

**HISTORY OF GROWTH
OF
SOUTH HUNTINGTON SCHOOLS**

**Compiled by
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Central Elementary School**

**In 1964
with
subsequent revisions**

HISTORY OF GROWTH of SOUTH HUNTINGTON SCHOOLS

"SOUTH HUNTINGTON HIGH SCHOOL Awards Diplomas to 77" ... this astonishing headline is from the newspaper, SOUTH HUNTINGTON BULLETIN, published on June 30, 1955.

Present enrollment of the class of June 1965 stands now at 635! (Ten years of growth) Well, you may say, what was it like in the beginning?

According to Mr. Roy Lott, Town Historian, in approximately 1892, Long Swamp School (Common School District #12), a crude structure with wooden desks and benches built around the walls and a square stove in the middle was the first of three schools in the area. The "necessities" were housed outside the building, and drinking water was provided by a cistern from the roof through a drainpipe into a well. A "privileged" boy was given the job of going out for a bucket of water which was used as drinking water by his classmates. One dipper served all.

The third school built in the area, Depot Road School, dates from 1912 and still stands in the triangle made by Depot Road, Melville Road, and Jericho Turnpike. The year 1912 saw the building of the original West Hills School on West Jericho Turnpike by Common School District #13 also.

The original West Hills PTA was founded on October 19, 1918 by eight mothers as a Mothers Club, and in October 1919 became a "Congress" PTA with Mrs. Charles Kissam as its first President.

After a vote by the taxpayers of 73-67, to consolidate Districts #12 and #13, the present South Huntington Union Free School District #13 came into being in 1924.

In 1925, the South Huntington Depot Road PTA (now Silas Wood PTA) was organized under the guidance of Mrs. George Korbman, its first President and her daughter, Mrs. S. Weaver. These two PTAs combined their efforts many times to support the School Board's attempts to provide better facilities for the children in District #13. They raised money to buy lantern slides, a motion picture projector, a mimeograph machine, and athletic equipment. They provided milk and cod-liver oil for undernourished children and concerned themselves with the safety of buildings, etc.

In 1925, they went "all out" to support the School Board in its plans to build an elementary school (the original part of the present Central Elementary School which was added to, renovated, and re-opened in September 1960.) This building project was the "building to end all building in District #13"!

Central School opened its doors in 1928. All high school children, however, attended Huntington High School until 1931, when the first high school class graduated from Central School. It is interesting to note that 15 students comprised this first South Huntington High School graduation class.

From 15 in 1931 to 77 in 1955, to 635 (projected) in 1965 .. that IS growth!

Even though Central School became a High School and was called the South Huntington High School, it was not until 1945 that the nucleus of the first high school PTA was formed. It was then that Mr. Theodore Valentine, Music Instructor, was instrumental in forming a "Band Mothers Club" to assist the band in its activity. Central PTA (it later became the South Huntington JR-SR High School PTA) emerged from this club with Mrs. Mae Rivers as its first President. It combined both grade and high schools in its membership, but as the school district grew, it parted from this combined unit. (A "Theodore Valentine Vocal Music Award" is still presented each year by the Silas Wood PTA in memory of its founder.

AND WE grew and GREW and GREW ...

The original Central School was built in 1927 on 4.594 acres of land which cost \$2,625 per acre, at a building cost of \$325,000. It opened in 1928. In the Spring of 1929, at a special meeting, the voters defeated by 150 to 4 the question of whether to close Depot Road School and the West Hills School on Jericho Turnpike (which according to "Huntington-Babylon Town History, published by the Huntington Historical Society, was actually the second school called West Hills built by Common School District #13 in 1910. The first, which burned down in the 1800s was located south of Jericho Turnpike, north of Chichester House " in the connecting piece of road" made "by the lower road out of Sweet Hollow" and "the east fork from the plain in the lower hills.") As a consequence, the two small schools remained open and were used as annexes until 1957.

In 1936, a proposition to purchase property for a new 20-room elementary school was defeated.

The next year, 1937, the total enrollment rose to 900 in the three schools, and the district had 34 teachers in its employ.

In 1946-47, the enrollment climbed to 1,110 and in 1956-58, it had risen to 4,800 with 240 teachers. As of November 13, 1965, it has soared to 10,627 with 569 teachers! Phenomenal? Indeed!

But let us see how our interested citizens, capable Boards of Education, and alert Administrators tried to keep pace with the "population explosion" in South Huntington Union Free School District #13 in spite of set-backs -- and there have been a few.

A prediction in 1959 based on the Town Officials' information that South Huntington was only 58% saturated with homes, gave rise to the possibility of 9,270 pupils in 1962 and a projection of 12,600 pupils in 1967-68. It might just be that the student population will exceed even their "wildest dreams."

In the years between 1927 and 1952, as the district grew, various means were used to provide classrooms for the children. The basement rooms at Depot Road and West Hills were used. Space was rented in a building on Birchwood Drive, which is now known as the Birchwood Home for the Aged, as well as a room in the original Gloria Dei Church on East 18 Street, and rooms in Cold Spring Harbor School for kindergarten classes, but no new buildings were acquired.

In 1944, the voters approved the purchase of 15 acres of land known as the Fischer Farm for a Junior High School as well as 15 additional acres to the rear of the Central School. A proposal to purchase three additional sites in 1948 was defeated. The building of the Silas Wood Elementary School was approved in 1949, to be built on the Fischer land. This elementary school opened its doors in 1952 with Mr. Arthur L. Ball, Principal. Mr. Ball had been principal of the Depot Road School since 1945, and was director of the Adult Education Program for South Huntington from its start in 1946.

In 1951, the voters approved the purchase of 62.1 acres of land known as the Oakley Farm, west of Central Elementary, but legal action held up the acquisition of the land until after the option had expired, and the property was sold to developers. (It is quite interesting to note that this acreage was available to the school district at approximately \$2,657 an acre; not too much more than the original purchase twenty-four years earlier.. and it brought approximately \$7,000 an acre on the open market.)

