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Big Ben the Builder: School Construction -- 1953-66

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BIG BEN THE BUILDER:

SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION -- 1953-66

by

Cynthia A. Wnek

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
Doctor of Philosophy

May

1988
Photograph One: Benjamin C. Willis as General Superintendent of Schools, 1956.

Source: Benjamin C. Willis -- Personal collection
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Cynthia A. Wnek is the daughter of Lee Rychlec and Elizabeth (Genosick) Rychlec. She was born and raised in Chicago, Illinois.

She attended St. Helen Elementary School and St. Stanislaus High School in Chicago.

Mrs. Wnek received the degree of Bachelor of Science from Northeastern Illinois University of Chicago. She also received the Masters Degree in Special Education at Northeastern Illinois University.

She has been working in the Chicago Public School system for the past 28 years. She began her association with the Board of Education as a parent volunteer. She became a teacher aide and went on to become a teacher. Mrs. Wnek is presently the principal of the Schubert Elementary School in Chicago.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

During the decade 1950-1960, more than 90 percent of the total increase in population in the continental United States occurred in the great metropolitan areas. This rapidly increasing urbanization of America brought problems in the cities that were more complicated than numbers alone could indicate. The movement of people from rural areas to the city due to the impact of technology usually meant the movement of people from one culture or way of life to a very different one. This placed additional and new demands upon education in the large cities.

Typical of the worsening school situation across the nation were conditions found in twelve large cities: New York, New York City, Boston, Pittsburgh, Milwaukee, Seattle, Detroit, Baltimore, San Francisco, San Antonio, Los Angeles and Chicago. In New York, the suburban areas were hardest hit by inadequate school facilities. The biggest problem was the financing of a building program to accommodate the expanding enrollment. The total public and private school enrollment was more than 3 million in 1956, a figure which reflected a gain of 185,000 more than the previous years' enrollment in New York schools. In New York City about fifty thousand public school pupils were on a part-time program. There was a major instructional problem in
shortage of science and industrial arts teachers.

A lower grade elementary teacher shortage was felt in Boston in the mid fifties, as it was in Pittsburgh and Milwaukee. In Seattle, they were using personnel out of the profession to supplement their teacher needs.

Even though Detroit in the 1940-1950 decade had built 119 new schools and annexes, 5,500 children were on half-sessions, and 5,200 traveled by bus to distant classrooms because of overcrowding in their own neighborhoods. This number, however, was topped by the Baltimore school system, which had 7,200 of its students on half-time sessions in 1956; this was up 2,051 over the year before. Churches were being used as schools and 136 classrooms operated two shifts. Also used were community buildings, cafeterias, gymnasiums and converted Army barracks at Fort Meade to house an additional 33,000 pupils.

In Milwaukee, a record enrollment of 91,000 with only 3,177 teachers posed a particular problem. In 1956, the citizens of the city were asked to approve a $39 million bond referendum to help finance a then proposed $66 million building program for the period of 1957-1962.

In San Francisco and San Antonio, there was not a significant teacher shortage; however, the enrollments were beginning to mushroom in the mid fifties. San Francisco's enrollment was above 2,500,000 and growing monthly. Some
200,000 students were on half-day sessions. In 1956 San Francisco's experts were predicting a need of fifty thousand more classrooms by 1965, followed by a search for fifteen thousand more teachers.

In Los Angeles, schools opened in September 1956 with an estimated enrollment of 530,000, which was up 20,000 over the year before. School construction there was spurred by a bond issue of $130 million, which had been approved in 1955. In spite of a massive construction program, sixteen thousand elementary and thirteen thousand secondary students were forced to attend short session that fall.¹

INCREASE IN BLACK POPULATIONS

After the turn of the century, America became an urban nation. The change from rural to urban residence was somewhat more dramatic for Blacks than it was for Whites. Sixty years prior, little more than half of the Blacks in metropolitan areas lived in the central cities. By 1960, however, eight out of every ten Blacks lived in a central city. Also, by 1960, more than half of the metropolitan Whites resided in the suburbs.

Population trends showed that between 1940 and 1960 the total population of metropolitan areas increased by 40 million. Eighty-four percent of the Black increase occurred in the central cities and 80 percent of the White increase was
in the suburbs. Between 1950 and 1960, twenty-four central cities gained more than 2 million Blacks. According to census data for 1960 and the figures on births and deaths from boards of health in cities like Chicago, the increase was due partly to a natural increase of Blacks (births minus deaths). In Chicago, for instance, this figure for the 1950-60 period totaled 170,468. Thus in Chicago, 53 percent of the Black population gain was from natural increase. The increase as a result of in-migration for the same period in Chicago was 149,904 or 47 percent. A comparison of figures for 1940-1950 were 43,346 or 20 percent from natural increase and 171,188 or 80 percent from in-migration.2

Not only were Blacks concentrated in central cities, but they were segregated within them. A study, done during the decade discussed the residential patterns in 207 central cities, and showed that residential segregation was rigid and uniform. Intense residential segregation existed in virtually every city in the nation:

This is true for all cities in all regions of the country and for all types of cities. . . . It is true whether there are hundreds of thousands of Negro residents, or only a few thousand.3

This fact was to be the reason for many problems which presented themselves to the Chicago public school administration.
RESULTING EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS

In Chicago, as in other major cities, the need for a strong program of education in the academic areas as a preparation for successful college work was as necessary as ever; but, in addition, the urban school had to provide many health and welfare services formerly provided by the home, a program of urban culture and a strong program of vocational education.

Further, the school was expected to maintain, extend, and improve the American way of life. Not only was it a must to include new content and new approaches in the school program, but parents of the pupils had to be reached -- particularly those who were new to an urban culture -- with adult education programs that could quicken and broaden the base of diffusion of the prevailing culture. To ignore the pressing needs of great numbers of children and youth due to the urbanization of America would have been to fail to meet the needs of both the individual and the society, and to allow the great central cities to cease to be great centers of business and industry as well as great centers of culture.

As if an increasing birth rate and advanced urbanization wasn't enough, Chicago was plagued by a factor which, in some estimations, caused the major part of resulting educational problems. This third factor was mobility. Mobil-
ity was not, however, a phenomenon unique to Chicago or to Chicago school enrollments. It was rather a national phenomenon and even an international one. The effect of the mobility of parents was reflected in the movement of their children from school to school. People moved into the city, left the city and moved from place to place within the city, seeking jobs or better jobs, homes or better homes, but above all, seeking a better way of life. Moving with their parents were the pupils of the school system.

The mobility of pupil population in Chicago was city-wide. During the school year 1960-61, all of the twenty school districts had enrollment figures denoting a plus or minus difference of up to seven hundred students. In five districts of the twenty that had the highest record of pupil mobility, almost forty thousand pupils transferred in and out during just two school months (September and October 1961.) This was an average of one thousand children moving every day of those forty days in one-fifth of the school districts in the entire city. In these five districts, one school alone accounted for almost two thousand transfers in and out during this forty-day period. That figure was an average of fifty children leaving or enrolling in that one school every day during the period being discussed. When the mobility records of individual children in these school districts were studied, it was not unusual to have found
that a child in the third grade had been enrolled in ten or twelve schools.

The more obvious challenges created by mobility were those of providing sufficient and adequate classrooms where and when they were needed, and of providing sufficient and competent teachers where and when they were needed. Inherent, though not as obvious, was the problem of the changing pattern of class and staff needs in any given school at any given time, sometimes even overnight. A school in which class size and staff were in balance one day may not have been the next day. The schools with low class memberships one day could easily become overcrowded the next. Short-range and long-range plans needed to be made with built in flexibility.

Excessive mobility of pupils created challenges to education that were both multiple and monumental. In addition to the problems of shortages of classrooms and teachers, there were administration and organization problems. These included the need for several complete reorganizations of classes per school in the first few months of the school years, and several more complete reorganizations as the school year progressed. Thus, the changes caused by the voluntary movement of pupils from school to school were necessarily compounded by the resultant need to move considerable numbers of children from class to class, or
even school to school, within a district in order to prevent excessive overcrowding in some and smaller numbers in others. 4

The narrative which follows will discuss in detail all of the problems which faced the school system in Chicago under the administration of Dr. Benjamin C. Willis during the years of 1953 to 1966. However, the focal point of the work will be Willis's massive school construction program. The social, economic and political factors, which brought serious pressures to bear on this construction program, will be highlighted. Even though the chapters will deal mainly with the Chicago situation, most information could be included in a narrative about any major city of that time.

For the purpose of using the vernacular of today, the term Black will be used in the narrative instead of the term Negro, which will be used only when quotes are presented.

WILLIS -- SUPERINTENDENT OF CHICAGO SCHOOLS

On 1 September 1953, Benjamin Coppage Willis, age fifty-two, assumed the responsibilities of the General Superintendent of the Chicago Public Schools, the second largest public school system in the United States. He held that post for thirteen years, the last five of which were turbulent ones.

When he succeeded Harold C. Hunt as superintendent,
Willis inherited a physical plant of four hundred buildings, a student population of 500,000, a teacher-staff force of twenty thousand plus and an operating budget in the millions. He also inherited a school system of widespread socioeconomic diversity, bulging with the first wave of post-war "baby-boomers," and civil rights-motivated Black and rural migrants. The thirty thousand dollar a year salary tendered by the board of education was testimony to its realization of the magnitude of the task Willis was to undertake.

BACKGROUND

The man, who had proved his ability in a city system was himself the product of rural America and its schools. The son of Milton Willis and Elizabeth Estelle Coppage, Willis was born on 23 December 1901 in Baltimore, Maryland. He was born with the "I Will" spirit. Some say it was the "I Willis" spirit. Nevertheless, it brought him acclaim as America's highest paid schoolmaster -- and angry denunciations by those who saw him as an obstinate tyrant.

Like his farm born and bred parents, Willis grew up on Maryland farms. His father was a hard-working man who believed in the powerful benefits that hard work could bring. His father taught him at the age of four how to milk cows. Milton Willis showed his son, since his fingers were
so small, how to position his thumb and fingers in order to achieve better leverage. Willis attributed his ability to work long hours to the boyhood responsibilities assigned to him. He learned to work with cows, horses, and mules. Plowing the fields at dawn was a normal happening for the farm boy who attended school on a regular basis. He eagerly fit into his day the work which had to be done. He was not a stranger to farm chores. Trips to a milk cooling station frequently preceded a six mile bicycle or horse and buggy ride to the public elementary school in Easton, Maryland.

EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND AND CAREER EXPERIENCE

It was Willis's elementary teacher of history, geography and math who recognized the potential of his student and contacted Mr. and Mrs. Willis suggesting that their son continue his education. He did so, going on to high school and spending his freshman year at St. John's College in Annapolis. He then moved on to George Washington University where he received his bachelor's degree in 1922. Four years later he completed work on his Master of Science Degree at the University of Maryland. At the age of forty-nine, Columbia University conferred on Willis the degree of Doctor of Philosophy. In 1933, he attended Johns Hopkins University where he took additional coursework in school administration.
While acquiring his own educational degrees, Willis engaged in the active practice of school administration from the time he graduated from George Washington University through the completion of his Ph.D. At the age of twenty-two, Willis applied for the position of principal of Federalsburg Elementary and High School, Caroline County, Maryland. This was to be the first and only position he would ever apply for during his administrative career. He was offered and accepted, instead, the principalship of Henderson Maryland Elementary and High School. He was later to be transferred to Federalsburg, where his talents were needed. On the long road from Henderson to Chicago, Willis took all the intervening steps and gained an intimate knowledge of the full range of American school systems, small and large.

Willis spent the next decade of his career in the principalships of Federalsburg Elementary and High School, Caroline High School, Sparrows Point High School and Cantonsville High School -- all in Maryland.

For the next thirteen years (1934-1947) he was engaged as the Superintendent of Schools in Caroline County, Denton, Maryland and later in Washington County, Hagerstown, Maryland. He quickly established a reputation as an educational leader of exceptional ability. His work in these positions reinforced his views that the strength of democracy, at its
most idealistic, was best fostered in a small community environment.

However, his passion for action and personal drive to succeed prompted him to accept the position of superintendent in Yonkers, New York for three years (1944-1947). From 1947 to 1953, he served in the same capacity in Buffalo, New York. "Start little and grow big" — his advice in 1973 to aspiring superintendents — summarizes his career accurately.

BUFFALO SUPERINTENDENCY

During his tenure in Buffalo, Willis was highly regarded as an executive who believed in the American concept of a public school system. His belief that no community could have an outstanding school system, unless it sincerely wanted one and was willing to pay for it, was widely known. That conviction and a willingness to devote himself to its realization was the cornerstone of his administration.

Donald W. Dunnan, Superintendent of Springfield Public Schools stated that it was his good fortune to have known Dr. Benjamin C. Willis while he was serving as Superintendent of Schools in Buffalo, New York. "He exercised outstanding leadership for the good of public education," Dunnan said. Willis's strength in public relations and
salesmanship were notable during this period. Despite extensive involvement in Buffalo's civic affairs, he remained accessible to classroom teachers. He was considered to be friendly, capable, efficient, and sincere.9

He had a good rapport with the New York system. The general attitude toward him by all, including teacher union personnel, was favorable. He was considered to be a very fair administrator by union rank and file. However, having made up his mind, while permitting free, open discussion as to the wisdom of his plans, he usually carried them out. His reputation was further enhanced when he successfully resolved a long-standing dispute among board members shortly after he entered that system as superintendent. He also successfully intervened in a controversy between a high school principal and a teacher who was supported by a vocal pro-communist group. During both of these interventions, Willis was characterized as responsible, fair and tolerant.

As part of Willis's reorganization of the Buffalo schools, he took the unpopular stand that two long established high schools should be closed and used for other purposes. The Urban League was supportive of his proposal and despite some show of local dissatisfaction, Willis's plan was initiated and continued to be implemented after his departure in 1953. After three years in Buffalo, the consensus was that he had served with notable success. "We are
sorry to see him leave," said a union activist. In his quiet, careful and courteous way, he had succeeded in securing public cooperation in implementing his fundamental principal: "EDUCATION IS EVERYBODY'S JOB".10

FROM BUFFALO TO CHICAGO

In September 1953, Willis was hired away from Buffalo by Chicago to reorganize that city's fragmented and grossly overcrowded school system. Willis was brought to the city of Chicago from Buffalo, New York, precisely for the purpose of administering a huge construction program with little disturbance to the existing set of racial and class relations, two tasks in which he was eminently successful. Benjamin Willis was the initiator of four previous school building programs at the time when he was being considered for superintendency of Chicago Public Schools. These programs were created and fostered during his superintendencies in Caroline County, Washington County, Yonkers, New York and Buffalo. In Yonkers, he received special acclaim for developing a program of additions to meet developing space shortages. In Buffalo he supported a state survey of the Buffalo school system, one of the first of its kind ever to be initiated.

The president of the Chicago board at this time said of the appointment of Willis, "We needed a man who had proved his ability in a city system. Dr. Willis's experience in
Buffalo showed us what he can do. He was our first choice—the best man for the job, we believe." However, Willis was not the unanimous choice of the board members the first time around. Much controversy arose over picking an outside person for the superintendency. Many board members were insistent that the successor to Dr. Hunt be chosen from local personnel. However, Dr. Redmond, who was being considered, in past years had left the Chicago system.11

When the vote was taken at the board meeting of 31 August 1953, affirmations were not made for Willis's appointment by all members. However, after discussion and a closed board meeting, the vote for Willis's election was unanimous.12

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

As Willis embarked on his thirteen year role as the guiding force behind the Chicago public schools, he carried his credo of "Education is everybody's job" even further in his pronouncement, "Magnificent things in a magnificent way for all children -- this is the goal of our educational program in our Chicago Public Schools." He was determined to provide an educational program, staff and plant designed to teach the "whole" child and to meet the needs of individual differences. Willis believed strongly that a successful educational program must meet the needs of both children and
our American democracy. That goal demanded creative leadership and school buildings that were in effect educational tools.13

Willis's immediate concern was to build more and different schools. His intent was to provide additions as necessary to existing buildings, to modernize and rehabilitate older schools, and to construct new buildings. Inherent to his building program was Willis's plan to construct schools which met the needs of their own communities and teaching staff, as well as the basic needs of children and the American society. The views of parents, staff and community representatives were to be a vital force in the building project.

A secondary consideration was the cost involved. The new superintendent was determined that the building program be carried out in as cost efficient a manner as possible. A city-wide educational staff was to plan locations, sizes of sites, and kinds of schools needed, while determining the number of rooms required at each grade level. Monies could then be designated for specific uses on a carefully determined priority basis.

By using a this approach and then determining local needs, Willis felt that carefully conceived plans could be developed for each site. Each school would house an educational program designed to provide optimum conditions
for teachers to help children develop abilities, attitudes and values essential for their everyday living and for their future roles.

WILLIS'S CHARACTER

As Chicago's general superintendent, Willis's considerable energy, singlemindedness and towering self-confidence merged into a leadership style that bowled over staff as well as observers. Articles stressed that Willis eats, drinks, sleeps and dreams schools. He was often known to call upon an assistant and say, "I have an idea. Come over and we'll kick it around."

The discussion would often go into mid morning. A Chicago Tribune reporter, after accompanying Willis through his paces for a complete day, remarked, "Ben Willis is paid $37,500.00 a year as superintendent of the Chicago Public Schools; so far as this reporter is concerned, Willis is welcome to the job." The writer got the facts, sore feet, and a case of second degree exhaustion.

Husky, moon-faced and heavy-voiced, Willis held one of the most demanding, thankless jobs in the country as boss of Chicago schools. Willis worked a sixteen-hour day. He was up at 6:00 A.M. and began his day with a leisurely breakfast with his bride, Rachel. His wife, a congenial, attractive woman, whom Willis called "Mom," seemed to have escaped the
Willis wrath. Although he protected her from the public eye, she did share in the controversies which enveloped her husband. Although he was reluctant to discuss school matters, there was one time when Mrs. Willis related to a reporter a story about how she and her husband, Ben, went to a restaurant in Waukegan. Upon arriving there weren't any tables open. She said within minutes Willis grabbed his hat and they started out to eat elsewhere. He was in such a hurry that he drove the wrong way on a one-way street and there was a policeman right behind them. She related how the policeman looked at Willis's license and then looked at Willis and said, "Good Lord, you've got trouble enough. Go on."

Before 7:30 A.M. Willis was on his way to work. As his chauffeur, provided by the school board, drove him to the board offices at 228 North LaSalle, he pored over a briefcase full of reports. Arriving at 7:30 A.M., Willis was busy dictating letters and memos to staff personnel, and arranging for future conferences with staff members. "It was platoon work, with Miss Harvey, Willis's executive secretary, handling the most important items, and the members of his eight-girl secretarial staff operating in relays", said one reporter.

The day proceeded at a fire engine pace. First, there were conferences, school visits and a speech. Then there was
a quick lunch in a still uncompleted cafeteria of a school under construction, which Willis had come to oversee. In the afternoon, it was one staff meeting after another. At 7:00 P.M., Willis sat back, tired, rubbing his hands over his eyes as Miss Harvey prepared her boss's brief case for the ride home. "I'll have dinner with my wife," Willis told the reporter. "Then, I'll go over this stuff in the brief case, to be ready for the meeting tomorrow with the board. Then, maybe, I'll read a little before I go to sleep at about 11:00 P.M."15

Willis amazed the board and the school staff with his quick grasp of the Chicago school system, his computer-like memory and his driving energy. He kept staff members working day and night to produce charts that became his favorite technique for explaining problems and plans to anyone who would listen.

CIVIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL INTERESTS

During Willis's tenure in Chicago, he maintained a consistent interest in the city by his participation in civic, social and cultural affairs. He was a member of virtually every notable urban organization. He generously supported charitable and service ventures, such as the Chicago Council of Boy Scouts, the Welfare Council of Metropolitan Chicago, the Teacher Education Council, and the
Homemaking Education Council.

Willis's accomplishments did not go unnoticed at the national level. In 1962, he served on the President's School Advisory Commission, on the Advisory Commission of Education in Illinois, and the Illinois State Educational Commission. He also chaired the Educational Policies Committee, was appointed to the President's Panel of Consultants on Vocational Education, and the President's Science Advisory Committee.  

There was no question that Willis had a strong messianic urge to improve education not only in Chicago but nationally. He was solely responsible for establishing the Great Cities Research Foundation, an institute that researched the educational problems of the nation's ten largest cities, and he brought their superintendents together for discussion once or twice a year. This urge manifested itself in his doctoral dissertation when he stated that the school leader of greatest value to the system is the one who may free himself from immediate day-to-day routine to climb the mountains to see the greater services that schools can perform.

RECOGNITION AND ACCOLADES

He received the recognition and accolades of his fellow educators during his distinguished career, accepting honor-
ary degrees from Northwestern, Bradley, and Harvard Universities. He was the first public school superintendent to be so honored by Harvard. When they awarded him the honorary degree in 1960, Harvard called him a determined defender of the proposition that American cities deserve good schools. Willis was also singled out for honors by the National College of Education, the American International College, Central Michigan College, and in 1964 by his alma mater, George Washington University.

At a January 1962 luncheon in Willis's honor attended by about 175 Chicago and suburban educators, businessmen and civic leaders, the Urban League Club of Chicago awarded him a citation for distinguished public service to schools. Praising Willis as "a financier, planner, man of vision and a great educator," Mayor Daley said, "many times we have to go out of town to hear them applaud so highly what has been done in our schools." He said, "We salute one who has carried on in a fine manner the most difficult job in our community." Also, Paul J. Misner, Glencoe School Superintendent, called Willis "a tough competitor in the field of educational leadership, who has proved that a big city need not take a back seat to the suburbs in terms of educational innovations and frontier thinking." He added, "the respect and affection we all have for Benjamin C. Willis is combined with wholesome envy and downright jealousy."
WILLIS'S EFFECT ON THE SYSTEM

Chicago's school system had come a long way under Willis. Educators remember a time when the system was so riddled with school politics that it was threatened with loss of accreditation. During Willis's first seven or eight years of superintendency, the Chicago Public School System inspired other superintendents to face big-city problems with, "Chicago is doing it; why can't we?" Visiting educators from Europe, coming here for a tour of American schools, often were advised to see Chicago first.

Willis was vivid. Once in his office after a meeting, he pounded his desk and quietly remarked that he'd like to choke every one of them. Willis was impatient, and he drove his associates as hard as he drove himself. No task was supposed to be too difficult for his team. Many considered Willis an arrogant person, one who admitted having superior ability to lead the Chicago Public School System, and one who as a result became intolerant of others. To many he was like the Pied Piper, who called the tune for the children of Hamelin, one man who more than any other influenced the life of Chicago youth.

Dr. Willis also generated intense loyalties on the part of those who worked with him. His teachers found him both an inspiring leader and a fanatic gadfly, who challenged them to continuous self-examination. Some said he was not an
easy man to work with because he made rigorous demands and
expected others to follow his Spartan purpose of excellence,
but they added that he never pushed people around and
expected no more than that they do their best.18

His foes and his fans will continue to disagree about
whether Willis was the villain or the hero of the school
scene during his term. More than most men, Willis is seen
in irreconcilable superlatives. "The best of all past,
present, and probably future school superintendents,"
trumpets a loyal board member. "The worst for this era,"
scoff his critics. Not even Willis's closest friends ever
doubted that this dynamo was strong-willed, bossy, hard­
driving, unyielding and profoundly sure of himself.19

A stormy, dramatic era in Chicago school history ended
on 31 August 1966, when Benjamin Coppage Willis walked off
the stage as Chicago's General Superintendent of Schools.
Hero or villain? An age of enlightenment or a return to the
dark ages? Only the slow, unemotional judgment of history
will reveal the truth.20 What follows is a record of the
events of this stormy period.
CHAPTER ONE ENDNOTES


6. Ibid., 5.


20. Ibid.
CHAPTER TWO

POPULATION AND ENROLLMENT

When Benjamin Coppage Willis arrived in Chicago in 1953, no Chicago resident would have denied that he was living in a time of turbulence and change. Chicago was undergoing changes which had begun in 1910.

The "flight to the suburbs" had begun in 1910 when the rate of increase in the city's growth began to slow down. Between 1910 and 1950 the suburban population tripled, until it was three-fourths that of the city -- and still growing rapidly. The central city lost in total population. As the property in the inner city deteriorated with age, and the proportion of children in the public schools to adult population increased, the assessed value of the city real estate per public school child went down by some $3,000 per child, while in most of the suburbs it increased. There was a measurable reduction, too, in the proportion of city children attending parochial schools. The demolition of buildings for the construction of wide roads to facilitate automobile transportation to the suburbs reduced the taxable area. The reduction in taxable property was increased by the replacement of slums by acres of public housing.
which did not pay full taxes.¹

By the early 1950s, many factors were present in Chicago's society. Pressures resulting from massive mobility of people were compounded by a traumatic population explosion, the onset of technology, the coming of automation, and intergroup tensions and hostilities which began to create turbulence within the Chicago public school system.

By the late 1950s, there was an influx of working-class Blacks, "Poor Whites" and Puerto Ricans in Chicago. The number of lower working-class and upper working-class community areas increased, while the numbers of middle-class areas decreased. Many of the working-class communities in Chicago had become largely Black.

An unevenly distributed increase compounded the problem. The increased population was concentrated in two kinds of areas: in the old and crowded communities where large housing projects were being completed and quickly occupied; and in the newly developed home communities in the periphery of the city (see map 1).²

Even though the city was divided into seventy-four community areas, not all of these areas will be discussed in this dissertation. The settlement of the influx families was sporadic, not always easily understood, and at times rather unpredictable.
Selection was made on the basis of population growth in certain areas of the city. What follows is a description of the population settlement patterns in Chicago between 1940 and 1960.3

OLD AND CROWDED COMMUNITIES

Between 1940 and 1950, the population of East Garfield Park (Community Area Twenty-Seven) increased as a result of an influx of Blacks; then it declined during the 1950s to its prewar level, due to a decrease in White population. By 1960, Blacks made up 62 percent of the population. The Italians were the only group remaining of the older immigrant groups. Fewer in numbers were the newer immigrant groups of Mexicans and Puerto Ricans, who concentrated in southern portions of the community.

