

HISTORY OF THE MADISON LOCAL SCHOOLS

Early History 1815-1929

This brief history of the schools in Madison Township is included in this report in an effort to provide the reader with a background which will enable him to understand more fully the present status and problems of the school district. The information for this history was obtained by reading minutes of the Board of Education for the period from 1853 through 1876 and from 1908 to the present and by conferring with Mr. John R. Williams, former Superintendent of Lake County Schools and a graduate of Madison schools.

The first building erected as a schoolhouse was built on the northwest corner of the town commons in Madison (Centerville at the date) in 1815, although, school had been conducted at other locations previously. This building was used until 1830 when it was replaced by a larger frame building at the southeast corner of the commons.¹ This later school was probably the same building in which an important meeting was held in 1853.

“Journal of the Madison Board of education, Madison (Township), April 18, 1853 being the third Monday, the day appointed by law. The Township Clerk with the clerks of the sub-districts below met at the school house in sub-district #9 (Centerville) and being a quorum proceeded to organize the Madison Board of Education.”²

At this date, this largest geographical township in Ohio contained twenty-one sub-districts (seventeen whole and four partial), twenty of which were operating schools within the township, and several of these had two-room schools. Each sub-district was governed by three directors elected by the voters, many times, apparently by the write-in method as Township Clerk made many appointments to fill vacancies caused by elected directors refusing to serve. Each group of directors chose one member as clerk of the sub-district and he subsequently served on the Township Board of Education, which met in Annual Meeting in April and Semi-annual Meeting in October each year and at such additional times as the membership or the Township Clerk, who also served as Clerk of the School Board, chose.

In 1856, Sub-district #5, a partial district with Harpersfield in Ashtabula County, was dissolved and combined with District #4. In 1857, the schoolhouse in District #15 burned and the Board estimated the cost of replacement at \$533.00. During that year, there were 1091 youth of school age in the township, 617 of whom were enrolled for at least one term of school. Thirty-nine teachers were paid a total of \$2,019.42 and the total value of the twenty-four schools was set at \$7,334.00.

Further information regarding finances and enrollment during this period may be found in the Appendix in A.1, A.2 and A.3.

¹ Kimball, General Abel, General History of the Township, Unpublished March 4, 1880.

² Journal of the Madison Board of Education, p. 1.

In 1858, a resolution was passed that each sub-district must retain at least one-third of their funds for operating summer school for young children unable to attend during the winter. A resolution was also passed to combine districts #14, #15, and #16 into two districts and district #3 and #11 into one, but this resolution was later rescinded. The books from the 21 libraries were also pooled, evaluated and re-distributed by a committee of Board Members.

During 1860, District #9 was legally organized into a separate district in conjunction with the incorporation of its territory as the Village of Madison. Districts #1 and #2, which were partial districts with areas in Ashtabula County, were dissolved and reorganized as District #2 and the schoolhouse in Former District #1 was sold.

The war years from 1861-1865 were felt by the schools in the form of loss of school directors to the army, and lower enumeration, enrollment, and average daily attendance. It was during this period that the Board began to purchase fuel, buildings, and fences on contract to the lowest bidder.

In 1870 the Township Clerk renumbered the districts and #21 became #1, #20 became #5 and #19 became #9. During 1872 the Board resolved to have schools in session for eight months each year.

Several moves toward consolidation were made between 1862 and 1875. Due to falling enrollments, a study was made of all districts enumerating less than 50 pupils but no action was taken. A proposal to acquire the Madison Seminary for a Central High School was defeated in the Board in 1862 and defeated again by the electors in 1869. Another resolution to establish a high school was presented to the voters in 1875 but the results do not show in the minutes.

The school board minutes have been misplaced or lost between 1876 and 1908. Between 1876 and 1898 when the map, (Map 1.1, page 4) was printed, District #10 and #14 had been consolidated out of existence. Between that time and 1908, additional consolidations had taken place until the only schools still being operated were #2, #4, #5, #12 and #18. A three-year high school was in operation at the District #12 school in North Madison. The Madison Village School District was also operating a four-year high school to which graduated of the three-year school or "Boxwell pupils" from the southern part of the township could attend with tuition paid by the Madison Township Board of Education. This group had been reorganized as a five-member board in 1904 and the Principal of the North Madison High School was acting as an educational consultant for the Board.

