

EDMOND AND THE TERRITORIAL NORMAL SCHOOL OF OKLAHOMA:  
A STUDY OF THE SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP  
BETWEEN COMMUNITY AND EDUCATION, 1890-1903

by

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## Abstract

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**Abstract:**

Oklahoma's colorful past is still reflected today in the descendants of those first settlers, the places settled, and the traditions established by its history. The central part of the state has a long and interesting record from the days Native Americans roamed the area to the thousands of Oklahomans living in the region today. The land, the people, and the history of this area built the foundation and framework of one town from its humble beginnings as a watering and coaling station for the Santa Fe Railroad. Little did anyone know the city of Edmond with its unique blend of place and people would become a center for education following the Land Run of 1889. Today, the University of Central Oklahoma educates students from across the United States and the world. In 1891, the Territorial Normal School of Oklahoma (TNSO) started with 25 students.<sup>1</sup> The city and the institution formed a relationship beginning in 1890. The bond created pre-statehood and fostered during the TNSO's formative years has not been studied.

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<sup>1</sup> Stan Hoig, *Edmond: The First Century* (Edmond: Edmond Historic Preservation Trust, 1987), 9; Since its creation in 1890 as the Territorial Normal School of Oklahoma, the institution has changed names five more times. In 1904, the name became the Central State Normal School and in 1918 switched to the Central State Teachers College. The school became the Central State College in 1938, followed by the Central State University in 1970. In 1991, the institution became the current name, the University of Central Oklahoma.

This thesis examines the connection between Edmond and the TNSO and allows the reader to understand the symbiotic evolution of the community and school. Several people have written about this university's history, but only touched upon the synergistic relationship between the school and the town during that formative period. Other published works on the history of Edmond have superficially discussed the connection between the two. This work fills the void by exploring various interpretations of the history and events surrounding Edmond's and the Normal School's relationship. Chapters cover the history and geography of the area, the push to open the Unassigned Lands to white settlement, the railroad and Edmond Station, the Land Run of 1889, and the founding of the town in order to ascertain the motives of the town's leadership in lobbying for the establishment of the Normal within Edmond's boundaries. A detailed review of these factors is necessary in order to analyze the growth of both the town and institution especially in light of the various aspects of the interwoven history in the period of 1890 to 1903.

Much of the previous scholarship about this subject written in the 1920s, 1950s, 1970s, 1980s, and mid-1990s pays scant attention to the early history. It is time for this subject to be revisited. Understanding the era in which the Oklahoma Territory emerged is important. Such a review can become a tangled mess if scholars only look at the period from the point of view of only one of the entities involved. Analyzing various interpretations and exploring primary sources can create a more robust interpretation of the relationship between Edmond and Central.

This thesis delves into the history of Edmond and Central by looking at their earliest connection. Chapter 1 gives a brief history of the geography of the area. It

discusses the pre-history of Edmond, including tribal use of the land, the push to open the Unassigned Lands to white settlement, and the railroad and Edmond Station. Chapter 2 opens with the Land Run of 1889, the founding of the town, and the political machinations and forces that led to the establishment of the Territorial Normal School of Oklahoma. Chapter 3 discusses the period of 1890 to 1895 with the growth of the Normal through the help of the city of Edmond, as well as the education provided by the school. Chapter 4 encompasses the years 1895 to 1903, just before the school's first name change, and documents the continuing symbiotic relationship by examining the efforts of the community and the TNSO to help one another.

The author of this thesis chose to write on a local history topic, as it is “the most accessible of all history, for it is closest to home.”<sup>2</sup> It is the study “of the human condition in and through time...Doing local history is a process of learning, and it is about explaining causes – the how and the why, of the past.”<sup>3</sup> This work supports local history by serving several purposes. One intention is to revisit the narrative about the pre-territorial days of Oklahoma and provide a well-rounded viewpoint of the events leading to the opening of the Unassigned Lands. An examination of the political and historical landscape is vital to the analysis of the evolution of the relationship cultivated between Edmond and Central. Another reason for this study is to relate the story of the Edmond community with its progressive understanding of the importance of education and recognition of the need for a teacher's college, which led to the establishment of the Territorial Normal School of Oklahoma. Finally, the research exposes the interdependent connection between Edmond and the TNSO, an area that has been underserved by

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<sup>2</sup> Carol Kammen, *On Doing Local History* 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Walnut Creek: Alta Mira Press, 2003), 1.

<sup>3</sup> Carol Kammen, *On Doing Local History*, 4.

historical research and the academic community. This thesis will provide the students, staff, faculty of the University of Central Oklahoma, and Edmond community members a sense of their shared history and an understanding of the distinctive relationship between Edmond and Central.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to say thank you to Dr. Carolyn Pool and Heidi Vaughn for allowing me to work on the Territorial Normal School of Oklahoma exhibit for the University of Central Oklahoma's Laboratory of History Museum. If it had not been for that project, I would not have developed a passion for local history and been able to write about part of the University of Central Oklahoma and the community of Edmond, Oklahoma's history.

I want to also acknowledge the support I received from the University of Central Oklahoma's Office of Research and Grants. The Research, Creative, and Scholarly Activities Grant and the research assistantship helped me immensely by allowing me to have a set time to work on my research and to have the funds to visit archives and make copies of the materials needed.

Thank you, Dr. Doug Hurt for helping me understand history from a geographical viewpoint and for teaching me the five themes of geography. It has allowed me to view my work as a historian and things around me in a different light.

And last but certainly not least, a very big thank you to my husband, parents, my wonderful family, and friends for your support as I made this journey.

Without the help and guidance from so many, this project would not be the work that it has become. Thank you!

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## Abbreviations

A & M – Agricultural and Mechanical College

MEC – Methodist Episcopal Church

TNSO – Territorial Normal School of Oklahoma

UCO – University of Central Oklahoma

## Institution Name Changes

Territorial Normal School of Oklahoma	1890-1903
Central State Normal School	1904-18
Central State Teachers College	1918-38
Central State College	1938-70
Central State University	1970-91
University of Central Oklahoma	1991-present

## Presidents of the Territorial Normal School of Oklahoma

Richard Thatcher	Republican	1891-93
George W. Winans	Republican	1893-94
E. R. Williams	Democrat	1894-95
Edmund Dandridge Murdaugh	Democrat	1895-1901
Frederick Howard Umholtz	Republican	1901-06

## Oklahoma Territorial Governors

George Washington Steele (1839-1922)	Republican	1890-91
Robert Martin (1833-97)	Republican	1891-92
Abraham Jefferson Seay (1832-1915)	Republican	1892-93
William Cary Renfrow (1845-1922)	Democrat	1893-97
Cassius McDonald Barnes (1845-1925)	Republican	1897-1901
William Miller Jenkins (1856-1941)	Republican	May 1901-Nov 1901
William C Grimes (Acting Governor) (1857-1931)	Republican	Nov 1901-Dec 1901
Thompson Benton Ferguson (1857-1921)	Republican	1901-06
Frank Frantz (1872-1941)	Republican	1906-07

## Introduction

The unique history of the settlement of Oklahoma offers insight into the mindset of the people who arrived to claim property in the land run that created the town that would become Edmond, Oklahoma. Once the domain of plains tribes, the forced relocation of the Five Civilized Tribes to the Oklahoma and Indian Territories opened the way for settlement by people determined to make a better life. Each incursion set the building blocks in place for what would become a beneficial relationship between a city and a school and is important to understand the events leading to the formation of the Territorial Normal School of Oklahoma.

The town of Edmond, Oklahoma and the University of Central Oklahoma formed a relationship before statehood. The bond was created in 1890 when the community received the Territorial Normal School of Oklahoma.<sup>1</sup> Townspeople joined together to facilitate the opening of the school. Various families opened their homes as boarding houses for students and faculty.<sup>2</sup> Church members from the Methodist Episcopal Church in Edmond allowed students to attend class in its new building until more suitable accommodations could be arranged.<sup>3</sup> Landowners offered property on which to locate the

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<sup>1</sup> Richard Thatcher, "The Normal University," *The Edmond Sun*, June 10, 1892, 4; Interview with Mrs. W. J. Huffman by Mildred B. McFarland, September 14, 1937, vol 45, 191, Indian Pioneer Collection, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma; Clarence Robison, "Early Memories of Central State College," November 18, 1955, 1, 10, Clarence Robison folder, Territorial Normal School box, Laboratory of History Museum, University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, Oklahoma; Goldie Maher, "Recollections of a Student in the First Class of the First Institution of Higher Learning in Oklahoma Territory," as told to William J. Dale, October 7-8, 1955, 2, Goldie Maher Folder, Territorial Normal School box, Laboratory of History Museum, University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, Oklahoma.

<sup>2</sup> Edna Jones, *Sixty Years at Central: Facts and Figures on Service and Friendship through the years, 1891-1951* (Edmond: Central State College, 1951), 6.

<sup>3</sup> Jones, *Sixty Years at Central*, 8.

school with the surplus land sold to Edmond citizens to raise funds for TNSO.<sup>4</sup> In return, the school brought attention to the young community, often drawing families into the area so the children could attend the Normal and model schools.<sup>5</sup> The Territorial Normal School of Oklahoma and the community of Edmond formed a symbiotic relationship creating growth and a sense of pride during the period before statehood.

Edmond's humble beginnings as a watering and coaling station for the Santa Fe Railroad, placed the future community on the edge of becoming a major player in the future of the territory.<sup>6</sup> When the Land Run of 1889 opened the area to white settlement, the Eighty-Niners staking claims in the township and surrounding homesteads did not know what was destined for the fledgling town. A political battle ensued at the territorial capital as Edmond's representatives pursued the goal of establishing the town as a county seat. Instead, the community received the Territorial Normal School of Oklahoma with the help of an influential citizen in the legislature.<sup>7</sup> Little did members of the community know that Edmond would become a center of education for the territory (and later the state of Oklahoma). Edmondites joined forces in various ways to insure that the Normal would prosper, instilling a sense of pride in the school for its teachers. In return, the TNSO brought attention to the town, helping to increase the population and boost commerce.

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<sup>4</sup> Richard Thatcher, "Early Reminiscences of the Normal School," *The Vista*, January 1904, 57; Aaron Fretz, "How Dear is Home" copy 2, 1, Aaron Fretz folder, Edmond History box, Laboratory of History Museum, University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, Oklahoma; Jones, *Sixty Years at Central*, 6.

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Mrs. Belle Roberts by Mildred B. McFarland, July 12, 1937, 433, Indian Pioneer Collection, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma; "Our Great Grandmother Elizabeth Ann 'Lizzie' Terry Griffin,"

<http://www.reocities.com/dgranna/lizpics.html>, (accessed October 25, 2011); Model schools were apart of normal schools. The purpose of the model school was to show students preparing to become teachers how to manage the pupils and the various teaching styles promoted during this time period.

<sup>6</sup> Stan Hoig, *Edmond: The Early Years* (Edmond: Edmond Historic Preservation Trust, 1983), 5.

<sup>7</sup> "Central State University: A Heritage to Honor," History of UCO Vertical File, Special Archives and Collections, Max Chambers Library, University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, Oklahoma; Dan W. Peery, "The First Two Years," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* 7 (Winter 1929), 437.

Within this introduction, an exploration of the historiography of the sources used to compile this thesis is included. This section reviews the various secondary sources used and also analyzes the primary sources that give balance to the narrative and fills in the story with personal details. Chapter 1 gives a brief history of the geography of the area. It discusses the pre-history of Edmond, including the tribes that roamed the land, the push to open the Unassigned Lands to white settlement, and the railroad and Edmond Station. Chapter 2 opens with the Land Run of 1889 and the founding of the town as well as the political machinations that led to the establishment of the Territorial Normal School of Oklahoma. Chapter 3 examines the growth of the Normal, aided by the community of Edmond during the period of 1890 to 1895, as well as an overview of the education provided by the school. Chapter 4 encompasses the years 1895 to 1903, just before the school changed its name, with the cooperation between the community and the TNSO to benefit both. The thesis examines in detail the period 1890-1903, the first epoch in the school's history. It focuses on the founding period and chronicles the relationship between the TNSO and Edmond.

### **Historiographical Overview**

A variety of sources and materials were used in the writing of this thesis. While secondary works provide an outline of what happened, primary sources fill in the gaps, rounding out the story and going more in depth. Chapter 1 – Before it was Edmond, utilizes a combination of the two types. Secondary works, such as the *Historical Atlas of Oklahoma*, edited by Charles Robert Goins and Danney Goble, in relation to the thesis, informs the reader about the geography and geological features important to the Edmond

community.<sup>8</sup> The authors of the different articles within the *Historical Atlas of Oklahoma* offered a concise and short history about different events and locations in Oklahoma.

Blue Clark's *Indian Tribes of Oklahoma: A Guide* gives detailed information regarding the Indians who have called the area home for hundreds of years.<sup>9</sup> Part of W. David Baird and Danney Goble's text, *Oklahoma: A History*, condenses the plight of the Five Tribes and their removal westward to Indian Territory.<sup>10</sup> The treaties discussed in the book, signed by the Choctaws, Chickasaws, Muscogee (Creek), Seminoles, and Cherokees are available to researchers online for in depth reading and analyzing.<sup>11</sup>

The *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture* serves as a beginning point for information on various topics pertaining to Oklahoma.<sup>12</sup> The entries give researchers secondary works to consult. The *EOHC* also helps condense large topics such as the Reconstruction Treaties of 1866 and the Boomer Movement into more concise form.

Roy Gittinger's *The Formation of the State of Oklahoma* is a secondary source that looks at the history of the state from a neutral standpoint.<sup>13</sup> It details the Boomer push to get the Unassigned Lands opened to white settlement, along with the federal government's changing response. It also serves as a helpful source to locate primary materials.

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<sup>8</sup> Charles Robert Goins and Danney Goble, *Historical Atlas of Oklahoma* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006).

<sup>9</sup> Blue Clark, *Indian Tribes of Oklahoma: A Guide* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009).

<sup>10</sup> W. David Baird and Danney Goble, *Oklahoma: A History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2008).

<sup>11</sup> The treaties are available online through the Oklahoma State University Library Electronic Publishing Center at <<http://digital.library.okstate.edu/kappler/index.htm>>.

<sup>12</sup> The *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture* is available online through the Oklahoma State University Library Electronic Publishing Center at <<http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/>>.

<sup>13</sup> Roy Gittinger, *The Formation of the State of Oklahoma: 1803-1906* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1939).



Stan Hoig's work on David L. Payne, as well as the Land Run of 1889 and the railroad in Oklahoma help put into perspective what happened to the last frontier in the continental United States to be opened to Euro-American settlement. *David L. Payne: The Oklahoma Boomer* chronicles the work of the book's namesake and his various tactics to get into the Unassigned Lands.<sup>14</sup> *The Oklahoma Land Rush of 1889* documents what happened following Payne's death, including the various forces that led to the opening of the territory.<sup>15</sup> It also contains details about life after the Land Run. *Land Hunger: David L. Payne* by Carl Coke Rister serves as a biography of Payne and records his efforts with his colonies of Boomers, fighting for the chance at land and a new life.<sup>16</sup> Rister's book on Payne delved into the Boomer's life sharing tidbits of his efforts and excursions into the Unassigned Lands that were not presented in other works.

In Chapter 1 – Before it was Edmond, a wide range of treaties and reports from the federal government were used to give exact details often not included by secondary sources. The *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* has repeated mentions of the issues created by the encroachment of white settlers on to Native American land that was not a part of the public domain.<sup>17</sup> On the other hand, the publications of Boomers' recollections in scholarly journals, such as *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, show a side of the movement that was often misrepresented.<sup>18</sup> They gave accounts of the hardships faced by land seekers and that life was not the easiest.

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<sup>14</sup> Stan Hoig, *David L. Payne: The Oklahoma Boomer* (Oklahoma City: Western Heritage Books, 1980).

<sup>15</sup> Stan Hoig, *The Oklahoma Land Rush of 1889* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1984).

<sup>16</sup> Carl Coke Rister, *Land Hunger: David L. Payne and the Oklahoma Boomers* (New York: Arno Press, 1975).

<sup>17</sup> The *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs* can be found online at <<http://www.archives.org>>.

<sup>18</sup> *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, vol. 1-40, can be found digitized online at <<http://digital.library.okstate.edu/Chronicles/index.html>>, hosted by the Oklahoma State Library Electronic Publishing Center.

Chapter 2 – The Settlement of Edmond uses both secondary and primary sources. Hoig’s work in several small books called *Edmond: The Early Years* and *Edmond: The First Century* provide brief glimpses at the birth of the town and how it grew with the help of the citizens who settled in the community and on homesteads surrounding the township.<sup>19</sup> He gives information about the types of businesses, who owned them, and when they opened to serve the public. The *EOHC* provides information by way of small vignettes on other cities settled during the Land Run, to draw a comparison of how they developed in the days after April 22, 1889.

D. E. Newsom’s *Kicking Bird and the Birth of Oklahoma: A Biography of Milton W. Reynolds* shares the story of the newspaperman’s life and the short time he spent in Edmond before his untimely death.<sup>20</sup> Newsom provides an array of information regarding the establishment of *The Edmond Sun* by Reynolds and how he had been elected to represent the community at the first territorial legislature scheduled to meet in the fall of 1890.

To further illustrate what life was like during the chaotic time after the dust settled from the run, information was pulled from a number of interviews from the Indian-Pioneer Papers Collection, available online through the University of Oklahoma’s Western History Collections and in paper form in the Research Library of the Oklahoma Historical Society at the Oklahoma History Center.<sup>21</sup> Stories dealt with individuals making the run and setting up shops in tents until permanent structures could be built.

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<sup>19</sup> Stan Hoig, *Edmond: The Early Years* (Edmond, Edmond Historic Preservation Trust, 1983); Stan Hoig, *Edmond: The First Century* (Edmond: Edmond Historic Preservation Trust, 1987).

<sup>20</sup> D. E. Newsom, *Kicking Bird and the Birth of Oklahoma: A Biography of Milton W. Reynolds* (Perkins: Evans Publishing, 1983).

<sup>21</sup> The Indian-Pioneer Papers Collection is available online in digitized form through the Western History Collections of the University of Oklahoma at <<http://digital.libraries.ou.edu/whc/pioneer/>>.

Newspaper articles from *The Edmond Sun* were helpful in telling the story about Edmond's bid to be a county seat of Ventura County, the legislature's inability to work together and pass bills in a timely manner, and the lobbying done by the town's citizens to receive one of the higher education institutions.<sup>22</sup> Obituaries helped develop the overall picture of some of Edmond's earliest settlers and the work they accomplished.

Various archival holdings within the Laboratory of History Museum at the University of Central Oklahoma yielded a wealth of knowledge and information not generally found in secondary sources.<sup>23</sup> Researchers have not used much of what is housed in the Edmond History box in the Laboratory of History Museum. This thesis used the resources to their fullest extent. Personal recollections and other information that have been filed away for years finally had the chance to help illustrate the founding years of the Territorial Normal School and Edmond.