With the Jewish movement northward to Albany Park and Rogers Park, the population of North Lawndale (Community Area Twenty-Nine) steadily declined between 1930 and 1950. In the 1940s and 1950s an important development was the increase of the number of Blacks into the community. This group, which comprised 13 percent of the community in 1950, made up 91 percent in the 1960s. Among the small remaining foreign stock population, Poles, Czechs, and Mexicans were the leading nationalities. A small Puerto Rican population also resided in the community in 1960.
As far back as 1910 Oakland (Community Area Thirty-Six) began to undergo conversions as it attracted transients. As the Blacks moved in, the English, Irish and German residents moved away. By 1930, the Black population had risen to 29 percent with a small Japanese-American group, the only one in Chicago at the time. During the 1940s there was an influx of southern whites. Between 1940 and 1950 the population increased nearly 70 percent, due to the influx of Blacks who made up 77 percent of the population. By 1960 the sizable Japanese population, as well as the Whites, had moved out of the community.

Between 1930 and 1960 the population of Woodlawn (Community Area Forty-Two) increased 23 percent. During these decades, Blacks were responsible for the steady increase. In 1960, dormitories of the University of Chicago and student housing made up part of the White population. Blacks made up 89 percent of the population. Among the foreign stock, Germans, Canadians and Mexicans were leading nationalities. A little over two thousand residents were Puerto Ricans in 1960.

In the 1930s Chatham (Community Area Forty-Four) was a middle class residential area, which had almost quadrupled its population since 1920. Irish, Germans and Swedish were the predominant groups among the foreign stock. In the 1950s and 1960s, the previously negligible Black population
grew rapidly. By 1960, Chatham was 64 percent Black. A large number of Swedes, Irish and Germans remained and occupied the fringes of the community.

In the decade between 1940 and 1950, Calumet Heights (Community Area Forty-Eight) experienced a boom, when the population increased 26 percent. In the 1950s, the population increased 107 percent. Poles, Russians and Germans were the leading foreign stock groups. By 1960, 77 percent of the housing units were owner occupied and 73 percent were single-family structures.

During the 1940s, the population of Roseland (Community Area Forty-Nine) increased 29 percent, partially as a result of an influx of Blacks, who comprised 18 percent of the population by 1950. The population remained relatively stable between 1950 and 1960. Italians, Swedes, Germans and Poles were the dominant groups among the foreign stock. The Black population increased slowly and by 1960 made up 23 percent of the total population of Roseland.

The population of South Deering (Community Area Fifty-One) increased by 138 percent between 1930 and 1960. Many of the residents were newcomers who were young, native Americans. In 1960, the leading nationalities among the foreign stock were the Yugoslavians, Russians and Poles.

The population of the East Side (Community Area Fifty-Two) declined slightly between 1930 and 1940, but increased
substantially -- by 31 percent -- between 1950 and 1960. In 1960 Polish, Yugoslavians, Italians and Swedes were the leading nationalities.

Between 1930 and 1940, the population of West Pullman (Community Area Fifty-Three) declined slightly, but increased in each of the two subsequent decades. In 1960 Poles, Italians and Germans were the predominant nationalities.

There was relatively little growth in Riverdale (Community Area Fifty-Four) between 1920 and 1940. Significant development occurred in the 1940s. Low-cost housing provided 1,500 apartments. The net result was a growth in population of over six times that of 1940, largely the result of an influx of Blacks, who constituted 84 percent of the community's population by 1950. Between 1950 and 1960 the Black population increased, and by 1960 it comprised 90 percent of the population.

Since 1940 Garfield Park (Community Area Fifty-Six) has experienced a rapid growth particularly during the postwar years. Due to a boom of building activity, the population more than tripled between 1950 and 1960. Poles were still predominant among the foreign stock, followed by Italians and Czechs. An interesting development during this decade was the appearance of Blacks in the community, so that by 1960 the Black population comprised 7 percent.
The population of Clearing (Community Area Sixty-Four) tripled between 1940 and 1960 due to industrial growth. Poles, Italians and Germans were the predominant groups among the foreign stock in 1960.

In 1940 West Lawn (Community Area Sixty-Five) was a community of predominantly one-story, single-family brick structures with a number of two-flats. After 1940 West Lawn experienced growth as a result of the expansion of neighboring industrial districts and the establishment of several new plants. Residential development spurted ahead between 1940 and 1960. The population increased 162 percent during this period. In 1960 Poles, Italians, Germans and Czechs were the leading nationalities.

Though Englewood (Community Area Sixty-Eight) was fairly built up residentially, the population increased slightly in each decade after 1930. In 1960 Irish and Germans were the dominant nationalities. The Black population also increased steadily after 1930, so that by 1960 it comprised 69 percent of the population.

The proportion of Black population rose to 86 percent in Greater Grand Crossing (Community Area Sixty-Nine) as a result of large-scale replacement of White by Black population during the 1950s. Mexicans, Irish and Italians were part of the remaining groups.

Dutch, Germans and Swedes were the predominant stocks
in the 1930s and 1940s in Ashburn (Community Area Seventy). New residents were attracted to the community during the 1940s. The population of Ashburn increased substantially until it reached 38,638 in 1960. The Irish, Poles, Italians and Germans were the major components of the population, along with a small Black population.

Washington Heights (Community Area Seventy-Three) increased 67 percent between 1930 and 1960. Irish, Germans and Swedes comprised the largest group of residents in 1960. During the 1950s the Black in-movement began and by 1960 it comprised 12 percent.

Between 1930 and 1940, Mount Greenwood (Community Area Seventy-Four) grew in size by just over a thousand. By 1950, its population almost tripled, and in 1960, it had nearly doubled its 1950 size. Leading nationalities among the foreign stock in 1960 were the Irish, Germans and Poles. The increased population and expanded residential construction were considered a result of the greatly increased industrial activity (see table 1).

NEWLY DEVELOPED HOME COMMUNITIES

From 1930 through 1950, Germans and Swedes made up the major population groups of West Ridge (Community Area Two). By 1960 Russians and Polish-Jews, who had been moving into West Ridge, became the leading nationalities. The shifts in
the last three areas revealed the following patterns. First, the population of Norwood Park (Community Area Ten) more than doubled between 1930 and 1960. By 1960 Poles had displaced the Germans as the major resident group. Italians and Swedes were also well represented. Second, the population of Forest Glen (Community Area Twelve) nearly tripled between 1940 and 1960. In 1960 Germans, Swedes and Poles were the leading groups. Finally, between 1940 and 1960, the population of North Park (Community Area Thirteen) increased 46 percent. Russian-Jews had become the dominant nationality among the foreign stock in 1960, comprising 24 percent of the total population. Poles were the second largest nationality.

FLUCTUATING POPULATION SHIFTS

Those community areas described below experienced population turnovers in large numbers especially in the exchange of White to Black. In these areas, the actual population total decreased during this turnover but the community changes were significant (see table 3).

The population remained stable in Lincoln (Community Area Seven) between 1940 and 1950 and then declined 13 percent during the 1950s. However, it experienced not only an increase in Black but also in Japanese populations in the 1950s, when the number of Japanese increased from 130 to
2,874. By 1960 the Japanese comprised three percent of the population. The growth of Blacks, however, did not parallel that of the Japanese; they constituted only a small part of the 1960 population. The rest of the community was made up of Germans, Poles and Italians who maintained their dominant positions along with a small percentage of Puerto Rican residents.

The population shifts of the Near North Side (Community Area Eight) roughly paralleled the Lincoln pattern. It remained relatively stable during the 1930s, increased by 16 percent during the 1940s, as a result of an influx of Blacks and Japanese, and then declined 15 percent during the 1950s as a result of extensive demolition. That same year the Black population again increased, comprising 31 percent of the population in 1960. Other groups decreased during this decade, while Germans, Italians and Russians were the leading nationalities among the foreign stock along with a sizable Puerto Rican population.

From 1930 to 1960, the community of West Town (Area Twenty-Four) continued to decline. In 1960 persons of Polish stock were the dominant nationality, followed by Russians, Italians and Germans. Starting in 1930, there began an influx of Blacks, and in 1960, 25 percent of the Puerto Rican population of Chicago resided in West Town. However, both Blacks and Puerto Ricans comprised small
shares of the total population of West Town -- 2 percent and 6 percent respectively -- in 1960. During the 1950s, there was also an increase in the number of Nonwhites other than Blacks, though this largely Oriental population made up a negligible share of the total population. A small southern White population also resided in the community in 1960.

In the 1930s, the population of West Garfield Park (Community Area Twenty-Six) peaked with a growth of the Russian-Jewish groups from North Lawndale and Near West Side. The Irish remained the largest ethnic group, followed by the Russians and Italians. The Irish began to move on, however, and in the 1950s the Black population began to grow. By 1960 Blacks made up 16 percent of the community's population, along with a significant Mexican and Puerto Rican population.

Before the 1940s, the Near West Side (Community Area Twenty-Eight) was mostly made up of Italians. By the late forties large numbers of Blacks and Mexicans settled into area twenty-eight, resulting in the flight of large groups of Germans, Irish, Poles and Russian-Jewish groups to other areas. By 1960 the Near West Side community was comprised of 54 percent Black, 19 percent Puerto Rican and 18 percent Mexican.

In 1960 as in 1930, the dominant groups among the foreign stock in South Lawndale (Community Area Thirty) were
the Poles, Czechs and Germans. Nearly one-fifth of all Czechs in the city resided here. Although there was a steady increase in the number of Black residents in the community, by 1960 they constituted only 6 percent of the total population.

Though the total population of Fuller Park (Community Area Thirty-Seven) increased only slightly between 1940 and 1950, the replacement of White by Black populations resulted in a sizeable percentage change so that the community was fifty percent Black by 1950 and 96 percent Black by 1960. A small White population along with a small Mexican group remains to the present.

By 1930 the Germans and Russians had replaced the Irish as the leading group among the foreign stock in Hyde Park (Community Area Forty-One). The following decade saw residential conversions. Between 1930 and 1950 the population increased by 15 percent. After 1950, however, the movement of Blacks was accelerated. Though the population declined markedly during the 1950s as a result of demolition for urban renewal projects, Black numbers increased until they comprised 38 percent of the population by 1960. Germans and Russian-Jews were still the dominant foreign stock groups, and a small Puerto Rican group also resided here.

During the 1920s and 1930s, the population of South
Shore (Community Area Forty-Three) more than doubled. Many families of Jewish faith moved into area forty-three. Germans, Irish and English resided here. Between 1930 and 1950, the population remained relatively stable. During the 1950s, there was a movement of Blacks into the community, and by 1960 they comprised 10 percent of the total population. Germans, Russian-Jews and Irish remained. The community remained almost entirely residential.

Chatham (Community Area Forty-Four) and Greater Grand Crossing (Community Area Sixty-Nine) must be noted in this grouping of community areas also. Chatham's Black population grew over twenty-six thousand between 1950 and 1960, and Greater Grand Crossing's Black population grew over fifty thousand during the same time period. The population of White residents in both communities declined, while the total population of both areas increased (see table 3).

A report of January 1961 pointed out that the metropolitan area employment located in Chicago had been declining since 1950. The report stated it as "this relative decline of manufacturing and wholesale and retail trade." The same report suggested a continuance of such a movement from the city's metropolitan area to the suburbs.
Table 1. -- Population increase 1940-60 -- old, crowded areas

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<th>Community Area</th>
<th>1940</th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>1960</th>
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<th>Community Area</th>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 2. -- Newly developed home communities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Area</th>
<th>1940</th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>1960</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2- West Ridge</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>43,553</td>
<td>47,930</td>
<td>63,884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10- Norwood Park</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>16,466</td>
<td>26,798</td>
<td>40,953</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12- Forest Glen</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>6,630</td>
<td>12,189</td>
<td>19,228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13- North Park</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>12,271</td>
<td>15,291</td>
<td>17,866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>12,122</td>
<td>14,706</td>
<td>17,280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>555</td>
<td>517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Automation in terms of job opportunities for the clientele of the Chicago Public Schools was a disconcerting
fact for those in control of the system. Technology made it necessary for more people to have more education for employment. The obvious effects of automation to a community having a high percentage of low income and low job skills meant higher drop out at an earlier age. From the period of April 1952 to May 1962, the number of persons in Chicago receiving public aid increased from 121,066 to 279,762. By 1953, however, enrollments in high schools and colleges had doubled, and by 1963 it had tripled.

Table 3. -- Fluctuating population shifts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Area</th>
<th>1940</th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>1960</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7- Lincoln</td>
<td>100,826</td>
<td>102,399</td>
<td>88,836</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>100,564</td>
<td>100,543</td>
<td>84,604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>1,358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>1,648</td>
<td>2,874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8- Near North Side</td>
<td>6,954</td>
<td>89,196</td>
<td>5,509</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>71,003</td>
<td>68,272</td>
<td>50,569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>5,158</td>
<td>17,813</td>
<td>23,114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>793</td>
<td>3,111</td>
<td>1,826</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24- West Town</td>
<td>169,924</td>
<td>161,620</td>
<td>139,657</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>169,167</td>
<td>158,917</td>
<td>136,479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>2,263</td>
<td>2,366</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>812</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26- West Garfield Park</td>
<td>48,447</td>
<td>48,44</td>
<td>35,611</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>48,392</td>
<td>48,328</td>
<td>38,152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7,204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28- Near West Side</td>
<td>130,518</td>
<td>160,362</td>
<td>126,610</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>110,274</td>
<td>93,934</td>
<td>57,676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>25,774</td>
<td>65,520</td>
<td>68,146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>470</td>
<td>908</td>
<td>788</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3. -- Continued.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Community Area</th>
<th>1940</th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>1960</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30- South Lawndale</td>
<td>70,915</td>
<td>66,977</td>
<td>60,940</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>70,106</td>
<td>65,579</td>
<td>57,278</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>790</td>
<td>1,343</td>
<td>3,568</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37- Fuller Park</td>
<td>15,094</td>
<td>17,174</td>
<td>2,181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>13,630</td>
<td>8,617</td>
<td>476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>1,438</td>
<td>8,545</td>
<td>11,692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41- Hyde Park</td>
<td>50,550</td>
<td>55,206</td>
<td>45,577</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>49,750</td>
<td>52,375</td>
<td>27,214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>573</td>
<td>1,757</td>
<td>17,163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>227</td>
<td>1,074</td>
<td>1,200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43- South Shore</td>
<td>79,593</td>
<td>79,336</td>
<td>73,086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>79,317</td>
<td>79,115</td>
<td>66,507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>7,018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>561</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Profound changes in clientele of the city's public schools as well as problems in assimilation of youngsters of different backgrounds were seen due to the influx of disadvantaged Blacks from the south and the "Poor Whites." Friction arose not only between the established urban White population and the Blacks, but also between the Blacks and the "Poor Whites" themselves.

Reference was made to the "fierce pride of identity" in a report conducted by the Chicago Commission Inventory. In the face of substantial turnover and change the attempt to maintain pride became a driving force. These neighborhoods
had racial, ethnic, religious and social overtones which made it all the more difficult for the schools to operate in such a way as to serve as a cohesive factor in the community. In the decade 1950-60, Chicago lost a total of almost 400,000 White residents and gained a total of 328,000 Nonwhite residents in exchange. It was no wonder that difficult, complex and delicate problems arose for the board of education from the transformation which the city had undergone. Through all of these happenings, the Chicago public school system followed through with a rather underdeveloped human relations program aimed at inculcating understanding between ethnic, religious, racial, economic, and social groups.

Immigration of the southern Black and the "Poor White," the flight of Whites to the suburbs, the Black ghetto and its de facto segregation, the instability of neighborhoods, and the insularity of ethnic groups made for a turbulent, emotion-packed situation. Implications of all of the above factors were keenly felt in the city's public schools. The school became a target of such organizations as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Urban League. Such groups as these provided the board with a number of controversial and explosive problems. Community groups and parents felt threatened by the possible adverse effects of the social attitudes, interests, and the poor
preparation of the children entering the Chicago Public Schools from homes of new immigrants. Parents were fearful of possible educational program impairments as well as interpersonal problems.

For the first time, concern for managing the community's educational facilities had to be curtailed by the board so that they could seek to understand the environment of the public school enterprise.

SCHOOL ENROLLMENT

Between December 1953 and January 1954 there was an increase of 2,119 in the number of children enrolled in the Chicago public schools. It was predicted that there would be an average yearly increase in enrollments of 10,000 or more for the next five to six years. All predications became reality as statistics for the 1954 school year became available (see table 4).

Statistics then prepared by the Chicago public school's Bureau of Research and Statistics estimated enrollments at an average yearly increase of more than ten thousand for the period of September 1953 to September 1959 (see table 5).
Table 4. -- Enrollment statistics for the 1954 school year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 1954</td>
<td>298,770</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 1954</td>
<td>316,911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1954</td>
<td>318,514</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 1954</td>
<td>319,615</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May 1954</td>
<td>320,516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 1954</td>
<td>342,245</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Elementary increases from September 1953 to September 1959 totaled 49,565 or an average of 8,261 a year. High school increases from September 1953 to September 1959 totaled 12,310 or an average of 2,052 a year. Total estimated increases for the same period were 61,875 or an average of 10,312 a year.10

Table 5. -- Estimated enrollments in elementary and high schools from September 1954 to September 1959 inclusive

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>Actual Enrollments</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>September 1952</td>
<td>381,980</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 1953</td>
<td>390,649</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semester</td>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. -- Continued.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Estimated Enrollments</td>
<td>400,583</td>
<td>410,361</td>
<td>421,363</td>
<td>434,119</td>
<td>443,936</td>
<td>452,524</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Between September 1953 and September 1963, Chicago actually experienced an increase in enrollments from kindergarten through college of 170,428 students (see chart 1).

For many reasons, it is important to note that although Chicago's total population went down seventy thousand between 1950 and 1960, Chicago public school enrollment went up more than 100,000.11

During the 1953-63 period, all school grades felt the impact of the increase in numbers. The pressure from the annual numbers of births, which had nearly doubled, was felt first in the primary grades. Between 1953 and 1966, Chicago public schools saw an increase in kindergarten enrollment of 150.1 percent, in third grades 108.4 percent and an overall
increase of 54.3 percent total enrollment (see chart 2 and 3). By the time these primary grade groups moved into the upper grades, the annual increase in numbers of births had grown much larger. By 1963 the large numbers of children born in the late forties were reaching high school. Between September 1962 and September 1963, the system experienced an increase in high school enrollments of 18,115; of this increase 9,443 students or more than half of them, were entering freshmen (see table 6).

---

Chart 1. -- Kindergarten through college enrollments September 1953 through September 1963

The increased enrollment was attributable to three factors. The first and most important factor was the continuing rise in the birth rate in Chicago. The birth rate in 1957 was almost double of the 1945 figure (see table 7).

The second factor was the expanding economy of Chicago due, in part, to the Calumet harbor development. New job openings brought large numbers of families with school-age children to the city. Over 200,000 jobs were created due to the Cal-Sag development. Economic advancement opportunities were also seen due to the 300,000 jobs available as a result of resignations and retirements within city employment ranks.

The third factor contributing to the increase in Chicago's population was a great immigration surge into the city. Some of these people were "Poor Whites," some were Puerto Ricans; but the rural Black made up the largest portion of this movement. Other immigrants were a part of the history of Chicago. In the 1950s, 52 percent of the people living in Chicago were of European birth. Of these ethnic groups, however, only some Poles remained in their original location within the city. The more affluent migrants found homes in the suburbs north and south of the city. The less affluent ones found residence in industrial suburbs close to Chicago, or in new communities at the edge
of the city (see table 2 -- page 40). Eventually most of the earlier immigrants became small home owners and left the city. In the meantime, the buildings of the older central areas of the city that had been worn out by decades of successive migrations became the homes of the new migrants from the South (see table 1 -- page 38). Housing laws were disregarded as these old buildings were divided into illegal living spaces and rented at high price to accommodate the new influx.

As can be seen the city's pattern of change was complicated by the movement of people within the city in sudden and often unpredictable numbers and directions. Some of the elementary schools had a greater number of transfers in and out during the school year than the total number of pupils enrolled. One school had almost two thousand transfers in and out in two months or an average of fifty transfers of pupils a day. One of the twenty-one districts had almost nine thousand transfers in or out within a five-month period.16

CONCLUSION

Functioning in a vortex of traumatic changes, The Chicago Board of Education became the subject of much controversy. The situation was immeasurably complicated by the metamorphosis experienced in many of the neighborhoods
as they felt the impact of urban renewal and shifts in population. The schools were confronted with a surplus of classrooms in one section of the city and acute shortages in others. This raised vexatious questions as to the defensibility of adhering to the concept of neighborhood schools, i.e., having pupils served by schools located in their particular residential areas.

Chart 2. -- Elementary enrollments


The interplay between local interracial problems, tensions and the nationwide trends engendered a situation in which the Black groups were both vocal and impatient with temporizing in meeting issues which they presented. Many Black parents whose own opportunities might have been
extremely limited looked with fervor to the schools as the basic instrumentality for the fulfillment of the aspirations which they had for their children. The rebuffs, hardships, and inequities that they had experienced in the industrial, professional, and social spheres made them acutely resentful of real or fancied inequalities within the schools. These circumstances presented the board with an array of controversial and even explosive problems that required the highest degree of statesmanship, understanding, and integrity for their ultimate solution.

Chart 3. -- High school enrollments

Table 6. -- Elementary and high school enrollments in numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Elementary</th>
<th>High School</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1950-51</td>
<td>294,877</td>
<td>96,048</td>
<td>390,925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951-52</td>
<td>306,838</td>
<td>95,092</td>
<td>401,930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952-53</td>
<td>319,585</td>
<td>94,815</td>
<td>414,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953-54</td>
<td>330,852</td>
<td>92,852</td>
<td>423,704</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954-55</td>
<td>342,245</td>
<td>93,574</td>
<td>435,819</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1955-56</td>
<td>352,206</td>
<td>93,271</td>
<td>445,477</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956-57</td>
<td>367,285</td>
<td>96,777</td>
<td>464,062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957-58</td>
<td>374,258</td>
<td>103,095</td>
<td>477,353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958-59</td>
<td>386,020</td>
<td>104,013</td>
<td>490,033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959-60</td>
<td>403,656</td>
<td>103,028</td>
<td>506,684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960-61</td>
<td>410,204</td>
<td>102,888</td>
<td>513,092</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961-62</td>
<td>400,322</td>
<td>108,025</td>
<td>508,347</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962-63</td>
<td>414,347</td>
<td>117,261</td>
<td>531,608</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963-64</td>
<td>417,115</td>
<td>135,672</td>
<td>552,787</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964-65</td>
<td>426,752</td>
<td>140,121</td>
<td>566,873</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The lack of a seat for each newly arrived immigrant child within the school system and the accommodations made to meet their needs as per new constructed schools, additions, rehabilitations and modernization involved one of the
most turbulent aspects of Superintendent Benjamin Coppage Willis's term in the Chicago Public School system.

Table 7. -- Continuing rise in the birth rate in Chicago

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1945</th>
<th>1955</th>
<th>1957</th>
<th>1959</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chicago Total</td>
<td>60,045</td>
<td>90,004</td>
<td>98,266</td>
<td>98,122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>52,255</td>
<td>65,057</td>
<td>69,010</td>
<td>66,538</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonwhite</td>
<td>7,790</td>
<td>24,947</td>
<td>29,256</td>
<td>31,584</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The next chapters will focus on the years from 1953 to 1966 and the school construction program.
CHAPTER TWO ENDNOTES


3. Ibid.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.


8. Automation: the science of operating or controlling a mechanical process by highly automatic means, such as electronic devices. The American College Dictionary, (New York: Random House, 1958), 84.


12. Ibid.

13. Ibid.

15. *Immigrant*: one who migrates usually from another country for permanent residence. At this time, however, immigrants were coming into Chicago and several other large cities from the South. *The American College Dictionary*, (New York: Random House), 604.

CHAPTER THREE
SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION: 1953-55

In his first annual superintendent's report of 1953-54, Benjamin C. Willis expressed his first priority when he wrote:

To the Mayor and the Citizens of Chicago: In an area of great concern to all of us, that of school buildings, this report presents the highlights of the accomplishments of the Chicago public schools during recent years, the program now under way, and the anticipated needs for the future.¹

In the beginning dialogue of the same report, Willis stated his philosophy regarding the school construction program which was to guide him through the following years.

If our American way of life is to flourish, your school and mine must be one with the emphasis on children. It must be one that has an educational program that meets the needs of children and of our American democracy; further, it must be one that has the creative leadership and the kind of school buildings that will serve as educational tools to make our goals possible.²

His awareness of the changing needs of the children who would occupy the school buildings was also apparent in still another statement from that first annual report:
Because of the greatly increased numbers of children who have already entered our schools, because of the increasing numbers that we know from statistics are to come in the immediate years ahead, and because of changes in the nature of the educational program -- we need more and different school buildings, we need additions to existing school buildings; and we need the modernization and rehabilitation of many others. Always, it is essential that we remember that all buildings must be planned, built, modernized, and rehabilitated with one objective in mind -- housing the educational program that best meets the needs of children.3

Handling the building needs of the Chicago schools was a major part of Willis' superintendency. But the beginning of the Willis school construction program had its roots in the Hunt years. In fact, all of the new schools opened in 1953 by Willis, all of the additions completed into 1954, some new schools and several additions in 1955 had their inception during the Herold Hunt administration (see table 8). Therefore, it is necessary to understand Hunt's construction program before discussing the Willis years.
SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION IN THE HUNT YEARS

As early as 1949 Superintendent Hunt realized the need for school construction in the Chicago public school system.

Table 8. -- New schools and additions initiated by Hunt

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>New School</th>
<th>Addition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Solomon</td>
<td>Garvey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Clinton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>Chappell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Peterson Branch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ogden</td>
<td>Canty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Manierre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>May-Gym</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Grimes</td>
<td>Hale Branch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Bousfield</td>
<td>Shakespeare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td></td>
<td>Owen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Neil</td>
<td>Foster Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td></td>
<td>Luella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Nansen</td>
<td>Shoop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1954</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sauganash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>Goudy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Hawthorne</td>
<td>Nettelhorst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Skinner</td>
<td>Edgebrook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Abbott</td>
<td>Grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Hendricks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Murray</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Dawes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hurley</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stevenson</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Wacker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Burnham</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Goldsmith</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>McDowell</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Dunne</td>
<td>Kellogg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Birney</td>
<td>Brownell</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 8. -- Continued.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>New School</th>
<th>Addition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1955</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Stock (site)</td>
<td>Edison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Taft High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rogers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Williams</td>
<td>Parkman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Rosenwald</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Hess (acquired)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The elementary school enrollment in April 1947 was 209,462. However, by 1949 the enrollment had grown to 221,981, an increase of over twelve thousand in a short span of two years.4

In fact, school construction was found to be a part of the William Johnson term (1937-47) as well, although not done in any large degree. The Garvey Elementary School addition, which was completed in 1953, was contracted for as early as 1946. Hunt continued the plan for Garvey's addition and also dealt with the construction projects begun by Acting Superintendent Cassell in 1947. One of Cassell's projects, the Pulaski Elementary School, was contracted for in May 1947 at a cost of $1,064,946. At this time, also, a new building at Thirty-Seventh and Wells Streets was contracted for at a cost of $318,237.5

At Hunt's very first board meeting as superintendent on
13 August 1947, contracts were awarded for an addition to the Mount Greenwood Elementary School, and a new elementary building at South Christiana and West Eighty-Third Streets.6

In his annual report of 1949, the superintendent concluded that the school building needs had reached their peak. There had been almost a complete stoppage of school building construction during the economic depression of the thirties, and the war. Also, wartime rationing of basic materials for the maintenance of existing structures had prevented the rehabilitation and repair of school buildings in Chicago as well as throughout the nation. Continued use of older buildings was necessary due to the high construction costs present in 1948-1949. These older buildings could not, however, serve the needs of modern education. Unfortunately the 1949 allotment of funds for building purposes, introduced the ultimate complication to the beginning of a much needed school building program.7

However, even under these poor conditions, Hunt managed to undertake a five-year building plan, which included a few major building projects, additions, rehabilitation of older schools and evening vocational school classes. Each area had both its short and long term objectives.