Transportation problems were already a large headache for the Board in 1908 as their minutes devote much more space to securing drivers and correcting the eighteen "Hack routs" than hiring teachers.

The expenditures for the entire school district for 1907 were \$12,468 and the Board levied 10 mills for the year 1909 apportioned as a 3 mill tuition, 5 2/3 mills contingency and 1 1/3 mills for bonds and interest. They certified this amount to the county auditor and he placed it on the tax duplicate to be collected.

The southern four rooms and office and basement of the “Old Building,” which was still in use in North Madison had been constructed and occupied in 1907. In 1909 the Board authorized the first addition of four rooms and a basement at North Madison at a total bid of \$5,380, which was soon followed by approval of \$429.86 additional for changes. This was financed from the sinking fund and sale of \$2,250 worth of bonds.

During the years from 1910 to 1919 many organizational changes occurred in the Madison Schools. The school District #5 was suspended in 1910, the pupils to be transported to District #18. A small section of Special District #3 of Thompson Township, Geauga County, was added in 1911 by resolution of the Thompson Township Board of Education. A new site was purchased and a contract for a new school in District #18 was authorized at a total of \$1,580.59. The school in District #2 was suspended in 1916 and pupils transferred to District #12. The three- room John Adams School in Unionville (District #4) was authorized in 1917 and bonds for \$6,500 were sold but construction costs were not listed. The area in Perry Township, which was formerly part of joint Sub-District #15, was officially added to Madison Township for school purposes in 1912. The official title was changed from Madison Township Schools to Madison Rural Schools to comply with a new law in 1914.

When the Lake County Schools were first organized, the Madison Rural Board voted to remain a separate district but they later accepted the proposition of the County Board for Superintendent Kendall to oversee the district during the school year 1915-1916. At this same time, the Board was negotiating with the Madison Village Board to form a Joint High School Board. Two members were selected to serve on the Joint High School Board, it was authorized to prepare plans, these were approved and a bond issue for \$25,00 was submitted to the township voters and passed by a very narrow margin in November 1915. Apparently, the Madison Village voters, who were to pay 50% of the cost of the building, turned down the issue. It was revived again in 1919 and a new larger bond issue amounting to \$64,395 of the estimated \$90,000 cost of the building was submitted at a special election in August 1919. It was passed. A similar \$25,605 bond issue was also passed by voters in Madison Village at this election. Since they were passed as separate issues they had to remain on the records and be calculated separately throughout their life as shown in Table 1.1. In November 1919, the Lake County Board of Education passed a resolution transferring the Madison Village School District to the Madison Rural School District. In December 1919, a member of the Rural Board of Education resigned and two men from the village were appointed in their places. The Board then elected one member from the village as president. At a later date, they voted to join the Lake County District for supervision to complete the various steps to acquiring the territory and organization which exist today.

This consolidation touched off several building changes. The schoolhouse in District #5 was sold in 1920. In that year the Madison Memorial High School was built on a new site in Madison Village. This original building contained eight classrooms, a library, office, gymnasium and auditorium and the contracts were let a total amount of \$120,190. Additional bond issues were passed in 1920 and 1921 to supply money to complete this building. In 1923 a new three-room elementary school on a new site in South Madison (District #18) was built at a contract cost of \$42,614. In 1925 a \$190,000 bond issue was rejected by the voters. One for \$85,000 was approved in 1926 and used to build the Homer Nash Kimball elementary school in Madison with

eight rooms, a gymnasium-auditorium, cafeteria-kitchen, office and clinic. In 1928 another bond issue was passed providing \$12,000 to go with the unencumbered \$37,000 in the sinking fund to build a gymnasium-auditorium-cafeteria addition and a new boiler room and heating system at North Madison.

During 1925, the Madison Board of Education made application and was accepted into the North Central Association.

