PAPERS FROM THE HISTORY SEMINAR OF

KALAMAZOO COLLEGE

NO. 21. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM FROM 1870 TO 1890

by

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January, 1949
"Religion, morality and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall be forever encouraged."

"Ordinance of 1787"
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</tr>
</tbody>
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Chapter I

The School System From 1870 To 1890

By 1870 the village of Bronson, legally changed to Kalamazoo in 1836, had grown enough to need and have six public schools. These were all the descendants of a temporary slab building erected in the fall of 1833. From 1870 until 1890 many changes occurred in the Kalamazoo school system. This paper will deal with these changes.

The Board of Education is the backbone of the Kalamazoo Public School System. It is important in that its members are elected by the citizens to run their schools. The first Board was elected on September 5, 1859. These elections were and still are on a non-partisan basis, because we believe that education should not be a "political football." The members are elected for a three year term and the

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1 Fuller, George N., Historic Michigan, vol. III, p. 156.
expiration of these terms has been staggered so that a completely "green" board does not have to take over at any time.\(^1\) It is easy to see that members who have a genuine interest in the education of our youth must be elected if the school system is to be successful.\(^2\)

In 1874 the BY-LAWS, RULES, and REGULATIONS of the DISTRICT BOARD of EDUCATION were published.\(^3\) The duties of the President, Secretary, and Treasurer of the Board were clearly defined and a list of standing committees, to be appointed by the President, was made. These committees were:

1. On Teachers and Schools.
4. On Finance, Accounts and Claims.
5. On Supplies and Heating Apparatus.

Section I and II of these BY-LAWS provided for the appointment of a Superintendent and set up his duties.\(^4\)

\(^1\) Thomas, James M., Thomas' Kalamazoo Directory and Business Advertiser for 1867 and 1868, Stone Brothers, 1867.
\(^2\) A list of the members of the Board will be found in the Appendix.
\(^3\) Minutes of the Board of Education from 1864 to 1882, ms., (hereafter referred to as Minutes I), pp. 268-70, found in the vault of the Administration Building.
\(^4\) A list of the Superintendents from 1857 to 1901 will be found in the Appendix.
For the purpose of aiding the Board of Education in the discharge of their duties, and to secure thoroughness in the course of study and efficient discipline in all the schools of the District, and for preserving and guarding all school property, a Superintendent shall be appointed.

The Superintendent shall act under the direction of the Board of Education. To him shall be committed the general superintendence of all Schools and School property, and the especial supervision of Schools not otherwise provided for.

A few provisions under the section of General Regulations are as follows:

1. The school year shall consist of forty weeks of school, commencing with the first Monday in September.

2. Schools are free to resident scholars, under the general School Law of the State. Non-resident pupils may be admitted to the schools under such regulations and at such rates of tuition as the Board of Education may from time to time establish.

3. There shall be a general public examination of all the schools under the charge of the Board in the last week of the winter term in each year, and at such other times as the Board may, by resolution, direct.

4. All marking in the Schools shall be on a scale of zero to one hundred. At examinations the standard for passing a study or grade shall be seventy-five.
5. All applicants for situations to teach in any of the Public Schools below the grade of High School shall pass an examination satisfactory to the Board before entering upon the duties of teacher.1

Up until 1874 the School District had embraced the whole village of Kalamazoo. However, in 1874 it was divided into three sub-districts.2

Sub-District No. 1 - Old Union
This sub-district included all west of Burr street, south of Main street, west of Elm street and north of Main.

Sub-District No. 2 - Lovell Street School
All east of and including Burr street to Main street.

Sub-District No. 3 - Frank Street School
All east of Elm street and north of Main street.

The territories of sub-district 4 - Portage School, sub-district 5 - Alcott School, and sub-district 6 - North West School were not defined. At this time rules for attendance were also set up. They provided that:

1. The high school and grammar school pupils attend the Union School.
2. All pupils of intermediate grades in sub-districts and throughout the village,

1 Minutes, I, p. 269.
2 Minutes, I, pp. 270-4.
School Districts in Kalamazoo Township in 1880.
except as specified below, attend the Union School.

3. Intermediate students of the fourth and fifth grade in sub-district 2 attend Lovell Street School.

4. Intermediate students of the fourth and fifth grade in sub-district 3 attend Frank Street School.

5. All primary scholars attend the school of the sub-districts in which they reside.

Attendance at Portage, Alcott and North West schools is made up of the lower grades, Primary scholars in their immediate vicinity.

Attendance at the various schools of Kalamazoo was recorded by the Superintendent and presented to the Board every month. At the end of the year a general report of attendance was given. In the years 1872, 1873, and 1874, there were five schools; in 1880 there were six; and by 1890, there were ten. Below are the figures for attendance as found in the Superintendent's reports to the Board of Education:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>1872</th>
<th>1873</th>
<th>1874</th>
<th>1880</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Old Union</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>771</td>
<td>710</td>
<td>720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Street</td>
<td>335</td>
<td>380</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lovell Street</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>294</td>
<td>444</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcott Street</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fortage Street</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodward</td>
<td>257</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1264</strong></td>
<td><strong>1536</strong></td>
<td><strong>1828</strong></td>
<td><strong>1706</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In 1871 there were 3058 children in Kalamazoo between the ages of five and twenty as compared with 3007 in 1880, and 5352 in 1890. Only 1966 of the 3058 children attended school in 1871, 2139 of 3007 in 1880, and 3289 of 5352 in 1890. In both instances--the number of children between the ages of five and twenty, and the number attending school--these totals were doubled between the years of 1871 and 1890. There was no marked increase of the number attending school, in comparison with the number of how many should attend, as one might expect. Roughly, I would say that about two out of three children between the ages of five and twenty attended school from 1871 until 1890.

