

In addition to P.J. Jacobs High School in Stevens Point, Allen G. Bostad, principal, there were three other high schools in the county in 1958 namely at Almond, John Brown, principal; Amherst, Walter L. Bowman, principal; and Rosholt, Russell W. Wrolstad, principal.

The Wisconsin State College, located in Stevens Point, opened Monday, Nov. 17, 1894 as part of a state-wide system of normal schools maintained at taxpayer's expense chiefly for the training of elementary teachers. First known as the Sixth Normal School, it was authorized in 1923 to offer the degree of bachelor of education, and in 1927 was designated the Central State Teachers' College. Later, authority was given for a bachelor of science degree, and, with a four-year liberal arts program added to teacher training work, the school in 1951 was designated the Wisconsin State College at Stevens Point.

A copy of the school paper, *The Normal Pointer*, dated Oct. 15, 1898, then in its fourth year of publication, carries stories and advertisements of local business men and one entire page by the Normal School which advertised itself as "Thoroughly Equipped: Modern Building; New Apparatus; New Library; New Gymnasium." Three advanced courses were advertised, namely, a two-year course for high school graduates and other competent students; an elementary course of two years for those holding certificates or passing entrance examinations; and a common school course of one year "for special benefit of those who must teach soon." A preparatory course of ten weeks was also offered in all the common branches.

The new quarter was scheduled to open Nov. 7, 1898 and new classes were to be formed at that date "in nearly every subject in the course of study except Latin, German, and some advanced science studies." Board was \$2.50 to \$3 per week, all school charges about \$1.25 per quarter (i.e. ten weeks), and no tuition fees were charged for those expecting to teach. Tuition of \$.65 per week or less in the preparatory grades was charged. Prospective students were urged to write for a circular "or better still" directly to President Theron B. Pray for "an immediate personal reply."

The Stevens Point Normal defeated Oshkosh Normal on Oct. 1, 1898 by a score of 22 to 6 in a football match which was described in the sports writeup as "one of the best games of football ever played in Stevens Point." The writer said Oshkosh's weak point was her line "whereas our line was practically invulnerable [and] our boys all played a good clean game. . ."

Beginning with an enrollment of 201 students in the normal department from 25 counties, in addition to 165 pupils in the training department, the 1958 fall enrollment at the college had risen to more than 1500 students from 175 Wisconsin high schools, several other states and foreign countries. New dormitories and a student union were built in the 1950s in addition to one of the finest libraries in the state.

The Normal School and later the College has been served by the following presidents: Theron B. Pray, 1894-1906; John F. Sims, 1906-1926; Dr. Robert D. Baldwin, 1926-1930; Frank Hyer, 1930-1938; Philip H. Falk, who remained only a few months and removed to Madison where he became city superintendent of schools; Ernest T. Smith, acting in 1938 who received permanent status in August 1939 and carried on until his death in 1940; and William C. Hansen, the seventh president, appointed in October 1940, a position he still holds. He is also the first graduate of the school to serve as president.

The longest tenure of office was held by President Sims, a fastidious man who usually wore a carnation boutonniere. When William Hansen first entered the Normal School as a student in 1909 he recalls that while he had difficulty crossing Main Street without getting his shoes dusty, he noted that President Sims always appeared before his students in polished shoes. Years later, commenting on this phenomenon to Miss Bessie May Allen, long-time head of the Home Economics Department, he learned that Sims kept a shoe kit in his office and as soon as he came off the street, polished his shoes. When Hansen became president in 1940 he found the kit in the office, apparently untouched since the time Sims last used it. East Main Street had meanwhile been paved and was no longer dusty.

Aside from the schools mentioned above, a boarding school for young ladies called the Northern Institute opened in Stevens Point in the 1850s and was discontinued at the outbreak of the Civil War, and the Stevens Point Business College, which offered a short course for professional people, was begun in the 1890s and discontinued shortly before World War I.

Whether students in general are paying more attention to their work in 1958 than they did 60 years ago, to judge from a letter appearing in the *Stevens Point Journal* of Nov. 21, 1898, is also problematical. The letter, signed by "Observer," noted that the Woman's Club had appointed a committee "to inquire into the conduct of the schools..." "Observer" suggested, in-

stead of inquiring into the conduct of the schools, that the women should confine their time to more profitable employment by "inquiring into the conduct and whereabouts of the boys and girls of this city, during at least seven nights in the week [and] make a house to house visit between the hours of eight and twelve, to find out whether the parents know where their children are. . ."

Despite this rather oblique reference to the Woman's Club, the latter served as one of the leading women's organizations in the city from the time of its founding in 1895 through the early decades of the 20th Century, concentrating its activities on literary, cultural and civic improvement. The founders were Mesdames Edwin Horace Joy, G. E. McDill, Owen Clark, Morly Townsend, Henry Curran and Byron B. Park. Among the outstanding projects which the Woman's Club helped to organize and promote were the Public Library in 1904 and a city hospital in 1910, later known as St. Michael's.

The Public Library grew out of a long-felt need in the community. Reading circles and a library association date back to the 1860s in Stevens Point. Eventually, a small library was established in rented rooms and finally in 1903, with the help of the Stevens Point Common Council and private subscriptions, in addition to a substantial grant-in-aid from the Carnegie Foundation, it was decided to build a library, a dream which was realized in the completion of the building on the northeast corner of Clark Street and Strongs Avenue. The staff of the library in 1958 included Miss Aileen MacGeorge, librarian; Mrs. Belva Lloyd, assistant librarian; Miss Beulah Larson, children's librarian; Mrs. Herman E. Pagel, cataloguer; and Miss Patricia Malick, reference librarian.

Other women's clubs which have added their bit to social and civic activity in Stevens Point are the Progress Club, organized in 1897; the Catholic Woman's Club, 1921; the Business and Professional Women's Club, 1928; the Twilight Music Club, 1931; the American Association of University Women, 1935; and the Women's Civic Council, 1950.