



6-1-1965

The Historical Development of the Reorganized Midway School District

Harriet A. Johnston

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**THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE REORGANIZED
MIDWAY SCHOOL DISTRICT**

by

Harriet A. Johnston

B. S. in Nutrition and Dietetics, University of North Dakota 1941

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty

of the

Graduate School

of the

University of North Dakota

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Science

Grand Forks, North Dakota

**June
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This thesis submitted by Harriet A. Johnston in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Science in the University of North Dakota, is hereby approved by the Committee under whom the work has been done.

Mildred Fiedesel
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Dean of the Graduate School

PREFACE

There is danger of distorting the past in terms of the present; yet, the history of a community cannot be studied apart from the people of an area. This study represents one rural North Dakota area, comprising a group of small towns and adjoining land, and considers the impact of the geological and economic factors on their settlement and development. This study relates the history of these people to the educational institutions they developed.

Documentary research was used to obtain data from newspapers, journals, records of proceedings, superintendents' reports and private memorabilia. Interviews with residents of the area provided much information that would not otherwise have been available.

The author felt that there was little written record on the settling of the particular area, the people who laid the foundation for the education and the farming and economic development of the area. The difficulty of establishing schools, libraries, churches and other institutions was an enormous task, and this study relates the impact of the past developments to the present, through an historical perspective.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author is sincerely appreciative for the patient assistance and timely suggestions offered by Miss Mildred Riedesel of the University of North Dakota during the writing of this thesis. The author would also like to express appreciation to Dr. Alton Bjork and Dr. Merlin Duncan for assistance and encouragement.

A thesis is not written alone, and the writer is deeply indebted to many people for help. To all those who made this study possible, the writer expresses most sincere gratitude. The author would like to dedicate this thesis to the pioneers, past and present, who like Robert Frost, when, "two roads diverged in a wood, took the one less travelled by, and that has made all the difference". Without the cooperation and interest of the residents of the communities involved in this study it would not have been possible.

A special thanks to my husband, Lewis E. Johnston, for his abiding faith in the powers of an enlightened citizenry to work for the good of all.

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INTRODUCTION

Early School Development

The idea that education in the United States should be public, tax supported and coeducational did not suddenly arise in the minds of people. Such education was neither established quickly, nor was it created without effort. The idea that education may be maintained "status quo" and without problems or change is equally unfounded.

The climate for the educational developments in the country were established in the 1800's as a result of the economic, social and political changes that took place in American life and culture at that time. The Industrial Revolution, the destruction of the plantation South, the abolition of slavery, the opening of the West, the rise of organized labor, the women's rights movement, and the development of a new conception of childhood all had significant impacts on educational progress.¹ Of all of these factors, the Industrial Revolution was perhaps the major one affecting the lives of American people. The patterns of subsequent educational effort followed very closely the program of industrial development that started at that time.²

Before 1800 what manufacturing did exist was on a domestic basis. It was carried on in the shop or household mainly by the labor of

¹William E. Drake, The American School in Transition, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1955), p. 165.

²Ibid.

the family. Inventions in the fields of textiles, farm implements, transportation and communications during the 1800's revolutionized conditions in the colonies.

The successful smelting of iron ore with anthracite coal in 1830 and the discovery of the Bessemer process in 1851 made it possible to produce steel at greater quantities and at cheaper prices. Among the significant contributions to the field of agriculture were the iron plow first patented by Charles Newbold in 1797, and the reaper of Cyrus McCormick first used in 1831.³ The subsequent development of transportation, building, agriculture and engineering were dependent on the steel industry.⁴

The industrial development was not an unmixed blessing, however. With the growth of industry came the growth of the urban community. Many of the industrial wageworkers came from Europe bringing with them alien cultures, languages and customs. There was a great and challenging educational demand; but changes in economic and social conditions were necessary before it could be accomplished.

The problem of the education of the child was indelibly locked with the problem of freeing the child from the exploitation of labor. The problem was also tied up with parental attitude and with a change in the point of view of civil authorities. Colonial records indicate "that it was a matter of conscience to keep children at work."⁵

³Asbjorn B. Isaacson, "Farm Mechanization in the Red River Valley, 1870-1915" (unpublished Master's thesis, Chester Fritz Library, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, N. D., 1949), 13.

⁴Drake, 179.

⁵George Henry Payne, The Child in Human Progress (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1916), p. 332, cited in Drake, 185.

The first legislative inquiry into the conditions of child labor was undertaken in Massachusetts in 1825. State legislatures then started passing laws restricting the hours of labor for children. Labor bureaus were set up in many of the states: Massachusetts, 1869; New York, 1883; California, 1883; and, North Carolina, 1887. Strange as it may seem, the movement to look after the rights of children grew out of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. From this society, a movement was launched in 1874 to look after the rights of children on the assumption, it must not only punish crimes against children, it must prevent them.⁶

Early School Laws. -- There are varying opinions regarding the date for the establishment of public education in America. There was a measure of public support and public control in Colonial New England, under the Old Deluder Satan Act of 1647, and other similar acts; but under these acts the church was to act as an agent of the state and the schools were not free and secular as they are at the present time.⁷ The American public educational system did actually not come into being until the passage of state public school laws after 1825. Prior to this time, in 1785, the old Congress of the Confederation passed the ordinance that provided that "there shall be reserved the Lot No. 16 of every township for the maintenance of public schools within said township." Ohio became a state in 1803 and was the first to benefit from this clause. One section for schools for each township became the rule as new states were admitted into the Union; but a few were given two sections and the last few states, four sections for each township. In

⁶Drake, 186.

⁷Ibid.

each state the people through their legislatures were the ultimate custodians of the school lands. Some of this school land was wisely managed, and made money for the school district; while some of it was sold too cheaply or dissipated through inefficiency and dishonesty.

Eighty sections of public school lands in Grand Forks County were leased by the County Auditor at public auction. Most of the land went at nominal figures ranging from 25 cents to \$50.00 per 160 acres. The bidders formed a combine and succeeded in keeping the prices down. There are 50,000 acres in that county to be leased in the same manner.⁸

Yet there was some return and some aid to schools; and as Good says in A History of Western Education: "If the lands helped to make a beginning in public education, an important service was rendered. Later generations could provide for the support of schools more easily than the early pioneers could establish them."⁹

Prior to 1825, efforts to avoid the levying of a property tax in the support of the public schools varied all the way from lotteries to liquor licenses.¹⁰ In 1797 the State of New York authorized four lotteries in an effort to raise \$100,000 for schools. Many cities set up lotteries without state authorization. Between 1812 and 1826 the Congress of the United States provided for the setting up of lotteries to finance the school of the city of Washington.¹¹

⁸Walsh County News and Times, April 16, 1890.

⁹H. G. Good, A History of Western Education, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1955), 402.

¹⁰Drake, 199, cited in Edgar W. Knight and Clifton L. Hall, Readings in American Educational History (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1951), p. 309 ff.

¹¹Ibid.

The difficulty in establishing a free tax-supported public school system is indicated by the long use of the rate bill. In New York, from 1828 to 1868, this tax on the parents produced a sum equal to about one-half the salary of all the teachers of the state. This system was not abolished in Ohio until 1853, Illinois in 1855, Connecticut in 1868 and Michigan in 1869.¹²

In his historic speech before the Pennsylvania legislature in 1834, Thaddeus Stevens won the battle for the right of school taxation and set a precedent for the nation. He said in part:

Hereditary distinctions of rank are sufficiently odious; but that which is founded on poverty is infinitely more so. Such a law should be entitled, 'An act for branding and marking the poor, so that they may be known from the rich and the proud.' Many complain of this tax, not so much on account of its amount, as because it is for the benefit of others and not themselves. This is a mistake; for it is for our own benefit, inasmuch as it perpetuates the government and insures the due administration of the laws under which they live, and by which their lives and property are protected. Why do they not urge the same objections against all their taxes? The industrious, thrifty, rich farmer pays a heavy county tax to support criminal courts, build jails, and pay sheriffs, and jail keepers, and yet probably he never has, and never will have any direct personal use of either. He never gets the worth of his money by being tried for a crime before the court, by being allowed the privilege of the jail on conviction, or receiving an equivalent from the sheriff or the hangman's officers! He cheerfully pays the tax which is necessary to support and punish convicts, but loudly complains of that which goes to prevent his fellow being from becoming a criminal, and to obviate the necessity of those humiliating institutions.¹³

The acceptance of the public for the tax supported school is a turning point in the educational development of the United States. The year 1856 marks an additional highlight when girls were admitted to the public high school in Chicago. The high school had a slow acceptance because for many decades it remained an urban and middle class institution. Rural areas

¹²Ibid., 200

¹³Ibid., 201-202, [cited in J. A. Woodburn, The Life of Thaddeus Stevens, copyright 1913, 1941, used by special permission of the publishers, The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., p. 45.]

were slower in developing the acceptance of both the elementary and high school idea.¹⁴

The opening of the West and the settling of that area presented great problems in living, and in educating children. There was actually very little chance for the children of the early settlers to go to school.¹⁵ If school did exist, they often operated for three months in the winter, or summer in the North. Little was offered in the schools, other than reading, spelling, writing, and arithmetic. Books were provided by the parents, often in as great a variety as the number of children who were in attendance. It was also found that children would not attend school on a voluntary basis. Legislation was needed for compulsory school attendance laws.¹⁶

Efforts to promote the development and expansion of the public high school program in the West were confronted with the same opposition found in the East. There was opposition to the high school on the grounds that the financing of it would deprive the elementary program.

The Territory of Dakota provided for the establishment of schools by the Act of March 2, 1861, that stipulated:

That when the land of the Territory shall be surveyed, under the direction of the government of the United States, preparatory to bringing the same into market, sections numbered 16 and 36 in each township in said territory shall be, and the same are hereby reserved for the purpose of being applied to schools in the state, hereafter to be erected out of the same.¹⁷

The Enabling Act of February 22, 1889, which made North Dakota a state, provided for "public schools, open to all children and free from

¹⁴Ibid., 232

¹⁵Ibid., 249.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Lewis Crawford, History of North Dakota (Chicago, Ill., and N. Y., 1931), American Historical Society Inc.), p. 323.

sectarian control". It is interesting to note that while full suffrage was denied women of North Dakota in the Constitution (Section 128) another section conceded to the women of North Dakota the privilege of voting in school elections.¹⁸

Early Reorganization Efforts. --Walking distance to and from school was one of the determining factors in the establishment of the early schools. The availability of land and the ease with which any group could form a school district resulted in the development of many one-teacher schools. Horace Mann recognized the limitations of these schools when he said in his first report to the Massachusetts Board of Education in 1838: "A schoolhouse is erected. . . but it is (often) at the expense of having a school in it."¹⁹ He went on to say that in the effort to accommodate all with a schoolhouse nearby, the effort sometimes defeated itself. The mere establishment of the schools did not guarantee the type and quality of education that was deemed necessary or desirable at the time.

If there were to be any schools, however, it was necessary that they be small in some areas. The sparse population and lack of all-weather roads made impractical any other kind of local school organization.²⁰

By 1917 it was reported that 195,000 one-teacher schools were operating in the United States. These small schools had many weaknesses:

¹⁸Ibid., 335.

¹⁹ Robert M. Isenberg (ed), The Community School and the Intermediate Unit, Department of Rural Education, Yearbook of the Department of Rural Education, National Education Association of the United States, (Washington, D. C.: 1954), 28, [citing: Horace Mann, First Annual Report of the Board of Education, (Boston, Massachusetts, 1838).]

²⁰Ibid.

but also one very significant advantage. They were close to the people who supported them. The patrons of the school felt personally related to the local school. The school was a source of pride and a center or meeting ground for all the interests in the area. It was these strong feelings of association with their school that has frequently been responsible for resistance to the "closing of the school".

As schools developed, traditions and practical finance dictated a local policy in education. The community boundaries of social and economic use determined the school boundaries. The wealth of America tended to support the policy of local control. The vast difference in wealth between the several districts in any state made a state system mandatory if there was to be any semblance of educational equality and a meeting of the public need.²¹

In many states the small neighborhood district schools and village schools began to have problems. Schools were poorly financed, buildings were obsolete and inadequate, curricular offerings were not realistic in terms of the needs of children. The entire school system often failed to measure up to desirable standards of quality.²² Reorganization became imperative.

The reorganization of school districts is not a new movement. School districts were being reorganized in some states more than 100 years ago and in many others well before 1900. This is something that had happened at least to some degree in most states. The amount of reorganization accomplished varied greatly and often little was done until legislation was enacted. Despite similarities the reorganization laws varied

²¹Drake, 16.

²²Tompkins, 15.

significantly in many respects. Many states, however, succeeded in reducing the number of their districts. Sometimes this was a small reduction; sometimes nothing short of phenomenal.

From 1947 to 1953 the total number of school districts in the United States was reduced from 105,074 to 66,472.²³ The number of school districts decrease further by 1961 when there were 36,000, or only 28% as many as in 1932.²⁴

There are various approaches to reorganization on the legislative basis. These may be divided into six different groups: (1) these are laws which hinder reorganization. For example, South Carolina had a law that no district having more than 49 square miles could be created. (2) There are laws which countenance reorganization. The consolidation laws of Iowa and North Dakota and other midwestern states illustrate this procedure, which was usually accomplished through petition of local patrons and the vote to ratify the new district. (3) There are laws which facilitate voluntary reorganization. This may be illustrated by the action of two school boards legally empowered to adjust the boundaries between them or even to amalgamate one district with the other. Majority vote also illustrates this type of reorganization. (4) Laws which encourage planned reorganization. This is illustrated by reorganization accomplished through a county planning committee. Funds and machinery are often supplied for surveys to establish a

²³Howard A. Dawson and William J. Ellena, Status of Schools and School Districts, 1930-1953 (Washington, D. C., Department of Rural Education, National Education Association, 1954), p. 31.

²⁴M. L. Cushman, "The Questionable Theory of Local School District Reorganization," The College of Education Record, John Q. Adams, (ed), (University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, North Dakota: University Press, 1962), XLVIII, No. 2.

satisfactory district. (5) This is the type that requires reorganization. Usually this process provides for time limits within which some designated agency must complete the reorganization procedure. For example, the Idaho legislature passed a law to the effect that the county committees must, through the processes available, effect school district reorganization prior to July 1, 1959, or the legislature would do it for them. (6) There are laws which actually reorganize. In 1933 the West Virginia Legislature abolished all local school districts and in the same act created 55 new districts in the state, one for each county.²⁵

North Dakota has been part of the almost nation-wide school district reorganization movement. The number of school districts in the state of North Dakota in 1932 was 2,228; in 1948 this increased to 2,267; but decreased thereafter to 2,111 in 1953 and 1,066 in 1961. The number of school districts in North Dakota in 1961 was 48% of the 1932 total.²⁶

The number of one-teacher schools has also steadily declined. In 1930 there were 4,270 in the state and in 1960 this had decreased to 1,143. North Dakota had only 27% as many one-teacher schools in 1960 as it had in 1930. In other words three out of four one-teacher schools had been discontinued.²⁷

The "West North Central States"²⁸ grouped as such by the United States Census Bureau, had as a group in 1932, school districts numbering 43,160; in 1961 there were only 35% as many or 15,227.²⁹

²⁵Cushman, 27.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid., 19.

²⁸These are: Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota and South Dakota.

²⁹Ibid.

One other measure of the progress of reorganization is the number of school districts having forty or more teachers. In North Dakota in 1948 there were only seven such school districts; but this number doubled by 1961 when fourteen school districts in the state had forty teachers or more. It must be noted that the total population of the state of North Dakota in 1950 was 619,636, and that the increase in the forty years from 1910 to 1950 was only 42,470.³⁰ Almost one-sixth of this total population resided in four cities: Fargo with 38,256 people; Grand Forks with 26,836 people; Minot with 22,032 and Bismarck with 18,640 people.³¹

There are other measures of progress in school reorganization in continental United States, and in North Dakota in the effort to eliminate educational inadequacies. Many of these have been accomplished during the last 30 years and particularly since the end of World War II.³²

North Dakota has not reduced the number of small high schools appreciably; but it must be remembered that like South Dakota, Nebraska, and Kansas, this is a state with sparse population, and small schools, if there are any schools at all, will be a necessity for some time in the future. According to the State Educational Directory, North Dakota had 343 four-year high schools in 1947-48. In 1961-62 this number was 324, a reduction of little more than one per year.³³

Many attempts at reorganization fail for a variety of reasons. During the last six months of 1949 California held nineteen separate elections for

³⁰United States, Bureau of the Census, North Dakota Population, 1910-1950 (Bismarck, North Dakota).

³¹Ibid., (These are all 1950 census figures).

³²Cushman, 19.

³³Ibid., 21.

school district reorganization, and 79% failed. Some of the factors that result in opposition to reorganization center around: (1) fear that taxes will be increased, (2) fear that stature will be lost in the community, (3) fear that a job in the community will be eliminated, (4) fear of ability to adjust to a new situation.³⁴

The most serious obstacles to overcome in the reorganization of school districts, according to the National Commission on School District Reorganization, arise from the topographic and climatic conditions, travel conditions because of poor roads, and the resistance of the people to the idea of establishing a school and placing the control beyond the limits of the immediate local neighborhood.³⁵ From the time of the Constitutional Convention American education developed into state systems rather than a national system. The states have all developed the school districts they have desired. As the land became settled and towns built, each small unit operated a school that was "within walking distance" of the school. This method of providing education was adopted by many states, and particularly those in the middle and western sections of the country. These units became known as school districts. There is great reluctance to relinquish the local school in most communities, even though many of the fears are ungrounded and not supported by evidence to date. De-population of the rural areas is a fact as seen from the following evidence: in 1935 there were 6.8 million farm units in the United States; but in 1961 there were only 3.1 million. A hundred years ago the population of the United States was 32 million people, and

³⁴Tompkins, p. 10, [citing: Pearson, "Factors opposing Reorganization," *Phi Delta Kappan* 32: 331, March, 1951.]

³⁵Ibid.

71.8% lived in rural areas. In 1940, 30 million persons lived on farms for every 100 million non-farm people. In 1957 it was estimated that there were only twenty million farm residents and 150 million people off the farms.

Mechanization, transportation, migration, changes in the work week are just a few of the factors that are changing rural living. Rural areas are becoming "rurbanized", and changes are inevitable.

CHAPTER I

THE GEOGRAPHICAL BACKGROUND OF THE RED RIVER VALLEY OF THE NORTH

The development of the Red River Valley was effected by its geological features: location, size, climate precipitation, soil and resources. Adjustments to them were necessary for survival in the early days of settlement; and to those who stayed, the geographical characters continued to present problems and demand adaptation.

Location.---One of the most significant facts about North Dakota is its location in the center of the North American continent. The state is the most northwest of a group of states commonly called the North Central States, (North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio).¹ John Wesley Powell, working with the United States Geological survey of 1878 was well aware of the geographical position of the state when he wrote:

The state of North Dakota has a curious position geographically in its relation to agriculture. . . . In the western portion all dependence in rains will ultimately bring disaster to the people. . . . They will soon learn in the western portion to depend on irrigation and provide themselves with agencies for the artificial fructifying of the soil with water. In the eastern part they will depend on the rainfall, and in the middle portion they will have less rainfall and there will be failure of crops and disaster will come on thousands of people who will become discouraged and leave. . . . That is the history of all those

¹Bernt Lloyd Wills, North Dakota, The Northern Prairie State (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Edwards Brothers, Inc., 1963), p. 1.

who live on the border of humid and arid lands. Years will come of abundance and years will come of disaster, and between the two the people will be prosperous and unprosperous, and the thing to do is look the question squarely in the face.²

Size. --The state of North Dakota is seventeenth in size among fifty states in the Union. Montana, Minnesota and South Dakota are all larger than North Dakota; yet, North Dakota is larger than England by about 19,000 square miles. The total area of the state of North Dakota is 70,665 square miles.³

Climate. --The location largely determines the climate of an area. North Dakota climate has been a controversial subject open to much misrepresentation since man first set foot in the area.

In 1872, General Hazen was sent out to investigate the resources of the Red River Valley for the Northern Pacific Railway, and reported that the area was, "a barren waste, fit only for Indians and Buffalo".⁴ A slightly more favorable opinion of the area was expressed by George Noyes in a letter to Judge Blackburn in 1884, when he wrote: "Magnificent country, as flat as the poorest sermon ever preached and more productive. Blizzards in winter and mosquitoes in summer constitute its only drawbacks, and the cold is not to be regarded as formidable, for it is a dry atmosphere".⁵ The truth of the matter is that the climate of North Dakota is neither all good nor all bad. As

²Bruce Nelson, The Land of the Dakotas (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1947), p. 139.

³Wills, p. 2.

⁴S. H. Shepard, et. al., History of the Red River Valley (Chicago: C. F. Cooper and Co., 1909), pp. 194-212.

⁵"History of the Episcopal Church" State Historical Society of North Dakota, Vol. I., p. 429. (Bismarck, 1906).

Bernt Lloyd Wills states in North Dakota, The Northern Prairie State: "It is no all-year summer resort, certainly, but it does have much in its favor". North Dakota weather is not characterized by uniformity. It is rather one of extremes. Winter is the longest season, lasting from November to March, and in some ways is the most dominant season. Sometimes North Dakota is an island of mild weather surrounded by a continent of extremely severe weather as in 1953-54. In the month of February that year the temperature in Grand Forks, North Dakota was above 32 degrees nineteen days out of the twenty-eight days in the month. It reached 30 degrees on three and 29 degrees on three more of the remaining. On the remaining three it rose to 10, 13 and 26 degrees.⁶ It is true that it was not a typical February but it was fully as typical as the year 1936 when the temperature recorded in Parshall, North Dakota on February 15th was 60 degrees below zero. That year was atypical in other respects, it was one of the driest in weather history. The absence of moisture contributed to the extremes of temperature that year, and illustrated the climate of "continentality" at its fiercest.⁷

Precipitation. --The Red River Valley located just east of the geographical center of the North American continent has as stated above a continental climate. The area generally receives about twenty inches of precipitation a year, that classifies it as somewhat of a transition zone with that of the moist humid climate to the east and dry arid climate to the west. Typically the Valley has cold, dry, snowy winters and warm, comfortable summers with cool nights. The Valley area gets more snow than the western

⁶Bernt Lloyd Wills, North Dakota, The Northern Prairie State (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Edwards Brothers, Inc., 1963), p. 17.

⁷Ibid., 18.

area of the state. The sum of all the snowfall for the year averages 30.2 inches; but may vary from almost none to over sixty inches. However, North Dakota does not receive a lot of winter snow considering its latitude, compared with other states in which the temperature from November to March averages below freezing. The mean January temperature at Grand Forks, North Dakota is 4.3 degrees above zero; the February mean of 8.4 above zero; and December, 11.2 are but slightly better. However cold this may seem, the average number of days in the winter that are below zero are fifty-nine. The mean temperature in the Grand Forks area in June is 63.5, in July, 69.0 and in August 66.9; the days that exceed 100 degrees are rare.⁸

Since the economy of the area depends on agriculture, the farmers are constantly concerned with the weather, and the first and last killing frost of the season. The average length of the growing season in the Grand Forks area is from May 16 to September 25th. This is slightly shorter in the northern portion of the valley so that the average number of days in the season without killing frost is about 120 to 132 days.⁹ The short growing season is aided by the long hours of daylight in the Valley. Grand Forks reports that on June 21st the area receives sixteen hours of daylight. Even on August twenty-first there are still fourteen hours of daylight in the Valley area.¹⁰

Soil. --In the Valley of the Red River of the North the soil was formed by drift left when Glacial Lake Agassiz receded, about six thousand years

⁸United States, Weather Bureau, Climatological Summary, p. 1.

⁹Frank J. Bavendick, "Climate of North Dakota," Climate and Man: The Yearbook of Agriculture. (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1941), p. 1045.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 78.

ago. The agent that accomplished the depositing of the characteristic soil of the Valley was the last Pleistocene ice-sheet as it retreated from the North American continent. As this great, slowly moving ice sheet, similar to that which covers part of Greenland, advanced and retreated over the surface of the ground it enveloped and bore along with it all the loose material with which it came in contact. With its enormous weight it became a grinding power, recarving the surface of the earth. As the glacier receded and melted it left a vast lake larger than the combined area of the Great Lakes. It also deposited on the floor of the lake fine grains of dust and soil, that later with the decay of the grass of the prairie made the fertile soil of the Red River Valley. This immense lake was nearly 700 miles long, extending from Lake Traverse between South Dakota and Minnesota, to Saskatchewan and the Nelson River in Canada. This large lake encompassed an area approximately 110,000 square miles, of which 21,000 square miles was in present day United States; 15,000 in Minnesota and 6,800 in North Dakota.¹¹

The lake was named "Lake Agassiz" in honor of Professor Louis Agassiz (1807-1879), the first prominent advocate of the theory that the drift was produced by land ice.¹²

The soils of this region belong to the group known as the Chernozem group which are developed in the temperate subhumid grassland areas of the world. "Chernozem" is a slavic word meaning "blackearth". The soil of the Red River Valley is of this type, varying from nearly black to black in

¹¹Wilson M. Laird, The Geology and Ground Water Resources, North Dakota Geological Survey, Bulletin No. 17 (Grand Forks, 1944), p. 3.

¹²Warren Upham, The Glacial Lake Agassiz, U. S. Gov. Printing Office, 1895) U. S. Geological Surveys Monographs, Vol. XXV, p. 5.

color.¹³ This mellow loam may be from about six to twenty inches deep in the valley area. This veneer of most excellent soil deposited by the glaciers and Lake Agassiz has caused the area to be known as a "gift to mankind" and a "horn of plenty for a hungry world", and justly so because the generally stone-free soils of the Red River Valley lend themselves especially well to the production of the bread making grains such as wheat and barley, flax and oats.¹⁴ The area became noted for its wheat producing ability very early, and in 1891 the papers of the middle Red River Valley referred to it as the "Land of No. 1 Hard". There was a "bumper" crop in the Valley that year.¹⁵

Drainage is often a problem in the Red River Valley because the area is so level. The Valley slopes toward the river at a rate from two to six feet per mile, and northward at less than one foot per mile.¹⁶ This incredibly flat surface is slow to drain, and is a constant problem during the spring, and in years with heavy precipitation. Potholes and other larger depressions in the soil cause added concern for drainage.

The Red River of the North. --Rivers have always been important to man and to the settlement of an area, and the Red River of the North is no exception in that respect. It is unique in that it is the only river of considerable size within the limits of continental United States whose entire course is northward.¹⁷

¹³Wills, p. 49.

¹⁴Ibid., 51.

¹⁵Walsh County Times, June 8, 1891.

¹⁶Elwyn Chandler "Red River of the North", Quarterly Journal (University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, North Dakota, April, 1911).

¹⁷Ibid., 1.

The Red River of the North is the stream from which the Red River Valley takes its name, and is deserving of consideration because of its unusual characteristics and its importance to the area which it drains. The source of the Red River of the North is a small lake in the southwest corner of Clearwater county, Minnesota, about twelve miles west of Lake Itaska. The elevation at this point is 1,550 feet above sea level. It flows southward for a short distance to Ottertail Lake at an elevation of 1,320 feet and then westward to the southern North Dakota border at Wahpeton. From here the river is called the Red River of the North and is at an elevation of 943 feet. The Red River flows north from here and empties into Lake Winnipeg where the elevation is 710 feet. In the United States the river is never more than five miles from a straight line.¹⁸

The Red River of the North is the eastern boundary of North Dakota and separates North Dakota from Minnesota, and occupies the middle of a broad, smooth plain forty to fifty miles wide. The Plain descends to the northern corner of the state; but at a rate that is almost imperceptible to the eye, for its descent is only about one foot per mile.¹⁹

The Forest River. --Forest River was known as the "Big Salt" to the early fur traders until 1878 when the stream was named Forest River, a name that soon applied to the stream, township and postoffice established by Jesse B. Warren. The railroad station received the same name in 1887.²⁰

Forest River is mainly confined to Walsh County; but in Grand Forks County it courses through the north portions of Inkster and Strabane

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ H. V. Arnold, "The Forest River Settlements", The Early History of Inkster, North Dakota, (Larimore, N. D., 1916), p. 11.



Scale in Miles
0 16

Fig. 1.--PHYSIOGRAPHIC DIAGRAM OF NORTH DAKOTA

township. It leaves Inkster township about a mile south of the county line, and courses through the north row of sections in Strabane township. It leaves Strabane in the northeast corner, and enters Walsh county. The northern part of the stream consists of small branches which extend as drainage coulees into the western hill country of the Golden Valley area. From this area, northwest of Inkster the stream descends about 375 feet to where it unites with the Red River of the North.

Beginning about 1877, settlers began to locate along the Forest River; but in 1878 when George Inkster came there were no settlers as far as the Forest River in Strabane township. The Forest River was something of a game area when the settlers came. There were small red deer, and so many fish in the river that in the spring it seemed to be "boiling" with life.²¹

Mr. Inkster wrote in a letter to H. V. Arnold in 1900:

The first winter I was on the Forest River I could find elk in an hour's ride any time. Black-tail deer were very plentiful and I often killed them in going across country to Grand Forks for supplies. There were also a few black bear, and otter. Strange to say, but beaver were found only after the country was 'settling-up' and that only on the upper part of the stream. I was told by half breeds that beaver were never found on the stream before.²²

Mr. Inkster went on to say that in the spring, geese and ducks were plentiful. Prairie chickens came with civilization.²³ From reports of those that traveled through the area before it was settled, buffalo disappeared from the Forest River area about 1867.

When the Red River Valley south of the 49th parallel began to be occupied by permanent residents, speculators proceeded to cover much of

²¹Interview with Mr. "Bill Hank" Johnston, November 5, 1964.

²²Arnold, p. 13.

²³Ibid.

the timber along the Red River with Indian Script, keeping the land out of the hands of actual settlers for several years. Fortunately for the county these non-resident "speculators" did not attempt to resort to "land grabbing" on the smaller streams and tributaries, so it was mainly along these streams in Walsh and Grand Forks County that settlers located.

The motives other than availability were those of water and wood. The wood was necessary for fuel and also for the temporary log cabin needed for establishing claim and shelter. In 1871 a sawmill was brought to Grand Forks; but lumber was a scarce and costly item to the early settlers in the Valley area.²⁴

The early settler found the Forest River presented about the same appearance that it does today. "Dead and fallen timber rotted away where it fell, unless destroyed by fire; then in low places large quantities of floatage stuff sometimes accumulated as brought down stream by the annual spring floods, more certain to occur in the early days than now. Again the annual prairie fires sometimes entered the valley and fire-killed some of the full-grown trees, with later fires burning away the dry and deadened branches, leaving some of the black and charred trunks still standing."²⁵

There are traceable in the small stream valleys old channel beds, showing that in pre-settlement times the river sometimes shifted its course, usually to the opposite side of the valley; but for just a short distance before it resumed the regular channel.²⁶

²⁴Arnold, p. 6.

