

HISTORY OF REDFORD UNION SCHOOLS

BY

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## TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS

One cannot fully understand or appreciate the Redford Union Schools of today without first understanding the township schools that preceded it, for Redford Union Schools, District No. 1 did not commence in 1926 with the formal organization of the school district. It began in 1837 with the building of the first school in Redford Township. It is here that the real story begins.

By the Statute of April 2, 1827, each township was authorized to determine by a two-thirds vote whether it would maintain township schools, and if so, a "grammar schoolmaster of good morals" was to be obtained. The subjects to be taught in this school were: reading, writing, orthography, arithmetic, and good manners. The teaching had to be in either the English or French language, and the school term was equivalent to six months. This term could be divided into two or more periods and could be held in different parts of the township if the people of the township desired. It was under this statute that in 1837, the same year Michigan was admitted to the Union, the first Redford Township school was erected by a Mr. Sullivan at the corner of what is now Burt Road and Grand River in the present City of Detroit. Until 1843 the building served a two-fold purpose. During the weekdays, it served as a school, and on Sundays as a place of worship for the Redford Center Baptist congregation. A Mr. Charlie Smith served as the only teacher. The total enrollment of the new one room school consisted of eight students. The school was built of black walnut logs for durability, and served the needs of the district until 1855, when another school, with Hiram Wilmouth as teacher, was built on a quarter acre of land leased by Solomon Burt for

ninety-nine years for the consideration of thirty-five dollars and a promise to keep all fences in good repair. This new one room school was built of red brick, made from the clay of the Rouge River which passes through the township, and from which the township derives its name. The school had two separate entrances--one for the boys and one for the girls. Even in the classroom the girls and boys were separated, with the boys on one side and the girls on the other. Boys and girls usually only sat together as a means of disciplinary action. A vied for privilege in those days was the duty of filling the school water bucket from the pump on the Burt farm across the road from the school. The bucket was usually filled each morning and again at noon. The same water dipper was used by all students, and the ritual of passing the dipper from mouth to mouth was called "making the water."

The last teacher to teach in the red brick building was a Miss Alice Gardner, who was held in high esteem by those who knew her.

The red brick school was replaced in 1890 by a modern wooden structure of one room, with a Mr. Miller as teacher. This building, in turn, served the purposes of the township until 1907 when another room was added to accommodate the increase in the school enrollment. Grades one through four were taught in one room, and grades five through eight were taught in the other. The last two teachers to teach in this school were Mr. Earl R. Laing, who later became District principal of Redford Schools, and Mrs. Henry Franklin of Detroit.

Mrs. Mary Potter, in an article about the 1890's, entitled "Redford Emerges from Old Sand Hill," recalled that "A lot of people were illiterate then, and I had to help them read their mail and sometimes write replies for them." This illiteracy, in part, was due to the large French settlement in

this area, which still adhered to its habitant language and customs. Then, too, since this was a rural community, many of the older settlers had not had the benefit of a formal education as their children were enjoying.

From 1837 to 1900 the township schools increased from one to nine, all of which were built on the one room basis.

An act passed by the legislature in 1891 provided for the organization of township school districts. Under this act the township could organize a

"....single district which shall be subject to all the general laws of the state, so far as the same may be applicable, and said district shall have all the power and privileges conferred upon the union school districts by the laws of this state. All the general provisions of which relating to the common or primary schools shall apply and be enforced in said district, except such as shall be inconsistent with the provisions of this act, and to vote taxes for the running expenses of the school...."

In accordance with the School Act of 1891, Redford Township, in 1900, was divided into the following districts:

1. Redford #2, located at the north side of Grand River at Oakfield.
2. Redford #3, the Oak School located at the southwest corner of Schoolcraft and Evergreen Roads.
3. Redford #4, the Bell Branch School located on the east side of Telegraph Road one block south of Five Mile Road.
4. Redford #5, on the west side of Beech Road, one fourth mile south of Seven Mile Road.
5. Redford #6, on the northwest corner of Plymouth and Lamphere Roads.
6. Redford #7, the Sheehan School on the west side of Southfield Road, one fourth mile south of Plymouth Road.



7. Redford #8, the Duboisville School, located on the south side of Seven Mile Road, one fourth mile west of Lahser Road.
8. Redford #9, the Beech School, located on the southwest corner of Beech Road and the Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad.
9. Redford #10, the Sand Hill School, located on the north side of Grand River Avenue between Six Mile Road and Trinity Avenue.

