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PREWITT, TERRY JAMES
GERMAN-AMERICAN SETTLEMENT IN AN OKLAHOMA
TOWN: ECOLOGIC, ETHNIC AND CULTURAL CHANGE.

THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA, PH.D., 1979

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THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

GERMAN-AMERICAN SETTLEMENT IN AN OKLAHOMA TOWN:

ECOLOGIC, ETHNIC AND CULTURAL CHANGE

A DISSERTATION

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GERMAN-AMERICAN SETTLEMENT IN AN OKLAHOMA TOWN:

ECOLOGIC, ETHNIC AND CULTURAL CHANGE

APPROVED BY

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

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GERMAN-AMERICAN SETTLEMENT IN AN OKLAHOMA TOWN:
ECOLOGIC, ETHNIC AND CULTURAL CHANGE

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1. The Problem

The town of Okarche, Oklahoma, was founded in 1892 during the opening of the Cheyenne-Arapaho Reservation to non-Indian settlers. Although the Okarche area was settled by European-American families of quite diverse backgrounds, very early in its history it became a center dominated by German-speaking families. By the early 1940's the preponderance of families associated with Okarche were of German heritage, many of them representing children and grandchildren of original settlers. Thus, an initially small group of foreign-born and first-generation German-Americans achieved success in Okarche, ultimately displacing a large sector of population of other backgrounds in both farming and town-associated pursuits.

One might think that "German" identity would play an important part in such a situation, and indeed it does in some respects. But the German-speaking settlers of Okarche really had much less common heritage than is suggested by the popular label "German." Moreover, the notions that "Germans are better farmers" or have a greater "love of the land"--

themes often propounded in popular literature and some anthropological circles--do not hold up under close scrutiny (see especially Jordan 1966). Nonetheless Germans prevailed in Okarche. Therefore, this dissertation is an investigation of the part played by "heritage" in bringing about the successes of those families who came to dominate and control Okarche during the first half-century after its founding. The central point of analysis involves tracing the ties between a changing population and changing sets of symbolic references I call "tradition."

2. Conceptual Structure

Heritage, if it is to be viewed as a "causal" agent in social continuities or change, required identification in social praxis. Such an identification is accomplished through reference to "tradition." Both "heritage" and "tradition" refer to elements of the background of individuals. The term "heritage" refers to the elements of cultural orientation based in general features of prior familial association--places of origin, language, and economic background. But "tradition" refers to the belief systems surrounding elements drawn from heritage, especially as they guide human associations ("tradition" relates to the "aggregations of symbols" of Whitecotton's 1976 discussion of ethnicity; see also Barth 1969: 9-38). Therefore, the terms are used to distinguish levels of common background, one stressing simple individual identification and the other stressing social self-identification. It is recognized in the distinction that although two individuals may come from quite common backgrounds, and therefore share common heritage, they may move in quite different social circles, share in different self-identifying concepts, relate to their common backgrounds in different ways, and even be drawn into competition.

To the extent that the people of Okarche are tied to German background, the interest of this dissertation is in the nature of German heritage and tradition--in other words, this work is directed toward the study of "ethnicity" in Okarche. However, the term "ethnic" has been given popular connotations in recent years which make "ethnicity" an undesirable word for the kind of work attempted here. Further, there is lack of precision (Ruth 1976) and difference of opinion as to an appropriate definition of "ethnicity" for historical and anthropological work (cf. Hale 1975: 201-3; Whitecotton 1976). Ethnic groups are usually associated with some specific cultural content--something directly observable, culturally distinctive, symbolically fixed or immutable. From this perspective an "ethnic group" exists because of its culture, and membership is based upon more or less ascriptive rules. German culture, then, becomes the basis for assessing an "ethnic" Germanness--the situation of having enclaves of people practicing German culture outside Germany--and people become "ethnic Germans" by being born into a particular identifiable group (an "aggregation of people," see Whitecotton 1976) or by becoming accepted in it.

It follows from such a position, especially in the wake of national character studies, that when the cultural forms associated with an ethnicity change, the ethnicity ceases to exist. If "German cultural practice" gives way, then "ethnic Germanness" is undermined. If we accept the most extreme statements of culturally-defined ethnicity, then anything short of substantial "German" cultural baggage does not seem to suffice as authentic. Following Whitecotton (1976) and Barth (1969) I believe that such an approach to ethnicity is totally inadequate. It serves only to

"identify" groups rather than to provide information as to their nature. Indeed, strict cultural definitions of ethnicity become nearly as extreme as that literature of the "national character" era which, even if short of lending understanding of our enemies, at least clearly set them apart from ourselves. There may be some justification for viewing the focus of local "tradition" as a reflex of national attitudes toward groups of particular background--in this case involving changes of orientation with the two World War periods (see Ruth 1976: 12). But there is no justification for presuming that (a) any identification with a background implies full knowledge or acceptance of particular cultural content, or (b) a substantial cultural correspondence is necessary between the "tradition" of a group and the background to which it relates as a formerly extant cultural system, in order to warrant the identification of an ethnic group.

Of course, ethnic groups do exist because of culture, but they do not depend upon any particular cultural content. It is the essentially arbitrary, highly expressive, symbolically and materially adjustable aspects of culture which define an ethnicity within a cultural arena or cultural field (see Bailey 1969, on "political fields" and the concept of "arena"). For that matter, all levels of human groups are so defined. The changes of cultural content attendant to the evolution of an ethnic or group association make descriptive tasks difficult at times. But these same changes should also be the central point of analysis, for they are the medium of adaptation of the human species (Bailey 1969: 196-202; Barth 1969; Geertz 1963; Eisenstadt 1969, in his treatments of "free-floating" resources and "autonomous goals"--see

especially note pages 18-20, 26-8; Cole and Wolf 1974: 286; Redfield 1950: 155-78).

The notion of "tradition" provides a way to formally recognize the changeable and sometimes arbitrary relations of groups of individuals to their respective backgrounds. The idea of "heritage" enables the recognition that all people have an identifiable cultural background, whether it serves as a focal point for the individual or not. These rather common terms bridge the crucial points of our concern with "ethnicity," then, if it is conceived in a manner which allows social continuities in the absence of cultural continuities.

If culture has adaptive value at all, that value must in part be based upon flexibility (Rappaport 1974; see Cole and Wolf 1974: 284-5). The terminology of this dissertation with regard to ethnicity is intended to recognize such flexibility. And it should be emphatically stated that "tradition" is focused into time and is highly interpretive of historical cultural conditions. The "symbols" of tradition are compositions, highly selective in material and forms of expression, that relate current situations to elements of the past (see Levi-Strauss 1966: 233-5). As such they are constantly changing (at least in those societies Levi-Strauss would call "hot"). Thus, precedents in the past for conditions of the present are sought in historical revision, or allowed to lapse out of memory when they get in the way. This form of change is mainly concentrated on what elements to draw into the fray. On another level of change, however, tradition is sometimes refocused--it is allowed to embrace entirely new elements, the reformulation of identity also giving a group new character.

If there were people in Okarche today who were "culturally German," one might argue that ethnicity in a direct cultural sense was responsible for the present family composition of the community. This is not the case, however, and so from a strictly cultural perspective German identity can have nothing to do with present population composition in Okarche. This does not negate the unlikely circumstance that the overwhelming majority of Okarche's present households are of German heritage, when German people were only a fraction of the original population in the immediate vicinity of the town. Much of the following material, therefore, attempts to account for the nearly exclusively "German" population of present-day Okarche through social continuities, recognition of cultural changes, and presentation of the key points of demographic development. Although limited proposals are entertained which outline the specific cultural differences between German and non-German segments of Okarche's population, my major arguments relate to the demographic, economic and social information which links the present population to organized groups of the pioneer era of Oklahoma.

In approaching this work I have primarily sought local causes for the cultural changes and major shifts of population which characterize Okarche's past. In particular, attention is given to economic conditions in Okarche as they favored or impeded the continuity of technological practices, and demographic conditions as they have established families on the land in stable techno-economic adjustments. The argument that social continuities represent manifestations of ethnicity is similar to Williams' (1978) arguments concerning social and cultural definitions of ethnicity for Welsh groups of the Lower Chubut Valley,

Argentina. The Germans of Okarche have mainly changed from "culturally defined" to "socially defined" groups. But I have also stressed the reorientation of "tradition" as an important part of this process. That is to say, changes in elements of tradition by a group serve to reset the limits of permissible actions or associations, and thus operate directly to conserve or capture "resources" of the sociocultural system. The ability of a group to culturally redirect itself, then, is the means through which the continuity of social identity is attained--plus ça change, plus c'est la meme chose.

3. The Sociological Setting

Historians, geographers, and a few anthropologists have turned to a common field of observation in the study of "pioneer colonization" (Thompson 1973), an orientation closely allied to "frontier" studies on a larger areal scale (Turner 1961; Hartz 1964; Miller and Steffen 1977). "Community" and small regional studies have taken on new form in this area of research, especially including demographic and technological studies of small pioneer groups throughout the world. The work is usually local--it lacks the hard reliance on broad statistical presentations common to much of contemporary social science--but it affords us a critical medium for the observation of major systemic transformations in relatively short periods of time. The demographic techniques of "pioneer" studies differ somewhat from regional and national scale demographic approaches, mainly in their concentration upon family history and total population presentation. These techniques have been developed particularly in history, and are important to the reformulation of

colonial American history (see Powell 1963, Greven 1970, Lockridge 1970). This study is grounded in similar direct demographic approaches, including the use of techniques known in anthropology from recent work by Hammel and Laslett (1974) and Kertzer (1977).

The study of frontiers is important for a number of reasons. As a social situation the "frontier" provides a "laboratory" for the study of cultural and social change as general processes (Thompson 1973). In addition, the study of frontiers may allow more specific treatment of culture-demographic relationships than is possible in other social contexts. Well-established or "mature" communities may seem essentially "boundary maintaining" or "homeostatic" in their operation, whether viewed historically or in contemporary settings (see Homans 1942 on "equilibrium" systems; Cole and Wolf 1974 on "homeostasis and ecology" as an anthropological orientation). That is, even in complex societies change often proceeds slowly, making its recognition so difficult that it casts the observer into a dilemma of descriptive scale. Some workers prefer a "synchronic" approach in the interest of logical or structural presentation of the social system, while others attach themselves to broad time-frames and the transformations of the system. The description of precise logical structures relies on different forms of detailed work than does the description of the "diachronic" system.

But the scale of events on the frontier--the pace of change--is right for detailed scrutiny and the resolution of logical structure and historical events. The dynamics of change are best seen where they are boldly manifested. The essentially adaptive quality of culture is best seen when adaptation is taking place. The quality of struggle for

existence in human life is most clearly understood when the struggle is pronounced. It is these elements of the frontier situation which provide strategic advantage for the study of human biocultural adaptation and change.

Thus, the study of Okarche is done more in the spirit of frontier and pioneer research than from the perspective of anthropological community studies. The viewpoint toward human relationships is especially linked to "familial" considerations through the demographic elements of the work. The demographic treatment is also ecological, but it is specifically not framed from the theoretical perspectives of "cultural ecology" (Steward 1955, Netting 1977) or the "culture-materialism" of Harris (1968). The only directly ecological materials and methods of this work are derived from Odum (1971) and from the perspective of general system theory.

The solution of the questions posed in this dissertation, although primarily based on demographic patterns in time, is a direct product of complex relations posited between factors of economy, environment, technology, symbols, communication, and most important, group identity. These factors are common grist of "functional" and "ecological" approaches of anthropology, but the general-system-theoretic perspective is taken in the hope of avoiding some of the pitfalls of strictly "functional" and "conflict" perspectives of the social sciences. In the body of this work materials on the demography, economy, and social units of Okarche are drawn into an essentially historical account. In the final chapter, the substantive results of the work are reviewed and several broad theoretical points are made

relating to frontier population dynamics, the intensity of ethnic identification, and the general relations between symbolic and material realms of cultural process. These broader arguments form the last three sections in the conclusion of the dissertation, and are presented in both a summary form and in terms which may disgruntle those who have no commitment to general system theory. The sections are presented, nonetheless, in order to allow some of the empirical generalizations of this study of Okarche to have meaning in broader sociocultural contexts, specifically in a range of "frontier" situations including urban systems.

Inasmuch as the bulk of this work is "historical" in its orientation, it is also necessary to indicate that I am aligned with numerous contemporary workers who use history as a vehicle to make certain anthropological, sociological, geographic or otherwise "scientific" points. I believe that a history carries a theoretical message, in part directly stated and in part manifested in its organization. The situation of Okarche is appropriate to the study of processes of social and cultural change, demographic change, economic change--human evolution--although it might be studied for many other reasons. But Okarche becomes of intrinsic interest to me only in a humanistic sense which is, after all is said and done, not the reason I have engaged in this work. Still, I feel obliged to attempt to project something of the feeling and orientation of the people of Okarche at points along the way. At no point in this work, however, do I feel obliged to provide an "ethnic" history or "ethnohistory."

4. Development of the Study

Most anthropological work is presented in the form of reconstructed logic. Formal arguments which were arrived at through a sometimes confused and essentially inductive process are presented as though they were perceived by the investigator in deductive terms from the very beginning. It is easy to get the impression that the subject at hand thrust itself upon the observer as a well defined "system" or "structure." The initiated fieldworker understands this shortcoming of the written report.

But sometimes it is useful to review, briefly, the actual logical steps through which a problem developed in the course of research. This is as much an aid to the author as to the reader, for it provides a context in which the rather dogmatic arguments attributable to "style" are softened. Therefore, in the following few pages I attempt to relate the major stages in the development of questions pertaining to Okarche. This discussion should make it clear that the nature and scope of empirical questions about Okarche changed as the work progressed, although the basic question of the work remained the same. It should also be clear that some of the theoretical conclusions submitted in the final chapter are a product of the long term interests of the author and the situations in which this dissertation was written.

The central question of the Okarche study was present at the outset: What part did German identity play in the successes of those families that came to dominate and control the community in the first half-century after its founding? It is assumed in this question that German identity plays some part in the changing population composition

of Okarche. Indeed, when I first became aware of Okarche my work was directed toward the obvious continuity of German families from the pioneer period to the present. Therefore, early in the investigation I pursued leads to cultural content that might have conferred advantage upon the German population. Within a short time, however, the lack of strong German cultural content in present day Okarche began to cast doubt upon the notion that Germans were successful by virtue of cultural distinctiveness. Of course, the modern situation does not preclude a strong German cultural commitment in the past, but while Okarcheans seem very aware of their background, they also seem to know little of the cultural intricacies of that background. And the documents on Okarche's past indicate a major change of cultural orientation from a predominantly German American direction, so that even by the time of the First World War "Germanness" was much less manifest than in the early years of settlement.

Yet, even though German culture waned, the number of German families in census materials, burial populations, and the present population increased. Thus, at the point of research in which primary data on German families and community demography were being compiled, it became obvious that more attention must be paid to community organization and the symbols and identifying concepts surrounding groups within the community. It was at this point in the work that the distinction between heritage and tradition was applied to the Okarche population.

This shift of emphasis involved a step away from what had initially been conceived as an essentially ecological problem toward

a more direct study of social units and symbols. That is, a culture-ecological explanation of the success of Germans might rest in the techno-environmental distinctiveness of an "ethnic" population. In such an argument differential success of groups might be supposed to be based upon material conditions. Lacking such material differences, an alternative hypothesis involving social distinctiveness was posited and data pertinent to the hypothesis were sought. These data were of two forms. First, material and demographic information concerning the composition, continuity, and identity of social groups in the community were organized from the materials already under study. The association of families within these groups were particularly sought. Second, information was gathered concerning corporate actions and informal actions of groups. From this work the notion of "tiered" German identification in Okarche was developed, wherein individuals were identified at one level with a congregation and on another level as simply "German."

Thus, parallel empirical questions began to emerge around which this dissertation was ultimately written. The first set of questions has to do with the demographic conditions in Okarche during settlement and the place of German groups in the settlement process. A second set deals with economic actions of groups and the development of the rural-oriented community economic pattern of the modern era, with particular attention to potential differences between German and non-German groups. Some of the information brought to bear on these questions indicates that German cultural orientation diminished as a force in the community, while other information documents the strong persistence of German social units.

These key materials are discussed in Chapters III, IV, and V. The specific empirical questions I have attempted to answer are as follows: What was the size and composition of the Okarche population, including both town and rural components, during the period from 1889 through 1940? What major trends in population dynamics can be identified during the period? More specifically, what was the timespan of German-American entry into the Okarche area? How did early settlers organize their agricultural and business pursuits? What kinds of economic enterprise can be identified, under pioneer conditions and after, as having had either short or long term prospects of success? What social, geographic, and economic factors mediated success and failure of the economic strategies which were practiced? How did individuals acquire their initial land, and under what conditions were subsequent additions of land made? What was the composition of households, and how did that composition vary over time? To what extent were different households related through kinship or other prior associations at the time of settlement? What voluntary associations were established by the people during the early years of settlement, and which of these continued long after the homestead period? To what extent are there patterns of family organization, interpersonal association, and economic orientation which are attributable to heritage? More directly, what elements of life in early Okarche are closely patterned after organizations common to particular areas of Europe or the United States from which Okarche pioneers came? What patterns of activity in Okarche were established in direct response to the Oklahoma environment, but can not be said to have roots in individual or collec-

tive background of the settlers? Finally, and most important, how do all of these factors interrelate in determining the directions and rate of social change in the community of Okarche?

Beyond these questions lie other considerations. For the most part the significance of Okarche does not rest in its particular manifestations of German "ethnicity" or the specifics of its economic development and organization. Rather, the Okarche case tells us something about ethnic identifications in general, and about the relations of ethnicity to economic and population stress. I believe that the frontier setting of the Okarche study in part led me to the kinds of generalizations offered in Chapter VI. However, much of the argument concerning the dynamics of ethnicity in frontier settings applies also to certain urban systems. Thus, a similarity is suggested between "frontier" and "urban" population dynamics, as well as the nature of ethnicity in the two kinds of systems. These matters are the results of my long time interests in systems analysis, the processes which characterize the Okarche case, and the fact that much of the conclusion was written, fortuitously, while I was also directly involved with several scholars with specialties in urban and applied anthropology. Thus, while some of the concluding sections of this dissertation may seem like an afterthought, they appear so mainly because of the introduction of arguments about urban systems and regional development, and perhaps because of the shift to a quite different style of presentation. Yet the arguments are essential if one is to understand the theoretical relationships between ethnicity and symbols on the one hand, and demography or economic considerations on the other. It is important

to me that Okarche be understood in terms of general processes of social action and change, not in terms of the historical particulars of the case.

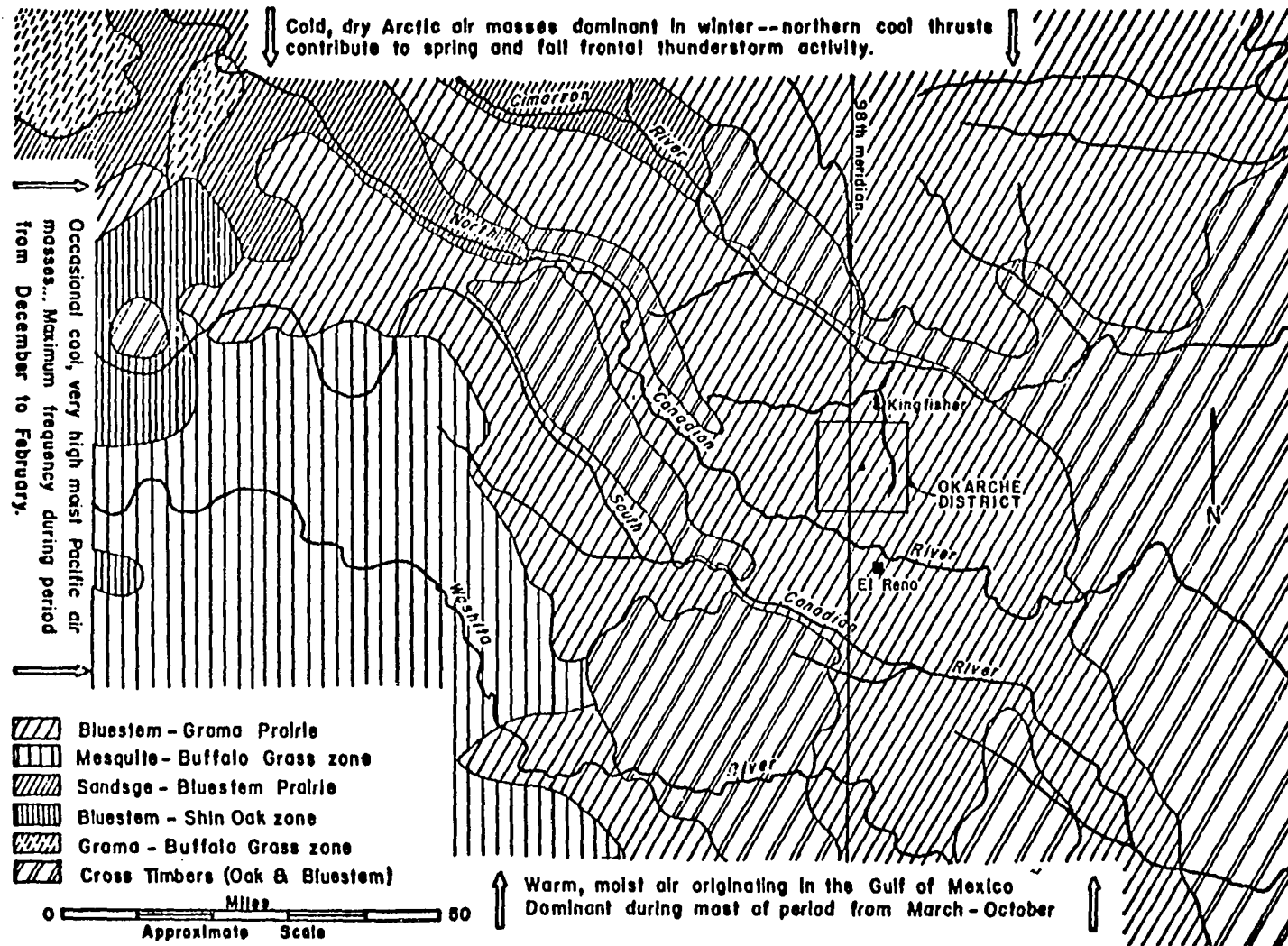
The study of Okarche developed, then, first as an empirical statement set against the background of Oklahoma settlement, and second as a theoretical statement about demography and ethnicity in frontier and urban systems--or rather, geographic systems involving rapid population turnover, as we shall see. The background, Chapter II, was indeed written first, and represents the kernel statement of the substantive issues to be incorporated in the dissertation. The organization of the materials benefited from two major adjustments. First, the chapter on economics was placed before the chapter on social units (Chapters IV and V). Second, the sections of Chapter VI were rearranged to place them in their present order. These changes from the original order of data and argument allow the reader to move from the strongly substantive early chapters to the more abstract final chapters. At least, demographic information seems more solid than contentions about ethnic identity. A particular benefit of this organization, however, is that the reader may with little difficulty disregard the last three sections of the conclusion and not lose any of the substantive argument of the work.

CHAPTER II

THE SETTING: OKLAHOMA AND THE OKARCHE PIONEERS

1. Ecological Background

The area in which the town of Okarche was founded was originally a rolling tall-grass prairie, dominated by a rather lush growth of little bluestem, side-oats grama and blue grama (see Küchler 1964). Under the grass was a well developed, rich dark soil and clayey subsoils on a parent surface stratum of clayey Red Beds (see Gray and Galloway 1959 for a general treatment of Oklahoma soils; see also Oklahoma Water Resources Board 1975, Section II: 12-12a). These were considered prime agricultural lands; more potentially productive than the Sandsage-Bluestem and Buffalo Grass prairies of regions farther west, and more easily broken out for farming than the Cross-Timbers and Oak-Hickory savannahs to the east (Map 1). The locality expressed only moderate relief, less than 100 feet of variation below the terrace crest on which the town was located, gently cut by small streams which flowed north to the Cimarron River. These streams were intermittantly fed by an average of 30 inches in yearly precipitation, most of it concentrated in Spring and early Fall thunderstorms (Oklahoma Water Resources Board 1975, Section II: 1). Storms of the prairie lands produced then, as they do today, broad extremes of day to day, and even year to year variation. There could be too much wind and water, or not enough, particularly as considered



Map 1. The Okarche district, located in its context of major geographic zones in central and northwest Oklahoma (after Kuchler 1964).

against the needs of a predominantly agricultural community. Still, the general conditions of climate were not especially harsh as compared to areas north and east of Oklahoma. Winters were certainly milder and shorter than those of the northern plains-prairie country, and summers, even if longer and hotter, had much more in common with climates of the eastern United States than with the steppe and desert lands of the southwest (see Haurowitz and Austin 1944: 204-11, for a standard, general treatment of North American climates).

Indeed, if there was a resource potential which the Okarche area lacked, it was biotic variety. There were few trees which might offer ready sources of building materials or fuel. Such trees as there were in the area grew small and were scattered along larger stream channels. The vast majority of minor plants available were grasses -- big bluestem, western wheatgrass, buffalo grass -- and a number of wildflowers and other forbs (Küchler 1964). The ecosystem of the prairie was highly specialized then, manifesting relatively few species each with very large populations, so that any major impact on one element of the regime could easily be felt by the whole (Geertz 1963: 12-37; D. Harris 1969: 4-5).

The classical animal dominants of this region are well known. First among them was the bison, everywhere prominent and central for several thousand years to articulations of people to the midcontinental environment (see Willey 1966: 42-51; Spencer and Jennings 1977: 316-8; Lowie 1963: 15-8, 205-18). Later came the domestic companion of the bison, the horse, which after its introduction in the early 1700's quite rapidly attained very large populations (Lowie 1963: 42-6; Oliver 1962). The horse also strongly influenced the lives of humans on the Plains,

entrenching them solidly in a very efficient, but specialized orientation toward bison hunting (Oliver 1962). Thus, larger numbers of people than ever before subsisted in relative bounty while concentrating on a single major component of the natural resource base. At a later time, however, there was an easy disruption of the equestrian hunters through the simple, systematic extermination of the bison herds, rendering the Native Americans of the Plains dependent upon the United States within a very few years.

These events occurred well before the opening of Oklahoma Territory, but the same principles of ecological specialization remain crucial to our understandings of later patterns of human endeavor. For a time, Texas cattlemen could exploit the grasslands of Oklahoma as a rapid and inexpensive route for movement of large herds to northern markets, and as a range which increased herd poundage en route (McReynolds 1964: 250-66). This arrangement also was easily disrupted in a few years. The "cattle frontier," resting as it did on requirements of plentiful open range and volume production, fell victim to the same economic expansion from which it had sprung after the Civil War -- the final settlement of the great, dreary middle of the continent. There began to arrive on the scene a large population of more sedentary orientation, and another great transformation of the prairie was underway (McReynolds 1964: 279-89; Rister 1942).

As the pioneers of Okarche first looked across the grasslands they would homestead, they stood in time at a sort of "ecological threshold" -- they represented in part the beginning of a new specialized regime. But this was to be, ultimately, a controlled regime of much

greater magnitude than any perpetrated before through human activity. We should note again that "action" in a specialized ecosystem is almost always conducted on a grand scale. We might say the orchestration is simple but produced with great fortissimo. But this would be insufficient, in and of itself, to account for the kind of transformation of which the Okarche pioneers were a part. What gave the settlement era its unique and lasting qualities was the condition that human actions in the system did not necessarily fall into harmony, initially at least, with the existing natural order of the region. In fact, some human actions of the settlement era ran totally counter to the specialized biological organization of former years. Yet they persisted in the short run, and so set into motion the massive irreversible adjustments which meant the final end to the tall-grass prairie.

What would ultimately replace the old order was not immediately evident. Perhaps the most dramatic change after the Oklahoma openings was the radical increase in human population density, especially in its context of individual land ownership. Population density had probably never exceeded one person per square mile during the presettlement periods (see Lowie 1963: 11-14). However, the rural population of the Okarche area exceeded thirteen persons per square mile after the Cheyenne-Arapaho opening (derived from correlated information in the Oklahoma Tract Book, the Oklahoma Territorial Census, 1890, and the Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900). This figure is typical of the Unassigned Lands and eastern sections of the Cheyenne-Arapaho reservation, and if city populations were included would be even higher. Thus, human population factors alone provided a great deal of the "kick" which, apart from matters of

technological impact, began pushing the prairie system in a new direction. From an ecological perspective what is paradoxical and interesting about the settlement situation is the diversity of the pioneer population. The cultural "baggage" the people brought with them was far from uniform. It was technologically implemented in many different ways, and the whole population was divided into a multiplicity of groups. There was great human "variety," and to a degree the people attempted to enforce a similar state of affairs on the total biotic sphere. Thus, the transformation of the ecosystem was from a specialized system to one more generalized, with great fluidity and variety.

However, generalized conditions were not to endure, for both economic and ecological reasons. The economic causes involved the development of the wheat industry in the central United States, especially its extension into the southern plains, even though this development does not account for the local play of factors which brought about particular stable populations in particular places. Indeed, Oklahoma wheat production was not great until about 25 years after settlement (Haystead and Fite 1955: 185-7).

We might better look at the factors which enabled some Oklahoma farmers to become successful in the wheat market, then, before citing it as a primary cause of the total developmental situation. The impact of wheat specialization followed the major impacts of local environmental constraints on small farm operators, in Okarche and elsewhere -- constraints which acted on the artificial and highly vulnerable position of individuals on a landscape with unfamiliar properties, few local options for relocation, and a rudimentary system of communication.

2. The Initial Settler Population

The opening of the unassigned lands of Oklahoma in 1889 brought together settlers from Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, Texas, Illinois, Indiana, Tennessee, and most of the other states and territories to the north and east. Among these people were a few foreign-born Americans and some recent immigrants from Europe and Canada (see Hale 1975 for a general treatment of European immigrants to Oklahoma). Within four years the Cheyenne-Arapaho lands and the Cherokee Outlet had also been opened, bringing more settlers from all parts of the country. This later settlement as well as the subsequent migrations to Oklahoma included a higher proportion of foreign-born persons, over 35 percent of whom were German speakers (Hale 1975: 182-3). After the turn of the century, the Oklahoma German-speaking population was concentrated in the north-central parts of the state, especially in Oklahoma, Canadian, and Garfield counties (Hale 1975: 184). These people have been the subject of interest of a few scholars over the years, although there is little in the way of a "German-American" literature pertaining to Oklahoma (see, however, Willibrand 1950, 1951; Pulte 1971 also offers brief comments on limited linguistic studies of Germans in Oklahoma). Recent work by historians and anthropologists reflects a growing orientation toward studies of European "ethnic" groups in Oklahoma, and the interest has been mirrored in popular literature on the settlement of the region (a key point of Hale 1975 concerns the need for historical work on ethnic groups in Oklahoma; see also Naramore 1973, Ruth 1976).

Okarche, today a town of about 800 persons, is located approximately in the center of the German-American concentration in north-central

Oklahoma, on the boundary between Kingfisher and Canadian counties. It is a visible German-American "ethnic enclave" only in a very general sense. The populations of the center and surrounding rural areas are composed predominantly of people of German-speaking heritage. Yet on a superficial level Okarche is rather "typical" of rural Oklahoma. There is nothing particularly unusual about the visual appearance of the town which dramatically sets it apart from other rural centers. It is only on closer contact with people in the area, and careful observation of the community itself that indications of the German heritage of Okarche become evident.