²⁵Ibid., 7.

²⁶Ibid., 8.

CHAPTER II

THE PEOPLE OF THE RED RIVER VALLEY OF THE NORTH

North Dakota is a young state, historically, since settlers did not come in appreciable numbers until the 1870's and 1880's. The history of the Red River Valley seems to be marked by two distinct epochs, the first that of the Indians and fur traders and the second that of the settlement by the immigrants from Canada, Europe and the eastern United States.

There were many reasons for the late settlement of the Red River Valley, and not the least of these was the fact that the Great Plains did present a barrier to the whole westward movement.

The Spaniards were the first white men to attempt exploring in the Great Plains, and they failed to adapt to the peculiarities of the Plains. The Spaniards would seem to have been the natural colonizers and settlers of the Plains area: the timberless country of the Plains was not unlike that of Spain, and the Spaniards had horses for the transportation so necessary in the vast areas of the Plains. Spain had solved the problem of building shelter without timber by using brick, adobe and stone, like the southern American Indians; but the similarities of the Plains to their native environment did not foster Spanish exploration into the interior of the country. The Spaniards were hunting for gold, not farm land, and they had many problems such as getting lost on the Plains. Francisco Vasquez de Coronado reported in 1541: "And what I am sure of is that there is not any gold nor any other

metal in all that country, and the other things of which they had told me are nothing but little villages, and in many of these they do not plant anything and do not have any houses except skins and sticks, and they wander around with the cows [buffalo].¹

The Comanches and Apache Indians were additional obstacles to the northern advance of the Spaniards, who were very reluctant to enter the Plains area against them.

Indians. --The Indians of the Plains are interesting in reference to the Red River Valley for several reasons two of which are: (1) the Indians had developed characteristics and habits which greatly influenced the white men who came to the area; and, (2) the Plains offered peculiar problems to those who came to the area.²

The Indian residents of the Red River Valley, in what is now North Dakota were of three linguistic stocks: the Algonquian, to which the Cheyenne, Cree and Chippewa belonged; second, the Caddoan, to which the Arikara belonged; and finally the Siouan, to which the Assiniboin, Crow, Hidatsa, Mandan and Dakota belonged.³

The Plains Indians were large-game hunters dependent for a considerable part of their diet and clothing on buffalo, deer, beaver and other game that inhabited the Valley area and Plains. They made very little use

¹Webb, p. 105, [citing: George Parker Winship, The Coronado Expedition, 1540-1542, Fourteenth Annual Report of the Bureau of Ethnology, Part I, pp. 329-613.]

²Ibid., p. 53, [citing: Wisler, North American Indians of the Plains (3rd ed., 1927), Chapter VII.]

³Robert H. Lowie, Indians of the Plains, (Garden City, New York: The Natural History Press, 1963), 5.

of fish and small game such as rabbits. The Eastern Dakota Indians did hook, spear and shoot fish and turtles, but did not like to have them "at the exclusion of meat".⁴ The Indians had methods of food preparation and preservation that were particularly suitable to the plains. The Indian method of curing meat was used by all the early fur traders and trappers throughout the area. "Jerked" meat was prepared by cutting fresh meat in thin strips and hanging them up to dry in the sun or over a slow fire. It was cured [dried] without salt and would keep indefinitely. It was useful for travelers, and was used by the Indians when fresh meat was not available. Sometimes it was cooked into a stew with vegetables.

Pemmican was made of "jerked" meat that was pounded into a powder and mixed with dried chokecherries or other berries indigenous to the area. Rendered buffalo fat was poured over the meat and berry mixture which had been put into a buffalo skin bag. The bags of pemmican, which were sewed to seal them, weighed about eighty or ninety pounds, and were often stacked like cordwood for future use. Pemmican was sometimes boiled, thickened with grain or flour when available and eaten as a main dish. This was called "rubaboo". Sometimes the pemmican was sliced through the casing and fried. For some reason it seemed customary for pemmican to be boiled at noon and fried at night.⁵

All the Plains Indians made use of native berries such as the choke-cherry. An additional highly prized food was the wild turnip (*Psoralea esculenta*) that was dug up and dried for winter use. It grew several inches below the ground, and was quite difficult for the women to dig.⁶ Some of the

⁴Lowie, 20.

⁵Flandrau, 36.

⁶Lowie, 21.

later white settlers died from eating what they mistakenly assumed to be the edible "wild turnip".

Among the Plains Indians, the women did most or all of the cultivating of the crops. Sometimes the men served as bodyguards for the working women to protect them from hostile tribes and raiders. For enemies of a different sort, the birds, women erected platforms or stages from which they and their children frightened away the winged intruders.⁷

Farming was not unknown to the Plains Indians. As early as 1541 Coronado's expedition recorded that the Plains tribes bartered corn for the "cloaks" of the men. Groselliers had observed the fact that the Indians raised corn and pumpkins in 1659 when he traveled through the area. In 1736 a Jesuit missionary spoke of the Assiniboin obtaining corn from the Mandan Indians. Two years later Verendrye recorded that the explorers traded guns and kettles for grain. Lewis and Clark recorded that the Cheyenne bartered buffalo meat and robes for Arikara corn and beans. Alexander Henry said that in 1808 he passed through "several plantations of Indian corn, beans, squash and sunflowers". He described how the Indians cooked beans and corn together and called it "m'sickquatash".⁸

At this point in the history of the Red River Valley, many seemingly disconnected forces were brought together that greatly influenced the development of the area.

French. --About 1659 Groselliers and Radisson, in the interest of France, made their way into the Northern Plains. Groselliers spent the next eight years telling his countrymen about the valuable furs to be had in

⁷Ibid.

⁸Coulter, 542.

the "Red River Valley". Feeling that he got unfair treatment from France when he was accused of taking part in an unlicensed expedition, Groseillers went to England. There he obtained the patronage of Prince Rupert and a boat with cargo, and sailed for Hudson's Bay in 1668. This was the movement that resulted in the formation of the Hudson's Bay Company, and the opening wedge into the Red River Valley.⁹

The French continued to explore along the St. Lawrence River Valley, and over an ever widening area of the "New France" they intended to establish. There were additional motives that lured them to the American continent: religious zeal to convert the Indians, and an overland route to the coast.

Sieur de la Verendrye explored the area in the interests of France in 1733, and later came with his nephew La Jemmerais, priests, various associates, soldiers and voyageurs. The French seemed alert to the advantages of friendly relations with the Indians, and maintained amicable relations with all but the Iroquois. They virtually occupied the country, trading and often inter-marrying with the Indians.

The profits from the fur trade soon transcended the other motives, and the fur trade business was established. The early French "coureurs des bois", or rangers of the woods, worked along with the Indians, and many adopted the ways of the Indians in dress and food habits, and many took Indian wives. The "bois brule" or half-breed race that resulted was a colorful and influential group in the history of the Red River Valley. Influential because they helped bring people into the area, and bring an awareness of the Valley to civilization.

⁹H. G. Gunn, "The Selkirk Settlement and its Relation to North Dakota History", North Dakota State Historical Society Collections, (Bismarck, N. Dak.), I, 79.

British. --The Hudson's Bay Company had an almost sovereign monopoly in the fur trade in the Northwest territory; but the wealth in furs soon resulted in many rival fur companies being established.

TABLE 1^a
LEADING FUR COMPANIES

Name of Company	Organized	Discontinued	Sold to or name changed to
1. Hudson's Bay	1670		still in existence
2. Northwest Co.	1784	1821	Hudson's Bay Co.
3. X Y Company	1801	1804	Northwest Co.
4. St. Louis Fur Co.	1808	1811	Missouri Fur Co.
5. Missouri Fur Co.	1811	1830	
6. Crooks & Mc Clennan	1807	1811	
7. American Fur Co.	1808	1865 (about)	
8. Pacific Fur Co.	1810	1813	
9. Southwest Fur Co.	1811	1812	
10. Chouteau & Berthold	1813	1831	
11. Columbia Fur Co.	1821	1827	American Fur Co.
12. Rocky Mt. Fur Co.	1822	1834	Fitzpatrick, Sublette & Bridger
13. Sublette & Campbell	1832	1842	
14. Pratte, Chouteau	1834	1838	Pierre Chouteau Jr., & Co.
15. P. Chouteau Jr. & Co.	1834	1838	Northwestern Fur Co.
16. Fox, Livingston Co.	1842	1845	American Fur Co.
17. Northwestern Fur Co.	1864		

^aFig. 1. --List of leading fur companies obtained from History of North Dakota, by Crawford, p. 176.

The theoretical rights of the Hudson's Bay Company to monopolize the fur trade and industry were ignored by many of the trappers; so that the next years were marked by rivalry and rebellion. As a result of the rivalry and the profits of the fur business, the number of companies increased to the extent that the credit of the Hudson's Bay Company was drastically reduced. It was then possible for one man to obtain control of the entire

organization. That man was the Earl of Selkirk. In 1811 the Hudson's Bay Company granted to Lord Selkirk for colonizing purposes, 116,000 square miles of territory comprising what is now Manitoba, the Northeast third of North Dakota and that part of Minnesota that drains into the Red River of the North. The grant was obtained through Selkirk "packing" the committee with his friends and although many of the influential stockholders of the company opposed him, he obtained a grant to some of the best fur producing area in the Northwest, and in addition, the Red River Valley.

Lord Selkirk, alert to the conditions in Scotland had plans to aid his fellowmen and colonize the area he had been granted. Agents were sent to Scotland and Ireland, and many willing settlers were found; individual rights were becoming issues of the day, "unrest was in the air", and the opportunities of the "New World" were appealing.

Scotch. --From 1805 to 1819 was a period of upheaval and unrest in Scotland. Between those years an area of about 750 square miles of thickly populated Scotch Highland territory was cleared of its ancient and hereditary tenantry.¹⁰ No less than 3000 families were evicted and forced to leave their homes. Many of these people emigrated to Canada in hopes of finding a new life.

The Scotch had revolutionized farming techniques as early as 1723 when a "Society for the Improvers of Knowledge of Agriculture" was established. Crop rotation, fallowing, tree-planting, growing of winter feed for cattle and fencing were all studied by this society. Living conditions in Caledonia, the old name for Scotland, were severe and harsh. Housing was simple and meager even for the wealthy. There were very few barriers

¹⁰Gunn, II, 86.

between classes since hardships were suffered by all in trying to make a living from the difficult land. Presbyterianism stood in Scottish history for freedom and the rights of the middle and lower classes against the crown and the aristocracy.¹¹

In 1811 agents were sent to Scotland and Ireland to obtain settlers for colonies in the "New World" and many were found ready to leave the conditions under which they were living. These settlers were the "Selkirkers" that established the first white colony in the Red River Valley.

There were conflicting opinions as to the motives that prompted Thomas Douglas, the Earl of Selkirk, to set up his colony. G. H. Gunn says: "I am of the opinion that Lord Selkirk started out in the beginning with unselfish motives".¹² On the other hand, Donald Gunn says in his "History of Manitoba": "It was fat dividends in the fur trade that were floating in his Lordship's mind!"¹³ Whatever the motives were, the colonizing attempts of the Selkirkers were the first organized attempts at farming in the Red River Valley.¹⁴ The next few years were marked by hardship, starvation, plagues of grasshoppers, and opposition from the fur traders. The traders and trappers thought the farmers would drive away all the game, and were reinforced in this opinion by the fur companies. The Selkirkers were the victims in the ensuing rivalry, and suffered extreme hardships.

The scarcity of buffalo caused the settlers to go up the Red River to Pembina the winter of 1812-1813. In the spring of that year they went back north to what is now Winnipeg. The group that had numbered 800 in 1803

¹¹Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Scotland", Vol. 20, p. 138.

¹²Gunn, 96.

¹³Coulter, 545.

¹⁴Gunn, 95.

when brought by Lord Selkirk had dwindled to 200 by 1813.¹⁵ They had been required to learn the ways of the Indian in order to survive. The buffalo furnished food when crops failed, and they learned to travel on snow-shoes over the vast distances.

The "Rocky Mountain Locust" completely destroyed the crops of the Selkirkers in 1817, 1818 and 1819. Several men were sent in quest of seed grain for the settlement in the spring of 1819. Their destination was Prairie du Chien on the Mississippi, a distance of about one-thousand miles. The men traveled on snowshoes for three months to reach their destination, where they bought from a trading company 250 bushels of wheat, 100 bushels of corn, 30 bushels of peas and some chickens. The grain was loaded on three Mackinac boats manned with six hands each and started up the Mississippi on April 15, 1820. They were delayed by ice on the river and on Lake Pepin, until May third; but then they were able to continue to Big Stone Lake from where they made a portage of a mile-and-a-half to Lake Traverse between South Dakota and Minnesota. This was accomplished by drawing the boats across on wooden rollers. From this point they traveled down the Red River until they reached the colony safely in June. This wheat that was planted then in 1820 was the crop that became the first successful one in the Red River Valley.¹⁶

In addition to these seemingly unrelated factors there were others that influenced the development of the Red River Valley. Europeans were finding out about the Red River Valley. Transportation companies were

¹⁵Crawford, 135.

¹⁶Hattie Listenfelt, "The Hudson's Bay Company and the Red River Trade", North Dakota State Historical Society, IV, p. 251.

sending out brochures and describing the "northwest country" in glowing terms, and some of the more adventurous had traveled to the Red River Valley and written about the wonderful Red River Valley.

The French, Scotch and English were early settlers in the Valley; but from the middle of the 1800's there were others--as Whittier said:

I hear the tramp of pioneers
Of nations yet to be--
The first low wash of waves,
where soon
Shall roll a human sea.

The Irish were also searching for relief from conditions that were unbearable, and they too, turned to the Red River Valley.

Irish.--Benjamin Disraeli speaking in the House of Commons in 1844 defined the position of Ireland in the following words:

A dense population in extreme distress inhabit an island where there is an Established Church (Anglican) which is not their church, a territorial aristocracy, the richest of whom live in a distant capital, thus they have a starving population, an absentee aristocracy, an alien church, and in addition, the weakest Executive in the world.¹⁷

In 1861 the Irish population was 5,798,967. Only one-fifth of these were Protestants, yet the Anglican church was the established one. The University of Dublin was closed to Catholics, and the training for professions was "beyond their means". Until the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829 no man of that faith could hold office. Catholics could not possess arms, and were penalized for trying to teach Catholicism in school or through private homes.¹⁸

¹⁷Donald H. Nicholson, "Reform and Revolution in Ireland", U. N. D. Quarterly, Vol. 18, p. 374-376, [citing: Ernest Barker, Ireland in the Last Fifty Years, p. 34.]

¹⁸Ibid.

Economic burdens equalled or excelled the religious. One of the most conspicuous figures was the absentee land lord; conspicuous because of his absence.¹⁹ The typical absentee lived in Paris and rarely took time to visit or improve the lot of the tenants. If the tenant improved the land he had to pay higher rent because of increased value of the estate. There was no incentive for progress or improved methods of agriculture. The tenant could also be evicted for failure to pay rent on time, or because he was a Catholic.

The absentee landlord was not only responsible for a large share of rural poverty; he was a standing invitation to violent demonstrations. Evicted tenants sometimes had comrades who made nocturnal attacks on police using clubs and stones.²⁰

The long process of Irish emancipation started with the Disestablishment Act of 1869, the same year as the Riel Rebellions in the Red River Valley. Through this act the Anglican Church remained in Ireland; but it took away the official status of the Church, its endowments, and the taxes paid to it by an unwilling people.²¹

There were other reforms such as the Land Act of Ireland in 1870, that gave the right to an evicted tenant to be compensated for improvements and eviction; but many of the Irish emigrated to Canada and the United States, and many of them found their way to the Red River Valley.²²

¹⁹Nicholson, [citing: Justin McCarthy, Irish Recollections, p. 57.]

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid.

²²Ibid.

TABLE 2
 PERCENTAGE OF NATIONALITY GROUPS TO
 TOTAL POPULATION OF STATE²³

Name	Rank	1890	Rank	1900
Norwegian	1	14.10	1	9.46
Canadian	2	12.6	2	8.8
English	6	1.8	7	.91
Irish	7	1.62	8	.83

The movement of these four nationality groups was an influential factor in the development of the Red River Valley. The Canadians occupied the northern tier of counties of the state except Buford, which was settled largely by Irish people. The Canadians led in Walsh, Church, Foster, Garfield, Kidder, Stevens, Towner and Wallace counties. Their territory, although more broken than that of the Norwegians, was nearly all in one group.²⁴ The state of North Dakota came to represent twenty-five different nationality groups;²⁵ but it became noticeable as the settlement of the Valley proceeded that arrivals from different countries or areas were locating together.

The Forest River, Gilby and Inkster areas were settled largely by Canadians of Scotch, Irish and English descent. There were a few from Wales, and also a few of Dutch and Norwegian extraction.

²³State of North Dakota Historical Society Collections, I, p. 185.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Robert L. Morlan, Political Prairie Fire: The Nonpartisan League, 1912-1922 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1955), p. 3, [citing: James Ertresvaag, "The Persuasive Technique of William Langer" (unpublished Master's thesis, Library, University of North Dakota, 1960), p. 4.]



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GOODE BASE MAP SERIES
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 HENRY M. LEPPARD, EDITOR

Fig. 2-- REPRINTED BY PERMISSION OF THE
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Prepared by Henry M. Leppard

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Norwegian. --In 1869 there were 16,068 emigrants who left Norway.

There were general causes for this such as: (1) promising prospects in America, (2) overpopulation in Norway, (3) severe requirements for military service and (4) lack of opportunity to acquire land or wealth.²⁶ There were also economic conditions that led to a general financial depression of the country.

From 1833 to 1877 there was great activity in dike building in Holland, and a large part of Norwegian timber was shipped there to fill this need. During those years Holland increased from 8,768 square miles to 12,731 square miles, nearly 4,000 square miles being reclaimed from the ocean by the erection of dikes. Norwegian timber became an important source of wealth that was accelerated yet further by the demands of the railroads for building. Property was valued at twice its actual worth and people speculated wildly on homes, farms and a higher standard of living. The railroads, in addition to making demands for timber also increased taxes, and depleted the forests. By 1870 the herring that had provided a living, died off inexplicably and the end of the land boom offered no other choice but to emigrate.

The "bondsman" custom was also a contributing factor to the crisis that forced emigration from Norway. There was a law requiring every man starting up in business to procure bondsmen, who in case he failed should meet the demands of his creditors. It was supposed to be "unkind" to refuse to be a bondsman, so many business men who failed, lost not only their own

²⁶ Omon B. Herigstad, "Conditions in Norway Contributing to Emigration to America" North Dakota State Historical Society, I, p. 131.

property but the holdings of a host of "friends", who otherwise may not have been directly affected.²⁷

Some of the more adventurous had been to America, learned a little English and went back as agents for transportation companies and induced large groups to go to America. These agents often received a 5% commission on all tickets sold to immigrants. The transportation companies and newspapers at this time described the "new country" in terms designed to influence them, and rates were sometimes lowered to induce people to go to America.²⁸ The inducement sometimes forced rather unlikely expeditions such as in the following report:

A novel sight--A vessel has arrived at this port with emigrants from Norway. The vessel is very small, measuring as we understand only about 360 Norwegian lasts or forty-five American tons [the Mayflower was 108 tons] and brought forty-six passengers, male and female, all bound to Ontario county, where an agent, who came over some time since, purchased a tract of land. The appearance of such a party of strangers coming from so distant a country and in a vessel of a size apparently ill calculated for a voyage across the Atlantic could not but excite an unusual degree of interest. They have had a voyage of fourteen weeks and are in good health and spirits. An enterprise like this argues a good deal of boldness in the master of the vessel as well as an adventurous spirit in the passengers, most of whom belong to families from the vicinity of a little town at the southwestern extremity of Norway near Cape Stavanger. Those who come from the farms are dressed in coarse clothes of domestic manufacture, of a fashion different from the American, but those who inhabited the town wear calicoes, ginghams, and gay shawls, imported we presume from England. The vessel is built in the model common to fishing boats in that coast, with a single mast and top sail, sloop rigged. She passed through the English channel and as far south as Madeira, where she stopped three or four days and then steered directly for New York where she arrived with the addition of one passenger born on the way. It is the captain's intention to remain in this country, to sell the vessel and prepare himself to navigate our waters by entering the American Merchant Service and to learn the language.²⁹

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹C. S. Torvend, "Early Norwegian Emigration and its Causes", North Dakota State Historical Society Collections, III, 314.

This was but one of many ships that brought emigrants from Europe to America in the 1800's and early 1900's. In ever increasing numbers they came bringing with them habits and customs unique to each group. Some died in the prairie blizzards, some wore themselves out in the effort to plant "just one more crop", some broke under the silence and loneliness of the prairies, some had visions of "greener pastures" and moved further west or east; others stayed to continue the struggle,³⁰ and some came to the Red River Valley to the Gilby, Forest River and Inkster area.

Homesteading

The Legal Basis. --Homestead and Exemption laws were based on the belief that the public domain belonged to the people and that each head of a family was entitled to a home or farm, the possession of which should be protected against seizure for debt. This theory developed gradually after 1785, when the federal government was forced into the merchandising business with the basic objective of getting the land settled quickly and new states formed. After heated debates the matter was settled with the adoption of the Northwest Ordinances, that outlined the way the land would be put into the hands of private owners, the way the settler could hold his land and the rules by which new states would come into the union.

The main provisions of the Ordinance of 1785 provided that after the land was purchased from the Indians, it would be laid out in six-mile square townships and sections of 640 acres, establishing the rectangular survey that John Wesley Powell was so opposed to. The first tracts surveyed according to the Northwest Ordinance were to be drawn by lot for the military

³⁰Ertresvaag, 4.

bounties promised soldiers and sailors under earlier legislation. Then the land would be offered for sale in township and smaller lots at one dollar per acre. Certain lands were set aside for educational purposes, and one third of the gold, lead and copper would be reserved. The land could be held by fee--simple tenure and could be transferred by deeds which would be recorded locally.

Until 1800, because of the urgent need of money, the federal government sold the public domain in 36-section townships and 640 acre sections; but the disposal was slow, and the revenue was less than anticipated. From 1800 to 1820 the minimum area was reduced to 320 acres and the land was sold on credit at two dollars per acre. The act reduced the size to 80 acres in 1820; but no credit was allowed. Many settlers at this time occupied land and established homes without acquiring title to the land. These "squatters" wanted the land free of all charges, and under the pressure of this practice, the revenue-producing idea was abolished.³¹

The Pre-emption act of 1841 acceded to the wishes of the "squatter-settler", who was given the first opportunity to buy his claim up to 160 acres. The Graduation law of 1854 made land available at twelve-and-a-half cents per acre after it had been on the market for thirty years. This was done to hasten the sale of land in the public domain that had been passed up for better land to the west. This law was in effect for eight years, and resulted in the sale of 26,000,000 acres; but much of it was sold to speculators.³²

The years between 1841 and 1871 were the "land-grant" and "railroad-grant" years. Grants of land were made to the states for the establishment of

³¹Encyclopaedia Britannica, "Land Tenure", Vol. 9, p. 705; vol. 13, pp. 682-685.

³²Ibid.

agriculture mechanic art colleges, and to the railroads for right-of-way privileges.

The sales and pre-emption era ended with the year 1862 when the Homestead law was enacted. This law was adopted after much debate and controversy between the eastern labor parties and the residents of the western area. The contest was essentially between the farmers seeking easy expansion and the eastern landlords and industrialists eager to preserve high rents and cheap labor.³³

In 1856 the eastern Republicans in an effort to get the support of the western Republicans, gave up the oppositions they had to the homestead laws and combined the issues of free farms with the anti-slavery expansion, and then the contest became one between the North and South. The secession of the southern states allowed the Homestead Act to be adopted easily in 1862. It provided that any citizen or alien who had declared the intention of becoming a citizen if twenty-one years old or the head of a family, or if a veteran of at least fourteen day's service in the armed forces of the United States during an actual war, and if he or she had never engaged in war against the United States or assisted in such a war, on payment of ten dollars might file claim to not more than 160 acres of the surveyed public domain. After having "resided upon or cultivated" this land for the following five years, and if then a citizen, the settler could receive a patent on payment of additional fees. In the next forty years there were numerous amendments to the law. In 1866 the bar against ex-Confederates was dropped, and then the prohibition against separate homesteads for both husband and wife. The choice between residence or cultivation for the first five years was changed to a requirement for both residence and cultivation.³⁴

³³Ibid.

³⁴Ibid.

The Homestead laws had many shortcomings that profoundly effected later adjustments and developments of the "Great Plains". Some of the shortcomings were:

1. By 1862, what was thought to be the most fertile land, was already in the hands of private individuals.
2. The Homestead law actually did little to relieve the labor pressures of the cities. The land offered was far removed from the congested labor market, and there was little or no provision for free transportation to the land.
3. There was no offer of training in successful farming practices during the years of making a beginning.
4. It was difficult if not impossible for many to acquire the capital for investments in housing, implements, fencing, livestock and other necessities for success.
5. The Homestead Law did not prevent speculators from acquiring large blocks of land for monopolistic practices.
6. Railroad companies were given immense grants of land and were instrumental in determining location and number of settlements.
7. The "commutation classe" made petty speculators of many homesteaders. Six months after settlement they could buy the land at one dollar and twenty-five cents an acre. By acting as agents for those wanting huge estates, they could make a neat profit without becoming actual homesteaders. In the forty years between 1862 and 1902, only about one out of ten new farms in the United States was a free homestead, while the others were often purchased from speculators.³⁵

Transportation

The Red River Cart. --During the War of 1812 the fur trade was in a state of turmoil. The hostilities toward the settlers depressed further settlement. Transportation was difficult to the point of being impossible at times. Furs had been easily transported in canoes, since they were light and easily moved; but grain needed heavier equipment and better means of

³⁵Ibid.

transportation. Until the railroads were established transportation was accomplished first by the Red River Cart, the stage coach and then navigation of the Red River. Alexander Henry had first noted the Cart when he wrote in his journal in 1801:

Men now go for buffalo meat in small low carts, the wheels of which are of one solid piece sawed from the ends of trees whose diameter is three feet. These carriages are more convenient and advantageous than horses, and the country being so smooth and level, we can use them to go in all directions.³⁶

This cart patterned after the peasant carts of Normandy may have started out as a small light weight vehicle; but it was extended into an all purpose form of transportation that according to some writers of the time had wheels six or seven feet in diameter and could carry from 800 to 1000 pounds. Grace Flandrau tells of the discomforts of travel by Red River Cart:

They were almost unequalled as Marathons of patience and endurance. Besides the difficulties common to all the routes of travel--bad roads, absences of bridges, the peculiarly violent storms common to the area, and the devouring legions of mosquitoes, there were other drawbacks.³⁷

There was the screeching noise of wheels that were ungreased, and the slow rate of travel for twenty miles a day was about all that could be accomplished. The Red River Cart was well suited to the area however, and had one distinct advantage: it was made entirely of wood, and could be made with few tools. A gun was needed to shoot an elk or buffalo, and an ax to cut down a tree. Light wooden box and a pair of shafts, all fastened together with rawhide thongs, this was the Red River Cart, and it was used until 1871.

Because they were pulled by a single pony or ox, the carts left distinctive, three-rutted tracks across the prairies, which were sometimes

³⁶Vera Kelsey, Red River Runs North!, (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1951), 118.

³⁷Flandrau, p. 22.

a foot deep and could be seen many years after the Carts disappeared from use. One of these Red River Cart trails ran through section twenty-one in Blooming Township where a giant cottonwood tree gave the trail the name "the lone tree trail". This served as a resting point and landmark for many of the early settlers that came to Gilby.³⁸

The War of 1812 was a deterrent to settlement, as were also the reports of Indians, grasshoppers and mosquitoes, to say nothing about the storms, floods and weather in general. In 1818 the grasshoppers were so numerous that they were found along the Red River "in waves and heaps like sea-weed, three to four inches deep".³⁹

A treaty with England in 1818 gave the Red River Valley territory to the United States, and established the northern boundary at the forty-ninth parallel. With the exception of this northeastern wedge of the state, North Dakota was part of the Louisiana Purchase of 1804. The land north of a line drawn from the southeastern corner of the state in Sargent County to the northwestern corner of the state in Divide County was the part of North Dakota included in the 1818 treaty and included the area called the Red River Valley.

Stage Coach. --A stage line was established from Fort Abererombie to Winnipeg in 1871, by Blakeley and Carpenter. Four-horse coaches traveled the west bank of the Red River Valley, following the old Red River Cart Trail. Relay stations were built to support the coach service, and these outposts were a factor in the opening of the country.

³⁸History of the Red River Valley, 584.

³⁹Compendium of History and Biography of North Dakota, (Chicago: Geo. A. Ogle, 1900), 55.

