

## INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

**The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.** Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each original is also photographed in one exposure and is included in reduced form at the back of the book.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

# UMI

A Bell & Howell Information Company  
300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor MI 48106-1346 USA  
313/761-4700 800/521-0600



**A HISTORY OF MILLARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS 1946-1989:  
Forty-four Years of Suburban Growth**

**By**

**Rex E. Anderson**

**A Dissertation**

**Presented to the Faculty of**

**The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska**

**In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements of the Degree**

**For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

**Major: Interdepartmental Area of Administration,  
Curriculum and Instruction**

**Under the Supervision of Professor Frederick C. Wendel**

**Lincoln, Nebraska**

**December, 1997**

**UMI Number: 9812345**

---

**UMI Microform 9812345  
Copyright 1998, by UMI Company. All rights reserved.**

**This microform edition is protected against unauthorized  
copying under Title 17, United States Code.**

---

**UMI**  
300 North Zeeb Road  
Ann Arbor, MI 48103

DISSERTATION TITLE

A History of Millard Public Schools 1946 - 1989: Forty-four

Years of Suburban Growth

BY

Rex E. Anderson

SUPERVISORY COMMITTEE:

APPROVED

DATE

Frederick C. Wendel  
Signature

Nov. 17, 1997

Dr. Frederick C. Wendel  
Typed Name

Alfred A. Arth  
Signature

Nov 17, 1997

Dr. Alfred A. Arth  
Typed Name

Stanley F. Vasa  
Signature

Nov 17, 1997

Dr. Stanley F. Vasa  
Typed Name

Ward Sybouts  
Signature

Nov. 17, 1997

Dr. Ward Sybouts  
Typed Name

Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Typed Name

Signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Typed Name

A HISTORY OF MILLARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS 1946-1989:  
FORTY-FOUR YEARS OF SUBURBAN GROWTH

Rex E. Anderson, Ph.D.

University of Nebraska, 1997

Adviser: Frederick C. Wendel

The impact of suburban growth was studied in the Millard Public Schools, a school district located southwest of Omaha, Nebraska. The study organizes the history of the Millard Public Schools within the context of state, national, and world events of the time. Additionally, this research provides a better understanding of the post World War II phenomena of suburban growth and how such growth impacted one Nebraska rural community and its school system. Primary and secondary sources were studied to create a vivid narration of the past both chronologically and thematically. Special attention was devoted to administrative, curricular, and instructional issues faced by interested parties within the school district.

Chronologically, the history was divided into five main periods. The first period was that of preparing for consolidation which took place between 1946 and 1955. During the second epoch of 1955-1960, the district experienced consolidation that drastically increased the size of the Millard Public Schools. The 1960-1970 stage was one of early suburban growth. The fourth span of time, 1971-1978, was one of rapid growth and resulting difficulty. The last era encompassing 1979-1989, was a period in which the district came into its own being as a large suburban school district.

Thematically, the 1940s and 1950s were periods focused on consolidation. The 1960s was a period in which the Board and the administrative leadership of the district learned to manage growth. The 1970s

was a period in which curricular issues became a focus. During the 1980s there was a great deal of emphasis placed on instructional improvement.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

When determining who to acknowledge at the end of four years of research and seven years of study, I find many people that I need to thank. First, and foremost, I thank the many people who came before us and made the Millard Public School system what it is today. The legacy our forefathers left behind is very powerful. In addition, I would like to thank the nineteen people listed in the interview section of the bibliography of this dissertation. Without their time and consideration much of the clarity of this project would be missing. I also want to thank Frederick Wendel for his time, patience, and assistance in this endeavor. Starts, stops, and delays were all worked around with true professionalism on his part, as he advised me on this project.

Administratively, there are several people I need to thank. My fellow building administrators, Phil Koch and Lori Jasa, for their flexibility, encouragement, and patience, as I have worked to make this dream a reality. Dr. Gary Barta is acknowledged for his initial encouragement in pursuing an administrative program and doctorate degree. Finally, my friend and fellow administrator, Glenn Schanou, for the insight and moral support in the early years of my program.

Professionally, I need to thank the teachers, staff members, and my friends in education who have been there when I needed support and who have encouraged me regarding this project. These people have served to help



me balance the goal driven side of myself against the affective needs that we all have as human beings.

With tears in my eyes I must thank the four most important people in my life. They have been there for the good and the bad over the past several years. First, my wife Martha. Your patience, encouragement, and cheerful attitude is truly appreciated. I know that the sacrifice on your part was as great as mine! The delay of this project for back surgery could have been the end of this study. Your gentle patience and encouragement made all the difference. To my sons, Ben and Gabe, as a teacher, I realize that the harvest of education is not realized at the time of the planting. I hope that the tenacity that I have demonstrated in completing this project and this degree will serve as a lighthouse to both of you in the future as you pursue your dreams in life. I know that over the past several years I have not always been there for many of the important events, but hope that you realize it doesn't mean that I love you any less! Finally, to my brother Roy, I thank you for being there for Ben and Gabe when they needed an adult male role model; being one of my best friends when I needed someone to listen; and, being of assistance to Martha at those times when she needed help with the boys, the house, or daily problems.

To all of the foregoing, there is a saying that "to teach is touch a life forever." Realize the power of that statement and know that each and everyone of you have all touched me in many ways! To the readers who read the following history, enjoy!

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	xiii
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
The Problem.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	1
Definition of Terms.....	2
Significance.....	2
Assumptions.....	3
Scope and Limitations.....	3
Sources.....	4
Procedures.....	6
Organization of the Study.....	6
II. SUBURBAN AMERICA IN A LOCAL HISTORICAL CONTEXT.....	9
Sociological Aspects.....	9
Early Studies.....	10
Suburban Myth.....	11
Present Suburban Studies.....	13
Historical Background.....	14
Early Years.....	14
First Schools .....	15
Post World War II.....	16
Millard as a City.....	16
Summary.....	17
III. THE PRE-CONSOLIDATION AND PLANNING YEARS: 1946-1955.....	18
The Setting.....	18
The World and the United States.....	18
Nebraska.....	19
Research Sources.....	20

Governance and Administration.....	20
Rural Growth.....	25
Curriculum and Instruction.....	26
Summary.....	29
IV. THE CONSOLIDATION YEARS: 1955-1960.....	31
The Setting.....	31
The World and the United States.....	31
Nebraska and Millard.....	32
Research Sources.....	35
Governance and Administration.....	35
Rural Growth into Suburban Growth.....	38
Curriculum and Instruction.....	44
Summary.....	45
V. THE EARLY SUBURBAN YEARS: 1960-1970.....	47
The Setting.....	47
The World and the United States.....	47
Youth and Education.....	48
Nebraska and Millard.....	49
Research Sources.....	50
Growth.....	52
School District.....	53
Boundaries.....	54
Annexation.....	54
School Population and Budget Growth.....	56
Buildings.....	58
Growth Studies.....	60
Governance and Administration.....	61
The Board of Education.....	61
Administration.....	63
Administrative Structural Plan.....	64
Board Policies.....	67
Early Policy Development.....	67
Procedural Policies.....	70
Codified Policy Development.....	71
Policies Reflect Times.....	72
Transportation.....	76
Salary Negotiations.....	78
Millard Education Association Formed.....	78
Early Negotiations.....	79
Early Benefits.....	81
New Negotiation Process.....	82

