

The Portage Schools Collection  
of the Portage District Library "Finding Aid"  
(Updated: Feb 2, 2004)

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Note (January 2003): This Finding Aid was developed by Tom Vance while serving an internship at the Portage District Library as a graduate student in the Department of History at Western Michigan University, under the direction of Steve Rossio, the Library's local historian. Tom is the communications coordinator for Portage Public Schools. Perrin Vanderveen, a student at Portage Central High School, assisted in processing of the collection as his school community service project.

[1] Board of Education

Board meeting packets and minutes from 1976 to present (10 boxes). Beginning in 1996, these packets also include the annual school district budget.

- 1.1 (1976-1982)
- 1.2 (1983-1989)
- 1.3 (1990-1994, 1996)
- 1.4 (1997)
- 1.5 (1998)
- 1.6 (1999)
- 1.7 (2000)
- 1.8 (2001)
- 1.9 (2002)
- 1.10 (2003)

## [2] News Releases

School district news releases covering district-wide and individual school news from 1969-2003 (6 boxes)

2.1 (1969-1973)

2.2 (1974-1975)

2.3 (1976-1979)

2.4 (1980-1984)

2.5 (1985-1991)

2.6 (2000-2004)

## [3] District Publications

A variety of reports and internal/external communications prepared by the school district for community, parent, or staff consumption (8 boxes).

### 3.1 Misc. District Reports

A. "Citizens Committee for Evaluation of Portage Schools" (CIT-COM), Fall, 1968. Frank Sheldon was chairperson of this lengthy study (page numbers are not cumulative). One bound copy, and one extra copy.

B. "Citizens Participating Committee" (Final Report), December 1976. Peter Kettner was chairperson of this lengthy study (page numbers are not cumulative). One bound copy.

C. "Recommendations for Academically Gifted & Talented Programming: A Report to the Superintendent," March 13, 1978, 44 pp.

D. "Human Growth & Development Report," 1979. Kenneth J. Harper and Olga Visser were co-chairpersons of this lengthy study (page numbers are not cumulative).

### 3.2 PPS Newsletter

Issues dated 1969-1979. Newsletters are from two to four pages per issue, published twice a month during the school year.

### 3.3 PPS Newsletter

Issues dated 1980-1987.

### 3.4 Focus

Issues dated 1969-1992. This quarterly report began in Fall 1968. The collection begins with Vol. 1, No. 2. The issues are 8 pages. "A New Focus" began in 1986, published every two months during the school year. Beginning in October 1987, "A New Focus" began appearing as a tabloid supplement to the Kalamazoo Gazette with 12 pages or more six times a year.

### 3.5 A New Focus

Issues dated 1993- 1995.

### 3.6 Portage Gazette Page

Issues dated 2000-2003. This page appears weekly as a one-page advertisement placed by the school district as a public service for the community. The page ran year-round until 2003, when it ceased summer publication and ceased publication during Winter and Spring breaks.

### 3.7 Staff Bulletin

Issues dating 1969-1990. This internal publication was four pages and began as a monthly, began appearing twice a month on occasions in 1988, and turned to twice monthly consistently in 1989.

### 3.8 Staff Bulletin/District Bulletin

Issues dating 1991-2003. The name was changed to District Bulletin in September 2000 (since the individual schools each have staff bulletins) and reverted to a monthly publication September through June.

### [4] Student Publications

A collection of student newspapers and literary magazines (7 boxes). For yearbooks, see Series 13.

#### 4.1

Portage High School/Central High School newspapers, The Portage Bugle (1952-1959) and the Mustang News (1960-1974). Also included are two issues of an underground newspaper, the ROAK, c. 1970.

#### 4.2

Central High School's newspaper, the Central Stampede, 1996-2000.

#### 4.3

Central Stampede, 2001-2003.

#### 4.4.

Central High School's literary magazines Omega (n.d. - 1969) and the Montage (1998-1999, 2001)

#### 4.5

Northern High School's newspaper the Outpost (1967-1969).

