

Education Of The Oklahoma Farm Population

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In Brief—

Summary and Conclusions

As agriculture becomes more complex, an increasingly wider range of skills and knowledge is needed for success in farming or ranching. Thus the education of a state's farm population becomes an important factor in maintaining that state's economy.

Information on the educational attainments and opportunities of Oklahoma's present and future farm-operating families has heretofore been available only in widely scattered sources. This bulletin brings together and summarizes much of this information.

The study reported herein shows that Oklahoma compares favorably with the other 47 states in the educational status of its farm population, both youth and adult.

First, Oklahoma ranks higher than any of the states in the Southern Region and above the national average in the proportion of farm children 6 through 17 years of age enrolled in school.

Second, Oklahoma exceeds the national average and ranks highest among the southern states in the proportion of its highschool-age farm youth enrolled in school.

Third, the enrollment rate in highschool vocational agriculture courses in Oklahoma is over twice the national average, and Oklahoma ranks third highest among the 48 states.

Fourth, the enrollment in highschool home economics courses in Oklahoma is also relatively greater than the national average.

Fifth, Oklahoma had the highest proportion of rural youth, 10 to 20 years of age, enrolled in 4-H Clubs of all 48 states in 1950.

Sixth, the resident college enrollment rate for Oklahoma in 1949 was far above the national average, in proportion to population, and was exceeded by only three states—Utah, Colorado, and Massachusetts—and the District of Columbia.

Seventh, the educational attainment of the Oklahoma adult farm population was about the same as the national average, but was higher than in any other state in the Southern Region except Maryland.

Eighth, the educational attainment of the Oklahoma adult non-white farm population was almost two years greater than the national average.

Ninth, the adult farm population of Oklahoma ranks just under the national average on the proportion that had completed highschool. The proportion of Oklahoma farm people who had completed college was the same as the national average.

A greater proportion of the farm girls than of boys, and of white than non-white children, were enrolled in school. The educational attainment of the adult farm women was higher than that of men, and that for whites was higher than for non-whites. The adult farm population residing in northwestern and southwestern Oklahoma has the highest educational attainment. Those living in east-central and southeastern Oklahoma have completed the smallest number of years of formal education.

As a result of the improvement of roads and more rapid transportation, decline in farm population, and legislative laws governing consolidation, the numbers of school districts and one-room schools have been drastically reduced.

The academic and classical curriculum of the early public elementary and secondary schools in Oklahoma has been basically altered. A broader curriculum, with courses in industrial arts, vocational agriculture, homemaking, and commercial subjects, is now offered in the larger highschools.

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Education of the Oklahoma Farm Population

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The 1950 Census shows that the amount of income received by persons tends to increase directly with the amount of education they have obtained. The financial advantages of having completed a college education are especially pronounced. Equal educational opportunities for all children is an accepted goal of the American people. Today, most parents want their children to acquire more formal instruction than they had.

In order to become a successful farmer or rancher in Oklahoma today, one must have a wide range of knowledge and skills. More years of formal education and specialized training are needed than ever before.

SOURCE OF INFORMATION. The data for this study were obtained from the Biennial Reports of the State Department of Education of Oklahoma; the Biennial Surveys of Education in the United States, published by the United States Office of Education; the United States Census; and from state agencies in charge of agricultural education programs in Oklahoma.

The school enrollment, educational status and attainment of the Oklahoma population engaged in agriculture is, therefore, an important subject for study.

Data on the educational status of the people engaged in agriculture are not reported separately in the federal census publications. The data are classified into the three residence groups—urban, rural non-farm, and farm. Therefore, the educational data analyzed in this study are

confined to the Oklahoma population residing on farms, which accounted for 86 percent of those employed in agriculture in 1950.¹

The principal objectives of this study were to:

- Determine changes in the proportion of Oklahoma farm youths enrolled in school, and how present enrollment compares with that in the South and in the United States as a whole.
- Determine changes in the educational attainment of the adult farm population of Oklahoma, and present attainment as compared with that in the South and in the United States as a whole.
- Describe two major educational trends—the school district consolidation movement, and changes in the curriculum—that are associated with the enrollment rates and educational attainment.

School Enrollment of Farm Children

In 1930, 84 percent of the Oklahoma farm youth 6 through 17 years of age were enrolled in school. In 1940, the figure was 87 percent; by 1950 this had risen to 90.4 percent.

The percentage of Oklahoma farm children ages 6 through 17 attending school exceeds that of any other southern state, and also the national average (Table 1). In 1950, less than 87 percent of the school-age farm children in the United States were in school. In only eleven states, all outside of the South, were the enrollment ratios of farm youth higher than in Oklahoma.

In Oklahoma, and nationally, relatively more farm girls than boys are enrolled in school. However, at age 18 and over, a larger proportion of Oklahoma farm boys than girls attend school since a greater number of girls than of boys terminate their education when they complete highschool.

In Oklahoma, 91 percent of the white farm youth aged 6 to 17 years, and 90 percent of the non-white of that age group, attended school during 1950.

Oklahoma also exceeds the national average, and ranks highest among the southern states, in the proportion of its highschool-age farm

¹ In 1950, nearly 154,800 Oklahoma workers 14 years of age and over were employed in agriculture. About 4 percent of these agricultural workers resided in urban centers, 10 percent in rural non-farm areas, and 86 percent lived on farms. An estimated 74,000 Oklahoma rural non-farm and urban people obtained their living from agriculture in 1950.

youth enrolled in school.² In 1950, 78 percent of the farm children 16 and 17 years of age in Oklahoma were enrolled in school compared to 67 percent in the United States (Table 1). Only ten states, all located outside the South, had higher proportions in school than Oklahoma.

In 1948-49, 14.1 percent of the Oklahoma highschool pupils studied vocational agriculture, as compared to less than 7 percent in the United States (Table 2). Only two other states, Arkansas and Tennessee, ranked higher than Oklahoma; and South Carolina equalled Oklahoma.

