

MAIRE THROUGH THE YEARS

A History of Lewis E. Maire Elementary School

Grosse Pointe, Michigan

1936-1986

by

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DEDICATION

This brief history of Maire Elementary School mentions few individuals by name, but it is dedicated to all the students, teachers and parents who for fifty years have filled her halls with life, laughter and learning.

May a knowledge of their lives and labors at Maire lead us to a fuller understanding of our community and of the world in which we live.

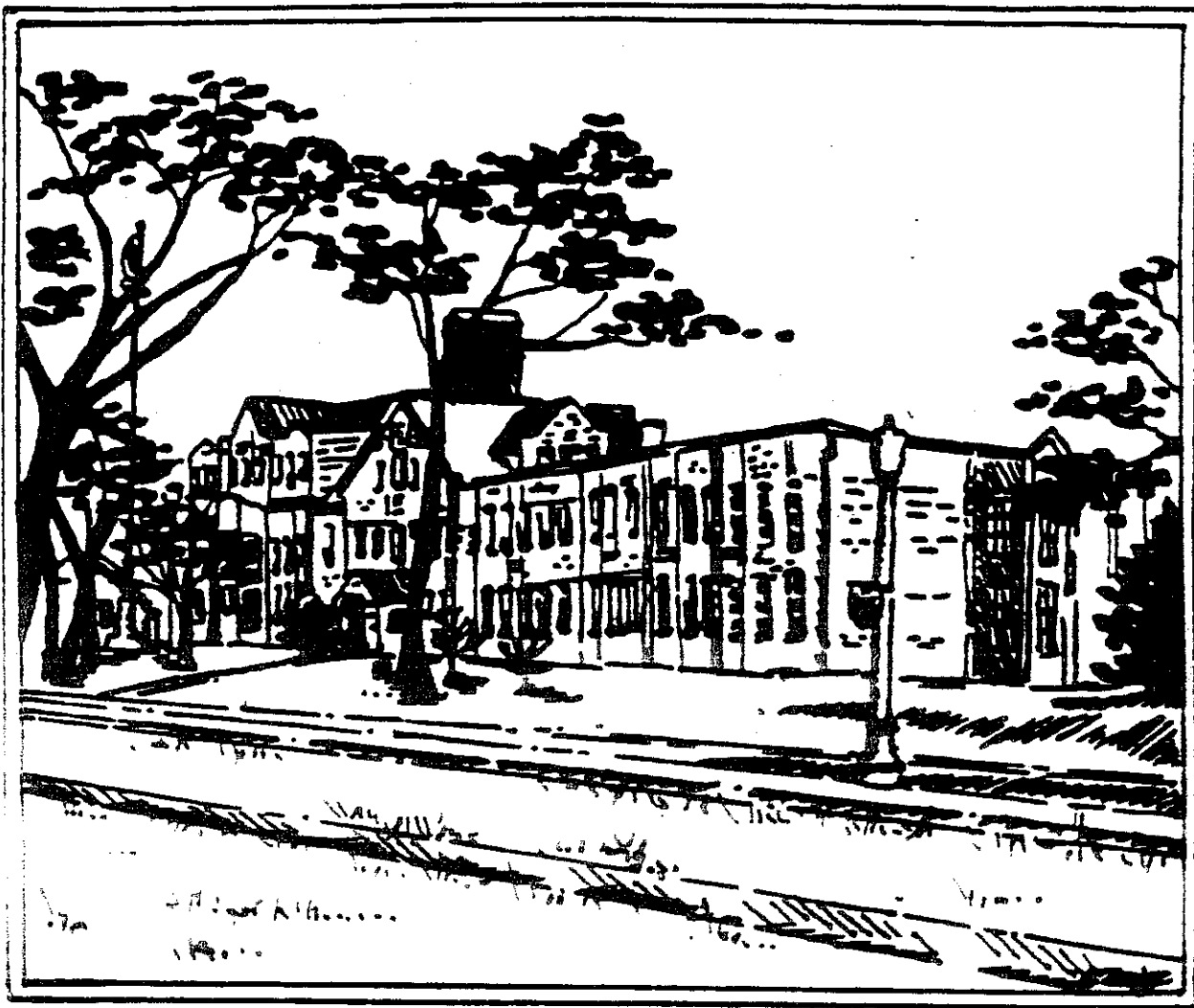


ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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My sincere thanks to Becky Easlick, who researched the history of Maire's provenance and who wrote the biography of Lewis E. Maire which is appended to this history, to Corinne Tyler, who shared in the arduous task of research, and to Douglas Ziegler, M. D., who advised me on the relevant health and medical history of the period. The omissions, errors and opinions are, however, entirely my own.

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Maire School - October 1936

ORIGINS

Lewis E. Maire Elementary School came into existence as the result of a comprehensive plan for expanding the educational opportunities for local children. The Grosse Pointe School District, as it is known today, was formed in 1922. Prior to this time there had been five separate districts, none of which could support a high school. Four of the five systems extended only through the eighth grade, while the fifth went through the tenth grade. It was apparent to a far-sighted group of citizens that there would be a greater need for higher education in the area after World War I, and to this end they put together a ballot issue to accomplish the consolidation.

As soon as this was passed, the new School Board began acquiring additional school sites for the future. In January of 1922, they authorized the purchase of three sites for the new elementary schools which were to become Defer, Trombly and Maire. In August of the same year, an advisory committee recommended purchase of the site which was bounded by Waterloo, Kercheval, Cadieux and Notre Dame. In January, 1923, this property was officially designated a school site, and the trustees were authorized to negotiate for its purchase. In the same month, a special meeting of the qualified electors was called, and after considerable debate, there was approval of the proposed site by a vote of 59 to 20.

Unfortunately, however, the site owners and the School Board could not agree on a price, and the Board had to initiate condemnation proceedings on April 8, 1924. The property was ultimately acquired at a cost of \$151,701.89 and was paid for by a sale of bonds. For a time in 1928 it was considered as a site for a junior high school, but due to opposition, the Board reverted to its original plan to build an elementary school there.

On December 4, 1930, the architectural firm of O'Dell and Diehl was appointed to design the building, but it was not until November 30, 1935, that a bond issue in the amount of \$169,000 was put to the vote and passed by the electorate. This amount represented only 55% of the estimated total cost of the project; the rest of the money was furnished by the Federal Government under the Public Works Administration. On December 11, 1935, bids were opened and contracts awarded in the amount of \$295,220 for the construction. Building of the school, which was to be named for Dr. Lewis E. Maire, one of the pioneers in the consolidation of the school district, began in the early months of 1936.



First Day of School.

THE FIRST DECADE

1936-1946

Settling into the New School

Students and teachers entered Lewis E. Maire Elementary School for the first time on the morning of October 20, 1936. They brought with them wagonloads of texts and supplies from their temporary classrooms and took up their classes where they had left off. One of the original students, Joanne Ramm, had these impressions of her new school:

I think this Maire School is a very nice place. I am not very used to it, and sometimes I get lost. I just came from Trombly. The desks, lockers, blackboards, windows and lights are more modern.

In keeping with the policy of the rest of the school system, the new Maire classes were organized on a semi-annual promotion plan. Each class had "A" and "B" sections. Children had to be five years old on or before November 1st in order to be eligible to enroll for September entrance into Kindergarten. A second group of slightly younger children would begin Kindergarten in February in a separate class. As a result, there were mid-year as well as June promotions. Every year, two groups of sixth graders graduated to junior high school on the campus of what is now South High School.

Soon after arriving in the new building, Maire students had their first lesson in civics. As the adults of the nation went to the polls on November 3, 1936, the children held a mock presidential election in which Republican candidate Alf Landon defeated Democratic incumbent Franklin D. Roosevelt, a reversal of the actual results. Nonetheless, a sportsmanlike commentator conceded in the student newspaper that "the best man won" and urged his readers to stand by Mr. Roosevelt "whether he is our man or not. Stand by him for he is the President for the next four years."

Finishing Touches

By the beginning of the first full year of classes in 1937, many improvements had been made to the school grounds. As the infant lawns struggled to survive the constant trampling of children's feet, the school newspapers were filled with notices urging pupils to stay on the established walkways, not to throw the playground gravel at each other and to avoid trampling mud into the new hallways.

Tennis courts had also been completed on the site of the present Kroger parking lot and were ready for use in the fall of 1937. Saturday

visitors were advised to reserve their courts at the old Cadieux Library on the corner of Cadieux and Kercheval and to observe the common rules of courtesy.

By March of 1938, students and teachers were discussing plans for the cultivation of a garden on the south side of the building. Eventually each class designed and planted a garden and cared for it until school was adjourned for the summer recess. When the students returned in the fall of 1938, they found many beautiful flowers there to enjoy.

In June of 1939, the School Board sold the Kercheval Avenue frontage of the Maire School property for \$155,000. This opened the way for the commercial development of the property to the south of the school.

Use and Improvement of the Interior Facilities

Students staged their first major dramatic and musical presentation in the new auditorium, the operetta Hansel and Gretel, on December 21, 1937. They also established Maire's first school library: children were responsible for unpacking the initial shipment of 91 volumes and for preparing them for shelving and circulation in the fall of 1938. The organization of the library on the Dewey Decimal System was deliberately modelled after that of the Grosse Pointe Public Libraries so that a child might learn from the beginning the proper procedures to follow in locating a book.

P. T. A. bridge parties and paper drives became popular means of raising funds that went toward the purchase of new books and furnishings for the library. In this way, parental involvement enhanced the educational environment at Maire from the very beginning. One of their early gifts to the library included three new works of ceramic art. These depicted the popular storybook characters, Midget and Bridget, King Arthur and Alice in Wonderland, and were made by Works Project Administration artists. In this way, Maire profited from the publicly funded arts projects engendered by the depressed economic conditions of the period. In 1941, the P. T. A. contributed further to the aesthetic atmosphere of the school by donating to each classroom an original watercolor depicting some aspect of transportation painted by the well-known Detroit artist, Robert Herzberg. The P. T. A. was able to acquire thirteen more paintings by the same artist in April, 1942.

In the spring of 1942, the school administration initiated a district-wide hot lunch program. Two motor trucks transported more than three hundred hot lunches from the high school cafeteria to each of the seven elementary schools each day. Prior to this, a hot lunch had been available for students to eat in the playroom and, presumably, it was produced right on the premises. Students who brought cold lunches from home were asked to eat them in the lunchroom which was

separate from the third floor playroom. However, students were urged to go home for lunch whenever possible. In the first year of operation of the new food plan, students could choose between a hot lunch served with plain milk for 17¢ and one served with chocolate milk for 18¢.

Early Educational Activities

Accounts of classroom activities during the first ten years reveal a definite bias towards a "hands-on" approach to education: students studying Indians built tepees; a unit on agriculture necessitated the construction of a farm and the modelling of vegetables from paper and clay; a study of American culture led to the knitting of afghans and the singing of folksongs, and so on. The fruits of such efforts were routinely displayed in the showcases on the first and second floors and shared with the rest of the school.

Field trips, which exposed the students to the real people, places and things they were studying, were naturally an integral part of such an educational approach. They also served (not always successfully) to expand the limited horizons of the individual student: in March of 1939, a sixth grade class visited an exhibit of Modern Art at the Alger House. One student's reaction was to exclaim: "Jeepers, Creepers! Modern art is awful stuff!" The editor of the school newspaper agreed, saying that he too could not feel "that these messes of lines resembling a broken alarm clock, telephone or something was art." Other excursions during the first ten years included trips to a bakery, to the telephone company at the corner of Mack and Cadieux, to Indian exhibits at Hudson's downtown, and to the Detroit Institute of Art.

Maire Elementary was well-launched upon its educational course by the summer of 1939 when Maire's first principal, Mr. Ivan C. Nichols, took a leave of absence to accept a fellowship at Northwestern University. He subsequently resigned when he accepted an offer to become superintendent of the Berwyn, Illinois school system. Mr. Herbert Hobart replaced him as principal at Maire, a position he would hold until his retirement in 1962.

Extracurricular Activities

Extracurricular activities abounded at Maire in the early years as teachers unselfishly gave of their free time to sponsor many different athletic activities and clubs. While some Maire students undoubtedly took private music and dance lessons, there was not then available the wide range of offerings through different community agencies there is now, and they sought and found educational enrichment at school.

Sports were a big part of life for Maire boys from the beginning. In the fall of 1937, the boys of the immediate neighborhood organized a

football team which practiced and held Saturday games on the Maire fields. They were coached by a student from the high school.

The following spring, Maire boasted a basketball team which played against all the other elementary schools, as well as an extra-curricular Tuesday night baseball league. In fact, it was a sixth grade class at Maire that designed the baseball diamond in arithmetic class and then laid it out on the field.

By 1945, the Board of Education was offering supervised playground activities, including tennis lessons, at all the elementary schools during the summer months. Students also found an outlet for more specialized skills in events like the yo-yo contest of 1938 and the marble competition which was held as part of the city-wide Free Press marble tournament in May, 1940.

By the spring of 1941, both boys and girls could choose between such diverse clubs as the aviation club which built models and studied the history of flight, folkdancing club, library club, dramatic club, Reporter's Club, Young Writer's Club (in conjunction with the Detroit News which published several stories and photographs by Maire students), and two photography clubs which used the school's darkrooms built in 1940. The following fall, a sports club was added to the roster of school activities, as well as a junior and senior chorus. Students also had opportunities to enroll in a piano class which boasted 46 students in 1941 and, by 1942, to participate in the Grosse Pointe All Elementary Band which performed locally.

Students were sufficiently at home at Maire by the fall of 1941 to feel the need for a school song to express their solidarity and their attachment to the place. A contest was held early in 1942, and Jerry Allen's lyrics were chosen to accompany the music written by Miss E. Chesarek. The words are:

M-A-I-R-E spells Maire.
We are leaders everywhere.
North, South, East and West
Maire always leads the rest.
In lessons, sports, and music too
We always try our best to do.
Teachers too all do their share to
Make us very proud of Maire.
Oh Maire, we are proud of you!

Parental Activities

While Maire students settled into their new building and daily routine, their mothers and fathers struggled with the age-old challenges

of parenthood. Fortunately, a number of lectures on parenting and child psychology were made available to them through the auspices of the Board of Education. One such series of classes ambitiously tackled "the problems of raising normal children, the development of self-confidence, the philosophy of disciplining and teaching them the desire to do what they should do of their own free will . . . " Parent education was to remain an important function of the parent-teacher organizations throughout the years.

The P. T. A. mixed business with pleasure on at least one occasion by inviting baseball great Hank Greenberg to speak at the opening meeting of the 1937-38 year. This was one P. T. A. function to which children were also invited. Whole families attended enthusiastically, asked questions and obtained Mr. Greenberg's autograph. Maire's affectionate reception of this outstanding Jewish athlete stands in pleasing contrast to the anti-Semitism which was rampant in Germany at this time. Just the preceding year Hitler had used the Berlin Olympics to showcase the superiority of Nordic athletes.

Charity Towards a Depressed and Warring World

As the country struggled to recover from the effects of the Great Depression, Maire students were encouraged to help others less fortunate than themselves. A statement written by student Mamie Nicastro in April, 1941, reflects an awareness of the imperfections of the world: "If I could have three wishes . . . I would wish for peace all over the world, wish for all the crippled and blind to see and walk, and wish for every boy and girl to be happy." Maire students were taught to believe that their efforts could make life more tolerable for the poor, the sick and those whose lives had been disrupted by the many conflicts around the world.

Every student was a member of the Junior Red Cross and participated in a variety of charitable activities. Students made utility bags and scrapbooks for disabled veterans. Fudge and candy sales were held to raise money for the Red Cross, which was faced with the largest amount of war relief work since the First World War. In 1941 students filled twelve boxes with gifts to be sent to war-torn areas overseas. Yearly they collected canned goods and prepared holiday food baskets for the needy in Detroit.

Health and Safety

Mamie Nicastro's concern in 1941 for the "crippled" had a very real basis. The country was then in the grips of a serious polio epidemic. Even the president of the United States was a victim of this dreaded disease, and no child could count on immunity from it. Each summer and fall, new cases of infantile paralysis were reported in Grosse Pointe. In both 1944 and 1946 Grosse Pointe students got an extra week of summer vacation because of the Board of Education's concern over contagion.

Other major health concerns included yearly measles epidemics which usually peaked in April and May. In May of 1943, twenty children at Maire were out of school with this common but potentially dangerous disease which can lead to death or serious complications. Then, as now, flu epidemics periodically depleted the classrooms: in March, 1939, 127 students were absent from Maire with the flu. In the fall of 1945, health officials worried about a rise in the incidence of diphtheria cases, a disease which poses a special threat to school-age children.

On the positive side, these years witnessed an important new health development. By November, 1944, Cottage Hospital had been designated the community distribution center for the new miracle drug, penicillin, which was used to combat heretofore untreatable bacterial infections.

Student safety on the street and in the halls was a major concern from the very first day: students were drilled repeatedly on safety rules, and safety patrol and service squads were formed immediately. All of Maire's efforts in this area were rewarded when in December, 1946, Maire became the first suburban school in Detroit to be awarded the Green Pennant by the Detroit Times in recognition of its outstanding record of pedestrian safety.