#### 4.6

Northern High School's newspapers the Northern Light (n.d., 1972-1975, 1996-1999), the Senatorial (1976-1977), and the underground newspaper Refreshing Oak (1969-1970). The literary magazine Aurora (n.d., 1966, 1969).

#### 4.7.

Northern Light (2000-2003).

### [5] District and School Documents

A wide variety of K-12 documents and photographs (12 boxes).

### 5.1

Portage Agricultural School assorted photographs (including class photos and some photos donated by Cleora Skinner, the first superintendent) and documents, including correspondence, commencement programs (including the first annual commencement program of Portage High School on June 18, 1924), and the early yearbooks.

### 5.2

Portage Agricultural School assorted photographs and documents (including receipts), and including the 1929 handout "Know Your School."

### 5.3

Elementary school photographs and documents, parent handbook, class photos from 1951-52, and school building "Welcome Open House" dedication programs, including: Ramona Lane Elementary (Nov. 9, 1958); Haverhill (Nov. 11, 1962); Angling Road (Nov. 10, 1963); Lexington Green (Feb. 27, 1966); Woodland (April 21, 1968); and Central (May 18, 1969).

### 5.4

Middle school photographs and documents, including school building "Open House and Dedication" programs, including the Portage Junior High School (Oct. 13, 1957); North Junior High School (Nov. 5, 1961); and West Junior High School (Nov. 11, 1973).

### 5.5

Central High School (and predecessors Portage Township High and Portage High) photographs and documents, including commencement invitations and programs, correspondence, Portage Alumni Association documents, and construction photos.

### 5.6

Northern High School photographs and documents, including building dedication/open house programs, commencement invitations and programs, and alumni reunion communications, and ground-breaking and construction photos.

### 5.7

K-12 school library inventories ranging from 1939-1960, along with school library correspondence and plans.

### 5.8

Misc. district-wide documents, including the 64-page history of Portage Schools, 75 Years of Shaping the Future: 1922-1997, published by Portage Schools as a part of the 75th anniversary celebration (researched and written by Penny Hames Briscoe); report by the Committee of the Present (1948); school district supplements to the Portage Herald (1960s), community education information (ranging from 1967 to 1982), and school milage election information (ranging from 1969-1976).

### 5.9

Misc. district-wide documents, including correspondence, including county-wide directories of

teachers (1954-1960), and information on the Portage Alumni Association and Parent Teacher Association.

#### 5.10

Misc. documents, including scrapbooks (1931 and 1949), bound school district records preceding PPS and PPS (1901-1942), and Purposes of Education in American Democracy, no author listed (published by the Educational Policies Commission, 1938).

#### 5.11

Elementary student work titled "Families," n.d.

#### 5.12

Land deeds, 1935.

#### [6] Photos/Images

See Box 10, Portage History, for PPS photos of people and places throughout the history of Portage.

#### 6.1

Rolled B&W photos of students and staff, most shot in front of the Portage Agricultural School, 1927-1930.

#### 6.2

A series of mounted and laminated B&W photos of Supportive Services and Library (media center) activities, n.d.

#### 6.3

Three elementary photo albums of individual classes during 1950-1951, 51-52, 52-53.

##### A. Over-sized photos (stored in file drawer)

- a. Portage Agricultural School, 39x6 black & white, identified as "Portage School," 1923.
- b. Portage Agricultural School, 16x7 black & white, front view 1924-1925 school year, donated by Fredric F. Bremer, class of 1933.
- c. 1923 building, 24x19 black & white, believed to be back view of Portage Agricultural School.
- d. District #2, 20x8 black & white, identified as "Carpenters Corners, school picnic at West Lake (Aims Resort), c. 1916.
- e. Portage High School Class of 1965, 19x16 black & white.
- f. Portage Township High School, 31x22 black & white, front view. g. Central High Class of 1970, 14x11 black & white.
- h. Northern High Class of 1969, 17x14 black & white.
- i. Board of Education, 14x11 black & white, n.d.

