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By

PHILIP REED RULON

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THE FOUNDING OF THE OKLAHOMA AGRICULTURAL AND
MECHANICAL COLLEGE, 1890-1908

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PREFACE

This thesis is an examination of the founding and historical development of certain selected aspects of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College from 1890 to 1908. The maturation of the institution --which is now one of the leading land-grant universities in the United States--has long been of concern. This interest has resulted through the years in the collection of an extensive number of documents and memoirs, both published and unpublished, and the steady production of short articles and specialized studies for the consumption of the general public. To date, however, the task of organizing known information and integrating it with new data has not been undertaken. It is hoped that the following narrative will accomplish this objective for the specified time period and provide a formula by which the remainder of the history may be compiled at some future date.

The particular time span of the project was chosen for several reasons. First, since the college was established in 1890, in spite of the fact that classes were not convened for nearly a year afterward, it seemed logical to record the political activity that led to the actual creation of the institution. In addition, the selection of the first board of regents, president, and faculty, as well as the almost futile effort to locate qualified students, also occurred in the time that elapsed between the chartering of the college and the beginning of classroom work. Secondly, it will be immediately obvious to students of local history that these eighteen years nearly correspond to the time Oklahoma

served in a territorial status. From 1890 to 1908, the legislative assemblies and high appointive officials retained essentially the same type of regulatory and administrative structure for the operation of the college. Once, however, statehood became a reality, the predominant political party, which claimed it had in the past been denied a proportionate share of the patronage, appointed members of the Oklahoma Board of Agriculture as regents. This act resulted in a significant narrowing of the goals of the institution. By using these dates, then, the writer was able to trace the initial effort to create a college patterned after the educational concepts of Justin Morrill. Lastly, the author thought it advisable to carry the history of the college through the term of Angelo Cyrus Scott, the president who was able to hold his position long enough for the institution to become firmly established in Stillwater.

The critical inspection and analysis of the development of a regional land-grant college or university transcends the scope of local interest. The symbolic passage of the First Morrill Act of 1862, coupled with the implementation of many of the ideas gleaned from the tongues and pens of land-grant reformers, greatly assisted in the modernization of higher education in the United States. At the very least, the success of these institutions proved to some skeptics that more than one road could lead to an adequate education and could prepare a productive class of people, thereby heralding the validity of a pluralistic educational philosophy. In this context, the development of educational practice and thought on individual agricultural and mechanical college campuses merits the attention of both regional and national historical scholars.

The land-grant colleges and universities established under the auspices of the Morrill Act of 1862 and the Second Morrill Act of 1890 were primarily service organizations geared to certain needs of the American people and therefore constituted a considerable departure from the classical orientation of European and early American institutions. This designation meant that agricultural and mechanical colleges were by and large without a historical precedent; thus they had to pioneer their own educational philosophy. In the case of Oklahoma State University a three-fold mission was eventually adopted which included transmitting, developing, and extending knowledge to the general public and the government of the United States.

The purpose of this study is to present a detailed narrative of the evolution of the agricultural and mechanical college during the period of time when the present state of Oklahoma was in territorial status, and to ascertain the relationship between the institutional organism and its ecological environment. Particular attention has been focused on the educational practice and thought of the college presidents, the faculties, and the students, but the project has not been limited to them. The emphasis on these individuals reflects the writer's belief that they were the ones who had to interpret and implement the land-grant and related national and state legislation on a day-to-day basis. Thus they faced the problems that had to be overcome if the local agricultural and mechanical college was to survive and contribute to the success of the national experiment.

The author gratefully acknowledges the assistance and encouragement received from many persons: Dr. Berlin Chapman, who during his academic lifetime gathered the present collection of college and university

historical documents, for many hints concerning source materials and constant encouragement; Dr. Angie Debo for wise counsel and the gift of many personal documents pertaining to the early faculty and students; Mr. Robert Cunningham for passing along valuable insights that he has gained from his close association with the university for over a thirty year period; Dr. Tom Sexton and Dr. Dan Hobbs of the office of the State Regents for Higher Education, who took time from their busy schedules to offer timely guidance and counsel to the writer on several unannounced visits; Dr. Joe Hurt and Mr. M. C. Collum of the State Board of Education for assistance in locating pertinent documents and sharing their extensive knowledge of the development of higher education in Oklahoma; Dr. Kenneth Browne of the Maryland State Board of Education for guidance during the early days of the study; Mr. James Ballinger, and his able secretary, Miss Clara Behnke, for assistance in locating several vital public and private document collections; Mrs. Louise Cook of the Oklahoma Historical Society for her patience and assistance in locating, furnishing, and purchasing various microfilm reproductions of territorial newspapers; Mr. Eugene Decker of the Kansas State Historical Society for additional assistance in the same area; Messrs. Ralph Hudson and Claude Hartzell of the State Library of Oklahoma, and their respective office staffs, for assistance in locating documents and microfilm related to the early history of Oklahoma and the college; Mrs. Cecil Howland, Mr. Guy Logsdon, and Mr. Richard King of the Oklahoma State University Library for their encouragement and assistance and for purchase of microfilm from the National Archives; the employees of the first, second, and fourth floors of the Oklahoma State University Library for their assistance in locating certain materials; Mrs. Charles Penfold

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Many of our American colonial forefathers, especially those of the English and Scottish variety, brought with them on their journey to the New World the concept that higher education was a necessary ingredient for establishing an enlightened and productive society. While men in the early seventeenth century did not often trouble to record their motivations, except in the areas of theology and church government, they did occasionally leave a few fragments of thought to which interpreters can give meaning. The chronicler of New England's First Fruits declared in 1643 that after Massachusetts Bay Puritans had provided for the basic necessities of life, "One of the next things we longed for, and looked after was to advance Learning and perpetuate it to Posterity...."¹ In the case of Harvard College, the first operational institution of higher learning, it was summarized in 1721, "that the great end for which the College was founded, was a Learned, and a pious Education of Youth, their instruction on Languages, Arts, and Sciences, and having their minds and manners form'd aright."² The majority of the other eight pre-Revolutionary colleges were founded with similar purposes in mind.³

¹Quoted from Samuel Eliot Morison, The Founding of Harvard College (Cambridge, 1935), p. 432.

²Quoted from Samuel Eliot Morison, Three Centuries of Harvard (Cambridge, 1936), pp. 22-23.

³A list of the nine colonial colleges and a brief history of their state and religious affiliations is contained in Edwin Grant Dexter,

The frontier conditions under which the colleges of the colonial era struggled caused them to be significantly different from their European predecessors.⁴ Among the most noteworthy changes were: (1) the executives of the colonial institutions were not called by the traditional European titles of rector or chancellor,⁵ but instead were called presidents, a position placing them somewhere among the board of overseers, the faculty, and the later state legislatures;⁶ the American colleges assumed a much greater responsibility in providing for the moral training of the youth committed to their care than did their ancestral institutional models;⁷ (3) and finally, the colonial colleges were constructed as regional and denominational educational centers as contrasted to the national European establishments.⁸ In regard to the latter difference, it is therefore not surprising to note

A History of Education in the United States (New York, 1911), pp. 223-265.

⁴ Frederick Rudolph, The American College and University: A History (New York, 1965), p. 19-20. The heritage of the American colleges from the oldest universities may be found in Charles Homer Haskins, The Rise of the Universities (Ithaca, New York, 1923), pp. 21-25. Also, see Richard McCormick, Rutgers: A Bicentennial History (New Brunswick, 1966), pp. 5-12.

⁵ Hastings Rashdall, The Universities of Europe in the Middle Ages (London, 1936), pp. 327-334.

⁶ Lynn W. Turner: An Address entitled "Half-Way to Parnassus," Delivered before the International Phi Alpha Theta Convention held in New York City on January 30, 1966, pp. 5-7.

⁷ Bernard Bailyn, Education and the Forming of American Society (Chapel Hill, 1960), pp. 39-41.

⁸ Allan Nevins, The Origins of the Land-Grant Colleges and State Universities: A Brief Account of the Morrill Act of 1862 and Its Results (Washington, 1962), p. 23.

that after American political independence was achieved from Great Britain, the number of regional and denominational institutions grew rapidly. By 1869, for example, there were over 560 colleges and universities in the United States.⁹ This number probably exceeded the sum total of higher educational institutions in England and Europe.

The colonial institutions of higher learning and the numerous state and sectarian colleges that developed later were neither popular nor democratic.¹⁰ For the most part they were shaped to transplant, as best they could, "the curricular concepts which had long prevailed in the English Universities."¹¹ It is true that some of these colleges proclaimed an open admissions policy, but the type of entrance examination given to incoming students often prevented the product of a common school from gaining a seat where he could learn from one of the masters of the day.¹² On the other hand, if such a student did gain admittance, he frequently found the curriculum was so designed that it was of little value in preparing for a practical vocation. It remained for a hithertofore undistinguished New Englander, Justin Smith Morrill, to sponsor legislation that opened the door of colleges and universities to the masses.

⁹ Hugh S. Brown and Lewis B. Mayhew, American Higher Education (New York, 1955), p. 12.

¹⁰ Rudolph, p. 18.

¹¹ Frederick Rudolph, Mark Hopkins and the Log (New Haven, 1956), p. 42.

¹² John S. Brubacher and Willis Rudy, Higher Education in Transition: An American History (New York, 1958), p. 12.

The Land-Grant Act of 1862

The land-grant colleges and universities of the United States are the result of a partnership of the states and the federal government.¹³ As early as 1785, the Continental Congress passed legislation that later served as a pattern for the representative from Vermont. It sought in that year to encourage the development of public education by reserving "one section of land in each surveyed township of the public domain for the use of common schools."¹⁴ Two years later, the same Congress granted land to the Ohio Company for the endowment of a "literary institution."¹⁵ Subsequent states fashioned from the Old Northwest Territory received similar grants. These generous donations not only assisted in the financial maturation of public education, but they also reminded writers of state constitutions that adequate provision needed to be made for higher education.

In 1857 Morrill, who was serving his second term in the United States House of Representatives, drafted a bill which urged his colleagues to use again the rich land resources of the federal government for the cause of American education. This time, however, the grants were to be for the construction of agricultural and mechanical colleges in each of the nation's states. A close friend summarized Morrill's arguments in the following words:

His argument was based upon the broadest grounds of public policy, maintaining that the public land, being a common

¹³ Land-Grant Colleges and Universities: What They Are and the Relations of the Federal Government to Them (Washington, 1951), p. ii.

¹⁴ Vernon Carstensen, "A Century of the Land-Grant Colleges," The Journal of Higher Education, XXXIII (1962), p. 30.

¹⁵ Ibid.

fund for the benefit of all parts of the country, should be so utilized as to promote the welfare of all sections in due proportion; that the Congress had used a portion of the first public lands that came under its control in the Northwest Territory for the promotion of primary and university education, and had repeated similar legislation in favor of every state afterward admitted to the Union; that this policy was too well established to admit of opposition on constitutional grounds, and that no legislation could more directly advance the interests of the great masses of the people by providing means for bringing the new discoveries of science to the aid of agriculture and the other industries of life.¹⁶

The initial land-grant proposal was reported on unfavorably by the House committee considering it; however, the Vermonter's persuasive speeches caused it to be passed anyway. The Senate added its approval on February 1, 1859. President James Buchanan pondered the measure, but chose to veto it on constitutional and financial grounds.¹⁷

Representative Morrill now decided to wait until President Buchanan left office before reintroducing his bill. In 1862, with the political climate favorable, the new measure passed, and on July 2 Abraham Lincoln's signature made it a law.¹⁸ The Act provided the states with a grant of land or land script in the amount of 30,000 acres for each senator and for the representative

endowment, support, and maintenance of at least one college where the leading object shall be, without excluding other

¹⁶United States Department of Agriculture, Office of Experiment Stations, Miscellaneous Bulletin No. 115, Proceedings of the Fifteenth Annual Convention of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations (Washington, 1901), p. 65. Henceforth the term "United States Department of Agriculture, Office of Experiment Stations" in footnote citations shall be abbreviated to read "USDA, OES." The debate surrounding Morrill's bill may be read in the Congressional Globe, 35th Congress, 2nd Session, pp. 1414 et seq.

¹⁷John Bassett Moore (ed.), The Works of James Buchanan (New York, 1960), pp. 300-309. See also, Philip S. Klein, President James Buchanan: A Biography (University Park, Pennsylvania, 1962), p. 338.

¹⁸John Y. Simon, "The Politics of the Morrill Act," Agricultural History, XXXVII (1963), p. 106.

scientific and classical studies, and including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, in such manner as the legislatures of the States may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the literary and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions of life.¹⁹

The proceeds from the sale or lease of the lands were to form a permanent endowment for the various institutions. The total grants of land under this act amounted to 17,430,000 acres, an imperial domain.²⁰

A number of reasons account for the legislative passage of the Morrill Act in 1862. The raging Civil War enhanced the need for modern technology. It also served to point out that a large corps of reserve officers might increase the efficiency of the army in future military engagements. Then, too, some people feared the rapidly increasing population of the United States might eventually lead to civil disorder; thus they thought it a good idea to have a substantial state militia ready to meet all emergencies that might arise. Finally, the Republican Party, which now controlled the presidency, was more disposed to use the federal government to grant lands to companies and individuals for public improvements than the major opposition party. These items, however, do not account for the immediate acceptance of land-grant colleges by the populace. George Atherton, a prominent American educator of the period, has provided a perceptive answer. He said:

Two powerful influences were working for a change. The first was the fact that scientific inquiry was beginning to reveal to the world its marvelous possibilities, and the other

¹⁹ U. S. Statutes at Large, Vol. XXVI, pp. 417-418 (1862).

²⁰ Nevins, The Origins of the Land-Grant Colleges and State Universities, p. 3. The amount of lands received by the individual states varied greatly. The largest amount of land was claimed by the state of New York. It received 999,000 acres. The smallest grant, 90,000 acres, went to the state of Kansas.

was a kind of blind groping instinct in the popular mind leading to the conviction that scientific knowledge ought in some way to be made more useful to the daily occupations of life than had previously been thought possible, and that the educational system of the country ought to contribute more directly to that end than it was doing.²¹

Thirty-seven states accepted the provisions of the Land-Grant Act of 1862 before the decade was over.²² But this acceptance did not mean that the colleges were accomplishing the goals that Justin Morrill had envisioned for them. Thus the father of the land-grant movement again turned his attention toward additional legislation.

The Morrill Act of 1890

For the majority of his forty-four years in Congress, the distinguished Vermonter had some type of educational proposal before his colleagues in the United States House of Representatives and Senate. Nevertheless it was ten years after the passage of the Land-Grant Act of 1862 before he thought there was a real chance for a major supplement to the initial bill. A new measure failed in 1873, but of the next eighteen years only six passed without a supplement being offered by the New

²¹USDA, OES, Miscellaneous Bulletin No. 115, Proceedings of the Fifteenth Annual Convention of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations (Washington, 1901), p. 65. In this regard, it is significant to note that in the time which elapsed between Buchanan's veto and Lincoln's assent, Charles Darwin's The Origin of Species had been published and widely reviewed in the United States. The outbreak of the Civil War prevented immediate public recognition of the work, but in intellectual circles it was a frequent topic of conversation. Richard Hofstadter, Social Darwinism in American Thought (Boston, 1967), pp. 1-30.

²²Allan Nevins, The State Universities and Democracy (Urbana, 1962), p. 26.

England lawmaker.²³ Finally in 1890, his eightieth year, a second bill received favorable consideration.

The Second Morrill Act was written by the senior senator from Vermont, but it was guided through the chambers of Congress by the Executive Committee of the American Association of Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations.²⁴ Henry Alvord, the committee chairman, in particular worked toward its passage by conversing with the national leadership of various agricultural interest groups who favored the measure but were afraid the funds allotted to it might be frittered away on classical educational studies. Major Alvord gained whole-hearted support from the officials of the Farmers' Alliance. However, the National Grange leaders "appeared distrustful, [and] feared the phraseology of the bill was to[o] general."²⁵ To appease this group a special amendment was written which limited any funds provided by the bill to be used for only

instruction in agriculture, the mechanic arts, the English language and the various branches of mathematical, physical, natural, and economic science, with special reference to their applications in the industries of life, and to the facilities for such instruction....²⁶

²³Edward Danforth Eddy, Colleges for Our Land and Time: The Land-Grant Idea in American Education (New York, 1956), pp. 100-101.

²⁴Earle D. Ross, Democracy's College: The Land-Grant Movement in the Formative Stage (Ames, 1942), p. 178.

²⁵USDA, OES, Miscellaneous Bulletin No. 30, Proceedings of the Ninth Annual Convention of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations (Washington, 1896), p. 24.

²⁶U. S. Statutes at Large, Vol. XXVI, p. 417 (1890). The remainder of this act simply detailed the manner in which the funds would be distributed. There were, however, two important differences from the organic act. First, the monies were not an endowment, but an outright cash gift. Second, territorial land-grant colleges were eligible to receive funds whereas the prior act subsidized institutions in organized states only.

The additional plank did not satisfy the leadership of the National Grange. Henry Alvord, then President of the Maryland Agricultural and Mechanical College, later concluded that the unreasonable suspicion of these officials delayed the passage of the bill.²⁷

The passage of the Second Morrill Act was an important milestone in the development of land-grant colleges. Edward Danforth Eddy, a historian who has paid considerable attention to the evolution of Morrill institutions in the two decades prior to the enactment of the 1890 law, has concluded in this regard: "The institutions which had struggled to survive were now ready, with this financial aid, to become permanent and progressive segments of American higher education."²⁸ The financial support extended under the auspices of the new act was somewhat different from the aid previously given to agricultural and mechanical colleges. The measure stated that fifteen thousand dollars in cash would be made available to each college in 1890, and thereafter the sum of \$1,000.00

²⁷ Alvord's statement slightly contradicts certain conclusions drawn by Earle Dudley Ross. In his book Democracy's College, Ross concluded that the so-called Granger Amendment was written "at the request of these organizations [National Grange and Farmers' Alliance]." (p. 178). In his presidential address to the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations in 1895, Alvord stated: "I have the original draft of that amendment in my possession; it was written by one college president who cared more for object than for form; was carefully trimmed and punctuated by another college president, and cordially adopted by the others on the committee, none of these being grangers although entirely friendly to that order and its general work. The Association Committee did not believe the amendment necessary, but willingly proposed it and supported it until adopted.... Therefore, instead of this limiting amendment being of Grange origin...the plain facts are that it originated with college men and had their honest support from the first to last...." USDA, OES, Miscellaneous Bulletin No. 30, Proceedings of the Ninth Annual Convention of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations (Washington, 1896), pp. 24-25.

²⁸ Eddy, pp. 103-104.

would be added each succeeding year until the sum of \$25,000.00 had been reached.²⁹ Since the funds were not an endowment, the federal government recommended that the entire amount be spent each year in order to bring immediate benefits to the recipient institution.³⁰

The Relationship of Land-Grant Colleges to Agricultural Experiment Stations

On July 8, 1885, the Commissioner of Agriculture met with a number of prominent American agriculturalists in Washington, D. C. in order to solicit support for the pending Cullen Bill (House Resolution No. 7498, Forty-eighth Congress), which was a measure designed to fund the establishment of agricultural experiment stations in each of the nation's states.³¹ Insufficient political strength was recruited to save the bill, but two important developments in the history of land-grant education evolved from this gathering. First, the agriculturalists decided to meet again in 1887, and at that time the influential Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations was organized.³² Secondly, the next Congress passed the Hatch Act, a bill that contained the essence of House Resolution No. 7498.

²⁹U. S. Statutes at Large, Vol. XXVI, p. 417 (1890).

³⁰Decision of the Attorney General, June 20, 1899. [Reproduced in] Land-Grant Colleges and Universities: What They Are and the Relation of the Federal Government to Them, p. 15.

³¹USDA, OES, Miscellaneous Bulletin No. 30, Proceedings of the Ninth Annual Convention of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations (Washington, 1896), p. 20.

³²Proceedings of the First Annual Convention of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations (Washington, 1887), [n.p.] .

The state experiment stations created under the auspices of the Hatch Act of 1887 were not envisioned as independent organizations. The legislation provided:

That in order to aid in the acquiring and diffusing among the people of the United States useful and practical information on subjects connected with agriculture, and to promote scientific investigations and experiments respecting the principles and applications of agricultural science, there shall be established under the direction of the college or colleges or agricultural departments of colleges in each state or territory established or which may hereafter be established...a department to be known and designated as an 'agricultural experiment station.'³³

The fusion of "experiment" or "research" stations to the Morrill colleges was destined to have far-reaching effects. First, it multiplied the resident number of trained scientists on agricultural college campuses.³⁴ Second, it improved the general character of agricultural instruction, for men who spent part of their time experimenting made abler teachers.³⁵ Third, it broadened the scientific curriculum of the colleges,³⁶ and "lifted research from local and immediate tasks to great fundamental problems--that is, from applied science to pure science."³⁷ Lastly, it brought the stations and the colleges into closer relationships with the public.³⁸ In all of these areas, the experiment stations were very close to the organic land-grant act.

³³U. S. Statutes at Large. Vol. XXIV, p. 440 (1887).

³⁴Nevins, The State Universities and Democracy, p. 102.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Francis Richard Gilmore, "A Historical Study of the Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Station," (Unpublished Ed. D. Dissertation, Oklahoma State University, 1967), p. 10.

³⁷Nevins, The State Universities and Democracy, p. 102.

³⁸Gilmore, p. 10.

Conclusion

The Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College came into existence almost three decades after the passage of the Morrill Act of 1862. While it was never funded under the organic act, it did have the advantage of receiving financial benefits simultaneously from the Second Morrill and Hatch Acts. In addition, the founders of the institution had the added opportunity of drawing upon the individual and collective experiences of the older and better established land-grant colleges and universities. There was also, of course, guidance available from the conferences of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations as well as from the numerous publications of the newly-created office of the Secretary of Agriculture. Finally, the Territory of Oklahoma was still composed of virgin lands; thus it was a rich area for experimentation and the application of scientific agricultural and mechanical knowledge. But with all of these benefits, the institutionalization of the Stillwater College did not occur for many years. The following chapters of this study are designed to trace the major factors that affected its historical development.

CHAPTER II

BONDS, BALLOTS, AND POLITICIANS

The Agricultural and Mechanical College of Oklahoma was founded amidst an unstable economic and political environment that existed on a recently opened midwestern frontier. The white settlement of the territory in 1890, which numbered 56,496 people, was concentrated on the two million acre tract now known as the Panhandle but then called No Man's Land, and a four million acre tract in the middle of present day Oklahoma.¹ With the possible exception of some earlier mineral rushes and religious pilgrimages across the Great Plains, the early Oklahomans had arrived in the most unusual manner of any American frontier migration. On April 21, 1889, as a result of a proclamation issued by President Benjamin Harrison, ten thousand pioneers gathered to the north of Arkansas City, Kansas, to await word that a portion of Indian Territory lands were officially open for colonization. The following day at high noon an officer of the United States Army rode to a point "where he could be seen for miles each way, with one hand raised a bugle to his lips and gave the signal, while with the other hand he waved a flag."² The same day the great rush began.

¹U. S. Department of the Interior, Census Division, Abstract of the Eleventh Census: 1890 (Washington, 1896), p. 27.

²Portrait and Biographical Record of Oklahoma (Chicago, 1901), p. 1.

The "Run of 1889" contained artisans, farmers, home-seekers, mechanics, and a large number of professional men.³ All were eager to embark on the inauguration of a new commonwealth within the continental borders of the United States at a time when the nation's eyes were being cast across the oceans. The factors influencing this migration were almost innumerable; they varied with each individual or family. The enactment of the Homestead Law in 1862, the westward advance of the railroads, the placing of western tribes of Indians on reservations, and the ever-growing pressures of population in regions further east spurred settlement of the second tier of states west of the Mississippi River.⁴ By 1893, as farmers filled the land, the Superintendent of the Census reported that, at last, no man could draw any frontier line between settled America and the wilderness.⁵ Thus the region which has been called the last west was about to be tamed.

When the migrants who were fortunate enough to locate unclaimed land settled, they found conditions were as bad as, or worse than, those they had recently forsaken. One early resident of Stillwater remarked: "Times were hard, the entire community being made up of poor people who

³Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, "Memories of Oklahoma," (Payne County Historical Society), p. 9; Dan W. Peery, "The First Two Years," The Chronicles of Oklahoma, VII (1929), p. 294. When used preceding a citation for a manuscript, manuscript collection, or a public document, the term "Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College" shall henceforth read "OAMC." The second citation of the terms "Territory of Oklahoma" and "Stillwater, Oklahoma" shall also be shortened to read "OT" and "SO."

⁴Edward Everett Dale, "Teaching on the Prairie Plains, 1890-1900," The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXXIII (1946), p. 293.

⁵Frederick Jackson Turner, The Frontier in American History (New York, 1920), p. 1; Theodore H. White, "Action Intellectuals: Scholarly Impact on The Nation's Past," Life, LXII (1967), p. 56.

had made the 'run'... from other states. Few had any worthwhile property."⁶ While this statement is not totally accurate, the primitive conditions that prevailed partially explain the great hope that the masses generally placed in education. A noted historian holds that one of the most pressing anxieties of the plainsmen was the "fear that on the new frontier their children would have little opportunity for schooling and might grow up in ignorance."⁷ The earlier frontiers did contain some hostility toward education, but as the nineteenth century closed schooling "was compulsory in nearly all states outside of the South...."⁸ Since a large number of Oklahomans came from the older states which bordered, or were located above, the Mason-Dixon line, they brought their educational values along with them.⁹ In Stillwater, for example, one of the first projects initiated by the local citizens was to work for the construction of an agricultural and mechanical college to educate their youth and to bring federal revenues into their community. It was a difficult effort, and the battles which ensued left deep scars that affected the history of the college for years to come.

⁶OAMC, "Selections from the Record Book of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1891-1941," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 75.

⁷Dale, p. 293.

⁸James Mulhern, A History of Education (New York, 1946), p. 492. It should be remembered in studying the frontier that its population was composed not only of cattlemen, dirt-farmers, and miners. There was, in addition, an abundance of lawyers, medical doctors, newspapermen, and other educated people. These classes often provided the leadership for the development of educational institutions.

⁹Biographical sketches, including some information on ethnic backgrounds of Oklahomans, may be found in the work Portrait and Biographical Record of Oklahoma, passim.

The Origin of the A. and M. Idea in Stillwater

While the educational age of the residents of Oklahoma may have been low on the average,¹⁰ the inhabitants of Stillwater, whether by design or by accident, included an unusual number of the well-educated. For instance Edward Clark, John Clark, Frank Hutto, and Charles McGraw--to name a few--had all at one time or another in their respective careers been public school teachers.¹¹ Frank Wikoff, a local banker, Robert Lowry, a lawyer, and William Knipe, a businessman from nearby Perkins, had actually attended agricultural and mechanical colleges in states where they had previously resided.¹² In addition, the frequent attempts at claim-jumping in the community attracted a wide variety of legal talent,¹³ many of whom had been trained in college or had had a college education before their legal apprenticeships. Finally, the city counted at least ten clergymen in her midst, and several of them such as Simon Myers and William Davies were well enough educated to qualify for work in a variety of local educational projects, which included secular and religious training for young adults.¹⁴ For the most part it was these members of

¹⁰ Eldon Clemence, "A History of the Democratic Party in Oklahoma Territory," (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, Oklahoma State University, 1966), pp. 15-16; also, see James Albert Barnett, "A History of the Empire of Greer," (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1938), pp. 120-121.

¹¹ Portrait and Biographical Record of Oklahoma, pp. 758-759, 844-847, 867.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 889, 1053, 1210-1211.

¹³ For a brief survey of the extent of claim-jumping in Stillwater, see Berlin Chapman, The Founding of Stillwater: A Case Study in Oklahoma History (Oklahoma City, 1948), pp. 136-140.

¹⁴ The Stillwater Gazette, January 22, 1892, p. 1. Myers and Davis were both Presbyterian ministers. Brief accounts of their educational

the professional class who first became interested in securing the agricultural and mechanical college.

With the organization of Oklahoma into a territory during the summer of 1890, the six original counties took an increasing interest in politics, with each speculating on its chances of obtaining the capital or some slightly less prestigious state institution.¹⁵ Payne county, and particularly Stillwater, was no exception. In mid-July a mass meeting was held at Swope Hall on the corner of Ninth and Main streets "to advise the one who was to represent Payne county in the coming Territorial Assembly... in getting some territorial plum."¹⁶ The participants could choose among the capitol building, state university, normal school, insane asylum, penitentiary, or the agricultural and mechanical college.¹⁷ There is some indication that the assemblage at first discussed the possibility of acquiring the site for the state capital, but they very

roles are contained in James K. Hastings, "First Presbyterian Church, Stillwater Oklahoma," (Stillwater Public Library Historical Collection), p. 2; Stillwater, Oklahoma, "Stillwater's First School Board Minutes," (Payne County Historical Society), p. 72.

Apparently Oklahoma clergymen differed somewhat in their support for public education. Since the territory for eighteen months had only subscription schools, one clergyman believed a "few thousand dollars at this critical time would erect a school building which would be a great factor in promoting the Church in this field." The Oklahoma Churchman (Guthrie), February, 1892, [n.p.]. Contrasted to this was a resolution of the Episcopal Church convention in 1899 urging an "intelligent interest in schools and colleges of Oklahoma and Indian Territories." Quoted from Alvin Hock, "Religious and Cultural Efforts of the Protestant Episcopal Church in Early Oklahoma," (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1926), p. 51.

¹⁵For example, see Gerald Forbes, Guthrie: Oklahoma's First Capital (Norman, 1938), p. 11.

¹⁶James K. Hastings, "Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College and Old Central," The Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXVII (1950), p. 81.

¹⁷OAMC, "Historical Pageant--Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 20.

likely would have settled for the penitentiary.¹⁸ Although they did not commit themselves to any one particular institution, the meeting did stimulate the sub rosa portion of the town council known as the "Sanhedrin" to make the attempt.¹⁹ A concerted effort followed.

A second meeting of the townspeople, including Frank Duck, Robert Lowry, Charles McGraw, J. B. Murphy, William Swiler, and Frank Wickoff was held in the local post-office soon after the territorial elections. At this gathering several who had attended or were acquainted with the nature of land-grant colleges, suggested that the county seriously consider such institutions as could be financed by federal funds under the Hatch and Morrill Acts.²⁰ Later George Gardenhire, Robert Lowry, and James Matthews met at the office of Frank Wikoff to marshal arguments toward the accomplishment of such an objective.²¹ Meanwhile, other forces were working for the realization of the same goal.

¹⁸Gene Aldrich, "Pioneer and Pioneer Life in Payne County," (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1938), p. 8; Bee Guthrey, "Early Days in Payne County," The Chronicles of Oklahoma, III (1925), p. 76.

¹⁹Houston Overby, "The Story of Aggieland The Nineteenth Century," Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College Yesterday and Today (Guthrie, 1938), [n.p.].

²⁰Wikoff later wrote: "All the other county seats had announced their intentions to go after the various prospective institutions. None had mentioned the A. and M. college.... Lowry had lived in Ames, Iowa, and knew what such a college was; I had attended the state university at Champaign and Urbana.... I knew it had the Morrill and Hatch fund, and we knew [where] there was a section of ... land close to Stillwater...." OAMC, "Selections from the Record Book of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1891-1941," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 104.

²¹Ibid.

The Legislative Battle Begins in Guthrie

The First Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Oklahoma convened in the McKennon Opera House in Guthrie on August 27, 1890, and was composed of a Council of thirteen members and a House of Representatives of twice that number. Their election had been called by Governor George W. Steele, who had been appointed by President Benjamin Harrison.²² At some point before the Oklahoma chief executive drafted his initial message to the Legislature, he had been in correspondence with a person he had known in Washington, D. C., Dr. James Clinton Neal, then of the Florida Experiment Station. Professor Neal brought to the attention of the governor the Morrill and Hatch Acts, which he thought would be of paramount importance in converting a frontier prairie into an agricultural kingdom. Neal in 1895 thus remembered it:

Still, few knew what a bonanza it was, and in my correspondence with the first governor, in 1890, his ideas were so very hazy as to its value and importance that I gave him line upon line, letter after letter, even to the extent of outlining the law, embracing the results of some years of experience of one of the oldest, and best conducted, and stable colleges in the United States.²³

Obviously moved by this correspondence as well as by the extensive drought on the Great Plains, the governor incorporated in his message to the Legislature on the evening of August 28th, 1890, a plea for the establishment of an agricultural experiment station in Oklahoma.²⁴ Less

²²Gaston Litton, History of Oklahoma at the Golden Anniversary of Statehood, Vol. I (New York, 1957), p. 460.

²³The Oklahoma A. and M. College Mirror (Stillwater), May 15, 1895, [n.p.].

²⁴Territory of Oklahoma, Journal of the First Session of the Legislative Assembly, (1890), p. 19.

than a month later, Steele also brought the newly passed Second Morrill Act to the attention of the legislators:

I have the honor to transmit herewith certified copy of an act approved August 30, 1890, providing for the more complete endowment and support of the colleges for the benefit of agriculture and the mechanic arts established under the provisions of an act of Congress approved July 2, 1862, and I recommend early legislation with a view of having the advantage of the liberal donation provided for in said act.²⁵

In this executive message to the lawmakers the governor encouraged the Legislature to consider petitioning Congress for permission to use the initial grant of monies under the Second Morrill Act for building purposes. He justified the request by citing the recent organization of the territory, the crippled condition of the predominant agricultural economy, and the fact that the majority of the homestead farms would not be subject to taxation for at least four years. The following day a memorial asking the Washington solons to permit "ten to fifteen thousand dollars ... to be applied by this Territory for the use of said college" was passed.²⁶ House Resolution No. 14, accepting the provisions of the Morrill Act of July 2, 1862, was read, forwarded to the Chairman of the Committee on the Location of the Capital and other Public Institutions, and subsequently gained approval.²⁷ Senator George Gardenhire was a member of the committee. He probably had much to do with the quick passage of the resolution, and no doubt was relaying such information periodically to his constituents. The interests of Stillwater and Payne

²⁵ Ibid., p. 127.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 133. A similar request was made earlier in connection with Hatch Act funds.

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 151-152.

county were therefore being effectively pursued even during the opening days of the first Legislature.

While the Legislature quickly accepted responsibility for implementing the Morrill Act of 1862, it did not designate where such an institution should be located. Governor Steele suggested that the six counties should compete vigorously to have the sites on which the agricultural and mechanical college--and the other institutions that would soon be established in the territory--should be situated. He recommended:

As the location of several necessary institutions for the Territory will be confined to only a few of the counties... I would earnestly impress upon you the importance of so legislating as to invite competition for locating them, according to the benefits the people of the several counties may place upon them, which may go far in the direction of relieving the Territory of expense, but will especially relieve counties receiving no direct benefits where it may be found impracticable to establish any of the institutions.²⁸

Gardenhire, a Populist, had been elected president of the Council because it was evenly divided between Democrats and Republicans. Now he decided to discuss with his colleagues the possibility of a further political compromise. Meeting them in a caucus room, he promised to support the Democrats' bid for the capitol building, if, in return, they would vote to give the agricultural and mechanical college to Stillwater.²⁹ Gaining this concession, he returned to his home county to seek additional advice from his supporters.

Gardenhire found, however, that the temper of the Stillwater populace had changed. Overestimating his actual political strength, they

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 127-128.

²⁹ Otis Wile, "Sixth Founders' Day Celebration is Best Yet," The A. and M. College Magazine, V (1934), p. 3.

held another town meeting in which they decided to seek the capital itself.³⁰ Gardenhire returned to Guthrie to carry out the new aim. The same evening Hays Hamilton, a Stillwater resident who had attended the meeting, reflected that the town had asked for more than it could realistically hope to keep because the community was not served by a railroad. The following morning he arose at dawn, hastily headed for the business district, and persuaded several of his friends to reconsider, instructing Senator Gardenhire to continue his efforts to obtain the A. and M. college. Word was quickly conveyed to Guthrie that "the voice of the people clamored for the College."³¹ From that instant the inhabitants of Stillwater and its elected officials sought the institution, according to an early faculty member, with the "unfaltering patience which inspired Knights of old in their questings for the Holy Grail."³²

A College for Payne County

The process of implementing the decision of Payne county residents proved more difficult than the early townspeople anticipated. The first problem that was encountered occurred shortly after Senator Gardenhire returned to Guthrie, when the projected "combine" failed to form. Instead, Governor Steele initiated his own institutional horse-trading. In the case of the college, Payne county legislators introduced four separate bills, to spearhead a simultaneous attack in both houses. Gardenhire sponsored Council Bill No. 14, Ira Terrill initiated House Bills

³⁰ Overby, [n.p.].

³¹ Ibid.

³² Freeman E. Miller, The Founding of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College (Stillwater, 1928), p. 2.

No. 30 and 31, and James Matthews added House Bill No. 32.³³ Each of these measures concerned the location and governance of the proposed agricultural institution.

The bills were subject to prolonged and stormy debate in the legislative halls in Guthrie. The political maneuvering was intense. The debate concerning the location of the college which began on September 24 was somewhat typical. Arthur Daniels, Fourth Representative District, opened the action on House Bill No. 30 by resolving to amend the location to read "Oklahoma Territory" instead of "Payne County"; Thomas Waggoner, Third Representative District, offered a clause to permit the governor to form a board of commissioners to select a suitable location; John Wimberley, Fourth Representative District, moved quickly to have the words "Payne County" stricken and "Canadian County" inserted instead; and finally, Edward C. Tritt, Fifth Representative District, favored Daniels' amendment.³⁴ All of these amendments were voted on, and all failed to gain a majority. Eventually William Merton arose to move that the rules be suspended and the bill be adopted and engrossed as originally written.³⁵ This was done. The following October 2, J. L. Brown, the Chairman of the Committee on the Location of the Capital and other Public Institutions, brought the bill to the floor of the Senate, where it was also approved.³⁶ At last it appeared as if Payne county would get her college.

³³OT, Journal of the First Session of the Legislative Assembly, (1890), pp. 118, 124, 130.

³⁴Ibid., pp. 169-170.

³⁵Ibid., p. 171.

³⁶Ibid., pp. 221-222.

An unforeseen event, however, came to light on October 14, temporarily dashing the hopes of the county for the institution. On that day Governor Steele returned House Bill No. 30 to the Assembly without his approval. In a note to Representative Daniels, Steele in an embarrassed fashion noted that the Legislature had adopted his earlier suggestion in regard to the Second Morrill Act, and then stated that he had been informed by William Stone, the Assistant Commissioner of the Oklahoma Land Office, that the bill was unconstitutional. Since Oklahoma was still a territory, it did not qualify for federal benefits under either the Hatch or Morrill Acts.³⁷ While the chief executive hoped that either the federal Congress or the Secretary of the Interior would ultimately give some assistance, he would not assent to the proposal until the matter was clarified.³⁸

Undismayed by what amounted to a veto of the bill, Senator Gardenhire determined to continue moving in the same direction. Less than two weeks later, he introduced Council Bill No. 52. It was similar to the previous bill but soon was sidetracked into a number of minor committees, where it died.³⁹ Representative Darius Farnsworth of Kingfisher introduced a companion measure in the House. It also met a similar fate.⁴⁰

³⁷ Ibid., p. 301.

³⁸ Ibid.; William Stone provided Governor Steele with incorrect information. Agricultural and mechanical colleges established in territories were eligible for funds under the Morrill Act of 1890. For further information, see U. S. Statutes at Large, Vol. XXVI, (1890), pp. 417-418.

³⁹ OT, Journal of the First Session of the Legislative Assembly (1890), 380, 590-593, 663.

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 411-412.

On November 20th, 1890, Representative Matthews introduced House Bill No. 82, entitled "An Act to locate and establish an agricultural college in Payne county, Oklahoma Territory."⁴¹ The bill was patterned after North Dakota Territory's law, passed in 1887.⁴² Twenty-three days later Ira Terrill introduced a companion measure in the House concerning governance of the college, and on the next to last day of the session Senator Leander Pittman offered a method for bonding future members of the board of regents.⁴³ The bills sponsored by Pittman and Terrill were passed as written. The Matthews proposal was less fortunate.

Shortly after introduction Matthews' bill was sent to the Committee on Public Lands and Buildings, where it lay dormant for nearly a month. Presumably the delay was related to the governor's earlier disapproval. On December 17th, D. W. Talbot brought the measure to the floor of the House of Representatives and recommended its adoption. A lengthy debate ensued, but late in the evening it received legislative assent by a margin of 14 to 2.⁴⁴ Two days later the bill was guided through the upper chamber by George Gardenhire.⁴⁵ As in the case of the House, the vote was not close. The governor, now convinced of the legality of the bill, added his signature on Christmas Eve, the last day of the session.

In spite of the lopsided margin in both bodies, the bill did not escape violent criticism from opponents. Senator Brown decided to

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 564-565.

⁴²Ibid., pp. 1000-1001.

⁴³Ibid., pp. 850, 920-921, 1000-1001, 1084, 1087, 1093, 1104, 1112-1113.

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 992-995.

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 1013-1015.

explain his negative vote, and probably spoke what was in the minds of several of the legislators when he commented:

This legislature has been charged with bribery and corruption, and rumors in this regard have pointed to no delegation, as it has to that of Payne County. Under such circumstances to see the best institution in the Territory, go to that county is the reason why one should hesitate and I therefore vote 'No.'⁴⁶

These words cast a dark shadow over the institution and thwarted its development for many years. In addition, the law itself came under criticism. The first hundred days of the initial session concerned the capital location and the large number of bills vitally needed for immediate territorial government. The subsequent haste added little credit to the work of the body. Professor Neal later commented that the law establishing the college was a queer medley of "bad English, uncertain phrase, and indirectness that makes it one of the curiosities of the legislature."⁴⁷ On the other hand, the kindly teacher also gave credit where it was due. "The members of the stormy first session of the territorial legislature," he said, "especially those of Payne county, builded much wiser than they knew when they asked for the Agricultural College, and 'through thick and thin' worked, schemed, intrigued, and nobody knows what else ... to get it."⁴⁸

The amendments added to the bill during the last week of the session enumerated several provisions for locating and financing the proposed college. First, since no specific location had been designated, the governor was instructed to appoint three commissioners to investigate and

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 1015.

⁴⁷The Oklahoma A. and M. College Mirror, May 15, 1895, [n.p.].

⁴⁸Ibid.

recommend the best possible site.⁴⁹ Generally speaking, the communities of Perkins, Payne Center, Cimarron City, Forest City, Clayton, Ingalls, Windom, and Stillwater were considered the most logical choices. Each had a post-office and the other minimum services needed to sustain a small institution.⁵⁰ Secondly, the county or municipality receiving the college was required to donate no less than eighty acres of land "suitable and fit for use as an agricultural college and experiment station."⁵¹ Thirdly, the county or municipality closest to the location of the college was to be responsible for issuing bonds in the amount of ten thousand dollars

and deliver the same to the Secretary of the Territory of Oklahoma to be by him sold for said Territory at not less than their par value, the proceeds thereof, to be placed to the credit of such institution, such bonds to run twenty years after the date of their issuance and draw five percent interest, payable semi-annually, and to be issued in the denominations of one thousand dollars each.⁵²

A further provision stipulated that the money was to be used for the construction of a college building. Lastly, if the county did not provide the bonds in a reasonable length of time, the college could be located elsewhere.⁵³

A College for Stillwater

After waiting six months for the various communities of Payne county to get ready, Governor Steele complied with the wishes of the Legislature

⁴⁹The Statutes of Oklahoma, (1890), p. 82.

⁵⁰Miller, pp. 6-7.

⁵¹The Statutes of Oklahoma, (1890), p. 82.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid., pp. 82-83.

by appointing three commissioners to begin the search for the exact site of the college.⁵⁴ The three nominees, W. Merton, G. W. Campbell, and J. M. Stovall,⁵⁵ were well qualified to carry out their assigned duties, since each had been reared on a farm, had been associated in one way or another with the educational field before coming to Oklahoma, had belonged to the First Territorial Legislature and the Masonic Lodge,⁵⁶ and, perhaps more important to the chief executive, had served in the Civil War. Steele, like the man who appointed him to office, trusted ex-military men to carry out governmental duties efficiently and with integrity.

Back in Stillwater the preparations for the impending visit of the three commissioners were largely, but not exclusively, made by the "Sanhedrin." These men had assisted in the Payne county elections of February 3, 1891, which had been called to vote on the bonds required by the Legislature. The haste in holding the election was due to the fact that, if the college was not located before June 30th, the state would not be eligible for the Hatch and Morrill appropriations for the fiscal year ending on the same date.⁵⁷ Unfortunately, however, the county had recently voted favorably on some railroad bonds, and therefore rejected

⁵⁴ John Alley, City Beginnings in Oklahoma Territory (Norman, 1939), p. 94.

⁵⁵ OAMC, Annual Catalog, Session of 1894-95, pp. 8-9.

⁵⁶ Portrait and Biographical Record of Oklahoma, pp. 202-205, 890-891, 1197; Berlin Chapman, "The Men Who Selected Stillwater as the Site for the College," The A. and M. College Magazine, II (December, 1930), p. 108.

⁵⁷ Amos Ewing, "The First Board of Regents," The A. and M. College Magazine, I (1929), p. 4.

the college bonds by a vote of 776 to 375.⁵⁸ Thus, if Stillwater was to obtain the agricultural college, she alone had to bear the entire responsibility for approving the bond issue and donating the land for the college.⁵⁹ Other interested communities, of course, possessed a similar opportunity.

The first necessary step for the Stillwater Town Council was to incorporate. On March 23, 1891, accordingly, a petition was presented to the county Board of Commissioners requesting an election for that purpose.⁶⁰ The commission authorized ballots to be cast on April 7 at the courthouse in Stillwater "to elect three commissioners for town officers."⁶¹ J. E. Sater, T. J. Lester, and John Caldwell, the town's commissioners, divided the city into the required districts and called for another election for April 20, to fill various community offices. Charles Knoblock, W. F. Ramsey, and R. L. Hester were chosen trustees, and J. B. Murphy, J. H. Swope, O. M. Eyler, and T. J. Hueston were elected to the minor offices.⁶²

With Stillwater now legally incorporated as a municipality, the new town officials set May 4th for the annual election of officers and a vote on the bond issue previously rejected by the county residents. In part, the official resolution read:

Resolved: That at the regular annual election for officers of said town of Stillwater ... the proposition for the

⁵⁸OAMC, Annual Catalog, Session of 1894-1895, pp. 8-9.

⁵⁹Miller, p. 8.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²Ibid.

said town of Stillwater to issue its bonds in the sum of \$10,000 to aid in the construction of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Oklahoma ... be submitted to the qualified voters of said town....⁶³

Notice of the election was to be published in the Oklahoma Hawk and the Stillwater Gazette at least ten days before the official balloting.⁶⁴

At a subsequent meeting held on April 28th, it was moved to accept the offer of the Wichita Eagle to provide the bonds, at a cost of \$75.00, if the election was favorable. The design of said bonds was to be an "Indian and Buffalo passing out and a Boomer wagon coming in and a body of Stillwater citizens" in the background.⁶⁵

In spite of a spirited campaign and divided vote for the city offices, the May 4th election indicated that residents of the city unanimously favored the issuance of the college bonds.⁶⁶ A month later the city officials accepted the blank bonds which had been engraved in Kansas and asked the Honorable George Gardenhire to convey them to Robert Martin, Secretary of Oklahoma Territory. No immediate effort was made to sell them, because, as a city resident later remembered, buyers of bonds

were as scarce as was money in those aspiring days; and money was the scarcest article in the whole country at the time.... Just remember that was in 1891 and 1892; and the panic of 1893 had been incubating over Kansas and the great West for two years already, and Coxey's army was even then dreaming of visiting the capitol steps in Washington.⁶⁷

⁶³SO, "Record of Minutes of the Board of Trustees of the Town of Stillwater," (Stillwater Municipal Building, Office of the City Clerk), p. 33.

⁶⁴Ibid.

⁶⁵Ibid., p. 38; Berlin Chapman, "Founding the College," The A. and M. College Magazine, I (1929), p. 7.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 47.

⁶⁷Miller, p. 18.

With the date nearing for the special ad hoc committee appointed by the governor to visit Stillwater, the local residents gave attention to locating a suitable tract of land to offer as a proposed site for the college. A committee consisting of John R. Clark, George Gardenhire, James Matthews, and Frank Wikoff hoped to obtain a 200 acre tract which lay to the north and west of the city. This property was owned by Alfred Newton Jarrell, Charles A. Vreeland, Oscar M. Morse, and a young man by the name of Frank Duck.⁶⁸ Of the four pieces of property, Duck's location was the most valuable as it linked together the proposed college site and the city of Stillwater. The local committee investigated these homesteads as two of the property owners, Duck and Jarrell, had already offered to donate portions of their claims in order for the city to meet the land requirements of House Bill No. 82.⁶⁹ With these two farmers leading the way, the others quickly followed in their footsteps.

For the most part, the land in question was of the homestead variety which had not been claimed long enough for final proof to be made. Yet the site had to be acquired by giving such proof, after which the property could be turned over to the city. Frank Duck converted his entry to cash on June 13, 1891; A. N. Jarrell and Charles Vreeland gave final

⁶⁸Chapman, The Founding of Stillwater, p. 145.