It was reported in 1877, by the Kalamazoo Gazette, that the average number of days attended by

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1 As a comparison for statistical data of the schools, I have chosen 1871, 1880, and 1890, as key years for presenting the period to be covered in this paper.
2 Annual Reports of District No. 1, for 1871, 1880, 1890.
each pupil during the school year of 1876-1877 had increased. This increase was from 117.3 days to 130.2 days for the entire student attendance, while the increase in the high school had been from 143 days to 160.6 days.\(^1\) In both cases the increase was a substantial one and might be considered as a sign that education was becoming more and more important in the lives of the people.

School property was valued at $100,000.00 in 1871 and strangely enough the value in 1880 had decreased to $80,000.00. By 1890, however, a great increase is shown; during this year school property was valued at $220,000.00.\(^2\)

Now what was the cost of all this education in the Kalamazoo Public Schools? In 1877 we find reported that the cost of instruction per capita in the Kalamazoo Public Schools--based on the average number belonging--had decreased during the year 1876. In the primary schools the cost per capita had decreased from $16.26 to $9.93; in the grammar school

\(^1\) Kalamazoo Gazette, (hereafter referred to as Gazette), July 13, 1877.  
\(^2\) Annual Reports, 1871, 1880, 1890.
from $14.84 to $14.83; in the high school from $26.80 to $24.08. The average for all the schools had been reduced from $12.67 to $12.46.¹

Unfortunately the statistics on the length of the school year for 1871 were given in months, and for the years 1880 and 1890 in days, thus making a comparison for the three a little difficult. School was in session for ten months during 1871; 200 days in 1880, and only 189 days in 1890. During these three same years the number of teachers grew. However, this growth was in the number of female teachers. There were three male and sixteen female teachers listed for 1871, five male and forty-three female for 1881, and two male and sixty-four female for 1890.²

The Civil War could not be used at these late dates as a cause for the lack of male teachers, but without a doubt one of the biggest reasons was that teaching had come to be considered by all as a woman's job. Men had not as yet come to accept teaching as a profession for themselves. Perhaps this very lack of

¹ Gazette, July 13, 1877.
² Annual Reports, 1871, 1880, 1890.
men teachers was a contributing factor to the problem of discipline which was so pronounced. This problem will be dealt with more fully in a later portion of my paper.

Records of the year 1885 show an interesting summary of organization of personnel, contrasting sharply with present day conditions. It was as follows:

High School ---------- principal and two teachers
Vine Street --------- principal and seven teachers
Frank Street -------- principal and seven teachers
Lovell Street ------- principal and six teachers
East Avenue --------- principal and two teachers
Lake Street --------- principal and three teachers
Alcott ---------------- principal

In all there were nine principals and forty-one teachers. During this time Henry F. French was Superintendent and Albert W. Hitchcock was principal of the high school.
The need for organization and grading in the schools was a serious problem. This was early recognized by Daniel Putnam, who was Superintendent of the Kalamazoo schools from 1857 until 1865. He submitted a plan for the organization of the schools to the Board of Education and it was adopted in July of 1858. This plan provided for the division of the schools into four departments, the Primary, Intermediate, Grammar, and High School. This plan proved satisfactory for a number of years.

But in 1873 the Board of Education asked the Superintendent to revise the course of study and to simplify it. At that time there were twelve grades below high school and these twelve were reduced by the newly appointed Superintendent, Austin George, to eight grades. Also these eight grades were further divided into four quarters of ten weeks each.1 Two years later, in 1875, the word "intermediate" was omitted, thus simplifying the grading somewhat. These and further changes left the system divided into three departments of four grades each.

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1 Gazette, January 24, 1937.
The three departments were known as Primary, Grammar, and High School, and contained twelve grades in all. The student population at this time was something like three thousand.¹

On December 26, 1873, an article in the Kalamazoo Gazette announced: "Our schools appear to be progressing finely under the management of Professor George, the new and able Superintendent, and the patrons of the schools have every reason to be well satisfied with the progress of the pupils and the general air of energy which pervades the buildings."²

Things were running smoothly. It would seem that education in Kalamazoo was a well-oiled machine performing satisfactorily

But by 1875 the Kalamazoo Gazette had changed its tune. On January 29, a scathing article entitled, "Our Public Schools" appeared in its pages. The article ran:

There is no disguising the fact that the people of this place are dissatisfied with the results produced by the present system of teaching. We need no better

¹ Minutes, I, p. 211.
² Gazette, December 26, 1873.
evidence that something is wrong than
that children brought into town from the
country, where they have had fair advan-
tages, are, as a rule, found to be from
one to three years farther advanced, in
everything essential, than those who have
been constant attendants upon our public
schools.

