

## **A history of the Waterford graded schools - District #1.**

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WISCONSIN STATE UNIVERSITY - WHITENATER

Seminar Approved

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Date:

June 26, 1968

Adviser:

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A HISTORY OF THE WATERFORD  
GRADED SCHOOLS-DISTRICT #1

by \_\_\_\_\_

Mr. Douglas Robbins

A Seminar Paper Submitted in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Master of Science in Teaching Degree

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Adviser: Dr. Edward Pfau

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This paper is an attempt to give as simply as possible a history of education in Waterford against historical background and colorful present in this, one of the oldest communities in southeastern Wisconsin.

The Pottawattomie Indians, who were the original settlers had discovered the area and because the river could be forded at this point, the town was named Waterford.

Later, approximately the second quarter of the nineteenth century, the lush green lands that lay along the Fox River attracted the early German settlers to this location. Incidentally, portions of this land are still farmed, some of it by descendants of these original German families.

However, the Indian teepees have long since disappeared and so has the ford crossing the Fox River which gave the town its name. Thus the farm lands have moved away from the river to make way for a business community, permanent homes, and summer cottages.

### STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This paper concerns itself with the history of the Waterford Graded School educational system of Waterford,

Wisconsin from 1836 through 1968. This particular subject was chosen because the writer resides in Waterford and because as an old community it holds a distinct place in the history of Wisconsin.

Significance of a study of the problem.--The national founding fathers left the problem of education to the individual states. The states, though charged with the responsibility of education, have allowed a great deal of freedom in the administration of education at the local level. This study shows how one community met the challenge of educating its youth over a period of one hundred and thirty-two years.

Lack and/or extent of present knowledge.--The writer was unable to find any such educational history, and there is no evidence that anyone has undertaken a study of particular nature of the community of Waterford as to the history of its public schools, per se. In short, there is no available evidence that anyone has ever made a study of the public schools in this community.

Hypothesis or assumptions.--Based on available evidence the writer reports the development of the schools in Waterford in relation to the local financial support of the public schools; the educational philosophy; policies regarding boards, teachers, and pupils and subsequently, tax supported schools during the years 1836-1968.

Limitations of proposed study.--Semi-complete records of the proceedings of the school boards from 1866 to 1968 are available; however, records previous to this are spotty as

will be shown. School board records were kept from 1867 but some of the records prior to 1867 have been kept by descendants of previous school board members. In lieu of written records, some information has been obtained from octogenarians of the community. A history of the Village of Waterford was printed in 1923 which contained a small section dealing with the schools from the period of 1836 to 1923. The history of the educational system for this entire period was covered by this in a matter of two pages--approximately 580 words.

Procedure.--The method of gathering data was by research. The writer read and evaluated information from (1) the files of the Waterford Post, (2) the minutes from 1866-1968 of the Board of Education of the graded schools, (3) the records of St. Peter's Lutheran Church, Community Methodist Church, and St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church; (4) minutes of the Village Board of Waterford, (5) books on related material as to concurrent happenings in American education.

A card index on materials gathered was kept and catalogued. The writer then wrote, edited, and correlated the material collected.



## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A survey of literature such as: (1) the Waterford Post Encyclopedia, (2) the Waterford Post, (3) the Waterford Village Board minutes from 1866 through 1968, (4) St. Peter's Lutheran Church records, (5) Community Methodist Church records, which produced little actual educational material. Interviews with descendants of early Waterford citizens whose information was based on an eighty-four year old memory, backed by fragmentary material, was one of the principal sources of gathering historical data. Other contacts were former school board members who served from 1947 to 1955, and a former school secretary who worked from 1959 to 1967.

Probably the most arresting and meaty piece of information is the brief but informative Waterford Post Encyclopedia which was primarily a business promotion project and contained as a cultural bait comments on the educational system of Waterford.

Indispensable to the writer and of paramount importance to the completion of this study was the record kept by the Boards of Education from the years 1866 through 1968. These records, stored in vaults, were surprisingly clear and intact as to numbers, with entrees accurate and cross referenced.

Since all civilization survives on education, no thorough history can be written without bringing out the education of the times. Many seemingly unrelated educational articles have bits and pieces which can be connected with the formal writings found on the history of the Waterford Graded School.

It must be remembered by the student that history is often the way it is observed. No one can know from what motives earlier historians have written or what their dreams and prejudices were. This paper, nevertheless, is based largely on these writings.

### CHAPTER III

#### AN INTRODUCTION TO THE HISTORY OF THE WATERFORD AREA

Waterford is a portion of the territory ceded to the United States Government by the treaty of 1833 with the Pottawattomie and other Indian tribes. By the terms of the treaty the Indians were to remain in possession of this land until 1836.<sup>1</sup>

It was in the fall of the year 1836 that two men of English ancestry, Levi Barnes and his son-in-law, Samuel Chapman, came on horseback from Lockport, Indiana. They made claim to the greater part of what is now Waterford. When they saw the crystal blue Fox River cutting a winding path through the deep green meadows and timber lands, they were pleased and decided to make this their future home. All was not fun; however, they dismounted, wrapped their blankets about them, and laid down to sleep. So soundly did they sleep that when morning came they found the stealthy Indians had stolen from their heads the red handkerchiefs which they had tied over them the night before. Mr. Barnes and Mr. Chapman staked their claims and returned to their Indiana homes. Soon after, they

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<sup>1</sup>The Waterford Post Encyclopedia, (Waterford, Wisconsin: Waterford Post, 1923), p. 1.

came back bringing their families to this new country.<sup>2</sup>

The place was called Waterford from the fact that the Fox River could be conveniently forded at this place.

Mr. Barnes' possessions, which were wholly on the east side of the Fox River, amounted to about six hundred acres at one time. For some of it he paid ten shillings an acre; for some, the lesser figure of twelve cents an acre. The Barnes family as of 1968 is still living on a part of what was once the large tract of land. The house, now the Foat family home, was built by Levi Barnes in the late 1830's and early 1840's. The frame of this house was of ten by ten hewn oak fastened with pegs. All the lumber was taken from the land where the buildings now stand. It originally possessed a high fireplace on one side of the kitchen and many reports indicate that the Indians slept on the floor in front of the hospitable hearth.<sup>3</sup>

The historic Chapman home, now partially occupied by the Sinclair Oil Company on the corner of Jefferson and Main, was erected 124 years ago. This site was once occupied by an Indian council house called "Cadney's Castle". Mr. Chapman's brother-in-law, Samuel C. Russ, erected the first tavern, "The Waterford House" in 1846 on the corner of Jefferson and Main within sight of the Chapman house. Jefferson Street was the connecting link with the old Milwaukee Plank Road across the bridge one mile north of the village; therefore, this

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid

<sup>3</sup>Interview with Mrs. Alice Barnes Tindall, July 15, 1967

tavern received extensive patronage.<sup>4</sup>

In 1837 the first dam across the Fox River was built by Barnes and Chapman assisted by several other men. A saw mill was erected soon after. In 1838 the first grist mill was built with two runs of stones; one for flour, and one for feed. The erection of the first grist mill was hailed as a great blessing by the early settlers. Flour, from which bread was made, was brought from Racine by ox team; from Southport, as Kenosha was then called, and from Chicago, because the previous long trips to the above mills were a tribulation. The slow travel by ox team was made still slower by poor roads or even lack of roads. In the winter the journey took from three to five weeks.

