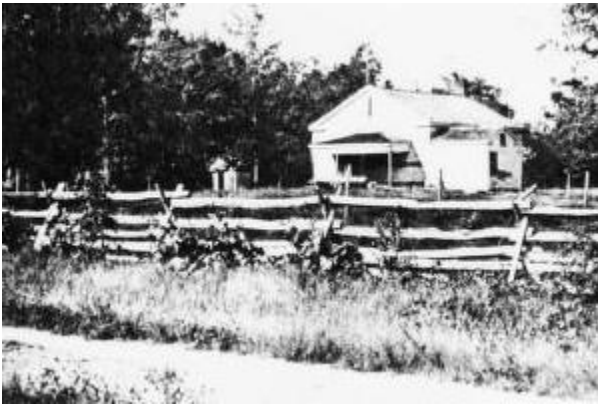


## Carpenter School



**First:** 1837-1854(?), formerly located southeast of Packard and Carpenter Roads.

Note: Although this photograph is labeled "First Carpenter School", it appears very similar to photos of the Second Carpenter School. The Pittsfield Township Historical Society would appreciate help locating photos of the First Carpenter School -- and other schools in Pittsfield Township.



**Second:** 1854-1914, formerly located southwest of Packard and Carpenter Roads; the wood structure was destroyed by fire in 1911



**Third:** 1914-1952, located southwest of Packard and Carpenter Roads, at 3360 Carpenter Road, 4/10th mile south of Packard and just south of the Second Carpenter School site; the brick structure later became Ozzie's Furniture (pictured) before being destroyed to make room for Carpenter Place.

The teacher and students are: (back row) Edith Webb Leverett (teacher), Annie Krips, Mabel Snyder, Michael Krips, May Snyder, Maude Snyder; (front row) Bernard Chalmers, Richard Cross, Kenny Chalmers, and Viola Schroen.





**Fourth:** 1952 to present, located at Central and Dayton.

### **Carpenter School History, 1837 to 1941**

Note: The following account was written by the students attending Carpenter School during 1941-1942 (and deposited in the Bentley Historical Library).

The history of Carpenter School district dates back to a time before Lincoln was president of the United States. The Negro Slaves would come up from the South to get away from the horrible conditions there. Some of the slaves walked up to the southern part of Michigan. The slaves had established a post here called The Old Sweet Farm. This belongs to Mr. Owen Cady now. On this farm there is an old Negro burying ground.

One hundred sixteen years ago the Stone School and Carpenter School were one. The location of this school was near the creek on what is known now as the old Swift Farm on Packard Road. The Carpenter district was formed May 22, 1837. Carpenter School was built at about this time. The school then was across the road [east of Carpenter Road].

In 1914 the building now used was built [current site of Carpenter Place]. When the school was built there were two windows on the north side of the building. The school was changed by taking the windows out. The side is fixed in brick. You can see about where the windows were. The school had what is called a "Michigan basement", a hole, with slanting sides dug out after the building is completed. There were quite a few of these basements in the district. Later, the sides were straightened.

The interior of the first school is like any other school. Teacher's desk in the front of the room and benches for recitation purposes. Kerosene lamps were the means of lighting the small school room. Seats were fastened to the floor. There is not much known about the seating arrangement -- probably the seats were in orde[r]ly rows. We know the seats were very uncomfortable and prompted some pupils to leave. The Carpenter school now has new seats.

There was a stove in the back of the room of the old school. It was quite recent that the school had a furnace put in. This has been a[n] asset to the school as the heat is more evenly distributed.

This is about all the history of the district that could be found.

Early records show that the school of this district had a different number of pupils. In 1880-1890 there were not many pupils -- 12 to 16 at the most. From then until the 1900s the amount seemed to grow steadily; one teacher had as many as 46 pupils. The schoolroom is so very small that it is doubtful where she could have put all of them. In the years 1911 to 1913, the school was closed because there were not enough pupils. Since then the number of pupils has varied, some years more than at others. At the

present time there are 34 pupils. The seventh and eighth grades are not included in this number. The other years have had the seventh and eighth grades.

Some of the first teachers of Carpenter School were:

Mr. Warren

Nellie Platt

Emma Kemes

Virginia Chalmers

Mable Wallace

Allic Slurant

Miss Thomas

Nellie Horner

Helen Green

Amy Persons

Clark Haas

Neva Andrews Hartwig

Opal Slavens

The first Student Teacher came to Carpenter School in Miss Persons' term. She taught about 3 years. This should be in the year 1925 or 1926. Student teachers have been training at Carpenter School ever since.

Mrs. Mathienson, a settler that lives in our district, brought some old textbooks to the school. Miss Crain used them when she taught at Carpenter School. Some of these books are over one hundred years old. Miss Crain was one of the first teachers at Carpenter School. Here are some of the books that were used, one of the books was Arithmetic book. The name was the Milne practical arithmetic. This book was by William J. Milne, P.H.D.L.L.D., copyright 1878, By John Janes. The name of another book is The Principles of Grammar.

Records show that early grading was done on the hundred basis, that is 75 or 80 passing and 100 excellent. The A, B and C system started in about 1910 or after. The system of S for Satisfactory, I for Improving and so forth is now used in Carpenter School.

The subjects studied were probably what is studied now. The titles may have been different but the subjects are probably the same. Such as Physiology and Orthography for Spelling were used. The modern schools have dropped this long title now.

The term has always been nine months or quite near this length of time except for those three years when the school was closed. In 1890 the school closed for a week or two because of influenza epidemics. The school has not been closed down since then that we know of.