During the school year 1954-55, 17,325 highschool boys studied vocational agriculture courses, and comprised the membership of 360 Future Farmers of America chapters and 31 chapters of the New Farmers of America in Oklahoma. The F.F.A., composed of boys 14 through 21 years of age, is the largest in-school farm boys' organization in the nation.

In 1948-49, 24 percent of the highschool pupils in the United States enrolled in home economics classes, as compared to 26.8 percent in Oklahoma (Table 2). Only 12 states had higher proportions than Oklahoma.

During the school year 1952-53, almost 39,800 home projects were carried on by 22, 939 Oklahoma highschool students enrolled in vocational homemaking courses. Of the total enrollment, one-third were farm youths and around 3,000 were Negro youths.

Participation of Youth in 4-H Clubs

While public schools are the primary agencies of formal education, other organizations also play important roles. The family is, of course, the first and basic educational institution. Next to the family, the most important out-of-school public agricultural education institution for Oklahoma youth is the 4-H Club program of the Agricultural Extension Service.³ The Extension field staff spends about one-third of its time in youth work.

In 1950, Oklahoma had the highest proportion of rural youth 10 to 20 years of age enrolled in 4-H Clubs of any state in the nation.⁴

² A higher percentage of Oklahoma farm youth 16 and 17 years of age were enrolled in high-school in 1950 than in any other age group. About 88 percent of the children 16 and 17 years of age enrolled in school were attending highschool. Only 70 percent of the 15-year-olds and 82 percent of the 18 and 19-year-old school children were attending highschool.

³ A unit of the Division of Agriculture of the Oklahoma A. & M. College.

⁴ In most states, youths between the ages of 10 to 20, inclusive, are eligible for 4-H Club membership. In Oklahoma, 9-year-olds may join. However, few become members until ten. Perhaps less than 5 percent of the 4-H Club members in Oklahoma reside in urban areas. Therefore, the population base of rural youth 10 to 20 years of age, inclusive, includes practically all youths available for 4-H Club membership in most states.

Nearly 35 percent of the rural youth of this age in Oklahoma were 4-H Club members (Table 3). The national average was only 19 percent. Only three other states—Arkansas, Tennessee, and Alabama—had more than 30 percent of their rural youth taking part in 4-H Club work. In eight states, membership was less than 10 percent, and Pennsylvania had less than 5 percent.

On June 1, 1954, there were 72,848 4-H Club members in Oklahoma in 2,048 local clubs. Of these, 37,244 were boys and 35,604 were girls. Approximately 65,700 white youth and over 7,100 Negro young people were enrolled in 4-H Club work. These youths had over 430,000 projects.

Education of the Adult Farm Population

In 1940, the Oklahoma farm people 25 years of age and over had completed 7.7 years of formal education. By 1950 the educational attainment of the adult farm population had risen to 8.4 years.

The median years of school completed by the Oklahoma adult population in 1950 is shown in Table 4. Four important points are shown:

First, the educational attainment of the urban people exceeds that of the rural non-farm and farm groups by more than two years.

Second, females received more formal education than males.

Third, whites have had more schooling than non-whites.

Fourth, the number of years of education received decreases as the age of the population increases. For example, the farm people 75 years and over had completed only 6.5 years in school compared to 10.3 years for those 25 to 29 years of age.

Prior to World War I, the average Oklahoman had received only an elementary school education. With the larger highschool enrollments during recent decades, the educational attainment of the adult population increased. In 1950, the average Oklahoma person between 25 and 29 years of age had completed a high school education.

The educational attainment of the Oklahoma adult farm population in 1950 was higher than in any other state in the Southern Region except Maryland (Table 5). The adult farm population in the Southern Region had completed one year less schooling than the average in Oklahoma.

The number of years of school completed by the Oklahoma adult farm people was about the same as for the country as a whole (Table 5). Farm adults in Oklahoma and the United States had finished 8.4 years in school.

The educational attainment of the Oklahoma non-white farm population was almost two years greater than the national average. The adult non-whites in the farming areas of the United States had completed only 4.8 years in school, whereas the figure for Oklahoma was 6.7. The average for the non-whites in the Southern Region of the United States, where practically all of the Negro farmers live, was the same as that for the nation—4.8 years.

The adult farm population of Oklahoma ranks just under the national average on the proportion that had completed highschool (Table 5).⁵ However, Oklahoma ranks above the average for the Southern Region. In only one other southern state, Delaware, was the percentage as high as that for Oklahoma.

Table 5 also shows that the proportion of Oklahoma farm adults who had completed a college education was the same as the U.S. average.

The proportion of Oklahoma youth who attend college is unusually high. In 1950, there were 50,571 students enrolled in Oklahoma institutions of higher learning. Approximately 13 percent of the Oklahoma young people 18 through 24 years of age—nearly 18 percent of the males and 8 percent of the females—were attending college in 1950.

The resident college enrollment rate for Oklahoma in 1949 was far above the national average and was exceeded by only three states—Colorado, Utah, and Massachusetts—and the District of Columbia (Table 6). Although recent accurate data on the number of farm youth in the United States enrolled in college are unavailable, Oklahoma undoubtedly ranks higher than the national average.⁶ The low percentage of adults on Oklahoma farms who are college graduates can only be explained by the fact that large numbers of farm youth migrate upon completion of college.

⁵ All people 25 years of age and over who had completed 4 years of highschool and 1 to 3 years of college are considered here as highschool graduates.

⁶ In the 1950 Census, college students living away from home were considered residents of the communities in which they were residing while attending college rather than as persons temporarily absent from their parental homes, as was the practice in 1940. As a result of this change, many Oklahoma college students from farming areas were classified as urban residents. For this reason, the 1950 Census data on the number of farm youth enrolled in college is understated. Since institutions of higher learning do not classify those students from farms separately, accurate data on the college enrollment of farm youth is not available.