##### B: Over-sized images (stored in file drawer)

- a. Portage Central High School Boys Basketball & Wrestling Schedule, 19x25, including boys swimming and girl's gymnastics, 1976-1977.
- b. Mustang logo and "C," 27x38, in blue and gold colors, n.d. c. Husky logo and "N," 27x38, in

brown and white, n.d. d. Portage..."Leader in Living...Learning, Portage Public Schools," 1982 (three copies: one mounted and two loose).  
e. unknown building interior design, 19x14.

## [7] Educational Resources

A variety of educational materials, most of which came from the Portage Northern media center (4 boxes plus non-boxed materials).

### 7.1

Two kits: Investigations into Ecology, by Beth Schultz and Phyllis Marcuccio (Bell & Howell, 1972). Consisting of 6 1/2" x 9" cards, the topics include: People and Environment; Plants, Animals & Environment; and Earth: Life's Environment. The other set is Television & Values, 1977, consisting of three booklets, one folder, one set of questions, one cassette tape, and one roll of microfilm.

### 7.2

Portage Bicentennial Kit: contents sheet lists 20 historic laminated black and white photo reproductions of the history of Portage, 1976. Contains several duplicates.

### 7.3

Plant Identification: one 41-page booklet Annuals, Perennials & House Plants, one cassette tape, and one microfilm, 1967; Fort Michilimackinac: one info card, one cassette tape, and one microfilm, n.d.; A Tale of Two Cities, CBS-TV Reading Program 24-page tabloid newspaper supplement, 1980; Genetic Controversy: Gene Splicing & Cloning with one discussion manual and one cassette tape, 1982; Kalamazoo Media Kit, Kalamazoo County Visitors and Convention Bureau, 14 pp., n.d.

### 7.4

Breakfast & the Bright Life: one 12-page teachers guide, one pamphlet, one vinyl record, and one microfilm, 1970; The Draft Debate, microfilm, parts 1 & 2, n.d.; Election 1972: The New Politics, microfilm, n.d.

### 7.5 (separate item, not boxed)

Oceanography: Understanding Our Deep Frontier (National Academy of Sciences, n.d.). This kit consists of 9 rolls of microfilm, and five booklets and five vinyl records.

### 7.6 (separate items, not boxed)

13 vinyl record albums in this collection (stored on the shelf with the 7-Series).

"Afro-American History In Song & Story," Encyclopedia Britannica Education Corp., set of three covering the years 1500-1910, n.d.

"Argentine Folk Songs," n.d.

"Documents & Speeches," Heritage USA, including Patrick Henry, Declaration of Independence, Thomas Paine, Bill of Rights, Benjamin Franklin, and George Washington, n.d.

"Draft Debate," Associated Press Special Report, set of two, 1971.

"Election '72: The New Politics," n.d.

"Folk Songs of New York City," n.d.

"I am an American," Michigan Education Association, 1970.

"Portraits of Patriotism," The U.S. Navy, originally four in the set, and three are included here, n.d.

"Robert Francis Kennedy: A Memorial," two-record set, n.d.

"Scandinavian Dances," including popular polkas, waltzes, and mazurkas, n.d.

"Six President's Speak: A Profile of the Presidency," from Franklin Roosevelt to Richard Nixon, n.d.

"Sounds of History" series from The Life History of the U.S. set of four, n.d.: No. 2, The Making of a Nation: 1775-1789; No. 3, The Growing Years: 1789-1829; No. 7, The Age of Steel & Steam: 1877-1890; No. 8, Reaching for Empire: 1890-1901.

"War of the Worlds," read by Orson Welles, n.d.

#### [8] Newspaper Clippings

Consisting of a variety of articles from local newspapers, primarily from the 1960s, including laminated full pages from the 1977 Kalamazoo Gazette.