Our children are crammed full of tom
foolry or discipline until everything prac-
tical is driven from the mind.... One of the
worst features of this graded system is the
tendency to mediocrity. If a child is defi-
cient in some particular branch of study it
is held back in all other branches, instead
of being allowed to progress in accordance
with the general bent of mind....

Parents who have children in attend-
ance upon school should take especial care
in the election of a school board and elect
men who have children to educate, and con-
sequently have a vital interest in the
management of the schools and not allow the
teachers to become impressed with the idea
that they own the schools, and that parents,
who pay for their services, have no rights
they are bound to respect.  

There is one point to which we wish
to call the especial attention of the school
board, and that is, that in the lower rooms
the teachers, as a rule, can never find time
to explain or show scholars about knotty
points in their lessons but if on account of
stormy weather or any other cause, they want
to hold a "double session," the work of the
whole day is accomplished in the forenoon.
We would like to know what these teachers
are paid for.

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1 Gazette, January 29, 1875.
The people of Kalamazoo are willing to be taxed for good schools and we hope hereafter there will be more interest manifested by our citizens on this subject and not leave everything in the hands of a few men to manage. It is time there was a radical change in the management of our schools.1

Yet in this same year, Austin George in his annual report as Superintendent, summarized his report to the Board of Education by saying:2

The past year was as a whole, fairly successful in all departments. In the High School only three pupils finished the course, but the number of pupils was larger than for several years and the promise for the future is good. In the Grammar school sixty-six pupils finished the course, at the close of the Winter term, fifty-eight of whom entered High School; eleven finished at the close of the Spring term, making a total of seventy-seven.

It is clear to see that there was an element of opposition. Perhaps the new departure as the working system at the Woodward Avenue School was a result of the Gazette's article. After the overcrowding of the Frank Street School, a new school, known as the Woodward Avenue School, was erected. It differed

1 Ibid.
2 Minutes, I, p. 308.
from the old schools in several respects and one of these was the working system.

A Superintendent was employed to direct the government of the school, supervise the teachers, and review the classes at certain periods. Also one teacher was hired for each branch of study and each one taught the various grades of the branch.\(^1\) Under this system no dull scholar, or one who was dull in any particular branch could retard his or her class. A scholar could be excellent in mathematics and deficient in grammar, good in geography but indifferent in some other branch. However, this made no difference in his class.\(^2\)

Each pupil was placed according to his or her grade in the different branches and could occupy the head of the class in one study and the foot of the class in another. Every one was graded according to his capacity or advancement in each different branch.\(^3\) This experiment was watched with keen interest by all.

\(^1\) Gazette, September 5, 1873.
\(^2\) Ibid.
\(^3\) Ibid.
In 1880 the Visiting Committee included the following paragraph in its report to the Board.

The new system of instruction on trial in this school appeared to be working most admirably. In every recitation room the teacher, giving undivided attention to one study, and thus becoming proficient in it, was able to convey instructions in the most approved methods, and evidently with the happiest results. There was scarcely anything observable of the friction and nervousness so often seen in teachers on examination days. It was easy to see that constant and thorough drill in one special study had given coolness and confidence.\(^1\)

If this report and articles found in the Kalamazoo Gazette reflected general opinion of that time accurately, it would seem safe to say that this new plan at the Woodward Avenue School was considered a good one, and that the citizens were satisfied that the school administration had made progress.

In 1876, Scientific and Modern Language courses were added to the high school curriculum.\(^2\)

In 1873 the studies found in the Kalamazoo school system were as follows:

\(^1\) Minutes, I, p. 557.
\(^2\) Gazette, January 24, 1937.
In the High School - History, Physiology, Analysis, Grammar, Higher Arithmetic, Algebra, Geometry, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Latin, Greek, and German.

In the Grammar School - Arithmetic, Grammar, Geography, Reading, Writing, Spelling, United States History.

By 1884, four distinct courses of study had been set up for the high school. These were: English, Classical, Modern Language, and Latin.¹ Each scholar was expected to choose and follow one of the courses from the ninth through the twelfth grade. Upon graduation the diploma of each individual student specified which course he had followed. A complete synopsis of these courses of study will be found on the following two pages.

¹ Minutes, II, p. 65.
**Kalamazoo Public Schools**

Synopsis of the courses of study in the High School.
Revised and approved January, 1884. (1)

**Ninth Grade - 3 terms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classical</th>
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<th>Modern Language</th>
<th>Latin</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>El. Algebra</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>same as classical</td>
</tr>
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<td>Grammar</td>
<td>Grammar</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin</td>
<td>El. Algebra</td>
<td>French</td>
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<tr>
<td>El. Algebra</td>
<td>Botany</td>
<td>El. Algebra</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Latin</td>
<td>Geography</td>
<td>French</td>
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<td>El. Algebra</td>
<td>Botany</td>
<td>El. Algebra</td>
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<td>Geography</td>
<td>Word Analysis</td>
<td>Geography or Botany</td>
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<td>Spelling</td>
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**Tenth Grade - 3 terms**

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<td>Phys. Geog.</td>
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<td>Latin-Caesar</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arithmetic or</td>
<td>Arithmetic</td>
<td>Arithmetic or</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin-Caesar</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>French</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Arithmetic or</td>
<td>Arithmetic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zoology</td>
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**Eleventh Grade - 3 terms**