In the Oklahoma adult farm population, a larger proportion of females than of males had finished highschool and college. Also, a greater proportion of the whites than of the non-whites had received a highschool and college education.

EDUCATION OF FARM ADULTS, BY COUNTIES

There is considerable variation among the 77 counties in the educational attainment of the farm population 25 years and over (Table 7). In Grant County, the adult farm people had completed 11.3 years of school. For Alfalfa County the figure was 10.5 years. At the other extreme, the farm adults in McCurtain County had received less than seven years of formal education.

In 1950, almost 17 percent of the farm population 25 years and over had completed highschool. A county by county comparison of the median number of years of school completed with the proportions of adults having a highschool education shows considerable correspondence. With few exceptions, the counties which ranked high on one also ranked high on the other.

In 1950, 2 percent of the adult farm people had completed four or more years of college (Table 7). Cimarron County, with 8 percent, had the largest proportion of college graduates. Alfalfa County was second with 6 percent. In three other counties—Oklahoma, Payne, and Texas—more than 4 percent of the farm population had attended college at least four years. Between 3 and 4 percent of those residing in 11 other counties, all in northwestern Oklahoma except Greer and Tulsa, had completed college. In eight counties of eastern Oklahoma, less than 1 percent of the adult farm people had completed college. Creek County ranked lowest with only 0.4 percent.

OTHER ADULT AGRICULTURAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS

In 1954, there were 1,935 home demonstration clubs in the 77 counties of Oklahoma with a membership of 36,917. The State Home Demonstration Council's major committees in 1954 indicate the nature of their work: membership, cooperation with 4-H Club work, civil defense, health, family and community relationships, and citizen and world neighbor. In 1953, the State Council was a co-sponsor for the first State Rural Health Conference.

Some idea of the magnitude of the county agents' program may be had from the report of Extension activities in Oklahoma during the 12-month period November 1, 1952 to October 31, 1953. During this

year, county agents made over 92,500 farm and home visits; presented almost 5,400 radio broadcasts and 550 television programs; published over 27,000 news articles; distributed more than 890,000 bulletins; received nearly 360,000 telephone calls and 300,000 office calls; held over 7,000 demonstration meetings; and conducted more than 2,200 training meetings for local adult leaders with over 67,000 leaders in attendance.

The State Board for Vocational Education also conducts an important rural adult education program in Oklahoma. During the school year 1954-55, over 6,607 adults were enrolled in organized vocational homemaking classes. In addition, over 177,000 adult women were served through informal meetings in neighborhood groups and clinics. It gave instruction in the areas of conservation of food, clothing, furniture, renovation, home nursing, meals for family, consumer education, health, and child development.

During World War II, the Division of Vocational Agriculture carried on a national defense program throughout the state on such subjects as farm machinery repair, food processing, elementary electricity, farm mechanics, milk production, and training farm workers. In 1941-42, these programs reached over 16,000 adults, and in 1944-45 almost 34,000.

Approximately 40,000 farm veterans have enrolled in the Veterans Agricultural Training Program conducted in cooperation with the public schools in Oklahoma since 1946. On-the-farm training classes have been organized in over 350 places for Korean and World War II veterans. The number of farm veterans enrolled in classes declined from a peak of around 15,000 during 1947-49 to about 2,500 in 1953-54, as a result of the expiration of eligibility and entitlement.

Highschool vocational agriculture teachers in Oklahoma conduct two types of out-of-school organized group instruction programs. In 1954-55, 400 vocational agriculture teachers in Oklahoma conducted 449 organized adult classes enrolling 8,325 adult farmers. Young farmer classes grew from a small beginning to 314, with 4,243 participants.

People engaged in agricultural work received instruction and information from many other educational agencies. Some colleges in Oklahoma conduct off-campus classes under their college or university extension programs. A few offer correspondence courses. Many farm adults enroll in vocational and non-vocational night classes at colleges and public highschools. Public libraries are increasingly becoming agencies of adult education. Churches have also started adult educa-

(Text continued on pg. 20.)

**TABLE 1.—Percentage of the Farm Youth Enrolled in School,
by States and Regions, 1950.**

State, by region	Percentage Enrolled by Age Groups	
	6-17	16-17
Northeast	89.6	71.5
Maine	88.1	67.1
New Hampshire	90.5	74.0
Vermont	88.3	63.7
Massachusetts	90.2	77.8
Rhode Island	88.3	65.2
Connecticut	92.1	79.9
New York	90.4	74.2
New Jersey	90.0	74.8
Pennsylvania	89.0	69.5
North Central	89.3	74.7
Ohio	91.0	79.4
Indiana	89.7	77.4
Illinois	89.3	74.2
Michigan	90.8	77.7
Wisconsin	88.9	70.9
Minnesota	89.4	72.1
Iowa	89.7	79.3
Missouri	87.7	68.4
North Dakota	85.9	64.4
South Dakota	85.5	70.3
Nebraska	89.1	74.8
Kansas	90.7	82.2
South	84.3	61.1
Delaware	85.1	63.8
Maryland	86.0	60.2
Virginia	83.3	58.1
West Virginia	84.9	59.1
North Carolina	85.0	62.6
South Carolina	82.9	54.3
Georgia	85.1	53.1
Florida	87.9	66.9
Kentucky	76.3	50.0
Tennessee	84.6	59.8
Alabama	85.8	61.9
Mississippi	84.4	65.8
Arkansas	85.1	63.4
Louisiana	85.4	62.6
Oklahoma	90.4	78.3
Texas	84.2	67.5
West	89.8	79.8
Montana	88.8	75.7
Idaho	90.5	83.7
Wyoming	88.1	74.4
Colorado	89.6	76.2
New Mexico	82.3	69.1
Arizona	76.4	58.7
Utah	92.1	90.5
Nevada	91.6	83.3
Washington	91.4	84.1
Oregon	92.0	85.2
California	92.4	81.0
United States	86.6	67.2

Source: 1950 United States Census of Population, P-B Series, Table 18; Also P-C Series, Table 62.

