

# MENOMINEE RANGE MEMORIES 26: THE ROARING TWENTIES – FORD MOTOR COMPANY’S ARRIVAL IMPACTS DICKINSON COUNTY – THE CLASSROOM SHORTAGE

By William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation Historian



*The Breitung Township School District built ten schools between 1923 and 1926 to accommodate the large influx of students due to the Ford Boom. Kingsford Junior High School was rapidly nearing completion in mid-April, 1925, when this photograph was taken. Built on Hamilton Avenue in the Ford Addition at a cost of \$259,886.06, the three-story brick structure had rooms outfitted for domestic science, chemistry and physics on the top floor, and a gymnasium, located on the first floor, which contained a large stage that doubled as an auditorium. Each classroom received excellent light due to the large banks of windows and had hardwood floors. A terrazzo composition material was used in the wide corridors. The building had no basement, the heating plant being located in a separate building. Despite its name, the building served as Kingsford High School from 1925 thorough the spring of 1965. When the new high school opened in the fall of 1965, the building was used as Kingsford Junior High School, housing grades seven through nine. In March, 1979, a fire was started by a student in the south end of this building, and that portion of the building could no longer be used. The ninth grade students were moved to the new Kingsford High School across the parking lot at that time. The structure fell to the wrecker’s ball in late June and early July, 1991. [Menominee Range Historical Museum]*

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**[NOTE: Dates, placed chronologically, are highlighted in boldface red letters for easier reading, and names of individuals and places are highlighted in boldface black letters to facilitate finding information.]**

The 26th installment of Menominee Range Memories, a series of articles by William J. Cummings, Menominee Range Historical Foundation historian, now available on the Dickinson County Library’s website, is titled “The Roaring Twenties – Ford Motor Company’s Arrival Impacts Dickinson County – The Classroom Shortage.”

Just as a housing shortage resulted from the rapid influx of employees at the Iron Mountain Ford Motor Company Plant beginning in **1920**, so, too, did a classroom shortage occur, as new Ford employees moved their families into the community.

Said to have been built in **1877** by **John Lane Buell**, the founder of **Quinnesec**, the **Pioneer School**, the first constructed in Breitung Township, was located on the southwest corner of Bluff Street and Paint Street (now U.S. 2) with the front door facing north.

A second story was being added in late **October, 1879**, to accommodate all the pupils in attendance. The addition was finished by mid-December, when the workmen enclosed the grounds with a fence. A one-story library building facing Bluff Street was attached to the school by a hallway and was undoubtedly the area’s first such repository.

One-room rural schoolhouses predominated in the **Breitung Township School District** prior to the coming of the Ford Motor Company.

The student population in the Breitung Township School District grew from 221 in **1920** to 285 in **1921**, 380 in **1922**, 428 in **1923**, 799 in **1924**, 1,652 in **1925**, 2,820 in **1926** and 3,071 in **1927**.

Thus, between 1920 and 1927, the students enrolled in the District increased by about 1,390 per cent, necessitating the construction of ten new schools between 1923 and 1926 to accommodate them.

The **Eischen School** opened **September 8, 1908** on the southwest corner of the **Joseph Eischen** farm near the current intersection of Westwood Avenue and Avery Street in Kingsford Heights with Miss **Liela Billings** teaching 21 pupils. By **1920**, this school, the only school in what became the **Village of Kingsford** at that time, had been discontinued, the nine children living in area attending school in the Iron Mountain School District.

In **1920** the **Garfield School** at **Quinnesec** had an enrollment of slightly less than one hundred students and the other schools, one room buildings throughout Breitung Township, located at **Pine Creek, Indiana Mine, Twin Falls, Merriman** and **Granite Bluff**, had a total of slightly more than one hundred students.

According to an article in **August 26, 1921** edition of *The Iron Mountain News* under the headline **Breitung School Attendance Grows**, when the **Garfield School** opened on Monday, August 29, the attendance was “larger than usual owing to the fact that every habitable house” in Quinnesec was occupied.

The total staff of the Breitung Township School District consisted of **T.J. Lenz**, principal of the Garfield School; **Lucille Rouse**, intermediate room, Garfield School;

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Della Tanquay, primary room, Garfield School; Gertrude Walter, Indiana Mine School; Hazel Johns, Pine Creek School;

Wesley Bond, Twin Falls School; Violet Erickson, Merriman School; and Laura Hebert, Granite Bluff School.



*Quinnesec's Garfield School, formally dedicated January 6, 1898, replaced the Pioneer School which could no longer be used because of its proximity to the Cundy Mine shaft. The two-story building, located where the Breitung Township Hall now stands, contained four classrooms and a library located in the front portion of the building on the second floor. The structure would accommodate 235 pupils. The interior was finished in Georgia pine. A large picture of President Garfield hung in front of the large classroom on the first floor, called the assembly room. Two additional classrooms were located on this floor. When the school opened, classes from kindergarten through eighth grade were taught. Eighth grade graduates held their commencement exercises in Buell's Opera House. Those wanting a high school education had to go to Iron Mountain. Students and teachers posed in front of the school for this postcard view, postmarked Quinnesec, Mich., June 1, 1911. [William J. Cummings]*

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On **July 10, 1922**, Breitung Township taxpayers voted 50 to 2 to issue \$46,000 worth of bonds to erect three new schoolhouses “made necessary by an increase in population during the past year.” Although the poll was light, the small negative vote indicated that a large majority of the taxpayers favored the measure.

