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THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE SCHOOL

# SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS AFFECTING UNEMPLOYMENT IN OKLAHOMA

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK

BY [redacted]

DOVE MONTGOMERY KULL [redacted]

Norman, Oklahoma

1940

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# SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS AFFECTING UNEMPLOYMENT IN OKLAHOMA

A THESIS

APPROVED FOR THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

BY



General

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# CHAPTER I

## THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Until the depression years following 1929, unemployment was not a significant social and economic problem in Oklahoma. Relatives, friendly neighbors, churches and volunteer groups assisted during periods of temporary unemployment. As the problem became acknowledged nationally, Oklahoma participated in nationwide plans to relieve an emergency and to stimulate industry. The Reconstruction Finance Corporation, the Civil Works Administration, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, and a number of social security and Federal works agencies succeeded one another in rapid succession. After eight years of Federal assistance, the problem still exists.

The aim of this study has been to present an analysis of the nature and extent of the social and economic factors that affect unemployment in Oklahoma. The study of the natural resources and employment opportunities of the State has been a major objective. An analysis has been made of the employed and unemployed population of the State. Some consideration of the status, number and sex of workers by occupation and problems relating to special training for skilled work has been included. A special effort has been made to determine the extent to which unemployment is due to a lack of skill on the part of those without jobs. In the study of the natural

resources, consideration was given to the quality of soils, the values of farm lands, the amount of revenue from taxation, and the income from crops and livestock. Some attention was given also to mineral resources.

Sources of information included interviews with persons employed in the various fields, and published and unpublished reports of a large number of agencies and organizations functioning in the general field. Census materials were utilized extensively, especially in the study of the composition of the population.

The data secured concerned the fluctuations in case load by counties; migration, transiency, housing, diet, health, loss of skills, age groups, occupations and grade levels. The Oklahoma State Employment Service made available the placement reports which indicated the number registered and placed, compensation benefits, occupational declines, and the sex, age groups and occupations of workers placed.

Interviews with professors in the Department of Agricultural Economics, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, Stillwater, furnished an insight into the correlation between soils and dependency and into the relation of soils and farm tenure to social and educational advancement. Statisticians in the Oklahoma Office of the United States Department of Agriculture furnished reports, bulletins and graphs concerning agricultural developments, declines and transitions. Plans for an improved agriculture were obtained from the offices of the Farm Security Administration and Agricultural Adjustment Administration. Data secured also included farm legislation, crop values in relation to

soils, and soil conservation. The Oklahoma City office of the United States Forest Service supplied facts about shelterbelts and forestry. Reports and articles were secured from the Oklahoma Geological Survey, Norman. From these records were collected facts regarding Oklahoma mineral development and dormant mineral resources that, if explored and developed, would contribute to the expansion of industry, building, manufacturing, road construction and soil building.

## CHAPTER II

## HISTORICAL SETTING OF OKLAHOMA

Indian arrowheads may be found on the surface of Oklahoma farms; buffalo wallows are still visible in some of the large pastures. This State has passed in a remarkably short time through the stone age, the hunting and herding age and the pioneer-home-settling age. The Government settled the Five Civilized Tribes in the eastern half of the State, known as Indian Territory; and later opened western Oklahoma to settlement by a series of "runs", the chief one in 1889, which afforded adventurous white people an opportunity to acquire free homes. Mining and discovery of oil attracted thousands more during succeeding decades. Indian Territory and Oklahoma Territory were united in statehood November 16, 1907.

The pioneers seized their Government gift of land without taking inventory. Prodigal with their wealth, they plowed up soil that should have remained "grassed down", and "pushed" this soil to produce enormous cash incomes from corn and cotton. During a brief period when there was no legislative control of crops and minerals, Oklahoma amazed the nation with its new wealth: $500,000,000 a year from agriculture, $500,000,000 a year from minerals, and $500,000,000 a year from manufactures.

The scene in Oklahoma has changed rapidly, bringing new problems

to be solved. In contrast with the tradition of the savage tribe which required its leader to provide for the entire tribe or relinquish his leadership, Oklahoma found itself in the 1930's with a white society in which modern civilized man "made a killing" in wheat, gorged himself and guarded with his life the part that he could not use while women and children were hungry. A scarcity of jobs kept men from providing for their families.

Now, Oklahoma is in the stage of analyzing what it has done, why it is on relief and what it should do next in order to settle down to a traditional pattern of living which is sufficiently scientific to insure a degree of security. The people who settled Oklahoma comprised adventurous, young couples who were eager to acquire their own homes by cutting the bonds from their northern or eastern families; couples that had failed to establish themselves in already oversettled communities; families whose leaders had, as Boomers, invaded the Oklahoma Territory earlier to boom the opening; and a few of the lawless escaping from over-restrictions of civilization or unpleasant pasts. There were the Sooners also who "jumped the guns" by staking claims prior to the legal opening in 1889.

In the first few years after settlement, dreary and monotonous months were broken by festive days: ice cream socials, quiltings, play parties for the young, Fourth of July picnics with "home-grown oratory", political campaign speeches, rodeos, calf roping, "bulldogging". On Arbor Day the community gathered to plant trees, to eat together and be sociable. On the last day of school, every one called at the schoolhouse

to surprise the teacher and eat a picnic lunch. Pie suppers served a dual purpose, as a social outlet and a means of equipping the schoolroom. Training in oratory, debate and public speaking was gained through school "literaries" where the community would "choose up sides and spell down" or set forth the merits of the dishrag as against those of the broom as symbols of culture and civilization. Children rode long distances on horseback to school where they recited from the platform and washed in a common washpan. A father nailed together crude benches for his own children and paid so much a month for each of his children toward the teacher's salary. Social and religious activity combined to lead the entire community to participate in revivals and church socials, to attend public baptisms in the lake or neighborhood stream. If a man were ill, families drove over in lumber wagons, "pitched in and put out the crop". The wives cooked dinner for all of the menfolks who gathered to help. When crops were to be harvested, neighbors exchanged work with one another. Many of them held it as a virtue to do as much or more for the neighbor than the neighbor had done for them.

But with all of their initiative and cooperation, the early settlers were unable to establish themselves without outside aid. Many of them put in their crops in 1891 through the courtesy of the railroads which supplied free seed.[1] In 1890, Congress appropriated money to

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1. Information furnished by E. E. Blake, Oklahoma City, attorney for the Rock Island.

relieve suffering brought on by a severe drouth.[2]

Oklahoma Territory, in an Act,[3] effective September 14, 1890, accepted the grant and created a board to administer it.

## RELIEF

### CHAPTER LXXIV. -- RELIEF


| Article | | Article | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Congressional appropriation distributed. | 2. | Clerks of relief boards. |


### ARTICLE I. -- CONGRESSIONAL APPROPRIATION DISTRIBUTED


| Section | | Section | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Secretary of Territory to receive appropriations. | 10. | Discretionary powers of commissioners. |
| 2. | Duties of Territorial board of relief. | 11. | Orders for goods and order of preference. |
| 3. | Distribution of aid. | 12. | Commissioners' accounts filed. |
| 4. | County boards of relief. | 13. | Report of Secretary of Territory Money when paid. |
| 5. | Ward, village and township boards. | 14. | Penalty for misexpenditure. |
| 6. | Purchase of supplies. | 15. | Officials, how qualified. |
| 7. | Supplies for the sick. | | |
| 8. | Distributing points. | | |
| 9. | Contracting powers of board. | | |


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2. U. S. Statutes at Large, Volume 26, p. 679. (No. 44) Joint resolution appropriating money to the Territory of Oklahoma to relieve destitution therein. Resolved by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, That the unexpended balance of an appropriation made by public resolution numbered fifteen, approved April twenty-fifth, eighteen hundred and ninety, for the relief of persons in the district overflowed by the Mississippi River and its tributaries, be, and the same is hereby, re-appropriated to the Territory of Oklahoma, to be expended as the law of said Territory enacted for the purpose, may direct for the relief of citizens of drought of that Territory, who have been rendered destitute by the unexampled drought of the present season. Approved, September 1, 1890.

3. Statutes of Oklahoma 1890, p. 1058.

AN ACT to Provide for the Distribution of the Money Appropriated by Congress for the Relief of Persons in Oklahoma Territory Rendered Destitute by the Unexampled Drouth of the present Season, and other Donations or Aid from any sources.

(Took effect September 14, 1890.)

Be it enacted by the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Oklahoma:

(6112) I. That the Secretary of the Territory of Oklahoma be and he is hereby authorized to receive from the Treasury of the United States, the money appropriated by a joint resolution of Congress for the relief of persons in Oklahoma Territory rendered destitute by the unexampled drouth of the present season, approved September, 1890, and all other donations or aid from any source, and to execute proper vouchers for the same.

(6113) 2. The Governor shall appoint, with the advice and consent of the Council, a commission consisting of three persons, who shall constitute a Territorial "Board of Relief". One from each of the three political parties in the Territory, whose duty it shall be to ascertain and make a record of all cases of destitution in the Territory, to purchase and distribute such supplies as are necessary to afford relief in the same, in the manner hereinafter provided.

(6114) 3. The fund so appropriated by Congress, and other donations or aid, shall be distributed among the counties of the Territory of Oklahoma in proportion to their respective population as shown by the census taken under the direction of the Governor; but such ratio of distribution may be changed by the "Territorial Board" herein provided for, on full reports made to them by the county distributing committees, which reports shall be based upon reports made to them by the various wards, villages and townships. It is hereby made the duty of said township and county Commissions to so report on request of the Territorial board of relief.

(6115) 4. For the purpose of creating county boards in each county the Governor, by and with the advice and consent of the Council, shall appoint three persons from each county in Oklahoma Territory, and no more than one of the same board shall belong to the same political party. The Governor shall be and is hereby authorized to remove any one or more of the persons so appointed for any failure to properly discharge the duties incumbent upon them under the provisions of this act, and by and with the advice and consent of the Council, may fill any vacancy which may occur by such removal or otherwise, if the Legislature

be in session, and if not in session the Governor alone may fill such vacancy. It shall be the duty of each county board on the last day of each month to make a full and complete report to the "Territorial Board" of all supplies received and distributed by them.

(6116) 5. The respective boards created by the preceding section of this act, in each county of this Territory are hereby empowered to appoint three discreet persons who are resident property holders, from each ward of the various cities and villages, from each village and from each Congressional township or fraction thereof, in Oklahoma Territory, whose duties shall be as hereinafter provided, and shall have the power to fill all vacancies which may occur.

(6117) 6. The "Territorial Board of Relief" shall from time to time, as the necessities of the destitute people may demand, and as the conditions of said fund will permit, contract at the lowest possible rates for the plain and ordinary necessities of life, which shall consist of flour, bacon, meal, beans and salt in suitable quantities, which contracts shall be in writing, plainly specifying the kind, grade, quantity and the price of each article, and shall designate the place where said goods are to be delivered and shall be signed by at least two of the commission above named, and also by the party contracting to supply the said goods, and shall be filed with the Secretary of the Territory and preserved in his office subject to inspection at all reasonable hours.

(6118) 7. The "Territorial Board of Relief" may in like manner contract for the purchase of a proper quantity of supplies suitable to the care and sustenance of the sick.

(6119) 8. The goods so contracted for, shall for Payne county be shipped to Stillwater and Perkins, via Guthrie or Wharton, as the "county board" may designate; for Logan county, to Guthrie; for Oklahoma county, to Oklahoma City and Edmond; for Cleveland county, to Norman; for Canadian county, to Frisco via El Reno; for Kingfisher county, to Kingfisher and Hennessey; for Beaver county, to Buffalo and Beaver; and shall be consigned to the commissioners provided for in section 4 of this act.

(6120) 9. The Territorial board of relief provided for in section 2 of this act shall have the authority to contract for and fix the rate for all necessary freight and storage of the goods purchased from the point of purchase to the point of destination. The county board provided for in section 4 of this act shall have authority to rent buildings in which to store the supplies shipped to them and from which to dis-

tribute them. The freight and storage of such goods from the point of purchase to the point of destination shall be paid by the Secretary of the Territory out of the relief fund, on the order of "The Territorial board of relief", and the rent of buildings at the points of distribution, shall be paid by the Secretary of the Territory out of the relief fund on the order of the county board, and in both cases the Secretary of the Territory shall hold such orders, and the receipts from the persons to whom the orders are given for the money shall be vouchers in the hands of the Secretary for the money so paid out.

(6121) 10. The commissioners provided for in section 4 of this act, shall receive the goods shipped to the respective counties and shall send a receipt therefor to the Secretary and shall safely keep the goods and deliver them to the parties holding orders therefor, as hereinafter provided; but if any one of said commissioners provided for in section 4, has good reason to believe that any of said orders are not in good faith, or that the holder of said order is not a fit subject of charity, they shall refuse to fill the same, or if there be not goods sufficient to fill the orders issued, they may fill them in part only to the end that there may be a fair distribution of said goods.

(6122) 11. The three persons named in their respective townships, villages and wards shall see to the condition and situation of persons claimed to be destitute and shall give to such persons, who were lawful residents of Oklahoma, on the first day of August, 1890, an order to the commission named in section 4 of this act, for goods, which order shall show the ward, village or township in which the one receiving it resides and which said commission may fill as hereinafter provided, and on issuing these orders children, widows and sick persons shall always be preferred. Next in order, men lawful residents who are heads of families shall be preferred according to the conditions of their respective families. The "Territorial Board" shall issue printed instructions to be distributed to the persons who are to act in the various counties and cities and townships as to how to proceed and shall prepare and set out forms for orders and on the back thereof forms to receipt for goods, said county commission shall so divide said goods at each ward, village and township shall receive its fair and just proportion of the goods sent to the respective counties.

(6123) 12. The commission shall keep an accurate account of all receipts and disbursements and shall between the first

and tenth days of each month file with the Secretary of the Territory a report of the same, for the next month preceding the date of such report.

(6124) 13. The Secretary of the Territory shall pay out said fund upon the order of the Territorial commission hereby created upon the presentation of any draft drawn thereon signed by a majority of such commission and shall report monthly to the Legislative Assembly how he was disposed of such relief fund.

(6125) 14. If any member of either of said boards shall knowingly connive at the expenditure of any of such money, or for the distribution of any of such money, or for the distribution of any of such supplies in any manner other than as contemplated by the act of Congress of the United States, in making such appropriation, or contrary to this act, such person shall be deemed guilty of a felony, and shall upon conviction thereof in court of competent jurisdiction, shall be sentenced to the penitentiary for a period of not less than one year nor more than five years.

(6126) 15. Each of the officers mentioned and described in this act shall before they enter upon their duties as such, take subscribe and file with the Secretary of their respective boards, an oath or affirmation to support the constitution of the United States and the law of Congress made to establish Territorial form of government for Oklahoma Territory, and to faithfully discharge the trust imposed in them under this act to the best of their ability, and each or either of the members of the committee shall be authorized to administer an oath and propound such questions as they deem necessary to ascertain the worthiness of the subject for charity, and any person or persons, swearing falsely to obtain any part of the appropriation or donation or other aid, upon conviction thereof in a court of competent jurisdiction shall be sentenced to the penitentiary for a period of not exceeding one year.

ARTICLE 2. -- CLERKS OF RELIEF BOARD

AN ACT to provide clerks for county relief boards. (Effective November 23, 1890.)

Section
1. Clerks of boards.

Be it enacted by the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Oklahoma.

> (6127) 1. That each county board of relief be allowed one clerk each for distributing point in the county, who shall receive one dollar and fifty cents per day, for each day that rations are distributed, and be paid out of the relief fund: PROVIDED, The county relief board may dispense with the services of a clerk, and the secretary of such board shall receive the compensation provided for herein.

People, hungry and shabbily dressed, walked, rode on horseback or in wagons to issue stations for food. They exchanged stories of their extreme deprivation as they waited for relief. One "eighty-niner" has told how he withdrew from the waiting line (because he still had a bushel of peas and some lard) after he heard another man tell how, for six weeks, his family of seven had lived on a one-item diet, black-eyed peas without lard, butter, salt or pepper as seasoning.

Since 1888 the Great Plains Region, of which Oklahoma is a part, has experienced 11 severe drouths occurring in 1889, 1890, 1894, 1901, 1910, 1917, 1930, 1931, 1933, 1934, and 1936. In 1896, the Chief Hydrographer of the United States Geological Survey described climatic conditions in the Great Plains Region.[4]

> Year after year the water supply may be ample, the forage plants cover the ground with a rank growth, the herds multiply, the settlers extend their fields, when almost imperceptibly, the climate becomes less humid, the rain clouds forming day after day disappear upon the horizon, and weeks lengthen into months without a drop of moisture. The grasses wither, the herds wander wearily over the plains in search of water holes, the crops wilt and languish, yielding not even the seed for another year. Fall and winter come and go with occasional showers which scarcely seem to wet the earth, and the following spring opens with the soil so dry that it is blown about over the windy plains. Another and perhaps another season of drought occurs, the settlers depart with such of their household furniture as can be drawn away by the enfeebled

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[4] Areas of Intense Drought Distress 1930-1936, (Series V, Number 1, WPA Research Bulletin, Wash., D.C. 1937), p. 4, quoting Newell, Frederick H., Irrigation on the Great Plains, Yearbook, U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1896, p. 168.