Chapter 3 – The Chosen Town and Chapter 4 – Growth, relied heavily upon two major works; one is the unpublished manuscript by Frances Coram Oakes who was a professor at the Normal, just before the name change occurred in 1904. He remained on staff for many years and was able to pen an interesting history about the institution. Oakes' *A Story of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma* presented a wide variety of information not present in other secondary sources.<sup>24</sup> While the majority of the manuscript used in the construction of this thesis dealt with the period before Oakes arrived, he knew many of the individuals who were included in his detailed history of the

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<sup>22</sup> *The Edmond Sun* is available on microfilm on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of Max Chambers Library at the University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, Oklahoma.

<sup>23</sup> Edmond History Box, Laboratory of History Museum, University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, Oklahoma.

<sup>24</sup> Frances Coram Oakes, *A Story of Central Sate College of Edmond, Oklahoma* (Edmond: Unpublished manuscript, 1953).

school. He interviewed and collected personal anecdotes from faculty, students and townsfolk. There was one drawback to his work. Upon completing his manuscript, he never deposited his research material which would allow future students and historians to use what he had gathered.

The other major work is the Master's thesis, "History of Edmond," by Stella Barton Fordice, written in 1927.<sup>25</sup> Fordice's thesis provided a wealth of information about early Edmond and the Territorial Normal School of Oklahoma, particularly interviews with town leaders such as Dr. J. W. Howard, who helped secure the Normal in Edmond. Unfortunately, she did not deposit her research, making it more accessible to those studying the history of the town and school.

Newspaper articles chronicled various events in the community and school, illustrating the interaction between the two entities and how they each benefitted one another. *The Edmond Sun* is an invaluable source of information, particularly for the years of 1890-92. *The Edmond Sun* allowed Principal Richard Thatcher and an anonymous author to report on what was happening in the school. Each article provided insight about day-to-day activities that many would not know about if they were not students at the TNSO.

Another set of archival holdings in the Laboratory of History Museum provided interesting glimpses into the lives of students attending the Normal.<sup>26</sup> The collection of letters and questionnaires gathered by Lucy Jeston Hampton from students of the TNSO tell little-known stories that allow today's students to connect with those who once studied at the school. The letters described what life was like in and out of the classroom.

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<sup>25</sup> Stella Barton Fordice, "History of Edmond, Oklahoma," (MA thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1927).

<sup>26</sup> Territorial Normal School Box, Laboratory of History Museum, University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, Oklahoma.

In addition to the archival material, several reports from the Governor of Oklahoma Territory were useful in determining some of the financial matters associated with running the Normal school.<sup>27</sup> Each report documented expenditures and the status of the territory's higher education institutions. The statements each Governor provided also discussed the status of the territory.

Interviews from the Indian-Pioneer Paper Collection were used again to show the perspective of Edmond's citizens and those who made the choice to move closer to the community so that their children would receive a quality education in the public schools or the model school and Normal department at TNSO. The interviews conducted by the Works Progress Administration captured the pioneer spirit of many and prevented this very personal form of historical information from being lost so that future historians could use the information to round out the overall narrative. A first-hand view of events provides a better sense of the times, making events more relatable to a reader.

One book of particular interest was a ready source for the entire thesis. *Building Traditions, Educating Generations: A History of the University of Central Oklahoma* by Dr. Patricia Loughlin and Bob Burke, helped guide my research in certain directions to look for information to explain the interesting history shared by Edmond and the institution of higher education.<sup>28</sup> This book also showed gaps in the narrative of the school's history, leaving room for other historians to explore those areas in the university's past.

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<sup>27</sup> The reports from the Governor of Oklahoma Territory can be found online at <<http://www.odl.state.ok.us/usinfo/terrgovs/index.htm>> through the Oklahoma Department of Libraries.

<sup>28</sup> Patricia Loughlin and Bob Burke, *Building Traditions, Educating Generations: A History of the University of Central Oklahoma* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Heritage Association, 2007).

The pre-statehood history of the establishment of TNSO is an underserved area of study. An examination of the geo-political aspects of events leading up to the opening of the Unassigned Lands in Oklahoma, the settlement of Edmond, and the creation and development of the Normal School is in order. The distinctive attributes of the land and the people involved provide insights into the symbiotic relationship between school and community. The desire of city leaders to establish Edmond as a political force in the territory combined with a progressive belief in higher education and the need to educate teachers. This symbiosis produced the unique incubator that hatched TNSO.

## Chapter 1

### Before it was Edmond

To understand an event, study the foundation. To recognize that foundation, examine the history. Step back and consider a time when this land was devoid of modern civilization. What geographical features contributed to settlement? What was it about this particular place that generated such interest? How did the geo-political foundation set the stage for future events? Like the city leaders of Edmond setting the cornerstone for the Territorial Normal School of Oklahoma, the history of the land, settlement, and establishment of Edmond all contributed to the formation and growth of TNSO.

### The Lay of the Land

The geography of Edmond played a role in the growth of the community following the settlement of the Unassigned Lands in 1889. The area is divided into two eco-regions. The eastern part of Edmond lies in the Cross Timbers, a stretch of vegetation from Kansas to Texas that consists mainly of post oak and blackjack oak trees. The western portion of Edmond is prairie land. Early explorers viewed the Cross Timbers as a barrier to travel between the Great Plains and the eastern portion of Indian Territory.<sup>1</sup> Washington Irving traversed the area and described the vegetation as a “forest of cast

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<sup>1</sup> Doug Hurt, “Osage Plains,” (Lecture, Geography of Oklahoma, University of Central Oklahoma, April 26, 2011).

iron.”<sup>2</sup> But Henry Ellsworth made note of the variety of food sources and the availability of wood, all necessary for settlement.<sup>3</sup>

Another important geological feature to the area is the Garber Sandstone and Wellington Formation aquifer.<sup>4</sup> The aquifer provides a continuous source of water throughout Edmond and the region. Following the Anglo-American settlement of the area, the Garber Sandstone and Wellington Formation would allow homesteaders to dig wells.

The area around Edmond appeared ripe for settlement. A source of food, water, and wood helped make the land suitable for farming and ranching. The land provided all the elements needed to attract a thriving population.

### **A Home to Many**

Prior to the arrival of European explorers and the later settlement of Anglo-Americans, Native Americans roamed the land of present day Oklahoma. Bands of Cheyenne, Arapaho, Comanche, Kiowa, Wichita, and Caddo wandered the plains and prairie hunting buffalo and other wild game. Some tribes, such as the Wichita, set up semi-permanent villages.<sup>5</sup> They planted crops each spring and after the harvest, the members packed up and traveled the land hunting bison. The Wichitas traded extensively with other tribes across the region and with European explorers as well.<sup>6</sup> The tribes

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<sup>2</sup> Washington Irving, *A Tour of the Prairies* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), 125.

<sup>3</sup> Bruce W. Hoagland, “Vegetation,” in *Historical Atlas of Oklahoma* edited by Charles Robert Goins and Danney Goble (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006), 24.

<sup>4</sup> Kenneth S. Johnson, “Aquifers,” in *Historical Atlas of Oklahoma*, edited by Charles Robert Goins and Danney Goble (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006), 15; The aquifer is often referred to as the Garber-Wellington.

<sup>5</sup> Blue Clark, *Indian Tribes of Oklahoma: A Guide* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009), 373.

<sup>6</sup> Clark, *Indian Tribes of Oklahoma: A Guide*, 373.



recognized the viability and ecological wealth of this area, which would eventually draw the attention of Anglo-American settlers.

The Louisiana Territory, once owned by Spain and ceded to France in 1801, encompassed what would be Indian Territory (and later the state of Oklahoma).<sup>7</sup> In 1803, the vast region ranging from the Mississippi River west to the Rocky Mountains was purchased from France by the United States.<sup>8</sup> Over time, various territories were carved out of the Louisiana Purchase. One such territory became the “new” home to thousands of Indians from across the southeast and other sections of the United States.

While the tribes from the southeast were removed to the new Indian Territory, the Plains Indians living in the region were not happy with the newcomers’ arrival.<sup>9</sup> No one knew where the boundaries lay for each of the tribes. To settle the issue, a federal committee was created to address this issue and renegotiate various treaties with the parties involved. Eventually, agreements were made with the Plains tribes to keep the peace with the new neighbors.<sup>10</sup>

The influx of the “civilized” tribes from the east opened the area to new ideas and brought the region to the attention of an Anglo-American population hungry for more land. The Unassigned Lands, a region created from lands ceded by the Creek and Seminole Nations were originally set aside for the purpose of relocating other tribes to the area.<sup>11</sup> The territory was located in what is now the central part of the state of Oklahoma. The Cherokee Outlet bound the northern border while the Canadian River and

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<sup>7</sup> Eric Foner and John A. Garraty, *The Reader’s Companion to American History* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1991), 681.

<sup>8</sup> Foner and Garraty, *The Reader’s Companion to American History*, 681-82.

<sup>9</sup> Baird and Goble, *Oklahoma: A History*, 87.

<sup>10</sup> Baird and Goble, *Oklahoma: A History*, 88.

<sup>11</sup> Bob L. Blackburn, “Unassigned Lands,” *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture* <<http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/U/UN001.html>> (accessed October 25, 2011).

Chickasaw Nation made up the southern border. The Cheyenne and Arapaho Reservation served as the western boundary of the Unassigned Lands. The reservations of the Sac and Fox, Iowa, Kickapoo, Pottawatomie, and Shawnee Indians formed the eastern edge of the territory.<sup>12</sup>

The patchwork of tribal land, public domain, and in some cases, the ambiguity of territorial boundaries laid the foundation for events to come. The Boomers, railroads, and the push to open the Unassigned Lands reverberated in the halls of Congress and along the borders as Anglo-Americans anxious for land clamored for access.

### **The Boom for the Unassigned Lands**

In the early 1870s, two railways were built across Indian Territory. The Missouri, Kansas, and Texas railroad built a line south from Kansas to the Red River. The Atlantic and Pacific Railroad built a line westward into Indian Territory from Missouri and by 1882, the rail line reached Tulsa.<sup>13</sup> Other railroads would cross the land of the territory in the years to come, fueled by the hunt for commerce and profit.<sup>14</sup>

In 1879, prominent Cherokee Elias C. Boudinot proclaimed the lands ceded by the Creeks, Seminoles, Chickasaws, and Choctaws were public land. His claim fueled a movement to colonize the Unassigned Lands. However, these lands were considered public domain and had been surveyed and “sectionized.” Boudinot offered a map

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<sup>12</sup> Danney Goble, “Land Openings of Oklahoma Territory, 1889-1906,” in *Historical Atlas of Oklahoma* edited by Charles Robert Goins and Danney Goble (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006), 123.

<sup>13</sup> Michael D. Green, “Indian Territory, 1866-1889,” in *Historical Atlas of Oklahoma*, edited by Charles Robert Goins and Danney Goble (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006), 98.

<sup>14</sup> August J. Veenendaal, Jr., “Railroads,” *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture* <<http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/R/RA004.html>> (accessed November 19, 2011).

showing the outline of the public domain lands formally belonging to the Five Civilized Tribes.<sup>15</sup>

Interested in the claims made by Boudinot, Charles C. Carpenter gathered followers at Coffeyville, Kansas. In late April and early May 1879, movement across the Kansas border into Indian Territory began. Approximately 112 families left from Coffeyville and eventually made camp near the North Canadian River.<sup>16</sup> As a result, on April 26, President Hayes authorized Indian agents in the field to use necessary force to remove trespassers.<sup>17</sup> Attempts to settle within the region caused Commissioner of Indian Affairs E. A. Hayt to discuss the issue in the *Annual Report* for the year of 1879.<sup>18</sup> President Hayes issued a second proclamation on February 12, 1880, but the push to settle the Oklahoma Country continued.<sup>19</sup>

Captain David L. Payne gathered a group of eleven men who made their way into the Unassigned Lands, but they were arrested and escorted back to Kansas. Payne attempted to settle in the area again but was arrested and taken to the U. S. District Court at Fort Smith, Arkansas.<sup>20</sup> Payne's invasion of the territory forced the court to examine the status of the Unassigned Lands, particularly the former territory of the Seminoles. The court determined the *Treaty with the Seminoles, 1866* implied that land use was restricted to settlement of other friendly tribes; therefore the ceded land was still

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<sup>15</sup> "March 31, 1879, Letter to Hon. Augustus Albert from E. C. Boudinot," *S. Ex. Docs.*, 46 Cong. 1 sess., I (1869), no 20, 5; The map is inserted between pages 10 and 11.

<sup>16</sup> Hoig, "Boomer Movement," *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History & Culture*; Hoig, *David L. Payne: The Oklahoma Boomer*, 53-54.

<sup>17</sup> "Proclamation," *S. Ex. Docs.*, 46 Cong. 1 sess., I (1869), no 20, 1-2.

<sup>18</sup> *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1879* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1879), XLIV.

<sup>19</sup> Gittinger, *The Formation of the State of Oklahoma*, 130; According to Stan Hoig's article "Boomer Movement" Dr. Morrison Munford of the *Kansas City Times* was the first to associate the words "boom" and "boomers" to describe the phenomenon of people sneaking onto Native American lands to establish settlements.

<sup>20</sup> Gittinger, *The Formation of the State of Oklahoma*, 130.

considered Indian Country. This applied to the lands ceded by the Creeks in their 1866 treaty and defined the status of the Oklahoma District.<sup>21</sup>

Payne's efforts to colonize and settle the Unassigned Lands continued unsuccessfully throughout 1880-83. The Boomer movement attempted to keep a constant presence in the territory and their actions caught the attention of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, E. M. Marble. He called for legislation regarding trespassers on Native American land.<sup>22</sup> In his 1881 *Annual Report*, Commissioner H. Price called for more stringent punishment for those breaking the law. Despite efforts to restrict the intrusions, treks into the Unassigned Lands continued.

Captain Payne regrouped and wrote letters to newspapers and published pamphlets. In a pamphlet dated 1882, Payne states "Congress, in 1878, passed an act providing that wherever there was a land grant to any railroad, or for any other purpose, (and does not matter in what State or Territory), that the Pre-emption and the Homestead laws of the United States should apply to all even sections of land within the limit of said grant."<sup>23</sup> He argued the Unassigned Lands had already been surveyed and should be open to general settlement. The push into the unsettled lands continued into 1884, in spite of continued failure. Boomers paraded around towns on the Kansas border with banners

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<sup>21</sup> Gittinger, *The Formation of the State of Oklahoma*, 130.

<sup>22</sup> Gittinger, *The Formation of the State of Oklahoma*, 130-31; *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1881* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1881), LXVII.; Rister, *Land Hunger: David L. Payne and the Oklahoma Boomers*, 105.

<sup>23</sup> David L. Payne, *To Our Oklahoma Colonists*, David Payne Papers, Box 2, Folder 16, Oklahoma Historical Society Research Center, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; The Pre-emption Act of 1841 allowed homesteaders to buy 160 acres from the U.S. government at \$1.25 per acre. The Homestead Act of 1862 allowed any adult citizen to secure 160 acres after paying a fee. After five years of living on the property and making improvements, the person received the title to the land. To acquire the title to the property sooner, the person could pay the government \$1.25 an acre after residing on the land for six months and making major improvements.

proclaiming “On to Oklahoma” and “Oklahoma forever.”<sup>24</sup> In November, Payne died suddenly. His followers believed he was assassinated, but according to letters from the coroners in Wellington, Kansas, Payne’s death was ruled an “embolism of the pulmonary artery.”<sup>25</sup>

Following Payne’s death, William L. Couch assumed leadership of the Oklahoma Colony movement. After the major defeat in the Unassigned Lands earlier in 1885, Couch went to Washington, D. C. to lobby for opening the territory to white settlement.<sup>26</sup> Couch spoke with Secretary of the Interior L. Q. C. Lamar, who informed Couch the administration considered the Oklahoma Country a part of Indian Territory and not public domain. Despite this, the movement continued to push for the opening of the Unassigned Lands.<sup>27</sup>

### **Laying the Foundation for the Creation of Edmond**

On March 3, 1885, the *Indian Appropriation Act* passed through Congress containing a section that authorized negotiations with the Creeks, Seminoles, and Cherokees to purchase all tribal claims to the unoccupied lands.<sup>28</sup> Even with the outright purchase of the Unassigned Lands by the government, treks into the territory continued. Politicians from Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, and Illinois, along with railroad lobbyists fought for legislation to open the region to white homesteaders.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Gittinger, *The Formation of the State of Oklahoma*, 134-35.

<sup>25</sup> “Statement of W.O. Barnett, September 18, 1907,” Thomas N. Athey Collection, Box 4, Folder 9, Oklahoma Historical Society Research Center, Oklahoma History Center, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

<sup>26</sup> Rister, *Land Hunger: David L. Payne and the Oklahoma Boomers*, 193.

<sup>27</sup> Rister, *Land Hunger: David L. Payne and the Oklahoma Boomers*, 194.

<sup>28</sup> Gittinger, *The Formation of the State of Oklahoma*, 137.

<sup>29</sup> Interview with Eugene Couch by Harry M. Dreyer on April 29, 1937, vol 21, 107, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

As lobbying continued in Washington, D.C., railroads penetrated the edges of the Unassigned Lands. By 1886, the Southern Kansas Railway, an affiliate of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe, began building tracks south from Arkansas City, Kansas, to join with the rail being laid north from Texas to Purcell, Indian Territory.<sup>30</sup> An article from the *Boston Transcript*, reprinted in an issue of the *Winfield Courier* in September 1886, speculated that building the railroad through the Unassigned Lands would inevitably open up the territory to white settlement.<sup>31</sup> The progress of the railroad thus proved to help further the Boomer cause.

Many Boomers worked on building the railroad, allowing them to legally be in the territory, and gave them the chance to scout settlement locations.<sup>32</sup> While working for the railroad, Boomers moved about freely, “unmolested” by the military.<sup>33</sup> Railroad executives also sought to benefit from the efforts of the Boomers. As soon as the land was settled, the railroad would profit from the various enterprises that would develop in the new towns.<sup>34</sup>

The northern track made it through Edmond in early 1887 after the roadbed was graded in 1886.<sup>35</sup> The Edmond stop was first known as Summit as it was the highest point between the Cimarron and North Canadian Rivers.<sup>36</sup> In November 1887, Edmond’s first citizen arrived. John Steen, a pile driver for the Santa Fe Railroad, was brought in from New Ingalls, New Mexico to oversee the well being dug at the new watering and

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<sup>30</sup> Stan Hoig, “The Rail Line that Opened the Unassigned Lands,” in *Railroads in Oklahoma* edited by Donovan L. Hofsommer (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1977), 22, 26-9.

<sup>31</sup> Hoig, “The Rail Line that Opened the Unassigned Lands,” 23.

<sup>32</sup> Hoig, “The Rail Line that Opened the Unassigned Lands,” 23-4.

<sup>33</sup> Hoig, “The Rail Line that Opened the Unassigned Lands,” 24.

<sup>34</sup> Hoig, “The Rail Line that Opened the Unassigned Lands,” 24.

<sup>35</sup> Stan Hoig, *Edmond: The Early Years* (Edmond: Edmond Historic Preservation Trust, 1983), 5; Hoig, “The Rail Line that Opened the Unassigned Lands, 25.