Legal Issues.....	84
Building Litigation.....	85
Student Litigation.....	88
Public Relations.....	89
Yearly Report and Newspapers.....	90
Citizen Committees.....	91
Business Practices.....	92
Business Management Growth.....	93
Electronic Payroll.....	94
Curriculum and Instruction.....	95
Curriculum Development.....	95
Elementary Curriculum.....	97
Secondary Curriculum.....	100
Educational Consortiums.....	104
Drug and Sex Education.....	106
Other Curricular Issues.....	108
Accreditation.....	110
Summer School and Adult Education.....	113
Vocational Education.....	115
Special Education.....	116
Instruction.....	119
Early In-Service Programs.....	119
New Instructional Methods.....	122
Instructional Impact on New Building Design.....	122
Summary.....	126
 VI. Growing Pains: 1971-1978.....	 128
The Setting.....	128
The World and the United States.....	128
Federal Court Decisions, Legislation, and Education.....	129
Nebraska and Millard.....	130
Research Sources.....	132
Personal Interviews.....	133
Growth.....	135
School Population Growth.....	137
Desegregation and Busing Impacts.....	138
Budget Growth.....	140
Buildings and Bonds.....	141
Annexation.....	143
Legislation to Annex.....	144
Litigation to Annex.....	145
Governance and Administration.....	147
The Board of Education.....	147

Administration.....	150
Administrative Growth.....	150
Job Descriptions Developed.....	153
Federal and State Legislative Constraints.....	157
State Imposed Constraints.....	157
Federal Imposed Constraints.....	159
Board Policies.....	160
Societal Changes.....	161
Student Policies.....	164
Teacher Policies.....	166
Salary Negotiations.....	167
Related Employment Policies.....	168
Legal Issues.....	170
Boys Town.....	173
Special Education.....	175
Student Cases.....	176
Religious Cases.....	178
Public Relations.....	179
Coordinator of Communications.....	180
School Facilities Made Available Patron Use.....	180
Committees and Questionnaires.....	182
Volunteers and Professional Staff.....	186
Business Practices.....	188
Transportation and Transfers.....	190
Curriculum and Instruction.....	193
Curriculum Development.....	194
Generic Curriculum Issues.....	194
Curriculum Challenges.....	198
Elementary Curriculum.....	202
Harry Stottlemeier curriculum causes problems.....	202
Elementary health education.....	204
Secondary Curriculum.....	205
The junior high program developed.....	205
Vocational education.....	209
A new secondary structure explored.....	210
Curricular leadership expanded.....	211
Year-Round School.....	214
Year-Round School Study Begins.....	215
Year-Round School Put to a Vote.....	217
Special Education.....	218
Special Education Administrator Appointed.....	220
Gifted Education.....	221
Instruction.....	224
Teacher Expectations Developed.....	224

Buildings Reflect Instructional Trends.....	227
Alternative Forms of Instruction Studied.....	229
Summary.....	232
<b>VII. Coming of Age and the Final Stroh Years: 1979-1989.....</b>	<b>233</b>
The Setting.....	233
The World and the United States.....	233
Nebraska.....	234
Millard.....	238
Research Resources.....	239
Personal Interviews.....	240
Growth.....	241
School Population Growth and Changes.....	242
Uneven Growth.....	243
Budget Growth.....	248
Grant Monies.....	250
Education Foundation Created.....	251
Buildings and Bonds.....	252
Lease-to-Purchase Program Explored.....	255
Merger.....	256
Governance and Administration.....	257
The Board of Education.....	257
Procedural Changes.....	258
Long-Range Planning and Goals.....	261
Millard Education Foundation.....	263
Administration.....	266
Central Office.....	267
Secondary Schools.....	271
Elementary Schools.....	274
Dr. Stroh's Retirement and Replacement.....	275
Alleged Administrative Mismanagement.....	277
Federal and State Legislative Parameters.....	279
Federal Legislation.....	279
State Legislation.....	281
Initiative and Referendum.....	284
Board Policies.....	285
Social Issues.....	285
Salary Negotiations and Working Conditions.....	288
Salary Negotiations.....	288
Merit Pay.....	291
Voluntary Early Separation Program.....	294
Paraprofessionals.....	295
Elementary Planning Time.....	295

Association Leave.....	296
Employment Assistance Program.....	297
Legal Issues.....	297
United States Supreme Court Cases.....	298
Board Litigation.....	300
Parent Litigation.....	301
Release of District Records.....	303
Public Relations.....	304
Business Practices.....	305
Technology.....	305
District Budget Funding.....	306
Legally Required Business Practices.....	307
Curriculum and Instruction.....	308
Curriculum Development.....	308
English as a Second Language Program .....	310
New Educational Consortium Formed.....	311
Educational Materials Challenged.....	312
Elementary Curriculum.....	313
Kindergarten program developed.....	314
Volunteer program receives attention.....	315
Elementary school students work to preserve past.....	315
Alternative elementary programs studied.....	316
Elementary art grants.....	318
Middle School Curriculum.....	319
Sixth-grade moves to middle school.....	319
Health and drug education programs developed.....	322
High School Curriculum.....	324
High school advisory program implemented.....	325
Funding causes changes in drivers education.....	325
Weighted grades become an issue.....	326
Vocational program and a court decision.....	327
Activities program changes.....	328
Board compromise results in new programs.....	329
At-risk program starts slowly.....	329
Community service program receives bad press.....	331
Technology.....	332
Special Education.....	334
Special Education Costs.....	335
New Programs Mandated.....	336
Gifted Education.....	337
Gifted Pilot Program Develops and Expands.....	338
Staff Development and Instruction.....	340
District Instructional Model Developed.....	341
Facilities Reflect Instructional Practices.....	342

Summary.....	344
VIII. Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations.....	346
Research Problem.....	346
Procedures.....	346
Findings.....	347
Conclusions.....	348
Recommendations for Further Study.....	351
Summary.....	351
APPENDIX I. ....	353
Consolidation Map.....	354
Millard Public Schools in 1989.....	355
SOURCES CONSULTED.....	356
Books.....	356
Enclypedias.....	357
Publications of Local, State, and National Educational Institutions and Government Agencies.....	357
Millard Public Schools.....	357
City of Omaha.....	358
State of Nebraska.....	358
United States Government.....	358
Newspapers and Magazines.....	359
Interviews.....	359



## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AIDS</b>	<b>Acquired ImmunoDeficiency Syndrome</b>
<b>BA</b>	<b>Bachelor of Arts</b>
<b>CIR</b>	<b>Commission of Industrial Relations</b>
<b>DCC</b>	<b>District Curriculum Council</b>
<b>DSAC</b>	<b>Don Stroh Administration Center</b>
<b>ESU #3</b>	<b>Educational Service Unit Number Three</b>
<b>GED</b>	<b>General Education Degree</b>
<b>HIV</b>	<b>Human Immunodeficiency Virus</b>
<b>IOTA</b>	<b>Instrument for the Observation of Teaching Activities</b>
<b>ITIP</b>	<b>Instructional Theory Into Practice</b>
<b>LB</b>	<b>Legislative Bill</b>
<b>MA</b>	<b>Master of Arts</b>
<b>MAP</b>	<b>Millard Assessment Program</b>
<b>MEA</b>	<b>Millard Education Association</b>
<b>MEF</b>	<b>Millard Education Foundation</b>
<b>Metro Tech</b>	<b>Metropolitan Technical Community College</b>
<b>MOEBA</b>	<b>Metropolitan Omaha Educational Broadcast Association</b>

<b>MOEC</b>	<b>Metropolitan Omaha Educational Consortium</b>
<b>NSAA</b>	<b>Nebraska School Activities Association</b>
<b>NATO</b>	<b>North Atlantic Treaty Organization</b>
<b>NSSBA</b>	<b>Nebraska State School Board Association</b>
<b>NCEE</b>	<b>National Congress for Educational Excellence</b>
<b>OSACS</b>	<b>Omaha Suburban Area Council of Schools</b>
<b>PAYBAC</b>	<b>Partners Assisting Youth, Business, and Community</b>
<b>SIECUS</b>	<b>Sex Information and Education Council of the United States</b>
<b>UNL</b>	<b>University of Nebraska-Lincoln</b>
<b>UNO</b>	<b>University of Nebraska-Omaha</b>
<b>YMCA</b>	<b>Young Mens Christian Association</b>
<b>Westside</b>	<b>Douglas County School District # 66</b>

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Suburban growth has been a phenomena of American history for over 150 years. In 1997, 31.9% of the population resided in suburban areas.<sup>1</sup> The growth of suburban areas necessitates increased public services including education. Millard Public Schools is an illustration of a public service that had to accommodate itself to a growing suburban population. A history of the Millard Public Schools serves as a case study of the problems faced by a school district as it moved from a small rural system to the third largest school district in the state of Nebraska.

Since World War II, many changes have taken place in the United States, Nebraska, and the Millard Public Schools. An understanding of these changes in the Millard Public Schools in administration, curriculum, and instruction needs to be compiled, studied, and recorded for posterity and future study.

#### **The Problem**

##### Statement of the Problem

The purpose for conducting this study was to trace the historical development of the Millard Public Schools as a suburban school district of the greater Omaha area since 1946. The study places the history of the Millard

---

<sup>1</sup>1990 Census STF 1C, File 0, Geography and Tables P1 to P10 United States. Definitions provided by the Center for Public Affairs Research at the University of Nebraska-Omaha indicate that this figure represents population living in an urban area, but not in the central urban area.

Public Schools in the state and national context of the time. Special attention has been given to administrative, curricular, and instructional issues faced by board members, administrators, staff members, and patrons of the Millard Public School District due to its rapid growth.

### Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this investigation, certain terms which were used frequently required a common classification.<sup>2</sup>

Suburb. Area that “refers to all parts of all metropolitan areas outside of central cities. It therefore includes unincorporated areas as well as suburban municipalities.”<sup>3</sup> A suburb may include areas that have been annexed by an urban center.

Millard Public Schools. School district in the state of Nebraska legally known as School District Number 17 of Douglas County.

Millard Board of Education. Policy setting group for the Millard Public Schools; hereafter referred to as “the Board.”

### Significance

School districts operate from policies set by the governing board of education. Often these policies are based on precedents. The source of these precedents lie in the history of the school district. To obtain the source of these precedents, a study of the history of the school district was necessary. In the case of Millard Public Schools, this history included a phenomenal suburban

---

<sup>2</sup>Abbreviations commonly used were listed on pages xii-xiii.

<sup>3</sup> Anthony Downs, Opening Up the Suburbs (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press, 1973) quoted in Harvey M. Choldin, Cities and Suburbs: An Introduction to Urban Sociology (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1985), 355.

growth factor which has impacted the development of policies. The study of the policies set in their historical context revealed the issues faced by the school district at the time. Continued suburban growth in the United States requires a better understanding of the issues and problems encountered by school districts in a rapid growth situation.

### **Assumptions**

This investigation was based on the following assumptions:

1. A history of Millard Public Schools as a suburban district existed in a variety of written and human resources.
2. The written and human resources were available for the inquiry required for this study to trace the history of the Millard Public Schools.
3. The written and human resources supplied sufficient information to allow for the completion of this study.

### **Scope and Limitations**

Only the years from 1946 through 1989 were studied. This study was restricted to major issues in administration, curriculum, and instruction of the Millard Public Schools. Documents in the school archives have not been indexed, therefore a formal process of citation was difficult to follow. In addition, other documentation available does not always have all the proper information to cite according to Kate L. Turabian's, A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987) which is the manual used for citations and writing style. Thus, Dr. E. L. Haselwood a professor of Library Science and Educational Media at the University of Nebraska-Omaha, who has Member status in the Graduate

College at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, was consulted and his recommendations were followed regarding the citations for school board minutes and archival materials of a special nature. These unusual archival materials include a news clippings file maintained by the Millard Public Schools, a general history file of the school district containing a variety of artifacts, and a file of school dedication brochures created at the time each school was officially dedicated. Each chapter includes the national, state, and local events that were pertinent to the major issues in administration, curriculum, and instruction.

### **Sources**

1. The primary sources for this study were the minutes and files of the Board of Education of the Millard Public Schools from 1946 to 1989. These sources included but were not limited to annual reports of the superintendent of schools; published school district policies, rules, and regulations; and other pertinent documents available from the central offices located at the Don Stroh Administration Center.

Several unique files were maintained by the Millard Public Schools. These files include a general history file that contains various items in no chronological order. These files have been developed over the years as items were donated to the school district or were found in related district research. The dates covered by this file were not maintained, but this file was valuable as the original school building burned in 1938, destroying all other records. Fire also destroyed the Douglas County Court House in 1927 and thus early records maintained by the County Superintendent's office were also missing.

