Coping with Administrative Pressures in the Chicago Schools' Superintendency: An Analysis of William Henry Johnson, 1936-1946

Theresa Mary White
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IN THE CHICAGO SCHOOLS' SUPERINTENDENCY:
AN ANALYSIS OF WILLIAM HENRY JOHNSON
1936–1946

by

Theresa Mary White

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
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The writer expresses her deep appreciation for the kindness, tolerance and devotion of many people who gave so generously of their support during the time spent researching and writing this dissertation. The project would never have been accomplished without the guidance and patience of Dr. Joan Smith, Director of the dissertation committee. Her unfailing assistance and persistent dedication is gratefully acknowledged and appreciated. Sincere gratitude is extended to Dr. John Wozniak and Dr. Philip Carlin for their suggestions and encouragement. The writer valued the assistance of Yolanda Wershing and the Loyola University staff at the Water Tower and Lake Shore libraries. I am sincerely indebted to Archie Motley and the staff of the Chicago Historical Society for their assistance and service. Mona Wie, the archivist at Illinois State University and archivist Thomas Quinn, at Northwestern University also gave generously of their time and support. Dr. Williams and the staff at the Chicago Board of Education library were especially helpful. The librarians at the Chicago, Park Ridge, Arlington Heights and Skokie public libraries were helpful in securing articles and books. In conclusion, I wish to acknowledge the incredible patience, and understanding of my family.
Initially, I became interested in Superintendent Johnson when I was a student at Chicago Teachers' College during the time that Raymond Cook was the dean there. Stories were widely circulated about the unbelievable difficulties Cook had encountered with the administration in the thirties and forties. While attending the University of Illinois in Champaign, I was fortunate enough to have had a dedicated instructor by the name of John DeBoer. He was another excellent educator who had problems with Johnson. I discovered that persons were considered disloyal and a threat to the Johnson-McCahey administration because they differed in their views with the organization. Persons such as Cook and DeBoer were punished so as to be taught a lesson. Disloyalty and speaking out against the organization appeared not to be tolerated by the group, and it seemed to me that teachers and administrators were severely punished and usually demoted with a loss in pay. Ever since that time I wondered how accurate that picture was.

I was also interested in Johnson because I was born and raised on the northwest side of Chicago in the Humboldt Park area and lived a few blocks from Johnson's birthplace near Wicker Park. Members of my family graduated from Tuley High School and Lane Technical High School in the thirties and
forties while Johnson was the superintendent of the Chicago schools. I wanted to find out more about this superintendent and the Chicago schools during his administration.

While my dissertation is a study of the man and his times it was important to understand what kinds of coping behaviors and devices he used for survival. I became interested in his personality, because I was curious and puzzled about his ability to withstand the constant, extreme opposition to his policies and administration. It was not clear to me how he survived the constant barrage of accusations against him. It was interesting to note that he was able to cope with the pressure groups and remain cool and unruffled most of the time. I wondered how a person was able to survive the administrative pressures of the superintendency over a ten year period of time. Finally, I speculated about the kind of strength an individual would need in order to cope with these constant pressures.

In the account that follows, I found Johnson was a strong figure who mastered the ability to cope with his daily duties as the superintendent in charge of a large metropolitan school system. I marveled at his use of a variety of survival strategies to withstand the criticisms hurled at him constantly by many of the teacher, parent, church, and civic organizations. He skillfully developed the strategies that allowed him to continue to move forward
despite the opposition to his policies and programs. The notoriety about the 1936 principals' examination had to be faced by Johnson on a continuous basis for ten years. The daily newspapers and the pressure groups would not allow the scandal to be forgotten.

It is important to understand that his membership in the administrative organization of the Chicago schools, gave him the support necessary to carry on his administrative duties. He was the one of the most educationally knowledgeable members of the organization and was able to utilize the expertise of many of his district superintendents who remained loyal to him throughout his administration.

In the most stressful situations Johnson can be seen as a person who is very rational and not too emotional. His rational behavior allowed him to be a stabilizing force to the other members of the organization. In turn they shared certain values that allowed them to empathize with each other and protect each other. Thus the group protected itself against the outsiders who were hostile to the organization.

The depression years were extremely difficult ones for Chicago. It was probably the hardest hit of all the major cities. Johnson had to find ways to keep the system running smoothly on a shoestring budget. He was not a quitter. Instead he tried to find solutions to the schools'
problems and worked long hours to provide what he thought was the most appropriate education for all the students in the schools. He had the youth and energy needed to bring about many innovations and changes in the curriculum which he believed would benefit the greatest number of students.

It is hoped that the reader will gain some insight into Johnson's history and personality and develop an understanding of the complex situations Johnson was subjected to because of the variety of political, economic, and administrative constraints forced upon him.
VITA

Theresa Mary White is the daughter of Carl and Theresa Lengyel. She was born in Chicago, Illinois.

She graduated from St. Aloysius Elementary School and completed her secondary education at Josephium Academy for Girls in Chicago. In 1950 she started her undergraduate work at the University of Illinois, at Navy Pier and the University of Illinois, in Champaign-Urbana. Having completed her senior year at Chicago Teachers College, she earned her Bachelor of Education degree in 1954. She received her Master of Arts degree from Northeastern Illinois University in 1979.

Her teaching career started in 1954. During her twenty years of teaching in the Chicago public schools, she has taught at every elementary grade level. Since 1976 she has been teaching children with moderate learning disabilities.

She is active in community, church, school and professional organizations. At the current time she is beginning her third year on the Local School Improvement Council (LSIC) of the Schubert Elementary School.
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CHAPTER I

WILLIAM H. JOHNSON'S HERITAGE AND EARLY YEARS

Johnson was the youngest and only Chicago-born superintendent of the Chicago Public Schools. Having been appointed by the board in April 1936 at the age of forty, he was to remain in that office for ten years as a very controversial figure during the Kelly-Nash political era. Both of Johnson's parents were Danish.

DANISH HERITAGE

John Johnson, William's father, was born in Denmark on 26 August 1850. He died of shock after a serious operation at St. Elizabeth's Hospital, near the Humboldt Park area in Chicago, on 3 April 1918. Internal bleeding, which was the cause of death occurred frequently after operations during the early 1900s because doctors had not yet acquired the knowledge to control this kind of bleeding. John's age was listed as sixty-seven. His mother, Maria Caroline (Nielsen) Johnson was born in the town of Christiana in Denmark on 30 August 1852. She died in her south side Chicago residence on 7 June 1928, at the age of seventy-five from heart related problems.\(^2\)

The United States Census Report of 1900 listed John's and Maria's birthplace as Germany and his birth date as October 1848, which information conflicts with that given on
John's death certificate. Since birth records are not available it is possible that the census taker, William F. Mertens, may have incorrectly recorded the birth date on his census report. He listed William's birth date as September 1894 instead of 1895, and William's sister's name as Louisa instead of Cecilia. Cecilia was born in January 1884, and was eleven years older than her only brother.3

The birthplaces of John and Maria may have been recorded as Germany since they were born in South Jutland in that area of Denmark called Schleswig-Holstein, which had been under Prussian rule since 1866. Little is known of their early lives except that they must have attended school between the ages of seven and fourteen conforming to Denmark's compulsory education laws. All parents were mandated to send their children to school whether they lived in the cities, in towns, or on farms. Below is a review of the educational turmoil that existed in Denmark before and during this time period:

Despite the fact that education was in theory compulsory, the law had never been enforced, and ... there were not enough teachers to go round. There were no properly trained teachers. In view of this grim situation, and as one effect of the reformation which spread throughout the country with the Enlightenment, a school commission was
set up in 1789. Its report formed the basis of the School Law of 1814 which really did introduce a new era into Danish education. It provided for free schooling for all, though parents who wished either to teach their children at home or send them to private schools were entitled to do so. For failing to comply with the law, parents were liable to heavy fines, and in cases of non-compliance the law was to be enforced. The new schools were henceforth to be paid for out of taxation, not by the landowner on whose land they had been situated, as had hitherto been the case. In addition, provision was made for the training of proper teachers by the establishment of training colleges, though decades elapsed before the supply was sufficient to satisfy all needs. The nineteenth century benefited from the new School Law, but it was essentially a result of the eighteenth century's philanthropy.5

John and Maria may also have had some schooling at the unique folk high schools founded through the efforts of a Danish churchman and poet, Nicolai F. Grundtvig, who realized that young people in the farming districts needed more education. Adults over eighteen were admitted to give them an opportunity for a general education, including the study
of literature, history, and methods of solving social problems. Male students lived at the schools and took courses during the five months of winter when there was little work on the farms and the young women took courses for three months during the summer.6

Grundivig, who founded these schools started the educational trend toward individualism. He was determined to instill his idea of the importance of the individual and to give each person an opportunity to express himself. Grundivig's liberal Christian outlook was stated by him: "Man first: then Christian."7

In the early 1850s Schleswig was a Danish dependency and Holstein was a German dependency, but Denmark ruled both. The German inhabitants of Holstein wanted their area and that of Schleswig to be united within the German Confederation. Open revolt against Denmark broke out in 1848 in Holstein and Schleswig, but the rebels in Holstein were defeated and the war ended in 1850. Unhappily another war began over the same problems in 1864, but this time Prussia and Austria joined the rebel forces and conquered the Danes. Denmark was forced to give up this area to the Prussians.8

An interesting historical rendering of the aftermath of this second war in Denmark during 1864 recalled the events that encouraged emigration from Denmark to America in the middle 1860s, 1870s and beyond. Reference is made here to
this area called Schleswig-Holstein in South Jutland: Denmark could not hope to retain even a part of Schlesvig, and by the Peace of Vienna in October she had to cede all three duchies to the victors, who shared their administration until after the Austro-Prussian War of 1866, when they became part of Prussia. For this result which meant the reduction of the lands of the Danish Crown in Europe by some 40 percent, Danish policy must take a large part of the blame . . . The fact that the rebellion of 1848-1850 had been put down had led to over-confidence; the more sobering lessons which might have been learned from the previous crisis had been insufficiently absorbed. And an unwillingness to compromise at the conference table had meant the loss of what might otherwise have been saved. None of which makes the policy pursued by Bismark any the more moral, but Danish mistakes did enable him to give a certain moral colouring and to carry it through to a successful conclusion.9

The outcome of the Second Schleswig-Holstein War was a shattering experience for all Danes. The Jutlanders unhappy under German rule and worsening economic conditions emigrated from Denmark to America by the thousands.
According to one source, the following study by Hvidt lists the occupations of the Danish emigrants who came to the United States.

Table 1.— Hvidt's study of the occupation of Danish emigrants 1868-1900

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupations</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farmers</td>
<td>3,806</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural laborers</td>
<td>47,656</td>
<td>43.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shipping, fishing</td>
<td>1,699</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Craftsman</td>
<td>20,487</td>
<td>18.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic-Urban laborers</td>
<td>28,178</td>
<td>25.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commerce Professions</td>
<td>8,590</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Employed</td>
<td>110,412</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


This source stated that:

Hvidt's study demonstrated that 69 percent of all emigrants were unskilled workers: rural laborers, domestic workers, or urban laborers. The other major group was the craftsmen, the elite of the working class. Taking these groups together, it appeared that at least 87 percent of the emigrants were landless manual laborers.10

John Johnson and Maria Nielsen probably belonged to the
domestic-urban laborer group mentioned by Hvidt, and they and people like them made up 25.6 percent of the Danes who came to America. They had read letters and heard stories of the opportunities in the United States; wages were better and the hardworking ethic that they adhered to would surely render their labors successful. John had left his home in the Schleswig area and tried his luck in Sweden but the Swedish famine made for more unhappiness. Having saved enough money by June 1869 for his passage to the United States and money to last a few months in Chicago until he secured a job as a laborer, John emigrated from Denmark confident of making a better life for himself. Whether he had friends in Chicago is not clear. He booked passage aboard the steamship Guiding Star and sailed from Copenhagen, Denmark on 15 June 1869. Although he was almost nineteen at the time, the ship's registry lists his age as twenty. This added year might have insured a job for him. He arrived in New York on 29 June 1869.11

Coming directly to Chicago this young man was welcomed by the newly organized Danish club called Dania. This benevolent society realized the important needs of Danish immigrants. Dania was there to help its countrymen first find lodging and soon after employment. Dania not only acted as an employment agency, but also as an English night school and advisory council. Often swindlers were awaiting
the newly arrived "greenhorns," and this is where Dania stepped in to guide the Danes and to help them with the practical aspects of survival in American society.\textsuperscript{12}

Maria Nielsen came to the United States in 1870 from Denmark and settled in Chicago.\textsuperscript{13} She was only eighteen and must have been very lonely and quite apprehensive about her decision to leave her homeland in search of a new and fulfilling life. She most likely received the same caring attention from the Dania society that her future husband John was provided. It is almost as likely that she was employed as a domestic within a short time after her arrival in Chicago. She probably became a member of Dania's ladies' society formed in 1866 and its choral group started in 1870. Both groups encouraged socialization and offered some respite for their industrious, work-weary members.\textsuperscript{14}

The city in the 1870s saw a Danish colony of six thousand by the end of the decade. Chicago's school census of 1884 showed two-thirds of Chicago's Danes living in two wards along Milwaukee Avenue. Chicago's first Danish church, Trinity Lutheran at Indiana (Grand) and Peoria\textsuperscript{15} Avenues, was listed in the city directory for the first time in the year 1873. It is almost certain that Maria and John met in Chicago, somewhere in the Danish colony, and were married in 1882; shortly after in 1884, their daughter Cecilia was born. Two other children whose names are
unknown were born to the couple, but they died of unknown causes in early childhood.16

According to the 1900 census report John's occupation was listed as that of a cab driver. He and his wife owned a six flat building at 1519 N. Milwaukee Avenue. It was in this building near North Avenue and Robie Street (Damen Avenue) that William was born on 20 September 1895. His father was forty-five years old when he was born and his mother was forty-three years old. Maria was thirty years old when she married John and he was thirty two. During this time period it was customary to wed later. Couples would presumably have enough money saved to provide food and lodging for their families and would have seniority on the job. Job seniority was important for with it came the hope of secure employment in the future.18

William was a healthy baby and his parents as well as his eleven-year-old sister Cecilia were extremely protective of him. He was the last born child of the Johnson's and undoubtedly received much affection and attention from the entire family. Since he was born at home; his birth may have been recorded in the family Bible, but was never registered with the city of Chicago.

In 1900 when William was five years old the Milwaukee Avenue address where he was born housed a saloon and a delicacy shop. Next door was a Chinese laundry run by an
unmarried Chinese male named Wo Lee who was thirty years old. The foreign born residents on his block hailed from the countries of Austria, England, Germany, Denmark, Norway, Ireland, Russia and China. American born residents on the same 1500 block of Milwaukee Avenue were born in Illinois, New York, Ohio and Wisconsin. Most of the foreign born male heads of households were naturalized citizens while their foreign born wives were not citizens. This was true in the Johnson household, where John had become a citizen while Maria had not. This phenomenon might have had something to do with the head of the household obtaining employment. Most of the married women during these years did not work outside the home. Some of the occupations of the Johnson's neighbors were; bookbinder, photographer, janitor, cabinet maker, canner, electrotypier, saloonkeeper, teamster, servant, delicacy storekeeper and laundryman. Danish immigrants like William's parents were more readily welcomed and accepted in Chicago than other immigrant groups because they were seen to be contributors to Chicago's growth. They not only contributed manpower but also technical experience which Chicago needed. Their customs were inconspicuous, their Protestant religion was familiar to Americans, and they harbored no dangerous political views. Danish and American heritages were considered so similar that the Danes were seen as people who reinforced American virtues. The
Chicago Record Herald referring to the Danes reported that:

They are distinguished for the earnestness of their religious worship, for their ardent advocacy of the cause of civil and religious liberty, and for the well-nigh total absence of great crimes. Wherever they settle we find them associated with the most loyal and law-abiding citizens, giving their best energies to culture, law, and order. . . . a high grade of immigrants might be looked for from that country.22

Among Danes the dominant factors that influenced their migration out of the Humboldt Park area included economic advancement as well as the importance of Americanization. One source describes how they felt:

Northwest Side Danes would look upon the years after 1900 as the golden age for their Chicago colony. North Avenue between Western and California became known as "the Danish Broadway." . . . stretched along North Avenue east to Robey (now Damen) and west to Fortieth (now Pulaski), in a band six to eight blocks wide. But by 1920, the last Danish neighborhood on the Northwest Side was dispersing. As Polish and Jewish communities . . . spread out, the Danes continued to move northward and westward. . . . they dispersed
throughout Cook County, and no colony formed to replace the one in Humboldt Park.23

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL YEARS

In 1901 at the age of six William was enrolled at the Langland Elementary School at 2230 W. Cortland which was approximately three blocks from his home. He remained at the same school for his entire elementary education. The school was built in 1884 and closed in July 1949. This twelve room building was named after Knud Langland, a Norwegian born in 1813 who had learned German from studying the Bible. He became a public school teacher who immigrated to America in 1843 making his home in Yorkville Prairie, Wisconsin where he edited several Norwegian papers. He edited *Skandinaven*, which had been started by John Anderson and Iver Lawson. Langland strongly supported the Republican party and common schools. He moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin, from Chicago in the 1880s and died in 1888.24

Little is known of Johnson's early school days other than that he enjoyed music and he loved to play the harmonica and banjo. Since Cecilia had graduated from Langland and was now attending Tuley High School, she was unable to walk to school with her little brother. Maria walked with her small son to school each day, and arrived at the end of the school day to take him home again. William
often went to Wicker Park with his mother who encouraged him to play and have fun with other children.

He developed a love for reading and often brought home armloads of books from the Humboldt Park Library. His sister took him to the library often and shared his love for reading. His parents nurtured in him the importance of education in gaining prominence and a respected place in the Danish community. They also instilled in him a love for music which he maintained throughout his life. He learned to play several other instruments including the violin, clarinet, and guitar. Johnson loved school and particularly enjoyed the subjects of mathematics, history and science.\(^{25}\)

William often described the neighborhood he lived in as a tough area. Parents or older children tried to be available to escort younger children to schools, parks, churches playgrounds, libraries, stores, movie houses, and other places because youngsters were sometimes harassed by neighborhood "toughs" who often bullied them. Although he described his parents as poor, William's family owned income property.\(^{26}\)

**HIGH SCHOOL YEARS**

After graduating from Langland school in June 1909, William entered Tuley High School in September of the same year. The high school located near Western Avenue and
Hirsch Street was within walking distance of his home. His parents lived in the same home throughout his elementary and high school days; therefore, he wasn't subject to abrupt school changes and was able to attend the same high school until he graduated. The subjects he took during those four years at Tuley included: English (four years) which stressed English literature; German (two years) which was comprised of grammar and composition; science (three years) which consisted of physiography, physiology, zoology and physics; mathematics (four years) which included algebra, plane geometry, college algebra and solid geometry; Latin (two years) which consisted of grammar, reading, Caesar, composition, and finally history (two years) which encompassed English history and American history.

Johnson prided himself on his academic prowess. He never neglected his love of music and enjoyed playing in the school band. Bill was not very active in contact sports. He was a thin, blonde youngster, approximately five feet eight inches tall and not considered athletic.

While at Tuley he met and dated a beautiful young lady named Lillian Mattocks, whom he eventually married in 1919. She shared his interests in music and especially his dream for a higher education. Her parents had always encouraged her to continue her schooling. They expected her to go on to college and become a teacher. Her older sister was
already a teacher in the Chicago school system and would later become an elementary school principal. Following in her older sister's footsteps, Lillian graduated from Northern Illinois Normal College, at DeKalb, where she studied to become a teacher. She began teaching at the Lafayette School in Chicago in 1922 and left that school in October 1927 after accepting the position of assistant principal at the Gale school.29

William's parents had almost the same educational aims for him as Lillian's parents had for her. His parents were willing to make sacrifices to help him attain his educational goals. It was possible that this was the reason the six-flat they owned had been sold some time after he went to college. The family then moved to the 3700 block of Sheffield Avenue. William was ambitious and found a job during his high school days, partly due to his parents' encouragement as well as his own desire to make extra money. This money was put away for college. Due to his musical talent he was able to secure a job playing with a neighborhood band.30

The subjects that William excelled in during his high school years included science, mathematics, English and foreign languages. He mastered German quite easily since he had heard the language spoken by many people during his childhood. It is probable that his parents also spoke this
language because they were familiar with it from their childhood. William graduated from Tuley and no doubt looked forward to college life on a small campus away from Chicago.

UNDERGRADUATE COLLEGE YEARS

Upon graduating from Tuley High School in June 1913 Johnson registered at Beloit College in Wisconsin. The college, located on the border of Illinois and Wisconsin, was only ninety miles from Chicago and easily accessible by train. Founded in 1846 the college was known as the "Yale of the West" in its early years. This selective liberal arts institution had a learning climate of tolerance, independence and individual growth. It provided a beautiful residential campus modeled after the New England colleges. Beloit was well-known in educational circles for excellence in teaching.31

William was a student there for two years from 1913 to 1915 before he decided to transfer to Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. While at Beloit he devoted most of his time to academics and did not participate in the social life of the college. According to his academic file there, he was listed as a chemistry and mathematics major.32

During his freshman year at Beloit he took the following courses: Bible study (two hours): chemistry (six hours): English literature (six hours): German (eight hours):
mathematics (six hours): and rhetoric (four hours). At the end of his sophomore year he completed these courses: chemistry (six hours): economics and sociology (six hours): French (six hours): German (six hours): Latin (six hours): and mathematics (six hours). Northwestern accepted fifty-eight hours of credit and allowed him to enter on 21 September 1915. Before he was accepted he attended summer school at Northwestern in 1915 and took six credit hours.33

The reasons William transferred to Northwestern are not known, but it is believed that he wanted to be closer to his aging parents. He may also have believed that Beloit College did not meet his expectations. It might also have had something to do with his sister's departure from Chicago. Cecilia, a Baptist missionary, had left the United States and was on her way to Burma where she was to devote her life to converting and educating the people there. She was to remain in Rangoon for the major part of her life, expending her energies in her missionary work. She never married and died in California in 1980 at the age of ninety-six.34

While at Northwestern William was more interested in completing the degree requirements for his baccalaureate degree than he was in participating in the social life of the university. He probably commuted to the university from his parents home each day via the elevated train, and re-
turned home each afternoon or evening. His goal was to finish his coursework as soon as possible and immediately thereafter, complete his master's degree without interruption. His lifestyle was not the customary one at the university.

Northwestern at this time had a very collegiate appearance. In 1917 Northwestern University centered around an undergraduate liberal arts orientation, and primarily drew 50 percent of its students from Cook County and an overall 70 percent from Illinois. There was still a strong association with the Methodist Church up to 1920 which gave the university a conservative moral tone. Around 1920 a catalog advertised strong academics and strong moral character building. In sharp contrast the University of Chicago was mainly an institution committed to secular, intellectual education. Northwestern, with its English orientation and large residential fraternities epitomized the ideal collegiate atmosphere primarily for the full time upper-middle class undergraduate student.

The courses Johnson completed for his Bachelor of Science degree included courses in English, mathematics, economics, French, German, Greek literature, chemistry, physics, Bible study, and education. He graduated in June 1917.
GRADUATE SCHOOL AND A TEACHING CAREER

Johnson was admitted to Northwestern’s Graduate School in February 1917 a few months before graduation from the undergraduate college in June 1917. He eventually completed his M.A. degree on 12 June 1918. He was a part-time student who had to work to pay his way through the university. He took these courses, as shown below, in preparation for his master’s degree in education:

Table 2.-- Northwestern Graduate School Courses 1911-1922

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<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Historical English Grammar</td>
<td>D2</td>
<td>Research</td>
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<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Chaucer</td>
<td>C4</td>
<td>Social Phases of Ed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5</td>
<td>School Administration</td>
<td>C7</td>
<td>Experimental Ed.</td>
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</tbody>
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Source: Northwestern University Bulletin, the Graduate School Announcement of Courses 1911-1922, Vol.11, Number 24, 11 March 1911.

The title of Johnson’s master’s thesis was: "Report on the Physical Condition of the Schools of Evanston, District 75 of the City of Evanston." No copy of his thesis was found at the university because during those years many of these documents were not placed in the library. Before 1920 there were only seventeen Ph.D’s at Northwestern University.
In 1918 the university's master's degree programs graduated approximately twenty-five students.39

The work in which Johnson engaged while pursuing his master's degree was that of a teacher. He applied for his first teaching position at Palatine High School in a town by the same name near Chicago. His application was accepted and he became the assistant high school principal at a salary of one-thousand dollars per year. The voters of Palatine township had recently approved the formation of a township high school district in 1914. The high school had been in existence for only a few years when Johnson arrived. The town was incorporated in 1866 and soon became a thriving commercial village by the 1880s. When Johnson was employed there the town had approximately fifteen hundred inhabitants. About two-thirds of the population consisted of German immigrants; the other one-third was made up of New Englanders whose Yankee grandparents had come from the eastern states. The Germans farmed the land and kept pretty much to themselves. They sent their children to the two Lutheran church affiliated schools in town and seldom sent them to the public schools. Only a few German students came to the public high school from these Lutheran schools.41

The weekly newspaper, the Palatine Enterprise, described the opening of the public schools in September 1917 with a corps of nine teachers. The elementary school
employed six teachers and the high school hired three teachers including the principal Allen B. Morris, the assistant principal William H. Johnson and Miss Jane Dicker. The principal taught Latin, math and bookkeeping. Johnson taught chemistry, physics, and coached the girls baseball and basketball teams. Miss Jane Dicker taught English. Johnson was working on his master's degree at the time and attended evening and Saturday classes at Northwestern. He commuted each day from Chicago to Palatine by train arriving at 8:00 A.M. and returning to Chicago each afternoon.