The era from 1838 until 1869 was alarmingly silent, and odd as it may seem, the acknowledged contributions from the State of Wisconsin of its citizens in the War between the States from 1861 to 1865 is bypassed.

Daniel Thompson, proprietor of the steam saw and cider mill, was adept at planing and turning in wood and iron. His saw mill was the forerunner of the first lumber yard to be located in Waterford in 1869. He had come from the east and located on the shores of Eagle Lake, which is five miles southeast of Waterford. At the request of Mr. Chapman he came to Waterford from Eagle Lake with his steamer "The Daisy" for the purpose of mowing the weeds in the river. The Daisy was the first boat to float on the waters of the Fox River. It was

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid.

used for excursion parties on the lake and river in summer and for hauling wood in the winter.<sup>5</sup>

The year 1874 is cited as time when active business flourished in Waterford. Some of these businesses were attorney and counsellor-at-law, notary public, dentist, physician, horse shoer, dry goods salesman, furniture dealer, manufacturer of barrels, tubs and cisterns, manufacturers of carriages and buggies, milliner and dealer in fancy goods, groceries and general merchandise, manufacturer of boots and shoes, dealers in hardware and cutlery, wagon maker and house builder, saddle and harness maker, butcher and stock dealer, dealer in liquors and cigars and saloon and billiard halls.<sup>6</sup>

The first plat of the village, made by surveyor Vilas in 1845, shows five mill sites extending along the banks of the river. They extended from what is now Mr. Graf's to a point north of the "old mill". At different times there were three flour mills, two saw mills and one paper mill.

The beautiful islands, which are located just north and close to the heart of the village, lie between two dams. Daniel Thompson erected a large summer hotel on what is now Fox Isle, the largest island.<sup>7</sup>

Three tragic events which stand out in the history of the village are the smallpox epidemic of 1837, the flood of

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<sup>5</sup>Alice Barnes Tindall, History of Waterford, A report read before the Racine County Historical Society (Waterford, Wisconsin: Historical Society, June 27, 1954), p. 3.

<sup>6</sup>The Waterford Times, March 21, 1874, p. 1

<sup>7</sup>Tindall Report, loc. cit.

1881 and the fire of 1898. An undetermined number of the bodies of those who died of the dread disease were carried by ox team at night to the old cemetery on the hill. The cemetery was a gift to the town from Levi Barnes. It was called "Old Settlers Cemetery" and naturally carries only tragic memories and is presently sorely neglected and no longer used.

In the spring of 1881, the Fox River began rising and within days the streets on the east side were covered to the depth of two to four feet. Soon afterward the dam gave way carrying with it the large quantities of ice which struck and smashed the bridge. Besides this damage, the stores lost large quantities of merchandise. Several young people took a boat and went out in the swollen river, not realizing the danger involved. The boat capsized and one life, that of Miss Betsy Olson, a 16 year old Waterford girl, was lost.<sup>8</sup>

Finally on the evening of July 3, 1898, a fire broke out in the basement of Louis Noll's store. This stood on the site of the present village park, which is indicated. With the exception of three buildings, two entire blocks of business places were destroyed. It was a great loss to the energetic and public villagers.<sup>9</sup>

Thus the trials, tribulations, and the glories of Waterford can probably be matched by many small towns along the Fox and other rivers. Yet somehow, more progressive and more energetic was the community in building formal schools

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

and business arteries and Chapter IV on Education will discuss this progress.