Another file maintained by the school district was a school dedication brochures file. This includes multiple copies of all of the school dedication brochures since 1960. Finally, the George Russell family allowed a family scrap book of news clippings to be photocopied at the time George Russell Middle School was dedicated. The George Russell family was very influential in the Millard community as they owned Millard Lumber, a major business that continues to this day. This scrap book contains a wealth of information about the 1950s and 1960s in the community of Millard and the growth of schools during this period.

2. A variety of historical documents were used including end of the year school district reports and library vertical files. Sources for these historical documents included the Douglas County Historical Society, the Douglas County Superintendent's Office, the Omaha Public Library, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the University of Nebraska-Omaha Library Systems, and the professional library of the Millard Public Schools.

3. Local newspapers and photo copies of newspaper articles were reviewed and used in this study where appropriate. The newspapers included The Omaha World Herald, The Millard Times, Sun Newspapers, and the Ralston Recorder (Millard Edition).

4. The statutes of the State of Nebraska and Nebraska court system decisions having an impact on the Millard Public Schools were analyzed and reported when appropriate.

5. Local citizens and school personnel from the historical periods were interviewed when possible, and the interviews were recorded. Questions used for these interviews were based on the issues found in the written materials of the period. These interviews confined themselves to the general history of the

Millard Public Schools and the issues and problems encountered in the area of administration, curriculum, and instruction due to rapid growth.

6. Major United States congressional legislation, executive department policies, and court decisions were reviewed as germane to this study.

7. United States Census Reports and Millard Public Schools Census Reports were analyzed in order to report growth during the period under study.

### **Procedures**

After collecting and reviewing the data, a model was developed consisting of periods and of topics within each respective period. This model allowed for both a chronological and thematic approach to the history of the Millard Public Schools. The period divisions were based on major events that occurred. The thematic topics cluster around the issues relating to administrative, curricular, and instructional issues. General historical events such as school construction, change in significant personnel, and outstanding events not in the previously stated issues have been included. Significant national and state events and trends have been noted.

### **Organization of the Study**

Chapter I contains the purpose for conducting the study, terms frequently found in the historical data, the significance of the study, the parameters of the study, the sources of data, the procedures employed in the research, and how the findings have been organized.

Chapter II is structured to provide a discussion of the setting in which the history that is reported took place. This discussion includes a general review of the development of suburbs in the United States, thus establishing the



sociological setting at large. A history of Millard as a city until 1971, when it ceased to exist as a political unit, was also provided to explain the historical context of the local community. Subsequent history of the Millard area as city is part of the history of the City of Omaha and was included in the general discussion of local items of importance throughout the ensuing chapters.

Subsequent chapters were organized according to the time and thematic model developed during the study. Attention is given, at the start of the chapters to the sources available to research that specific time, so that the reader can better understand the scope and limitations of the chapters. The types and amount of documentation archived during each period indicates a great deal about the period and what was or was not valued, and thus available sources are a dimension of the history of each period. Each chapter includes a general chronology of the major world and national events. Significant people were also noted in the context of the times. Thus, Chapter III focuses on the years of 1946 to 1955, when Millard Public Schools served an approximately four square mile agricultural community and the surrounding, rural K-8 schools as a high school.

Chapter IV focuses on Millard Public School's role in being a school consolidation leader of its time and its early consolidation and suburban growth during the years of 1955 through 1960. This period includes the main geographic growth to the district's present size, and the building of Western Electric that was to change forever the school district. The junior-senior high school (Millard Central Middle School) was planned and built during this time.

Chapter V traces the growth of the Millard Public Schools from 1961 to 1970. This growth includes the building of six elementary schools and a new senior high school. Major consideration in this chapter was devoted to the early

development of a written curriculum beyond the use of text series, the development of Board policy, and impact of the need to construct seven buildings in ten years along with additions to existing school facilities.

The period of 1971-1978 was a time of extreme growth for the Millard school district as found in Chapter VI. Millard went from being the ninth largest school district in the state to being the third largest. Rapidly growing enrollments necessitated flexibility in how the school district was organized during this period. Issues such as busing in Omaha, curricular challenges, year-round school, and bond issues dominated this era.

The final ten years under study, from 1979 to 1989, are found in Chapter VII. The only superintendent, Dr. Don Stroh, that the school district had for over thirty years resigned at the end of this period. Dr. Stroh's last ten years were dominated by state and federal regulatory and fiscal issues. In addition, the economy caused the growth during this period to slow and then quicken. The improvement of instruction, development of curriculum, and the participation of citizens during this period helped to make the proactive changes needed during this time.

The summary chapter, Chapter VIII, reviews the research problem and procedures, reports significant findings, analyzes conclusions, and recommends areas for further study.

## CHAPTER II

### SUBURBAN AMERICA IN A LOCAL HISTORICAL CONTEXT

American historian Michael Kammen discussed the historical tendency to explain the present in terms of reflections of the past.<sup>1</sup> Thus, American history can be viewed as a mirror copy of the English past. Kammen proposed that the past be seen instead as an indirect influence on the present. Rather than calling this influence a reflection, Kammen referred to the optical term refraction "meaning to break the course of something, and turn it away from its direct line of continuity . . . ."<sup>2</sup>

To put into perspective a study of a suburban school district such as Millard Public Schools, two refracting agents must be understood. Thus, a consideration of the sociological aspects of suburbs in general and specifically the historical background of the Millard area must be studied.

#### **Sociological Aspects**

Choldin wrote of four historical periods of suburban development:

1. The walking and horsecar era, pre-1850 to the late 1880s
2. The electric streetcar and railroad era, late 1880s to 1920s

---

<sup>1</sup>Michael Kammen, People of Paradox (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), 6.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

3. The recreational automobile era, 1920 to 1945
4. The freeway era, 1945 to the present<sup>3</sup>

The time frame of this study is found in the Freeway Era and beyond since Choldin's book was published in 1985. The freeway era was characterized as a time of rapid construction due to a high demand for family housing in the United States following World War II. The construction itself was quite different from the past in that until this time, most homes had been built by small independent builders. During the freeway era, there was a shift to the reliance on a few large construction companies to meet the demands of a growing populace. Construction company officials looked to the periphery of the urban areas to discover the open spaces needed for large scale construction.

#### Early Studies

The first sociological studies of the freeway era named this period the "mass-produced suburb,"<sup>4</sup> due to the small number of construction companies that built the majority of the homes. Construction companies however, were not the only impetus for the large number of homes built during this time. The national government also had a significant impact through the construction of the interstate system and the large number of government loans made available to families wishing to purchase homes. The Interstate Highways Act was a result in the United States of the World War II experiences in Germany with the autoban. President Eisenhower saw direct benefits for such an interstate system. The interstate system not only aided in long distance travel, it also facilitated the construction of expressways to serve the major cities that the

---

<sup>3</sup>Harvey M. Choldin, Cities and Suburbs: An Introduction to Urban Sociology (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1985), 356.