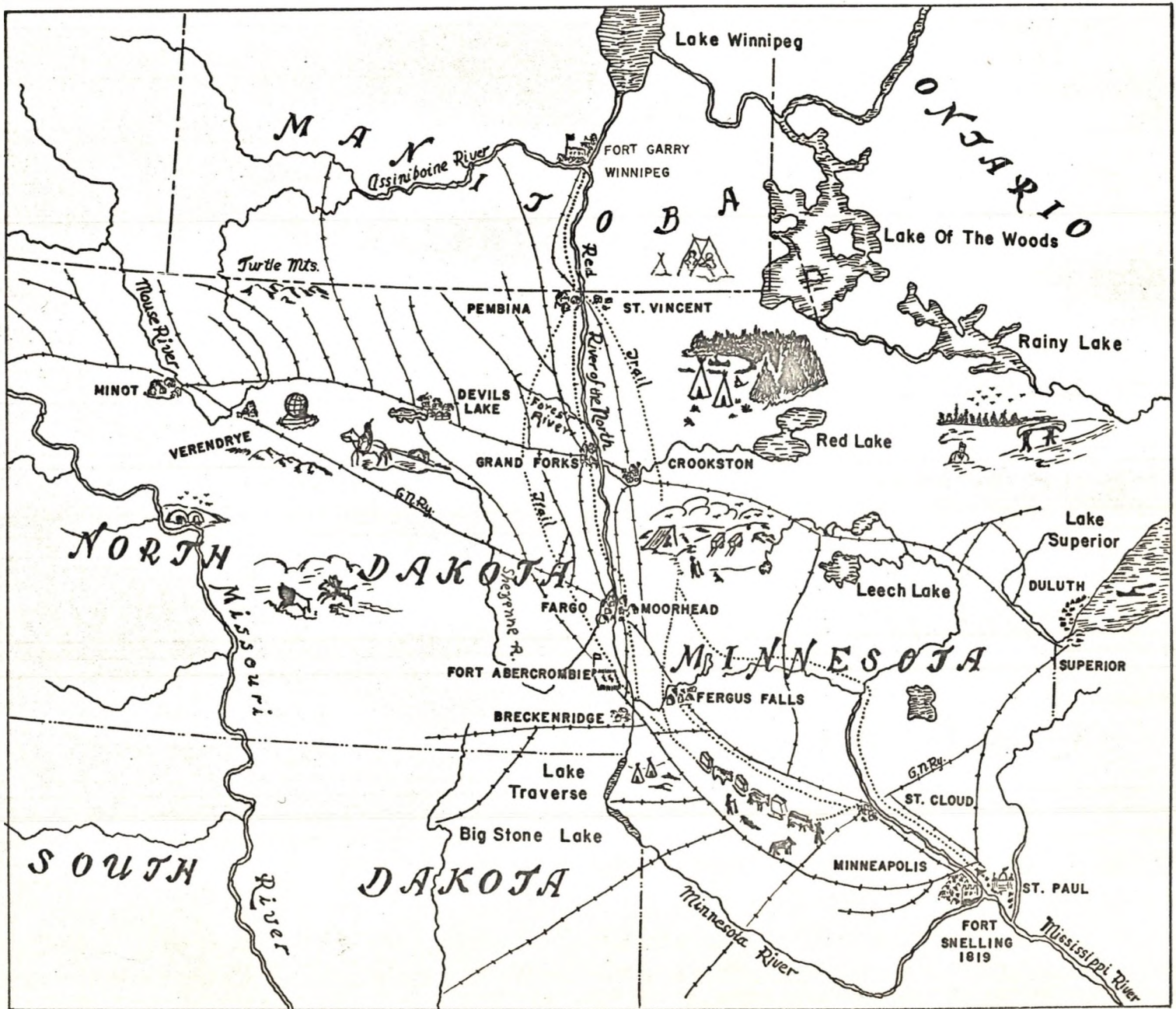


Fig. 3--RED RIVER TRAILS

River Transportation. --Steamboat traffic on the Red River began in 1859 when the Anson Northrup carried supplies from St. Paul to the Sheyenne River. Blakely and Carpenter bought the boat and made the first steamer trip to Winnipeg, changing the boat's name to Pioneer. The International was launched at Fort Abercrombie in 1861; but then the Sioux Massacre of 1862 caused traffic to the Red River Valley to be nearly at a standstill for the next few years. Canada at this time had no rail connections with the east. A 500 mile "Dawson Trail" was used; but required numerous changes of transportation, among them steamboat on the Great Lakes, to train, to stagecoach, to the Red River Steamboat.⁴⁰ Some of the settlers in the northern part of the valley came from Canada by the American route to Fisher's Landing, then to Grand Forks and from there some walked the thirty miles to the Forest River, Gilby, Inkster area to establish claims of land. The Red River Cart, steamboat navigation and the advent of the railroad gave access and egress to the Red River Valley in two directions: north, and east. Some of the settlers to the area came by boat from Europe to Duluth, Minnesota, from where they proceeded west by overland travel to the Red River Valley.⁴¹

The Railroad. --In San Francisco, California, in 1869 the celebration of the first transcontinental railroad was taking place. Judge Nathan Bennett said:

The influences of railroads extending over our whole country cannot be too highly appreciated in its effect of consolidating our different states into one united country . . . in bringing the people of the northwest into close acquaintanceship with the people of the far southwest, as quick and easy interchange between different nations contributing more toward peace and good will between them, than treaties alone could ever bring

⁴⁰The Lay of the Land, Works Project Administration Writers project, n.d.

⁴¹Interview with Mrs. Ted Drew, March 12, 1965.

about, and the interchange of ideas between the inhabitants of distant positions of the same country must produce the same effect.⁴²

The railroads were a significant factor in the development of the Great Plains as a whole, and the Red River Valley in particular. Not only were they the major means of transportation, but they were also the colonizing agents. Without the railroads the colonization of the Red River Valley would have taken a much longer time. Excluding the Great Northern Railway Company the four major transcontinental roads received extensive grants of land from the government.⁴³

The Union Pacific, for example, received twenty sections of public land for each mile of construction on the Plains. The Northern Pacific, on the other hand, received twenty sections of public domain in the states and forty sections in the territories for each mile of construction. Grants were also made to the Sante Fe Texas and Pacific. These lands were either sold or leased. Few settlers were willing to make a purchase of land unless they knew what they were buying, hence the railroads needed to advertise. One of the best methods used was that of the traveling agricultural exhibit. The receipts of the railroad depended upon the immigration and the development of industry; but it also depended on the sale of land granted by the government. A report of one such advertising scheme was in *The Country Gentleman* of 1880:

⁴²From an oration delivered at the celebration of the first trans-continental railroad by Judge Nathaniel Bennett, Sunday May 9, 1869. (San Francisco Morning Chronicle, May 9, 1869).

⁴³Kraenzel, 127 [John Lee Coulter says in The North Dakota State Historical Journal, III, p. 586: 'It is popularly believed that the Hill road had no land grants. The main line from Minnesota to the Pacific was built without subsidy, but the old St. Paul and Pacific . . . which became the Hill road in 1879, had the same grants of land as other roads.]

Mr. James B. Power, land commissioner of the Northern Pacific Railway, is making a novel exhibition of the products of the country traversed by that railroad. A baggage car has been fitted up with bins, shelves and hooks, so that specimens of the crops can be shown, both as they grew, and as prepared for market. Small sheaves of wheat, rye, oats, barley, flax, beans, peas, spelt [the wheat, *Tritium Spelta*], corn and sorghum are tastefully arranged on the sides and top of the car, and glass jars contain seventy-two samples of cleaned grain, weed, etc. In bins are potatoes, beets, carrots, and other roots, squashes, melons and cranberries. There are 23 varieties of native grasses and one of timothy shown alongside the wild timothy of the region, a much coarser, taller grass, but similar otherwise. Any one entering the car is instantly struck with the variety of crops grown in a country generally supposed to be a grain country and nothing else. The peculiarity of that climate is noticeable in the fact that dent corn is grown and ripened there, as well as melons and other products of southern latitude. Judging from the specimens shown in this car, the settler along the Northern Pacific railroad can raise as good crops of farm products as the farmers of the middle and western states, and at the same time, owing to the average cool temperature, the small grains are larger and heavier than are grown elsewhere. The car passed through Albany on Monday, and is to be at the New England Fair this week, and is worth a visit from eastern farmers.⁴⁴

James Hill the founder of the Great Northern Railroad sincerely believed that the Plains could be thickly settled, with one family to every 160 or 320 acres. "He would force this 'wasted' empire into the frame of his vision: little green fields, little white houses and big red barns, with lightning rods to deflect the shafts of the Northwest's primeval gods."⁴⁵ Like the others the Great Northern offered excursion rates, prizes for the best wheat grown, and provided emigrant and demonstration trains.⁴⁶ The railroad also determined to a great extent the location of towns in the Red River Valley and the pattern of settlement. The paper of June 26, 1884 reported:

Three new town sites will be located between Larimore and Forest River. The first will be on Simon A. McCanna's farm about nine miles down the old grade. The next is to be at John C. Orr's, in the Agnes

⁴⁴Coulter, III, 586.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Kraenzel, 127.

township, and the third is at Inkster, two miles south of the Forest River. Mr. Faulkner says the last would have been located on the river but for engineering difficulties: the river and adjacent land is much lower than on either side, there being quite a steep slope for some two miles and it would require two engines to start trains and pull up the grade. For this reason and those alone, Mr. Faulkner says the petition for the location on the river cannot be granted. He says the town site there is dry but there is considerable wet country around it . . . and that this new line passes through the very best continuous wheat country in the whole valley, and will have more wheat to ship than any other line of road.⁴⁷

John Wesley Powell (1834-1902) did not share Mr. Hill's enthusiasm about small 160 to 320 acre farms on the Plains. In 1878, on a Geological survey for the United States, he studied the Plains area and made recommendations to Congress of an entirely different nature. He advocated 2560 acres, or four sections, as the ideal for the average settler's tract of land. "A quarter-section of land alone will be of no value," he wrote. Powell also advocated the topographical survey, taking into account the contour and water facilities of the land, rather than the rectangular survey that was used. He further suggested that with large tracts of land and sparse population, that the settlers be grouped to provide social and cultural unity and lessen the other high costs of administration. Under his plan, community development was to have been done without county organization. Powell's study revealed that only in the Red River Valley could the farmer be certain of sufficient yearly precipitation. The further west the farms spread out over the prairies, the less certain became sufficient moisture.

Powell's predictions and warnings were ignored. The land was homesteaded in small tracts, and the surveys were made after the township plan, small frequent communities, schools, churches and towns were built, and counties struggled to provide services for scattered tenants.

⁴⁷ The Grafton Herald, June 26, 1884.

The fact that his recommendations were not followed was understandable: the government made land available on the easiest terms in the Homestead Act of 1862. The timber culture Act of 1877 and the right of preemption made still more land available.⁴⁸ The total, however, did not even approach Powell's 2560 acres.

Forest River. --As early as 1877 there were settlers in the "Forest River Country" as it was known then. Jess Warren came that year with a government surveying party, and Robert Maltman came about the same time.

Most of the first settlers were from Canada: Pakenham, Bell's Corner and Oshawa, Ontario. Pakenham, which is the only village in Pakenham Township is said to have been named for Sir Edward Michael Pakenham, a brother-in-law of the Duke of Wellington. It was near a small waterfall, in Pakenham Township, Ontario, Canada that Scotch, Irish and English settlers established a village in 1823. These were the parents and families of many of those who later settled the "Midway" area.

The stage for the unprecedented emigration from the British Isles had been set by the Industrial Revolution, famine and war. Other social and economic grievances added to the unrest and emigration. Britain needed lumber from her North American Colonies, and space was available in the boats returning empty to the St. Lawrence. The War of 1812 preserved for England huge land acreages ready for settlement. The two basic requirements of land and transportation then, made emigration possible. Verna Ross McGiffin describes the situation:

Public speakers and letters from earlier immigrants eloquently described British North America as the land of prosperity, where a man might be his own master. The prospect was a bright dream to

⁴⁸Elwyn B. Robinson, "Themes of North Dakota History," North Dakota History, XXVI (1959), p. 17.

the depressed and downtrodden thousands who struggled hopelessly against conditions created by the Industrial Revolution. Unemployment followed by scores of disbanded troops following the wars, widespread hunger from crop failure and religious persecution fanned the dream of escape into obsession and sent thousands to the seaports to swell the return cargo of the timber ships. Shipping Companies, swift to capitalize on the possibility of gain added their efforts to speed the emigrants from Britain's shores.⁴⁹

Packenham was near water and there were trees, so many in fact, that in 1842 there were twenty-nine pot and pearl ash manufacturers in Packenham Village. To clear the land the trees were burned and the resulting ashes were valuable for the lye obtained. Ashes were even used as "legal tender" in the early days in Packenham. There were two methods of disposing of the ashes left after burning off the trees: (1) Ashes were gathered and saved, dry, and hauled to the village potshery; or, (2) They were sometimes leached and boiled in huge kettles in the home. The lye was tapped off and used for soap making, disinfecting and cleaning.⁵⁰ Accidents to children sometimes resulted, in the first instance from suffocation in the dry ashes, and in the second, by falling into the huge kettles of boiling potash.⁵¹

Life in Packenham was hard. The soil was rocky, clearing the land of trees was incredibly difficult, transportation was primitive and slow, and medical care was virtually nonexistent. The lot of both pioneer men and women was marked by isolation, loneliness and frustration. "Accidents to early settlers were common;" Verna McGiffen goes on to say that, "an ill-directed axe blow, a falling tree, a blinding blizzard, a wrong turn in a trail, an unskilled shift of a paddle could all spell desolation or death."⁵²

⁴⁹Verna Ross McGiffen, Packenham, Ottawa Valley Village 1823-1860 (Packenham, Ontario: Mississippi Publishers, 1963), p. 10.

⁵⁰See Appendix K.

⁵¹McGiffen, 12.

⁵²Ibid.

In spite of the difficulties of living for the settlers of Pakenham they were interested in educational needs. In 1842 on June seventh the following notice appeared:

School rules:

1. Every teacher must be of good moral character.
2. There shall be no distinction in regard to religion.
3. School shall open with prayer.
4. The teacher is to:
 - a. Teach five hours each day.
 - b. Teach five and a half days each week.
 - c. Teach twelve months a year.
 - d. Keep a catalogue of attendance and progress.
5. In punishing the teacher can use:
 - a. Either hands or a piece of leather and must make note of the punishment, number of blows given, and cause of their affliction.
6. All accusations against the teacher must be made in writing.
7. All teachers shall suppress all whispering and noise in their schools.⁵³

Conditions in Canada did little to make the life of the settlers easier. There were rebellions in 1837, and on until 1869 when the last Riel rebellion was suppressed. Two years prior to this, in 1867, the British North American Act created modern Canada. There were few, if any laws on immigration at the time, and the settlers from Pakenham, left in groups, for the area south: Forest River. Many of them traveled by boat from Winnipeg, Manitoba, to Fisher's Landing and then overland by wagon or foot to the area. The choice of good land was often made by digging down in the ground with a small

⁵³ Ibid., 10.

shovel.⁵⁴ Some chose the area near the stream for wood and water. They often built log houses for shelter. There were others that "staked claims" on the open prairie. They used "dug-outs" and "sod huts" for shelter the first few years. The "sod huts" were warm in the winter and cool in the summer; but during long wet periods the roof sod would become saturated and would "drip" into the house.

Forest River Village was platted in 1887 and the town incorporated in 1893. The first postoffice had been established in 1878 and at that time the name changed from "Old Salt" to Forest River. Some early settlers were: George Eastman, the Carpenter brothers, James and John Bayne, Nathan and John Stoughton, Robert Howard, Ira and C. O. S. Johnson, George Willson, Henry Warren, Hamnett Hill Traveler and the Johnston brothers. There were others that came shortly after, and the area was soon populated by: "an intelligent class of farmers, most of whom are from the Dominion of Canada."⁵⁵ "The country round about the grove," the paper went on to say, "has the appearance of being farmed successfully, from the appearance of the fine growing grain".

The soil was productive, and the climate was suitable for growing grain. In addition to grain other crops were planted, and diversified farming was urged by the local papers of the day. Attesting to the success of the farming of one early settler was the following notice:

James Carpenter of Forest River was in Grand Forks Friday, and called at the Plainealer office. Mr. Carpenter is among the oldest settlers in that country, having been there for seven years. He has 600 acres of land on the river and raised 11,000 bushels of wheat this year, and a large quantity of oats. He has seventy-five acres of

⁵⁴Interview with Mr. W. H. Johnston, September 5, 1964.

⁵⁵Grand Forks Plainealer, July 13, 1882. (Forest River News)

timber on his farm and is perfectly satisfied with the country. Mr. Carpenter is not discouraged at the low price of wheat and will sow extensively the coming season. He has four Deering binders which he proposes to keep busy the next harvest. Such farmers are a credit to the country and are bound to succeed.⁵⁶

The year 1885 was not a particularly prosperous year for the Valley. The average price of wheat that year the country over, was sixty-five cents a bushel against ninety-one cents the year before. The average in New York that year was eighty-five cents; in Ohio, seventy-five cents; Illinois, sixty-three cents; Iowa, fifty-five cents; Minnesota, fifty cents; Dakota, forty-six cents; Kansas, forty-five cents; and Nebraska, forty-two cents. The Grafton Herald sympathized with wheat growers, and said: "Thus poor Nebraska is again behind, a surprise, as, in this crop, it had generally been supposed that Dakota was the 'suffering sister'. . . . The lesson suggests itself: let the farmers go into other products and stock".⁵⁷ The area remained a wheat growing capital; but other crops were gradually introduced and grown successfully: corn, potatoes and sugar beets.

The farming methods and living conditions in the area were primitive for only the first few years. Returns of wheat were high, expenses were low and after the first rush of homesteading was over the "sod huts" and "dug-outs" were soon replaced by substantial farm homes, large barns and machinery sheds.

Grain was hauled to railroad points until four elevators were built in Forest River with impressive names such as: Atlantic, Thorpe, Monarch and Amenia.⁵⁸ The Northern Pacific Railroad came through the village in

⁵⁶Grand Forks Plaindealer, January 15, 1885.

⁵⁷The Grafton Herald, January 15, 1885.

⁵⁸Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Chester Lowe, Forest River, November 4, 1964.

1886, and the Minneapolis, St. Paul and Sault St. Marie in 1905.⁵⁹

The first school in Forest River was built about the same time the town was founded. It was a two room frame building about a quarter mile from town. The village had actually been founded about a mile east of its present site. It was re-established when the railroad came through.

Some of the early teachers were: in Forest River District 68 in 1892, Lavina Fleming; in District eight: Mary Ryan, and District number 20: W. M. Cochran. The same year, 1892 the Forest River District number 68 included Sections sixteen, two, twenty-eight and thirty-three in Forest River Township. The plat book of 1893 shows that there were schools in the following Sections: 2, 6, 22, 24, and twenty-nine. The last named was in the village, and was called number sixty-eight. Mr. Duncan McEachern was one of the first teachers in this school. A modern brick school was constructed in 1902.

Gilby.--Most of the settlers in the Gilby area were Scotch and Irish people who came from the British Isles, Canada and the East. Some were Norwegian, and there were a few from Holland. They came usually by Fisher's Landing (Fisher, Minnesota), then across country by the Lone Tree Trail. A Post Office was established at this point for a while. Mr. J. W. Scott had this to say about the area when he came in 1879:

My first trip to Grand Forks and the Valley was in September, 1879. The day was a beautiful, warm, sunshiny September day. I arrived at Crookston in the early morning and took the mixt freight and passenger train to Fisher's Landing. The country lookt so good that I did not occupy a seat in the old coach but enjoyed the fine weather and the landscape riding on the top of a box car--which to me was great pleasure to see the fine country.

⁵⁹Now commonly called the "Soo".

And my first impressions of the country were so favorable that I thought 'this is the country for me' and now after nearly forty-three years of ups and downs, disappointments and pleasures of the farming business in the Valley, I am pleased to write that those first impressions are with me yet. North Dakota lookt good to me then and it looks good to me yet, particularly the Scott farm and Gilby district. I was pleased at getting a ride to Grand Forks with a farmer and saving the stagecoach fare.

At Grand Forks I met a young man I knew in Wisconsin, Tom Lewis, and he was so anxious for me to see what he called the Turtle Forest River country that he volunteered to take his team the next day and drive me out. The next morning we started for Forest River (not the present town--just a little river). There were no settlers in this section then, except along the rivers. My friend and driver had a claim in section 11-153-53. (In getting a direction then to any part of the country it was the number of section, town and range) We stayed the first night out in his 'sod shack'. There was not a tree or shrub that I saw between Turtle River and Forest River--just one unobstructed prairie. The first house we saw was near the Forest River, and it was a home of a fine gentleman by the name of Ira Johnson from the 'show me' state. He had quite a pretentious house, all built of lumber. That house still stands there, but near it stands a fine house, barn, and other fine farm buildings surrounded and protected from winter blast by a very fine grove of trees, [That grove is still 'thrifty',] a real homelike farm homestead. Returning we had our lunch and fed the horses at Tom's shack, and then started for Grand Forks. Shortly after leaving his shack, the weather became cloudy and a fine mist made it impossible to see farther than a short distance ahead. We should have reached the Turtle River in two or three hours, but no river showed up. He kept driving in but nothing came in sight. As nightfall fell and darkness settled over the earth, we came to the conclusion that we were lost, and made up our minds that at the first hay stack or any kind of protection we came to we'd camp for the night, and the horses were getting played out. Just as it was getting quite dark, we spied two hay stacks and made the best preparations we could for the night's lodging under the buggy and between haystacks. About this time Tom said, 'I believe these are my haystacks that I put up at haying time.' They were his and we were not a half mile from where we had eaten dinner and lunch. We had traveled all the afternoon and got back where we started from. But I don't think I ever slept better or more comfortable than I did that night under the buggy.⁶⁰

The town of Gilby was founded in 1887 when the Northern Pacific railroad was built through the area. Some of the early settlers were: George, James and John Gilby, for whom the town was named; James Douglas,

⁶⁰J. W. Scott's notes, Pioneer Farmer, Gilby, North Dakota, Quarterly Journal, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, April, 1923.

Will Douglas, Peter Reiton, J. W. Scott, Tom Porter and John Kinsala. Will Douglas came by rail to Winnipeg, down the Red River of the North to Fisher's Landing, Minnesota. From here he walked the thirty-five miles to Gilby, filed a claim, and walked back to Grand Forks!⁶¹

The first school in Gilby was an 18' x 24' wood building on the Southwest quarter of Section nine in Gilby township. The land had been donated by J. W. Scott and the building was constructed by Peter Barr, who hauled the lumber from the Grand Forks area by wagon. The school was built in 1885 about two blocks from where the town was platted. The names of the parents who had children in that first school were: J. W. Scott, J. C. Johnson, Mr. Quennel from Johnstown, George Salisbury and John Decker. Many one-room schools were established "within walking distance" and these were often named from the location or area such as the "Decker School" or the "Farnsworth", "Fife" or "Stewart". Sometimes different names were applied to the school, depending upon the name of the family living near at the time. When the railroad came through the area the first school had to be moved for the track. The little school had six windows and one door, and was heated by a wood stove. Sometimes fuel was scarce in the area and every other tie of the railroad track would be taken for fuel. The trains in early years sometimes could not run for three months in winter because of snow and generally severe weather. Sometimes floods prevented the regular service of the train, in the spring.

The following description of "weather" in Dakota Territory in 1880 illustrates some of the discomforts of early pioneering:

⁶¹Interview with Mrs. Erva Traynor, Gilby, August, 1964.

We returned to N. D. in the spring of 1880. The snow was all gone in Wisconsin and farmers were about to commence seeding when we left there about April 1. But when we got to Grand Forks, there was little sign of spring except on the streets where the snow had melted a little.

We soon started for my homestead but after crossing the Great Northern track north of the city, found one vast waving snow field three to four feet deep, and only passible for horses where the settlers had kept a beaten road during the winter. The trail led from one farm to another, and the trail did not go to section 9-153-53; it was over a mile from the beaten trail to our claims. To get there we had to go one mile north of them and break a road thru where the land was plowed to get to our shack. Where the land was not plowed, the snow was so deep and crusted that the horses could not smash thru. We succeeded in hauling all our feed for horses and ourselves from Grand Forks out in sleighs, making the last trip on sleighs April the 16th.

I don't often get the blues, but I did on some of these trips from Grand Forks out over thirty miles over a sea of snow four feet deep, cold as the dead of winter in April. The sun shining on the glassy snow nearly blinded me (some did get so blinded they could not stand it). And between the stinging frost and the sunshine burning my face and ears until all the skin peeled off--Oh dear, didn't I wish I was back home with mother! I thought that if this is N. D. April weather, how can we raise crops here. And anyone could gotten what I had in N. D. for a very small price. (After I had the over 200 acres seeded and the grain was up, I tried to sell the half section with crop for \$3500. But no one here had money to buy.

When the snow went off we had a sea of water from here almost all the way to Grand Forks. I had one more trip to make with a wagon. On my return when out from Grand Forks about 8 or 10 miles, I met teams coming back to Grand Forks saying that the bridge across the Turtle River was gone and no one could get across the river.⁶²

The first school in Gilby came to an unfortunate end in 1891 when it burned down. Subsequently, a new school was constructed: a two-story building with two rooms on the first floor and one large room on the floor above. Coincidentally, perhaps, this second school also burned about 1925.

In 1907 part of Wheatfield consolidated with Gilby, and that same year the Gilby school had its first three year "graduation" exercise. Some of the Gilby students went to Grand Forks to complete their four years of high school.

There were many small rural schools in the area in the early years. The plat book of 1893 indicates schools in Sections ten, twenty-nine and

⁶² Memoirs of J. W. Scott.

twenty-six. Section thirty-six was not settled; but Section sixteen was divided between two owners. Additional schools were constructed after this in Section twenty-nine and thirty-two; these are not listed in the first plat book.

There was some traveling library service in the Gilby area the first part of the 1900's when a horse drawn "bookmobile" was used. Horse and wagon also provided the first "bus" service in the area.

The early settlers in the Gilby area remarked about the honesty of the first pioneers. One merchant ordered a stock of hardware worth about \$2500.00, and kept it in a small wooden building, the door of which was held closed by a "bit of rope". Hardware was scarce and valuable; but nothing was ever taken without payment of some kind.

Cooperation was evident in all communities in the early days. The reasons for united effort varied considerably. The townships of Inkster and Strabane each voted in 1886 to pay \$50.00 toward a joint 'lock-up' to be used by both.⁶³ Cooperation was also evident in church worship patterns. In Gilby, one denomination worshipped in the morning and another in the afternoon; both groups used the same building. Church cooperation patterns were also evident in the Forest River community: where there were three churches at one time; there is one "Community Church" at the present time.

Johnstown. --This village was originally called Milan. Both the old and the new name were in honor of the first postmaster John Ryan Barker, who came from Milan, Bradford County, Pennsylvania. The postoffice was established December 13, 1880 in the Barker home in Section twenty. The name Johnstown was given to the township and postoffice when the village was

⁶³Walsh County Times, April 1, 1886.

platted in February, 1904.⁶⁴ It may have been named from the given name of Barker, or the surname of Isaac Johnson, on whose homestead the village was platted. The Northern Pacific railroad extended a branch line through the county and the Johnstown area in 1887. All the land in the area was settled by 1893, and the township designated as: Township 154 north, range, 53 west.

The Plat book for 1893 shows that in the Johnstown area there were schools in Sections two, seventeen, twenty-seven and twenty-nine. Sections sixteen and thirty-six did not have school buildings.⁶⁵

Inkster. --George T. Inkster for whom the township and railroad town were named was the first settler in the Inkster area. Mr. Inkster was born at Seven Oaks, near Winnipeg, in the Parish of Kildonan, Manitoba. He was of Scotch descent, but his mother belonged to the "Metis" or mixed, part Indian people of the Hudson's Bay area. H. V. Arnold says that his father was probably connected with the fur trade.⁶⁶

In the 1870's Mr. Inkster located in the Red Lake River area between Mallory and Grand Forks. In 1874 he explored the Turtle River and Forest River area in search of a location for a stock ranch and mixed farming area. Walter J. S. Traill and Hector Bruce were with Mr. Inkster at the time. Traill was an agent of the Hudson's Bay Company, then transacting business south of the forty-ninth parallel, and Bruce was a surveyor who had laid out Grand Forks for Captain Alexander Griggs. In 1876 Mr. Inkster moved from

⁶⁴Mary Ann Barnes Williams, Origins of North Dakota Place Names, (Washburn, North Dakota, 1961), p. 9, citing H. V. Arnold, The First Ten Years of Grand Forks History, 1900.

⁶⁵D. W. Ensign and Company, Plat Book of Walsh, Pembina and Grand Forks Counties, (1893), p. 43.

⁶⁶Arnold, p. 12.

his location on the Red Lake River and settled on the northeast quarter of Section twelve in Inkster Township. In 1877 settlers began to locate along the Forest River. James and Otis Carpenter settled seven miles from Mr. Inkster's location the same year. Most of the settlers in Inkster were from Ontario, Canada, and the earliest settlers came before the land was surveyed. They were called "squatters" since the land had not been opened by the government for "filings".⁶⁷

In April 1879, James, William and John McDonald settled in the Inkster area. James arrived first to "make a claim", and the other two brothers came in May of that year. Others who arrived the spring of 1879 were: Tillison Wager, Leonard Wager, William Pitts, Henry Congram and William Hobbs. David Lemery also came at that time and William and Neil Mathie. James Colling, Clark Cory, Jonathan Wager and M. L. McElwain came a short time later.⁶⁸

With but few exceptions the early settlers in the Inkster area were from Ontario. Pitt came from Wisconsin, McElwain from New York, and the Carpenter brothers "teamed through" Missouri in the spring of 1879.⁶⁹

Schools were held in private homes in Inkster before 1880. The railroad was established through the village in 1884; but before that time a small school was located one mile north of the present town. The school was built near the river, where the settlers hoped the town would be located. The railroad, however determined the final location of the town, and the next school was built in the village.⁷⁰

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰See page 47.

One of the early teachers was Miss Nichols who taught the term starting May 15, 1884. She not only taught; she also made use of her homestead rights and "proved up" three-hundred and twenty acres. One of the other early teachers in Inkster was Miss Ann Corey, who taught in 1885. She gave the following report of the school at that time:

With thirty-three students enrolled in a one-room school, I find the want of room and lack of uniformity on books to be a very severe obstacle in the way of success. Would it not be well for our citizens to take into serious consideration the building of a school in town, and make provisions for a good winter school there? This would extend school privileges to those who have no time to attend in summer, besides adding largely to the growth of the town.⁷¹

Miss M. Beatrice Johnstone taught from July 1st to October 18th in 1886, and walked the mile from school to town where she had "room and board". That winter the district rented the Methodist church in town for the first winter term of school. Mr. J. J. Trask was the teacher.⁷²

District Number 103 was formed in 1888 by dividing School District Number 39. It was decided that the district build a school in town, and this was accomplished in time for the start of school January 7, 1889. There were sixty-two students, ages 5 years to 19. The term closed June 30, 1889, and a summer term started then with forty-six students enrolled. The next winter term opened December 2nd, 1889 with seventy-three students. Miss Hattie Robinson was employed as an assistant to Mr. J. M. Bateman, the teacher. Miss Robinson's salary was \$40 a month, while Mr. Bateman received a salary of \$65 a month. The three R's, algebra, geometry and bookkeeping were taught. School closed in Inkster in 1890 on March 28th.

⁷¹Records of The School Board, Inkster, North Dakota, (1885).

⁷²Ibid.

The enrollment in the Inkster school had increased to 105 students by 1896, and for three years prior to that school was in session from fall to spring. Discipline was a problem for Miss Nesbitt, and she expelled several students. She wrote a full account of this and sent it to the school board. The board decided that: "re-employment of the present teachers had to be reconsidered on account of the unfavorable expressions of citizens and taxpayers." The teachers were not re-employed.⁷³

By petitions of property owners the school district had enlarged, and the enrollment increased to 178 in 1900. Further annexation of the Decker District Number 37 increased the Inkster district to twenty sections of land.⁷⁴

The date for the first graduation was set in the spring of 1907. This was an eighth grade graduation because there were no students beyond the 11th grade at that time. The teachers listed then were: Mr. J. R. Willett, Miss Mary Morey, Miss Josephine Barry, Miss Luella Coe and Miss Bosard.⁷⁵

The building used at present in Inkster was built in 1908 after a precarious beginning. A fire destroyed about seventy-five per cent of the business establishments in Inkster in October 1908, and the school was in danger of being destroyed before it was finished. It was completed, however, and has been in use since January 1, 1909.⁷⁶ The plat book of 1893 shows that there were schools in Inkster township sections seven, fifteen and twenty-nine.⁷⁷

⁷³See letters in Appendix J.