One can readily see that the newly created school districts were representative of the times. Since Redford Township was so large, thirty-six square miles, people in different parts of the township felt they had little in common with other residents of the same township. When we consider the northwestern portion was still adhering to French customs, the extreme eastern portion was being influenced by the City of Detroit, and the remaining portion was interested only in farming, it is easy to see why the people felt as they did.

From 1912 the growth in population in Redford Township was phenomenal. It grew so rapidly that in 1914, the Redford Board of Education of District #10, which consisted of Dr. L. N. Tupper, moderator; Harvey T. Houghten, treasurer; and Ralph T. Burt, director, approved the replacement of the old two room frame building with a new eight room brick school. At the time, they were criticized by many as having built too large of a building. But within a few short years, this building was to prove inadequate, and a new building program had to be undertaken. The new building, called the Soleman Burt School, was dedicated on January 30, 1915, by Mr. Edward Minnock, a lawyer who had lived in the district for many years and who was legal counsel for the Board of Education. This new school represented not only the first high school in Redford Township, but also the only high school between Northwestern High School in Detroit,

located at Grand River Avenue and West Grand Blvd., and the village of Farmington, a distance along Grand River Avenue of approximately twenty miles. This building served as a high school until 1921, when the first unit of Redford High School, now of the City of Detroit, was begun, on a site across the street from the "Old Burt School." The Burt School then became an elementary school, and was used as such until 1926, when it was annexed to the City of Detroit. It then became the Redford Branch Clinic of Detroit Receiving Hospital.

## CCNSOLIDATION

In 1900 nine school districts were formed in Redford Township, each with its own one room school, and each under local control. As time progressed, and life became more complex economically, the individual school districts began to realize that the local school district could not offer the same educational opportunities for children as enjoyed by schools in the cities. The only answer to the problem was consolidation.

Consolidation of local school districts within townships had long been recommended by the State Superintendents of Public Instruction. In 1909 the legislature passed an act which provided the basis for statewide consolidation; however, very few districts were organized between 1909-1921. The main reason for this seems to be that often township boundaries did not coincide with the natural boundaries of communities. Recognizing this fact, the legislature passed an act in 1917...

"to provide for the establishment of rural agricultural schools by consolidating three or more rural schools in any township or school district; for the organization of school districts in certain cases; for teaching agricultural, manual training, and home economics therein and providing state aid for the maintenance thereof."

On May 29, 1923 the question of consolidation was put before the voters in the various school districts within Redford Township. The following school districts voted for the consolidation:

- District #10 - Redford Village
- District #8 - DuBoisville School
- District #5 - Beech Road School
- District #3 - Oak School
- District #4 - Bell Branch School
- District #12 - Seven Mile Road School

The consolidation of the six school districts formed one of the largest rural consolidated school districts in the United States. The name given to this newly created district by E. W. Yost, County Commissioner of Schools, was "Rural Agricultural School District #2 of the Township of Redford, Wayne County, Michigan."

On August 3, 1923, the Board of Education of the consolidated school district petitioned the county commissioner to change the name of the district to that of "Redford Union Schools, District #1, Redford Township, Wayne County, Michigan." On August 6, 1923 Commissioner Yost granted the request and the name of the district was changed, and is still maintained today.

The first superintendent of the Redford Union Schools was P. N. Sawyer, who had previously been superintendent of Redford Township School District #10. He took over his office in 1923, and held it until 1925, when he resigned to become the head of the Mathematics Department in Redford High School.

All totaled, there were sixty teachers in the school district when Mr. Sawyer took over in 1923; in 1925 there were one-hundred and seven; and by May, 1926, there were one-hundred and fifty. In addition to this large number of teachers, there were many clerks, engineers, and janitors. Prior to 1914, teachers were required to do their own clerical and janitorial work.

One of the first actions of the Board of Education was to appoint Mr. Sidney Johnson as Building Inspector and Business Manager. The main job, however, before the Board of Education was the undertaking of a vast building program to keep in line with the growth of population. According

to an article appearing in the Detroit News, the population increased so rapidly that one new teacher was required every four weeks to keep pace with the number of new students being enrolled in the schools. This meant that an average of forty-five to fifty pupils were added to the school rolls each month.

With an eye to the possibility of future annexation by the City of Detroit, the Board of Education tried to model Redford Union Schools after that of Detroit. It hired the Detroit architects, Wilhelm and Molby, so that the school buildings would harmonize with others found in Detroit. The Board also adopted the platoon system of teaching, courses of study offered in the Detroit high schools, advanced methods of instruction that had proved valid by experimentation in Detroit, and the Detroit salary schedule for teachers and principals.