The initial population in Okarche was not predominantly "German" or foreign born. Indeed, German-speakers did not yet numerically dominate the community in 1900, and there were numerous foreign-born of French, Bohemian, Russian, Irish, and English background. Among these the "French" were often German-speakers, and the Irish were closely linked to the German-speaking community through the Catholic Church. A few of the Irish families are still represented in Okarche today. Furthermore, before coming to Okarche most of the German-speaking families of the initial population had long-term association with other areas of the United States or Canada. Thus, not only are foreign-born Germans important to the settlement of the town, but first generation German-Americans are prominent as household heads in the 1900 census population.

The German component of the Okarche population is actually more properly distinguished as "Germanic," since it included people from most of central Europe, east European areas which had large German-speaking elements, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and German-speaking areas of North

America which had been established for over a century. Although "standard" German became a primary medium for communication within this population, most of the people spoke different dialects (Willibrand 1950, 1951). Local comments concerning German language use in early Okarche suggest that people could "shut out" large sectors of the population by using more esoteric forms of speech; given the diversity of the census populations this does not seem to be an unreasonable claim. It is also clear that most families included bilingual speakers who were competent in English, especially in the younger generation (manuscript schedules of the Twelfth Census of the United States suggest that there were very few monolingual German speakers).

Numerically more prominent in the initial Okarche population, although not "dominant" in the sense of group identity, was a large component of families with much longer "American" association. These included farmers and a majority of the businessmen of the town. The regions from which these people came were much the same as the German-speaking population - - the settled Midwest of that day and the northern and western fringes of the South - - although more families in the "Anglo-American" group were from the New England and Mid-Atlantic regions than among German speakers.

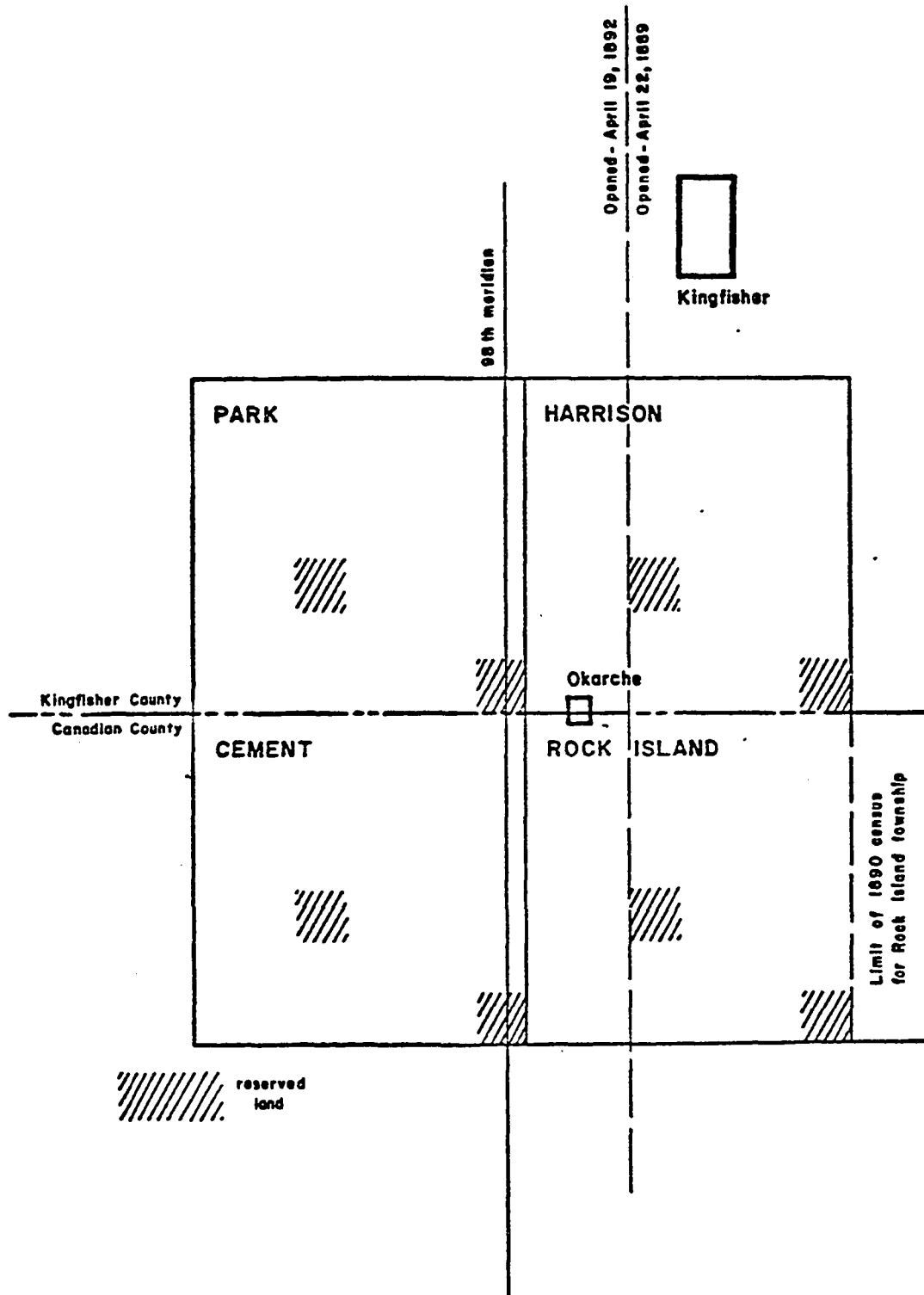
The most important characteristics of the early population in Okarche were its youth and transience. This is reflected in all of the key records of the developmental period, including the census materials of 1890 and 1900, tract books noting the homestead claimants of the rural population, newspaper accounts of events during the first ten to fifteen years after settlement, Sanborn-Perris maps of the town, church histories,

and those personal accounts of early conditions in the area which are available at present. Indeed, a very small percentage of the families who participated in the Okarche district land runs actually remained.

A second wave of migrants to Oklahoma accounts for a much larger part of the present population base. These people bought rights to homesteads from original claimants, obtained claims from relatives who had preceded them into the territory, or filed claims for land which had been abandoned by original claimants. Thus, continued patterns of migration in and out of the community, and the development of family units in situ are the demographic factors of greatest importance to the founding of Okarche.

3. Local Land Divisions and Regional Economic Networks

The initial tracting of land in the vicinity of present-day Okarche occurred in two stages. First, the Oklahoma land run of 1889 created 160-acre homesteads in a 3000-square-mile area which had remained unassigned to Indian groups after the post-Civil-War reservation treaties (see McReynolds 1954). Second, in 1892 the Cheyenne-Arapaho reservation was opened to settlement, except those 160-acre lots which, under agreement with the United States, had been set aside for Indians in 1891 (see Gittinger; McReynolds 1954: 299). The town of Okarche was established during this later opening, and is situated only one mile west of the boundary between the two regions (Map 2). Until 1892, Okarche settlers of the Oklahoma opening looked to Kingfisher as their primary place of association. Kingfisher was also the location of claims offices for both land runs.



Map 2. Major geographic and political divisions of the Okarche district, and limits of the four-township census sample area.

The administrative units into which the Okarche population was divided included Kingfisher County on the north and Canadian County on the south. The counties were subdivided into townships, four of which figure prominently in this study. The Okarche townsite was tracted on 160 acres of land adjacent to a rail stop and cattle corrals of the Chicago, Rock Island, and Pacific Railway. This tract comprised four 40-acre segments of individual homesteads, two in Harrison township, Kingfisher County, and two in Rock Island township, Canadian County (Oklahoma Tract Book). Such claim duplications were not uncommon during any of the Oklahoma land openings, although the legal machinery for dealing with them was improved after the bitter experience of 1889 during which time there was no means of adjudicating conflicts until eight months after settlement (see McReynolds 1954: 291-292). Thus, the Okarche townsite was officially certified in two separate court actions only four months after the April 19th admission of homesteaders. This placed the town almost at the intersection of Harrison, Park, Rock Island, and Cement townships, with its rural population almost evenly divided among these land divisions.

Selection of this four-township area for the demographic study of early Okarche is based upon documents which associate people with business transactions and with the general social resources of the town. That is, the "Okarche community" is viewed in both a geographic and social sense--consisting of social networks tied to economic, political, and religious organizations as well as their physical manifestations in the town and surrounding rural area. A particularly helpful information base for this evaluation is a series of public announcements in mid-1890 local

newspapers, which listed individuals who approached final certification of their homesteads (Okarche Times 1894 and 1895). These notices include the location of property to be certified, the name of its holder, and a list of references who attested that the claimant had indeed satisfied homestead conditions. The personal references are most important since they list names and places of association of several individuals. Thus, they provide not only a record of small personal networks, but a general town identification for each network. By far the majority of the notices concerning people in the four townships surrounding Okarche center indicate an Okarche identification. However, on the north of Harrison and Park townships, and on the south of Rock Island and Cement townships there are, respectively, numerous references to Kingfisher and El Reno. To the east and west a much more distant indication of association to Okarche is noted, extending out of the four-township zone to a distance of about 8 miles from the center.

In the four-township area surrounding the town, then, a strong but imperfect "identification with Okarche" is indicated by the documents. In this respect, a second consideration for demographic study becomes important. The agricultural census materials of 1900 were both collected and generalized at the township level (Abstract of the Twelfth Census, 1900, 1902; and Twelfth Census of the United States: Statistical Atlas, 1903). For this reason, and considering the rather fortuitous position of the town within the township matrix, I have limited detailed demographic consideration to Harrison, Park, Rock Island, and Cement townships; this allows the use of general reports on the agricultural census of 1900--a necessity since the individual agricultural schedules in

Okarche are not available for study. The study area provides information on perhaps 70 to 80 percent of the early Okarche service area. Of course, the selected area also includes a small proportion of families not strongly associated with Okarche by participation in its dominant social interactions; but this is to be expected in any areal attempt to delineate social boundaries on the level of "communities."

The community of Okarche is also a product of the broader regional development of north-central Oklahoma, and the economic development of Oklahoma and the nation. North-central Oklahoma is deeply involved today in wheat production, and, to a lesser extent, in natural gas and raw petroleum drilling. The importance of these commodities was felt relatively early after settlement, although none were central to the economy of Okarche until well after the homestead period and Oklahoma statehood. It was a more general interest in the potentials for wheat and other grain production in Oklahoma which provided some of the impetus for individual demands that the area be opened to settlement (see Rister 1942: 201-5; McReynolds 1954: 278-9). As early as 1893 inflated predictions of the wheat yields were printed in area newspapers, together with glowing estimates of the importance of the region in wheat farming. However, it is important to note that for most farmers subsistence, rather than intensive wheat production, was of paramount concern in the earliest years after settlement.

Unlike cases of initial settlement in several other areas of the United States, there were few options available to settlers of Oklahoma as to the location and arrangement of towns or agricultural land. (cf. Jordan 1966; Powell 1963). Of course, most of the people who moved to

Oklahoma from the Midwest were familiar with the system used in tracting the territory. However, changes were undoubtedly felt in the general logistics of farming activity by almost all of the settlers. Communications with grain marketing centers, although they were well established in much of Oklahoma from the beginning of settlement, were insufficient to allow for the rapid development of the region's agricultural potentials. Whereas "towns" might essentially spring up overnight, farms are a different matter. For most farmers, the 160-acre limitation on government allotments undoubtedly restricted the scale of individual gains in key commodities. Therefore, unless a farmer had reserve resources, it was necessary to pursue a broader, "subsistence oriented" strategy for at least the first few years.

The tract system also predetermined the soil and vegetation composition of homesteads. It was impossible for individuals to maximize balances of soil, cover, and especially water resources, except within the preset choices available—when, indeed, there were choices at all. As we shall see, this situation is reflected in the chronology of claims, and migration patterns as new lands were opened in other parts of Oklahoma.

Okarche center was also limited in its initial and developmental functions by the commercial geographic features of Oklahoma Territory. The towns of Kingfisher and El Reno were established three years earlier than Okarche, and consequently had served as a logistic base for some rural families who were later closely associated with Okarche. These towns had already developed service potentials over a wide area, as had Oklahoma City, some 30 miles to the southeast in territorial days. Thus, early business in Okarche was placed in competition with more stable and developed regional competition.

The services offered by the early Okarche center mainly involved construction goods and general supply. There were a few specialty shops-- a candy store, a cobbler and a tin shop--as well as a bank, an insurance corporation, several hotels and saloons, a milling company, a dentist, a barber, and several doctors some of whom were rural land claimants. The history of commercial enterprise in Okarche closely parallels developments in the rural sector of economic activity, particularly with regard to the growth of specialized wheat farming. The supply of essential services and equipment for farming activities was important early, and gained in importance through time. The town has never been a major center for commercial activities over a wide region, although it has recently provided medical services beyond the limits of its business market-zone.

4. Family, Religious and Social Units

The vast majority of families in the settlement population of Okarche were unrelated nuclear units without long-term prior association with many of their neighbors. There were a few constellations of households, however, related through kinship ties at the time of settlement and closely colocated on the land. Almost immediately after the opening of the Cheyenne-Arapaho country and the founding of Okarche, two churches were established which would play an important part in the development of the community. These were St. John's Lutheran Church and Holy Trinity Catholic Church, the former with almost a totally German congregation and the latter with German and Irish parishioners. In addition, a Congregationalist church was attended mainly by Anglo-Americans, and a Mennonite church was founded six miles south of the center by east-European German-speakers. There were other congregations--Baptist and German-Evangelical--

but the Catholic, Lutheran, and Congregational churches have continued until the present.

The Catholic and Lutheran congregations represent the most stable social units of Okarche. They continue to be dominated by families of original homestead period settlers, each now multiplied into several households located throughout the Okarche region and in the center. Some of the factors which have contributed to the stability of these groups are an early use of the German language (see Willibrand 1950, 1951), programs of congregation promoted mutual aid, support of regional church organizations--particularly in the case of the Lutherans--and the maintenance of separate schools which has persisted from the period of settlement. This does not mean that Lutheran and Catholic families have maintained themselves in strong isolation from other segments of the Okarche population. Rather, the groups are, and have been since the founding of the town, strongly identifiable associations which have varied in composition much less than other church units or more direct economic and political associations. It is also in the church groups that German "tradition" is most evident within the population. Indeed, the religious patterns practiced by the Okarche congregations contribute the bulk of "cultural elements" which may be directly and unequivocally identified with the European backgrounds of the people. In other areas of endeavor, however, distinctive patterns of activity are not so clearly apparent, today or in the past, at least as viewed through documentary sources.

We must recall that Okarche Germans were involved in the overall "pioneer" context of adjustive strategies, risk, and poorly developed logistics. Even the Germans of early Okarche pursued many different,

sometimes incompatible economic practices under variable land conditions. The successes and failures of many individuals cannot be attributed in their entirety to one element of common association, whether it be an element of heritage, tradition, or corporate action. It should not be expected that all Germans should have "succeeded" on the land or in business activities of the center, regardless of their religious and interpersonal associations. Indeed, many did not remain in the area in the long run, even though they were part of the "traditional" German element of the population; others remained although they were not.

The families of Okarche today are enmeshed with one another through long-standing ties of marriage and cooperation, generally within the three religious denominations although with somewhat less force recently than in former years. The patterns of association evident today result from the pioneer building processes which have operated in many other historical and social contexts. These processes include what James Malin (1935) called "turnover," the tendency of a pioneer population to include many "short-term" residents, and what some demographers have called "cumulative inertia," the tendency of a frontier geographic zone to manifest greater and greater levels of population stability through time (Hudson 1977: 18-9). From an individual point of view, households which invest time in a place have a strengthened commitment to remain as that investment grows. Thus, when we view the pioneer population of Okarche, it is not surprising to see a high rate of demographic turnover which is not readily explained by local economic conditions. With the passage of time, however, it is also not surprising to see family continuity and individual persistence, even in the face of major adverse

economic or political conditions. The understanding of key demographic components of early Okarche history, then, incorporates population profiles and family history, both tied to the contexts of larger social associations, economic action, "ethnic" identifications, and "community" and regional development. As we shall see in subsequent chapters, the religious groups centered on "German" ethnic identification are the most important tier of social groups of this larger system.

CHAPTER III

DEMOGRAPHIC SKETCH OF THE OKARCHE AREA--1889-1940

1. Backgrounds of Settlers

The settlers of Oklahoma came from practically every part of North America and Europe, but most had strong prior association with the United States. The opening of the Unassigned Lands was accomplished from several starting points, resulting in an initial segregation of people with Midwestern ties on the north, and Southern ties on the south. Okarche is situated in the northern area, and so reflects the Midwestern pattern of states of origin. A number of observational techniques allow the construction of a relatively refined picture of source areas for the Okarche population, as well as a general view of migration patterns prior to the opening of Oklahoma. A simple record of birthplaces for the population provides a starting point in both of these tasks.

Birthplace information for Rock Island and Harrison townships in 1889 shows that many families had moved frequently before settling in Oklahoma. In general population movement progresses westward, although some households show return migrations from frontier areas such as South Dakota and Nebraska, or changes of residence within the upper Midwest and Appalachia. In one extreme case the children of an

Indiana couple were born in Arkansas, Illinois, Texas, Kansas and Indian Territory during a fourteen-year period. Another couple had children in Texas, Kansas, and Colorado during the ten years prior to their coming to Oklahoma. The tendency toward migration continued in these cases, for neither family was present in the Okarche region in 1900. The first gained final certification of a homestead in 1895, but is not in the 1900 census. The second relinquished a claim by the end of 1890. But the more typical pattern of births in households shows longer duration of prior residence in states of the Midwest and the central prairies, with successions of several births for one or two places.

The birthplace record for the 1889 population enumerated in the 1890 census (Table 1) readily displays the relative contribution of each source area, and suggests some qualitative differences in the significance of several "key" states to Oklahoma settlement. A total of 135 (61%) of the over-20 individuals born in the United States were from Missouri, Illinois, Kentucky, Indiana and Ohio. The relative distance of these states from Oklahoma is reflected in the under-20 births, providing one strong indication of the chronology of westward movement during the years preceding the Oklahoma openings. The addition of people from Iowa, Tennessee, Pennsylvania and Kansas accounts for 188 (85%) of the over-20 population. With the exception of Kansas, these states show moderate numbers of under-20 individuals. The very high number of Kansas births is the result of the pre-opening activities in that state immediately prior to 1889, although 16 of 144 households in the 1890 territorial census had long prior association with Kansas.

	Primary Place of association before 1889 ^a (households)	Households reporting births	Total Births	Births of persons under 20 in 1889	Births of persons over 20 in 1889
Kansas	16	35	90	78	12
Missouri	9	29	57	24	33
Illinois	8	28	49	20	29
Kentucky	5	16	35	13	22
Indiana	2	21	29	4	25
Ohio	1	21	27	1	26
Iowa	3	17	25	9	16
Tennessee	2	10	21	7	14
Pennsylvania	2	7	20	9	11
Texas	4	5	9	9	0
Wisconsin	1	5	5	0	5
Virginia	1	3	7	0	7
Michigan	1	2	4	2	2
Nebraska	1	2	4	4	0
South Dakota	1	1	4	4	0
South ^b	0	9	9	2	7
Northeast ^b	0	12	12	0	12
West ^b	0	6	7	7	0

a. Any household reflecting long-term residence in a state is included in this count. Long-term residence was determined through place-of-birth information on children. Conjugal households in which all members (Father, Mother, first child) show the same birthplace are included also.

b. South includes Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, Georgia and North Carolina; Northeast includes New York, Maryland, Connecticut and Maine; West includes Colorado, No Man's Land, and Indian Territory.

Table 1. Places of Origin of the 1889 population of Rock Island and Harrison townships, including persons in foreign-born-headed households (Compiled from the manuscript schedules of the Oklahoma Territorial Census of 1890).

Thus, Kansas, Missouri, Illinois and Kentucky account for 135 (70%) of the under-20 population in 1890, and the addition of Iowa, Tennessee, Pennsylvania and Texas brings the total to 169 (87%).

Another way of estimating the significance of the contribution of each source state to Okarche settlement is by observing the duration of residence by households. This is the purpose of the "primary place" column of Table 1. Households showing successive births of children in one state, or births of all family members (regardless of household size) in a state, were counted as having a primary association to the place involved. Of course, single individuals and couples were deleted from this listing, leaving only conjugal family units and extended family households. While the criteria for considering a household to have had prior strong ties with a place are somewhat subjective, the resulting associations augment the information from birthplace counts in two ways. First, the general pattern of primary contributing states is refined to place less emphasis on certain places showing large numbers of births, such as Indiana and Ohio. Similarly, Texas shows a low number of total births but four family associations, and so requires more emphasis. Second, with the exceptions of Wisconsin, Virginia, Michigan, Nebraska, and South Dakota, no other places provide indications of long-term association. Therefore, a large number of states and territories which occur as birthplaces listed for the early Okarche population are deleted from further consideration, since they relate only to individuals of the population or to very short terms of residence.

From these data we see that the older population of the 1889 run in the Okarche area had its roots in the Midwest primarily, and that

most families had considerable first-hand pioneer and settled experience with farming communities in the prairie-woodland belt of Illinois, Iowa, Missouri and Kansas. However, a relatively small number of households from Kentucky, Tennessee and Pennsylvania account for a rather large number of the settlers--about 18% of the population. The census materials confirm that several large families from these areas included older parents and nearly adult children. Other states-of-origin made their contribution more in "births" than in "experience." The most significant departure from this rule involves those households with foreign-born heads.

Table 2 depicts the places of birth and immigration chronology of the foreign-born individuals in the early Okarche population. These figures are not to be taken as indicative of "ethnic groups" per se, because there were also first-generation European-American household heads who are not adequately reflected in the 1890 census materials. The seven source countries in 1889 were dominated by Germany, England and (English) Canada. Most of the population was over 20 years old, and 83% of those individuals for which immigration dates are reported in the census had ten years or more experience in the United States. This acquaintance with America follows the internal locational patterns of settlers born in the United States, except that Kentucky and Tennessee account for none of the foreign-born families.

The 1900 census materials augment this general picture, but also provide some striking contrasts between the populations which initially entered the Unassigned lands and the Cheyenne-Arapaho reservation. Figure 1 presents age-sex and marital information for the

A. Place of Birth	Number of Households	Age in five-year cohorts										
		10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	60-64
Bohemia	1	1	1						1		1	
Canada	5				1	1	1	1		1		1
England	4			1		2				1		
Germany	9			1	5	2	1	1			2	1
Ireland	2	1							2	1	1	
Russia	2			1		1						
Sweden	2				3							
TOTALS	25	2	1	3	9	6	2	2	3	3	4	2

B. Place of Birth	Total amount of time in United States in five-year intervals ^(a)										
	0-4	5-9	10-14	15-19	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54
Canada	1				1	3		1			
England			1	2					1		
Germany		3	5	2	1			1	1		
Ireland			1		2						2
Russia		1				1					
Sweden			1								
TOTALS	1	4	8	4	4	4		2	2		2

a. Not reported for all individuals by census takers.

Table 2. Foreign-born persons in the 1890 Census of Rock Island and Harrison townships, depicting (A) place of birth by age groups and (B) number of years spent in the United States prior to 1890 (Compiled from the manuscript schedules of the Oklahoma Territorial Census of 1890).

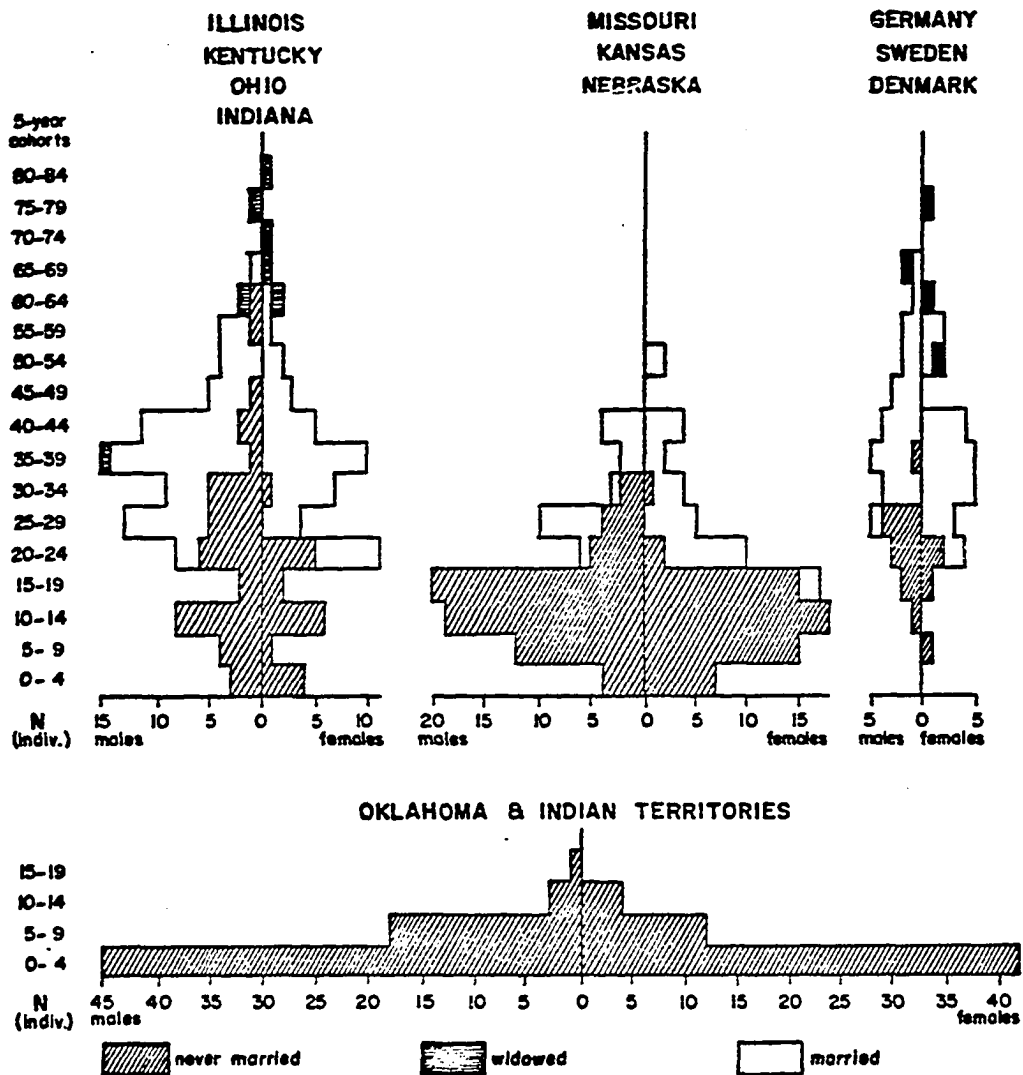


Figure 1. Age-sex profiles of the 1900 population of Cement township showing major contributing states differentiated by their locations in the migration field (low frequency places omitted; compiled from manuscript schedules of the 1900 census).

population of Cement township in 1900, organized according to place of birth. Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois are represented predominantly by individuals over 20 years of age, while Missouri, Kansas and Nebraska reflect births mainly between the years 1880 and 1900. The foreign-born of this population are considerably more numerous than in 1889. They display an age pattern similar to that of Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. Finally, Oklahoma births fill out the base of the population, especially in the 0-4 cohort. These profiles also show the continued immigration which occurred during the early years of settlement. Fewer than half of the children born into this population between 1890 and 1895 were born in Oklahoma.

The frontier marriage pattern reflected in these materials is also interesting. A large number of the youngest married females came from Missouri, Kansas and Nebraska. These women were married to men from the primary source states, except three who were married to men from Germany. All sectors of the Cement township population show the tendency for women to be married between the ages of 20 through 24, and for men to remain single longer. Indeed, the early marriage ages for women fall in the late teens, while for men they begin in the early twenties. But the marriage-age spans for women and men end at 25 and 35 respectively.

The apparent difference in marriage age of men in the American-born and European-born sectors of the Cement township population is the result of small population size. This difference is not strongly reflected in the total population of the region. There is a difference, however, in the sexual balance of the two groups. There were relatively

few European-born single males who came to the Okarche region, other than those attached to the households of their parents. Further, of the 22 married men from Germany, Sweden, and Denmark in Cement township in 1900, only one married a woman born in the United States to American-born parents. The others all married women of European background, and only two of those women were born in the United States. Yet only seven of the marriages took place in Europe, so approximately two-thirds of these men came to North America as single males. Similarly, all but two of the married women born in Germany, Sweden and Denmark from this population were married to European-born men. Most of the women came to the United States as children, while several of the men came as adults. Thus, among those individuals who entered the United States as single persons, a pattern of marriage practice similar to non-Germans in its locational aspects is represented, although selection on the basis of heritage seems to be strongly manifested. Women were in North America, and in some cases the frontier areas of the continent, prior to the arrival of the men they would marry. Finally, there is a total of 13 married men of German heritage reflected in the American-born age-sex profiles of Figure 1. These men also married women of similar background--primarily other German-Americans.

Thus, the German-American component of the early Okarche community reflects strong commonality of heritage throughout its adult population, but a range of American migration and settlement experience no less broad than the population of the region in general. Indeed, at no time during the settlement period of Okarche do we encounter a large proportion of recent migrants from Europe, or large groups entering the region from any one place in the United States.

The pattern of source states differs slightly between the 1889 and 1892 settlement areas, at least as reflected by 1900 census data for the Cheyenne-Arapaho area. Nebraska, for example, is of much greater importance in the later run, while Pennsylvania and Tennessee are of much less significance. Nebraska accounts for 31 births within the Cement township population, but Pennsylvania and Tennessee together were the birthplaces of only 16 individuals, five of whom were under ten years of age. Furthermore, the Nebraska-born individuals are predominantly unmarried teens, representing several prior long-term resident families from more northern prairie farm communities. Iowa remains prominent as a source of Okarche population, but ambiguous from the point of view of age. Many other states are represented by from one to five individuals, and had little real impact on the composition of the population during either land run.

The foreign-born of Cement township also included a single male from Spain, a married woman from France and a couple from French Canada. There were no Czechs in the township, but representatives of all of the other European countries which were present in the 1889 run are found in the Cement township census.

The differences in the backgrounds of people in the 1889 and 1892 settlement areas of Okarche result from national economic conditions and the processes of communication between initial settlers and friends of like background in other parts of the United States. For example, as Willibrand (1951: 285) has pointed out, at least one German individual who established himself during the Oklahoma run carried on correspondence with people to the east and north which was aimed at

bringing more Germans into Okarche. Moreover, population pressure in some of the more settled areas of the east—especially as coupled with the aura of opportunity presented in newspaper treatments of Oklahoma—provided impetus for individual attempts to settle well into the Twentieth Century. The "push" factors were a combination of rising land prices and a settled mature population in areas such as Illinois, Iowa, Indiana, Missouri, and even Kansas and Nebraska, both of which made it difficult for young couples to establish new farms or for established farmers to increase their holdings. The "pull" factors were relatively inexpensive land amenable to rapid improvement, excellent initial logistic support in the form of railroads and a large commercial population, and a comparatively stable political situation. But we should suspect, given major differences in the source states responsible for the base populations of different land openings, that the "push" factors were more important in determining who arrived in Oklahoma for settlement.

