

# **KIPLING HISTORY REVIEW**

**COMPILED BY THE  
KIPLING PTO IN  
CELEBRATION OF  
KIPLING SCHOOL'S  
40TH ANNIVERSARY**



## I. 1848-1945 THE BEGINNING: THE ONE SCHOOL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Kipling School's roots reach back 140 years to Deerfield's early years and the village's first school. In 1848, on his farm near County Line Road, Jacob Cadwell built a school which for years was known as "Cadwell School". The first teacher in this school was Cadwell's daughter, Rosella.

When School District 109 was organized in 1860, a one-room wooden school was built at the southwest corner of Deerfield and Waukegan Roads. The school year was three months in the winter and the unmarried men in the area who had nothing to do when the harvest was over also attended. The teacher was paid \$3 per week. In 1869 the school building was sold to Philip Hole, who moved it across the road and added it to his house. This first District 109 schoolhouse was replaced by another one-room school built on the same corner, and a second floor was added in 1879. The building was moved in 1903 to the present site of the district Administration Building on Deerfield Road. In 1910 two more rooms were added, and the four-room school was used until May, 1913, when the entire building burned to the ground.

A new school, the Deerfield Grammar School was built on the site. Ready for use in May, 1914 the building consisted of six classrooms and an assembly hall. A distinguishing feature of this "ultra-modern" building was its indoor plumbing, which replaced the "six-holer" outhouse of the previous school building. In 1926 four more classrooms were added and Deerfield's first public library was established in the school. The school continued to grow and in 1928 a gymnasium and five more classrooms were added. In those first sixty-eight years, District 109 grew from a one-room schoolhouse to a two story, fifteen classroom brick school building. Deerfield Grammar School continued to be used as a school for another forty years without major physical changes.

In June 1943, in the midst of World War II, Superintendent Ball resigned to become superintendent of a much larger school district (four buildings) in Highland Park. The teachers decided they would "much prefer to temporarily manage the running of the school themselves than have a new superintendent in an emergency who might change the methods which the staff had worked out with satisfactory results." For two years the district operated without a superintendent. A temporary position of principal was created and Miss Hazel Miller, the eighth grade teacher, was paid an additional \$200 for her dual position of teacher-principal. During this period teacher salaries ranged from \$1,100 - 1,400 per year and Deerfield Grammar School's custodian, Dewey Deal was paid \$140 per month. The teaching staff included nine full time teachers (one of whom taught half-day music/half-day kindergarten) and one full time physical education teacher.

## II. 1945-1968 YEARS OF EXPANSION

In May, 1945 the school board began interviewing for a superintendent since there seemed to be "some assurance now that a man selected at this time would not be called into military service." William Sheehan was hired as superintendent and the expansion of District 109 began.

During November, 1944 the school board had discussed the desirability of the school owning additional ground adjoining the facilities. Now under Superintendent Sheehan's direction, the district began negotiating the purchase of thirteen lots in the newly plotted Goldman's North Shore Golflinks Subdivision, directly to the south of Deerfield Grammar School. Five of the lots were purchased on October 7, 1946 for a sum of \$16,040.09. The remaining eight lots were purchased on May 5, 1947 for a price of \$11,000. The section of Whittier Avenue running west from Kipling Place through the newly acquired property was condemned and vacated. In response to the housing shortage following World War II, two prefabricated steel houses (20 x 24' and 20' x 32'), to be used as living quarters for teachers and custodian Dewey Deal, were erected on the newly acquired property (directly west of the bike racks presently located in front of Kipling School). The two houses remained in place until April 1960.

The proposed use of the newly purchased property was as a playground for the Deerfield Grammar School. Tennis courts were developed on the eastern edge of the property (where the Kipling gym stands now) and baseball diamonds were marked out on the west half. The District 109 Parent Teacher Association raised \$500 at its 1947 "Fashion and Fun Party", which it donated for the purchase of playground equipment for the primary grades. The large oak trees in the play area were protected by flagstone walls. The playground site was completed with the installation of a split rail fence along Deerfield Road and Kipling Place. A rail splitting party, organized by school board member, Mrs. Margaret Tibbetts, was held on March 20, 1948.