<sup>36</sup> Hoig, *Edmond: The Early Years*, 5.

coaling station.<sup>37</sup> Steen and his crew completed the well in May 1888. Along with the finished water well, Steen built a two-room structure that housed the pump and a coal hut.<sup>38</sup> The building also served as a home for Steen, his wife Cora and son Charles. While Steen did his daily duties for the railroad at the watering and coaling stop at mile 103, for the one passenger and one freight train a day, Mrs. Steen cooked meals for the various crews passing through on their way to Kansas or Texas.<sup>39</sup>

Although the *Springer Bill* passed in the U. S. House of Representatives on February 1, 1889, members in the Senate kept it from passing.<sup>40</sup> In a last ditch effort to get the measure approved, the *Springer Bill* was attached as a rider to the *Indian Appropriation Bill*.<sup>41</sup> The new piece of legislation passed both houses and on the eve of March 4, President Cleveland signed the bill. Several weeks later, the new President, Benjamin Harrison issued an executive proclamation announcing the opening of the portion of Indian Territory considered public domain as of March 2. Harrison outlined the provisions of how the land opening would occur.<sup>42</sup>

The unique history of the area surrounding Edmond laid the foundation for future events involving the creation of the Territorial Normal School of Oklahoma. The geography of the region provided ideal elements for settlement. The demeanor and drive of those wanting to settle the area set the cornerstone for the mindset of civic leaders, and the tenacity with which they pursued the acquisition and establishment of TNSO.

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<sup>37</sup> Interview with Mrs. Minnie Steen by Mildred B. McFarland, May 26, 1937, vol 87, 172, Indian Pioneer Collection, Western History Collection, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

<sup>38</sup> Interview with Mrs. Minnie Steen, 172; Hoig, *Edmond: The Early Years*, 5.

<sup>39</sup> Interview with Mrs. Minnie Steen, 172, 174; Hoig, *Edmond: The Early Years*, 5-6; Stan Hoig, *Edmond: The First Century* (Edmond: Edmond Historic Preservation Trust, 1987), 3.

<sup>40</sup> Harlow, *Harlow's Oklahoma History*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (Norman: Harlow Publishing Corporation, 1967), 202-3.

<sup>41</sup> Harlow, *Harlow's Oklahoma History*, 203-4.

<sup>42</sup> Harlow, *Harlow's Oklahoma History*, 204; Benjamin Harrison, "A Proclamation, March 23, 1889," reprinted in *Readings in Oklahoma History*, ed. Gene Aldrich and Royce H. Peterson (Edmond: Thompson Book and Supply Co., 1970), 285-9.

Railroads, legislation, and men intent on expanding their influence came together at a time and a place ripe for building a lasting legacy. These elements combined to create an atmosphere conducive to the formation of a relationship between town and school that would prove to be beneficial to both.



## Chapter 2

### The Settlement of Edmond

A new land carved by the efforts of politicians, lobbyists, and common men would soon open for settlement. People from across the country gathered, waiting for the chance at a fresh start to life. No one knew what the future would hold for Oklahoma Territory once the dust settled. The settlers lining up to make the land run had definitive ideas about community and education and the role each played in the building of a town. Among the new residents, key individuals in Edmond history would leave their mark etched into the foundation of the community and the Territorial Normal School of Oklahoma as leaders and advocates.

#### The Opening of the Promised Land

After years of multiple attempts to settle the Unassigned Lands, the hope of a new start fueled the dreams of thousands of Americans and immigrants. As the days dwindled down to April 22, 1889, thousands of men, women, and children gathered at the borders awaiting the momentous occasion to arrive. Groups gathered neared Hennessey in hopes of getting good positions along the line.<sup>1</sup> Those making the run into the Unassigned Lands from the north were often called “North Liners,” while those coming in from the

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with William Powell by Anna R. Barry, May 25, 1937, vol 72, 389, Indian-Pioneer Papers Collection, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma; Interview with Payton A. Smith by Anna R. Barry, May 11, 1937, vol 86, 294, Indian-Pioneer Papers Collection, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

west were “West Liners.”<sup>2</sup> From the south, settlers camped near Purcell on the banks of the Canadian River.<sup>3</sup> Those converging on the territory from the east camped near the Kickapoo, Iowa, and the Sac and Fox Indians.<sup>4</sup> Others waited to make the run aboard trains headed into the territory from Purcell, Indian Territory and Arkansas City, Kansas on the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad.

When the clock struck twelve noon on the 22<sup>nd</sup> day of April, bugles sounded and guns fired. “Harrison’s Hoss Race” began and thousands of people rushed frantically to claim a town lot or a one hundred sixty acre homestead. For some, the hopes of owning land were dashed. L. F. Carroll spent several days searching for unclaimed tracts, but continually found land already taken.<sup>5</sup> Those lucky enough to stake a claim were able to find a place to call home. Colonel Eddy B. Townsend, H. C. Anglea, J. D. and J. Wheeler Turner made the dash in from the Kickapoo Reservation, roughly a distance of fifteen miles.<sup>6</sup> Most of these men had been in Indian Territory prior to the Land Run of 1889. Townsend ran the IOA cattle ranch on the Iowa Reservation. Anglea worked as a federal government farmer on Ponca land. J. D. Turner operated the trading post at Wellston.<sup>7</sup> Townsend, Hardy, and J. W. Turner, each claimed a quarter of Section 35. Claim disputes happened all across the territory in the days following the open. In Edmond, Alexander Smith disputed Townsend’s claim in Section 35.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Glen V. McIntyre, “Kingfisher,” *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture* <<http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/K/KI010.html>> (accessed October 25, 2011).

<sup>3</sup> Interview with W. E. King by Maurice R. Anderson, February 24, 1937, vol 51, 161, Indian-Pioneer Papers Collection, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

<sup>4</sup> James W. Moffitt, “The Diary of an Eighty-Niner,” *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* 15 (Spring 1937): 67.

<sup>5</sup> Moffitt, “The Diary of an Eighty-Niner,” *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, 67-8.

<sup>6</sup> “Death of H. C. Anglea,” *Edmond Enterprise*, October 29, 1907, 1; Stan Hoig, *Edmond: The Early Years* (Edmond: Edmond Historic Preservation Trust, 1983), 7.

<sup>7</sup> Hoig, *Edmond: The Early Years*, 8.

<sup>8</sup> Hoig, *Edmond: The Early Years*, 8, 34.

Like their male counterparts, women made the dash for land. Nanitta Daisey, commonly known as Kentucky Daisey, jumped at the chance to claim her own quarter section of land. She served as a reporter for the *Dallas Morning News* and used her assignment to cover the opening of Oklahoma Territory to obtain 160 acres. She rode aboard a northbound Santa Fe train from Purcell. As the train climbed the upgrade just north of Edmond, she reportedly jumped off of the cowcatcher on the locomotive and staked her claim close to the railroad tracks. After placing her marker in the ground, she fired off her pistol and ran back to the train, pulled up into the caboose by a fellow journalist.<sup>9</sup> Another pioneer woman, Ada Baskins Jorgenson made the run with her father and staked her own claim nine miles northwest of Edmond.<sup>10</sup> Daisey and Jorgenson represented just a portion of the pioneer women who made the run on their own accord. Some were widowed and others unmarried. Male settlers were not the only ones with progressive ideas. These women are examples of the attitudes and spirit settlers brought to town.

As the thunderous sound of hooves, wagon wheels, and trains rambling down the tracks faded, darkness fell across this new and unfamiliar land. As night set in, homesteaders built makeshift lean-tos or slept in the bottom of their wagons, while those fortunate enough to have tents put them up. The majority of the “Eighty-Niners” slept without shelter.<sup>11</sup> Others dealt with the issue of Sooners staking claims after illegally

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<sup>9</sup> Stan Hoig, “Daisey, Nanitta R. H. (? – 1903),” *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture* <<http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/D/DA004.html>> (accessed October 25, 2011).

<sup>10</sup> Interview with Ada Baskins Jorgenson by Mildred B. McFarland, August 25, 1937, vol. 49, 455, Indian-Pioneer Paper Collection, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

<sup>11</sup> Edwin C. McReynolds, Alice Marriott, and Estelle Faulconer, *Oklahoma: The Story of Its Past and Present* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1981), 161.

entering the territory before the start of the opening.<sup>12</sup> In some cases, violence broke out. One man, John Evans, believed he had secured a claim legally, but discovered it had been “jumped by professionals” and his life was threatened.<sup>13</sup> The pressures associated with packing up, moving to a new territory and leaving behind the comforts of what had been home brought out the good, the bad, and the ugly. Despite incidents of lawlessness, the majority of arrivals came with the intent to build homes and businesses, to create communities where they could raise and educate their families.

For some homesteaders, life in the early days of the territory would not be as tedious as it was for some. Newspaperman Milton W. “Kicking Bird” Reynolds made the run aboard the first train headed south into Oklahoma Territory with other news correspondents.<sup>14</sup> Like some, luck was on his side. Upon his arrival in Edmond, he staked a claim northeast of Edmond proper by one and a half miles.<sup>15</sup> He also bought several town lots where he built a two-story structure and a print shop that would become the home of *The Edmond Sun*.<sup>16</sup> Reynolds had the means to make things happen in a timely manner, opening the door to success in the young territory.

As homesteaders made the dash for farmland, others hurried to stake claims on town lots. That first day saw approximately fifty thousand entrants rush into Oklahoma Territory.<sup>17</sup> Overnight, Guthrie, Oklahoma Station (later Oklahoma City), Kingfisher, and other towns sprang up. Guthrie served as one of two land offices for homesteaders to file

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<sup>12</sup> “Honest Settlers Duped; Swindled by Officials in Oklahoma,” *The New York Times*, April 26, 1889, 1.

<sup>13</sup> “Honest Settlers Duped; Swindled by Officials in Oklahoma,” *The New York Times*, April 26, 1889, 1.

<sup>14</sup> D. E. Newsom, *Kicking Bird and the Birth of Oklahoma: A Biography of Milton W. Reynolds* (Perkins: Evans Publishing, 1983), 115; Interview with Susan G. Reynolds by Mildred B. McFarland, October 27, 1937, vol 75, 328, Indian-Pioneer Papers Collection, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Susan G. Reynolds, 328.

<sup>16</sup> Interview with Susan G. Reynolds, 328.

<sup>17</sup> Stan Hoig, “Land Run of 1889,” *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture* <<http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/L/LA014.html>> (accessed October 25, 2011).

their claims. The booming community actually consisted of four towns, Guthrie, East Guthrie, West Guthrie, and Capital Hill.<sup>18</sup> This was the product of part of President Harrison's proclamation in which he specified that a town site could only encompass 320 acres. As a result, each town had its own provisional government and ordinances. By the summer of 1890, the four towns converged into one Guthrie (the original intention of the homesteaders) and served as the territorial capital.<sup>19</sup> The beginnings of a future state took shape as towns dotted the horizon and people settled the frontier.

A stop along the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad, Oklahoma Station sprang to life the day of the run and grew during those that followed. It is said that roughly 10,000 to 12,000 people made the run to Oklahoma Station and the surrounding area by nightfall.<sup>20</sup> An estimate of 5,000 to 6,000 people actually settled within the area.<sup>21</sup> Unlike those trying to settle in and around Oklahoma City and Guthrie, homesteaders could not ride the train to Kingfisher because the railroad for the Chicago, Kansas, and Nebraska Railway had only reached a point just south of Pond Creek by April 22.<sup>22</sup> Even though the railroad had not reached Kingfisher, many settled in the area, as it was the site of the other land office.<sup>23</sup> Like Guthrie, Kingfisher was originally comprised of two town sites, Lisbon and Kingfisher City, until they were joined together in June 1890.<sup>24</sup>

For those who chose to make claims around Edmond, their journey was completed in a roundabout way. One such settler, a Swedish immigrant, trekked from

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<sup>18</sup> Linda D. Wilson, "Guthrie," *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture* <<http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/G/GU003.html>> (accessed October 25, 2011).

<sup>19</sup> Wilson, "Guthrie," *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*.

<sup>20</sup> Roy P. Stewart, *Born Grown: An Oklahoma City History* (Oklahoma City: Fidelity Bank N.A., 1975), 11.

<sup>21</sup> Linda D. Wilson, "Oklahoma City," *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture* <<http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/O/OK025.html>> (accessed October 25, 2011).

<sup>22</sup> McIntyre, "Kingfisher," *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*.

<sup>23</sup> McIntyre, "Kingfisher," *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*.

<sup>24</sup> McIntyre, "Kingfisher," *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*.

Illinois then made his way to Purcell, passing through what would be his new home. At noon, he boarded a train that took him to Edmond and walked a distance of two to three miles west of the township where he staked his claim on one hundred sixty acres.<sup>25</sup> These towns, along with others would be centers of trade and influence in coming years. Several of the communities would also become political bases as the territory continued to develop.

### **As the Dust Settled**

Before claims on town lots in Edmond could be filed and paid for, the issue of which survey company's town plat to accept arose. Two companies competed against one another and laid claim to the rights to survey and sell town lots. The Seminole Company used its connection with the railroad to survey and plat the town site, and filed an affidavit for the location at the Guthrie Land Office the same day as the run.<sup>26</sup> The Chicago Company filed their claim on April 24, stating how their group did not enter the area until after the official opening of Oklahoma Territory. The Chicago Company even had a provisional town government established with a mayor, vice mayor, secretary, treasurer, trustees, town marshal, and a city surveyor.<sup>27</sup> After an investigation, an agreement was reached. Individuals who had bought town lots from the Seminole Company kept their sites and the survey done by the Chicago Company worked around them.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Interview with Gust Nordstrom by Mildred B. McFarland, November 18, 1937, vol 67, 297, Indian-Pioneer Papers Collection, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

<sup>26</sup> Hoig, *Edmond: The Early Years*, 9-10.

<sup>27</sup> Hoig, *Edmond: The Early Years*, 9-10.

<sup>28</sup> Hoig, *Edmond: The Early Years*, 10.

Following the arrangement between the Seminole and Chicago surveying companies, a new election took place. The citizens elected J. J. Hunt as mayor and P. R. Prickett as city clerk. James Martin received the post of city treasurer, C. E. Schow as city attorney, and Robert Galbraith as city marshal. The community selected W. J. Donovan, J. A. Killern, J. J. Stephenson, J. R. Taylor and G. C. Forster as city councilmen.<sup>29</sup>

Once the survey and plat conundrum was solved, life in the young town became busy, bustling with economic development along the main roads of the community. Overnight, tents sprang up with businesses eager to make profit on the needs of the people in Edmond and surrounding areas in the weeks following the Land Run. Unlike Guthrie, Oklahoma City, and Kingfisher, only one hundred fifty people settled within the town of Edmond.<sup>30</sup> Edmond's commercial district spread along First and Second Streets and up Broadway.<sup>31</sup> James Brown, an immigrant from Ireland established one of the first businesses in Edmond, a lumber company that was fully operational by early May.<sup>32</sup> Having the lumberyard open nearby, other business and homes could follow. G. C. Forster established Edmond's first grocery store, Pioneer Grocery, in a tent following the run on the town plot he staked. George Angerman was Forster's business partner.<sup>33</sup> Forster's wife arrived shortly thereafter in Edmond. Until they located a permanent home,

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<sup>29</sup> Stella Barton Fordice, "A History of Edmond, Oklahoma" (MA thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1927), 14.

<sup>30</sup> Hoig, *Edmond: The Early Years*, 11.

<sup>31</sup> Hoig, *Edmond: The Early Years*, 11; Second Street has often been referred to as "Two Street" and Broadway as "Broad Street."

<sup>32</sup> Hoig, *Edmond: The Early Years*, 11; Joseph B. Thoburn, *A Standard History of Oklahoma*, vol 5 (Chicago: The American Historical Society, 1910), 1914; "James Brown," *The Edmond Enterprise*, January 24, 1924, 8; "James Brown," *The Edmond Sun*, January 24, 1924, 4; Brown also operated a grocery store and a hardware business. He served as the postmaster for one term.

<sup>33</sup> "Edmond Pioneer Called by Death," *The Edmond Sun*, December 13, 1928, 1; "George C. Forster, 1859-1928," *The Edmond Booster*, December 13, 1928, 8; Hoig, *Edmond: The Early Years*, 11.

the Forsters lived in the home of the Santa Fe Station agent, Mr. Donavon.<sup>34</sup> Once the store was built on the corner of Second and Broadway, they lived in quarters on the second floor.<sup>35</sup> The idea of neighbors helping neighbors would take on a different form in the future when education would take priority in town and the surrounding areas.

Cooperation between residents and the caliber of the businessmen drawn to Edmond set the stage for the political foundation that would bring the Territorial Normal School to town.

As prosperity abounded in town, the ability to stay informed of what occurred across the territory and the U. S. appeared in July with the first edition of Reynolds' *Edmond Sun* newspaper.<sup>36</sup> As time passed, more businesses opened and by mid-September, the village boasted a livery and transfer stable named Hotel DeHoss; the Carey-Lombard Co. which sold hardware and furniture; a bakery that sold milkshakes and soda in addition to bread and pastries; a barber; a billiard hall; and a hotel along Second and Broadway with twenty rooms.<sup>37</sup> J. W. Howard, a doctor from Kentucky, opened one of the first drug stores in town. He also established a medical practice in Edmond.<sup>38</sup> Whether it was goods needed to build or furnish a house, medical needs, or entertainment, businesses thrived in the growing town and met the needs of Edmondites.

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<sup>34</sup> Mrs. G. C. Forster, "Questionnaire: Historical Society, Central State College, Edmond, Oklahoma," October 1956, 1, Mrs. G. C. Forster folder, Edmond History box, Laboratory of History Museum, University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, Oklahoma.

<sup>35</sup> Hoig, *Edmond: The Early Years*, 11; Interview with Mrs. G. C. Forster by Mildred B. McFarland, May 19, 1937, vol 31, 204, Indian-Pioneer Paper Collection, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

<sup>36</sup> Hoig, *Edmond: The Early Years*, 14.

<sup>37</sup> Hoig, *Edmond: The Early Years*, 14.

<sup>38</sup> "Funeral Services for Dr. Howard, Edmond Pioneer," *The Edmond Sun*, May 14, 1936, 1, 7; "J. W. Howard, Pioneer Edmond Citizen, Dies," *The Edmond Enterprise*, May 12, 1936, 1; Dr. Howard ran both the drug store and his medical practice until 1920 when he retired.



The semblance of budding communities outside of Edmond's town limits began to take shape. Settlers helped one another make progress on their lands. Homesteaders made improvements on their claims such as building soddies, firebreaks, fences, and planting crops.<sup>39</sup> Others looked to their land for shelter and built dugouts out of outcroppings until they had enough lumber to build small homes, often sixteen feet by twenty feet in size.<sup>40</sup> People in these outlying areas traded goods in Edmond, patronizing the businesses established there as they bought and sold goods.

Aside from making improvements to their homesteads in terms of living arrangements, settlers worked the land. Some raised cattle and hogs. Others built lumber mills to process wood for the construction of homes and other buildings.<sup>41</sup> One family east of Edmond grew cabbage on their farm.<sup>42</sup> On another homestead, farmer Matthew Reynolds planted and harvested grapes, strawberries, rhubarb, various fruit trees, and vegetables. He sold his produce to merchants in Edmond.<sup>43</sup> The spirit of cooperation continued to develop as people on the outskirts of town interacted with their neighbors in the town proper.