Many temporary wooden buildings had to be erected to take care of the increasing number of students. Before new school buildings were even completed, the blueprints were drawn up for much needed additions. During a three year period, many schools required two and three additions. Two new additions were added to the new high school that had been built in 1921. By 1925, it boasted a new swimming pool, gym, and an auditorium. The new elementary schools erected during this period were:

T. Dale Cooke - Named for an elementary principal in Detroit. The name was proposed by Superintendent Frank Cody, who at this time was also President of the State Board of Education. The Redford Board of Education had proposed the name of Frank Cody for the building, but by request of the Superintendent, they selected the name he proposed.

Thomas Burt - A name transferred from the "Old Burt School" when it was discovered that the old building was to cease as a school.

Warren G. Harding - Named for the President, who had recently died while in the service of his country.

Samuel D. Holcomb - Named for Dr. S. D. Holcomb, who was one of the beloved pioneers of this section.

Thomas Houghten - Named for Thomas Houghten, a life long resident. Mr. Houghten gave his life at the hand of an assassin while serving this community as cashier of the bank he loved and helped to establish.

Don Hubert - Named for the only boy who gave the supreme sacrifice of his life in the World War.

Eugenia Mettetal - Named for a former teacher of this community who had served for many years and was endeared to all. This name was selected by the Redford Women's Club.

Peter Vetal - Named for a man who had lived many years in the district and served on the Board of Education for twenty-four years.

E. W. Yost - Named for the County Commissioner of Schools, who served in that capacity for over thirty years.

In addition to the above named schools, the following were begun in 1925:

Fred L. Keeler - Begun April 13, 1925

Coffey School - Begun April 20, 1925

Volney Smith School - Begun August 24, 1925

With the resignation of Mr. Sawyer, Mr. Loren Bow was selected as Superintendent of the Redford Union Schools, and held this office until the annexation of two-thirds of the township by the City of Detroit in May, 1926. He was then appointed to the position of Principal of Redford High School, a position which he held until his election as Superintendent of Detroit Public Schools.

## ANNEXATION

On October 6, 1925, the voters of Redford Township voted on the question of their willingness to be annexed to the City of Detroit. As a result of the election two-thirds of the township declared a strong desire to become a part of the City of Detroit. This meant that automatically this area's schools would come under the jurisdiction of the Detroit Board of Education. The annexation proceedings were scheduled to be completed by July 1, 1926.

Much of what had been the Redford Union School District #1 was involved in the annexation. Of the twenty-one schools that had been built within the last few years, only four remained under the jurisdiction of the Redford Union Schools. Of the 5,678 students on the school census in 1925, there remained only 445. Of the vast population that had once been within the Redford Union School District #1, only 3,000 remained.

The question of annexation presented many problems that were not easily resolved. The first problem arose over how much of the indebtedness the Detroit Board of Education should assume for the bond issues that had been sold by the Redford Union Board of Education to finance the vast building program that had been necessary to keep pace with the increasing population. On December 21, 1925, the Board of Education of the Redford Union Schools and the Detroit Board of Education agreed to the transfer of the "Old Burt School" to the City of Detroit to be used as a hospital clinic. In return, the City of Detroit agreed to pay the Redford Union Schools \$75,000, which was to be used to pay off the total amount still outstanding on the new Burt School, which fell within the boundaries of the new Detroit City limits.

Redford Union further agreed to pay to the City of Detroit the sum of \$72,579.02, which had been paid to the School Board from the collected taxes by the Redford Township treasurer. This represented, on a per capita basis, the amount of money due Detroit for the support of the 5,233 new students that came under its jurisdiction for the fiscal year of 1926-1927.

On June 3, 1926, the Redford Union Board of Education agreed to pay the City of Detroit \$50,000 still outstanding on architectural fees.

The two boards of education came to early agreements on everything save the \$850,000 bond issue that had been sold on February 11, 1925, to finance new schools. Detroit finally agreed to assume \$700,441.12 of the indebtedness, while Redford Union assumed \$149,558.88 of the indebtedness. The problem arose on how this money was to be paid, since the money was tied up in bonds of \$1,000 each and could not be separated. Redford Union finally asked the Detroit City Sinking Fund Commission to act as its fiscal agent in the retirement of the bonds, thus paving the way for a complete and amicable settlement.

There were other problems that had to be settled within the unannexed portion of the Redford Union School District. A new Board of Education took over on April 28, 1926, with the resignation of the previous one. It consisted of:

Sidney H. Smith	-	President
John T. Shaw	-	Secretary
James U. Watt	-	Treasurer
William W. Fox	-	Trustee
William Ballinger	-	Trustee

One of the first acts taken by the new board was to appoint a new school superintendent for the fiscal year 1926-1927, to replace Mr. Loren Bow.