> draft animals, the herds disappear, and this beautiful land, once so fruitful, is now dry and brown, given over to the prairie wolf. Then comes a season of ample rains. The prairie grasses, dormant through several seasons, spring into life, and with these the hopes of new pioneers. Then recurs the flood of immigration, to be continued until the next long drought.

Six of the states in the Great Plains Region are semiarid: North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. From 1881 to 1930, the average annual rainfall in Oklahoma has been 32.63 inches.[5] Drouths have been disastrous in Oklahoma not only because of lack of rainfall but, as in 1934, because of contributing factors, excessive heat and continuous high winds.

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5. Areas of Intense Drought Distress 1930-1936, WPA Research Bulletin, (Series V, Number 1, Washington, D. C. 1937), p. 7.

## CHAPTER III

## POPULATION ANALYSES

Since the 1890 drouth, population distribution has been influenced by the amount of rainfall, soil productivity, occupational attractions of certain urban centers and of mineral extraction. From 1920 to 1930, shifting population increased the population of 50 counties and decreased that of 27. In 1930, there were 2,396,040[6] persons in the State. Negroes lived mostly in the east-central counties where they did small scale farming. Muskogee had the largest urban percentage of this race. Tulsa and Oklahoma City also attracted many.

The Indians as a whole are agricultural. They supplement their incomes through handicraft. The Five Civilized Tribes, Cherokees, Choctaws, Creeks, Chickasaws and Seminoles, live in the eastern part of the State. The Plains tribes are located in Kiowa, Caddo, and Comanche Counties; the Osages, in Osage County. More than 30 tribes, including 92,725 members and composing 36 per cent of the nation's Indian population, lived in Oklahoma in 1930.

Only 1,408 aliens and an additional 1,223 aliens with first papers were living here in 1930.[7] The distribution and percentages by races and nativity were as follows:

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6. U.S. Bureau of the Census. Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930. Population, Vol. III, Part 2,(Washington: Government Printing Office), p. 541.

7. Ibid., p. 558.

TABLE I

Population Growth by Decades Oklahoma

1890-1930[8]

| Decade | Number | Per Cent Increase by Decades |
|---|---|---|
| 1890 | 258,657 | |
| 1900 | 790,391 | 205.6 |
| 1910 | 1,657,155 | 109.7 |
| 1920 | 2,028,283 | 22.4 |
| 1930 | 2,396,040 | 18.1 |

8. Ibid., p. 541.

TABLE II

Population Distribution by Race Oklahoma 1930[9]

| | Number | Per Cent |
|---|---|---|
| White | 2,130,778 | 88.6 |
| Negro | 172,198 | 7.2 |
| Indian | 92,725 | 3.9 |
| All others | 339 | 0.01 |

9. Ibid., p. 541.

TABLE III

Population Distribution by Nativity

Oklahoma 1930[10]

| | Number | Per Cent |
|---|---|---|
| Native White Parentage | 1,994,305 | 83.2 |
| Native White Mixed Parentage | 53,901 | 2.0 |
| Native White Foreign Parentage | 48,465 | 2.0 |
| Foreign Born White | 34,107[11] | 1.4 |

10. Ibid

11. This number includes foreign born white, naturalized, aliens, and aliens with first papers. (2,349 persons of unknown parentage are not included in this table.)

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The average size of all the families of all classes in the State was 4.02 in 1930.[12] Home owners in general had 3.51 persons to the family; tenants, 3.72. Urban residents included 3.18 members to a family, while rural farm residents had 4.27 members and rural-nonfarm, 3.46. The largest families were among the rural farm tenants who averaged 4.45 members.

The rural areas also had more illiterates than the cities. In the State, 2.8 per cent of the population, or 51,102 persons, were illiterate.[13] Of this number, 30,114, or 3.2 per cent, were males; 20,998, or 2.4 per cent, were females. Of the population from 10 to 20 years of age, 6,015, or 1.1 per cent were illiterate. Of persons 21 years and over, 45,087, or 3.5 per cent were illiterate. Of rural persons, 3.7 per cent were illiterate. Only 1.2 per cent in the towns were illiterate. Tulsa and Oklahoma City ranked in 1930 among the ten cities in the United States having the fewest illiterates per 1,000.[14] There was less illiteracy in this state than any other of the sixteen southern states.

A study of economic factors as related to social life among 1,362 Oklahoma cotton farmers was made in 1933.[15] These families were representative of full owners, part owners, share and cash tenants, and croppers in Carter, Greer, Jefferson, Kiowa, Love, McIntosh,

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12. Ibid., Vol. VI, Families, p. 1070.
13. Ibid., Vol. III, Part 2, p. 546.
14. Ibid.
15. Duncan, O. D. and Sanders, J. T., A Study of Certain Economic Factors in Relation to Social Life Among Oklahoma Cotton Farmers: Experiment Station, (Bulletin No. 211, Stillwater, 1933), 35 pp.

TABLE IV

Population Distribution by Residential Environment

(ie. Urban, rural farm, rural non-farm)

Oklahoma 1930[16]

| | Number | Per Cent |
|---|---|---|
| Urban | 821,681 | 34.3 |
| Rural farm | 1,021,174 | 42.6 |
| Rural non-farm | 553,185 | 23.1 |

16. Ibid., p. 541.

Stephens, Tillman, Jackson, Bryan, and Pottawatomie Counties. Figures in this study revealed a tendency for lower farm tenure to be associated with lower educational achievement and for ownership to be related to higher educational status.[17] Of the children of croppers, 79.7 per cent received an average of 5.6 years of schooling, while only 1.4 per cent gained as much as one year of college. Children of full owners, however, fared better; 57.2 per cent of these children received an average of 7.3 years of schooling and 9.6 per cent, an average of three years or more of college. This tendency characterized varying geographical areas of the cotton belt in the southeast, the south central and the southwest where children of croppers and tenant farmers are either not inclined or not financially able to continue in school. More than four-fifths, or 86.8 per cent of the operators studied in the survey, did not go beyond elementary school.[18] One of the conclusions drawn from the survey was that a positive correlation exists between economic and educational advancement among parents, and that this relationship is carried over to the educational advancement of children.[19]

A study made in May 1938, of Works Progress Administration occupational cards in the Division of Employment[20] revealed that in

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17. Duncan, O. D. and Sanders, J. T., A Study of Certain Economic Factors in Relation to Social Life Among Oklahoma Cotton Farmers: op. cit., p. 24.

18. Ibid., p. 26.

19. Ibid., p. 28.

20. WPA Survey of Farm Tenantry, Farm and Crop Values, Land Utilization, Education, As They Affect the WPA Caseload, WPA For Oklahoma, Ron Stephens, Administrator, Compiled by E. L. Hopper, Division of Employment, (Oklahoma City, May, 1938.) (Mimeographed.)

the lower educational level of fourth grade education or less were 16.8 per cent of the group from 18 to 25 years; 23.4 per cent of the group from 26 to 40; and 38.1 per cent of the group 40 and over. This condition was reversed in the next two educational groups, with the exception that the state total for the 26 to 40 age group still showed a slightly higher percentage in the fifth to eighth grade group than the 18 to 25 age group. Of persons possessing some college training there was again a slight increase in the older age groups. These conditions might indicate that the youth of today have found it necessary to seek employment rather than continue with their college training. This may account also for the smaller percentage in the 18 to 25 age group that is receiving college training.

In a Works Progress Administration case load of 92,245, there was 28.1 per cent with only a fourth grade education or less, and 56.2 per cent with between fifth and eighth grade. Only 14.3 per cent had received from a ninth to twelfth grade education, and 1.4 per cent, some college training.[21] Further study showed that Alfalfa County in the northwestern wheat belt, with a case load of 228 in May 1938, had no certified workers with less than a fifth grade education in the 18 to 25 age group. But 4.9 per cent in the 26 to 40 age group and 7.5 per cent in the group over 40 had less than a fifth grade education. On the other hand, Adair County, in the eastern impoverished soil area with a case load of 593, showed the educational limitation of fourth

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21. Ibid.

grade for 33.33 per cent of the workers between 18 and 25 years, 24.44 per cent of the group between 26 to 40 and 49.52 per cent of the group over 40. This meant that 37.6 per cent of the county's case load had an education of fourth grade or less.[22]

The construction program of the Works Progress Administration in the State has included more than 600 school buildings while the adult education program of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration and the Works Progress Administration has concentrated on classes for illiterates.

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22. Ibid., Table I.

## CHAPTER IV

## SOURCES OF LIVELIHOOD

All persons ten years of age and over in Oklahoma in 1930 totaled 1,845,657. Of this number, 44.9 per cent were gainfully occupied.[23] With the exception of West Virginia, this was the lowest state percentage of gainfully occupied in the United States. Agriculture attracted 306,901 of the 828,004 gainfully occupied.[24] There were 139,923 engaged in manufacturing and mechanical industries; 100,244 in trade; 73,470 in domestic and personal service; 56,087 in transportation and communication; 53,087 in professional service; 43,086 in clerical work; 41,286 in extracting minerals; 12,519 in public service; and 2,211 in forestry and fishing.

Of the 828,004 persons gainfully employed, 15 per cent were females ten years of age and over.[25] Women were scattered throughout the various occupations: 35 per cent in domestic and personal service; 21 per cent in professional service; 17 per cent in trades; 10 per cent in agriculture; 7 per cent in manufacturing and mechanical industries; 5 per cent in transportation and communication; 1.4 per cent in public service; 1 per cent in extraction of minerals, forestry and fishing.

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23. Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930. Population Vol. III., p. 17.

24. Ibid., p. 18.

25. Ibid., p. 20.

TABLE V

Usual Industries of FERA Workers

Oklahoma March 1935*

| Usual Industry | Number | | | Per Cent | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female |
| Agriculture | 83,740 | 82,390 | 1,350 | 54.5 | 98.3 | 1.7 |
| Forestry & Fishing | 670 | 640 | 30 | .04 | 95.6 | 4.4 |
| Extraction of Minerals | 6,760 | 6,750 | 10 | 4.4 | 98.4 | 1.6 |
| Manufacturing & Mechanical | 18,800 | 15,050 | 3,750 | 12.1 | 85.4 | 14.6 |
| Transportation | 11,180 | 10,930 | 250 | 7.2 | 97.6 | 2.3 |
| Trade | 3,630 | 2,680 | 950 | 2.2 | 74.1 | 25.9 |
| Public Service not else where classified | 440 | 300 | 140 | .02 | 68.1 | 31.9 |
| Professional & Technical | 1,510 | 780 | 730 | .09 | 51.7 | 48.3 |
| Domestic & Personal Service | 11,360 | 1,780 | 9,580 | 7.2 | 15.6 | 84.4 |
| Industry not specified | 15,540 | 14,430 | 1,110 | 10.1 | 92.8 | 7.2 |

*Workers on Relief in the United States in March, 1935, A Study of Industrial and Educational Background, Vol II. WPA Division of Research. (Washington, D. C., 1938), p. 312.

Men over ten years of age gainfully occupied numbered 698,698.

The total number of native white men over ten years of age was 833,662. Of these, 73 per cent were employed.[26] Of the 15,489 foreign born white men ten years of age and over, 84 per cent were gainfully employed. In other words, the proportion of gainfully employed foreign born men was 10.9 per cent higher than the proportion employed of native white men. Male negroes ten years of age and over totaled 68,315 with 75 per cent gainfully occupied. This percentage was 2.2 per cent above the whites. The native born white male may have a higher standard of living or an air of independence that drives him to refuse work at a low wage. Most of the foreign born came over for the express purpose of finding employment, therefore, there are fewer of the foreign born from 10 to 18 proportionately than in the native born group. Part of the explanation of difference may lie in school attendance and illiteracy. Of all persons ten years old and over in 1930, statistics showed 1.7 per cent of illiteracy among the native white population, 5.6 per cent among the foreign born, and 9.3 per cent among the Negroes. Indians were not separated in the census by race and occupation. Gainfully occupied boys ten to seventeen years of age of all races totaled 26,270; girls, 5,526. Legislation, however, has affected employment for this age group.

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26. Ibid., p. 36.

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TABLE VI

Industrial Distribution of Gainfully Occupied

Oklahoma 1930*

| Industry | Number | | | Per Cent | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female |
| Agriculture | 306,140 | 293,288 | 12,852 | 51.9 | 42.0 | 9.9 |
| Forestry & Fishing | 2,285 | 2,266 | 19 | 0.3 | 0.3 | .... |
| Extraction of Minerals | 60,210 | 58,690 | 1,520 | 9.6 | 8.4 | 1.2 |
| Manufacturing & Mechanical | 111,953 | 102,759 | 9,194 | 21.8 | 14.7 | 7.1 |
| Transportation | 62,212 | 55,842 | 6,376 | 12.9 | 8.0 | 4.9 |
| Trade | 115,735 | 93,375 | 22,360 | 30.6 | 13.4 | 17.2 |
| Public Service not elsewhere classified | 16,239 | 14,457 | 1,782 | 3.5 | 2.1 | 1.4 |
| Professional Service | 55,800 | 28,174 | 27,626 | 45.3 | 4.0 | 21.3 |
| Domestic & Personal Service | 71,119 | 24,950 | 46,169 | 39.2 | 3.6 | 35.6 |
| Industry not specified | 26,336 | 24,417 | 1,919 | 5.0 | 3.5 | 1.5 |

* Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, Population. Vol. III, Part 2, p. 549.

TABLE VII

Age Distribution of FERA Workers

Oklahoma March 1935*

| Age | Number | | | Per Cent | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female |
| 16-17 | 8,892 | 5,300 | 3,591 | 5. | 59.7 | 40.3 |
| 18-19 | 12,978 | 8,166 | 4,812 | 6. | 62.1 | 37.9 |
| 20-24 | 32,072 | 22,842 | 9,230 | 17. | 71.2 | 28.8 |
| 25-34 | 51,287 | 37,736 | 13,551 | 27. | 73.5 | 26.5 |
| 35-44 | 38,469 | 27,166 | 11,303 | 20. | 70.6 | 29.4 |
| 45-54 | 30,794 | 22,445 | 8,349 | 16. | 72.9 | 27.1 |
| 55-64 | 17,246 | 13,424 | 3,822 | 9. | 77.7 | 22.3 |
| Total | 191,738 | 137,080 | 54,658 | 100. | 71.4 | 28.6 |

* Workers on Relief in the U. S. in March 1935, Vol. I, Table 4, WPA, Division of Social Research, p. 718.

The most employable age for men in 1930 was from 25 to 44 years. Ninety seven per cent of those in this group were gainfully employed. The chances were not so good for groups younger or older. Only 75 per cent of the men from 18 to 25 were employed and 71 per cent of those over 45. The age group from 18 to 25, however, was the most favorable for employment of women. Twenty-two per cent of them were employed. Only 18 per cent of the women 25 to 44 had gainful work, and 9 per cent of those over 40. Forty per cent of the people on the Works Progress Administration in 1938, on the other hand, were over 40. At the other extreme, 15.8 per cent of the total caseload in Oklahoma was in the age group from 18 to 25 and 43.6 per cent in the 26 to 40 group.

Farming is the leading occupation in Oklahoma. The 1935 farm population was 1,015,562.[27] The total number of farms reported in that year was 213,325. There were in the same year 55,285[28] full owners representing 255,687 persons; 22,460 part owners, representing 128,935 persons; and 122,490 tenants, representing 626,006 persons including 12,339 croppers with families of 58,713 persons and 110,151 other tenants representing 567,293 persons.

As many as 113,194 farmers reported they obtained no outside work for pay. However, 44.5 per cent of all farm operators worked in

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27. U. S. Bureau of the Census, U. S. Census of Agriculture, 1935. Statistics by Counties with State and U. S. Summaries, Vol. II, (2nd Series. U. S. Department of Commerce), p. 718.