⁶⁹A. E. Jarrell, in his declining years, reported his father as saying the following to Frank Duck: "If you will give your northwest forty, I will give my northeast forty, which adjoins your land on the west, this will make the minimum 80 acres and we will locate the Oklahoma A. and M. College and Experiment Station, so none of the politicians can ever move it, and we will have a school capable of giving our children all the education they are capable of holding." OAMC, A. E. Jarrell to B. B. Chapman, June 25, 1956, "The Jarrell Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library); A. E. Jarrell, "I Remember When...", Oklahoma State University Magazine, II (July, 1958), p. 7. For a farmer's appraisal of the anticipated value of the station, see James K. Hastings, "Log Cabin Days in Oklahoma," The Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXVII (1950), p. 153.

proof on November 3rd; and Oscar Morse did the same two days later. Apparently Duck and Vreeland gave their forty acres without charge, Jarrell was paid enough to pay his filing fee, and Morse, who offered twice as many acres as the rest, was compensated at the rate of \$15.00 per acre.⁷⁰ Such acts of generosity are clear evidence that some Stillwaterites saw the advantages of having the college and experiment station in their midst.

While these negotiations seemed forthright and honest, it is not surprising that real estate speculators, who were numerous in the territorial period, entered the scene seeking to secure personal gain. Certain members of the local committee returned to see Frank Duck several days after the initial meeting. They now told him that in order to consummate the deal for the college land he must also sell his south eighty acres to the city. No contemporary records of this second meeting remain; however, in later years it has been suggested that the property owner was offered either \$2,500.00 or \$25,000.00 for the additional acreage.⁷¹ Whatever the amount offered, the land did change hands, but it went to real estate speculators, not to the community of Stillwater.

According to Frank Wikoff, the land was purchased by a Guthrie real estate syndicate headed by Joseph W. McNeal, a cousin to Dr. James C. Neal of the Oklahoma Experiment Station. McNeal gave the task of

⁷⁰OAMC, "Selections from the Record Book of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1891-1941," (Oklahoma State University Library), pp. 315-316. The market value of this land was approximately \$70.00 per acre. In addition, it should be remembered that by proving-up early, the remainder of the land was subject to taxation,

⁷¹Chapman, The Founding of Stillwater, p. 146; Overby, [n.p.]. In a letter to Dr. Berlin Chapman, Frank Wikoff stated that \$2,500.00 had been offered to Duck. Houston Overby, a historian of the early days of the college, stated that an offer of \$25,000.00 was tendered. The truth is difficult to determine; however, the former source seems more reliable. Frank Duck maintained that only \$800.00 was ever paid to him.

subdividing the land to Wikoff, but the Stillwater man maintained that the McNeal-Duck contract was made without his knowledge, assistance, "or desire to benefit by it."⁷² It therefore remains an unanswered question, since Wikoff was a member of the committee who visited Duck a second time, whether he was involved in a financial scandal at this early date in the institution's history.

On the evening of June 24, 1891, the commissioners appointed by Governor Steele arrived in Stillwater to discuss the location of the college with the city fathers. To assist them in every manner possible, Senator Gardenhire registered next to them at the Stillwater City Hotel.⁷³ After ascertaining the legality of the recent bond election and viewing the 200 acre site that had been set aside for the construction of a college campus and experiment station, the committee departed to nearby Perkins to complete the remainder of their inspection trip. On July 11 their official report to Governor Steele stated:

We were of the opinion, that the tract for the site should embrace upland and bottom land, and selected a body of land containing two hundred acres, that contained the various quantities of soil as we thought would be the most suitable for the purposes for which the college is to be established, and asked the citizens of Stillwater ... to make a formal tender of deeds conveying the same to the Territory. The land so selected by us is located northwest of the town of Stillwater....⁷⁴

⁷²Chapman, The Founding of Stillwater, p. 183.

⁷³SO, "Register of the Stillwater City Hotel," (Payne County Historical Society), [n.p.].

⁷⁴Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Station, Bulletin No. 1 (1891), p. 7. It remains a question as to what criterion the board of commissioners used to determine where the college should be located. Warren Chantry of Perkins believed that the soil in the fertile Cimmaron Valley, which had rich loam and grew six foot bluestem grass, was much better than the hard pan bunch grass and buffalo wallows typical of the Stillwater area. This same man later revealed that, after the commissioners had visited Perkins, they were again invited to Stillwater. In a

The report was accepted by the governor, and the deeds to the property were transferred to the newly-appointed board of regents of the A. and M. college on November 25, 1891.⁷⁵

The Sale of the College Bonds

By January 1, 1892, Stillwater's inhabitants had sufficient reasons to believe that their move to Oklahoma Territory was going to bring success. The city was the county seat, it was in the process of building a new courthouse, and the borders of Payne county were so arranged that the designation appeared permanent. Besides this, the Agricultural and Mechanical College was operating, and a tax levy of six mills had been assessed to pay the interest on the college bonds once they were sold. Finally, the city could boast of several public schools and churches. It is no wonder, with these credentials, that the editor of the Stillwater Gazette could proudly exclaim: "If you desire your child to reap the benefits of a christian [sic], remove to and rear him in Stillwater."⁷⁶

In reality, however, things were not quite that secure. The most immediate problem in the early months of 1892 was to see that a sale of

newspaper article he described the festivities that evening as follows: "Back at the end of the room sat our senators surrounded by all the old-timers of the town. Banquet tables spread before them. There were speeches, red and glowing eyes, champagne corks popping. That was the picture that met our eyes. Knipe said to me, 'We are sunk. These Stillwater fellows are just a damned shrewd bunch of horse traders.' We were seated and after a helping of wild turkey, prairie chicken, and a few highballs we were just one happy family and promised support for the best school in Oklahoma Territory." The Stillwater Daily Press, December 14, 1938, p. 1.

Henceforth the words "Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Station" will be abbreviated to read "OES" when used in a footnote citation.

⁷⁵ Chapman, The Founding of Stillwater, p. 147.

⁷⁶ The Stillwater Gazette, January 22, 1892, p. 1.

the college bonds was effected. True, they were already in the possession of Acting Governor Robert Martin, but no effort had been made to move them. In view of the political jealousies which had developed during the initial legislative session, it seemed imperative to comply with every letter of the law establishing the college before it could be wrested away on a technicality. An intensive effort was therefore instituted in hopes of negotiating an immediate sale.

On March 3, 1892, the first President of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, Robert J. Barker, met with the Stillwater Board of Trustees.⁷⁷ This meeting was the first indication that a prospective buyer had been located. Shortly afterward, Charles McGraw announced that he was in the process of gathering records pertaining to the election that had approved the college bond issue, and was also making a transcript of the last property assessment "showing the ... valuation of all the real estate within the boundaries of the city."⁷⁸ These materials were then forwarded to a man named Vandergraff, who expressed to Robert Martin an interest in buying such bonds. No doubt this news aroused a good deal of excited anticipation in the community, but it proved to be short-lived. A communication was soon received stating that the bond issue was invalid, for according to a federal law a territorial municipality could not assume a bonded indebtedness that exceeded 4% of its assessed real estate valuation.⁷⁹

⁷⁷SO, "Record of Minutes of the Board of Trustees of the Town of Stillwater," (Stillwater Municipal Building, Office of the City Clerk), p. 64.

⁷⁸The Stillwater Daily Press, January 1, 1939, p. 1.

⁷⁹Supplement to the Revised Statutes of the United States, 1874-1891. Vol. I. (1891), p. 504.

Following this startling revelation, the board of trustees requested Charles Donart, the Stillwater Township Assessor, to make a special report to them on his last city assessment. Donart indicated that the valuation he had made the past year had increased \$60,000.00, which brought the total for the community to \$110,000.00.⁸⁰ The figure was less than the \$250,000.00 needed to support an issue of \$10,000.00 of college bonds. The board, however, decided that Donart's figures were too low. A special assessor was elected to make a new survey. When the second canvass was completed, the Stillwater property value was listed as \$263,000.00, which was more than enough to permit the new bonds to be issued.⁸¹

At the next meeting of the trustees Charles Knoblock moved that a special election be held on July 26 to vote new bonds and "to levy a ... tax to pay the interest on said bonds...."⁸² The balloting was held as scheduled, the results certified, and an announcement made stating the measure had passed by a margin of 167 to 6.⁸³ In August, the new set of bonds, which had been engraved this time for only thirty-seven dollars, was forwarded to the territorial secretary.⁸⁴ In the same month an effort was made to sell the securities.⁸⁵

⁸⁰The Stillwater Gazette, July 29, 1892, p. 1; Miller p. 18.

⁸¹In later years, Charles McGraw remembered the incident as follows: "I appointed Van Martin as special assessor to make the assessments. The council confirmed the appointment and he proceeded to make the assessment and made his return which was satisfactory and the requirement of the federal statute was fully complied with." The Stillwater Daily Press, January 1, 1939, p. 1.

⁸²SO, "Record of the Board of Minutes of the Town of Stillwater," (Stillwater Municipal Building, Office of the City Clerk), p. 83.

⁸³Ibid., p. 88.

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 89.

⁸⁵The Stillwater Gazette, August 26, 1892, p. 3.

On September 23, 1892, a date nearly coinciding with the opening of the first full-length academic year of the college, the Stillwater Gazette carried a small news item proclaiming that the college bonds had been sold and that work on the initial college building would begin in the near future.⁸⁶ In reality the statement was premature, although the city officials did have a plan of action in mind. For the past several months Eli Reed, Treasurer of Payne county, had been engaged in negotiating the sale of \$50,000.00 of county bonds to the St. Joseph Loan and Trust Company through its agent George Theiss.⁸⁷ Reed, a resident of Stillwater, promised the town council that he would attempt to sell the city and county bonds to the Missouri firm in a package deal. This arrangement would eliminate the prospect of selling separately bonds for a college which did not physically exist.

When the offer by Reed to sell the college bonds became public, complications developed. Other Payne county officials feared that combining the two bonding ventures would jeopardize the sale of the county bonds. They therefore obtained a court injunction to prevent the two sets of securities from being lumped together.⁸⁸ But before the legal notice could be served on Reed, and at a time when it was known that representatives of the St. Joseph firm were on their way to Oklahoma, the county treasurer was mysteriously kidnapped.⁸⁹ He remained in captivity just

⁸⁶The Stillwater Gazette, September 23, 1893, p. 8.

⁸⁷Hays Cross, "Memories to be Revived," The A. and M. College Magazine, XI (1939), p. 4.

⁸⁸"We Get the College," The A. and M. College Magazine, I (1929), p. 31.

⁸⁹Cross, p. 4.

long enough for the Stillwater Board of Trustees to convince the out-of-town visitors that they should also purchase the A. and M. bonds. When a verbal agreement to this effect was reached Eli Reed appeared with the county bonds, looking no worse physically from his recent ordeal. On November 2, 1892, the president and clerk of the town council were authorized to sign the college bonds and close the proposed deal.⁹⁰

While the Missouri firm promised to purchase the Stillwater college bonds, they had not offered a specific amount of money. It had been assumed that, due to the financial conditions in Oklahoma, the bonds could not be peddled at face value. In order to sustain the interest of the buyers, the board offered to give a bonus of \$381.00 to the St. Joseph concern if they would pay seventy-eight cents on the dollar.⁹¹ Apparently the offer was accepted, for on January 5th, 1893 the initial set of bonds were recalled from the secretary of the territory, and the First District U. S. Court ordered them to be "wholly consumed by fire."⁹² The Legislature was informed of this action, being asked also to approve the proposed sale to the Missouri firm. Shortly thereafter, Professor Alexander Magruder of the college and a group of Stillwater citizens rode to Orlando to receive word from friends in the legislature as to whether their efforts for the college had been successful.⁹³

Although the news received by Magruder was favorable to the college cause, the Stillwaterites were not to be spared more anxious moments.

⁹⁰SO, "Record of Minutes of the Board of Trustees of the Town of Stillwater," (Stillwater Municipal Building, Office of the City Clerk), p. 89.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 98.

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³"We Get the College," p. 31.

The sale of bonds did not materialize, leading to the distinct possibility that the Legislature might move the college. Nevertheless, Charles McGraw and several other members of the board of trustees immediately began to implement another course of action, contacting the Guthrie financial syndicate that had purchased a portion of Frank Duck's land for real estate speculation. McGraw succeeded in selling the bonds to McNeal and his wife for \$7,825.00, which was \$75.00 more than George Theiss had offered.⁹⁴ Returning to Stillwater by stagecoach, McGraw was greeted by chattering and ebullient voices, later recalling:

Coming out of the darkness was W. A. Swiler, W. E. Hodges, Frank Wikoff, Harry Swope and Hays Hamilton - all demanding proof that the bonds were sold. When I offered the deposit slip they lighted a match, read the slip and rushed to town, got out the band and 'blew the glad news' to the people. We celebrated that night.⁹⁵

These events occurred in the week prior to the beginning of May, 1893.

Now only one more hurdle needed to be cleared. The bonds were sold for approximately \$2,175.00 below par, and this sum needed to be raised and deposited with the territorial treasurer at Guthrie. To accomplish this final requirement fifty-five citizens, including a large number of farmers and members of the college faculty, purchased city warrants in the amount of \$33.35 each to make up the majority of the deficit.⁹⁶

Several members of the board of trade secured the last \$352.00 by giving their personal note to "Uncle Alex" Campbell of the Farmers and Merchants

⁹⁴The Oklahoma Hawk (Stillwater), April 27, 1893, p. 1.

⁹⁵The Stillwater Daily Press, January 1, 1939, p. 1.

⁹⁶The Stillwater Gazette, January 22, 1892, p. 2; SO, "Record of Minutes of the Board of Trustees of the Town of Stillwater," (Stillwater Municipal Building, Office of the City Clerk), p. 127; Miller, pp. 20-21.

Bank.⁹⁷ With the required signatures on the note, the city was able to forward a guarantee for \$10,000.00 to Guthrie the following day.

The repayment of the city warrants, the personal note for \$352.00, and the biennial interest payments of \$250.00 placed a heavy financial burden on the Stillwater community; yet they carried it without complaint. The personal note to the bank was eventually redeemed by using funds collected from the sale of saloon licenses, and the warrants were retired periodically as funds became available.⁹⁸ But the interest payments were another matter. At various intervals special warrants had to be issued, money was borrowed from other accounts such as the Road and Bridge fund, and finally a levy of three mills was placed on certain types of real estate to take care of the matter until the bonds were redeemed.⁹⁹ Remembering the long but fruitful effort to obtain and finance the A. and M. college, an early member of the board of trustees once summarized the ordeal in these terms: "These things were not jokes ... they were life and death to us. We practically fought, bled, and died for the college...."¹⁰⁰

The sale of the college bonds did not reach completion without criticism from certain quarters in Stillwater. The Oklahoma Hawk newspaper, an organ of the Democratic party, fired an editorial barrage on April 27, 1893 aimed at the Republican-oriented group that had handled

⁹⁷ The Stillwater Daily Press, January 1, 1939, p. 1.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

⁹⁹ SO, "Record of Minutes of the Board of Trustees of the Town of Stillwater," (Stillwater Municipal Building, Office of the City Clerk), pp. 206, 252, 314.

¹⁰⁰ OAMC, Frank Wikoff to Tom Hartman, November 30, 1940, "The Hartman Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

most financial matters concerned with the founding of the college. This particular column began: "We have this week made it our business to interview the knowing ones and found out what we could about the [bond] transaction and below we give the whole affair."¹⁰¹ Then in an authoritative manner, the writer enumerated the expenses that had been incurred by the board of trustees in negotiating especially the proposed sale of bonds to the St. Joseph Loan and Trust Company. The editor revealed that over \$530.00 in vouchers had been paid to F. C. Hunt, J. J. Shaffer, Charles McGraw, Charles Knoblock, and the St. Joseph firm itself.¹⁰² In addition, a competitive bid submitted by M. L. Turner was rejected without consideration. The article concluded that politics had played a role in deciding who got the bonds, and how much money was paid for them.¹⁰³

In spite of such charges, the majority of the residents of the community were relieved that at last the bonds had been sold. Instead of rehashing the past, they channeled their energy into persuading the territorial legislature to provide the financial assistance needed to build an instructional edifice. On March 13, 1893, at about the time the bond deal was completed, the state Assembly approved a \$15,000.00 bond issue for a college building.¹⁰⁴ A contract was let on June 20, 1893 to H. Ryan of Fort Smith, Arkansas, and the ground was broken shortly thereafter for one of the first permanent college buildings in the Territory.¹⁰⁵ Old Central, as it would be called in later years, symbolized

¹⁰¹The Oklahoma Hawk, April 27, 1893, p. 1.

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³Ibid.

¹⁰⁴OAMC, Annual Catalog, Session of 1894-1895, pp. 13-14.

¹⁰⁵Miller, p. 22.

the end of the difficult struggle to bring agricultural education to the state, and thus it has gained a peculiar affection from persons associated with the college, particularly those who lived in the territorial period.

Professor Freeman E. Miller, an eye-witness to many of the events that comprise the nucleus of this chapter, explained the historical importance of the first A. and M. college building in a speech given at the Founder's Day celebration in 1929. Talking at a time when the future of the building was somewhat in doubt, he said:

I hail with profound sympathy and approval the movement now underway for its restoration. May it stand for decades to come as a remainer of the days when men dared much and accomplished more - when out of poverty they beheld great visions and adventured forth with brave hearts to achieve victories they coveted. They had few things of this world; but they were rich in faithIt was their prayer and dauntless hearts that laid the foundation of this great institution....To them be the homage of good men and women forever.¹⁰⁶

While the means employed to obtain the college were sometimes both ethically and legally questionable, the ultimate success of the endeavor was accomplished with a good deal of patience and personal sacrifice. During the territorial period the residents of Oklahoma were competitively pitted against one another. To stake a claim or to locate an institution, one had to be prepared to meet the challenge of his neighbor. The visionary people of Stillwater realistically assessed the nature of the environment they lived in and rose to the demands of the occasion.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., pp. 23-24.

¹⁰⁷ Although it has not been noted, the manner in which the Territory of Oklahoma was settled could be seen as a logical outgrowth of the "survival of the fittest" philosophy espoused by such individuals as Charles Darwin, Herbert Spencer, and William Graham Sumner. In staking a claim, locating a territorial institution, and vying for legislative patronage,

Conclusion

With the exception of a significant portion of the populace of Stillwater and Payne county, the founding of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Oklahoma Territory evidences no deep commitment to either land-grant or democratic educational ideals. On the territorial level, it is clear that the institution was visualized simply as a political plum generously endowed with federal funds.¹⁰⁸ It therefore was sought by the elected representatives of the various counties as a means of bringing hard cash into localities that were economically depressed. At no point in the recorded legislative debates were the merits of, or the best means to implement, the land-grant idea discussed. In fact, as the correspondence between James Neal and George Steele suggests, it is likely that few if any members of the Oklahoma political hierarchy had any significant understanding of the purpose and intent of the Morrill or the Hatch Acts. The Stillwater local lights, of course, were an exception.

Much of the difficulty experienced in acquiring and implementing the legislation that chartered and located the A. and M. college must be attributed to the uninspired leadership of Governor Steele and a local reflection of the national attitude that government was simply an instrument for achieving selfish aims. The governor's policy of encouraging

the emphasis was on being quicker and more skillful than one's neighbor. For an assessment of the influence of "social Darwinism" during this era, see Richard Hofstadter, Social Darwinism in American Thought (Boston, 1967), pp. 1-7.

¹⁰⁸ This was not a unique development in the history of land-grant colleges and universities. For example, see Thomas Cochran, The American Business System (New York, 1957), p. 172.

the six counties to compete for state institutions was perhaps sound in view of the fact that there were no substantial sources of revenue available, but on the other hand, it created political jealousies that lasted far beyond the territorial period.¹⁰⁹ Not only were the other counties disappointed because they did not receive the land-grant institution, but several afterward worked in later legislative sessions until they had a seat of higher learning in their own midst.¹¹⁰ While this process may have augmented democratic education in the state, it also led to the construction of colleges and universities that were permanently understaffed and inadequately funded. In this regard, Gaston Litton, a competent regional historian, has correctly conjectured that the educational history of Oklahoma would read differently today had the Normal School, the University, and the A. and M. college been incorporated into a single educational institution.¹¹¹ Guthrie politicians had offered such a deal to Oklahoma City officials in exchange for their support in locating the capital at the former.

A further undesirable by-product of the educational pork barrelling in Oklahoma was that many of the twenty-three private institutions of higher learning that existed in the territory before statehood eventually discovered that they could not obtain enough students to justify their

¹⁰⁹OAMC, Emma G. Dent to B. B. Chapman, November 14, 1965, "Early Student Correspondence Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

¹¹⁰By 1901, the Territory of Oklahoma had seven institutions of higher learning. They were spaced geographically so that nearly every one of the original counties had one. For a listing of such institutions, see E. T. Dunlap, "The History of Legal Controls of Public Higher Education in Oklahoma," (Unpublished Ed. D. Thesis, Oklahoma State University, 1956), pp. 23-24.

¹¹¹Litton, p. 458.

continued existence.¹¹² As these gradually closed their doors, the Legislature had to assume more complete responsibility for educating the state's youth. This situation might have been partially prevented if the land-grant funds had been given to an existing private institution, or if public institutions had not been established in places already serviced by private organizations.

In Stillwater, the businessmen were also interested in obtaining the coveted funds; yet there is little doubt that some of the people such as Frank Duck, James K. Hastings, A. N. Jarrell, Oscar Morse, and Charles Vreeland, all men of the farmer class, possessed an understanding of how such an institution could aid the community to develop more fully their agricultural and human resources. It was largely folk of this social level who consistently approved expensive bonding ventures and allocated funds for the college's operating expenses for over four years. The unusual number of the well educated, and especially those professional and semi-professional men who had previously attended land-grant institutions, also contributed significantly to the success of the effort. Their leadership constitutes the first distinct legacy of the older and better established colleges patterned after the ideas of Justin Morrill. On the local level, therefore, since people of nearly all economic, political, and social classifications supported the acquisition of the college, it may be concluded that the institution was born with a degree of grassroots support.

¹¹²A list of the private and denominational institutions of higher learning may be found by consulting Oscar William Davison, "Education at Statehood," The Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXVIII (1950), p. 79.

Finally, the four year struggle to locate permanently the agricultural and mechanical college in Stillwater had one more profound effect. Whether the inhabitants of the city initially sought the college out of greed or enlightenment, they gradually came to realize the importance of the institution and decided that whatever the cost they would never permit it to be relocated. Strengthened with the courage of their ever-increasing convictions, they worked incessantly to accomplish their goal.

CHAPTER III

THE ITINERANT YEARS

While the townspeople of Stillwater waged the economic and political struggle from 1890 to 1894 to retain the agricultural college in their locality, the first board of regents, the first president, and the first faculty attempted to implement the diffuse law that established the institution. This task was made even more difficult by the fact that nearly all of the early leaders were inexperienced in the field of higher education, possessed inadequate funds and facilities with which to carry on their research interests, and had to deal with students who were not scholastically prepared for college-level work. Such conditions existed throughout the entire territorial period and could be therefore eventually classified as routine problems. Much more noteworthy, however, are the initial efforts of the faculty, and to a degree of the administration, to formulate educational objectives for the institution. A college needed to have goals, to stand for certain principles, and to have a mission clearly recognizable by the general public. But what should these be? Herein was the most perplexing problem associated with the founding of the college.

The purpose of this chapter is to trace the academic and occupational backgrounds and to develop the conflicting patterns of educational practice and thought of individuals who were associated with the college before Old Central was constructed. It was the period of time when

classes were conducted in Stillwater churches, the offices of local newspapers, the county courthouse, and the homes of professors. This era may thus be most adequately described as the "Itinerant years," for the college had no permanent home.

The Organization of the First Board of Regents

Most of the statute entitled "An Act to locate and establish an agricultural college in Payne County, Oklahoma Territory" concerned the composition, the method of appointment, and the duties of the board of regents. Generally speaking, the members of the board were given dictatorial powers. Nevertheless, if more stable political circumstances had prevailed perhaps a spirit of cooperation between the board and other members of the academic community could have brought about an equitable sharing of the authority vested in the board. But in the early years, with no one to check their activities, the board reserved a large number of administrative powers exclusively for themselves.

According to law, the board of regents was to be composed of five members, with the governor of the territory serving as a sixth and ex-officio member.¹ The chief executive of the state was granted the power to submit a list of names for vacancies as they occurred, and the Legislature was to add periodic confirmation. Two regents were to be appointed for two years and three for four years, thereby insuring some continuity of administrative policy.² The most notable exception to this original design was the proviso that if a Territorial Board of

¹The Statutes of Oklahoma, (1890), p. 83.

²Ibid.

Agriculture was created, it would have the privilege of sending two names to the governor that he was obliged to appoint. The executive was also empowered to "fill all vacancies in said board, which occur when the Legislature is not in session and they shall hold their offices until their successors are appointed and qualified...."³ The coordination between the board and the college was to be accomplished by having the secretary of the board and the president of the college be one and the same man.

In general, the board of regents were given supervisory powers in all areas related to the college. The members collectively had the right to "hire" and terminate the services of all personnel from the president to student laborers, direct the disposition of federal and territorial funds, audit the expenditures of the college, prepare reports to be forwarded to officials in Guthrie and Washington, affix the salaries of all employees of the institution, and have the authority with the faculty to confer degrees on persons passing required examinations and who were "known to possess a good moral character."⁴ Finally, the law limited the number of times that the regents could meet and the amount of financial compensation that they could draw for their services.

While these duties should not have proved difficult to an already established institution, they were onerous at a time when the college physically existed only on paper. To add to this burden, the regents also were given the responsibility of supervising the affairs of the Oklahoma Experiment Station, which was considered merely as a subsidiary

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

of the college.⁵ It was especially in the latter area that the law was vague and no clear lines of authority were drawn.⁶ Thus the regents often took advantage of this portion of the bill to appoint persons of the right political persuasion to lucrative and prestigious positions.

The first board of regents were appointed by Governor George Steele on December 24, 1890,⁷ the last day that the First Territorial Legislature sat in session. Steele proposed five names. Since Oklahoma was only recently settled, and the names and background of many of its inhabitants were not known, four of the five names submitted were members of the legislative body itself. Robert Barker, Logan county, forty-one years old, a farmer and member of the Republican party; the Reverend J. P. Lane, Cleveland county, thirty-eight years of age, a clergyman and member of the Republican party; Arthur Daniels, Canadian county, a Populist serving as speaker of the house of representatives; and John Wimberley, Kingfisher county, twenty-four years of age, a farmer and member of the Democratic party, were the members of the Legislature nominated.⁸ Amos Ewing, Kingfisher county, twenty-nine years old, an employee of the Choctaw, Oklahoma and Gulf Railroad Company and a lifelong Republican, was the final appointee.⁹ All were confirmed with the

⁵Ibid.

⁶A revision of the 1890 statute clarified this situation somewhat. In addition, the name of the institution was changed from the Agricultural and Mechanical College of the Territory of Oklahoma to the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Oklahoma. For a complete text of the new law, see The Statutes of Oklahoma, (1893), pp. 79-83.

⁷OT, Journal of the First Session of the Legislative Assembly, (1890), p. 1094.

⁸Portrait and Biographical Record of Oklahoma (Chicago, 1901), p. 535; Freeman E. Miller, The Founding of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College (Stillwater, 1928), p. 11; OT, Council Journal, (1895), pp. 668-783. The criteria that Steele used to choose these men are not known.

⁹Portrait and Biographical Record of Oklahoma, p. 173.

exception of Daniels. On May 10, 1892, Governor A. J. Seay, successor to Steele, appointed M. T. Little to fill the fifth position.¹⁰

The Positive Accomplishments of the First Board of Regents

The first formal meeting of the board of regents occurred in the Old Herriott Building in Guthrie on June 25, 1891, six months after their initial appointment.¹¹ It is likely, however, that some of the individuals had been in contact with each other before this meeting, for Barker, Ewing, and Lane, the Republican members of the board, were the only persons present. Since a simple majority was all that was needed to conduct business, the meeting was held as scheduled. The most important item on the agenda was the selection of a president for the college and a secretary for the board. Later Robert Barker, who was testifying before a special legislative investigating committee, revealed what had taken place. He said: "The Board of Regents of the A. and M. college was organized ... by electing R. J. Barker, President and Secretary: A. A. Ewing, Treasurer."¹² It was also decided that Ewing should comply with territorial law and post a \$25,000.00 bond.¹³

With the regents now organized, the remainder of the year seemed a profitable and productive one for the college. At the second meeting,

¹⁰ Miller, p. 11.

¹¹ Amos Ewing, "The First Board of Regents," The A. and M. College Magazine, I (1929), p. 4.

¹² OT, House Journal, (1893), p. 347. It should be noted at this point that the minutes of the meetings of the board of regents for the "itinerant years" are not available. Frequent changes of administration, fires, and the fact that early officials were not conscientious about keeping records have reduced the number of primary sources available for analysis.

¹³ OAMC, Annual Catalog, Session of 1891-1892, [n.p.].

held in August, Dr. James C. Neal of the Florida Experiment Station was elected Director of the Oklahoma Station.¹⁴ On November 25th, the board met again and some historic decisions were made. First, it was decided to begin classes on December 14th of the same year in the Congregational church.¹⁵ The residents of Stillwater agreed to pay the rent on the building, purchase the supplies needed to convert the church into a classroom, and provide money for janitorial services and utility fees, as the Second Morrill Act prohibited using federal funds for such purposes.¹⁶ Secondly, Alexander Covington Magruder, a graduate of the Mississippi A. and M. College, agreed to become professor of agriculture and horticulture.¹⁷ In addition, Regent Wimberley was designated as superintendent of buildings and authorized to make plans for "the erection of a

¹⁴OAES, Bulletin No. 1, (1891), p. 8.

¹⁵Miller, pp. 11-12.

¹⁶"We Get the College," The A. and M. College Magazine, I (1929), p. 31. The expenditure of federal funds under the Second Morrill Act was in theory carefully regulated; however, in practice the "illegal" use of such monies was sometimes sanctioned under certain conditions. During these years William Torrey Harris, the U. S. Commissioner of Education, worked with the Executive Committee of the Association of American Land-Grant Colleges to ascertain what expenditures were just, and the nature of reports that land-grant colleges should submit to the secretary of the interior. Harris expressed his personal views on this matter to Professor E. F. Ladd. He wrote: "Under this interpretation of the law the following are a few of the items which are held as not properly chargeable to the funds granted by the act of August 30, 1890: Salaries of president, treasurer, secretary, librarian, bookkeepers, accountants, janitors, watchmen; salaries of professors of ancient and modern languages, of pedagogics, of mental and moral philosophy, of music; also furniture, cases, shelving, musical instruments, fuel for heating purposes, lighting, tableware, and cooking utensils...." North Dakota Agricultural and Mechanical College, Third Biennial Report of the Board of Trustees of the North Dakota Agricultural College, Session of 1895-1896, (Bismarck, 1896), p. 14.

¹⁷Horace J. Harper, "Magruder Field," The A. and M. College Magazine, VIII (1942), p. 6.

residence for the director [of the Experiment Station] not to exceed \$1,300.00; a laboratory not to exceed \$700.00; a house for the superintendent of the farm, not to exceed \$400.00 and barns and sheds not to exceed \$600.00."¹⁸ The next day, Captain L. J. Darnell received designation as temporary Commandant and Tactician of the college.¹⁹ Edward Clark, a Stillwater public school teacher, agreed to take charge of the A. and M. sub-collegiate school. The following evening a banquet and reception was given for the newly-appointed regents in recognition of their rapid start toward making the agricultural college a reality. Dr. Neal served as master of ceremonies, and speeches and toasts were tendered by R. J. Barker, John Lane, George Gardenhire, J. R. Keaton, A. A. Ewing, John Wimberley, Colonel T. S. Jones, A. N. Daniels, and John Clark.²⁰ Afterward the local postmaster invited the guests to spend the

¹⁸OT, House Journal, (1893), pp. 347-348.

¹⁹Alfred Edwin Jarrell, "The Founding of Oklahoma A. and M. College: A Memoir," The Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXXIV (1956), pp. 323-324. The officials of the college hoped to be eligible in the near future for a military officer to be detailed from West Point to take over the position of Commandant and Tactician, and therefore Darnell's appointment was only temporary. Major Henry Alvord, who was the first officer detailed by West Point to train students enrolled in Morrill colleges, and C. W. Dabney, the President of Tennessee University, carried the fight in the Association of Land-Grant Colleges for continuance of such appointments. Some of the older land-grant institutions, such as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, also endeavored to maintain similar relations with the Naval Academy at Annapolis. For further information, see USDA, OES, Miscellaneous Bulletin No. 3, Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Convention of the Association of Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations (Washington, 1890), pp. 68-69; Miscellaneous Bulletin No. 65, Proceedings of the Twelfth Annual Convention of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations (Washington, 1899), pp. 64-65; Miscellaneous Bulletin No. 20, Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Convention of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations (Washington, 1894), p. 25; Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Annual Report of the President and Treasurer, Session of 1898 (Boston, 1899), p. 16.

²⁰Miller, pp. 12-13.

evening at his home instead of the Wagon Yards.²¹ An aura of excitement permeated the village, and harmony prevailed for perhaps the last time during the "itinerant years" among the regents, the personnel more directly associated with the college, and the citizens of Stillwater.

The remainder of the "year"--whether academic, calendar, or fiscal --was anti-climactic. Contracts for the previously enumerated buildings were signed at Guthrie on December 12th, and a month later A. V. McDowell of Kingfisher was hired as farm superintendent.²² George Holter, a recent chemistry graduate of the Kansas State Agricultural and Mechanical College, received appointment to the faculty on February 12, 1892.²³ From this date until the end of the first academic year only routine business was transacted. Toward the end of June, the regents met in Stillwater to close the fiscal records and review the year's work.²⁴ Much had been accomplished, particularly in the area of recruiting teaching and research personnel, and a beginning had been made in constructing crude physical facilities for the station. No public report was made of the college's financial situation, but it was generally assumed that A. and M. was the most generously endowed institution in the territory. Meanwhile, the first president and faculty of the fledgling college began the task of molding an institution of excellence.

²¹Gale Wallin, "I Remember When--," The A. and M. College Magazine, I (1930), p. 5.

²²The Stillwater Gazette, January 15, 1892, p. 2.

²³Miller, p. 15.

²⁴The Stillwater Gazette, July 1, 1892, p. 4.

The First College President

Throughout the territorial period the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College had more than its share of outstanding presidents. Henry E. Alvord, George Espy Morrow, and J. H. Connell all had national reputations in the field of agricultural education. In addition, the engaging Edward Dandridge Murdaugh added color to the campus and brought his wealth of experience concerning instruction in the mechanical arts to Stillwater. The administration of Angelo C. Scott remains the high point of the territorial college. On the other hand, Robert J. Barker, the first president and the man who succeeded in getting the college started, has remained largely a mystery, for he was a colorless and quiet diplomatist.

Robert Barker came to Oklahoma Territory in the land rush of 1889. Born near Hinton, Virginia on April 28, 1848, he received his secondary education from the Cheshire Academy in Ohio and later returned to the South to attend Hale Normal College in West Virginia where he graduated in 1869, having taken a special course in civil engineering.²⁵ Shortly thereafter, he taught school in Jumping Branch, West Virginia and Sulphur Springs and Kokomo, Indiana.²⁶ In 1880 the young teacher abandoned the educational field and entered the furniture business in Pomeroy, Kansas and Jeffriesville, Missouri. The move to Oklahoma Territory was to establish a land claim and to raise shorthorn cattle. In most of these endeavors the native Virginian had some degree of success, and it was for this reason that his neighbors in Crescent City and the surrounding

²⁵ Portrait and Biographical Record of Oklahoma, p. 535.

²⁶ Ibid.

area elected him to represent them in the First Territorial Legislature.²⁷

Representative Barker had many favorable personal characteristics. Coming from the ante-bellum South, he evidenced to his friends much of the charm and poise that is sometimes attributed to men of the planter class. Harry E. Thompson, who worked with him closely for over three years, described him as a "congenial, companionable, intelligent citizen a warm friend to those he liked."²⁸ He had his critics, too. For example, some associates did not like the manner in which he became president of the college. Barker had helped to draft the law establishing the institution,²⁹ and then appointed himself president after being elected the executive of the board of regents.³⁰ He also retained his complete identification with the Republican party in Oklahoma. Nevertheless, Professor Thompson thought that even his "bitterest political rivals ... never dared accuse him of the slightest trickery."³¹ Horticulturalist Frank Waugh agreed. "He was strictly honest," he said, "and though in his political relations, surrounded by malfeasance and speculation, he never appropriated so much as a postage stamp nor stooped to

²⁷ Ibid.; interview with Dr. Angie Debo, Marshall, Oklahoma, August 3, 1967.

²⁸ OAMC, H. E. Thompson to B. B. Chapman, June 3, 1954, "The Thompson Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

²⁹ Ewing, p. 4.

³⁰ Harry E. Thompson, "The Territorial Presidents of Oklahoma A. and M. College," The Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXXII (1955), p. 364.

³¹ Ibid., p. 365.

the faintest dishonesty."³² Subsequent investigations of the college by the territorial legislatures corroborated the accuracy of these evaluations.

In spite of the fact that President Barker had a college education and had served a ten year apprenticeship in the common school classroom, he came to Stillwater with major educational disadvantages. He was not a scientist by nature or training, nor had he a clear idea of the intent of the land-grant acts. As late as 1892, for example, he wrote to John Noble, the Secretary of the Interior, a letter indicating that he had not spent much time in studying either land-grant legislation or the various information circulars that were distributed by the United States Department of Agriculture and the American Association of Land-Grant Colleges. He wrote:

We understand by Act of Congress of July 2, 1862 - Sec. 1 - that the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Oklahoma Territory is entitled to 90,000 acres of public land as a permanent endowment. How to proceed to have it set apart to our college is what we do not know. We would like if practicable to get³³ our land in the Outlet. Awaiting your advice, we remain....

Representative Barker had been a member of the Legislature when the whole question of federal aid to the Oklahoma college had been discussed. Therefore, he should have been well aware that the institution was not eligible for such support. If he had missed those discussions, it is

³²OAMC, "Selections from the Record Book of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1891-1941," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 86.

³³OAMC, Robert Barker to John Noble, March 18, 1892, "The OSU Collection, 1891-1899," (Oklahoma State University Library). George Holter, a colleague, believed that President Barker did not understand the Second Morrill Act either. OAMC, "Selections from the Record Book of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1891-1941," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 39.

somewhat amazing that he would wait nearly a whole year before making inquiries.

The very title that President Barker assumed indicates also some hostility toward the new sciences, especially those that were closely associated with land-grant colleges. The initial catalog of the institution, which he wrote himself, listed him as "President of the Faculty and Professor of Moral and Mental Science."³⁴ Whereas such titles were once used by college presidents to guard the religious orthodoxy from theological heresies, in the late nineteenth century it is much more likely that the term indicated that the executive was attempting to prepare students "to discover the distinction between science and philosophy and to detect the fallacy of identifying science with a metaphysic of positivism or naturalism."³⁵ Holter, Magruder, Neal, and Waugh, who were all graduates of colleges and universities that some clergymen called "godless," probably did not have a high opinion of such a title and the course that was offered under its auspices.

In addition, President Barker had another liability that affected his administration adversely. Having come to Oklahoma to acquire

³⁴OAMC, Annual Catalog, Session of 1891-1892, [n.p.].

³⁵Sherman B. Barnes, "The Entry of Science and History in the College Curriculum, 1865-1914," The History of Education Quarterly, IV (1964), p. 46. Apparently President Barker took this side of his teaching responsibilities very seriously. An early student recorded these words of his in her scrapbook: "In entering upon the duties of president at this institution I felt that the destinies of these students were entrusted to my care. I recognized that whatever is retained is not necessarily the idea in its entirety, but the effect of the idea upon the mind and ad infinitum. Dark and evil sentiments produce like effects, rendering turbid and vicious, the mind impressed by them, while good impressions like sparkling water tends to purify all with which they come into contact." OAMC, [Willa Adams, "Scrapbook of Willa Adams," n.p.] in "The Dusch Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

government-owned land, he made a homestead settlement on a tract of 160 acres on April 24, 1889, and on May 18th he made homestead entry at the Kingfisher land office.³⁶ This filing meant that if Barker wanted to keep possession of the claim, he would have to fulfill the residency requirements of the Homestead Act of 1862.³⁷ When the genial man became the head of the A. and M. college, he chose to maintain his permanent residence in Crescent City so that he could eventually receive a clear title to his homestead. He therefore left his wife and children on it,³⁸ and took every possible opportunity to go back and supervise what land he had under cultivation. Consequently, Barker was often away from his college post when crises developed. This situation caused ill-feelings between the president and the remainder of the faculty.

The president's lack of knowledge of the land-grant idea, his frequent absences from the campus, and the slowness of adequate physical facilities to develop soon led to clashes with the younger and more enthusiastic members of the faculty. The first signs of an internal struggle within the college occurred shortly after the opening of the first full-length academic year.

A Brief Evaluation of the Barker Administration

With President Barker preoccupied with his land holdings, teaching classes, and the effort to sell the college bonds, as well as

³⁶ Berlin B. Chapman, A manuscript entitled "President Robert Barker," in "The Angie Debo College Collection," (Author's Library), [n.p.].

³⁷ For the requirements to establish residency under the Homestead Act of 1862, see Henry Steele Commager (ed.), Documents of American History (7th ed.) (New York, 1963), pp. 410-411.

³⁸ OAMC, H. E. Thompson to Angie Debo, March 14, 1957, "The Angie Debo College Collection," (Author's Library).

administrative duties, it is highly doubtful that he had, or took, the time to create a set of educational objectives specifically designed for the Oklahoma agricultural college. Instead, he continued to operate under the ideas that guided him while he taught common school. Thus he seemingly was content to view the college as an agricultural preparatory school. It is true that on one occasion he told a group of legislators "in this institution we consider that we have but a reflection of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Kansas."³⁹ This statement, however, must be considered as an exaggeration. The Kansas State Agricultural College by this time was permanently established, had in excess of a thousand students, and had a collegiate type management. The Oklahoma college was not yet permanently located and had fewer than a hundred students, and Barker's dealings with his faculty smacked of a principal-teacher relationship rather than a president-professor relationship.

Spending the summer of 1892 in Crescent City, President Barker returned briefly to the campus in September. After a stay of only a couple of weeks, he then spent the majority of the next three months with his family.⁴⁰ By late October issues of such importance were cropping up in faculty meetings that it often appeared an academic mutiny was afoot. On the 24th, with Dr. Neal chairing the session, George Holter moved that a committee of the faculty be appointed to submit a plan for disciplining students who were not satisfactorily performing classroom

³⁹OT, House Journal, (1893), p. 351.

⁴⁰Barker's absences from the campus may most easily be calculated by checking the register of the hotel where he stayed. For exact dates, see SO, "Register of the Stillwater City Hotel," (Payne County Historical Society), *passim*.

work.⁴¹ This motion referred not only to a discipline problem, but it also called attention to the fact that the president had failed to organize the faculty into standing committees. Moreover, Professor Magruder moved that a committee of the faculty be appointed to confer with the board of regents about a proposed division of the preparatory class.⁴² His action constituted, of course, a break in the regular academic chain of command. The motion was tabled and at the following meeting withdrawn,⁴³ but it still indicated a growing dissatisfaction with the Barker administration. At the latter meeting it was also proposed that a set of parliamentary rules be adopted. This motion perhaps reflected upon the manner in which Magruder's proposal was handled.

During the months of November and December the academic disputes became more intense. On November 14th, Magruder moved "everything affecting students or Faculty shall be discussed, voted upon and carried, ordered published by the Faculty, prior to any announcement to that effect by the president or any member of the Faculty."⁴⁴ At the next regularly scheduled meeting a motion by Professor Clark indicated that the college badly needed its executive on campus. He moved a committee be appointed to "confer immediately with the City Council in regard to wood to supply the present need of the college."⁴⁵ Furthermore, the twin insurgents of the faculty--Holter and Magruder--were appointed to

⁴¹OAMC, "Minutes of the First Faculty," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 113.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ibid., p. 114.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 116. The motion was defeated.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 119.

communicate to President Barker that he had been selected to chair the wood committee. The next month student discipline on the campus fell to a new low. A significant number of young men were involved in incidents of drunkenness, stealing, and illegal meetings.⁴⁶ After punishments were meted out to the guilty parties, the executive declared that the work of the special committee to revise the college disciplinary code was not valid.⁴⁷ He did, however, acquiesce in the matter of appointing standing faculty committees, and on January 16, 1893 six were established. In subsequent meetings Barker listened with more sympathy to the requests of the faculty for additional instructors to be appointed the following year.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, no noteworthy action was taken.

The following year, as surviving academic records suggest, some progress was made in improving the quality of instruction offered at the A. and M. college. The farmer-president also took an increasing interest in other institutional affairs. He was particularly active in working with the state legislature, detailing the financial requirements of the college in the immediate future.⁴⁹ Here his experience as a territorial politician worked to the benefit of the college. It does, however, remain a fact that on Barker's last recorded meeting with the faculty no formal expressions of gratitude were extended. Neither did local newspapers or student publications lament his academic passing. Nevertheless, in later years some people who knew him personally took a

⁴⁶ Ibid., pp. 127-129.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 130.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 140.

⁴⁹ OT, House Journal, (1893), p. 349.

more charitable view of the first president. In 1965 an early student wrote:

I looked over the President's pictures in the 50 year book --and think other Presidents [sic] may have had greater gift and ability. President R. J. Barker and not leave out the first faculty made a great beginning--with what they had to work with.⁵⁰

Barker's troubles with the faculty did not all stem from personal ineptness. The professors by and large were fresh from land-grant colleges just beginning to acquire national reputations,⁵¹ and were anxious to shape the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Oklahoma into the mold of their almes matres. President Barker realized that in the 1890's the Stillwater institution was not yet in a position to implement many of the bold ideas being discussed elsewhere and was often forced into the unpopular position of having to hold the enthusiasm of the young professors in check.

An Analysis of the Faculty of the Oklahoma Station

There were many exciting things connected with land-grant colleges and universities in the decade before the turn of the twentieth century. Nothing, however, supersedes the contributions made by the experiment stations that were attached to them by the Hatch Act of 1887. This piece of legislation charged the station personnel to conduct original research and to verify experiments in certain scientific areas.⁵² Theoretically,

⁵⁰OAMC, Emma Dent to B. B. Chapman, November 14, 1965, "Early Student Correspondence Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

⁵¹A good review of the transition of land-grant colleges into universities is contained in Frederick Rudolph, The American College and University: A History (New York, 1965), pp. 265-286.

⁵²U. S. Statutes at Large, Vol. XXIV, p. 440 (1887).

it may have been the intention of the framers of the law to use the faculty of experiment stations purely to perform investigative functions, but it was not long until prominent members of the government such as Edwin Willets, the Assistant Secretary of Agriculture,⁵³ and land-grant academicians were urging scientists to step into the classrooms and before the public to publicize the results of their research. Louis L. McInnis, Chairman of the Faculty of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas, along with George Atherton of Pennsylvania State College, in particular stressed this view. McInnis vigorously put it thus:

In my opinion, the practical relation between the agricultural experiment stations and the colleges is that the stations are to occupy a coordinate position with the college departments having instruction for their purpose. Their purpose is investigation, but the final use of investigation is instruction; not necessarily the instruction of youth, but the instruction of all studies and teachable minds.⁵⁴

Such statements cleared the way for land-grant colleges and universities to become centers for research and the popularization of knowledge, as well as being institutions to transmit classical subject matter.

The Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College had no debate concerning whether station personnel should perform in the classroom. Both shortages of funds and of instructional faculty made it a necessity. In fact, the station scientists probably had often to teach to the virtual exclusion of their research interests. But by working long hours and performing a variety of duties, such personnel contributed greatly to

⁵³USDA, OES, Miscellaneous Bulletin No. 2, Proceedings of the Third Annual Convention of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations (Washington, 1891), pp. 86-87.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 78.

the development of the institution and the territory.⁵⁵ An example of a man who worked in this vein was the first director of the experiment station.

Dr. James Clinton Neal, the oldest and most experienced member of the academic staff, was employed in August, 1891 as station director.⁵⁶ In reality, however, he was much more. A student publication commented upon his premature death in 1896 in the following terms:

To those who think Dr. Neal's place can be easily filled by any one man, we will name the branches which he taught. They are as follows: Geometrical Drawing, Physical Geography, Physiology and Hygiene, Botany, Entomology, Zoology, Meteorology, Biology and Geology, besides his Station work.⁵⁷

To these duties should be added others--that he personally answered large volumes of daily correspondence, served often as chairman of faculty meetings, wrote station bulletins, held the position of acting president during the early college's darkest hour,⁵⁸ and served as a friend to all who needed one.⁵⁹ Frank Waugh, his brilliant colleague, summarized the feelings of most of Neal's subordinates when he once

⁵⁵Francis Richard Gilmore, "A Historical Study of the Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Station," (Unpublished Ed. D. Dissertation, Oklahoma State University, 1967), pp. 74-78.

⁵⁶D. C. McIntosh, Don M. Orr, and C. White, "The Story of Agriculture of Less than College Grade in the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College from December 25, 1890 to June 1, 1940," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 3.

⁵⁷The Oklahoma A. and M. College Mirror (Stillwater), January 16, 1896, p. 6.

⁵⁸During this period Neal wrote to his sister: "I have been President for the last three weeks....I have two classes each day now, and besides am writing two bulletins, reports and a correspondence that is quite large, often 50 letters per week. I am up till 10 each night." OAMC, James Neal to Jennie Neal, November 22, 1894, "The James Clinton Neal and Family Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

⁵⁹OAMC, Amie Neal Jamison to E. A. Jarrell, [n.d.], "The James Clinton Neal and Family Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

said: "Dr. J. C. Neal, director of the experiment station, was the best known, best loved, most respected and most influential man on the staff."⁶⁰ This evaluation came from a man who later taught at the Massachusetts Agricultural College and wrote twenty-two books on agriculture and hundreds of articles for professional journals.