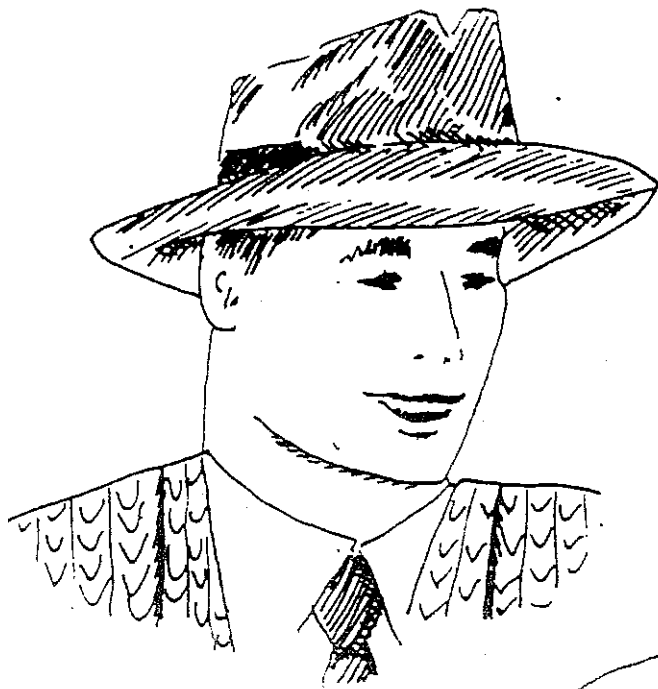
The Shadow of War

Even before the formal entry of the United States into World War II, the need for renewed patriotism and a strengthened national defense was making itself felt at Maire School. At the beginning of the 1939-40 school year, staff members were exhorted by the Board of Education to "teach Americanism," and schools were increasingly perceived to be the proper tool for "instilling faith in Democracy." In these years, students confronted the reality of war throughout the world: a fourth grade class, for example, elected to study China and Japan in 1937 in order to understand why those countries were at war with each other. Other students ominously fashioned models of bomber airplanes as special classroom projects.

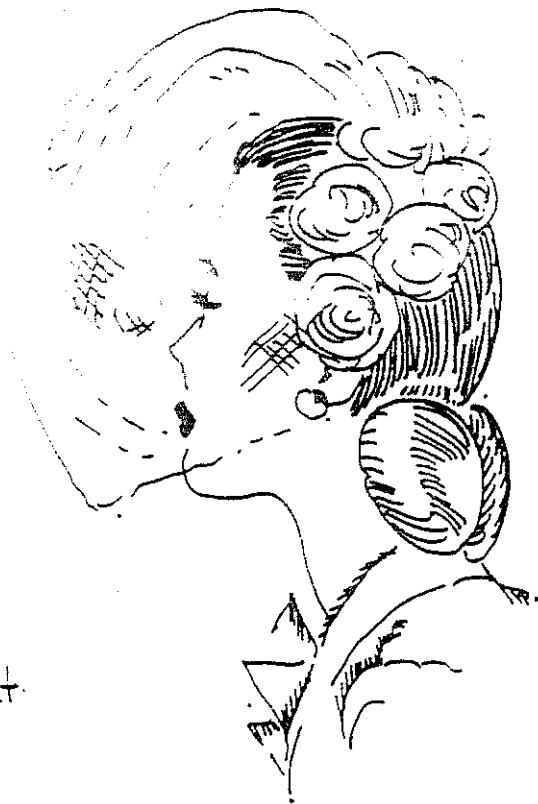
By November of 1940, the school system was rapidly losing teachers who were called up to serve in the armed forces, even as school enrollments were jumping. The Board of Education did, in turn, its patriotic best by promising to keep their jobs for them.

Maire students did their part for military preparedness by participating in the National Defense Stamp Drive initiated in October of 1941. The children were given an opportunity to purchase the stamps for a dime or a quarter each Wednesday morning. They quickly learned to do without ice cream treats and "shows" so that they could contribute their money toward the national effort to build the guns, boats and airplanes needed in the event of war.

Wartime Dinner Fashions



Profile Brim Hat
1943.



Ladies Hat
1944.



Maire Meets the Challenge.

The War Effort

It was after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on the morning of December 7, 1941, and America's entry into the war in the Pacific that Grosse Pointe children were thoroughly mobilized and became a most significant element in the local war effort. Without their enthusiastic participation, many a wartime project would have undoubtedly foundered on adult indifference.

An editorial writer in the Grosse Pointe News on April 16, 1942, described civilian responsibilities this way:

The work to be done by the civilian population is so varied that it is hard to think of anyone, from the ranks of childhood to age, for whom some niche cannot be found in the great home-front of the war machine.

Undoubtedly, Mairé students felt themselves to be important cogs in the gigantic war machine, and this attitude of personal responsibility for the fortunes of their country was reflected in some of the student writings from this period. Sixth grader Howard Beauvais wrote in April, 1942:

I'm thankful I live in the U.S. A.
I will help to defend it any day.
I'm thankful for defense stamps to buy.
To win the war we will surely try.

And fourth grader Joseph Redfield wrote at the same time: "We are lucky to be happy and free in America. We will buy more stamps and bonds and win the war."

Sixth grader Frances Frost's fiercely patriotic poem "Our Flag" was published in the Grosse Pointe News on June 1, 1942:

Our flag is flying overhead
With lovely stripes of white and red.
White stars upon a field of blue
Make up our flag to which we're true.
Sailors at sea, and soldiers on land
All fight for our flag and for what it stands;
For truth, for courage, for loyalty too,
For children and grownups like me and you.
So when you see your flag up high,
Lift up your head unto the sky
And be glad you live in a country so grand,
Where freedom reigns throughout the land.

But Maire students demonstrated their patriotism in practical ways too. They participated energetically in national campaigns to collect and conserve certain materials like waste paper, rubber (from rubber bands to old tires) and scrap metal which were desperately needed to combat wartime shortages. The paper collections of 1942 and '43 raised proceeds which were donated to the Red Cross. The frequent paper drives of January, August and October, 1944, reflect a real sense of national urgency in this area and were held in concert with all the other public and private schools of Grosse Pointe. In May of 1942, the paper shortage touched Maire students personally when they were obliged to give up publication of their quarterly newspaper, The Reporter, due to the need to conserve paper.

At this time, victory gardens provided an important source of food for the Grosse Pointe community. During the war, all residents were urged to cultivate every available piece of land. Lincoln Maire, the son of Lewis E. Maire, was a prominent leader in this program, and as the land along Cadieux and the adjacent streets was considered particularly rich and suitable for vegetable growing, many Maire children must have been actively engaged in tending these gardens at home during the summer months. Some students even laid out their gardens and built models of them as spring classroom projects.

Maire students offered moral support and encouragement to members of the armed forces (some of whom were their own fathers and brothers) by collecting boxes of playing cards and more than six hundred books as part of the Victory Book Campaign. These items were sent to cheer and amuse American troops at home and abroad. Maire children also extended relief to America's allies by participating in such programs as those sponsored by the Save the Children Federation and the "Watches for Russia" Drive of 1943.

But Maire's participation in the National Defense Savings Stamp and War Bond programs was perhaps the most noteworthy of all: in March of 1943, a "Schools at War Flag" was awarded to Maire in recognition of the fact that over 90% of her students had purchased defense stamps of either denomination each month. In the first three months of 1943, Maire pupils had purchased \$4,485 worth of war savings stamps. By the end of 1943, Maire students had, through their purchase of stamps and bonds in the "Schools at War Jeep Campaign" contributed the full cost of one regular jeep, two amphibian jeeps or "quacks," and two flying jeeps or "grasshoppers." By February of 1945, their stamp and bond purchases sponsored the acquisition of an ambulance transport plane which was eventually dubbed "The Old Grey Maire" by Maire students. This name was painted on its side, and it was flown in Belgium during the last months of the European war by Detroit S/Sgt. Lionel J. Montagne, a Ninth Air Force Liaison Pilot. The pilot wrote his mother that "those kids will never

know how happy I am to get a plane sponsored by them. It just makes my heart feel good, especially since it was sponsored by students of a Detroit school. All day I've worked on it, looking it over, and it's perfect."

In the Fourth War Bond Drive of 1944, Maire children sold \$39,000 worth of bonds. They came in fifth in sales after the students at the High School, Pierce, Kerby and Defer.

In January of 1942, the school administration instructed parents and principals in procedures to be followed in case of enemy attack. Students duly performed air raid drills, and alternate plans were made in case an evacuation to private homes became necessary. Shovels and sand were placed conveniently at hand throughout the building to aid in fire fighting. Later that spring, the schools and their students dutifully played their parts in official blackout tests, the first of which was held on May 7, 1942. Boy Scouts volunteered their services as messengers for the local Civil Defense workers.

The elementary schools were designated as registration and distribution points for sugar and gas ration books, and these centers were staffed by both the teachers and by P. T. A. volunteers. As its quota of fuel oil was running too low to allow this additional use of its facilities in February of 1945, Maire was then exempted from this duty. On those occasions when Maire was used as a distribution center, students were given time off from classes. School buildings were also made available for civil defense and first aid training: in February of 1942, 130 people turned out for first aid training at Maire.

Administrators also adjusted school hours to War Time in the fall of 1942. Classes now met between 9:15-12:00 and 1:15-4:00, and this allowed schools to comply with blackout regulations. School leaders also pondered the need for nursery school facilities as community mothers were increasingly employed outside of the home in war production. Perhaps it is no coincidence that Mrs. Alice Moody Schaefer became the first female member of the Grosse Pointe Board of Education in June, 1942, a reflection of the major role women were playing on the homefront.

Psychological Effects of the War

Although Grosse Pointe students proved themselves to be model citizens in their eager support of the war effort, both educators and parents were concerned about the possible psychological effects of the war on the children of the community. In March, 1942, Superintendent Paul Essert distributed a memorandum to teachers and parents cautioning them to be on the lookout for symptoms of stress in their students and

children during the war period. He strongly advised against the use of punishment and counseled a calm, tolerant, self-controlled approach toward children who were disruptive because of their fears. Adults were to ascertain privately the causes of a child's anxiety and offer reassurance and support whenever possible. In short, Essert felt that the school's most important wartime task was "to prepare the minds and emotions of children for the difficult situation they have to face," an acknowledgement that the nation's most precious resource was still its children.

Reports had reached Essert that children were "silently and dazedly groping with half-understandings of the situation, in a fearful and somewhat hysterical mood . . . Children are raising their heads from their desks as roaring planes go over the school, half wondering whether they are friendly or not." He, therefore, cautioned instructors to avoid engaging in gossip or repeating wild rumors in the presence of children. Everything a teacher does or says, he felt, added "to the chances for either a nation resolute and purposeful or a nation gossipy and hysterical." War programs such as National Defense Savings, civilian defense and conservation efforts should be quietly and calmly incorporated into the daily routine at school without unnecessary fanfare.

Essert further urged all teachers to take training in first aid and to register for civil defense work as a necessary contribution by their profession to the well-being of the community. School system employees were offered a payroll deduction plan so they could easily put a portion of their wages into United States Savings Bonds. Of their own volition, many school teachers enlisted in the armed forces and, by December, 1943, the school system faced a serious shortage of teachers.

Denouement and Peace

Although they continued to work hard, Grosse Pointe children had a more difficult time putting the Sixth War Loan Drive over the top in December, 1944. Paper pickups dropped off in 1945, and a clothing drive failed to net more than one third of the quota of clothes needed "for the stricken people of Europe" in 1945. This slackening of the war effort may reflect either the community's strained resources or a general sense of complacency engendered by the approaching victory of the Allies in Europe. Nonetheless, Grosse Pointe school children had already contributed approximately three million dollars to bond drives by this time.

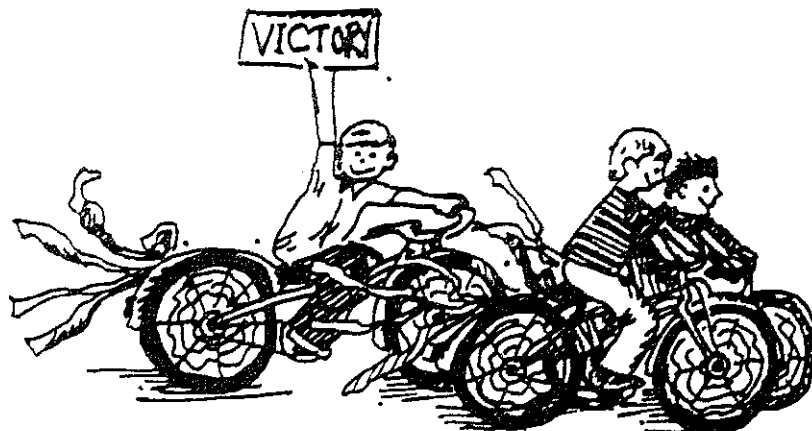
By April of 1945, all the public school principals had submitted plans to the superintendent for the observance of Victory in Europe (or V-E) Day "if and when such a day would occur," when the schools would

pause in their work to pay definite tribute to those who had made victory possible. The second purpose of such an observance would be to make students recognize the magnitude of the job ahead in the war in the Pacific and rededicate themselves to the war and the peace which lay ahead.

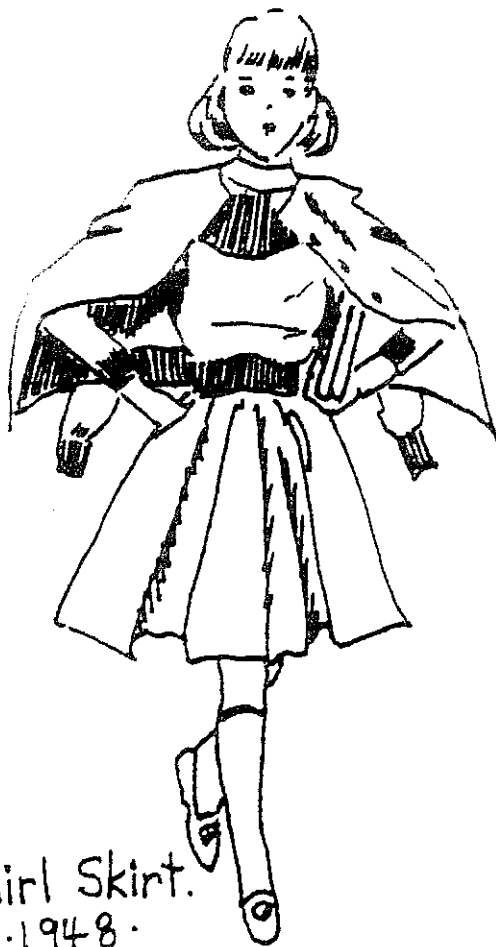
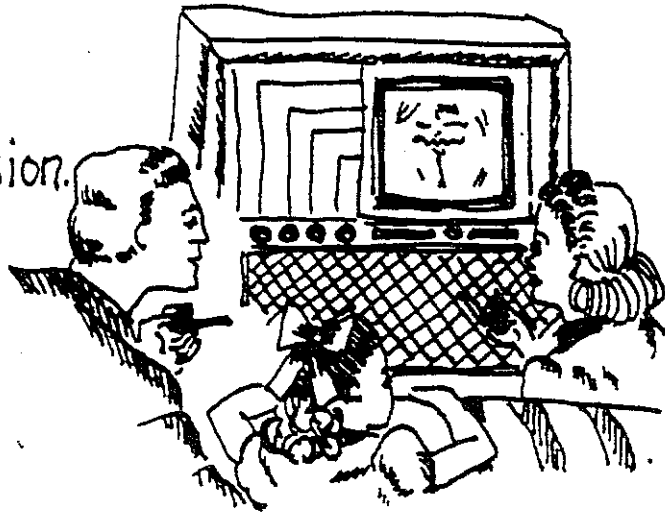
When V-E Day finally did come on Tuesday, May 8, 1945, the occasion was observed with solemnity and restraint throughout the Grosse Pointe community. The streets were noticeably emptier than usual. Most bars, restaurants and shops were closed for the day, and churches held special services. The schools convened in regular session and marked the end of one phase of the war with assemblies in which students and teachers shared the programs, with flag raisings and oaths of allegiance, and pledges to carry on the war effort. Students also wrote letters of gratitude to soldiers and their commanders. As they had so often in the past, they promised to work hard for the success of the Seventh War Loan, which was needed in order to resupply and transport American forces from Europe to the Pacific and for the United States to build an entirely new air force to use against Japan.

When Victory Over Japan finally came in August, 1945, ordinarily quiet and sedate Grosse Pointe was transformed by riotous celebrations. Some people shouted, some sang, others honked horns and rang cowbells. Throngs attended church. On Cadieux, three ten-year old Maire students decked their bikes with crepe paper and trailing streamers and paraded up and down the street. Many Grosse Pointers headed toward the celebrations in downtown Detroit, while many Detroiters passed them as they fled the city and headed out of town along Lake Shore Drive. Many thronged to gas stations to fill up their tanks and luxuriate in hours of aimless driving now that they were sure rationing would be lifted.

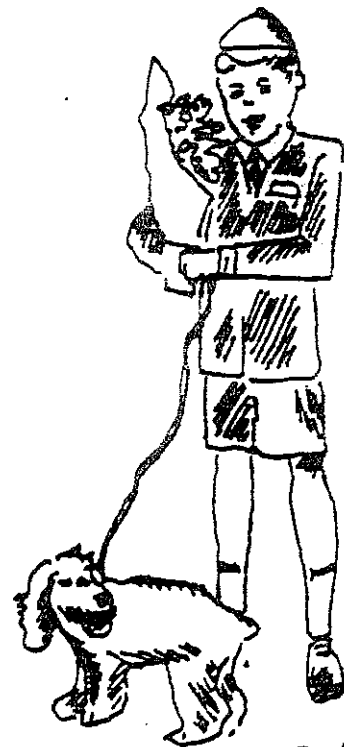
A dangerous and stressful period of American and world history had come to a close. For Maire students, these years at war had been both frightening and exhilarating as they proved themselves time and again more than equal to the challenges confronting them. They could rejoice in the knowledge that they had made a significant contribution to the welfare of their country and their world.



.1940's Television.



.Whirl Skirt.
.1948.



.Eton Suit.
.1948.

THE SECOND DECADE

1940-1950

Postwar Realities

In the aftermath of the war the nation experienced a severe housing shortage. This had a direct effect upon Grosse Pointe schools as new teachers were hard put to find accommodations for themselves and their families. Often, they had to resort to boarding in the homes of local residents and farming out their own children to relatives. In many cases the district lost good teachers who resigned due to their inability to find suitable housing.