28. Ibid., p. 718.

TABLE VIII

Age Distribution of Occupied Population Oklahoma 1930*

| Age | Number Occupied by Sex in Each Age Group | | | | Per Cent of Total Population in Each Age Group Employed by Sex | | Per Cent Distribution of the Employed by Age Groups by Sex** | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Male | | Female | | | | | | |
| | Total | Occupied | Total | Occupied | Male | Female | Total | Male | Female |
| 18-19 | 50,195 | 31,179 | 51,102 | 9,115 | 62.1 | 17.8 | 4.9 | 4.5 | 7. |
| 20-24 | 114,425 | 101,083 | 116,466 | 29,489 | 88.3 | 25.3 | 15.8 | 14.5 | 22.8 |
| 25-34 | 183,889 | 178,265 | 182,114 | 35,361 | 97.0 | 19.3 | 12.9 | 12.7 | 13.6 |
| 35-44 | 152,164 | 148,354 | 141,585 | 24,304 | 97.5 | 17.1 | 11.4 | 10.1 | 9.3 |
| 45-54 | 115,329 | 111,526 | 97,801 | 15,555 | 91.7 | 15.8 | 7.6 | 8.0 | 6.0 |
| 55-64 | 75,492 | 68,924 | 57,690 | 7,306 | 90.8 | 12.4 | 4.6 | 4.9 | 2.8 |
| 65-74 | 39,011 | 17,333 | 29,247 | 2,157 | 68.6 | 7.1 | 1.8 | 1.9 | 0.8 |
| 75-and over | 15,673 | 5,338 | 12,957 | 393 | 34.1 | 3.0 | 0.7 | 0.8 | 0.3 |

* Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, Population, Vol. IV, Occupations by States, p. 1334.

**The total number of gainfully occupied from which the percentages were computed included persons 10-17 years.

1934 for pay or income not connected with their farms. This group engaged in non-farm work for a total of 5,063,639[29] days. A further analysis of the figures showed that 31 per cent of the full owners worked outside for pay a total of 1,670,599[30] days; 37 per cent of the part owners, 483,563 days; 16 per cent of the farm managers, 15,136 days; and 52 per cent of the tenants, 2,894,341 days. A study of the tenants on this basis showed that 53 per cent worked outside for pay a total of 284,361 days; and 51 per cent of other tenants worked for 2,609,980 days. Other employment was for the most part composed of non-agricultural work.

> Today the farmer is affected by the size of the coffee crop in Brazil, which in turn affects the size of the cotton crop; the drouth in Australia; the Danish pig crop; the self-determination of nations; the mechanization of agriculture; our changing food habits; a decline in the birth rate, and other bewildering forces. No longer is farming a simple way of life. It is, instead, a complex business. The Oklahoma farmer, whether consciously or unconsciously, is adapting himself to, or is suffering from, the economic readjustment of nations and internal changes of our country.[31]

Oklahoma's land, totaling 44,424,960 acres, takes a gradual slope from the northwestern corner of the Panhandle, which is approximately five thousand feet above sea level, to the southeastern

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29. Ibid., p. 722. Figure arrived at from the result of the number of days each man worked multiplied by the number of men employed.

30. Ibid., p. 719.

31. Roberts, Clarence, "Balanced Farming and a Brighter Day", Daily Oklahoman, (Oklahoma City, April 23, 1939), p. 3.

corner of the State, which is 350 feet above the sea.[32] In the northwest, wheat growing and livestock raising are the chief activities; oil dominates in several central counties; coal mining, lumbering and cultivation of corn are the dominant occupations in the eastern counties. Lead and zinc are mined in the northeastern counties. Cotton engages much attention in all of the southern counties except the sub-marginal area in the southeast. The year of 1936 saw Oklahoma first in the production of zinc, second in oil, fifth in mineral, and eleventh in agricultural products. It was twenty-third in lumber production and thirty-fourth in manufacturing. Nationally, Oklahoma was seventeenth in total wealth.

According to the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, corn yields increased from the settlement days to 1909. During those years Oklahomans planted their largest corn acreages, harvested their biggest yields and showed the greatest total production. Corn, still one of the principal crops, decreased sharply in production from 1909 to 1914 and suffered an additional decline from 1920 to 1930.

Although Oklahoma has ranked among the greatest cotton producing states for years, the increasing surplus of available raw cotton has caused Oklahoma farmers to turn to other crops. The acreage and production climbed steadily until 1925 when the downward curve began.

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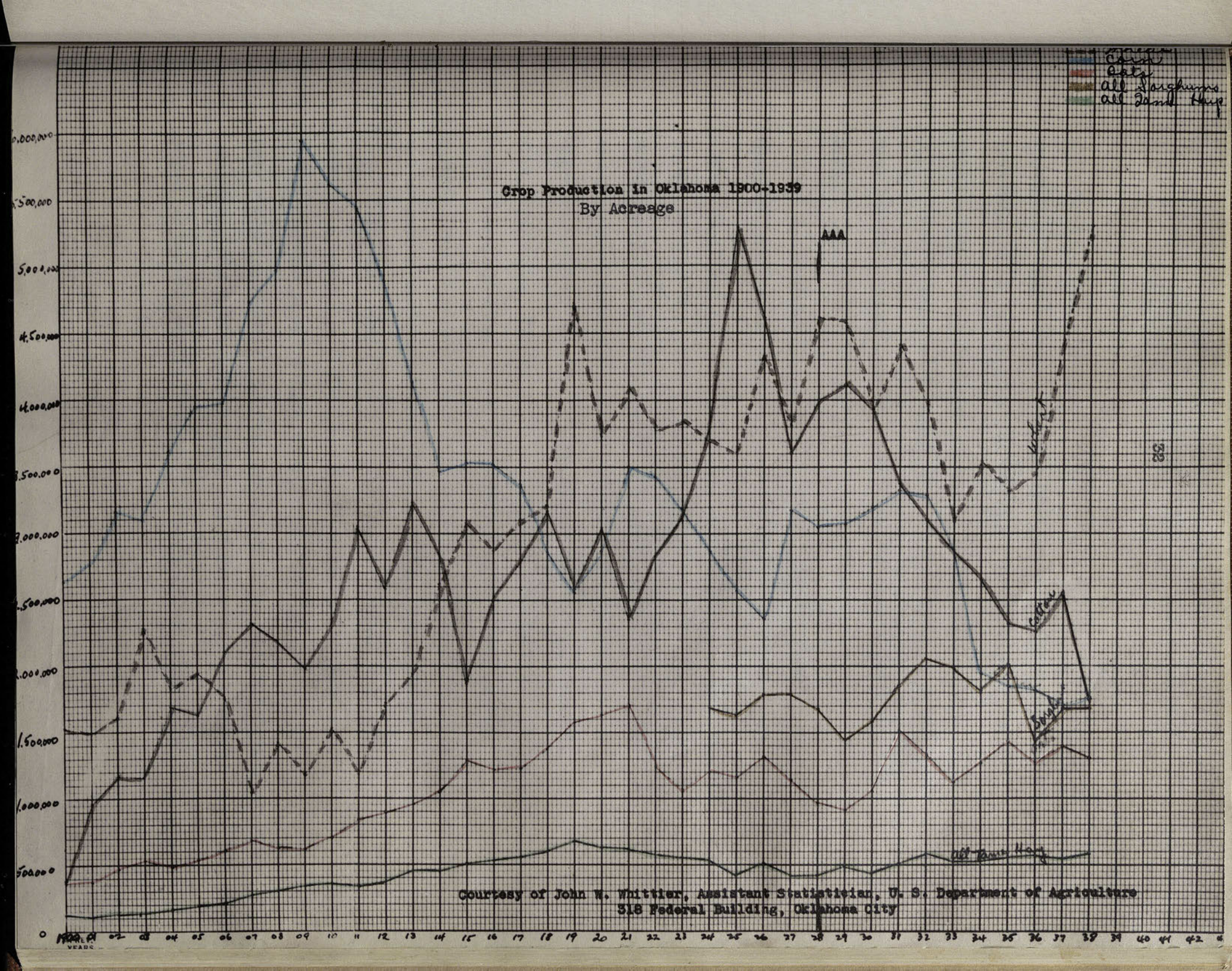
32. Phillips, George R., State Forester. The Oklahoma Forest Service. United States Department of Agriculture. (Publication #7, Reprint #1. Oklahoma City, 1935), p. 16.


Crop Production in Oklahoma 1900-1939
By Acreage
AAA
Courtesy of John W. Whittier, Assistant Statistician, U. S. Department of Agriculture
318 Federal Building, Oklahoma City

This was accentuated by drouths and government action to reduce cotton production. Boll weevil created disaster years in 1921 and 1922. In 1938 Oklahoma farmers planted the smallest acreage to cotton that they have devoted to that crop in any year since 1905.

During the 1920's the acreage for grain sorghums increased. Oats and tame hay took on a very gradual upswing until 1920 when they assumed moderate up and down trends.

The total planted acreage of all Oklahoma's principal farm crops in 1938, was 13,266,000, according to reports by the United States Department of Agriculture. This compared with 13,130,000 acres in the previous year and the average of 14,199,000 acres in the previous ten years. Oklahoma was among the leading states in production and acreage of more than a dozen principal farm commodities. In wheat production, the State has ranked consistently among the top five wheat states; in cotton production, among the top ten. It has ranked above all other states except Texas in the number of bales ginned. Only Texas and Kansas have ranked with Oklahoma in production and acreage of grain sorghums. Oklahoma usually stands second.

Oklahoma, near the top in livestock production, ranked about seventh in the number of cattle. The State led all southern states in dairying and ranked twelfth in the United States in this field. Only six or eight states had more horses and mules; only about fourteen, more hogs. The 1935 Census of Agriculture ranked Oklahoma fifth in number of turkeys, eighth in peanut production, fourtennth in hay

acreage harvested, fourteenth in cowpeas harvested for peas, sixteenth in sweet potato production and twentieth in total value of turkeys and chickens. In oats production, Oklahoma has ranked among the first ten states. Good yields in years of large acreages have placed the State among the first ten or twelve corn producing states.

Through the Agricultural Adjustment Act, the Federal Government has assisted the farmers in crop control; through the Rural Rehabilitation and the Farm Security Administration, it has aided soil conservation and individual rehabilitation. Relief case loads are affected by the soil, increasing and decreasing according to its quality and the variations in factors affecting its productiveness. Machines, tractors and combines, have dispossessed human laborers, especially in the western part of the State. Affecting the crops are drouths, washouts, boll weevil, grasshoppers, chinch bugs and rust. But the soil itself, from which 65 per cent of the unemployed have tried to make a living, is depleted from the one-crop system and cut into deep gullies by wind and rain erosion.

The Panhandle dust bowl during the drouth of 1935 was a center of acute distress. The following report prepared in 1935 described the courage and tenacity of human beings thrown upon relief through no fault of their own. The report covered Cimmaron, Texas, Beaver, Harper, Ellis, Woodward and Woods Counties.[33]

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33. Report prepared by Dorothy DeWitt, Field Representative for the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, Oklahoma.(Typewritten).

The seven counties in the present drouth area of Oklahoma have always been part of the commercial farming and cattle grazing area. A few ranches of thousands of acres still exist; but farms now consist of a few sections of land and frequently a quarter section. In years previous to this long succession of drouths, wheat yield of forty to sixty-five bushels per acre was not unusual, and grass and water were available for stock. The land was fertile, and farms were known to pay for themselves in one year with the wheat crop produced.

The reverse is now true.

There was no crop of any kind produced in 1934, and the 1935 wheat crop is completely destroyed. It is estimated that no possible crop can be produced for another fifteen months. Pastures of dry grass do not exist because the grass is blown out completely and shows only occasionally at the edges of miniature sand dunes. The few cattle remaining walk over fence tops buried in sand. Half dug out farm homes show a small patch of roof. Frequently, farm home outside doors can be opened only with effort because of drifts of dust and sand that have formed during the night. Listed fields show level furrows.

Stock is dying from lack of feed and "sand colic" developed in attempting to nose out dry tufts of grass. Feed of poor grade sells for $25.00 a ton. The cost of food is equally high -- as an illustration, onions sell for ten cents a pound in contrast to two and one-half cents in the southeastern section. Utilities are high, too, in proportion, and many farmers are forced to haul water for long distances. Sagebrush has been blown out by the roots, and tumbleweeds constantly roll across the highway -- one day from north to south, and the next, from south to north, returning. Dust and sand shift as rapidly in heavy rolling walls and in whirlwinds sometimes sixty feet high.

Cars carry short-length chains which drag along the highways to keep them from being "grounded" when struck by the whirlwinds. Nine whirlwinds per mile at forty miles per hour car cruising speed, present a good frequency rate.

Main highways require constant maintenance to keep them open because of shifting sand and dust drifts. Less important roads have frequently been abandoned. Case aides carry shovels and are often stuck in the sand from six to seven hours, all the time shovelling. Visibility is so short that

it is often impossible to see highway signs at intersections. Less-traveled roads and farm buildings cannot be recognized.

Deaths from "dust" pneumonia have been occurring at the rate of one per day in Cimarron and Beaver Counties. Windows cannot be opened at night because of the danger from night storms, although the day might be clear. The three-inch snow which fell in Colorado, New Mexico, and Cimarron County in Oklahoma, gave only three days' relief from the dust. Many homes have windows taped, double blankets tacked over windows to catch the dust which sifts in around the window frames, and floors covered with thick layers of paper for protection from the dust which sifts upward through the cracks.

There is no employment available in private industry. Private industry is leaving rapidly; for example, an agency selling moderately-priced cars abandoned Boise City, County seat of Cimarron County, two weeks ago. There has been no seasonal labor in the wheat fields. Cattle ranches are deserted. Horses, cattle, and furniture are being trucked out daily. Families are migrating to Arkansas and Missouri, where they can raise gardens, have fuel for cutting, and build log houses, they say. New cars are not in evidence in the county seat towns.

The percentage on the relief rolls as computed on the 1930 census basis, misrepresents the picture. The census population figures are far too high for the present total of population which is being rapidly decreased through migration.

Variety in relief projects is difficult to secure. Clients are scattered, and existing regulations are difficult. Practically all work relief has been on road and schoolhouse construction. Road construction has been carried on under the NRWR program with large horses and large equipment. Administrators report that twenty to sixty per cent of the allocations received must be used necessarily for team and truck hire and supervision.

Allocations heretofore have never met the requirements of budget deficiency on a food and household necessity only basis. Rent is high. Natural fuel (wood and coal) does not exist. There are no gardens and no canned produce remaining from other years. Cows have been turned out to forage and are no longer giving milk.

The only available employment has been on the State

highway construction jobs; but few of our clients have had sufficient food during the last year to give them the strength necessary to do the work required, and are constantly being returned to the Relief organization by the foreman who say, "I'm sorry, but they are only able to work three hours. They don't have enough to eat."

Pneumonia deaths are preceded many times by measles and scarlet fever. Epidemics of mumps, whooping cough, and a disease described as "non-contagious menigitis" also exist and are spreading eastward. Malnutrition, disease, and dust have made a health situation most critical, as indicated in the death rate in Beaver and Texas counties. Case aides have developed "dry" bronchitis, and many of them have had severe hemorrhages. Doctors forbid their return to their territories. Qualified applicants are not available. Salaries do not carry provision for actual mileage. Driving conditions are hazardous both to cars and to health. Case aides in the most serious health conditions are being transferred to the office staff, and the stronger members of the staff are being sent to the field. Car bearings and pistons are being cut out with sand and dust. Filters are necessary, and change in oil and grease is imperative at less than five hundred miles.

But withal, the people of the Panhandle want to stay. Many are migrating; but seventy-five per cent and over are remaining. Case records show mortgages of thousands of dollars on farm machinery now being buried in sand and dust. Land, stock, and machinery have no more loan value. Many credit agencies no longer attempt to operate in the Panhandle counties.

There is the constant oral expression, "We can't leave. Everything we had is here. We can make it if it will ever rain; but our families are all sick. It was never this bad before; but we're going to try to stay on another year or two. We've seen millions of dollars of wheat grown here. It has to rain again sometime. We have water under the surface in some of this land, and if we could irrigate, we could raise gardens and a little feed. The soil isn't hurt; this is mostly good loam blowing in; but we've got to have rain."

One of the trends toward soil conservation is the shifting of this western dust bowl into livestock farms. The trend is being retarded by high prices of livestock and a four to six year period

of waiting for animals to grow into cash profits. Renters are not able to become stock farmers. Absentee owners are not interested. The total value of all crops in Cimarron, Texas, Beaver, Harper, and Ellis counties in 1930, according to the Resettlement Administration, was $25,866,274. in contrast with $13,608,050 for 1935. During this period the Panhandle became known as a dust bowl. In 1935, Crop Reporting District No. 9,which includes five counties in the southeastern corner of the State, estimated the total value of all crops and livestock produced in the district for the year was $11,488,363. For the same year, in Crop Reporting District No. 4 composed of six of the central western counties, there was a total crop and livestock value of $29,267,029, or nearly three times that of the southeastern district.