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<th>Latin</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rhetoric</td>
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<td>German</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin-Cicero</td>
<td>Rhetoric</td>
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<td>Latin</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>English Lit.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Latin-Cicero</td>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>English Lit.</td>
<td>&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek</td>
<td>English Lit.</td>
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<td>Eleventh Grade (continued)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classical</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Modern Language</td>
<td>Latin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin-Virgil</td>
<td>Physics</td>
<td>German</td>
<td>Latin</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greek-Anabasis</td>
<td>English Lit.</td>
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<td>English Lit.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek-Anabasis</td>
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<td>Mental Phil.</td>
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<td>Geometry</td>
<td>Mental Phil.</td>
<td>Geometry</td>
<td>Geometry</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin-Virgil</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>German</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek-Anabasis</td>
<td>Geometry</td>
<td>Astronomy</td>
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<td>Geometry</td>
<td>Astronomy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Latin-Virgil</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>German</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek-Anabasis</td>
<td>Geometry</td>
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<td>Geometry</td>
<td>Civil Gov't</td>
<td>Geometry</td>
<td>Civil Government</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The earliest mention of music in the schools was in 1858, as far as I can determine. Music was offered in the course of Instruction of the Kalamazoo Union High School from its outset. However, the Trustees of the Union School announced that both resident and non-resident scholars would be charged extra for this course.¹ An article in the Kalamazoo Telegraph again brought out this fact by saying:²

It should be understood, if it is not already, that the teachers of Music, Drawing, and Painting etc., are not to be paid by the District, but receive only the tuition of their own pupils, so that the expense of the school is not increased by the teaching of these branches.

Finally in 1886, on July 12, music in Kalamazoo won by a vote of two to one. For days preceding the meeting the Kalamazoo Gazette had carried editorials and interviews in favor of having music taught in the schools. According to the Gazette these were the "most hotly contested district meetings ever held in this city." The question of

¹ Kalamazoo Telegraph, November 10, 1858.
² Ibid. November 24, 1858.
debate was whether or not an appropriation of one thousand dollars should be included in the budget for school expenses, for the year 1886-7, to pay the salary of a music teacher for the schools. When the budget was offered for adoption at the school meeting, one of the electors offered the motion that it should be adopted, with the exception of one thousand dollars for a music teacher. A great deal of discussion followed, but finally the motion was withdrawn. The budget was then approved by a big majority. Thus a music course was put on the same basis as other courses in the curriculum. No longer were extra charges to be made.

The Kindergarten movement had its beginnings in Germany. Its purpose was to meet the educational needs of children between the ages of four and six, through the agency of play. The name "Kindergarten" was given to this project by Friedrich Froebel, a

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1 Gazette, September 2, 1929.
2 The Board of Education had voted to buy a piano in 1883. This was the first piano purchased for the Kalamazoo Public Schools and was to be used in the high school. The price of the instrument was $250.00. The records state, "instead of paying rent the motion was made and carried to buy a piano." Minutes, II, p. 25.
German, in 1837. Although this movement had its roots in Germany, it had its fullest development in the United States. Kindergartens were first established here in the early '70s, in the cities of Boston, New York, Milwaukee, Chicago, and St. Louis. Within the next decade they had been established in all the large cities.¹

Early kindergartens were all private or supported by organizations. As they proved their merit they were gradually adopted by the schools of their community. This general picture was also true in Kalamazoo. The first mention of Kindergartens becoming a part of the school system was made by the Visiting Committee of 1873 in their report to the Board of Education. They said:

> Modification is needed in the methods of teaching primary grades— we urge a "Kindergarten" system.²

It is interesting to note that not until 1898 did kindergartens "prove their merit" to the city of Kalamazoo. Although an early awareness of

² Minutes, I, p. 209.
them was evident from the Visiting Committee report, nevertheless nothing constructive along these lines was done until 1898. For it was in this year that kindergartens were first transferred by a vote of the school district to the public schools.¹

I believe that the adoption of the kindergarten by the schools was an advantage to both. The housing and equipment which the school afforded was better than that which the isolated kindergarten schools could provide, and teachers were better trained.

In 1874 the big thing in education had been the final decision of what is called in the history of American public education the "Kalamazoo Case."²

The maintenance of an high school at public expense had been until a few years before virtually unheard of, and many believed public funds could not be appropriated for its support. So violent was the opposition of a certain faction in Kalamazoo to the high school department of the Union Building that

¹ Gazette, January 24, 1937.
² For a fuller discussion, see the paper of Mr. Dyksterhouse.
the matter was finally taken into the courts for settlement. What many regard as Kalamazoo's greatest gift educationally to the state of Michigan was the fruit of this controversy, since it brought out the famous decision by Judge Cooley ruling that public maintenance of high schools is legal.

In 1864 the idea of a visiting committee had been advanced by the Board of Education to show to the residents of Kalamazoo—then a village of twelve thousand inhabitants—the progress that had been made in its educational system. Many of the pupils were called upon to give oral explanations of problems, or to read, or recite other lessons. As can be easily understood and fully expected, some "failed utterly through fright, while others came through with flying colors." Occasionally a member of one of the committees took it upon himself or herself to "conduct the examinations for a few minutes and this proved a real ordeal for the unlucky pupil who was called upon to answer the question propounded."

