

Chapter III

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL TRANSITIONS

The economic and social changes affecting the community during the life span of the school are quite marked. In her early years, Miner was one of the outlying schools. Just a few years before Miner was built, Creighton Avenue was the south boundary of the city limits. In 1886 there was an approximate population of 35,000, and Miner was one of ten public grade schools in the city.

Today, seventy-five years later, the official census of Fort Wayne is 161,776. There are forty public elementary and or junior high schools, and there are four high schools. At the end of the current year the count will remain the same, for while Miner is being abandoned a new junior high is being constructed. Overcrowded conditions still remain in some schools and appear on the horizon for some others. In just a few years there is an anticipated need for several new schools including, probably, two new high schools. This information regards only the public schools. There is a like story of expansion in the parochial systems.

As I have mentioned before, the Fort Wayne Community Schools (formerly known as the School City of Fort Wayne) has an enviable record in the State for having a good school system. However, at this writing, there is pending in court a law suit resulting from the decision of the State Reorganization Commission to approve a two unit Allen County School system. In 1959 the State Legislature enacted laws providing for the reorganization in school areas to facilitate better educational opportunities for all. In accordance with the law, a local committee known as the Allen County School Reorganization Committee was appointed to study the problems and needs of the county and then submit its findings and recommendations to the State Commission. After studying many possible plans, they reduced their thinking to two plans:

1. a one unit system for all of Allen County
2. a two unit system dividing the county into an East and West division.

After much work wherein volumes of information and statistics were compiled, the time came for the committee to vote on which plan to recommend. Up until this time it appeared likely that the one unit system was the favored one. However, in a surprise revelation, one of the five members switched his thinking to favor the two unit plan, and the resulting vote was three to two in favor of the East-West plan. Consequently, much to the dismay and surprise of many interested school people and concerned taxpayers, this recommendation was submitted to the State Commission for approval. After a public hearing by the State Commission (where again it looked like the two unit plan was not held in very high regard by the majority of people) the plan was approved. As a result one of the most controversial and involved school issues of all time got underway.