In 1917 the high school occupied the third floor of the public elementary school with forty-three pupils in attendance, and three teachers. Johnson seemed to have good rapport with the students. The older boys called him "Snappy Johnson" because he often told them to "snap to it." Most of the students seemed to enjoy chemistry and thought he was a good teacher. After completing their chemistry experiments, they were allowed to read silently or do whatever they wished within reason. Once he allowed the girls to make fudge after they finished their experiments successfully.

One day soon after his arrival one of the boys spied Johnson's derby placed on a chair near his desk. That derby with his initials embroidered in gold inside the brim, had tempted one student. The boy deliberately sat on his hat.
and ruined it. Johnson was really very upset. He was always meticulously dressed in a suit, white shirt and tie. His derby appeared to be one of his prized possessions. The girls expressed their sympathy about the pranks the boys played and felt sorry about this particular incident for he had to buy a new hat. From that time forward he locked his hat in a closet.

"There are 43 pupils enrolled in the high school this year, an increase of four over last year and an increase of eight over the year before," related the Palatine Enterprise newspaper:

Some of the pupils of the rural districts, who were expected to attend have not enrolled as yet. . . . There are only 10 boys in the high school. Four of these can not play football, but the boys of the grades are interested so there is sure going to be a team. The girls are making plans for their baseball schedule. . . . There are enough going to try to make a place on the team to make up two teams.

Johnson didn't seem to enjoy the job of coaching the girls baseball and basketball teams. When the weather was warm the class, along with the coach, hiked about a quarter of a mile to a grove in the forest preserves and practiced baseball.
When the baseball season was over the same girls played basketball indoors. Since the school had no gymnasium practice was held in Stroker's Hall in town. During the cold weather they had to employ someone to start a fire in the old pot belly stove at one end of the hall. Unfortunately it took a long time to heat the hall because the stove heat was inadequate. Johnson seemed bored most of the time; he wasn't athletic and his coaching consisted of standing on the sidelines watching the girls shoot baskets. When practice was over he often let them dance in the hall. He didn't realize dancing was forbidden by the school because most of the students were Methodists. This denomination frowned upon dancing. The girls never told him it was forbidden because he never asked. They had some good times after basketball practice.48

Most of the girls liked him because he was young, blonde and good looking. He seemed in general though to be cool and aloof most of the time in class. His lessons were very formal, but he did seem to enjoy teaching chemistry and physics. The students liked him because he attempted to get along with them. In class he constantly talked to the students about Northwestern University and the fact that he had received his teacher training at this university. He made it quite clear that he felt that he was a cut above most teachers who attended a normal school for their
training. This prompted the boys again to give him another nickname; they called him "U Johnson" because of this constant reference to the university. Yet, for most students he was a difficult man to get to know. Johnson was appreciated, however, for his musical ability.49

He was an accomplished violinist and Merci Heise who accompanied him on the piano, considered it an honor to perform with him at assemblies. These were held in the Methodist church in town. To many people who knew him in Palatine William's personality was nondescript; he was regarded as being almost devoid of personality and was considered a rather boring fellow by his students. He was not a forceful person. Thus, they were indeed surprised when it would be announced almost twenty years later, that he had been selected the superintendent of the Chicago schools. He completely isolated himself from the community in Palatine and never involved himself in any of the activities in the town. According to one colleague, he wasn't part of the community because that's the way he wanted it.50

Johnson had asked to be released from his position possibly in November or December of 1917. In January 1918 the Palatine Enterprise ran this article in the weekly newspaper:

Miss Mercill, of Chicago, was installed as teacher
of chemistry, physics etc. at the Palatine High School Monday, in place of Mr. Johnson, who was released by the Board of Education to accept a position with the Kankakee High School. Miss Mercill comes very highly recommended and will ably fill the position. Palatine is very fortunate in being able to secure at this time of the year a teacher of her ability.  

The reasons for his departure are unknown. Perhaps Johnson disliked the indignity of a teacher having to trek to the small often poorly heated hall in town a few times a week during the cold weather to watch the girls practice basketball. He may also have decided the small high school was not the place where he wanted to be when other positions were available. After all, only six students graduated from Palatine in June of 1918. Strangely enough the high school basketball team that he had coached had won three out of a possible four games and was to meet the strong DesPlaines team in Stroker's Hall the week he left for Kankakee. The presence of the town was requested to help the team win.  

Johnson's next teaching assignment was at Kankakee High School as a chemistry instructor. While he was at this high school, he was also a part-time student at Northwestern. William received his master's degree from Northwestern University in June 1918 and was eligible to be drafted into
the army or navy. He enlisted immediately after his graduation and served his country as a research chemist in the Chemical Warfare Service, American University Research Division, Washington D.C., as well as with the Army Board of Psychology determining the mental status of men. He served in these capacities from June 1918 to December 1918. At the end of World War I, William was discharged from the service on 10 December 1918.54

He married Lillian Mattocks shortly after his release in 1919. With his impending marriage there was a need to seek employment as soon as possible. Therefore, William applied for and received a position with Rockford College in Illinois.

TEACHING ON THE COLLEGE LEVEL

He became a chemistry instructor at Rockford College during the 1918-1919 school year. There was one other chemistry instructor, but the entire faculty at that time only numbered thirty-one. He taught at the college for approximately one-half year. His wife Lillian was not listed on that faculty, but she might have taught in the public schools in Rockford that year.55 His stay at the college was just as brief as his other teaching assignments. Again, the reasons for his departure are not known. Perhaps a drop in enrollment eliminated the need for a second
chemistry teacher.

Shortly after he left Rockford College he took a position as a chemistry teacher at Fort Scott Community College in Fort Scott, Kansas. Johnson taught here for about two years during the 1919-1920 school year as well as the 1920-1921 school year. Reese Hughes, the principal of this small college, was a young man that may have shared some of Johnson's educational aims. William stayed there longer than he had at any other such school. Again, there is no record in Fort Scott's public school office that would indicate that his wife Lillian taught in the public school system. It is quite possible that she was able to obtain employment in a private or parochial school during this time.56

Johnson's picture was shown in the school's 1920 yearbook, *The Crimson*. The dedication page echoed a grim reminder of the human sacrifice of World War I:

This, the year book of the Class of 1920, is dedicated to the boys of the Fort Scott High School, who answered their Country's call and made the supreme sacrifice. They did their duty; do not count them dead; Rather count them living with us yet; Their spirit urging us to higher things. Such youth, such nobleness can never die, But live eternal. We shall not forget.57
William and Lillian stayed in Kansas until 1921. Again it is not known why they decided to return to Chicago. Possibly Lillian missed her family very much and the long trips back and forth to Chicago to visit their families were not appreciated by either of them. It is also probable that Johnson again believed he could better his teaching situation, while at the same time satisfying his wife's desire to return to Chicago.


11. Barekman and Barekman, Passenger List of the Steamship Guiding Star sailing from Copenhagen, Denmark to New York, 29 June 1869, Chicago, National Archives, Microfilm Box 237-313, 15-29 June 1869.


15. Ibid.


19. Ibid.


22. Ibid.


26. Ibid.


28. Ibid.


33. William H. Johnson file, Northwestern University Archives.
34. Patricia Watson interview, 26 June 1987.


36. William H. Johnson file, Northwestern University Archives.

37. Ibid.


42. Article by editor, "School Opens Sept.3," The Palatine Enterprise, a newspaper published by Paddock Publications, 31 August 1917; Merci Hiese interview 13 October 1987; Mildred Sanborn, (Johnson's former student at Palatine High School in 1917) Interview by author, telephone conversation, Palatine, Illinois, 13 October 1987.


44. Ibid.

45. Ibid.

46. Article by editor, "Enrollment Increases Palatine Schools Show Large Increase in Attendance-Greater than Expected, "The Palatine Enterprise, 13 September 1917, 1.


49. Ibid.

51. Palatine Enterprise, 4 January 1918, 2.

52. Ibid.


54. William H. Johnson folder, Northwestern University Archives.


56. Mary Beveridge, Assistant Director of Fort Scott Community College Library, Fort Scott, Kansas, Letter to author, 19 October 1987.

CHAPTER II
JOHNSON'S ROLE WITHIN THE CHICAGO SCHOOL SYSTEM PRIOR TO HIS SUPERINTENDENCY

Bill Johnson harbored within him a tenacious desire to improve his position in the Chicago schools. He was going as far up the ladder as possible. After Johnson left Fort Scott, Kansas in the summer of 1921, he returned to Chicago where he was able to gain employment. In September 1921, the Chicago public schools hired him to teach math at Lane Technical High School. The city had changed a great deal since he had left in 1918.

RETURNING TO A TRANSFORMED CHICAGO

Chicago must have been a precipitous change politically and socially for Johnson. He left behind the relatively tranquil setting of a small college town and was abruptly reintroduced to Chicago in the "Roaring Twenties." The early 1920s displayed the "jazzy Chicago" image; that image faded when tragedy struck in 1929. In Chicago Mayor Bill Thompson declared the city a "wide-open town," which meant a kind of laissez-faire municipal government as far as the underworld was concerned.

Chicago was know as the most heterogeneous if not the most egalitarian of large cities. Even the recession of

33
1921, caused by overextension on the heels of the war, was a temporary setback. By 1924 the city's thirty thousand factories had a combined output of $7 billion worth of goods and services. Incomes were some 500 percent higher in the mid-1920s than they were in 1900.²

Chicago's population was booming and this drastic increase caused a tremendous housing shortage that initiated a vast building construction era. A 1924 population survey by the telephone company found that there were 110,000 blacks, 805,000 foreign-born whites, and 1,035,000 native whites born of foreign parents. Only 800,000 white Chicagoans were second generation natives. In seventeen of the thirty-five wards the foreign born outnumbered the second generation natives, and in one ward (the twentieth) there were more foreign born than first and second generation natives combined. But the free flowing hydrant of immigration would soon slow to a trickle. American labor unions were angry about the jobs taken by the new arrivals, and conservatives were very concerned about the entry of communists and fanatics. "America for the Americans" was the standard.³

The Emergency Quota Act of 1921 and the Johnson Immigration Act of 1924 were primarily designed as anti-immigration measures. The quota law of 1921 limited the number of immigrants for the first time. It was aimed at
Central and Eastern European countries that had been sending untrained and underprivileged emigrants. Each country was limited to only 3 percent of the number of persons of that nationality living in America in 1910. The Immigration Act of 1924 changed the 1921 quota to 2 percent and made 1890 the base year. This reduced the total to about 150,000 immigrants a year. The national-origins law went into effect in 1929. The law set a limit of 150,000 immigrants per year. Between June, 1921 and June, 1922, the number of immigrants to the United States decreased to about 309,000 from 805,000. This tremendous influx of immigrants prior to 1922, many of whom were small children, impacted heavily upon the school systems both public and parochial. There was an overwhelming need for new school buildings.4

Along with the problems of overcrowding in the schools and the need for better housing for the newly arrived immigrants, was another frightening problem. Crime was rampant in Chicago. The year before, (1920) "Big Jim" Colosimo, head of bootlegging and vice in Chicago, was murdered and the crime syndicate in the city was moving ahead under the direction of Johnny Torio. In February 1921 the city council passed a resolution asking the state and federal officials to take steps to start working on a beer and wine amendment to temper the Volstead Act.6

Another social problem was also causing Chicago some
distress. Racial hatred reared its ugly head as the first branch of the Ku Klux Klan was established in Chicago. In September 1921 former Mayor Dunne and attorney Clarence Darrow headed a national unity council to seek legislation to crush the klan. During the same month the city council adopted a resolution to get rid of the Ku Klux Klan in Chicago.7

During this time Chicago's teachers' groups applied the pressure and by 1922 received salary increases. Elementary teachers now received a beginning salary of $1,500 per year with automatic increases to $2,500 as compared to a beginning salary of $800 and a maximum of $1,500 in 1918. In 1917 and 1918, while Johnson was teaching in the small towns outside the city, his annual salary was at least two hundred dollars more than his counterparts in Chicago in 1918.8

Johnson's wife, Lillian, was employed in 1922 by the Chicago public schools, as an elementary school teacher at the Lafayette School in the Humboldt Park area. Since she had married William in 1919 she had been away from Chicago. Now they were both home in the city they loved. William was very devoted to his mother and was happy to be able to see her more often and provide for her needs. Although the Johnsons belonged to several churches prior to 1930, it wasn't until then that they became members of Buena Park
Memorial Presbyterian Church at 4301 N. Sheridan Road near Broadway Street. Johnson and his family remained members until 1947. In fact, he wasn't an active member of the church and attended services infrequently. It was probably at his wife Lillian's urging that they became members. He wasn't active with any social or political group in his community. Johnson wasn't a community oriented person. Education was his main orientation.

While teaching at Lane in 1921 Johnson enrolled as a doctoral student at the University of Chicago and completed his Ph.D. two years later at the age of twenty-seven. The title of his dissertation was; "Mental Growth Curve of Secondary School Students." His teaching career up to this point involved secondary, college, and junior college level students. Part of his short time in the U.S. Army was devoted to intelligence testing which increased his interest in this area. Until 1924 Bill Johnson served as the director of vocational guidance at Lane. William J. Bogan was the principal of Lane at the time. The relationship between Johnson and his principal was not particularly warm. In Bogan's opinion he believed Johnson to be an opportunist without much concern for the children he taught.

Johnson was preoccupied with working toward his goal of extending his teaching experiences to the college level. Thus he applied in 1923 for a position as a teacher of
education courses at Chicago Normal College, on the south side of the city. He had received his doctorate in educational administration the same year and seemed eager to begin teaching college students.

THE CHICAGO NORMAL COLLEGE EXPERIENCE 1924-1925

Johnson continued to teach at Lane Tech until he secured a position in 1924, as a professor of education, at Chicago Normal College, later renamed Chicago Teachers College, and known today as Chicago State University. Dr. William Bishop Owen was the president of the College when Johnson was there. He was nearing the end of his term in office. Dr. Owen was a conservative; unlike Francis Parker he believed the school should turn out the type of teacher that the Board of Education wanted. The school took on the characteristics of a "woman's seminary" where such wild and scandalous dances as the Tango and the Charleston were forbidden, and students were reprimanded for talking in the lunchroom.14

Enrollment at the college in 1924 approximated sixteen hundred students. By 1926 the normal school encompassed the Chicago Normal College, Parker High School, Parker Junior High School, and Parker Elementary School. The faculty had grown to eighty-eight members, most of whom had been teachers in Chicago schools. Johnson and ten other members
of the teaching staff held doctoral degrees; fourteen had M.A. degrees; three, M.S. degrees; and the remaining members had a either a variety of bachelor degrees or the educational experience and a wide range of professional or industrial backgrounds needed for teaching. Most of them at one time or another in their careers, had been teachers in the Chicago public schools and like Johnson used their positions on the normal faculty as stepping stones to the principalship in the city schools. In March 1925 at age twenty-nine Johnson and several other members of the faculty left normal after they had successfully passed the principal's examination and received their first assignments.

Almost a year after Johnson left Normal, in February of 1926, the college inaugurated a three-year program which increased the preparation for teaching of the elementary grades. The three year course required English, geography, sociology, chemistry, and either botany or zoology. Increased emphasis was on traditional subjects within the academic curriculum. Students were required to register for music, art, oral expression, and physical education. The program did offer a solid academic core.

During the twenties Chicago Normal College had a variety of extracurricular activities. Due to the preponderance of women the athletic program was more
extensive for the girls than the boys. Throughout the year the college's athletic association sponsored field hockey, indoor baseball, volleyball, captain basketball, swimming, golf, hockey, horseback riding, ice skating, roller skating, rifle shooting, and hiking. Male students (of which there were only a hundred in 1926) played on the baseball or basketball teams. Student activities included the Dramatic Club, Glee Club, Orchestra, and the Debating Club.18

During the time Johnson taught at the Chicago Normal College from 1924 to 1925 it was still assumed that the purpose of education was:

to produce teachers reflective of the solid middle-class virtues of a prosperous, Protestant, racially untroubled America. If these were years of middle-class tranquility in the land, then neither the College nor any other segment of society saw it as its mission to disturb that calm. The American Dream was still unquestioned, and if the almost totally Anglo-Saxon names of the Wentworth-Parker-Tompkins-Young era were diluted in the twenties by the increasing number of those like Hayes and O'Brien and a growing handful like Levin, Krakowski, and DeMeglio, the school still viewed its purpose as the training of the genteel middle class for a professional calling, and the
elevation of the newly emerging lower class to a suitable social status." 19

Examining the college's class schedules for the years 1924 to 1925, we find that Dr. Johnson taught a course in American educational history dealing with the larger problems of education in the light of their historical development. The text used was Cubberley's *Public Education in the United States*. One of the students who had taken this class with Johnson recalled that he was an excellent teacher and made the course worthwhile and interesting for her. He took time to answer students' questions completely and even injected humor into many situations. He also taught a mathematics course entitled, "The Teaching of Arithmetic in the Lower Grades." 20

During subsequent semesters he taught "The Teaching of Arithmetic in Grades 7 and 8," and the "Methods in Teaching Algebra." He was also scheduled to teach a course called "Practical Trigonometry" for teachers who had never studied trigonometry. Johnson no doubt enjoyed teaching the course entitled "Visual Education" with Mr. McLeod which included: (1) demonstrations and class practice in the use of the various devices of visual education, such as projection lantern, stereoscope, and the moving picture machine; (2) the application of visual education to specific subjects such as geography, history, and English; (3) consideration
of the educational principles which were involved in visual education; and (4) a critical review of the more recent educational experiments. The course was to be of practical interest to teachers, supervisors, and principals who were considering the use of visual materials for instructional purposes. This course contributed to Johnson's writing of his first book which focused on visual education in 1927, and was titled *Fundamentals of Visual Instruction*. He hoped it would be helpful to teachers.

He also taught a course listed as "Supervised Study," which assisted teachers with the techniques of teaching study habits. These habits were to be of value to the student in securing ideas from the printed page; habits of value in recitation were discussed in the course. The teaching of a number of study habits was treated in detail which illustrated the technique involved; they were of special interest to teachers in the high school and grammar grades. Lectures and discussions were included.

While at the Chicago Normal College he was the managing editor of the *Chicago Schools Journal* for a period of four months from November 1924 through February 1925. It is likely that he spent parts of his afternoons securing articles for the journal and getting it ready for publication. Many of the courses that Johnson taught as well as his experiences at Lane were the subjects of articles he
submitted to the Chicago Schools Journal. He began writing the articles in 1924 and continued this practice until he retired in 1953. Although he wrote very little after 1946.

In an article written by Johnson on the subject of supervised study entitled "Supervised Study in the High School and the Seventh and Eighth Grades," he discussed the changing of study habits to include such procedures as shortening lessons to improve concentration, changing techniques slowly, and pointing out to pupils that new habits take time to produce efficiency. He specifically stressed the study habits that met with success and that varied with the nature of the subject. In the field of history he advocated habits of restraint in forming moral judgments, forming accurate chronological judgments, suspending judgment until all possible facts were at hand, critically evaluating the data and evidence, and using generalization and application carefully. In mathematics he mentioned habits of: (1) making a mental summary of what is given in a problem and what is to be found; (2) deciding before making the computation what will be done with the partial answer when you get it; and (3) deciding whether the answer (when found) seemed reasonable before going through the actual proof. Finally, in science he believed the following habits were essential: demanding objective as
opposed to subjective data; securing verifiable data and records; demanding impartial data; and citing expert opinion when objective data couldn't be secured. He concluded that:

At the present time teachers are putting the greatest emphasis on the weakness which the pupils display in the subject-matter. Little attention is given to the probable causes of these weaknesses. In some schools it has been assumed that by compelling the pupils to study under the supervision of the teacher these deficiencies would be corrected. But merely providing a new environment does not imply greater achievement. It is the method of study that must be conscientiously developed and directed or redirected. The development of good mental habits is as important ... in the education of the individual pupil as the mastery of certain subject-matter. Ability to do is more important than information.24

In another article Johnson discussed a series of experiments with Lane high school math students using experimental and control groups. His purpose was to compare the efficiency of the ordinary question-answer type of recitation method and a second method he called the socialized-project-study method. The latter method was an
informal one consisting of a discussion of the next topic to be studied along with habits of study which appeared worthwhile. No student was allowed to dominate the classwork. The teacher acted as a referee urging the weaker students to take part in the oral discussions and restraining the ambitious talkers. In examining the results of tests given to these groups of students, Johnson found that the second method was helpful to students in that it was more effective in improving conduct, reducing cheating, developing interest in new modes of expression, and producing a better grasp of the subject in mathematics.25

As a result of his experiences as the director of vocational guidance at Lane, Johnson explained his philosophy of vocational education in an important article entitled, "A Suggested Program of Vocational Guidance." He stated that vocational guidance must be broad enough to include educational guidance. He believed vocational guidance had a place in the elementary school curriculum. The purpose was to inform the pupils of the industrial opportunities which were open to them regarding wages, educational and physical requirements, advancement, processes, etc. The need of further training in the school subjects was to be stressed. He felt this would increase the pupils' desire to remain in school. Vocational guidance was to be adapted to the needs of the community
and the potential capabilities of the students.  

Johnson stressed that this guidance should be offered in the early grades so that many retardates could be steered clear of blind-alley jobs. There was obviously, in his thinking, a gap between employer and student, school and industry, which could be bridged only through an intermediary agency. Vocational guidance in the high school should serve as the intermediary agency. His recommendations included a central office or bureau of vocational guidance whose functions should include the following:

(a) The bureau should make a first hand study of the various industries in the community and disseminate this information throughout the high schools and elementary schools in the system. (b) The bureau should serve as a center for the placing of children in suitable vocations. A system of following up the children so placed in industry should also be included. (c) Guidance directors in the various schools should consult the bureau concerning vocational openings for students in their schools. Positions which come to the attention of the directors and which they are unable to fill from their own student bodies should be referred to the bureau. Co-operation is essential in this matter of placement. (d) The
bureau should also stimulate the directors of vocational guidance in the various schools through meetings of an inspirational and informational type. Such meetings will furnish an opportunity for the exchange of opinions and experiences, and for the formulation of definite policies.28

In this same article he pointed out the importance of the director's knowledge of the general entrance requirements of the larger colleges and universities. This was done so that the correct courses would be taken by the students near the beginning of their high school careers. He advocated parent conferences and individual and small group conferences with the students. In conclusion, he honestly believed that his program would help eliminate a tremendous waste in instructional effort by including in the curriculum a thorough program of educational and vocational guidance. Johnson indicated that the junior high school was especially adapted to include such a program. His program was to help reduce (1) the loss of time involved in changing courses; (2) the large number of failures; and (3) the large number of dropouts.29

It seemed Johnson wanted to extend the services of the Bureau of Vocational Guidance which was established in 1916. At that time the bureau directed a group of vocational advisers and sixteen visiting teachers and worked to keep
some children in school. The child labor law of the state had raised the school leaving age to sixteen years unless sixth grade had been completed.30

It was also during his tenure at the Chicago Normal College in 1924 that Johnson started teaching educational administration courses several evenings a week on a part-time basis at Loyola University of Chicago. He met Father Austin Schmidt S.J. who had recently completed his fifteen year course with the Jesuits. When Schmidt arrived at Loyola in 1924 from the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor he took a liking to Bill Johnson. They developed a friendship that spanned many years. Fr. Schmidt became Dean of Loyola's Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and proved to be a gifted scholar with incredible energy. Not only was he a professional educator but he also had another full time career as the editor of the Loyola University Press. This press turned out over a million textbooks annually to be used in parochial schools throughout the United States, Canada, the Philippines, Australia and other parts of the world. Thus, it might have been from Fr. Schmidt that Johnson generated the idea of writing, then marketing his books outside the Chicago school system.31

Johnson continued his teaching activities on a part-time basis. His next full-time position was to focus on public school administration. He was successful in
obtaining a principalship of a Chicago elementary school in 1925.

THE PRINCIPALSHIP 1925-1935

Johnson's first principalship must have been a fulfilling experience for him. He enjoyed working with the teachers and children of the Daniel Webster Grammar School located on Chicago's southside at 3315 S. Wentworth Avenue. The school was erected in the shadow of Comiskey Park at the corner of Wentworth and Thirty-Third Streets in 1883. It was named after Daniel Webster who was Secretary of State under President Harrison (who was president for one month) and served in the same capacity under President Fillmore in 1850. James Brayton, the first principal of the school from 1884-1886, received a fixed salary of $1900 annually. Johnson's maximum salary was not more than $5,700.32

Johnson continued as the principal of Webster until he was offered the principalship of a new school that was being built. The new school to be erected was named Volta in 1927. William left the Daniel Webster Grammar School in January 1928 to assume the principalship of the Alessandro Volta Grammar School which was to be built at 4950 N. Avers. On 14 January 1930 an appropriation was set aside for this school totaling $665,911. The school was officially opened in January of 1931. Coincidently, it was in October 1927
that Lillian Johnson became the assistant principal of the Gale School, where she remained until she was granted a leave of absence because of illness in February 1936.34

Volta school was named after Count Alessandro Volta, who was born in Como, Italy in 1745. He showed a marked taste for literature and for physics. He experimented with frictional electricity and became a professor of physics in the Royal School at Como in 1774. Volta applied himself to chemistry and physics at Pavia and developed the voltaic cell. Napoleon made him a count and a senator in 1801.35 He died in 1827. It seemed appropriate that Johnson was assigned as the new principal of Volta. He had held a special interest in physics since his high schools days and taught physics in the high school setting.

