

Schools

YPSILANTI GLEANINGS

PAST SCENES and OLD TIMES

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OCTOBER 1973

THE EARLY ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF YPSILANTI

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Since the days when Ypsilanti became an established village, the importance of her schools has been a chief feature of great pride. For instance, it has been said, to have graduated from the Ypsilanti Union Seminary was an honor only second to a similar success at the University of Michigan.

We know very little about these earliest schools in our pioneer settlement. However, THE WASHTENAW COUNTY HISTORY for 1881 says: "The first school without the village was taught by Catharine Rosencrantz". Perhaps this is the school mentioned in THE DETROIT GAZETTE for December 7, 1825:- "Wednesday, the schoolhouse in Woodruff's Grove entirely burned." We do know that these schools, which were not 'free' schools were but an desultory effort to teach children the alphabet. Children were called together and organized into classes and were taught by a local lady who had the time and some education and was glad to get paid, small as the salary was, for her services. It soon became obvious that the efforts were not accomplishing the results sought so a full-time teacher was hired and in 1826 a Miss Hope Johnson opened a school 'at the Grove' (*). About the same time a school was started by Miss Olive Gorton in Ypsilanti. Miss Gorton married Lyman Graves (1794-1880) and their son, Albert (1840-1921) fondly wrote of his mother:-

* 'at the Grove' - there were many 'groves' in the Ypsilanti area and we do not know if this 'grove' mentioned referred to Woodruff's Grove or not.

Mrs. Olive Gorton Graves was born in New Lisbon, Otsego Co., New York, Sept. 30, 1804, and died Oct. 29, 1886. In 1825, with her father's family, she crossed Lake Erie in the schooner 'Red Jacket', Captain Walker, master. After a somewhat perilous voyage of about two weeks, they reached Detroit, transferred their effects to a barge and plunged into a wilderness, pulling the barge up the Huron River to Woodruff's Grove on the east bank of the Huron River. At the age of 15 she had entered upon the vocation of school teaching, which she followed upon her arrival here, by opening the first school in Ypsilanti on the west bank of the river. Children were sent to her school from the east side of the river and were rowed across the river by herself morning and evening.

After teaching there long enough, at two dollars a week, with the money saved she purchased her wedding outfit and in August, 1826, she was married to the late Lyman Graves.

During the summer of 1828 a Miss Mirian Brooks took over from Mrs. Graves. In the winter of 1828-29 Mrs. Mark Norris opened part of her home for classrooms. In 1830 a little brick school house was built on the east side of the river by Wm. Harwood with a Miss Laura Vail as teacher. Mr. Harwood owned many acres on the east side of the Huron River. When he came in 1825 all the lots in the original plat were in his holdings. He built the small brick building which stood until 1929 on Babbitt Street in back of the present Woodruff school. This modest building was really the beginning of the Ypsilanti Public Schools. Wm. Harwood gave the land for the East Public Square bounded by Lincoln Street to Park Street and from Parsons to Babbitt Street. The little brick school was on the edge of the square.

Another brick building begun in 1831, 110 River Street was used by the Methodist Congregation until 1835. The building was subsequently bought by the Baptist Society and used until 1847 after which it was given over to school purposes. Later this building was sold to the Worden Brothers who had to remove school furnishings before they could establish their factory. About 1857 this school was united with District #4 on the east side of the river. We have not been able to find out if this school was kept up until 1866 when a four room brick building was erected on the northeast corner of East Congress, (Michigan Avenue) and Prospect.

Another school of the early days was 'The Peck Street Primary'. This school stood on the property of Joseph and Sophia Churchill Peck who in 1823 came with their five children to this section from New York state. They first built a small log cabin and then a commodious farm house. The Peck home was a center of hospitality and a cordial welcome was given to all new settlers and travellers coming along. Soon this section was known as 'Peckville'. We do not know the exact date the brick schoolhouse, on the Peck property on East Forest, was built. The property was deeded by Joseph Peck to School District #3 for \$40 in 1850 and was known as the Fourth Ward Schoolhouse. In 1858 ninety-nine children were enrolled. This school property was later deeded to Mr. George George, November 17 1866 and a new site for a school was chosen. The property was later

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purchased by Mr. Frederick J. Swaine. A few years ago the Swaine property, 101 E. Forest, was purchased by Mr. and Mrs. Robert R. Anschuetz.