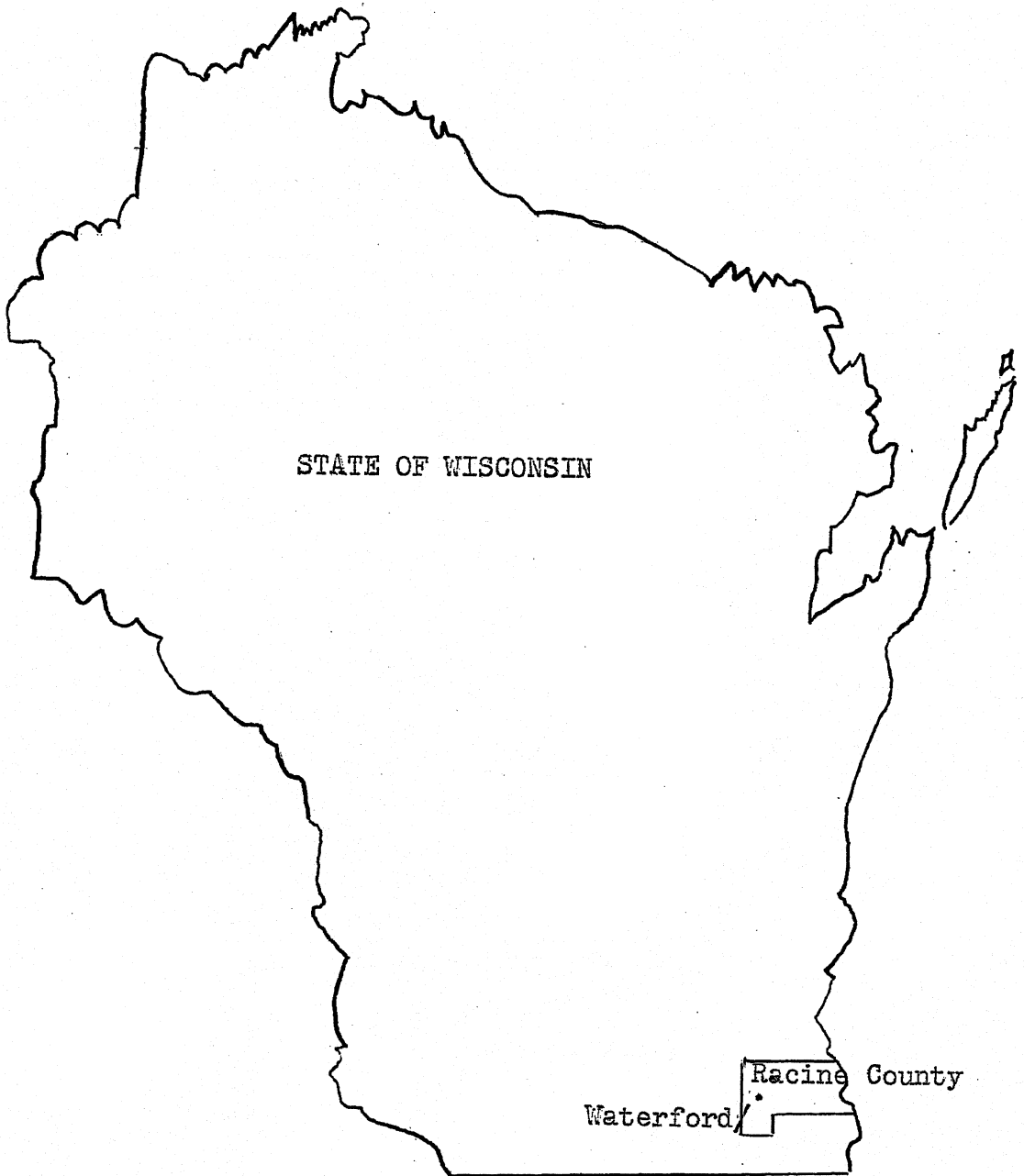


Figure 1. Village of Waterford

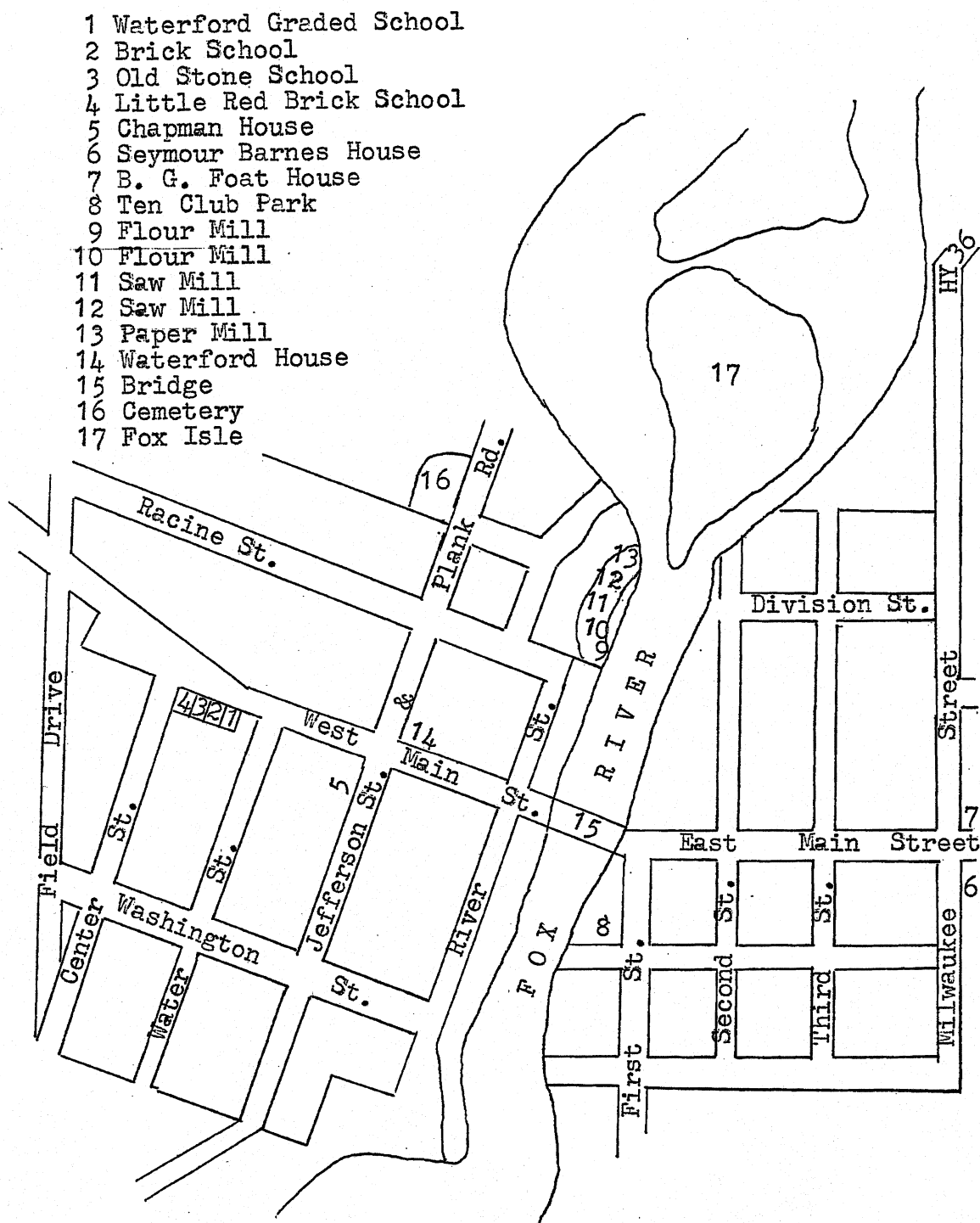


Fig. 2.--Village of Waterford and its Landmarks

## CHAPTER IV

### A HISTORY OF THE WATERFORD GRADED SCHOOLS DISTRICT #1

A guide to the progressive and public spiritedness of a community is its system of education. The pioneer settlers of Waterford knew this and soon after the first homes were established, about 1837, they began to provide for the education of the children. There has been a steady development in the progress of our schools. Growth in numbers has been accompanied by growth along every line--the equipment provided for work, the courses taught, housing facilities, number of teachers employed and methods used in instruction.

The first school in the Waterford community was opened in 1840 and was taught by Miss Harriet Caldwell, according to histories of Racine County published in 1879 and 1916.<sup>10</sup>

Amid some vague records, it would seem owing to the lax manner in which the first records were kept, very little can be ascertained about the early school history. Captain John T. Rice, of Burlington, who was born in 1839, the first white boy born in the town of Waterford, verified Miss Caldwell's employment and added that the first school in the town of Waterford, which was at that time a part of the town of Rochester, was taught in what later became known as the Webster

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<sup>10</sup>The Waterford Post Encyclopedia, loc cit., p. 44.

District, about a mile west of the village. Miss Caldwell, who later became the wife of L. W. Ward of Caldwell Prairie, was a cousin of Captain Rice's mother and while teaching in the district spent a greater part of her time at the Rice home. To the Webster District also belongs the honor of building the first school house, commonly called the Webster School. Whether the school house preceded the school or the school the house, research does not reveal.

Incidentally, Captain Rice spoke further of teachers when he said, "A man by the name of Sherwood was among the earliest and best teachers of the district and pupils came out from the village to the school".<sup>11</sup>

Undated papers found in the Chapman home gave some information such as the fact that on September 22, 1845, Samuel deeded to the trustees of District No. 9, town of Rochester, 40 feet running north and south by 30 feet east to west off the northeast corner of lot 3, block 9, Waterford, to be used for a school house site. This is the first tax supported school in Waterford, Wisconsin.

In a series of nine building programs of the Waterford Public School the first was that of the "Little Brick School House" in 1847 on land deeded in 1845. It was to be 26 feet long and 22 feet wide. A 13 foot panel door was to be placed in the center of the front end with transom sash over the door with 1.15 light windows each side of the door leaving spaces. There was to be 1.15 light window in the back end in

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<sup>11</sup> Tindall Report, loc. cit.

the center and three such windows on each side. A good large Norfolk latch and a good stock lock were to be put on as a warning to potential thieves.<sup>12</sup>

Just when the building was erected is not known as the paper was not dated. Early documents show that a special school meeting was held May 27, 1847, at which the trustees were authorized to finish the school house as they deemed fit. Mrs. J. W. Jordan, of Mason City, Iowa, youngest daughter of Samuel, said that the building was used for school purposes before it was completed.<sup>13</sup>

On June 3, 1847, another special meeting was held at which an appropriation of \$180 was made for the purpose of finishing the school house and plans were made for the levying and collecting of a tax to meet the appropriation.