**Fred E. Parmelee & Son** were engaged to draft the plans for the three buildings, located in **Kingsford Heights, West Breitung** and **Pine Creek**.

The **Michigan Iron, Land & Lumber Company**, at the time a subsidiary of the **Ford Motor Company** in Iron Mountain, donated one acre of land on **Woodward Avenue** for the Kingsford Heights school, and the **Iron Mountain Real Estate**

**Company** donated several lots in the middle of the 200 block of **Lyman Street** for the West Breitung school.

The two schools were basically identical in size and design. Each was 73 by 38 feet in size, one story high, constructed of brick, stone and stucco with a full basement, four classrooms, sanitary wardrobes and modern toilets. The initial plan was to only finish two classrooms in each building the first year.

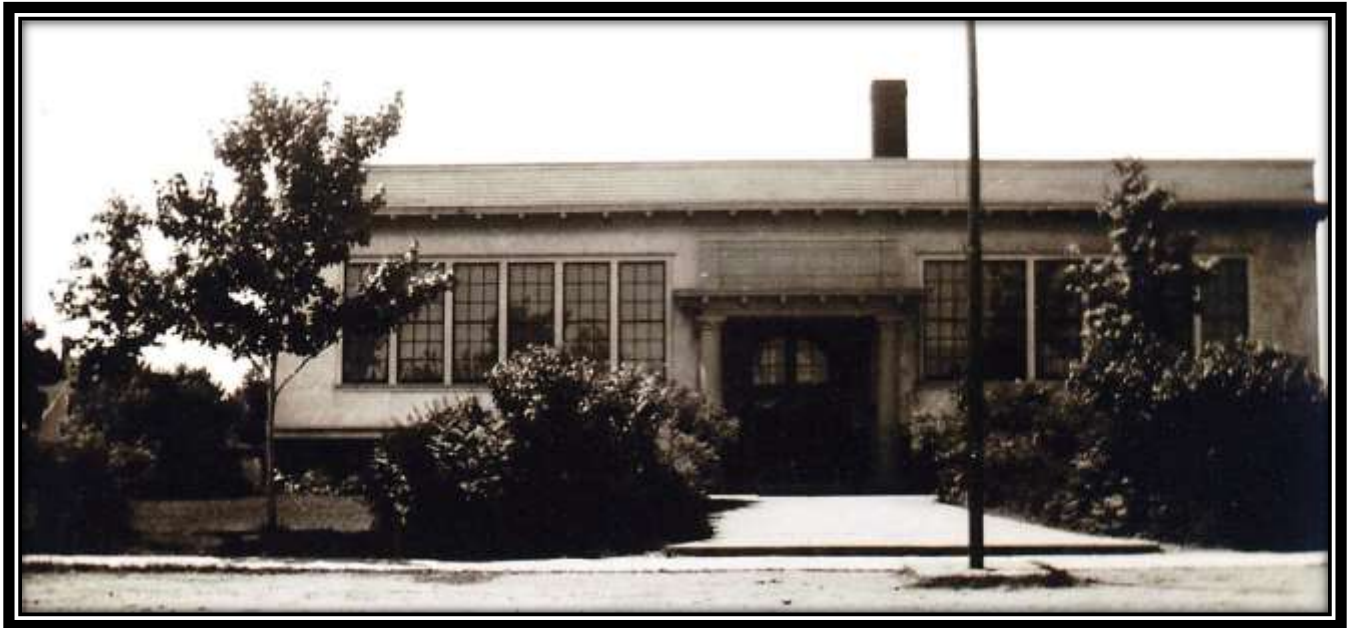
Ultimately plans were to equip the basement for manual training and domestic science departments. The plans were so arranged that additions may be made to the two buildings to accommodate the increased growth of the district.



*The four-room Woodward Avenue or Kingsford Heights School, constructed on the south side of Woodward Avenue near the intersection with Harding Avenue at a cost of \$34,235.25, was opened in January, 1923. Each room would accommodate 40 pupils, giving the school a capacity of 160. After the Village of Kingsford was formed, the village offices were housed in a couple of rooms in the basement of this building until the Kingsford Village Hall was built in 1930, the rent being \$10 per month. The structure which later housed the Kingsford Fire Department was razed in early October, 1977. The gazebo park is now located at this site. [John Alquist/Breitung Township]*

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*The four-room West Breitung School, constructed in the middle of the 200 block on Lyman Street at a cost of \$33,275.25, was opened in 1923. In mid-November, 1924, a two-room addition had been completed, providing badly needed room due to an extremely large enrollment. At that time 590 children were housed in 11 rooms – six in the main building, four in the portable school and another in a one-room building. [John Alquist/Breitung Township]*

**Victor Bergquist** was initially awarded the contract for the excavation and construction of the basements of the two schools with a bid of \$3,465. Both Bergquist and **Emmett Markley**, the second-lowest bidder, withdrew their bids. Bergquist stated he had underestimated the work and found it difficult to secure a bond for the price submitted. The contract was awarded to the third lowest bidder, **G.A. Gustafson**, at \$5,825.

The **Woodward Avenue School** or **Kingsford Heights School** opened in **January, 1923**, and the **West Breitung School** opened shortly thereafter.

The **Pine Creek School**, measuring 24 by 40 feet with a wing 8 by 16 feet,

replaced an older building and was situated in “a much more attractive location”.

Teaching staff for the **1923-1924** school year at the Breitung Township School District doubled from the previous term, the increasing from nine to eighteen due to the large number of students enrolled, according to Superintendent **Edmund A. Crawford**.