Edmond sprang to life and began to look like a budding frontier metropolis as wooden structures were completed and by 1890, permanent buildings dotted Broadway and the downtown area.<sup>44</sup> That summer, the business district welcomed photographer C. A. Dake. By August, Dake had a complete set of town views available for purchase in his

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<sup>39</sup> Interview with Mrs. J. F. Messenbaugh by Amelia F. Harris, April 13, 1938, vol. 62, 235-36, Indian-Pioneer Paper Collection, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

<sup>40</sup> Interview with Gust Nordstrom, 298.

<sup>41</sup> Interview with Ada Baskins Jorgenson, 456-57.

<sup>42</sup> Interview with Sarah Tennessee Kennard by Mildred B. McFarland, November 17, 1937, vol. 50, 267, Indian-Pioneer Paper Collection, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

<sup>43</sup> Interview with Matthew Reynolds by Mildred B. McFarland, November 10, 1937, vol 75, 323, Indian-Pioneer Paper Collection, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

<sup>44</sup> Hoig, *Edmond: The Early years*, 12-13

studio.<sup>45</sup> In September, the community's first financial institution, the Bank of Edmond opened. The board of six directors included Dr. J. W. Howard, E. B. Townsend, Anton H. Classen, J. W. Walters, C. L. Siler, and John Pfaff.<sup>46</sup> John L. Mitch, a settler from Colorado, worked as the bank's cashier.<sup>47</sup> Industry was present in the young community. Early on a cotton gin opened, but since the area could not support cotton growing the gin closed down.<sup>48</sup> In time, two flourmills were established and each remained a stable business.<sup>49</sup> Local merchants provided necessities and luxuries for community members and provided a source of income to the farmers growing wheat and other staple crops.

As the economy grew, city leaders encouraged municipal improvements. The town's founders had the foresight to set aside land for a park for the community to enjoy. Located between Campbell and Edwards and east of Broadway, the park received trees and flowers to beautify the area. Community members Classen and Mitch assisted largely in the project during the spring of 1890.<sup>50</sup> Later that year, Mitch continued the work and added more trees to the park and other areas of Edmond. Another park, located between Fourth and Fifth streets along the west side of Boulevard, was added later with the help of Townsend.<sup>51</sup> These progressive leaders maneuvered Edmond into a position to be a center of power in the territory. Civic improvements promoted the image of Edmond, paving the way for a bid to become a county seat or even the location of a higher education institution.

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<sup>45</sup> Hoig, *Edmond: The Early Years*, 14.

<sup>46</sup> Hoig, *Edmond: The Early Years*, 14.

<sup>47</sup> "Pioneer Deeds Recorder Dies," *The Daily Oklahoman*, February 11, 1926, 9.

<sup>48</sup> Hoig, *Edmond: The First Century*, 5.

<sup>49</sup> Hoig, *Edmond: The First Century*, 5.

<sup>50</sup> Hoig, *Edmond: The Early Years*, 19.

<sup>51</sup> Hoig, *Edmond: The Early Years*, 19; "Col. E. B. Townsend Dead," *The Edmond Enterprise*, July 29, 1909, 3; The park Townsend helped developed, originally known as South Park is now Stephenson Park. The land came from Townsend's claim and the area is called Townsend Addition.

## A Need for Education

As families settled down and life returned to a more normal pace, citizens voiced the need for schools to educate their children of the town. Before Edmond's schoolhouse was built, a group of women joined together to hold events such as socials and bazaars to raise funds to hire a teacher.<sup>52</sup> The citizens of Edmond gathered resources and built the first schoolhouse for public use in the territory.<sup>53</sup> They located the school on the southwest corner of Second Street and Boulevard and it still stands today.<sup>54</sup> Until construction was completed, the community invited students to attend classes in empty buildings around town.<sup>55</sup> Following the completion of the building in August 1889, pupils started class work on September 16.<sup>56</sup> By initiating the first school in the territory and cooperating to get it open, Edmond's residents established their city as a leader in education.

While churches and a school were organized in the township of Edmond, those further out often opened their homes for church services and subscription schools. A subscription school was funded by monthly student tuition. Generally, the young women teaching the pupils were in charge of securing a place to hold class and pay rent.<sup>57</sup> One Edmond resident recalled one of the first subscription schools southeast of Edmond, the Sunnyside School and the teacher, Anna Burke Love.<sup>58</sup> If a lady was not available to

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<sup>52</sup> Interview with Mrs. G. C. Forster, 205.

<sup>53</sup> Hoig, *Edmond: The Early Years*, 18.

<sup>54</sup> Hoig, *Edmond: The Early Years*, 18.

<sup>55</sup> Interview with Mrs. G. C. Forster, 205.

<sup>56</sup> Hoig, *Edmond: The Early Years*, 18.

<sup>57</sup> Linda D. Wilson, "Schools, Subscription," *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture* <<http://digital.library.okstate.edu/encyclopedia/entries/S/SC005.html>> (accessed October 25, 2011).

<sup>58</sup> Interview with Mrs. Bonnie Doxsie Terry by Mildred B. McFarland, July 29, 1937, vol 89, 435, Indian-Pioneer Papers Collection, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

teach at a subscription school, a man could fill the role of instructor. One Edmondite recalled her time at the area school under the steady hand of W. A. L. Hoff.<sup>59</sup>

Ada Baskins Jorgenson donated an acre of her land to build the first schoolhouse for the area in which she lived in northwest of Edmond.<sup>60</sup> Jorgenson boarded the teachers who taught at the school and sewed for them. The money she collected from her boarders paid for her provisions, including food.<sup>61</sup> She also explained how her father and other men on surrounding homesteads collected enough money to purchase wood at a local sawmill to build a subscription school. Her father then paid \$1.00 for each of his eight children to attend.<sup>62</sup> Often times, the school was only held for a few months at a times, which allowed students to help with planting and harvesting crops on the homesteads.<sup>63</sup> Subscription schools in the territory lasted until the Organic Act of 1890 provided the means to set up public school systems.<sup>64</sup> Subscription schools illustrate the earliest form of a symbiotic relationship between communities and educational institutions. Schooling the young benefitted the community by providing an educated populace. The schools themselves created job opportunities for the more educated. Construction of school buildings, equipping them with furniture and books generated income for local businesses. Teachers who did not have their own accommodations paid to board with local families close to the schoolhouses, adding further income and buying power for residents.

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<sup>59</sup> Interview with Phamie Elizabeth Sheldon by Mildred B. McFarland, August 13, 1937, vol 82, 263, Indian-Pioneer Papers Collection, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

<sup>60</sup> Interview with Ada Baskins Jorgenson, 456.

<sup>61</sup> Interview with Ada Baskins Jorgenson, 457.

<sup>62</sup> Interview with Mrs. J. F. Messenbaugh, 237.

<sup>63</sup> Wilson, "Schools, Subscription," *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*; Interview with Rhoda Morris by Ruth E. Moon, July 30, 1937, vol 65, 80, Indian-Pioneer Paper Collection, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

<sup>64</sup> Wilson, "Schools, Subscription," *Encyclopedia of Oklahoma History and Culture*.

For settlers living in the country, attending church in Edmond was not always possible. In response, traveling pastors conducted Sunday services attended by family and neighbors in private homes. One homesteader recounted of the use of her family's home for Sunday school and church each week, while the pastor used a table in the house as the pulpit.<sup>65</sup> A woman living north of Arcadia recalled the use of a blacksmith shop as a gathering place for Sunday worship. The Baptist preacher used the anvil to set his bible on as he preached his sermon.<sup>66</sup> Those in outlying areas also developed a sense of community despite being isolated from Edmond by distance.

As churches developed and the Edmond schoolhouse and subscription schools were opened, residents recognized the need for a library. Edmondites came together, donating numerous books from their personal collections to create the library's repository.<sup>67</sup> The community's public library was established on April 21, 1890. Mr. and Mrs. G. C. Forster allowed the collection of 100 books to be housed in the front of their general store.<sup>68</sup> The Forsters had a book case made to hold the books and installed the shelf in one corner. Many young men would spend time reading books from the library's collection.<sup>69</sup> Classen served as president and Mrs. Forster as librarian.<sup>70</sup>

Residents and leaders identified various necessities required within the community and cooperated to meet those needs. With the educational and spiritual needs of the community met, citizens focused on politics.

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<sup>65</sup> Interview with Mrs. J. F. Messenbaugh, 237.

<sup>66</sup> Interview with Sarah Tennessee Kennard, 267.

<sup>67</sup> Forster, "Questionnaire," 4.

<sup>68</sup> Forster, "Questionnaire," 4.

<sup>69</sup> Forster, "Questionnaire," 4.

<sup>70</sup> Hoig, *Edmond: The Early Years*, 19; Forster, "Questionnaire," 4.

## A Matter of Politics

Edmondites were eager to make a name for their community and help it stand out from all the other territorial towns. To garner attention, newspaperman Reynolds used the pages of *The Edmond Sun* to declare Edmond's intent to become a county seat.<sup>71</sup> With the goal of becoming a county seat, Reynolds and many of the readers of his paper considered creating a new county out of the northern one-third of Oklahoma County and the southern one-third of Logan County. The proposed Ventura County would range from the township of Britton to Waterloo, and the width of the county as it is today.<sup>72</sup> As early as the January 23, 1890, edition of *The Edmond Sun*, editorials called for securing an institution of higher education in Edmond. The article stated, "Twenty acres of the south should be set aside and reserved by the city for University or State Normal school grounds."<sup>73</sup> City leaders and community members decided to lobby harder for the creation of a new county with Edmond named as the county seat if the city did not receive an institution of higher education.<sup>74</sup> Eighty-Niner Aaron Fretz described Edmond as being stubborn in the fight to be the county seat.<sup>75</sup> Town leaders and citizens saw the importance of being either a county seat or the location of a higher education institution. By being one or the other, Edmond would receive the recognition and attention associated with being a political and educational base in the emerging territory. They knew it was only a matter of time until legislation formally recognizing the territory was

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<sup>71</sup> Masthead of *The Edmond Sun*, July 25, 1889, 1.

<sup>72</sup> Fordice, "A History of Edmond, Oklahoma," 42; H. H. Moose, "Untitled," no date, 1, H. H. Moose folder, Edmond History box, Laboratory of History Museum, University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, Oklahoma.

<sup>73</sup> "No title," *Edmond Sun*, January 23, 1890.

<sup>74</sup> Francis Coram Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma* (Edmond, 1953), 1.

<sup>75</sup> Aaron Fretz, "How Dear is Home," copy 1, no date, 1, Aaron Fretz folder, Edmond History box, Laboratory of History Museum, University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, Oklahoma.

enacted and signed by President Harrison. Edmondites were already looking toward the future.

Chaos and uncertainty reigned in the young territory. Politics remained localized at the community level until enactment of the *Organic Act* in May 1890. Shortly thereafter, United States President Harrison appointed George W. Steele as Oklahoma Territory's first governor.<sup>76</sup> Until Steele could assemble a legislature and draft statutes for the territory, Nebraska's state laws were used.<sup>77</sup> Governor Steele issued a statement on July 8, 1890, that called for the election of representatives and councilmen for the first territorial legislature.<sup>78</sup> The election took place on August 5.<sup>79</sup> Two Democrats, L. G. Pitman of Oklahoma City and J. W. Howard of Edmond, along with Republican J. L. Brown of Oklahoma City, won the three Council positions available to Oklahoma County.<sup>80</sup> Republicans C. G. Jones and H. G. Trosper, and Democrats C. M. Burke, Sam D. Pack and Dan W. Peery, won the five seats in the House of Representatives for Oklahoma County. Newspaperman Reynolds won the representative-at-large seat.

Edmond's leaders took an early role in the beginning stages of establishing the territorial government, but before the Edmondites' chosen representatives could start lobbying for the town, the first session of the legislature was put on hold before convening on August 19, 1890. Just days after winning their respective seats in the House and Council, Burke and Reynolds died suddenly a day apart.<sup>81</sup> As a result, the date was moved to the 27<sup>th</sup> of the month for the opening session of the legislature. A special

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<sup>76</sup> Dan W. Peery, "The First Two Years," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* 7 (Winter 1929), 424.

<sup>77</sup> Peery, "The First Two Years," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, 427.

<sup>78</sup> Peery, "The First Two Years," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, 431.

<sup>79</sup> Peery, "The First Two Years," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, 432.

<sup>80</sup> Peery, "The First Two Years," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, 432-33.

<sup>81</sup> Peery, "The First Two Years," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, 433.

election was held on August 25 to fill the two vacancies. Moss Neal and A. M. Colson were elected to the respective empty seats.<sup>82</sup>

Already fraught with setbacks, the legislature finally opened its first session on August 27, 1890. Tempers flared and the House and Council did not work harmoniously together. Many of the men of the two houses had very little knowledge of how legislatures worked and often brought their politics from their hometowns.<sup>83</sup> Many of the delegates served as town boosters, promoting the agendas of their communities instead of coming together with other legislators.<sup>84</sup> As a result, the governing body accomplished very little during the first session. A majority of the time, the politicians argued over the location of the capital. Bill after bill was discussed, with some making it to Governor Steele's desk to be approved, only to be vetoed.<sup>85</sup> The "boosterism" and lack of cohesiveness hindered the main objective of the first session, which was to establish laws for the territory.

As fall transitioned to winter, the legislature made some progress. Key bills concerning public education passed, though the fledgling territory had no real set of laws to govern the people. Just days before the conclusion of the session, members frantically struggled to create statutes for the territory.<sup>86</sup> In some cases, men pulled pages out of other states' statute books. As a result, Oklahoma Territory in several instances ended up with laws bearing no significance to the geographic location. One such careless mistake

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<sup>82</sup> Peery, "The First Two Years," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, 434.

<sup>83</sup> Danney Goble, *Progressive Oklahoma: The Making of a New Kind of State* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980), 27.

<sup>84</sup> Goble, *Progressive Oklahoma*, 27.

<sup>85</sup> "Territory News," *Edmond Sun*, December 26, 1890, 1; Dan W. Peery, "The First Two Years," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* 8 (Spring 1930), 100-16.

<sup>86</sup> Goble, *Progressive Oklahoma*, 28-29.



was the inclusion of Michigan's maritime laws.<sup>87</sup> Despite statutes and laws that had little to do with the needs of the fledgling territory, the legislature made progress.

Just as the assembly began working together, the question of locating educational institutions in the territory was presented. While Edmond's lone politician, Howard, remained inactive in most affairs of the legislature, he spoke out adamantly when the topic of discussion concerned the location of institutions of higher learning in the territory. He worked ambitiously for Edmond to receive one of the three, either the University, the Agricultural and Mechanical College, or the Normal School.<sup>88</sup> Howard introduced a bill on November 16, 1890, to find an appropriate location and establish a normal school for Oklahoma Territory.<sup>89</sup> Through his efforts, Edmond received the Normal.<sup>90</sup> Despite lobbying for the community and his bill, the fruit of his work did not materialize until the bitter end of the legislature. Over a month after submitting the bill, the Governor signed the legislation and established the Territorial Normal School of Oklahoma at Edmond.<sup>91</sup> Norman received the University and Stillwater the Agricultural and Mechanical College.<sup>92</sup> While Edmond did not become a county seat, the town did receive the Normal School. As the community that established the first public school in the territory, and an area that fostered education in the form of subscription schools, it was fitting the community obtained the institution designed to educate teachers.

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<sup>87</sup> Goble, *Progressive Oklahoma*, 28-29.

<sup>88</sup> Peery, "The First Two Years," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, 437.

<sup>89</sup> "Central State University: A Heritage to Honor," History of UCO Vertical File, Special Archives and Collections, Max Chambers Library, University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, Oklahoma.

<sup>90</sup> Peery, "The First Two Years," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, 437.

<sup>91</sup> "Central State University: A Heritage to Honor," History of UCO Vertical File.

<sup>92</sup> Abraham Seay, *Report of the Governor of Oklahoma, 1892* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1892), 472.

### Ahead of Educational Times

Organized higher education in the United States played a roll in the advancement of many professional fields, including medicine and law. This did not hold true for the teaching profession in many instances. There was no formal instruction dedicated to preparing individuals for teaching, although the need for these types of institutions was recognized during the colonial period of the country.<sup>93</sup> In the 1820s and 1830s, the concept of a normal school evolved in the U. S. after citizens across America voiced dissatisfaction with the educational system. States such as New York, Connecticut, and Massachusetts moved forward in an attempt to start normal schools.<sup>94</sup>

The first state-funded institution located in Lexington, Massachusetts was established in the late 1830s.<sup>95</sup> The normal school movement spread along the east coast and into the Midwest. Schools opened years after statehood. In some instances, a handful of normals began pre-statehood. Dakota and Arizona Territories each took over twenty years to establish their normals, Dakota in 1881 while Arizona began the Tempe Normal School in 1885.<sup>96</sup> Washington Territory waited forty-seven years to procure their normal school, which began operation in 1890, the same year Oklahoma's first territorial legislature authorized locations for the three institutions of higher education.<sup>97</sup> Oklahoma

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<sup>93</sup> Charles A. Harper, *A Century of Public Teacher Education* (Washington, D.C.: Hugh Birch-Horace Mann Fund for the American Association of Teacher Colleges, 1939), 10.

<sup>94</sup> Harper, *A Century of Public Teacher Education*, 14-16; Christine A. Ogren, *The American State Normal School: An Instrument of Great Good* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 14.

<sup>95</sup> Harper, *A Century of Public Teacher Education*, 9.

<sup>96</sup> "About - DSU History," *DSU Dakota State* <<http://www.dsu/about/history.aspx>> (accessed November 21, 2011); "The New ASU Story - Introduction," *ASU Libraries – Arizona State University* <<http://www.asu.edu/lib/archives/asustory/intro.htm>> (accessed November 21, 2011).

<sup>97</sup> "Milestones for Washington State History – Part 2: 1851-1900," *HistoryLink.org* <[http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file\\_id=5380](http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=5380)> (accessed November 21, 2011).

established the Territorial Normal School, along with the Territorial University and the Agricultural and Mechanical College less than two years after becoming a territory.

After the Oklahoma Land Run, a wide variety of people settled in and around Edmond. Businessmen, farmers, and their families built homes and established lives in the new territory. Residents recognized the need to create a sense of civic pride, either through political means or by other definitive statements of their unique community. Additionally, education played an important early role in determining Edmond's place in the overall scheme of things. Community leaders advocated for and advertised the attributes of Edmond in hopes of drawing in new residents and establishing the city as either a political or education center. When the territorial legislature assigned the Territorial Normal School of Oklahoma to Edmond, residents realized they must now foster a continued sense of community and cooperation in order to realize the benefits provided by TNSO. Thus began the symbiotic relationship between community and institution.

### **Chapter 3**

#### **The Chosen Town**

With the passage of the bill locating the three Oklahoma institutions of higher education to their respective towns of Norman, Stillwater, and Edmond, the race to be the first to start course work began. Edmond residents came together, donating land, money, time, and temporary quarters to make sure the Normal School would be the first to open and prosper, and in return the school would bring attention to the community. Developers understood the draw of the Territorial Normal School. An influx of new residents and building both the school's facilities and new construction to house the population and commerce would put money in their pockets. In addition to the economic benefits, Edmond would have the honor and pride of being first. Everyone from town leaders to the youngest residents had the opportunity to be in on the ground floor of this exciting new enterprise. Their input, assistance, and participation would prove crucial to the fledgling institute.