Personally, Dr. Neal was an unusually kind man. This fact reflected itself in his dealings with his students and family. As a young man he served two enlistments in the Civil War. He first saw action with the 138th Regiment, Indiana Infantry, where his name was associated with William Mershon "who won fame as 'the drummer boy at the battle of Shiloh'."⁶¹ Neal's second enlistment began on March 10, 1865.⁶² The tender-hearted man, however, was not suited for military life. Besides being near-sighted, he abhorred the destruction of war. While traveling on a train shortly before the second enlistment, he wrote:

War is stern, savage, awful in the huge cannon, the long lines of earthworks, the hordes of glistening and gleaming bayonets. Nature is beautiful, shady groves, springs, and rivers. War is cruel, gloomy, when the patients come in from the front, mangled, bruised, torn, lame, and crippled for life. I have seen all this and more.⁶³

While the Civil War loosed in some men a spirit of adventure and a continuing lust for an active and wandering life, it worked just the opposite in James Neal. Deeply moved by his combat experiences, he decided to devote the remainder of his life to the cause of humanity.

⁶⁰OAMC, "Selections from the Record Book of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1891-1941," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 86.

⁶¹The Tulsa World, November 28, 1965, p. 6.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³OAMC, James Neal to Jennie Neal, January 28, 1864, "The James Clinton Neal and Family Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

In 1869 the ex-soldier received two degrees from the land-grant college at Ann Arbor, Michigan.⁶⁴ The latter of these degrees, which was awarded for a course of study consisting of medical, scientific, and pharmaceutical classes, entitled him to be called Dr. Neal. Following graduation, he gained employment at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D. C.⁶⁵ Later he became affiliated with the Florida Agricultural College.⁶⁶ As a result of his friendship with Governor George Steele, Professor Neal was offered the Directorship of the Oklahoma Experiment Station.⁶⁷

By 1890 Neal held a conservative view of what the purpose and functions of an experiment station should be. He believed, for example, that the Oklahoma institution should provide farmers with information about soil, temperature, rainfall, and crops.⁶⁸ Since the territory had only recently been settled, this type of activity was quite natural. Yet to be in line with the thinking of many of the national leaders in this area, he should have also stressed more abstract investigations.⁶⁹ On the other hand, however, Dr. Neal was not content to see the station develop into a model farm. Secondly, the director believed that his

⁶⁴OAMC, Nancy B. Kremkus to B. B. Chapman, September 29, 1965, "The James Clinton Neal and Family Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

⁶⁵OAMC, [Willa Adams, "Scrapbook of Willa Adams," n.p.] in "The Dusch Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷The Stillwater News-Press, December 7, 1952, p. 10.

⁶⁸OAES, Bulletin No. 1, p. 8.

⁶⁹For example, see USDA, OES, Miscellaneous Bulletin No. 3, Proceedings of the Fourth Annual Convention of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations (Washington, 1892), p. 55.

staff of scientists should perform largely a teaching function, but in this area too, he was not an absolutist. His annual report for the year 1894 included the remark that the ideal situation was one where both research and instruction were combined to the mutual advantage of each.⁷⁰

In implementing his educational position, Professor Neal had two sources of constant irritation. The board of regents, including President Barker, and the territorial legislature were lax in providing funds and moral support for scientific research. A somewhat typical attitude was expressed by one of the regents who was a Guthrie grain and cotton dealer. He stated he could get a good stenographer for his office for seventy-five dollars per month and therefore could not see why a faculty member of the college should ask for more.⁷¹ Secondly, the law that established the experiment station was badly written and consequently made it impossible to know whether the station director or the college farmer had the most authority. Frank Northup, a reporter for the Stillwater Gazette, thought the farmer often hindered Neal, Magruder, and Waugh in their efforts to make scientific investigations. To illustrate, the farmer once told Northup: "I'll show these young squirts where to get off. When it comes to farming I know my stuff."⁷² This man was a philosophical cousin to those "practical" farmers who believed they knew all about agriculture because they had worn out several farms prior to migrating to Oklahoma.

⁷⁰ Gilmore, p. 31.

⁷¹ James K. Hastings, "Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College and Old Central," The Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXVIII (1950), p. 83.

⁷² OAMC, "Selections from the Record Book of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1891-1941," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 49.

After several years of fighting financial problems, attempting to get along with inept political appointees on the farm, and seeing his family live in quarters where his daughters had to place an umbrella over their bed in the winter to prevent snow from dampening blankets,⁷³ Dr. Neal aspired for the presidency of the college.⁷⁴ The added monetary rewards and increased prestige would have partially alleviated many of his personal difficulties. Failing health, lack of positive accomplishments at the experiment station, and other factors, made this objective impossible to attain. In 1895, he was relieved as station director but retained as a member of the faculty. His replacement, Colonel Henry Glazier, was not an academic man. Instead he sat on the board of regents and considered himself a "practical" farmer. Home, Field, and Forum, an Oklahoma agricultural magazine, protested the change by publishing editorials ridiculing the new appointee, stating among other things that:

Several of the students at the Agricultural college at Stillwater are far better qualified to act in the capacity of Horticulturist than Colonel Glazier. They at least know Johnson grass from toesits and will not advocate the driving of nails into or the hanging of horseshoes onto fruit trees in order that they might have an abundant supply of iron.⁷⁵

The practical man at Stillwater prunes vines and fruit trees during the middle of August, while the sap is in full flow. We naturally wonder if he seriously intends this as a 'practical' experiment. While such unseasonable pruning is of itself almost enough to kill the trees and vines, this presumptuous, self-styled 'practical' man even attacks the roots and tears them asunder with the turning plow; and that too, right in the midst of the growing season. This is, indeed,

⁷³OAMC, Amie Neal Jamison to B. B. Chapman, May 31, 1962, "The James Clinton Neal and Family Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

⁷⁴The Stillwater Gazette, July 4, 1895, p. 2.

⁷⁵Quoted from The Payne County Populist (Stillwater), August 22, 1895, p. 8.

experimenting with a vengeance, and we must insist is a very impractical kind of 'practical.'⁷⁶

During his tenure at the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, Dr. Neal represented a transitional scientific figure. His training at the University of Michigan was completed before the teachings of Darwinism had thoroughly penetrated the sciences.⁷⁷ Being of the old school, he largely thought of science as the instrument for the accumulation of a large number of helpful facts, but he did not reach the point of incorporating these data into structured forms that attempted to explain cause and effect relationships. Nevertheless, he was the man who held the institution together during the early uncertain years. Herein lies his major contribution to the development of the college. Some of the younger members of the experiment station faculty, however, were products of modern universities, held different scientific views, and

⁷⁶Quoted from The Payne County Populist, September 26, 1895, p. 6.

⁷⁷In 1909, John Dewey made the following observation concerning the influence of Charles Darwin's book, The Origin of Species. "No wonder, then, that the publication of Darwin's book, a half century ago, precipitated a crisis. The true nature of the controversy is easily concealed from us, however, by the theological clamor that attended it. The vivid and popular features of the anti-Darwinism row tended to leave the impression that the issue was between science on one side and theology on the other. Such was not the case - the issue lay primarily with science itself, as Darwin clearly recognized." John Dewey, "The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy," in Bert James Loewenberg (ed.), Darwinism: Reaction or Reform? (New York, 1966), p. 52.

By roughly 1900, the conflict in the sciences was nearing resolution. The idea of taking factual data and formulating all-encompassing natural laws was passing from vogue. Instead, modern scientists were looking for causal relationships. In addition, a significant number of professors in land-grant colleges broadened the areas in which they did research. In other words, they believed the farmer "had other problems besides insects, hail, frost, and the sterility of his prize boar." Theodore H. White, "Action Intellectuals: Scholarly Impact on the Nation's Past," Life, LXII (1967), p. 56. See also Thorstein Veblen, "Why Is Economics Not an Evolutionary Science?" The Quarterly Journal of Economics, XII (1898), passim.

were more serious about pressing their newly discovered knowledge into the minds of the rough-edged sons and daughters of the Oklahoma prairie. Thus the real core of the teaching and researching personnel of the college during this period was an agricultural triumvirate composed of George Holter, Alexander Magruder, and Frank Waugh.

The first of these three men, George Holter, was recognized by his colleagues as the best trained man on the staff. After graduating from Pennsylvania State College and studying in several German universities, he came to Stillwater to be station chemist and to teach chemistry,⁷⁸ which subject was regarded as "the first real science of the new age,"⁷⁹ An early student recalled Holter's abilities in the following words:

He could read German textbooks and had quite a large library of scientific books. The first aggies [sic] could not speak or write much without mentioning Holter. He gave us vision and inspiration and did all that a great teacher could do - he led us to the fountain of science where it was up to us to drink.⁸⁰

In addition to being a superb teacher, Professor Holter also recognized that the students of A. and M. needed someone both to discipline them and to explain what higher education was all about. After all, the students had no upper classmen to imitate or to query about their new environment. In a stern and uncompromising manner, the former Pennsylvanian assumed this task.⁸¹ While he got away with being blunt and abrupt with students, these attributes did not always please the president and

⁷⁸Hastings, p. 83.

⁷⁹Edward Danforth Eddy, Colleges for Our Land and Time: The Land-Grant Idea in American Education (New York, 1956), p. 9.

⁸⁰Jarrell, p. 324.

⁸¹George L. Holter, "When the School Was Young," The A. and M. College Magazine, I (1929), p. 12.

board of regents. These people tended to tolerate him, since he was one of the better chemists in the nation, but in spite of his subject matter abilities he was never seriously considered for the presidency of the institution because of his frankness.⁸² Holter trained a large number of young men in chemistry who later went onto distinguished careers in academic and government circles.

The second member of the station teaching force was Alexander Magruder, the son of a prominent professor of the English language. Colorful, well-tailored, a military veteran, and a man who turned many a young lady's eye as he rode his horse "Damit" along Stillwater streets, Magruder had a good working knowledge of the mission of land-grant colleges and strove during his years in Oklahoma to make it a scientific institution in the modern sense. Buttressed with his degree from Mississippi A. and M., post-graduate work in Germany,⁸³ and two years experience at the West Virginia Experiment Station, he set about to do two things. First, he attempted to build an academic tradition of excellence by awarding the Magruder medal to students showing outstanding ability in agriculture.⁸⁴ Secondly, he established the Magruder Plot,

⁸²OAMC, Frank Northup to B. B. Chapman, December 22, 1962, "The Northup Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

⁸³Harper, p. 6.

⁸⁴Since the college had no graduation exercises until 1896 Magruder believed that the students needed something visible to work for. Three medals constructed of solid gold were presented to Katie Neal, George Bowers, and Arthur Adams, respectively. Berlin Chapman, "Medal Collection Complete," The A. and M. College Magazine, XV (1943), p. 7; The Stillwater News Press, August 26, 1956, p. 15. Portions of the addresses that won medals may be read in The Stillwater Gazette, June 23, 1893, p. 1; The Eagle-Gazette (Stillwater), June 21, 1894, p. 1; The Stillwater Gazette, June 13, 1895, p. 1.

which is the second oldest continuous plot of ground in the United States for conducting agricultural experiments.⁸⁵

During the summer of 1895 Professor Magruder was rewarded by the board of regents by being abruptly dismissed. Returning from a brief vacation, he was told that his services the next year would no longer be needed. When Governor William Renfrow heard this news, he promptly offered Magruder the position of State Superintendent of Public Schools for Oklahoma, but the latter declined, choosing instead to attend Tulane University, where he received a medical degree in 1900.⁸⁶ Before leaving the college, however, the twenty-six year old teacher and scientist left an indelible imprint on the institution. He fathered the emphasis on academic excellence that has later characterized the scientific schools of the university for many years.

The last member of the agricultural trio was Frank Waugh. He joined the faculty on February 28, 1893, shortly after receiving his Master's degree from the Kansas State Agricultural College.⁸⁷ A short plain-appearing man of twenty-three, Waugh was the most popular teacher on the campus and the chief means of communication between the students and the faculty. His contribution, however, to the college, and to the nation as well, came in the scientific area. Professor Waugh was one of the leading American scholars who de-emphasized the teachings of a Frenchman named Antoine Poiteau, and pioneered the offering of science subjects as both technical and liberal arts courses.

⁸⁵Harper, pp. 6, 15.

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Miller, p. 15.

The French horticulturalist Antoine Poiteau constructed a model for teaching his specialty as a vocational subject that was widely imitated in the United States. Frank Waugh believed it was permissible to use this instrument if one were teaching a horticultural course in a technical school, but in college he thought the subject should be taught "as a disciplinary study in the scheme of liberal education."⁸⁸ Horticulture should teach a student to observe, to reason accurately, to present his thoughts cogently, and to cultivate the aesthetic tastes--these items to teach the development of the whole man.⁸⁹

To illustrate this premise, Professor Waugh wrote an article entitled "Ideals of Horticultural Instruction" wherein he maintained that there were three aspects of horticulture, each laid in a different field of knowledge: (1) a science, a branch of botanical science; (2) a philosophy, based on the science and typified in the evolution course; (3) an art, illustrated in landscape gardening.⁹⁰ He also concluded in this same article that a college course embodying such principles could teach a vocation and provide a liberal education as well. He completed his thoughts by comparing the advantages of this approach to that espoused by the Frenchman. He wrote that those who follow the lead of the latter individual

cultivate the practical side of the subject, in preference to the liberal aspect; their ideal is an institute of horticultural technology. The followers of Professor [Liberty] Bailey bring into the foreground the requirements of a liberal education; and while they teach technology, treat it as of secondary

⁸⁸ Quoted from The Oklahoma A. and M. College Mirror, February, 1898, p. 2.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

importance. Horticulture is a required study in agricultural colleges generally. For students, who do not follow that occupation in after years, the technology is of comparatively little value; while the student who pursues a course shaped according to the second ideal develops in a manner to increase his satisfaction in life, whatever his surroundings may prove to be.⁹¹

Waugh's concept of horticultural instruction was not appreciated by some people associated with A. and M. College. A newspaper writer reported he was "fired to make a place for an auctioneer-farmer near Orlando who was prominent in politics and he had 'planted an orchard.'"⁹² Leaving Stillwater, the engaging young man traveled to Europe and studied in French and German universities.⁹³ Later he achieved national prominence at Cornell University and the Massachusetts Agricultural College.

In the final analysis, a college or university is no better than its faculty.⁹⁴ In the case of the Oklahoma Morrill college, the combination of Neal, Holter, Magruder, and Waugh gave the institution an

⁹¹The article "Ideals of Horticultural Instruction" was written after Frank Waugh left the Oklahoma A. and M. College. Many of the students' essays, however, that were written while Waugh was in Stillwater evidence the same type of indoctrination. For example, see the oration entitled "Landscape Gardening" given by J. H. Adams in June, 1895 at the annual closing exercises. It may be read in part by consulting The Stillwater Gazette, June 13, 1895, p. 1.

While such changes in agricultural courses have been widely publicized, it should not be forgotten that the same was also true in the mechanic arts. Speaking on this subject, President Francis A. Walker of M. I. T. said: "Our shops are not factories, but laboratories. It is not the thing made, but the training, the discipline, the practice, which the student obtains in the making, which forms the object in view." Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Annual Report of the President and Treasurer, Session of 1896 (Cambridge, 1897), p. 39.

⁹²OAMC, Frank Northup to B. B. Chapman, December 22, 1962, "The Northup Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

⁹³OAMC, [Willa Adams, "Scrapbook of Willa Adams," n.p.] in "The Dusch Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

⁹⁴Vernon Carstensen, "A Century of Land-Grant Colleges," The Journal of Higher Education, XXXIII (1962), p. 31.

extremely capable faculty for a college of its size and endowment. But these men were soon relieved of their duties, and "the college was badly crippled by the appointment of political neer-do-wells...."⁹⁵ This situation cost the fledgling institution prestige, and the quality of research and instruction degenerated. Yet it would be incorrect to assume that the faculty of the station were fired exclusively to make room for political appointees. There was in some quarters antagonism to the educational practices and objectives of these men. The demotion of Director Neal, the replacement of Magruder and Waugh, and the eventual loss of Professor Holter represented during the early years the demise of modern scientific thought on the campus.

An Analysis of the Faculty of the Preparatory School

The earliest classes conducted at the college were not collegiate, but instead were of the high school variety. The faculty could find no qualified students to enter the freshman class. Therefore, President Barker appointed individuals to scour the locality for bright students who could qualify for college work after a year or two of preparatory studies.⁹⁶ During the "itinerant years," two men, Edward Clark and Harry Thompson, secured and taught students enrolled in such a school. Each man made an important contribution to the success of the land-grant experiment in Oklahoma.

The first faculty member appointed to organize and supervise the activities of the preparatory department was Edward F. Clark, who was

⁹⁵OAMC, A. E. Jarrell to B. B. Chapman, September 22, 1957, "The Jarrell Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

⁹⁶Jarrell, pp. 316-317.

currently serving as the principal of the common schools in the locality.⁹⁷ A graduate of an unidentified normal school, he had in previous years taught classes in the Swope Building, the Congregational Church, and now the Methodist Church.⁹⁸ In 1891 he experienced difficulty with a high school student in one of his classes; after being exonerated from certain charges by an investigation conducted by Simon Myers, a Presbyterian clergyman sent to Oklahoma the year before by the Board of Home Missions, Clark decided to resign and accept the position offered to him by Robert Barker.⁹⁹ Clark was a popular teacher, and he secured approximately fifty of his former pupils to enroll for the first classes offered by the college.¹⁰⁰

Professor Clark proved to be an excellent choice to give beginning instruction to the early students. An environmentalist, he believed that those things which a person learns in his youth will set the pattern for future conduct. Thus he attempted to instill in his students a sense of responsibility and give them a code to live by. His speech, "Honor and Integrity," delivered early in the history of the college, found him emphasizing the value of choosing certain people as models. He spoke:

Early training, early associations, early reading when the mental faculties are unusually active and impressions are readily made, has much to do with the moral culture of the mind. History with its various unfoldings of the human character and its record of greatness and failings of men and nations, furnishes an abundant source wherein the true seeker may find mental food

⁹⁷SO, "Stillwater's First School Board Minutes," (Payne County Historical Society), p. 81.

⁹⁸Ibid.; The Stillwater Daily Press, September 18, 1934, p. 1.

⁹⁹Jarrell, pp. 316-317.

¹⁰⁰J. H. Adams, "When the College Was Young," The A. and M. College Magazine, XII (1942), p. 9.

essential to the development of a noble mankind or a pure womanhood. Bible history furnishes the reflective mind many characters imbued with many virtues. The history of the Old World is made to read with fascinating charms by virtue of the nobleness of its numerous martyrs to faith, government, and justice. Yet I am too patriotic to believe that it is strictly necessary for an American youth to go without the limits of our own beautiful domain to seek an ideal worthy of his admiration. The pages of our history with which every youth should be familiar, are resplendent with renowned and illustrious characters which, for their nobility of purpose in the establishment of liberty and the nurturing of free institutions of learning have received the plaudits of the civilized world.¹⁰¹

The students so enjoyed such speeches that they often forgot the humble physical surroundings of the college.

In 1892 Professor Clark accepted an appointment to teach college mathematics courses. He stayed at the Stillwater institution until 1898, departing then for greener pastures. An early college verse states that he died of lymphatics, but no concrete record of this allegation remains.¹⁰² His preparatory school replacement was destined to be one of the most colorful and inspiring individuals to grace a college classroom.

Harry Thompson, the son of a Princeton-educated clergyman, received his early education from his father, attended the Catawba County, Kentucky, schools, and then took a normal training course at the Southern Normal School (Western Kentucky State College).¹⁰³ He afterward taught common school at Irving, Kentucky, and Little River, Texas, and

¹⁰¹The Oklahoma A. and M. College Mirror, June 15, 1895, [n.p.].

¹⁰²Jarrell, p. 317; B. B. Chapman, "First Faculty Set Standards," The A. and M. College Magazine, XV (1943), p. 3.

¹⁰³B. B. Chapman, "I Remember the University When," The Oklahoma State Alumnus, II (1961), p. 13.

then became Principal of the high school located at Rogers, Texas.¹⁰⁴

Thus Thompson came to Stillwater as a teacher of some considerable experience.

At Stillwater, Professor Thompson took it upon himself to impress upon the students what higher education was all about. He could be tough on his pupils, but he also disliked seeing them get into serious trouble and miss the golden opportunity which he thought lay before them. Thomas Hartman here recalls the nature of Thompson's duties, and how he could bend when necessary:

Thompson looked after the preparatory department. He was a boy who got most of the rough stuff. It was necessary for him to tame all the wild animals and get them started in the right direction. You must remember that some of us were worse than others. His job required a real 'heman.' Thompson was the man for the job. A tall slender, alert chap, who could take one of those wild boys from the plains and have him 'saddle broke' and 'saddle wise'--headed for the particular pasture where he could find what was best for him. I am grateful to Thompson for helping me out of a heap-o-trouble one night in Old Central when a free for all fight occurred in the Sigma Literary Society. I got cracked on the conk and bled like a stuck pig. Thompson cleared me before the faculty. He had them believing I was a hero--struck down in my line of duty, as it were.¹⁰⁵

Besides taming the preparatory students to the point where they could appreciate the advanced instruction offered by Holter, Magruder, Neal and Waugh, Professor Thompson also deserves the distinction of being one of the earliest persons to suggest to students that black and orange would be good colors for the college. This was undoubtedly a tribute to his father.

¹⁰⁴"Last of the A. and M. Faculty," The A. and M. College Magazine, XXI (1949), p. 11. Thompson brought excellent letters of reference from these institutions.

¹⁰⁵OAMC, ["Biographical Sketch of Harry Thompson," n.p.] in "The Hartman Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

Neither Edward Clark nor Harry Thompson was as well trained as were their more scientifically-minded colleagues attached to the experiment station. They did, however, contribute measurably to the educational history of the early college. Both of these men believed in the positive value of a higher education for the masses. Thus they constantly strived to add enough academic luster to sons and daughters of midwestern farmers so that they could eventually enter college and better prepare for the challenges of the future. As such, they were as close to the mission of the Morrill acts as their fellow instructors.

Conclusion

The foremost aspect of the A. and M. college during the "itinerant years" was its diversity. At least three distinct forces were working to shape and color its current and future mission. The first of these, the board of regents, may best be visualized as an extension of the Oklahoma Territorial Legislature. These men played a somewhat passive, but important, role in the development of the institution in that they simply attempted to implement the founding law. With the possible exception of President Robert J. Barker, the regents were primarily of the business class and viewed the supervision of a college as being comparable to the running of a market place. The board worked to build a physical plant, appointed personnel to tend the store, and spent whatever money was available for equipment. But for being so close to the institution, they had a remarkable lack of educational vision. There were no dreams of building a Cornell, Michigan, Wisconsin, or a "Princeton of the Prairie." They were rather ordinary men, and truly products of their own times. In this regard, too, the college was often conceived of

as an organization which could be used to further their own personal ambitions.

The second force which gave guidance to the college through this period was the administration, headed by Robert Barker and James Neal. The former, possessing an adequate knowledge of the common schools, attempted to build a college that would serve as a substitute for the missing high schools of Oklahoma. As with the regents, it was difficult for him to envision the college as something more than a humble frontier institution. Of his integrity and ability there is no doubt. He, too, however, was curiously unaffected by the importance of the position he held. Also his close attachment to his family and his desire to be a landholder, which is understandable since he was a product of the antebellum South, robbed him of much of the time other presidents spent in pursuing more lofty educational aims and objectives. On the other hand, James Neal would very likely have been a better choice to head the institution initially. He showed a willingness and desire to devote the long hours needed to construct an educational institution of merit and excellence. A man with a sound academic background, profitable contacts, and broad experience, he alone of the first faculty possessed the knowledge and skill to build a multi-purpose educational establishment. If he had a major fault, it was that he, like Grover Cleveland, became too deeply involved in his paperwork. While leadership requires dedication and perspiration, it also needs leisure for ideological fermentation. The latter Neal did not have.

The most important force in the early history of the university was the faculty. Possessing differing academic and geographical backgrounds, these individuals became the idea men of the college. They previously

had sampled the exhilaration of being a part of an established and thriving land-grant institution and desired to reconstruct this type of environment at the Stillwater college and station. But in addition, they were also able to work effectively with the quality of students Oklahoma had to offer. They were a combination of progressive and practical men, in touch with their times, but with hopes for something better. To them belongs the credit for planting the seeds of a modern university.

CHAPTER IV

DEMOCRACY'S SCHOOL

The Territory of Oklahoma was opened for settlement in 1889 without adequate provisions being made for civil government. For example, the only officials in the early period who possessed any real authority were a handful of deputy marshals, and their jurisdiction was limited to breaches of federal law. This overall lack of planning had several important social consequences, not the least of which was the fact that "there were no provisions for public schools and the only schools for the first eighteen months were subscription schools."¹ The community of Stillwater was one of the first in the territory to establish elementary and high schools, but without property tax revenues the institutions turned out to be very crude affairs. The Reverend Simon Myers, who agreed to serve as president of the local school board, reported on the state of the high school in 1890:

The room is very small for the number of pupils; the seats are not fastened to the floor and placed too close to pass between them. Not being fastened to the floor the seats frequently work and shove from their place. The room is cold. There is no room for recitation seats. Thus depriving the Teacher from having his class separate from the School during recitations. During windy days the noise and dust caused by the wind are very annoying. The room being so near to the business part of town is also of much annoyance.²

¹Dan W. Peery, "The First Two Years," The Chronicles of Oklahoma, III (1929), p. 289.

²SO, "Stillwater's First School Board Minutes," (Payne County Historical Society), p. 88.

Besides adverse physical conditions, the Stillwater high school suffered major disciplinary problems. Inexperienced teachers, such as a certain Miss Dunn, found it difficult to control the rowdy prairie youth.³ In addition, absenteeism, a common educational malady, constituted a problem. As late as 1897-1898, an annual announcement of the college stated "it is not possible to maintain good schools for more than a few months in each year in some parts of the Territory."⁴ In view of the numerous problems encountered in the effort to develop a complete sequence of public education, the residents of the Stillwater area welcomed the disclosure by President Barker that a preparatory department would be established at the college. As a result, the majority of high school age students received their training at the A. and M. institution. The scheme proved popular, and until 1904 a question existed as to whether the city should maintain a separate high school.⁵

The preparatory department created at the college, however, was designed to be much more than simply an educational instrument to correct deficiencies in the local school system. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the major reasons for founding such a department and to assess its effectiveness during the early years.

The Function of the Preparatory School

The preparatory department inaugurated at the Stillwater A. and M. College was a direct response to certain educational conditions of the

³SO, Stillwater High School Journalism Class of 1935-1936, "Stillwater Public Schools, 1889-1938," (Stillwater Public Library Historical Collection), p. 3.

⁴OAMC, Annual Announcement, Session of 1897-1898, p. 8.

⁵The Stillwater News-Press, September 3, 1963, p. 4.

period. A significant factor in the creation of sub-collegiate schools concerned the lack of good high schools. One of the curiosities of American educational development in the post-Civil War era was that no effective link connected the common schools and the state colleges and universities. Hence, a general purpose of all land-grant preparatory departments involved the creation of a bridge between "the public elementary school and the public university."⁶ The Stillwater institution fell partially into this category. It provided training in arithmetic, grammar, geography, and United States history, subjects which prepared students to pass the oral and written examinations needed to obtain admittance into the collegiate departments.⁷ Secondly, the department included a function designed to serve students who would not be able to attend college classes. For example, agricultural instruction was presented to such individuals in order to enable a preliminary acquaintance with modern farming methods.⁸ A third mission of the school was to assist potential teachers in passing the territorial examinations needed to obtain teaching certificates.⁹ The services of the department were also utilized by mature students who believed it would be embarrassing to attend the regular high schools.

⁶ Frederick Rudolph, The American College and University: A History (New York, 1965), p. 281.

⁷ OAMC, Annual Announcement, Session of 1896-1897, p. 8.

⁸ OAMC, Annual Catalog, Session of 1893-1894, p. 34.

⁹ Harry E. Thompson, "The Territorial Presidents of the A. and M. College," The Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXXII (1955), p. 364. The teacher training courses were taught by Harry Thompson. They were usually offered during the summer months. One of the first teachers to receive her certificate as a result of these classes was Miss Gertie Diem. The Stillwater Gazette, August 26, 1892, p. 5.

A last purpose of the A. and M. preparatory department was to provide an opportunity for the masses to attend college: thus it had a conscious democratic function. The law establishing the institution stated: "Males and females shall be admitted ... and all citizens of the Territory of Oklahoma between the ages of twelve and thirty years shall be admitted to instruction therein, if they apply as students...."¹⁰ After two years, however, the faculty of the college cooperated with the state legislature in making several noteworthy changes. Nevertheless, the new law was not particularly stringent. It stated:

Citizens of Oklahoma between the ages of fourteen and thirty years, who shall pass a satisfactory examination in reading, arithmetic, geography, English grammar, and United States history, and who are known to possess a good moral character, may be admitted to all the privileges of the institution.¹¹

Furthermore, the school was geared financially so that the greatest majority of the populace could afford to attend it. At the turn of the century, the costs of attending older colleges were often prohibitory. To illustrate, the expenses of Yale students were estimated as follows: (1) freshmen year, \$912.00; (2) sophomore year, \$943.00; (3) junior year, \$943.00; (4) and senior year, \$1,034.00.¹² Fees at the Lawrence Scientific School of Harvard were slightly lower. Not including travel, it

¹⁰The Statutes of Oklahoma, (1890), p. 85.

¹¹The Statutes of Oklahoma, (1893), p. 83. While the entrance policies of the law seems very clear, there were notable exceptions. An early student, Emma Dent, recalled that a young Negro girl was refused admission during the academic year 1893-1894. Under territorial laws, segregation in the public schools was subject to county option. Miss Dent revealed that in Stillwater if more than five Negroes were present then separate facilities were provided. In spite of this policy, a young Negro woman named Jackson, who had an acceptable academic background, was denied permission to enroll. OAMC, Berlin Chapman to Edward Morrison, June 28, 1951, "The Angie Debo College Collection," (Author's Library).

¹²The A. and M. College Mirror (Stillwater), October 15, 1895, p. 8.

was estimated that yearly expenses would range from \$372.00 to \$1,303.00.¹³ By contrast, the students of A. and M. could attend classes for less than \$150.00 per year. The amount was divided as follows: (1) room and board, \$100.00; (2) textbooks, \$10.00; (3) military uniform, \$12.00; and (4) incidentals, \$28.00.¹⁴ Lastly, the majority, if not all, of a student's expenses could be earned by working on the station farm at the rate of ten cents per hour.¹⁵

The democratic function of the early school was aptly stated in an address delivered by the Reverend R. B. Foster, the pastor of the local Congregational church. "In the past," he summarized, "society has been divided into privileged classes and the masses. The classes were expected to be educated; the masses, to inherit a life of toil and be content with the minimum of intellectuality."¹⁶ In addition, the speaker believed land-grant colleges were capable of breaking down this rigid social barrier. Concluding his presentation, the minister admonished the working men in the audience to take up the challenge of democracy. He said:

In conclusion, I would say to working men: Put your religion in your hearts, education in your heads, and money in your pockets, and take your rightful place--the world cannot keep you from it. When that is generally done, there will cease to be privileged classes.¹⁷

¹³The A. and M. College Mirror, May, 1898, p. 3.

¹⁴OAMC, Annual Catalog, Session of 1894-1895, p. 33.

¹⁵OAMC, Prospectus of the A. and M. College, Session of 1894-1895, p. 5.

¹⁶R. B. Foster: An untitled address given at the dedication of Old Central on June 15, 1894. [Located in] OAMC, "The Chapman Clipping and Letter Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

¹⁷Ibid.

The Earliest Physical Facilities

Because of the lack of territorial revenue most of the colleges in Oklahoma in the 1890s did not possess instructional buildings. Instead they used whatever public and private structures were available. For instance, the initial classes of the Oklahoma Normal School of Edmond met in the Methodist Church.¹⁸ Likewise, the first classes of the Stillwater college and preparatory school assembled in the local churches. During the 1891-1892 academic year, the students gathered regularly in the Congregational Church.¹⁹ The next year the facilities of the Presbyterian Church were secured, and while Old Central was being built, the city fathers procured the structure used by the congregation of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.²⁰ Various offices in the Payne county courthouse and local newspapers, in addition to the homes of professors, were used as the occasion demanded.

The churches of territorial Oklahoma were not the modern structures of today. Generally speaking, they were frame buildings with little or no ornamentation. The first college printer, Frank Northup, who came to Oklahoma in 1893, recaptured the nature of the local religious edifices in the picturesque words:

In the winter they were uncomfortable, heated by a wood-burning stove near the center. In summer the winds sifted fine dust over students, seats and books with indiscriminate

¹⁸OT, Report of Oklahoma Educational Institutions (Guthrie, 1902), p. 28.

¹⁹Harry Thompson, "1892--A. and M. College--1930," The A. and M. College Magazine, I (1930), p. 4.

²⁰J. H. Adams, "In Retrospect and Prospect," The A. and M. College Magazine, XII (1942), p. 8; SO, Church Directory of the First Methodist Church, [n.c., n. d.], [n.p.].

regularity. Outside sanitation, inside discomfort, dust, the muddy streets, the few board sidewalks limited to the fronts of the buildings.²¹

The interiors of the churches were also very plain, consisting usually of one room; thus all classes were conducted in the same building. This was accomplished by using partitions with rollers to separate students preparing for assignments and those offering recitations. Professor George Holter recalled that the arrangement was less than satisfactory. "The partitions," he stated, "were the best conductors of sound I think I have ever seen. Frequently, ability to hold a recitation became a question of ears, lungs, capacity, and endurance."²² The students' evaluation of the classrooms was of a similar nature. A. E. Jarrell remembered:

There were four or five movable wooden partitions, about eight feet high and twelve feet long, mounted on rollers. The partitions set apart the instructor's desk and the corner seats, thus making a small room with a blackboard or two. Persons in the improvised recitation room were not visible from the main room. The small room was lighted by windows, and some light came over the partitions.²³

Such physical surroundings were not of the type to inspire students to utilize all their energies in the pursuit of knowledge. Therefore, the structures of the churches often suffered damage. James Hastings, a Stillwater resident, believed a different building was sought each year because "one year or term was about all any one church could stand the

²¹OAMC, "Selections from the Record Book of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1891-1941," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 50.

²²George Holter, "When the School Was Young," The A. and M. College Magazine, I (1929), p. 31.

²³Alfred Edwin Jarrell, "The Founding of Oklahoma A. and M. College: A Memoir," The Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXXIV (1956), p. 317.

wild birds among them."²⁴ But in spite of these meager facilities, the educational process did begin, and a new land-grant institution was born.

The Development of Student Responsibility

The first group of students to enroll in the preparatory department of the Oklahoma Agricultural College were not quite sure what to expect from this new experience. Neither they, nor many of their parents, were familiar with the nature of higher education, but there was general feeling that the college presented a unique opportunity. Alfred Jarrell's parents, who had not attended college, urged their son to enroll because they believed he would have better instructors than would students in the public school system.²⁵ James Homer Adams, another initial enrollee, thought the very fact college instructors were called professor was sufficient incentive to become a part of the institution.²⁶ Tom Hartman chose to register for classes as he disliked getting up early in the morning to do farm chores.²⁷ Showing up in ragged clothing, penniless, and with little conception of what "college" was all about, he still convinced Professor George Holter he had the fortitude to pursue his goal. The chemist took Hartman to a local restaurant, secured him employment as a dishwasher, and enrolled him in the preparatory school.²⁸

²⁴James K. Hastings, "Oklahoma Agricultural College and Old Central," The Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXVIII (1950), p. 83.

²⁵Jarrell, p. 316.

²⁶OAMC, "Selections from the Record Book of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1891-1941," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 41.

²⁷Ibid., p. 87.

²⁸Ibid.

Students such as Jarrell, Adams, and Hartman needed to be informed of the functions of land-grant institutions if they were to become effective learners. President Barker began this indoctrination on the first day of the school year.

Almost fifty students appeared at the Congregational Church in Stillwater on December 14 to enroll for classes. If a reminiscence of James Adams is representative, each was youthful and frightened. Leaving his brother Arthur at home because of an illness, James walked to the church, took a seat in the rear of the building, listened to a Bible reading and several lengthy announcements, joined in a prayer, and then gave his complete attention to an inspirational talk given by the president of the college.²⁹ The heavy dark-haired man was followed by another, who looked even more imposing than the first speaker. The latter gentleman, Dr. James Neal, proceeded to explain the nature and purpose of the institution, defined the obligations and responsibilities of the students, and then asked those attending to step forward and sign a mysterious document called the Matriculation Pledge, which signified that the prospective students understood his or her future role at the institution.³⁰ Young James Adams' name was called first. At thirteen, he needed courage to approach the desk in the front of the room; but he falteringly moved forward. When President Barker asked him if he comprehended the nature of the paper he was to sign, James replied in the negative. After another lecture, Adams decided to sign the Pledge and make the attempt to understand it later.³¹

²⁹Ibid., p. 66.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid.

This experience of James Adams, and presumably many of the other students, represents one of the major problems that the faculty faced in regard to the preparatory school. The youthfulness of the boys and girls, the lack of a home educational environment, and the absence of college students to point the way caused the enrollees to misunderstand the role that the professors had in mind for them. Somehow an educational system needed to be devised which would teach discipline, encourage personal development, and keep students in harmony with the objectives of the school until they were mature enough to grasp the meaning and potential of a higher education. The instrument chosen for this important task was a system of military discipline.

The Morrill Act of 1862 was passed, in part, because northern Congressmen surmised that the emphasis on military education in the southern states had measurably increased Confederate capacity to prolong the Civil War. C. W. Dabney, the President of Tennessee University, in a speech presented to the Association of American Agricultural College and Experiment Stations, estimated that almost all of the one thousand graduates of the Virginia Military Institute, the West Point of the Confederacy, had held a position of leadership in the southern Army.³² Thus the suspicions of the legislators proved correct. After the conclusion of the war, the military institution cooperated with the eastern land grant colleges to turn out civilian and military engineers.³³ In many of the

³²USDA, OES, Miscellaneous Bulletin No. 65, Proceedings of the Twelfth Annual Convention of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations (Washington, 1899), p. 65.

³³For example, see Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Annual Report of the President and Treasurer, Session of 1898 (Boston, 1899), p. 96.

Morrill establishments located in the midwest, however, the rationale for maintaining a department of military instruction was altogether different.

The oldest agricultural and mechanical college in the midwest was the institution located at Manhattan, Kansas, which was founded the same year the Morrill Act of 1862 passed. Its idea of military instruction was of a twofold nature: First, it was a method to impart "manliness, alertness, respect for authority and consideration of others;" secondly, in a day when the harmful effects of the rigorous academic training of students in Germany were widely publicized, the officials of the college believed training in physical culture would promote "health, body-building, and correction of unnatural positions."³⁴ To these two concepts, which were eventually also adopted at the Oklahoma Agricultural College,³⁵ the Stillwater institution added one more. Military instruction and drill were needed to combat "the indolence and indisposition always found to exist in a warm climate."³⁶

Captain Lewis J. Darnell and Professor Alexander Magruder instituted the first military instructional program at the college. Lewis Darnell, who had had a distinguished service career in the Union Army, took the position of drill instructor reluctantly; but President Barker played upon his local loyalties by explaining the city might lose the institution if every letter of national and state land-grant legislation

³⁴Kansas State Agricultural College, Sixteenth Biennial Report of the Board of Regents and Faculty, Session of 1907-1908, (Topeka, 1908), p. 82. While this document came off the press two decades after the Oklahoma A. and M. College was founded, the ideas expressed in the report were not new. They were simply an explanation of past policy.

³⁵OAMC, Annual Catalog, Session of 1893-1894, p. 42.

³⁶OAMC, Annual Catalog, Session of 1894-1895, p. 93.

were not complied with,³⁷ Thus he accepted. For perhaps the same reason, Alexander Magruder agreed to present twenty-four lectures on military tactics and the composition of foreign armies.³⁸ Together these two men attempted to instill discipline into the sub-collegiate students. Their earliest efforts were upon occasion more humorous than educational.

One reason Captain Darnell did not want to associate himself with the school's military program concerned the fact that the president, through a misunderstanding of the Morrill Act of 1862, wanted females as well as males to participate in drills. The Captain's premonitions of disaster came true on the first day of practice. Commandant Darnell appeared wearing his "Civil War uniform with army belt, cap, and huge square-toed shoes."³⁹ Acquainting the mixed gathering of students with military commands proved frustrating. He first tried to explain the position of attention. "Eyes front, chins in, shoulders back, chests out, stomachs in, toes out," and as the old soldier warmed to his task, "the second finger of your hand on the seam of your pants."⁴⁰ Then silence, a snort, a giggle, and finally pandemonium. Regaining his dignity, the Captain dismissed the company. Turning to a nearby member of the faculty, he shouted: "This is a hell of an army."⁴¹

After adjustments, the character of future drills took on a more orderly appearance. By and large the male students liked the sessions

³⁷OAMC, "Selections from the Record Book of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1891-1941," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 306.

³⁸Ibid., p. 125.

³⁹Jarrell, p. 24.

⁴⁰OAMC, "Selections from the Record Book of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1891-1941," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 306.

⁴¹Ibid.

and took pride in learning proper military bearing. They were a ragged group at first with long and short coats, high and low heeled shoes, and hats of all varieties;⁴² but when the handsome cadet apparel became the order of the day, the students became eager to display their talents.⁴³ On one occasion, the drummer beat his instrument so hard that the head fell out of it.⁴⁴ Such enthusiasm indicated a means of communication had been successfully achieved.

The effect of military drill on the female students of the preparatory department was not unlike the experience of the males. Professor George Holter has preserved a picturesque description of how an April 1892 drill session appeared to a new member of the faculty. He recorded:

The first sight of this cadet corps a couple of days later burned a hole in my memory, and the hole is there yet. You have possibly seen a cartoon of an Irish brigade, but if you have, it certainly does not give you much light on the subject for a sight of this cadet corps beggars description. Picture if you can, a lot of girls in long dresses, in new dresses, having on their heads all shapes and sizes of hats and sun-bonnets, and you have an idea, possibly of the general appearance of the uniforms.... Now take this battalion ... of girls, form them into a company, and drill them in an average Oklahoma wind, and if the sight does not leave an impression in your memory, you are certainly puncture proof to all sights.⁴⁵

Eventually a greater degree of dignity was added to the drills. On October 8, 1894, the wives of Henry Alvord, Freeman Miller, James Neal, and Frank Waugh were asked by the faculty to design an appropriate dress

⁴²Ibid., p. 39.

⁴³George W. Bowers, "Early Military Training," The A. and M. College Magazine, I (1930), p. 4.

⁴⁴The Eagle-Gazette (Stillwater), December 13, 1894, p. 1.

⁴⁵Holter, p. 12.

for the department's girls.⁴⁶ The ladies accepted the assignment, and several weeks later a pattern of a sailor dress with a blouse waist, plain full skirt, and seaman's cap was adopted.⁴⁷ Before, however, the new uniforms were made mandatory apparel, the females were excused from military drill. Nevertheless, the common dress and the ability to perform ceremonial formations in unison must have facilitated the development of a casteless student body, for the school's charges did become a close and harmonious group.

The other effective aspect of militarism on the campus was the system of military discipline devised by the faculty. The Matriculation Pledge placed the students firmly under the control of the faculty. It stated:

Being now about to enter as a student of the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Oklahoma I do hereby acknowledge my obligation and bind myself to obey all its laws and regulations and I pledge myself on honor that so long as I am a student of the College during the term or while I remain at the College during vacation I will not have in my possession any deadly weapons without the consent of the President or Faculty. And I do further pledge myself on honor that I will not join or form any connection with, either directly or indirectly, any secret club, society, fraternity, or other organization composed in whole or in part of students of the College, or attend the meetings or wear the badge of any such secret organization. And I do further pledge myself, on honor, that I will not treat with disrespect by shouting or otherwise any applicant for admission to the College. And I will not engage in 'hazing' or any other maltreatment of a student lately admitted to the institution.⁴⁸

With this document signed, the students were then informed of other rules which they were expected to honor. They were threatened with

⁴⁶OAMC, "Minutes of the First Faculty," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 171.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 180.

⁴⁸Ibid., p. 101.

dismissal for violating the oath, using alcoholic beverages, or interrupting classes, and were generally acquainted with the demerit system of assessing punishments for minor infractions of the institution's regulations.⁴⁹

The demerit system, which did not reach full bloom until the second academic year, was used to encourage student responsibility in a variety of ways. The accumulation of a certain number of points led to instant dismissal. For example, tardiness carried two demerits, an unexcused absence from chapel three demerits, and a willful violation of any college rule twenty-five demerits.⁵⁰ A total of twenty-five demerits resulted in a warning to the student's family; the assessment of forty in one term or one hundred in an academic year brought automatic expulsion.⁵¹

The rules were generally enforced. The faculty minutes remaining for the 1895-1896 school year reveal that nearly fifty students of the preparatory and collegiate departments were expelled.⁵² Often such stringent disciplinary measures served to bind the students together. On two occasions, the faculty preferred charges against a total of twenty-seven students accused of drunkenness, petty thievery, and fist-fighting. In neither instance could the faculty find witnesses who would help them to set the record straight.⁵³ Professor George Holter, who in later years found time to reflect upon the early disciplinary procedures,

⁴⁹Ibid., pp. 101-106.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 210.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid., passim.

⁵³Ibid., pp. 127-128, 269-275.

has provided a good evaluation of the system of military punishments.

"We had peculiar ideas in those days and as I look back upon some of our disciplinary measures," he said, "I think a great many were crude ... but they had one point of merit; they worked to perfection and with little friction."⁵⁴

Occasional aspects of the military disciplinary system, however, some educators would lament. The numerous rules often prohibited individuality and non-conformity. On September 23, 1895, for instance, two Quaker brothers named Oldham requested permission to be excused from military drill on account of religious scruples.⁵⁵ The request was temporarily granted, but a week later an entry in the minutes of the faculty revealed the two boys and their sister had withdrawn from college. The next year, a male student recently admitted to the freshman class addressed a similar request to the faculty by letter. He asked to be excused from attending compulsory chapel exercises on account of religious scruples.⁵⁶ Two reasons were presented to support the request. First, the student believed that the founders of the American nation had intended that religious freedom be granted to all. Secondly, he thought that a land-grant institution should be "free to all citizens of the United States and Oklahoma, without regard to their religious views."⁵⁷ The request was refused. Shortly afterward, the inquiring young student

⁵⁴OAMC, "Selections from the Record Book of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1891-1941," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 40.

⁵⁵OAMC, "Minutes of the First Faculty," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 217.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 215.

⁵⁷Ibid.

left the campus to look presumably for more liberal educational pastures.

While such instances are to be regretted, a defense for the actions of college officials may be made. The faculty recognized that the students were still at the high school level and therefore subject to the concept of in loco parentis. On the other hand, the college officials hoped for something more than moral training. They hoped to instill in each student a sense of responsibility and an understanding of the mission of the institution. This could come about only by regulation of the environment so that a change could occur. As collegiate classes were formed, the faculty relied more and more on upper classmen to set proper behavioral standards. Therefore, the system of military discipline as an academic punishment was not envisioned as a permanent part of the institution. It was a transitional state that a frontier college had to pass through in order to accomplish higher objectives.

The Curriculum of the Preparatory School

The students who entered the preparatory school were expected to complete their studies in one or two years. Generally speaking, the curriculum was divided into two broad areas. First, the morning classes were conducted in the church classrooms and devoted for the most part to studying traditional academic subjects. Secondly, the afternoons were largely devoted to practicums: that is, working on the college farm and experiment station in order to apply some of the information obtained in the classroom. In addition, practicums were also sometimes construed as military drill or simple practice in reading and writing. Thus the faculty attempted to create a curriculum which was composed of pure and applied subject matter.

During the first year of operation, the students received training in English grammar and composition, arithmetic, history, and geography in the mornings.⁵⁸ The afternoons were devoted to military drill, agricultural lectures, and practice in reading and writing.⁵⁹ Those students who were permitted to take an advanced course the first year concentrated on physics, algebra, physical geography, and civics.⁶⁰ Their afternoons were quite similar to the lower group, with lectures in horticulture substituted for agriculture.⁶¹ About two hours a day were reserved in both programs for practicum on the farm, but when this obligation was completed the students were permitted to continue working in order to earn money to apply toward their college expenses.⁶²

The teaching methodology employed by the faculty of the college was a combination of time-honored and more modern techniques. The professors adopted a textbook sequence of instruction before the school opened, but the lack of a bookstore in Stillwater made published works difficult to obtain. Students were encouraged to bring their high school texts to the college, and a simultaneous effort was instituted to locate other reading matter in the city.⁶³ Enough materials were available to hold classes. Finally, the provisions of the Second Morrill Act generously

⁵⁸OAMC, Annual Catalog, Session of 1891-1892, [n.p.].

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²OAMC, "Selections from the Record Book of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1891-1941," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 40.

⁶³Jarrell, p. 317.

provided funds to purchase teaching aids. In 1894, Professor Thompson evaluated the school's items as follows.

This department is well and thoroughly equipped with all apparatus necessary, such as: globe, outline and relief maps; charts of various kinds, historical physical and geographical; a manikin; new materials, etc, etc.⁶⁴

The combination of these items, in addition to the agricultural and horticultural work on the farm, gave the students a varied informational diet.

Some specific information is available concerning course content.