The choice fell on Mr. Sidney E. Johnson, who had been, previous to the appointment, the Business Manager for the Board of Education. His job was to pay \$4,200 per year.

The Board of Education no longer had an office in which to hold meetings and conduct business, so it was decided that meetings would alternate between the Keeler, Smith, and Beech Road Schools.

The District was without a high school, now that the Redford High School was annexed to the City of Detroit. The Board of Education proposed on June 24, 1926, that the question of paying tuition of students who attended Detroit high schools should be put to a vote during the next election. The proposal was put on a ballot on July 15, 1926, and the people voted affirmatively.

On October 21, 1926, recognizing a need for more schools within the district, the Board of Education, voted to purchase four acres of land bordered by Lennane, Aheto, and Forza Avenues for \$10,000.00. This site was to be used for the erection of a new elementary school to be named Hettie Bristol School, in honor of a school principal who still continued in the service of the school district.

On November 23, 1926, the Board of Education voted to build an addition to the Volney Smith School to take care of the overflow of students in that area. The Volney Smith and Keeler Schools had to be put on half-day sessions until the new addition was finished.

On July 21, 1927, the people of the school district voted to sell the Bell Branch School site to a Mr. Burt Eady Taylor, since the school site was located on Telegraph Rd., the boundary between Detroit and Redford Township.

On July 24, 1929, Supervisor Bilcovsky of Southfield Township approached the Redford Union School Board to see if the school board would consider letting Southfield Township School District #9 incorporate a fractional part of the Redford Union School District that lay in Southfield Township. On August 6, 1929, the Redford Union School Board agreed to the request of Southfield Township School Board. In return, Southfield Township School District #9 agreed to assume the indebtedness for that area that amounted to about \$100,000.

## DEPRESSION YEARS

On August 1, 1929, the school board asked for the resignation of Mr. Sidney Johnson as superintendent. The vote was carried by only one vote. On September 4, 1929, he tendered his resignation effective as of that date, and the school board, after accepting his resignation, appointed Mr. LeRoy Clark, President of the Board of Education, as the acting superintendent. On September 10, 1929, the board hired Mr. William E. Lantz, with a salary of \$250.00 per month. During his tenure of office a junior high school was started at Volney Smith School on October 28, 1929. At the same time a tenth grade was added. This was the beginning of the new Redford Union High School.

In keeping with the teacher salary increases in the City of Detroit, the board of education on March 20, 1930 approved a salary schedule of \$1350.00 as a minimum and a maximum of \$1800.00. The maximum was to be reached after seven years with the Redford Schools. At the same time, the board of education agreed to let teachers have ten days off per school year at half pay in cases of illness or death in the family. New teachers were to be paid \$50.00 for each year of prior service up to and including four years.

After only a year as superintendent, the Board of Education asked for the resignation of Mr. Lantz, who tendered it in August, 1930. The board then appointed Mr. Albert L. Losey to take his place. In addition to the job of superintendent, Mr. Losey had to also assume the role of a principal in one of the schools, and business manager for the school district.

The Board of Education, which had just begun to get the district on its feet after the problems of annexation in 1926, began to feel the results of the depression by June, 1930. The board tried many ways to curb unnecessary spending, but still the District went deeper and deeper into debt. On July 10, 1930, the board voted to let the janitors and bus drivers off for the summer without pay for economical reasons. At the same time, the board of education realized that the quality of education taught in the schools must not be sacrificed at the cost of conserving money. With this in mind, they voted unanimously to continue plans for a typing course to be taught on the tenth grade level during the 1930-31 school year. To do this they purchased twelve Remington typewriters, thus beginning the Commercial Department in the Redford Union High School.

On December 3, 1930 Mr. Losey made recommendations that the eleventh grade be added to the Volney Smith School commencing with the school semester in January, 1931. The board of education accepted the recommendations and the eleventh grade was added. He recommended, at the same time, that a school nurse be hired for the District, to work two days per week. The board also accepted this recommendation, and added a school nurse in the spring semester of 1931.

In a meeting held in Lansing, Michigan, in December 1930, between Mr. Losey, the Redford Union School Board, and the Department of Public Instruction, it was recommended that the Department of Public Instruction would recognize a twelve graded school in the Volney Smith building if two rooms ceased to be used as classrooms. At least two classrooms were added

in the 1931-32 school year for the high school use, and a chemistry laboratory installed by the second semester in the school year of 1930-31.

When the conditions were met, as had been outlined by the Department of Public Instruction in December 1931, the Department of Public Instruction granted approval of the Volney Smith School as a twelve graded building.