<sup>4</sup>Choldin, 358.

system connected. These expressways thus created the transportation system that was needed to connect the automobile oriented society of post World War II with large urban areas that the expressways surrounded. At the same time, government policies for loans to veterans returning from the war through the Veterans Administration and loans guaranteed by the government for the general citizenry through the Federal Housing Authority gave preferential treatment to the buyers of new homes that were being built in suburban areas.

### Suburban Myth

Early sociological studies of the immediate post World War II period concerning the suburbs started what is known as the “suburban myth.” The suburban myth was perceived by early sociologists to be a part of an American cultural distrust for large urban areas and a need to return to what Choldin referred to as “morally and environmentally superior”<sup>5</sup> semi rural suburbs. One of the unusual facets of human nature is that an idea that is perceived to be true, whether in reality such an idea is really true or not, does not matter. If the perception exists, the idea is seen as true. The early academic studies and fictional writers of the late 1940s and early 1950s developed the idea of the suburb as a monolith of a certain lifestyle. This monolith soon dominated the American psyche.

The suburb was seen in this myth as a place of conformity. The term suburb came to be synonymous with homes of a similar style in the same setting. The owners of these homes made use of the expressway systems to commute to work in the city at jobs that were seen as being quite similar, often white collar management positions. Thus the suburb was thought to be

---

<sup>5</sup>Choldin, 357.

inhabited during the day by white middle class females whose civic-minded husbands returned at night to the resting place with the prescribed number of children and pets. Relatively few studies of suburbs were done during the initial stage of growth of the suburbs, but those studies that were conducted tended to support the myth. Juxtaposed against these studies was one study by Berger who indicated that the suburban myth was untrue. In Berger's study of autoworkers who had moved from one life style setting to another in a suburban setting, he found that the autoworkers did not take on the characteristics ascribed to the suburban area that surrounded the autoworkers. Instead, the autoworkers continued to maintain their "working class attitudes and style of life intact in the context of the bright new suburb."<sup>6</sup>

Even though Berger's study cast serious doubt on the suburban myth, the myth continues to dominate the American psyche. During the 1960s the suburban myth was generally rejected by sociologists as untrue, or a myth. In several replicated studies the authors indicated that the suburb was not unidimensional. Kramer stated that "on many demographic indices suburbia and cities are not radically distinct although, in aggregate, the suburbs are somewhat more affluent and considerably whiter."<sup>7</sup> The suburban myth of sameness was directly attacked "because individual suburban places possess dissimilar function, historical, political, and demographic attributes, they also possess dissimilar social environments."<sup>8</sup> A new view of the suburbs

---

<sup>6</sup>Bennett M. Berger, "The Myth of Suburbia," in North American Suburbs: Politics, Diversity, and Change, ed. John Kramer (Berkeley: The Glendale Press, 1972), 11.

<sup>7</sup>John Kramer, ed., North American Suburbs: Politics, Diversity, and Change (Berkeley: The Glendale Press, 1972), xiv.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., xv.

developed in which "suburbia is a dynamic setting, its social and institutional structure constantly becoming more complex and urban."<sup>9</sup>

### Present Suburban Studies

By the early 1980s, sociologists had come to realize that not only the suburbanization of residences had taken place, but also that of businesses. The expressways and the development of the trucking industry made suburbs more viable locations for industry. Before long, the corporate headquarters of companies followed the industries. As more and more workers were employed in the suburbs, there was no need to go to the city because shopping malls with easy parking were developed to meet the consumer demands of the residential population.<sup>10</sup>

Sociologists found suburbs to be along a continuum of development. This continuum starts with suburbs that serve as bedroom communities to nearby urban centers and evolves to separate communities that are highly self-contained with their own sources of employment, shopping, and entertainment. Many of the problems commonly associated with large urban centers are in varying degree found in suburban areas, including diverse socioeconomic status and racial and ethnic segregation. Although suburban problems of an urban nature have been extensively documented, Americans continued to believe as late as 1995, the suburban myth.<sup>11</sup>

Quite often, the degree of suburban development can be measured by its proximity to the nearby urban center. Closer areas tend to be more established

---

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., xix.

<sup>10</sup>Choldin, 390.

<sup>11</sup>Jerry Adler. "Bye-Bye, Suburban Dream." Newsweek. (May 15, 1995) : 40-53.

with residences, manufacturing, and shopping, while areas further away from the urban center tend to be more residential.

The suburban area occupied by the Millard Public Schools is a case study of much of the sociological research. The area was developed in the freeway era and was dependent on the interstate system for the growth of industry. Additionally, the suburban area encompassed by the Millard school district was a classic example of the suburban myth. As noted later in this study (Page 242), the culture that developed was not monolithic and exhibited a variety of social problems. Many of the residents lived and worked right in the suburban area. Local studies of socioeconomic status support the concept that the suburban area was more affluent (Page 248) and more monolithic in race (Pages 138-140); thus supporting Kramer's work that suburbs are slightly more affluent and significantly whiter. The history of the Millard Public Schools is a parallel study of the continuum of development that suburban areas follow.

## **Historical Background**

### **Early Years**

In the midst of the freeway era of suburban development was a small rural village called Millard. Millard was located in the outlying vicinity of Nebraska's largest urban center, Omaha. Millard dates back to spring of 1870 when Ezra Millard laid out the community of Millard. The town was not officially incorporated until September 26, 1885. During its early years, Millard was largely a rural community serving local farmers of German background.

Early in Millard's history, a railroad station on the Union Pacific line between Papillion and Elkhorn was built. Although this link was important to



farmers in the area in selling their crops, Millard remained a rural village twenty-one miles from Omaha by road and eleven "as the swallow flies."<sup>12</sup> The main industries included a local mill, elevators, and a brick yard. By 1913 the population of Millard had reached a population of 315. This population grew to 350 by the 1930s.

### First Schools

The first school in Millard was established in the fall of 1870 with six pupils. They met in various buildings of a local farmer. The first school building was constructed in 1876 at the cost of \$2,700.00. An early school board member was Samuel Cottner who ran a local grain elevator. A local street still bears his name. One early student spoke of attending the school in 1910, which consisted of grades one through ten, with the upper grades being taught by a male teacher who also served as principal.<sup>13</sup>

The 1876 building burned to the ground in 1930 and a new brick school was built on the same site, with a present street address being 13270 Millard Avenue in what was the center of the original town of Millard. This building remains today and is used as the Millard Learning Center. Prior to being named the Millard Learning Center, the building was used as an elementary school and was known as Central Elementary School. The land area of the school district consisted of approximately four square miles.<sup>14</sup>

---

<sup>12</sup>"Millard," Vertical File Collection, Omaha Public Library--Millard Branch, Omaha.

