

BEDFORD TOWNSHIP, MICHIGAN

Located in southeast Michigan, Bedford Township is Toledo, Ohio's largest suburb. It has been widely recognized as the garden spot of Monroe County and is a great place to raise children. Emerging out of Erie Township in 1836, Bedford Township grew from a group of 60 pioneering families, many of whom still have descendants in the area. Bedford encompasses the three unincorporated villages of Lambertville, Samaria, and Temperance. All have developed a strong sense of local pride, manifested in various annual events including homecomings, trade fairs, and school and family reunions. Bedfordinians who have achieved wide recognition include ballplayer LeRoy "Bud" Parmelee, "Brighten the Corner" hymnist Ina Duley Ogdon, bus safety-mirror inventor Reid Stout, artist Howard J. Schuler, World War II hero Ensign Harry Lee Corl, and Sens. Norm Shinkle and Bev Hammerstrom. We invite you to browse these pages, noting family names—if your friends or relatives are mentioned, enjoy renewed acquaintances. Next time you are back home check out our Local History Room in the grand new Bedford Branch of the Monroe County Library, where you may find your ancestors on the shelves.

Author Trudy Wieske Urbani is a retired teacher, past president of the Historical Society of Bedford, and historian for Bedford Township.

The Images of America series celebrates the history of neighborhoods, towns, and cities across the country. Using archival photographs, each title presents the distinctive stories from the past that shape the character of the community today. Arcadia is proud to play a part in the preservation of local heritage, making history available to all.