PTAs Join Forces to Help Ease the Growth of our Expanding District

Double sessions were necessary as a stop-gap measure in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Many of the children who have graduated from high school in the last few years knew naught but half-day schooling, with few special subjects, for most of their elementary school days, and there were extra jobs for teachers and administrators alike.

In fact, as Miss Irene Behrens, one of our most revered kindergarten teachers for many years, wrote, in an article for the first issue of the South Huntington Teachers Association publication, The South Huntington Herald, in 1957, "Let us never forget these unsung heroes and heroines, "the Head Teachers of the Little Buildings." "These super men and women answered the phone all day, registered new entrants, appeased irate parents, counted milk money, checked all classroom registers, requisitioned supplies, received distinguished visitors touring the building, loyally carried out directives of the Administration, and incidentally, managed to inspire a roomful of jumping jacks enough to teach them."

The three PTAs (Central, South Huntington-Depot Road, and West Hills) did their best to help publicize the growing need for more space during these years. They formed a PTA Council in 1950, with Mr. G. Mitchell, West Hills PTA, as President; Mrs. John Donnelly, Vice President; Mrs. Ethel Runyon of Central PTA and Mrs. Dorothy Burgess, then President of South Huntington-Depot Road PTA, as Board Members.

In 1952, when Silas Wood School opened, the Council disbanded, the Central PTA became known as the South Huntington High School PTA with Mrs. Amelia Felton as President (Central was then used as a high school) and the other two elementary PTAs voted to combine forces as the South Huntington Elementary Schools PTA, with Mrs. Dorothea Hatter as its first President.

Mr. Lloyd Spahr was high school principal in 1950 and the late Mr. Thomas Calabrese became the first junior high school principal in 1953. Mr. Dodd B. Craft, who passed away in 1955, and for whom the South Huntington Teachers Association named their Student Loan Fund "In Memoriam" was then Supervising Principal.

During 1952-53, both the Elementary and High School PTAs cooperated with the school board to publicize the advisability of purchasing land for a new high school; publicize the need for qualified teachers and better salary schedules; joined forces with the Melville Civic Association and the School Board to obtain a traffic light at the Melville and Jericho intersection; purchased phonograph records and phonographs for the schools; and provided milk for underprivileged children, etc.

The Cafeteria hot lunch program started in Silas Wood School with Mrs. Josephine M. Maggiore as its Director. When Silas Wood went on double sessions shortly after opening, hot soup and sandwich lunches were served through the efforts of Mrs. Catherine Dore and Mrs. Marjorie Burford, as head cooks, after Mrs. Maggiore's resignation. The hot lunch program as we know it today, resumed in 1955 under the direction of Mrs. Rhea Cushman, and it has remained self-sustaining through the years, under her guidance, in spite of the addition of many schools.

In 1954, the School Board enlisted the aid of the two PTAs, plus civic associations, fraternal organizations, businesses, clergy, teachers, parents and students, (an impressive roster of over 490 participants) in a tremendous GET OUT THE VOTE CAMPAIGN, the first of its kind in the South Huntington District, or in Suffolk, for that matter. Mr. George Blaesi, then Board President, together with Board Members Ernest Johnson, Otto Langhans, Charles Schilling, Kenneth Dyer, John Thatcher, George Mezger, and Mrs. Senta Spring, then District Clerk, Administrators Dodd B. Craft, Arthur L. Ball, Samuel Turn, Lloyd Spahr, and Thomas Calabrese, Mrs. Ethel Runyon, High School PTA President, and Mrs. Dorothea Hatter, Elementary School PTA President, spearheaded the campaign.

A method was devised and put into practice then, which has been revised in later years through the use of Data Processing machines, and is still in use today whenever an "alert" to the voters is needed. The use of modern methods today makes the task less monumental than in that first campaign when records of names, addresses and telephone numbers were copied by hand on three sets of cards, using school records and telephone directories!

The "monumental" task of alerting the voters for the 1954 Building campaign did not have the benefit of modern machines. It was literally done by hand. Names, addresses and telephone numbers of each resident of the School District were written on 3 x 5 cards in duplicate. One set was alphabetized and one sorted according to streets in the area for use by Area Captains who enlisted the aid of one or two people on each street to act as Street Captains. Maps and lists were made for each of these Captains.

The Street Captains visited homes with brochures, telephoned the voters to urge them to register, reminded them to vote, and telephoned a third time if necessary, after a check had been made to see whether all eligible to vote had voted.

There were telephone squads, visiting and speaking groups armed with accurate information regarding the propositions; there were radio broadcasts, and sound trucks, informational meetings, as well as flyers, brochures, collars for milk bottles urging registration prior to the days set and again on voting day to remind people to vote which were distributed by the various milk companies in the area, bumper stickers for automobiles, baby sitters, drivers who picked up those who had no transportation to and from the polls, etc.

Original Central School, where the voting took place was a beehive of activity on registration and voting day, as was Silas Wood School where the Telephone Information Crew was based. It was a thorough and exhausting, but rewarding campaign that year 1954, because from its efforts an outstanding (and then unheard of) total of 3,438 votes were cast..... and the plurality favored a new junior-senior high school (Walt Whitman) plus three new elementary schools for a total cost of \$5,637,000.

Two of these schools, Birchwood School, Dr. Buck R. Rex, Principal, and Oakwood School, Mr. John J. Chase, Principal, opened in September 1955. The third, Maplewood School, Mr. Samuel Turn, Principal, "doubled up" with Silas Wood School until its building opened in January 1956.

Three new PTAs were then organized in the school district. Birchwood PTA's first President, Mrs. Phyllis Whitehead, served from 1955 to 1957, Mrs. Julia Higgins in 1957-58, Mrs. Sylvia Levine 1958-59, Mrs. Helen Pistilli for 1959-61, Mrs. Pearl Ellis in 1961-62, Mrs. Helen Falkenberg from 1961-63, and Mrs. Barbara Cummins in 1964-65. In 1957 Dr. Buck R. Rex became Assistant District Principal and Mr. Theophilis Vincent became Birchwood's Principal for one year before going into curriculum work in the District Office. In 1958 Mr. William J. Wagner, presently Birchwood's Principal, took over the helm from Mr. Vincent.