⁷⁴Spengler interview.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Plat book of Walsh, Pembina and Grand Forks Counties, 1893.

The Survey.--The survey of public lands on the North Dakota side of the Valley began in 1867. The preliminaries were done under the authority of the government. That year there were a few counties laid out and subdivided; but the work was slow until 1870 to 1876. The usual method of running township lines was for surveyors to take contracts in blocks of townships called "checks". A "check" was composed of twenty-eight townships having correction parallels for their north and south boundaries. The plats of the subdivided townships were not turned over to the district Land Office until late in the fall after the season's work had been finished. They were then sent to the Interior Department at Washington for record and approval, and after several months were returned to the U. S. Land Office. The surveyed townships were then declared open to settlement and "squatters" and prospective settlers could then make their filings on claims.⁷⁸

During the interval between the survey and the "throwing the land open to the market" many settlers occupied claims. These were recognized rights according to law. These rights were valid as long as they or their families actually lived upon the land and improved it. They were even allowed ninety days in which to make their filings after the land was placed on the market. The claim to the land was not supported by deed, so they could not deed the land to another; but they could sell their "squatters rights", for any agreed-upon amount. The purchaser in such an instance succeeding to the former occupant's pre-emption right to the land. Transactions of this kind, made any time before the occupant of a claim had "proven up", were called "relinquishments". Though not numerous in the area, there were two known instances of "relinquishment" in Inkster. William Postal settled in

⁷⁸Arnold, 17.

the area in 1879, but migrated after the survey, and St. Pierre Maisson, a part Indian settler sold his claim to Silas Lundy.⁷⁹

The United States Land Office for the Territory was opened at Pembina in 1874 and the same year the government land around the Grand Forks area was opened to settlement. Until the land was surveyed, however, few came.

The early settlers who lived in the "timber" usually constructed log cabins since the material was available. "Claim shacks" were often 12' x 12' or 12' x 14' and there were instances of a joint effort to make claim by building on what was thought to be the intersection of the land. In this way, two brothers could live in the "shack" and both actually occupy the land, thus each obtaining his parcel of land. Since this was done in many cases before the survey, the intersection lines often "missed" the occupied homestead, and the joint claim resulted in only a single claim. There were many claims on small "handkerchief size"⁸⁰ amounts of land of eighty acres, forty acres and even twelve acres. George Wesley Powell's warnings were surely unheeded.⁸¹

In North Dakota in 1920, after thousands of families had left, there were still 77,690 farms with an average size of 466 acres. By 1955 this had decreased to 61,943 farms with an average size of 676 acres.⁸² Since many pioneers did not take the full allotment of land their farms were many times smaller than they needed to be. There were three general ways to acquire land through the Homestead acts in Dakota: (1) a person could obtain 160 acres

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Cushman, 19.

⁸¹[See Chapter I, p. 1.]

⁸²Cushman, 19.

at a nominal fee of from about fourteen to eighteen dollars and five years residency on the land, (2) or by paying \$2.50 an acre, if within railroad rights, or \$1.25 an acre if without, and six months residency he could obtain pre-emption rights to the 160 acres allowed this way, (3) an additional 160 acres were available under the Timber Culture Act, which stipulated that residence was unnecessary; but that the culture of ten acres of timber was required, and that at the end of eight years there must be "675 thrifty trees to each ten acres". Under this act the remaining 150 acres could be cultivated during the eight years required to perfect the title.⁸³ This act was later repealed.

Another method of acquiring land, though less commonly used was that whereby soldiers could deduct the length of time they had served in the army from the time necessary to secure a homestead. It was necessary for them to make entry at the land office in person if they took advantage of this, and pay a fee of two dollars.⁸⁴

⁸³ Ada Alert, April 9, 1880.

⁸⁴ The State of North Dakota Statistical Abstract (Aberdeen, South Dakota), 1889.

CHAPTER III

THE IMPACT OF HISTORICAL, GEOGRAPHIC, CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AREA

The Red River Valley has been influenced by the factors mentioned previously in this study. It seems well at this point to emphasize the features that made this particular area unique in order that the reader may obtain a better perspective of relationships. The difference between rural and urban is no longer the sharp dichotomy it may have been at one time. It seems to exist on a continuum that shades almost imperceptibly from rural to urban or vice versa. However, each community is different from every other as a result of traits, customs and traditions that characterize the people of the area. Wheat growing areas differ from corn and dairy areas, for example. Adaptations must be made to environment for survival, and the institutions established by a people reflect their particular adaptation to the area in which they live. Some of the unique features of the area are mentioned here to the reader.

Climate.--The main characteristic about the weather in the area is its wide range of variation. The early settlers became quickly aware of the diversity of climate, and adaptations to the climate were almost as varied as the weather. The sod huts and dugouts were instrumental for the survival of many of the first pioneers, and were used in this area the first few years. The 1870's were years that gave rise to much of the adverse opinion expressed

and circulated about North Dakota. The Reverend Mr. A. McG. Beede who travelled through the state in 1877 said:

In March 1877, a few of us crossed the Red River at Breckenridge into what is now North Dakota. Going northward with loaded teams through snow sometimes three feet deep, and losing our way, we did not arrive at a point opposite Fort Abercrombie till 2:30 the next morning. . . . It was very cold. A youth in the party, just from school froze his face badly. A Scotchman cursed the whole country, while an Irishman jested as only the Irish can. . . . One Sunday I piloted a wagon load of land seekers, mostly from Wisconsin, over a vast stretch of land. Every mile or so the post auger was put down to try the soil. Not one of the party found the place he would risk for a home. . . . There were settlers at that time on the Cheyenne river out of Fargo. Caledonia was a place of promise. "Yankee" Johnson's spacious log hotel gave this place favorable mention. In spite of existing doubts and subsequent reverses these few pioneers had laid the real foundation. Some of them stayed here because they could not get away. Most people do as they want to do when they can, and when they can't they do as they have to do. . . . I do not remember meeting a person in those days, except a few foreign born, who regarded Dakota as a good place in which to live.¹

The settlers in the Forest River, Gilby and Inkster area came "south" from Canada, to a climate not unlike that from which they came. In spite of some reports that expressed lack of enthusiasm there were others extolling the beauty and productivity of the land, and urged those who desired "good land and healthful climate" to come. The more adventurous who came early wrote to friends in Canada and Europe about the "Land of the Golden Grain", and many came. Some brought their families, and some waited a year and went for them. The cool dry climate was favorable to the culture of small grains, and the hard, red, spring wheat was in demand by eastern millers. The soil was productive and the wheat yield was so great some years that it was often Christmas before all the grain was hauled to the elevators.

¹Rev. A. McG. Beede, "Reminiscences of Early North Dakota", North Dakota State Historical Society Collections Vol. I, (Bismarck, North Dakota, 1906), p. 429.

In spite of the success of some of the early pioneers, some experienced illness, crop failure, and other difficulties that resulted in discouragement and disenchantment. Many left for "greener pastures". Typhoid, tetanus and tuberculosis were common among the early settlers in the area. A load of ice was hauled out on the prairie in Gilby, to melt, at one time when a typhoid epidemic threatened.² A child pinched his finger on the trigger of a toy pistol on the Fourth of July and got tetanus. A family left the Forest River area to go to a climate thought to be better for tuberculosis. Improvement did not take place and they decided to come back; but the child died before they reached their destination. Notices of land sales appeared frequently in the papers such as: "Seventy acres, broke, three miles from elevator, will take \$1,000". One homesteader sold his land consisting of a parcel of 480 acres, for \$5,200.³ The land he sold then would probably have a cash value of about \$120,000, at the present time. A price of \$250.00 an acre is not uncommon in the area.

The years 1881, 1882 and 1883 were unusually hard, with deep snows. The few years between 1883 and 1886 were generally years of fair weather and good crops and more settlers came at that time. But the years from 1886 to 1889 were marked by poor prices, poor crops and more extreme weather.⁴ The year 1898 was marked by the shortest growing season on record: 56 days!⁵ A killing frost July 14th that year partially destroyed the crops in the area.

²Interview with Mrs. Lula Dickson, Gilby, July, 1964.

³Grand Forks Plaindealer, June 8, 1882.

⁴Thirty-eighth Annual Report, Langdon Substation (Langdon, North Dakota), 1963.

⁵Ibid.

To eliminate some of the risk of farming in an area with such extremes of climate, the papers as early as 1890 urged diversification:

Every farmer has come to realize in the past two years that he should cultivate a more diversified crop; but in the hurry of spring seeding he rushes to the crop that is the most easily handled. Why not this year devote ten or twenty acres to potatoes? The best potatoes in the world can be raised in the Red River Valley. Dakota potatoes command the highest price in the market, and there will always be a demand for them. A dry year is often favorable to a large crop and at twenty cents a bushel a good income is realized. A shortage of crop in other vicinities will warrant from twenty-five to forty cents per bushel at least one year out of three. Starch factories are sure to be established and already movements are on foot for this purpose. Then there will be a home market every year, and when a year of high price comes the farmers will be prepared to supply the demand and pocket the shekels.⁶

Many of the farmers did diversify their crops and good years for potatoes were realized. One hundred pounds of potatoes from the area are worth \$6.00 at the time of this writing. A quarter section (160 acres) of land planted in potatoes this year (which is unusual) could bring to the owner a profit of \$80,000!

Yields were high many of the early years, expenses were low, and the foundation for some of the large land holdings and wealth of the area were laid down at that time. Many farmers bought more land, expanded their farms and modernized equipment as it became available. It is not uncommon for farms to consist of three or four sections, and some even twelve to sixteen! As farms grew larger many people left. The weather was a deciding factor in many instances. The following table on population trends in the towns illustrates the change:

⁶ Walsh County Record, April 9, 1890.

TABLE III
POPULATION OF "MIDWAY" AREA
VILLAGES, 1910-1960

Towns	1910	1940	1960
Forest River	238	207	191
Gilby ^a	---	---	288
Inkster	353	310	281
Johnstown	244	271	209

^aGilby was incorporated in 1956.

The county population trend in Walsh county has been similar: in 1910 Walsh county had 19,491 people; but this had decreased to 18,859 people by 1950. Grand Forks county had 27,888 citizens in 1910, and 39,443 by 1950. The city of Grand Forks grew from 12,478 in 1910 to 26,836 in 1950.⁷ The trend to urbanization is evident in this area, as in other sections of the country.

The fact that small grains constitute most of the crop of the area, and the seemingly unrelated factors of large farms, mechanization and severe winter weather has resulted in the winter migration of many of the residents of the area, and also the summer immigration of Spanish-Mexican laborers from the southern United States and Mexico. These factors cause some problems in the educational system, and result in lack of continuity in other areas of community life. This is not a recent phenomenon at all. Many of the early settlers made enough money in the four months of the year to allow them to live in California during the most severe winter months. Enough

⁷North Dakota Population, Federal Census, 1910-1950. (Bismarck, N. D.).

people of the area were in California many years to establish an annual Long Beach Picnic made up predominantly of people from this area. Sometimes children are "displaced" to schools in Florida or California for the winter, and sometimes left at home for shorter periods of time with hired household help. The practice of "displacing" children and the influx of migrant children does cause fluctuation in class size, language problems and problems with subject matter and locality differences.

Modern methods of transportation, heating, improved machinery for farming and many others that accompany better living conditions have made the weather slightly less of a threat; but much of the economy of the area is dependent upon the weather, yet. The economy of the area fluctuates considerably, and there are still years when the farmers say as they did in 1884: "Money is pretty close these days; but not close enough to get a hold of".⁸

Agriculture. --The Land Grant College Act of 1862 (Morrill) granted lands to each state to aid in establishing colleges for the agricultural and mechanic arts (engineering), and led to the beginning of scientific education for farmers. The subsequent Hatch Act of 1887 and the Second Morrill Act of 1890 provided for the establishment of experiment stations as well as additional research.

A different stimulus to the pursuit of agricultural development was that of the railroad companies. They encouraged immigration by offering low fares and low rates on the transportation of farm machinery. After the transcontinental railroads were completed from 1869 to 1884 the influx of settlers began in earnest.

⁸Grafton Herald, April 10, 1884.

It was only the first few years that farming was primitive in the Red River Valley and what is now the "Midway" area. First oxen were used; these were replaced by horses, and farm machinery was introduced about the time the railroad came through the area. One of the early improvements advertized in the Park River Gazette was the Deering All Steel Mower that was an "improved" replacement for the wooden frame Mower.⁹ The paper also advertized Canton Clipper Plows, Phoenix engines and Daisy Hay Rakes.

Although a little wheat is grown in many parts of the United States, almost three-fourths of the nation's wheat is grown in the Great Plains area, and almost the entire state of North Dakota grows wheat. Fifty per cent of the nation's flax is grown in North Dakota.¹⁰

The Red River Valley seems particularly suitable to the growing of durum. The durum area is the eastern side of the northcentral area of the state. It apparently has the right combination of soil and climate to quite consistently produce quality durum.¹¹ Durum grown west of the "durum area" is often too high in protein content to permit quality macaroni manufacture. The macaroni producers like durum with 15% or less protein.

Wheat prices and yields have fluctuated considerably in the area: a low of \$0.36 a bushel was obtained in 1932, and a high of \$2.53 a bushel in 1947.¹² The yield has also varied. Some reported phenomenal yields; other

⁹Park River Gazette, July 15, 1887.

¹⁰Dr. Rodney Briggs, "Future Agriculture-Opportunity or Bust", Red River Valley Farm Forum Bulletin (Grand Forks, North Dakota, January 16, 1964).

¹¹L. A. Jensen, "Wheat Seeding Decisions for 1964", Red River Valley Farm Forum Bulletin, January 16, 1964.

¹²Robinson, p. 17.

reported yields of from 15 to 30 bushels per acre. Some of the new varieties of wheat yield 50 to 55 bushels per acre. Lakota wheat yielded an average of 48.8 bushels per acre in the years 1957-1962 inclusive. Trial yields of the same variety were as high as 74.0 bushels per acre.¹³ As farming becomes more scientific, standards are imposed. Grain must be stored in clean, tight, bins and buildings. It must not be stored when above twelve per cent moisture; if dried by artificial means it must not be dried at a temperature above 110°F. Above that temperature it becomes "case hardened" and more difficult to mill. Too high a temperature renders the grain unfit. Damage to wheat protein or gluten through coagulation results in poor quality wheat flour.¹⁴

The rural culture of the wheat areas stands in sharp contrast to some of the other rural areas. Levels of living and income are high, the birth rate is low, relatively little of the produce is consumed by the family and the proportion of operators of farms owning tractors and equipment is high. Farms are often large, and people are sparsely settled. Towns are rather infrequent, and cities are apt to be small. The maintenance of schools, libraries, churches and other institutions is a critical problem. The differences between rural and urban in the wheat growing area are less than between most other rural and urban areas.

Farmers in the area are accustomed to fluctuations in crop yield as well as crop value. Rainfall is apt to be uncertain, and hailstorms and pests are common problems. The practical application of research has taken some

¹³Red River Farm and Home Forum Bulletin, January 17, 1963.

¹⁴North Dakota Agriculture College Experiment Station and Extension Service Bulletin, "Grain Drying and Quality", December, 1958.

of the risk and uncertainty out of farming through insecticides, fungicides and pesticides. It is not necessary to say as the farmers once did: "One for the mole, one for the crow, two for the blight, and one to grow".¹⁵

"Agribusiness" is largely responsible for the economy of the entire area, and is generally of concern to everyone. Information supplied to the farmers through experiment stations and extension services in addition to the University at Fargo have been of benefit to all engaged in agriculture. There seems to have been some criticism of "scientific farming" on the basis that it produced surpluses.¹⁶ Many of the present problems in agriculture are the result of success and not failure.¹⁷ Technology has improved agriculture and farming. There are new systems of scientific animal nutrition, management, chemical fertilizers, insect and disease control that have indeed resulted in surpluses. In a speech before the Seventy-fifth Annual Faculty Conference at the University of North Dakota in 1958, Mr. J. William Buchta, Professor of Physics at the University of Minnesota said in reference to the problem of surpluses: "Technology will help find new uses for surpluses; this is a much happier task than struggling to find adequate calories for hungry bodies".¹⁸

The mechanical revolution and social upheaval that have been apparent nationwide have not left the Red River Valley untouched. In this area rural and urban differences have been minimized by the development of all-weather

¹⁵T. J. Schulz, "The Future of Insecticides in Applied Entomology", North Dakota Experimental Station Bulletin, January 1965.

¹⁶Briggs, Farm Forum Bulletin, January 16, 1964.

¹⁷University of North Dakota Seventy-fifth Annual Faculty Conference, (Grand Forks, North Dakota, July, 1959).

¹⁸Briggs, Farm Forum Bulletin, January 16, 1964.

roads, two-way radios in school buses, television, newspapers, magazines and travel opportunities. Many farms in the area are getting larger, and some farmers "farm" from nearby towns and cities. In spite of improvements and advantages in farming the rural population here, shows the same trend as that of the nation. The following table illustrates the national population trend from 1790 to 1950:

TABLE IV^a
GROWTH OF URBAN AND RURAL POPULATION IN
THE UNITED STATES, 1790-1950

Census year	Per cent urban	Per cent rural
1950	64.0	36.0
1950 ¹⁹	59.0	41.0
1940	56.5	43.5
1930	56.2	43.8
1920	51.2	48.8
1910	45.7	54.3
1900	39.7	60.3
1890	35.1	64.9
1880	28.2	71.8
1870	25.7	74.3
1860	19.8	80.2
1850	15.3	84.7
1840	10.8	89.2
1830	8.8	91.2
1820	7.2	92.8
1810	7.3	92.7
1800	6.1	93.9
1790	5.1	94.9

^aUnited States Census of Population, 1950, cited in The Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. I, p. 374.

¹⁹The second figure: 1950, is by the new definition of urban which includes all persons living in incorporated centers of 2,500 or more. All other population is classified as rural.

Population changes have also taken place in North Dakota. The rural population of the state in 1950 was 73.4 per cent and the urban was 26.6; by 1960 the urban had increased to 35.2 per cent and the rural had decreased to 64.8 per cent. The total state gain in population during the same decade was only 2.1 per cent, or from 619,636 in 1950 to 632,446 in 1960. The age group 14-17, however, increased seven per cent the same decade: from 42,162 in 1950 to 45,129 in 1960. Fewer adults were educating more young people and the trend seems to be in the same direction.²⁰ Only one out of seven of the young men will find a place on the farm; this is also the result of mechanization, technology and the other factors mentioned.

More research is needed to close the gap between research and its practical application in the area of farming and in the area of education in farming districts. Some communities have made attempts in this direction; but many are not aware that farming "is a science which requires superior skill and ability, and that considerably expanded educational programs are necessary to close the gap".²¹ This study concerns one of the first areas in the state to make such an attempt: to provide better educational opportunities for the young people of their area.

Newspapers. --The life of the pioneer was a difficult and hard existence; but was made more bearable and perhaps a little easier by the local newspapers. All of the villages in this study had small local newspapers for short periods of time. When they ceased to exist, the "news" was sent to

²⁰United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States, 1961, 82nd Annual edition, (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1961).

²¹E. H. Hartmans, University of Minnesota, "Adjustment--The Challenge to Agriculture" [cited in: Red River Valley Farm Forum Bulletin, (Grand Forks, North Dakota, 1959)]

the larger papers as a column of local interest. The early papers were instrumental in exercising approval or censure on the citizens. An article in the Grafton Herald July 12, 1883, titled: "A Bad Practice", illustrates the point:

The common practice of immigrants and others, crossing the prairies in all directions, regardless of the growing crops, is causing much annoyance to farmers. We know of small fields no more than 5 acres broken up by roads in no less than three places. Notices and obstructions are generally disregarded, and we have heard of at least one place where even the presence of a guard was not sufficient to put a stop to the nuisance. A little patience and a strict following of the laid out roads, by the farmers themselves is the only remedy we can suggest at present.

Signed: Mitchell, ed., Forest River Journal
(Republican)²²

The papers also had answers for different types of problems that faced the early farmer:

Brother Farmers! Shall we let the gophers be victorious, and let them drive us away? If not, we'll have to drive them away or kill them or put them in the state prison.²³

The local papers urged local spending, loyalty and piety. The paper was sympathetic with those in sorrow, scolding with those needing reprimanding, and very frank in everything. Frequently there appeared an item such as the following:

One of the citizens of the town, who occasionally wipes dishes for his wife, became tired of the job, and refused, saying: 'It is not man's work'. Not feeling disposed to lose his help, she brought out the Bible to convince him of his error and read the following from II Kings 21:13: And will wipe Jerusalem as a man wipeth a dish, wiping it and turning it upside down. It is needless to say he is doing his occasional stunt.²⁴

²²Grafton Herald, July 12, 1883.

²³Walsh County News and Times, April 23, 1890. (Bounties were offered of five cents a tail for several years after this).

²⁴Forest River News, 1906.

The paper published notices of births, deaths, illnesses, card parties, basket socials, races on foot five miles long, and races between the fire departments of neighboring towns. The social life of the early days is recorded rather well in many of the papers; also advice such as the following that was offered to women:

American women have no reason to find fault with their general treatment in public even if certain political franchises are not theirs. In England men are served first, waited on first at table.²⁵

The ladies in Inkster had different ideas, however as reported by an early paper: an affirmative vote was given on the question: Should the franchise be given to women?²⁶ Debates sometimes took three hours, and covered varied subjects some trivial and some profound.

Sometimes sheer nonsense was given space in the paper such as the following:

While a farmer was driving across the railroad track yesterday coming into town with a load of turnips, one of them fell upon the track, and the railroad company had to send the wrecking train to remove it with a derrick. Turnips are smaller than usual in the Valley this year on account of the drought.²⁷

The papers also concerned themselves with school business. They published the examination grades of the teachers when they applied for permits to teach, and the papers published recommendations about what should or should not be taught in school, such as the following:

It is a mistake to think that politics should not be taught in school. Politics taught judiciously, is the very best teaching the young men and women of today can have. The intrigues of political cliques should not be taught, but the broader questions of national importance. Because

²⁵Walsh County Times, August 29, 1882.

²⁶The Grafton Herald, June 28, 1884.

²⁷Ibid., October 25th.

the field of politics has been degraded by political trucksters is no reason why our best young men should hold themselves aloof from entering it.²⁸

Self evaluation for teachers was suggested by articles such as the following "Food for Thought":

What effect does teaching have on you? Does it make you selfish? Does it make you domineering and dictatorial? Are you sorry when school opens and glad when it closes? If you feel so you had better stop. You have likely missed your calling.²⁹

The old papers also recorded the lives of those who subsequently achieved fame and recognition. A wedding on April 28, 1907 in Forest River is of interest because the Wedding March was played by Vera Kelsey.³⁰ There were others who left the area to become professional people of recognition; but the foundation of the communities was laid by those who stayed to adapt their lives to the environment and adjust to it. The early settlers seem to have developed a spirit of cooperation, willingness to help others and a good natured good-will that is still in evidence in all the communities here studied.

The egress of people from the area started early and gained momentum in the 1930's and the years of the Second World War. Classes were small in the schools; it was difficult to obtain teachers; the curriculum and laboratory facilities as well as the building were inadequate and obsolete; the expense to the tax-payers of operating many small schools at high per pupil cost but low educational standard made change mandatory. The subsequent reorganization of the high school districts to form Midway Public Junior and

²⁸Walsh County Record, April 9, 1890.

²⁹Walsh County Record, April 23, 1880.

³⁰Forest River News, 1907. [Refer to footnote 36, p. 43]

Senior High School Number 128 was the result of the cooperative effort of the people of the area to their everlasting credit.

Education. --North Dakota became a state in 1889, and a year later there were only 570 high school students in the state. Most of these were three year high schools.³¹ The North Dakota Education Association at its second annual meeting in 1888 had urged the establishment of non-sectarian schools for the territory, and also the establishment of high schools:

Resolved: That in order to complete and unify the system of territorial education we favor the establishment and maintenance of territorial High Schools on the same basis as the primary schools and the University, regarding it of the highest importance that the steps in public education should be continuous and unbroken from the primary grades to the university and that all possible encouragement should be extended to the humblest son or daughter of the commonwealth to take the complete course.³²

In 1891 three years was established as the minimum high school course. Two years later North Dakota had a total of twenty-eight high schools.³³ In 1899 there were only nine high schools in North Dakota that offered a full course of a standard acceptable for entrance to the University.³⁴ The University of North Dakota had a preparatory department for students intending to continue their education at the University; but this was discontinued in 1907 when a model high school was established. Walsh County had a rather unique high school in the Park River Agriculture school which was established in 1913. The only high school in this town of 1,692 is the high school established at

³¹Louis G. Geiger, University of the Northern Plains, (Grand Forks, N. D.: The University of North Dakota Press, 1958), p. 111.

³²Minutes of the North Dakota Education Association, 1887-1902, Superintendent of Public Instruction (Bismarck, North Dakota).

³³Geiger, 111.

³⁴Ibid.

that time and called the Walsh County Agriculture School. It is one of two in the state, the other being in Morton County.

The years between 1899 and 1921 were generally times of fair to good farm prices. Many ungraded elementary schools were established, secondary education was being urged and interest in education grew. High schools were established in Forest River, Gilby, Inkster and Johnstown as early as the students advanced enough to do high school work. A notice in the Forest River News illustrates the type of education in the area at the time:

One of the most successful years in the history of the Forest River public school closed on Monday, June 10, 1907, with the fourth annual eighth grade commencement exercises, which were held in the Presbyterian church. The class was quite large in number, seven in all. . . . Hon. Tobias Casey delivered the address of the evening, taking for his theme, 'A High School in Forest River'.³⁵

Two year high schools were common in the area at that time. Students varied considerably in age, background and language. The fall term in Inkster (September 4th to December 23rd, 1904) had students that varied in age from 13 to 21.³⁶ According to the Grand Forks Herald, the Inkster School was considered to be a 'very fine school'. The curriculum included at that time such courses as: Latin, geometry, algebra, physical geography and history.³⁷ At the School Board Meeting of May 25, 1911, it was noted that a request was made to teach German in the Inkster school during the following summer.

³⁵Forest River Journal, 1907.

³⁶Teachers' Register, Inkster, North Dakota, 1901.

³⁷Teachers' Register, Inkster, North Dakota, 1904-1905.

CHAPTER IV

SCHOOL DISTRICTS THAT FORMED MIDWAY NUMBER 128

Reorganization was not a new concept to the people of the area; as early as 1883 changes were made in school districts in an effort to make improvements. The following is a brief summary of the school districts that were involved in the Midway reorganization that culminated in the formation of District Number 128:

TABLE V

Name of District	Number Formed	Name of District	Number Formed
Grand Forks County:		Walsh County:	
Levant	17	Ops	8
Johnstown	19	Forest River	38
Lakeville	29	Forest River	68
Strabane	35		1892
Strabane	37	Forest River	(about)
Honeyford	38		
Inkster	39		
Johnstown	49		
Levant	51		
Wheatfield	52		
Mekinock	56		
Wheatfield	65		
Inkster	66		
Inkster	73		
Gilby	75		
Johnstown	79		
Gilby	96		
Inkster	103		
Strabane	106		
Wheatfield	110		
Johnstown-Levant	112		

*Where no date is given, it was not found recorded.

Districts were formed in various ways. Some were formed by people simply deciding to have a school district. Below is described the manner in which each developed.

District Number 17. --All Township 155, Range 53, except sections 1, 2, 3, 10, 11 and 12 shall constitute and be one school district to be known as School District Number 17.¹

The numbers given to districts were assigned in the order of their formation. The seventeenth in the county was formed then, when County Superintendent C. A. Burton recorded the following notice concerning the interest expressed above:

I have this day formed School District Number 17 to fill the place of one by that number set off to Walsh County. The following is a description: sections 19, 20, 21, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33 of Township 154, Range 52, and the same shall hereafter be known as School District Number 17 of Grand Forks County. The first meeting is to be held at the house of A. L. McCallum, January 10, 1884, SW 1/4 of Levant.

In 1894 three sections of Lakeville Township (7, 8, 9) were annexed to District 17, which was called Levant Number 17.

District Number 19. --This school district was formed in February of 1884, and consisted of sections 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 34, 35, 36, of Township 154, Range 53. This was the SE 1/4 of Johnstown Township.

If the Range and Township were known, the exact location of specific boundaries was easily determined, since the townships were laid out with the numbers arranged in the following manner:

6	5	4	3	2	1
7	8	9	10	11	12
18	17	16	15	14	13
19	20	21	22	23	24
30	29	28	27	26	25
31	32	33	34	35	36

¹The reference material for this chapter was procured from the Records of County Superintendents' of Schools, (Grand Forks County and Walsh County, North Dakota, 1883-1965).

Some districts attempted organization and failed. Such an attempt was made to form District 25 in Township 154, Range 53. This was not completed and the sections of the township were later incorporated into other districts.

District Number 29. -- This district in Lakeville Township was formed March 9, 1881. It consisted of fourteen sections in Township 153 N., Range 53 W., that year; in 1883 two sections 33 and 34 were added to the original district. It then consisted of sections thirteen through sixteen, twenty-one through twenty-eight, and thirty-three through thirty-six of Township 153 N., Range 52 of Grand Forks County.

District Number 35. -- This district in Township 154 N, Range 54 W., consisted of sections 1-4, and 9-16 in 1882. The school district remained as was until 1952 when it became part of Inkster Number 124. (This reorganized into Midway Number 128 in 1958).

District Number 37. -- This district known as Strabane Number 37 was formed May 16, 1882 and consisted of sections 3, 4, 9, 10, 15, 16, 21 and 22 in Township 154, Range 55 W. This became part of Inkster 103 in November 1946, and subsequently part of Number 124 and Midway Number 128.

District Number 38. -- This district was also formed in 1882 in Township 151, Range 50 W. It consisted of sections 7, 8, W 1/2 9, W 1/2 16, 17, and 18. In August 1883, an addition was made to school District 38 when the SW 1/4 of Gilby Township was added: sections 19, 20, 21 and twenty-eight through thirty-three in Township 153, Range 53. A further change was made in this district in May 1907 when the following notice appeared:

On presentation of the proper petitions and upon recommendation of the County Superintendent of Schools, the County Commissioners annexed all of District Number 96, being sections 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 34, 35, and 36 of Gilby Township to School District Number 38, Gilby Township. District Number 38 now consists of sections 19 through 36 of Gilby Township.

District Number 39. --In 1882 the people around Inkster were also interested in forming a school district. The following notice was received by the Office of the County Superintendent of Schools on May 25, 1882:

We, the undersigned residents of the following sections, viz: 5, 6, 7, 8, 17 through 20 of Township 154, Range 54 W., and 1, 2, eleven through fourteen, 23 and 24 of Township 154 N., Range 55 W., respectfully ask that you grant us a school district formed of the above sections. (Signed):

S. S. Russell
 Silas Lundy
 D. Lemery
 Geo. Inkster
 Geo. Orr

Nelson D. Mellwain
 Henry Pitts
 O. B. Lundy
 B. Humphery
 C. T. Snell

The Board of Commissioners of Grand Forks County recorded the formation of School District Number 39 as follows:

Pursuant to the prayer of the foregoing petition, sections 5, 6, 7, 8, 17, 18, 19, and 20 of Township 154 N., and sections 1, 2, 11, 12, 13, 14, 23 and 24 of Township 154 N., Range 55 W., are hereby set apart and shall constitute a school district which shall be designated as School District Number 39.