The first public school west of the river was taught by Chauncey Joslin, (1813-1889), who came to Ypsilanti in 1837 and who studied in local law offices and became Judge of Probate in 1852 and Mayor of Ypsilanti in 1858 and who served on the School Board for twenty years. The school in which he taught was called 'The White Schoolhouse, District #4'. The building, enlarged and altered is at 137 N. Washington and is the home of James Westfall and his sister, Mary. The building was originally a one room building and was used for school purposes up until the time of the purchase of the old Seminary in 1848 when it was no longer used for a school building. There was no bell on the room and school was opened when the teacher had called the children from all directions by ringing a large hand bell. From records in our archives we find that there were only fifteen houses on that side of the river at that time. The pupils brought their dinners in pails and on pleasant days ate outdoors under the trees, and when the teacher wanted them back in the schoolroom she rapped on the window with a very long ruler.

Recently Mrs. Lorenz Kisor gave an interesting and valuable gift to the Archives which reads:

Re. of Mr. Glover eighty-nine cents in full
for State, Town, County and School tax on S 1/2
of SE 1/4 40 acres for the year 1843
Ypsilanti (signed) A. Craddock
January 31, 1844

In 1851 another district south of Congress, (Michigan Ave.) united with District #4. The Ypsilanti City Directory for 1860 lists: 'Washington Street Primary School - west side of Washington between Catherine and Woodward', and a Miss Helen Buck is listed as 'teacher in the Washington Street Primary School'. This school was also called 'The Southside School' or 'The Red Brick School'. The building was struck by lightning and extensively damaged. The site was bought by Dr. Parmenio Davis (1816-1883) in order to convert the remains of the school building into a dwelling. The Abstract states that on December 29, 1864, School District #4 gave a Warranty Deed to the Doctor for lots #51 and #52. The consideration was \$1,254.00. Just how much Dr. Davis changed the lines of the original school building we are unable to determine. On December 4, 1867, Parmenio and Carlita Showerman Davis, gave a Warranty Deed to William H. Payne for lots #51, #52 and #53, for a consideration of \$3,000.00. Mr. Payne had been hired as Principal of the Ypsilanti Schools in 1866 and served until 1870. The Paynes with their family, were probably the first occupants of the new dwelling that replaced the old schoolhouse. The new dwelling, with the Paynes in residence, became a social and civic center for the community. The organizational meeting for the Ladies'

Library Association was held in the library of the Payne home and Mrs. Eva Fort Payne was one of the original incorporators of the Association in 1869. The Payne family moved away from Ypsilanti in 1870. Today the property is owned by Dr. and Mrs. Bradley Harris, 206 S. Washington. The original school stood in an oak grove for an old article on the schools says:- ...'In my early childhood there still stood in the center of the sidewalk in front of the house three large oak trees with walks on either side wide enough for two to walk abreast. They are gone now, victims of our straight sidewalk committee.'

There were other schools and other teachers scattered around the village. The teacher's salary was so very nominal and in not a few instances districts allowed their houses to be occupied by whomsoever would undertake to teach and for whatever he could obtain from his patrons. Such was the state of educational affairs in Ypsilanti from 1836 until 1848-49.

In 1840 a Francis Griffin established a school. He first used the meeting room of the Presbyterian Church on Pearson Street and later located in the "Nunnery" on Congress Street. He advertised to teach Latin and Greek and when his pupils inquired about these courses advised them to wait for a more convenient time to take them. About the same time a Mr. Landreth opened his school which was located in the Larzalere Block at the corner of Washington and Congress, (Michigan Avenue.) He later went to Detroit where he established a very flourishing school for a year or so when Detroit, in 1842, opened the first free tax supported school in the state.

In May 1836 Charles Woodruff and his parents, from Waterloo, New York, came and settled at Carpenter's Corners in Pittsfield Township. Charles went east to Allegheny College in Pennsylvania graduating in 1841. Upon his return he was hired to teach in Mr. Landreth's school. Soon after he hired Woodruff Mr. Landreth left for Detroit and Charles Woodruff took over his duties. He offered opportunity to 'teachers of district schools to improve themselves in the branches of learning pertaining to their department of teaching'. It might be reasonable to assume that the location in Ypsilanti a few years later of the State Normal School may have been influenced by the beginning in training teachers made by this earlier school.