TABLE 2.—Percentage of Pupils Taking Subjects Taught in Last 4 Years of Public Secondary Day Schools, by State, 1948-49.

State	Percentage Enrolled in Specific Subjects					
	State History	Agriculture	Biology	Chemistry	Physics	Home economics
Alabama	2.3	12.3	20.7	7.4	5.9	25.4
Arizona	3.6	4.9	22.5	6.9	4.5	26.2
Arkansas	.6	19.2	17.9	3.5	1.4	26.0
California	1.4	4.0	16.2	6.8	4.0	26.2
Colorado	4.4	5.3	16.1	10.4	5.6	20.3
Connecticut	.3	.7	18.2	9.2	6.8	23.0
Delaware	.4	4.6	19.5	9.2	6.0	36.0
Florida	1.2	9.7	22.9	8.7	4.2	28.9
Georgia	2.8	12.4	19.9	7.7	3.8	28.4
Idaho	.3	8.8	20.6	9.4	6.0	24.5
Illinois	.1	5.9	17.6	6.8	6.3	21.2
Indiana	.2	7.0	24.0	6.0	5.6	31.0
Iowa	.2	9.6	18.8	3.6	8.4	25.2
Kansas	.2	7.8	18.3	5.2	5.3	30.4
Kentucky	.1	10.7	17.1	4.6	3.0	23.0
Louisiana	.5	12.9	20.3	5.9	2.6	34.2
Maine	.4	3.6	18.3	8.6	5.9	16.7
Maryland	.2	5.7	25.3	9.7	7.1	30.9
Massachusetts	---	.8	15.7	10.8	7.8	19.3
Michigan	.4	5.0	19.1	8.7	5.8	25.4
Minnesota	.1	5.8	17.7	9.2	6.6	20.2
Mississippi	.5	13.9	19.9	8.0	3.2	26.5
Missouri	4.0	8.6	15.3	4.0	3.2	19.7
Montana	1.4	8.6	16.5	8.1	5.4	20.2
Nebraska	.4	7.3	18.2	5.1	6.4	21.1
Nevada	.4	3.0	13.4	8.4	4.0	18.0
New Hampshire	.5	2.8	15.3	9.6	8.2	18.8
New Jersey	.1	1.3	18.0	9.2	7.6	25.7
New Mexico	1.1	6.0	22.9	5.9	3.7	22.7
New York	.2	1.5	13.6	8.1	5.9	15.4
North Carolina	.9	13.4	25.6	7.3	5.1	29.4
North Dakota	.5	9.0	25.3	9.1	5.2	16.1
Ohio	.4	3.7	18.5	7.6	5.9	24.5
Oklahoma	17.4	14.1	16.5	3.5	1.8	26.8
Oregon	.1	5.4	21.9	5.9	4.1	21.1
Pennsylvania	15.8	3.0	20.1	10.4	8.5	24.3
Rhode Island	1.5	1.4	15.8	9.8	8.8	18.6
South Carolina	---	14.1	20.6	9.9	3.6	24.1
South Dakota	---	4.2	19.2	7.8	6.5	21.8
Tennessee	---	14.5	17.8	8.2	3.3	32.0
Texas	5.7	11.8	15.8	6.5	3.1	28.6
Utah	---	11.4	19.5	6.6	3.7	32.1
Vermont	---	5.8	17.5	9.7	6.1	19.2
Virginia	.5	9.9	19.1	7.0	2.2	22.6
Washington	19.4	7.2	18.0	6.7	4.9	30.0
West Virginia	.7	6.3	26.4	7.2	3.0	23.4
Wisconsin	.3	9.6	20.7	11.6	8.1	24.3
Wyoming	2.7	8.4	19.1	8.5	5.7	20.1
Dist. of Col.	---	---	18.2	7.3	5.4	12.8
U. S.	2.7	6.7	18.4	7.6	5.4	24.2

Source: *Biennial Survey of Education in the United States, 1948-50*, Chapter 5, *Offerings and Enrollments in High School Subjects*, Federal Security Agency, Office of Education, 1951, pp. 100-105.

TABLE 3.—Percentage of Rural Youth 10-20 Years of Age Enrolled in 4-H Clubs, by States and Regions, 1950.

State, by region	Rural population 10-20 years of age ¹	Total 4-H Club members ²	Percent
Northeast	1,322,567	128,836	9.7
Maine	79,867	5,426	6.8
New Hampshire	35,654	8,112	22.8
Vermont	42,132	6,765	16.1
Massachusetts	109,592	12,550	11.5
Rhode Island	20,355	3,449	16.9
Connecticut	63,598	5,605	8.8
New York	324,223	51,639	15.9
New Jersey	99,463	8,535	8.6
Pennsylvania	547,683	26,755	4.9
North Central	2,768,690	500,150	18.1
Ohio	406,149	65,616	16.2
Indiana	271,369	72,041	26.5
Illinois	325,336	55,246	17.0
Michigan	327,547	58,828	18.0
Wisconsin	250,363	43,492	17.4
Minnesota	240,914	50,959	21.2
Iowa	233,502	44,260	19.0
Missouri	270,039	35,608	13.2
North Dakota	86,460	13,034	15.1
South Dakota	79,609	11,650	14.6
Nebraska	121,058	20,096	16.6
Kansas	156,344	29,320	18.8
South	5,094,791	1,210,331	23.8
Delaware	19,497	1,622	8.3
Maryland	129,856	14,112	10.9
Virginia	361,405	54,599	15.1
West Virginia	279,546	34,008	12.2
North Carolina	590,626	129,326	21.9
South Carolina	305,790	51,352	16.8
Georgia	409,316	119,940	29.3
Florida	176,148	26,837	15.2
Kentucky	397,828	66,846	16.8
Tennessee	384,282	130,035	33.8
Alabama	383,289	126,037	32.9
Mississippi	347,024	102,605	29.6
Arkansas	267,782	92,154	34.4
Louisiana	259,679	66,854	25.7
Oklahoma	223,394	77,291	34.6
Texas	559,329	116,713	20.9
West	1,070,756	128,119	12.0
Montana	57,462	8,633	15.0
Idaho	64,657	10,506	16.2
Wyoming	28,180	4,892	17.4
Colorado	95,836	19,086	19.9
New Mexico	74,778	8,576	11.5
Arizona	65,394	3,532	5.4
Utah	51,720	9,019	17.4
Nevada	11,066	1,196	10.8
Washington	158,400	13,385	8.5
Oregon	117,361	27,355	23.3
California	345,902	21,939	6.3
United States	10,256,804	1,967,436	19.2