The staff at the Garfield School in Quinnesec consisted of **Lillian Voight**, principal; **Olive Caddy**, **Jennie Rowe** and **Lillis Richards**.

At the Kingsford Heights School, the staff included **Bernard Geisen**, principal, **Agnes Morrow**, **Viola Hoaglund** and **Mildred Truckey**, while the West Breitung

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School staff included **Hugo Husted**, **Collette Larkin**, **Gertrude Wolters** and **Edith Richardson**.

Rural schools and their respective teachers were Twin Falls, **Margaret Langsford**; Merriman, **Agnes E. Oberg**; Granite Bluff, **Viola Erickson**; Indiana Mine, **Agnes Stensaas**; and Pine Creek, **Wesley Bond**.

Enrollment rapidly increased beginning in **1924**.

In the **January 16, 1925** edition of *The Iron Mountain News*, an article, under the headline **Two-Shift Plan Used in Schools: Village Has Accommodations for 900; Enrollment is 1,250**, reported:

*School congestion has become so stressed in the village of Kingsford that the Breitung township board, which has supervision over all village schools[,] has instituted a two-shift plan in several of them.*

*And in the opinion of **E.A. Crawford**, superintendent of township schools, unless more bonds are issued, so that new buildings can be erected, next fall will find the township facing a problem almost impossible to solve.*

*Schools that have gone on a two-shift basis include those at **Ferndale**, **Garden Village**, **Pinehurst**, **Breitung** and the **Marquette boulevard** school in Kingsford Heights. The grades affected are the second, third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh.*

*School starts for the first shift at 7:15 o'clock in the morning, continuing until 12 noon. At 12:15 the second shift begins, ending at 5 p.m. Each shift has its own teachers.*

## **Need More Buildings.**

*Continuation of this plan will be necessary until there are more school*

*buildings, Mr. Crawford stated. Even the new \$250,000 **junior high school building** being erected in the village will not relieve the situation to the extent of permitting normal routing in the other schools.*

*The village schools now have an enrollment of approximately 1,250 children. There are 54 teachers on the payroll; three years ago there was one. There are accommodations for 900 pupils so that about 600 are attending school on the two-shift plan. Without the portable and temporary schools that were put in use during the last year there would be room for only 550 students.*

*The issuance of more bonds is regarded as the only effective solution, despite the fact that the township now has about \$375,000 in school bonds outstanding. Growth of the village and adjoining territory has been more rapid than anticipated and school officials have found themselves hard pressed to meet the situation with insufficient funds to properly carry on the work.*

By the end of **April, 1925**, 1,300 of the 1,700 students in the Breitung Township School District were attending school in the Kingsford area. Over 100 of those students had to attend the schools in **Iron Mountain**, making it necessary for the township to pay tuition for each one.

Comparing the Kingsford area at the end of **April, 1925**, with other communities in the area having about the same school population, the majority had an average of at least 32 grade school classrooms.

The total number of available grade school classrooms in the Kingsford area numbered only 28 which needed to accommodate 1,300 students taught by a 41-member teaching staff. Of these 28

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rooms, only 12 were classified as approved grade school rooms by the state board, those remaining being four basement rooms, six portable rooms and six one-room buildings.

Thus, it was necessary to use the six rooms in the **West Breitung School** and the six rooms in the **Woodward Avenue School** on a two-shift basis, making an average of over 47 pupils for each room, or 32 pupils per teacher.

Although the double-shift plan took care of the enrollment, it was found, after a careful survey, that pupils were unable to cover the work needed to be completed.

A bond issue of \$450,000 was readily approved by the taxpayers of Breitung Township in **May 11, 1925** by a vote of 233 to 21 to carry out the development of the school system outlined in a survey made by state officials.

All polling was done at **Quinnesec**. This was the last school election held under the old law which mandated voting be done in one place. School election voting precincts were established, following a new law offered by Dickinson County Representative **Fred Langsford** at the previous session of the Michigan State Legislature.

In the two weeks prior to the bond issue vote enrollment in the Kingsford area of Breitung Township increased from 1,300 to 1,350, with new residents moving in daily.

According to **Frank C. Sweeney**, Dickinson County Commissioner of Schools, conditions in the Kingsford area had reached a crisis point, and the only relief was through the passage of the bond issue.

Funding to construct two new schools – the 10-room Westwood School in Kingsford

Heights and the 14-room Garden Village School – were included in this bond issue, as well as money to complete the second stories of the new Quinnesec Junior High School and the ----- school in Kingsford.

Furnishings for all the schools were also purchased, and five additional school sites were acquired during the summer of 1925 as a precautionary step to provide for the rapid growth of the community areas in the township.

Having served as Dickinson County Commissioner of Schools since 1920, **Frank C. Sweeney** resigned the day after the election (May 12) to become Breitung Township School District superintendent.

Sweeney had been closely associated with the growth of the Breitung Townships schools and had taken an active part in the framing of a school program for the **1925-1926** school year. He produced the first all standard township school system in the state and also had unlimited experience as a teacher, principal and superintendent in several schools in the lower peninsula.

During Sweeney’s term as county commissioner of schools the county-wide school census increased from 1,300 pupils to 3,000 and the number of teachers more than doubled, 52 being employed in 1920 as compared to 120 by **May of 1925**.

Close cooperation had been maintained between the commissioner’s office and the principals of the various schools in the county, resulting in significantly higher school standards and many new features being incorporated in the rural school program. County school attendance increased from 25 to 70 per cent and the number of eighth graders entering high school showed a large gain. In addition,

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the average training of teachers increased from 1.2 years to 2.1 years.

