

- EST. 1958 -

# WYANDOTTE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

September 2022

VOLUME 9

BACK TO SCHOOL—BACK IN HISTORY



The Scrapbook of Mary McInerney is fascinating! The first three pages of her scrapbook are pictured on this cover. You can read about the scrapbook and Mary on page 3 of this newsletter. Enjoy.



## MESSAGE FROM THE PREZ

Over the years I have heard a variety of stories about family encounters with the Wyandots in the 1800s. When I saw this recipe in the Wyandotte Museum collections I loved the story so much I wanted to share it with all of you! This recipe came from Thelma Marshall:

"This is one of the many recipes my great-grandmother McTaggart brought with her when she left Scotland sometime about 1840. She and her husband, Malcolm, lived for a time in New Brunswick, Canada, then in the Georgian Bay area.

In 1857, there were serious difficulties between the Catholics and the Protestants that became so bad the McTaggerts were forced to flee. Great-Grandpa took the seven boys and traveled at night. Great-Grandma took the six girls in a buck board, and they headed by different routes for America. When they found each other again, they settled in Wyandotte. This was a tiny village in those days, with many Indians around. Great-Grandma was a very generous woman, and the Indians knew they could always

get donuts, cake, or bread at her house. Just after they arrived here, three Indians came and were fed. The next day the Chief returned and offered two of his wives and a horse for Great-Grandma. I'd love to know how Great-Grandpa got out of that! Here's the potato bread the Indians -- and Great-Grandma's family -- loved so well."

Mary-Johna Wein, President

P.S. The Wyandotte Historical Society is still collecting recipes for a cookbook. Please send us your family's favorites.

*Recipe for Great-Grandma McTaggart's Potato Bread*

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>ingredients</b></p> <p>2 potatoes, cooked and<br/>mashed with a little<br/>potato water</p> <p>1 heaping tablespoon butter</p> <p>2 heaping tablespoons sugar</p> <p>3 cups warm water and 2<br/>cups milk combined</p> <p>3 yeast cakes dissolved in ½<br/>cups warm water</p> <p>Flour</p> | <p><b>directions</b></p> <p>Put everything but the flour into a mixing bowl, stir well. Begin adding flour and continue until the consistency is like stiff cake dough. Let rise 1 ½ hours. Add enough flour to hold its shape into loaves. Place loaves in greased tins. Let rise until doubled or higher. Bake 30 minutes in a 350 degree oven.</p> <p>With some additions, this recipe makes a Christmas fruit bread: Add ½ pound butter, 1 cup citron, and nuts. After bread has risen the second time, brush tops with egg whites, beaten.</p> |
|--|---|

from the kitchen of: **Thelma Marshall**      prep time:      serves:

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### KROGER COMMUNITY REWARDS

Kroger Community Rewards is our easiest fundraiser. It actually requires no work. Well, just a little. In a few minutes you can connect your current Kroger card to our organization and the Historical Society will receive a small percentage of every purchase you make at any Kroger store. (If you don't have a Kroger card you can request one at their Customer Service desk.) To connect your Kroger card to the Wyandotte Historical Society:

- Log on to [www.krogercommunityrewards.com](http://www.krogercommunityrewards.com)
- Scroll down to the large box on the left of the screen – LINK YOUR SHOPPER'S CARD.
- Enter the necessary information and you are done.
- Our organization name is – WYANDOTTE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
- Our organization number is – MT260

The Kroger Customer Service number is 1-800-576-4377 if you have any difficulty.

We receive a check quarterly with all of your donations. Thank you.

Beth Labadie, Vice President

From the Bacon Library by Jakki Malnar

A BRIEF HISTORY OF  
WYANDOTTE SCHOOLS

- 1837  
Wyandotte's First School on Orange St.
- 1855  
Old Brown School 1855 Current Site of Downriver Council for the Arts
- 1869  
Central High School (Oak and 7th) Later named Lincoln High School
- 1872  
Third Ward School (McKinley School Site)
- 1886  
First Ward School (Garfield Site)
- 1898  
New First Ward School Building
- 1901  
The first McKinley School replaces the Third Ward School
- 1905  
Wyandotte High School (Oak St) replaces Lincoln School
- 1923  
Roosevelt High School opens and replaces Wyandotte High School
- 1929  
Washington Elementary
- 1940  
Current McKinley Elementary
- 1950  
Jefferson Elementary
- 1953  
Madison Elementary
- 1956  
Lincoln Junior High