From January 1928 to January 1931, before the Volta School was completed, the temporary school consisted of eighteen "wooden portables" as they were called then. Classes were held in these makeshift buildings. Johnson's office was in one that also served as a book room. He was able to obtain the books necessary for the classrooms and used his office as a storeroom for new or auxiliary books and supplies. According to a teacher who taught at Volta during this time, he appreciated the excellent work the teachers did under adverse conditions. However, he was never effusive in his praise.
At lunchtime the teachers and Johnson would eat their lunches in his office-portable. He encouraged camaraderie among the teachers and discouraged teachers from eating alone. He believed it was a good time to talk to each other, joke around a bit and relax. This time together also helped the teachers' morale. Johnson had a good sense of humor and the teachers at Volta generally found him to be pleasant. His door was open for parents and teachers who wished to speak with him about their children as well as classroom problems.36

Johnson displayed his ability as a strong instructional leader on many occasions. He was specific about how he wanted lessons taught and often went into teachers' classrooms when he felt they were having problems. He demonstrated methods he believed to be effective for the teaching of a reading, math, history, geography, or a science lesson. A majority of the teachers respected his expertise and didn't seem to resent his intervention. He was a37 humane administrator. He often attended the wakes of his staff's family members. When tragedy struck Johnson on 7 June 1928, he was deeply touched by the outpouring of sympathy from his faculty at the time of his mother's death. His mother Maria died in her home on East Forty-Sixth Street. She had been suffering from bronchitis and pleurisy and then succumbed to a heart attack. The faculty's38
condolences and kindness helped him finish the school term in June of 1928.39

On 8 January 1931 the new school was officially opened and the wooden portables were removed. At this particular time the neighborhood around Volta was predominantly Jewish. The school population was approximately 90 percent Jewish with the remaining 10 percent of the children coming from a small Swedish colony and the Bohemian orphanage in the school area. Johnson immediately hired a Swedish lady to come and cook hot lunches for the teachers and himself. He wanted everyone to eat together and continue to enjoy each others' company. Everyone paid for the cost of the food and the two hour wage that the lady received. She was not only an excellent cook, but a great waitress who also washed the dishes.

The school had a very active PTA. Most of the parents appreciated Johnson. He was able to encourage the PTA to have many fund raisers to get needed equipment and supplies for the school. These parents generously volunteered their time and displayed enthusiasm about their children's education. Johnson was a real stickler for well orchestrated music assemblies. As demanding as the parents were in regard to well organized assemblies, Johnson was also inspired to help the teachers conduct special music assemblies for the holidays and other special events. He
was always willing to share his wealth of ideas about music as well as a variety of teaching methods.

At one of the meetings two teachers at Volta, Helen Brindl and Elinor McCollom, complained about the lack of a good middle-grade social studies textbook about Chicago. Johnson suggested that they write such a book. They took him seriously and each one of them contributed six chapters. Each chapter ended with a test and suggested field trips and activities. Johnson wrote one chapter on student government. He suggested that his name be used as the author of the book entitled *Chicago*, so that it would sell more easily to the parochial schools because he had name recognition and many educators knew him. No royalties were received when the books were used by the Chicago public schools. The cost of the book was about sixty-nine cents. In fact, very little money was realized from it, because within a few years Helen Ganey wrote a similar text for the Catholic schools in Chicago.

Johnson was so interested in having the children understand the workings of their city government that he helped the upper grade teachers organize each classroom like a ward. The rows were precincts. Elections were held in each room and fire marshals were appointed along with the police chief. The children really learned by doing. He promoted this concept and it spread throughout the city.
Johnson was very interested in independent reading. He insisted that each classroom have a library with appropriate level books and a library table with a lamp on it. When the children had completed their work they could go to the table, turn on the lamp and read. He was able to obtain sample copies of many books and passed these out to the teachers. He was a superior organizer who worked hard to put across the adjustment teacher idea in Volta School. (The adjustment teacher was responsible for testing children's achievement and referred children to the psychologist and other specialists for further testing if it was necessary). He often demanded that teachers keep accurate records of math and spelling tests that were required to be given each Friday. Special folders for each pupil were kept in record cabinets in each classroom. These folders contained information related to pupils' tests and samples of the students' work.

Bill Johnson appreciated good discipline. The students were talkative but they were not usually discipline problems. The pupils seemed interested in completing their assignments and appeared to genuinely enjoy school. Johnson talked to them firmly about improving their grades and following their teachers' rules. Elinor McColloM recalled that Johnson sent for her one afternoon close to dismissal time. She told her fifth grade pupils to be sure
to stay in their seats. When she returned to her room at least five minutes after the final bell rang, she surprisingly found the children still seated waiting for her to dismiss them. Several teachers had attempted to release the class, but the children would not leave their seats until she returned.

Everyone was not in favor of Johnson's instructional methods. An evaluation of his methods was made by a research assistant assigned by Superintendent Bogan's Advisory Council subcommittee on Civil Education. (Bogan, Johnson's principal at Lane had become the superintendent in 1928). This research assistant visited Johnson at the Volta School in 1931, and roundly criticized him. He had read an interesting article Johnson had written for an educational journal, describing in exciting terms his successful experiment in self-government within a sixth grade class. The research assistant recalled that:

Johnson, eager for recognition, called a meeting of his council of students to demonstrate its success. Twelve little children sat on the school stage, staring vacantly at each other. Behind the two from each grade stood one teacher who told each child what to say, and made corrections if he failed to repeat the teacher's word accurately. He kept the council on the stage and those in the
assembly hall seats for twenty minutes of their lunch hour in his effort to make a good impression.40

This same researcher observed that Johnson, either did not recognize the pupils reaction to the situation or he did not care. According to this source, Johnson was so interested in prestige that he would say or write anything he believed would bring him recognition.

The principalship was demanding and time consuming, yet Johnson truly enjoyed teaching and was still conducting educational administration classes at Loyola University. He was the Saturday morning lecturer for the Chicago Historical Society from October 1929 to May 1935. Another teaching assignment he agreed to conduct was educational administration classes for the Catholic nuns at Xavier College. This position might have been consented to at the urging of Fr. Austin Schmidt during one of their weekly tennis games at Loyola University.42

The devastating stock market crash in the autumn of 1929 ended the prosperous years of 1928 and 1929 in which taxes were usually paid readily by most taxpayers. Johnson had not been hurt too badly by the crash because he had not invested heavily in the stock market. Most of his money was in safer securities and in his home. He was able to meet the mortgage payments easily. Many other people were
THE GREAT DEPRESSION HITS CHICAGO

Chicago by now one of the ten largest cities in the United States, was hit hardest after the crash. Many groups in the city were hit hard. More than half of the employees of the electrical industries, and a substantial number engaged in the furniture, packing, clothing, printing, and transportation industries, were laid off from their jobs.43

After the crash until the 1931 mayoral election, teachers' fears of not having anyone in city hall who cared about them were well founded as one source stated:

"Thompsonism" came to be a symbol for spoils politics, police scandals, school-board scandals, padded pay rolls, gangster alliances, betrayal of the public trust, grotesque campaign methods, and buffoonery in public office. . . . He believed in the campaign rule, "If your opponent calls you a liar, call him a thief."44

Thompson was not to remain the mayor of Chicago; people were finally fed up with his brand of politics. Teachers of Chicago certainly agreed with the above definition of "Thompsonism." Their voices were among the supporters of A.J. Cermak. They had high hopes that he would be their salvation.
In order to understand the background of Johnson's climb to the office of superintendent it will be useful to recall the political climate of Chicago during the early thirties.

In 1931 the Chicago teachers groups enthusiastically supported Anton Cermak's bid for mayor. He was endorsed by Margaret Haley, president of The Chicago Teachers' Federation (CTF) as the savior of the public school system. She felt he had empathy with people he represented, and Mary Herrick, vice president of the Women's Federation of High School Teachers, believed he talked good sense to teachers. In March 1931 Helen Hefferan, a member of the board of education, sent out letters to many of her friends. She stated that Cermak was an energetic laborer for the public good and the schools needed the protection of a man of his caliber. Anton Cermak was elected with a plurality of over 190,000 and became the first foreign-born non-Anglo-Saxon mayor of the city. The foundations of the "Democratic Organization" in Chicago were laid down during the short term (1931-1933) of Anton Cermak. He is credited with setting the Democratic machine in motion.45

Cermak had too many other political debts to pay before he could even think of helping the teachers. Unfortunately, on 15 February 1933 Cermak was shot in Miami by a fanatic, while riding in a car with Franklin D. Roosevelt. He died
of complications from his wounds three weeks later. He had opened his door to teacher organizations and to the civic organizations concerned with the erosion of good instruction in the public schools. Who knows what he could have accomplished in years to come?46

In August 1932 the city started an economy drive that put more people on relief. Over one thousand jobs were eliminated at an annual savings of about $2.5 million. By September only 51 of the 228 banks in Chicago were still open, the others had failed. In October statistics showed that Chicago had more than 750,000 people unemployed, and the weekly cost of relief was $1.5 million. In addition to that rents dropped drastically and wages fell. Largely due to the efforts of Cermak the federal government assisted Chicago in November with a series of loans from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation for public works improvements. As was expected on 8 November 1932 in the presidential election Chicagoans voted overwhelmingly for Franklin D.Roosevelt. The depression of the 1930s caused a multitude of problems within the Chicago Public School System which brought great hardships for the teachers.47

EFFECTS OF THE DEPRESSION ON THE SCHOOLS

Many taxpayers were unable to pay and delinquent taxes came to more than $370 million. Money was unavailable by
1931 and contractors were forced to discontinue construction on DuSable, Lane, Rembrandt, Senn, Steinmetz, Verdi, and Wells High Schools. It wasn't until 1934 that contractors completed Lane, Senn, and Steinmetz; DuSable and Wells were completed in 1935. Finally, Galileo, Rembrandt and Verdi were finished in 1939.48

By 1931 teachers were among those who suffered "payless" pay days. Howatt states:

In spite of all efforts, however, the salary rolls for the last half of April, 1931, could not be met and the employees had their first experience with the "payless" pay day, an experience that was to be repeated many times in the next three years. Following the failure to meet salary payments to employees, the Board inaugurated a plan of pay in scrip during five of the months of 1931. The employees found difficulty in disposing of some of this scrip and soon distress appeared among lower (income) groups where it had been impossible for the individuals to accumulate any surplus to give them economic security.49

Drastic cuts in services and programs mandated by the board beginning in September 1933 caused the release of fourteen hundred teachers and 50 percent of its elementary school principals. Because of economy measures the school50
board mandated in 1933, Johnson was one of the principals who was now in charge of two elementary schools, for 1933-1934. He began to commute to the Haugan Elementary School in September 1933. The school was located at 4500 N. Hamlin Avenue and was not far from Volta. Johnson spent a half day at Volta and a half day at Haugan. Some board members frankly boasted that it was indeed William Johnson who was the "educational expert" who approved their economy program in July 1933. While board members supported these drastic cutbacks other school factions did not. Although Johnson would continue to climb higher he would do it without the support of many school personnel. Meanwhile, Mayor Kelly was forging ahead with patronage jobs in the city and in the Chicago School System, amid accusations of nepotism, graft and underworld connections. Big business was dictating its demands through the mayor and the board. Economy measures by the board were subject to hot debates.

THE DEVASTATING ECOMONY PROGRAM

The economy program that the board initiated in 1933 was still having adverse effects on the public school teachers, students and their parents. The program of 1933 was decried by religious and civic groups as a catastrophe, and was a major cause of anger and frustration for teachers and parents. Legislators, educators, and most of Chicago
knew that Springfield approved an amendment to stagger the school deficit over a period of six years. The amendment was signed by Governor Henry Horner on 11 July 1933. So, Margaret Haley was correct when she said by "12 of July 1933, there was no deficit in the educational fund of the city of Chicago." Big business was punishing the teachers for raising issues over the board's leasing of school property at extremely low rates to banks and other large companies. Teachers knew their efforts to get equitable taxation for city property, much of which the banks owned, also caused the bankers to act. When the Kelly board assumed office in spring 1933, under the leadership of President James McCahey, it was confronted with a problem of maintaining its facilities for 500,000 students. Meeting a weekly payroll for thirteen thousand teachers and five thousand other employees at a weekly cost of $1 million was no easy task. As of 1 July 1933 the board owed them $23 million. The board's credit with the banks was gone and only the city would help by buying all the school warrants that their legal experts would approve. Unpaid tax anticipation warrants of the board were $85 million, unpaid interest was $8 million and outstanding bonds of the board were over $24 million. The county assessor ordered a 25 percent reduction in the assessment of real estate values for 1932 which reduced the board's income
by $6 million. Estimates of the deficit in 1933 were between $10 million and $35 million depending on which financial authority had the correct figures.54

The sharp blade of the economy program, popularly called the "school-wrecking program," not only shaved off what the board called "fads and frills" but also cut deeply into the school organization and operation. The following measures were adopted by the board: A nine month school year with an annual savings of $4 million; a closing of experimental junior high school program (sending seventh and eighth graders back to the elementary schools) and the use of the twenty-nine buildings for senior high school students at a savings of $27 million; a tearing tear down 336 unsafe portables now being used by the high schools and an increase in working hours for teachers to five hours each day. Each high school teacher had to teach seven periods and elementary teachers lost free periods; a cutting of kindergarten staff by one-half and a reduction of the number of parental school pupils as low as possible; a closing of Jones and Winchell Continuation Schools and transfer of their pupils to Washburne; an abolishing of the Special Schools Bureau and the closing of household arts and manual training in elementary schools; a cutting of pre-vocational classes with fewer than thirty students; a stopping of purchases of musical instruments and cancelation of lectures for
teachers; an eliminating of vocational guidance teachers and changing the duties of household arts teachers to now supervise lunchrooms; a stopping of bath service where unnecessary and a reduction of textbook purchases; a managing of two schools by all elementary school principals and a cut salaries of engineer-custodians by 24.8 percent and operating employees by 24.3 percent; and a closing of Crane Junior College making it available for high school students. These changes were listed by the board in their booklet "Our Schools Must Not Close." Apparently, more cuts were still on the grill. The following were also initiated at the regular board meeting on 12 July 1933; the cutting of high school physical education teachers by one-half; the dropping of all elementary physical education teachers and visiting teachers; the discontinuing of athletic teams and swimming along with bands and orchestras; The reducing of district superintendents from ten to five and assistant superintendents from five to three; the cutting of five psychologists and dropping the Bureau of Curriculum; the cutting of printing classes and the reduction of compulsory education by 50 percent; the dropping of social studies supervisors and finally the dismissing of fourteen hundred teachers.

Another source blames much of what happened in the schools on the apathy of the general public:
The calamitous predicament of Chicago's public schools was symptomatic of a general civic lethargy and tolerance of mismanagement of local government. This, in turn reflected a citizenry that had become inured to mediocrity, ineptness, and even corruption on the part of its officials. Even those who see the actual performance are frequently not moved to do much about it because they do not recognize their personal involvement.56

Though both Helen Hefferan and Superintendent Bogan were members of the board they were not invited to attend the 12 July 1933 board meeting. The cuts were made by "coal dealers and other small businessmen with little education themselves [sic] and only a few days of service on the Board of Education."58

Irwin Walker, a member of the board, entered a large meeting room immediately after the board voted for the cuts, and read a long motion to a waiting audience. He mentioned the cuts to the large group of teachers, parents, and interested members of civic groups. Everyone was very upset.

Anger over these further economies exploded into action. That same evening, teachers, members of the PTA, The Woman's City Club and The League of Women Voters formed
the Citizens' Save Our Schools Committee. This group became an important pressure group against many of the board's policies. The organization comprised of a large number of teachers, and civic groups is not to be confused with the Citizens' Committee with Sargent at the helm. How did the Citizens' or Sargent Committee get its start?

According to one source it started in March 1928,

After Superintendent McAndrew's dismissal, the Union League Club invited The Association of Commerce, The Chicago Real Estate Board, The Commonwealth Club, The Western Society of Engineers, and some members of the 1922 Joint Committee on Public School Affairs, to join in acting on school issues. This coalition grew into businessmen's committees and finally into the Sargent Committee.

Margaret Haley, president of the Chicago Teachers Federation, was angry with the Sargent Committee that was supposedly going to save the city. She said it was "one of the most insidious sappers of genuine civic spirit." and that the group "represented big business with two capitals," their power for a time was greater than that of any elected body in the City of Chicago. A noted educational historian, stated this about the Sargent Committee:

On July 12, under the direction of the Sargent
Committee, the school board hit public education unmercifully by passing their so-called economy measures. Chicago's crippled and skeletal public education was brought to its knees.62

Opposition was mounting in the city against the board. When the board received an injunction against closing the school, it remained open. A mass rally of more than thirty thousand protested these cuts. The meeting at the Stadium of 21 July 1933 was sponsored by the Citizens Save Our Schools Committee and the Illinois Congress of Parents and Teachers. Professor Judd of the University of Chicago, John Fitzpatrick of the Chicago Federation of Labor and, Mrs. Holland Flagler of the P.T.A. spoke out against the board's economy measures. No person from Chicago's business community could be convinced to speak. Petitions with a total of 350,000 signatures were sent to the state capital. At one of her fall meetings, Margaret Haley along with the Chicago Teachers Federation and nine teachers' groups offered to pay for an official audit of the board books. Haley declared that if a deficit was found the teachers would work free until it was made up. When this proposal was presented, Joseph Savage a member of the board and a political puppet of Al Capone, was infuriated and said he would be the first to vote for the dismissal of anyone who couldn't see this program as a benefit for children.64
While over fourteen hundred teachers lost their jobs, the city added seven hundred political appointees. Although the Strayer Report recommended a reduction of 502 unnecessary janitors the board ignored the findings. The city was now informing aldermen how many school janitor jobs their wards would be eligible for from the next "civil service" exam. McCahey said that everyone had to expect cuts during the depression. Strangely enough the big coal companies that supplied the schools, had received a 10 percent bonus because they had to wait for their money.

In April 1933 the North Central Association (NCA) refused to approve the ten new high schools in the junior high-school buildings. It warned the remaining twenty-four that their services were below standard. The high schools were disorganized, short handed, and lacked books and equipment. In April 1934 the NCA said that recent changes were not based on sound educational advice, and that they had impaired the efficiency and lowered the general intellectual and moral tone of the high schools. More than two hundred teachers were teaching seven classes a day instead of the normal five. In his annual report of 23 May 1934 President McCahey said that high school teachers were expected to do a full day's work. Even though there was a large increase in high school attendance, he stated that extra teachers were not necessary. This meant that the high
schools were kept open as much as three or four more periods every school day burning more coal and using more electricity. Some suspicious people said that was the reason in back of McCahey's order.66

Desperate for someone to listen to their plight one thousand unpaid Chicago teachers held a demonstration and stopped the opening ceremonies of the 1933 Century of Progress Exposition over which Mayor Kelly presided.67 The mayor promised the school board enough money to pay the teachers for four months of salary through December 1932. He announced that all further parades and other demonstrations would be illegal. He was more upset about the teachers creating bad press then he was about their plight. The school news was shoved off the front pages because of the fair during the rest of May and June. Teachers therefore had to fend for themselves and find some financial support to keep the wolf away from the door during the summer.68

Meanwhile, help came to the schools from an unlikely source, the state. Other school districts in Illinois were also in distress and the General Assembly in February 1934 was called to help the schools. The first "pegged levy" bill of 1935 which became a law provided $43 million for Chicago schools and legalized raising the assessed valuation of property to a tax rate needed to raise that money.69
The school system used this "pegged" tax successfully for many years for needed funding. A motor fuel tax was also collected across the state. Chicago was to receive over $3 million dollars by increasing a flat grant of sixteen dollars for each elementary school child and giving seven dollars for each high school student. In 1936 a federal bill was also passed that allowed city boards with over 500,000 pupils to mortgage school lands as security for government bonds up to $40 million. When the bill became law and was passed, the teachers received their seven-and-one-half months back pay in August 1934. But federal loans had to be paid back and the board was now in debt over 6.5 million more than the taxes they had received. Luckily from that time on teachers received regular paychecks on time, with the exception of one time in 1937 (and again briefly in 1979). Schools opened in fall of 1934 with elementary principals returning to their 1933 assignments while the junior college branches had an enrollment of over four thousand students. Whether the mayor was a saint to some and a sinner to others, he was undeniably a force to be nurtured by the Roosevelt administration.70

MAYOR EDWARD J. KELLY AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

When Patrick Nash, a powerful Democratic machine politician and friend of Cermak's, suggested Edward J. Kelly
as a successor, the dying Cermak replied:

Ed Kelly would make a good mayor; but if you once get him in you'll have a hell of a time getting him out. Apprised of that conversation, Kelly supposedly responded, "What in hell would I want that job for?". . . . for the next fourteen years, Ed Kelly would indeed be "the boss of city hall." . . . And his aggressive leadership would pilot Chicago through the turbulent waters of depression and global war, while maintaining the most power-political machine in urban America.71

Kelly used federal relief and work programs to help influence voters, but not all voters were Democrats. Many factors contributed to the heavy Democratic vote in the 1930s. As the repeal of prohibition was being studied by the mayor and a liquor control law was on its way, Kelly's big concern was the continuation of federal assistance in the relief program. Realizing the urgency, Roosevelt authorized the set up of the Civil Works Administration (CWA) totally funded by the federal government. CWA workers would receive wages for their jobs on the public works projects. Amid criticism of graft the program was stopped by the federal government in the spring of 1934. From July 1933 to the end of 1935, the federal government provided 87.6 percent of the emergency relief in Chicago, the state
11 percent, and the city 1.4 percent. Until the state
demanded Chicago increase its contribution in July 1936, the
city paid only 0.6 percent of the total relief cost. Kelly
maintained that the city could not pay a large amount to
care for its homeless and unemployed.72

The mayor secured WPA projects from the federal
government. He concentrated on proposals that used the
largest labor force with a minimum of equipment. Streets
were repaired, parks improved and new sewers installed.
Kelly also claimed the credit for ending payless paydays for
school teachers, reducing the city's debt, painting over 400
schools and saving $44 million for the corporate fund. He
did this, forgetting to mention the help of the federal
government's WPA.73

Recently, a researcher related that Kelly had been
investigated by the federal government in the Sanitary
District "Whoopee Era" scandal in 1928. The state's
attorney's office discovered unexplained deposits and
withdrawals that Kelly made from secret bank accounts. A
federal investigation showed his total income for three
years from 1927 up to and including 1929 was $450,000. He
had not paid taxes on most of this income. The source of
his income was never identified by the IRS. Kelly settled
with the government and paid $106,390 and avoided being
prosecuted for income tax evasion.74 The Hearst newspapers
in Chicago, the American and the Herald and Examiner, kept the heat on Kelly to disclose the source of his income. On 19 August 1933, Kelly revealed his income for 1919 to 1929 in the Chicago Tribune. His salary for the ten year period was $151,152.92, he admitted to a net income of $724,368.99. The difference he claimed was from dividends, rent, interest on real estate sales and securities. He refused to discuss the $450,000 cited by the U. S. Treasury Department for 1927-1929.75

Despite revelations about Democratic politicians, Franklin D. Roosevelt's popularity and his New Deal securely anchored the Democratic party as the majority party in the nation. Chicago's citizens and the public schools were to receive many benefits from the federal government through the Works Progress Administration (WPA). It is important to note some of Johnson's early accomplishments.76

JOHNSON'S EARLY CONTRIBUTIONS

From 1925 to 1935, as a principal in the schools, Johnson seemed to be an effective administrator. He was well liked by most parents, and his teachers respected him for his expertise with curriculum and methods of teaching. His door was usually open to parents and teachers. While he was a principal in 1927 he wrote his first book on visual education and encouraged teachers in another school to write
a textbook in 1931. He initiated an adjustment teacher concept at the school which had been a tremendous help in identifying students' problems in learning. Most of all he was remembered for being an excellent teacher whose methods of teaching were used by many other teachers. He belonged to only a few professional teacher organizations and as a member of the principal's club was singularly unidentifiable. He had a tremendous amount of energy accepting teaching positions as a part-time professor at Loyola University of Chicago, teaching the nuns at Xavier College, and as a regular Saturday morning lecturer at the Chicago Historical Society. He definitely was not a crusader for teachers' causes and steered clear of criticizing the board.
CHAPTER TWO NOTES


3. Ibid.


6. *The World Book Encyclopedia*, 50th ed.s.v. "Volstead Act." 362. The Volstead Act also known as the National Prohibition Act of 1919 provided for the enforcing of national prohibition of the use of intoxicating liquors. It was passed by Congress over the veto of President Woodrow Wilson. Amendment 18 to the United States prohibited the manufacture, sale or transportation of intoxicating liquors within the United States.

7. Ibid., s.v. "Ku-Klux Klan." 310. (The Klan was founded at Pulaski Tenn., in 1866, as a social group for war veterans. But many Southerners began to use the Klan to terrorize former slaves. The Klan all but disappeared in the late 1800s after the Southern whites gained control of their state governments. A new Klan was organized in Atlanta, Ga., in 1915. It directed its activities against Negroes, Jews, Roman Catholics, so-called radicals, and foreigners. After the 1920s the Klan lost power.)