Charles Woodruff wished to move his school away from the thickly built portion of the city and rented a large building, 'Tecumseh' built in 1844 as a railroad hotel, and which had been standing empty for many years. Woodruff wanted the city to buy a building for his school but they refused, so he rented a portion of it. He held very successful classes there until 1845. One day a Reverend Lyman H. Moore, Pastor of the Baptist Church during the forties, came as a visitor to Woodruff's School and enrolled his son and brother as pupils. Reverend Moore was a frequent visitor to the school and told Charles Woodruff of his great interest in the advancement of education. Soon, Woodruff always claimed that it was without his knowledge, Pastor Moore bought the complete building and opened his school which he called 'The Ypsilanti Seminary'. The academic year

year was divided into two terms of 22 weeks commencing the 1st Monday of September and the 2nd Monday in February. The tuition was for \$3 to \$8 and board and room \$14 per quarter of 11 weeks. William L. Easton and Mary B. F. Brown were Principals and Lyman Moore and Wm. A. Moore, Proprietors. By act of the State Legislature, approved March 12, 1849, the 'Ypsilanti Seminary' received its full organization under Board of Education of District #4. In 1851 a second district was added and soon other districts, including those across the river, united with District #4 and thus gradually and by common consent the school became known as 'The Union Seminary'.

m. Perhaps Charles Woodruff could have stayed on as a teacher in Reverend Moore's school but he was angered by what he considered Moore's underhand treatment and withdrew from school teaching as an occupation. However he always remained a champion of good education for all. Indeed when he became editor of THE SENTINEL he wrote many editorials tending to advance the cause of education in Ypsilanti. Charles Woodruff was born in New York State in 1816 and died in 1896 at the home of his son, Marcus Tullius Woodruff, at 717 Cross Street. Woodruff School, built in 1901, was named in his honor and not for Benjamin Woodruff.

In April of 1853 Reverend Joseph Estabrook became Principal of 'The Union Seminary'. The school became known as 'the model' and much progress was made along intellectual lines.

Rooms were rented to students whose homes were outside of Ypsilanti and to its teachers. For awhile more students from outside attended the school than from the school district. The first graduating class received their diplomas in 1852.

In the 1910 December issue of "The Ypsi-Sem", Henry Rm Utley, class of '57 wrote of what he remembered about the Seminary:-

I first attended Ypsilanti Union Seminary in the early fall of 1852. I was the bashfullest kind of boy, fresh from the farm, and everything in the town was to me grand and impressive. The old Seminary building stood on the same lot as it is at present, but was close to the sidewalk, immediately at the corner. It was originally built for a hotel in the stage coach days. But the opening of the railroad sidtracked it for hotel purposes. After standing idle for sometime, it was bought by some public spirited citizens for about \$8,000 and in 1849 was opened as a public school and seminary under the auspices of the school board of the consolidated district of Ypsilanti.

It was a two-story brick in the form of a letter 'L', the lower wing running west from the corner and the shorter running north. The latter was extended about 1853 to meet the demand for more room. Attached to the west wing was a two-story frame building, originally a dwelling. The ground floor of the entire building was devoted to recitation and study rooms. The second floor, having been guest rooms in the hotel days, was left unchanged and the rooms were rented as dormitories to non-resident students. The west wing was occupied by boys, the north by girls. Professor James Jackson, the vice-principal, occupied a room in the boys' wing and attended to the preservation of order. Miss A. C. Rogers, the 'preceptress', had a room in the girls' wing. The regulation of the dormitories was very strict. A bell in a cupola on the roof gave signals for rising in the morning, retiring at night, for chapel exercises

and for changing classes. All lights in the rooms were required to be out at 10 o'clock at night. No one was permitted to leave the building during study hours without a pass.

Professor Joseph Estabrook was the Principal, having been called from Tecumseh to take charge of the school in the fall of 1852. He remained several years. Miss Rogers, the preceptress, resigned at the end of that year to accept a like position at the Normal. She was succeeded by Miss Harriet M. Cutcheon, who continued as preceptress many years.