The effects of suburban development and the baby boom began to be felt by the Deerfield School District in 1947. In February, 1948 Superintendent Sheehan pointed out "the need for a larger school is imminent with an average of two new pupils per week still holding." Following a successful referendum on May 22, 1948, the district went ahead with plans drawn up by the architect firm of Perkins and Will to build a new eight classroom school on the southeast corner of the Deerfield Grammar School property for the sum of \$275,000. Excavation for the new school began with a ground breaking ceremony on Friday, October 15, 1948. The new school opened in the fall with an enrollment of

226 students in grades K-4. Although dedicated as the Deerfield Primary School on September 10, 1949, the school was referred to as the "New Building" for years. The architect firm of Perkins and Will was lauded for its innovative design. The American School Board Journal, in a 1950 issue, devoted four pages to Deerfield's new school. The article summarized that "although Deerfield's primary school is only one year old, many of its basic features are appearing on drafting boards across the country, reinforcing its claim to becoming a prototype for schools to come."

The attendance area of the two schools, sitting side by side, was the entire district. Population concentrations were such that only students living in West Highland Park received bus service to and from school. This bus transportation was provided via a Highland Park High School bus.

Rapid growth continued to plague the Deerfield School District. In January 1952, sixteen months after opening the "New Building", Superintendent Sheehan predicted that "we have facilities for handling our children for just one more year. Unless we go into a building program immediately, we will be faced with the problem of having to run the schools in two shifts." The district responded by beginning the construction of Maplewood School which was modeled after the "New Building" (Kipling). In June, 1953 prior to the opening of Maplewood, Deerfield Primary School was officially renamed Kipling School after the name chosen "almost unanimously" in an election held among the primary children. Faced with the management of three schools, the school board approved the hiring of Frank Whitcher as the first non-teaching principal of Kipling and Deerfield Grammar School.

The opening of Maplewood School in September 1953 did not relieve the overcrowding at Kipling for long. Conditions were such that by September '55, District 109 enrollment had ballooned to 761 students. Compare that to the 349 students in September '49 (the year Kipling opened) and 646 in September '54. The Kipling kitchen served as an auxiliary classroom and one of the Kipling fourth grade classes moved into the visual aids room at Deerfield Grammar School during the '55-56 schoolyear. In February '56 work began on an addition of six classrooms to Kipling and four classrooms to Maplewood. The Kipling addition, which was finished October 12, 1956 provided a new west wing and an office in the original entryway. The three schools were restructured. Grades K-5 now attended either Kipling or Maplewood with Grades 6-8 at Deerfield Grammar School.

Growth within the district continued over the next ten years. Walden School opened in September 1958 and Shepard Junior High in September 1961. Kipling, Maplewood and Walden remained K-5, the sixth grades remained at Deerfield Grammar School, and grades 7 and 8 moved to Shepard. To alleviate the continual problem of overcrowding throughout the 60's, school boundaries

were shifted. Highland Park kindergarteners were transferred to Walden. Shepard Elementary School (K-4) temporarily opened in one wing of the Junior High.

The period 1957-1967 was also a period of administrative change. Robert Agan was hired as principal at Kipling in 1957 and was replaced by Frank Ventura in 1960. Superintendent Sheehan resigned at the end of the '65-66 schoolyear and Dr. William Fenelon accepted the position beginning with the '66-67 schoolyear. Mr. Kenneth Nilsen, teacher at Deerfield Grammar School since 1964, was named Assistant Principal for Kipling and Deerfield Grammar Schools in March '67 and then Acting Principal at Deerfield Grammar School for the '67-68 term.

Kipling School experienced a final metamorphosis with the completion of a second addition in September 1967. The construction of four classrooms at the far west end, a library, additional office space, and a gym enlarged the school to its present size and configuration. In less than twenty years the school had grown from eight classrooms plus a playroom and kitchen to eighteen classrooms, gym, library, and offices for special services and administration. Student population had grown from 226 to 460 students.

At the end of the '67-68 schoolyear, Mr. Nilsen was appointed principal of Kipling School and the Deerfield Grammar School closed. That historic building was used two more years for administrative offices before being razed in July 1970 to make room for a new administration building. In the years to come, one more major physical change was made at Kipling School. A door was placed between the library built in 1967 and an adjacent classroom, thereby expanding the library for more individualized instruction. Today this area houses Kipling's computers and picture book section. The new learning center was opened in September 1972 and dedicated to Dewey Deal, a District 109 employee for 37 years, first as custodian at Deerfield Grammar School and later at Kipling.

As Kipling's last addition was completed in 1967, construction of Briarwood and Cadwell Schools began with both schools opening September 1968. The district had grown from one, one-room wooden schoolhouse in 1869 to six schools in 1968. As Briarwood opened, parents in Kings Cove and Colony Point protested the transfer of their children from Kipling to Briarwood. They cited the lack of a roadway or paved path between Colony Point/Kings Cove and the school and the potential for overcrowding at Briarwood after the residential area around that school was fully developed. The village's unwillingness to open Carlisle from Deerfield Road to Lake Cook Road made it necessary for the district to bus students from Colony Point to Briarwood School.