In the early times kerosene lamps were used. Lantern also helped out. A large chandelier hung from the top of the room. In the ring, the kerosene lamps were placed. In the Carpenter School that stands today there is one old bracket on the wall.

In the year 1922 electricity was installed in the school. There has been electric lights every since this date. The school has modern lamps now and is very well lighted in comparison with the early school.

There is a story that happened many years ago. One of the pupils that went to Carpenter School did not like the seats he had to sit in. Mr. Gibbs a settler of this district told us this boy stated that if he ever had any extra money he was going to have new seats put in the school. When this boy had grown up and made his fortune he left in his will \$5000.00 for new seats for Carpenter School. Now the school has these seats and they are very comfortable.

Another interesting story about the district is the railroad. The electric line was one of the first means of travel between Ypsilanti and Ann Arbor. Later some people thought that if they put a steam railroad in that would be more useful. There was some debate but the engine was put in. The electric railroad has gone for quite some years and steam ones are still in. Many people were afraid the steam railroad would not last. However, it has and is still there.

#### The Carpenter School Community

Some of the early settlers of the Carpenter school district were the Platts for which Platt got its name. They lived just inside the Platt we know today. The Bohnets was another family and Adam Bohnets is still living in this district. He is the caretaker of the country club on Packard Road. Darlings were another family. They also lived in Platt. The section we call Darlington. Which of course was named for them. Carpenter was another very early settler. They were the people that build Carpenter school. And Carpenter Corner also was named for them. They lived in the same house that Leveretts now live in. The house was built in 1828 by the Carpenter Family; that was 143 years ago. Another family called Crain moved here about 106 years ago. They built the home that the Mathiesens now live in. The Crains stayed in that house until their new home was built. Then they moved into their new home. The farm changed hands many times, until now J. H. Mathiesen owns it.

Some of the other early settlers are Picketts, Reyers, Burns, Reesers, Sobers, and Sweets. There are quite a few more. Most of them have moved from this district.

One of the early settlers which is more important than the rest in connection with this school is Mr. and Mrs. Newland Carpenter. They lived on the corner of Packard and Carpenter. This family donated the present site of Carpenter school to the district. The school was named after them. The corner on which they lived was called Carpenter Corner. There is a member of the Carpenter family still living in this district.

The Carpenter school was closed for about three years. (The cause was lack of pupils.)

There is not much known about the early homes. The old Swift farm was one of the first. This section was part of the Northwest Territory. The homes were made of wood. Large homes are still very numerous in this district. The old Carpenter house on the corner of Packard and Carpenter Roads has been here for quite some time now. Leveretts now live there. Mrs. Leverett taught in the Carpenter School before she was married. Another old family is the Bohnets. They live on the northwest corner.

Mr. Bohnet is the caretaker of the country club. Mr. Ellsworth on Ellsworth Road is another person that has lived here quite a few years. Some of the smaller farms that are here now were together.

Early transportation for the Carpenter school district was not very good. The principal roads in this district have been here for quite some time. Washtenaw Road has ran on the northern edge and Ellsworth Road runs parallel of this district. Ellsworth Road runs along with Packard. Only it is farther south. Platt Road runs parallel of Carpenter and Golfside Road to the right. Some of the roads are quite bad in the spring in early times. There was one place on Carpenter Road that seemed to always sink. Since this road has been plowed the difficulty has been overcome. There is a railroad running through the district. It was built quite some time ago. There used to be electric going along Washtenaw Road to Ann Arbor. This is taken out now.

Teachers in Carpenter School, 1940-1941

Critic Teacher

Opal Slavens

Student Teachers

Linda Atkison

Patricia Perry

Ann Baldwin

Rose Lavendar

Lorna Dean

Clara Root

Wilma Corbett

Betty Jane Brink

Catherine Robertson

Betty Jo Thompson

Lila Keech

Ruth Lietz

Josephine Vusick

Marion Herbst

Jeanette Spence

William Wright

Pupils In Carpenter School, 1940-1941

(Pupil, Grade)

Wilma Jean Foster, 6  
Doris Graham, 6  
Harold Graham, 6  
Robert Hewitt, 6  
Evelyn Leech, 6  
Howard Moore, 6  
Marion Himmelspach, 5  
Martha Moore, 5  
Marion Price, 5  
Rosemary Wyatt, 5  
Shirley Cazier, 4  
Norma Graham, 4  
Harold Price, 4  
Gilbert Volk, 4  
Wilma Cazier, 3  
Doris Goings, 3  
Robert Hubard, 3  
Hans Mathi[e]sen, 3  
Arlene Moore, 3  
Allene Raymor, 3  
Barbara Raymor, 3  
Rena Jacobus, 2  
Ellen Betty Mathi[e]sen, 2  
Genevieve Diccion, 1  
Patricia Hewitt, 1  
Kenneth Hubard, 1  
Joanne Mathi[e]sen, 1  
Gerald McNut, 1  
Charles Raymor, 1

Ruth Louise Butts, B

Jean Mathi[e]sen, B

Jimmy Squires, B

Lewis Stanley, B

Harry Vaniadis, B

Lois Johlfs, 5

Rose Marie Hubbard, B

Teacher: Miss Opal Slavens

*Source: Pittsfield Township records, box 1, Bentley Historical Library, University of Michigan. This entry is from a history of Washtenaw County Schools written by students in the schools and loaned to the Bentley Historical Library by Julius W. Haab, County Superintendent, August 1943. It has been edited slightly for inclusion on the Pittsfield Township Historical Society Website.*