Oakwood PTA had Mrs. Margaret Vaughn as its first president in 1955-57, Mr. Norman Young in 1957-58, Mrs. Mildred Hollas in 1958-59, Mrs. Betty Woods, 1959-60, Mrs. Mildred Owens in 1960-61, Mrs. Muriel Gilman, 1961-62, Mrs. Miriam Stein, 1962-63, Mr. Hans Neuman, 1963-64, and Mrs. Beatrice Pelletier in 1964-65.

When Mr. John J. Chase became Director of Instructional Services for the District in 1962, Mr. Paul A. Lyle became Principal of the Oakwood School.

Maplewood PTA elected Eric Herold as its first President in 1955 but business reasons made it impossible for him to serve so Mrs. Rose Fassler took over for him and served again in 1956-57. Mrs. Jane Dusenbery served in 1957-58, Mrs. Marge Robertson in 1958-59, Mrs. Marianne Cantor in 1959-60, Mrs. Rose Fortune in 1960-61, Mrs. Suzanna Skidmore in 1961-62, Mrs. Friederike Lyons in 1962-63, Mrs. Ann Reed in 1963-64, and Mr. Albert J. Reed was president in 1964-65.

After being combined with West Hills PTA for three years as the South Huntington PTA, the membership of the South Huntington-Depot Road PTA voted to continue its Congress PTA membership which it had had uninterruptedly since 1938 when Mrs. John Dodds became its first Congress president and it changed its name once more, this time to the Silas Wood PTA-South Huntington, in 1955. As stated earlier in this history, there had been a PTA for the Depot Road School which had been organized in 1925 by Mrs. George Korbman and her daughter, Mrs. Weaver. Subsequent presidents in those early years were Mrs. George Walker, Mrs. M. S. Blowers, and Mrs. A. Goeller, but in 1929 this PTA disbanded. Other presidents after 1938 include Mrs. Astrid Bertram, Mrs. Jean Blinn, Mrs. Rose Canales, Mrs. Florence Eales, Mrs. Ann Gove, Mrs. Belma Holbreich, Mrs. Alice Johnson, Mrs. Emily Luyster, Mrs. L. Nielson, Mrs. Mildred Raskin, Mrs. Dorothy Burgess and Mrs. Marjorie Maas.

During the three years when the South Huntington Schools PTA encompassed the entire school district, Mrs. Dorothea S. Hatter was president from 1952 through 1954 and Mrs. Clare Currie served in 1954-55 and part of 1956. In April, 1956, when its name was changed to Silas Wood PTA, Mrs. Dorothea S. Hatter again served as president until June 1957. Mrs. Faye Fraser served from 1957 to 1959, Mrs. A. Yasik in 1959-60, Mrs. Gussie Aronson from 1960-62, Mrs. Marguerite Pinto in 1962-63, Mrs. Vicky Eberhardt in 1963-64, and Mrs. Kay Grego was elected for 1964-65.

The present Walt Whitman High School PTA, formerly the South Huntington Junior-Senior High School PTA, evolved, as stated earlier, from the original Central School PTA, with Mrs. Mae Rivers as its first president in 1945-47, Mr. Walter Scher in 1947-48, Mr. Charles Schilling in 1948-50, Mr. William Yandel in 1950-51, Mrs. Amelia Felton in 1951-52, Mrs. Ethel Runyon from 1952-54, and Mrs. Anne Wicks in 1954-55. When Mrs. Sylvia Cullen became president in 1955, a "Career Night" was instituted, whereby representatives of leading businesses and professions as well as guidance counselors, met with parents to give some idea of future opportunities for their children, and many other interesting projects were launched which are being continued each year. Mrs. Cullen served another year and was followed by Mrs. Audrey Volckmann in 1957-58, Mr. John Walker in 1958-59, Mrs. Eleanor Spahr in 1959-60, Mrs. Edith Miller in 1960-61, Mrs. Nancy Sample in 1961-62, Mrs. Jane Carroll in 1962-63, Mrs. Helen Brown in 1963-64, and Mrs. Patricia Gibson in 1964-65.

In March 1956, another bond issue of \$5,967,000 was approved by the voters to build three more elementary schools and a Junior High School (Memorial) and to buy two additional sites for future expansion under the Emergency State Aid Act. According to the New York Times on March 4, 1956, "Union School District 13 has been informed by Assistant District Superintendent Dr. John Dooley that a proposed \$5,750,000 building program actually will cost the taxpayers only \$89 under the Emergency State Aid Act."¹

¹ Quoted from New York Times, issue of March 4, 1956.

September 1956, saw Central School in use, housing only six sixth-grades and twelve seventh grades, with Mr. Robert G. McNutt as its Principal.

Walt Whitman High School opened its doors at this time with grades 8 through 12, though there are those among us who remember that it was not completely finished at that time.

1956 also brought Mr. Paul H. Benedict to the district as District Principal and he set up his offices and those of the Board of Education in the basement of the West Hills School on Jericho Turnpike, while classes went on overhead.

In 1957, the seventh grades were housed in Birchwood School while grades 8 through 12 still attended Walt Whitman High School.

Beverly Hill Elementary School opened in October, 1957 with Dr. Raymond Russell as Principal. Its PTA was soon organized and Mrs. Hazel Maickel was its first president, serving until 1959, followed by Mrs. Kay Frey, 1959-61, Mrs. Elizabeth Agneta, 1961-63, Mrs. Selma Lowell in 1963-64, and Mrs. Betty Winiarski in 1964-65.