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1 This information is from a clipping from the Gazette; it is found in Book I of the series of scrapbooks in the Kalamazoo Public Library; the date is 1920.
But most of the committee members were content with having the teacher do the work while they sat about the room in "solemn array" and listened. In addition to being present at the final examinations, this committee looked over the school buildings and grounds and then sent a report to the Board of Education. Below will be found excerpts from the report of the Visiting Committee of 1873.¹ This report is typical of all the reports made by this committee.

Attended examinations June 18, 19, and 20, 1873. We find pleasure in expressing an almost entire satisfaction with the exercises which came under our observation....we regard our schools well abreast with the best schools of our land in buildings, grounds, appliances, skill of teachers, excellence in methods of instruction, and proficiency of scholars....

We suggest planting of more trees at Frank Street and Lovell Street schools. The introduction of Holly Hydrants in the school yards, giving the pupils running water. Making more room as some rooms are too crowded, containing more than sixty scholars; forty or fifty are as many as one teacher should try to take care of.

¹Minutes, I, clipping from the Gazette, found on p. 209.
We are glad that the walls of some rooms are adorned with pictures and we suggest that at least one good picture be purchased for each room because the money would be well spent for the cultivation of taste.

We deem the History text books not satisfactory. In our opinion the schools suffer from want of visitation on the part of the parents and are sorry to say that some members of the Board of Education are negligent in this respect.

Then, even as now, discipline was a distinct problem and challenge to teachers and administrators alike. I have no explanation for this, but perhaps the Civil War and the general feeling that results from such a conflict affected the students from, let's say, 1860 to 1870.

In 1865 recess had been abolished because of "vicious habits and bad language." In 1872, on the recommendation of the Superintendent, a ten minute recess during the forenoon and afternoon was instituted. Scholars were permitted to leave

1 Ibid.
2 Minutes, I, p. 173.
the room under restriction and the directions established by the Superintendent. It certainly must have been unbearable to remain sitting in one room all morning or all afternoon and restlessness may have been one of the causes for a disciplinary problem.

The following resolution was adopted by the Board of Education in their meeting of March 7, 1874.

Whereas complaint has been made to the Board that the pupils of the Public Schools are guilty of misconduct and improprieties in the street to and from school—therefore resolved that the Superintendent and teachers are hereby directed to take notice of all such misconduct; and that the Superintendent see to it, that the rules pertaining to the behavior of pupils are strictly enforced.¹

Specific rules for the conduct of the students were set up on 1874. They were included in the By-Laws, Rules, and Regulations of the District Board of Education. Excerpts from these rules follow.

¹Ibid. p. 239.
Walk quietly and single file through the halls....not to scuffle run or jump; not to converse in halls or stairways....not to be guilty of any rude or boisterous conduct while on the way to and from school....not to have in possession any kind of fire-arms or gunpowder, nor have or use any intoxicating drinks, nor use tobacco in any form on or about the school premises. Any pupil guilty of such offense shall be liable to suspension or expulsion from school.¹

From the tone of these rules one might easily arrive at the conclusion that the position of the student was truly a restricted one. But we can be sure from the frequent reference to the word "discipline" that the ingenuity of the children played havoc with these rules.

Even if the supposition of the effects of Civil War, which I presented earlier, were true, it would not explain why the problem seemed to gain momentum so that in 1880, at a meeting of teachers of Kalamazoo city and county, "Discipline" was the key word.²

¹ Minutes, I, p. 269.
² Gazette, November 9, 1921.
As far as I can determine the first mention of health protection for school children, during this period, was made in 1872. At a special meeting of the Board of Education on January 13, Trustee Abraham T. Metcalf proposed the following:¹

Whereas it is reported that a case of small-pox has broken out in this school district, and whereas the rules of the school require that all pupils shall have been vaccinated previous to admission, therefore resolved:

1. That a medical examination be held and all not vaccinated be excluded until they have complied with the rule.

2. That the Superintendent keep records of those vaccinated for future use.

It was decided after adopting this resolution that the Superintendent of the Poor pay the expenses of the vaccinations of children who could not pay for their own. It was definitely a step in the direction of greater safety for children exposed to childhood diseases and the prevention of possible epidemics. Also consideration and support was now given for the "have-nots."

¹ Minutes, I, p. 159.
Before 1872, the city's library had been strictly a school library. Only school children or families in which there were school children had any use of the books and not until this date was it opened to the public. From that date until the present, however, the public library has been a part of the school system and under the supervision of the Board of Education.

The Kalamazoo Public Library grew out of the great interest of Miss Jennie Wolcott and the Library Committee of the Board, consisting of Dr. H.O. Hitchcock and Thomas S. Cobb. They wanted to make the library a more important factor in the life of the community. Miss Wolcott accepted the offer of the Board to take charge of the library at the nominal salary of $100.00 per year. Now there was a library open to the community in general, a public not a school library.

At a special meeting of the Board, held at the library rooms on October 8, 1872, the Committee on the Library submitted rules and regulations

1 Later Mrs. J.A. Kent.
2 History of the Kalamazoo Public Library, ms., Flora B. Roberts and Isabelle C. Roberts, p. 3, in the Kalamazoo Public Library.
governing the use of the "Library of School District Number 1 of the Village and Township of Kalamazoo." The rules were adopted by the Board. Books could be drawn every Saturday from nine in the morning until four in the afternoon and kept two weeks; after that time a fine of two cents a week would be imposed. Only one book could be drawn at a time by each person and no family could have more than two books at the same time. Any resident of the district was allowed to draw books, "but children fourteen years of age may be required to present to the Librarian written requests from their parent or guardian."  

