

My, How You've Grown! District Is 3rd Largest

In 1827, David Ryder purchased 80 acres of flat, open land studded with forests at a cost of \$2 per acre. His farm 140 years later is a small portion of the City of Livonia in a densely populated metropolitan area where land values have soared to several thousand dollars an acre.

What is now Livonia was originally a portion of Bucklin Township. In 1831 Bucklin Township was split into two townships, Nankin and Canton. Thereafter, in 1835, Livonia Township separated from Nankin Township. Livonia Township already in-

cluded several small unincorporated villages.

The first school to be built in the area in 1830 was Schwartzburg School on the northeast corner of Ann Arbor Trail and Wayne Road. The second was Newburgh School, originally a log cabin, in 1831. In the same year, Nankin Township of which Livonia was a part was divided into nine school districts. Newburgh was a small farming village near the intersection of Ann Arbor Road and Ann Arbor Trail.

An 1827 state law required a com-

munity of 50 or more to provide a teacher for instruction in reading, writing, English, French, arithmetic, spelling and "decent behavior." The schools of the period were open six months of the year on a tuition basis. Parents were also required to supply the school with firewood. No free public education was available in Michigan until 1842, and then only in Detroit.

Early schools were very crude one-room log cabins with one or two windows, a fireplace, and homemade seats. The teacher lived in pupils' homes and received free room and board as part of his wages. By 1845 the school year consisted of four months of winter school and five months of summer school.

In 1869 Newburgh School became graded. It was educating 108 students

with three teachers, two men earning 242.26 per year and one woman receiving \$80 per year.

Other early schools included Tamarack, later Livonia Center, at Five Mile and Farmington; Bell, Middle Belt between Schoolcraft and Five Mile; Chapman, Middle Belt and Plymouth; Briggs, Six Mile and Newburgh Road; Gaffney, Six Mile and Middle Belt—later Wilcox School; Pierson, Seven Mile near Farmington; and Stark, Wayne Road, but subsequently moved. Chapman and Bell Schools became Elm School in 1876. Each of these schools served a separate village within Livonia Township.

Education in the Livonia area continued to be limited to small ele-

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