More than 1,700 students started their summer vacation on **June 5, 1925**, when the following schools closed: **Woodward Avenue/Kingsford Heights, West Breitung, Garden Village, Pinehurst, Ferndale, Marquette Boulevard, Indiana**

**Mine, Granite Bluff, Deer Lake, Twin Falls and Merriman.**

An estimated 1,800 pupils would be supervised by between 70 and 75 teachers during the 1925-1926 school year in the Breitung Township School District, led by Sweeney, who also retained his position as county commissioner of schools until the end of the 1924-1925 school year.



*The two-story, brick Quinnesec Junior High School was built on a five-acre site in 1925 at a cost of \$170,054.90. In its first year (1925-1926) the school contained kindergarten through eleventh grade which had transferred from the Garfield School which had only gone through the tenth grade. During the 1926-1927 school year the twelfth grade was added, and Quinnesec's first graduating class received their diplomas in May, 1927. At the end of the 1943-1944 school year the high school was closed and students were transferred to Kingsford High School. The school remained open with classes from kindergarten through eighth grade until the end of the 1964-1965 school year. [John Alquist/Breitung Township]*

The **July 15, 1925** edition of *The Iron Mountain News*, under the headline **Township School Problems Solved: Rapid Growth of System Has Given Board Hard Task**, reported:

*The growth of the Breitung township school system has been tremendous during*

*the last year and the board has been confronted with many complex problems most of which have been satisfactory [sic – satisfactorily] solved, a survey reveals.*

*The enrollment of school children at the end of the last term was 1,750 as compared with 1,250 at the beginning. The enrollment*



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in June, 1924, was slightly more than 800, showing an increase of more than 100 per cent in a year’s time. And, in addition, there will be a heavy gain when sessions are resumed **August 31**, when the new junior high school will be opened in the village and Quinnesec.

The growth in the Kingsford area first made itself keenly felt in the fall of 1924 when children were requested to report to classes in “shifts.” This presented the board of education with a problem of great proportions that demanded quick action and sound judgment. But with the assistance of the state department of education, which it called on for advice, the board took care of the situation in the best manner possible. Temporary buildings and school facilities were immediately provided.

## **1,400 In Village Area.**

Of the 1,750 pupils enrolled in the township schools last month, 1,400 were in the Kingsford area. Probably no school district in the state has shown such proportionate rapid growth.

The board and **Superintendent Sweeney** are still confronted with many problems but they are confident of being able to take care of them. During the past year, new high school buildings were erected at **Kingsford** and **Quinnesec**. The final cost of the structures will be included in a report of the secretary to be submitted soon.

Construction work has been started on a new 14-room grade school at **Garden Village** and erection of another grade school will be started soon in **Kingsford Heights**. It will be a 10-room building with all modern equipment and will be located on **Mayfair street**.

The building program will be continued until such a time as there is ample room for the entire enrollment. At the completion of the present plans, the system in the township will compare favorably with any of its size in the state.

## **Rural Schools Grow.**

The rural schools in the township have also been increased in enrollment. It was necessary during the past year to build an addition to the **Twin Falls** school house.

Beginning next September, Breitung township high school students[,] who heretofore have been compelled to enroll at the **Iron Mountain** and **Norway** schools, will be given regular senior high school courses at the new buildings in **Kingsford** and **Quinnesec**.

Schools in the village [Kingsford] and **Quinnesec** will be conducted on a six-six plan, that is, six grades in the grammar school division and six grades in the junior and senior high school division.

The new high school organization, both in courses and objectives, will be somewhat different than in most places in the district. The plan will soon be outlined by Mr. Sweeney, the new superintendent.

## **Davidson Is Principal.**

**Dean Davidson**, of Kalamazoo, has been selected as principal of the new high school in Kingsford. He comes to the village highly recommended and with a good record. He was principal of the Dowagiac and Marcellus high schools and was formerly an instructor and principal of the high school at **Vulcan**. He left there about 10 years ago.

Mr. Davidson, who is expected to arrive here soon, and Mr. Sweeney will arrange a course of study and program for the new high school in the near future.

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*John Possi, who for the last three years, had been manual training instructor in the **Iron Mountain** schools, has accepted a similar position with the Breitung board while **John Schwei, of Iron Mountain, will have charge of athletics and physical graining in the township schools. He will also teach science.***

In the **August 27, 1925** edition of *The Iron Mountain News*, plans for the school year which would begin **September 1** were announced under the headline **Granite Bluff School Closed: Sweeney Gives Districts To Be Served by Various Buildings**, as follows:

*School boundaries in the rural districts of Breitung township are the same as in past years except that the **Granite Bluff** school will be discontinued and all children in that section transported to **Merriman**, it was stated today by **F.C. Sweeney**, superintendent.*

*All pupils in grades seven to nine, inclusive, will be enrolled in the junior high department and all students in grades 10 to 12, inclusive, will also attend school at the same building, on **Hamilton avenue** in Kingsford.*

*Several rooms in the new junior high building have been assigned to take care of all pupils from the kindergarten to the sixth grade who live in the district between **Carpenter avenue** and the Ford filtration plant,*

*Children of **Kingsford Heights** from the kindergarten to the sixth grade, inclusive, will attend classes at the **Kingsford Heights school** except those enrolled at the **Marquette boulevard** school. Beginners and first grade pupils living within a radius of three blocks from the Marquette*

*boulevard school will attend classes at that building.*

*All children in grades one to six, living east of **Odin and Campbell streets**, are requested to report at the **Ferndale school.***