While this explains the first school house, but not the first school, as there were private schools in operation since 1837. Mrs. Jordan was known to have said that many times she had heard her mother tell that the first school in the village was held in the "Old Ark"--the old log house (1837)--the first to be built in the village, which served as the home of the Chapman and Barnes families, was the stopping place for all new comers and served as the community center of this settlement. It is thought that Mrs. Martha Short, a sister of Mrs. Samuel Chapman and a daughter of Levi Barnes, was the first teacher.

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<sup>12</sup>The Waterford Post Encyclopedia, loc. cit.

<sup>13</sup>Tindall Interview, loc. cit.

An item taken from the Racine Advocate of May, 1844, and quoted in one of the early numbers of the Waterford Posts says: "The Village of Waterford contains 150 inhabitants, has a good school, a good state of society, moral and religious, and now and then an abolitionist".

Private schools seem to have been numerous, if not permanent, in the early days. Mrs. Lydia Woodhead Carr, who moved to California, wrote of attending a "Select school" for primary scholars, taught by Miss Ruth Chapman in the upper room of her home.

Miss Louise Weage (later Mrs. Merrick) also taught a private or select school in a room furnished by her father, Fred Weage, in the second story of his building, now the Topp Building on Main Street. The building was later damaged by fire and only the first story rebuilt. Individual seats, the first seen in Waterford, were used in this school. From thirty to forty pupils could be accommodated. This was the "School de Luxe" of the village for three or four years.

Miss Imogene Chapman conducted a primary school in the west wing of the old Chapman home at one time, but the date is not certain. Miss Chapman and her sister, Miss Ellen, were also among the teachers who taught in the "little brick school house".<sup>14</sup>

Another private school was held in the evenings in the Weage building, which was attended by older boys. Several of the young men testified to the value of this instruction,

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid.

which included German and some commercial branches, when they entered the business world a few years later.

For several years a school was held in the basement of the old Congregational Church (erected in 1859). At one time it was used to take care of the overflow from the "little brick school", but was used exclusively as the public school when the "little brick school" was out of commission. The Congregational Church was also used to house the high school at one time.

Advanced branches, which prepared the pupils for college, were taught and the young people went from this village school to Lawrence, Rockford, and other colleges. One of the instructors was Professor Whitcomb, though young was promoted to an older class composed largely of young women who resented the little boy being put in their class. The little boy stood up in school and made a speech. He explained why he was put forward, said that nothing could keep him back, and challenged the young women to keep up with him. This little boy later became the president and reorganizer of one of the large and important railroads of this country.<sup>15</sup>

The little red brick school house was not only the home of the public school, but was used as the town hall and all public meetings were held there. Impartially it opened its doors to the various denominations of the community for church services, Sunday school, and weekly prayer meetings. It was also the theatre of the village and many plays by

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

traveling troupes and home talent shows were frequently held there. On these occasions, or whenever a meeting was held in the school house in the evening, lights were furnished by the neighbors whose best lamps and lanterns were carried, all freshly cleaned, to the school house. The Chapman melodian, carried to and from the school house by older boys and men, furnished music for the church services.<sup>16</sup>

In the early days it was the custom for the teachers to "board out" or to "board round" the tuition of the pupils. It was not until the state took charge of the school in 1858 that a money consideration was offered teachers.

Available records, minutes written by Joseph Williams, Clerk pro tem, indicated that the first annual meeting of the district was held on September 24, 1866, at which time Mr. V. M. Willard was chosen chairman.<sup>17</sup>

George F. Newell was elected district clerk and Charles Moe was elected district treasurer for the term of three years.

Sums of money used for educational purposes (1866-67) came from these sources: County fund, \$142.36; State fund, \$170.97; District tax, \$200.00

Included in the expenditures were teachers' salaries; the man teacher, Mr. E. R. Smith, was hired for forty-five dollars a month for the four winter months which started on

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Waterford District School Record. (Waterford, Wisconsin, 1866-1887).



November 21, 1866, and ended on March 22, 1967, and the woman teacher, Miss Martha Lowell, received twenty dollars a month for teaching the four summer months which began April 8, 1867, and ended August 2, 1867.

A Teacher's Certificate for Mr. E. R. Smith--first documented evidence--dated November 20, 1866, shows the courses he studied to become a teacher: Orthography, Reading, Penmanship, Mental Arithmetic, Written Arithmetic, English Grammar, Geography, United States History, Theory and Art of Teaching, Algebra, Physiology, Physical Geography, Natural Philosophy, and Geometry.

There were thirty-five boys and twenty-two girls enrolled for a total of fifty-seven pupils, whose average age was nine and one-half years. Their attendance averaged forty-three days during the term. Studies pursued by the pupils in 1866-1867 were the alphabet, spelling, reading, arithmetic, geography, history and vocal music.

A second building program was put into operation when, at the annual school meeting on September 30, 1867, it was voted that the school board be authorized to commence operations for the purpose of building a graded school house of stone. The taxpayers had to raise one thousand dollars for the purpose of building the school, and another two hundred dollars was needed for teachers' wages for the ensuing year.<sup>18</sup>

This stone building, erected on the site of the little

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

red brick school house, was begun the following year, and at the annual school meeting on September 28, 1868, \$1,600 was voted to complete this building.<sup>19</sup>

This school house survived for more than a century, and the author has fond memories of the "Old Stone School" because he taught seventh grade in this building his first year in Waterford.

At the annual school meeting September 28, 1868, motion made and carried that the time of the annual school meeting be held on the last Monday in August instead of in September. It was voted to raise three hundred and twenty dollars for teachers' salaries and seventy-five dollars for maintenance.

The following year the teachers' salaries and money needed for incidental funds remained the same, but a motion was made and carried to raise six hundred dollars for building purposes.

Five months of school with two teachers for the ensuing year was voted upon at the annual meeting on August 29, 1870.

It is interesting to note that at the next annual meeting on August 31, 1871, the money on hand was a mere \$1.83. Also at this meeting it was moved and carried to have three terms of school with two teachers as follows: first term to commence the third Monday in September and continue thirteen weeks; second term to commence the second Monday in January

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid.

and continue twelve weeks; third term to commence the fourth Monday in April and continue thirteen weeks.<sup>20</sup>

These annual meetings, incidentally, were not always well attended since it is recorded that eight ballots were cast for district clerk.