The pupils of the school were mainly boys and girls of the town. But there was a goodly number of non-residents from neighboring towns. All the dormitories being occupied by them, while others found quarters in private houses or roomed over stores on Main street. There were three male teachers and a like number of women. The teaching staff of that day would certainly compare in point of character and ability with that of any educational institution, even of this day.

Beside class studies, literary exercises were required of all. Every Friday evening was given to public affairs, in which, following a literary program, special pleasures afforded free opportunity for boys and girls to meet and mingle. I feel sure that every one of the students of my day have preserved throughout their lives the most delightful recollections of their teachers and of those with whom they studied and recited in the old Ypsilanti Seminary.

Joseph Estabrook, Principal of the Seminary from 1853 to 1865 was born in Bath, New Hampshire in 1820 and died in Olivet, Michigan, in 1894. His family settled near Clinton, Michigan, about 1835. He graduated from Oberlin College in 1847. When he left college he taught at various district schools near Clinton and Tecumseh and came to Ypsilanti in 1853. In 1865 he became Superintendent of Schools in East Saginaw and in 1871 was appointed 'Principal' of the Normal school in Ypsilanti.

He was also a Regent of the University of Michigan and State Superintendent of Education. Professor Estabrook was a much loved citizen of our town. In THE HISTORY OF MICHIGAN STATE NORMAL COLLEGE (pub. 1899), the author, Daniel Putnam, says of his friend and colleague: 'No teacher ever connected with the school was more loved, was remembered with kindlier feelings, or greeted wherever he went, with warmer or more sincere words of personal regards.' Estabrook School, 1555 W. Cross was named in honor of Joseph Estabrook. In 1880 Reverend Estabrook went to Olivet College to teach and remained there until his death.

No history of the Seminary would be complete without mentioning the Cutcheon brothers and sisters who came here from Penbrooke, New Hampshire. There were ten children of James and Hannah Tripp McCutcheon, which is how the name was spelt in the New England area. The first to come was Dr. Lewis Cutcheon who was a co-author of a textbook on physiology and who traveled lecturing on that subject. In 1849 under the auspices of the Superintendent of Public Instruction he gave lectures to teachers and students of the Seminary. Many times his lectures were so well attended that the assembly room of the school was too small and a larger room at one of the local churches was used. Early in 1853 when Miss Rogers, the Preceptress resigned, he called the attention of the Board to his sister, Harriet, then teaching at East Bloomfield, New

York, and she was appointed to the position.

Harriet, (1817-1908), attended the local academy in her home town of Pembroke, taught in a district school there and graduated from Mt. Holyoke Seminary in 1851. She came to the Seminary shortly after Joseph Estabrook. She left Ypsilanti in 1860 and was Preceptress of Monroe High School and of Monroe Female Academy, head of the Women's Department at the University of Wisconsin and Preceptress of Flint High School. She returned to Ypsilanti to help take care of the family of one of her brothers and spent the remaining years of her life as an honored resident of Ypsilanti during valuable volunteer work.

Anna (1840-1921) attended the school in Pembroke and in 1854 joined her older sister in Ypsilanti and graduated from the Seminary in 1857. She taught schools in Michigan, Tennessee and Illinois and taught for eight years in the Department of Literature at the Normal School and for thirteen years was the senior Principal of the Detroit Seminary. In the summer it was her habit to take young ladies to Europe touring Great Britain and the Continent. She, too, returned to Ypsilanti and for the Seminary Semi-Centennial celebration in 1899 she gave the first of the series of addresses by the Alumni and was Secretary of the Alumni Library Committee.

Sullivan (1833-1900) and Byron (1836-1908) obviously impressed by what they heard from their sisters about the

Seminary and Ypsilanti followed them here. Sullivan graduated from Dartmouth College in 1856 and the same year he became Principal of the Seminary and took charge of the boys' dormitory. After two years of successful work as a teacher he accepted the position as Superintendent of Schools in Springfield, Illinois. While there he put into operation the first public school system in the state of Illinois. He also met and was a friend of young Abraham Lincoln and the two of them liked to play a form of hand-ball together - sometimes ~~cracking~~ their heads together in the excitement of the game. While in Springfield he gained admission to the bar. In 1859 he returned to Ypsilanti and married Joseph Louise Moore (Seminary-class of 1858), daughter of Charles Moore who built the house at 110 Woodward now the home of Mr. and Mrs. Lorenz Kisor. He and his wife moved to Detroit where Sullivan had a large and lucrative law practice. He was also interested in banking and was President of the Dime Savings Bank of Detroit from 1884 and of the Ypsilanti Savings Bank from 1892, until his death. He was twice a member of the Legislature and was Speaker of the House in 1863.