#### [9] Pre-PPS History

Consisting of a wide variety of school and education-related materials pre-dating the 1922 establishment of Portage Schools.

##### 9.1

Michigan Reports (1862), Michigan laws (1864), Teacher contracts (1893), State Superintendent Report (1901).

##### 9.2

Exam (1893), General Acts (1874), National Education Association book-length report (1897), State Report (1900).

#### [10] Portage History

Although these photos are of Portage history and not the school district, they are in this collection because they came from the district and are labeled "Portage Public Schools" on the

back. As of Dec 2003, it is not clear, but perhaps they were taken by students for a photography class or for school newspapers.

[11] P. J. Dunn Collection

Interview with P. J. Dunn conducted by Dolly Polson and Ted Vliek on 2/3/76 and a "Rural School Shop Trophy" plaque from Western State Teachers College (1933 or 1934).

[12] Teacher's Attendance Records

These 300 documents span 1926 through 1952, representing three teacher attendance record systems: Doubleday, Welch's System, and Michigan School Service. These entries vary in length from 11 to 24 pages.

[13] Yearbooks

The high school and middle school yearbooks (total of 149 volumes), located in the locked glass cabinet in the Heritage Room, comprise the most used documents in the overall collection. Represented are editions of the Watoha from the Portage Agricultural School; the Roundup from Portage Township High School, Portage High School, and finally Portage Central High School; the Legend from Portage Northern High School; and the three middle school yearbooks: the Pow Wow, later known as the Blue & Gold and finally as the PCMS yearbook for Portage Junior High School, later Portage Central Middle School; the Northmen from Portage North Middle School; and the West Middle School yearbook.

A: The Watoha, 1924 (Vol. 1, No. 1) and the 1926 edition (identified as the 1922-1926 issue). The first editor-in-chief was Dorothea Huizinga.

B: Roundup, 1951-2003 (missing 1966 and 1997). The early editions combine the junior and senior high school. Co-editors in 1951 were Jack Thoms and Marilyn Brouwer. Also included is the 1995 Student Directory.

C: Legend, 1966-2003 (complete). The first editor was Bob Block. Also included is the 1995 Men's Varsity Soccer roster, containing individual photos, biographical information about the players, team records, and reproduced news articles.

D: PCMS, 1957-1960, 1969, and 1972-1995. Pow Wow was the title during 1957 and 1958, while Blue & Gold was the title for 1959 and 1960, with issues since then referred to as PCMS Yearbook.

E: Northmen, 1963-1965, 1967-1968, 1974-1977, 1981-1988, and 1991-1992, 1994, and 1996.

F: West Middle School, 1981-1989, 1992-1994, and 1999-2001 (the yearbook started publication in 1973).

Appendix

A: Superintendents of Portage Public Schools

Cleora A. Skinner, 1922-1939  
Hugh G. Archer, 1939-1943  
Lewis D. Crawford, 1943-1947  
Varl O. Wilkinson, 1947-1970  
Dr. George L. Conti, 1970-1986  
James H. Ridders, 1986-2002  
Dr. Peter J. McFarlane, 2002 - present

B: Presidents of the Board of Education, Portage Public Schools

C. H. Fletcher, 1922-1933  
Harry Sweetland, 1934-1937  
George Chipman, 1938-1944  
Gardner Garlick, 1944-1946  
Stuart McCamley, 1946-1953  
Clair Branch, 1953-1960  
Okko Brouwer, 1960-1961  
Dr. Bob VanderRoest, 1961-1970  
Dr. L. William Boyer, 1970-1975  
Gayl Werme, 1975-1978  
James Ellinger, 1978-1986  
Patricia Dolan, 1986-1989  
Kevin Flynn, 1989-1991  
Philip Sheldon, 1991-1995  
John Whyte, 1995-1996  
Dr. Kevin Hollenbeck, 1996-2003  
Tom Eddy, 2003- present