On August 26, 1872, the school board was instructed by the electors to obtain insurance on the school house for \$1,500 for five years. The electors, monetarily regressed, then voted to shorten the length of the school term to seven months; four months winter term, and three months summer term. G. H. Newell, newly elected clerk, introduced the following resolution which was voted upon and passed:

Resolved by the electors of school district No. 1, Town of Waterford, County of Racine, in annual school meeting assembled that the sum of money equal to one-third of all the school money raised on the taxable property in said school district No. 1 for the year 1874 shall be paid to the trustees of St. Thomas School in the Village of Waterford--this resolution shall not be construed as to mean any of the monies appropriated by the state or county known as government money. Waterford, August 31, 1874.<sup>21</sup>

The school term was to be three terms of twelve weeks each for the 1874-1875 school year, but in 1875-1876 the school was divided into two departments. The higher department was to have a term of six months taught by a male teacher and the primary department nine months taught by a female teacher.

At the 1876 meeting they raised \$300 for school purposes making a total of \$515.07 in the treasury. At this

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<sup>20</sup>Waterford District School Record, loc. cit.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

time the school clerk received his first pay which amounted to ten dollars.

Necessary items, now considered obsolete, were listed in the early treasurer's records of the school district: such as, wood sawing and splitting, building of fires in classroom stoves, water pails and dippers, and whitewashing of the walls.<sup>22</sup>

Unhappily, salaries had not increased one iota from 1866 to 1882. They varied slightly during these years with the male teacher receiving forty-five dollars per month and the female receiving thirty dollars per month. The following expenditures which occurred during this time are interesting: the building of fires from January 13, 1877 to April 8, 1877, cost eight dollars; the sweeping out of the school for three months in 1882 cost two dollars; services of the clerk in 1882 cost seven dollars; a set of encyclopedias in 1883 cost sixteen dollars.<sup>23</sup>

A special meeting was held at the school house in District No. 1 Waterford, Monday, September 18, 1882, to hear reasons for non-attendance in the public school in said district of children between the ages of seven and fifteen years. A. A. Pierce, District Clerk, records that no one attended the meeting. This apparently reveals laxness in school attendance or even interest in it by the community.

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<sup>22</sup>Waterford District Treasurer's Records (Waterford, Wisconsin, 1866-1887).

<sup>23</sup>Waterford District School Record, loc. cit.

At the school house on February 23, 1883, a special meeting was held to decide if the upper department should be continued three months longer. A total of forty-one ballots were cast with twenty-seven for no school and fourteen for longer school. Another regression! A woodshed built of stone and at a cost of \$150 was also built in the above year.

In 1884 the school had eight months of school in both lower and upper departments, but went back to nine months of schooling in 1885-1886, then went back to eight months the following year. This issue seems to have come up every year with changes each time, because in the 1887-1888 school year they had ten months in the lower department and eight months in the upper department.

As far as this author could ascertain, the teacher-pupil ratio was very high during these early years, usually over fifty pupils for each teacher.

The records are vague for the next few years, although the treasurer's report states that a belfry for the stone school house complete with bell and hangings was built in 1887 for a cost of sixty-eight dollars, while in 1895 a flag staff with flag was erected at a cost of ten dollars and fifty-six cents.

The following letter was received by the school board giving some idea of the schools around 1901:

Burlington, Wisconsin  
June 24, 1901

To School Boards

Gentlemen,

I wish to suggest a few matters pertaining to the welfare of our schools.

In the hiring of teachers I stand ready to assist you. There is no one who is able to judge what work a teacher is able to do in a school as the Supt. is---he knows both the condition in the school and the fitness and the ability of the applicant. If you want a teacher, write me. Don't wait until almost all are engaged. If you wish to know the ability of certain applicants to teach and to govern a school, write me and I will tell you honestly and impartially of their ability to teach school. There are many teachers, who, if they were placed in the right positions could do much better work. A person may teach one school quite successfully under the conditions existing in some other school. First of all the applicants must have a legal certificate in this county. You cannot make a contract with a person who is not legally qualified. Then, ask the applicant this question, "Do you attend institutes and teachers' meetings regularly?" Don't hire one who does not attend the institutes. She is not out for improvement. She is either teaching for the money or to kill time or for both. Don't be in too much of a hurry to hire teachers. The institute is held early and the results of the examination will be announced by August 15th. I urge you to come to the institute to see the work and incidentally to see what teachers are there. People do not realize what a stimulus and inspiration to better work a teacher receives from the work in our institutes.

It is the duty of the Supt. to inform school boards concerning the fitness and qualifications of the applicants, and the Supt. stands ready at all times to do his duty without fear or favor. However, it is no more than common courtesy to ask that such information remain confidential in order to foster and preserve harmonious the relations of teachers, school boards, and the district at large. Is your teacher a subscriber to the best educational journals? Has she kept herself up-to-date in methods, fresh in food for her pupils, alert to the need of practical instruction of common every-day things? If she has been a "normal student" be likewise persistent that she attend the summer institute. Many "normal students", laboring under the delusion that their attendance at Normal School has transformed them into a teacher pure and simple--a mass of pedagogical propensity--have become "rutty", educationally deformed, and lack that

pliability which comes from an association and exchange ideas, methods, and common clean-cut instruction. He who teaches this year the same as he did last year has taught a year too long. Hire a progressive teacher, one who will work, advise with her in regard to the discipline, instruction and management of the school, and make your school better than it has ever been before. I shall be glad to have you confer with me before you hire, and will do my utmost to place in the schools the teachers who will do the best work.

As a rule it is unwise to hire a teacher whose home is in the district. I am aware that it is impolite for me to say so, but in so many instances a failure to promote the best interests of teacher pupils I have attributed to this cause. If a teacher is successful at all, she will be much more successful away from home. A teacher's work in the schoolroom secure for her a continuance of service or advancement in position, rather than her personal favor, social position, or political preference. Inquire thoroughly and consistently into the qualifications and previous success of the applicants.

Many of the districts need library cases--not a circular glass-highly polished mahogany piece of furniture, that would lend a charm to a rich man's parlor, but a neat, tight roomy case that any good carpenter can make out of beaded ceiling. Let it be fastened to the side of the wall and have a lock and key. Be sure it is large enough as the library grows each year. It is a shame to have good books strewn all over the room and consequently roughly handled. The very principle taught a boy or girl "to have a place for everything and everything in its place" ought to be worthy of so small an expenditure.

I notice in some schools a fine easy chair for the teacher. It is a mistake, people. Such an article of furniture is liable to be used most of the time. Usually such a school has no globe, numerical frame or library case.

In some districts the outbuildings are in a frightful shape--a disgrace to any civilized community--unfit for occupancy--immoral and a breeder of indecency. Your children are obliged to use an outbuilding which, if you were obliged to occupy, would cause you to blush with shame. There are obscene marks and sayings that would send the carver to pay the penalty of the law. A recent law is very stringent in this matter. Get the outbuildings in shape. Have them separate if possible. Have your teacher inspect them every day and hold her responsible for their condition. If necessary have them furnished with lock and key.