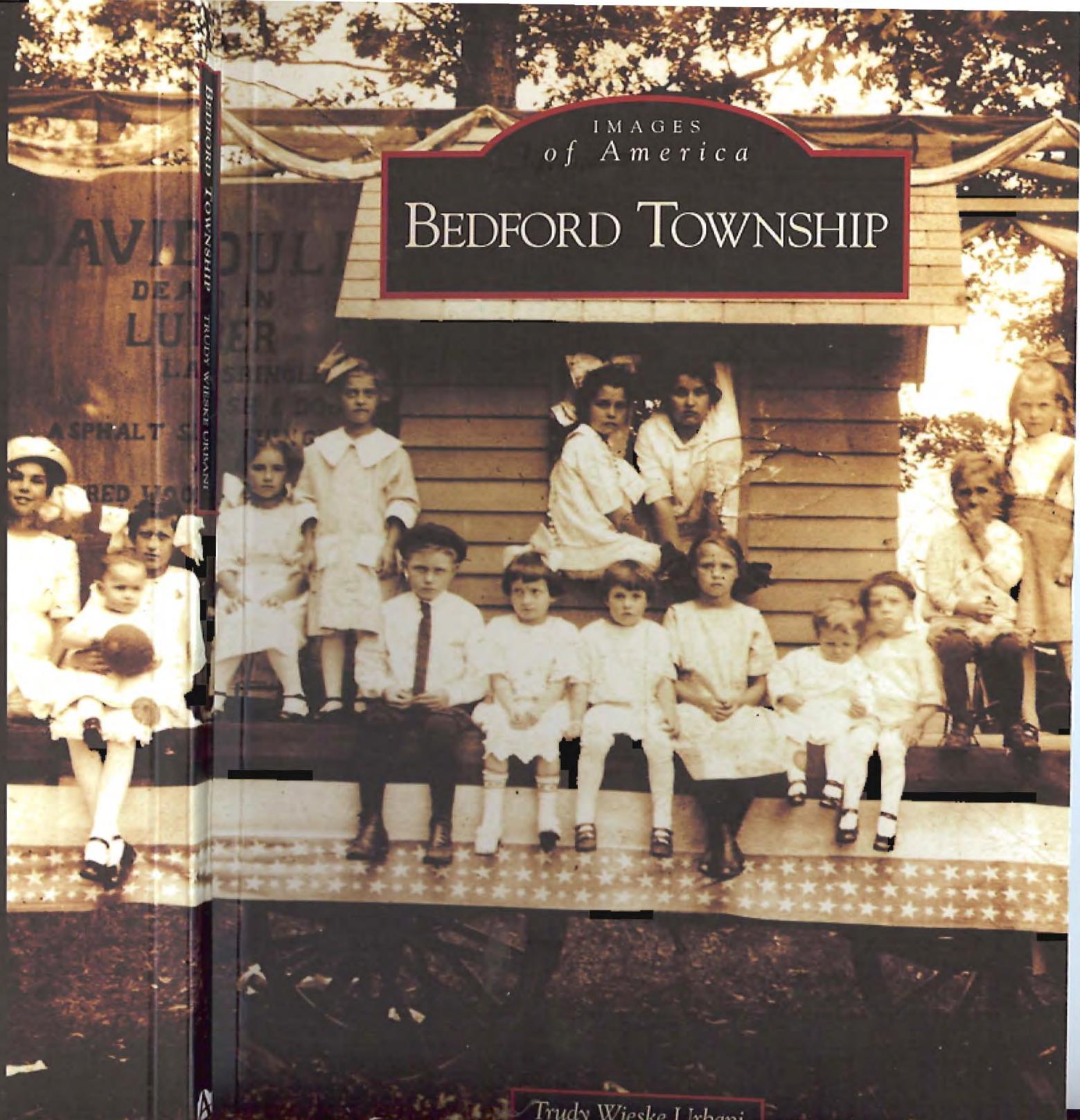
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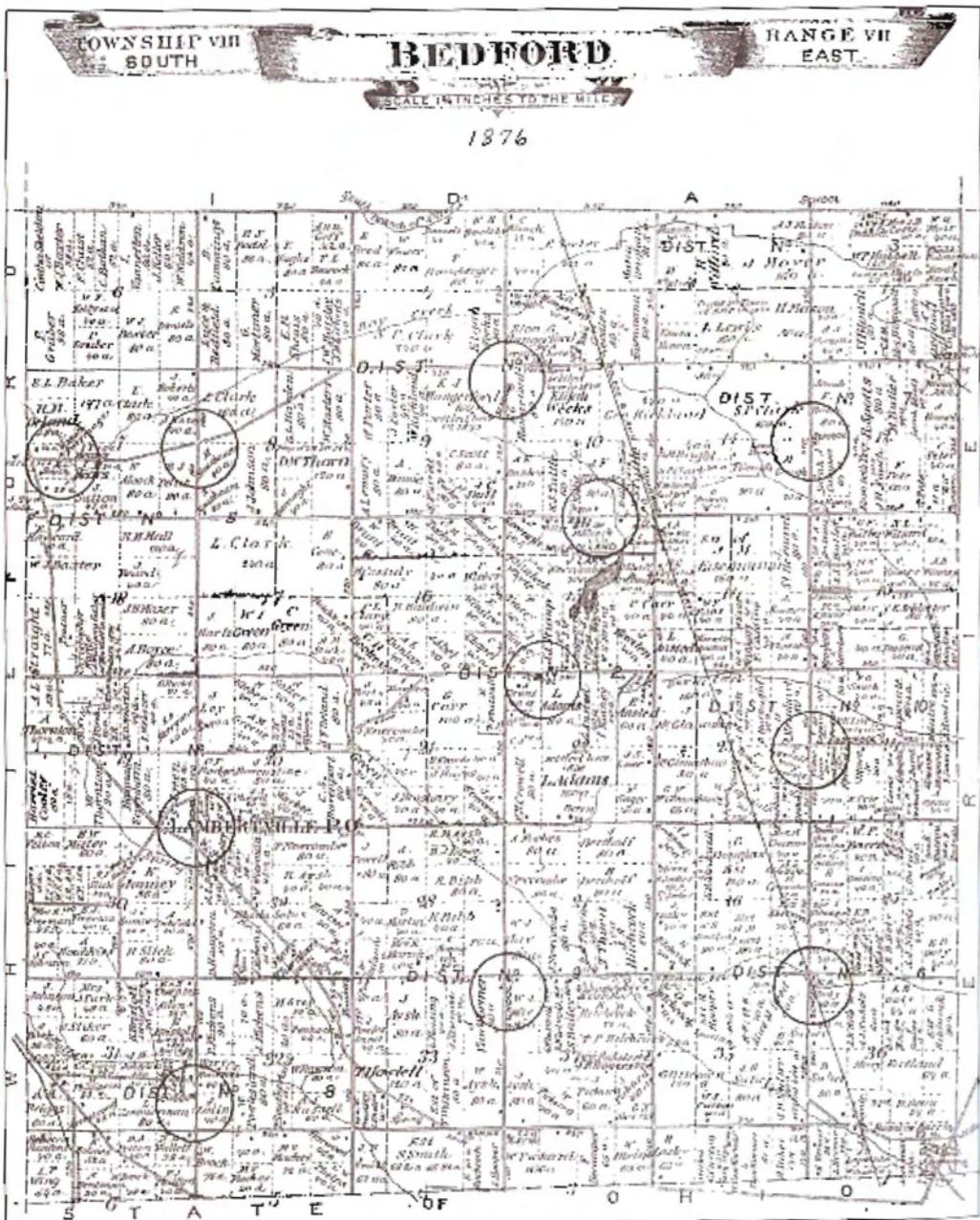
Trudy Wieske Urbani