Pidgeon Hill Elementary School, Mr. Robert G. McNutt, Principal, opened in September 1957. Pidgeon Hill Elementary School PTA organized in 1957, had as its first President until 1959, Mrs. Elwyn Wallace; Mrs. Kitty Prep in 1959-60, Mrs. Mae Knee in 1960-61, Mrs. Patricia Reilly in 1961-62, Mr. Loughlin J. Smith in 1962-63. Mrs. Doris West in 1963-64 and in 1964-65, Mrs. Florence Soss.

In September 1958 the new West Hill Elementary School on Weston Street opened with Mr. William Bosch as Principal. The original West Hill PTA, as mentioned before, started in 1918. Among its presidents were the Mesdames: Albert Brown, Dana Corey, Neil Dahl, Isabella Driscoll, C. Eckman, L. Faust, A. Felton, E. Geissinger, William Graeser, L. Hutchinson, F. Jahrling, H. Jos, Joseph Matthews, C. Probeck, G. Reeves, William Roberts, A. Rosenthal, M. Schow, E. Taylor, and Stanley Winter. The founders included Mrs. Charles Kissam, Mrs. Soper, Mrs. A. Wesick, Mrs. J. Schofield, Mrs. L. Baylis, and Mrs. Graham Smith. Two men also served as presidents during these early years, Mr. Harvey Clarkson and Mr. William Kaufman.

After combining with the South Huntington Depot Road PTA in 1952 through 1955, this PTA was reorganized as the West Hill School PTA in 1958 with Mrs. Clare Currie as its first President. Mrs. Naomi Moss served in 1959-60, Mrs. Norma Peterson in 1961-62, Mrs. Emmalou Kirchmeier from September 1963 to November 1963 when Mrs. Agnes Klein, its 1964 President took over. In September 1964, Mr. William Bosch transferred to Pidgeon Hill Elementary School as Principal, upon the resignation of Mr. Vincent Spinella who had been Pidgeon Hill Principal since 1960, following Mr. Robert G. McNutt's return to Central Elementary School. Mr. John DiPreta is currently Principal at West Hill School.

September 1958 saw the opening of the Memorial Junior High School. Enrollment had increased so alarmingly in the junior high school area that an additional \$555,000 was approved by the voters in February, 1958 before it was finished, to provide for additional classrooms, all-purpose area, etc. Its PTA was organized after it opened with Mrs. Frances Stahl who served as its first president until 1960. Mrs. Marion Stubbart served in 1960-61, Mrs. Agnes Cavanaugh in 1961-62, Mrs. Suzanna Skidmore in 1964-65.

Mr. Thomas Calabrese, Principal, passed away in 1963 and the school's library has been named in his memory. Mr. Robert Guizzetti, who served as one of the assistants, has been named Principal of Memorial Junior High School commencing 1965, to succeed Dr. Lawson Rutherford who is to be Principal of Stimson Junior High School when it opens in September 1965.

With the opening of the "Hill" Schools in 1957-58, consideration was given to the possibility of selling the original Central School and it stood idle while its fate was being decided. After thorough investigation it was felt that since it was structurally sound, though deteriorated after thirty years of use, it would still be practical to redesign and "add to" Central at a cost of \$1,449,000. Plans were made at this time also to accommodate the Board of Education offices (which had been housed in the old West Hill School on Jericho Turnpike, known affectionately as "The Little Red School House") on the third floor of the new Central Elementary School's original building.

When Central Elementary School, Mr. Robert G. McNutt, Principal and Mr. Paul A. Lyle, Assistant Principal, opened its doors in September 1960, many of the "old-timers" were amazed at the renovations made to the original building. What had been the "old" gymnasium with its two story open balcony was now a very shiny new cafetorium with translucent walls along two sides of the former open second story balcony, and a solid wall where once one could enter from the street and peer down on the activities in the gymnasium below. Handsome showcases now close part of that former entrance. The cafetorium (combination cafeteria and auditorium) has a large stage at one end and where the old storage rooms of the old gymnasium used to be, there is a nicely tiled, well-lighted kitchen with modern equipment. Above this "general purpose" room, where the original auditorium with stage and fixed seats used to be, is a very complete "two-station" gymnasium, complete with offices and locker rooms. The new two story addition to the rear of the original building holds the main offices and classrooms similar in style to the "Hills" Schools. The first and second floors of the original building hold classrooms which have been entirely renovated and the third floor is devoted to the air-conditioned offices of the District Office (Board of Education).

Another elementary school PTA was organized in South Huntington School District, and was called Central School PTA. This PTA does not claim any previous history since the original by this name was in the secondary school area most of the time. Mrs. Anne Sivec served as its first president for two years; Mrs. Wardean Henry from 1962-64 and presently Mrs. Rita Siegel is president.

Memorial Junior H.S. found it necessary to use some classrooms at Pidgeon Hill Elementary School in September, 1960. It was then that a study was made and the recommendations to acquire 12.7 acres of land to build an addition to Walt Whitman H.S. as well as additions to Birchwood and Maplewood Elementary schools were approved. These came under the Emergency Aid for the entire cost of land, additions, and equipment.

For the first year in Central's new quarters, the Board of Cooperative Services (BOCES) rented the first floor of the original building for its special classes. In 1961, however, these rooms were needed for Central's own children and by 1963, it was necessary to house some of Central's second grades (and several Kindergartens from other schools) in the new addition to Walt Whitman High School which had been approved in 1962 by the taxpayers. At this same time, approval was given for the construction of a new junior high school (The Henry L. Stimson JHS, Dr. Lawson Rutherford, Principal) on a previously purchased site on Oakwood Road. This school opened in September 1965-- also a new elementary school, Countrywood, with Mr. John Henderson as Principal, opened in September, 1964. Countrywood PTA was organized shortly after the school opened. Its first president was Mr. Edward Kelly.