¹ Source: 1950 United States Census of Population, P-B Series, Table 15; Also P-C Series, Table 52.
² Source: 4-H Club Enrollment Data Obtained from Report Division of Field Studies and Training, Extension Service, USDA, 1951.

TABLE 4.—Years of School Completed by Persons 25 Years Old and Over, Oklahoma, 1950.

Age and Race	Average Years of Schooling of Population											
	The State			Urban			Rural Non-farm			Rural-farm		
	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female
25-29	12.1	12.1	12.2	12.4	12.4	12.4	11.3	11.2	11.5	10.3	9.6	10.7
30-34	11.8	11.6	12.0	12.3	12.3	12.3	10.6	10.3	10.7	9.4	9.0	9.9
35-39	10.7	10.3	11.1	12.1	12.1	12.2	9.7	9.2	10.0	8.8	8.6	9.0
40-44	10.0	9.3	10.5	11.7	11.2	12.0	8.9	8.8	9.3	8.6	8.4	8.8
45-54	8.8	8.6	9.0	10.1	9.7	10.5	8.5	8.4	8.6	8.2	8.1	8.4
55-64	8.3	8.2	8.4	8.8	8.7	8.9	8.0	7.8	8.1	7.7	7.4	8.0
65-74	8.0	7.6	8.1	8.3	8.2	8.5	7.2	7.0	7.5	7.0	6.6	7.3
75 years and over	7.4	6.9	7.9	8.1	7.5	8.2	6.7	6.5	7.0	6.5	6.3	6.6
Total, 25 years and over.	9.1	8.9	9.6	11.0	10.7	11.1	8.6	8.5	8.7	8.4	8.2	8.6
White	9.4	9.0	9.8	11.4	11.0	11.6	8.6	8.5	8.7	8.5	8.3	8.7
Non-white	7.8	7.5	8.1	8.4	8.1	8.6	7.1	6.8	7.3	6.7	6.4	7.1

Source: 1950 United States Census of Population, Oklahoma, Detailed Characteristics, P-C 36, pp. 162-163.

**TABLE 5.—Years of School Completed by Rural-Farm Population
25 Years and Over, by States and Regions, 1950.**

State, by region	Median school years completed (Total)	Percentage of population who had completed:	
		High School ¹	Four or more yrs. of college
Northeast	8.8	22.7	4.0
Maine	9.5	28.8	3.0
New Hampshire	9.8	30.1	6.0
Vermont	8.9	24.1	3.4
Massachusetts	10.1	31.2	6.8
Rhode Island	8.8	23.4	5.2
Connecticut	8.9	26.5	5.6
New York	8.9	22.5	4.0
New Jersey	8.7	22.9	5.3
Pennsylvania	8.6	19.6	3.3
North Central	8.7	23.2	1.8
Ohio	8.8	26.3	2.6
Indiana	8.8	26.9	2.5
Illinois	8.7	22.3	2.0
Michigan	8.7	21.6	2.0
Wisconsin	8.5	17.6	1.2
Minnesota	8.5	17.1	1.0
Iowa	8.9	30.2	1.6
Missouri	8.5	17.4	1.5
North Dakota	8.5	19.6	1.2
South Dakota	8.7	23.6	1.4
Nebraska	8.9	29.0	1.4
Kansas	8.9	29.9	2.4
South	7.3	9.8	1.6
Delaware	8.5	16.8	2.5
Maryland	7.9	14.9	4.2
Virginia	7.1	10.6	2.2
West Virginia	8.1	10.4	1.6
North Carolina	7.0	7.3	1.5
South Carolina	6.3	6.4	2.1
Georgia	6.6	6.5	1.1
Florida	7.8	13.8	2.5
Kentucky	7.9	9.7	1.4
Tennessee	7.6	10.6	1.1
Alabama	6.6	7.9	1.0
Mississippi	6.9	9.6	1.1
Arkansas	7.5	8.9	.8
Louisiana	5.6	6.5	1.4
Oklahoma	8.4	16.8	2.0
Texas	8.1	12.7	2.1
West	9.0	28.7	3.9
Montana	8.8	27.7	2.8
Idaho	10.1	31.9	2.5
Wyoming	9.6	31.6	3.4
Colorado	8.9	28.2	3.4
New Mexico	8.0	17.3	2.8
Arizona	8.3	20.3	4.6
Utah	10.9	37.2	3.4
Nevada	9.3	29.0	4.9
Washington	9.3	30.0	3.4
Oregon	9.3	30.4	3.6
California	9.1	28.5	5.1
United States	8.4	17.1	2.0

¹ Includes those who had completed 4 years of high school and 1 to 3 years of college.
Source: 1950 United States Census of Population, P-B Series, Table 20.

TABLE 6.—Resident College Enrollment in Non-Federal Institutions of Higher Education in Relation to Total Population: 1949.