#### **Plans in the Making**

Following the passage of the bill that located the Normal School at Edmond, community leaders worked to meet the requirements given regarding the school. Section 14 of the act establishing the TNSO called for

Forty acres of land lying within one mile of the said village of Edmond, which shall without cost to the Territory be conveyed by good and

sufficient warranty deed to the Board of Education in this act designated, for the benefit of the institution; ten acres of which land shall be reserved as a site on which to erect buildings for said institution, and the remainder shall be laid out into lots and blocks, and disposed of for cash, for the use and benefit of such institution.<sup>1</sup>

Governor Steele appointed three Edmond citizens to choose the property, plat, and buy the land, as well as make the contracts needed for the building of structures for the school.<sup>2</sup> The committee consisted of John L. Mitch as chairman, James Brown, and Colonel H. H. Moose.<sup>3</sup> Several homesteaders, including Anton H. Classen and Aaron Fretz offered their land to the delegation. Deciding the tract of land on which to locate the Normal School proved a tedious task. The committee used a great deal of diligence and time before making a choice.<sup>4</sup> Fretz's homestead was located on the northwest quarter section of Section 26, Township 14 North, Range 3 West, while the town of Edmond proper was situated in the southeast quarter section of Section 26 of the same township and range. Classen's property was the southwest quarter section of Section 25 of the same township and range. The location offered by Fretz sat to the northwest of the community and on the west side of the railroad tracks, which bisected the area from north to south. Classen's land, just east of Edmond proper, occupied a small hill that overlooked the area.<sup>5</sup> After looking at what each site had to offer, the committee picked

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<sup>1</sup> Stella Barton Fordice, "A History of Edmond, Oklahoma," (MA thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1927), 41.

<sup>2</sup> Fordice, "A History of Edmond, Oklahoma," 43.

<sup>3</sup> Fordice, "A History of Edmond, Oklahoma," 43.

<sup>4</sup> Edna Jones, *Sixty Years at Central: Facts and Figures on Service and Friendship through the years, 1891-1951* (Edmond: Central State College, 1951), 6; Richard Thatcher, "Early Reminiscences of the Normal School," *The Vista*, January 1904, 57; Fordice, "A History of Edmond, Oklahoma," 43; Aaron Fretz, "How Dear is Home" copy 2, 1; "Aaron Fretz Passes Away in Dayton, O.," *The Edmond Booster*, January 31, 1935, 1; Anton H. Classen was a lawyer and later the owner of *The Edmond Sun* following the death of Milton "Kicking Bird" Reynolds in 1890; Fretz Homesteaded for a time northwest of Edmond proper until moving into town at a later date. After moving, he established a sewing machine business and kept it in operation until several months before his death in Ohio at the Union Soldiers Home.

<sup>5</sup> "Edmond and Vicinity [map]," in Stan Hoig, *Edmond: The Early Years* (Edmond: Historic Preservation Trust, 1983), 34; "Edmond, Oklahoma Territory [plat map]," in Hoig, *Edmond: The Early Years*, 35;

Classen's section because of its proximity to the town proper and elevation.<sup>6</sup> With the decision to use the parcel of land from Classen's property made, the committee moved forward to section off the land.

I. R. Snuthwick surveyed the land and the deed was created. The Normal's Board of Regents, J. H. Parker, E. F. Mitchell, Samuel Murphy, R. E. Innes, and Mitch registered the plat and received the authority to sell thirty acres to the public as one way to fund the school.<sup>7</sup> Of the thirty acres available, one hundred lots were laid out in a semi-circle around the site reserved for the school, calling the area the Normal Grounds Addition of Edmond.<sup>8</sup> The lots sold for \$30 each.<sup>9</sup> Community members also raised additional money for the school, particularly for the construction of the Normal building, by offering bonds for sale and accepting outright donations. In total, \$10,000 was raised for the TNSO.<sup>10</sup>

While work to prepare the land for school continued, the community rallied in support. The drive to be first infected the residents and they joined in that effort. The congregation of the Methodist Episcopal Church (MEC) offered the TNSO the use of the Epworth League room of the unfinished church on Broadway until completion of the school building.<sup>11</sup>

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Theodore H. Barrett, "Township 14 North, Range 3 West, Indian Meridian [survey map]," General Land Office Records, Bureau of Land Management, U. S. Department of the Interior, *General Land Office Records* <[http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/details/survey/default.aspx?dm\\_id=22717&sid=vznpr0ch.tpo](http://www.glorerecords.blm.gov/details/survey/default.aspx?dm_id=22717&sid=vznpr0ch.tpo)> (accessed November 17, 2011); Locations were determined based on comparing the "Edmond and Vicinity" map compiled by Stan Hoig, the original plat map of Edmond, and the land survey map approved on January 3, 1872 by Willis Drummond, Commissioner of the General Land Office.

<sup>6</sup> John L. Mitch, "The Normal," *The Edmond Sun*, February 5, 1892, 4.

<sup>7</sup> Fordice, "A History of Edmond, Oklahoma," 43-44.

<sup>8</sup> Fordice, "A History of Edmond, Oklahoma," 44.

<sup>9</sup> Jones, *Sixty Years at Central*, 6.

<sup>10</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma* (Edmond, 1953), 2.

<sup>11</sup> Jones, *Sixty Years at Central*, 6.

Construction plans on the Normal building commenced in 1891 under the management of Gall Whitely, who designed the original structure with a full basement.<sup>12</sup> By the end of January 1892, the architect completed the plans for the new Normal building. Once the commissioners received the plans and approved them, the secretary would advertise in the local newspapers for bids from contractors. With spring approaching, work could begin on the structure.<sup>13</sup> Progress on a permanent home for the TNSO proved slow but steady.

With the architectural plans complete, the process for receiving contractor bids could begin. At the end of February, the Board of Regents accepted Whitely's plans and specifications presented at the meeting. Planned construction of the two-story building included a brick facade with the basement and foundation built of stone. The secretary of the board then formally announced the period for soliciting bids from contractors to be open.<sup>14</sup> As the community awaited the closing of the open bid phase, the public could inspect the architectural renderings of the Normal building at the Bank of Edmond.<sup>15</sup> The proposal consisted of a main floor with two large classrooms, a girl's room, a cloakroom and several closets for storage. The second floor housed two more classrooms, a boy's room, more closets, and the assembly hall.<sup>16</sup> Mitch reminded those interested in entering a contractor's bid to turn them into him by 5:00 pm on March 25 at the Bank of Edmond.<sup>17</sup> Perched on the hill to the east, the impressive building would dominate the town's blossoming skyline once it was built. Residents and tradesmen surely felt the

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<sup>12</sup> Patricia Loughlin and Bob Burke, *Building Traditions, Educating Generations: A History of the University of Central Oklahoma* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Heritage Association, 2007), 6.

<sup>13</sup> "No Title," *The Edmond Sun*, January 29, 1892, 4.

<sup>14</sup> "No Title," *The Edmond Sun*, March 4, 1892, 4.

<sup>15</sup> "No Title," *The Edmond Sun*, March 11, 1892, 4.

<sup>16</sup> "No Title," *The Edmond Sun*, March 11, 1892, 4.

<sup>17</sup> "To Builders," *The Edmond Sun*, March 11, 1892, 4.

excitement. The new school meant work for some and pride for the rest.

### **The Man Chosen to Lead the Territorial Normal School of Oklahoma**

As provisions for building the Normal were made, the need for a teacher and principal became apparent. The Board of Regents called upon Richard Thatcher, who had recently arrived back from working for the Census Office in Washington, D. C. Thatcher's arrived in Edmond after the run, but he was offered employment in Washington soon after while Mrs. Thatcher opened the Central Hotel in Edmond. Before moving to Oklahoma Territory with his family, Thatcher served as superintendent of city schools in Severy, Kansas for a time.<sup>18</sup> His final position before arriving in Edmond was as the superintendent of Neodesha schools, Kansas.<sup>19</sup> Thatcher's return to Edmond was timely and the board appointed him to the position of principal on October 1, 1891.<sup>20</sup> Thatcher was the only faculty member until September 1892 and would be one of many educators from Kansas who would grace the halls of the Territorial Normal School of Oklahoma.<sup>21</sup>

As time drew near to the start of the first session of the TNSO, efforts were made to spread the word throughout Oklahoma Territory about the school. Just three days before classes started, Thatcher wrote an article in *The Edmond Sun* announcing the opening of the Territorial Normal School of Oklahoma.<sup>22</sup> He stated the school's purpose

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<sup>18</sup> "History of University of Central Oklahoma," *University of Central Oklahoma Archives and Special Collections* <[http://library.uco.edu/archives/ucohistory/university-presidents\\_details.cfm?PID=1](http://library.uco.edu/archives/ucohistory/university-presidents_details.cfm?PID=1)> (accessed April 11, 2011).

<sup>19</sup> "History of University of Central Oklahoma," *University of Central Oklahoma Archives and Special Collections*.

<sup>20</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 7.

<sup>21</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 11.

<sup>22</sup> Richard Thatcher, "A Grand Opportunity," *The Edmond Sun*, November 6, 1891, 1.



to train individuals to be teachers. He then said,

Even High Schools and Colleges do not usually make a specialty of preparing persons for school-teaching. The medical schools train our physicians, the law-schools, our lawyers, the theological schools, our ministers. So the Normal Schools have the special function of furnishing trained teachers for the public schools and our legislature wisely provided that Oklahoma should have a Normal School, and locate the same at Edmond.<sup>23</sup>

For those uncertain of the function of a normal school, Thatcher's articles educated them on the institution's purpose.

The establishment of the Normal School so early in the territory's history pointed to a belief in the importance not only of education but of having trained teachers to educate the populace. The board's choice of Thatcher proved them to be serious about creating an institute of learning geared toward training scholars to educate the next generation. As evidenced by the town's reaction to the school and the resident's willingness to support the institution, the Legislature did chose wisely. Thatcher now needed to recruit students to make TNSO a viable place to prepare them for the teaching profession.

### **A Time of Learning**

With Thatcher in charge, learning commenced. The curriculum first used by Thatcher consisted of three grades taught: preparatory and the first and second years of high school. The preparatory grade work consisted of five subjects: "arithmetic, grammar, descriptive geography, reading, and orthography."<sup>24</sup> The Normal department of

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<sup>23</sup> Thatcher, "A Grand Opportunity," *The Edmond Sun*, November 6, 1891, 1.

<sup>24</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 3.

the first and second years of high school course work consisted of two semesters. Higher arithmetic, physical geography, elementary algebra, English analysis, U. S. history, and orthography made up the first term of work. Higher algebra, civics, physiology, Lockwood's English, penmanship, and theory and practice rounded out the curriculum for the second term.<sup>25</sup> As a result of the lack of high schools in the territory and haphazard curriculums in elementary schools, the course work at the TNSO remained rudimentary in order to bring students up to an acceptable level of education.

As students listened to their lessons on various subjects in the unfinished Methodist Episcopal Church, they sat upon benches and in front of desks made by Principal Thatcher. Later into the school year, the appropriate furniture arrived.<sup>26</sup> Often times, pupils helped Thatcher with the upkeep of the classroom, particularly during the cold winter months. For example, William McFadyen remembered the numerous times he helped the principal break kindling for the wood stove used to heat the space.<sup>27</sup> At a time when hard work was the norm, students did what they could to help Principal Thatcher with the care of the classroom as he was the only administrator and faculty member of the school.

From the moment Thatcher began his work as teacher and principal at the TNSO, he wanted to establish a model school. This model school not only would allow children from the community to receive a good education, but would be used to train students of the Normal School in a classroom setting. By mid-December 1891, his dream came to fruition. On Christmas Day 1891, Thatcher placed an announcement in *The Edmond Sun*

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<sup>25</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 3.

<sup>26</sup> "Letter to L. Jeston Hampton from William McFadyen," June 17, 1944, 1, William McFadyen Folder, Territorial Normal School box, Laboratory of History Museum, University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, Oklahoma.

<sup>27</sup> "Letter to L. Jeston Hampton from William McFadyen," June 17, 1944, 1.

stating “I am about to organize a “Model School” department in combination with our Normal. My accommodations are limited, and I cannot provide for more than eight or ten pupils – Their ages should not be less than six nor above twelve at the highest.”<sup>28</sup> On January 6, 1892, Thatcher had ten students creating a first and second grade.<sup>29</sup> In a later announcement, the principal reiterated the importance of the model school, saying “While it will benefit the young Normalites by giving them daily practice in teaching, it will doubtless give superior advantages to those young pupils, who are so fortunate as to secure a place in the Model School department of the Normal.”<sup>30</sup> Thatcher saw the importance of building upon the association between the TNSO and Edmond. In return, Edmondites recognized the advantages to having the TNSO located in their community. Thatcher’s desire became the ground floor in the budding symbiotic relationship between the town and the school.

The principal’s model school consisted of up two grades. Each level focused on specific areas of study and built upon knowledge gained from the previous learning levels. The model school consisted of a first grade, with a “C”, “B,” and an “A” class. The course work in “C” class included readings from *McGuffey’s Chart*, spelling, learning numbers, writing, drawing, and language.<sup>31</sup> The “B” class read from *McGuffey’s First Reader*, continuing work in spelling, numbers, penmanship, and language. The second class also had a course called Oral Geography, which involved locating the geographical location school through the use of compass directions and maps. The students also had to find various town buildings and streets. Besides the previously mentioned course work,

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<sup>28</sup> Richard Thatcher, “An Invitation,” *The Edmond Sun*, December 25, 1891, 3

<sup>29</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 4; “Normal Echoes,” *The Edmond Sun*, January 8, 1892, 4.

<sup>30</sup> “Normal Echoes,” *The Edmond Sun*, January 8, 1892, 4.

<sup>31</sup> Richard Thatcher, “The Model Class,” *The Edmond Sun*, January 8, 1892, 1.

weekly “rhetoricals” were added to the pupils’ studies.<sup>32</sup> “A” class built upon the work of “C” and “B,” progressing to higher levels dependent on the development of the students. For example, the students began with counting up to twenty-five. Then they moved to simple addition and subtraction of the number two. From there, the children progressed to addition and subtraction by the numbers two and eight.<sup>33</sup>

The second grade of the model school had “B” and “A” classes as well. In “B” class, students read the first half of *McGuffey’s Second Reader* and worked with multiplication and division tables.<sup>34</sup> The children also learned the proper names of mathematical units, such as tens, hundreds, thousands, and so on. Language work included composition and punctuation exercises. The pupils continued spelling lessons and weekly “rhetoricals.”<sup>35</sup> The students also began writing on paper with lead pencils. The geography course continued the use of maps and utilized globes to learn the hemispheres.<sup>36</sup> The second grade “A” class was similar to that of the first grade in terms of building upon the work previously done in other courses. However, in second grade “A” class, the pupils learned long division, multiplying with larger numbers, and how to prove their answers. Principal Thatcher taught both grades lessons in color and drawing, as well as calisthenics.<sup>37</sup> The course work and classroom setting was similar to what children at public schools were experiencing. On the other hand, the model school allowed students of the TNSO to observe classroom management styles and teaching techniques.

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<sup>32</sup> Thatcher, “The Model Class,” *The Edmond Sun*, January 8, 1892, 1.

<sup>33</sup> Thatcher, “The Model Class,” *The Edmond Sun*, January 8, 1892, 1.

<sup>34</sup> Thatcher, “The Model Class,” *The Edmond Sun*, January 8, 1892, 1.

<sup>35</sup> Thatcher, “The Model School,” *The Edmond Sun*, January 8, 1892, 1.

<sup>36</sup> Thatcher, “The Model School,” *The Edmond Sun*, January 8, 1892, 1.

<sup>37</sup> Thatcher, “The Model School,” *The Edmond Sun*, January 8, 1892, 1.

As Thatcher and the students labored away, the Board of Regents of the Normal met to discuss expenditures and purchases. On January 6, 1892, the board approved a bill for the salary of a teacher and janitor. New seats and various appliances needed for the classroom were also ordered.<sup>38</sup> The members also visited Thatcher and the students during class and were pleased with the “manner in which it is being conducted.”<sup>39</sup> They made note of the present unfinished state of the building. The board, unhappy with the lack of plastered walls, passed a resolution to have the issue taken care of at once, informing the Methodist Episcopal Church that if upgrades did not occur, they would have to make other arrangements for the school.<sup>40</sup> After the Board of Regents of the Normal School convened a second time, they approved of the improvements made to the church’s interior since their meeting earlier in month. The members were also pleased with addition of new furniture previously ordered to the classroom.<sup>41</sup> The students were able to work in an environment more conducive to learning because they had the proper tools to do so.

As the students labored away on their studies, Thatcher was hard at work on his next endeavor. His project was to organize the Normal School Literary Society.<sup>42</sup> The society raised funds to purchase books for the library, as the collection lacked in all aspects of a true library.<sup>43</sup> Almost every week, the group held a debate and partook in various forms of entertainment.<sup>44</sup> The Literary Society’s meetings were open to the

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<sup>38</sup> “No Title,” *The Edmond Sun*, January 8, 1892, 4.

<sup>39</sup> “No Title,” *The Edmond Sun*, January 8, 1892, 4.

<sup>40</sup> “No Title,” *The Edmond Sun*, January 8, 1892, 4.

<sup>41</sup> “No Title,” *The Edmond Sun*, January 29, 1892, 4.

<sup>42</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 4.

<sup>43</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 5.

<sup>44</sup> “Normal Echoes,” *The Edmond Sun*, January 29, 1892, 4.

public and after a time began charging admission.<sup>45</sup> Various topics of discussion ranged from “Resolved, that the beauties of nature excel those of art,” to being single versus married. The conversations sparked by the debates were often lively and humorous.<sup>46</sup> Aside from the Literary Society and students busying themselves with course work, some pupils took time to join a “young folks” organization. Minnie Morton served as the secretary for the group. Under the direction of Reverend H. H. Cronk, the young adults met every two weeks at the Methodist Episcopal Church.<sup>47</sup> These types of organizations provided students and community members the chance to come together to network and interact with one another.

Within a relatively short time, Thatcher made his first recommendation for a young woman to take on a teaching position in the community. Morton met the minimum requirements and taught at a one-room schoolhouse just west of Edmond.<sup>48</sup> As the school term advanced, a number of students took county examinations to obtain teaching certificates. D. E. Sloan received a third grade certificate, and others obtained credentials to teach first and second grades.<sup>49</sup> Thatcher’s students were making their way out into the community and territory, spreading the knowledge gained at the TNSO. With the accomplishments of these students, Thatcher and the board proved the Normal School was a viable and needed addition to the territory. The training of these future teachers positively impacted Edmond and outlying communities.

Students and Edmondites took a break from the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

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<sup>45</sup> “Normal Echoes,” *The Edmond Sun*, February 12, 1892, 4.

<sup>46</sup> “Normal Echoes,” *The Edmond Sun*, January 29, 1892, 4; “Normal Echoes,” *The Edmond Sun*, February 12, 1892, 4.

<sup>47</sup> “No Title,” *The Edmond Sun*, January 19, 1892, 4.

<sup>48</sup> Loughlin and Burke, *Building Traditions, Educating Generations*, 1; Morton later married and was known by the last name of Kibby.

<sup>49</sup> “Normal Echoes,” *The Edmond Sun*, February 19, 1892, 4.