### III. 1969-1989 REORGANIZATION: THE EFFECTS OF DECLINING ENROLLMENT AND CONSOLIDATION

Fears of overcrowding at Briarwood were never substantiated in that school's short, nine year history. Briarwood opened in 1968 with a population of 245. The transfer of Highland Park, Kings Cove, and Colony Point students from Kipling to Briarwood helped to alleviate overcrowding at Kipling and boost enrollment at Briarwood. However, in spite of these transfers, the expected Briarwood School enrollment for fall '77 was only 108 students, with just fourteen kindergarteners and ten first graders. At the end of the '76-77 schoolyear, Briarwood was closed and Highland Park, Colony Point, and Kings Cove children were once again assigned to Kipling. Briarwood Vista children were transferred to Cadwell School.

Declining enrollment, spiraling costs, difficulty in gaining passage of a referendum to increase funds, and the potential combined effects of all of these factors on the quality of education caused the merger of Deerfield-Highland Park District 109 and Riverwoods District 110 in 1978. District 109's Dr. Fenelon retired and District 110's superintendent, Dr. Charles Caruso, became the superintendent of the expanded District 109. The new District 109 included Kipling, Maplewood, Walden, Cadwell, Wilmot Elementary, South Park, Woodland, Shepard Jr. High, and Wilmot Jr. High Schools.

As enrollment continued to decline, the District anticipated the necessity of closing two schools. Kipling was one of the three schools under consideration. After reviewing factors including location, number of available classrooms, and size of library and gym, the district closed Cadwell and Maplewood Schools in 1981. Students living in the north Cadwell and Briarwood Vista areas were transferred to Kipling School.

Over the next four years the declining student population previously seen in the lower grades began to be felt at the junior high school level. The district considered several options including closing one junior high or restructuring the district as primary (K-2) schools, middle (3-5) schools, and upper grade (6-8) schools. In 1985 the district reorganized the schools making the elementary schools kindergarten through fifth grade and the junior high schools sixth through eighth grade. Woodland School was closed. The district predicted that school enrollment would stabilize and there would be no need, in the near future, to close another school.

#### IV. THE MORE THINGS CHANGE THE MORE THEY STAY THE SAME

Kipling, once the "New Building" and now the oldest of the original District 109 schools, has seen a lot of changes in its forty years. The building has been enlarged twice and its attendance area boundaries have changed as other schools were built and then closed. Kipling has gone from a K-4 school to a K-5 school to a K-6 school and back to K-5. Mr. Nilsen is the school's fourth principal, but he has held that position for more than half of Kipling's history. Mrs. Lorretto Nero, who first taught at Kipling School in 1952, and again from 1967 to the present, was the first of the current staff to teach at Kipling. Miss Geraldine Herr has been a third grade teacher at Kipling for thirtytwo consecutive years. More than one-third of the entire present staff were assigned to Kipling prior to 1980. Ten of the twelve classroom teachers were already teaching at Kipling in 1978, the year the '88-89 fifth grade class was born.

Some present day activities enjoyed by current students have been around for quite a while. Field Day was first organized May 28, 1953, by physical education teachers Jane Voisard and Dick Reed, as an afternoon of races and athletic contests for the Deerfield Grammar School and Kipling students. The Outdoor Education program, enjoyed by Kipling's fifth grade students, was adopted in 1960.

Fund raising has long been a goal of the school's parent-teacher organizations. Fund raisers have included the 1947 "Fashion and Fun Party"; the "Toy Sales", "Sports Nights", and "Mother-Daughter Fashion Shows" of the sixties; the "Kipling Karnival" held in May, November, or February 1970-75; and "Pumpkin Festival", which originated October 23, 1976. The expected income from those early Pumpkin Festivals was about \$500. Compare that to the \$7,600 earned at the 1988-89 Pumpkin Festival and Silent Auction!

The '88-89 Kipling staff adopted "Forty Years of Caring and Sharing" as a motto. This aptly describes the spirit of Kipling. The 1952 PTA sponsored renovation of toys to be donated to a Chicago orphanage; the collection of canned goods for the needy in West Deerfield Township, which began in 1978; and the donation of clothing and toys to A Safe Place in 1988 are all examples that Kipling cares.

## V. THE FINAL CHAPTER IS YET TO BE WRITTEN

Use these blank pages to express (write or draw) your thoughts about Kipling's past, present, and future. These pages will be filed away for Kipling School's 80th birthday in 2029!