The average value of an improved acre in Atoka County in 1935 was $9.34; the per capita valuation was $233.80. The average value of an improved acre in Alfalfa County was $41.65; the per capita valuation was $2,381.78. Farmers in the eastern and southeastern sections of Oklahoma have utilized very few of the methods of conserving the soil. Among the wooded areas are wooded pastures interspersed with red clay hills, cut into deep gullies by rains that have washed the top-soil away. The tillable acreage is small. Only 10 per cent of the land in Latimer County is cultivated as compared with 71 per cent in Jackson County located in the southwestern corner of the State. Farms have passed into fewer hands. In depression

years when the cost of production has equaled or exceeded the market value of crops, the small farmers have relinquished or lost their farms until more than 60 per cent of the farmers of the State have become sharecroppers or tenants.

County and municipal branches of Government have been affected seriously by shrinking revenues during the past decade. Homestead exemptions, reduction in the assessed valuation of property, inability of property owners to pay taxes have brought about this shrinkage. The homestead tax exemption law has affected especially the counties of the eastern part of the State. This law exempted from taxation 99 per cent of the total homestead valuation in Delaware County on the eastern border. Only 38 per cent, however, in Grant County in the northwest was exempted. Since tax exemption covers only the first $1,000, the high percentage of exemption further emphasizes the generally low valuation of property in the eastern area where many homes are totally exempt.

Soil erosion is accompanied by farm land tax delinquency. The better soil maintains its owners and enables them to pay taxes; the depleted soil neither maintains its owners nor enables them to pay taxes. In 1932 Grady, Murray, Love, Pontotoc, Latimer and Sequoyah Counties were suffering from the burden of 70 to 85 per cent of assessed acres delinquent; the entire farm acreage of the State was delinquent 46 per cent.[34] Quality of soil, of course, was not the only

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34. A Compendium of Maps and Charts Pertaining to State Planning in Oklahoma. Oklahoma State Planning Board. (Oklahoma City, 1936), p. 36.

factor influencing tax delinquency. There were other difficulties: mismanagement, and low prices for produce.

Oklahoma farm tenancy, which increased from 51 to 62 per cent between 1920 and 1930, especially affected the eastern counties.[35] The counties from Osage south to Bryan and from Jefferson east to McCurtain showed 70 to 80 per cent farm tenancy in 1930. A large portion of the land in these counties is being held by absentee owners for oil or mineral development and is not being improved. It is estimated that about half the tenants move annually from one farm to another, the least skilled going to the poorest farms, the best equipped to the best farms. As a result of this competitive moving about, the poor soils lose their opportunity for improvement.

Haskell, Latimer, LeFlore, Pushmataha and McCurtain Counties form a sub-marginal area that soil experts have said should be retired from cultivation.[36] The strip of counties from eastern Osage southward to Bryan, suffering from serious soil erosion, is in need of larger farms, different types of farming, soil building and soil conservation. A strip from Ottawa swinging westward to Okmulgee, the soil specialists have outlined as in need of fertilizing and a changed erosion. A section extending south to the Red River from Dewey, Blaine and Kingfisher has suffered only moderately from soil erosion, and needs a changed crop system. Even the northern part of the rich wheat belt

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35. Ibid., p. 38.

36. Ibid., p. 28.

demands attention. Low rainfall and wind erosion necessitate a change in farm practices such as tilling and seeding only under favorable conditions. Parts of Greer and Ellis Counties along the west line suffer from over-grazing.

The United States Soil Conservation Service has listed Oklahoma as one of the states most seriously affected by erosion. The agricultural methods brought from other states by the settlers were disastrous here. Within a short time, nearly 45 per cent of the State lost 75 per cent of its topsoil; and, in some places, part of the subsoil was lost. The State started a soil conservation program to conserve and reclaim its soil through terracing, contour cultivation, strip cropping, check dams and rotation soil holding and soil building crops.

Oklahoma was the first state in the nation to participate in the soil conservation program through the Work Projects Administration. A project, made eligible under the ERA Act of 1939,[37] began operations in McIntosh County in November, 1939. Features of the project were 3,000 acres of pasture sodding, 2,000 acres of gully control, 50,000 lineal feet of terrace outlet channels, 60,000 square yards of sodding of terrace outlets, 30 acres of tree planting, 10,000 rods of fencing, 15 farm reservoirs, 60,000 lineal feet of diversion terraces, 600 acres of fertilizer applied, 1,000 acres of land seeded to erosion resisting crops, 10 terrace outlet structures, 10,000 acres of terrace

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37. United States Congress, Public Resolution Number 24 of the 76th Congress, Joint. Section 1 (b) (3). (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1939)

and pasture lines, 15,000 lineal feet of roadside protection, 200 miles of terraces and other appurtenant work. This project was proposed

> . . . for the purpose of establishing proper land use practices thereby tending to reduce the effects of erosion, prevention of crop failure and resulting impoverishment of rural families, . . . . . Since the larger portion of the laborers used are tenant farmers from the rural section, an increase of proper land use practices can be expected on farms that are not under agreement. As the practices become established, a gradual increase in the income of cooperating farmers can be expected. The training received on this work should make the workers more desirable tenants and lead to the acquiring of small tracts of land on which, by proper land use practices, they could expect to earn their living. This increase in personal income will result naturally in an increase in governmental revenues.[38]

This project, including a total of 259,200 acres and costing approximately 35 cents an acre, strikes at the heart of the relief problem in Oklahoma through a dual objective of preserving natural resources and rehabilitating land owners on or near relief. Sixty-five per cent of the people certified by the Work Projects Administration formerly earned their living from some agricultural pursuit. The Work Projects Administration has proposed nine state soil conservation districts similar to the one operating in McIntosh County. These districts would reclaim 6,745,000 acres at a total cost of $560,882. The nine districts would include LeFlore, Haskell, Latimer, Pittsburg, Choctaw, Beckham, Washita, Murray, Garvin, Jackson, Stephens, Tulsa, Wagoner, Rogers, Pottawatomie, Seminole, Pontotoc, Roger Mills

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38. Excerpt from departmental memorandum to Ron Stephens, Work Projects Administration Administrator, from W. H. Sindt, State Director, Work Projects Administration Operations, Subject: McIntosh County Soil Conservation, (Oklahoma City, August 1, 1939).

and Custer Counties.[39] Oklahoma's brief history has demonstrated that "Agriculture is no richer than the soil, neither are the business and the communities dependent upon it."[40]

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39. The procedure necessary to obtain Federal assistance for soil conservation work on privately owned property is:

1. The soil conservation district, which must be organized in accordance with the State law, may comprise a part of the county, a full county or parts of several counties. A district is organized to include land lying within certain drainage areas.

2. The soil conservation district, after it is duly organized in accordance with the State law, enters into a memorandum of understanding with the United States Department of Agriculture and is then entitled to the technical services furnished by the United States Soil Conservation Service.

3. The individual landowner within such soil conservation district must enter into a cooperative agreement with the Soil Conservation District before any technical information is available to him for soil conservation work to be done on his land. This agreement provides for proper land usage and cropping over a period of five years. It also provides for the landowner to do certain work, such as construction of terraces and other erosion control measures.

4. Under the 1939-40 Appropriation Act for work relief, Federal Funds have been made available to assist in erosion control measures on private land. The soil conservation districts, which have been organized under the law as outlined above, may submit project proposals to the WPA for certain items of work in connection with soil erosion control. Under such projects, the United States Soil Conservation Service will furnish the technical service for land on which the owner has entered into a cooperative agreement with the Soil Conservation District which is the legal sponsor of the project. The individual landowner and the Soil Conservation Service furnish all of the sponsor's constribution.

40. Bennett, Dr. Henry G., President Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, Chairman State Soil Conservation Committee, "Oklahoma Needs Enlarged Soil Program," The Hugo Daily News. (Hugo, Oklahoma, Dec. 21, 1939).

Reforestation of sections that should not have been plowed is another step in soil conservation. The Government is working toward reforestation in Oklahoma, not only to conserve the forests which lumbering is devastating, but to establish a shelterbelt for the soil. Near Lexington, in Cleveland County 9,000,000 seedlings are grown annually in the shelterbelt project; they are culled and the best are sent to western Oklahoma to be planted. From 50 to 75 per cent of the counties in the vicinity of the Quachita Mountains are in forests: short-leaf pine, post and red oaks, hickory, fork-leafed white oak, red gum, elms, maple and sycamore. Although 75 mills are in operation, the United States forest service has estimated that enough lumber work remains in this section to keep 3,700 men busy the year around for 10 years. The total annual value of the State's forest products is $10,000,000.[41] Replanting and more careful harvesting of trees are parts of the forest service plan. Second-growth plantings now occupy 85 per cent of the forest area.

Much of what is thought to be soil is only soil material, for Oklahoma soils, as a whole, are extremely shallow, without reservoirs to retain moisture necessary to resist drouths. These shallow soils, planted to row crops by the pioneers, washed away. Farm values decreased. Two million acres of Oklahoma land is severely eroded, cut

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41. Forestry Facts for Oklahoma., op. cit., p. 20.

by gullies too deep for farm machinery to cross.[42] The pioneers, unaware of the need for soil conservation, did not maintain a productive condition by a proper system of soil management. They did not know "that centuries of time are required to develop one inch of surface soil and that erosion would remove seven inches of earth in thirty years from a sloping field planted annually to cotton or corn."[43] Annually sweeping prairie fires have robbed the soils of the pioneer, the primitive farmer and the ranchman of moisture and soil-building content. Approximately 150,000 tons of superphosphate would be needed annually by soils to replace phosphorus removed by wheat, corn and cotton. More than a third of the original nitrogen content has been lost since grass and forests were uprooted.

Oklahoma's eroded land has become an agricultural liability not only to communities, but in some instances, to the State and to the nation. In sections in which soil productivity is low, as in cotton areas, improved standards of living depend upon a change in the size of farm units or upon higher prices for crops. Strangely enough, "the term 'poor white trash' is applied to some of these unfortunate people who live in an environment which they did not create".[44] With no money to buy plant nutrients or machinery to distribute lime

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42. Harper, Horace J., Soil and Civilization; Reprinted from Vol. XXVI: Proceedings of the Oklahoma Academy of Science, (Stillwater, Oklahoma, 1937), p. 3.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid.

and phosphate, with little hope of cash income after a series of drouths, these people are entangled in a net of misfortune which can be straightened out only by drastic legislation and reorganization of farming systems. It has been pointed out that "terrible punishment" has been inflicted on the soil in an attempt to increase farm income. Social progress has ceased, and social problems of a very difficult nature have appeared.[45]

A study of the soil is being made by the Bureau of Chemistry and Soils in the United States Department of Agriculture which studies and classifies soil on the basis of productivity as determined by physical and chemical examinations. Already maps have been prepared to indicate the location of productive soils and areas unsuited to the production of cultivated crops. A number of soil survey reports and maps of counties in Oklahoma have been published, and field work in additional counties is in progress. Soil surveys furnish information essential to promote land utilization studies. The State Agricultural and Mechanical College has three definite objectives in land use planning: development of a comprehensive program for soil conservation, necessary readjustment in land use or practice, and a plan for the permanent retirement of given lands from cultivated crops which fail to yield a profit under a system of good soil management.

Since 3,000,000 acres of State and Indian land in Oklahoma is not subject to taxation, the remaining acreages in communities where

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45. Ibid., p. 4.

these lands are located must carry the tax load. Add this obligation to the back of the community which already bears the burden of farms too poor to pay their own way and the tax situation is a problem.

Rural zoning laws in Wisconsin and Michigan have made it impossible for individuals to settle on impoverished soil unsuited to providing a self-sufficient type of agriculture. County Commissioners have found that rural zoning has helped solve their tax problems by placing farmers on soils that will pay their way and by preventing settling on soils that pile up delinquent taxes for the county. The magnitude of the complex farm problems extends beyond individual ownership rights.

The Congress has passed more than a dozen major farm laws and a number of minor ones since 1933. States also have created legislation to improve rural living.[46] Soil scientists, economists and other experts have been called in to assist the farmer in adapting Federal and State programs locally. The director of the State Extension Service serves as the chairman of the State Land-Use planning Committee composed of the director of the State Experiment Station, the chairman of the State Agricultural Adjustment Administration Committee, State Coordinator of the Soil Conservation Service, State Director of the Farm Security Administration, the State planning representative of the

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46. Planning for a Permanent Agriculture, United States Department of Agriculture, (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1939), p. 1.

Forest Service, and other State and department representatives who administer public land use programs, and a number of farm people, at least one from each type-of-farming area within the State. Since 1935, the Department of Agriculture has developed an administration that invites active and voluntary participation of farmers themselves.[47] The Department's philosophy has become, "Democracy is not government by experts. Democracy is government by the people, who seek the aid of experts".[48]

The agricultural problem became a leading national issue following 1921, when surpluses accumulated and did not disappear. The reasons[49] for surpluses were that the area of cultivated land greatly expanded during the World War and continued to expand after the Armistice; the automobile, truck and tractor displaced crop-consuming horses and mules; the United States became a debtor instead of a creditor nation; European countries increased their production of farm products; new producers from newer countries such as Argentina and Australia entered the world market. Broad objectives of the Agricultural Department that have grown out of the complexity of the farm problem are to guide the population toward the use of land in ways that will maintain its productivity and provide the highest possible

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47. Ibid., p. 7.
48. Ibid., p. 10.
49. Ibid., p. 13.

standards of living for the United States.[50] Attainment of these objectives is restrained by economic pressure on the farmer who may be driven to exploitation of his soil in growing cash crops. The Agricultural Adjustment Administration was designed to assist the farmer with this problem by paying him to shift land from soil-depleting to soil-conserving uses.[51] Payments are made also to adopt soil-building practices suitable to the farmer or to the area.[52] These practices include

1. New seedings of soil-conserving crops as grasses, legumes and trees.
2. The application of limestone, superphosphate, or other chemical applications; mulching orchards, green manuring, etc.
3. Terracing
4. A wide variety of erosion-control measures as contour furrowing, protecting summer fallow, strip-cropping, damming, reducing the number of animal units grazing on range land, and restoring native grasses.

The underlying psychology of this new Agricultural Adjustment Administration program is positive rather than negative. Instead of paying a farmer by contract not to produce on a given section of his land, he is paid by voluntary agreement to produce a given number of acres and practice soil conservation or soil-building on the remaining acreage. No penalty is imposed upon farmers who do not participate.

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50. Ibid., p. 19.
51. Ibid., p. 21.
52. Ibid., p. 22.

The Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1938, established, however, marketing quotas to regulate the volume of cotton, corn, wheat, tobacco or rice as it moves through inter-state commerce channels to market.[53] Penalties were provided for each bushel or pound of a crop marketed in excess of a farm's marketing quota. This amounts to 15 cents a bushel for corn or wheat, 2 cents a pound for cotton. To prevent the emergency wherein farmers are forced to obtain cash by throwing their whole crops on the market at harvest times, the Act provides for loans to farmers on the security of their stored crops.[54] This prevents market flooding and allows the farmer to hold his crop so that he may obtain any advantage of increase in prices. This Act also provided for crop insurance for wheat beginning with the 1939 crop.[55] Crop insurance was planned to establish and maintain reserve stacks of wheat. Later, insurance may be extended to other crops. The Government may purchase surpluses for distribution to those in need.

The poor soils, less suited to agriculture, accompany mining areas. An extensive development of mineral extraction and mineral by-products would, therefore, induce retirement of some sub-marginal land from cultivation.

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53. Ibid., p. 27.
54. Ibid., p. 26.
55. Ibid., p. 29.

## CHAPTER V

## MINERAL RESOURCES

The State reached first rank nationally as an oil producer in 1927. Later it gave way to Texas, and, in 1939, dropped to third place below California. Four and one-half billion barrels of oil during the last forty years have created $6,000,000,000 in wealth for the State. During this period the state produced an estimated 18.9 per cent of all the oil produced in the United States. In 1929, it turned in 25 per cent of the nation's oil supply. Through 1930, Oklahoma produced 22.8 per cent of the national oil supply.[56] Since that time, the percentage has decreased because of increasing production in other states and the establishment of a strict curtailment program by the state corporation commission. In 1939, Oklahoma was producing 17 per cent of the national oil supply, despite the fact that curtailment was more stringent than in previous years.

Although irreplacable oil and gas are being drained from the state's earth, there are numerous minerals unexplored industrially.[57] To rebuild Oklahoma's eroded and crop-worn soil, the State's deposits

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56. Barrow, Claude V., oil editor. The Daily Oklahoman. (Oklahoma City, April 23, 1939.)