The Scrapbook of Mary McInerney

(continued from the cover)

To fit the theme of “Back to School”, I tried to find interesting photos or documents pertaining to a Wyandotte school. To my surprise, I found a few old scrapbooks that were done by Wyandotte students. The one that caught my attention the most was compiled by Mary McInerney, a Wyandotte girl born in 1902. Her scrapbook includes school items and a hodge-podge of cool, yet random items from Wyandotte.

Mary was born to John and Florence McInerney, both from Wyandotte as well. Going through Mary’s scrapbook it can be gathered that her family attended St. Patrick’s Church. One of the first things in her scrapbook is her mother’s first communion certificate from St. Pat’s, which is incredibly ornate. Her mother’s confirmation was at St. Pat’s and a card with an embossed “Class of ‘20” with a green and white ribbon is present.

There are many report cards for Mary from St. Pat’s School from elementary through the end of high school. She received A’s, with an occasional high B, and she excelled in Christian Doctrine. Next to her report cards, there are drawings (including one of her and her classmates playing volleyball), homework, and newspaper clippings of updates from World War I alongside them.

It’s also obvious that Mary loved music and the opera. There are lots of music and performance booklets and playbills glued to the pages – from performances at St. Pat’s to the Marx Opera House to the Detroit Opera House. Also, the amount of invitations present alludes to Mary being a popular lady – graduation, birthday, Hallowe’en, Christmas, and wedding invitations are plentiful. “A Song of Home” is a Wyandotte fight song that is present on a page.

Continuing through the scrapbook, the newspaper articles became almost entirely about the Catholic Church or Wyandotte in some regard. Many are about the Detroit Archdiocese, St. Mary’s College, and the convent in Monroe. One copy of the Wyandotte Herald addressed to J. Drennan (likely Josephine) at 2610 Biddle (our beloved Ford-MacNichol Home) is inside as well.

Other than the newspaper articles, the oldest item in this book is from 1922. The scrapbook itself is actually a ledger for keeping employment records of employees and their pay from the 1880s-1890s. It is unclear who used the ledger before it became Mary’s scrapbook.

After attending St. Pat’s, Mary became a nun and attended St. Mary’s College. She took on the name Sister Florentia and spent the rest of her life as a teacher, mostly at Marygrove College in Detroit. She also lived and taught in Monroe, MI and Akron, OH. Mary passed in Monroe on August 31, 1993 just after her 91<sup>st</sup> birthday.

Audrey Wicklander, Museum Assistant

**NOTE:** To see more images of Mary’s scrapbook online, look under “Wyandotte Museums Archives “ in the “Document Center” of the website: [wyandottehistory.org](http://wyandottehistory.org).

### Labadie School, Wyandotte, Michigan

The school was named after Antoine Labadie, an early pioneer of Ford City, who was active politically and held many municipal offices. The school opened in 1921 to serve kindergarten through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. A year later, Ford City was annexed to the City of Wyandotte. The school was situated between Biddle Avenue and First Street with the main entrance facing Goddard Road.

I never attended Labadie School however, my mother Ellen (Crassweller) Denny and my elder sisters Gayle, Lois and Bonnie did. The latter two provided information and described the approximate floor plan of the school for this writing. The Bacon Library also provided resources that assisted me. I used my architectural background skills to create the plan as described to me taking some minor liberties for readability.

The school had four levels: a basement, the gymnasium at ground level, and the first and second levels situated above the basement. It is my speculation that the school underwent major repairs and modifications during the 1951 and 1952 school years, as my sisters all attended the J. B. Ford School at that time, then returned to Labadie School in the fall of 1952. The building being 30 years



**Kindergarten Class of Labadie School in 1921.**

**Bottom row (L to R):** June LeBeau, Rosie ?, Ellen Crassweller, June Bondie, (?), Kathleen Benson, Ruth \_\_\_\_, Margaret Mink,  
**Top row (L to R):** Charles Goodman (?), \_\_\_\_ (?), Stanford Perry, Benny \_\_\_\_ (?), Wornal (?) Bush, Donald Theil, Arbie Busby, Walter Gryb, Miss Marshal, teacher

old by that time, likely needed a new coal/tar pitch roof (commonly used at that time) and underwent room modifications. Boilers typically last about 30 years, but it was not replaced at this time as I learned later.