<sup>13</sup>Anna Munster, "Millard," 22 September 1978, Interview conducted in Omaha, Vertical File Collection, Omaha Public Library--Millard Branch, Omaha.

<sup>14</sup>Douglas County District 17, Millard Public Schools General History File, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

Until 1938 Millard students wanting a high school diploma usually completed their education at Omaha South High School. In 1938 Millard graduated its first senior class; prior to that time as a 1916 Graduation Program indicated, Millard Public Schools held double graduations for the eighth and tenth grade classes.<sup>15</sup>

### Post World War II

By 1947, Millard was still described as “a small rural village”<sup>16</sup> but a change was not far in the future. One of the major change agents was the building and operation of the the Western Electric plant on the north side of Millard. Thus, Millard annexed another 80 acres to its existing 80 acres, signaling the start of Millard’s suburban growth. Millard’s suburban growth in the post World War II period places Millard in the freeway era of suburban development. The Western Electric plant had access to both the interstate system serving Omaha and the railroad that had been established early in Millard’s history. Unlike the suburb of the suburban myth, Millard’s initial growth centered around a new business, and Millard did not initially serve as a bedroom community to a larger urban area.

### Millard as a City

Over time, shopping centers were built and business headquarters eventually located in Millard. By 1960, Millard had become a second class city.<sup>17</sup> The growth of Millard to a second class city indicated a doubling of Millard’s population, as such a city was defined as having a population of more

---

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Harold Cowan, “Millard’s Watchful Mayor,” Sunday World-Herald Magazine of the Midlands, 24 April 1966.

<sup>17</sup>Cowan, 24 April 1966.

than 800 and less than 5,000. A city of such a size was allowed to have a mayoral system instead of a board of trustees.<sup>18</sup>

In the mid-1960s, Millard became embroiled in a confrontation for its political existence. At that point, Omaha's westward growth reached Millard's eastern edge and Omaha pursued annexation of Millard. Millard, led by Mayor Harry Andersen, fought the annexation until 1971 when the United States Supreme court hearing was denied thus ending the City of Millard's existence as a political entity. Although Millard as a city no longer exists, it maintains a sense of community. This sense of community is seen in many of the business names in the area and the civic pride taken in such activities as Millard Days, a local summer celebration. One of the largest items of civic pride left behind is the public school district. The Millard Public Schools existed as a separate political unit from the city and thus the school district continues to exist as a suburban political entity.

### Summary

The community of Millard in which the Millard Public Schools developed is an example of a freeway era suburb. Good access to transportation in the form of railroads and the interstate system assisted in the rapid development of the area. The initial change agent for the community was the location of the Omaha works by Western Electric in the rural Millard community. This new industry started the initial population growth that has been a source of transformation for the Millard Public Schools since the late 1950s.

---

<sup>18</sup>Judy A. Meyer, ed., Nebraska Blue Book 1992-93 (Springfield, Illinois: Phillips Brothers Co., 1993), 809-810.

## CHAPTER III

### THE PRE-CONSOLIDATION AND PLANNING YEARS: 1946-1955

#### **The Setting**

The late 1940s and the first half of the 1950s were watershed years for both the United States and the world. World War II had changed the political landscape of the world. The horrors of World War II were over and the soldiers were coming back home. The United States attempted to return to normalcy, but the nation was forever changed along with the world.

#### The World and the United States

The year 1946 saw the inception of both the United Nations and the start of a new war, as alluded to by Winston Churchill in his Iron Curtain speech in Fulton, Missouri. The once allies of World War II were quickly heading towards a new war, commonly referred to as the cold war. The colonies of once strong European nations such as France and Great Britain were seeking independence. The leading countries of the world continued to test nuclear potentials as countries other than the United States developed atomic power. New alliances were being made such as NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) and new countries such as Israel were being formed out of old countries.<sup>1</sup>

By the early 1950s, the problems of the world had infiltrated the United

---

<sup>1</sup>Tim Wood and R.J. Unstead, The 1940s (New York: Franklin Watts, 1990) 46-47.

States. Communists such as Alger Hiss were identified or at least alleged to be by such men as Senator Joe McCarthy. More American soldiers marched to defend the free world from communism in such exotic places as Korea. The United States developed the H-bomb. Leadership at the national level was dominated by war time leaders such as President Truman and later Dwight D. Eisenhower, a World War II military leader.<sup>2</sup>

National educational issues of the time centered around the growth of the number of students due to the post war marriages and increased number of young who began arriving in the schools in the early 1950s. Two events that would forever change American education and most certainly affect the suburbs occurred in 1950s. First, President Eisenhower successfully engineered the creation of the cabinet Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. Second, in 1954, the Supreme Court ruled that public schools segregated by race were unequal and thus unconstitutional. The long standing precedent of the separate but equal doctrine established in in 1896 with Plessy versus Ferguson was reversed in Brown versus Board of Education of Topeka. Thus began in the United States what is often referred to as the second reconstruction.

### Nebraska

At the state level, Nebraska's economy continued to prosper as it had during World War II. Legislation such as the Pick-Sloan Missouri Basin Project ushered in the development of flood control that continues to this day in the Millard Public Schools area with the the Papio Natural Resources District. In addition, the family farm started to change as farm acreage grew in size and

---

<sup>2</sup>Richard Tames, The 1950s (New York: Franklin Watts, 1990) 46-47.

more people moved to larger communities to secure employment.<sup>3</sup>

The growth in the more urban areas of the state and the size of farms was reflected in the declining number of school districts. During the 1946-47 school year in Nebraska, there were 6,923 school districts with 7,136 school houses while by the 1954-55 school year there were 5,631 districts and 5,836 school houses. During this same time, the number of teachers grew from 11,902 to 12,692. Thus from 1946 to 1955 a net growth of 790 teachers and a net decrease of 1292 school districts occurred.<sup>4</sup>

#### Research Sources

Sources of information to write the history of Millard Public Schools during this time were very limited. Written sources included hand-written board minutes which were kept by the Board and yearly reports filed with the Douglas County Superintendent's office. The latter were also recorded in the Board's official minutes. In addition, some documentation was found in the generic history file maintained by the district. Finally, a personal interview with Wilma Upchurch, a teacher who taught in the district from 1947 to 1977, was conducted. In addition, comments from a personal interview with Dr. Don Stroh, who became the superintendent in 1955 were used when possible.