In arithmetic a standard text was used. Fractions, their laws and operations through decimals, elementary banking, square and cube roots in their application to mensuration, and the metric system of weights were covered.⁶⁵

History classes used Edward Eggleston's History of the United States (New York: Appleton and Company, 1888).⁶⁶

The explorations of the Norsemen, the Spanish, the English, the French, and the Dutch were reviewed. Then a stress was placed on their American settlements. The course concluded with a segment on political history in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, including the administrations of American presidents. The classes in physiology touched upon the structure of the human body with a special emphasis on hygiene.⁶⁷

The effects of alcohol and tobacco on the nervous system were also included. English studies were geared toward rhetoric, not literature. An advanced text was used for instruction in English grammar.⁶⁸

⁶⁴OAMC, Annual Catalog, Session of 1894-1895, p. 99.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 100.

⁶⁸Ibid.

geography, a course particularly pertinent to Oklahomans, included climate and geographical patterns as well as laying a foundation for further study in physics, geology, and other related subjects.⁶⁹

The preparatory school remained essentially the same from 1891 to 1902. During the latter year, President Angelo C. Scott appointed Professor G. D. Hancock to the position of principal. Proudly sporting a new master's degree from William Jewell College, he and the president reorganized the department.⁷⁰ They raised the minimum age limit from fourteen to sixteen and increased the requirements for admission.⁷¹ In addition, the mission and name of the institution was altered.

In 1903, the preparatory department became the School of Agriculture and Domestic Economy.⁷² The college agricultural course had proved unpopular; the sons of farmers did not want to attend college to learn how to farm. Therefore, the new department was designed to reduce elementary agriculture from the college level to the high school level, a two year course embodying both theory and practice.⁷³ In reality, the new school became simply a short course in agriculture and domestic economy offered on the campus for the convenience of interested students. The term extended from October to March 15th, about one-half of the regular academic year. Those persons who desired to begin college classes were permitted further training in non-agricultural subjects. This course convened on March 15th and extended into the early summer months. As

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰The College Paper (Stillwater), October, 1902, p. 84.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²The College Paper, October 15, 1903, p. 1.

⁷³Ibid.

with the preparatory department, the School of Agriculture and Domestic Economy proved only moderately successful. Its lasting contribution to the history of the college is that it paved the way for formal extension courses to be offered.

The merits of the preparatory school in relation to the land-grant mission are difficult to assess. Approximately one thousand students were enrolled in the first decade of the school's history,⁷⁴ but a few of these students went on to attend college in Stillwater. There were, for example, about eighty young men and women enrolled in the preparatory department during the opening academic year. Only six remained at the college long enough to obtain a diploma in 1896.⁷⁵ The high attrition rate was not peculiar to the Stillwater college. Professor H. W. McArdle, of the North Dakota Agricultural College, wrote:

The large number of students enrolled in the preparatory course as compared with the number in the college shows the need of such a department. It is a lamentable fact that so few continue their work beyond the preparatory classes.⁷⁶

In spite of these discouraging statistics, the preparatory school did advance the cause of land-grant education. The sons and daughters of farmers were familiarized with the work of experiment stations, acquired a better knowledge of local agricultural conditions, and were exposed to the benefits of a liberal education. In a day when farm families were still economically and socially isolated from their city cousins, the

⁷⁴This is a rough estimate. The figure was obtained by taking what seemed to be a proportionate percentage of the student enrollment statistics in Ruth Howard, "The Development of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College," (Unpublished M. S. Thesis, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1926), pp. 40-41.

⁷⁵The A. and M. College Mirror (Stillwater), May 15, 1895, [n.p.].

⁷⁶North Dakota Agricultural College, Sixth Biennial Report of the Board of Trustees, Session of 1901-1902, p. 65.

preparatory schools were a transitional link which prepared the way for the colleges to assist farmers further in substantially decreasing this growing cultural lag.⁷⁷

An Educational Monument for the Masses

A very real aspiration of the early day students of the preparatory school was to have their own instructional and recreational building located on college-owned grounds. Furthermore, the faculty and the residents of Stillwater were also anxious for the college to have a campus. All were excited, no doubt, when on August 4, 1893, The Stillwater Gazette publicly announced: "Work is being pushed for our Oklahoma Territorial Agricultural College building. The campus, heretofore, sod, has been broken and seeded to cowpeas preparatory to making the lawn."⁷⁸ The article could have added that Dr. Neal had already sketched a landscaping plan, and that the students were prepared to assist voluntarily with the laying of brick.⁷⁹ But the opening of the third academic year brought only gloom. Again, it looked as if the institution was doomed to failure.

The initial obstacle blocking the physical development of the institution concerned the replacement of the entire board of regents by Governor William Renfrow the month before classes were to

⁷⁷While preparatory schools generally contributed to the popularization of the land-grant mission, they were not without critics. Henry Alvord believed they were illegal and often served as simply a substitute for state supported high schools. USDA, OES, Miscellaneous Bulletin No. 30, Proceedings of the Ninth Annual Convention of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations (Washington, 1896), p. 30.

⁷⁸The Stillwater Gazette, August 4, 1893, p. 4.

⁷⁹OAMC, A. E. Jarrell to Berlin Chapman, [n.d.], "The Jarrell Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

convene.⁸⁰ The former regents contested this action by refusing to turn over college funds and by taking court action against the new board composed of J. C. Caldwell, Frank Caruthers, John Clark, Henry Glazier, and J. W. Howard.⁸¹ Secondly, the next month the lands of the Cherokee Strip were opened to homestead filings by the federal government.⁸² Both students and faculty were influenced by tales of overnight riches, and many temporarily deserted their posts in Stillwater to seek claims.⁸³ Thirdly, the location of the college building became the subject of a dispute between the institution's administration and the residents of the surrounding community.⁸⁴ Finally, the college bonds voted by the Guthrie lawmakers in 1893 had not been sold. All of these situations combined to make the prospects for the coming year very bleak indeed.

Of these various problems, the manipulation of the board of regents of the college caused the most repercussions in the Territory. Charles Becker, the editor of the Stillwater Gazette, attempted to keep local people informed of comment throughout the state by reprinting articles that had appeared in other newspapers. On August 18th, three interesting excerpts indicated the different viewpoints.

⁸⁰Freeman E. Miller, The Founding of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College (Stillwater, 1928), p. 14. Renfrow took office on May 7, 1893. He was appointed by President Grover Cleveland. Gaston Litton, History of Oklahoma at the Golden Anniversary of Statehood, Vol. I (New York, 1957), p. 464.

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²OT, Council Journal (1895), pp. 74-75.

⁸³OAMC, "Selections from the Record Book of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1891-1941," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 60.

⁸⁴The Stillwater Gazette, March 31, 1893, [n.p.].

The first article reprinted in the Gazette was from the Edmond Sun. It suggested that the change in the regents occurred because the governor owned a bank in Norman and wanted a board of regents who would let him use the funds of the college as capital for his bank.⁸⁵ As might be expected, a Guthrie Democratic newspaper defended the governor. A writer covering the story for the Guthrie News believed the chief executive had tried to force the former board of regents into activity, but they left town rather than risk a face to face encounter with the governor. Specifically, the paper reported:

They did not dare to look an honest man in the face. They had not the courage to meet the governor of Oklahoma, though he had taken the trouble to invade them on their own dunghill. It would have been a meeting of honesty and rascality. Of courage and cowardice. These men have robbed the territorial treasury and they felt that they were thieves and criminals, and so feeling did not dare await the coming of Oklahoma's executive.⁸⁶

After more general abuse, the regents' individual accomplishments, backgrounds, and characteristics were examined in an equally colorful fashion.

A third article reprinted from the Guthrie Capital, presented the substance of an alleged interview which had previously taken place between the editor of the paper and Amos Ewing, the former treasurer of the board of regents. According to this article, the current trouble was precipitated by the rascality of M. L. Turner, a Guthrie man who had purchased an option on the college bonds, but could not find a buyer which would give Turner's business firm a handsome profit. Judge Ewing

⁸⁵The Stillwater Gazette, August 18, 1893, p. 4.

⁸⁶Ibid.

believed this option should be cancelled and the \$2,500.00 earnest money used to rent a college building until the situation could be untangled.⁸⁷

Charles Becker added his acute political insight to the situation. He believed the former regents should be kept in office unless malfeasance could be proven. If the governor had evidence of wrongdoing, it should be presented in a court of law and not tried in territorial newspapers. He concluded by comments with a probable explanation for the vitriolic reprints.

The Gazette is not disposed to uphold the regents or anybody else in rascality. No one can say we are doing it now.... The facts are that the governor concluded to appoint democratic successors for them and then someone probably some democratic editor at Guthrie, anxious to gain a little cheap notoriety, started a rumor going that their work had been crooked, and without stopping to investigate or wait for the proper parties to make charges before a proper officer that gaseous members of the democratic party over the territory swelled up, and proceeded to gloat over the crime alleged to have been committed by republicans.⁸⁸

Becker's coverage of the alleged college scandals stirred comments, rebuffs, and rebuttals from several sources. About two weeks later an anonymous letter writer defended the governor and stated that he was holding up the final sale of bonds until the new treasurer of the board of regents, Frank Caruthers, could be installed in office. The writer concluded: "That the governor of a commonwealth would use his influence to defeat the best interests of his wards in a charge too unreasonable to claim even passing notice."⁸⁹ A little later, Amos Ewing countered with still another communication. He said that the governor had

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ The Stillwater Gazette, December 1, 1893, p. 4.

promised to have the bond money available to the regents by the time the college building was under construction. The money, however, was not forthcoming when needed, and consequently the building was having to withstand the Oklahoma winter unroofed. Ewing, as had the Edmond Sun earlier, believed the governor was "dragging-his-feet in order to use the money for his bank at Norman."⁹⁰ About the same time, Ewing wrote to the college faculty and asked them to petition the governor for an immediate release of the money.⁹¹ Meanwhile, events were occurring that were to precipitate a settlement.

The end of the 1893 calendar year meant that another installment was due to the Territory of Oklahoma from the Second Morrill Act. Subsequently a check for \$19,000.00 was deposited with the territorial treasurer. Ewing tried to bring court action in order to receive the money; however, jurisdiction was not accepted, because the particular court in question ruled that money was not the issue. The real problem was who was the treasurer of the board of regents.⁹² In March, the governor decided to attempt an out of court settlement. The editor of the Gazette earlier charged the governor had misappropriated some \$21,000.00 related to land sales in the Cherokee Strip.⁹³ In order to give full attention to this matter, Governor Renfrow commissioned C. A. Galbraith, the Oklahoma Attorney General, to drop the unfiled charges against Ewing,

⁹⁰The Eagle-Gazette, January 26, 1894, p.1.

⁹¹OAMC, "Minutes of the First Faculty," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 151.

⁹²The Oklahoma State Sentinel (Stillwater), February 1, 1894, p. 1; The Eagle-Gazette, February 9, 1894, p. 4.

⁹³The Eagle-Gazette, March 30, 1894, p.1.

if the latter man would resign.⁹⁴ Ewing did so. But he failed to turn over all the money that had been entrusted to his care by the first board of regents. Later, he was persuaded to do this also. The new board of regents were by then officially installed, and construction on the college building completed.

The dedication services for the building eventually to be called Old Central were held on the evening of June 15, 1894.⁹⁵ Its completion marked a major turning point in the evolution of Oklahoma State University. First, of course, the structure meant that the institution now had its own campus and could operate independently of community pressures. Secondly, June 15 signaled the end of the Barker administration. Thirdly, the secretary of agriculture, who by now was acquainted with the precarious state of the Stillwater college, decided to intervene directly in the affairs of the institution, and at his suggestion Henry Elijah Alvord replaced the first president. The college now seemed ready to forge ahead.

The importance of the completion of Old Central has previously been discussed in relation to the residents of Stillwater. It meant, however, as much or more to the faculty and students of the institution. To these people, it indicated that classrooms, laboratories, offices, and meeting and recreational rooms were now available. Many of the personnel associated with the early college have taken time to express their affection for this frontier building, but one of the most moving tributes is a

⁹⁴OT, Council Journal, (1895), p. 713.

⁹⁵Berlin Chapman, Old Central in the Crises of 1955 (Oklahoma City, 1965), pp. 76-93.

poem penned by Vingie Roe. At the request of her mentor, Angelo Scott, she verbalized the emotions of thousands of Aggies when she wrote:

The autumn twilight hangs abroad o'er all
 The land, cool, dark, and beautiful. One star
 Glides up the reach of silent, mystic sky,
 And from the plains steals in a southern breeze
 A faint glow fires the west and 'gainst its light
 Tall, black, and shadowy, the College stands.
 And sitting here upon the steps which make
 A dim, white bulk amid the darker gloom,
 A dream, born of twilight, fills my heart --
 A dream of all the faces which have passed
 In at these portals, and come forth again
 In armor strong, invincible, to meet
 The world.⁹⁶

Conclusion

The preparatory department of the Oklahoma A. and M. College, "Democracy's School," is a good example of the strength and versatility of American land-grant colleges and universities. While the majority of the faculty of the local agricultural college were clearly in favor of offering a quality education, they were also "action intellectuals" who thought it would be wrong to turn a deaf ear to the immediate pleas of the youth of the area for an education. Therefore, the faculty reached down to grasp hands that could not reach up to the college. Allan Nevins in his perceptive study of the state universities has cited such phenomena as an illustration of the "fact that although democracy is supposed to begin at the bottom and grow upward, it can begin at the top and pull the bottom to it."⁹⁷

⁹⁶ The College Paper, November 28, 1902, p. 113.

⁹⁷ Allan Nevins, The State Universities and Democracy (Urbana, 1962), p. 66. Also, see Richard Hofstadter and C. DeWitt Hardy, The Development and Scope of Higher Education in the United States (New York, 1952), pp. 42-43.

Herein is the basis for the "democratic" characterization of the preparatory school.

A second significant contribution of the preparatory school concerns its function as a model high school and as an institution to train secondary teachers. In 1862, the United States, outside of the state of Massachusetts, had only 243 high schools or "about 16 for each million people."⁹⁸ In the next thirty years the number of such institutions increased rapidly, but in Oklahoma due to a lack of planning before the territory was opened only a very few such schools existed. Thus the sub-collegiate department of the local land-grant college provided a standard for public schools to emulate.

Thirdly, the preparatory school at Stillwater cleared the path for college classes to be of collegiate quality. While the institution stooped down to provide an opportunity for the masses, it still required the masses to rise to the institution's standards. Therefore, the college curriculum was of better quality than if its entrance examinations had been lowered to permit elementary students to enter directly.

Lastly, the preparatory school was a good source of advertisement for the land-grant college. The thousand students who attended the department lived in nearly every county in Oklahoma. Certainly the experience of being a part of the institution for even a short time must not have been an altogether distasteful encounter, and it may be surmised that brothers and sisters, relatives and friends, and neighbors must have heard of the ideas behind the founding of the Payne county college. This word-of-mouth good will, combined with speeches by faculty members and

⁹⁸ Nevins, p. 50.

publications of the Oklahoma Experiment Station, paved the way for increased future enrollments.

CHAPTER V

THE INVESTIGATION

The board of regents appointed by Governor William Renfrow were firmly in control of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College by April, 1894. Near the end of this month the board discussed a number of important personnel changes. John Clark, the president, led a movement to reorganize the faculty and staff of the college and station. The first notable substitution occurred when B. J. Conley, of Kingfisher county, became superintendent of the college farm, replacing A. V. McDowell.¹ The latter man had generated considerable friction between the station staff and faculty; thus his removal was not seriously protested. On the same day Conley was hired, T. M. Upshaw agreed to take over the duties of college secretary,² a new position that some people charged was created specifically for him. Since a secretary was needed, this appointment was also accepted without undue criticism. In May, however, the reorganization touched a popular member of the faculty. W. W. Hutto, whose brother Frank was a well-known territorial Republican political leader, was released as an instructor of the English language and literature.³ The Eagle-Gazette lamented the Hutto removal,

¹Freeman E. Miller, The Founding of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College (Stillwater, 1928), p. 2.

²Ibid.

³OAMC, "Selections from the Record Book of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1891-1941," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 86.

stating he had gained "the love and esteem of the students and respect and confidence of patrons of the college."⁴ Nevertheless, he was succeeded by a capable man.

Professor Freeman Miller, the replacement, was a native son of Indiana in addition to being recently the recipient of Bachelor and Master of Arts degrees from DePauw University.⁵ While he had migrated to Stillwater to practice law, he was a man soundly trained in history and literature, having graduated valedictorian of his undergraduate class. But in spite of his academic background, the Gazette still charged his appointment to the faculty resulted from right political thinking.⁶ The Sentinel disagreed.⁷ One member of the faculty who was never at a loss for something to say had another explanation to offer. He believed Professor Miller received the appointment because he had been making deep inroads into the law practice of Regent Clark.⁸ Regardless, however, of the divided local feelings, the new teacher performed well at the college. He became the first resident member of the faculty to publish widely in his field and eventually received from local newspapers the title of "poet laureate of Oklahoma."

It is important to note that these changes took place while the institution did not have a president. Robert Barker had earlier retired

⁴The Eagle-Gazette (Stillwater), June 28, 1894, p. 1.

⁵Ibid.

⁶The Eagle-Gazette, May 4, 1894, p. 3.

⁷The Oklahoma State Sentinel (Stillwater), May 10, 1894, p. 4.

⁸OAMC, "Selections from the Record Book of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1891-1941," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 64.

to Crescent City to tend his farm and furniture store, and Henry Alvord was in Washington, D. C. serving as a deputy assistant to the secretary of agriculture. When the latter man arrived in Stillwater, he was immediately embroiled in the political controversy accompanying several of the aforementioned changes. The purpose of this chapter is to examine Alvord's qualifications for the office he was to hold, and to trace the conflict which developed between him and the board of regents.

Meet Henry Elijah Alvord

When Norman J. Colman became the first secretary of agriculture in 1889,⁹ he stated that the department under his jurisdiction should be revitalized, and among his many innovations was the effort to create a closer working relationship with the increasing number of agricultural colleges.¹⁰ The third secretary of agriculture, J. S. Morton, believed much the same way. It was at his request that Henry Alvord received the nomination to fill the vacancy at the Oklahoma Morrill institution.¹¹ Because this suggestion came from a figure high in the national government, and because the former Major Henry Alvord had had a distinguished career in other land-grant institutions, the board of regents thought they had no choice but to confirm him as the second president of the agricultural college located in Stillwater.

⁹For information on the agricultural commissionership, see Earle D. Ross, "The United States Department of Agriculture During the Commissionership: A Study in Politics, Administration, and Technology, 1862-1889," Agricultural History, XX (1946), pp. 129-142.

¹⁰Vernon Carstensen, "A Century of the Land-Grant Colleges," Journal of Higher Education, XXXIII (1963), p. 34.

¹¹OAMC, H. E. Thompson to B. B. Chapman, June 3, 1954, "The Thompson Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

Henry Alvord, the son of a prominent Massachusetts lawyer, received his early education in the public schools of Greenfield and then entered the famous Norwich Academy in Vermont, where Justin Morrill was a member of the board of regents.¹² Leaving the institution in his junior year, he enlisted as a non-commissioned officer in the Rhode Island Cavalry. Subsequently, he served in the Second Massachusetts Cavalry, the Tenth Cavalry, and the Ninth Infantry Division.¹³ By 1871, he had acquired the rank of major, possessed a sterling war record, had worked under Philip Sheridan in the Freedman's Bureau, and had assisted in quelling uprisings in the Iowa, Comanche, and Apache in the southwest,¹⁴ including Oklahoma. In addition, he found time to pen an article entitled "American Beef for British Markets." The latter earned him the Grand Medal of the Royal Agricultural Society of England.¹⁵ He completed his service career by being appointed the first army officer detailed from West Point to become an instructor in military tactics at a land-grant institution.¹⁶

While stationed at the Massachusetts Agricultural College, the restless young major studied agriculture under Charles A. Goessman, a highly competent German who had received his degree in analytical and organic chemistry from Göttingen.¹⁷ At his point, Alvord developed an intense

¹²Alfred C. True, "Henry Elijah Alvord," Dictionary of American Biography, I, ed. Allen Johnson (New York, 1928), p. 238.

¹³Caroline B. Sherman, "A Young Army Officer's Experiences in Indian Territory," The Chronicles of Oklahoma, XIII (1935), p. 146.

¹⁴The Eagle-Gazette, December 20, 1894, p. 1.

¹⁵True, p. 238.

¹⁶Harold Whiting Cary, The University of Massachusetts: A History of One Hundred Years (New York, 1962), p. 43.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 42.

interest in scientific agricultural investigations. Shedding his uniform, he became a member of the faculty of the Massachusetts Agricultural College, lectured regularly at the nearby Williston Seminary, conducted dairy experiments at his farm in Virginia, pioneered cooperative creameries, managed the Chautauqua "School of Farming," and wrote what was probably the first agricultural extension course in the nation.¹⁸ Moreover, he also served on the board which created the Carlisle School for Indians. Beginning in 1880, the young professor began to achieve national fame. He agreed to direct the Houghton Farm at Cornwall, New York, which was patterned after the Rothamsted Station in England. The complete plan for experimentation included investigations in soil physics, plant physiology and pathology, animal breeding, and nutrition.¹⁹ In 1887, the presidency of Maryland Agricultural College was offered and accepted. Besides administrative duties, he sponsored the development of the state experiment station.²⁰ Through this same period, he was also closely connected with the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations, and became a leading figure in the passage of the Second Morrill Act.²¹

¹⁸True, p. 238.

¹⁹Earle D. Ross, Democracy's College: The Land-Grant Movement in the Formative Stage (Ames, 1942), p. 139.

²⁰True, p. 238. Although Henry Alvord stayed only five years at the Maryland Agricultural College, he apparently learned a great deal about collegiate administration. After the ex-major left Oklahoma, James Neal wrote "there are few men his equal as a College President, and none in the United States his superior." OAMC, James Neal to Robert Lowry, January 16, 1895, "The Cunningham Manuscript Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

²¹USDA, OES, Miscellaneous Bulletin No. 1, Proceedings of the Second Annual Convention of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations (Washington, 1899), pp. 23-25, 68-71; Kansas State Agricultural College, Eighth Biennial Report of the Regents and Faculty, Session of 1891-1892. (Topeka, 1893), p. 55.

The Alvord Administration

The fourth academic year of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College started on September 12, 1894.²² The session commenced with 120 students, half of whom were scheduled to take courses on the collegiate level.²³ Only a senior class remained to be formed. The handsome brick building which now adorned the campus was superbly equipped with reference books, maps, charts, models, apparatus, and technical and office furnishings.²⁴ The teaching faculty consisted of eight members, the largest in the institution's history. Two of these professors were undoubtedly acquainted with the new executive who was on his way to Stillwater. Both James Neal and Alexander Magruder had occasionally attended meetings of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations,²⁵ and since Henry Alvord chaired the executive committee, it is likely that each man had at least been introduced to him.

Arriving after the semester began, President Alvord threw himself immediately into the many tasks which confronted him. His first major duty was to prepare the annual report of the college president. It should have been written by Robert Barker by June 30th, but when the former administrator resigned from the board of regents in 1893 cool-

²²OT, Council Journal, (1894), p. 73.

²³OT, Council Journal, (1895), pp. 75-76.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵USDA, OES, Miscellaneous Bulletin No. 16, Proceedings of the Sixth Annual Convention of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations (Washington, 1893), p. 15; Miscellaneous Bulletin No. 20, Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Convention of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations (Washington, 1894), p. 14.

relations developed between him and the board. Nevertheless, President Barker gathered all the necessary data for the report and left them in his desk for the incoming man to assemble. The task of preparing the lengthy document, while tedious, afforded an opportunity for the new executive further to acquaint himself with the current status of the college and to offer recommendations to the board of regents. In the completed account, the administrative officer's ability to locate trouble spots was clearly evident.

The first item which drew the attention of President Alvord concerned the problem of fluctuating enrollments. He repeated an already too familiar story when he wrote:

The students do not seem to appreciate the necessity for persistent application in their work, their needs and opportunities now offered to them. And parents are too prone to permit, or even to encourage, absences for very insufficient reasons. The full strength of the College and its teaching force is exerted to impress ... the importance of punctual and regular attendance.²⁶

Secondly, the ex-major commented on the organization of the military department. He believed morale was low, and suggested that a request be sent to West Point for an officer to be detailed to the college.²⁷

Thirdly, attention was directed toward several pressing faculty problems. While Alvord had somewhat adjusted teaching loads, he thought additional instructors and teaching assistants were required immediately. The professors of chemistry and physics were unable to find time to perform their research functions, and the agricultural and horticultural instructors were compelled to turn down "calls to various parts of the Territory

²⁶OT, Council Journal, (1895), p. 9.

²⁷Ibid.

where they could be of great service to the people and to the institution."²⁸ Furthermore, the salaries of the faculty were inequitably divided.²⁹

A fourth item of comment concerned the need for reorganization of the collegiate departments. The president believed that the departments of botany and horticulture were so closely aligned that they should come under one head, with enough assistants provided as needed for research and instruction. In Oklahoma, he would have placed botany under horticulture, as the latter seemed most essential to the future development of the state. In addition, Alvord believed a female instructor was necessary "to give proper advice as to study, health, and conduct to girls and young women who are for the first time removed from home influences, and at a critical age."³⁰

The last portion of the report dealt with the new departments and additional buildings which were needed. The legislators were reminded that, when they accepted the provisions of the land-grant acts, they had in essence contracted to support the future development of the institution. The two departments most urgently needed were domestic economy and mechanical arts. The former should be constructed before the latter, since almost one-half of the student population was composed of females. As far as buildings were concerned, at least two were required in the immediate future. A horticultural edifice should include plant houses, propagating pits, a boiler house, and work rooms for attendants. Office space for the staff must not be neglected either.

²⁸Ibid., pp. 10-11.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid., p. 12.

A second building should care for the needs of the departments of chemistry and physics. This structure might also include laboratories and lecture rooms for zoology and comparative anatomy. The existing facilities for chemistry and physics were inadequate, for as was expected the chemical laboratory in the basement of the College Building was causing trouble. In this respect, the president stated: "The odors, fumes, and gases cannot be fully controlled and reach every part of the building at times. Occasionally classes in upper rooms have to be dismissed."³¹

When the report was completed, the executive began to implement many of his suggestions. First, he reduced the number of administrative items the faculty had been forced to assume due to the frequent absences of the former president. Secondly, the teaching staff were formed into standing academic committees. Alexander Magruder and Henry Alvord took charge of the military department; Frank Waugh, Edward Clark, and Freeman Miller studied questions relating to room and board for students; and Professor Miller accepted the responsibility of setting up a college library.³² Besides this, the rules for admission of students were also screened. Entrance examinations were henceforth to be written or oral, depending on the discretion of the instructor in charge.³³ Also, the wearing of military uniforms by students during class hours would now be mandatory.

Next, the faculty turned their energies toward reviewing the numerous college laws and regulations. Professors Clark and Magruder became

³¹Ibid., p. 13.

³²OAMC, "Minutes of the First Faculty," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 175.

³³Ibid., p. 176.

a committee to codify the "rules and regulations governing the college."³⁴ New methods of turning in written reports, the standardizations of daily forms, and more stringent supervisions of the student literary societies were other topics coming under discussion.³⁵ By the middle of October, the instructors implemented a plan to coordinate the work students were required to do for their classes. On the 15th, it was decided to have "five public exercises ... during the course of study."³⁶ At the close of the spring quarter of the sophomore year a declamation, essay, or oration was to be given, with the latter coming from the rostrum in the auditorium. Lastly, each senior was directed to deliver an oration during each of the quarters, in addition to preparing an address for graduation.³⁷

Near the end of October, the faculty scrutinized the thorny problem of practicums. It was decided that all such endeavors should in the future be considered independently of other exercises of the college. Grades for such courses would be reported separately. The same rules which applied to regular classes were to be also applied to practicums. Lastly, two hours of work on the farm henceforth counted the same as one hour in the classroom.³⁸

With a new building operational, the faculty reorganized, the rules governing students revised, and provisions made for the scientists to have more time to devote to experimentation, the president decided an

³⁴Ibid., p. 178.

³⁵Ibid., p. 171.

³⁶Ibid., p. 180.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Ibid., p. 183.

effort should be made to recruit more students. Besides making numerous speeches throughout the state,³⁹ he began to write promotional brochures. A typical one began with a brief statement on the purpose and mission of the college. It read:

This college provides for a broad and thorough education in English, the mechanic arts, the sciences, agriculture and horticulture. The course is of a general scientific character; special attention being given to such branches as chemistry, physics, mathematics, botany, geology, and entomology in connection with agriculture.

The object is to give a thorough and general education and one at the same time of practical use in the arts and industries in life. Special emphasis is laid on practical work in the fields and laboratories.⁴⁰

Subsequent pages enumerated the vast amount of scientific equipment housed in the college building, opportunities for student employment, and the desire to model the institution after West Point. In addition, the writer stated the design of the college included public service. The members of the faculty would be made available to give speeches and read papers to farmer's institutes and horticultural gatherings. The last page of the pamphlet urged parents, boys, girls, school teachers, farmers, lawyers, doctors, merchants, mechanics, and politicians to acquaint prospective students with the facilities of the institution.⁴¹

As might be expected, the strong leadership exerted by President Alvord did not receive the enthusiastic approval of the board of regents.

³⁹President Alvord possessed a reputation as an excellent speaker. He was especially popular in Oklahoma since he had been stationed there in the 1860's and knew many stories of Indian Territory. For examples of his addresses, see The Eagle-Gazette, October 11, 1894, p. 1; December 20, 1894, p. 1.

⁴⁰OAMC, Prospectus of the A. and M. College, Session of 1894-1895, pp. 2-3.

⁴¹Ibid., pp. 3-8.

A conflict soon developed. The initial problem involved a question of authority rather than a quarrel over a specific incident.

The Clash with the Board of Regents

The first antagonism between the board of regents and Henry Alvord concerned the manner in which the latter handled the reporting of college fiscal matters. At a meeting of the two factions occurring early in the academic year, the regents requested the president to swear to the validity of each voucher passing through his hands.⁴² Of course, the president resented such a treatment. He promptly retorted he would not comply with such a procedure, and the battle was on.

Instead of wasting energy arguing the matter, the chief executive decided to write to his friend Alfred True in order to obtain an official policy statement from the secretary of agriculture. On November 9, the bibliographer replied by means of a lengthy letter to the Oklahoman detailing the proper procedure for handling college and station accountants.⁴³ True indicated the governing board should have a voice in determining which specific objectives should be pursued, but then an executive officer must be appointed who would administer whatever funds were necessary to carry the project to completion. Expenses were to be incurred only by the consent of the director, with vouchers being written at regular intervals. These checks were then to be audited periodically by the governing board. The only items which required sworn affidavits were those "in which proper vouchers could not be

⁴²OT, Council Journal, (1895), p. 692.

⁴³OAMC, A. C. True to Henry Alvord, November 9, 1894, "The Cunningham Manuscript Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

obtained and notarial fees are not a necessary or proper charge against station funds received from the United States except in such cases."⁴⁴ The president had won his point and probably did not waste a minute in conveying such information to the regents.

But before the president and the board could settle their differences, Henry Alvord received a call to Washington. The next annual convention of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations was to convene toward the end of November. As chairman of the executive committee, the Oklahoma agriculturist had little choice but to be present. During the course of the convention, Chairman Alvord performed his duties in the same efficient manner so characteristic of him, but realizing the magnitude of the responsibilities awaiting him in Stillwater, he decided to resign his position. He then asked the delegates to relieve him of any future duties. His wishes were respected; however, the assembly honored his faithful service to the organization by electing him president of the body.⁴⁵ Since his position was largely honorary, entailing his presenting the next annual presidential address, Alvord graciously accepted the appointment.⁴⁶

Also while in Washington, Alvord attempted to locate items which would enhance the meager Oklahoma A. and M. College library. Learning from a friend that a complete set of Harper's Magazine would soon be sold, President Alvord checked the price of the items and penned a note

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵The Eagle-Gazette, November 22, 1894, p. 5.

⁴⁶USDA, OES, Miscellaneous Bulletin No. 24, Proceedings of the Eighth Annual Convention of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations (Washington, 1895), p. 62.

concerning the collection to Freeman Miller. Shortly thereafter, the volumes adorned the shelves of the college library in the central building.⁴⁷ This purchase indicates that the executive had not forgotten his primary responsibility and still had an interest in the welfare of the institution he headed. On his return to Stillwater, nevertheless, smoldering animosity between him and the board of regents erupted into flames.

The Resignation of the Second President

Although no documentary evidence to this effect has been uncovered, it is likely that President Alvord conferred with officials of the department of agriculture while in Washington. At any rate, upon returning to Stillwater, he no longer possessed a willingness to arbitrate or compromise differences of opinion. A list of proposed reforms was presented to his antagonists, and when the document was refused, the executive verbally tendered his resignation.⁴⁸

From all appearances, the resignation of the president was tendered in a moment of haste. But he gave the regents an opportunity to consider his action, for late in the month of December the board journeyed to Stillwater in order to make their final decision. The Gazette announced their choice somewhat later. A writer for the paper reported the board accepted "the resignation of Major Alvord ... and then proceeded to elect a successor, a man of whom they knew nothing and cared less."⁴⁹ Four days later, President Alvord produced a written resignation.

⁴⁷Freeman Miller, "Founding the College Library," The A. and M. College Magazine, I (1929), p. 18.

⁴⁸The Eagle-Gazette, January 17, 1895, p. 1.

⁴⁹Ibid.

He explained:

The government of the United States and the public generally consider me in a large measure responsible for the conduct of affairs of this institution. I cannot afford to maintain relations by which I may appear to be, in any degree, a consenting party to the payment of large salaries to positions at this College and Station, which are unnecessary and where the duties performed do not justify the expenditure. The result is nothing less than diversion of public funds from the objects for which they are specifically provided.

As your Board has seen fit to decline action notwithstanding my presentation and protest on this subject, I hereby tender my resignation as president of this college....

I shall consider it my duty to furnish copies of this letter to the secretary of the interior and the secretary of agriculture with some further explanation of the circumstances.⁵⁰

⁵⁰Quoted from The Eagle-Gazette, January 17, 1895, p. 1. While President Alvord stated that he resigned because the board of regents would not accept his salary proposals, persons close to the scene have offered a multitude of other reasons for his actions. For example, Harry E. Thompson believed there was a personality clash between the ex-major and John Clark. This conjecture may have had a degree of truth, because the president of the board of regents did not get along well with Alvord's successor. The two college presidents were much alike. Both were meticulous dressers, came from the east, were authoritative, and believed the faculty, not the regents, should operate the institution. OAMC, H. E. Thompson to B. B. Chapman, June 3, 1954, (Oklahoma State University Library). A local Democratic newspaper attributed the dispute to a "discussion with the governor." The Daily Democrat (Stillwater), October 3, 1904, p. 1. Robert Cunningham, a college historian, believed the president left "vowing he did not have to endure the bickering of petty politicians of the Territory." The Stillwater News-Press, March 18, 1963, p. 4. A writer for the Gazette stated the gentleman was "charged with being somewhat old maidish in his ideas...." The Eagle-Gazette, January 17, 1895, p. 4. Tom Hartman, a student, wrote Alvord "didn't like Oklahoma, its dust storms, the people, or the college." OAMC, "Selections from the Record Book of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1891-1941," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 87. The college printer believed the president left because Stillwater "had no bathtubs." OAMC, "Selections from the Record Book of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1891-1941," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 50. Finally, Tazewell Upshaw related: "It was the common talk around Stillwater that his wife would not come to this country anyway, and that was one of his reasons for wanting to leave." OT, Council Journal, (1895), p. 699.

The formal letter of resignation was followed by a public letter of appreciation printed in the Stillwater Messenger.⁵¹ Other copies of the same letter were published in the Oklahoma State Sentinel, the Eagle-Gazette, and in the territorial legislative records. These letters, addressed to the "good people of Oklahoma," appealed for public spirited citizens to insist through their legislators that the "college not be used for selfish, personal, or political ends, but that it shall be conducted solely for the public good."⁵² In addition, Alvord urged that several reforms be implemented. First, he believed a new board of regents needed to be constituted. Secondly, a resident treasurer of the college should be appointed. And finally, he stated that the regent from Stillwater had done an excellent job and was one of those who deserved reappointment.⁵³ The latter comment was quite remarkable, for the regent from Stillwater was John Clark.

The editor of the Messenger appended an editorial to Alvord's letter. He believed that Alvord would not resign and send a "stinging" report to Washington if the college president were not able to substantiate his charges. Thus he asked for an investigation by the Territorial Legislature, which was now in session.⁵⁴ The day following the printing of the newspaper, Dr. James Neal wrote to Representative Robert Lowry stating that real trouble was afoot. He informed the state legislator that Alvord was on his way to Washington to become, he conjectured, assistant secretary of agriculture. Next, he reported that he had been

⁵¹The Stillwater Messenger, January 11, 1895, [n.p.] .

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Ibid.

apprised of two plans concerning the possible relocation of the college and the experiment station. The first idea was to move the college and station to some other locality in Oklahoma. The second idea involved moving just the station to an area which had better soil. Neal, of course, opposed both plans. Speaking against the latter suggestion initially, the director said the two institutions should remain together. The college needed the faculty of the station to teach courses, and the students benefited from the same organization, for it provided employment. In relation to the college, Neal warned the state representative:

As soon as a College gets on wheels, its value is gone, and it then is as a football for successive Legislators to use as a plaything, and possibly a means of getting 'rake-offs' No matter what the arguments as to suitability of location, poor soil, out of wayness and that Payne County got it by 'finesse and trading'. The facts are that Payne County has worked for all she was worth, and sacrificed both time and money to hold it, and here it should stay. Some of these days a Railroad will make this place as accessible as Guthrie or Oklahoma City, and all the other objections can be overcome.⁵⁵

On January 15, 1895, Hays Hamilton sent a note to his friend Robert Lowry. He believed the majority of the Stillwater populace supported an immediate investigation of the charges of ex-President Alvord, and he thought it would be to the city's advantage if Lowry were the one to present such a motion.⁵⁶ The next day, Neal further corresponded with the local lawmaker. He stated he had asked Alvord to withdraw his resignation if another board of regents could be appointed. But almost as an afterthought, he concluded: "I think it doubtful if he would serve except on his own terms."⁵⁷ The next day, the Oklahoma State

⁵⁵OAMC, J. C. Neal to Robert Lowry, January 12, 1895, "The Cunningham Manuscript Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

⁵⁶OAMC, Hays Hamilton to Robert Lowry, January 16, 1895, "The Cunningham Manuscript Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

⁵⁷OAMC, J. C. Neal to Robert Lowry, January 16, 1895, "The Cunningham Manuscript Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

Sentinel, following the lead of the Oklahoma City Times-Journal, requested that the board of regents not accept the president's resignation until an investigation had been conducted.⁵⁸ The suggestion, however, came too late. On the same day Hays Hamilton informed Lowry that the major's resignation had been filed, and Edmond Murdaugh was the new executive of the college.⁵⁹

Meanwhile, other developments were taking place in Guthrie. Representative Angelo C. Scott, a newspaperman, former candidate for governor, hosteler, and member of the Territorial Council, introduced a motion in the Legislature asking that Alvord withdraw his resignation until an investigation had been completed.⁶⁰ His motion passed, the lawmakers being unaware of events in Stillwater. In addition, a Joint Council Resolution received consideration. It read:

That the committees on agriculture of the council and house are hereby constituted a special committee to investigate the affairs of the Territorial agricultural and mechanical college at Stillwater. Said committee shall hold its sessions at Guthrie: Provided, That if it becomes necessary, it may send a sub-committee, not exceeding three of its members, to the seat of the said college, at Stillwater, for such times as it deems proper, within the time hereinafter limited for the report of said committee. Said committee shall have the power to issue process for witnesses and papers, and to enforce the same; and shall have access of said institution. The subjects of investigation contemplated in this resolution, are the financial management of the institution, including the disposition of government funds belonging thereto; the appointment and dismissal of instructors, employees and officers; the matters covered by the last report of the president of said college, and of the director

⁵⁸The Oklahoma State Sentinel, January 17, 1895, p. 1.

⁵⁹OAMC, Hays Hamilton to Robert Lowry, January 17, 1895, "The Cunningham Manuscript Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

⁶⁰OT, Council Journal, (1895), p. 318.

of the experiment station; and generally, an inquiry into the conduct and management of said institution....⁶¹

Three hundred dollars were appropriated to pay the expenses of the investigating committee.⁶²

Before the special committee could convene, a plan to reorganize the board of regents came in Robert Lowry's mail. Dr. Neal, acting president, drew upon his previous experience with the college and suggested that the number of regents should be increased to nine. The proposed board would be divided politically, three Democrats, three Populists, and three Republicans.⁶³ Furthermore, a number of significant administrative vicissitudes at the college were contemplated. Besides Neal's letter, the Stillwater lawmaker received correspondence from other constituents offering a variety of assistance. J. A. Stephenson reported he had shown a previous letter of the representative to local bankers and businessmen, who offered to help in any manner possible.⁶⁴ C. D. Shaffer extended his talents in handling the Populists if needed.⁶⁵ Other citizens extended offers, too.

The Investigation

The ad hoc investigating committee of the Oklahoma Legislature convened in Guthrie, Oklahoma, on February 5, 1895. The report of its

⁶¹The Statutes of Oklahoma, (1895), pp. 271-272.

⁶²Ibid., p. 51.

⁶³OAMC, J. C. Neal to Robert Lowry, January 16, 1895, "The Cunningham Manuscript Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

⁶⁴OAMC, J. A. Stephenson to Robert Lowry, January 31, 1895, "The Cunningham Manuscript Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

⁶⁵OAMC, C. D. Shaffer to Robert Lowry, January 31, 1895, "The Cunningham Manuscript Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

findings came off the press February 26th. During the three week interval fifteen witnesses were called to testify, including the current governor of Oklahoma, an ex-governor, a former college president, several key members of the board of regents, both past and present, and a number of the faculty and staff of the college and station. S. H. Kelsey, an expert accountant, agreed to audit the fiscal accounts of the institution. As might be expected, the territorial newspapers capitalized on the situation and reported a weekly blow-by-blow account of the entire proceedings.

To guide the committee in their investigations, the lengthy report Henry Alvord had recently mailed to the secretary of agriculture and secretary of the interior in connection with his resignation was used. In this document, the ex-president identified what he considered the worst trouble spots in the college and experiment station and made suggestions for changes. The most noteworthy items included: (1) the experiment station was being run as a model farm, and the regents were trying to have it make a profit; (2) the legislature had been negligent in providing funds and allocations for buildings; (3) the "Farm Superintendent" was a political appointee, ignorant of scientific principles, and paid an excessive salary in proportion to those of the faculty; (4) the college secretary was a political appointee, negligent in doing his duties, and incompetent; (5) the board of regents had spent federal funds foolishly and paid themselves abnormally high salaries; (6) the past treasurers of the board of regents had not kept proper books; (7) the salaries of the faculty were unequally divided; (8) the

board of regents needed to be reorganized; (9) and a larger faculty was required properly to carry out the mission of the institution.⁶⁶

The first witness called by the committee was A. V. McDowell, who had served as superintendent of farming from April, 1892 to June, 1894. He told investigators he quit "when the democrat board of regents met the time after they got possession of the books and seal."⁶⁷ The superintendent had been employed as a time keeper and labor supervisor at a salary of \$75.00 per month, which was as much as some of the faculty were earning. McDowell was not charged with wrongdoing, but he did freely admit he had not worked in harmony with the faculty of the experiment station. His attitude was reflected in this statement: "I think if they [the faculty] would use a little bit more of good common sense and a little less science that our farmers would appreciate the station more than they do."⁶⁸

The same day, the committee held an extended session with the Director of the Oklahoma Experiment Station. While Neal was quizzed on the use of Hatch and Morrill funds, payment of professor's salaries, expenditures of the board of regents, the recommendations of President Alvord, and the status of the soil and water supply of the college, his most revealing testimony concerned the manner in which the regents purchased supplies for the college. The agriculturalist acknowledged that regents Wimberley, Lane, and Little were paid substantial amounts of expense

⁶⁶OAMC, Report of the President, December 31, 1894, pp. 1-20. Local newspaper editorial comment on the report may be read by consulting The Oklahoma State Sentinel, January 17, 1895, p. 4; The Eagle-Gazette, January 17, 1895, p. 1.

⁶⁷OT, Council Journal, (1895), p. 669.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 670.

money for acting as purchasing agents for the institution when the faculty did most of the work; that almost all of the Hatch Act funds had been spent for instruction and payment of faculty salaries; and that \$5,516.06 had been spent on building a road at the experiment station.⁶⁹ The latter expenditure, which had been authorized by the regents, had seriously embarrassed the college the following year, as barely enough cash remained to pay monthly earnings.

To conclude the first day's testimony, Amos Ewing was called to the witness chair. The committee interrogated the former regent about certain travel expenses charged to the college's accounts, faculty appointments, funds he might still have in his possession that belonged to the institution, and the location of banks where he had deposited federal funds provided by the Hatch and Morrill acts. All of Ewing's answers were interesting; however, those in regard to the latter category were most damaging to his reputation. The treasurer stated institutional funds were deposited in Guthrie and Kingfisher banks. The books of these establishments revealed that no interest on unpaid daily balances had been credited to the college. When quizzed as to whether he personally received interest payments, he admitted:

When the peremptory writ of mandamus was sued out, some of the parties with whom I had deposited, as I understand it, agreed to pay counsel when the question arose as to whether or not the governor of this territory of his own motion could remove the board of regents.⁷⁰

Ewing forgot to mention that Joseph McNeal was president of the Guthrie bank where funds were deposited, and that he himself had an interest in

⁶⁹Ibid., pp. 670-679.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 682.

the Kingfisher establishment. Nevertheless, no charges were filed against him when the proceedings were finished.

The next person called has been identified by a college historian as "the chief trouble maker of the college."⁷¹ This was, of course, the arrogant Tazewell Upshaw, who was serving as secretary of the Stillwater college. His qualifications for the job included clerking in a drug-store, serving as deputy register of deeds, and sales experience in wholesale drug and fire insurance lines. Upshaw testified that he had been hired by the board of regents. Afterward, Dr. Neal presented him with a list of duties he should perform at the college. The secretary, however, thought the list too numerous and took it to Regent Caruthers, who promptly scratched off all the items except one. On the bottom of the paper, the same man scribbled the notation: "Prescribed by the board of regents."⁷² Upshaw retained this slip of paper in his pocket at all times. If he was requested to perform a certain task, he lost no time in producing the paper.

According to testimony brought out by various members of the committee, Upshaw's conduct at the college became increasingly more difficult for the faculty to overlook. He was asked whether he had hired Emma Smith, a student, for \$4.00 per month to perform his duties while he was absent.⁷³ In addition, the committee inquired if he used alcoholic beverages to excess and if he had bragged that his job had been awarded for political reasons. Lastly, a member of the committee asked

⁷¹The Stillwater News-Press, April 1, 1963, p. 4.

⁷²OT, Council Journal, (1895), p. 669.

⁷³Ibid., p. 694.

whether he had been spying on President Henry Alvord and reporting his activities to the board of regents. Upshaw's replies indicated there was a degree of truth in each allegation. In regard to the latter query, the college secretary's answer indicated that a major portion of his job was to keep the regents posted on Alvord's activities. For instance, he reported that he had overheard the president say that the "first duty of the faculty was to educate the board of regents, and that when they were properly educated they could run things to suit themselves." While the committee finished with the clerk in one day, the remainder of the investigation referred to Upshaw's conduct many times.

The next gentleman to appear before the legislators was Frank Caruthers, a member of the successful Norman law firm of Ross and Caruthers.⁷⁴ This man refused to answer almost every question that the committee directed to him, insisting that he could not recall or remember the exact circumstances of a situation. Nevertheless, two important questions were asked which were bombshells in themselves. First, the committee inquired if he know that Tazewell Upshaw was wanted on a murder charge in Texas. Of course not, he replied. Next, he was queried as to the banks where college funds were currently deposited. Caruthers explained that there was on hand about \$23,000.00. About one-fourth of these funds were deposited in McNeal's bank in Guthrie, and the remainder in the Norman State Bank. The institution in the capital was the account used to pay daily expenses; the monies in Norman were not used except in case of an emergency. Then the regent was asked who owned the

⁷⁴The College Mirror, May 15, 1895, [n.p.].

bank in Norman. Caruthers crisply replied with the name of W. C. Renfrow, the Governor of the Territory of Oklahoma.⁷⁵

After the sensational testimony of Frank Caruthers, J. E. Quien took the stand. He was followed by John Wimberley. Both men had formerly been members of the board of regents. The latter man, in particular, was quizzed concerning his activities as a regent and as purchasing agent and superintendent of buildings for the college. It was eventually brought out that he had received pay simultaneously for both positions. Also, several of his financial transactions in relation to the experiment station were explored. In relation to the latter point, he admitted he had supervised the purchase of three horses from a neighbor of his for use at the Stillwater station. A handsome price of \$275.00 was paid for the animals. The horses proved incapable of work in the fields. One turned out to have lung trouble and another was blind. To top off the deal, Wimberley's brother received a total of \$27.00 for bringing the horses to the college. The regent tried to explain away the charges, but on the whole was unsuccessful.⁷⁶ The committee soon dismissed him.

William Campbell, who had been a member of the committee appointed by Governor George Steele to locate the A. and M. college, was the next major witness called. After his brief and unenlightening testimony, ex-president Barker took the chair. The committee pressed him for additional information on the activities of the first board of regents. His firm and calculated answers soon made it increasingly clear that much of the blame for the "failure" of his administration was due to the unwise

⁷⁵OT, Council Journal, (1895), pp. 700-711.