8. John Howatt, *Notes on the First 100 Years of Chicago School History* (Chicago: Board of Education Library, 1940), 44.


10. Mary Louis Pond, clerk at Buena Memorial Church, information from church records. 17 July 1987.


15. Ibid.


17. Kearney, 16.

18. Ibid.

19. Ibid.


21. Ibid.


27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., 50.


33. Chicago Public Schools File, see Volta School file, Chicago Historical Society Library.

34. "Mrs. Johnson's Funeral to be Held Tomorrow," Chicago Tribune, 16 November 1937, 14.

35. Ibid.


37. Ibid.


39. What follows was derived from the Elinor McCollom interview, 23 July 1987.

40. Herrick, 225.


44. Ibid., 10-12.


46. Herrick, 189.

47. Furer, 49.
48. Howatt, 49.
49. Ibid., 50.
50. Herrick, 224.
51. Ibid.
52. Sullivan, 212.
53. Ibid.
55. Ibid., 9-12.
59. Ibid.
60. Ibid., 234.
63. Herrick, 211-12.
64. Smith, 28-29.
65. Herrick, 212; Proceedings, 8 April 1937, 1155.
66. Herrick, 221.

68. Smith, 28.


70. Herrick, 219-221.


72. Ibid., 33, 78.

73. Ibid., 78-79.

74. Ibid., 28.

75. Ibid., 29.

76. Ibid., 37-39.
In 1935 when Bogan was the superintendent he refused to recommend Johnson for the position of assistant superintendent. It will be recalled that Bogan was the principal of Lane when Johnson was a teacher there. Thus he was well qualified to assess him. In his opinion Johnson was an opportunist without much concern for the children he taught. It is not clear how concerned Johnson was about the relationship at this time. Apparently Johnson was never aware of Bogan's view of him and remained steadfastly on course working tirelessly toward achieving his goal of acquiring a higher administrative position in the school system.1

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT OF HIGH SCHOOLS

Johnson at the age of thirty-nine received the news in July 1935 that he was appointed assistant superintendent. Most of the teachers at Volta were sorry that he was leaving. After all he had served ten successful years in the principalship most of which were spent at this school. His staff wished him good luck in his new important position, presented him with a life membership in the National Education Association (NEA) and bid him farewell.
No one could have predicted the tough sledding ahead for Johnson in his new job. Benjamin Buck the assistant superintendent in charge of high schools had recently retired in July 1935 and Johnson was appointed by the board to replace him. Even though Bogan did not wish to recommend him for this position, the board believed that Johnson was useful and lost no time in appointing him. They favored him because he never participated in any protests against board actions or policies, and his educational credentials were impressive.

According to Johnson Bogan's last year in the superintendency was hampered by illness. Most of the time he depended on his assistant to complete much of his work, including the superintendent's unpublished annual report for 1935. Johnson believed the senior assistant superintendents were jealous of him because of his youth and enviable position as Bogan's assistant. In an interview with Johnson one researcher stated that Johnson considered Bogan to be a "do nothing" superintendent with blurry progressive ideas. He spent his time contemplating a grand design for a better world, instead of attempting to implement workable programs for the pupils.

As assistant superintendent, Johnson attempted to improve his image among the teachers by visiting many of the high schools. Meetings were set up so Johnson could
get to know the high school teachers who taught English, social studies, art, and foreign languages to name a few. He met with a group of high school English teachers at the Kilmer School on the north side in March 1936. Johnson stated that he wanted to get acquainted with "the people who are doing the dirty work, that is, among those that actually do the job," he said.5

During this meeting he told the high school teachers that the function of the central office was to set standards for the departments of English. One of Johnson's ideas was to implement a program review. Occasionally, inspections would be made by two district superintendents to find out if standards were being met. Teachers would not be dealt with personally; instead the principals would be responsible for the work done by the teachers. "I mention that for fear anyone may think we are going to come to razz you," said6 Johnson. He stated that two district superintendents would sweep through a department the way the North Central Association customarily did. After the inspection the principal would be notified about weaknesses. In five weeks the district superintendents would return for a follow-up to see what had been done to remedy the situation.

This program of supervision would mean the board would not have to worry about the N.C.A. "We will know what the defects are before the North Central steps in and orders us
to do certain things," remarked Johnson.

Johnson indicated that he came to them directly because it was possible that the principals might misjudge or misinterpret his remarks, and that the teachers might get the wrong impression of him. He didn't want to be thought of as a myth which was the status of most of the people in the downtown office. He believed everyone should be concerned with promoting the welfare of the children and mentioned twenty-eight standards to be met. Fourteen were discussed under "Written and Oral Composition" and fourteen under "Reading and Literature."

He wanted each of the principals to send him a list of the teachers of English and under each of the twenty-eight items listed on a questionnaire, a check would then be placed on the standards completed and a zero next to those the teacher didn't fulfill. Johnson explained to the teachers that it wasn't necessary for them to take notes during the present meeting and that they could debate and discuss the standards if they wished. He apologized and said:

If I appear dictatorial, it is not because I mean to be so. It is because I am definitely interested in this program, and that I insist on a good job being done.

Going through his list of standards, he explained each one
carefully and teachers asked questions pertaining to children who were very poor readers. He mentioned that the grade schools couldn't keep some of the children until they could read at the seventh grade level because they would be very old men and women by that time. He praised the elementary schools for the good job most of them were doing regarding reading and written language.¹⁰

Johnson thought that the students should be started off with writing good complete sentences, then a paragraph, or several paragraphs before they were expected to write a theme. He demanded that every English department in every high school have a remedial reading program and then stated:

Now I have warned you, I have cajoled you, I have implored you. There have been certain things going on in certain schools, and I have warned you personally. In other words, there will be Cain raised unless in every high school in the English department there is a program of remedial reading. That may be a part of the sixth study period, or in the form of a remedial class, or whatever you like, but I expect that.¹¹

One teacher who sat through the explaining of the twenty-second standard pointedly said:

I think we all agree that the standards are fine, but I think there is a certain ... resentment in
the approach from above. I maintain in the past, in the history of Chicago, these standards and procedures and devices have come from the teaching staff, and, furthermore, I feel that there is a slur upon the efficiency and professional approach of our teaching staff.12

A fray ensued in which Johnson wanted to know what the trouble was. Several teachers began to angrily raise their voices. The teachers didn't want someone from the central office coming in and telling them the ABCs of their profession as if they were kindergarten students and didn't know what it was all about. In the remainder of the transcript it was truly amazing that Johnson had no idea he had offended an auditorium filled with high school teachers. Finally, another teacher said:

Dr. Johnson, then perhaps it is not your intention, but if it has not been your intention, it seems to us that you have presented it in such a way that it has made us feel that we haven't got these things, that no other leader or supervisor has given us any until now.14

Everyone applauded after each of these verbal encounters directed at Johnson. He took their comments in stride and continued to laboriously present the remaining standards. Finally he stated, "There it is in a nutshell." and a loud
voice called out, "In a what?" and everyone laughed. After the laughter subsided, Johnson began to summarize briefly that he had no malice aforethought. He asked everyone to lend their wholehearted support to this program.15

Professor Herbert Espy agreed with the concept of standards of performance that Johnson was trying to get across to the high school teachers when he stated:

The facts suggest that, in addition to setting up generally accepted standards of performance, there must be specific and definite indications of what is comprised in them. The mere existence of these specifications, in terms sufficiently exact and concrete to be understood by all teachers and pupils alike, would greatly facilitate the general improvement of pupils' ability . . . . Adherence to reasonable performance standards specifically and definitely made known to pupils would likely effectively produce satisfactory competence in many cases.16

The remarks made by teachers and by an expert in high school education indicated that Johnson's ideas of standards were educationally sound. It seemed that he lacked the ability to present his ideas tactfully and effectively to the group. Although Johnson's aim was to gain more friends among the teachers, he managed to alienate them. The
teachers claimed he neglected to treat them as intelligent professionals. He spoke to them as if they were small children and he was the benevolent father giving them some good advice. Yet, from his remarks he was completely unaware of a breakdown in communication until he was bluntly told about his presentation. Johnson was a stickler for supervision of teachers by a principal. While he was at Volta, he constantly visited the teachers to give advice and check on the job they were doing. Apparently high school teachers required a uniquely different approach to supervision and Johnson was not cognizant of that reality. They were not accustomed to this kind of supervision and resented it.

It is conceivable that Johnson didn't realize that large groups of professional women in the last several years had become very militant concerning women's rights. They had a significant conscience-raising experience through their success in finally getting voting privileges. In fact, the teachers' movement, piloted by Margaret Haley, was an outgrowth of the suffrage movement. Professional women, especially in Chicago, found out they had power over their professional lives and were tired of adhering to the nineteenth century, passive version of Victorian women who did what they were told. Men teachers also became more active as their numbers grew. They were involved in high
school teaching and were enthusiastic participants in organizing more teachers' groups.

According to his daughter, Johnson would ignore what went against his wishes or dislikes. If he did not have to deal with it he wouldn't. Johnson seemed to have great difficulty in his personal dealings with people. She remembered the problems he had compromising with others. His daughter recalled that even with her he dealt as he deemed fit, never asking her how he could be of help to her or paying attention to her desires and needs. Again, his daughter's account shows him as either unaware of the feelings of others and unable to perceive the social situation correctly or deliberately ignoring the needs of others. Sometimes she felt that a brick wall would have to fall on him before he understood what anyone was trying to tell him. He also had difficulty sharing with others.17

This characteristic inability to perceive the situation correctly may have been part of his Danish enculturation. As had been noted earlier, the government of Denmark suffered from an inability to understand a serious situation and to master the art of compromise. It lost 40 percent of its land in 1866 because of this flaw. It should also be recalled that while Johnson was a principal, there was an obvious situation that he should have spotted when he was at Volta. The bored sixth graders made little effort to
demonstrate their concept of self government on stage, yet Johnson kept them there unobservant of their disinterest. Perhaps he inherited this characteristic. Probably, however, he learned that by ignoring opposition, one's chances for moving ahead with one's own goals were enhanced. At any rate, he appeared to have trouble "reading" people correctly. Thus, he had difficulty getting along with many of the teachers. On the other hand, Bogan who was superintendent while Johnson was his assistant had excellent rapport with most teachers. To assist in trying to understand why the teachers loved and respected Bogan, the following account would be helpful.

WILLIAM J. BOGAN

Bogan was elected to the office of Superintendent of the Chicago Public Schools in June 1928 and died in office in March 1936. As the following account shows the Chicago school system felt it had lost a man who truly devoted his whole life to the children of Chicago. He was mourned by the entire city. Superintendent William J. Bogan spoke out in vain against the economy measures he realized would be forced upon the Chicago Public School System. In a radio address to the parents of public school children on 3 October 1932, Bogan pleaded with the parents when he said:

SAVE THE SCHOOLS strikes deeper in its impli-
cations than salaries or supplies or any other material things. The impairment of the schools means the weakening of the rights of every citizen, and though in our despair of democratic government we sometimes cry for the man on horseback to save us from ourselves we know that every vestige of liberty taken from us will be difficult to restore just as we know that some phases of democratic education eliminated in a crisis like this will never be restored. . . . Will you, the parents of pupils in our public schools permit public education to be wrecked? The city is shamed in the eyes of the world, but we seem to lack the financial leadership that would modernize our nineteenth century revenue system, pay our debts, and save our schools from destruction.18

When Bogan died every newspaper in Chicago eulogized him. An editorial in the Chicago Daily News said:

The death of William J. Bogan ends a brave but losing fight. All through the depression, and right to the end, Chicago's superintendent of education struggled to hold the citadel of the city's schools against the assaults of spoils politics. . . . Mayor Kelly and the board have
their long-sought opportunity. They can put the schools under someone who will do their bidding without question.19

Bogan's expertise and opinions about education were for the most part ignored by the board. He worked through the NEA, other educational groups and civic organizations in the city to try to bind these groups and the schools together in a cooperative venture for the good of the students and teachers.20

Herb Graffis, a Sun Times columnist, who was a Lane graduate, recalled Bogan in this manner at the 1958 dedication of Lane's library in memory of Bogan:

Principal William J. Bogan was a big brawny lion-mane man with a genius for inspiring kids, helping them and keeping them in good discipline. His administration of a technical high school made Chicago a world's model for a while. . . . The Board of Education showed lack of education in delaying recognition of this magnificent educator whose ideas and hard work produced the Lane of today.21

Strong citizen groups pooled their resources to see that Bogan's successor would be chosen for his proven ability to manage a great school system. Some of these were: The Joint Committee on Public Affairs; Chicago Church Federation; Cook
Whether Johnson knew that within the next month he would be chosen Superintendent of the Chicago Public Schools is anyone's guess. The schools were believed to be in good hands under the leadership of Assistant Superintendent James E. McDade who headed four other assistant superintendents. Johnson was one of these four. The Tribune predicted Johnson's appointment two days after Bogan's death, and they turned out to be right. Johnson was indeed to be chosen superintendent of the Chicago schools over the protests of all of the above mentioned citizen groups. 22

WILLIAM H. JOHNSON BECOMES SUPERINTENDENT

When Johnson was appointed superintendent of the Chicago public schools on 22 April 1936, he must have known it would be an uphill battle for him to gain acceptance by the teachers, parents, church and civic groups. One source who knew him personally said that he was

One of the youngest men ever elected to this office. He brought to the superintendency the virility, energy and fresh viewpoint characteristic of youth and soon made his presence felt
through the inauguration of changes in the educational system to bring it in step with the day.23

The superintendent's role had been altered legally by the Otis Law in 1917, when all areas of administration were to be under his domain. He alone was to be responsible for the school system. However, because of the political structure of Chicago this was impossible according to one source:

The political system which developed during this period drew its strength from political patronage and the control over the public school superintendency was necessary in order to control school positions, contracts, purchases and civil service appointments within the school system.24

Kelly's choice of appointing anti-intellectual men as members of the school board was to cause him much criticism from teachers, parents, church and civic groups. He remained staunchly behind his choices for thirteen years. The superintendent, the board president and members of the board cooperated with each other in running the schools. In the midst of turbulence, the members of the school board appointed by Kelly played an important role in the direction the schools were heading. Johnson related positively with Kelly and with the school board and was at ease with them.
THE KELLY SCHOOL BOARD

Looking at the members of the school board we find men who were rather unimportant people in the city itself in comparison with the members of the Sargent Committee who were leading bankers and industrialists. The president of the school board, James B. McCahey was appointed by Kelly in 1933 and remained in that position for fourteen years. He was also the president of the J.J. Dunne Coal Co. Many of those on the Kelly board had little formal education and were mainly interested in being loyal to Kelly. They followed his dictates and were getting contracts from the schools for their friends. These people would then return the favors over the years. The board consisted of coal dealers, an oil dealer, small bankers, real estate managers, lawyers and union officials (not endorsed by the Chicago Federation of Labor). One member lived in Winnnetka and another in Barrington. The only woman on the board was Helen Hefferan. Representation followed the ethnic pattern of the city. The board consisted of Irish, Polish, Czech, Jewish, German and Scandinavian, and after 1944 there was always a Black chosen.25

The teachers and civic groups had at least one friend they could trust on the board. She was Helen Hefferan. In May 1936 when Mayor Kelly reappointed her the board's
attitude was one of tolerance at best; ignoring her was often the practice. They considered her to be a "toothless lioness." On one occasion twenty-seven thousand people signed petitions for Helen Hefferan's reappointment to the board, and members of the Citizens Schools Committee (CSC) personally delivered them to Mayor Kelly. Hefferan had completed twelve years as a board member and had been faithful to the schools in every crisis. Her background was impressive. Having graduated from the Chicago Normal College she taught seven years under the principalship of Francis W. Parker and was a member of the first board of directors of the Illinois Congress of Parent and Teachers. Her involvement with other civic organizations endeared her to many teachers. In 1938 while Mrs. Hefferan was still on the board, the mayor appointed another woman, Mrs. Heineman, after two years of demands by the Chicago Woman's Club and the Citizens' Schools Committee. Now Mrs. Hefferan felt that she would get a second on her motions.

The board also expressed negative attitudes to their teacher employees. For example the following information gives some insight into Board President McCahey's feelings. In a letter dated 4 January 1936 to Lyle Wolf (who later became a staunch supporter of the Chicago Teachers' Union and wrote articles for the union's newsletter) McCahey traced his anger on paper and chastised Wolf. He wrote:
In my opinion, you are lucky to have any job in Chicago. . . . I'm going to have my eye on you, and everything you say or do will find its way to my desk drawer. I have ways of finding things out. You may be all right yourself, but you have been seen consorting with rough characters and you are definitely under suspicion. Some day, I'll come down and teach your pupils some real arithmetic with dynamite in it.27

On 10 June 1936 the board adjusted the salary of Lyle H. Wolf, a teacher in the Chicago Normal College, to read "Upper group, third year, to date from January 1936 and to advance to upper group fourth year, May 1936." He had met the requirements for promotion. Lyle H. Wolf had only a short time to wait for the wrath of McCahey via Johnson. He would not pass the principals' examination and was treated shamefully by the system. He was demoted and transferred to a teaching assignment at Hyde Park High School. Years later, however, the board would reinstate him to his former position at Normal, recently renamed Chicago Teachers College. For now, however, Superintendent Johnson had appeared to have reached the pinnacle of success. He just didn't know how precarious his perch was until years later.28
BEGINNING EXPERIENCES AS SUPERINTENDENT

Johnson took office in 1936 with an annual salary of $15,000 a year. That amount of money went a long way in those days. In 1936 a new all brick English-American home consisting of seven rooms, a one car attached garage, two and one-half baths with gas heat and a gas fired air-conditioning unit cost $9,500. One could also own a 1935 four door deluxe Dodge for $495. It appeared Johnson's salary was excellent for those depression days. Besides he had an aptitude for saving money and was able to accumulate a good sum through intelligent investing. However, there were more important concerns than salary to many of his watchers who expected much from him.²⁹

The Citizens' Schools Committee (CSC) stated that the reasons for their opposition to Johnson's appointment were: (1) the position was so important to the people of Chicago; and (2) there was distrust concerning the motives of McCahey, the school board president and the machine-like support of ten of the board members. At the board meeting on 22 April 1936, Helen Hefferan voted against Johnson's appointment, not because she disliked him or had any preconceived notions about him, but because she felt the civic groups should be involved in this decision. She asked for a motion for one week's time to hear from civic
successor. At this meeting, President McCahey asked for a second to Mrs. Hefferan's motion, but no member would break the silence.30

The CSC gave Johnson the benefit of the doubt but blamed the board when it stated that every decent citizen must "react with revulsion," to these methods used by the board. The committee decided to give Johnson a chance and published this letter in their publication Chicago's Schools:

The Citizens Schools Committee congratulates Dr. Johnson on his opportunity for unselfish service. His first official remarks with respect to his policy reveals professional insight and admirable courage: "So far as I'm concerned there shall be only one aim for our Chicago public schools. . . . So to administer them and so to inspire our young people that you and I would be tickled to death to have our own flesh and blood sitting in any classroom. . . . I see no reason for anyone hesitating to accept that plank. That calls for no dogmatism on my part. I should never hesitate to allow every teacher and every principal every freedom. All I ask is that they cooperate with my aim to supply every youngster with that power, skill, and those bits of knowledge that he may
live a full life."31

The hope was that Dr. Johnson could translate his high ideal for the Chicago School System into administrative action. If that was possible, he would prove himself a worthy successor to Superintendent Bogan. Unhappily, the superintendent was not able to remain on friendly terms with the CSC. For all practical purposes, Johnson knowing that a large percentage of the group consisted of Chicago teachers was not enthusiastic about meeting with them.32

In an interview with Johnson, one source stated that Johnson had met with a CSC delegation who had come with a prepared agenda. After listening to their complaints and proposals Johnson said he had to call a quick halt to the meeting. He explained that the group was a "... wild bunch ..." who was trying to give him advice about running the schools. He certainly would not abide that. In calling an abrupt end to the meeting he mentioned that certainly a patient would not attempt to tell the doctor how to make a diagnosis. Surely, no layman would tell him the "... educational expert ..." how to run the schools. This was the final time the CSC was welcomed by Johnson.33

Needless to say, Johnson had great difficulty taking any constructive criticism from civic groups. Again he showed that characteristic of refusing to deal with anyone who seemed critical of him. He had no interest in learning
from others. This was particularly true, if he thought they were uncooperative and hostile toward him. Pettiness, between CSC and Johnson eventually caused a crevasse that became too wide to cross. The new superintendent considered the CSC a small pressure group bent on dictating policy to the schools. The committee in turn voiced its opinion that Johnson was unfit for the job. This committee's persistent denunciation of Johnson and the board eventually would be instrumental in causing big problems for the superintendent.

Johnson accepted his first invitation to speak at the Union League Club on 23 April 1936. He presented ten scholarships to honor students as part of Youth Week activities. The Union League Club provided a grant to study ways to improve education for citizenship. However, its findings were never given consideration by the Kelly board, and a week later Johnson spoke at the City Club and outlined his philosophy of education. He told the gathering that as he became better acquainted with them his horns would drop off his brow. He skirted the controversial issues and talked about continuing to keep up the good work the schools were doing. In 1937, because of sharp criticism of the board by CSC, both Johnson and McCahey refused to speak at the City Club. McCahey noted that "the policy of the board has been to ignore reckless and irresponsible charges. . . ."
same attitude that Johnson had toward unpleasant situations, he would ignore them and choose not to deal with such matters. 36

Johnson's erroneous belief that he could carry on in the same manner as Bogan was not realistic especially since his philosophy was different from Bogan's. He had stated his educational credo in these terms:

I believe education should be for the masses. It is the duty of our schools to equip the ninety percent who do not go to college. However, in doing this I would not neglect the other ten percent. I merely mean that we would give all students the type of education that would best fit them for life. Doing this will not upset the present school system, it will just broaden it to meet the demands of what is generally recognized as a good progressive school program." 37

The statement that 10 percent of the high school population would attend college might have been perceived as inaccurate by many students and their teachers at one Chicago high school. Looking at the June 1937 Review, the yearbook for John Marshall High School, the students at the time might have refuted Johnson's estimates. Although, Marshall High School was predominantly Jewish middle class, there were small percentages of Irish, Italian, German, and
Black students at the high school. Whether all students who said they would attend the universities and colleges actually did so is unknown. However, the intent to continue their educations was expressed. They were making plans for the future. More than 80 percent of the June graduating class had chosen to attend universities and colleges. Among the popular universities and colleges were, Northwestern, University, University of Chicago, University of Illinois, and Southern California University. A few chose the University of Notre Dame, Loyola University, DePaul University, University of Wisconsin, Mundelein College, Chicago Normal College, Illinois Business College, Wright Junior College, Purdue University, Bradley University, the University of Michigan, Yale University, Vassar College, and Harvard University. A substantial number of the class were going to Bryant & Stratton, and Moser which were business colleges and to the Art Institute. A few were going into nurses training schools and beauty culture. Meanwhile, Johnson was enjoying his physical comforts if not his situation.38

JOHNSON'S SYSTEM OF TEXTBOOK CONTROL

It appeared that Johnson was not satisfied with the condition of the superintendent's offices in 1936 and recommended that the sum of $2,561.00 be set up to make
necessary alterations to his second floor office. This came after $4,500 were allocated three weeks earlier for alterations in his office and the Bureau of Finance on the third floor of the Builders Building. That added up to $7,000 in taxpayers' money, at a time when many thousands of people were still suffering from lack of food and clothing during the depression. It appeared that Johnson was a self indulgent man with the taxpayers' money yet frugal with his own.

Early in his superintendency Johnson seemed to be a target for the Chicago Daily News, noted for its interest in McCahey in many of its articles. The newspaper was now using both McCahey and Johnson for target practice. For instance, it was hinted in a June 1936 column, that a textbook scandal was brewing. Two nationally known publishers hired lawyers and investigators. Evidence tended to show why a few textbook publishing houses were paid for books sold to the board while some waited years without getting paid. Over $2 million was yet to be paid by the board to publishers for books delivered before January 1934. Those with political pull were paid while the rest waited.

Some publishers claimed that the Kelly-Nash machine was now in control of the Chicago school system. Publishers viewed the book depository with alarm. At the board's
meeting on 13 May 1936 Superintendent Johnson recommended that the positions of the superintendent of depository, two book handlers and one watchman be filled, and that five teachers be placed in the positions of book auditors in the bureau of research and building survey. Johnson's recommendations were adopted. Money for the depository was allocated in the 1936 budget. Before the existence of the depository all books were shipped directly to the schools. Under the new arrangement all books were purchased by the board and shipped directly to the depository at 762 W. Monroe Street.

The next day McCahey answered the newspaper's charges and stated that the system of textbook control had taken $114,000 a year out of the publishers profits. Now they are required to bid for the board's business and sell textbooks at a saving to the board for 16 to 19 percent below their former prices. Wastefulness in the use and purchase of textbooks before 1933 caused a survey to be made. Because schools did not inventory books, unneeded books were bought: sometimes books were sent by publishers a year before they were needed. This resulted in large amounts of usable books stored only to become obsolete. Some schools had four texts and others had twenty-eight for each child. Chicago paid 50 percent more for the same books then did other cities. McCahey believed the bureau would be better able to
redistribute books so that each pupil would have the necessary books.