Byron, too, stated his education in Pembroke but came to this city in order to graduate from the Seminary in 1857. He graduated from the University of Michigan in 1861 and in that fall became Principal of the school here. In July 1862, under President's Lincoln's call for 3000,000 men, he recruited Company B., Twentieth Michigan Volunteers, at Ypsilanti, and was

commissioned Captain. It is interesting to note that every¹⁴ commissioned officer, four of the five Sergeants, six of the eight Corporals and a large proportion of the privates, were pupils of the Seminary. Byron was in twenty-five battles and engagements and became Major and Lieutenant-Colonel and Brevet Colonel of the 20th for 'gallant service'. He became Colonel of the 27th Michigan and was Brevet Brigadier-General for gallantry at the Battle of the Wilderness and received a Congressional Medal of Honor. In 1863 he married Marie Ammie Warner (Seminary-class of 1857) and in 1866 received the degree of LL. B. from the University of Michigan Law School and M.A. from the Literary Department. In 1867 he moved his family to Manistee, Michigan and while there he was Congressman from 1883 to 1891. In 1891 Byron moved to Grand Rapids and there resumed his law practice. Although Byron's active connection with the Seminary was not a long one, he, as were his brother and sisters always most loyal to the school and to the city and he delivered the main address at the Semi-Centennial of the Seminary in 1899.

On Sunday morning, March 29th 1857, the original Seminary building was destroyed by fire. Temporary quarters were found and - perhaps to the student's dismay - school work was hardly interrupted. A new building was soon erected and it was said that it was the finest school building of its kind. Dedication day, August 17, 1858, coincided exactly with the day that gas lights appeared in Ypsilanti. On January 7, 1859 the famous

Horace Greeley lectured at the Seminary his topic being "Great Men".

In 1859 another school building in Ypsilanti burned. The original building of 'The Normal', founded in 1849, burned to the ground. When he had made his report to the State Board of Education advising them to accept Ypsilanti as the site for the Normal School John D. Pierce, 'Father of Public Instruction in Michigan' and the first State Superintendent, had said:-

'...The village of Ypsilanti is sufficiently large to furnish every facility for boarding pupils, and the character of its population, and the deep interest manifested by them upon the subject of education, cannot fail to surround the institution with good influences.'

A second fire, December 8, 1877, completely destroyed the second Seminary building. Again the students were given class work in buildings scattered around the city. The third building was dedicated in 1879. At that time R.W. Putnam was Superintendent and he stayed until 1891 when he left to become a professor at Kalamazoo College. This third building, too, was partially destroyed by fire May 3, 1894 but quickly repaired in a better style.

The following excerpt is taken from an article "An Historical Sketch of Ypsilanti High School" written by Carolyn Case of the class of 1916 for that year's 'Ypsi-Dixit'.

The first graduating class received their diplomas in the year 1852, and since then there has been an annual succession of

of graduating classes with the exception of 1872 and 1873, during which years the High School and academic department of the Normal college were combined. (*) It is interesting to note that the first graduating class was composed of three young women. This is rather remarkable in view of the fact that in early years this was about the only full college preparatory school in the state, and as the University at that time did not admit women, the alumni of the school were, for the first twelve years, almost exclusively men. In the late fifties and early sixties there were two sets of graduates. In 1860 and 1861 there are graduation programs bearing date of the last Friday in September. These students took a six weeks' review after vacation to prepare for their University entrance examination. Those not going to college were graduated less formally the last of June. The classical section of the class of '62 remained in the High School one year after graduation, completing the first year of their University work there...In 1870 the University opened its doors to women and since then the proportion of young women in the graduating classes has increased until now they number more than half of the outgoing class.

...Some of the subjects formerly taught are: Elements of Criticism, Moral Science, Mental Philosophy, Evidences of Christianity, Astronomy, Logic Greek, University Algebra, Intellectual Philosophy and Ancient Geography.

