

DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESS OF EDUCATION
IN OKMULGEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

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DEVELOPMENT AND PROGRESS OF EDUCATION
IN OKMULGEE COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

BY

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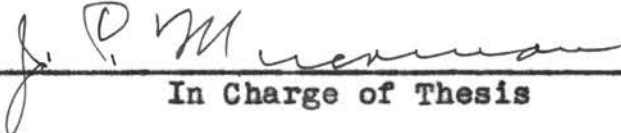
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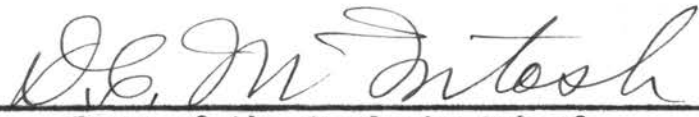
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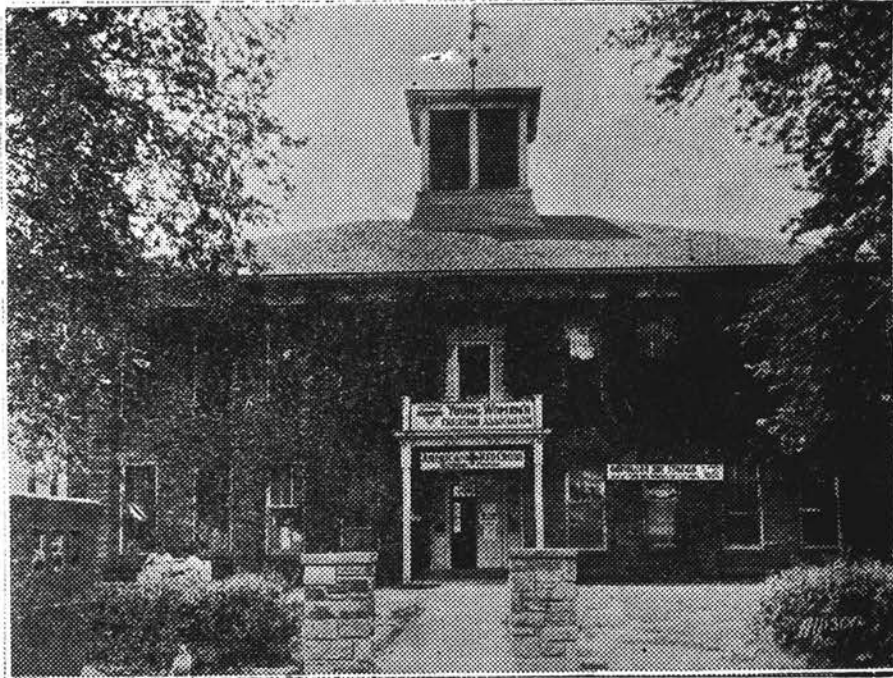
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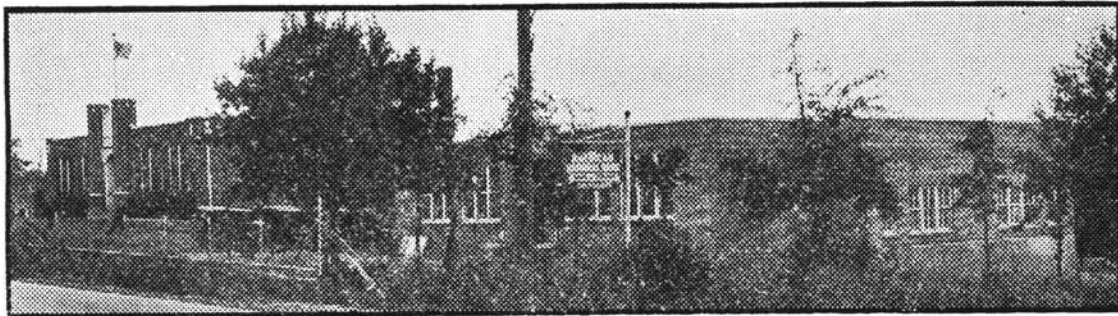

Dean of the School of Education


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Old Indian Council House Okmulgee, Oklahoma. Erected A. D. 1878



Oak Dale School, Consolidated No. 9, Okmulgee County

INTRODUCTION

In making this study the writer has made an effort to collect facts relating to the history of education in Okmulgee County. The study has taken the writer into history and records of the Creek Nation and the Creek Indians in their home east of the Mississippi River.

The writer has endeavored to set forth the interesting events relating to education in Okmulgee County as well as the things that are considered important in any history of education.

Many of the early schools in Okmulgee County, among the Creek Indians, are written up in detail because the system was quaint and interesting as well as different from schools of the later period. In this study attention was given to early missionaries and their work, outstanding characters among the Creeks in the Okmulgee area, and many of the leading educators of the later period. The plan of instruction of these early schools, enrollment, location of school, salaries, qualifications of teachers, and apparent results have been treated with emphasis. Progress of schools in Okmulgee County from 1907 to 1935 is digested only, because of the wide scope of study contained in that section of its history.

This study has been very interesting though somewhat difficult at times because of meager information of an authentic source. Records of early Okmulgee County education

are meager and incomplete. Many of the later records are also incomplete and inaccurate. The writer, as a matter of necessity, resorted to personal interviews with some of the older citizens of Okmulgee County now living. From them has been obtained some of the most authentic and interesting information concerning Okmulgee County Schools. Among these should be mentioned George Riley Hall, of Henryetta, Oklahoma, educator, writer, and publisher; Judge Orlando Swain, historian, student of government, and the present historian in charge of the Creek Indian Council House and Museum; Mrs. John M. Robe, an early teacher and missionary worker in Okmulgee County; Mrs. L. M. Leiber, and Mrs. Sue M. Rogers, Creek Indian descendants and early citizens of the Okmulgee area, and many others.

The purpose of this study was to reproduce the history of education in what is now Okmulgee County, in chronological order so that it may be perpetuated and preserved, also that comparisons made and conclusions reached may become usable in some manner in formulating educational problems for the future.

The writer is grateful to those who have assisted in making this study. To Dr. J. C. Muerman, I am grateful for his counsel and wise direction. To the personnel of the Historical Library, the Library of the A. and M. College, and the State Library Commission, I am deeply grateful for their suggestions and helpful selections of material. To my wife, Mrs. Vallie W. Harris, and son, Lowell, I am

grateful for their practical help in collecting and compiling data for this study. To Dean M. Conger I am grateful for his valuable suggestions and encouragement.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Any history of Okmulgee County would be incomplete without some account of the Creek Indians who have given to that county so much local color, and in no small manner determined its future.

In their old home, east of the Mississippi, the Creek Indians were divided into two divisions, the upper and lower Creeks. This division did not, as might be supposed, refer to social conditions, but merely indicated the geographic location of the two groups. Also, it is used frequently to designate two factions that existed among them; the lower Creeks making up what was termed the McIntosh faction, while the upper Creeks composed the faction led by Opothleyohola.

The upper Creeks were located on the Chattahoochee River, while the lower Creeks were found on the Coosa River.¹ These factions had kept the tribe torn and disorganized so that they had not reached such an advanced stage as many of the other tribes.² In spite of this condition, the Creeks, in their old home, had made some progress in education and religion. In 1811 they had some schools and churches.³

¹ Chronicles of Oklahoma, Volume VIII, p. 128.

² Speech of John Murphy, Governor of Alabama, American State Papers, Volume I, p. 60.

³ Ibid.

In 1822, John C. Calhoun, Secretary of War, reports to President Monroe that there were eleven schools among the Creeks, with three additional ones in preparation. The enrollment for these schools for the year is given as 508, with an expenditure by the federal government for Creek Indian education for the year of \$15,827.56.⁴

In making his final report to Congress, Mr. Calhoun recommended more mechanical training for boys, and domestic art for girls.⁵ In his report for the year 1820, Mr. Calhoun stated that the Cherokees were more eager for education than the Creeks.⁶

In 1796 the President of the United States strongly advised the Creeks to educate their children and offered to provide educational facilities for the sons of all Chiefs. This offer was refused by the tribe, giving as their reason that education made bad men out of their sons. The offer was renewed again in 1801 and again was refused. But, during intervals between 1796 and 1822, the missionaries of the Baptist, Moravian, and Presbyterian Churches had been busy among them, preaching and teaching with the result that the Creeks were becoming more interested in the white man's religion and schooling.⁷

⁴
Ibid. Volume II, pp. 275-76.

⁵
Ibid.

⁶
American State Papers, Volume II, p. 200.

⁷
Ibid. p. 201.

Reverend John Fleming and wife were among the early missionaries of the Creeks, in their old home. They were well educated in schools of the East, and were consecrated to their work. They went about their work in a business-like and systematic manner; first making friends with the Indians and persuading them to assist in the education and training of their children.⁸

The people were handicapped in their work because of a lack of knowledge of the Creek language. It was some two or three years before they were able to converse with the Indians without an interpreter. Soon however, they had prepared an elementary handbook of the Creek language.⁹

These first schools were conducted in dwellings, rudely constructed log churches, and in many cases, in brush arbors.¹⁰

Reverend John Gambol, a highly educated Presbyterian minister, was also early among the Creeks in Georgia. As early as 1805 he had preached to the Creeks under the trees and in improvised buildings. In his report to the Missionary Board in 1817, he states that the Creeks are an intelligent people, and that they are making commendable progress in education and industry.¹¹

⁸

Missionary Herald, p. 25 and 26.

⁹

Ibid.

¹⁰

Ibid.

¹¹

History of Muskogee and Northeastern Oklahoma, pp. 262-67.

In 1824, through the influence of Reverend John Fleming, and the Reverend John Gambol, a school for Creek Indian Boys was established at Candy's Creek, Georgia. It accommodated from twenty-five to one hundred Creek boys. Reading, singing, mathematics, physical culture, and Bible were taught. This school continued in operation until 1837.¹²

By the terms of the Treaty with the Creeks, February 12, 1825, the Indians were to release practically all their holdings in Georgia. In return they were to receive \$5,000,000 and lands west of the Mississippi.¹³ So bitter was the opposition to this treaty that John Q. Adams declined to enforce it, and William McIntosh, the Chief who had signed it without approval of the council, was killed by the Opothleyohola, or the upper Creek group.¹⁴

Various treaties were later made, namely, January 24, 1826; November 15, 1827; and April 4, 1832.¹⁵ In each treaty agreed upon, except that of February 12, 1825, made provisions for a stipulated sum of money to be paid to the Creeks for education.¹⁶ By the terms of the treaty of April, 1832, all claims to land in Georgia were given up,

12

Ibid.

13

Ibid.

14

Chronicles of Oklahoma, Volume VIII, p. 167.

15

History of Muskogee and Northeastern Oklahoma, pp. 262-67.

16

Ibid.

and in addition to the \$5,000,000 stipulated in the treaty of 1825, the Indians were to receive annually \$3,000 for education, adequate blacksmith tools, and equipment, and a supply of rifles and blankets.¹⁷

By this time a school for Creek students at New Echota, Georgia was making good progress with eighty to one hundred Creek youths in regular attendance.¹⁸ The Secretary of War reports that these students show much improvement in manners and dress, and have proven themselves quite able to acquire education.¹⁹

In 1833 it is noted that the United States Government paid \$3,000 to the Choctaw Academy for education of fifteen Creek Indian youths. Again it is reported that these youths have shown great improvement in appearance, manners, and dress.²⁰

In each of these schools the Lancasterian Plan of instruction was used. Much emphasis was placed on reading, writing, spelling, and arithmetic, and the Bible. Pupils were divided into classes, according to their various abilities or accomplishments.²¹

17

Ibid.

18

Ibid.

19

American State Papers, Volume II, p. 265.

20

Chronicles of Oklahoma, Volume IX, p. 22.

21

American State Papers, Volume II, p. 200.

It was largely because of the progress made with their schools and churches that caused the Creek tribe to become reluctant to leave their old home.²²

Finally it was conceived by authorities that the various chiefs could be used to induce their people to leave their old home. Accordingly, \$100,000 was appropriated to be divided equally among these chiefs who could induce 200 or more of their people to move to lands west of the Mississippi.²³

Although many of the tribesmen had been moving west with their families, it was not until this latter plan and the culminating events of the McIntosh murder that the exodus really began.²⁴

The effect of the early stages of Creek Indian education in their old home was not lost in their removal to the new home. It made itself felt in the forming of the government of the new home, and has made itself felt in the schools, churches and other institutions of the Creek Nation.²⁵

²²

Chronicles of Oklahoma, Volume IX, p. 22.

²³

American State Papers, Volume II, p. 201.

²⁴

Ibid.

²⁵

Interview with Judge Orlando Swain.

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CHAPTER I
EARLY SCHOOLS OF OKMULGEE COUNTY,
1838-1868

The history of Okmulgee County education begins with the migration of the Creek Indians from their old home east of the Mississippi to the Creek Nation, as early as 1836.

By the treaty of April 4, 1832, the Creeks had finally given up claim to all lands east of the Mississippi in return for land between the Arkansas and Canadian Rivers and an assurance of federal support for education of their children, and a supply of blankets, tools, ammunition and rifles.¹

The latter provision was stubbornly contended for by the Creeks because of the location of their lands, being hemmed in by other tribes, some of which were hostile and war-like. The precaution seems to have been wise. It is probable that some of their number had made an exploration of their new territory before the removal began.²

The McIntosh faction, or lower Creeks, was the first to reach the western territory in a comparatively large group. They settled near Fort Gibson as early as 1832 and 1833, bringing with them their slaves and missionaries.³

¹ History of Muskogee and Northeast Oklahoma, pp. 262-275.

² Ibid. pp. 262-275.

³ Chronicles of Oklahoma, Volume I, pp. 139-165.

In the settlement of the new country the upper and lower Creeks reversed their geographic positions; the lower Creeks taking the southern or lower part of the territory. Thus it is principally with the lower Creeks or McIntosh division that this chapter is concerned.⁴

What is now Okmulgee County, at the time of the coming of the Creeks was a waving prairie, well watered and consisted of 702 square miles of the very finest soil.⁵

From 1838 to 1866 Okmulgee County was in what was known as the Arkansas district,⁶ which was all of the Muskogee Indian Territory lying north of the Canadian River, and for several years after the Indians arrived here from Alabama, was under the chieftainship of Chilly McIntosh.⁷ All of the Indian territory lying south of the North Canadian was the Canadian district under the chieftainships of several different Chiefs.⁸

These two forms of government continued up to 1866. At this time both factions agreed to meet seven miles west of what is now Okmulgee, at a spot known as the Black-Jack

4

Ibid.

5

History of Okmulgee, by Okmulgee Chamber of Commerce, pp, 21 to 25.

6

Ibid.

7

Ibid.

8

Ibid.

Grove.⁹ At this convention a new constitution was formed and Chief Samiel Checotah was elected Chief.¹⁰

Immediately after this Okmulgee was designated as the Capitol spot, taking its name from some bubbling springs that came out of the small creek just south and east of where the Phillips Motor Company now stands.¹¹

In 1868 they erected a double log capitol building where the present stone building now stands. At this time this Indian territory was divided into six districts, and what is now Okmulgee County was then Okmulgee District.¹² This district embraced practically all of what is now Okmulgee County, from 1838 to 1858. This area was the scene of many petty conflicts among the Creeks. To this fact is charged the lack of an early interest in education as was found among the other tribes.¹³

Just when the first red men arrived in what is now Okmulgee County to make their home is not certainly known. The first immigrants stopped in the eastern part of the Creek area because of the protection of Fort Gibson.¹⁴ But is certain that in 1836 Isparhecher, Chief of Cussetah Town, came with his followers, about 300 souls, and settled seven

⁹
Ibid.

¹⁰
Ibid.

¹¹
Ibid.

¹²
Ibid.

¹³
Ibid.

¹⁴
Oklahoma History, Buchanan and Dale, p. 43.

miles southeast of the present site of the city of Okmulgee. This was the first of many such settlements which soon dotted the prairies of Okmulgee County. The location of the groups was determined, to a large extent, by the convenience to water. This settlement or town was near the junction of Deep Fork River and a small tributary stream.¹⁵

Here was instituted the first school in what is now Okmulgee County. No records were kept, but is certain that Chief Isparhecker, who had been one of the first to adhere to the teachings of the early missionaries in the old home, early set about the duties of compliance with the treaties which required attention to education. These Indians had brought with them the customs, practices, and whatever desire they had for education, from the old home.¹⁶

The school here established was a tribal school and probably of the very crudest sort. Emphasis was given to reading, spelling, singing, writing, and study of the Bible.¹⁷

The teacher was a lady of some white blood who had been educated in the state of Georgia, probably at New Echota or Creekpath. She taught all children of the tribe who cared to attend, and was paid \$1.00 per pupil per month.¹⁸

¹⁵

Chronicles of Oklahoma, Volume X, p. 126.

¹⁶

Interview with Robert Seffridge, Indian Curator.

¹⁷

Ibid.

¹⁸

Ibid.

This school continued in this manner until 1843, without written records. In the meantime the missionaries, Reverend Buckner, who had settled with the tribe near Eufaula, and Reverend and Mrs. Fleming who had stopped near what is now Muskogee, had extended their influence to these adjoining settlements in Okmulgee County through converted and trained Indians or people of mixed blood.¹⁹

By the end of the year 1843, four towns including Cussetah Town, dotted the prairies of what is now Okmulgee County. These towns were names that had survived from the old home in the east. Each had their schools and churches. The church building was one of the main buildings in each town and was constructed of logs and seated with crude log benches. In each case these buildings were used for school.²⁰

Although, as given above, the early missionaries did not take up residence in what is now Okmulgee County, schools and churches were being slowly developed. But there was still much opposition to the white man's education.²¹

In making his report in 1838, the United States Commissioner says:

The Creeks are a corn growing people. Those who have been in the country some years raise corn in large quantities. Some of the principal farmers crib from five to ten thousand bushels per season. They do not raise much stock, nor are they as a

¹⁹ Interview with Mrs. Sue Rogers, at one time secretary to Chief McIntosh.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

people so far advanced in civilization as the Cherokees and Choctaws. They are making some progress in education. They have a number of tribal schools where much attention is given to teaching the subjects of reading, writing, spelling, weaving, and arithmetic.²²

He praised many of the missionaries and stated that others were detrimental to the progress of the people they attempted to serve.