Requisitions for 182,000 books were cancelled: the control bureau established a textbook bindery and thousands of worn books were rebound. In August and December 1935, for the first time in school history, 425,000 books were purchased from publishers through competitive bids with discounts given for worn or obsolete books. The savings to the board was $65,000 which amounted to about $115,000 a year. Each principal kept an inventory of all the books in his school. The four hundred schools were no longer in need of book agents; only required books were purchased through the central office. In 1936, the board owed $1.4 million for textbooks which included $1 million for those purchased in 1933. Since no taxes were levied for textbooks that year the debt remained. Although the Daily News could not adequately substantiate any wrong doing, the innuendos were surely there. Johnson's ability to organize and his economic ideas were saving the board money. Allyn and Bacon, Ginn and Company, and Harcourt Brace, no longer would do business with the board.41

Three days later a Chicago Daily News article said it was discovered that William R. Skidmore, a deposed gambler, had been poking his nose into school board affairs. Further investigation proved that the school board purchased
materials from dummy corporations by splitting orders into units of three hundred dollars each. This way they cleverly avoided the rule that orders in excess of that price were to be submitted to competitive bidding. In one year nine dummy corporations sold the schools $786,000 worth of merchandise in orders of less than three hundred dollars each. Jake Arvey's brother, R.V. Arvey of the Nash-Kelly-Arvey team, headed a firm that sold $70,000 worth of materials to the schools in one year. There is no evidence that Johnson knew about this scheme.42

The board was openly criticized by the Chicago Daily News again in June 1936 for spending $6.75 million in a nine minute time period at a board meeting. The money forthcoming from a federal grant from the Public Works Administration (PWA) was to be spent on new school buildings and additions. The board rejoiced because it would put many jobless laborers to work for at least two or more years. Kelly was anxious to give his Black voters at least a few new school buildings to keep them satisfied. The Lilydale Elementary School would be a new school for the Black south side. A new elementary school was planned on the Wendell Phillips High School property along with the new Carter school at 5700 S. Michigan Avenue. Another, was the new Lewis-Champlin School at 320 W. Englewood Avenue.43
JOHNSON AND THE 1936 PRINCIPALS' EXAMINATION

His budget expenses were not the most serious charges. Johnson's handling of the 1936-1937 principal's examination drew even greater fire. The most damaging evidence in this regard came early in his career as assistant superintendent of the Chicago schools in 1935 and as superintendent in 1936-1937. No sooner had Johnson been appointed assistant superintendent in 1935, then he announced that he was a candidate for the superintendency, in which capacity most teachers knew he would head the board of examiners. He told those who were interested in taking the principals' examination that his private classes in administration at Loyola University would be most helpful in preparing for the forthcoming exam. He continued securing students for his classes even after he was elected superintendent. 44

Before Johnson's appointment the counsel of the board advised that owing to Bogan's death there was no legal board of examiners. It was recommended that the examination dates be changed from 27, 28, and 29 April 1936 as was set by Bogan, to 9, 10, and 11 September 1936. The entire board agreed to the new dates due to legal issues.45

In spite of the mounting criticism, Johnson continued offering classes at Loyola University of Chicago that prepared candidates for the principals' examination. His class enrollment catapulted to over two hundred students.
from the original fifty. Having the dates changed from April to September 1936, gave him a few more months to solicit new students. One source mentioned:

Rumor had spread quickly that enrollment in the course would assure one's success in the approaching Principals' Examination. . . . The criticism that was directed at Johnson in the summer of 1935 to the effect that he was using his position in the School System to further his own personal ends was brought into sharp relief when the list of successful candidates . . . was published showing . . . former pupils captured 122 out of a total of 155 positions on the list.46

The principal's examination consisted of a written and an oral portion. The written part was given in September 1936 and graded by February 1937. The oral interviews were given during March 1937, with the results published in April 1937. All candidates knew the written part consisted of a test of the candidates' knowledge of major subjects and professional study. The technical requisites for the position and a number of minor scholastic subjects completed the written examination. The oral and written parts were each to count one half of the total grade. To pass the examination all candidates knew these rules: (1) One must obtain a mark of a least 70 percent on the written portion
of the test and a mark of at least 70 percent on the oral part; (2) no mark in any subject can be below 50 percent; and one must finally obtain an average score on the whole examination of 80 percent. But what did Johnson do? He altered the oral part of the examination without the legal authority of the board of examiners by dividing it into two parts: (1) evaluation of record; and (2) personal oral examination. Each part was made to count 25 percent of the total grade. A grade of at least 75 percent was required to pass the personal oral examination. If candidates did not obtain a grade of 75 percent, they failed the whole examination.47

It is interesting to note that shortly after the appointment of the new principals in April 1937, the Chicago board business manager recommended ordering a 1937 Cadillac, V12-7 Sedan for the express use of Superintendent Johnson at a cost of $4,538.50 minus the trade-in of Bogan's car of $1,184.50. The reason for this needed change were stated to be the dilapidated and broken down condition of the three year old car with 48,326 miles on the speedometer. The board believed the cost of repairs to such a worn out car was prohibitive. Realistically cars were built to last many years in those days and it seemed likely that this one was well cared for. A car with less than 50,000 miles could hardly be considered dilapidated. It would appear therefore
that the cadillac was a reward for services rendered by
Johnson to McCahey.48

J.J. Zmrhal, a district superintendent unable to live
with the knowledge of corruption, decided to expose the
superintendent. By his sworn affidavit on 14 March 1938,
the public became aware of all that had transpired during
the orals and Johnson's corrupt practices. To add greater
credence to Zmrhal's affidavit, Daniel J. Beeby, who had
been a member of the examining committee, upon his retire­
ment, also came forward and stated:

J.J. Zmrhal's affidavit is a true and accurate
statement as to the conduct of the principals'
oral examination.49

Zmrhal recalled that before Raymond M. Cook (who became
the dean of Chicago Teachers College under the next
superintendent) entered the room for his oral, Johnson
stated to the committee: "This man is out; he is disloyal."
After Cook had been questioned by the committee Johnson said
in substance, the following: "This man has high marks on
the written and evaluation. I will have to mark him low
enough so as to be sure to fail him." Zmrhal and George
Cassell protested against the giving of a very low grade to
Cook and said in view of his obvious fitness it would
vitiate the whole system of oral examination. To these
objections Johnson replied in substance: "Oh, what dif­
ference does it make?" After their protests Johnson said he would change Cook's oral grade from 50 percent to 70 percent. Zmrhal also reported about the cases of Lyle Wolf and Russell Wise. Before they entered the room for the oral examination Johnson said they were disloyal and regardless of what the committee might feel, they could not be passed. According to Zmrhal, he understood Johnson to mean "dis­loyal" to the administration in charge of the Chicago schools.50

According to District Superintendent Zmrhal, after all the candidates were interviewed for the oral examinations, the examining committee was called into session to affix their signatures without being given a chance to compare the names of candidates and their grades. Because the committee had confidence in the superintendent and honestly believed the names presented were those they had passed, they signed the lists. Zmrhal said he discovered upon reading the list in the newspaper that some of the candidates who had failed the personal oral examination were listed as successful. It was then that he realized what had happened. The "eligible list" and the examination were both attacked for their legality in the courts. Three important law suits are reviewed below:51

The first case involving the principals' examination was Hiram S. Loomis and Russel L. Wise vs. Board of
Education, James B. McCahey, et al. Loomis, a former principal of Hyde Park High, and Wise a teacher at Kelly brought this suit as taxpayers. Wise had failed Johnson's oral examination. He was an active leader of teachers' organizations and considered disloyal according to the testimony of J. J. Zmrhal. Loomis and Wise believed that the 1936 exam was carried out with fraud intended, to deprive all but 155 candidates success. They asked for an injunction against the appointment of any person on the list. The board wanted the case dismissed, but Superior Court Judge Niemeyer granted the injunction saying that the serious nature of the alleged facts demanded the voidance of the examination. The court ordered the board to answer these charges. The board refused and decided to honor the injunction voiding the list rather than permit a trial of facts. The board immediately appealed. The appellate court set aside the injunction on the ground the plaintiffs as taxpayers, "did not suffer any injury (monetary) and a court of equity could not grant relief."

Raymond M. Cook sued for a writ of mandamus asking the board to issue him a principal's certificate. He had received very high marks in the written part of the examination (91.25), and in the part dealing with the evaluation of his scholastic record he was also high (92.5). However, his grade on the oral examination was only 70. Just prior
to the 1936 examination the board of examiners changed the passing grade on the oral part from 70 to 75 depriving the candidates of the right to average their oral grades with their evaluation grades. He said the board had no right to change the rules, but did not go so far as to charge the board with fraud. The superior court ordered the board to give Cook a principal's certificate. The board appealed and was successful. The appellate court stated it was within the powers of the board of examiners to apply the test independently of the board or any rules made by it.

Lemuel Minnis also petitioned for mandamus asking for a principal's certificate. His complaint was that the personal oral committee (consisting of assistant and district superintendents) gave him a passing grade on the oral but that Johnson manipulated the results in such a manner that Minnis received a grade of sixty, instead of the ninety-one given to him by the committee. This suit was filed as a result of the exposures made in the famous "Zmrhal Affidavit." The board countered with a motion to dismiss. Judge Donald S. Mckinley threw out the case on the ground that the board of examiners sanctioned Johnson's action. By using the Cook case the judge said the board could do just as they pleased in the conduct of the examinations. This left the legislature with the job of enacting a more equitable and foolproof system.
Before the case was dismissed, J. J. Zmrhal testified as to the records in his notebook concerning the decisions of the oral committee. Even though Johnson told the committee not to take notes he did keep a record of the oral exams. His deposition showed that the final results given by the board of examiners varied considerably from the recommendations of the committee, tending to prove the charges Minnis had made. The other members of the personal oral committee refused to appear even though they were subpoenaed. Only Zmrhal appeared. Dismissal of this case saved the board from having to defend allegations against it. Following the Otis Law to the letter, the courts held that the board of examiners was all powerful.

School officials remembered that Zmrhal was a witness against William McAndrew when he was ousted as school superintendent in 1928. McAndrew later won vindication in the courts after being accused of acting as "a tool of King George." Johnson did not remain quiet about the outcome of the court cases and the principals examination. Johnson commenting on charges made by J.J. Zmrhal said: 53

Such a statement is ridiculous and absurd. The affidavit, like other charges against the school system was made for political purposes. . . . I called in ten superintendents for the oral tests, to obtain their advice and recommendations as to
the fitness of the candidates. . . . The teachers selected as principals were named entirely on their merit and in complete accordance with school laws. . . . The advisory board worked day and night for six weeks to hear each candidate.54

Many more irregularities came to light after the "eligible list" was published. The Zmrhal report claimed that Johnson deliberately prevented those candidates hostile to his administration from becoming qualified for the principal's certificate, while other less qualified candidates passed. The civic organizations vowed to rid the Chicago schools of this corruption. They were, however, to meet many obstacles.55

Among those that passed the examination were Marie McCahey, sister of the board president. Twelve others were the first fifteen principals to be assigned. Marie had failed two previous examinations but now was made principal of Warren Elementary School much to the dismay of the teachers at that school. They so feared her power that none joined the teachers' union. Also her PTA was so terrorized that it was afraid to meet in school. "Miss Marie" had belonged to the union for awhile because her brother decided it would be advantageous. Celestine Igoe had been a physical education teacher at McKinley in 1936. She took the principals' examination, passed it, and was one of the
first persons to become a principal. It was due to the influence of her brother Michael L. Igoe, a Democratic party leader who later became a federal judge. Almost all of the 155 successful applicants had connections and were traced to some immediate sponsor or relative who had "clout." Johnson took care of those who had clout. Johnson was rewarded for his part in placing political favorites in the schools as principals. McCahey was really responsible for this idea. He felt he could get away with this oral examination evaluation, because it was used in principals' examinations conducted by Bogan, McAndrews and other predecessors of Johnson. Henry S. Crane, secretary of the board of examiners, mentioned the prior use of orals in an interview with a Tribune reporter in May 1938. Crane also mentioned that the purpose of the oral examination was to screen candidates who had passed the written part. This oral interview, was used to evaluate intangible factors such as executive ability, tact, command of the English language, power of expression, loyalty to the administration of the schools, and ability to deal with parents, teachers and pupils. Physical appearance, aptitude, and personality were also important qualifications. The examiners unanimously decided that those possessing these abilities and qualities should be passed. What Crane neglected to mention was that the oral interview was misused by the board of examiners in
the recent principals' examination. With Johnson willing to concede to his demands, the board president conveniently used the superintendent to manipulate the outcome of these orals to the advantage of favorite candidates. Johnson was willing to carry out the president's orders, and McCahey was able to get Johnson to become the "fall guy" when the outcome of the examinations were disputed. Although Johnson did willingly participate in these corrupt practices, he took all the blame; McCahey was hit also but not as hard. Johnson perhaps felt that if he had to take this punishment it was worth it. He wanted to remain the superintendent and was determined to take the good with the bad. He honestly he felt could make some worthwhile contributions to the school system. He was young and enthusiastic about his many untried ideas for enhancing the curriculum. He firmly believed vocational training would help students find jobs after leaving the high schools.57

The Chicago Teachers' Union and the Chicago Division of the Illinois Education Association with the support of the Citizens' Schools Committee tried in vain to pass legislation in 1941 and in 1947 to create a new kind of board of examiners independent of the schools superintendent. The Otis Law of 1918 brought the board of examiners into being and this law is still in effect and will remain the standard used by schools until July 1988 when the State of Illinois
will abolish the board of examiners in the Chicago Public Schools. At that time all certification of Chicago's teachers and principals will revert back to the state.58

PERSONAL TRAGEDY STRIKES

During this period Johnson suffered a personal loss in his life even greater then the loss of public esteem. Johnson's wife, Lillian Mattocks Johnson, died after a long illness in November 1937. He was deeply grieved at her death but was expecting it for some time since he had taken her to Mayo Clinic. There he was told there was little hope for her survival. He had been very happily married to his first wife. Five months after her death in April 1938 he married her nurse, Helen Ronan. She came to Chicago from the Mayo Clinic to care for Lillian. Johnson's daughter Patricia Joyce (adopted by the Johnsons shortly after her birth) was only nineteen months old when her adoptive mother, Lillian, died. Johnson needed a mother for the child as well as a wife. Helen was thirty when Johnson married her, and he was forty-one. They became a very devoted couple over their forty-two years of marriage. She did not work and remained in the home caring for Johnson's daughter. Neither of his wives bore him children. Bill Johnson was not a judgmental father; he seldom criticized. His adopted daughter was always able to talk with him, and
he denied her nothing as far as material things were concerned. However, he was harsh in that he made few allowances for weaknesses in people and as had been stated earlier he could ignore some of her wishes and feelings. Johnson was seldom home because of his many educational endeavors. Believing in toughness he taught her how to be a survivor. Rarely did they go out having fun as a family group. On the other hand, she had lovely clothes, toys, books, and records, but his daughter would have preferred having him spend time with her. Instead, he enjoyed bowling with his wife every week; they seemed to enjoy each other's company. He was very frugal, often selling his daughter's books, toys, records and clothing when he decided she no longer needed them. He did not believe in sentimental attachments to objects.59

Johnson was to continue his hostile attitudes toward the teachers throughout his tenure in office. Some of the time this hostility was caused by the open bias expressed against him since he had taken office. He perhaps felt he had to be on the defensive constantly with the teachers. Often they were unfair in not giving him credit for the innovations that he introduced into the schools that did work out well such as: the new record systems; the remedial reading programs; the adjustment teachers in all the schools; and by and large repeated attempts to assist
students in choosing some type of a vocation if they did not go on to college. The teachers, however, were never to forgive Johnson for the infamous 1936 principals' examination scandal.
CHAPTER THREE NOTES


5. A Stenographic Report of a Meeting Held by Special Assistant Superintendent William H. Johnson with the Teachers of English, at the Kilmer School Auditorium, Greenviwe and North Shore Avenues, 17 March 1936, 1, Folder 7, Box 28, CTU Files, Chicago, Chicago Historical Society Archives.

6. Ibid., 2.

7. Ibid., 4.

8. Ibid., 5.


10. Ibid., 27-30.

11. Ibid., 60-61.

12. Ibid., 79.

13. Ibid., 79-80.

14. Ibid., 83.

15. Ibid., 97.


18. "The Danger of Free Public Education." A radio broadcast made by Mr. Bogan, Men Teachers' Union Series, 3 October 1932, Folder 3, Box 36, CTU Files, Chicago, Chicago Historical Society Archives.


23. John Howatt, First Hundred Years of Chicago School History (Chicago: Chicago Board of Education, 1940), 52.


26. Ibid., 267.


32. Ibid. 1,4.

33. Hazlett, 150-151.


44. Herrick, 247.

45. Proceedings, 16 April 1936, 1118.


47. The Unitarian Fellowship for Social Justice, Committee on Public Schools and The Chicago Unitarian Council Committee on Freedom and Humanity, Matters Now Of Public Record Concerning the Conduct of William H. Johnson Superintendent of the Chicago Public Schools: An Appeal for

48. Proceedings, 8 April 1937, 1155.


50. Ibid., 11.

51. Ibid., 12.

52. What follows is taken from: "The 1936 Principals' Examination Results of the Law Suits." n.d., Folder 1, Box 32, CTU Files, Chicago: Chicago Historical Society Archives.

53. Ibid.


55. Herrick, 247-249.


58. Chicago Teachers Union Statement at Chicago City Council Hearing on the N.E.A. Report 18 March 1946, Box 24, CTU Files, Chicago, Chicago Historical Society Archives.

59. Mrs. Patricia Watson interview, 26 June 1987.
CHAPTER IV
STORM OF DISCONTENT SURFACES

The charges of corruption that were hurled at Johnson, due to his involvement in the 1936 principals' examination, hung heavily over his head. The CTU, church and civic organizations, especially the CSC, vowed to rid the Chicago schools of Johnson and political corruption. These problems clouded the innovations that the superintendent was trying to make in the school system. While these group hostilities were occurring and growing rapidly into a storm of protest against him, Johnson brought in new ideas. For the most part, his programs were firsts. They were on the cutting edge of what the research said should be happening.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND HONORS

It is important to take the reader back to 1937 to view some of Johnson's major accomplishments and innovations. During the stormy accusations against Johnson by parents, teachers and community organizations, the Tribune was giving Johnson credit for the declining truancy rate in the Chicago schools. It was noted that in 1924-1925 there were almost seven thousand truants. By 1937-1938 truancy had been cut to less than four thousand. Johnson was credited with the reduction of truants. This reduction resulted
from his demand for an increase in staff officers who visited all four hundred schools and branches. The superintendent also insisted on the specific training of staff officers who, after training, became much more effective in their jobs.

Along with his interest in reducing truancy, Johnson must be given credit for the continuous uninterrupted education of elementary school children at a time when Chicago was faced with a poliomyelitis outbreak in September 1937. The polio epidemic closed the schools for two weeks, yet Johnson kept the educational programs operating. Using radio broadcasts and the newspapers the superintendent devised a plan, to educate the elementary school pupils while they were at home. He monitored the planning of programs which consisted of four major subjects: English, math, science, and social studies for grades three through eight. Johnson estimated that 315,000 pupils listened to the educational lessons that were broadcast on the radio. Parents helped their children by following the lesson plans in the Chicago daily newspapers. A hotline was set up that answered parents' questions about the polio outbreak and the educational radio programs. All available educational personnel were recruited to answer phones at the board. On their return to school pupils were tested on the material learned over the airways and in the newspapers. Johnson
was praised for his ideas and efforts by university professors and other educators. The superintendent wrote an article describing what he did, for the Chicago dailies and received more praise after his article appeared in The New York Times.²

During the late thirties Johnson made an outstanding contribution to the students of the public schools through his special interest in radio which he nurtured. The superintendent was understandably proud of his WPA project innovations which brought a radio council into the schools. Experimentation, testing of programs, psychology of listening, and techniques of classroom procedure were stressed. Students, from one hundred schools came to the board studios and spent a portion of an afternoon watching rehearsals and demonstrations of studio techniques. They participated as actors and actresses; many even shared in producing and planning the broadcasts.³

While this innovation was occurring a major Chicago newspaper encouraged the superintendent to spread the good news about his innovative projects. A year long series of articles written by Johnson were printed in a weekly column in the Chicago Evening American between 1938 and 1939. In several of these articles Johnson commented on the important educational methods used to improve the children's knowledge of the subject matter to be learned. He wrote the articles
in order to acquaint parents and interested citizens with current effective implementation of educational programs in the schools. Methods of teaching verse writing, arithmetic, and science through radio broadcasts were stressed in Johnson's articles. He also stressed Americanism and wrote about the meaning of special patriotic holidays.4

While continuing to write for the Chicago newspapers the superintendent instituted a new program during this time. He called it the three-point program which was thought of as one of Johnson's major innovative ideas by many other school systems throughout the country. The first point of the program included the improvement of reading and the adoption of remedial reading for low achievers. Demonstration centers were set up so that teachers and administrators could be inserviced on the latest and best methods to be used in teaching reading as well as other school subjects. The second point included a new cumulative recording system. Permanent academic records for each child were to be kept on a master card. This cumulative record contained psychological testing information as well as subject grades. Each child's cumulative card and individual folder was kept up to date and forwarded to the teacher in the next grade when the child was promoted. These permanent records followed the students throughout their high school years. The student's
folder also contained pertinent information about the child including notes from parents, health records, mastery of work charts, teacher-parent conferences, and information on individual differences. (The cumulative cards and folders with some modifications are still used in the Chicago schools to this day.) The third point stressed socialization which called for the training of children through participation in school management, student councils, and school assemblies. The second point of Johnson's three point program was the most important. He was the first superintendent in a large school system to successfully plan and execute an effective procedure of record keeping. It was regarded as one of his major innovations and became a prototype for many educational systems.5

During this same period of time the superintendent made another notable contribution. He showed a concern for pupils with special problems who needed speech services that were not available in the school system. He introduced a speech clinic into the Chicago schools, with an expert speech pathologist in charge. Pupils with suspected speech defects were referred to the pathologist by field psychologists at the home school.

Two other innovations of Johnson's were the new elementary school report card and the use of printing instead of cursive writing for small children. He was
concerned about the children whose limited abilities required needed changes in reporting their progress. He did away with percentage grades and used the terms satisfactory and unsatisfactory. This was fairer to the children who worked diligently although they had limited ability to do the work. Due to Johnson's insistence, a new method of manuscript writing (commonly known as upper and lower case printing) was also adopted for primary children from kindergarten through second grade. According to Johnson research proved that the similarity of the manuscript writing with the printed word, made teaching reading and writing more meaningful for children and developed faster and better reading ability. Many of the school systems around the Chicago area followed his advice on using manuscript writing.

Another important innovation of Johnson's also concerned the teachers and pupils in the kindergarten-primary grades. The superintendent was very cognizant of the close emotional relationship and attachments that young children formed for their teachers. He realized that something had to be done to cement that relationship and protect it. He instituted a requirement that kindergarten teachers advance and stay with their initial group through and including the second grade. He called this the Kindergarten-Primary Cycle Plan. The superintendent
believed that as the children progressed with the same teacher they experienced a feeling of security that encouraged them to adjust more easily to classwork.\textsuperscript{7}

Johnson was credited with a first when he initiated the use of demonstration centers as an innovative way to inservice the teachers throughout the elementary school system. Forty-five demonstration centers were set up in the schools to help principals and teachers learn interesting new methods and procedures in the teaching of reading, mathematics, science, social studies, and mechanical arts. Johnson was especially interested in science. To make sure that science was not neglected resource units were written, mimeographed by the curriculum department and sent to all the seventh and eighth grades teachers. He also improved the lower grade's course of study and a weekly science bulletin was initiated giving teaching suggestions.\textsuperscript{8}

A paramount innovation that was heralded as a first was completed by Johnson during 1939 and 1940. He was credited with getting trained adjustment teachers into the elementary schools and high schools. Every school had one trained adjustment teacher. These teachers were responsible for testing children's intelligence and proficiency in reading and other subjects. It was through their efforts that special cases were brought to the attention of the Bureau of Child Study. The bureau in turn sent out psychologists who
then diagnosed the pupils. Some were found to be gifted, others mentally retarded. Many more were slow learners or reading disabled. Getting needed information about the children's abilities into the hands of the classroom teachers, was the important job of the adjustment teacher in every school. Each adjustment teacher was trained to coach seriously retarded readers. Although it was difficult for teachers to provide individualized instruction, the cumulative record system and the adjustment service were helpful in improving instruction in the schools. Johnson noted that competition with others was not to be fostered. The focus was on the successful improvement of the child’s own record. This increased the pupil's satisfaction with himself. In other words self-competition was to be fostered. Johnson was the first superintendent of a large school system to bring adjustment teachers into all the schools. His employment and training of these teachers for each school throughout the system was another first nation wide.

With the help of WPA funding Johnson inaugurated an important service in the high schools called the placement counseling service. This service was offered to all students who left school including graduates and "drop-outs" alike. The students were counseled regarding the kind of jobs they were qualified to do. A placement clearance
center was organized as a part of the Bureau of Occupational Research. The center tabulated information about available jobs sent by public agencies. Applicants for work were screened and job placements made. Placement counselors in the schools talked with students' prospective employers and to the public agencies that hired workers. Typing and stenographic tests aimed at meeting certain employment standards were given to those students who desired that kind of work. The assignment of a placement counselor in each high school made it possible to build a cooperative placement service which had already received national recognition. Again Johnson was probably the first superintendent of a large metropolitan public school system, that successfully implemented this necessary service for the students.  