In no time at all, the dearth of housing for teachers and for all the veterans arriving back home ready to begin families engendered a building boom in the Grosse Pointes, particularly in the less developed "east end" of the district. The resultant influx of population was to have a dramatic effect on the development of the school system for years to come.

Strained Facilities and Redistricting

As early as February, 1946, Assistant Superintendent John R. Barnes presented a study to the Richard P. T. A. outlining the possibility of classes as large as forty-five, half-day sessions, and the busing of students to schools outside of their neighborhoods if a new building program was not funded in the March school tax election. Particularly strained were the Mason (where enrollment rose to 950 pupils by 1951) and Vernier districts. Already, Mason 5th and 6th graders were being transported to classes at Trombly, and the 6A pupils at Vernier were attending Defer. Old Kerby School was also crowded with one hundred pupils over capacity. All three schools were operating without library or gym facilities. The system was short at least seven classrooms in 1946 and short by fourteen in 1947.

The Maire district was not affected as dramatically by the building boom this early, but by the beginning of the 1949-50 school year, serious overcrowding at Richard necessitated a major redistricting which changed the composition of Maire's student population: residents of University and Lakeland were reassigned to the Maire district. This decision by the Board of Education was met with almost unanimous opposition from the residents of those streets. In vain, they advocated busing Richard 6th graders to Trombly or the construction of quonset huts on the Richard grounds as alternatives to their leaving the Richard district. But the School Board prevailed and, as a result, 431 students were enrolled at Maire in 1949-50.

The transfer of Richard students to Maire ultimately resulted in the overcrowding of Maire and the need for additional redistricting: in 1951-52, the children living on Audubon and Whittier were permanently reassigned to the Defer district. The decision in 1949 by the School Board to drop the Junior Kindergarten program is another indication that facilities were strained and that every bit of space in the system was needed for essential classroom activities. The effects of the housing and baby booms were making themselves felt system-wide.

Modernization of the School Structure

Even as Grosse Pointe educators were contemplating drastic changes in the number of elementary schools and in the boundaries of the individual school districts, a fundamental reorganization of the classroom structure at Maire and all the other schools was underway. In May of 1946, the Board of Education called for the gradual elimination of the system of semi-annual promotions which had long been in effect. As of September, 1946, only children who were age five as of January 1st would be eligible for enrollment in Kindergarten. No new kindergarteners were to be admitted at mid-year. After seven years, there would be no more mid-year promotions or graduations.

The reasons cited for abandoning the old system were: (1) the desire to eliminate "combined" (or "split") sections, as 25% of the system's students were already in classes which combined two or three half-grades; (2) the desire to eliminate oversized classes; (3) the desire to eliminate the summer instructional gap for mid-year students, particularly those just beginning to read; and (4) the desire to eliminate disruptive teacher and class changes at mid-year. Superintendent Paul Essert felt reorganization to be a crucial step forward in improving the educational services offered by the Grosse Pointe School System and one that would bring it into line with national trends. .

Changes on the School Grounds

In this decade, Maire school property temporarily housed the forerunner of what came to be known as the Central Branch of the Public Library. In the process of planning the much needed new library (which was also for a time intended to double as a permanent war memorial for Grosse Pointe), the School Board had long eyed the land at the corner of Fisher and Kercheval as a possible site for the new facility. But in 1946, they decided to move two small properties from Kercheval and Cadieux onto the Maire school grounds to serve as a temporary facility rather than erect quonset huts on the high school site.

In February, 1953, Maire lost its tennis facilities and the old library property when the Board of Education offered to lease these

portions of the grounds to the City of Grosse Pointe for the amount of \$1.00 per annum. The City was, at that time, experiencing a severe parking shortage, and soon these areas were converted into off-street parking lots behind the Kroger store and adjacent businesses. The school had previously cooperated with "Village" merchants by making the tennis courts available for parking relief during the peak Christmas shopping season.

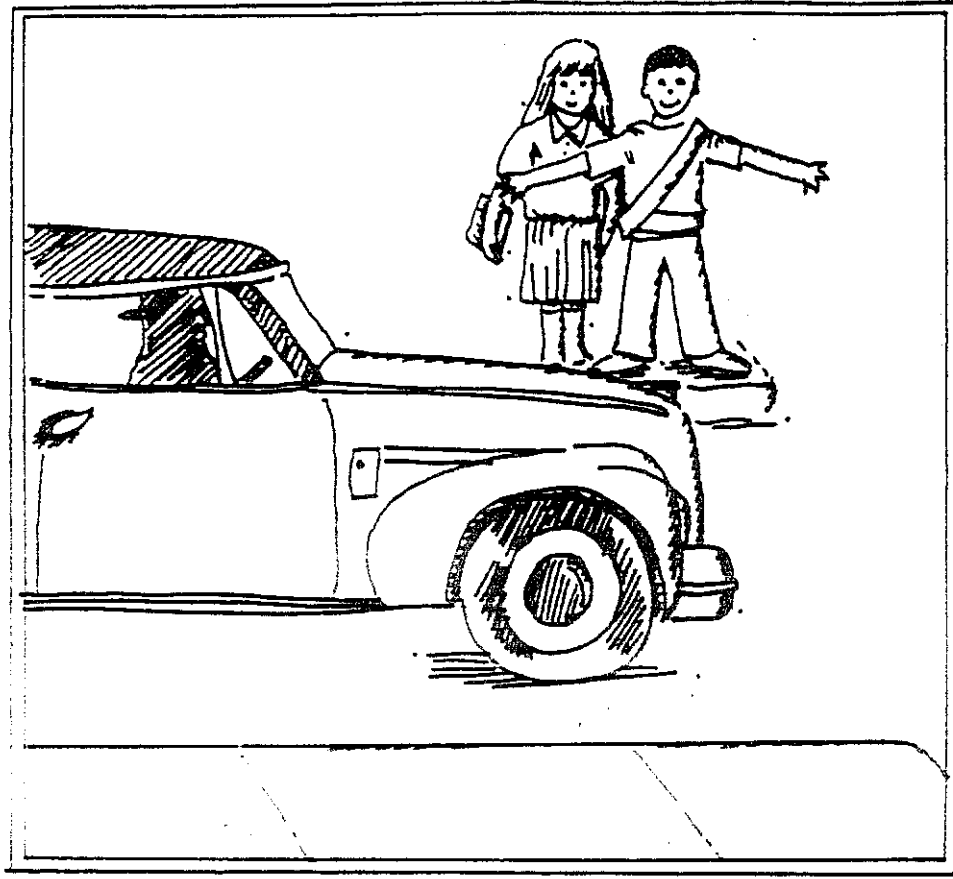
By 1955, a gas station was constructed on the corner of Cadieux and Kercheval. This caused Maire parents considerable anxiety about the increased traffic flow in and out of the adjacent alley and station entrances. After considerable agitation by the parents of the Maire P. T. A., the City agreed to furnish extra crossing guards at that location.

Service and Charity in the Postwar World

The great volunteer war effort had come to an end, and it is very possible that the children at Maire were both glad and sorry to be relieved of their heavy wartime responsibilities in the national defense. Perhaps it is no coincidence that Maire's Scouting programs blossomed in the postwar years and became a prominent part of the school's extracurricular activity. Although the area's earliest troops were founded in 1935 and 1939 at Defer and Trombly, it is not surprising that these activities which stressed the development of high moral character, citizenship and community service should be even more popular amongst the students of the late forties and early fifties. These same children had, after all, with the end of the war, lost a very vital function in their society. And Scouting offered unparalleled opportunities for children to serve their communities in a positive way, while preserving that feeling of camaraderie that comes from cooperating with others on significant tasks and which was a notable feature of the war years.

In the 1950's, Maire Scouts worked together on projects like the collection, repair and distribution of second hand toys to needy children (Cub Pack 19) and the baking and delivery of more than 60 dozen cookies to the patients in the Marine Hospital (Girl Scout Troop 1047). Satisfying ceremonial events occurred too: Brownie Troop 1723 was presented with an American flag by the auxiliary of the American Legion Post 303 in January of 1956, and all the Scouts of Maire School held a joint rally at Pierce Auditorium in 1954.

Other charitable works were integrated directly into the school's daily life. Students continued to participate in Junior Red Cross activities, as its parent organization was still faced with the challenge of massive relief work amongst the displaced peoples of war-ravaged Europe and later also in the Korean War arena. In March, 1949, Maire students conducted a successful fundraising campaign by collecting \$150.00 and the next year, beat its previous record by netting \$181.90. Maire



· Safety Patrol On Duty ~ 1950 ·

students regularly joined the other Grosse Pointe children in supporting the Torch Drive. They also participated in yearly clothing drives which sent much needed garments to poor children in the rural United States and to refugee children in seven European countries. In May, 1950, they kicked off a U.S. Savings Bond Drive at Maire by viewing a traveling exhibit of a replica of the Liberty Bell. Individual classes also undertook charitable causes: in 1954, a second grade class took Christmas gifts to the patients at the U.S. Health Service Hospital on Windmill Point.

Students, of course, were still encouraged to serve each other: safety patrol squads continued to promote pedestrian safety each school day. Members of these groups were rewarded for their services each year with outings to Tiger baseball games (1949), Midget Auto Races (1949), Golden Glove fights (1952 and 1953), and the horse races (1953). In 1955, all public, private and parochial students took part in a massive Grosse Pointe clean-up campaign and learned first hand about the evils of littering their environment.

A New Era of Consumerism

As the nation converted from a wartime to peacetime economy, many profound changes were taking place in American society and culture. Americans were deluged with a proliferation of consumer goods on a scale never before experienced and especially tempting to the consumer in view of the deprivations caused by the war.

The era of the supermarket began in the "Village" with the opening of the brand new Kroger "Serve-Self Supermarket" in 1940. The grand opening of an enlarged and modernized store took place in September, 1956. In the meantime, a competitor, A & P, had opened "the Store of the Future" along the same commercial stretch between St. Clair and Neff. Full page ads begged local parents "to make A & P your headquarters for the nutritious, delicious foods that will keep your children healthy and happy from Kindergarten to College" and reminded them that A & P's low prices would help them save for college too. Now mothers could turn to the convenience of fancy new produce sections for vegetables and fruit and avoid the labor of the wartime victory garden. Better methods of refrigeration meant fewer trips to the market too. Students could stop by the Kroger or A & P stores on their way home from school and buy snacks at appealing prices: doughnuts were only 29¢ per dozen, cookies 25¢ per dozen, a half pound bag of potato chips cost 29¢, and so on. The age of junk food had begun.

One major event in the lives of Maire families must have been the dramatic announcement by local stores in October, 1946, that "Meat is back!" After wartime rationing of staples and the general scarcity of beef, lamb, and pork, consumers must have greeted the restocking of meat departments and butcher shops with enthusiasm.

With gas rationing lifted, Maitre families could again travel by automobile to destinations outside of their communities. During the war, congestion had been a notable feature of summer life at Grosse Pointe's lakeside parks. Pollution of the waters of Lake St. Clair due to the discharge of raw sewage into the lake had become a growing concern in the mid-forties, and there were frequent swimming bans. But now Grosse Pointers could escape to distant locations. Florida was a favorite destination, but it was also possible for moderately affluent residents to venture as far as such exotic spots as Havana, Cuba. In 1947, an all-expenses-paid roundtrip to Havana by airship for six nights cost only \$166.30. By 1948, the same trip cost \$179.15.

Local entertainment was available too: the Punch and Judy and Esquire Theatres continued to flourish as they had during the war years when people sought escape from grim realities in the fantasies of Hollywood. But now families were offered an exciting new alternative to the conventional theatre when the "all-new, glorious" Gratiot Drive-In opened in 1948 with its "thrilling multi-coloured waterfall curtain." Families could pile into the privacy of their latest model automobile (readily available now that war-production had ended and terms were easy) and drive to the movies "just as they were."

The splintering of the audience into isolated groups at the Drive-In was paralleled by a new and important development in home entertainment. Mass production and easy credit made the television readily available for the first time. One ad from 1948 urged local families "to make this a television Christmas" in their homes. "Just a turn of the dial brings drama, music, sports, news, etc., right into your home." Affluent Grosse Pointers could even acquire complete family entertainment centers: for \$550, one could purchase RCA Victor units which combined TV sets with AM-FM radios and Victrola phonographs in a single cabinet.

The arrival of television was to usher in an age in which neighbors came to have less contact with each other, and old patterns of childhood play were disrupted. Children soon learned to substitute long hours of individual TV viewing for the old communal games of the neighborhood. Time previously spent reading silently or aloud with the family or in listening to fairly complex radio programming was now usurped by the predictable pattern of TV variety shows and situation comedies. All this was eventually to have a profound effect upon the attention span and reading ability of elementary age children. As early as 1952, an open meeting of the Grosse Pointe P. T. A. met at Trombly to consider the question of television's influence upon children. Eventually, teachers were to fight fire with fire and incorporate more audio-visual aids into their teaching in order to recapture the attention of pupils whose eyes and brains were attuned to the fast-paced images of the television screen.

Home life was also transformed in this period by the proliferation and improvement of household appliances, labor saving devices such as washers, driers, refrigerators, freezers, mangles, and dishwashers. These freed women from the most time-consuming of household labors and from the need for full-time domestic help. Eventually, this physical emancipation from heavy housework would pave the way for the movement of wives and mothers into workplaces outside of the home. But such a movement was not to take place on a large scale until the Seventies and Eighties. In the meantime, perhaps in reaction to the separations and economic hardships of the wartime, Americans luxuriated in large nuclear families, with Dad at work and Mom at home in the kitchen or out chauffeuring the kids around in her capacious new station wagon. The baby boom of the mid-century had begun with a vengeance, and the steadily growing population was to affect the course of the Grosse Pointe Public School System for many years to come.

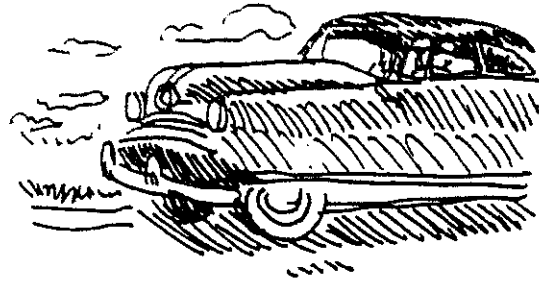
Reflections of Social and Cultural Trends at Maire

The new emphasis on consumerism and the growing affluence of the middle class is reflected in an activity popular with Maire children and their parents in this decade. In the early years of the Fifties, both students and the P. T. A. staged a number of fashion shows. Newspapers of the day burgeon with ads featuring both adult and juvenile fashions and must have reflected the styles of clothing Maire children and their mothers modelled at these events.

One such show sponsored by the P. T. A. was called "A Boutique of Furs by Roberts." Proceeds went toward the purchase of record players for the classrooms and for additional musical instruments for the rapidly growing band and orchestra. Another event held in the winter of 1955 was a "Southern Wear Fashion Show" with P. T. A. members modelling resortwear. The show must have appealed to Grosse Pointe's new preoccupation with travel and leisure time activities, because it was successful enough to fund a public address system for the school. On the opposite side of the coin, however, were the P. T. A.'s profitable annual rummage sale fundraisers, reminders that not everyone shared in the area's new postwar affluence.

Two fashion shows planned by and featuring Maire students were held in this same period. The first, in 1949, involved 125 children who modelled clothes for a variety of occasions. The event concluded with a Maypole dance celebrating May Day, a holiday more often observed by children then than now. In March, 1953, Maire students once again presented a fashion show, this time to the members of the P. T. A. On this occasion, each second grader modelled two or three of his own garments, and a portion of the show was devoted to children's clothes which inspire dramatic play. Favorite dress-up clothes included

1951 Nash Rambler.



Ladies
Cotton
Swimsuit.
1955.

Gene Autry
cardigan.
1950.



outfits for cowboys, Indians, baseball players, fairies, clowns, supermen, Boy Scouts, ballet dancers, and brides. These costumes provide some clues to the juvenile fantasies and popular culture of the early Fifties.

In general, P. T. A. fundraising efforts grew more elaborate and serious. Perhaps the most ambitious undertaking, one that would be repeated with modifications periodically throughout the next thirty years, was an outdoor fair held in May of 1953, which featured booths and pony rides. On this occasion, the proceeds went toward acquiring new library books, audio-visual equipment and records which the school needed due to the strained resources of a system which served more and more students each year.

Advances in Juvenile Medicine

Although Grosse Pointe had, in general, a lower incidence of polio than the rest of the state, it was still a major concern for Maire parents and their children. Thirty local cases were reported in the epidemic's national peak year of 1952, twenty-four in 1953, and forty-three in 1954. By 1955, the area was down to only twenty cases and to only two in 1956. The dramatic and sudden drop in incidence between 1954 and 1955 can be directly attributed to the development of the Salk polio vaccine which became available to Grosse Pointe in April of 1955. All public, private and parochial first and second graders were given the chance to get the series of three vaccine shots. 2,952 children were vaccinated in a mass inoculation on a single day, April 25, 1955. This impressive achievement required the cooperation of twenty-five local doctors and an unspecified number of nurses, as well as over one hundred volunteer mothers. The Pointe police departments participated too by providing transportation of the needles and syringes back and forth between the inoculation centers and Bon Secours Hospital where they were sterilized free of charge. The second and third vaccine shots were scheduled to be administered on May 2nd and May 31st, but had to be delayed due to a shortage of available vaccine. By November, 1955, the Salk vaccine was produced in sufficient quantities for all Grosse Pointe children through the age of 14 to be inoculated.