In June, 1843, the first school house was erected at Cussatah. J. B. Baylor began teaching in the new building on July 1, of the same year. He reported thirty-five scholars enrolled in reading, spelling, singing, writing, grammar and arithmetic. With an average daily attendance of 11, the pupils were divided into classes according to achievement and ability. It is interesting to note that Mr. Baylor complained that his average daily attendance was small because the older pupils ran away from school. He reports that five scholars out of the thirty-five could spell words of three syllables, ten could spell words of two syllables, and the others could spell words of one syllable. All could sing and enjoyed it. Four read fluently from the New Testament, and seven could speak English well.

The Cussatah school grew steadily in attendance, equipment and method of instruction. Professor Baylor points out in his report for 1844, that there were forty scholars enrolled and in regular attendance. Also, that he had

²²

Report of United States Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1838, p. 25.

gained the confidence of the parents and of the older children so that there was no more running off from school, by the larger pupils. The ages of those enrolled ranged from twelve to fifteen years.²³ He had received a good supply of song books, some new pine benches, chalk and erasers. He had divided the school into classes according to their several abilities and accomplishments. The scholars, except very few, could sing hymns in English. Several could speak English fluently. He selected two older pupils to act as monitors, and stated that with their assistance the scholars were learning to apply themselves diligently.²⁴

Records and reports of this school are not obtainable again until 1855. But the school continued in about the same manner until absorbed by the system of neighborhood schools set up in 1868.²⁵

In 1844 a school is reported at Concharty Town, located in the extreme northeastern part of Okmulgee County, on part of what is known as the Miller Ranch. Ellen Brown was teacher of this school. She enrolled twenty-five Creek scholars. The school was held in the log church. It was in session six months, closing in March, 1845, because of

²³

Report of United States Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1844, p. 27.

²⁴

Ibid.

²⁵

Mrs. Sue Rogers, aged Creek Indian.

sickness. The teacher reports that she herself was ill, brought about by the poor condition of the building.²⁶

These pupils were instructed in Bible, spelling, and reading. McGuffey's Readers were used in first, second, third, and fourth grades. This arrangement indicates the grading or classification of the scholars.²⁷ This school made regular reports, beginning in 1855. It continued in operation also until absorbed by the system of neighborhood schools. No other schools are reported in Okmulgee County until 1854.

This does not mean that there were many other schools, or that education was at a standstill. Some white people, and persons of mixed blood had begun to settle among the Indians. Many of these persons were educated and conducted schools in their homes for their own children. If neighbor children cared to attend, they were given this instruction at a cost of one and one half to two dollars per pupil per month, payable in cash, corn, molasses or live stock.²⁸

Nor did education of this period cease with these schools. Each year fifteen youths were selected from this area to be sent to schools of higher learning in Indiana, Kansas, and other states. Many of the Indians who later became educa-

²⁶ Report of United States Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1846, p. 141.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Mrs. John M. Leiber, Creek Indian, early citizen of Okmulgee District.

tional leaders were educated in this manner, among whom was Monty Tiger, first Superintendent of Creek Indian Orphans Home, and leader in civic affairs of this district, and later Principal Chief. Mrs. John M. Leiber was also sent "outside" for her education.²⁹

In 1848 the Creeks made an appropriation for manual labor schools. Although Okmulgee District did not have one of these located within its boundaries, many of its youths were benefitted by being chosen to attend these schools located on the borders of the Okmulgee Area.³⁰

In 1854 a tribal school is reported at Hichiter (later spelled Hitchita) Town, located on the border of southeastern Okmulgee County. This school was taught by Mr. and Mrs. E. B. Duncan, and was conducted in the log church. They enrolled fifteen scholars. The school was organized into five classes. The subjects taught were reading, spelling, arithmetic, and Testament. In this school is noted the first case of insubordination of pupils. These teachers reported that they had great difficulty in inducing the larger pupils to apply themselves to their studies, and later reported that they had only the smaller children in school because the larger ones refused to submit themselves to the rules of the school.³¹

29

Ibid.

30

Ibid.

31

United States Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1854, p. 397.

Late in the school year these teachers resigned because of the bad condition of the building, and poor health.³²

In 1843 the Creeks of the Okmulgee district participated in the payment by the federal government of the first installment paid, under terms of the treaty, for education.³³ Participation in this fund marked the beginning of an area of educational development.³⁴

In 1855 Cuseta School is again reported and continues thereafter until absorbed by the public school system. This report gives Thomas C. Carr as teacher, twenty-five pupils enrolled, ages ten to fourteen years. They were studying reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, spelling, singing, and physical culture. Professor Carr remarked that: "The pupils are studious and showed much advancement in manners, general appearance, and dress."³⁵

The Creek Nation had primarily been divided into two districts: Canadian and Arkansas. The Okmulgee area was a part of the Arkansas District. In 1857 there had been appointed a superintendent of schools for each one of these districts. In 1857, G. Herrod, the superintendent of schools for the Arkansas district, reports 172 pupils en-

32

Ibid.

33

United States Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1851, p. 385.

34

Official Documents, Neighborhood Schools, Numbers 3730 to 37904, Library History Society.

35

United States Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 1855, p. 142.

rolled in nine schools of his district. Four of these schools were located in what is now Okmulgee County. They were : Cuseta, Concharty, Arbeeka, and Salt Creek, with an average daily attendance for Okmulgee County of 74.³⁶

Teachers in these schools were paid \$100.00 for each quarter taught, i.e. sixty days. The branches taught were as reported, reading, writing, arithmetic, spelling, singing, English, and Bible.

In 1844 to 1857 there was no regularly organized system of schools in Okmulgee County, but, by 1857, J. W. Dunn, United States Agent for Creeks writes: "The Creeks are paying commendable attention to education. They have a good school system, and ample funds."³⁷

During the period from 1857 to 1861 two more schools were opened in Okmulgee County, namely, Bald Hill and Durant. Irwin Brodie was teacher at Durant, and A. W. Barnett at Bald Hill. They each received \$100.00 per quarter for their services. Professor Brodie enrolled twenty-eight pupils, all Indian, eleven of whom could speak English. Professor Barnett enrolled twenty-one pupils, seven of whom could speak English. Books used were: McGuffey's Readers, first and second; third, Independent Series; arithmetic, Ray's Third Book, and Daniel's First Book.³⁸

³⁶

United States Commissioner's Report, 1857, p. 147.

³⁷

Ibid. 1867, p. 413.

³⁸

Official Documents, State Historical Library, Neighborhood Schools, Numbers 37304-904.

In 1858 the Creek Nation was divided into four districts, and provisions were made for a superintendent of schools for each district, and a board of trustees for each neighborhood school. At the same time an appropriation was made to buy books for the neighborhood schools. A bill for \$340.00 for school books for the six schools then in Okmulgee County, was allowed and paid by the Creek Council in 1858.³⁹

Mr. G. Herrod was appointed superintendent of schools for this district, and had set up a system of neighborhood schools for Okmulgee County when the advent of the Civil War threw the nation into chaos, and further plans for education in Okmulgee County came to a standstill. During the war no report was made of the neighborhood schools. Since most of the women and children were taken North into Kansas, we conclude that most all school activity was abandoned for the period from 1860 to 1867.

³⁹

Ibid.

CHAPTER II

OKMULGEE COUNTY EDUCATION, 1860 - 1907

The Creek Nation had adopted a constitution in 1858 in which provisions were made for a division of the nation into four districts. What is now Okmulgee County was included in Okmulgee District. Each district was to have a superintendent of schools whose duty it was to designate a place for the location of such schools as he deemed necessary and proper; he was to select a board of trustees for each school, or leave this selection to a vote of the community, as he chose, prescribe the course of study, designate the teachers' salary, visit the schools at least four times each year, prescribe the form for reports, and conduct annual examinations of the pupils in scholastic attainments. He was required to see that good, comfortable houses were provided for schools, these to be erected by the neighborhood. The superintendent was to receive, pay out, and receipt for all money placed at his disposal. No teacher was to be paid more than three hundred and fifty dollars per annum, and by the terms of these laws no teacher who held to abolition principles was to be employed. The Superintendent was to receive \$300.00 annually from the school funds.¹

Although this system was set up in 1858, there is no report which indicates that the neighborhood schools were

¹
Creek Indian Laws, 1858, p. 7.

in operation during the interval from 1860 to 1868.

At the close of the Civil War chaotic conditions existed among the Creeks in the Okmulgee District. School houses and churches had been destroyed. These were rapidly rebuilt, but the division of opinion among the citizenship of the Okmulgee District was an obstacle to the progress of education as well as to other branches of government.²

In 1867 a new constitution was adopted. It provided for a division of the Creek Nation into six districts for judicial and school purposes.³ These districts were: Okmulgee, Arkansas, Coweta, Eufaula, Wewoka, and Deep Fork. The Okmulgee District was composed of what is now Okmulgee County.⁴

G. Herrod was appointed superintendent of schools for the Okmulgee district in 1858, in which position he was continued for seven years with the same duties as given in Creek Laws of 1858.⁵

In numbers 37304 to 37904, in the year 1868, reports are resumed for the neighborhood schools. Arbeka is the first to report. It was divided into two districts, Number 1 and Number 2, or Arbeka School and Hickory Town School. These schools were in the extreme southern part of the

²

Chronicles of Oklahoma, Volume IX, pp. 174-76.

³

Becket's History of Okmulgee.

⁴

Map by Samuel Chevate, Okmulgee Council House.

⁵

Official Documents, State Historical Society, Numbers 37304 to 37904, 1868.

county near the North Canadian River. Miss Susan Drew taught Arbeka Number 1, during the school year 1867-1868. She reports thirty scholars in attendance, with an average daily attendance of 23. She had divided the school into six classes. The ages of her scholars ranges from eight to seventeen years. Eleven of her students spoke English fluently, twelve with some degree of efficiency, and seven not at all.⁶ Her salary was \$100.00 per quarter. No qualifications were given.

The next years' reports, 1868-1869, for this school were made quarterly, and shows that Miss Kate Drew was teacher of Arbeka Number 2, or Old Hickory Town School. The report for the latter showed 33 scholars enrolled with an average daily attendance of twenty. The school was divided into six classes. All studied reading, writing, arithmetic, spelling, singing, and Bible, and in addition the scholars of the two higher classes studied English grammar, history, and geography. Nine pupils of this school could speak English fluently, and the others spoke some English in a broken manner. Arbeka Number 1 reports the same as for the preceding year, except an increase in enrollment from thirty to thirty-five scholars. Each teacher received \$100.00 per quarter for services as teacher of this school. Each report was signed by the three trustees of the districts. Two reports of the year 1868-69 note visits to the schools made by

⁶
Ibid.

Alex McIntosh, Superintendent.⁷ This school continued until it was absorbed by the system of schools adopted after statehood. It was replaced by the Salem School now taught by two teachers and located on a site not far removed from where Old Hickory Town School was located.⁸ Some former students and one former teacher of Arbeka School reside in or near the original district. Some of the teachers and their term of service in this school is given, they are: Archie Doyle, 1869-73; Mary L. Herrod, 1873-76, Ellen J. Perryman, 1876-80; S. J. Logan, 1880-84; Mrs. Lou M. Scott, 1884-90; J. W. Mills, 1890-94; George Riley Hall, 1894-95; Anna H. Grayson, 1896-98, Addie Carr, 1898-1902; and V. E. Hill, 1902-06.⁹

The reports for these schools do not indicate when the schools were consolidated, but it is indicated by the date of the last report that they were combined into one school in 1882. The teachers through the years from 1868 to 1883 received \$100.00 per quarter for services as teacher. The enrollment and average daily attendance continued much the same. The number of pupils speaking English increased rapidly so that the later reports show almost no non-English speaking scholars.¹⁰ During the school year 1872-73 a bill

7

Ibid.

8

Interview with George Riley Hall.

9

Ibid.

10

Official Documents, State Historical Society, Numbers 37304-37904.

for \$457.60 was paid by the Creek Nation Council to the American Book Company for books and supplies. During this period Bibles were furnished to all neighborhood schools by churches or Mission Boards.¹¹ The text books used were: readers, McGuffey's or the Independent Series, McGuffey's Spellers, Ray's Arithmetic, Reed and Kellogs Grammar. All schools were furnished with copy books, chalk and erasers, and blackboards as early as 1871.¹² In 1870 a report was made from Cane Creek School. This was a new school located on Cane Creek in the extreme northeastern part of Okmulgee County. Students from both Okmulgee and Muskogee Counties attended this school. Con Tom was the teacher of this school on this date. He reports twenty-four scholars enrolled with an average daily attendance of eleven. The usual subjects of reading, writing, arithmetic, spelling and grammar were taught. The pupils were not regular in attendance, and were given to much quarreling among themselves. The teachers' salary was \$100.00 per quarter.¹³

Cusetah is reported back in session again in 1869 with John S. Porter, teacher. His salary was \$100.00 for the quarter. There were enrolled in his school thirty-five

11

Ibid.

12

Interview with George Riley Hall, Henryetta, Oklahoma.

13

Official Documents, Neighborhood Schools, Numbers 37304 to 904, State Historical Society.

scholars. All spoke English except two. Three white children attended this school.¹⁴

In 1869 there were in all five neighborhood schools in session in the Okmulgee District, with a total of one hundred fifty-five scholars enrolled. During the period from 1869 to 1878 ten more schools had been added, bringing the total to fifteen with an average daily attendance of two hundred and forty-three scholars. During the period from 1878 to 1893 nine more neighborhood schools had been added bringing the total to twenty-four, with an average daily attendance of 486 pupils.¹⁵ These schools were as follows: Cuseta, near Okmulgee; Concharty, in northeast Okmulgee County; Twin Mounds, in northeast Okmulgee County; Salt Creek, near the present city of Beggs; New Yorker (or Nuyaka), due west of Okmulgee; Durant, southwest of Okmulgee; Cane Creek, extreme east part of county; Hichita, southeast of Kuseta; Arbeka, southern part of county; Fairview southwestern part of county; Bald Hill, near site of Okmulgee, Coal Creek, southern part of county; Wolf Creek, western part of county; Deep Fork, near Okmulgee; Bruner Creek, extreme northern part of the county; Shieldsville, near edge of present site of the city of Okmulgee; Okmulgee on the present site of the Beauclair Hotel in Okmulgee; Honey Creek, southwest of Okmulgee; Twin Hills, northeast of Okmulgee; Natura, northeast of Okmulgee;

14

Ibid.

15

Ibid.

and Murray School near Cuseta. The latter two were for whites, although some Indians attended them also.¹⁶

The teachers of these schools were selected by the Superintendent of the Districts. Many of them were well qualified for the work they were doing. Some were native Indians and some were white. The boarding schools at Tallahassee and Asbury Mission School furnished a great number of these teachers. Many were educated at other schools as has been pointed out.¹⁷

The Creek National Council met each year in September when an appropriation was made to defray the cost of education for the current year.¹⁸ On three successive years, 1869, 70, and 71, reports show that \$15,000 was appropriated to pay salaries of teachers and provide for books and other supplies. The money was placed at the disposal of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, who in turn required teachers to make a quarterly report, signed by the trustees, to him, of the actual condition of the school, whereupon he issued an order on the Creek National Treasury for the amount due.¹⁹

16

Ibid. and Maps of Okmulgee County by Samuel Checote, Council House, Okmulgee.

17

Interview with Mrs. John M. Leiber, natural citizen of the district.

18

Creek Laws, 1867, p. 8.

19

Official Documents, Neighborhood Schools, State Historical Society, Numbers 37304 to 37904.

In each case the buildings were provided by the neighborhood, wood or other fuel, and water was provided by the community until 1893 when new school laws became effective.²⁰

It would not be proper to pass this point in the development of Okmulgee County Schools without mention of some of the educational leaders of this era. The Superintendents had no small part in the building of this early school system, and should be mentioned in passing.

By the act of the Creek Indian Council of 1858 the first system of schools was devised for the Creek Nation. Under this act G. Herrod, who previously was Superintendent of the Arkansas District, became Superintendent of the Okmulgee District, but during the Civil War his efforts were futile, and no further mention is made of the neighborhood schools during the period of the war. Under the school act by the Creek Council of 1867, William McCombs became Superintendent of the Okmulgee District and served in this capacity until 1875, when he was succeeded by David Yargee. Yargee in turn, served as District Superintendent until 1877. Alex McIntosh was then appointed and served until 1887. He was succeeded by James Colbert who served in his place until 1893. Not much is recorded as to the character, ability or education of these men. The formal records reveal only that they performed their duties as required by

20

Ibid.

law, and that during this period the school of the Creek Nation grew in number and improved much in quality.²¹

In 1882-83 Miss Alice Robertson taught a Creek Indian school on the lot in Okmulgee where the Beauclair Hotel now stands. She was the daughter of a Reverend W. S. Robertson, and Ann Eliza Worcester, who were teachers and mission workers in the Creek Boarding School at Tallahassee. She had been in the schools of the East and had taught in the East for several years. She had inherited from her father and mother and a missionary grandfather, a zeal for work among the Indian people. She afterwards became Supervisor of Schools for the Creek Nation. Her influence was a positive factor in the advancement of education among the Creek people.²²

By the act of Congress in 1893 which made provisions for the Dawes Commission, the Federal Government assumed more control over the schools of Indian Territory in that this act also provided for appointment by the Federal Government of a Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Indian Territory. However, tribal schools existed until 1899.²³

Simultaneously with this act by the Federal Government the Creek National Council passed as Act, October 13, 1893,

²¹

Ibid.