By 1888 the Library had made great progress. With more books and greater circulation came more problems. The following is part of Isabelle C. Roberts' library report to the Board for the year 1887-88.  

However, the library proved to be so popular that it was soon necessary to open two days a week and by January of 1874, it was open three days.  

1 Minutes, I, pp. 185-6.  
2 Ibid.  
Some system of greater protection for the books borrowed from the library is much needed, for we lose more books in the year than many libraries of double or triple our circulation, and as each year more valuable books are placed on our shelves, some greater safeguard should be thrown around them. We are constantly losing books from having persons leaving the city, and either carelessly or intentionally, neglect to return to the library books they have borrowed.

The relation of the Public Library to the educational institutions of the city is a very important one, and it is desirable that every means should be used to make the connection closer and more vital. I am happy to say that many of the teachers appreciate this fact, and take such interest in directing their pupils to its shelves for the books that will assist them.

Between the years 1872 and 1881, $4,780.00 was expended for the purchase of new books.¹ In 1880 the library had 7,900 books in circulation and 2,458 new books were purchased from the funds provided by that year's school budget. By 1890 there were 16,534 books in circulation and in this year only 858 new books were added to the collection.²

¹ Roberts, op. cit., p. 8.
² Annual Report of District No. 1, 1880 and 1890.
In 1893, when the library moved to its present home, it possessed 18,225 volumes. Today there are 150,000 volumes in the whole system of the Kalamazoo Public Library.

The library was housed in the old City Hall until 1893 when Dr. and Mrs. Van Deusen made the generous offer to give $50,000.00 for a library building.\footnote{Roberts, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 10.} The Board was to buy a lot and provide the furnishings. This same building still serves Kalamazoo in its original capacity. The Van Deusen Room, a special room for children, was opened in the basement in December of 1895 with Miss Sarah Eldred in charge.
Chapter II

The Schools of Kalamazoo from 1870 to 1890

Woodward Avenue School

In 1873 the Frank Street school building became crowded and an old dwelling on the north side of Summer Street, and on the corner of Elm street, was rented. It became a one-room school, with seats for about fifty students. This building continued to be used until the building of the new school on Woodward Avenue.

The building of the Woodward Avenue School was a new departure in more than one respect. First, in construction. It differed from the stereotyped plans of former years. It was to be a one story building with no running up and down and no danger on the stairs in case of fire. The building was divided into two parts--the Primary and the Intermediate. The Intermediate occupied one large room sufficient to hold 280 students and had six recitation rooms attached to it. The Primary was a smaller
room with a capacity of sixty students and only one recitation room was attached to it. The second departure was in the working system, which has already been discussed in the preceding chapter. The plan of the building, the internal arrangements, and the working system were the result of the joint effort of Professor Austin George and the village School Board.¹

In 1886 a petition, signed by forty people, was presented to the Board to build a new addition to the Woodward Avenue School. At this time no action was taken by the Board. But in March of that same year they had purchased a new site for a school on North Westnedge Avenue. Perhaps this is why no action was taken to build an addition to Woodward.²

Lovell Street School

The Lovell Street School was built in 1886 at a cost of $8,900.00. It accommodated 375 children. By 1868 conditions were somewhat crowded and because of this the first grade was divided so that the youngsters attended only half days.³

¹ Gazette, September 5, 1873.
² Minutes, II, p. 170.
³ Minutes, I, p. 74.
On January 1, 1884, the Committee of Buildings and Grounds reported to the Board the loss of the Lovell Street School building by fire. The committee was given power to act in providing rooms to hold classes in during the time it would take to erect a new building.¹

On April 14, 1884, a special meeting of the Board of Education was called. Its purpose was to consider the re-building of Lovell Street. At this time $16,000.00 was appropriated for an eight-room building.² On April 16, a special meeting of the Board was called. Their job was to examine plans for the new building. They asked for more time to go over the plans. In June the contract for the new building was given to Meyer's and Son for $14,907.49.³

This same building, today, is no longer a school house full of children but rather the Administration Building. It is the center of our Kalamazoo Public School System. Here are located the offices of the Superintendent and his staff. From here our entire school system is geared after careful planning and replanning.

¹ Minutes, II, p. 64.
² Minutes, II, p. 72.
³ Ibid. p. 79.
Frank Street School

The Frank Street School was built in 1870. The cost of the land and building was $16,000.00. It was erected on the north side of Frank street and East of Burdick. It was a "large and handsome building," two stories high and had eight rooms which could accommodate 400 students. From all reports, the people of Kalamazoo were pretty proud of it. It was considered "a model of comfort and convenience." When it was erected it was considered large enough to meet the needs of the town for many years to come, but as early as November, 1873, it was overcrowded. An old home on Summer Street, north of Kalamazoo Avenue, was rented and used for a one-room school, with forty-eight students. This was called the North West School.