While Johnson was initiating the cooperative placement service in the high schools he made an outstanding contribution to the vocational education program already in the school system. His aim was to develop policies to bring the public schools into harmony with current trends in a changing society. In keeping with these policies he established the vocational education department in the schools in the late thirties. He was vitally interested in trade and industrial education. He surmised that research expanded men's knowledge in the mechanical, electrical and,
manufacturing fields. The superintendent concluded that the relationship between the old type of classical education and the technical knowledge required in modern industrial development was becoming more and more remote. The rapid growth of the vocational training programs necessitated provisions for additional supervisory and coordinating activities. This service was provided through the vocational office at the board. Approximately 212 teachers were enrolled in formal classes in vocational education. Because of the joint efforts of Johnson and the labor unions a total of fifty-five different trade or industrial courses were offered.11

Johnson's crowning accomplishment in vocational education transpired in 1940. The superintendent outlined a $13 million "progressive" construction program to relieve overcrowding and promised an end to double shifts in the high schools. The program was initiated in 1940 and was completed by September 1941. The new $3.5 million south side Chicago Vocational School was opened in 1940 located at Eighty-seventh and Chappell Avenues. The school was named the Chicago Vocational School, and was set on twenty-three acres that accommodated four thousand students. Johnson proudly introduced a new type of education, combining vocational training with academic work. This new program was another first for Johnson.12
A monumental first as far as programs were concerned, was Johnson's introduction of a Black history course of study in the Chicago Public Schools to meet the needs of the minority students. Such a course of study was long overdue as far as Johnson was concerned even though it was first introduced in 1939. He was anxious to meet the needs of the minority Black children in the school system. An accurate account of how he became interested in a Black course of study follows.

Johnson was visited at the board one day in June of 1939 by one of his former teachers at Volta School who was one of the "Dirty Thirty-Six," as the principals from the 1936 examination called themselves. He trusted her and he often shared his education concerns with her and the teachers at Volta. This time, however, her visit was prompted by concerns for the children in her school. She was the principal of the Emerson Elementary School in 1939, the population of which was almost entirely Black. Most of the teachers were also Black and showed concern over the lack of a history course of study for minority children. Because of her teachers' interest in Black history she went downtown to the board to talk to Johnson about it. She was instrumental in convincing the superintendent that such a course was greatly needed in the Chicago schools. Johnson believed it should be initiated to help develop black
children's pride in their heritage. Johnson wholeheartedly accepted her suggestion and encouraged the principal to send her best teacher, Madeline Morgan, to design the course of study. With the help of the department of curriculum under and the watchful eyes of Johnson, Morgan developed Black American Heritage. It was welcomed with open arms in Black minority schools in Chicago as well as in schools all over the U.S. that were interested in Black history. He was one of the first, if not the first superintendent from a large metropolitan school system, to include Black history in the curriculum.13

Johnson was in fact so pleased with his accomplishments in the schools that he wrote an important article gleaned from an address he delivered to educators on 20 January 1940, at Northwestern University. In the article he listed the most important accomplishments of his career up to and including the year of 1939. It dealt with addressing the problems of individual differences of children in a large school system. He noted that many children suffered failure in school without having a fair chance at success. As a result their reading ability was impaired. Johnson stated that about 36 percent of the Chicago's public school children entering first grade were not ready to read. He discussed the pre-reading plan. Thus helping primary children who had not reached the appropriate mental age
which was suggested by researchers for successful reading. It also helped these children increase pride in their pre-reading abilities and developed new interests. They were given a chance to complete activities with success. Johnson discussed his two-track plan, which allowed brighter children to finish elementary school in seven years instead of eight. He mentioned his "pupil-managed" reading program of individualized reading improvement. His individualized techniques were also successfully used with children in special education classes for the physically and mentally handicapped. He proudly pointed to the counseling for gifted students which helped channel their aptitudes and interests in the right direction. Also mentioned were the industrial arts program and the health program which provided the best services for children in the schools. Johnson stated that junior college students also needed individual guidance to encourage them to continue on to senior college.14

The superintendent was apparently well respected by teachers who left the classroom and went to work for him at the central office. It is important to note that Johnson was still able to work effectively with the people whom he chose to work with him. He wasn't hostile toward persons he felt were loyal to him and with whom he could work harmoniously. One of those employees at the board was Mary
Lusson, who was assigned by Johnson as the assistant to the secretary of the board of curriculum. She worked for the board after passing the 1936 principals' examination, and remained the director for forty-six years. Apparently, she admired Johnson very much. Later in the fifties and sixties, she worked for two other superintendents, Dr. Hunt and Dr. Willis. She believed Johnson was the best educator of them all. He was a teacher at heart. She remembered designing various curricula that Johnson recommended. He wanted superior teachers to be picked by district superintendents to come to the board. They came and worked on curriculum projects. With the help of Nellie Ryan for English, Dr. Graham for science and Dr. Rogers for math, individual teams of teachers worked out curriculum related details after meetings. The work was edited and mimeographed for the schools at the board. This saved money because printing was expensive. All work was carefully checked under the direction of Dr. Johnson, and quickly dispatched to all the schools. According to Mary Lusson:

Johnson was outstanding. He couldn't get enough of school. He wasn't a public man. He didn't hob-nob. He knew what he was doing and he directed us.15

There were more bright spots in Johnson's life. He was honored in May 1938 by the Volta Elementary School,
where he was principal before his superintendency. A packed school auditorium heard him praised by the people of the neighborhood around the school. A bust of Johnson was presented to the school by the PTA through a funded "WPA Federal Art Project." A plaque cited Dr. Johnson's name and length of service at Volta. The Von Steuben Symphonic Choir was there to honor him along with Volta's principal, Frank D. Lino who stated that Dr. Johnson, "has been the guiding force in the destinies of your children." Also in attendance was Clarence Lineberger, Principal of Washburne Trade School, who called Johnson the "Happy Warrior" and "an esteemed friend and a progressive leader." 16

Johnson acknowledged with appreciation the honor afforded him and took the opportunity to tell the audience to look for proof of charges made by his critics. Johnson stated that if vested interests opposed WPA work a fight was what they would get. He stated that his vocational educational program had been misrepresented, and that people shouldn't be persuaded to think that the school board was political. He said that he operated the school without being dictated to and would continue in that manner. He was remembered by Volta's teachers as an excellent administrator and teacher who was willing to share his expertise in methods of teaching. He was also praised for his ability to accept new ideas. 17
Although the superintendent seldom mentioned the following honors that he received he was surely pleased with them. Johnson was awarded the honorary degree of Doctor of Letters for his leadership in Vocational Education by John Brown University in Arkansas in 1938. Also, the honorary degree of Doctor of Law was awarded to him in 1939 at Chicago Teachers College. He received honors from the Greek government in recognition for his services to education and was decorated and awarded the "Commander Order of Phoenix" which was conferred on him in 1939. He served as president of the Illinois Industrial Education Association from 1939-1942. He also held the office of president in the Illinois Vocational Education Association for the years 1941-1942. Unfortunately Johnson's educational innovations and contributions were to be overshadowed by a storm of protest initiated by teachers, parents, church and civic groups against his administration.

POLITICS AND THE SCHOOLS

The principal's examination was not the only thorn in Johnson's side. There were other problems and political machinations that deeply concerned teachers, parents, citizens and religious groups. First of all, teachers were frightened about the serious cases of transfers and demotions that left them little control over their own
professional lives. They felt helpless, if these things could happen to a few teachers in the profession, it could happen to them. Teachers, civic and church organizations were also upset over the awarding of temporary certificates to politically "right" people. Parents, civic, and religious groups were concerned about graft and politics in the schools. They wanted an end to the general confusion in the system that upset teachers and students. Second, the CTU leadership had difficulty establishing rapport with the administration in order to present teacher grievances. Teachers feared for their professional lives, because they thought they had no voice. All of this lead them to wonder if the superintendent was really qualified for the position. Although Johnson was carrying out board policies in most instances he absorbed the major repercussions of the criticism. People felt that the board controlled him and that ultimately Kelly and McCahey used him as an accessible scapegoat. What follows is an account of these problems in detail.

William McCoy, a principal, was transferred suddenly in March 1937 from the principalship of Bowen High School to the principalship of the Biedler Elementary School. Parents, teachers and citizen groups protested the transfer to no avail. McCoy had committed the sin of differing on several occasions with a subordinate who happened to have
powerful machine connections. McCoy's salary was also reduced by seven hundred dollars in the transfer. He protested to the board in May 1937. In a lower court he charged that he was removed from the high school without just cause. When he lost his case he appealed. The appellate court ruled that the board could transfer principals from high schools to elementary schools "as the best interest of the respective schools may require." This court said his tenure rights were not violated. In a final effort he asked the Illinois Supreme Court to review the case, but the court refused. Civic organizations protested his removal and charged that it was a political move.19 Two years later John Fewkes, President of the Chicago Teachers Union, submitted a final plea for restoring McCoy's position; writing a letter to Johnson in March 1939 he reminded him that McCoy would be retiring in November. Johnson ignored the letter because he knew McCahey would refuse to consider it.20

Butler Laughlin, President of the Chicago Normal College, was also targeted for demotion when he objected to McCahey's interference in the college's administration. He was transferred to the principalship of the Lindblom High School. Such tactics continued to haunt Laughlin who was still there in 1942 when Frankland, a board member and president of the local steamfitters' union, visited
Lindblom. Frankland was displeased with the vocational education program and immediately voiced his displeasure at a board meeting. After speaking to McCahey, Johnson told Laughlin that he had no choice but to reassign him to another school. He was transferred to Harper High School soon after at no loss of salary. One source said that he was transferred to make way for a relative of the board's president.21

Another problem for Johnson was in the awarding of temporary certificates. He was accused of approving them for teachers who did not have valid certificates, while 2,450 teachers with valid certificates were on waiting lists. In April 1938 a young certified teacher was interviewed by a Chicago newspaper reporter. She told the reporter that temporary teachers had replaced assigned teachers who were on sabbatical leaves. This happened despite the mimeographed statement that authorized substitutes had to be approved by the substitute center first. During the year regularly certificated substitutes were replaced by inefficient and unqualified temporary appointees whenever Dr. Johnson's office learned of extended leaves of absence. Temporary teachers were selected from a special list in Johnson's office without the knowledge of the substitute center. Many teachers felt that this political patronage policy needed a thorough exposure in the Chicago
By February 1939 it appeared that there were three hundred of these sabbatical jobs kept open for patronage. One principal who was afraid to be named told a Daily News reporter that the temporary teachers came in and told him who sponsored them. Sometimes it was a board member or an alderman or a ward committeeman. Many principals were accustomed to bending over backwards to avoid offending the temporaries.

A few months later in April 1939 the outspoken church group that negatively tabulated Johnson's problems with the principals' examination raised a loud voice against Johnson's political policies involving temporary teachers. The Chicago Unitarian Council accused Johnson of using temporary certificates to practice "wider control over the political views and loyalties of these teachers." The council believed that it "constitutes a direct threat to academic freedom." It held the mayor as well as the school chief responsible for tolerating this system. The council angrily protested the increased use of temporary appointments for high school and junior college teachers. The church group reflected the opinions of many teachers when they stated that they deplored the trend in which unqualified teachers obtained positions because of political influence. The council believed that this practice was
detrimental to the children and to the standards of instruction. A letter of protest relating this sentiment was sent to the board. The board completely ignored the letter.25

Eight months later in December of 1939 Henry S. Crane, secretary of the board of examiners, defended Johnson against the teachers, principals, church, and civic groups that criticized the way the superintendent appointed temporary teachers. Crane was quoted in a newspaper article and said that there were 1,012 temporary teachers. More than 436 of the temporary teachers were used in the evening schools because it was not the policy of the board to employ the same person for day and evening school teaching. He commented to the reporter that the 148 Chicago Teachers' College graduates holding temporary certificates were elementary teachers who were also qualified to substitute in the high schools. There were 316 temporary teachers in the day high schools. Crane defended the assignments of temporary teachers to fill sabbaticals. He mentioned that this was done by the superintendent to avoid another change in teachers for the children. Crane said that the superintendent was concerned about the welfare of the children when the certified teacher who substituted left that class and took a permanent assignment.26

Unfortunately Johnson didn't care about the two thousand
teachers on the waiting list. With the declining enrollment they were not likely to get jobs substituting every day unless they had political pull.27

Meanwhile as accusations against Johnson for his involvement with the temporary certificates for patronage increased, there were bitter resentments expressed by other groups against Johnson's corrupt practices during the principals' examination. These people insisted either on his resignation or his ostracism. This denouncement started early in 1938 and continued to build into a major storm of protest over his retention. In February 1938 the administration was angered when it was learned while reading the Daily News that a campaign was launched by the CSC, to tell members of 1,050 Protestant churches to support the Citizens' Schools Committee, so that it could more effectively safeguard the schools. Pastors were asked to discuss the schools' "political spoils system" with their congregations. The CSC asked for five thousand new members with a membership fee of one dollar. The churches readily agreed to speak to their congregations because it was imperative to rid the school system of politics and especially the superintendent. The CSC was able to increase its membership so that it was close to the expected new membership mark of five thousand.28

Shortly after this mass appeal for membership the
Chicago branch of the American Association of University Women angrily demanded that the board remove Johnson from office. The group stated that because of Johnson's conduct in the principals' examination the results of the examination should be voided. The university women stated that a school system could not serve a community efficiently unless the merit system was in use and sent the board a letter in which they requested that he be removed from office as soon as possible. The board ignored the communication.

Not only were the citizens unhappy with Superintendent Johnson, they were also dissatisfied with the board president. In April 1938 the Citizens' Schools Committee and the Illinois Congress of Parent and Teachers sent a delegation to the mayor's office to protest the reappointment of McCahey, the board president, and to ask Kelly to appoint a committee to probe the charges against the board and the superintendent as soon as litigation on similar charges in the courts was over. The delegations said that confidence in the board had been seriously undermined and that the investigation was necessary. The mayor promised an investigation but it never materialized. The courts exonerated the board of examiners and Johnson in the three cases involving Loomis and Wise, Raymond Cook, and Lemuel Minnis. The mayor did nothing about the requested investigation. His attitude angered these groups even further.29
Also, as a result of the principals' examination the Illinois Congress of Parents and Teachers dropped Johnson from their list of fourteen advisors on education; it was probable that the state PTA had lost complete confidence in Johnson. In a telegram to the board The Chicago Church Federation stated that the loss of respect for the school superintendent because of charges of dishonesty needed an immediate investigation. Again the board did nothing about these written communications and completely ignored the situation. A storm of indignation and disbelief by the people was steadily growing.30

A year after Kelly's reelection the city club wrote Mayor Kelly a letter in April 1940 and asked that Johnson not be reappointed superintendent for four more years. They said that he contributed to the complete breakdown of the merit system in the public schools. They told Kelly that his record as mayor would forever be remembered as "the doom of honesty and decency in the appointment and promotion of teachers and principals." The letter from the city club was completely overlooked by Kelly.31

A year later in 1941 Johnson was very much aware of the continued anger expressed by many PTA, civic, church and teacher groups, against his behavior during the principals' examination of 1936-1937. He was so fed up with the negative remarks and accusations of corruption against
him that he tried to stop the barrage of charges. He would not get involved in another oral examination scandal. This desire probably prompted Johnson to write a letter to President Snyder of Northwestern University in May 1941. In it he asked for the names of five professors who could participate in oral examinations of candidates for the fall semester admission to Chicago Teachers' College. These oral examinations were scheduled for the summer of 1941. He sent similar letters to the presidents of Loyola, DePaul, Chicago and Illinois universities. The president of Northwestern complied with Johnson's request and submitted the names. It is not known if the other university presidents responded to his letters. This effort by Johnson seemed to make little difference to the groups that were calling for his resignation.32

CITY HALL POLITICS AND SCHOOLS

Meanwhile during the time that Johnson faced a storm of protest over his corrupt practices in the schools, Kelly in another arena was having his worries about all the opposition he encountered because of Johnson and the schools. Delegations of citizens and parents came to him with their complaints about the board and Johnson. Ten members of the Illinois Congress of Parents and Teachers met with Kelly in March of 1938 charging that teaching jobs in
the Chicago schools were being given out by politicians either for graft or as a reward for being politically "right." Kelly had heard such charges before and stated:

Maybe a niece of a friend of the president of the board of education or the school superintendent does get a temporary appointment or sabbatical leave. That's human, and we all make mistakes. But point me out the man who is low enough to take money for a job and I will prosecute him myself.33

Kelly's misguided statement only angered this delegation more. Then the mayor asked them to direct their complaints to Johnson. The delegation expressed the teachers' fear of the administrator. Kelly chided them and reiterated that it wasn't proper for subordinates (referring to the frightened teachers) to criticize something they disliked. He cautioned that he had no control over the superintendent. He knew little about him and saw little of him. The mayor added that he had kept away from the school system just as he had from relief (welfare) because they were both dynamite. Obviously they knew he was being evasive while playing "Ring-Around-the-Rosy."34

A year later in February 1939 the political situation with the schools plagued Kelly more incessantly. He realized he would have to do something in order to defuse
the anti-sentiment of a large group of citizens if he was to be reelected in three months. Kelly believed he had the solution to his problem. He announced the formation of a citizens' advisory committee to exercise supervision over the board and "take the schools out of politics." The plan was an outgrowth of conferences between Professor James Weber Linn of the University of Chicago and Mayor Kelly. Linn was also a state representative who announced he would support Kelly for reelection. In a message before his re-election Kelly said:

The committee and the mayor will have but two objectives: The thorough-going welfare of our school children and the teachers and the proper safeguarding of the taxpayers' investment in the educational system.35

A few of the people named to the mayor's advisory committee were suspicious of Kelly's intentions; this was especially true of Charlotte Carr, head resident of Hull House. She insisted Kelly do something about political patronage and corruption in the schools immediately instead of waiting until after he was reelected. If the mayor took such a step to clean up the political mess in the schools she might consider volunteering to serve on his advisory committee. It was apparent that she didn't trust him. He promised her that he was sincere about taking politics out
of the schools and she decided to serve on the advisory committee before his April 1939 reelection. According to one source when the committee accomplished nothing, Carr, Professor Frank Freeman of the University of Chicago and businessman Lester Selig resigned a few months later because they realized Kelly never intended to use their advice on school board appointments or anything else. The appointment of the advisory committee accomplished what Kelly intended. It won more votes for him.36

Two years after Kelly's reelection in March 1941 charges against Kelly for his phony advisory committee still drew anger from the newspapers. The public was being reminded over and over again about Kelly's political maneuvering. An editorial, in the Chicago Daily News said Kelly was guilty of maintaining a phony advisory committee. The initial committee literally died four months after its inception. Three of its outstanding unpolitical members resigned when they discovered Kelly had no intention of freeing the schools from politics. This so called advisory committee also drew fire from the CSC as being a farce. The mayor referred to the group as his "citizen board."37

About this same time in January 1941 Kelly was bombarded by the All-Chicago Committee representing forty civic organizations. The committee circulated petitions urging the mayor to appoint Mrs. Harry M. Mulberry to the
board vacancy of Mrs. William Hefferan who had resigned after eighteen years on the board. Again Kelly ignored the wishes of this committee and appointed Mrs. L. Robert Mellin, a former executive in a manufacturing firm, welfare worker, and wife of a physician. This move angered the combination of forty civic organizations who wanted their candidate selected.38

While Kelly was concerned about getting the right people on his school board something happened in Springfield that upset the teachers and civic groups again. In April 1941 a hearing was being held in the state capital to create a super school board in Chicago that would take politics out of the schools. The Sprague bill advocated the use of a modern merit system in the choice of examiners for public school appointments. As had been expected "Kelly power" over the administration and the board of examiners prevailed. The Sprague bill, for which the teachers worked so diligently, was defeated by the Illinois house in May 1941. The lawmakers believed that the measure would eliminate Chicago's home rule and was therefore unpalatable for most of them.39

A STORMY CTU RELATIONSHIP

While all of the afore mentioned problems manifested themselves in the loud denunciations by civic, church, and
PTA groups, citizens were becoming more angry with Johnson and Kelly. They felt they could no longer tolerate Johnson's corrupt practices in the schools nor Kelly's indifference at attempting to find solutions to help solve these urgent problems. Now a storm of criticism arose at the same time in another arena. This biting criticism of Johnson came from the Chicago Teachers Union (CTU).

Representatives of the union tried to cooperate with him to settle problems related to teachers' rights and grievances. Johnson was seen as an uncompromising administrator who distrusted the Chicago Teachers Union leadership so much that he chose to ignore this organization. The teachers were becoming increasingly worried about their situation. They believed they had no audible voice with which to negotiate needed changes for their professional lives. The following is a review of the most pressing problems the union had with Johnson. These problems included: Johnson's refusal to accept the CTU as the bargaining agent for the majority of the teachers as well as his refusal to schedule regular meetings with the CTU; his lack of concern for teachers' grievances due to unfair transfers; his intimidation of teachers; his renewing of lapsed teaching certificates for unassigned teachers; and his reluctance to discuss needed salary increases. Most noteworthy, was the superintendent's refusal to accept the
CTU as the bargaining agent for the teachers. Johnson knew he had the union over a barrel. One source explained that public employees were not under the umbrella of the National Labor Relations Act. This act forced private employers to recognize the one organization that the majority of their employees joined as their bargaining agent. Unfortunately the teachers were public employees who had no legal recourse to force the school administration to recognize the CTU as the bargaining agent for the teachers. Certainly the Kelly board was not going to voluntarily allow the CTU to operate successfully against their policies and practices.40

John Fewkes worked long and hard for the CTU. He devoted much effort in getting teachers' grievances heard. Johnson felt that the union was a large pressure group of disgruntled teachers. He had difficulty dealing with them and believed them to be nothing but troublemakers who wanted to tell him how to run the schools. He still refused to meet with the civic organizations and wanted nothing to do with the CTU representatives.

The board's lack of concern about teachers, Johnson's indifference for their welfare, and the depressed economic situation were some of the reasons that prompted the teachers to unite. They were concerned about their professional careers and wanted more safeguards. They did not have a united voice and wanted to be heard. Before the
fall of 1937 the teachers were working through ten local groups and now decided to unite. Not all the groups joined the teachers union. Under the aggressive leadership of John Fewkes the Chicago Teachers Union (founded in 1937) was making progress. Enrollment of 8,500 of the city's 13,000 teachers in the summer of 1938 was impressive. By 1941 the union had nearly 9,000.

Many leaders such as Dr. Judd of the University of Chicago, Dean Melby of Northwestern University, and Arnold R. Barr, President of the CSC endorsed the union. Johnson however was distrustful of the CTU and many letters requesting immediate meetings with the superintendent were usually ignored or put off by him. When the union secretary Kermit Eby, received a delayed meeting date, he or John Fewkes asked the Chicago Federation of Labor's secretary, Joseph Keenan, to intervene and secure an earlier meeting date. It was difficult for the new union leadership as they struggled to deal with the dictatorial attitude of Johnson.