Before the advent of the Salk vaccine, the threat of polio shaped children's lives to a considerable degree, especially during the warm summer months. In 1950, a directive from the Michigan Department of Health urged that every Michigan child be required to take daily afternoon naps and that swimming be allowed for only short periods of time so the child wouldn't run the risk of becoming chilled or tired (for doctors sensed a relationship between chill and fatigue and the amount of paralysis in the first stages of the disease). Furthermore, children were to be kept away from strange children who might be disease carriers and were urged to wash their hands religiously before meals and after using the toilet. Parents were to watch for signs of headache, sore throat, upset stomach,

sore muscles, fever and stiff neck and back. Nervousness and irritability were also symptoms. Miraculously, the Salk vaccine relieved worried parents of these grave concerns.

But other diseases continued to disrupt the continuity of the school year. Measles remained a common childhood experience especially in the late winter and spring months: 1950 witnessed a serious measles epidemic with an average of 150 cases occurring in both January and February. In March, there were 293 cases with the peak in incidence not expected until April. 234 local children came down with measles in April of 1952. 707 cases were reported in 1954. These seasonal epidemics together with periodic outbreaks of chicken pox, mumps, German measles, rheumatic fever, diphtheria, whooping cough and flu all added up to a lot of missed days at school, even when other serious complications were avoided. Grosse Pointe also experienced a 33% increase in tuberculosis cases in 1954, and doctors recommended periodic x-ray examinations to prevent a major outbreak.

A major, if still somewhat controversial, breakthrough came in dental care in these years: the treatment of children's teeth with fluoride and the hotly debated fluoridation of the water supply to protect the children from tooth decay or dental caries. In 1951, fluorine treatment was made available to all second graders in the Grosse Pointe System at a cost of \$5.00 per child for four applications. By 1953, the children of Mairie were receiving free fluoride treatments at school sponsored by the Mothers Health Council.

Mental health was not totally neglected in this period either, though the evidence suggests that perhaps it was emphasized less than in earlier years. On at least one occasion, a psychology professor addressed a Mairie P. T. A. meeting and focused on the "Problems of the Normal Elementary Child."

The Korean War

The spectre of the Korean War does not appear to have loomed as large in the lives of Mairie children as did its predecessors. Yet here and there, one can sense its ominous presence in Mairie activities. In January, 1952, all Grosse Pointe children were briefly mobilized to enlist donors during a bloodmobile drive, the blood being desperately needed in Korea.

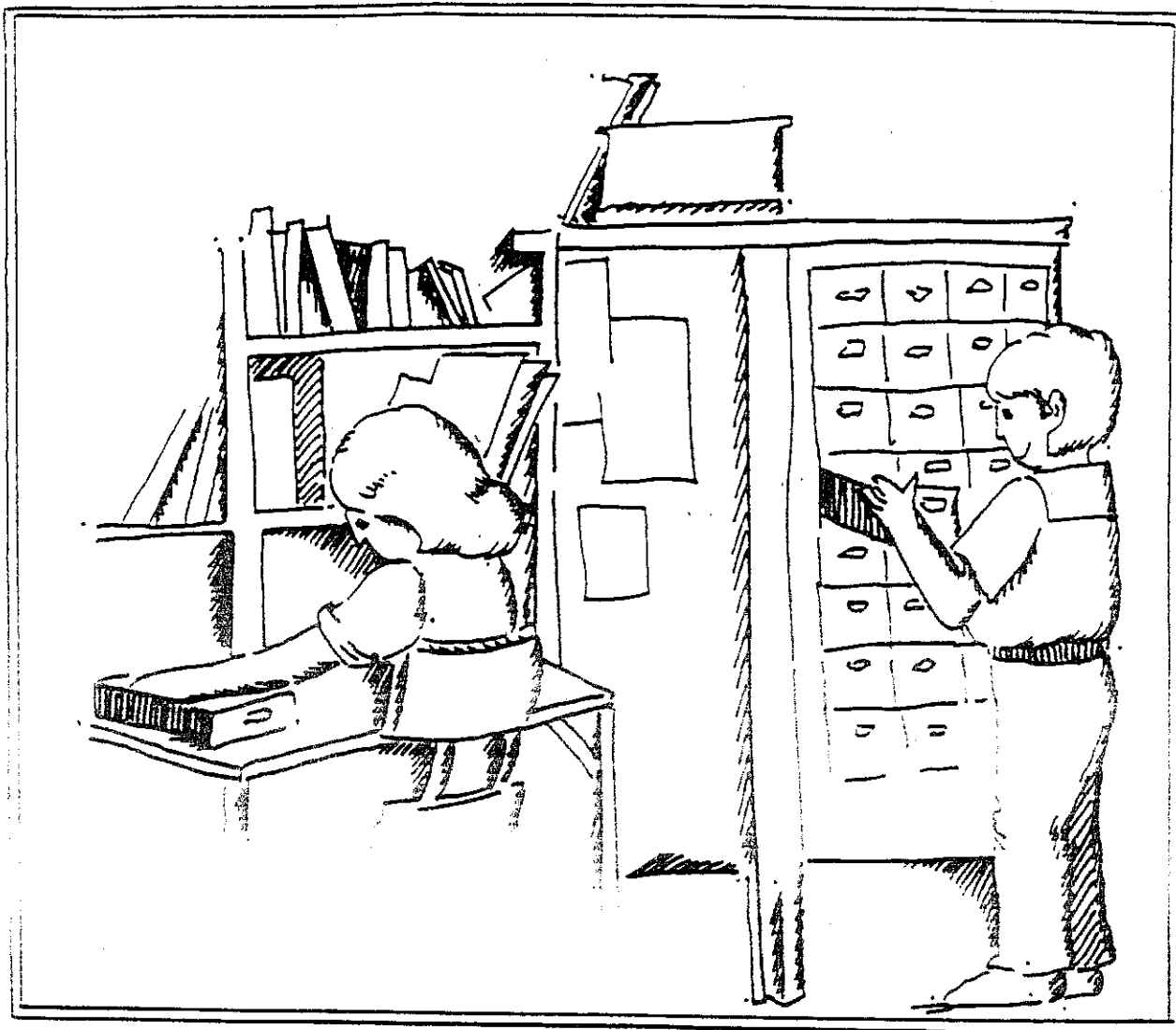
In December, 1950, the school system mapped out a program for civil defense in view of the "existing international situation." Students practiced air raid drills to be used in the event of enemy air attack. Additional (and, in retrospect, ridiculously inadequate) procedures were added to protect children from the still not thoroughly understood effects

of atomic radiation. The following May, the local Office of Civilian Defense reassured Grosse Pointers that their community "would not suffer great harm" in the event of a bombing attack on Detroit. Parents were also instructed not to come to school during an air raid warning, but women were reassured nonetheless that they would play a key role in the event of nuclear attack.

The Beginning of a New Tradition

Finally, it was during this decade that one of Maire's proudest and most enduring traditions began, the annual trip by sixth graders to Washington, D.C. to study famous sites and to observe the American government in action. Every year henceforth save one, students, faculty, and parent chaperones would pose for a group portrait on the steps of the Capitol, and the experience in Washington soon became part of each student's rites of passage from elementary school to junior high. Credit goes to Maire parent, Mrs. William Adams, for originating and implementing this worthwhile activity at Maire in 1954.





Using the New Library Facilities - 1964.

THE THIRD DECADE

1956-1966

Changes in Administration and Faculty

One of the most noteworthy developments of this period came with the retirement in 1962 of Mr. Herbert L. Hobart, the principal who had led the school since its infancy in 1939. At his retirement, he was a 32 year veteran of the school system which he had joined as a high school social science teacher. For some time after leaving Maire, he remained a friend and neighbor to the school at the home he and his wife maintained on Cadieux Road. Mr. John Hammel, who had been the principal of Poupard School since it was built in 1951, became Maire's new administrator.

There were many other new faces on the staff in those years as well. Enrollments continued to grow, classes were large and the building was filled to capacity. Even the small rooms at the southern ends of the corridors on the first and second floors were utilized for smaller but regular class sections. The teaching staff grew accordingly to meet the demands of the extraordinarily high enrollments. In 1962, there were twenty-one members of the staff including part-time specialist teachers. Each year brought more newcomers to Maire: each year the system acquired approximately 75 new or replacement staff, and Maire averaged three new teachers a year between 1958 and 1965. The turnover of staff was not necessarily rapid either: many of the teachers who began their service at Maire in the late '50's and early '60's were still serving their school loyally and well at the time of the school's 50th Anniversary in 1986.

The Expansion and Renovation of the Building

1963 was to be an important year in the evolution of the school building. The year began inauspiciously with an act of vandalism over the Easter weekend which destroyed several windows, but October brought the beginning of construction on a major new addition to Maire.

The addition, which was not completed until September, 1964, brought Maire two new classrooms (a music room equipped with hi-fi and recorder and a fifth grade room), a new enclosed stairway to the third floor on the north end of the building which replaced an old fire escape, and a new conference room for use by specialists located off the northern staircase. At the same time, the old third floor "playroom" was remodelled and converted into an instructional materials center which combined the resources of the existing library (now 6,000 volumes) with collections of records, tapes, filmstrips and study carrels for reading, listening and viewing.

The main office, which had been an architectural afterthought carved out of the original school clinic, was enlarged and provided with work space for the secretary, an expanded reception area, a clinic, a combined storeroom and bookstore, a principal's office and a workroom. It was also refurbished with fresh yellow paint and gold draperies. A kitchen area was added onto the gymnasium. The low bids on the construction of the addition came to roughly \$108,000, and initially the Board balked at paying this much. Finally, they acquiesced in the inevitable and construction began.

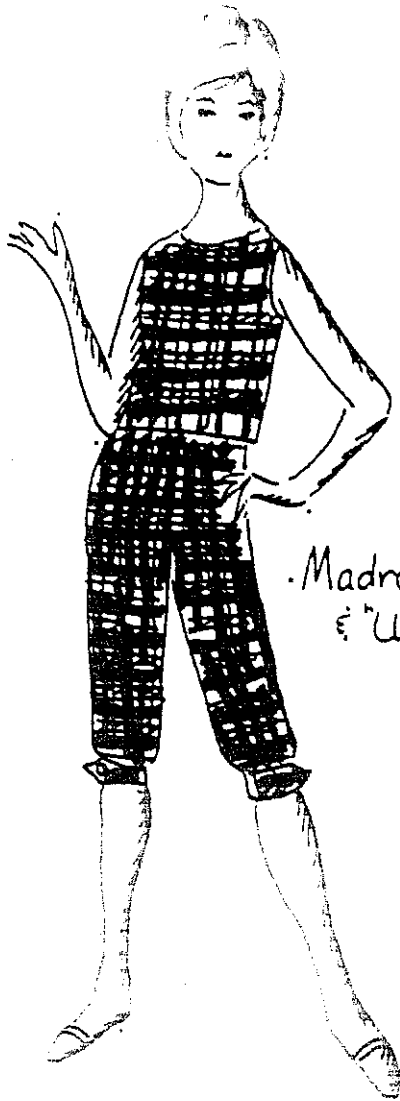
It was hoped that the new addition would eliminate the need to use the small end-of-the-hall rooms as regular classrooms and that this space could be used by part-time speech and reading specialists. When Principal John Hammel finally surveyed the results of the year-long program, he pronounced them "excellent." "We have breathing space and elbow room - at long last!"

Changes in the Curriculum

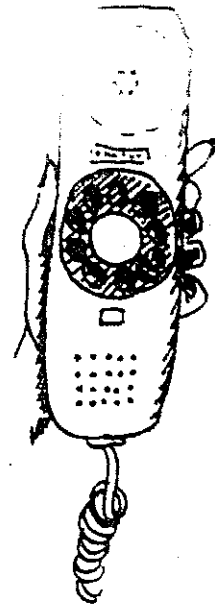
One intriguing innovation, which received considerable publicity in the local press in 1959, was the introduction of French language classes as part of a program by the Board of Education to establish a foreign language program in the elementary schools. Superintendent James W. Bushong recommended on May 11, 1959, that two French classes be scheduled for each elementary school. These classes were to meet for 45 minutes immediately following the regular schoolday and would be available to all students in grades 4, 5 and 6. The Board then authorized the establishment of the program, which was developed in response to an earlier poll of parents in which 95% of the respondents indicated a desire for earlier language instruction in the schools. The majority preference was for the French language.

It is not known whether the system was successful in its search for sufficient numbers of competent French teachers or, indeed, whether it ever implemented the program. But it is indicative in a small way of the mood of the country which, in the wake of Soviet space advances, suddenly wanted stronger language and science instruction for its children.

In 1964, the School Board dropped the Early Admissions Program under which certain students could be admitted to Kindergarten on the basis of "readiness" as indicated by psychological tests, rather than on their chronological age. Henceforth, children were admitted on the basis of age as determined by Michigan statute. The Board felt the success rate of the children involved in this program was not so great that it warranted the continuation of the expensive testing procedure. By doing this, the system got back in step with "better schools throughout the country."



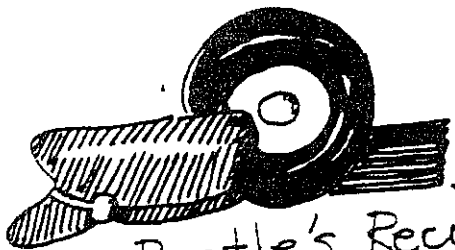
Madras Shell Top
& "Urchin" Pants.
.1963.



Trimline
Telephone.
.1964.



Nylon
Ski Jacket
.1963.



Beatle's Records.
John Lennon Hat.
.1960's.

Showing Concern for Others

Maire teachers continued to foster the qualities of generosity and compassion in their students. Many incorporated charitable projects into the classroom routine. One third grade class in 1957 expressed the true meaning of Christmas by bringing gaily wrapped presents to lonely patients at the United States Public Health Service Hospital. The Red Cross aided them by supplying a list of suitable presents. In 1962, other students brightened the holidays for patients at Eloise, Receiving and Wayne County Hospitals and at the Eventide Residence for the Aging by sending them more than 278 presents. In 1963, the patients at the Harbor Light Center received packages, each with a personal get-well note from a student. The scouting troops at Maire continued their good works as well, although the publicity photos from this period primarily feature promotional ceremonies and fundraising efforts for troop activities.

Maire children, of course, continued to serve their school and their classmates. The Patrol Squad and the Service Club, still sex-segregated, enjoyed successful years. The Green Pennant for pedestrian safety was awarded by the Detroit News several times during the mid-sixties. Early in 1964, new pedestrian routes were established for the Maire district, and these had to be carefully explained to the students in a special assembly by Principal John Hammel and implemented by the Patrol Squad. Other opportunities for school service were found in the library and in the operation of the school bookstore.

A Unique Tradition Continues at Maire

The annual Washington trips continued through this decade without interruption. It had become a tradition that was uniquely Maire's in the Grosse Pointe School System. As enrollment continued to grow, the organization and realization of such a large undertaking grew more complex for the annual chairpersons, from the necessary fundraising to the actual chaperoning of the students. The number of children and adults traveling to the nation's capital rose from 73 in 1957 to 123 in 1966, a far cry from the 56 who made the original journey in 1954.

During the '50's and '60's, the groups traveled by train, usually departing on Thursday afternoon and returning early on the following Sunday. Friday and Saturday were devoted to a marathon of sight-seeing which included visits to the Capitol Building, the Library of Congress, the Bureau of Printing and Engraving, the National Art Gallery, the FBI Building (a perennial favorite of the students), the National Archives, the Washington Monument, the Jefferson and Lincoln Memorials, a private guided tour of the White House, Mount Vernon, Arlington National Cemetery and the various buildings of the Smithsonian Institution.

A new stop was added to this rigorous itinerary in the years following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in November of 1963. In 1964, the Maire entourage placed a memorial wreath at the gravesite of the slain president in Arlington National Cemetery and later groups faithfully continued this pilgrimage.

Another innovation of this period was the decision in 1962 to travel in late October or early November. The purpose of this scheduling change was to avoid the congestion of the spring months when sightseers flocked to the capital in thousands. This was to remain the annual pattern for many years to come.

An Old Tradition is Revived

The country fair staged by the Maire P. T. A. in 1953 was reborn again in the "Maire Fun Faire." Students prepared the publicity for the event in the form of colorful posters and parents volunteered their talents and time on Saturday, May 14, 1966, while crowds of neighborhood children thronged Maire's halls and classrooms which were transformed into booths and game courses and bazaars. The "Maire Faire" was to be revived periodically throughout the years, most recently in May of 1985. It always proved to be a fun and profitable, if exhausting, event.

A New Tradition is Established

When students approached Maire teacher Guido Sabella in the late '50's and complained about the lack of opportunities to perform in dramatic and musical productions, he could not have foreseen that his response would lead the way to the establishment of another institution at Maire, the 5th and 6th grade Christmas Play. Originally based on the story of the "Pied Piper of Hamelin," the production evolved over the years into a sophisticated talent show entitled "Christmas Comes to Hamelin."

In the beginning, the musical portion of the production was rather crude: children simply mimed to the accompaniment of phonograph records. Later, energetic and enthusiastic music instructors took a hand in the production and the musical aspect of the show grew more elaborate. Mr. Sabella's classes have presented "Christmas Comes to Hamelin" continuously, except for a few years in the late '60's and early '70's when Mr. Sabella was teaching at Barnes. In the mid-eighties, the children of the lower grades were still looking forward annually to seeing the "big kids" perform.

