

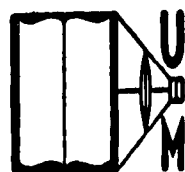
DOCTORAL DISSERTATION SERIES

TITLE The Development of Public
Education in GRAND RAPIDS
(1826-1906)

AUTHOR FORREST G. AYERILL

UNIVERSITY of Michigan DATE 1948

DEGREE Ed.D. PUBLICATION NO. 1234



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1949

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN GRAND RAPIDS

(1826-1906)

by

Forrest G. Averill

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education in the
University of Michigan
1948

Committee in charge:

Professor Arthur B. Moehlman, Chairman
Dean James B. Edmonson
Professor Claude Eggertson
Professor Clarence D. Thorpe
Professor Lewis G. Vander Velde

THE ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Grateful acknowledgment is given to the following members of the staff of the Grand Rapids Public Library who have given valuable assistance in helping to locate needed information: Donald Kohlstedt, Mrs. Ruth Abrams, Miss Mary Morrissey and Claxton E. Helms.

Sincere appreciation is expressed to the following members of the East Grand Rapids Board of Education for grating a leave of absence of one semester to work on this paper: Horace J. Barton, Edward C. McCobb, David D. Hunting, Mrs. Eleanor Moritz, and Bruce K. Muir.

Important suggestions have been made by the members of the doctoral committee composed of James B. Edmonson, Claude Eggertson, Clarence D. Thorpe, Lewis G. Vander Velde, and Chairman Arthur B. Moehlman.

Particular acknowledgment is due Professor Arthur B. Moehlman, who has furnished much stimulation and guidance in the preparation of this manuscript.

Appreciation also is expressed to Edwin Wintermute, editor of the Michigan Education Journal, for helpful editorial suggestions.

The cooperation of Dwight H. Rich, Superintendent, and Mrs. Caroline Clapperton and Mrs. Elizabeth Erickson of the Lansing Public Schools has been very helpful.

Sincere appreciation is also due the members of my family for their helpful cooperation and encouragement. Special thanks go to my wife, Josephine B. Averill, for her help.

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INTRODUCTION

This study of the development of public education in Grand Rapids during the first 80 years of the city's history was undertaken for a dual purpose: first, so that a history of the Grand Rapids Public Schools would be written before the already very incomplete early records were lost or destroyed, and, second, so that the educational progress of those years might be studied in contrast to present-day educational programs.

To realize these objectives, it was necessary to begin with the earliest history of the city, before the establishment of public schools, and to trace their development from the most primitive frontier school through the period of the Union School to the establishment of a unified city school system. Within a short time after the organization of the city's schools as one administrative unit, interest in the New Education Movement increased; it finally came to be the dominant educational philosophy of the schools before the 80 years were over.

An attempt is made wherever possible to point out the relationships between educational progress in the city and the political, economic and social development. Evidence is often lacking, to show the actual degree of relationship between simultaneous events and also between events which seem to have taken place in logical sequence.

The year 1908 was chosen as the chronological terminus of this study, because it marks the end of the period in which educational policies were determined by a large, ward-elected, politically-minded board of education, and the beginning of a new era, in which the board was to consist of a relatively small number of citizens, elected at large.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PERIOD BEFORE PUBLIC SCHOOLS (1826-1835)

Although the settlement of Grand Rapids did not begin until 1826, the historian of the Grand Rapids public school system sees importance in tracing the early history of the Northwest Territory of which Grand Rapids was a part, to provide historical and legal background. It is also important to include information about the early fur traders and missionaries, and to make special mention of some of the early leaders. In 1833, with the coming of more permanent settlers from the East, the community began a period of rapid development, and, before long, the first school district was organized.

LEGAL BACKGROUND AND STRUCTURE

Early History

The ownership of the area now making up the present State of Michigan has been much disputed. It was a part of New France from 1603 to 1760; then it was surrendered to the British. Under the provisions of the Treaty of Paris in 1783, it was ceded to the United States. Virginia, Massachusetts, Connecticut and New York all set up claims to the territory, but in the early 1780's the states gave their land claims to the central government and passage of the Ordinance of 1787 by the Congress made all of the area north of the Ohio River and west of Pennsylvania a part of the Northwest Territory. The Territory was

divided in 1800, and the Territory of Indiana, including Michigan was created. Michigan was separated from Indiana in 1805, and remained a separate territory until its admission to the Union as a state.

Law of 1827

The Territorial Laws relating to education in effect during this period were those of 1827, 1829, and 1833. The Law of 1827¹ provided that every township of 50 inhabitants or householders should employ a schoolmaster of good morals to teach children to read and write and to instruct them for a term equivalent to six months of each year in the English and French languages as well as in arithmetic, orthography, and decent behavior. Every township containing 100 families must hold school for longer than six months, and provide an additional teacher. Every township containing 200 families was to provide for a grammar schoolmaster to teach the Latin, French, and English languages. Any township which neglected to meet the requirements of the law was subject to a penalty of from \$150 to \$250. Five school inspectors were to be chosen, and the money needed for the support of the school voted at an annual meeting of the inhabitants of the township. This money was to be assessed and collected in the same manner and at the same time as the township and county taxes, except that it was to be apportioned according to the number of children between the ages of five and seventeen and was therefore a rate bill. These funds were

1-Laws of the Territory of Michigan. Lansing: W.S. George Co., 1874.
II, Pp. 472-477.

to be used exclusively for the payment of teachers' wages. Any township could, by a two-thirds vote, refuse to come under the provisions of this law.

Law of 1829

On November 5, 1829, the Legislative Council of the territory repealed the Law of 1827 and substituted a new act which provided for the election of five commissioners in each township for a three-year period to take charge of the common schools.¹ These commissioners were empowered to lay out the township in school districts and to select a suitable site for a schoolhouse in each district. They were authorized to tax all inhabitants for the erection of a schoolhouse, and to sell property for non-payment of school taxes. Money for the operation of schools was to be raised by rate bill, each person to be assessed in proportion to the number of days his children attended school. Persons living too far to permit attendance by their children were exempted from the payment of a tax for the building of schoolhouses. The poor were exempted from the payment of rate bills for their children, and such uncollected rate bills as remained unpaid by the poor were to be spread on the tax rolls according to property valuation. Parents who failed to supply fuel were assessed to pay for it. Five inspectors were to be elected, whose duty it was to examine schools established under this act and to examine and certify applicants for teaching positions. This act of 1829 also provided for the appointment by the governor of a superintendent of common schools to

1-Laws of the Territory of Michigan, II, Pp. 769-777.

take charge of and protect from waste section 16 in each township or any other fractional section reserved for schools where trustees or commissioners had not been chosen. School directors were to report to him, and he was to make annual reports on the conditions of the schools, to the Legislative Council. There is no record showing that this position was ever filled.¹ Detroit was specifically exempted from the provisions of the act of 1829.

Law of 1833

In 1833 the Legislative Council passed a new school act² which included Detroit. The act provided that three commissioners of common schools be elected in each township for a term of three years, and that the commissioners' duty would be to form school districts where none had yet been formed, protect the school lands, and whenever advisable to lease them for not more than three years. The inhabitants of each school district were to elect three directors for one year terms, a clerk, a treasurer, and a collector. The directors were to employ a qualified teacher for each district, to serve at least three months. Taxes for the support of the school were to be collected from the parents on the basis of the number of days their children attended school. The penalty for non-payment of taxes was the sale of property to meet the assessment; parents who did not pay the tax could not send their children to school. Offsetting this stringent regulation was a provision that pupils of parents who were to pay

1-William L. Smith, Historical Sketches of Education in Michigan, Lansing: W. S. George & Co., 1881. P. 13.
 2-Laws of the Territory of Michigan, III, Pp. 1012-1020.

the tax could attend school and the rate bills for them would be paid by a tax on property valuation. The district directors were required to submit annual reports to the state superintendent of common schools.

FUR TRADERS AND MISSIONARIES

Long before the first settlements, fur traders venturing into the Grand River Valley were much impressed by its fertility and natural advantages. Probably the first fur trader to locate a trading post in the valley was Joseph La Flamboise, a representative of the American Fur Company; he established a post in a clearing about a mile south of the mouth of the Flat River, about 1809. After his death, his widow continued his business until 1821, then sold out to Rix Robinson. He built his post at the mouth of the Thornapple River at what is now called Ada, and became the first permanent white resident of the area now comprising Kent County.¹

Treaty of Chicago

In that same year the territorial governor, Lewis Cass, journeyed to Chicago where, on August 29, he made a treaty with the Chippewa, Ottawa, and Pottawatomie Indians by which nearly all the country within the boundaries of Michigan, south of Grand River and not before ceded, became the property of the United States.² This

1-William J. Etten, A Citizen's History of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Grand Rapids: A. P. Johnson Company, 1926. P. 8.

2-Henry Schoolcraft, Travels in the Central Portion of the Mississippi Valley. New York: Collins and Hannay, 1825. Treaty included in Appendix, Pp. 437-445.

treaty provided that, in consideration for the lands ceded to the government, each tribe of Indians would be paid \$1,000 annually and, in addition, \$1,500 would be spent annually by the government for the support of a teacher, a blacksmith, and the purchase of tools.¹

Baptist Missionary Society

Under the provisions of the treaty, Governor Cass made arrangements with the board of managers of the Baptist Missionary Convention for the establishment of two schools. The church placed the responsibility for their establishment on the Rev. Isaac McCoy, who set up the Carey Mission for the Pottawatomies on the St. Joseph River where Niles is now, and in 1823 selected one square mile on the west side of Grand River south of the present Bridge Street line as the site of the Thomas Mission, to be established for the Ottawas. Some delay occurred in the establishment of the Thomas Mission, because of opposition from the Indians, but finally, in September 1825, farming utensils, other tools, and provisions were shipped to the site from the St. Joseph River by way of Lake Michigan and the Grand River, and soon thereafter permanent log buildings were built.²

McCoy's Instructions

Governor Cass gave quite definite and complete instructions to McCoy as to his responsibility and duties.³ They are too long and

1-Ernest Fisher, History of Grand Rapids and Kent County, Michigan. Chicago: Robert O. Law Co., I, Pp. 39-40.

2-Albert Baxter, History of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. New York: Munsell and Co., 1891. Pp. 49-51.

3-Isaac McCoy, History of Baptist Indian Missions. Washington: W. M. Morrison, 1840. Pp. 145-151.

detailed to quote here, but have been well digested by Albert Baxter in his History of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan.¹

1. Give the Indians young and old such instructions as are best suited to their habits and condition; exercising discretion as to the best proportion of moral and religious instruction.
2. Inculcate proper sentiments toward the government and citizens of the United States, and strive to wean them from affection for any foreign power.
3. Labor assiduously against the use of ardent spirits and to prevent the free introduction of whiskey among the natives.
4. Watch the conduct of the traders and report infractions of the law to the nearest agent.
5. Strive to induce the Indians to engage in agriculture and the rearing of domestic animals.
6. Instruct them as to the best method of expending their annuities, and against unlawful traffic.
7. Seek to promote the general good of the Indians and persuade them to stay at home.

The Thomas Mission

The Rev. Isaac McCoy, a man of considerable organizing ability, great zeal, and ambition, proceeded to establish his missions in spite of many difficulties. He, his family, and a Miss L. Purchase left the Carey Mission in November 1826, for the Thomas Mission, and arrived there after an arduous eight-day journey. On December 25, 1826, the Thomas Mission School opened with six scholars--five Indian boys and one of the white men employed by the mission. By April 1, 1827, there were 15 scholars; the number reached 21 soon afterward, and McCoy was much encouraged by the prospects of the mission.

McCoy's responsibility for the whole Baptist Mission program compelled him to make exploratory trips westward, and therefore he

1-Albert Baxter, History of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 50.

transferred his headquarters to the Carey Mission and called Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Slater to work in the Thomas Mission. The Slaters were assisted at different times by Mr. J. Lykens and Mr. Jothan Meeker. The irregularity of the receipt of the Indian payments and of the government money set aside for the operation of the mission, and the arrival of settlers and fur traders across the river with the customary supplies of whiskey prevented operation of the mission on the scale which McCoy had anticipated. The school was actually closed for a few months in the summer of 1829, but reopened in the fall, and continued until 1836 when, under the provisions of an Indian Treaty concluded in Washington that year, the mission was moved to Prairieville, in Barry County.¹

Leonard Slater was apparently a capable and conscientious man who made a real contribution to the early development of Grand Rapids despite the difficulties he encountered in the operation of the mission under adverse conditions. He learned the Ottawa dialect, and was commended by Governor Cass for his work. During his management, several additional buildings were built on the mission property. Slater was appointed postmaster in 1834, and held that office until he left for Prairieville in 1836. He was influential in getting government help to build a sawmill about one and one-half miles above the mission property as a means of helping the Indians. The mill had a capacity of about 2000 feet per day; the early settlers of Grand Rapids and the surrounding area got their first lumber from this mill.

1-Isaac McCoy, History of the Baptist Indian Missions, Pp. 292-396.

It is perhaps unfortunate that Slater did not remain in the Valley but, feeling that his responsibility was with the Indians, he went with them to Prairieville. The Thomas Mission School was attended by some of the children of the early settlers as well as by the Indians, and for several years provided the only school services available to the pioneers.¹

The Catholic Mission

Although Catholic missionaries were in the Valley early, they made no attempt for a permanent establishment in Grand Rapids until 1833 when Bishop Fenwick of Cincinnati sent Father Frederic Baraga to establish a permanent mission. He selected a tract of about 65 acres on the west bank of the river, and built a frame building for a chapel and a small dwelling. In 1834, Father Andreas Viszoczky, a Hungarian priest, was sent as Father Baraga's assistant. Father Viszoczky in 1835 succeeded Father Baraga as pastor.² Father Baraga was transferred to the Upper Peninsula, became outstanding as a student of the Indian language, and eventually became Bishop of Marquette.³ There is no evidence that the Catholics conducted a school at their mission, either for Indians or white children.

1-Albert Baxter, History of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 51-53.

2-William J. Etten, A Citizen's History of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 75.

3-Charles Moore, History of Michigan. Chicago: The Lewis Publishing Co., 1915. I, Pp. 536-537.

FIRST WHITE SETTLERS

From 1826 to 1833 the Grand Rapids settlements were largely under the supervision of Leonard Slater at the Thomas Mission on the west side of the river, and of Louis Campau, who is considered the founder of Grand Rapids.¹ Campau operated a trading post on the east side of the river, having settled there permanently in the fall of 1826, only a few months before the coming of Slater. There were several white teachers and workmen at the Mission. On the east side of the river, members of the Campau family and their employees were almost the only white people; the French language was used almost exclusively because most of the Campau family spoke French only.²

1-Louis Campau was born in Detroit on August 11, 1791, and was descended from a French family that came to Montreal, Canada, about 1650 and moved to Detroit in 1708. Louis spent only a few months in school, and these months constituted all of the formal education he ever received. At the close of the War of 1812, in which he had served, he went to the Saginaw Valley as an employee of his uncle and other merchants who had goods to sell to the Indians. He learned to speak the Indian language, and soon established his own business buying furs and trading with the Indians. His first wife died after four years of marriage. On August 9, 1825, Campau was married to Sophie de Marsac. He came to the present site of Grand Rapids in November, 1826, and in the spring of 1827 built two log cabins and a blacksmith shop. In 1831 Campau purchased from the government land office in White Pigeon the 72 acres with the present boundaries of Michigan Street on the north, Fulton Street on the south, Division Street on the east and the river on the west. Although he became rich as the result of his real estate and fur trading activities, his prosperity did not last. He resided in Grand Rapids until his death on April 13, 1871, at nearly 80 years of age.

2-William J. Etten, A Citizen's History of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 13.

Settlers from the East

The year 1833 marked a great change in the development of Grand Rapids; the first really permanent white settlers came from the East. There is no accurate record, but various estimates of their number range from 50 to 65 persons. They were interested in setting up an organized government, and in establishing schools and churches. The pioneer trading post and Indian mission were slowly replaced by a pioneer village, the residents of which had faith in its future and felt confident it would become a great city. The "boom days" were getting under way, bringing nearer the greatly stimulated real estate development, increased building construction and feverish business activity which was to come in the three or four years remaining before the Panic of 1837.

Organization of Kent County

Originally the territory around Grand Rapids was included in the County of Wayne. Kalamazoo County was organized in 1829 and included all of present Kent County.¹ On March 2, 1831, the boundaries of the County of Kent were named and defined by the Legislative Council.² This act provided that, until duly organized, it was to remain a part of Kalamazoo County. The area included in Kent County was the same as at present except the two northern tiers of townships, which were added later. The county was organized March 24, 1836, and officially set off as a separate political division of the State of Michigan.³

1-Laws of the Territory of Michigan, III, P. 736.

2-Ibid., III, P. 871.

3-Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1835-36.
Detroit: John S. Bagg, 1836. P. 65.

Organization of Township

The Township of Kent, which later became the Township of Grand Rapids, was organized on March 7, 1834, the first township organized in Kent County.¹ The first township election was held April 4, 1834, in the house of Joel Guild, with nine voters present. The following were elected to office: Eliphalet Turner, clerk; Rix Robinson, supervisor; Joel Guild and Barney Burton, assessors; Ira Jones, collector; Luther Lincoln, poormaster; Myron Roys and Ira Jones, constables; Johnathan F. Chubb, overseer of highways.² One of the early acts of the new officers was the establishment of the first school district on May 9, 1835, under the provisions of the Territorial Law of 1833.³

SUMMARY

It is significant that the present site of Grand Rapids should always have been considered a desirable spot for men to live. Ancient man lived there, as proved by the many mounds he left. When the fur traders and other early visitors came, they found two large Indian villages and were almost unanimous in their prediction that some day the site would become an important center of white population although probably none of them would have predicted the actual growth that has occurred.

It is also important to keep in mind the good influence exerted by the Baptist Mission during the years covered by this chapter, in

1-Laws of the Territory of Michigan, III, P. 1275

2-William J. Etten, A Citizen's History of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp.53-54.

3-Laws of the Territory of Michigan, III, Pp. 1012-1020.

combatting, even though rather unsuccessfully, the bad effects that the coming of white men had on the Indians. The mission also made a contribution to the life of the whites at Grand Rapids by providing lumber from the sawmill and making and repairing tools in the blacksmith shop, not to mention the personal contribution of some of the personnel.

During this period Grand Rapids was in every sense a pioneer community. Until 1833 there were very few white children to be educated, save those of the missionaries. It is significant that the new settlers quickly started private schools for their children, and almost immediately provided for the establishment of public schools. Although the legal machinery had been in existence in Michigan for some time, to enable communities to establish public schools, few had made use of it. The establishment of public schools was one of the first acts of the early settlers of Grand Rapids.

CHAPTER TWO

FRONTIER EDUCATION (1835-1848)

The years 1835-1848 cover the beginnings of both public and private educational effort in Grand Rapids. The first private schools were opened in 1835; the first school district was organized during that year. The years 1835-1848 were a period of struggle for the idea of tax-supported schools, a struggle which received stimulus from the organization of the State School System, but was retarded by the effects of the Panic of 1837 and the years of depression which followed, and lasted through much of the period. During this time three school districts were organized in the area now comprising Grand Rapids, but education above the primary level was not available, except in private schools. The community grew from a population of 100-200 to approximately 2000. In spite of this very considerable growth, the public schools remained essentially the typically pioneer, ungraded, one-room, primary schools. Toward the end of this period there were discussion and agitation for the establishment of a union or graded school.

LEGAL BACKGROUND AND STRUCTURE

The township board established the first school district in 1835 while this area was still a part of the Michigan Territory,

but by the time the first public school was opened, in the summer of 1837 the territory had become a state. The public schools of Grand Rapids during this whole period were therefore organized upon the basic philosophy set forth in the State Constitution of 1835, the laws passed later by the State Legislature, and the rules established by the state superintendent of public instruction.

Constitutional Provisions

The Constitution of 1835 contained five sections on education. These sections provided for the appointment of a state superintendent of public instruction, the establishment of a primary school fund, a system of common schools which must be kept open at least three months in each year in each school district, the establishment of at least one library in each township, and the support of a state university.

On July 26, 1836, John D. Pierce was appointed state superintendent of public instruction and, by act of the Legislature on that same day, was commissioned to prepare recommendations for a system of common schools and a plan for the university and its branches.¹ Soon after his appointment, Superintendent Pierce took an extended trip through the eastern states, studying schools and conferring with the leading educators there. When the Legislature met in 1837, he submitted his recommendations to them and they adopted them with only slight changes, on March 20, 1837.²

1-Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1835-1836, P. 50.

2-Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1837. Detroit:

John S. Bagg, 1837. No. 63.

Basic School Code

The unit of administration was the school district controlled by a district board consisting of a moderator, a director, and an assessor. These officers were responsible for the school, and were required, with the consent of the district, to provide buildings, school furniture, and supplies. Power was granted to them to levy taxes of not more than \$90 per year for the support and operation of the school, of not more than \$500 for a school building, and not more than \$10 per year for books. The district board was charged with the responsibility of employing qualified teachers, and maintaining school for at least three months each year. The township also had some definite and specific responsibilities for schools. A township board of three school inspectors was to be elected with the responsibility of organizing new districts, inspecting the school, examining teachers, apportioning the Primary School Fund among the various districts, raising an amount by taxation equal to that received from the state, and making annual reports to the county clerk on matters relating to schools. This legislative act of 1837 constitutes the basic school code of the State of Michigan although it has been much amended and supplemented.

Amendments of 1839

It is significant that this basic law provided that the support of schools be based on the taxable property of the school district in proportion to its valuation. Some school districts found it difficult to raise the money needed to finance schools and therefore, in 1839, the Legislature enacted a law which permitted a district to

assess additional amounts, necessary to meet the expenses of the school, on the parents, in proportion to the time the children were in school.¹ If not paid, the tax was to be collected by the sale of the property of the parent. The result of this law was that the schools had a fair attendance so long as the public funds met the expense, but when this money had been expended the poorer parents withdrew their children from school. This practice tended to produce a panic among the others because the fewer children in school the higher the rate bills would become and, as a result, the schools frequently closed.

Amendments of 1840

The original law of 1837 also made it mandatory for each organized school district in the state to keep school open at least three months in each year. In 1840 this provision was amended to make it permissible for the voters at the annual meeting to determine the length of time school would be held each year.² This amendment also reduced the amount a district could spend for building a schoolhouse to \$100 unless the township school inspectors specified a larger amount, and even then it could not exceed \$300. A total of not more than \$300 could be raised in any one district in any one year, and there had to be at least nine children of school age in any district before a schoolhouse could be built.

1-Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1839. Detroit: John S. Bagg, 1839. No. 105.

2-Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1840. Detroit: George Dawson, 1840. No. 121.

One Dollar and One Mill Taxes

Another provision of the original school act of 1837 was that in addition to the school district taxes, the township was required to levy an amount for school purposes equal to the amount received from the Primary School Fund. In 1841 this provision was amended to give to the electors of the township at the annual meeting the right to raise for the support of schools up to \$1 per child between the ages of five and seventeen years.¹ In 1843 another act was passed which provided that the supervisor in each township should assess for the support of schools in the year 1843 the amount of \$25 for 1844 a tax of one-half mill on each dollar of the taxable property of the school district and for 1845 and annually thereafter one mill on each dollar of valuation.² This act of 1843 also reestablished the mandatory three months minimum school year.

Union School Law

When the original school code was adopted in 1837, no provision was made for more than one schoolhouse in each district, consequently, whenever it became necessary to build another building, the old district was divided and a new one formed. It became evident very soon that, in the more thickly populated areas, some other provision than subdividing was necessary. The Legislature in 1843 saw the need of meeting this problem, and passed a law which permitted the

1-Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1841. Detroit: George Dawson, 1841. No. 48.

2-Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1843. Detroit: Ellis and Briggs, 1843. No. 50.

formation of union school districts.¹ Another law having to do with schoolhouses was enacted in 1846.² Some districts had failed to exercise care in obtaining proper titles for the sites before the schools were built, and therefore found themselves in legal difficulties. To remedy this condition, the law provided that the district must have a clear title or a lease for 99 years on any site on which a brick or stone building was to be erected, or a clear title or lease for 50 years on the site of a frame schoolhouse unless the district retained the right to remove the schoolhouse when so directed by the qualified voters.

School Supervision

Under the provisions of the original code, the responsibility for visitation and supervision of schools was placed on the township board of school inspectors. This plan was followed for three years; then the Legislature, for some unspecified reason, repealed that portion of the law which required school visitation. Superintendent Franklin Sawyer, in his annual report for 1841, asked that the supervisory responsibility be placed on a county official. Finally, in 1843, the Legislature restored to the township board, in a modified form, the requirement of visitation. The inspectors were to designate one of their members to visit each school in the township at least once each term.³ This sketchy visitation program and the requirement that school inspectors examine and certify

1-Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1843, No. 50, Section 37.

2-Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1846. Detroit: Bagg and Harmon, 1846. No. 134.

3-Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1843, No. 50, Sec. 28.

teachers constituted all of the direction and control given to these early schools unless, as sometimes happened, one of the members of the district board was an educated person who took a real interest in seeing that the school was well taught.

Legal Basis for University Branches

The legislative act which set up the legal framework for the control of the University provided that the Board of Regents and the superintendent of public instruction were to establish branches in different parts of the state as authorized by the Legislature.¹ The branches were not to confer degrees, but were to contain at least three departments; one for the education of females, in the higher branches; a department of agriculture, and a department for the training of teachers for the primary schools. Several such branches were established, but there was much criticism of the plan and in 1846 the Board of Regents cut off the appropriation for the four branches then in existence.²

1-Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1837, No. 55.

2-Francis W. Shearman, System of Public Instruction and Primary School Law of Michigan. Lansing: Ingals, Hedges and Company, 1852. P. 315.

LIFE IN GRAND RAPIDS

Beginning in 1833 with the coming of the first permanent settlers from New England, Grand Rapids rapidly became a "boon town"¹. People were very optimistic about its possibilities. Outside capital was invested freely in projects not justified by actual conditions. The boom burst suddenly with the financial crash which overtook the country in 1837. Because Grand Rapids was so new and so much a center of speculation, the blow was unusually heavy. The following statement by John Ball, who first came to Grand Rapids in 1836, is an eye witness account:²

Grand Rapids then a village in the wilderness, had her dark days in 1837: when the light went out in her dwellings, and when bankruptcy and ruin seemed to be the presiding genii of the place. No town felt more the crushing effect of the financial revulsion which paralyzed the country between 1836 and 1842. During the few years before Grand Rapids had been one of the centers of speculation. Settlers were filling up the region around, and great things were undertaken here; some wisely and some based on prophetic vision,-----When stricken down, a man will either die, live a cripple or get well. It is so with a community. The Grand River Valley recovered after being crippled long. The year 1842 showed hopeful signs; the convalescence continued until 1846, when in full health it entered on a career of rational prosperity.

1-The information for this section was taken from the following list of references:

Albert Baxter, History of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan.
 Ernest Fisher, History of Grand Rapids and Kent County, Michigan. I, II.
 William J. Etten, A Citizen's History of Grand Rapids, Michigan.
 Franklin Everett, Memorials of the Grand River Valley. Chicago: Chicago Legal News, 1878.
 Charles E. Belknap, The Yesterdays of Grand Rapids. Grand Rapids: Dean-Hicks Company, 1922.
 Dwight Goss, History of Grand Rapids and Its Industries. I, II. Chicago: C. F. Cooper and Co., 1906.

2-Franklin Everett, Memorials of the Grand River Valley, Pp. 42-44.

Lucius Lyon¹ said in letters written in 1838² and 1840³ that the population of Grand Rapids dropped from 1,200 to 1,000 in that two-year period. The financial reverses incident to the panic were followed in the spring of 1838 by bad floods caused by an ice jam in the river. The floods caused added misery and suffering to many persons who were already struggling for existence.

Among the first acts of the newly incorporated village in 1838, were the raising of \$200 for poor relief, and the desperate expedient of issuing \$300 in \$1 and \$2 bills backed by the credit of the village. It was several years before they were redeemed; they were used as currency and commonly called "shin-plasters". There were no banks in Grand Rapids until 1852.

Louis Campau became bankrupt as a result of the Panic of 1837 and Lucius Lyon the other leading citizen of Grand Rapids also suffered great financial loss. These men were bitter enemies and, at

1-Lucius Lyon, one of the most outstanding citizens of Grand Rapids during this period, played a very important part in the early history of Michigan. He was born on a farm near Shelbourne Falls about six miles from Burlington in Cittenden County, Vermont, February 26, 1800. His father, Asa Lyon, was a prosperous farmer and managed to give him a good practical education. Lyon came west to take a position as teacher in a Girl's Seminary at Detroit. In 1823 he received an appointment which he held until 1830 as deputy surveyor of the public lands belonging to the United States. He was elected to Congress as the Territorial Delegate and later as one of the first Senators when Michigan became a state. He returned to Grand Rapids in 1839 to devote full time to his business interests. He was again elected to Congress in 1843 from the Second Michigan District. He played a very influential part in the State Constitutional Convention of 1835 and served as a Regent of the University from 1837-1839. He died in Detroit in 1851 at the home of his nephew, George W. Thayer.

2-Michigan Pioneer Collections. Lansing: Robert Smith Printing Co., 1897. XXVII, P. 454.

3-Ibid., Pp. 535.

a time when the young community needed the whole-hearted cooperation of all citizens, they were constantly quarreling. Campau succeeded in purchasing 72 acres of the choicest land on the east side of the river. Lyon bought from Campau that part north of the present Lyon Street and platted it as the Village of Kent. Campau retaliated by platting the area from Division Street to the river between Pearl and Lyon Streets as a continuous row of lots with no space allowed for streets. After several attempts, Lyon succeeded in purchasing from a property owner the lot which is now Monroe Avenue from Pearl to Lyon Streets, and opened it as a street. Lyon was able through his political connections to get the name of the township and later the village changed to Kent in 1836; it was not changed back to Grand Rapids until 1844. When the original property transaction was made between the two men, Mrs. Campau refused to sign away her dower rights to the property purchased by Lyon and for many years this prevented the lot owners from getting clear titles.

The first steamboat, the Governor Mason, was put into operation between Grand Haven and Grand Rapids in 1837. This steamboat was followed by others operating both below and above the rapids, most of the freight reached Grand Rapids by boat until the coming of the first railroads. Many of the steamboats used on the river during this period were built at Grand Rapids.

A weekly newspaper, The Grand River Times, was started in 1837. It was succeeded by The Grand Rapids Enquirer in 1841. The Grand River Eagle was started by Aaron B. Turner in 1844. None of

these early weeklies was very successful financially. It was not at all unusual for them to be forced to cease publication for several issues because of a lack of money or inability to get the paper on which to print their news. They were composed almost entirely of national and state political news, want ads and syndicated stories and frequent editorials attacks on the rival paper and its policies.

At the beginning of this period there was only weekly mail service to and from Grand Rapids. A trip from Detroit took one week on horseback. With the addition of new stage lines the service became more frequent and regular until, in 1846, daily service was established with Battle Creek, and weekly and semi-weekly service was maintained to several other places. Toward the end of this period, the citizens were making efforts to get railroads to and through Grand Rapids. In 1846 they were able to get the State Legislature to charter the Grand River Valley Railroad with permission to build a road from Jackson to Grand Rapids. In 1847, a Kalamazoo to Grand Rapids Railroad was chartered, and in an address given in celebration of this event the Rev. Joseph Penney of the Presbyterian Church made the bold prediction that Grand Rapids would have a population of 30,000 by 1900.

The streets during this period followed for the most part the old Indian trails, and were not improved in any way. They were quagmires in wet weather, and dusty in dry weather. Not until 1847 was any serious attempt made at street improvement; then Canal Street for a short distance south of Michigan was improved by hauling in sand and then covering the sand with cracked limestone.

It was generally considered that the year 1842 was the turning point in the struggle to overcome the effects of the hard times following the Panic of 1837. Undoubtedly, one of the helpful factors was the completion along the east side of the river of the power canal which increased real estate values and caused several small industries to spring up along its banks. It is interesting that as early as 1847, the first small factory to use power woodworking machinery went into operation.

Franklin Everett, who came to Grand Rapids in 1846, reported that times were still hard then, and that farmers could get very little for their crops. The best wood could be had for \$1 per cord.

There were five organized churches, four doctors and eleven lawyers. Lots were cheap because many of them were owned by non-residents who were eager to sell. A brass band was organized, and gave public concerts. Dances were held frequently during the winter months, and the more serious-minded residents attended meetings of the Lyceum, to hear debates on the controversial issues of the day.

During this period (1835-1848) Grand Rapids was fundamentally Democratic in politics, although the Whigs came close to carrying the county in 1840, and carried the township in 1848 by 24 votes. In local politics, one of the major issues was the licensing of taverns to sell liquor.

The village grew from approximately 100 to 2,000 in population between the years 1835 and 1848 and by the end of the period a feeling of optimism for the future was quite general. There was a feeling that the worst was over, that the pioneer days were at an end,

and that Grand Rapids was destined for great growth and progress. There was talk about incorporating as a city and building a Union School both of which projects would be needed, if the expected developments took place.

COMMON SCHOOLS AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

First White Schools

The first schools in Grand Rapids exclusively for white children were private schools. Miss Emily Guild, daughter of Joel Guild, who came to Grand Rapids in 1833, opened a school in the spring of 1835 in the building on Waterloo Street later known as the "old yellow warehouse". This building was partly completed on the Catholic Mission property, and was moved across the river on the ice by Louis Campau to be used as a church. Miss Guild's pupils were for the most part small sisters or cousins of the teacher; not more than two or three other children were enrolled. The term was only two or three months long.¹

Another school was operated for about three months during 1835 in the home of Darius Winsor at Fountain and Ionia Streets by a Miss Day, who had been a teacher at the Thomas Mission. At the conclusion of this one term, she returned to her home in Massachusetts. There were approximately ten pupils in this school.²

In the summer of 1836, Miss Sophia Page taught a small school in a new barn a little to the southeast and across the street from

1-Albert Baxter, History of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 219
2-Ibid.

the present Morton Hotel. Daniel Smith had a school for boys and Miss Mary Hinsdill a school for girls at the National Hotel during the winter of 1836-37. There was a total attendance of about 25 pupils in these schools.¹

First Public School

Although the township board took action on May 9, 1835, establishing the first school district and setting its boundaries,² the summer of 1837 came before the commissioners, William A. Richmond, Charles I. Walker and Noble H. Finney, arranged for a term of school to be taught by Miss Celestia Hinsdill of Kalamazoo. The school was established on Prospect Hill in a frame building which had been built by Aaron Sibley as a residence.³

Frequent reference is made to this old frame building, in the early history of Grand Rapids. In addition to housing the first public school, it was used by several private schools and for Lyceum and other public meetings, and at one time was used to house the fire engine. There is no evidence that a public school was conducted in 1838; the tone of the following editorial in the Grand River Times for March 27, 1838, seems to indicate that the school was not open:

While our young and ambitious State is looking forward with proud anticipation, to the results to arise from its magnificent University and its branches, we hope that the common schools of the State will not be neglected. They are the

1-Albert Baxter, History of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 219-220.

2-The boundaries of this district in terms of present landmarks were: the River on the west, Hall Street on the South, Eastern Avenue on the east and approximately the Atwater-Northwood Street line at the northern boundary of Riverside Park on the north.

3-Albert Baxter, History of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 220.

stepstones of the intelligence of a people. They are the pulses that indicate the mental health of the body politic. In them the great mass of the people must receive their education, and upon them must the higher institutions depend. They should be cherished with the utmost zealous care for in proportion as their benefits are extended, so must be the strength and permanency of our republican institution. In them, every citizen, whether parent or not, whose bosom beats with one feeling of amor patriae, should take the deepest interest. When we witness the apathy that is sometimes felt upon this subject we are filled with alarm, and we long to have the power and the opportunity to awake the attention of every citizen to its vast import, till they shall not only know but feel the mighty influence that common schools exert upon the public weal.

Upon this subject, line upon line precept upon precept are needed, to arouse a correct state of feeling, and there is none more worthy the attention of the press than this.

It is in vain that the school fund is ample, it is in vain that laws are liberal and encouraging unless the people aid in carrying out the plan, of giving an opportunity to every child in the land, to acquire the elements of knowledge, the key to the vast storehouse of wisdom, filled with the results of the learning of the past.

Our attention has been called to this subject by the neglect which common schools have met with, from our citizens. Have our intelligent citizens forgotten the pit from which they were dug, the rock from which they were hewn, that they neglect common schools. Have they forgotten the influences that formed their character. We hope not, and we hope they will no longer deserve and receive censure for their great apathy upon this subject.

No trouble or expense should be spared in placing our common schools upon a permanent basis so that they may command the respect and confidence of all, and secure the services of teachers qualified for their business. It is a narrow minded and short sighted economy, that comes short of this, as it is one of those cases where giving does not impoverish nor withholding enrich.

West Side Schools

The first public school for white children on the west side was opened in 1838 in the old Mission Schoolhouse just south of Bridge Street.¹ The school which had about two dozen pupils, was taught by a Miss Bond, who came to Grand Rapids to teach at the

1-Albert Baxter, History of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 223.

mission and later became Mrs. Frances Prescott. The school was open most of the year for six days a week, from 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. The log building and furnishings were very primitive, but this structure remained the only west side school building for several years. Miss Mary Green, who later became Mrs. William I. Blakeley, succeeded Miss Bond and taught the summer term only, in 1838 and 1840. There is no further information available about this school for several years.

First Schoolhouse

The east side school district acquired a building in 1838 when a schoolhouse built by William I. Blakeley was completed on the north side of Fulton at the end of Jefferson Street.¹ This one story frame building accommodated about 80 pupils and two teachers. At least part of the time a woman teacher was employed. The building was used until it was destroyed by fire on February 22, 1849.² The first teacher in this school was Joseph B. Galusha, son of the governor of Vermont. Other teachers who served the east side school were Warren B. Weatherly, O. R. Weatherly, Elijah Marsh and Thomas B. Cuming, who was in charge when the building burned. Thomas Cuming, the son of the Rev. Francis Cuming of the Episcopal Church, later went west to Nebraska, where he became Acting Governor.

Organization of Walker Township and Village of Grand Rapids

Walker Township on the west side of the river and the Village

1-First schoolhouse in other cities: Buffalo, 1818; Cleveland, 1815; Chicago, 1832; Detroit, 1838; Jackson, 1833; Battle Creek, 1834; Ann Arbor, 1840; Lansing, 1847.
2-Grand Rapids Enquirer, February 28, 1849.

of Grand Rapids on the east side were organized in 1838.¹ The first township meeting in Walker was held in the spring of 1838 in the old Baptist Mission Schoolhouse. The following officers were elected: Isaac Turner, clerk; Harry Eaton, treasurer; Robert Hilton, Isaac Turner, Ira Jones, Josiah Burton, justices of the peace. At this time the Township of Walker included all of that part of Kent County lying west and north of Grand River. There was never a village organization in Walker; that part of it which later was included in Grand Rapids remained under township government until it became a part of the city in 1850.²

The village of Grand Rapids, lying entirely on the east side of the river, was organized by act of the Legislature April 5, 1838.³ This incorporation did not affect the legal status of the school district and the township board continued to administer its responsibilities in relation to schools.

ATTEMPTS TO ESTABLISH SECONDARY SCHOOLS

University Branch

It was the original plan of the Regents of the University to establish a branch in Grand Rapids. Accompanying the report of the University Regents for 1852 is a memorandum by Dr. Zina Pitcher, in which he states that the Regents decided that branches should be established before the University itself as a means of preparing

1-Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1838. Detroit: John S. Bagg, 1838. Act 10, Section 7, Adjourned Session of 1837.
 2-William J. Etten, Citizen's History of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 55.
 3-Ibid., Pp. 55-56.

students for university work.¹ To do this wisely, they employed an agent to visit various locations in the state, to get the cooperation of citizens living at points that seemed most suitable for the location of branches, and to report his findings to the board. The following is Pitcher's statement relative to the report made by the agent to the Regents:²

This agent who was restricted to eight localities reported in favor of locating branches at Pontiac, Detroit, Monroe, Tecumseh, Niles, Grand Rapids, Palmer and Jackson, the citizens of which were required to furnish the state and edifice necessary for the accommodation of pupils.

Pitcher reported that branches were actually established and supported by the University at Monroe, Tecumseh, Niles, White Pigeon, Kalamazoo, Pontiac, Romeo and Detroit. Branches were also located at Mackinac, Jackson, Utica, Ypsilanti and Coldwater, but no appropriations from the University were made for their support. He made no mention of the organization of branches at Grand Rapids or Palmer.

In a letter written by Lucius Lyon from Washington on May 5, 1838, he refers to the branch at Grand Rapids as if it were already established.³

A branch of the University of the State has lately been located there with a department in it for the education of young ladies in all of the higher branches.

Apparently an attempt was made to raise the money and furnish the site as shown by the following statement of Lucy Ball, daughter of John Ball:⁴

1-Francis W. Shearman, System of Public Instruction and Primary School Law of Michigan, Pp. 313-315.

2-Ibid., P. 313.

3-Michigan Pioneer Collections, XXVII, P. 454.

4-Publications of the Historical Society of Grand Rapids, No. 2, I, Pt. 2.

In 1839 when there was talk of having a branch of the University here in Grand Rapids, a fact that gave the name of College Avenue to one of our streets, we find his name (John Ball's) on the subscription list for \$25.00.

Henry Seymour's School

Henry Seymour's School, which opened on June 6, 1842, is considered the first of real secondary school rank and the forerunner of the Grand Rapids Academy. The following paid advertisement in the Grand Rapids Enquirer for June 3, 1842, told the story:

Mr. Seymour would beg leave to inform the inhabitants of Grand Rapids and vicinity, that he intends to open a Select School in this village, on Monday, the sixth of June, in the house occupied for worship by the Dutch Reformed; in which will be taught all the English Branches usually taught in such schools, with the rudiments of the Latin and Greek Languages. Terms \$3.50 per quarter.

H. Seymour

The Enquirer of September 16, 1842, announced the opening of the second term on October 3, and listed as references: A. D. Rathbone, the Rev. Hart E. Waring, Dr. Charles Shepard, T. H. Lyon, W. G. Henry and Judge John Almy.¹

1-The following is a list of other private schools operating between 1842 and 1849:

- 1842- Miss M. Lovell, school over the Kent Store for the teaching of French, drawing, and Chinese painting.
- 1844- Miss Sarah P. Stevens opened a school for young women in the upper rooms of the C. P. Calkins residence at Ottawa and Fountain Streets.
- 1844- Mr. Philbrick and a "Science of Music" school in the Dutch Reformed Church.
- 1846- A Catholic Academic School was held at the corner of Monroe and Ionia in charge of a Mr. Cock.
- 1846- A Miss Janes had been conducting for several years a School for Young Ladies across Monroe from the Catholic School but married in the fall of 1846 and the school was closed.
- 1847- Mr. P. W. Moore had a Select School for Young Ladies and Gentlemen in the Rathbone House on Prospect Hill.
- 1848-1849- Mrs. A. Jennison kept a Select School for Young Women on Prospect Hill.
- 1848- Mrs. E. T. Moore had a School for Young Ladies at her residence on the south side of Monroe above Market.
- 1849- Miss Hollister, School for Misses, not under ten years of age, courses in English, French and drawing held in the Rathbone House on Prospect Hill.

Grand Rapids Academy

On Monday, March 27, 1843, a meeting was held in the Court House, to adopt measures to establish an Academy.¹ John Ball was chairman of this meeting, W. A. Richmond, secretary, and the Rev. James Ballard was the spokesman who stated the object of the meeting. A committee of five men was appointed to prepare a plan, draft regulations, laws, and so forth, for the speedy establishment of the Academy. This committee consisted of John Almy, Lovel Moore, James Ballard, W. G. Henry, and E. B. Bostwick. A second meeting was called for April 1; the committee was then to submit its report.

At the meeting April 1, the report of the committee was adopted and a large number of persons subscribed and became members of the association. Messrs. Bostwick, Ballard, Taylor, Chubb, and Henry were selected to solicit subscribers in Grand Rapids and adjoining towns and counties. Before adjournment, a third meeting was called for April 8, so that the organization might be completed and trustees elected to direct the institution for the coming year. The announcement made by the trustees, before the opening of the Academy follows:²

Arrangements have been made to open an academic institution at the village of Grand Rapids, on the first Monday of May, 1843. The trustees have engaged Henry Seymour as the Principal of the institution. Mr. Seymour has conducted a high school in this place for the last nine months, with great credit to himself, and to the entire satisfaction of his patrons. He is a young gentleman of unblemished moral and religious character and every way competent for the proper discharge of the duties of his station. It is intended ultimately that the institution shall furnish instruction in the various branches of a scientific, literary and polite education. At present,

1-Grand Rapids Enquirer, March 29, 1843.
2-Grand Rapids Enquirer, April 12, 1843.

provision will be made for a thorough course of instruction in English studies. The languages will receive attention so far as may be necessary. The rates of tuition are \$3.00 per quarter, to be paid one half in advance. Board can be had in good families on reasonable terms. Admission can be obtained into the school by applying to any one of the following trustees:

E. B. Bostwick	James Ballard
John Almy	James McCray
C. Shepard	A. Platt
D. Ball	Geo. Martin
W. G. Henry	T. B. Church
J. Ball	J. F. Chubb
W. A. Richmond	E. W. Davis
James M. Smith	C. H. Taylor
	L. Moore

The Grand Rapids Academy, incorporated by Act of the Legislature, March 11, 1844, was the seventeenth academy to be incorporated in Michigan.¹ Henry Seymour continued as principal for only one year. He was followed in order by E. B. Elliott, Addison Ballard, E. A. Reynolds

1-William L. Smith, Historical Sketches of Education in Michigan, P. 46.

The following list gives the corporate name, location and date of incorporation:

Name	Location	Date
Academy at Ann Arbor	Ann Arbor	1830
Auburn Academy	Auburn	1831
White Pigeon Academy	White Pigeon	1831
Cass County Academy	Cassopolis	1833
Michigan and Huron Institute	Kalamazoo	1833
Michigan Manual Labor Institute	Washtenaw Co.	1833
Pontiac Academy	Pontiac	1833
Richland Academy	Richland	1833
Romeo Academy	Romeo	1833
Shelby Liberal Institute	Macomb County	1833
Spring Arbor Academy	Spring Arbor	1835
Marshall Academy	White Pigeon	1836
Tecumseh Academy	Tecumseh	1837
Grass Lake Academy and Teachers Seminary	Grass Lake	1839
Marshall Female Academy	Marshall	1839
Allegan Academy	Allegan	1843
Grand Rapids Academy	Grand Rapids	1844

and Franklin Everett. The Academy was popular for a few years as shown by the fact it had four teachers in 1847; Franklin Everett, A. M., principal; Thomas B. Cuming, A. B., assistant; Mrs. Franklin Everett, preceptress of the female department; and Miss Elizabeth White, assistant.¹ Mr. Everett continued as principal until the opening of the Union School caused interest in the academy to lag; it was discontinued as a corporate entity about 1851. Mr. and Mrs. Everett continued its operation as a private school (Everett's Academy) except for brief intervals until 1874.²

CHARACTER OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Everett's Comments

Professor Everett commented on the public schools in Grand Rapids when he arrived in 1846. There were three primary schools in all; one on the west side of the river, held in the Old Mission

1-Grand Rapids Weekly Enquirer, Feb. 3, 1847.

2-Franklin Everett, popularly called Professor Everett, exerted a great deal of influence on the culture and educational life in Grand Rapids over a period of nearly 45 years of active teaching. He was born in Worthington, Massachusetts, January 26, 1812. Because of poverty he was unable to attend school very long, but he fitted himself for college with little formal education. He began teaching when he was 16 and finally at 23 years of age entered Colby University, then Waterville College, where he was graduated in 1838. He was in charge of the Black River Academy in Vermont and later of academies in Canajoharie and Cooperstown, New York; he came to Grand Rapids in 1846 to be principal of Grand Rapids Academy. Mr. Everett was an active member of the Lyceum and frequently appeared on its programs. He was also a member of the Kent Scientific Institute to which he presented his fine collection of minerals. He was a member of the Old Residents Association and author of an authentic and interesting book on the early history of the Grand River Valley.

Schoolhouse, another in the north end of the east side, "up in Kent", in a rented building, and the one on Fulton, at the end of Jefferson Street. In describing them, he said:¹

At that time the private schools completely overshadowed the public ones, and the teachers in the public schools had no enviable position in consequence. In the village there was little interest taken in the district schools, while the private schools were strong in the public sympathy.

Schools Ungraded

There is no accurate record of ungraded schools, but all evidence indicates that they were pretty much the typical one-room pioneer ungraded school. In the annual report for 1842, the state superintendent of public instruction said that in many schools the whole program was based on memory and that often several books were used in the same school in the same group or class.

The following description of a pioneer school is probably a fairly accurate illustration of the curriculum and methods employed in these schools.²

The branches usually taught in those early days were reading, spelling, writing, and arithmetic. Sometimes geography and grammar received attention but not often. The books mostly used were Murray's English Readers, with Introduction, Dilworth's and Webster's Spelling Books, Dabell's and Ostrander's Arithmetics, Morse's Geography and Greerleaf's and Murray's Grammars. The instruction in most schools was very rudimentary in character, while it cannot be said that there was much if any, method in the manner in which it was given. Spelling and reading were made specialties, and were regarded as the chief test of scholarship. The alphabet was taught in the old slow way, by commencing at the letter A and naming the letters in order to the letter Z. Usually one term was consumed in learning the letters, and usually another one in learning words of one syllable and simple two syllable words. If a pupil was sufficiently apt to be able to learn the exercises in reading in the

1-Franklin Everett, Memorials of the Grand River Valley. Chicago: Chicago Legal News, 1878. Pp. 382-383.

2-William L. Smith, Historical Sketches of Education in Michigan. P. 8.

spelling book during the third term, he was immediately advanced to the English reader class. There were no mental arithmetics in use in those days and the first exercises of the students in the study of numbers was in connection with the slate. The average pupil generally progressed before quitting school as far as through the fundamental rules, and possibly to "vulgar fractions"; others, endowed with more perseverance and favored with better opportunities, were not content until the mysteries of the, "rule of three", had been explored, while occasionally one might be found who had been through the book.

The school on Fulton Street may have had two rooms, and, since there were two teachers part of the time, it is quite possible that one of them taught beginners and the other the more advanced pupils, although there is no evidence to prove that the school was organized in that way. It is also known that the township voted \$200 for schools during 1843, but this appropriation included the school at Reed's Lake and probably some other schools than the two in present Grand Rapids, because Grand Rapids Township consisted at that time of all of Kent County lying south and east of the river.

Early Library

An advertisement by Johnathan Lamb of Ann Arbor in the Grand Rapids Enquirer for April 18, 1843, urged school inspectors to call on the county treasurer for their share of the penal fines and called attention to the fact that the new law required townships to raise \$25 for libraries. He urged the inspectors to purchase "The Massachusetts School Library". Apparently the Grand Rapids Township School Inspectors became interested in his proposal; as a result the east side schools acquired the beginnings of a library. In 1845 the following newspaper article appeared:¹

1-Grand Rapids Enquirer, February 14, 1845.

The school inspectors of Grand Rapids have purchased of Johnathan Lamb of Ann Arbor 150 volumes of Harpers and the Massachusetts School Library an appropriation having been made for the purpose at the Town Meeting last spring.

Financial Support

The report of the state superintendent of public instruction for 1840 stated that in 1839 District No. 1 of the Township of Kent (Grand Rapids) raised \$666.57 to build a house and support a school. A total attendance of 77 pupils was reported in that district. School was in session five and one-half months. In his annual report for 1842, the superintendent states that one district kept school open for nine months, raised a total of \$148 and had a total attendance of 115. State aid was 37¢ per child in 1843, 42¢ in 1844 and 28¢ in 1845. In the report for 1843, the state superintendent included a study of the salaries paid teachers in 44 towns and villages outside Grand Rapids. However, in a similar study reported in 1846, he placed Grand Rapids fourth in the state with a monthly salary of \$26.87 for men and \$17 for women.

Textbooks Used

The following advertisement for the Kent Bookstore indicates the textbooks used:¹

Just received at the Kent Bookstore, a large assortment of Schoolbooks, which will be sold cheap for cash--remember for cash only.

Olney's, Smith's, Hale's, Parleys', Brinsmade's, Woodbridge's, Willett's, Morse's, Huntington's, Worcester's and Scripture Geography.

1-Grand Rapids Enquirer, March 8, 1843.

Murray's, Smith's, Willson's, Kirkham's, and Levizac's Grammar.

Comstock's, Phelps's, Blair's, and Smellie's Philosophy. Wilson's, Smith's, Colburn's, Pike's, Daboll's, Ostrander's, Emerson's, Parley's, Adam's, and Willett's Arithmetics. Jameson's rhetoric, Newman's do., Poetry for Schools, Wilson's class-reader, Jack Holyard, Elementary spelling, English readers, Writing books, slate, slate pencils, political class book, Webster's history, Rollin's do., Pinnock's do., Hale's do., of Rome do., of Greece, Kirkham's elocution, Wheatley's logic, Hedge's do., Playfair's Euclid, Flint's Survey, Gummers's do., Columbian Orator, Duer's outline, Cobb's reader, popular lessons, Colburn's algebra, Comstock's mineralogy, elements of criticism, Paley's works, Firstbook History, Young astronomer, Colburn's first lessons, etc.

J. W. Pierce

This store had books for sale to private as well as public schools and also for outlying districts as well as those in Grand Rapids.

STATE PROGRAM OF FINANCE AND TEACHER IMPROVEMENT

Finance

The provisions for financing schools were inadequate during most of this period. People generally felt that the land grants would provide enough or almost enough money to finance public schools, but not so much money was realized from the sale and rental of these lands as was anticipated because of the hard times resulting from the Panic of 1837. The original laws contained the provision that the local district was required to match the amount of state aid, but the total sum was not enough to finance even the primitive schools of those days, and therefore the rate-bill legislation of 1839 was passed, making it possible to assess parents on the basis of the number of pupils attending school. In 1841 permission was given to townships to vote a tax of not more than \$1 per child for school purposes. In 1843 a law was passed which became

fully effective in 1845, requiring each township supervisor to assess one mill on the taxable property for the use of schools. By 1847 school revenues were derived from the following sources: interest on the primary school fund was distributed on the basis of the number of children between the ages of four and eighteen years; the township was required to levy a tax of one mill on the taxable property; the township could also levy a tax up to 50¢ per child, and a rate bill, if needed.

Teacher Institutes

During the years 1835-1848, there was considerable interest in teachers' institutes and associations as a means of teacher training and improvement. The Grand Rapids Enquirer of October 24, 1845, reprinted a circular letter from Ira Mayhew, superintendent of public instruction, in which he urged the establishment of teachers' associations and referred to the fact that on September 29, 1845, he had spoken at the Lenawee County Association which he thought was the only one of its kind in the state. His suggestion met with approval, as the following newspaper announcement shows:¹

Notice to School Officers and Teachers.

At a meeting of several of the citizens of Grand Rapids it was decided, that a convention of the teachers and school officers of this county be called to meet at Irving Hall in this village at 1 o'clock P. M. on Tuesday next, (Dec. 23rd.) for the purpose of forming a Teachers Institute for the benefit of the common schools of this county.

