

established. It will give us, I believe, a deeper appreciation for all the educational freedom we have enjoyed at Miner

One of the earliest records we have of public schools dates back to 1835. Henry Work and Samuel Edsall were appointed to "employ a suitable number of teachers and pay them out of a fund set aside for school purposes". However, a report in 1836 stated that "The town cannot employ teachers on terms advantageous to the corporation" and after a discussion with the Ways and Means the matter was dropped as a problem "beyond the power of the trustees to solve".

Actually then, in 1853 the free schools had their beginning. Even so, the result was almost certain defeat. Hugh McCulloch, Charles Case and Wm. Stewart were the trustees appointed to solve a three-fold knotty problem. (1) They were entrusted with the educational interests of a town of 4,000 people -- 1,233 of which were school age children; (2) not a single school room belonging to the city; and (3) with only \$330.72 with which to establish and maintain schools for one year.

The said trustees rented a building on the east side of Lafayette Street between Main & Berry, (known as old McJunkin School) which was built in 1838 and used by Alexander McJunkin, schoolmaster until 1852. Isaac Mahurin was hired as principal and Miss M. L. Mahurin was his assistant. They also engaged Mr. & Mrs. A. M. Hulburt to teach in their home (residence of Henry C. Paul) at the southwest corner of Wayne & Ewing. Both schools opened in the fall.

But all did not go well ! In April 1853 when the council resolved that "an order be drawn upon the city for the sum of \$1,200.00 on account of money set aside for purchase of school sites and placed in the hands of the trustees" there was tremendous opposition and the trustees resigned.

The true friends of the free schools rallied and waged a bitter fight and in 1854 James Humphrey, Henry Sharp and Charles French were appointed trustees. Slow but definite progress was made by their endeavors. A tax of 2 mills was levied on each \$100.00 worth of taxable property for school purposes. Many private donations boosted the fund. The school report of 1868 states:

"some citizens pledged every dollar they were worth to the object; others came up to the full measure of their duty, and enough was obtained to justify the undertaking (to erect the first school buildings). Honor to them all ! The buildings that were erected should ever be monuments to their liberality and sacrifice".

And so we come to the erection of the first two public school buildings, -- the Clay School at Washington & Clay, and the Jefferson School at Jefferson and Fairfield.

After the formal opening of the Clay School (designed to