It had been a practice of the board to pay tuition for students attending high schools in Detroit, however, they were forced to discontinue paying tuition to Cass Technical High School and other trade schools in Detroit as the economical pinch was felt, but continued to pay tuition of students at regular high schools.

On August 15, 1930 the school board got an economic break when they settled with the Redford Township Clerk for \$75,176.72 for back taxes and interest owed to the School District over a period of years from 1926 onward. Unfortunately the money was not turned over all at once to the school board.

On April 20, 1931, the board of education notified the Detroit Board of Education that tuition students could no longer attend Keeler School because of the crowded conditions and economical reasons. On June 18, 1931 teachers were given ninety day promissory notes in lieu of their May and June pay, because no money was available to pay it. Janitors, bus drivers, and maintenance men were laid off without pay for the duration of the summer vacation.

When it came time for contract renewal, the board voted that the same pay schedule of 1930-31 be adopted for the school year of 1931-32.

On May 6, 1932 promissory notes were given to large creditors for one year at six percent interest. On June 13, 1932 the school term for 1932-33 was cut to nine months in order to save money. This nine month school term lasted for the next five years.

On February 23, 1933 the banks refused to issue checks or cash checks. The board of education decided on March 6, 1933, to use scrip, a type of promissory note, to pay for the school district's future debts. The scrip was to be issued for six months, with hopes that the banks would grant loans to school districts at the end of that time. On April 26, 1933, the board of education voted to pay 25% of the teachers' salaries in scrip, and on May 11, 1933, the board voted to pay 25% of all school employees' salaries in scrip. On May 18, 1933 this percentage had to be exceeded because there was very little money left to pay salaries.

On June 1, 1933 Southfield Township agreed to take all of that part of the Redford Union School District that remained in Southfield Township, thus releasing the Redford Union Schools from Southfield Township territory. Redford Union, however, did not agree to the proposal at this time. In fact, on August 23, 1933 that small fractional part of the Redford Union School District that had been annexed by Southfield Township in 1929, petitioned the Redford Union School Board to be taken back under their jurisdiction. The school board, however, tabled this petition.

On November 4, 1933 the school board voted to have the scrip, already issued, remain in force until paid. Each month, as money became available, a few hundred dollars of scrip was redeemed with cash.

When the ninety day promissory notes became due, the board of education' borrowed \$10,000 to pay the teachers' salaries and interest on outstanding bonds.

On September 2, 1931 the board of education addressed mimeographed notices to students' parents, asking that they pay their school taxes. The board allowed parents to pay for school texts with one-third down at the beginning of the term and the remainder to be paid within sixty days.

Kindergarten was done away with for the term of 1931-32 for economical reasons, and children were not allowed to enter school until they reached the age of six years. In August 1932 the school board voted to continue this policy for the school term of 1932-33, and continued the policy until 1935.

In October of that year, thirty day promissory notes were once again issued to teachers for their salaries due them. An appeal, made on November 5, 1931, for parents to pay their school taxes brought very little results. Drastic measures had to be taken. On November 23, 1931 the board voted that all telephone calls made on school phones, not concerning school business, had to be paid by the user. They also reduced their own salaries retroactive to November 1, 1931, as follows:

	<u>From</u>	<u>To</u>
LeRoy Clark (President)	\$40.00	\$20.00 per month
Hubert Bulman (Secretary)	\$50.00	\$20.00 " "
J. C. Barney ( Treasurer)	\$40.00	\$35.00 " "
Raymond Stuckey (Trustee)	\$40.00	\$10.00 " "
Theresa Cranley (Trustee)	\$40.00	\$15.00 " "

On April 7, 1932 teachers' salaries, for the remainder of the school year, were reduced. A teacher with a beginning salary was cut back to about \$110.00 per month and one with the maximum was cut to about \$135.00.

The Hattie Bristol School became the Roosevelt School on or about April 5, 1934. The minutes of the board of education are not clear on this. The name was changed, however, because of a strong disagreement between the school board and Mrs. Bristol. There seems to be some question, even today, as to whether the school was named in honor of Theodore Roosevelt or Franklin D. Roosevelt. Considering the time in which it was named it is safe to surmise that it was probably named in honor of the latter, who was fast becoming a national hero.

On June 12, 1934, the school system adopted an agricultural, a home economics and a manual training course, in order to take advantage of federal and state aid as an agricultural school.

On April 5, 1934, five hundred dollars was voted by the board of education to pay for building improvements, improvement of school grounds, and for the improvement of roads for safe transportation under the auspices of the federal C.W.A. On June 25, 1934, adult education was begun in the Redford Union Schools with the aid of federal aid.