Two

EARLY SCHOOLS, CHURCHES, AND CEMETERIES



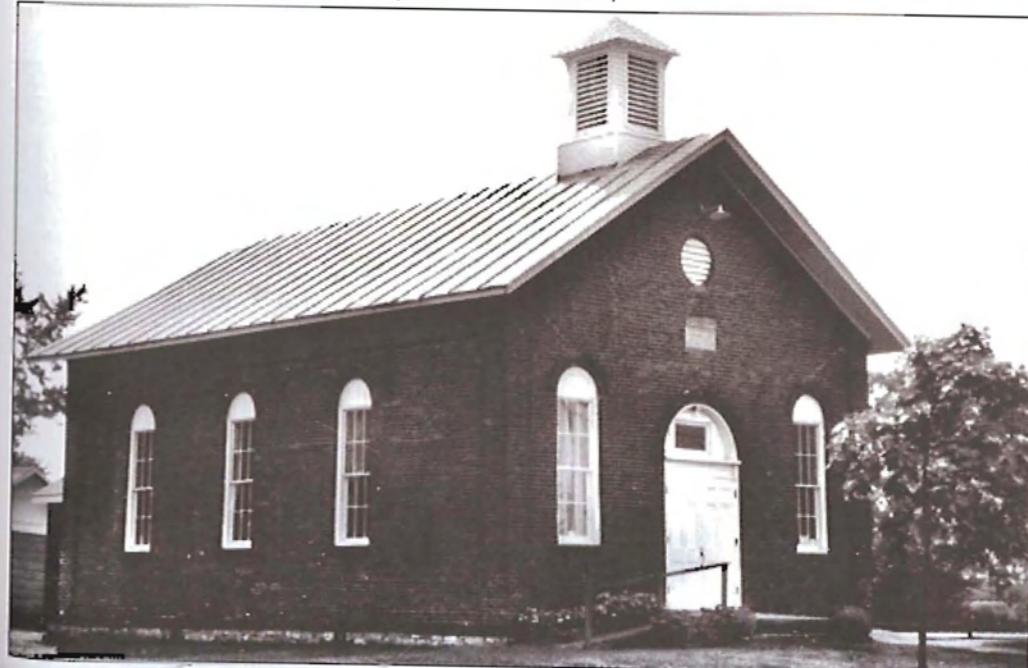
DISTRICT NO. 8, RAWSON SCHOOL. In 1835, the school was located near Sterns and Summerfield. It was then moved to Smith Road, between Douglas and Secor. Finally it was moved to Secor Road, near Section Road, on property owned by the White family. Remodeled considerably, the building has remained at the Secor site for many years. When the school closed about 1970, it was reopened as the first Bedford Cooperative Nursery.