The community gathered to participate in Edmond's first masquerade ball in February at Central Hall, an entertainment venue across the street from the hotel managed by Mrs. Thatcher. The attendees fancied the music and dancing. Laughter erupted when the guests attempted to discover the true identities of everyone under masks.<sup>50</sup> The night of frivolity allowed pupils of the TNSO to take a short departure from their daily studies and relax, and offered them the opportunity to interact and get know each other. Normal life resumed after the masquerade only to be disrupted shortly after when a blizzard struck a few weeks later preventing some students living outside of town from attending class.<sup>51</sup>

As town members and students took a weather-induced break, Thatcher remained hard at work. Principal Thatcher once again argued for the school's cause in a March 1892 article in *The Edmond Sun*, continuing his debate about teachers finishing their winter school term. He stated that because of the lower wages of instructors in Oklahoma Territory, those trained in the "old settled state" would remain where they were.<sup>52</sup> Thatcher quoted Governor Steele in saying, "One of the most pressing demands of Oklahoma is good schools."<sup>53</sup> The principal continued advocating the importance of the Normal School to prepare the up and coming educators in the future state of Oklahoma. He went on to urge that those who wanted to do more than teach at a second or third grade level to seek advanced qualifications by attending the school at Edmond.<sup>54</sup> Thatcher understood the importance of recruiting working teachers into the TNSO to advance their own education so that students across the territory would benefit from well-trained educators.

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<sup>50</sup> "No Title," *The Edmond Sun*, February 26, 1892, 4.

<sup>51</sup> "Normal Echoes," *The Edmond Sun*, March 25, 1892, 1.

<sup>52</sup> Richard Thatcher, "To the Teachers of Oklahoma," *The Edmond Sun*, March 4, 1892, 1.

<sup>53</sup> Thatcher, "To the Teachers of Oklahoma," *The Edmond Sun*, March 4, 1892, 1.

<sup>54</sup> Thatcher, "To the Teachers of Oklahoma," *The Edmond Sun*, March 4, 1892, 1.

Learning continued at the TNSO and at the conclusion of the spring term, fifty-six students had entered the classroom under Thatcher's guidance. Pupils ranged in age from thirteen to twenty-one years old.<sup>55</sup> The principal approached the board, petitioning for the addition of a qualified teacher to instruct the model school children, along with another faculty member to assist him in teaching the courses of the Normal School.<sup>56</sup> Morton received a summer teaching position as a result of her work during the spring at a country school.<sup>57</sup> The TNSO had reached a major milestone, the completion of its first year of operation. The performance of Morton's teaching ability and her award of the summer school contract could also measure the progress of the school. The TNSO was gaining momentum and advancing towards becoming one of the premier institutions of higher education in the territory. Great strides had been made to improve facilities, instruction, and staff. The school and town learned to integrate and support each entity during this first year.

### **Onward and Upward**

As students excelled in course work, the town improved in a variety of ways. New homes sprang up, along with new buildings spanning Broadway and Second Street.<sup>58</sup> *The Edmond Sun* made note of the lots platted around the site of the Normal. The newspaper recognized the value of the land and the people eager to move from other towns to be close to what many believed would be "Oklahoma's leading educational

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<sup>55</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 4.

<sup>56</sup> Richard Thatcher, "The Normal University," *The Edmond Sun*, June 10, 1892, 4.

<sup>57</sup> "Normal Echoes," *The Edmond Sun*, April 15, 1892, 4.

<sup>58</sup> "Improvements," *The Edmond Sun*, March 25, 1892, 4.



institution.”<sup>59</sup> Classes continued and work moved forward on the construction of the Normal building after being delayed by the bidding process for contractors.<sup>60</sup> The town prospered and growth continued. Residents and students enjoyed a sense of anticipation as they prepared for the attention sure to come once construction was completed on the Normal building.

Soon the school would rise on the hilltop and serve as a beacon for educating teachers. Following an extended deadline of April 9, the Normal building construction contract was awarded to Spicknell, Townsend, and Hubbard of Wellington, Kansas for \$4,400.<sup>61</sup> This contract was for the shell of the building. A second open bid period occurred at a later date for the completion of the interior. The contractors established a brickyard locally after examining the quality of the clay for the bricks needed for the exterior.<sup>62</sup> Approximately 140,000 bricks were needed and 170,000 were fired at the brickyard on the property of Captain Jackson, just to the north of the Normal land.<sup>63</sup> The contractors also planned to use the labor of idle community members to construct the building. The estimated completion date was September 1, 1892.<sup>64</sup> For many, the Normal School brought pride to the community. For others, the construction of the school gave citizens the chance to earn an income, keeping money flowing through Edmond’s coffers.

As work forged ahead at the school site, citizens made note of rising real estate prices. Many believed it meant a rapid but steady growth for the community. In turn, this

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<sup>59</sup> “No Title,” *The Edmond Sun*, February 12, 1892, 4.

<sup>60</sup> John L. Mitch, “Normal Notice,” *The Edmond Sun*, April 1, 1892, 1.

<sup>61</sup> “The Normal Building,” *The Edmond Sun*, April 22, 1892, 4.

<sup>62</sup> “The Normal Building,” *The Edmond Sun*, April 22, 1892, 4.

<sup>63</sup> “The Normal,” *The Edmond Sun*, July 1, 1892, 4; Fordice, “A History of Edmond, Oklahoma,” 44; Thatcher, “Early Reminiscences of the Normal School,” *The Vista*, January 1904, 54.

<sup>64</sup> “The Normal Building,” *The Edmond Sun*, April 22, 1892, 4.

would attract attention to the town and increase business.<sup>65</sup> *The Edmond Sun* boasted that if 500 students attended the Normal, \$2,000 a week for roughly nine months would go into the town's economy. Edmond could become "the center of the most enlightened and cultured society in the territory."<sup>66</sup> As a result, increasing population would demand more farm produce, helping the local farmers and expanding the regional economic base.

### **Assistance from the Community**

As local residents worked on the Normal building, Edmond citizens also helped the TNSO in other ways. At one Literary Society gathering, town citizens donated seventeen dollars for the acquisition of books or other items deemed necessary by the organization's leadership.<sup>67</sup> By early May 1892, the group began saving up to purchase the TNSO's first musical instrument, a chapel organ. The organ cost ninety dollars.<sup>68</sup> With the end of the term near, the final social was held on the evening of the last class day, July 1. Everyone held high hopes the entertainment would be the best performance of the year.<sup>69</sup> Admission to the event was twenty-five cents; for children age twelve and under, fifteen cents. All of the funds received would go directly towards purchasing the organ for the school.<sup>70</sup> Due to the residents' generosity, the Normal School received their new instrument shortly thereafter and the students, faculty, and townsfolk were pleased with the "sweet tones and splendid actions."<sup>71</sup> With the new organ in place, the Literary Society's entertainment productions became more exhilarating. The week after the final

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<sup>65</sup> "The Normal," *The Edmond Sun*, May 20, 1892, 4.

<sup>66</sup> "The Normal," *The Edmond Sun*, May 2, 1892, 4.

<sup>67</sup> "Normal Echoes," *The Edmond Sun*, April 29, 1892, 4.

<sup>68</sup> Jones, *Sixty Years at Central*, 6; "Normal Echoes," *The Edmond Sun*, May 6, 1892, 4.

<sup>69</sup> "Normal Echoes," *The Edmond Sun*, June 17, 1892, 4.

<sup>70</sup> "Normal Entertainment," *The Edmond Sun*, June 24, 1892, 4.

<sup>71</sup> "Normal Echoes," *The Edmond Sun*, May 27, 1892, 4.

literary social, *The Edmond Sun* commended the students' performances. The program included various orations, recitations, music, and dialogue presented by the Normal department. A handful of children from the model school performed several gesture songs.<sup>72</sup> The community praised the efforts of Principal Thatcher and was pleased with the growth of the institution.<sup>73</sup> Thatcher worked hard to get the school to this point. His success was in part owing to active citizens concerned about the TNSO.

Change was in the air for the students and school. Shortly after the conclusion of the first year of the Normal School, classes moved from the Methodist Episcopal Church at Broadway and Hurd to Central Hall on West First Street.<sup>74</sup> The change in venue was the result of the allegedly immoral activities of students during school hours in the church building. Those activities included dancing.<sup>75</sup> As a consequence, the school's administration was told by the church's minister to find a more suitable place to hold lessons until the Normal building became habitable.<sup>76</sup> Members of the community came forward and offered the upper floor of Central Hall to become the educational home for TNSO's students.<sup>77</sup> Edmondites made sure the students had another place to continue their studies when they returned in the fall.

In addition to more students enrolled at the school, the town also experienced growth. One of the town doctors, J. W. Comp, persuaded his daughter Elvie and her husband W. J. Huffman to move from Missouri to Edmond. The Huffmans would soon

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<sup>72</sup> "No Title," *The Edmond Sun*, July 8, 1892, 4.

<sup>73</sup> "The Normal," *The Edmond Sun*, July 1, 1892, 4.

<sup>74</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 5; Jones, *Sixty Years at Central*, 8.

<sup>75</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 5-6.

<sup>76</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 6; Loughlin and Burke, *Building Traditions, Educating Generations*, 6-7.

<sup>77</sup> Jones, *Sixty Years at Central*, 8; the Normal building was often referenced by students and locals as Normal Hall until it took on the name of Old North.

play a role in the lives of teachers-in-training.<sup>78</sup> As more students filled up the seats, the community realized that not everyone had a place to stay. Principal Thatcher made a plea to the editor of *The Edmond Sun* and community members, asking for more places where student's might board, and even suggested the possibility of a student dormitory to help increase the number of pupils attending the TNSO.<sup>79</sup> Local residents heeded the call and for the portion of students who came from a distance, families around the Edmond community opened their homes. The Huffmans opened their home to students at the same time as the center section of Normal Hall was completed.<sup>80</sup> One boarder of the Huffman's recalled paying \$2.50 a week for his room and board each time he stayed with them during the span of several years.<sup>81</sup> Another student of the TNSO recounted her time spent at the school and her rented room. During her stay at this boarding house just north of the Normal School, the young woman helped cook for the ten or twelve other ladies residing with her.<sup>82</sup> Helping around the boarding house was a common practice for many students.

Community members came to the aid of students, providing places for them to stay during the school year. The young men and women helped defray the extra cost by paying for their room and board as well as assisting around the home. The added income helped families, increased commerce with local merchants and, along with the social interaction, strengthened the ties between community and school.

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<sup>78</sup> Interview with Mrs. W. J. Huffman by Mildred B. McFarland, September 14, 1937, vol 45, 191, Indian Pioneer Collection, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

<sup>79</sup> Thatcher, "The Normal University," *The Edmond Sun*, June 10, 1892, 4.

<sup>80</sup> Interview with Mrs. W. J. Huffman, 192.

<sup>81</sup> Clarence Robison, "Early Memories of Central State College," November 18, 1955, 1, 10, Clarence Robison folder, Territorial Normal School box, Laboratory of History Museum, University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, Oklahoma.

<sup>82</sup> Goldie Maher, "Recollections of a Student in the First Class of the First Institution of Higher Learning in Oklahoma Territory," as told to William J. Dale, October 7-8, 1955, 2, Goldie Maher folder, Territorial Normal School box, Laboratory of History Museum, University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, Oklahoma.

## A New Year

Seasons changed and students soon transitioned to the day-to-day activities of classroom learning. Summer passed with the addition of Edna Whitaker teaching summer school in a district close to the TNSO.<sup>83</sup> By the start of the 1892-93 school year, two instructors joined Thatcher in guiding the pupils in their studies.<sup>84</sup> Even with the increase in faculty from one to three and an enrollment of one hundred students, the curriculum remained the same. Thatcher continued to teach with the assistance of F. H. McNett and Mrs. Selwin Douglas.<sup>85</sup> The 1892-93 school year marked an important milestone. On January 2, 1893, the students and faculty moved into the partially completed Normal building and held classes there.<sup>86</sup> The assembly hall and four classrooms were available for lessons and lectures.<sup>87</sup> Although Normal Hall was finished enough to occupy for classes, it was far from being completed. Goldie Maher recalled how male students climbed up into the bare rafters and into the scaffolding surrounding the building, agitating the instructors.<sup>88</sup> The second school year welcomed a slew of new experiences. Students were finally attending classes in an environment designed for learning.

Although students and staff occupied the Normal building, the interior still needed to be fully completed. Two members of the second territorial legislature from Edmond, Hugh McCredie and John Pfaff, lobbied for and received an appropriation of \$15,000 to

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<sup>83</sup> "Normal Echoes," *The Edmond Sun*, May 13, 1892, 1.

<sup>84</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 4.

<sup>85</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 4, 17.

<sup>86</sup> "History of University of Central Oklahoma," *University of Central Oklahoma Archives and Special Collections*.

<sup>87</sup> Fordice, "A History of Edmond, Oklahoma," 44.

<sup>88</sup> Maher, "Recollections of a Student in the First Class of the First Institution of Higher Learning in Oklahoma Territory," 1.

enlarge and complete the Normal building at TNSO.<sup>89</sup> J. G. Haskell, a contractor from Topeka, Kansas, added the two wings and clock tower in 1894, which provided more classrooms for student use.<sup>90</sup> Sandstone from the farm of R. B. Potts covered the exterior of the north and south wings, as well as the clock tower, and the center section of Normal Hall, which was originally covered in brick.<sup>91</sup> Like their predecessors, Edmond's representatives worked diligently in the legislature to make sure the school's needs were met.

As McCredie and Pfaff labored away for the Normal School, waves were made regarding the value of teacher certification. Principal Thatcher, dissatisfied with the lack of attention to the value of the certificate of graduation in the original act establishing the school, voiced his concerns to the legislature.<sup>92</sup> Thatcher, along with McCredie, Classen, and Mitch, drafted a bill and got it passed that provided the diplomas issued by the Normal School would serve as a five-year certificate, allowing graduates of the school to teach anywhere in Oklahoma Territory.<sup>93</sup> Every five years an individual could renew the certificate, essentially turning it into a lifetime certification. Only the territorial superintendent could authorize the renewal.<sup>94</sup> The passage of this bill helped bring more clout to the diplomas issued by the TNSO upon the completion of the required course of study to become a teacher.

Before the start of the 1893-94 school year, politics interfered with the dynamics of the TNSO. Despite Thatcher's work with the legislature in 1893 to ensure the value of

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<sup>89</sup> Fordice, "A History of Edmond, Oklahoma," 44-45.

<sup>90</sup> Loughlin and Burke, *Building Traditions, Educating Generations*, 6.

<sup>91</sup> Fordice, "A History of Edmond, Oklahoma," 45.

<sup>92</sup> Thatcher, "Early Reminiscences of the Normal School," *The Vista*, January 1904, 59.

<sup>93</sup> Thatcher, "Early Reminiscences of the Normal School," *The Vista*, January 1904, 59.

<sup>94</sup> Thatcher, "Early Reminiscences of the Normal School," *The Vista*, January 1904, 59-60.

the school's diploma and an increase in student enrollment to one hundred sixteen, the administration of the institution was changed.<sup>95</sup> The Board of Regents removed Thatcher from his position as president for various reasons.<sup>96</sup> One cause for his firing was that he did not increase enrollment to an acceptable number during his two years as principal.<sup>97</sup> Also, the new state government officials in Guthrie flipped from being associated with ex-Union soldiers and Republicans to Democrats. Another motive was attributed to interference from "politically-minded busybodies."<sup>98</sup> The board chose George Winans, a former state superintendent of public instruction for Kansas, to replace Thatcher.<sup>99</sup>

With the new administration in place, Thatcher's model school faded into the background. In September 1893, Principal Winans divided the Literary Society into the Lyceum and Pioneer Literary Societies.<sup>100</sup> Extra-curricular and social activities at the school generally revolved around the two literary groups.<sup>101</sup> Members of Lyceum and Pioneer wrote essays, read a variety of dialogues, and held debates.<sup>102</sup> Aside from the scholarly gatherings, the boys joined together on multiple occasions to play baseball, but there were no formal sports competitions at the time.<sup>103</sup> For the students, life continued regardless of the changes and they made the best of the situation.

When students had time away from coursework, they took advantage of it. Young men and women went on dates. One student recalled the usual type of date consisted of a

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<sup>95</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 17.

<sup>96</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 12-14.

<sup>97</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 12-13.

<sup>98</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 13.

<sup>99</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 14.

<sup>100</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 17.

<sup>101</sup> Maher, "Recollections of a Student in the First Class of the First Institution of Higher Learning in Oklahoma Territory," 2.

<sup>102</sup> Maher, "Recollections of a Student in the First Class of the First Institution of Higher Learning in Oklahoma Territory," 2.

<sup>103</sup> Maher, "Recollections of a Student in the First Class of the First Institution of Higher Learning in Oklahoma Territory," 2.

young man escorting his young lady to the Main Street area of Edmond with a stop at Dr. Peck's Drug Store to listen to the "juke box," an early model of the gramophone.<sup>104</sup> If a man wanted to really impress the lady, he rented a horse and buggy to take her on a moonlit ride.<sup>105</sup> Little did the couples know, their activities away from the TNSO helped the local economy.

Changes continued to occur during Winans' first year at the school. The title of "President" was officially designated to Winans in January 1894.<sup>106</sup> During his short tenure at TNSO, a total of five faculty members taught varying degrees of course work.<sup>107</sup> Winans taught history, the science of education, psychology, school management, and methods.<sup>108</sup> F. H. Umholtz instructed classes in language, history, and civics. J. O. Allen taught the natural science courses and developed the science department. Mary L. Sloss instructed literature and rhetoric. Thatcher, the only remaining faculty member from the previous year, taught mathematics as well as penmanship. During this time he also served as the school's registrar and recorder.<sup>109</sup> The students and staff adjusted to the additions made to the school's dynamics.

As with all of the school's administrations, Winans set the goal of substantially increasing enrollment numbers, but circumstances barred him from large gains. A severe economic panic occurred in 1893, disrupting life all across America.<sup>110</sup> Much of Oklahoma Territory was already dealing with agricultural hardships due to drought in

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<sup>104</sup> Maher, "Recollections of a Student in the First Class of the First Institution of Higher Learning in Oklahoma Territory," 2-3.

<sup>105</sup> Maher, "Recollections of a Student in the First Class of the First Institution of Higher Learning in Oklahoma Territory," 3.

<sup>106</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 14, 16.

<sup>107</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 15.

<sup>108</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 15-16.

<sup>109</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 16.

<sup>110</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 14.



1892 and 1893 before the financial downturn. As a result of the drought, many crops failed.<sup>111</sup> According to Governor William C. Renfrow's 1894 report, Oklahoma Territory was dealing with the effects of the financial depression much better than the rest of America because the "people of Oklahoma were not in debt."<sup>112</sup> In his "General Observations" for 1895, Renfrow discussed how the crops were cut short or failed due to the lack of rain in the region during the spring.<sup>113</sup> Even with the drought and economic downturn, the school's numbers increased steadily, but not to the extent Winans had planned.

Edmond and the Territorial Normal School won the race to offer classes before the other two territorial schools with the help of Edmond residents. Their support proved instrumental in getting the institution off the ground with the offer of land, construction of the first building, along with providing space for classrooms and student residency. In addition, the presence of the institution brought notice to the fledgling town. The influx of students and increased construction contributed directly to Edmond's growth.