On December 21, 1934, the board of education voted to extend the Christmas holiday until January 21, 1934, because of the economical problem. Teachers, however, agreed to take promissory notes for their pay and thus made it possible for the schools to open on schedule.

On January 5, 1935 Southfield Township agreed to pay the primary money and all delinquent tax money up to 1933 due the Redford Union Schools. This money was put to good use to pay teachers' salaries and to redeem more scrip.



On April 5, 1935, the board approved the plowing of the land behind the Volney Smith School. This land was used by the students in the high school agricultural classes for planting gardens. As the times began to improve the board agreed to retain the janitors and maintenance men on a half time basis during the summer months.

On October 7, 1935 the board of education, with federal aid, undertook the building of a temporary two room building at the Volney Smith School, to be used for the manual training department. The day before the board had approved a two room addition to the Roosevelt School. On July 23, 1936 the board saw fit to approve an addition to the Volney Smith School also. In January 1937 an addition to the second floor of the Volney Smith School was approved. As economic conditions continued to improve, the board of education voted the long overdue improvements to be undertaken immediately. In March of 1937, and again in 1938, teachers' salaries were raised by one hundred dollars per year, an indication that the economy of the school district was becoming solvent.

On August 12, 1938 all unredeemed scrip was called in by the board and paid in full. On June 15, 1939 the board of education voted to pay the money that was owed to the City of Detroit, per the agreement of 1928, and which the Redford Union School District had had to default during the critical years of 1931 - 1936. Some of the bonds were retired at this time.

As the year 1939 came to a close, the Redford Union Schools had come a long way on the road to recovery. All the scrip issued during the critical years of 1931 - 1936 had been redeemed, defaulted bonds were being paid

off with interest, teachers had received salary increases, and much needed new additions to school buildings had been built.

## PROGRESS AND EXPANSION

Throughout the 1940's the school district continued to make progress and expand its physical plant to meet the needs of the ever-increasing population. Where there had been only 445 students in 1926, there were over 1,500 students in the early 1940's. World War II gave impetus to another wave of people moving to the suburbs. This presented a problem to the school district because the school buildings in existence at the time were inadequate and overcrowded. As the war progressed, another problem presented itself. Materials for construction were hard to come by, especially steel for girders and equipment such as lockers. Then, too, the school district was trying to pay off bonds that had been issued over twenty years before.

On April 9, 1940 the board of education invited the public to a bond-burning ceremony at the Roosevelt School. This was a momentous occasion for the school district, for bonds that had been issued in February and June of 1927 were burned. At this site, on May 14, 1940, alterations and a much needed addition were undertaken with the help of the federal government through the W.P.A. The school district's cost for this was not supposed to have exceeded \$2,000.00; however, it ran \$3,877.00 before the job was finished. The district also assumed the cost of sending a bus each morning to the Five Points Police Station to pick up the W.P.A. workers and returning them there again after a day's work on the Roosevelt School.

In January 1941 Mr. Norman A. Wolfe became the new Superintendent of the Redford Union Schools.

On May 27, 1941 the board of education, taking advantage of the Defense Area Government Program, voted to begin the following projects:

	<u>Total Cost</u>
Five room school on Stuckey site	\$ 54,000.00
Four room addition to Keeler School	31,000.00
Construction of a new High School	<u>434,000.00</u>
Total	\$519,000.00

Under the terms of the agreement between the U.S. Government and the Redford Union School District #1, the school district's share of the construction was \$80,000.00. Actual construction, however, was not begun until after July 22, 1941, when the U.S. Government gave its approval of the project.

In the school district election of October 9, 1941, the people voted to issue \$50,000.00 in bonds to help pay for the Defense P.W.A. project. They also voted to increase the district's tax rate for the next five years. At the same time, the school board considered adding an addition to the Redford Union High School, before the original building was even finished.

On October 29, 1941 the high school site was cleared of trees and debris by a Mr. Meghin. On November 11, 1941, actual construction began. The board, at the same time, negotiated for and bought seven more lots adjacent to the high school site for an athletic field. Real trouble began in February, 1942, when governmental restrictions were clamped down on building construction. The district had to purchase used lockers, and even finally forced to construct wooden ones that were not retired from use until after World War II.

. On June 14, 1943, in accord with the Constitution of Michigan, the people of the school district voted to raise the millage 2.85% over the 15 mills allowed by the State for a duration of two years.