2. Household Composition and Age-Sex Structure

The overwhelming majority of households during the settlement period of Okarche consisted of conjugal family units (throughout this discussion the terminology of Hammel and Laslett 1974, as modified by Kertzer 1977, is employed). Most of these households were unrelated to other settlers of the immediate locality, although a few kin networks established themselves on adjacent or very nearly adjacent homesteads. Figure 2 depicts the household composition and kinship relations of all such networks recorded in the 1890 census and reflected in the Oklahoma Tract Book. Four of these extended kin networks (Figure 2, a-d) repre-

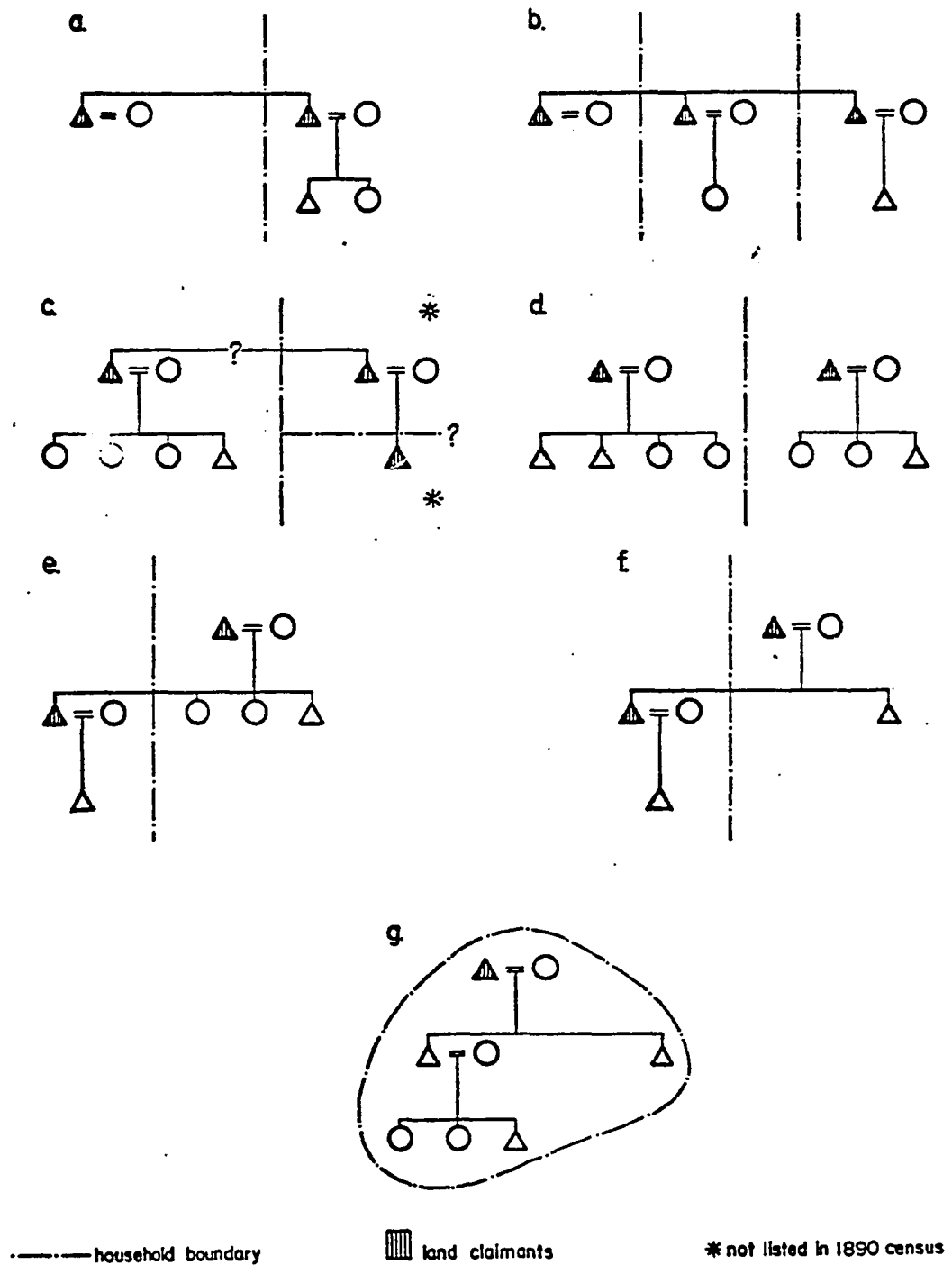


Figure 2. Household composition and kin relations of family networks in the 1890 population of Harrison and Rock Island townships (compiled from manuscript schedules of the 1890 Oklahoma census).

sent sets of brothers, while two consist of father-son pairs (Figure 2, e and f). There were only two extended family households in the 1900 census. One (Figure 2, g) was the three-generation household of an old couple. The other included a man in his sixties accompanied by a 33-year-old wife, four sons ranging in age from 27-34, and a grandson. This family and two conjugal family units are interesting because of the presence of several children in the 25 to 35 year age range. Such households look suspiciously like they were preparing for later land openings, and indeed only one of these families remained through 1900. However, the two families that left Okarche did not relinquish their claims in the Unassigned Lands area until the very late 1890's, and so they evidently did not capitalize on the opportunities of the Cheyenne-Arapaho and Cherokee Strip openings. Other households consisted of several siblings in their middle twenties, and some of these apparently did "stage" for later land openings by taking a poor claim near the Cheyenne-Arapaho reservation border. The late date of claims for such households, coupled with the dates of relinquishment matching other openings, lends support to this interpretation.

An age-sex profile of the 1889 population of Rock Island and Harrison townships is presented in Figure 3. It is apparent from this profile that the general settler population was young, as might be expected in a case with a large predominance of conjugal family units. The sex ratio for the 1889 settlers was 134:100, reflecting many unmarried males between the ages of 20 and 40. Very few of the men under 25 were married, and half of the 25-29 cohort was single. Most of the women over 20 were married, however, as well as half of the women in

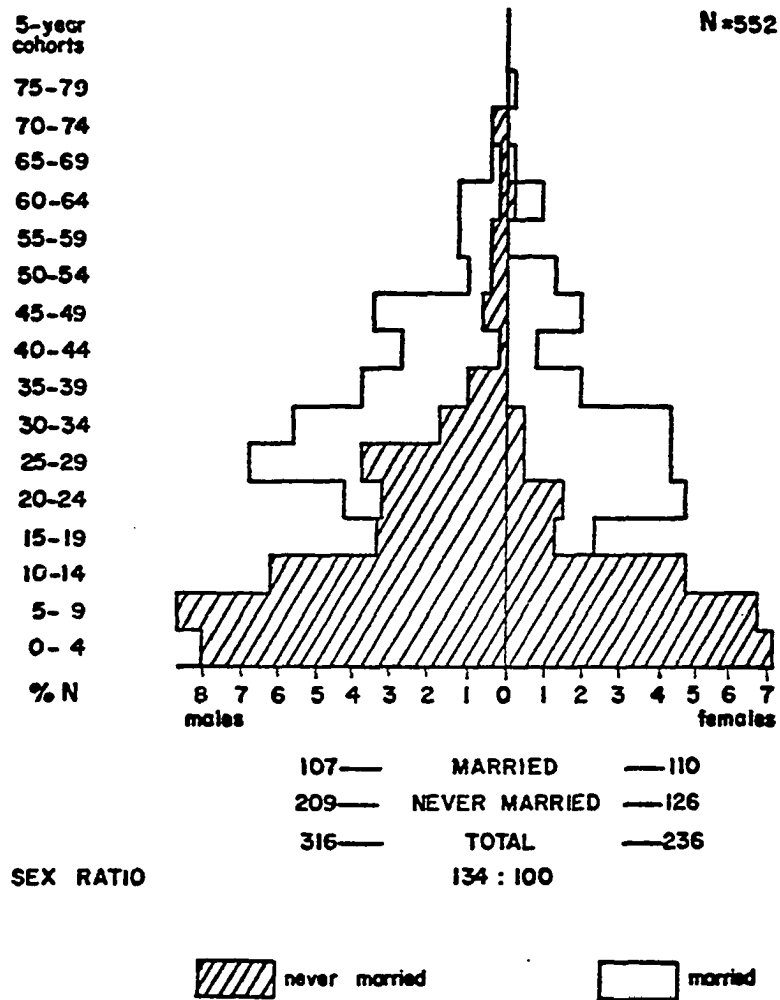


Figure 3. Age-sex profile of the 1889 population of Rock Island and Harrison townships (compiled from manuscript schedules of the 1890 Oklahoma census).

the 15-19 cohort. This age-sex pattern is typical of frontier situations which have been investigated by others (Lefferts 1977), including the constriction of the profile into an "hourglass" form. The constriction involves the 15-19 cohort in the 1889 population, indicating that most couples were in the early years of childbearing. This means that the potential for population growth through births was great immediately after settlement, the potential for work output on homesteads would remain high during the first 10 to 15 years, and pressure on the land through new marriages and births stemming from the under-20 cohorts would be deferred over at least the same period of time.

The people included in Figure 3 number 552 individuals, representing 155 households located in a 48 square mile area. In addition to the two extended family households noted above, there were 72 conjugal family units, 19 married couples with no children, and 51 single individuals. Only two single land claimants were women, and there were very few households listed in the 1890 census but not in the Oklahoma Tract Book. The families without land all left the Okarche region before 1900. Among the homesteaders the potentials for satisfying claim conditions differed greatly from household to household. This is strongly reflected in the demographic picture gained from study of the original settler families remaining in Okarche through 1900. In the first ten years after settlement 377 of the original 552 people in the 1890 census either left the community or died. Most left, leaving only 50 of the original households and one newly married couple who established an independant farm close to the man's parent's homestead. Only seven of the single male claimants, one widow, and six of the

married couples present in 1890 remained in 1900. The other successful eighty-niners were initially larger family units. Thus, 42% of the families with children remained on their homesteads through the first ten years, while only 31% of the couples and 15% of the single persons remained over the same timespan.

The dynamics of household composition and basic population features for the 50 households present in both 1890 and 1900 are complex. Using an abbreviated classification of households which reflects age, sex, and generational distinctions, it is possible to view the changing patterns of family composition for the purposes of assessing work potentials on homesteads. Figure 4 presents a count of households in each class for the two census years, and a flow diagram indicating household class changes which occurred over the ten year period. The diagram shows that even though the figures for most of the household classes are similar in the two years, the actual households in each class are generally different. Thus, although there were 15 couples with at least one child over ten years of age in the 1890 household breakdown, the 17 similar households in 1900 included only nine of the same families. In this fixed household sample, we could expect the number of such households to be reduced over a subsequent ten-year period, and for major increases to occur in the formation of extended family households or couples with all children over ten years of age. In a broader view of Okarche population, the turnover in households would introduce new families in classes B, C and D, which would also go through a process of compositional change leading to household extension or maturity, depending upon continued conditions of land availability.

Household Class	1890	1900
A. Single Male	7	2
B. Couple	4	1
C. Couple with children 0-9	12	8
D. Couple with at least one child over 10	15	17
E. Couple with all children over 10	4	5
F. Old Couple	2	5
G. Widow(er) living alone	1	1
H. Extended Family Household	1	7
I. Female head of household	2	4
J. Household with attached unrelated persons	2	3
Total Households:	50	51

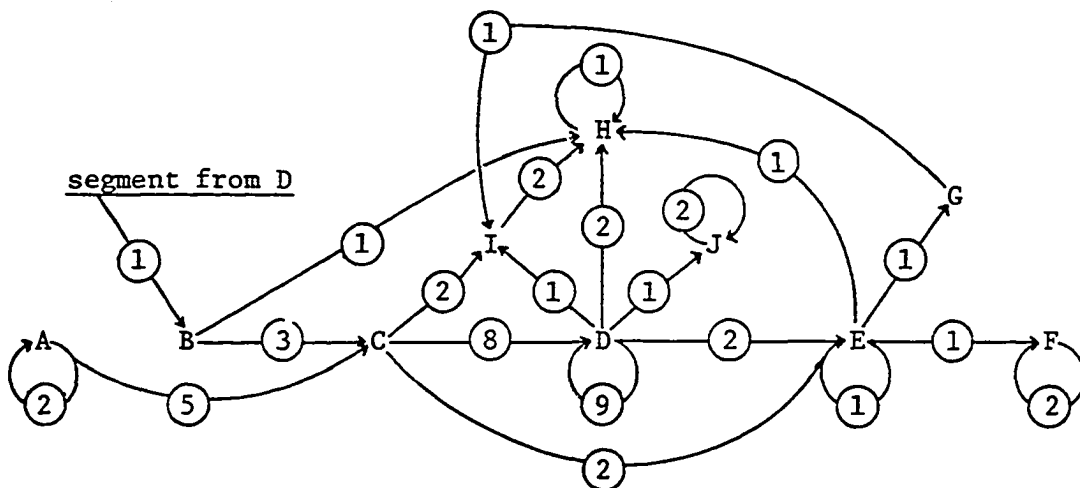


Figure 4. Comparison of household structures in 1890 and 1900 for 50 settler households remaining in Okarche over the first ten years of settlement, including frequency of household class changes (compiled from manuscript schedules of the Oklahoma Territorial Census of 1890 and the U.S. Census of 1900).

The changes in household class of the settler population which remained from 1890 through 1900 reflects, then, an incomplete picture of a larger family cycle, and the data underscore the relative youth of the families involved. Even as the most "mature" households of Okarche in 1900, the initial claimant population still mainly involved parents who were only in the middle of their childbearing years. This is true of extended family households and households which included attached unrelated persons. Indeed, only two of the extended family households of 1900 included elderly male heads who were initial land claimants (Figure 5, a and b). A third household of the same class (Figure 5c) included a male head 45 years old and three sons over age 20, one of whom was married and had a child. The remaining complex households include several different situations centered on female family heads or the attachment of elderly lineal or young collateral relatives. Thus, one extended family (Figure 5d) resulted from the marriage of a woman claimant paired with the marriage of her daughter, and the remaining complex households included a network of widowed sisters-in-law (Figure 5e), a mother-son two-household network (Figure 5f), and three households which included mothers of primary individuals (Figure 5, g through i). Two households added unrelated individuals and nephews or nieces (Figure 5, ja and k). In none of these cases is there reason to believe that the impetus for family extension was based on inheritance; nor is there a "pattern" of household extension indicated by the data.

While the conditions on the Oklahoma frontier seem to have favored larger conjugal family units and complex households, at least

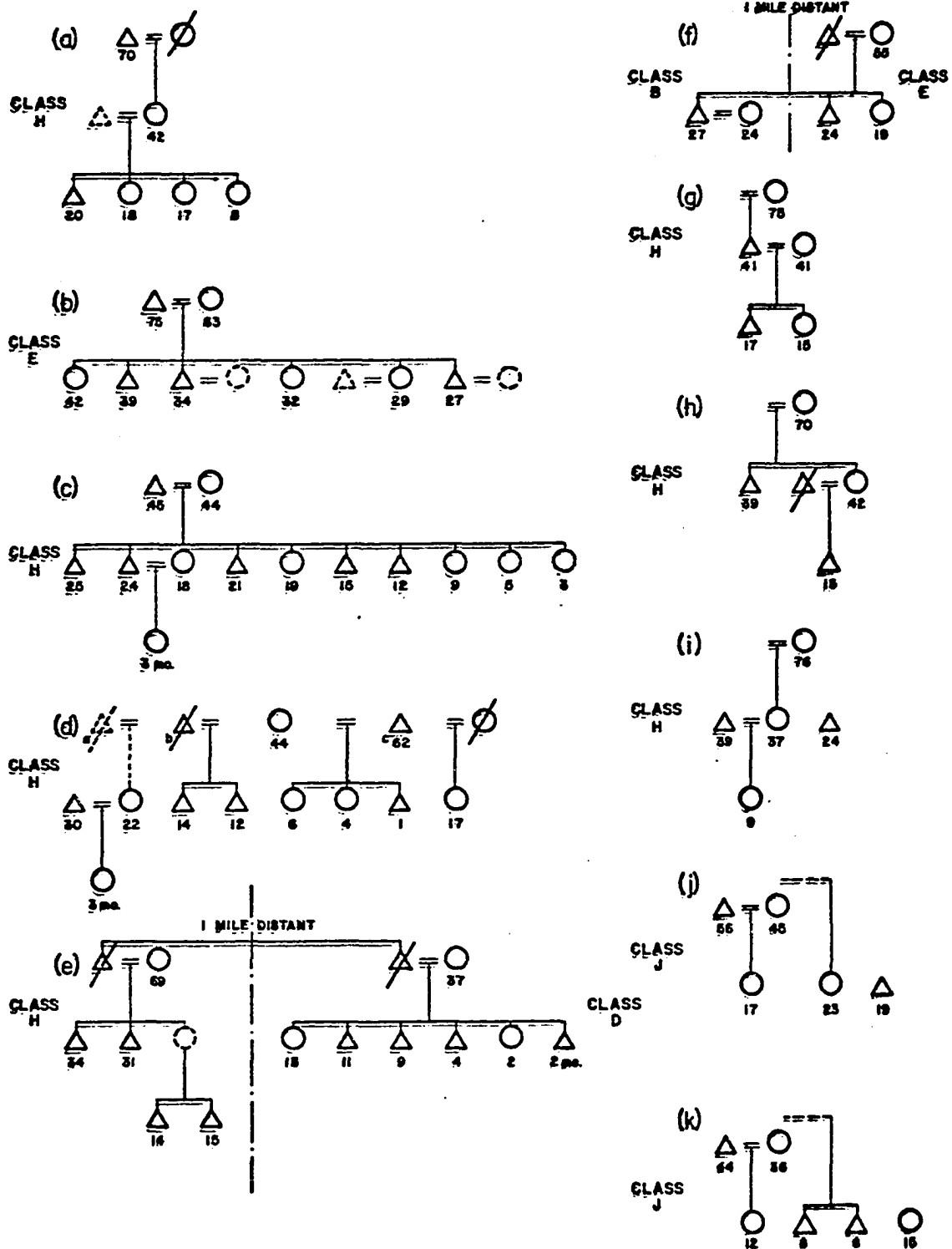


Figure 5. Complex households in the 1900 census sample (compiled from the manuscript schedules of the 1900 census).

during the first ten years, younger couples probably found it easier to establish themselves as farming and commerce in the area stabilized. It should be emphasized that although turnover of the Okarche population was great during the first few years after settlement, it dropped radically before 1900. Thus, an age difference of 15 to 20 years separated the older children of the diverse households in 1900, with the great majority of these children being under age 20. For this reason, as well as because of the competition for available homesteads immediately after 1900, a more complete family cycle would show a number of extended family households including children in their twenties between 1900 and 1915. The agricultural system favored concentration of family labor resources on initial homesteads coupled with additional land acquired through purchase by initial land claimants. There were few new farms established by young couples during the same period then, either from the outside or by children of homesteaders. The age structure and turnover features of the older Okarche population, furthermore, set the span of the initial generational land turnover at about ten years, beginning in about 1915 and lasting through 1925. During this period original homesteads and additional farmland acquired in the name of the settlers were either preinherited by a child or divided among several children, the actual disposition depending upon the amount of land available for transfer.

A number of other characteristics of the initial settler population which remained in the Okarche area through 1900 elucidate factors which mediated success on the Oklahoma farming frontier. The sex ratio of the successful households was slightly lower than that of

the general population of 1890, for example, and it balanced from 115:100 in 1890 to 109:100 in 1900. This reflects the reduced number of single males who represented a prominent part of the total 1890 population. The change in size and sex ratio of the population is the cumulative result of births, deaths, migrations, and marriage. During the ten year period following settlement, the following changes in the composition of the population are reflected by census records: 89 recorded births, 9 recorded deaths, 29 lost through either unrecorded death or migration, 9 additions through marriage, and 25 additions through migration of relatives. These changes brought a net increase of 85 people, from 213 persons to 298. The impact of these changes on the age-sex structure of the combined households is shown in Figure 6. In addition to greater sexual balance, the age-sex pyramids show an increase in the combined work potential of the households. The large full-time productive sector of the population (persons from 15 to 59) had increased from 112 to 161 people (from 52.5% to 54.0%). Thus, there was not only an increase on a per capita basis, but also a slight increase in the proportion of working-age householders to less-productive members of the population. Meanwhile, the under-15 cohorts increased from 97 to 120 individuals, but dropped on a percentage basis from 45.5% to 40.2% of all people on these farms. This decrease was matched by an increase in the over-59 cohorts from a total of four individuals in 1890 to 17 in 1900, or 1.8% of the population to 5.7%, respectively.

By viewing isolated households such as these it is possible to suggest some of the long-term demographic trends of the pioneer settlement. One trend is toward an older, sexually balanced population,

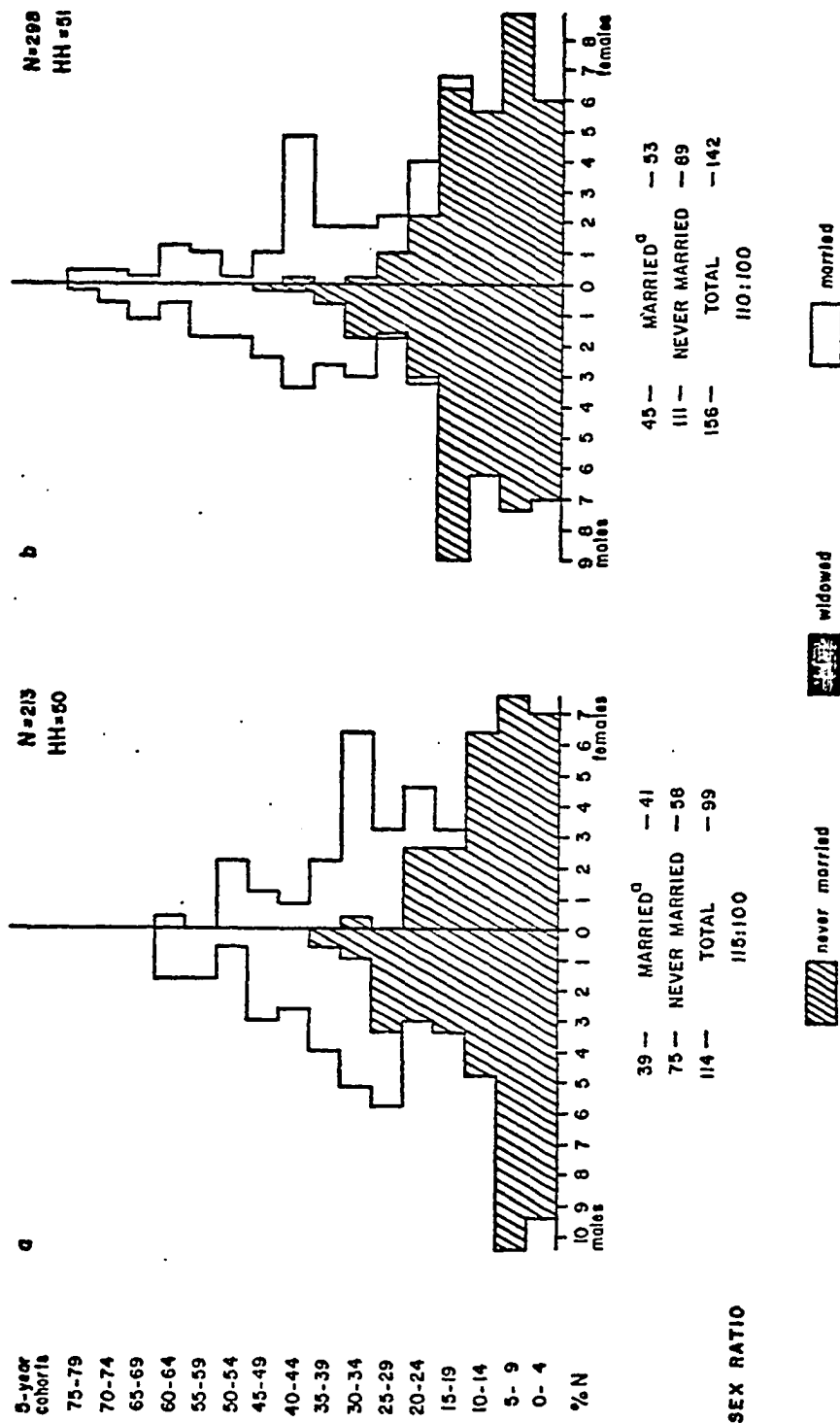


Figure 6. Age-sex structures of 1889er households that maintained residence in the Okarche area through 1900 for the years 1890 and 1900 (compiled from manuscript schedules of the 1890 Oklahoma census and the 1900 census).

ultimately with no radical constrictions in its pyramidal form. But in the ongoing settlement process the continued in- and out-flow of households contributed to the youth of the settler community. Turnover, then, impeded the development of an age-sex structure along the lines of what might have been projected from the patterns of the settler population at any given time. The decision of a young married couple to locate in the same area as their parents, in a totally new area, or with one of the parents in an extended household situation, was generally mediated by land availability and the economic needs of all concerned. Thus, for a time, the new youth which did enter the settlement came from more established agricultural areas where land and economic conditions afforded few options but outmigration, while the peer group of these new arrivals already on the Oklahoma frontier remained attached to their parents while building an interest in an inheritable capital estate. This whole process constituted what is properly called the "adjustive" phase of settlement. Its end was marked by the generational transition from settler parents to their children and the close of entry into the region by families from outside the Oklahoma frontier, both of which occurred during World War I. After the adjustive phase the tendency of the population toward a less youthful age distribution and more balanced sex ratios proceeded without impeding effects, and a regular pyramidal age structure was established.

3. Turnover, Demographic Structure, and Settler Background

The chronology of claims and transfers of claim in the Okarche region indicates the rate of turnover for each of the two settlement areas. Table 3 summarizes the claims and household replacements for

Cheyenne-Arapaho Lands						
Year	New Claims	Claim Replacements	Household Total	New Claims	Claim Replacements	Household Total
1889				165	8 (5%) ^a	165
1890				16 (10%) ^b	36 (20%)	181
1891				4 (2%)	18 (10%)	185
1892	94	27 (28%) ^a	94	1 (.5%)	16 (9%)	186
1893	1	25 (26%)	95		6 (3%)	186
1894	1	5 (5%)	96		2 (1%)	186
1895		3 (3%)	96		1 (.5%)	186
1896		1 (1%)	96			
1897		2 (2%)	96			
1898		1 (1%)	96			

a. N divided by total of same year

b. N divided by total of previous year

Table 3. New claims and turnover rates for Rock Island and Harrison townships from 1889 through 1898 (Compiled from the complete record of claims in Rock Island and Harrison townships in the Oklahoma Tract Book).

part of the Unassigned Lands and Cheyenne-Arapaho Reservation, and shows a number of differences in the patterns of change in population for the two areas. The data refer to: (1) all of the Unassigned Lands homesteads in the study area, a block four miles wide and twelve miles long on the east edge of Harrison and Rock Island townships, and (2) the two-mile wide strip of the same townships settled in 1892. The settlement of the Unassigned Lands near Okarche was not complete by the end of 1889. A total of 21 initial claims came after 1889, one as late as 1892. On the other hand, the settlement of the Cheyenne-Arapaho tracts in the Okarche area was virtually complete within a month of the land opening. The two areas also differed in the rate of replacement during the first year of settlement, and in the overall pattern of replacement until relatively stable conditions were established. In the 1889 area, only eight homesteads were relinquished to new claimants during the first year, representing a figure of 5% replacement. However, in the 1892 area 27 homesteads changed hands over a similar length of time. This figure involves 28% of the available tracts in the part of the Cheyenne-Arapaho area considered. Moreover, the replacements in the Unassigned Lands area never exceeded 20% in any given year subsequent to settlement, while turnover in the Cheyenne-Arapaho area remained high through 1893.

These differences relate in part to the proximity of Okarche to the starting points of the two land runs. The lands nearest the edges of the areas opened were taken quickly, accounting for the rapid claim saturation in 1892. The starting points for the Oklahoma run were distant from the Okarche region, so a few tracts remained untaken

for several months. The availability of land and town-based opportunities probably accounts for the differences in turnover rates over the first few years. The Unassigned Lands section of the Okarche rural sector experienced most of its critical adjustment during the years prior to the founding of the commercial center. The later settlers could more easily seek an alternative claim in the west, or leave farming entirely to attempt the establishment of a business in the center. There was also a high rate of turnover on claims in the four quarter-sections which surrounded the town, and adjacent to Indian allotments to the north of the center.

It is easily seen that both areas of settlement in the Okarche region experienced high rates of turnover during the first few years after homesteading, and that the entire region was relatively stable by 1895. Yet the three year difference in starting points and the turnover variations of the two areas are reflected in the age-sex structures of the 1900 population. For example, if we compare an age-sex pyramid for the entire population of Cement township (Figure 7) to that of the households of initial Unassigned Lands claimants (Figure 6, b), both populations considered as of 1900, there is a five-year disparity in the overall age structures observed. The 1900 Cement township profile is more similar to that of the 1889ers in 1890 (Figures 3 and 6, a). The same is true of German population of Cement and Park townships when compared to the Germans of Rock Island and Harrison townships (Figure 8). The profile of the areas dominated by earlier settlers shows a large 40-44 cohort, constriction at the 20-24 cohort, and the beginnings of a decline in births manifested as a

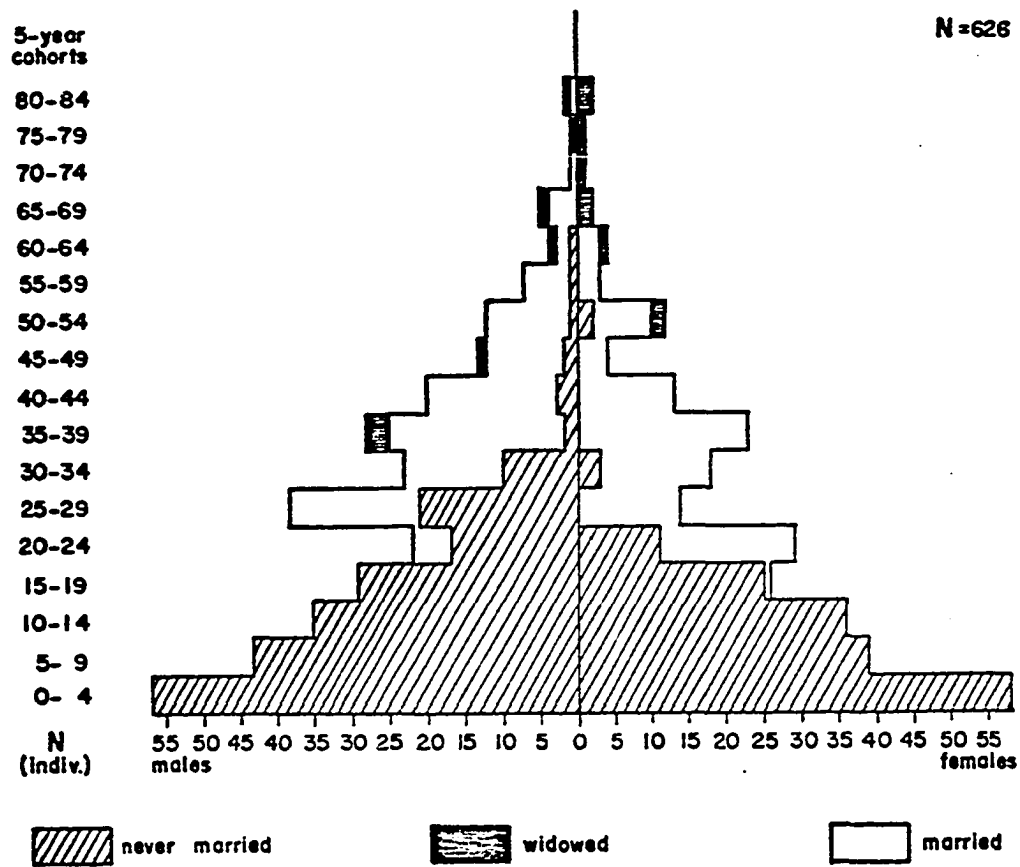


Figure 7. Age-Sex profile of Cement Township in 1900 (compiled from the manuscript schedules of the 1900 census).