²²

Chronicles, Volume X, pp. 14 to 17.

²³

History of Oklahoma by James B. Thoburn, pp. 21 to 31.

which provided for three grades of Creek Nation Schools, viz: first, second, and third.²⁴ This classification referred to the grading of teachers and placed that authority in the hands of the Superintendent of Public Instruction of the territory, and the Board of Education created by the same act of congress which created his office.

The act by the Creek Nation also provided that teachers be paid according to the grade of certificate possessed. Under this act a holder of a third grade certificate would receive twenty-five dollars per month; a holder of a second grade certificate, twenty-five dollars, and a holder of a first grade thirty-five dollars per month. No neighborhood with fewer than 10 children of school age were entitled to a school; under the provisions of the act the schools of Okmulgee District rapidly increased in number and quality.²⁵

During the period from 1869 to 1893 many white settlers had come into Okmulgee County because of the fine farming and grazing land. The Indians, reluctant at first to have their territory invaded by white men, soon came to welcome them because of the opportunity to lease their land to these tenants.²⁶

24

Neighborhood Schools, Historical Society Library, Document Numbers 373-4-9-4.

25

E. B. Shotwell, early citizen and first County Superintendent of Okmulgee County.

26

Interview with Johnson Tiger, Creek Educator and Missionary.

With the coming of the M. K. & T. Railroad in 1871, there also came a horde of white people. Many outlaws and convicts also invaded this territory. All this brought an increased demand for public schools. Although many whites had patronized the Indian Neighborhood Schools, this plan was not entirely satisfactory.²⁷ These white settlers had settled in locations most favorable for farming or grazing, thus was formed many settlements or neighborhoods where efforts were begun to establish schools for whites.²⁸ Okmulgee City in 1867 was only a trading post. The center of population had grouped itself about Shieldsville, a village located just northwest of the present city of Okmulgee. When the Creek Nation Capitol was moved to Okmulgee, business houses and families were quickly moved to the capitol. Thus Okmulgee quickly became the leading population center for the county, and began the building of schools and churches.²⁹

But Okmulgee Town has not lagged in school interest. In 1868 a log building was erected for school purposes near where the Beauclair Hotel now stands. Josie Horne was the first teacher of this school. She enrolled twenty-three pupils, all Indians but one. She was followed in turn by Albert V. Ray, 1871-72; R. H. Sayers, 1872-73; Thomas

27

Ibid.

28

Ibid.

29

History of Okmulgee by Chamber of Commerce and Times Publishing Company, pp. 29 to 37.

Harrison, 1873-75; Miss Lou Archer, 1875-76; Miss Helen Severs, 1876-78. Some of Miss Helen's pupils were Bess Severs and Miss Anderson, now Mrs. Farmer. During this year a new frame building was erected to replace the old log building. Other teachers who taught in this school were: Miss Helen Trent, 1878 to 1880; Mrs. E. E. Cutler, 1881 to 1882; Mrs. Alice Robertson, 1882 to 1884; James H. Land, 1884 to 1887; Mr. James R. Rorex, 1887 to 1891, Mittie Britt, 1896 to 1898; Miss Helen Grey Simpson, 1900 to 1909; Miss Cora Lee Wright, 1901 to 1902; Miss Ethel Hubbard, 1902 to 1904.³⁰

It is hard to say when this school became a school for whites. It was a gradual process. From 1901 to 1904, Cell P. Fowler, who now resides at Beggs, Oklahoma, was principal of this school. He was assisted by the teachers. They enrolled a number of Indians, but the school was then classed as a school for whites.³¹

In 1904 oil was discovered near the edge of the village of Okmulgee. This increased the population of the City. The school had been growing steadily in 1903; the enrollment had reached 140. Three teachers had been added making a total of four for the school. Some high school work was begun in 1901, and in May, 1903, Okmulgee graduated its

30

Neighborhood Schools, Historical Society Document, Numbers 37304-904.

31

Interview with Cell P. Fowler, Beggs, Oklahoma.

first high school class consisting of one young lady and one young man, namely: Miss Minnie Evans, and Dick Jeness.³²

Previously the old log building had been replaced by a frame structure which was in turn replaced by a five-room stone building in 1901. In 1904 a splendid new building known as Lee High School was erected. The stone building mentioned above which first housed the high school, was located on a site near where the present site now stands and was donated by Mr. Colt, father of the late Dr. William M. Colt.³³

The new high school building erected in 1904 consisted of eight rooms and an office, and was provided with running water and a furnace. It was classed as the finest building in the state by the Okmulgee Chieftain.³⁴ The principal of this school was Charles T. Baker. There were seven other teachers, they were: Mrs. Barr, Mrs. Maynard, Mrs. Sheehan, Mrs. Buchanan, Miss Cannon, Miss La Rue, Miss Evans, Miss Riddle, and Miss Bronson.³⁵ This school graduated twelve students in 1905, nineteen in 1906, and continued a steady growth until 1929.³⁶

32

Interview with Dr. S. B. Leslie, School Board Member, Okmulgee District.

33

Ibid.

34

Okmulgee Chieftain, published October 1, 1904.

35

Ibid.

36

Ibid.

From about the year 1890 many white communities had begun to erect buildings and employ teachers on a tuition basis.³⁷ Such a school was located at Salt Creek community in the early nineties. Others were located at Schuller, Durant, Bald Hill, and near Beggs.³⁸

In 1896 Peter Ewing became Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Creek Indian Nation, and Mrs. Alice Robertson, Supervisor of Schools for the same area. Each encouraged the building of schools for whites as well as Indians. So far they had not been able to offer financial assistance to these white subscription schools, but had assisted in securing competent teachers for them. In 1900 many of these communities began seeking financial assistance to operate their schools.³⁹ Some examples of these efforts are given: in 1904 R. S. Brown, W. J. Roberts, and H. V. Smith are named as a committee to seek financial aid for their school. They had erected a building out of crude lumber; the labor being performed by citizens of the community, and the cash needed subscribed by the patrons or donated by business men of Okmulgee.⁴⁰

The committee was informed that \$1,000,000 had been appropriated for territorial public schools, and that their teachers salary could be paid out of this fund. Accordingly,

³⁷
Ibid.

³⁸
Ibid.

³⁹
Ibid.

⁴⁰
Ibid.

a Miss Green was employed to teach and begun school in the new building on September 7, 1904.⁴¹

Another example was the Cusetah Community. They erected their school building by community labor and cash donations, and seated it with funds raised by giving a dance and ice cream supper. Miss Dillion taught the school in the Cusetah Community, in the year 1903-1904. The name of this school was the Murray School. Miss Amanda Lope opened school in the Murray School building on September 23, 1904.⁴²

Alex Posey had become Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Creek Nation in 1897. He was succeeded by Mr. Alex McIntosh in 1898. In 1900 Mr. John D. Benedict succeeded Mr. McIntosh and continued in that capacity until statehood. Each of these gentlemen had labored earnestly to develop a school system that would meet the ever growing needs.⁴³

A census of school children between the ages of six and eighteen years made by the Postmaster in the Okmulgee District in 1900 showed a total of 1300 whites. When the \$10,000 appropriation became available schools sprang up all over the Okmulgee District. One opening day one teacher reported that she had opened school in a small dwelling converted into a classroom. 115 students presented them-

41

Ibid.

42

Ibid.

43

Ibid.

selves for instruction. Among them were several negroes who also expected to be admitted. Superintendent Benedict ruled that Negroes could not share in the new appropriation.⁴⁴

Thus Okmulgee County swung into statehood with a large population of whites, Negroes and Indians. The day of the neighborhood school had come and gone. The foundation of an educational system had been laid and the citizenship was demanding the best in public education.

⁴⁴

Ibid.



GEORGE RILEY HALL
Of Henryetta, Okla. Pioneer Okmul-
gee County School Teacher,
Writer and Publisher

CHAPTER III
MISSION AND BOARDING SCHOOLS

During the school year of 1882-1883, Miss Alice Robertson, while teaching a Creek Indian school in Okmulgee, realized that better educational advantages were needed for Western Creek Indians of the Okmulgee District; accordingly, she went East to try to secure money from friends for the establishment of a boarding school for this part of the Creek Nation. She met with a ready response from her influential friends. Through the influence of these friends she was enabled to lay her case before the Women's Executive Committee of Home Missions of the Presbyterian Church.¹

This committee assured Miss Robertson that if she could secure the consent of the Creek Nation Council to appropriate money each year for a period of twenty years for maintenance of a school, secure a suitable site for the buildings, supervise the construction of the buildings and otherwise give full cooperation, the Committee would pay the cost of erection of the buildings and supervise the school for the twenty year period.²

Miss Robertson returned to Okmulgee and presented the proposition to the Creek Council, which body, after some wrangling among its factions, agreed to accept the terms. Accordingly, a contract was entered into on October 18, 1882,

¹Chronicles of Oklahoma, Volume X pp. 14 to 17.

²Ibid.

wherein the Council was to locate and secure the site for the school, supervise the arrangement and construction of the buildings, appropriate \$5,600 per year each year for operation of the school for a period of twenty years. The council then appointed, as a committee to secure the site and to supervise the construction of the buildings, T. W. Perryman, Thomas J. Adams, and N. B. Moore.³

The committee began the work with much enthusiasm and efficiency. They made regularly and accurate and complete reports of their work to the Council.⁴

The first site chosen was on Salt Creek, near the present location of the Wilson Consolidated School. Since the lands were held in common and all were eager to have the school, no difficulty was encountered in securing land for site of buildings for industrial training and maintenance of the school.⁵

Plans for the buildings had begun to take shape when it was discovered that the water from a well drilled on the site was too salty for use. Further investigation showed that no other kind of water was obtainable. This location was accordingly abandoned.⁶

3

Official Papers, Nuyaka Mission, State Historical Society, Numbers 36638-684.

4

Ibid.

5

Ibid.

6

Ibid.

The next selection for a site for the school was in New Yorker Town--later called Nuyoka. This site was abandoned because of an objection raised by the citizens of this town, both Indians and Whites. They objected because of crowded conditions in the town.⁷

The committee then selected land for the site three miles due west of Nuyaka, on the place of Jimmie Larney near the Carr Ranch and fifteen miles almost due west of Okmulgee. Forty acres of land was included in the original contract. This was added to from time to time until the farm belonging to this school contained one hundred sixty acres.⁸

Almost an entire year was consumed with plans and bids for contract for construction of the buildings. Some time during the year 1883 the buildings were begun.⁹

The Women's Executive Committee of the Board of Missions for the Presbyterian Church helped to plan the arrangements of the building. This committee insisted that the buildings should be arranged so that the school should be like one big Christian family. And they insisted that there should be no mixing of the sexes. Accordingly, the buildings were arranged somewhat like the arrangement of an old tribal village, with the buildings forming the sides and

7

Ibid.

8

Ibid.

9

Ibid.

ends of a rectangle, boys' and men's dormitories on one side of the rectangle and the women and girls housed at a distance from these.¹⁰

The original buildings consisted of a two-story almost square structure with two large class rooms, office, and cloak rooms on the lower floor. The chapel, or assembly room, was on the upper floor. This building faced the north. The next building was a large one located somewhat to the west, and a little farther north of the school building it housed the boys of the school and contained an apartment for superintendent and his family. Two other buildings were erected for use of the female students and teachers. These were located north of the men's dormitory. Each of these last three buildings were complete with both kitchen and dining room.¹¹

The complete cost of these buildings was twelve thousand five hundred dollars, ten thousand of which was paid by the Women's Executive Committee of the Presbyterian Board, and two thousand five hundred was paid by the Creek Council as was originally contracted. The buildings were completed during the summer of 1885. The school opened on September 1, 1885.¹²

It is interesting to note that when the final report of the Building Committee was received, the Committee was

¹⁰

Ibid.

¹¹

Ibid.

¹²

Ibid.

strongly commended for its work by the Creek Council in a
session October 15, 1885. Each member of the Committee was
paid the sum of two hundred dollars to recompense him for
his time and necessary expenses incurred while performing
his duties.¹³

The cost of operation of the school was based on the
number of students that would attend. The cost was esti-
mated at seventy and the number of students at eighty,
making the total of five thousand six hundred dollars per
year. This amount was paid each year by the Creek Council
until the time of the dissolution of the contract with the
Presbyterian Board in 1897. However, the enrollment of the
school was always more than eighty in number.¹⁴

Mrs. Ann Agusta Robertson Moore, sister of Miss Alice
Robertson, became the first Superintendent of the Nuyaka
Mission Boarding School at its opening in September, 1885.
Mrs. Moore, like her sister, Miss Alice, had been educated
in the East and also appeared to have inherited some of the
qualities of her ancestors, which led her to become a great
teacher and mission worker among the Creek Indians.¹⁵

An amusing incident of the early days of the Nuyaka
Mission School is related here. Water was scarce at the
school and the supply was of poor quality. Mrs. Moore

13

Ibid.

14

Ibid.

15

Interview with Mrs John M. Robe, former teacher in the
Nuyaka Mission School.

engaged a man to drill on the school premises for water at a fixed price per foot, the contract being that if no water was found, no money would be paid. The man drilled to a depth of more than one hundred feet without striking water, when he encountered solid rock and could scarcely make any further progress. But no water was found. As a consequence, he tried to effect a compromise and receive part pay. Mrs. Moore would not agree. So he drilled some more and contrived to haul water at a time when he would not be discovered, and put in the well. Mrs. Moore was convinced that the well was producing water and paid him for the completed well. The story goes that the well has never been dry since and produces what is called the finest water in the vicinity. The man's subterfuge was not known until some years later.¹⁶

Mrs. Moore had seven teachers and workers assisting her with the school.

The course of study consisted of the fundamentals of the grammar school course: reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, history, grammar, geography, natural philosophy, industrial and manual arts, Bible, and catechism.

Fifty per cent of the students did not speak English. All teaching was in English.¹⁷

¹⁶

Ibid.

¹⁷

Official Papers, Nuyaka Mission, State Historical Society, Numbers 36638-684.

Mrs. Moore continued as Superintendent of the Nuyaka Mission School until August 1, 1888, when she resigned. A Mr. Well was appointed to take her place. Reverend Robert Hill, Superintendent of Missions for the Presbyterian Board, writes to Mrs. Moore, August 6, 1888, at Muskogee, "Mr. Wells, a very efficient man, has been appointed to fill your place and is already on the ground. We regret to lose your most valuable and efficient service from this school."¹⁸

On June 16, 1892, Mrs. Moore again makes the report for the Nuyaka Indian Mission for the school year 1891-92. No account of the service of Mr. Wells is given, neither is any account available of the services of Mrs. Moore during her second term of service to this school. In September, 1892, Mr. W. B. Robe became Superintendent of the Nuyaka Mission School. He was a native of Illinois, but had been teaching and working among Indians of the Choctaw Nation since the opening of the larger schools of that nation. He was well educated and adapted to work in a school such as this one. Mrs. Robe, wife of Superintendent Robe was general matron of the school during Mr. W. B. Robe's term of service. There were six other teachers teaching in the school during the period from 1892 to 1907 when the school was taken over exclusively by the Creek Nation.¹⁹

¹⁸
Ibid.

¹⁹
Ibid.

The course of study underwent some changes under the administration of Mr. W. B. Robe. The course of study as shown during his term of service consisted of algebra, natural philosophy, Bible, English grammar, physiology, arithmetic, United States history, penmanship, spelling, and industrial and manual arts.²⁰

Regular classes were in session continuously for six hours during each day of the week except Saturday and Sunday. From seven-thirty o'clock to nine-thirty o'clock each evening all pupils were required to apply themselves to study, usually under supervision of their teachers. After four o'clock each evening until six, many of the students worked at the various tasks incident to the operation of the farm, the kitchens, and other household tasks.²¹

The pupils developed rapidly in speech, manners, attitude, and dress. The demeanor and bearing of some of these students were equal to that of students of some of the best colleges.²²

The policy of the school was to keep the pupils away from tribal influence and customs so far as possible. Each pupil furnished blankets, bed linens, and towels for his own use. Those who wished paid seventy dollars per year tuition. No pupil who desired to enter this school was

20

Ibid.

21

Ibid.

22

Ibid.

turned away because of insufficient means. If he did not have money to pay his tuition, he was allowed to work for it.²³

The land owned by the school was fertile. Much of the food consumed by the school was produced on the school farm. Cows were kept to furnish milk, and hogs were raised to furnish meat for the common table. The grocery bills for the school usually included only such items as citrus fruits, condiments, sugar, and coffee. Some articles produced on the school farm were sold to promote cash for other necessities. One sale amounting to nine dollars received for the sale of a fat hog is noted.²⁴

Each year the Creek Nation paid to the superintendent of the school \$5,600 in quarterly payments, for maintenance of school as per contract. The superintendent's salary was twelve hundred dollars per year. He gave full quarterly reports to the Presbyterian Mission Board and to the Creek Nation for all monies received and paid out, the condition of the school, and health of the teachers and pupils. The Mission Board maintained the buildings and equipment.²⁵

The enrollment of this school continued to be near one hundred constantly from its opening until about 1907, and this plan of operation was continued throughout the entire

23

Ibid.

24

Ibid.