FIVE-YEAR PLAN

The George Washington Carver Elementary School at 133rd
Street and Corliss Avenue was one of these. Under construction also at that time was a substantial addition to Lindblom High School, 6130 South Wolcott Avenue, which made significant improvements and broadened the possibilities for the expansion of educational services to youth. Also included in the five-year plan were additions to the Luella, Byrne and Oakland Elementary Schools.

Two of the oldest and most obsolete elementary school buildings were razed and replaced by fine new structures; one was the new Sherwood Elementary School, a modern two-story fireproof structure, at 245 West 57th Street; and the other was the Yale Elementary School, at 7010 Yale Avenue, equipped with assembly hall, gymnasium, and all the facilities which the old building lacked. Also, the new Jane Addams Elementary School and the Peterson Elementary School addition were opened to better service children. In 1949 the Owen, Pulaski, and the Abbott Elementary Schools were opened along with additions to the Carter and Mount Greenwood Elementary Schools. The new schools and additions built during this period amounted to construction costs of $9,300,000.

By 1949 a long-range building program was under study by the Hunt administration. An elementary school building survey was conducted during 1948 by a committee of district superintendents, principals, engineers, representatives of
the offices of the architect, the chief engineer, the
director of the budget, the director of building surveys,
and the Parent Teacher Association.\textsuperscript{10}

Efforts were made to extend community use of schools
but because of limitations of funds that was possible only
when no additional expenditures were required. Progress was
made during the year of 1949 in the development of a
cooperative plan whereby the city, park district, and the
Board of Education presented a city-wide activity program
for people of all ages. This plan combined the recreational
facilities of all public agencies. The Chicago Plan
Commission, the park district, and the Board of Education
collaborated in the selection of school and park sites. At
Twenty-Seventh and Dearborn Streets, and Sixty-First Street
and Melvina Avenue contiguous sites were acquired by the
park district and the school board. Schools planned for
community activities were constructed on these sites.\textsuperscript{11}
Finally, in the 1950s, agreement was reached between the
Chicago Park District and the board of education for the
joint use of park and school facilities in the vicinity of
Williams Elementary School, South Shore High School and
Kelly High School.

Due to the lack of funds to build new schools, one-
story, cottage-like structures were developed. Such
tentative quarters were provided in five areas of the city
where the need to relieve overcrowded classes was most urgent. The superintendent described them as follows:

"Each of the cottages had a two classroom unit, with cloakroom, inside toilet, and an oil heating plant."

Thirteen such units were in construction during 1949 (see photograph two).12

The use of such temporary housing units for children dated back as far as the early 1900s. After World War II many thousands of school children were housed in make-shift accommodations known as "portables" -- movable, one-room buildings, tin-roofed, poorly-ventilated, unevenly heated with stoves (see photograph three).13 Prominent in the building program of 1949-50 were six major construction projects: the new Hale Elementary School; a new school at Twenty-Sixth and State Street; and the complete rehabilitation of four high schools: Harrison, McKinley, Tilden and Crane. Slowly but steadily the architect's office was moving toward urgent unmet needs.

CHANGING CONDITIONS AND SHIFTING POPULATION

By 1950 it was evident to Superintendent Hunt that the school construction program needed to be made a top priority. It was estimated that 206 classrooms were needed to provide a full day for those children attending school only half days.
Photograph Two: Cottage Type Units used in construction during 1949.

Cottage-type building in use for temporary needs
Photograph Three: Portables prominent in the building program of 1900s.

Also, 1,250 classrooms were needed to provide facilities for an anticipated enrollment increase of fifty thousand children. In addition to these, 500 classrooms were authorized for construction to provide facilities for children living in public housing projects. New, privately-sponsored family dwellings on the periphery of the city necessitated the providing of an extra 132 classrooms. Hunt's objectives for the 1950-51 school year included a further plan of a long-range building program to accommodate the steadily increasing elementary school enrollment, the development of a procedure for financing this program, the study of building needs, and the coordination of efforts of the board of education building program with city planning and housing agencies.

On 4 June 1951 a majority of the voters in Chicago approved the sixty-seventh General Assembly's authorization of a $50 million building bond issue, thus assuring completion of the board of education's five-year building plan without an increase in the tax rate. Surveys of building needs continued to be reviewed in relation to developing conditions and shifting populations. Maps and records were prepared showing the location, size and other information for all private, city or federal housing projects. New school buildings were designed to accommodate an expanded program of community use. During the 1950-51 year, the
Department of Architecture and Building Repair completed the following schools: Yale, Sherwood, and Edison Elementary Schools; the Carver Elementary and High School; and additions to the Luella, Byrne, and Canty Elementary Schools. They also awarded contracts for the construction of three new elementary schools and three additions. Major rehabilitation work and improvements were done to a number of elementary and high schools.14

Funds became available through the 1951 bond issue in 1952, and were to be spread over four years -- 1952, 1953, 1954 and 1955. The funding was separated into amounts of $12,500,000 per year. In his 1951-52 annual report, Hunt set forth his objective to complete additions to the Garvey, Hale Branch, Luella, Manierre, Oriole Park and Wildwood Elementary school buildings and to construct new buildings at the following school sites: Bennett, Boone, Hale, Ogden, Rogers, Stone, Forty-Sixth and Lemont Streets, and Twenty-Seventh and Dearborn Streets. Another objective for that year was the start of twenty-two other school building projects, as a part of the five-year building program. This objective was not, ultimately providing for forty-nine new buildings or additions to buildings, seventeen cottage-type buildings, ten rehabilitations or partial replacements, and purchase of twenty-one school sites. Expansion of the program for the joint planning and use of facilities, not
only in new buildings but also in existing schools adjacent to park district property was enhanced in the objectives.15

In 1952 and 1953, plans were made to improve new building facilities for Dunbar Trade School and Jones Commercial High School. The budget of 1953, showed a capital outlay of $17,970,544 for new buildings, additions and sites. The budget of 1953 also showed a capital outlay of $5,152,343 for permanent improvements and equipment.16 In June 1953 alterations and rehabilitations were underway in twenty-two high schools: Amundsen, Kelly, Sullivan, Chicago Vocational, Marshall, Taft, Englewood, Parker, Tilden, Farragut, Phillips, Tuley, Fenger, Roosevelt, Wells, Harrison, Schurz, Westcott Vocational, Hirsch, Senn, Hyde Park and South Shore. Alterations and rehabilitations were also underway in the following elementary schools: Arnold, Agassiz, Armour, Barry, Barton, Beale, Beidler, Bridge, Budlong, Burr, Cameron, Carter, Clissold, Columbus, Copernicus, Dewey, Doolittle, Goethe, Garvey, Goudy, Greeley, Haines, Hale, Hale Branch, Henry, Irving Park, Jefferson, Luella, Manierre, McCosh, McLaren, Peabody, Plamandon, Pullman, Reinberg, Scammon, Schubert, Stewart, Sullivan, and Tennyson.

In addition to alterations and rehabilitations, repairs and maintenance work by the board of education mechanics had been carried on in conformity with budget requests. Work
included such items as repairs to sheet metal work, gutters, downspouts, steel lockers, repairs to electrical equipment, fixtures, motors, controls, fire alarms and bell systems. The 1953 budget allotted $5,988,584 for such repairs and maintenance.\textsuperscript{17} In February 1953 alterations and improvements to buildings were running a cash outlay as such: Cameron, $6,025; Drummond, $6,327; Hoyt, $6,033; Jefferson, $6,266; and Lloyd $6,092.

Various evening schools were also in operation. These schools had been begun in 1856 with sixty students. The enrollment in 1953 numbered forty thousand and covered accredited junior college courses, elementary and high school courses, vocational courses, special programs in English and citizenship for new Americans. These evening schools were located throughout the city, with the Lake View High School being located on the north side and Fenger High School located on the south. The high schools that participated were: Lake View, Schurz, Wells, Austin, Phillips, Englewood and Fenger. The following vocational schools also participated: Washburne, Manley, Jones, Dunbar and Chicago Vocational. Wright, Crane and Wilson Junior Colleges were a part of these evening as well as day programs.

UNFINISHED PROJECTS UNDER HUNT

By May 1953 elementary school enrollment had risen to
295,646. The problems were not over yet. On 11 May 1953, Hunt asked to be released from his contractual obligations as general superintendent of schools to accept a Charles W. Eliot Professorship in the Graduate School of Education at Harvard.

In 1953 as Willis assumed the rintendency, the school building program showed schools and school additions at various stages of completeness (see table 9).

Table 9. -- Various stages of school construction in 1953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>New</th>
<th>Addition</th>
<th>Alteration</th>
<th>% Complete</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abbott</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowen High</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canty</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chappell</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edgebrook</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foster Park</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grant</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harrison High</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hawthorne</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>95%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hendricks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jenner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nettelhorst</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9. -- **Continued.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>New</th>
<th>Addition</th>
<th>Alteration</th>
<th>% Complete</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nansen</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hurley</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stevenson</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goldsmith</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnham</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wacker</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosenwald</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dawes</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenwood Branch</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owen</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sauganash</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shakespeare</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skinner</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decatur</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keller</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Chicago Board of Education, *Proceedings of the Board of Chicago of the City of Chicago*, (Chicago: City of Chicago, 9 September 1953), 698.*

These schools initiated by the Hunt administration were to be completed by Willis within the next two years. It was stated that alterations and rehabilitation work providing added educational facilities and repairs were under way in twenty-five high schools, in fifty-six elementary schools and on numerous playgrounds. Urgent and important repairs
and improvements were under way at many school buildings. Miscellaneous work on the buildings required for upkeep, maintenance and protection of the buildings was progressing, along with usual seasonal repairs in all of the schools—work performed by board of education mechanics. All in all, much had been done since 1947 by Dr. Hunt to correct the inadequacies of the past. A real beginning had been made on the building situation by the passage of the bond issue for $50 million in 1951.

Table 9 shows the schools in full operation as of the close of the school year of 1953.

WILLIS ENTERS

Although the building program initiated by Dr. Hunt would appear to have been a large one, in reality it was but a small beginning for the massive program which was apparently needed according to all of the enrollment predictions for construction for the years to follow. Wartime restrictions in finances and materials were lifted. The new superintendent could attack several problems. In his efforts to solve the eternal problem of finding roofs and seats for the endlessly increasing number of children, Superintendent Benjamin C. Willis made his major contribution to the Chicago public school system.
Table 10. -- Fully operating schools in June 1953

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of School</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular elementary schools</td>
<td>341</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special elementary schools</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational elementary schools</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial trade, vocational, apprentice and</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>continuation schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High schools</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial trade, vocational, apprentice and</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>continuation schools</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers' College</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Junior College</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* These school had hospital branches

Approximately $33 million was spent for new construction and school sites during the years of 1952-1953 from funds derived from the building tax rate and the sale of school building bonds; another $13 million was appropriated for 1954. This was about half of the total expenditures and appropriations for 1952-54 inclusive for all building and related costs: rehabilitation of elementary schools, high schools and colleges, permanent improvements, repairs and replacements, equipment, building sites, fuel, interest paid on tax anticipation warrants, and money set aside for the payment of school building bonds and interest. The amount of money collected annually from the building tax rate and from the sale of school building bonds, resulted in a considerable sum. However large the amount, it was only enough to follow through on the projects that Hunt had started and to barely begin the Willis building program.

WILLIS'S CHARACTER ADDED TO THE BUILDING PROGRAM AND CHICAGO

Willis carried through with the plans initiated by the Hunt administration and applied his knowledge and ideas to their completion. Not only did Willis continue the plans, he expanded upon this base. He held fast and did not go off in different directions. Willis continued the free public evening schools as well. He was so proud of these programs because they offered large numbers of immigrants the
opportunity to become proficient in English as well as social and economic upward mobility. He demonstrated that pride by participating in a pageant at the Chicago Historical Society on 22 May 1956, which was called, "The Light in the Night," honoring the one-hundredth anniversary of evening schools operations in Chicago.21

Far more than his predecessor, Willis knew how to use his power, wielding the prerogatives of his office in a fashion that tolerated little criticism. He kept board members busy with five-inch-thick, two-pound agendas that dealt with purchasing transactions, routine personnel matters, and contracts. He had a penchant for detail. His tight grasp of massive amounts of budget data and his eager, searching interest in everything that went on in the schools -- from the cost of fuel per pupil to how many high school students could get into a Loop department store job training program -- impressed both admirers and critics.22

A principal in the system recalled just how apt Dr. Willis was when it came to facts and figures about the schools. He remembered when Willis would walk into a given school, unannounced and ask the principal to accompany him to the auditorium. Willis would then proceed to tell the principal to step up on the stage and spend two minutes discussing everything about his school: statistics, enrollments, community facts, etc. During one such visit, the
principal took the stage and was having a difficult time relating the facts Willis was waiting to hear. Dr. Willis then stated that the principal had exactly one minute and forty-six seconds to begin, and that if he could not perform the task, he (Willis) would take the stage and do the job for him. Occasionally Willis would ask the principal to take a seat in the auditorium, while he (Willis) would relate all of the facts pertinent to that particular school from the stage. He was known as a man who truly knew his schools in total.23

Willis, evidently, was the same type of superintendent during his term in Buffalo, when a reporter who interviewed him for a day wrote that Willis was the man "who runs everything except the tugboats."24 The Chicago Daily News in like manner, called Dr. Willis, "Ben the Boss -- running the operation with an iron fist and no gloves.25

Willis's steamroller style found vigorous acceptance among most board members, at least in the beginning years of his superintendency. It gained him a high reputation with the business community. Often mistaken for a businessman both in dress and demeanor, Willis cultivated contacts within Chicago business circles. He joined the influential Commercial Club, dined at numerous businessmen's clubs, and counted bankers, industrialists, and realtors as friends. A source close to the superintendent in the beginning years,
stated that Willis was such an influential businessman that all he had to do was stroll along Michigan Avenue and he could get whatever he wanted for his financial needs. When Willis came in 1953, a Loop banker recalls, "he approached people individually; he picked up the contacts Hunt had procured. He made a point of going to the Association of Commerce and Manufacturer Association or any group that would have him. . . ."26 Willis definitely knew how to play politics, and many questions were to arise in the following years regarding the relationship of school business and Chicago politics.

Where did Willis stand in this large political arena of Chicago? Technically, school board matters were inviolate from mayoral or city council interference, save for board appointments. Through these appointments, the mayor's influence was felt indirectly but powerfully; and most appointees were consistent supporters of Willis's policies, especially in his beginning years of his superintendency. When crises developed, direct political influence by the mayor upon the school system was minimal (this limitation was the result of the series of scandals that rocked the city in the 1930s and 1940s.) Often the political machine worked in subtle, patient ways, influencing Chicago, a myriad of civic and ethnic groups, each with fundamentally different interests. When disagreement escalated into
controversy and the usual political strategies of bargain­ing, compromise, and clout failed, the mayor usually did nothing. Willis had little to worry about from city hall.27

AREAS OF SPECIAL ATTENTION SET BY WILLIS

As Willis continued to work on the problems of school buildings, he gave special attention to the educational program, the building needs that were present, improved methods of construction and the best allocation of the balance of the building fund. In his efforts to meet the needs of the community which the school served, Willis did not neglect the basic needs of the children who would occupy the building, the teaching and administrative staff, the parents and all community representatives. Willis was a great believer that a school building, correctly designed, could become a valuable tool in the hands of a dedicated teacher. He planned therefore, that the school building program should be: first, the development of overall long range plans on a city-wide level; and second, the careful development of plans for each school particular to that community's needs. Further, he believed that if the board was to achieve ideal school buildings, as well as sufficient numbers of them, the educational staff of the buildings must cooperate in the planning.

By studying the needs at a city-wide level, Willis felt
that the board could be sure that all areas got the special services that would meet the varied needs of the children; could guarantee educational facilities which were most desirable for the basic needs of the children, and would decide the best use of present facilities. Working as a team of experts, he thought, the educational staff would cooperate with the Chicago Plan Commission, the Chicago Land Clearance Commission, and other governmental and private agencies that had something to contribute. The city-wide educational staff would plan locations and sizes of sites, the kind of schools needed, the number of rooms at each grade level, the approximate amount of money available, and the general list of educational needs.

Three basic considerations were part of Willis's construction program. The first and most important was the housing of children for their program. The children were there, and their educational programs had been developing for more than a hundred years; he felt that they must plan school buildings for them that would accommodate their educational program—that would consider the purposes the building would serve and the activities that would take place in them. Second, due thought must be given to adequate space in planning. Population trend surveys, the annual school census, school attendance records, birth records, a continuous study of building permits and of real
estate developments, spot maps derived from these sources and any other data available were all necessary items to be studied. Third, adequate consideration needed to be given to the construction of the building. The safety and health of the child were major factors. Methods had to be economical as well as efficient. The school buildings had to be technically acceptable in such areas as lighting, heating, ventilation, acoustics, structure, materials and equipment. Planning had to be done to insure the best physical equipment possible.28

The buildings had to be designed to implement the Chicago philosophy of education and the major functions of living. Their design had to take into account how children learn. They also had to provide for the extended use of the building by children and adults from four until nine or later. The building had to be suited to the teaching system which was to be used in it. It had to be planned from the inside out. The building needed to grow out of the educational program insofar as site, space, materials, and equipment were concerned.

The portion of the money from the 1951 school bond issue was allotted rapidly while being consistent with adequate planning, efficiency and economy. "THERE WAS A NEED TO GET ONE HUNDRED CENTS VALUE FOR EVERY DOLLAR EXPENDED."29 When more than a million dollars had been spent on the site
for the new Dunbar Trade School, and $5 million more was estimated as the cost of the building, Willis was sure that the hasty expenditure without adequate planning had been both inefficient and uneconomical. According to Willis's philosophy, emergency planning for buildings was sometimes necessary, but it did not yield the maximum educational return on the dollar spent. He believed that based upon population trends surveys and other sound and continuous sources of statistical data, planning could be done long before the need of a school building was a matter of pressing concern. He vowed that money would only be designated for specific uses on carefully determined priority basis. He also decided that the first and most important consideration would be to provide seats where the need existed and where there were no seats available.

At the end of 1954, twenty-one new buildings and twenty additions to existing buildings had been completed. Numerous other buildings and additions were in various stages of planning or construction. The modernization of one building was almost complete. Willis felt that much more needed to be done in planning and providing for adequate and sufficient school buildings. In 1954, 156 school buildings were over fifty years old and 18 were over seventy years old. In meeting the challenge, he felt that only with many factors of the community as active partners
could he hope to improve the results of the past. It was essential that he provide a seat for every child according to his or her need; it was just as essential that money be so spent that it actually facilitated the education planned for the children.

Participating partners -- was what he wanted; it was what he believed must be if this "big business" was to serve the best interests of the children and of the country. Willis quoted Daniel Hudson Burnham, the man for whom the south side school was named, when he said, "Make no little plans." He did not and he would not make little plans for his school housing program. The need was great; the solution needed to be equal to it.
CHAPTER THREE ENDNOTES


2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.


9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.


16. Ibid.


23. Mr. Jack Perlin, interview by author, oral history through conversation, Chicago, 3 November 1987.


29. *Ibid*.


CHAPTER FOUR

SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION WILLIS STYLE: 1953-1957

It was to Willis's credit that he continued the building program work begun under Herold Hunt. The manner in which Willis picked up the threads of the Hunt construction program and initiated these new projects so early in his superintendency, endeared him to the board members, the public, and the employees of the Chicago Board of Education. Everyone affected felt that he had taken on a Herculean task. The Chicago press held him in highest esteem and even reported his first official act as school superintendent—holding up the progress of a $600 thousand electrical project at the Harrison High School -- as a mark of an astute superintendent. A newspaper article in the Sun Times of 27 September 1953 reported this move in the light of a superintendent who correctly questioned the cost and time element for the completion of the project.¹

Another action which was viewed in his favor was the dropping of a $16,500 annual salary for an assistant. Willis was reported as stating in an article in the Tribune on 20 October 1953, that, "three or four more teachers could be hired by not having this administrative post on the payroll."² In his first years, decisions such as these caused him to be thought of as a progressive leader. He did not sit back.
WILLIS'S FIRST CONTRACTS

He began almost immediately to make plans for the contracting of schools and school additions for which he saw a need. He had the ability to grasp a subject quickly and the keen insight for recognizing future developments. He was aware of enrollment predictions and the needs which would be presenting themselves ever so steadily in the next ten years, and thus there was no time to lose. He recognized also that some existing schools were not serving the community adequately. This recognition was evident in his very first contracts. At his first board meeting as superintendent, on 9 September 1953, Willis contracted for an addition to the Andersen Elementary School. A portion of the old building had become obsolete for modern educational purposes. The contract was awarded to the Harvey A. Hanson Company at a cost of $802,374. The Goudy Elementary addition was also contracted for at this same time to the Michuda Brothers Construction Company at a cost of $102,701. The last months of 1953 were spent in planning for schools to be built in 1954. Willis awarded two contracts to Coath and Goss, Inc.: one for the amount of $722,890 and another in the amount of $421,187. These were for the construction of the Deneen and the William Green Elementary Schools respectively.

Many months of 1954 were spent involved in his school
building program. In the spring he awarded the following contracts to: Fred Berglund and Sons, Inc., in the amount of $660,780 for the construction of the Carver Elementary School Building E; Harvey A. Hanson Company in the amount of $131,523 for the Dever Elementary School addition; William R. Goss Company for the Parkman School addition in the amount of $170,002; Coath and Goss, Inc. for the Rogers Elementary School addition in the amount of $292,531; Chell and Anderson for the new Stewart Branch in the amount of $46,979. In June 1954 the Jamieson Elementary addition was awarded to Frank Burke and Son, Inc. for $213,042.64. The Bret Harte Elementary addition followed, being awarded to Leo Michuda and Son, in the amount of $135,542, along with the Sherwood Elementary School addition and the Wadsworth Elementary addition in July of 1954. A number of other school construction contracts were awarded between August and December 1954. All told, nineteen new schools and additions had been contracted for during Willis's first two years in the superintendency. Newspaper articles in Chicago newspapers pointed with pride to the new schools and school additions which had been completed under Willis's direction. Yet, more than ten thousand students still remained on the restrictive double-shift schedule in all areas of population influx. This was true despite all the speedy attention that was being given to the school construction program and
despite the appropriation of the school bond issue funds amounting to a $24,421,219 budget for 1954. That figure included allocations for seventy-eight buildings, additions, rehabilitations and sites.

The general superintendent quickly became a dominant figure. According to one source, "The board played a more passive role and the general superintendent exercised substantial authority." He was convinced of the need for buildings and wanted action from the board. Thus, the school board adopted a record budget for 1954 totaling $156,033,849, which included funding for twenty schools. Willis took every opportunity to make his philosophy of financial responsibility known. In an address to the Schools Problems Commission on 19 March 1954, he stated his belief that only with increased effort on the part of everyone involved could a school system attain its goals and fulfill its needs. He said that there would be only three possible ways to deal with the growth of student population and the money which needed to be expended to handle the rise in numbers: state aid, more local revenue, or a reduction in the present school building program. The 1954 budget, allowed $1,585,000 for four elementary school projects; however, bids had been let at a savings of about $400,000, because Willis had conducted studies which had reduced the expenses of administration and operations. He prided
himself in being a strong steward over the money expended. These studies resulted in better utilization of school buildings and thorough scrutiny of all projects ready for bidding. Also, studies of methods of construction had resulted in remarkable savings in the 1954 program.

Another saving plan was to let contracts to competing private firms. During the first month of his superintendent, Willis had won approval from board members to personally negotiate with private architects, believing that school construction costs might possibly be lessened by such action. He worked long and hard and looked into all aspects of this idea; it soon was implemented into the cost-effective management plan for his school construction program.

Many early projects initiated by Willis proved to be economical for the system. Among others, the Crane-McKinley-Herzl school merger saved between $2-3 million. However, it was not enough to ease the overcrowded conditions. Another $50 million would be needed for new school buildings between 1956 and 1960, not including replacing and rehabilitating the city's antiquated schools.

On 28 July 1954, the board unanimously approved a $50 million school building bond issue to be expended over 1955-56. It was hoped at that time that the citizens would vote favorably for the issue on April 1955. The hope was to become a reality as the people of Chicago passed the issue
with a vote of 679,915 to 107,203.

The year of 1954 ended with Willis in good stead as the General Superintendent of Schools. His conversion of the Crane Vocational High School to a coeducational school was an example of flexibility in a school program which had already gained him fame. The city's business leaders supported Willis as a cost-effective superintendent, due to the $10 million which was saved from the 1954 budget. However, some said that his building program was causing racial and religious imbalance in the schools. A counter argument to this was found in the mayor's Human Relations Council and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith who claimed that Willis was responsive to such issues by granting permits to students to attend high schools out of their own districts.

1955 BEGINS

With the passing of the bond issue in April 1955, Willis's reputation was that of an individual who could devise plans and programs to alleviate the public school crisis in growth, and save money as well. His cost effectiveness was seen not only in his building program but also in his administrative service costs. These were lower in 1955 as compared to Hunt's 1953 budget. This was accomplished by reshuffling his top administrative assistants.
The Chicago press hailed him as an exceptional educator who was not content to fumble with the issues of Chicago education. He was instead a man feverishly busy confronting the problems of the school system with the acumen of a business wizard and industrial magnate. In fact, the press began to treat him as a celebrity, reporting his minor activities and reactions for all they were worth. It would have been hard for anyone to realize that in the span of a few short years, no such accommodation would be afforded to Willis and that the least little action and reaction would be considered in the worst possible light.