On October 10, 1944, Mr. Beiser, Superintendent of the Clarenceville School System, suggested a meeting between the two school boards to adjust the northwestern boundary line between the two districts. In 1946 a portion of the Clarenceville School District was transferred to Redford Union. This made Inkster and Eight Mile Roads the northwestern boundary line, which still exists today. The board also finally agreed, in 1947, to the selling of the Bell Branch School site in the southeastern section of the school district, to Mr. George Nott for the sum of \$2,700.00.

Lunchrooms were begun at the Roosevelt and Smith Schools on November 13, 1945, when the board of education voted \$1,000.00 to start the project. They later added a \$500.00 fund for purchasing food and paying salaries. On December 11, 1945 it was voted that only one hot dish would be served because federal funds were exhausted. At this time, an additional \$2,000.00 was voted to purchase more equipment and for remodeling purposes. On February 25, 1946 the kitchen in the Volney Smith was remodeled and furnished at a cost of \$3,000.00. The first student lunches sold for fifteen cents.

The board of education asked permission of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction to build a temporary two room unit on the Roosevelt School site. The Superintendent, however, suggested that a permanent four room building be constructed on an eight lot site near the high school; that had been purchased on January 9, 1945 for \$1,500.00 from B. E. Taylor.

Construction was not begun on the school until April 1948. In June of that year the board of education voted to name the school, the Hubert Bulman Elementary School, in honor of a member of the school board. The Bulman School was hardly begun, when the board of education voted to build a four room building on the Stuckey School site. Plans had had to be shelved for this school when World War II broke out. The Stuckey School was named in honor of Vincent Stuckey, an early pioneer in the school district. The building was built at a cost of \$43,291.00. Construction costs for these buildings were offset, in part, by the decision of the voters, when they voted to raise the millage for a period of three years, and a bond issue of \$135,000.00 sold in the spring of 1949.

When Mr. Russel S. Hilbert took over the office of the Superintendent of the Redford Union Schools in January of 1948 the school district had done much to alleviate the crowded conditions in the schools. But, during the next ten years much more was to be done, as we shall see.

A driver education program was begun in the high school in January of 1948, with the aid of the State Department of Public Instruction.

In April 1949 the school board investigated the possibility of transferring that portion of the school district that lay in the Southfield Township School District. On September 12, 1949, after much consideration, the school board resolved to turn the area over to the Southfield Township School District; however, it was not done until 1954, when a portion of land of approximately seventy to eighty acres was transferred. This transfer, made Eight Mile Road and Five Points the district's northeastern boundary line.

. In July 1950 the board of education informed the Redford Township School District that the Redford Union Schools would not accept any ninth graders from their district, for the school year of 1950-51 because of the crowded conditions in the Redford Union High School. The board even rented room in the basement of the Covenant Community Church on August 14, 1950, to avoid overcrowding in the elementary schools. On September 11, 1950 the board informed the Redford Township School District that only eleventh and twelfth graders would be accepted in the high school for the school year of 1951-52. By 1954 the board voted not to accept any students in the high school from the South Redford Schools.

On November 13, 1950 the school board supported a bond issue for the addition to the Bulman and Stuckey Schools in the amount of \$50,000. These additions were completed by 1952.

In keeping with modern trends in education, a speech correctionist and a full time teacher for the handicapped were hired for the school district on June 9, 1952. In 1955 two teachers were hired for the mentally retarded children.

The tax levy adopted for the school year of 1952-53 was:

Allocated tax for operation, 1952	7.0 mills
Voted for Operation, 1952	11.0 mills
For debts incurred prior to 1932-1952	1.5 mills
For new additional bond issue of \$500,000.	<u>5.0 mills</u>
Total levy	24.5 mills

It can easily be seen the voters were taxing themselves far in excess of the maximum 15 mills allowed by the State of Michigan, in order that their children would have the advantage of a sound education.

.On November 17, 1952 the board of education voted to construct a junior high school and an elementary school. Land was purchased at the junction of Curtis and Kinloch Streets in March of 1953. The first unit of the Redford Union Junior High School was completed in October of 1954, at a cost of \$1,000,000, with a capacity of eight hundred students. An addition to the junior high school built in 1956, at a cost of \$685,000, brought the student capacity to 1,450. The ninth grade was transferred to the junior high school from the high school at this time.

The MacGowan Elementary School, named in honor of a graduate of the school district, was completed in the fall of 1955. The total cost of the building was \$512,420.00, of which the U.S. government paid \$422,820.

In 1953, the policy of annual school promotions was adopted. Only one kindergarten class was accepted that September and thereafter those children in the half year classes were encouraged to go to summer school to make up a half year of school and thus put the entire school system on a full year basis. The last accelerated summer school program occurred in 1958.