State, by region	Population July 1, 1949 in thousands	Number	
		All students	Per 10,000 of total population
Northeast	39,308	684,391	174.1
Maine	904	9,507	105.2
New Hampshire	523	9,069	173.4
Vermont	367	7,767	211.6
Massachusetts	4,772	102,351	214.5
Rhode Island	791	13,841	175.0
Connecticut	2,006	32,105	160.0
New York	14,746	312,971	212.2
New Jersey	4,788	45,562	95.2
Pennsylvania	10,410	151,218	145.3
North Central	43,837	746,648	170.3
Ohio	7,995	137,743	172.3
Indiana	3,896	70,363	180.6
Illinois	8,626	151,622	175.8
Michigan	6,270	101,390	161.7
Wisconsin	3,326	49,678	149.4
Minnesota	2,916	50,709	173.9
Iowa	2,551	44,045	172.7
Missouri	3,907	65,183	166.8
North Dakota	583	8,673	148.8
South Dakota	618	8,157	132.0
Nebraska	1,284	22,024	171.5
Kansas	1,863	37,061	198.9
South	46,195	634,734	137.4
Delaware	319	3,441	107.9
Maryland	2,339	36,570	156.4
Dist. of Col.	839	37,454	446.4
Virginia	3,297	37,393	113.4
West Virginia	1,938	22,834	117.8
North Carolina	3,944	45,195	114.6
South Carolina	2,004	23,038	115.0
Georgia	3,360	39,094	116.3
Florida	2,679	36,093	134.7
Kentucky	2,862	32,455	113.4
Tennessee	3,267	39,748	121.7
Alabama	3,004	31,760	105.7
Mississippi	2,076	19,695	94.9
Arkansas	1,835	19,445	106.0
Louisiana	2,633	35,641	135.4
Oklahoma	2,125	45,401	213.6
Texas	7,673	129,477	168.7
West	19,219	371,787	193.4
Montana	562	8,622	153.4
Idaho	572	8,266	144.5
Wyoming	276	3,817	138.3
Colorado	1,249	35,063	280.7
New Mexico	632	9,592	151.8
Arizona	726	13,144	181.0
Utah	677	22,380	330.6
Nevada	159	1,775	111.6
Washington	2,373	43,093	181.6
Oregon	1,493	25,588	171.4
California	10,499	200,447	190.9
United States	148,558	2,437,560	164.1

Source: *Biennial Survey of Education in the United States, 1948-50*, Chapter 4, Section 1, *Statistics of Higher Education: Faculty, Students, and Degrees*, Federal Security Agency, Office of Education, 1952, pp. 27-28.

TABLE 7.—Years of School Completed by the Rural-Farm Population 25 Years Old and Over, Oklahoma, 1950.

County	Median Years of School Completed	Proportion Who Had Completed 4 Yrs. of High School and 1-3 Yrs. of College	Proportion Who Had Completed 4 or More Years of College	County	Median Years of School Completed	Proportion Who Had Completed 4 Yrs. of High School and 1-3 Yrs. of College	Proportion Who Had Completed 4 or More Yrs. of College
Adair	7.6	8.4	1.5	Le Flore	7.4	7.2	1.4
Alfalfa	10.5	36.4	5.9	Lincoln	8.4	14.1	2.1
Atoka	7.4	8.8	.5	Logan	8.7	21.8	2.8
Beaver	8.8	25.9	2.4	Love	8.0	11.4	.5
Beckham	8.5	16.9	2.2	McClain	8.1	12.4	1.7
Blaine	8.8	23.6	3.1	McCurtain	6.7	7.0	1.1
Bryan	8.3	13.5	1.6	McIntosh	7.3	9.4	1.2
Caddo	8.5	17.6	1.7	Major	8.7	22.7	1.5
Canadian	8.8	27.0	3.1	Marshall	8.3	16.4	1.7
Carter	7.9	11.4	1.9	Mayes	8.2	13.0	2.0
Cherokee	7.7	6.8	1.7	Murray	8.5	14.8	2.6
Choctaw	7.2	7.4	1.2	Muskogee	7.8	12.0	1.5
Cimarron	9.3	25.8	7.5	Noble	8.8	27.2	2.0
Cleveland	8.4	19.6	2.2	Nowata	8.4	15.8	2.1
Coal	7.9	10.8	1.9	Okfuskee	7.6	9.7	.9
Comanche	8.7	22.4	1.7	Oklahoma	8.7	21.9	4.3
Gotton	8.7	17.1	1.6	Okmulgee	8.1	12.7	1.5
Craig	8.5	16.9	.7	Osage	8.7	22.2	2.3
Creek	8.0	12.6	.4	Ottawa	8.4	13.9	1.9
Custer	8.8	24.1	3.1	Pawnee	8.5	16.2	1.7

(Continued.)

TABLE 7.—Continued.

County	Median Years of School Completed	Proportion Who Had Completed		County	Median Years of School Completed	Proportion Who Had Completed	
		4 Yrs. of High School and 1-3 Yrs. of College	4 or More Years of College			4 Yrs. of High School and 1-3 Yrs. of College	4 or More Years of College
Delaware	8.2	11.9	2.2	Payne	8.6	20.7	4.3
Dewey	8.7	25.1	1.4	Pittsburg	7.9	10.2	1.1
Ellis	9.2	32.5	1.6	Pontotoc	8.2	14.5	2.8
Garfield	8.9	28.9	3.8	Pottawatomie	8.3	13.5	1.1
Garvin	8.3	12.9	2.4	Pushmataha	7.5	9.4	2.5
Grady	8.5	18.1	1.7	Roger Mills	8.7	20.1	1.5
Grant	11.3	42.4	3.8	Rogers	8.3	15.8	1.2
Greer	8.8	17.9	3.7	Seminole	8.1	12.8	2.6
Harmon	8.8	20.0	1.5	Sequoyah	7.1	7.4	1.6
Harper	8.9	26.9	3.4	Stephens	8.3	13.3	1.2
Haskell	7.4	8.2	.9	Texas	9.0	27.5	4.2
Hughes	8.0	11.0	1.5	Tillman	8.9	25.0	2.6
Jackson	8.9	23.9	1.5	Tulsa	8.6	21.5	3.8
Jefferson	8.3	13.3	2.0	Wagoner	8.0	12.8	.9
Johnston	8.1	13.9	2.1	Washington	8.6	19.8	1.9
Kay	8.9	27.5	2.0	Washita	8.8	23.6	1.6
Kingfisher	8.9	27.7	3.9	Woods	8.8	25.3	3.8
Kiowa	8.8	25.1	1.5	Woodward	8.9	25.5	3.6
Latimer	7.4	8.0	.8				
				State	8.4	16.8	2.0