Maire and the Cold War World

The years between 1956 and 1966 saw the launching of the Russian satellite Sputnik and the resultant race for space in the United States, the

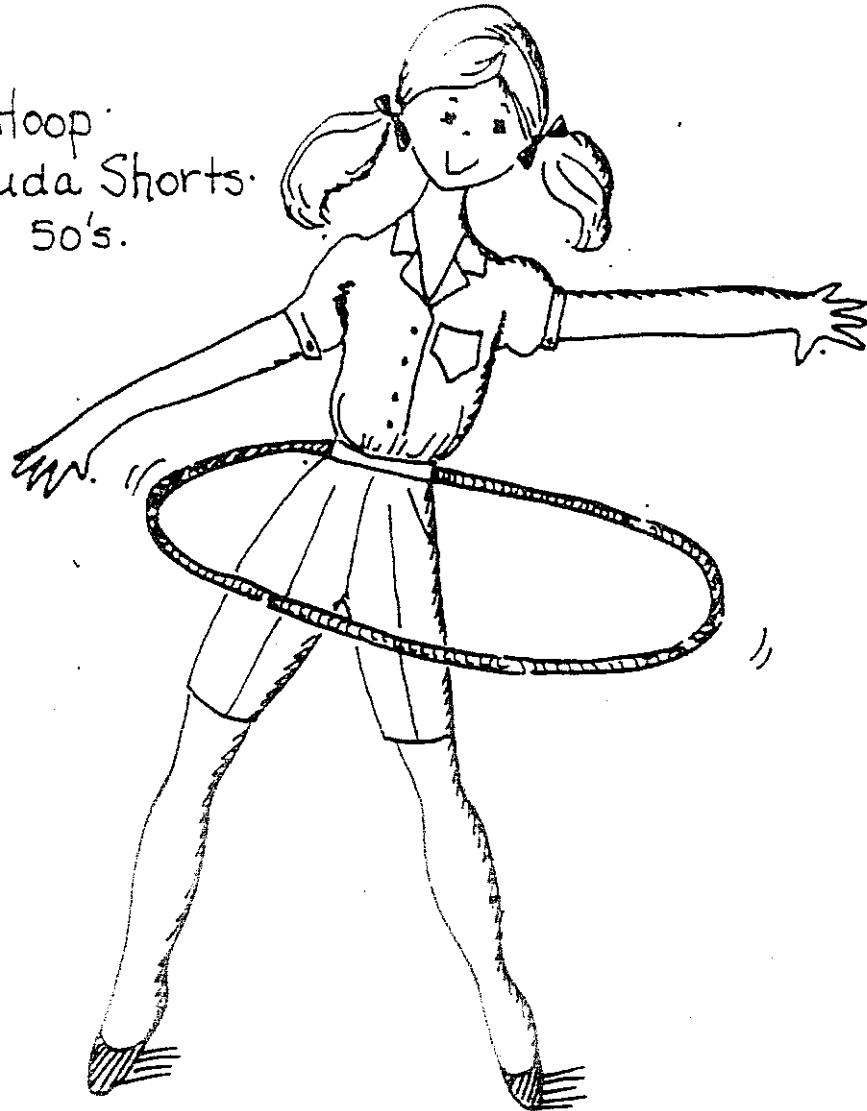
Cuban Missile Crisis, the Bay of Pigs, the erection of the Berlin Wall, the assassination of John F. Kennedy and the subsequent affirmation of our system of government with the orderly transferral of presidential power to Vice President Johnson. It was a decade when cultural fads were as ephemeral as the hula hoop (an activity at which Maire students apparently excelled, if the performance of Debbie Humphreys, who on one occasion revolved her hoop 10,000 times, is anything to judge by) and as enduring as the musical legacy of the Beatles, who swept Detroit with Beatlemania during their visit in September, 1964.

The international tensions of the period, particularly between East and West, manifested themselves intermittently in school activities and community issues. In January of 1962, the Maire P.T.A. offered school parents an opportunity to view a film entitled "Russia Today." There was a general feeling that the confrontations between the United States and Russia had reached a serious point. The spectre of Soviet Russia was so frightening that the ordinary citizen felt a strong need to pierce the Iron Curtain, as well as lift his own veil of ignorance, and learn more about the nature of the Soviet Union, its people and its system of government.

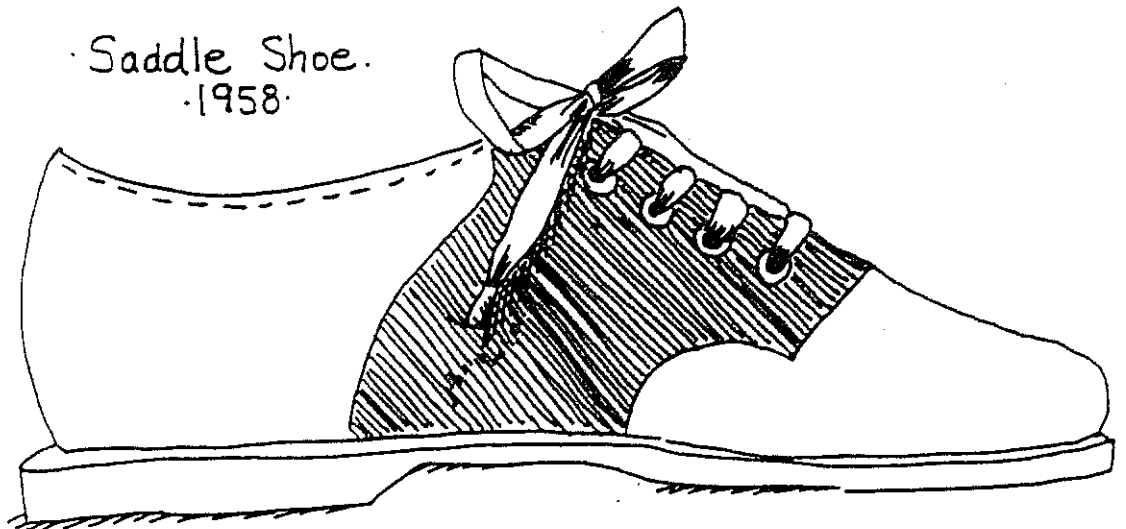
A year later in 1963, the Grosse Pointe Board of Education greeted the production of a new teachers' manual entitled "Teaching American Ideals and About Communism" with enthusiasm. This was the fruit of a full year's work by a public school committee appointed to find ways "to strengthen the educational program." The 87 page pamphlet was hailed as a breakthrough in that it summarized in an orderly fashion "the many ways in which Americanism can be taught and stressed." The document's preface also reflected a feeling that American values and institutions were seriously threatened, not only by the existence of the Soviet Union, but also by subversive forces within American society itself. It contained a clear statement that "schools also have a responsibility to see that our people are informed about the nature and evil of Communism . . . If Americans are thoroughly informed we need have no fear of our nation ever - peaceably - accepting the Communistic philosophy." (original emphasis)

It recommended that all Grosse Pointe boys and girls be taught: (1) to appreciate American ideals and to appreciate being part of the American way of life, (2) to understand the menacing evils of Communistic philosophy, and (3) to do their duty as citizens by denouncing Communism and by openly defending American institutions and culture. It is unclear to what extent this new program was actually implemented at the classroom level. The pamphlet itself admitted that patriotism was already well taught by the Grosse Pointe schools. In retrospect, this manual seems to reflect a momentary faltering of self-confidence and a tendency to underestimate the deep attachment and loyalty most Americans naturally feel for their country.

· Hula Hoop ·
· Bermuda Shorts ·
· Late 50's ·



· Saddle Shoe ·
· 1958 ·



During and after the Cuban Missile Crisis, there was increased concern about enemy attack, and many an American family discussed the need to build a "fallout shelter" or, indeed, actually constructed one. Similarly, the question of civil defense received a great deal of attention on the federal level, and President Kennedy early in his administration directed the Secretary of Defense to canvas the nation to determine the number of buildings available to serve as bomb shelters for fifty or more people.

In response to this survey, the Superintendent of Schools reported in February of 1963 that only a few of the system's school buildings, namely Trombly, Monteith, Parcels and the High School, qualified as air raid shelters under federal guidelines, and that these would need considerable renovation to accommodate significant numbers of citizens. An additional \$25,842 would be needed to modify the buildings in order to shelter 7,149 people. He felt it "was questionable whether the Board could or should attempt to justify the expenditure of school funds to provide public fallout shelters," especially since the expenditures were not "educational" in nature.

The Death of a President

There is no published account of how Maire students reacted to the sudden death of President John F. Kennedy when he was felled by an assassin's bullet on November 22, 1963. But nine out of the fourteen public schools in Grosse Pointe held commemorative events on or about the anniversary of his death. The idea for these commemorations originated with Detroit dentist Dr. Albert C. Howe. He suggested a joint student-teacher project that would include a tree planting ceremony at each school.

The decision to observe the anniversary of the assassination was left up to each school and, on November 20, 1964, a memorial tree was planted on the front lawn of Maire School to the right of the flagpole and to the left of the main entrance. Brief ceremonies in the gymnasium, during which sixth grade students paid tribute to Kennedy, preceded the planting of the living memorial. It is interesting that by 1965, this tree was referred to as the "Presidential" tree rather than as the "Kennedy" tree, as it had been originally, and it was said then to honor all of the nation's chief executives who had been assassinated while in office. This tree was still standing on the Maire grounds in 1986.

Medical Landmarks

In this period, another chapter was written in the story of the triumph of medical science over infantile paralysis which had killed and disabled so many in the years before the development of the vaccine by Dr. Jonas E. Salk in 1955. The quick acceptance of this vaccine by

millions of Americans had led almost immediately to a dramatic drop in polio incidence. "Never before," said a reporter in the Grosse Pointe News of May 22, 1958, "had a major achievement in preventive medicine been executed on so vast a scale in so short a time." In the first year of anti-polio inoculations, there were only 28,985 cases nationally, a 25% drop from the average number of cases during each of the preceding five years. 1957 saw another dramatic drop in incidence. By 1958, the only fear was that public complacency and the failure of the unimmunized to get their shots would lead to a new epidemic. Grosse Pointe's last recorded case of polio was in 1959.

The year 1964, however, saw the development and distribution of a more potent weapon in the war against the polio virus, the new oral vaccine which was called Trivalent, because it contained the three live polio viruses. It was considered far more effective and enduring than the Salk vaccine which used dead polio virus cells.

Dr. Thomas Davies, Pointe Health Commissioner, announced another community polio immunization program to take place on Sunday, April 19 and Sunday, June 14, 1964. Maire was one of the local elementary schools designated as a vaccine administration center. On each of those dates, 5,200 children and adults passed through Maire and received two drops (flavored strawberry) of the oral vaccine, which was served on a small lump of sugar. With the aid of many doctors, nurses, policemen and other volunteers, the successful program immunized almost 53,000 people locally and was dubbed "Operation Sugar Cube." Recipients of the vaccine were asked to contribute 50¢ or more to help defray the cost of the program, but no one was rejected for not making a contribution. Those residents who were unable to avail themselves of the program were encouraged to be immunized by their private physicians, even if they had previously received the Salk injections. Standard use of the oral vaccine had, by 1986, lowered the average annual number of reported cases of polio in the United States to about six.

The early 1960's witnessed another significant medical development, which was to have a profound effect on the lives of school-age children. A measles vaccine was licensed for use in March, 1963. Following a nation-wide immunization effort in 1965-66, the incidence of epidemic measles decreased dramatically. Prior to the introduction of the vaccine, measles primarily attacked children between the ages of five and nine years, and epidemics occurred in urban centers like Detroit every two to five years, with each epidemic lasting three to four months. Measles is a highly infectious disease and was passed rapidly in a school setting. Between 200,000 and 600,000 cases were reported annually in the United States in the pre-vaccine era, so the disease was clearly a disruptive force in the lives of children and the teachers who had to cope with their absences from school.



·Saturday Gym·1970·

THE FOURTH DECADE

1966-1976

Administrative Changes

This decade witnessed the most rapid administrative changes Maire Elementary had ever experienced in its thirty-odd year history. Principal John Hammel left Maire in 1966 to head Monteith School, a position he was to hold until his retirement eleven years later. He was replaced at Maire by John Rohrer, who remained in charge until his replacement by Donald Bassett in 1968.

Mr. Bassett's tenure at Maire is especially remembered for a project he undertook with the students each spring, maple sugaring. Sap was drawn from the large maple which stands on the rear playground between the school building and the Kroger parking lot. The sap was then boiled down and reduced to maple sugar crystals.

Another Bassett innovation was the Saturday Gym program. Bassett first conceived of the idea in 1969 when he found himself coming in to work on Saturdays and bringing his children along with him. His kids had so much fun playing in the gym that he decided to propose a Saturday recreation program for all Maire students. Mr. Bassett also originated the idea of bringing in the school engineer to help maintain order and to assist in cleaning the gym so that it would be ready for use on Monday morning.

While it was Mr. Bassett's idea, it was the Maire P.T.A. which made the program possible and picked up the cost of a rider on the school system's liability insurance. By 1973, the program was well established with between 80 and 120 energetic children supervised by a cadre of roughly 15-20 fathers and mothers. Experience led the parents to devise two sections, one from 9:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. for K-2nd grade students, followed by one from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon for the older children. This system worked well because the younger kids were willing to yield the floor to the older children, but the reverse was not always true.

Saturday Gym activities were varied and ranged from floor hockey to relay races to tumbling exercises, with the action extending out into the main corridor of the building. One parent might do multiple duty as coach, referee and scorekeeper.

In 1973, boys and girls attended the early sessions in roughly equal numbers, while only a few older girls braved the later one. The Women's Movement had, however, permeated Maire to the extent that the Safety Patrol and Service Club were finally made co-ed. Once given the opportunity to help monitor pedestrian safety, the new female guards performed very creditably.

Other P. T. A. Activities

Maire benefited from a very active and enthusiastic group of P. T. A. volunteers in this period. By 1971, Maire parents were deeply involved in enhancing the educational program with enrichment activities. No longer were they content to function solely in a fundraising and social capacity. Besides the Saturday Gym program, parents conducted an extracurricular dramatics club (the kind of activity teachers had sponsored in earlier years) and a creative stitchery program conducted within the classrooms for a short period each year.

Nonetheless, P. T. A. social events, like the annual Ice Cream Social, were important in binding the staff, the students and their parents into a harmonious working unit, and fundraisers were still necessary. One ambitious effort during the 1971-72 school year was the "Maire Aire Faire" held at Three Mile Park, where more than 600 hot dogs, 500 soft drinks and 200 kites were sold to a large and enthusiastic crowd. Also, a White Elephant Sale was held which netted over \$600 to help defray the cost of P. T. A. activities and gifts to the school. The proceeds from the sale of the Maire Mom's Cookbook went toward these same ends. The tri-annual fundraiser, the Maire Faire, was also held regularly during these years.

School Reorganization

If Maire experienced a rapid turnover of principals during this decade, it (like all the elementary schools) also experienced the disruption of having its 6th grade classes transferred to Pierce Junior High School in 1968. This change was made in order to relieve the crowded conditions in the elementary schools where enrollments reached a peak in 1971 and in order to implement the "middle school" educational concept. By the mid-1970's, disenchantment with this arrangement seems to have set in, and falling enrollments among the elementary age population made it possible to move the sixth graders back from the now-congested middle schools into the less crowded environment of the elementary schools.

Weakening of Public Support

Declining enrollments enabled the elementary schools to regain their jurisdiction over the sixth grade, but they were also a cause for concern by administrators and School Board trustees, who had to contend with failed millage initiatives (in 1970 and 1976) or with slim margins of victory (1972), as well as with the threat of declining state aid in 1976.

In this period, they had to resort to threatening teacher layoffs if second millage proposals failed: four Maire staff members were threatened with layoffs in 1976. It was at this time that the Grosse Pointe School System embarked upon long-range planning that would take into consideration the new realities of the declining birth rate.

Educational Trends

This was a period of educational experimentation nationally, when students on all levels were allowed and encouraged to have greater input into the educational programs that served them. The Grosse Pointe system had had "open school" programs in operation at several of its elementary and secondary schools including Defer and Richard for a number of years by the mid-1970's. These had been developed in response to parental demands as well as to the preferences and interests of individual teachers.

In the open education approach, the interests and needs of the students are considered paramount, and the curriculum is structured around these. The teacher, no longer a central authority figure, serves as a facilitator and coordinator of student activities. The goal of open education is exploration and discovery, as opposed to the more traditional transmission of skills and specific information.

By 1975-76, Superintendent James A. Adams described the Grosse Pointe School System as one that combined the best of both the open and traditional approaches to education. He argued that there was "no one best" method of education, although he conceded that the Grosse Pointe system was, on balance, traditional in nature. He advocated for the future maintaining a flexible approach that would take into consideration the needs of students, parents and teachers. He personally believed that the open approach better served the social development and individuality of the student, but that the teaching of basic skills and transmission of specific knowledge were the most important goals of any educational program.

"New math" had been a feature of American education since the early 1960's but, by the early 1970's, disenchantment with its methods and results led to a strong reaction against it. One group of Maitre fifth graders expressed their irreverence towards "new math" in a flippant parody of the "Gettysburg Address" which was published in the Grosse Pointe News on March 16, 1972:

The Math Address

Four math books and seven pages ago
our teachers brought forth in this classroom,
a new math book conceived in liberty and dedi-
cated to the proposition that all math books are
created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great math test,
testing whether that class, or any class so con-
ceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We
are met in a great test field of that book. We
have come to dedicate a portion of that math

book as a final testing place for all those wrong answers. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

But in a larger sense we cannot do our work, we cannot answer these problems, we cannot do the test. The brave kids living and dead who struggled here have done the work faster than our poor power to add or subtract. The school will little note nor long remember what I am saying here, but it can never forget what they did here.

It is for us the survivors rather to be dedicated to the unfinished work which the teachers have assigned. It is rather for us the survivors to be dedicated to the great test remaining before us, that from these honored kids we take increased devotion to the cause for which they gave one last measure of their time . . . for math, math, math.