57. Statement made in 1939 in a personal interview with Robert H. Dott, Oklahoma Geological Survey, Norman.

of limestone will yield quantities of fertilizer. A geological survey is conducting investigations to determine the extent of deposits of phosphates, magnesium and potash. The survey mapped, sampled and tested large deposits of high-calcium limestone suitable for treating acid soil and extended the information to the Agricultural and Mechanical College for the use of farm agents. These spreading deposits, found in many communities, could furnish local needs.

> In the matter of mineral products, the outlook is not quite so gloomy as in agriculture. . . . . These dormant resources, lying undeveloped in the ground, are not paying taxes. They are not adding to our effective wealth nor to the revenues of our state. It is up to us to do everything in our power to aid in the development of the dormant resources of Oklahoma and the establishment of factories here within the state which will take care of our needs. It is up to us to encourage in every way possible the opening of the quarries and of mines, to the establishment of plants and factories to utilize these raw geological materials so that we do not need to send our good money abroad for the things we should be producing at home.[58]

Oklahoma hills still contain 79 billion tons of coal, or enough to last 26,000 years.[59] Coal, more or less displaced in the State by natural gas, is found in 20 eastern counties. At its peak of production in 1920, the annual output was 4,849,288 short tons valued at $23,294,000 as compared with the 1936 production of 1,540,303 tons valued at $3,500,000.

The Arbuckle and Wichita mountains of southern Oklahoma hold

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58. Gould, Charles N., "What of the Future?", The Daily Oklahoman, op. cit., p. 45.

59. Ibid.

tons of asphalt which is potential paving for the streets and roads of the State. Already this has been quarried near Ardmore, Lawton, Cache, Dougherty, Sulphur, Valliant and other localities in 14 southern counties.

Gypsum, another dormant mineral found in 30 western counties, has been estimated at nearly 123 million tons, or enough to keep 100 mills busy 34,000 years.[60] It might be used for wall plaster and wall board, and possibly for outside walls. Gypsum occurs in six different forms: gypsite, or earth gypsum; three crystal forms, selenite, satin spar and concretionary; and rock gypsum, accompanied by anhydrite, found in Blaine and Major Counties.

Salt is found in abundance. Seven salt plains are in western Oklahoma, in Woodward, Woods, Alfalfa, Blaine, Beckham, Greer and Harmon Counties. The United States Geological Survey estimated a rock salt area 300 miles long and 100 miles wide from central Kansas across Oklahoma to the Texas panhandle. This vast rock salt, which is beneath the surface of the soil, is more than 100 feet in thickness and is the largest known salt deposit in the United States, probably in the world.[61] Approximately 100 carloads of salt could be manufactured daily from salt water flowing from the springs in the State.[62]

Oklahoma's most abundant metal is zinc. At one time Ottawa

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60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.

County produced more zinc than all the combined output of all the states except Oklahoma. Zinc not only is not depleted in Ottawa, but there are unmined quantities in the Arbuckles and the Ozarks.[63] Lead and zinc, found together,are separated by smelting.

Copper has been located near Perry, Watonga, Kenton, Paoli, Byers, Lawton and Prague. Low grade iron is found in the Arbuckle and Wichita mountains. Manganese iron ore has been located in the Arbuckles near Turner Falls as well as in the Wichita mountains between Apache and Cooperton.

For future building, Oklahoma has an abundance of granite, sandstone and limestone.[64] The Arbuckle and Wichita mountains afford granite. Near Tishomingo is a granite area of 100 square miles; and in the Wichitas, is a 60 mile stretch. The basement of the State Capitol Building was constructed from granite extracted from Ten Acre Rock near Troy. Few of the 50 granite quarries in the State are now active.

Porphyry, of igneous origin, similar to granite, may be used for road metal, concrete rock and building stone.[65] The East Timbered Hills south of Turner Falls in the Arbuckles and the West Timbered Hills south of Fort Arbuckle are pink porphyry. This pink igneous stone is found also in the Fort Sill reservation and along Medicine

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63. Ibid.
64. Ibid.
65. Ibid.

Creek north of Lawton. Gabbro, another igneous formation, is used for road metal, monument stone and building. It is located near Cold Springs and the Wichita game refuge.

Limestone, which has many uses, occurs in six areas in the State: the northeastern Ozarks in parts of Ottawa, Delaware, Mayes, Adair, Cherokee and Sequoyah Counties; the Arbuckle mountains in south central Oklahoma including Carter, Murray, Pontotoc, Coal, Johnston and Atoka Counties; the Wichita mountains in the southwest in Comanche, Kiowa and Caddo Counties; the north central part in Kay, Osage, Washington, Nowata, Craig, Rogers, Tulsa and Pawnee Counties; the Red River in McCurtain, Choctaw, Bryan, Marshall and Love Counties; the section comprising Pittsburg, Latimer, Atoka, Coal, Johnston and Pontotoc Counties.[66] Limestone may be used in building and in the manufacture of Portland cement, as crushed rock for cement, for road metal and some manufactured products. The amount of Oklahoma's limestone is estimated to be in the billions of tons, yet Oklahoma has only two plants for Portland cement. Much of this cement is imported from other states.

Sandstone is another building stone in abundance. Nearly every county has some of it, varying in color from gray to red. The Ouachita Mountains are sandstone; western Oklahoma counties have sandstone. Many of our towns are built of sandstone, yet countless tons

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66. Ibid.

of it are still in reserve.[67]

Marble, also a building material, is found in Sequoyah County and the Arbuckles. Dolomite, which is not unlike sandstone, may be used in insulation, for fertilizer to rebuild certain types of soil, and for road metal. The Arbuckles and western parts of the State hold this material until such time as the citizens see fit to use it.

Before the drilling of gas, shales were utilized in the manufacture of brick. Although Oklahoma has beds of shale suitable for sewer tile, the bulk of its sewer tile is shipped in from Texas and Missouri. Trade journals point out more than 40 uses of shale and clay; but Portland cement and brick are almost the only products for which these materials are being used.[68] Caliche, which is in inexhaustible supplies in the three Panhandle counties, makes very good secondary roads. Sand, gravel, arkose, additional road materials, will last indefinitely along the streams and mountains.

The raw material for rock wool, used as insulation for air-cooled buildings, is abundant in Ottawa, Adair, Delaware, Cherokee, Muskogee, Pryor, Craig, Nowata, Washington, Rogers, Osage, Pawnee and Kay Counties. It could be produced profitably.[69] Some of the western counties afford supplies of bentonite resembling Fuller's earth used

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67. Ibid.

68. Ibid.

69. The Oklahoma Geological Survey. "What It Is - What It Does." Directors Biennial Report for 1937-1938. (Norman), p. 20.

in oil refining.[70] Glass sand has been quarried near Roff, Mill Creek and Hickory in the Arbuckles. A few glass factories have been established, but undeveloped glass sands are scattered across southern Oklahoma.[71]

Near Tangier, Gate, Okemah and Custer City, volcanic ash is mined. Other deposits are located in Beaver, Texas, Harper, Woodward, Ellis, Woods, Alfalfa, Kay, Custer, Roger Mills, Kingfisher, Okfuskee, Hughes, Garvin and Haskell Counties. Scouring compounds, floor sweep and concrete admixtures are evolved from volcanic ash.[72] Tripoli, an abrasive material; novaculte, a fine-grained sandstone; and various minor minerals are found in quantities in scattered parts of the State.[73]

Geologists and chemists have pointed out potential wealth lying dormant in Oklahoma hills, on plains and along streams, a wealth that would enrich the State's impoverished soils, add to the material beauty and convenience of daily living, and put thousands of idle men and women to work. Not only the counties which have the poorest soils but some of the counties which have the greatest potential mineral wealth are carrying the heaviest relief loads.

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70. Ibid.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid.

## CHAPTER VI

## THE WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION WORKER

Oklahoma, according to the 1930 census, had 31,131 men and 4,202 women out of jobs, able to work and looking for work.[74] This figure was 1.6 per cent of the population, or 4.5 per cent of the gainful workers. In Oklahoma City, there were 2,718 men and 518 women, or a total of 3,236 workers, unemployed in 1930;[75] in Tulsa, there were 3,565 men and 752 women unemployed.[76] The public, however, was scarcely aware of an unemployment problem. The entire Federal Emergency Relief Administration case load of Oklahoma County in September, 1934, included 11,332 families. By this time, the public had become conscious of a major problem involving hunger, evictions and riots.

In September of 1934, there were 775,240 individuals in 184,481 families existing on relief in Oklahoma. In September 1935, persons registered with the Works Progress Administration included 492,305 persons in 111,482 certified families, or 20 per cent of the State's population. One third of the population was on the Federal Emergency Relief Administration the year before. Much of this difference

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74. Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930, Unemployment Vol. II: General Report, p. 91.

75. Ibid., p. 194.

76. Ibid., p. 226.

of 67,000 families was due to the case load review and wholesale transfer to the county welfare boards previous to July, 1935, of specific classes of unemployables and potential applicants for categories of social security. Also, some transients left the camps, boys enrolled in the Civilian Conservation Corps, and some farmers were transferred to the Rural Rehabilitation Division. Part of the difference was attributed also to the voluntary resignations of workers to accept private employment.

A study of the relief rolls by counties showed that under the Federal Emergency Relief Administration in the fall of 1934, ten counties had as high as 70 per cent of their population on relief. Latimer led with 91.5 per cent of its population. This was probably the highest rate in the State. A year later the Works Progress Administration case load in Latimer County was 70 per cent of the population, the highest percentage in the State. During the year, Atoka County's employable case load was reduced from 84 per cent to 36 per cent; Beaver County from 79 per cent to 17 per cent; Coal from 73 per cent to 23 per cent; Harper from 75 per cent to 14 per cent; Haskell from 75 per cent to 51 per cent; LeFlore from 70 per cent to 49 per cent; Love from 70 per cent to 33 per cent; Pushmataha from 89 per cent to 44 per cent; Rogers from 84 per cent to 23 per cent; Oklahoma County from 21 per cent to 13 per cent. In Beaver, Cimarron and Texas Counties, the load dropped from 4,052, or 55 per cent of the population, to 901, or 11 per cent. Beaver dropped from 2,157 to 459 families; Cimarron from 670 to 107; and Texas from 1,225 to 345. Only two counties

showed increases instead of decreases. Tulsa increased from 5,601 to 6,383 and Bryan from 2,482 to 3,048. Eleven counties: Atoka, Beaver, Cimarron, Coal, Ellis, Harper, Latimer, Love, Mayes, Pushmataha and Rogers, dropped as much as 30 per cent. In September 1935, Grant County showed only 4 per cent of its population on relief rolls; Washita 5 per cent and Cimarron 9 per cent. Six additional counties had case loads of less than 10 per cent; Alfalfa 8 per cent; Ellis 9 per cent; Garfield 8 per cent; Kay 8 per cent; and Texas 9 per cent.

Many Oklahomans, dissatisfied with the insufficient amount of relief granted in their local communities, left the State. California was the chief objective of their travels. The Los Angeles Times of April 28, 1935, stated that transients were not eligible for county charity relief, inasmuch as California's law forbids county aid unless individuals have lived there three years independent of Federal, state or county relief. At that time, 10,702 Californians were roaming other States as transients. California complained that Oklahoma, Texas, Washington and Illinois, in the order named, furnished the largest proportionate number of transients visiting California. The Los Angeles Times admitted that these new transients usually were not hoboes, but pioneers who were often enterprising and energetic people in their former communities.

Along the highways drifted hordes of people, boys, girls, women, couples, men,widows with babies, entire families, hitchhiking, begging rides along the way, drifting around tourist camps overflowing with cars loaded with derelicts. Freight trains were filled with human beings,

sitting on top, hanging on the sides, dangling legs out of open doors. For some time there was a strong tendency to look upon the transient as a person requiring case-work technique and treatment. Transients who stubbornly resisted the case-work approach to rehabilitation emerged, under the more normal conditions of a work project, from sullen discouragement and inertia into effective workmen. It appeared then as if what most of them needed was a job. As the Works Progress Administration developed, it was, therefore, not only legally but psychologically possible to include transients in the regular work activities for the unemployed. In organizing the work program, a number of the teachers of the transient camps were retained. Transient camps with suitable projects were transferred intact to the program. An effort was made to reassign transients to other projects, to allow the camps to lose their identity as transient camps. Transient relief ended because, with the cessation of Federal relief grants to the states, there was no way to continue Federal support on an emergency basis for transients. Those who could not be employed were returned to their place of legal settlement or transferred to the care of the state or locality in which they were located. Under the Works Progress Administration, transient camps ceased to exist.

By November 1935, a large part of Oklahoma's employable case load was assigned to work projects. Social workers assisted transients as well as residents to adjust to the work program. Among the first problems Works Progress Administration social workers attempted was the interpretation of attitudes of men who had been unemployed and on

direct relief for a number of years. In order to insure consideration and justice to certified workers, employment supervisors made as many as three or four transfers of men who did not fit into the projects to which they were assigned. A few men, who had been out of jobs so long that they could not adjust themselves to the reality of employment, collapsed and had to have medical or nerve care for a number of days or weeks.

Mr. A, in Oklahoma City, who "leaned on his shovel", was sent by the social worker to the city doctor who, after examination, pronounced the worker to be a victim of pellagra, physically unfit for work. This certified worker was removed from work and referred to the county for care.

Tom X, who "leaned on his shovel", was found, upon investigation of his work history, not to be a manual laborer. He had peddled handbills and papers. He was light in weight and of slight build. As a single man, he had lived for long periods with the soupline as his only resource. The employment supervisor transferred Mr. X to work that he was equipped to do.

During the cold days of November and December 1935, ten certified workers a day collapsed on projects in Oklahoma County, failed to report for work on account of illness, or deserted. They were referred to other agencies for temporary care. One man made eight trips to talk with his social worker before he could get up his courage to report on his work assignment. Each time, after going over his fear, he would leave assuring the social worker that he was on his way

to report; seven times he returned. Minds were filled with fear; work skills had been lost; human values had been impaired. A foreman reported to a social worker that an apparently able-bodied man had refused to work. The social worker who checked his case had visited the workman's home. She reported to the employment supervisor that in the early days of the Civil Works Administration this worker had left his bed when he was ill from flu and had reported to work in order to provide for his family. The workman told the social worker that he still wanted to work but that he did not like the way the foreman ordered him around just because he was on relief. He was transferred to another foreman who was prepared for the "chip on the shoulder".

## CHAPTER VII

## HOUSING AND STANDARDS OF LIVING

In certain sections of the State, the income of the bulk of the population is far below the amount required to meet the necessary expense for proper diets, decent living quarters, and adequate schooling.

A Federal housing survey made in Oklahoma City disclosed the fact that 2,500 persons were living in shacks, dugouts and trailers in 1934. These persons were included in 608 families with nearly five to a family, according to the Federal Emergency Relief Administration survey director. Most of the families were found huddled in shacks built of boards and bits of lumber they had picked up. As many as 404 families lived in shacks while 110 families lived in tents. Seven of the families had not progressed to a tent or a shack, but lived in dugouts or crude cellars. Trailers formed the homes of twelve families. One household lived in a sedan car. The survey director stated that sanitary conditions were deplorable. Despite the surroundings in which some of these families were living, they were keeping comparatively clean. "Of course, some of them were indescribably filthy but in many of the places with canvas tops and dirt floors, an honest effort is being made to keep them clean," stated an

investigator. The better class of temporary residents said that they would not move into a camp with the usual run of camp people.

Since more than fifty per cent of Oklahoma farmers are tenants, croppers and laborers with little or no possessions, the rural housing is on a low plane. Also, throughout the eastern counties are shacks, box houses, log huts and some dugouts. Leaking roofs, screenless and paneless windows and sagging doors are common. Many shacks, without stone foundations, are on the ground or are packed around with clay to keep winter winds from circulating between the floor and the ground. Yards with top soil washed away are barren. In some counties orchards reminiscent of hail storms, surround the shacks. Barns sag, granaries sprawl out of shape.

Numerous primitive outdoor toilets add to the rural desolation as well as to the health problem. The public relief agencies, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration, the Civil Works Administration, the Oklahoma Emergency Relief Administration and the Works Progress Administration have constructed 107,000 sanitary toilets between 1933 and 1939. Of this number, the Works Progress Administration was responsible for 60,000.[77] Whole communities, however, still use primitive toilets which are hazardous to health; for the owners of the units are too poor to buy the lumber and other materials to meet the project requirements.

Inadequate housing and sanitation facilities are not confined

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77. Estimated report of the Work Projects Administration Operations Division. (Oklahoma City, 1939.)

to tenants, croppers and laborers. Many small farm owners have deprived themselves in order to become owners or to remain owners. Their apparent living standard is little above that of the renter or hired man.