During the beginning months of 1955, as the board met to decide on the budget allotments for 1955, controversy was activated regarding federal aid to schools. Even though many felt that the schools of the nation were badly in need of additional funding, others believed that the providing of $1.3 billion for school construction would produce federal pressures in every facet of education. Federal aid was to be made available by: (1) federal purchase of school bonds; (2) federal help to state officials or agencies concerned with building schools (the government meeting up to one-half of the basic debt service due for one year); and (3) direct grant on the familiar matching-fund basis. In Chicago the central issue centered around who would have control. For this reason Willis was opposed to federal aid. Discussions
were to continue on this issue for some time.

Had federal aid been allotted, the board budget for 1955 would not have been so large. As it was, an even larger percent of monies was allotted for capital outlay. An amount of $12,500,000 from the school bond issue made up a large part of this allotment, so that new buildings, additions, sites, permanent improvements and equipment could be handled. From January through June, eight projects were awarded to board architects: the Solomon School addition, the Dunbar Vocational High School, the Mt. Greenwood Branch, the Neil Elementary School, the Brown Elementary School, the Hoyne Elementary School, the Lee Elementary School and the Stock Elementary School.

The George Washington Elementary and High School became a landmark project in June 1955 because it was Willis's first award to a private firm of Perkins and Will, and because it was the city's first two-in-one school experiment. It was Willis's idea to have a double-duty school building, with elementary and high school facilities. He felt that getting double use of big expensive facilities such as auditoriums, gymnasiums, cafeterias or multi-purpose rooms, would be a definite advantage. Also, a single, large boiler would no doubt be less expensive than two smaller ones.

Architect Lawrence B. Perkins liked the idea believing
that capital costs could be lower in a two-in-one building. He added, however:

Everything you can do to economize on the building cost of a school is small compared with the cost of operating it for twenty years. The whole case for or against a twelve-grade school stands or falls on whether it is good to operate elementary and high school classes under the same roof. Sheer bigness in schools rarely pays off. When a school gets beyond 1,500 to 1,800 students, it ceases to be economical to administer.6

Some school architects like Charles Nicol and Louis Balluff were skeptical about the possibilities of real economies in the joint school structures. In a Sun Times article on 4 August 1957 the following doubts were voiced:

If a cafeteria is used for both elementary and high school youngsters, it will mean that some students will be eating too early or too late, and the whole family schedule will be thrown off. They added, If you cut the school site, you won't have room for high school athletics. Nicol concluded, I don't see how the idea would save any money, and it would create a lot of problems.7

By all standards, the Washington School was cost effective. It cost $2,740,000 and accommodated 1,540
students, 940 in the high school and 600 elementary students. It was built on a nineacre site which the board purchased for $6,761. For separate elementary and high school buildings, the board would have sought about twelve acres. Like about a dozen others, it occupied a site purchased in cooperation with the park district, which had acquired twenty acres for a park adjacent to the school. The park district operated an after-school recreational program using school facilities instead of building a field house. By using the park for a school outdoor play and athletic program, the size of the school site was considerably reduced.

It was thought, most importantly, that a school such as this would ease the transition for youngsters between elementary and high school. In accordance with Willis's philosophy about a school being a tool for education and cooperation, he felt that such a construction would make it easier for elementary and high school teachers to talk things over and correlate their work. Willis believed that the school had a built-in flexibility. There was a kind of neutral area that could be used for elementary or high school classes as the need arose. No interior walls bore the weight of the entire building, so if necessary, alterations in room size could easily be made in the future. However, parents did not like their elementary children in
close contact with the high school students. Therefore, the Washington school was constructed to minimize contacts between elementary and high school students.

EARLY SIGNS OF TROUBLE

In June of 1955 a year after the Brown vs Topeka decision, the Chicago American carried a story stating that the citizens complained of badly overcrowded conditions in the north Lawndale area. It was reported that Willis told the group that there were other areas in worse condition. The articles pointed out that the citizens referred to a survey showing that 22 percent of their schools were on double shift and that 43 percent of the teachers were substitutes. It was mentioned that the citizens voiced the opinion that preference was being shown to Hyde Park with new schools, building additions and new teachers. The articles further stated that Willis seemed to give no recognition to the problems presented, that no one could pressure him, and that one must view this problem in relation to the needs of the entire city.

Willis's dominating personality was becoming evident; in June 1955 he addressed an adult group interested in the conversion of the Foreman High School to a branch of the Chicago Teachers College. He told them that school trustees and administrators were the ones responsible for working out
school problems in the entire city and not the citizens. According to one source, "Willis was barely two years in Chicago at this time when initial indications of his dislike for being questioned or challenged began to emerge. With the benefit of hindsight, it is apparent to the observer of Willis's later years that these early signs of annoyance were ominous."9

Until this time, Willis had virtually no opposition from the board members. However, in the summer of 1955, reports of controversy between the board members and the superintendent began to emerge in the press. One particular controversy, which surfaced in 1955, began when Willis was urged by various board members to slow down his plan for the gradual closing of all the city's vocational elementary schools, and to review the location of the north branch of the Chicago Teachers College. The board was concerned about the number of residents opposed to these changes. These controversies did not deter Willis who said:

There are school problems that money won't solve, but there is no problem that public understanding won't solve. May we never be afraid to explore and to inquire. Let us always honor the honest question and test the alternative idea. Yes, we have problems; but we see our problems as challenges -- as opportunities, and we are doing
It was evident that Dr. Willis knew that an open and receptive mind was good. Still the fact remained that Willis closed three elementary vocational schools. On 15 September 1955, the Chicago American reported board member Bachrach as saying, "Willis took action without board approval. My quarrel with him is that he is trying to go faster than he can go, with accuracy."  

1956 BEGINS

As 1956 began, Willis continued to contract for new schools and additions. Due to the building bond issue of 1955, it was possible to greatly expand the building program. In July 1956 thirteen new buildings had been completed: ten buildings were under construction: twenty-two buildings were in preliminary stages: and seventeen were in the final planning stage. Thus, the budget for 1956 showed a capital outlay of $36,498,034, which was almost double that of the 1954 budget. Of the 1954 amount, $13,221,047 was set aside for new buildings, additions and sites; $30,816,665 was set aside in the 1956 budget.

Since the 1950 bond issue, 37,110 seats had been provided and occupied. But this was still not enough. Due to the birth rate trend and many other factors, the school construction program continued to be one of great importance.
In the capable hands of Dr. Willis, school construction had not only continued, but several innovations were evident in their planning. In his opinion much of the construction under Hunt was not acceptable by current educational standards. The Hannah Greenbaum Solomon Elementary School on the north side was one of the new schools that was made possible through bond issue funds. It was so planned that it was a tool in the hands of a skillful teacher: its one-story construction was safe; it was easy and economical to build; there were no wasted stairwells or basements; and all of the building was available for the educational program.

Two others fit with his concern for efficiency without sacrificing beauty. For example, the Hurley school was a new school with innovations which proved to be more efficient. It was one of the first schools which combined an auditorium and gymnasium. Fifteen classrooms, a kindergarten, a library, and a home mechanics room were part of the makeup of this building. The Green school, plans for which were begun during Hunt's administration, came to completion as one of the most beautiful schools of its day. Terra cotta plaques inlaid in the school walls depicted phases of education -- literature, plant life, bird life, the atomic age, fish life, tree life and animal life. The idea for embedding the plaques in the building under construction at
that time came from stones of historic significance embedded in the Tribune Tower. These plaques were designed to arouse the curiosity of the child, and truly be a part of the education of the students within the building.12

New building features that made auxiliary services and a more desirable program possible were added to the Sauganash. These included a home mechanics room, a library, an adjustment room, and an auditorium. The Eliza Chappell building was basically sound. The bricks and mortar were as good as any in a new building, but heating, lighting, ventilation, acoustics and equipment needed to be upgraded for efficiency. In this growing community, four classrooms needed to be added to make a full day possible for the children. The Wacker school had some features that made the school technically and educationally acceptable: proper acoustics, adequate lighting, unit ventilation, open book cases. Modern construction made possible an almost continuous window wall. Hollow tile was an inexpensive curtain wall between classrooms and gave necessary flexibility.

Willis gave special attention to all aspects of the construction process. He believed that a systematic process would yield efficiency and economy. The architect prepared preliminary sketches of possible utilizations of the site. Through conferences of the educational staff and the architect, basis for evaluation were determined and one of
the preliminary sketches would be selected. The architect would then go into more detail on the preferred sketch. Specifications and estimates of cost were submitted. After further conferences in which the educational staff and representatives of the community involved were consulted, final plans, specifications, and a second estimate of cost was then given. Finally, competitive bidding took place, and a contract was awarded by the board of education.

Willis believed that with this type of systematic process the school was one of contemporary architecture and well related to its site, to the needs of the people who used it, and to those in the community. He believed strongly in construction that was always safe, efficient, economical and easy. He insisted that the school be cheerful, friendly and attractive both inside and outside and that it suggest a path toward desirable attitudes, values, skills and habits. It had to be a place where all of the children could work and live together in the climate of the "good life."

As 1956 came to an end, the Chicago press took increased interest in Willis as an outstanding school leader. The Daily News ran many articles reporting innovations and improvements which would be in store for Chicago schools.13
1957 -- THE BEGINNING OF THE END

The end of the honeymoon for Superintendent Willis seemed to come with the launching of Sputnik. Even though he was reappointed to the superintendency, public sentiment wondered if his building program was taking precedence over science needs in the curriculum. In the annual report of the superintendent of 1957, Willis once again stated his ideas on quality education in Chicago when he said:

We build--seeking quality in education. The search for quality has been described as "the search for an ideal after necessity has been satisfied and usefulness achieved. Quality in education is excellence in education. Quality in education does not occur by chance. It is the result of purposing, of careful study, of wise choices and worthy goals, of thoughtful execution, and of continuing evaluation in relation to expanding knowledge and the changing world, to discoveries about the learner and learning, and to the eternal verities. Quality in education is the result of the concerted and intelligently directed efforts of all concerned."

Benjamin Willis's ideas of "quality education" began to be challenged, and many came forth to question the real meaning of quality. Nevertheless, Willis truly believed
that quality could be accounted for in the construction of his buildings, the purchase of furniture and equipment, the use of instructional materials, and the reduction of costs. However, many community people and parents were beginning to describe quality in education in other terms, such as the location of the buildings being built in light of influxes of school population.

Enrollment in the Chicago public schools increased during 1956 and 1957 by more than fifteen thousand each year, which meant that thirty thousand more children needed to be educated. This increased enrollment meant more dollars in almost every part of the budget -- books, paper, equipment, and school buildings. Just to provide a seat in a classroom for an additional fifteen thousand children a year, without reducing the previously existing shortage of classrooms, placed a heavy burden on the board. To supply seats alone would mean that the building program would have to create two classrooms every day in each school year. The job had been a massive one until now and did not look like it was ready to decrease or come to an end.

Willis viewed the annual budget as a translation of educational policy into dollars. He believed that the budget provided for a program of education and reflected the values as well as the needs. Willis prided himself on making every effort to secure the additional funds necessary
to maintain what he considered quality education. The state legislature had allowed for an increase in the tax limits for a number of funds: the textbook fund, from 2-1/2 cents to 3-1/4 cents; the playground and recreational fund, from 2-1/2 cents to 4-1/2 cents; and the educational fund, from $1.20 to $1.30 for 1957 and $1.35 thereafter. In addition, the building tax rate of nineteen cents was increased by two cents as of 1959, four cents as of 1960, and six cents by 1961. These allotments were already being stipulated in 1957.15

With the Russian achievement of Sputnik came many comments regarding the expenditures of the budget. Many pointed to the record to prove that not enough funds were being expended to give our children the advantages they needed to keep abreast of curriculum area skills such as mathematics and science. All of the newspaper coverage given to the Sputnik achievement and the comments regarding it did not shake up Benjamin Willis. He maintained a steady pace to keep up with the needs of the city's continually growing student body. The budget appropriation for 1957, when set out in graphic form revealed the reason for the questioning, i.e., that emphasis was still on construction not instruction (see table 11).16

As of August 1957 the building program charts reflected the following: nine new buildings and five additions under
construction for elementary schools; one new and one addition under construction for high schools; thirteen new and six additions to elementary buildings in the final planning stage with blueprints in the hands of the architects; blueprints in the hands of the architects for three new high schools; and seven new elementary school buildings in the preliminary planning stages.17

Table 11 -- Budget appropriations for 1957

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fund</th>
<th>Appropriation</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INSTRUCTION</td>
<td>$ 5,600,039</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPERATION OF PLANT</td>
<td>19,719,642</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAINTENANCE OF PLANT</td>
<td>7,317,012</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAPITAL OUTLAY</td>
<td>45,670,881</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BUILDING AND SITES</td>
<td>52,546,860</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REPAIRS AND REPLACEMENTS</td>
<td>7,115,999</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PERMANENT IMPROVEMENTS AND EQUIPMENT</td>
<td>5,848,031</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL SITES AND CONDEMNATION COSTS</td>
<td>35,662,849</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCHOOL BUILDINGS</td>
<td>3,920,000</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL--------$183,401,313 100%


Critics didn't realize that planning such as this had to continue, for as of February 1957 elementary membership had increased by 55,207 and forty-one schools had 22,675 students on double shift. In an attempt to keep up with the increasing school population, eighteen new schools and five
additions were contracted for during the year of 1957. All of these were to reach completion and be available for occupancy in 1958 (see table 12). Careful board planning had managed to cut the time of the complete building process from blueprint to opening to eighteen months as opposed to the previous two to three year period.

Table 12. -- New elementary school and addition contracts in 1957 in order of board reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Elementary Contracts</th>
<th>Addition Contracts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bethune Elementary</td>
<td>Stevenson Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Marshall Harlan High School</td>
<td>Dawes Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whistler Elementary</td>
<td>Ruggles Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carroll Elementary</td>
<td>Motley School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beale Elementary</td>
<td>Vanderpoel Gymnasium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pershing Elementary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Pullman Branch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earhart Branch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Moseley Social Adjustment Center</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mason Elementary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hancock Elementary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washburne Trade School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bogan High School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanson Park School</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beard Elementary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sousa Elementary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crerar King Elementary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gladstone Branch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


BEGINNING OF RACIAL PROTESTS

To add to this difficulty, controversy continued over
federal aid to schools and education. President Eisenhower summoned a second nationwide conference on education. The first White House conference had been held in 1956. Public interest was demonstrated by the avalanche of letters and wires pouring in to the legislators, demanding action on every phase of education. In a Sun Times article of 27 February 1957, Clarence Mitchell, director of the Washington Bureau of the NAACP urged the House Education Subcommittee to attach an antisegregation amendment to any school aid bill for which it voted.

A protest by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) against a proposed Chicago school site in February renewed feelings of the presence of segregation in the Chicago school system. The NAACP urged the board not to buy land at Forty-Eighth and State Streets to build a school for the children of the future Chicago Housing Authority project at Fortieth and Fifty-First Streets. Although this purchase would be in keeping with the practice of having neighborhood schools, it would also enhance racial segregation. Thus, they suggested that in order to desegregate, the school board should build west of State Street and let the children leave the project premises to go to school. In a telegram to the Chicago Board of Education President R. Sargent Shriver, Jr., the NAACP stated that two small schools would be preferable to one
large institution. On 17 April 1957 the Tribune carried an article which dealt with the New York school system and the building of twenty-four schools to force mixing. The article reported that Dr. David H. Moskowitz, associate superintendent in charge of the city's school building program, was getting ready to implement a plan. Twenty-two of twenty-four schools were to be located in such a way that integration of Black and White students would naturally take place. Dr. Moskowitz stated that the twenty-two schools were to be put in the fringe areas, where the population around the school would be mixed. The twenty-four schools were to be elementary and junior high schools. Fifteen would be built in the Harlem area of Manhattan and nine in the section of Brooklyn where large numbers of Blacks and Puerto Ricans lived. The schools would accommodate twenty-five thousand pupils.

In the same article, Dr. Moskowitz stated that other plans were being proposed to solve the segregation problem. First, he was proposing to transport 1500 White and Black pupils by buses to schools other than those they were then attending. The result would be a moving of four hundred Black pupils from Brooklyn's predominantly Black section into a predominantly White section, Dr. Moskowitz said. A part of Dr. Moskowitz's plan also included the offering of incentives to teachers to move to the so-called difficult
schools in Black and Puerto Rican areas, many of which had had a high percentage of substitute teachers. There were no such plans for Chicago, however. To complaints about segregated schools that came from the Black community and church and civic groups, Willis was guarded when he said, "I think far more is going on in the way of progress than anyone realizes." Yet, two repeated specific requests for a larger school human relations staff and an outside, expert survey on the race questions in the schools haunted him. But his answer remained the same, "They are not provided for in the tentative budget." By December 1957, pressures over segregation issues had grown. Willis was being pressed by board members for more information on the location of new schools that he would be presenting for construction and remodeling for the 1958 budget. Four board members, Sydney P. Brown, Mrs. John B. Allen, Joseph Pois, and Raymond W. Pasnick were asking Willis for more data on the numbers of vacant classrooms in the city.

Let's get one thing clear first, Willis said, the 1958 budget reflects principles which the board has agreed on -- namely that we will not replace schools, that we will give priority to eliminating double shifts, and that in general we will try to provide schools in growth areas. But even with
these guiding principles, Willis said, the job of providing an up to the minute picture of Chicago's schools is no simple task. For example, the northwest and south superhighways are in progress of construction. We know the routes, but we don't know if they are going to condemn a half block wide or a block wide area. We aren't sure where the displaced families will move, and how many there will be. A school with hundreds of vacancies today may be on double shift next semester.\footnote{23}

The location of school construction was to become one of the hottest issues in the not-too-far future. In April 1957 the Chicago press was reporting that board member Dr. Robert Berghoff warned his fellow board members to cooperate with Dr. Benjamin Willis or they might regret it. Knowing Willis's temperament and realizing that recent agitation by W. Bachrach, Joseph Pois, and Raymond Pasnick might provoke the superintendent's anger, Berghoff feared that Willis might not accept reappointment to the superintendency in August 1957.\footnote{24}

Also, there were rumors of a better job offer having been made to Willis. This was reinforced by an article in the American quoting Willis as saying, "No comment."\footnote{25}

In April, the school board offered Willis a salary of
$35,000 with the understanding that the salary would graduate to $42,500 by the end of his contract in 1961. This salary increase reflected a 41.6 percent increase over four years. The Daily News on 29 April 1957 noted that the increase was well deserved but charged that taxpayers would be ruined, along with the school district, if such a raise was to be given to all employees across the boards. Amid controversy about the rehiring of Dr. Willis for another term as superintendent, Chicago dailies were also quick to point out the many accomplishments of a man who they felt had done a good job and deserved every accolade.

WILLIS'S BUILDING PROGRAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In the years 1952-57, forty-eight new elementary buildings, two new high school buildings, and forty additions to existing buildings were completed; eighty-one sites were purchased; twenty-five sites were approved for purchase and fifteen sites were under consideration for recommendation (see table 13, 14 and 15).

In addition to buildings designed by the architectural department of the Chicago Board of Education, nineteen outside, private architects were employed. A reduction of cost per unit-square foot in building construction was effected due to improved methods of purchasing for the last few years, while approximately $1 million was saved due to
the contract basis with architects.27

Table 13. -- Building program accomplishments -- 1952-1957

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEW ELEMENTARY BUILDINGS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abbott</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andersen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attucks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bartelme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bousfield</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carnegie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carver &quot;F&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

HIGH SCHOOLS

Dunbar High School                          Washington High School


A third $50 million building bond issue was passed by Chicago voters in April 1957. This was a vote of confidence in the educational program and the building program which was being developed under the direction of Dr. Benjamin C. Willis. This bond issue was not a referendum as previous bond issues were. Willis was asked to go before the legislature to ask for this bond issue since it was felt that he had built up a good rapport with this body. It was
evident that, at that time, Chicagoans agreed with the philosophy of Willis regarding his school construction program and the children's future:

TOMORROW IS THEIRS; TODAY IS OURS. WE BUILD SEEKING TO INSURE THEIR FUTURE.28

Table 14. -- Additions opened -- 1952-1957

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Additions</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bennett</td>
<td>Edison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boone 1955</td>
<td>Foster Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boone 1956</td>
<td>Garvy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>Goudy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brownell</td>
<td>Grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budlong</td>
<td>Harte</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Byrne</td>
<td>Jamieson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canty</td>
<td>Kellogg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chappell</td>
<td>Luella</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinton</td>
<td>Manierre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coonley</td>
<td>Neil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cregier Voc.</td>
<td>Nettelhorst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dever</td>
<td>North Forrestville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edgebrook</td>
<td>Oriole</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


However, the one thorn in his side was the Black situation. This situation was to fester. However, it is interesting to note that at this early stage of his superintendency, Mrs. Eleanor Dungan of the Chicago Committee on Human Relations was convinced that the segregation in the Chicago public schools bred bias. Although Willis's name
was not mentioned, she charged that schools made up largely of one racial group were causing tensions. This one voice seemed to herald the onset of years of friction regarding the integration\segmentation issue for Willis.

Table 15. -- Sites purchased -- 1952-1957

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sites</th>
<th>Sites</th>
<th>Sites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abbott</td>
<td>Decatur</td>
<td>Hess 1955</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthony</td>
<td>Dixon</td>
<td>Hess 1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arnold</td>
<td>Doniat 1955</td>
<td>Hoyne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attuck</td>
<td>Doniat 1956</td>
<td>Irving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bartelme</td>
<td>Dore</td>
<td>King</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beale</td>
<td>Drew</td>
<td>Kinzie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beard</td>
<td>Dunbar</td>
<td>Mather 1956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beidler</td>
<td>Earhart</td>
<td>Mather 1957</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birney 1955</td>
<td>Einstein</td>
<td>Mayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Birney 1956</td>
<td>Esmond</td>
<td>McCosh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blaine</td>
<td>Gillespie</td>
<td>McDade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bogan</td>
<td>Gladstone</td>
<td>McDowell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brainard</td>
<td>Goldsmith</td>
<td>Morgan Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>Grant</td>
<td>Morris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Budlong</td>
<td>Green</td>
<td>Mt.Greenwood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnham</td>
<td>Hancock</td>
<td>Nelson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Byrd</td>
<td>Harlan</td>
<td>Oakenwald</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carpenter</td>
<td>Harte</td>
<td>Owen Branch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carroll</td>
<td>Hawthorne</td>
<td>Parkman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chalmers</td>
<td>Healy</td>
<td>Perkins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coleman</td>
<td>Hearst</td>
<td>Pershing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Newspapers of this time did not pick up on this information to any extent, and continued reporting the superintendent's plans for new school construction and for
his transfer plans to end double shifts and overcrowding. The Chicago press carried many stories and editorials on the famous United States Supreme Court decision, Brown vs. Topeka Public Schools, banning segregation in the nation's public schools. However, their voices were silent when it came to Chicago school segregation.
CHAPTER FOUR ENDNOTES

1. "New Superintendent Outlines Cost-Efficient Program," 

2. "Willis Drops $16,500 Post on School Staff," Tribune, 
   20 October 1953, 67.

3. Thomas F. Koerner, "Benjamin C. Willis and The Chicago 
   Press" (Ph. D. diss., Northwestern University, Evanston, 

4. Chicago Board of Education, Proceedings of the Board of 
   Education of the City of Chicago, (Chicago: City of 
   Chicago, 9 September 1953), 1687.

   the Chicago Board of Education, May 1967, 11.

6. Ruth Dunbar, "City's 2-In-1 School Experiment," Sun 
   Times, 4 August 1957, 12.

7. Ibid.

8. "Lawndale Residents in Uproar," Chicago American, 10 
   June 1955, 87.

9. Thomas F. Koerner, "Benjamin C. Willis and The Chicago 
   Press", 36.

10. Ibid., 38, 39.

11. "Board Member Problems With Willis," Chicago American, 
    5 September 1955, 54.

    Tribune, 29 July 1954, 66.

13. Helen Fleming, "Study New Plans To Better Schools," 
    Daily News, 5 January 1956, 43.

14. Chicago Board of Education, "We Build -- Seeking 
    Superintendent of Schools, (Chicago: Chicago Board of 

15. Ibid., 20.

16. Ibid., 26, 27, 68.
17. Ibid., 19.


19. Folder 5, Box 82, Cyrus Addams Collection, Chicago, Chicago Historical Society.


28. Ibid., 3.
CHAPTER FIVE

SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION: 1958-60

THE PROGRAM IN REVIEW

Preliminary studies under the direction of Thomas J. Higgins, head of school building survey, had indicated in 1955 that the greatest need for elementary schools was in the center of the city. These areas were in the following school districts: 8, 9, 10, 14, 19 and 20 (see map 1--chapter 2 -- page 26). Higgins said that these community areas had the least amount of growth from 1950-54, but that they would experience 60 percent of the growth in school-age population for 1954-58. Therefore, Benjamin Willis concentrated the new elementary school construction in these community areas.

Map 2 shows three areas which were considered for construction in 1955 -- Areas A, B and C. The periphery of the city, where school construction had been concentrated during 1950-54, was not expected to grow more than 16 percent in enrollment from 1954-58. Therefore, no new construction was planned there. This section is designated as Area C on map 2. The middle area of the city, Area B on map 2, was expected to remain unchanged in enrollment figures; therefore, no new schools were needed. Willis concentrated on these periphery areas of the city during the first phase of his construction program -- 1953-57. However, rehabil-
itation and additional facilities such as libraries, auditoriums and gymnasiums were added. Most new elementary school construction was concentrated in Area A for reasons stated above. This area was semicircular in shape, starting on the north with Irving Park Road and Lake Michigan, swinging southwest to Kedzie Avenue and Madison Street, then south to Sixty-Third Street and the lake (see map 2.)

Map 2. -- Areas considered for construction in 1955

In 1955 Higgins also pinpointed eight areas where high schools were needed. Sites were purchased in West Rogers Park, the region around Midway Airport, Scottsdale, Mount Greenwood-Morgan Park, Ninety-Fifth and State Streets, Hyde Park-Kenwood, Taft high school area; and Waller, Wells and Tuley high school areas (see one through eight on map 2). Building construction plans started on these the same year; however, these plans experienced delays due to priorities set by the board.

In regard to building replacements, Willis estimated that it would take as much as $150 million to replace old, and largely obsolete school buildings which were built before 1900. However, the board members had agreed that they would place as top priority the building of new schools and additions over the replacement of these older school buildings. At that time, fourteen thousand pupils were on double shifts in older buildings. Willis agreed with the board estimating that they would have to build an average of eight new classrooms a week, just to maintain the status quo.