Citizens generally are invited to attend. Those living at a distance will be entertained by the citizens of this place free of cost. Mr. J. Lamb will be present and lecture to the teachers in the afternoon, and to the citizens generally in the evening. Mr. Lamb is prepared to furnish the towns in this County with books for their Libraries.

¹Grand Rapids Enquirer, December 19, 1845.

In 1848, a newspaper report stated that Superintendent Mayhew had made a trip to Grand Rapids for the purpose of organizing a County Educational Society, and that a meeting was held in John Ball's office to consider the matter.¹

THE MOVEMENT FOR A UNION SCHOOL

Grand Rapids Lyceum

The Grand Rapids Lyceum undoubtedly played an important part in developing and keeping alive public sentiment for the Union School.² There is no evidence to show whether or not the movement was affiliated with the National Lyceum, but it had aims like those of the National Lyceum which were, according to Cubberley,³ "the advancement of education, especially common schools." He said also that lyceums promoted membership among teachers as well as other citizens, promoted lecture courses for adults, encouraged the establishment of libraries, the equipment of schools with scientific apparatus, and propogandized the movement for more adequate taxation for schools and better trained teachers. One who reads the newspaper announcements of the meetings of the Grand Rapids Lyceum from week to week is impressed by the similarity of their program to that proposed by the national organization. The following announcement of one of the programs of the Grand Rapids Lyceum illustrates the interest shown by that group in the movement for the Union School.⁴

1-Grand Rapids Enquirer, November 22, 1848.

2-The Union School was the name commonly used to describe a graded school.

3-Elwood Cubberley, Public Education in the United States. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1919. P. 165.

4-Grand Rapids Enquirer, December 9, 1846.

Grand Rapids Lyceum Meeting at the schoolhouse on Prospect Hill. The following resolution will be discussed. That it is expedient for the village of Grand Rapids to support but one school, which school shall be arranged as to afford educational advantages from the alphabet to the highest branches of a collegiate course; and that such school should be supported by a property tax, excepting the aid given by the primary school fund and the tuition of pupils that are from abroad. Affirmative, John Ball and W. G. Henry, Negative, Charles H. Taylor and James Miller.

The Lyceum apparently did not have a steady existence. There is an announcement of its reestablishment in 1850.¹ In 1854 it was reorganized as the Grand Rapids Lyceum of Natural History with John Ball as its first president.² The new organization, as its name indicates, was primarily concerned with the study of scientific subjects and the development of collections having scientific interest.

SUMMARY

The years 1835-1848 were characterized by the beginnings of governmental organization and schools. The new settlers were determined that schools should be established for their children, but before they were able to get them organized on a sound basis, the Panic of 1837 struck Grand Rapids a severe blow. Life resolved itself into a struggle for bare existence, and every civic ambition, including the movement for improved schools, suffered. Some of the leaders in the community tried to establish facilities for secondary education by trying to get a University Branch in Grand Rapids but failed. They then devoted their attention to the establishment of the Academy, and succeeded.

1-Grand Rapids Enquirer, December 25, 1850.

2-First Annual Report of the Art and Museum Commissioners. Grand Rapids: Dean-Hicks Printing Co., 1904. P. 14.

This era (1835-1842) was a period of pioneering in education on a state-wide basis. The State School System was set up, and struggled during these years to become established on a sound financial and legal basis. The Detroit schools alone became tax-supported during this period, and their achievement undoubtedly served as a great stimulus to those leaders in Grand Rapids who were, toward the end of this period, conducting the campaign which resulted in the establishment of the Union School.

CHAPTER THREE

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNION OR GRADED SCHOOL (1848-1860)

During the period last discussed (1835-1848) there was an unsuccessful attempt to establish a University Branch in Grand Rapids and a successful attempt to establish an academy. The academy did not, however, provide the needed facilities for education beyond the primary school for all the children of the community, because the academy was private and many parents could not afford to send their children. As the number of children grew, it was logical that attention should be focused on the movement to establish Union Schools. The years (1848-1860) were marked by the building and first endeavors of the two Union Schools in Grand Rapids, one on the east side, and one on the west side of the river. The story of these schools, their construction, organization, and early development, makes up the major part of the educational history of Grand Rapids during those years.

This period also contains the first real attempts to grade the schools and to provide teacher training and supervision, and the first step toward the establishment of a complete system of tax-supported schools by the abolition of rate bills except for high school students. During this period District No. 1 appointed a superintendent of schools charged with the responsibility of supervising and

directing all of the schools in the district which included detached primary buildings, built to provide space for the younger children who could no longer be accommodated in the Union School building.

LEGAL BACKGROUND AND STRUCTURE

Constitution of 1850

This period began hopefully with the State Constitutional Convention of 1850, which was in favor of "free schools",¹ and provided in the Constitution that within five years the Legislature was to set up the legal machinery to make them possible. In spite of urging by several of the governors and the activity of the friends of the free school movement, the Legislature did not take the necessary action to abolish rate bills until 1869².

Mill Tax Laws

There was much indecision on the part of the Legislature about the amount of the mill tax needed to finance schools. In

1-The term "free school" was used very commonly to describe a tax-supported school free from rate bills.

2-The following list given by Elwood P. Cubberley in his Public Education in the United States, P. 205 indicates that Michigan was comparatively late in abolishing rate bills. The states listed abolished rate bills in the years shown:

Pennsylvania	1834	New York	1867
Indiana	1852	Connecticut	1868
Ohio	1853	Rhode Island	1868
Illinois	1855	Michigan	1869
Vermont	1864	New Jersey	1871

1851¹ the millage tax was raised to two mills, but was reduced to one mill in 1853², and there it remained until 1859³ when it was again raised to two mills.

Other Laws of this Period

In 1850 an Act of Incorporation for the City of Grand Rapids was passed by the Legislature⁴. A law was passed by the Legislature in 1855 setting up the procedure for school districts to obtain school sites by instituting condemnation proceedings⁵. Earlier, districts had, in some instances, had considerable difficulty in getting suitable sites for schoolhouses.

In 1857 the State Normal School got the right to grant teaching certificates which, when filed with the township clerk, permitted the holder to teach in any primary school in the State⁶:

The so-called Graded School Law, passed in 1859 was probably the most important Michigan legislation on education between 1848 and 1860 because it encouraged the establishing of high schools and the abolition of rate bills⁷. It provided that any school district with more than 200 children between the ages of four and

1-Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1851. Lansing: R. W. Ingalls, 1851. No. 140.

2-Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1853. Lansing: George W. Peck, 1853. No. 82.

3-Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1859. Lansing: Hosmer and Kerr, 1859. No. 247.

4-Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1850. Lansing: R. W. Ingalls, 1850. No. 247.

5-Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1855, Lansing: George W. Peck, 1855. No. 29.

6-Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1857. Detroit: John A. Kerr and Co., 1857. No. 104.

7-Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1859. No. 161.

eighteen might elect to organize as a graded school district and to establish a high school, by vote of the electors at the annual meeting of the district. Although some districts were already doing so, the act of 1859 gave legal power to the citizens of a district at the annual meeting of the electors to vote to raise by property tax all the money needed to support schools, including high schools.

The provisions of the law relative to the establishment of a high school or establishing schools free from rate bills were permissive only but they greatly encouraged school districts to adopt programs leading to expansion and improvement and were an important step toward the mandatory provisions of the Free School Law, finally passed by the Legislature ten years later. Another law passed in 1859 which in Grand Rapids affected only the Coldbrook District, provided that members of primary district boards should be elected for three years with staggered terms so that only one would be elected each year. Formerly, all three were elected annually.

LIFE IN GRAND RAPIDS

The period from 1848 to 1860 was one of transition from pioneer living to city life.¹ The population grew from approximately 2,000 to 8,000 and many of the industries and institutions that later rose to high importance in the life of the city had their beginnings.

In 1850, the City of Grand Rapids was incorporated with a population of 2,686 and an area of four square miles and in 1857, after Grand Rapids had had a few years of experience in city government, the charter was revised to meet more nearly the needs of the growing community, and the city limits were extended to include 10.9 square miles.

During this period (1848-1860), the plaster trade was of considerable importance; it gave employment to many people. The lumber industry was booming; thousands of logs and much cut lumber were floated to Grand Haven to be shipped from there by lake boats. There were mills above and below Grand Rapids as well as in the city. Much rivalry, stealing of logs and other cut-throat methods, were practiced. The first furniture factory using power machinery

1-The information for this section was taken from the following list of references:

- Albert Baxter, History of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan
 Ernest Fisher, History of Grand Rapids and County, Michigan. I, II.
 William J. Etten, A Citizen's History of Grand Rapids, Michigan.
 Franklin Everett, Memorials of Grand Rapids Valley.
 Charles E. Belknap, The Yesterdays of Grand Rapids.
 Dwight Goss, History of Grand Rapids and its Industries.

was established in 1849, and by 1851 was doing an annual business of about \$30,000 and employing 30 to 40 men.

The first bank was established in 1852. A reporter for the Rochester American who visited Grand Rapids wrote a glowing report after his return to New York state, in which he predicted that Grand Rapids would soon become the second city in Michigan. During 1856 approximately 20 stores were built with "iron fronts" which, it was reported, greatly improved the looks of the business district; extensive wharfs were built on the east side of the river, and William Harrison started his wagon works, destined to become one of the big manufacturing plants of the city.

Transportation to and from Grand Rapids improved considerably from 1848 to 1860. In 1849, two new daily stage coach lines were put into operation, making four in all. The Champion, a lake boat making three trips weekly to Milwaukee, made connection at Grand Haven with the river boats. A two-track plank road to Kalamazoo was opened in 1855, and in 1856 a night mail was established to Kalamazoo. In 1858, the Detroit and Milwaukee Railroad completed its route through Grand Rapids to Grand Haven and established the first train service to Grand Rapids.

The streets, which had been notoriously bad, were somewhat improved during these years. As late as 1850 it was reported that there was not a single good wagon road leading into the city, and that the roads that did exist for the most part followed the old Indian trails and were unfenced and at certain times were almost

impassable. In 1849 a plank road was laid up the steep sandy part of Fulton Street. In 1857, Monroe Avenue was paved with cobblestones and in 1859 Canal Street also was paved. New toll bridges were built at Leonard and Pearl Streets in 1857 and a new bridge was built at Bridge Street in that same year to replace one destroyed by fire. It is significant that the bridges were toll bridges, for the charging of tolls tended to encourage and emphasize the separation and rivalry that existed between the people on both sides of the river. In 1857 an enterprising citizen built a sprinkling wagon and sprinkled the downtown streets; he collected his pay from the merchants.

The first fire company was organized in 1849; two more were organized in 1850. There was much rivalry among the fire companies; the methods of spreading an alarm so as to call the firemen to duty were unsatisfactory, and the water supply was often very inadequate. In 1854, the city built five reservoirs at strategic points, to be used in case of fire.

The Grand Rapids Hydraulic Company, organized in 1849, piped water downtown through wooden pipes. A second water company was organized in 1854, but the water supply was so inadequate that practically everyone depended on his own wells for his water supply. Not until 1857 was the first iron water main laid on Monroe Avenue.

A few gas lights were set up in the downtown area in 1857 when the Grand Rapids Gas Light Company began operations. Gas lighting was a great novelty, received enthusiastically by the

merchants. A total of 280 gas meters had been installed by 1860.

Although there were great growth in population and advancement in many lines during this period, there were many events which interfered with this progress. There was a bad flood in 1852 and there were disastrous fires in 1857 and 1858. In 1857, 25 business buildings and manufacturing plants and Bridge Street bridge were burned, and in 1858 there were two bad fires in one of which the county records were burned. The depression or panic of 1857 was, of course, a serious blow; as late as 1860 the city was still feeling its effects.

There was some development of commercialized entertainment from 1848-1860. Theatrical troupes entertained at Collins Hall in the summer and in 1859 Squiers Hall was built which was the first building in Grand Rapids to have real stage equipment. One of the first shows to be billed there was "Uncle Tom's Cabin". With the opening of the railroad in 1858, a popular holiday trip consisted of taking the steamboat to Grand Haven and coming back by train. If one preferred, he could stay overnight to take a moonlight dance excursion on a steamboat on Lake Michigan, and return the following day either by boat or train. Beginning in 1849, with a small fair on West Bridge Street there were annual fairs, which were well attended. By 1858, they were formally organized as County Fairs and were held regularly at the fair grounds on South Division. During the winter there was much skating on the river, despite considerable danger.

There is evidence that those who were interested in the more cultural aspects of life were also active and not totally lacking in creating opportunities for enjoyment. In 1849, the first pipe organ in the city was installed in St. Mark's Church. In the winter of 1851 the Rev. Joseph Penney gave a series of Philosophical Lectures. In 1856 the Lyceum of Natural History was formed with several of the most prominent citizens of the city as active members. The Grand Rapids Library Association was formed in 1858 and in 1859 a Burns Centennial Festival was held, celebrating the birth of Robert Burns.

Further evidence that Grand Rapids was growing up was the establishment of the first daily newspaper in 1855, the opening of telegraphic communication in 1858 and the fact that in the spring of 1859 for the first time there were no Indians fishing for sturgeon at the rapids in the river.

THE EAST SIDE UNION SCHOOL

Several years before Grand Rapids was incorporated as a city some of its citizens had seen the advantage of establishing Union Schools. This movement was initiated in Grand Rapids by Elijah Marsh who was teaching in the schoolhouse on Fulton Street opposite the end of Jefferson Avenue. He enlisted the aid of Stephen Wood and John Ball¹ and from 1846 to 1848 the three men carried on a campaign which eventually resulted in the establishment of the Union School in District No. I on the east side of the river.

Both Sides of the Union School Question

The Grand Rapids newspapers carried none of this campaign but the arguments for and against the Union School were probably quite typical of those used generally in such discussions. Although probably not all of the arguments listed by Daniel Putnam in his Development of Primary and Secondary Public Education in Michigan

1--John Ball made a \$200.00 contribution in addition to his services. He was born in 1794 in Groton Township, Grafton County, New Hampshire. After being graduated from Dartmouth, he began reading law, and taught school as a means of support. His love of travel prompted him to journey to Oregon in 1832 with the third expedition in the United States to cross the Rocky Mountains. He came to Michigan in 1836 to buy and sell land with Eastern capital. He was elected State Representative for Ottawa, Kent, Ionia, and Clinton counties in 1837. After settling in Grand Rapids he served as a member of the Board of School Trustees for a period of about 30 years. He married Miss Mary Webster on December 31, 1849 and ten children were born to this marriage. He died February 3, 1884, at the age of 89.

were used in this case it is appropriate to present them.¹

Arguments Against Organization of Union Schools:

It was feared by not a few real friends of educational progress that the bringing together, on the same grounds and into the same buildings, of large numbers of children of different ages and of varying characters, would be attended by dangers and evils of grave nature. It was feared that the morals of the better class of pupils would suffer serious harm, and that proper discipline and good government could be maintained only with extreme difficulty, if at all.

Arguments For Organization of Union Schools:

They economize the time of teachers; the teaching is better; pupils are more thoroughly instructed, and make more rapid progress; each class received its due share of time and attention; all school arrangements can be better adapted to the age and capacities of different classes of pupils; a much larger number of pupils will be able to pursue advanced studies without increasing their stay in school; they afford special facilities for teaching the higher branches of study and thus serve as secondary schools; the high school grades stimulate pupils in the lower grades; they offer the advantages of higher education to all children without regard to parentage or wealth; they make it possible to have longer terms of school, better buildings and a better supply of apparatus, and other means of instruction; they secure a better class of teachers, and by bringing more teachers together, furnish a stimulus for improvement on their part; they can be better and more easily governed; the animating and inspiring influence of large numbers in the same school is of great value; the character of the school boards will be improved by the larger interests involved in the school; the people generally will have a higher regard for education; thorough supervision of all the schools will be made practicable; and finally the graded school is the most economical and most efficient form of school yet discovered.

1-Daniel Putnam, Development of Primary and Secondary Public Education in Michigan. Ann Arbor: George Wahr, 1904. Pp. 80-82.

Reorganization of Districts

Strangely enough, the first act leading to the building of the Union School provided for a separation of districts rather than a union of districts. The East Side District was divided almost equally in 1848 at a line midway between Newberry and Mason Streets, the lower or southern part forming District No. 1, and the northern part District No. 6, commonly known as the Coldbrook District.¹ At the first meeting of District No. 1 on May 6, 1848, James M. Nelson was elected moderator, Stephen Wood, director, and W. G. Henry, assessor. Several special school meetings were held, at which the question of erecting a new schoolhouse was thoroughly and warmly discussed.

At a meeting on June 13, 1848, the opposition succeeded in rescinding action taken at an earlier meeting which authorized the board to sell the old schoolhouse and the lot on which it was situated, to procure a site for a new schoolhouse, and to contract for its erection.² A committee was appointed at this meeting (June 13, 1848) to make inquiry into the cost of the project and submit recommendations to another meeting of the electors. It would appear that the committee made a favorable report, because at a meeting held June 24, it was resolved, "That for the erection and completion of a suitable stone schoolhouse in this district, the sum of twenty-five hundred dollars be levied and assessed upon

1-Albert Baxter, History of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 220-221.

2-Grand Rapids Enquirer, June 14, 1848.

the property of the district."

On July 15, 1848, the committee recommended the purchase of lots 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 in Block 8 of the Dexter Fraction and the six lots lying and adjoining on the east side of the Hatch Addition, as the new schoolhouse site. This report was accepted and the property which is the present site of the old Junior College Building on Ransom Street was purchased by the district.

At the annual school meeting on September 24, 1848, the organization of the school district as a union school district was completed, and the following board of education of seven members was elected: moderator, Thompson Sinclair; director, H. K. Rose; assessor, Michael Connolly; trustees, W. K. Henry, John Ball, Zenas G. Winsor and T. H. Lyon.

The School Building

On November 11, 1848, the Director H. K. Rose, was authorized to receive proposals for the erection of a two-story stone schoolhouse without a basement, according to the plans drawn by Stephen Wood. On January 8, 1849, the committee accepted the proposal of David Burnett, and the building, which was constructed of stone from the Grand River, was built during the summer and fall. However, before it was completed, the old schoolhouse on Fulton Street burned down on February 22, 1849, and school was held in private residences for the remainder of the term.¹

¹-Grand Rapids Enquirer, February 28, 1849.

An interesting feature of the construction of the building has to do with the cupola. Apparently the original plans did not include one, but they were changed. An editorial in the Grand Rapids Eagle of June 29, 1848, commented on the speed with which the building was progressing and the fact that the site was highly desirable because it made the building appear to good advantage and afforded a good view of the village. The editor advocated the construction of a dome on the top of the building as a sort of observatory and a place of vantage for those who would like to get a good view of the village and the surrounding country, and recommended that the money be raised by popular subscription. The Enquirer of August 1, 1849, contained the following announcement:¹

The suggestions of our citizens have prevailed and by virtue of a private subscription, the contractor has commenced placing on the roof of the new schoolhouse an octagonal dome. The room within the dome is fourteen feet in diameter, to be covered with a tin roof and will furnish a most commanding place of observation.

Apparently it was not easy to raise the money because, more than a year later, The Eagle carried the announcement that while the amount necessary for building the cupola had been subscribed not all of it had been paid in.²

It is evident that in addition to the cupola it was decided to build a basement, making the building three stories instead of two as originally planned. This was fortunate, because during

1-Grand Rapids Enquirer, August 1, 1849.

2-Grand Rapids Eagle, August 19, 1850.

the first term it was necessary to open a second primary room in the basement. The building when completed was 44 by 64 feet with only one room on each floor. Apparently these large rooms were later divided into three large study rooms, six recitation rooms, a dressing room for girls, and a room for the storage of school apparatus. John Ball, who was a member of the board of education when the school was built, made the following statement:¹

The school opened in November 1849 with six teachers in two rooms. But we soon made the basement into another to supply the want.

In an announcement at the end of the first term, printed in the newspaper over the signatures of all of the board members, the same information was given:²

Before the middle of the term, the two rooms of the school were filled to overflowing, and some twenty scholars were necessarily denied admission until another room could be fitted up. It was done and we now have the whole building in school order.

Baxter³ and Etten⁴ both speak of the building as having the larger number of rooms as does a newspaper article written in 1855, indicating that the schoolhouse was altered and partitions were installed sometime between its completion and 1855.⁵

1-Lucy Ball, John Ball and Early Grand Rapids. Publications of the Historical Society of Grand Rapids, No. 2, Vol. 1, Part 2. P. 21.

2-Grand Rapids Enquirer, February 6, 1850.

3-Albert Baxter, History of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 220.

4-William Etten, A Citizen's History of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 112.

5-Grand Rapids Enquirer, March 21, 1855.

BEGINNINGS OF THE UNION SCHOOL

Announcement of Opening

The Grand Rapids Eagle of October 26, 1849, contained the following paid advertisement of the opening of the Union School schedule for November 12, 1849, under the direction of E. M. Johnson, principal:

It is intended to make this school one of the most thorough kind, second to none combining in itself all the desirable qualities of the District or Common School and an Academy of the first rank, enabling a child to obtain an education extending from the alphabet till he is prepared for the University or Business.

The Tuition will be very low: English Branches not to exceed \$1.63 per quarter of 11 weeks and Greek, Latin and French \$2.50.

Scholars from outside the district must pay: Ordinary Branches \$2.50, Higher Branches \$3.00, and Latin, Greek and French \$4.00.

A uniform set of textbooks will be used and no change will be made except by authority of the Board of Trustees.

List of books: Webster's Elementary Spelling Book, McGuffey's Reading Books, Thompson's Practical and Higher Arithmetic and Collin's Mental Arithmetic, Smith's Primary and Clark's New England Grammar's, Smith's Primary and Olney's Geographies and Comstock's Natural Philosophy and Chemistry. Books in the Higher Branches will be announced at the time of forming classes. We recommend the purchase of books locally and advise students against the purchase of books before consulting the Principal.

Signed by all Members of the Board.

Definition of Union School

It is appropriate at this point to define the term Union School. This has been done very well in the following quotation:¹

1-Twenty-Fifth Annual Report of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1851, Lansing: John A. Kerr Co., 1862. P. 15.

The terms Union School and Graded School are synonymous. The former term is the popular and the latter the true genuine name for this class of schools. The Union School is always a graded school although the grading may be imperfect and inefficient. The term Union School is simply the common name for any public school separated in two or more rooms taught in two or more departments either in the same building or several buildings. The establishment of a Union School does not necessarily imply the building of new buildings or starting a high school.

In this case it did imply the construction of a new building and the establishment of a Higher Department which probably should not be called a high school. At first the grading was also "imperfect and inefficient", to quote the above statement.

First Year of the Union School

The first term of the Union School opened as scheduled on November 12, with Mr. E. M. Johnson as principal, assisted by a Miss Hollister, Miss Elizabeth White, Miss Almira Hinsdill and Miss Thirza Moore. An incident at the opening exercises was to determine very early the strictly non-sectarian character of this institution. John Ball reported it as follows:¹

There was much interest taken at the opening of the school and a number of citizens came in at that time. The Principal made quite a long prayer on the occasion at which some of the citizens, the Catholics, took alarm, and complained of it. So, the trustees, six in all, of which I was one, considered the matter, and wishing our school should prove, what it was intended for, the place and means of instruction to all the children of the village, unanimously adopted this rule: that teachers should only read or rehearse the Lord's Prayer. It proved satisfactory and all went on smoothly.

1-Lucy Ball, John Ball and Early Grand Rapids. Publications of the Historical Society of Grand Rapids, No. 2, Vol. 1, Part 2, P. 21.

Mr. Ball also reported that the school was popular and so many applied for admission that it was necessary to fit up the basement for another primary department which was full to capacity the next term. At the end of the first term Mr. Johnson resigned and the Rev. James Ballard was employed as principal.¹

Board Summary of First Term

At the end of the first term the board prepared a statement which was addressed to: "The Citizens of the Union School District" and was published in the Grand Rapids Enquirer of February 6, 1850. The statement follows:

The first quarter of the new Union School has closed and we feel confident in saying that it has more than fulfilled the most sanguine expectations of all of its patrons who have judged its merits by visits and not by flying reports. Its able, efficient and faithful teachers have done all they could to render the school worthy of the firm patronage of all. That they should escape the censure of all, he is a poor student of human nature who could expect. They deserve your praise, not censure. To call this large school, of more than three hundred members, together from the chaotic mess of material and to train and drill them into a state of unity and order, was indeed no trifling matter. In attempting this, to meet the severe unmerited censure of any, "was the unkindest cut of all".

Before the middle of the term, the two rooms of the school were full to overflowing, and some of the twenty scholars were necessarily denied admission until another room could be fitted

1-The Rev. James Ballard was born at Charlemont, Massachusetts in 1805. After being graduated from Williams College he taught for ten years at Bennington, Vermont, and married Miss Emeline Hinsdill in 1831. He then attended a Theological Seminary in Troy, New York and came to Grand Rapids in 1838 as pastor of the First Congregational Church. He was principal of the East Side Union School from 1850-53 and of the West Side Union School from 1855-57. In addition to his pastoral and teaching activities he spoke frequently on lyceum programs and was a contributor to the newspapers.

up. This they were notified would be done with all dispatch. It was done and now we have the whole building in school order, making room for from four hundred fifty to five hundred scholars.

The rate bill for the past term, we think, will not exceed \$1.50 per scholar, and we see no reason for supposing that it will be more for the ensuing terms, if it receives the patronage it merits.

System, order and regularity it must have. Let no obstacle be thrown in the way of these, and we venture to say that this school will prove an ornament and pride to the village, and the greatest moral, social and literary benefit to the rising generation.

The next term will commence on Monday the 11th of February with a full complement of teachers. Scholars from without the district will be received, as heretofore, at \$3.00 for the Languages and Higher Branches; \$2.50 for the ordinary branches. The term consisting of twelve weeks, no school on Saturdays.

Allow us in closing to commend this School to the hearty support and countenance of all citizens. Let all your children here meet and mingle together on the broad platform here presented of equal rights, equal privileges. Let emulation and order here reign triumphant; and time shall determine the wisdom of the heavy tax you have so cheerfully borne in the erection of our noble School Building.

All of which is respectfully submitted to your favorable consideration

- H. K. Rose, Director
- T. Sinclair, Moderator
- M. Connolly, Assessor
- Z. G. Winsor, Director
- W. G. Henry, Director
- T. H. Lyon, Director
- J. Ball, Director

Examination of the above statement shows that the grading consisted chiefly in dividing the pupils in two rooms or departments, the Languages or Higher Branches and the Common Branches. The tone of the statement also indicates that there had been some criticism of the school.

School Among First in State

The organization of the East Side Union School places Grand

Rapids very early among the cities of the state in the establishment of so-called, "graded schools", as is shown by the following list of Michigan schools giving the year of the establishment of legal graded schools:¹

Detroit	1842	Coldwater	1853
Jonesville	1844	Ann Arbor	1856
Flint	1846	Dexter	1856
Grand Rapids	1848	Dowagiac	1857
Ypsilanti	1848	Miles	1857
Adrian	1849	Ontonagon	1857
Port Huron	1849	Bronson	1858

This list gives the year that the graded schools were established legally, they were usually not put in operation until later. In Grand Rapids the schools were actually graded the following year. The second Union School in Grand Rapids was established on the West Side in 1853, in District No. 2.

Criticism of the School

Further proof that there was criticism of the new school and the new methods is furnished by an article in the Grand Rapids Eagle for June 10, 1850, asking the community to take a more charitable attitude toward it. The citizenry were called upon to support rather than to run down the school. They were asked if it had had a fair trial and their attention called to the fact that the schools in the East to which it was being unfavorably compared had been operating and developing for some time. The author pleaded for an honest heartfelt effort to make the school what it

1-Reports of the State Supt. of Public Instruction, 1855-57. Lansing: Hamner & Kerr, 1858. P. 433.

ought to be.

Evidently one of the criticisms was aimed at the fact that the older boys and girls were taught together because a special "Ladies' School," was set up at the beginning of the second term of the second year. The editor of the Enquirer expressed his opinion of the change in the following words:¹

The Board has set up a Ladies School in the middle room of the Union School under the direction of Mrs. H. Lyon and under the general supervision of Rev. Ballard. Under this arrangement many futile objections heretofore made against the school, will be obviated, and persons, even of a squeamish morality, may now send their children there with entire safety.

This same article reminded the public that, in addition to the common school subjects, the following branches were taught: algebra, geometry, trigonometry, navigation, mensuration, surveying, botany, history, French, Latin, Greek, Hebrew and "all of the oriental and practical sciences".

OTHER SCHOOLS IN GRAND RAPIDS

The City of Grand Rapids was formed by popular vote of the citizens on March 1, 1850, adopting the charter which had been granted by the State Legislature. The boundaries of the city included four sections of land in the township of Grand Rapids on the east side of the river and in Walker Township on the west side. The boundaries were what are now Wealthy Avenue, Eastern Avenue, Leonard Street, Alpine and Straight Avenues. The population at

1-Grand Rapids Enquirer, February 26, 1851.

that time was 2,686. The charter divided the city into five wards, three on the East Side and two on the West Side. Provision was made for the election of two school inspectors. As early as 1855¹ an attempt was made to organize the schools into a single school district, but this was not accomplished until 1871.

Early West Side Schools

The old Mission Schoolhouse housed the first public school on the West Side until a small frame building was built a little south of Bridge Street and east of Scribner. By 1853 when the district was organized as a Union School it was housed in a considerably larger, one-story frame building which had been built about 1850 on First Street about where St. Mary's Catholic Church now stands.²

West Side Union School District Organized

There is no record of the organization of the West Side Union School District except that it took place in 1853. Mr. Milton S. Littlefield was teaching in the west side school at that time, and continued as principal under the new organization until he resigned to go into a real estate and brokerage business, sharing an office with Withey and Eggleston, attorneys.³ He later became a national figure as Chief of the Colored Bureau in the Department of the South, and eventually attained the rank of Brigadier General.

1-Grand Rapids Enquirer, August 8, 1855.

2-Albert Barter, History of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. P. 22.

3-Grand Rapids Enquirer, November 21, 1855.

A newspaper article of August 16, 1854, carried an announcement of a meeting scheduled for the following Saturday to authorize purchase of a lot and building a schoolhouse.¹

It is reported that the schoolhouse used for the preceding four years was built on a lot leased for the purpose. The lease now having expired some action is necessary. The district comprises the fourth and fifth wards and part of the township of Walker and is estimated to have a population of from ten to fifteen hundred. The taxable valuation is estimated that a tax of one-half mills would buy a lot and put up the walls of a two-story stone schoolhouse and finish off the lower part for use the coming Winter. James Scribner is Director and P. R. Jarvis, Moderator. Mr. Littlefield, the Principal, is reported as actively working to promote the project.

Decision to Build a West Side Union Schoolhouse

At a meeting of interested citizens held on August 21, 1854, the following committees were appointed:²

Site J. F. Chubb, Alderman Turner of the Second Ward, and Dan Schermerhorn.

To Procure Plans Baker Borden, S. M. Pelton and M. S. Littlefield.

Committee to Examine into Condition of School Property in the District R. W. Cole, Nelson Robinson and H. G. Stone.

A meeting of electors was held on August 24, 1854, at which resolutions were unanimously adopted to purchase a lot and build a schoolhouse.³ The committee reported favorably on a lot running through from Broadway to Turner about 70 rods north of Bridge Street, containing about an acre of ground. This is the present site of Union High School. The meeting also voted \$1200 of which

1-Grand Rapids Enquirer, August 16, 1854.

2-Ibid., August 23, 1854.

3-Ibid., August 30, 1854.

\$250 was to be used for the first payment on the lot owned by Mr. Turner, the balance to be used for the construction of a good stone schoolhouse at an estimated cost of from \$2000 to \$3000.

Construction of the Building

The original plans calling for a two-story building were changed to include a third floor to be used as a drill hall for militia. Men who were influential in getting the change made were: Lucius Patterson, Baker Borden, and others interested in the formation of a militia company.¹ Because of this change or for some other reason the building must have cost much more than was originally planned, because a newspaper article in September, 1855, stated that the board had negotiated a loan for \$5000 from Mr. James W. Converse to be used to complete the school building and equip it.² The dimensions of the school were 46 by 67 feet, the third floor being left as one big room for a drill hall. Each of the two lower floors was divided into two rooms, one for girls and one for boys. It was estimated that these two floors would accommodate four hundred pupils.³

The following description of this school building, written in 1922, by a man who had attended school in it differs from the above account, concerning internal arrangement of the rooms. It is

1-Albert Baxter, History of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 222.

2-Grand Rapids Herald, September 26, 1855.

3-Grand Rapids Enquirer, December 12, 1855.

possible that changes had been made before he attended there:¹

In the 1850's it became necessary to enlarge the school-house on the west side of the river. Board decided to build large enough for all time-riverstone plentiful-lumber a drug on the market and carpenters one dollar per day of ten hours. Built where Union High now stands. Top or third floor was used as the Armory-each lower floor had a large study and two recitation rooms. Large rooms had two stoves burning two foot wood. Boys and girls sat on opposite sides of the room.

Mr. Littlefield began his last term as principal on April 23, 1855.² In the term which closed about March 15, 1854, he was assisted by a Miss Fanton and a Miss Fitch. The school had an enrollment of about one hundred forty. In commenting on the conduct of the school, the editor of the Enquirer made special mention of the fact that Mr. Littlefield devoted a part of each week to instruction in music.³ It was the editor's belief that the influence of this instruction favorably affected the government of the school. Mr. Littlefield resigned his position as principal to engage in business before the new building was completed.

Early Years of the School

The first term in the new building began about December 15, 1855, with the Rev. James Ballard as principal.⁴ The newspaper announced that the rates of tuition were low but gave no figures. It will be remembered that in 1850 the Rev. James Ballard had been

1-Charles Belknap, The Yesterdays of Grand Rapids, Pp. 170-172.

2-Grand Rapids Herald, April 17, 1855.

3-Grand Rapids Enquirer, March 15, 1854.

4-Grand Rapids Daily Herald, December 11, 1855.

appointed principal of the East Side Union School at the end of the first term to succeed Mr. E. M. Johnson, who resigned. Mr. Ballard was principal of the East Side School for about three years, then was succeeded by Mr. Edward W. Chesebro in 1853. Mr. Ballard continued as principal of the West Side Union School from December 1855 until July 1857 when it was announced that he gave his "Valedictory".¹

In the preceding February it had been reported that the school enrollment was about 200. Mr. Ballard had as assistants at that time: Miss M. R. Harpham, in the Upper Department, and Miss Ann Chubb in the Primary Department, Miss Chubb was assisted by Miss Grace Baldwin.² It is significant to note that the school was at that time divided into into two departments, the Upper and Primary.

On October 12, 1857, the fall term opened with William F. Kent as principal and three departments. Mr. Kent came from the principalship of the Union School at Lyons, Ionia County.³ The staff of the school for this term was as follows:⁴

<u>Academical Department</u>	W. F. Kent, Principal and Superintendent
	Miss Olivia A. Cobb, Associate
<u>Grammar Department</u>	Miss Sarah J. Stebbins, Preceptress
	Miss Cornelia J. Robinson, Assistant
<u>Primary Department</u>	Miss Anna E. Chubb, Preceptress
	Mrs. Caroline E. Kent, Assistant.

1-Grand Rapids Daily Enquirer and Herald, July 19, 1857.

2-Grand Rapids Daily Enquirer, February 1, 1857.

3-Grand Rapids Daily Eagle, October 8, 1857.

4-Ibid., October 14, 1857.

The Coldbrook Schools

The Coldbrook School, District No. 6, remained essentially an ungraded school until 1867. In 1848 the board levied a tax of \$160 to build an 18 x 24 foot schoolhouse and \$10 to buy a site of one-fourth acre and a stove.¹ In 1851 it was voted to have four months' school and employ a man teacher. Professor Franklin Everett was hired as the man teacher for the winter term at a salary of \$55.32.² A Miss French taught the summer term in 1852, and Miss Amanda Walker the winter term ending March 14, 1854. There is no record of the exact location of this first schoolhouse except that it was in the extreme northeastern part of the city on the hill overlooking Cold Brook. Examinations were given in arithmetic, writing, grammar, spelling and composition at the close of the term.³ The winter term which closed in March 1856 was taught by a Mr. Cook. It was stated at that time that a movement was on foot to enlarge the district, making it more nearly comparable in size to the other districts but there is no record of this having been done.

DECLINE OF PRIVATE SCHOOLS

Decline of the Academy

As the Union School became established in public favor the interest in private schools decreased. Albert Baxter in his History

1-Albert Baxter, History of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P.224.

2-William J. Etten, Citizen's History of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 113.

3-Albert Baxter, History of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P.239.

of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan expressed this very well in a discussion of the closing days of the Grand Rapids Academy:¹

The Academy for a time furnished the only facilities in the village for obtaining a higher education and consequently was soon firmly established.-----After the building of the Stone Schoolhouse and the organization of Union Schools in the district, the Academy, like Othello, began to find its occupation gone, and April 1851, Professor Everett announced that the Grand Rapids Academy would close on the second of the following May. This ended the work of the Academy as a corporate institution but Professor Everett and his wife maintained in their residence a private academy upwards of twenty years longer.

St. Mark's College

Lack of patronage also caused the failure of St. Mark's College, incorporated on March 20, 1850 as a college with a preparatory department. The Rev. Francis H. Cuming of the Episcopal Church was prominent in its founding; so, also, was Bishop McCroskey. The female department of the preparatory school opened in the spring of 1850 and the male department in the fall of the same year. Mr. Charles Taylor of Ann Arbor was the first president. In a report to the state superintendent of public instruction dated February 6, 1852, he indicated that the enrollment of the preparatory department was about 125 and that it had averaged about 100 since its organization.² He also said that there were six professors and teachers on the staff at that time.

1-History of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 239-240.
2-Francis W. Sherman, System of Public Instruction and Primary School Law of Michigan, P. 569.

Other Private Schools

The project did not prosper and was soon abandoned, some of the teachers opening private schools of their own which also were quite short-lived. A newspaper article written in January of 1851 stated that St. Mark's College had a total enrollment of 130 and its Academy of 80.¹

In June 1851 William and Garret Barry opened a mercantile Academy in McConnell's Block, in which they taught bookkeeping, mathematics, penmanship, and other branches of commercial learning.² This school was still operating in 1857 and was the first private commercial school in Grand Rapids of which there is a record.³ In 1852 Joseph J. Watson opened at the corner of Monroe Avenue and Ionia Street for the teaching of architectural drawing and drafting, a small private school which was well patronized for some time. In 1853 Miss Thirza Moore kept a children's school on LaGrave Avenue; from 1854 to 1857, Mrs. H. S. DePew kept a "Cottage School" in a building on Fulton Street opposite the residence of John Ball, and from 1855-1857 the Rev. O. H. Staples conducted a Select School for Young Ladies in a house at Bostwick Avenue and Lyon Street. Miss D. Ives and Miss Laura Prentiss, formerly of St. Mark's College, operated a Select School for Young Ladies in 1857 which in 1858 was taken over by a Miss Mitchell and a Miss Cole.

Agitation for a Female Academy

The writer of a letter to the editor of one of the newspapers

1-Grand River Eagle, January 3, 1851.

2-Albert Baxter, History of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P.241.

3-Grand Rapids Daily Enquirer, March 10, 1857.

early in 1858 advocated the establishment of a Seminary for Young Ladies.¹ A meeting was held on August 14² and another a few days later³ at which the desirability of such an institution was thoroughly discussed. At the later meeting a committee of three consisting of Ransom E. Wood, P. G. Hodenpyl, and A. E. Gordon was appointed to work out plans for the establishment of such a seminary. A different idea was advanced by one of the citizens writing to the newspaper an open letter in which he advocated the establishment of a seminary or high school open to both boys and girls as a supplement to the Union School.⁴ He recommended that it be set up with a course of study equivalent to the best college or leading to advanced standing in college. He recommended further that it be established as a public institution and be supported by taxation. He pointed out the high schools of Cleveland, Chicago, Utica, New York City, Cambridge, and Boston as examples of what he had in mind. The high point of the movement for the female seminary seemed to be a meeting held about September 1, 1858, at which the committee of three appointed earlier gave its report.⁵ At this meeting one committee of five was appointed to open books for the subscription of capital stock in the amount of \$5000, another committee was appointed to look up teachers, and a third was appointed to see how many scholars could be obtained to start

1-Grand Rapids Daily Enquirer and Herald, January 13, 1858.

2-Grand Rapids Daily Eagle, August 14, 1858.

3-Ibid., August 20, 1858.

4-Ibid., August 25, 1858.

5-Ibid., September 2, 1858.

the institution. Oddly no further record exists, of the attempt to establish the seminary.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE UNION SCHOOL

Edward W. Chesebro

Much of the credit for the success of the East Side Union School should go to Edward W. Chesebro who succeeded the Rev. Mr. Ballard as principal in 1853 and continued to serve as principal until 1858, when he was forced to retire because of ill health. The newspaper article announcing his retirement stated that his "assiduous attention to the school for the last few years has broken down his health."¹ Everett, considering him a martyr to the cause of education in Grand Rapids, stated:²

With intellect wasted to nothing he died in about two years, January 31, 1861, age 43. The inscription on his monument in Oak Hill Cemetery, most justly characterized him. This monument is the tribute of his pupils:

His was a teacher's heart,
With zeal that never tired;
And thousand souls beat higher,
By his single soul inspired.

Mr. Chesebro was active locally in many undertakings not directly connected with the school, such as the Lyceum and also participated in the meetings of the State Teachers Association of which he was one of the vice presidents in 1857. He helped to organize the Kent County Teachers' Association and was a frequent speaker on its programs and at its institutes. During the last two or three years of his principalship, his brother, Mr. G. H. S. Chesebro was assistant principal.

1-Grand Rapids Daily Enquirer and Herald, March 21, 1858.
2-Franklin Everett, Memorials of the Grand River Valley, P. 398.

The Union School in 1857

Just a few months before Mr. Chesebro retired as principal, he submitted to the state superintendent of public instruction a report which contained valuable information about the schools.¹ There were at that time three Ward Schools in addition to the Central or Union School. About 638 volumes of the City Library were divided between the East and West Side Union Schools. The East Side Union School was divided into three departments: Higher, Intermediate and Primary. Chesebro got a salary of \$1000 and had one male assistant getting \$600; there were 17 women teachers who got salaries ranging from \$220 to \$308. Chesebro reported a total average attendance of 865 pupils of which 510 were in the Central Building. Four or five graduates had gone to the State University and about fifteen to colleges in other states. The school was co-educational; a small rate bill was charged for a part of the year. In the Intermediate Department, spelling, reading, penmanship, geography, grammar, written arithmetic, history, composition and declamation were taught. The subjects taught in the Higher Department were: spelling, reading, penmanship, geography, grammar, mental arithmetic, written arithmetic, history, algebra, geometry, bookkeeping, science of government, rhetoric, physiology, natural philosophy, astronomy, French, Latin, composition and declamation.

Danforth's Classification and Course of Study

Mr. Chesebro was succeeded by Mr. Edward Danforth,² who came to

1-Reports of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Years 1855-56-57. Lansing: Hasmer and Kerr, 1858. Pp. 462-466.

2-Mr. Danforth served as a vice-president of the State Teachers Association in 1860 and presented a paper on Elementary Education at the state meeting. After leaving Grand Rapids he became Deputy Superintendent of Schools at Troy and Elmira.

Grand Rapids from the State of New York and remained until 1861. With the opening of the winter term in 1858, Mr. Danforth got the title of principal and superintendent, the first time the title of superintendent appeared. In December 1858 one of the newspapers published a "Classification and Course of Study in the Public Schools of Grand Rapids, (East Side)", prepared by Mr. Danforth as one of his first official acts.¹

Under this classification, the Primary School was divided into three classes, the Intermediate Department into two classes and the Grammar School into two classes. Danforth did not include the course of study for the High School, but said that it consisted of three-year optional courses either classical or English. He said that many of the scholars enrolled in the advanced school were pursuing some of the studies of the Grammar School. Candidates for advancement in school had to pass a satisfactory examination and receive a certificate from the superintendent before they could be permitted to enter a higher class or department. Examinations for that purpose would be held at the beginning and end of each term.²

West Side School Development

The Union School on the west side of the river did not grow or develop as rapidly as that on the east side, but considerable progress was made in its organization between 1848 and 1860. Mr. W. F. Kent, who succeeded the Rev. Mr. Ballard as principal, served only two years and was succeeded in 1859 by Mr. D. T. Dell of Comstock, near Kalamazoo. The first extant record of this change in the principalship is a newspaper announcement of the quarterly examinations to be held November

1-Grand Rapids Daily Eagle, December 18, 1858.

2-Grand Rapids Eagle, October 14, 1858.

16-17-18, 1859.¹ In the spring of 1858, the school was in two departments called the Higher and Primary, with five teachers besides the principal and approximately 225 pupils.² With the opening of the fall term it had been divided into three departments.³

EFFORTS OF TEACHERS AND LAYMEN FOR BETTER SCHOOLS

The State Normal School

An effort was made to have the State Normal School located in Grand Rapids as the following newspaper article states:⁴

The attention of the citizens of Grand Rapids and vicinity is invited to Act No. 138, passed by our Legislature the last session, entitled "An Act to Establish a State Normal School".

The great importance of this object and the universality of its provisions commend it to the attention of every well wisher to the cause of Common and Universal Education. The fact that the school is yet unlocated; that the committee of location have been appointed but have not as yet agreed upon any point, calls loudly upon every property holder and every citizen who has at heart the best interest of our village; its prosperity and usefulness; to use every exertion to procure its location at this place.

To effect this purpose, a meeting of all who feel an interest in the matter (and who is there that does not?) is requested at the Court House, on Friday evening next, at 7 o'clock; at which time and place the Reverend Dr. Penny, one of the Board of Examiners of the University; who has lately returned from Ann Arbor, will deliver an address upon the subject and give any information desired of the present situation of the matter. By request of

Many Citizens.

Undoubtedly it would have been a great advantage to Grand Rapids if it had been chosen as the location of the Normal School, but it was hardly to be expected, since this city was so far from the other large centers

1-Grand Rapids Daily Eagle, November 14, 1859.

2-Grand Rapids Enquirer and Herald, April 8, 1858.

3-Grand Rapids Daily Eagle, October 14, 1858.

4-Grand Rapids Enquirer, September 19, 1849.

of population in the state.¹

Teachers' Institutes

The state superintendent of public instruction addressed an open letter to the "friends of education" in 1848 to be published in the newspapers, urging local communities to hold teachers' institutes.² In this letter he states that he would get the staff to provide the program if the local committee would provide the place to meet and provide free lodging and meals in the homes of the citizens in the community.

The first statewide teachers' institute was held in Ypsilanti for two weeks after the dedication of the State Normal School in 1852. Although there was an attendance of 250 persons, no Grand Rapids teachers were listed among those present.³

A teachers' institute opened in Grand Rapids on October 2, 1855, and continued for ten days. Thirty men and 52 women attended regularly and others part of the time. This was one of six such institutes held in the state during the year; attendance ranged from 75 to 122. The Grand Rapids Institute was the second smallest, the one in Detroit alone being smaller.⁴ One of the local newspapers in commenting on the program of the institute said that, because of

1-Elwood Cubberley, in his Public Education in the United States, Pp. 323-324, 384, states that Michigan was sixth on the list of states establishing normal schools, and that as late as 1860 there were only twelve normal schools in the United States, all located in nine northern states.

2-Grand Rapids Enquirer, November 15, 1848.

3-Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1853, Lansing: George W. Peck, 1854. Pp. 115-118.

4-Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1855-56-57, P. 14.

the absence of some of those expected from outside who were detained by illness, E. W. Chesebro, the Rev. James Ballard, and M. S. Littlefield played prominent parts.¹ One of the resolutions adopted dealt with problems of teachers in many communities where salary differentials existed because of sex. The resolution read:²

That we regard females equally competent with males for the high station of teaching, and that they should receive equal compensation for services rendered.

Teachers' Associations

There were several teachers' associations in this area between 1848 and 1860 and for a short time there seems to have been considerable rivalry between them. The first one of which there is a record was the Mayhew Teachers' Association which seems to have included teachers from both Ottawa and Kent Counties.³ Announcement was made of the organization of the Kent County Teachers' Association in 1854 with James Ballard, president, E. W. Chesebro, corresponding secretary, and M. S. Littlefield, recording secretary.⁴ Meetings of this group and also of the Mayhew Teachers' Association were held rather irregularly up to 1858 when there was some controversy carried on in the newspapers about a proposed reorganization of the Kent County Teachers' Association. One faction felt that a new organization should be formed primarily of teachers in the city; the other group felt that everyone should belong to the Mayhew Teachers' Association. The group who favored a new association

1-Grand Rapids Herald, October 9, 1855.

2-Ibid., October 17, 1855.

3-Grand Rapids Daily Eagle, August 23, 1850.

4-Michigan Journal of Education and Teachers Magazine. Detroit: Henry Barns Co., 1855. II, P. 55.

organized as the Kent County Educational Association on December 18, 1858,¹ with E. W. Chesebro, president, and "Professors" Strong, Kent and Everett as vice-presidents. At their organization meeting they passed resolutions favoring the abolition of rate bills and the teaching of the science of music in all schools. The Gregory Educational Association was organized at Grand Haven on the closing day of a teachers' institute in October 1859 at which Mr. Danforth was a speaker.

No real attempt was made prior to 1860 in this part of the state to give training to teachers except through teachers' institutes and the activities of the teachers themselves in their own associations; undoubtedly the programs of these groups were helpful to the teachers who attended. In some instances teachers' criticism which was repeated in the newspapers indicated that the programs were not always good and that the attendance was poor. The institutes were at their best poor substitutes for teacher training.

Teachers' Class in Union School

The Annual Catalogue of the Grand Rapids Schools for the Year 1860-61 (East Side) announced that during the fall term a teachers' class would be formed for those preparing to teach. It stated further that the exercises of the class would consist of general reviews and lectures on the best methods of instruction. This is the first record of such a teachers' class in the Grand Rapids area. It was obviously an attempt on the part of the school authorities to provide for beginning teachers some helpful information which

1-Grand Rapids Daily Eagle, December 21, 1858.

they could not get in any other way, because Grand Rapids had no academy or other institution engaged in training teachers.

Newspapers Helpful

The newspapers of Grand Rapids between 1848 and 1860 were helpful in promoting the cause of public education. They gave space in their columns to announcements of school meetings and letters about schools. They repeatedly urged the citizens to visit and support the schools, and gave prominence to announcements of lectures on school subjects, lyceum programs, and other cultural programs. This cooperation was important, for the Union Schools were new and needed help in becoming established and in creating the public opinion necessary for adequate financial support.

Gov. John S. Barry's opening message to the Legislature of 1850 in which he urged placing in effect the provisions of the Constitution of 1850 relative to free schools, was printed in full in one of the newspapers.¹ Later, the same paper reprinted an editorial from the New York Semi-Weekly Tribune strongly supporting the principle of free schools.² In August 1851, the editor of the Enquirer included a long and forcefully written editorial which, he said, was stimulated by the receipt of the annual report of the state superintendent of public instruction. In it the editor emphasized the need for improvement of the public schools and urged the adoption of the one-mill tax so that better support could be given the Union School, and the dollar tax, which would bring in about \$650.

1-Grand Rapids Enquirer, February 12, 1850.

2-Ibid., January 29, 1851.

He felt confident that many more pupils would attend if the tuition (rate bill) were removed.

Another newspaper printed an editorial urging action by the Legislature,¹ an article by a correspondent urging free schools,² a reprint of a conversation with Gen. Francis Marion of the Revolutionary War just before his death, in which he advocated free schools,³ and reprints of the remarks of Mr. Joseph W. T. Orr of Barry County in the Constitutional Convention of 1850 in which he, too, advocated free schools.⁴

It was decided at the annual meeting of District No. 1 in September, 1853, to operate the Union School (East Side) without rate bills the following year. The officers reported that a capitation tax of 50 cents per child, the two-mill tax required by law, the appropriation from the state fund, and the amount on hand would enable them to operate without rate bills. A correction was printed immediately below this announcement, stating that the two-mill tax law had been amended the preceding winter, but had been attached as a rider to another act not related to schools, and had been overlooked by the local school authorities.⁵ This legislative maneuver made it necessary to abandon the idea of operating the school without a rate bill.

1-Grand River Eagle, February 25, 1850.

2-Ibid., September 9, 1850.

3-Ibid., November 6, 1850.

4-Ibid., November 20, 1850.

5-Grand Rapids Enquirer, September 28, 1853.

FINANCING THE SCHOOLS

Rate Bills in Grand Rapids

In most of the statements about the Union School in which the method of financing is mentioned, the word tuition is used to describe the method of collecting money by the use of rate bills. In 1851, collections of \$741.28 were reported to the state superintendent of public instruction out of a total amount of \$1533.28 raised by taxation in the school districts of Grand Rapids. The initial rates in 1848 were low, \$1.63 per term for the ordinary branches and \$2.39 for Greek, Latin, and French, but were reduced still further to 70 cents or less in 1851.¹

Schools Free Except High School

One of the newspapers carried the following announcement in 1855, stating that the schools were then free.²

The Union School of this city is now a free institution. This is of vast importance not only to such families as are straightened in their circumstances but to the citizens generally. Everyone ought to be interested in the universal education of the children of the place. Much vice is prevented and the public prosperity greatly increased by the education of the masses.

Either the announcement referred only to the grades below the high school or the tuition (rate bill) was reestablished in those grades very soon because there is evidence that rate bills were collected in that department for several years after this date. In the annual financial report of District No. 1 for the year

1-Grand Rapids Enquirer, February 26, 1851.

2-Arthur R. Mead, The Development of Free Schools in the United States. New York City: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1918. Pp. 109-110.

ending in September 1858 the following sources of revenue and the amounts were given:¹

Total Receipts	\$7,121.34
Balance from Previous Year	44.94
From one mill tax, taxes as voted and amount unpaid on previous rate bills	5,679.86
Primary School Money	717.50
Rate Bill Collections	591.79
Tuition	87.25

This report indicates that the rate bills were still being collected; therefore, by 1860, Grand Rapids schools were free except in the higher department or high school.

Struggle to Abolish Rate Bills in Michigan

The struggle for free schools in Grand Rapids quite closely parallels the movement throughout the State. In 1858, State Superintendent Mayhew asked the Union School principals to report whether or not their schools were free or partly supported by rate bills.² Detroit and Ypsilanti reported that they were free; Ann Arbor reported that they had been free since 1856, except for music and foreign language.

There were at the time 17 graded districts in the state. In 1859 there were 18 free schools reported and seven with tuition and rate bills. In the report of the superintendent of public instruction for 1859, he stated that out of 628 townships reporting, there were 70 in which there was no rate bill and out of 1202 districts nearly one-third were free from rate bills.³ In his report for

1-Grand Rapids Daily Eagle, September 29, 1858.

2-Grand Rapids Herald, May 4, 1855.

3-Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction for 1859. Lansing: Hosmer and Kerr, 1860. P. 18.