⁷⁶Ibid., pp. 717-739.

actions of the initial board of regents. They had spent college funds foolishly, had taken junkets which resulted in no value to the college, and had refused to consult the faculty on the immediate needs of the institution.⁷⁷ In relation to the lack of positive accomplishments at the experiment station, the Crescent City businessman assumed complete responsibility. He refused to slander the character or ability of Neal. In fact, he said: "J. C. Neal, who is also director of the station, is one of the best men I ever met in my life; honest, upright, sensible and unassuming; he takes great pleasure in his work, nothing passing him that is not right, or any duty ever neglected."⁷⁸ It was clear at the end of the lengthy session that Barker had not approved of the actions of the board of regents, but he was relatively incapable of taking any positive correctional measures. As will be seen, the governors of the Territory of Oklahoma were deeply involved in many of the shady dealings. Therefore, if Barker had wanted to inaugurate reforms, he would have had to go to Washington for assistance.

The last witnesses brought before the legislative investigating committee were the Reverend J. P. Lane, ex-governor A. J. Seay, John Clark, Governor William Renfrow, and Henry Glazier.⁷⁹ The Reverend Mr. Lane admitted receiving double salaries; Governor Seay could not recall whether while he was in office he had been simply a stockholder or a director of the bank in which college funds were deposited; John Clark provided a sterling character reference for Tazewell Upshaw; Governor

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 736.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 755.

⁷⁹Ibid., pp. 755-783.

William Renfrow pleaded innocent to any wrongdoing and claimed he had been hoodwinked by the regents in some of their personnel manipulations; and finally, Henry Galzier acknowledged the general accuracy of the report Henry Alvord sent to Washington. None of the testimony given reflected credit on these individuals' reputations.

In addition to the statements of the fifteen witnesses, the investigating committee also had the benefit of the audit of the college prepared by Captain Kelsey before transcribing their findings and recommendations. While Kelsey's report was abbreviated, it generally corroborated the testimony previously supplied. He generalized: (1) an inefficient system of bookkeeping had prevailed for the first three years of the college's history; (2) a complete and accurate report was impossible to obtain, because a number of important documents were missing; (3) the vouchers he had were so over-simplified that it was difficult to determine why, how, and by whom money was expended. Lastly, the auditor commended the system of bookkeeping inaugurated during the Alvord administration. It was clear, concise, and free from error.⁸⁰

The final report of the investigating committee was broken into eleven sub-divisions. The writers believed much of the trouble during the first three years stemmed from the fact that the founding law was loosely drawn and few, if any, safeguards were woven into it. This situation permitted less than scrupulous regents to use the college to their own personal advantage. For instance, several trips that the regents took to Kansas, Ohio, and Texas were supposedly to gather information on the educational practices of other land-grant colleges. In

⁸⁰Ibid., pp. 788-791.

reality, however, the committee suggested the junkets were to "visit friends and relations living in the different states..."⁸¹ No reports were made to the faculty or the president of the Stillwater college concerning what useful information was collected on the trips.

Specifically, the committee made these general observations. First, the lands selected for the college and station were not well chosen. The top soil was extremely poor, and a total of thirteen water wells had been drilled without an adequate supply of the vital liquid uncovered. Secondly, the positions of farm superintendent and college secretary should be abolished. Thirdly, complete and accurate college records must be kept. And lastly, the majority of students enrolled at the institution were from the Stillwater locality. It was therefore recommended that the institutional leaders should attempt to broaden the geographical area from which students were recruited. They hoped this effort would combat the charge that favoritism was exhibited to local students.⁸²

In conclusion, the report of the investigating committee generally commented on the current status of the college in the following manner:

In our examination into the financial management of this institution we have found little to commend and a great deal to condemn. Where public officers rendered for every day in the month, including Sundays, and then in addition collect pay in the territory for the same time that they have charged the institution for service as an agent in some other capacity, it is time such officials in charge of educational institutions should be taught to observe a law which is older than colleges and nations.⁸³

While these words imply that correctional measures should be taken, the Territorial Legislature took no positive correctional action. Instead

⁸¹OT, House Journal, (1895), p. 721.

⁸²Ibid., pp. 722-724.

⁸³Ibid., p. 725.

the body took the view that, since a new board had already been installed, there was no need for further recriminations. Then, too, the majority of the reforms suggested by Henry Alvord and James Neal were left in a dormant state. Finally, the investigation of the college intensified the ill-feelings existing between the two major political parties in Oklahoma. This situation developed into a contest to move the institution away from Stillwater.

The Effort to Relocate the College

As the legislative committee attempted to untangle the financial status of the college, a battle was conducted by Payne county political officials to retain the institution in Stillwater. On February 11th, Dr. Neal wrote to Representative Lowry urging him to sponsor a bill to increase the number of the college regents. He feared if the old board were held over "no Republican stands a ghost of a chance in the faculty after June, and that all the abuses that are now in the work, as to Upshaw, will be continued...."⁸⁴ Three days later, the Gazette reported that a bill had been introduced in the Council to move the college to El Reno.⁸⁵ The prospects of retaining the institution seemed bleak. To add to Stillwater's troubles, the county courthouse had recently burned down. Shortly thereafter, Representative W. A. Knipe, of Perkins, began implementing a plan to "move the county line nine miles into Lincoln county and to move the county seat to Perkins."⁸⁶

⁸⁴OAMC, J. C. Neal to Robert Lowry, February 11, 1895, "The Cunningham Manuscript Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

⁸⁵The Eagle-Gazette, February 14, 1895, p. 4.

⁸⁶The Daily Democrat, August 27, 1904, p. 1.

The business and political leaders of Stillwater, however, were determined to keep the city's possessions. The Sentinel warned: "When you tackle Stillwater and her institutions you will be facing Spartans."⁸⁷ The board of trade took the lead in fomenting action to keep the courthouse. Charles McGraw wrote to Representative Lowry:

If you get the common gobbler started an assertion is soon made a positive fact and continues to get larger. Kill the Knipes Bill in the Committee we will send money to do so.⁸⁸

By early March, Lowry indicated that the county seat would remain in Stillwater. In return, F. C. Hunt wrote to Lowry thanking him and stating a reception was being prepared in his honor.⁸⁹

The exact manner in which the Representative was able to save the college for his community is not known, but there is evidence that suggests the situation was not as grave as had been originally thought. When the local solon ran for election in 1894, his popularity was such that it was rumored he would be made speaker of the house of representatives. In addition, many people believed the man who held this office would be appointed governor after the next national elections were over.⁹⁰ Lowry was opposed for the speakership by Cassius M. Barnes, who had come to Oklahoma Territory to work as a clerk in the Guthrie land office. In spite of the political support of such stalwarts as Henry Asp, John Dille, and Frank Greer, the Stillwaterite decided to support his opponent. In return, Bob Lowry received an important pledge from

⁸⁷The Oklahoma State Sentinel, February 14, 1895, p. 1.

⁸⁸OAMC, Charles McGraw to Robert Lowry, February 24, 1895, "The Cunningham Manuscript Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

⁸⁹OAMC, F. C. Hunt to Robert Lowry, March 6, 1895, "The Cunningham Manuscript Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

⁹⁰The Stillwater News-Press, March 18, 1963, p. 3.

Barnes. The former wrote:

Now Bob, I want to be speaker, and you are in a position to be of much assistance to me. If you do help you may be assured I will appreciate and remember your friendly aid in a time of need, and shall reciprocate in any way within my power.⁹¹

As it turned out, Barnes was made speaker of the house, and later he became territorial governor. Apparently the promise made to Lowry was kept, for the college remained in its original location. In addition, newspapers for this period do not indicate that any other serious efforts to relocate the college occurred.

Conclusion

The investigation of the college by the Territorial Legislature illustrates the effects of Oklahoma politics on the Stillwater institution of higher education. The college was regarded as a political football. Partisan regents were appointed who readily cooperated in dividing the spoils of office with high state officials. On the other hand, the performance of the faculty during this difficult period was exemplary. Not a single charge was levied against a member of this group. Moreover, the degree of professionalism they exhibited during the crises kept the college steadily moving in the direction of fulfilling the institution's stated goals.

Henry Alvord came to Oklahoma cognizant of the fact that the land-grant mission of the Stillwater college was not being properly implemented. The nature of the criticisms and recommendations contained in his report to Washington suggest that he, too, thought the faculty was doing a commendable job, considering the circumstances under which they

⁹¹Ibid.

had to labor. Thus he sought to decrease the power of the board of regents and to turn the college over to the faculty. As such, President Alvord was the first individual associated with the institution to attempt to reward the faculty for services rendered. He hoped to adjust the salary scale, provide teaching assistants to make more time available for scientific research, and to enable the researchers to spend more energy in facilitating the development of local agricultural and horticultural societies.

Also Alvord did not neglect the best interests of the students. He made an effort to upgrade instruction, to increase the number of students doing college-level work, and to impress upon parents the necessity of keeping students in classes the entire academic year. Finally, the president was a man to whom the students could look up. He was a national figure, a colorful personality, and a dedicated scholar. Unlike his predecessor, Henry Alvord envisioned the college eventually becoming a "Princeton of the prairie." Although his sojourn in Oklahoma as president was brief, he did implant the idea that academic excellence could be obtained even on the frontier.

The investigating committee established by the Oklahoma Legislature did a remarkable job of indicating the nature of the problems which had slowed down progress at the institution in Stillwater. Nevertheless, the old political rivalries existing in the Territory prevented far-reaching reforms from being obtained. The administration and friends of the college were forced to use their energy to prevent the institution from being relocated instead of working for continued improvements. This attitude was not entirely selfish, for James Neal pointed out what could happen when a college got wheels. Subsequently, the collective strength

of Stillwater businessmen and college officials resulted in a victory for the faction supporting the present location of the college. But when the effort reached completion, the subject of reform was not broached, as it was feared further publicity might create another unpleasant situation. Being ignorant of the institution's past history, the incoming president elected to carry on the work instituted by Henry Alvord. The battle among the board of regents, the college administrator, and the indigenous political parties resumed.

CHAPTER VI

MURDAUGH AND MORROW

The legislative investigation of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College was sensational, but it initiated few permanent policy reforms. One reason it did not is that most of the urgent problems had been solved before the committee convened. The revision of the founding law by the Second Territorial Legislature occurred well before the investigation, the bookkeeping system set up under the Alvord administration received the approval of Captain S. H. Kelsey, and the college secretary resigned in order to accept employment in an Oklahoma City judicial office.¹ The youthful son of a current regent replaced the latter man at the college.²

Meanwhile, President Henry Alvord departed the campus in time to be on his way to Virginia before the 1895 New Year's celebration. A subsequent announcement in the Eagle-Gazette revealed the ex-president soon would join the faculty of the Vermont Agricultural College.³ The next year, he took charge of the newly-created Bureau of Animal Husbandry, a division of the United States Department of Agriculture.⁴ Immediately

¹The Oklahoma State Sentinel (Stillwater), December 5, 1894, p. 1.

²Ibid.

³The Eagle-Gazette (Stillwater), January 31, 1895, p. 4.

⁴The Payne County Populist (Stillwater), August 1, 1895, p. 1.

after the Virginian's exit, a number of derogatory rumors began to circulate designed to harm his public image. One of the most persistent concerned an allegation of the board of regents that he had spent \$5,000.00 of college funds without their approval. He was also accused of taking some books which belonged to the institution's library that had a value of \$65.90. But since no formal charges were ever filed, it may be assumed that the board simply wanted to embarrass publicly the president as he had them by calling for an investigation. Then too, it is possible that some people in Oklahoma resented the interference of the secretary of agriculture in selecting the man to replace Robert Barker.

The college in 1895 still remained under the direct supervision of the board of regents, who were continuing their "special" relationship with territorial officials in high places. The next two presidents of the institution would have to deal with essentially the same type of problems faced by Alvord. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the administrations of Edmond Dandridge Murdaugh and George Espy Morrow in order to identify the methods they used to cope with the situation. Each man attempted to handle the academic dilemma differently, one meeting with failure and the other attaining a remarkable degree of success.

The Administration of Edmond Murdaugh

The next president, Edmond Dandridge Murdaugh, the third administrator of the college in four years, also came to Stillwater in the midst of controversy. While he stayed in the community only five months, he still qualifies as one of the most colorful educators to serve the Oklahoma populace. Dr. Murdaugh dressed impeccably, possessed abundant charm and polish, and was immensely proud of the wavy steel-gray hair which adorned

his handsome head.⁵ Furthermore, he was probably the best orator in the Territory.

Murdaugh, the son of a Morengo county, Alabama, Episcopal clergyman, was descended from one of the most illustrious families of Virginia. Shortly after Edmond's birth, the father returned to the clan's native state to become bishop for the diocese.⁶ While there, the son studied at William and Mary College and the University of Virginia, where he prepared for the teaching profession. Later, he earned a Master of Laws degree from National University and received a Doctor of Pedagogy certificate from the Maryland Board of Education.⁷ According to an Oklahoma teaching colleague, the aristocratic family background combined with a splendid education made Murdaugh a princely character

always ranking above his environment. A disciplinarian of the old school, he never faltered from the position. That the education process worked best under strict tutelage was his birth-right and treasured inheritance. A southerner to the manor born, he never betrayed his Virginia antecedents!⁸

It has often been rumored that Dr. Murdaugh received his appointment to head the Oklahoma Morrill college because he was the personal choice of Henry Alvord. But this statement may be questioned. It is doubtful that the ex-president had any influence left with the board. More likely is the possibility that Murdaugh received the position because of his eighteen years of experience in heading the institution of mechanic arts

⁵OAMC, Frank Wikoff to Tom Hartman, November 30, 1940, "The Hartman Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

⁶OAMC, H. E. Thompson to B. B. Chapman, June 3, 1954, "The Thompson Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

⁷Francis Coram Oakes, "Edmond Dandridge Murdaugh, 1895-1901," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 27.

⁸Ibid., p. 25.

in Eaton, Maryland, a city located on the eastern shore of Chesapeake Bay.⁹ This school was generally regarded as the leading one of its kind in the state. In addition, the principal was widely known for his lectures on pedagogic and psychological topics.

A Cleveland Democrat who was appointed by a board of regents having the same political persuasion, President Edmond Murdaugh gained immediate acceptance in the community. Upon his arrival, the editor of the Gazette stated:

President Murdaugh is a gentleman easily to be recognized by his polite and dignified manner and bearings. While the institution needs sympathy in its loss of Major Alvord, it should at the same time, be congratulated on its procural of so able a gentleman as Mr. Murdaugh to fill his place. Talents he has many, a prominent one of which is natural oratory as is shown by the master manner in which he handles subjects which daily arise.¹⁰

The students concurred. The college newspaper reported that everything was so orderly that faculty meetings lasted only a few minutes. The writer of this article continued: "It is talked on the streets that President Murdaugh is the right man in the right place. He is always polite, gentlemanly, and easy on all occasions."¹¹ Toward the end of the academic year, he proved quite popular with the college girls as a number of Maybaskets were deposited on the door of his home.¹²

The first faculty meeting conducted by the new president occurred on February 4, 1895. Only routine problems were discussed. At the

⁹ The Stillwater News-Press, April 15, 1963, p. 3.

¹⁰ The Stillwater Gazette, February 28, 1895, p. 1.

¹¹ The A. and M. College Mirror (Stillwater), May 15, 1895, [n.p.].

¹² Ibid.

subsequent weekly sessions in March, a problem in the area of student discipline evolved. Thirteen students were temporarily or permanently dismissed.¹³ The single innovation in these months was the establishment of a press bureau, to be headed by Freeman Miller. The president undoubtedly suggested this position in order to counteract some of the unfavorable publicity received during the recent legislative investigation.¹⁴

Near the end of the academic year some friction did occur between the president and several members of the faculty. While the exact manner in which it arose is not known, it is logical to assume that the trouble again centered on the experiment station. Dr. Neal, it should be remembered, had not fared well in the report sent by Henry Alvord to the secretary of agriculture. The station has been criticized for not conducting experiments in animal breeding, for giving away free seed, and for spending too much time on variety testing.¹⁵ Moreover, it has been previously suggested that Neal aspired for the presidency of the institution. Perhaps these two considerations combined to drive a wedge between the director and the president, thereby causing members of the faculty to side with one or the other man. The Gazette got wind of the strife, but was in error in ascertaining the reason for the disagreement. A writer noted:

There is something rather peculiar about the college at this place, which is hard for the average man to understand. There are

¹³ OAMC, "Minutes of the First Faculty," (Oklahoma State University Library), pp. 201-208.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 202.

¹⁵ OAMC, Report of the President, December 31, 1894, pp. 10-12.

presumably a dozen men employed there who draw good salaries. Their duties are not cumbersome, and, to the outside world, it appears, that as soon as a man has been duly elected and installed in that institution his head begins to swell, and not satisfied with a good thing when he has it, seeks to breed discord in the premises and in consequence has the entire institution in a turmoil.¹⁶

The board of regents had about as much understanding of the situation as the unidentified newspaper writer. Captain S. H. Kelsey, who replaced John Clark as president of the board in March, was a former businessman and now a member of the Legislature.¹⁷ He thought there was perhaps jealousy between the new and old faculty members. His business background dictated a simple and practical solution. Kelsey proposed to fire the higher paid senior professors and restaff the institution with less expensive personnel.¹⁸ In a short period of time, the following changes were discussed and implemented: (1) President Murdaugh was informed he would not be rehired; (2) James Neal was relieved of his duties as director of the experiment station and made a professor of natural science, receiving a \$500.00 cut in salary; (3) Frank Waugh and Alexander Magruder were released; (4) and finally, the college farmer was notified that his services were no longer needed.¹⁹

The initial reaction concerning these measures came from the faculty. Professor H. E. Thompson, who was absent from the campus, heard the news of the reorganization from his friend Freeman Miller by letter. He replied:

¹⁶ The Stillwater Gazette, July 4, 1895, p. 2.

¹⁷ The Payne County Populist, August 1, 1895, p. 1.

¹⁸ The Stillwater Gazette, July 4, 1895, p.2.

¹⁹ The Payne County Populist, July 18, 1895, p. 1; The Payne County Populist, July 4, 1895, p. 1; The Stillwater Gazette, July 4, 1895, p.1.

Heavens and Dante! What an avalanche has swept down upon the faculty. Are our feet on the rock or are we on the sinking sand? The mill of the gods grind slow, but they grind to powder.²⁰

Even vacationing students were disturbed. Several wrote to friends on the faculty requesting an explanation of the recent events.²¹

The local newspapers also reacted to the changes. Many of them regretted the fact that with both Waugh and Magruder gone, the experiments in progress at the station would be lost; but the real controversy focused on the release of Dr. Murdaugh. The Guthrie Leader began the questioning. A writer of editorials that were published in late June and early July charged that an unholy alliance had turned out the executive. He believed that Governor Renfrow desired to keep Murdaugh, but that Captain Kelsey, backed by James Neal and Tazewall Upshaw, obtained the dismissal.²² Kelsey decided he must refute these charges in order to maintain the integrity of the board of regents. In a communication to the editor of the Gazette, he gave his side of the affair.

Captain Kelsey suggested first that President Murdaugh or a close friend of his had written the article in the Leader. He asserted next that it was the regents who were charged with running the Stillwater institution. Hence, they were the ones to judge the actions of subordinates. At the same time, however, he asserted that politics had nothing to do with the aforementioned changes. The legislator also believed that

²⁰OAMC, H. E. Thompson to Freeman Miller, July 2, 1895, "The Cunningham Manuscript Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

²¹For example, see OAMC, C. E. Regnier to Freeman Miller, July 7, 1895, "The Cunningham Manuscript Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

²²The Guthrie Leader, July 30, 1895, [n.p.]; The Guthrie Leader, July 2, 1895, [n.p.].

had Governor Renfrow attended the meeting of the regents when the re-organization had taken place, the Oklahoma chief executive would have concurred in the action. Lastly, the ex-furniture dealer got to the crucial point. Murdaugh had been fired for immoral conduct.²³

This was a serious charge; thus an attempt was made to prove it. It was common knowledge in the Stillwater community that some of Murdaugh's personal activities were not within the normal realm of conduct. For instance, two months after he arrived in the locality, he had been invited by the former president of the board of regents to go along with the "boys" on a camping trip on Stillwater Creek. The party took along a generous supply of the favorite frontier refreshment. Then, according to an early resident, the trouble began. This man wrote:

...the Doctor was not a strict abstainer. During the festive hours of the night someone took shears and cropped his wavy locks, leaving abundant evidence of how it was done. Next morning he got the barber up early and had his head smoothly clipped.²⁵

The Sentinel had reported this incident in the paper in May.²⁵ Now Captain Kelsey revealed that other such incidents existed. He wrote;

Reports came to members of the board from sources which we had to accept as true that Professor Murdaugh had on several occasions since being president of the college had been under the influence of liquor and especially on one occasion he was so much that he attracted attention of the people of a neighboring city in such a way as to bring comments on his actions from a Sunday School superintendent before his school as an illustration of the disgrace and effects of intemperance; that he had appeared in his hotel on several occasions under the

²³ The Stillwater Gazette, July 18, 1895, pp. 1-2.

²⁴ OAMC, Frank Wikoff to Tom Hartman, November 30, 1940, "The Hartman Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

²⁵ The Oklahoma State Sentinel, May 9, 1895, [n.p.].

influence of liquor; tht he was in the habit of sending out and buying liquor and keeping it in his room.²⁶

The former Kansan concluded his comments by saying if the evidence of the board had been insufficient before the president's release, they were vindicated by his actions on the evening he learned of their decision. The executive was charged with appearing on the streets of Stillwater, in the saloons, and at his hotel in "a maudlin condition from the effects of liquor."²⁷

There are very few remaining documents which pertain to the administration of Edmond Murdaugh. It is therefore difficult to ascertain if the charges levied against the colorful Virginian were entirely true.²⁸ Nevertheless, there are circumstances which suggest that the accusations may have been slightly exaggerated in order to make a desired political change. First, it will be remembered that Captain S. H. Kelsey, a veteran of the Union Army, was a prominent member of the Republican party in Oklahoma when he replaced Democrat John Clark as head of the board of regents two months after Murdaugh assumed office. It was not unusual in the midwest for such vicissitudes to signal sweeping academic changes. For example, in 1896, when Populists and Democrats succeeded in capturing control of the Kansas State Agricultural and Mechanical College, the contracts for all the faculty as well as the president of the institution

²⁶The Stillwater Gazette, July 18, 1895, pp. 1-2.

²⁷Ibid., p. 2.

²⁸Two acquaintances of Edmond Murdaugh, Robert Cunningham and Joe Hurt, indicated to the writer in personal interviews that Murdaugh in later life did not use alcoholic beverages to excess. They maintain that he was merely a social drinker. In addition, both men testified to the fact that the president was a staunch Democrat. Personal interview with Robert Cunningham, April 15, 1967; personal interview with Joe Hurt, March 29, 1967.

were cancelled.²⁹ The political turmoil surrounding the Morrill college in Stillwater was not altogether unlike the situation in Manhattan. Second, President Murdaugh, after being relieved of his duties at Stillwater, did not leave the territory but remained in Oklahoma to render yeoman educational service to his adopted state. At the suggestion of Harry Thompson, he immediately assumed the presidency of the Central State Normal College, which institution boasted the largest student enrollment in the state.³⁰ In later years, he organized the Northwestern Normal School at Alva, became superintendent of the Woodward school system, returned to Maryland to head the Frostburg Normal School, returned to Oklahoma to head the Oklahoma Military Academy at Claremore, was elected chief executive of the Southeastern State College, and finally ended his long career as professor of psychology at Central State.³¹ If Murdaugh had possessed an immoral character, as the regents charged, he probably would not have been able to secure such prestigious academic positions. At no other point in the records pertaining to his academic career was the president accused of improper conduct.

The treatment accorded President Edmond Murdaugh, Experiment Station Director James Neal, and Professors Alexander Magruder and Frank Waugh was not unlike the experiences of many other individuals involved in land-grant education at the time. These institutions were born of

²⁹ Richard Hofstadter and Walter Metzger, The Development of Academic Freedom in the United States (New York, 1955), p.424.

³⁰ Harry Thompson, "The Territorial Presidents of Oklahoma A. and M. College," The Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXXII (1955), pp. 355-356.

³¹ Francis Coram Oakes, "Edmond Dandridge Murdaugh, 1895-1901," (Oklahoma State University Library), pp. 25-26. Professor Oakes attributes Murdaugh's frequent moves to the throes of Oklahoma politics, not misconduct.

political compromise and existed in an environment dominated by the sometimes ruthless men of the business world; thus the often dedicated leaders were frequently treated badly. President David Boyd of the Louisiana Agricultural College wrote in his diary that one year his institution had no appropriations, was in debt, and had no credit. Furthermore, he was reduced to wearing his Confederate overcoat to shield his body from the cold wintry winds. Yet he stayed, hoping for brighter tomorrows.³² At more prominent agricultural colleges and universities, such as Cornell, the members of the administration and faculty were treated somewhat better. Andrew White, for instance, once remarked it was better to have a splendid faculty in a barn than an insufficient faculty in a palace.³³

In spite of the fact that Edmond Murdaugh met an untimely academic death in Stillwater, his administration may have had some lasting historical importance. Dr. Murdaugh was not an agriculturalist, and his immediate quarrel with the faculty was against those who were. It seems likely, in view of the president's eighteen years at the mechanical institute in Eaton, Maryland, that he hoped to upgrade the portion of the land-grant mission which had been slighted in the past. It is interesting to note that such courses were offered by the next administration. George Espy Morrow, Murdaugh's successor, was known as a man who leaned toward the agricultural side of the A. and M. mission. Hence, it is logical to assume that the handsome Virginian laid the groundwork for instruction in the mechanic arts. If so, the Murdaugh administration marked the end of the agricultural college and the beginning of a multi-purpose institution.

³²Allan Nevins, The State Universities and Democracy (Urbana, 1962), p. 81.

³³Ibid., p. 48.

Meet George Morrow

Professor George Morrow, along with Liberty Hyde Bailey and Eugene Hilgard, was one of the American academicians who struggled to make agriculture accepted as a modern science.³⁴ While the former man received a classical education at the Maineville Academy, from which he graduated in 1856, and a law degree from the University of Michigan ten years later,³⁵ Morrow early in his career evidenced a deep interest in empirical science. He first gained his vast agricultural knowledge by editing such distinguished publications as: Western Farmer, Western Rural, and American Agriculturalist.³⁶ He decided to enter the teaching profession in 1876, accepting an invitation to become associated with the Iowa Agricultural College.³⁷

At Ames Professor Morrow began an academic career which would make him in the next quarter of a century one of the leading agriculturalists in the nation. After he agreed to fill the chair of agriculture, the Progressive Farmer reported Morrow had been chosen with singular unanimity and further stated that no one "ever embarked in a difficult enterprise with so universal a confidence on the part of the public that he would achieve success."³⁸ The professor, however, did not fulfill the writer's expectations, for he left the same year to occupy a similar

³⁴Ibid., p. 64.

³⁵Thompson, pp. 364-368.

³⁶Ibid.; OAMC, H. E. Thompson to B. B. Chapman, June 3, 1954, "The Thompson Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

³⁷Thompson, p. 364.

³⁸Quoted from Earle Dudley Ross, A History of the Iowa State College of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts (Ames, 1942), p. 123.

position at the state industrial school in Illinois.³⁹ This institution would be his home for the next two decades.

At Urbana Morrow developed an international reputation, subsequently serving as professor of agriculture, dean of agriculture, and director of the experiment station.⁴⁰ He championed the cause of farm education in his state. Nevertheless, the number of agricultural students in his classes steadily declined. Industrial courses were becoming more popular than agriculturally-oriented courses. He therefore decided to stump the state to popularize scientific agriculture and to search for students. His travels eventually absorbed so much of his time that a teaching assistant was provided to cover his classes at the university.⁴¹ In the end, however, he met defeat. Thus when the invitation to head the Oklahoma land-grant college arrived, he accepted, thinking the chances for increasing agricultural instruction there would be more favorable. Therefore he proceeded to Stillwater.

President Morrow brought with him to Oklahoma many years of valuable experience in the academic and journalistic worlds, an exceptional ability to work with the public, the results of his travels in Denmark, England, and Holland, and in addition one more important item, his family. Morrow became the first president of the Oklahoma land-grant institution to bring his wife and children, thereby indicating he regarded the

³⁹ USDA, OES, Miscellaneous Bulletin No. 99, Proceedings of the Fourteenth Annual Convention of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations (Washington, 1902), p. 94.

⁴⁰ Winton Solberg, "The University of Illinois Struggles for Public Recognition, Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society, LIX (1966), p. 21, 24.

⁴¹ Ibid.

position as a permanent one. At last, the college was to have a first lady. His only apparent disadvantage was advanced age.⁴²

The Educational Philosophy of George Morrow

George Morrow brought a definite philosophy of agricultural education to Oklahoma. His presidential address to the Association of American Agricultural College and Experiment Stations in 1894, one year before he came to Stillwater, was regarded by Alfred True as "the beginning of a deeper interest in the method of teaching agriculture."⁴³ In this speech, he presented a current analysis of the status of agriculture in the nation and recommended a program designed to cure persistent irritating problems.

The widely-acclaimed professor from Illinois believed that agriculture constituted the basic industry of the world.⁴⁴ At that time in the United States, the extent and rapidity of agricultural changes were threatening the primacy of industry. Morrow, as would any modern rural sociologist, recognized in the 1890's the drain from the country to the city, and the drain from older lands to newer lands in the west; farmers who were hurt by the depression, or were past their prime, were moving to cities.⁴⁵ In his opinion, such trends were a mistake. Therefore, a vital function of the agricultural and mechanical colleges was to

⁴²OAMC, H. E. Thompson to B. B. Chapman, June 3, 1954, "The Thompson Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

⁴³Quoted from The College Paper (Stillwater), October 1, 1900, p. 70.

⁴⁴USDA, OES, Miscellaneous Bulletin No. 24, Proceedings of the Eighth Annual Convention of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations (Washington, 1895), p. 26.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 27.

alleviate the problems of these peoples. To do this important task, agriculturalists needed better methods of technical instruction. To accomplish this objective, Morrow suggested that the secretary of agriculture help systematize and coordinate technical agricultural instruction. In the future, land-grant colleges should introduce new crops in order to increase the variety of agricultural products and to find new uses for the crops that were already being produced.⁴⁶

Upon arriving to assume the duties of his new position, President Morrow explained to Oklahomans more specifically what the functions of a land-grant institution should be. First, the colleges were "founded and endowed for the undertaking and the performance of limited and specified labors."⁴⁷ These labors were not in the common ordinary sense general education. Second, the Morrill institutions were not so much "for the accommodation of the individual, as for the ultimate benefit of the public."⁴⁸ Third, the new president classified higher educational establishments into three categories: (1) the general; (2) the professional; (3) the industrial.⁴⁹ According to this scheme, the agricultural colleges would necessarily take their place under the last division. In this regard, he stated:

The work of the Agricultural College has to do in the largest sense with the earth as a producer; as a fruit and grain-grower; as a nourisher; upon which man and the animals that serve him and the flowers and grasses that delight him, feed and flourish....the Industrial institution has as its paramount purpose to give its students the largest use of their brains

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 32.

⁴⁷The A. and M. College Mirror, September 16, 1895, p. 6.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid.

and bodies in the actual industries; to enable them to use every power whose possibilities nature has bequeathed to them; to join the trained mind and the trained hand together for the conquering of the world, for the subjugation of the hostile forces of nature. This special purpose, which may be called the 'manu-mental,' may well be termed the highest.⁵⁰

While the executive thought agricultural education was the highest of the three forms of enlightenment, he believed the other two categories should not be excluded. On the contrary, the three together formed an educational trinity which ought to be continued.⁵¹

In a speech delivered to one of the first meetings of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations, Professor Morrow espoused his idea of the relationship between the agricultural colleges and the experiment stations. He thought the chief function of the college was to teach that which was known rather than to investigate. By the same token, then, the experiment station was to conduct agricultural investigations instead of teaching. Thus, in Morrow's mind, these two organizations could give a uniqueness to land-grant colleges which would be difficult for other institutions to duplicate.⁵² Three years later, in a paper entitled "The Relation of Teaching to Experimental Work," Morrow explained how the work of these two units could be coordinated. He said:

Keep the college and station side by side in intimate and cordial relations, as two helps to one end. Let the teacher carefully study the experiments now in progress as well as those grown venerable with age, and make use of them as object lessons. Let there be the freest consultation between the teacher

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 6-7.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 7.

⁵² USDA, OES, Miscellaneous Bulletin No. 1, Proceedings of the Second Annual Convention of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations (Washington, 1889), p. 44.

and experimenter, and so far as it is practicable without injury to his assigned work, let each help and work in the other's field.⁵³

In order to implement his ideas in Oklahoma, the agriculturalist decided to assume the directorship of the experiment station as well as the presidency of the college.

The Administration of George Morrow

George Espy Morrow served as president of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College from July, 1895 to June, 1899. He was the first college executive at Stillwater to serve as long as he wanted to.⁵⁴

There are some occasional hints from some of his associates that he would have liked to continue for another year, but an active life had sapped his vigor and enthusiasm. His presidency, therefore, was to mark the end of a distinguished career in agriculture. The numerous accomplishments and professional prestige he acquired during his adult life entitled him to be called the nation's "first gentleman of agriculture."

An initial contribution of President Morrow was his incessant travel on behalf of the college to overcome the stigma of the legislative investigation, to procure students of good quality, and to establish formal extension courses which served to strengthen the ties between the institution and the public. During his first month in office, he spoke in Oklahoma City, delivered in Stillwater a public lecture entitled "Some Privileges of College Students," and addressed teacher's meetings in

⁵³ USDA, OES, Miscellaneous Bulletin No. 7, Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Convention of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations (Washington, 1892), p. 68.

⁵⁴ Thompson, p. 368.

Perry, Oklahoma City, El Reno, and Pond Creek. In addition, he attended a farmer's institute in Guthrie and appeared at a meeting of the local horticultural society in Oklahoma City.⁵⁵ In October, the president gave a brief press release to the editor of the Gazette stating that he wanted Oklahoma residents to feel the college had a mission of public service. Specifically, he said: "It is the desire of college authorities to make the college a helpful influence to the community as a whole. Citizens will always be welcome as visitors to all public exercises."⁵⁶ Just before the annual Christmas vacation, the chief executive and his wife met with more farmers' gatherings in Guthrie, Oklahoma City, and El Reno.⁵⁷ Such activities were continued throughout the remainder of the academic year.

The college gadfly, Harry Thompson, attended most of these meetings as the personal secretary of the president. Besides admiring his superior's warm personality, Professor Thompson was quite impressed with Morrow's speaking abilities. He called his lectures "epics of science," and indicated that when he spoke "he showed his superiority over the heads of the other institutions."⁵⁸ Eventually these speeches paid off, for by the end of the first year of his presidency Morrow had obtained widespread public support and recognition for the Stillwater agricultural institution.

⁵⁵The Stillwater Gazette, August 22, 1895, p. 6; The Stillwater Gazette, September 26, 1895, p. 1; The A. and M. College Mirror, September 16, 1895, p. 13.

⁵⁶The Stillwater Gazette, October 17, 1895, p. 3.

⁵⁷The Stillwater Gazette, December 12, 1895, p. 3.

⁵⁸OAMC, H. E. Thompson to B. B. Chapman, June 3, 1954, "The Thompson Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

The following year Morrow reduced the number of his personal appearances throughout the state and encouraged his faculty to assume more responsibilities of this type. Some citizens, such as a Stillwater newspaper editorial writer, had charged that the bulletins published by the local experiment station were too technical and that the average farmer could not understand them.⁵⁹ The president thought that extended personal contacts could eliminate such criticisms and were also desirable because "in a country with so many important and unsettled problems as has Oklahoma, such meetings should be of great value."⁶⁰ The last year of the Morrow administration provided many illustrations of the fruits of these efforts. For example, formal agricultural extension courses were regularly scheduled in Shawnee, Newkirk, Hennessey, Perkins, and Perry.⁶¹ For the first time in the history of the institution, the public service concept of the land-grant mission was implemented.

In order to continue offering such services, President Morrow needed to impress upon the board of regents the need of a good faculty. In this regard, he was fortunate to have two board presidents who had known him at other institutions. Robert Lowry, the colorful Payne county lawyer, became acquainted with him while Morrow was at the Iowa Agricultural College.⁶² When Lowry left to fight in the Spanish-American War, Frank Wikoff replaced him as head of the board of regents. Wikoff first struck an acquaintanceship with Morrow while the latter was on the faculty of

⁵⁹The Stillwater Gazette, June 17, 1897, p. 2.

⁶⁰The Stillwater Gazette, October 24, 1896, p. 2.

⁶¹The Stillwater Gazette, November 24, 1898, p. 1.

⁶²The A. and M. College Mirror, April, 1898, p. 7.

the University of Illinois.⁶³ Having a great deal of confidence in the college executive's abilities, these two men permitted him a relatively free rein.

The faculty members who were recruited by these new administrators were selected for their academic backgrounds, not their political allegiances. In fact, Morrow made a concerted effort to take the institution completely out of territorial politics. On October 26, 1896, for instance, a communication was issued to Hays Hamilton, the Secretary of the Democratic Free Silver Committee, stating that the faculty would not endorse the candidacy of a former A. and M. graduate, Arthur Adams, for political office.⁶⁴ The new academic appointees were most often selected from out of the state, and such favorable employment conditions prevailed that the majority of them stayed until statehood. These were the men who ushered in the "Golden Age," as many of the local people called the later successful administration of Angelo C. Scott.⁶⁵

The incoming faculty members were chiefly drawn from the older and better established land-grant colleges. Some of the more outstanding were: (1) E. E. Bogue, botany and entomology, a graduate of Ohio State University; (2) J. W. Fields, chemistry and physics, a graduate of Pennsylvania State College; (3) J. F. Bone, agriculturalist, a graduate of Ohio State University; (4) L. L. Lewis, veterinary medicine, a graduate of Iowa Agricultural College; and (5) R. E. Chandler, mechanical

⁶³OAMC, Frank Wikoff to Tom Hartman, November 30, 1940, "The Hartman Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

⁶⁴OAMC, "Minutes of the First Faculty," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 264.

⁶⁵OAMC, Frank Wikoff to Tom Hartman, November 30, 1940, "The Hartman Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

engineering, a graduate of Stevens Institute of Technology and Cornell University.⁶⁶ Shortly after Morrow's retirement, and before the incoming president was installed, a graduate of William and Mary College and a man highly recommended by Alfred True were also appointed to the faculty.⁶⁷ The most important academic appointment of this period, however, was that of Dr. Angelo Scott, a graduate of the University of Kansas and the Columbian School of Law.⁶⁸ These new men, with the president's approval, gradually assumed more and more the responsibility for running the institution. It eventually came to the point where they delegated power to the president, not the reverse.⁶⁹ The climax of the recruitment and retention program occurred during the first week of June, 1898. The Stillwater Gazette reported that "the entire faculty was re-elected for another year...."⁷⁰ This marked the first time such an incident had happened at the college, and the action must be regarded as a high tribute to the leadership of the fourth president of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College.

The most difficult problem the new president and faculty had to face concerned the matter of financing the growing college. In 1895, Governor

⁶⁶ The A. and M. College Mirror, March 16, 1896, pp. 5-6; The Stillwater Democrat, September 2, 1898, [n.p.]; The A. and M. College Mirror, June 15, 1896, p. 12.

⁶⁷ The College Paper, October 1, 1899, p. 59.

⁶⁸ Portrait and Biographical Record of Oklahoma (Chicago, 1901), p. 817.

⁶⁹ The delegation of power to the president usually involved only routine disciplinary actions, but it still symbolized the increasing importance of the faculty. For specific instances, see OAMC, "Minutes of the First Faculty," (Oklahoma State University Library), pp. 201, 207, 216, 266, 276.

⁷⁰ The Stillwater Gazette, June 8, 1898, p. 3.

C. M. Barnes reported to the secretary of the interior that the Stillwater institution had received for that year approximately \$20,000.00 from the federal government, of which \$14,701.00 belonged to the experiment station.⁷¹ These funds were hardly sufficient to support an institution that had nearly two hundred students and carried on an extensive adult education program. Besides the federal funds, the college obtained a small amount of money from the sale of crops grown on the station lands in addition to the funds sporadically provided by the territorial legislatures.

Under the Morrow administration another source of money was obtained, but the amount fluctuated so much it was nearly impossible to plan in advance for its expenditure. These funds came from the leased lands of the Cherokee Strip.⁷² In 1893, the Congress empowered the president of the United States to reserve certain lands in the Oklahoma Panhandle for such purposes as the territorial legislature might designate. Consequently, sections thirteen and thirty-three in each township were leased with the proceeds reserved for public improvements.⁷³ A year later, the same national body created a committee consisting of the governor, the secretary of the territory, and the superintendent of public instruction to supervise the leasing of this land.⁷⁴ A portion of

⁷¹OT, Report of the Governor of Oklahoma to the Secretary of the Interior for the Year 1895 (Washington, 1896), p. 9.

⁷²54th Congress, 2nd Session, U. S. House of Representatives, Document No. 5. Report of the Secretary of the Interior, Vol. III (Washington, 1896), p. 429.

⁷³OT, Biennial Report of the Secretary of the Board for Leasing School Lands to the Governor of Oklahoma Territory for the Year of 1898 (Guthrie, 1898), p. 3.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 4. The committee named was only temporary. They were to act until the Oklahoma Legislature had passed laws concerning the use of the leased lands.

this revenue was divided between the Oklahoma institutions of higher education.

In 1897, the funds received by the Stillwater college from leased lands amounted to about \$7,500.00.⁷⁵ The next two years the figure dropped to \$5,038.90⁷⁶ and \$900.00,⁷⁷ respectively. The extreme decrease the third year brought an immediate reaction from the president and the board of regents. The annual report at the end of the fiscal year contained this statement: "The opinion that this institution is well provided with funds rests on a false assumption...."⁷⁸ Then the report concluded with questioning whether Oklahoma Territory was fulfilling its pledge made to the federal government in 1890.

Some progress was made in the next year in securing a larger part of the leased land revenues, but simultaneously another serious financial reversal occurred. The segregation issue, which had been receiving considerable attention in the deep south, now came to the conversational surface in Oklahoma. As early as 1895, a student of the A. and M. institution reported members of the Negro race had requested admittance to Central State Normal School. Then the student stated: "This disturbing question has not yet arisen here, but it is coming up for solution

⁷⁵OT, Exhibit "B", Third Annual Report of the Territorial Treasurer to the Governor of Oklahoma for the Years 1895 and 1896 (Guthrie, 1897), p. 9.

⁷⁶OT, Biennial Reports of the Board of Regents, Clerk and Treasurer of the Territorial Agricultural and Mechanical College, Session of 1897-1898 (Guthrie, 1898), p. 50.

⁷⁷The A. and M. College Mirror, January, 1898, p. 5.

⁷⁸OT, Biennial Reports of the Board of Regents, Clerk and Treasurer of the Territorial Agricultural and Mechanical College, Session of 1897-1898 (Guthrie, 1898), p. 39.

soon."⁷⁹ Two years later, the Oklahoma Legislature responded to the situation.

Taking advantage of the provision of the Second Morrill Act which permitted segregation in land-grant institutions, the lawmakers decided to create a second agricultural college for persons of the colored race. Then, too, the institution was also to combine instruction in teacher training. Instead, however, of providing separate funds for the Colored Agricultural and Normal University of the Territory of Oklahoma at Langston, as it was called, the Legislature decided the Stillwater college should immediately give Langston the sum of \$15,000.00, and henceforth the federal land-grant funds would be shared on a percentage basis with the new educational establishment.⁸⁰

The Stillwater populace generally supported the creation of Langston University. The Gazette piously announced: "Won't it be a benefit to the farmers of the Territory to have two experiment stations, one at Stillwater and one at Langston, twenty miles from each other."⁸¹ The college students were more realistic. A reporter for the campus newspaper questioned if it were possible to combine agricultural and normal instruction under the same roof, but he wished the new institution good luck.⁸² Two months later another Aggie penned a comment published shortly after the cornerstone was laid for the initial Langston University

⁷⁹ The College Mirror, May 15, 1895, [n.p.]. This student did not realize, as has been stated in Chapter IV, that a Negro girl named Jackson had applied for admittance to the college during the 1893-1894 academic year.

⁸⁰ OT, Session Laws of Oklahoma, (1897), pp. 67-68.

⁸¹ The Stillwater Gazette, April 1, 1897, p. 2.

⁸² The A. and M. College Mirror, January, 1898, p. 9.

building. He said: "Abstractly considered, colored people have a right to attend the schools for the whites, but, in view of existing feeling or prejudice, it seems better to provide separate schools."⁸³

The loss of federal revenues, in addition to the general inadequate attention given to the institution in the past, relegated the Stillwater college to a low place in statistical land-grant ratings, both those prepared by the federal government and those by private institutions. For instance, according to Alfred True's calculations there were sixty-four land-grant colleges and universities in the United States in 1898, of which fourteen were exclusively for Negroes.⁸⁴ The college in Payne county, using figures provided by the department of agriculture, ranked in the lowest five percent of the statistical ratings in number of students, in value of permanent funds and equipment, in general revenue, and in equipment additions for the year.⁸⁵ These measurements were also borne out by charts and graphs prepared by the administration of the Pennsylvania State College. Its study placed the Stillwater institution forty-eighth in assessed valuation of property, forty-second in fixed appropriations, the same in total yearly appropriations, fortieth in fixed state appropriations, and twenty-eighth in equipment owned.⁸⁶ If these sets of statistics were correct, the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College ranked lower than many of the all-Negro colleges.

⁸³The A. and M. College Mirror, April, 1898, p. 9.

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵USDA, OES, Bulletin No. 51, Statistics of the Land-Grant Colleges and Agricultural Experiment Stations in the United States for the Year Ended June, 1897 (Washington, 1898), pp. 10-27.

⁸⁶Pennsylvania State College, Annual Report, Session of 1897 (Harrisburg, 1898), pp. 8-11.

Herein lies the true tragedy of the creation of Langston University. The Stillwater college lost valuable revenue which could have assisted President Morrow to continue to upgrade the institution. This is to say nothing of the lower level of instruction offered at the colored center of higher education in Oklahoma.

In an attempt to counteract such conditions, President Morrow began an intensive effort to increase the physical facilities of the college. At the end of the 1894-1895 academic year, Dr. James Neal had pointed out that the "present college building was too small to accommodate the classes."⁸⁷ At the same time, he urged the construction of a chemical laboratory, which should be separate from the classrooms, a building for mechanic arts, a library, a museum, a biological room and an insectory for the natural sciences, and a greenhouse for the horticultural department.⁸⁸ A year later, with Morrow at the helm, the student college newspaper reissued a similar plea. The pertinent article concluded: "The time has now arrived in the history of this institution when its further expansion must be seriously crippled unless more ample provision is made for buildings and other necessary equipment."⁸⁹

Similar statements were also issued frequently during the academic year 1897-1898. In September, a lengthy campus paper article, which was composed from information provided by George Morrow, again detailed the needs of the institution. The new list requested (1) quarters for the department of domestic economy; (2) a building and equipment for the

⁸⁷The A. and M. College Mirror, May 15, 1895, [n.p.].

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹The A. and M. College Mirror, June 15, 1896, p. 8.

department of mechanical arts; (3) a botanical and entomological laboratory for the station; (4) an additional chemical and physical science laboratory for the college; (5) a study room adjacent to the library; (7) a dairy building, laboratory, and experiment room for the college and station; (8) increased recreational facilities; (9) a museum; (10) a printing shop; (11) and additional library space.⁹⁰ Seven months later, the regents took constructive action. On March 21, 1898, plans were discussed for the erection of a mechanical arts building.⁹¹ On April 13th, it was also decided to add instruction in stenography, typewriting, bookkeeping, foreign languages, and music.⁹² This expansion implied a willingness to provide extra space.

The actual plans for the mechanical arts building were approved in May, 1898. The structure was to be a two story building 80' x 32' with an annex for a boiler and engine room. The lower story, it was further projected, would be occupied by wood and iron working shops, with the upper story divided into two class and two apparatus rooms.⁹³ The building was constructed at a cost of \$3,500.00.⁹⁴ A year later, the contract was let to build a new chemistry laboratory and to expand library facilities.⁹⁵ These accomplishments serve as a tribute to the leadership of George Espy Morrow. By taking the college out of politics and appealing

⁹⁰The A. and M. College Mirror, September 15, 1897, p. 5.

⁹¹The Stillwater Gazette, March 24, 1898, p. 1.

⁹²The A. and M. College Mirror, April, 1898, p. 5.

⁹³The A. and M. College Mirror, May, 1898, p. 3.

⁹⁴OT, Council Journal, (1899), p. 31.

⁹⁵The College Paper, May 15, 1899, p. 7.

to regents with patience and reason, he was able to bring the first expansion of the college since Old Central was constructed in 1894.

The First Graduation

President Morrow presided over the first graduation ceremonies held on the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College campus. In September, 1892, a freshman class had been organized from former preparatory students. Each succeeding year a new academic step was added until a senior class came into being. The students were not as academically advanced as present day freshmen, but an early faculty member believed their standard of excellence was above much later standards, based on the percentages of failures for a given term.⁹⁶ For the most part, the first students to receive diplomas were from Payne county and had limited finances. It should be remembered, however, that these students were not entirely provincial in background. For example, Tom Hartman, who originally hailed from Pennsylvania, came to Stillwater via the state of Kansas. He had actually assisted his father in bringing the family possessions in a covered wagon;⁹⁷ thus he possessed a maturity the average college student of today often does not have. Nevertheless, humble origins did not necessarily mean a young man or woman lacked an inquiring and supple mind. George Stiles, who enrolled a little later than Hartman, "came in from the sticks in abbreviated pants, and a long Prince Albert coat he had inherited from some of his preacher ancestors."⁹⁸

⁹⁶OAMC, "Selections from the Record Book of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1891-1941," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 39.