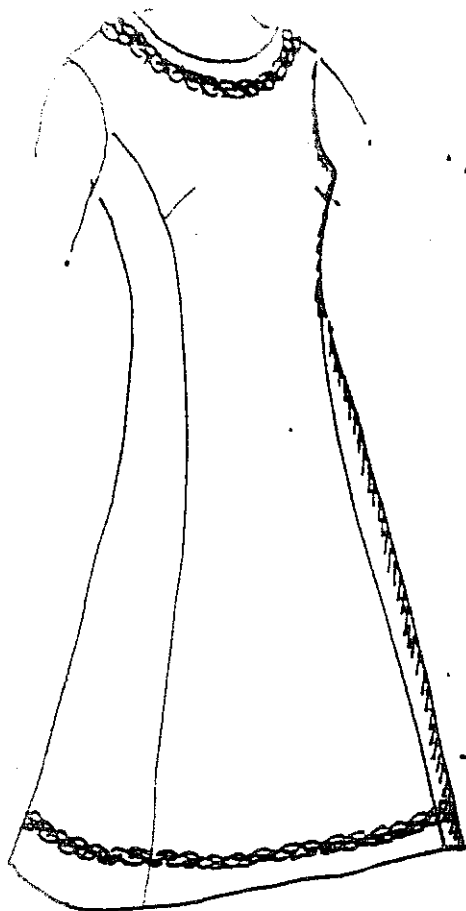
That we here highly resolve that these dead kids shall not have died in vain, and that this school under math shall have a new birth of math and that this math of the kids, for the kids, and by the teacher shall perish from the school.

By 1976, "new math" had been virtually abandoned by the Grosse Pointe Public School System. Educators were once again stressing mastery of "life skills" rather than general mathematical principals.

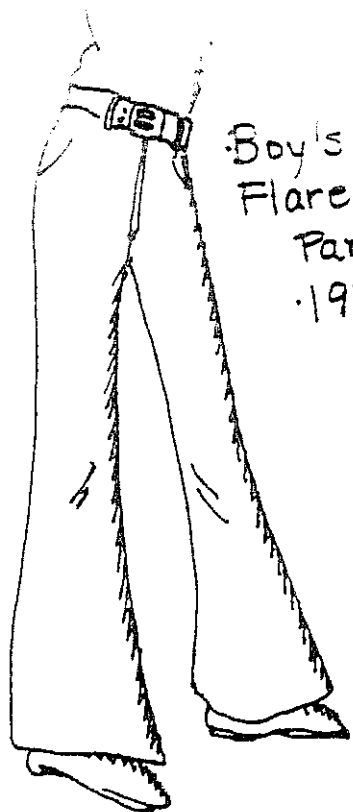
Special Education

Another significant development in this period was the phenomenal growth of special education programs in the Grosse Pointe system. Following the passage of the Michigan Mandatory Special Education Act in 1971, special education programs became the fastest growing segment of public education thanks to funding from federal, state and county grants. By 1976, the program had grown to serve more than 2,000 Pointe students both public and private.

Maire students who needed remedial reading instruction or speech therapy now received help two or more times a week by specially trained instructors or therapists. Social workers were available to assist students and their families with any problems that might arise, and school psychologists tested students regularly. Severely physically, mentally or emotionally impaired residents of the district were educated in special facilities separate from Maire, but otherwise never before in the history of the school had Maire students and their teachers had such ready access to the specialized skills of so many support professionals.



·A-line Shift·
·1965·

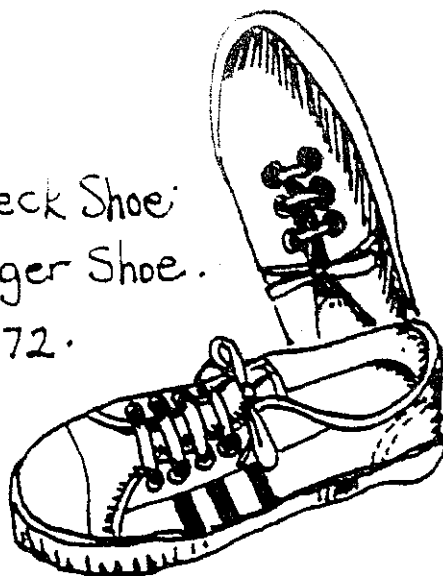


·Boy's
Flare leg
Pants·
·1970·

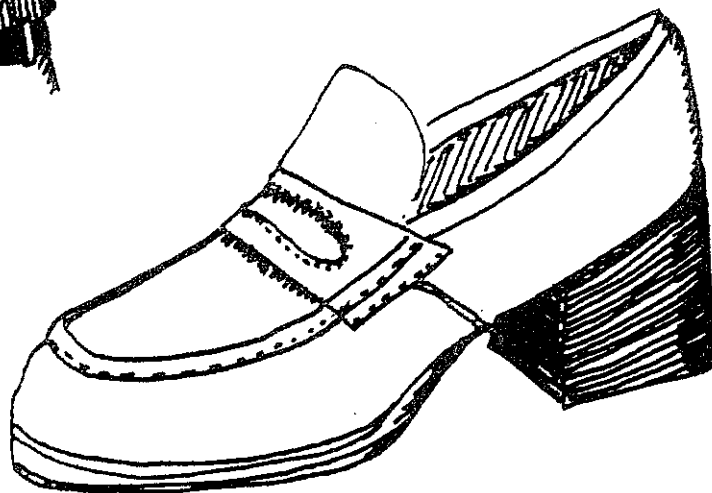


·Mini Coat·
·1968·

· Canvas Deck Shoe ·
· Canvas Jogger Shoe ·
· 1972 ·



· Wide Collar Shirt ·
· Wide Tie ·
· 1972 ·



· Men's Platform Sole Loafer ·
· 1973 ·

More Advances in the War Against Communicable Childhood Diseases

Rubella (or "German Measles") virus was propagated as early as 1962, but it was not until the middle of 1969 that it was first licensed in the United States. Prior to the introduction of the vaccine, the rubella virus attacked children and adolescents most commonly, and localized major epidemics occurred at six to nine year intervals. Pandemics occurred in 1941-44 and 1963-65.

Another common childhood illness was mumps for which accurate statistics are not available because it was not a reportable disease. Children in the five to ten year old age group were most commonly infected before the introduction of the mumps vaccine in December, 1967. Since widespread use of the vaccine in the early 1970's, relatively fewer young children have suffered from this disease.

By the mid-seventies, it was more and more possible for a child to have a perfect attendance record at Maire School.

Other Health Concerns

Dental health was still stressed at Maire. At least once during the fourth decade, the Health Education Council of Grosse Pointe made available to K, 2, 4, 6 and 8 students a cleaning, fluoridation and dental hygiene program.

Programs were also implemented throughout the school system to deal with the higher incidence of alcohol and illegal drug use by Grosse Pointe students. Emphasis was placed on educating students about the potentially harmful effects of these substances.

Witness to History

With the first full term of office of President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1964-68 came the culmination of the civil rights movement, the War on Poverty and major civil disruptions that took the form of urban riots. The spring of 1968 brought the renewed threat of further civil disorder in the wake of the assassinations of civil rights leader Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and of Democratic presidential candidate Senator Robert Kennedy, who were killed within just a few months of each other.

Maire activities were touched by these events in small but concrete ways. The fifth grade trip to Washington was postponed due to the Poor People's March on Washington which was staged in November of 1967. A combined group of fifth and sixth graders were able to make the trip the following year and, when they did, they found a new stop had been added to the traditional itinerary, the gravesite of Senator Robert Kennedy.

Maire bore witness more directly to a small chapter in the final days of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., who had dedicated his life to achieving equal rights for American minorities. The trustees of the Grosse Pointe Board of Education held a regular meeting in the gymnasium at Maire on February 12, 1968. After regular business had been concluded, there followed much discussion by the trustees and audience of the request by the local Human Relations Council for permission to use school facilities for an address to be given by Dr. King in March. There had been a longstanding policy on the part of the Board to allow the use of school buildings by community groups.

In the course of the discussion, one trustee sought to block the use of the high school gymnasium. He presented what he called "factual evidence" to substantiate his earlier claim that "Dr. King was not the apostle of non-violent acts he is purported to be." The trustee also emphasized that local police chiefs were concerned about the impending visit. Assistant Superintendent Joseph Spagnoli replied that the concern felt by and precautions taken by the police were normal in view of the national importance of the figure they had undertaken to protect.

A standing-room-only crowd and tense atmosphere greeted the Board of Education at its next regular meeting on March 11, 1968. This meeting, too, was held in the gymnasium of the Maire School. The same trustee again made a motion to rescind the permit issued to the Human Relations Council for speaker Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The motion was defeated by a 5-2 vote.

A heated discussion of the matter ensued. It was eventually established that the Human Relations Council had indeed fulfilled all its requirements as a renter of school property, that the Human Relations Council had proper personal liability coverage, that the speech would cause no postponement of school activities, and that the Human Relations Council would cover all extra police costs as well as the first \$500 should any property damage occur as a result of the speech.

As it happened, Dr. King did come and lecture to a capacity audience of 2,700 Grosse Pointers who filled the high school's gymnasium on the evening of March 14, 1968. Although he was greeted with a standing ovation, some 200 pickets demonstrated against him in front of the building, and throughout his speech, he was interrupted by members of the ultra-rightwing group "Breakthrough" who shouted derogatory epithets such as "traitor." Dr. King, in each instance, treated the hecklers with a courtesy they did not return.

Dr. King then remarked that he had discovered the theme for his Lenten sermon in the events of that evening. He would preach on the New Testament text, "Forgive them, for they know not what they do." At the conclusion of his speech, he was given another standing ovation.

Dr. King's remark to his detractors in Grosse Pointe gained new and haunting significance when, only three weeks later, he was killed by an assassin's bullet in Memphis, Tennessee. Grosse Pointers were stunned by the news of their recent guest's death, and they joined the nation in mourning the loss of this leader on April 4, 1968. Flags were flown at half-staff on all public buildings, and the public schools all stopped for a silent tribute to Dr. King on the Tuesday morning following his death. The churches of Grosse Pointe joined together for a Memorial Service on Palm Sunday, and 200 mourners placed a floral tribute to Dr. King at the base of the flagpole at Grosse Pointe High School. Many more silently rededicated themselves to work for the improvement of human relations.

Earth Day Observances

In this decade, the ecological awareness of Americans was being raised in a variety of ways. Grosse Pointe had been personally touched by the problem of pollution when local beaches were first closed in the 1940's due to sewage contamination.

Earth Day, first held on April 22, 1970, was the idea of Senator Gaylord Nelson. It was dedicated to educating all Americans about serious environmental issues. An all-out national effort was made to reach students at every level, and Grosse Pointe schools planned a variety of activities in observance of the occasion, ranging from day-long "teach-ins" to local clean-up campaigns by individual classes. Other student groups collected unreturnable bottles and cans and returned them to the manufacturers. Still other groups were taught how properly to dispose of DDT and other common household insecticides and were taught the hazards of using non-biodegradable detergents.

Most of the Grosse Pointe elementary schools appear to have participated in some form of Earth Day activity. This one day of observance eventually spawned various community-wide conservation efforts that persisted for a number of years.

Schools and the Energy Crisis

President Richard M. Nixon addressed the nation with a televised speech on November 7, 1973, in which he brought home to every American the serious meaning of the national energy crisis brought on by the Arab oil embargo. In this speech, he outlined a series of steps to be taken to curb the national consumption of oil, gas and electricity.

Prior to the President's address, the Grosse Pointe School Board had already begun discussion of measures that could be taken by the school system to reduce energy use. Conservation methods proposed included: (1) maximizing the use of school buildings during off-school

hours and (2) making alterations in hall and exterior lighting at night, on weekends and during holiday periods.

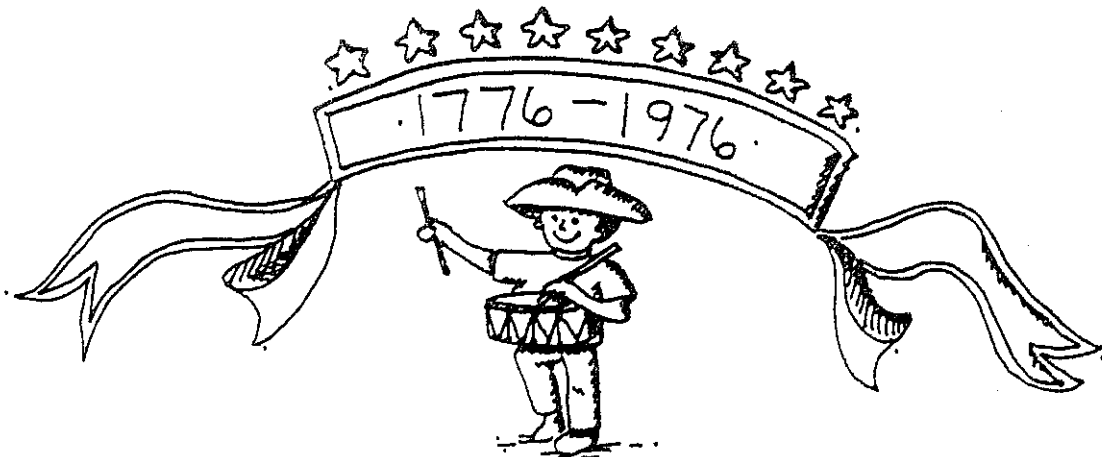
Five of the system's schools, including Barnes, Monteith, Ferry, Defer and Pierce, were heated exclusively by oil, and plans were made for placing their students in alternate facilities should the crisis become acute. Maire's continuing operation was not threatened at this time because it was not entirely dependent upon oil fuel. Later in November, 1973, the Board also considered the option of shutting down all of the schools for a longer period than usual during the Christmas vacation in order to conserve fuel costs.

The Bicentennial of the United States

At the end of Maire's fourth decade, the United States of America celebrated its two hundredth birthday. This was the occasion for much rejoicing and celebration across the nation, and Grosse Pointe was no exception. Since nobody enjoys birthdays more than children do, the schools provided a natural focal point for many of the local bicentennial festivities.

A system-wide celebration took place from April 5th to 9th, 1976. Special events geared to stir the patriotic impulses of every child were scheduled for each day. Daily assemblies, balloon launches, historic murals, dress-up days, flag-raising, patriotic films, American craft fairs, song fests and historical announcements over the public address systems were typical elementary school activities. Most of the Maire students' efforts went into the production of an operetta, "My Country 'Tis of Thee," which was presented on Wednesday evening, April 7, 1976, in the school gymnasium.

Thus, Maire's fortieth anniversary year began on an upbeat note, refreshing after the difficult years overshadowed by civil disturbances, political assassinations, a costly and controversial war in Vietnam, Watergate and the resignations of a vice-president and president in disgrace, and the debilitating experience of the oil crisis. It felt good to rejoice in the simple fact of America's continuing existence.



THE FIFTH DECADE

1976-1986

A Threat to Maire's Continuing Existence

The single most important fact about Maire in its fifth decade is that it almost ceased to exist as a neighborhood elementary school. Declining enrollments had been a cause of concern since the early 1970's for Grosse Pointe educators, who had grown accustomed to the large classes and crowded facilities of the baby boom era. By 1977, the census report indicated that the system had lost about 20% of its students since 1970.

In April of 1978, School Board members decided (in view of the declining enrollments) to commission a study of the long-term utilization of school buildings. For the short term, they were committed to keeping all existing schools open through 1978-79. The following December, on the recommendation of Superintendent William Coats, they decided to allow all buildings to remain open at least two more years through 1981, although they were to continue to discuss the possibility of some eventual closings. The postponement of the closing issue at this time was due to apprehension about the high cost of providing transportation to the displaced students of the closed schools and was also influenced by negative parental and neighborhood response.

By September of 1980, enrollments had dropped further to the levels of the mid-1950's (about 8,705 students, a loss of 36% since 1971), and substantial reductions were predicted for the next three years as well. By January of 1981, the closing issue was again at the top of the School Board's agenda. Although Superintendent Coats continued to advise that closings be avoided and that the emptier buildings be used to house expanded facilities for art, libraries, music and the gifted, he reluctantly proposed a plan of his own to: (1) close Mason, Defer and Barnes, (2) move 6th graders into the middle schools, and (3) move 9th graders there as well.

By May of 1982, most of the work had been completed on the school closing study by the citizens' committee chaired by Mr. Edward Deeb. Rumors were flying fast and thick in the community about which of the schools were to be closed. In January, 1983, the citizens' panel advised the Board to close down one middle school, to redistrict or consolidate the elementary schools and to move 6th graders into the middle schools. They suggested that 240 students should be the minimum enrollment for each elementary school. Public hearings were held on the subject during the spring months.

On April 11, 1983, Superintendent Brummel announced his own closing plan. The first phase involved: (1) moving 6th graders into the

middle schools and (2) closing Mason, Defer, Kerby and Barnes in the fall of 1984. The middle schools would, for the most part, absorb the displaced students. A tentative second phase would: (1) close Ferry, Trombly and Richard and send their students into the middle schools and (2) move current middle schoolers into the high schools where grades 7-12 would be combined. The only elementary schools to remain open under this plan would be Poupard, Monteith and Maire. This plan received strong support from Board President Dorothy Kennel, who found it "necessary to preserve programs." Trustee Roger Dalby pointed out that the plan would result in a system of mega-schools with only three elementaries and two high schools by 1990.

Parents voiced strong opposition to Brummel's proposal at public hearings and began to organize and to expose the logistical weaknesses of the plan. As a result, the trustees asked Brummel to delay his final recommendation until October in order to allow for more parental input and to permit the trustees time to study the plan.

In August, before many Grosse Pointers had returned from their summer vacations, Brummel ventured a second plan: (1) to close Maire, Mason and Barnes, (2) to close Pierce, and (3) to move the 6th graders into the middle schools. Parental protests grew more organized and vocal through the fall months.

In response to parental pressure and nearly insurmountable transportation problems, Brummel's final recommendation in October, 1983, was much reduced. He asked that: (1) Barnes be closed, (2) that 6th graders be moved into the middle schools, and (3) that some Defer students be transferred to Trombly. On November 11, 1983, the School Board voted 6-1 to approve the first two recommendations.