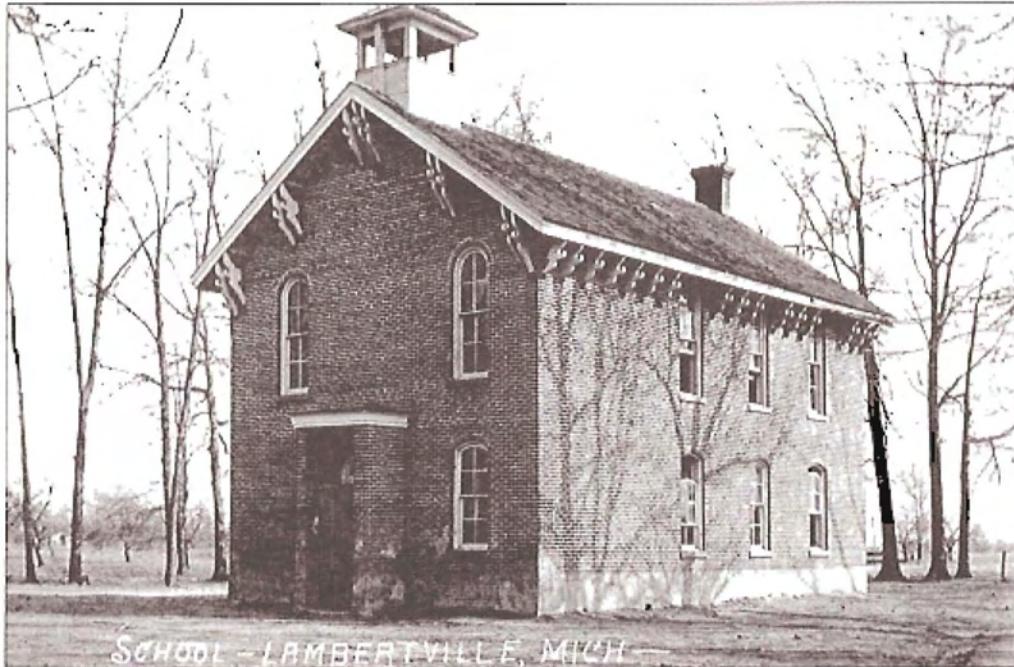


MAP OF 1876 SCHOOL DISTRICTS. School districts were generally two miles apart. District No. 5, the Little Lake Log School, was first built before 1855 on land owned by the Turtle family on Erie Road between Lewis and Jackman Road. This tiny school served the community until it became overcrowded around 1865. It was closed and the students divided between Samaria and Temperance. No photograph of the building has been found as yet, but one can pinpoint its location on this map, along with the other rural schools.



DISTRICT NO. 6, BANNER OAK, WAS ORIGINALLY NAMED LORD SCHOOL. Located on the north side of Sterns at Crabb Road since 1843, it was replaced in 1871 by a new red brick school across the road. Around 1930, Lord was changed to Banner Oak after a Civil War legend about a flag hung from a large oak tree. The prediction was that on whichever side the flag fell, that side would win the war. From 1930 to 1956, a wooden portable building was added. This later served as the Bedford YMCA and was destroyed in the 1970's as a volunteer fire department training exercise. The brick school closed in 1956 and would house a voting precinct, a Baptist Church, even briefly a little theater group. Eventually it was turned over to the Historical Society of Bedford, which, with the help of the alumni, restored it and worked to have it placed on the Michigan Register of Historic Sites. It is the only building in all of Bedford Township that holds this honor. Today Banner Oak School is a living history museum where classes come to reenact school days typical at the beginning of the 20th century.





SCHOOL - LAMBERTVILLE, MICH.