A survey of relief families in Ottawa County in 1934, revealed the physical aspects of households of all occupations as follows: poor, 31 per cent; fair, 24.2 per cent; good, 24.2 per cent; excellent, 3.2 per cent.[78] A breakdown of all occupations revealed that poor housing conditions characterized 24.1 per cent of the farm owners on relief at that time; tenants, 28.0; farm laborers, 32.3; miners, 39.3; unskilled laborers, 34.5; all other occupations, 25.2; no usual occupations, 31.1. Classifications were made from the case records of the Federal Emergency Relief Administration home visitors who described the houses and overcrowding of rooms. Although the sanitary and physical aspects of the houses were generally deplorable, occasionally the social workers called in homes with "lye-scrubbed floors", "dainty curtains made from sugar sacks", home-built tables and chairs and flowers.[79]

The Ottawa County survey assumed an average of one person to a room, counting all rooms in a house, as a necessary minimum ratio

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78. McMillan, Robert T., A Social and Economic Study of Relief Families in Ottawa County, Oklahoma, 1934. (Technical Bulletin No. II: Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College Agricultural Experiment Station, Stillwater, July, 1938), p. 47.

79. Ibid., p. 48.

for comfort.[80] Over-crowding appeared to be prevalent generally in houses of fewer than five rooms; and, on this basis, it constituted a more serious problem for the rural than for the urban relief populations studied. In the urban group surveyed, two-room houses represented the average size, while in the rural families two and three-room dwellings were in equal proportions, although the median appeared in the three-room group. Of the total Ottawa County relief population, 60 per cent lived in one, two or three-room houses. In general, rural families were more densely housed than urban families. The range in numbers of persons to a room in rural areas was from 0.6 in seven and eight-room houses to 3.9 in one-room dwellings. In urban centers, the number of persons to a room ranged from 2.9 in the smallest to 0.3 in the largest houses.

Sharecroppers and farm laborers live very close to the margin of pauperism. With little or no savings, with the scantiest array of livestock, poultry and garden supplies, a drouth, washout or pestilence will drive them to the relief office. A good crop will remove these groups only seasonally or temporarily from the relief rolls. Not only Oklahomans but Americans in general have far less opportunity to become farm owners than they had before 1882 when one-half of them by economy and management rose to ownership at 25 years of age, or up to 1922 when one of five obtained land in his own name.[81]

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80. Ibid., p. 21.

81. Taylor, Carl C., Wheeler, Helen W., and Kirkpatrick, E. L. Disadvantaged Classes in American Agriculture. Social Research Report No. VIII, p. 20: (Washington, D. C. 1938).

TABLE IX

Percentage Distribution of Home Ownership According to Residential Environment Oklahoma 1890-1930*

| Decade | Per Cent | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Farm | Non-farm | Total |
| 1890 | 95.0 | 68.5 | 86.9 |
| 1900 | 54.8 | 46.0 | 52.1 |
| 1910 | 45.1 | 42.8 | 44.0 |
| 1920 | 43.3 | 45.9 | 43.6 |
| 1930 | 35.0 | 43.0 | 39.9 |

* Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1930. Population Vol. VI, Families, p. 1067.

Many of the present croppers have lost their land or capital investments or have undergone misfortune. Croppers include Negroes and whites; farmer owners, farmer tenants; young persons beginning farming and older persons who have always been croppers. They furnish the labor; their landlords, the work stock. The landlords also keep the books.

The relative prosperity of the northwest wheat belt is reflected in the higher standard of living, the possession of mechanical devices to save labor and promote communication. This section owns the bulk of the State's telephones. While 70 per cent of the farm homes in Woods, Alfalfa, and Grant Counties enjoy the use of telephones, only 7 per cent in Pittsburg, Choctaw and Sequoyah can afford them.[82] Larger acreages and more prosperity on the west side of the State have created the demand for and the purchase of tractors and combines, little used on the east side of the State. In comparison with some of the western counties, where there are 1,500 tractors to a county, some of the southeastern counties have fewer than 50 tractors each. Since the southeastern counties are wooded, however, this is hardly a fair comparison.

During the distribution of Federal surplus clothing to approximately 40,000 families certified but not assigned to the Works Progress Administration projects during the winter of 1938 and spring of 1939, social workers gained new insights into the social and economic background of Oklahomans on relief. As the majority of the young men in

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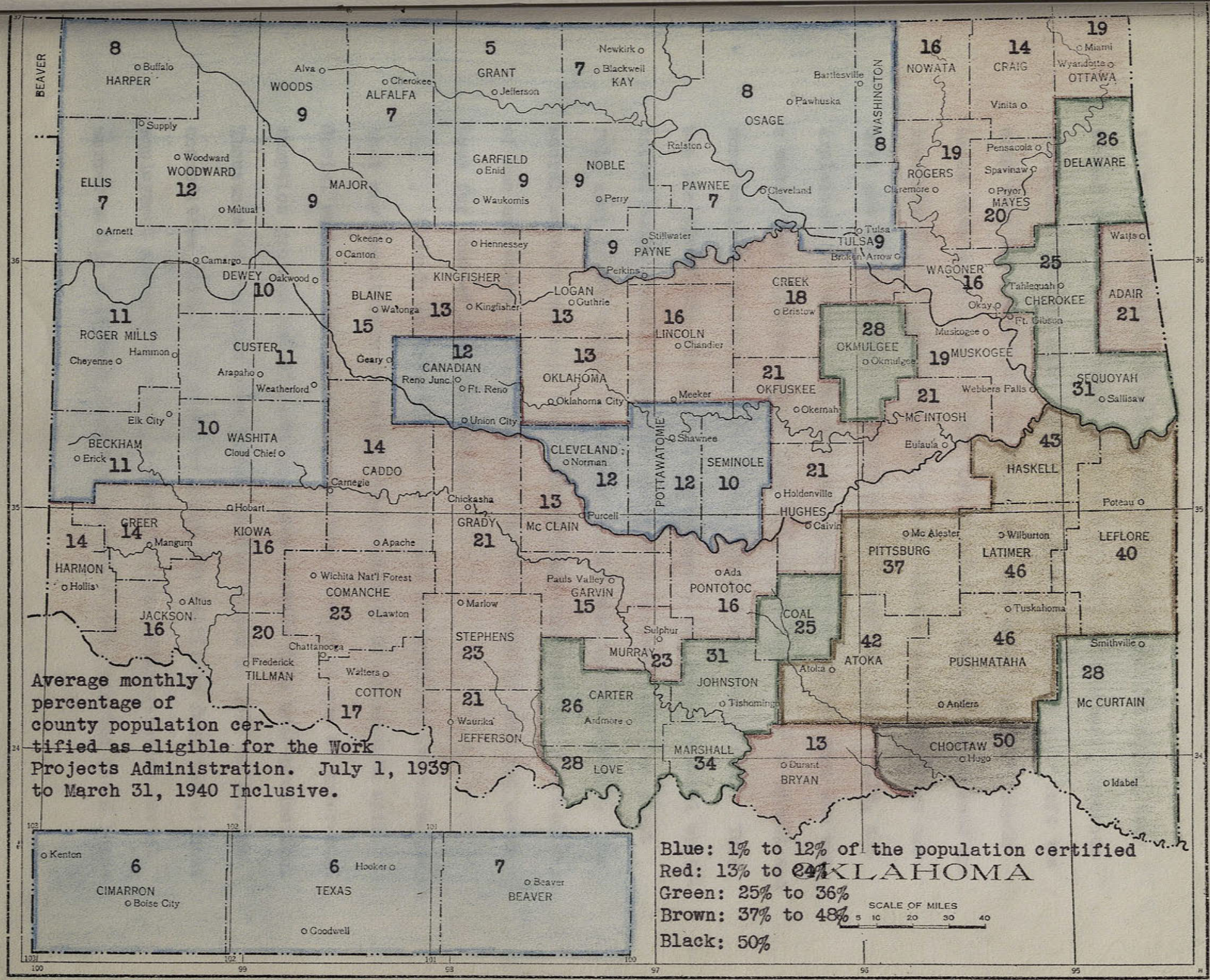
82. A Compendium of Maps and Charts Pertaining to State Planning in Oklahoma, op. cit., p. 36.


Average monthly percentage of county population certified as eligible for the Work Projects Administration. July 1, 1939 to March 31, 1940 Inclusive.
Blue: 1% to 12% of the population certified
Red: 13% to 24%
Green: 25% to 36%
Brown: 37% to 48%
Black: 50%
OKLAHOMA
SCALE OF MILES
5 10 20 30 40
BEAVER
HARPER
WOODS
ALFALFA
GRANT
KAY
OSAGE
WASHINGTON
NOWATA
CRAIG
OTTAWA
ELLIS
WOODWARD
MAJOR
GARFIELD
NOBLE
PAWNEE
ROGERS
MAYES
DELAWARE
DEWEY
BLAINE
KINGFISHER
LOGAN
PAYNE
CREEK
TULSA
WAGONER
CHEROKEE
ADAIR
ROGER MILLS
CUSTER
CANADIAN
OKLAHOMA
LINCOLN
OKMULGEE
MUSKOGEE
SEQUOYAH
BECKHAM
WASHITA
CADDO
CLEVELAND
POTTAWATOMIE
OKFUSKEE
MC INTOSH
HASKELL
GREER
KIOWA
GRADY
Mc CLAIN
SEMINOLE
HUGHES
LEFLORE
HARMON
JACKSON
COMANCHE
GARVIN
PONTOTOC
PITTSBURG
LATIMER
COAL
TILLMAN
COTTON
STEPHENS
MURRAY
JOHNSTON
ATOKA
PUSHMATAHA
JEFFERSON
CARTER
MARSHALL
BRYAN
CHOCTAW
MC CURTAIN
LOVE
CIMARRON
TEXAS
BEAVER
Woodward
Alva
Cherokee
Newkirk
Blackwell
Jefferson
Pawhuska
Bartlesville
Miami
Wyandotte
Vinita
Supply
Ralston
Enid
Waukomis
Perry
Cleveland
Claremore
Pensacola
Spavinaw
Pryor
Tulsa
Broken Arrow
Stillwater
Perkins
Camargo
Okeene
Canton
Hennessey
Oakwood
Watonga
Kingfisher
Guthrie
Bristow
Tahlequah
Okay
Ft. Gibson
Muskogee
Webbers Falls
Sallisaw
Cheyenne
Hammon
Arapaho
Weatherford
Geary
Reno Junc.
Ft. Reno
Oklahoma City
Meeker
Okemah
Elk City
Cloud Chief
Union City
Shawnee
Eufaula
Erick
Carnegie
Norman
Purcell
Chickasha
Holdenville
Hobart
Mangum
Apache
Calvin
Mc Alester
Wilburton
Poteau
Wichita Nat'l Forest
Pauls Valley
Ada
Hollis
Altus
Lawton
Marlow
Sulphur
Tuskahoma
Chattanooga
Frederick
Walters
Waurika
Atoka
Antlers
Smithville
Tishomingo
Ardmore
Durant
Hugo
Idabel
Kenton
Hooker
Goodwell
Boise City

their early twenties signed receipts for their woolen suits, they stated that they had never owned a full suit of clothes. Numerous world war veterans said that for the first time since they left the army they had pants and coat to match. One woman, aged 57, shook hands with each member of the social service staff and expressed appreciation of a neatly tailored, black, woolen coat, the first new coat she had possessed in her 57 years. When she was a child, she explained, she wore "made-over and handed-down" coats; when she was a woman, her children had to have the new clothes to go to school and some neighbor or relative saw to it that she had a used coat. This was the first time she had ever possessed a new coat. Several white-haired women timidly asked for black silk dresses that they might fold away in the bureau drawers to insure them decent burials. The social workers realized that many of these children and grandchildren of men and women who had made the run for claims in 1889 had never been far removed from destitution.

Already an argument has developed in regard to over-production that may result from increasing the fertility of Oklahoma's soil. Social workers have maintained that the problem is one of under-consumption growing out of reduced incomes rather than over-production. Thousands of families were living in the winter of 1939 on surplus commodities alone. In order to learn how destitute families without employment managed to exist, a Work Projects Administration social worker within a 48-hour period in December 1939, visited in 15 homes

of Oklahoma County families certified not assigned to work.[83] All of the families except one had children under 16 years of age. Only one of these children was receiving milk which was supplied by the landlord who knew the child was suffering from osteomyelitis. The children in 13 families suffered from colds; they had no milk, butter, eggs, or leafy vegetables. They were existing on surplus commodities: onions, apple sauce, flour, corn meal and a little oat meal. A three-year-old boy sat on a doorstep hungrily tearing the skin from a small quail tossed over the fence to him by a passing hunter. Three rural men who were unemployed explained that the wild game was almost extinct, that they could not buy shells to shoot rabbits and quail, but had to try trapping.

During the same month the free clinics in Oklahoma City had a record of doctors' certificates for more than 1,000 relief persons suffering from malnutrition. The Oklahoma hospitals for the insane were admitting and treating patients insane from pellagra brought on by starvation. After the State has paid for hospitalization and treatment for pellagra cases, the State discharges such patients to return home to their former inadequate diets.

Some persons have been enabled through Work Projects Administration projects to return to their former living standards; others, to rise to standards higher than they had known before. Housekeeping

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83. The cards of these families were selected without referring to names, one from each of 15 localities scattered over the county.

aides, supervised by county physicians, have instituted health practices not only in the homes of illness to which they have been assigned, but in their own homes. For several years, 11,000 women have learned how to select and buy materials, how to cut and sew. Daily practices of sanitation in the sewing rooms and attention to personal care have had their effect at home. Under the instruction of registered nurses, large groups have been trained in the selection and buying of foods, in infant care, home hygiene, and other phases of planned home making designed to increase the ability to provide beauty and adequate diet on a low income.

Projects in gardening, canning and serving school lunches have preserved the health of school children and served as training courses for project workers. Men on construction projects have learned to select, cut and lay native stone. During the past two years, it has been observed that many of the men trained in stone work have built stone houses for their families during periods when they were not employed on projects. Others, through encouragement from foremen and timekeepers, have used their time off to repair their houses and remodel their furniture. Men and women working on renovation and repair projects have learned methods of conserving and beautifying. Project supervisors have stressed the carrying over of practices from the projects to the homes in order to restore or improve living standards.

* According to 1930 Federal Census
** Case Load times family unit of 4.5 persons
*** Work Projects Administration and Other Federal Agencies

# WORK PROJECTS ADMINISTRATION

## For Oklahoma

## EMPLOYMENT DIVISION

## AVERAGE MONTHLY EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE
Covering
## CERTIFIED WORKERS

July 1, 1939, to March 31, 1940, Inclusive

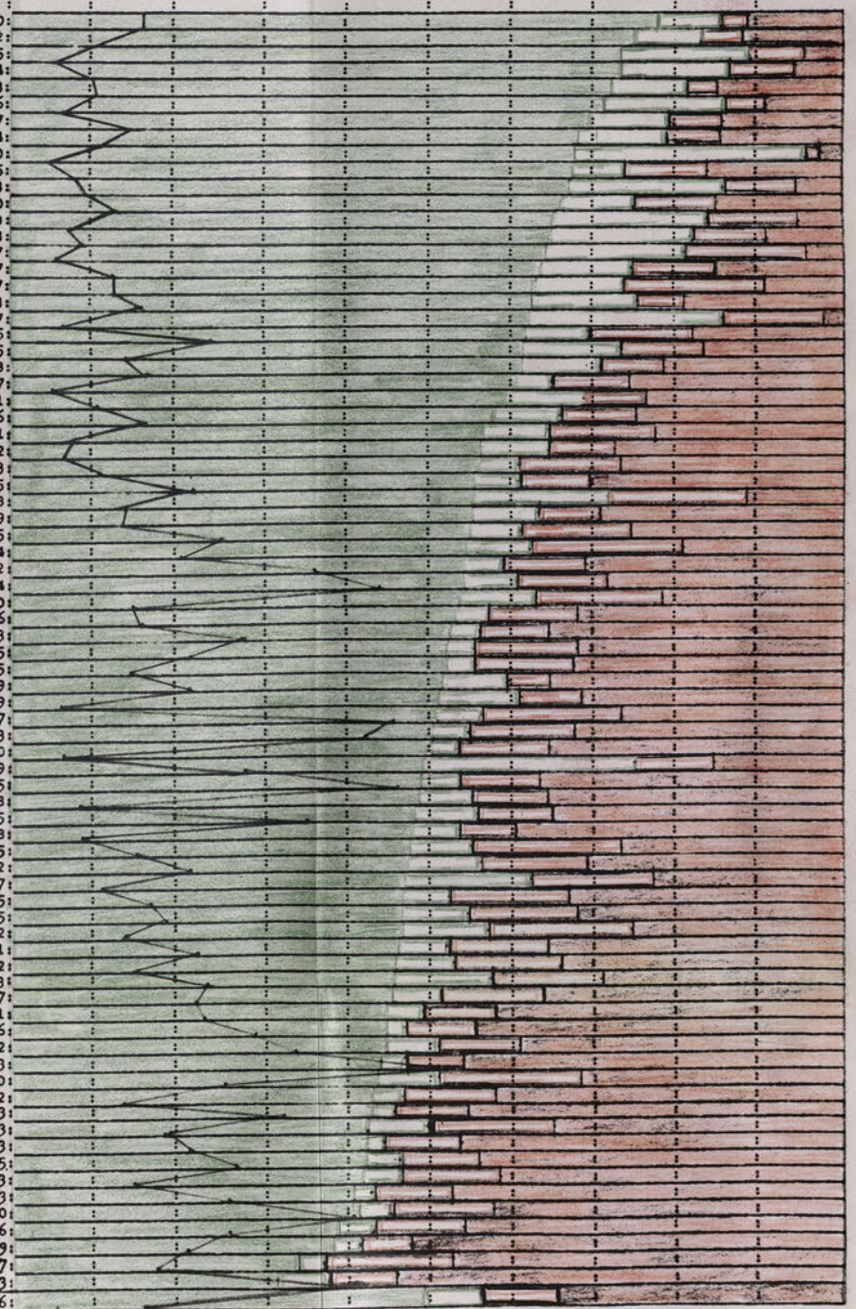
Green Block: Employed by Work Projects Administration and Other Federal Agencies
Green Outline: Privately Employed
Red Block: Awaiting Assignment
Red Outline: Temporarily Unavailable for Assignment
Blue Line: Percentage of county population represented by Case Load

Compiled by W. M. Flake, Sr.