## **Garden Village.**

*Pupils in grades one to four, inclusive, and all beginners who live in the area bounded by **Odin and Campbell streets** on the east and **Carpenter avenue** on the west, must enroll at the **Garden Village school.** Children in the fifth and sixth grades who live in this district will enroll at the **Breitung school.***

***Pinehurst school** will be occupied by children living south of **Breitung avenue** to the Menominee river and from **Carpenter avenue** west to **Hooper avenue.** This affects only pupils in the kindergarten and first grade. All other pupils in this district will attend school at **Breitung.***

*The **Lawrence street school** building will take care of kindergarten and first grade pupils who live in the following in the area from **Balsam street** west to the river and from **Emmett street** south to the river.*

*All children from the kindergarten to the sixth grade, inclusive, who live on the south side of the Ford plant except those already assigned to schools mentioned above will attend the **Breitung school.***

*Following the plan adopted several years ago, free text books [sic – textbooks] will be given to students. A small deposit must be made with the teacher, but the money will be returned at the end of the school year if the books are in good condition.*

*When school began on **September 1, 1925**, there were 28 more teachers than there were at the close of school in June.*

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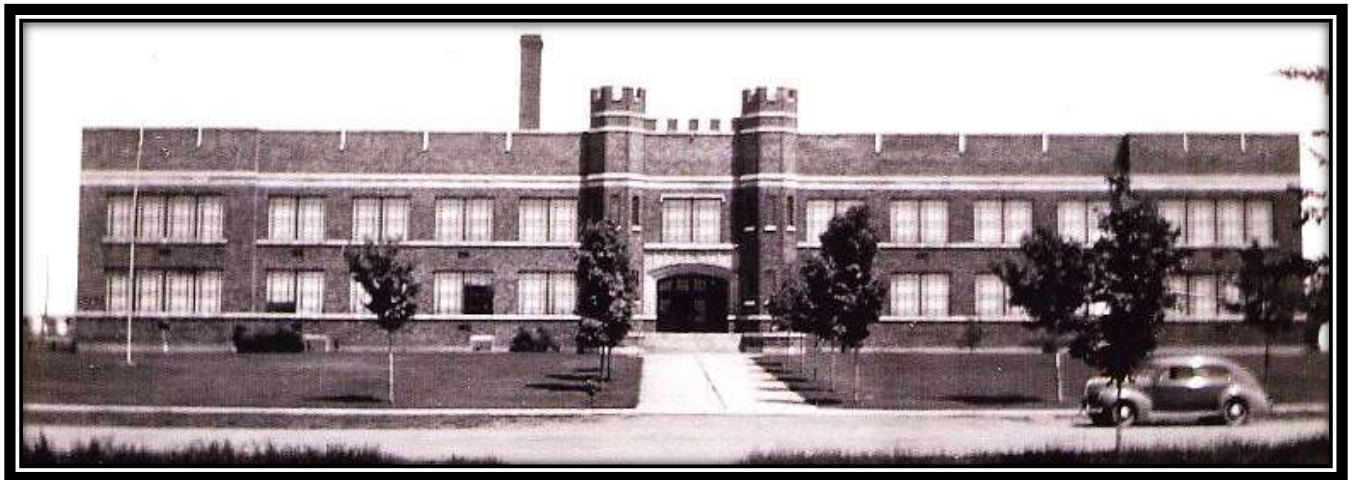
Eighty-one were engaged to instruct approximately 1,900 pupils. In **June, 1925**, 53 instructors were on the payroll. In the village of Kingsford area alone, an increase of 19 teachers is required because of the increase in enrollment.

Following is the list:

High school, Kingsford – **F.C. [sic – F.D.] Davidson**, principal, **Martha Miller**,

**Loretta Belhumeur, Thelma Hoose, Anne E. Moore, Mildred Schultz, Hazel Radford, John Possi, John J. Schwei, Jennie Anderson.**

Junior high – **Eugenia Mitchell, Joseph Walsh, Rosa Nowack, Gladys Gemlick, Collette Larkin, Bernard Geisen, Carmen Martin, Lorraine Hooper and Doris Nelson.**



*The 14-room Garden Village School, constructed on Chestnut Street between Henford Avenue and Sagola Avenue at a cost of \$141,078.18, was opened March 24, 1926. Approximately 500 children were enrolled in kindergarten through sixth grade when the school opened, relieving congested conditions in other Breitung Township schools at the time and allowing 200 children to again attend classes on a full-time basis. [John Alquist/Breitung Township]*

Kingsford Heights grade school – **Genevieve O’Leary**, principal, **Ruth Pendergast, Lillian Clifford, Eugenie Morin, Bernice Kennedy, Viola Hoglund, Johanna Clifford, Edith Richardson, Mrs. Dehlia Golden, Marjorie Unger, Mrs. Colwell, Agnes Stensaas, Pearl Carlyon and Agnes Morrow.**

Marquette boulevard school – **Pearl Dubuque and Sylvia Dustin.**

Central grades at junior high – **Clarys Richards, Pearl Ripper, Mrs. Goodrich, Margaret Langsford and Dorothy Weeks.**

Breitung school – **Anna Nord**, principal, **Mahala Mimmick, Orme Firkes, Blanche Smith, Juanita Sullivan, Ruth Nasberg, Ruby Thode, Angeline Rivolta, Adele Erickson, Helen Shipley, Gertrude Walters, Jennie Rigoni, Victoria Rigoni, Iola Banfield, Leo Godin and Adele Hyder.**

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Quinnesec school – E.A. Crawford, principal, Edward Stanaway, Donald Whitney, Emerson Johnston, Elsie Trestrail, Jane Rowe, Gladys Chainey, Ina Watson, Evelyn Welsh and Ida Goff.