This school district consisted of eight sections in Strabane Township and eight sections in Inkster Township. In 1952 parts of each of these became Inkster Number 124 and subsequently Midway 128.

District Number 49. --It was intended in 1882 that School District Number 49 be formed from sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 16, 17, and 18 of Township 151 N., Range 53 W. However, F. W. Iddings the County Superintendent of Schools published the following notice:

School District Number 49, as constituted and described in the foregoing records of this office, having failed to organize according

to the requirements of law, is hereby declared 'void' and sections 4 through 8, 16, 17, 18 of Township 151 N., Range 53 W., are unorganized territory.

This was later united with District Number 19 of Johnstown Township and slight changes were made in boundaries: District Number 19 and the "unorganized Number 49 were organized as one district" to be known as School District Number 49 in July, 1914.

District Number 51. --Proceedings to form School District Number 51 were started in June 1884 in Township 150, Range 53. This was to take the place of Number 44 which had failed to complete their organization. (School District 44 was in the Arvilla and Larimore area). The new School District Number 51 failed, also to complete their organization and was declared "void". There were further attempts to organize District Number 51. Eight and a half sections of School District 3 were added, and also some unrecorded changes until the district known as Levant Number 51 existed as sections 4, 5, 8, 9, 16, 17, 20, 21 and the W 1/2's of 3, 10, 15 and 22 and the NE 1/4 of 18 in Levant Township. It remained as such until it was annexed to Midway Number 128.

District Number 52. --This district formed in Dakota Territory in December, 1882 in Township 154 N., Range 54 W., consisted of sections 28 through 33 of the above named township, and sections four through nine of Township 153 N., Range 54 W. District 52 then consisted of sections 28 through 33 in Strabane Township and sections 4 through 9 in Wheatfield Township. These twelve sections became part of Inkster 124 in 1952 and subsequently Midway 128.

District Number 56. --On January 26, 1883, a petition as follows was recorded by the office of the County Superintendent of Schools:

Petition

To the County Superintendent of Schools, Grand Forks, Dakota Territory: We, the undersigned, wish to be set off and form a separate school district. Signed:

Elias Thompson	Daniel Kirkude
Ingebert Rasmusson	Hans Anderson
John Jogenson	Herman Halverson
Erik P. Stavting	Halvor H. Nordelman
Andus Anderson	Paul Larsen
E. Rice	John O. Overland
Mans Rasmusson	Eli K. Dokeson
Ele E. Groff	H. T. Moen
Erik Severson	O. H. Olson

District 56 was then organized to consist of the following sections: 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 of Township 152, Range 53. In 1885 sections three, 10, 15, 14 and 13 were taken from Number 24 and added to District 56. This was done by "petitions signed by five heads of families accompanied by the necessary affidavits stating that on account of the improper size of District 24, their children were prevented from attending school". Further changes were made in District 56 when all of District 80 was added upon the recommendation of the County Superintendent and the petition of patrons in the District. District 56 now consisted of Sections 17, 18, 19, 20, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33 and the western half of Section 21 and 28 of Lakeville Township (formerly constituting District Number 80) and Section 1, 12 and 13 (formerly constituting District Number 56) of Mekinock Township. This change took place July 9, 1909. (Mekinock 56 remained until 1951, as stated when it became part of Number 121 through reorganization).

District Number 65. --This District was formed on the 4th of July, 1883. It consisted of Sections 22 through 27, 34, 35, 36 of Township 153, Range 54. Known as Wheatfield Number 65, it remained as the SE 1/4 of Wheatfield

Township until 1959 when part of it was annexed to Larimore Number 44, and part to Midway Number 128.

District Number 66. --This district was also formed in 1883 in Township 154, Range 55 and consisted of sections 5, 6, 7, 8, 17, 18, 19 and 20.

District Number 73. --In April 1885 School District Number 73 was formed:

I have this day formed School District Number 73 of Grand Forks County, Dakota and the following is the description: Sections 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33 and the south half of sections 19 and 20 of Township 154, Range 55.

The south half of sections 19 and 20 belonged to District Number 66 but a petition was signed by a majority of the voters of the District Number 66 allowing the said south half of sections 19 and 20 to be taken from District 66 and formed into a new district. In 1951 Inkster District Number 66: sections 5, 6, 7, 8, 17, 18 and the N 1/2 of 19 and the north 1/2 of 20 reorganized, part going to Fordville (Walsh County) and part going to Inkster School District 124, which later reorganized to form Midway Number 128.

District Number 75. --This district was formed May 4, 1884, and consisted of Sections 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 16, 17 and 18 of Township 153, Range 53. In 1906 all of School District Number 91 was annexed to District Number 75, and part of Wheatfield Number 53 was also added. Gilby Number 75 then consisted of the N 1/2 of Gilby Township and the NE 1/4 of Wheatfield Township until 1958 when reorganization made it part of Midway Number 128.

District Number 79. --This district was formed July 6, 1885 of the following sections: 1, 2, 3, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 of Township 154, Range 53. Part of this was annexed to Johnstown District 49 at an unknown date (This District Number 49 had failed to complete their organization).

District Number 96. --This district included sections 22 through 27, 34, 35 and 36 in Township 153, Range 53, and had been formed May 1, 1887. In 1907 upon the presentation of a petition and the recommendation of the County Superintendent of Schools, all of District Number 96 was annexed to School District Number 38, Gilby Township.

District Number 103. --This School District in Inkster Village started in 1888 when part of Number 39 was divided. The District Number 103 consisted of 6 sections, but increased to twelve upon petition of property owners, and then increased further to 20 sections, when Decker School District Number 37 was annexed.

District Number 106. --The Township 154, Range 54 W. was known as School District Number 54 in 1882. At some unrecorded time between then and 1897 it was changed to District Number 106. It remained as such, comprised of Sections Twenty-one through twenty-seven, 34, 35, and 36 until it became part of the Midway School District reorganization in 1958. School District Number 106 was generally known as Strabane 106.

District Number 110. --Known as Wheatfield Number 110, in Township 153, Range 54, this district's founding date is unrecorded. In 1958 part of this district became Midway Number 128, and part went to Larimore.

District 112. --At a joint meeting of the County Superintendent of Schools and Board, School District Number 112 was organized April 3, 1893 and included Sections 1, 12, and 13 of Johnstown and 6, 7, and 18 of Levant Township. This Johnstown-Levant School District Number 112 reorganized later to form Midway Number 128.

The School Districts named above were mainly in what is now Grand Forks County. There were a few in Walsh County, as follows:

District Number 8. --This School District known as Ops School District Number 8 was formed at an unrecorded date; but became part of the Midway reorganization in 1958.

District Number 38. --This District's date of founding could not be found, but it existed in 1897. That year a Miss May Crawford taught at the school. This became part of the Midway reorganization.

District Number 68. --This School District in Forest River Village was formed from a School District Number 18, at an early unrecorded date. In 1892, the District Number 68 in the village consisted of Sections 16 through 21, 28 through 33, in Township 155, Range 53. There was a transfer of Sections 18, 19, the W 1/2 of 17, the W 1/2 of 30 and NW 1/4 of 20 to District 116 in April 1894. This District Number 68 became part of the Midway District 128. Part of District Number 68 went to District Number 20 (Minto) at that time.

District Number 88. --This School existed in Section 24 of Forest River Township in 1893; but the founding date is unrecorded. It, also became part of Midway, when one section joined the Midway area.

CHAPTER V

THE REORGANIZATION TO FORM MIDWAY PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT 128

In the enthusiasm of building new lives, communities and schools the state of North Dakota had established by 1946-1947 school districts numbering 2,271 of which 911 were operating schools for fewer than ten pupils; many for five pupils, three pupils, and even one.¹ The cost per pupil is excessively high in such cases. In some of the districts road conditions and natural barriers made such schools necessary; but in many districts the high per pupil cost was due to the small size of the district.

In many districts, high schools offered only skeleton programs. In 1946-47 there were over 200 high schools in North Dakota which offered four years of high school to less than fifty students each; in fact there were 29 that offered four years of high school work to less than twenty students each. The boy who wanted to farm, the girl who wanted to do office work, and the boy preparing for medicine all had the same program in the small schools. There were too few high schools with vocational agricultural courses in 1946-47 in North Dakota, a state that is primarily agricultural. There were only eighty high schools that offered vocational home economics, in spite of the fact that every girl would use the training she would receive in homemaking.²

¹State Committee on School District Reorganization (Bismarck, North Dakota, 1947), p. 4.

²A Key to Better Schools in North Dakota Organization, 1948, p. 5.

Walsh and Grand Forks counties had problems of small enrollment, obsolete buildings, high per capita cost, and limited curricula in common with the state and nation. In 1957 Walsh County had 108 school districts, and Grand Forks County had 91 in 1954-55. Walsh County decreased this number to twenty-five by the 1964-65 school year, and Grand Forks to twenty-two, by the same year.

There are a number of important relationships among three variables: size, cost and quality of education. The larger the school, the more efficient is its expenditure and the lower, usually, the cost. A Florida study in which the high cost of education in the state was investigated came to the following conclusions:

1. Breadth of educational opportunity increases with size of school from less than 50 pupils to 350 pupils in grades 7 through 12.
2. Cost per pupil per unit of educational opportunity did not level off until a school reached 500 pupils.
3. Reorganization of school districts is more likely to produce adequacy of program than additional expenditures in schools smaller than 500 pupils.³

In an investigation of a somewhat similar situation in Iowa, Peck said:

"Although size of school and cost per pupil were both reliable predictors of quality of education, size was 7 times as important as cost."⁴

One school in Walsh County has at the present time seventeen students in high school and the cost per pupil is \$1080.41 a year. This is for a high school. The Grafton city high school has 420 students, and the cost per pupil is \$494.47. In Grand Forks the number of students in high school was 2,853 in the 1963-64 term, and the cost per pupil was \$513.88. Students in the seventeen pupil high school supplemented the deficiencies by correspondence taken for the courses that were lacking.

³Cushman, 24.

⁴Ibid.

In 1956-57 the towns of Forest River, Gilby, Johnstown and Inkster were all operating high schools. The enrollment district-wide was:

Grade 1	48	Grade 7	44
2	41	8	33
3	42	9	36
4	40	10	32
5	38	11	33
6	<u>26</u>	12	<u>20</u>
	235		198

There were 198 high school students divided among four high schools. One class had two students in it, and all the classes were small. Laboratory facilities were completely inadequate, no home economics or vocational agriculture were taught, and the cost of operating all the schools was increasing. In the words of Mr. Peter Simmet:

It had been recognized for some time that in a sparsely populated state, the problem of too many school districts would have to be solved some day. Increased costs of operating, improved educational standards and a need for more and better training for our mobile population hastened the day of reckoning.⁵

Rural society is not only mobile today. Technological economic and educational changes are evident. This is how one rural sociologist described the American farmer in 1928:

In rural America. . . the farmer goes along as he always has and his father before him and still keeps going. . . . The farmer holds tenaciously to old and outgrown ways long after new and better ones are known to him. He fears experiment. His record is generally one of opposition to reform in economic policies. He habitually votes down schemes of tax reform in economic policies, steadfastly upholds the protective tariff, defeats programs unless he can see some direct benefit to himself. . . . Further evidence of dogged adherence to custom is seen in moral and religious behavior.⁶

⁵Mr. Peter Simmet is at the present time Superintendent of Midway Junior-Senior High School number 128.

⁶Everett M. Rogers (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1960), p. 7, [citing Newell Leroy Sims, Elements of Rural Sociology (New York: Crowell Pub. Co., 1928), pp. 229-231.]

Contrast this with a description of the modern farmer in 1957:

The farmer in a business suit has taken the place of the old homesteader. His horsepower is bred in factories and his stock is fed by white-frosted scientists in the laboratories that produce those fabulous substances known as antibiotics and hormones. His family farm is a costly, efficient, revved up complex of fields, barns and equipment with a gluttonous hunger for capital and managerial know-how. His productivity is a hundred, a thousand times his family's own needs. His harvests flow through myriads of enterprises and arrive in your kitchen cleaned, prepared and processed as if by built-in maid service.⁷

The change in rural society is not only in the method of farming, rural life is becoming "rurbanized". There has been a retrenchment or cutting back of excesses in farms, schools, banks, towns, newspapers, and churches. In many cases it has been a painful sort of adjustment.

Wide distances have always been a problem on the Plains. North Dakotans have solved that problem for themselves by having more cars per capita than people in other sections. In 1956 people in North Dakota had 467 motor vehicles per thousand persons to 385 per thousand for the United States.⁸

In 1800 it took an average of 56 hours of labor to produce an acre of wheat. By 1880, when the horse-drawn reaper was widely employed, it took 20 man-hours to grow and harvest an acre of wheat. Today on the Great Plains less than two hours of labor will do the job and do it better. Now one can go into the country on a July day and see one man bale and load ten tons

⁷Everett M. Rogers (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1960), p. 7, [citing John Davis and Kenneth Hinshaw, Farmer in a Business Suit (New York: Simon Schuster, 1957), p. x.]

⁸United States Department of Commerce, Historical Statistics of the United States--Colonial Times to 1957. (Washington: United States Government Printing Office, 1960), p. 278.

of hay in an hour. Twenty years ago, two men working with pitchforks could not have done that much in an entire afternoon.⁹

Better farming methods, better seed and equipment have made this progress possible. People from rural areas are a mobile people and the life they lead has very little resemblance to the past in many ways. In some ways, however it, too, is pioneering: new ways, perhaps untried and untested must be employed, and old ways left behind. Wherever rural people have been confronted with tasks which could not be accomplished individually, they have devised ways of uniting their efforts. This spirit of sharing and neighborliness contributed to the establishment of early schools in this country. More recently it has helped to bring about increased educational opportunities in rural communities through reorganization.¹⁰

During 1946 the American Institute of Co-operation of the National Education Association, and the Department of Rural Education jointly sponsored and arranged eight regional conferences, in which small groups of agricultural leaders and educators from every section of the United States discussed the common problems of rural education.

In 1945 the session of the North Dakota Legislature created an Interim Legislative Research Committee. This committee appointed by the presiding officers of both houses was composed of 6 members of the House of Representatives and 5 members of the Senate.

⁹Louis M. Wangburg, "The Historical Geography of Selected Farms in the Larimore, North Dakota Area" (unpublished Master's thesis, Library, University of North Dakota, 1964), p. 4.

¹⁰Department of Rural Education Yearbook, Vocational Education for Rural America, ed. Gordon I. Swanson (Washington, D. C.; National Education Association, 1958-59), iii.

Governor Aandahl of North Dakota met with the committee at its first conference, suggesting three subjects, one of which was school district reorganization, which he believed was of sufficient importance to merit their study. This committee studied the current school systems and the reorganization acts passed by other states such as Kansas, Washington, Oregon, Illinois, and Idaho, the result of which was the passing of the North Dakota Reorganization House Bill Number 43, S. L., in 1947.¹¹

Committees. --After the passage of the reorganization law, citizens, concerned about the educational need of the young people became active in organizing meetings. In 1947 a committee was organized composed of one member for each commissioner district as designated by law. This was to be done 60 days after the passage of the act. The law was carried out to the extent that within six months after its enactment in each county in the state, a committee known as the county committee was to be established. No person engaged in teaching as an instructor or supervisor or administrator was eligible to serve on any county committee. At least one member was to be elected from each commissioner district. The Grand Forks County Committee members appointed were:

George Eccles, Grand Forks, Chairman
 Mrs. Joe Bjerkdie, Gilby, Vice Chairman
 Miss Hilda Christianson, County Superintendent, Secretary
 Erik Sand, Emerado
 Oswald Braaten, Reynolds
 P. W. Peterson, Aneta

The Walsh County Committee members were:

Mrs. H. J. Gallagher, Drayton
 H. H. Hewitt, Minto

¹¹Effie Carroll, "Reorganization of School Districts in Grand Forks County, North Dakota" (unpublished Master's thesis, Library, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, N. D., 1948), p. 1.

Norman Bjerneby, Hoople
 Hulbert Casement, Fordville
 George Berntson, Edinburg
 Mr. Strand, Walsh County Superintendent, Secretary

Meetings. --The first public meeting of these groups was at Adams, October 6, 1948. This was a joint meeting with Pembina, Walsh, Traill and Grand Forks counties. On December 10, 1948 at a meeting in Grand Forks the speaker was Dr. M. L. Cushman of Iowa State College, Ames, Iowa. This meeting was to discuss the possibilities of reorganizing. There were many meetings after this. The problem areas, or "what people were afraid of" were: taxes, giving up local schools and long distances of bus transportation.¹²

The start of reorganization in the area, after the preliminary County Committees were appointed, was the meeting on March 22, 1950. This was a small reorganization plan involving Forest River and sections 2, 3, 4, and 6 of the Johnstown township. This plan culminated in boundaries being set which included these sections. At the time it seemed that other Grand Forks county areas adjacent to Walsh county were reluctant to reorganize northward.

In January of 1951 a joint meeting of Grand Forks and Walsh Counties was held, at which time Mr. A. R. Nestoss of the State Department, Bismarck, proposed that the reorganization be enlarged to include parts of Grand Forks county. George Berntson moved that the plan be accepted for public hearing. The thought of large area reorganization did not meet with approval, and reorganization continued on local and small-area basis for the next few years.

The small reorganizations did not seem to answer the problems needing solutions. The small schools offering twelve grades were crowded,

¹²Interview with Mr. Strand, February 19, 1965.

inefficient, costly and deficient in curricula. In Forest River the room containing the first grade was divided into two rooms. Other changes were made to alleviate the inadequacies of the schools; but the local changes did not answer the needs.

Finally on January 20, 1957 a meeting was called in the office of Miss Florence Rasmusson, the County Superintendent of Schools in Grand Forks county. From this meeting, a "steering committee" composed of sixteen members representing the areas evolved. Their stated purpose was to bring about the formation of a new school district which would provide better educational opportunities for all children, a greater degree of uniformity of school tax rates among the districts, and wiser use of school funds for the support of the school system. There were several alternatives discussed:

1. Keep the school in the small districts and curtail offerings.
2. Have only two or three years in the high school offerings instead of the four year program.
3. Consolidate the taxable assets and pupil enrollment of a large area and bring the pupils to one school.¹³

Three meetings followed: January 24, February 17 and February 24, 1958 at which time the finance, site, enrichment and transportation committees were appointed to work with consultants from the University of North Dakota. A series of meetings were held to acquaint the people with the project. The meetings were held in Forest River, Gilby, Johnstown, Inkster, Honeyford and Wheatfield. Mr. A. G. Strand, County Superintendent of Walsh County thought there were "at least 150 meetings to get the Midway project 'off the ground'". The meetings were well attended by interested

¹³Notes from meeting January 20, 1957.

citizens. The following letter was sent to the patrons of the district in answer to questions that were asked:

Many questions have been asked concerning the proposed reorganization in the Forest River, Gilby, Inkster, Johnstown and Honeyford area.

1. What are the purposes of reorganization?

A. To assure every student a good high school education. Grand Forks High School at present offers 46 units of work; Larimore - 28; Gilby - 17; Inkster - 17; Forest River - 16. Combining the Forest River, Gilby and Inkster High Schools we will be able to offer a high school program comparable to Grand Forks, Larimore and Grafton.

B. To equalize the tax burden.

The tax rate in the different districts included in this plan varies from a low of 4.52 mills to a high of 45 mills for the General Fund.

C. To provide transportation.

D. A wiser use of school funds.

2. What will be the valuation of the new district?

The valuation will be close to three million dollars.

3. What will be the tax rate of the new district?

Had these districts operated as one district this past year, the levy would have been 28 mills. The maximum levy for a high school district is 32 mills. This maximum can only be increased by holding a special excess levy election.

4. Is it true that it will be cheaper for Inkster, Gilby and Forest River to be a part of this new district and operate at a lesser cost than we are at present?

YES. At the present time Gilby has a 32 mill levy for the General Fund, 10 mills for the Building Fund and 3 mills for the Special Reserve Fund. Inkster has 29 mills for the General Fund, 10 mills for the Building Fund; Forest River has a mill levy of 45 mills plus their Sinking and Interest Fund of 5 mills. If this is one district, the General Fund would not exceed 32 mills and the Sinking and Interest Fund for the bond issue for the new building should not exceed 10 or 12 mills.

The bond issue which will be voted upon if this reorganization plan passes will replace the present building funds, Special Reserve Fund, and the excess levy of these districts.

5. If these three schools do not reorganize, will it be necessary to plan a building program?

YES. Inkster has already stated that they will need to vote an excess mill levy this year to provide for an additional grade teacher and classroom space. Forest River and Gilby within the next five years will also need additional facilities to meet state requirements.

6. Is it necessary that rural districts must become a part of high school districts?

The State P. T. A. is now sponsoring an initiated measure that every district should be in a high school district. 10,000 signatures are needed on this petition to put it on the fall election ballot.

7. Will there be more state funds per teacher unit in the proposed new district?

YES. At present we are receiving \$2,340 per teacher from the state. Under the new plan we would receive \$3,744 for each teacher--nearly a teacher's salary.

WHAT YOU DO AT THE POLLS ON MAY 26 WILL DETERMINE THE
FUTURE EDUCATION OF THE BOYS AND GIRLS IN OUR AREA.

SIGNED: THE STEERING COMMITTEE

March 3, 1958, a public hearing was held in Inkster, North Dakota, to discuss proposed boundaries in the hope of presenting a plan to the State Department that would be approved without contention. This meeting was attended by 500 people residing in the area. Three members of the Grand Forks Committee were there: Oswald Braaten, George Bradshaw and Erik Sand. Miss Florence Rasmussen, County Superintendent of Grand Forks County was present, as well as the entire Walsh County Committee. There had been two replacements in the Walsh County Committee because of the death of two members. The replacements were: Wallace Feltman who succeeded H. H. Hewitt, and Luther Berntson who succeeded his father. Lewis Johnston presided at the meeting as President of the Educational Committee.

The "steering committee" and the county superintendents determined the area to be included in the plan, and it was submitted to the State Department for approval. That plan was returned rejected because of boundary opposition.

Grand Forks, North Dakota
March 25, 1958

TO: SCHOOL PATRONS OF FOREST RIVER SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 68

A decision was not made by the State Board of Public Education on the proposed plan submitted by the Grand Forks County and Walsh County Reorganization Committees for the state approval of the reorganization of the Forest River-Johnstown-Gilby-Inkster area.

The reason for the decision not being made by the State Board is that there apparently is a controversy over the area included in the plan-- a portion of the area apparently wishing to be a part of the reorganization at Minto. Therefore, the State Board returned the plan for clarification of boundary lines with the Forest River-Johnstown-Gilby-Inkster area and the Minto area.

The State Board recommended that we call a meeting in Forest River School District No. 68 for further consideration of the boundary lines of our proposed plan. In compliance with this request, the Grand Forks County and Walsh County Reorganization Committees have called a meeting for Tuesday, April 1, 1958, at 2:00 P.M. in the school gymnasium at Forest River.

We urge you all to attend this meeting.

Sincerely yours,

Florence Rasmusson

SECRETARY of Joint Committee
of Grand Forks County and
Walsh County Reorganization
Committees

FR/lmk

Hearing Amendment. --At that time the public hearings were held after the boundaries were established. During the writing of this thesis the

1965 North Dakota Legislature is considering amending this so that the hearings are held before the boundaries are established.

For an Act to amend and reenact section 15-53-21 of the 1963 Supplement to the North Dakota Century Code, relating to school district reorganization and annexation proposals.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA:

1 SECTION 1. AMENDMENT. (Section 15-53-21
2 of the 1963 Supplement to the North Dakota Century Code is hereby
3 amended and reenacted to read as follows:
4 15-53-21. VOLUNTARY PROPOSALS FOR
5 ORGANIZATION OR ALTERATION OF SCHOOL
6 DISTRICTS.) Proposals for the organization of
7 a new school district, for the consolidation of two or more
8 districts, or for the alteration of the boundaries of established
9 school districts, by any of the means provided for by law, must be
10 submitted by the county committee and county superintendent to the
11 state committee for approval (((before any)));
12 1. After hearings on petitions are held by the county
13 committee, or
14 2. (((before))) Before final action is taken by the committee
15 in cases where no petition is required, or
16 3. (((before))) Before proposals are submitted to the vote of
17 the electors,
18 as the law may require in each case. Such proposals shall be

19 approved by the county committee and county superintendent and
20 approved by the state committee if in the judgment of said committees
21 they constitute an acceptable part of a comprehensive program for
22 the reorganization of the school districts of the county.

One of the purposes of the amendment was that of eliminating "holding up" the approval of a reorganization plan. It was the feeling of the sponsors of the bill that differences should be allayed before the plan was sent to the State Department. The progress of the Midway plan was retarded after the plan was first rejected because at that time those who disagreed with the boundary of the proposed district were required to wait until after the plan had been submitted, and there was in the district one family that did not want to be included in the district as outlined in the plan. The family referred to even took their case to the State Department in Bismarck. After consideration by the Department, and the County Committees, it was agreed that this family should be allowed to withdraw from the proposed Midway district. The fear of those on the planning committees at that time was that other families would also choose to leave the district that was proposed. If very many would so choose, the reorganization efforts would have been frustrated hopelessly.

Approval of Plan. --Again a plan was sent to the State Department, and on April 8, 1958 it was approved as follows:

NOTICE OF APPROVAL OF PLAN

This is to certify that the NORTH DAKOTA STATE BOARD OF PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION has approved this plan for the reorganization of the school districts in and about the vicinity of Forest River, Gilby,

Honeyford, Inkster & Johnstown consisting of the following described territory: All or parts of Levant No. 17, Honeyford No. 38, Johnstown No. 49, Gilby No. 75, Strabane No. 106, Johnstown-Levant No. 112, Wheatfield No. 110, District No. 121, Inkster No. 124, Forest River No. 68, Forest River No. 38, and Forest River No. 88 in Grand Forks and Walsh Counties, North Dakota.

The plan was approved with the following provisions:

All provisions as stated in the plan.

The new district as proposed is to be known as the _____

Midway Special School District No. 128

Dated at Bismarck, North Dakota, this 8th day of April 1958.

North Dakota State Board
of Public School Education
M. F. Peterson
Executive Director

On May 26, 1958 seven school districts and parts of others went to the polls and voted affirmatively to reorganize into one district under one board of education. The following is taken from the ballot voted on for reorganization:

It being further provided that a building program be proposed to provide facilities for a high school to be centrally and feasibly located in the Johnstown area which will serve the seventh and eighth grade students and high school students of this area.

Six hundred and eighteen (618) votes were cast: 396 affirmative, and 222 negative. There were 437 votes from the towns and 181 from the rural areas.

The acceptance of the plan for the boundary was just the first step in the reorganization effort. The Committees planned for the next procedure

by appointing sub-committees to study various aspects and make reports. If there was a key to the reorganization it may have been: Involvement. Everyone was involved with the project in some way. Those who were not on committees worked for the ones that were, and the entire citizenry of the area was interested and concerned.

At the time of reorganization in the Midway area, the people in the new district No. 128 voted to have the Board of Directors follow a strict procedure. The Board selected Dr. Melvin Gruwell, Department of Education at the University of North Dakota, and with his assistance established a study committee of citizens representing all parts of the school district. The areas studied were: organization, administration, the school program, the school plants and sites and the availability of water at the various proposed sites.

ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERN FOR STUDY AND EVALUATION OF MIDWAY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Administrative Office, Johnstown, N. Dak.

I. Executive Committee

A. Members of Board of Directors

B. Advisory Members

1. Superintendent of Schools
2. Consultant

II. Study and Evaluation Committee

A. Committee-of-the-Whole

1. Receive sub-committee reports
2. Accept or reject recommendations from sub-committees. If recommendation is accepted, committee will forward said recommendation to Board of Directors. The Board of Directors is the legal body. The committee has no power in itself. Its purpose is to study and evaluate and be advisory to the Board.

3. Develop a desirable administrative structure, organizational pattern, financial program within the limits of the resources of the school district, suggest a desirable program of studies of grades 1-12 and the school buildings and site to provide such a program.
4. Be available to meet with community groups and others in the presenting the findings and recommendations of the study to all interested people.

III. Study and Evaluation Sub-Committees

A. Administration and Organization

1. Attendance Units and enrollments
2. Type of Organization (8-4, 6-3-3, 6-6)
3. Transportation
4. Administrative Structure
 - (a) Staff
 - (b) Specialists
 - (c) Other

B. Finance

1. Cost Analysis
2. Potential Revenue Resources
3. Revenue by Sources
4. Assets and Liabilities
5. Miscellaneous

C. School Program

1. Desirable Elementary School Program
2. Desirable Secondary School Program
3. Evaluation of present Program
4. Plan for New District

D. Plant Facilities and Site

1. Evaluation of present Facilities
2. Alterations in present Facilities
3. Alternate Proposals for Use of Present Buildings and Sites in New Plan
4. General Specifications for any New Construction, Renovation and any New Sites

IV. Consultant Service

- A. Dr. Gruwell will co-ordinate and serve as consultant for Committee-of-the-Whole.¹⁴

¹⁴Dr. Melvin Gruwell, Dept. of Education, University of North Dakota.

- B. Consultant will meet with each Sub-Committee and serve as member of Special Committees.
- C. Special Consultant help will be needed in the following areas.
1. Building and Site Evaluations
 2. Legal advice on Bonding Structure and Bond Plan
 3. Architect for Specifications on New Buildings and Major Renovation
 4. Site Committee on Selection of Site

The Board of Directors of Midway sent a series of letters and brochures informing the patrons of the district of committee findings; the first of which follows and continues to page 109.

**YOUR CHILD'S FUTURE DEPENDS ON GOOD SCHOOLS,
AND THE KEY TO GOOD SCHOOLS IS IN YOUR HANDS**

This is the first letter sponsored by the Board of Education to show the pressing need for a new Junior and Senior High School to relieve the overcrowding and shortage of facilities in our now existing buildings.

Subject number one, the problem of present day enrollment, started in 1946 with the increased birth rate and has continued up to the present. Each year this surge of children moves on thru the grades and now the effects are being felt in high school.