1860, the state superintendent made the following summary of the growth of free schools in the state since the adoption of the basic school law in 1837:¹

From 1837 to the present the State has nearly doubled its population with a proportionate increase of pupils. Yet the number of Academies and Private Schools has fallen off one hundred and eleven and the number of pupils in them 3,985. This is a significant fact, when we remember that while this decrease has been going on the number of pupils in the State has nearly doubled. During this time about one hundred high schools have been developed, free to all, and doubtless receiving many or most of those 4,000 pupils who have fallen off from the private schools.

THE GROWTH OF THE SCHOOLS

Growth in Population and School Housing

Between the years 1848 and 1860 Grand Rapids grew from a village of approximately 2,000 to a city of about 8,000. Although there is no accurate record of the number attending school in 1848, a close estimate would be 400 in the three school districts; this number grew to 1,693 in 1860. The state superintendent of public instruction said in his annual report for 1859 that the number of children on the census lists and the number attending school in Grand Rapids were second only to Detroit among the cities of the state. This statement is borne out by a list which appeared in

1-Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction for 1860. Lansing: Hosmer and Kerr, 1861. P. 11.

one of the Grand Rapids newspapers of cities in Michigan showing the number of children on which the state aid appropriation was made in 1858:¹

Detroit	12,668
Grand Rapids	2,023
Adrian	2,000
Ann Arbor	1,324
Jackson	1,255
Monroe	1,245
Flint	1,068

There were, in 1849, three school buildings in Grand Rapids; small ones in the Coldbrook and West Side Districts, and the Union School in District No. 1. In 1860 there was still only one building in the Coldbrook District although, the second floor still unfinished, a new two-story building was put in use in April 1860. The West Side District constructed of stone in 1853 a Union Schoolhouse which was still in use. The East Side District No. 1 built three so-called ward primary schools between 1855 and 1858 so that, beginning in the fall of 1858, the Union School was occupied only by pupils in the classical, intermediate and secondary departments.² This plan of having separate primary schools is referred to in one of the newspapers of that time as the Lowell System.³ In 1860 another primary school was used for the first time, making a total of five small schools and two Union Schools in the city.

Increased Staff and Organization

At the beginning of this period (1848-1860) there were a princi-

1-Grand Rapids Daily Eagle, June 5, 1858.

2-Ibid., September 11, 1858.

3-Grand Rapids Enquirer, January 11, 1854.

pal and four teachers in the East Side Union School, one teacher in the Coldbrook School and one or two in the West Side District. In 1860, there were five men and 25 women teachers in all. The Union School of District No. 1 had a superintendent, a man, who was principal of the high school department and women who had the title of principal in the grammar and intermediate departments and in each of the ward schools.¹ The Union School on the west side of the river had a man who had the title of superintendent and principal, and, in charge of the other departments, women who were called principals.

Superintendent of Schools

The title of superintendent, given in 1859 to Mr. Danforth in District No. 1 was retained by him until he left the school system at the end of the school year 1860-61. There is no mention made of his teaching at any time except in the teacher's classes during the fall term; it appears that he devoted full time to administration. His successor, Mr. E. A. Strong, however, got the title of superintendent and high school principal--a change which may have been caused by the activities of a Taxpayers Association which held several meetings early in 1860 at which Mr. Danforth's salary of \$1,200 was severely criticized.² At the time the salary of the high school principal was \$800 and that of the superintendent

1-Annual Catalogue of the Grand Rapids Public Schools (East Side), for the Academic Year 1862-63. Grand Rapids: Daily Eagle Office, 1863. Pp. 4-5.

2-Grand Rapids Daily Enquirer and Herald, February 21, 1860.

and principal of the west side schools \$600. The title of superintendent was fully established by the school year 1865-66.¹

Regardless of which date is accepted, Grand Rapids was still very early in establishing the office of superintendent. Cubberley lists twenty-six cities as having superintendents by 1859 and only twenty-nine by 1870.²

School Grading in Grand Rapids

The system used in the various communities for grading their schools was to a considerable degree dependent on the buildings available and their construction and location. The following quotation from Cubberley explains why that was true:³

This creation of schools of different grades took place largely as new buildings were needed and erected, and represented the first step in the evolution of the present class-grade organization of our schools. With each additional building in the same district the children were put into better classified schools. This same division of schools for purposes of grading, as new building facilities were provided, took place generally over the United States between about 1820 and about 1860, though with quite different results and nomenclature,

The development of graded schools in Grand Rapids seems to have followed this same general pattern. When the Union School was built, plans were made to use only two floors; the school was divided in two groups, the primary department housed on the first floor, and the higher department housed on the second floor. During the first

1-Annual Report of the Board of Trustees for the School Year, 1865-66.
Grand Rapids: Daily Eagle Office, 1866. P. 5.
2-Elwood P. Cubberley, Public School Administration, P. 75.
3-Elwood P. Cubberley, Public Education in the United States, P. 307.

term it was necessary to divide the primary department and fit up another primary room in the basement. There were still only two departments in 1854 but in 1855 there was one on each floor, making a total of three. Three ward schoolhouses for housing primary children were authorized at the annual meeting in 1855, two of the new buildings were to be completed within a month.¹ In 1858, the schools of District No. 1 were divided into four departments. All of the primary pupils were at that time (1858) housed in the three ward schools; space therefore was left in the Union School for three departments, one being housed on each of the three floors. It must also be kept in mind that, within the departments, further grading was being done as the two or more teachers divided up the work by further classifying pupils.

Grading in West Side and Coldbrook Schools

Grading of the West Side Union School took place more slowly than in District No. 1 because it was smaller and fewer teachers were necessary. There were only two departments until 1858, when the third department was established. The Coldbrook School remained a small school with one or two teachers until after 1860.

Plan of Organization

The first complete statement of the plan of organization of the Union School (East Side) was the one prepared by Superintendent Danforth in 1858 which is discussed on pages 69-70. The next published

1-Grand Rapids Enquirer, December 4, 1855.

statement shows the organization followed in the school year 1860-61.¹
 The diagram reproduced on the following page shows the comparison
 between them.

Discipline

Although the newspapers rather frequently commented on the necessity for good and more firm discipline in the Union School because more students were brought together in one building, no other mention is made of discipline in the schools on the East Side. On the West Side, however, an anonymous letter was sent to one of the newspapers in 1857 complaining of the cruel treatment of children by teachers in the Union School, during the first term of W. F. Kent's principalship.² In 1860, Mrs. Sarah Bennett, one of the teachers, was arrested and tried for assault and battery on the son of C. W. Leffingwell, but was acquitted.³ The newspapers carried a report of the trial and printed letters from friends of both parties.

In the principalship of the Union School (West Side), there were frequent changes which may have contributed to the unsatisfactory conditions there, or it is quite possible that the bad conditions may have resulted in the changes in the principalship. W. F. Kent, who succeeded the Rev. Mr. Ballard in 1857, was followed by D. T. Dell of Comstock, Kalamazoo County, in September 1859.⁴ In July 1860 it was announced that Dell had "retired to be succeeded by Mr. Gilbert, a

1-Annual Catalogue of the Grand Rapids Schools for the Year 1860-61.

Grand Rapids: Daily Eagle Office, 1861. Pp. 29-34.

2-Grand Rapids Daily Enquirer and Herald, December 20, 1857.

3-Grand Rapids Weekly Enquirer, December 12, 1860.

4-Grand Rapids Daily Enquirer and Herald, September 4, 1859.

Organization 1858-59		Organization 1860-61	
High School (3 Years)	English Course (3 Years)	Classical Course (3 Years)	Classical Course (5 Years)
Grammar School (2 Years)	Second Class	High School (3-5 Years)	English Course (3 Years)
	First Class		
Intermediate or Secondary (2 Years)	Second Class	Grammar School (2 Years)	Second Grade
	First Class		First Grade
	Third Class		Second Grade
Primary School (3 Years)	Second Class	Intermediate School (2 Years)	First Grade
	First Class		Second Grade
First Class	Second Division	Primary School (2 Years)	Second Grade
	First Division		First Grade

DIAGRAM I
SCHOOL ORGANIZATION IN GRAND RAPIDS

resident of this county."¹ Dell became principal of the Ionia Union School in September 1860.² There is no record of Gilbert's having actually acted as principal, and, at the time of the trial of Mrs. Bennett in December 1860, a Mr. Brown was principal. One of the newspaper articles describing the trial refers to him as only a "nominal principal". He must have continued through the school year, because one of the newspapers carried the announcement of the death of his wife in March 1861, and refers to her as the wife of the principal of the West Side Union School.³ J. C. Clark became principal in September 1861, and continued in that position until June 1865.⁴

Special Teachers

As early as 1855 mention is made of special instruction in vocal music being given in the Union School (East Side) by a Professor Bement.⁵ He was not listed as a regular member of the staff for that year or later. In 1858 he received only \$61 as a salary for the year which seems to indicate that he was employed on a part-time basis.

In 1858, Miss Hester Weston was employed as a teacher in the secondary department of the Union School and as a special teacher of penmanship in all of the three departments. The following year it was announced that "Professor" C. J. Dietrich had been employed to

1-Grand Rapids Daily Enquirer and Herald, July 28, 1860.

2-Grand Rapids Daily Enquirer and Herald, September 7, 1860.

3-Grand Rapids Daily Enquirer and Herald, March 22, 1861.

4-Wm. J. Etten, A Citizens History of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 115.

5-Grand Rapids Enquirer, March 7, 1855.

6-Richmond Scrapbook, No. 1, Excerpts from School Papers and Public Prints. Michigan Room, Grand Rapids Public Library.

teach writing, commercial law, and bookkeeping at the beginning of the fall term.¹

Condition of Union School Building

Apparently rumors were rampant in 1860 about the condition of the Union School Building (East Side); some people feared that it had become unsafe. To determine the real state of affairs and stop the rumors, a committee of architects and builders was asked to examine the building and make a report. The report was subsequently published:²

Messrs. Pierce, Foster and Danforth-
Gentlemen:

We have this day complied with your request by making a thorough examination of the building referred to, and our unanimous opinion is, that, though defective, it is perfectly safe.

Yours respectfully,
David Burnett,
J. L. Wheeler,
J. Leonard.

There is nothing to indicate the nature of the trouble. The building continued in use for years.

SUMMARY.

During the years covered by this chapter (1848-1860) the most significant educational development was the increased interest in public education and a decline in the reliance formerly placed on private schools. The popularity of the Union Schools was largely responsible for this change in the thinking of the citizens of Grand Rapids, but the whole-hearted support given this concept by the

1-Grand Rapids Daily Eagle, August 30, 1859.

2-Ibid., May 3, 1860.

newspapers and the activities of the teachers themselves through the holding of institutes and meetings of their associations must also have been helpful in bringing about a change in educational thought. This development in Grand Rapids was part of an awakening consciousness on the part of people all over the nation that schools should be public, tax-supported, and non-sectarian.

This period of rapid expansion and growth in Grand Rapids made it necessary to build more schools and as they were built it became possible to classify pupils and subject matter and assign to some members of the teaching staff certain administrative and supervisory responsibilities. This specialization of the administrative function is undoubtedly the origin in part of the increased attempt to improve the quality of the job being done by the schools, noticeable after 1857. Evidence of this advance is the increased emphasis on regular attendance on the theory that the pupils must be present if they are to be taught; the establishment of a teachers' class in the high school to give to prospective teachers at least the most elementary rudiments of improved teaching methods, and the preparation of a complete outline of the courses offered and recommendations of the superintendent for the improvement of the schools.

It is fortunate that in the early years of the Union Schools of Grand Rapids the educational leaders were men who were active in community affairs in addition to being concerned with the details of their job. As one reads the newspapers, he cannot help but be impressed by the wide participation of the Rev. Mr. Ballard, and Messrs. Chesebro, Littlefield, Danforth and Strong in community

affairs. These men also participated frequently in Teachers' Institutes, Teachers' Association meetings and some of them in meetings of the State Teachers Association. These wide interests on the part of the school administrators were undoubtedly influential in creating public interest and arousing local pride in the school program, elements essential to the establishment of a good school system.

CHAPTER FOUR

EXTENSION OF SECONDARY EDUCATION (1860-1871)

This period began with the organization of both the East and West Side Schools under the provisions of the Graded School Law of 1859. The population of the city doubled in this period of 11 years and although the Civil War interfered to a certain extent with normal progress there was no extensive period of depression and great growth took place in manufacturing as well as in population. Nearly all of the railroad lines that now serve Grand Rapids were completed and the stimulus which they gave to travel was influential in broadening the attitude of the citizens of Grand Rapids.

The big increase in school population in District No. I on the East Side made it necessary to build some new primary schools as well as a new high school building which was completed and occupied for the first time in September 1868. The schools inherited the books of the defunct Library Association and the Public Library came under school management and was housed in the high school building. During the most of this period a teachers' class was conducted in the high school during the fall term. The West Side Schools in 1865 paid the last installment of the debt that had been contracted to build their Union Schoolhouse in 1854.

Both the West Side District and District No. I abolished

tuition for resident pupils. A rule prohibiting corporal punishment was adopted in 1870 in District No. 1. Also in 1870 the discussion of consolidation of the schools in the city began with renewed vigor and after some joint meetings of the boards consolidation was completed in 1871.

LEGAL BACKGROUND AND STRUCTURE

The Graded School Act of 1859 which provided for more adequate financing in school districts of 200 or more children was amended in 1861 so that districts with as few as 100 children could organize under its provisions.¹ In 1863 the state board of education was made responsible for compiling for school libraries an approved list of books on which book dealers were asked to submit bids.² On the basis of these bids the board was empowered to contract with a dealer to furnish the books to all district libraries at a stated price. School officers had to buy their books in this way unless the voters of the district in the annual meeting gave them permission to buy books elsewhere.

The Grand Rapids City Charter was amended in 1865 by an act requiring the city to distribute all penal fine money to the school

1-Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1861. Lansing: John A. Kerr and Co., 1861. No. 259.

2-Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1863. Lansing: John A. Kerr and Co., 1863. No. 133.

districts on the basis of their school census to be used for libraries.¹ The county treasurer had been distributing this money through the township school inspectors but the city treasurer had not been distributing it to the schools in the City of Grand Rapids. Both Superintendents Strong and Montgomery had been urging their respective boards to collect this money by instituting law suits if necessary. In 1867 the Legislature passed a law placing limits on the amount of indebtedness of school districts of different sizes, and setting the maximum indebtedness allowed regardless of size at \$50,000.00.² In this same year a law was enacted providing for county superintendents of schools to whom were given many of the duties and responsibilities formerly held by the township school inspectors.³ In 1869 a law was passed making it mandatory for districts to levy taxes for the entire support of the school in addition to the money received from the two-mill tax and the primary fund.⁴

The Legislature passed a Compulsory Attendance Law in 1871, requiring all children between the ages of 8 and 14 years to attend school at least 12 weeks each year and making it the duty of the director or president of the district board to prosecute parents

1-Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1865. Lansing: John A. Kerr and Co., 1865. No. 174.

2-Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1867. Lansing: John A. Kerr and Co., 1867. No. 34.

3-Ibid., No. 55

4-Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1869. Lansing: W. S. George and Co., 1869. No. 110

who did not comply with the law.¹ Michigan was one of the first states to adopt such a law.² The Legislative Act which consolidated the school districts of Grand Rapids in one city district was passed on March 15, 1871.³

LIFE IN GRAND RAPIDS

From 1860 to 1865 the citizens of Grand Rapids and the area around it made a great contribution to the war effort.⁴ Kent County sent a total of 4,214 men to serve in the armed forces. Cantonment Anderson was located at the fair grounds on South Division Street and was used throughout the war. Several units were formed there and most of the time 3000 to 5000 men were stationed at the camp. In 1863 two cavalry regiments were organized in Grand Rapids.

In 1863, the County Board of Supervisors voted money to be paid as a bounty to men who enlisted. In 1864, for war hospitals

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- 1-Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1871. Lansing: W. S. George and Co., 1871, No. 165.
- 2-Massachusetts in 1852, District of Columbia in 1864, New Hampshire in 1871, Territory of Washington in 1871.
- 3-Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan 1871, Lansing, No. 344.
- 4-The information for this section was taken from the following list of references:
 Albert Baxter, History of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan.
 Ernest Fisher, History of Grand Rapids and Kent County. I, II.
 William J. Etten, A Citizen's History of Grand Rapids, Michigan.
 Franklin Everett, Memorials of the Grand River Valley.
 Charles Belknap, Yesterdays of Grand Rapids.
 Dwight Goss, History of Grand Rapids and its Industries.

\$1,800 was raised at a Sanitary Fair held in connection with the county fair. In 1863 when the state treasury was almost empty because of heavy expenses connected with the war a meeting was called at Grand Rapids and \$23,000 was raised and at another meeting two months later \$81,000 was raised.

Early in 1865, Gen. Thomas Custer visited the city and spoke at a meeting called to stimulate enlistments. On April 10, 1865, there was a big celebration over Lee's surrender and on April 15 much sorrow on hearing of Lincoln's assassination. Some of the units from Grand Rapids started almost immediately after the end of the war to hold annual reunions and at the first reunion of the Second Michigan Cavalry in 1870, Gen. Phillip Sheridan who had been at one time colonel of that regiment, was present.

There was much complaint about the stability and value of the currency in 1860, and when greenbacks came into circulation in 1861 conditions were temporarily bad, with much fluctuation of value and rapid increase in prices. This condition stabilized rather quickly under actual war conditions and much progress was made in the development and stabilization of banking and investment facilities. New banks started or old banks were reorganized in 1861, 1864, 1868, and 1869 so that by 1871 fairly adequate and well managed banking facilities were available.

The flow of logs and lumber down the river increased after 1865 but it was more orderly and the traffic was largely controlled by "booming companies". In 1868 the Ottawa County Boom Company

delivered 43,000,000 feet of lumber at Grand Haven by the river route. In 1870 was organized the Grand Rapids Boom Company, destined to handle much of this river traffic in the years to follow.

Many of the big furniture manufacturers got their start in the 1860's. The Berkey and Matter Furniture Company organized in 1862, the Phoenix Furniture Company organized in 1868, and the Nelson Matter Company organized in 1870, are good examples. The first carload lot of furniture was shipped from Grand Rapids in 1864 by C. C. Comstock. The years 1860-1871 were largely a period of organization and development in furniture manufacture with some of the companies beginning to develop a sales organization and branch stores.

The people of Grand Rapids were much concerned about the need for more railroads and in 1864 the city got permission to pledge its credit toward the building of railroads from Jackson and from the Indiana border. The drive for more railroads was slackened during the war, but was resumed as soon as it ended, and, in the year 1866 especially, there was much activity and several meetings were held to develop ways and means to bring railroads into the city. In 1867, the Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad was opened from a station on the west side of the river to Rockford and in 1868, the Grand Rapids and Indiana completed a bridge across the river. In 1869, a rail connection was made with Kalamazoo via Allegan, the city paying a bonus of \$10,000 for its completion, and in 1870 connections were made with Jackson and Muskegon, the city paying \$25,000 toward the

completion of the road from Jackson. By the end of this period there were rail connections with Detroit, Jackson, Kalamazoo, Grand Haven and Muskegon and a line was built north as far as Cedar Springs. With the coming of railroads, the backbone of the river traffic was broken, although steamboats continued to operate on the river for many years.

When one studies the history of Grand Rapids he sometimes wonders how the city could progress at all against the floods and fires that caused so much damage. There were bad floods in 1867 and 1870 and several big fires. In 1864, a fire destroyed eight business blocks. In 1866, one fire caused an estimated loss of \$100,000 and in a second fire six buildings were burned. In 1870 the biggest fire of all destroyed all the shops and mills between Canal Street and the river at an estimated loss of \$250,000.

In spite of the fact that few new projects were undertaken during the early Civil War years, more civic improvements were begun between 1860-1871 than in any earlier period of eleven years. In the years 1863 and 1864 a Tree Planting Association, recently formed, was active, and enlisted the help of city officials in a project of city beautification. In 1864, the first street railway began operating on Monroe Avenue, and in 1865 the city began experimenting with concrete sidewalks and established grades for the building of sewers on which future sewer construction was to be based. In 1866 a new dam was built in the river. The west side power canal was completed in 1867 and in 1869 the east channel of the river was filled in making the

islands a part of the east bank.

Grand Rapid's first steam fire engine was bought in 1867, another was bought the following year. In 1869, gas was piped to the west side through pipes laid on Pearl Street Bridge. In 1870 the two hydraulic companies merged and the water supply system was somewhat improved, but much dissatisfaction with it continued and outside engineers were brought in to study the problem and make recommendations. In 1871, a police department was organized; it consisted at first of a chief and eight patrolmen.

With the coming of the railroads, the "excursion" became popular as a new type of entertainment. In 1869, one group of 500 persons came from Kalamazoo, and at a later date that same year Grand Rapids was visited by the Kalamazoo firemen, and by a group of 50 businessmen from Sheboygan and Fond du Lac, Wisconsin. In 1870, Grand Rapids entertained a group of county and city officials from Milwaukee and later in the year their visit was repaid by 250 citizens of Grand Rapids who went to Milwaukee on an excursion.

The county fair continued to prosper and grow; the fair of 1864 was unusually successful despite the war. In 1869 horse-racing by thoroughbreds was begun by the Grand Rapids Horsebreeders Association although races had been held earlier in connection with the Fair. In 1868 a lot on West Bridge Street was flooded to make the first ice rink in Grand Rapids; it became a popular place of entertainment. The Fiske Lake House was popular and one of the favorite pastimes of horsemen was to ride or drive out there in the afternoon, leave an order for dinner, ride or drive

on out to Ada and return, and after dinner stay to dance in the evening.

During the war years the existing clubs, churches, and other organizations of Grand Rapids were devoting all of their attention and energies to war work but after the war there was considerable development in the cultural and religious organizations of the city. In 1866, the Grand Rapids Y.M.C.A. was organized and in 1869 the City Library Association which later became The Ladies Literary Club. In 1870 new church buildings were built at a total cost of \$170,000 by the Park Congregational and First Methodist Churches.

ORGANIZATION UNDER GRADED SCHOOL LAW

Organization Meetings

The West Side District organized under the provisions of the Graded School Act at its annual meeting in September 1859.¹ The following men were elected to the board of trustees: B. Stocking and J. D. Bennett, one-year term; the Rev. C. Smith and Baker Borden, two-year term; N. Robinson and William Hovy, three-year term. At this meeting a resolution was passed to levy a tax sufficiently high to make the schools free for ten months.

District No. I on the East Side organized one year later (in September 1860) when a resolution was approved adopting the district organization provided under the new law.² The following

1-Grand Rapids Daily Enquirer and Herald, September 29, 1859

2-Ibid., September 28, 1860

men were elected trustees: James H. McKee, Dr. Charles Shepard, John W. Peirce, George Kendall, Wilder D. Foster and John Ball. At this meeting a resolution was passed instructing the board to establish a high school during that school year (1860).

It was not until September 2, 1867 that the Coldbrook School District voted to organize as a Graded School District.¹

High School Tuition Policy

A committee was appointed in 1860 to make the necessary recommendations for the establishment of a high school. Their report from which the following is an excerpt is important because the policy outlined on tuition was adopted and remained in effect until the school year 1868-69, just a few months before the passage by the State Legislature of the law which made it mandatory for school districts to make their schools free.²

The influence of a high school as a stimulus to the lower or preparatory schools, its necessity in the education at home, of teachers; the duty which this city owes to herself and the surrounding country tributary to her, to provide all their sons and daughters the opportunity of obtaining a good education at a limited expense, rather than that a few should pay largely for those benefits to more enterprising neighbors; the demand for it, as seen by the large numbers enrolled there, and its importance to our enterprising city- all these are loud arguments in its favor.

The demand, at the present day, for more extended knowledge, is almost universal, and in many towns and cities free tuition is allowed in the higher branches, yet, especially in the present time of financial embarrassment, we believe those pursuing the studies of the Higher Department should be charged tuition extra therefor. This has been the policy for years in

1-William J. Etten, A Citizen's History of Grand Rapids, Michigan.
P. 113.

2-Grand Rapids Daily Enquirer and Herald, October 5, 1860.

regard to the study of foreign languages, and we see no reason which should forbid extending a similar provision to all the studies of the High School.

The recommendation of the committee has been carried out; and we believe the rates of tuition now charged in the higher studies will meet the extra expense caused by tuition therein. We think there is but one voice among all noble minded, intelligent citizens, and that in favor of making the common branches of an English education free to every resident child. We are free from debt and have money in the Treasury. Our schools are respected by the entire community; and it is with mingled pride and pleasure we find that abroad, as well as at home, they are acknowledged "second to none." On the other hand, in school buildings we are as greatly deficient. We know of no place in the State, of one third the population of this city, but that excels us in this respect. The school suffers for want of ample and convenient accommodations. Pecuniary embarrassments have delayed action upon this subject.

The High School movement grew quite rapidly after 1840 and by 1860 it is estimated that there were about 320 high schools in the United States.¹

First Published Report

District No. I published its first annual catalogue in 1861.²

The catalogue contained the names of the board members, the teachers, all of the pupils in the school system, some statistics about enrollments, a calendar of the school year, a section entitled Classification and Course of Study, the rules and regulations and an annual report of the superintendent. The teaching staff was made up of 21 members, only two of them men: Mr. Danforth and Mr. Strong. The high school department consisted of an English

1-Boston 1821, New York City 1825, Philadelphia 1838, Buffalo 1838, New Orleans 1843, Cleveland 1846, Cincinnati 1847, Toledo 1849, Chicago 1856, Ann Arbor 1856, Detroit 1858, Grand Rapids 1860, Lansing 1868.

2-Annual Catalogue of the Grand Rapids Schools for the Academic Year, 1860-61.

course which took three years and a classical course which in that year was extended to five years. Pupils who were graduated from the English course spent nine years in school and those in the classical course eleven. There were 150 pupils listed in the high school department; 26 in the classical course, 73 in the English course and 51 unclassified. The total enrollment in the schools of the district was 1320. The school year of 40 weeks was divided into three terms; fall term of 16 weeks, winter term of 12 weeks and a spring term of 12 weeks. The primary department consisted of a first and second grade and was conducted in four primary buildings. The intermediate and grammar departments each consisted of a first and second grade and were housed in the high school building.

Rules and Regulations of the Board

There were four standing committees of the Board:

- Committee on Buildings and Supplies
- Committee on Teachers and their Qualifications
- Committee on Rules and Discipline
- Committee on Library and Apparatus

High school students were charged a tuition of \$2 per term, payable in advance. The superintendent was expected to hold a meeting of all the teachers every Saturday morning at nine o'clock and to report the general proceedings of these meetings once each term to the board. There were many specific instructions for teachers and pupils. Teachers were required to be present at least 15 minutes before the opening of the morning and afternoon sessions, prepared to render any needed service. The rules regarding attendance, tardiness and defacing school property were strict, and violations

were punishable by suspension or expulsion from school. A board of visitors was to be appointed every year to attend the final examinations in each school and department and report to the board of education.

ADMINISTRATION

New Administrative Heads

Both District No. I on the East Side and the West Side District began the year 1861-62 with new administrators. Edwin A. Strong¹ succeeded Edward Danforth on the East Side and J. C. Clark succeeded a Mr. Brown who had been temporarily employed on the West Side. As an economy measure, Mr. Strong served for two or three years in the combined capacity of superintendent and high school principal. Mr. Clark remained at the head of the West Side Schools only four years, but Mr. Strong continued as superintendent until 1871; then resigned to become head of the Department of Science in Oswego Normal School Oswego, New York.

Administrative Changes

At the Coldbrook School, Mr. C. W. Borst was principal from 1862 to 1864 and Miss Fannie Tucker in 1867. Other teachers in the district were A. J. Tucker, Marie A. Jipson, Mr. and Mrs. G. H. Bell

¹-Mr. Strong was born in Onondaga County, New York in 1835 and came to Grand Rapids as high school principal in September 1858 after being graduated from Union College in June of the same year. He married Harriet Jane Pomeroy of Auburn, New York in 1861. When he left Grand Rapids in 1885 he became Head of the Science Department of the State Normal School at Ypsilanti and in 1919 was made Professor Emeritus. He died in St. Petersburg, Florida in February 1920 at the age of eighty-six.

and Adelaide Tucker.¹ The West Side Schools opened the school year 1865-66 with a Professor Carlton of Ann Arbor in charge.² Mr. Carlton did not complete the year; an announcement of the spring term stated that Mr. William Kent was in charge.³ Mr. Stewart Montgomery became superintendent and principal in September 1867 and gave the West Side Schools active and energetic leadership until 1871, when the districts were consolidated. Mr. Anson J. Daniels was employed in 1867 as principal of the grammar department of the East Side Schools and became high school principal the following year, succeeding Mr. W. H. Beal.

Abolishment of Corporal Punishment

At a meeting on September 12, 1870 the board of trustees of District No. 1 adopted the following rule:⁴

Rule 28. For determined resistance to authority, or for any misconduct such as corrupting in its influence on pupils, or seriously detrimental to the interests of the school, the teacher, by the advice and consent of the Principal of the department, may suspend a pupil from school, such suspension to remain in force for the current school month, but in no case shall corporal punishment in any form be employed by a teacher in the school.

Superintendent Strong's instructions to teachers relative to the enforcement of this rule were:

If the wrongdoing is sudden and violent the teacher may at once suspend the pupil from school, sending the required

1-William J. Etten, A Citizen's History of Grand Rapids, Michigan. P. 113.

2-Grand Rapids Daily Democrat, September 15, 1865.

3-Ibid., June 29, 1866.

4-Richmond Scrapbook, School Papers and Excerpts from Public Prints, No. 1, Suspension Notice and Newspaper Clippings, Michigan Room, Ryerson Public Library, Grand Rapids.

notices to the parents of the pupil and the Superintendent. If the evil is a growing one, the pupil shall receive due admonition, and, in case of its continuance, he shall be subjected to such deprivations of privilege as will in their nature tend to correct the evil without endangering the health of the pupil- such as removing from temptation by change of seat or classification, keeping after school for special work or assistance, (provided that pupils never be detained more than five minutes at recess, and, except in extraordinary cases and in the higher schools, more than a half hour after school), the withdrawal of such special privileges as are bestowed for good conduct, etc.

If the misconduct is continued, notice of the fact shall be sent to the parents of the pupils, and if there shall be no amendment, the pupil shall be suspended from school, notice of the suspension, with the reason for such action, being sent to the parents and the Superintendent. At the end of the school month the School Board or the proper committee will meet to act upon applications for restoration to school privileges to whom these notices will be forwarded by the Superintendent. In case of restoration the pupil shall be classified by examination.

In addition he made these explanatory comments:

It will be seen that the rule places the discipline of children where I suppose most persons will agree that it ought to be, with parents themselves, while it provides a remedy by the use of which the school can go forward unhindered by the vicious and ill-disposed.

The School Board have long had in mind the adoption of a rule substantially like the above. It is demanded by a large and constantly increasing portion of the community, and is especially urged by a large majority of teachers, who believe that it ought not be expected of them in addition to their other duties that they should reduce to submission big unruly boys, who have never known what it is to be subject to rightful authority. If the rule is an experiment here it is not elsewhere. It has been tried and approved in many towns, both large and small, and under greatly varied circumstances, and it requires no spirit of prophecy to foresee that it will soon be the prevailing practice in the civilized world.

Superintendent Strong felt that the main difficulty in the enforcement of the rule was in the large number of homeless, orphaned or spoiled children who would take this opportunity to get out of school. He believed that the State should do away with corporal

punishment and provide for the education of such children with enforced attendance.

EXPANDED SCHOOL SERVICES

School and Public Library

The Grand Rapids Library Association was disbanded in 1861 because of lack of public support and the books were placed in charge of the school trustees of District No. 1 with the understanding that they would be made available to pupils in the schools and to the public. The books were to be housed at the school and kept in good order and the board agreed that they would appropriate at least \$25 annually for new books.¹

Kent Scientific Institute Collections

Among the distinctive features of the Grand Rapids Schools at this time were the excellent collections of scientific value housed in the high school building and available to the students for study. In 1867, the older Lyceum of Natural History joined with the Kent Scientific Institute and the collections of both societies were placed in the high school.² The Circular and General Information for the Academic Year 1867-68 contains the following description of the collection.³

1-Grand Rapids Daily Enquirer and Herald, December 17, 1861.

2-First Annual Report of the Art and Museum Commissioners, May 1918, Pp. 23-27.

3-Public Schools of Grand Rapids, Annual Reports and Catalogue for 1867-68, Grand Rapids: Daily Eagle Office, 1868. P. 54.

The Cabinets of the school contain specimens sufficient to illustrate the elementary facts of nearly all departments of Natural History except Botany, a deficiency which will be supplied as speedily as possible. The following are the more important of these collections:

- 1st. A collection of Minerals, embracing about 400 specimens.
- 2d. A collection of Silurian and Devonian fossils, containing 375 species, and upward of 1000 specimens.
- 3d. About 50 specimens illustrating Lithological and Stratigraphical Geology.
- 4th. A collection of Shells containing about 600 specimens.
- 5th. About 100 species of Birds and Mammals, represented by 120 specimens.
- 6th. The Cabinets of the Kent Scientific Institute, which are now deposited in the school building, and contain collections of Minerals, Fossils, Insects, Reptiles, etc.
- 7th. The McNeil collection of Shells, containing 2500 species and varieties, and upward of 10,000 specimens. A small library is attached to this collection containing rare and valuable foreign illustrated works on Conchology the Edinburgh Encyclopedia and other important works.
- 8th. Mr. Currier's collection of Shells, of about the same number of entries as above, not in the school building but kindly placed at the service of the Natural History classes of the school. Mr. Currier's collection contains many type specimens, and is rich in terrestrial and fluviatile species as the McNeil collection is in marine forms.

The McNeil collection which was acquired in 1868 deserves special mention. The Grand Rapids Daily Eagle printed an article signed by John Ball, president of the Kent Scientific Institute, urging the public to augment the funds of the institute so that Mr. J. A. McNeil, a resident of Grand Rapids who had been on an expedition in Central America under the auspices of the Peabody Academy of Science in Salem, Massachusetts, could make a collection for Grand Rapids.¹ Superintendent Strong also wrote to the

1-Richmond Scrapbook, School Papers and Excerpts from Public Prints.
No. I, Grand Rapids Public Library.

Eagle seconding Mr. Ball's plea and asking for public support of the project. At the annual meeting in 1870 the sum of \$1,000 was voted for the purchase of the McNeil collection of shells.¹

The Gilbert Fund

On January 1, 1860 a donation of \$2,000 was made to the schools by Thomas D. Gilbert, establishing the Gilbert Fund.² The interest on this money was to be expended annually at the discretion of the board either in the purchase of books and apparatus or for medals and gifts for the more worthy pupils. The annual report of the superintendent for 1860-61 stated that the first expenditure under the provisions of the gift was for needed equipment.

CURRICULUM AND COURSE OF STUDY

Organization Plan

The annual catalogue for 1862-63 contained information about the organization plan then in use in the schools.³ The primary department consisted of six divisions, each of which would normally take one-half year. These divisions were lettered from F the lowest, to A, the highest. The intermediate department would normally take two years, each year being divided into two sections, C and D for the first year, and B and C for the second. The grammar department also took two years and was organized into four

1-Daily Morning Democrat, September 7, 1870.

2-Grand Rapids Daily Enquirer and Herald, October 5, 1860.

3-Annual Catalogue of the Grand Rapids Public Schools for the Academic Year 1862-63. Pp. 22-26.

sections. There were two high school courses: the English course of three years and a five-year classical course. In his annual report, also printed in the catalogue, Superintendent Strong indicated that it was possible to advance rapidly from one grade or division to the next one and he considered that feature of the program quite undesirable. His statement on this subject follows:

Promotions-- Perhaps the greatest evil existing at present in our schools is the rapidity with which promotions are made from the lower to the higher grades. Any person who will compare the Course of Study assigned for the various departments, will see that, with few exceptions, the majority of the pupils are in advance of those studies which they can most profitably pursue at their age. The misfortune is that this state of things is often regarded as quite creditable to the school, and thus the evil is not only confirmed, but pupils of other schools are made extremely restless under a system which does not allow of so rapid promotions. The evil arises from an intense anxiety on the part of parents and children concerning advancement into a higher grade, the whole ambition of pupils being frequently concentrated upon this one point-- to complete the studies of their department. Such an ambition properly restrained, would usually be regarded as quite praiseworthy; and it must be admitted that this desire for advancement does not seem, hitherto, to have decreased the thoroughness with which pupils are prepared for higher classes. But in order to bring about this result, pupils are overworked, and soon become weary; and, by getting in advance of the studies proper to their age, they lose, thenceforward their interest in all study. They cannot easily go forward, they are not willing to go backward. They also employ their energies unprofitably as they do not (if we assume an educational axiom, that the mental faculties have a certain order of development) bring to their studies those abilities which time alone can give. And, worse than all, it is found that those pupils who have, during the formative period of life, acquired no love of scientific truth for its own sake, but have been actuated by a mere desire for promotion, and a wish to be reputed as having completed an education, will make their attainments of little use to themselves or the world.

Comparison of Organization Plans

The task of developing a graded school system which was begun

in Grand Rapids in 1849 with the establishment of the Union School (East Side) was continued and several changes were made, although in most cases the changes were largely in nomenclature. Other towns and cities of the state were carrying on similar experimentation with organization plans; there was much dissimilarity. This can be seen quite readily by examining the accompanying diagram showing the organization plans in effect in several Michigan cities in 1862.¹ (See diagram on following page).

Changes in Organization of Both Districts

In September 1865, the Classical Course in the high school on the East Side was apparently reduced to four years, but it actually continued to be five years long because it was begun in the last year of the grammar school. In the year 1867-68 a new five-year course called the Literary or Complete Course was added; it included all of the regular English studies of the high school and the Latin and Greek of the Classical Course. Girls were permitted to substitute German or French for Greek in the new course.²

Apparently an attempt was made in 1868 to organize the schools of the West Side on a plan comparable to that of the East Side, as the following quotation from one of the newspapers indicates.³

1-Twenty-Fifth Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1862, Pp. 71-189.

2-Public Schools of Grand Rapids, Annual Reports and Catalogue of 1867-68, P. 30.

3-Grand Rapids Daily Eagle, September 4, 1868.

Years	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Grand Rapids	F-G	Primary D-C	B-A	Intermediate D-C	B-A	Grammar D-C	B-A	English Classical					
Ann Arbor	3rd	3rd	2nd	1st	1st	1st	3rd	Grammar 2nd	1st	English Classical			
Niles	1st	Primary 2nd	3rd	2nd	1st	1st	Intermediate 1st	2nd	Grammar 1st	2nd	Class. Elect.		
Marshall	1st	Primary 2nd	3rd	1st	2nd	3rd	Intermediate 1st	2nd	Grammar 1st	2nd	English Classical		
Jackson	3rd	Primary 2nd	1st	3rd	2nd	1st	Secondary 2nd	1st	Grammar 2nd	1st	English Classical		
Monroe	9th	Primary 8th	7th	6th	5th	4th	Junior Department 3rd	2nd	1st	Academic Department D	C	B	A
Detroit	1st	Primary 2nd	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	Junior 1st	2nd	3rd	Senior 2nd	3rd	English Class. Mixed	

DIAGRAM II

SCHOOL ORGANIZATION IN SEVERAL MICHIGAN CITIES IN 1862

The fall term of the city schools commences on Monday next, the 7th. inst. Arrangements have been made by which the same course of study will be pursued in all the schools. Heretofore, the schools on the east and west side of the river have not been uniform in their course of study. That defect will now be remedied and there will be but one school, in fact, in the whole city, with numerous departments working together in harmony with the same books, the same general principle of discipline and the same method of management and study, to secure the same object.

Superintendent Montgomery announced the employment for the first time of teachers of French and German for the opening of the fall term.¹ This expansion of the Higher Department was one of the factors which entered into the decision to consolidate, because many people felt that it was unnecessary to duplicate high school facilities in the city. For many years after consolidation, the pupils from the West Side went to the East Side High School.

College Preparation

In September 1863 one of the newspapers printed a signed article by Mr. Strong which urged parents, if there was any possibility that their child might go on to college, to notify the school, so that he could be properly prepared.² This article emphasized the importance of selecting in high school those subjects recommended by the colleges in order to avoid the necessity of repeating them in college, the fact that pupils who had thoroughly mastered the studies of the grammar school and the first year of high school had more than enough scientific and mathematical

1-Grand Rapids Daily Eagle, September 4, 1868.

2-Ibid., September 4, 1863.

knowledge to fit them for college, and the desirability of beginning the study of foreign languages early because in his opinion they were learned more easily by younger pupils. He closed his article with a plea to send more pupils away to college, so that they would come back to enrich the life of the community.

TEACHER TRAINING

Teachers' Class

In May, 1864, the state superintendent of public instruction sent out a circular letter to all Union Schools, colleges and academies of the state asking them to give him information about teachers classes they were conducting.¹ Superintendent Strong replied that a teachers' class had been started in 1860 during Mr. Danforth's superintendency and had been continued. He described the work as consisting primarily of instruction in the subject matter to be taught in the primary schools, in which the teaching candidates were found to be poorly prepared. There were a few classes in "Methods" and some time was spent in visiting other teachers, but there was no practice teaching. The classes were conducted for 12 weeks of the fall term and had an average attendance of about 28.

Before the receipt of the letter from the state superintendent,

1-Twenty-Eighth Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1864. Lansing: John A. Kerr and Co., 1864. P. 29.

Mr. Strong had announced in April 1864, the organization in the grammar school of classes in chemistry, botany, zoology, natural history and a class in elementary botany of special value to prospective teachers.¹ He stated that, since the method of teaching by object lessons was so popular, it was important that all teachers know these subjects well. At the opening of the fall term, Mr. Strong made the following statement:²

In accordance with the wish of Superintendent Gregory, of the State Department of Public Instruction, most of the high schools of the State will establish during the coming term in connection with the regular course of study, a Normal Department for the instruction of teachers. Mr. Edwards, Principal of the grammar department, will have charge of this department and will be assisted by other teachers so that the instruction will be thorough and efficient. Mr. Edwards, will also keep a register of persons who desire to teach and will assist school committees in securing competent teachers.

In the spring of 1865, Mr. Edwards announced that he had a "record" containing the names of a few good teachers who could be obtained to take charge of summer schools. Teachers not belonging to the normal department were required to furnish evidence of qualification to teach in order to be recommended. He stated that he hoped that hereafter the normal department would be able to help supply efficient teachers to the county.

In the fall term of 1865 only six weeks were devoted to the teachers' class instead of the 12 formerly allowed. This change coincided with the opinion expressed in his report to the state

1-Grand Rapids Daily Eagle, April 8, 1864.
2-Ibid., August 17, 1864.

superintendent of public instruction in which Superintendent Strong said that the class would probably be discontinued because it interrupted the regular work and was no source of revenue.¹ He felt that the Legislature should either locate a normal school in Grand Rapids or recognize the work being done by giving validity to the Grand Rapids certificates and paying something toward the expense of the courses. However, a teachers' class was conducted in the Central School in the fall term of 1869 and in making the announcement, Superintendent Strong said that, should the enrollment be large, the county superintendent had promised that he would assist in the instruction and examinations.² There is no record showing the size of the class.

Superintendent Montgomery of the West Side Schools outlined the plan to be followed in their first teachers class to be held in the fall of 1869 and called special attention to a member of their faculty, Miss E. J. Keeler, teacher of method in geograph, reading, invention, drawing and oral lessons.³ She was a graduate of the Normal Training School of Oswego, New York and had excellent recommendations from that school.

Teachers' Institutes

Three Teachers' Institutes were held in Grand Rapids between

1-Twenty-Ninth Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1865. Lansing: John A. Kerr and Co., 1865. Pp. 24-25.
 2-Daily Morning Democrat, August 25, 1869.
 3-Ibid., September 4, 1869.

1860 and 1871. An institute lasting one week was held in April 1863¹ under the direction of State Superintendent John M. Gregory assisted by Professor A. S. Welch of the State Normal School and Professor Oramel Hosford of Olivet College.² An institute under the direction of Mr. C. C. Bicknell, the county superintendent, assisted by Messrs. Strong, Daniels and Montgomery was held in Grand Rapids in October 1866, and was attended by 150 teachers.³

The East Side Schools sponsored a Teachers' Institute held on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, September 17 to 19, 1868.⁴ Schools were closed and all the teachers in the city were invited. It was reported that 70 were in attendance. Superintendent Strong was in charge, assisted by A. J. Daniels, high school principal, and Miss Emma Field, principal of Primary No. 2. The program was based on the materials and methods used in the schools of District No. 1.

TEACHERS' SALARIES AND SCHOOL COSTS

Local Criticism of School Costs

In the spring of 1860 a Taxpayers Association became active in suggesting economies in school operating costs. They recommended reducing the salary of Superintendent Danforth, who was getting \$1200, and also the salaries of some of the teachers.

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- 1-Twenty-Seventh Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Lansing: John A. Kerr and Co., 1863. P. 32
 - 2-Grand Rapids Daily Eagle, March 25, 1863.
 - 3-Thirty-First Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Lansing: John A. Kerr and Co., 1867. P. 62.
 - 4-Daily Morning Democrat, September 20, 1868

They recommended that Professor Dietrich, who taught commercial subjects in the high school on a part-time basis, be paid from a special tuition fee charged for his courses.¹ A comparison of the costs in the East and West Side Districts showed that the teaching costs on the West Side were less per child. Mr. E. A. Strong, principal of the high school, was paid \$800 and Mr. D. T. Dell, principal on the West Side, \$600. Teachers on the East Side received salaries of \$5.50 to \$7.00 per week, and on the West Side \$4.50 to \$5.50. The total expenditure for teachers' salaries on the West Side was \$1,849 for teaching 540 children or \$3.42 per child for a school year of 43 weeks. On the East Side, the total expense for teaching was \$6,700 on 1476 children or \$4.54 per pupil or \$1.12 more than on the West Side.² There is no record of the amount of school tax on the West Side, but the rate established at the annual meeting of District No. 1 in September, 1860, was three and one-half mills.³

Comparative Study of Teachers' Salaries and School Costs

Teachers' salaries in Grand Rapids were very good in 1865 when compared with state averages. The average salary of \$63.81 per month for males was far above the state average of \$34.00; the average of \$39.45 for females was also much better than the state average of \$16.61.⁴ In his annual report for the year 1865-66,

1-Grand Rapids Daily Enquirer and Herald, February 21, 1860.

2-Ibid., February 25, 1860.

3-Ibid., September 28, 1860.

4-Twenty-Ninth Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction for 1865, P. 221.

Superintendent Strong listed the average annual cost per pupil in the schools of District No. I at \$9.50.¹ He had made a study of the school reports of a large number of the principal cities of the country and had found that the average annual cost per pupil was about \$11 reanging from \$7.50 in Detroit to \$17.29 in New York. He also reported that if the average membership were divided by the number of teachers the number of pupils per teacher would be 45.5 for Grand Rapids, a figure he said was not far from the usual average in most northem cities. The smallest number of pupils per teacher that he found reported was 36 in Springfield, Illinois, and the largest 56, in Detroit.

Teachers' Salary Schedule

The first real attempt to set up a salary schedule for teachers was made during the school year 1867-68. Superintendent Strong reported that many teachers began the year with the feeling that their salaries were inadequate, but that this feeling had been removed toward the end of the year by the generous action of the Board in adopting a new plan for the payment of teachers' salaries, based on the recognition of the value of successful experience. The salary schedule as adopted is quoted below.²

The salaries of the teachers of the High School and Principal of the Grammar School shall be left for separate determination; in other grades the salaries shall be as

1-Annual Report of the Board of Trustees for the School Year, 1865-66.
Grand Rapids: Daily Eagle Office, 1866. P. 24.

2-Public Schools of Grand Rapids, Annual Reports and Catalogue for 1867-68. Pp. 13-14.

follows:

Grammar School, First Assistant	\$11.00 per week
Grammar School, Second Assistant	\$10.00 per week
Intermediate School, Principal	\$12.50 per week
Intermediate School, First Assistant	\$10.00 per week
Intermediate School, Second Assistant	\$10.00 per week
Intermediate School, Third Assistant	\$ 8.00 per week
Primary Schools, Principal	\$10.00 per week
Primary Schools, Assistants	\$ 9.00 per week
Primary Schools, Second Assistants	\$ 8.00 per week

Add five per cent after two years¹ experience
 Add ten per cent after four years¹ experience
 Add fifteen per cent after six years¹ experience
 Add twenty per cent after eight years¹ experience

It can readily be seen by an examination of the above schedule that it was based on position and experience.

It is interesting to compare these salaries with those of 1860 which were under attack by the Taxpayers Association at that time.¹ Five teachers were then receiving \$7 per week, two \$6 per week and eleven \$5.50 per week. Under the new schedule it would be possible for a grammar school teacher, first assistant, with eight years experience, to get a salary of \$13.20 per week. The second assistant primary teacher, who was in the lowest salary bracket, could, after eight years¹ experience, receive a salary of \$9.50 per week, more than any one of the five most highly paid teachers was receiving in 1860.

SCHOOL HOUSING PROBLEMS

New School Buildings

In 1860 the Coldbrook District completed a new two-story

¹-Grand Rapids Daily Enquirer and Herald, February 21, 1860.

building designed to accommodate 128 pupils but equipped and occupied only the first floor. The West Side District did not build new buildings in 1860 but found it necessary to use the third floor of their Union School, which had served until then as an armory. District No. 1 completed its fourth primary school in the fall of 1860, and anticipated the need for a new Central School Building. A meeting was called in October to discuss this problem.¹ The prevailing opinion of those present was that the old building would not meet the need for more than two or three years more, and that a new building should be built as soon as possible. It was suggested that from \$2,000 to \$3,000 be raised by taxation and added to the current balance of \$1,700 to start a building fund. This additional money could be raised without increasing the tax rate, for only the routine expenditures were to be made that year. At the annual meeting of District No. 1 in 1863 there was another and very spirited discussion of the necessity for building a new Central School.² It was decided to build at a cost not to exceed \$25,000 and to raise \$3,000 by taxation during the next year and borrow \$15,000 by issuing bonds. A committee of three was appointed to act with the board members as a building committee. This committee decided not to build because of the high cost of labor and materials which had developed as a result of the Civil War and school housing conditions

1-Grand Rapids Daily Enquirer and Herald, October 6, 1860.

2-Grand Rapids Daily Eagle, September 23, 1863.

became bad before action was finally taken to remedy them.

Need for Buildings

The relative position of Grand Rapids in regard to school buildings was so poor by 1865 that the state superintendent of public instruction commented on it as follows:¹

The City of Grand Rapids has more children, and considerably more wealth, than any other place in the State, except Detroit, and reports but \$18,800 invested in schoolhouses. There are twelve places outside of Detroit that report more than this, the whole number averaging \$37,882 each.

In spite of this criticism by the state superintendent very little was done to relieve the situation in 1865. The West Side District voted no money for buildings. Just before the annual meeting of District No. I, in September, 1865, it was announced that the question of building two new large brick schoolhouses would be discussed.² The housing problem was so great in the area served by Primary School No. I that 48 of the smaller children had been taught in the basement of a nearby church.³ An appropriation of \$500 was voted to elevate Primary School No. 2 and build a basement schoolroom.⁴ It was voted to raise \$3,000 to be added to the \$18,000 in bonds and notes already in the high school building fund. The annual meeting of 1865 removed the \$25,000 limit on the construction of the High School building and authorized the board to proceed with its erection on the plan adopted earlier, regardless

1-Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction for 1865, P. 221.

2-Grand Rapids Daily Eagle, September 1, 1865.

3-Ibid., March 31, 1865.

4-Ibid., September 5, 1865.

of cost. It was also voted to complete Primary School No. I at a cost of \$3,000. Having completed the payment of their indebtedness in 1865, the West Side District voted \$1,600 to build a primary school in Ward Four. The next year this building was in use, and at the annual meeting money was voted for the purchase of a site and a bond issue was approved to build a primary school in Ward Five.¹ The East Side Schools announced in 1867 the opening of a new brick school to replace Ward School No. I.

New High School Building

The new Central School building for District No. I was occupied for the first time in September 1868. The building was made of brick at a cost of approximately \$50,000. In the annual report of the trustees, considerable space was given to a detailed report on the construction, including a statement of costs, a list of the architects and contractors, and in some instances, the names of the workmen.² The statement was made that the new building was designed to provide each pupil nearly double the space usually allowed in public schools, and to accommodate from 550 to 600 pupils, with a maximum of 700, if necessary. Reference was also made to the high quality of the workmanship and materials that went into the construction of the building, proof of which is the fact that it continued to be used as a grammar school until 1911, years after a new high school had been built. Photographs in the

1-Grand Rapids Daily Eagle, September 3, 1867.

2-Public Schools of Grand Rapids, Annual Reports and Catalogue for 1867-68, Pp. 15-17.

collection at the Grand Rapids Public Library show both the new Central Building¹ and the Old Stone Schoolhouse, but the latter was not used for school purposes after June 1868, and was torn down and the stone sold for construction material. There was criticism of the new building on two counts. Some people disliked the severe simplicity and massive character of the architecture; others were critical because so few pupils were accommodated in so large a building. The criticism was short-lived, and was soon replaced by a feeling of civic pride. In 1870, a rather large delegation of Milwaukee citizens visited Grand Rapids. As a feature of their entertainment, they were driven to the Central School to view the city from the cupola. One of the Milwaukee gentlemen is reported to have remarked that Milwaukee had no schools that would compare with this one.²

Buildings were in the process of construction in all three districts in the school year 1869-70. Superintendent Montgomery stated in his annual report that the Union School building was remodeled to provide seating for 536, that a second story was being added to the Fourth Ward school, which would accommodate an additional 80 pupils and in the Fifth Ward a new three-story brick building was under construction and would be ready by January 1870.³ The Coldbrook School District let the contract for a new school-

1-The new building was built farther east on the school lot than the old one which was quite close to Ransom Avenue.

2-Daily Morning Democrat, June 16, 1870.

3-Ibid., September 4, 1869.

house near the Detroit and Milwaukee Railroad Depot in June 1870; the schoolhouse was to be ready for occupancy in September of that year.¹ At the annual meeting of District No. 1 it was announced that the new building for Primary No. 4 would be ready for the winter term.² A site for Primary No. 5 was designated at a later meeting, and the trustees were authorized to borrow money for the purchase of the lot.³ It was also decided to raise by tax \$1,500 for building purposes during the year. In 1870 it was voted to build two new primary buildings and to borrow \$12,000 to be used for their construction.⁴

PRIVATE AND PAROCHIAL SCHOOLS

List of Private Schools

The decline of the influence of private schools on education in Grand Rapids, which began about 1850, became increasingly evident during the years 1860-1871. The private schools in operation were:

- 1859 The Rev. Mr. Staples' Female Seminary
- 1859 Miss Winslow's School (40 pupils)
- 1859 Miss Lizzie Waring, Select School
- 1859 Miss Hattie G. Clay, Select School (formerly Mrs. DePew's School)
- 1860 Young Ladies Seminary (Catholic) Three Catholic sisters were sent to Grand Rapids by Bishop LeFevre of Detroit and stayed about three years, then the school was closed and they were transferred to a school in Canada.