No matter how time consuming the class work or how strict the school routine young people have always found time for school pranks - and the pupils of the Seminary were no different in that respect. One of the favorite pastimes was to climb up into the old clock tower and be there when the clock struck even though the escapade was against the school rules. The sound was deafening - but it was a challenge and something to be

(** We have unable to find this information anywhere else.

done before graduating - at least by the boys. All the classroom bells were controlled by a clock in the principal's office and once long ago a group of boys set the clock ahead with the happy result that all classes were dismissed early. We don't know whether or not the culprits were found out!

In 1896 Austin George became the Superintendent of Schools in Ypsilanti. He was born June 15th, 1841 at Litchfield, Michigan and at the age of twelve he lost his right arm in the machinery of a flouring mill at Jonesville. He came to the Normal and while there in the summer of 1863 he was instrumental in raising the Normal Company "E" of the 17th Michigan Infantry and he went to the front as company clerk. After the battles of South Mountain and Antietam he held the positions of Regimental postmaster and clerk of Brigade at Division Headquarters. He returned to the Normal and graduated in March 1863, and from Kalamazoo College in 1866. He taught at Kalamazoo College and was Superintendent of the schools there. In 1882 he returned to the Normal in charge of the Practice School and while there the name 'Practice' was changed to 'Training School' and he also started "The Normal News". While he was Superintendent of Schools in Ypsilanti not only did he increase the enrollment of the Seminary by fifty percent but he was also active in community affairs being a city Alderman and was active in the development and the building of the city water works and while he was a

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member of the Board of Public Works the sewer system of the city was devised and the principal sewers constructed. The 1903 'Ypsi-Dixit' says of him: "Professor George will be remembered in Ypsilanti, as a public spirited citizen, one ready to do his full share of public work without regard to compensation, as a warm personal friend to a great number of people in the town; but he will be remembered especially by those who during the years of his Superintendency went out from the schools bearing the impress of his high and manly character. Austin George died in 1903.

Early in 1900 the 'Union Seminary' had its name changed to 'High School'. But a much loved name is hard to change or be forgotten and many who went there and taught there still referred to the High School as 'The Seminary'. At any rate, the old building was much too crowded and lacked up to date facilities. As early as 1911 plans were hopefully being made by Superintendent William B. Arbaugh and the members of the School Board for a new building. After two school bonds were turned down by the people of Ypsilanti, City and Township, the needed amount was approved and in January of 1916 the new school was opened for inspection by the public. A newspaper article of that month, describing the opening and praising the new school quoted this short poem sent in by an unnamed citizen of Ypsilanti:-

When I paid my winter taxes
 I was hot around the neck;
 When I saw the nice new building
 It cooled me off a speck
 'Taxpayer'

The Superintendent of Schools of Ypsilanti in 1916 was William R. Arbaugh who had come to Ypsilanti from Ohio in 1896 as Principal and in 1903 became Superintendent. The 'Ypsi-Dixit' of 1916 says of him:- 'His interest in his work in this city has been a deep-seated one and one that has accomplished a great deal for our benefit.' Mr. Arbaugh left Ypsilanti in November of 1919 to become General Secretary of the Clearing House of Schools of Wayne County.

The Principal of the Central High School in 1916 was Stanley Morris a graduate of Oberlin College who came to the city in 1914. He left in 1918 for war community service under the Army and Navy Department Commission on Training Camp Activities.

The faculty of Central High School in 1916 were:

Edith Steere - Algebra

Jessie C. Laird - German

DeForest Ross - Physics and Chemistry

Carrie E. McKnight - English

Branson A. Walpole - Science and Agriculture(*)

Daniel Ohlinger - Manual Training

Ethel Minnard - English

Ellen Hoff - Librarian

Jessie C. Swaine=Domestic Sci.

George W. Frasier - Science

Elsie Cooper - Latin

Carrie A. Hardy - Science

(*) Ypsilanti Central High School was one of the first high schools in the state to teach Agriculture.

As in other towns and cities all over this country the early parochial schools of our area have been an extremely important part in our development. Any article on the schools of Ypsilanti would be lacking if it did not include something of the first years of the St. John Elementary school.