May 14, 1940

| COUNTY | WPA DIS. NO. | POPULATION: OF THE COUNTY | POPULATION: REP.** BY CASE LOAD | POPULATION: AVG. CASE LOAD | EMPLOYED***: W.P.A. and O.F.A. | EMPLOYED***: Private | EMPLOYED***: Total | UNEMPLOYED: Awaiting Assgn. | UNEMPLOYED: Temp. Unavlble. | UNEMPLOYED: Total | PERCENTAGES OF CASE LOAD: To County Population | Employed: W.P.A. and O.F.A. | Employed: Private | Employed: Total | Unemployed: Awaiting Assgn. | Unemployed: Temp. Unavlble. | Unemployed: Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jackson | 2 | 28,910 | 4,680 | 1,040 | 820 | 66 | 886 | 115 | 39 | 154 | 16.19 | 78.85 | 6.35 | 85.20 | 11.05 | 3.75 | 14.80 |
| Roger Mills | 2 | 14,164 | 1,656 | 368 | 277 | 28 | 305 | 46 | 17 | 63 | 11.69 | 75.27 | 7.61 | 82.88 | 12.50 | 4.62 | 17.12 |
| Grant | 1 | 14,150 | 783 | 174 | 128 | 28 | 156 | 8 | 10 | 18 | 5.53 | 73.56 | 16.09 | 89.65 | 4.60 | 5.75 | 10.35 |
| Noble | 1 | 15,139 | 1,391 | 309 | 225 | 44 | 269 | 17 | 23 | 40 | 9.19 | 72.82 | 14.24 | 87.06 | 5.50 | 7.44 | 12.94 |
| Custer | 2 | 27,517 | 3,145 | 699 | 505 | 68 | 573 | 101 | 25 | 126 | 11.43 | 72.24 | 9.73 | 81.97 | 14.45 | 3.58 | 18.03 |
| Ellis | 1 | 10,541 | 823 | 183 | 130 | 28 | 158 | 17 | 8 | 25 | 7.82 | 71.04 | 15.30 | 86.34 | 9.29 | 4.37 | 13.66 |
| Greer | 2 | 20,282 | 2,844 | 632 | 449 | 53 | 502 | 102 | 28 | 130 | 14.02 | 71.04 | 8.39 | 79.43 | 16.14 | 4.43 | 20.57 |
| Beckham | 2 | 28,991 | 3,429 | 762 | 536 | 68 | 604 | 124 | 34 | 158 | 11.83 | 70.34 | 8.92 | 79.26 | 16.28 | 4.46 | 20.74 |
| Cimarron | 1 | 5,405 | 347 | 77 | 53 | 21 | 74 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 6.42 | 68.83 | 27.27 | 96.10 | 1.30 | 2.60 | 3.90 |
| Washington | 4 | 27,777 | 2,246 | 499 | 336 | 29 | 365 | 82 | 52 | 134 | 8.09 | 67.35 | 5.81 | 73.16 | 16.43 | 10.42 | 26.85 |
| Woods | 1 | 17,005 | 1,584 | 352 | 236 | 68 | 304 | 21 | 27 | 48 | 9.31 | 67.05 | 19.32 | 86.37 | 5.97 | 7.66 | 13.63 |
| Cleveland | 3 | 24,948 | 3,146 | 677 | 452 | 53 | 505 | 104 | 68 | 172 | 12.21 | 66.77 | 7.83 | 74.60 | 15.36 | 10.04 | 25.40 |
| Harper | 1 | 7,761 | 661 | 147 | 96 | 26 | 122 | 9 | 16 | 25 | 8.53 | 65.31 | 17.69 | 83.00 | 6.12 | 10.88 | 17.00 |
| Major | 1 | 12,206 | 1,161 | 258 | 168 | 44 | 212 | 25 | 21 | 46 | 9.51 | 65.12 | 17.05 | 82.17 | 9.69 | 8.14 | 17.83 |
| Texas | 1 | 14,100 | 954 | 212 | 137 | 42 | 179 | 10 | 23 | 33 | 6.77 | 64.62 | 19.81 | 84.43 | 4.72 | 10.85 | 15.57 |
| Canadian | 3 | 28,115 | 3,587 | 797 | 511 | 83 | 594 | 120 | 83 | 203 | 12.76 | 64.12 | 10.41 | 74.53 | 15.06 | 10.41 | 25.47 |
| Woodward | 1 | 15,844 | 2,029 | 451 | 288 | 86 | 374 | 44 | 33 | 77 | 12.81 | 63.86 | 19.07 | 82.93 | 9.75 | 7.32 | 17.07 |
| Harmon | 2 | 13,834 | 2,134 | 452 | 286 | 52 | 338 | 90 | 24 | 114 | 14.70 | 63.27 | 11.50 | 74.77 | 19.92 | 5.31 | 25.23 |
| Beaver | 1 | 11,452 | 896 | 199 | 125 | 46 | 171 | 5 | 23 | 28 | 7.82 | 62.81 | 23.12 | 85.93 | 2.51 | 11.56 | 14.07 |
| Comanche | 2 | 34,317 | 8,091 | 1,798 | 1,111 | 145 | 1,256 | 336 | 206 | 542 | 23.58 | 61.79 | 8.06 | 69.85 | 18.69 | 11.46 | 30.15 |
| McClain | 3 | 21,575 | 2,961 | 658 | 405 | 77 | 482 | 112 | 64 | 176 | 13.72 | 61.55 | 11.70 | 73.25 | 17.02 | 9.73 | 26.75 |
| Kiowa | 2 | 29,630 | 5,013 | 1,114 | 685 | 104 | 789 | 242 | 83 | 325 | 16.92 | 61.49 | 9.33 | 70.82 | 21.72 | 7.46 | 29.18 |
| Pawnee | 4 | 19,882 | 1,454 | 323 | 196 | 16 | 212 | 85 | 26 | 111 | 7.31 | 60.68 | 4.95 | 65.63 | 26.32 | 8.05 | 34.37 |
| Washita | 2 | 29,435 | 3,038 | 675 | 403 | 62 | 465 | 158 | 52 | 210 | 10.32 | 59.70 | 9.19 | 68.89 | 23.41 | 7.70 | 31.11 |
| Cotton | 2 | 15,442 | 2,749 | 611 | 359 | 50 | 409 | 151 | 51 | 202 | 17.81 | 58.76 | 8.18 | 66.94 | 24.71 | 8.35 | 33.06 |
| Payne | 3 | 36,905 | 3,402 | 756 | 438 | 51 | 489 | 165 | 102 | 267 | 9.22 | 57.94 | 6.75 | 64.69 | 21.82 | 13.49 | 35.31 |
| Osage | 4 | 47,334 | 3,821 | 849 | 488 | 45 | 533 | 235 | 81 | 316 | 8.07 | 57.48 | 5.30 | 62.78 | 27.68 | 9.54 | 37.22 |
| Seminole | 3 | 79,621 | 8,424 | 1,872 | 1,055 | 77 | 1,132 | 517 | 223 | 740 | 10.58 | 56.36 | 4.11 | 60.47 | 27.62 | 11.91 | 39.53 |
| McIntosh | 4 | 24,924 | 5,431 | 1,207 | 679 | 53 | 732 | 363 | 112 | 475 | 21.79 | 56.26 | 4.39 | 60.65 | 30.07 | 9.28 | 39.35 |
| Craig | 4 | 18,052 | 2,601 | 578 | 325 | 93 | 418 | 69 | 91 | 160 | 14.41 | 56.23 | 16.09 | 72.32 | 11.94 | 15.74 | 27.68 |
| Logan | 3 | 27,761 | 3,730 | 831 | 467 | 55 | 522 | 242 | 67 | 309 | 13.47 | 56.20 | 6.61 | 62.81 | 29.12 | 8.07 | 37.19 |
| Coal | 5 | 11,521 | 2,884 | 641 | 353 | 39 | 392 | 163 | 86 | 249 | 25.04 | 55.07 | 6.08 | 61.15 | 25.43 | 13.42 | 38.85 |
| Mayes | 4 | 17,883 | 3,609 | 802 | 436 | 65 | 501 | 157 | 144 | 301 | 20.18 | 54.36 | 8.10 | 62.46 | 19.58 | 17.96 | 37.54 |
| Pittsburg | 5 | 50,778 | 18,923 | 4,205 | 2,275 | 218 | 2,493 | 1,279 | 433 | 1,712 | 37.27 | 54.10 | 5.18 | 59.28 | 30.42 | 10.30 | 40.72 |
| Haskell | 5 | 16,216 | 6,984 | 1,552 | 837 | 103 | 940 | 447 | 165 | 612 | 43.07 | 53.93 | 6.63 | 60.56 | 28.80 | 10.64 | 39.44 |
| Blaine | 1 | 20,452 | 3,118 | 693 | 369 | 71 | 440 | 148 | 105 | 253 | 15.25 | 53.25 | 10.25 | 63.50 | 21.35 | 15.15 | 36.50 |
| Wagoner | 4 | 22,428 | 3,672 | 816 | 431 | 32 | 463 | 266 | 87 | 353 | 16.37 | 52.82 | 3.92 | 56.74 | 32.60 | 10.66 | 43.26 |
| McCurtain | 5 | 34,759 | 9,900 | 2,200 | 1,155 | 72 | 1,227 | 790 | 183 | 973 | 28.48 | 52.50 | 3.27 | 55.77 | 35.91 | 8.32 | 44.23 |
| Hughes | 5 | 30,334 | 6,597 | 1,466 | 760 | 50 | 810 | 476 | 180 | 656 | 21.75 | 51.84 | 3.41 | 55.25 | 32.47 | 12.28 | 44.75 |
| Caddo | 2 | 50,779 | 7,412 | 1,647 | 851 | 82 | 933 | 585 | 129 | 714 | 14.60 | 51.67 | 4.98 | 56.65 | 35.52 | 7.83 | 43.35 |
| Tillman | 2 | 24,390 | 5,040 | 1,120 | 576 | 95 | 671 | 349 | 100 | 449 | 20.66 | 51.43 | 8.48 | 59.91 | 31.16 | 8.93 | 40.09 |
| Kay | 1 | 50,186 | 3,964 | 881 | 452 | 89 | 541 | 242 | 98 | 340 | 7.90 | 51.31 | 10.10 | 61.41 | 27.47 | 11.12 | 38.59 |
| Latimer | 5 | 11,184 | 5,216 | 1,159 | 594 | 60 | 654 | 373 | 132 | 505 | 46.64 | 51.25 | 5.18 | 56.43 | 32.18 | 11.39 | 43.57 |
| Atoka | 5 | 14,533 | 6,133 | 1,363 | 685 | 71 | 756 | 483 | 124 | 607 | 42.21 | 50.26 | 5.21 | 55.47 | 35.43 | 9.10 | 44.53 |
| Alfalfa | 1 | 15,228 | 1,184 | 263 | 132 | 65 | 197 | 41 | 25 | 66 | 7.77 | 50.19 | 24.71 | 74.90 | 15.59 | 9.51 | 25.10 |
| Love | 3 | 9,639 | 2,785 | 619 | 306 | 45 | 351 | 207 | 61 | 268 | 28.90 | 49.44 | 7.27 | 56.71 | 33.44 | 9.85 | 43.29 |
| Pushmataha | 5 | 14,744 | 6,872 | 1,527 | 750 | 57 | 807 | 565 | 155 | 720 | 46.61 | 49.12 | 3.73 | 52.85 | 37.00 | 10.15 | 47.15 |
| Garfield | 1 | 45,588 | 4,329 | 962 | 469 | 69 | 538 | 350 | 74 | 424 | 9.50 | 48.75 | 7.17 | 55.92 | 36.39 | 7.69 | 44.08 |
| Marshall | 3 | 11,026 | 3,852 | 856 | 417 | 68 | 485 | 303 | 68 | 371 | 34.37 | 48.71 | 7.94 | 56.65 | 35.40 | 7.95 | 43.35 |
| Tulsa | 4 | 187,574 | 17,833 | 3,963 | 1,924 | 185 | 2,109 | 1,579 | 275 | 1,854 | 9.51 | 48.55 | 4.67 | 53.22 | 39.84 | 6.94 | 46.78 |
| Nowata | 4 | 13,611 | 2,183 | 485 | 234 | 33 | 267 | 128 | 90 | 218 | 16.04 | 48.25 | 6.80 | 55.05 | 26.39 | 18.56 | 44.95 |
| Grady | 3 | 47,638 | 10,062 | 2,236 | 1,078 | 194 | 1,272 | 681 | 283 | 964 | 21.12 | 48.21 | 8.68 | 56.89 | 30.46 | 12.66 | 43.12 |
| Dewey | 1 | 13,250 | 1,417 | 315 | 151 | 46 | 197 | 73 | 45 | 118 | 10.70 | 47.94 | 14.29 | 62.23 | 23.17 | 14.60 | 37.77 |
| Pontotoc | 3 | 32,469 | 5,351 | 1,189 | 570 | 50 | 620 | 390 | 179 | 569 | 16.48 | 47.94 | 4.21 | 52.15 | 32.80 | 15.05 | 47.85 |
| Rogers | 4 | 18,956 | 3,690 | 820 | 393 | 60 | 453 | 264 | 103 | 367 | 19.47 | 47.93 | 7.32 | 55.25 | 32.19 | 12.56 | 44.75 |
| Kingfisher | 1 | 15,960 | 2,200 | 489 | 232 | 53 | 285 | 124 | 80 | 204 | 13.74 | 47.44 | 10.84 | 58.28 | 25.36 | 16.36 | 41.72 |
| Jefferson | 3 | 17,392 | 3,825 | 850 | 398 | 49 | 447 | 305 | 98 | 403 | 21.99 | 46.82 | 5.77 | 52.59 | 35.89 | 11.52 | 47.41 |
| Garvin | 3 | 31,401 | 4,666 | 1,059 | 493 | 66 | 559 | 354 | 146 | 500 | 15.18 | 46.55 | 6.23 | 52.78 | 33.43 | 13.79 | 47.22 |
| Murray | 3 | 12,410 | 2,898 | 644 | 299 | 73 | 372 | 190 | 82 | 272 | 23.35 | 46.43 | 11.34 | 57.77 | 29.50 | 12.73 | 42.23 |
| Pottawatomie | 3 | 66,572 | 8,122 | 1,805 | 831 | 90 | 921 | 667 | 217 | 884 | 12.20 | 46.04 | 4.99 | 51.03 | 36.95 | 12.02 | 48.97 |
| Bryan | 5 | 32,277 | 11,889 | 2,642 | 1,191 | 122 | 1,313 | 1,113 | 216 | 1,329 | 13.29 | 45.07 | 4.62 | 49.69 | 42.13 | 8.18 | 50.31 |
| Muskogee | 4 | 66,424 | 12,893 | 2,865 | 1,271 | 54 | 1,325 | 1,264 | 276 | 1,540 | 19.41 | 44.36 | 1.88 | 46.24 | 44.12 | 9.64 | 53.76 |
| Stephens | 3 | 33,069 | 7,780 | 1,729 | 767 | 111 | 878 | 679 | 172 | 851 | 23.53 | 44.36 | 6.42 | 50.78 | 39.27 | 9.95 | 49.22 |
| Choctaw | 5 | 24,142 | 12,164 | 2,703 | 1,184 | 91 | 1,275 | 1,276 | 152 | 1,428 | 50.39 | 43.80 | 3.37 | 47.17 | 47.21 | 5.62 | 52.83 |
| Delaware | 4 | 15,370 | 4,572 | 1,016 | 439 | 77 | 516 | 322 | 178 | 500 | 26.49 | 43.22 | 7.58 | 50.80 | 31.69 | 17.51 | 49.20 |
| Oklahoma | 3 | 221,738 | 30,613 | 6,803 | 2,909 | 266 | 3,175 | 2,829 | 799 | 3,628 | 13.81 | 42.77 | 3.91 | 46.68 | 41.58 | 11.74 | 53.32 |
| Sequoyah | 4 | 19,505 | 6,110 | 1,380 | 589 | 33 | 622 | 680 | 78 | 758 | 31.83 | 42.68 | 2.39 | 45.07 | 49.28 | 5.65 | 54.93 |
| Ottawa | 4 | 38,542 | 7,358 | 1,635 | 696 | 121 | 817 | 569 | 249 | 818 | 19.09 | 42.57 | 7.40 | 49.97 | 34.80 | 15.23 | 50.03 |
| Adair | 4 | 14,756 | 3,195 | 710 | 302 | 13 | 315 | 330 | 65 | 395 | 21.65 | 42.54 | 1.83 | 44.37 | 46.48 | 9.15 | 55.63 |
| Okmulgee | 4 | 56,558 | 15,876 | 3,528 | 1,466 | 180 | 1,646 | 1,583 | 299 | 1,882 | 28.07 | 41.55 | 5.10 | 46.65 | 44.87 | 8.48 | 53.35 |
| Lincoln | 3 | 33,738 | 5,553 | 1,234 | 508 | 68 | 576 | 515 | 143 | 658 | 16.46 | 41.17 | 5.51 | 46.68 | 41.73 | 17.10 | 58.83 |
| Cherokee | 4 | 17,470 | 4,536 | 1,008 | 408 | 17 | 425 | 491 | 92 | 583 | 25.96 | 40.48 | 1.69 | 42.17 | 48.71 | 9.12 | 57.83 |
| LeFlore | 5 | 42,896 | 16,830 | 3,740 | 1,523 | 216 | 1,739 | 1,588 | 413 | 2,001 | 40.11 | 40.72 | 5.78 | 46.50 | 42.46 | 11.04 | 53.50 |
| Carter | 3 | 41,419 | 11,074 | 2,461 | 946 | 96 | 1,042 | 1,143 | 276 | 1,419 | 26.74 | 38.44 | 3.90 | 42.34 | 46.44 | 11.22 | 57.66 |
| Okfuskee | 4 | 29,016 | 6,278 | 1,395 | 527 | 52 | 579 | 716 | 100 | 816 | 21.64 | 37.78 | 3.73 | 41.51 | 51.32 | 7.17 | 58.49 |
| Creek | 4 | 64,115 | 11,983 | 2,663 | 884 | 102 | 986 | 1,293 | 384 | 1,677 | 18.69 | 33.20 | 3.83 | 37.03 | 48.55 | 14.42 | 62.97 |
| Johnston | 3 | 13,082 | 5,238 | 1,164 | 364 | 71 | 435 | 637 | 92 | 729 | 40.04 | 31.27 | 6.10 | 37.37 | 54.73 | 7.90 | 62.63 |
| STATE OKLA. | | 2,396,037 | 426,874 | 94,863 | 46,794 | 5,701 | 52,495 | 32,723 | 9,645 | 42,368 | 17.82 | 49.33 | 6.01 | 55.34 | 34.50 | 10.16 | 44.66 |