25

Ibid.

history of the school. However, the enrollment decreased noticeably after the advent of county high schools.²⁶

In 1897 the Presbyterian Board of Missions made a request of the Creek Council to dissolve their contract with the school. Superintendent Robe presented the request, stating as a reason that the maintenance of this school was more than the Board could further afford. The Creek Council heard the request, but it was not acted upon until a second request was made in October, 1899, that the Council acted upon the request and agreed to take control of the school and to pay the Presbyterian Board ten thousand dollars for their interest in the buildings and equipment.²⁷

Mr. W. B. Robe continued as superintendent of the school after this transaction. In fact, no material changes were made in the general plan of operation of the school, except that buildings and other property were maintained by the Creek Nation. In 1902 the Creek Nation Council passed an act authorizing a renewal of the contract with the Presbyterian Mission Board. T. W. Perryman, Roly McIntosh, and Chief Pleasant Porter was appointed to act as a committee to confer with the Mission Board. The result was that the Board again assumed supervisory control of the school, but made no reinvestment in the buildings or property.²⁸

26

Ibid.

27

Ibid.

28

Ibid.

In 1898 John M. Robe became Superintendent of the school, now called Nuyaka Boarding School, succeeding his father, who accepted a position with the Church Board of the Presbyterian Church. John M. Robe had been disciplinarian and industrial teacher in the Nuyaka Mission School since his father became superintendent. He was educated in the schools of Illinois and Kentucky. He was by temperament a natural teacher and one of the finest gentlemen and citizens of Okmulgee County. His influence on the life of the Indian People and educational history of Okmulgee County is of inestimable worth.²⁹

Mrs. John M. Robe, formerly Miss Mabel Langhein, a teacher in the Nuyaka Mission, whom Superintendent Robe married while teaching in the Nuyaka School, became matron of the school, succeeding Mrs. W. B. Robe. She is also a fine teacher and leader. The chieftain places her as the equal of her husband in every respect and gives her credit for much of the success of the school.³⁰

Mr. Robe continued as superintendent of the Nuyaka Boarding School until 1907. In the operation of the school he was constantly working for its improvement. During his administration a large dining hall was erected on the campus and one other building for teachers' quarters was added.

29

The Okmulgee Chieftain, October 18, 1905, State Historical Society.

30

Ibid.

These were paid for, in large part, by the earnings of the farm.³¹

In 1906 tribal relations came to an end. From this point to the time when the school was taken over by the Missionary Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, there are no detailed records of the personnel of the school. Suffice to say it was operated by the Creek Indians. The United States Commission reports statistical facts on the Nuyaka Boarding School as shown in Table I.³²

In 1921, the school funds of the Creek Nation having become exhausted, Nuyaka Boarding School was closed, and the property consisting of forty acres of land, ten large frame buildings equipped with beds, kitchen, office, and dining room furniture, was put up for sale at auction. It was bought in by Reverend J. M. Wiley, for the Oklahoma Baptist General Convention.³³

In 1923 it was taken over by the Education Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, a corps of teachers employed, and about fifty Indian pupils enrolled. In 1925 the first eighth grade class was graduated. A few high school pupils were taking high school work. Reverend L. B. Alder was Superintendent from 1923 to 1932. During Reverend Alder's

³¹

Interview with Mrs. John M. Robe, former teacher in the Nuyaka Mission School.

³²

Okmulgee Chieftain, October, 1904, State Historical Society.

³³

Hamilton, Robert, The Gospel Among The Red Men, p. 233.

TABLE I

STATISTICAL DATA OF THE NUYAKA BOARDING SCHOOL

Report of United States Commission of Indian Affairs

YEAR	NUMBER ENROLLED	AVERAGE ATTENDANCE	TOTAL YEARLY COST	PER CAPITA COST	COST OF MAINTENANCE	NUMBER OF MONTHS	PAGE
1907	109	72	\$ 5,599.81	\$ 78.76			97
1908	94	82	5,934.78	72.38		8	107
1909	114	83	5,640.00	67.95		8	88
1910							
1911							
1912							
1913							
1914	117	83					308
1915	123	81	24,775.25		\$17,699.61		97
1916	138	89	20,495.04		18,644.11		111
1917	126	106	24,647.75		22,843.60		78
1918	126	90	29,098.42		23,432.76		79

Further than this the records are silent.

TABLE I (Continued)
 NUYAKA BOARDING SCHOOL
 REPORT OF UNITED STATES COMMISSION OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

YEAR	COLLECTED	FULLBLOODS	RESTRICTED	UNRESTRICTED	NET TOTAL EXPENDITURE
1907					
1908					
1909					
1910					
1911					
1912					
1913					
1914					
1915					
1916	\$1,028.32				
1917	1,195.17	91			
1918	1,249.87	97	23	6	\$27,852.55
1919					
1920					

There were no reports made to the United States Commission from 1907 to 1915.

term of service the school had an average of about fifty students. He did a great work with this school. He gave personal attention to orphan Indian children. Many of these received educational advantages who otherwise could not have had such. In 1931 the school graduated seven eighth grade students and two high school students.³⁴

The Baptist Board became unable to finance the school in 1932. Reverend Alder struggled with it independently until 1933, when the school was closed out and the property leased to Oscar Graham, and later sold to E. E. Mount who now has possession of it, the Creek Indians Orphans Home.³⁵

By the treaty with the Federal Government of 1866, there was to be invested at St. Louis certain monies for maintenance and operation of a home for Creek Indian Orphans, and orphans of their freedmen. Two thirds of the accruals of this investment was to be used for Creek orphans homes and one-third of the amount was to be used for homes for the freedmen's orphans.³⁶

In 1889 the Creek Nation was informed that the money had been invested and that the accruals would amount to ten thousand dollars yearly. The Creek Council at the next session approved an appropriation of \$5,700 for the construction of a building, and \$1,250 for equipment. A com-

³⁴

Personal knowledge of writer and records of County Superintendent, Okmulgee, Oklahoma.

³⁵

Ibid.

³⁶

George Riley Hall, interview.

mittee composed of Maty Tiger, T. W. Perryman and Chief Pleasant Porter, was selected as a committee to choose a site for the building and receive bids for contract and consummate same with a competent contractor for completion of the building.³⁷

In 1890 the site was chosen. It was located northeast of what is now the city of Okmulgee, just outside of the northeast city limits, in the S $\frac{1}{2}$ of SW $\frac{1}{4}$ of Section 4, Township 13 North, Range 13 East, Okmulgee County. The building, a frame structure of eight rooms, had just been completed when it caught fire and was burned to the ground.³⁸

The Creek Council then appropriated \$13,600 to rebuild on the same site. This building was constructed of brick which were made on the land owned by the Creek Government, near the building site. The building was completed and ready for occupancy at the beginning of the school year 1892.³⁹

Moty Tiger was selected as the first Superintendent of this school home. He was a well-educated full blood Creek Indian. He had attended school at Tallahassee Boarding School a few years previously, and had attended some of the best schools of the states. His salary was fixed at fifty dollars per month. Other teachers were to receive forty

³⁷
Creek Orphan's Home, Official Papers, Numbers 24414-475.

³⁸
Ibid.

³⁹
Ibid.

dollars per month. This salary schedule did not prevail throughout the life of the institution.⁴⁰ The school opened with fifty students. The plan of the school was different from that of Nuyaka and other boarding schools of that day, in that it was the pupils' home. He would know no other. The school furnished the students board, clothes, room and medical care. In a word it was one big family. Some food was produced on the farm; but in general the expenses of operating and maintaining the school home was defrayed entirely out of the accruals of the orphans investment fund.⁴¹

The pupils were classified much as they were in the neighborhood schools, i.e., they were divided into classes according to ability and previous achievements. They were taught reading, writing, spelling, grammar, geography, United States history, Bible, and industrial arts. Books and all school supplies were furnished by the Creek Indian Council. Teachers who worked in the school during the first year of its operation were: Mrs. L. M. Adams, Agnes L. Reed, and Mrs. Maty Tiger, Matron. The teachers had quarters in the building and boarded at the common table.

In 1894 Peter Ewing became superintendent of the Creek Orphan's Home and served in that capacity until the end of the first quarter of the school year 1894-1895. The report for the year 1894-1895 showed an enrollment of fifty-seven

40

Ibid.

41

Ibid.

girls and boys. All spoke English except three. The health of the pupils was good. Cost of medicine and doctors bills was given as thirty-four dollars for the year. During the year it is noted that ninety-six hymn books and the same number of Bibles were donated to the school by the American Baptist Publishing Society of Philadelphia.

At the beginning of the second quarter of the school year 1896, Alex Posey assumed the position of Superintendent of the Creek Home. With him came George Riley Hall from the Neighborhood School at Arbeka, as an instructor. Other teachers serving were: J. E. Emery, Lillie M. Lee, and J. E. (Johnson)Tiger. Later that year Miss Rose Lee was added to the corps of instructors in the school. Mr. Posey was Superintendent of this school until 1900. Mr. Hall remained as instructor throughout the term of service of Mr. Posey. It was here that they married two sisters. These two men had found friendships for each other which were deep and lasting.

It would be a poor history of Okmulgee County indeed that did not recount some of the qualities of such early educational leaders as Alex Posey and George Riley Hall.

Alex Posey held numerous positions among the early Creek schools. He was a poet of no mean ability. Some of his poems have endured and are treasured for their real literary value. He was accidentally drowned in the Canadian River. The sketch of his life is best given in Chronicles of Oklahoma, Volume X, page 174.

Alexander Lawrence Posey, son of a full blood Creek mother, and Scotch-Irish father, taught by private teacher 1885-1887, then entered public schools of Eufaula. Entered Bacone University, Muskogee at the age of seventeen years. There acted as Librarian. 1892 published "The Comet's Tail," a poem which gave Indian tradition of the coming of the first ships of white men to discover America. 1896 appointed Superintendent of Creek Orphan Asylum, Okmulgee. Married Miss Minnie Harris, Fayetteville, Arkansas, teacher in same institution. Resigned position as Superintendent October, 1897. Two months later appointed Superintendent of Public Instruction for Creek Nation. All the time he was writing as inspiration prompted. Later became superintendent of Creek National High School, Eufaula. Later held similar position at Wetumka; relinquished that to take charge of Indian Journal at Eufaula." 42

George Riley Hall, like Posey, was and is a writer of poetry. He was a pioneer teacher and educational leader of Okmulgee County. He resides in Henryetta. He is still interested in education and is recognized as a capable platform speaker at any of our Oklahoma educational institutions. Concerning the life of George Riley Hall, I quote from an article in the Oklahoma Teacher by Harriett M. Westbrook of Okmulgee:

An urge to seek distant horizons seems to have been part of George Riley Hall's heritage. He was born in Springfield in 1865 of a family which had come to Missouri in 1851. His father's family had been Virginians but had located in Kentucky before trying Missouri. Both grandmothers were of pioneer stock which had worked its way from the Atlantic to the Mississippi.

In 1888 young Hall left Missouri for the newer frontier, Indian Territory, locating near Eufaula. When I asked him the date on which he first came to Henryetta, he smiled and told me he was there ten years first. On his first chance visit to the locality which he has helped build into a thriving

42

Creek Orphan's Home, Official Papers, Numbers 24414-475.

little city, he stayed over night in the home of Hugh Henry, Indian rancher. A decade later he spent another night in the Henry home. Henry was then planning to divide his allotment into town lots and establish a settlement to be known as Henry City.

During the intervening years Hall had done more than plant potatoes and cotton on his farm near the Chattahoochee. He had gotten a teacher's certificate in 1890 and taught at various Indian schools--they were all Indian schools then--until 1900. He was paid by the Creek National government and among the assignments given him during those ten years, were the following: Coweta boarding school, Hutchechuppa, Ossochee, Weogufky, Artussi, and the Creek Orphan's Home near Okmulgee.

It was during this period, 1897 to be exact, that Hall was elected president of the Creek National Teacher's Institute while that body was in session in Muskogee, but it was not long after that, that Hall left the teaching profession to try his hand at newspaper work. In 1902 he established the Henry-etta Free-Lance, daily newspaper which he and his sons still publish.

If George Riley Hall doesn't get out a book of his poetry, Oklahoma literature is going to be vastly poorer because of it." ⁴³

The reports of the Creek Orphan's School during Mr. Posey's tenure as Superintendent, showed fifty-five to sixty students in regular attendance, almost constantly. The cost of operation of the school home continued to stay within the amount derived from the investment fund. ⁴⁴

On August 1, 1900, Johnson E. Tiger became superintendent of the Creek Orphan's Home and continued in this capacity until 1903. Mr. T. W. Kennedy succeeded him as superintendent, and remained as such until 1906, when the home was closed. His reports show that the school continued

⁴³
Creek Orphan's Home, Official Papers, Numbers 24414-475.

⁴⁴
Oklahoma Teacher, April 1938

to operate on two-thirds of the investment fund. He reports an average enrollment of fifty-six full blood Creek children. All spoke English at the end of 1906.

The school property reverted to the heirs of the Harjo estate, from it was originally secured. It is now used as a farm home and is in possession of Mrs. Naomi Foster Harjo.⁴⁵

⁴⁵
Creek Orphan's Home, Official Papers, Numbers 24414-475.

TABLE II
EARLY TEACHERS OF NUYAKA MISSION

TEACHER	POSITION	PERIOD
Mrs. Augusta R. Moore	Superintendent	1885-1888
Mr. Wells	Superintendent	and 1890-1892 1889-1890
Mr. W. B. Robe	Superintendent	1892-
Mrs. W. B. Robe	Matron	1892-
Miss L. A. Robe	Principal	1897-1900
Miss M. E. Ashley	Intermediate Grades	1897-1900
Miss Mary Robe	Primary and Music	1897-1900
Miss Emma Jackson	Matron of Girls' Cottage	1897-1898
Miss M. Frances Robe	Matron of Small Girls' Cottage	1897-1900
Miss Lizzie McCracken	Matron	1898-1900
Mr. H. G. Brown	Principal	1899-1907
Mrs. H. G. Brown	Intermediate Grades	1899-1907
Miss Mable C. Laughlin	Music. Later became Mrs. J. M. Robe, Matron	1899-1907
Miss Frances Robe	Matron	1899-1907
Mr. John M. Robe	Disciplinarian and Industrial Teacher	1897-1899
Mr. John M. Robe	Superintendent	1899-1907

TABLE III
TEACHERS OF THE CREEK INDIAN ORPHAN'S HOME
OKMULGEE COUNTY 1892-1907

TEACHER	POSITION	PERIOD
Moty Tiger	Superintendent	1892-1895
Mrs. M. L. Adams	Teacher	1892-1894
Agnes Reed	Teacher	1892-1894
J. M. Mitchel	Teacher	1895-1896
Peter R. Erwing	Superintendent	1895-1896
George R. Hall	Teacher	1895-1897
J. E. Emery	Teacher	1895-1896
Lillie M. Lee	Teacher	1896-1897
A. L. Posey	Superintendent	1896-1897
Rose Lee	Teacher	1896-1897
Mrs. A. L. Posey	Matron	1896-1897
Miss Ollie Wilson	Matron	1896-1897
G. W. Tiger	Superintendent	1897-1900
Mrs. G. W. Tiger	Matron	1897-1900
J. E.(Johnson) Tiger	Teacher	1897-1900
Anna Belle Wright	Teacher	1897-1901
Mrs. Hepsy Jimboy	Assistant Matron	1897-1900
Anna Patterson	Teacher	1899-1902
J. E.(Johnson) Tiger	Superintendent	1900-1903
Mrs. J. E. Tiger	Matron	1900-1903

TABLE III (Continued)

TEACHER	POSITION	PERIOD
Mrs. S. J. Biggs	Matron	1900-1901
T. W. Kennedy	Teacher	1902-1906
Mabel Hall	Teacher	1902-1906
Kate Wilson	Matron	1902-1904
James Pinson	Teacher	1903-1906



JOHN M. ROBE
Early Teacher and Missionary Among
the Creek Indians.

CHAPTER IV
OKMULGEE COUNTY SCHOOLS
FROM 1907 to 1920

At the first election at the time of statehood, John M. Robe, Superintendent of the Nuyaka Indian Mission located in Okmulgee County, was elected County Superintendent of Public Instruction of Okmulgee County. At the time, Mr. Robe was away from the county on business in the interest of his school at Nuyaka. On his return it appears that he had received favorable information relative to the continuance of the school at Nuyaka. He therefore declined to accept the office of County Superintendent. On his failure to qualify the Board of County Commissioners of Okmulgee County appointed E. B. Shotwell, who was duly qualified and immediately assumed the duties of County Superintendent of Okmulgee County.¹

E. B. Shotwell was a teacher of the schools of Okmulgee County. He had been educated in Missouri and Kansas, and had been a teacher of rural, village, and city schools for a number of years. He was a man of admirable qualities and well adapted to the place he now assumed. He was a good organizer and had a thorough knowledge of, as well as an interest in the rural schools. Under the law it became his duty to divide the county into convenient districts. This

¹
George Riley Hall, A teacher, publisher, and writer, Henryetta, Oklahoma.

constituted his first duty toward the schools of Okmulgee County.²

It will be recalled that schools for whites, Negroes, and Indians had been established in twenty-one communities and neighborhoods of the county during the later years of territorial government.

The buildings for the schools had been constructed by the communities, and equipment provided by donations, ice-cream socials and other public functions. The county schools now came into possession of these buildings and they formed a basis of the organization of school districts. These buildings were in many cases poorly constructed, poorly equipped, and in most cases were too small to accommodate the number of students who were presenting themselves for instruction.³

One of the major points in Mr. Shotwell's program for the first years in office was to bring about an improvement of buildings and equipment for the schools. Using the neighborhood schools as a basis he divided the county into forty-two districts. Forty-one of these made a complete report for the school year 1907-1908. The other was not formed until late in the year, therefore no report was received for it.⁴

²
E. B. Shotwell, the first County Superintendent of Okmulgee County.

³
Ibid.

⁴
Ibid.