In 1862 Father Edward Van Paemel came as Priest for the St John Baptist Church and stayed until 1871. Father Van Paemel came from Detroit to Ypsilanti but had been born in Belgium and came to America while still a seminarian. In 1862 the Parish purchased two lots on Cross Street adjoining the Church property and there built a parish house. A little frame school house was added to the church property in 1867. These were two adjoining lots purchased from Patrick Kelly on Florence Street. We do not know just what this school looked like some, say it was simply the Kelly home remodeled. The education was elementary since the children left school about the age of twelve. It has been said that all early discipline problems were attended to immediately by Father Van Paemel's strong right hand. The earliest teachers in this school were 'lay' teachers; Miss Elizabeth Foy, Miss Maggie Murphy, Miss Bridget Monaghan, and Mr. Michael Moren and a Mr. Devlin.

The Priest who succeeded Father Van Paemel was Father Patrick Murray. He, too, was interested in teaching and spent much of his time in the little school. He loved playing with the

the children at recess time but he, too, was quick with discipline.

Father William DeBever took charge of Saint John's Parish in 1876 and one of the problems facing his pastorate was that he found the first school inadequate as a building and as a center of learning. With his typical directness he attacked the problems of building a new school. The frame schoolhouse was torn down and a two story brick structure was built in its place. Sisters of Providence from Terre Haute, Indiana, were secured as instructors. A square frame house on the lot adjoining the school property was purchased on November 4, 1880 to be the home of the sisters.

The second school opened in 1884 and a pupil of that time, Mrs. Sarah Austin, has written what she remembered of the opening exercises:-

The children were grouped in a formation to make the figures of 5 and 4, as it was Father DeBever's fifty-fourth birthday. They presented Father with a fur cap, which I well remember cost \$17. As visiting pastor of the Milan and Whitaker Parishes, Father DeBever had to take long cold drives in the winter so the fur cap was considered a practical gift.

There were six sisters and instruction was given in elementary and in high school subjects, algebra, chemistry and geometry were taught to the upper classes. Music held an important place in the curriculum for Father DeBever was a

student of music and always interested in musical activities. Botany was taught by a Sister Saint Cosmos and her field trips were very popular. Needlework, with emphasis upon needle work tapestry was stressed. One little girl, working in needlepoint on "Christ Blessing the Children" caused considerable merriment in her class when it was being worked on for she was frequently heard to say, 'I'm going to do our Lord's head in chenille'.

This school provided accomodations for boarding pupils. In the sisters' home was a dormitory with fourteen beds. Girls from Clinton, Manchester, Wayne and other townships surrounding Ypsilanti availed themselves of these boarding priviledges. The girls rose at five o'clock and retired at 8:30. They played croquet on the ground between the church and the school and sometimes Father DeBever took them riding in his carriage.

Father DeBever left Ypsilanti in 1892, returning occasionally to substitute. He was elevated to the rank of Monsignor in 1906 and died in Dexter April 19, 1919 at the age of 89 years.

About 1896 the school was discontinued. Lack of funds was the principal reason for its closing, and for a short time after the Sisters left, lay teachers were hired to teach the lower grades. After the school closed no further use was made of the building for a number of years. During the pastorate of Father Kennedy about 1910 the Catholic Students' Club, with the help of interested townspeople, reclaimed the old school building and soon the parish found itself with a pleasant place for the meeting

of all parish organizations. This old school was also used²⁴ for awhile as the weekly meeting of the Rotary Club and when they moved their meeting place to the High School they donated to the St. John's Club House dishes, silver and linens which were greatly appreciated.

In 1922 Father Dennis Needham came to Ypsilanti. Plans were formulated for a new church and the basement was dug and plans were made to open a grade school in the fall of 1925. Dominican Sisters from Adrian, Michigan, were selected as teachers and the house at 309 N. Hamilton was purchased to be a home for the sisters. However, Father Needham died prematurely in 1925 and the Priest who succeeded him also died in 1931 before the completion of his plans for the church and school building. It was not until the Pastorate of Father Warren Peck in the 1930ties that the St. John the Baptist Elementary School was completed.

Other churches of Ypsilanti also had early schools connected with them. Many in our city will remember the Parish School of the Emmanuel Lutheran Church. The following information on this school was graciously given to us by Miss Edith Lidke, 279 Harris Road. Miss Lidke, herself, did not attend the school but had relatives and friends who did. Miss Lidke graduated from Central High School and also taught Latin at the high school.