Source: 1950 Census of Population, Oklahoma, General Characteristics, P-B 36, pp. 121-125.

tion programs. The three farm organizations—Grange, Farm Bureau, and Farmer's Union—have played an important role in adult education. In addition, newspapers, farm magazines, radio, and television are very effective educational media for the communication of recommended farm practices and new ideas to the farm people. By estimate, farmers learned through these mass media about one-fifth of the new practices they adopted.⁷

Two Important Educational Trends in Oklahoma

Many significant educational trends are closely associated with the higher rate of school enrollment and educational attainment in Oklahoma. Two of the major trends are school consolidation and reorganization, and changes in curriculum.

CONSOLIDATION AND REORGANIZATION

The public school system was established in Oklahoma Territory in 1890.⁸ When Oklahoma became a state in 1907, it established public schools in the eastern counties, formerly Indian Territory.

One-room schools developed from the pattern of settlement on the land. The sparse settlement of the farm population, with families living on separate farms, made it impossible to have more than a small number of pupils per school. The lack of year-around roads made it necessary to locate school houses within walking distance of the homes of the students. This resulted in the building of schools in each farm neighborhood and the creation of local areas of administration. As a consequence, Oklahoma came to have many school districts which were small in both land area and school population.

According to the provisions of the school law passed by the Territorial Legislature in 1890, each township of 36 square miles was divided into four elementary attendance areas, with the provisions that one high-school could be established in each township and in each town of 500

⁷ Gladys Gallup and Amy Cowing, "America's Roadside Teachers," *Adult Leadership*, February, 1954, p. 7.

⁸ Before the opening of lands in Oklahoma for settlement in 1889, schools had been established for the Indians. The school system of the Five Civilized Tribes was supported by tribal funds. In 1889, there were approximately 325 primary schools and 25 academies and seminaries with a total enrollment of more than 11,000 children. There were also 35 or 40 mission schools established by churches with an enrollment of about 1,000 children.

The Indians in Western Oklahoma had no school system of their own. In 1892, there were about 20 boarding and day schools supported by the U. S. Government with an enrollment of around 3,000 children. The 10 mission schools provided education for about 500 Indian children.

In the eastern part of Oklahoma, the few schools for whites prior to 1889 were supported by local subscriptions and were confined to villages. By 1907, there were 200 municipal schools there. In Western Oklahoma, there were no white settlers until 1889, except in Old Greer County and in "No Man's Land" (the Panhandle).

or more population. Therefore, the first elementary school districts had attendance areas of only three miles square or nine square miles.

Soon after statehood in 1907, there were 5,641 organized school districts. Of these, 3,441 were in western Oklahoma. The remaining 2,200 were in the former Indian Territory of eastern Oklahoma, where there were no organized districts prior to that date. In the eastern part of the state, the newly formed districts had larger attendance areas than those in the west. In the eastern counties, the attendance areas averaged 15.3 square miles in size, compared to 10.4 square miles in the western counties.

When the district unit of control replaced the township system of local schools, the majority of the administrative units were small common school districts with no highschools. Nearly all farmers in Oklahoma lived in common school districts with only elementary schools. In 1915, for example, 98 percent, or 5,280 of the 5,397 rural districts gave no highschool instruction. Over 60 percent of the school children in Oklahoma resided in districts without free highschool instruction. Those children who attended highschools outside of their districts paid tuition.

In 1903, a consolidation and centralization movement arose primarily to provide free highschool opportunities to all children in the state. Also, it was to alleviate some of the problems of the small schools. The common school districts lagged behind in average daily attendance, percentage of enrollment in the highschool grades, number completing the common course of study, number graduating from highschools, length of school term, and amount spent annually for the maintenance of schools.

The first consolidated school district was organized at Quay, Payne County, in 1903. In 1911, the Legislature provided state aid for construction of new buildings in newly formed consolidated and union graded school districts. This act hastened the consolidation movement. In 1916, there were 103 consolidated and 6 union graded schools located in 39 different counties. The number of centralized school districts increased rapidly after 1919, when the Legislature authorized the use of motor trucks in transporting children to and from school. During the school year 1927-28, the number of consolidated schools had risen to 293, and the number of union graded schools to 97.

The number of organized school districts in Oklahoma reached a peak in 1913-14, when there were 5,880. Annexation and consolidation reduced the number to 4,933 in 1930, to 4,644 in 1940, and to 4,450 in

1946-47. House Bill #85, passed by the State Legislature in 1947, brought about a drastic decrease in the number of districts. According to the provisions of the law, all elementary school districts with less than thirteen students in average daily attendance, and all highschool districts with an average daily attendance of less than 25 students in grades 9 to 12, unless declared isolated schools, were annexed to another district the following year. This act reduced the number of school districts to 2,664 in 1947-48. In February, 1954, organized school districts in Oklahoma numbered only 1,884 or less than one-third as many as existed in 1915.

Perhaps the most important effect of the consolidation movement has been the displacement of nearly 4,200 one-room schools in Oklahoma. The enlargement of farms, decrease in the farm population, improvement of roads and more rapid means of transportation, and the passage of laws setting minimum average daily attendance limits have been the main factors contributing to the closing of the one-room schools.