Lawrence street school – unassigned.

Garden Village school No. 2 – Agnes Oberg and Florence Barber.

Ferndale school – unassigned.

Twin Falls – Laura Hebert and Marjorie Thomas.

Pine Grove – Marion Rogers.

Merriman – unassigned.

Indiana Mine – June Nelson.

Pine Creek – Wesley Bond.

Deer Lake – Earl Wooster.

Grade supervisor – Mabel Highlands.



*Ground was broken for the Westwood School, located on a lot bordered by Westwood Avenue, Walworth Street and Mayfair Street, on August 27, 1925. The 13-room school, constructed at a cost of \$169,981.81, was formally dedicated on September 21, 1926. This view shows the south end of the building. [John Alquist/Breitung Township]*

In the **September 3, 1925** edition of *The Iron Mountain News*, under the headline **Classes Again on Two Shifts: Crowded Conditions Still Apparent in Village**, the following article appeared:

*Owing to the crowded conditions in the Kingsford Heights, Breitung and Ferndale grade schools, Superintendent of Schools F.C. Sweeney has been forced to*

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again have some of the classes conducted in two shifts.

The first shift starts school at 8 o'clock in the morning and is dismissed at 12:15 p.m., the second group beginning at 12:30 o'clock and finishing at 4 o'clock.

Mr. Sweeney today stated that additional school facilities will be provided at Ferndale and that it is possible a building may be secured within the next few days.

Congestion will be relieved at the Kingsford Heights school as soon as the 14-room building, now under construction on Fairmont street, is completed.

Still another building program was announced in the **December 29, 1925** edition of *The Iron Mountain News* under the headline **Outline \$600,000 School Program in Breitung Area: Unusual Increase In Enrollment Again Taxes Buildings to Capacity.**

The erection of two grade schools and a large addition to the present high school building are included in a proposed expansion program outlined by the board of education of Breitung township, it was stated today. Cost of the program is estimated at \$600,000, which includes purchase of the sites, erection of buildings and installation of equipment.

Because of the unexpected increase in enrollment throughout the entire village of Kingsford area, the erection of a grade school in the **Ferndale** district and another in the **Skidmore** is considered inevitable. Many of the children from those districts are now compelled to go to the **Breitung** grade and portable schools, which are taxed to capacity.

The completion of the **Garden village** [sic – **Village**] school, now under construction, will remedy conditions

considerably but will not give relief in the Skidmore and Ferndale area. Conditions in **Kingsford Heights** will be relieved when the new school in that district is brought to completion.

## **Use Double Shift**

Under the present system of conducting classes in the village area, 22 rooms are on double shift, a condition that is unprecedented in the entire state. The arrangement necessitates giving instructions to many pupils in a hurried manner in order to accommodate [sic – accommodate] both shifts.

In many cases there are as many as 55 students in one room. This is not in accord with the policy of the state department of education, which recommends not more than 40 pupils be assigned to one class. Adequate facilities, however, are not available as the increase in enrollment has gone far beyond the expectations of the school board.

The enrollment in the village of Kingsford area last September was about 2,200 students. During the last four months it has passed the 2,600 mark, on an increase of approximately 400.

## **Rooms Needed**

To accommodate [sic – accommodate] the pupils living on the south side of the Ford plant, **F.C. Sweeney**, superintendent of schools of Breitung township, declared today that this is a conservative estimate based on careful survey with the assistance of a member of the state educational department.

On the north side of the Ford plant, 17 rooms will be necessary to take care of the pupils. These will be available in the near future when the new **Kingsford Heights** grade school is ready for occupancy.

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*It would appear that this snapshot photograph was taken when construction on the Westwood School was near completion, as the porches and steps which were located on the east side of the building have not yet been completed. The school was formally dedicated September 21, 1926, almost thirteen months after construction began. This view is taken looking west on Montclair Hill. [City of Kingsford]*

*After the new Garden village [sic – Village] building is completed, there will be at least 250 pupils who will have to attend classes in temporary one-room schools. There are six of these buildings now used in the village of Kingsford area.*

*In order to give an idea of the growth of the school system in Ferndale, Mr. Sweeney said that a year ago only 45 students were registered from that district. Today the enrollment is 180.*

*Since last September there has been an increase of 300 children from the kindergarten to the sixth grade, inclusive, in the incorporated limits of the village alone.*

### **New Building Crowded**

*Conditions in the new junior high school building on Hamilton avenue are*

*also crowded. Because of the all-around increases throughout the village, grade classes are conducted in this building in order that children from that part of the village known as central Kingsford need not walk to Kingsford Heights.*

*When the new high school building was formally opened last September the enrollment was 330. A check-up recently showed that it is now 500.*

*The problem is made more intricate by the fact that only 25 seniors will be graduated next June and at least 200 sixth grade pupils will pass into the seventh grade, which is part of the junior high school. With rooms now taxed to capacity, additional facilities must be provided for next September, Mr. Sweeney said.*

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*According to the tentative plans for the addition to the high school building, the structure will be enlarged to almost double its size. It is planned to include in the new addition a library, study hall, manual training rooms, domestic science rooms, auditorium, gymnasium annex, recitation rooms and cafeteria.*

*The need of a cafeteria is apparent, Mr. Sweeney said. At the present time there are fully 300 students who are compelled to bring lunch baskets to school.*