A storm was definitely brewing between Johnson and the union. The superintendent was aware that John Fewkes had recently consented to serve on the board of managers of the CSC. Immediately afterward in February 1938 Fewkes and the other teachers at Tilden high school were told they could no longer hold their union meetings in the school building
without permits and that permits were unobtainable. The action was not unexpected because union teachers in other schools were not allowed to meet the month before. The teachers contended that they should have the same meeting privileges as did the PTA. Johnson subsequently invoked a long-overlooked rule banning permits, and used it against the union. That was the administration's method of retaliation.43

By March 1938 it seemed likely that union teachers were being punished because Johnson knew many of them were affiliated with the CSC, a pressure group that he considered threatening. The union also supported the Loomis case openly and because of the "tremendous growth of the Chicago Teachers' Union," the board perceived it as a threat aimed at the school administration. In March 1938 Johnson backed down from his position. The CTU and its teachers were once again allowed to meet in their schools after classes on a monthly basis. He had stated that he did not object to the meetings when classes were not in progress. Secretary of the Chicago Federation of Labor, Joseph D. Keenan, who represented the teachers said that the arrangement was agreeable. The teachers were to find out later that Johnson's promise was a false one.44

In July 1938 Johnson announced the appointment of John A. Bartky, former district superintendent to the presidency
of Chicago Normal College. At the same time Johnson mentioned that Lyle Wolf, who was transferred from the normal school at a reduction in salary the previous October, had been "chastised for disloyalty." He would now be returned as an instructor in education methods. Cook was to remain at Hyde Park High School. The board's reversal on Wolf was seen by some as an attempt to ease the criticism about the administration of the Chicago schools. Because of much more unexpected public criticism the board backed down and also sent Cook back to the normal school now renamed Chicago Teachers College (CTC).45

The CTU continued to have problems setting up meetings with Johnson to discuss sick leave, reorganization of junior colleges, unjust lapsing of regular certificates held by unassigned teachers, adjustment of salary withheld from certain teachers and an immediate publication of current rules of the board. Fewkes who by now knew he couldn't get to "first base" with Johnson, called on John Fitzpatrick to secure a meeting date. The labor president immediately set up an appointment for Fewkes on 4 March 1938. McCahey and Johnson were both waiting for Fewkes and Fitzpatrick when they arrived in Johnson's office. McCahey and a board lawyer were usually at these meetings involving the union and Johnson. During the meeting Fewkes complained about Johnson's treatment of the union. McCahey told Fewkes,
"Don't pay any attention to him: [meaning Johnson] if you want something you've got to come to me." Johnson sat and said nothing. He had been overruled by McCahey.46

Urgent problems arose in December 1938 and Fewkes had to meet with Johnson. He wrote to him about the need for the restoration of the privilege under the board rules of placing union literature in the teachers' mailboxes. Probably knowing he would get no reply from Johnson, Fewkes wrote to Fitzpatrick stating that discrimination was being practiced by the superintendent against the union. Fewkes requested that the intimidation of teachers be stopped and asked Fitzpatrick to use his influence at the board. The labor leader again agreed to intercede for the sake of the union but little was done to stop this practice.47

Superintendent Johnson did extend an olive branch to the union when he announced the opening of the new Jones Commercial High School on 31 January 1939. He pledged that no academic teachers would be released to make room for trade instructors and that there would not be an increase in temporary teaching certificates. Promotions would be made on merit and no factories would be built or be connected to or near the vocational school. This did nothing to alleviate the problems between Johnson and the CTU.48

Meanwhile, Fewkes had more problems again as he tried
to set up a CTU meeting with Johnson. The union president wrote Johnson three letters in which he requested an interview to discuss the welfare of the teachers in public schools. He wrote on 5 and 20 January, and again on 15 February 1939 requesting a meeting. Fewkes gave Johnson the choice of three dates or more in February for the meeting. No reply was forthcoming and on 25 March 1939 he wrote another letter and asked Johnson to clarify three important issues in the next superintendent's bulletin: one was the placing of union literature in the teachers' mailboxes which was not allowed by Johnson; another was the meeting of the union in the schools which was still not permitted; and the last was the use of principals' authority to prevent teachers from joining organizations of their choosing.49

Mable Simpson, secretary for the CSC, helped select Fewkes for the executive board of managers of the CSC. In a letter to her he promised to be a more effective and useful member of the executive committee.50 With the assistance of the CSC, the teachers' union kept alive the issue of the 1936 principals' examination. Letters were sent by Mrs. Simpson and other members of the CSC, to the city council, Illinois legislators and civic organizations as she decried the "corroding influence of frustration that can destroy a school system." 51

Fewkes continued to make every effort to communicate
with the superintendent about CTU issues. By this time Johnson was aware of Fewkes's connection with the CSC whom he refused to welcome into his office. He believed the CSC was a group of troublemakers. He also believed Fewkes was just as guilty because he was one of them.

At an October 1939 meeting of union teachers Fewkes commemorated the third year of the existence of the Chicago Teachers' Union. He told the eighteen hundred teachers assembled about an ongoing fight with the board as he said:

We will fight, and fight successfully to rid the schools of spoils politics. ... A growing storm of protest is gathering and will soon break. ... The Principals Club has already fallen and the Chicago Division of the Illinois Education Association will be the scene of the next attempt. 52

Meanwhile, it is important to go back in time and discover the reasons why Fewkes seemed angry when he mentioned the fall of the Chicago principal's club (CPC) and the possible takeover of the Illinois Education Association by the Johnson camp. Dissension broke out between Johnson and the principals in 1937 over the appointment of the new principals from the 1936 examination. The principal's club, up to the end of 1938, had been staunchly supportive of Bogan's policies while critical of Johnson's. Since many principals who passed the 1936 examination were being
assigned rapidly, by the end of 1938, the club was reflecting the attitudes of its newest members instead of its older members. It appeared that the Johnson faction gained ground within the club. When Johnson's appointees were coming into the schools in larger numbers the principals were of course more helpful to Johnson.

In October 1939 Fewkes mentioned that the club's rejection of the merit plan for choosing principals digusted him and every educationally minded administrator and teacher. O. C. Taubeneck, Executive Secretary of the CPC, fought against the political abuses of the board until he was fired in October 1939. Marie McCahey, sister of the controversial board president, was the leader of the faction that dismissed him and was one of the seventy-one principals appointed by Johnson.53

Fewkes knew what he was talking about during the October 1939 meeting of the union when he mentioned the takeover of the Illinois Education Association (IEA). In December 1939 the William H. Johnson faction of the IEA overrode the recommendations of the Chicago division's executive board and nominated Robert C. Keenan, principal at Bowen High School, as first vice-president of the state organization. His selection was unusual because he was defeated for reelection as head of the Chicago division a month earlier in a bitter fight. The fight grew out of a
drive by classroom teachers for a stronger voice in the association. There was a growing fear that the Johnson administration would take over the association. Keenan was considered a friend of the Johnson administration and was always welcome in McCahey's office.

Not wanting to be a referee for the Chicago division, the credentials' committee, decided to leave the selection to Lyle H. Wolf, president of the division. He immediately appointed the delegates who were elected at the Chicago meetings. Montefiore principal, Edward Stullken was elected first vice-president instead of Keenan. He said that the Chicago school administration took an active role in trying to defeat and silence the IEA legislative lobby of the teachers on Chicago school policy. The Johnson faction was soundly defeated.54

The CTU had tried in vain to receive recognition from Johnson. In April 1941 CTU President John Fewkes wrote to every union affiliated with the American Federation of Labor (AFL). He told each of them that the board refused to recognize or negotiate with them as a union. As many as ten unions dispatched letters to the administration immediately and asked that McCahey and Johnson accept the CTU as a union. Fewkes wanted regular meetings with Johnson to discuss teachers' problems.

McCahey and Johnson were well aware of the union's
desires. They also felt that there was a growing hostility toward the school administration and refused to have a meeting with the CTU for seven months. Probably, because of the letter blitz by the unions to the AFL, a meeting was set up. On 18 April 1941 a two and one-half hour meeting took place with Johnson, Irwin Walker, Vice President of the Board of Education, Wilson Frankland member of the board, and Frank Righeimer attorney for the board. Johnson always had the board attorney with him whenever the union leadership worked out a meeting through the efforts of the AFL. Fewkes and Kermit Eby tried to negotiate a salary restoration, improved working conditions and promotions that affected the welfare of the teachers. Johnson said that a 7.5 percent raise would cost the board $15 million a year and that the board would not consider it. He said he would talk to the board about CTU recognition. Twenty-five problems that affected the teachers and the welfare of the schools were left unresolved. Johnson stated that the problems would be taken under advisement and that another conference would be called within "a reasonable time." That time was not to occur until the end of November of that year.55

After this meeting in April 1941 Fewkes stepped down as president of the CTU after four years of service. In the late 1940s Fewkes would again regain his position as the
CTU's president. The new CTU president was Ira S. Turley, a teacher at the Harrison Technical High School. He was elected to a two year term beginning in July 1941, and promised to carry on the policies started by Fewkes. The new CTU president said he knew the CTU couldn't solve Chicago's problems alone but stated that he would cooperate with all groups who wanted to make Chicago a better place to live and raise children.56

Up to this point in time Johnson still refused to meet with the CTU and would not accept the union as the bargaining agent for the majority of the teachers. Turley sent the superintendent ten letters requesting a meeting between 1 July 1941 and 25 September 1941. Johnson ignored all of them. Conditions between the CTU and Johnson were at an all time low. The superintendent refused to meet with the representatives of the union, and the teachers were more distressed than ever over the Johnson's ignoring of their union leadership.57 Johnson continued to ignore all the criticism from the church, PTA and civic groups. His subservience to the board and his inflexibility along with his continued practice of ignoring the union were the greatest stumbling blocks in his relationship with the teachers. While he used an authoritarian approach to administration, citizen and teacher groups used a democratic one. They were on opposite ends of the spectrum of
compromise. The storm of discontent was rapidly and irrev­
ersibly roaring ahead toward the united goal of all the
organizations bent on Johnson's removal from office. The
teachers, PTA, church and civic groups gained strength and
momentum in their battle to rid the Chicago schools of
political corruption.
CHAPTER FOUR NOTES


8. Ibid., 22-44.


10. Ibid., 129-134.


12. "1940 school Program Aims to End Overcrowding," Chicago Herald American, 31 December 1939, Folder 3, Box 77, CTU Files, Chicago, Chicago Historical Society Archives.


17. Ibid.


22. Ibid.


27. "2,000 on Teachers "Wait List," Chicago Herald American, 5 July 1941, Folder 2, Box 78, Chicago, Chicago Historical Society Archives.


32. President Franklin Bliss Snyder of Northwestern University, letter from Supt. William H. Johnson, 20 May 1941; William H. Johnson, letter from Snyder including a list of five names of professors, 27 May 1941, Folder 3, Box 13, Series 3\16\1, Franklin Bliss Synder Papers, Evanston, Northwestern University Archives.


34. Ibid.


36. Herrick, 231.


40. Herrick, 291.


42. Letter to Mr. Joseph Keenan, Secretary for the Chicago Federation of Labor from Kermit Eby, Executive Secretary of the Chicago Teachers Union, 19 May 1938, Folder 5, Box 28, CTU Files, Chicago, Chicago Historical Society Archives.

43. "Ban on Teachers' Meetings Denounced as Petty Reprisal," Chicago Daily News, 11 February 1938, Folder 3, Box 72, CTU Files, Chicago, Chicago Historical Society Archives.

44. "Schools Open to Meetings of Teachers' Union," Chicago Daily Tribune, 3 March 1938, Folder 3, Box 72, CTU Files, Chicago, Chicago Historical Society Archives.


46. Kermit Eby, letter from Joseph Keenan of the Chicago Federation of Labor, 25 February 1938, setting up an appointment for CTU President Fewkes to meet with McCahey and Johnson on 4 March 1938 at 4 P.M., Folder 2, Box 19, CTU Files, Chicago, Chicago Historical Society Archives; Herrick, 268.
47. William H. Johnson, letter from John Fewkes dated 6 December 1938; Letter to John Fitzpatrick from John Fewkes dated 6 December 1938, Folder 2, Box 19, CTU Files, Chicago, Chicago Historical Society Archives.

48. "Jobs are Safe Johnson Tells City Teachers," Chicago Herald American, 15 January 1939, Folder 6, Box 74, CTU Files, Chicago, Chicago Historical Society Archives.

49. William H. Johnson, Superintendent of the Chicago Schools, letter from John M. Fewkes, President of the Chicago Teachers' Union dated 15 February 1939; Letter to Dr. William H. Johnson from John M. Fewkes dated 25 March 1939, Folder 2, Box 19, CTU Files, Chicago, Chicago Historical Society Archives.


51. John M. Fewkes, president of the Chicago Teachers' Union, Letters mailed to civic organizations, city council, and Illinois legislature 27, April 1939, Folder 2, Box 19, CTU Files, Chicago, Chicago Historical Society Archives.

52. "Teachers Union Declares War on School Politics," Chicago Daily News, 2 October 1939, Folder 1, Box 77, CTU Files, Chicago, Chicago Historical Society Archives.


55. A series of letters and communications between the Chicago Teachers' Union and eight unions in the AFL, all letters were written by John Fewkes to the union leaders in early April 1941. In turn they sent copies of letters that they had sent to McCahey and voiced their displeasure at the lack of cooperation between the board and the CTU. Folder 1, Box 18, CTU Files, Chicago, Chicago Historical Society Archives.

57. Chicago Teachers Union, "Record of Union Requests for Meeting With the School Administration Since April, 1941," Folder 5, Box 28, CTU Files, Chicago, Chicago Historical Society Archives.
CHAPTER V

THE END OF A CAREER: 1942-1946

From 1942 through 1946 the innovations and programs that Johnson was so intent on completing were entirely overshadowed by the relentless storms of anger and distrust that had steadily built against him in the community. The problems that plagued Johnson now were many of the same that plagued him before. The civic, parent, teacher and church organizations raised louder voices in opposition to the administration's policies. These groups were angry about overcrowded schools, changed school boundaries, the non-transfer policy for students and the demotions and transfers of teachers. They rallied to the aid of principals and teachers who were still being demoted and transferred unmercifully. Pressure groups especially the CSC, CTU and activists were working hard to remove the present administration from office. They believed the administration was politically corrupt with a complete disregard for pupils, parents and teachers alike.

During this period of time (1942-1945) the school system was also involved in placing its school buildings at the disposal of the federal government to help the war efforts. Selected high school and junior college buildings in Chicago were used for training centers. This meant that
the students had to be placed in other high schools or in the junior colleges. The movement of students into already crowded schools caused overcrowding which prompted angry parents to demonstrate their displeasure with Johnson. Parents became upset and worried; they blamed Johnson for all of these school problems. None of these situations were caused by the superintendent, but again, he was the board's convenient scapegoat and took the brunt of the blame. What follows is an account of what Johnson faced at the hands of parent, PTA and CSC groups.

JOHNSON'S PROBLEMS WITH PARENTS

In June 1943 the navy took over the Wright Junior College buildings for technology training classes. McCahey justified the takeover and said that only one junior college was needed in the city. Wright students were sent to Herzl Junior College but overcrowding was a big problem. The administration decided in August 1943 that Carl Schurz High School was to be chosen as the north side location for Wright Junior College. Johnson told the board that such a move and staff reduction would save the schools $450,000 annually. The board heard the angry protests of a large group of Schurz parents, who didn't want Schurz to become overcrowded or to be mixed with junior college students. They demanded that Johnson send these college students
elsewhere. In the September 1943 when the schools opened, Schurz housed Wright Junior College students. The administration ignored the parents demands which left the parents angrier with Johnson then before.  

A year later in September 1944 there was another crisis. The administration implemented a new board policy in the same autocratic style as the Wright move. The administration decided to cancel all school permits which allowed children to transfer to schools outside of their districts. This new policy was called the non-transfer plan. Children who were attending schools outside of their districts were required to return to their own district schools because their permits were cancelled. This problem was compounded by a change in school district boundaries that occurred at the same time as the cancelled permits. These combined conditions caused the following results: many parents in protest kept hundreds of children at home; hundreds of other parents enrolled their children in private schools; and the remaining twelve to fifteen thousand children were transferred back to their own districts into schools within the new boundary lines. The school scene was one of mass disruption. Many children were sent to schools that were already overcrowded and thousands of children had their educations interrupted for over a month or more while the board was deciding where to send them. More than one
hundred irate parents gathered in Johnson's office on the morning of 8 September 1944 and waited until the late afternoon when Johnson finally spoke with them. He promised he would study the problem and added that he would visit the schools to determine the effect of the rule. For several days parents continued to come to the board in large angry groups. They waited for Johnson to change the orders he issued about non-transfers and the new school district boundaries. The CSC accompanied the parents and charged that over one thousand children had been deprived of an education over the transfer mess and told parents to stick to their guns and force the board to make further adjustments in transfers and boundaries. The CSC also advised the parents' groups that were assembled at the board to get organized and fight against cancelled permits and sudden transfers outside of the unpublished district boundaries. Many PTAs listened intently to Mrs. Frank White, co-chair of the parents' group and member of the CSC, when she stated that there was a need for a doorbell-ringing campaign to fight the board. She advised them to stay united in a group against the administration.2

This explosive situation may have caused a regrettable act of violence that was aimed at Johnson. His home was bombed the night of 22 September 1944. His young daughter was asleep at the time in his apartment and luckily escaped
injury. No one was seriously injured but more than twenty-nine windows were broken in Johnson's apartment building. The police were never able to solve the bombing incident.

At this same time a spontaneous wave of indignation by parents was aimed at Johnson. A large group of one thousand parents met under the guidance of the CSC at a special protest meeting over the boundary and non-transfer policies. They voted to hire an attorney who filed an injunction suit against the board in superior court. On 25 September 1944 Judge Lewe dismissed the case. Parents were so angered by the judge's decision that they demanded a grand jury investigation of Johnson over the issues of the non-transfer plan and the boundary rule. The grand jury investigation never took place. It is unknown whether this situation was ever resolved to the satisfaction of the parents. Appeals to the board and Mayor Kelly for the removal of Johnson went unheeded.

On another front while parents were battling the superintendent, he was severely and angrily attacked again over the continued demotions and transfers of teachers. The protests over prior demotions and transfers were still fresh in the minds of the teacher, parent and civic groups who were involved in denouncing them. These injustices were continuously being practiced by the administration. Johnson had to take the heat again for a political mandate that
probably worked its way down from McCahey to Johnson. McCahey once again gave Johnson the dirty job of issuing transfers.

TRANSFER AND DEMOTION PROBLEMS WITH STAFF

In February 1942 an unjust transfer of a principal drew major fire from community, church, parent, and medical groups. Johnson, adhered to the orders from McCahey and removed Mrs. Olive Bruner as principal of the Spaulding School for Crippled Children. Her replacement was Celestine Igoe, the sister of Federal Judge Michael L. Igoe a former Democratic political leader. Celestine was handed the newly created post of "director" of the special school at a larger salary than a principal's. This action was condemned by the Chicago Church Federation, the Association of Family Living, the Chicago Nurses Association, the Chicago Orthopedic Society, the Chicago Women's Club, the CIO, AFL, the Chicago Woman's Aid, the Chicago Club for Crippled Children, the National Council of Jewish Women, the Citizens' Schools Committee and the Chicago Teachers' Union. All of them vehemently protested what they called the outrageous transfer and demanded the reinstatement of Mrs. Bruner who they felt had been a victim of a flagrant display of political power. When confronted with the Bruner transfer by these groups McCahey implied it was none of
their business to inquire into the board's activities. He failed to state why the former gym teacher and high school principal was given the job. A mass meeting to protest Bruner's transfer was held with more than sixty professional, civic and religious groups in attendance. They denounced the board's policies as being politically inspired. Unfortunately the board's decision prevailed.4

Raymond Cook was another victim of politics. Earlier he was denied a principal's certificate by the board because he failed Johnson's infamous oral review during the principals' examination. Most teachers believed the administration punished him because of his perceived disloyalty to the administration. Shortly after he filed a suit against the board to obtain his principal's certificate and lost. In retaliation he was demoted from his teaching position at the normal school and was sent to a high school. After much pressure from teacher, civic and church groups, Cook was reinstated at Chicago Teachers College. Johnson knew that Cook was sent to the 1941 convention of the National Education Association by the CTU and fought successfully against the superintendent's bid to become president of the NEA. Cook remained at CTC until August 1943. At that time enrollment had fallen by 60 percent and Johnson was forced to release forty-three of the teachers. Cook was dismissed with others on the grounds
that he had a junior high school certificate and not a senior high school certificate. Thus he was demoted to a third grade classroom on the south side while his salary plummeted from $4,000 to $2,500. He stayed in the elementary school for one year. After that in order to support his family he took a job in a war plant during the years 1944-1945.5

Still another demotion was on the grill. On 7 January 1944, McCahey announced that the navy would use the Manley School building which housed an elementary school as well as a high school. Its principal Thomas J. Crofts along with one thousand teachers, parents, and civic leaders met at the school on 13 January to protest breaking up the student body. Johnson promised Crofts another high school principalship at the beginning of the next semester. His promise was never kept; Crofts was assigned to the Key Elementary School at a lower salary, and became the only high school principal in an elementary position at that time. Parents wrote letters and had demonstrations and meetings about Crofts' demotion but to no avail.6

One of the most glaring acts of injustice in demotions was perpetrated by Johnson and the board. In May 1944 Dr. John DeBoer, the director of student teaching at Chicago Teachers College protested against Johnson's changes in the college curriculum. He also denounced the cutting of the
general education material from the curriculum. His objections were ignored by Johnson and arrangements were made to implement Johnson's new ideas. Other faculty members and district superintendents were privately verbal and angry over Johnson's actions, but none protested. When DeBoer continued to be ignored by Johnson, he wrote Johnson a letter on 8 May 1944 and released copies to the newspapers and to accrediting agencies. His letter bluntly stated that the superintendent's orders to change the curriculum denied future teachers a liberal education. DeBoer stood in favor of the prior curriculum at Chicago Teachers College, and said it was hailed as a model for other teachers' colleges by the North Central Association. He also angrily stated that Johnson had turned the educational clock back many years with his present action.

On 9 May 1944 Johnson demanded Dr. DeBoer's resignation. DeBoer refused to resign, and two days later he was transferred to Herzl Junior College. No formal charges were placed against him, no notice was given and no hearing was held. On several occasions when DeBoer criticized the superintendent's policies, Johnson called him, "My severest critic." Those familiar with the situation were sure that DeBoer was really demoted because he dared to speak out against the administration.7
Realizing that these abuses would never stop unless something was done very soon to get the administration out of the schools, one important activist started the ball rolling. Edward E. Keener devised a plan. He had been prominent in the CTU as a teacher and in the principals' club before its takeover by the Johnson faction. Keener was now president of the Chicago Division of the Illinois State Teachers Association. In that capacity he urged the National Education Association to institute an investigation regarding the personnel practices of the board and Johnson in 1943. By 1944 the NEA received formal requests for an investigation from the following organizations: The Woman's City Club of Chicago, the City Club, Cook County League of Woman Voters, The Chicago Division of the Illinois State Teachers Association, the Illinois Education Association, the Illinois Education Association, the Citizens' Schools Committee of Chicago, the National Council of Teachers of English, and the Ethics Committee of the National Education Association. The NEA consented to these requests and began an inquiry about the treatment of personnel in the Chicago public schools in November 1944. In order to insure an impartial and unbiased inquiry the commission appointed a four-man committee of recognized leaders in education with Donald DuShane as its director. The probe took five months to complete. The CTU
offered DuShane the briefs and all the court cases on which it had spent some twenty thousand dollars and any other records he wanted. It also contributed one thousand dollars for printing the results. The CSC offered its support and fifteen hundred dollars to cover the cost of printing. DuShane gladly accepted.

The investigation was very thorough. It checked and summarized all the important issues raised against the board and the superintendent beginning in 1933 and continuing to November 1944. Commenting on the pending investigation Edward E. Keener said:

It is a well known fact that numerous charges of irregularities in the administration of teacher personnel in the Chicago schools have been made. These charges have been publicized widely and have caused many people throughout the country to look at us with suspicion. The only way to clear the record is to prove the charges as either true or false . . . the great majority of teachers will welcome this investigation.

In December 1944 the NEA investigating committee sent Dr. Johnson a letter requesting the cooperation of the school administration and the board in making school records and information available with full access to school buildings and personnel. The board decided not to cooperate
with the investigation, and the committee was denied access to the schools. The investigators asked to meet with Johnson in April 1945. He refused. The committee believed that the secretiveness, fear of the investigation, and the closing of the schools to the committee helped to explain the fact that the administration had "something to hide."

The report of the committee was published in May 1945. The committee discovered massive problems at CTC.

The report commented on many of the unpopular board policies. First, in regard to the Chicago Teachers College the committee believed that the autonomy of the college was destroyed, the morale was weakened and the cultural value of the curriculum injured. The best interests of the college could not be served by the absentee management of the superintendent and the board president. The committee insisted that a thorough investigation by the two accrediting agencies which go through the colleges would show violations of standards. It was recommended that a responsible independent administration should be restored and the college should be opened to all properly qualified students.

Next, the report noted that between September and December 1944 over six hundred teachers were transferred. The rate of transfer was in the committee's opinion too large to be justified. It appeared that the transfers
intimidated the teaching force and created an unwholesome fear. In Dr. DeBoer's case the investigators found that academic freedom was violated, the transfer was unwarranted and attempts to secretly defile his character with false accusations violated his civil rights. The Raymond Cook case was one of unjust personnel practice; it was concluded that both DeBoer and Cook were to be restored to full standing in the teachers' college. In checking the Butler Laughlin case the committee found Johnson was badly misinformed about school conditions at Lindblom High School which he had criticized. Laughlin was found to be an able administrator of the vocational and technical program, and there was no justification for replacing him. The transfer edict came from Kelly not the board, but since Johnson was given the dirty work of issuing transfers, he again took the heat for this one. This case was an example of misuse of transfer authority and nepotism on McCahey's part. The new principal's wife was a relative of McCahey's. Laughlin received no prior notice or reasons for his transfer nor did he have an opportunity for a hearing.

In the Crofts' demotion, it was recommended that he be given a principalship as soon as possible and that the Manley School be reorganized at the earliest possible time and that Crofts should be offered the principalship. In examining the Bruner transfer, it was recommended that she
be restored to her former position as principal of Spaulding School. The board and Johnson again violated the merit system of school appointments as required by the Otis law. 10

In the McCoy case, the committee concluded that his transfer had been planned to serve the personal and political purposes of the administration. He had been unjustly treated for being hostile to a friend of McCahey's sister, who was a head teacher at Bowen High School. The committee stated that he was never given an opportunity to answer the charges placed against him. 11

In regard to the 1936-1937 principals' examination the report concluded that the superintendent should have disqualified himself and should have left the conduction of the examination in the hands of the remaining members of the board of examiners. It went on to state that all principals' records from the 1937 examination should have been looked at carefully, and improperly certified persons should have had their certificates revoked. The committee also concluded that the principals' examination of 1937 was unprofessional, irregular, and probably illegal, despite the decisions of the courts that followed the letter of the Otis law. 12

In the area of teacher intimidation the investigators found that the Johnson-McCahey administration sought the control of the teachers' organizations by a "divide and
conquer" approach or by capturing its offices in elections. A "spy system" was used in most school buildings, where at least one individual reported teachers' conversations or conduct to the downtown office. If it had not been for tenure the Chicago schools would have been hopelessly disorganized and dominated by politics and corruption. At least tenure protected teachers from unjust discharge.