Unfortunately, Willis was fighting a never-ending battle -- a race that seemed to be impossible to win. The construction program, however, moved quickly and systematically, planning for the projected enrollment, the projected areas of growth shifts, and the projected need for high
schools in the next four-year period since the birth rate showed no signs of decreasing.

During the 1956-57 building years a speed-up program with private architects played a major role in the race. Willis proposed his program which included the construction of new school buildings at the rate of two each month. Intensive planning followed. The private architects handled $10 million of the 1955-57 building program -- 20 percent of the total projects. In the years that followed, private architects were used to build 60 percent of the building projects because they moved faster and were more economical than board architects.

By 1958 the school construction program had picked up speed and was progressing with fire engine momentum. During the year of 1958 alone, fifteen new buildings and nine additions were opened for occupancy (see table 16). With a realization of what the needs would be, twenty-seven sites were also purchased during this year (see table 17). At the end of 1958, a total of fifty-three buildings and fifty-seven additions had been completed; six buildings and ninety sites had been purchased for a total of 63,147 additional classroom seats.

The budget for 1958 showed a capital outlay of $42,746,067 for new buildings, additions and sites; it also showed $5,355,212 for permanent improvements and equipment.
Table 16. -- New buildings and additions opened in 1958

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New</th>
<th>New (Continued)</th>
<th>Additions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Allen</td>
<td>Nelson</td>
<td>Cooley Vocational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beale</td>
<td>Pershing</td>
<td>Dawes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beard</td>
<td>Reavis</td>
<td>Jenner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carroll</td>
<td>Sousa</td>
<td>Nansen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decatur</td>
<td>Washburne</td>
<td>Raymond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earhart</td>
<td>Whistler</td>
<td>Ruggles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hancock</td>
<td></td>
<td>Stevenson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harlan</td>
<td></td>
<td>Taft High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mason</td>
<td></td>
<td>Vanderpoel Gymnasium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 17. -- Sites purchased in 1958

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sites</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Barnard</td>
<td>Grant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bartelme</td>
<td>Herrick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassell</td>
<td>Hess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chopin</td>
<td>Hoyne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deneen</td>
<td>Kilmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Doolittle</td>
<td>LaSalle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Einstein</td>
<td>Medill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fermi</td>
<td>Mt. Greenwood Branch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fleming</td>
<td>Newberry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>


In May 1958 Frank Whiston, a prominent realtor and board member commended Willis for keeping up and said that for the first time in many years the board was building classrooms faster than student enrollment was increasing. At that time
less than twenty thousand students were on double shifts—just about 5 percent of the total school enrollment.

The beginning months of 1958 focused on the Russian accomplishment of Sputnik. Coverage in the press was heavy in reporting viewpoints of educators, parents, members of congress and professionals. Many proposals for advancement of skills in science and math were presented to the board. The business community even donated twenty thousand dollars to support the science fair of 1958, which previously had been supported sparsely and had received most of its impetus from Willis and his board. During this time, Chicago’s daily press made frequent mention of Willis’s building program in its regular reports of school board meetings, as buildings were contracted for and as buildings were completed and opened. As a result Willis gained considerable prestige for his abilities to meet the challenges of a growing big city school system.

NEW TENSIONS ARISE

Towards the end of 1958, tensions arising from controversy regarding the money spent on building sites as opposed to money spent on curriculum needs began to surface again. Twenty-eight thousand youngsters were still on a four-hour day shift because there was a lack of 416 classrooms in these congested neighborhoods; yet at the same time
297 classrooms stood vacant in less congested neighborhoods. In addition, partially used schools had 1,068 rooms for extra activities. In the neighborhood of Roosevelt and Pulaski Roads, 7,500 children were on double shifts. Within 2-1/2 to 5 miles north of this area, however, there were schools with four to ten vacant classrooms. Similarly, between Thirty-Fourth and Seventy-First Streets and the lake and Ashland Avenue, there were thirteen schools with some 9,500 children on double shifts. In like manner, to the west between Fiftieth and Sixty-Sixth Streets and Ashland Avenue and Pulaski Road, there were seven schools with four to thirteen vacant rooms or more. The vacant classroom issue soon caused tensions to accelerate. As Willis searched for a way to solve this dilemma, many viewpoints were being expressed, which seemed to be taking on racial tones. Gerald D. Bullock, regional director of the NAACP stated that the organization did not advocate the wholesale bus transportation of pupils to obtain complete integration in Chicago schools. Even though empty classrooms were available in all-White communities, and many all-Black schools were badly over-crowded, such a step, he said, "would be unwholesome and undesirable".1

At a conference in January 1958, Bullock urged that an objective study of Chicago public school integration problems be made by an interracial team of experienced
analysts. He also suggested redistricting on the periphery of the black areas. Instead, the board of education began its own study of the vacant classroom situation in relation to the overcrowded schools in February 1958. The study was done by the School Education Committee with Mrs. Louise Malis as chairperson. The committee was divided into three subcommittees to explore all possibilities. One subcommittee devoted itself to bus transportation, another dealt with redistricting and the third considered "other" ways and means for the alleviation of overcrowded and double-shift schools. Official maps showing the location of the vacant classrooms and the location of the double-shift schools were studied very carefully. In addition, maps of new schools to be built and maps showing site acquisitions were studied.

It was found that the vacant classrooms were, for the most part, located on the periphery of the city, while the majority of the double-shift schools were concentrated in South Side and a West Side areas (see map 1 -- chapter one -- page 26). In most instances, it was found that the empty classrooms were separated from the overcrowded areas by distances too great to be used in a practical fashion.  

It was agreed by the committee, that general city-wide redistricting would not result in full utilization of the empty classrooms in some schools and the elimination of overcrowded conditions in others. There were certain
specific instances where redistricting and realignment of school boundaries would be effective in alleviating the crowded conditions, and the School Education Committee believed that every effort should be made to take advantage of these. However, they felt that it was not feasible or practical to utilize all of the empty classrooms to house the children from overcrowded schools. Nevertheless, every effort had to be made to utilize the school buildings to their maximum capacity.

The committee also felt that population shifts were taking place constantly due to in-migration, slum clearance, highway construction, etc. Consequently, the schools that were empty one day might be overcrowded the next or vice-versa. Thus, they recommended reviewing the use of buildings for special classes in schools that were near congested areas and moving special classes to other areas. They also suggested the establishment of upper-grade centers in buildings that had a sufficient number of vacant rooms. For example, housing the seventh and eighth grade children from several elementary schools in a separate building, would have the obvious advantage of creating more space in crowded schools. The upper-grade center could be located on the less congested periphery of a crowded area using a partly empty school. Finally they recommended that the board review and change boundaries where necessary. By January
1958 discussions over redistricting became part of the turmoil, which was to continue to grow. A delegation of disgruntled parents left the board of education dissatisfied with the response they had received. The group consisted of Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) from the Scott, Carnegie and Bret Harte Schools, along with the Public Schools Committee of the Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference, the Citizens Committee for Better Schools in Woodlawn Conference and the Hyde-Park-Kenwood Community Conference. These groups were made up of Whites and Blacks with an interest in desegregation. They did not want their grade school children from the Scott School, an all-Black School, to be sent to vacant rooms at Hyde Park High School, which was almost all Black. They felt that this would perpetuate segregation. They thought that sending the White children to Black schools would further integration efforts. Therefore, the PTAs of both Scott School and Bret Harte School recommended that four vacant rooms at the Harte school be used to accommodate an overflow of students of Scott school. Bret Harte was all-White and Scott was almost all-Black. Two other schools involved were the Murray and the Ray schools, which were all-White schools. Willis rejected the requests of the community groups and ordered the transfer of sixty-five students from Murray school to Bret Harte and sixty-five others to the Ray. The Black
opposition groups considered this a move, once again, to keep segregation alive in the schools. However, Don Rogers and James Smith, both Associate Superintends of Schools, said that the principal reason for transferring Scott pupils to Hyde Park rather than Bret Harte was distance. Hyde Park was only a few blocks from the center of the Scott school district, but Bret Harte was more than a mile away. Dr. Willis told reporters that the problems of the Scott-Bret Harte area could not be viewed in isolation -- "boundaries of schools all the way from Thirtieth to Seventieth Street are being adjusted," he said, "I think we will have boundary changes every month for the next five years." Willis again insisted that the racial aspect was not considered.

In January the Suder and an addition to the Beidler were let. These additions and others were beginning to be questioned in the early months of 1958. Groups supporting integration were quick to point out that these additions did nothing but contain the Black children within their community areas and the White children within their own. Questions regarding the locations of additions slated for construction were very soon to be heard in many sections of the city.

WILLIS CONTINUES IN SPITE OF PRESSURES

Despite constant pressures from community-activist
groups, Willis continued unaffected toward his goal of building schools where they were most needed due to population growth, and redistricting areas where he felt it would be most beneficial to the children. In February Don C. Rogers, Associate Superintendent of Schools, said that 5,518 public school children on double shifts would return to a normal school day. He said that double shifts ended in twelve schools because of the careful planning of Dr. Willis. Even though 21,500 pupils still remained on these shifts, Rogers stated that the nearly one hundred new schools or additions then under construction would do much to relieve the situation in the near future. Most of the 5,518 pupils who returned to a normal day of school were enrolled in schools on the southeast side. Major reductions were seen in the Wabash Avenue School, where 959 pupils were taken off shifts, along with 856 pupils at the Scott School and 706 pupils at the Oakenwald school. A number of other schools were taken off double shifts as well: Haines, Drake, Sherwood, Grant, Hayes, Hurley, Pope and Skinner.4

The period of March through June 1958 saw the board hassling with decisions on the redrawing of school districts. A decision on the boundaries had been stalled several weeks mainly because of concerned Hyde Park citizens who felt that the new pattern would "freeze" segregation into the schools. The controversy developed because
District 14 although the largest in the new plan with 27,557 pupils, was the only district which would contain just one high school -- Hyde Park. Three large grade schools with overwhelmingly Black enrollments -- Forestville, Fuller and Willard -- who sent their graduates to Du Sable, would in the new plan be in the new district and send the students to Hyde Park High School. Community groups argued that the boundaries for District 14 could have been extended south to include South Shore High School, and that some of the area in the northern part of the district could have been severed. Board member Raymond Pasnick contended that the new boundaries "would disrupt the community's efforts to build an integrated neighborhood. We as a board have no right to interfere with the basic goal the community is trying to achieve," he declared. Mrs. J.B. Allen said the community felt the school board didn't care about maintaining Hyde Park as an integrated school. The people in that area, she said, wanted integration and also a high quality education for their children. "They are understandably very concerned to think that these objectives are not taken equally seriously by the board. The boundaries we have created do look rather illogical, because they extend 3-1/2 miles farther north of Hyde Park High School than they do south," she continued.5 In an article in the Sun Times of 11 June 1958, Thomas J. Higgins, director of school facili-
ties, stated that the northern boundary adjustment for Hyde Park High School followed a recommendation contained in a report of the Hyde Park-Kenwood Community Conference. However, the conference also asked that the southern boundary for the district be shifted south, but that change was not adopted.  

In a Chicago American article of 6 April 1958, Dorothy Gardner alluded to the fact that no matter what the administration of the school system would do, it would not be accepted. The board had followed the recommendations of the School Education Committee in regard to redistricting and removal of upper grades from overcrowded schools, yet, the NAACP charged that all of this was just another means of perpetuating segregation in the schools.  

Board members were beginning to be the targets of racial questions, also. Reverend Herbert W. Jones, pastor of the Hope Presbyterian Church, who was in the group that picketed the board of education in April, stated that things would get worse before they would get better. He said that the Chicago school population was 40 percent Black, but there was only one hand-picked Black on the school board. Here he was referring to Mrs. Wendell Green, the wife of the circuit judge. This remark and many like it spurred on the future policy of keeping statistics on pupils' race within the public schools. At that time it was impossible to
either confirm on deny Reverend Jones's figures. He also alluded to the fact that human relations would improve if more Black board members were appointed.

The Chicago American asked Francis B. McKeag, Assistant Superintendent, if the administration was satisfied with human relations in the Chicago schools. McKeag replied:

"A human relations program must come from within and cannot be superimposed from without. But at all times a wholesome attitude in this area has been sustained. The Chicago Public schools have been integrated for the past century to the extent that anybody living within attendance areas of a given school has the privilege of attending that school. At no point has there been forced integration."

Amid all of the turmoil, the board of education kept plodding along in its fight to keep up with Chicago's rapidly increasing student population. Elementary school enrollment had increased 33 percent between 1950 and 1957. All but one school district (district four) showed an increase in population. On the basis of the thirty-eight students per classroom average, the school system was 241 classrooms short. However, based on the educational ideal of thirty per classroom, there was a 2,323 room shortage.

During the first week of April 1958, the board opened
eight new schools and additions making 4,725 more seats available. These schools were: Charles G. Dawes, Amelia Earhart, Joseph Warren, Edward Jenner, North Forestville, John J. Pershing, Adlai Stevenson, William Howard Taft High School and Elihu Washburne Trade School. These completed facilities eliminated double shift classes for approximately 5,100 elementary pupils. In addition the expansion of Taft high school restored their program to the normal ten-period day. After 1952, the board abandoned its "pay as you go" building policy and was authorized by the legislature and the voters of Chicago to issue building bonds to push its construction program. By then the board had spent more than $120 million to construct forty-nine new schools and forty-eight additions. Yet, with the rising population figures, the number of double shift students rose from 9,392 in 1952 to 24,167 in 1958.

The board had appropriated $47,596,279 for construction in 1958 and in addition to the schools already opened it had twelve schools and additions under construction, which were scheduled to be opened during the remainder of the year. Willis told the board members at the April meeting that the school system was running nine months ahead of its construction schedule and was looking for its fourth bond issue in the middle part of 1959.

Thomas Higgins estimated that the student enrollment
would grow at the rate of fifteen thousand a year and that it would cost $1,000 per seat to build an elementary school and $1,500 per seat to erect a high school. The bulk of the building had been elementary schools, which had increased from 350 to 411 after 1952, while the high schools had risen only from fifty-two to fifty-four. Of the fifty-eight schools being built in 1958 or being contemplated, fifty-five were elementary. Besides being proud of the number of schools built and presently contracted for, the board could also boast of reduced costs for their construction.

As the year 1958 progressed, the board began planning as far as ten years ahead. The cost per square foot to build schools was $15.29 compared with $17.50 in 1951 and $13.43 in 1948, according to Thomas Higgins. He attributed the recent cut in costs to the use of more economical materials by the board.

Lower room ceilings also reduced costs. All modern schools included improved lighting and ventilation, strip instead of separated windows, oil instead of coal heating, and asphalt instead of wood floors. Actual construction of an elementary school took nine to twelve months and a high school fifteen to eighteen months from the time the need for a school was determined to completion. Schools were constructed with the needs of the community in mind, and also were designed so that any future additions could be
constructed economically.

On 25 August 1958, the Tribune ran the first article of a six-piece series by Rudolph Unger describing the conditions, achievement, and problems of the Chicago public schools. The articles glorified Willis with comparative statistics, which showed a school system of 358,908 pupils, 393 schools, a budget of $79,679,654 and a tax rate of ninety-six cents in 1946. This was opposed to a school system of 451,910 pupils, 454 schools, a budget of $233,946,323 and a tax rate of $1.73 in 1958. The glory was short-lived and the next months brought only more interracial tensions.10

CONTROVERSY OVER SCHOOL BOUNDARIES

When schools opened in September 1958, three groups of parents (two White and one Black), staged protests because of their school area redistricting. Black parents charged that the board of education was fostering segregation by refusing to create new boundaries which would bring Black pupils into schools almost exclusively White. White parents protested redistricting which made it necessary for their children to walk through what they claimed were "tough" (mainly Black) neighborhoods while traveling to and from schools.

Willis said school boundaries were fixed after long and
intensive study and that there was no reason to make adjustments. He said that with expanding school enrollments, attendance areas are determined "with great care," and that "it is necessary to make firm decisions about boundary lines." "Such racial friction and the lack of understanding between cultures . . . was the 20th Century's greatest problem," in the opinion of R. Sargent Shriver, Jr. president of the Chicago Board of Education. As host, over the Labor Day weekend, at the Catholic's First National Conference for Interracial Justice at Mundelein College, Shriver, also president of the Chicago Catholic Interracial Council, stated, "It has a great deal to do with the kind of country we have. The United States must either solve the issue of race relations, or admit that 'American ideals' are a delusion."11

To add to the tensions of that month, Look magazine charged Chicago with being the worst segregated large city in the nation in a September issue.12 The only Chicago newspaper which publicized the charge was the Daily News of 16 September, but then it quickly disposed of it by quoting Francis McPeek, director of Chicago's Human Relations Commission, who denied the charges.13 In 1958, however, Chicago was not the only city with de facto segregation. The construction of schools, specifically their location, was beginning to be a major question with Black leaders. It
must be remembered, however, that board policy held that schools be built in areas of the greatest need due to population increases. The program continued with that goal in mind.

**NEW BUILDINGS AND ADDITIONS CONTRACTED FOR IN 1958**

Many contracts were let for new buildings and additions during the year of 1958. New buildings included: Suder, Birney, Headley, Mt. Greenwood Branch, Sauganash Branch, Central Park and Fifth Avenue, Forty-Fourth and Woodlawn and the Hurley Branch. Additions included: Beidler, Luella, Hoyne, Kilmer and Warren.

There was a trend away from ornamental features of buildings and toward more simplicity in exterior and interior design. Twelve-foot ceilings were reduced to ten-foot or less. Expensive ornamental stone trim was eliminated. Less expensive one-story construction was used wherever the availability and cost of the site made it possible. The net result was less cost, a building with a friendly atmosphere, and an increase in the value of all other property in the community. Experiments showed that the degree of light and brightness were related to the energy output needed for learning tasks. Aware of this, architects greatly increased glass areas to bring natural light as deeply as possible into the classroom. As the window area was increased,
masonry walls correspondingly were reduced. Fixed sash was used to some extent instead of movable sash. In combination with other factors, the increased use of glass gave a better learning situation and reduced costs as well.

Ease and cost of maintenance and operation were important factors that related to the cost of school buildings. Maintenance costs were reduced in a number of ways. Where wear required otherwise, asphalt tile floors laid in mastic directly on the concrete floor slabs were used, and interior wood trim added for decorative reasons alone was eliminated. Low-pressure boilers and automatic operation of boilers were among the factors that contributed to both maintenance and operational savings.

Important reductions in both construction costs and possible maintenance costs were made in schools with the use of walls of concrete blocks in classrooms and the frequent use of brick and stone for wall surfaces in assembly halls and corridors. The texture and pattern of these materials, as well as the care taken in doing the work, added a distinctive beauty.

Competitive building and excellence in architectural design and care in the selection of materials and their uses contributed to the savings. Adaptability and flexibility in design permitted multiple-purpose use of rooms, easy expansion of the building, and easy and economical adjustment of
interior spaces. Another cost reduction was seen in the multiple use of building designs. When a design was created for one building, efforts were made to use the same design in the construction of several sister schools. This way of saving money was first used as far back as 1954 when five new south side schools were constructed. The Hendricks, Murray, Rosenwald, Dunne and McDowell all opened in September 1954 and all had the identical design.

THE WILLIS BUILDING PROGRAM AMID TURMOIL

For the first time, even the federal government became involved in being good to the schools by dispensing funds under the National Defense Education Act in September 1959. Almost $300,000 was received for the modernization of science, mathematics and language instruction, along with student loans and mass testing. Federal support for several additional projects was applied for and granted. The Chicago Board of Education also received an unexpected windfall of $6,516,720 in extra state revenues due to a readjustment in reckoning state aid based on attendance figures. An extra $7,000,000 would be forthcoming in 1960 as well.

Not only did this money allow Willis to propose a pay raise for the teachers, it also allowed him to continue full force toward his building construction goals. He pinpointed
fifty-nine areas where Chicago needed new schools or additions, and he asked the board to consider them in the 1960 budget. Willis estimated spending $8 million in school districts one through nine, which lay mainly north of Roosevelt Road, and $25 million in districts ten through eighteen, where more than two-thirds of the growth of the city's school population was occurring. He proposed to finance the program by $25 million in school bond revenue and by levying an authorized nine cent increase in the school building tax rate. There were then 31,187 children on half-day sessions in forty-six schools, but this number would be reduced by four thousand in December 1959 as new schools were opened.

The bond issue of April 1959 passed five to one. Despite several verbal attacks against Willis policy from board members, the NAACP, Democratic state representative Corneal David and Charles Finston in Springfield, the critics of Willis were actually few.

Not only had Willis built fifty-three new schools and fifty-seven additions, but there was evidence of quality education with ninety-seven national merit semifinalists, an upgraded science and mathematics curriculum, new and innovative programs within the system and much more. The American in a series by Dorothy Gardner took another critical look at the Chicago public schools in early
September. She concluded that the "Schools Look Good." The piece of 6 September said that the schools were in good hands, describing the professional administrators and members of the Board of Education as "first-rate" people.14

Willis approached the board members and received permission to hold local, neighborhood meetings to secure information which would help keep the school system in good stead with the communities. These meetings were also to give the community groups a chance to participate further in the school construction program with ideas which could benefit everyone concerned. The first in a series of eighteen local and neighborhood meetings to get ideas from civic groups and parent organizations on the 1960 budget was held at South Shore High School on 4 September 1959. Twenty-three groups were present. Among them were PTAs and church groups, chamber of commerce, veteran groups and clubs of various kinds. During the meeting at South Shore High School, Willis said that schools were going to be only as good as people want to make them or as poor as people will tolerate. Such meetings continued through October 1959. These meetings progressed well and added prestige to the Willis administration. Recognition was also to come from without in the next year as well.
NEW HEIGHTS OF ACHIEVEMENT FOR WILLIS MIX WITH DISSENT

In his seventh year -- 1960 -- as "boss" of the Chicago public schools Willis reached new heights of achievement. He was selected by his peers as president-elect of the prestigious American Association of School Administrators, he was named "Chicagoan of the Year" in education and he received an honorary degree from Harvard University. The association cited him as "a defender of the proposition that American cities deserve good schools." 15

Chicago press continued to favor Willis with articles about his many achievements with the school construction program, as well. The press noted that the budget for 1960 was $294,376,632, which was an increase of $37,460,180 over the previous year. A Tribune article of 14 January reported Willis as stating that the large budget was necessary because of the increased enrollment, the need for more teachers and modern school buildings. Also increased safety measures were planned after the 1959 fire at Our Lady of the Angels School. (Many children lost their lives due to faulty fire safety equipment.) 16

The Chicago press also reported that residents of the Garfield Ridge neighborhood paraded at the board of education building demanding that Willis build a high school in their area. A few such demonstrations continued during the year. The Sun Times of 8 July reported a story that the
Lawndale citizens urged busing children to end the half-day sessions. The American of 29 August carried a story about fifty Lawndale mothers with their children who planned to picket the board building. No major disruptions were visible, however, but it was evident that matters were due to rage once again and very soon.

Along with the adverse notoriety, newspapers carried Willis's accomplishments in construction of new schools and additions. In August the American reported that children in five Chicago neighborhoods would attend school in September in new buildings. Eight new schools or additions had been completed. Accommodations for seven thousand children were provided by the opening of the following schools and additions: Dore addition, Earhart addition, Garvey branch, McCosh School, Tesla, Cassell, Byrd, Birney, Doniat, Kinzie, and Deneen. Other school buildings or additions were soon to be completed and opened after the start of the 1960-61 school year. Completion of the Beale addition, the Einstein, Holmes, Montefiore, Brownell, Dodge and Herbert schools plus the Carver branch made it possible to provide space for a total of 16,170 children that year. Willis also announced the acquisition of seventeen new building sites, sixteen condemnations proceedings, approval for thirteen additional site purchases and approval for four more sites.
Something new in school designs received attention for its architectural uniqueness. The unusual design of the Brennemann School was an $850,000 outlay. Built by the firm of Bertrand Goldberg Associates, it employed the use of sprayed concrete. This was a technique being used in other parts of the country, Italy and Latin America with good results. The design called for twenty-four classrooms, each with a vaulted roof upon which the concrete would be sprayed. The classrooms were in rows of four which fed out from a rectangular building containing administrative offices, a combination library-lunch room and a multipurpose room. Each room had a large window taking the shape of the vaulted roof starting about seven feet from the floor. All classrooms had a north light exposure, which was more desirable because it had constant light and was free of glare, according to Daniel C. Bryant, the architect in charge of the project. The school was designed to actually be three schools of eight classrooms which could function as separate units in conjunction with the main building. The building was constructed at a cost of $17.10 per square foot, which was possible because concrete was one of the less expensive building materials. Thus the method of spraying the concrete over mesh forms did not increase costs. Brennemann was completed in 1963 and housed 980 pupils, kindergarten through sixth grade.20
WILLIS'S IMAGE GOOD AS YEAR ENDS

Confrontations between Willis, members of the school board and the public were few and short-lived in the years 1953-60. An image had been created of Willis as a driving dynamo who did not tolerate mediocrity. He was known as a leader who got needed buildings erected and also initiated and developed educational programs. It was to his benefit that he cut costs without sacrificing quality. Newspeople as well as others were well aware of Willis's stubbornness and his refusal to consider criticism, but the job was getting done well so few cared to question the manner in which it was getting accomplished.

Willis's achievements, personality and character were enough, at this time, to carry him through the sporadic rumblings regarding perceived problems within the school system. However, in the years to follow he would find it harder and harder to handle the multitude of charges once they became city-wide and once they were supported strongly and boldly by civil rights organizations. The tone of the budget hearings held in December was not favorable to busing and desegregation issues. Demands that segregated schools and overcrowded schools be remedied by transporting children from all-Black schools to empty classrooms in other neighborhoods were voiced. Indications that segregation was fast becoming an issue to be reckoned with became more evident as
1960 came to an end. The segregation issue was soon to become an albatross around the Willis administration.
CHAPTER FIVE ENDNOTES


2. Report of the School Education Committee on Vacant Classrooms in the Chicago Public Schools, 24 December 1958, Folder 1, Box 1, Cyrus Addams Collection, Chicago, Chicago Historical Society.


YEARS OF PRAISE AND BLAME

There was discussion among many constituencies throughout the city regarding the hiring of Benjamin Willis for his third four-year term to start in 1961. The subject received heavy press coverage throughout the entire summer of that year. During many months, the superintendent was examined critically by all factions interested in education. Even though he had demonstrated remarkable skills in leadership in his eight years as superintendent, questions continued to be raised as to his abilities to handle the changing Chicago environment. Gradually more and more attention would be placed on his personality with less and less attention focused on the many beneficial accomplishments of his tenure.