*Just what method the board of education will employ to finance the project has not yet been decided but it was stated that another bond issue will be the logical step. Members of the board and Mr. Sweeney have been studying the situation for the last three months and it is expected that a complete report will be forthcoming within the near future.*

*The subject was discussed at the regular meeting of the board last night, but definite action was deferred.*



***The 10-room Roosevelt School, sometimes referred to as the Skidmore School, was constructed on a lot on the northwest corner of Hemlock Street and Hoadley Avenue at a cost of \$110,672.40, and was dedicated November 1, 1926. [John Alquist/Breitung Township]***

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In her reminiscence titled “New Beginnings: Life in Early Breitung”, Mary (Weinert) Erickson Sundberg wrote:

*In Hiawatha [The Weinert family moved from the Manistique area to Kingsford.] we went to a one-room school that had outdoor toilets, but now we went to the new **West Breitung School** in the middle of the 200 block of **Lyman Street** where they had flush toilets inside!*

*The school soon became crowded and it was necessary to have half of the students go in the mornings and the other half in the afternoons. Later, portable wooden schools were moved in on **Sterling Street**, the entrance, with cloakroom and chemical toilets between the north and south wings. When the new **Roosevelt School** (named after Teddy) was built we marched over to the **Hemlock Street** school, teachers leading the way and entered the beautiful, new school. Classes were from kindergarten through sixth grade.*

***Roosevelt School** went through the sixth grade, so when our class passed into the seventh grade we had to go to the **Garden Village School**. This was on the east side of **Carpenter Avenue**, and we could cross at either **Breen or Breitung Avenue**. **Sagola Avenue** ended at **Parkway Street**, above **Sewer Creek**, where it bubbled and steamed below a steep bank. Posts with heavy cables prevented drivers from going over the edge.*

*Barriers are meant to be overcome, right? So, a few daring kids climbed over the cables and slid down the embankment*

*to the creek. Hopping from one slippery rock to another the most daring took this shortcut to school. Unfortunately, some slipped and fell in. Getting wet would have been bad enough, but the smell was overpowering! Of course, they had to go home and clean up and change clothes and be late for school.*

*Some of the kids from East Kingsford, who had no need to cross the creek, tried it just for the fun of it! Of course, this upset the teachers. The problem was solved when a wooden bridge and steps were built. This served until Sagola Avenue was extended to join Carpenter Avenue. The site of this bridge is where the Franks Chiropractic Care Center is now.*

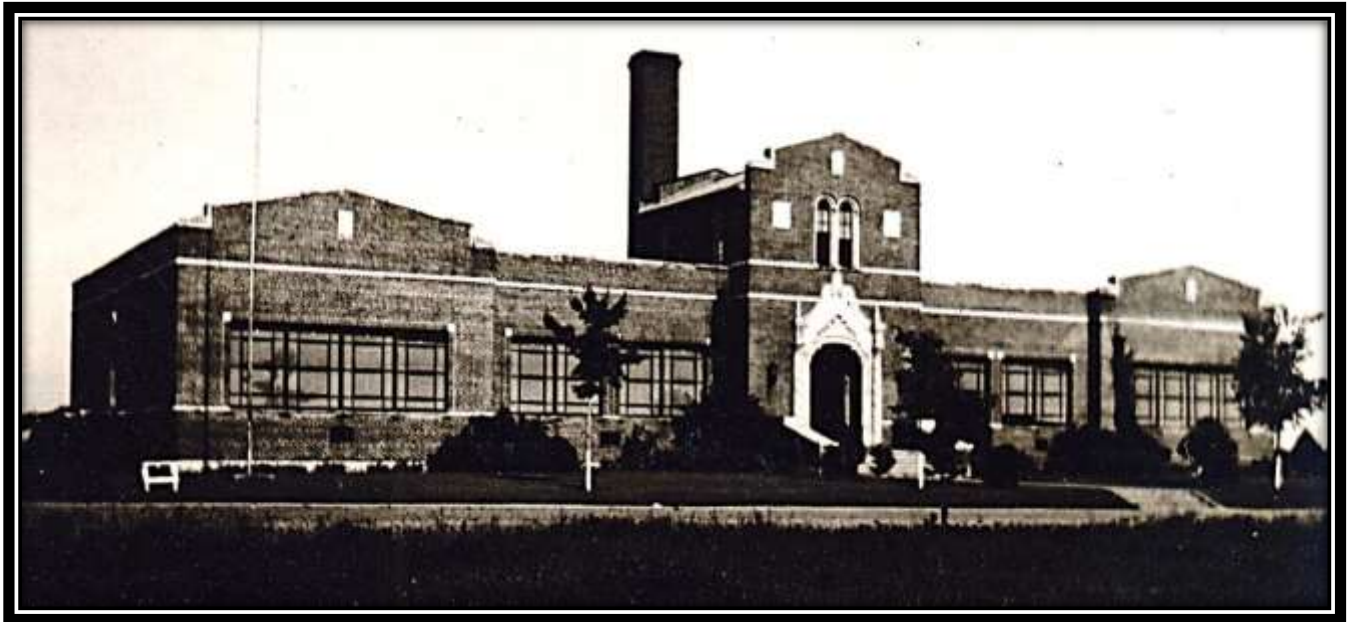
*When we went to Kingsford High School, we still had problems with the creek as we walked along the Ford fence. The corner at East Boulevard came perilously close to the creek. Here the path slanted down toward the water and on icy days became very slippery and there were some accidents. Our woolen gloves stuck to the damp wire of the fence, so we had to take off our gloves and cling to the wire while still hanging on to our books. The creek steamed its way past Kingsford High School and when the wind was from the east all windows had to be closed. North of Hamilton Avenue the creek had been covered.*