When originally opened, the school had the kindergarten through 4<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms on the first floor, including a band room, with the 5<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms on the second floor. Following the 1950-1951 closure, the school reopened to be a junior high school *only*, serving 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades.

The original layout prior to the 1950 closure had coatrooms between the classrooms as shown on the plan in this article. When the school became a junior high school in 1952, the coat rooms were converted to new uses and students had individual lockers about the hallways.

On the first floor, the east coatroom became a teachers' lounge, and the west coatroom became a kitchen. The original 1<sup>st</sup> grade classroom then had a dual purpose of being a lunchroom and a classroom and the original 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classroom then had the dual role of being space for the lunch line and a classroom. The original doors to the coatroom were walled off and new doors were added to the back of the original 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classrooms, so the lunch line flowed along the west wall. My sisters Gayle and Lois served fellow students and received a free lunch for their work.

The band room on the original first floor layout became the principal's office with the new renovations (according to Lois). In 1954, according to Bonnie, the principal's office was on the second floor above the kindergarten room. Although Lois and Bonnie had differing views of the principal's office, they both could be correct since there is a 3-year difference in their ages and building updates could have taken place in the interim.

Originally, the school did not have a library. Students would use the Bacon Memorial Library. In 1954, on the second level, the room above the original band room was converted to a small library to provide some library services to students.

The gym did not have facilities such as shower rooms and changing rooms. Students would change into gym clothes (brought from their school lockers) in the gym and leave their street clothing on the benches, lining the gym, when engaging in gym activities. The gym also served as an auditorium for special events, plays, and concerts for

*(continued on page 5)*

**LABADIE SCHOOL, WYANDOTTE MICHIGAN**

(continued from page 4)

parents. An elevated stage was at the south end. Dressing rooms for these special events had boys' and girls' rooms under the stage. Folding chairs were housed on the north side under the balcony/staircases' storage area. Dances were held in the gym for junior high students who were required to purchase a dance card to attend.

The boy's and girl's toilet rooms were *only* at the ground level with the gym. There were no such facilities on the first and second levels where all the classrooms were. Also, the building did not have a passenger elevator.

The playground was outside between the school building and Biddle Avenue. It was enclosed with a six-foot chain linked fence. The area was covered with crushed cinders and its dust tended to soil skin and clothing.

The basement during the junior high years served for science classes, wood shop, art class, and home economic classes where treadle type sewing machines were used (no electricity) and cooking lessons were done on stove tops only (no ovens).