He was the highest paid school administrator in the country at $42,500 a year. Many votes of confidence were expressed for the man who could be tough, make policy, and put his foot down on matters. Such expressions came from board member Edward Scheffler, who said that Willis could get $150,000 in industry. Scheffler believed that the superintendency was a man-killing job and deserved the salary allotted.

In June, the American reported on an evaluation of
Benjamin Willis that had been given to the board members and had been done by a poll. The report card showed that the majority of board members favored Willis. It was noted that up until that point, there had been very little disagreement between Willis and the board members.

In July the school board voted ten to one in favor or the reappointment of Willis at an annual salary of $48,500. In a series of articles in the Tribune beginning 13 July, Ronald Kotulak reported on Willis's accomplishments along with his opposition which had recently been raised regarding Willis's reappointment. According to Kotulak comments from board members ranged from "Chicago's lucky to have him" to "he's not doing an adequate job." It was mentioned that board member Raymond Pasnick was his severest critic. The president of the board, William Caples, said that Willis maintained a "backbreaking" pace in five areas -- improving education, directing his administrative staff, handling the $200 million building program, controlling large sums of money, and building, equipping, and staffing a new school system every year. Thus, Willis assumed the superintendency for still another term, and continued his progress in the school construction program. Generally assessments of Willis as a man who was on the edge of facing entirely new issues and a completely changed human relations environment, were the sign of the times.
However strange as it may seem, this period also represented the acme of Willis's professional career as a school administrator, with national recognition, prestigious job offers and accolades given by a national magazine. In April 1961 an educational magazine interviewed Willis. They described him as a "man in a hurry." The article spoke of his endless energy as general superintendent of Chicago public schools. The author, Arthur H. Rice stated that Willis's "philosophy for administration is expressed dramatically by his achievements." The article was a glowing tribute to Dr. Willis for his past years of dedication to the city of Chicago:

From his first day on the job until now, he has been knocking down the old shibboleths that kept a big city school system from being great. Using thirty-four outside architects in addition to the Chicago public school architects, approximately 122 buildings and 109 additions are now completed or under way. One hundred fifty-five sites have been acquired or are in the process of being acquired. To date, his work has encumbered approximately $175 million of a $200 million bonding power granted the board of education by Chicago citizens. All this work was but a prelude to the real task Dr. Willis has assumed of making
education in a big city as good as that in the best of America's suburbs. To accomplish this end, he decentralized the school system into community schools, each in charge of a district superintendent. It is a dynamic school system, visited each year by thousands of visitors from this country and abroad. The man, Ben Willis, who has brought a city school system pride and recognition, is a contradiction. He is a tireless executive who has dedicated virtually every waking moment to the cause of education. He has no hobbies, no free time, no moments of relaxation. He is a hardsell salesman for education on every occasion and with every person he meets. He lets down the barrier only with children, and in particular his grandchildren. With them he is a gentle, warm, considerate, interested man. Children find the weak spot in the armor that surrounds this lonely executive, who makes decisions every day whose consequences would frighten the most valiant.3

In Atlantic City, where the annual convention of the National Education Association was held in June, Willis was praised for his contributions to education. Francis Keppel, Dean of the School of Education at Harvard University and
later United States Commissioner of Education, hailed Willis as an "Administrative Cyclone." Allen Walter, chief of the Philadelphia public school system, described him as one of the greatest schoolmen America had ever known. Yet, while acclaim was being given from several sources, pressures were building within certain groups in the city.  

A CONCERTED EFFORT BECOMES APPARENT

The period from 1961-62 was also packed with ammunition that was aimed at the administration by many vital factions of Chicago communities that finally succeeded in getting the resignation of Dr. Benjamin C. Willis in 1966. During these years, a concerted effort was made by racial organizations to integrate the Chicago public schools. The Chicago press initiated investigative actions into such charges as gerrymandering and budget allocation for construction, and joined in reporting the happenings in a way that was unfavorable to Willis.

The NAACP and the Citizens School's Committee were especially vocal in their disapproval of the reappointment of Willis. The NAACP had been an active influence in past years and had guided many demonstrations, headed by top officials of the organization. This organization was the first to initiate attacks on Willis via newspaper articles. The NAACP had been mentioned in many scalding articles on
school racial bias and Willis in Chicago's Black newspaper, *The Defender*. These statements began as early as 1954.5 However, 1961 saw a widening of their attempts to gain status and become an influential factor in educational issues. In a statement to Chicago's Mayor Richard Daley and school board members on 3 March, the NAACP said that present board policies resulted in separate and unequal schools for most Black pupils in the city. They charged that it was the responsibility of the board to equalize all schools, and they urged that school districting be used to achieve integration and equal opportunities. They were backing up the pleas of the Parkside PTA who spoke at a board meeting on 2 March. The parents claimed that since the boundary changes affected White students only, the racial balance in the Parkside school would be decreased. They alluded to gerrymandering in order to permit Whites to leave Parkside. The PTA group stated that the proposed boundary changes at the racially balanced Parkside school would put about seventy White Parkside students into empty classrooms at the nearby all-White O'Keefe school. Willis denied the charges and the board deferred action on the boundary changes.

In January, the Chicago Committee of Racial Equality (CORE), released a statement to the Illinois School Problems Commission, asking it to consider several problems which the committee felt could be properly remedied by state action
against the Chicago Board of Education. They questioned half-day sessions, maximum size of elementary schools, bus transportation, the use of inexperienced teaching staff, inferior education and racial segregation in schools that were predominantly Black in composition. The commission, however, ignored CORE's concerns.6

By August, CORE had joined forces with the NAACP to demonstrate their position. They were especially troubled by the fact that some Black children were on double shifts while certain White schools allegedly had classroom space. They demonstrated at the school board meeting of that month.7 In November CORE pledged itself to the sole objective of bringing about full racial equality in education by direct nonviolent action. In a letter of 19 November 1961 to the members of the board of education, the organization questioned Willis's proposed plan to reduce classroom size, claiming that his plan would only affect White schools across the city. They asked the board members to require from Dr. Willis a proper report regarding classroom availability. The group also sent a letter protesting this plan to newsman Len O'Connor.8

Shortly after CORE circulated a petition demanding the resignation of Superintendent Willis, along with a series of five questions and answers as to "Why Should Superintendent Benjamin Willis Resign." They stated in an undated,
unsigned release on plain white paper that they had "long
sought to end racial segregation and inequities in the
Chicago public school system. After years of endeavor by
many of Chicago's conscientious citizens, it has become
obvious that the main obstacle to successful school integra-
tion is the Superintendent of Chicago's public schools,
BENJAMIN C. WILLIS."  

On 9 October 1961, a resolution by Chicago Urban League
Board of Directors, of which Edwin C. Berry was the execu-
tive director, was submitted to the Chicago Board of
Education. It spoke to the "unequal education in Chicago's
public schools." The resolution challenged the meaning of
equal education and the means which were being employed to
achieve it. The statement also mentioned that "The Chicago
Urban League [had] observed with great interest the current
activities of parent groups and civic organizations for the
elimination of segregated education in Chicago. . . ." The
resolution was specific in its interpretation of equal
education: "the American concept of equal educational
opportunity has been increasingly defined by the courts as
meaning that segregated schools, whether by law or de facto,
do not provide their pupils with equal education." The
league set forth its principle for the board to understand
when it stated, "That those entrusted with authority over
the public schools are charged, as a matter of right and of
responsibility, with the duty to move toward complete equality of educational opportunity, by conscious and deliberate design and with all possible speed. "The resolution concluded with the following passage:

The Chicago School Board has not, as yet, revealed sufficient intention to meet its responsibilities in these areas. Meanwhile, this lack of necessary action carries a frighteningly high price tag. Its cost must be measured especially in terms of the multitude of Chicago children whose education will not be adequate to fit them for the economic life of modern times, and will bring to adulthood another generation of Chicago Negro children who have been denied equality in this tragically critical period of preparation of adulthood.

The league urged the board to face the fact that educational inequality, with all its awesome implications, could no longer be tolerated. They called for policies and actions which positively encouraged integration in all possible ways.10

The Chicago Urban League persisted, rejecting the facts and figures that Dr. Willis presented to the board. Instead they compiled their own facts on available classroom space which showed that the reports prepared by Dr. Willis were a biased effort to continue segregation within city schools.11
The CORE group was also prominent and vocal at the 1962 school budget hearing held on 19 December 1961. They spoke out against allocation of funds, school boundaries, unused school space and other issues presently under scrutiny. They spoke also about the crime and violence in the schools, noting the recent murder of a teacher within a school bookroom. As bountiful as criticism was at this point, Willis continued with his building program.

BUILDING PROGRAM UPDATE

Keeping pace with skyrocketing enrollments and a continuing program of improving the quality of education, Willis continued to make an extensive building program an essential for the Chicago public schools. An ongoing program to meet the ever-increasing enrollment needs was in progress and continued into future years. To date, the board had acquired 201 sites during Willis's tenure. Eleven more buildings or additions to existing buildings were completed and occupied between January 1961 and May 1962.

Even with all of this activity, there were many old buildings which needed a number of improvements. Modern lighting fixtures were installed, and sanitary facilities were improved. Safety and fire prevention measures were extended by the installation of steel stairways, fire doors, and sprinkler systems; the removal of wooden paneling in
the halls and of wooden lockers reduced fire hazards. However, much remained to be done in older buildings, it would take many more years and much more money to complete these improvements.

New buildings were constructed in areas where growth in enrollments had occurred and additional space was essential (see table 1,2,3 -- Chapter 1 -- pp.38-41). In 1961 a total of 3,498 classrooms had been added as opposed to 979 which had been removed due to loss by fire, highway development, or demolition. Insofar as possible, plans were made for new construction to anticipate any and all increases in enrollments of school-age population. In order to prepare for the influx, constant observation, study, and analysis of all pertinent factors were in progress. School authorities obtained information regarding building permits for new housing from city officials. Plans for housing projects obtained from the Chicago Housing Authority were also studied. Several projected items were considered: proposed land clearance, changes resulting from highway or railroad construction and land development from land clearance. This information was obtained from the Chicago Planning Commission or such other sources as then were appropriate.12

Various statistics within individual districts were analyzed for approaching changes. The opening or closing of private schools in individual districts was accounted for
as well. New housing developments were springing up quickly in order to accommodate enrollment needs within the city. Whenever possible, the school building necessary to accommodate large groups of new children was completed by the time new housing facilities were ready for occupancy. Often, however, where mobility was a factor, increases in enrollment could not be predicted in spite of all possible precautions, and then accommodations and adjustments had to be made in the shortest time and by the best means possible.

The year 1961 also marked the beginning of board interest in mobile units. Willis began to study the possible use of "portable classrooms" of a trailer type that could be pulled by auto into Chicago areas where schools were especially crowded. His primary reason for their use was to eliminate double shifts, but he never intended these mobile units to be long-term solutions. After studying the uses of mobile units, Willis presented his plan for their use to the board. Such classrooms met all requirements of the building code and were well-equipped for educational activities. When permanent facilities were completed, the plan was to move the mobile units in a matter of hours to another location where enrollments had suddenly shot upward and a short-term solution was needed.

Opposition began to be heard from the Blacks regarding the use of the units in the congested areas where predomi-
antly Black students attended school. They were afraid that they would become permanent. Reverend Fuqua, executive secretary of Chicago's NAACP, talked with reporters from the *Sun Times* on 27 September and warned that the use of such units would not integrate the school system. He stated that until this was accomplished "we will have to keep pushing the issue."13 Despite comments from Reverend Fuqua and many others, the Chicago press was quick to state that the segregation problem could not be solved as long as housing patterns remained as they were. From time to time during heated discussions regarding integration-segregation issues, the point was made that perhaps these complaints were being voiced to the wrong people. It was not, after all, the job of the schools to integrate the city. It was felt by Willis that the schools and the children were being used as tools for integration. Never, however, was wrath focused in the direction of the city government officials where some felt it rightfully should have been.

Controversy grew until once again demands for Willis's resignation were heard loud and clear. Now an independent publication published by Wesley South, a Chicago Black, reported in an article on 3 November that Willis was summoned to the office of Mayor Daley for a "hush-hush" meeting. It related that a couple of Blacks were also present. The article speculated about Willis being called
on the carpet by the Mayor and negotiating a deal. The speculation may have been misleading since it was also noted that the editor of this publication failed to remember details of this incident when he was questioned about it afterwards.14

Shortly afterwards Dr. Willis recommended that the board permit students to transfer providing the transfers did not increase any class to more than thirty pupils and that transferring pupils pay their own transportation. Stipulation was also made that the transferring student return to his neighborhood school when class size at that school was sufficiently reduced. An article in the Daily News of 28 December 1961 quoted Willis as saying that he was tired of being a "whipping boy" for the widely criticized board policy of neighborhood schools. He did, however, also state that his belief in neighborhood schools being the best had not changed.15 This action, by Willis, which was meant as a move in the right direction caused the movement of the civil rights groups to grow in strength towards the end of 1961. With the advent of 1962 the movement was to pick up steam and strength over this issue and many more.

STATUS OF BUILDING PROGRAM

As of 31 December 1961 there were 636 classrooms under construction, 441 in various planning stages, and money for
474 more provided for in the 1962 budget. In addition, the budget provided for fifty-two one thousand dollar items for schools from which the next group of priorities were drawn for a succeeding budget; and ten three thousand dollar items for the preliminary planning of ten new high school buildings. The money appropriated for the 1962 building program included the balance of the last school building bond issue money and the money available from the school building fund.

With the buildings which were completed with monies appropriated in the 1962 budget, 15.9 percent more elementary classrooms were added to existing facilities. At that point, the board was adding classrooms faster than enrollments were increasing. This was in line with their goal to provide a seat for every child to relieve double shifts and reduce class size.16

Along with the accomplishments seen in Willis's scheduled building program, drastic cuts in school building costs were revealed in a Sun Times article of 27 February 1961. In the article, Ruth Dunbar reported on a two-year study which was done by national specialists in school planning, architecture and engineering. The report showed that while the Chicago building cost index went up between 1954 and 1958, the actual square foot costs of Chicago schools decreased more than 7 percent. Overall school costs, adjusted for comparative purposes, were reduced 17.4
percent. Major savings were seen in electrical costs which were down 50 percent; heating and ventilation costs which were down 42 percent, and plumbing which was down 23 percent.

The survey included all thirty-seven elementary schools built between 1954 and 1959 at a cost of $20 million. Almost half of these schools were built by private architects. The study was the first complete study of cost and quality in school construction done by any major city and it was directed by Donald J. Leu, school plant consultant at Michigan State University. It was financed by the Educational Facilities Laboratories, Inc. and the Ford Foundation.

Also, in order to evaluate quality, Dr. Floyd G. Parker, executive secretary of the National Council on Schoolhouse Construction, was hired. He spent weeks going through each of the thirty-seven schools in detail. Parker's report concluded that cost reductions were achieved without loss of quality. Measured on a standard scale of "educational adequacy," the schools constructed in 1959 rated higher than those built in 1954.

The report pointed to the many measures that were taken through the leadership of Dr. Willis when he entered office in 1953. Such measures were major factors in the reduction of costs and the maintenance of quality. Factors which
contributed were the employing of private architectural firms, stimulation of competition by bidding, use of new materials and steps in construction such as lowering of ceiling. Dr. Willis was proud of the fact that with all of the capital outlay which was appropriated toward the achievement of their goals to keep up with the ever-increasing enrollments in the city schools, more cents of every dollar went into instruction in 1961 than it did in 1951, (see table 18).

In the Annual General Superintendent's Report of 1962, Benjamin Willis once again focused his goal on each child and its tomorrow when he stated:

Every child is special. Beginning with his strengths, we build a bridge to his tomorrow. We build from his interest in science or talent in art -- from the potential power of each child. We must discover and develop that potential. Just as each child is an individual, so is his tomorrow individual. As parents and teachers, as citizens, as Americans, we must draw upon our experiences, our insight and foresight, our thinking to guide each child in building his own future in the way best for him. No bridge to the future may be narrowly conceived but must be broad enough to permit each child to be special. No bridge to the
future may be limited in span but must stretch as far as the eye can see into the horizon. 18

Table 18. -- Operating Expense Dollar

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Almost 172,000 additional children and youth were enrolled in the Chicago public schools in the eleven-year period from September 1951 to September 1962. Effectiveness
and efficiency in the use of the tax dollar along with hard driving leadership, made it possible to eliminate double shifts for the first time in one hundred years and to reduce class size as well. In May 1961 33,401 children, mostly Black, were on double shifts. By December 1962, shifts were virtually eliminated from the Chicago school system with the use of the portable classrooms.

Between 1952 and 1962, 106 new buildings and 114 additions were completed along with 12 buildings acquired. This made 3123 rooms available to the students of the Chicago public schools. With these rooms many seats were created to accommodate the increasing enrollment. New schools and additions were constructed and opened in congested areas. Even with all of these increases, overcrowding in schools due to population growth continued to be a problem.

FIRST MOBILE UNITS PLACED

In early January 1962 the first mobile trailers were set up at the LeMoyne (White) and the Parker (Black) elementary schools located at 3700 North and 6800 South respectively. After their first week of use the units were acclaimed by the district superintendents, principals, teachers, pupils and many parents who responded with warm praise. They were pleased with the appearance of the mobiles themselves and also with the usefulness, practical-
ity and beauty of the structures.

On 13 January Mrs. Stewart J. Roak, president of the LeMoyne PTA, sent a letter in appreciation of the additional classroom at the LeMoyne school. Many direct quotes from parents and students were included in her letter. It was noted that members of the PTA of Parker school were also very pleased with this new facility which they saw as a pleasant, effective classroom. It appeared that the mobile trailers would not be a problem and that the board had found an acceptable way of eliminating double shifts in many schools.

By May 1962 protests began to arise in regard to the use of mobile trailers in certain sections of the city. It was evident that a change of heart was being felt by some, while others still felt that the units were acceptable. In an article in the Sun Times of 25 May 1962 Ruth Dunbar reported that six new mobiles were placed at Sixty-Fourth Street and Stony Island Avenue. According to the article two kinds of visitors were on the scene that week to view the mobiles during an open house. Both looked at the same neat row of buff-colored units, which were soon to be opened for use. Both groups were Black. One group saw evil and carried placards that said, "No Willis Wagons." They marched in front and angrily refused to tour the classrooms. They said the mobile units were "junk" and a "disgrace,"
and the units should be "pushed in the lake." Representing the Woodlawn Organization (TWO), they refused to see anything good about the rooms. To them, the mobiles were symbols of segregation, forced on them by Superintendent Benjamin C. Willis, (Hence the label "Willis Wagons.") A protestor was quoted as stating:

Even if these mobile classrooms were gold plated and the interiors were lined with ermine, they would still be evil because of the use made of them. They are evil instruments to maintain a segregated school system in Chicago, to maintain the Negro ghetto. Within walking distance of these units there are White schools where 20 percent of the seats are not used. I've seen them myself. This is only the start. We will protest these things and keep up the fight until it is won.19

The other group, however, numerically larger and including many children and teachers, found the mobile units attractive, pleasant and desirable. They said they were more modern and better than they expected. They seemed to admire the buff-and-blue movable furniture, the airy brightness of the interiors and the novelty of going to a one-room trailer school. Teachers from other schools envied the air-conditioning and the fact that classes would be limited to thirty children -- a luxuriously small size for
This was to be only the first sign of the multitude of demonstrations which would follow rejecting the use of the mobile trailers as segregation tools. The demonstrations grew in strength and many strong civil rights organizations felt that there would be no need for these units if Willis would admit to the existence of vacant rooms which could be used instead.

A vacant classroom report was presented by Dr. Willis to the board in 1962. In it he stated that there were 703 vacant classrooms in elementary schools. Also eighteen elementary schools were found to have an average class size higher than thirty-nine. Of this total, twelve schools were from 60 to 100 percent Black; two were heavily Puerto Rican or rapidly changing in ethnic composition; and four were 100 percent White schools in new areas of the city. Civil rights groups, like the Chicago Urban League, however, claimed that an undetermined additional number of vacant classrooms were not included in the count, and that was because the rooms were located mostly in less crowded all-White schools. A "ping pong game" ensued between Dr. Willis and the league with each one rebutting and then making further accusations. Whether or not facts and figures were correct on either end was never really clarified, but they activated anti-Willis feelings once again.
Finally, on 22 August 1962 Benjamin Willis released a lengthy statement to the board on classroom availability and enrollments. The report tallied 11,514 available classrooms, some of which were assigned for other purposes but still included with an explanation of their use. This report must have been satisfactory to the civil rights groups, because no further rebuttals were found in the research. Willis concluded his report by suggesting that the permissive transfer policy be reinstated by the board. This was January, however, and by February the Chicago Urban League was leading another effort against the Willis administration.

THE CONCERTED EFFORT CONTINUES

On 8 February Edwin Berry from the Chicago Urban League presented a statement before the State of Illinois School Problems Commission. He restated the purpose of the league and then proceeded to relate all of the aforementioned problems which were present in the educational system in Chicago. His statement was lengthy and strong in its language. The facts and figures presented represented a lot of research into background data on population movement within the city and the enrollments within the Chicago schools.

A conference sponsored by the Urban League was held on
24 March 1962 in Chicago to provide a public forum in which the problems of segregation and inequality in education could be aired openly and objectively. It was attended by city-wide PTA leaders, and included facts on de facto segregation and education, along with happenings in other parts of the country regarding segregation issues. The conference was well attended, with a roster showing approximately five hundred in attendance. There were representatives of every PTA in the city, plus members of the following organizations: American Civil Liberties Union, American Jewish Congress, Cook County Physicians Association, Chicago Commission for Equal Education, Chicago Federation of Labor, Citizens School's Committee, Hyde Park Baptist Church, Illinois State Federation of Labor, American Federation of Labor, League of Women Voters and many more (fifty in number). There was no doubt that the Chicago Urban League Community Services Department had left no stone unturned in putting together a cooperative effort in the preparation of this conference. After the conference, several publications were released almost on a monthly basis by the Urban League in an attempt to keep certain facts and figures about vacant classroom space before the public.

In June 1962 CORE circulated petitions to parents living in crowded areas. These were presented to the board in massive numbers and requested that their children be
transferred to uncrowded schools unless conditions in their neighborhood schools were corrected. The petitions also demanded that their children not be instructed in a mobile unit, because it promoted racial segregation. This activity was followed by many sit-ins, stand-ins and picketing demonstrations.

During 1962 Chicago was not alone in its racial problems. School segregation based upon residential ghettos, was also under increased attack in the United States Courts. Many decisions held that de facto segregation was unconstitutional in a case when there was a clear intent on the part of the school board to use residential segregation as a means to maintain segregated schools by gerrymandering. The Commission on Human Relations held housing hearings in the City Council Chambers on 9 August 1962. Many representatives of active groups for integration spoke before the commission. CORE spoke on the renting and buying of Chicago houses by Blacks and the problems confronting them in these instances.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION FOR WILLIS

Amid the turmoil over alleged racial segregation and discontent with Willis, many newspapers carried articles about Willis, the school construction program and other accomplishments. The Chicago Daily News on 3 July 1962
initiated a series of articles that gave special attention to the many facets of the leadership of Superintendent Benjamin C. Willis. In the first article of the series, "Big Ben the Builder," Willis's accomplishments in school construction was discussed. Mention was made of the reduction in costs of building due to use of cost-efficient materials, etc. The author, M. W. Newman, noted that under Willis's guidance 126,000 new classroom seats had been provided for Chicago's school enrollment. Newman pointed out also that 70,000 more seats were in the process of being completed. The article gave Willis credit for 105 new buildings and 94 additions to date. The series of articles included information on all facets of Willis's tenure and abilities. It also pointed out the myriad of problems he faced in regard to his segregation policies. The articles received much attention from those interested in education in Chicago. They outlined in detail the viewpoints of both sides of the issue and tended to give Chicagoans an excellent look at the pressures present for the administration of Chicago schools. In the article entitled," Big Ben The Sociologist," Willis stated that when he was asked to talk about this situation, he tended to boil because the criticism of him and his policies came, "From the professional workers of the Urban League and the NAACP Negro betterment groups, [who had] to stir up business." However, according to one source, "The
big problem with Willis is that he doesn't understand the social situation. He blames the Urban League, but neither he nor they is responsible for the way things are." 21

The last article dealt with Willis's personality and outlined exactly how strongly he felt about being the complete boss of the Chicago school system. "He's a strong man with strong ideas, and he doesn't like criticism." He was described as hard-pressing and hard-driving, a tough negotiator, self-confident, energy-filled, and a man who kept his finger on everything all at the same time. Those who knew Willis well, knew that this was true. As one said, "He is a decision-maker. He likes to make as many decisions as he can, big, small and middle-sized." In view of all of the hot criticism which had been aimed at Willis during his years as superintendent in Chicago, it is surprising that he stayed on the job and was able to keep his mind on the track of continuing to produce such good results for the children of the system. His responses to many of the criticisms, however, while continuing to do his job, gave him the reputation of being tactless and autocratic in his dealings with others. 22

Amidst the many criticisms several articles appeared in Chicago newspapers which placed a favorable light on the Willis administration and dispelled many of the fears that the administration and board members were attempting to
maintain segregated schools in the city. Chicago newspapers even reprinted an article from the *New York Times* which praised the Chicago school system and pointed out that Chicago builds schools faster and cheaper than New York. It credited Willis with streamlining administrative procedures and establishing new channels of authority.

Although Willis had his critics, at the end of 1962 the Chicago Board of Education seemed to be more favorably viewed. Many credited the more positive image to board president Clair Roddewig, who was able to say and do the right thing at just the right time. For example, not only did he stand up in front of a state hearing and back the systems programs, but he was able to convince community groups that the board in good faith would review its neighborhood school policy in order to solve segregation issues.

In August 1962 the *American* ran an article by Dorothy Gardner which praised the new president of one year. It credited the improved outlook for the board's relations with the community to this man, who stated that "The first thing we must do is regain the confidence and respect of community groups." Roddewig became interested in the present situation within communities and was known to get into his car and drive out to communities to view for himself problems described by community residents and activists groups. He
was always available to investigate the merits of com-
plaints.23 According to one source, Roddewig was known to be "a close friend of Mayor Daley, and it was assumed by some that he was specifically requested to do what he could to ameliorate the politically embarrassing friction between Chicago's Negro community of almost a million and the city's schools."24

The remainder of the year brought satisfactory comments from many sectors interested in education. The American began a series of articles on 20 August by James B. Conant, scholar, scientist, educator, statesman, author and former president of Harvard University. Conant's views were informative and discussed the meaning of "equal opportunity" in education. He diplomatically talked about many of the issues present in the Chicago environment regarding proper education of children. He stated that, "It is my belief that satisfactory education can be provided in an all-Negro school thru the expenditure of more money for needed staff and facilities." In the three articles of the series, Chicago residents were, again, given food for thought. Thus, amid criticism, the board finally had a slight hold and a hope that community confidence would build and cooperation would be achieved in the future. Unfortunately, this hope would not be realized.25
CHAPTER SIX ENDNOTES


8. Letter to members of the board from Chicago Committee of Racial Equality, 19 November 1961, Folder 3, Box 1, CORE Collection, Chicago, Chicago Historical Society.