In 1962, the South Huntington Union Free School District No. 13 of Huntington, N.Y., became a Superintendency and Dr. Jack Hornback, the present Superintendent came to the District in July of that year, as did Dr. Robert Blanchard, as one of his assistants. Ten years previously, Mr. Joseph A. DePalma, the present Assistant Superintendent for Business Affairs, left the Business department of the high school to become both District Clerk and Business Administrator of the District. As the District grew, the position of District Clerk was filled by Mr. Robert Bossardet in 1963. He also supervises the District's Data Processing.

When Dr. Blanchard left in 1964, the position was filled by Mr. Charles A. Connell, who, from 1958 when Mr. Lloyd Spahr left, had been Walt Whitman High School principal. Mr. Russell Orlando was Acting Principal in 1964-65, having served as Assistant Principal to Mr. Connell. Mr. Woodrow Zaros joined the South Huntington Schools in July 1965 as Walt Whitman High School Principal.

When Woodrow Zaros became Principal of Walt Whitman High School in July 1965, Mr. Russell Orlando, then Acting Principal, resumed his former position of Assistant. Mrs. Dolores Eklund continued as Assistant Principal in Walt Whitman H.S., having assumed that role in 1964.

As the District grew, positions were created in the Administration offices. Mrs. Muriel Gilman was appointed Personnel Officer in 1963. Dr. John L. David, present Director of Pupil Personnel Services came to the District that same year. Mr. John deRosa continued as Supervisor of Attendance, which position he has held in South Huntington since 1954. 1964 brought to our District, Mr. Joseph Del Rosso as Director of Academic Services and Dr. Orville F. Rush Jr., as Supervisor of Mathematics and Science. Mr. John M. Hansen has been Clerk of the Works since 1960, while Mr. John Arcaro has held his position as Supervisor of Transportation since 1948. Mr. George Lesko ably assisted him from 1961 to 1964 when he left the District and Mr. Stephen Burke replaced him.

Mr. Morgan Larsen, present Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds, came to the District in 1964 as did Mr. Harold Molinelli as Purchasing Agent and Mr. Joseph F. Singleton as Administrative Assistant to Mr. DePalma.

With one exception, Central, the following larger elementary schools have only had their full-time Assistant Principals since 1964. At Birchwood, Mr. Alfred Mendelsohn, at Maplewood, Mr. Robert C. Bird and Silas Wood, Mr. Harry Kent have filled these positions. The exception, Central, has had an Assistant Principal since 1960. Mr. James Spatola replaced Mr. Paul A. Lyle in 1962 when the latter became Principal of Oakwood School.

In September 1965, Mr. Bird was appointed Countrywood's principal, replacing Mr. John Henderson who resigned. Mr. Howard Link filled the vacancy thus created in Maplewood as Assistant Principal.

In September 1965, Mr. John J. Chase assumed the role of Director of Staff Personnel when Mrs. Gilman resigned. Mr. Franklin Cass took over the duties of purchasing agent when Mr. Molinelli left earlier in 1965. September 1965 also saw Mr. Robert Young filling the vacancy of Physical Education Director created by the resignation of Dr. Alfred McCay. Also in 1965, Mr. Gerald Chabot succeeded Dr. McCay who had briefly served as Adult Education Director, following Mr. Arthur L. Ball who had directed this program for approximately seventeen years. September 1965, also brought Mr. John A. DeSilva to District 13 as Administrative Assistant to Dr. Hornback.

In September 1966, Mr. Jack Nidds was appointed Principal of Stimson Jr. H.S. upon Dr. Rutherford's resignation.

In some schools there are full-time special teachers and in others, their services are shared. There are elementary special teachers in Art, Music, both Vocal and Instrumental (Band and Stringed), Librarians, School Nurse-Teachers, Reading and Speech Specialists, School Psychologists, Physical Education teachers, Social Workers, and many other special area teachers in this school district, in addition to the regular classroom teachers.

In 1965, Mr. Leonard Adriance was appointed Music Coordinator. In 1966, Mrs. Galvin assumed the role of Art Coordinator.

There are others, working in the non-teaching areas, who are vastly important to the operation of the school district, such as bus drivers, cafeteria personnel, custodians, maintenance personnel, and office personnel, secretaries, etc.

South Huntington School District has grown in the last forty years from a sparsely inhabited, quiet, countryfied area with woods, ponds, potato fields, and two "little" schools (the population total in 1920 was 1,200; in 1930 - 3,500; in 1940 - 4,700; in 1950 - 8,500; and in 1958 - 26,407) to a bustling community complete with a South Huntington Public Library (established in 1960 and opened in the

basement rooms at Central Elementary School in 1961), a Movie Theatre, a Fire House, a Bowling Alley, magnificent shopping centers, one with an enclosed mall, numerous stores, banks, services, light industries, more people, more traffic, better roads, and, at present writing, nine elementary schools, one double-sized high school, two junior high schools, plus two little school buildings (Depot Road and "old" West Hills which are 'retired' and await their fate because of their age), which are the net result of much forethought, planning, and hard work.

It has been estimated that the school district which covers 15 square miles, is now (in 1965) saturated with the building of homes, etc. Dr. Hornback reported to the School Board in 1965 that by 1968, 13,408 pupils are anticipated and even on the basis of 30 pupils per room in the elementary schools and double kindergarten sessions, our current capacity of 12,260 would be inadequate by 1967. In February 1966 a referendum was approved to build additions to Countrywood, Oakwood and Beverly Hill and to improve the Walt Whitman High School Athletic Field. So it is easy to see that current South Huntington Board of Education members are always looking ahead and thinking about possible solutions, as did their many predecessors. I for one, think that all involved have done an excellent job over the years and I have confidence in the future of our District through its citizen interest and concern and our administrators' efforts to always do what is best for the children - our leaders of tomorrow.

Originally compiled February 28, 1965

and revised 1966

- - - Dorothea S. Hatter

Credits:

Huntington & Babylon Town History,
published by Huntington Historical Society - 1937

History of Our School District,
obtained from Mr. John Starkey of the Social Studies Dept. Memorial Jr. H.S.