DISTRICT NO. 4, LAMBERTVILLE SCHOOL. The first District No. 4 school was a wooden structure, built in 1835 and located on the north side of Monroe Road. The second school was the above two-story red brick building, with lower grades on the first floor and upper grades on the second. This building was damaged heavily during the cyclone of 1920. The third school, the much larger red brick building seen below, was built in 1922. In the 1930s, a gymnasium was added as a WPA project. The school operated from about 1922 until 1969, when it became the new location of the Bedford public school administration offices. Today this structure houses Olde Schoolhouse Commons, a quaint collection of stores, boutiques, and a restaurant. The Lambertville High School reunions are also held here the first Sunday in August.



STONE SCHOOL IS THE OLDEST SCHOOL STANDING IN THE TOWNSHIP. District No. 7 first had a log school located on Lakeside (Samaria) Road. In 1855, Stone School was built on a half acre of land purchased for \$16 on Crabb Road between Erie and Samaria Roads. It cost \$407.74 and a stove was purchased for \$14. In the 1940s, a portable building housed the primary grades while the stone building housed the grammar grades. The last teachers here were sisters, Julia Wehner and Genevieve Grasley.



CLASS AT STONE SCHOOL. Miss Eiler's class poses in front of the new portable building in 1940.



RECESS AT LIBERTY CORNERS. A group of children enjoys a brief recess from studies at Liberty Corners School. In this c. 1890 photograph, note the pork-pie hats and the wide-open spaces in the background.



DISTRICT NO. 9, LIBERTY CORNERS SCHOOL. Located at the corner of Sterns Road and Jackman on land donated by the Bibb family, this school was built in 1869 by Frank W. Ludwig, who would build the Banner Oak School two years later. Howard Schuler, a local artist, attended as a boy and has created several sketches of both the interior and exterior of this graceful building.



DISTRICT NO. 10, FRENCH WAYSIDE SCHOOL, CRABB AND SUBSTATION ROADS. Built on land donated by the Miller family in 1878, the above school mainly educated French-speaking children. Teacher Grace Kerstetter always referred to it as her "little French School by the Wayside," and the name changed accordingly. Below is a portable building where Sarah Shinkles's class of 1934 learned. By 1947, the building was just used for storage and was demolished by a high wind, which took off the roof and walls and deposited the piano on top of the furnace (witnessed by teacher Mary Morin). Appropriately the last teacher at Wayside School was Grace Kerstetter Stratton, who taught all grades back in 1924 and taught fourth graders there in 1953–1954. She turned the key for the last time in 1954. The abandoned building was burned down by the Bedford Volunteer Fire Department as a training exercise on November 15, 1967. The area was named Ralph Miller Park, after the son of the original donors of the land, Ida and Erwin Miller.





DISTRICT NO. 3, SAMARIA SCHOOL. Built in 1865, the District No. 3 school was originally a one-room wooden structure on Jackman Road on Hungerford family property. About 1900, that building was sold for \$57.25, moved to Samaria, and attached to the Willard Store. Pictured is the second school at this site, a two-room wooden structure, which was leveled in the cyclone of 1920. The final Samaria School was built of red brick and completed in 1922. Located at the corner of Jackman and Samaria Roads, it was used as a school until 1970, when it was renovated as the Bedford Senior Center.



DELAND SCHOOL, DISTRICT NO. 1 FRACTIONAL SCHOOL. Built about 1870 at the corner of Route 151 and Summerfield Road, it was the second school at this site. Lyda Montri Venia, former student, describes, "one large room, about 30 feet by 50 feet, with four rows of double desks and benches for approximately 75 pupils. . . . In back were two cloakrooms, one for boys and one for girls, with hooks on the wall for coats and a shelf for lunches. In the corner at the back was a long stove that burned cordwood." The blackboard was across the front wall in back of the teacher's desk, which was on a raised platform. Writing tools were individual 8-by-10-inch slates with a real sponge eraser; older students used straight pens and ink. Due to overcrowding about 1951, the little lott School from Whiteford was attached at the rear, with a cloakroom in the middle that served both structures. Below is Mrs. Ault's students at the Deland School.