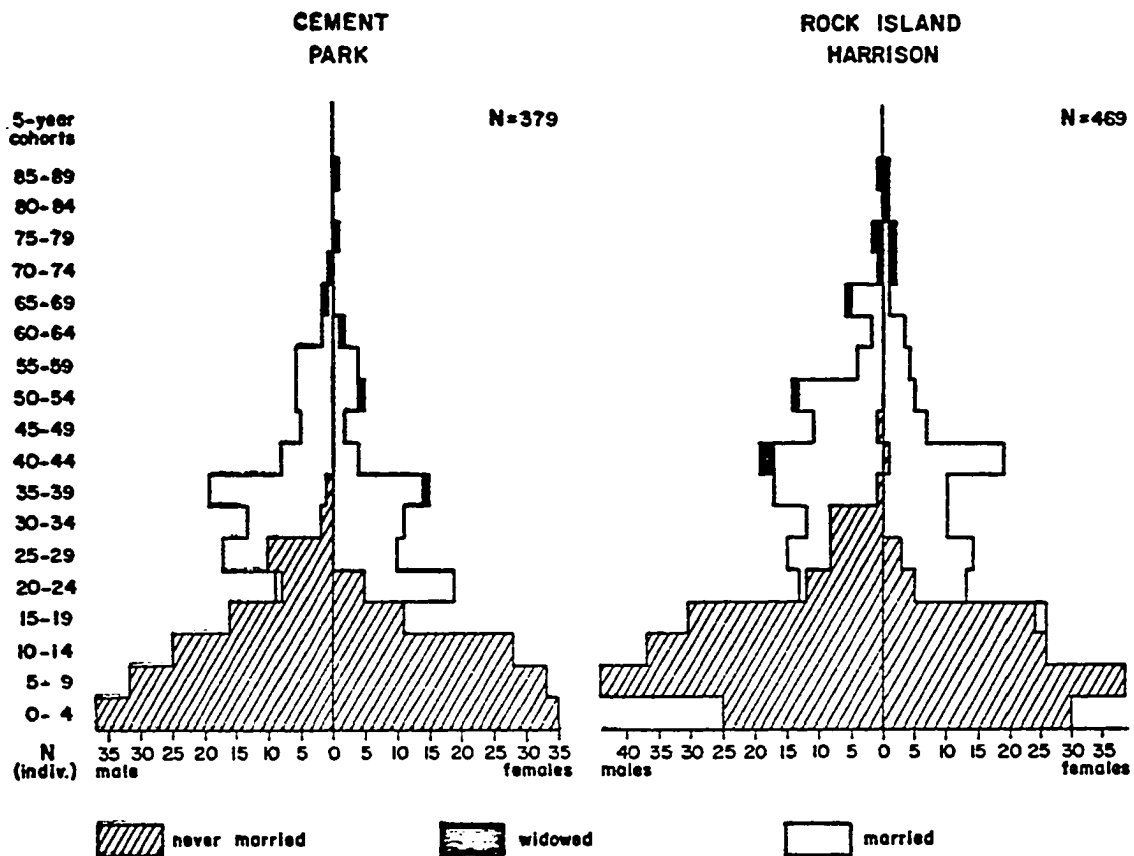


Figure 8. Age-Sex profiles of Germans in the Oklahoma Run area (Rock Island and Harrison townships) and Cheyenne-Arapaho Run area (Cement and Park townships) in 1900 (Compiled from manuscript schedules of the 1900 census).

constriction of the 0-4 cohort. That of the townships fully in the Cheyenne-Arapaho area reflects a younger adult sector, a small 15-19 cohort, and a large 0-4 base.

A more important consequence of the sequence of settlement in the Okarche region was the production of variable patterns of household organization through time. This variation is also expressed in differences between the areas settled in 1889 and 1892, as well as in a clearly differentiated town pattern. In discussion above, some of the dynamics of household change in successful families of 1889 were introduced, based on data summarized in Figure 4. By observing the different household patterns in the two settlement areas and the town it is possible to construct a general picture of household dynamics of the settlement era. Table 4 presents the simple classification of household types for all of Cement and Rock Island townships, and for Okarche Center, as of 1900. Since both the town and Cement township were settled in 1892, it is not surprising that they reflect many similarities. However, they also reflect differences stemming from the distinctive makeup of rural and town population, so in some respects Cement township is more similar to Rock-Island township than to the town. In all three areas a distinction has been made between "German" and "non-German" population.

These data show that household organization, like age-sex structure, follows similar patterns for Germans and non-Germans in the Okarche region. Thus, the most frequent household class for both groups in Cement township in 1900 was "couples with children 0-9 years of age." But in Rock Island township more households of both groups

Household Class	Cement Township			Okarche Center(a)			Rock Island Township		
	German	Other	Total	German	Other	Total	German	Other	Total
A. Single Male	3	17	20 (15.0%)	3	13	16 (17.9%)	3	6	9 (5.6%)
B. Young Couple	1	2	3 (2.2%)	4	7	11 (12.3%)	5	9	14 (8.7%)
C. Couple with children 0-9	16	22	38 (28.5%)	5	23	28 (31.4%)	10	20	30 (18.8%)
D. Couple with at least one child over 10	14	16	30 (22.6%)	1	10	11 (12.3%)	14	44	58 (36.2%)
E. Couple with all children	4	10	14 (10.5%)	1	8	9 (10.1%)	6	25	31 (19.4%)
F. Old Couple		6	6 (4.5%)		2	2 (2.2%)	1	4	5 (3.1%)
G. Widow(er) living alone		1	1 (.7%)		2	2 (2.2%)		2	2 (1.2%)
H. Extended Family Households	4	17	21 (15.8%)	3	7	10 (11.2%)	3	8	11 (6.8%)
Total Households			133			89			160
Classes of Households with female heads--frequency	C-1 E-2	E-2			E-1			D-1 E-3	
Classes of Households with unrelated attached persons included--frequency	B-1 C-3 D-2	C-1 D-1 E-2 F-1 H-3		C-1 H-1	C-3 D-2 E-1 H-2		B-1 C-2 D-1 E-1	B-1 C-3 D-4 E-3 G-1 H-3	

(a) Includes population of center in both Rock Island and Harrison townships.

Table 4. Household classes of Cement and Rock-Island townships, and of Okarche Center in 1900, differentiated by background (Compiled from the manuscript schedules of the Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900).

had children over 10 years of age. If there is any overall difference in German and non-German segments of the population, it is that German families on the elder end of family development cycles (in classes E, F, and H of Table 4) are slightly less frequent than the non-German families. However, in their basic characteristics, the household development cycles of the Germans are the same as for the population as a whole. There is no indication that family organization on the household level conferred any special advantage to Germans, particularly in the area of economic potentials in the homestead situation.

The frequency of "single male" households in Cement township does not appear to be consistent with the observation made for the 1889 area that single farmers seemed to be at a disadvantage. Inspection of the census lists shows that only one of the single males in Cement township was engaged in a non-agricultural occupation. Eight of the remaining single males were land claimants, and the other eleven were employed as farm labor. Therefore, the "success" rate of single claimants is probably actually in line with that developed where dual-census inspection was possible. The most typical household association of single males in Okarche during this period was as a "boarder." There are therefore many single individuals in both areas not directly listed as "households" but indicated in the census as attached members of larger households.

There is also a larger percentage of extended family households in Cement township than in Rock Island township as of 1900. This is evidently the result of a greater tendency to attach mothers, fathers and siblings to households than was observed in settlers of the 1889

land run. Such attachment is not surprising in a settlement situation where logistics were more well established. It should be remembered that there was only one extended family household among the 50 initial claimant families who remained in Harrison and Rock Island townships during the first 10 years of Okarche's development, and that only six such households were formed during the first 10 years.

The frequencies of both single male and extended family households are similar for Cement township and Okarche Center. In time, however, one would expect to see greater similarities in both classes of household between the two rural population components. Based upon the isolated household information summarized in Figure 4, the expectation for single males would involve continued reductions through marriage and migrations out of the Okarche area. Conversely, also as indicated above, extended family households would be expected to increase in number throughout the rural territories. In addition, the nature of extended families would be expected to change, resulting in a lower frequency of sibling-pairs and a higher frequency of three-generation patricentric households. Meanwhile, the town would be expected to at least maintain its complement of single males and reflect fewer cases of household extension.

These short-term projections are consistent with known later conditions in Okarche, particularly as regards the German population. The town remained essentially "non-German" much longer than the rural areas surrounding it, while initial German families added to their holdings and provided a "pull" effect on people of similar background. Families matured on the land, adding to their overall work potential,

and ultimately contributed older population to the town. Therefore, beginning in the late 1920's and early 1930's, the age structure of the center began to shift dramatically. Until then it had remained a center dominated by the youngest segments of the region's population--it would eventually become dominated by the oldest, the retired settlers leaving farm work for the younger generations.

The town was also dominated by females in the under-20 cohorts. Indeed, the overall sex ratio of the center was 92:100 in 1900, even though males over 20 years of age outnumbered females (see Figure 9). One explanation for this disparity from the normal male-dominated population of the region during the settlement period is to be found in the small population size of Okarche center. The census reflects 319 individuals, 166 of whom were women. Among middle-aged households--those with children in their teens--the sex balance is disrupted by the loss of male children to work elsewhere or independent settlement opportunities. In the younger families, however, there were apparently many more female births. A check of the census for household classes C and D shows a full accounting of children reported as born to most mothers. Among these households are several with all female children. In such a small population, it does not take too many sexually imbalanced households--such as that of the hotel keeper with seven daughters ranging in age from 5 to 18--to produce radically skewed sex proportions in 5-year cohorts.

Household classes (Table 4) and age-sex data (Figure 9) both serve to strongly differentiate the town of Okarche during its early years from the farming population it served. The center had the highest

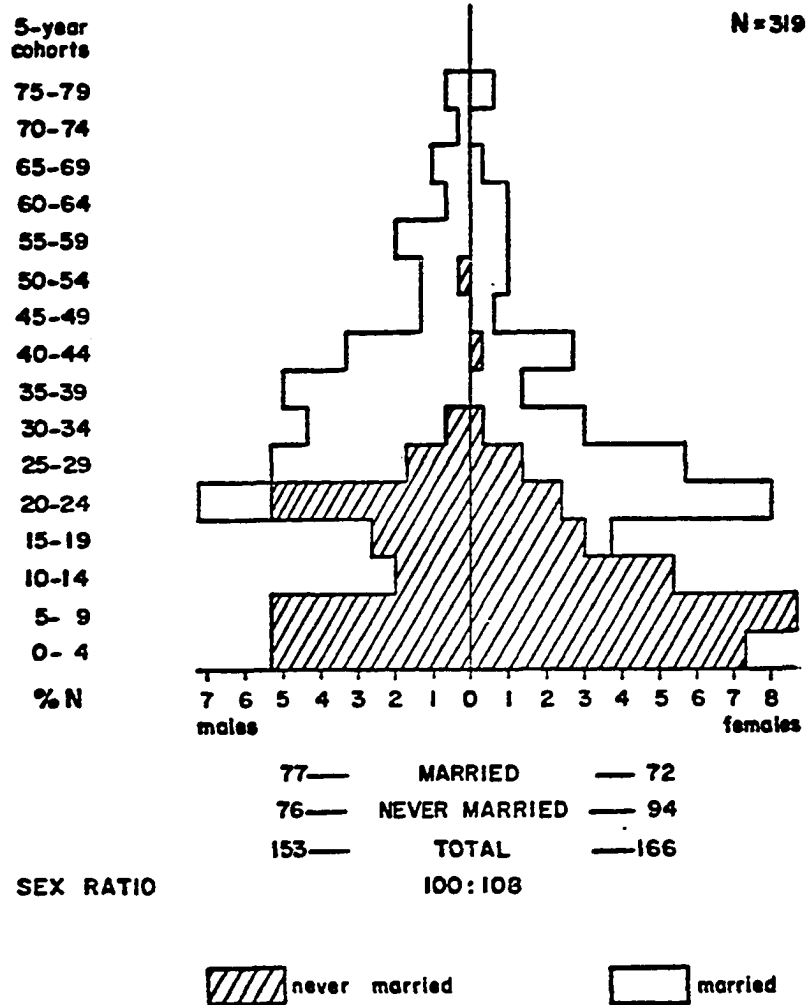


Figure 9. Age-sex profile of Okarche Center in 1900 (compiled from the manuscript schedules of the 1900 census).

frequencies of single males and young couples without children, and an absolute predominance of households with children under ten years of age (31.4%). The average household size in the center in 1900 was four persons, while that of Cement township was five persons. The center also had the highest number of married people relative to total population. The married couples and elderly individuals in widowed status comprised 46.8% of persons residing in the town, a far greater proportion than the 32.9% component of married people among the 1889 settlers. The German population of the town and all four surrounding townships consisted of 63.1% unmarried persons, 3% widows, and 33.9% married persons.

These comparisons underscore the particularly fluid nature of the town population in early Okarche--a fluidity which is probably typical of most centers during the early years of Oklahoma settlement. If farming a homestead was a tenuous undertaking, then starting a business amidst the uncertainties of the agricultural sector was even more tenuous. Several businesses in Okarche captured local clientele, but established towns such as Kingfisher and El Reno shaved the service area in which serious competition could be mustered. The size of the German population rapidly became a factor of importance to businessmen, since losing German customers could make the difference between success or failure. In addition, much of the local trade with farmers in the early years was carried out on a barter basis, or involved extension of credit. These factors contributed to continued turnover among town-based entrepreneur families through the early 1900's. The availability of limited day-labor and clerks positions also kept the proportion of young and single households relatively high.

The most important consequence of the turnover period, however, was the establishment in the Okarche region of German families in the rural areas primarily to the west of town, but also on the east in the Oklahoma land run area. Figure 10 shows the backgrounds of settlers in Harrison and Rock Island townships by national groups between the years 1889 and 1895. In 1889 (Figure 10 a) there were only nine households comprised of German immigrants or first-generation German Americans. It is clear from the increase of Germans in 1892 (Figure 10 b) that much of the impetus for concentration of people from Germany, Sweden, Denmark, Austria, and Switzerland around Okarche occurred with the Cheyenne-Arapaho run. On the 1889 side of the land run boundary the number of German households had increased to 20 by 1892. Some of these households came before the 1892 run as part of the flurry of transfers of 1890 and 1891. Many, however, took relinquished claims at the same time that the other area was opened for settlement. Meanwhile, a total of 24 initial claims were established by people of German background in the part of the Cheyenne-Arapaho territory immediately west of the starting line, in Rock Island and Harrison townships. A great many other households established themselves in Cement and Park townships.

But the German entry into the region did not stop immediately. Four additional households established themselves in Harrison and Rock Island townships east of the land run boundary, and 19 households took advantage of the turnover conditions west of the line between 1892 and 1895 (Figure 10 c). During the same period, a total of seven German households left farms located in the two townships. Thus, the total

Figure 10. Claims sequence for Rock Island and Harrison townships by place of origin from 1889 through 1895 (A = Cheyenne-Arapaho, B = Bohemia, C = Canada, E = England, G = Germany, I = Ireland, u = United States, R = Russia; compiled from the Oklahoma Tract Book and the manuscript schedules of the 1890 Oklahoma census and the 1900 census).

German component of the eastern townships of the Okarche region rose from 44 to 60 households by 1895. By 1900 there were 167 households with foreign-born or first-generation "German" affiliation in the entire Okarche Region, still predominantly on the Cheyenne-Arapaho tracts, with a total population of 850 including the few German families living in town (Figure 11). The age-sex structure of this population appears more balanced, and has the beginnings of a fully pyramidal form. The sex ratio of the 1900 Germans was 116:100, most of the imbalance occurring in the 45-and-older cohorts. The people of German background comprised 31.6% of the total population of the region (2691 people are listed in the 1900 census for the four-township area, including the town).

It is clear from the size of the 15-19 cohort, as well as from the large number of unmarried males between the ages of 20 and 34, that the marriage potential for the Germans in the immediate post-1900 years was great. The age-sex data also suggest that the standard ages at marriage for German women were between 20 and 24. This is true also of the population at large. Age at marriage for men was slightly older, usually between 25 and 29. Some of the potential marriages suggested by age-sex data took place soon after the turn of the century, beginning what was to become the major generational turnover of the First World War era. But even greater impetus for increases in the number of German households came with new immigration to the region immediately prior to the First World War, involving families originally located in central Midwest states.

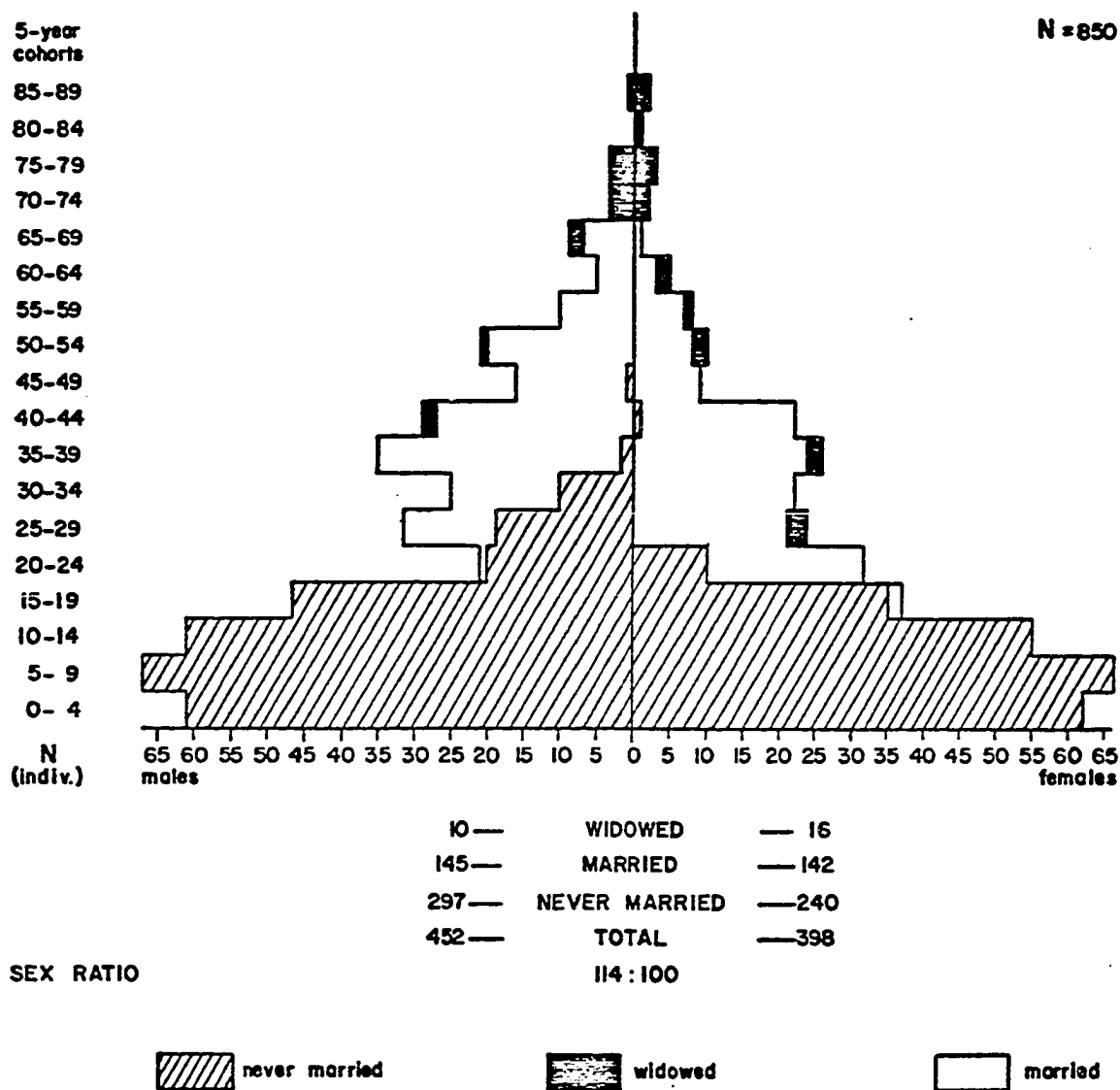


Figure 11. Age-sex profile of the "German" population of Okarche, including all members of immigrant and German-American households in Okarche center and the four surrounding townships in 1900 (Compiled from the manuscript schedules of the 1900 census).

One indication of the relative proportions of German and non-German population over a longer span of time can be obtained by viewing cemetery populations. Since the basic age characteristics of the settlement population of Okarche were similar throughout all groups, a comparison of deaths in ten-year intervals shows differences in population size, even in light of turnover processes. The Germans, moreover, maintained cemeteries for members of their two dominant church congregations. Of these, the Catholic cemetery includes a large number of Irish and other non-German individuals; therefore, the Lutheran Cemetery provides a slightly better gross comparison with the Okarche Cemetery, the overwhelmingly non-German burial area. The number of burials for the Lutheran cemetery compared with Okarche cemetery are as follows:

	Lutheran	Okarche
1893-1902	8	31
1903-1912	14	33
1913-1922	25	27
1923-1932	19	17
1933-1942	26	6
1943-1952	36	14
1953-1962	24	10

Both cemetery populations show fluctuations resulting from the initial asymmetrical conditions of the settlement population. However, in spite of the fact that between 1923 and 1932 the majority of the eldest original settlers had already died (those who had been over 49 in 1892), the Lutheran cemetery reflects a population of equivalent size to the

non-German cemetery. The Lutherans from that time through the present represent only one-third to one-half of the total population of Okarche of German background. Thus, after 1932 Okarche may be said to have begun tending toward its present situation. At that time the overall population of the region was dominated by people of German background, and the German component of the town was beginning to increase dramatically.

The turnover period of Okarche history represents more, then, than the simple adjustment of families on the land during the first four to five years of settlement. That period, especially for the Cheyenne-Arapaho run, was certainly of importance, but continued in and out migrations of households resulted in German dominance over the region. After 1900, the transfer of only a few quarter-sections per year subtly transformed the character of the town and countryside. Of course, other events and conditions contributed to this process, and these are the subject of other parts of this work. But the demographic changes in early Okarche present the clearest picture of the scale and direction of overall processes operative in the community. At worst they represent an ample basis for social and economic analysis. It is helpful, then, to add a few other threads of demographic information pertinent to later Okarche, and summarize processes which helped to shape the community through the late 1930's.

4. Summary of Demographic Trends

It is clear that the two settlement areas which ultimately formed parts of the Okarche region underwent similar demographic processes. Even though the Oklahoma and Cheyenne-Arapaho run areas

manifest different patterns of age-sex distribution, their composite characteristics become relatively well balanced by or shortly after 1900. It is therefore possible to list the basic features of the processes involved in the early settlement sequence, and thereby project some of the potentials for stable population characteristics that follow the settlement period, given alternative economic conditions.

A basic scenario for the demographic changes in Okarche includes:

- (1) The establishment of a young, predominantly male population, including many single adults and young married couples, on initial claims of unimproved land.

- (2) Selection against single claimants and couples in the rural sector, in favor of larger households, resulting in rapid turnover and the introduction of new young population.

- (3) Relatively early inclusion of old persons as attached members of households, resulting in a rapid, short-term overall increase in extended family households.

- (4) An initially high fertility rate which persists for only a few years, reflecting the youth of the initial adult settlers.

- (5) A gradual balancing of the sex ratios of the overall population throughout the turnover period, with more stable ratios being manifested as continuity on the land is established.

- (6) The establishment of fertility, in spite of the reduction of births to the maturing households, as the prime impetus for population growth after the initial high-turnover period.

- (7) Net increases in the number of people and proportion of households of German background, mainly in the rural sector, through the 1930's.

(8) A change in the nature of extended family households reflecting reductions (through mortality) in the number of households including elderly parents of claimants, and increases (through marriage of children) in three-generation households of elderly claimants.

(9) A secondary formation of family/farm networks including splinter households stemming from initial settler families, also commencing as the elder cohorts of settler children reach marriage age.

(10) A second onset of high fertility as greater numbers of marriages occur, and the stabilization of birthrates commencing with these marriages.

(11) Increased pressure on land resulting in household extension and outmigration, alleviated to some extent by the onset of deaths or retirement of the initial parental cohorts, beginning approximately 20 years after settlement and continuing through the late 1930's.

(12) Ultimate displacement of the more youthful town population as elderly farmers retire to town, and economic depression takes hold in the United States.

Some of the general demographic trends noted by Lefferts (1977) for frontier situations are reflected in these specific Okarche trends. The overall processes seem to be somewhat "compressed" in time relative to other frontiers, if indeed we are correct in calling Oklahoma settlement a frontier situation. It is evident, however, that the scale of Oklahoma settlement was quite different than that of the east coast, for example, or the old Northwest, northern plains areas, and Texas settlement of later times. This difference in both population size, general competition for land, logistics, and temporal placement tended

to speed processes of demographic adjustment which took longer periods of time in other American settlement eras.

Given the rather rapid achievement of stability on the Oklahoma frontier, the transition of land from parents to children is among the most important demographic factors affecting social and economic life in Okarche. This is perhaps more true than in other frontier situations we might view, because the "pioneer period" did not last through the lifespans of the initial settlers. Thus, as a final note on demographic trends in Okarche it is necessary to view the timing of the generational transitions more closely, again relying primarily on cemetery data. Figure 12 shows deaths in the Lutheran cemetery population from 1892 through 1962, arranged in ten-year cohorts reflecting birthdates. The beginning of the first generational transition is seen between 1913 and 1922, with eight deaths of individuals who had been 20 to 49 years of age in 1892. In the subsequent decade the youngest of these cohorts (20-29 in 1892) entered its sixties, so deaths and retirements of the whole group opened numerous farms to the next generation. A similar transition began during the period of the Second World War, involving deaths of people who had been born between 1902 and 1873.

These generational cycles correspond closely to technological transformations in agriculture (see Chapter IV). They also begin during the two war periods. Thus, the initial settler, first-generation, and second-generation Okarche farmers fall temporally into distinctive familial and techno-economic patterns. They also manifest distinctive outlooks on a social and cultural front. For example, transformations

Age in 1892		over-49	40-49	30-39	20-29	10-19	0-9								
Birthdate	Span	1842 & earlier	1843-1852	1853-1862	1863-1872	1873-1882	1883-1892	1893-1902	1903-1912	1913-1922	1923-1932	1933-1942	1943-1952	1953-1962	total
year of death	1893-1902	1	1	1		1	1	3							8
	1903-1912	5	1	1		1	1		5						14
	1913-1922	5	3	1	4		1	1	2	8					25
	1923-1932	3	1	5	4			1		3	2				19
	1933-1942		3	8	3		5	3			1	3			26
	1943-1952		1	3	9	10	5	4	2				2		36
	1953-1962			1	2	4	6	2	4		1			4	24
totals		14	10	20	22	16	19	14	13	11	4	3	2	4	152

Figure 12. Mortality of the Lutheran Cemetery Population from 1892 through 1962 arranged in ten-year cohorts and ten-year intervals (compiled from information reported by Stallings, Stallings and Conover 1964).

of language use--and therefore, one of the prime mechanisms of social bounding operative in early Okarche--match the generational turnover closely. The subsequent sections of this work, then, make use of the isomorphy of demographic-technological-economic-social sequencing in the presentation of material. Indeed, it is difficult to resist such treatment of material which offers itself to a contrapuntal style. However, it should also be noted that the apparent synchronization of the two wars suggested in the treatment is fortuitous. It was determined largely by the age of the settlement population and time of settlement. For this reason we will concentrate on the changing population as a primary causal factor in viewing the transformations of agriculture, social bounding, and cultural identity in Okarche, rather than centering on the widely believed "impacts" of the wars on Germans in the United States. This approach will show that the importance of the anti-German sentiment of the war years to life in Okarche was minimal, and perhaps over-rated in other parts of the United States as well. At the least, it is to be expected that multiple factors of local social and economic organization, from the level of households to the community as a whole, would provide the only milieu in which generalized pressures of anti-German feeling could induce change.

CHAPTER IV

LONG-TERM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN OKARCHE

1. Economic Structures

The economic structure of early small communities in Oklahoma was quite different from that of today. In centers such as Okarche, for example, a much broader range of occupations was pursued, and hence a broader range of services was available to both town and rural people. Non-agricultural services and agricultural supplies were locally available to a ready rural population, and the town served as a major market place for the products of the land. The main exceptions to this service and commodity pattern were wheat and cotton, key products directed to national markets by rail. Thus, there was a "productive" division between town and countryside that does not exist today. The long-term transition in the town has reduced services offered and brought a loss of local hold on consumers. The technology of communication has changed with the development of the state, and many interactional and economic functions of the old community have been taken over by other places in the region.

In the rural theater there has been a transition from small-scale farming to specialized wheat production. This development is closely intertwined with the changes of the town proper, and is reflected strongly in the demographic history of the community. In

particular, the town is now made up of families of rural association, both retired and young farmers. Indeed, the rural limits of the Okarche service area have been somewhat redefined by this change in the town's population, so Okarche embraces a much smaller territory and much more well-defined social units.

One might expect that the social and economic growth of any community would involve a crystalization process--a definitive development following specific rules of "bonding" in its internal sphere, but also individually shaped by the general constraints of larger contexts. This is precisely the case in Okarche, for what began as a loosely organized and varied collection of families, occupations, backgrounds, and approaches to economic success, became a well organized and highly patterned set of social units specifically tied to each other and the central place. And as this process continued, the "economic" functions of the community became highly specialized--"fit," so to speak, to the other social institutions of the whole and the larger economic field of central Oklahoma. In order to understand such a process, however, it is insufficient to describe it as a series of events. The events, as Braudel (1972) and Wallerstein (1974) have both recently suggested, must be given meaning in terms of the structures which "impede" and "control" them. Thus, a history must have its timeless sense, and speak to the form which is embedded in the action of its content. If we are concerned with structures or cycles in history, then we are also concerned with the master framings of time which carry meaning to us for the events of daily life.

Thus, we may focus upon particular patterns of activity in an abstract sense. In Okarche the basic agricultural system may be

represented as a succession of three such abstract forms--the "yearly round" of the horse farm, the small-tractor farm, and the large-tractor farm. Each of these forms held sway for some major period during the past 85 years; each has its own logic and implications. These may in turn be analysed in terms of their relations to broader patterns of family growth, demographic change on the community level, cycles of war and peace, and patterns of prosperity and depression. And so we may also see the yearly agricultural round as a series of time-bound events, the peculiar twists of each new waxing and waning of activity reflecting the place of repetition in the larger flow of time, and the circumstances locked with it in a particular present. It is in this way that we arrive at larger patterns of "growth" and "decline" which we call processes, and which represent the conjuncture of many scales of systemic operation.

2. Yearly Farming Cycles

The yearly cycle of the horse farm is depicted in Figure 13. The general division of activities shown in the schematic representation is between (1) seasonal activities, and (2) male and female activities. The "seasons" are defined by their associated work, and so do not represent arbitrary calendrical units. Thus, the "winter" activities begin in late October or early November and last through perhaps late February, "spring" activities continue through early June, and "summer" encompasses the whole harvest period through late August. The short "fall transition" identifies the important period of wheat planting and cotton harvesting, and represents a natural beginning of the agricultural cycle. Since decisions about the whole coming year were made during the fall months, it is an appropriate place to begin description.