1-Daily Morning Democrat, June 22, 1870.

2-Ibid., September 10, 1869.

3-Ibid., September 14, 1869.

4-Ibid., September 7, 1870.

- 1860 Commercial Institute operated by Professor Dietrich, part-time teacher in the High School.
- 1861 Select School of Mr. H. H. Barrett, graduate of the New York State Normal School, in Merritt's Hall
- 1866 New Select School of the Misses Cummings
- 1866 Grand Rapids Commercial College was established by Prof. A. C. Parsons and C. G. Swensburg with 63 students. This institution was very successful and continued for many years. Mr. Swensburg came to be considered one of the leading citizens.

Parochial School Development

There was a considerable development of parochial schools during this period, especially German schools. In 1865, one of the newspapers announced a campaign to raise money for a building to house a non-sectarian German school that had been in successful operation for two years.¹ In the article the editor stated that two other German schools were being operated in the city, one Lutheran and one Catholic. A few months later, this same editor wrote a long editorial advocating the teaching of German to all of the students in the higher grades of the public schools.² He stated that the public schools of Cincinnati and St. Louis and some others had for some time required a reading and speaking knowledge of German for graduation.

Enrollment Statistics

In his annual report for the year 1866-67, Superintendent Strong listed the number of pupils enrolled in private and parochial as well as in the public schools.³ This report shows

1-Grand Rapids Daily Eagle, May 29, 1865.

2-Ibid., August 4, 1865.

3-Ibid., August 8, 1867.

the extent to which the private schools had declined, and the parochial schools developed. It also gives the number of pupils of school age in the city for purposes of comparison with the number in actual attendance:

Persons of school age (5 to 20 yrs) East Side	2416
Persons of school age (5 to 20 yrs) West Side	<u>960</u>
Total in city	3376
Number who have attended school (District No. I)	1740
Number who have attended school (West Side)	621
Number who have attended school (Coldbrook)	150
Number who have attended German schools	203
Number who have attended Catholic schools	160
Number who have attended private schools	<u>92</u>
Total for City	2966

He estimated that about half of the students in the private and parochial schools had also been enrolled in the public schools, and so were counted twice. After making allowance for the fact that about five times as many pupils came to the city to be educated as left it for that purpose, he arrived at the figure of 2611 pupils who attended the public and private schools of the city during the year or 78 percent of the number of school age.

CONSOLIDATION OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Meetings Held

Although many persons had realized for some time that there would be many advantages in consolidating the schools of the city in one system and a meeting had been held in 1855 to discuss consolidation, the action which finally brought about consolidation was begun at the annual meeting of the West Side District in 1870.¹

1-Daily Morning Democrat, August 28, 1870.

At this meeting a resolution was passed authorizing the trustees to confer with those of District No. I about consolidation. The meeting was adjourned to convene again after the conference with the East Side Board. The members of the East Side Board were much in favor of consolidation and at the adjourned meeting, the West Side voted 101 to 35 authorizing their trustees to proceed with the proposed consolidation.¹

The voters of District No. I also discussed consolidation, at an adjourned meeting, and decided informally that it was a good idea and that the Legislature should immediately be asked to pass a law so that it could be made effective with the beginning of the school year in 1871. This meeting was then adjourned for one week, then a vote was to be taken.² Only 38 persons attended; the proposal was rejected 20-18.³

Legislative Act Prepared

The trustees of District No. I did not consider this vote as a mandate of the people, and therefore the following resolution was passed at a joint meeting of the board of education of the two districts, held in the office of John Ball and James McKee less than two weeks later:⁴

The members of both Boards being unanimously agreed upon the importance and practicability of consolidating the school districts of the city and incorporating the schools by legislative enactment, Messrs. James H. McKee and J. N. Davis

1-Grand Rapids Daily Times, September 13, 1870.

2-Daily Morning Democrat, September 14, 1870.

3-Grand Rapids Daily Times, September 21, 1870.

4-Ibid., October 2, 1870.

were on motion of Mr. Gilbert appointed a committee to draft a law for that purpose and report to an adjourned meeting.

About the middle of December the newspapers published the full text of the proposed law so that the public would have an opportunity to study it and make suggestions before the two boards met the following Wednesday and took final action.¹ The more significant sections have been briefed in the following statements:

Section 1 The city of Grand Rapids and all territory later added to it were to become one school district.

Section 2 The board would consist of two members from each ward elected on the first Monday of September on alternate years for two-year term. All present members of the boards would complete their term.

Section 6 The mayor should be an ex-officio member of the board of education.

Section 7 The first meeting of the board was to be called by the mayor within thirty days after the law took effect.

Section 9 No more than five mills could be levied in any one year for school buildings.

Section 11 The board should constitute the board of school inspectors for the city.

Section 17 The common council and the board of education acting together might organize truant schools, reform schools, etc., for juvenile offenders and set up rules for their control and management.

Section 19 The Act should be submitted to the electors of the city at the next charter election to be held and if passed should take effect immediately.

At the joint meeting of the boards, after making several minor changes, the members signed a petition to the Legislature requesting the passage of the law.²

Bill Passed by Legislature

The Legislature passed the Act on March 15, 1871, in essentially

1-Grand Rapids Daily Times, December 18, 1870.

2-Ibid., December 22, 1870.

the form in which it was submitted giving it immediate effect,¹ but did not include the section which gave the city council and the board of education permission to establish truant or reform schools.

Organization Under the Act

The act was approved by the electors in the various districts at the spring election, April 3, 1871, by a vote of 1472 to 377.² Under the provisions of the law the members of all of the school-boards in the city met on April 11, 1871 on call of the mayor, to organize.³ A Lamont Chubb was elected president, James H. McKee, secretary, and J. Frederick Baars, treasurer.⁴ A resolution was adopted instructing the city treasurer to pay over to the treasurer of the board all money belonging to the school funds of the several districts, and a committee on by-laws, rules and regulations was appointed.

National Movement Toward Unified City Districts

The consolidation of the school districts of Grand Rapids into one city district was in keeping with the nationwide trend as cities began to realize that the old system of district schools under separate boards was inefficient and impractical under city conditions.⁵

1-Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1871, No.344.

2-Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Grand Rapids: Dygert Bros. and Co., 1875-P. 76.

3-Grand Rapids Daily Eagle, April 12, 1871.

4-For several years, banks offered proposals of the interest they would pay on deposits and charge on loans and the board of education selected a depository and elected one of the bank officials as treasurer.

5-Michigan cities and dates of consolidation: East Saginaw 1859, Lansing 1861, Ann Arbor 1865, Saginaw (West Side) 1865, Bay City 1867, Flint 1867, Grand Rapids 1871, Battle Creek 1871, Muskegon 1887, Pontiac 1889, Kalamazoo 1891, Jackson 1897.

The schools of Cincinnati were united in one district by Legislative Act in 1825, but did not become fully organized as a unit until 1828.¹ The first superintendent of schools in Cincinnati assumed

his duties in 1851, although the high schools were not under his jurisdiction and were operated under a separate board until 1895.²

The schools of Detroit were organized as one school district by Legislative Act in 1842.³ Chicago schools were united in one system in

1857, although in 1853 the city council had appointed a superintendent of schools in an attempt to unify the work in the seven school districts in the city.⁴ Cleveland had established a unified school

system by city ordinance in 1837, but a superintendent of schools was not appointed until 1853.⁵ Boston established the office of

superintendent of schools in 1851, but the primary school committee which had charge of the primary schools was not abolished however

until 1855 when the jurisdiction over them passed to the regular school committee.⁶ Even then the almost complete independence of

the primary schools of Boston was maintained for many years by a system of primary school sub-committees.

1-John B. Shotwell, A History of the Schools of Cincinnati. Cincinnati: School Life Co., 1902. P. 6.

2-Ibid., Pp. 13-15.

3-Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1842. Detroit: Bagg and Harmon Co., 1842. No. 70.

4-Elwood P. Cubberley, Public Education in the United States. P. 318-19.

5-Ibid., P. 319.

6-Annual Report of the Superintendent of Schools, Boston, Massachusetts. 1929, Bound Documents, No. 7. Boston: 1929. P. 96-97.

SUMMARY

The organization of both the East and West Side Schools under the provisions of the Graded School Act were among the first events of this period, (1860-1871). The establishment of the high school in District No. I brought about very little change in the school except a further refinement of the program and curriculum. This period marked the discontinuance of rate bills in all of the school districts in Grand Rapids, District No. I being last to adopt the plan by abolishing high school tuition for resident pupils.

There was considerable improvement in school housing. Many of the old frame schoolhouses were replaced with better designed brick buildings and the new high school constructed in District No. I was quite advanced in design and construction. The school program was much improved and more attention was paid to methods and curriculum. There was also a more serious attempt to give supervision to teachers through teachers' meetings, institutes and teacher training classes. Although early in the period there was criticism of the cost of the school and some rather stringent economies were practiced during the Civil War years, teacher morale was no doubt greatly improved by the adoption of the first teachers' salary schedule in Grand Rapids.

The decrease in private school enrollments was accompanied by

an increase in parochial school development. Near the end of the period, a rule was passed abolishing corporal punishment which resulted in an attempt on the part of the teaching staff to place the emphasis on leading instead of driving pupils. The culminating event of this whole period was the consolidation of the school districts of the city in one district under one board and one superintendent.

In his annual report for the year 1867-68 Superintendent Strong included the following summary of the progress made during the ten years that he had been connected with the schools of Grand Rapids.¹

Ten years ago today I looked for the first time upon this city, and, in company with one of your present number then a member of the Board, examined the school property of the town, and the means which had been provided for meeting the educational wants of the people. Much severe and well-directed labor had already been expended, but much still remained to be done. The schools were graded only in name; if a course of study had been adopted it had not been regarded; there were few or no High School pupils in the usual sense of the term; the value of the school property was small, not exceeding ten thousand dollars; the apparatus was limited to two globes and a tellurium; a few dozen ill-kept and little used volumes comprised the library; and the School Board, as pioneers of the educational work, were far in advance of the community, and compelled continually to urge reforms and improvements upon the people. During the intervening ten years a respectable library, a good collection of apparatus and extensive cabinets have been formed; the schools have been thoroughly graded; a course of study has been prepared and brought into use; a High School Department has been created and encouraged until it is unusually large in proportion to our population; three new buildings have been erected and the others thoroughly

1-Public Schools of Grand Rapids, Annual Reports and Catalogue for 1867-68, Pp. 18-19

repaired, so that the value of the school property of the district is hardly less than eighty thousand dollars, and the community at large have become so alive to their true interests that they are continually calling for improved buildings and increased facilities for education.

CHAPTER FIVE

GRAND RAPIDS IN TRANSITION (1871-1883)

In this period, which begins with the establishment of the city school district, there was more dissension and criticism of the schools than in any preceding period. The criticism, centered largely on the high school, was directed against its cost, and its academic character. The new ward-elected board of education was sensitive to the petty grievances of persons and therefore gave considerable time to the discussion of relatively unimportant matters such as the length of the noon hour and whether or not certain books should be bought for the library. For the first time in the history of the Grand Rapids schools, the newspapers were divided on many of the issues before the board of education; this division added to the general condition of unrest and factionalism which was characteristic of the years 1871-1883 in Grand Rapids.

Although classes were large and the regulations governing teachers strict, salaries were relatively good. The great growth in population complicated the problem of providing sufficient school-rooms to accommodate the children. The Public Library was established, and, after considerable controversy, came under the complete supervision of the board of education. Evening schools were established; special teachers of music, drawing and penmanship were appointed, and a superintendent of school buildings was hired. The first program of teacher training was inaugurated which required teaching under the

supervision of experienced teachers. There was considerable improvement in the quality of the school buildings constructed from 1871 to 1883.

LEGAL BACKGROUND AND STRUCTURE

Incorporation Act

The original act incorporating the Grand Rapids Schools, passed March 15, 1871 was amended four times by the Legislature between that date and 1883 at the request of the Grand Rapids Board of Education.¹ The changes were for the most part minor and related primarily to the election of board members.² The most important change was made in 1877, when the election date was set forward to the first Monday in May. This change did not prove satisfactory; the new plan was criticized by the president of the board in his annual report for that year.³ His criticism was based on the fact that a new board came into existence just at the time of year when teachers were being hired, and plans being made for the coming school year. In 1879, the Act was amended again and the election date was fixed as the first Monday in September, as it had been in the original Act.

1-Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1871. No. 344.

2-Local Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1875.

Lansing: W. S. George and Co., 1875. No. 357, P. 579.

Local Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1877.

Lansing: W. S. George and Co., 1877. No. 331, P. 438.

Local Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1879.

Lansing: W. S. George and Co., 1879. No. 369, P. 170.

Local Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1881.

Lansing: W. S. George and Co., 1881. No. 318, P. 106.

3-Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Grand Rapids: Eagle Job Printing Co., 1878. Pp. 11-12.

The Kalamazoo Case

In the July term of the State Supreme Court in 1874, Judge Thomas Cooley wrote an opinion destined to have widespread influence on the development of high schools, not only in Michigan, but also in other states. This opinion was given in settlement of the so-call Kalamazoo Case, in which Charles E. Stuart and others brought suit against School District No. 1 of the Village of Kalamazoo to restrain the board from collecting that portion of the school taxes voted for the support of the high school and for the payment of the salary of the superintendent.¹

The plaintiffs contended that the common schools mentioned in the State Constitution did not include high schools, which were a part of higher education, and should be supported out of other funds than those for common schools. The plaintiffs also argued that the teaching of foreign languages was unconstitutional under a provision which required that "all instruction shall be conducted in the English language".

The decision of the lower court was in favor of the school district; the Supreme Court sustained the lower court in every particular. In his written opinion, Judge Cooley called attention to the provisions in the Constitution of 1850 for the establishment of free schools in every district and a university, which implied that the people intended to provide a complete education from the primary grades through the University. He also stated that legislation subsequent to the adoption

1-William L. Smith, Historical Sketches of Education in Michigan, Pp. 50-55.

of the Constitution had followed that pattern and, consequently, school districts could not be restricted in the subject matter branches to be taught, if the voters consented to raise the taxes for the purpose.

Repeal of County Superintendency Law

The law establishing the county superintendency, passed in 1867, to improve educational conditions in the rural and small-town schools, was repealed in 1875.¹ The Act replacing it provided for a township superintendent of schools elected by the voters of the township and serving on a per diem basis as chairman of the township school inspectors to whom were returned many of the responsibilities formerly delegated to the county superintendent.

New School Code

In 1881 the Legislature made a complete revision of all of the laws relating to education and the public schools, incorporating them into one act, the title of which was:²

An Act to Revise and Consolidate the Laws relating to Public Instruction and Primary Schools and to repeal all statutes contravening the provisions of this Act.

One of the significant changes placed the granting of teachers' certificates in the hands of a county board of examiners elected annually by the township school inspectors.

LIFE IN GRAND RAPIDS

During the twelve years (1871-1883), the population of Grand

1-Public Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1875.
Lansing: W. S. George and Co., 1875.

2-Public Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1881.
Lansing: W. S. George and Co., 1881.

Rapids grew from approximately 18,000 to about 40,000. Grand Rapids was booming, but in many ways the civic development of the city fell behind the material progress that was taking place.¹ This lag in civic development is particularly noticeable in city service, especially water supply and police and fire protection. The people of Grand Rapids were generous to victims of catastrophe at home and away, but nothing much was done to prevent the repetition of disasters. There were 185 saloons in Grand Rapids but despite an active temperance movement, not much was accomplished toward remedying moral conditions. In other words, Grand Rapids was having growing pains, because not all phases of its development were taking place at the same rate.

The building of railroads to and from Grand Rapids, so important a part of the activity in the decade 1860-1870, played a much less important part between 1871 and 1883. Yet the railroad to Holland was completed in 1872, and the Grand Rapids and Indiana was extended to Traverse City in 1872 and to Petoskey in 1873.

Business expanded greatly, and in 1875 alone, 442 buildings, 48 of them stores, were built in the city. In 1876, silver money appeared in trade for the first time in approximately 15 years, and, in 1879, specie payments were resumed, and both gold and silver were available. This stabilization of the currency was helpful to

1-The information for this section was taken from the following list of references:

- Albert Baxter, History of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan.
 Ernest Fisher, History of Grand Rapids and Kent County, Michigan, I, II.
 William J. Etten, A Citizen's History of Grand Rapids, Michigan.
 Franklin Everett, Memorials of the Grand River Valley.
 Charles E. Belknap, The Yesterdays of Grand Rapids.
 Dwight Goss, History of Grand Rapids and Its Industries.

business, but, in spite of stable currency, in 1880 several Grand Rapids business men were almost ruined through speculation in the wheat market.

The year was significant because for the first time flour and apples were shipped from Grand Rapids to England. The years 1879 and 1880 were prosperous; business of the city increased markedly. Several banks were established or reorganized: Grand Rapids National in 1880, Fourth National in 1882, and the Old National in 1883.

Grand Rapids became a convention center, and undoubtedly the number of visitors to the city helped to break down provincialism and broadened the point of view of the citizenry. The following state organizations met in Grand Rapids during the years 1875-1881.

1875 - Michigan Soldiers and Sailors Association. Several regimental reunions were held at the same time.

1877 - Masonic Grand Lodge

1877 - Michigan Methodist Conference

1877 - Michigan State Troops Annual Encampment

1878 - First Annual Convention of Superintendents of Poor

1878 - Grand Lodge, I.O.O.F

1879 - State Association of Congregational Churches

1879 - State Conference of Episcopal Churches

1880 - State Sanitary Convention

1881 - Second Annual Convention of State Undertakers Association.

Grand Rapids had many bad fires during this period (1875-1881) and one of her worst floods. In 1872, Squier's Opera House and other property valued at about \$60,000 was burned, and later that same year a fire in the neighborhood of Pearl and Canal streets destroyed prop-

erty valued at \$200,000. In 1873, the Kent Woolen Mills burned, and a bad fire north of Bridge Street on the east side of the river destroyed approximately 100 buildings, including the homes of about 600 persons. The total fire loss for that year was estimated at \$425,000. In 1875, a big fire on the West Side brought about the dismissal of the fire chief, Michael Shields, and the appointment of Gen. Israel Putnam and Capt. Charles Belknap. Putnam and Belknap were dissatisfied with the political character of the city council, therefore stirred up agitation which resulted in legislative action in 1881 legalizing the appointment of a non-partisan board of police and fire commissioners. In 1876, and again in 1879, factories burned, and approximately 200 men were thrown out of work in each instance.

In 1883 the river was so high that the log booms broke and the mass of logs jammed in the river causing it to overflow even more. All three railroad bridges were carried away, and the property damage from flooding was great; it was estimated by one authority at \$5,000,000. Another flood of less consequence occurred in 1880; the city reservoir gave way, allowing 4,000,000 gallons of water to rush down the hill through the business district.

Telephone service was instituted in 1878 when a branch office of the Detroit exchange was opened in Grand Rapids. It served the public through messengers until instruments could be provided. The popularity of the telephone was so great that growth in the number of subscribers made it necessary to put out a directory within a few months. In 1881, a state telephone exchange was established with Grand Rapids as one of the centers, and, in 1883, long-distance service was instituted with Muskegon, Grand Haven, Big Rapids and

Ionia.

In 1873, the street railway was extended to the fair grounds on South Division Street and, in 1875, the so-called dummy line to Reeds Lake was completed. In 1881, a street railway company operating on the west side of the city extended its lines across the river and up Monroe Avenue so that there were two tracks on that street, operated by rival companies.

In 1872, a new jail was built, and in 1873, agitation began for a city hall, but not until 1883 was a bond issue voted for its construction. In 1873, a hydraulic engineer was brought in to study the water supply system, and to make recommendations for its improvement. He suggested changes to cost approximately \$250,000 but little was done until the disastrous fires of 1875 when public opinion demanded improvement in the water supply.

In 1873, house-to-house postal delivery was begun, and, in 1879, the postoffice building was completed. In 1873, a long-awaited public improvement was brought about with the elimination of "Grabs Corners" where Campau Square is now located, and the straightening of Monroe Avenue. The following year the grade of Canal Street was raised four feet in an attempt to bring it above flood level. This change in street level necessitated raising most of the buildings, too. Raising of Sweet's Hotel, on the present site of the Pantlind Hotel, was considered quite a feat.

In 1880, the first gas cookstoves appeared in Grand Rapids, and in 1881 the city experimented with electric lights installed on a high tower to light the city. The plan called for the installation

of several such towers, but was abandoned as impractical. In 1882, the Fuller Electric Light System was installed in the Michigan Iron Works.

There is evidence that the people of Grand Rapids had a commendable spirit of charity between the years 1873 and 1883. In 1873, they raised thousands of dollars to help families whose homes were burned in the big fire. That same year the Union Benevolent Association was organized, and, in 1875, its home was opened. In 1876, St. Mark's Home and Hospital, later to become Butterworth Hospital, was opened. In 1877, a carload of supplies was contributed and sent to northern Michigan to alleviate suffering caused by forest fires. In 1878, the sum of \$3,500 was raised for the relief of yellow fever victims in the South. In 1881, a big and successful relief movement was conducted for forest-fire sufferers in eastern Michigan. In 1882, a campaign was begun by the Union Benevolent Association to raise money for a new hospital, and in 1883, the sum of \$1,500 was raised in Grand Rapids to be sent to Germany for flood relief in addition to monies raised to help those who had suffered losses in the local flood of 1883.

Excursions by rail or boat, so popular in the 1860's, continued popular during this period. In 1872, an excursion was conducted to Sparta and in 1873 to Newaygo, to celebrate completion of the railroad to those points. In 1880, a crowd of 350 of the older residents took an excursion to Grand Haven by boat, returning overland on the train, and in 1883 Grand Rapids entertained a big group of Detroit residents on an excursion.

Three theatres were built during this period (1871-1883); Powers Opera House, seating 1300, and considered the best in Western Michigan was built in 1874; the Redmond Opera House in 1882; and Science Hall, later named the Lyceum Theatre, was built in 1883. Saenger Hall, which had been a popular place of entertainment, burned in 1882.

Grand Rapids continued to be interested in fairs. In 1873 the first state fair was held there, and in 1879 the West Michigan State Fair was organized, and began to hold annual fairs in Grand Rapids. In 1876, the Michigan Horsebreeders Association held a successful fair at Grand Rapids. The West Michigan Fair of 1882 was considered unusually successful.

Many special celebrations were held during this period in addition to those held annually on July 4. In 1876, there was a big Centennial Celebration for which special memorial arches were built on Monroe and Canal Streets and elaborately decorated. In 1878, the first phonograph was demonstrated in Grand Rapids. In 1883, the colored residents celebrated Emancipation Day at the fair grounds. The Germans held a big celebration of the Bi-Centennial of the First German Settlement in America. Another unusual event was a series of pedestrian contests held in the spring of 1882.

The Hebrew congregation was organized in 1872. In 1874, the Episcopal Church organized its West Michigan Diocese, with headquarters in Grand Rapids. In 1875, Grace Episcopal Church was organized; in 1876, the centennial year, the new St. Andrew's Church was dedicated; and in 1883, St. Andrew's Church became a

cathedral. The Y.M.C.A., the Ladies' Literary Club, and the Library all opened public reading rooms during 1875.

Much emotionalism was displayed during this period, over the amount of drinking and drunkenness in Grand Rapids, but practically nothing was accomplished to improve conditions. In 1874, a Woman's Temperance Crusade was conducted with many meetings held and many sermons preached, but no definite results achieved. Again, in 1878, temperance meetings were held; one an immense one, in Fulton Park, but no change of any consequence for the better was recorded.

In 1876, the Holland Christian Reformed Seminary which later became Calvin College, was established, and, in 1881, a three-day Music Festival was held; it drew large audiences and created a great deal of enthusiasm for music. In 1879, the third daily newspaper, *The Evening Leader*, began publication.

ORGANIZATION AS A CITY SCHOOL SYSTEM

Selecting an Administrative Staff

Two of the first problems confronting the new board of education upon its organization were the appointment of a superintendent and of a high school principal. In February, E. A. Strong had resigned to accept a position as head of the Science Department of Oswego (N.Y.) Normal School, and A. J. Daniels had been appointed acting superintendent.¹ Apparently, W. F. Matthews was appointed high school principal, for at a board meeting in June it was

¹-Grand Rapids Daily Eagle, February 2 and February 8, 1871.

reported that he had presented his resignation which was placed on file. A special committee was appointed for the selection of a superintendent and at board meetings during the spring and summer, it reported need of more time before making a recommendation. On June 20, Mr. Daniels' salary was set at \$1,800 while he continued to act as superintendent.¹ On June 27, it was raised to \$2,000 and the committee reported to the board favorably on Stewart Montgomery and Daniels of Grand Rapids, and G. C. Emery of Auburn, Maine, but stated that the committee was unable to agree on the one they wished to recommend.² It was decided to vote on these three candidates; three ballots were taken as follows:

1st Informal	Montgomery 6, Daniels 3, Emery 5
1st Formal	Montgomery 7, Daniels 0, Emery 6, Blank 1
2nd Formal	Montgomery 8, Daniels 0, Emery 6

The newspaper reported much heated discussion after the vote, but the next day announced the selection of Professor Stewart Montgomery as superintendent at a salary of \$2,000.³

This decision was not final, however, and on July 6 it was reported that at the last meeting of the board, A. J. Daniels⁴ had

1-Grand Rapids Daily Eagle, June 20, 1871.

2-Ibid., June 27, 1871.

3-Ibid., June 28, 1871.

4-Anson J. Daniels was born at Vesper, Onondaga County, New York, in 1835. He and Edwin A. Strong were classmates in Union College and graduated in 1858. He taught in Syracuse for one year and then in Cortland Academy at Homer until he came to Grand Rapids as principal of the grammar school in 1865. He became high school principal in 1866 and superintendent in 1871. He resigned in 1883 to become manager of the Phoenix Furniture Company. Later he was president of the Newaygo Furniture Company, and in 1899 became manager of the Worden Grocer Company in which position he continued until he retired in 1903. He died January 4, 1908. His daughter, Miss Eva Daniels, who taught for many years in the public schools of Grand Rapids was assistant principal of Central High School from 1923 until her retirement in 1937.

been elected superintendent at a salary of \$1,800 and Mr. Montgomery high school principal at \$1,800.¹ In August, a special committee on the legality of the election of the superintendent reported that Judge Withey had given his opinion that Mr. Daniels had been legally elected superintendent, and that closed the controversy.² Mrs. Montgomery died in June, and Mr. Montgomery was extremely ill during the late summer.³ On August 28, the following statement appeared in one of the newspapers.⁴

The many friends of Prof. Stewart Montgomery who has recently been very sick will be pleased to know that he is a little better this morning and hopes are entertained for his speedy recovery.

At the end of September, he went back to work on a part-time basis as the following announcement stated:⁵

We are glad to be able to announce that Mr. Stewart Montgomery, Principal of the Central High School and Assistant Superintendent of Schools in this City is now nearly recovered from his recent illness. He commenced work last Tuesday, and expects to assume the entire work of his position next week.

In his annual report, Mr. Daniels explained that the illness of Professor Montgomery had made it necessary for him (Daniels) to continue his former work in the high school for about four weeks.⁶ Mr. Montgomery's health apparently did not improve, because his resignation because of ill health was accepted by the board in December.⁷ The Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1873 listed Mr.

1-Grand Rapids Daily Times, July 6, 1871.

2-Grand Rapids Daily Eagle, August 22, 1871.

3-Ibid., June 3, 1871.

4-Ibid., August 28, 1871.

5-Grand Rapids Daily Times, September 30, 1871.

6-First Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Grand Rapids; Democrat Steam Printing House, 1872, p. 27.

7-Grand Rapids Daily Times, December 19, 1871.

Montgomery as superintendent in Battle Creek. He later became a professor at Olivet College.

Strong Returns as Principal

On January 6, 1872, it was announced that J. C. Emery, formerly a candidate for the superintendency, had been appointed high school principal.¹ Mr. Emery served for the remainder of the year only. In June, the committee on teachers for the ensuing year reported their nominations, including that of E. A. Strong as principal of the high school, and passed a highly complimentary resolution commending the work of Mr. Emery.² Mr. Strong and Mr. Daniels were close friends and held very similar ideas about educational policies. Mr. Strong took complete charge of the high school; Mr. Daniels devoted most of his time to the lower grades.

Standing Committees of the Board

The board of education was at first organized with only five standing committees, but, by November, 1871, eight had been established:³

Teachers	Ways and Means
Schools	Claims and Accounts
Textbooks and Apparatus	Buildings
Library	Supplies

This plan of committee organization was continued until 1879; then a committee on grounds was added.

School Statistics

Because the union of the school districts marks the opening of a new era in the Grand Rapids Schools, it is interesting to consider some statistics taken from the reports of the secretary and superintendent

1-Grand Rapids Daily Times, January 6, 1872.

2-Ibid., June 4, 1872.

3-Ibid., November 21, 1871.

at the end of the first year of operation as a single district.¹

Receipts

Primary School Money 1871	\$ 2,537.71
Library Monies (City Treasurer)	2,082.49
From Taxes	52,599.80
Tuition from Foreign Scholars	761.87
Total Receipts (Including items not listed)	98,381.04

Expenditures

Teachers' Salaries	\$35,440.07
Paid on Bonds and Interest	11,213.22
Janitors' Wages	2,764.00
Secretary's Salary	600.00
Fuel	1,982.08
Insurance Premiums	1,300.85
Books for Library	2,203.33
Repairs to Buildings and Sidewalks	1,539.32
Total Expenditures (Including items not listed)	98,381.04

Bonded Indebtedness Total	56,100.00
Falling due over a ten-year period,	
\$14,000 with interest at 7%	
7,000 with interest at 8%	
35,000 with interest at 10%	

Population of City 1871	18,136
Number of children between 5 and 21 years	5,229
Whole Number of Teachers Employed	53
Whole Enrollment in the High School	114
Whole Enrollment in the Central Grammar School	194
Whole Enrollment in the Central Intermediate School	256
Whole Enrollment in the Union School	619
Whole Enrollment in the Coldbrook School	197
Whole Enrollment in the Eight Primary Schools	2,425
Total Enrollment	3,805

Total Average Number Belonging	2,320
Total Average Daily Attendance	2,112
Percent of Whole Number Enrolled on Number of School Age	75
Percent of Average Number Belonging on Number of School Age	44
Percent of Average Attendance on Number of School Age	40
Percent of Average Number belonging on Number Enrolled	59
Percent of Average Attendance on Number Enrolled	53
Percent of Average Attendance on Number Belonging	91

¹First Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of
Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 12-13, 27-28.

Mr. Daniels called attention to the fact that while 75 of every 100 pupils of school age had attended for some part of the year, the average number belonging had been only 44 and the actual attendance only 40. He estimated that, if one included the number of pupils attending private schools, the above percentages would be increased about eight percent. He said that the attendance in all of the schools on the East Side had been considerably decreased by an epidemic of smallpox.

School Buildings

The following list of school buildings with their location, number of rooms, number of sittings and valuation as given in the first annual report is included for comparison with those of later dates.¹

Name	Location	Number Rooms	Number Sittings	Valuation
Primary No. 1	Bridge Street	6	300	\$20,000
Primary No. 2	S. Division	5	268	8,000
Primary No. 3	Fountain Street	9	436	30,000
Primary No. 4	Wealthy Avenue	6	346	18,000
Primary No. 5	Grandville Road	2	108	8,000
Primary No. 6	Turner Street	3	128	2,000
Primary No. 7	Ionia Street	8	268	23,000
Primary No. 8	Jefferson Street	5	128	15,000
Coldbrook	Leonard Street	2	148	5,000
Union	Turner Street	9	464	15,000
Central	Lyon Street	<u>21</u>	<u>604</u>	<u>78,000</u>
		76	3,198	\$222,000

Problems of First Year

At one of the first meetings of the new board, a representative was present from the area outside the city, formerly a part of District No. 1 and now left out of the new district.² In the discussion, it was brought out that there were other similar areas, formerly parts of the Coldbrook District. It was decided to allow the children from these

1-First Annual Report of the Board of Education of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 23.

2-Grand Rapids Daily Eagle, April 19, 1871.

areas to attend school for the remainder of the year without tuition. In October 1876, it was decided to charge all such pupils tuition at the usual rate.¹ A special committee was appointed in May 1871, to examine the school grounds and report as to the advisability of setting out trees and shrubbery.² In November, the board of education approved a request from the city council that a night watchman be permitted to use the tower of the Central High School as a fire lookout station.³ The representatives of four systems of penmanship gave demonstrations before a combined meeting of the teachers and board members in September.⁴ The four systems demonstrated were:

The Babbittonian
The Spencerian
The Electic and Payson
Dunton and Scribners

The matter of adoption of a system of penmanship was left to the committee on schools and textbooks for recommendation. In the annual report it was announced that the Spencerian System had been adopted for the following year, replacing the Babbittonian.⁵

Half-Day Sessions

The length of the primary school day got considerable attention during this first year (1871-72). In April, the board granted the petition of several teachers that the length of the day be reduced from six to five and one-half hours.⁶ In December, the committee on schools made a lengthy

1-Grand Rapids Daily Times, October 3, 1871.

2-Grand Rapids Daily Eagle, May 2, 1871.

3-Grand Rapids Daily Times, November 7, 1871.

4-Ibid., September 30, 1871.

5-First Annual Report of the Board of Education of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 17.

6-Grand Rapids Daily Eagle, April 19, 1871.

report to the board in favor of half-day attendance in the primary department.¹ The report was tabled, but the matter was aired in the newspapers. The editor of the Times came out flatly in favor of the recommendation, in reply to an article criticizing the idea written by the Rev. J. Mergon Smith, published in the Eagle. The editor felt that parents should assume more care of younger children, and that it was not right nor safe to keep from 60 to 100 children aged five to eight in a single room six hours per day.² He felt that the Rev. Mr. Smith would agree if he tried teaching them, and that under existing conditions three hours per day was long enough.

Lunch Hour Controversy

There was much discussion and controversy, between 1871 and 1878, over the length of the lunch hour. In March 1871, the lunch period was extended to two hours so that the pupils could, "go home for a good square meal", and the school day was extended from three to four in the afternoon.³ In January 1873, the board adopted a change in its rules, shortening the noon recess during the winter from three-quarters to one-half hour.⁴ In March of the same year, Mr. Daniels presented a request from the teachers that the short noon hour be discontinued immediately, instead of continuing through the term.⁵ The request was granted, and the noon hour was set at one and one-half hours. In their next recorded action, the board lengthened the winter recess to one hour from one-half hour, against the recommendation of Superintendent Daniels, who said

1-Grand Rapids Daily Times, December 5, 1871.

2-In the Annual Report President Chubb stated that the number of pupils in the city divided by the number of teachers gave an average class size of forty-four.

3-Grand Rapids Daily Eagle, March 6, 1871.

4-Grand Rapids Daily Times, January 7, 1873.

5-Daily Morning Times, March 5, 1876.

that most children brought their lunch anyway, and during an hour would cause damage around the school building.¹ This action was rescinded at the next meeting, and the noon recess again became one-half hour officially during the winter months.² In March, the secretary of the board read a communication from the Rev. J. Morgan Smith, condemning the short noon recess on grounds of health, and it was again extended to one and one-half hours.³ The matter was finally settled by compromise in 1878, the noon period to be one hour in length except at the Central School building, where it would be one and one-half hours.⁴

City Attorney Becomes Board Attorney

In the summer of 1873, the city council granted the board's request that the city attorney serve the board of education as well as the city.⁵ This arrangement has continued to the present except in cases where the interests of the city and school district were in conflict. One of the city attorney's first official acts was to rule that the teaching of foreign languages was not illegal.

Rules and Regulations of the Board

The rules and regulations of the board were included in the annual report for the school year 1874-75; some of the more interesting and significant are briefly stated.⁶

Regular meetings of the board were held on the first Saturday

1-Daily Morning Times, December 3, 1876.

2-Ibid., January 7, 1877.

3-Grand Rapids Daily Times, March 4, 1877.

4-Ibid., December 10, 1876.

5-Second Annual Report of the Board of Education of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Grand Rapids: Daily Democrat Steam Printing House, 1873.

6-Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Pp. 77-103.

of the month.

Teachers were employed only after passing examinations.

Complaints against teachers must be written and signed.

Hearings on such complaints would be held before the committee on schools with the teacher present.

Twenty copies of every book or six copies of every map must be donated to the board before the same would be referred to the textbook committee.

Final action would not be taken for one month.

Any member of the board neglecting to perform any duty required by the rules and regulations, or absent from two successive meetings of the board without sufficient excuse must pay a fine of five dollars to the treasurer for the library fund.

The board reserved the right to dismiss any teacher at any time for a willful violation of the rules of the board, or for misconduct or inefficiency, or on 30 days notice without assigning a reason.

Teachers who were absent because of illness had the salary of their substitute deducted from their pay.

All teachers absent for other reasons than illness forfeited their salary.

Rules of parliamentary procedure for the conduct of the meetings were very formal. Members were required to stand when addressing the chair.

Superintendent of School Buildings

In September 1879, the committee on school grounds recommended that a competent person be employed to take care of the school grounds for the ensuing year, and that he be empowered to hire a laborer to assist him.¹ The recommendation was not followed. In February, 1880, Superintendent Daniels recommended the employment of a general janitor to take charge of the buildings and grounds of the 16 schools then in use.² Finally in April 1882, the board voted to employ a superintendent of construction to assist in the construction and repair of all school property.³ The next month, it was announced that H. R. Naysmith had been employed as superintendent of school buildings at a salary of 40 cents

1-Grand Rapids Daily Times, September 7, 1879.

2-The Daily Times, February 8, 1880.

3-Ibid., April 23, 1882.

per hour for the time he worked. His work was to be under the supervision of the building committee and he was required to attend all board meetings without extra compensation.¹ In November of the same year, he was employed for the ensuing year as superintendent of buildings at an annual salary of \$1,200.²

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Public Library Established

The union in 1871 of the School Library, the City Library Association and the Y.M.C.A. Library into a Free Public Library was an event of considerable importance in the civic and educational life of Grand Rapids.³ The movement seems to have been begun by the board of education in the appointment of a committee of three members instructed to confer with the other two groups about the desirability of consolidation.⁴ Several meetings were held, and as a result in November the board of education approved the union of the libraries, two-thirds of the cost of operation to be paid by the board of education and one-third by the Y.M.C.A.⁵ Five members of the Ladies' Library Association and five members of the Y.M.C.A., would be advisory members of the board of education committee on libraries, which would serve as a board of control. It was agreed that at least one woman librarian would be employed, and more when needed; Miss Frank Holcomb was appointed.⁶ Quarters were rented in the

1-Daily Times, May 7, 1882.

2-Ibid., November 5, 1882.

3-In the Annual Catalogue for 1867-68, Miss Sarah A. Jenison was listed as Librarian and also as a teacher in the grammar department.

4-Grand Rapids Daily Times, October 3, 1871.

5-Ibid., November 7, 1871.

6-Ibid., November 21, 1871.

Leonard Block on Monroe Avenue.¹

Growth of the Library

The arrangement for the control and management of the public library worked well for a few years but eventually friction developed between the board of education and the representatives of the Ladies' Library Association. In 1875, the library had outgrown its quarters and moved to newer and larger ones in the Ledyard Block.² In 1876, a special committee of the board of education reported that there was still trouble about getting the penal fine money for the library, stating that the county treasurer had been distributing the money to the various townships, but that the city had not been getting its share.³ This situation was remedied; in 1878 it was reported that there was in the library fund \$2,500 which could be spent for books only.⁴ The annual report of the library committee for 1881-82 said that the library then consisted of 12,332 books with a circulation during the year of 61,000, an average of about five loans per book.⁵ The library staff at that time consisted of two full-time and two part-time librarians.

Controversy in Library Management

Considerable controversy about the management of the library came during the years 1876-78. The Rev. Joseph Penny, one of the members of

1-Free Public Libraries were established:

Boston	1848	Chicago	1872
Cincinnati	1854	Indianapolis	1873
Detroit	1865	Jackson	1883
Flint	1868	Adrian	1890
Cleveland	1869	St. Louis	1893
Bay City	1869	Port Huron	1895
Kalamazoo	1872	Denver	1898

2-Daily Morning Times, January 20, 1875.

3-Ibid., January 9, 1876.

4-Grand Rapids Daily Times, November 5, 1878.

5-Tenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Grand Rapids: O. H. Godwin, 1889. Pp. 15-22.

the board of education, was strongly opposed to the purchase of books of fiction for the library, and expressed his point of view very freely in board meetings.¹ His objection to fiction and to the works of certain authors was contagious; much time was spent in board meetings going over the lists submitted by the librarian and the library committee for purchase, and frequently individual books failed to get approval, and the lists were sent back to be revised for approval at the next meeting. Friction also occurred with the Ladies' Library Association about the appointment of a librarian.² In December, 1876, the women recommended Miss Harriett Nash, and the board appointed Mrs. Alfred Putnam; Miss Nash failed to get a single vote. In December, 1877, the representatives of the Ladies' Library Association asked to have a Mrs. Lee appointed and the board re-appointed Mrs. Putnam.³ At the January meeting of the board in 1878, a communication from the Ladies' Library Association was read and referred to the Library committee asking that their books be returned to them.⁴ In February, the board voted to accept the recommendation of the committee and return the books, about one thousand in number.⁵ In September, 1878, one of the newspapers contained an editorial recommending that the library be properly catalogued, so that the librarians would have more freedom to serve as advisers to readers, rather than mere keepers of the books.⁶ Two months later the board purchased 50,000 book cards to use in classifying the library.⁷

1-Daily Morning Times, November 5 and 12, 1876.

2-Ibid., December 3, 1876.

3-Grand Rapids Daily Times, December 4, 1877.

4-Ibid., January 6, 1878.

5-Ibid., February 3, 1878.

6-Grand Rapids Daily Times, September 19, 1878.

7-Ibid., November 5, 1878.

REPORTS OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

Recommendations

The first annual report of Superintendent A. J. Daniels contained many suggestions and recommendations which show that he was a clear thinker and in some respects ahead of his time in educational ideas. He reported that he had asked Mr. Strong to work out a course of study in natural science for the primary schools. He urged the board to permit the purchase of extra books for the primary grades, and asked permission to buy some sets to be used in the second grade as an experiment. He said he believed there would be much improvement in reading if the pupils read various books rather than rereading one two or three times. He objected to the annual examination for teachers, and said he felt that many teachers were distracted from their duties by the necessity of preparation for examinations and by the nervous strain caused by anticipation of the examinations. His recommendation was that teachers when once employed be required to take an examination only when they wished to teach in a higher grade. His statement in criticism of promoting teachers by transfer to higher grades follows:¹

The utility of the practice which has heretofore prevailed of promoting teachers to a higher grade, after a short service in a lower, is questionable; no one is willing that his own child shall receive poorer instruction at seven than at ten years of age, and yet if a teacher performs passably well the work of one grade, it is generally thought she deserves promotion to a higher the following year, even if it be her first year at teaching. One year at least is required to learn how to do well the work of any one grade, and if at the expiration of this time the teacher is taken from the work she has but just learned to do well, and given new work, she will continue to remain an inexperienced teacher, no matter how long she may have

¹*First Annual Report of the Board of Education of Grand Rapids, Michigan. P. 32.

taught. In some manner let it be brought about that teachers shall see as great inducements to remain in the lowest Primary as to seek promotion to the higher grades, and then we shall see better work in the lower grades. Very many of our pupils spend but three or four years in school, and it is of the greatest importance that the work be of the best kind in these grades where is formed the character of the child.

Second Annual Report of Superintendent

In his second report Superintendent Daniels again criticized the system of annual examination of all teachers. He commented on the success of the Teacher Training School established in Primary No. 3 on Fountain Street. In this school the prospective teachers taught one-half day and spent the second half day in preparation or in visiting other teachers. Two students were matched so that it was not necessary to hire a teacher for the room. After school hours all of the student teachers met with the principal for a discussion and planning period.

Daniels recommended reducing the size of classes from 50 or 60 to 30 and asking teachers to do some visitation so that a better understanding could be developed between the parents and the teacher. He said he felt that greatly improved attendance and accomplishment would be the result. He also advocated a system of half-day school attendance for many of the young persons employed in the factories. Under this plan, students would be matched in pairs, one working in the morning and attending school in the afternoon, while his mate would attend school in the morning and work in the afternoon. Daniels made a strong plea for grade libraries, calling attention to the fact that children under 10 were not allowed to use the Public Library, and in many cases the distance of the library from their homes would prevent its use, even though the rule were changed.

He called attention to the reduction in the length of the high school courses from four to three years, and recommended the addition

of a short commercial course. He reported seven courses in the high school: English, French, German classical preparatory, Latin and scientific preparatory, Greek and scientific preparatory, and scientific and engineering preparatory. The courses designated as preparatory were preparatory to the University of Michigan, and based on the requirements for admission in the latest catalogue.

Strong's Defense of the High School

In his annual report at the end of the first year after the adoption of the three-year high school course, Daniels included a long statement from Mr. Strong who said that as a result of the experience of the year he was compelled to report unfavorably on the three-year plan. Strong felt that it would not materially increase the number of graduates. He said that there were several reasons why, with a high school enrollment above the average for cities of this size, the graduating classes were so small.¹

1. Many pupils tried to complete the work of two or more courses.
2. Six years at least would be required by an ordinary pupil to complete all of the courses of study, so attempts to take more than one usually resulted in not completing any.
3. Allowing free election of subjects cut down the number of graduates, but in his belief increased the usefulness of the school.
4. Many parents wished their children to take classes they felt they needed regardless of any course of study leading to graduation.
5. Many parents wished their sons and daughters to take a college preparatory course but wanted them also to take some work in science or English literature not in the course. Since the school allowed no substitutions or equivalents, such pupils were not graduated unless they remained in school longer than the usual time.
6. Many pupils wished to prepare for colleges outside the state, and took a definite course of study with reference to such preparation. In general, all such pupils did not meet the requirements of the courses in the high school, and therefore were not

1-Third Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Grand Rapids: M. H. Clark & Co., 1874. Pp. 36-40.

- graduated.
7. A popular course with the pupils was the regular classical course with German in place of Greek, but the curriculum did not have regard to this case so such pupils were not graduated.
 8. Many parents had a deep-seated prejudice against certain subjects, and would not permit their children to take them; consequently the children did not meet the requirements for graduation from any course.
 9. A low opinion of graduation had always been a tradition in the high school. Teachers had unwittingly fostered this sentiment by urging pupils to care more for solid attainments than the empty honor of a diploma.

Strong gave the following statistics in an attempt to show how unjust it was to measure the usefulness of the high school by the number of its graduates:

Total number of graduates in ten years	135
Total number who had gone to college	42
Number in school four years or more	148
Number in school three years or more	311
Number in school two years or more	506
Whole number of different pupils taught	876

EXTENSION AND REVISIONS OF SCHOOL PROGRAM

Evening Schools

The first evening school was established in November, 1872, with Charles Chandler, principal of the Central Grammar School, in charge. There was a great deal of interest in it at first; a membership of 200 was reported.¹ In December, a class was begun for girls only, with an initial enrollment of 25.² In February, 1873, it was reported that because of decreased attendance resulting in part from inclement weather, the evening schools were ordered closed, the girls' early in February and the boys' at the end of the month.³ In his annual report, Superintendent

1-Grand Rapids Daily Times, November 17, 1872.

2-Ibid., December 4, 1872.

3-Ibid., February 5, 1873.

Daniels recommended the continuance of the school for boys, but felt that the attendance in the girls' classes did not justify continuing them.¹ After two years of experience with the evening schools, he recommended their continuance, but called attention to some of the problems involved, as the following statement shows:²

Evening schools have been tried for two winters and have afforded advantages for securing an education to a large class of persons whose circumstances were such as to prevent their attendance upon the day schools. Those who have been taught in these schools may be divided into the following classes; first, Hollanders, mostly adults, who wish only to learn the English language; second, young men, many of whom attended the grammar school in former years, and now wish to review the studies of that grade; and third, boys between the ages of ten and sixteen years who are engaged during the day in the various shops and factories of the city. These classes were taught in separate rooms last winter, the first two with undoubted success, but the members of the latter class seemed to have no definite object in view, and were easily influenced for the purpose of visiting places of greater attractiveness. It is evident that some means should be adopted to secure a more regular attendance on the part of this class in the future, or very little good will result from the instruction offered them. Least of all should these be neglected, for, if allowed to grow up in ignorance, they will become in many cases dangerous members of the community.

Evening schools continued despite some criticism because of the expense, and bickering in board meetings about the advisability of holding classes on the West Side as well as on the East Side.

Special Music Teacher

The first special teacher of music to be employed on a full-time basis was George D. Herrick, who began his work in the Grand Rapids schools in January, 1873, with the opening of the winter term.³ It was

1-Second Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 34-35.

2-Third Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 34-35.

3-In 1868, Miss Susie Perry had been employed as a teacher of English and Vocal Music but was no longer on the staff.

reported that Herrick met every pupil in the school system at least once a week.¹ In May, 1873, a leave of absence of one week was granted to him to visit Boston "in the interest of his department".² Although there was some considerable criticism because of cost, he was able to continue his work until the end of the school year 1879-80; he resigned then to become manager of the Grand Rapids store of Bullock's Piano and Organ Company. He was apparently a capable and popular teacher, and deserves much credit for establishing music in the schools as an accepted part of the program.³ His successor was George C. Shepard.

Special Teacher of Penmanship

In November, 1873, G. Weston Williams was employed as a teacher of penmanship for the remainder of the year.⁴ Superintendent Daniels commented favorably on the work done by Williams, but Williams left at the end of the year. There was no penmanship teacher the next year, but in the fall of 1875, M. C. Sessions of St. Paul, Minnesota, was appointed as teacher of penmanship and continued in that capacity for several years in spite of some opposition from taxpayers who thought that the special teacher should be discontinued and the classroom teachers teach their own penmanship.⁵

School Business Course

A business course was added in the high school in September, 1875, with Mr. M. C. Sessions in charge of the commercial subjects.⁶ In the

1-Grand Rapids Daily Times, January 7, 1873.

2-Ibid., May 10, 1873.

3-Special teachers of music were employed in Boston in 1858, Cincinnati 1844, and Lansing 1885.

4-Grand Rapids Daily Times, November 4, 1873.

5-Daily Morning Times, September 7, 1875.

6-Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 35.

ninth year the course was identical with the English course, but in the next two years considerable attention was given to bookkeeping, business forms, commercial law, penmanship, and arithmetic. A diploma was given at the completion of the course at the end of the eleventh year or third year of high school.

Special Drawing Teacher

As early as 1868-69, in the circular and general information of the schools of District No. 1, space was left for the name of a teacher of drawing, but it was not until 1881 that one was employed.¹ In 1876, the Krusi system of drawing instruction was adopted.² In June, 1880, Superintendent Daniels asked that a special teacher of drawing be approved.³ His request was referred to the committee on schools and, in October of 1880, the Walter Smith system of drawing was adopted on the recommendation of the committee, and it was announced that Miss Abbie White of Boston was coming for two weeks to instruct teachers in its use.⁴ In August, 1881, Miss Cornelia Abbott of Richfield, Connecticut, was appointed teacher of drawing.⁵

Ungraded Department in High School

In July, 1872, the board voted to establish an ungraded class in the high school and hired Miss A. C. Clay as teacher. The class was designed to give temporary instruction to older pupils who had been out of school, or to pupils who for any other reason could not be classified as regular students. Superintendent Daniels stated that the ungraded class met a need

1-Special teachers of drawing were first employed in Boston in 1853, Cincinnati 1864, Lansing 1898.

2-Daily Morning Times, May 7, 1876.

3-Daily Times, June 6, 1880.

4-Ibid., October 3, 1880.

5-Ibid., August 7, 1881.

that had long existed and had compelled many to attend private schools.¹ A total of 102 pupils was in attendance at some time during the year; this class was continued for several years without any apparent opposition.

High School Course Shortened

The reduction in length of the high school course from four to three years was a direct result of community criticism. The feeling of a great many persons was that too much emphasis was being placed on the high school, which was attended by only a small percentage of the students, and that the primary and grammar schools suffered in consequence. The critics called attention to the large classes in the primary schools and the relatively small classes in the high school. The major point of criticism was not of cost but of the kind of program offered. The following editorial, commenting on the action of the board in reducing the length of the high-school course, expresses this point of view.²

The Board of Education have not in years given more general satisfaction than by their action.

The old course has been a very nuisance and stumbling block from its first inception. Teachers and scholars have been alike unfortunately affected by it. It accumulated labor and responsibility on both till many broke down under it, and all were oppressed by the severe and unreasonable load they were forced to carry. Furthermore, it violated in its structure the first principles on which our public schools are founded.

These schools are neither academies nor colleges. They are maintained for the purpose of furnishing to children a thorough rudimentary education—a beginning and outline, which, indeed, shall be a firm and fair one, but nothing more. To read, to write, to spell, to cipher, to acquire the elements of a few of the more useful arts and sciences — these seem to us to cover the whole legitimate province of our common schools. These teach the child all that is necessary, and much that goes beyond necessity—fit him for a start in life—lay deep and wide a foundation on which he

1-Third Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. P. 35.

2-Grand Rapids Daily Times, August 9, 1873.

may build whatsoever style of structure seems best to him.

But of late years our ideas have been controverted in theory, and supplanted in practice. Public schools have been expanded to the dimensions of universities, and the public scholar has lost health and sense by being plunged into an education maze which, when once out of, he rarely knows middle, end or beginning.

The late salutary measure referred to was a long step toward reform, but it was a step which will have to be yet several times repeated before we arrive at a proper stopping place - before the necessary changes are made. Our school system in Grand Rapids needs looking into, and it needs reformation. As at present constituted it is neither wise, provident, nor constitutional. We trust that on the occasion of the coming election only such men will be chosen members of the Board of Education and representatives of the public sentiment, but such as are pledged to explore this Thesean labyrinth, and lay open its windings.

Grading System Revised

With the opening of the fall term in 1875, the whole grading system was revised according to the recommendations of the National Association of School Superintendents. Superintendent Daniels' description of the new plan and the philosophy behind its administration in Grand Rapids follows:¹

In accordance with recommendations made at Detroit last year by the National Association of School Superintendents, our school course has been divided into three grades, and named respectively primary, grammar, and high school grades. Each grade is further subdivided into four parts, called first primary, second primary, etc., first grammar, second grammar, etc.

A designated amount of work has been assigned for each grade and each subdivision of the grade, the whole constituting a course of study. Upon this course of study, children at the age of five years are permitted to enter, and if they enter at this age, making allowance for irregularity of attendance, which as is shown by some of the preceding tables, comes in the experience of nearly all our pupils each year, those of average ability will finish the course in twelve years, bright pupils will do it in less while the dull will require more time.

If our system demands that all these pupils be classed together, whatever their natural ability may be, and none allowed to advance faster than others, nor pass through the course in less than twelve years, as is frequently affirmed, then too much cannot

1-Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Pp. 38-40.

be said in condemnation of it; and insofar as the progress of pupils is hindered in anyone of the above ways, the system is faulty, and as far as possible should be corrected.