Huntington Tap Roots - Town Historian, Roy E. Lott - 1960.

South Huntington Reporter - Issues from 1960 to date.

About Your Schools - published by school district - issues from 1951-1960.

The Huntington Bulletin - Articles written and compiled by author of this series expressly for that publication in 1955.

Histories of PTAs compiled by author of this series from The Long Islander, past Officers, Minutes of PTAs, etc. in 1953 and 1965.

Encouragement and editing assistance from Mrs. Norma Sinclair, Centra-Lite Newspaper editor, PTA publication,

New York Times - March 4, 1956.

Plus "living through it" since 1945 when author moved to this area and child attended Grades K through 12.

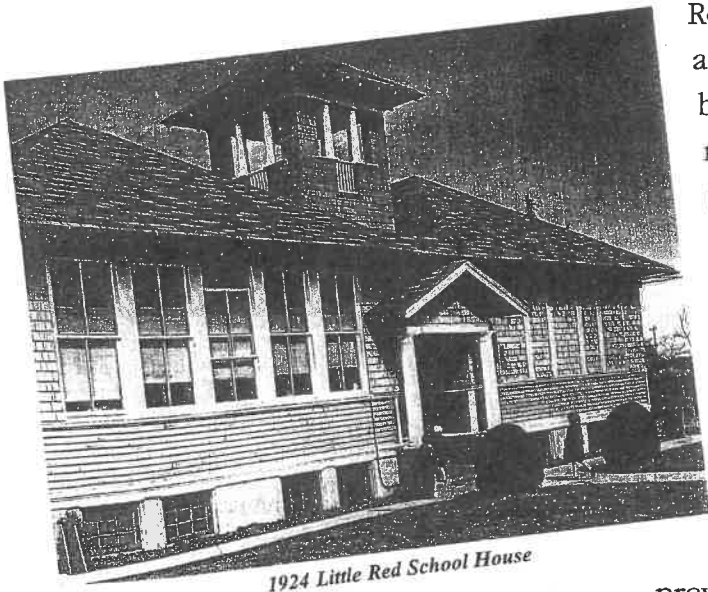
History of the South Huntington School District

Beginnings and Growth – the 1920's through the 1960's

In the forty-two years between 1924 and 1966, the South Huntington School District grew from a sparsely inhabited, quiet, countrified area with woods, ponds, potato fields, and two "little schools" to a bustling community complete with a South Huntington Public Library (established in 1960 and opened in 1961), a movie theatre, a fire house, a bowling alley, magnificent shopping centers (one with an enclosed mall), numerous stores, banks, services, light industries, more people, more traffic, better roads, and at present writing, nine elementary schools, one double-sized high school, two junior high schools, plus two little school buildings (Depot Road and "old" West Hills which are retired and await their fate because of their age), which are the net result of much forethought, planning, and hard work.

(Quote from Dorothea Hatter's history, last revised in 1966)

The history of the South Huntington Schools is a history of two separate Districts, West Hills, Common School District #13 and South Huntington, Common School District #12. The first of three schools in the South Huntington School system was Long Swamp School. Built in 1892 by Common District #12, the Long Swamp School was on the same site now occupied by the South Huntington Public Library. According to Mr.



Roy Lott, Town Historian, Long Swamp School was a crude structure with wooden desks and benches built around the walls and a square stove in the middle. The "necessities" were housed outside the building and drinking water was provided by a cistern from the roof through a drainpipe into a well. A "privileged" boy was given the job of going out for a bucket of water which was used as drinking water by his classmates. One dipper served all.

The Depot Road School (Common School District #12) was built in 1912. Two years

previously, in 1910, the West Hills School had been constructed on Jericho Turnpike west of New York Avenue. Before that time, it is apparent that the school was maintained in what was known as the Branch School House which was situated at the corner of 6th Avenue and Oklahoma Avenue in Huntington Station and in the Little "Red" School house in the West Hills section.

After a vote by 140 taxpayers on December 10, 1924, District #12 and #13 consolidated and became the present South Huntington Union Free School District.

In 1925, the PTAs and residents went "all out" combining their efforts to support the School Board in its plan to build an elementary school (Central). This building was proposed as "the building to end all buildings in District #13!" Central School opened its doors in 1928. The student population at that time

totaled 325. All high school children, however, attended Huntington High School until 1931, when the first high school class of 15 students graduated from Central School. By 1937 the total pupil enrollment had risen to 900, and the faculty numbered 34.

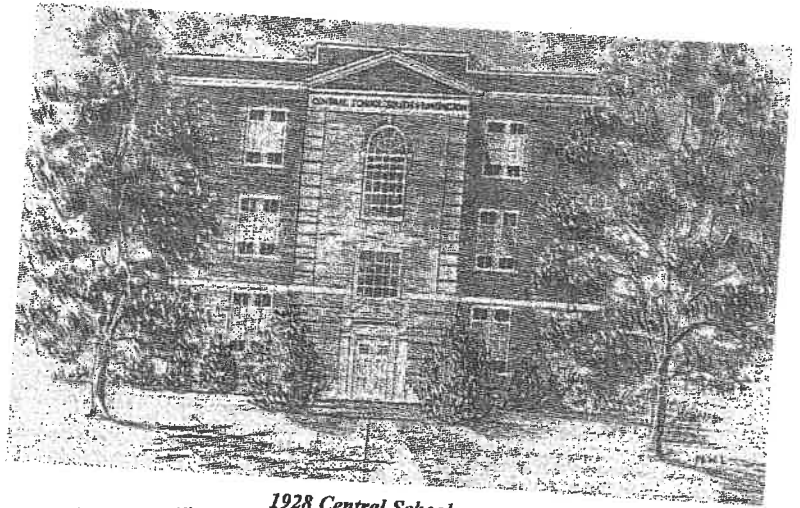
Between the years 1927 and 1952, the district grew and grew and grew. During this time no new buildings were acquired and various means were used to provide classrooms for children. The basement rooms at Depot Road and West Hill Schools were used; space was rented in a building on Birchwood Drive; a room in the original Gloria Dei Church on

East 18th Street was used; and rooms were secured in the

Cold Spring Harbor School for kindergarten classes. In 1944, the voters approved the purchase of fifteen acres known as the Fischer Farm for a junior high school, as well as fifteen additional acres to the rear of Central School.