⁹⁷OAMC, [Willa Adams, "Scrapbook of Willa Adams," n.p.] in "The Dusch Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

⁹⁸OAMC, "Selections from the Record Book of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1891-1941," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 61.

He graduated from the college and then continued his education elsewhere, eventually acquiring a Doctor of Philosophy degree from the Johns Hopkins University.

A senior class was formed the first year of the Morrow administration. Professor George Holter by this time could remark that the college was no longer an experiment, but an established fact.⁹⁹ In addition, about this same period, a writer for a Stillwater newspaper noted a difference in attitude on the part of the students enrolled in the institution. A Populist news item stated that the "students are usually to be found pursuing their studies after 7 o'clock p.m."¹⁰⁰

It was a proud moment when the faculty on June 9, 1896, certified that Arthur Wesley Adams, James Homer Adams, Frank Ellsworth Duck, Alfred Edwin Jarrell, Ervin Gibson Lewis, and Oscar Matison Morris, had passed their final examinations and were therefore entitled to receive the Bachelor of Science degree.¹⁰¹ In addition to possessing good moral characters, and having passed their final examinations, the graduates were also required to write and deliver a senior thesis. This year these were entitled: (1) "The Esthetics of Emotion;" (2) "The Study of Nature;" (3) "Sir Humphrey Davy;" (4) "Abraham Lincoln;" (5) "Man, the Master;" (6) and "Pictures in the Fire."¹⁰² These projects, which do not indicate a preoccupation with agriculture, may well suggest that the college president constructed a well-rounded academic program.

⁹⁹George Holter, "When the School Was Young," The A. and M. College Magazine, I (1929), p. 31.

¹⁰⁰The Payne County Populist, September 19, 1896, p. 4.

¹⁰¹OAMC, "Minutes of the First Faculty," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 256.

¹⁰²OAMC, The First Commencement Program (Stillwater, 1896), [n.p.] .

The graduation ceremonies in 1896 were elaborate, commemorative, devotional, and sentimental. Several significant speeches were made, but one of the most touching and symbolic came from the lips of Representative Robert Lowry a week before the actual graduation ceremonies were held. Speaking at a reunion of Old Settlers in Stillwater, he paused to reflect upon the accomplishments made in Oklahoma in the last six years. The increased population, the smoke-crowned factory tops, the towering spires of schools and churches, and the development of cities where once Mother Nature had reigned supreme were a monument to those pioneers who had gone before. He concluded his moving address by giving an answer to future generations who might ask who had made this land. He said, let the answer be

I cannot tell. I only know
 He heard God's voice and came
 In the white caravan across the prairie sea,
 To work for country, God and me.
 The soil he broke, felled the huge oak,
 And from the soil, with horrid toll,
 Dragged forth its gnarled, and twisted foot.
 No granite monument, is chiseled with his name,
 No brazen trumpet blazons forth his fame.
 A city there, a school, a church spire tall.
 The farms, the homes, the villagers, - all -
 These be his monuments and these alone
 He needs no urn of bronze and no memorial stone. 103

The students of the first graduating class also realized that they were pioneers. Surviving the lean years in the Stillwater churches, painfully enduring the embarrassment of the various political squabbles, suffering patiently as favorite professors left for more stable academic homes, they pressed with vigor their desire for knowledge. Leaving the institution in 1896, they migrated to various parts of the country. But

¹⁰³Quoted from The Stillwater Gazette, May 28, 1896, p. 1.

a fondness always remained for the prairie college. One is reminded of the words Daniel Webster once spoke to the Supreme Court. Of his own alma mater, he said: "It is a small college, yet there are those who love it."¹⁰⁴ Completing these words, he wiped away an affectionate tear which bleared his eyes as he recalled the halls of Hanover. Such also could be the case with many early "Plowboys and Blacksmiths."

Three years after the first college class graduated, George Morrow left Stillwater. He was in ill health and beginning to feel the awkwardness of advanced age. In June, 1899, the respected agriculturalist introduced his successor Angelo Scott to the students assembled for graduation exercises. His last official duty was to present diplomas to the class of 1898-1899. Then he prepared to return to his former home in Paxton, Illinois.¹⁰⁵ Less than a year later he expired.¹⁰⁶

Numerous obituaries lauded the agricultural accomplishments of the former editor, teacher, and administrator. Alfred True called him the father of modern agricultural instruction.¹⁰⁷ His former colleagues of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations praised his leadership in the land-grant movement.¹⁰⁸ In Stillwater, the faculty of the institution paid him a large compliment. They regarded him as the man who had given respectability and permanence to

¹⁰⁴Quoted from Nevins, p. 104.

¹⁰⁵The College Paper, June 15, 1899, p. 40.

¹⁰⁶The College Paper, April 1, 1900, p. 2.

¹⁰⁷The College Paper, April 1, 1900, p. 2.

¹⁰⁸USDA, OES, Miscellaneous Bulletin No. 99, Proceedings of the Thirteenth Annual Convention of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations (Washington, 1901), p. 94.

their academic home. A college resolution, which probably was penned by President Scott, described the attitude of many of the faculty and students toward Morrow. It read:

Resolved, That we, the faculty and students of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College have heard with profound regret of the death of Professor George Morrow....As a scholar the range of his learning was wonderful; as a specialist in his chosen pursuit his services were of conspicuous and enduring value; as a teacher he was suggestive and inspiring; as an administrator he was honorable and faithful; as a man his life was stainless and beyond reproach; and he was a Christian citizen, doing his full duty by the State. Through all the future history of this institution his name will be honorably associated with its early struggles and triumphs.¹⁰⁹

This tribute marked the first time the loss of a president of the institution was mourned.

Conclusion

The tenure of George Espy Morrow at the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College is an example of what a dedicated academic leader can do for an educational institution. Coming to Stillwater at a time when the previous two executives had lasted for only six months each, he patiently endeavored to create good relations among the faculty, the board of regents, the Legislature, and the general public. Not only was he a respected scientist in the eyes of the world, but he was also a superb salesman for higher education. In the 1890's the day was passing when an institution could simply wait for students voluntarily to apply for admission. Federal, state, and private funds often depended on increased student enrollments and the ability to build prestigious academic programs. In this regard, President Morrow became a champion in the

¹⁰⁹Quoted from The College Paper, April 1, 1900, p. 3.

cause of making agriculture a respected science. To popularize his ideas, he strengthened the institution academically and then proceeded to educate the public on the aims and purposes of a land-grant college. As such, President Morrow was the first man to implement the concept long associated with Morrill institutions: that is, teaching, research, and extension.

CHAPTER VII

TEACHING AND LEARNING

By 1890, the American land-grant colleges were beginning to acquire much of the promise that their intellectual architects had earlier ascribed to them. State support had been meager in the sixties, seventies, and eighties because many of the local legislatures believed Morrill colleges were national institutions and therefore refused to appropriate revenues for them.¹ At the same time, private and denominational administrators, as the land-grant institutions began to shed their purely agricultural image, claimed that the practical colleges were encroaching on the study of the classics, a domain which they believed belonged exclusively to them. Princeton President James McCosh even went so far as to suggest that federal land-grant endowments should be discontinued and given to the struggling high schools of the nation.² President Warren Candler of Emory College, later a Southern Methodist Bishop, addressed the Georgia legislature in 1889 in an attempt to

¹Edward Danforth Eddy, Colleges for Our Land and Time: The Land-Grant Idea in American Education (New York, 1956), p. 103.

²Earle Dudley Ross, Democracy's College: The Land-Grant Movement in the Formative Stage (Ames, 1942), pp. 173-174. Wellford Addis, the statistician for the Department of Agriculture, estimated in 1896 that land-grant colleges were receiving \$617,506.00 annually. US Congress, House of Representatives, Report of the Secretary of the Interior, Document No. 5, 54th Congress, 2nd Session (Washington, 1897), pp. 1243-1244.

prove that "higher education was no function of the state."³ Nevertheless, the additional income from the Second Morrill Act, the increased number of scientifically trained professors, and larger state appropriations catapulted the land-grant colleges into national educational prominence by the dawn of the twentieth century.

The changing functions of the Morrill institutions were reflected in their curricula.⁴ A lack of student interest in the old-style agricultural courses, advanced technological improvements, and the desire to offer a liberal education were major reasons for curricular adjustments.⁵ Liberty Hyde Bailey outlined what these emendations meant in his own area of speciality in his 1904 report to President J. G. Schurman of Cornell University. He wrote:

In the epoch just closing colleges of agriculture have concerned themselves mostly with technical farming, largely with the increasing of the productiveness of the farm. In the epoch just opening great emphasis is also to be laid on the farm home and family. We are to reach the farmer as well as the farm. Certain great public questions touch the farmer very closely; these must be considered in the College of Agricultural at Cornell University, both in its regular academic courses, and in its extension work. Some of these questions are farm labor, rural organizations, good roads, means of communication in the country, sanitation, architecture

³Allan Nevins, The State Universities and Democracy (Urbana, 1962), p. 53.

⁴Eddy, p. 76.

⁵The A. and M. College Mirror (Stillwater, March, 1898, p. 3). The A. and M. College Mirror, April, 1898, p. 6; USDA, OES, Miscellaneous Bulletin No. 2, Proceedings of the Third Annual Convention of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations (Washington, 1890), p. 67. A list of nineteenth century agricultural technological improvements may be found in Otis Durant Duncan: An Address entitled "Economic Changes in American Rural Life," Delivered before the National Conference on Rural Education held in Washington, D. C. on October 4, 1954 (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 9.

of farm buildings, cooperation with churches and societies in introducing better ideals of farming and citizenship....⁶

Increased responsibilities meant that methods of instruction had to be improved, too. As early as 1891-1892 Charles Kendall Adams of Cornell stated that in "no university in the country have greater pains been taken to provide all the facilities for advanced instruction."⁷

Numerous speeches and reports presented at the gatherings of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations indicate that Adams' opinion was by no means unique.

The Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, which was founded during the flowering of the land-grant movement, moved slowly but surely in adopting a modern curriculum and incorporating the new teaching techniques pioneered by the older academic institutions. But for better or worse, the college was colored by local environmental conditions. The purpose of this chapter is to trace the history of teaching and learning at the frontier college from its birth to the turn of the century.

General Educational Objectives of the Early Colleges

The land-grant colleges and universities did not develop along a single pattern. No super-structure had been created to insure that a particular evolutionary path would be followed; therefore, each institution's story constitutes a separate and unique chapter in the

⁶ Cornell University, Annual Report of the President, Session of 1903-1904 (New York, 1904), p. liv, appendix.

⁷ Cornell University, Annual Report of the President, Session of 1891-1892 (New York, 1892), p. 5.

history of agricultural and mechanical education.⁸ A collegiate department was formed at Stillwater in September, 1892. Every succeeding year until 1897 the administration instituted a higher class, thereby indicating that four years were thought sufficient to attain an undergraduate education. To accommodate the students, both male and female, who frequently had to return home to work on the farm, the administration divided the nine month academic year into three equal quarters. The initial collegiate terms began on October 4, 1892; January 4, 1893; and April 5, 1893.⁹ Those students desiring an education and who could perform at an acceptable scholastic level could expect to receive the Bachelor of Science degree, the only one offered.¹⁰

The First Territorial Legislature of Oklahoma was a major force in shaping the educational objectives of the Stillwater college. The law which founded the institution charged the administration to design a collegiate program which would offer practical instruction in agriculture and the mechanic arts.¹¹ As in the preparatory school, the admissions policies were democratic. In order to insure that the faculty followed the Second Morrill Act to the letter, the lawmakers enumerated the subjects which could be taught. The legislation stated:

The course of instruction shall embrace the English language and literature, mathematics, civil engineering, agricultural

⁸ US Congress, House of Representatives, Annual Report for the Department of the Interior for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1897, Report of the Commissioner of Education, I, Document No. 5, 55th Congress, 2nd Session (Washington, 1898), p. 427.

⁹ OAMC, Annual Catalog, Session of 1890-1891, [n.p.].

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ The Statutes of Oklahoma (1890), p. 84.

chemistry, animal and vegetable anatomy and physiology, the veterinary art, entomology, geology and such other natural sciences as may be prescribed; political, rural, and household economy, horticulture, moral philosophy, history, book-keeping, and especially the application of science and the mechanic arts to practical agriculture in the field.¹²

The organic law was both specific and general, making it most difficult for the faculty to interpret and to implement the instructions contained therein. A conscientious attempt, however, was made to follow the educational path laid out by the territorial forefathers. In line with these directives, an early college catalog stated that the purpose of the institution was "not to afford a university education."¹³ Instead, it was to give a thorough training in the arts and sciences necessary to a first-class education in the various industries of life.¹⁴ Students were warned that pursuance of an education took hard work. A writer declared:

It is not expected that students enter upon a course of study for the purpose of passing a few years in pleasantry, but on the contrary it is presumed that the attainment of useful knowledge and skill is the dominant motive, which prompts young men and women to enter the institution.¹⁵

The exact process by which students were to receive their education often became the subject of a good deal of dispute, but the majority of the faculty seemed to believe that instruction should be composed of learning and doing. Classroom recitations and lectures were integrated

¹²Ibid.

¹³OAMC, Annual Catalog, Session of 1893-1894, p. 30.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵OAMC, Annual Catalog, 1894-1895, p. 30.

with scientific experimentation and practical labor. A catalog suggested that students "study the principles of chemistry in the classroom and handle the chemicals in the laboratory."¹⁶ Practicums were required on the college farm, for the faculty believed:

Four years of study without labor, wholly removed from the sympathy of the laboring world, during the period of life when tastes are so rapidly formed, will almost invariably produce disinclination, if not inability to perform the work and duties of the farm. To accomplish the objects of the institution, it is evident that a student must not, in acquiring a scientific education, lose either the ability or the disposition to labor on a farm.¹⁷

Two hours per day in such educational pursuits were thought sufficient to preserve such skills.

Generally speaking, it was the faculty who assumed the responsibility for setting academic standards. The instructors used the 100 point system for assessing grades, with a mark being recorded at least once a month.¹⁸ To pass a particular subject, a student needed to maintain an average of at least seventy percent and had to have a final examination mark of fifty percent. Practicum grades were kept separate from classroom work. Graduating seniors were required to write a 3,000 to 5,000 word thesis.¹⁹

In spite of the fact that the founding law outlined the general

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 31.

¹⁷ OAMC, Annual Catalog, Session of 1893-1894, p. 31.

¹⁸ OAMC, "Minutes of the First Faculty," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 220.

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 218.

procedures for admission into the collegiate program, it was up to the faculty to devise a system which detailed the specific requirements. Two methods were used. Students could be accepted on the basis of possession of a first grade certificate, county diploma, or state or life certificate or diploma from a reputable educational institution.²⁰ Or in lieu of this procedure, an individual could request that he be given oral and/or written entrance examinations at the time he signed the Matricular Pledge.²¹

The students to a limited degree participated in setting the general academic standards of the college. For example, an honor system received the assent of the faculty in 1895 after a student petition signed by "practically the entire student body" requested it.²² The professors favored the idea as it relieved them, in their own words, of being "watch-dogs." An instructor handed out the examination, but did not make an especial attempt to observe the conduct of the students. When the examination period was over, the persons taking the test wrote at the end of his paper: "I hereby certify on my honor that I have neither received nor given assistance on this examination."²³

The College Curriculum

Of all the educational topics which were discussed in the late nineteenth century, it was the curriculum that undoubtedly received the

²⁰Ibid., p. 109.

²¹Ibid., pp. 117-118.

²²OAMC, Annual Catalog, Session of 1906-1907, p. 75.

²³Ibid.

most attention. The first college to move in making a major change was Harvard. Under President Charles W. Eliot, the elective system became popular, thereby permitting a student to select a few of the courses which he wanted to take. To young Theodore Roosevelt, however, who was enrolled at Harvard in the late seventies, the new freedom did not appreciably enhance his opinion of the curriculum.²⁴ Many of Eliot's colleagues did not believe that the addition of new courses, in order to provide a wider selection for students, was wise. A somewhat typical attitude of presidents of older institutions is portrayed by a fictional dialogue carried on between Peter Finley Dunne's Mr. Dooley and Mr. Hennessey. The Irish bartender Dooley related to Hennessey the problems encountered by an Irish lad who was discussing which college courses he should take with a college president; Mr. Dooley said:

If he's not sthrong enough to look f'r high honors as a middle-weight pugilist he goes into th' thought departmint. Th' prisidint takes him into a Turkish room, gives him a cig-areet an' says: 'Me dear boy, what special branch iv larning wud ye like to have studied f'r ye by our compitint profissors? We have a chair iv Beauty an' wan iv Puns an' wan if Pothry on th' Changin' Hues iv th' Settin' Sun, an' wan on Platonic Love, an' wan on How Green Grows th' Grass, an' wan on th' relation iv Ice to th' Greek Idee iv God', he says. 'This is all Ye'll need to equip ye f'r th' perfect life, nless,' he says, 'ye intind being a dintist, in which case,' he says, 'we won't think much iv ye, but we have a good school where ye can larn that disgraceful thrade,' he says.²⁵

The curriculum was also the subject of much discussion in the land-grant colleges and universities of the United States. In the early days

²⁴Henry F. Pringle, Theodore Roosevelt: A Biography (New York, p. 36.

²⁵Finley Peter Dunne, Mr. Dooley at His Best (New York, 1938), p. 218.

of these institutions, educators disagreed as to the direction A. and M. colleges should take. Utopian idealists envisioned "quiet rural settings where students might study the great books and ponder the great thoughts while engaging in productive labor...."²⁶ Practical vocationalists wanted boys and girls instructed in the development of the model farms. Sectarian classicists often wanted a portion of land-grant funds and were willing to give only lip service to vocational training to get it. And finally, military enthusiasts would have liked to transform Morrill campuses into miniature West Points.²⁷ These various viewpoints, of course, were reflected in the curricula of fledgling land-grant schools.

National organizations of various kinds exhibited an interest in the educational endeavors of agricultural and mechanical colleges. For example, the Grange expressed deep concern over the status of public and higher education in the South.²⁸ The Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations continually worked to establish a basic agricultural curriculum which would serve as a model for land-grant institutions.²⁹ In addition, the Darwinian war between scientific and theological organizations, as well as the less publicized

²⁶Earle D. Ross, "The Great Triumvirate of Land-Grant Educators," The Journal of Higher Education, XXXII (1961), p. 480.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Solon Justus Buck, The Granger Movement: A Study of Agricultural Organization and Its Political, Economic and Social Manifestations, 1870-1880 (Lincoln, 1913), pp. 290-292.

²⁹The A. and M. College Mirror, April, 1898, p. 6.

one between the classics and English, modern languages, and history,³⁰ precipitated innumerable discussions among the nation's educated elite. The Stillwater student newspaper, in an article based on the life and works of Louis Pasteur, indicated that this debate had reached the college. A writer stated:

Pasteur obtained some of his best ideas from other men who had the facts before them but who were wanting in reasoning power to follow the subject to a logical conclusion. Interest in science must go beyond a mere curiosity to know a fact, but when you study science for the sake of science as such, when the enjoyment of completeness and accuracy are more desirable than the indolence of ignorance, when the desire for originality is great enough to stimulate work then the mind has passed the stage of a blind intellectual instinct.³¹

Moving from taxonomical studies to the seminar, the laboratory, and the research library, the new scientific thought was destined to have far-reaching effects on land-grant institution curriculums.

Oklahomans also expressed a specific interest in the Stillwater college curriculum. As has been previously stated, the Guthrie lawmakers formulated the initial group of courses which were listed in the college catalog. Secondly, clergymen were often quite vocal in suggesting what items should be included in the collegiate course of study. A

³⁰ Sherman B. Barnes, "The Entry of Science and History in the College Curriculum, 1865-1914," The History of Education Quarterly, IV (1964), p. 44. Also, see J. P. Powell, "Some Nineteenth Century Views on the University Curriculum," The History of Education Quarterly, V (1965), pp. 97-109.

³¹ The A. and M. College Mirror, May, 1898, p. 1.

continual critic of the Oklahoma A. and M. College was Robert Brooke, the Episcopal bishop of the territory. In 1893, he said:

Specialization in science or history or literature that gives no chance nor scope for a large view and a thorough knowledge of the whole field, that is to blame for much if not most of the knowledge that is not godly and God Fearing.... Let us look to it dear friends, that as we use our microscopes, and our chemical tests, and analytic methods with that accuracy and patience which is the distinguishing glory of physical scientists that we do not forget that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in that philosophy, or that can be found in it or deduced from it. ³²

Perhaps the most outspoken group, outside the faculty, were the students. Countless articles on teaching and learning were included in their newspaper. Some pertinent titles read: "The Department of Chemistry;" "The Mechanical Engineering Department;" "Should Examinations Be Abolished?" "Am I Educated?" "The Department of Agriculture;" "After Graduation;" "The Benefits of a College Education;" "College Influence;" "Specialization in Education;" "Brain Culture and Agriculture;" and "Agriculture."³³ Students also chartered clubs which related to the subjects taught at the college. The Chemistry Club came first,³⁴

³²The Stillwater Gazette, June 23, 1898, p. 6.

³³The College Paper, November 16, 1903, p. 112; February [n.d.], 1905, p. 73; October 1, 1899, p. 54; May 1, 1900, p. 17; March [n.d.], 1903, pp. 34-40; December 20, 1902, p. 145; March [n.d.], 1904, p. 211; November 28, 1902, pp. 120-122; December 20, 1902, p. 159; The A. and M. College Mirror, April [n.d.], 1898, p. 1, March [n.d.], 1898, p. 5.

³⁴The College Paper, January 1, 1900, p. 106.

followed by the Biology, Agriculture, and Mechanic Arts clubs.³⁵ One organization was especially designed to discuss teaching and learning. Created in November, 1895, the College Club in the succeeding months had papers read entitled: "The Use and Abuse of Textbooks;" "How to Teach Science;" "Physical Culture;" "The New Education;" "Electives;" and "Textbooks, Lectures and Laboratory Instruction."³⁶

President Robert Barker wrote the first college curriculum just a few weeks before the college opened.³⁷ Since no collegiate classes were offered the first year, this particular sequence of courses was not used. Generally speaking, the effort included all the courses prescribed by the Legislature, and they were squeezed into one course of study that had no electives. Regular classes were conducted in the morning, with drill, practicums, and laboratory experiments held in the afternoon. The most notable course in Barker's curriculum suggested by the lawmakers was Latin, but there is no evidence that instruction in this subject was given. Agriculture, science courses, and vocational subjects dominated the program.³⁸

³⁵ The College Paper, December 2, 1901, p. 146; The College Paper, November 1, 1900, p. 88; The College Paper, May, 1902, p. 23.

³⁶ The Stillwater Gazette, December 19, 1895, p. 1; The A. and M. College Mirror, November 15, 1895, p. 12; The A. and M. College Mirror, January 16, 1896, p. 6.

³⁷ OAMC, Annual Catalog, 1891-1892, [n.p.] .

³⁸ It is difficult to determine exactly which courses composed the first college curriculum. Several changes in the printed program were made in pen and ink. When these modifications were made is impossible to determine. For the initial curriculum, see OAMC, Annual Catalog, 1891-1892; [n.p.] .

The curriculum that served as a basic model for the college throughout the territorial period received the assent of the faculty in May, 1893.³⁹ One year later, Professors Edward Clark and Frank Waugh were appointed to gather opinions on it from the faculty and then to make recommendations for changes. These men requested each department head to turn in to them a report detailing the exact title of their courses, when they were to be offered, how they were to be taught, what textbook would be used, and what major points would be covered.⁴⁰ It was on the basis of this information that a new curriculum came into being. Most of the courses appear to have retained the same title, but many of the textbooks and objectives were changed.

To graduate, a student needed to complete successfully 314 quarter term credits. If the suggested sequence was followed, the young men and women took 74 hours of work the freshman year, 82 the sophomore year, 90 hours the junior year, and 68 hours the senior year.⁴¹ Practicums, laboratory work, and time spend on the college farm carried less credit than regular courses.

³⁹ OAMC, "Minutes of the First Faculty," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 142.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 170.

⁴¹ Compiled from OAMC, Annual Catalog, Session of 1894-1895, p. 33. The freshman year 16 courses were taken in mathematics, agriculture, English, military subjects, sciences, and bookkeeping. The sophomore year 18 courses were taken in mathematics, agriculture, science, and mechanical drawing. The junior year 18 courses were taken in mathematics, English, science, history, and mechanical drawing. The senior year 14 courses were taken in mathematics, agriculture, English, science, philosophy, law, military subjects, psychology, and surveying.

The Content of the Collegiate Curriculum

In order to gain an understanding of the content of the curriculum of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, it is necessary to look beyond course titles. The particular educational orientation of individual instructors, the pedagogical techniques employed to package the course content, the type of textbooks elected, and the general organization of the classes are more reliable guides to use in assessing the intellectual level of the instruction offered to the students. Since the territorial college was divided into academic departments,⁴² a sampling from each major area is given in order to illustrate the nature of teaching and learning.

Beginning in 1893, the college contained four major departments and seven smaller subdivisions. Agriculture, horticulture, chemistry, and physics had departmental status, while mathematics, logic, psychology and ethics, natural sciences, military science, English and English literature, and history formed the lesser instructional units. Each of these divisions had specific objectives.⁴³ Alexander Magruder headed the department of agriculture. He was a man the students learned to respect because of his dedication to his profession. Magruder believed that his charges should be exposed to both practical and theoretical instruction. In his own words, he thought "practical manual work... as co-ordinate with, if not superior to classroom work; but to... accomplish the best end the two must be combined."⁴⁴

⁴²The Sunday Oklahoman Supplement (Oklahoma City), October 17, 1965, p. 2.

⁴³OAMC, Annual Catalog, Session of 1893-1894, pp. 34-48.

⁴⁴OAMC, A. C. Magruder to Board of Regents, "Manuscript Letter Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

Instruction in agriculture on the college level began during the sophomore year. The first course stressed dairy husbandry, centering upon the establishment of better methods of dairying. A significant portion of the course also touched upon "farm drainage; surface and sub-soil drain; hillside ditching; terracing; action of flowing water; irrigation, and the duty of water."⁴⁵ The same year an advanced course, usually offered in the Spring, took students outside the classroom to learn the use of the level, leveling rod, and drainage tools. In the senior year, the students continued their studies in this area. Further attention was given to farm economy, natural and artificial manures, treatment of alkali soils, the work of the United States Department of Agriculture, state experiment stations, and foreign farm practices. Upperclassmen were taken on inspection tours to visit some of the best farms in the Territory. Here attention focused on "the crops, location of dwellings, barns, sheds, pastures, fields, and water supplies."⁴⁶ When a textbook was needed, the students relied on F. A. Gulley's First Lessons in Agriculture (College Station: Gulley Publishing Company, 1887).

The initial studies in horticulture were supervised by Frank Waugh. Two terms of classwork and two terms of practicum were required. The freshman year gave students "a general knowledge of horticulture, its scope and fundamental principles."⁴⁷ Liberty Hyde Bailey's Talks Afield: About Plants (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1885) provided

⁴⁵ OAMC, Annual Catalog, Session of 1893-1894, p. 35.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 36.

information on large and small fruits, viticulture, forestry, landscaping, floriculture, and vegetable gardening.⁴⁸ During the junior year, the men and women formed separate classes. The boys were trained in applying the principles of horticulture to the climate and geography of Oklahoma, while the girls studied such parts of fruit and vegetable cultures as seemed best to suit their needs. Professor Waugh offered to design special courses to give advanced students who were regularly matriculated. He gave encouragement in all of his classes for pupils "to plan and prosecute original work."⁵⁰

The instructional standards of George Holter, who headed the chemistry department, were of the highest caliber. His aim was to make this academic unit "second to none in the college."⁵¹ C. Remigius Fresenius's Manual of Qualitative Chemical Analysis (New York: Wiley Company, 1897) was the textbook used. Professor Holter insisted upon the necessity of thought, frequent recitations and review, and periodic examinations in order for the facts learned to be firmly implanted into the students' heads.⁵² Holter also considered laboratory work especially important, for Oklahoma farmers did not have the equipment or knowledge to conduct chemical analyses. Because of this belief, he admonished:

The work accomplished must be work well done, and analysis nearly right is an analysis not at all right. When a student is given a sample containing four elements these four elements must be found, no more, no less.⁵³

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid;

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 37.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 43.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid., p. 45.

Apparently, these stern methods paid off for the students. Professor William English, a respected midwestern professor of chemistry, once said the disciplinarian Holter taught him all the chemistry he knew.⁵⁴

The early day chemistry laboratory held unusual perils for the faculty and students. On one occasion a novice, who was working in the laboratory on an experiment, inhaled some ammonia hydrate and "sank down exhausted."⁵⁵ In another instance, Professor Holter breathed in too much hydrogen sulfide and passed out in front of the class.⁵⁶ The usual remedy for such accidents was to carry the victim to an open window, hoping the fresh air would revive him.

The department of physics also fell under the jurisdiction of George Holter. Using Joel Dorman Steele's New Popular Physics (New York: Barnes Publishing Company, 1887), the main physics course gave elementary training in studying motion, force and energy.⁵⁷ Matter, changes in matter, sound, light, heat, electricity, and dynamics completed the course. Particular attention was given to practical work, and frequent demonstrations were conducted.⁵⁸

Instruction in the natural sciences included classes in entomology, botany, geology, zoology, and meteorology. All of these courses were taught by James Neal. In entomology Alpheus Spring Packard's Entomology for Beginners: For Young Folks, Fruitgrowers, Farmers, and Gardeners (New York: Holt Publishing Company, 1888) provided general information

⁵⁴OAMC, W. L. English to B. B. Chapman, October 16, 1964, "Miscellaneous Student Letter Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

⁵⁵The College Paper, December 1, 1899, p. 92.

⁵⁶The College Paper, March 1, 1901, p. 14.

⁵⁷OAMC, Annual Catalog, Session of 1893-1894, p. 45.

⁵⁸Ibid.

which was then directed toward local needs and problems. Dr. Neal believed: "No science is of more value to the farmer than practical entomology, since in most cases his success depends upon the extent to which his crops suffer from insect ravages."⁵⁹ The practicum in this area was almost wholly devoted to collecting, preserving, and devising means for exterminating Oklahoma insects.⁶⁰ Geology classes used J. LeConte's Compend of Geology (New York: Appleton Publishing Company, 1884). Lectures and recitations were the normal method of covering the subject, and special attention was devoted to Oklahoma rock strata.⁶¹ The aim of the zoology course was to "make observers rather than mere book scientists."⁶² Packard's Elementary Zoology (New York: Holt Publishing Company, 1886) served as the text.

In Professor Neal's courses in botany, his favorite subject, less attention was paid to applying the discipline and more to teaching basic subject matter. Students began with C. E. Bessey's Elements of Botany (New York: Holt Publishing Company, 1884) and then moved on to the series of books written by Asa Gray.⁶³ Germination and decay, physiology, and the structure of plants comprised the main topics considered.⁶⁴

There were few courses offered in psychology, ethics, and logic. The inclusion of all these subjects under the same heading reminds the

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 46.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Ibid., p. 47.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³The Gray textbooks are analysed in Charles Ford, "Botany Texts: A Survey of Their Development in Higher Education, 1643-1906," The History of Education Quarterly, IV (1964), pp. 62-65.

⁶⁴OAMC, Annual Catalog, Session of 1893-1894, p. 47.

modern reader that a day existed when psychology was less a behavioral science than a philosophical discourse. President Robert Barker handled instruction in this area for the "itinerant college." He believed these subjects should be taught inductively,

no theory or doctrine being urged for acceptance which is not based upon a philosophical induction. The student is taught to subject every statement of fact or principle to the test of his own experiences. A full and free discussion of opposing views is encouraged. Recent research in physiological psychology receives special attention.⁶⁵

Students received detailed instruction in mathematics. During the freshman year Joseph Ray's series of books was used. Professor Clark, who later specialized in teaching mathematics, provided direction for the students. Inequalities, indeterminate equations, series, and logarithms, all algebraic subjects, composed the nucleus of the first course.⁶⁶ The sophomore year, E. Wentworth's New Plane and Solid Geometry (Boston: Ginn Publishing Company, 1888) provided the basis for a study of geometry.⁶⁷ Much attention was given to applying the principles of the subject to undemonstrated propositions and an attempt to make students aware of the application and utility of the science.⁶⁸ During the senior year, the students were introduced to trigonometry and the principles of surveying. In Clark's own words, the general aim of mathematics instruction was to "secure full possession of the leading principles and methods, to exhibit practical applications, and to lead

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Ibid., p. 39.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Ibid.

the student to form accurate and precise methods of thinking."⁶⁹ These remarks give, of course, evidence that the college's mathematics course had not disregarded the views of classicists on the subject.

Professor W. W. Hutto, a popular instructor with the students, handled the teaching of English, English literature, history, and constitutional law. In English, a variety of textbooks was used including T. W. Harvey's Elementary Grammar and Composition (Cincinnati: Van Antwerp Publishing Company, 1880), Adams Sherman Hill's Principles of Rhetoric and Their Application (New York: Harper Publishing Company, 1885), William Swinton's New Word Analysis (New York: Ivison Publishing Company, 1888), and V. Waddy's Elements of Composition and Rhetoric (Cincinnati: Van Antwerp Publishing Company, 1890).⁷⁰ During the freshman year, students concentrated on the construction of sentences and the history of the English language. The junior year brought direction in the area of explanation, argument, laws of mind and languages, and literary criticism. English literature, considered a capstone course, came in the senior year. The classics were read. Practicum for English consisted of public orations, usually held in connection with chapel exercises.

Hutto used textbooks in history courses, but the emphasis was on student research. M. E. Thalheimer's New Eclectic History of the United States (Cincinnati: Van Antwerp Publishing Company, 1890) and W. Swinton's Condensed History of the United States (New York: Ivison Publishing Company, 1878) were the books read in common. Usually, however, students were assigned a topic for investigation. They then proceeded to the library, where they were to support their conclusions with facts.⁷¹

⁶⁹Ibid., p. 40.

⁷⁰Ibid., pp. 40-41.

⁷¹Ibid., pp. 42-43.

Constitutional law, which was regarded as the practical aspect of history, provided an acquaintance with federal and state laws governing the Territory of Oklahoma.

An annual announcement of the college printed in 1898 summarized the methods by which students were exposed to the curriculum. It stated:

Varying in detail with the nature of the subject, there is a combination of the use of text and reference books, lectures, laboratory work, library research, with oral and written reviews. It is the attempt, while avoiding educational fads, to make use of the best methods of teaching, a leading feature of which is an insistence on the student's seeing, handling, working with things and subjects rather than simply reading or being lectured to about them. Greater importance is attached to securing in the future, and acquiring the knowledge of where and how to find information than to the accumulation of a mass of facts.⁷²

A complete and proper evaluation of the college curriculum is a project of such importance that it warrants a separate study. Nevertheless, it can be said at this point that the teaching offered at the institution was of respectable quality. The textbooks were of recent vintage, the educational philosophy agreed in principle with ideas being expressed by young John Dewey, and the variety of pedagogical techniques employed by the faculty served up subject matter in a palatable form. In addition, the fact that some of the A. and M. students were able to do advanced work at leading American universities suggests that the Stillwater program possessed quality.

A large number of the early Aggies went on to distinguished careers, including one who became a college president, as well as many lawyers, school teachers, and businessmen.⁷³ Several students continued their

⁷²OAMC, OES, Annual Announcement of the College, Session of 1897-1898, p. 8.

⁷³A list of the early alumni may be found in The College Paper, February 1, 1901, pp. 131-132.

educational endeavors at prominent institutions. Andrew Caudell, an Indian, enrolled at the Massachusetts Agricultural College;⁷⁴ Oscar Morris studied at Cornell University and later joined its faculty;⁷⁵ and Frank Greiner stood at the head of his class at Pennsylvania State.⁷⁶ Lewis Miller entered the Yale School of Forestry, and George Stiles, a boy whom George Holter felt did not have any real academic ability, received the coveted doctor of philosophy degree from Johns Hopkins University soon after the turn of the century.⁷⁷ Finally, Miss Cora Miltimore took a special course at the University of Kansas after leaving Stillwater.⁷⁸ She later came back to become the Aggie librarian. Another indicator of the quality of the institution's students is the fact that several of them were able to secure the "scientific aid" scholarships sponsored by the federal government. These scholarships, supervised by the United States Department of Agriculture, were designed to employ outstanding students, especially of land-grant colleges, to work in Washington while they earned their graduate degrees. George Stiles obtained his advanced degree in this manner.

College Curriculum Supplements

The early college faculty and students found many ways to supplement the prescribed curriculum detailed by the founding law. Student

⁷⁴The A. and M. College Mirror, October 15, 1897, p. 8.

⁷⁵The A. and M. College Mirror, January, 1898, p. 9.

⁷⁶The College Paper, March 1, 1900, p. 136.

⁷⁷George M. Stiles, "Reminiscences of the Class of 1900," The A. and M. College Magazine, XVII (1945), pp. 3-4, 6.

⁷⁸The College Paper, May 1, 1900, [n.p.].

organizations, a growing library, guest lecturers, chapel services, and a variety of teaching aids permitted the teacher and learner to sample a wide range of knowledge. Neither the faculty nor students qualify as midwestern provincials.

Next in importance to the student subject matter clubs and literary societies, which are discussed elsewhere in the study, the library was the major curricular supplement. Located at first in a cubby-hole in the College Building,⁷⁹ it soon became, under the watchful eye of Freeman Miller, an important part of the college's physical facilities. During the presidency of Henry Alvord, Miller ordered a "copy of nearly every newspaper in the Territory."⁸⁰ By May of this same year, the student Mirror reported that the library contained 1,650 volumes.⁸¹ Three years later, the library had grown in possessions and in use to the point where Miss Jessie Thatcher had to be employed as an assistant. The library then contained approximately 4,000 volumes.⁸² In 1907, a college catalog writer estimated that there were 43,000 items housed in the structure, 13,000 bound volumes and 30,000 unbound publications. The writer concluded his comments by stating that the

books are kept in fire-proof stack rooms, and the general reading room of the college is immediately adjoining. In this room are kept all of the chief current magazines, representative metropolitan newspapers, and the leading and many of the local newspapers of Oklahoma, dictionaries, encyclopedias, and

⁷⁹ Alfred E. Jarrell, "I Remember When...", Oklahoma State University Magazine, II (1958), p. 7; Freeman E. Miller, "Founding the College Library," The A. and M. College Magazine, I (1929), p. 18.

⁸⁰ The Eagle-Gazette (Stillwater), December 13, 1894, p. 1.

⁸¹ The A. and M. College Mirror, May 15, 1895, [n.p.].

⁸² The Stillwater Gazette, August 19, 1897, p. 1.

other books of ready reference, historical, literary, and scientific.⁸³

The library then, as later, has received excellent value from the meager dollars invested by Oklahomans.⁸⁴

While only a limited in loco parentis concept existed on the campus, this situation did not prevent the college officials from offering moral instruction. During the life of the "itinerant college," since classes were held in local churches, chapel services were conducted for and by the faculty and students. Customarily this activity began the academic day. With the construction of the College Building in 1894, the institution took on a more secular atmosphere, and the prestige which once had been associated with chapel services declined.

The students sometimes used the morning chapel hour as a time to implement mischievous pranks. One morning the college president found the physiology department's human skeleton sitting in his chair. Another time a cow, which had been tied in the auditorium all night, greeted the students as they arrived for worship. Then too, a young man probably majoring in chemistry placed some chemicals in an air-shaft of the auditorium which when combined with warm air caused an extremely offensive odor. That day, chapel services were not held.⁸⁵ The faculty were not immune to using this time to serve their own interests. James Hastings related:

⁸³ OAMC, Annual Catalog, Session of 1906-1907, p. 13.

⁸⁴ Many of the titles of bound library books kept during the early territorial period are recorded in OAMC, "Charging Book of the A. and M. Library, 1895," (Oklahoma State University Library).

⁸⁵ OAMC, "Selections from the Record Book of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1891-1941," (Oklahoma State University Library).

There were some fine men on the faculty in the old days as there are now but there was one purely political appointee who aspired to shine all the time. He thought that he should be permitted to lead convocation and did but he did not know the Lord's Prayer. So one of the good sort would sit behind him and coach him quietly when he came to a halt. Finally, at the end of the term, the politician was assured that he had better taken time out and learn that prayer for he could get no more help on it.⁸⁶

During the administration of President George Morrow, chapel began to assume the identity of a high school assembly. Dr. Scott, for example, used five minutes of the time set aside for devotions to give lectures on English grammar.⁸⁷ Visiting lecturers were also given an opportunity to present their wares. This custom began in 1894, when Henry Alvord instituted the first scheduled lecture series on the campus. The Reverend R. B. Foster, Bishop Robert Brooke, Mary E. Lease, Alfred True, Champ Clark, Dr. Robert McIntyre, and others presented a variety of lectures to the students.⁸⁸

Music played an important part in the life of the students during the early territorial period. Since it was not initially included in the curriculum, the students themselves were responsible for inaugurating these studies. The Sigma Literary Society catered to students who possessed a musical background.⁸⁹ They even purchased from their own funds an organ, the only one on campus, in order to provide better

⁸⁶ James K. Hastings, "Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College and Old Central," The Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXVIII (1950), pp. 83-84.

⁸⁷ The College Paper, February 1, 1900, p. 118.

⁸⁸ The Stillwater Gazette, October 6, 1893, p. 1; The Eagle-Gazette; March 30, 1894, p. 5; OAMC, "Minutes of the First Faculty," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 219; The A. and M. College Mirror, November 15, 1895, p. 13; The A. and M. College Mirror, May 15, 1895, [n.p.].

⁸⁹ Willa Adams Dusch, The Sigma Literary Society 1893-1897: A Chapter in the History of Oklahoma A. and M. College (Stillwater, 1951), p. 14.

entertainment for their members and the public-at-large.⁹⁰ The Webster Debating Society followed suit by buying several French horns. Collectively, these instruments were used to play such popular melodies as "After the Ball is Over;" "Sweet Bunch of Daisies;" and "Pride of the Ball."⁹¹ Students used their own funds also to purchase music.⁹² While no formal instruction in this area was offered, the societies did create an interest in music, and under the Scott administration the subject was added to the curriculum.

One of the brightest phases of early college instruction concerned the large number of teaching aids which were made available through the funds provided by the Morrill Act of 1890. The so-called Granger Amendment permitted the purchase of the books, charts, and maps one would naturally expect to find on a college campus. But in addition, the institution acquired a goodly number of pieces of expensive technical equipment, in 1894 obtaining a model of a grain of wheat and another of a horse's leg.⁹³ The next year a papier-mache model of a complete horse arrived from Paris, the figure costing approximately \$500.00.⁹⁴ Five years later a sturdier plaster of paris replica was purchased for \$920.00.⁹⁵ Fifteen microscopes valued at \$1,100.00 were included in the

⁹⁰OAMC, "Minutes of the Sigma Literary Society," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 5.

⁹¹Dusch, p. 18.

⁹²OAMC, "Minutes of the Sigma Literary Society," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 46.

⁹³The Eagle-Gazette, December 13, 1894, p. 1.

⁹⁴The A. and M. College Mirror, May 15, 1895, [n.p.].

⁹⁵The College Paper, November 1, 1900, p. 25.

shipment.⁹⁶ During his tenure as president, Angelo Scott constructed special buildings to hold the technical apparatus.

The college library, the series of lectures by local and national personalities, the informative chapel services, the student music programs, and the instructional aids all enhanced the prescribed curriculum. The funds provided by the federal government combined with faculty and student initiative made the Stillwater college the best equipped institution of higher learning in the territory.

The Elective System

The Oklahoma Morrill institution joined its sister colleges and universities in developing a curriculum which included electives. While the administration did not possess the staff or the funds to offer degrees which did not have a common core, it still was possible during the later territorial years to come up with a system of majors and minors. Both students and faculty welcomed this change. The former could now tailor their courses to meet their interests; the faculty members could teach more subjects in their respective specialties.

During the administration of Henry Alvord, the faculty took the first steps toward instituting an elective system. A student was permitted to substitute if he could obtain the consent of the instructor who would teach the desired course. In addition, the collective permission of the faculty was needed. A motion, for example, passed on September 25, 1894 stated that A. C. Adams could choose "a study in

⁹⁶The College Paper, May 1, 1900, p. 25. These microscopes were in addition to the six purchased in 1895. At that time, the college newspaper reported that the institution owned \$6,000 worth of technical equipment. The A. and M. College Mirror, May 15, 1895, [n.p.].

place of Agriculture which he passed that year."⁹⁷ Two years later such occurrences were becoming commonplace. The student newspaper reported: "It is about certain that in future years elective courses will be provided for the students of the Junior and Senior classes."⁹⁸ Only five days later, the faculty issued an announcement which said that college juniors could now select their own programs of study. During the first term, the student could take either analytical chemistry, general history, chemistry, or botany; the second term electives included descriptive chemistry, general history, chemistry or botany; the third term choices were among horticulture, veterinary science, mechanics, botany, comparative anatomy and zoology.⁹⁹

Along with the adoption of the elective system, the faculty decided to create a standardized policy to govern the innovation. On May 18, 1896, President George Morrow, George Holter, and Freeman Miller were appointed a committee to consider what should be done and make recommendations to the faculty as a whole.¹⁰⁰ A week later the report was submitted and approved. The academicians suggested that: (1) a student not be permitted to take an elective unless he had the necessary prerequisite courses; (2) a student could not enroll in an elective unless his classwork and practicum totaled more than 12 hours per week; (3) students choosing an elective had to carry the subject to its logical conclusion; (4) students were authorized to select their own elective

⁹⁷OAMC, "Minutes of the First Faculty," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 148.

⁹⁸The A. and M. College Mirror, April 15, 1896, p. 4.

⁹⁹OAMC, "Minutes of the First Faculty," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 248.

¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*, p. 254.

studies, but the choices had to be approved by the faculty; (5) a student had his choice of any subject which could reasonably be offered by the teaching force; (6) when a course was not included in the regular curriculum, the student should work in advance with the instructor to find out when it could profitably be offered.¹⁰¹

In 1897, the faculty decided to coordinate the senior year with the junior year. Thereafter, if a student decided to specialize in chemistry, he would have to choose electives in this same field his senior year.¹⁰² This decision met with the whole-hearted approval of the student body.¹⁰³ The next year, some additional controls were added. Students were no longer permitted to take typewriting, stenography, music, or commercial work as electives.¹⁰⁴ By 1900, the college student publication revealed that "courses of study are so arranged that the work of the freshman year was the same for all."¹⁰⁵ This statement indirectly indicated, of course, that the elective system had now penetrated into the upper three classes. The age of specialization had arrived.

Conclusion

The Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College lagged behind some of the more prestigious land-grant and private schools, but this situation did not mean that it was out of touch with reality. Quite the

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 284.

¹⁰³ The A. and M. College Mirror, October 15, 1897, p. 8.

¹⁰⁴ OAMC, "Minutes of the First Faculty," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 321.

¹⁰⁵ The College Paper, April 1, 1900, p. 4.

contrary. The faculty and students were fully aware of the immense changes taking place in the academic world, as well as in the country in general. A particularly significant illustration of the validity of this statement came in the commencement oration of Jessie Thatcher, the first woman graduate of the institution. In a speech entitled "The Dawn of the Twentieth Century" she said: "If you and I could have chosen when to exist, I think there could have been no more inspiring time than now."¹⁰⁶ Continuing, the pert young lady enumerated many of the revolutionary changes taking place in the communication and transportation industries, and the new role of women in society, and then she turned to the topic of education. It was, she believed, the "one all important thing, paramount to everything else."¹⁰⁷ She added prophetically:

The future race will, perhaps, be one of specialists. This will be necessary, on account of the vast amount of knowledge involved, but in all probability, the whole volume of human knowledge will be gradually rewritten and condensed. ... The sciences themselves will be scientifically systematized, and by the aid of that process it will be possible for the future specialist to be better versed in all departments than the specialist of today in his own.¹⁰⁸

Finally, she pointed out what seemed to her to be the greatest contribution of the nineteenth century to American life. Slavery had been abolished. This fact established the reign of liberty. Now education could spin its magic, and a truly democratic nation could fulfill its oft-repeated promise of liberty and freedom to all.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶Quoted from Berlin Chapman, Old Central in the Crisis of 1955 (Oklahoma City, 1966), p. 96.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 99.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 100.

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

The land-grant colleges and universities played a large part in popularizing and implementing the concept of democracy. A central idea behind the land-grant movement was that liberty and equality could not survive unless all men possessed the opportunity to pursue an occupation at the highest practicable level. The curricula of the Morrill colleges and universities assisted the public to do this very thing. Men and women were given the chance to obtain as much education as their minds and tastes could hold. They were then turned over to the nation to travel in any direction that seemed worth pursuing.

CHAPTER VIII

"PLOWBOYS AND BLACKSMITHS"

In the United States the college student has not been the object of intensive historical research. This situation seems strange in view of the fact that so many American leaders, especially political figures,¹ even from colonial times have been college and university graduates. Many reasons could be cited in order to account for the low esteem of students held by collegiate personnel and the public, but the major one is probably related to the concept of in loco parentis,² a term which implies intellectual immaturity, the need for paternalistic supervision, and the belief that higher education should teach more than vocational skills. Largely because of this concept, the student has not been granted Lernfreiheit or been permitted a significant voice in the governance of colleges and universities. One historian of higher education, Richard Hofstadter, believes that the lack of freedom to learn has harmed the intellectual development of centers of advanced studies. He said: "The college in America could not become a market place of ideas so long

¹Theodore H. White, "Action Intellectuals: Scholarly Impact on the Nation's Past," Life, LXII (1967), pp. 45-56.