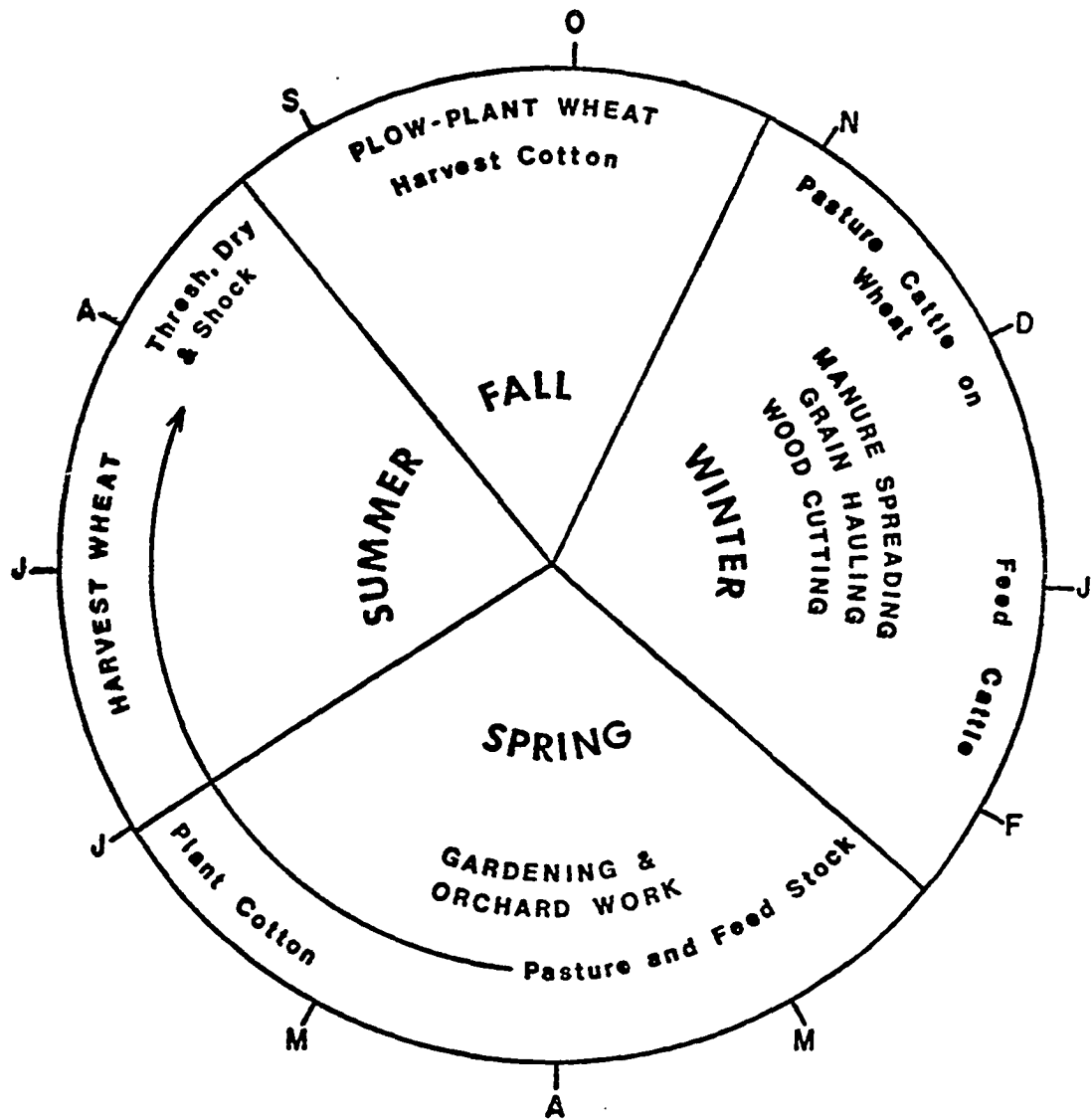


Figure 13. The yearly cycle of work activities on the horse farm (primary activities shown in all-caps; important secondary activities shown in upper-lower case lettering).

It is important to understand the scale of the horse farm. The settlers of the land runs and homestead period, with a few exceptions, started with either 80 or 160 acres of land, usually the latter. The farms were quite varied in their position relative to water resources, and to some degree in their initial soil conditions. Most, however, were run without irrigation on a reasonably well-drained soil base. The components of the farm were (1) land for wheat, cotton, or other crops, (2) pasture, and (3) orchards. Orchards and pasture represent a set commitment of space, so that an average farm in 1900 included only about 50 acres of cultivated area for wheat, oats, cotton, and vegetables (Abstract of the Twelfth Census, 1900: 217). The optimal condition of land commitment was to have about one-half of the farm cultivated, with the remainder in use as pasture and orchard (this assessment by an elderly Okarchean is in substantial agreement with practice reflected in Twelfth Census of the United States: Statistical Atlas: Pls. 146-159). Thus, during the adjustment phase of settlement a farmer attempted to build toward a position in which about 80 acres out of a quarter section could be committed to grain and other crops.

The horse-drawn plow, in its standard form involving a four-horse team, was used to prepare fields. One man and a team could plow about 7 acres per day on the average, so a single plowing of cultivated land on most farms took 10 to 15 man-days. Preparation for planting took place as soon as possible after harvest. The shifting fronts between northern and southern air masses provided a reasonably certain period of rain during September and October, allowing a wheat crop set in early Fall a good start before the winter. Cotton was not a major

crop in Oklahoma until some time after settlement, although some cotton production was begun during the settlement period in Okarche (see Fite 1966: 213; Haystead and Fite 1955: 204-5). Those farmers with cotton crops were also involved in harvest in late September and October.

The rule for winter wheat was "sow September, wheat November," and the early growing crop was put to use as pasture during the busy start of the winter (see Okarche Times, Jan. 1895). The winter months were occupied with field maintenance, marketing and provisioning activities. Manure from cows, horses, and chickens was spread, and hay was stored for the later, colder months. Men also cut poles from an area several miles west of town known as the "blackjacks." These poles were hauled into town where they were reduced for use as fuel. Grain which had been stored at farms after harvest was brought into town to be shipped out to markets by rail. Women did a great deal of beef canning during the winter, as well as other farm chores. Dairy cattle were important in early Okarche, and remained prominent until well into the 1930's. Farms provided cream for processing in the local creamery during the period from 1906 through the early 1920's, and later the cream was transported to Enid for processing (Oklahoma Volksblatt, 22 June 1906). Of course, all members of the family were involved in care of animals and milking, but women and children did much of this work when men were involved in other farming tasks. Most of the clothing of farmers was made by the women of the household--indeed, women were probably the busiest contributors to the farming routine.

During the spring gardens were planted and much attention was given to orchard crops. Almost all farms established orchards which

were maintained until the major drought of the Dust Bowl days. In addition, a few vineyards were established where soil and water conditions permitted. Before the Dust Bowl period water conditions in central Oklahoma were much more conducive to these activities. Vegetables and fruit, including peaches, apples and pears, contributed to the local market in the center and home consumption. There was a concomitant activity of canning and setting preserves associated with these crops. Animals were returned to pasture during the spring. Cows were sometimes pastured in common fields which were to be prepared for new crops. They were taken to these fields in the morning and returned home in the evening by school children. A boy might make a dollar a month per cow for performing this service. At the close of spring cotton was planted. Again, the size of the cotton crop during the early years was small, in part because of other commitments to the land, and in part because of the continuous cultivation requirements of the crop. The deleterious effects of cotton on the soil were outweighed somewhat by the potential insurance cotton provided against wheat failure (see Margolis 1977: 617). In addition, if the wheat crop did not do well in the spring, farmers sometimes recommitted land to corn. Corn could be planted in time to take advantage of late April and early May rains, or even later planting sometimes provided relief against a major wheat loss.

In June the mature winter-wheat crop was ready to harvest, and so men were totally involved in the fields. Women and children took over almost all of the other farming chores during the harvest period, and in addition women cooked for the large harvesting crews. The harvest routine on the horse-farm included four major activities. First, binders

cut the wheat and left long bundles in rows in the fields. This was accomplished in June and early July. Then the bundles were stacked or "shocked" for drying. This was an activity involving large crews, and sometimes the population of Okarche would be doubled through the addition of itinerant workers during the two-day shocking operation. The wheat would dry in about one week to ten days, and was then ready for threshing. Threshers were set up in the middle of fields and worked from farm to farm in a circuit. The wheat was loaded onto wagons which carried about 50 bushel loads, and transported to barns or directly to town. And so with the harvest the yearly cycle was complete and farmers began preparations for new planting.

Such a farm produced a balance of vegetable crops and animal produce suitable for direct consumption or small cash gains, and cash crops of wheat and cotton in good years that provided excellent potentials for profit. Unfortunately, wheat prices remained deflated except during the years of World War I, and the necessary commitment of space to oats and pasture reduced the size of the cash commodities. The diversified farm with 50 to 80 acres in wheat, oats, cotton, and corn, a few milk cows, 80 to 100 chickens, four or five draft horses or mules, a vegetable garden, an orchard, and a reserve of pasture land represented, nonetheless, an efficient operation given labor conditions and commodity prices of the period. There was flexibility to allow for changing weather conditions, and reasonable self sufficiency in the area of energy resources for fuel and animal maintenance.

The winter-wheat specialization of modern times is an outgrowth of what was earlier an "emphasis" derived from the experience

of farmers in the prairie lands of Nebraska and Kansas in the 1870's (see Fite 1966: 50-52). Okarche was in an excellent position for wheat production, since it was located on the Rock Island Railway line. In spite of deflated prices and drought conditions in 1894 and 1895, the Okarche Times (June 9, 1893) printed pieces encouraging farmers to plant as much wheat as possible. In actuality, most of the farmers had a much firmer perception of what was really going on on the ground, and it is doubtful that these editorials had much impact on farming practice. More important were the releases of information about crop and husbandry research from Oklahoma State Agricultural Testing Stations, which occurred in all newspapers of the region during the settlement period. In the German-language newspaper printed in El Reno there were similar articles on Obst und Weinbau (Oklahoma Volksblatt, 22 June 1906). A major contributor to these resided in Okarche and most of the people of German background subscribed to the paper (see also Willibrand 1951: 290). Such information provided keys to better management of diversified farms, and thus promoted cropping and husbandry strategies that offered better opportunities for long-term success.

During the 1920's horses began to be replaced by small tractors, and a number of changes in the agricultural cycle took place. The basic pattern of the farming cycle remained almost intact, but the reduction of the horse population released land which had formerly been committed to oats, other feed crops, and even pasture, for use as wheat and cotton fields. It is during this period that cotton became a major crop in the Okarche area as well as in other parts of central Oklahoma (Haystead and Fite 1955, 204-5). Small tractors (Figure 14) were used in the culti-



Figure 14. Small tractors cultivating cotton in the Okarche region sometime during the early 1920's (photograph courtesy of Frank Heinen).

vation of cotton through the 1930's (Haystead and Fite 1955: 205; Table 72, 188). Although they were only slightly more efficient than a horse-team in terms of daily work output, the small tractors afforded relative luxury for the farmer. Early tractors could work about ten acres per day and reduced maintenance costs slightly. As time went on, of course, larger tractors were produced and a real mechanical commitment was established. But as long as the tractors were small, they could work under much the same conditions as horses and produced a similar scale of results.

Along with the small-tractor farm came the beginning of a major husbandry shift in the Okarche region. By the 1930's more land was being committed to crops and there was stress on land used for the maintenance of cattle. It is during the 1930's and 1940's then, that beef cattle began to replace dairy cattle in the area (see Indian Pioneer Papers, however, for statements on Okarche and early beef cattle). Beef cattle could be raised and sold, rather than requiring maintenance throughout the year. One could keep them or not, according to other farming circumstances, and thus control land use during different parts of the yearly cycle. This shift was not fully felt until after World War II, but it represents a second chink in the generalized position of the early community.

We may see the small tractor period, then, as one in which there were: (1) greater commitments to specialization in cash crops--either cotton or wheat, (2) reduction in the reliance upon dairy production as a cash-producing activity, (3) more complete cropping of land, and (4) greater reliance upon energy resources external to the farmer's

direct control, specifically upon the growing petro-chemical industry. This last trend involved both fuel and fertilizer, and represents perhaps the most significant departure from the practice of former years.

The small-tractor farm was heavily impacted by the depression and drought of the 1930's. Although the effects of the Dust Bowl were not as severe in central Oklahoma as they were farther to the west, the combination of circumstances of the period brought a quick end to the heavy cotton emphasis in central Oklahoma (Haystead and Fite 1955: 204-7). There was not a change in the trends toward specialization of cropping, or toward mechanization. During World War II and after there was a complete return to wheat on central Oklahoma farms; the land was denuded of orchards and partially depleted by the cotton boom, but chemical fertilization and a new scale of operation contributed to the success of the endeavor.

The immediate post-war period brought major technological shifts in both the farming cycle and the general communication system of the region. Whereas a trip to Oklahoma City in the 1920's took two days by wagon, general use of trucks and improved roads greatly increased the farmer's potential to deal directly with markets in the region--today, the trip takes only 30 to 40 minutes. On the farm large tractors capable of working several hundred acres per day are the rule, and the harvest is accomplished by locally owned and contracted combines. These giants, representing investments of about \$45,000.00 each, cut and thresh the wheat in the Okarche district in a scant 10 days. Working day and night, the town turns its total attention to the crop, just as in years past, but with a new intensity and flourish.

The contemporary wheat farm is striking in that it is large and may be adequately worked by an individual with minimal help except during harvest. A "break-even" point for a wheat farm today requires probably two quarter-sections, but most farms involve three or four quarters and many are much larger than that. Some farmers have other occupations which supplement earnings from grain production, or against which wheat profits are supplemental. But the importance of timing in the yearly cycle is still great. Too much rain during the harvest, for example, can result in serious crop losses or severe labor shortages. Crop loss means the loss of thousands of dollars. Delay because of rain or other factors during the harvest of a particular area puts strain on the overall harvest schedule, since contracted combines move north from southern Oklahoma and the Texas panhandle through Kansas and into Nebraska. The sheer bulk of combines prohibits harvesting in very wet conditions, and the wheat itself must be dry in order to insure maximum yield. So weather conditions, more than ever before, are critical to farming success.

Considering the investment required to maintain a farm and produce a crop, it is not surprising to find a busy yearly schedule. The investment includes equipment, fuel, fertilizer, insecticides, contracted costs of other commodities and services which sustain the farmer but are no longer produced by the household. But the schedule does not involve many small-scale activities each of which contributes in a different way to sustenance and cost production. Rather, longer periods of time are taken up in the performance of tasks that all contribute to the wheat crop.

The large-tractor farm, then, is a specialized concern in both ecological and economic terms. The wheat fields replicate the kind of "grassland" conditions which typified the area of Okarche before settlement. Beef cattle, when they are kept, represent larger and more concentrated populations than the individual dairy interests of the generalized early form of farm organization. Wheat farmers are also inextricably tied to the major commodity structures of the nation and world. World demand for grain, coupled with the success of farming technology in the United States, allows the Oklahoma area to produce and favorably market wheat on an amazing scale. Cattle management is fit to the early phase of beef production, and articulated with a large feed lot east of town and the stock yards in Oklahoma City. And finally, in recent years work has begun to tap natural gas resources running between Oklahoma City and points to the northwest through the Okarche region, so some farmers are actually producing three of the key commodities in the national and world resource system.

The agricultural development of Okarche has involved a series of economic boundary expansions. It began on a subsistence level and in a trade medium where barter and credit were more important than marketing, and progressed through local, regional, national, and international market postures which influenced the application of technology and constrained family growth. With each new generation in the farming population it became increasingly difficult to acquire land sufficient to employ all of the sons of a particular family, increasingly expensive to procure equipment, and easier to obtain training and employment elsewhere. Thus, while many of the children of the pioneer generation in Okarche remained in the community as farmers, beginning their farms

during the period between the two world wars, a much smaller proportion of their children remained. The pressures which produced this situation were augmented by the development of the center itself. We must view that development in order to complete the picture of economic change which has shaped the modern community.

3. Commercial Development in Okarche Center

The first townsite lots in Okarche were obtained in El Reno on a cash basis, and very quickly businesses were established to provide goods and services necessary to survival in the region. A 30 ft. by 150 ft. lot in the center sold for \$75.00 in 1889, a considerable investment for most of the settler population. However, a small nucleus of merchants, craftsmen and professionals established themselves on the line separating Kingfisher and Canadian Counties, immediately adjacent to the rail stop of the Rock Island line. Most of the early shops and dealers were in Canadian County, as were the grain elevator, two of the early churches, two schools, and eventually the post office. At first, mail was received by way of a common box located east of town. Newspaper advertisements of the early 1890's include local and regional establishments, particularly business ads from El Reno and Kingfisher. However, a list of businesses in Okarche in 1894 depicts the breadth of occupations of the early center. (Table 5).

The most important early businesses in Okarche were the bank, insurance company, the lumber companies, and the general stores. The bank was one of the few establishments founded by a person of German heritage, and is now the oldest continuously operated enterprise of the

bank and insurance office	1
barber	1
butcher shops	2
candy store	1
cobbler	1
dentist	1
drugstore	1
furniture and agricultural implements store	1
grist mill	1
general stores	5
grocery store	1
grain elevator	1
hardware stores	2
harness company	1
harness shop	1
hotels	3
ice house	1
livery	1
lumber yards	2
lunch shop (attached to butcher shop)	1
lunch shop	1
millinery shop	1
paint shop	1
printer	1
saloon	3
school	1
tin shop	1
wagon shop	1

Table 5. Establishments depicted on the Sanborn-Perris Map of Okarche, 1894.

community. Also associated with the German population was the insurance company (Deutschen Farmers Gegenseitigen Feuer Versicherungs-Verein von Okarche) which also continues operation today under another name (see Willibrand 1951: 290). In 1894 there were two lumber companies and five general stores, the former supplying construction materials and the latter many of the commodity needs of the rural population. It was sometimes several years before farmers could make large improvements on their land. But the trade in building materials thrived throughout the settlement period. In fact, most of the businesses of the first ten years appear to have enjoyed more success than new businesses do today. Of individuals working in the town and listed in the 1900 census, several undoubtedly go back to the first year or two of settlement. The occupations listed in the census (Table 6) include some not depicted in the Sanborn-Perris map of 1894--cement workers, editors, doctors, day laborers, machinists, photographers, a cheese maker, and a jeweler. In addition, a full range of jobs associated with such establishments as the hotels, livery, lumber yards, and agricultural occupations also represent stable population dating to the earliest settlement.

There were, nevertheless, many failures and changes of ownership. The newspaper, for example, changed hands several times in the first 10 years (Willibrand 1951). It served the English-speaking community, but was a poor competitor for German-speaking subscribers of the area. We have already noted that Germans more often took the Oklahoma Volksblatt, printed in El Reno, or other German language newspapers. Later, as English came into general use in the community,

Occupation		Occupation	
banker	1	hotel keeper	2
barber	2	jeweler	1
blacksmith	3	livery	1
book keeper	1	lumber dealer	3
brick mason	1	machinist	2
butcher	1	mason	2
carpenter	9	merchant	5
cement workers	9	milller	2
cheese maker	1	minister	7
clerk	2	night watchman	1
collector--real estate	1	photographer	2
cook	1	plasterer	2
day laborer	10	porter	2
doctor	2	RR laborer	8
druggist	2	Restauranteer	1
drygoods merchant	1	salesman	1
drygoods clerk	1	saloon keeper	1
editor	2	stone mason	2
engineer (various)	4	tailor	1
grain dealer	2	teacher	5
grocery clerk	3	teamster	6
grocery merchant	2	telephone man	1
hardware	1	tiner	2
harness dealer	1		
harness maker	1		

Table 6. Occupations listed in the 1900 census in Okarche center and immediately surrounding non-agricultural concerns (males; compiled from the manuscript schedules of the 1900 census).

the local paper became a more community-wide vehicle for information transmission. Thus, Okarche never supported a local German-language paper. The fact that the early papers continued to operate indicates the size of the early non-German population, especially in the center. Individuals also sometimes made several attempts at starting a business, or were involved in more than one enterprise. There is one interesting series of notes in the Okarche Times, running over a several month period, which places an individual first on a farm southwest of town, later as a partner in a saloon, and finally as an outmigrant to accept a railroad job in Kansas City.

During the early 1900's a creamery was established in Okarche. A note in the El Reno newspaper tells us that the Gesellschaft zur Fabrikation von Butter und Kase collected a capital base of \$25,000.00, and began production in 1906 (Oklahoma Volksblatt, 22 June 1906). The creamery continued in operation until the early 1920's. In a monthly report for 1914 (Okarche Times, January 1914), a list of contributors and dollar values for their monthly production is given. This list was used to encourage support of the operation. The individual cash payments listed for the month ranged from \$68.15 to just over \$20.00 from four cows' production over the month. The overall volume of the creamery was great. It processed 19,415 pounds of cream in January 1914, produced 6,920 pounds of butter. The cream payments for the month totaled almost \$1,500.00. This represents a production of from 1,500 to 1,800 pounds of butter per week. An indication of the importance of the German-speaking community in Okarche is given in this record. Only one of the top twenty cream producers among the farmers was not of German background, and most of those listed represent families still in

the community today. This is one of the few direct economic indications of the important post-1900 influx of German families.

The fortunes of businessmen of the center were dependent upon the success of the agricultural community, and the period of the 1930's affected the center dramatically. After the depression there were no longer hotels, the creamery had closed, and many of the non-German small merchants had left the community. There was a long-term resident doctor in Okarche who came in the early 1930's when individuals from the community finally got an Oklahoma City physician to take up residence in the area. A rather typical small-town pattern of retirement into the center began during the 1920's and continued through this period to today.

A list of contemporary establishments in the town of Okarche (Table 7) suggests the two major specializations of the center--medical services and agricultural support facilities. Many of the businessmen in town also farm. Through the efforts of the banker and the doctor, the Okarche community hospital was established after the War. This enterprise enjoyed wide community support from the beginning, and is administered by Sisters of the Felician Order. The hospital and clinic serve a wider area than other establishments in Okarche today, although the automobile dealers enjoy overhead advantages over the major dealers of Oklahoma City, and therefore, do some regional business. All of the other businesses are much more local in their orientation, serving the people of the town and the immediately adjacent countryside. The only businesses with potential for transient earnings are the motel and two eating establishments.

Antique Store	1
Automobile Dealers	2
Agricultural Supply Companies	3
Bank	1
Bar	1
Beauty Salon	1
Butane Dealer	1
Clinic	1
Club	1
Cooperative	1
Drive-in Restaurant	1
Flower Shop	1
Funeral Home	1
Grain Company	1
Grass Equipment Company	1
Grocery Stores	2
Hospital	1
Insurance Office	1
Lumber Company	1
Motel	1
Package Store	1
Pharmacy	1
Service Stations	2
Small Industrial Corporation	1
Schools	3
Catholic (1-8)	
Lutheran (1-8)	
Public (K-12)	
Other Listings	
Volunteer Fire Department	
Town Office	
Post Office	

Table 7. Contemporary business and public establishments in Okarche (compiled from information gained in a survey of places made by the investigator and from listings in the Okarche telephone directory).

Almost immediately after settlement schools were established by the Lutherans and the Catholics, in addition to the public school. The Catholic school took students from grades one through twelve, as did the public school. The Lutheran school operated with grades one through eight, and for a time had kindergarten classes. The kindergarten was discontinued after one was established in the public school. The two church schools now operate classes through the eighth grade, and the public school takes all of the high-school students. The operation of three separate school systems in a town with such a small population base is unusual. Indeed, it is rather unique even among German communities of Oklahoma. This in part accounts for the large number of teachers in the 1900 census population (see Table 6). In addition, because of the expense involved, it suggests the degree of economic solvency of Okarche throughout its history. It also suggests a fundamental aspect of the development of the community. All of the enterprises established in common by the German-speakers in Okarche, including the bank and with the exception of the creamery, have continued operation uninterrupted from their founding through the present. Thus, the German-population shared in a wide variety of resources through the two dominant church groups of the early era. There remained a strong social boundary between the Catholics and Lutherans in Okarche, however, and so the resource groups they represent are somewhat independent. Many friendships, nonetheless, have bridged the two groups, and common action of the community as a whole is reflected in the hospital and clinic establishments. But in business there has at times been restraint between the members of different congregations.

Probably the major key to the success of the German population was that its goals, primarily centered on agriculture, fit well with the larger system of economic growth in Oklahoma. It was highly unlikely at the time of Okarche's founding, given the prior establishment of towns such as El Reno, Kingfisher, and especially Oklahoma City, that it would become a major commercial center. It was simply too close to the two county seats to compete on a wide commercial front, and its location on a county line worked against its growth. Given a roughly equal start on the land, then, we would expect organized groups to compete well against individuals and small groups of kin. Therefore, German identity aided farmers in the settlement population to the extent they were associated with that identity in the church congregations. It provided access to support during lean times, labor during critical periods of farming activity, and "familial" identity through the church. And as transportation improved in the region, the services of the town were diminished.

4. Summary of Economic Trends

The town of Okarche began as a general-service support center oriented to a local town-based and rural marketing region. The support area was restricted on the north and south by Kingfisher and El Reno. Most of the large capital investments and major support businesses--including the bank, insurance company, creamery, schools, and one of the merchants--were controlled or instigated by people of German background. The newspaper, a cement works southwest of town, the hotels, and several small businesses, represented the non-German population. By the 1920's German farmers were established in the rural area and

were beginning to retire to town, while the general-service posture of the commercial sector in town was transformed to a much more limited set of services. Major enterprises after the 1920's, such as the Community Hospital, clinic, auto dealerships, and the coop, reflect either all-German or German-family actions. The modern center, then, is a special-service center serving essentially agricultural and health-care needs of the people. There is, however, regional support of the hospital and auto dealerships.

In the agricultural sector there has been steady implementation of capital intensive farming techniques since the 1920's. This has been reflected also in specialization of agricultural interests. Therefore, the patterns of familial continuity have not been manifested in the same manner during successive generational turnovers. During the first turnover period, corresponding also to the transformation from horse farms to small-tractor farms, most of the children establishing households became farmers. During the next turnover, however, fewer new farms were established and a major trend of outmigration was established. Thus, the regional and town-based age-sex profiles now reflect a larger proportion of older population.

Okarche farmers saw the last years in which the Oklahoma prairie was used as a ground for specialized beef production. Settlement curtailed that activity within a few years, and beef marketing from the region did not commence again until transportation systems were well developed and the farmers had begun to adopt specialized wheat production as their major agricultural strategy. Beef cattle are very important

in the region today, and are gaining in significance slightly as difficulties in the wheat market continue. During the interim period from about 1900 until just before World War II, dairy and dual-purpose cattle were raised on a small scale. It is also during this period that cotton production began to increase in Oklahoma, affecting the Okarche area during the 1920's and 30's.

Generational change matches closely the periods of economic reorientation in Okarche. The pressures for modification of town services stem as much from the changing age characteristics of the town population as they do from general economic circumstances of the state and nation. The modifications of farming technology and new crop selection patterns, moreover, result from the receptivity of newly established farmers and from the climate of the commodities markets and the development of new technology. At the same time, however, larger systemic conditions did influence the nature of the generational changes. So it is impossible to say that familial continuity and generational turnover caused the reorientations any more than one could say just the opposite. The decisions that were made by individuals and small groups concerning practical daily and yearly routines carried an ultimate impact for family structure and continuity in the Okarche community. Those decisions, such as the adoption of cotton as a major crop, did not always operate to the benefit of a family or toward familial continuity on the land. In the end, supports within the community through the churches, the bank, and cooperative organizations favored continuity, providing a safety valve working against failures stemming from poor markets and crop failures. And at the very points when young people were not

able to enter the local system and make a living, there were opportunities outside the local system that could take up the excess population. All that was necessary was that children take advantage of their options.

CHAPTER V

SOCIAL UNITS IN OKARCHE: FORMATION AND TRANSFORMATION

1. Ethnic Associations

In the preceding chapters it was shown that a sizable foreign-born and first-generation German population established itself in the Okarche region during the first ten years after the opening of the Unassigned Lands. This population was different from the other settlers in matters of "background" and "heritage." All, however, shared a common experience of migration within North America and activity on the farming frontiers of the United States between the years following the Civil War and the opening of Oklahoma. In addition, the family circumstances and general population characteristics did not differ between the German and non-German segments of the community. All of the settler groups reflect the same demographic processes during the critical adjustment period of settlement. Germans and non-Germans left the community, and many households of both groups remained.

The German families, however, shared a visibility in the early community of Okarche which was manifested in three major ways. First, both foreign-born and American-born persons of North European heritage spoke German or a closely related language at the time of settlement. Most were bilinguals, to be sure, but the majority of these people had learned German as their primary language, and continued to use it in

the home and in dealings with each other in the town. Further, early records of the bank and insurance company were in German, and the services of the Lutheran, Catholic and Mennonite churches were conducted in German.

Second, most of the German families were associated with either the Catholic or Lutheran congregations. Therefore, a religious demarcation along lines of heritage existed which not only served to render "Germans" socially identifiable, but which also segregated these people into resource groups. The interaction between the groups has been variable through the years, but marriage, land dealings, language use, and to a degree economic cooperation, have been strongly influenced by religious differences.

Third, the German families were predominantly rural. Thus, with few exceptions the early history of Okarche sees the town dwelling population as distinctively Anglo-American. The exceptions are notable, however, including the banker and one of the grocery merchants. The Anglo-American identity in Okarche was not, however, as cohesive as were the various identities comprising the "German" population. The major manifestation of power relationships in the early town was the Commercial Club, but this organization did not mediate all aspects of association for its members to the same extent that the essentially religious enclaves of the German population did.

Other groups were defined primarily on the basis of religious association. The Mennonites founded a church four miles south of Okarche, around which Mennonite homesteads were established by people of Swiss, German, English, and east-European Germanic heritage. These

people interacted much less with townspeople than did other groups, and the locations of the congregation on the ground placed the service area of the church on the boundary of the commercial service areas of Okarche and El Reno. There were also (1) a small group of German Evangelicals, (2) an enclave of Blacks to the east of town who founded their own church, and (3) several other small rural congregations of various denominations. In town the largest non-German church was that of the Congregationalists.

Three of the congregations of the area were part of large regional or national organizations--the Catholic church, the Missouri Luthern Synod, and the Mennonite church. The other churches were not strongly tied to larger organizations, and so were more totally dependent upon contributions from within for support. The St. John's Lutheran congregation of Okarche, however, was financially supported in part during its first eight years by the Kansas Mission Board of the Missouri Synod (Petrowski 1974: 83-4). Similar supports in the way of clergy and building funds were provided for Holy Trinity Catholic church through the Oklahoma Diocese centered in Oklahoma City.

The Blacks and Indians of the immediate Okarche area formed locational enclaves, while the remainder of the population was spatially more dispersed. Even the Mennonites, who established a relatively tight cluster of homesteads near their church location, were spread across the landscape. It was difficult for large groups to satisfy requirements of soil and water in the selection of a homestead, and at the same time worry about the denomination of one's neighbors or proximity to friends and relatives. This is especially true during

the later part of the turnover period, during which many kin related household networks were established. Further, when related families filed independent claims, whether co-located or not, the dates of filing given in the Oklahoma Tract Book are different by months. Thus, the conditions of land acquisition in Oklahoma worked against the creation of large spatial enclaves, such as are observed in the religiously-defined or ethnically-based communities of the East and Midwest during the 17th through 19th centuries, or in Texas during the 19th and 20th centuries (see Jordan 1966; Gilbert 1971, 1972).

The Mennonite cemetery is located adjacent to the church. It includes two grave groups, one on the north of the church property and the second behind the church to the west. All of the individuals buried in the north grave group represent families that homesteaded in the Okarche area, most in Rock Island and Cement townships during the Cheyenne-Arapaho run. None of the individuals in the other grave group, however, are listed in either census or tract materials of the Okarche study area, except the minister who was a boarder in a household across the road from the church. The locations of homesteads of the Mennonites in Rock Island township are depicted in Figure 15, a sequential representation of Mennonite, Black, Indian, Catholic and Lutheran founder-families that remained in the region throughout the homestead era. Burials in the Mennonite cemetery have continued since the last services were held in the church in 1953, largely through the completion of family plots. The church and graveyard are now maintained by the national organizations of the Mennonites.