During the years from 1903 to 1907 high schools had been established at Okmulgee, Beggs, and Henryetta. During the year 1908-1909, Schuller and Dewar established village high schools. During this year forty-nine teachers were employed in the forty-one white schools of Okmulgee County, three of whom held first grade county certificates, sixteen were holders of second grade county certificates, fifteen held third grade certificates, and fifteen were issued temporary certificates. No report is given this year on salaries of teachers. 3,656 pupils were enumerated. No report is given of the number of pupils enrolled in the schools for this year.⁵

There were thirty-five buildings completed and under construction in Okmulgee County at the end of this year. In the four high schools reported this year, namely: Beggs, Morris, Henryetta, and Okmulgee, 121 pupils were enrolled. Thirteen graduated from high school, and the per capita cost for high school students was \$62.22. The white population of the schools was rapidly increasing and the demand for public education was keenly felt and expressed among people on every occasion.⁶

In 1908 the number of teachers employed has increased to a total of 107; 140 of these held first grade county certificates, 20 held second grade certificates, and 20 held

⁵ County Superintendents Annual Reports to State Superintendent.

⁶ Ibid.

third grade certificates, and 23 were holders of temporary certificates. The lowest salary paid that year was \$42.00 per month. The highest salary paid was \$150.00. There were 4,033 children enumerated between the ages of six and twenty-one years. 3,206 of these were enrolled in school. The average per capita cost for grades this year was \$15.68. There were thirty-eight buildings in use by the public schools of Okmulgee County. The total value of buildings is set at \$69,735.00. There were enrolled in the high schools of the county this year 178 students; 19 high school graduates, and the per capita cost for high schools this year was \$62.00.⁷

At the end of the school year 1910 there were sixty school buildings in use in Okmulgee County, representing a total valuation of \$94,325.00. There were 4,397 white pupils enumerated this year. 3,587 of these were enrolled in the public schools. The average daily attendance for this year was 2,181 for whites. The per capita cost for pupils of grades one to eight this year is given as \$18.60.⁸ There were 100 pupils enrolled in high school, 20 high school graduates, and the per capita cost for high school was given this year as \$61.25. There were twenty-one teachers holding first grade county certificates, forty-one holding second grade certificates, twenty-two holding third grade certifi-

7

Ibid.

8

Ibid.

cates, and twenty-three teaching on temporary county certificates. The lowest salary paid this year was \$40.00; the highest \$160.00.⁹

At the end of the school year 1911, there were in use seventy school buildings in Okmulgee County, representing a total value of \$209,000.00. There were 4,500 volumes in the various school libraries of the county, representing a value of \$3,000.00. The taxable valuation of the county this year was \$16,250.75. The number of white pupils enumerated for this year was 4,645. The number enrolled in the public schools was 4,296. The average daily attendance for grades one to eight was 3,517. The number of eighth grade graduates was 37.¹⁰

A system of examinations for eighth grade pupils had been set up and was administered by the County Superintendent. The pupils were required to present themselves at the office of the County Superintendent for such examinations. There were five high schools in the county this year, with a total enrollment of 180 pupils. Thirty-eight graduated from high school. The per capita cost this year from high school students was \$78.60. There were 14 teachers employed who were holders of a first grade county certificate, twenty-eight holding a second grade county certificate, thirty-seven holding third grade certificates, and thirty holding

9

Ibid.

10

Ibid.

temporary certificates. The lowest teacher's salary paid this year was \$50.00 and the highest \$150.00. The shortest term of school this year consisted of six months and the longest term was nine months.¹¹

At the end of the school year 1911 and 1912 there were eighty-one school buildings in Okmulgee County, estimated at a total valuation of \$270,500.00. The taxable value of the county this year was \$18,700.18. The number of white pupils enumerated was 4,891. The number of white students enrolled was 4,296 with an average daily attendance for the entire county of 3,517. There were thirty-seven graduates from the eighth grade. At the same time there were 197 students enrolled in the five high schools of the county; forty of these were graduates from the eighth grade. The average per capita cost for high schools was \$86.00. There were employed this year in the eighty-one schools of the county twelve teachers holding a first grade county certificate, thirty-one holding second grade county certificates, sixty-one holding third grade county certificates, and fourteen holding temporary county certificates. The lowest salary paid to teachers this year was \$40.00 per month. The highest salary paid was \$140.00. The shortest term was six months, and the longest term was nine months.¹²

11

Ibid.

12

Ibid.

In the general election held in November, 1912, J. D. Campbell was elected County Superintendent. He was a graduate of Jefferson City High School of Jefferson City, Missouri, and had had training in the Normal School at Springfield, Missouri. At the time of this election to the office of County Superintendent, he was Superintendent of the Beggs City Schools. He brought to the office a practical experience as well as thorough schooling for this job. He took office on July 1, 1913, and was responsible for the report for the school year 1912-1913. Superintendent Campbell had a broad outlook and analyzed the school situation in Okmulgee County in the following manner: The number of schools had increased from forty-one in 1907 to eighty-two in 1913. The number of scholastics in the county had increased from 3,656 to 5,401. The enrollment had increased from 3,206 in 1909 to 5,339. The highest number of eighth grade graduates during this period was forty-seven. High Schools of the county had increased from four in 1907 to six in 1913. Patrons of school districts had begun to inquire as to what could be done to establish high schools which would be more convenient for their children. In many cases also they were demanding more school buildings or some means of transportation for small pupils. As the population of the county increased school districts had enlarged and many of the pupils were walking from three to five miles to attend school.¹³

13

Interview with J. D. Campbell, Ex-County Superintendent, Okmulgee County.

During the school year 1912, Natura School District, which will be noted, was one of the early territorial public schools, had formed a consolidated school. This consolidation probably was and still is without legal status. The people of the community merely called their own meeting at the school house and by a show of hands voted to convert the Natura School District into a consolidated school, so that their pupils might receive the advantage of transportation. There is no record in the office of the County Superintendent relative to this consolidation, but it has been recognized as such since the date of that first meeting and is listed in records and reports as Natura Consolidated District No. 6.¹⁴ During the school year 1912-1913, Morris City Schools formed the first legally constituted consolidated school of Okmulgee County. The district was formed from unorganized territory and one organized school district was added to the Morris School District in this consolidation.¹⁵

The number of school buildings in Okmulgee County had been increased to 82. The total value of these buildings was \$284,600.00. The taxable valuation for the county this year was \$21,716,085.00. There were enumerated this year 5,401 white children in this county. The number enrolled in the public schools for the whites was 5,339. The number

14

County Superintendents Annual Reports to the State Superintendent.

15

Ibid.

of eighth grade graduates was 47. The per capita cost for grades was \$24.00. The number of high schools had been increased to six during the year 1912-1913. There were enrolled 213 white students in the six high schools; forty-three were graduated from the twelfth grade. The per capita cost for high schools that year was \$87.18. There were twenty-eight teachers employed in the county who held first grade county certificates, thirty-nine held second grade county certificates, thirty held third grade county certificates, and twenty-seven were holders of temporary county certificates. The lowest salary paid for this year was \$45.00 per month and the highest salary was \$155.00. The shortest school term was five months in length and the longest term was nine months.¹⁶

The population of Okmulgee County was still increasing; at the end of the school year there were eighty-four school buildings at a total valuation of \$360,600.00. There were 4,900 books in county libraries valued at \$2,172.65. The taxable valuation of the county this year was \$25,673,197.00. There were enumerated in Okmulgee County this year 6,451 white children. Of this number 5,842 were enrolled in the public schools. Forty-six pupils were graduated from the eighth grade, and the per capita for grade children this year was \$23.60.¹⁷

16
Ibid.

17
Ibid.

During the school year 1912-1913 the Schuller High School had come into prominence; the first report from that school was received this year. The Colton School, situated in the mining district of Okmulgee County also began reporting high school students that year. This brings the total of the schools for the year 1913-1914 to 8. There were enrolled in the white high schools this year 221 pupils, and fifty-three of these pupils were graduated from high school. The per capita cost for high schools this year was \$85.00. At the end of the year 1913-1914 there were eighty-four school buildings in use in Okmulgee County, valued at \$370,600.00, and the library books were valued at \$4,932.60. Although a number of school districts were lost by consolidation of other schools, there still remained eighty-four schools in operation in Okmulgee County. In these schools this year were employed twenty-three teachers holding first grade county certificates, forty-one holding second grade county certificates, forty-six holding third grade county certificates, and twenty-six holding county temporary certificates. The lowest salary paid for any teacher this year was \$50.00, and the highest was \$180.00 per month. The shortest length of term for any school in the county was seven months, and the longest was nine months.¹⁸

At the end of the school year 1914-1915 there were still eight high schools recorded in the county with a total

enrollment of 300 pupils. There were in addition twenty-one colored pupils enrolled in the Dunbar High School, which had come into existence as a high school two years before, but no report had been made until this year. During the same year 7,405 pupils were enumerated in Okmulgee County. 6,639 were enrolled in schools with an average daily attendance of 2,577. There were graduates. The total number of buildings this year is given as sixty-one. This decrease in the number of buildings was probably occasioned by loss of school districts through consolidation. The value of the buildings this year was \$358,950.00. The number of library books was 12,366 at a total valuation of \$5,780.60. There were employed in the schools this year thirty-three teachers holding a first grade county certificate, twenty holding a second grade certificate, twenty-seven holding second grade county certificates, and thirty-five teaching on temporary certificates. In addition, there were eight life certificates this year and two high school certificates.¹⁹

During the school year 1914-1915 Liberty Consolidated School was organized in the northeast section of Okmulgee County. It embraces thirty-three sections, employed seven teachers, and began school under the new consolidation with 175 pupils enrolled. During the same year the Eram Consolidated School No. 3 was organized from three districts. The new district was made up of twenty-nine sections, em-

19

Ibid.

ployed six teachers, and had an enrollment of 186 pupils. Superintendent Campbell was extremely interested in the consolidation of schools. It was during his administration that all except three of the nine consolidated schools in Okmulgee County were formed.²⁰

In 1916, during his administration, schools were consolidated as follows: Rocky Hill, Consolidated District No. 4, made up of twenty-seven sections; Preston Consolidated District No. 5, made up of thirty-eight sections formed from three districts; and Wilson Consolidated District No. 7, made up of thirty-six sections, taken from three districts.

At the end of the school year 1915-1916 there were 8,606 white pupils enumerated in Okmulgee County.²¹ Of this number there were 6,639 white pupils enrolled in the public schools. The average daily attendance for whites for that year was 2,358. There were 79 eighth grade students graduated from the common schools this year. There were 84 buildings reported in use by the public schools in Okmulgee County during this year with a total valuation of \$355,400. The number of library books in the public schools this year was 16,528, valued at \$17,500. The total taxable valuation for Okmulgee County this year was \$33,617,500. There were eight high schools in operation during the year 1915-1916 with an enrollment of 323. No report is given for the num-

20

Ibid.

21

Ibid.

ber of pupils graduated, per capita cost, and the other usual information for that year. There were employed in the schools of that County that year 19 teachers holding a first grade county certificate, 59 holding a second grade county certificate, 55 holding a third grade county certificate and, 3 holding county temporary certificates. There were also 10 teachers holding life certificates and 4 holding elementary state certificates.²²

At the general election in November 1916, Mr. H. G. Creekmore who was then Superintendent of Schools at Morris, was elected County Superintendent of Schools. His term of office began on July 1, 1917. The report for the following year was made by Mr. Creekmore. There were now 7 consolidated schools in the county, each doing some high school work and all transporting pupils. Many of the school districts had disbanded horse-drawn vehicles for transportation of pupils. It is interesting to note that throughout the history of education for the term of Mr. Shotwell and Mr. Campbell that their school visitation was done by use of horses and buggies.²³

Mr. Campbell relates that he very frequently spent one week visiting schools without being in his office. On such trips he would spend the nights and take his meals with friendly patrons of the schools who were always glad to

²²

Interview with J. D. Campbell, Ex-County Superintendent of Okmulgee County.

²³

Ibid.

have the county superintendent with them. Mr. Campbell states that he was driving a Ford Touring car when he went out of office, which he had secured in 1916.²⁴

At the end of the school year of 1916-1917, there were enumerated in Okmulgee County 11,107 white pupils and 10,075 of these were enrolled in the public schools. The average daily attendance was 6,401. There were enrolled in the high schools at the same time 598 pupils with no report of attendance or graduation. There were 72 school buildings in the county that year for which no valuation was given. The libraries for the public schools that were used were valued at \$30,000.²⁵

There were employed that year 24 teachers holding first grade licenses, 48 holding second grade licenses, 23 holding third grade licenses, 15 holding county temporary certificates and 12 holding state certificates.²⁶

At the end of the school year 1917-1918, there were 11,553 whites enumerated in the County. The per capita cost for grade school students was \$20.10. There were one hundred eighth grade graduates. There were 635 students enrolled in high school. The report this year shows 12 high schools. Seventy-nine pupils graduated from high school. The per capita cost for the year was \$93.00. There were

²⁴
County Superintendents Annual Reports to the State Superintendent.

²⁵
Ibid.

²⁶
Ibid.

eighty-two buildings in the county and the total taxable valuation was \$38,748,613.²⁷

In the school year of 1918-1919 there were eighty-two schools reported in Okmulgee County. There were 14 teachers employed holding first grade county licenses, 5 holding temporary certificates, 11 holding life certificates, 4 holding high school certificates, and 13 holding state elementary certificates.²⁸

There were 12,658 white pupils enumerated during the school year 1918-1919 and the average per capita cost for the grade school students was \$25.13. There were 797 students enrolled in the high schools of Okmulgee County this year and 101 graduates from high schools. The per capita cost for high schools this year was \$86.00. There were 82 buildings in the County but no valuation was placed on them. Six teacherages in the County with a valuation of \$3,000 were in use. Two thousand five hundred and ninety dollars valuation was placed on the library books, and the taxable valuation of the county was \$46,618,793.²⁹

Mr. N. O. Hopkins, who was Superintendent of Schools for the City of Okmulgee, was elected County Superintendent in November 1918 and succeeded Mr. H. G. Creekmore in July, 1919. Mr. Hopkins began his administration just at the time that the Model School Program was perfected by

²⁷
Ibid.

²⁸
Ibid.

²⁹
Ibid.

the State Department of Education.³⁰

The story of the schools up to this time had been a struggle for better buildings and equipment. During the first year of Mr. Shotwell's administration he had spent most of his time and energy trying to bring about improvements of buildings and equipment. When Mr. Campbell succeeded him he found very few unpainted buildings in the County. By the end of 1915 the buildings were in fair condition. There were a few teachers at this time who were improving their qualifications. The teachers' colleges had instituted a program of training for teachers by which means they were able to secure teaching certificates based on a minimum of normal training. The old county institute which had endured up to 1912 or 1913 had been disbanded and the urge was for teachers to take advantage of normal training during the summer. Schools had been consolidated and modern transportation had taken place of horse-drawn vehicles. Roads had been greatly improved so that schools and communities were more accessible to each other. A strong desire for high school education permeated the population of the entire county. Each consolidated school was offering three to four years of high school work. Beggs, Morris, Okmulgee and Henryetta were making much progress

30

Interview with J. D. Campbell, Ex-County Superintendent of Okmulgee County.

with their high schools.³¹

By the end of the year 1919 Okmulgee City, under the Superintendency of Mr. H. B. Bruner, who is now Professor of Education at Columbia University, had set up a program for Okmulgee City schools which placed it in rank among the best schools of the United States. Many rural school pupils who did not reside in consolidated districts or village schools were transferred to school districts where high school advantages were offered.³²

The history of this period from 1913 to 1920 might well be classed as the period of history of Okmulgee County schools when consolidated high schools and the desire for high school education was born in Okmulgee County. Schuller, Coalton and Dewar had opened four-year high schools. Many of the larger rural schools were doing two years of high school work.³³

Mr. Hopkins began his administration with the objective in mind of maintaining and improving high schools of the county, and to make use of the Model Score Card for raising the standards of buildings and equipment of rural graded schools.³⁴

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Interview with J. D. Campbell, Ex-County Superintendent of Okmulgee County.

³²

County Superintendents Annual Reports to State Superintendent.

³³

Ibid.

³⁴

Ibid.

CHAPTER V
DEVELOPMENT OF OKMULGEE COUNTY SCHOOLS
FROM 1920 to 1935

Mr. N. O. Hopkins assumed the duties of County Superintendent of Okmulgee County on July 1, 1919. He was well prepared both in scholastic training, experience and temperament for the position which he assumed. The past few years preceding his administration had been a period of wide consolidation of schools for that County. The districts were torn by factions because of these consolidations. In many cases the vote to consolidate was very close, hence the communities were divided almost equally for and against. Many minor grievances in a school district were magnified and had its termination either in the office of the county superintendent or the county attorney's office. Mr. Hopkins refused to take sides with any faction or take part in any community argument. He chose to follow the direction of the statutes for settlement of any school problem which came up. Thus he won a strong place in the hearts of the rural people of Okmulgee County. His disposition was so genial and likable and his demeanor so fair and impartial that he made friends of those against whom he had rendered an official decision.¹

Early in his administration he set to work to make use of the newly organized system of Model schools using the

¹Records in Office of County Superintendent, Okmulgee, Oklahoma.

Model School Score Cards. Teachers were scarce during the early part of his administration and probably more poorly prepared than should have been owing to conditions surrounding the participation of the country in the World War. Men teachers found that on their return from the War in 1919 that they could secure more remunerative employment than that of teaching. Tax valuations and commodities in general had risen in prices out of proportion to the salaries paid teachers in Okmulgee County.²

It was not until the latter part of Mr. Hopkins' administration that teachers' salaries were raised to any considerable degree. During the latter part of his administration there was a general increase in demand for higher training for teachers. It was during this era that large numbers of teachers from Okmulgee County began attending summer schools at the various normal schools of the state. It was at this time that the value of extension work from the teachers' colleges was realized and that work began in Okmulgee County.³

During the school year 1920-1921 there were 15 people in Okmulgee County taking correspondence study. There was an extension class taught by an instructor from Ada who came to the county and conducted the class in the county superintendent's office once each week. There were 25 teachers enrolled in this class.⁴

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

During the school year 1922-1923, Dr. W. C. Herring, of the East Central State Teachers' College, who was then designated as the Rural School Supervisor for that College, came to Okmulgee County with the first set of achievement tests and intelligence tests for pupils of Okmulgee County. These tests were given throughout the County and results of these tests were used to standardize tests for other counties.⁵

Much improvement was noted in buildings and equipment during Mr. Hopkin's administration. This was due in part to an increase in funds to be used for school purposes and by use of the Model School Score Card as a standard.