Faults of this nature have existed, and to a certain extent do now, and will continue to exist so long as large numbers are given to single teachers for instruction; but these imperfections in the system are receiving our attention, and instead of having only one class in each school doing the work of each primary grade, there are in every school at least two, and in several three or four classes in each grade, each class a few weeks in advance of the following. Whenever a pupil shows ability to enter a higher class, he is allowed to do so; in like manner, when a class finishes the work of one primary grade, it is at once promoted to that of the next, no matter at what time of the year this may occur. As the pupils become more advanced, and the range of studies more extended, as is the case in the grammar and high school grades, there are more difficulties in the way of carrying out this plan as we would like.

This new plan covered the same number of years as the one it supplanted, which was adopted in 1873, and consisted of primary, five years; intermediate, two years; grammar, two years; high school, three years, making a total of twelve years.

Program for Teaching Reading

In 1875, when the board authorized Superintendent Daniels to spend not over \$15 per building for supplementary readers to be used in the second grade, the policy of providing such material became established.¹ In his annual report for 1879-80, Mr. Daniels made the following report on the materials and methods used in teaching reading.²

Very little time has been given to imitative reading, but much more time than formerly by means of conversations and questions, to arousing an interest in the subject matter of the lesson, keeping constantly in mind that the purpose of reading is to obtain information.

The pupils have been furnished with books and encouraged to read much by themselves, and the facilities provided by this and former Boards of Education have allowed this course to be pursued to an extent most gratifying and encouraging to the teachers, and with most excellent results. More than two thousand copies of

1-Daily Morning Times, September 7, 1875.

2-Eighth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Grand Rapids: O. H. Godwin, 1880. Pp. 34-35.

first and second readers, embracing nine different series, about the same number of copies of the Nursery; two hundred and twenty-five copies of Hooker's Child's Book of Nature; eighty copies each of Swinton's and Goodrich's small histories and Nordhoff's Island World, are now owned by the Board of Education, and in constant use in the schools.

By means of this material the lower schools are furnished with a great variety of reading matter, and instead of a review of the same book, different books of the same grade are read by all the classes, before entering on those of a higher order.

These books are furnished to the schools in sets of twenty and twenty-five, for the care of which the teacher is held responsible. A recent careful examination of all this material and comparison of the same with books owned by the pupils, show that to provide books in this manner is far less expensive than by the usual manner.

In his next annual report, he stated that during that year purchases had been made of 250 copies of Rollo's Tour in Europe, 500 copies of First Readers of several series, and 200 copies per month of Little Folk's Readers. The results of this program were described in the following statement:¹

The good results growing out of the course pursued in regard to reading are shown in the much greater readiness with which pupils now read at sight, and the eagerness manifested even by young pupils for the new stories furnished by the new books and magazines. Instead of being an irksome task, reading has become an exercise pleasing as well as profitable. The reading of the Rollo books alone, for the seven months, during which they have been used, is equivalent in amount to the reading of over 9,000 volumes of the same size. In other words, each of 1,300 pupils has read seven books of the series, and the benefit received far exceeds what would have resulted from a hasty reading of as many books on disconnected subjects drawn from the Public Library at random.

By reading so many books under the direction of a teacher, the pupils are not only acquiring readiness in the exercise but are at the same time obtaining much valuable information, not only this, but the high moral tone of the works is having a most salutary influence on the conduct and aspirations of the pupils. In return for the generosity with which you have supplied the wants of the schools in this respect, I know that you have the thanks of both pupils and teachers.

1-Ninth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Grand Rapids: O. H. Godwin, 1881. Pp. 39-40.

SCHOOL BUILDINGS

New Union School Building - West Side

When the school districts were united, one of the first acts of the new board was to delegate to a committee the responsibility of designating or naming the schools. The board recommended that the high school building on the East Side be called the Central Building and the old Union School Building on the West Side be called the Union School.

As early as 1870, doubts were expressed by many persons about the safety of the Union School, and, in November of 1870, a general stampede from the building took place when it was discovered that the outside walls had settled.¹ The teachers did not try to get the pupils to go back into the building until it had been examined and repaired. School was closed for more than a week while the building was repaired by David Burnett.² Rumors persisted that the building was unsafe and unfit for use, and therefore in April, 1873, the committee on buildings reported that it had examined the Union School House and, although it had settled somewhat in the center, the committee considered the walls firm and the building perfectly safe. The committee was asked to publish in the city newspapers a full account of the results of their examination.³

In May, 1873, the committee on buildings was instructed to investigate the possibility of buying some lots to add to the Union School grounds.⁴ Apparently the board considered the heating and ventilation of the building poor, because the next month \$50 was voted to assist

1-Grand Rapids Daily Eagle, November 25, 1870.

2-Ibid., December 3, 1870.

3-Grand Rapids Daily Times, April 9, 1873.

4-Ibid., May 10, 1873.

Miss E. J. Parker, a former teacher in the school who was ill and in need on the grounds that the conditions under which she had taught had contributed to her illness. The following statement is quoted from the report of a committee that had investigated her case.¹

. . . for faithful services rendered as teacher, and on the ground that her sickness may be regarded as resulting from the condition of the school room in which she has taught as regards both heating and ventilation.

In November, 1873, a special committee was authorized to hire competent builders to inspect the Union School building and report to the board.² About a month later, it was decided to construct a new school on the site.³ The contract was let the following April (1874) for constructing the building at a cost of \$32,000.⁴

In his annual report for 1873-74, Henry Fralick, president of the board of education, described the building and gave the following report on the progress being made in its construction.⁵

Early last spring the Board entered into a contract with John S. Farr and Co., for the erection and completion of a Union School building, 85 feet wide by 108 feet long, three stories high above a high basement, on the site of the old one on the west side of the river. The house is to contain twenty-one rooms with sittings for 600 pupils, with ample closet and hall room; to be strictly a first-class building in all respects; to be supplied with Ruttan's improved ventilating apparatus and Hawley's Tubular hot air furnaces. The walls of the new building are now up ready for the roofing, which is to be slate with copper gutters, all to be completed ready for occupancy on or before August 1st., 1875. The Board has erected a temporary building at a small expense on the south end of the Union School lot for the accommodation of the school until the new building shall be ready for use, when it will be removed, the lot graded, properly fenced, and in every way put in order. When all is completed this Union School Building and its grounds will be one of the best as well as the most attractive in the city or State.

1-Grand Rapids Daily Times, June 5, 1873.

2-Ibid., November 4, 1873.

3-Ibid., December 3, 1873.

4-Ibid., April 10, 1874.

5-Third Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Pp. 10-11.

The building was completed and opened for use in September, 1875, and the temporary building was then torn down and the lumber used in the construction of new buildings, fences and walks.

Revision of Building Policy

While the plans for the new Union School building were under construction, the board appointed a special committee to investigate the effect on the health of children of stair-climbing in three and four-story schools.¹ President A. L. Chubb of the board reported that, in the brief time at their disposal, the committee had been unable to get any conclusive evidence, and consequently the board had gone ahead with its original plan for that building.² He felt, however, that the matter of changing the style of architecture of school buildings should be given careful consideration.

President Fralick, in the next annual report, definitely recommended that the board abandon the policy of constructing large three and four-story buildings, and erect smaller ones of one or two stories which in his opinion would not only be cheaper but more healthful.³ In his next report, he announced the completion of one such building on Spring Street at a cost of \$3,900.⁴ It was a two-story frame building 32 by 74 feet, designed to seat 200 pupils. He explained that the building was constructed of wood because there was another quite old building on the lot, and probably both would be torn down in a few years to be replaced by a brick

1-Grand Rapids Daily Times, May 10, 1873.

2-Second Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 7.

3-Third Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 9-10.

4-Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 10-11.

building. A similar building was under construction at Center and McDowell Streets. Brick was to be used instead of wood; the estimated cost was \$5,211.

Proposal for Downtown High School Building

As early as 1875, Mr. Strong, principal of the high school, reported that the high school building was so crowded that it was necessary for many of the students to do their studying at home and come to school only for recitation.¹ Henry Fralick, president of the board of education, recommended the construction of a museum building on the Central School lot as a means of relieving the crowded conditions of the high school.² In 1877, the committee on buildings recommended the erection of a building on the Central School lot to house the museum, the ungraded and commercial schools.³ In February, 1880, Trustee D. Darwin Hughes recommended a downtown building to house the library, museum, ungraded school, night school, and board of education offices.⁴ Superintendent Daniels called attention to the advantage such a location would have for West Side pupils who had not only to walk across the bridge over the river but climb the hill to the school. At the meeting the next month, the committee on grounds reported favorably on the erection of such a building, and presented plans for a structure costing approximately \$20,000.⁵ The committee reported that a suitable lot could be bought for \$5,000. The board authorized them to receive proposals for the construction of the new building. Excepting the appointment of another committee and

1-Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Grand Rapids: M.H. Clark, 1876. P. 39.

2-Ibid., P. 15

3-Grand Rapids Daily Times, May 6, 1877.

4-Daily Times, February 8, 1880.

5-Daily Times, March 7, 1880.

its report in February, 1882, presenting a list of available downtown sites with their prices, no further action was taken on this proposal.¹

PROBLEMS OF TEACHER WELFARE

Strict Regulations for Teachers

The board of education elected when the districts were consolidated apparently took office with the determination to follow a policy of strict treatment of the teachers. In November, 1871, the committee on teachers reported adversely on an increase of salaries, and the committee on schools reported in favor of requiring teachers to supply themselves with the textbooks used in their work.² At a meeting two weeks later, the board took action requiring all teachers to agree to abstain from the use of tobacco in the schoolroom or on the street.³ There was newspaper criticism of the board ruling that teachers who stayed home because of illness or death in the immediate family lost their pay, and in January, 1873, the board temporarily suspended the rule in order to pay two teachers their salary under such circumstances. This rule was again waived in 1876, when \$6 which had been deducted from a teacher's salary because of absence after the death of a relative was restored.⁵ In the fall of 1876, the teachers below the grammar grades were required to attend a two-week course of instruction in drawing, conducted by John Goodison of the State Normal School. With the exception of 1877, the board adopted or rejected the recommendations of the committee on

1-Daily Times, February 5, 1882.

2-Grand Rapids Daily Times, November 7, 1871.

3-Ibid., November 21, 1871.

4-Grand Rapids Daily Times, January 7, 1873.

5-Daily Morning Times, March 5, 1876.

teachers and the superintendent, with very little discussion of individual teachers.

Struggle to Maintain Teachers' Salaries

Although Grand Rapids was not greatly affected by the so-called Panic of 1873, many citizens felt that teachers' salaries as well as other school costs should be reduced. This idea became popular with some of the members of the board and in June, 1876, when a special committee on retrenchment gave its report, considerable pressure was exerted to reduce the salary of teachers.¹ This retrenchment committee recommended a reduction of salaries on a sliding scale from 5% for teachers getting from \$250-\$500, to 20% for those in the highest brackets. This proposal was rejected, and in September the annual meeting approved the salaries as recommended, the same salaries as were paid in the preceding year.² In the following June, the committee on teachers submitted a report calling for the same salaries for the coming year, and Trustee Edmond J. Shinkman presented a minority report providing for the reduction of salaries. After a long discussion, the matter was tabled. A few days later, it was again discussed at a meeting attended by many citizens.³ The majority report was amended to raise the salaries of several teachers, and the minority report was opened for discussion. Two petitions were presented, one requesting Mr. Strong's salary not be cut, and one from the teachers, asking that salaries not be reduced. Mr. Fralick, of the board of education, predicted that many of the best teachers would leave, if salaries were reduced. Citizens spoke

1-Daily Morning Times, June 4, 1876.

2-Ibid., September 26, 1876.

3-Grand Rapids Daily Times, June 29, 1877.

both for and against the report, and as a result the matter was again tabled.

The majority report was finally adopted at a meeting early in July, and the list of teachers and their current salaries were approved although some of the board members attempted to discontinue the services of the special music and commercial teachers.¹ At the next meeting, some of the board members tried to make changes in the salaries in the cases of certain teachers, but the matter was referred to the committee.² The recommendations of the board were adopted at the annual meeting, and the teachers' salaries for that year were not cut.³ The comments of the editor of the Times on the Annual Meeting are interesting. He said that the "gang" in charge of the board played their cards well, and succeeded in getting their budget passed by purposely scheduling the meeting in a small room and packing it with their friends, who arrived early. He inferred that many people were turned away, and that the result would have been different, if the hall had been larger. Salaries were reduced 10% by the Board, for the year 1878-79.⁴

Corporal Punishment

Although the board of education in District No. 1 had passed a resolution in 1870 prohibiting corporal punishment, the rules and regulations adopted by the board of the City District on April 18, 1871 were silent on the subject. In January, 1876, one of the board members offered a resolution to prohibit corporal punishment; this resolution was defeated by a vote of nine to three after Superintendent Daniels said

1-Grand Rapids Daily Times, July 3, 1877.

2-Ibid., July 8, 1877.

3-Ibid., September 25, 1877.

4-Grand Rapids Daily Times, June 25, 1878.

that for the past four months no such punishment had been administered, except after a consultation of all of the teachers in the school.¹ In May, Mr. Daniels reported only 20 cases of corporal punishment during the preceding month, in contrast to 133 for the same month a year earlier.² He also said at that time that only 17 cases were reported for March, and six for February.

In his annual report, Superintendent Daniels included the following statement indicating his attitude toward corporal punishment.³

Though corporal punishment still exists in our schools only 184 cases were reported for the year against 924 for the year previous. This great decrease has been brought about by a united determination on the part of most of the teachers to resort to the use of the rod only when any and all other means failed to secure obedience. From a careful examination of many cases which have come under my observation, I have no doubt that in nearly, if not in all cases, some other course might have been pursued. Still I do not think it best to legislate corporal punishment out of the schools, rather let it be understood that it may be resorted to in extreme cases and this impression will do much towards holding in restraint those who otherwise would be more difficult to control; let the teachers also know that to manage and teach a school successfully without its use is evidence to the Board of Education of superior tact and fitness for the profession, and other and better means will finally be adopted. Although there has been so great a decrease in the number of corporal punishments, cases of willful insubordination making suspension necessary have been less than during any of the preceding years during which the school has been under my charge.

Size of Classes

Classes were large in the primary schools, especially in some of the more crowded buildings; the newspapers made frequent reference to over crowding. Many persons opposed to the high school argued that the money used for its support should go toward the reduction of class size in the primary and grammar schools. In October, 1875, one of the board members offered a resolution asking that, as soon as practical,

1-Daily Morning Times, January 9, 1876.

2-Ibid., May 7, 1876.

3-Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Pp. 35-36.

the maximum number of pupils per teacher be reduced to 30.¹ The next month, the board adopted the general policy of 30 pupils per teacher; Superintendent Daniels reported that the average class size was 47 but that some teachers had as many as 60 pupils.² By 1878, the average number of pupils per teacher had been reduced to 40, although some of the oversize classes were just as large as before.³

Teacher Training Plan

A teacher training department for primary teachers was organized in the fall of 1872 in Primary No. 3 on Fountain Street. In the following quotation, Mr. Daniels described the plan on which the school was conducted.⁴

The Principal with eight pupil teachers to assist takes charge of and teaches the primary department, consisting of four rooms, of the school on Fountain Street. Two pupil teachers are assigned to each room, one for each half day, who continue to do the work in the same for ten weeks, when they are placed for the same length of time in charge of another room. Thus passing through all the primary grades in one year. In a meeting at the close of the day, at which all are required to be present, criticisms and suggestions are made by the Principal, and plans presented for conducting class exercises, which are written out by the assistants and presented at a subsequent meeting.

Parents of children in the school were critical of the plan because of the frequent change of teachers and the fact that the children were constantly under the supervision of inexperienced persons. Daniels reported at the end of the first year that the pupils in these classes were as far advanced as those in the other primary schools, and he felt therefore that, since all the work was planned under one person and conducted under her supervision, the objections

1-Daily Morning Times, October 5, 1875.

2-Ibid., November 7, 1875.

3-Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 28.

4-Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 38.

were not well founded.¹ This training school was kept in operation until 1879; then it was discontinued, and a plan of employing cadet teachers as assistants to experienced teachers was substituted.²

Cadet Teachers

In his annual report for 1880-81, Superintendent Daniels spoke favorably of the functioning of the new plan.³ He stated that whenever possible the principal of the school taught the lowest grade, and a cadet teacher was assigned to work with her. This served a dual purpose; it gave to the cadet teacher the opportunity of working under the direction of a capable and experienced person, and it also enabled the principal to be freed from her room duties, for part of each day, so that she could observe the work of the other teachers in her building. This was the first instance of time being given to principals for supervision.

Teacher's Salary Schedule

The board of education adopted a set of rules regulating teachers' salaries in April, 1882, the first salary schedule after the establishment of the City District.⁴ District No. 1 had adopted a schedule in 1867. The most interesting features of the new schedule, quoted below, were the facts that most of the principals were included, and that their salaries were dependent in part on the number of rooms in their buildings.⁵

1-Second Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 28-29.

2-Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Grand Rapids: O.H. Godwin, 1879. P. 14.

3-Ninth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 43.

4-Daily Times, April 16, 1882.

5-Tenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 93-94

The salaries of principals shall be in proportion to the number of schools actually taught in the buildings under their charge, starting with \$475.00 per annum as a basis, and receiving \$25.00 additional for each school more than one taught in their buildings, provided, however, that the above shall not apply to the salaries of Central High School, Union School principals, and assistants in Central School building in charge of rooms, whose salaries shall be fixed irrespective of the above regulation.

The maximum salaries paid teachers, other than principals, shall be as follows, viz:

- (a) To those teaching second to sixth grades, inclusive, \$450.00 per year.
- (b) To those teaching first grade, \$475.00 per year.
- (c) To those teaching seventh grade, \$500.00 per year, and:
- (d) To those teaching eighth and ninth grades, \$600.00 per year.

All teachers other than principals, from first to ninth grades inclusive, shall receive annual salaries proportioned to their experience as teachers in the Grand Rapids public schools, or equivalent experience in other schools, as follows, viz:

- (a) For first half year as cadet, \$100.00.
- (b) For second half year as cadet, \$150.00.
- (c) For second and following years, as cadet, \$300.00 per year; but if in charge of a room, \$350.00 per year.
- (d) For third year in charge of a room, \$400.00 per year.
- (e) Salaries for fourth and following years shall increase from \$400.00 per year taken as a basis, in a ratio for each year, according to the grade taught by them until the maximum salary for that grade is reached, as follows, viz: Teachers of the first grade, \$15.00; second to sixth grades, inclusive, \$10.00; seventh grade, \$20.00, and eighth and ninth grades, \$40.00 per year, until the eighth years' service is reached, when the maximum salaries for these grades will be obtained.
- (f) Teachers holding third grade certificates shall be eligible only to positions in second to sixth grade, inclusive.
- (g) Principals of buildings of eight or more schools, and all teachers of high school grades shall be required to hold first grade certificates.

Like the one formerly in effect in District No. 1, this schedule was based on the position held or grade taught, and on experience. No discrimination in salary was made on the basis of training or efficiency, except that in order to get certain of the more highly paid positions, a teacher must hold a higher-grade certificate.

CRITICISM OF THE SCHOOLS

The Taxpayers' Association

During April and May, 1875, a series of meetings devoted to discussion

of the school was held by the Taxpayers' Association. At the first meeting, the following resolution was offered; it provided the stimulus for the discussion at this and subsequent meetings.¹

Resolved that in the judgment of this Association the present school system involves a large expenditure and embraces a wider field of knowledge than is within the spirit of the law.

Lowell Hall, who presented the resolution, stated that in his opinion the spirit of the school law was to provide a common school education for the poor as well as the rich. He criticized the content of the curriculum and the methods used, and said that he thought children could learn as much in two years as in the seven then required to complete the primary and grammar schools. Strong replied that the State Supreme Court had interpreted the School Law and the Grand Rapids school system was based on that interpretation. It was significant that Strong also said that he was personally in favor of charging tuition in high school, because, he thought, people appreciate more those things for which they pay, and therefore the quality of work would improve. Henry Fralick, president of the board of education, and Superintendent Daniels spoke briefly about school costs; it was decided to table the resolution until the next meeting, when Messrs. Fralick and Daniels would present more detailed reports.

Reports of Fralick and Daniels

At this next meeting Mr. Daniels gave a comprehensive report based on the course of study and the methods used in the school system. Fralick had prepared a report on school costs, but was called out of town because of the serious illness of his brother, and Strong presented Fra-

¹-Daily Morning Times, April 21, 1875.

lick's report, which contained the following information about costs in Grand Rapids and other cities.¹

Operating Cost Per Pupil

Grand Rapids	\$12.86	Chicago	\$19.54
East Saginaw	12.83	Memphis	21.08
Fort Wayne	13.65	Cincinnati	20.26
St. Louis	18.53	Omaha	21.08
New York	18.91	San Francisco	21.26
		Boston	25.04

Total Cost Per Pupil Including Interest On Bonds

Grand Rapids	\$18.47	Omaha	\$29.47
East Saginaw	19.72	Boston	35.13

High School Cost Per Pupil

Grand Rapids	\$36.86	Boston	\$67.16
East Saginaw	54.35	Syracuse	46.25
Fort Wayne	58.04	Rochester	45.46
St. Louis	66.10	Cleveland	60.91
Chicago	59.58	Newark	45.60
Omaha	64.72	Hartford	38.94
Elmira	51.24	Dayton	56.00
		Albany	64.39

In Grand Rapids, the school tax was 25% of all taxes collected, - six and one-half mills. In the towns of Kent County, the average school tax rate was seven and four-fifths mills, 45% of the total tax collected.

After this report, citizens rose to the defense of the schools and as a result Hall's resolution was defeated. The Rev. Joseph Penny then submitted a resolution asking for more primary teachers, for tuition to be charged in high school, and for scholarships to be set up for needy pupils. This resolution was tabled for consideration at the next meeting.

Third Meeting of Taxpayers' Association

The third meeting of the Taxpayers' Association was devoted to a consideration of the Rev. Mr. Penny's resolution, which, for purposes of discussion, was divided into two parts.² In support of the first part

1-Daily Morning Times, April 30, 1875.

2-Daily Morning Times, May 6, 1875.

he said that 60% of the pupils who entered the primary schools never reached the grammar schools, and therefore there was great need for more and better primary teachers. Several other citizens spoke in favor of the resolution, and expressed the belief that the classes in the primary school should be reduced at the expense of the grammar grades, and the high school, if reductions were necessary. This part of his resolution was adopted, and the second part was tabled for consideration at a later meeting; this proposed meeting of the association was not reported in the newspapers.

Committee on Retrenchment

In June, 1876, a special committee of the board, appointed to bring in recommendations for possible economies, presented the following eight-point program:¹

1. Reduce salaries on a sliding scale from 5% for those receiving \$250-\$500, to 20% for those in the highest brackets.
2. Reduce the salary of the Secretary of the Board from \$500 to \$300.
3. Endeavor to save money on wood by having it bought on bids and hauled or shipped in.
4. Build less expensive buildings.
5. Make textbooks changes less frequently and furnish stationery and supplies to pupils at cost.
6. Get higher interest on money in the treasury.
7. Reduce the amount of the insurance.
8. Be economical wherever possible.

After considerable discussion, the motion to adopt the report was lost by a vote of 6 to 10.

Stormy Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of 1876 was characterized by considerable criticism of the board of education's policies.² Lowell Hall, who had been elected chairman, left the chair and made a speech in which he referred to the "riotous extravagance of the board of education." A Captain

1-Daily Morning Times, June 4, 1876.

2-Ibid., September 26, 1876.

Williamson asked those citizens who opposed continuing the high school and special teachers of penmanship and music, to stand. He also asserted that several members of the board had been elected with those economies as a part of their platform, and he thought the time had come for them to live up to their promises. In spite of the speeches of criticism, the annual budget was adopted as recommended by the board.

Proposal to Appoint Board Members

In February, 1877, Trustee C. W. Calkins said there was community criticism of the management of school affairs, and proposed that an amendment be made to the school law to reduce the size of the board to five members appointed by the mayor, subject to the approval of the city council. Calkins felt that the board was too large, and should not be elected by wards. No action was taken on the proposed amendment, although it stimulated a spirited discussion.

Trouble at the Grammar School

At the end of the school year 1876-77, Charles Chandler, who had been principal of the grammar school for several years, resigned and was replaced by N. S. Cramer.¹ Cramer was unsuccessful in coping with the discipline problems of the principalship; it was reported in November that a disgraceful scene had taken place in which he nearly got a black eye.² In the same article, it was said that the pupils had organized and would expel Cramer from the school by force, if necessary. In the January meeting of the board, Miss Kate Hulbert was promoted to the principalship to succeed Mr. Cramer.³ The Cramer episode marked the first time that anything had appeared in the newspapers on disciplinary troubles

¹-Grand Rapids Daily Times, September 6, 1877.

²-Ibid., November 9, 1877.

³-Ibid., January 6, 1878.

in schools on the East Side.

PROBLEMS RELATING TO ATTENDANCE

Compulsory Attendance

The problems involved in enforcing the Compulsory School Law were frequently discussed in board meetings, in the newspapers and in the annual reports. In 1879 one of the citizens present at the annual meeting moved to include in the budget an item of \$300 to be used to hire a detective to enforce the law.¹ The money was not voted, but after considerable discussion, a resolution was adopted, stating that it was the desire of those present that the school authorities use every legitimate means for enforcing the law. Many children of school age were working. The newspapers frequently mentioned the great laxity of parents in the matter of making their children go to school. The school authorities, on the other hand, realized that, because of the already crowded conditions in the schools, forcing additional children to attend would be making a bad condition still worse. There was considerable agitation for the establishment of a school for truants; although in 1877 a petition was presented to the board, no such school was established until several years later.²

Pure Drinking Water

In the fall of 1877, Superintendent Daniels reported to the board that the city water at several of the schools was unfit for use and asked that the condition be remedied.³ It was not until two years later that anything constructive was done, and then it came as an indirect result

1-Daily Times, September 23, 1879.

2-Grand Rapids Daily Times, November 4, 1877.

3-Grand Rapids Daily Times, October 7, 1877.

of criticism of the schools by the board of health. S. G. Milner, principal of the Union School, had sent four boys from school to act as pallbearers for a child who had died of diphtheria, and the board of health, as a result sent a communication to the board of education asking that Milner be reprimanded for exposing the boys to possible infection.¹ Daniels came to Milner's defense by saying that precautions were taken at school to protect the health of pupils, but that the unfiltered water furnished to the schools by the city was a detriment to health and a frequent source of disease. At a meeting of the board one week later, the committee on buildings was instructed to purchase 14 filters.²

Industrial School for Girls

During the school year 1879-80, the board of education in cooperation with the Womens' Benevolent Association conducted, on an experimental basis, a so-called Industrial School for Girls.³ Approximately 30 girls from poor families were enrolled. The girls were taught to make their own clothes, and other homemaking arts, as well as some of the regular school subjects. Cloth and other supplies were provided and it was reported that most of the girls in attendance would not have been able to attend school at all if it had not been for this opportunity to make suitable clothing for themselves. As a sideline to the regular work of this school, a sewing class, meeting three hours per week, and composed of needy girls from three other schools, was conducted with volunteer teachers.

In April, 1880, Daniels recommended that the Industrial School be made a part of the regular school program and estimated that the annual operating cost would be about \$30 per child. His request was referred

1-Daily Times, October 5, 1879.

2-Ibid., October 12, 1879.

3-Ibid., November 6, 1879.

4-Daily Times, April 4, 1880.

to the committee on schools, which recommended at the next meeting that the school be abolished.¹ In September, 1880, the Women's Benevolent Association asked for the use of one of the school buildings on Saturdays so that they could continue their work.²

CONTROVERSY ON BOARD OF EDUCATION

Arguments about Teachers and Curriculum

There was much controversy on the board of education during the years 1880-83. The board was divided on almost every issue that came up. Many of the meetings were long and fiery. One of the points of controversy was the teaching of languages. Some members were opposed to inclusion of foreign languages in the curriculum; others were strong for their being taught. The problem was complicated by the determination on the part of members from the West Side wards to have French and German taught in the Union School as well as in the Central High School on the East Side.

Another controversial subject was the appointment of teachers. Frequently there were arguments about the appointment or re-appointment of individual teachers. The case of Miss M. L. Coe is a good illustration. In June, 1881, the committee on teachers did not include her among those to be re-employed; after some heated discussion, the report of the committee was adopted, and she was not employed.⁴ In January, 1882, she was hired to fill a vacancy, by a vote of 9 to 6, against the recommendations of the teachers committee, which reported that she was highly

1-Daily Times, May 2, 1880.

2-Ibid., September 6, 1880.

3-Daily Times, July 4, 1880.

4-Ibid., June 19, 1881.

irritable and was in such poor health that she would have to be brought to school and taken home in a hack.¹

The Insurance Problem

In December, 1880, it was announced that Trustee Ebenezer Anderson was "after" the board members who carried the insurance on the school buildings.² At the next monthly meeting the matter of insurance was heatedly discussed.³ It was revealed that the insurance was held by companies represented by two of the board members, and several of the other members felt that the rates paid were higher than those of comparable companies. There is no known record to show how this matter was settled.

Arguments about Organization and Membership

At an organization meeting in October, 1880, the board balloted 13 times before electing a president.⁴ In the following meeting, they voted 23 times to fill a vacancy from Ward Seven. Charles Belknap was finally elected as a compromise or "dark horse" candidate, because no agreement could be reached on the original candidates.

Controversy Over Superintendent's Contract

Opposition developed to the re-election of Superintendent Daniels in July, 1880. It was reported that nine of the 16 members of the board had held a caucus before the regular meeting, and had agreed that they would not vote for him.⁵ One of the group was to suggest to one of Daniels' supporters on the board that he advise Daniels to resign in

1-Daily Times, January 8, 1882.

2-Ibid., December 19, 1880.

3-Ibid., January 6, 1881.

4-Ibid., October 3, 1880.

5-Ibid., July 18, 1880.

order to avoid the disgrace of not receiving his contract. The plan did not work out; Daniels was re-elected on the second ballot. On the first ballot, Daniels got seven votes, Milner, principal of the Union School, four votes, and six ballots were blank. On the second ballot, Daniels got ten votes, Milner four votes, and three ballots were blank.¹ The two leading newspapers took opposing sides on this issue. The Eagle was opposed to Daniels' re-election and stated that undoubtedly two of his original opponents were "talked over" in order to re-elect him.² The Times, on the other hand, called attention to his faithful and capable service of 15 years in the school system; the editor of the Times said that in his belief all criticisms of his work were couched in "glittering generalities" and were not of importance.³

The argument broke out again in July, 1882, when the board deadlocked over the election of a superintendent.⁴ A group of seven members had agreed in advance of the meeting to attempt to elect O. G. Owen, of Lapeer, whom they had not seen, but about whom they had had favorable reports. On the first ballot, Daniels got four votes, Owen seven, I. N. Mitchell, principal of the Central Grammar School, one vote, and S. G. Milner, principal of the Union School, four votes. On the 36th ballot, Owen got seven votes, Milner five votes, Strong one vote and there were three blanks. Since the meeting, held on Saturday evening, had run on past midnight, the question of the legality of the board's action was raised, and it was decided to adjourn and meet again in a few days.

At the adjourned meeting, the board voted 14 times without electing

1-Daily Times, July 18, 1880.

2-Grand Rapids Daily Eagle, July 19, 1880.

3-Daily Times, July 20, 1880.

4-Ibid., July 2, 1882.

a superintendent.¹ A petition was read, containing the names of many of the prominent citizens asking that Daniels be re-elected. During the heated discussion, telegrams were read from citizens of Lapeer, some of which praised, and some of which condemned Owen. On the final ballot, Owen still had his seven votes, Daniels had five, Mitchell, three and Milner, one. This was the last reference made to the controversy except for an editorial which appeared about one week later stating that the board was hopelessly deadlocked, and recommending that both Daniels and Owen withdraw so that the board could settle on someone to whom they could give unanimous support.²

Daniels continued as superintendent until January, 1883, when he resigned to become manager of the Phoenix Furniture Company.³ The board balloted six times to elect his successor.⁴ On the first ballot, Milner had six votes, Mitchell, five, Charles C. Chandler, a member of the Board, two, a Mr. Spencer of Battle Creek, two, and one blank vote was cast. On the sixth and deciding ballot, Milner got five votes, Mitchell, nine, and Joseph Johnson, two votes. Mitchell was therefore declared elected and at the next meeting W. A. Greeson, who later served for many years as superintendent of schools, was employed to succeed Mitchell as principal of the Central Grammar School.⁵ In July, 1883, Mitchell was re-elected by a unanimous vote and the controversy was ended.⁶

1-Daily Times, July 7, 1882.

2-Ibid., July 12, 1882.

3-Ibid., January 25, 1883.

4-Ibid., January 28, 1883.

5-Ibid., February 4, 1883.

6-Ibid., July 8, 1883.

SUMMARY

The pattern of organization for the city school system was largely an adaptation of that in effect in District No. 1 before consolidation. The board was dominated by men from the East Side, because there were four more wards there, the schools were better organized and staffed and were larger, and finally, and most important, Superintendent Daniels, and Strong, the high school principal, had been associated with the schools of that district for many years and were to a great extent credited with their organization.

Rapid growth took place during the years 1871-1883, as the following comparative statistics from the annual reports show:

	<u>1871-72</u>	<u>1882-83</u>
Annual Budget	\$98,381	\$163,225
City Population	18,136	39,005
School Census	5,229	10,854
Number of Teachers	53	133
High School Enrollment	114	556
Average Number Belonging	2,320	4,878
Number of School Buildings	11	18
Valuation of School Property	\$225,000	\$519,600

With this growth came the realization on the part of the board of education that to attempt to administer the schools through the activity of board members serving on standing committees was not completely satisfactory and a superintendent of school buildings was appointed to whom certain responsibilities were delegated.

During this period (1871-1883) there was much criticism of the schools, and much controversy regarding their administration. The hard times which culminated in the so-called panic of 1873 were partly responsible, but there were real differences of opinion about the advisability of teaching foreign languages, and of continuing to give a high school education at public expense. This attitude toward the high school in

Grand Rapids was undoubtedly a manifestation of the nation-wide struggle raging at that time for tax-supported secondary education. The supporters of the public high school got valuable help from Judge Cooley's decision in the so-called Kalamazoo Case in 1874. It is interesting to note that statements from his opinion in that case were used in defense of the high school at meetings of the Grand Rapids Taxpayers' Association in 1875.

There is evidence in the recommendations that Superintendent Daniels made in his annual reports to show that he held many advanced ideas on school administration. Besides the elimination of the annual examination for the renewal of teacher's certificates, he advocated equal pay and professional recognition for primary teachers, the teaching of science in the elementary grades, and the purchase and use of a wide variety of supplementary reading materials.

The establishment and development of evening schools for those who could not attend day schools, with special emphasis on teaching foreigners to read and write English, was an important accomplishment of those years. In instruction, the reading program was particularly well organized, and the amount and variety of reading materials provided seems unusually great for such an early date. The services of the school were expanded by the employment of special teachers of music, penmanship, and drawing; the establishment of an ungraded room for high school pupils who could not be assimilated easily in the regularly organized classes; the addition for the first time of commercial subjects in the high school, taught by a qualified teacher, although it was many years before a really practical or adequate commercial course was established.

The only really big school construction project completed between

1871 and 1883 was the building of the new Union School on the West Side. This structure was apparently well-built and modern, and it is significant that the new buildings were for the most part good substantial brick buildings establishing a new standard for school construction in Grand Rapids. It is also important that the proposal to build a downtown high school, which received so much consideration during these years, was abandoned. It is conceivable that, had it been adopted, the development of the Grand Rapids schools would have been different in many particulars.

The following statement, from the Grand Rapids Saturday Globe of December 8, 1883, gives a good picture of the status of education in Grand Rapids at that time.¹

The Public School System, though decidedly expensive is so arranged to fit the youth for direct admission to the State University. There is one Central or high school on the east side of the river while the west side is equally well ornamented with a fine Union school building, located in the heart of this most flourishing portion of the city. Sixteen ward or primary schools also form a part of the system, the assessed valuation of school property being placed at \$519,600. The number of pupils enrolled is 5,496 requiring the services of 140 teachers, 8 of whom are males. Seventy-one thousand dollars are annually spent for salaries, making the average pay of each teacher a trifle over \$500. In addition to the regular branches, French, German, Latin, Greek, and music are among the studies furnished to the public. In addition to the public schools, there is a business college, a theological seminary of the Holland church, a convent, two Catholic parochial schools, two kindergartens, and eleven private schools.

¹-Grand Rapids Schools, 1883, Michigan Pioneer Collections. Lansing: Wynkoop, Hallenbeck, Crawford Co., 1907. P. 325.

CHAPTER SIX

THE NEW EDUCATION MOVEMENT (1883-1890)

A great increase in population in Grand Rapids occurred between the years 1883 and 1890; the school authorities were consequently hard pressed at times to provide educational facilities for the children. It was a period of social unrest in which the woman suffrage movement and the labor movement gained considerable ground; the first women members and the first representatives of labor appeared on the board of education. The new education movement began to make itself felt, although its period of greatest acceptance came later. The controversy continued over the offering of foreign language instruction in the high school, and over the method of teaching it. The library was expanded and developed and progress was made toward the employment of a trained library staff. Although the Board of Education continued to perform many executive functions through standing committees, there were signs of a growing realization of the necessity for delegating more responsibility to paid employees. There was also a greater appreciation on the part of the board of the proper function of the superintendent of schools as an executive officer, as shown by their relieving him of some of his direct responsibilities for buildings and supplies, and the employment of a full-time clerk to assist him.

LEGAL BACKGROUND AND STRUCTURE

Compulsory School Attendance

In 1883, the Legislature put teeth into the Compulsory Attendance Law and legalized the establishment of ungraded or truant schools for the pupils who would be forced to attend school under the provisions of the new law.¹ This new law was amended in 1885 by changing the age limits for compulsory attendance from 8-14 to 8-16 years.²

Amendments to Grand Rapids School Act

At the request of the Grand Rapids Board of Education, the Act of Incorporation was amended in 1885 and again in 1887. In 1885, four changes were made:³

1. Permission was given to charge tuition for instruction in foreign languages in the high school.
2. A power of veto which could be overruled only by a two-thirds vote, was given the president of the board of education.
3. The franchise for school electors was extended to correspond with the provisions of the general school law.
4. Provision was made for submission of the annual estimates to the common council for approval, rather than to an annual meeting of the citizens of the district.

In the 1887 revision, three changes were made:⁴

1. The time of electing the superintendent was changed from July to May.
2. Permission was given to establish Industrial or Manual Training Schools.
3. Permission was given to the board to provide free textbooks and supplies.

1-Public Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1883.

Lansing: Thorp and Godfrey, 1887. No. 144.

2-Public Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1885.

Lansing: Thorp and Godfrey, 1887. No. 108.

3-Local Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1885.

Lansing: W. S. George and Co., 1885. No. 381.

4-Local Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1887.

Lansing: Thorp and Godfrey, 1887. No. 451.

Free Textbook Law

In 1889, the Legislature passed a general law which made it possible for school districts to provide textbooks and supplies free to pupils if the districts wished to do so after submitting the proposal to the people and getting a favorable vote.¹ Certain cities of the state had received this permission by special act or amendment of their Act of Incorporation as in Grand Rapids, under the Act of 1887.

LIFE IN GRAND RAPIDS

Grand Rapids continued to be a popular convention city between 1883 and 1890 as the following list shows. It includes only part of those held in the city:²

Conference of Western Michigan Episcopal Diocese

State Arbeiter Bund

American Pomological Society

Several Regimental Reunions in 1885

State Conference of Methodist Episcopal Church

State Law and Order League

1-Public Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1889.

Lansing: Darius D. Thorp, 1889. No. 147.

2-The information for this section was taken from the following list of references:

Albert Baxter, History of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Ernest Fisher, History of Grand Rapids and Kent County, Michigan. I, II.

William J. Etten, A Citizen's History of Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Franklin Everett, Memorials of the Grand River Valley.

Charles E. Belknap, The Yesterdays of Grand Rapids.

Dwight Goss, History of Grand Rapids and Its Industries.

State Grange

Michigan Council of Catholic Mutual Benefit Associations

State Grocers Association

State Poultry Show

State Engineering Society

Michigan Businessmen's Association

State Encampment of G.A.R.

Traveling Men of Michigan

Grand Commandery of Michigan

Michigan Holiness Camp Meeting

County Agents of the Poor

State Board of Corrections and Charities

Many Military Reunions in 1889

Both the Republican and Democratic parties held their state conventions in Grand Rapids in 1886 and the Democratic party convened again in Grand Rapids in 1890.

During this period (1883-1890) the citizens took their politics more seriously than they had in the past. In 1888 and 1889 the mayoralty campaigns were especially close and hard-fought. In 1889 the congressional district including Grand Rapids was much excited about the contest between Melbourne H. Ford and Charles H. Belknap, won by Belknap.

James G. Blaine visited Grand Rapids and spoke at political rallies in 1884 and again in 1888. William McKinley spoke to a large audience in Grand Rapids in 1890. Political observers of this period commented on the growing strength of the Republican party in Grand Rapids.

In 1884, 20 furniture companies sponsored a Grand Rapids Furniture Pavilion at the International Exposition in St. Louis and the city earned the distinction of being the only one to have its own building.

The next year, 1885, Grand Rapids had its first serious labor trouble, caused by a general 10% reduction of wages by the manufacturers and other big employers. Many men stopped work; some of the factories were closed; the street railroad was boycotted, and there were many carry-alls on the streets to provide transportation. Demands for poor relief were greatly increased and conditions continued bad for several months until the trouble could be settled. In 1886 there was another and better-organized strike in which one of the demands was for an eight-hour day with no reduction in salary.

These strikes were indicative of the increasing power of the Knights of Labor as a force in the life of Grand Rapids. Further evidence of the increasing interest of working men in the advantages of organization is the fact that in 1888 Samuel Gompers, president of the American Federation of Trade Unions, spoke in Grand Rapids to a large group of workingmen. In 1889, Grand Rapids had its first big Labor Day Celebration.

Business continued to grow rapidly. The increase consisted, to a greater extent than in the past, in the development of already existing institutions rather than the establishment of new business and manufacturing organizations. In 1885, the value of the new buildings erected was estimated at \$1,000,000. In 1887 an unusual amount of new building construction was reported.

In 1886, the Fifth National Bank was organized to serve people on the West Side, and in the same year the Clearing House was organized. In 1889, the Michigan Trust Company, the first trust company in Michigan, was organized, and in 1890 the Peoples Savings Bank was established. The Grand Rapids Board of Trade was organized in 1887. The National Furniture Manufacturers Association was organized in 1889 at a meeting in Grand Rapids. Another event of importance to Grand Rapids was the visit in 1889 of a group of Pan-American business men for the purpose of establishing business connections.

Considerable bridge building activity began in 1884 with the completion of a new bridge at Bridge Street and the building of the bridge at North Park. The following year, 1885, the Fulton Street bridge was built and, in 1886, a new bridge was built to replace the old Pearl Street bridge, and another bridge was built at Sixth Street.

The city acquired its first park property by bequest in 1884 on the death of John Ball; the first 40 acres of John Ball Park became city property under the provisions of his will. The Grand Rapids and Indiana Railroad was completed to Muskegon in 1886, making the second rail connection between the two cities and, in 1888, the Grand Rapids-Lansing and Detroit Railroad was completed. In 1888, the Michigan Soldiers' Home was built. In 1887, the court house site was purchased, and in 1889 the court house was built. The new City Hall was completed in 1888.

Fire losses were much reduced during this period (1883-1890) through more efficient and non-political management of the fire department, better equipment, and a more adequate water supply. Few

fires were large enough to receive special mention; in 1886 the total fire loss in the city was estimated at only \$75,000. The city's water supply was improved during this period by the building of a new pumping station by the Hydraulic Company in 1886, and the installation of new and larger iron pipe on some of the main supply lines, and by other changes for which the city had borrowed \$150,000 in 1888 and \$80,000 in 1889. The city grew from approximately 40,000 in 1883 to 60,000 in 1890.

In 1884, there were 530 telephones in Grand Rapids and night service was begun. By 1888, there were 800 telephone users in the city. In 1885 a police signal system with 28 stations was installed.

In 1885 the Grand Rapids Street Railway Company was organized. In 1888 a rival Cable Company was formed and began operations using, at first, imported manila hemp which soon was found unsatisfactory and replaced by steel cables within a few months. The original cable lines were extended in 1890, and that same year the street rail lines all were consolidated. It was reported that before this consolidation there were street cars on almost all of the downtown streets, the city having granted permission to install lines to various companies with the provision that as far as possible each company stay off streets on which there were already lines operating; on some streets there were two sets of tracks belonging to different companies.

The people of Grand Rapids continued their interest in the welfare of the unfortunate. In 1884, they raised \$4,250 for relief of victims of the Ohio floods and \$700 to be distributed to the needy of Grand Rapids on Thanksgiving. In 1885, \$1,100 was raised

for the cause of Irish independence. In 1886, a new hospital was built by the Union Benevolent Association and in connection with the hospital, the city's first training school for nurses was established. In 1887, the Children's Home Society, later to become Blodgett Children's Home, was founded. In 1890 St. Mark's Hospital, which later became Butterworth Hospital, was opened.

Interest in scientific investigations was stimulated by the finding in 1884 of the bones of a mastodon on a farm near Grand Rapids and again, in 1887, with the finding of the tusks of another pre-historic animal on another farm near the city.

Two newspapers were established between 1883 and 1890, the Morning Telegram in 1884, and the Grand Rapids Evening Press in 1890 as the first penny newspaper in the city.

The Westminster Presbyterian Church was completed in 1885 and the Wealthy Street Baptist Church in 1886. The Ladies' Literary Clubhouse was built in 1887 and in 1890 the Ladies' Literary Club began the practice of bringing prominent speakers to the city to lecture.

There was much interest in theatricals and other entertainments during these years. Power's Opera House was enlarged in 1884, Smith's Opera House was built in 1885, and Germania Hall was built in 1886. The Old Settlers Association was very active holding annual reunions during the winters and annual picnics every summer at Reeds Lake, both of these functions being very well attended. In 1884, it was reported that approximately 4,000 attended the picnic. Beginning in 1886, the Northwestern Amateur Rowing Association held its annual

regatta on Reeds Lake, attended by huge crowds. Although excursions were not as popular as earlier, 1,100 people came to Grand Rapids in 1886 from Saginaw, and in 1888 approximately 400 Grand Rapids people went on an excursion to Indianapolis. The West Michigan Fair continued popular; it was reported that the fair of 1887 was the largest up to that date. It was reported in 1889 that baseball had become highly popular in Grand Rapids.

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Size and Organization

The board of education consisted of 17 members from 1883-1890; there were two members from each of the eight wards, and the mayor who was an ex-officio member. The size of the board caused criticism which brought from Charles C. Chandler, its president in 1884, the statement that there was so much work to be done by the committees that it was absolutely necessary that the board be large or too much time would be demanded of individual members.¹ In his annual report for 1886-87, James Blair, president of the board, recommended that the size of the board be reduced to ten or 12 elected at large for terms of three years so that a majority of the board would always be persons with experience as members.² When two additional wards were

1-Twelfth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Grand Rapids: I. S. Dygert, Printer, 1884. P. 22.

2-Fifteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Grand Rapids: W. H. Hart, 1887. P. 8.

about to be added to the city in 1890, A. S. Richards, as president of the board, recommended that the school act be amended so that one instead of two members be elected from each ward but no change was made in spite of his suggestion.¹ Although, in 1883, one of the trustees made a plea for the reduction of the number of standing committees from nine to four, they remained the same throughout these years and no essential change was made in their duties.²

Office of Secretary

On February 21, 1885, the board passed a resolution asking the Legislature to amend the act incorporating the Grand Rapids schools to make it possible to elect a secretary who was not a member of the board. The Legislature did amend the act as requested on June 9, 1885,³ but the board continued to elect secretaries from its membership. In 1886, with the election of Edgar P. Mills, the office of the secretary was transferred to the board of education office and in the annual report for 1887-88, it was stated that E. H. Stein, secretary, would have regular office hours from 9:30 to 12:00 noon, and 2:00 to 5:00 P. M., at the board of education offices in the City Hall.⁴ The method of electing the treasurer from the staff of the bank chosen as the depository of the school funds was continued.

1-Eighteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Grand Rapids: Verkerke, Taylor and Hinsdill, 1890. Pp. 6-7.

2-Daily Times, October 7, 1883.

3-Local Acts of 1885, No. 381.

4-Sixteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Grand Rapids: West Michigan Printing Co., 1888. Back cover.

President's Veto

Another provision of the Grand Rapids School Act as amended in 1885 gave to the president of the board a veto power over any act of the board provided he file with the secretary a statement giving his reasons for the veto, within 24 hours after the passage of the act.¹ The board, by a two-thirds vote, could pass measures over his veto. The veto was used only three or four times between 1883 and 1890.

Woman Suffrage Movement

In August, 1885, the city attorney who also acted as attorney for the board of education ruled that women were qualified to vote in the school election to take place in September.² After the election, one of the newspapers said that about 300 women had voted, but that their votes had actually changed the results in only one ward.³ In 1887, the editor of one of the newspapers said that two women were nominated for the board of education, and that he wondered what the women wanted, since it was a policy of the board to employ women wherever possible and to give them equal pay.⁴

In September, 1888, Mrs. Harriett A. Cook was elected from the third ward, and became the first woman member of the board.⁵ In June, 1889, N. A. Fletcher, president of the board, resigned, and was succeeded by A. S. Richards.⁶ At the next meeting of the board, a

1-Local Acts of 1885, No. 381.

2-Grand Rapids Daily Democrat, August 30, 1885.

3-Ibid., September 8, 1885.

4-Ibid., September 4, 1887.

5-Mrs. Cook resigned April 7, 1890, her letter of resignation having been sent from Denver, Colorado.

6-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1888-89, P. 536.

petition with 98 signatures was presented, asking that Mrs. Lydia DeCamp Goodrich be appointed to succeed Fletcher as trustee from the Eighth Ward. The board elected Eli F. Harrington, giving to Mrs. Goodrich only three votes on the final ballot.¹ At the next election, Mrs. Goodrich was elected by a vote of 578 to 374 for George C. Bratt, Mr. Harrington not having run for re-election.²

Other Board Affairs

A third change made in the Legislative Act of June 9, 1885, was the abolition of the annual meeting at which the estimates of the board for the ensuing year were approved.³ Under the new provision, the annual estimates were approved by the common council. In April, 1886, one of the members of the board presented the following resolution which was tabled:⁴

Resolved, That no member of this board shall have any benefit or emolument either by labor on its building or by interest in contracts or otherwise and his services shall be simply those in the performance of the functions of his office as trustee.

A few days later, one of the newspapers carried an article in which statements of several representative citizens were quoted on the resolution.⁵ It was asserted that the resolution was aimed directly at Trustee Josiah Tibbitts, a carpenter who had worked on some of the schools, although several of the other board members also had profited directly or indirectly from school business. The general consensus

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1888-89, P. 538.

2-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1889-90, P. 564.

3-Local Acts of 1885, No. 381, Section 12.

4-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1885-86, P. 43.

5-Grand Rapids Daily Democrat, April 24, 1886.

was that there was no objection if the board received honest value for the money expended, and the bills were properly authorized and paid. H. J. Felker, then president of the board, called attention to the need for a rule of this nature in his annual report of that year.¹ Organized labor was represented on the board, although the newspapers did not single out any members by name as candidates sponsored by the Knights of Labor.² The board of education offices were moved in June, 1883 from Central High School to the Ledyard Block on Pearl Street.³ The offices were moved again to rooms in the new City Hall during the school year 1887-88.⁴

Population Growth

There is no record of any expansion in the boundaries of the district between 1883-1890, but there was a great increase in the population of the city. The number on the school census grew from 11,910 in 1883 to 16,547 in 1890. The number of pupils in attendance increased from 6,932 to 10,750 in the same period.

THE ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Superintendent Mitchell

I. N. Mitchell who became superintendent in the spring of 1883 after the resignation of A. J. Daniels, was re-elected unanimously in July of that year.⁵ He served for three years and was popular

1-Fourteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 18.

2-Grand Rapids Daily Democrat, September 8, 1885.

3-Daily Times, June 17, 1883.

4-Fifteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, back cover.

5-Daily Times, July 8, 1883.

with the teachers and townspeople, although during the last year there were indications in the proceedings of the board that friction was developing between him and some of the members. In January, 1886, one of the board members voiced criticism of the way supplies were handled.¹ He stated that children had been sent home from school because of failure to bring money for supplies, and said that he did not believe in paying a superintendent \$2,500 and then allowing him to make money on supplies sold to the pupils. Other members came to the defense of Mitchell, who said that the supplies were handled on a non-profit basis. In June, 1886, one of the Grand Rapids newspapers reprinted an article from the Jackson Citizen in which it was stated that Superintendent F. M. Kendall was about to resign to accept a position as superintendent in Grand Rapids.² Mitchell's friends tried hard to get his contract renewed, and for the next meeting of the board, petitions were signed by as many teachers as could be reached in the summer, asking that he be retained. In spite of this support from the teachers, Kendall was appointed superintendent by a vote of 11-6 on July 3, 1886.³ The newspapers said nothing about the reason why Mitchell's contract was not renewed.⁴ It is significant, however, in view of the earlier criticism of his handling of school

1-Grand Rapids Daily Democrat, January 3, 1886.

2-Ibid., June 26, 1886.

3-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1885-86, P. 77.

4-Mr. Mitchell became Superintendent at Fond du Lac, Wisconsin.

supplies, that on August 7, 1886, about a month after Kendall was appointed, the board adopted a resolution forbidding the sale of supplies to pupils by the superintendent.¹

Superintendent Kendall

Superintendent Kendall was re-elected unanimously each year for four years, although, in the summer of 1888, the board was deadlocked over his re-appointment when his contract was first brought up, and the matter was tabled until the next meeting. At this meeting unanimous approval was given to a new contract.² Kendall resigned March 1, 1890, to accept a position with Ginn and Company, textbook publishers.³ Miss Agnes McIntyre was made acting superintendent.⁴

Controversy Over Superintendency

At a meeting on May 3, 1890, the board proceeded to the election of a superintendent. The two leading candidates were W. W. Chalmers, superintendent in Cassopolis, and W. S. Perry, of Ann Arbor. Perry was reported to have said that he would not come for less than \$3,000 but several trustees spoke in favor of his selection as a capable and experienced man.⁵ Other trustees spoke in favor of Chalmers, but there was much criticism of his youth and inexperience and his presumption in applying from a school system of only eight teachers for the position in the second largest city in the State. On the first

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1885-86, P. 90.

2-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1887-88, P. 432.

3-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1889-90, P. 620.

4-Ibid., P. 620.

5-Grand Rapids Daily Democrat, May 4, 1890.

ballot, Chalmers got seven votes; Perry, six; Mitchell, two. On the third ballot, Chalmers got eleven votes; Perry, two; Mitchell, one; one ballot was blank, Chalmers was declared elected.¹ Within the prescribed 24-hour period, Richards vetoed Chalmer's election on the grounds of inexperience.² A few days later, one of the newspapers stated that Richards would not call a meeting to reconsider the matter, but that any five members of the board could, and probably would call a meeting.³ The same article quoted one of the trustees in vigorous criticism of the selection of Chalmers.