**Projected enrollment in high school thru 1965
(upper four grades - 9,10,11,12)**

	Forest River	Gilby	Inkster
1957-58	30	48	30
1958-59	28	68	27
1959-60	36	64	38
1960-61	39	70	41
1961-62	34	76	45
1962-63	34	75	52
1963-64	48	80	49
1964-65	52	83	51

In addition, the need for a new Junior and Senior High School is increased by the following factors:

1. High schools have increased their holding power because:
 - a. The labor market cannot absorb high school age boys and girls.
 - b. Child labor laws
 - c. Better enforcement of compulsory attendance laws.
2. Obsolescence of existing buildings.
3. A back log of needs built up during the depression and war years.
4. Today practically all youth complete 12 years of schooling.
5. There has been and still is a serious lag in changing the program to meet the needs of all boys and girls and not just those who plan to enter college.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE?

I. Reorganization: On May 26, 1958 seven school districts and parts of others reorganized into one district under one board of education. The following statement is taken from the ballot voted on for reorganization.

It is being further provided that a building program be proposed to provide facilities for a high school to be centrally and feasibly located in the Johnstown area which will serve the seventh and eighth grade students and high school students of this area.

II. Site: With assistance of architect Grosz, engineer Richmond, and consultant Dr. Gruwell from the University of North Dakota, a committee of thirty-one people appointed by the Board of Education studied a number of sites and selected a site two miles west of Johnstown.

III. Land: The Board of Education secured an option on 20 to 40 acres of the SE 1/4 of Section 13, Strabane Township 154, owned by Harry Muir.

IV. Building Plans: The architect was instructed to prepare drawings which will implement the school program decided on last winter by the program committee. With these preliminary drawings, which should be ready in about two weeks, the architect will be able to state the size of the bond issue.

Another report of the steering committee dealt with site, and was sent to the patrons of the district. It was as follows:

Site

Many sites were considered for the building of the school that was to serve the entire area. Approximately three thousand dollars was spent to

hire experts to "check out" all of the proposed areas. The third party (the hired experts) weighed the advantages and disadvantages of all the areas and presented the report to the committees. Personal opinion and personal desires were respectfully considered, even "water witching", in the hope of finding water on the site chosen. The report of the Site Committee was sent to all the patrons of the district and was as follows:

Selected Site:

Accessibility: Located on a county road that is built up and may become a hard-top road. One of the first in the general area to be opened in blizzard conditions.

Hazards and Nuisance Factors: Building can be located on site in such a manner that adequate parking can be provided. No natural hazards and removed from railroad, heavy truck traffic and other noise factors.

Elevation: There is some elevation which should enhance the beauty of the site, assist in sewage disposal and site drainage. This also will reduce the amount of "fill" required in setting up the foundation work for the building.

General Location: As near the center of student population and geographic center as possible and still provide the other factors.

Soil: As good as you will find in the central and southern part of the district in terms of chemical content, ability to absorb moisture (sewage) etc.

Water: This cannot be determined without actual test. However, the location of other sources of desirable water indicates that an adequate supply can be found in this area.

Power: High tension power lines pass the site.

Land Available: This can only be determined through negotiation with land owners. If property can be secured, price is lower than some other sites and there is sufficient open areas to provide up to 40 acres of land if needed.

Fire Protection: It is within the service area of the Inkster Fire Department.

Drainage: The elevation provides adequate drainage for site.

Adaptability: This site can be made adaptable to any style of architecture and provides plenty of room for future expansion.

Gilby School Site:

This site has many of the features of the selected site. It is accessible; it has plenty of electric power; it is free from hazards and general noise factors. There is land available to the east. Drainage can be provided through the ravine that passes near the school.

The site has certain limitations. The location of the present building on the present site does not lend itself to a full grade 1-12 program as required in an expanded program. The part of the present building that would have to be opened for expansion does not lend itself to that purpose. Expansion to the north is not possible and expansion to the east is blocked by the room arrangements and location of the gym and stage. The elevation is as good as other sites in the Gilby area but not adequate for all purposes. Water is not available on the site. Soil is heavy but adequate for building purposes. Fire protection is limited. It is not at the geographic center or center of pupil population.

Other Sites (Gilby to Johnstown):

Other possibilities were checked between the two towns. Other than the fact that no school plant is presently located on a potential site, the same strengths and weaknesses are present as at Gilby. In addition you have an electrical supply problem at certain points plus the noise factor from the railroad.

Potential Site at Johnstown:

The same general limitations exist at Johnstown. In addition the accessibility is limited. Most students would have an added railroad crossing. The present building is not flexible and would not serve as adequate classroom space for Junior-Senior High School purposes. The site is low and indicates a drainage problem.

Potential Sites North and East of Johnstown:

There are potential sites in the general area, that could provide most of the same factors as provided in the selected site except water, elevation and meeting the conditions of being centrally located. If water cannot be found on the selected site, it may be necessary to locate nearer Johnstown. The major difficulty in doing so will be drainage.

The report following is one of a series presented to the patrons of the district, evaluating the areas under study.¹⁵

¹⁵Report of Study Committee, May, 1958.

SUMMARY AND FINDINGS

District Organization

Finding I. The district is basically sound. It has a good territory in terms of area. This in turn provides a sound financial structure.

II. It has a lack of any large center of population which makes it feasible to transport students without undue hardship and also results in flexibility in terms of future growth and location of new building structures.

III. The district is presently organized on an 8 grade elementary school 4 year high school basis. The vote of the people at the time of reorganization called for a change to a six year elementary and a six year junior-senior high school plan of organization. This plan has been carefully reviewed and the conclusion of the study group is that the 6-6 plan would serve the future needs of the district best.

IV. The reorganization plan called for the location of the junior-senior high school at a point centrally and feasibly located. The elementary (grades 1-6) should remain in the local area except by petition or vote of the people served by that school. This action has been reviewed and has been determined to be sound and should continue to be the goal of the district.

Administration

Finding I. The reorganization structure established specific areas from which directors would be elected. This has been done.

II. The Board of Directors is functioning according to law and is in the process of reviewing procedures from which definite policies will be formulated. This is in accordance with the most desirable practices in school administration.

III. The Board of Directors has elected a treasurer and a clerk to handle the detail usually relegated to these positions.

IV. The Board of Directors has appointed an acting superintendent and established a temporary office at the Johnstown. This is not satisfactory on a long term basis. The office of superintendent should become a regular appointment and school district records, documents dealing with the district, etc., should be centrally located in an office established for that purpose. It is very difficult for the Board functions to be divided as at present and still have the single, unified coordination necessary for maximum efficiency.

V. Most of the administrative problems can be corrected by locating the administrative offices in the junior-senior high school, which by mandate of the people must be centrally and feasibly located.

Finance

I. The budget and spending program were reviewed and found basically sound. Some minor adjustments within the budget may be necessary due to the fact that the district has had no previous experience in such areas as district-wide transportation, special programs of speech correction, district-wide music programs, etc.

II. The district has an excellent possibility to grow through the annexation of added territory which in turn will not materially increase in student enrollment but will increase the taxable assessed valuation.

III. The potential revenue of the district will depend on changes enacted by the state legislature and the addition of such federal-state programs as vocational agriculture, vocational home economics and adult education. In relation to the potential of other areas of the state it is strong.

V. The bonding capacity of the district is excellent. On the basis of bonding capacity without special election (10% of the Taxable Assessed Valuation), the district can raise about \$300,000 less amount remaining in bonded indebtedness. On the basis of bonding capacity with special election (20% of Taxable Assessed Valuation), the district can raise about \$600,000 less the amount remaining in bonded indebtedness. This is more than enough to provide adequate school building housing for a desirable program of education kindergarten through adult.

Pupil Transportation

Finding I. All students of the high school grades and those students of the elementary school grades living on established bus routes are being transported. This is a major step forward both in terms of student safety and in terms of the per cent of attendance. It will result in more student hours in school and in turn an opportunity for a better program of instruction.

II. Some adjustments are being made and will continue to be made as pupil transportation experience increases. All problems can not be anticipated before buses actually travel routes.

III. If the patrons decide to locate a central school building for junior-senior high school purposes, some added changes in transportation will need to be made. An analysis of present routes shows that a major increase in school transportation will not be necessary.

Enrollments

Finding I. Projected enrollments indicate that district-wide there is an increase in the lower grades and in the pre-school years. One of the difficulties is that students in the high school and elementary schools are found in seven different attendance areas thus eliminating the possibility of one grade per teacher.

II. The drop-out factor must be considered in the projection of enrollments. This factor is between 12% and 16% in the district. Thus a class of 48 first grade students could be expected to graduate about 40 students from high school.

III. On the basis of present figures, the combined enrollment for a junior-senior high school will reach between 250 and 260 students.

IV. As the program of studies more nearly meets the needs of students, the drop-out percentage decreases.

School Plant and Site

Finding I. The building and site facilities in the district are generally old, not flexible and limited in what can be handled within the building.

II. A brief summary of each building and site rating follows:

(A) Forest River - Much has been done to make the building pleasant. The new addition (gymnasium and cafeteria) is very good. The old building has serious limitations especially for high school use. There is an almost complete lack of special service facilities for science, home economics, shop etc. The building can be used for a reasonable period of time for elementary school use. However, in view of the safety factors within the building, this time should be limited. Maintenance costs will continue to be very high.

(B). Inkster - The Inkster building has almost identically the same limitations as the Forest River building. The main difference is that the Inkster building lacks the new addition found at Forest River. Again it is found that there is an almost complete lack of special service facilities. This building can be used for some time for elementary school purposes. Here again, maintenance will continue to be costly and safety factors, especially fire, are very questionable.

(C). Johnstown - The building is in reasonably good condition. The heating system shows age and may need replacing within a short time. The building is not flexible and can not be adapted for any other use than for what it is being used. It seems to be reasonably adequate for present purposes.

(D). Gilby - This building is the best building in the district. As in the other two major units, it is overcrowded. Classes are being held on the stage. Two classes are being taught at the same time in the study hall. The placement on site and type of construction makes it very difficult to add a new section. The cost would be very high and the results questionable. This building could be used for a number of years to come for elementary purposes. It is the most flexible and adaptable of all the units. Its lack of special service facilities (shops, etc.) makes it very questionable as a high school expecting to meet a modern program of education.

(E). Honeyford - The building is of frame construction and is in good condition. It is more than adequate for present use.

III. With serious site and building limitations that in turn limit the program of studies it seems desirable that an immediate solution to the housing problem for the upper six grades be found.

School Program

Finding I. The program of studies in the three high schools is very limited. It represents a minimum of subjects of a very traditional nature.

II. The program has little to offer girls and those boys not interested in college entrance.

III. The limited program has had direct influence on the holding power of the high school students.

IV. The following basic program of studies is desirable and can be offered if a proper school plant is provided.

- A. Basic and Advanced Mathematics.
- B. Comprehensive Social Studies Program.
- C. English and Speech.
- D. Comprehensive Science Program.
- E. Vocational Home Economics.
- F. Vocational Agriculture.
- G. Industrial Arts and General Shop.
- H. Business Education.
- I. Health and Physical Education.
- J. Foreign Language and Art.
- K. Music.

V. In addition to the program of studies listed above, guidance for the upper six grades, kindergarten, and a program of adult education.

VI. Teachers can concentrate their efforts in the areas of major and minor preparation.

General

The major limitations currently present can be corrected through a united effort. The important thing is that people continue to focus on the important factors - namely the education of the children. There may be a necessity for some compromise area to area, but by focus on facts instead of unfounded opinion a reasonable solution can be found.

PROPOSED AREA
January 1958

District	Number of Sections	1957 Taxable Valuation	Value of School Property	Amount Appropriated	Amount Levied	Anti-ipated Income	MILL LEVIES		Taxable Valuation of Quarter Section
							General	Other	
Levant #17	12	\$ 65,287	\$ 2,000	\$ 2,241	\$ 295	\$ 848	4.52		\$1,321
Honeyford #38	18	313,118	8,000	5,577	3,087	1,891	9.70		2,657
Johnstown #49	32 1/2	506,978	30,000	16,750	11,192	3,978	22.07		2,610
Wheatfield #65	9	89,834	8,500	3,635	2,256	1,145	25.11		2,472
Agnes #72 (Orr)	18	250,489	40,000	10,185	6,677	3,502	26.66		1,881
Gilby #75	27	487,441	85,000	40,493	15,598	17,838	32.00	12.68	2,595
Mekinock #105	9	82,782	1,200	64	none	none	none		2,261
Strabane #106	10	108,381	6,000	4,368	2,602	1,446	24.00		2,489
Wheatfield #110	12	121,285	3,900	2,725	1,955	846	16.12		2,472
Johnstown- Levant #112	7 1/4	64,368	1,500	2,843	2,439	1,027	37.88		1,912
#121 (Part)	8	28,778					21.94		1,429
Inkster #124	62	664,146	100,000	41,000	19,254	20,240	28.99	9.80	
Forest River #68 (Walsh County)	34	580,107	120,000	44,647	26,105	16,764	45.00	5.22	2,374
TOTALS	258 3/4	\$3,362,994	\$406,100	\$174,528	\$91,460	\$69,525			

^aAdapted from Records of the County Superintendent of Schools, Grand Forks, N. D., 1958.

Estimated Utility Costs Comparison**Wilkin Site**

Cost of well and pumphouse	\$ 2,500.00
Cost of 4" water line to site - 6,600' @ \$4.00	26,400.00
Cost of Imhoff Tank	3,000.00
Cost of drainage field	5,000.00
	<u>\$ 36,900.00</u>

Holmquist Site

Cost of well and pumphouse	\$ 3,500.00
Cost of 4" water line to site - 10,560' @ \$4.00	42,240.00
Cost of Imhoff Tank	3,000.00
Cost of drainage field	10,000.00
	<u>\$ 58,740.00</u>

Muir Site

Cost of well and pumphouse	\$ 3,500.00
Cost of 4" water line to site - 11,220' @ \$4.00	44,380.00
Cost of Imhoff Tank	3,000.00
Cost of drainage field	10,000.00
	<u>\$ 61,380.00</u>

Many meetings were required to determine the type of school building needed to serve the area. The steering committees visited buildings in the surrounding area: Grafton, Grand Forks, Park River, North Dakota, and Warren and Hallock, Minnesota. The school bus was used to transport interested patrons of the district to some of the same schools to allow them to see what had been done in other communities.

With assistance from Dr. Gruwell from the University of North Dakota, a committee of thirty-one people appointed by the Board of Education studied a number of sites and selected a site two miles west of Johnstown. The Board of Education secured an option on 20 to 40 acres of the SE 1/4 of Section 13, Strabane Township 154, owned by Harry Muir.

Three architectural firms visited the school board, and explained approximately what the cost would be. The Board then visited schools that had been designed by all three of the firms.

The joint boards of Budget Review of Forest River, Gilby and Inkster voted unanimously in February 1960 to support the proposed bond issue of \$608,000 for the new building. After the board meeting February 23, 1960 a public hearing was held February 29th for the purpose of giving the patrons of the Midway district an opportunity to be heard on the forthcoming bond election. The proposed resolution:

Be it, Therefore, Resolved that the question whether said initial resolution shall be approved be submitted to the qualified voters of said school district; that said election be held on the 15th day of March 1960, being not less than twenty (20) days and not more than forty (40) days from the date of said initial resolution; that the said election the polls shall remain open from 11 O. C. in the A. M. to 7:00 O. C. P. M. and the polling places will be at Inkster, Forest River, Gilby, Johnstown and Honeyford.

A brochure was sent to all the patrons of the district.¹⁶ The following letter accompanied the pamphlet:

¹⁶See Appendix A.

March 9, 1960

Dear Patron:

You are being presented with a plan for a complete revamping of our school system. This includes a very major outlay of funds for a new building. This is what your Board of Education, and many of our district members, all taxpayers, believe is the minimum we should offer our young people in a program and in a building.

We do not claim or say that this will be cheap! but we do feel that if cuts must be made--they must be made in other places than in the education of our young people. We must not place our young people at a disadvantage when they meet the competition of those from other communities.

We, as a school board are aware of the costs to you and the members of the board, as taxpayers, but we know, also, that all of us will receive more for our money in the purchase of an education for our children, than in any other item we may ever purchase for ourselves or our families.

We, as a board, ask you to remember that you are not spending this money in one year. You are investing your money in the future of our young people for the next 40 or 50 years, if the history of our schools remains true.

For you people who do not have children in the school system we ask you to be generous with the parents. Perhaps you will benefit indirectly from our new school through a better trained young man from the shop, or a better trained young lady from the Home economics department, or a new doctor, who was given a good foundation in the school system.

You have already formed a new school district with over three million dollars assessed tax valuation. A one mill levy brings your school over three million. This new district can and will bring an adequate education if you give it the "go ahead" with your vote of approval. We all need this new educational program. We are depriving ourselves when we reduce the income of a young man or woman because we have not given adequate support to our school system. We ask you therefore, to think of the cost of our educational program not as raising taxes; but as buying a better education for our young people.

The next move is yours as a voter, and this vote will determine the direction of our educational progress.

Lewis Johnston, Chairman

Verne Spengler, Clerk
Elfrida McArton, Treasurer
Tilford Bjornstad, Member
Ronald Matteson, Member
Gordon Midthun, Member
Jack Stewart, Member

Board of Education

Midway Special School District
No. 128

Implementation. --The vote to bond the district for an amount not to exceed \$608,000 was passed with a 67.7 majority vote. After this the procedure for "letting the bids", and starting the building was initiated.

The notice that bids would be accepted for a building of certain specifications was printed in the paper and the Grosz and Anderson Architectural Firm of Grand Forks, North Dakota, received the bid for the \$608,000 building. The Dean Witcher Company of Minneapolis, Minnesota, was the contracting firm for the building.

The patrons of the school district were intensely interested in the building, and were informed of its progress periodically. At one meeting on August 15, 1960 it was reported that the building was sixty per cent completed and that it would be ready for occupancy in the fall of 1961. The first class did enter in September, 1961.

Change is inevitable: from an economy of agriculture to industry, from hand production to automation and from rural living to urban living. Change is also evident in education. The tradition of small local schools has changed to a trend for larger consolidated schools that better meet the demands for a wider variety of educational opportunities. At the present time small schools are still a necessity in some areas of the state, but in others would be considered a luxury.

In consolidating their schools and reorganizing their district, the people of the "Midway" area felt that education could be improved by the formation of the new school district and the consolidation of the junior and senior high schools into a centralized unit. This remarkable achievement is a great credit to all the people of the area for their effort to provide better educational facilities and their cooperative effort to meet the challenge of change in its various forms.

To the Voters of the District . . .

The need for additional classroom space, as well as improved special facilities in our schools, has been apparent for some time. If we are to give our children the educational advantages offered by other communities, changes and additions must be made.

Your Board of Education and an advisory committee of 30, representing the entire area of Midway, have employed consultant service from the University of North Dakota, have consulted with the State Department of Education and with the advice and assistance of architects, Grosz and Anderson, and engineer, Lloyd Richmond, have developed plans concerning the educational program, building facilities, transportation, finance, and site.

After due consideration of various proposed sites by the site committee and a report back to the over-all committee, it was recommended by the majority that the Board of Education acquire land two miles west of Johnstown, owned by Harry Muir, for the purpose of constructing a Junior-Senior High School.

No further action can be taken toward providing our children with the educational opportunities to which they are entitled without the approval of the voters of this district.

It is our sincere hope that you will give serious thought to the educational welfare of our present and future youth — the youth who will ever be grateful to you for your vote which will insure educational service for every child in our communities.

We urge you to study the information in this pamphlet and voice your opinion by voting on March 15, 1960.

Respectfully submitted by your Board of Education

Verne Spengler, Clerk
Elfrieda McArton, Treasurer
Lewis E. Johnston, Chairman
John T. Stewart, Member
Gordon Midthun, Member
Tilford Bjornstad, Member
Ronald Matteson, Member

What Is Proposed?

A new Junior-Senior High School building located two miles west of Johnstown which is the geographic center, the population center, the transportation center and was by the terms of the reorganization ballot the central and feasible location and also the choice of the site committee.

A new building for grades 7-12 will give the seventh, eighth, and ninth grade students all the special facilities provided for the Senior High School and teachers with degrees working in their major fields. The removal of the high school students from the existing buildings will relieve the pressure on the grade schools.

Transportation for all students attending the Junior-Senior High School and all country grade children will be offered. At present, 299 of our 483 students are being transported.

A 20-acre site, with an option on an additional 20 acres, to provide adequate athletic facilities, parking areas and experimental plots for vocational agriculture.

All these facilities arranged with a view to intensive use for adult education.

According to House Bill No. 550, which created the minimum 22-unit curriculum for accreditation law, the following units must be provided for during a student's four-year high school career.

HOUSE BILL NO. 550, SECTION 1.

"Not later than July 1, 1961, the following units of study shall be made available to all students in each high school in this state at least once during each four-year period if such high school is to receive any accreditation by the Department of Public Instruction:

<i>Course Area or Field</i>	<i>Number of Units</i>
English	4
Mathematics	3
Physical Science	4
Social Studies	3
Health & Physical Education	1
Music	1
Six units of any combination of the following: Business Education, Foreign Language, Homemaking, Vocational Agriculture, and Industrial Arts."	

Education Is an Investment In People . . .

The opportunity to take advantage of this education comes only once to children and time does not wait.

The kind of educational opportunity in a community should be the best that it can afford.

How the Building Will Be Financed . . .

Our architects, Grosz and Anderson of Grand Forks, North Dakota, have an excellent reputation for this type of work and estimate the program can be handled with a \$608,000 bond issue. If the voters approve the bond issue the Board of Education will be authorized to borrow up to \$608,000 and this loan will be repaid over a period of 20 years. To pay principal and interest will require an average annual tax of \$45,600 for 20 years. Based on our present valuation, this would mean an average annual mill levy of 5 mills. Any taxpayer can figure his tax on the bond issue by applying the 15 mills (which is \$15 per 1,000 of taxable property) times the taxable assessed value.

Costs . . .

Our architects have estimated the cost of the new building as follows:

New Building	\$528,255.00
Equipment, architects' fees, legal expense and miscellaneous	79,745.00
Total estimated cost	<u>\$608,000.00</u>

This Is an Economy Program . . .

NOW

13 teachers, grades 7-12

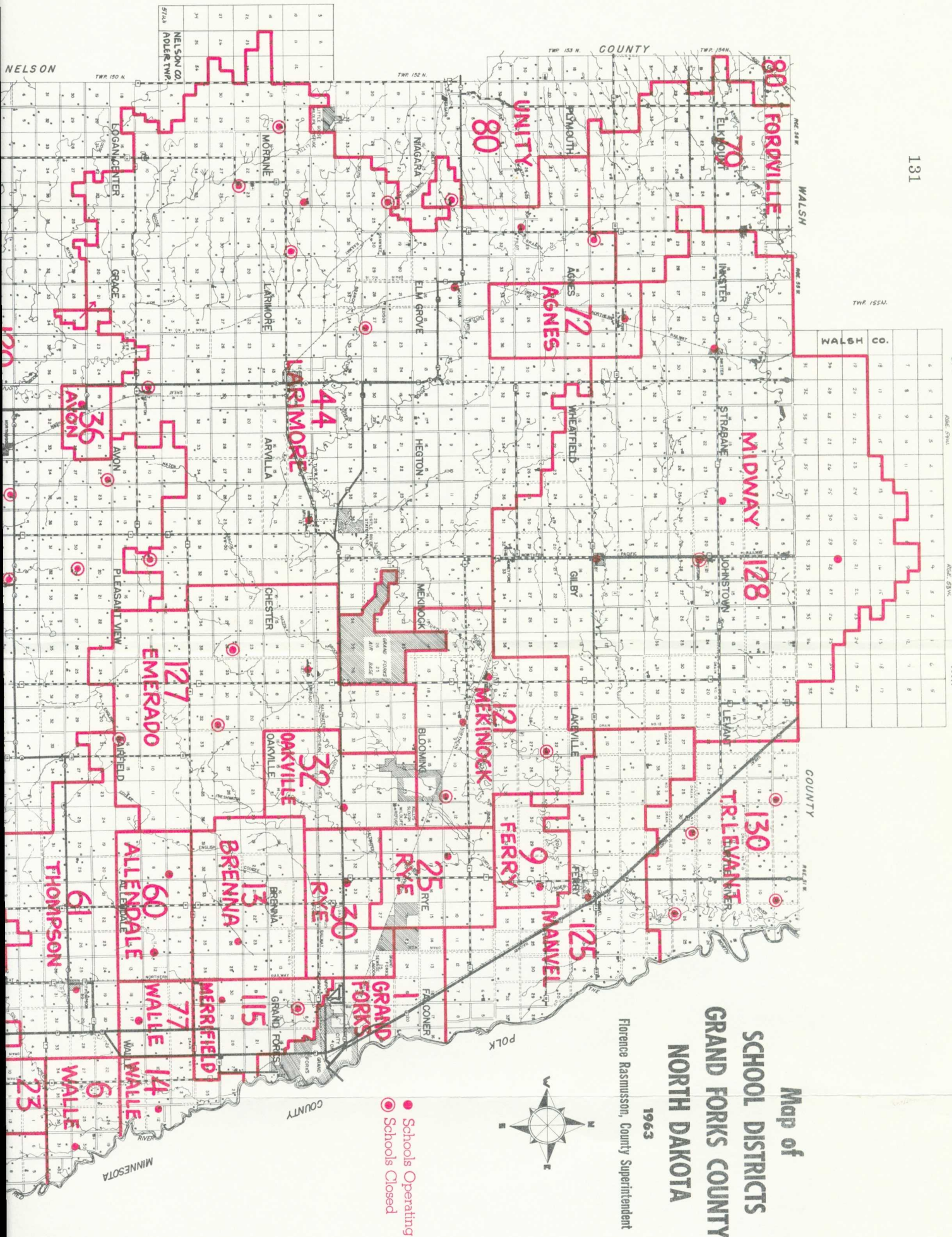
FUTURE NEW CENTRAL SCHOOL

11 teachers, grades 7-12. Two of these (Voc. Ag and Home Ec) getting $\frac{1}{2}$ of salary from Federal Gov't. This is a saving of 3 teachers @ \$5,000 \$15,000

Additional cost of operating new school:

Janitor	\$3,000	
Fuel	2,000	
Water	1,000	
Power	500	
Insurance	1,000	
Janitor's Supplies	300	7,800
SAVING OF	<u> </u>	<u>\$7,200</u>

If the bond issue is defeated the district will continue as it is now, operating three separate, inadequate high schools housed in three inadequate buildings. Eleven high school teachers housed in one central building can offer a complete program where we are now using 13 teachers with a very limited program. The cost of enlarging all three high schools for a modern program would approach the cost of a new centrally located building.



**Map of
SCHOOL DISTRICTS
GRAND FORKS COUNTY
NORTH DAKOTA**

Florence Rasmusson, County Superintendent

1963



- Schools Operating
- Schools Closed

REORGANIZATION PLAN FOR THE

**FOREST RIVER
GILBY
HONEYFORD
INKSTER
JOHNSTOWN**

AREA

**IN
GRAND FORKS COUNTY
AND
WALSH COUNTY
NORTH DAKOTA**

THIS IS THE ORIGINAL PLAN

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**A PLAN FOR THE REORGANIZATION OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN
AND ABOUT GILBY, FOREST RIVER, INKSTER, JOHNSTOWN, AND
HONEYFORD AREA IN GRAND FORKS COUNTY AND WALSH
COUNTY, NORTH DAKOTA, ACCORDING TO THE
PROVISIONS OF CHAPTER 15-53, 1957
SUPPLEMENT TO NORTH DAKOTA
REVISED CODE OF 1943**

I. Purpose of the Plan

The purpose of the plan is to bring about the formation of a new school district which will provide a more nearly equalized educational opportunity for pupils of the common schools and the high school, a higher degree of uniformity of school tax rate among districts, and a wiser use of public funds for the support of the school system.

The basis of the plan is the data collected and compiled in accordance with Section 15-5307, 1957 Supplement to North Dakota Revised Code of 1943, by the Grand Forks County and Walsh County Committees on School District Reorganization, and filed in the offices of the County Superintendent of Schools of Grand Forks County and Walsh County, North Dakota. Available also were the annual reports of the school districts of Grand Forks County and Walsh County and the official records of all the county offices.

The educational meetings which have been held in the area are reported on page 145 of this plan. The public hearing on the proposed plan as required by Section 15-5309, 1957 Supplement to North Dakota Revised Code of 1943 was held on March 3, 1958. The exhibit on page 145 of this plan is the official publication of the notice of the public hearing.

Approval of the plan was given by the Grand Forks County and Walsh County Committees on School District Reorganization. Attached is the statement of approval by the joint county committees.