Maire had come through the great school closing wars not entirely unscathed, but basically intact - fortunately, as it turned out, since a leveling of the enrollment occurred in 1984, and higher than expected numbers of students in 1985 led to the hiring of extra teachers. That year's 4th Friday count revealed 222 more students system-wide than had been projected by the school administration. 1986 enrollments exceeded projections too.

New Principals

So Maire did survive its fifth decade despite the loss of its sixth grade classes, and twice during those years it experienced a change in leadership. When Principal Donald Bassett left in 1978 to administer Pierce Middle School, he was replaced by Mr. Lee Warras, who served as principal until the assignment of Mr. Jay Flowers to the school in 1984. At this time, Mr. Warras became the principal of Kerby School with responsibilities at Brownell as well.

The replacement of Warras by Flowers was part of a system-wide reshuffling of administrators under a sweeping reorganization plan instituted by Superintendent Kenneth Brummel shortly before his departure from the system in 1984. Under the plan, Maire also lost a part-time administrative position, that of the first assistant to the principal. Of the changes he ordered, Brummel said, "I'm one who firmly believes principals should move around from time to time. It gives them and the teachers they lead a fresh perspective and encourages them to approach problems with new concepts."

Fresh Concepts at Maire

By the time of the school's fiftieth anniversary, Mr. Flowers had introduced many educational innovations at Maire. One of these was a fifth grade social studies project which he had already pioneered at Defer. Beginning in 1984-85, both fifth grade sections participated in Mini-Society, a program developed and patented by UCLA professor Dr. Marilyn Kourilsky to teach economics to grade-schoolers.

Under this program, students are encouraged to develop their own nation, flag, monetary system and economy complete with the development, advertisement and sale of products. Students are required to live by the choices they make for their society. Teachers Guido Sabella and Ronald Ferguson were specially trained during a four day seminar in the techniques required to teach the program, the costs of which were split by the school system and a sponsoring business. One of the hardest things for the teacher to learn was to be a member of the society and not its manager.

Besides gaining first-hand experience with economics, the students used reading, writing and math skills in working on this project. At the end of the program, they were asked to review and analyze their experiences and to learn from their errors.

Olympics of the Mind

Mr. Flowers had established a successful extracurricular Olympics of the Mind program at Defer, and felt that Maire students would benefit from such a program as well. At Defer, the program had been organized and coached by parents interested in developing creativity and problem-solving skills in their children. At Maire, the program was to be heavily dependent on both the efforts of volunteer parents and on those of its high ability teachers.

The Olympics of the Mind program started in 1978 when 28 middle and high schools met for competition in creative problem-solving at Glassboro State College in New Jersey. Six years later, there were

1,000 teams from the United States, Canada and Mexico competing against each other in various problem-solving exercises.

Maire's teams were remarkably successful in the school's first years of participation in the program. In both 1985 and 1986, Maire students performed well in regional competitions and went on to take top prizes in the state competitions at Lansing. By working together as a team after school and on weekends for more than three months, these students were able to brainstorm, execute and demonstrate the solution to a complex problem without the help of any adult. Maire was justly proud of her new champions!

Young Authors Program

Another academic program Mr. Flowers encouraged at Maire was the Young Authors Program, which was hosted each spring by a different elementary school. Several participants were chosen from each Maire class to attend the annual conference along with 300 other Grosse Pointe students. The students could choose from a wide array of workshops led by over twenty presenters on a variety of subjects ranging from cartooning to word processing to poetry to journalism to song writing. They also had the opportunity to hear talks by such distinguished authors of children's literature as Alfred Slote and Trinka Hakes Noble.

Noon Hour Enrichment

Soon after his arrival at Maire, Mr. Flowers threw his full support behind a proposal by a Maire parent to establish a Noon Hour Enrichment program. This program was implemented by November of 1984 and offered students interesting alternative noon-time activities during the winter months. During the first year, the program offered students a choice of drawing, German, Junior Great Books and Table Games. In the second year of its operation, French, Printmaking, Science, Future Problem Solving and computer classes were added to the roster. All of these classes were taught by mothers who volunteered their expertise and at least one hour's time each week to the program.

Increasing Parental Involvement

With Mr. Flower's encouragement, Maire parents were now involved in a big way in enhancing the educational program. Some parental involvement had, of course, existed prior to his arrival at Maire. Early enrichment activities were, like the later ones, funded and supported by the P.T.O. which also facilitated the recruitment of parent volunteers.

The older enrichment programs included the Stitchery and the "Picture Lady" programs. Since 1980, Maire parents had been affiliated

with the Metropolitan Detroit "Picture Lady" Program sponsored by the Birmingham/Bloomfield Art Association. Under this program, trained parent volunteers entered the classrooms on a regular basis to introduce the children to the works of a major artist. Thus, it provided a means of offering Maire students a good art appreciation program and an introduction to the history of art.

Another important P.T.O. enrichment activity which began in the late 1970's was called the Supplemental Environmental Studies Program and was staffed by about six Maire parents. They sponsored activities such as lectures by the supervisor of the Belle Isle Nature Center which exposed the children to undomesticated wild animals. The program also introduced students to important environmental issues and taught them the basics of conservation by sponsoring aluminum can collections and paper drives. In this way, it encouraged the habit of recycling limited resources. Parents also tended the Nature Center located to the south of the building and sponsored visits by the Upland Hills Farm and the Living Science Foundation.

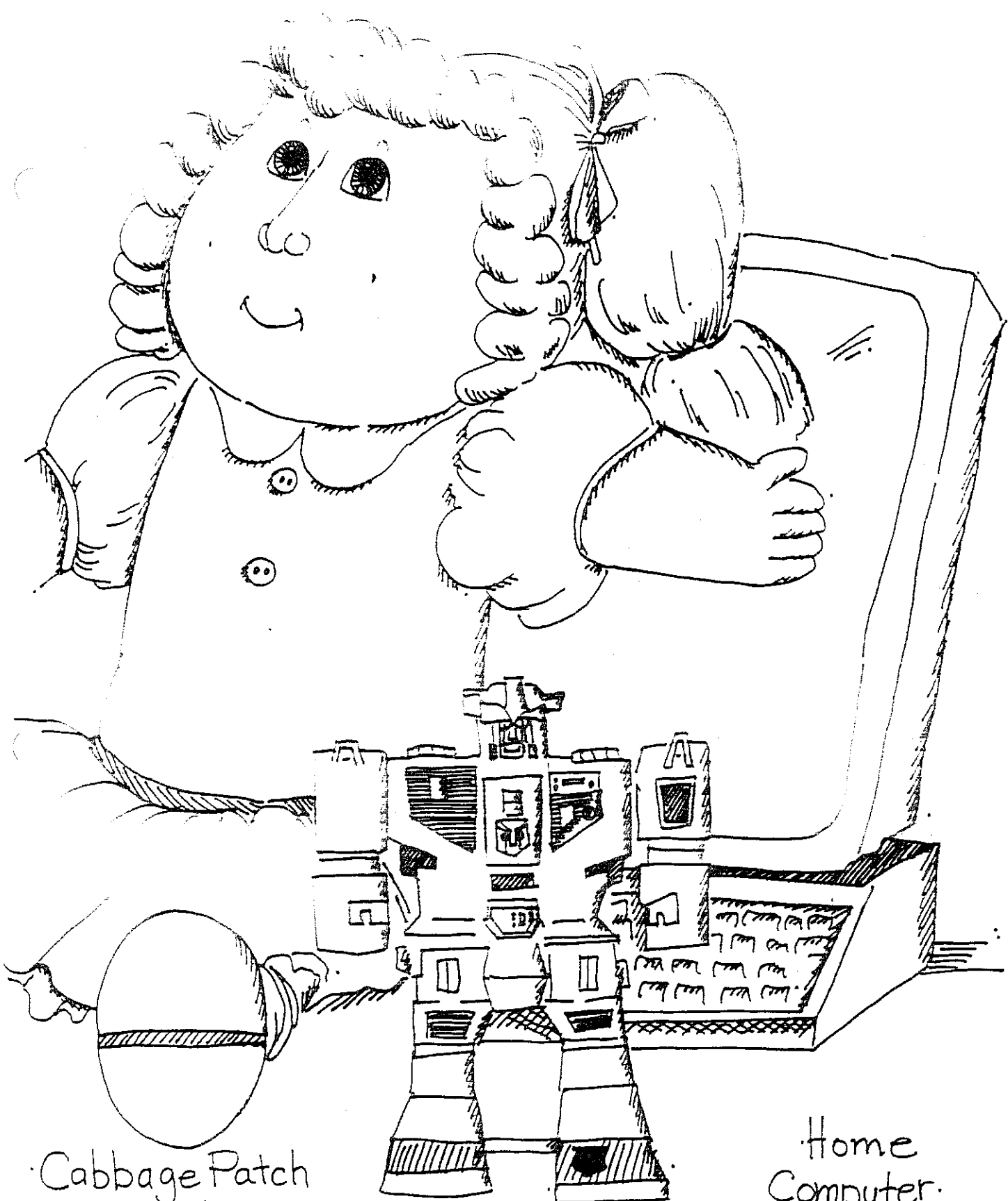
Continuing parental interest in science education led to the establishment in 1984-85 of the Maire Science Room and the Computer Program in 1985-86. The Science Room was outfitted by a group of parents in an unused classroom of the school. Eventually, this was to become the locus for regular science instruction by classroom teachers in conjunction with a visiting science consultant who spent one day a week at the school.

The Computer Program developed out of the desire of one Maire parent to centralize the school's computer resources in a single room and, with the help of many other volunteer mothers, to offer all of Maire's students a regular program in computer science. In 1986, this program was still run entirely by parent volunteers, but it was fully integrated into the school curriculum and conducted during class hours.

New Developments in the Elementary Curriculum

In the years between 1976 and 1986, the elementary curriculum underwent major scrutiny. Superintendent James Adams undertook the task of reorganizing and updating the entire school curriculum in 1974 and released a definitive report on the K-6 programs in October of 1976. At that time, he stated that all programs had been updated "in conformity with an activity centered inductive philosophy of education," which would require some teacher in-service retraining and the introduction of new texts, particularly in the language arts area.

In practical terms, the new curriculum meant that "new math" was abandoned and that basic math skills were to be stressed. The



Cabbage Patch
Doll.

Transformer.

Home
Computer.

system was also now committed to the teaching of metrics, although the following year it would grow more cautious about precipitously abandoning the teaching of the old American measurement system. The science program would use an activities-oriented method to teach students to observe, describe, interpret and draw conclusions. The Orff music program, which utilized "mistake proof" instruments, would be adopted. In 1984, another report on the elementary curriculum recommended that "computer literacy" be stressed and called for the reorganization of the old TAG (Talented and Gifted) program into a more selective high ability program.

When state cuts in aid to school districts were threatened by the Milliken administration in 1980, the most obvious targets were state-funded programs like special education. Serious cut-backs began in 1981 at the same time that declining enrollments made certain special education classes too small to operate. By January of 1985, Director of Special Education Dr. Claire Hunt was looking for ways to economize and streamline her department which was, at that point, the third-highest staffed in the system.

These departmental cuts coincided with the decision to "mainstream" educable impaired students. In May of 1985, the Board of Education approved the establishment of classrooms for severely multiply impaired and severely mentally impaired students and an elementary resource room for educable mentally impaired and visually impaired students. This would allow the district to serve students locally who had previously been educated outside of the community. Furthermore, the educable mentally impaired and visually impaired were to be assigned to regular classrooms whenever possible for academic work at their own level. The stimulation provided by the regular classroom was thought to improve the performance of these students.

In 1985-86, Maire was selected to house the elementary resource classroom for the system, and many Maire students were exposed for the first time in their lives to the wonders of the Braille method. Old and new students began to learn from and about each other.

In 1984-85, a pilot all-day Kindergarten program was tested at Ferry and was very well received. This program was developed in response to the increasing need of large numbers of working mothers for extended care of their children and as a solution to the problem of unused classroom space in the system. The following year, the program was implemented at Defer as well. As of 1986, Maire did not offer a full day Kindergarten program, but a number of the district's children attended the program at Defer.

Concern for Child Safety

Child safety became increasingly a cause for concern for both

parents and schools in the late 1970's and early 1980's. Child abuse and abduction had received considerable attention in the national media during this period.

In response to mounting concerns in the community about the issue of child safety, P.T.A./P.T.O. representatives, in conjunction with the Youth Services Divisions of the local police forces, established in April of 1977 the Emergency "E" program. As a result, all Grosse Pointe schools recruited individuals within their districts who volunteered to display the red "E" sign in the windows of their homes and promised to provide safe houses where children could go for help in the case of an emergency. Police departments also volunteered time, materials and personnel to assist schools like Maire in carrying out fingerprinting programs so that parents could keep permanent records to use in the event of a child's disappearance.

In January of 1986, the public schools supplemented their own safety instruction programs by inviting representatives of the KENNY Foundation to present slide presentations which taught students safety with strangers. Maire students were among those who benefited from this program.

Mental Health

The P.T.O. continued to sponsor events which promoted childhood mental health, and indeed there was increased concern in this period about the effects of childhood stress and low self-esteem. The P.T.O. served the community by providing parents with lectures and seminars, which taught them to deal with child-rearing problems in a constructive way.

In February of 1985, the Trombly P.T.O. invited the parents of Maire, Defer and Pierce schools to a program presented by David R. Groves, Ph.D., who stressed the importance of high self-esteem in both parent and child. He was later invited to offer a full series of seminars at Maire School.

In the spring of 1986, a lecture by nationally known writer and lecturer David Elkind was sponsored by the public school system and open to community parents. Dr. Elkind spoke on the problems of the modern "hurried" child who is pressured by parents and society to achieve and behave in ways inappropriate to his age.

Medical Hope for the Future

At the time of Maire's fiftieth anniversary, periodic waves of chicken pox (or varicella) were still sweeping through the student population. The estimated incidence of chicken pox in the United

States in the mid-1980's was three million cases per year. Incidence rose each year in September with the opening of school and would peak in the spring months. Classroom contact was the major cause of propagation of the disease.

Live attenuated varicella vaccine was developed in Japan in the early 1970's. Since that time, there had been extensive testing both in Japan and in the United States of what appeared to be a safe and effective vaccine. In 1986, most experts believed that the vaccine would soon be licensed for use as part of the "MMR" (Measles, Mumps, Rubella) vaccine, thus making it a "VMMR" vaccine. It was fully expected that this new vaccine would dramatically reduce the incidence of chicken pox.

The Latchkey Program

In the late 1970's and early 1980's, more and more Grosse Pointe children came from families where both parents were employed at full-time jobs outside of the home. They, as well as working single parents, were especially in need of child care assistance in the hour directly before school began and in the period between 3:15 p.m. and 6:00 p.m.

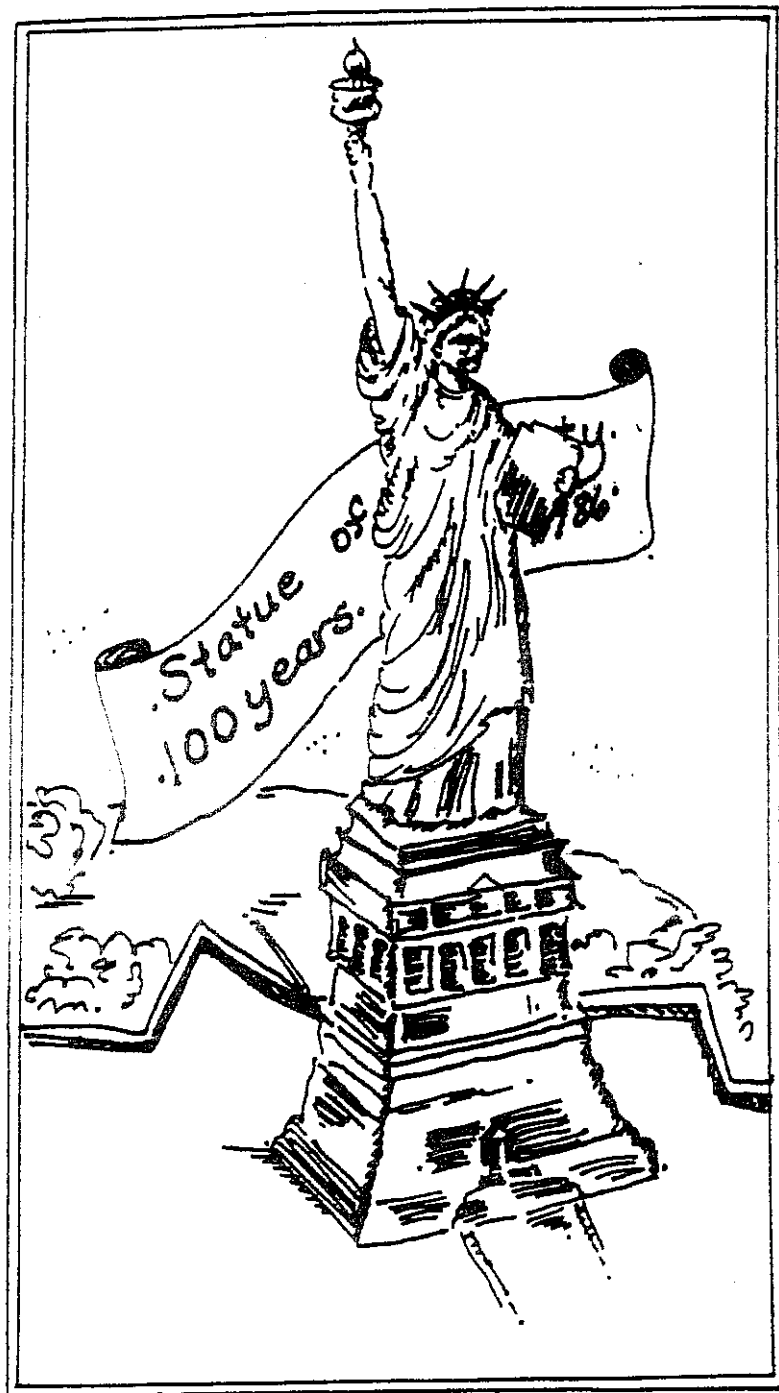
It was in response to the needs of these parents that Defer Principal Dr. Sally Bell originally established the system's first Latchkey program in the fall of 1979. The term "latchkey" was derived from the image of a child wearing housekeys around his neck to school. Dr. Bell and her successor, Jay Flowers, strongly felt that such children should remain in an educational setting, rather than return home to an empty house.