During the time that elapsed between the veto and the next board meeting, the newspapers carried many articles on the controversy. On May 8, it was announced that the friends of Chalmers were actively working in his behalf.⁴ One of them, Rezin A. Maynard, was reported to have said that Chalmers had rare administrative ability, and it was his (Maynard's) opinion that after Chalmers had held the position a year the people would be as sorry to lose him as they were Mitchell. In this same article, W. A. Greeson was reported to have suggested that Miss McIntyre be appointed. On May 9, Alderman Stebbins was quoted as recommending Mr. Chalmers highly, having known him and his three brothers from boyhood.⁵ He said that James, the eldest, was a professor in Ohio State University, another was pastor of a large church in Cincinnati, and Andrew, the youngest, was high school

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1889-90, Pp. 643-44.

2-Ibid., P. 645.

3-Grand Rapids Daily Democrat, May 7, 1890.

4-Ibid., May 8, 1890.

5-Ibid., May 9, 1890.

principal in Sparta. On May 11, the Democrat carried a long two-column statement about Chalmers' record in Cassopolis.¹ Quotations were included from persons both for and against him. It was reported that he had made outstanding progress in building up the school, but that his popularity was declining and it was probable that he would not have been re-employed there. One of the chief criticisms was that he had drawn two salaries at the same time, as superintendent and county school examiner, and that he had collected from the county for many days when he was actually working as superintendent. On May 16, the Democrat gave a report of the results of a trip to Ypsilanti taken by one of its reporters, to interview four professors supposed to have known Chalmers best.² The article also contained a copy of a letter from the president of Eureka College where Chalmers got his Master's Degree. All of these statements were complimentary, and it was the opinion of all of these men that he would succeed as superintendent in Grand Rapids.

At a special session of the board on May 17, the board balloted eight times and finally elected Chalmers.³ A new candidate, A. H. Beals, superintendent of schools in Paducah, Kentucky, was put forward in opposition to Chalmers, and Miss McIntyre received some votes. On the first ballot, Chalmers received seven votes; Beals, six, and Miss McIntyre, two. On the eighth and final ballot, Chalmers got nine; Beals, four and Miss McIntyre, three. Richards

1-Grand Rapids Daily Democrat, May 11, 1890.

2-Ibid., May 14, 1890.

3-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1889-90, Pp. 645-46.

again vetoed the action of the board, and another special meeting was called on May 21, at which Chalmers was again elected by a vote of 11 to 4 and his salary was set at \$2,250.¹

Principals, High, Central Grammar, and Union Schools

E. A. Strong, high school principal, left at the end of the school year 1884-85 to become head of the Science Department in Michigan State Normal School, Ypsilanti, and W. A. Greeson, who had been principal of the Central Grammar School, succeeded him and remained principal of the high school until 1895. Greeson was succeeded as principal of the Central Grammar School by A. J. Volland, who resigned in August 1889.² Volland was succeeded by Guy V. Thompson. S. G. Milner was principal of Union School until June 1885, and was succeeded by Irving W. Barnhart, who continued as principal of Union School until the end of the school year in June 1891.³

Clerk to Superintendent

In the annual report for 1882-83, Superintendent Mitchell recommended the employment of a supply teacher on a full-time basis with the understanding that she help in the superintendent's office when she was not teaching.⁴ Miss Agnes McIntyre, who had been teaching in Primary No. 3, was transferred to this position. President Felker

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1889-90, P. 648.

2-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1888-89, P. 555.

3-Mr. Milner took medical training and returned to Grand Rapids as a Homeopathic physician.

4-Eleventh Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Grand Rapids: Daily Democrat Book and Job Printing Establishment, 1883. P. 36.

recommended the employment of a full-time clerk for the superintendent in his annual report for 1884-85.¹ In his next report, he stated that \$300 additional had been placed in the estimates for the year to be added to the salary of the secretary of the board so that the board could elect some competent person who would devote full time to the duties of the secretary and also do the clerical work of the superintendent.² This plan was not adopted but on November 6, 1886, Miss McIntyre was employed as a full-time clerk in the superintendent's office.³ There is no indication that she had any responsibility for the work of the secretary of the board.

Superintendent of Construction

H. R. Naysmith, the superintendent of buildings, appointed during Mr. Daniels' administration, was frequently criticized by members of the board for lack of initiative; in January 1885, the board voted three times on his re-appointment without arriving at a decision.⁴ At the next meeting, James T. Barnaby was appointed superintendent of construction on the fifth ballot.⁵ The work of Barnaby met the requirements of the board and he continued as superintendent of construction until 1898.

1-Thirteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Grand Rapids: Daily Democrat Steam Printing House, 1885. P. 13.

2-Fourteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Grand Rapids: W. H. Hart, 1886. Pp. 11-12.

3-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1886-87, P. 128.

4-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1884-85, P. 72.

5-Ibid., P. 80.

Superintendent of Janitors

Sometime before the cold weather came in 1885-86, a new position was established; a superintendent of janitors was employed. President Chandler made the following statement explaining one of the principal reasons for this action:¹

The demand for fuel to properly heat our school buildings is constantly increasing, and is becoming an item of expenditure, yearly, of no small amount. The Committee on Supplies, under the lead of its efficient chairman, has faithfully discharged the duties assigned to it, under the rules of this Board. The proper kind of fuel, the method of economical use of the same, so as to avoid undue waste, are problems that this Board may well consider. There is no doubt that the Board has been compelled to use in the coal furnaces a large amount of coal and fuel beyond what there was need for, through the inexperience and want of knowledge on the part of the janitors of the principles of running furnaces and using fuel economically. The buildings have been improperly heated and the furnaces burnt out and injured for the same reason. It is to be hoped that under the management of the new officer, the superintendent of janitors, we shall hear far less complaints of teachers and scholars as to badly heated school rooms, and that our item of repairs to furnaces will be reduced to a minimum.

On June 6, 1885, Joseph Miller, who had been appointed to this position, gave a detailed report on the type, amount, and cost of fuel used to heat each school building.² A similar report was made to the board each year thereafter. Miller was forced by ill health to give up this work and on December 3, 1887, A. S. Paul was appointed at a salary of \$800 with the understanding that he must keep a horse and buggy with which to deliver light supplies.³ Paul continued in this position until 1894; then the position was abolished, and Barnaby got

1-Twelfth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 21-22.

2-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1884-85, Pp. 113-115.

3-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1887-88, P. 370.

the title of superintendent of construction and janitors.

Truant Officer

After some consultations between members of the board of education and the common council about the authority to pay a truant officer, a communication was read from the board of police and fire commissioners at a board of education meeting October 11, 1884 saying that the board of police and fire commissioners would delegate one or more members of the police force to act as truant officer.¹ On November 7, these services were requested for the first time.² On December 4, 1886, the board approved the payment of five dollars per month to Truant Officer Frank B. Fee for the expense of keeping a horse.³ Fee continued as truant officer for many years, until his death February 2, 1914.

EXPANSION OF INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES

Establishment of Kindergartens

The first kindergarten in Grand Rapids was opened in the fall of 1873 in rooms over the Howe Sewing Machine Company at 63 Monroe Street, under the sponsorship of a kindergarten association, of which H. W. Hinsdill was president; Mrs. Frances Rutherford, M. D., secretary, and Enos Putman, treasurer. There were four terms of ten weeks each, with tuition at ten dollars per term. The hours were from 9:00-12:00 and 3:00-4:00 and the first teacher was a Miss Hyde, who had been brought to Grand Rapids from Minnesota.⁴

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1884-85, P. 54.

2-Ibid., P. 66.

3-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1886-87, P. 136.

4-Grand Rapids Daily Times, September 28 and October 12, 1873.

On August 17, 1885, Superintendent Mitchell's recommendation that a kindergarten be established in the First Ward was referred to the committee on schools.¹ On September 19, of the same year, the committee reported favorably on the establishment of a kindergarten, but the report was accepted and placed on file and no further action was taken.²

In his annual report for that year, 1885, Superintendent Mitchell said that an effort had been made to make the work of the first and second grades less abstract and mechanical by borrowing some of the methods of the kindergarten, and that inch blocks, shoe pegs, cubes, cylinders and tiles, paper discs, paper squares, straw and clay had been used freely and successfully.

In the spring of 1885, one of the newspapers carried a story about the free kindergarten then in operation, in which it stated that Superintendent Mitchell was president of the Free Kindergarten Association and that most of the funds with which the school was being operated came from the proceeds of a series of lectures given by Strong.³ Mitchell was reported to have said that much of the interest in the kindergarten movement in Grand Rapids had come as a result of speeches in the city by W. P. Jones of Chicago and W. N. Hailman, president of the National Froebel Institute. The article said that Mrs. W. D. Stevens and Mrs. Charles Sligh were active in the work of the Grand Rapids Kindergarten Association.

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1884-85, P. 130.
 2-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1885-86, P. 149.
 3-Grand Rapids Daily Democrat, April 7, 1885.

Superintendent Mitchell announced during the summer of 1886 that two rooms in the Central School Building had been set up as a model kindergarten and a primary class room where progressive methods of instruction could be observed.¹ Parents who wished to have their children attend were to apply to him.

On March 16, 1889, the board finally voted to open a kindergarten in the Grandville Avenue School, with Mrs. Constance Rourke as teacher.² On July 13 of the same year, the board voted to establish a second kindergarten in the Henry Street School with Miss Ella B. Knappen as teacher.³ The new kindergartens were very popular. There was interest in their establishment in other buildings as soon as suitable quarters could be arranged and trained teachers obtained. In Superintendent Kendall's last annual report, he cited the need for an assistant teacher and a musical instrument in each of the two kindergartens then in operation.⁴

Truant or Ungraded School

Because both President Perkins and Superintendent Mitchell in their annual reports for the year 1883-84 recommended the establishment of a truant school, the board decided to include in their estimates for the next year an item of \$2,500 for such a school.⁵ On October 11, 1884, the committee on schools recommended the establishment of a truant school, and on November 1, C. D. Wach was appointed teacher at a salary of \$75

1-Grand Rapids Daily Eagle, July 12, 1886.

2-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1888-89, P. 511.

3-Ibid., P. 549.

4-Eighteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 62-63.

5-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1884-85, P. 5.

per month for the remainder of the year, the school to open on November 12.¹ At the end of the first year, Superintendent Mitchell reported that the percentage of attendance had improved because of the enforcement of the Compulsory Attendance Law and the operation of the truant school.²

In May, 1886, one of the members of the board made a statement quoted in a newspaper, in which he said that he would like to see a woman teacher employed for the school and a system of kindness tried instead of the severity then in force.³ He reported that when visiting the school recently he was told by the teacher that the teacher had flogged seven boys that morning. Three days later, the same newspaper carried an article signed by W. H. Eastman, in which he stated that he had visited the truant school, and considered it well taught and that the boys liked and respected their teacher.⁴ The following month, the board decided to try the experiment of having a woman teacher for the next year, and passed a resolution which declared that their action was no reflection on the work of the former teacher, E. M. Gardner.⁵ The experiment did not prove successful and after one year men were again placed in charge of the truant school.

Plan of Instructional Organization

With the exception of the addition of the kindergartens in two primary schools, there was no change made in the organization plan

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1884-85, P. 5.

2-Thirteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 44.

3-Grand Rapids Daily Democrat, May 2, 1886.

4-Ibid., May 5, 1886.

5-Ibid., June 20, 1886.

between 1883-1890, and the schools continued to consist of four years of primary work, four years of grammar school and a four-year high school. During the year 1885-86, for the first time, the eleventh grade was held at Union School but pupils continued for many years to go to Central High School for their twelfth grade work.¹ Consideration was given to the advisability of conducting grammar school work in some of the primary schools or of building some new grammar school buildings to house only the grammar grades. It was thought that one of the causes of decreased attendance in the higher grades was the long distance many children were forced to go to school, and that the above proposals would be helpful in that regard.

CURRICULUM AND METHODS

Language Instruction

The years 1883-1890 were full of controversy over the teaching of languages in the schools of Grand Rapids. At the annual meeting in September, 1883, the abolition of languages from the high school program was discussed, with representative citizens taking positions both for and against the proposal.² Many persons in the city favored the idea of offering languages in the high school on a tuition basis; President Chandler discussed this proposal in his annual report, but said that the board had found that it was unable to charge tuition for resident pupils under the Act of Incorporation for the schools of Grand Rapids.³ After considerable discussion at earlier meetings,

1-Fourteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 15.

2-Daily Times, September 25, 1883.

3-Twelfth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 8.

the board decided on August 18, 1884, to include French and German in the curriculum.¹ In the discussion preliminary to this action, Trustee A. Porter Sinclair asserted that the high school was a school for rich men's children and Trustee Felker stated that more than half of the pupils in high school came from poor families.²

Less than a month later, a special committee, which had been appointed to study the matter, recommended that the Legislature be asked to amend the Act of Incorporation so that tuition could be charged.³ In June, 1885, the Legislature did amend the Act by the insertion of the following clause:⁴

Provided: that the Board of Education shall have the power to establish a moderate rate of fees to be paid for tuition in the branches of Latin, Greek, German, and French taught in the high school conducted in such district, which said rate of fees shall be paid by all high school pupils pursuing the studies so designated, unless the same are remitted by said board.

An article signed by M. J. Ulrich, a member of the board of education, appeared in one of the newspapers in February, 1885, in which he presented statistics from 35 high schools which refuted the argument that they educate only the children of the rich.⁵ He also included information from a study made in Detroit in 1880 of the occupation and financial standing of the parents of pupils in the high school there. The argument continued, and on September 19, 1885, a resolution relative to fees which had been tabled at the August meeting

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1884-85, P. 7.

2-Grand Rapids Daily Democrat, August 19, 1884.

3-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1884-85, P. 25.

4-Local Acts of 1885, No. 381.

5-Daily Morning Democrat, February 22, 1885.

was referred to a joint committee consisting of the committees on schools and teachers.¹ At the next meeting, the committee presented a majority report in opposition to fees, and a minority report in favor of them.² The majority report was adopted by a vote of 8-6, and the controversy therefore was ended. Superintendent Mitchell reported at that meeting that 57.8% of the high school pupils were taking foreign languages.

Method of Language Instruction

The method of teaching the modern languages was criticized ; it was eventually changed by resolution of the board. The following resolution was submitted and referred to the committee on schools at a meeting February 6, 1886:³

Whereas, It is the sense of this board - to quote the words of Professor Henniquin, instructor of German and French in Michigan University, in the preface of his revised edition of Duffet's New French Method - 'that the object to be attained in studying a foreign language is certainly to understand, i.e., to speak it, and to write it, at the earliest possible moment,' and

Whereas, German is now taught in our public schools simply as a dead language, and without any effort to give pupils the ability to speak it; and

Whereas, Graduates in German from our high school are unable to speak the language, understand it when spoken, or write it with any readiness; therefore be it

Resolved, That the Superintendent of Schools be directed to see to it that German be hereafter taught with the object of enabling pupils to understand, speak and write the language at the earliest possible moment.

At the next meeting, the board adopted the so-called eclectic method of teaching the modern languages, as outlined in the resolution, and

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1885-86, P. 149.

2-Ibid., P. 153.

3-Ibid., P. 18.

increased the length of time that French and German were taught, to three years.¹ President Felker reported favorably on the change in method, which, he said, was adopted so pupils could learn to speak and write the foreign languages instead of merely emphasizing the beauties of the literature of the language.²

Controversy Over French and German Teachers

At a meeting on June 4, 1887, the committee on teachers recommended that new teachers of French and German be employed; Moritz Levi of Ann Arbor to teach German and French at the high school, and Miss Agnes Ginn to teach French and German at Union, replacing Joseph DeLaPierre, the French teacher, and Mrs. M. C. Orth, teacher of German.³ About two weeks later, one of the newspapers contained a long article in which several members of the board were quoted.⁴ Some of them said that they were opposed to having teachers teach two languages and that the whole controversy was being stirred up by citizens, including Greeson, who did not want to have these languages taught by the new method, but preferred to have them taught as "dead languages". At the meeting on June 17, a petition from the senior class was presented, asking that DeLaPierre be retained.⁵ The French and German teachers were not hired at this meeting. On July 2, DeLaPierre was appointed as French teacher by a vote of 10-6, and Mrs. Orth as German teacher, 15-1.⁶ The editor of one of the newspapers commented the next day on

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1885-86, P. 25.

2-Fourteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 8.

3-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1886-87, P. 180.

4-Evening Leader, June 9, 1887.

5-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1886-87, P. 189.

6-Ibid., P. 203.

the decision to retain DeLaPierre, saying that in his opinion retainment was unwise, because it was well known that he was a poor teacher.¹ President Blair vetoed the appointment, and at a special meeting on July 7, Miss Agnes Ginn was appointed by a vote of 15-1² and remained as a teacher of French in the high school for many years. President Blair's veto message was a strong one; it accused DeLaPierre of untruthfulness and trouble-making as well as inefficiency. Blair stated among other things that DeLaPierre had used his talents for untruthfulness and mischief-making with such persistence against Strong and Daniels that he had contributed very largely to the conditions which led to their resignations. President Blair said that he would prefer to have French dropped from the course of study rather than have DeLaPierre continue any longer as a teacher.

Laboratory Method in Science

Considerable development in the teaching of science in the high school took place in 1886. On March 6, a class in chemistry was approved, and one room was set aside for chemistry classes.³ In September, science classes were organized with the laboratory method. President Felker recommended the purchase of considerable equipment for the ensuing year, to contribute to the success of the new system.⁴ At the end of the first year after the adoption of the new method, W. A. Greeson, principal of the high school, made the following comment on the progress made:⁵

1-Grand Rapids Daily Democrat, July 3, 1887.

2-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1886-87, P. 200.

3-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1885-86, P. 23.

4-Fourteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 9.

5-Fifteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 66.

We have been very fortunate, indeed, in securing the services of Mr. Carman, at the time when the Board had decided to place the natural sciences on a proper footing. He has succeeded in overcoming what seemed insurmountable difficulties, arising from inadequate quarters and facilities, and now, for the first time the sciences are taught by the laboratory method—the only way in which they can be properly presented. The liberality of the Board in providing him, as far as possible, with the necessary equipment, be assured is appreciated. Many important additions to the equipment are imperative—especially do we need some microscopes for the work in botany and zoology. It is hoped that some way may be found to supply these at an early date.

In his annual report for 1887-88, President Blair referred to the new laboratories provided in the annex on the high school grounds which provided much more satisfactory space than the basement rooms which had formerly been used.¹ Greeson announced at the close of the next year that botany and physics had been made a part of every course in the high school. His statement is quoted below:²

Some changes have been made in the courses of study in the high school which will add much to the efficiency of instruction. Two of the most important and useful of the sciences—botany and physics—have been introduced into all the courses which formerly did not have them, so that now all pupils must have a fair knowledge of at least two sciences. This has reduced somewhat the time formerly given to arithmetic, Latin, and physical geography. I am confident that this will not detract from the former efficiency of the instruction in these branches. The ninth grade arithmetic was formerly a mere repetition of work just done in the seventh and eighth grades and was always a source of dissatisfaction to teachers, pupils, and parents. Under the new arrangement, during the first half of the ninth grade, pupils will take a general review of the whole subject of arithmetic. Considering the fact that, as it seems to me, an undue proportion of time has already been given to arithmetic in previous grades, this certainly is an ample amount of time to be allotted to this subject.

1-Sixteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 8.

2-Seventeenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Grand Rapids: The Dean Printing and Publishing Co., 1889, P. 68.

Penmanship Instruction

President Felker made the following statement in his report for 1884-85 regarding the action of the board in deciding to dispense temporarily with the special teacher of penmanship:¹

The work performed by the schools in writing has been good, and the specimens now in the custody of the Board of the penmanship of children of ages from seven to fourteen show the effect of training in this branch. At a meeting of the Board, it was decided to temporarily dispense with the services of a special teacher of penmanship. The reasons assigned therefore were that a number of the regular teachers did not give sufficient personal attention to the teaching of penmanship, but relied too much on the special teacher; that by temporarily dispensing with a special instructor (except as to the board work), such teachers would realize their responsibility and make suitable effort to impart instruction. It will be advisable for the Board to take particular pains as to the result of this action. Penmanship is a very important item, and one in which patrons of our schools and parents of children take more interest than in almost any other, especially in the primary departments. Should at any time the least deteriorating effect be detected, you should, at your earliest convenience, secure a suitable person as special teacher of penmanship, and dispense with any of our regular teachers who neglect their duty in this respect.

One of the newspapers reported an interview with M. C. Sessions, the former teacher of penmanship, in which he said that the decision to abolish the position of special teacher of penmanship was an attempt to get rid of him because some of the members of the board were opposed to him personally.² Two days later, Superintendent Mitchell had a statement published to reassure the public that it was proposed to teach penmanship in all grades and to do better work than formerly with no essential change, using the same materials used by Mr. Sessions.

1-Thirteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 12-13.

2-Grand Rapids Daily Democrat, September 1, 1885.

Mitchell said that the bookkeeping formerly taught by Sessions would be taught by E. L. Mosely.¹ The board was very much divided on the matter as can be seen by their action of October 3, 1885, when by a vote of 8-6 the committee on teachers was instructed to employ a teacher of writing and bookkeeping.² This was done against the recommendation of Mr. Mitchell, who said that he believed it unwise to appoint a teacher of penmanship.³ The committee did not recommend anyone for the position, and, on April 3, 1886, a motion to employ M. C. Sessions, the former teacher, was defeated by a vote of 8-7.⁴

In their annual reports for that year, both President Felker and Superintendent Mitchell said that the experiment of getting along without a special teacher had been successful. Superintendent Mitchell's statement of his ideas on the teaching of penmanship and the responsibility of the classroom teacher have a very modern ring and are quoted below:⁵

The art of writing belongs almost exclusively in the domain of manual training, it therefore follows that pupils should learn to write by writing. To this end, I believe that there should be no distinction between penmanship and writing in the schools. Every bit of written work should be an exercise in writing. As careful supervision should be given to this work by the teacher as to the separate exercise in penmanship. The objective points should be clearness or legibility and rapidity, being sought simultaneously.

Before publication of this report, Mitchell had been replaced as superintendent by F. M. Kendall and Sessions had been re-employed by

1-Grand Rapids Daily Democrat, September 3, 1885.

2-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1885-86, P. 155.

3-Grand Rapids Daily Democrat, October 4, 1885.

4-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1885-86, P. 43.

5-Fourteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 55-56.

a vote of 9-8.¹ Sessions was replaced after one year by Miss May Cavanaugh, from Muskegon, who reported at the end of the first year that she was basing her instruction on, "muscular movement, a union of the forearm with the finger movements."²

Instruction in Drawing

The work in drawing was undoubtedly one of the outstanding features of the Grand Rapids Schools. In October 1884, the board voted an appropriation of \$100 to defray the expense of preparing an exhibit for the World's Industrial and Centennial Exposition in New Orleans.³ The exhibit of stick-laying was so well done and unusual that requests came from the French and Japanese governments for samples to be taken to their own countries for permanent exhibits.⁴ In the annual report for 1888-89, Superintendent Kendall stated that an average of 20 minutes per day was given to drawing in all of the grades up to the high school, where pupils could elect either drawing or music.⁵ He also said that in the spring term an exhibit had been held which had been a revelation and surprise to most persons including many teachers. Much of this exhibit was on display at the Bay View Summer School and at the time of the writing of his report had been taken for display to an Indiana Normal School at the request of the college authorities.

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1885-86, P. 63.

2-Sixteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 62-63.

3-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1884-85, P. 53.

4-Ibid., P. 112.

5-Seventeenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 53-54.

Political Economy and Civil Government

At a meeting on February 6, 1886, a resolution was tabled which proposed that political economy be added to the course of studies.¹ The following June, the board voted on the recommendation of the committee on schools to include political economy in the course of study for the ensuing year.² At the end of the first year, Greeson, principal of the high school, reported that in his belief the course as taught had been beyond the maturity and understanding of the pupils and he therefore questioned the desirability of including it in the program.³ By 1889, the course had been revised and renamed Civil Government and had won the enthusiastic support of Greeson, as is shown by the following quotation:⁴

By curtailing the time formerly given to arithmetic, the most important change of all has been made possible - the introduction of Civil Government into the preparatory English course which includes about half of the entire number of pupils in the high school. All pupils entering the high school in February take civil government, so that now about three-fourths of all the pupils must pursue this very important subject.

Suggested Changes in Reading Program

In his annual report for 1887-88, Superintendent Kendall expressed dissatisfaction with the method of teaching reading then in use and recommended changes which he felt would improve the results of the reading program. His recommendations were so definite and fundamental

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1885-86, P. 18.

2-Ibid., P. 65.

3-Fifteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 64.

4-Seventeenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 68.

that they are quoted below:¹

A year ago, I strongly emphasized the importance of this subject and urged upon teachers the necessity of giving it the first place in their thoughts if they would have intelligent reading. I confess to a feeling of disappointment in the results attained in the last two years. The subject has not been neglected and I am convinced that the teachers have labored faithfully to bring about a better state of affairs.

After much observation and a careful study of the situation, it is my judgment that the method of furnishing the readers is to a great extent the cause of the difficulty. Under the present plan all reading books used in the schools are furnished by the Board. They come to the rooms in sets of 25, and they are distributed to the classes for recitation, and afterward collected and put away until needed again. They are never taken home by the pupils; for then they would be soiled and injured. In many cases the pupils never use them outside of the recitation, although instructions are given to have them so used. There are two remedies, either one of which, I think, would be effective: 1. To permit pupils to keep their reading books in their desks in school and take them home with them, if they wished; or, 2. To require pupils, in the primary grades at least, to purchase the readers as they need them and use those furnished by the Board strictly as supplementary readers. The objections to the first plan are that more books would have to be purchased by the Board and they would not last as long as they do now. The average life of a reader is now about five years. The second plan would bring the expense of one reader each year for three years upon the pupils; and they would then have one book to use as much as they chose. The cost would be to each pupil about as follows: For a First Reader 25¢; Second Reader, 38¢; Third Reader, 48¢. If this were done, I would not have fewer readers provided by the Board, but they would be used differently and they would last longer.

'The object of all reading is to gain thought.' As it is now taught, our pupils come to the class, in some cases with no previous preparation of the lesson, and at the best with but a few moments study of it. As a result, when they read, their whole attention is necessarily given to pronouncing the words, and they do not grasp the thought. If the teacher takes sufficient time in the class to develop the thought of which the word is the sign; and if she allows time enough for the pupil to associate the thought with the sign, then no time is left to read and this part of the exercise must be postponed until another day.

1-Sixteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 57-59.

If each pupil owned his book or could take one to his seat and keep it there or take it home, the teacher could assign work to be done and a large amount of the preparatory 'word drill' might be omitted and the time given to reading, that is, getting thought from the printed page.

The next year, he reported that improvement had been made; he recommended that a set of basic readers be adopted, and that pupils in the primary grades be required to purchase them.¹ This suggestion was not carried out during his administration.

Examinations and Promotions

Superintendent Kendall attempted to reduce the emphasis on examinations by giving more attention to records of the daily work of pupils. The following statement appeared in his annual report for 1888-89.²

During the last two years some changes have been made in the manner of promoting pupils from grade to grade, and an account of the method now followed may properly be given in this report.

It is a well known fact that where stated written examinations are the only means used to determine the promotion of pupils the most unfortunate results often follow. Few teachers can resist the influence of a system that looks to per cents as the final accomplishment of all their work, and the instruction naturally falls into the narrow ruts which lead to the desired end. Cramming and rote teaching are the natural accompaniments of such a system; freedom to teach according to one's best knowledge and judgment cannot be exercised under such circumstances. Strangely enough teachers themselves are sometimes slow to recognize the bondage of the 'percentage system', and dread to break away from it lest the effect upon the pupils will be unfavorable. They fear that the stimulus being removed pupils cannot be held to their work.

The system formerly in use in the schools here was not open to all the objections which I have cited; but promotions were largely made upon the basis of the semi-annual examinations, although the recommendations of teachers and principals were given due weight in exceptional cases.

1-Seventeenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 51.

2-Ibid., Pp. 62-64

In order to overcome such unfavorable effects as were apparent, and at the same time not to make too radical a change, a series of oral and written reviews were introduced. A review each week is given in one of the four subjects, arithmetic, language (or grammar), geography, and spelling, beginning with the third week of the half year. This provides four reviews in each subject during the half year. These are short and informal in character and are not in any sense regarded as examinations; on the contrary, they are properly considered as an element in the teaching, and as such they have a very important place. By taking these reviews into consideration in making promotions, the daily work of the pupils becomes the most important factor, and this is the end desired. Accordingly, a record of the reviews is kept, and at the end of each half year the standings are averaged with those obtained in the semi-annual examinations, which now count as one-fifth, the reviews counting as four-fifths. Pupils in the grammar grades whose standings in the reviews, in any subject, average 85 or more, are excused from the examination in that subject, and the average of the reviews counts as the final average. Pupils in the first and second grades are promoted on the recommendations of the teachers in charge. All exceptional cases are considered individually and the recommendations of the teachers and principals are final in each case.

This plan has been followed this past year with good results, not only to the pupils but to the teachers. Better methods are already apparent and a greater interest is taken in those subjects of study that cannot be tested by formal examinations. Parents are also better satisfied when they are informed that the regular daily work of their children, and not the examination alone, determine their promotion. I will not say that this is the best possible method for the promotion of pupils, but it is certainly an advance over methods formerly in use, and it is so far satisfactory that it may well be left for further trial to determine what modifications are necessary.

It may be stated in this connection that on an average from 82 to 87 per cent of the pupils in each grade are promoted to the next higher grade each half year. Those who are not promoted are obliged to take the work of the half year (five months) over again. Very little dissatisfaction on the part of parents, as to the results of promotions, finds its way to the superintendent. In most cases the principal and teacher are able to satisfy the parent that no injustice has been done and that the best good of the child has been, in all cases, considered.

TEXTBOOKS AND SUPPLIES

Distribution of Supplies

In order to ensure some uniformity in the supplies used in the

schools it was customary for the superintendent of schools to purchase them and make them available for sale in each school through the principal. Objections were made to this system on two counts; first, that it took some of the time of the superintendent which could more profitably have been spent on more important work, and secondly, that some of the members of the board felt that he was making a profit on these transactions. On January 2, 1886, the committee on supplies proposed that the superintendent of janitors assume this responsibility.¹ The recommendation was tabled by a vote of 7-6. Sometime within the next few months, the distribution of supplies to the schools was placed in the hands of E. H. Church, janitor of the board of education offices, as the following recommendation of the committee on supplies approved in August of that year shows:²

Your committee on supplies, to whom was referred the matter of supplies for the schools for the ensuing year, would respectfully report that they have placed the matter in the hands of E. H. Church and that he has purchased a full supply of the same, the same to be handled by him as they were last year and would recommend that he have charge of the same for the ensuing year providing he furnishes the schools as good a quality as we have been having and at a reasonable price.

Church remained in charge of supplies for many years even after they were provided by the board.

Free Textbooks and Supplies

The practice of providing free reading books was continued and the board showed considerable interest in the possibility of providing

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1885-86, P. 10.

2-Ibid., P. 94.

free textbooks and supplies in all subjects and grades. In March, 1886, in response to their inquiry, the attorney ruled that the board (under the existing law) could not provide free supplies except to indigents.¹ President Felker recommended in his annual report for the year 1885-86 that the board request the Legislature to amend the Grand Rapids School Act so that all supplies and books could be provided free.² His recommendation was followed and the act was amended by the Legislature on April 27, 1887.³ In the spring of the same year, Superintendent Kendall was sent by the board to visit the school systems of Detroit and East Saginaw to study their ungraded schools, and their methods of handling supplies. He reported favorably on the plan which had been followed in East Saginaw since September, 1885, of providing free books and supplies in all grades.⁴ No action was taken as a result of his recommendations until August, 1888; then the board voted to place in the annual estimates the amount needed to provide free textbooks and supplies with the understanding that after the money had been collected the board could take any action thought best.⁵ However, no change was made in the method of handling textbooks and supplies until April, 1890; then the board voted to provide reading books for the high school English classes on the same basis as they had been furnished in the primary and grammar grades.⁶

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1885-86, Pp. 28-29.

2-Fourteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp 9-10.

3-Local Acts of 1887, No. 451.

4-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1886-87, Pp. 162-163.

5-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1887-88, P. 451.

6-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1889-90, P. 630.

TEACHER WELFARE

Method of Employment

The committee on teachers exercised a great deal of responsibility in relation to the certification, employment and transfer of teachers. President Chandler said that its duties were the most arduous, with the possible exception of the duties of the committee on buildings.¹ On June 6, 1885, Trustee Joel C. Parker presented the following amendment to the rules of the board, which, he said, he had prepared for consideration at the next meeting. Although it was never formally considered by the board, it is quoted below because it was so modern in its provisions:²

All teachers when first appointed in the public schools, shall serve a probationary term of three years at which time if found fully qualified their term of office shall be during good behavior, and that all teachers now in our schools who have served three years and are deemed qualified shall be nominated as above, and that the same tenure of office and regulations shall apply to the Superintendent of Schools.

There was a great deal of controversy over the appointment of teachers. On April 20, 1886, the board by a vote of 11-6 overrode the veto by President Felker of the appointment of Mrs. J. J. Williams to fill a vacancy for the remainder of the school year.³ The committee on teachers had originally recommended Miss Harriett Taylor for this position. In the discussion at the meeting of April 3 when her name was presented to the board, one of the members accused Mitchell of

1-Twelfth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp 6-7.

2-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1884-85, P. 116.

3-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1885-86, P. 47.

having forced the resignation of Miss Reed, the former teacher, in order to make a place for Miss Taylor.¹ On June 5, 1886, the board again interfered with the regular appointment of teachers when it rejected the majority report of the committee on teachers, and adopted a minority report by a vote of 9-8.²

Later in the month, a petition was presented from patrons of the Plainfield Avenue School asking that the board reconsider their decision not to reappoint Miss Jennia Maley as a teacher in that school.³ This request was referred to the trustees from the Fifth Ward in which the school was located; the trustees were to report at the next meeting. After their report, quoted below, Miss Maley was re-appointed by a unanimous vote.⁴

Gentlemen - The trustees of the Fifth Ward to whom was referred the petition of the patrons of Plainfield Avenue School, urging that Miss Jennia Maley be restored to her position in said school, beg leave to report that we have had the matter under consideration and that there is some objection to Miss Maley by the principal of said school; while on the other hand we have before us the petition signed by a large majority of the patrons of said school; and, believing that it is the duty of all representatives to represent the people and not personal interest, therefore it becomes our imperative duty to try and comply with the wishes of the people we have the honor to represent as far as practicable.

And, therefore, we recommend that Miss Jennia Maley be placed in such room that the children of said petitioners will be her pupils, as far as practicable.

On June 17, 1887, the list of teachers was finally approved with some exceptions, after it had been discussed at three earlier meetings.

1-Grand Rapids Daily Democrat, April 4, 1886.

2-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1885-86, Pp. 61-63.

3-Ibid., P. 64.

4-Ibid., Pp. 79-80.

Voting even then was by individual building. In some instances the vote was on the re-appointment of individual teachers.¹ The preceding illustrations show that the recommendations of the superintendent and principals were often given little weight in the appointment of teachers.

Local Versus Foreign Teachers

In a school system in which teacher appointments were made primarily on the recommendation of a standing committee of the board with little weight being given to the recommendations of the supervisory staff, it was inevitable that strong preference was given to local candidates, with considerable importance placed on the local examination for purpose of certification. In December, 1883, there was a lengthy discussion in a board meeting about granting certificates without examination to graduates of the Potsdam Normal School in New York and it was decided not to grant them.²

On February 6, 1886, Trustee Tibbitts presented the following resolution, which was referred to the committee on schools for a report at the next meeting.³

Resolved, That any citizen of the city desiring to become a teacher in our city schools be and is hereby allowed the privilege of entering the same in order to give all such persons experience in the grade work of the schools. The principals may give them such instruction as they deem fit and proper for teachers to receive, thereby giving this Board the opportunity of selecting teachers from this city instead of non-residents.

The committee reported that it was their opinion that the proposal

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1886-87, Pp. 189-193.

2-Daily Times, December 2, 1883.

3-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1885-86, P. 18.

was impractical, but that they did recommend the employment of resident teachers whenever their employment was consistent with the best interests of the schools.¹ The report was accepted.

In his annual report for 1887-88, President Blair commended the board for having employed some outside teachers for the ensuing year.² At the end of the year, Superintendent Kendall reported that the addition of these outside teachers, most of whom had been trained in state normal schools, had proved helpful; he heartily recommended that the practice be continued.³ In the fall of 1889, two teachers who had been dropped the preceding year because of incompetence were reinstated by the board on the recommendation of the teachers committee and against the wishes of Superintendent Kendall.⁴

Froebel Institute

The Froebel Institute was organized by a group of Grand Rapids teachers in 1884 for the purpose of studying the newer methods and theories of primary teaching. Two years later, Superintendent Mitchell said that regular weekly meetings had been held, attendance ranging from 25 to 75, with an average attendance of about 40 composed largely of principals and primary teachers.⁵ During the school year, the programs had consisted of lectures on the history of pedagogy, and for three months, the meetings were devoted exclusively to the

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1885-86, P. 23.

2-Sixteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 8.

3-Seventeenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 57-58.

4-Grand Rapids Daily Democrat, October 6, 1889.

5-Fourteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 54.

principles of drawing under the leadership of Miss Sylvia McCall, a special teacher of drawing.

City Teachers' Institute

In August, 1889, the first city Teachers' Institute in the state financed by county-institute money was held in Grand Rapids.¹ Superintendent Kendall reported that he had arranged for the institute at the suggestion of State Superintendent Estabrook, especially for the benefit of the city teachers, although all of the teachers in the county were urged to attend. Kendall called attention to the fact that, although the city teachers had been forced by law to pay in about \$140 each year, they had received nothing in return, because the county institutes were usually held in the summer in one of the smaller towns.

The announcement of the institute stated that there would be morning and afternoon sessions all week, and Dr. E. E. White, superintendent of schools in Cincinnati, Ohio; Alex E. Frye, formerly of Cook County Normal School; and Miss M. E. Cooper, formerly of Oswego Normal School, would be the lecturers. Kendall reported that more than 300 teachers were enrolled and that the attendance taxed the capacity of the largest room in the high school in spite of the oppressive heat during the whole week.

Superintendent Kendall recommended that a similar program be held each year during the first week of the school year. His

1-Seventeenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 59-62.

arguments for such a program, quoted below, are almost identical with those now used in advocating similar programs by many school systems:¹

The success of the Institute in every particular, raises the question whether it would not be wise to hold a similar meeting the first week of each school year, as is now done in some of the large cities of the country. If the Board would make the Institute a part of the school session and give to it the first week in September of each year, I believe the efficiency of the instruction given would be greatly increased and the progress of the pupils would not be affected unfavorably. The first week in September is usually very warm, and the schools are organized with difficulty on that account. The time lost to the pupils by a week's delay would be saved by more prompt organization of the schools and by the earlier adoption of good methods of work as a result of such an Institute as the last.

In Cincinnati, for more than twenty years past, the opening of each school year has been preceded by a Teachers' Institute, and recently the Board of Education so changed the rules as to make the Institute a part of the school session, the teachers receiving compensation for their presence the same as if teaching. The results have justified the wisdom of the change. I recommend that this question be referred to a committee with a view to determining what, if any steps should be taken to carry out the above suggestions.

In his annual report for 1889-90, issued when he resigned, April 1, 1890, Superintendent Kendall said that arrangements had been made for holding in Grand Rapids a session of the National Summer School the last two weeks of August under the direction of Frye.² Teachers would be required to pay a fee, but Kendall was hopeful that part of the expense could be met with county institute money.

1-Seventeenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 61-62.

2-Eighteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 61-62.

Teacher Training

Superintendent Kendall in commenting on the cadet system of teacher-training as it was operating in Grand Rapids said:¹

The oft repeated expression 'Teachers are born, not made,' will always find abundant confirmation in whatever locality one looks and this city is no exception to the rule. But while the best teachers are so from natural qualifications and gifts, good teachers can be made - or rather can make themselves. If ordinarily bright, active, good-tempered and well-educated men or women can have proper assistance from experienced teachers, and will use the means at their disposal to inform themselves in regard to principles and methods of teaching, there is no reason why they should not succeed in the public schools. In most cities of this size, it is found necessary to supply a large percentage of the vacancies which occur each year from resident graduates of the high schools, and therefore training schools for these and other inexperienced teachers have been established and are in successful operation. Such a school was supported by the Board here a few years ago, but its place has been taken by the 'Cadet system.'

No explanation of the workings of this system is necessary. I only wish to suggest the advisability of requiring more from cadets than to be simply the helpers of the principals. They should be instructed, as a class, in the principles and methods of teaching and then required to work them out for themselves. If possible, their work should not be confined to the first and second grades, but they should be prepared to take higher grades if need be. Above all, if the work of a year fails to develop fairly good teachers they should be dropped; it is worse than folly to put a room full of children into the hands of one who is fitted neither by aptitude or by education to teach them.

But I would not have it thought that our teaching corps should be supplied wholly from the high school - nothing could be more unfortunate than that. There should always be in the schools a number of thoroughly tried, successful, teachers from abroad, who can command good positions elsewhere at any time. Such teachers always give tone and strength to the schools; they bring in new ideas and develop a spirit of friendly emulation that is beneficial. The claims of personal friendship or political interests or private need should not be regarded in applicants if there is not promise of the making of excellent teachers; neither should these claims suffice to retain anyone in the ranks who is found to be incompetent.

1-Fifteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 60-61.

In his next annual report, he stated that weekly classes in methods had been conducted for the cadets, but that it would be desirable to require more work of this nature.¹ He again advised in his report for 1889-90 an extension and improvement of the cadet system or the adoption of a more extensive teacher training program.² He reported that, in many cases, cadets were now required to remain a second year under another principal before getting a regular assignment.

Teachers' Salaries

The teachers' salary schedule was changed in 1887 and again in 1890. One of the changes made in 1887 was the reduction of the salary of cadets from \$250 to \$200. In commenting on this change, one of the Grand Rapids editors said that he thought it was unwise, because, in his opinion, some worthy girls who had to depend on their own efforts would be prevented from entering the teaching profession.³ The maximum for first grade teachers was raised from \$475 to \$550, and for seventh grade teachers from \$500 to \$550. The effect of this change was to place teachers in grades one through seven on the same schedule. Eighth and ninth grade teachers had a maximum of \$600 as before. All maximum salaries were reached in six years instead of eight as in the old schedule.⁴

1-Sixteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 67.

2-Eighteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 58-60.

3-Evening Leader, May 23, 1887.

4-Fifteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 142.

The principal change made in the 1890 revision was the increase in the maximums for teachers of grades four through seven on an ascending scale. The maximums were:¹

Grades One through Three	\$500.00
Fourth Grade	520.00
Fifth Grade	540.00
Sixth Grade	560.00
Seventh Grade	580.00
Eighth and Ninth Grades (Same)	600.00

As in all of the other schedules, the salaries of teachers in Central and Union High Schools did not come under the rules.

SCHOOL BUILDINGS

Building Procedure Changed

With the building of the Straight Street School during the year 1884-85, the board embarked on a new construction policy.² This building and many others in succeeding years were built under the supervision of the superintendent of construction without a general contractor. Members of the board said that by this method they could build better buildings than before, at a great saving in cost.

Union School Addition

In their annual reports for the year 1888-89, President Richards and Superintendent Kendall both made pleas for an addition to the Union School to relieve the overcrowding.³ On July 25, 1889, the board voted 9-6 to build an 11-room addition.⁴ At the next meeting, a

1-Eighteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 163.

2-Thirteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 33.

3-Seventeenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 5, 67.

4-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1888-89, P. 553.

resolution to reconsider this action lost by a vote of 7-6.¹ On December 7, the building committee and the superintendent of construction were told to proceed with the construction of the building.² The addition was ready for use in the fall of 1890.³

Movement for New High School Building

In his annual report for 1885-86, Superintendent Mitchell discussed the relationship between the long distances that many pupils were forced to walk to school and the number who dropped out in the grammar school grades.⁴ He recommended that new grammar schools be built in the southeast and northeast parts of the city to provide schools nearer the pupils' homes and to permit the grammar grades to be moved from the over-crowded high school building. In the next annual report, President Blair criticized the location of the high school because of the height of the site and recommended a new building to be built in a more central location to serve the pupils from both sides of the river.⁵

In October, 1887, a committee of three board members was appointed to look at sites for a high school building and report to the board.⁶ In March, Superintendent Kendall said that more room was urgently needed, and that unless more space were provided before the opening

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1888-89, P. 553.

2-Ibid., P. 605.

3-Eighteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 5.

4-Fourteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 57-59.

5-Fifteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 7-8.

6-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1887-88, P. 357.

in September, the ninth graders would have to remain in the ward schools.¹ He stated that arrangements had been made with the Cable Company to allow pupils and teachers to ride their cars up the hill for half fare.

The chairman stated that the committee had been considering the downtown site purchased for the county building but that the county had paid more than the committee would recommend to the board. It was also proposed that a good new building be built on the Ransom Street side of the high school lot. During the spring and summer of 1888, a temporary building was built on the high school grounds to provide space badly needed for the science laboratories.² In his annual report for 1887-88, President Blair made a strong plea for the erection of a new high school on another site, and suggested that the present building could very well be used to house the seventh and eighth grades after the new building was completed.³

The following year, Greeson, principal of the high school, urged the construction of a new building and the advisability of having only one high school.⁴ In describing conditions as they existed at that time, he said:⁵

1-Grand Rapids Daily Democrat, March 18, 1888.

2-Sixteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 8.

3-Ibid., Pp. 7-8.

4-At this time, pupils from the West Side were permitted to remain at the Union School through the eleventh grade.

5-Seventeenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 69-71.

It can be seen that no step in advance can be made without a new High School building. We cannot even carry out our present plans without being seriously crippled and hampered on every hand by lack of room. In my room especially, we are seriously overcrowded, for we are attempting to accommodate 250 pupils in a room intended for less than 200. My time is almost entirely taken up in teaching, leaving no time or strength for the much needed work of supervision. In so large a school, with its varied courses and multiplicity of details, almost my whole time should be given to my legitimate work as Principal. The several departments, and the work of different instructors in the same department cannot be properly co-ordinated until this is done. It is an impossibility for me or any other man to do this in the present condition of things.

The accommodations for the laboratories are even now entirely inadequate for the large number of pupils taking those subjects which must be taught by the laboratory method to be of much value.

At present all the desks in the chemical laboratory are occupied, and some have to be used by two pupils. There are sixty-two pupils in Physics now; in February there will be about ninety, while next September the number will undoubtedly exceed one hundred. We have forty-four pupils in Zoology who have to do their work in the basement, in rooms poorly lighted, heated and ventilated - rooms entirely unfit for the purposes for which they have to be used.

In what I have said on this subject I do not wish to seem to blame the Board of Education; for, without exception, they have cheerfully granted every request that we have made. The difficulty is only this, we need a new building - a modern high school, which will properly provide for all these necessities, and the time has come, it seems to me, when something must be done or the High School cannot maintain even its present state of efficiency.

My own opinion is that the city ought not to attempt to maintain two High Schools. Such an arrangement will inevitably result, either in weakening both schools, or in a very great and constant expense, almost twice as much as necessary to maintain one good school. If a central location can be obtained and a suitable building constructed and equipped, all the pupils can be easily accommodated in one school, and this will be far stronger for much less expense than is possible if we attempt to maintain two High Schools.

On December 7, 1889, the building committee was instructed to provide plans for a building to relieve or replace Central High School.¹ At

¹-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1889-90, P. 605.

the meeting on February 1, 1890, the committee presented a pencil sketch and floor plans for such a building, the approximate cost to be \$18,500.¹

Analysis of School Housing Conditions

The school buildings of Grand Rapids were well built and modern for the times. In a newspaper article written in 1887, the Rev. C. B. Smith criticized the board for extravagance in their building program.² He stated that the buildings were "fancy" and that they were designed and constructed with the purpose of increasing real estate values as well as to provide good school facilities. Superintendent Kendall felt that the buildings were good as is shown from the following statement from his last annual report:³

It gives me pleasure to report that the buildings and grounds, as well as the entire material equipment of the schools, are maintained in the most satisfactory manner. Careful provision has been made for light, heat, and proper ventilation, the rooms are cheerful and the seats are comfortable. This may sound like extravagant praise, but from somewhat extended observation covering a number of cities in this, and other states, east and west, I am prepared to say that for well-constructed, commodious buildings, adapted to the needs of the schools, well-kept grounds, abundance of illustrative material, pure air and plenty of light and heat, the schools of this city are excelled by few in the country. This is a cause for congratulation, since the mental and moral development of the pupils, as well as their physical well-being is conditioned no less upon proper sanitary conditions, than upon the excellence of the teaching force.

The growth in population and the development of the school plant to meet this increase between 1883 and 1890 is shown by the following figures:

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1889-90, P. 615.

2-Grand Rapids Daily Democrat, October 9, 1887.

3-Nineteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Grand Rapids: West Michigan Printing Co., 1891. Pp. 56-57.

	<u>1883</u>	<u>1890</u>
Total Enrollment	8892	14,673
Number of Buildings	18	23
Valuation of Buildings	\$ 519,600	\$708,000
Bonded Indebtedness	189,000	211,000

LIBRARY SERVICES

Personnel Problems

In February, 1885, the Board of Education dropped the assistant librarian, Mrs. Lucy Myers, from the staff, on grounds of gross insubordination.¹ In commenting on the trouble at the library between Mrs. Myers and Mrs. Frances Wood, librarian, the newspaper quoted one of the board members as of the opinion that the library needed a good man as librarian. Another member felt that trouble could be avoided by letting the librarian choose her helpers.² In his annual report for 1884-85, President Felker charged the library committee with the responsibility of improving conditions in the library and implied that there was evidence of dissension and laziness in its operation.³

At a meeting of the board on February 20, 1886, Henry J. Carr was appointed librarian at an annual salary of \$1200.⁴ Dr. J. B. Griswold, chairman of the library committee, reported that they had made an extensive search for a librarian, having written to various universities and advertised through the employment division of the American

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1884-85, P. 83.

2-Grand Rapids Daily Democrat, February 21, 1885.

3-Thirteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 17-18.

4-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1885-86, P. 21.

Library Association, where they were told about Carr, a Grand Rapids resident, who had been working as an accountant.¹ This was a good selection, as Carr was a vigorous and intelligent administrator. In his next report, President Felker stated that there had been great improvement in the library under Carr's direction.² Among other things accomplished was the placing in use of several thousand books that had been purchased and allowed to stand for many months in the shipping boxes. On August 20, 1890, the board denied a recommendation of the library committee that Carr's expenses be paid to the meeting of the American Library Association of which he was treasurer.³ At their next meeting, Carr resigned.⁴ He became librarian in St. Joseph, Missouri at a salary of \$1,850 per year. After a few years, he went to Scranton, Pennsylvania, and there served as librarian for 38 years, until his death.

Cataloguing the Library

On July 7, 1888, was tabled a resolution presented by the library committee, asking that a professional cataloguer be employed at a salary of \$100 per month to catalogue the library completely.⁵ The resolution was defeated by a vote of 7-5 on August 4, and then tabled by a vote of 12-0.⁶ In the annual report for 1887-88, Carr made a

1-Grand Rapids Daily Democrat, February 25, 1886.

2-Fourteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 16-17.

3-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1889-90, P. 672.

4-Ibid., P. 675.

5-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1887-88, P. 448.

6-Ibid., P. 453.

strong plea for the employment of a professional cataloguer.¹ On January 5, 1889, the board approved the employment of Miss Lillian Denio of the Columbia University Library as cataloguer at a salary of \$80 per month plus traveling expenses.² It was reported May 3, 1890, that she had completed her work after a period of 13 months.³

Miscellaneous Library Matters

At a meeting of the board of education on February 7, 1885, a petition was presented asking that a Holland department be added to the library and that books in the Dutch language be purchased.⁴ In the petition it was stated that approximately one-fourth of the population of the city were Hollanders, and attention was called to the fact that a German department had previously been established. On March 7, 1885, the board approved the purchase of 275 Dutch books for the library.⁵

On April 17, 1886, teachers were authorized to borrow books for a period of six weeks to be used in their classrooms as a classroom library.⁶ Apparently this service was not extended to teachers in private schools, because on February 2, 1889, a request for the privilege from a teacher at St. Mark's School was denied on the grounds that the library was a public school library.⁷

1-Sixteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 30-32.

2-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1888-89, P. 490.

3-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1889-90, P. 640.

4-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1884-85, P. 74.

5-Ibid., Pp. 90-92.

6-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1885-86, P. 37.

7-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1888-89, P. 499.

In October, 1888, the library was moved to new quarters in the City Hall.¹ The rooms were better than those in the Ledyard Block, but were so small that it was necessary to have the reference and reading room on another floor from the remainder of the library.² Carr reported that the ventilation and lighting also were poor. On January 4, 1890, the board adopted a policy for employment of the library staff and a salary schedule for others than the librarian and assistant librarian, who did not come under its provisions.³

SUMMARY

Much unrest and dissatisfaction with the old ways of doing things existed in Grand Rapids between 1883 and 1890. This showed itself in several ways. Conflicts between labor and management resulted in the first really serious strikes. Organized labor gained considerable recognition as a powerful factor in local politics and other phases of the life of the city. The woman suffrage movement won much support in Grand Rapids and women not only got the right to vote in school elections, but two were elected to serve on the board of education. There was also dissatisfaction with the educational methods of the past and much interest in the new education movement which was gaining nation wide recognition.

1-Seventeenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 21.
 2-Eighteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 28-29.
 3-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1889-90, Pp. 606-607.

Many changes were made in the instructional program because of this dissatisfaction. In the high schools much more emphasis was placed on developing the ability to speak foreign languages; the laboratory method of teaching science was adopted, greater emphasis was placed on the development of the aesthetic side of pupils through improved teaching of drawing, better teaching of reading and literature was made possible through providing needed books.

Lay interest in new educational methods showed itself in the activity of the Grand Rapids Free Kindergarten Association, which, although begun earlier, was active during these years, and finally, in 1889, persuaded the board of education to organize and support two kindergartens as a part of the school system. The teachers showed their interest in newer techniques by the organization of the Froebel Institute and by their whole-hearted support of the Teachers' Institute held in August, 1889.

The decreased emphasis on semi-annual examinations and the consequent relaxation of the rigid promotion policies that had prevailed in the schools were also developments of considerable importance, part of the changed educational philosophy gaining ground in the schools of Grand Rapids. Along with this development came an increased realization of the value of professional training for teachers in the new methods, and the responsibility of the board not only to provide training for local graduates, but also to bring in capable, and well-trained teachers from outside.

Considerable expansion of the central executive authority occurred between 1883 and 1890 and additional personnel were employed

to assist the superintendent with various responsibilities which he had formerly carried alone. Supplies were placed in charge of the janitor at the board of education offices, a clerk was employed to assist the superintendent, a superintendent of construction was employed, a superintendent of janitors was appointed and arrangements were made for a full-time truant officer. All of this additional personnel was needed to meet the increased administrative needs of the rapidly growing school system.