Despite a small rift with part of the community, the rest of the town rallied to provide needed commodities to the students and faculty. Construction directly benefitted the city and residents alike and the social interactions provided an atmosphere of entertainment and enlightenment not often attained in a young territory. Community leaders embraced the school even as the school depended upon the community. The push for locating the TNSO in Edmond laid the foundation for the symbiotic relationship between the two. The formative years of the TNSO and the town built the ground floor in

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<sup>111</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 14.

<sup>112</sup> William C. Renfrow, *Report of the Governor of Oklahoma, 1894* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1894), 441.

<sup>113</sup> William C. Renfrow, *Report of the Governor of Oklahoma, 1895* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1895), 513.

an association that would prove beneficial for school, town, and the territory as a whole. In time, Edmond would become known for its educational opportunities and the Normal School would become an innovative leader in teacher education.

## Chapter 4

### Growth

Despite economic setbacks and changes in administration, the Normal School and Edmond continued to forge a future together. Their destinies appeared intertwined. The community responded to the needs of the school and the TNSO provided a symbol of pride and a political power base for the growing town. Businesses prospered from the increase in the student population as the school bought commodities locally. Extracurricular activities at the TNSO profited from advertising merchants purchased in the school's monthly publications. Children of local residents had the opportunity for a first-class education, provided by the students taught at the TNSO. The symbiotic relationship between Edmond and the TNSO thrived as both the school and community matured during this formative period. Those in positions of leadership understood the benefits of cooperation to further the development of both.

#### **Moving Forward to an Educational Milestone**

Determined to continue building and intent on prospering after the removal of Winans as the leader of the school, the board of trustees selected another man to move the institution forward. E. R. Williams succeeded the previous president of the Normal in May and managed the completion of the additions to the Normal building in July 1894.<sup>1</sup> The composition of the faculty changed once again. Umholtz was no longer listed on the roster of instructors and James S. Buchanan took over his predecessor's duties teaching

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<sup>1</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma* (Edmond, 1953), 20-21.

history and civics.<sup>2</sup> Three women were hired to replace Sloss, teaching English, literature, and instrumental music.<sup>3</sup> One of those women, Vinnie Galbraith developed the new department of instrumental music. Although Thatcher made it through the initial transition from Winans to Williams, he was removed from his post on June 1, 1894.<sup>4</sup> For the school year, Thatcher served as the Principal for the Edmond schools. He returned at the start of the second term to teach penmanship at the Normal.<sup>5</sup> Despite the setback of integrating a new administration, the loss of several teachers, including Thatcher for a time, the school pressed on.

President Williams increased the enrollment numbers to one hundred sixty-one for the 1894-95 school year.<sup>6</sup> He also updated the mission statement of the school to state:

The institution does not propose to be a University. Its special function is to prepare teachers for our public schools. Its courses of study have been prepared with reference to this end. The principle underlying Normal Schools is that teachers should not only understand the subject matter, but the best method of presenting it as well; that there is a rational and orderly development of the mental faculties, and the subject matter taught should correspond with this development; that in this way; and in this way only, can the highest results be achieved; that he who would teach most successfully must recognize these principles in his work, and that to this end he must give special preparation.<sup>7</sup>

Throughout his brief one-year tenure, Williams brought positive changes to the Normal.

To gain admission to TNSO, students had to pass examinations in reading, writing or

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<sup>2</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 20.

<sup>3</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 21; The names of the two women who accompanied Vinnie Galbraith to teach at the Normal are not known.

<sup>4</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 21.

<sup>5</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 18, 21.

<sup>6</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 20.

<sup>7</sup> J. Dale Mullins and Lucille Patton, *A Centennial History of the Education Program* (Edmond: Central State University, 1990), 14.

penmanship, spelling, arithmetic, English grammar, geography, and American History.<sup>8</sup>

Toward the end of the first term, the president brought in Mrs. McCartney to teach art classes, expanding the curriculum once again.<sup>9</sup> He encouraged the two literary societies to engage in debates, essays, recitations, readings, and parliamentary drills.<sup>10</sup> Each year the Pioneer and Lyceum members competed against one another for the Regents Medal, the winners receiving bragging rights and ownership of the trophy until the next year.

During the 1895 spring semester, the two organizations held a contest to help raise funds to increase the library's meager holdings.<sup>11</sup> Spectators from the community responded to the call for help and approximately one hundred books were added to the collection.<sup>12</sup> The spring also brought good and bad news to the school. The legislature issued the TNSO an appropriation of \$3,000 to finish the interior of the school. Although Edmondite James Brown helped secure the funds, the amount proved insufficient. Only the interior of the south wing was completed.<sup>13</sup> The community once again came to the aid of the school to enhance the learning atmosphere.

Change in leadership affected the Normal School once again. Although President Williams excelled during his year of employment, he resigned at the end of the 1894-95 year.<sup>14</sup> Edmond D. Murdaugh took over as president of the Normal School. Murdaugh went straight to work following his appointment to fill vacancies in the faculty. He selected Reverend Walter Lee Ross and added Mrs. Charles York to teach the new vocal

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<sup>8</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 22-23.

<sup>9</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 24; Mrs. McCartney's first name is not known.

<sup>10</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 23.

<sup>11</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 23.

<sup>12</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 24.

<sup>13</sup> Stella Barton Fordice, "A History of Edmond, Oklahoma," (MA thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1927), 45; Edna Jones, *Sixty Years at Central: Facts and Figures on Service and Friendship through the years, 1891-1951* (Edmond: Central State College, 1951), 8.

<sup>14</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 25.

music course.<sup>15</sup> In 1895, the TNSO adopted bronze and blue as the school's colors.<sup>16</sup>

Following another turnaround in the school administration, the students and staff adapted and the institution continued to progress.

President Murdaugh introduced several new additions to the academic year. He instituted the first school catalogue for the 1895-96 term. The catalogue provided a range of information, including upcoming holidays for the 1896-97 school year with entrance examinations September 7-8, 1896, and the first term beginning the following day, and listed admissions requirements, rules of conduct, and course schedules for each of the five levels taught at the Normal.<sup>17</sup> To enter the Normal, a student had to provide a diploma issued by the Territorial Board of Education, showing proof of attending a public school and completing the required course work. If a prospective student did not have a diploma, he or she had to pass an exam covering reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, English, grammar, geography, and American History.<sup>18</sup>

The catalogue also informed the prospective student of some of the expenses they would encounter while attending the TNSO. The Normal School did not charge tuition, but an incidental fee of a dollar and twenty-five cents a term was due upon entrance. Boarding information was also provided. If a student wanted an unfurnished room, they could rent it for two dollars a month, while a furnished space cost four dollars. Some students had the option of living with private families that also provided meals. The rates

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<sup>15</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 25.

<sup>16</sup> Patricia Loughlin and Bob Burke, *Building Traditions, Educating Generations: A History of the University of Central Oklahoma* (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Heritage Association, 2007), 10.

<sup>17</sup> *Catalogue of the Territorial Normal School of Oklahoma, 1895-96* (Edmond: Territorial Normal School of Oklahoma, 1895), 1, 6, 21-26.

<sup>18</sup> *Catalogue of the Territorial Normal School of Oklahoma, 1895-96*, 6-7.

were from two dollars and fifty cents to three dollars a week.<sup>19</sup> This is another example of the relationship between the community and the school. By providing places for students to live during each term, households not only benefitted monetarily, but they had the opportunity to interact on a daily basis with the students. In return, the young men and women found a sense of community and belonging.

Murdaugh's first year as president was hampered by several unfortunate events. Throughout the 1895-96 academic year, enrollment dropped from one hundred sixty-one students to one hundred fifty-six. By this time, the University at Norman and the Agricultural and Mechanical College at Stillwater were competing for students across the Territory, attempting to get them to enroll in coursework at their institutions.<sup>20</sup> Aside from fighting to increase dwindling enrollment numbers during 1895-96, the Normal School and the Edmond community dealt with the deaths of three students and two prominent men, one of which was the town's mayor. In a tribute to the three Normalites who passed away, three trees were planted by Normal Hall on Arbor Day 1896.<sup>21</sup> Although the TNSO dealt with competition from the other two territorial institutions, the students, staff, and citizens came together to support one another in the wake of the deaths.

In an attempt to attract men and women to the TNSO, Murdaugh became creative in what the school offered to students in regard to classes. Under the president's guidance, a lecture series began in February 1896.<sup>22</sup> In his second year, President

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<sup>19</sup> "Tuition and Incidental Fee," *Catalogue of the Territorial Normal School of Oklahoma, 1895-96*, 9; "Board," *Catalogue of the Territorial Normal School of Oklahoma, 1895-96*, 9.

<sup>20</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 26.

<sup>21</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 32; Loughlin and Burke, *Building Traditions, Educating Generations*, 10.

<sup>22</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 33.

Murdaugh added two more members to the faculty. Washatella Turner served as the assistant in voice training and music. Dr. Edwin W. Doran, the first “educated doctor” at the Normal School, took the post of head of the English department.<sup>23</sup>

Under Murdaugh’s watchful eye, the school produced the first monthly publication, *The Normal Philomath*, in January 1897.<sup>24</sup> In Greek, Philomath translates to “lover of learning.”<sup>25</sup> The overall purpose of *The Normal Philomath* was to inform the readers of school activities, share important information and lectures, as well as literary works. It also discussed local and regional issues regarding collegiate sports.<sup>26</sup> In the first issue of the paper, the Normal Yell was printed:

*Karo, Karo, Kire, Kee  
Oklahoma Normal, Don’t you see  
Hip! Hip! Who! Bronze and Blue;  
Oklahoma Normal, Hoo! Hoo! Hoo!*<sup>27</sup>

In the March edition of *The Normal Philomath*, in the “Territorial News” section, mention is made of President Murdaugh’s work on updating courses of study for the county institutes in the areas of arithmetic, geography, pedagogy, and physiology. “Territorial News” also informed the readership of the next annual examination for territorial certificates and diplomas on June 15-19 in Edmond.<sup>28</sup> Several advertisements in the publication were rather catchy. The Poppino & Chapman Company used interesting facts to draw attention to their business so that students and other businesses would buy supplies from this establishment.<sup>29</sup> One fact was “The English language is

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<sup>23</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 33.

<sup>24</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 34.

<sup>25</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 34.

<sup>26</sup> Loughlin and Burke, *Building Traditions, Educating Generations*, 13.

<sup>27</sup> Loughlin and Burke, *Building Traditions, Educating Generations*, 13.

<sup>28</sup> “Territorial News,” *The Normal Philomath*, March 1897, 21.

<sup>29</sup> Advertisement for Poppino & Chapman, *The Normal Philomath*, March 1897, 22.



spoken by 125,000,000 people.”<sup>30</sup> This tidbit of information was to draw the reader into the store to buy stationery, pens, and ink from the company. Another piece of information was about how a pound of spider web could reach around the world.<sup>31</sup> Poppino and Chapman were trying to entice individuals and business owners to buy bookkeeping supplies from their company. By placing advertisements in *The Normal Philomath*, businesses showed their continuing support of the school and this was another form of networking with the students.

Murdaugh and his staff advanced various endeavors to make the school better, but even with the improvements made since the opening of the TNSO, the territorial legislature approved the creation of a second Normal school at Alva in March 1897.<sup>32</sup> This created more competition for students among the various institutions of higher education in the territory. Edmond’s Normal School forged ahead despite the setback and continued training students in the art of teaching. Academic contests became a part of the students’ educational activities. During the spring 1897 term, students from the TNSO competed against the Territorial University (University of Oklahoma). The two teams debated the topic of feudalism.<sup>33</sup> Despite the addition of Northwestern Territorial Normal School of Oklahoma, the TNSO made the best of the situation and worked to increase the presence of the institution in the territory. Support from the community helped and the school looked toward the future.

Undeterred by the changes in educational dynamics within the territory, the TNSO continued to progress. The spring marked a defining milestone in the evolution of

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<sup>30</sup> Advertisement for Poppino & Chapman, *The Normal Philomath*, March 1897, 22.

<sup>31</sup> Advertisement for Poppino & Chapman, *The Normal Philomath*, March 1897, 22.

<sup>32</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 35.

<sup>33</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 35.

the Territorial Normal School of Oklahoma. Five students made up the first graduating class.<sup>34</sup> The graduates, John Adams, Robert Mayburn Howard, Phronia S. Eckes, Ida W. Belt and Rose M. Jackson, received Life Certificates after completing the entire program of study. Two of the students began their quest to obtain their degrees back in 1892.<sup>35</sup> Pageantry filled the June commencement ceremony. The women wore white Victorian dresses and the men donned formal suits.<sup>36</sup> Among those in attendance, the most prestigious guest was Territorial Governor Cassius M. Barnes.<sup>37</sup> This turning point in the TNSO's evolution as a worthy institution of higher education brought the school and community back into the limelight.

### **Working with Competition**

Aside from the competition with the A&M, the Territorial University, and later Alva's Normal School, the TNSO had to cope with normal institutes. The first implementation of the concept occurred in October 1839 with Henry Barnard of Hartford, Connecticut in charge of conducting the first session.<sup>38</sup> A normal institute generally consisted of a four to six weeklong course of study that included lectures and observations in a local public school.<sup>39</sup> Before the TNSO opened, normal institutes were held during the summer months, usually in Edmond. The institute allowed hopeful teachers to receive training in a shorter period of time, especially in the absence of a true

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<sup>34</sup> Loughlin and Burke, *Building Traditions, Educating Generations*, 11.

<sup>35</sup> Loughlin and Burke, *Building Traditions, Educating Generations*, 11.

<sup>36</sup> Loughlin and Burke, *Building Traditions, Educating Generations*, 11-12.

<sup>37</sup> Loughlin and Burke, *Building Traditions, Educating Generations*, 12.

<sup>38</sup> James W. Fraser, *Preparing America's Teachers: A History* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2007), 61.

<sup>39</sup> Fraser, *Preparing America's Teachers*, 61-62.

normal school.<sup>40</sup> For many, the idea of attending a normal institute was more appealing than taking classes for several years to become a teacher.

As the idea of the normal institutes spread throughout the country and into Oklahoma Territory, the TNSO had to counter the effects on the school's enrollment. Edmond's Normal School administration looked at the factors driving the desire for the institutes to continue. Flexibility and timing of the county normals played a large role in the program's continuing presence. This is evident in Governor Renfrow's 1893 report to the Secretary of the Interior. In the report he stated that all of the counties in Oklahoma Territory held sessions for two weeks during 1893.<sup>41</sup> Teachers already in the field often preferred the institute to the traditional school setting because it did not interfere with their schedules during the academic year. This is evident in Renfrow's findings for the 1895 report, in which he stated, "The normal institutes for training teachers were well attended, and have done much to advance the cause of popular education."<sup>42</sup>

If the students would not, or could not, come to Edmond to learn about the TNSO, a representative of the school would go to them. The president faced the competition head on and ventured out to the counties in an attempt to recruit students. As he traveled across the territory, he spoke to teachers about what the Territorial Normal School of Oklahoma had to offer them educationally.<sup>43</sup> One teacher attending the Kingfisher County Normal Institute, Francis Coram Oakes, listened to President Murdaugh speak about the TNSO during the summer of 1896 on his tour across the territory.<sup>44</sup> Little did

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<sup>40</sup> Fraser, *Preparing America's Teachers*, 62.

<sup>41</sup> William C. Renfrow, *Report of the Governor of Oklahoma, 1893* (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1893), 458.

<sup>42</sup> Renfrow, *Report of the Governor of Oklahoma, 1895*, 517.

<sup>43</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 23.

<sup>44</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 26.

the two men know what the future held for the young teacher. In 1900, Oakes performed at the Normal assembly hall with the Kingfisher College Glee Club.<sup>45</sup> Oakes would join the TNSO's English department as professor in 1903.<sup>46</sup>

Although Murdaugh did not get the response he had hoped for, he did not give up his pursuit of bringing in more people to the school and Edmond by continuing work that he had started prior to his appointment as president of the Normal School. Before taking his leadership role at the TNSO, he helped organize the Territorial Normal Institute, held May 27-29, 1895. The institute served as training for instructors and conductors of the county institutes held each summer.<sup>47</sup> In essence, this allowed the summer sessions to follow the same standards and curriculum. May 1896 saw the completion of the Second Annual Territorial Institute, held once again in Edmond.<sup>48</sup> The next May, the Third Annual Territorial Institute grew in size, particularly in regard to the number of speakers.<sup>49</sup> The length of the conference increased from three days to four days.<sup>50</sup>

In a way, Murdaugh's push for the Territorial Institute had a twofold mission. The first was to introduce those in charge of the county normals to what the Territorial Normal School of Oklahoma had to offer to young teachers. Second, by linking the Territorial Institute to Edmond and the TNSO, he linked the two names as being the pinnacle in higher education. The instructors and conductors of the county normals would then go back to their respective counties and share the information obtained while at the institute and attempt to sway the perspective teachers to attend school at the Normal in

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<sup>45</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 46.

<sup>46</sup> Loughlin and Burke, *Building Traditions, Educating Generations*, 15.

<sup>47</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 27.

<sup>48</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 28.

<sup>49</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 35.

<sup>50</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 35.

Edmond. Lengthening the Territorial Institute and hosting the gathering in Edmond brought money into the local economy. The visitors stayed in the town's hotels and ate at various dining establishments. Holding the institutes in Edmond enhanced both town and school and cemented the idea of the connection of both to quality education. If the town of Edmond became synonymous with teachers' training, its status would receive a boost.

### **A Change of Scenery**

For some, the TNSO was the only reason individuals were attracted to Edmond. But for families, the school and the community together offered the whole package. The two combined allowed the children to receive a quality education in the public schools and at the Normal School to further their training. The Territorial Normal School of Oklahoma attracted students from all over the young territory, but often times families and individuals moved to Edmond so that they (or their children) could receive a superior education. The Griffins serve as an example to the hopes of those pursuing a better life. The matriarch of the family, Lizzie, moved from her homestead northwest of town into Edmond so that the children had a better chance of attending the Normal School.<sup>51</sup> Several of her children went on to teach in local public schools after graduating from the institution.<sup>52</sup>

Another family that made the sacrifice for education moved from a homestead near El Reno, Oklahoma Territory.<sup>53</sup> The Roberts family realized they needed to move to

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<sup>51</sup> "Our Great Grandmother Elizabeth Ann 'Lizzie' Terry Griffin," *Griffin History Website* <<http://www.reocities.com/dgranna/lizpics.html>> (accessed October 25, 2011).

<sup>52</sup> "E. E. Griffin's Rites in Edmond to Be Thursday," *The Daily Oklahoman*, April 25, 1956; "Griffin," *The Edmond Evening Sun*, July 14, 1991.

<sup>53</sup> Interview with Mrs. Belle Roberts by Mildred B. McFarland, July 12, 1937, 433, Indian Pioneer Collection, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

where there were good schools. They decided on Edmond as their new home. They purchased land adjacent to the TNSO and sent their children to the local schools and later to the Normal.<sup>54</sup> The area schools benefited from the proximity of the TNSO and Edmond provided an attractive environment. Property sales and new construction to accommodate those drawn to the promise of education boosted the economy.