²The concept of in loco parentis in America seems to have been closely associated with the decline of the institutions of the family, the church, and the apprenticeship system. See Bernard Bailyn, Education in the Forming of American Society (Chapel Hill, 1960), pp. 3-52.

as it regarded its students as both gullible and perverse."³ But with few exceptions, the early state and religious colleges did not identify students with the term scholar.

The land-grant universities of the United States were a significant force in attacking the merits of in loco parentis. Since these organizations came into being to train young men and women in the industries of life, patterned themselves after German university models, emphasized empirical science, and usually lacked schools of law and theology, their faculties were less concerned with moral training than were their classical cousins. In the case of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, the first students, particularly those of the preparatory department, received instruction in the area of Christian ethics and proper public conduct. But when scientific scholars gained control of the institution, the stress in this area decreased. Students were gradually given more intellectual freedom and permitted a larger voice in shaping the aims and objectives of the college. The purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to ascertain the relationship of the students to the institution, to the faculty, and to each other.

Student Life

The student life of the young men and women enrolled at the agricultural college in Stillwater, Oklahoma, reflected the frontier environment from which they had so recently emerged. The young men and women were poor in terms of dollars and cents, often employed physical violence to settle personal disputes, fervently sought any type of entertainment,

³Richard Hofstadter and Walter P. Metzger, The Development of Academic Freedom in the United States (New York, 1955), p. 283.

feared the twin pestilences of smallpox and typhoid, and possessed a high degree of courage and self-reliance. While the negative aspects of frontier life were perhaps stronger than the positive influences, the students were able to overcome those handicaps and continued to improve their minds and bodies.

The majority of the early students were recruited from Payne county and were on the average less than fifteen years of age.⁴ As most of their parents, such as those of Alfred Edwin Jarrell, were quite poor, the young adults had to earn money with which to pay college expenses. Besides working in the experiment station program, students were employed as dishwashers, maintenance men, clerks in Stillwater stores, and indeed almost anything else that came along.⁵ One somewhat typical student, Lewis Miller, assisted his widowed mother to run a hand laundry, worked as a janitor at the college, and as a handyman for a local church. When he graduated, he stated in his senior oration: "And now, we go out to face the stern realities of life."⁶ This comment amused a local citizen who believed the lad had faced realities as stern as any he would encounter. Furthermore, the students did not seem to mind the strenuous

⁴ Amos Ewing, "The First Board of Regents," The A. and M. College Magazine, I (1929), p. 30. The chronological age of the students increased later in the territorial period. In 1898, the college newspaper revealed: "The average age of students at time of entrance to the college and preparatory classes during the last three years has been 17 3/5; thirty-three percent were below and forty-three percent above seventeen years of age." The A. and M. College Mirror (Stillwater), May, 1898, p. 4.

⁵ OAMC, E. A. Jarrell to B. B. Chapman, September 22, 1957, "The Jarrell Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library); Tom Hartman, "1898 Class History," The A. and M. College Magazine, XIV (1943), pp. 3-8.

⁶ OAMC, "Selections from the Record Book of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1891-1941," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 50.

conditions under which they got their education. A contemporary of Miller's, Frank Rector, has written that "to those of us who were privileged to get our first taste of higher education in the new institutions in the raw territories there was implanted a restlessness and zeal for the acquiring of knowledge that has persisted throughout our lives."⁷

The majority of the early students earned money to apply toward their college expenses by working on the experiment station farm. With board and room being estimated by a writer of a college catalog at three dollars per week,⁸ this meant a student, who was paid at the rate of ten cents per hour, had to work a minimum of thirty hours each week in order to pay for his food and lodging. During the "itinerant years" plenty of employment was available for everyone. Consequently, the young agriculturalists were sometimes not too concerned about the quality or quantity of their labors. Later, however, the \$3,200.00 allocated for student work projects was awarded on a competitive basis, and slackers were not hired.⁹

A major method of saving money utilized by the students during the territorial period was to form boarding clubs. The institution had barely enough space for classes and equipment, much less excess funds with which to provide dormitories and cafeterias. Students therefore had to locate their own accommodations. A few lived at home, some rented rooms from local residents, and one ingenious and hardy young soul occupied the bell tower of the Assembly Building.¹⁰ The boarding clubs served to

⁷Ibid., p. 58.

⁸OAMC, Annual Catalog, Session of 1894-1895, p. 33.

⁹The College Paper (Stillwater), November 1, 1899, p. 66.

¹⁰Fern Hurley, "That Which They Built," The A. and M. College Magazine, I (1930), pp. 10, 27, 29.

alleviate such extreme living conditions as well as to offer food and lodging below the standard rate. The College Boarding Club, which was simply a large plain structure owned by a local citizen, contained twenty-two rooms.¹¹ A group of students collectively rented the building, hired a cook to prepare food, and paid classmates to serve as waiters. In this manner as much as one dollar per week could be shaved from their previous expenditures.¹² The college maintained no control over such organizations.

Discipline at the college level varied somewhat with each president. The faculty, however, played a strong intermediate role. The institution, of course, was much too young and too poorly endowed to afford the luxury of a non-teaching administrative officer to handle such problems. Under Robert Barker, the military system of discipline used for preparatory students applied also to collegians. During this period so many rules were adopted that at times it must have appeared to the students that every phase of their college existence was regulated. As has been previously stated, one of Henry Alvord's first tasks was to appoint a committee to codify the rules and regulations. Demerits were used to punish automatically various minor infractions. More serious cases seem to have been handled individually by the faculty, with the president often executing their decisions. Offenses ranged through drunkenness, improper behavior between the sexes, chicken stealing, eating peanuts in class, insubordination, pranks turned sour, and other such items. Generally speaking, the faculty's bark was worse than its bite in meting out punishments.

¹¹The College Paper, October 1, 1899, p. 61.

¹²Ibid.

With a large number of the students living near the subsistence mark, it was not unusual for them to drop out for a portion of the academic year. In addition, homesickness, scholastic failures, discouragement, and disciplinary measures took their toll.¹³ One contrite student, who had been temporarily expelled for violating a college regulation, realized he had not made the most of a valuable opportunity and wrote Freeman Miller asking to be reinstated. He said: "Well, Prof, I'll treat you professors right and you do me the same. Trust me with a loose rein, but if I try to bust the sinch. Sock the rull to me rights." Then, perhaps to show he was becoming more serious about his studies, he added:

I should like to talk with you on some certain subject that is on some ancient religion and the Bible. I don't want to become a peddler of the Gospel, but I want to study languages and don't know the meaning of some whole chapters. They seem to me like a myth. I pay you for the trouble as it would be as good a lesson as I want.¹⁴

Because of their austere surroundings and their youthful enthusiasm, the students cultivated a sense of humor to break the monotony of campus routine. The attempts to add spice to the hum-drum existence often got them into trouble. One of the pranks related to George Holter's wedding is a good example. Holter and Mable Hodges were married in November, 1894, at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church.¹⁵ The bride was the daughter of W. J. Hodges, the recognized social leader of Stillwater.¹⁶ Nearly a week after the ceremony several male students wheeled

¹³The Payne County Populist (Stillwater), September 26, 1895, p. 4.

¹⁴OAMC, John Slack to Freeman Miller, August 10, 1897, "The Cunningham Manuscript Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

¹⁵The Eagle-Gazette (Stillwater), November 8, 1894, p. 1.

¹⁶Ibid.

an old cannon to the front of the Holter home, loaded it to the muzzle, and then discharged the vintage weapon.¹⁷ The concussion which resulted was so great that it not only aroused the young couple from slumber, but it also shattered every window in the house. In class the next morning, the bridegroom demanded that the guilty students dig deeply into their pockets and produce enough cash to restore the broken window panes.¹⁸

The frontier students of yesterday lived close to death. Both violence and disease took tragic tolls. In 1900, a young man returned from his Christmas vacation with smallpox. Although he recovered, classes had to be discontinued from January 23 to February 6 in order to prevent the infection of the remainder of the students. Earlier, a boy's bout with typhoid ended more sadly. Ross V. Taylor, one of the most popular individuals on campus, came down with the dreaded fever while he was visiting his parents in Ohio. Losing a heroic fight to live, he uttered a last wish, that he be "brought back to his fellow students, and for all to meet him at the end of his journey."¹⁹ The parents granted the request. The students of the military department met the incoming train and provided Taylor with an escort to the local cemetery.²⁰

Not all the early students' deaths were attributable to natural causes. Just prior to the cannon escapade, Max Stubblefield, who lived at the James Bruce residence in the College Addition, was shot above the right eye. His roommate had acquired a rusty pistol which projected a

¹⁷ The Eagle-Gazette, November 15, 1894, p. 1.

¹⁸ James K. Hastings, "Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College and Old Central," The Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXVII (1950), p. 83.

¹⁹ The A. and M. College Mirror, January 16, 1896, p. 5.

²⁰ Ibid.

bullet by accident while it was pointed in Stubblefield's direction.²¹ The lead missile lodged in the brain, where a local physician said it would have to remain. After a recuperative period, the boy's parents took him with them back to Lincoln county. For a while it appeared he might recover.²² Gaining strength, he clerked in a Chandler store and subsequently returned to college at Central State Normal School. But a month later, he expired.²³ The president of the Edmond institution, Edmond Murdaugh, accompanied the lifeless remains back to his parents' home.²⁴

Violence also formed a portion of the relationships between the college students and their local age-group counterparts. The specific items which provoked trouble were a shortage of girls, poorly lighted streets, band concerts on the corner of Ninth and Main streets, a lack of spending money, and the absence of recreational facilities for teen-aged youths.²⁵ Several severe skirmishes took place between the two factions. Finally, the Stillwater boys found a champion in a large muscular Negro lad. Not being able to distinguish between Stillwaterites and college boys, he would ask a male in this age classification if he was a "boomerah." An affirmative answer brought an immediate physical response. Therefore, the ill-feelings mounted until a college youth was knocked through the

²¹The Eagle-Gazette, November 15, 1894, p. 1.

²²The Eagle-Gazette, December 3, 1895, p. 1; January 3, 1895, p. 5.

²³The A. and M. College Mirror, May 15, 1895, [n.p.].

²⁴The Stillwater Gazette, October 31, 1895, p. 1.

²⁵The Stillwater News-Press (Oklahoma), October 19, 1964, p. 3.

window of a Main Street butcher shop.²⁶ More sensible feelings then prevailed.

The experience of living on the Oklahoma frontier produced a spirit of camaraderie among the young men and women. First day classes of each new academic year brought joy, as well as sorrow, because some old friends were found and others were not.²⁷ In addition, the students often attempted to lessen the ideological elements which separated them. For example, a writer for the college newspaper believed churches should discard their narrow sectarianism and unite in an organization that might be titled: "The United Brethren Church."²⁸ A final illustration of the type of bond which often developed between students is exhibited in a beautiful wish expressed to Willa Adams by Norris "Gib" Gilbert. He wrote in her autograph book:

May the names of those who love you
Whose hearts are true and kind,
When you are in life's twilight
Rest gently on your mind.²⁹

Gradually, the student life of the campus developed into a collegiate way. A community was molded which matured outside of the classroom, the laboratory, the faculty office, and other standard academic environmental surroundings. The campus of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College was a world unto itself. The students realized this fact; thus they learned to make their way both individually and collectively. The importance of this aspect of the institution should not be

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷The College Paper, February 1, 1900, p. 109.

²⁸The A. and M. College Mirror, February, 1898, p. 9.

²⁹OAMC, ["Autograph Book of Willa Adams," n.p.] in "The Dusch Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

underestimated, for it is possible that more behavioral changes occurred as a result of student interrelationships than from the formal instruction presented by the teaching staff.

The Student Literary Societies

The origins of the literary society has been lost in the mists of antiquity, but in the prairie West the organization of such clubs seems to have been suggested by the Friday afternoon exercises of the rural schools.³⁰ The parents frequently visited school on this day. But to the teacher's dismay, chaos and tension often developed. A historian of the frontier has conjectured in this regard:

During this period the children eagerly anticipating two entire days of freedom seemed to be possessed of the devil, and the teacher with nerves worn to a frazzle by the week's hard work was nearly certain to be jumpy, over-critical, and acutely sensitive.³¹

To soothe the nerves of the teacher, to provide entertainment for the waiting parents, and to interest the children, the Friday afternoon classes were cancelled and a "literary" held instead.³²

Since many of the students of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College attended frontier elementary schools in the midwest, it is not surprising that a literary society was established at A. and M. during the first academic year.³³ In January, 1892 the faculty and students

³⁰Edward Everett Dale, "The Frontier Literary Society," Nebraska History, XXXI (1950), p. 168.

³¹Edward Everett Dale, "Teaching on the Prairie Plains, 1890-1900," The Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XXXIII (1946), p. 303.

³²Ibid.

³³It is also possible that the society originated as a heritage of the older colleges and universities. For the legacy of such institutions, see Frederick Rudolph, The American College and University: A History (New York, 1962), pp. 137-146, 270-271, 451.

organized the Star-Crescent Literary Society.³⁴ The organization was designed to provide information and entertainment for students and citizens of the local community. It was so popular that almost every member of the preparatory school joined.³⁵

The name of the society may have been derived from one of several sources. President Barker, it will be remembered, lived in Crescent City, Oklahoma. Therefore, a portion of the name may have been selected indirectly to honor him. In addition, a student motto was: "Ad Astra per Aspera."³⁶ The word "star" could possibly have been taken from the motto in order to make the name of the organization include something from the faculty (Crescent) and something from the students (star). On the other hand, a land-grant college formed in 1862 possessed a literary society called the Crescents.³⁷ Consequently, the students and faculty may have wanted to borrow a historical name.

No original records of the Star-Crescent Society remain, but a few of its activities have been preserved in local newspapers. The meetings were held in the evenings on Friday with both faculty and students as well as townspeople attending. In the month of January, a debate occurred among Earl Myers, Phede Shearer, Julian Murphy, and Lillie Emmons.³⁸ A similar meeting occurred in April, featuring a debate on

³⁴The Stillwater Gazette, January 22, 1892, p. 2.

³⁵J. H. Adams, "When the College Was Young," The A. and M. College Magazine, I (1929), p. 9.

³⁶The A. and M. College Mirror, May 15, 1895, [n.p.].

³⁷Earle D. Ross, A History of the Iowa State College of Agriculture and the Mechanic Arts (Ames, 1942), p. 177.

³⁸The Stillwater Gazette, January 22, 1892, p. 2.

the topic of woman suffrage.³⁹ In June the boys planned a surprise box supper for the girls, and the group at large provided the entertainment for the first closing exercises. The club was reorganized the next year, but met with little success. The reasons for its demise are not now clear.

The student literary societies which were founded from 1893 to 1902 after the death of the Star-Crescent Society should not be associated with Greek letter fraternities or sororities. A student newspaper article suggested that such organizations were undemocratic and should be banned from land-grant college campuses.⁴⁰ Instead the literary societies were created to fill curricular gaps, stimulate physical and intellectual growth, promote contact between the sexes, and give practice in debate and oratory.⁴¹ The organizations were popular with the students, who anxiously sought new members.⁴²

On the evening of October 16, 1893, a small number of male college students met at the Methodist Episcopal Church, South to discuss the organization of a literary society.⁴³ Ervin G. Lewis and Alfred E. Jarrell served as presiding officers.⁴⁴ After a lengthy session, the

³⁹ The Stillwater Gazette, April 15, 1892, [n.p.].

⁴⁰ The College Paper, December-January, 1905-1906, p. 45.

⁴¹ OAMC, [Willa Adams, "The Scrapbook of Willa Adams," n.p.] in "The Dusch Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library); OAMC, Annual Catalog, Session of 1894-1895, pp. 114-115; The A. and M. College Mirror, June 15, 1895, [n.p.] ; The Payne County Populist, January 18, 1900, p. 8.

⁴² The Stillwater Gazette, September 26, 1895, p. 1.

⁴³ OAMC, Constitution of the Webster Debating Society (Stillwater, 1896), p. i.

⁴⁴ OAMC, "Minutes of the Webster Literary Society," October 16, 1893, (Oklahoma State University Library), [n.p.].

participants decided to seek permission from the faculty to organize the Webster Debating Society.⁴⁵ Gaining approval, fourteen males met again the following week to elect officers and write a constitution.⁴⁶ The personable Frank Waugh, the youthful agriculturalist, gained a majority of the presidential votes.⁴⁷

According to the constitution of the Webster Society, as it was usually called, the purpose of the organization was to improve its members in debating, general literature, and "social development."⁴⁸ The weekly meetings were to consist of roll call, a reading of the previous minutes, the initiation of new members, a business session, a debate, the report of the critic, and the formulation of plans for the following meeting.⁴⁹ Such systematic procedure had been demanded by George Holter. He did not completely trust the students; thus, to him, the constitution was the same as a college regulation and must be scrupulously heeded.⁵⁰

The all-male member Webster Literary Society remained essentially a debating club for the majority of its life. There is some indication that the faculty considered approving the weekly debate in advance,⁵¹

⁴⁵OAMC, "Minutes of the First Faculty," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 150.

⁴⁶OAMC, A. E. Jarrell to B. B. Chapman, September 1, 1958, "The Jarrell Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

⁴⁷OAMC, "Minutes of the Webster Literary Society," October 20, 1893, (Oklahoma State University Library), [n.p.].

⁴⁸OAMC, Constitution of the Webster Literary Society, p. 1.

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 10.

⁵⁰OAMC, "Minutes of the First Faculty," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 161.

⁵¹Ibid., p. 157.

but no intensified effort seems to have been made in that direction. The debate resolutions covered a broad range of subjects, with popular ones being frequently repeated. Generally speaking, the topics fell into five major categories, namely: educational, historical, political, philosophical, and social. A listing of some of the representative titles follows:

Educational

1. November 18, 1893: Resolved that a student should choose his profession before entering college. Negative decision.
2. February 10, 1894: Resolved that the study of mathematics is of more use than the study of English. Affirmative decision.
3. January 12, 1895: Resolved that the studies of the classes of the college should be set back one year. Affirmative decision.
4. September 28, 1895: Resolved that training is more the object of education than information. Affirmative decision.

Historical

1. November 25, 1893: Resolved that Washington deserves more credit for defending his country than does Columbus for discovering it. Affirmative decision.
2. January 6, 1894: Resolved that Arnold should not have been deprived of his command at the time he was. Affirmative decision.
3. January 19, 1895: Resolved that the character of Napoleon should be admired. No decision recorded.
4. February 29, 1896: Resolved that the warrior has done more for civilization than the statesman. Affirmative decision.
5. April 7, 1896: Resolved that the feudal system was favorable to civilization. Affirmative decision.

Philosophical

1. October 28, 1893: Resolved that there is more pleasure in pursuit than in possession. No decision recorded.
2. January 20, 1894: Resolved that curiosity will lead a man further than necessity will drive him. Negative decision.
3. February 24, 1894: Resolved that country life is better than town life. Decision for the affirmative.
4. November 2, 1895: Resolved that there is more happiness in the savage than in the civilized state. Affirmative decision.

Political

1. January 13, 1894: Resolved that Oklahoma now should be admitted as a state. Affirmative decision.

2. January 27, 1894: Resolved that the Queen of Hawaii should be returned to her throne. Negative decision.
3. March 10, 1894: Resolved that the Chinese laborer should be excluded from the United States. Affirmative decision.
4. November 3, 1894: Resolved that the Government should own and control the railroads of the United States. Affirmative decision.
5. February 15, 1896: Resolved that the national banking system of the United States should be abolished. Affirmative decision.

Social

1. May 26, 1894: Resolved that poverty causes more crime than ignorance. Affirmative decision.
2. October 13, 1894: Resolved that capital punishment is justifiable. Affirmative decision.
3. January 5, 1895: Resolved that Indians have received worse treatment by the whites than the Negro. Affirmative decision.
4. November 4, 1895: Resolved that the lawyers have proven a curse on the country, and are not necessary under our present state of civilization. Affirmative decision.⁵²

A student critic judged the debates and rendered a verdict. The various judgments which are listed at the end of the debate topics should not be taken as representative of the thinking of the entire student body. Willa Adams, who served as a critic, has written years later: "I see by the [Sigma] minutes I was appointed a judge a few times, and now I am wondering just upon what I based my decision, whether on the strength of the arguments, or on my personal preference or feeling toward debators."⁵³ V. Williams, another early student, in a college newspaper article entitled, "An Unloved Friend," added that critics were accused of having personal biases and sometimes were unpopular as the result of

⁵²These debate topics have been compiled from the "Minutes of the Webster Literary Society," from October 28, 1893 to October 3, 1896. The resolutions used by the Sigma Literary Society formed later in the same month are similar. Precedent for listing debate topics in the text is Edward Everett Dale, "The Frontier Literary Society," Nebraska History, XXXI (1950), p. 168.

⁵³Willa Adams Dusch, The Sigma Literary Society (Stillwater, 1951), p. 17.

their decisions. The writer reminded his readers that everyone could benefit from criticism, whether it came from a professor, literary critic, or student friend.⁵⁴ In conclusion, the reporter said that while the debate itself was important as far as judging was concerned, incorrect speech, rude manners, imperfections in morals, unclutivated tastes, and general ignorance were other items that needed to be considered in rendering a verdict and "better things suggested in their place."⁵⁵

The next literary group to receive a charter from the faculty was the Sigma Literary Society. Maggie Hutto and Elsie Parker, perhaps feeling left out because the Websters' organization excluded females, approached President Barker in October, 1893 about the possibility of beginning another club.⁵⁶ The executive did not appear sympathetic to the idea, but Professor Frank Waugh, who was also in the room, assisted the girls in their endeavor by asking the kind of questions which helped the girls to present a convincing case.⁵⁷ Finally, the president gave his permission.

The Sigma Literary Society held its first meeting on the evening of October 20, 1893. Nine male and female students embarked upon the task of writing a constitution.⁵⁸ Three days later George Holter announced in the weekly faculty meeting that the project had been completed.⁵⁹ Then

⁵⁴The College Paper, November, 1902, p. 86.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Dusch, p. 3.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 5.

⁵⁸The A. and M. College Mirror, May 15, 1895, [n.p.].

⁵⁹OAMC, "Minutes of the First Faculty," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 150.

he asked for approval of the document. Evidently some objections were raised as it was three weeks later before the body granted the request.⁶⁰ The delay probably involved the redrafting of the instrument so that it more closely coincided with the one previously approved for the Websters. When completed, the final draft stated that the objectives of the organization were to "improve oratory, general literature, and to promote friends."⁶¹

In spite of the constitutional similarities, the two societies were markedly different. First, the Sigma Society contained both males and females, thus providing more opportunity for dating, an activity which was popular with frontier literary organizations.⁶² Second, the programs of the co-educational group included literature and music. In fact, Miss Katie Neal composed an official song for the body entitled: "The Sigma Waltz."⁶³ Third, the Sigmas' meetings included more variety than the activities of its campus counterpart. A typical program contained: (1) opening music, usually a vocal solo; (2) a call of the roll; (3) a declamation; (4) a dramatic reading; (5) more music, probably instrumental; (6) a debate; (7) practice in extemporaneous speaking; (8) drill in parliamentary procedure; (9) a reading of the minutes of the previous meeting; (10) the report of the critic; (11) general criticisms from the audience on the debate; and (12) the assignment of duties and responsibilities for the coming meeting.⁶⁴

⁶⁰Ibid., p. 152.

⁶¹OAMC, Constitution of the Sigma Literary Society (Stillwater, n.d.), [n.p.].

⁶²For example, see James Whitcomb Riley, "At the Literary," The Complete Works of James Whitcomb Riley (New York, 1916), pp. 1292-1295.

⁶³Dusch, p. 17.

⁶⁴Compiled from the "Minutes of the Sigma Literary Society," February 8, 1895 to November 28, 1896.

With two societies competing for new members and campus and community prestige, it was not long until hostility occurred between the organizations. The first instance of inter-group rivalry took place in late 1893. A joint debate ended in victory for the Sigmas, but the Websters walked away from the affair complaining that they had not properly understood the ground rules. James H. Adams explained: "The Webster speakers had prepared for long arguments, and, when, the chairman limited them to ten minutes each, they were not prepared to concentrate their remarks and consequently lost the debate."⁶⁵ To evidence their resentment, the all-male group passed a motion in a subsequent meeting requesting their secretary "to inform the Sigmas that they did not desire to hold any more joint meetings."⁶⁶

In 1896 the occasional bickering turned into serious trouble. At the beginning of the academic year, the members of both societies voted to purchase and wear different distinctive badges.⁶⁷ Then, just preceding the Thanksgiving vacation, the faculty received requests from each literary society seeking permission to hold a meeting on the holiday eve at the Methodist Church. The Sigmas, who at the request of the faculty had cancelled a previous meeting in order for the faculty to hold a reception, were given approval to hold a social.⁶⁸ The application of the

⁶⁵OAMC, "Selections from the Record Book of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1891-1941," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 42.

⁶⁶OAMC, "Minutes of the Webster Literary Society," December 9, 1893, (Oklahoma State University Library), [n.p.].

⁶⁷OAMC, "Minutes of the Sigma Literary Society," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 37; OAMC, "Minutes of the Webster Literary Society," October 26, 1895, (Oklahoma State University Library), [n.p.].

⁶⁸Dusch, p. 23.

Websters was denied.⁶⁹ On the designated evening, when Norris Gilbert attempted to announce the debate topic, the bells began to ring continuously. Someone had wired the contacts together. The entertainment was finally held, but the Sigmas blamed the Websters for the interruption.

The hostilities continued. At the request of the faculty a joint meeting of the two societies was scheduled for Friday, December 4th. Before the evening's entertainment could get under way a fist-fight developed. Several young men suffered lacerations and bruises.⁷⁰ The news of the dispute spread to the community. After the Christmas vacation, the Eagle-Gazette reported: "There is quite an ill feeling between the two college literary societies, that has caused quite a disturbance for the past few weeks, we hope that this will be overcome, and that the societies will work in harmony with each other."⁷¹ The hoped-for reconciliation did not come about. Just a short time later the Sigmas stole some refreshments of the Websters; in turn the Websters "spiked" a bushel of Sigma apples with quinine and cayenne peppers.⁷²

The faculty investigated the fist-fight. Altogether nine boys were suspended from class for a three week period.⁷³ Particularly disturbing to the faculty was the fact that the students refused to inform on each other. The ties of the collegiate way held strong. To punish the culprits, both those involved in the fight and those who maintained silence,

⁶⁹OAMC, "Minutes of the First Faculty," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 267.

⁷⁰Dusch, p. 25.

⁷¹The Eagle-Gazette, January 17, 1895, p. 5.

⁷²The A. and M. College Mirror, January 16, 1896, p. 5.

⁷³OAMC, "Minutes of the First Faculty," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 270.

the faculty ordered the college secretary to announce that the existing literary societies were officially abolished.⁷⁴ At least in the case of the Sigmas, the members met again to divide the funds in the treasury.⁷⁵ This last parting must have been sad, for as long as fifty years in the future the organization held fond memories for its members.

The next year the students challenged the faculty's authority to ban student societies. A secret meeting was held in the upstairs room of the Payne County Bank. After another investigation, the faculty published a policy letter detailing the relation of the students to the college. In part, the communication read:

It is the sense of the Faculty that the students of this institution are under the control of the Faculty from the time they enter College until their connection therewith is severed by withdrawal, suspension, expulsion, or graduation.⁷⁶

But in spite of the stern tone of the letter, the faculty decided to permit their charges to charter new literary organizations. The first to form was the Omega Society, which had a continuous life until 1905.⁷⁷ The College Legislature, the Alpha Society, the Young Ladies's Society, the Philomathian Society, and the Social Club were organized later.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, the death of the Websters and Sigmas marked the end of the debating literary societies' heyday on the campus.

⁷⁴Ibid., p. 276.

⁷⁵OAMC, "Treasurer's Book of the Sigma Literary Society," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 21.

⁷⁶OAMC, "Minutes of the First Faculty," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 300.

⁷⁷The A. and M. College Mirror, December 15, 1897, p. 8; The College Paper, January, 1905, p. 67.

⁷⁸The College Paper, April 1, 1900, p. 9; April, 1905, p. 95; March 1, 1902, p. 214; October, 1906, p. 11; February, 1906, p. 61; October, 1902, p. 82; February, 1904, p. 195.

The two major literary organizations served an extremely important function on the campus. With no elective system, and with the rote learning techniques still popular during the "itinerant years," the Websters and Sigmas provided students with the opportunity to discuss current educational and intellectual topics. As the elective system came into vogue in Stillwater, and as teaching methodologies improved, the debates of the new societies lost much of their glamor. Clubs related to subject matter disciplines became the new rage.

The Student Newspapers

An important heritage of the student literary societies, particularly the Sigmas, whose membership included a large number of the imaginative gentle sex, was the introduction of a college newspaper to the campus. Because of a lack of money, and since there were no printing facilities at the college, the initial editions of the papers were not published. Instead, they were written in longhand and passed among the members of the student body in manuscript form. In 1895, using literary club dues, subscriptions, faculty contributions, and advertising revenues, the students succeeded in publishing a paper entitled The A. and M. College Mirror. The initiative for the project came exclusively from the students.

The first evidence of student interest in newspapers were the "college notes" sent to the editors of Stillwater weeklies. At irregular intervals, such men as Charles Becker of the Gazette received campus news items signed: "No Man;" "Mirza;" "Vanquished;" "The Populist;" "G.A.S.;"

"Pagoda;" and a variety of personal unidentifiable initials.⁷⁹ After publication of several barbed comments about students and faculty, the editor of the Gazette, who received most of the "college note" items, decided that henceforth all future submissions had to be signed if they were to be published in his paper.⁸⁰

The manuscript campus newspapers were quite often read as a portion of the proceedings of the literary society meetings. An example of such a paper was the "Riverside Review," which was jointly written by Willa Adams and some other unknown college student. The news items were neatly written on ruled tablet paper and covered ten pages. While the paper did not have a date, it was numbered volume ten, number five, thereby indicating it was part of a series.⁸¹ The content of the make-shift weekly contained stories about the faculty and students. For example, an engagement was announced, the results of a chemistry test were discussed, a chapel address by President Barker was summarized, and it was noted that Lieutenant Norris Gilbert had given an improper command during drill and his company "ran right into him, knocked his cap off and ran over him."⁸²

In 1895, the year that the literary societies were at their zenith, the members of these organizations made plans to issue a published edition of their hitherto manuscript newspaper. Under the business

⁷⁹ These names were compiled from The Stillwater Gazette and The Payne County Populist newspapers from January 1, 1892 to January 1, 1895.

⁸⁰ The Stillwater Gazette, February 28, 1895, p. 1.

⁸¹ OAMC, ["The Riverside Review," n.p.] in "The Dusch Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

⁸² Ibid.

leadership of Jessie Thatcher,⁸³ the content of the initial printed effort was gathered and written during the month of April. Shortly afterward, The Stillwater Gazette proclaimed: "The first issue of the 'Oklahoma A. and M. Mirror' will be out about May 13."⁸⁴ The paper came out on schedule. It contained sixteen pages, which included advertising, news stories, educational information, and items of local interest.⁸⁵

A major factor in moving the Aggies to publish their own newspaper at this time was the custom of student newspaper exchange, a national phenomenon paralleling the rise of sensational urban publications. Students of high schools, colleges, and universities, all anxious to publicize the merits of their institutions, printed newspapers and then mailed them to everyone willing to return the courtesy. The College Mirror exchanged with over one hundred high schools and colleges scattered throughout the length and breadth of the nation, including the states of Arkansas, California, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nebraska, New York, and Pennsylvania.⁸⁶ When the first issue of the Mirror came off the press, the students sent a large number of copies to other institutions and to newspaper editors located within the territory of Oklahoma. They then anxiously awaited the verdict of their colleagues. Generally speaking, the reviews were good.⁸⁷

⁸³OAMC, "Minutes of the Sigma Literary Society," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 77.

⁸⁴The Stillwater Gazette, May 9, 1895, p. 1.

⁸⁵The A. and M. College Mirror, May 15, 1895, [n.p.].

⁸⁶Many of the institutions with which the Aggies exchanged newspapers are listed in The College Paper, February 1, 1902, pp. 192-193; The College Paper, April, 1902, p. 1.

⁸⁷Thirteen reviews of the first edition of the College Mirror may be read in the A. and M. College Mirror, June 15, 1895, [n.p.].

The newspaper of the Stillwater college students was designed, among other things, to advance the cause of education and their own institution. An early editorial writer explained the goal of the paper in these words:

While our first purpose is to advance the best interests of our own institution, both at home and abroad, we want the teachers of the common and high schools to feel that in our columns they may find assistance and encouragement. To this end we cordially invite teachers and all other interested in educational matters to contribute their best thoughts, and aid us in making our paper more and more useful.⁸⁸

In addition to reprinting popular lectures, educational essays, and statistics related to land-grant colleges, the paper published a large number of biographical sketches of prominent literary and scientific figures. In less than one year's time, for example, verbal portraits were printed of John Randolph, Louis Agassiz, William Cullen Bryant, Charles Darwin, Robert Fulton, Asa Gray, Karl Wilhelm von Humboldt, Thomas H. Huxley, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Washington Irving, James Russell Lowell, Charles Lyell, Isaac Newton, Edgar Allan Poe, John Tyndale, and John Greenleaf Whittier.⁸⁹ These items were undoubtedly included for the benefit of public school teachers who did not have access to a modern library.

The College Mirror met its first demise at the end of the 1895-1896 academic year. The editor, sensing that the outlook for the paper was not bright, attempted to summarize what he had hoped to accomplish during his term of office. He wrote:

We have done the best we could with the means at our command. If we have done even a little to direct attention toward

⁸⁸The A. and M. College Mirror, September 16, 1895, p. 81.

⁸⁹These names were compiled from The A. and M. College Mirror, June 15, 1895 to June 15, 1896.

the institution, to educate people to a proper understanding of what the institution is and of what our work is, to bring students to the institution and to increase its influence and power, we are satisfied. Whether the paper shall have a future is a question yet to be determined.⁹⁰

The paper was not published the following year, but in September, 1897 it came out again. This time, however, the venture was edited jointly by the faculty and students of the department of English.⁹¹ Nevertheless, the reorganization did not solve some basic financial problems. A member of the faculty, E. E. Bogue, became a committee of one to apportion the indebtedness among the professors in proportion to the salaries they received.⁹²

Dr. Angelo Scott found an answer to the perplexing dilemma the subsequent year. He correctly surmised that the high costs of printing the paper could be substantially reduced if the college had its own press.⁹³ Then, too, the cost of reproducing experiment station bulletins had risen sharply in the past due to "the unreasonably high prices charged for work done under the contract for printing made by the Territorial Legislature in 1897."⁹⁴ Therefore, a department of printing was created in order to give assistance to both organizations. This step successfully eliminated the majority of the printing problems of both groups.

⁹⁰The A. and M. College Mirror, June 15, 1896, p. 8.

⁹¹The A. and M. College Mirror, September 15, 1897, p. 2.

⁹²OAMC, "Minutes of the First Faculty," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 318.

⁹³The College Paper, May 15, 1899, p. 2. President Scott had had experience with student newspapers before coming to Stillwater. He and two of his classmates at the University of Kansas wrote and printed the first student newspaper at Lawrence. In addition, he was an ex-newspaper publisher himself. The College Paper, October, 1906, p. 8.

⁹⁴Francis Richard Gilmore, "A Historical Study of the Oklahoma Agricultural Experiment Station," (Unpublished Ed. D. Dissertation, Oklahoma State University, 1967), p. 63.

Early Athletic Activities

During the "itinerant years" little attention was given by the faculty to collegiate athletics, either intramural or extramural. With no campus, a meager budget, a lack of nearby institutions with which to compete, and the absence of a railroad to provide transportation to "away" games, the omission is understandable. James Homer Adams, a member of the first graduating class, described the athletic activities of the early students in these words:

The athletic sports, outside of an occasional game of football and some talk about baseball, were all concentrated and merged into one day--Washington's birthday. The sports consisted of a game of football, a foot race, sack race, three-legged race, potatoe race, pie-eating contest, running, jumping, high jumping, and tug-of-war.⁹⁵

Nevertheless, the interest of the students in this area increased each year. In 1895 the boys became quite vocal about the fact that no organized athletic program existed on the campus. A student newspaper item related: "The continued talk about athletic sports in our college is becoming tiresome in the extreme."⁹⁶ While the work on the college farm provided physical exercise and thus negated the need for an intramural program, the students' interest in extramural sports activities grew more intense.

Those students who agitated for inter-collegiate athletic teams found a variety of arguments to support their position. They believed the day was past when the scholar could be conceived of as one who "wore glasses or had a scholarly hump on his back."⁹⁷ Instead, they pointed

⁹⁵OAMC, "Selections from the Record Book of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1891-1941," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 41.

⁹⁶The A. and M. College Mirror, September 16, 1895, [n.p.].

⁹⁷The A. and M. College Mirror, May 15, 1895, [n.p.].

out, as did the author of an article entitled "The Value of Athletics," that the ancient Greeks believed "a strong and symmetrical body was necessary to perfect the development of the mind."⁹⁸ Finally, another student rationalized:

There seems to exist an intimate relation between the vigorous athletics and the receptive powers of the mind; and that institution which leads in excellence of its games turns out the best prepared men mentally and physically.⁹⁹

The students in favor of athletics found what at first seemed to be an unlikely champion to further their cause. This man was Angelo Scott, an individual who represented the traditional picture of what a scholar should look like. He, with the approval of the board of regents, constructed for the students an athletic field which some called the finest such facility in the Territory.¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, he paved the way for the admission of the Stillwater institution into the Oklahoma Intercollegiate Athletic Conference and the Oklahoma Intercollegiate Oratorical Association.¹⁰¹ These two organizations held their contests simultaneously. In both respects the A. and M. students fared exceptionally well and probably did not deserve the "plowboy and blacksmith" nickname attached to them by their opponents.¹⁰²

The first athletic teams were self-supporting, but their activities were supervised by a committee of the faculty. On February 2, 1904, the

⁹⁸The College Paper, November 1, 1901, p. 104.

⁹⁹The College Paper, October 1, 1899, p. 51.

¹⁰⁰The College Paper, April 1, 1900, p. 9; The College Paper, January 1, 1900, pp. 1-2.

¹⁰¹The Tulsa (Oklahoma) World, April 3, 1966, p. 4; The Payne County Populist, January 18, 1900, p. 8.

¹⁰²The Stillwater Gazette, May 10, 1900, p. 1.

athletic committee codified the institution's rules concerning student participation in intercollegiate sports. The completed report stated that athletic contests had to be approved in advance, students who lived off campus had to register with college officials when traveling with the team to an "away" game, a successful grade needed to be made in seventy-five per cent of the last semester's courses, work missed on the college work program needed to be made up, ineligible students had to be suspended from the team, and no one sport was to have a monopoly on games held away from Stillwater.¹⁰³ In addition, the socials and suppers sponsored by the student body to finance the teams had to be approved in advance by the faculty.¹⁰⁴

The sport which aroused the most enthusiasm on the part of the students was football.¹⁰⁵ It was also Dr. Scott who cleared the way for the Aggies to form a team and compete intercollegiately in this area. His opinions on the subject were voiced to F. L. Shallabargar, a Guthrie stationed newspaper reporter for the Kansas City Journal. He wrote:

In answer to your inquiry of the 24th instant, respecting the attitude of this institution toward the game of football, I have to say that it is distinctly favorable. We encourage the game without reserve, except that the participants in it must preserve their standing in classes.

Occasional accidents on the field are to be deplored, certainly; but even the elements of risk and danger I do not regard as an unmixed evil. Besides giving health and strength, the game develops self-reliance and courage. We expect to

¹⁰³The College Paper, February, 1904, p. 195.

¹⁰⁴OAMC, "Minutes of the First Faculty," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 330.

¹⁰⁵This enthusiasm corresponded with an increased national interest in the sport. For a good analysis of the reasons for its rising popularity, see Rudolph, pp. 371-393.

have a strong team the coming season, and shall give our fullest encouragement.¹⁰⁶

The first intercollegiate football game played by the Orange and Black came a month later with the Kingfisher College. The latter team went down by a score of 220-0.¹⁰⁷ The students and local citizens took an immediate interest in the football contests, and special trains were chartered in order to see the Aggies play.¹⁰⁸ Besides having a formidable team, the campus newspaper believed the Aggies had a reputation for "gentlemanly play."¹⁰⁹

During the Scott years, the athletic teams were of consistently high quality. One of the proudest moments in the athletic history of the institution occurred on May 23, 1900, when the literary and track team brought the prized Douglas Cup to Stillwater permanently.¹¹⁰ Miss Alice Jenkins placed first in the Oklahoma Intercollegiate Oratorical Association contest with a speech entitled "Ideals."¹¹¹ The Orange and Black team defeated the Edmond Normal School, the Kingfisher College, and the University of Oklahoma for the track championship.¹¹² Since this

¹⁰⁶ Quoted from The College Paper, October 1, 1899, p. 56.

¹⁰⁷ Sam Barnes, "Early Day Football Reviewed," The A. and M. College Magazine, VI (1934), p. 6. The Aggies chose their school colors in one of Professor George Holter's classes. The selection of the Princeton combination was most likely a tribute to Harry E. Thompson as his father was a graduate of that institution. OAMC, A. E. Jarrell to B. B. Chapman, September 1, 1958, "The Jarrell Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

¹⁰⁸ The Stillwater Gazette, April 26, 1900, p. 4.

¹⁰⁹ The College Paper, January 1, 1900, p. 104.

¹¹⁰ The College Paper, July, 1902, p. 59.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Ibid.

victory was the second in a row for A. and M., the college was permitted to keep the small, but precious, cup donated by a Guthrie jeweler.¹¹³

The increasing emphasis on athletics, especially football, generated a number of reactions from college students during the 1901-1902 academic year. In November, Miss Lila Nelson forwarded an article headlined "One View of Football" to the editors of the college newspaper.¹¹⁴ In the communication she maintained the game should be banned on the campus because it endangered life and limb, was too violent to be healthful, was brutal and degrading, and in addition cultivated a rough and unsympathetic spirit among the students. Such a challenge, of course, could not go long unheeded. R. H. Kerr submitted a counterposition to the paper in the form of an essay entitled "A Defense of Football."¹¹⁵ He admitted that serious injuries had occurred, but he believed that Americans by nature were a competitive people and enjoyed such activity. This spirit of competition was what had made America great. Because of it, the flag of the United States currently stretched half-way around the world, and the nation had never suffered defeat in time of war. Because of our immense strength we were good architects of peace. He concluded his defense by stating that Chancellor Otto von Bismarck had said that two-thirds of the students of German universities "die young as a direct result of their college course."¹¹⁶ Therefore, football was no worse.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ The College Paper, November 28, 1902, pp. 125-127.

¹¹⁵ The College Paper, January 28, 1903, pp. 176-179.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

like some of their leaders, envisioned the territorial college as a stepping stone to the construction of a major university. While their student organizations were undoubtedly geared toward self-fulfillment, they were also consciously oriented toward enhancing the prestige of their alma mater. The performances of the literary societies evidenced to the townspeople that the faculty was successful in polishing some of the rough frontier edges. The newspapers told the A. and M. story to young people all over the nation, and, in addition, gave educational information to isolated public school teachers. The Orange and Black athletic teams, through their accomplishments, turned the attention of Oklahomans more and more to the higher educational institution located in Payne county. Finally, the pride that the early Aggies had in their college was responsible in no small degree for the ever increasing enrollments during the administration of Dr. Angelo Cyrus Scott.

CHAPTER IX

ANGELO CYRUS SCOTT

Shortly before the Christmas vacation of the 1898-1899 academic year, Angelo Scott, a founder and leading citizen of Oklahoma City, received an invitation to deliver a public lecture to the students of the agricultural college located in Stillwater.¹ While Dr. Scott did not know it at the time, the faculty extended this invitation in order to scout at close range the talents of a man many people in Oklahoma considered to be the cultural leader of the Territory.² About the same time, President George Morrow penned a note to the Chancellor of the University of Kansas, Francis Huntington Snow, to check on the Citian's academic credentials. The reply described the candidate in glowing terms. In part, it read:

Mr. Scott is one of the most highly respected and talented graduates of the University of Kansas. He has remarkable qualities of a literary character. He was at one time invited to become a member of the faculty at this University, but at the time, much to our disappointment, had other plans that could not be lightly set aside. I am thoroughly acquainted with him....I should consider your institution exceedingly fortunate to be able to secure his services.³

¹Angelo C. Scott, The Story of an Administration (Stillwater, 1929), p. 3.

²OAMC, Fayette Copeland to Mrs. A. C. Scott, March 31, 1949, "The Scott Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library); The Stillwater Gazette, June [no day], 1908, p. 4.

³Quoted from The A. and M. College Mirror (Stillwater), January, 1899, p. 8.

On the basis of this favorable recommendation, an outstanding record of past accomplishments in Oklahoma, and the inspiring lecture presented in the college auditorium, A. C. Scott was appointed chairman of the department of English, being selected over a number of other candidates who had applied from all parts of the nation.⁴

The former Oklahoma City lawyer remained as chairman from January 1, 1898 to June 30, 1899. He acquired at Stillwater a reputation as an exceptional teacher and lecturer, which on one occasion prompted the alumni magazine of his alma mater to describe him with near divine powers, calling him a man who spoke "with the tongues of men and angels."⁵ When George Morrow retired, Angelo Scott became the unanimous choice of the board of regents for the college presidency.⁶ Bidding his friend and former superior a fond farewell, Dr. Scott used his varied talents to carry on the spirit of his predecessor's administration. The purpose of this chapter is to trace the administration of the fifth president of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College and to assess the effect of his term of office on the institution he served.

The Scott Family Combine

A key to understanding the successful administration of President Angelo Scott concerns the fact that he possessed an illustrious academic, family, and occupational background. He constantly drew upon these

⁴Ibid.

⁵OAMC, [An unidentified newsclipping of the Kansas University Graduate Magazine, n.p.] in "The Scott Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

⁶The College Paper (Stillwater), June 15, 1899, p. 40.

resources to augment his own slender and diminutive physical frame. Born in Franklin, Indiana on September 25, 1857, the son of Dr. John and Maria Scott,⁷ Angelo developed a keen sense of public responsibility and a unique respect for higher education. His physician father, who migrated to Olathe, Kansas in 1858 to start a medical practice, retired at an early age due to poor health. While this situation had adverse financial affects on the family, it permitted the elder Scott to spend more time with his three sons. As a result the clan became exceptionally close. Special pains were taken by the parents to make Angelo a practicing Christian and a man of letters.⁸

At the time Professor Scott became associated with the Stillwater agricultural college his father and two brothers held prestigious state and national positions, giving him a firm base to work from. Dr. John --who by this time was advanced in age--sat in the Oklahoma House of Representatives,⁹ having run on a platform of promoting education in the

⁷Portrait and Biographical Record of Oklahoma (Chapman, 1901), p. 817.

⁸OAMC, [Mrs. A. C. Scott, "Biographical Notebook of Angelo C. Scott," pp. 9-10.] in "The Scott Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

⁹In spite of ill health, Dr. John Scott held a number of distinguished positions in Kansas and Oklahoma. In the former state he served in both the territorial and state legislatures, including selection as speaker of the house of representatives and president pro tem of the senate. Moreover, he was a farmer, a representative for the Leavenworth, Lawrence and Galveston Railroad, a druggist, a regent for the University of Kansas, and a member of the federal government livestock inspectors in Kansas City. In Oklahoma, now a retired physician, he was appointed Indian Agent of the Ponca, Pawnee, and Otoe tribes, and was a farmer and a member of the Oklahoma Legislature. He died in 1899 soon after his son assumed the administrative reins of the college, becoming the first law-maker in the Territory to expire in office. Portrait and Biographical Record of Oklahoma, pp. 817-818; The National Cyclopedia of American Biography, XXXVII (New York, 1951), p. 337; OT, House Journal, (1899), pp. 348-355.

state. Because of his experience in Kansas government, he was highly esteemed in the eyes of his colleagues. Only an untimely death prevented him from rendering yeoman service to his college president son. William, a brother, also resided in Oklahoma Territory and published the influential Oklahoma City Times newspaper, which he and Angelo had started on May 9, 1889.¹⁰ In addition, the brother was at one time a member of the Legislature and owned considerable farm land in the western portion of the state.¹¹ Both of these men were in a position to further the ambitions of their relative and quite often did so.

The third son of Dr. John Scott, Charles, was also in a position to offer concrete assistance to his brother. As a regent of the University of Kansas, he was able to secure invitations for Angelo to speak at Lawrence on noteworthy occasions;¹² as a United States Representative from Kansas, he had been appointed to the chairmanship of the committee on agriculture by the untidy but colorful Speaker "Uncle Joe" Cannon.¹³ This committee, of course, worked hand in hand with the land-grant colleges. When circumstances warranted, Charles aided his brother directly, introducing him to prominent Congressmen who assisted President Scott to make substantial gains for the college he headed. Of the three brothers, Charles and Angelo were the closest. They kept in touch with each other

¹⁰"Advice at Presidential Level," The A. and M. College Magazine, XXV (1954), pp. 20-21.

¹¹The Daily Oklahoman (Oklahoma City), December 30, 1937, p. 1.

¹²The Kansas University Weekly (Lawrence), September 17, 1898, p. 1.