Improvement was made in the percentage of attendance during the years 1883-1890, to which at least three factors contributed: better enforcement of the Compulsory Attendance Law, the threat of the truant school, and the increased holding power of the schools. The services of the library were improved and extended by the employment of a trained librarian, the complete cataloguing of the library, better methods of buying books, and the adoption of a regular employment policy and salary schedule.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE TRIUMPH OF THE NEW EDUCATION MOVEMENT (1890-1906)

As the title of this chapter indicates, the most significant educational development between 1890 and 1906 is the inclusion or acceptance of many features of the New Education Movement in the Grand Rapids Schools. This acceptance was accompanied by a corresponding development of the idea that education is a community responsibility of which the day-school program is only one part. The period therefore is also characterized by increased cooperation among the schools and other groups in the community interested in various phases of cultural and civic improvement. These ideas did not win acceptance without a struggle. The community was in many instances impatient with the progress of the big unwieldy board of education and its decisions, often made on the basis of ward politics and petty graft. The desire of the more thoughtful for a better board of education resulted at the end of this period in a complete re-organization of the board as a group of nine citizens elected at large and the elimination of all but two of the standing committees.

LEGAL BACKGROUND

During 1893 the State Legislature passed two acts amending the basic act on free schools in the city of Grand Rapids. The first

amendment changed the day of the annual school election from the first Monday in September of each year to the first Tuesday in September.¹ The second amendment outlined in greater detail the qualifications of voters, and provided for a special registration of voters for school elections.²

In 1899, at the request of the Grand Rapids Board of Education, the Legislature amended the act of incorporation to enable the board to borrow money to buy a library site or erect a library building provided it was approved by a majority of the voters at a regular or special election.³

On April 2, 1903, the Legislature passed a law providing for the election of a board of library commissioners, to take over from the board of education the management and control of the library and the museum.⁴

On June 6, 1905, the Legislature passed a most important act legalizing the re-organization of the Grand Rapids Board of Education as a body of nine citizens elected at large, replacing the former board of 25 consisting of two members from each ward and the mayor.⁵ The statute bringing about this re-organization was part of a new city charter, and became effective on May 7, 1906, with the first meeting of

1-Public Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1893.
Lansing: Robert Smith & Company, 1893. No. 331.

2-Ibid., No. 406.

3-Public Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1899.
Lansing: Robert Smith Printing Company, 1903. No. 393.

4-Public Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1903.
Lansing: Robert Smith Printing Company, 1903. No. 401.

5-Public Acts of the Legislature of the State of Michigan, 1905.
Lansing: Wynkoop, Hollenbeck, Crawford, Company, 1905. No. 593.

the new board of education elected at the regular city election in April.¹

LIFE IN GRAND RAPIDS

The atmosphere of Grand Rapids changed considerably during the 16 years between 1890 and 1906.² The population grew from 60,000 to approximately 100,000. The logging and sawmill industries disappeared as the timber was cut off, and the furniture and other industries grew in importance, to take their place. The city grew more urban with the electrification of the street cars which had been horse-drawn, a great increase in the use of telephones, and increased circulation of both morning and evening newspapers. To an even greater extent than in the preceding period (1883-1890), development was largely an expansion and stabilization of already existing business concerns and institutions. Many of the businesses became big organizations during this period (1890-1906). The Grand Rapids Furniture Exhibition was organized in 1895, and in 1897 the John Widdicomb Furniture Company was re-organized and expanded to employ 850 men. In 1902, the Herpolsheimer Store was enlarged and Sweet's Hotel became the Pantlind.

1-Thirty-fourth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Grand Rapids: White Printing Co., 1906. P.8.

2-The information for this section was taken from the following list of references:

- Albert Baxter, History of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan.
 Ernest Fisher, History of Grand Rapids and Kent County, Michigan. I, II.
 William J. Etten, A Citizen's History of Grand Rapids, Michigan.
 Franklin Everett, Memorials of the Grand River Valley.
 Charles E. Belknap, The Yesterdays of Grand Rapids.
 Dwight Goss, History of Grand Rapids and Its Industries.

There was less labor trouble than in the decade between 1880 and 1890, although there was a strike of street railway company employees in 1891, and a teamsters' strike in 1904. In 1896, Eugene V. Debs of the American Railroad Union visited the city and spoke to a large group of workmen.

Improvements in keeping with the growth of the city were made in several phases of public service. Mr. and Mrs. C. C. Comstock presented 90 acres of land for fair grounds on the west side of the river at North Park to the West Michigan State Fair Association in 1891 and the street railway company bought the dummy line to North Park from Mr. Comstock, making it a part of the street railway system. In 1892 electric street cars were put into use, and in 1899 the first of the interurban companies was organized to provide electric car service to and from nearby cities. Connection was made with Muskegon in 1902, and with Grand Haven in 1903. Although the coming of the automobiles shortened its period of usefulness, the influence of the service and its convenient hourly schedule was great. It encouraged Grand Rapids people to own cottages on Spring Lake and Lake Michigan. Many business men became regular commuters in the summer months. The interurban service also developed business in Grand Rapids; residents of the area used it for shopping trips to and from the city.

Telephone service grew rapidly in Grand Rapids. By 1893 there were 1,000 telephones in Grand Rapids, when there were less than 7,000 in all of Michigan. In 1895 when some of the Bell Telephone patents ran out, making it possible for independent telephone companies to organize, the Citizens Telephone Company was formed and Grand Rapids

therefore became the first city in the United States to have 500 users of independent telephones. By 1905 Western Union was handling approximately 1,000 messages per day, and had 46 lines leading out of Grand Rapids.

Although Grand Rapids acquired the initial acreage for its park system in 1884, when the first 40 acres of John Ball Park became city property at the death of John Ball, it was not until after 1895 that the real foundations of the park system were laid. In 1895 the city bought 40 acres to add to John Ball Park, and in 1899 Martin Ryerson presented Antoine Campau Park to the city in memory of his grandfather. In 1904, the Grand Rapids Parks and Boulevards Association was formed; it became highly influential during the following years in stimulating the city to obtain additional park acreage and properly develop properties already city-owned. One of the most active workers in this association was Charles A. Garfield, who, with two others, presented Garfield Park to the city in 1906.

In 1892, Police Headquarters was moved to more adequate quarters at its present location and in 1895 some new high-pressure pumps were bought for the pumping station to provide adequate water pressure in the higher parts of the city. Although there were some large factory fires during this period, use of better fire fighting equipment, and good management reduced fire losses notably. In 1897, the total loss for the year was only \$43,264. In 1900, the Municipal Lighting Plant began operation.

In 1900, bursting of the city water reservoir caused about \$100,000 damage, but no deaths. The biggest disaster was, of course, the flood

of 1904, the worst in the history of the city; it caused much damage, especially on the west side of the river. The financial loss suffered by many citizens of Grand Rapids as a result of the flood intensified the negative effects of the financial depression of 1897. In 1905 a big construction project long needed was completed; anti-flood walls were built on both sides of the river.

There was much interest in state politics and also in national politics during 1890-1906. Some Grand Rapids citizens attained positions of great honor and responsibility. In 1894 William Alden Smith was elected to Congress for his first term; he served until 1907. In 1895, Edwin F. Uhl of Grand Rapids was appointed United States Ambassador to Germany. In 1896, William Jennings Bryan visited Grand Rapids and spoke three times to big political meetings of which there were many that year, because of the Free Silver issue. Mr. Bryan reportedly felt a special obligation to Grand Rapids because its delegation had given him loyal and much-needed support at the National Democratic Convention. Grand Rapids was host to the State Republican Convention in 1896, and to the State Democratic Convention in 1897. In 1899, Theodore Roosevelt visited Grand Rapids as Vice-President and, in 1900, William Jennings Bryan again spoke in Grand Rapids. In 1904, both the Republican and Democratic state conventions were held in Grand Rapids. In 1905, Mr. T. J. O'Brien of Grand Rapids was appointed Minister to Denmark.

Grand Rapids continued to be a popular convention city but, although the number of conventions was not so great as during the period 1883-1890, some were national and international in scope. In 1896 the National

Conference of Corrections and Charities met in the city and in 1897 and again in 1899 the National Association of Woman Suffrage Associations met in Grand Rapids. In 1899 the International Y.M.C.A. Convention and the International Conference of Christians met in Grand Rapids.

The newspapers of Grand Rapids consolidated between 1890 and 1906 so that there remained by 1906 only three dailies instead of the five in existence in 1891. During 1891 the Evening Leader was bought by and merged with the Morning Press as was the Eagle in the following year. In 1893 the Morning Press became the Grand Rapids Evening Press; it is now published as the Grand Rapids Press. The name of the Telegram Herald became the present Grand Rapids Herald in 1892. The third daily, the Grand Rapids Democrat, was published as a morning daily until in 1902 it was made an evening daily called The Grand Rapids Evening Post. The name was again changed to the Grand Rapids News and it was continued as an evening daily until in 1922 it ceased publication.

The first extension course from the University of Michigan in Grand Rapids was given in 1892. In 1893, the St. Cecelia Society built its concert hall, which became the center of many of the musical activities of the city. In 1895 the first Shrine of the White Shrine of Jerusalem in Michigan was organized in Grand Rapids. In 1897 Ballington Booth the Commander of the Salvation Army visited Grand Rapids and in 1900 the City Rescue Mission was established by Mel Trotter and became a great influence for good among men and women who could not be reached through the churches. In 1900 the Y.W.C.A. was organized locally and

in 1902 the Grand Rapids Bar Association was formed. In 1899 and 1900 Grand Rapids, because of the large number of Dutch residents, became a center of sympathy for the Boers and meetings and demonstrations were held sponsoring their cause during the Boer War. In 1900 the city made a great occasion of the visit of Admiral and Mrs. George Dewey.

The charities of the city continued to become better organized and their facilities were increased. In 1892, Delos A. Blodgett presented the Clark property to the Children's Home Society, and in 1893 the Kendall family built the Kendall Home for Nurses. In 1893 three Catholic sisters came from Big Rapids to establish the hospital which is now St. Mary's.

The annual picnic of the Old Residents Association, which held its 60th Anniversary in 1893, continued to be one of the big events of the summer. The West Michigan State Fair grew in popularity; 40,000 persons reportedly attended it on one day in 1904. Although the shipment of freight on the river practically ceased after the coming of the railroads, river boats still continued popular for pleasure cruises to Grand Haven. In 1900, the Board of Trade had an excursion on the river and as late as 1905 two steamboats were built to operate between Grand Rapids and Grand Haven. The Lakeside Club on Reeds Lake was opened in 1895, Kent Country Club was organized in 1900 and the Grand Rapids Boat and Canoe Club in 1902.

BOARD OF EDUCATION

Size and Organization

In the school year 1890-91 the number of wards in the city was

increased from eight to ten; the increase automatically increased the number of board members from 17 to 21.¹ The board was again enlarged in 1892 as the number of wards was increased to 12, increasing the size of the board to 25 members. The board continued to have 25 members until 1906-07 when the school act was amended to provide for a board of nine members elected at large.

The number of standing committees went through a somewhat similar development. In 1890-91 there were 10 committees: Teachers, Schools, Textbooks, Library, Ways and Means, Claims and Accounts, Buildings, Apparatus and School Library, Grounds, Supplies. In 1892-93 a committee on special training was appointed and charged with responsibility for kindergartens and manual training. In 1893-94 a committee on stationery supplies was added. In 1895-96 a committee on school savings banks was appointed, and in 1901-02 one on the Kent Scientific Museum was added, making a total of 14. In 1904-05 the number was reduced to five: Schools and Teachers; Buildings and Grounds; Finances; Supplies and Textbooks; Apparatus and School Libraries, and the size of committees also was reduced. When the small board was organized in 1906-07, only two committees, Educational and Business, were appointed.

Struggle to Reduce Size of Board

In 1892 President Blair repeated a recommendation he had made earlier that the board be reduced to six or seven members elected at large, and that the length of term be extended from two to three years.²

1-An area containing nine square miles, 10,000 population, nine schools and 30 school rooms was added at that time.

2-Twentieth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Grand Rapids: Dean Printing and Publishing Co., 1892. P. 6.

In 1895 the movement to reduce the size of the board had assumed such proportions that the board found it necessary to adopt a resolution asking the Legislature to make no change in the number of members.¹

The strong plea for reduction in the size of the board made by Arthur C. Denison, president of the board, in the annual report for 1903-04 is quoted below.²

I am convinced that the most serious condition affecting education in the city is the tendency on the part of many people and on the part of many members of the Board, to let things alone, thinking that they are good enough as they are. It is said that our system is good and suits our needs, and that there is little occasion to compare with other places or to get new ideas in the endeavor to make it better. This is a great mistake. Any one who has served on the Board of Education even one term and thinks that our schools are about right and do not need improvement, must have had his eyes shut.

From the bottom to the top are evidences of the general plan of letting things alone, making no systematic, general plans for future developments, and meeting every exigency as it comes merely with some expedient. Even these exigencies are not met until the trouble is past endurance. There are not more than two or three buildings in the city that have tolerable plumbing and sanitary arrangements. No such conditions would be tolerated in private business; yet in the schools they go on year after year. It has been known for years that bad conditions of light were causing much injury to the eyes but the conditions have not been remedied. Even the action of the Board, taken two years ago, directing that painted blackboards should be discontinued because of the injury to the eyes produced by them, has received little, if any, attention. Fuel sufficient for the season ought to be put into each building during the summer, but many buildings have not the sufficient storage space. This could have been provided years ago, with a small expense in each building, but it has never been done. There have been repeated spasms on the subject of furnishing proper drinking water but no permanent steps have ever been taken. Teachers known to be not as efficient as they should be

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1894-95, P. 43.

2-Thirty-Second Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Grand Rapids: White Printing Co., 1904. Pp. 2-4.

are retained from year to year. So on, over the whole subject. The sense of complacent self-satisfaction, so widely prevalent on the Board, is the worst enemy of the schools of Grand Rapids.

In my judgment the best remedy, and the one most likely to bring better conditions, is the displacing of the present board by a much smaller body. How that body should be chosen, whether by district or at large, or partly in each way, these are subordinate questions. The important thing, I believe, is to have a smaller Board with a longer tenure of office.

There is an immense inertia in a body of twenty-five members and this inertia cannot be overcome by the small number who may happen to be especially familiar with the necessities of any particular situation. One-twenty-fifth of the whole responsibility is such a small fraction that few people will trouble about it very much and consequently the responsibility is nowhere.

I believe that you cannot do a better service to the public schools of Grand Rapids than to co-operate earnestly in the effort so to revise the law as to provide for a Board of such comparatively small membership that there may be a strong sense of responsibility, and of such tenure of office that it may be possible to make systematic plans for a period of years.

In an attempt to overcome the inertia of the large board and meet the criticisms made by Denison, the rules were revised in September, 1904, and only five committees were appointed. A special committee was appointed to consider changes to be made in the School Act and on October 4, 1904, the committee recommended to the board that the number of board members be reduced by electing only one from each ward, but the recommendation was not followed.¹

Secretary and Treasurer

The custom of electing as treasurer one of the officials of the bank selected as the depository for school funds was continued until the charter revision of 1906 when the city treasurer became the treasurer of the board. Although the Legislature had at the request

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1904-05, P. 10.

of the board amended the Act of Incorporation in 1885¹ making it possible to elect a secretary who was not a member of the board, Edward H. Stein continued to be elected annually from the board membership to serve as secretary on a full-time basis until the charter revision, which provided that the secretary was not to be a member of the board.

Petty Graft on Board

Evidence is on record to show that the moral tone of the board was not high in the "90's", and in the first five years of the 20th century, and there were several instances in which members of the board profited as a result of unethical if not actually illegal conduct. On October 5, 1894, an editorial advocated open meetings of board committees and accused the board of illegal dealings with textbook companies. The article also charged that many persons thought board members made a good income from their office although they had no salary.² The following evening (October 6, 1894) a resolution which would require that any bids made to a committee of the board by a company one of whose members was serving on the committee must be submitted unopened to the board as a whole, was defeated by a vote of 16-7.³ Henry J. Felker, president of the board, criticized the practice of employing or purchasing materials from board members, in the annual report for 1894-95 which stated that the practice was

1-Local Acts of 1885, No. 381

2-Grand Rapids Herald, October 5, 1894.

3-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1894-95, P. 11.

frequently criticized by other Grand Rapids citizens. His statement is quoted below.¹

In my report of 1886, above referred to, I used the following language: 'I would also suggest that the Board, by resolution or otherwise, take some steps toward prohibiting any person, while a member of the Board, to be employed under pay from the Board. While no harm may be done if members are employed under pay, yet it is a doubtful policy and should be discountenanced.' I now renew the above suggestion and would call the Board's attention to that part of Section 7 of the act establishing this Board, which reads as follows: 'No school trustee, shall receive any compensation for his services.' I have frequently had the remark made to me by men in good standing in this city that they could not help but notice that at nearly every meeting of this Board that the report of the Committee on Claims and Accounts contained the names of a large number of members who were trustees at the time of such report. While I do not believe that any wrong has been done or that any advantage has been taken, yet as I stated nine years ago, 'it is a doubtful policy and should be discontinued.'

On July 11, 1896 the board adopted the report of a committee censuring one of the members for having accepted a commission from the agent for the property purchased for the site of the Buchanan School. The report stated that, in the belief of the committee, acceptance of the commission was a serious breach of ethics but was not evil in intent.² The following month a resolution was adopted which provided that bids for materials or supplies would not be accepted from board members.³ On March 1, 1904, the board adopted a much stronger resolution which forbade the purchase of anything from a firm in which any board member had a financial interest.⁴

1-Twenty-Third Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Grand Rapids: Grand Rapids Printing Co., 1895. Pp. 12-13.

2-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1895-96, P. 98.

3-Ibid., P. 99.

4-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1903-04, P. 74.

Textbook Scandals

At a meeting of the board on September 9, 1899, a communication was read from the retiring president, John Rowson, in which he vetoed the adoption of the Milne Arithmetics which had been voted 13 to 8 at the meeting of September 6.¹ Rowson's veto was based on cost to the taxpayers and school patrons, and the fact that the only change desired by the superintendent was to introduce a textbook for the third and fourth grades only.² He said nothing in his veto message about having been offered money to refrain from vetoing the adoption, but a newspaper article of September 10 charged that that had been the case. He was reported to have said that some of the board members supporting the book were doing so from dishonorable motives.³ At a meeting of the board on October 7 a communication was presented from the American Book Company in which the company said that it had come to their attention that Rowson had said that he had been offered a sum of money if he would refrain from vetoing the Milne Arithmetic adoption.⁴ The letter denied that anyone authorized to act for them had made such an offer and asked that a complete investigation be made. A committee of three board members was appointed to conduct such an investigation.

At the meeting of November 4, 1899, the committee was divided, and presented majority and minority reports.⁵ The majority report

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1898-99, P. 109.
 2-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1899-00, Pp. 1-3.
 3-Grand Rapids Herald, September 10, 1899.
 4-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1899-00, Pp. 7-8.
 5-Ibid., Pp. 19-26.

signed by Edwin F. Sweet and James A. Hunt, said that M. L. Dunham, an attorney, was employed by the American Book Company to attempt to get Rowson to refrain from vetoing the adoption of their book and that Dunham was acting as their agent. The American Book Company placed at Attorney Dunham's disposal \$250 provided he could influence Rowson to withhold his veto, said the majority report, and out of this amount Dunham thought he was to take \$100 or \$150 and give it to Rowson if he (Dunham) wanted to. The report said the talk with Dunham resulted in Rowson understanding that he could have money if he withheld his veto. The report ended with the statement that they found the American Book Company guilty of attempting to influence improperly the action of Rowson as president of the board.

The minority report of Henry E. Locher said he believed that the money offered to Dunham was a fee for his services and that Dunham exceeded his authority if he offered any part of it to Rowson as a bribe. The minority report condemned the practice of employing attorneys and others by book publishers to lobby for their books, but felt that the practice was general and that no actual attempted bribery could be proved in this case. Locher also reported that Trustee J. E. Blandford had stated that William White, agent of the American Book Company, had called on Blandford to induce him to come in from his cottage at Macatawa Beach for the board meeting if he was favorable to the Milne Arithmetic and had led him to believe that he (Blandford) could have \$25 if he would vote for that book. White denied this offer. Blandford also stated that George W. DeJonge had come to him in the interest of the Milne Arithmetic and

had said to him, "stick to the Milne book and there will be fifty in it." DeJonge denied this, but it was admitted by everyone that White did give Blandford \$5 for his expenses to Grand Rapids and return to attend the meeting and vote for the Milne Arithmetic. Blandford was reported to have returned \$3.25, the unused balance. The minority report was adopted by a vote of 15 to 7.

At the meeting on December 2, 1893, three resolutions were adopted dealing with the relationship of the board to the American Book Company.¹ The first one stated that because the minority report adopted at the last preceding meeting did not express disapproval of the company having paid the expenses of one of the board members from Macatawa to Grand Rapids and return, it was the sense of the board that this act merited severe condemnation. The second resolution stated that because the report previously adopted made no statement about the assertion of Blandford that he was offered a bribe by an agent of the American Book Company, the board in this second resolution wished to express its unqualified confidence in Blandford's testimony. The third resolution asked the prosecuting attorney to conduct a complete investigation of the official conduct of members of the board.

At the next meeting of the board on January 6, 1900, the prosecuting attorney sent a communication to the board in which he stated that it was not within his jurisdiction to investigate the actions of the board of education or of individual members, unless someone filed

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1899-1900. Pp. 35-36.

a formal complaint of bribery or instituted criminal action.¹ He also said that, although the conduct of the American Book Company was unjustifiable and reprehensible, he saw no evidence on which to base criminal action. At this same meeting the board appropriated \$700 with which to buy the Milne Arithmetic for the free use of pupils in grades 3, 4 and 5 by a vote of 13 to 8.² Community opposition was spontaneous and quick; a petition was immediately circulated condemning the action of the board and requesting President Verdier to veto the action. The Evening Press of January 8, 1900 was highly critical of the decision of the board and listed the names of all the members who had voted favorably on every action involving the American Book Company. The article also stated that Superintendent Hathaway preferred either one of two other books to the Milne Arithmetic. In the same issue, the editor said that he would rather have the children get along without arithmetics than to have them see "the crookedness behind the selection of this one." The following day he wrote another editorial complimenting the citizens of the city on their widespread and immediate denunciation of the shady dealings of the American Book Company and complimenting Verdier on his veto.³

At the next meeting of the board on February 3, Verdier's veto was accepted and placed on file.⁴ The day before the meeting, in an article entitled, "Agents Hover About" one of the newspapers stated that several of the representatives of book companies were

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1899-1900, Pp. 37-39.

2-Ibid., Pp. 45-46.

3-Evening Press, January 9, 1900.

4-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1899-1900, P. 47.

in town working on the arithmetic adoption.¹ It said that a book published by Silver, Burdette & Company was Superintendent Hathaway's choice, but that the American Book Company had enough votes to prevent the adoption of any other book than theirs but not enough to override the veto. The strategy of the American Book Company was to keep from having another book adopted, and then to get theirs adopted after the election in the fall. Superintendent Hathaway in his last annual report, dated July 2, 1900, was critical of the method of selecting textbooks; he made some complete recommendations, quoted below in full.²

The history of Grand Rapids during the past ten years gives abundant proof that there should be an immediate and thorough revision of the rules governing the adoption of text-books in this city. During the period referred to every important adoption of text-books (that is, important from a financial standpoint) has been attended with more or less criticism bordering upon scandal. Witness the so-called text-book fights over the introduction of Wentworth's Arithmetic, the Frye Geography and the recent attempt to change arithmetics. So obnoxious has the present system become that the influence of book concerns and their agents is directly felt in the election of school trustees, the selection of the officers of the Board of Education, the appointment of the board officials, the choice of superintendents and even the selection of a teaching corps.

Under the existing rules, the educational force of the city has absolutely nothing to say concerning the selection of text-books. The entire matter is left to the committee and board which may be correctly termed purely accidental. Trustees who may possibly never have given any attention to the study of text-books are expected to decide upon the respective merits of the various books presented. From their decision there is no appeal. With as large a board as that in Grand Rapids there is always ample opportunity for unscrupulous or designing book agents to secure support by methods which are open to the greatest criticism. The educational head of the schools has little opportunity to impress his views upon the committee or Board of Education unless he is willing to resort

1-Evening Press, February 2, 1900.

2-Twenty-eighth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Grand Rapids: West Michigan Printing Co., 1900. Pp. 61-64.

to similar methods. In the book contests the pressure which is brought upon teachers, principals and the superintendent to make them favor one book or another is sometimes almost unbearable. Repeatedly have teachers and principals come to me with the statement that if they expressed their honest views they would be in fear of losing their positions.

Such conditions demand a radical change. In my opinion a new plan should embody the following propositions:

1. With reference to the books used below the High School. The principals of ward schools should specify by secret ballot their opinion upon the advisability of continuing in use any given text-book. Their decision should be final unless vetoed by the Superintendent, in which case they should have the privilege of passing the question over his veto by a two-thirds vote.
2. After the principals shall have determined upon the advisability of changing a book it should be the duty of the Superintendent of Schools, the assistant Superintendent and a principal of an eighth grade building selected by the Board of Education to nominate a book or books for the consideration of the committee on text-books.
3. The committee on text-books should have authority to approve or disapprove the nominations made by the previously mentioned persons, but should not have authority to substitute a new text-book in place of the one thus nominated.
4. The Superintendent of Schools, the principal of the Central High School and the principal of the Union School should nominate all High School text-books for consideration to the committee on text-books.
5. The Board of Education should have authority to approve or reject the report of the committee on text-books after that report shall have laid on the table thirty days; but shall not have the authority to substitute another book in the place of the one recommended.

The advantages of the proposed plan are as follows:

1. The actual value of a book in use is determined by the person most conversant with the real merits of the case. As there is a supervising principal in each building who gives exclusive attention to the actual progress of the classes, these people are better able to pass upon the merits of any book now in use than any other persons connected with the school system.
2. The nomination of text-books is placed in the hands of persons who by long training and hard study of existing conditions are best able to determine the genuine worth of text-books. The merits of text-books should not be determined by novices or politicians.
3. The committee on text-books has the privilege, in its private meetings to reject nominations if they think improper influences have been brought to bear upon the nominating committee.

4. The Board of Education, after the lapse of a full month, in which any improper transactions may come to light, has the privilege of placing its final seal of approval or disapproval upon the preceding transactions.

5. While the above plan avoids "one man power" it centralizes responsibility upon a few persons whose definite recommendation can always be ascertained. It, moreover, gives the Board of Education as representatives of the people the privilege of protecting the rights of the citizens.

Some such plan as this would, in my judgment, do away with the unpleasant features at present connected with the adoption of the text-books in the public schools of this city.

About two months later on September 1, 1900 the Board adopted a resolution setting up a procedure substantially as recommended by Superintendent Hathaway.¹

More textbook troubles developed in 1904 and 1905 over the adoption of a geography book. In October a resolution was proposed and tabled which recommended that books of the American Book Company not be considered for adoption.² The following month this resolution and two substitutes were considered, and one was finally adopted which recommended that all business relations be discontinued with companies that were known to have interfered with the election of board members or had attempted to get business by offering bribes to members or by exerting any corrupt influence. The resolution placed the American Book Company on the unsatisfactory list and provided that other companies be placed there whenever shady business practices were discovered.³ At the January meeting in 1905, the board voted 15-9 against suspending the rules to hear a report on geographies from

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1899-1900, P. 108.

2-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1904-05, P. 22.

3-Ibid. Pp. 31-32.

Superintendent Elson.¹ In the meeting on February 8, 1905, the committee on textbooks reported that matters were deadlocked because the superintendent recommended the Frye Geography published by Ginn and Company, the committee favored another one, and they could only adopt books that he recommended.² The following month Superintendent Elson recommended three geographies in the order of his choice, with the Frye Geography first, in an attempt to break the deadlock.³ The matter was tabled at this meeting, but on April 4, 1905, the Frye Geography was finally adopted by a vote of 14 to 7.⁴

On February 8, 1906, a special committee that had been appointed to investigate the charge of Trustee Kriebel that the American Book Company had offered to pay his election expenses reported that William White, agent of the American Book Company, had placed \$10 in the hands of John Joldersma, a former member of the board, for the purpose of paying Trustee Kriebel's expenses and that Trustee Kriebel had refused to accept the money.⁵ The committee also reported that White had stated that he had paid the election expenses of J. Verdier when Verdier was a candidate for re-election. Verdier denied this under oath, and the committee included the information with the statement that it considered White's action as prompted by malice because of Verdier's veto of the adoption of the Milne Arithmetic when Verdier was president of the board. At the meeting on March 6, 1906,

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1904-05, P. 53.

2-Ibid., P. 66.

3-Ibid., Pp. 75-76.

4-Ibid., Pp. 90-91.

5-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1905-06, Pp. 231-233.

were adopted the following resolutions, which seem to have ended the controversy and discussion about the business ethics and practice of text-book companies.¹

Whereas, the special committee appointed to investigate the charge made by Trustee Kriebel against the American Book Company, has presented a unanimous report finding said company guilty of an attempt to corruptly interfere in the election of a member of this board, and;

Whereas, said committee also found that Mr. White an agent of said company has slandered Mr. J. A. S. Verdier, one of our most esteemed citizens by making statements concerning him which were absolutely false and were apparently prompted by malice.

Therefore be it resolved, that it is the sense of this board.

First, that said White and the American Book Company which employed him as its agent, deserve the condemnation and censure of this board.

Second, that business relations with the American Book Company ought to be discontinued so far as compatible with the interest of the city schools.

Third, that this should be the settled policy of this board and its successors and should apply with equal force to all corporations, firms and individuals hereafter found guilty of similar practices or corrupt methods of any kind.

Whereas the first duty of the members of this Board is to advance the interests of the pupils of the public schools of the city so as to develop them morally and intellectually.

Resolved, that this Board denounces in the severest terms all forms of immorality and all shades of dishonesty.

Resolved, that the Board of Education shall furnish to the Public Schools the best of everything that is within their reach according to circumstances such as the best persons for Superintendents, Principals, Teachers and Janitors and that they shall furnish the best text-books and supplies, setting aside personalities.

Resolved, that it is the sense of this Board when purchases are made and contracts let that preference shall always be given to persons and firms of high moral standing, and those with strict business integrity.

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1905-06, Pp. 249-250.

EXECUTIVE ORGANIZATION

Administration of W. W. Chalmers

Although there was long and bitter controversy about his appointment, Chalmers soon convinced the people of Grand Rapids that he was a capable administrator; he served continuously as superintendent for eight years through a period of great physical growth and expansion, with a large, unwieldy, ward-elected board of education. He was an aggressive administrator; his annual reports and recommendations to the board indicate that he was progressive and a strong advocate of the newer methods and philosophy of education. Miss Agnes McIntyre, who had been clerk to the superintendent and acting superintendent from Superintendent Kendall's resignation to Chalmers' assuming the superintendency, became assistant superintendent and served until her sudden death in the summer of 1897. She was succeeded by Mrs. Therese Townsend.

A crisis developed in the summer of 1897 over the failure of the board to re-appoint Miss Florence Cromwell, principal of the East Bridge Street School. On June 19, the following action was taken at the board meeting:¹

By Trustee Turner:

Whereas, certain charges have been preferred against Miss Florence A. Cromwell, one of the teachers now in the employ of this board, and whereas such charges, whether true or untrue reflect upon her character as a woman and in view of the fact that public censure seems to rest on the superintendent and some members of the board for not further investigating the matter; then be it

Resolved, That the president be requested to assemble this board as a committee of the whole, as early as possible to investigate all facts bearing upon the case that may be presented.

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1896-97, P. 80.

Trustee Turner moved that the resolution be adopted.
Trustee Leffingwell moved as an amendment that it be laid on the table until such time as Miss Cromwell shall ask for an investigation.

About one week later one of the newspapers printed a letter from Mr. Miram Fletcher, attorney and cousin of Miss Cromwell, in which he accused Superintendent Chalmers with having told Miss Cromwell that she must withdraw her application for re-appointment or a charge would be made against her, affecting her moral character.¹ At the meeting on July 3, 1897, the teachers committee reported at length and in detail on the history of the events leading up to their refusal to re-appoint her.² The report stated that they had been considering this action for several years and that there was no connection between their action and the "rumors" that had been circulated about Miss Cromwell, and that they had tried to protect her name. Letters from Miss Cromwell to Chalmers were submitted as evidence that she had known for some time that her work had been criticized by many people.

On July 13, the board met as a committee of the whole to discuss the Fletcher charges against Superintendent Chalmers. Although the Proceedings of the Board contain very little information about the meeting, it was reported quite fully in the newspapers the following day.³ The newspapers said that Fletcher and Wanty, attorneys for Miss Cromwell, had wanted the case discussed in open meeting with much fanfare and would not permit their witnesses to speak unless they (Fletcher and Wanty) conducted the investigation. The board

1-Grand Rapids Herald, June 27, 1897.

2-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1896-97, Pp. 81-86.

3-Grand Rapids Herald, July 14, 1897.

would not permit this; it insisted on carrying on the hearing in its own way. The board members felt that the attorneys were in reality trying to block the investigation and to give the impression that the board would not hold one. The board invited Miss Cromwell to appear before it, accompanied by Attorney Wanty provided the board conducted the investigation, but he would not permit her to come unless he could examine the witnesses. At the end of two and a half hours of discussion, the board voted unanimously that the charges were not sustained; Superintendent Chalmers was exonerated.¹ The following day the Grand Rapids Herald contained an editorial which stated that in the opinion of the editor the whole mess should not have occurred, and that all Miss Cromwell's friends had gained was to besmirch her name. The editorial stated that her attorney, Wanty, had announced in public meeting the basis for the previously unknown rumor, and that it looked like a plain case of malice against Superintendent Chalmers on the part of Fletcher. In his annual report for that year, Chalmers thanked the board for their loyal support, "under fire as well as during peace".²

The following year there was again criticism of his administration, and when his contract came up for renewal in the May meeting of the board some of the members were opposed to his re-employment.³ Trustee John Rowson re-nominated him with a speech of approval and

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1896-97, P. 93.

2-Twenty-Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Grand Rapids: Grand Rapids Printing Co., 1897. P. 98.

3-Grand Rapids Herald, May 8, 1898.

Trustee D. W. Tower replied with a speech in which he criticized Chalmers severely. He said that Chalmers was lacking in the proper education for the job and was neither truthful nor reliable; that he had withheld street-car tickets from cadet teachers contrary to the instructions of the board, that he had replaced a teacher when the committee had instructed him to divide her work among other teachers, and had then lied about the instructions he had received. When the vote was taken he was re-employed, 17-7. The newspaper reporter stated that the vote was an effective refutation of the slanders and criticism circulated in the city for the preceding three months. A month later Chalmers announced that he would accept the superintendency of the Toledo (O) schools offered him by unanimous vote of the Toledo board.¹ He also said that one of the reasons he liked the prospect of going to Toledo was the opportunity it presented to run the schools without political interference. Mayor George R. Perry took a parting shot at him by making public a wire he had sent to the Toledo Blade in response to a request for information about Chalmers. The Mayor stated in the telegram that Chalmers had not been a success in Grand Rapids and that he (the Mayor) and six other members of the board had voted against his re-appointment. Interviewed, Chalmers said that the telegram would have no effect on the situation in Toledo, because he had already told them of the mayor's opposition.

Administration of F. R. Hathaway

F. R. Hathaway, superintendent of schools in Flint, was elected superintendent of the Grand Rapids schools at a special meeting on

1-Grand Rapids Herald. June 2, 1898.

August 5, 1898, from a list of five candidates submitted by the committee on the selection of a superintendent. W. H. Elson, who succeeded Hathaway, was one of the five on the list.¹ Hathaway resigned in March, 1900, to become manager of the Alma Beet Sugar Company. It was reported that his resignation came as a great surprise to the board which credited him with having brought about more changes than any preceding superintendent in the same length of time.² He was credited with having departmentalized the high school, having obtained the recognition of the teachers' training school, developed a normal course in the high school, systematized the reading instruction, made the teaching of civil government and history compulsory in the high school, and had been responsible for bringing three big state conventions of teachers to Grand Rapids. At the meeting on April 7, 1900, the board adopted a resolution commending Hathaway's service as superintendent, and a committee was appointed to select his successor.³

Administration of W. H. Elson

Many candidates applied for the superintendency. Among them were: W. H. Elson of West Superior, Wis.; O. E. Latham of Kalamazoo, Mich.; F. W. Cooley of Calumet, Mich.; W. H. Hershman of New Albany, Ind.; James Simmons of Stevens Point, Wis.; James A. Tormey of Winona, Minn.; J. H. Snyder of Tiffin, O.; Henry Ward Foster of Ithaca, N.Y. and David McKenzie of Muskegon.⁴

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1897-98, P. 89.

2-Evening Press, March 8, 1890.

3-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1899-1900, P. 69.

4-Evening Press, May 8, 1900.

It was reported that W. W. Chalmers, superintendent in Toledo, was in town attending the Michigan Superintendents' Convention and working to get his brother James elected superintendent.¹ A few days later one of the newspapers reported that W. W. Chalmers and his friends were working hard to get James Chalmers appointed, and that a caucus was held the preceding evening at which 13 votes were promised for him. He was at that time pastor of a church in Toledo, but had been principal in Sparta and county school commissioner.² The following day it was reported that his support was wavering, and that another meeting of his friends had been scheduled for that evening.³ On the day of the meeting at which the decision was made it was announced that three members of the Chalmers family were in town, working to get James Chalmers elected, and although he was not in the list of five being recommended by the committee, several board members were pledged to vote for him if a deadlock developed.⁴ The deadlock that had been hoped for by the supporters of Chalmers did not develop, and the board therefore appointed W. H. Elson by a unanimous vote on May 23, 1900, from the following five names submitted by the committee: W. H. Elson, Ortine Latham, James A. Tormey, Charles H. Gordon and James W. Simmons.⁵

After six years Elson presented his resignation to the board at a meeting on May 1, 1906, and asked that it be made effective on May

1-Evening Press, May 9, 1890.

2-Ibid., May 11, 1890.

3-Ibid., May 12, 1900.

4-Ibid., May 23, 1900.

5-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1899-1900, P. 77.

14, so that he could take up his duties as superintendent of schools in Cleveland, Ohio.¹ At the same meeting (May 1, 1906) a resolution was adopted commending his work in Grand Rapids, and listing the accomplishments of his administration. This resolution although somewhat eulogistic in nature is quoted below.²

To the Honorable Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids:

Your special Committee, appointed to draft resolutions on the resignation of Superintendent Elson, respectfully present the following:

Whereas — Superintendent William H. Elson has offered his resignation as Superintendent of our city schools, to take effect May 14 to accept the similar position in the schools of Cleveland, Ohio.

Resolved — First, that in accepting his resignation we greatly regret the loss of his valuable services, recognizing his worth to our schools, to society and to the city, yet it is our duty to subordinate our own interests and desires to his opportunity of enlarged duties, increased responsibilities and larger sphere of usefulness and we congratulate the large commercial city of Cleveland in securing one of the ablest and most distinguished educators in the nation for the head of their schools.

Resolved — Second, that we greatly appreciate his services during his six years of administration among us. He has not only maintained the high standard of our schools, but has widened their scope, increased and enlarged their fields of usefulness; evening schools have been opened, kindergartens multiplied, training vacation schools inaugurated, some of the schools have been made social centers, and school extension lectures, free to the various neighborhoods, have been instituted, circulating libraries from the city library have been furnished, a system of medical inspection and trained nurses have been established, the commercial course has been greatly expanded and the play grounds have been beautified.

His administration has been progressive, advanced, systematic and of the highest standard of excellence.

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1905-1906, P. 268.
2-Ibid., P. 281.

Resolved — Third, that these resolutions be made a part of our records and that a copy be engrossed by the Secretary and presented to Superintendent W. H. Elson.

Respectfully submitted,
 Chas. E. Kriebel,
 John A. McColl,
 Elisha S. Sevensma,
 Cyrus E. Perkins,
 President
 Ed. H. Stein,
 Secretary.

Mrs. Therese Townsend, assistant superintendent, was appointed acting superintendent until later in the summer when William A. Greeson of the Lewis Institute in Chicago, formerly principal of the Central High School in Grand Rapids, was appointed superintendent, by the new board.¹

Superintendent of Construction and Janitors

At a meeting on July 1, 1893, the board re-appointed A. S. Paul, superintendent of janitors, but one of the members questioned the appointment and suggested that the positions of superintendent of janitors and of construction be combined.² On July 7, 1894, the board did combine the two positions as a method of retrenchment as no new buildings were planned for the coming year.³ To Joseph T. Barnaby, who had been superintendent of construction, was given the responsibility for the two jobs; he was complimented at the end of the year by Superintendent Chalmers for his efficiency and co-operation.⁴

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1906-07, P. 63.

2-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1892-93, P. 96.

3-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1893-94, P. 74.

4-Twenty-Third Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 102.

On April 4, 1896, a communication was presented to the board from the Ladies' Literary Club in which it was stated that a committee from that organization had examined the boys' and girls' lavatories in 12 of the school buildings which they considered representative, and that they considered them very unsanitary, and the lack of partitions in them as conducive to immorality. In this communication they also stated that it was hoped that the board would recognize the welfare of the children as more important than its consideration of "ignorant and prejudiced janitors."¹ On July 11, 1896, the board voted 11-9 not to install partitions over the boys urinals as requested by the Ladies' Literary Club.² On January 4, 1898, the board appointed George I. Davidson to replace Barnaby by a vote of 14-8.³ Davidson resigned on July 5, 1904.⁴ At a meeting on August 15 of the same year, the duties of the superintendent of construction and janitors were added to those of E. H. Church, supply clerk.⁵ On June 6, 1905, the committee on buildings and grounds presented a majority report asking that A. M. Nichols be appointed superintendent of buildings and janitors and a minority report recommending the appointment of Henry H. Leffingwell, one of the members of the board. It was decided to vote by secret ballot; Leffingwell was thereby elected by a vote of 13-8.⁶ On October 3,

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1895-96, P. 56.

2-Ibid., P. 88.

3-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1897-98, P. 30.

4-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1903-04, P. 111.

5-Ibid., P. 138.

6-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1904-05, P. 108.

1905, E. G. Williams was employed to take charge of the new mechanical equipment then being installed in the Central High School.¹ This was the first record of the appointment of a specialized janitor or "engineer" in the Grand Rapids Schools.

Principals at Central and Union

On June 4, 1892, the old high school building was named the Central Grammar School and William A. Greeson, high school principal, was made principal of both buildings.² Greeson resigned at the end of the school year 1895-96. Albert J. Volland from Racine, Wisconsin became principal in September, 1896. The board was divided on Volland's appointment, some of the members having preferred to promote Orr Schurtz to this position from the principalship at Union.³

On March 6, 1897, the board approved the employment of clerks in the offices at Central High School and Union.⁴ On June 2, 1890, Mrs. Florence Milner was appointed preceptress at the high school, a position which seems to have been the equivalent of an assistant principalship.⁵ Orr Schurtz remained as principal at Union through the school year 1896-97, and was succeeded by Albert Jennings in September, 1897.

Principal of Training School

On July 11, 1893, Mrs. Josephine Goss, nee Josephine Ahnefeldt, who was principal of the Training School, sent to the board a letter

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1905-06, Pp. 164-165.

2-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1891-92, Pp. 77-78.

3-Grand Rapids Herald, June 7, 1896.

4-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1896-97, P. 46.

5-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1899-00, P. 84.

of resignation in which she said that her salary of \$900 was not sufficient for so difficult a job.¹ She said further that she was disappointed because as principal she had dreamed of making the Grand Rapids Training School the best in the state. Mrs. Goss later served for several years as a member of the board of education. Miss Mary E. Doyle was appointed her successor at the same salary, \$900, but evidently did not remain in the principalship because the annual report of the training school for the school year 1893-94 was signed by Miss Emma Palmer as principal.² On February 3, 1900, the board of education accepted Miss Palmer's resignation and passed a resolution stating that they were doing so at her urgent request, and that it was no reflection on her work.³

Supply Clerk

The arrangement whereby Edwin H. Church, janitor in the board of education offices, bought supplies and sold them through the principals of the schools was changed by resolution of the board on July 1, 1893, when it was voted to provide all stationery supplies free.⁴ On June 1, 1895, Church was appointed supply clerk at a salary of \$75 per month, but was also to continue his work as janitor in the offices of the board.⁵ On April 1, 1899, he was relieved of his janitorial work to devote full time to his duties as supply clerk.⁶

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1892-93, P. 99.

2-Twenty-Third Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 98.

3-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1899-00, Pp. 55-56.

4-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1892-93, P. 89.

5-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1894-95, P. 61.

6-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1898-99, P. 62.

On October 7, 1902, a resolution was presented asking that a committee be appointed to study the possibility of combining the positions of secretary and supply clerk. The resolution was tabled by a vote of 11-9.¹ At the next meeting, the resolution was passed by a vote of 14-8, and the committee was appointed.² At the meeting on January 6, 1903, the special committee reported at considerable length recommending that a secretary be appointed who was not a member of the board and that an assistant be given to him to help in the work of the combined position.³ This recommendation was not followed. Church continued as supply clerk and Stein as secretary until the re-organization after the election of the smaller board of education in 1906 when Thomas D. Perry was appointed secretary and business manager.

INSTRUCTION AND CURRICULUM

Kindergarten Expansion

Although at the end of Superintendent Kendall's administration there were kindergartens in only the Grandville Avenue and Henry Schools, there was a great deal of public interest in the kindergarten movement which carried over into this period and eventually resulted in their inclusion in the school program.

Evidence of this public interest is found in the Proceedings

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1902-03, P. 13.

2-Ibid., P. 30.

3-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1902-03, Pp. 48-49.

of the Board of Education for their meeting of February 7, 1891, when in response to a petition from the Rev. Campbell Fair and 203 others, the committee on schools stated that the opening of more kindergarten rooms would be impractical at that time because of crowding.¹ The committee expressed sympathy with the request, and called attention to the fact that the first grade rooms in every building in the city had been equipped with supplies for giving instruction based on kindergarten methods. In his annual report for that year, James Blair, president of the board, urged the establishment of kindergartens in all of the schools in the city.² In the same report, Superintendent Chalmers made a strong plea for kindergarten methods; he closed with the suggestion that young ladies should be trained for the work so that kindergartens could be opened under proper supervision as soon as rooms could be provided.³ His next annual report contained the statement quoted below.⁴

Encouraged by your resolution and appropriation our primary teachers have with commendable zeal, entered upon the study of the kindergarten. Over one hundred of our teachers took advantage of the opportunity offered by the local association, of taking an elementary course in kindergarten instruction under very competent tuition.

We are not keeping pace with public sentiment in this very important department of the public school. In 1873 the first kindergarten was organized in this city. The growth has been steadily advancing since that time until today there are ten kindergartens. Only three of these are under the control of the Board of Education. The growth of public sentiment in favor of

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1890-91, Pp. 721-22.

2-Nineteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 6.

3-Ibid., Pp. 61-63.

4-Twentieth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 70-71.

kindergarten instruction in this city has been of a fungus growth, but has been slow and healthful.

At the last session of the State legislature a law was passed authorizing boards of education to receive pupils in public school kindergartens at the age of four years. I would recommend that as fast as practicable kindergartens be opened in our primary schools, and especially in those districts where a large portion of the population is foreign. In many of our schools whole rooms of beginners come to school before they can understand the English language. From one to two years are consumed in teaching these children the English language, and teaching them the proper use of their hands and eyes. These are the children who can ill afford to lose this time. They must leave school as soon as they are old enough to assist a struggling father to provide for a large family. If these children could be put under the care of a trained kindergartener at the age of four years, at least one more year of the course could be given them than under the present arrangement. We have had a practical illustration of how anxious our citizens are to avail themselves of the advantages of the kindergarten. As soon as the present kindergarten law became operative we had thirty-four four-year-olds knocking for admission at the Grandville Avenue kindergarten.

He followed that statement with a strong plea for the "New Education" in his third annual report, in which he repeated his request for the early establishment of kindergartens in all of the schools of the city, especially those in parts of the city where a large portion of the population was foreign.¹

The persistence of Superintendent Chalmers and the other promoters of kindergartens eventually won recognition and support. At a meeting on September 22, 1893, the board of education voted to move the wooden building on the high school grounds, formerly used as a laboratory, to the southeast corner of the grounds and make it available for the use of the Grand Rapids Kindergarten Association in appreciation of the services rendered by the association.² In his

1-Twenty-First Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Grand Rapids: The Democrat, Job Department, 1893. Pp. 83-87.

2-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1893-94, P. 5.

annual report for 1893-94, E. B. Fisher, president of the board, called attention to a strong public demand for more kindergartens, and also to the establishment of another kindergarten in the Diamond School.¹ Superintendent Chalmers also referred to the new kindergarten in his report, and called attention to the fact that it was so popular with the patrons of the district that it was necessary to place on half-days the 64 pupils enrolled.² Chalmers also called attention to the fact that the instruction of these pupils had cost the city nothing, but recommended that a second-year cadet be employed for the following year to assist the teacher supplied by the Kindergarten Association, that teachers be provided for kindergartens in the South Division and Sibley Street Schools and rooms be made available in those buildings.³

Three years later, on June 5, 1897, the committee on schools reported to the board that there were still only seven kindergartens in the schools, all running double sessions.⁴ On August 7, 1897, the board approved a resolution criticizing some of the methods in use in the schools, and asking that the committee on schools present a revised plan in time for adoption during the coming school year.⁵ Two weeks later the committee reported recommending that kindergarten

1-Twenty-second Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Grand Rapids: Martin and Wurzburg, 1894, P. 11.

2-Ibid., Pp. 96-97.

3-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1894-95, P. 17.

4-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1896-97, Pp. 72-73.

5-Ibid., Pp. 98-99.

work be dropped from the beginners grade in those buildings where it had been taught as a substitute for the lack of kindergartens.¹

In his annual report for 1897-98, Thomas D. Bradfield, president of the board, reported that three kindergartens, each of which had two sets of pupils, had been added during the year, making a total of 18.² On October 2, 1897, the committee on schools, in answer to a petition asking that three more kindergartens be established, said that their establishment was impossible, but recommended that money be placed in the budget for the following year to establish kindergartens in all of the schools in the city.³

In his last annual report, Superintendent Hathaway called attention to action taken by the board the preceding March, which obligated them to establish a kindergarten in place of the beginners grade in any elementary school on receipt of a petition signed by 40 parents of children under seven years of age.⁴ He said that 14 kindergartens had been added under this provision, making a total of 28 and that only four or five buildings remained where they could still be introduced. He also called attention to the employment of Miss Bertha Bradford in September 1900, as supervisor of kindergartens.

In his first annual report, Superintendent Elson called attention to the fact that in April, 1901, the International Kindergarten Union

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1896-97, P. 102.

2-Twenty-Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Grand Rapids: West Michigan Printing Co., 1898. P. 5.

3-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1897-98, P. 15.

4-Twenty-Eighth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 48.

had held its convention at Chicago, and partly because the board of education had allowed teachers to attend without loss of time, Grand Rapids had the distinction of having the largest delegation at the meeting.¹

It can be assumed that the struggle for the establishment of kindergartens in Grand Rapids was finally won in 1901, and succeeding annual reports of the superintendent concern themselves with improved methods of instruction and better training for kindergarten teachers rather than the need for additional kindergartens.

Struggle for Manual Training

During much of the time that the friends of the kindergarten were working for their inclusion in the school system, there was also agitation for manual training. On May 2, 1891, a communication from the Grand Rapids Board of Trade requesting the establishment of manual training schools was received by the board of education and referred to the committee on schools.² In his annual report for that year, Superintendent Chalmers recommended the introduction of manual training into the high school curriculum.³ In the annual report for 1891-92, James Blair, as president, urged the board to include provision for manual training and commercial work in its plans for the new high school building.⁴

1-Twenty-Ninth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Grand Rapids: White Printing Co., 1901. P. 68.

2-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1890-91. P. 746.

3-Nineteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Pp. 63-64.

4-Twentieth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. P. 5.

The board minutes for the meeting of April 1, 1893, contained a long and detailed report from the committee on special training of a trip to Toledo, Ohio for the purpose of studying the Manual Training School there.¹ At the conclusion of the report they recommended that Grand Rapids institute a course in manual training the following year, and suggested that it could be done with a small initial expense because there were on the high school grounds rooms which could be fitted up for the purpose. The committee asked for the approval of the plan by the board so that a course of study could be prepared and some of the equipment could be obtained.

At the meeting of June 3, 1893, approximately two months later, the board voted 14-8 to place a sum of \$5000 in the budget for the ensuing year to establish a manual training school in connection with the high school.² At the next meeting of the board on July 1, 1893, a communication was presented from the Board of Trade commending the action of the preceding meeting.³ At the meeting of August 21, 1893 the appropriation was stricken from the budget with only one dissenting vote.⁴ In his annual report for 1899, E. B. Fisher, president of the board, stated that the project was deferred because of the financial depression then gripping the nation.⁵

There was no further board action until July 11, 1896, when one of the members presented a resolution, referred to the committee on

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1892-93, Pp. 61-64.

2-Ibid., P.91.

3-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1892-93, P. 92.

4-Ibid., Pp. 108.

5-Twenty-First Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. P. 7.

special training, requesting that manual training be added to the school program.¹ At the meeting on August 1, 1896, a resolution was adopted instructing the ways and means committee to consider the advisability of including an item of \$5,000 in the new budget for manual training.² In his annual report for that year, Superintendent Chalmers made a lengthy statement about manual training instruction, prompted by the fact that the board had decided to introduce manual training in the schools and had appropriated \$5,000 for that purpose.³ For some reason which I have been unable to discover, the course was not begun at that time; there is no mention of manual training in the annual reports or the proceedings of the board until 1899. Although I have no real evidence to back up the statement, I think that it is quite possible that those who were thinking of manual training as a vocational subject were disappointed with the statement of Superintendent Chalmers which emphasized the general development which would result from the study of manual training rather than its value as vocational training. I think it is possible that the members of the board of education and the members of the Board of Trade were not greatly interested in a manual training program of the type Chalmers described.

At the meeting of May 5, 1900, a communication from the Ladies' Literary Club was presented, asking that manual training be added

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1895-96, P. 90.

2-Ibid., P. 96.

3-Twenty-fourth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Grand Rapids: Martin & Wurzburg, 1896. Pp. 90-100.

to the school program, and suggesting that in the selection of a new superintendent the board be careful to select a man who believed in manual training and could supervise such a program.¹ At the meeting on November 3, 1900, it was decided to move the Kent Scientific Collection to the fourth floor of the Central High School and equip the old Central Annex for manual training.² At the same meeting, a resolution was adopted making manual training a part of the regular course in grades five, six and seven and appointing George S. Waite on half time as director of manual training.³ The program as adopted consisted of knife-work for boys, and sewing for girls, in grades 5 and 6, with shop work for boys and cooking for girls in grade 7. In his annual report for that year, Superintendent Elson stated that classes were actually begun on January 2, 1901, with six teachers, one of carpentry and joinery, one of cooking, two of knife-work and two of sewing.⁴ The knife-work was given in the classrooms by the special teacher. Elson said that the eighth-grade pupils would be included the following year, and additional centers for shop work and cooking would be opened in the Madison, Plainfield and Turner street schools.