During the school year 1922-1923 there were seven Model schools established. Five brick buildings were constructed in the County, taking the place of the same number of old frame buildings.⁶

In 1922 Districts 31, 37, and 53 were combined in the northwestern part of Okmulgee County to form the Nuyaka consolidated school. This district contained thirty-three sections of land and had a taxable valuation of more than \$700,000.⁷

At the beginning of Mr. Hopkins' term there were 15,308 white children enumerated in Okmulgee County, and 11,671 of these were enrolled in the grade schools. At

⁵ W. C. Herring, Professor of Education, East Central State Teachers College, Ada.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

the end of his term of service in 1924 there were 16,370 enumerated and 11,700 enrolled in the grade schools. Also at the beginning of his administration there were 72 buildings reported in the County and there were 11 teachers holding life certificates, 4 holders of high school certificates, and 3 teachers holding the elementary state certificates. The lowest salary paid the teachers that year was \$75 and the highest was \$225. At the close of his term there were 24 teachers holding a life diploma, 13 of whom had bachelor degrees from standard colleges, 21 had life certificates and 31 had elementary state certificates. During the latter part of the year 1923 and the early part of 1924, Mr. Hopkins became very ill and at times during these months was not able to remain at his office all the time. He died in August of 1924 and was succeeded by Mr. O. E. Carter who filled that office until July, 1925.⁸

Mr. Carter was very much the same type of superintendent as Mr. Hopkins. He was congenial, a good psychologist, and fair in his estimate of people. His chief objective was the improvement of classroom instruction. Mr. Carter was a good classroom teacher and supervisor. He visited schools perhaps more frequently than any county superintendent up to this time.

During Mr. Carter's administration the county teachers' association was reorganized. It appears that the organi-

⁸

Personal Experience of Writer.

zation had almost ceased to function during the two preceding years. It became very active during 1924-1925.

In the spring of 1925 one of the largest field, track, and literary meets was held in Okmulgee County that had been known up to that time.⁹

In 1925 Mr. J. O. Payne, who had been elected at the November election in 1924, came into the office of the County Superintendent of Okmulgee County succeeding Mr. Carter.¹⁰

Mr. Payne had been trained in the teachers' normal training school at Springfield, Missouri, had been county superintendent of schools in Missouri, city superintendent in Missouri, and at Beggs, Oklahoma, for a number of years.

Mr. Payne was very aggressive in organization of teacher groups of the County, Promotion of better classroom instruction, improvement of old buildings and erection of new buildings. It was during his administration that the community building composed of a gymnasium and auditorium came into prominence in that County.¹¹

During the years from 1925 to 1928 community buildings were constructed in seven communities. The county teachers' association was completely reorganized. Instead of the one

9

Ibid.

10

Interview with J. O. Payne Ex-County Superintendent of Okmulgee County.

11

Personal Knowledge of Writer and County Superintendent's Records.

unit type of organization, the association was divided into sub-groups consisting of one group for high school teachers, another for high school superintendents and principals, a group for upper grade teachers (Grades 5-8), and another for primary teachers and teachers of grades 1-4.¹²

Mr. Payne also had a good supervisory program. Monthly meetings were called for discussion of class room problems at which meetings plans were devised which would tend to unify classroom teaching and procedure for all the schools of Okmulgee County.¹³

The moon-light schools came in for a share of the program in 1925-1926. These were schools designated to offer a course of study which would be interesting and adaptable to the average patron of the school district. They were conducted at night in the various communities. The schools of this type were held at Wilson, Consolidated District No. 7; Sharp, District No. 32; Schuller, District No. 25; Coalton, District No. 50; Preston, Consolidated District No. 5; and Nuyaka, Consolidated District No. 8. These schools continued in session from six to ten weeks with a varying degree of success. Their influence was felt among the patrons of the school in the promotion of progressive education in Okmulgee County. Extension

12
Ibid.

13
Ibid.

courses for teachers were given much attention during Mr. Payne's term of service.¹⁴

During the school year 1926 and 1927 classes for teachers in Okmulgee County were taught by instructors from the Ada State Teachers' College at Okmulgee, Henryetta, Beggs, and Morris and by superintendents of local schools at Wilson, Schuler, Preston, Nuyaka, Coalton, and Dewar. The requirements for teachers of these classes was that they hold a bachelor's degree from a standard college and should teach the class according to certain outlines of procedure set up by the teachers' college. Many teachers of the county improved their training rapidly by means of these classes.¹⁵

Another educational enterprise sponsored by Mr. Payne was that of the community institute. These institutes were held at five centers in Okmulgee County. They were conducted by Mr. Armstrong and Mrs. Ashby, both of the University of Oklahoma. At these meetings all patrons of a community were invited to attend. The purpose of the meetings was to better inform patrons of the function of their school, to teach them to regard their school as a center of activity for the entire community, to inspire good will and fellowship and, in general, to unite the community in a better cooperative effort for improvement of public schools.

14

Ibid.

15

Ibid.

The results of these meetings was very noticeable. The community spirit for the county improved because of these meetings and has had its effect until this day.¹⁶

During the school year 1927-1928, two courses of extension study were taught in Okmulgee County by Dr. R. A. Cummings, of the University of Oklahoma. In this class 98 per cent of the teachers of the county were enrolled. The classes continued through 24 weeks of study and met two hours each week.¹⁷

At the beginning of Mr. Payne's administration there were 16,053 whites of school age enumerated in Okmulgee County, twelve thousand and one of these were enrolled in the grade schools. The average daily attendance for grade schools this year was 11,302. The per capita cost for grade school students was \$27.00.¹⁸

At the end of his administration there were 15,698 whites enumerated and 12,876 of these were enrolled in grade schools. The average daily attendance was 10,619. The per capita cost for white grade pupils was \$50.00. At the beginning of his term there was 43 teachers holding life certificates, 27 of whom also had standard bachelor degrees. Thirty-eight teachers had state high school certificates and 23 had state elementary certificates. There

¹⁶

Ibid.

¹⁷

Ibid.

¹⁸

Report of County Superintendent to the State Superintendent.

were only 21 teachers who held county certificates. Seventeen of these were first grade certificates.¹⁹

At the end of his administration there were 71 teachers holding life diplomas, 34 of whom also had a bachelor degree from a standard college, 43 teachers held high school certificates and 34 teachers had elementary state certificates. There were 14 teachers holding county certificates, 11 of which were of the first grade type. The remaining teachers held second grade certificates.²⁰

At the end of Mr. Payne's administration there were 19 schools in the County doing high school work. Enrolled in these schools there were 1,504 whites. The County graduated 402 pupils. The per capita cost for high schools was \$93.²¹

At the election held in Okmulgee County on November 6, 1928, Edgar E. Harris was elected County Superintendent of Okmulgee County Schools. He had been Superintendent of the Wilson Consolidated School of that county for the six years prior to his election. He held a life certificate and a B. S. Degree from the Ada State Teachers' College.²²

He took as his main objectives the improvement of rural schools by means of the Model and Accredited School program, and the improvement of classroom instruction. The plan of the county teachers' organization of the county was continued. Extension work was carried forward during his

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Ibid.

²²Records in Office of County Superintendent, Okmulgee, Oklahoma.

entire administration.²³

Classes for all types of teachers were conducted by instructors from the teachers' colleges, from A. and M. College and from the University. During the year 1929 and 1930 a supervisory plan was set up which was designed to increase interest of teachers in better preparation for classroom teachers. In carrying out this plan teachers were called to meet in groups at various points in the county once every month for discussion of classroom programs and demonstration of class teaching.²⁴

At these meetings a report of achievements was given by means of the results of test given during the preceding weeks. These tests were furnished by the County Superintendent's office, and were standardized. Much improvement was shown in classroom procedure during the progress of this program. At the end of the school year 1930-1931 the number of Model and Accredited schools had been increased to twenty-nine. At the end of the next year they had increased to thirty-five. By the end of the school year 1935 all schools in the county had become Model and Accredited except two.²⁵

During the early days of 1932 and throughout the remainder of the administration of Mr. Harris, the financing

23

Ibid.

24

Ibid.

25

Ibid.

of the schools were in a pitiable condition due to greatly decreased taxable valuations and non-payment of taxes. The big task of the Superintendent then became that of assisting and supervising Boards of Education with their financial estimates. At the beginning of the school year 1930, and at the same time each year thereafter, School Boards were asked to bring their financial estimates and statements to the office of the County Superintendent where the budgets were set up and estimated.²⁶

It was during this time that the relief program was established and under way. Many plans for school buildings and other improvements for schools were supervised and carried to completion under Mr. Harris's direction.²⁷

In 1933 the Adult Education program was instituted in Okmulgee County. Unemployed teachers were found in great numbers who were placed, so far as possible and according to qualifications, as teachers of these Adult schools. The plans were to conduct Adult classes at night at various centers throughout the entire county. Twelve centers were established, namely: Coalton, Schulter, Dewar, Nuyaka, Hart, Liberty, Morris, Bryant, Wilson, Twin Hills, Okmulgee, and Kusa. In these classes seventeen teachers were employed. Many of these schools were eventually arranged for daylight hours, and many of them have continued until the present

26

Ibid.

27

Ibid.

time. Some have gone out of existence and others have been established instead.²⁸

At the beginning of Mr. Harris's term there were seventy-four school buildings in Okmulgee County, valued at \$565,990.00. There were estimated 12,770 volumes in the libraries of the county at a value of \$40,000.00. There were thirty-one teacherages on the county valued at \$41,500.00. There were nineteen high schools with a total enrollment of 1,484. Number of graduates from high schools that year was 529. There were fifty-six teachers holding life certificates or Bachelor's Degrees, forty-three holders of high school certificates, forty-two holders of elementary certificates, and seventy-five teachers holding temporary state certificates. The lowest salary paid that year was eight months and the longest nine months.²⁹

At the end of Mr. Harris's term there remained nineteen high schools in which 2,135 pupils were enrolled. 786 were graduated from high school that year. There were enumerated in the county for the school year 1934, 15,342 pupils of which 12,063 were enrolled in school in grades one to eight. The per capita cost for the school year 1933-1934 was \$71.60, and for grade schools that year \$24.16.³⁰

In March, 1933 Oakdale School, District No. 29, and

28

Ibid.

29

Ibid.

30

Ibid.

Sharp School, District No. 32 were united to form Consolidated District 9 of Okmulgee County.³¹

Mr. James A. Nevins was elected County Superintendent of schools of Okmulgee County, at the general election held in November, 1934. He was a graduate of the East Central State Teachers College, and had taught in the rural schools of Okmulgee County for a number of years. He was at the time of his election, Superintendent of the Liberty Consolidated School of Okmulgee County.³²

He was very ambitious to succeed in school work, and began a good program for the continuance of the educational programs of Okmulgee County.³³

At the end of the school year 1935 there were enumerated in Okmulgee County 15,092 whites. 11,696 of these were enrolled in public schools. There were forty-three graduates this year by examinations, and 360 pupils were promoted by the accredited schools of the rural districts.³⁴

There still remained nineteen high schools in the county this year. There were 1,530 pupils enrolled in high schools and 798 high school graduates. The per capita cost for that year was \$72.00 for high school.

31

Ibid.

32

Personal knowledge of writer and Records of County Superintendent, Okmulgee, Oklahoma.

33

Ibid.

34

Ibid.

Mr. Nevins is the present County Superintendent and is carrying forward the program in general in a commendable manner.³⁵

Okmulgee Junior College

During the year 1925-1926 there became a decided sentiment for the establishment of a Junior College in Okmulgee. Patrons of the Okmulgee schools pointed out that their children who were graduating from high school were too young to send away to college. The Junior College idea became so popular that it was decided by city school officials, Chamber of Commerce, and business men to establish a one-year college course and charge a tuition fee, for those who wished to attend. The fee was fixed at \$100.00 per year and has remained the same until the present.³⁶

The University of Oklahoma gave its approval, under certain limitation, and stipulated that the faculty employed would have to possess qualifications equal to those of the regular faculty of the University, if the school wished to be affiliated with the University. These conditions were met, and in September 1926, the Junior College of Okmulgee opened its doors, in the high school building. The enrollment the first year was seventeen. The classes were taught in part by the regular high school faculty. One additional instructor was employed. Books and laboratory equipment

³⁵

Ibid.

³⁶

Records of City Schools of Okmulgee, Oklahoma.

were added to that used for the high school. They developed a type of instruction and a spirit of the school which was very good. It continued under this plan until 1932.³⁷

Before the close of the third year of the Junior College term, sentiment became strong for another year's work to be added. In the early summer of 1930, the Chamber of Commerce designated a committee from the larger educational committee of that body to assist in bringing about the increase desired in the Junior College course of study. The committee consisted of L. M. Carter, chairman, Edgar E. Harris, and Joseph I. Pitchford. The committee set about the task by approaching the city of Henryetta for their cooperation in bringing about the enlargement of the Okmulgee Junior College. The Henryetta Citizens became enthusiastic and gave very practical assistance. But the objective was not accomplished this year. However, the enrollment was increased by the efforts of this committee and the school officials to such an extent that the way was paved for a two-year course of study. It became a reality the next year, 1931.³⁸

At the beginning of the school year 1931-1932, the college was opened in the upstairs department of the Checotah grade school building with a full staff of teachers employed for Junior College instruction. The enrollment

37

Ibid.

38

Ibid.

this year was more than one hundred students. The faculty was composed of four full-time instructors. The regular University freshmen and sophomore courses were offered. Many of the high schools graduates from all parts of Okmulgee County were enrolled. The college was moved the next year to its present location in the old Lee High School building located at Eighth Street and Muskogee Avenue. Two faculty members added, and the enrollment increased to near the two hundred mark. The Junior College had become a permanent institution.³⁹

The college faculty has employed as many as twelve faculty members. It enrolls more than two hundred students each year. These students enter the University of Oklahoma and other colleges on the same conditions as the regular students on the campus of their respective schools.

W. K. Wood became Dean of the Okmulgee Junior College in 1932. He remained in this capacity until his death in February 1938. It was under his administration as Dean and that of W. Max Chambers, President that the school was permanently established with its present high rating.⁴⁰

39

Ibid.

40

Ibid.

County Superintendents, Okmulgee County 1907-1935



J. CAMPBELL
1913 to 1917



H. G. CREEKMORE
1917 to 1919



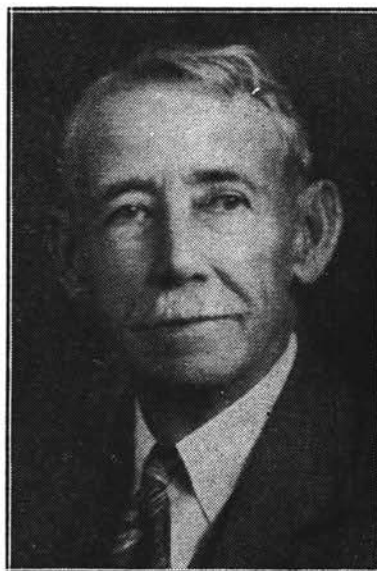
N. O. HOPKINS—1919 to 1924



J. O. PAYNE
1925 to 1929



JAS. A. NEVINS—1935 to 19—



E. B. SHOTWELL—1907 to 1913



EDGAR E. HARRIS—1929 to 1935

COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS
OF OKMULGEE COUNTY

YEAR	SUPERINTENDENTS
1907-1913	E. B. Shotwell
1913-1917	J. D. Campbell
1917-1919	H. G. Creekmore
1919-1924	N. O. Hopkins
1924-1925	O. E. Carter
1925-1929	J. O. Payne
1929-1935	Edgar E. Harris
1935-	James A. Nevins

CHAPTER VI
NEGRO EDUCATION IN OKMULGEE COUNTY
1836 to 1935

During the early history of Okmulgee County records are silent as to the establishment of schools for Negroes in what is now Okmulgee County. From interviews with some of the earlier citizens of Okmulgee County it is found that there were a few schools for Negroes between the years of 1836 and 1858. It is certain also that in many cases Negro children attended school with Indians during this period in Okmulgee County.¹

By the terms of various treaties made with the Creek Indians, especially the one of 1866, Negro freedmen in the Creek Nation were given equal rights to a fair school education with the Creek Indians. One third of the annuities and accruals from investment funds for the Creek Nation was set aside for the education of Negroes in the Nation.²

In the year 1867 there was a school established for Negroes at Tuskegee, which is located in the southern part of Okmulgee County, adjoining Arbeka School District on the north. This school was taught by Phileas Grayson. Seventeen scholars enrolled in this school. The average daily attendance was thirteen. Reading, writing, arithmetic, spelling, grammar, and United States history was taught.

¹ Interview with Mrs. Sue M. Rogers, aged Creek Indian woman.

² Ibid.

Pupils were classified and taught on the same plan as that used in the Negro schools, that is, pupils were divided into five classes according to their age and achievement and ability. The teacher of this school received \$19.25 per month. The warrants were issued by the Treasurer of the Nation through the County Superintendent of Schools of that district.³

At the same time the school was established at Salt Creek in Okmulgee County for whites and Indians, there was also established a school for Negroes by the Act of the Creek Council in 1866. Included in this Act was a provision prohibiting Negroes from attending school with whites and Indians. The school at Salt Creek was taught by S. E. Marchant. There were fourteen pupils enrolled, with an average daily attendance of eleven. The ages of pupils ranged from eight to nineteen years. The report for the third quarter states that seven of these students could read in the third reader; others were reading in the first reader, and were able to spell words with two syllables. In addition to the subjects taught in the other school mentioned, that school also taught industrial work, singing, and instrumental music. The type of instruments used are now known, probably as banjo and violin.⁴

³

Ibid.