10. Letter to the CBOE from The Chicago Urban League, 9 October 1961, Folder 3, Box 2, CORE Collection, Chicago, Chicago Historical Society.

11. Memorandum from Edwin C. Berry, Executive Director Chicago Urban League to members Chicago Board of Education, 8 December 1961, Folder 3, Box 1, CORE Collection, Chicago, Chicago Historical Society.


14. Ibid., 103.


CHAPTER SEVEN

SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PATTERNS AND RACIAL UNREST

As early as January of 1963, controversy regarding the Willis administration began to build and quickly grew in somewhat unbelievable proportions. So involved were the issues of this year that several hundred pages would be needed to do them justice. However, an attempt will be made to relate them in such a manner as to bring to light the immensity of their impact upon the Willis administration.

THE NATURE OF THE CONFLICTS

There was one bright spot that year. On 28 January, for the first time in one hundred years, double shifts ended in Chicago schools and elementary school children began to attend full day classes. It was a great day for Superintendent Willis who had long awaited this day. All of his efforts had been aimed at this for many years. At a press conference, Willis announced that class size was now at thirty-two. He predicted that Chicago schools would be able to maintain this status for at least four years to come. He credited the $200 million building program, along with the use of mobile classrooms and ninety-nine classrooms leased in housing projects, with the end to double shifts.

However, many activists groups were focusing their attention on boycotts protested transfer of their children.
According to a Black weekly newspaper, the *Bulletin*, there was "No Praise For Willis," instead he deserved "every ounce of the bitterness smoldering in the hearts of so many Black parents whose children have suffered." The article stated that double shifts were only a result of the inequitable situation of segregation in the schools. It spoke candidly when it expressed the opinion that until integration was a reality Blacks could not be sure of getting the best of teachers, curriculum, books and education for their children.1

Bitter opposition built among Black parents and community leaders over what they considered to be Dr. Willis's unyielding attitude on the subject of the school's responsibility for creating an integrated city. They thought that all agencies, public and private, had to make their contribution toward integration of the city, and that the future of the city depended upon how the school system faced up to race relation problems. In a report compiled by the Urban League, which emphasized the reluctance of the board and the superintendent to accept any responsibility in the situation of integration, it was stated:

In a city where it has been impossible to obtain an open occupancy ordinance, and where the city administration and council have passed up numerous opportunities to promote residential integration,
is it reasonable to expect the school administration to undertake by itself a positive program of integration. . . .? A program of carefully planned zoning in fringe areas, coupled with a sound transfer policy might not only provide the first steps toward integration in the schools, but could encourage the other organs of the city government to undertake with new spirit the herculean task of housing desegregation.2

Headlines such as "Pickets marched in front of the school board offices at 228 N. LaSalle, and even camped in!" and "There were marchers outside the homes of Mayor Daley, School Board President Clair M. Roddewig and Willis himself," were almost a daily happening in the Chicago press for the remainder of 1963. Demonstrations became the norm and not the exception. It was reported that these early year demonstrations, ("sit-ins," "sit-outs," and "lie-ins"), were orchestrated by activists from a number of organizations that were affiliated with civil rights groups. One of the most active demonstrations occurred when Black parents had a "sit out" during which they kept their children out of school. The parents claimed that the building was both inadequate and hazardous. Dr. Willis had turned a Goodwill warehouse into a school in order to end double shifts. The protest was ineffectual, and that made the parents even more
Legal channels for protesters were simplified when a decision handed down by the U.S. Supreme Court early in June stated that Blacks charging racial segregation in their schools did not have to exhaust state administrative remedies before filing suit in a federal court. Judge Julius Hoffman, of the U.S. District Court, in 1961 had dismissed a case charging segregation in the Chicago schools on those grounds. Immediately, attorney Paul Zuker reactivated his 1961 suit charging the board with segregation of schools. This action triggered renewed battles against Willis and the board.

With his reappointment for the second term, Roddewig pledged a full-scale effort to unite the board and the Black community. Under Roddewig's influence the board revised Chicago's school boundaries so that schools, now segregated because of housing patterns, would be integrated. However, when the new changes were approved by the board, they were not to the liking of the people concerned because they did not really affect the existing segregation patterns. Even attempts made by Roddewig to squelch the feelings of demonstrators by meeting with them and discussing issues proved, at last, ineffective. Thus, the city continued to experience civil rights demonstrations in proportions which had never before been reached.
These demonstrations continued from February throughout the month of July, and during all of them, Willis was unavailable to handle them, because he left in January to accept a part-time job as the director of a survey project on the Massachusetts school system. Even though board members had given him permission to take on the extra job, many viewed it as a colossal error in public relations since he was needed in Chicago on a full-time basis. Board member, Pasnick, who had for some time been opposed to Willis' ways, was quoted in the Sun Times as being dissatisfied with Willis's moonlighting; on the other hand, Mayor Daley was quoted as being satisfied with the recognition Willis had received as an expert in his field.4

Expressions of discontent over Willis's acceptance of the second job poured into newspapers from Teacher Union President John Fewkes, PTA leaders, teachers groups, the Independent Voters of Illinois, the Chicago Schools Committee, Chicago Urban League, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and the CORE organization. Reverend Fuqua angrily accused Willis of arrogance, neglect of duty, blindness to Chicago school problems and enriching himself at taxpayers' expense. At that time, the Reverend outlined a three-point plan of action for the NAACP, which urged all citizens: (1) to demand the ousting of Willis; (2) to ask the mayor to demand resignations from school board
members; and (3) to go to court to challenge Willis's acceptance of this second job. The Defender joined the chorus on 15 January, when it stated that "not only does the city need a new school superintendent, but also a more knowledgeable school board."  

Several articles were also written taking the opposite point of view. For example, columnist John Justin of the Daily News said that a few readers had written to him asking that he declare war on Willis. His response to them was "No, thanks." He explained that Willis was only doing what many others were also doing. Organizations of all kinds, Justin reported, had officers or administrators who were constantly involved in more than one job. He saw no reason for this display over Willis's move. On 24 January, the Chicago press ran stories quoting President Roddewig as saying that the board had given Willis approval with the understanding that the second job would not interfere with his Chicago job. On the same day Norman Ross, a columnist from the Daily News, reported that the attacks on Willis were unfair. An editorial also claimed that some of the reactions to Willis's moonlighting had been extreme. It said that it was clear that some groups with axes to grind or a distaste for the Willis personality had seized on the job as a stick with which to beat him. Many editorials began with acknowledgment of the honor that had been
bestowed upon Willis, but concluded with the hope that justice could be done to both jobs, especially his Chicago one. Willis, however, stated that he would spend weekends in Massachusetts and, therefore, no time would be taken away from his Chicago job. The controversy soon subsided, although it was rekindled ever so often when other issues were present.6

Willis was upset by all of the adverse controversy to his acceptance of the second job in Massachusetts. An unidentified board member said that Willis might have thought of giving up the Massachusetts job, if he had realized how much opposition there would be. Instead the board member explained that the adverse publicity and opposition were not foreseen by Willis.

Amid all of the racial strife, John Fewkes, President of the Chicago Teachers Union, appeared at a March board meeting to request collective bargaining rights for the union. Willis reported to the school board that he was opposed to any collective bargaining agreement with a teachers' organization. Instead, Willis recommended that communications between teachers and administrators should be improved.

At the end of July Willis returned ready to de-fuse the opposition and stop the demonstrations. To his surprise it seemed as though a break was near when representatives of
the sixteen opposing organizations, composing the Coordinating Council of Community Organizations, met and decided that demonstrations were hurting the civil rights movement and that negotiations would be more effective. They decided to adopt a more peaceful approach. In a special meeting called by Roddewig, CORE officials put the following items on the agenda: withdrawing charges against demonstrators; rescinding boundary changes; supplying wanted information regarding school statistics, redistricting high schools for integration; abolishing high school branches; opening enrollments for integration in all public apprentice and trade schools; integrating or removing mobile classrooms; providing educational materials for Black schools; and discussing Willis's philosophy on racial integration.

Reports in the Chicago press varied in their relating of Willis's position during this meeting. "Silent and scowling," one reported, while another related it as Willis listening "without show of emotion." However, soon after this meeting, CORE officials said that they would resume sit-in demonstrations. It seemed apparent to the opposition groups that they were ignored in the meeting and thus their efforts at a peaceful approach were ineffective.

By August, the demonstrations were in full force and they continued for the remainder of the year. Racial discontent seemed to have increased in fury and intent.
Arrests were made almost daily, with people such as comedian Dick Gregory leading the groups.

The news pages of all Chicago dailies reported the rising momentum of an even bigger demonstration, the scheduled boycott of schools on 22 October by the Coordinating Council of Community Organizations (CCCO). Press reports indicated that the school boycott would include participation by students from more than a hundred of the city's public schools and that all Black parents would support it. Civil rights groups behind the planned boycott had prepared a list of thirteen demands to present to the school board the day of the boycott. The first was the removal of Willis as superintendent of schools. If these demands were not met, the boycott would be prolonged, they said.

On the day of the boycott 224,770 students or 47 percent of the Chicago's school children in grades one to twelve were absent. Students and parents numbering eight to ten thousand marched to Chicago's Loop to hear Reverend Carl Fuqua and Comedian Dick Gregory speak. In the last few months of 1963 continued bickering between the officials of the CCCO and board President Roddewig took place. They had previously considered Roddewig a person to whom they could turn to get their wishes fulfilled. The administration was plagued with other problems. Another school boycott,
continued civil rights demonstrations, and the shared time program all helped to focus attention on Willis in all sectors of education. The year ended with discontent at a point which was not soon to be quieted.

SCHOOL REPORTS

In the meantime, the board had commissioned two reports in hopes of finding support for their segregation policies. These became known as the Havighurst and the Hauser Reports. During 1963 the long-awaited comprehensive study of the Chicago public schools was started under the direction of Professor Robert Havighurst. After several deferments and stalls, the board approved Robert Havighurst of the University of Chicago to direct the independent study of the city's public schools at the cost of $25,000 on 28 May, 1963. Havighurst and Willis served on a three-man committee along with Alonzo Grace, Dean of the College of Education at the University of Illinois. Innuendoes were many regarding the direct interference of Willis in the choice of a director, and the influence he would have being a member of the committee. Havighurst calmed the fears of critics by announcing that the study would be broad and inclusive and that no area would be excluded from the study.

It was not long before Havighurst began to present written and oral periodic results to the board. Each time,
however, Willis would defer action on Havighurst's recommendations. The many deferments were blamed on Willis's dislike of the recommendations because they tended to support desegregation. The fact that Willis would not give an inch toward accepting any of Havighurst's recommendations led many to speculate that he was out to get Havighurst. However, Milburn Akers in a *Sun Times* article stated that to think "That he [Willis] would be a surreptitious party to a witch hunt directed against a fellow educator, or anyone else, is unthinkable. That Willis would say one thing publicly and another privately is certainly not in keeping with his reputation."\(^8\)

Another study that the school authorized shortly after Havighurst's was the Hauser Report. Professor Philip Hauser of the University of Chicago was named chair of this integration study panel. Early in 1963 the panel was already at work interviewing community groups about segregation. The panel finished its report in March 1963.\(^9\) It was hailed as "one of the most significant . . . in the history of the Chicago board of education," because it was to be the "blueprint of action."\(^10\)

The report, however, did not calm the Chicago school board. Instead, the report listed thirteen recommendations which CCCO officials said included 90 percent of their integration demands. It also brought the threat of law
suits from White parents if the board attempted to adopt the recommendations. Fortunately for the board of education and Dr. Willis the report also showed that average per pupil expenditures for books and supplies were higher in Black schools than in all-White schools. The many cries that came from various groups, stating that the Black students were gyped in educational materials, were finally quelled. Dr. Willis had said on various occasions that these two items were facts, but civil rights leaders continually denied their truth.

However, one of its most important findings for civil rights groups was that it showed how "de facto" segregation existed in the Chicago public schools.

The Hauser Report did imply criticism of the neighborhood school policy. Unfortunately it failed to point out that this had been a long time policy of the Chicago board long before Willis arrived in Chicago, and that he was only implementing it. Many White parents vowed to fight the report's criticism of the neighborhood school policy, knowing that Willis strongly favored it. Many White groups were activated. One of the policy's strongest proponents, Mrs. Kenneth Kantor, president of the Wrightwood Improvement Association, resigned her post to devote her full energies to maintaining the policy. White parent groups felt that, since the neighborhood policy was approved in Gary by the
United States Supreme Court, the fight to maintain the policy in Chicago was worthwhile.

THE PEAK OF CONFLICT

In January 1964 an internal struggle broke out among CCCO members, and all civil rights organizations seemed split into three factions. One group, the militants, wanted direct action before negotiations; another group wanted negotiations before force; and the last group, the conservatives, refused to go along with any attack on the Chicago public school system. A Black democratic Alderman, Kenneth Campbell, was reported to be the representative of the conservatives.

Willis had attempted to integrate when he initiated the transfer of about two hundred students from three different schools to the Bond school on 3 February 1964. A recently completed addition of twenty-one classrooms at the Bond necessitated this move. The Altgeld school, which was 51 percent White was due to send children to the Bond which was all Black except for two White students. This situation seemed to portray in miniature just how hard it was for the school administration to take on the job of integrating the city through the schools. Parents of both Black and White children protested the transfers. It was especially clear "how complicated it was for the school board to bring about
integration when parents, both White and Black, did not want to have their children transferred. Nevertheless, in a good faith gesture, the board adopted a policy statement on integration on 13 February. It was approved by a five to two vote, the two opposing votes being those of the two Black board members, Mrs. Green and Mr. Bacon. CCCO called the move an "empty gesture," and the boycott plans continued. Many Chicago newspapers expressed satisfaction with the board's policy statement and in an editorial the American of 15 February condemned the position taken by the CCCO in criticizing the statement.  

Attempts at ousting Willis continued even to the point of opposing Black leaders meeting with Mayor Daley. These attempts were being made even when opposition to a planned boycott was growing in the city among local White and Black groups. This opposition included a campaign by several Black Democrat ward committeemen who rang "doorbells" in an attempt to sway people over to their way of thinking.

The boycott took place as scheduled with an estimated 80 percent of the Black children out of school. Sporadic parent picketing continued at elementary schools protesting the placing of mobile units along with picketing of the Mayor's office. The boycott was seen as another impotent effort. The lack of response by the board only added fuel to the integration fire which continued to blaze.
As the months of the year progressed, violence in the schools took over as the main focal issue. Willis confirmed that incidents of violence had doubled in the past year; he attributed this to the boycott. The violence issues along with the shared time program were reported extensively in the Chicago press.

Clair Roddewig announced in the earlier part of the year that he would not be a candidate for another term on the board. He cited personal reasons and interference with his business life as his chief reasons for not seeking another term. Much controversy surrounded this decision by Roddewig. Many said that the "personal reasons" amounted to Willis's dissatisfaction with Roddewig and his dealings with anti-Willis groups. Frank Whiston became Roddewig's successor as president of the board in June 1964. Whiston insisted on accurate and complete information from Willis on all actions. He and the board demanded that Willis give the correct number of vacant seats in the city. They were thinking that population changes in the city warranted another look at this situation.

In August Whiston pushed the board into taking the steps outlined in the Hauser report. A city-wide transfer plan was approved which followed the recommendations of the Hauser report. However, as was usual when any steps were taken by the board and Willis the controversy grew as
discontent with the decision was voiced. In the midst of the adverse opinions the American "commended Willis and the board for their efforts to remove the causes of Black protests." The summer and fall of 1964 were virtually free from demonstrations by Chicago parents or civil rights groups. A few occurred in October over poor ventilation and lack of equipment and teachers, but they were mild.13

At the end of the year news was released that the PTA had asked the board to define criteria for the choosing of a new superintendent in anticipation of the expiration of Willis's term in 1965. Two criteria decided on were that the superintendent be willing to have his policies critically examined and that he welcome the informed opinion of community leaders on school problems. These two surfaced because Willis had often been accused of not doing either of them.

THE END OF 1964

In November, the five hundred-page Havighurst report became available.14 Havighurst warned "that his report was not an answer to whether the Chicago schools were good or bad, but rather, that it was an attempt to show how complex the school's role was in modern society and to recommend changes to arrest the economical, physical, and social problems besetting the schools." Frank Whiston directed
Willis to study the Havighurst report and correlate it with the Hauser report and the ninety-three point reply to the Hauser report which Willis had previously prepared. No evidence is available that this directive was followed.

In November when Willis submitted the tentative budget of $318,891,335 for 1965, he presented a surprise billion dollar program for improving educational services which he hoped could be accomplished in the next five years. Board members were divided on their responses to the proposal. Havighurst himself supported it as an attempt to comply with the recommendations of his report but saw it as a little unrealistic in implementation. At the end of the year, Willis presented his reactions to the Havighurst report. He took issue with the report as being vague and inaccurate. Havighurst commented saying that Willis seemed to want to ignore the original report.

The year 1964 was notable for few anti-Willis demonstrations. Although the press was not openly seeking Willis's resignation or demanding that the board fire him, "it was becoming increasingly irritated with his arrogant personality and with his stubbornness to concede that problems existed in the school system which he directed."15

Having succeeded in what he set out to do when he first assumed the superintendency i.e., the elimination of double shifts and the provision for a seat for every student in the
Chicago public school system, Willis turned his attention to the enhancement of special education and vocation education programs in the schools. In fact the annual report for 1964 was devoted to special education in Chicago schools. In this report he outlined extensively the scope of the program.

The budget for 1964 and 1965 showed the largest outlay of money for instruction -- 58.5 percent and 64.2 percent respectively. Operation, maintenance and repair of the plant on the other hand was at an all time low -- 11.4 percent and 11.1 percent respectively.

Also, by 1964 money to continue the building program had run out. No further seats could be provided for public school children, since the annual increase in the elementary schools was greater than could be provided for from the current building tax rate. The enrollment in the high schools had risen by 1964 to 123,974, and 40,000 high-school students were being accommodated on a shortened pupil day and longer hours for the schools. Work continued on previous building projects initiated by the Willis administration but only two schools, the Faraday and the Mason Intermediate, were opened that year.

As the year ended, Willis and the board were in conflict. The board had lost confidence in its superintendent; many members could not stand the heat and resigned or
refused reelection. Also protesters were so frustrated at being ignored that their voice was becoming stronger and more unified.
CHAPTER SEVEN ENDNOTES


8. Milburn Akers, "Not At All In Willis Character," Sun Times, 18 May 1963, 89.


11. Ibid., 260.


15. Thomas F. Koerner, Benjamin C. Willis and the Chicago Press, 323.
WILLIS'S REELECTION

In the face of massive criticism due to mounting hostility during the year of 1965 the board offered Benjamin Willis another four-year contract. Before the re-hiring of Willis on 28 May 1965, pros and cons of the issue were evident in the dailies. A petition carrying six thousand collected signatures was presented to Mayor Daley by Willis supporters, who went so far as to put up posters urging "Willis For Mayor." Sacks of mail received at the board offices were mainly pro-Willis letters with support from local constituents (Black and White) except the civil rights groups.

While many attempts such as these were made to show support for retaining Willis, demonstrations against the superintendent continued. The anti-Willis groups described him as intransigent and authoritarian, and their positions continued to be covered by the press.

Many Black local groups in the city, however, were not in accord with adverse statements about Willis. These local groups were known to have no affiliation with the hard-pushing civil rights groups determined to oust Willis. One such group was the National Baptist Convention. Reverend Joseph Jackson, president of that group and a prominent
Black leader as well, spoke for more than five million Blacks when he defended Willis. The Reverend claimed that it would be a tragedy if a man like Willis were destroyed by mass hysteria and said that Willis was doing all that anyone could do. Reverend Jackson was a champion of Black rights, but he openly disagreed with methods of some Black leaders. He believed the causes of de facto segregation were historical and social and that such segregation could not be blamed on one man.1

New and old board members were split in the controversy with Thomas Murray the only one willing to state publicly that he wanted Willis retained. In March Milton Cohler, a top Willis aide, resigned his twenty-three thousand dollar a year job as associate superintendent in charge of administration. After forty-two years with Chicago schools, Cohler took the opportunity to criticize the board severely for lack of faith in its administration. Cohler stated that Willis had become a "scapegoat" for the problems created by de facto segregation, and said that the city's power structure refused to take a realistic view of racial, social, economic and political ills. To implement the Hauser and Havighurst findings and suggestions, he said, would be to take a symptom of a difficulty and by some form of magic transform a whole body politic of a metropolis. All of Chicago dailies carried the story.2
Even the board was undecided. A majority of the board were new appointees after the exodus. Without any clear direction from the mayor the old board was afraid to make a decision particularly when it came to rehiring a superintendent. At an hour-long closed meeting in the early part of May they decided seven to four not to offer Superintendent Willis a new term beginning 1 September 1965. Then they discussed procedures for seeking another man for the job. Finally, toward the end of the meeting they doubted the wisdom of their decision and voted to rehire Willis. At the open board meeting of 28 May 1965 where a reported 150 demonstrators attended the board voted to retain Willis for a fourth four-year term. He and the board negotiated the contract with an oral agreement that he would retire when he became sixty-five years of age in December 1966. Newspapers carried stories which indicated who had voted, how and why. Willis's final two years were to be filled with numerous attempts to oust him. Even the business community who before had been totally behind Willis, were beginning to be swayed to believe that the time for Willis in Chicago was drawing to a close.3

PLANS TO OUST WILLIS

A third boycott and more anti-Willis demonstrations were proposed by civil rights groups and Black leaders
directly following the announcement of Willis's rehiring. Due to an injunction by the courts, the boycott never took place, but many demonstrations continued for the biggest part of 1965 and into 1966. Those demonstrations of 1965 were arranged largely by Albert Raby of the Coordinating Council of Community Organizations with the hope that Mayor Daley would intervene to force Willis's resignation. These demonstrations strangely enough caused a mixed number of opinions to be expressed. Many Black groups and leaders felt that they were unfair and that Willis should be given a chance, pointing to his many accomplishments of the past years as superintendent. Demonstrations were continued on an almost daily basis for many months of 1965. By the end of July Mayor Daley charged that there were communist influences in the anti-Willis demonstrations. Even though civil rights leaders denied the charges, the Tribune reported that the Communist Party of Illinois had confirmed the fact.4

Another occurrence that fanned the flames of those opposing Willis was the Jenner school incident. Jenner school had a principal who was regarded by Black parent groups as being incompetent. She was charged with being abusive and insensitive to the needs of her Black students. When Willis supported her a boycott was planned. So violent and forceful were the numerous demonstrations and the
boycott, that they resulted in the replacement of the principal who they felt was not handling her administrative responsibilities for the best benefit of the children. Throughout this incident Willis remained calm. In fact he ended up being praised in an American editorial of 20 April 1966 for his presentation of the issues. During a press conference Willis stated the board's position. He said that after careful review of the facts the principal's actions were not found to be incompetent but that she would be replaced. The consensus was that if Willis would have held these press conferences "earlier and oftener" much dissen­sion would have been avoided.5

THE OTHER SIDE OF THE STORY

During the summer of 1966, many summer schools were in force in the areas that Willis thought were the most in need. A look at map 3 will show that these summer schools were also placed in the districts and community areas which were the most congested and with the highest population of Black children. Black students flocked to the schools to take advantage of this opportunity. Even though a total of 209,550 enrolled, little recognition was given to Willis by Black militant leaders for being the person who had in¬stituted these programs.
Map 3. -- Summer Schools

Elementary Special Summer Schools
Grades 1 to 6
1965

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Pupils</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>12000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>18000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Willis pointed out that the underprivileged areas had not been forgotten. Instead, he made reference to a 2.5 mile square area (2600 W to 4400 W and 200N to 2300S) which was 68.2 percent Black with the school enrollment of 96.4 percent Black. The number of schools increased from seventeen in 1953 to forty in 1965; the number of teachers increased from 632 to 1889; the number of social centers increased from two to twenty-two; and the number of special education classes increased from sixteen to seventy-three. In addition, thirty-three after-school libraries, five reading clinics, six special summer schools and twenty Operation Head Start centers were opened in this area. 6

Many were of the opinion that Chicago newspapers should have reported figures like these three to five years earlier. However, Chicago newspapers were quick to note that Willis should have explained these situations much earlier to enable newspeople to report them to the public. This could have enlightened readers with the other side of the segregation issue. It appears to have been one of the unfortunate truths of the Willis administration -- that amid all of the hustle and bustle of trying to build schools and establish programs for the benefit of children's education, little time was taken to make "small-talk" with the general public over all that was really happening in the system. Willis was too busy making conversation with big business
representatives and presidents of corporations who could aid him in the fulfilling of his dreams.

FEDERAL AID AND DESEGREGATION

Chicago schools were receiving a substantial amount of federal funding, much of which was funneled into the alleviation of overcrowded classrooms. The National Defense Education Act made federal funds available for science, foreign language, mathematics, and other materials through the Illinois State Office of Public Instruction in 1959. The science laboratory remodeling program, the foreign language laboratory program and the cost of equipment and materials secured for instruction in science, mathematics and foreign languages were paid for with 50 percent from the regular budget and 50 percent from funds supplied by the NDEA. A summary of reimbursements can be seen in table 19. It appeared at this time, however, that the burden on property as a form of taxation to which schools were limited on a local level was heavy and would require supplementary funding. The administration was carefully reviewing every state and federal statute and regulation to assure that the board of education was receiving all of the funds to which it was entitled.
Table 19. -- Reimbursements for Title III N.D.E.A.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Foreign Language</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
<th>Science</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>$79,034.99</td>
<td>$55,606.31</td>
<td>$61,215.68</td>
<td>$195,856.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>76,883.23</td>
<td>52,094.97</td>
<td>128,690.16</td>
<td>257,668.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>39,080.25</td>
<td>30,436.87</td>
<td>268,669.01</td>
<td>338,186.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>5,084.42</td>
<td>62,482.54</td>
<td>475,841.49</td>
<td>543,408.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$200,082.39 $200,620.69 $934,416.34 $1,335,119.42


The threat of withheld federal funds became a reality in the summer of 1965 due to pressures of Black civil rights groups. When the desegregation movement with its anti-Willis component had reached enormous heights, Reverend Martin Luther King promised to help in any way that he could to integrate Chicago. He even made the statement that he would step up the drive to oust Willis.