"Emmanuel Lutheran Church established a Parish Day School in the 1880's which all children of the parish were required to attend. Public School attendance laws did not exist then. In 1884 there were fifty-two families listed on the membership roll. It seems about this time eight families did not send their children to the Parish School but to the Academy. The church school board members, the pastor and lay members became quite disturbed over the situation.

The school first of all aimed to teach Christian faith, but the children could not read and understand the Bible in the literary German because at home the families spoke 'low German' or 'Plattdeutsch'. So a great deal of time was spent in teaching the 'high German' or 'Literary German'. Records show that the Rev. Nionka, who left the church in 1890, had his brother come to help him with the classes.

Traditional hearsay gives the impression that attendance at the Parish School was required for the five school days of the week and for two or three years. This we learned in part from the late Mrs. Frank Lidke, Sr., mother of Frank J. Lidke who resides on East Forest Avenue. Her sister, the late Mrs. Henry Helzermann, nee Minnie Wolter, and her brother, the late Otto Wolter, husband of Mrs. Agnes Wolter, and Mrs. Lidke all attended this school in the 1880's. Mrs. Lidke used to tell how Mrs. Nat Hopkins, nee Mary Wallace, mother of Mrs. Laurence Thomas, nee Ellen Hopkins, used to come to

the school and teach the girls crocheting and knitting when she was a young woman and lived with her parents at the home at the corner of E. Michigan and S. Prospect, site of the present telephone building. On special holidays she sometimes invited the school children to her home and treated them to goodies. She even sensed when some children needed clothing and secured some for them. All of this was done by Mrs. Hopkins as a community project.

When the Parish Day School was established the classes met in the home of a member, the Esslinger family, who lived diagonally across from the present church building on N. River Street where the octagon house now stands. In 1886 the congregation built a schoolhouse on the east side of the church which stood at that time on the northeast corner of E. Michigan and N. Grove, the "A and W" stands there now. the Parish School was discontinued in the early 1890's. Instruction of the children continued on Saturday classes and sometimes after the public school hours.

The copy of the old church constitution translated from the German original says, Article 17: "The members of the congregation who are minors must attend Christian instruction." Article LV.Sec D. says: "The School Board members shall be an example to the congregation and especially to the youth in word and deed...They must care for the school in the best possible manner and carry out all orders of the congregation in this

They shall see to it that the teacher not only teaches according to the teaching plan but also practices it; that he begins school on time and holds it regularly. For this purpose the School Board members shall not only visit classes from time to time but also attend school public examinations; they especially note that the religious instructions be taught in the strict belief of the Evangelical Lutheran Church and the Bible stories. Above all they shall support the teacher and promote the best for the school as well as to see to it that the teacher receive regularly the salary promised by the congregation. They shall investigate all complaints made about the teacher and where possible minimize same as well as admonish in love the parents who send their children to a nonreligious school instead of to the Christian Parish School."

Most of the time the Pastor was also the teacher of the school"

In 1959 for the Centennial of the Emmanuel Lutheran Church Miss Lidke translated all of the material from the church's old Constitution for research material for that event.

Originally the black children of Ypsilanti attended the Old Seminary. However, in 1860 a separate school was provided for them, in an old shop, at the northeast corner of Adams and Congress streets and the first teacher was a Mr. Hall. This building was later moved up on Congress Street, west, and made into a double house, owned by W.W. Worden. In 1864 the first ward, or Adams Street School Building was erected, a one room

affair with one teacher, at east side of Adams near Buffalo. It is an historical fact that many of the black men who enlisted for the war came out of the infant class of this school. Miss Loretta A. Pitkin, mother of Mrs. Shelley Hutchinson, was the first teacher in this school. In the 1870's a Reverend Isaac Burdine, who died in April of 1896, was the teacher and he was always very proud of the fact that many of his pupils went on to graduate from the Seminary. In the 1920's the Harriet Street School was built at the SW corner of Hawkins and Harriet. Lewis M. Lash was an early Principal there and early teachers were: Mildred Forsberg, Edith M. Bates and Xema Skeels. In 1956 the name of this school was changed to 'Perry' School in honor of Dr. Lawrence C. Perry, a local dentist, community leader and a member of the School Board for many years.

All of the research material for this article, with the exception of Miss Lidke's material, was done in the Archives of the Museum from old newspaper articles, 'Ypsi-Dixit' year-books, and other resource material.