were making the little district schoolhouse less and less important as a community center. To meet this enlarged community relationship, the county schools began holding music festivals, pageants, and gatherings. The historical pageants of 1939 and of 1948, as well as the successful music festivals held throughout the county, are examples of the extra curricular activities carried on by rural teachers and pupils.

The problem of providing warm noon lunches for pupils attending the one-room rural school has been attacked several times. It has long been recognized that cold, and often-times frozen noon lunches, were detrimental to the good health of children. Longer school terms, more intensive courses of study, and higher standards of living have resulted in movements to provide nutritional noon meals for rural children. The first concerted action towards this goal was begun just prior to the 1920’s. Many school districts purchased oil stoves on which warm lunches could be prepared or on which pint jars of food prepared by the mothers at home in the morning could be heated before noon. This movement died down about 1930, but was again revived in 1945 when the federal government contributed food and money for carrying on a recognized and acceptable school lunch program.

Manitowoc county has made a few attempts to organize P. T. A. organizations but on the whole the movement has failed. The finest examples of successful parent-teachers’ organizations are in Centerville district No. 4 and in Two Rivers city. In the cities, kindergarten clubs and parent organizations function in connection with the schools.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF GRADED AND HIGH SCHOOLS

The teaching of the 3 R’s provided the pioneer children with a sufficient knowledge to cope with the problems of pioneer life. The first general law relating to the organization of high schools was passed by the legislature in 1853. This act authorized any two or more adjoining districts, by a two-thirds vote in each district, to unite to form a union free high school district. It was not until 1875 that the legislature provided for the organization of high schools in any town, incorporated village, or city, or school district whenever a majority of the voters so favored such establishment.

Up until 1905, no attendance limits were set by law for one-room rural schools. Consequently, we heard some of the old-timers speak of the time when they went to schools enrolling as high as 125 children ranging in age from 6 to 21 years. Records indicate that “large” school enrollments were common in one-room rural schools throughout our county. A total of 63 districts enrolled from 50 to 100 pupils each as late as 1905. In 1905, the legislature passed a law requiring districts enrolling more than 65 pupils during any one year to provide an additional room and teacher or forfeit its share of the 7 mill tax then in effect. This law created the so-called “graded” schools in our county. Twenty county school districts at one time or other maintained a graded school. By 1948, there were only ten districts maintaining graded school systems including those in Manitowoc, Two Rivers, and Kiel. Many of the former graded schools which reverted back to one-room schools now have a building which could serve as convenient center schools for surrounding districts.

Some of the graded schools did not revert back to one-room schools but continued to grow and develop into first class state graded schools maintaining one or more years of a high school course. Those at Manitowoc, Two Rivers, Kiel, Valders, Reeds-ville, and Mishicot eventually developed into full four year high schools. Ninth and tenth grades were put into the course of study at Two Creeks No. 2 in 1913 and at Kossuth No. 4 in 1923. Both of these high schools were discontinued in the spring of 1948 upon recommendation of the State Department of Public Instruction. The reason given for such discontinuance was that the small high could not offer courses necessary for rural youth of today.

Manitowoc county by 1948 had six high school districts offering a full four year high school course. The districts were Manitowoc, Two Rivers, Cato Jt. 3 (Valders), Reedsville, Kiel, and Mishicot. Eighth grade graduates were also attending high schools outside the boundaries of the county. Community centers were also the high school centers for the youth of that area. County eighth grade graduates were attending their community high schools at Brillion, Chilton, Denmark, and Sheboygan.

The first county high school, a union free high school, was organized at Two Rivers in 1877. The course at first was a three year one and continued so until 1893 when a full four year course was introduced. The Manitowoc schools set up north and southside high schools of the district type as designated under the laws of 1875. Separate high schools were maintained until the districts in the city were consolidated in 1910. Then the Third Ward School (the present Adams School) became the central high school for the city and served in that capacity until the 1920’s when Lincoln High
was built. A system of junior high schools was inaugurated in Two Rivers in 1915 and in Manitowoc during the early 1930's. In Two Rivers the junior high school is maintained in the same building as is the senior high school, but in Manitowoc two fine junior high schools have been erected—one on each side of the river.

The county high schools, so-called, began as graded schools. Reedsville began as a graded school in 1891 and organized a four year high school course in 1916. Valders began as a graded school in 1910 and instituted the full four year high school course in 1923. Mishicot organized as a two-department school in 1881 and by 1921 had introduced complete high school departments. Kiel began with a two-room graded school in 1873 and by the 1890's had become a recognized high school.

High school attendance until about the 1920's was limited to some of the more ambitious eighth grade graduates who wished to enter business or the professions. Most of the first high school graduates entered the teaching profession from which the men especially "graduated" to the professions of medicine, law, etc. The first high school courses were primarily set up to meet college entrance requirements and to "prepare" young men and women to pass the "teachers' examinations". The course consisted then of a review of the common branches, algebra, geometry, physiology, physical geography, Latin, and German.

After 1915, organized labor began fighting the employment of children under 18 years of age in factories. Their fight brought about compulsory attendance laws which required urban children to attend some school until the age of eighteen. High school attendance became an accepted policy for the youth living in the cities. In the rural areas, the acceptance of high school work for rural eighth grade graduates developed more slowly but had become a common policy among rural youth by 1948. About 90% of the county area was outside of a high school district so the towns of the county paid tuition for the township pupils attending nearby high schools. The problem of placing all of the rural area in Manitowoc county within a recognized high school district was being attacked by the County School Committee set up by legislative act in 1947.

Compulsory attendance laws in urban areas for youth up to 18 years of age brought on a demand for vocational schools. These schools were set up primarily for eighth grade graduates who did not wish to attend high school but who wished to learn a trade. Today vocational schools are for adults who wish to receive further help and training in their particular trade. The high schools have added courses in agriculture, shop, and domestic science for the high school youth interested in vocational courses.

The legislature in 1921 passed legislation which required any person over fourteen and less than eighteen years of age, and who was an eighth grade graduate, and living in a city or village to attend some public, private, or parochial school at least eight hours per week for at least eight months each year, or to attend a vocational school if he or she was not attending a high school. Since that act, the legislature has passed many measures furthering the idea of high school education for all children of school age.

MOVEMENTS TO EQUALIZE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

When districts were first organized, most of them had about the same valuation because all were forest covered. As the forests were removed, some districts became more prosperous than others because of soil conditions, surface conditions, water power sites, and the establishment of businesses in certain strategic locations. Variations in the sizes and the valuations of Manitowoc county rural school districts increased as the years went by. The continued development of prosperous farms and of progressive villages soon made some school districts extremely rich as to assessed valuations. Other districts, less fortunate because of soil conditions or geographic locations, kept about the same valuations as they had in 1900, or due to the decline of rural industries even lost in assessed valuations. By 1948, rural school districts in the county ranged from a low of $167,000 to a high of $962,000. The tax rate ranged from no dollars per thousand in four county districts to a high of $13.36 per thousand dollars of assessed valuation for operating a one-room rural school. The per pupil cost of educating children in Manitowoc county's one-room rural schools ranged from a low of $65 per child to a high of $902 in one district.

The state and county have given varying aids to promote better educational opportunities. In 1885, the legislature saw fit to provide a state tax of one mill on each dollar of the assessed valuation of the taxable property of the state for school purposes. This was known as the "Mill Tax Law". In 1903, this rate was to seven-tenths of one mill and stayed in effect until 1927 when the Callahan Equalization Law was passed by the state legislature.