Many expensive pieces of apparatus have been placed in our schools. A dollar globe is far more useful in a district school than a twenty or forty dollar one. The twenty or thirty dollar chart has very little value in

proportion to the amount of money you pay for it. The reading chart contains more words than the ordinary first reader that you can buy for 15 cents. Give your children a book, a blackboard and business-like teacher. What you need is enough good blackboards, plenty of chalk, good maps, plenty of modern text-books, a Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, a fifty-cent or a dollar globe, a good library with serviceable case, and a live teacher who is willing to work and to improve. According to section 430 of the Revised Statutes no school apparatus can be purchased without the consent of the Supt. If not purchased by law the district will not be held liable, and whether the individual members are liable for the purchase price or not, may depend upon the persistence of the agent or firm who sold the goods. There are many so-called agents for school apparatus who are no more or no less than "fakes". Their profits are large and perhaps you pay their livery, hotel and whiskey bills. See to it that at the annual meeting you make an appropriation to cover necessary school apparatus. See Sec. 436.

Sec. 436a compels every district board to purchase a flag and necessary fixtures to display the same. Make a note of this and at the beginning of the next school year may we not be able to say that every district owns a suitable flag of our nation.

I would like to see the flag wave over every school-house while the school is in session.

It is painful to note the number of antiquated text-books that some of our schools are using. When modern texts are so good and so cheap, there is no excuse for allowing out-of-date books to find a place in our schools. Boards, can't you do something so that your children may have the use of better text-books? If you haven't legally adopted a list, do so at once. The law is compulsory. See Section 440. If you have adopted a list, make some recommendations for a change at the annual meeting, provided the adoption was at least three years previous to the change.

Withal, let me urge you to come to visit the institute. There must be an awakening in behalf of the common school.

Assuring you that I am ever ready to assist you and that my every effort is for the improvement of our schools, and hoping that these suggestions may meet with your kindly consideration and co-operation, I am,

Very truly yours,

W. W. Storms



The third building program constituted a large brick addition which was erected in front of the stone building in the summer of 1902. Noll and Auterman were the contractors, with a bid of \$3,785.

During the school year 1902-1903 a wood and coal furnace was installed in the brick building at a cost of \$575. The school district was now entitled to \$300 in extra state aid which was used for the purchase of all new equipment and a new course of study was prepared for the school by the state superintendent.

The teachers in this new school for the first year were J. J. Pettijohn, principal, Miss Lizzie Shenkenberg and Miss Lizzie Plucker while members of the school board were A. S. Titus, clerk, Edward Malone, director, and Dr. Flett, treasurer.

In 1904 a district free high school department was added with an enrollment of forty-two, which had classes on the second floor of the graded school building. The entire enrollment that year was one hundred and two children.<sup>24</sup>

The following items of interest were found in the treasurer's records: the first electric light bill for the district was paid on March 4, 1909, for \$2.90, while payment of Village of Waterford water permit and tax amounting to \$6.75 was not paid until October 11, 1915, and modern plumbing was installed by Wallman and Stinke for \$91.98 in 1916.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

<sup>25</sup>Waterford District Treasurer's Records, loc. cit.

It was also in 1916 that the high school department transferred to its own building across the street from the graded school.

School records are not available for the years 1917-1936. No building programs took place from 1902-1949. For forty-seven years there was to be no building program. This amazing truth can be somewhat explained by the following events: (1) The first World War was taking place during 1917-1918, and this usually impedes building programs. Interest would drop off in schools during a war. The population of Waterford did not change much during this time. (2) Waterford, like so many rural communities has been and is a retired farmers' town. Generally speaking these communities are very conservative and Waterford is no exception.

With the Great Depression starting in 1929 and lasting through the 1930's, growth in almost every area was almost at a standstill. During the 1930's at the annual meetings free textbooks were voted down. This is another indication of the difficult economic times. The population in the United States reached an all-time low of 18.4 births per 1,000 in 1933 and again in 1936. These trends on the national level were being felt in Waterford and elsewhere during these depression years. Mrs. Melvin Hanson, a Village of Waterford resident for many years and presently teaching kindergarten in this same village, stated: "There was a question among many people in Waterford whether or not the Graded School could keep operating with the declining

enrollment that they were experiencing." America's entry into World War II in 1941-1945 had a tremendous effect upon schools. There was a shortage of qualified teachers, and a lack of building materials and construction workers because war related industries had top priority.

The only mention of World War II in the minutes was at the July 13, 1942, annual meeting. A letter was read from the county superintendent regarding the sugar ration allotment.

At the annual meeting July 12, 1943, a committee of four was appointed by the chairman to give consideration to the formation of a parent-teacher association and present definite recommendations in the near future.

A petition was presented requesting the establishment of a kindergarten in the Waterford Graded School. This subject was thoroughly discussed, after which a motion was made and seconded that the school board establish a kindergarten if suitable quarters and a competent instructor could be employed. 19 ballots cast - 1 blank, 16 yes, 2 no. A motion made and seconded that the sum of \$3,000 be added to the budget to defray the expenses of operating a kindergarten, if established. Motion carried, July 9, 1945. It is interesting to note how relatively late Waterford started its first kindergarten when we are reminded that kindergarten has had its greatest development in the United States. The first American kindergarten was established in 1856 in Watertown, Wisconsin by Mrs. Carl Shurz, wife of the American general and politician.

At the annual meeting July 8, 1946, a motion made and carried to have the board secure the services of a music teacher in an effort to establish a school-wide music program. At this same meeting it was decided to retain the \$3,000 budgeted for kindergarten purposes the previous year for future use for the same purpose due to the unavailability of suitable quarters.

In 1948 the graded school had three teachers and a teaching principal. The teachers met with the board and spoke favorably of the parent-teacher conferences which replaced the report card system although this new system will take time.

The fourth building program of the district was in 1949 when a \$23,000 lunch room and kitchen, and finally a kindergarten were added to the stone school. For this building program there were 54 votes cast: Yes - 41, no - 10, blank - 3. This was a very modest building program, and relatively inadequate. It was a piecemeal affair and looked unfinished, which it was, because they did not cover the cement block building with brick; in fact, they didn't paint it. Not all was gloom and despair however. The school's first phone was installed in 1949. The K-8 enrollment was 124. Fire escapes costing \$2,000 were added to the building this same year. This was the first building program in forty-seven years.

The enrollment of the Waterford Graded School increased rapidly after 1950. The population in Waterford continued to increase steadily in line with the national

trend on the post-war baby boom. The United States birth rate climbed to 26.6 in 1947 and has since then fluctuated around 25.0, a higher level than in any other Western country. In recent years outlying school districts requested and were granted annexation to the Waterford School District. Hot lunches were served for the first time in 1950.

The fifth building program was inaugurated in 1951. It was the most progressive to date and included a new boiler room, four classrooms, and two washrooms were added to the school for a total cost of \$80,222. Vote was by ballot with the following results: For bonds - 57, against bonds - 13.

At a special meeting September 24, 1951, a resolution to increase the board membership from three to five was introduced. This did not pass because of the consolidation with District #5 on August 20, 1951.<sup>26</sup> Ranke School District #5 closed in 1926 and pupils entered Waterford Graded School District #1 on a tuition basis. Ranke School District provided bus transportation in 1930, having the first school bus in Racine County and one of the first in southeastern Wisconsin.