#### Governance and Administration

From 1946 to 1955 Millard Public Schools was governed by a six member board of education. The members of the Board were elected in a

---

<sup>3</sup>Angela J. Strong, ed., Nebraska Blue Book 1994-95 (Lincoln, Nebraska: Joe Christensen, Inc., 1994), 74.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 918-919.

caucus form of election. The latter took place at a community meeting where nominations were taken from the floor and the actual ballots were cast and tallied immediately. The officers of the Board consisted of the moderator, the treasurer, and the director. The moderator was the presiding officer who conducted the meetings. The treasurer was a bonded officer who received and disbursed the monies of the school district. This officer also kept the official books of the school district that were subject to yearly audits. The director served as a clerk of the board of education and was often referred to as such in the minutes of the Millard Board of Education. In addition to the secretarial duties, the director prepared the school district's census, developed the proposed budget, and posted notices of the annual school meeting.<sup>5</sup> The three officer positions were paid a salary set each year at the annual school board meeting. The salaries for these officers in 1947 were \$25.00 for the moderator, \$75.00 for the director, and \$75.00 for the treasurer.<sup>6</sup>

The annual school board meeting was generally held in June of each year. This meeting could be attended by all voting members of the school district, and for this meeting all could vote in the actions taken. At this meeting the yearly budget and tax rate were set. In addition, an annual report was prepared for the Douglas County Superintendent which included such pertinent information as the annual meeting minutes, the director's and treasurer's reports of the the previous year, the election of officers, the salary of the officers, the length of the school year, the proposed budget, and any old or new

---

<sup>5</sup>New Uniform System of Accounting for School Districts: Director's Record Property of Douglas Country, Nebraska (Lincoln, Nebraska: Lincoln School Supply Company, 1923), inside cover pages.

<sup>6</sup>Millard Public Schools Annual Meeting Minutes (Douglas County District 17), June 9, 1947, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

business. This practice of an annual meeting was required of all Class II school districts at the time. No bond issues were required in such a process as the whole community could vote on the budget at the annual meeting.<sup>7</sup> In the Millard Public Schools during this time, the annual meeting had taken on its own customs. Usually the annual meeting was held after a Lions Club meeting at the local Lutheran church. Immediately following the meeting, the men would cross the street to the school building and hold the annual meeting.<sup>8</sup> No participation on the part of women during 1946-1955 can be found in the official records.

The general operating officer of the school was the superintendent who also served as a part-time teacher and was often a coach. During the pre-consolidation and planning years, Millard Public Schools had three superintendents. They were R. W. Stickney (1942-1946), Ray Jenkins (1946-December, 1953), and Richard Riggs Todd (January, 1954-1955).<sup>9</sup> The salary for the superintendent's position for Mr. Todd during his term of office was \$5,000.00 a year.<sup>10</sup> Because the latter could not start his new position until he was released from his contract, the Board allowed the extra expenditure of \$32.50 to hold the house used by the superintendent.<sup>11</sup>

Actions taken and noted by the Board during this time ranged from the mundane to important planning for school district building projects and possible

---

<sup>7</sup>Dr. Don Stroh, interview by author, Tape recording, Omaha, Nebraska, 28 October 1995.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), December 20, 1953, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska. (Mr. Jenkins had been making \$6,000.00 a year at the time when Mr. Todd was hired for \$5,000.00.)

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., February 2, 1954.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., February 2, 1954.



school consolidation. Board meetings in December during this period always included the assigning of who would buy the Christmas treats to be distributed and who would play Santa Claus. Each May or late April would see the inclusion of a list of assignments for the items necessary for the annual school picnic, while May or June would see a reference to the use of the school facilities for Bible School. Few policy decisions are noted during this time in the minutes beyond the establishment of elementary tuition for non-residents and the regular monthly meeting times. More policies may have existed but the Board minutes of this time are very brief and little supporting documentation exists as is illustrated by the following:

2-2-54

Regular meeting of Board of Education called by Chrm Holling at 7:50 P.M. All board members were present as was Supt Todd.

School Dist 54 paid rent on gymnasium of \$30.00.

Tuition to collect for remainder of year Art Drusen \$68.05

H Bouermeister 1.55. All tuitions will be paid up to end of 1953-54 year.

Motion by C Schroeder second by Metzler bills as read by Supt Todd be allowed.

On motion by Metzler second by G Nelson that H Gosch be allowed 32.50 rent for holding Supt' house. Motion carried.

G Nelson, C Schroeder, R S Metzler appointed to audit committee to do the audit after June 1.

Supt Todd to write Decker on ruling of tuition of Laurence Albino whether his tuition be free or charged to him.

H Backhaus made a motion to adjourn. Motion carried.

Harold Hultman<sup>12</sup>

Meetings were changed from the first Thursday of the month to the first Monday of the month in 1953.<sup>13</sup> In a report issued from the State Department of Public

---

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., February 2, 1954. (Minutes presented as written. Actual minutes are hand written by the secretary in school district minutes record book provided by the Douglas County Superintendent's Office.)

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., September 3, 1953.

Instruction in 1954, reference was made to the Board's plans to develop a set of school board policies.

The period of 1946-1955 should not be viewed as a period of little progress because major plans were being laid for future change. References to county and state meetings on consolidation are found throughout the recorded minutes of this period. At the annual meeting of 1949, other business included "school redistricting bills of legislature discussed."<sup>14</sup> In 1953 at the annual meeting, a major decision was made to purchase land in the northeast part of the community for future building purposes.<sup>15</sup> This purchase was to be financed by \$1,000.00 generated in a building fund levy for three years and that the other \$2,000.00 be paid for with \$2,000.00 in United States Treasury bonds that the district held. Ultimately, the Sven Overguard property was purchased for \$5,000.00 with \$2,000.00 down and \$1,000.00 per year interest free for the next three years.<sup>16</sup> A letter from the State Department of Public Instruction that was discussed at a special meeting in May of 1954 suggested that Millard Public Schools employ a consultative service to survey the town regarding school redistricting and the consequences for businesses in the area.<sup>17</sup>

During the ensuing months, the land that had been purchased was graded. In addition, Merle A. Stoneman of the University of Nebraska was retained for \$30.00 to conduct a school survey.<sup>18</sup> Within a few months the

---

<sup>14</sup>Millard Public Schools Board Minutes of the Annual School Meeting (Douglas County District 17), June 13, 1949, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., June 11, 1951.