A young man by the name of Clarence Robison, who boarded with the Huffmans just down the street from the school, came all the way from Tecumseh to attend the institution.<sup>55</sup> Although his stays were short, as he had to return to Tecumseh to teach and earn funds so that he could support his mother and sister, he remained eager to continue his education. Robison often took course work during the summer terms.<sup>56</sup> Students like Robison caused a fluctuation in the town's population due to their intermittent attendance. Despite this, Edmond's growth remained steady.

When the 1900 Census was conducted, Edmond's population swelled to 965, up substantially from the 294 inhabitants counted in 1890. The town's increase in residents in ten years was nearly 230%, substantially more than Norman's at 182%. Stillwater, on the other hand, saw a boost of 406% between 1890 and 1900.<sup>57</sup> By committing to the TNSO and the ideal of quality public schools, Edmond created an atmosphere conducive to adding population. With a stable business environment and a location advantageous to growth, the TNSO was a viable addition to the community, which also acted as an incentive for people to relocate there.

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<sup>54</sup> Interview with Mrs. Belle Roberts, 435.

<sup>55</sup> Clarence Robison, "Early Memories of Central State College," November 18, 1955, 1-2, 4, Clarence Robison folder, Territorial Normal School box, Laboratory of History Museum, University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, Oklahoma.

<sup>56</sup> Robison, "Early Memories of Central State College," 1, 6, 12, 14.

<sup>57</sup> Department of the Interior – Census Office, "Statistics of Population, Table 8 – Population of Incorporated Cities, Towns, Villages, and Boroughs in 1900, with Population for 1890 – Continued," *Census Reports Volume I – Population Part I, 1900* (Washington: United States Census Office, 1901), 470.

## Forging Ahead

The TNSO continued to make strides in academic advancements. By the start of the 1897-98 school year, the two twenty-week terms became three sixteen-week terms. The change in semesters was enacted in hopes of attracting young teachers who had just completed the six-month school year.<sup>58</sup> With an enhanced school calendar, President Murdaugh increased faculty numbers to facilitate the anticipated rise in enrollment. Although two members of the staff resigned, Murdaugh filled the vacancies with L. W. Baxter and Frederick H. Umholtz.<sup>59</sup>

During the first term of that school year, the newest student group was formed. The Athenian Literary Society was created for men eighteen years of age or older.<sup>60</sup> By December 1897, the Glee Club was organized. President Murdaugh also hired Mrs. J. G. Imel as the Normal's first librarian.<sup>61</sup> Aside from those additions, Murdaugh also breathed life back to the old model school through the work of Miss Lizzie Wooster. Miss Wooster expanded upon Thatcher's work from 1892. Murdaugh appealed to the Board of Regents to further expand the training department. After further review, the Board denied his petition, stating the school was not ready for such growth.<sup>62</sup> Despite the denial of his request to expand the model school class, the president, staff, and students prospered educationally at the school with the additions of new faculty, classes, and extracurricular activities.

After almost a decade of existence in the territory, county normal institutes began

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<sup>58</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 37.

<sup>59</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 37.

<sup>60</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 37-38.

<sup>61</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 38.

<sup>62</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 44; Loughlin and Burke, *Building Traditions, Educating Generations*, 14.

to die off. Early in 1899, the Board of Regents, at Murdaugh's urging, developed a ten-week summer term to replace the four-week county review institutes.<sup>63</sup> There was an apparent need for more advanced course work, rather than the basic common branches generally taught. The county review institutes were at times viewed as a leisurely break from the rigors of teaching pupils.<sup>64</sup> By instituting the ten-week term, teachers had the ability to fine-tune their craft with more in-depth studies. In return, lower division students would benefit from their educators' increased proficiency in the various areas of study.

At the start of the autumn 1899 term, the Board of Regents allowed the model school to be organized once again, but work would not begin until the 1901-02 school year when Miss Emma Waite was selected as teacher.<sup>65</sup> The model school was completely set up and fully functional by the start of the 1902-03 school year with a director and team of teachers to educate children and provide hands-on training to the Normal students.<sup>66</sup> With the model school up and running, families seeking a better educational opportunity for their children had the chance to enroll them in the program. The model school benefitted Edmond and the TNSO by providing additional classroom space for young students and pupils for the teachers to practice their management and instruction skills.

### **Changing Times**

After six years of a stable administration at the TNSO, the cohesion of the school

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<sup>63</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 45.

<sup>64</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 45.

<sup>65</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 46.

<sup>66</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 46.



changed at the end of the 1900-01 academic year. Territorial government politics again played a part in disrupting the dynamics of the school.<sup>67</sup> Although Murdaugh resigned, his work had made a lasting impact. The course of study was now five years in length and a total of 82 students had graduated from TNSO since 1897.<sup>68</sup> Baxter, a former faculty member of the Normal School who left to become the current territorial superintendent, appointed Umholtz, an English professor at the school, to the position of president.<sup>69</sup> Instead of selecting someone unfamiliar with the TNSO, officials chose to appoint Umholtz who had been with the institution off and on since 1893. This created a smooth transition.

With Umholtz in charge of TNSO, the faculty under Murdaugh remained virtually unchanged. Baxter's move to superintendent and Umholtz's appointment to the presidency left two positions vacant in history and English. These slots were filled and five additional staff members were added.<sup>70</sup> Vice President J. O. Allen developed the science department.<sup>71</sup> Under Umholtz, the TNSO continued to grow and prosper.

By the start of Umholtz's first term as president, of the 337 students enrolled at TNSO, 139 pupils were from Edmond and a staggering ninety-five Oklahoma post offices were represented by the others, thus showing the far reach of the school.<sup>72</sup> Umholtz worked diligently to increase the holdings of the library, which had been neglected for years and showed a lack of competitiveness with the Territorial

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<sup>67</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 48.

<sup>68</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 50.

<sup>69</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 48.

<sup>70</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 60; The names of the men hired to fill the vacancies in History and English are not known. The other five members added to the staff were John G. Imel, Catherine Brown, Oscar Lehrer, Catherine Horner, and Emma Waite.

<sup>71</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 61-62.

<sup>72</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 65.

University's library at Norman.<sup>73</sup> With perseverance and additional funds, the library grew. As new additions were made to the TNSO's library, the collections were being properly catalogued under the watchful eye of the president starting in 1901.<sup>74</sup>

When the fall term began in 1902, faculty numbers increased and the training school was up and running with eight grades.<sup>75</sup> Benjamin Nihart served as the first director of the new program.<sup>76</sup> The following year, a kindergarten class was added to the school with Ms. Mary Brewer as the teacher.<sup>77</sup> As a result of his efforts to add to the offerings of the school and the increase in Edmond's population, President Umholtz almost doubled the number of Normal students in 1901-02 to 626 in 1902-03, with 132 in the training school. The Normal students decreased by three for the 1903-04 year and the subnormal's enrollment increased by six.<sup>78</sup> The school saw one of the largest increases in student attendance in the TNSO period under Umholtz. Even with the small decrease in the Normal School's numbers in 1903-04, enrollment stayed steady.

With all of the changes made to the school, the institution's mission statement needed to be modified. President Umholtz's update to the catalogue for the 1902-03 year redefined the school's mission. He modernized the school's basic purpose, first shared by Thatcher in November 1891 in *The Edmond Sun* and which Williams issued for the 1894-95 school term. Umholtz's new mission statement read:

The special function of the Normal School is to prepare young men and women for the work of teaching. This must be accomplished, first, by thorough and liberal academic work; second, through the study of the child; third, through the study of philosophy of teaching; and fourth,

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<sup>73</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 64.

<sup>74</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 67.

<sup>75</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 66.

<sup>76</sup> Mullins and Patton, *A Centennial History of the Education Program*, 34.

<sup>77</sup> Loughlin and Burke, *Building Traditions, Educating Generations*, 14.

<sup>78</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 73.

through the practice and training in the Model School. The work of the Normal School differs, therefore, from that of the college. A college aims to teach the different branches of knowledge—to impart a general culture; the Normal School teaches not only the subject matter of the various branches of knowledge, but the resultant of these processes, and this aim is kept constantly before the student throughout his academic career as a learner. This fact distinguishes the Normal School from other institutions of learning, and determines the course of study as well as the distinctive methods by which several branches of learning must be taught.<sup>79</sup>

Umholtz's description of the purpose of the school put into words what so many of the previous presidents failed to do to help distinguish TNSO from the other institutions of higher learning in the territory.

As alterations were made to TNSO's catalogue, an indoor gym would soon be available for student use. Besides his duty as an English professor, Oakes was instructed to oversee the excavation and building of a gymnasium in the southern half of the basement of the Normal building during the fall term of 1903. The space upon completion had enough room for 200 students and was equipped with dumb bells, ladders, ropes, horizontal and parallel bars, and more.<sup>80</sup> Oakes also served as the athletic director and coach.<sup>81</sup> With the addition of the physical education space in the Normal building, more course offerings and organized sports became available.

November witnessed several important milestones for TNSO. The Agricultural and Mechanical College needed to fill an empty spot on the calendar and invited the Normal to play a football game the Saturday before Thanksgiving. President Umholtz accepted the offer and placed professor C. B. Blake in charge of building a team.<sup>82</sup> Under Blake's watch, a team of 13 athletes joined together and created their own jerseys and

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<sup>79</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 67.

<sup>80</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 74, 76.

<sup>81</sup> Oakes, *A History of Central State College of Edmond, Oklahoma*, 76.

<sup>82</sup> Loughlin and Burke, *Building Traditions, Educating Generations*, 18.

procured cleats. The morning of the contest, the team took the 5:00 am train to Perry, Oklahoma Territory and then rode in wagons to Stillwater. The conditions were not favorable for the game as the ground was frozen and the A & M team beat Normal's team 40-0.<sup>83</sup> Regardless of the huge defeat, Umholtz was excited and started the process for a formal team to be formed for the 1904-05 school term.

After years of no major source for school news since *The Normal Philomath*, Normalites welcomed *The Vista*, a magazine-like publication created by the senior class. *The Vista* replaced the *Normal Philomath*.<sup>84</sup> The first staff consisted of Harvey O. Shuff, Alice Mann, Roy Horace Jenkins, Loren Hindes, Laressa G. Cox, Kate Peters, Luther Dickerson, and Edward G. Klein.<sup>85</sup> The monthly magazine covered a variety of topics ranging from elections and student activities to athletics.<sup>86</sup> Students, faculty, and community members could pay a yearly subscription fee or buy individual issues. Members of the staff sold spaces for advertisements to local business to help finance the printing costs associated with the publication. Through advertising in *The Vista*, local merchants were able to reach a wider student audience again.

A variety of businesses promoted their services in *The Vista*. Some of the town merchants included Dr. J. W. Comp - Physician, Dr. T. W. Brigham – Dentist, O. H. Lowery – Photographer, and Howard Drugstore.<sup>87</sup> *The Edmond Sun* printed *The Vista* at their facility.<sup>88</sup> Underneath the listed businesses, it stated “Let Every Student Patronize our Advertisers.” In essence, this encouraged the student body to visit and use the

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<sup>83</sup> Loughlin and Burke, *Building Traditions, Education Generations*, 18-19.

<sup>84</sup> Loughlin and Burke, *Building Traditions, Educating Generations*, 18.

<sup>85</sup> “Editorial Staff,” *The Vista*, November 1903, 18.

<sup>86</sup> Loughlin and Burke, *Building Traditions, Educating Generations*, 18.

<sup>87</sup> “Our Advertisers,” *The Vista*, November 1903, inside front cover.

<sup>88</sup> Loughlin and Burke, *Building Traditions, Educating Generations*, 18.

services of the establishments helping to pay for the printing of the monthly publication. The publishing of business advertisements also alerted community members to the types of services available in Edmond.

In the “Local” section of *The Vista*, information was given on the Pioneer and Lyceum societies membership numbers. Pioneer had 118 students and Lyceum boasted 76 members.<sup>89</sup> The same section also publicized the Normal Young Women’s Christian Association, attempting to gather more members to the organization by promoting their cause and Christianly work.<sup>90</sup>

### **A Hand Up from the Community**

With rapid student population growth in 1901 and 1902, six buildings surrounding the main building were turned into classrooms and used for various school activities.<sup>91</sup> Prominent businessmen from Edmond pushed for funds once again for an additional building. Due to the dramatic increase in enrollment, the school was outgrowing its means.<sup>92</sup> Dr. Howard, Mitch, and others were finally able to convince Governor T. B. Ferguson to sign an appropriations bill if the U. S. Congress would grant an exemption.<sup>93</sup> As a result, Edmond city leaders sent Sydney Clark of Oklahoma City to lobby in Washington, D. C. for their cause. Clark succeeded, but a battle ensued in the territorial legislature.<sup>94</sup>

After several months of lobbying by Edmond businessmen in Guthrie and a failed

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<sup>89</sup> “Local,” *The Vista*, November 1903, 22.

<sup>90</sup> “Local,” *The Vista*, November 1903, 23.

<sup>91</sup> Fordice, “A History of Edmond, Oklahoma,” 45.

<sup>92</sup> Fordice, “A History of Edmond, Oklahoma,” 45.

<sup>93</sup> Fordice, “A History of Edmond, Oklahoma,” 46.

<sup>94</sup> Fordice, “A History of Edmond, Oklahoma,” 46.

bill with too high of a price, Governor Ferguson signed a bill appropriating \$40,000 to the school.<sup>95</sup> As a result, the TNSO was able to build one building for classrooms and offices, as well as a heating plant.<sup>96</sup>

During this period, the Normal School and Edmond forged a relationship based upon a shared existence. The TNSO, with its emphasis on quality education for teachers, laid the foundation for Edmond schools to excel. The community schools remain strong even in the present, offering an inducement even now for people to relocate to Edmond. At the turn of the century, education helped fuel the fledgling town's growth. Edmond's leaders and residents recognized the benefits of the TNSO's proximity and worked to keep the institution growing. The Normal School relied upon the community for support ranging from advertising in the school's publications to lobbying for funds to build new structures on campus. The institution's growth mirrored that of the town's and members of each group could point with pride to the achievements realized by the other. Cooperation benefited school and community alike.

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<sup>95</sup> Fordice, "A History of Edmond, Oklahoma," 46.

<sup>96</sup> Fordice, "A History of Edmond, Oklahoma," 46; Jones, *Sixty Years at Central*, 12.

## Conclusion

As the clock struck midnight, January 1, 1904, Edmond citizens, faculty, and the students of the beloved TNSO said goodbye to the territorial era of the school's history. The new year ushered in a new name, Central State Normal School, and a new era in teacher education as the territory lobbied for statehood, hoping it would come in the near future. To many, the Territorial Normal School of Oklahoma was an educational gem and a leader in the advancement of teachers across Oklahoma. The Normal School and the community of Edmond formed an interdependent relationship in one another that is still evident today. Examining the history of the place, the times, and those who settled in the area presents a unique perspective on the idea that school and community relied on each other for existence, growth, political power, and a sense of pride. The association between them grew much like the original campus building. Events leading up to the land run resembles the basement of the structure—an archive and storage area for the ideals and hopes of the people who settled the area in pursuit of a better life.

Local history and events could be forgotten and lost among the tales of great battles, leaders, and wide-reaching events. The stories of the everyday citizen, student, and pioneer are the roots of an event. In constructing a historical overview, the memories of day-to-day lives and activities correspond to the bricks and mortar used in building a structure. The study of local history permits the reader to step back in time and achieve a greater sense of what life was like before modern times. Novice and professional historians alike profit from the ability to understand the foundation of an event and how

that basis affects both present and future, offering a blueprint to the evolution of human experience.

The institution now known as the University of Central Oklahoma survived the trials and tribulations of a tempestuous beginning. Changes in administration and mission, political whims, and competition from other educational institutions did not crack the foundation laid by the community and the Territorial Normal School in the very beginning. Local citizens and influential leaders lobbied for the TNSO's cause. In return, the TNSO drew attention to the small community. The school brought families from around the territory to Edmond because they knew their children would receive a worthy and well-rounded education. The Normal School produced teachers who went out into local community and other towns to educate the young. Aaron Fretz said it best,

In reviewing the early settlement, we see the all importance of education. The progressive march of Oklahoma must be obtained through the excellency of her school system. Therefore all energy was bent in the early beginning to lay the foundation so that our sons and daughters might be able to cope with this progressive age.<sup>1</sup>

Edmond laid the groundwork by forming the relationship with the Territorial Normal School of Oklahoma.

The community nurtured the Normal School in various ways from providing temporary housing for the school until a permanent structure could be built to raising part of the funds needed to get the Normal building constructed. Residents offered land for the school to be located on. Community members serving in the legislature worked to secure additional funds for the school so that it could expand. Edmondites opened their homes to students attending the Normal School, giving the young men and women a home away

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<sup>1</sup> Aaron Fretz, "How Dear Is Home," copy 1, no date, 3, Aaron Fretz folder, Edmond History box, Laboratory of History Museum, University of Central Oklahoma, Edmond, Oklahoma.



from home. Local merchants supported the institution through advertisements in *The Normal Philomath* and *The Vista*. Without that amount of support from community leaders and residents, the TNSO would not have prospered to the extent that it did during the period of 1890-1903. If Edmond had not been supportive of the TNSO and the school's mission, it may have taken the institution longer to grow and produce teachers for the territorial schools.

In return, the Territorial Normal School of Oklahoma played a vital role in the development of Edmond. The school's mission, as defined by the first few presidents, put education first. The emphasis on educational excellence set the standard within the community—a standard still in existence today. The school's location turned the community into a center of education. Construction on the TNSO provided jobs for those who needed the work and provided local companies with steady commerce. Students attending the TNSO helped the economy by increasing the need for more food and places for lodging. The young men and women patronized local businesses, helping the economy even more. Political clout and town pride were additional benefits derived from the Normal School. With the territorial capital of Guthrie to the north and the bustling community of Oklahoma City to the south, Edmond might have become lost between the two, remaining simply a refueling stop along the railroad. Instead, the foresight of community leaders and those instrumental in acquiring the TNSO helped ensure that the community became a destination on the map and the leadership of the Normal school provided one point of pride Edmondites tout today—the quality education available within its boundaries.

The formative years of the TNSO, 1890-1903, have mostly been neglected by researchers. By demonstrating the effect the institution had on the community and conversely, the ways in which Edmond helped shape the TNSO, this area should be better understood and illustrated. The Normal School was instrumental in setting the foundation for the educational system in Oklahoma. Teacher education and certification first formalized during these years defined the levels of expertise and experience educators took with them into the field to teach the new generations of Oklahomans. With its emphasis on teacher excellence and a firm commitment to educational values at the community level, TNSO provided the building blocks for the university it evolved into.

Today, the community of Edmond and the University of Central Oklahoma continue to nurture the relationship formed over 120 years ago. The school attracts students from all over Oklahoma, the United States and the world. UCO boasts 114 undergraduate majors and 54 graduate programs and the school has come a long way from its humble beginnings as an institution for the education of teachers. But UCO has not forgotten its roots in the territorial era of the state's history and continues to produce well-trained teachers for public schools.

The shared existence and support between Edmond and the Normal School during territorial years forged an association that benefitted both. It might have been possible for each entity to achieve growth and prestige without forming an alliance. However, by working together, Edmond and the Territorial Normal School cemented the foundation of a symbiotic relationship that echoes even in the present.

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