In January 1954 half day sessions were instituted for the first graders of the district, and classes were held in the Gaylord Baptist Church, Presbyterian Church, and Grace Lutheran Church. This condition existed until the MacGowan School opened in 1955.

On August 8, 1955 the State Department of Public Instruction approved an addition of seven classrooms for the Beech Road School at a cost of \$126,334.



In helping to curb juvenile delinquency, the Redford Union Junior High School instituted a Teen Canteen, held on alternate Fridays. This program offered students a sociable evening of dancing and other organized activities. A Saturday Recreation program was adopted at the same time to supplement the Teen Canteen.

Another junior high school plot was chosen and purchased on June 11, 1956, for \$3,523.21 at the junction of Pembroke and Beech Road in the northeast section of the school district. It was proposed, at that time, that the present junior high school would change places with the high school when the new junior high school went into operation, thus putting the high school in the approximate middle of the school district, with a junior high school located in the southern and northern part of the school district. This was scheduled to take place in the fall of 1959. The new junior high school was named Elsmere Pearson Junior High School on May 14, 1958, in honor of a former board of education member.

During a period of eighteen years, from 1940 - 1958, much progress was made in the Redford Union Schools. The school enrollment increased from 1,500 to nearly 7,000 in 1958. To offset this increase in the enrollment, a vast building program had to be undertaken. The following chart helps to illustrate how the physical building plant of the school district changed in eighteen years:

<u>Prior to 1940</u>	<u>From 1940 Onward</u>
Beech Road School	7 room addition, 1955
Volney Smith School (w/addition)	4 rooms, 1941; 2 rooms, 1954
Keeler School	1 room, 1940; 2 rooms, 1954
Roosevelt School (w/addition)	Additions in 1958
High School (begun in 1940)	Bulman School - 4 rooms, 1948; 13, 1951; and 5 in 1953

(continued)

From 1940 Onward

Stuckey School - 4 rooms, 1949; 12 rooms, 1951;  
4 rooms, 1953  
R.U. Jr. H.S. - 25 rooms, 1954; 23 rooms, 1956;  
swimming pool, 1958  
MacGowan School - 20 rooms, 1955  
Pearson Jr. H.S. - 1959

During this period of time the salaries of the teachers, administrators, maintenance men, custodians, clerical workers, and bus drivers were raised nearly every year to meet the cost of living index. A comparison of the teachers' salary schedule is representative of this. In 1939 the following schedule was followed:

(Minimum)	B.A.	\$1300.	(Maximum)	B.A.	\$1800.	(After 7 yrs.)
	M.A.	\$1500.		M.A.	\$2000.	" " "

In 1958, the following schedule was adopted:

(Minimum)	B.A.	\$4600.	(Maximum)	B.A.	\$7050.	(After 7 yrs.)
	M.A.	\$4900.		M.A.	\$7350.	" " "

At the same time, progress was made in new techniques of teaching. The junior high school program centered around a block of time set aside as a homeroom. English and social studies were taught on an integrated basis. Curriculum planning programs were undertaken under the auspices of Wayne State University. Members of the various schools met at the junior high school one night a week for three hours to re-evaluate and plan units of study. A curriculum planning committee for the entire school system was set up with representatives from each school to see if some agreement could be reached on what was being taught on each grade level with a view to enriching the existing program.

Recognizing a need for extra work for the gifted child, a science workshop was offered for the first time in the summer of 1957 under the

guidance of Mr. Sidney Quigley, of the high school science department.

This course was offered in the summer months for six weeks without credit.

The biggest problem that exists today in the Redford Union District (in 1958) is one of finance. The people of the district, as we have seen, have taxed themselves to the limit, and the State of Michigan has offered what assistance it could through the Sales Tax Diversion Act, but this is not enough. The State of Michigan is itself in dire straits financially, and no longer can meet its obligations to the needy school districts. It is hoped that the federal government and the State of Michigan will be able to offer greater assistance in the near future. They must if school districts are to meet their obligations.

SUPERINTENDENTS OF REDFORD UNION SCHOOLS

P.N. Sawyer (1923-1925)

Loren C. Bow (1925-1926)

Sidney Johnson (1926-1929)

William Lantz (1929-1930)

Albert Losey (1930-1941)

Norman Wolfe (1941-1948)

Russel S. Hilbert (1948-1968)

Paul Shoemaker (1968-1974)

Robert C. Juhnke (1974-1981)

Kenneth H. Erickson (1981-1992)

Kenneth L. Johnson (1992-1998)

Thomas D. Gay (1998-