⁴

Official Papers, Neighborhood schools, State Historical Society, Numbers 37304-904.

Records of this date show that the Negro schools shared in the appropriation for books and other school supplies. As early as 1869 a school for Negroes was established in what is now the city of Okmulgee. The building was constructed of logs, and seated with benches made from what was then called raw-hide lumber, that is lumber sawed from native trees, such as sycamore, oak, and cottonwood. It was used in constructing crude benches and other such articles without being dressed.⁵

In 1870 another Negro school is reported at Wolf Creek, which is also in south central Okmulgee County, adjoining Arbeka on the northwest. S. E. McIntish was teacher of this school. Twenty-four scholars were enrolled, with an average daily attendance of fifteen, ranging in age from seven to seventeen years. The same subjects were taught in this school as at the others given, except instrumental music was not taught. The salary of the teacher was \$24.00 per month.⁶

Sometime during the year 1874 and 1875 a school was opened for Negroes at Grayson. The school was taught by David Grayson. Evidentially the school was named for him. The village is now referred to as Wildcat. In this school Grayson enrolled twenty-seven scholars, and had an average daily attendance for the fourth quarter of seventeen. He

5

Ibid.

6

Ibid.

states that the pupils were well-behaved and eager to learn, also that more than one-half of the students could read well in the fourth reader. All of them were interested in singing, and seven of the older pupils read well in the New Testament.⁷

By 1875 the school for Negroes in Okmulgee had grown to such an extent that two teachers were employed. They were: James A. Roper, who afterwards became the first postmaster of Okmulgee, and Jennie B. Cdjo was the assistant teacher in the school. They enrolled that year forty-seven scholars, including all ages from seven to twenty-one years. The salary of James A. Roper was \$87.50 per quarter. That of Jennie B. Cdjo was \$78.75 per quarter. The history of this school for Negroes in Okmulgee is that of a steady march to the present time.⁸

In 1885 the school in Okmulgee for Negroes was employing four teachers, with an enrollment of 167 scholars. By 1890 it employed six teachers, with an enrollment of 193 scholars. By the year of 1900 they had added one teacher, and the enrollment for the school was 223. Schools had by this time been established in practically every neighborhood in Okmulgee County for colored children. The plan of these schools was that, in the case of neighborhood schools, the trustees designated for the neighborhood school were to take a census

7

Ibid.

8

Ibid.

of Negro children between the ages of eight to twenty-one years, and report this to the Superintendent of Public Instruction of that district, who in turn conferred with the trustees as to the needs of the school, and in cooperation with them caused suitable buildings to be erected and equipped equal to that of the Indian school of the neighborhood. Also, the trustees were required to supervise the school during that year, visit the school frequently, make reports to the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and sign all reports made by their teachers.⁹

When territorial public schools were established for whites during the years from 1893 to 1907, Negro children frequently presented themselves for instruction at the school opened for whites. Many white people were prejudiced against Negroes. This fact alone has retarded education in Okmulgee County more than any one factor.¹⁰

In 1905 the school for Negroes in Okmulgee had increased to such proportions that they employed nine teachers. The Board of Education for white schools for the city of Okmulgee assumed control of the school when the frame building housing the five colored teachers was constructed in 1905.¹¹

9

Ibid.

10

Okmulgee Chieftain, August 2, 1902, Okmulgee, Oklahoma.

11

Records in the County Superintendent's Office, Okmulgee, Oklahoma.

The teachers of the Okmulgee school during the school year of 1905 and 1906, in their eagerness to advance in their positions, began teaching some high school work. The school for white in Okmulgee had at this time graduated two high school classes, therefore the Negroes felt that they were entitled to high school privileges as well. This feeling has prevailed in Okmulgee City to this date.¹²

In 1906 a school for Negroes was established in Beggs, Oklahoma. In 1909 this school had grown to an enrollment of 178. Four teachers were employed in the Beggs colored school that year. By the end of the term of service of Mr. E. B. Shotwell as County Superintendent of Okmulgee County, there were nineteen schools for colored people. The school enumeration for colored was 1,973. They had enrolled in school 869 students including grades one to twelve. In 1914 there were 2,418 Negroes enumerated between the ages of six to twenty-one years; 1,340 of these were enrolled in the public schools. There were enrolled that same year twenty-one Negroes doing high school work. No graduates were listed in this report. The per capita cost for high schools for Negroes that year was \$93.00.¹³

At the end of the year 1916 there were 2,822 Negroes enumerated, with an enrollment of 1,543 in the common school branches. The average daily attendance for that year in all

12

Ibid.

13

Ibid.

schools for grades one to eight was 756. They had enrolled twenty-three in high school. The per capita cost for high schools that year was \$77.00.¹⁴

At the beginning of the school year 1916, W. H. Fort, who had been educated in Chicago, came to Okmulgee as Superintendent of Dunbar High School, which was begun in the new building erected in 1915-1916. The frame building which was erected in 1905 was then devoted to the use of the grade schools entirely. This frame building was razed in 1937. The site is now occupied by a beautiful stone building constructed during the school year 1937-1938. W. H. Fort was a leader of Negro education. His influence on the school system for Negroes of Okmulgee County is still felt. He remained as principal of the Dunbar High School in Okmulgee until 1932. He was replaced by W. E. Anderson, a younger man than Professor Fort, and educated and highly intelligent. W. E. Anderson is principal of that high school at the present time.¹⁵

By the end of the school year 1920 the enumeration of colored scholastics was given as 2,256, with 1,784 enrolled in grades one to eight, with an average daily attendance of 1,156.¹⁶

14

Ibid.

15

Ibid.

16

Ibid.

In 1907 the method for financing Negro schools was clearly defined. All separate schools, which in most cases meant Negro schools, were to be financed by a levy of two mills made on the taxable property of the entire county. The proceeds of this levy were used to pay teachers' salaries, construct buildings, and furnish equipment. During Mr. Shotwell's administration as County Superintendent, buildings were constructed for Negro schools under supervision of the School Board for whites in the district where it was located. Equipment for the school was bought also on recommendation of the School Board in that district. It was expedient that the Negro teachers not be paid more than the white teachers due to the race prejudice among the whites. In most cases the salaries of Negro teachers was much less than the salaries of the white teachers. In 1910 the lowest salary paid Negro teachers in Okmulgee was \$33.33 per month. The highest salary paid that year was \$97.50 per month.¹⁷

During the administration of J. D. Campbell from 1913 to 1917, the same general policies were continued with regard to the Negro schools, although Mr. Campbell assumed a somewhat more critical attitude toward the building of Negro schools. During the successive administrations up to 1924, Negro schools had not progressed to a great extent. At the end of the school year 1924 there were enumerated in

17

Ibid.

Okmulgee County 2,556 scholastics, with an average daily attendance of 1,386. There were enrolled in high schools 213. There were eighteen colored students graduated from high school that year. The per capita cost was \$85.00.¹⁸

During the period from 1924 to 1925 a program for improvement of Negro education was instituted. All buildings were carefully repaired, painted, and uniform equipment added throughout the schools of the county. At the end of the year 1935 there were forty-three school buildings in Okmulgee County in good condition. There were 3,560 Negro pupils enumerated that year. The enrollment in grades one to eight that year was 2,141. The average daily attendance was 1,747. There were in all sixty-nine teachers employed during the school year 1934-1935. The lowest salary paid was \$75.00. The highest, that of W. E. Anderson of Okmulgee, \$175.00.¹⁹

No teacher of colored schools in Okmulgee County that year held a certificate below the first grade certificate; there were only two of these. Others ranges in rank from elementary state certificates and B. S. Degrees. The general spirit among the colored people of Okmulgee County is very good. Their attitude toward the public school is one of gratefulness for any opportunity offered them by whites who control their schools. It is the opinion of the writer, based on a close study and observation of the Negroes

18

Ibid.

19

Ibid.

of Okmulgee County that there has not been a race of people who have advanced more in education, socially, and in economic conditions than has the Negro race. It is common comment among business people of Okmulgee County that the Negro children of the schools of that county are in general as well fed and clothed as the average white children.²⁰

20

Ibid.

CHAPTER VII
AUXILIARY EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES
OF OKMULGEE COUNTY

4-H Club Work

Four-H Club work has played an important part in the training and development of Okmulgee County since the year 1910. Early in the year 1910 Amos Edwin Lovett came to Okmulgee County as agriculture agent. He had charge of four other counties besides Okmulgee County. No enrollment of clubs is given for that year, but it is stated by early day citizens that there were three 4-H Clubs organized in Okmulgee County during 1910-1911.¹

In 1911 Mr. Lovett was succeeded as County Farm Agent by G. E. Thomas. Mr. Thomas served one year. He was succeeded in 1912 by E. B. Shotwell, who was then County Superintendent of Schools. Mr. Shotwell served throughout the years from 1912 to 1917. During the year 1914 there were 93 boys and girls enrolled in 4-H Club work in Okmulgee County. At the end of the year 1916 there were 159 Club members enrolled. In 1918 Mr. J. T. Carter succeeded Mr. Shotwell as County Agent.²

Mr. Shotwell went to the Oklahoma A. and M. College, at Stillwater, Oklahoma, where he was employed as a pro-

¹ Records in Office of State Director of 4-H Club Work, A. and M. College, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

² Ibid.

fessor of agricultural extension work. Mr. Carter remained one year and was succeeded in 1919 by Mr. D. P. Trent.³

During Mr. Trent's first year of service, 479 boys and girls of Okmulgee County were enrolled in 4-H Club work. In 1920 there were 506 Club members enrolled. By this date 4-H Clubs in Okmulgee County were exhibiting their products at the State Fair. In 1921 there were a number of second and third prizes won at the State Fair in Oklahoma City by these clubs.⁴

In 1921 there were 21 Clubs active in the County. There were more than 100 Pig Club members in Okmulgee County. At the end of Mr. Trent's term of service in 1924, the county had a total enrollment of 603 boys and girls in 4-H Club work. This represented 23 Clubs with still more than 100 Pig Club members.⁵

Mr. Trent was succeeded by Mr. W. L. Fowler, who served as County Agent from Okmulgee County, 1925-1929, inclusive. Mrs. Francis R. McLeod was sent to Okmulgee County as the first Home Demonstration Agent of that County in 1919. She served throughout the years to the end of 1921. She was succeeded by Mrs. Norine Hughes in 1922. Mrs. Hughes is the present Home Demonstration Agent for Okmulgee County, having served continuously since that date.⁶

³
Ibid.

⁴
Ibid.

⁵
Ibid.

⁶
Ibid.

During the year 1926 there were 750 Club members enrolled in Okmulgee County; in 1927 there were 805, and in 1928 there were 832.

Mr. Wesley Chaffin came to Okmulgee County at the beginning of the year 1930. He has continued in this capacity to the present. During Mr. Chaffin's and Mrs. Hughes' term of service in Club work in Okmulgee County, the enrollment has reached the total of 1,061.⁷

Mrs. Hughes has devoted her time and efforts to the promotion of 4-H Clubs and Home Demonstration Clubs. There have been organized in Okmulgee County under the direction of Mrs. Hughes, ten ladies' Home Demonstration Clubs. During the depression years from 1929 to 1935, Mrs. Hughes especially stressed the organization of the Clubs. They did much during those years to teach farm and city women alike to can and preserve foods for future use. Many evidences of the work of the Home Demonstration Agent of Okmulgee County is seen among the students enrolled in the public schools in the improved conditions of cleanliness and neatness of personal appearance in general.

The value of early 4-H Club work among the citizenship of Okmulgee County is evidenced by many young progressive farmers who had their training as 4-H Club members in Okmulgee County. Among these men are James Copelan, Edward Copelan, Otto Nichols, Troy Cannon, and Vernon Waugh.⁸

7

Ibid.

8

Ibid.

Mr. Chaffin and Mrs. Hughes have so established themselves in the lives of Okmulgee County that the citizenship think of them as a permanent fixture in that county. The transfer of these people from that county would be taken as a disaster by the citizenship.

**Civilian Conservation Corps
in Okmulgee County**

On July 22, 1935, Civilian Conservation Corps Company Number 2809 was opened. This company had for its work objective the improvement and beautification of Lake Okmulgee. This company enrolled 164 young men between the ages of sixteen and twenty-one years. The company was commanded by Lieutenant W. F. McIntire who was succeeded very shortly by Lieutenant Edward H. Burba.

Lieutenant Edward Burba immediately set up a program of educational training for these boys.⁹

The personnel of this camp was made up of boys who, in most cases, were willing to apply themselves to civilian pursuits, but unfortunately could not find employment. These young men, as a rule, were not in the best physical condition. The first task was to arrange a program of physical culture. The course consisted of competitive games and class instruction in personal hygiene. Games consisted of soft ball, baseball, boxing, and wrestling.

9

Records in Office of State Director of Education for Civilian Conservation Corps Camps, Santa Fe Tracks and Twelfth Street, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Classes in hygiene met each evening for one hour. Persons qualified to teach this subject were engaged to give instruction to this group. Classes in first aid to the injured also were organized and conducted by various members of the staff. Work shops were set up for instruction in manual arts. Recreational games, such as bowling, checkers, dominoes, and ping pong were organized.¹⁰

During the first year of the Camp at Okmulgee a good library was built up for use of the enrollees. The library contained ten books on trades and industries, twenty-six volumes of general literature and fiction, and more than one hundred volumes of history, economics, and science.¹¹

The training of these boys was divided into two divisions, jobtraining and academic training. Classes in academic training met in the recreation hall, or at a later period, in a room especially constructed for a classroom.

There were among the one hundred sixty-four enrollees, two illiterates, forty-six boys of elementary school achievement level, sixty of high school achievement level and thirty-two of college level. Classes were organized in reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, and spelling. Classes in work training, or vocational training, was organized in the CCC administration, citizenship, typing, and

10

Ibid.

11

Ibid.

woodwork. The average attendance at the classes was as follows:¹²

Reading and writing. . . .	2
Arithmetic	21
Grammar	21
Spelling	21
CCC Administration	18
Citizenship	138

No effort was made during the first year to graduate boys from either common or high school courses. During the second year of the Okmulgee Camp, plans were made and were in process of execution by which those completing the work of the eighth grade would receive an eighth grade diploma, which would entitle the holder to entrance into any state accredited high school. These plans also provided for high school graduation. But these plans were cut short by the removal of the Camp from Okmulgee.¹³

During the stay of the camp in Okmulgee the educational advisers for the Camp were in order: Robert N. Brittain, Glenn Farges, and John W. Bridges. Wesley Chaffin, County Agent, conducted classes in vocational training voluntarily during the year 1936-1937.¹⁴

Morris CCC Camp was established August 19, 1935. There were enrolled in this camp 181 young men. Their

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

educational program consisted of vocational or job training. It was primarily a soil conservation project. Beside job training, courses in academic subjects were offered and the number enrolled in each were as follows:

Reading, writing, and arithmetic..17

Vocational training.....61

These subjects consisted of auto mechanics, photography, telegraph and radio, typing, woodwork, blacksmithing, and mapping. Besides these a full course of physical culture and hygiene courses were offered. No pupils have been graduated from this Camp course.¹⁵

Boys who have taken these courses in these Camps have improved greatly in manners, speech and personal appearance.

Newspapers Published in Okmulgee

Okmulgee County's first newspaper, The Record, was published weekly by E. P. Gupton and printed in Muskogee. Its first issue appeared April 13, 1900. It ceased publication within a few weeks.¹⁶

The next venture was by Valdo Smith, who commenced publication of The Democrat, August 23, 1900. He managed the paper as a weekly until November 1, 1901 when he sold out to C. O. Musselman. Mr. Musselman died January 20, 1904, and his widow continued publication of this paper until 1907.¹⁷

¹⁵
Ibid.

¹⁶
History of Okmulgee, pp. 97 to 100, Chamber of Commerce, Okmulgee, Oklahoma.

¹⁷
Ibid.

In 1901 George Wood established The Creek Chieftain. The first issue of this paper appeared September 3 of that year. Mr. Wood sold the paper, after publishing five issues of it, to R. H. Jenness who changed the name of the paper to The Okmulgee Chieftain. The Okmulgee Chieftain was published twice a week, Tuesdays and Fridays, previously it had been a weekly edition.¹⁸

Frank F. Lamb established the paper known as The Capitol-News, October 18, 1901 and continued publication of it until July 1907.¹⁹

The Democrat and The Capitol-News were democratic in politics; The Chieftain was republican.²⁰

J. W. Foster published The Informer, a weekly paper, for negro readers a short time in 1904. The same year a monthly Baptist paper, Sunshine and Flowers was published for several issues. Both were printed outside of the city.²¹

In April 1907, J. J. Moroney and Dr. O. A. Lambert, both of whom had moved from Marietta, Ohio to Okmulgee, bought The Democrat from Mrs. Musselman. Early in the year 1908, Mr. Bert Hodges, who had been connected with The Muskogee Times-Democrat, bought Dr. Lambert's interest in The Democrat. The owners incorporated the paper soon afterward. They soon built their own plant. It was located between

¹⁸

Ibid.

¹⁹

Ibid.

²⁰

Ibid.

²¹

Ibid.