The two black families shown in Figure 15 on the east edge of the study area are part of a larger enclave of blacks centered more to

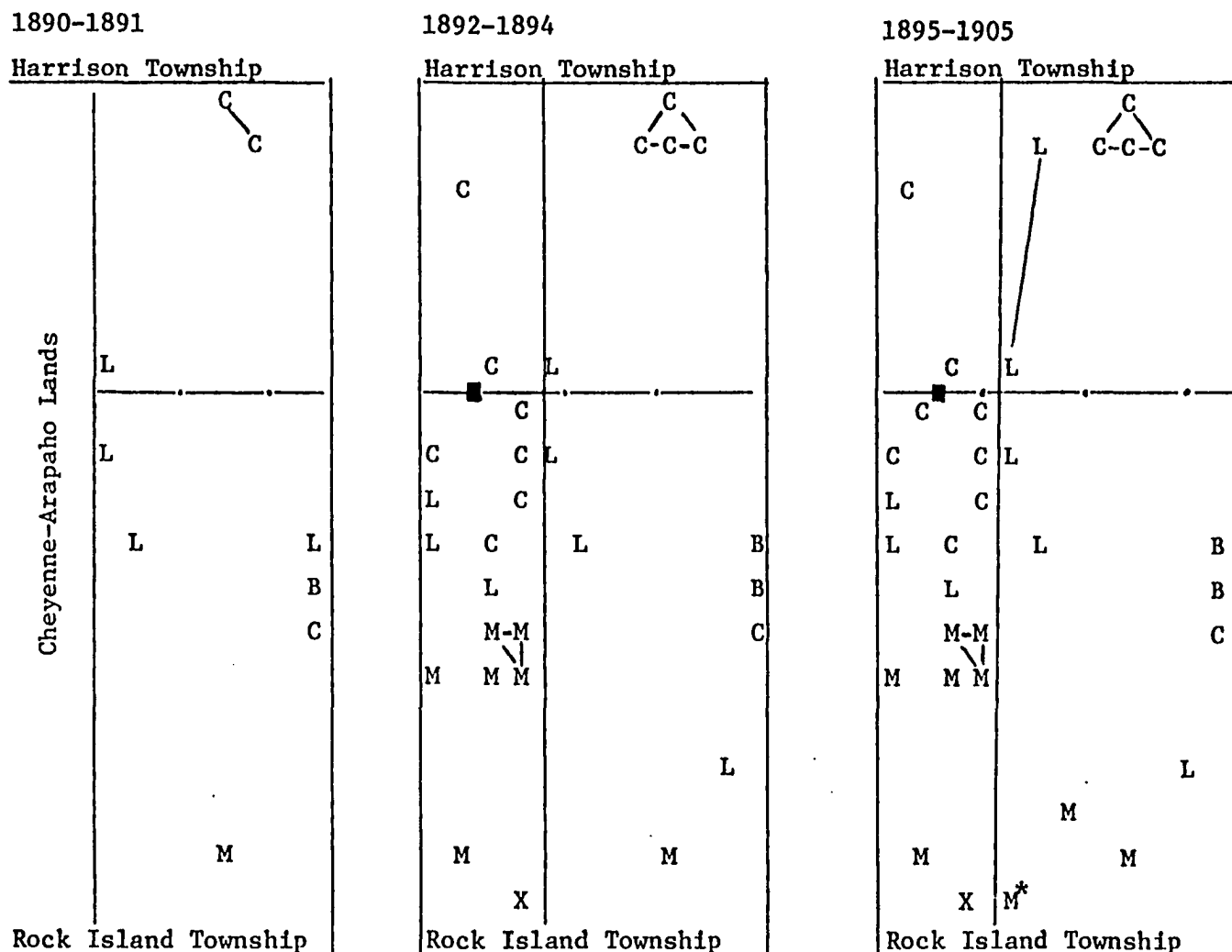


Figure 15. Founder families of German Catholics and Lutherans, and Mennonites of the North Cemetery group from 1890 through 1905 in Harrison and Rock Island Townships (I = Indians, B = Blacks C = Catholics, L = Lutherans, M = Mennonites, X = Mennonite Church, * Mennonite minister; Catholics and Lutherans include families still in Okarche; compiled from Oklahoma Tract Book).

the east. Indian allotments extended west and southwest from the four shown in the northwest corner of Harrison township, through Park Township. Between the Mennonites, Blacks, and Indians, especially on the south and west, were Lutheran and Catholic families of German background. There were very few consanguineal family networks during the first ten years in the Oklahoma land run area. The brother of one of the Lutheran founders established an 80-acre farm as a new claimant in 1900. One Catholic family network (brothers and sisters) managed to acquire closely co-located farms, and to extend the co-located network after 1892. However, in this case also the extension involved 80-acre tracts rather than 160-acre tracts.

It is apparent that the majority of Germans of both major congregations were part of the Cheyenne-Arapaho run, just as was indicated for people of German background in the general demographic discussion (see again Figure 10, Chapter 3). But for the Lutheran congregation, a major growth occurred between 1910 and 1920 with new arrivals from the upper Midwest. This is reflected in marriages of the Lutheran congregation as seen through the burial population. Of 21 women who were born between 1880 and 1900, and who were later buried in the cemetery or had obtained plots with their husbands, only four were related to founder families. Only three of these women were listed in the 1900 census. Moreover, they were all daughters of 1889 settlers, and their families had all been instrumental in the foundation of the church. The other women of this group had all come to Okarche from other localities in the immediate region through marriage, or as unmarried members of later migrant families.

The three women just noted represent the three initial Lutheran families depicted in Rock Island township in the 1889 area on Figure 15 b and c. Their marriages tied these families strongly to each other, and reflect one of the basic characteristics of the developing frontier. That is, through time there is an increased tendency of families to stay in a frontier area as they develop affinal ties with other families.

The churches formed the basis for a kind of dual "affinal" tie. Since the number of actual marriages which occurred within either the Lutheran or Catholic congregations remained small during the early years of settlement, the church itself established a symbolic familial tie within each congregation. The primary sphere of cooperation for Lutheran and Catholic settlers was the immediate conjugal family unit, but the strongest external sphere of cooperation was the church congregation. The nexus of resource relationships for each family incorporated German-speaking people of similar religious affiliation. This association was stronger than immediate-neighbor ties, or individual commercial links into the center. This is especially true of the Lutherans, but well reflected in the Catholics of all backgrounds--the Catholic resource group included several Irish families. The congregations became preferential endogamous groups, since even before families were actually united through marriages the corporate nature of the groups was established. The two churches operated their own schools and charitable organizations, as well as maintaining separate cemeteries. Thus, the German community was bipolar, consisting of two well-defined and to some extent competing entities.

These groups were not only bounded from outsiders by denominational difference, but also by language. Lack of knowledge of German

immediately excluded a large part of the remaining population of Okarche from some social interactions. German language use in the community, then, became the basis for a level of unity, largely economic, which crossed denominational lines. The cooperative ventures of the insurance company, and later the creamery, were both "German" enterprises. To speak of the "Germans" of Okarche, however, is to recognize an identity viewed mainly from the perspective of the Anglo-American population. From that viewpoint language was an overt manifestation of a generalized cultural difference, unrecognized as defining a formal community-wide resource network. It is clear from newspaper materials that Anglo individuals regarded the "Germans" as different--especially when they were not incorporated into their circles as were the Irish Catholics--without realizing the strength of cooperative bonds and subtleties of differentiation directing social action in the German-speaking segments of the community. The success of German farmers became heralded, therefore, as a result of their "hard working" and "moral" character. These characteristics attributed to Germans were the source of a great deal of respect on the part of the Anglo population. There were, nonetheless, "German" based jokes printed in the early Okarche Times, and occasional brief notes which indicate a polarity of German and non-German interests.

In actuality, there was little difference in the kinds of things Germans and non-Germans did on their farms, although there were some differences in emphasis. The most important difference between the Anglo-American population and the German groups was that the Anglo families were not tied to large resource-sharing organizations. Beyond the conjugal family unit, the next most important sphere of cooperation for the Anglo farmers was that of the "farm neighborhood." Cooperation

among neighbors in town was less important, however, than the commercial ties of the town leaders in the commercial club, or in independent business links. Even so, the images of the individual, the entrepreneur, or the commercial nucleus that would transform Okarche into a city had less social substance, and less potential given the town's location, than did the simple identities "German," Lutheran, and Catholic.

Another aspect of the economic viability of the German farmers is indicated in the settlement sequence. Many of the German families came to Okarche as second or third claimants, and purchased their claims by paying initial homesteaders. Although the Okarche Times generally reflects the activities of the Anglo-American population, several notes indicate transfers from non-Germans to German land owners, and the amounts paid for claims. In 1895 between the months of January and April the following comments were printed in the general news sections of the paper:

Peter Schmitz bought John Fox's farm. This gives him a half-section. (Feb. 22).

August Ingold purchased Daniel Kelley's claim located 4 miles south of town for \$1800.00. (Jan. 10).

A. Ingold began building a large house southwest of town. (Jan. 24).

Mr. Litwiller purchased 120 acres of land adjacent to the town on the Northwest. Mr. Ingold, former owner, moved to one of two quarters he owns outside town. (April).

These transactions show two instances of non-German release of farm land. The price of \$1,800.00 for a 160-acre claim is similar to other prices noted during the same period, and in another series of notes we also see how land became available as a result of family circumstances:

Mrs. J. K. Moss died at the home of her parents, residing in Missouri. (Jan. 3).

John Ottis' father has purchased Mr. Moss' 120-acre farm adjoining town on the southwest for \$2000.00. (April 8).

Very few such reported transfers of claim of title show Germans leaving the Okarche area and most involve German buyers either entering the rural sector from the town, or extending their holdings of agricultural land. The Germans who entered the community just before World War I, primarily Lutheran, bought farms with money they had received for their land in the Corn Belt. In some cases they realized a 400% increase of acreage for their dollar investment. Of course, not all of the German settlers had capital resources sufficient to buy claims or established farms, but a substantial number did, creating a long-term trend of transfers into German ownership. Among successful homesteaders the addition of three or four quarter sections within the first twenty to thirty years was common.

Continuance on the land throughout the settlement period and after was a matter of at least meeting subsistence needs. The German resource groups, German-wide economic cooperative ventures, and developing familial ties aided tremendously in riding out stress periods. The more socially "isolated" Anglo families had fewer and more limited tiers of resource support for such periods, as well as fewer ties that might make them endure extreme hardships in the interest of staying in Okarche. There were, nonetheless, many families of non-Germans who remained in the Okarche area, some through the present. But these

families have come to be less and less "associated" with Okarche. Thus, in addition to German acquisition of the majority of tracts immediately surrounding the town, the German population has become the primary service population of the center.

Changes in the major communication vehicles for the center reflect this trend. The early newspaper was very irregularly read by German families who preferred the Oklahoma Volksblatt, published in El Reno. By the early part of this century, however, most of the articles in the English-language newspaper in Okarche reflect local German activities. Naturally, the church activities formed part of the material in the papers between 1905 and 1920, but it is also evident that the economic and political nucleus of the community was heavily German at this time. This is in part a result of the location of the town straddling the boundary of two counties. Political action of the center engaged people of both counties, but supports from the county level were directed from two sources with very poor coordination. The effective political nexus of the town in this case mirrored the religious division of Lutheran and Catholic Germans--these were the groups which could amass resources for the common good of people with interests in and around Okarche. Thus, the Germans had political advantage over the territorially defined governmental units and people who tried to operate exclusively within these units.

We see in the early German-speaking population, then, the basis for economic and political competition which might account in part for the ultimate success of German families in Okarche:

- (1) The Germans were socially isolated from the Anglo

population, but positively received through the symbols attached to them by non-Germans. Essentially, those notions of German religiousness, hard-working nature, and efficiency fit an Anglo conception of the ingredients necessary for success as a pioneer (see Ruth, 1976, for continuity of this view). Furthermore, the fledgeling commercial sector of the town regarded all agricultural success as a necessary ingredient of their own viability (Okarche Times, Dec. 8, 1901; see also Okarche Times, June 9, 1893, for attitudes on the importance of wheat production to the town).

(2) Social isolation of the Germans and the polarity of Lutherans and Catholics created two effective resource groups which gave German families an advantage over non-Germans. The exclusivity of these groups was maintained by language and denominational factors; thus, recruitment was generally directed to locations external to the town and region.

(3) Anglo resource networks were more diffuse and fluid, and were not mediated by formal organizations which persisted through time. The primary basis of external social resources rested in "neighborly" action or private contracts. Thus, the trend of German recruitment drained social resources in the non-German sphere, except in the case of families attached to the German-Catholic enclave through the church. Recruitment in voluntary associations dominated by Anglo families--especially the churches, was local, and so also subject to the same pressures. In this situation only the most efficient farmers and businessmen could survive.

(4) The county-line location of Okarche further segmented the

Anglo-American population politically, while the German resource groups took on community-wide political functions for their members.

These factors contributed to a situation in which Germans developed greater group commitment, in some cases sacrificing latitude of personal action, but achieved greater flexibility in the area of economic performance on a familial level. On the contrary, the Anglo-American population developed more limited group commitment, or in some cases a strongly idiosyncratic social stance, at a cost of productive flexibility. In this sense, the German organizations were better "adapted" to the Oklahoma frontier situation and the particular climatic and economic events of settlement than were Anglo-Americans.

The long term result of this situation was the reduction of the number of farms in the region, the creation of larger farms, and the establishment of almost total German dominance of the rural service area of Okarche and its center. Figure 16 shows contemporary farm sites reflected in the telephone directory of Okarche, with families distinguished when possible by religious affiliation. The area of the rural service region in the figure is a minimum of 130 square miles, and there are 134 families depicted. Several other families could not be plotted, but their addition would probably have extended the land area of the service region. If all of the land in the region were controlled by those farmers living in the rural sector, then the average farm size would be about one square mile. In actuality, there are other farmers who live in town, and land holdings vary considerably. However, contemporary average farm size in the wheat belt of Oklahoma is well over 500 acres (Haystead and Fite 1955: 185-7). The acquisition patterns of the Germans during the early part of the century and

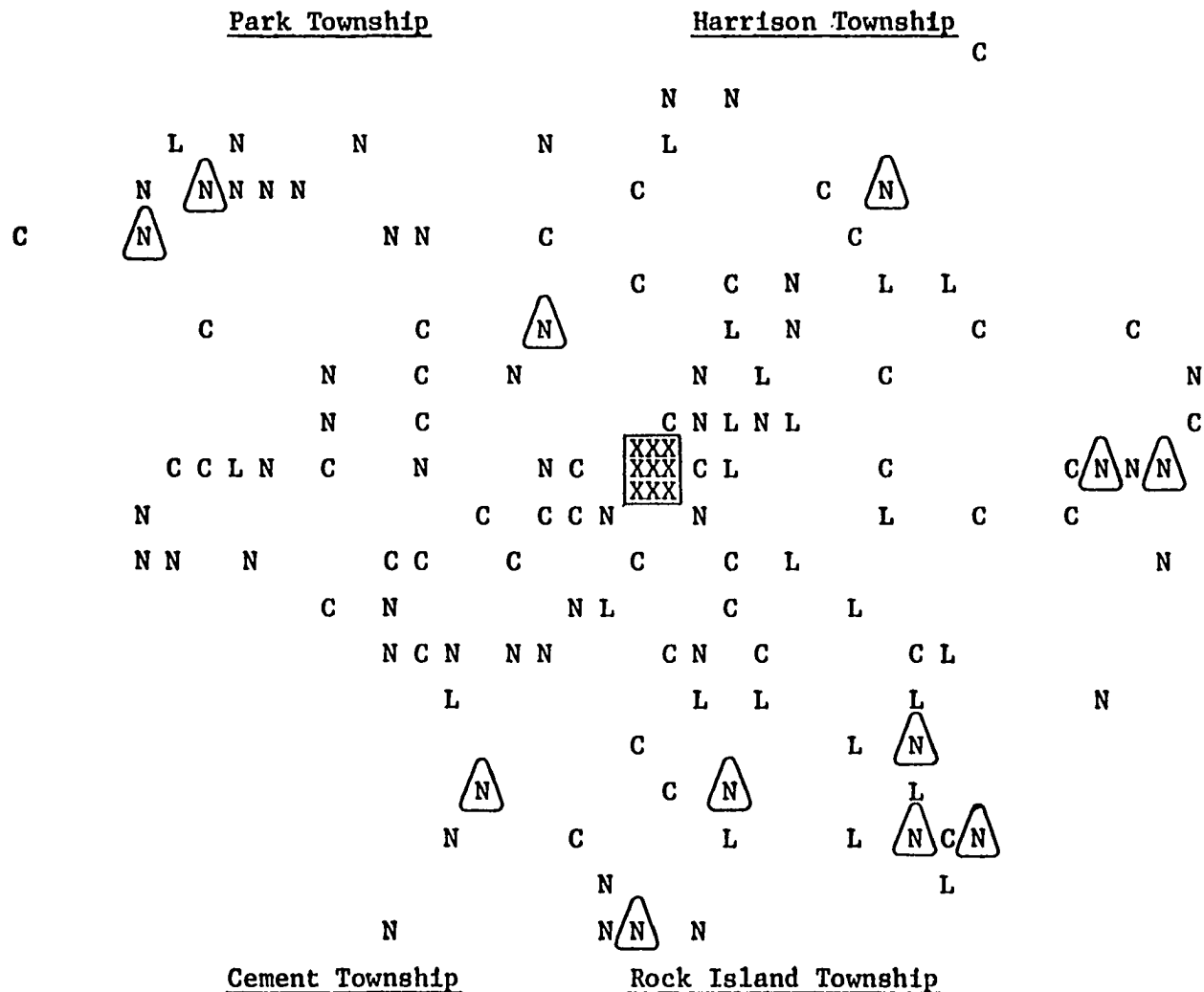


Figure 16. Contemporary farmsites by religious affiliation and background (C = Catholic, L = Lutheran, N = unknown religious affiliation, △ = not of German background, X = town location).

the information of Figure 16 both suggest that an average figure of 500 acres in Okarche for contemporary farms is not unreasonable.

Of the 131 farmsteads shown in Figure 16, approximately one-half are included in large family networks. Contemporary "same-surnamed" farm sites are depicted in Figure 17. The distribution of networks in the two settlement areas shows the differential processes through which German acquisition took place. The networks are overlapping and dispersed in the Unassigned lands area, showing long-term acquisitions--especially of the Lutheran population. On the contrary, the networks of the Cheyenne-Arapaho lands are more discrete, indicating co-locations and block acquisition. Fuller identification of religious background would probably show a preponderance of Catholic families, although the apparent preponderance of Catholics in the western settlement area is most likely a function of incomplete data.

Firm spatial segregation of Catholics and Lutherans occurs in the town today. A map of family locations differentiated by denomination (Figure 18) shows clear pockets of Lutherans and Catholics on the south side of town, a mixed area on the west side between the Lutheran church and the public schools, and Catholic dominance around the Catholic church and in the hospital area on the north. This places most of the Lutherans in Canadian County and most of the Catholics in Kingfisher County. The distribution illustrates one of the kinds of political problem created by the location of the town. The Lutheran school has never operated a high school, so children of the group go to the public high school. The public schools are supported in part by tax money obtained under county political authority, creating a complex tax relationship in matters of school funding.

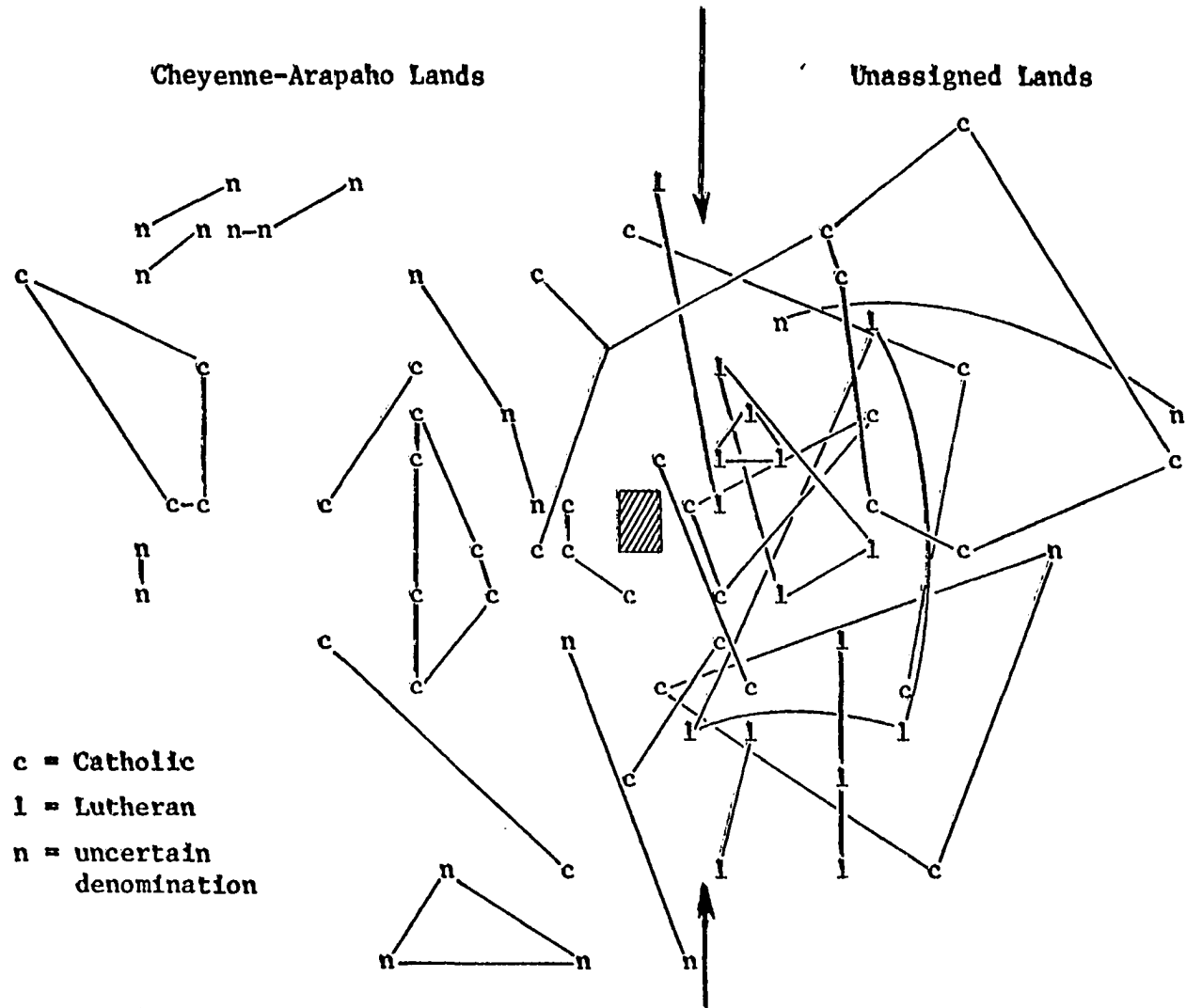


Figure 17. Farmsteads operated by same-surnamed individuals in contemporary Okarche (Compiled from the address listings of the Okarche telephone listings).

Figure 18. Locations of Catholic and Lutheran residential units in Okarche center (Compiled from residential listings in the telephone directory and listings of households and individuals in church related materials and church histories).

The continuation of denominational segregation into the modern era has not been complete, but it has been strong enough to allow the observation that "German," Lutheran and Catholic groups exhibit characteristics associated with "ethnic" units (Barth 1969: 9-38; Whitecotton 1976: 128-9). The German population as a whole was contrasted from the remaining Okarche population both in cultural content and political proclivities. But the designation "German" does not properly represent a functional "ethnicity." This is because neither the cultural content, including group-defining symbols, nor the power relations of the Germans were (or are) unified for the entire population. Functional ethnicity in the Okarche situation rests on the level of religious differentiation. Both relations of power and the symbols which support differentiation of competitors through time correspond to the congregations primarily, and to the "whole" of the German population only in a secondary, recent, and superficial way. Thus, the label "German" implies--using the language of Whitecotton's (1976) discussion of ethnicity--the "segmentary," and "attributional" characteristics of ethnic groups, without providing for boundary maintenance, recruitment, or coalition in actions directed at a resource field. Yet we may view some strong similarities in the content associated with the two German church congregations in Okarche. It is therefore convenient to discuss the cultural characteristics of "Germanness" in Okarche, recognizing that the identification of the German "ethnic group" is tied to two distinct social populations. Where cultural differences or distinctive stress-and-response situations exist in the record, they may be easily pointed out in the general treatment. In certain areas of cultural content

which serve to symbolize or identify functional social groups in the community, there is a replication in the Lutheran and Catholic congregations. It is in these features, in particular, that continuity of European-based behavioral patterns is seen.

2. Cultural Features of German Ethnic Groups

The characteristics which served to distinguish Germans in early Okarcho from other elements of the population may be divided into two major categories. First, a few cultural features associated with the German population may be thought of as elements derived from heritage which symbolized German identity. Some of these features, such as the Catholic and Lutheran brass bands, family wine-making, the maintenance of segregated seating by generations in the Lutheran church, dedicatory inscriptions and family seating in the Catholic church, and the formation of religious schools represent quite overt differences of cultural practice from the non-German population. These elements sometimes simply define spheres of unified social action, while in other cases they act as "boundary maintaining" features of particular groups. Second, other cultural features associated with the German population represent elements tied to heritage which not only define groups socially, but influence the productive potentials and resource sharing patterns within the community as a whole. These include orientations toward crops, marriage, cooperative enterprise, farmstead organization, and communication (involving both language use and media). These features must be defined largely on a statistical basis, and certain ambiguities arise in the evaluation of their relation to heritage.

Thus, some cultural elements which came to be associated with Germans in Okarche comprised a distinctive "German tradition," an internally defined ideology of "Germanness" on a local level which was quite apart from the total German "cultural system" as it existed in Europe. Other cultural elements involved more subtle differences in orientation which, although they probably arose from the backgrounds of the people, were not incorporated into the endogenous attributional definitions of Germanness in Okarche. These elements served as the basis for "secondary" or exogenous attributions to the German population. On the level of community-wide agricultural practice, for example, there were few differentiating features of the agricultural cycle, crop selection, or marketing practices which clearly segregated German and non-German farmers. However, Germans were regarded as "hard-working" and "successful" farmers by non-Germans, particularly those of the town (see Willibrand 1951: 288, for an Okarche Times quotation including images of the Germans as "thrifty" and "law-abiding" farmers). The productive results of quantitative differences in the scale of farming operations, in crop diversity, and in numbers of local contacts of the immediate social spheres in which individuals operated, lent themselves well to translation into qualitative judgments. Such positive attributions could also be adopted by the Germans with ease, since the population changes throughout the early years of Okarche seemed to indicate the general "success" of German farmers. As we have seen, however, much of that change resulted from new in-migration of Germans, rather than from an overwhelming failure of non-Germans and displacement by successful German founder-families.

Further, some cultural elements suggesting that German background was important in shaping the community of Okarche did not become prominent until well after the settlement period. This phenomenon has been termed "cultural rebound" in Jordan's (1966: 192-203) treatment of German farming in Texas. The assessment of such situations is difficult because it is not easy to determine how closely an activity is related to cultural proclivities, as opposed to the immediate economic environment or other social conditions influencing the local population. For example, if we suggest that wheat specialization in Okarche (or northwest Oklahoma, for that matter)--a trend which began about the time of the First World War--is a result of the cultural preference of German farmers with a strong background in European grain preferences, we are probably on very weak ground. The local environmental conditions are conducive to specialized wheat production given certain minimal levels of land holding and agricultural transportation technology. Further, it was the Germans perhaps more than any other group who did not think in terms of specialized farming regimes during the settlement years. On the other hand, commercial butter and cheese production on a large scale also became very important during the First World War period. This was not only well suited to economic circumstances, but reflects the intensification of a culturally specific agricultural orientation which was heavily dominated by the German families in Okarche.

It is the specificity and intensity of expression of cultural content tied to German background which is most important in recognizing a "cultural rebound" situation. The contemporary winery is an excellent example of some of the processes involved. Mr. P. Swartz, the owner

and operator of the winery (the only bonded wine producing operation in the state), is a "second-generation" Okarchean who learned to make wine from his father. Family wine production was a minor feature of German cultural content in Oklahoma during the early part of this century. As family production waned, local interest in the wine being made in the Swartz household taxed the available product and became a mild financial burden. In order to enter into commercial production, however, a license and certain major capital investments were required. The scale of investment in these necessities underscore the personal commitment of the family to the enterprise, for there was not sufficient real demand to insure a quick return in profits. Although the winery was in effect "driven into business," the product remains tied to a very local market. The establishment of this commercial operation is exceptional, then, as an example of the development of a formal business enterprise out of a generalized cultural interest. Okarche does not need a winery, nor is it tied into the larger wine industry of the United States in a competitive sense. But the winery operates as a reflection of personal and group maintenance of cultural orientation in the context of long-term cultural transformations.

Perhaps the most important differentiating characteristics associated with Germans in early Okarche are (1) continuity on the land after 1900, (2) the initial practice of a generalized farming strategy, and (3) cooperative endeavor in farm production. The first of these characteristics resulted from a tendency of German families to establish ties within their respective religious groups through marriage. Founder and early immigrant families also attempted to

assure land holdings for sons by making periodic purchases of land in the region. This continued until land became less available and more expensive. Under specialized wheat conditions of today, it is not economically feasible to continue such a practice. But for the first forty years after settlement the rule was for family holdings to grow. The early generalized farming strategy was not unique to Germans, but was manifested strongly in German crop and husbandry emphasis. This emphasis and the cooperative structures for butter production, in particular, provided a relatively strong economic orientation and support system for the younger members of the German population who took over farms during and after World War I. Continuity, crop orientation and cooperation, then, all went hand in hand until the years of the Depression.

Wheat specialization changed this picture dramatically. Although the established German population remained in control of land in the Okarche area, fewer but larger farms meant a reduction in the number of households which might reasonably be drawn into the farming pattern with generational turnover. There was an expansion of family interests outside the Okarche area, then, as young men and women of the community established new households. Contemporary families have sons and daughters spread over much of the United States. While there is, of course, tremendous cooperation in producing wheat for sale on national and international markets, the cooperative institutions serve a region in the central-place pattern of Oklahoma. They are, therefore, much less directly tied to the specific population of "German" families, except by virtue of the numerical prominence of people of German background.

There are still relatively few marriages across denominational lines in Okarche, but the strong pattern of denominational and even congregational marriage preference is no longer in force. The mobility of the young places them in a much wider range of social contacts from the high-school years through the normal marriage ages. University attendance and the acceptance of work outside the community also strongly influence the contemporary marriages of Okarche children. The maintenance of three school systems--Catholic, Lutheran, and Public--tended to segregate children of different denominations throughout their periods of education. The closing of the Catholic High School in the 1960's brought all Okarche teens together during the critical last four years of their schooling. This has undoubtedly weakened the social differentiation of the Catholic and Lutheran congregations, and served as a major impetus for social change in the community as a whole.

Religious and non-religious education in the private schools included a strong emphasis on German during the settlement period. The language experience of the Lutherans and Catholics, however, was quite different (see Willibrand 1951: 286-9). The Lutherans had relatively great autonomy and commonality in German background, and a generally positive experience in German language use until World War I. The Catholics, on the other hand, got into a conflict with the bishop in Oklahoma City over the assignment of non-German priests in the Oklahoma region. The people still used German for roughly the same period as the Lutherans. The war and anti-German sentiment were probably less influential in bringing about the adoption of English than was the generational turnover which occurred between 1915 and 1925.