III. The Boundaries of the Proposed District

The boundaries of the proposed reorganized school district in Grand Forks County and Walsh County, North Dakota, to be known as Midway Special School District No. 128, are as follows:

Beginning at a point at the NE corner of the NE 1/4 of Section 6 of township 154-52; thence due south 2 miles along the east line of Sections 6 and 7 of township 154-52 to the SE corner of the SE 1/4 of Section 7 of township 154-52; thence due west 1/2 mile along the south line of Section 7 of township 154-52 to the SW corner of the SE 1/4 of Section 7 of township 154-52; thence due south 1/2 mile along the east line of the NW 1/4 of Section 18 of township 154-52 to the SE corner of the NW 1/4 of Section 18 of township 154-52; thence due east 1/2 mile along the north line of the SE 1/4 of Section 18 of township 154-52 to the NE corner of the SE 1/4 of Section 18 of township 154-52; thence due south 1/2 mile along the east line of the SE 1/4 of Section 18 of township 154-52 and due south 1 mile along the east line of Section 19 of township 154-52 to the SE corner of the SE 1/4 of Section 19 of township 154-52; thence due east 2 miles along the north line of Sections 29 and 28 of township 154-52 to the NE corner of the NE 1/4 of Section 28 of township 154-52; thence due south 2 miles along the east line of Sections 28 and 33 of township 154-52 and due south 3 miles along the east line of Sections 4, 9 and 16 of township 153-52 to the SE corner of the SE 1/4 of Section 16 of township 153-52; thence due west 3 miles along the south line of Sections 16, 17 and 18 of township 153-52 to the SW corner of the SW 1/4 of Section 18 of township 153-52; thence due south 3 miles along the east line of Sections 24, 25 and 36 of township 153-53 to the SE corner of the SE 1/4 of Section 36 of township 153-53; thence due west 6 miles along the south line of Sections 36, 35, 34, 33, 32 and 31 of township 153-53 to the SW corner of the SW 1/4 of due

north 1 mile along the west line of Section 17 of township 154-55 and due north 1/2 mile along the west line of the SW 1/4 of Section 8 of township 154-55 the NW corner of the SW 1/4 of Section 8 of township 154-55; thence due east 1 mile along the north line of the S 1/2 of Section 8 of township 154-55 to the NE corner of the SE 1/4 of Section 8 of township 154-55; thence due north 1/2 mile along the west line of the NW 1/4 of Section 9 of township 154-55 and due north 1 mile along the west line of Section 4 of township 154-55 to the NW corner of the NW 1/4 of Section 4 of township 154-55; thence due east 4 miles along the north line of Sections 4, 3, 2 and 1 of township 154-55 to the NE corner of the NE 1/4 of Section 1 of township 154-55 in Grand Forks County; thence due north 3 miles along the west line of Sections 31, 30 and 19 of township 155-54 to the NW corner of the NW 1/4 of Section 19 of township 155-54; thence due east 4 miles along the north line of Sections 19, 20, 21 and 22 of township 155-54 to the NE corner of the NE 1/4 of Section 22 of township 155-54; thence due north 1/2 mile along the west line of the SW 1/4 of Section 14 of township 155-54 to the NW corner of the SW 1/4 of Section 14 of township 155-54; thence due east 1 mile along the north line of the S 1/2 of Section 14 of township 155-54 to the NE corner of the SE 1/4 of Section 14 of township 155-54; thence due north 1/2 mile along the west line of the NW 1/4 of Section 13 of township 155-54 to the NW corner of the NW 1/4 of Section 13 of township 155-54; thence due east 1/2 mile along the north line of the NW 1/4 of Section 13 of township 155-54 to the NE corner of the NW 1/4 of Section 13 of township 155-54; thence due north 1/2 mile along the west line of the SE 1/4 of Section 12 to the NW corner of the SE 1/4 of Section 12 of township 155-54; thence due east 1/2 mile along the north line of the SE 1/4 of Section 12 of township 155-54 and due east 1/2 mile along the north line of the SW 1/4 of Section 7 of township 155-53 to the NE corner of the SW 1/4 of Section 7 of

township 155-53; thence due south 1/2 mile along the east line of the SW 1/4 of Section 7 of township 155-53 to the SE corner of the SW 1/4 of Section 7 of township 155-53; thence due east 1/2 mile along the north line of the NE 1/4 of Section 18 of township 155-53 and due east 1/2 mile along the north line of Section 17 of township 155-53 to the NE corner of the NW 1/4 of Section 17 of township 155-53; thence due north 1 mile along the west line of the E 1/2 of Section 8 of township 155-53 to the NW corner of the NE 1/4 of Section 8 of township 155-53; thence due east 1/2 mile along the north line of the NE 1/4 of Section 8 of township 155-53 and due east 1/2 mile along the north line of the NW 1/4 of Section 9 of township 155-53 to the NE corner of the NW 1/4 of Section 9 of township 155-53; thence due south 1/2 mile along the east line of the NW 1/4 of Section 9 of township 155-53 to the SE corner of the NW 1/4 of Section 9 of township 155-53; thence due east 1/2 mile along the north line of the SE 1/4 of Section 9 of township 155-53 to the NE corner of the SE 1/4 of Section 9 of township 155-53; thence due south 1/2 mile along the east line of the SE 1/4 of Section 9 of township 155-53 to the SE corner of the SE 1/4 of Section 9 of township 155-53; thence due east 3/4 mile along the north line of the NW 1/4 and the W 1/2 of the NE 1/4 of Section 15 of township 155-53 to the NE corner of the W 1/2 of the NE 1/4 of Section 15 of township 155-53; thence due south 1/2 mile along the east line of the W 1/2 of the NE 1/4 of Section 15 of township 155-53 to the SE corner of the W 1/2 of the NE 1/4 of Section 15 of township 155-53; thence due east 1/4 mile along the north line of the E 1/2 of the SE 1/4 of Section 15 of township 155-53 and due east 1/2 mile plus 22 1/2 rods along the north line of the SW 1/4 and part of the SE 1/4 of Section 14 of township 155-53; thence due south 1/2 mile; thence due west 22 1/2 rods plus 1/2 mile to the SW corner of the SW 1/4 of Section 14 of township 155-53; thence due south 1/2 mile along the east line

of the NE 1/4 of Section 22 of township 155-53 to the SE corner of the NE 1/4 of Section 22 of township 155-53; thence due east 1 mile along the north line of the S 1/2 of Section 23 of township 155-53 to the NE corner of the SE 1/4 of Section 23 of township 155-53; thence due south 1/2 mile along the east line of the SE 1/4 of Section 23 of township 155-53 to the SE corner of the SE 1/4 of Section 23 of township 155-53; thence due east 1/2 mile along the north line of the NW 1/4 of Section 25 of township 155-53 to the NE corner of the NW 1/4 of Section 25 of township 155-53; thence due south 1/2 mile along the east line of the NW 1/4 of Section 25 of township 155-53 to the SE corner of the NW 1/4 of Section 25 of township 155-53; thence due east 1/2 mile along the north line of the SE 1/4 of Section 25 of township 155-53 and due east 1 mile along the north line of the S 1/2 of Section 30 of township 155-52 to the NE corner of the SE 1/4 of Section 30 of township 155-52; thence due south 1/2 mile along the east line of the SE 1/4 of Section 30 of township 155-52 and due south 1 mile along the east line of Section 31 of township 155-52, all in Walsh County, to the point of beginning, and all in the State of North Dakota, an area comprising all of the present school districts of Levant School District No. 17, Honeyford School District No. 38, Johnstown School District No. 49, Gilby Special School District No. 75, Strabane School District No. 106, Section 16 of Wheatfield School District No. 110, all of Johnstown-Levant School District No. 112, and Sections 16, 17 and 18 of Reorganized School District No. 121 in Grand Forks County; all of Inkster School District No. 124 in Grand Forks County and Walsh County; the E 1/2 of Section 8, and the W 1/2 and SE 1/4 of Section 9 of Forest River School District No. 38; the S 1/2 and the NW 1/4 of Section 25, and all of Section 36 in township 155-53, and the S 1/2 of Section 30 and all of Section 31 in township 155-52 of Forest River School District No. 88; and Forest River Special School District No. 68

less the N 1/2 and the SE 1/4 of Section 14, the E 1/2 of the NE 1/4 of Section 15, and the N 1/2 of Section 23, all in township 155-53; in Walsh County; all in State of North Dakota.

IV. The Reasons for the Establishment of the Proposed District

The reason for this proposal of reorganization is primarily to make better educational opportunities available to all children in the area included in the plan. In order to accomplish this, special attention must be given to the basic part of the educational structure which is the school district itself. A good school district has the wealth to provide and the people to serve and, as a result, with good management, schools which measure up to the highest rating can be established and maintained.

We find these qualities in a good school district:

1. It provides uniform training for all children from grade one through grade twelve, and kindergarten and adult education wherever practical.
2. It provides adequate facilities in the form of classrooms, shops, gymnasiums, laboratories, playgrounds, etc., for a complete educational program.
3. It provides safe, efficient transportation for all children who need it.
4. It provides and retains well trained, efficient teachers and supervisors in all schools.
5. It provides a complete educational program based on child growth and needs, with special work in guidance, music, industrial, commercial, agriculture, and other fields.
6. It has a uniform system of taxation for school purposes which meets all the requirements of the district without placing an unreasonable tax burden on any individual taxpayer at any time.
7. It assures every child a high school education.

At the present time and under the present system of operating as separate school districts, many of the qualities of a good educational system

are lacking in this area. An examination of the statistics included here show a lack of uniformity in tax support of schools, ranging from 4.52 mills to 45.00 mills and a variation in costs per pupil ranging from \$19.29 to \$55.49 per pupil per month. Individual districts from year to year show variations in tax levies and per pupil costs which lack consistency.

V. Statement of Facts Concerning the Present Districts

On a separate sheet, page , you will find the Statement of Facts.

VI. Recommendations

A. Concerning the Location of Schools

1. Three high schools, namely Gilby Special School District No. 75, Inkster School District No. 124, and Forest River Special School District No. 68, are presently serving the area included in the plan for the proposed district. Because of the limited enrollment, limited number of teachers employed, and limited classroom space in each of these schools, the curriculum that is now offered in each of these schools is very inadequate. With the greater wealth of a new enlarged district, it is recommended that a new building be constructed which will serve the seventh and eighth grade students and high school students of this area. It is recommended that the new school be located near Johnstown at a location which would be centrally and feasibly located.
2. The law provides that elementary and rural schools in a reorganized district that are operating at the time of reorganization must continue to operate unless the people in the old district where the school is located by a majority vote approve its closing. There are three rural schools operating now, namely Honeyford School District

No. 38, Strabane School District No. 106 and Johnstown-Levant School District No. 112, and which, by law, will continue to operate. Should these rural schools decide to close, the pupils will be transported to the most conveniently located grade school.

3. The present buildings at Forest River, Johnstown, Gilby and Inkster will be used to accommodate the first six grades.

B. Concerning Transportation

It is recommended that a system of bus transportation be inaugurated and expanded as needed. Bus transportation shall be governed by existing laws and regulations. There will be no transportation for students living within the city or village limits attending school in the village or city.

Feasible bus transportation for all seventh and eighth grade students and high school students shall be provided from all central points to the new high school building. If the rural schools continue to operate, the family type of transportation will be provided. However, if the rural schools decide to close, feasible bus transportation will be provided to the closest and convenient town grade school.

C. Concerning the Type of School District

The proposed new school district to be known as Midway Special School District No. 128. The proposed district shall be a special school district with a board of education consisting of five (5) members elected by the voters at large but chosen from geographic areas as follows:

One member from the district of Inkster School District No. 124;

One member from the districts of the E 1/2 of section 8, and the W 1/2 and SE 1/4 of section 9 of Forest River School District No. 38, the S 1/2 and the NW 1/4 of section 25, and all of section 36 in township 155-53, and the

S 1/2 of section 30 and all of section 31 in township 155-52 of Forest River School District No. 88, and Forest River Special School District No. 68 less the N 1/2 and the SE 1/4 of section 14, the E 1/2 of the NE 1/4 of section 15, and the N 1/2 of section 23, all in township 155-53;

One member from the districts of Gilby Special School District No. 75, Sections 16, 17 and 18 of Reorganized School District No. 121, and Section 16 of Wheatfield School District No. 110;

One member from the district of Honeyford School District No. 38;
and

One member from the districts of Levant School District No. 17, Johnstown School District No. 49, Strabane School District No. 106, and Johnstown-Levant School District No. 112.

D. Concerning the Probable Costs of Operating the Schools of the New District

Figures taken from the Statement of Facts concerning the financial support for the operation of all the schools in the proposed district for the past year from all sources indicate a 1957 mill levy for individual districts varying from 4.52 mills to 45 mills. Had this mill levy been spread over the entire proposed area a mill levy of 28 would have been adequate. It is reasonable to expect that more science and shop equipment and school busses are needed, but the economies of operation can offset other items of expenditure which may result from the new district so the tax levy in the new district would not vary too much. Bond issues voted after the formation of the new district would be separate and additional levy on the district.

E. Concerning the Adjustment of Assets of Whole Districts

1. All cash assets including cash held by the school district treasurers and cash held by the county treasurers become the property of the

new district. Funds accumulated in the Sinking and Interest Fund become the property of the new district.

2. All physical assets such as school buildings, school sites, outbuildings, furniture, fixtures, busses, textbooks, supplies and any and all other properties that may exist in all the districts included in the plan will become the property of the new district.
3. Any building fund established and existing in any district included in the proposed district shall become and remain as a building fund for the new district, subject to the laws pertaining thereto.
4. Any Special Reserve Fund existing shall become a Special Reserve Fund of the new district.
5. State apportionment payments, County and State high school and elementary tuition payments and uncollected taxes due to any of the districts included in the proposed district as of June 30, 1958, shall be transferred to the new district.

F. Concerning the Adjustment of Assets of Parts of Districts

1. If parts of districts become a part of the new district, the cash on hand held by the school district treasurer and the county treasurer as of June 30, 1958, shall be prorated on the basis of the valuation of the part of the district included in the plan in proportion to the taxable valuation of the district in which it was originally a part and turned over to the new district on notice.

G. Concerning the Adjustment of Liabilities

1. Any bonded indebtedness shall remain the obligation of Forest River Special School District No. 68 less the N 1/2 and the SE 1/4 of section 14, the E 1/2 of the NE 1/4 of section 15, and the N 1/2 of section 23, all in township 155-53.

2. The school bus contract indebtedness of Inkster School District No. 124 to be absorbed by the proposed new district.
3. Any outstanding bills as of June 30, 1958, shall become the obligation of the new district.

VII. Record of Educational Meetings and Public Hearings as Provided by Law

One public hearing has been held in the Forest River, Gilby, Honeyford, Inkster, and Johnstown area:

March 3, 1958 at Inkster, North Dakota

Organization Meeting held as follows:

January 20, 1958, at Court House, Grand Forks, North Dakota

Steering Committee Meetings held at Johnstown as follows:

January 24, 1958
February 17, 1958
February 24, 1958

Educational Meetings held as follows:

January 30, 1958 at Forest River, North Dakota
February 8, 1958 at Gilby, North Dakota
February 10, 1958 at Johnstown, North Dakota
February 12, 1958 at Inkster, North Dakota
February 15, 1958 at Honeyford, North Dakota
February 26, 1958 at Wheatfield School District No. 65 Schoolhouse, North Dakota

Meeting to clarify boundary lines between the Minto and Forest River

Areas:

April 1, 1958 at Forest River, North Dakota

VIII. Statement of Approval of the Proposed Plan by the
Grand Forks County and Walsh County
Reorganization Committees

This plan for a new reorganized school district in Grand Forks County and Walsh County, North Dakota, embracing the territory included in the boundaries of the district as described on page 136 of the plan was approved by the Grand Forks County and Walsh County Committees on School District Reorganization on April 1, 1958. This plan was approved in all respects in accordance with the provisions contained herein.

The proposed district is to be a Special School District and is to be known as the Midway Special School District Number 128 of Grand Forks County and Walsh County, North Dakota.

Dated this 1st day of April, 1958.

Signed Erik Sand
Joint Chairman, Grand Forks and Walsh Counties Committee

Hulbert Casement

Mrs. J. W. Bierklie

George Bradshaw

Norman Bjorneby

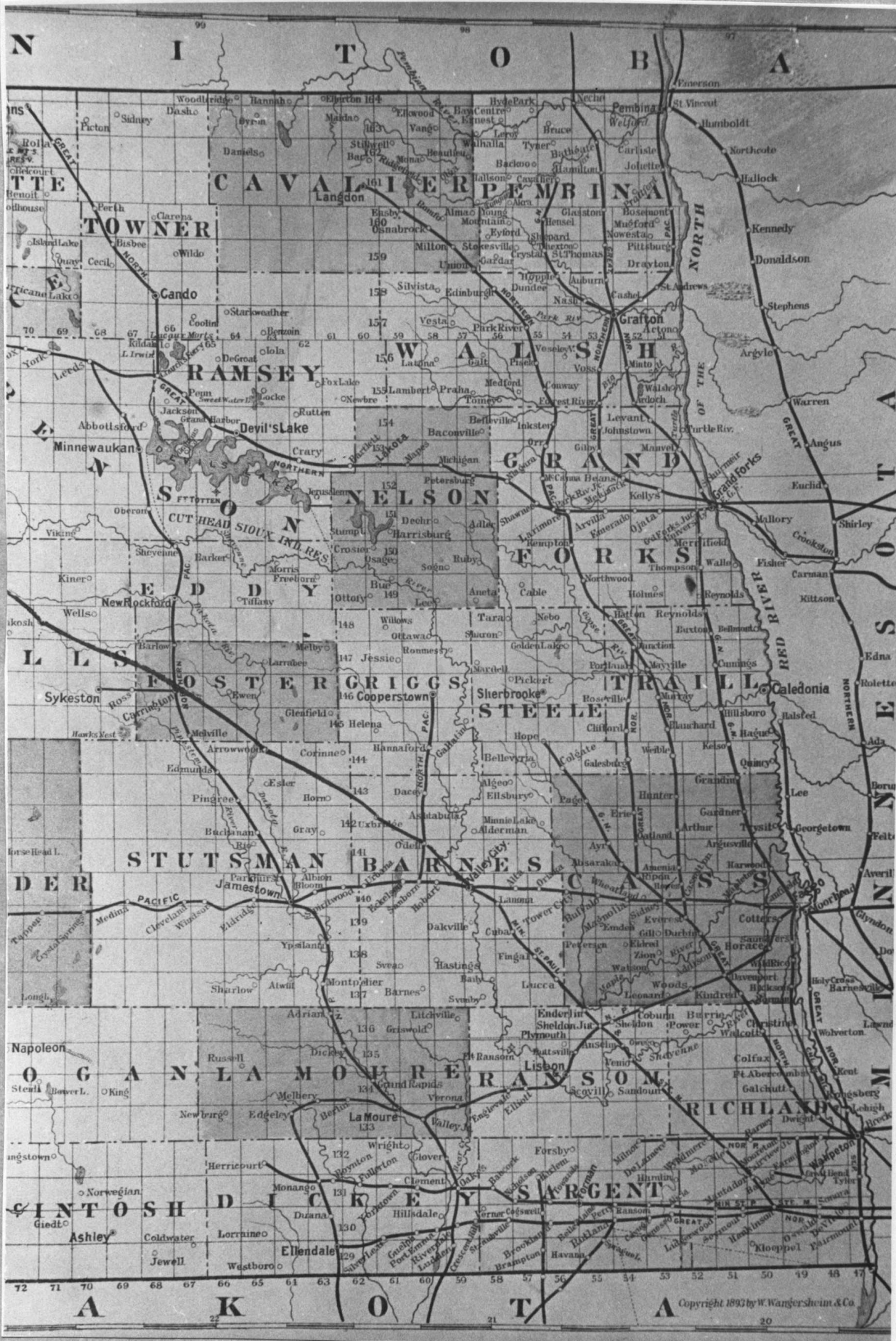
Geo. R. Berntson

Wallace J. Feltman

Florence Rasmusson
Joint Secretary, Grand Forks and Walsh County
Committees

Florence Rasmusson
Secretary, Grand Forks County Committee

A. G. Strand
Secretary, Walsh County Committee



Eastern North Dakota Counties, from the Plat Book of 1893.

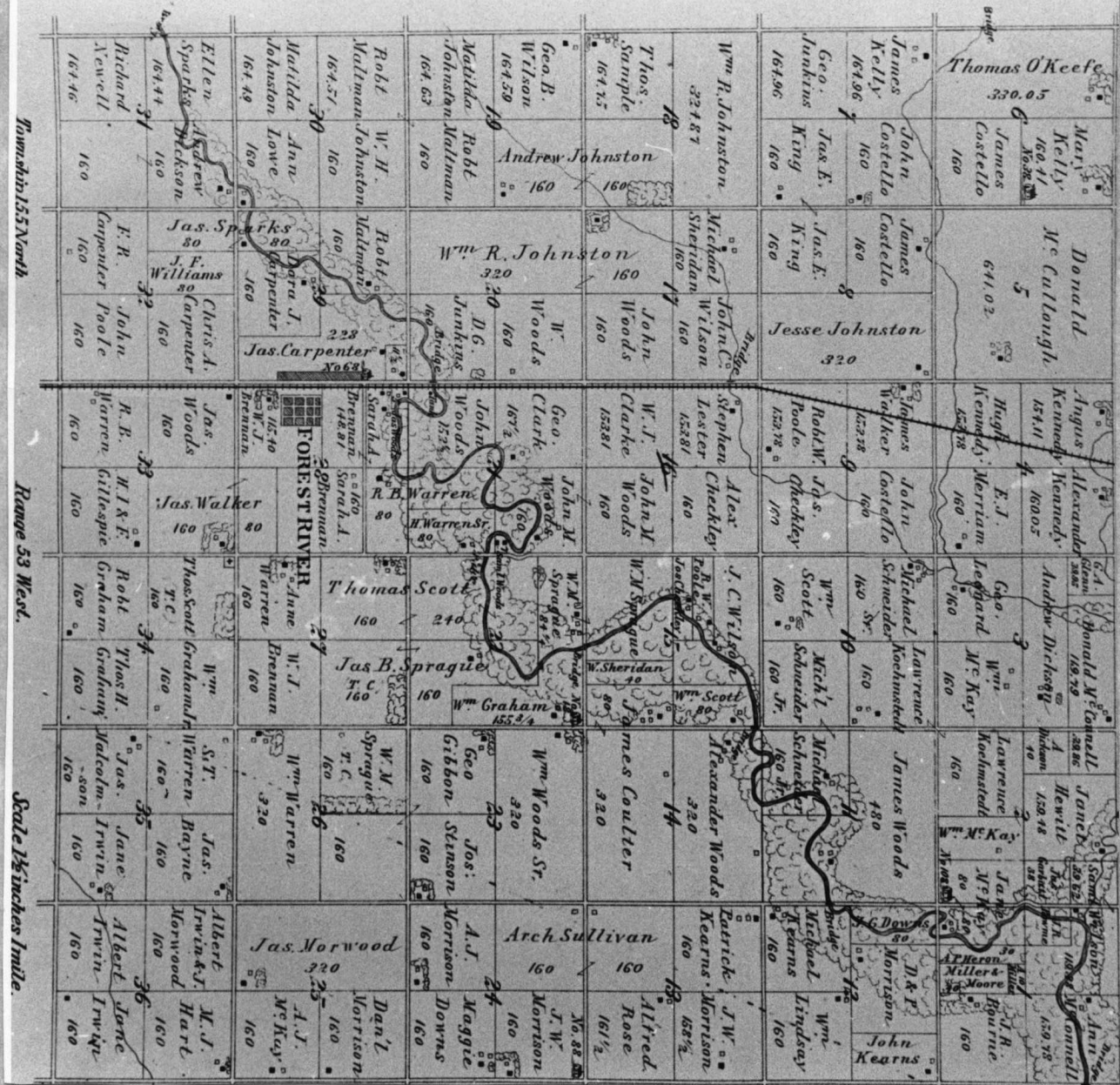
COTTON FIBER CONTENT

APPENDIX E

WATSON'S
CORRASABLE
IRON

FOREST RIVER

WALSH, CO. N.D.



The village of Forest River and adjacent land. From the Plat Book of 1893.



APPENDIX F





Fig. 1.--This school served the Forest River district number 68 from the time it was built in 1902 until the present. It is being used now for grades one through six. The grades seven through twelve now attend the Midway junior senior high school number 128.

No actual record could be found of the cost of the building; but the reputed price as given by people in the community was \$7000. This would seem reasonable since the Walsh County Auditor's office recorded that in 1906 district number 68 still had an indebtedness of \$5500, and in 1908, \$5000. The bonds issued at 4% interest were redeemed by August 14, 1930.

District sixty-eight bonded itself again in 1953 to add a gymnasium to the school at the cost of \$40,000, at 2 3/4% interest. There are six payments left of the debt that was not assumed by the Midway district; but left for district 68 to pay off.

• MAR • 65



Fig. 2.--This school served the Gilby school district number 96 from the time it was built in 1927, until the present. It is being used now for the grades one through six. The grades seven through twelve now attend the Midway junior and senior high school number 128.

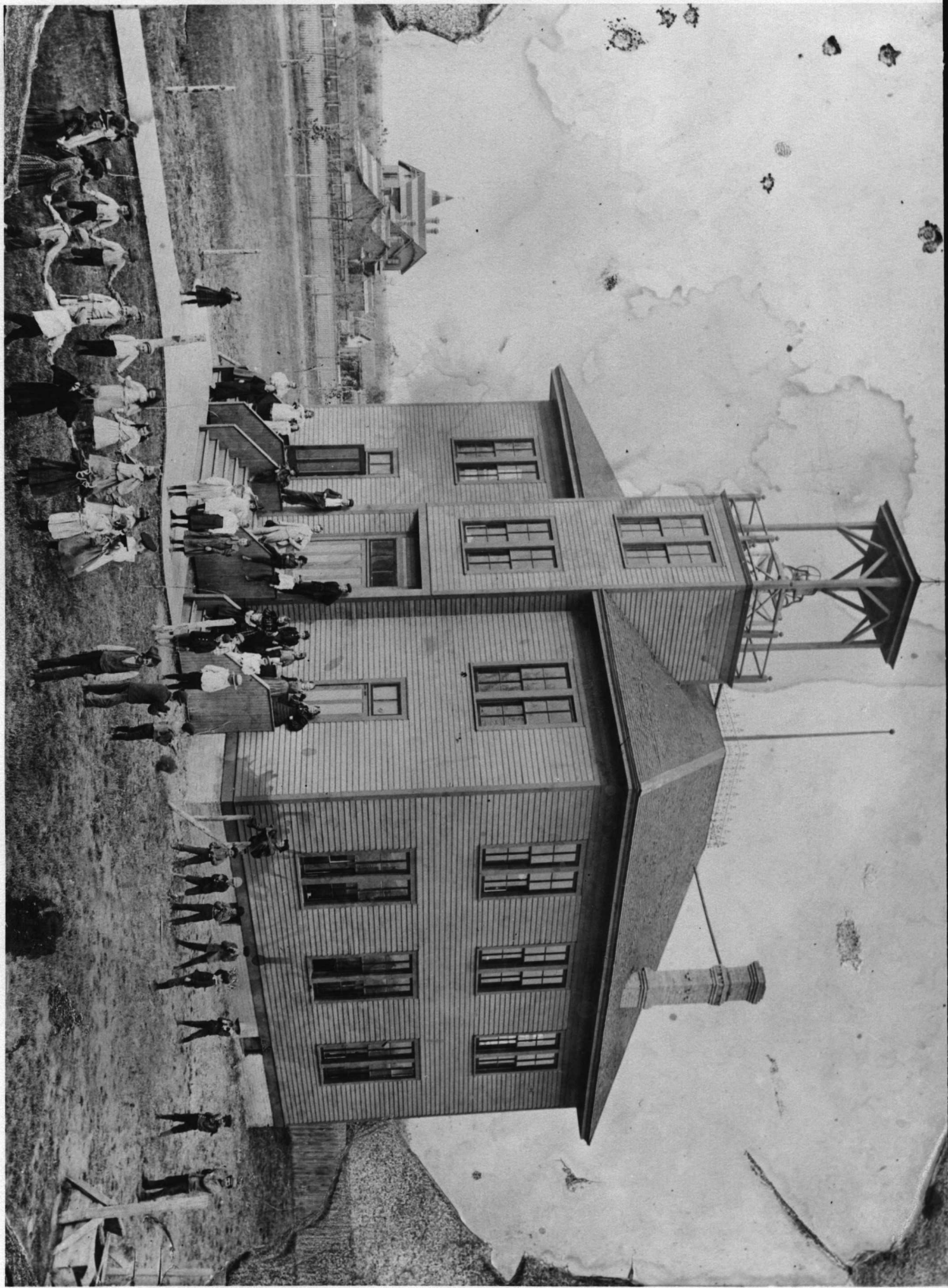
The people of Gilby bonded themselves for \$42,000 on May 1, 1927 for the purpose of building the brick school-house. The bonds were issued at 4 1/4 % interest and were redeemed by 1947.



Fig. 3.--This school served the Inkster school district number 103 from the time it was built in 1908, until the present. It is being used now for the grades one through six. The grades seven through twelve now attend the Midway junior and senior high school number 128.

The people of Inkster bonded themselves for \$9,350 at a special election for the purpose of building the school-house, which cost \$18,080 to complete. The building was almost destroyed by a fire which consumed an entire block of Inkster buildings, before it was entirely completed, in October of 1908.

The school pictured on the following page was built in Inkster in 1888 at a cost of about \$3,500. A petition circulated July 24, 1888 listed the signatures of twenty-nine residents of the district who voted affirmatively to bond the district for \$1,500. Mr. V. E. Bemis subsequently received the bid for three bonds of five hundred dollars each at 10% interest. The first term in the school was January 7, 1889, and the building continued in use until 1907. The picture was taken between 1900 and 1906.





This small school was the first in the Village of Inkster. It was built in the early 1880's, and at one time there were thirty-three students enrolled. The building is now used as a granary, and may be seen near the Village.

• MAR • 65



Fig. 4.--This school building served the Johnstown district number 49 from January 1, 1922 until the fall of 1961 when the students from grades seven through twelve began attending Midway junior-senior high school number 128. The grade school children were transported by school bus to the grade schools in Forest River and Gilby. The Johnstown school is now closed.

The people in Johnstown bonded themselves for \$24,000 in 1922 to build the school-house, with the twenty-year bonds at 6 1/4 % interest held by the Minneapolis Trust Company. The bonds were redeemed by 1933.

Township Names^a

Levant

The St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba Railroad (Great Northern now) established a station in March 1882 on the siding they constructed in 1881 on sections 13 and 14, Levant township and named for the township, which was settled by many of the early settlers from Levant, Ontario, Canada. A post office was established here on January 8, 1900 with Isaiah Steen, postmaster; rescinded October 15, 1900.

Strabane

A post office established in section 22 of Strabane Township June 25, 1883 with Joseph Myers, postmaster; discontinued June 10, 1886 and mail sent to Johnstown. When Strabane township was organized November 10, 1881, Edward Miller one of the early settlers proposed that it be named Strabane, explaining to his neighbors present, that he derived it from the Latin (strabic), meaning "I stray". Later they learned, in the words of one of them, "We have been duped and named our township after Ed Miller's old home town, Strabane, Ontario, Canada.

Honeyford

This was but a Northern Pacific Railway Station in Section 32 Gilby Township, named Bean for S. S. Bean, a land owner along the right of way when the line was constructed in 1887. The post office was established here March 29, 1888 and took the same name. Samuel White was commissioned Postmaster April 27, 1891; but this station was discontinued a short time later, and the mail sent to Gilby. Then on July 25, 1892 a post office, named Honeyford was established here with William J. Honeyford postmaster. The station name was changed to coincide with the post office when the station's plat was filed August 9, 1906.

^aFrom origins of North Dakota Place names by Mary Ann Barnes Williams, Washburn, North Dakota, 1961.

A COMPARISON OF SCHOOL FACILITIES AND FINANCES¹
(1890-1960)

Decade	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960
Total Number Districts	951	1,434	1,904	2,160	2,228	2,272	2,350	1,351
Total No. Schools in Session	1,479	2,611	4,800	5,139	5,107	4,252	3,272	1,763
Total No. Rural Schools in Session	...	...	...	4,372	4,270	3,392	2,641	1,143
Total No. Teachers Employed	1,674	4,083	7,387	8,057	8,856	7,361	6,876	7,120
Average Monthly Salary	\$36.60	\$37.52	\$52.27	\$69.87	\$109.87	\$85.72	\$250.56	\$459.38
Total Amount of Taxes Levied	477,561	853,676	3,263,967	9,671,080	10,760,081	6,959,670	13,861,096	17,789,300
Total Expenditures	780,161	1,583,594	4,829,232	13,396,724	16,264,426	10,246,915	23,973,658	51,471,541
Avg. Monthly Cost of Tuition	3.37	3.02	4.02	9.21	10.00	8.49	22.75	42.63
Total Cost of Text-books Purchased	...	49,893	61,886	153,883	298,078	144,601	332,444	623,111
No. of Volumes in Libraries	3,251	46,567	229,492	761,193	888,651	890,671	976,028	1,068,915
No. Pupils Enrolled (All Grades)	29,904	77,686	139,802	168,446	169,277	139,629	112,917	135,548
No. Pupils Enrolled (High School)	...	...	...	...	29,697	33,895	26,852	35,600
Per cent of Attendance	74	88	86	83	92	95	95.4	95.9
No. Days School Was in Session	90	119	145	167	167	166	172.7	179.94

(When no number is given the information is not available)

¹Annual Reports of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Bismarck, North Dakota, cited by Berat Lloyd Wills, North Dakota the Northern Prairie State (Ann Arbor: Edwards Brothers, Inc., 1963), p. 262.