By 1946 the enrollment had climbed to 1,100 students. The Silas Wood Elementary School, approved in 1949, opened its doors in 1952.

Double sessions were necessary as a temporary measure in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Many children graduated from high school experiencing only half-day schooling with few special subjects during most of their elementary days.



1928 Central School



1954: Laying the cornerstone at Birchwood School. Bob Trimmer, Board Member; Buck Rex, Principal; Paul Benedict, Superintendent



1954: Sam Turn, Principal, laying the cornerstone at Maplewood School.



1955: John J. Chase, Principal, with Board Members, laying the cornerstone for the opening of Oakwood School.

After the opening of Silas Wood, the original Central School building housed both the junior and senior high school students. In 1954, the voters cast an unheard of 3,438 votes, the plurality of which approved the building of three new elementary schools and a junior-senior high school. In 1955, the Birchwood Elementary and the Oakwood Elementary Schools opened for September enrollment and the Maplewood Elementary School began operations in January 1956. The student population had now risen to 4,800.

In March 1956, another bond issue was approved by the voters to build three more elementary schools, Memorial Junior High School, and the purchase of two additional sites for future expansion. September 1956 saw Central School housing six sixth grades and twelve seventh grades while grades eight through twelve moved into the new but incomplete Walt Whitman High School. In 1960, a newly renovated Central School opened, with the entire first floor of the original building rented by the Board of Cooperative Educational Services, but by 1961 these rooms were needed for Central Elementary's children. The South Huntington Public Library was housed in the basement rooms at Central in 1961.

By September 1960, Memorial Junior High School found it necessary to use some classrooms at Pidgeon Hill Elementary School and it was then that a study was undertaken and the recommendation made (which was approved by the taxpayers) to acquire 12.7 acres of land to build an addition to Walt Whitman High School and additions to Birchwood and Maplewood Elementary Schools.



June 1960: Board of Education visited the old South Huntington High School, just before its renovation as Central Elementary School. Left to right: Al Mendoza, David Westermann, Walter Baden, Lawrence Lentol, Lawrence Sommer, Desmond Reilly, William Cullen.



1962: Dr. Jack Hornback, first Superintendent of UFSD #13.

In 1962, taxpayers approved building a new junior high school on previously purchased land, a new elementary school on another district-owned site, and an addition to Silas Wood Elementary School. Countrywood Elementary School opened in September 1964 as the district's ninth elementary school and the following year Henry L. Stimson Junior High School became the district's second junior high school.

Within the ten-year period 1956 to 1966 the student population had more than doubled in size. Twelve modern buildings were in operation with nine additions to the original structures, a tremendous change from the three little schoolhouses of forty years ago.

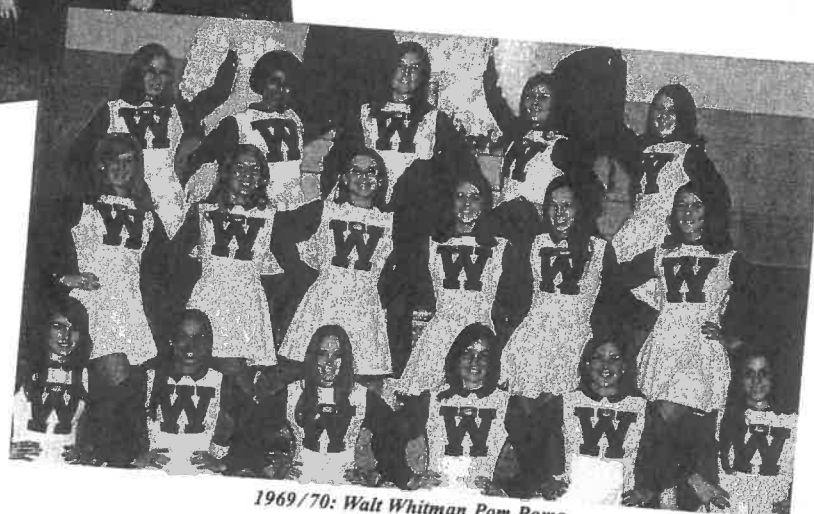
One hundred and six new teachers were hired for the 1964-65 school year, all of them undoubtedly attracted by the starting salary of \$5,400. The total population of the community was 35,162. One-third of them were students enrolled in the schools. The year 1968 was a landmark year. The student population peaked at 11,781.



1964: Mr. Charles A. Connell, Principal of Walt Whitman High School, became Superintendent



1960: Walt Whitman High School Band's director, Clement DeRosa, receives the first annual award to an outstanding school dance band, presented by The Fred Gretsch Company of Brooklyn.



1969/70: Walt Whitman Pom Poms.

Years of Transition... the 1970's, 1980's and 1990's

In 1969, the newly appointed superintendent, Mr. Charles Connell, delivered a report that was to portend the decade ahead. For the first time in the history of the school district mention was made of a student population decline. Although the junior high school and high school enrollments continued to bulge, the elementary enrollment declined by one percent, reflecting a newly discovered decline in the birth rate.



1975-76: Board of Education: (standing) Ted George; Ronald Olsson; Dr. William Kampel, VP; Joseph Shea. Seated, Joseph Kayal; Herman Gehrich, President; Alex Cover.

The fall of 1970 was marked by another first. Not only were no new teachers hired, but also six teaching positions were eliminated at the elementary level. By October 1972, the decline in enrollment was no longer gradual. The drop in enrollment was considerable enough to warrant the abolition of 47 teaching positions and the closing of two elementary schools. Pidgeon Hill was turned into an annex for Memorial Junior High School and

a Kindergarten center. Central Elementary school became an annex for the high school and later housed a BOCES program.