The settler generation spoke German at home and in the community, but their sons and daughters tended to adopt English as a primary language while maintaining German for use with their elders. Following a rather typical United States pattern (see Eichhoff, 1971), the second-generation Okarcheans also learned German through interaction with their grandparents, but dropped regular use of the language with the passing of the settler generation. The third generation and their children have little, if any, knowledge of German as the result of their association with the community.

In summary, it is clear that most of the cultural features which are strongly associated with German background were dropped in a generational turnover process similar to that which brought about a total English language orientation. Yet the major groups defined by German cultural content in the early community have remained intact as socially bounded entities through the present. The group boundaries, however, are by no means as firm today as they were in the past. It is interesting to note that early settlers of the German-speaking era are thought of, and to a great extent speak of themselves, in the images of "pioneer" life (see, for example, the Indian-Pioneer Papers interview of Fred Schroder, Interview No. 9782, 24 Jan 1938; and Sunday Oklahoman, May 30, 1976: A5). In the contemporary community, the notions of German identity are typical of American notions of German character. Thus, with a few exceptions, even in the area of identification of cultural elements tied to German heritage, the people of Okarche are not greatly different from other, non-German Oklahomans.

CHAPTER VI

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

1. Substantive Review

This study began in an attempt to account for the nearly exclusively "German" population of present-day Okarche in the contexts of cultural changes and the geographic development of Oklahoma. The town and rural elements of Okarche have been approached through demographic, technological, and social representations, and a number of specific generalizations pertinent to a wide array of historical questions have been offered. Indeed, the summaries of analysis in the three preceding chapters primarily respond to the long list of working questions introduced in Chapter I (pp. 14-5). Now it is necessary to draw the Okarche information into a more general and abstract frame of reference. We must seek in the historical development of Okarche those principles and processes which extend beyond the time-space limitations of early Oklahoma settlement. In this way we may answer the central questions of how Germans succeeded, and at the same time understand some of the factors which determine differential success of groups at all times and in all places.

In a brief substantive review we may view the developing patterns of energy control and flow in the rural development of Okarche, as well as the changing patterns of social and economic interaction of

the community. Our goal is to understand what advantage German background conferred upon families in the early community, and what manifestations of German background meant at different times to the maintenance or development of the system of relations on the local level. Because the boundaries of the system changed through time, we will also view changes in the "system" to "environment" links of the Okarche community. That is, viewed from Okarche the change in systemic boundaries appears as an increase in the intensity and channelling of information between the community and higher level political-economic units. Thus, we can maintain Okarche as a geographic identity while recognizing the fundamental transformations it has undergone. The review begins with social differentiation in Okarche and then turns to economic development, citing limited demographic trends which are inter-related with social and economic changes.

A simple diagram (Figure 19) illustrates the major relations of the subpopulations of early Okarche. The German-speakers formed two primary groups represented by two levels of hierarchy--the local church and the regional/national church organization. A family had as its primary group of association the congregation of which it was a part, and through which it sometimes received supports from established congregations elsewhere. The interaction across denominational lines was minimal at first, giving way to some economic interaction in the areas of wheat marketing and dairying. Children were socialized into the community in separate schools, generally married within denominational boundaries (although not always locally) and for some time established residence in the community with great frequency. Meanwhile,

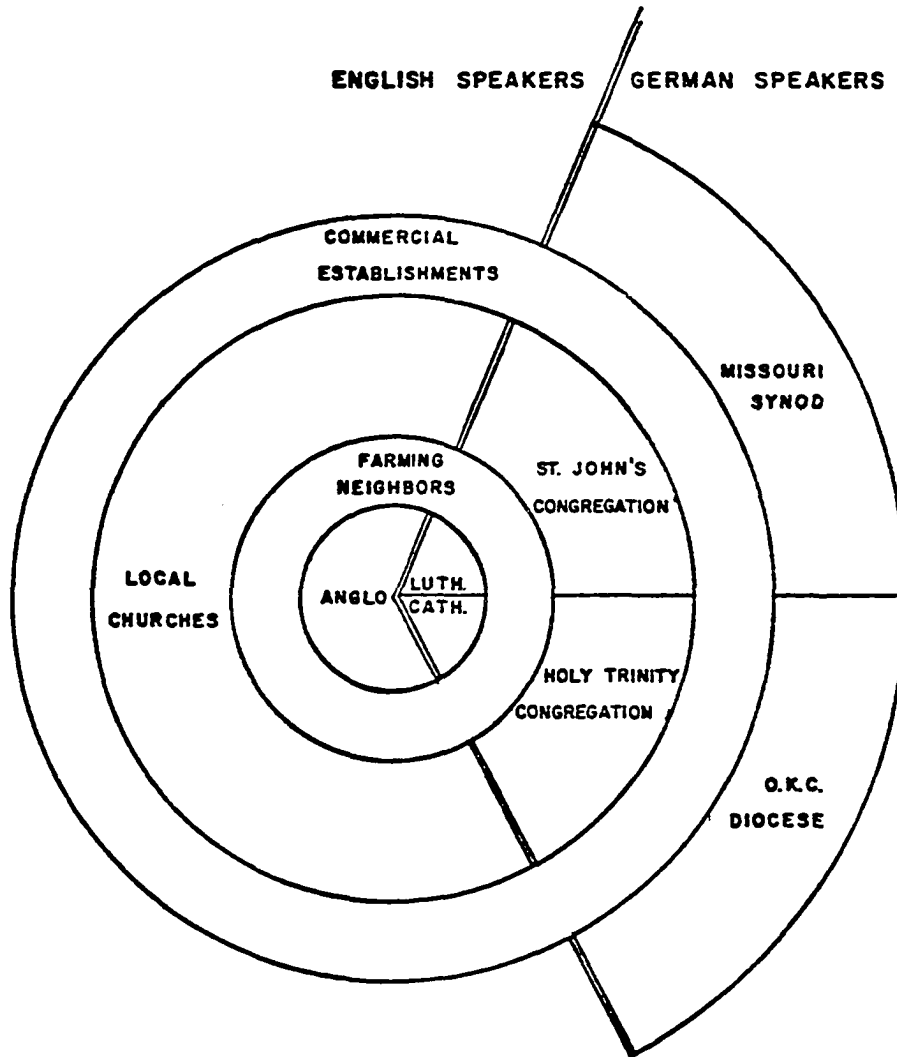


Figure 19. Schematic representation of local and regional social-hierarchic relationships, emphasizing differentiation of the English-speaking and German-speaking populations of Okarche.

the rural Anglo-American population was directly linked to farming neighbors, and then to local churches and commercial establishments. The symbols surrounding the Germans as viewed from the Anglo-American perspective were generally positive, and the German resource groups represented by the two church congregations were quite competitive with other social and political groups of the immediate region.

We may state, then, that German identity was adaptive for certain families since: (1) it enabled them to gain access to resources centered outside the frontier community of Okarche, and (2) it provided them with constant formal social ties within the frontier community. The latter point requires further clarification. The church congregations represented local social resources on a larger scale and more permanent basis than the farm neighborhood and church ties of the non-Germans. Immediate farming neighbors changed constantly during the turnover period; the larger areal coverage of the congregations helped maintain continuity of associations by people of like interest, while not basing the association on proximity of homestead locations. Moreover, the fact that German was spoken formally in the Lutheran church, and at least socially among the Catholics, aided in regulating membership within the resource groups each congregation represented. Thus, under any situation of economic stress we would expect fewer German failures.

As German farmers expanded their operations by adding tracts to their homestead land, their sons were coming of age, marrying, and having their own children. The "German identity" of such first generation Okarcheans was somewhat weaker than that of their parents, but non-German competition was also weaker. Furthermore, congregational

ties were strengthened by numerous local marriages, and regional ties were enhanced by marriages out to other towns (particularly in the case of the Lutherans). The generational transition, then, marked a shift to dual-language church services in the Lutheran church. This potentially opened the church to English-speaking Lutherans, although its primary impact was to reduce the differentiation of Lutherans and Catholics on the basis of language use patterns. But the basic relations of the settler generation remained intact through the generational transition. The enlarged and growing Catholic and Lutheran congregations remained strongly bounded from non-German elements of the population.

The parallel of technological and language-use changes in Okarche's history, as noted above, strikingly fits with the generational transition periods (see Figure 20). Thus, just as dual-language church services began with such a transition period--aided perhaps by anti-German sentiments of the First World War--regular German-language church services at St. John's ended in the early 1950's. This is a time when the second generation Okarcheans were firmly established as the primary household heads of the region, and persons who were 20 in 1890 had attained the age of 80 years. Indeed, most of the initial adult founders of Okarche were well over 20 in 1890, and few of them remained in the Lutheran congregation in 1950.

On the technological front the generational transitions provided impetus for innovations leading to specialization. Both transitions began during technologically active war periods, when wheat prices also were quite high. Young men taking over their fathers' farms generally had more land to contend with than had their parents,

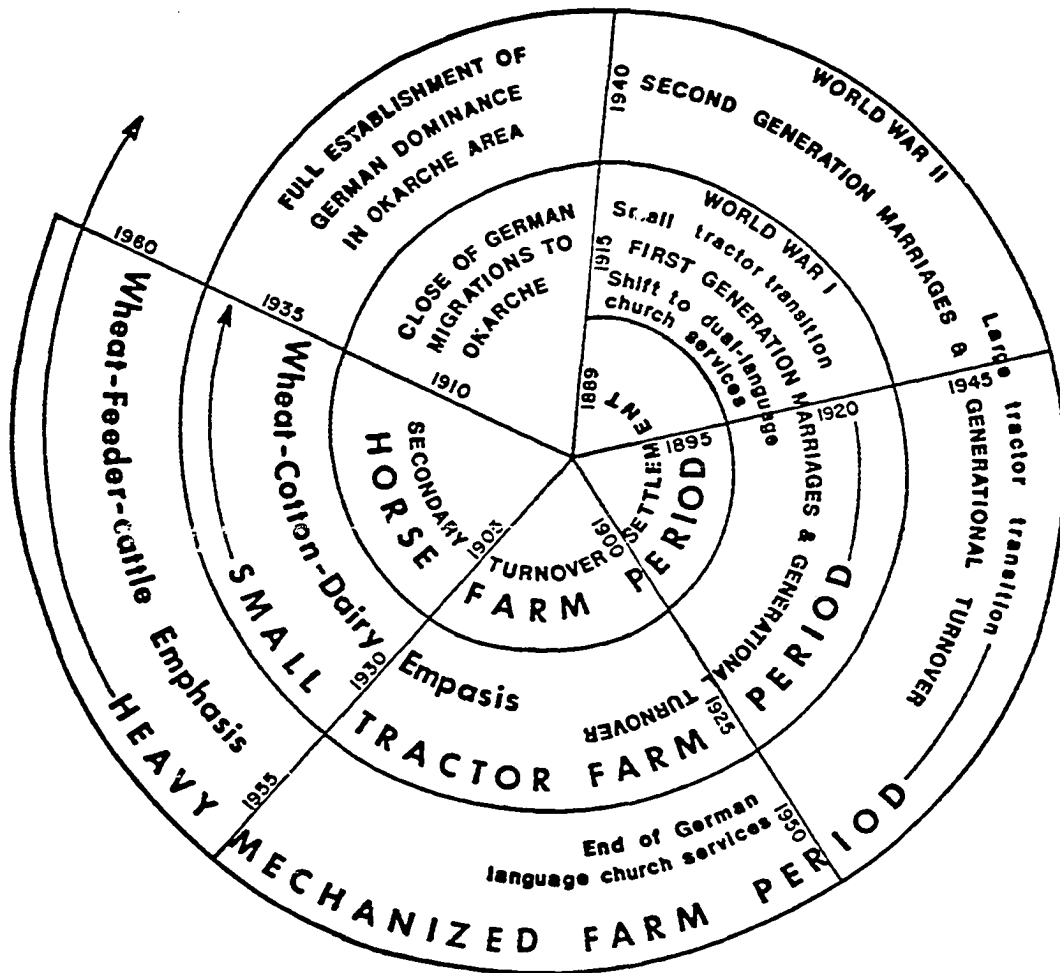


Figure 20. Cyclic structure of community development and generational turnover, including major linguistic, migration, and economic transformations of Okarche from 1889 through 1960.

certainly more considering that established operations of the post-settlement period involved optimal broken tracts. Thus, even if the acreage turned over to a son were close to the original homestead size, the improved acres would represent work requirements beyond the capabilities of a single individual, given constant technological aids. Still, as we have seen, there was not a wholesale giving-over to heavy technological change on the farm. An informational model of production, consumption and work output on a farm with options for the use of work-animals or tractors aids in pointing out critical variables in the changing agricultural system. The model (see Figure 21 for flow diagram) expresses a number of variables surrounding technical and cropping decisions, fuel requirements, and the ultimate payoff of cash over costs. The Oklahoma farmers maintained limited profit interests initially, but were too dependent upon external commodities to operate totally sustaining--economically "closed"--farms. However, an interest in cash is not sufficient to propel a near subsistence-level farm into a more specialized technological pose. We must presume, then, that individuals maximized cash production and "land worked per unit of time," and that these variables jointly are crucial to the changes of the larger system.

Given these conditions, individuals may be capable of specialization by virtue of both (a) increased land coverage per year, within the limits of available land, or (b) reductions in the human work force. These two alternatives amount to specialization in that they both reduce total human work input contributing to the region's yearly production. This is most possible, it should be noted, when

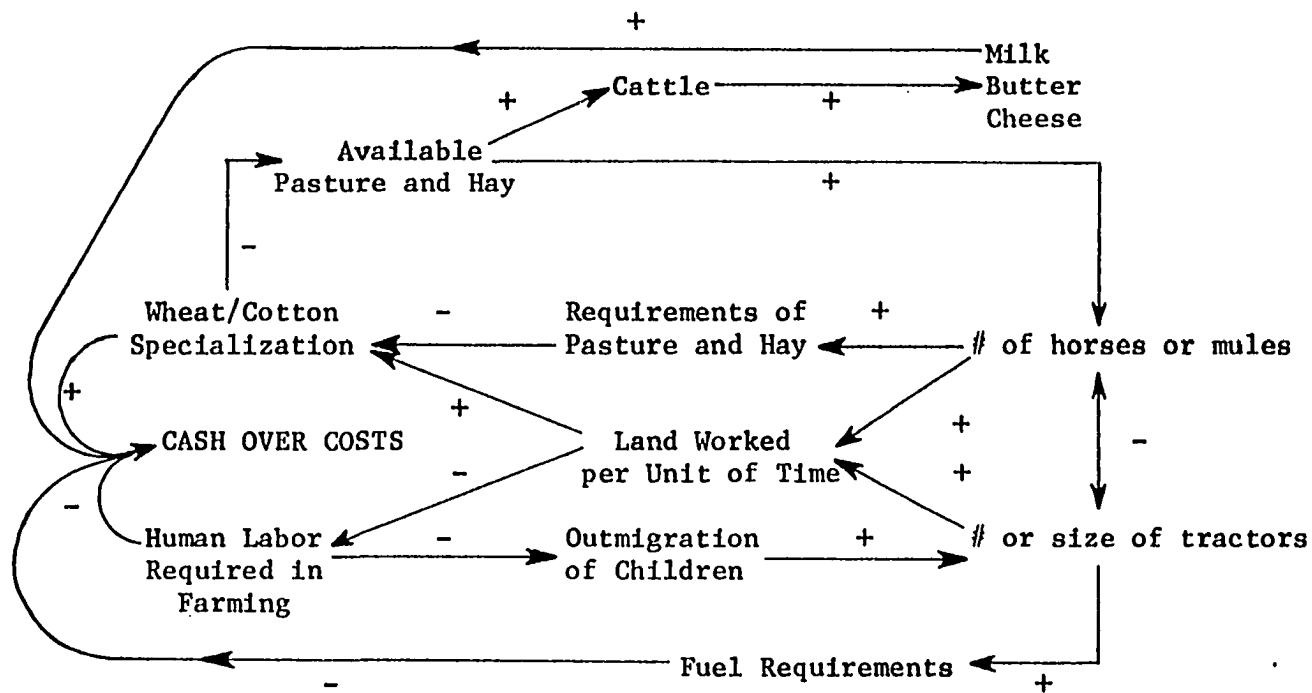


Figure 21. Information model providing for transition from the horse farm to the specialized tractor farm.

tractors are employed. Larger tractors will accomplish more work, at a cost in fuel, while reducing or maintaining the size of the required labor force. On a horse-farm, increases in the number of work animals generate requirements of pasture and hay which limit specialization in cash crops. Addition of animals would also increase human labor requirements, not only in working teams, but in hay cutting and husbandry chores. Thus, specialization is highly constrained in the horse-farm system.

The critical variable promoting or retarding specialization on a tractor farm is the cost and availability of fuel. As long as fuel is plentiful and inexpensive, the payoff from specialization in cash crops--even at relatively low prices--may be great. During the introduction of tractors in Oklahoma, the work benefits and fuel costs were probably not as important to farmers as the potential for recommitment of farmland to specialty crops. Later, and particularly after World War II, energy costs continued to decline while production and utilization of gasoline, natural gas and electricity increased dramatically (see Demand and Conservation Panel of the Committee on Nuclear and Alternative Energy Systems 1978 for a review of pricing and demand in major energy resources). In the long-term system fuel and work potentials brought about reductions in work animals, and ultimately in cattle keeping except as a specialized meat-producing enterprise. An impact of this trend was the reduction of cash from dairying, although the potential losses were more than absorbed by cash from grain or cotton sales. And dairying continued until a situation developed in which labor on individual farms became a critical variable, available

technology allowed successful specialization, and the farmers involved were relatively uncommitted to past practices--optimal conditions for the shift occurred during the late 1930's and World War II.

When dairying began to wane the shift was relatively rapid. The erosion of interest on the part of farmers jeopardized cash gains for individuals contributing to cooperatives such as the one in Okarche. That is to say, it is not simply the "popularity" of a given strategy of farming which always contributes to major shifts of emphasis--the initial decisions of a few individuals may be sufficient to tip the balance of costs and profits against others engaged in an activity.

From these multiple factors of human decision, technology, market values, and labor conditions were formed the three basic agricultural stances described in Chapter IV and listed in Figure 20. The specific energy flows, intensity of production and consumption, and reinvestment practices for the three periods, reflecting the variables of Figure 21, are depicted in the three diagrams of Figure 22. The predominantly "internal" cycling of energy on the horse farm was an efficient state of affairs, but did not produce large cash gains. As tractors were introduced, the cash output was reinvested in land, and the impact of specialization on human labor requirements was deferred temporarily. Finally, as land ceased to be available, pressure was placed on households to become smaller or suffer reductions in income relative to perceived needs in the developing commodity orientations of the nation. In essence, the following means of increasing household income and the per capita income from farming became important, roughly in the sequence presented:

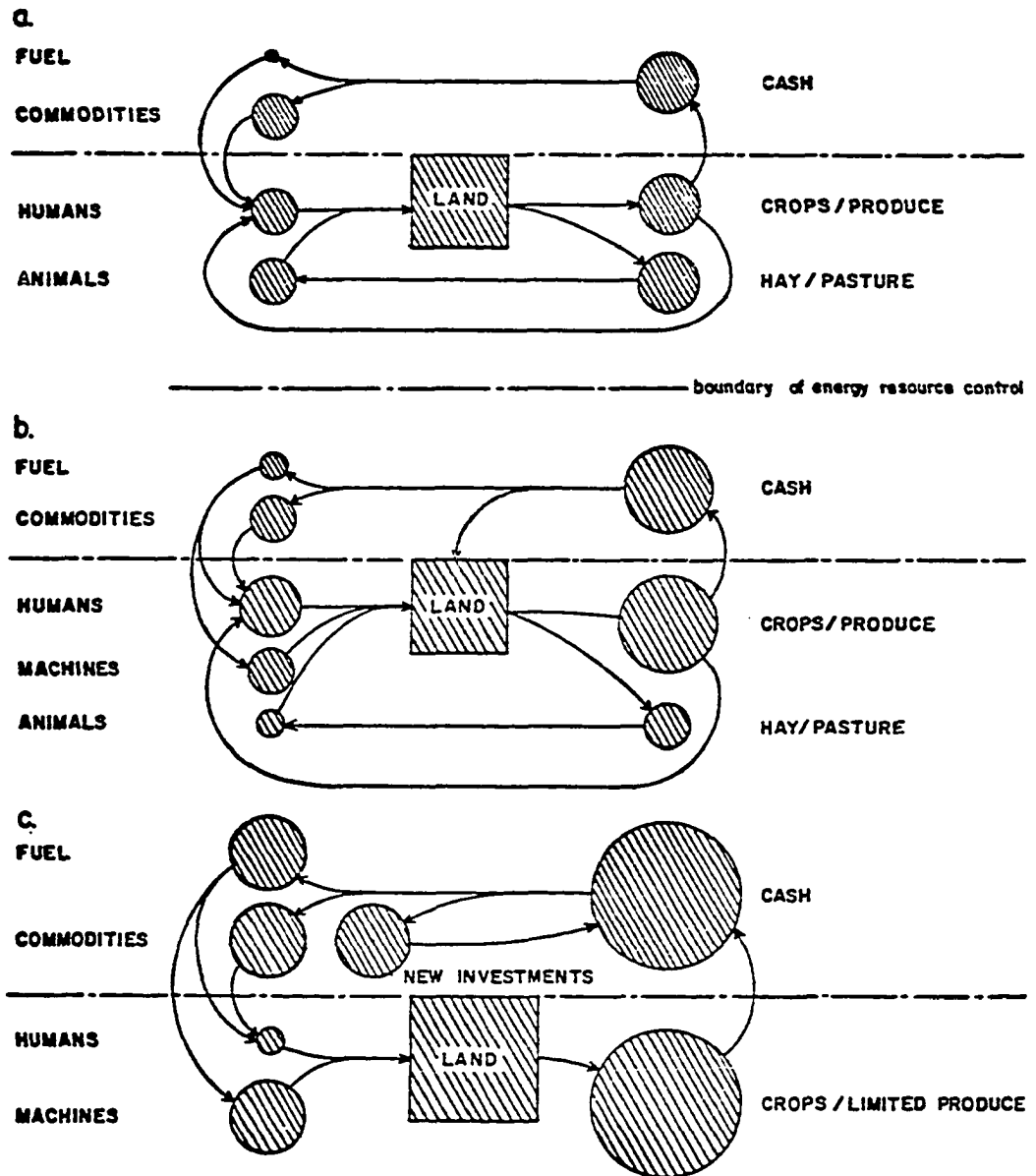


Figure 22. Flow diagram of resources and production during (a) the horse-farm period, (b) the small-tractor period, and (c) the large-tractor period.

1. increases in work potential through household maturation
2. increases in land holdings
3. specialization in wheat and cotton; reduction in gardening and dairying
4. mechanization of farming tasks; diversion to external energy sources
5. reduction in household size commensurate with work needs; tendency for sons to enter non-farming professions
6. investment in non-farming or commodity-hedge opportunities.

This long-term development left most of the land in the Okarche region in the hands of German-American households that were closely related to one another through the two church organizations. The boundaries of the social and economic system since the 1950's have been greatly expanded through the communications revolution of the post-War era. Thus, the geographic localities of immediate importance incorporate a regional sphere and a national/international sphere associated with wheat production. Within the regional sphere (see Figure 23) are the county seats at Kingfisher and El Reno, as well as Oklahoma City, all of which provide shopping and marketing services for farmers. Most politically important is Oklahoma City. Oklahoma State University is significant in Okarche, as it has been since its founding because of its agricultural programs--very few children from Okarche have gone to The University of Oklahoma for higher education. The change in boundary conditions for the community has impacted the marriage patterns during the modern era, and even high-school interaction within the Kingfisher/El Reno/Oklahoma City region is quite strong today.

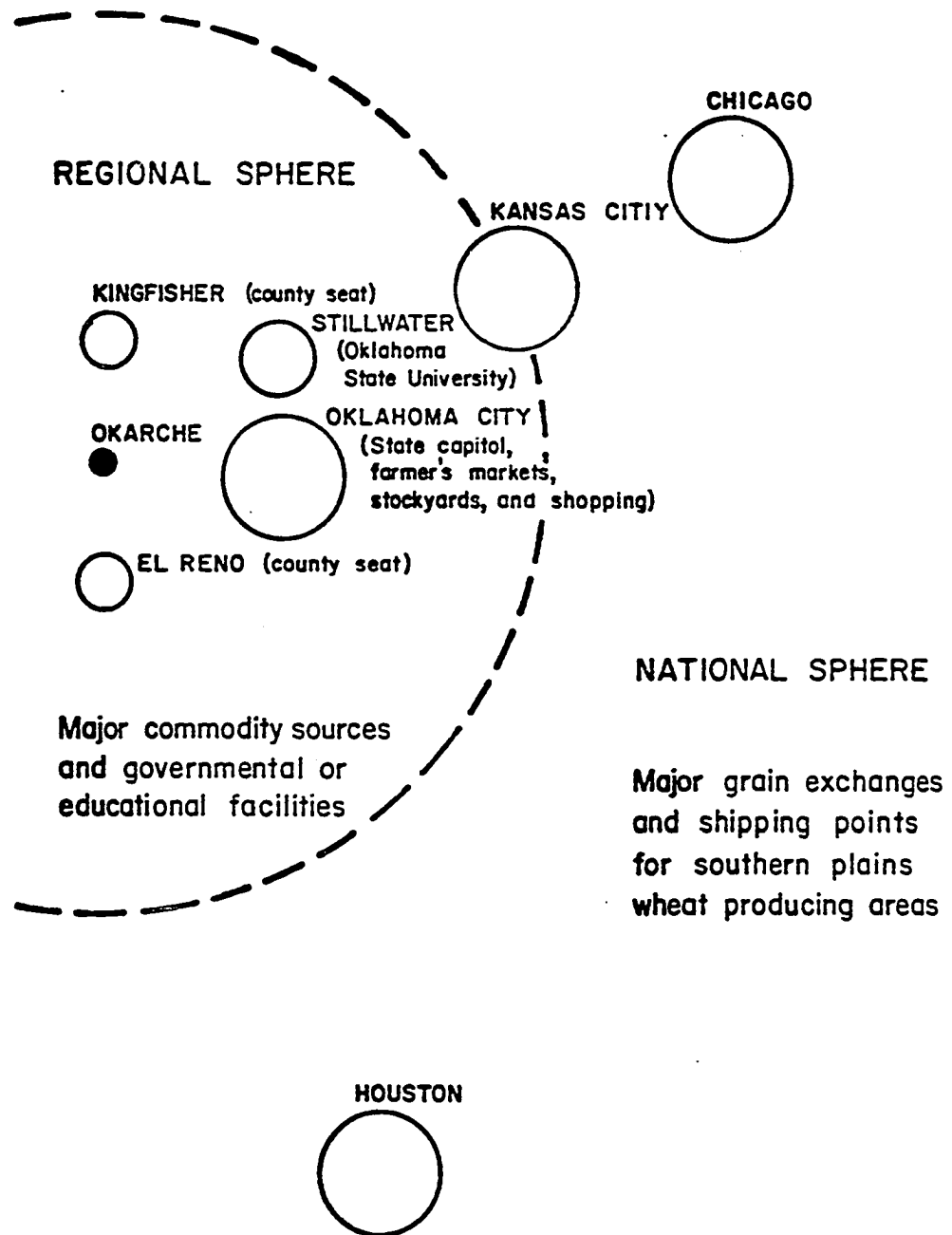


Figure 23. Places of regional, district, and local importance to contemporary Orkarche economic activity.

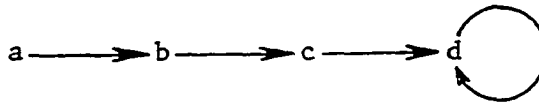
On the national and international level Chicago, Kansas City, and Houston are all important in aspects of the grain business. Oklahoma City and Houston, as well as several other cities in Oklahoma and Texas, are important to the Okarche region because they serve as headquarters for gas exploration. Property-owner shares from the production of natural gas in central Oklahoma represent perhaps the most significant impact on the economy of the past decade--more indeed, than the real impact of the Soviet grain deals of recent years. Both world wheat production and energy supplies should continue to influence local decision-making and economy in the immediate future.

2. Order and Disorder

The specific events of social and economic development in Okarche exemplify more general processes of systemic change, especially those of "frontier" dynamics. We must now directly consider some of these general processes, and attempt to discern what the Okarche study tells about broad aspects of systemic change. We may begin with the observation that the total historical development of Okarche seems to involve a progression from (1) a state of affairs characterized by disassociated or highly independent events, to (2) a more regularized, cohesive, or otherwise orderly system. On the demographic front the birth and death rates, migrations, families and households all develop toward rather stabilized conditions with time. As the settlement era draws to a close there is a decrease in the magnitude of change in the absolute balances of population and the localization of people on the landscape. Social boundaries too, at first multifaceted and poorly defined, become more strongly manifest as familial ties to land,

neighbors and new relations become more coherent. The economic strategies of the town and rural folk are at first not wholly consistent, but become attuned to each other with time. And the economy, together with the technology supporting it, becomes adapted to the larger regional and national systems of commodities, transportation, and communication.

The frontier system moves through a series of alterations of state toward essentially stabilized conditions. This development is similar in some respects to ecological succession, although the two processes differ substantially in several important ways. The form of the development may be graphed as follows:



where each state of development represents a different set of relations and intensities of relationship in the areas of demography, social differentiation, agricultural practice, and regional or national ties. The terminal state of such a progression is essentially homeostatic in operation when viewed in the short term. However, this is not meant to imply that any complex social situation may be viewed as homeostatic in the long run. Indeed, demographic, social and economic variables do not actually maintain the specific "equilibrium controls" of the homeostatic model, since there is no explicitly defined value at stake in the operation of such systems of values. Rather, a "stable" state is achieved by the blind operation of many variables in the chaotic initial conditions of the system--the flow of things produce a tendency toward natural order, even though there is no "teleological" capacity of the

system as a whole. The duration of such a "stable" state is dependent upon its efficiency in maintaining energy flow requirements set by its organization. The efficiency of the system may be taxed by numerous environmental circumstances, and under extreme conditions the fundamental relationships of the "stable" system may be forced to change.

The evolution of an ecosystem (see Odum 1971: 251-75) involves many kinds of trends, the most important of which concern the relations between community production (total photosynthesis) and community respiration (energy yielding biotic oxidation). If the ratio of production to respiration is greater than one, organic matter accumulates in the system. This accumulation is the net production (apparent photosynthesis) of the community. An ecosystem undergoing succession tends toward a balance of production and respiration, regardless of its initial ratio, resulting in a large stable biomass, kept within limits by conditions of climate and soil (Odum 1971: 253-4). Agricultural systems maximize accumulation of biomass rather than a production/respiration ratio of 1. They therefore retard or inhibit the establishment of natural energy conserving relationships which characterize climax ecosystems. There is, then, a continual drain of energetic potential from the agricultural field-unit which must be replaced if the system is to maintain a high rate of production.

Thermodynamic order functions of the ecosystem adjust in succession, then, according to the stability principle, which states that "any natural enclosed system with energy flowing through it, whether the earth itself or a smaller unit . . . tends to change until a stable adjustment, with self-regulating mechanisms, is developed"

(Odum 1971: 38). But in the agricultural system ecological stability is obtained only to the extent that human actions are consistent with environmental potentials, and energy drains, in particular, are balanced by inputs from external sources. In temperate climates the control of energy drain and maximization of production of usable plant parts have both been accomplished, although at a high cost of energy and commitment. The intensive use of pesticides, fertilizers, and irrigation, coupled with selection for high-yield crop varieties, produces far reaching effects on soil, groundwater, natural biotic regimes, and people. Indeed, the system is anything but self-regulating. In spite of all the appearance of "stability" under human control, then, the complex agricultural system is actually a controlled "growth" operation. This makes it subject not only to ecological stress, but also to economic stress.