Beginning in 1951 and ending in 1963, because of economic reasons, a rash of consolidations took place. At a special meeting July 25, 1951, with ten members present, the Ranke School District electorate voted to consolidate with Waterford State Graded School. Ten ballots were cast and all were in favor of consolidation. The Pilgrim School District

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<sup>26</sup>Waterford School District Record Book, 1937.

on July 13, 1953, voted to consolidate with Waterford. The West High Street District #3 consolidated with Waterford on August 4, 1953. This school was located four miles west of Waterford on Highway 20. The school was eventually moved and converted into a farm home. The Webster School District #2 consolidated with Waterford on August 20, 1953. The school-house is still located one mile west of Waterford at the junction of Highways 20 and 83. This school house is being used as a shelter for horses.<sup>27</sup>

November 2, 1953, was the first district meeting since the consolidation of the Pilgrim School District #7. The Pilgrim School did not close until May of 1955. Waterford Graded School kept it open because of a shortage of space.

At the July 12, 1954, annual meeting a petition requesting an increase in the membership of the board from three to five members was read. Adoption of this resolution was moved and carried.

A summer recreation program was started by the school district for the summer of 1955. It proved very successful and has been in continuous operation since. The program has also been very popular in the community with about three hundred children taking part. It has been growing steadily since its inception. The recreation program offers such activities as baseball for all ages complete with uniforms, golf, tennis, swimming lessons, volleyball, dancing, arts

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<sup>27</sup>Waterford Township Record Book.

and crafts, hiking, bicycling, fishing and other interesting games and sports.

The sixth building program by the Waterford Graded School District was begun in 1951. This addition was sorely needed and it was a good step forward by the community. A \$70,000 addition was built which included four new classrooms and the large well-lighted and now fully equipped kindergarten room on the southeast corner of the building.

However, the community was not keeping pace with the increased enrollment. The first day of school, Wednesday, September 5, 1956, an emergency meeting was called to discuss the increased enrollment and possible solution to the problem. First day enrollment was 341. When this is compared to 124 pupils in 1949 this is a 175% increase in enrollment in seven years.

This was the seventh building program in the district. An all-purpose room (gym) with a large stage and two more classrooms were added in 1959 at an expenditure of \$90,000.

The number of students increased from 223 in 1954 to over 550 in 1963 or a 146.7% increase. Another building program was inevitable.

For the first time the district voted at the annual meeting in 1958 to have 190 school days; it has been the same ever since.

The seventh and eighth grade became departmentalized in the 1960-61 school year and was taught in the village school that year.

In 1958 the Racine Agricultural School at Rochester, a village two miles south of Waterford, was closed. It was the last remaining agricultural school in the state.

The Waterford High School District purchased the Racine Agricultural School from Racine County for future expansion. The Waterford Graded School rented it from the Waterford High School District for a junior high school. In 1961-62 the seventh and eighth grades were moved to the Rochester building. Schools in the high school district sent their seventh and eighth graders on a tuition basis to the junior high during the 1961-62 school year only.

The curriculum was expanded greatly that year. A regular physical education and band period were added. Home Economics, Manual Arts, and a French program were also added.

The following year the above mentioned outlying schools discontinued sending their students, but the junior high was continued and the sixth grade was also sent from the village to Rochester. The present enrollment in junior high is about 250 students.

Two more school consolidations took place in 1963. The Pleasant View District #3 closed May 24, 1963. It had been in operation for ninety-seven years. It is located approximately four miles southwest of Waterford.

Buttles School District #4 closed in June of 1963. This school is located on Highway 83 approximately four miles northwest of Waterford. The brick building is still in very good condition and is owned by the Waterford District.



The school board has rented this building to the Racine County Special Education group for a center to teach educable children.

A bond issue of \$205,000 was authorized by the district electors in June of 1963. This was the eighth and next to last building program in the Waterford Graded School District.

Zarse and Zarse, a Milwaukee architectural firm, submitted plans for a \$208,000 addition.

Ground was broken in October 1963 and construction completed for school classroom use in September 1964. The cornerstone was laid in place on Saturday, February 1, 1964.

\$9,850 was designated in the 1964-65 school budget of \$449,270.61 for furniture and general equipment. The 1868-1902 brick school house was torn down to make way for a portion of the new addition.

Seven classrooms were added, an office for the principal, an outer office, boys and girls shower rooms, two wash-rooms and storage rooms. The old principal's office is now a conference room.

The former lunchroom and kitchen were remodeled and enlarged for the present kitchen, walk-in cooler-freezer, storage area and a large cafeteria with drop-down tables and benches.

The basement area was enlarged and rebuilt. One section is used as a full-time remedial reading clinic and an office for the full-time psychometrist who serves both the graded school and St. Thomas Aquinas School. The rest of the