Among other complaints it was charged that the school system's administrators were embarrassingly inept, uncooperative and did not comply with the Civil Rights Act. When the funding was denied in early 1966, stories were carried in newspapers accusing Willis of his lack of cooperation with the government. As it would turn out, federal aid would not be forthcoming until Willis was gone.
from the superintendency.

WILLIS'S DESEGREGATION PLAN FOR HIGH SCHOOLS

High school enrollments were on the increase and this necessitated double shifts and shortened class days again. Money for construction had almost been depleted and other means of handling this need had to be found. In an attempt to respond to this problem and also to appease his opposition, Willis implemented a plan for clustering high schools. Unfortunately, it met with much opposition. Whites fled to the suburbs, and Blacks pointed to this mass exodus as proof of a failed plan. With so much controversy plans to integrate other White high schools through clustering were dropped. The Black leaders claimed that Willis had buckled under to White pressure groups because he wanted to insure that support for his neighborhood school policy would continue. Despite adverse statements, seventy students transferred to designated White schools without incident. Years ahead were to prove that Willis's plan would be implemented without incident under pressure from federal desegregation legislation.

THE BUILDING PROGRAM AND FINANCE

Willis knew that he would not return in the fall of 1966 and yet he did want to finish his school construction
program. Thus, amidst dissension that reached drastic proportions he pushed toward his goal.

The tally of Willis's school construction progress was impressive. At the end of 1966, Superintendent Willis boasted of the following: 232 elementary school buildings or additions; 21 high school buildings or additions; 2 college buildings or additions; 20 buildings acquired through purchase or gift; 824 mobile classrooms; and 7480 new classrooms. Approximately 48 percent of the Chicago public school pupils were going to school in modern buildings less than ten years old.7

The years 1965-66 continued to show a growth in the completion and occupation of many buildings and additions (see table 20). Not only were several opened for occupancy, but Willis continued in his own special way to supervise a number of the construction projects which had been started the year before. These were in various stages of completion (see table 21). As in years before and amid all of the controversies, he was the one who was always watchful that the program proceeded according to plan.

The new architecture employed by Willis had done away with drab and forbidding buildings; it made fullest use of color, design, modern surfacing materials, and improved levels of lighting. A totally new school environment had been created. The Chicago public schools became a leader in
bold planning, and they found uses for part-time idle areas. Typical of these was the lunchroom area. The introduction of book shelves on the perimeter walls of the lunchroom, the seating, the tables, and the floor space became available for the use of source material and for instruction in library procedures to earlier age groups.

When the school building program was intensified in 1955, architects that were employed by the Chicago Board of Education were encouraged to participate in award-winning competitions, emphasizing excellence in school design.

Table 20. -- Buildings and additions occupied after 1-65 (Elementary and Secondary)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Date of Occupancy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Melody</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1-1-65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higgins</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>9-8-65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duffy</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11-29-65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hinton</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9-8-65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gershwin</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2-4-65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodson North</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9-8-65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stockton addition</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>11-29-65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Secondary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Building</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Date of Occupancy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J.F. Kennedy addition</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2-65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simeon Vocational</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9-8-65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morgan Park addition</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>2-65</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 21. -- Schools under construction in 1966

Elementary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Date of Occupancy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May addition</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3-67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fermi addition</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>11-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stagg</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whistler addition</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Woodson South</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delano addition</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tilton addition</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12-66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Secondary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Date of Occupancy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jones Commercial</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dante</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hubbard addition</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington addition</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>12-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Shore addition</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>9-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orr addition</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9-66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Westinghouse addition</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>9-66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


These exhibitions not only brought about general recognition of the achievements of school planners, but resulted in a more widespread sharing of the concepts of modern school design which they represented. From 1956 until 1965 forty-two schools, representing the designs of twenty-eight architects, were exhibited at the annual conventions of the American Association of School Administrators. The following schools received acclaim (see table 22 and 23).

One of the newest buildings in 1966 was the John F.
Kennedy High School, which housed a complex of school grades kindergarten through twelve.

Table 22. -- Schools named to receive citations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Richard E. Byrd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>John T. Pirie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1962</td>
<td>Joseph Brennemann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>James R. Doolittle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Chicago Teachers College, North</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The three-story building was designed to meet the modern-day educational needs through the provision of a total of sixty-six special rooms. These facilities were in addition to eighteen regular classrooms. Like all others this complex related to the present community with a less formalized design and materials and by the introduction of child-oriented features. Special units included: two language rooms; two biology laboratories; music, chorus, and practice rooms; a natatorium with balcony; a general shop; a printing shop; an instructional materials center; a counseling and guidance center; an administrative suite; girls' and boys' gymnasium with offices and store-rooms; and a series
of laboratories for students in science, physics, chemistry, clothing and foods.

Table 23. -- Schools named to receive honor awards

FOR DISTINGUISHED ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN ARCHITECTURE FROM:
- American Institute of Architects
- Chicago Association of Commerce and Industry
- Chicago Association of Consulting Engineers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Paul L. Dunbar Vocational High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1960</td>
<td>John J. Pershing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>Chicago Teachers College, North</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>James R. Doolittle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>Jens Jensen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The K-6 John Kinzie school was the first part of this complex to be completed, and it was one of the first in the city to employ the "joint use" principle of cooperation with the Chicago Park District. Here the park district used a portion of the school facilities for its programs in the community and the school used the park's facilities. At the end of 1966 thirty-five such schools were in existence.

The Kennedy High School was self-contained and adjunct to the Kinzie Elementary School and Upper Grade Center. It
satisfied the demands of the parent groups that the elementary students be separated from the older, high school students.

This newest building in the program was occupied in 1966 and was built at a cost of $3,322.31. This amounted to $15.72 per square foot, well below the cost of the average 1,800 pupil high school structure in this part of the country. It was flexible in design, with dual-purpose rooms. The auditorium was able to be divided into four sections by an electrically operated partition. This building was typical of many utilizing construction materials that provided for low-cost maintenance -- without sacrificing modern educational needs. Glazed tile wainscot in corridors, gymnasiums, natatorium, locker and shower rooms were both practical and attractive. Asphalt tile was used in classrooms and on corridors.8

From 1953-63, the Willis administration piled up a mountain of accomplishments. Within this period, the enrollments of the Chicago public schools increased by 170,428. Every effort was made to secure the additional funds necessary to accommodate this increase, to improve educational programs, to provide essential new services and to expand the physical facilities. The tax rate for each of the available funds and the source of income expressed in rate per one hundred dollars reflect the increase (see table
Table 24. -- Sources of income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>1953</th>
<th>1963</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State (total)</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>27.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equalization</td>
<td>3.2%</td>
<td>9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flat Grant</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other state aid</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>.3%</td>
<td>.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local (total)</td>
<td>82.6%</td>
<td>70.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other than taxes</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local property taxes</td>
<td>80.2%</td>
<td>69.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (unexpected balance)</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 25. -- Tax rate per $100 assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funds</th>
<th>1953</th>
<th>1963</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational</td>
<td>$1.075</td>
<td>$1.620</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building</td>
<td>.184</td>
<td>.300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textbook</td>
<td>.017</td>
<td>.032</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>.018</td>
<td>.040</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Above and beyond the money raised by the levying of the school building fund tax rate, $25 million of the first $50 million school building bond issue (approved by vote of the
people of the city of Chicago) was available as of 1953. Three additional school building bond issues of $50 million each were approved during the decade. As of 1963 a total of $200 million in bonds had been approved; all but a very small part of it had been paid out for school construction by the close of the year.

For the first time in 1963, after many years of requesting financial support, Chicago was reimbursed by the state for part of the cost of the operation of the schools. Willis believed that increased funds were necessary because of: the anticipated and continued increase in enrollments; the urgent and increasing problems of education for children with special needs; and the increasing numbers of school buildings that were so old that they should have been razed. He believed that the community must tax itself sufficiently to provide the financial resources necessary to provide the best education possible for all children in the city. It was apparent that the needs could not be met by continuing to increase the tax levy on real property. Much progress had been made during the decade of 1953-63, but unless substantial assistance was to come from some other sources, Dr. Willis felt that there was danger of losing ground in the neverending fight to keep up.

Once again it was to the credit of the administration that the largest portion of the budget was again allotted to
instruction (see chart 4). With a review of the budgets for the past ten years, it can easily be seen that the budget had grown year by year. An expanded budget was necessary for without improvements of any kind, merely to maintain the program of education, would have necessitated a larger budget each year.

Strong in purpose and determined in principle, Willis headed a school construction program which at the end of ten years could boast of the completion of 236 buildings and additions and the occupancy of 4,801 additional classrooms, making it possible to accommodate 149,920 students with seats in the elementary schools and 518 students with seats in high schools. Twenty-two buildings and six additions were opened in the year of 1963 alone (see table 26).9

Just the number of building schools would have been a feat of which to be proud. However, forty-three of those schools were in architectural exhibitions, and four received special citations in an Honors Award Program for Distinguished Accomplishments. Another four received special citations in national school architectural exhibits, as well (see table 22 and 23).10

School designs were improved to provide for flexibility, team-teaching approaches, school-park plans, science laboratories, libraries, multiple-purpose rooms, modern communication media centers, all of which contributed to an
enhancement of the educational facilities. They were not only built for beauty, as was evident in the design of the Mather High School and the Brennemann, but many safety features were a part of their construction blueprints.

Chart 4. -- Budget pie graph for 1953 and 1963

Table 26.--New schools and additions built by 1963

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New</th>
<th>New (Cont.)</th>
<th>Additions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Banneker</td>
<td>McCorkle</td>
<td>Bond</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brennemann</td>
<td>Mollison</td>
<td>Chalmers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cather</td>
<td>Overton</td>
<td>Deneen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dett</td>
<td>Paderewski</td>
<td>DuSable UGC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donoghue</td>
<td>Price</td>
<td>Hearst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dumas</td>
<td>Reed</td>
<td>Wadsworth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dvorak</td>
<td>Sbarbaro</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goethals</td>
<td>Sixty-Four East Lake</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson</td>
<td>Tanner</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lathrop</td>
<td>Terrell</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mason</td>
<td>Yale UGC</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Features such as low pressure steam or gas heat, improved lighting, fire-resistant construction, and effective use of new materials were also considered a major part of the entire process. Requirements of a new ordinance made it necessary to install connections in all new and old school buildings with the city firm alarm system. All old buildings, which numbered 159, were also provided with automatic sprinkler systems at a cost of more than four million dollars beginning in January 1963.

A major achievement in this decade toward organization and savings in school construction was the reorganization of the field staff of the Bureau of Engineering. The reorganization established the positions of chief engineer,
district supervising engineer, school property security inspector, methods and standards coordinator and a head janitor.

At the end of his term in 1966 Willis finished the final step in his school construction program. He expressed his feelings regarding his program, that had been so comprehensive in scope:

The school building construction story is one of flexibility in the use of existing facilities, and a massive program of new buildings to meet changing needs in education. BUT, MOST OF ALL, IT IS A STORY OF PEOPLE AND PROGRAM AND PLACE . . . people who plan the buildings for maximum educational value; PEOPLE who use the building as educational tools; PROGRAMS which meet the needs of children and youth; programs which dictate the room-to-room needs of the school population. Thus, the place -- the building itself -- houses people and facilities and serves as a laboratory for learning which offers children and youth the best setting in which to obtain the best education. The construction story is also one of the uses of mobile classrooms and the reduction of class size which has removed all children from the double shift for the first time in more than 100 years.
The building program has been a most dynamic one in the past thirteen years in Chicago public schools. It has represented sound educational planning, a sense of vision for the needs of tomorrow, and a continuing philosophy toward quality education that is made manifest in the "bricks and mortar" of our schools. More than bricks and mortar, then, the school building story is a many-faceted one. . . .

Buildings, growth, and controversy sum up the career of Benjamin Willis. Nicknamed Big Ben the Builder by the local press, Willis prided himself on his planting "jewels" (that is, new schools) in the crowded Black south side ghetto—buildings that even in 1973, he said, still looked "as if they were planned yesterday and just moved into."12

"Practically peerless as a big-city school superintendent," in the words of a widely respected college dean, Willis planned and oversaw the details of each massive multi-million dollar construction project. He was known for supervising everything from the heights of the ceilings to the price of nails. His program drew rave reports. His buildings were built with the thought that "a Superintendent's job was to make the job of instruction easier and more efficient for the teacher."13 It is important to remember that never was there any breath of scandal con-
nected to any part of his administration, not even when millions of dollars were being spent almost daily as his building program progressed. He was known as a man who operated correctly at all times, and used his better judgment in all things.

Many have been known to state that Willis was not much of an educator, but simply a man who knew how to construct buildings. It takes only a review of his many contributions to curriculum, instruction, personnel status, educational programs and the such to begin to think twice about any such statements.

FACTS ABOUT THE WILLIS SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROGRAM

The following sixteen maps are presented as concrete evidence that Willis followed through with the board policy, agreed upon when he initiated his building construction program. Board policy included, first and foremost, the premise that the construction of schools would be concentrated in areas of the city which had the highest influx of population and, therefore, a larger enrollment of school-aged children. Top priority was to be given to areas where no schools existed, and the next set of schools or additions were to be added to the schools already in those areas.

Only a glance is needed to realize that the largest concentration of population was in the middle of the city
(see map 4). It can be recognized, by looking at map 5, that the districts involved in the highest concentration of poverty based on income, education, housing, welfare and delinquency were 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26 and 27, and were mainly in the middle of the city. Many had experienced an elementary growth gain of 60 percent to 286 percent from 1951 to 1965 (see map 6).

From map 7, it is evident that the building construction program truly did place emphasis on the areas indicated on all of the other maps as areas of extreme need, resulting in the largest concentration of school construction in Black areas. Map 8 shows the locations of the Headstart classes within the city. These programs serviced 20,500 pre-kindergarten children in the summer of 1965.

In the selection of sites for education and vocational guidance centers, elementary and high school after-school classes and educable mentally handicapped classes, choices were guided by the needs. (This is evident in maps 9, 10, 11 and 12). In those areas, which showed a 10 percent or more Black population (see map 13), hot lunch programs (see map 14), and summer school programs (see map 3, page 194) were placed. Maps 15 and 16 show the geographic distribution of pupils by race.

For some, the question is not whether or not Willis planned for construction of school buildings and additions
in the areas of the city where the greatest population influxes and poverty levels occurred. Rather: why the board policy for school construction emphasized the importance of building in these areas instead of integrating? Many Black leaders, civil rights groups and integration activists, were positive that this policy and the resulting constructions were quite simply a way of making sure that Black populations were kept contained within certain areas and neighborhoods and not allowed to spread to all-White areas and neighborhoods of the city. Of course, these groups were ready to solidify their argument with the fact that Chicago politics held the neighborhood school policy as almost a religious doctrine in those years, as well. Many would have readily claimed that Dr. Willis and board members were being told that they better do everything in their power to maintain that policy within the city. In keeping it many felt strongly that the status quo would be maintained in Chicago.

WILLIS'S LAST YEAR AS SUPERINTENDENT

The academic year 1965-66 was not different from his last few in the office. It, too, was ridden with controversy -- so much so in fact that it caused Willis to resign on 31 August 1966 before his agreed time. Issues similar to those of 1965-65 plagued the Willis administration in its
last year: further withholding of federal funds, parent boycotts, and general dissension among Black civil rights groups and leaders.

Among the most significant of these controversies was the U.S. Office of Education's investigation of the city's school system. It resulted from charges that Willis's plans for using federal funds were not directed at schools having high concentrations of children from low-income underprivileged families. After extensive investigation, the following statement was released:

An examination of the materials submitted to us by the Chicago school system indicates that much time and professional effort have gone into the development of these programs and we believe that the operation thus far and the proposals for the future exhibit a meritorious approach to the solution of the problems of the educationally deprived.14

Willis was also the topic of conversation among teachers for his settlement of the forecasted teachers strike of the past year. His settlements with Fewkes of the Chicago Teachers' Union over the last two years of his term averted a teachers' strike. Although many would view his actions with the union from different perspectives, Willis tried at all times to be true to his belief that teachers
and neighborhood schools were the backbone of the educational system. In his dealings with the teachers' union, as with all others, Willis never let himself be pushed into corners.

Beginning in May of 1966, Chicago newspapers began discussing the picking of a successor to Willis. Many organizations became a part of the "fixing of the criteria" for the selection of the next superintendent. An article in the Sun Times of 12 July 1966, stated that forty-eight business and industrial leaders in Chicago urged the school board to pick a Willis successor promptly. The Urban League, PTAs, and many others offered suggestions as to the qualifications which should be part of the search. Many speculated about James Redmond's appointment to the job. Editorials put a lot of emphasis on the fact that Redmond was a public relations expert, and stated that:

some think it is more important for the superintendent to be a public relations expert than a gifted educator. Certainly a superintendent needs the patience to suffer fools gladly, along with the courage to oppose them when he thinks they are wrong. This is an area in which Supt. Willis faltered. . . .15

Willis was proud of his accomplishments as superintendent but tired of the constant battling it took to achieve
these goals. He had done all that he could do and happily looked to a calmer future.
Map 4. -- Elementary Enrollment

Map 5. -- Areas with highest poverty level

AREAS WITH HIGHEST CONCENTRATION OF POVERTY
BASED ON (5) INDICATORS
- INCOME
- EDUCATION
- HOUSING
- WELFARE
- DELINQUENCY

Map 6. -- Elementary Growth Gains

Elementary Enrollment with Greatest Growth in Districts
Sept. 1951 - Sept. 1965
Percent of Gain
60% to 286%

Map 7. -- Building Program

Map 8. -- Headstart Classes

Map 9. -- Guidance Centers

Map 10. -- Elementary after-school classes

Map 11. -- High School After-School Classes

Map 12. -- Educable Mentally Handicapped Classes

Map 13. -- Black Population Percentages

Map 14. -- Hot Lunch Programs

Map 15. -- Geographic distribution of pupils by race--elementary schools

Map 16. --- Geographic distribution of pupils by race --- high schools

CHAPTER EIGHT ENDNOTES


7. It is important here to note that the research was filled with discrepancies regarding the number of elementary, high schools, new and additions constructed. Board Proceedings were the basis used in this dissertation, (1953-1966).


11. Ibid., 1.


A reader of the newspaper accounts of 1963 is quick to realize that this year was a turning point in the relationship that Willis had with the press up until that time. While almost all of the Chicago dailies in the beginning of 1963 were still eager to print articles regarding Willis's school construction accomplishments, stories regarding the extent and depth of Black discontent with Chicago's public schools were reported more and more. The only newspaper which remained loyal to the superintendent was the Tribune.

The discontent that the dailies reported was real. By 1963, ten years after Benjamin Coppage Willis assumed his job in Chicago, pressures to break up what activists and some parents viewed as a segregated school system were brought to bear on the superintendent and the Chicago school board. The neighborhood school policy, which many felt was prolonging segregation in the schools, was the target of their fight and made big headlines. Willis became the object of demonstrations and accusations. To many, segregation was apparent within the city's schools, and the head of the system was the symbol of all they were against.

Superintendent Benjamin C. Willis accomplished much during his ten years as head of the country's second largest public school system. He updated high school curriculum, fostered special education classes, strengthened science and
math course work and was the first to stand strongly behind the need for a vocational educational program. These innovations and activities were available systemwide. However, his building program was by far his major contribution and as noted in Chapter Eight the new construction was found in Black neighborhoods as readily as White. Thus, the "planting [of] jewels" throughout the city was not a slogan that showed racial favoritism.

Willis's philosophy, which was the basis of his administration, had not changed in ten years. He was always ready and unafraid to stick to his belief that the neighborhood school was the best for all school-age children. Throughout the thirteen years of his superintendancy, Willis reiterated over and over again that children would receive a much fuller education in schools that were within walking distance from their homes and within familiar environments. The superintendent felt strongly that the school should never be further away than a five-minute walk from a student's home, so that if sickness or accident should befall the child, the mother of the child could be in quick access to the school. To him the center of his philosophy was the child. One source said that Willis would spit in the eye of God if He asked him to go against his (Willis's) principles. Because of these policies many newspeople, parents, Black leaders and civil rights groups accused him
of maintaining the status quo—a charge that he adamantly
denied.

For thirteen years his administration aimed at excel-
ence in education. He sought to provide a high quality of
education for all children and youth in the Chicago public
schools. Yet, it became more and more evident that his idea
of the meaning of excellence and that of the opposition were
very different. As quality of education became synonymous
with integrated schools his definition was lost in the eyes
of many who viewed the system. These people felt that
Black children could never achieve their full potential in
segregated schools. They also felt that Black children in
segregated schools were not getting their fair share of
equipment, materials or teaching methods. Willis talked
about the worth of the individual and the perfectibility of
man. This especially was a sore spot to social change
activists. They were sure that the system was promoting
policies that were degrading to the Black children and that
would end up destroying the Black child's future chances of
being a fully-developed individual. Very much aware of this
controversy, Willis stated:

No institution in our present civilization can be
all things to all men . . . we have worked toward
the improvement of children and youth. For ten
years, as decisions have been made we have taken
into account our primary goals and the priorities of the school's responsibility. We have made and interpreted proposals and have made decisions in keeping with our primary goal. We have determined priorities within this same frame of reference. We have consistently approved that which we felt would help, and we have actively sought new and imaginative means to achieve our objective.1

This was Willis's perspective on his administration even though his opponents had a different one of status quo and unequal treatment of Black children in schools. This latter perspective has continued to be the conventional wisdom for many who remember his administration.

This paper has attempted to shed light on the major forces affecting the Willis administration in hopes of providing a more complete historical reality about his term as superintendent. Towards that end, it is useful to view Willis's superintendency within two theoretical frameworks: status and reference groups and the unitary model of organizational development. In regard to the former, according to Robert A. Nisbet, a prominent American sociologist, the unit-idea of status is defined as "the individual's position in the hierarchy of prestige and influence that characterizes every community or association."2 Beringer expounds on this theory and states "What is new in
the modern age is that an individual's status might change, perhaps ought to change, in his or her own lifetime. And, if status could change, those who held high status, whether due to their own merits (achieved status) or those of their ancestors (ascribed status), could possibly lose it; if it could be lost, such individuals might well suffer from status anxiety and, motivated by this anxiety, might take measures to prevent loss of status or to regain it if it had already been lost."

Muzafer and Carolyn Sherif define reference group "as the group with which the individual identifies or aspires to belong." They state that individuals are motivated by certain feelings of attainment which cause them to follow standards which are set and maintained by the group. Historian David Donald states that "stand patters" are usually so shaken by the idea of loss of status that they hold on to status quo with unusual tenacity.4

In his discussion of politics in the Chicago schools, Paul E. Peterson considers the unitary model with its components of organizational routines, organizational interests, shared values of organizational members and organizational unity. All three of these components, Peterson states, have more than a random relationship to one another. Usually standard operating procedures are consistent with both organizational interests and professional
values. These three components dovetail to shape the decision-making process. Peterson cites:

In a school system based on the concept of the neighborhood school, for example, all three elements seem to work together to perpetuate the system. Efforts to change that system may well be frustrated by the challenge they pose not only to organizational interests and values, but even to routine patterns of operation. In such a case it is difficult if not impossible to determine whether interests, values, or routine procedures are separately shaping organizational proposals. An administrative staff communicates to its board through channels which are structured by formal guidelines and informal norms and expectations. The operating procedures, once established and standardized, place constraints on the problem-solving activities of the organization. They narrow options to be considered. They bias the evaluation of options in directions consistent with organizational structures and routines. They limit the range of policies the organization is capable of implementing. Consequently, the organizational behavior is prone to "error" in crisis situations, those times when almost by
definition routines are inappropriate for dealing with problems the system faces. Rather than selecting the most appropriate alternative, the organization suggests one that conforms most closely to its standard operating procedures.5

The social, economic, and political conditions which were present in Chicago when Willis became superintendent formed a bureaucratic organization. The citizenry was not a part of this organizational structure; the board and the mayor were. Willis operated as a member of this bureaucratic structure. His power base was within this structure and he received support from the other members of this group.

Having status in this particular reference group, Willis's position was theoretically predetermined and constant. He had a position of prestige and influence in the hierarchy, belonged to this reference group and was "motivated by his sense of identity, the stability of this identity, his need for human company and mutual support [and] his felt need to act in concert . . . for the effective attainment of his cherished goals. . . ."6 The reference group set and maintained the standards for Willis.

Willis's action in regard to the opposition groups can be explained by looking at what the Sherifs called "the normative reference group." The Sherifs stated that an individual's behavior "may not be the result of conscious
adoption of the group's norms but the consequence of absolute rejection of another group's norms; thus, not all reference groups are positive ones to which individuals aspire to belong or to imitate -- there are also negative reference groups, whose norms are emphatically disapproved."  
For Willis the civil rights groups were his negative reference groups. When considering Willis's tenure as superintendent within the framework of status and reference groups along with shared values of organizational members many actions of the superintendent can be explained. In most cases the opposition groups felt that Willis was so powerful that all he had to do was integrate the schools and integration of the city would follow. This power in reality was a perceived power that came from the bureaucratic administrative structure in which he operated. The school board, therefore, was his reference group and their values were his. Segregation and the neighborhood school concept were part of their shared belief system.  
It is interesting to note that even when conflicts arose between board members and Willis a majority of the board members supported Willis and thought he was doing a good job. There were certain unifying aspects of the organization even though from time to time internal conflict did arise. For example, when Willis tried the "clustering of high schools" idea, it was not accepted. This could be
accounted for with the shared value of organizational members theory. This was not in keeping with the interests of the organization and went against its unifying aspects. At a later date, however, with a different board and a different racial composition, it was accepted because the shared values and interests of the organization had changed.

In many ways, the Chicago school system operated as a bureaucratic organization isolated from external forces. Thus, citizen groups for social change had little impact on policies and practices set by this administrative body. Benjamin C. Willis was simply a member of the organization.


6. Muzafar and Carolyn W. Sherif, *Reference Groups: Exploration into Conformity and Deviation of Adolescents*, (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), 55. While the authors are concerned with the application of the theory to adolescents, the definition applies equally to other age groups.

7. Ibid.
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Photograph Four: Benjamin C. Willis (1982)

Source: Benjamin C. Willis -- Personal collection
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