Odum (1971: 252) presents a list of ecosystem characteristics for developing and mature stages of ecological succession. The list is partially summarized in Table 8, which also presents a tabular model of agricultural change from generalized to specialized farming. The similarities of both farming systems to the developing natural ecosystem should be immediately apparent. The community energetics of all of these systems are similar (items 1-5), and highly contrastive to the nature ecosystem. All three of these systems are also relatively "specialized"--they have low indices of diversity (items 7-10) and rapid, inefficient energy exchanges (items 14-16 and 19). Finally, all three of these systems are extremely fragile. Stability (item 20) against external stresses is weak.

<u>Ecosystem Attributes</u>	<u>Early Stages---Mature Stages^a</u>		<u>Generalized Agriculture---Agribusiness</u>	
1. Gross production/ respiration ratio	Greater or less than 1	Approaches 1	Greater than 1	increasing
2. Gross production/ standing crop biomass	High	Low	High	Very High
3. Biomass supported/ unit energy flow	Low	High	Low	Very Low
4. Net Community Production	High	Low	High	Very High
5. Food Chains	Linear	Weblike	Intermediate	Linear
6. Total Organic Matter	Small	Large	Large	Small
7. Species Variety	Low	High	Intermediate	Low
8. Species Equitability	Low	High	Low	Low
9. Biochemical Diversity	Low	High	Low	Very Low
10. Pattern Diversity	Poor (tends to randomness)	Well-organized	Poor	Poor
11. Niche Specialization	Broad	Narrow	Narrow	Narrow
12. Size of Organism	Small	Large	Large	Large
13. Life Cycles	Short, Simple	Long, Complex	Short, Simple	Short, Complex
14. Mineral Cycles	Open	Closed	Open	Open
15. Nutrient Exchanges	Rapid	Slow	Rapid	Rapid
16. Role of Detritus in Nutrient Regeneration	Unimportant	Important	Intermediate	Unimportant
17. Production	Quantity	Quality	Both	Both
18. Internal Symbiosis	Undeveloped	Developed	Poorly Developed	Undeveloped
19. Nutrient Conservation	Poor	Good	Poor	Very Poor
20. Stability	Poor	Good	Poor	Poor

Table 8. Comparison of ecological succession and agricultural specialization trends (succession developmental characteristics after Odum 1971: 252-8).

Taken as a sequential development the trends of agricultural specialization are antisuccessional, especially as regards energetics. This is the result of a number of artificial constraints placed upon the standing crop biomass. On the community level the total biomass standing at any time is reduced as agriculture is intensified, the variety of organisms supported in a unit of space is reduced, and the biochemical diversity of the community is reduced. On the individual level the size of plants especially the usable portions, is maximized. Thus, the usable yield of the community (net usable production) can increase even though the total biomass standing in the system is reduced. Production is both qualitative and quantitative in the agricultural system, depending upon the selective capacities of the cultivators and the ability of the technological system to replenish depleted nutrients. The energy cost of the system is high, and increases much more rapidly than yield. Odum (1971: 412) estimates, for example, that agricultural yields may double with tenfold increases of fertilizer, pesticides, and horsepower. Moreover, fuel powered agroindustry which produces four times the yield of horse-farm agriculture requires 100 times the resource expenditure.

When one views the development of a farming community such as Okarche, then, the critical ecological variables become (1) yearly production, (2) yearly resource expenditure, and (3) efficiency of nutrient regulation. In order to increase or maintain production, increases in yearly resource expenditure are exacted (some local and some external) and the efficiency of extant nutrient regulation mechanisms is taxed (whether natural or artificial). A "stable" system may

be largely self-contained on the level of the individual farm, with a consequent cost of productivity per year. Otherwise, a "stable" system is subordinated to larger regulatory interests, mainly economic, and will remain stable only so long as those interests remain intact. In thermodynamic terms, all agricultural systems are ecologically entropic, and they increase in disorderly tendency with intensity. The work of "pumping out" the disorder in these systems is a product of higher-level order in the human system--technological capacity, social organization, ideals regulating consumer patterns. Thus, the development of specialized wheat agriculture in Okarche and elsewhere is a function of economic goals of individuals (setting the desired levels of productivity) operating against fuel-acquisition technology, fuel-price stability, fuel-use efficiency, commodity market openness, national consumer patterns, the efficiency of direct technological applications in agriculture, and the ability of farmers to withstand economic stress from these factors while maintaining at least minimal production. To the extent that the agricultural system follows the agricultural trends listed in Table 8, it must be transformed from a system understandable primarily in ecologic terms (through energy flows) to one understandable partially in economic terms (through cash circulation), and partially in social terms (through rules of resource access and channeling).

3. Frontier-stabilizing Demographic Trends

In the preceding sections it is argued that developing patterns of energy control and flow involved social changes within the Okarche community and changes in the economic articulation of Okarche to larger

systems. The development, it is argued, was necessary to counteract the energy-inefficient tendencies of the agricultural system, especially as mechanization under a profit motive commenced. German identity was adaptive in the context of the developing community because it allowed German farmers insurance against failure in the critical adjustive years of settlement. German background quickly provided a strong factor of "order" in the frontier system, which facilitated resource access and enhanced potential economic benefit of its possessors. As energy requirements and economic commitments changed, external ties of the local system were expended to counteract increased "disorder" of the agricultural ecosystem. Meanwhile the identifying symbols and behaviors of dominant German groups were modified. Both initial social conditions on the frontier and the social and economic changes of the post-frontier period were initiated mainly on a conscious basis. They represent "choices," then, even if options within particular historical circumstances were highly constrained. Therefore, we must now consider models of the natural stabilizing trends of the frontier, viewed again as ecological phenomena. These natural trends tend to limit individual and group options in the changing system.

Social "order" is especially promoted by demographic stability, and the population development of frontiers follows certain regular stabilizing trends (see Lefferts 1977: 47-8, Figure 4). We shall view the gross population trends of the frontier as a self-organizing system tending toward an equilibrium which is a function of applied technology, initial constraints on land acquisition, and environmental potentials. The ideal system would operate in a manner analogous to the relations of production and respiration in the developing ecosystem (see Figure 24 a).

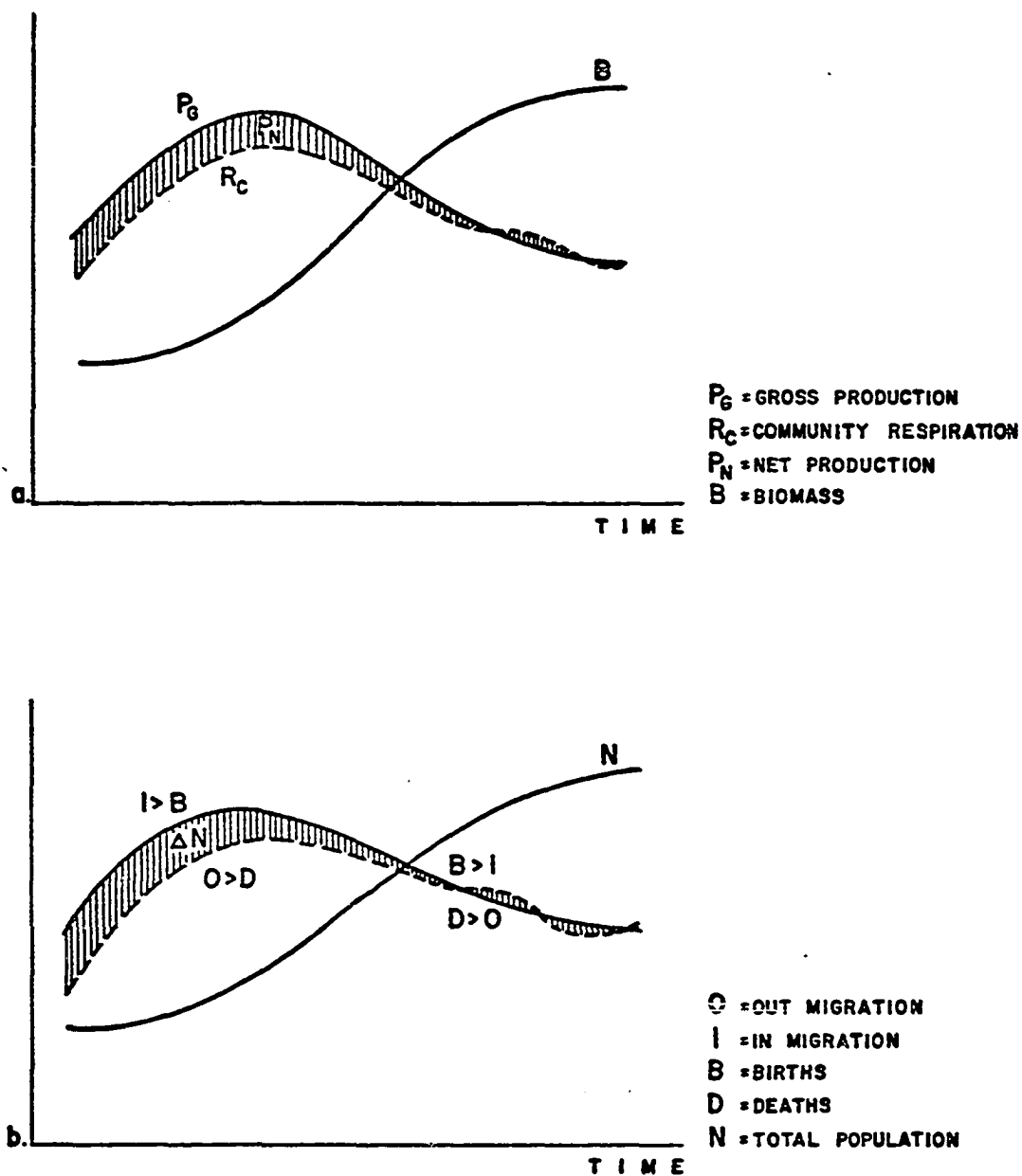


Figure 24. Stabilizing trends of the succession model (a) and the frontier demographic system (b) (succession model after Odum; the frontier demographic system expresses the essential relations of "turnover" and "cumulative inertia").

During ecological succession when productivity exceeds respiration, the net production brings about accumulation of biomass in the system. At climax the biomass is at a maximum, while production and respiration are approximately equal. The level of total development of the system is determined by energy potentials of the initial environment. Similarly, the net accumulation of individuals in the frontier system will increase as in-migration and births, or both, exceed out-migration and death (see Figure 24 b). In the frontier development in and out movements of people dominate births and deaths during the initial stages, while the opposite is true as stability is approached. Thus, under stable conditions the population should be at a maximum, while net and absolute changes in population on any time basis remain at a minimum. The system builds "order" much in the way a successional ecosystem does, by increasing life-cycles (duration of units in the system), size (energy potential of individual units), mutuality, and species (familial) continuity in situ. The mature population, like the mature ecosystem has a high information content and low entropy.

In the absence of technological adjustments or serious land depletion, an agricultural frontier might reach population equilibrium within a few generations. Such a development would approximate the age-sex characteristics presumed by stable-population theory (Weiss 1973, Swedlund 1975)--constant age-specific death rates and perfect replenishment through births. In an actual situation many kinds of perturbances may effect the development. The size of the frontier, density of settlement, and initial investments of labor and capital by frontiersmen may produce changes in the time required to reach stability. In many cases, technological change will modify the potentials of the system

it is in early stages of development, so that the population trends start into secondary or tertiary adjustments. Comparison of frontier patterns provides, in spite of the difficulties of substantive difference, several reliable potential measures of social change and development phenomena (see Thompson 1973; Miller and Steffen 1977). However, the comparison of active processes in frontiers of different developmental rate might be aided by having a means of identifying analogous stages of development in any two systems.

For example, if we take duration of residence on a farming frontier as a measure of successful farm establishment, then a measure of "order" of the system would be the ratio of (1) residents already in the system for some set time (say, one year), to (2) residents of shorter acquaintance in the system. The rate of change of this ratio during the development of a frontier would define the population cycle in such a way that comparison of widely divergent systems would be possible. The observation of a single system using this ratio allows a direct observation of changing information content in the gross demographic system (cf. Odum 1971: 253, Table 4, on "overall homeostasis" in ecosystems).

The population system of Okarche is depicted in Figure 25 as a stability seeking system (a), and through independent estimates of migration, nativity, and mortality inputs (b). The development of the Okarche population matches the "succession" model well, although it reflects perturbances of technological changes after the 1930's. The system became technologically limited with the establishment of the tractor-farm and the trend toward agroindustry, reflected in out-migrations and a net reduction in population. This is related to the larger

central-place development of Oklahoma, as depicted in Figure 26 a. The frontier is dominated by population-increasing factors, but tends toward relatively stabilized conditions (the diagonal of the graph represents a ratio of increase/decrease equal to 1). The continued capitalization of agriculture provides a "push" effect reflected as a domination of population-decreasing factors, returning to equilibrium at low absolute and net rates of change. Towns and cities gain or lose population depending upon their place in the central-place structure. Major towns (such as Enid, El Reno, and Kingfisher) maintain relatively high rates of absolute change (turnover) and may experience growth with capital investments. Cities exhibit higher rates of absolute change, and are usually committed to net accumulations of people as well. Agriservice towns, such as Okarche, stabilize with small populations and low basic rates of change.

The age-pattern associations of Okarche (Figure 26, b) are typical of agriservice towns. Average adult ages on farms increased from mid-30 to mid-40, where they stabilized. Meanwhile, the town changed from its very young beginnings into a center with very large numbers of retired people, reflected in an average age in excess of 50. The sexual balances in both cases developed toward parity, although the town began as female-dominated and the rural areas were dominated by males. This sexual balancing reflects the overall stabilizing trends of the population.

Changing household structures provide the changes of "continuity," "mutuality," and "size" which characterize the developing frontier demographic system. Reduction of turnover increases the information stored in the demographic system, or increases its "order," on the level

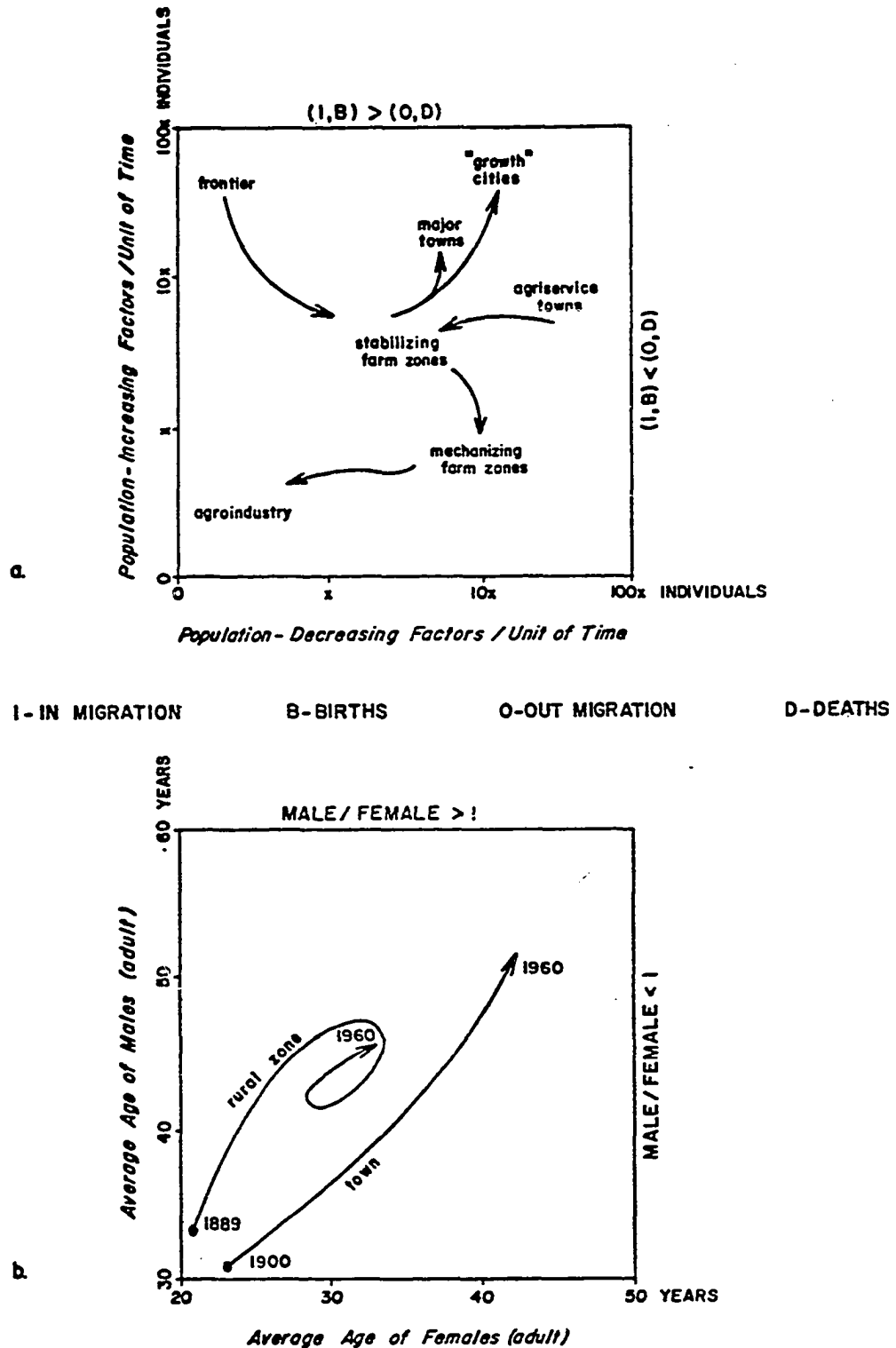


Figure 26. Demographic factors characteristic of central-place development in Oklahoma (a) and age-pattern associations of the rural and town elements of Okarche's population from 1889 through 1960.

of household units by (1) changing the introduction of new family units in an immediate sense, and (2) defining the set of households from whom generational transition will ultimately occur. That is, reduction of turnover in the frontier period defines the probable ultimate direction of "continuity" of households. The maturing households achieve greater size and average-age patterns. This means that both gross and net work potential (total output and working-age output) of the units is increased. Expanding friendship and marriage patterns, as well as segmentation of first-generation households, contribute to the "mutuality" and interdependence of the family units.

The high degree of familial variety in the frontier system limits the economic differentiation of units. As absolute variety of familial background is destroyed, however, social and economic variety in the form of stratification is created. Thus, the "order" in the population and household system is directly correlated with the creation of economic order in the community system--cash and resource flows in the system become regularized and reasonably predictable in the short term. As the population system of the frontier approaches stability, the resource allocation of the system becomes increasingly well defined. In essence, familial units carve out sets of resources which they control, or in which they have a share of control. At a point when resources become severely limited in relation to demand, the stable system comes under economic stress.

4. Resource Availability and the Frontier

The crucial ecological characteristic of a "frontier" is a high ratio of resources to population. That is, the frontier per se is

a low-density demographic situation. As the resources of a frontier are tapped and expended, and as larger population becomes well established in control of untapped resources, the frontier ceases to exist. At that point the frontier either becomes an independent mature system, or part of the system from which its population sprung. As a geographic/economic entity, then, the frontier possesses properties which appropriately warrant the often glibly-used term "safety-valve." It is a zone that will accommodate population from the crowded core of a "growth" system, while also augmenting core resources and providing expansive growth for investment. For the settlers a frontier is a land of individual opportunity, while in pure economic terms it is a land of windfall profit for both local and absentee investors. In either case the initial risk may be high, but as stabilization begins the risk is dramatically reduced. Thus, core areas are able to withstand pressures for internal reorganization, both economic and social, by virtue of frontier development. At the same time, however, frontier development brings about changes of overall scale and "order" in the core-frontier system.

Figure 27 presents characteristics of population density and mobility, population entropy, and fuel-use efficiency for frontier development. The graphs may be employed as either geographic or temporal representations, depicting (1) regional inter-relationships of core, developing, and frontier areas, or (2) the progressive development of a region from its "frontier" period through a highly "developed" state. The frontier is opposed to the core in terms of fuel-use efficiency. Even though the technology of frontier development may be rudimentary, the release of commodities for local or core consumption

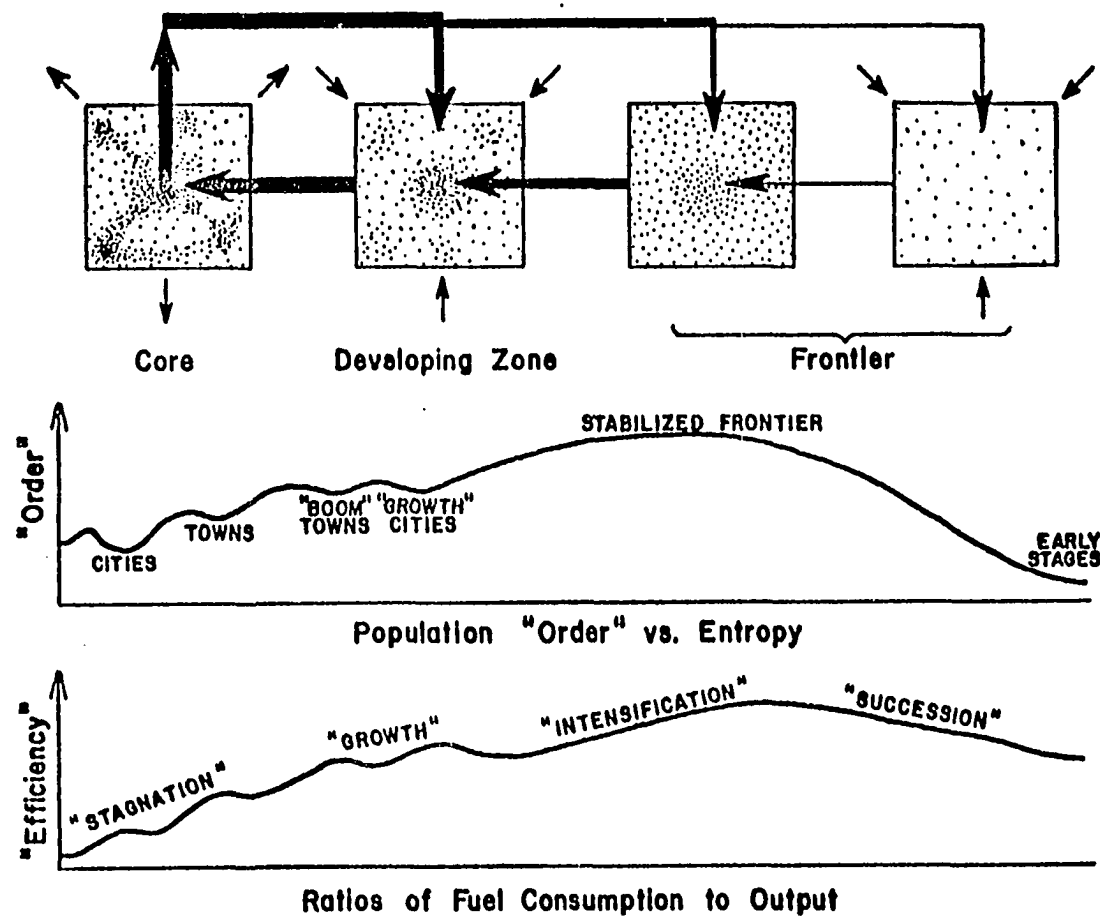


Figure 27. Ideal patterns of population density, mobility, population entropy, and fuel-use efficiency for frontier development, suggesting temporal relations of frontier systems and the geographic characteristics of the core-frontier system.

is high in relation to either labor or capital investment. Indeed, the core consumption of energy reflects the costs of heavier technology and an orientation toward manufacturing functions in the system. In the developing zone one encounters the "growth" industry, manifested in a "state of the art" technology and relatively efficient fuel consumption. Thus, while both energy consumption and output increase as one approaches the core situation, the productive efficiency of the organization is diminished. This lack of efficiency is augmented by the increased concentration and mobility of population in the developing zone and core. The developing zone possesses the accretional population characteristics of the initial frontier stages (see again Figures 24a and 26a), without the tendency to reduction of gross population changes. The core and developing zones are characterized by high rates of turnover, or high population entropy.

Yet there is a high degree of "order" in such systems, inclusive of the frontier and core, which also since the mid 1600's have comprised the "world capitalist system" (Wallerstein 1975: 401). As development of new frontiers ensues, social differentiation in the form of stratification accrues to the system. A great information content rests in the political regulatory structures of the developing system, so that resources are channeled to privileged individuals and away from the unprivileged. This is a characteristic of high-density population, such that the ratio of resources to population remains low (see Wallerstein 1975: 406 on "ethno-nations" and the political requisites of the capitalist world-economy).

These characteristics define the importance of ethnic identity in active local social relationships of particular "communities" in the

system. We have seen in the study of Okarche that ethnicity, corresponding to elements of heritage and manifest in limited "traditional" behaviors and attitudes, was important in the frontier situation but decreased in importance as the Oklahoma frontier reached population stability, followed by regional specialization. Indeed, it is argued here that German identity was adaptive, or conferred resource-access advantage to certain families. We may argue, further, that in any high-risk situation strong social bounding will serve to limit group resource drains while maximizing continuity of participants in sharing networks. In the low-population-density situation of the frontier the most efficient local-resource controls may be those created by "ethnic" identification. Such organizations do not compete well against the more centralized political regulation of differentiation, highly developed systems, such as that of a "core" area. But they may compete if sheltered by poor core-frontier communications technology. Thus, as the communications technology develops the "adaptive" value of primarily ascriptive "ethnic" identifications wains. Ethnic boundaries change to allow access to "free-floating" political-economic resources, if continued "gain" in the post-frontier system is to be obtained (cf. Eisenstadt 1969: 91-2, 361-2; Wallerstein 1975: 406).

What is remarkable is the fact that, in spite of the high rate of regional "production" of a frontier, the position of many frontiersmen in the total system is such that per capita production is low to marginal. This is also a function of communications technology, largely controlled by the core, which detracts from commodity sales and increases costs of core-produced items. Ethnic identity in frontiers, then, mediates

against high risks of frontiersmen who control little capital and are familially isolated in a turbulent demographic system. In the long run, the flexibility of identifying symbols surrounding an "aggregation of people" of common interests determines whether they will (1) succeed in tapping political resources of the developing system, or (2) suffer progressive social and economic isolation which limits sharing in the "growth" system.

We should not be surprised, given the differences in energetic and demographic tendency of frontier and core systems, to find ethnicity as an important feature of highly differentiated systems, especially in the urban arena. It is in the highly stratified core that more and more people are excluded from direct control of resources, and where the risks attendant to survival become critical. Further, it is in the core centers that population turnover is highest--local circulation of people is tremendous, while labor conditions cause high rates of in and out flow. Ethnic identification in these conditions, promoting closure of resource enclaves, keeps the sparce resources of the unpri-
vileged working within proscribed arenas. Ethnicity in these situations is adaptive for the same reasons it is on the frontier--it mediates against high risks of people who control little capital and are familially isolated in a turbulent demographic system. From this point of view ethnicity is an adaptive pose, centered upon the intensity of aggregations of symbols which identify, socially bound, and behaviorally orient, aggregations of people. Under situations of demographic and economic stress the symbols will intensify in order to conserve resources controlled by a group, or change in order to obtain resources controlled by others. Under more stable demographic conditions, or

where local competition for resources is low in spite of turnover of population, the symbols surrounding a group may decrease in intensity, or lose their boundary-maintaining functions.

The quality of "ethnic units" is a function of system size, then, for the complex system pushes ethnic units toward increased closure and differentiation, while the frontier system pushes ethnic units toward decreased closure and differentiation. In essence, the "melting-pot" so widely heralded in American history is only one direction of a two-way process, the other direction of which is a probable eventuality as population strain on the world economy ensues. The production of a great, unified, middle class in a bounded, capitalist development is the beginning, its social differentiation the end. This presumes, of course, that the privileged--the elite "ethnicity" of a Marxian economic core--always resist dispersal of excess resources except in a limited sense to "co-opt oppositional movement" (See Wallerstein 1975: 414-5 on the contradictions of the capitalist world economy).

The adaptive adjustments surrounding ethnicity are primarily symbolic, as opposed to material, in with workings. The results of different "ethnic" organizations on the same landscape, in terms of material "output," are in many cases "equifinal"--not productive of adaptive advantage on the part of one group (see Cole and Wolf 1974; Netting 1977: 93). The adaptive significance of ethnicity concerns the amount of resources maintained and directly controlled vis a vis outsiders and the total resource field. Thus, an inefficient system of production which affords high resource security per capita through time can dominate an efficient system which affords less individual resource security.

There is a direct relationship of symbolic change to the boundary conditions pertaining to a group. The more well bounded the group, the more intense and rigid the ethnicity, and the more protected the group's resource base. To the extent that German heritage and traditional symbols in Okarche centered on resource groups, as has been argued throughout this dissertation, they worked in precisely this way. Symbols attached to the German population (or sub-populations), whether autochthonous or externally applied and adopted, delimited a functional social boundary which regulated resource and labor flows in the otherwise fluid community-level system. However, the progressively firm establishment of German families in the Okarche region, brought by stabilizing trends of frontier and regional demographic change, rendered the boundary between Germans and non-Germans less significant. The symbols of German identity became adaptively neutral. Furthermore, the primary cultural content associated with German heritage (language, generalized agricultural practices, maintenance of totally independent schools) was not adaptive in the long-run development of the larger system. Softening of local German identity enabled entry into larger-scale interactions necessary for farm and community maintenance. This softening came at points of least resistance, the generational turnover periods, and was facilitated by the adoption of a "Pioneer" ideology which was applied to the early generation of settlers. Indeed, the attributes which were once applied by the Anglo-American population to the Germans are the same as many of those today applied to the Okarche pioneers--hard-working, religious, family-oriented, efficient farmers.

In the long run systems of human organization are subject always to the developments of energetic potential. People arrive at

highly transient adjustments under diverse conditions. Sometimes, as in the case of Okarche, the ability of individuals to persist depends upon their ability to create, mentally, a system or order which will counteract the highly disruptive influences of surrounding events. The community-level adjustments which arise from these processes of self-definition may then be further shaped by their techno-environmental contexts. But in the main, those outcomes we care to call cultures and communities are but parts of longer-term cycles. As the cycles proceed human symbols become more rigid, recognized resources more limited, and potentials inverted. As long as there are frontiers, the current world-system may continue to grow in intensity. Without frontiers it must invert (undergo a technological death) or be transformed into another kind of system. The problem, of course, is not a new one; indeed, one account from the West's most cherished traditions provides a cynical commentary on social outcomes of such a transformation:

Thus Joseph acquired all the farm land of Egypt for Pharaoh, since with the famine too much for them to bear, every Egyptian sold his field; so the land passed over to Pharaoh, and the people were reduced to slavery, from one end of Egypt's territory to the other. Only the priests' land Joseph did not take over. Since the priests had a fixed allowance from Pharaoh and lived off the allowance Pharaoh had granted them, they did not have to sell their land. Joseph told the people: "Now that I have acquired you and your land for Pharaoh, here is your seed for sowing the land. But when the harvest is in, you must give a fifth of it to Pharaoh, while you keep four-fifths as seed for your fields, and as food for yourselves and your families." "You have saved our lives," they answered. "We are grateful to my lord that we can be Pharaoh's slaves." (Genesis 47: 20-25; in accordance with the New American Bible text, see Vawter 1977: 448-50 for historical commentary).

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