¹³The Iola Register (Kansas), June 6, 1910, p. 2.

by mail when they left home,¹⁴ and after their careers started to blossom they spent the summers together either at the Sprague Ranch or at the "Scottage," both located in Estes Park, Colorado.¹⁵

Angelo Scott did not lag behind the other members of his family in impressive educational and occupational achievements. As a youth, he received tutoring from his father in music and the classics. A retired mathematics professor from Williams College, then residing in Iola, prepared him for the same institution's entrance examinations.¹⁶ But the week he was to leave for the East, a hunting accident occurred, keeping him inactive for nearly a year.¹⁷ By the next year, Dr. John Scott had been appointed a regent of the University of Kansas, and Angelo decided to begin his college career at Lawrence. He graduated in 1873, the valedictorian of his class.¹⁸ Continuing his studies at the same institution, he earned a Master of Arts degree three years later.¹⁹ In 1884, the Columbian School of Law in Washington, D. C. granted him the LL. B. and the LL. M.²⁰

¹⁴OAMC, [Charles Scott, "The Journal of Charles F. Scott," n.p.] in "The Scott Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

¹⁵OAMC, [Mrs. A. C. Scott, "Biographical Notebook of Angelo C. Scott," pp. 15-16] in "The Scott Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

¹⁶OAMC, [A speech entitled "Response to Citation for Distinguished Service," pp. 4-5] in "The Scott Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Portrait and Biographical Record of Oklahoma, p. 818.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰OAMC, [An unidentified newsclipping in the Kansas University Graduate Magazine, n.p.] in "The Scott Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

Besides an excellent academic record, the young scholar gained a variety of occupational experiences which later enhanced his administrative abilities. He taught school in Iola, worked as a legal clerk in the same locality, served on the school board, and then moved to Washington, D. C., where he became executive secretary to an ex-Kansas governor who was then a state school land commissioner.²¹ Coming to Oklahoma in the Run of 1889, Dr. Scott opened a law office, helped to found the city which is now the state capital, started a newspaper in Oklahoma City, became a United States Commissioner, sat in the Legislature, and served as Oklahoma executive commissioner for the World Columbian Exposition.²² In 1892, he barely missed being appointed governor of the state.

The family background, the excellent academic credentials, and the wide variety of occupational experiences made Angelo Scott one of the most qualified men in the Territory to head the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College in Stillwater in 1899. In spite of numerous physical frailties, the educator possessed great imagination, ingenuity, and the perseverance to carry his dreams to a successful conclusion.²³

²¹The National Cyclopedia of American Biography, XXXVII (New York, 1951), p. 338.

²²Ibid; Scott, p. 6.

²³Physically, Dr. Scott was less than a giant. He weighed just a little over one hundred pounds, and, according to his wife, suffered from chronic insomnia. Any undue physical exertion, such as becoming too excited at a football game, would cause dizziness and fainting spells. Nevertheless, careful dieting and exercise enabled him to live to be ninety-one years old. OAMC, [Mrs. A. C. Scott, "Biographical Notebook of Angelo C. Scott," p. 9] in "The Scott Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

The College Combine

One of President Scott's strongest administrative attributes was his ability to select qualified men for professorships and to create a smoothly functioning organization. In addition, he could charm a legislator out of large sums of money, effectively delegate authority, convince farmers that their children should attend a small frontier college, and inspire students to rise above the humble environment. Using such talents, the Stillwater educator was able to accomplish some remarkable things in a relatively short period of time.

Dr. Scott cooperated with, and provided leadership for, the college board of regents. In this regard, he was most fortunate to have a board president who had attended a land-grant institution in his youth. This man, of course, was Frank Wikoff. Judge Wikoff received his undergraduate training at the Illinois Industrial University and later studied law in Cincinnati, Ohio.²⁴ The regent, therefore, was well-educated himself and could see the advantages in preparing an academically strong institution in Stillwater. Furthermore, Wikoff, having served a legal apprenticeship before going into the banking business, brought a wide variety of practical training to his office. His knowledge of territorial law and his expert financial judgment were of inestimable value to the fifth chief executive of the agricultural college.

John Fields, who replaced George Morrow as Director of the Oklahoma Experiment Station, was also a tower of strength to Angelo Scott. He came to Stillwater from New York City, but had gained his agricultural

²⁴The Southwestern State Banker (n.c.), December, 1902, p. 8.

education at the Pennsylvania State College.²⁵ There he had achieved considerable fame as the co-discoverer of tuberculosis in cattle, assisting Leonard Pierson.²⁶ His business partner in the printing and publishing business, Frank Northup, ascribed a number of significant achievements to Fields. He stated that after leaving Oklahoma A. and M. the ex-director edited a prominent farm journal, ran for governor twice, barely missed being appointed secretary of agriculture, was author of the Rural Consolidated School Law, the Parcel Post Law, the Federal Bank Law, and originated the idea for the Federal Reserve Act.²⁷ Fields, Scott, and Wikoff worked as a team, and in the president's own words became a "sort of sub-board of regents, taking over between regent's meetings."²⁸

A major goal of the Stillwater agricultural trio was to expand and to strengthen the faculty of the college. President Scott used his contacts in the educational world to secure the names of outstanding young scholars, and the board of regents provided the money with which to employ them. For example, the executive's friendship with David Starr Jordan, with whom he vacationed at Estes Park, Colorado, resulted in the acquisition of Dr. Walter Shaw, a graduate of Stanford and of an unidentified European university.²⁹ Dr. Edwin Mean Wilcox became the first holder of the Doctor of Philosophy degree from Harvard to join the faculty.³⁰

²⁵ OAMC, "Selections from the Record Book of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1891-1941," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 50.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Scott, p. 10.

²⁹ The College Paper, November 1, 1901, p. 108.

³⁰ The College Paper, July 25, 1900, p. 48.

Lewis Cecil Gray, a graduate of William Jewell; John F. Nicholson, a graduate of Wisconsin; F. L. Wilson, a graduate of the State Normal School of Illinois and the University of Chicago; C. O. Foster, a graduate of the Maryland Agricultural College; and E. H. Riley, a graduate of Minnesota, were the other additions to the teaching staff.³¹ These men, combined with the professors recruited by George Morrow from land-grant institutions, composed a body of scholars who rivaled the staff of any agricultural and mechanical college in the mid-west.

Dr. Scott not only attempted to secure qualified men, but he labored incessantly to assist them to continue their studies. In the summers an annual migration flowed eastward to Chicago and Boston.³² A few, like Professor Richard Tucker, even made it to Europe to study languages. A new age had dawned at Stillwater.

The Educational Views of Angelo Scott

In the 1890's, the experiment stations were often the segment of the land-grant colleges that inaugurated educational reforms. As the investigators brought freshly researched data into the classrooms, they had to devise new teaching techniques for relaying the information and had to create new course titles.³³ Visionary college presidents, however, could also aid in modernizing institutions of higher learning. In the case of the Oklahoma A. and M. College Henry Alvord, in

³¹The College Paper, October 15, 1903, p. 48.

³²The College Paper, July 25, 1900, pp. 56-57.

³³Russell Thackrey, "The Land-Grant Heritage," The A. and M. College Magazine, XXIV (1952), p. 9.

agriculture, and Edmond Murdaugh, in mechanic arts, publicized the need for sweeping academic changes. George Espy Morrow succeeded in upgrading the quality of instruction of agricultural education both on and off the campus. Following their tradition, Angelo Scott moved the college a major step, yet in a different direction. He hoped to create a multi-purpose state university.

In spite of some of his later statements, it is questionable whether Justin Morrill knew specifically what he wanted to accomplish in the Land-Grant Act of 1862. If he did, many of his devotees did not.³⁴ But by the turn of the century a general consensus was forming among educators as to what should be the proper goals of a land-grant college. Morrill himself reflected this consensus in a speech delivered before the students of the Massachusetts Agricultural College in 1887, the twenty-fifth anniversary of the organic act. The original intention of the legislature, he thought now, was to open the doors of these institutions to the masses by being close at hand and to offer them a liberal education. He continued:

It would be a mistake to suppose that it was intended that every student should become either a farmer or mechanic, when the design comprehended not only instruction for those who hold a plow or follow a trade, but such instruction as any person might need--without the exclusion of those who might adhere to the classics.³⁵

Dr. Scott's concept of an A. and M. college agreed in principles with the above statement. His classical educational background, in

³⁴ A variety of institutions provided precedent for land-grant colleges. These may be reviewed in Earle D. Ross, "On Writing the History of Land-Grant College and Universities," Journal of Higher Education, XXIV (1953), p. 412.

³⁵ Quoted from Ruth Howard, "The Development of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College," (Unpublished M. S. Thesis, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1926), p. 3.

addition to his often futile attempts to recruit students who would enroll in the agricultural course; reinforced this view. Farmers' sons did not want to go to college to learn how to plow or work on a farm. Neither did parents desire them to. Farming was hard, demanding, and often unprofitable; thus they preferred their children to gain the type of education which would increase the economic and social status of their offspring.³⁶

In 1907, Angelo Scott was interviewed by Blanche Little, who subsequently became a close friend of the family. The results of this conversational exchange received publication in the Teacher's College School Journal. Fully aware his administration would end when Oklahoma became a state,³⁷ Dr. Scott spoke frankly. Many people, he believed, thought of the Stillwater institution as a place where "they farmed some and carried on high school work."³⁸ This type of image made it difficult to implement properly the late nineteenth century concept of a agricultural and mechanical college. Therefore, the educator desired to change the name of the institution to the Oklahoma State College, thus broadening its public appeal.³⁹

The revamped college should have a curriculum which would emphasize science and the liberal arts, and should produce a probing mind. Speaking

³⁶For a good survey of Angelo Scott's analysis of the attitude of Oklahoma farmers toward agricultural education, see OT, Second Biennial Report of the Oklahoma Territorial Board of Agriculture for the Year 1905-1905 (Guthrie, 1906), pp. 262-271.

³⁷OAMC, W. C. Jamison to Edith Copeland, April 29, 1949, "The Scott Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

³⁸Blanche Little, "The Agricultural and Mechanical College," The School Journal, LXXIV (1907), p. 664.

³⁹Ibid.

at the dedication of a Carnegie Library, the president repeated Thomas Carlyle's statement that a university was a collection of books. He felt, however, that this definition was somewhat dated. He explained:

...we have moved away from the day of Carlyle. With the coming of Science into the Kingdom of learning, the preeminence of books is challenged by the microscope, the spectroscope, the theodolite, and the chemical reagent, and the university which does not number these and a hundred other handmaids of Science ...is poor indeed.⁴⁰

On the other hand, an institution also needed to guard against training students to be mere technicians of science. "I believe," he said in another speech, "the narrowly trained mind is apt to remain narrow, while the broadly trained mind, if right used, is certain to grow and expand...."⁴¹ The former skills could best be obtained in the laboratory, but the latter objective was to be derived from a study of "literature, history, philosophy, religion, science, and law...."⁴²

In view of these beliefs, it is not surprising that the college president significantly increased the number of areas in which a degree could be earned. In his biennial report for the academic year 1899-1900, Scott wrote that a Bachelor of Science degree could be obtained in six areas. They were: (1) general science and literature; (2) agriculture, including horticulture and veterinary science; (3) mechanical and electrical engineering; (4) chemistry; (5) botany; (6) and biology.⁴³ Besides

⁴⁰OAMC, [A speech entitled "The Mission of Books, n.p.] in "The Scott Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

⁴¹OAMC, [A speech entitled "Which Way Education?", p. 2] in "The Scott Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³OT; Biennial Reports of the Territorial A. and M. College and Experiment Station of the Territory of Oklahoma for the Period 1899-1900 (Guthrie, 1900), p. 15.

this, the students could take a special course in other areas; however, a degree might not be granted for such endeavors.⁴⁴ At the same time Dr. Scott announced that a number of supplementary courses, including modern languages, had been added to the curriculum.⁴⁵

Two years later the president and faculty cooperated in raising entrance requirements and reducing the practical agricultural course to the sub-collegiate level. The preparatory department was discarded in 1902 and replaced with a two year high school program in agriculture and domestic economy.⁴⁶ A twofold result was expected. First, the agricultural course could be tailored to fit the needs of those students who would actually return to the farm. Secondly, this move cleared the way for agricultural instruction at the college level to be more scientific. New attention could be given toward training research personnel who would step into the classroom or assume positions in the rapidly expanding federal government posts.

About the same time, the college entrance requirements were substantially stiffened.⁴⁷ The subjects in which tests were administered remained the same, but were made considerably more difficult. The student newspaper reported the faculty became so jealous in preparing these examinations that the questions were submitted to the whole body for consultation and review.⁴⁸ In 1903, for the first time in the college's

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ The College Paper, October, 1902, p. 65.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

history, there were many students who were not permitted to enroll because of academic deficiencies.⁴⁹ In addition, the president reported that "a discriminative tuition fee of five dollars a term or fifteen dollars a year, upon students entering from other states...." was⁵⁰ applied.

The move, of course, had some dangers attached. With increasing enrollments, the college was having to depend more and more on the state legislature for appropriations. If a decrease in enrollment occurred, the institution might have suffered a severe financial reversal. Nevertheless, the opposite happened.⁵¹ By 1908, the Stillwater agricultural college numbered over one thousand students.⁵² The geographic areas from which students were recruited increased, too. In 1900, for example, the president reported to the board of regents that scholars were enrolled from Illinois, Indian Territory, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and several foreign countries.⁵³

In spite of the emphasis on increased standards, Dr. Scott firmly believed in education for the masses. He thought that in a democracy all citizens needed to be educated in order for the democratic political

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰OT, Report of Oklahoma Educational Institutions (Guthrie, 1902), p. 21.

⁵¹OT, Report of the Governor of Oklahoma to the Secretary of the Interior for the Year 1900 (Washington, 1900). p. 16. In 1899, the student body had numbered approximately 200 students.

⁵²Scott, p. 9.

⁵³OAMC, [Frank Wikoff, "The Scrapbook of Frank Wikoff, President of the A. and M. Regents, 1899-1907," n.p.] in "The Wikoff Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

philosophy to work. Therefore, he stumped the state publicizing the mission of the land-grant college and seeking increased financial assistance. He made literally thousands of speeches to farmer's gatherings of all types, women's clubs, and state and religious functions. Each success, small or large, inspired him to devote more of his precious energy toward enhancing the prestige of his adopted institution. According to an article in the student newspaper, he declared in 1903 that he was disposed to "work day and night for the upbuilding of the institution and for the welfare of the students...."⁵⁴

The President and His Students

One of the many reasons Angelo Scott liked his position of president was his belief that living near a college campus gave him and the faculty a feeling of perpetual youthfulness.⁵⁵ In return for this mental exhilaration, he attempted to create a campus and community environment where students could live and learn in a wholesome atmosphere. President Scott was a Calvinist, but not necessarily a self-righteous one.⁵⁶ Nevertheless, as a Presbyterian he believed that a morally upright life should be pursued by his students. After the educator's death, his wife stated that this area saw him contributing the most to the college.⁵⁷

At the beginning of each academic year, the president expressed a personal interest in each student left in his care by anxious and often

⁵⁴The College Paper, October 15, 1903, p. 80.

⁵⁵The College Paper, October, 1902, p. 1.

⁵⁶OAMC, [Mrs. A. C. Scott, "Biographical Notebook of Angelo C. Scott," p. 15] in "The Scott Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, p. 14.

weeping mothers. A typical admonition was given at the opening of the first 1902-1903 term. The president warned his youthful charges of two perils concerned with college life. "The first," he said, "is the peril to achievement...the second is the peril to character."⁵⁸ Expanding on the first point, the speaker suggested that the students study at least five evenings per week, for upon "no other plan of procedure can you hope to accomplish what you are here to do."⁵⁹ Referring to the second peril, the administrator encouraged the selection of the right kind of friends. "Above all, don't get the idea," he further cautioned, "that it is an unmanly thing to lead a straight, clean and decent life. It is the manliest thing in the world, and the best."⁶⁰

President Scott also attempted to create a suitable environment for students in the surrounding community. He supported the establishment of a town band, directed several operettas, participated in the meetings of the local chapter of the YMCA, and loaned college faculty members to the community in times of crisis. For example, Dr. L. L. Lewis worked closely with the county health department one year to assist in controlling a raging epidemic of smallpox.⁶¹ Such activities led the administrator to believe he had a vested interest in the community and could condemn the things he did not like. In 1903, armed with a manuscript speech over ninety pages long, he spoke to an assembled body of the citizens on the evils of alcohol and gambling. These

⁵⁸The College Paper, October, 1902, p. 66.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹OT, Report of the Superintendent of the Territorial Board of Health for Oklahoma (Guthrie, 1902), p. 50.

conditions, he claimed, were especially prevalent in Stillwater, thereby creating temptations for students. Then, perhaps overstepping the bounds of propriety, he accused city officials of being in league with the unlawful element. To buttress his point, he urged them to sue him for slander if he had accused unjustly.⁶²

The president was also concerned with the physical needs of his students. He related some of his own personal experiences in order to prove that an education was worth whatever sacrifices needed to be made to attain it. In one instance, he told how a collegague at the University of Kansas, William Allen White, had worked and starved his way through the institution. Remembering that he too earned his own money for board and room by serving as organist and choirmaster for nearby churches, Scott explained how he stretched his own food budget. He said:

I had the pleasure of cooking my own food and washing my own dishes through a large part of my college course...and I tell you it is perfectly amazing how well and cheaply one can live on oatmeal and soupbones. Why, the evolution of a soupbone is something wonderful - first the soup, and then the cold meat, and then the stew, and back to soup again. I tell you, there's food for reflection in a soupbone.⁶³

Knowing many of his students were attending college on borrowed money, the conscientious president attempted to help them find jobs to

⁶²OAMC, [An untitled speech delivered at Stillwater and other places, p. 36] in "The Scott Collection" (Oklahoma State University Library). The extent of the drinking problem in Stillwater is evidenced by this notation in the Gazette. "Some of the farmers who occasionally get full of booze when in town have the idea that the city authorities take particular pains to run them in on the least provocation and at the same time permit residents of the town to go unmolested no matter how drunk they get. This notion whould be dismissed now since the city marshal has been hauled up before 'his honor' and treated as any other plain drunk." The Stillwater Gazette, March 25, 1897, p. 3.

⁶³OAMC, [An untitled speech delivered on the opening of the 1901-1902 academic year, pp. 14-15] in "The Scott Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

repay their benefactors and to save enough to embark on their careers. In 1905 Dr. Scott requested the Oklahoma Legislature to permit the Stillwater college to share the teacher-training function of the Edmond Normal School so that students could obtain territorial teaching certificates. A bill granting such a request was passed in the upper house, but the student newspaper reported the "Normal School combination jumped sideways in the House, tore its hair, waved its arms, and killed the bill by a narrow margin."⁶⁴ The college was successful, however, in obtaining a large number of the "scientific aid" scholarships established by the United States Department of Agriculture for graduate study.⁶⁵

Quite a number of stories could be related to indicate the closeness of Angelo Scott to his students. He stated upon leaving the presidency that kindness won more with college students than severity, so that he made the former his guiding star.⁶⁶ His relationship with Vingie Roe serves as an excellent example of this philosophy. While reading the Perkins Journal, Dr. Scott came across a poem entitled "The Flight of the Wolves."⁶⁷ Thinking the writer had promise, the former English professor wrote to his friend Congressman Victor Murdock, editor of the Wichita Eagle, and asked him to give the piece wider cir-

⁶⁴The College Paper, April, 1905, p. 93.

⁶⁵For example, see The College Paper, June 1, 1901, p. 36.

⁶⁶OAMC, [A chapel symposium on the subject of "Honor," p. 10] in "The Scott Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

⁶⁷B. B. Chapman, "Author Discovered by A. C. Scott," The A. and M. College Magazine, XVII (1945), p. 3.

ulation by including it in an edition of his paper.⁶⁸ He also sent a note to the young girl who had written it and invited her to the campus to study rhetoric under him personally. Vingie Roe accepted the invitation, but the combination of her genius and shyness did not blend with the less mature student body. She soon left.⁶⁹

Before her departure, however, the young girl spent many hours with her mentor. A large number of these conversations later turned up as plots of the thirty-one novels she would write. One of these, The Great Thrace, which is generally conceded to be her best, was dedicated to Angelo Scott. Years later, she again publicly acknowledged the debt she owed this individual. "Dear Man. He believed," she said, "in the lights, which was, in all truth, to be the one great flame of my life."⁷⁰

The Washington Affair

Dr. Richard Henry Tucker, of Washington and Lee University, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the Oklahoma A. and M. College, wrote a detailed description of the institution's appearance in 1899. He stated that the campus contained two hundred acres, possessed only one medium sized building and several smaller less pretentious ones, and had a faculty of fourteen or fifteen to teach the two hundred students

⁶⁸OAMC, [Vingie E. Roe, "The Scrapbook of Vingie E. Roe, p. 16] in "The Vingie Roe Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

⁶⁹OAMC, Vingie E. Roe to B. B. Chapman, September 19, 1929, "The Vingie Roe Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

⁷⁰Ibid. The Great Thrace was published in Philadelphia in 1948 by Macrae-Smith Co.

enrolled.⁷¹ When President Scott severed his relationship with the institution the campus contained over one thousand acres, while funds were received from the Second Morrill Act, the Hatch Act, the Adams Act, a territorial tax levy, and the land lease fund. Moreover, the endowment gained from a 250,000 acre land-grant secured from the federal government. In addition, the physical facilities increased, with the campus containing a new agricultural building, a separate library structure, a chemistry building, a dairy building, and an engineering hall. Dr. Tucker, who was vice-president of A. and M. in 1908, attributed these gains to the "fine leadership of President A. C. Scott, assisted by an energetic faculty...."⁷²

Soon after assuming the presidential office, Dr. Scott began working to secure funds for a building program. The first goal was to provide housing for the department of mechanical and electrical engineering.⁷³ Money for this project was gained through the efforts of Senator Freeman Miller and Representative "Uncle Jimmy" Matthews,⁷⁴ both long-standing friends of the college. They succeeded in introducing a legislative measure providing for a three-tenths mill levy in 1901 and four-tenths mill levy in 1902. The bill was passed as written.⁷⁵ In

⁷¹OAMC, "Selections from the Record Book of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1891-1941," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 55.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³OT, Biennial Reports of the Territorial Board of Regents of the A. and M. College and Experiment Station of the Territory of Oklahoma (Guthrie, 1900), p. 9.

⁷⁴The College Paper, March 1, 1901, p. 141.

⁷⁵Ibid.

September, 1901, the board of regents let contracts for the expenditure of these funds.⁷⁶

The next academic year saw an emphasis placed on remodeling existing structures. The basement of the library was transformed into a gymnasium, piping was laid from the heating plant to the gym so it could be heated during the winter, inside sanitation and sewage facilities were provided, brick sidewalks were constructed to connect the various buildings, and the college was hooked up to the Stillwater city water system.⁷⁷ But with all of these improvements, there were still existing problems. The students in agriculture and engineering were cramped for space, and multiple sessions had to be scheduled, thereby adding to the already heavy teaching loads of the faculty. Furthermore, the college heating system remained on the whole inadequate. Caustic George Holter, who always was one to speak his mind, wrote a letter to Professor Richard Chandler and said:

I am supposed to have a recitation at 8 o'clock., four days each week. In order to do this I must have heat. This morning my lecture room had the delightful temperature of 59 degrees. It is absolutely impossible for me to give chunks of wisdom at this temperature. I am religiously opposed to playing a game of 'freeze-out' with students.

I do not know how the other fellows feel about this cold⁷⁸ proposition but, as for me and my classes, we must have heat.

Scott took notice of such criticisms, but it was a lengthy and expensive task to revamp the antiquated physical facilities of the college overnight.

⁷⁶The Daily Gazette (Stillwater), September 5, 1901, p. 3.

⁷⁷The College Paper, October, 1902, pp. 70-71; OT, Report of the President of the Board of Regents, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, of the Territory of Oklahoma, Session of 1901-1902 (Guthrie, 1902), pp. 1-15.

⁷⁸Quoted from The College Paper, November 16, 1903, p. 127.

In 1903, the political parties of Oklahoma Territory began to squabble again, and the building program in progress slowed down. The immediate source of dissention centered upon the fact that all members of the board of regents were known Republicans. This situation irritated members of the major opposition party. On January 16th, a writer for the Stillwater Democrat accused the Scott administration of being politically partisan. The reporter stated: (1) no Democrats were on the board of regents; (2) members of the faculty who were of this political persuasion were being replaced as quickly as possible; (3) President Scott was campaigning for members of the Republican party; (4) members of the college faculty were encouraged to do the same; (5) and staff members of the college who belonged to the Democratic party were being forced from their jobs.⁷⁹ The article concluded: "It is time that this prostitution of a great institution, this debasement of the greatest educational establishment of the territory, should forever cease."⁸⁰ The next day, the editor of the Gazette skillfully answered every charge.⁸¹ Nevertheless, the damage was done. The institution once again slipped back into rough-and-tumble Oklahoma politics.

President Scott's insistence on pushing for increased revenues for the college heightened political tensions. The next year, with the student body approaching the five hundred mark, the administrator demanded that the territorial legislature provide additional funds. A bill granting a special allocation of \$54,000.00 received the assent of the

⁷⁹The Stillwater Democrat, January 16, 1903, [n.p.].

⁸⁰Ibid.

⁸¹The Stillwater Gazette, January 17, 1903, [n.p.].

lawmakers, but the governor vetoed the measure. In a brilliant legal maneuver Senator Freeman Miller took the matter to court on a technicality and succeeded in gaining a partial restoration of the funds.⁸² It was a costly victory, however. The state's leading Democrats resented Miller's victory in the courts; thus it became nearly impossible for Scott to secure the cooperation of high appointive officials of the majority party.

Under the guise of attending the annual meeting of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations, President Scott in 1905 went to Washington to seek permission from the federal government to construct more buildings and to obtain additional revenues.⁸³ Sometime earlier, Congressman Dennis Flynn of Oklahoma, in an effort to retain the territorial capital at Guthrie, had convinced the Washington solons that no more public buildings should be built until statehood was achieved.⁸⁴ The board of regents instructed the college president to seek passage of a bill which would eradicate this stumbling block, to attempt to secure a larger portion of the leased land revenues, and to ask that the section of school land which lay adjacent to the campus be ceded to the institution.⁸⁵ It was a large order, but one the president proved capable of fulfilling.

⁸²The Daily Democrat (Stillwater), August 27, 1904, p. 1.

⁸³The College Paper, January, 1905, p. 72; USDA, OES, Miscellaneous Bulletin No. 153, Proceedings of the Eighteenth Annual Convention of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations (Washington, 1905), p. 9.

⁸⁴OAMC, "Selections from the Record Book of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, 1891-1941," (Oklahoma State University Library), p. 48.

⁸⁵Ibid.

President Scott was the logical representative to send on such an important mission. He had taken his law degrees at the Columbian School, had served as secretary to a school land commissioner, and, perhaps more important, had a brother who occupied a strategic governmental position in the house of representatives. The initial move was to secure introductions from Charles Scott to Speaker Cannon and Senator Albert J. Beveridge. Enlisting their aid in the college cause, President Scott then systematically visited each congressional sub-committee that might be concerned with the three bills he wanted approved. After five weeks of such activities, it was decided that the measures should be presented during the "unanimous consent hour." The measures passed.⁸⁶ Joyously, the executive boarded a Baltimore and Ohio train to return to Stillwater.

Meanwhile, John Fields, who had attended the meeting of the Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations with his superior, returned early to Guthrie in order to request the Legislature to provide revenues for the construction of a new college building and to improve certain facilities at the station.⁸⁷ Succeeding in getting the bills introduced, he then turned his attention toward getting the support of the Oklahoma Territorial Board of Agriculture. Since Scott and Fields had courted this group in the past, it was not difficult to secure a resolution in favor of the bills. The final draft read:

Resolved that the earnest efforts for the development and dissemination of accurate information concerning all lines of agriculture, on the part of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College and Experiment Station are of the greatest importance to the future of Agriculture in Oklahoma, and that the needs of this institution as incorporated in the bills now

⁸⁶ Scott, pp. 13-16.

⁸⁷ The College Paper, February, 1905, p. 84.

before the Legislature (1) approximately \$30,000.00 for the securing, improving, and stocking, and equipping of the section of land recently granted by Congress to the College, (2) appropriating \$100,000.00 for the erecting of an Agricultural building, additional shops, and a gymnasium, and (3) amending the law for the free distribution of ...vaccine....With more than three fourths of the people in Oklahoma engaged in Agricultural pursuits, expenditures for higher education along these lines in the Territory, should in some measure bear a similar proportion to the total expenditure for higher education.⁸⁸

In later years a plea from this important board would have received the immediate attention of the lawmakers. In 1905, however, the board lacked power and was not well organized; thus Fields and Scott had to resort to other measures in order to gain the legislation they desired.

Next, the duo decided to hold an open house at the college and to invite members of the Legislature and friends of the institution personally to inspect the physical plant.⁸⁹ On Friday, February 17th, a chartered train brought four hundred people, including a large number of legislators, to Stillwater from Guthrie. The guests were treated to a colorful reception at the depot, were served a luncheon prepared by the girls of the domestic economy department, and then were seated for a round of speechmaking.⁹⁰ Dr. Scott spoke last. "I don't like lobbying. But when," he continued, "the mountain comes to Mahomet, it seems

⁸⁸OT, "Minutes of the State Board of Agriculture, March 8, 1901 to February 2, 1915," (Archives of the State Board of Agriculture), pp. 24-25.

⁸⁹The College Paper, February, 1905, p. 77.

⁹⁰The Stillwater Gazette, February 21, 1905, p. 1. If a verse of a student rhyme published in the campus paper is correct, President Scott prompted students when to applaud. The verse in question reads:

And when he raid gymnasium,
My! How the boys did yell!
You know he tole em to do that,
(But den you mustn't tell.)

For a complete text, see The College Paper, April, 1905, p. 92.

to me it is entirely fit and proper to place the claims of the Agricultural and Mechanical College before the legislature...."⁹¹ The needs of the institution were then detailed in an impassioned and lengthy speech.

The speaker had chosen an appropriate time to request a large slice of territorial funds. He had the backing of his faculty, and the territorial legislature was predominantly Republican.⁹² Two months later the Fields-Scott proposals were adopted in their entirety. The annual appropriations of the college were increased by \$5,000.00, while twice that amount became available to pay the claims of those who had leases on the school land section adjoining the college, and \$92,000.00 was released for the construction of an agricultural building.⁹³ On the surface, it appeared that a complete victory had been won.

In reality, however, the victory united the Democratic party in their opposition to the Republican-oriented administration of the Stillwater land-grant institution. The first sign of antagonism occurred when L. W. Baxter, the state auditor, and J. C. Strong, the state attorney-general, refused to approve a voucher for the expenses incurred by President Scott on his trip to Washington.⁹⁴ Following this, the contract issued to O. A. Campbell and S. A. Layton by the board of regents to build the new agricultural college building, Morrill Hall,

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² The Daily Democrat, February 27, 1905, p. 1.

⁹³ The College Paper, April, 1905, p. 98; OT, Sessions Laws of Oklahoma, (1905), pp. 49-51.

⁹⁴ OAMC, [Frank Wikoff, "The Scrapbook of Frank Wikoff, President of the A. and M. Regents, 1899-1907," n.p.] in "The Wikoff Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

was contested by an Oklahoma contractor named Kruger.⁹⁵ The latter man related to the territorial governor that he had been the low bidder for the new structure, but the contract had been given to someone else. An informal investigation revealed Kruger was correct; his bid had been nearly \$5,000.00 lower than that of the Campbell-Layton firm.⁹⁶ The board of regents explained this development by stating that they had inspected some of Kruger's work and had found it unsatisfactory.⁹⁷ The contract stood, but rumors persisted to the effect that \$20,000.00 of "velvet" had been returned to the regents.⁹⁸

In spite of the embarrassment these charges caused President Scott, he remained an effective instrument for the college. In 1907, the executive again returned to Washington in order to make sure that, when statehood replaced territorial status, the institution received the lands it was entitled to under the Morrill Act of 1862.⁹⁹ Upon arriving at his destination, Scott discovered that David Boyd and his attorney Henry Asp of the University of Oklahoma were there, too. These men had found an antiquated statute which would also provide their institution with a grant of land, if statehood became a reality. After talking to them, Dr. Scott had to make a momentous decision. Should he join them or should he go it alone?

⁹⁵ The Daily Democrat, October 18, 1906, p. 1.

⁹⁶ The Daily Democrat, November, 1905, p. 1.

⁹⁷ The College Paper, November, 1905, p. 31

⁹⁸ The Peoples's Progress (Stillwater), September 26, 1907, [n.d.]. The cost of the new building was approximately \$65,000.00.

⁹⁹ Scott, p. 17.

The decision was a difficult one to make. Under the provisions of the Morrill Act, the Stillwater institution could certainly expect to receive 210,000 acres of land. On the other hand, he could gamble, along with Asp and Boyd, and obtain 250,000 acres. Before making a final decision, the Oklahoman consulted with Senators Joseph Foraker and Chester Long. They assured him of the validity of the Asp-Boyd plan and further pointed out that the A. and M. College, if it received an endowment under the Morrill Act, would undoubtedly have to share the grant with the Negro institution at Langston.¹⁰⁰ Dr. Scott now made up his mind to seek the 250,000 acres.

The decision proved to be the correct one. A few weeks later bills were introduced to grant 250,000 acres of land to both the Norman and Stillwater colleges.¹⁰¹ In addition, the income from the leased lands in the Panhandle was preserved.¹⁰² As well he should, Scott regarded these measures an "important step in the history of the College."¹⁰³

Farewell

Upon returning to Stillwater, Dr. Scott sensed the winds of change. Little public adulation followed his latest accomplishment for the college. Instead, the local citizens were discussing the prospects for statehood. With such an exciting and long awaited event in sight, the populace temporarily lost interest in the problems of the agricultural

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³Ibid., p. 18.

college. As a result, sweeping changes in the administrative structure of the institution were made with little criticism. Other territorial executives concerned with education also were to feel the political wrath of the incoming Democratic party, who now controlled the state.

The first major innovation, implemented by the members of the territorial legislature, was to reorganize the personnel and structure of the board of regents. On June 6, 1907, the Oklahoma Board of Agriculture assumed jurisdiction of all agricultural and mechanical colleges in the state.¹⁰⁴ On November 16, 1907, Governor Charles Haskell appointed J. P. Conners, J. Roetzel, R. F. Wilson, D. N. Robb, G. T. Bryan, E. White, D. Diehl, R. S. Burns, J. C. Elliot, R. W. Lindsay, and S. D. Dennis to replace the current board of regents.¹⁰⁵ The new board met five days later at the Royal Hotel in Guthrie and decided to go to Stillwater for an on-the-spot inspection of the college.¹⁰⁶ While the board did not unduly interfere with the daily operation of the institution, they did bring some financial changes. Unexpended college funds, with the exception of a few thousand dollars, were removed from ex-regent Frank Wikoff's bank and transferred to Guthrie. What monies were left in Stillwater were to draw three per cent interest in the future.¹⁰⁷

The reorganization of the board of regents heralded a change of the collegiate administration, too. Not wanting to face the humiliation of

¹⁰⁴OT, "Minutes of the State Board of Agriculture, March 8, 1901 to February 2, 1915," (Archives of the State Board of Agriculture), p. 125.

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., pp. 126-134.

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

being dismissed, Dr. Scott submitted his resignation to the members of the new board, asking that it not take effect until June 30, 1908. The regents accepted the resignation with the date Scott wanted. On January 22, 1908, the Oklahoma Board of Agriculture interviewed three candidates to replace Scott. After several ballots, Dr. J. H. Connell, the Dallas, Texas editor of the Farm and Ranch Magazine, was elected president at an annual salary of \$4,500.00.¹⁰⁸ President Scott graciously congratulated his successor and suggested that when the state legislature met in Guthrie, the Texan should attend the meetings in order to safeguard the interests of the college. Scott, then, would remain in Stillwater until the senior class graduated. This procedure was followed.¹⁰⁹

During the months of May and June, 1908, Dr. Scott gave many farewell talks, each reviving memories of his administration. A curtain of gloom gradually settled over the campus in spite of the fact that graduation ceremonies would soon be held. The speaking engagements began with the Junior-Senior Banquet, and address to the YMCA and the YWCA, and a chapel symposium on the subject of "Honor." Finally, the festivities of commencement arrived. On the last Monday evening before diplomas were distributed, the students gathered en masse outside a room where the regents were meeting. "We want President Scott," they shouted.¹¹⁰ The slender man left the meeting and introduced the next administrator to the students. He closed his short talk by pointing to Connell and saying, "The King is dead, long live the King." The next

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., p. 135.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., p. 151.

¹¹⁰ Scott, p. 19.

evening, the outgoing president was carried on the shoulders of several young men to an athletic banquet. He attempted to speak, but the cheers and applause made it useless.¹¹¹

At commencement, Angelo Scott delivered his last public address as president of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College. A newspaper reporter who had been assigned to cover the event, noted that a special atmosphere prevailed.¹¹² Dr. Scott briskly strode to the speaker's platform, introduced the president-elect, and then turned his attention characteristically to the assembled students. He said:

Incomparably the choicest memory I take with me in leaving the A. and M. College is that of the friendship and the affectionate loyalty of its students. Many puzzling problems confront a college president in dealing with a student body, and I have had my share. The students of this college have not always held me to be right, but they have known, I think, that in all my dealings with them I have tried to follow the Biblical injunction, at once to 'do justly, and to love mercy.' I shall never forget the occasions without number when I have been made to feel their strong support. Sometimes when I was least expecting it. It has gladdened my hour of triumph and it has lighted many an hour of discouragement. Though this particular student body will soon pass beyond the walls of the institution, there is a certain symbolism about a college which one does not forget, and I am sure I shall never see your orange and black without also claiming it as mine, or hear your multitudinous yell without feeling moved to join in it.¹¹³

A week after Scott's departure from the campus, the Stillwater Gazette predicted that a majority of the faculty, either voluntarily or involuntarily, would follow him.¹¹⁴ This forecast proved accurate. The "Golden Age" was over. The college returned to the Oklahoma political arena.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² The Stillwater Gazette, June 8, 1908, p. 4.

¹¹³ OAMC, [A speech entitled "Farewell Address," pp. 6-7] in "The Scott Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

¹¹⁴ The Stillwater Gazette, June 15, 1908, p. 4.

Conclusion

Leaving Stillwater, Angelo Cyrus Scott continued to render distinguished educational service to his adopted state. He immediately accepted an invitation to replace the sparkling Vernon Louis Parrington at the University of Oklahoma. Parrington had also felt the political wrath of the majority Oklahoma political party.¹¹⁵ But before the next academic year began, Scott accepted a counter offer to become Graduate Dean of Epworth University. Later, however, he re-established his ties with the Norman institution. Throughout the remainder of his ninety-one years, Dr. Scott continued to promote higher education in the Sooner state. Many honors were accorded him in the twilight of his long career. On one of these future occasions, the alumni magazine of the University of Kansas pictured him in the way he would most like to have been remembered. The journal stated: "He looks like an actor; he would like to have been a preacher; he has been an editor, a lawyer, and politician; he is a teacher."¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Roy Gittinger, The University of Oklahoma 1892-1942 (Norman, 1942) p. 25.

¹¹⁶ OAMC, [An unidentified newsclipping of the Kansas University Graduate Magazine, n.p.] in "The Scott Collection," (Oklahoma State University Library).

CHAPTER X

CONCLUSION

The Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College came into being almost three decades after the passage of the Morrill Act of 1862. Located in a frontier environment, it was subject to many of the same illnesses which afflicted other territorial institutions. The quality of state leadership was generally poor, the large number of tax-exempt homestead claims eliminated a popular source of revenue, and the national depression of the nineties combined with the drought on the Great Plains to negate the possibility of creating other major revenue measures. These insufficiencies played a large role in preventing the agricultural and mechanical college from moving ahead at a rapid pace.

Yet, the Oklahoma frontier also had qualities which favorably influenced the early development of the college. The Payne county leadership, especially those individuals from Stillwater, exhibited the individuality and resourcefulness which some historians have traditionally associated with the succeeding frontiers in American history. Both ingenuity and patience were evidenced by the local citizenry in snaring the small college for their community. Furthermore, the surrounding geographical area provided the type of students who could best profit from the instruction offered. Young adults from the urban areas of the midwest might not have tolerated some of the more extreme conditions which often prevailed.

The frontier also possessed an egalitarian and competitive spirit. Those people migrating to Oklahoma in the territorial period often worked together for the realization of common goals. A case in point is the cooperative effort to found the college. Businessmen, college professors, farmers, lawyers, mechanics, and politicians were involved in the struggle to bring agricultural education to the state. On the other hand, the manner in which Oklahoma was founded fostered the development of individualism. A man had to be quicker than his neighbor to stake a claim. Then, too, the policies that Governor George Steele suggested in order to locate state service institutions indicated that competition among counties would stimulate progress. Each individual, and in its turn each community, had the opportunity to mature as ability dictated.

The battle to secure the Stillwater college was exceeded only by the fight to obtain the territorial capital, with the intensity of the conflict destined to create a twofold heritage. The winners of the legislative skirmish for the educational establishment resolved to retain the college in their midst regardless of cost; the vanquished elements increased their efforts to seize the federally endowed plum from their political adversaries. While the ensuing antagonisms caused some undesirable side effects, the publicity which accompanied the quarrels did acquaint the majority of territorial citizens with the fact that such an institution existed.

With the college founded, the question of what forces shaped the institution during the territorial period must be reviewed. First, of course, were the revolutionary ideas of Justin Morrill. Throughout his long and distinguished career in Congress, the father of the land-grant movement almost singlehandedly championed the cause of agricultural and

mechanical instruction in the nation. In the case of Oklahoma A. and M. College, the administration and faculty were forced for a good portion of the territorial period to depend wholly on the federal government for revenues. There is little evidence that such an organization would ever have been created in the state, if it had not been for the persistence and vision of Morrill and his successors.

The national government of the United States played an identifiable role in molding the Oklahoma agricultural and mechanical institution. The willingness of the federal branch to grant lands for public education was not new, for such practices were nearly as old as the nation. What was new, however, was the keen interest taken by certain individuals, such as the secretary of agriculture and the secretary of the interior, in supervising the expenditure of federal funds. These services enabled each of the land-grant colleges and universities to become acquainted with the practices of over sixty similar institutions at the turn of the century. Direct intervention in the affairs of the Stillwater college came when it was apparent that progress evolved too slowly. The adoption of the suggestion that Henry Alvord be appointed collegiate president initiated the process of converting the institution into a legitimate center of agricultural education. Lastly, the "scientific aid" scholarships established by the department of agriculture provided the financial assistance for Stillwater students to do graduate work.

The Association of American Agricultural Colleges and Experiment Stations also rendered valuable service to struggling land-grant colleges, including the one in Oklahoma. This influential body encouraged the development of modern scientific courses and curricula, published statistical information, lobbied for further financial assistance, and

created a forum where agricultural and mechanical questions could be publicly debated. Both Henry Alvord and George Morrow had been guiding lights in this organization since its inception. They brought a wealth of information to Stillwater which sometimes was not appreciated by local elements. Nevertheless, each of these men made a significant contribution to the college. Lastly, the Association promoted a spirit of cooperation among the land-grant colleges and universities. For instance, President Robert Barker and the first board of regents traveled to Kansas, Ohio, and Texas to gain information about other institutional practices.

The older and better established land-grant colleges measurably contributed to the agricultural instructional center at Stillwater. Besides providing general models after which younger institutions could pattern themselves, these organizations trained the faculty who staffed the fledgling colleges. Such men and women brought with them the latest educational practices being employed in other parts of the nation. If professors could not have been secured from Kansas, Iowa, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania, the process of institutionalization would certainly have been delayed longer than it was.

The successive territorial legislatures of Oklahoma prominently added to the development of the local A. and M. college. The organic law, though badly written, established the institution and provided safeguards designed to preserve the integrity of the land-grant educational mission. It detailed administrative functions, specified the courses which could legally be taught, and sporadically provided supplementary funds. The blame for the appointment of unqualified regents, inept administrators, and sub-standard faculty lies primarily with other

individuals and groups. Furthermore, it was the legislatures which were moved in 1893 and 1895 to inaugurate the investigations which publicized wrongdoing. Finally, the legislatures created the democratic admissions policies which assured a college education to almost all the youth of Oklahoma who sought one. At times this body moved slowly, but it did eventually give concrete assistance in founding a viable institution.

Until the administration of President George Morrow, the board of regents made few noteworthy contributions to the development of the Stillwater college. The early regents were mainly businessmen who attempted to operate the college as they would a farm, a furniture store, or a seed business. They thought the organization should operate at a profit. Not being men of educational vision, they neglected to assess the importance of training first-rate engineers, agricultural scientists, and teachers. At times, some regents even used the college for their own personal gain. Many of the early graduates soon sensed that the educational climate of Oklahoma was unfavorable and left the state rather than wait for the environment to change. The failure of the initial regents to publicize the work of the college, to secure private and state aid, and properly to inform the legislatures of the needs of the college seriously curtailed the ability of the faculty to attain academic excellence during the period preceding statehood.

The community of Stillwater deserves much credit for whatever success was achieved during the "itinerant years." They fought to secure the college, delved deeply into their pocketbooks to finance its operations, and strived to build a city where students could pursue their studies without being exposed to the lawlessness often found in pre-territorial political entities. While a degree of selfishness is evident

in their efforts, the residents of the area correctly visualized what the institution had to offer the community.

Personalities associated with the college appreciably assisted in creating an identity for the agricultural and mechanical institution. The college presidents, each in his own way, guided the organization to maturity. President Barker, who was not thoroughly acquainted with the nature of the land-grant mission, succeeded in keeping the masters and scholars together during one of the most difficult periods in the college's history. Henry Alvord began the process by which the powers of the board of regents were reduced to a more realistic perspective. Edmond Murdaugh fell a victim to the elements who sought to keep the institution a small practical agricultural college. Yet his demise painfully revealed to citizens that reforms must take place. The latter two men, in spite of their brief tours of duty, prepared the way for George Morrow and Angelo Scott to build a multi-purpose service organization, one which would serve various segments of the state and union.

The faculty of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College and Experiment Station were primarily responsible for creating an institution sensitive to the cause of land-grant education. Provided crude equipment and paid inadequate salaries, these dedicated instructors worked with what meager resources were available to train students in the various industries of life and to provide the scientific information needed to transform a virgin midwestern prairie into a modern state. Richard Chandler, George Holter, L. L. Lewis, Alexander Magruder, James Neal, and Frank Waugh deserve especial commendation for their contributions to the development of the college. But with the exception of the name of the Magruder Plot, the present campus nowhere acknowledges their

role in the construction of a modern university. Surely their accomplishments should not be ignored forever.

The collegiate students exhibited an exceptional interest in the welfare of the territorial college. Their societies evidenced to the Stillwater community that academic progress was being made. Their numerous publications told the A. and M. story and directed further attention to the college's contribution to classical and scientific education. Leaving the campus, they came back to serve on the board of regents, to proclaim the worth of their mentors, and to chastise administrators whom they felt did not respect the early heritage. Student correspondence, at least that which has been preserved, indicates a tender affection for the institution that so markedly changed their lives.

The college obviously drew upon many different elements in institutionalizing and maturing. It also, however, gave back to the surrounding environment. Generally speaking, the organization endeavored to carry on a threefold mission: (1) teaching; (2) research; and (3) extension. A major responsibility of the early college was to provide vocational training to the youth of the state and nation. A conscious by-product concerned the offering of instruction which would enrich the lives of those who came into contact with it. Secondly, the territorial institution sought to provide information to Oklahomans about their physical environment. A few faculty members progressed beyond this stage, probing the cause-and-effect relationships which alter the environment. By and large the latter men were not appreciated; thus they were frequently forced to locate other academic homes. Lastly, the personnel of the college strove to offer an education to the adult portions of the community. Public lectures, speeches to agricultural organizations, short-term

institutes, publications, and formal extension courses increasingly made citizens aware of the importance of the land-grant college in their midst. All of these services increased the proficiency and productivity of persons who came into contact with the organization.

It now may be seen that the institution in question was influenced by and contributed back to its environment. This continual inter-action created new conditions which modified the natural state and changed human evolution. This process, of course, is what Charles Darwin called evolution. Change in itself, however, is not necessarily progress. Educators have a solemn obligation to understand the complexities of environment and to attempt to explain its operation to the public. The land-grant institutions of the United States have, since maturity, significantly contributed to the understanding of environmental interaction.

In the case of the Oklahoma Morrill College, the institutionalization occurred when the services it offered exceeded the need to borrow from other social structures. Gaining maturity, it provided teaching to a larger number of students, it intensified the research programs, and it became more involved in educating the adult public. Thus increasingly the organization contributed to the well-being of the people, a goal which has been held to be the heart of American democracy.

Were there alternate paths which would have enabled the college to reach maturity sooner? Certainly. If more Oklahomans had been willing to acquaint themselves with the purpose and potential of land-grant institutions, more cooperation would likely have been secured in locating, financing, and thus securing for the college a higher talented staff. While more money might have been helpful, continued attention, encouragement, and recognition for services rendered would have

measurably added to the confidence of the college's administration and faculty. Apathy, political jealousies, and a luke-warm commitment to the ideals of agricultural and mechanical education decreased the effectiveness of the institution during the territorial period. An organization which so forcefully contributed to democracy should have received more attention from the democracy itself.

A by-product of this dissertation has been to trace the influence of ideas in historical development by the case study method. An intellectual germ in the mind of Justin Morrill, which may or may not have been original with him, was immortalized by Congressional legislation to result in the creation of almost one hundred institutions of higher learning, or at least the grafting of land-grant educational ideals onto existing academic structures. The teaching offered in these universities has had much influence in elevating the status of science in the nation and world.

In conclusion, the majority of the Stillwater land-grant college presidents, faculty members, and students have served their institution with respectability; thus their achievements ought to be preserved for posterity. If one accepts the general validity of the theory of evolution, then it is helpful to know which factors have affected the development of an institution at any given point. This study has been compiled with the view that in order to understand the problems of the present and to prepare for the future, the heritage of the past must be revealed and understood.

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