Fifth and Sixth Streets on the east side of Morton Avenue. They moved into this building in 1909. The building was known as the Democrat Building. It is now known as the Rebolt Building. These men began the publication of The Democrat as a daily soon after moving into the new building. They sold The Democrat to John Rebold of Okmulgee and G. G. Martin, who came there from Franklin, Pennsylvania in April 1918.²²

In December 1918, Mr. Bert Hodges bought The Okmulgee Chieftain and changed its name to The Times. He published this paper one year as a daily, when he in turn sold it to Charles Flick of Pennsylvania and several associates, including Mr. Rebold. The same year, 1919, a firm known as the Time Publishing Company was formed. This firm bought The Times and named Sanford C. Cox as editor and manager. In April 1920, H. H. Horton, former business manager of The Muskogee Phoenix and former business manager of The Tulsa Democrat, now The Tulsa Tribune, bought the stock of Mr. Cox and several other associates in The Times. Mr. Cook retained his interest in the paper. Mr. Horton became active business manager and editorial director of the paper. About this time The Democrat was sold at a bankrupt sale when it was purchased by Mr. H. H. Horton, who combined the two publications and called it The Times-Democrat. At this time The Times was located at the southwest corner of

22

Ibid.

Morton Avenue and Fifth Street and The Democrat in its own building one-half block south.²³

In May both papers were joined in one plant at 114-116 East Seventh Street in a building which had been purchased and remodeled by Mr. H. H. Horton. The Democrat now became an evening paper and The Times the morning paper. The Democrat was published every day except Sunday. The Times was issued every day except Monday. In March 1932, The Democrat was discontinued as a daily and was published every Thursday as a weekly. At the present Mr. H. H. Horton is the manager of both papers. Stockholders, besides Mr. Horton, are Mr. and Mrs. Cook and A. D. Cocchran.²⁴

Unique in The Times files are seven multigraphed issues of The Times published September 7 to 14, 1921, inclusive during a time when printers walked out from work on both Okmulgee Daily papers. The trouble developed, first, between Democrat publishers and their printers over wages. The trouble was soon settled and workers back at their tasks. The multigraphed editions were so small that news was produced in bulletins of utmost brevity.²⁵

In 1902 George Riley Hall established the paper known as the Henryetta Free-Lance. This paper has continued under the management of Mr. Hall to the present. He and his sons

23

Ibid.

24

Ibid.

25

Ibid.

now edit and print the Henryetta Free-Lance in Henryetta. It is the only newspaper in Okmulgee County under continuous management since it was first established.²⁶

For a few years the Henryetta News was published by A. R. Garrett of Henryetta, later it was taken over by Olen Perkins. In 1936 it was consolidated with the Henryetta Free-Lance. The Beggs Independent, a newspaper published at Beggs, was published first in 1910 and continued throughout the years until 1932.²⁷

The Morris News was published first in 1909 and has continued as a publication of that city until the present. These newspapers have had the usual effect in molding the sentiment and influencing the attitude of the citizenship of Okmulgee County. As newspapers usually have, each of these papers have a good circulation among the citizens of the respective cities and quite a good circulation in the rural districts.

The Okmulgee Daily Times now has a wide circulation throughout Okmulgee County and many adjoining counties.²⁸

²⁶
Ibid.

²⁷
Ibid.

²⁸
Ibid.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Schools have existed in Okmulgee County since 1836.

The early Creek Indians were not as eager for education as many of their red neighbors. Early missionaries among the Creeks had great influence in convincing these Indians of their need for education.

Early schools among the Creek Indians in Okmulgee County were crude. Instruction in the fundamentals was concrete, and in many ways, effective. Attendance at the early schools was comparatively good.

Early school laws of the Creeks were well gotten up, and their school system developed rapidly under their laws.

Neighborhood schools were controlled after 1858 by the legislative council of the Creek Indian Nation. The schools of that day developed a high degree of efficiency.

White men came in to the Creek Indian country and into Okmulgee County at a very early date, although the federal treaties with the Indians had stipulated that this should not happen. The coming of the white men stimulated the growth of the Territorial Public School system.

The Neighborhood School System reached its greatest highth of development in the early nineties. It was about this time that neighborhood schools gave way to the Territorial Public Schools.

The city of Okmulgee early assumed a place of leadership among Okmulgee County Schools.

The Territorial Public Schools were given an example of energy and progressiveness by the communities of Cuseta and Natura.

The County Superintendents of Okmulgee County from 1907 to 1935, were: E. B. Shotwell, J. D. Campbell, H. G. Creekmore, N. O. Hopkins, J. O. Payne, Edgar E. Harris, and James A. Nevins.

In 1907 there were four high schools for whites in Okmulgee County with a total enrollment of 121. Thirteen students were graduated from these schools. There were, at the same time, a total of 41 grade schools in Okmulgee County. There were 1,162 whites enrolled in grades 1 to 8. No record of graduates from grades 1 to 8 was found for 1907.

In 1935 there were nineteen high schools and one Junior College; 2,135 students were enrolled in high school, and 102 in the Junior College. In the 86 grade schools 11,087 whites were enrolled, and 608 graduates from the eighth grade.

The schools of Okmulgee County have made a steady advance since their earliest existence. They were retarded by the Civil War, again by the World War, and by the financial depression of 1929. But in general their progress has been constant. After each period of stagnation they rose to higher planes than the period preceding the retardation, as shown by increased number of students graduated, more liberal appropriations for education, and improvements of physical equipment.

Per capita costs for education in Okmulgee County, teachers' preparation, and public school support are on a parity with average counties of the state.

TABLE IV

STATISTICS OF EARLY CREEK INDIAN SCHOOLS
IN OKMULGEE COUNTY, 1838 to 1860

YEAR	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	NUMBER OF TEACHERS	LENGTH OF TERM		TEACHERS' SALARIES	
				Low	High	Low	High
1836-1843	1	No Records were kept					
1843-1844	1	35	1				
1844-1845	2	65	2	6	6		
1845-1854				6	6	\$33.33	\$33.33
1854-1855	2	15	3	Only one school reported			
1855-1856	3	45	4				
1856-1857		No Report					
1857-1858	9	172	11				
1858-1859		No Report					
1859-1860		No Report					
1860-1861	11	222	13	6	6	\$33.33	\$33.33

Blank spaces in any Table indicates no report for that space for the year indicated.

TABLE V
 NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS
 OKMULGEE COUNTY, 1860 to 1907

YEAR	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	NUMBER OF TEACHERS	LENGTH OF TERM		TEACHERS' SALARIES	
				Low	High	Low	High
1860-1867							
1867-1868	1	30	1	6	6	\$33.33	\$33.33
1868-1869	5	150	6	6	6	33.33	33.33
1869-1870	5	155	7	6	6	33.33	33.33
1870-1878	15	250	17	6	6	33.33	33.33
1878-1893	24	500	26	6	6	33.33	33.33
1893-1900	31	968	33	6	8	25.00	35.00
1900-1907	33	1,200	35	6	9	35.00	75.00

TABLE VI

STATISTICS OF TEACHERS' PREPARATION, 1907 to 1920

YEAR	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS	COUNTY CERTIFICATES				STATE CERTIFICATES			SALARIES		LENGTH OF TERM	
		Grades 1st 2nd 3rd	Tempo- rary	High Life	Elemen- School	tary	Low	High	Low	High		
1907-08	41	3 16 15	10							3	8	
1908-09	49	23 40 20	23					\$42.00	\$150.00	3	9	
1909-10	81	21 41 22	23					40.00	150.00			
1910-11	82	14 28 37	30					50.00	150.00	6	9	
1911-12	81	12 31 61	14					40.00	140.00	6	9	
1912-13	81	28 31 30	27					45.00	150.00	5	9	
1913-14	84	23 41 46	26					50.00	130.00	7	9	
1914-15	82	33 20 27	35	8	2			40.00	150.00	6	9	
1915-16	82	19 59 55	3	10	4			45.00	150.00	6	9	
1916-17	82	24 48 23	15	12		1		50.00	155.55	2	9	
1917-18	82	20 51 21	24	21		23		65.00	160.00	6	9	
1918-19	82	15 40 18	27	24		31		75.00	200.00	8	9	
1919-20	84	11 30 10	21	46	22	30		75.00	171.66	6	9	

TABLE VII

TEACHERS' PREPARATION, 1920 to 1935

YEAR	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS	COUNTY CERTIFICATES				STATE CERTIFICATES				SALARIES		LENGTH OF TERM	
		Grades 1st 2nd 3rd	Tempo- rary	Life	High School	Elemen- tary	Tempo- rary	Low	High	Low	High		
1920-21	50	6	27	14	7	2	2	2		\$ 90.00	\$151.00	8	9½
1921-22						2	2	2			186.00	6	9
1922-23						1	3	2			181.00	7	9
1923-24						2	2	2			290.00	8	9
1924-25	57	4	9	18	3					95.00	350.00	8	9
1925-26	57	3	2	8	4					95.00	380.00	8	9
1926-27	56	2	3	3	6					95.00	375.00	8	9
1927-28	55	3	4	9	13					105.00	375.00	8	9
1928-29	56	2	3	4	1					125.00	375.00	8	9
1929-30	56	4	3	2	1	72	41	81	6	125.00	365.00	7	9
1930-31	56	1	4	1		86	44	86	10	115.00	360.00	7½	9
1931-32	58	1		1		86	93	72	12	80.00	360.00	7½	9
1932-33	53	1				94	91	78	12	75.00	300.00	8	9
1933-34	54	1				101	84	98	5	75.00	270.00	8	9
1934-35	52									95.00	275.00	8	9

TABLE VIII

TEACHERS' PREPARATION, 1920 to 1935
(NEGRO)

YEAR	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS	COUNTY CERTIFICATES				STATE CERTIFICATES			SALARIES		LENGTH OF TERM	
		Grades			Tempo- rary	Life	High School	Elemen- tary	Tempo- rary	Low	High	Low
		1st	2nd	3rd								
1920-21	39	1	3	5		2					8	9
1921-22	44						1					
1922-23	44					2	1	1				9
1923-24	44						2	1	\$70.00	\$118.00		9
1924-25	45	10		2		12	20	18	70.00	155.00	8	9
1925-26	45								75.00	165.00	8	9
1926-27	46	1	8	7	1				60.00	175.00	8	9
1927-28	48	1	2	4	8				75.00	180.00	7 $\frac{3}{4}$	9
1928-29	48	2	1		1				75.00	165.00	5	8 $\frac{3}{4}$
1929-30	48								75.00	165.00	5	8
1930-31	49								70.00	160.00	6	8
1931-32	49								70.00	150.00	6	8
1932-33	48								60.00	150.00	6	8
1933-34	49								65.00	160.00	6	8
1934-35	49	6	12			30	20	26				

TABLE IX
 PHYSICAL EQUIPMENT, 1907 to 1920
 (WHITE)

YEAR	BUILDINGS		TEACHERAGES		LIBRARY VOLUMES		TAX VALUATION
	Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value	
1907-08	41						\$14,000,000.00
1908-09	49	\$69,735.00					
1909-10	60	94,325.00					
1910-11	70	20,900.00			4,500	\$ 3,000.00	16,250,750.00
1911-12	81	270,500.00					18,700,018.00
1912-13	82	284,600.00			4,640	2,172.65	21,716,085.00
1913-14	84	370,600.00				4,932.54	25,673,196.00
1914-15	82	358,950.00			12,366	5,780.60	31,507,763.00
1915-16	82	355,400.00			16,528	17,500.00	33,617,500.00
1916-17	82					30,000.00	38,748,613.00
1917-18	82		3	\$ 900.00	3,452	31,126.10	45,617,872.00
1918-19	82		6	3,000.00	2,590		46,618,793.00
1919-20	86	412,200.00	8	12,000.00	5,687		46,793,896.00

TABLE X
 PHYSICAL EQUIPMENT, 1921 to 1935
 (WHITE)

YEAR	BUILDINGS		TEACHERAGES		LIBRARY VOLUMES		TAX VALUATION
	Number	Value	Number	Value	Number	Value	
1921-22	86	\$1,014,200.00	15	\$15,000.00	8,129	\$ 9,500.00	
1922-23	86	1,120,000.00	17	21,000.00	8,194	9,645.00	
1923-24	86	1,090,000.00	20	23,050.00	8,194	9,235.00	
1924-25	87	1,115,752.00	20	26,000.00	7,154	11,500.00	
1925-26	87	1,136,000.00	23	40,000.00	9,005	11,550.00	
1926-27	87	1,114,900.00	30	40,000.00	9,389	11,000.00	
1927-28	87	1,175,000.00	30	41,500.00	10,460	12,500.00	\$44,724,566.00
1928-29	87	1,209,600.00	31	44,600.00	12,564	12,800.00	42,648,345.00
1929-30	87	1,131,980.00	31	45,000.00	12,775	12,950.00	40,529,524.00
1930-31	87	1,133,980.00	31	30,000.00	13,298	15,000.00	34,903,311.00
1931-32	88	1,120,460.00	31	30,000.00	15,650	15,900.00	33,863,275.00
1932-33	87	1,000,325.00	31	29,500.00	16,000	15,950.00	29,800,347.00
1933-34	87	963,745.00	31	29,350.00	16,800	16,125.00	27,645,250.00
1934-35	86	921,125.00	31		17,000	17,500.00	25,348,360.00

TABLE XI
 STATISTICS FOR GRADES 1 to 8
 1907 to 1921

YEAR	ENUMERATED		ENROLLED		AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE		8th GRADE		PER CAPITA COST	
	White	Colored	White	Colored	White	Colored	White	Colored	White	Colored
1907-08	3,656	1,558	1,162							
1908-09	4,033	1,591	3,206	1,060					\$15.68	\$10.53
1909-10	4,397	1,900	3,587	1,630	2,181	447			18.60	14.40
1910-11	4,645	2,185	4,296	1,671	3,517	568	37			
1911-12	4,891	2,307	4,296	1,817	3,517	578	37		25.80	17.00
1912-13	5,401	2,318	5,339	1,873	4,167	695	47		24.00	23.00
1913-14	6,451	2,418	5,842	1,906	5,088	706	46			
1914-15	7,435	2,417	6,639	1,382	5,177	128	55			
1915-16	8,606	2,822	7,412	1,543	5,358	756	79			
1916-17	11,107	3,017	10,075	1,686	6,401	930	92			
1917-18	11,553	2,519	10,500	1,740	7,128	1,060	100	26	20.00	20.10
1918-19	12,658	2,068	11,255	1,770	8,868	1,094	129	33	28.40	27.60
1919-20	13,599	2,256	11,441	1,784	9,163	1,156	172	47	35.80	32.90

TABLE XII

STATISTICS FOR GRADES 1 to 8
1921 to 1935

YEAR	ENUMERATED		ENROLLED		AVERAGE DAILY ATTENDANCE		8th GRADE GRADUATES		PER CAPITA COST	
	White	Colored	White	Colored	White	Colored	White	Colored	White	Colored
1921-22	15,308	3,601	11,620		7,643				\$37.40	\$27.00
1922-23	17,039	3,709	11,640		7,987				38.90	21.50
1923-24	16,370	4,114	11,987		8,117					
1924-25	16,132	4,001	11,301	2,992	7,346	1,386	412	24		
1925-26	16,120	3,506	11,407	2,961	7,288	1,634	428	32		
1926-27	16,550	3,891	11,435	3,185	7,301	1,656	560	47		
1927-28	15,909	3,849	11,667	2,595	8,593	1,970	604	68	48.40	35.00
1928-29	15,539	3,642	11,868	3,063	8,155	1,845	416	72	50.25	35.00
1929-30	15,698	3,930	11,642	3,069	8,895	2,138	470	43	46.60	21.80
1930-31	15,883	4,388	11,243	3,143	8,465	2,548	510		38.60	19.00
1931-32	15,358	4,271	10,970	3,100	8,248	2,458	541		25.80	19.50
1932-33	15,092	4,310	10,299	3,269	7,871	1,456	506	68	28.00	21.30
1933-34	15,126	4,278	10,679	3,232	8,462	1,491	560	85	24.50	16.00
1934-35	15,342	3,888	11,687	2,660	9,966	1,461	608	90	26.80	15.00

TABLE XIII
HIGH SCHOOL STATISTICS, 1904 to 1921

YEAR	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS	ENROLLED		GRADUATES		PER CAPITA COST	
		White	Colored	White	Colored	White	Colored
1905-06							
1906-07	4	121		13		\$65.00	\$
1907-08	4	178		19		62.00	
1908-09	4	100		20		61.25	
1909-10	4	153		33		65.40	
1910-11	5	180		38		78.60	
1911-12	5	197		40		86.00	
1912-13	6	213		43		87.19	
1913-14	8	221		53		85.00	
1914-15	8	222	21	53		88.43	93.00
1915-16	8	323	23	61		85.00	77.00
1916-17	9	598	27	73		82.00	67.00
1917-18	12	635	70	79	11	93.00	63.00
1918-19	12	797	79				
1919-20	13	932	117	101	9	86.00	66.00
1920-21	15	1,103	118	123	18	95.00	85.00

TABLE XIV
HIGH SCHOOL STATISTICS, 1920 to 1935

YEAR	NUMBER OF SCHOOLS	ENROLLED		GRADUATES		PER CAPITA COST	
		White	Colored	White	Colored	White	Colored
1921-22	16	1,491	157	168	13	\$101.00	\$28.00
1922-23	16	1,800	210	202	25		
1923-24	17	2,097	659	234	36	92.00	72.00
1924-25	17	2,054	186	233	28	90.00	67.00
1925-26	19	2,051	34	301	23	88.00	64.00
1926-27	20	2,089	210	270	16	84.00	56.00
1927-28	18	2,322	259	323	17	77.00	85.00
1928-29	19	2,295	226	329	17	81.00	51.70
1929-30	19	1,482	274	272	17		
1930-31	19	1,560	280	286	139	76.00	58.00
1931-32	19	1,557	335	307	20	62.00	62.00
1932-33		2,383	336	452	128	69.00	48.00
1933-34		5,995	378	563	47	55.00	34.00
1934-35		2,135	365	786	49	61.00	36.00

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Robe, Mrs. John M. Former teacher of Nuyaka Indian Mission.

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