Modern History 1930-1963

The Madison Schools had been growing in enrollment and in capital outlay. But the depression was just around the corner and with it hard times for schools. The enrollment dropped from 823 in 1925 to 698 in 1940 and did not get back to about 800 until 1948. South Madison and Unionville schools were suspended in 1939 due to decreased enrollment. Extra levies were defeated and tax authorities were even unable to collect the taxes within the limitation, which was lowered from 15 mills to 10 mills in 1935. Schools were closed in May 1933 due to lack of funds. A 3-mill levy was defeated in the November election in 1938 and defeated again in a special election in December 1938. Another 2½- mill levy was defeated in November 1939. All schools were closed on November 15, but a group of citizens got out petitions for a new 3-mill levy, which was approved at a special election on December 14. This series of levies is included in Table 1.2. Schools reopened December 15. The South Madison School was never reopened and was sold in 1946. The John Adams school was reopened for the 1940-1941 and the 1941-1942 years, closed again from 1942-1943 until the fall of 1949 when it was re-opened and has been used each year since to house the overflow sixth or seventh graders from other buildings

An Industrial Arts building with two classrooms and a large shop was built at the High School in 1938 with WPA help.

The years from 1940 to 1951 were years of financial recovery and slow growth in enrollment for the Madison schools. Voters were reluctant to approve additional funds and school board members were reluctant to propose them. The Auditor's Form #25, for the 1935-1936 school year lists \$197,538.98 in unpaid taxes among the school assets and the one for 1942-1943 still shows \$160,340.35 in unpaid taxes so this reluctance to assume more obligations is understandable. The three mill levy for operating expenses secured by desperate measures in 1939 was lowered to two mills for the period from 1941 to 1946 and raised to three again from 1946 to 1951 when it was combined with an additional two mills levied in 1947 to make a five mill levy.

However, the voters defeated proposed bond issues to build additions to the three schools then in use, four times at general elections in 1946, 1948, 1950, 1951, (See Table 1.1)(not available on disc). Finally, a community wide effort and extreme crowding in the elementary schools gained voter approval of a \$800,000 bond issue at a special election in February 1952. However, construction of the additional facilities was delayed by a taxpayer's suit that was carried to the Ohio Supreme Court. The additions at the elementary schools were occupied in the fall of 1954 and provided four additional rooms at Homer Nash Kimball School and ten rooms and a rebuilt heating system at North Madison. They halted the use of temporary classrooms and half-day

sessions for two years. The High School addition of six classrooms, a library-study hall and a new heating system were all occupied in the fall of 1955. The equipment for these rooms as financed by a one- mill levy for one year passed in 1954 and collected in 1955.

The passage of this bond issue in 1952 marked a turning point in school affairs for Madison. Additional operating levies were passed in 1953 and 1956 and no operating levy has been defeated since that time, although some have passed by narrow margins as shown in Table 1.2 (not available on disc).

A \$420,000 bond issue passed in 1955 provided another six classrooms at North Madison School and one classroom, a gymnasium, and locker and shower facilities at the High School. First grade pupils at North Madison School had half-day sessions again in the fall of 1956 but these were terminated in December when the new rooms were occupied. Another bond issue in May of 1957 provided six rooms, kitchen, administrative area and a general-purpose room at the new Red Bird School and the “shell” for five more rooms at the High School. These rooms were finished and both additions equipped with proceeds from a three-mill levy for one year collected in 1957. Two first grades spent 1957-1958 in temporary rooms in a church basement but this ended with the opening of Red Bird School in the fall of 1958. Another \$205,000 bond issue passed in 1958 provided seven more rooms at the Red Bird School and an addition to the High School shop, which were occupied in the fall of 1959.

At this time, this school system was declared eligible for a state building loan but the school board turned it down due to the insistence of the State Department that they start another elementary school instead of adding on to the Red Bird School. Madison was using their addition in the 1959-1960 school year and a neighboring school system, which accepted the state loan, was unable to get the building into use until the fall of 1961.

In May of 1960 a \$570,000 bond issue to build the first installment of a new Junior High School was submitted to the voters in a special election. Due to a delay in the Treasurer’s office, tax notices with increases in school, county, and township taxes, were received by property owners just three weeks before the election. The resulting “tax strike” defeated the bond issue but one for \$600,000 was passed at the November election that year. This building with sixteen classrooms, administrative area, a library-study hall, and a gymnasium was occupied in September 1962 and in November another bond issue to provide six classrooms and new offices at the Junior High School passed by a narrow margin.

For over one hundred years, the citizens of Madison Township have desired and have worked for better schools. Their only consolidation problems have been internal ones. However, they have often been faced with limited resources. This will certainly continue in future years.