GRAPHIC ILLUSTRATION OF PERCENTAGES



## CHAPTER VIII

## SOME INDICES OF LACK OF SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT

Destitution, illiteracy, juvenile delinquency and health problems are most acute in the southeastern counties which not only suffer from impoverished soil, but are spotted with natural resources. Outstanding among these counties is LeFlore, which has submarginal soil that should be retired from agricultural use,[84] 38 per cent of its population on the Work Projects Administration,[85] 6 per cent of its population illiterate,[86] and from 10 to 26 of each 1,000 juveniles between 10 and 15 years, delinquent.[87] The sub-marginal section comprising LeFlore, Pushmataha, McCurtain, Latimer, Sequoyah, Adair, and Cherokee Counties, was reported in the 1930 census as having 6 to 10 per cent illiteracy.[88] The State's average for illiteracy was 2.8; the Nation's average, 4.3. In 1940, there were 791 Work Projects Administration adult education classes assisting in the reduction of illiteracy and the education of the under-privileged.

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84. A Compendium of Maps and Charts Pertaining to State Planning in Oklahoma, op. cit., p. 28.

85. Work Projects Administration Statistical Report, Oklahoma Employment Division, (Oklahoma City, August, 1939.)

86. A Compendium of Maps and Charts Pertaining to State Planning in Oklahoma, op. cit., p. 112.

87. Ibid., p. 114.

88. Ibid., p. 112.

Juvenile delinquency is not confined to rural sections. From 10 to 26 of each 1,000 children between 10 and 15 years in Washington, Tulsa, Oklahoma, Carter, Pontotoc, Coal and LeFlore Counties, were delinquent in 1935. The State average was 6.8.

Malaria, typhoid and tuberculosis take heavy tolls along the eastern and southeastern counties. Although the State averaged, from 1930 to 1934, only 4.3 deaths from malaria for each 100,000 persons, in the swampy area comprising Latimer, Pushmataha, McCurtain and Choctaw, the State Board of Public Health reported from 10 to 50 deaths from this disease among 100,000 persons.[89] Countywide malaria control projects were approved by the Work Projects Administration in November 1939, for LeFlore and Pittsburg Counties. The Oklahoma board of health worked cooperatively with the Work Projects Administration on projects costing nearly a half million dollars and furnishing a year's income for 384 families in addition to providing a healthful living place for the population of two counties. A statewide malaria control project has been submitted by the state board of health and the Work Projects Administration to Washington for approval.

The State maintained an annual average of 10.5 deaths from typhoid for 100,000 persons, but Delaware, Cherokee, Adair, McIntosh and Pontotoc Counties reported from 20 to 25 deaths for 100,000.[90]

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89. Ibid., p. 106.

90. A Compendium of Maps and Charts Pertaining to State Planning in Oklahoma, op. cit., p. 106.

Lack of sanitation caused the spread of the disease.

> The Oklahoma state health department has done a good piece of work in the last six years in rural sanitation. Since 1933 the health authorities have supervised the construction of 109,000 sanitary outhouses in rural communities. When this work was first started a good many people smiled. Farmers who had no running water on the premises were slow to take to the new-fangled outhouse idea, but gradually they came around. The farmers furnished all of the materials, the health office supplied the plans and supervision, and the WPA gave the labor. What is the result so far? In 1933 the state had 231 deaths from typhoid fever; in 1939 there were only 91 deaths from typhoid. The project has justified its existence and it should be carried on until better sanitation is introduced into every farming community.[91]

The average number of deaths among 100,000 from tuberculosis in Oklahoma was 51.7. Adair, Wagoner, and Muskogee Counties had from 70 to 311 deaths per 100,000.[92] These counties do not have tuberculosis hospitals or hospitals having tuberculosis wards. The lead, zinc and coal mining counties are affected most severly by this disease. Malaria, typhoid and tuberculosis are less prevalent throughout the western counties, where relief percentages are lower.

Since adequate incomes from agriculture or from employment will eliminate some of Oklahoma's social maladjustments, and improved practices brought about by education will reduce others, the operations division and employment division of the Work Projects Administration encourage a return to farming, a return to private employment, and school enrolment of adults. Case load reviews are conducted each

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91. Oklahoma City Times, May 9, 1940.

92. A Compendium of Maps and Charts Pertaining to State Planning in Oklahoma, op. cit., p. 106.

spring and fall, through the combined efforts of project supervisors, employment supervisors, social workers and the Farm Security Administration in order to transfer farmers who have recovered their finances sufficiently to come clients of the Farm Security Administration for further rehabilitation.

Relief offices worked in cooperation with the Oklahoma State Employment Service and the National Reemployment Service which placed 23,392 persons from July 1, 1937 to December 31, 1937. Of this number, 16,879 were men and 6,513 were women. The average age of the applicant was 34.2 years. About 31.7 per cent of the placements made were of persons over 40 years of age.

The Oklahoma State Employment Service placed 43,696 persons in employment from January 1, 1938, to December 31, 1939.[93] Of this number, 38,992 were men; 4,704 were women. Private industry led with 32,427 placements; public employment followed with 11,269. During this period, agricultural placements amounted to 15,381; public building and construction, 10,986; and domestic and personal service, 10,302. The bulk of the agricultural placements were made on cotton and truck farms. Approximately 55 per cent of the placements were from the unskilled labor classification which was represented by the professional, sales and clerical.

The average age of workers placed in 1938, was around 33 years. Only about 29.3 per cent of the placements were from the group over

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93. Information by courtesy of the Statistical Department, Oklahoma State Employment Service. (Oklahoma City, 1938.)

40 years. Records showed that 15.9 per cent of the applicants placed were between 10 and 19 years; 31.9 per cent between 20 and 29; 22.9 per cent between 30 and 39; 17.8 per cent between 40 and 49; 8.4 per cent between 50 and 59; and 3.1 per cent 60 and over.

Of the 2,782 war veterans placed, 1,872 were placed in private industry. However, during 1938, as many as 4,212 veterans made new applications for employment and 6,832 renewed their applications.[94] As of December 31, 1938, the Oklahoma State Employment Service had 49,904 applications from men and 8,840 from women in the active files. Of this number, 3,532 were from veterans. During the year, 79,780 persons made new applications and 89,727 renewed their applications. Recorded personal visits of the unemployed totaled 623,021.

Unemployment Compensation Benefits were initiated in Oklahoma December 1, 1938, when 21,496 initial claims and 21,030 continued claims had been received by the central office of the Unemployment Compensation Section. From December 1, 1938 to May 31, 1939, 72,597 initial claims had been filed and 290,204 continued claims for unemployment compensation had been taken; a total of $2,490,240.60 had been paid in benefits. Since persons receiving or eligible for unemployment compensation are generally ineligible for Work Projects Administration employment, the work program rolls will be affected appreciably.

Changes in regulations for Work Projects Administration eligibility and methods of assignment, Public Works Administration referrals,

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94. Information furnished by Guy C. Knarr, Veterans Placement Service, Oklahoma City.

adequate personnel, and the number of Oklahoma State Employment Service offices in the State cause peaks and valleys in the number of applications and number of placements made. In the spring and summer of 1935 applications increased because all persons certified for the work relief program were required to register with the Oklahoma State Employment Service which also made the placements on work projects. As a result, from July 1935, to March 1936, 102,527 relief placements were made. When the Work Projects Administration conducts a seasonal drive such as to get cotton pickers into the cotton fields, it works in cooperation with the Oklahoma State Employment Service which shows, as the result, sharp peaks in the placement curve. At the time of such organized drives, private placements through employer-demand suffer.

An analysis of the work of the Oklahoma State Employment Service in relation to the entire unemployment problem in the State is limited by the fact that the employment office receives voluntary applications, apart from relief registrations.

Occupational declines leave stranded bewildered people, many of whom join the stream of migrants. When logging activities declined in the southeast a stranded population was left in McCurtain, LeFlore, Latimer and the eastern part of Pushmataha Counties. Coal went into a decline and left miners stranded in Pittsburg County. Oil dropped downward and left Oklahoma City with rooming and boarding house operators and other groups unemployed. During harvests or peak seasons of

employment, agricultural labor may assume the aspect of "gang labor"[95] in Texas, Oklahoma and Arizona. In Texas and Oklahoma more than 50,000 migrant cotton pickers, white, Negro and Mexican, come from as far away as 900 miles for employment during the season.[96] Oklahoma wheat harvests attracted large numbers of seasonal laborers prior to 1925 when mechanization increased and displaced men.

Eighty-five per cent of the part-year migratory cotton pickers in Arizona in 1937 originated in the four western cotton states; 54 per cent from Oklahoma, 17 per cent from Texas, 8 per cent from Arkansas and 6 per cent from Missouri.[97] The usual occupations of the part-year and full-year migrants were practically the same. Almost half of the unattached workers and family heads had been engaged usually either as cotton tenants (29 per cent) or as cotton farm hands (20 per cent).[98] An additional 14 per cent had been occupied usually on other types of farms: 4 per cent as operators and 10 per cent as farm hands. Only 12 per cent had been skilled industrial workers, and 10 per cent unskilled industrial workers.

A large-scale westward movement of families from poorer regions of Oklahoma, Texas and Arkansas has been in progress since 1920. Drouth, agricultural depression and mechanization stimulated the movement

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95. Taylor, Carl C., Wheeler, Helen W., and Kirkpatrick, E. L., Disadvantaged Classes in American Agriculture; Social Research Report No. VIII. (Washington, D. C., 1938), p. 20.

96. Ibid.

97. Migratory Cotton Pickers in Arizona, Work Projects Administration Division of Research, (Washington, Government Printing Office, 1939), p. 22.

98. Ibid., p. 26.

in the 1930's and created emergency situations at points of destination which could not absorb large groups. The number of tractors in use in Oklahoma increased 19.4 per cent from 1934 to 1936.[99] Tractors replaced tenants and laborers. Some tenants stayed on as laborers, others drifted into small towns where they existed on odd jobs, occasional farm work and inadequate relief.[100]

Migrants in Arizona gave as their reasons for leaving home:[101]

| | |
|---|---|
| Economic | 81% |
| Farm failure | 19 |
| Insufficient income | 56 |
| Other | 6 |
| Personal | 19 |
| To be with relatives or friends | 8 |
| Ill health | 6 |
| Other | 5 |

Labor-recruiting publicity issued by Arizona cotton growers in 1937 indicated that a picker could make from $14.00 to $19.00 a week. Actually the average weekly income for families on all Arizona cotton picking jobs that year was $10.14.[102]

Handbills caused many dispossessed Oklahoma tenants and laborers to migrate to California. In six months in 1935, 53,000 unemployed persons crossed the California border in cars. Of these, 45 per cent were from the Great Plains. Oklahoma led with 7000 persons.

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99. Ibid., p. 27.
100. Ibid., p. 27.
101. Ibid., p. 28.
102. Ibid., p. XVII.

Texas, with about half as many, ranked second. There were 2000 Kansans, 2000 Nebraskans; 1000 each from Colorado and New Mexico.[103]

The following year, a nine-months' study was made and it was found that 54 per cent of the 71,000 persons who entered California were migrants from the Great Plains States. Again Oklahoma, with 16,500 persons, was in the lead.[104] For the month ending September 15, 1936, there were 3,900 unemployed Oklahomans who crossed the border, while only 1800 went in the corresponding month of the previous year.

A study of 467 families moving to rural sections of the state of Washington from 1932 to 1936 showed that 40 per cent migrated from the drouth-stricken Great Plains States. The communities into which these people moved considered that one-fifth of the migrants made an unsatisfactory adjustment economically and socially, two-fifths exhibited a high degree of transiency, and three-fifths made "permanent" settlement.[105]

Although Oklahomans have led the exodus from drouth areas, migration is not merely a state problem; rather it is regional with national significance. "The Study of Population Redistribution" concluded that, although 36,000 families had moved from the drouth

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103. The People of the Drought States. (Series V, Number 2. Works Progress Administration Research Bulletin, Washington. Government Printing Office, 1937), p. 45.

104. Ibid.

105. Ibid., p. 46

region since 1930, nearly 59,000 of those remaining were surplus population.[106]

Relief, rehabilitation, and work agencies have been serving as stop-gaps until industrial or agricultural development can be effected. Information service and migratory labor boards have been proposed. Zoning to restrict utilization of privately owned land has been suggested. Irrigation and conservation of water and soil through improved practices have reflected changing policies and attitudes. Slowly Oklahoma has been shifting in some counties from plowed agriculture to grazing. In an attempt to arrive at a higher degree of general welfare, Oklahoma is working toward combined planning to restore agriculture and develop small industries.

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106. Ibid., p. 55, quoting from Goodrich, Carter and others, Migration and Economic Opportunity. (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 1936), Ch. V, pp. 202-250. This chapter was prepared by C. Warren Thornthwaite.

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