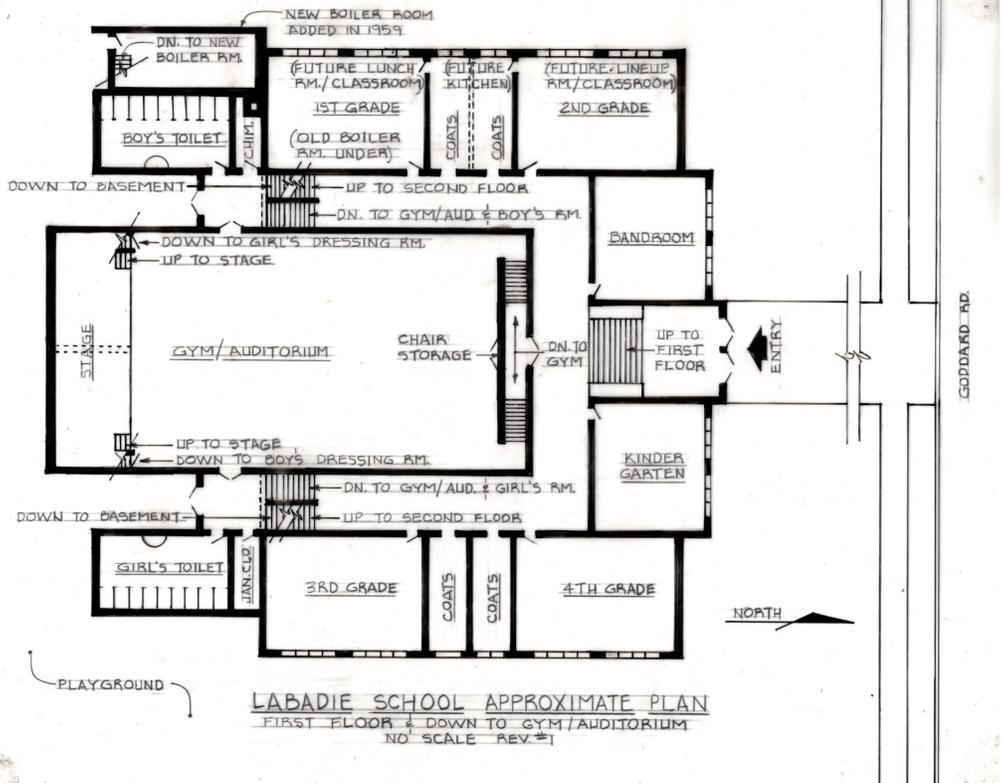
Sister Lois Borgosz attended Labadie School beginning in 1945, and except for those two school years at J.B. Ford School in 1950 and 1951, she finished junior high in the spring of 1954. Then she attended Roosevelt High School. My sisters typically walked to school from our home on Riverbank and Second Streets. Some of the teachers Lois recalls were Ms. Friman (1<sup>st</sup> grade), Ms. Siple (2<sup>nd</sup> grade), Ms. Omar (3<sup>rd</sup> grade), Ms. Graves (4<sup>th</sup> grade), and math teachers Mr. Parfitt and Mr. Kazlusky.

Sister Bonnie Nietubicz attended Labadie School beginning with kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade in 1948 and 1949 (and J.B. Ford in 1950 and 1951). The family moved to 23<sup>rd</sup> Street in 1952, and Bonnie attended the new Jefferson School from 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> grade. For 7<sup>th</sup> grade, Bonnie took the "Loop" bus from Fort Street to Labadie School. Then the new Wilson Junior High School was completed and Bonnie attended 8<sup>th</sup> grade there, followed by attending Roosevelt High School. The teachers that Bonnie recalls from Labadie School include: Miss Kridkiss (1<sup>st</sup> grade), Mrs. Welch (5<sup>th</sup> grade), Miss Olstrike, Mr. Paul (math), Mr. Wygoki (art), Miss Mugridge (wood shop), and Mr. Dally (school principal). All my sisters recall Mr. Forsythe who was a science teacher for them, and also my mother!

Some of the mentioned teachers moved on to the newer schools of Jefferson Elementary and Wilson Junior High. It is somewhat ironic that my mother attended the first kindergarten class in 1921 when the school opened, and my sister Bonnie attended Labadie School until the spring of 1956 when the school was to no longer be a junior high school. In the fall of 1956, the school became solely an elementary school for the first time.

Room changes occurred again at this time. The library records indicate the basement now housed the library, music room, a teacher's work room, the lunchroom, and the art room. The blueprint indicating these changes also show a new boiler room was built in 1959. I did not find any record when the school was closed or demolished.

Duane Denny



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**Wyandotte Historical Society**

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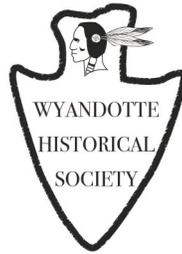
2624 Biddle Ave.

Wyandotte, MI 48192-5208

**Phone:** (734) 324-7299

**Email:** wyandottehistory@gmail.com

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- **September 9, Friday at 7:00 pm at the Marx Home**—Come listen to Fr. Mark talk about Wyandotte and Polish immigration. Learn about the building of Polonia in Wyandotte and the evolution to what we have today.
- **September 9, 10, 11 , Friday, Saturday, and Sunday**—Fall City-Wide Garage Sale
- **September 12, Monday**— Tickets go on sale for the Historic Cemetery Walk
- **October 14, 15, Friday & Saturday**—Historic Cemetery Walk

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