SAMARIA TWO-ROOM SCHOOLHOUSE, 1910. Teachers Clarence Harwick and Alice Parmelec appear here with their students.





DISTRICT NO. 1, BULLOCK SCHOOL. Named for an early settler, this 1892 school was a landmark at the curve of Secor Road and Route 151. Most students were drawn from the old Deland District. During World War I, Madeline Johnson Elliot Reger taught about 60 students there and earned \$60 per month. The last teacher was Esther Kasmatka Tucker, in the mid-1940s. She began by sharing the split sessions with another teacher, but ended up teaching all eight grades. The school burned one night in March 1945. After that, students attended classes in the basement of St. Anthony's Church until Bedford schools became consolidated.



FLOYD DELAND, BULLOCK SCHOOL TEACHER, 1913-1914. Deland is pictured here with his "shoeless wonders."

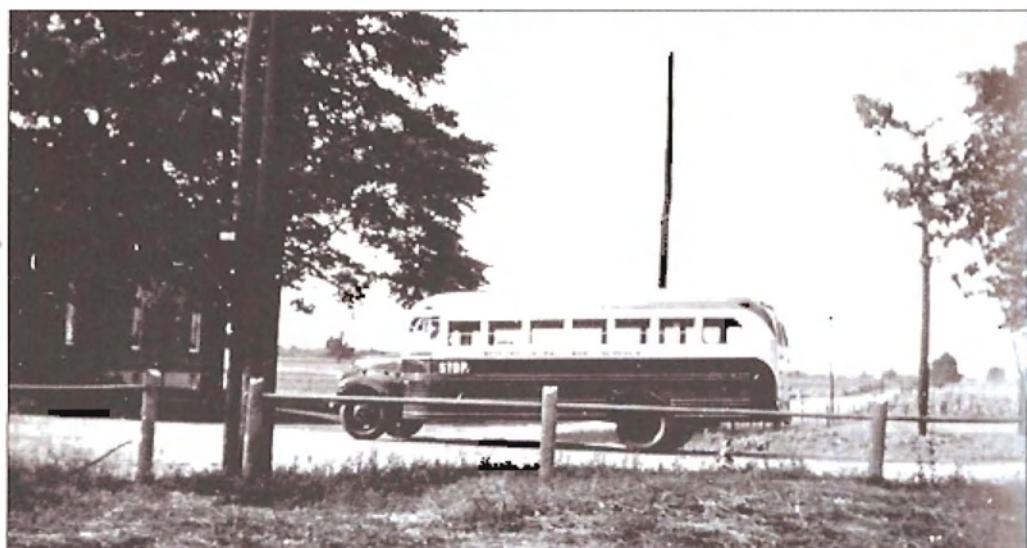


DISTRICT NO. 2, TEMPERANCE SCHOOL. The second school on Temperance Road was built after the tiny Center School was outgrown. Through the years, additions were made to accommodate the increasing student population. As shown below, the building burned in February 1946, causing the school board to consider consolidation of the rural schools of Bedford Township. Temperance students briefly attended the Lambertville School, and then arrangements were made to bus students to the Hamilton School in Toledo until a new brick school could be built on Douglas Road.





FORMER HAMILTON SCHOOL, TOLEDO, OHIO. Because both Bullock and Temperance Schools had burned within a one year period, Toledo's Hamilton School became a temporary home away from home for Bedford Township students, and the change would be historic. The school board then decided to consolidate all the individual rural schools into one system, the Bedford Rural Agricultural School System. The school system was formed in 1946 and construction began on one centralized brick school building.



FOR SOME, WALKING TO SCHOOL WAS SIMPLY OUT OF THE QUESTION. Because of the distance involved in the temporary housing, some Bedford area students would be transported in the first school buses, painted a patriotic red, white, and blue and driven by teachers. An outcome of this would be the invention of the bus safety mirror by Reid Stout.