<sup>16</sup> Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), July 22, 1951, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., May 21, 1954.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., November 1, 1954.

survey was ready and conducted. The Board also decided to interview three architects when it accepted the results of the survey and Leo Dworak was retained as the school district's architect.<sup>19</sup> Two other important items of concern that developed during this period were (a) the large number of trailer homes placed in the district that housed children but generated low tax funds and (b) the conditions of streets around the schools. The foregoing issues were a foreshadowing of events to come. The 1954-1955 school year ended with the hiring of a superintendent, Don Stroh. In addition, Herman Backhaus, a school board member, was thanked for his work over the past year as the State School Board Association President.<sup>20</sup>

### **Rural Growth**

At the June 11, 1945, Annual School District Meeting for the District 17 of Douglas County, the tax levy was set at 20 mills to raise \$12,000.00 in taxes for nine months of school during the 1945-46 school year.<sup>21</sup> The mill levy rate for the 1954-55 school year was 25.14 mills and the anticipated revenue was \$32,000.00. The year end fiscal reports for 1945-46 indicated a census population of 103 students.<sup>22</sup> By the 1954-55 school year, the census had risen to 124 students.<sup>23</sup> The census figure can be misleading, however, as Millard

---

<sup>19</sup>Ibid., March 7, 1955.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., May 2, 1955.

<sup>21</sup>Millard Public Schools Board Minutes of the Annual School Meeting (Douglas County District 17), June 11, 1945, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

<sup>22</sup>Census population refers to all students within the school district between the ages of five and twenty-one.

<sup>23</sup>Millard Public Schools Board Minutes of the Annual School Meeting (Douglas County District 17), June 14, 1954, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

Public Schools accepted both parent-paid-tuition elementary students and high school students from surrounding rural districts which provided for the tuition of these students through the County Superintendent's office.<sup>24</sup> For example, during the 1954-55 school year there were seventy-five elementary students of which six paid tuition and fifty-six high school students of which thirty-three generated revenue through tuition.<sup>25</sup> These tuition paying students are an example of the fact that Millard Public Schools was serving a much larger area and population than defined by tax base over which the school district held revenue generating powers. The importance of the tuition students of this period was denoted in the funds they generated which was \$10,302.37 of the total receipts of \$41,886.01, or nearly 25% of the funds for the 1954-55 school year.<sup>26</sup>

### **Curriculum and Instruction**

Expenses for teachers' salaries from 1946 to 1955 had risen by approximately 80% from \$14,692.89 to \$26,478.08. Salaries for the teachers were reported by elementary and secondary grade levels and by the gender of the teachers at each level. The salaries at this time were recommended yearly in letters from the Douglas County Superintendent. The recommended salary scales were differentiated by the location of the school; rural, village, or suburban (Millard Public Schools was classified as village); number of

---

<sup>24</sup>Dr. Don Stroh, interview by author, Tape recording, Omaha, Nebraska, 28 October 1995.

<sup>25</sup>Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), September 9, 1954, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

<sup>26</sup>Millard Public Schools Board Minutes of the Annual School Meeting (Douglas County District 17), June 11, 1945, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

teachers, and level of education. The latter referred to having a college degree or not. In addition, allowances were made for coaches to be paid extra. Female and elementary teachers tended to earn less. Teachers could individually negotiate their salary with the Board. The first benefits noted were the three days of cumulative sick leave.<sup>27</sup>

Several instances can also be found during this time in which the Board chose not to renew a teacher's contract in the spring. Some teachers did not complete the duration of their contract such as the new English and music teacher, Miss Barbara Provaznik, who was asked "to resign or that she surrender her contract."<sup>28</sup> Miss Provaznik promptly did both, but in her letter told the Board in regards to their children to teach them to be "less materialistic."<sup>29</sup>

Throughout the period, 1946-55, the staff remained constant at seven members. Three elementary teachers were assigned to rooms for K-2, 3-5, and 6-8. The secondary staff consisted of three full-time teachers and the superintendent who also taught a few classes. Most of the teachers hired during the period reflect that English, business/commercial, math, science, and social studies were the main courses offered at the secondary level.

References to the curriculum of the time indicate that at the secondary level, shop equipment was purchased for the 1950-51 school year.<sup>30</sup> The Board minutes of the time indicated little more than a dollar amount spent on the equipment. Later that year, Superintendent Jenkins reported that the technical

---

<sup>27</sup>Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17),, January 31, 1955, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., November 8, 1951.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid.

<sup>30</sup>Ibid., August 31, 1950.

training was “going well.”<sup>31</sup> The industrial arts program at the time Don Stroh came to be superintendent of Millard Public Schools, in 1955, consisted of students having a “real work study program.”<sup>32</sup> This program allowed male students to obtain real life training by working at Millard Heating and Manufacturing. Some of the former students still work for this company.

Commercial training was also very important as new typewriters were purchased each summer for the business classes. What music that was taught was provided by teachers who had the added talent of piano playing, although the hiring of a certificated music teacher was discussed in 1953.

Letters from the State Department of Public Instruction in 1953 and 1954 indicated problems that the Board needed to consider rectifying. These problems included the need to reduce the large number of students in the K-2 room (30 students), to lower blackboards in the elementary classrooms, to add courses on homemaking for girls, to acquire better maps for the elementary classrooms, to purchase a sixteen-inch globe for the secondary classrooms, to place a Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature in the library, to drop American Government for Modern Problems, to shorten bookkeeping to one semester, to add general business, and for the superintendent (Richard Todd) to secure a Provisional and Supervisory Certificate for Class II Schools. Millard was regarded as a leader in some ways as the elementary curriculum was unique in

---

<sup>31</sup>Ibid., February 1, 1951.

<sup>32</sup>Dr. Don Stroh, interview by author, Tape recording, Omaha, Nebraska, 28 October 1995.

that it included a kindergarten program. This program included reading, which was unusual for the time.<sup>33</sup>

Extra curricular activities noted in Board minutes included baseball, basketball, and football. The care of the athletic fields and lighting was also often mentioned in Board minutes. The main activity for girls was the Pep Club. Since the district did not provide transportation to school or to school activities at the time, Board members discussed a car problem in transporting the Pep Club.<sup>34</sup> The Board took very seriously its role in setting the moral tone of the community when it decided no longer to allow the use of the school auditorium for dances. "From the information we can gather we are led to believe that the Rural County Teenage Dances are out of hand and we do not care to entertain this project further."<sup>35</sup>

### Summary

Millard Public Schools may have appeared to be a small, rural school district serving a small village and a small agricultural area. In reality, it reflected the growing population trend as reflected in the growing census and overcrowding in the classroom for the lower grades. The consolidation that was taking place at the state level was being discussed in the districts surrounding Millard Public Schools as seen in its community survey, purchase of land, and the hiring of an architect. The need for a consolidated school district was evident in the growing numbers of tuition high school students. School growth

---

<sup>33</sup>Wilma Upchurch, interview by author, Tape recording, Omaha, Nebraska, 29 September 1995.

<sup>34</sup>Millard Public Schools Board Minutes (Douglas County District 17), January 5, 1950, Don Stroh Administration Center, Omaha, Nebraska.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid., March 6, 1950.

was evident in the Board's desire to develop a set of school policies and the serious attention given to letters from the State Department of Public Instruction. The Millard Board of Education's participation in growth and consolidation issues left the Board poised to be an active leader in the changes to come.