REORGANIZATION LAW

Chapter 15-53 of 1947 Supplement to Revised Code

(Chapter 147 of Session Laws of 1947)

15-5301. Title and Purpose. This Act (chapter) shall be known and may be cited as an "Act to provide for the reorganization of school districts." It shall have for its purpose the formation of new school districts and the alteration of the boundaries of established school districts in order to provide a more nearly equalized educational opportunity for pupils of the common schools, a higher degree of uniformity of school tax rate among districts, and a wiser use of public funds expended for the support of common school system.

15-5302. Definitions. In this Act (chapter) unless the context or subject matter otherwise clearly requires:

1. "Reorganization of school district" shall mean and include the formation of new school districts, the alteration of the boundaries of established school districts, and the dissolution or disorganization of established school districts, through or by means of:
 - a. The uniting of two or more established districts;
 - b. The subdivision of one or more districts;
 - c. The transfer to an established district of a part of the territory of one or more districts; or the attachment thereto of all or any part of the territory of one or more districts subject to disorganization for any of the reasons now specified by law; or the transfer therefrom of any part of the territory of said established districts; and
 - d. Any combination of the methods aforementioned.
2. "County committee" and "state committee" shall mean respectively, the county committee for the reorganization of school

districts and the state committee for the reorganization of school districts hereinafter provided for by this Act (chapter); and

3. "County superintendent" shall mean the county superintendent of schools.

15-5303. Board to Appoint State Committee, Members of; Meetings; Compensation; and Termination of. The governor, attorney general and the commissioner of agriculture and labor shall constitute the members of a board to select the state committee provided for in this Act (chapter). Within sixty days after this Act (chapter) becomes effective such board shall meet and select the members of the state committee. The governor shall be the chairman and the commissioner of agriculture and labor the secretary of such board. Minutes of meetings shall be kept by the secretary and such board shall hold meetings only upon the call of the governor, or upon the call of the other two members of the board. Such members shall serve without compensation. Such board shall terminate six years after the effective date of this Act (chapter) unless extended as hereinafter provided.

15-5304. State Committee: Members: Vacancies: Duration and Compensation. The state committee shall be composed of seven members, one of whom shall be the superintendent of public instruction. At least one member of the state committee shall be appointed from among the residents of each judicial district of the state. At least four members of such committee shall be persons not engaged in the profession of education. The members of the state committee shall be appointed without regard to political affiliation. Vacancies in the membership of the committee shall be filled by action of the board provided for in Section 3 of this Act (15-5303.) The life of the state committee shall terminate six years after the effective date of this Act (chapter) unless extended as hereinafter provided. All members of the committee, except the superintendent of public instruction shall be compensated for the time spent in attendance at sessions of the committee at the rate of ten dollars per day and all members, including the superintendent of public instruction, shall be paid their actual expenses incurred in attending such meetings and in the performance of their official duties.

15-5305. Organization of State Committee. Within sixty days after its appointment, the state committee shall organize by electing from its membership, a chairman, vice chairman, and a secretary.

15-5306. County Committees; Creation; Composition. Within six months after the effective date of this Act (chapter) there shall be created in each county in the state a committee which shall be known as the county committee. Prior to the time specified in this section, the county superintendent shall be required to give a ten day written notice to each school board in each county requiring the members of such board to select from among its members or electors one person who shall represent such school board in electing the county committee as provided in this section. Such notice shall also specify the time and place of the meeting to select such county committee. Each school board in the county, upon the receipt of such notice, shall be required to meet and select such person. At the county meeting the school district representatives from each commissioner's district

shall divide into groups by commissioner's districts and shall select the member of the county committee from that commissioner's district as specified in this section. If any school district consists of territory within two or more commissioner's districts, the representative of the school district shall vote in the commissioner's district in which the greater part of his school district lies. The member selected by such school boards shall each have one vote at the election to elect the members of the county committee. The size of the county committee shall be dependent upon and shall have the same number of members as there are county commissioner districts in the county. No person who is engaged in the teaching profession as an instructor, supervisor, or administrator shall be eligible to serve on any county committee. At least one member of such county committee shall be elected from among the residents of each commissioner district of the county.

15-5307. Vacancies; Duration and Compensation of County Committee. No member of a county committee shall continue to serve thereon if he ceases to be a resident of the commissioner district from which he was elected. Vacancies in the membership of a county committee shall be filled by such committee and any person elected to fill such vacancy shall be selected from the county commissioner district in which such vacancy occurs. In case of a tie vote existing upon filling a vacancy, the county superintendent shall cast the deciding vote. The life of each county committee shall terminate six years after the effective date of this Act (chapter) unless extended as hereinafter provided, or unless such committees seeks and secures from the state committee a discharge at an earlier date on a showing of having fully performed the duties imposed upon it by this Act (chapter). Members of the county committee shall each receive as full compensation for their services the sum of six dollars per day but in no event shall any member of the committee receive more than three hundred dollars in any one year and in addition to such compensation each member shall receive his actual and necessary expenses incurred by him in attending said meetings and in the performance of his official duties.

15-5308. Organization; Meetings; Quorum and Additional Salary of County Superintendent. Within ten days after the county committee has been elected as provided in Section 6 (15-5306), the county committee shall organize by selecting from its membership a chairman, and a vice chairman. The county superintendent shall be the secretary of the committee. Meetings of the committee shall be held upon call of the chairman or a majority of the members thereof. A majority of the members of the committee shall constitute a quorum. The county superintendent shall receive monthly in full for services rendered under this Act (chapter) a sum of money equal to ten per cent of his monthly salary as county superintendent; said salary to commence upon the organization of the county committee and ceases as soon as the reorganization of said county is completed. He shall also be allowed and paid his actual and necessary expenses incurred while in the performance of his duties under the provisions of this Act (chapter). Such additional salary and expenses shall be chargeable and payable as an expense of the county.

15-5309. State Committee to Call Meetings of County Committee: Purpose. Within thirty days after all county committees have been organized as provided in Section 8 (15-5308), the state committee shall call as many meetings of different county committees as in its discretion may be necessary. Such meetings shall be held at such centrally located points throughout the state as such state committee may designate. Such county committees as are requested to be in attendance at any such meeting shall be given at least a ten day prior notice of such meeting by the state committee. Such meetings shall be held to counsel and advise the county committees on:

1. The provisions of this Act (chapter);
2. The topography of the state and its road and highway system;
3. The general economic conditions of the state including population trends and developments; and
4. All factors which may affect the determination of proper district boundaries of the school system of the state in keeping with a wise educational and economic school district program.

All members of a county committee upon receipt of such notice shall attend such meeting, if possible, but the chairman and secretary of the county committee shall be required to attend.

15-5310. County Committees to Conduct Hearings and Meetings to Explain Provisions of Act (Chapter); Notice Required. Prior to preparing or formulating a plan for the reorganization of school districts as hereinafter provided, each county committee shall conduct such public hearings and hold such public meetings at such specified places throughout the county as it may be deemed necessary to explain and acquaint the people in the various communities with the provisions of this Act (chapter). Notice of any hearing shall be given by publishing a notice in the official county newspaper at least ten days prior to the date set for such hearing. Such notice shall specify the time, place, and purpose of such meeting.

15-5311. Comprehensive Study of County Made By Committee; Considerations. Within nine months after its organization the county committee shall make a comprehensive study of the county school system in order to consider and determine:

1. The taxable assessed valuation of existing districts and the differences in such valuation under possible reorganization plans;
2. The size, geographical features, and boundaries of the districts;
3. The number of pupils attending school and the population of the districts;
4. The location and condition of school buildings and their accessibility to the pupils;

5. The location and condition of roads, highways, and natural barriers within the districts;
6. The school centers where children residing in the districts attend high school;
7. Conditions affecting the welfare of the teachers and pupils;
8. The boundaries of other governmental units and the location of private organizations; and
9. Any factors concerning adequate school facilities for the pupils.

Such committee shall also give due consideration in the preparation of a plan for the reorganization of school districts to the educational needs of local communities; to economies in transportation and in administration costs; to the future use of existing satisfactory school buildings, sites and playfields; to a reduction in disparities in per pupil valuation among school districts; to the equalization of the educational opportunity of pupils, and to any other matters which in its judgment are of importance.

15-5312. Determination and Adjustment of Property, Assets, Debts and Liabilities Among Districts. The county committee shall determine the value and amount of all school property and all bonded and other indebtedness of each school district affected in a reorganization plan and consider the amount of all outstanding indebtedness and shall make an equitable adjustment of all property, assets, debts and liabilities among the districts involved after the hearing provided for in Section 13 (15-5313).

15-5313. Public Hearing on Proposals for Reorganization; Hearings Testimony for Adjusting. The county committee shall hold a public hearing on the advisability of any proposal by such committee for the reorganization of school districts which involves the formation of a new district or the transfer from one established district to another of any territory in which children of school age reside. Notice of such hearings as are held under the provisions of this section shall be given by publishing a notice in the official county newspaper at least ten days prior to the date of such hearing. Such committee shall also hear at such time as may be fixed by it, testimony offered by any person or school district interested in any proposal of the county committee to form a new district or to transfer territory from one school district to another or to attach to an established district or districts all or any part of another district subject to disorganization for any of the reasons now specified by law, said testimony to be heard for the purpose of finding and determining the value and amount of all school property of whatever nature involved in the proposed action, the nature and amount and value of all bonded, warrant and other indebtedness of each school district affected by the proposed action, including all legal uncompleted obligations then existing and in so doing to consider the amount of such outstanding indebtedness incurred for current expenses, the amount incurred for permanent improvements and the location of such improvements and to make an equitable adjustment of all property, debts, and liabilities among the districts involved; and to keep a record of all hearings on the reorganization

of school districts and of all findings and terms of adjustment of property, debts and liabilities among the districts involved, and to submit the same to the state committee at the time of submitting a plan for the reorganization of school districts as provided in Section 14 of this Act (15-5314). A subcommittee, composed of not less than three members of a county committee, or three members of the county committee of each county concerned in case territory in two or more counties is involved, may hold any hearing that the county committee is required to hold.

15-5314. Reorganization Plan Prepared and Submitted to State Committee. Within one and one-half years after its selection, the county committee shall have prepared and submitted to the state committee a comprehensive plan for the reorganization of school districts within the county. Such plan shall be accompanied by:

1. A map showing the boundaries of established school districts and the boundaries proposed under any plan for the reorganization of school districts, prepared and submitted in compliance with the provisions of this Act (chapter);
2. A description of the proposed boundaries aforementioned;
3. Recommendations respecting the location of schools, the utilization of existing buildings; the construction of new buildings, including dormitories, and the transportation requirements under the proposed plan for the reorganization of school districts;
4. A summary of the reasons for such proposed reorganization of school districts;
5. Recommendations specifying whether such reorganization districts shall be common or special school districts which classification shall be based upon and subject to the laws existing in regard thereto; and
6. Such other reports, records and materials as the state committee may require.

If any difficulties are encountered by a county committee in formulating such comprehensive plan for the reorganization of school districts so that such plan will be unable to be submitted to the state committee within the time specified in this section, such county committee may make an application to the state committee for an extension of time in which to submit such comprehensive plan. The state committee, in its discretion and if the facts and circumstances warrant, may grant such extension as it may see fit; provided, however, that in no case shall such extension be for a longer period than six months.

15-5315. Plan Involving Territory in More Than One County. A plan for the reorganization of school districts involving territory lying in two or more counties shall be prepared by joint action of a special

committee composed of not less than three members of the county committee of each county involved, which plan, for purposes of submission to the state committee shall be incorporated into the comprehensive plan of the county which has the largest number of pupils residing in the proposed joint district.

15-5316. Completed Plans For District or Districts May Be Submitted Prior to Comprehensive County Plan. The county committee, from time to time, may submit to the state committee a plan for the reorganization of one or more school districts within the county without awaiting the completion of a comprehensive plan; provided, however, that such plan fit into and become an integral part of such comprehensive plan as the county committee is required to prepare.

15-5317. State Committee, Powers and Duties. The state committee shall:

1. Appoint and employ a director and other personnel. Appoint and employ a director and such other assistants and personnel as may be necessary to enable the committee to carry out the powers and duties imposed upon it by this Act (chapter) and to fix the compensation of such appointees and employees;

2. Disbursement of funds. Govern the disbursement of such funds as are provided by law for carrying out the provisions of this Act (chapter) with authority to designate one or more of its members to examine and pass upon all claims against such funds for submission to the state auditing board and to require good and sufficient bond of such member or members so appointed for the faithful performance of the duties of such member or members in examining, passing upon, and approving such claims. All such disbursements shall be by the procedure and in the manner provided by law for the disbursement of funds of the state;

3. Aid county committee. Aid county committees in carrying out the powers and duties vested in and imposed upon them by this Act (chapter) by furnishing such committees with the assistance of the employed staff of the state committee, with other necessary clerical assistance, and with such plans of procedure, standards, data, maps, forms and other materials and services as may be necessary.

4. Receive, examine, approve, or disapprove reorganization plans. Receive, file, and examine the plans for the reorganization of school districts and the reports of findings and terms of adjustment of property, debts and liabilities among the districts involved, submitted to the state committee by county committees, and to approve such plans and terms of adjustment when they are found by the state committee to provide for a satisfactory school district system for the counties and the state and for the equitable adjustment of property, debts and liabilities. Whenever a plan submitted by a county committee is found by the state committee to be unsatisfactory, or whenever the terms of adjustment so submitted are found not to be fair and equitable, the state committee shall so notify the county committee and upon request shall assist said county committee in

the revision of such plan or terms of adjustment, which revision shall be completed by the county committee and resubmitted within ninety days after such notification;

5. Appoint county committee. Appoint a county committee in case no county committee is elected, as required in Section 6 of this Act (15-5306), or in case a committee so elected shall fail or refuse to submit plans, records, reports and other data as provided for in this Act (chapter);

6. Transmit approved plans to county superintendent. Transmit to the county superintendent of each county a copy of the plan for the reorganization of the school districts of a county approved by the state committee; a copy of approved terms of adjustment of property, debts and liabilities; a statement of the findings and conclusions of the state committee respecting such approved plans and terms of adjustment; and copies of maps, reports, records and all other pertinent material submitted to the state committee by the county committee of his county; and

7. Present recommendations for extension of life of committees. Present to the legislative assembly a recommendation in writing that the life of a county committee and of the state committee be extended beyond six years, if in the judgment of the state committee such extension is necessary to the complete and satisfactory performance of the duties imposed upon said committees by this Act (chapter).

15-5318. Approved Plan Received by County Superintendent; Duty of Superintendent to Call Special Election; Definition of Voting Units; Favorable Results. Upon receipt from the state committee of an approved plan for the reorganization of school districts, and approved terms of adjustment of property, debts and liabilities among the districts involved, the county superintendent shall call a special election of the voters residing within the territory of each new district, such election to be held at the place or places therein which have been determined by the county superintendent to be convenient for the voters. In holding such elections, any territory within the proposed new district consisting of one or more incorporated villages or cities shall vote as a unit, and all rural territory within such proposed new district shall vote as a unit. For the purpose of this section all incorporated areas in the proposed new districts, regardless of their number and size, shall be considered as one incorporated area, and all rural areas in the proposed new district, regardless of size, shall be considered as one rural area. Notice of such election, stating the time and place of holding the election, shall be published by the county superintendent in the official county newspaper once each week for two consecutive weeks at least thirty days next preceding such election, and by posting not less than fourteen days before the election one such notice on each school house door of each school district containing a school building and included in the proposed change. The election notices shall clearly state that the election has been called for the purpose of affording the voters an opportunity to approve or reject a proposal for the formation of a new school district and shall also contain a description of the boundaries of the proposed new district and a statement, if there be any, of the terms of adjustment of property, debts and liabilities applicable thereto. The county superintendent

shall appoint judges and clerks of the election and the election shall be held and conducted in the same manner and the polls shall open and close at the same time as is specified for elections in special school districts. The result of the elections shall be certified and delivered to the county superintendent within three days after the closing of the polls. If a majority of all votes cast by the electors residing within the rural area of a proposed new district and a majority of all votes cast by the electors within the incorporated area of the proposed new district are both in favor of the formation of the district, the county superintendent shall make the proper adjustment of the property, assets, debts, and liabilities as provided in such approved plan and shall organize and establish such districts and in so doing shall perform all other necessary duties that are required by law to be performed by the county superintendent in connection with the organization and establishment of new school districts of any kind or type.

15-5319. **Transportation Required.** Whenever any reorganization plan provides for the transportation of students from one part of such new district to a central point, and such plan is approved by the voters of such new district, then it shall be mandatory upon the school board of such new school district to provide adequate and practical transportation.

15-5320. **Proposal Rejected, Revision Made; New Election Held.** If a proposal for the formation of a new school district is rejected by the voters at the election provided for in the preceding section, the county committee may make such revision as it deems advisable in the boundaries proposed for such new district in the terms of adjustments of the property, debts and liabilities thereof, as the case may be, and submit the same to the state committee for approval. If the boundaries of the proposed new district or the terms of adjustment, as the case may be, as revised, are approved by the state committee, notice thereof shall be transmitted to the county superintendent, as provided for in Section 17, Sub-section 6 of this Act (15-5317, subs. 6). Upon receipt of such notice the county superintendent shall call, in the manner and for the purpose specified in Section 18 of this Act (15-5318), a special election of the voters residing within the revised boundaries of the proposed new district. If a majority of all votes cast by electors so residing within both urban and rural units are in favor of the formation of the new district, the county superintendent shall proceed to organize and establish such district and to perform the necessary duties related thereto in the same manner and to the same effect as is provided in Section 18 of this Act (15-5318).

15-5321. **Classification and Type of School Districts.** The identity and classification as to type of school districts reorganized under the provisions of this Act (chapter) shall be subject to the provisions of Sub-section 5 of Section 14 of this Act (15-5314); provided, however, that any school district existing prior to the effective date of this Act (chapter) and not having had its boundaries changed under the provisions of this Act (chapter), and all independent school districts and school districts organized under a special law shall keep and retain their present identity.

15-5322. **School Boards in Reorganized and Original Districts.** After the establishment of any new school district, the school board for

such new school district shall be elected at the regular annual school district election. At the first election to elect a school board in a newly reorganized district constituting a common school district the provisions of Sections 15-2401, 15-2402, and 15-2409, of the North Dakota Revised Code of 1943 shall govern; and in a district constituting a special school district the election shall be governed by the provisions of Section 15-2801 and 15-2802, of the North Dakota Revised Code of 1943. Members of school boards elected in the newly reorganized districts shall not enter upon the duties of such office until the time specified in Section 22 of this Act (15-5322). School boards in original school districts included within a reorganized district shall continue and remain in existence until the time specified in Section 22 of this Act (15-5322) at which time the new school board elected for the newly reorganized district as provided in this section shall become the governing body of such school districts; provided, however, that prior to the completion of the reorganization of any school district under the provisions of this Act (chapter) the existing school board of any school district shall not contract or place such district under any obligation, except upon the recommendation of the county committee. Subsequent annual elections in such school district shall be governed by the laws pertaining thereto.

15-5323. **Effective Date of Approved Reorganization Plans.** Any reorganization plan voted upon and approved shall become operative and effective on the first day of July succeeding final approval of the same.

15-5324. **Voluntary Proposals for Organization or Alteration of School Districts.** After the effective date of this Act (chapter), proposals for the organization of a new school district, for the consolidation of two or more districts, through or by any of the means provided for by any law in effect at the time, must be submitted by the board of county commissioners, or the county superintendent, as the case may be, to the county committee and to the state committee for approval before any hearings on petitions are held by the board of county commissioners or the county superintendent, or final action is taken by the board of county commissioners, or the county superintendent in cases where no petition is required, or where proposals are submitted to the vote of the electors as the law may require in each case. Such proposals shall be approved by the county committee and by the state committee, and the board of county commissioners and the county superintendent, as the case may be, so notified if in the judgment of said committees they constitute an acceptable part of a comprehensive program for the reorganization of the school districts of the county.

15-5325. **County and State Officers to Cooperate With Committees.** The county and state officers shall make available to the county committee and the state committee such information from public records in their possession as is essential to such committees in the performance of their duties.

15-5326. **Reorganized Boundaries of School Districts Not to Be Altered Within Five Years; Exception.** The boundaries of a school district established through and by means of the reorganization of school districts

provided for in this Act (chapter) shall not be altered within five years of such establishment, except upon recommendation of the county superintendent and approval by the county committee and the state committee during the life of said committees.

15-5327. Duties Imposed Upon County Superintendent and Officers Where Reorganized Districts Constitute Joint Districts. The duties imposed upon and required to be performed by the county superintendent under the provisions of this Act (chapter) or under other provisions of law are in like manner imposed upon and required to be performed by all county superintendents affected by a reorganization of school districts involving territory in two or more counties. Duties that are required by law to be performed by any other county officers or by any school district officers in connection with the operation of joint school districts established under the provisions of existing law shall likewise be performed by such officers in connection with the operation of such joint districts as are organized and established pursuant to the provisions of this Act (chapter).

15-5328. Appeal from Decision of County Committees in Making Adjustments of Property, Debts and Liabilities. An appeal may be taken to the district court on any question of adjustment of property, debts and liabilities among the districts involved in which the power to make an adjustment or adjustments has been extended by this Act (chapter). Any person feeling aggrieved by the decision of the county committee after the hearing provided for in Section 13 (15-5313) may appeal from such decision. Such appeal shall be taken within thirty days after the decision of the committee on the adjustment of the property, debts and liabilities, by serving a written notice of appeal upon a member of the county committee. If such court finds the terms of the adjustment in question not to be equitable or in conformity with any provisions of the Constitution of North Dakota, such court shall make an adjustment that is equitable and in conformity with every provision of the state Constitution of which such adjustment shall be deemed by the court to be violative. Any determination by the court with respect to the adjustment of property, debts and liabilities among the districts or areas involved shall not otherwise affect the validity of the reorganization or creation of any district or districts under the provisions of this Act (chapter).

15-5329. Appropriation. There is hereby appropriated out of any monies in the state treasury, in the State Equalization Fund not otherwise appropriated, the sum of sixty thousand dollars or so much thereof as may be necessary for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of this Act (chapter).

15-5330. Savings Clause. If any section, subdivision, sentence, or clause of this Act (chapter) is for any reason held to be unconstitutional, such decision shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of this Act (chapter).

Inkster, Jan. 13th, 1896

To The School B'd.
Inkster, N. D.

Gentlemen:

Permit me to make a report on the present condition of the school with special reference to non-resident pupils: Since the first of September we have enrolled in both rooms one hundred five pupils, nearly one half of whom are non-residents. The evil effect of this unrestricted influx of pupils from outside districts can be told in a few words.

First, There is a grade in Miss Brownlie's room which by right belongs in mine and would be there only that I have not seating room nor time for them, my room being filled to its utmost capacity. This grade consists entirely of resident pupils, Jennie McGillivray, Vern Bemis, James Parks, Alma Gallagher, Coran Crittenden and others. Such pupils of course have a right to be advanced as fast as their ability warrants.

Second: There are children representing seven families, who bring their dinners to school, eat in the school rooms and are there during the noon intermission. The families are: Coopers, Reynolds, Montgomerys, Hatts, Hawkins and two families of Taylors. I need not comment on the possible damage to school property from having such a crowd there during our absence at noon. As a matter of fact the only damage that has yet been done is the breaking of a window light, and by threatening to entirely exclude them from the rooms we have now gotten them to leave the rooms in a tolerably clean condition.

Third: The over crowded condition of the rooms makes it almost impossible to keep any kind of order: to illustrate the point I will say that I have classes so large that when they come to recite all the pupils in front seats have to get up and move back, then come up to the front again, when the recitation is completed. You can easily imagine how much a pupil can learn who is moving back and forth like that.

Fourth: The means of ventilation are insufficient for the number of pupils in the rooms. This is really a serious evil and deserves attention at least before another school year opens. This is quite a chapter of evils, but I must add on Miss Brownlie's account that she has not for weeks had a table to herself not a chance to sit down. She is not only crowded but over-worked. Of the class of pupils we have this year I will say that many of the outside pupils are among the best pupils we have, best both in intellect and character but there are a few who give more trouble and require more constant watching than any or all of our own pupils. Right here is where the evil effects of a tuition fee would come in, some of the pupils who would be least able to pay it are making the most use of their opportunities, while others who could pay it are idlers and a damage to the school. Now having placed before you some of the difficulties under which we are laboring, I should at least be able to offer a few suggestions to what should be done about it. Since vacation I have been trying to find some way out of the difficulty, and am no nearer a solution of the problem than I was when I began. There are so many classes of pupils to be taken into consideration, for instance, pupils, whose parents have moved into town being a class who it seems to me deserve special consideration,

another class is those pupils who board in town. The third class of pupils being those who drive in from the country, that is the class who get the most while giving the least of any class there is. Looking at the situation from every point of view it seems almost impossible to change at this time, so if the Board thinks best we will go on as we have been for weeks, putting up as best we can with the inconveniences and hoping we shall not be blamed if the same work is not done that might be done under different circumstances. But if you conclude to settle it in this way, may we not dismiss any pupil or pupils who make us special trouble or require special watching, I think you have known us both long enough to know we would not take advantage of such a privilege. Now, I have written this at length mostly to let you know the exact situation, and we are prepared to abide by anything you may think best to do in the matter.

Respectfully Submitted,

Mary Nesbitt, Principal

Inkster, N. D.
April 8th, 1896

To the School Board
Inkster, N. D.

Gentlemen:

Permit me to make a report on matters concerning the school. I need not go back farther than my January report as that covered everything up to that time. From the time that report was made we worked under the greatest disadvantages possible in a school room. I do not want to pose as a chronic grumbler, but my report would not be a truthful one if I did not at least touch upon that subject again.

It is certainly impossible to keep any kind of order or do justice, to the great number of pupils we have had this year, and if the conditions are not remedied before another year it will be entirely useless for the advanced pupils to attend. But I am sure you are already aware of all this so I will submit for your consideration the plan I have in mind: As it came near the time when the older pupils commonly leave school I held a series of examinations the purpose of which was to grade the pupils and show where each belongs, so when they come in another year there will be no difficulty in dividing them in case a third teacher is hired, which of course, is the plan I have to propose. If the attendance is as great as it has been this year a third teacher will be needed for at least three and a half or four months, probably from the middle of November to the middle of March, such teacher to have charge of the pupils who are in school during the winter only thus avoiding a change of teachers for those who are in school all the time.

The only alternative is to shut out non-resident pupils completely commencing it at the beginning of the school year. But I am sure you will look carefully into the matter and do what seems best to you. I dismissed two pupils from school for disobedience; the circumstances are familiar to the Board, so I will only say that I was very careful about using the unlimited power given me by the Board and would not dismiss any body except under extreme provocation. We had only two successful candidates in the teacher's examination this Spring, and two or three more will write in May. We have paid the sum of money assessed us for the University fund and after paying the expenses of our entertainment have a small sum left which we shall probably use in buying books for starting a school library, something the school needs more than it needs anything else, and we would respectfully ask that the Board help us a little in this matter.

I will mention another point for consideration, not because it needs to be decided now, but that it will come up in the future and might as well be thought over. It is the case of those boys who, while nominally members of the school, are permitted by their parents to leave school for a half or a quarter of a day to go skating, or go here and there ending generally. I understand in some place where they shake dice and do other things of a similar nature. For my own part I regard the presence of such boys in the school as a disgrace and liable to exercise a demoralizing effect upon pupils who are not allowed such liberties.

At the commencement of this term twelve pupils were advanced from Miss Brownlee's room into mine and their advancement gives to the school a certain permanency it never had before, as all of them are resident pupils, and pupils who are constantly in school. In conclusion I will add that Miss Brownlee and myself have spared no effort for the advancement of the school though working under such adverse circumstances. Hoping for a betterment of these conditions I am,

Yours Respectfully,

Mary E. Nesbitt

OLD-STYLE FAMILY SOFT SOAP²

To "set the leach", bore several holes in the bottom of a barrel; or use one with out a bottom; prepare a board larger than the barrel, then set the barrel on it, and cut a groove around the outside of the barrel, making one groove from this to the edge of the board, to carry off the lyse as it runs off, with a groove around it, running into one with in the center of the board. Place all two feet from the ground and tip it so the lye may run easily from the board into the vessel below prepared to receive it. Put half bricks or stones around the edge of the inside of the barrel; place on them one end of some sticks about two inches wide, inclining to the centre; on those place some straw to the depth of two inches, over it scatter two pounds of slaked lime. Put in ashes, about half a bushel at a time, pack it well, by pounding it down, and continue doing so until the barrel is full, leaving a funnel-shaped hollow in the centre large enough to hold several quarts of water. Use rain water boiling hot. Let the water disappear before adding more. If the ashes are packed very "tightly" it may require two or three days before the lye will begin to run, but it will be the stronger for it, and much better.

To make the boiled soft soap: Put in a kettle the grease consisting of all kinds of fat that has accumulated in the kitchen, such as scraps and bones from the soup kettle, rinds from meats, etc., fill the kettle half full; if there is too much grease it can be skimmed off after the soap is cold, for another kettle of soap. This is the only true test when enough grease is used, as the lye will consume all that is needed and no more. Make a fire under one side of it. The kettle should be in an out-house or out of doors. Let it heat very hot so as to fry; stir occasionally to prevent burning. Now put in the lye a gallon at a time, watching it closely until it boils, as it sometimes runs over at the beginning. Add lye until the kettle is full enough, but not too full to boil well. Soap should boil from the side and not the middle, as this would be more likely to cause it to boil over. To test the soap, to one spoonful of soap add one of rain-water; if it stirs up very thick, the soap is good and will keep; if it becomes thinner, it is not good. This is the result of one of three causes: either it is too weak, or there is a deposit of dirt, or it is too strong. Continue to boil for a few hours, when it should flow from the stick with which it is stirred, like thick molasses; but after boiling if it remains thin, let it stand over night, removing of from the fire, then draining it off very carefully into another vessel, being particular to prevent any sediment from passing. Wash the kettle, return the soap, and boil again, if dirt was the cause; it will now be thick and good; otherwise, if it was too strong, rain-water added will make it right, adding the water gradually until right and just thick enough.

²Mrs. F. L. Gillette, White House Cook Book, (Minneapolis, Minnesota: L. M. Ayer Publishing Co., 1887), p. 468.

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