In 1918, there were 4,805 one-room schools in the state. The number decreased to 4,395 in 1920; 2,990 in 1930; 2,153 in 1943; and after implementation of House Bill #85, the number was further reduced to 1,324 in 1948. By March, 1954 there were only 613 one-room schools left. Most of these are found in eastern Oklahoma. Cherokee County maintained the largest number, 33; followed in order by Pittsburg with 27; Kay, 22; Craig and Lincoln, each 21; Mayes, 18; Muskogee and Pottawatomie, each 17; and Delaware and Haskell, each with 16. In the following ten counties there were no one-room schools in 1954: Alfalfa, Greer, Harmon, Harper, Jackson, Kiowa, Murray, Texas, Tulsa, and Woodward.

BASIC CHANGES

IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM

When public schools were first established in Oklahoma, the goal was an elementary school education for every child. With this objective accomplished, it became a public responsibility to furnish highschool opportunities for each child. In 1908, of the 5,656 organized school districts, only 185 offered any highschool work and children could not attend a highschool outside of their district unless tuition was paid. In 1949-50, there were 2,181 school districts of which 678 offered highschool courses. Today, every child in Oklahoma has access to a free public highschool.

Since World War II, more and more youth have found a highschool education inadequate as preparation for their life's work, and have increasingly entered colleges. In 1915, elementary schools accounted for over 93 percent of all children attending school in Oklahoma, high-schools almost 5 percent, and colleges less than 2 percent. By 1950, the proportions were over 21 percent in high school and over 9 percent in colleges, leaving less than 70 percent in kindergarten and elementary schools combined. It was growth in school enrollment in the upper age groups which accounted for these shifts in proportions, as school enrollment did not decline relatively in the lower ages during this period.

The expansion of secondary and college enrollments has had a profound influence upon the curriculum of the elementary and secondary schools. In the early Oklahoma elementary schools, reading, writing, arithmetic, and spelling received the primary emphasis. In 1890, the law required common schools to teach spelling, penmanship, reading, arithmetic, geography, English grammar, United States history and constitution, and physiology and hygiene. In 1913, it added agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, stock feeding, forestry, and domestic science to the required list. Citizenship became a required subject in 1919. In 1937, the state law provided that all schools, public or private, must teach American history in the primary grades. Other requirements were agriculture, orthography, reading, penmanship, English grammar, physiology and hygiene, geography, United States history and civics, arithmetic, and such other courses as the State Board of Education may determine.

The early highschools in Oklahoma offered an academic and classical curriculum, emphasizing college preparation primarily. The college entrance requirements at Oklahoma A. and M. College, the University of Oklahoma, and the other institutions of higher education largely determined what subjects the highschools taught. These courses were algebra, geometry, English and Latin, ancient, medieval, and modern European history, and English and American history. Very few students attended highschool during this period and most of those who did planned to enter college and prepare for professional work. However, after World War I, this situation underwent a drastic change. Enrollment in highschools began to mount and more and more students terminated their formal education upon completion of highschool. A curriculum designed primarily to meet college entrance requirements did not meet the needs of the majority of the students, since they had no plans for a college education.

A broader curriculum was instituted in highschools to prepare more adequately for life the students who terminated their education at the highschool level. Most of the larger schools added instruction in industrial arts, vocational agriculture, commercial subjects, music and art to their programs. For the most part, it has been the schools with four or more teachers which have broadened their highschool curricula to include practical pre-vocational and vocational courses.

Four-year Oklahoma highschools now require pupils to complete sixteen or more units of regularly organized classroom instruction for graduation. Seven units of specified subjects are required: one unit in mathematics, one in laboratory science, one in American history, and four in English. One unit of speech or journalism, or a combination of one-half unit of speech and one-half unit of journalism, may be substituted for the fourth unit in English.

As mentioned previously, the proportion of Oklahoma highschool students enrolled in vocational agriculture and home economics is higher than the national average (Table 2). The percentage of Oklahoma highschool students in state history is second only to that in one other state, Washington. On the other hand, a very small proportion of the Oklahoma highschool students study either chemistry, physics, or biology. In 1948-49, Oklahoma and Arkansas had the lowest ratios in chemistry and Oklahoma ranked 47th among the 48 states in the percentage of students in physics. Oklahoma and Montana were tied for 39th place on the proportion of highschool students taking biology (Table 2). Also, Oklahoma stands somewhat below the national average relative to its highschool students in industrial arts (non-vocational) subjects and in trade and industrial education (vocational) subjects. Some educators have noted that the gradual increase in the number of school hours devoted to competitive sports in the small Oklahoma highschools reduced the number of courses that students can take in science, trade, and industrial education subjects.

Summary

The objectives of the study reported in this publication were to: (1) Measure changes in the school enrollment of Oklahoma farm youth, (2) Determine changes in the educational attainment of the adult farm population of Oklahoma, and (3) Describe two major educational trends in Oklahoma—the school district consolidation movement, and changes in the curriculum. The information obtained is summarized on the inside front cover.

**APPENDIX TABLE 8.—Consumers Who Purchase Cream Regularly;
Oklahoma City, March-April, 1955.**

Family Size	Income Group:*						Totals	Pct. of pur- chasers**	Pct. of group†
	1	2	3	4	5	6			
1	2	4	2	0	0	0	8	5.2	9.0
2	1	7	11	13	12	16	60	39.2	23.2
3	0	4	12	5	5	7	33	21.6	19.2
4	0	1	9	5	5	4	24	15.7	15.2
5 & 6	0	1	8	3	7	6	25	16.3	20.5
7-over	0	1	0	1	1	0	3	2.0	12.5
Totals	3	18	42	27	30	33	153	---	---
Percentages of:									
Pur- chasers**	2.0	11.8	27.5	17.6	19.6	21.6	---	100.0	---
Group†	6.8	12.4	18.1	14.7	25.6	33.3	---	---	18.6

* (1) Under \$1,000. (2) \$1,000 to \$2,399. (3) \$2,400 to \$3,599. (4) \$3,600 to \$4,799. (5) \$4,800 to \$5,999. (6) \$6,000 and over.

** Percentage of the total number of households purchasing cream regularly.

† Percentage of the total number of households in this income group or family size.