While teacher tenure provided one of the best methods of maintaining teacher morale the law passed by the Illinois legislature in 1917 had a number of defects. One was the failure to protect teachers and principals against demotion and salary reduction. Johnson in his dealings with teachers had avoided situations which would permit hearings under the tenure law. The committee believed that while tenure was a basic protection against disruption in a school system it couldn't be expected to protect teachers from improper transfers. It stated that these protections needed to come as a result of strong vigilant teachers' organizations and through public objections to undemocratic as well as unethical practices.

Since Johnson refused to permit the committee to visit most of the schools, information about overcrowding was obtained after speaking to many elementary teachers. It was discovered that overcrowding existed mainly in the elementary schools attended by Black children. Many of
these schools were still on double-shifts. It was recommended that double-shifts be eliminated.14

In the investigation of the textbooks written by Johnson, the committee found that it was common knowledge that Johnson hadn't written most of the books. They were written by teachers and other school employees usually on school time. Yet it seemed clear that the superintendent was interested in the sale and profits of his own textbooks. Whether he violated any of the Illinois statutes was for the courts to decide. (Johnson was never taken to court regarding this matter). The opinion of the committee was that Johnson violated the NEA "Code of Ethics of the Teaching Profession," in recommending the use of his own textbooks in the Chicago schools.15

The committee commented on the function of the board. It said that experience had shown that it was best when the superintendent of schools was also the chief executive officer with the business manager and other executive officers serving under him. The investigators believed that McCahey had attempted to act as the superintendent making decisions and recommendations far outside his legal authority. It also said that there was little realization on the part of most members of the board that they were public servants and that the schools belonged to the people. Therefore they are entitled to the complete knowledge of
school affairs. The report stated that McCahey had not protected the teachers, nor had he created an atmosphere of confidence that resulted in the best teaching conditions possible for the benefit of the school children. It also condemned Johnson in this area.16

It was found, after careful consideration that regardless of the superintendent's accomplishments he had engaged in administrative practices that were destructive to teacher morale and injurious to the schools of Chicago. The report harshly stated:

The opinion of large elements of the population in Chicago as to Superintendent Johnson's character, leadership, purposes, and judgment is such as seriously to condition his present and future usefulness as Superintendent of the Chicago schools. Also the fact that a considerable portion of the teaching body in Chicago lacks confidence in his leadership and professional integrity to a great extent destroys his present and future effectiveness as the educational head of the school system.17

While the committee was not in a position to decide how much of the responsibility for the above stated conditions were Johnson's, the board's or the city's respectively, it did recommend changes: school administra-
tion practices and personnel policies should be free from personal dictation and political manipulation; and administrative decisions should be based on school management that insured academic freedom, the civil rights of school employees and the educational interests of Chicago's children.

A brief summary of the report's recommendations included the following: (1) an Otis law amendment would be accepted by the board, making the superintendent its major executive officer and requiring business and department matters to clear through him to the board; (2) a teachers' council would be established by the superintendent to secure the objectives of listening to teacher grievances, suggestions, ideas and criticisms; (3) a board president would be restricted by the customary and legal functions of the office and board business would be conducted openly and democratically; (4) a treatment of employees would be followed by just and considerate objectives following every effort to correct the defects of the Otis law which would include the high qualifications of the board of examiners, tenure provisions giving employees the right to a hearing before demotion, and amendments prohibiting nepotism; (5) a teachers' college would be maintained by a high level of efficiency with autonomy guaranteed and a faculty protected from undue control with graduates from other colleges in
competition for positions in the schools; and (6) an investigation would be conducted by the governor or legislature in relation to the operation and management of the Chicago schools.19

RESPONSES TO THE REPORT

The administration completely ignored the NEA report after it was printed. Mrs. Heineman was the only member that supported the investigation. Leo Lerner, newspaper editor and former president of CSC, ran the complete text of the report in a series. His neighborhood papers were able to keep all the citizens informed about the investigation. The Chicago Daily News and the Chicago Sun summarized the NEA report and its recommendations, so it was assumed that the Chicago public was well informed. Governor Green who promised to rid the schools of politics was reluctant to act on his promises and did not hold the hearings that were requested by the NEA report. The Second World War ended in April 1945 and people were more concerned with their loved ones coming home than with the school situation. The board took advantage of that fact.20

Lapp of the CSC, who called Johnson "Baron Munchausen" in an editorial he wrote for Chicago's Schools, described how over 400,000 copies of the booklet One Hundred Years of Educational Progress were distributed by the board, to the
schools in June 1945. The purpose obviously, was to counteract the effect of the NEA report. The booklet described the history of the early Chicago schools and dealt mainly with the great accomplishments of the McCahey-Johnson administration. Making sure to keep the NEA report in the limelight, the CSC continued to write about it and summarize its findings in print.21

In August 1945 a few months after the NEA report was made public, the Chicago's Schools issued a summary of the entire report and John Lapp, President of the CSC wrote an article that stated:

The citizens of Chicago must assert themselves if their public schools are to be rescued from the toils of the personal and political spoilsmen who now dominate them. Individuals must act; organizations must act.22

The Journal of the NEA in November 1945 mentioned this NEA report on Chicago and said, "it points the way to the correction of many abuses in American education and to proper and constructive administration of our schools." 23

Probably the most difficult time for Johnson came in January 1946 when the NEA Ethics Committee expelled the superintendent from its membership. This was done after the committee sent Johnson a letter in October 1945 and asked that he appear before the ethics committee in January
1946 and show cause why he should not be dropped. Johnson refused to go and refused to send a representative to present his side of the case. 24

LOCAL HEARINGS AND NORTH CENTRAL'S ULTIMATUM

Finally, after much public indignation and prodding by the PTA, church and civic organizations, the city council appointed a committee of five "Kelly" aldermen to listen to the charges. On 18 and 19 March 1946 the Chicago city council chamber was crowded with a large group of speakers, who represented various civic organizations including the CSC, CTU, and the PTA. These groups gave their reasons why the city council should accept the recommendations of the NEA report. After listening to the testimony, then viewing reports and records for two days, the council issued its report absolving Johnson and the board by stating:

It is unnecessary to have any further hearings and this sub-committee unanimously finds that the charges made against the Board of Education of the City of Chicago and its officials have not been sustained. 25

Two days after the city council subcommittee released its findings, the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools (NCA) issued an ultimatum. It ordered the Chicago schools to divorce itself from the political mess it
was in or lose the accreditation of its high schools. Up to this time the NCA had approved the schools in Chicago. Now, the NCA demanded that the administration had to work out their personnel problems. When the NEA report came out, the whole administration was scandalized. Johnson took most of the blame. The NCA could not ignore these charges that were broadcast to the people of Chicago and the whole nation. The mayor appointed another advisory committee to help solve the schools' problems on 1 April 1946.26

This advisory committee consisted of five university presidents and the president of the NCA. It was known as the Heald committee when Henry T. Heald, was elected its chair. Kelly promised to adhere to the committee's recommendations. Although the committee was not unanimous in its assessment of the Chicago school administration, the majority reached its final decisions on 18 June 1946. The committee recommended that the superintendent and the board resign. Heald said the Otis law was unsound and needed to be amended and that the new superintendent would act in very much the same way as a university president. Mayor Kelly adhered to the majority of their decisions except the resignation of the entire board, because he would have had no school board. By September 1946 three more board members would resign leaving six positions to be filled on the board. McCahey stayed until he retired in May 1947.
having completed fourteen years as president of the board. The new members of the board were picked by the Heald committee. Kelly decided not to run in 1947. Instead his successor was a reform mayor, Martin Kennelly. This mayor promised the CSC that he would continue using a screening committee to appoint school board members. The Kelly-Nash era had come to a bitter end. However, the Democratic party machine was still alive and well. 

RESIGNATION IN DISGRACE

On 18 June 1946 Kelly relayed to McCahey the decision of the Heald committee (which had to be his decision also) that Johnson must resign. Johnson and Samuel Levin, a school board member, resigned a few hours after the Heald committee requested the resignations of the superintendent and the complete board. All of the board members, however, did not resign. Upon his resignation the former superintendent was then immediately given the position of vice president of the Chicago City Junior College at a salary of over twelve thousand a year. His superintendent's salary had been fifteen thousand. He was still regarded favorably by the members of the organizational structure of the Chicago public schools. Also, it was all right with the Heald committee if Johnson stayed on in the school system to exercise his civil service rights. Under the board rules,
Johnson had tenure and pension rights.

His retention, however, in that capacity did not satisfy the NCA. The association demanded the dismissal of Johnson from his vice president's position. The NCA also threatened to blacklist the Chicago high schools if certain other conditions were not met. It wanted a politically independent board with the superintendent as the chief executive officer of the entire system. The last condition of the NCA was met when the Illinois legislature passed a newly amended bill which was signed into law by the governor in 5 June 1947. On this same day Chicago's new General Superintendent, Herold C. Hunt, accepted his position. Complying with the mandates of the NCA Hunt demoted Johnson to the elementary principalship of the McPherson School.

PRINCIPALSHIP AND RETIREMENT

Angry over his assignment a group of parents came to see Hunt with petitions requesting that he not be assigned to their school. Hunt refused to honor their petitions. A full board listened to these complaints. The parents insisted that Johnson not be placed at their school because of the scandal that surrounded his previous administration. The board was legally responsible for giving Johnson a principalship unless it was to decide to put him on trial and to find him guilty of unprofessional conduct. The board
refused to do that to Johnson. In fall of 1947 they stuck to Hunt's decision. Dr. Hunt said, "The board feels Dr. Johnson should be given the opportunity of doing an effective piece of work." 28

Johnson became the principal of the McPherson as of 2 February 1948. Unfortunately this had to be done over the protests of many of the parents at the school. He remained the principal at the school for more than five years until he retired in June 1953 at the age of fifty-seven. Upon his retirement he said, "Chicago is lousy now. There isn't a citizen right now who trusts a policeman. In the last 50 years the city hasn't had a mayor of the intellectual stature that should be required for that job". 29

Johnson had held the job of superintendent longer than any other person. He mentioned that he had worked long enough and was looking forward to traveling and enjoying life. He also stated:

The schools are part of the political machine, and that's the way it should be. The mayor appoints the school board members. He is responsible to the public. The people generally conceive a political machine to be something bad; that isn't necessarily so. 30

When he retired in 1953 Johnson reported that William B. Traynor, the board president at that time, had run the
schools and had been doing so for two or three years. He said that Hunt hadn't much to do with running them during that period. The former superintendent believed the schools were in good shape and were in his words, "50 years ahead of the rest of the country." He stated that the schools hadn't improved much since he quit as the superintendent.

Johnson had saved his money, invested it wisely and spent the first year of his retirement traveling around the world. He then enjoyed a well deserved retirement in Florida during the winters and on his Minnesota farm during the summers. Johnson died in Fort Lauderdale, Florida on 1 May 1981 at the age of eighty-five. He requested cremation and his ashes were buried next to his parents and first wife Lillian M. Johnson in Graceland Cemetery in Chicago. While he had led a full and active life his legacy to educators has been a mixed one to assess.

JOHNSON'S LEGACY

Johnson was an ambitious young man destined for the Chicago schools superintendency for a ten year period. To say that he was a "do nothing," incompetent, money grabbing, superintendent, would be a completely unfair assessment of him. As a young man he had been ambitious enough to continue to receive the benefits of a higher education for the purpose of furthering his career. He never lost sight
of his goal of attaining a name for himself in the educational field. He was also ambitious and hard-working enough to leave many others in the dust. Desire to attain a goal remained a dream and never a reality for many people who lacked the fortitude to strive for achievement over a long period of time. Johnson had the energy to carry out his desires. There is much to be learned from his performance as a teacher, a principal, an assistant superintendent and finally as the superintendent of schools for one of the largest cities in the United States. Had he lived in a different place or a different time, without the constraints of politics he perhaps would have fared better.

As a teacher of high school students he remained just that, a teacher. He did not believe in taking on the role of friend or helper in the community. Perhaps he felt his role as teacher would suffer if his students' perceptions of him changed because of that secondary role. Had he allowed himself the opportunity to become part of the community in those days at Palatine High School, he might have been better able to understand the community. He was considered a superior educator and prolific writer. Before he became superintendent, he authored many excellent ideas related to: methods of teaching reading, mathematics, developmental and remedial reading, vocational guidance, student government, Americanism, safety, educational testing, and study skills
techniques to name a few. Many of his ideas were new and innovative.

As a principal he was well-liked and respected by his teachers because he was anxious to share his teaching methods with them and because they looked up to him for direction and guidance. He was humane toward them and treated them as equals, responding to their needs in their quest for the improvement of academic attainment for their pupils. He felt comfortable with them. He was known as a friendly administrator as well as a capable one.

As assistant superintendent he made some judgment errors in the way he treated high school teachers. He seemed to be unaware of the women's liberation movement that had begun when women received the right to vote. Most of the high school teachers resented his telling them how to teach their subjects. His efforts to help teachers pass the principals' examination while he was an assistant superintendent were based not so much on making money but on cementing a good relationship with teachers.

As superintendent he was credited with placing adjustment teachers in all the schools and making high school counseling meaningful. He understood that pupils should decide what occupations they were interested in so that they would work toward that goal early in their high school years. He didn't want them to take unnecessary
courses. He deemed education to be something worthwhile and useful in daily living. He felt that students should be given the choice if they desire to learn a trade and make a decent living for themselves and their families. He also thought that the 10 percent who were going to college should be given the opportunity to take the courses they needed, because they had what he had: a fervent desire to attain that education no matter what. He was, however, more concerned about making the other 90 percent respectable and worthy citizens of their country and city. They could experience pride in their jobs even if they were "blue collar" jobs. Johnson, though, was reacting to the needs of the majority of students in Chicago. Labor unions were in their heyday and gaining power. Most of the students were immigrants themselves or first generation Americans. They could not afford a costly college education. Some did try to attend the junior colleges in the city, but many had little money and went to work after they graduated from high school. Also, southern Blacks from Mississippi, Alabama and other southern states were coming to Chicago by the thousands. They needed a basic education. Johnson was trying to provide them with the necessary survival skills and job training. He was surely among the first, if not the first, to concern himself with Black education by including it in the course of study. Many of his innovations were
firsts.

A substantial portion of middle class teachers and university professors could not identify with his vocational philosophy. They believed he deprived students of a full education. In many instances the overcrowding in Black schools made this accusation true. He made great efforts to keep pupils in high school until graduation. If they were not interested in the classic course of study, he wanted to introduce vocational training that would interest them. He was sure they would use this training to become self sufficient in later life. His critics believed this stereotyped training limited the capabilities of students.

It was true that the federal government helped Chicago with the building of its schools during the late thirties and early forties. Johnson had federal money at his disposal for vocational education programs as well as for regular education. He initiated inservice training for all teachers in reading, mathematics, science, English, social studies, music and art, through the establishment of demonstration centers in each district. Teachers were encouraged to learn new methods and techniques in teaching all these subjects.

Johnson did have great difficulty relating to people especially when he believed they held attitudes that were hostile to him. He felt this way about the CTU and was
overly careful in dealing with the union. Unfortunately, because of demotions, transfers, nepotism practices and his complete disregard for the teachers' union, he made teachers feel he was not an honest, trustworthy person. The CTU found it impossible to deal with him. He merely ignored their union status and relegated them to the category of enemies. He put on his defensive armor and would not recognize the union leadership as spokespersons for most of the teachers in the system. Thus they concluded that he was an irresponsible administrator. By ignoring too many people he became an ineffective leader. He often refused to meet with community organizations or parent groups. He felt threatened by any kind of criticism including the comments and ideas of others. Had he been more receptive these interactions would not have contributed to his downfall.

He was also hampered in his dealings with the teachers because of the board President, James McCahey, who decided that Johnson had to carry out his political orders. The political climate was one that could not be overcome by Johnson. If he rejected McCahey's dominant role he would have been out of his superintendent's job with few prospects of finding a similar position that paid as well during those depression years.

He did, through the Bureau of Curriculum and the master teachers who helped write the texts, get textbooks
and other materials into the Chicago schools that correlated with the curriculum guides. Those guides, mimeographed materials and texts assisted the teachers in having on hand adequate information for the children to read and use.

Johnson must be given credit for his instructional leadership through his development of the curriculum in the schools as well as his general improvement of instruction. Unhappily, Johnson's negative legacy dealt with his role as a superintendent taking orders from the president of the board. It was because of this relationship that civic, teacher, PTA, and church groups through the assistance of the news media, found an unacceptable flaw in the school system. This flaw needed to be corrected so that political power would be taken away from the board president. The NEA Report and the NCA assessment of Johnson concurred with the Chicago citizen groups. It was the NEA and NCA reporting as much as it was the assessment of the CSC, CTU, PTA and other civic and church organizations throughout Chicago that caused Johnson's downfall and ultimate resignation. It is unlikely that these organizations incorrectly assessed the situation in the Chicago schools.

Throughout the ordeal of Johnson's resignation, reassignment and finally the demotion to elementary principal status, Johnson was able to overcome bitterness. He became the principal at a school were the parents
protested his arrival and was able to use his coping abilities to overcome their hostilities. He never lacked faith in himself and did not lash out at the NCA, parents, teachers, or the press with angry retorts. He refused to verbally accuse anyone else of wrongdoing. He took his punishment and made the best of the situation. Again, for the most part he was able to ignore the humiliation he must have felt by being demoted. Johnson refused to apologize to anyone for his ten years as superintendent. In his estimation he had done the job required of him. He worked many long hours in his office guiding the smooth operation of the educational programs of the schools. He honestly believed he had done his best and was loyal to his superiors.

It was in response to ten years of public outcries denouncing the corruption in the Johnson administration that the state legislature finally passed an acceptable law giving the general superintendent of schools in Chicago the ability to run the schools as the chief executive officer. This meant all matters pertaining to the schools had to be cleared through the superintendent. With this the general superintendent would no longer be quite so hampered by political tieups.

Although the school system is not perfect and politics still exist in the schools, there are greater opportunities
for effective and successful schools when students, parents, teachers, the community, and administrators have confidence in the general superintendent and of course in the school board. Therefore, the Johnson administration can be seen as a turning point in administration. As a result of Johnson's lack of power to carry out his own desired administrative policies corrupt political practices were carried out by the board. Reform had been welcomed by the citizens who fought desperately for a permanent change that would rescue the schools from political control. The role of the general superintendent resulted from a reform movement that struggled to divorce itself from politics.

Finally, it is necessary to understand how Johnson was able to maintain such resolute strength. He had the ability to cope and withstand threats and accusations of corrupt personnel practices, nepotism and political favoritism. These were the most serious accusations hurled against him by the teacher, parent, civic and church organizations.

JOHNSON'S COPING STRATEGIES

Johnson's ability to cope effectively with the administrative pressures of the superintendency over a ten year period may be explained on the basis of a formulation of the theoretical assumptions of Karen Horney, a social psychologist. These seem to provide some valuable insights,
realizing that no definitive analysis is intended. Horney has analyzed the ways individuals differ as they conduct their lives in relation to other people. Horney's interpersonal coping strategies are similar to those used by Johnson in attempts to solve basic conflicts with others. Her development of personality can be viewed as an interpersonal process involving the acquiring of self-confidence as well as the capability of acting spontaneously to other people. She has noted that in attempts to solve conflicts some persons use attitudes of compliance (a giving in to others) aggression (a striking out at others) and withdrawal (an avoidance of others) along with other behaviors that help provide a protective structure for coping with problems. Included is the use of "elusiveness," "blind spots," "compartmentalization," and "rationalization." The first is sometimes used by persons to avoid contradictions in their lives. It allows them to avoid making any decisions whatsoever, and usually has a bewildering impact upon its recipients. The second or the use of "blind spots" is the inability or refusal to view oneself as others do. The third, "compartmentalization," refers to an ability to separate one's life into isolated and parallel categories. Thus, the person has a compartment for friends, for enemies, for family, and for professional activities separated from his/her personal life. Anything that occurs in one
compartment can not contradict, support or influence what happens in another. Finally there is "rationalization" which assists persons in using reasoning to deceive themselves by creating good reasons for some of their actions that would otherwise be unacceptable to their self-esteem.

Horney's description of compliance, aggression, and withdrawal, intertwined with "elusiveness," "blind spots," "compartmentalization," and "rationalization" are what constituted an entire protective structure that Johnson used to cope with the severe professional pressures of his superintendency. Not only did it allow for a sense of security, but it also acted as a shield to fend off new threats to his self-image. The interpersonal strategies that Johnson used allowed him to remain cool and aloof and sometimes withdrawn from genuine interaction with significant others. He construed most teachers and civic organizations as essentially troublesome and unjustly demanding of him. His only reasonable solution was avoidance or "elusiveness." He ignored their demands for his time and thus was able to cope with pressure groups that he believed hostile to his administration. Some examples of these coping strategies used by Johnson were seen during his high school days when he stayed away from athletics because of his light weight and short stature. He
avoided confrontations with strong athletic boys who probably could have made fun of him or bullied him. He took music instruction instead. During his college days he did not socialize often or mix with the students. He joined few if any clubs on campus. While he taught in suburban towns he did not socialize with community groups. During the time he was a teacher at Lane, at the normal college, and later as a principal, he was careful not to get into any confrontations with the board about teachers' rights. He was not known to raise his voice in protest against the board's policies, nor did he join professional groups involved in social or political issues in education. He was not a joiner or mixer. Mary Lusson, a teacher who knew him well, stated that he would not hob-nob or socialize like other men she knew at the board. Johnson avoided conflict whenever he could. He used this protective "elusive" behavior as a way to avoid making many decisions that affected the teachers while he was superintendent. The superintendent had a capacity to becloud important issues such as teachers' salary demands, extension of teaching certificates, and the allowance of CTU mail to be placed in teachers' mailboxes. His avoidance behavior was very bewildering to its recipients. The CTU as well as civic organizations tried to pin him down on certain issues and could not because he used this protective coping behavior.
Johnson used two other behaviors that enhanced his protective structures to provide security from conflict. For instance, he did not see how his actions were evaluated by others. In other words, his "blind spots" gave him shelter from situations that he perceived as threats to his administrative power. For example, he could not understand why teachers wanted or needed a union other than to use it as a threat against his administration. Johnson also used "compartmentalization." Often, he was very unfair to teachers through demotions, transfers and his refusal to meet with the CTU to discuss the teachers' grievances. Yet, he would write columns for the newspapers about the importance of Americanism, patriotism and the important attributes of honesty and integrity in teaching character education.

Johnson was compliant with the demands of board President James McCahey, and carried out his dictates. He was able to use this compliant attitude along with "rationalization" which allowed him to keep his positive self-image intact. An example of the latter was his involvement in the selection of successful candidates who had passed the oral part of the principals' examination due to his assistance. Johnson probably rationalized that it was important to have principals in the system who were known to be loyal to that organization. James McCahey's
sister Marie was successful as were some of her friends after failing several times before. Johnson rationalized what he did by explaining that the district superintendents voted to pass or fail candidates and that the courts approved of the board of examiners' action by throwing out all the cases brought against the 1936-1937 principals' examination. Rationalization was also a survival technique used in coping with administrative pressures. McCahey was his superior and the superintendent had to do what his superior requested. Thus Johnson was able to maintain his own positive self-image throughout these stressful years as superintendent.35

These variables and coping devices provided Johnson with a protective structure that was necessary and very important to his administrative and personal survival. However, he still needed the support of an organization behind him which allowed him to cope with outside pressure groups who wanted him out of office. Paul Peterson tells us that the administrative organization of the Chicago schools was one in which members were not willing to act against the interests and the values of the members of that organization. Johnson had his own place in the hierarchy of the organization and had strong ties with the members because he shared their values. He was an accepted and valued member of the group, and the group protected its
individual members who became valued objects to the organization. Johnson was probably appreciated for his expertise in the school curriculum as well as his assistance in saving board money. He was also undoubtedly prized for his loyalty to the organization and his strength in withstanding the barrage of criticism aimed at him and the school system. He was able to maintain his position in the group for the ten years of his superintendency. Even when he was forced to resign the group protected him and provided another position for him as an administrator in charge of the high schools. Paul Peterson explains the shared values of organizational members in this way:

If organizations are reluctant to act contrary to their interests, neither do they eagerly promote alternatives inconsistent with the values of organizational members.36

The protective structure that Horney explained and the support of the organization of which Johnson was a member provided him with a strong base for effective coping strategies in his administrative role. The organization's shared values allowed the group to become cohesive. It was the glue that held the organization together and allowed him to survive. Johnson's strength in coping with administrative pressures was the key to his survival in office for ten years.
CHAPTER FIVE NOTES


7. Ibid., 17-18.


10. Ibid., 14-31.

11. Ibid., 34.


13. Ibid., 40-41.


15. Ibid., 46-47.

16. Ibid., 48-56.

17. Ibid., 60.

18. Ibid.


26. Citizens Schools Committee, "Does Whitewash Clean Our Schools." An Analysis of the final report of the Subcommittee of the Committee on Schools, Fire and Civil Service of the City Council of Chicago, following the public hearings on the charges in the N.E.A. Report in the Council Chambers of the City Hall, 18, 19 March 1946, Folder 3, Box
19. CTU Files, Chicago, Chicago Historical Society Archives; "Kelly Asks 7 For Advice on School Board," Chicago Daily Tribune, 2 April 1946, 1.

27. Herrick, 276-277.


30. Ibid.

31. Ibid.

32. Graceland Cemetery records of John and Maria Johnson and the William H. Johnson families: Chicago.


34. Ibid.

35. Ibid., 458, 474, 480-481.

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