South Burdick Street School

The Alcott school was erected in 1869 on the edge of town. On July 3, 1883, a petition was presented to the Board for the removal of the Alcott School to a more convenient location. The next month

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1 Gazette, October 18, 1925.
2 Ibid.
3 Minutes, II, p. 40.
the Committee on Buildings and Grounds recommended that a lot on South Burdick be purchased and that the Alcott Building and lot should be sold. This recommendation was voted on and passed by the Board. At the Annual District Meeting, in July, the sum of $1,500.00 was appropriated for the purchase of a lot in the district of Alcott School.1

The following year (1884) the matter of a new school building was again presented at the Annual District Meeting. An appropriation of not less than $8,000.00 for a school building in the Balch addition of South Burdick Street was passed by the group. In August of 1885 the Buildings and Grounds Committee presented plans and specifications to the Board for approval. It was granted and the contract for the new South Burdick School was given to James A. Campbell for $5,350.00.2

By 1886 the Committee of Buildings and Grounds reported to the Board that the building was completed and that the teachers and pupils of the Alcott School had moved in. At this time the name, "South Burdick

1 Ibid. p. 50.
2 Ibid. p. 53.
Street School," was made official.\textsuperscript{1} The Alcott school building and grounds, meanwhile, had been sold to Martin Van den Berg for $450.00.\textsuperscript{2}

**East Avenue School**

By 1880 there was a need for a school on the east side of the river. There were forty-eight children between the ages of five and twenty. A petition signed by twenty-five persons was presented to the Board. The Board in turn presented the problem to the meeting of the electors at the annual gathering on July 12. The petition was granted and the Board recommended that $700.00 be raised by taxes to buy a site. This proposal, requiring a two-thirds majority, was carried by a vote of 162 to 44.\textsuperscript{3}

In the fall of 1880 a site was bought but deemed undesirable because it was too close to the railroad. (They had nothing on Kalamazoo College!) Consequently, it was sold, and on July 3, 1882 a lot on the corner of Gilbert Street and East Avenue was purchased from Jennie den Bleyker.\textsuperscript{4} The contract for

\textsuperscript{1} Ibid. p. 15.
\textsuperscript{2} Ibid. p. 16.
\textsuperscript{3} Minutes, I, p. 616.
\textsuperscript{4} Ibid. p. 793.
the building was given to William Ritchers for $5,400.00 early in 1883. The building was completed before the school year (1883-4). In the reports of 1884-5 only two teachers were listed; the enrollment for October was 101 and in June 148.

North West Street School

In November of 1880, a petition was presented to the Board of Education by the people living in fractional district number 1, as a number of children living in the south part of district 13 (north part of village) were deprived of school privileges on account of the remote location of the school building. As a result of this petition a joint-meeting of the Kalamazoo and Cooper township officials was held and the request was granted.¹

As far as I could find no action was taken by the Board until September 1884. At this time they authorized the Committee of Buildings and Grounds to secure a room in the north part of the district. This room was to be occupied as a primary school.² The following May, this same Committee reported that they

¹ Ibid. p. 649.
² Minutes, II, p. 97.
had rented a room in the Hoedemaker Store for that term.\(^1\) In July this committee recommended that a lot be bought on North West Street (present North Westnedge Avenue) and that $1,000.00 be appropriated for this. The recommendation was approved and a site was purchased in March of 1886.\(^2\)

**Old Union**

The Union High School was dedicated on January 27, 1859. Unfortunately the construction had been faulty and from 1875 until 1879 rumors that Old Union was unsafe were circulated. Parents and pupils feared, but at the same time many denied the danger and said it was only a plan of the Board to erect two modern buildings for the burdensome total of $40,000.00.

In 1877 the Visiting Committee included the following in its report to the Board of Education. After commending the teachers and pupils and especially the "young ladies for their high scholarship" the Committee expressed a need for a new building for the high school.\(^3\)

\(^1\) Since this store was on North Park Street, the school is mentioned in the reports of 1885-6 as Park Street School.

\(^2\) Minutes, II, p. 129.

\(^3\) Ibid. I, p. 557.
It is little less than slow murder to require the young ladies to climb three long flights of stairs to reach their school room. It is a well known and indisputable fact, that many young ladies have been seriously injured, and some have been hastened to their early graves by this unreasonable, not to say criminal, tax upon their strength. The light in the study-room is very imperfect. There have been not a few cases of serious injury to eye-sight from this cause.

Besides these things, the ventilation of the rooms is bad. This condition must work very injuriously on the health of all, as well as prevent the best intellectual results. Now combine these three serious objections to the present high school rooms, and they show the absolute necessity of providing a more suitable place for this school. Every parent should demand it with an emphasis that will move to action. The extra expense to the citizen is not for a moment to be weighed against the health and lives of our youth. Persons would not unnecessarily expose their beasts. Why should they their children?

As a result of an earthquake shock, wide cracks showed up in the walls and the students made the most of it. "You do not have to stretch your imagination to a breaking point to realize that the students helped along the alarm programs to the very best of their ability." In 1880 the people of Kalamazoo viewed their high school building with so much

1 Gazette, January 24, 1937.
alarm that they "turned the students out and tore the building down." 1

At the Annual District Meeting of 1880, Hezekiah G. Wells, the president of the Board, moved that a committee of 15 be appointed to consider the safety of Old Union. If they found it unsafe they were to find out how it could be made safe. 2 The committee was given $250.00 to get the services of an "architect and skilled builders" to advise them. It was then moved that H.G. Wells be added to the committee thus making a Committee of 16. 3 The Committee of 16 reported to the Board as follows:

1. The earth is not suitable to sustain a building with concrete footing.
2. The building is really beyond repair.
3. If repaired the building will still be old and wouldn't meet the requirements of a modern school.