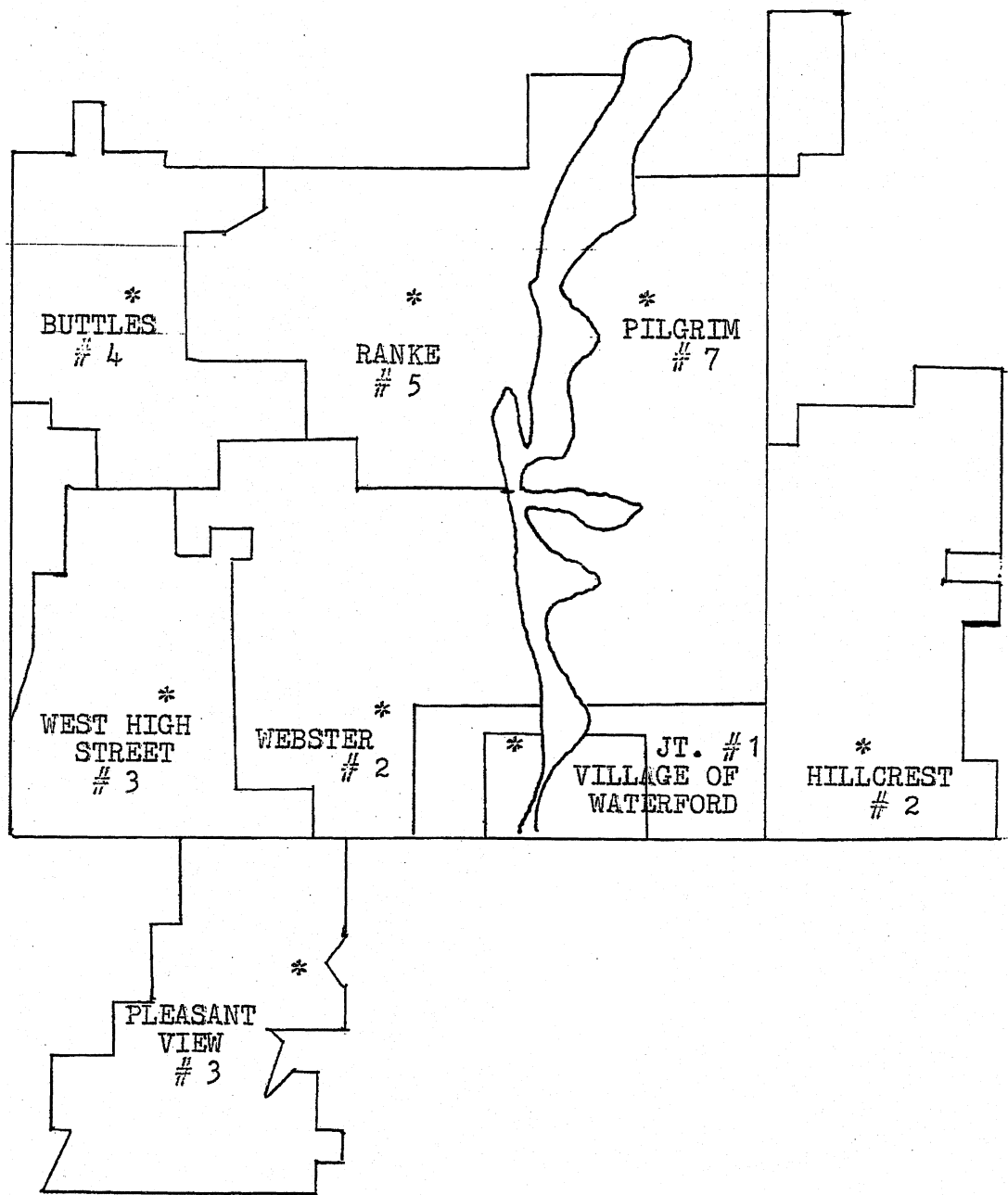


Fig. 3.--Map illustrating school districts and locations which have consolidated with Waterford Graded School District #1.

basement area is used for storage.

The present 1967-1968 enrollment of the graded school is 576 children in grades kindergarten through five.

District electors authorized the graded school board of education at the annual meeting in July 1964 to investigate the purchase of a site and the construction of a new building to be used as a district middle school. At a special district meeting held June 26, 1967, the electors voted 79 to 12 authorizing the construction of the new middle school.

The new school will replace the present junior high school located in Rochester and will contain grades five, six, seven and eight, with an eventual capacity for 660 students.

This, the ninth and last building program, is probably the boldest and most exciting step the school district has ever taken. This building program will cost the taxpayers over one million dollars.

At a special board meeting held Monday, July 10, 1967, the Waterford Graded School Board of Education determined to issue promissory notes in the amount of \$895,000 for the construction of the new middle or junior high school.

The annual meeting held July 24, 1967, was a very interesting and important one for the district. Due to increased enrollments and rising costs it was necessary to increase the budget. Total enrollment was increased by approximately seventy-five additional students. This necessitated the hiring of three additional teachers at a cost of approximately \$18,000. Quite a blow!

A survey had been taken the previous school year (1967) which indicated a desire for a summer school program. Estimated cost of this six weeks program is \$2,070 and was included in the proposed budget. The summer program will include remedial reading, remedial mathematics, and a band program.

The district equalized valuation had increased from \$22,676,700 to \$24,847,100. The 1966-67 school budget was \$338,243 with a mill rate of \$14.92 per \$1,000 equalized valuation. The 1967-68 school budget is \$433,682 with a mill rate of \$17.41 per \$1,000 equalized valuation--an increase of 16.7% in school taxes in one year. Another blow!

The 1967-68 school year began on August with crowded conditions in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades at Rochester and kindergarten through fourth at the Waterford Graded School. The school kindergarten census was not the same as the number of pupils who showed up on the first day of school. A fifth session of kindergarten is being held in the basement of the Methodist Church across the street from the graded school. The junior high at Rochester is overcrowded, and to add to the problem is the poor condition and inadequate arrangement of facilities.

The middle school is progressing, and is expected to open about November, 1968. This new building is located on a thirty acre site about a quarter of a mile west of the present graded school. This building will contain grades five through eight and is expected to take care of enrollments for

the next five years. The total enrollment for the two schools is approximately 850 students; sixth, seventh, and eighth graders at Rochester, and kindergarten through fourth at Waterford. There is a faculty of thirty-six; twenty-five in the former, and eleven in the latter.

Another special meeting was held March 25, 1968, to raise an additional \$145,000 to complete the middle school construction, making a grand total of \$1,040,000. This is the Waterford Public School system as of 1968.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY

The history of America is really the history of the new world education.

Waterford with its rich farm lands, wooded areas and its proximity to such cities as Milwaukee, Racine, and Waukesha is not too different from other areas of the United States, and is similar to many communities in the Louisiana Purchase.

From the scanty records of Waterford numerous private schools were held in the village from 1837 through the 1840's.

In 1840 the first public graded school opened in the Waterford District known as the Webster School. This type of education was called in common parlance, the grade school, and had its origin in the New England States and was frequently referred to as the "common school". From this date through the war between the states the grade school records in the Waterford District are at best scanty, incomplete, and frequently poorly recorded; yet youngsters were educated.

By the late 1860's things, educationally speaking, started to look up in the Waterford area. One room schools were being built and their importance to the district was formidable can be testified by the fact that the Webster

School operated for 113 years and Pleasant View for 97 years.

The turn of the century with its easy living, the horse and buggy days were to be reflected by the casualness in living and the seemingly steadiness of the Waterford district schools. Change apparently was not the motto of the school boards. Local control was revered. There was no central control except for the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

Things remained somewhat static until the close of World War I. This was the case all across America, including Waterford.

During the years of the Great Depression seldom was the question heard about where and when to build schoolhouses, but how can teachers be paid, how can schools be maintained, and education be continued without suffering setbacks.

Thus for a half-century no visible change was to take place in the Waterford School District. In fact as late as 1949 there was not a telephone. Soon; however, this was all to change.

The word consolidation began to creep into the vocabulary of the rank and file, although State department officials, superintendents, principals, and educators knew that such a movement was inevitable. Thus crashing in view of all those who wanted to observe, and falling on those who did not want to hear, was the passing of one of the most strong, single units of American democracy--the school district board.

Thus in 1949, four years after World War II, events were to take a rapid, drastic turn with six rapid building programs in twenty years, versus three building programs in over one hundred years. The last single building cost was over a million dollars. With this expenditure one would think that building of schools in the Waterford district would come to a close for a considerable length of time.

Indications are, however, that in the next few years the school board and administrator will be making recommendations for an erection of another elementary school probably in an easterly direction.

In conclusion this writer would like to point out that the people of the Waterford community fostered the cause of education and excellent training for the children of this district.



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Hulbert Home. Personal interview with Alice Hulbert. April, 1968.

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Tindall Home. Personal interview with Alice Barnes Tindall. September, 1967; April, 1968.

Mrs. Tindall gave this author more material and information than any other person regarding the background history of Waterford, Wisconsin.

Waterford Graded School. Personal interview with Robert Graf, former board member. March, 1968.

Mr. Graf attended grade school in Waterford, served as a board member and is now the bus contractor for the district. He was very helpful.

Waterford Graded School. Personal interview with Earl Ranke. January, 1968.

The Ranke School was named after his family. He went to school there and the old school house is still on his farm.