*A WPA project (1933 or 1934) finally put an end to the problem when the stream was piped to about a block from where it entered the Menominee River near the Aurora Bridge.*



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*The Lincoln School, constructed for a cost of \$70,774.25 at the southeast corner of South Jackson Street and Breen Avenue in the Ferndale-East Kingsford area, was officially dedicated December 2, 1926, marking the completion of an extensive three-year building program. This school was sometimes referred to as the Ferndale School. Declining enrollment resulted in a recommendation by the state department of public instruction in August, 1942, to close the Lincoln School, as well as the Quinnesec High School. It was suggested that students from the Lincoln School could easily be absorbed by the Garden Village School at the time. [John Alquist/Breitung Township]*

Crowded conditions were also felt in neighboring Iron Mountain.

In the **May 29, 1925** edition of *The Iron Mountain News*, under the headline **School Addition Formally Opened: Two Hundred Attend Program at Washington Last Night**, the following article appeared:

*Formal opening of the new addition to the **Washington school** was held last evening under the auspices of the Parent-Teacher Association, about 200 being present.*

*Five new class rooms [sic – classrooms] and a gymnasium have been added making a total of 11 class rooms [classrooms], which is ample to take care of the increased attendance at the school.*

*A varied program was presented last evening, entertainment being furnished by the grade children who presented a musicale matinee. **G.P. Fugere** represented the board of education, explaining the work and policy of the board in carrying on the school program.*

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*Located on the southeast corner of Washington Avenue and East D Street, the six-room Washington School was constructed in 1900. The two-room addition was constructed in 1908, and another addition took place in 1924. The orthopedic room was added in the classes in 1925. The structure was razed in November, 1969. [William J. Cummings]*

In the **July 25, 1925** edition of The Iron Mountain News, under the headline **New North Side School Modern in Every Detail: Building Will Be Ready For Occupancy When Fall Term Opens**, the following article on what became the **Amidon School** appeared:

*The North Side school now nearing completion will be ready for occupancy at the opening of the school term in September.*

*Built on spacious lines, with modern features of heating, ventilation, and convenience, the school is adequate to more than take care of the overflow from the many grades.*

*Last year, owing to crowded conditions, it was necessary to report [sic – resort] to half day attendance, in spite of which most of the lower grade classes were large enough to be unwieldy.*

**Turned Over To Board.**

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*The construction of the building is the work of the Phelps Drake company. It was started toward the latter part of September. The general contract was completed early in June, when the building was turned over to the school board.*

*Heating, plumbing and wiring have proceeded simultaneously with the construction of the school, where necessary, and since then the finishing touches have been added.*



***Stamped October 19, 1912 on the reverse, this photograph shows the Farragut School (left), located at the corner of Vulcan and Fifth Streets, and the Chapin School (right), located at the corner of Vulcan Street and Sixth Streets, in Iron Mountain’s Chapin Location on the North Side. The two-story brick structure, named in honor of Henry A. Chapin, the fee owner of the Chapin Mine, was constructed in 1889, and originally contained six rooms and a basement, but four more rooms were added later. The building was razed in 1949. Constructed in 1899, the two-story brick Farragut School was named in honor of Admiral David Glasgow Farragut, admiral of the U.S. Navy during the Civil War, who is best remembered in popular culture for his order at the Battle of Mobile Bay, usually paraphrased “Damn the torpedoes, full speed ahead.” The Amidon School, named in honor of L.E. Amidon, Iron Mountain’s superintendent of schools from 1898 to 1915, was erected in same area in 1924, and still stands today, now serving as an apartment building. [Menominee Range Historical Museum]***

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*The school is situated on the same property with the **Farragut** and **Chapin schools**, this location having been [sic – been] chosen because of the possibility that the street on which it faces may be condemned, and the property spreading before the school used as a playground and school park for the three buildings.*

*The school is 135 feet long, 89 feet high [sic – wide], and two stories in height, and is faced with tangerine colored brick with Bedford stone trim.*

*Its construction is semi-fire proof. That is to say, the construction of its corridors throughout is such that the pupils may at all times have access to safety, though the remainder of the building be burning.*

*Ornamental plastering, terrazz [sic – terrazzo] floors and red oak woodwork, [sic] combine to form an interesting interior.*

## **Social Center Room.**

*The building is equipped with a large social center room, which combines as an entertainment place, with a large an [sic – and] attractive stage, and gymnasium.*

*There is a kitchen back of the stage provided so that banquets and lesser affairs in which refreshments are part of the entertainment may be held in the building.*

*A clinic room for the school examining physician, and dentist, and a public waiting room off the principal’s office are two new features incorporated in its construction.*

*A large room to be used at present as a library may be converted if desired into an additional class room.*

*There are seven grade rooms, very large and well and scientifically lighted.*

*The ventilation is very modern and highly endorsed by health authorities.*



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*Located at the southwest corner of Carpenter Avenue and West F Street, the Lincoln School, designed by Architect J.E. Clancy, was built in 1896. The two-story brick structure contained eight classrooms, but only the first-floor classrooms were completed initially. A contract to finish three of the uncompleted second-floor classrooms was let on June 15, 1900, to Parmelee & Son for \$2,445. In 1925 an addition was made to the structure which included a gymnasium. This undated view was probably taken in the 1920's. [Menominee Range Historical Museum]*