West Hills Elementary School closed at the conclusion of the 1974-75 school year, and in two years was converted into the district's administrative offices.



1975: Kindergartners in Housekeeping Corner.

Beverly Hill School was closed in June of 1979. The 1980-81 school year marked the end of an era in South Huntington. Two well-liked and highly respected administrators announced their retirements after many

years of service in South Huntington, Mr. Charles Connell and Mr. John Di Preta. In addition, the Supervisor of Health, Physical Education, Recreation

and Health services, Mr. Robert Young as well as three principals and one assistant principal retired. Dr. William Kampel and Mr. Stan Mason, Board of Education trustees, also retired.



1971: Love in bloom.

The student population had dropped 40% since 1968 and 426 fewer students attended South Huntington Schools in 1980 than had been in attendance in 1979. Projections were for an average student decline of 225 per year for the next seven years. The sale of buildings began. Central was sold and renovated as an office building. The Beverly Hill building was purchased and converted into a senior citizen residential facility.

By the close of the 1980's, the students were housed in four elementary schools, one early childhood center, one middle school and one

high school. In addition, the Alternative High School was opened in 1988.



1981: Dr. Daniel A. Domenech,
Superintendent of Schools
through 1994.

During the 1990-91 school year the South Huntington School District found itself in the midst of a financial crisis due to a midyear reduction in state aid. The district found it necessary to make numerous cuts during the school year. By year's end, the actions of the governor and state legislature resulted in a reduction of almost \$5 million dollars in state aid. Further reductions were predicted and in order to save substantial amounts of money, the district reorganized. Beginning with the 1992-1993 school year, Countrywood and Oakwood would be Primary Centers housing grades Kindergarten through second grade.

Birchwood and Maplewood were selected as Intermediate Schools consisting of grades 3, 4, and 5. During the initial school year, the Intermediate Schools would service students in grades 2 through 5. All sixth graders would be moved to Stimson Middle School and the Silas Wood Early Childhood Center would be closed.

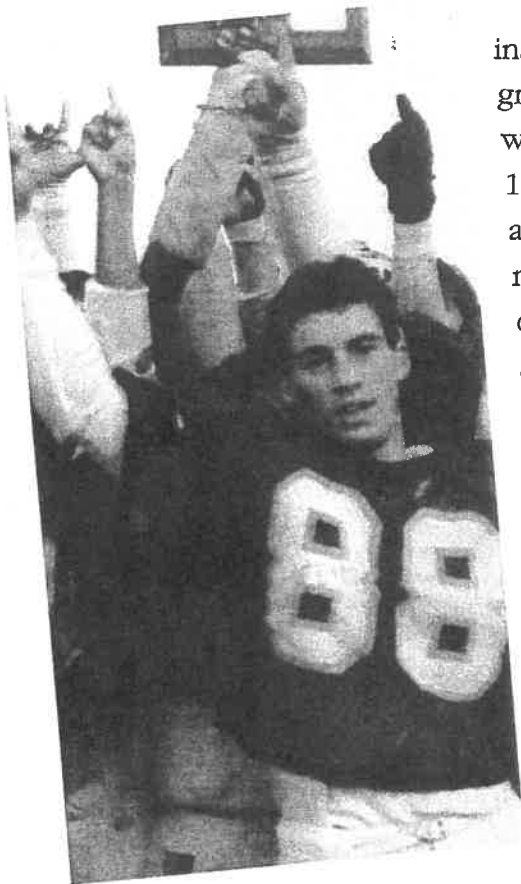
The mid-1990's witnessed fluctuating enrollments in South Huntington. In order to understand this phenomenon as well as analyze current and future



1979: Staff and parent chaperones with Walt Whitman
Marching Band at Disney World.



1983: Summer Music Program



instructional facility needs of the District, an extensive demographic study, which came to be known as the Bishop Report, was undertaken. The five-year forecast predicted that by 1999, the district would require additional classrooms for approximately 438 elementary children. Based on the enrollment trends, beginning with the 1996-97 school year and continuing for approximately 10 years, Stimson Middle School would be unable to accommodate the growing grade 6-8 population. The study also indicated that the high school had ample capacity to accommodate the grade 9-12 enrollments throughout the forecast period. During the fall of 1995, a School Use Committee was charged by the Board of Education to "present recommendations on building use and how the district can plan for and implement a combined technology/capital project bond issue." The plan that was initially approved called for the closing of Stimson Middle School and the reopening of Memorial/Pidgeon Hill as the district's new middle school. The plan also provided for the opening of

Silas Wood as a sixth grade school on a temporary basis and repairs and renovations at all of the schools. When revised cost estimates made this plan untenable, Stimson Middle School was updated as a seventh and eighth school and Silas Wood was renovated as a sixth grade annex to Stimson.

Forecasted enrollment increases continued and by 1998, approval was sought to add four portable classrooms at each elementary building. During the 1998-99 school year, modular units were added at Birchwood and Maplewood Intermediate Schools. Similar additions are scheduled for completion at Oakwood and Countrywood Primary Centers by the fall of 2000.



The Future.....

Preserving the past and planning for the future is the essence of this celebration to mark the 75th Anniversary of the district. South Huntington is once again faced with an era of growth. Technological changes in the next two years will be greater than during the past twenty. Greater demands are being made on the students, the staff, the parents and the community. In the final chapter of "Portrait of a Small Town," Dr. Sforza describes Huntington Station. It... "still represents the melting pot that all America claims to be. Its people still are a wide range of ethnic groups trying to make a better quality of life for themselves and for their children."

The word history contains the word story. The historian records history. However, it is simply a record of the story of the lives of the people who created it. The legacy of those who came before coupled with the actions of the present generation provides the

foundation for what will happen tomorrow and in the next millennium. The rest of the story is yet to be written....



***"You cannot always build the future
for our youth, but we can build our
youth for the future."***

Franklin D. Roosevelt