By 1985, each of the public elementary schools, including Maire, had a Latchkey program. In 1984, the State's Attorney General ruled that Latchkey programs operated by the schools must meet Department of Social Services requirements for licenses. By January, the system had filed application for the licensing of its programs, as well as requests for certain exemptions from DSS requirements that were deemed inappropriate in a school setting. The programs were finally licensed by the State at the end of the 1985-86 school year.

Typical latchkey sessions combined quiet times spent over table games, books, homework or television with more active periods of play on the playground or in the gym. A standard hourly fee was charged for use of the program.

Building and Grounds

The Maire building, so sturdily constructed in the 1930's, survived the ravages of its first fifty years in fine shape with the help of its dedicated head engineers and hard-working custodial staff. In the



·Happy Birthday Lady Liberty· 1886-1986·

last decade, it experienced a few minor repairs and a major addition to its grounds.

In January of 1979, the school system authorized a thorough search of all school buildings in order to pinpoint the locations of asbestos. This was done in view of the proved cancer-causing properties of this substance, which was commonly used in the mid-1940's until 1973 to fireproof and insulate walls and pipes and to strengthen cement and plastics. It was thought that each school contained some asbestos, but that in most instances it was covered or sealed and provided no hazard. At any rate, an investigation by the EPA in the spring of 1985 found all the system's buildings (including Maire) to be in compliance with federal asbestos regulations.

In 1980, the School Board allotted \$26,000 for roof repair work on Maire. But a far more noticeable and more generally appreciated alteration to the property came in the fall of 1983 with the addition of two new wooden playscapes, gifts of the Maire P.T.O. These were to become the focal points for much playground activity in the years ahead.

After February of 1977, Maire's halls and classrooms, relatively costly to heat, became cooler than they had been. For at that time, the Grosse Pointe schools began to participate in a "Dial Down" plan and to do their part in conserving fuel by setting thermostats at 65°. The system had been asked by Michigan Consolidated Gas to voluntarily reduce its monthly consumption of gas by 6%.

A year later, Governor William Milliken asked residents of the state to make still further voluntary conservation efforts. Due to the effects of a coal haulers' strike, there was the very real possibility of wide-scale blackouts. The school system responded by making further efforts to reduce its consumption by another 10%.

In November of 1979, the building witnessed a change in elementary school hours. Due to a new teachers' contract, children were now released from school at 3:15 rather than at the old time of 3:30. Teachers, however, were to remain in the building until 3:45. The lunch hour, too, was shortened by fifteen minutes and now lasted from 11:30 to 12:35.

Maire's Fiftieth Year

As 1986 began, Maire's students were as hard at work as their counterparts had been fifty years before. The rousingly patriotic Spring Concert, which paid tribute to an important symbol of American values, the Statue of Liberty, revealed the same deep affection for their country that Maire students have demonstrated throughout the years. The children of 1986 too were as generous and caring as their predecessors, although perhaps they were offered fewer opportunities at school to exercise these

qualities. One Maire student from this period, third grader John Graffius, eloquently expressed his concern for the world about him in a letter to Santa Claus:

I hope you can grant my wishes.
For me, all I want is to have all my
family together for Christmas . . .
For the world I hope they stop the
Star Wars plan. And I hope they find
a cure for AIDS and cancer. I hope we
stop making nuclear weapons, and I
hope we get food to the Ethiopians.
And that the victims of the earthquake
live.

Several unique events occurred in Maire's fiftieth year that made it different from any of the forty-nine that had preceded it. On January 15, 1986, Maire students quietly observed the first national holiday in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the slain civil rights leader who had touched Grosse Pointe less than twenty years before with his eloquence and his commitment to non-violence. The day was punctuated with student-read selections from his writings over the loudspeaker system.

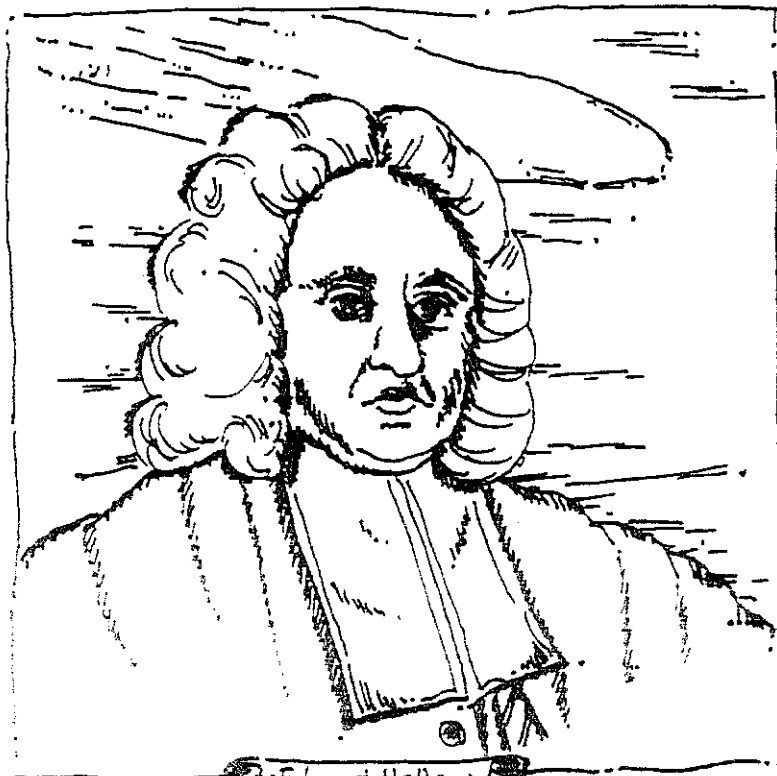
A few lucky individuals caught a glimpse of the elusive Halley's Comet in the generally rainy skies of 1985-86. They alone could boast to their classmates at Maire of having seen that rare sight. Yet everyone at Maire was touched in some way by the proximity of this largely unseen and mysterious visitor, and many a student sported a Halley's comet pin or presented comet memorabilia at snow and tell.

A Gift to the School

In 1986, the school was the fortunate recipient of a major piece of art, a mural by Detroit artist Dennis Orlovski. Stretching across the back wall of the third floor library, it depicted the history of Maire School in a parade of figures from the past and present.

In the last weeks before the summer recess began, Mr. Orlovski became a familiar figure as he sketched children's faces in the library. He spent the entire summer of 1986 transferring his rough sketches to a scale drawing and then to a full-size reproduction and, finally, to the plasterboard on the wall. In the fall, the nearly completed painting greeted students as they returned to school and eagerly searched the vast extent of the colorful mural for familiar faces.

Artist Dennis Orlovski's generous gift of his time and his talent was a significant addition to the school's fiftieth anniversary celebration. Maire was fortunate to begin its second half-century with such a visually eloquent testimonial to its past.



Edmund Halley
1656 - 1742

Halley's Comet
Returns!
1986

A Big Birthday Celebration

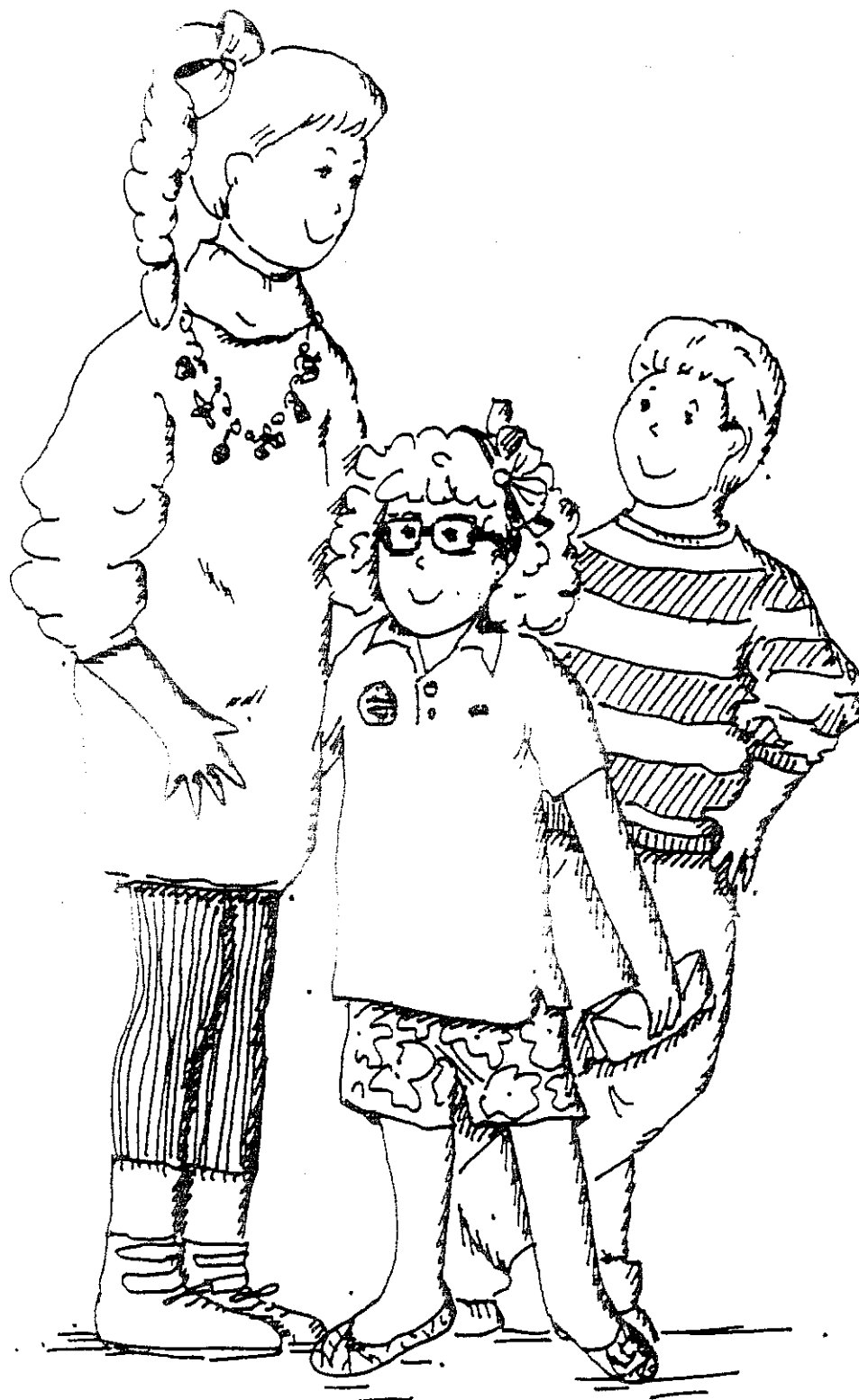
A massive balloon launch scheduled for October 20, 1986, fifty years to the day after students first entered Maire's classrooms, was to be the formal beginning to a week of birthday festivities. But for the students, the anniversary activities actually began during the second week in September when they were taken by their teachers to view an old film transferred to videotape of the construction of the school building back in 1936. They watched with fascination as the workers dug the cellar and poured the foundation and as the school they knew evolved before their very eyes.

On Wednesday, September 10, 1986, students gathered in the gymnasium had the opportunity to witness by remote video camera the opening of the cornerstone and the removal of its contents. When a sealed box was brought before the assembled students and opened, the students were vaguely disappointed that the box contained nothing but old documents and contemporary newspapers. The few coins which rolled to the floor were the most exciting part of the discovery, as some dated back to the beginning of the century.

During the week of October 20-26th, each class took on the responsibility of studying and explaining to the other students the events of a different decade in the past fifty years. Bulletin boards were decorated appropriately, historical announcements were made and plans laid for new additions to the cornerstone, which was to be resealed in November.

On Saturday, October 25, 1986, old staff and friends of the school gathered at the Grosse Pointe Hunt Club for a festive reunion. A rededication ceremony, complete with dignitaries and the unveiling of the Orłowski mural, took place on the following day, to which all students past and present were invited. When the celebration was done and the guests had departed, Maire moved quietly on into the future.





· Children's Fashions ·
· 1986 ·



A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

OF

LEWIS E. MAIRE

By

Becky Easlick

Dr. Lewis Emil Maire

1855-1935

"To many, he was considered to be a quiet, reserved, dignified yet friendly gentleman. His family and close friends knew him to be energetic and industrious and vigorous. Besides his profession, he was always interested in the lives of those around him, even in the lighter side of life so often prominent in our large family of nine children, the oldest born in 1882 and the youngest in 1907." This description comes from Dr. Maire's son, Edward, also a physician, and the eighth of the nine Maire children.

Research bears out the descriptions of his public and private life. Dr. Maire, born in Philadelphia on September 3, 1855, of French Huguenot descent, came to Detroit with his parents, Mr. and Mrs. John E. Maire, at the age of three months. His education was in the Detroit Public Schools, where he attended Webster Polytechnic. He graduated with Honors from the Detroit College of Medicine and Surgery in 1881 and then went East for special coursework on the eye and ear. He studied at the Manhattan Eye and Ear Hospital and then spent considerable time in special colleges and hospitals in New York, acquiring valuable experience and absorbing all available knowledge.

After returning home to Detroit, he was an Assistant Professor at the Detroit College of Medicine. Later he became a Professor at the Michigan College of Medicine and Surgery, a school which he helped to found.

Dr. Maire was involved with many of the burgeoning medical associations and societies of his time and president of several of them, including the Detroit Academy of Medicine, the Wayne County Medical Society and the Michigan Surgical and Pathological Society.

In the early years of the century when Dr. Maire was practicing, there were few physicians specializing in ophthalmology in Michigan, and Dr. Maire would take two and three day trips to smaller communities in the state to perform cataract operations on patients of the local doctors. "He developed a system of doing this type of surgery in the patient's home and this worked out so well for all concerned that he proceeded to do nearly all cataract surgery in the home," writes Dr. Edward Maire. And he notes with interest that this procedure may become routine in our future.

Dr. Maire's concern for and interest in the lives of others is evident in his founding of the Detroit Free Eye and Ear Dispensary in 1887. For more than a quarter of a century, he conducted free eye and ear clinics and gave free medical and surgical treatment to thousands of patients.

From 1883 to 1900, he was surgeon and examiner for the Wabash Railroad. He contributed largely to medical literature, but he also contributed several scholarly articles on art and general literature. He was a man of many interests. He collected paintings, oriental rugs and books. He established a rather large library of the complete works of Victor Hugo, Dickens, George Eliot, Thackeray, Balzac, Longfellow and Oliver Wendell Holmes, among others. He read from the Bible every Sunday. Often during the long winter evenings, he would gather the children around the dinner table and read - at times dramatically - stories about the horrors of the French Revolution, Longfellow's poems, and stories about the lives of great persons. His son, Edward, notes that, because of the wide age range of the children, the repertoire would not always please all of the children simultaneously and that often there would be "a disturbing restlessness among the audience!" Another son, Stephen, reports on his father's great interest in history and recalls coming home from school and attempting, unsuccessfully, to catch him up on some detail or another.

The Church was important to Dr. Maire and he assumed a strong leadership role. He was one of those who signed the first articles of incorporation of St. Columba and was Senior Warden of the First Vestry. Dr. Maire chaired the Parish House Building Committee and suggested putting shops on the Jefferson Avenue frontage as a source of revenue for the maintenance of the building, a new venture in Episcopal Church architecture, but one which was largely copied. He chaired the Building Committee for the new church as well, and an article in the church dedication program cites his "unfailing interest and constant oversight as important measures in the completion of these projects."

Gardening and farming were two great loves of Dr. Maire, and he owned two farms during his life, the first on the Clinxon River in Mt. Clemens and, many years later, another in Dexter. But even when he was at home in Grosse Pointe, he was an ardent gardener. His son, Edward, remembers: "During the summer, he would arise at 5:00 a.m. and work in the garden for one or two hours before breakfast. One time he advertised in the paper for a gardener. Shortly, an elderly man came into the yard and stood watching father cultivating, soon leaving without saying a word. However, later that day, he appeared at the office in Detroit to apply for the job. During the interview, he said 'You know, that old man you got there now doesn't know a darn thing about gardening.' Father, hiding a smile, hired the man to start work the next day. But the man never showed up! Father delighted in telling this story on himself for many years."

Dr. Maire had great energy and went to his office every day, including Sundays. He took vacations no oftener than every three or four years and practiced medicine actively until the age of 75.

He participated in his local community and instituted the State Enabling Act to set up township Boards of Health and helped to establish the Grosse Pointe Board of Health. He helped organize the Village of Grosse Pointe Park and was elected to serve on its Board for four years.

Dr. Maire's energy might also be seen in the fact that he and his wife, the former Florence Davis, had nine children - Lewis E. Jr., Julia F., Lincoln, Edward D., Stephen, Katherine, Grace, Constance and Charlotte.

One of his ambitions, perhaps influenced by his need to educate his nine children, was to make the Grosse Pointe School System one of the best. There were, at that time, five separate school districts, none of which could support a high school by itself. Dr. Maire was instrumental in bringing about the consolidation of the five districts into the current system so that higher education was available for the children of Grosse Pointe. He was a member of the Board of Education for twelve years and its President for one year.

It is no wonder that after his death in 1935 a public petition was placed with the Grosse Pointe Board of Education to name the new school, MAIRE, in his honor - for his services to the community and especially for the development of education in Grosse Pointe.

The Grosse Pointe Public School System

389 St. Clair Avenue
Grosse Pointe, Michigan 48230

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