In his annual report for 1901-1902 Benn M. Corwin, board president, recommended extending manual training down into the

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1899-1900, P. 70

2-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1900-1901, P. 13

3-Ibid., P. 15.

4-Twenty-Ninth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Pp. 61-65.

primary grades and up into the high school.¹ On October 7, 1902, the board, on the recommendation of the committee on manual training, approved an appropriation for raffia, basketry and other similar materials for use in the primary grades.² On May 5, 1903, a special committee of the board was authorized to study the desirability of building a Manual Training High School.³ At the meeting of November 1, 1904, was adopted a resolution authorizing the president of the board to appoint a committee to study the possibility of enlarging and equipping both Union and Central high schools so that complete courses in commercial subjects, manual training and domestic science could be given.⁴ There is no record of a report by this committee.

Commercial Training

Closely related to the problem of offering work in manual training was that of providing training in the commercial subjects; most of the proposals for more practical work in high school included commercial work as well as manual training. The board voted on June 3, 1893, to establish a commercial department with the beginning of the new school year.⁵ On July 11, 1893, the board approved the appointment of Arthur H. Holmes as teacher of the commercial department at an annual salary of \$1,000.⁶ At the meeting on September 16,

1-Thirtieth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Grand Rapids: White Printing Co., 1902. Pp. 6-7.

2-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1902-03, Pp. 9-10.

3-Ibid., P. 105.

4-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1904-05, P. 32.

5-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1892-93, P. 80.

6-Ibid., P. 99.

the New Complete Bookkeeping by Williams and Rogers was adopted as the textbook for the commercial course.¹ In his annual report for 1892-93, William Greeson, as principal of Central High School, reported that Holmes already had more pupils enrolled than he could teach satisfactorily, and expressed hope that the board would employ an assistant for Holmes before the success of the new department was jeopardized.²

Eight years later in the annual report of A. J. Volland, principal, is a statement by him that the commercial subjects then offered in Central High School were commercial arithmetic, commercial law and bookkeeping.³ He recommended the addition of penmanship, type-writing, stenography, commercial geography and perhaps Spanish. In the next annual report, Corwin, as board president, made a forceful plea for better commercial work, and said that few improvements had been made in that course, although much progress had been made in other lines.⁴ He also said that in his belief the strongest criticism of the high school course was that Grand Rapids had three thriving and successful private business colleges.

There is evidence that the board became impatient with the slowness of the adoption of changes in the commercial department, for

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1893-94, P. 3.

2-Twenty-First Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 73.

3-Twenty-Ninth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 81.

4-Thirtieth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 4-6.

on November 7, 1905, was adopted a resolution calling for the appointment of a committee of three to investigate the reasons for the non-existence of a course in typewriting in Central High School, although for the preceding two years considerable money had been appropriated for the purchase of typewriters.¹ The annual report for the school year 1904-05 listed for the first time typing, shorthand and penmanship as commercial subjects.² The preceding year (1903-04) only bookkeeping, commercial geography, commercial law and economics were listed.³

Shearer Plan of Grading and Promotion

During the school year 1897-98 the board of education became much interested in a flexible system of promotions in use in Elizabeth, N. J., the Shearer System. On December 4, 1897, a resolution was adopted calling for the appointment of a committee of five including the superintendent to investigate the plan and report at a later meeting.⁴ At the meeting on March 5, 1898, the committee recommended that Superintendent Chalmers be sent to Elizabeth to observe the plan in action, but the recommendation was defeated by a vote of 12-11.⁵

At the April meeting a resolution was adopted authorizing an experiment in flexible grading similar to the Shearer Plan in two

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1905-06, Pp. 192-193.

2-Thirty-Third Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Grand Rapids: White Printing Co., 1905. P. 68.

3-Thirty-Second Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 66.

4-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1897-98, P. 26.

5-Ibid., P. 46.

or three buildings.¹ In the annual report for 1898-99, President Rowson called attention to the experiment with the Shearer Method being conducted in the Madison School under the direction of Charles L. Spain, principal.² He questioned the advisability of continuing the experiment because in his opinion "children were being crowded and a nervous temperament seemed to pervade in the whole building."

In the annual report for 1899-1900 Spain, in an extensive report on the experiment, said he was not ready to pronounce it a success or failure, and recommended that it be continued.³ He said that efforts were being made to reduce the nervous tension for which the school had been criticized the preceding year and in his opinion that condition of tension no longer existed. He reported that approximately 30 percent of the pupils had gained time amounting to a total of 1672 weeks or about 42 years, making a financial saving to the board of about \$700. The experiment was continued. In his annual report for 1902-03, John B. Hilliker, president of the board, stated that in his belief it had been tried sufficiently to warrant its adoption with modifications.⁴

The High School Program

At the beginning of this period, in 1890, the Grand Rapids

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1897-98, P. 54.

2-Twenty-Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Grand Rapids: West Michigan Printing Co., 1899. Pp. 3-4.

3-Twenty-Eighth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Pp. 55-58.

4-Thirty-First Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Grand Rapids: White Printing Co., 1903. P. 7.

schools were organized in four grades each of primary, grammar and high school standing. But pupils entering school for the first time were known as beginners, and were not counted as first graders until from five to ten months had passed, unless they showed marked capacity for first grade work.¹ Semi-annual promotions were continued through the 10th grade only. Seven courses were available for high school students; Commercial English, Preparatory English, German, English, French-English, Latin-German, Latin-French and Classical Course. No languages other than English were studied in the first two courses (Commercial English, Preparatory English) and the commercial work in the Commercial-English Course consisted only of two years of bookkeeping. Three years of German were required in the German-English Course, and three of French in the French-English Course. Four years of Latin and two of German were required in the Latin-German Course, two years of French in the Latin-French Course. In the Classical Course four years of Latin and two of Greek were required. As will be shown in the following pages, this period (1890-1900) was marked by an attempt to incorporate more of the so-called practical subjects in the high school program.

On August 6, 1892, the board adopted a new course of study for the high school.² The Commercial-English Course was dropped, the German-English and French-English Courses were changed so that four years of the foreign language were required, instead of three.

1-Nineteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 83-120.

2-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1891-92, P. 102.

"Short" German-English and French-English Courses were offered, requiring four years for completion but only two years of one language other than English. The Latin-German, French-German and Classical Courses remained essentially the same as before.¹

On October 7, 1893, the board extended the semi-annual promotion plan to include pupils in the 11th and 12th grades, provided there were classes of 20 or more in the mid-year groups.² In the annual report for 1893-94, Greeson, as principal of Central High School, made a plea for more teachers.³ He said that the enrollment had been increasing for several years out of proportion to the number of additional teachers employed. This practice had continued until there were at that time an average of 38 pupils to each teacher. He also made a plea for holding pupils more rigidly to the ten established courses, a new Commercial-English Course, an Engineering Course and a Scientific Course having by that time (1893) been added.⁴ Although there were frequent requests from residents of the West Side to make Union High School a complete unit with its own graduating classes the 12th grade work continued to be given in Central High School until 1910.

In his annual report for 1894-95, Felker, as president of the board, was critical of the results attained in the schools; he said

1-Twentieth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 138-150.

2-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1893-94, P. 7.

3-Twenty-Second Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 93.

4-Ibid., P. 178.

that the high school program was, in his belief too expensive to operate.¹ He urged the discontinuance of the post-graduate work which made it possible for a student to enter the University of Michigan as a sophomore. In his annual report for the same year (1894-95) Superintendent Chalmers defended the program of the high school, and called attention to the fact that no extra courses were given to post-graduates, but that each year a few graduates did take advantage of the offerings of the high school and were therefore able to complete the university in three years.²

On June 2, 1900, the board voted to establish ninth grade classes in the Jefferson and North Ionia Street schools because of the necessity for relieving the crowding in Central High School.³ Foreign languages were not offered in Jefferson and North Ionia Street schools but pupils there who wished to take a foreign language in the ninth grade were permitted to attend Central High School. During this same year (1900) Central High School was departmentalized.⁴

At the meeting of August 19, 1901, the board adopted a new high school course of study based on required and elective subjects, and greatly simplifying and making more flexible the former rigid requirements.⁵ Under the new plan, the former "Courses" became "Suggestive

1-Twenty-Third Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 6-8.

2-Ibid., Pp. 85-89.

3-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1899-1900, P. 78.

4-Twenty-Eighth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 3.

5-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1900-01, P. 105.

Courses of Study¹ and were reduced in number to the following six: Commercial Course, Commercial Course with Long German (Four years of German), Scientific Course, Engineering with Two Years of Foreign Language, Four Years of Foreign Language, and Six Years of Foreign Language.¹ The commercial course included more commercial subjects but still no shorthand or typing. More latitude was allowed in the combinations of languages than under the former plan. For the first time, English was required in every grade regardless of the course taken. The subject offerings in the high school remained essentially the same for the remainder of this period, although shorthand and typing were added in 1905.²

Superintendent Elson in his annual report for 1901-02 made a strong plea for more practical work in the high school and a greater emphasis on pupils' needs;³ he criticized the universities and colleges for their arbitrary entrance requirements set up by the college staff for their own convenience with little real understanding of conditions in the high schools, deplored the tendency of teachers, especially younger ones, to imitate university methods and practices not suitable to pupils of high school age. In this same annual report A. J. Volland, principal of Central High School, defended his school against the charge that its energies were all devoted to

1-Twenty-Ninth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 99-100.

2-Thirtieth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 68-71.

3-Thirty-Third Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 68.

college preparation, with the statement that no student was ever compelled to take a college preparatory course, and more than half of the pupils who were graduated took other courses.¹ He again requested the addition of stenography and shorthand to the commercial course, and asked for a teacher of physical training who would also coach sports after school hours. He said that 96 boys had elected manual training, and 122 girls domestic science, but that many of the boys and girls electing these subjects had dropped out when their other studies crowded them, because no credit was given for that work. He recommended that credit be given.

In his annual report for 1902-03, Superintendent Elson made an urgent plea for additional space to house the growing high school population and criticized the high school program in Grand Rapids.² He said that the growth of high school attendance in Grand Rapids had been rapid, but fell short of growth in the nation at large. He called attention to the fact that when the building had been completed 11 years earlier the enrollment was 768 with 29 teachers, or an average of 26.5 pupils per teacher, but there were, in 1903, 1,224 pupils and 31 teachers, or an average of 39.5 pupils per teacher, while the average for the United States was 25.2. He said that 50 additional teachers were needed to give Grand Rapids high school pupils advantages equal to the average for the nation as a whole.

1-Thirtieth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 81-84.

2-Thirty-First Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 67-76.

but that the problem would still be unsolved because the building was already taxed to its limits and every available room was in use. He criticized the academic nature of the program offered in the high school, and asked that an addition be built to the Central High School with facilities for manual training, and domestic science, and more adequate rooms for commercial work. He also recommended that a new high school be built in the south end of the city.

EXPANDED SCHOOL SERVICES

Library Services

The years 1890 to 1903 were marked by the struggle for satisfactory housing for the library, and considerable controversy about who would control it. In his annual report for 1893-94, Ernest B. Fisher, president of the board, advocated building a public library building.¹ Two years later Henry E. Locher, as president of the board, recommended that the South Division Avenue School be used to house the library.² That the housing problem was becoming more acute is shown by the statement in the annual report of John Rowson, president of the board, for 1896-97 that the city council had asked the board to move its offices and the library from the City Hall.³

1-Twenty-Second Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 12.

2-Twenty-Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 8-9.

3-Twenty-Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 7.

Rowson recommended that the building when completed should also house the Kent Scientific Institute collections. A few months later, on December 4, 1897, the board approved the appointment of a joint committee of council and board members to select a site for a library.¹

The next three years were marked by unsuccessful attempts to build a library building by issuing bonds to be paid from tax funds. On November 5, 1898, the board authorized the appointment of a special committee charged with the responsibility of building a library.² At the December meeting the city attorney presented, at the request of the committee, the draft of a law which, if approved by the state Legislature, would amend the school statute to permit the board to build a library.³ On March 14, 1900, a resolution was adopted authorizing a bond issue of \$125,000 for the purpose of building a library, the issue to be placed on the ballot at the spring election.⁴ The bond issue was defeated by a vote of 6737 to 5326.⁵ In the annual report for that year, John A. S. Verdier, board president, recommended that a special election be held in May or June, 1901, to bond the city to build a library building.⁶

Another special committee was appointed on November 3, 1900, and charged with the responsibility of promoting the obtaining of

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1897-98, P. 19.

2-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1898-99, P. 19.

3-Ibid., Pp. 24-25.

4-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1899-1900, Pp. 62-63.

5-Grand Rapids Herald, April 3, 1900.

6-Twenty-Eighth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 5.

a suitable library building.¹ This committee was apparently more successful than the earlier one, because we find that at the meeting of the board on February 19, 1901, an agreement was reached with the city council whereby both bodies agreed to appropriate up to \$20,000 annually for the support of the library. The board was to provide the site if money for the building were furnished by Andrew Carnegie, who had expressed his willingness to consider such a proposal.² Between this meeting of February 10, 1901, and that of June 4, 1901, arrangements were made for Martin Ryerson to provide the money to put up the building, and at that meeting the site of the present library on Library Street was selected, although a minority favored the purchase of the site of the present museum.³ At the meeting of August 19, 1901, the board approved the agreement with Ryerson whereby he would construct the building on the site provided by the board of education.⁴ At the meeting of June 24, 1902, it was announced that the ceremony of laying the cornerstone would be conducted on July 4, 1902.⁵ After considerable discussion and indecisive action on the part of the board of education during 1902 and 1903, a resolution was finally passed at the meeting of October 6, 1903, which turned the library and all library monies over to the Library Commission.⁶

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1899-1900, P. 19.

2-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1900-01, Pp. 48-49.

3-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1900-01, Pp. 80-81.

4-Ibid., Pp. 106-107.

5-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1901-02, P. 93.

6-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1903-04, Pp. 9-10.

Additional Library Services

In the annual report of the librarian for 1893-94 it was asserted that the first purchases of books for branch libraries in the schools were made in October, 1893, and the distribution of books to the schools was begun in February, 1894.¹ Lucy Ball, the librarian, called attention to the desirable features of the system in use, and indicated that the principals of the buildings were in charge of the branches. The Children's Room of the library was opened October 7, 1901.²

Grand Rapids Museum

The collections of the Kent Scientific Institute had been housed for many years in the school buildings and were available for use by the pupils in the schools, although the title to them remained with the institute. This arrangement was not completely satisfactory. On many occasions friction had occurred between the members of the institute and members of the board about the way the collections were housed and maintained. On November 13, 1900, the board approved an arrangement with the institute transferring the title of the collections to the board, with the understanding that they would be under the direction of a committee consisting in part of members of the institute.³ On November 5, 1901, it was announced that an agreement

1-Twenty-second Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 37-39.

2-Thirtieth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 43.

3-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1900-01, Pp. 20-22.

had been reached to house the museum in the De Vore house on the library lot.¹ The resolution approving this agreement included an appropriation of \$2500 to make necessary alterations.

The De Vore house soon was considered inadequate for housing the museum, and therefore on February 24, 1903, a resolution was passed by the board referring to the committee on buildings and grounds the possibility of considering buying the present museum site called the Howlett property at Jefferson Avenue and Washington Streets.² If this site were purchased the collections were to be placed in the house located on the site. At the next meeting, March 3, 1903, the board voted to purchase the property after the committee reported favorably on it, and the city attorney presented an opinion in which he stated that it was perfectly legal for the board to buy property for that purpose.³ At the meeting of the board on January 5, 1904, it was announced that the dedication would take place two days later on January 7.⁴

In the annual report of Arthur C. Denison, president of the board of education for 1903-04, he recommended that the control of the museum be taken over by the library commission or another commission specifically set up for that purpose.⁵ At the meeting of the board of education September 5, 1905, opposing opinions were

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1901-02, Pp. 18-19.

2-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1902-03, P. 72.

3-Ibid., Pp. 73-78.

4-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1903-04, P. 51.

5-Thirty-Second Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 2.

presented from Moses Taggart, city attorney, and Willard Kingsley, attorney for the Kent Scientific Institute on the legality of a recent change in the city charter placing the supervision of the museum under the board of library commissioners.¹ The city attorney said he believed the transfer was legal, but Kingsley contended that it was not. On April 3, 1906, a letter from the museum board of directors was presented asking that the board of education retain control of the museum. At this same meeting the museum committee made a long report tracing the relationship which had existed for many years between the Kent Scientific Institute and the board.² In spite of the opposition of the members of the Kent Scientific Institute, the control of the museum passed to the board of library commissioners on June 2, 1906.³

School Savings Plan

As early as April 4, 1891, a resolution was adopted by the board asking the ways and means committee to study the proposal that a school savings bank stamp system be introduced in several of the schools of the city.⁴ At the next meeting (May 2, 1891) the committee recommended against its introduction and the matter was tabled by a vote of 15-6.⁵ At the meeting on June 4, 1894, it was decided to set up an experimental program in four schools when school opened in September.⁶ At the meeting of November 3, 1894, a committee reported

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1905-06, Pp. 142-144.

2-Ibid., Pp. 252-267.

3-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1906-07, P. 51.

4-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1890-91, P. 744.

5-Ibid., P. 748.

6-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1893-94, P. 63.

favorably on this experimental program.¹ The following August the organization of the board was changed to provide for a standing committee on school savings.² In a report on school savings presented to the board on May 2, 1896, the committee asserted that Grand Rapids was the first city in the state to adopt a school savings plan, and that its adoption was then being considered in many other cities.³ In his annual report for 1901-02, Superintendent Elson reported on the success of the program, and said that many requests were received for information about the program as operated in Grand Rapids.⁴

Summer Playgrounds

On May 7, 1901, a resolution requesting the opening of one of the school playgrounds during the summer was referred to the committee on grounds.⁵ On June 3, 1902, a communication from the Civic League was presented at the board meeting, asking that public playgrounds be established in the summer on some of the school grounds.⁶ At the July meeting approximately one month later, two more communications were presented, making the same request for playgrounds.⁷ One of the requests contained the suggestion that the city council make an appropriation of \$1500 to be used by the board in supervising five playgrounds during the summer.

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1894-95, Pp. 17-18.

2-Ibid., P. 77.

3-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1895-96, Pp. 63-64.

4-Thirtieth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 77.

5-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1900-01, P. 70.

6-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1901-02, P. 77.

7-Ibid., P. 96.

At that same meeting (July 1, 1902) the board appropriated \$300 for the equipment and maintenance of one playground on an experimental basis.¹ At the meeting of August 18, 1902, Mrs. Josephine A. Goss, chairman of the committee in charge, made a favorable report on the experimental playground conducted at the Congress School.² At this same meeting the board voted to accept \$400 offered by the city council for equipping two more playgrounds and appropriated \$150 to maintain them the remainder of the season.³ In his annual report for that year (1901-02) Superintendent Elson commented favorably on the program and said that more than 200 adults had visited the playground. Elson made special mention of a Mr. Tsanoff and Mayor Jones, of Toledo, Ohio.⁴ The summer program was continued. In his annual report for 1902-03, John B. Hilliker, president of the board, commented favorably on it and recommended that in addition the schools provide a two-week camp program at a suitable site on Lake Michigan for the underprivileged children of Grand Rapids.⁵

Medical Inspection in the Schools

In his annual report for 1904-05, Board President Cyrus E. Perkins made a strong plea for medical inspection in the schools.⁶

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1901-02, P. 103.

2-Ibid., Pp. 118-120.

3-Ibid., P. 120.

4-Thirtieth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 65-66.

5-Thirty-First Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 12-15.

6-Twenty-Third Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 4-7.

He asserted that the need for medical inspection service had first been brought to his attention by the Charity Organization Society of Grand Rapids, and that upon investigation he had found the need great. He quoted figures gathered by Mrs. Flora Nieman of the District Nurses Association, who for 20 days had visited nine schools regularly to learn what the actual conditions were.

At the meeting of November 7, 1905, the president of the board was authorized to appoint a committee to consider the desirability of providing medical inspection.¹ At the next meeting (December 5, 1905) the board voted to employ a nurse for three months and institute an experimental program with the cooperation of physicians who would give examinations without cost.² In his annual report for 1905-06, George A. Davis, president of the board, commented on the experiment, and urged that medical inspection be continued.³ In September, 1906 two school nurses were hired.⁴ Regular inspection by physicians was begun in 1909.⁵

Free Public Lectures

Superintendent Elson in his report for 1902-03 commented on an experiment conducted that year in wider use of the school buildings by the public.⁶ He said that a lecture series consisting of talks

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1905-06, P. 194.

2-Ibid., Pp. 204.

3-Thirty-fourth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 10.

4-Thirty-ninth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan. Grand Rapids: Duhamel Printing Co., 1911. P. 34.

5-This date was obtained from the Office of the Grand Rapids Department of Public Health.

6-Thirty-first Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 66-67.

on history, literature, biography, science, art, travel and music had been presented one night each week in four schools. The lecturers gave their services, and the board of education freely opened the buildings for the lectures. In his next annual report he described the lectures given in 1903-04 and included a program of the lectures given in the Widdicomb Street School which, he said, were typical of the program.¹ In the meeting of the board on November 1, 1904, an appropriation of a sum not to exceed \$100 was made for such a series of lectures in the Widdicomb and Madison Avenue Schools with the provision that the lectures be fewer in number.² This is the last mention made of lecture series arrangements in either the proceedings of the board or in their annual reports.

TEACHER EMPLOYMENT POLICIES AND SALARIES

Teacher Employment Policies

At the beginning of this period (1890) certificates were granted practically all of the teachers on examinations conducted by the superintendent of schools. On May 7, 1892, the board of education passed a resolution which provided that from that time teachers would not be appointed until they had actually obtained their certificates.³ The committee on teachers said that, earlier, uncertified teachers had been appointed - "subject to examination" with the understanding

1-Thirty-second Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 41-42.

2-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1904-05, P. 24.

3-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1891-92, Pp. 67-68.

that they would take the next examination given, but had often failed to do so and were permitted to remain for that term rather than to upset the school by a change of teachers during the term.

The next mention of employment policies came on March 7, 1896; the committee on teachers then was instructed to examine the so-called Denver Method of examination of teachers and the advisability of adopting it.¹ On September 5, 1896, a petition with 500 signatures asking that all married teachers be dropped after the school year 1896-97 was presented and referred to the committee on teachers.² No further action was taken on this request.

In his annual report for 1895-96, Superintendent Chalmers said that according to the plan used by the Denver Board of Education all candidates for positions during the year lost their identity upon taking the teachers examination and were known only by number and that as a result all possibility of favoritism was eliminated.³ He suggested that the board also adopt a program of continuing tenure like that in use in Denver, Minneapolis and some other cities where after years of successful teaching experience teachers could be placed on a basis of permanent employment. In his annual report for 1896-97, John Rowson, president of the board, recommended that all teachers holding second or third grade certificates be required to

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1895-96, P. 55.

2-Ibid., P. 102.

3-Twenty-Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 89-90.

take an examination every two years, and that those who failed to pass be dropped.¹

The years 1897 and 1898 were marked by a stiffening of the policies of the board toward teachers. On May 25, 1897, a special committee was appointed to revise the salary schedule downward.² The committee reported the next month (June) that it had been unable to agree on any revision of salaries to take effect the coming year, but had agreed to a moderate reduction to take effect in 1898.³

On December 4, 1897, a resolution was presented and tabled that teachers would be employed in the following order on the basis of training: first, graduates of the Grand Rapids Normal School; second, graduates of other normal schools having a standing equal to that of the Michigan State Normal School; and third, those getting the highest scores on the examinations given for certification.⁴

On March 5, 1898, the board adopted a resolution requiring recitation room teachers in the high schools to take charge of rooms at least 30 hours a week and study-hall teachers at least 25 hours a week.⁵ In the April meeting of that year (1898) a new schedule was adopted; the salaries of grade teachers remained practically unchanged, and the salaries of high school teachers were placed on a schedule for the first time.⁶ Teachers who were not graduates of

1-Twenty-Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 5.

2-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1896-97, P. 65.

3-Ibid., P. 79.

4-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1897-98, P. 26.

5-Ibid., P. 44.

6-Ibid., Pp. 54-55.

the Grand Rapids Normal School or some other normal school or university must be a high school graduate and have had three years of successful teaching experience in a graded school of not less than three rooms before being employed. All teachers employed for high school positions must be college graduates. On April 16, 1898, the board adopted a rule that the marriage of any teacher would constitute a resignation, and that no married women were eligible for appointment.¹ Married teachers already employed were not affected by the new rule.

In preparing the list of teachers for September, 1898, the board caused quite a community uprising by refusing to re-employ three veteran teachers in the high school, two elementary principals and a teacher in the Congress School. Petitions were presented at the meeting on June 21, and five of the leading citizens of Grand Rapids were permitted to address the board, asking for re-instatement of the three high school teachers.² At the next meeting more petitions were presented asking for their re-employment.³ One of the teachers, Miss Alice James, was re-employed for that year (1898-99) at the meeting on September 7, and remained a member of the staff of Central High School for many years thereafter.⁴ A second teacher, Miss Ellen Dean, was again employed in September, 1900, but Miss Annah Clark, the third teacher was never re-employed.⁵

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1897-98, P. 58.

2-Ibid., Pp. 69-72.

3-Ibid., P. 73.

4-Ibid., P. 104.

5-Twenty-Eighth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 35.

In his annual report for 1901-02, Superintendent Elson commended the firm policy of the board toward basing the appointment of teachers strictly on merit.¹ In his report for 1903-04 he spoke in glowing terms of the progressive attitude and professional advancement of Grand Rapids teachers as shown by the number attending summer sessions or traveling for self-improvement.² He reported that 38 teachers had attended the summer session of the University of Chicago alone.

TEACHER TRAINING

Normal Training Classes

Because dissatisfaction had developed with the working of the cadet system as a method of training teachers, the board, on May 16, 1891, voted to establish a training school in the Jefferson School.³ The plan was to conduct a three-way program: theory, practice teaching, and a model school where observation would be required. In his annual report for 1890-91, Superintendent Chalmers emphasized the need for such a school and gave arguments for establishing it.⁴ He also called attention to a teachers' reading course established as an in-service teacher-training device.⁵ The course would take

1-Thirtieth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 79.

2-Thirty-Second Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 24.

3-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1890-91, P. 754.

4-Nineteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 66-68.

5-Ibid., P. 60.

two years, and would then be repeated for the teachers who had not taken it.

Mrs. Josephine Ahnefeldt Goss, principal of the training school, reported on its operation during the first year in the annual report for 1891-92.¹ Twenty-four girls were admitted, and six rooms were set aside for practice teaching, two girls being assigned to each room in the morning, and two others in the afternoon. While half of the girls were teaching the other half were studying. Mrs. Goss said this was the only teacher training school of which she had knowledge that actually put students in charge of classes. She felt that the plan placed on the trainees responsibility valuable for them but that the plan did throw a heavy load on the principal. The practice of giving full responsibility to trainees caused much criticism from parents who did not like to have their children in the classes taught by practice teachers. On February 4, 1893, a petition was presented with the signatures of 104 parents asking that the training school be abolished.² At the meeting on May 6, 1893, the committee on schools reported that it had been unable to arrive at a decision on the continuance of the training school; after some discussion the board decided to keep it in operation.³

Opposition to the training school continued, and at the meeting of April 7, 1894, another petition was presented from

1-Twentieth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 67-69.

2-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1892-93, P. 40.

3-Ibid., Pp. 69-70.

parents of pupils in the Jefferson School asking that the training school be abolished or moved to some other building.¹ At its next meeting (May 5, 1894) the board voted to move the training school to some other building and to change the plan so that the practice teaching would be distributed throughout the schools of the city.² In the annual report for 1895-96, Miss Emma Palmer, principal of the training school, recommended that pupils be admitted only after high school graduation.³

In his annual report for 1896-97, John Rowson, president of the board, questioned the desirability of continuing the school, arguing that the school was unnecessary and that more teachers were being trained than were needed.⁴ On November 6, 1897, a recommendation of the committee on schools that the normal training course be extended to two years was referred to the committee. At the meeting of December 4, 1897, the committee reported the proposal back without recommendation, and it was tabled by a vote of 12-8.⁵ At the meeting on August 30, 1899, the board voted not to admit a new class to the training school in September but instructed the committee to continue its study of various plans under consideration for the permanent organization of the training school.⁶ At the meeting of January 7, 1899, the committee on schools recommended a plan which was tabled

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1893-94, P. 52.

2-Ibid., Pp. 59-60.

3-Twenty-Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 84-86.

4-Twenty-Fifth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 8.

5-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1897-98, P. 19.

6-Ibid., P. 99.

but later adopted by the board.¹ In his annual report for 1898-99, Superintendent Hathaway reported on the following essential features of the program.²

First. That there be established in the High Schools a four years' normal course intended for those who expect to enter the Training School; the first three years of this course to be devoted to academic work and the fourth year to review work.

Second. Admission to the Training School to be determined by examination, which shall test, as far as possible, the aptitude of the candidate for the profession of teaching.

Third. Admission of classes to the Training School annually.

Fourth. A course of instruction in the training School extending through one school year of forty weeks; the work in this school to be divided as nearly as possible upon the basis that half of each day be allotted to recitation and study and half to observation and practice.

Fifth. Students in the Training School shall not be allowed to do supply work in the city schools.

Sixth. Students who complete a year's work in the Training School with credit and approval, to receive a certificate attesting that fact and to be placed on the eligible list of teachers as cadets.

Seventh. Cadet teachers to be given a full diploma and advanced to the rank of regular teacher at the end of their year of cadetship; provided the same is recommended by the Principal of the Training School and the Superintendent of Schools, and approved by the Committee on Teachers.

By special arrangement a class was admitted to the Training School under the above rules in February, 1899. This class will be the last midyear class. Subsequent classes will be admitted in September of each year.

Another new feature incorporated in the Training School is the introduction of a forty weeks, two hour course, in kindergarten methods, which is required of all students, no matter what grade they expect to teach.

On June 2, 1900, the board voted to discontinue the Normal School for the year beginning in September.³ In commenting on this action, one of the newspapers spoke of it as the abolition of the Normal

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1898-1899, Pp. 29-30.

2-Twenty-seventh Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 52-53.

3-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1899-1900, P. 79.

Training School, which actually was never re-opened.¹ The reason given for its closing was the oversupply of graduates who could not all be placed in the schools.

In Service Training

In his last annual report, Superintendent Hathaway explained in some detail a series of teachers' classes that had been conducted during the year for the 200 persons teaching on third grade certificates.² The classes which met two afternoons each week for a term of 20 weeks were in geometry, algebra, English literature, geography and physics and were taught by the more experienced high school teachers. Hathaway reported through these classes many teachers had passed the examinations for their second-grade certificates. In his first annual report, Superintendent Elson said the teachers' classes, held for 20 weeks during the year were successful, and meeting a great need.³ He recommended that the board accept credits earned in college summer sessions instead of requiring the examinations in subjects for higher grade certificates, because, he said, he considered it undesirable for teachers to attend classes after school when they were tired, and also be forced to spend the necessary time and energy in preparation. Elson said that the classes would be continued one more year to complete the work begun by some of the teachers, but urged the board to encourage summer school

1-Evening Press, June 2, 1900.

2-Twenty-Eighth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 49-50.

3-Twenty-Ninth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 75-76.

attendance as a better means of accomplishing the desired end. On January 6, 1903, the board voted to underwrite up to \$100 a series of lectures to teachers on reading and literature.¹ On June 2, 1903, the board appointed a committee to attempt to get the newly authorized Western Michigan Normal School located in Grand Rapids.²

SCHOOL HOUSING PROBLEMS

New High School

On May 2, 1891, was adopted a recommendation of the building committee that a new high school be built on the Central High grounds facing Ransom Avenue, the old building to be retained.³ At the June meeting the board accepted a pencil sketch and floor plans for the proposed building the cost of which was estimated at \$54,000.⁴ In the annual report of Board President Blair for the year 1890-91 he commented favorably on the decision to build a new high school and emphasized the need for providing space in it for manual training and commercial work.⁵

In his annual reports for 1891⁶ and 1892,⁷ Greeson, as high school principal, warned that the proposed building was inadequate and would be crowded when it was completed, or within a year or two

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1902-03, P. 53-54.

2-Ibid., P. 122.

3-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1890-91, P. 748-9.

4-Ibid., P. 764.

5-Nineteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 6.

6-Ibid., P. 64.

7-Twentieth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 72-73.

afterwards, at most. At the meeting of August 6, 1892, the board authorized half-day sessions for the high school at the beginning of the fall term until the new building was completed.¹ In the annual report for 1894-95, Greeson said 950 pupils had been enrolled that year, a total close to the absolute capacity of the building.²

In his annual report for 1896, Superintendent Chalmers recommended fitting up the top floor of the high school for school use, and asked that seats be placed in the hall.³ In 1897 Superintendent Chalmers again called attention to the crowded conditions in both Union and Central High Schools, and said that transfer of some of the ninth graders from Central High School to the Old Grammar Building on the same lot would be necessary.⁴ At the same time he cited the high percentage of pupils who attended high school in Grand Rapids by contrasting the high school enrollment of 1,192 pupils to a total enrollment of 15,451 and a high school enrollment in Toledo, Ohio, of 534 out of a total enrollment of 16,692.

No further attempt was made to provide more room for high school students until 1902 when Superintendent Elson in his annual report called attention to the great need for more adequate high school housing.⁵ He recommended the construction of a new building on the east side of the Central High School lot near Barclay Street

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1891-92, P. 96.

2-Twenty-third Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 89-91.

3-Twenty-fourth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 87-88.

4-Twenty-fifth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 82.

5-Thirtieth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 72-73.

to house the grammar school and to provide room for manual training, domestic science, chemistry and physics laboratories and an expanded commercial department. This plan would necessitate tearing down the old high school building which, he said, would be so close to the new building that it would greatly interfere with the lighting in some of the east rooms of the high school.¹ In his annual report for 1903 Superintendent Elson again recommended tearing down the old high school building, commonly called the Central Grammar Building, and constructing additions to Central and Union High Schools to provide facilities for gym and manual training, building a new school on Fountain Street to replace the old Central Grammar School and building a new high school in the south end of the city.²

On these recommendations was appointed a special committee which made practically identical recommendations to the board on January 5, 1904.³ The following month the committee on ways and means was asked to study ways of raising money for this program,⁴ the committee on buildings was assigned the responsibility for selecting sites, and a special committee was appointed to present plans for the proposed south end high school.⁵

March 1, 1904, the board voted to submit to the voters, a \$200,000 bond issue designed to finance this program.⁶ On April 5, 1904, it was reported at the board meeting that the bond issue had

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- 1-This building was used until 1911 when it was finally torn down.
 2-Thirty-First Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 67-79.
 3-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1893-94, Pp. 46-47.
 4-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1903-04, Pp. 65-66.
 5-South High School was not built until 1915.
 6-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1903-04, Pp. 68.

failed to pass, but that the defeat was probably not a true expression of public opinion, because most of the adverse vote came from those areas on the West Side most affected by the recent flood.¹ On May 3, 1904, the board voted to re-submit the bond issue to a vote in September at the regular school election.² At the meeting on September 7, 1904, it was announced that the bond issue again had failed, the vote being 995 for to 3,195 against.³ The board did not give up the idea of getting some new buildings constructed and on January 31, 1905, another special committee made a long and detailed report on the problem.⁴ On April 4, 1905, was accepted a revised report of this committee calling for a new school to house pupils from kindergarten through the eighth grade to be built in the neighborhood of Wealthy and Fuller Streets (Sigsbee School), the demolition of the Old Central Grammer School and the erection of a new building to take its place on the same lot facing Barclay Street.⁵ The report also recommended alterations in the Central High School building to provide for commercial rooms in the space then used as an auditorium, and an addition to Union High School.

Elementary School Buildings

In 1891 the school district was enlarged by an area of approximately nine square miles containing a population of approximately 10,000.⁶

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1903-04, P. 75

2-Ibid., P. 92.

3-Ibid., P. 140.

4-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1904-05, Pp. 54-59.

5-Ibid., Pp. 92-93.

6-Nineteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 5.

Nine school buildings containing a total of 30 rooms were located in this area. By the end of the school year 1890-91 there were 32 buildings containing 230 rooms and seats for approximately 14,000 pupils and, in addition, 14 rooms were being rented. The total estimated value of all of the buildings including the high schools was \$789,100.¹ By 1906 the school property had increased to 37 buildings containing 409 rooms with seats for 15,477 and a total estimated value of \$1,174,200.²

In the annual report for 1892-93, Board President Fisher called attention to the unusual activity in school building during the preceding two years, and listed in addition to the new high school, the following new eight-room buildings just completed or almost ready for use; Hall Street, Jefferson Avenue, Sibley Street, Widdicomb Street, Palmer Avenue and a four-room addition to the Wealthy Street School.³ He also reported that quite extensive repairs and alterations had been made to several other buildings and expressed the belief that no such large expenditure should be necessary for many years. He recommended that the board adopt a steady program of building construction designed to meet the needs as they developed. In the annual report for 1905-06, Superintendent Elson commented favorably on the new Sigsbee School, and stated that he hoped it

1-Nineteenth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 5.

2-Thirty-Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, Pp. 44-45.

3-Twenty-First Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 6.

would set a new standard for buildings in Grand Rapids.¹ He said that Grand Rapids needed to build better and larger buildings and that this (Sigsbee School) was the first to meet that need adequately.

Water Supply

As far back as 1877, Superintendent Daniels had assailed the city water supply, and, because of his criticism, filters had been installed, but dissatisfaction with the water provided for the schools had continued. On September 15, 1895, the committee on buildings was asked to report on the cost of providing pure water to the schools.² On May 3, 1897, the committee on buildings listed several schools that were being supplied with city water without filters; the committee was authorized to purchase Pasteur filters for them.³ On April 4, 1898, a resolution was adopted, asking the committee on buildings to study the problem of an improved water supply and the possibility of installing drinking fountains instead of requiring children to dip cups into a pail exposed in the basement for water to drink.⁴ On May 5, 1900, the committee on buildings was authorized to install filters in 19 buildings which lacked them.⁵

On January 27, 1903, a communication was sent to the board from the father of a former teacher in the Henry Street School asking that the remainder of her salary for the year be paid because there was

1-Thirty-Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Education of the City of Grand Rapids, Michigan, P. 17.

2-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1895-96, P. 10.

3-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1896-97, P. 59.

4-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1897-98, P. 57.

5-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1897-98, P. 57.

good reason to believe that her death had been caused by drinking water from the school well.¹ On March 3, 1903, the committee on buildings reported that an analysis of the water from the school wells had proved that there was no apparent danger in the use of the water.² On June 7, 1904, the board again adopted a resolution asking that the committee on buildings investigate the possibility of a pure water supply for all of the school buildings.³

On December 6, 1904, the need for a better water supply was vividly brought to the attention of the board by a communication from the city health officer asking that all school drinking water be boiled and that teachers urge pupils to have all of the drinking water boiled at home as an essential part of his effort to suppress an epidemic of typhoid fever.⁴ At this same meeting the committee on buildings was instructed to take immediate action to provide pure water for the schools.⁵ One week later the committee reported that boiled water was being furnished to all of the buildings.⁶

On May 2, 1905, the committee on buildings was authorized to enter into a contract to buy bottled water for all buildings.⁷ On December 5, 1905, the committee recommended the purchase of one new-type filter on a trial basis, the water to be tested before and after installation.⁸ On February 8, 1906, the committee reported that the

1-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1899-1900, P. 72.

2-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1902-03, P. 46.

3-Ibid., P. 78.

4-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1903-04, P. 109.

5-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1904-05, P. 33

6- Ibid., P. 44.

7-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1904-05, P. 101.

8-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1905-06, Pp. 198-199.

contract with the Silver Springs Water Company ran to May 16, that they were still studying the problem, and that they hoped to be able to make a recommendation before that date.¹

SUMMARY

Probably the greatest single educational accomplishment of the period (1890-1906) was the final abolishment of the big ward-elected board of education because it paved the way for much better management of school affairs in the years that were to follow. There were however other major accomplishments of which the improvement of teacher morale and methods of selection which became relatively free from considerations of political expediency were also of major importance. Securing the new Library Building and the early adoption of a School Savings Program and a Summer Playground Program were also evidences of the awakened consciousness of the need for a broad educational program which was so noticeable after 1900.

On the negative side we have the slowness with which many problems were met of which the provision of an adequate water supply is an example. Another example is the inertia in revising the high school program to include suitable instruction in manual training, home economics and the commercial subjects.

This period also marked the end of the attempt on the part of the board of education to give formal training to local candidates for teaching positions and the beginning of a new era in which teachers

¹-Proceedings of the Board of Education, 1905-06, P. 225.

were required to have college training before being employed. There was also an increased effort on the part of the school administration to develop a program of in-service teacher training on a broader cultural base.

CHAPTER EIGHT

GRAND RAPIDS SCHOOLS IN RETROSPECT (1826-1906)

An attempt is made in this final chapter to analyze, summarize and interpret the various influences which caused the Grand Rapids Public Schools to develop as they did during the first 80 years of the city's history. No attempt is made to offer proof for the statements made, because in many cases specific documentary evidence could not be found; however, if a study of this kind is to have maximum value, the historian must point out and suggest possible relationships between and among events, social and political movements and the influence of certain personalities.

Often these relationships can be seen only by one who has read widely and made careful study of the whole period; the relationships cannot be explained in terms of small segments of known fact. The reader therefore must keep in mind that this chapter is an attempt on the part of the author to make such interpretations and that the statements made are not necessarily true but are offered as his best judgment and opinion based on the facts available.

Although it was very unfortunate in many respects that Grand Rapids, a very young and an unusually active center for speculation, should suffer so heavily from the panic of 1837, the poverty of most of the citizens and their inability to pay for the education of their children in private schools undoubtedly helped to focus attention early on the need for good public schools. This sense of

need was undoubtedly one of the factors which led to the establishment in Grand Rapids of one of the first Union Schools in Michigan.

Private schools have never played an important part in the total educational program in Grand Rapids. Although there were private schools of various types, none of them was permanent or became influential. The Grand Rapids Academy, chartered in 1844, struggled along for a few years, and was discontinued about 1851; St. Mark's College, incorporated in 1850, also was discontinued after a few years, for lack of patronage; Everett's Academy was operated intermittently for many years by Franklin Everett and Mrs. Everett, but the total number of students served was small.

During the early and formative years of the Grand Rapids Public Schools, District No. 1, which provided most of the educational leadership, had a board of education with vision and the ability to win support for public education. John Ball and James McKee, who were members of the board for many years, typified this constructive leadership.

It was also fortunate that for many years the newspapers of Grand Rapids actively supported the cause of public education. Even those articles which appeared in the newspapers from time to time criticizing certain features of the school program urged better public support as a means of improvement. Aaron B. Turner, who published the Grand Rapids Eagle for many years, was outstandingly aggressive and consistent in his support of the schools. Not until 1878 did one of the newspapers, the Grand Rapids Daily Times, take a position in direct opposition to board of education

policy on an important issue.

With the exception of E. M. Johnson, the first principal of the Union School (East Side), who remained only one term, the early principals of the Union Schools were men active and influential in community affairs as well as efficient in their teaching. The Rev. James Ballard, E. W. Chesebro, Edward Danforth and Edwin A. Strong, on the East Side, and Milton S. Littlefield and the Rev. Mr. Ballard, who also served as principal of the West Side Union School, were well-known, and participated widely in community affairs. Undoubtedly, their personal popularity helped to win support for the schools under their direction.

The above mentioned administrators were also active in promoting and organizing Teachers' Associations and Institutes and not only held office but participated frequently in their programs. Some of these men also were officers, and "read papers" in the early programs of the State Teachers Association. This participation in the programs of the State Association helped to build up the reputation of the Grand Rapids schools. I think it is safe to say that, beginning with the establishment of the Union School (East Side) in 1849, the schools of Grand Rapids quickly earned the confidence and support of the local citizenry, and a good reputation throughout the state.

Another evidence of the progress made in the organization of the public schools of Grand Rapids was early recognition of the desirability of and need for professional administrative leadership. Grand Rapids was early among the cities of the United States

in establishing the office of superintendent of schools. I think Grand Rapids was also fortunate in the men who were selected to fill that position. As I have read their annual reports and studied the progress of the schools through their administrations, I have come to the conclusion that none of them was weak and that they gave the schools real professional leadership. Although there is always the danger of doing injustice to others when one attempts to single out individuals, Edwin A. Strong, Anson J. Daniels and William H. Elson seem to have been especially capable administrators.

The administrator who seems to have exerted the greatest influence on the Grand Rapids schools before 1906 was Edwin A. Strong, who served as high school principal or superintendent from 1858 to 1885 except for one year when he was head of the Science Department of Oswego Normal School, Oswego, N.Y. He was popular with his students, and was active and influential in civic, social and educational affairs. Although he actually preferred to teach science, he was a good administrator, and was largely responsible for the organization and philosophy which dominated the high school for many years after he had left Grand Rapids. For the ten years immediately preceding the organization of the city school system, he was superintendent of the east side schools and many of his ideas, suggestions, and administrative practices were incorporated in the new organization.

Undoubtedly the strength and popularity of the principals mentioned was also responsible to a large degree for the freedom from disciplinary troubles which seems to have been typical of the

Union Schools, and to have made it possible for the board of trustees in District No. 1 to abolish corporal punishment as early as 1870. This rule was not adopted by the new board when the city district was organized, but there is every indication that its influence was felt in the later administration of the schools.

It is interesting to note that in the early years of this 80-year period the dominant racial group among the immigrants to Grand Rapids was German, rather than Dutch. As early as 1867, Superintendent Strong reported 203 students in attendance at private German schools out of a total attendance of 2966 in the city in public, parochial and private schools. The German residents made a very real contribution to the culture of the city, especially in the field of music.

One of the unusual features of education in Grand Rapids was the excellent collection of the Kent Scientific Institute. Many of the civic and educational leaders of Grand Rapids were active in the institute and took great pride in the collection. Because the Kent exhibits were customarily stored in the high school building, they were available for use as instructional material; they contributed to the interest of pupils in scientific subjects, one of the characteristics of the high school. The availability of these scientific collections housed by the board of education for use in instruction set up a tradition of close cooperation, still observed between the Grand Rapids Museum and the Grand Rapids Public Schools.

Another outstanding feature of the early Grand Rapids schools

was the high quality of the drawing and other art work. An exhibit at the World's Industrial and Centennial Exposition at New Orleans drew much praise which led to requests from the French and Japanese governments for materials to be used in permanent exhibits in their countries. In 1889 an exhibit at the Bay View summer school was commended highly and was borrowed later by an Indiana Normal School to be used to encourage its graduates to attempt to do work of that same high quality.

From 1861, when the Grand Rapids Library Association was disbanded and placed its books in the custody of the Board of Trustees of District No. 1, until 1903, when the Grand Rapids Board of Education formally turned over the library to the newly-formed Library Commission, the public library was a part of the public school system. This relationship undoubtedly explains why, throughout this period, the public library was administered with an awareness of the needs of children and the contribution which the library could make to the instructional program.

Although as early as 1855 rate bills were abolished in Grand Rapids for all but the high school grades, it was not until 1868, just a few months before the State Legislature passed a law making it mandatory for school districts to levy enough money by property tax to support the schools without charging tuition or levying rate bills for pupils residing in the school district, that the Grand Rapids high school did away with tuition for resident pupils. Many other school districts in Michigan had already stopped charging tuition and I think it probable that one of the chief reasons,

if not the determining factor, which prevented Grand Rapids from taking the step earlier was the opposition of Edwin A. Strong, who followed a belief that high school students would do better work and be more appreciative of their opportunities if they were required to pay a tuition fee.

In the fall of 1860, the Union School (East Side) offered a teachers' class for those who were preparing to teach. This move was the first of many attempts on the part of the Grand Rapids schools to set training programs to train local young folk for positions in the school. Although some of the attempts were ambitious and original, none of them was highly successful; the idea therefore was abandoned when the board of education abolished the Grand Rapids Normal School in 1900. The reason given was that there was an oversupply of graduates, who could not all be placed in the schools, but there is some evidence to support a belief that the abolition of the school was also a triumph for those who felt that the local training program was inadequate, and only teachers with training in state normal schools or colleges should be employed.

As early as 1867, a teachers' salary schedule was adopted by the trustees of District No. 1, based on the position held, and experience. This schedule was followed by other schedules, and, although it is difficult to generalize on matters of this kind, I feel that it is safe to say that salaries in Grand Rapids were comparatively good. Part of the time they were much above the average, and in spite of many determined attempts to reduce teachers' salaries, they were held at a fairly high level. The fact that the

principle of paying teachers on the basis of an adopted schedule was established so early probably helped to maintain good salaries and reduced controversy on the board about the salary of individual teachers. I think it is interesting that in his first annual report, issued in 1872, Superintendent Anson J. Daniels advocated the payment to primary teachers of salaries equal to those paid in higher grades. Not until 1944 did the Grand Rapids Board of Education adopt a schedule embodying the principle of equal pay regardless of grade taught.

It is interesting to speculate on the possible effect on the development of the Grand Rapids schools and the location of buildings if the board of education had adopted the proposal to build a downtown building to house the library, museum, ungraded school, night school, and board of education offices, a move seriously considered in 1880, and again in 1882. It seems to me that such a move could easily have brought about a change in the present location of the museum and library buildings, and it is also quite possible that the move would have delayed the transfer of the control of the museum and library from the board of education to the library and museum boards.

Although Grand Rapids, founded relatively late among Michigan cities, grew rapidly, and before 1865 became the second largest city in Michigan, school housing has always been comparatively adequate. There have been notable exceptions, one of them in 1865, when the State Superintendent of Public Instruction felt it necessary to comment, in his annual report, on the need for more and

better school buildings in Grand Rapids, and in the early 1890's and again in the early 1900's the need for proper housing for high school pupils became acute before new buildings were provided.

Only once during the first 80 years of Grand Rapids' history did financial conditions become so bad that educational progress was seriously affected. This most serious financial blow was the Panic of 1837 when Grand Rapids was young. The poverty-stricken village was for a time unable to do much to provide adequate schools but, as I have pointed out earlier, this lack of money may have helped to focus attention on the need for good public schools as soon as they could be provided. Although there were periods of business depression in Grand Rapids on many occasions during the 80 years covered by this paper, the strength and virility of the lumber and furniture industries, the backbone of Grand Rapids' economy, were so great that money conditions never became bad enough at any time to prevent reasonably adequate support for the schools.

Although there were some examples of graft on the part of the board members, especially during the years (1890-1906) when the moral tone of the board seems to have been at the lowest point, the graft was comparatively petty. The textbook scandals were inexcusable, but probably not a great deal of money was involved, and it is likely that comparatively little school-tax money was diverted from legitimate school use. The big ward-elected boards that governed the schools between 1871 and 1906 were often slow, inefficient and petty, but not fundamentally corrupt. They were

for the most part made up of serious-minded citizens interested in helping to develop good schools. Only on relatively few occasions did political considerations or the possibility of personal gain become the basis for board action.

The Woman Suffrage Movement in Grand Rapids, which must be credited with bringing about the early election of women to the board of education, rendered a considerable service to the cause of improved education in Grand Rapids. The women board members not only brought a feminine point of view into the consideration of school problems; they seemed also to be above the average of the men board members in ability. This, it seems to me, is to be expected because in those days, when the right to vote and run for office was first granted to women, a woman had to have recognized ability to be elected.

Organized labor did not play a great part in determining educational policies in Grand Rapids during the first 80 years of the history of the city. At times there were representatives of labor on the board of education, but they were never identified in any of the newspaper articles commenting on board action. There is no evidence to show that the labor representatives had a program for which they worked or even that they voted as a unit on issues before the board.

To the Grand Rapids Kindergarten Association should be given much credit, not only for the establishment of kindergartens in the schools of Grand Rapids, but also for the missionary work done by the organization in winning acceptance for the philosophy and methods of the New Education Movement. The association was active from 1873

to 1900 in promoting kindergartens, and continued after that date to work for improved teaching and better equipment in the kindergartens. These efforts in behalf of kindergartens were helpful in improving conditions in all of the elementary grades.

The teaching of reading got much attention in the Grand Rapids schools and seems to have been one of the strongest features of the school program. As early as 1875, supplementary readers were purchased for use in the elementary grades. Much attention was given to the problems of teaching reading, in the annual reports of all of the superintendents--evidence that there was much study of this problem and a constant effort to improve the methods used and the results accomplished.

Beginning with the establishment of the higher department of the East Side Union School in 1849 through 1906, the academic education offered at the secondary level in Grand Rapids was relatively good. The secondary school leadership was strong, and interested in maintaining high academic standards, and the high school earned and retained the reputation of a good academic, conservative, college-preparatory school.

The conservative, academic character of the secondary school program in Grand Rapids, with the lack of proper housing, is undoubtedly responsible for the relative slowness with which the so-called practical subjects such as commercial and manual training were included. The Grand Rapids Board of Trade and many other interested citizens were forced to work hard to overcome the inertia of the board of education before commercial and manual training were included in the high school

program on a really practical basis.

Teacher morale was relatively good in Grand Rapids throughout most of the years before 1906. Salaries were comparatively good. The superintendents were all professionally trained, and quite able. Salaries were paid on a definite schedule throughout much of this period. Although board members sometimes interfered with the appointment of or brought about the dismissal of individual teachers, the recommendations of the superintendent usually were followed in such matters. Teacher morale reached a high point between 1900-1906 when teachers showed a commendable spirit as shown by attendance at college summer sessions, attendance at teachers' conventions, travel, and other activities which proved their interest in professional growth.

Grand Rapids was the first city in Michigan to establish a school savings plan, in which it was also a leader among the cities of the nation. Members of the board of education and others were much interested in this program; there were many requests from other cities for information about the plan as operated in Grand Rapids.

Grand Rapids was also one of the pioneers in establishing a summer playground program. This activity, which was a part of Superintendent Elson's program of expanding the services of the school, was popular in Grand Rapids and the playgrounds were visited by educators from other cities interested in studying its possibilities. It is of especial interest that the method of financing the program by appropriations from both the city and school budgets has been widely adopted as a means of financing such programs.

Much difficulty was encountered in getting a pure water supply for the schools, and as late as 1906 this problem had not been solved except by the expensive expedient of using bottled water. For those of us who have been for so many years accustomed to having pure water provided by cities to its citizens, it is hard to realize that Grand Rapids should have been plagued with this problem for so long, and continued to pump impure water through its mains.

In conclusion, I feel that it is important to invite attention to the rivalry between the residents of Grand Rapids caused by the river and the natural boundary which it set up between the residents of the city. This feeling of separation was intensified by the fact that for so many years the bridges were all toll bridges, and the charging of tolls discouraged the flow of traffic from one side of the river to the other, thereby encouraging the setting up of duplicate facilities on each side of the river to meet the needs and desires of each group.

In the evolution of the public schools, the East Side, because of its larger population and earlier development, early assumed the leadership and maintained it throughout the 80-year period studied in this paper. Rivalry between the communities on the east and west sides of the river has been more helpful and stimulating than destructive, and actually resulted in improvements in the program of public education.

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