They recommended that the building be torn down and that as much of the old material be used for the new building as was deemed safe. Mr. Watkins, the architect who had been consulted, estimated that it would cost from seven to eight thousand dollars to

1 Ibid.
2 Ibid.
3 Minutes, I, p. 594.
Ibid.
make the building safe. He also suggested that the third story be taken off, but then cautioned that the building would look disproportioned. He believed that the best move would be to tear it down. At a special meeting of the District, on July 26, the report of the Committee of 16 and Mr. Watkins was read and accepted. Finally they had agreed to tear down the building! This conclusion involved many "stormy meetings."\(^1\)

At the same meeting $20,000.00 was appropriated for the new building with a capacity of 400 students. Also it was voted that a school for 600 be erected on the east side of the Old Union lot at a cost of $20,000.00. The money was to be raised by taking $5,000.00 out of that Year's taxes, and by a Bond issue of $35,000.00.\(^2\) The Committee on Teachers and Schools was told to look for accommodations for classes while the two new schools were being built.

\(^2\) Minutes, I, p. 604.
After this meeting of July 26, it was discovered that the decision to issue bonds to the amount of $35,000.00 was in excess of the amount permitted by the law. Consequently notices were posted in the district announcing a special meeting for August 4. At the meeting a Bond issue of $30,000.00, of six annual installments was approved. These six installments were to be $5,000.00 each, and the interest was to be five per cent. The remaining $10,000.00 was to be spread on the taxes of the year.  

On August 26, 1880, the Board of Education was empowered to build these two new buildings. They could locate them on any part of the Old Union lot which seemed proper in their judgment. Accomodations for classes during the building time were as follows:

1. The high school was kept in Baptist College.
2. The lower grades were housed: 75 in a barn on Walnut Street, 
159 in a house on Dutton Street, 
39 in a house on Cedar Street,

Ibid. p. 605.
49 in a house on South Park Street, During the fall of 1881 some classes were also held in the chapel of Plymouth Church.

Seventeen years later, in 1897, the High School building was destroyed by fire. Until a new school could be erected, classes were held in the Y.M.C.A. The Board had to pay the Y.M.C.A. $250.00 a month for this service. The total cost for the new building that was eventually erected was $25,227.00.\(^2\)

Schools are the training institutions for our future citizens. As a nation we firmly believe in public education, and any scheme of public education that fails to take into account all the boys and girls of our democracy is fundamentally faulty. A democracy's safety, progress and efficiency is measured by the conduct, foresight and cooperative thinking of its people. The schools are our agencies for developing the kind of people who will be of greatest benefit to our society. Is Kalamazoo doing its part in educating our future citizens? In my biased opinion, yes.

\(^1\) Minutes, I, p. 630.  
\(^2\) Gazette, October 18, 1925.
APPENDIX
### Members of the Board of Education

**1870 - 1885**

<table>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>President</th>
<th>Secretary</th>
<th>Treasurer</th>
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### Members of the Board of Education (continued) (1)

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(1) Historical Catalogue of the Kalamazoo Public Schools, published 1902, page 7.
This is an actual program found in the files of Mr. Heathcotte in the Administration Building of the Kalamazoo School System.

KALAMAZOO
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Graduating Exercises
of the
HIGH SCHOOL
Friday Evening, June 26, 1874

PROGRAMME:

Prayer
The Ultimate in Human Endeavor, (Salutatory) Minnie K. May
Invisible Spectacles, Libbie McNaughton
The Review of a Day, Sarah A. Keech

Music
For Value Received, Minnie E. Bennett
The Dead Living and the Living Dead, Flora A. Guthrie
A Grand Masquerade, Georgeanna Russel
A. B. C. Lucy A. Goss

On the Threshold, Minnie K. May
What Will the World Say, Etta G. Thayer
We Girls, (Valedictory) Anna F. Cobb

Music
PRESENTATION OF DIPLOMAS

Music
Superintendents of the Kalamazoo Public Schools from 1857 to 1901.

1. Daniel Putnam -------- 1857-65
2. Elisha A. Fraser ------ 1865-73
3. Austin L. George ------ 1873-80
4. Henry F. French ------ 1880-92
5. O.E. Latham --------- 1892-1901
BIBLIOGRAPHY
Sources

(a) Manuscripts

Minutes of the Board of Education from 1864 to 1882, found in the vault of the Administration Building.

Minutes of the Board of Education from 1882 to 1901, found in the vault of the Administration Building.

(b) Newspapers

Kalamazoo Gazette, passim., 1870-1895.

Kalamazoo Telegraph, 1860-1870.

(c) Reports and Bulletins

Annual Reports of District No. 1, for 1871, 1880, and 1890.


(d) Scrap Books

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Secondary References

(a) Histories


Flora B. Roberts' and Isabelle C. Roberts' *History of the Kalamazoo Public Library*, ms., found in Kalamazoo Public Library.

(b) Newspapers

*Kalamazoo Gazette*, passim., 1900-1937.

(c) Encyclopedias