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GRADUATE COLLEGE

FREDERICK DOUGLASS MOON: A STUDY OF BLACK EDUCATION IN OKLAHOMA

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SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

In partial fulfillment of the requirement for the

degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

BY

MARY C. MOON

Norman, Oklahoma

1978

FREDRICK DOUGLASS MOON: A STUDY OF

BLACK EDUCATION IN OKLAHOMA

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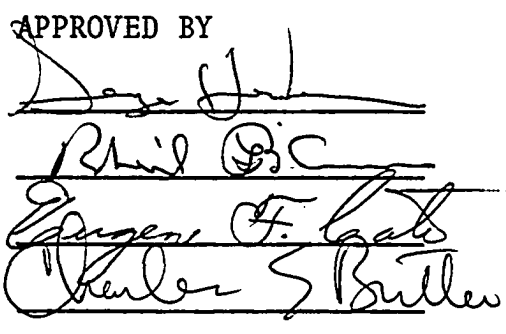

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

To my children Ronald Carleton Moon and

Mary Carletta Moon Abernathy, that they may know.

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First of all, the writer is indebted to Leeoshia Harris Moon whose graciosity permitted access to the files of F. D. Moon. The utilization of these documents were guided through the use of the Black Dispatch established by the late Roscoe Dunjee. His ingenious and critical reportings of the eras involved served as guidance for the theses.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Value judgments of many Oklahomans and also related literature acknowledge that Frederick Douglass Moon (F. D. Moon) significantly influenced education in Oklahoma. In most instances this assumption is based on vague, subjective, and non-empirical data. However, if this assumption is valid, the historical accounts of black education in Oklahoma as seen in the writings of Arthur L. Tolson, Evelyn Richard Strong, Ollie Everett Hatcher, Gene Aldrich, Kaye M. Teall, and others are the foundations upon which additional substantiation of the theses can be built.

Many of the educational problems confronting blacks in the nineteenth century were still unresolved during the period of F. D. Moon's career as an educator in Oklahoma (1921-1961).[1] On the positive side is the fact that Oklahoma had already provided its children with an opportunity for a common school education, as well as a school for training black teachers -- the Colored Agricultural and Normal University at Langston, Oklahoma. Even so, the legality of "separate but equal" schools was sanctioned in the

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[1]See, for example, John Henrik Clarke, "Education and the Making of the Black Urban Ghetto," in Jim Haskins, ed., Black Manifesto for Education (New York: William Morrow, 1973), p. 36.

Territorial Legislature beginning in 1890, and by virtue of the U. S. Supreme Court's 1896 Plessy v. Ferguson decision this practice was adjudicated as being constitutional. Racially segregated schools were re-confirmed in Oklahoma in 1906 by state law and remained in effect until 1955.[2] The change, of course, followed the U. S. Supreme Court's 1954 Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka, Kansas decision, which concluded that in public school education "separate but equal" had no place.[3] Oklahoma was not unique in its educational disfranchisement of blacks. Alabama, North Caroline, Virginia, Georgia, Louisiana, and Mississippi had similar constitutional barriers to desegregation.[4]

This was also a time of great philosophical debate, in which debators chose between Booker T. Washington's vocational education or William Edward Burghardt DuBois's liberal arts educational approach.[5] Oklahomans were torn between the two positions.[6] Both positions had merit for F. D. Moon.

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[2]Robert Lasch, "Along the Border," in Don Shoemaker, ed., With All Deliberate Speed (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), p. 58.

[3]See, Gene Aldrich, Black Heritage of Oklahoma (Edmond: Thompson Book Supply Company, 1973), pp. 34-36, 47.

[4]John Hope Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans, 3d ed., rev. and enl. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1967), pp. 340-341.

[5]John Henrik Clarke, "Education and the Making of the Black Urban Ghetto," pp. 31-40.

[6]Arthur L. Tolson, The Black Oklahomans History: 1541-1972 (New Orleans: Edwards Printing Company, 1974), pp. 90, 91.

Review of Related Literature

As noted earlier, separate education facilities for black and white persons in Oklahoma were mandated by the first Territorial Legislature in 1890.[7] However, the "separate but equal" principle did not originate in Oklahoma. Rather, it was based in an 1849 Massachusetts case, which in turn originated in the Boston schools. Even so, the concept persisted in the South and its bordering states for over a century, and was reinforced by the U. S. Supreme Court's Plessy decision.[8]

Following the 1803 Louisiana Purchase by the United States,[9] the area now known as Oklahoma -- not including the Panhandle -- was to become Indian Territory.[10] The removal of the Choctaw, Chickasaw, Cherokee, Creek, and Seminole Indians from their respective states to the Indian Territory between 1817 and 1842 resulted in a wider spread of slavery in the Territory.[11] Nathaniel Washington

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[7] See, Kaye M. Teall, Black History in Oklahoma: A Resource Book (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma City Public Schools, Title III, ESEA, 1971), p. 187.

[8] Robert A. LeFlar, "Law of The Land," in Don Shoemaker, ed., With All Deliberate Speed, p. 1.

[9] See, Edwin C. McReynolds, Oklahoma: A History of the Sooner State, 6th ed., rev. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), pp. 42-50.

[10] Ollie Everett Hatcher, "The Development of Legal Controls for Racial Segregation in the Public Schools of Oklahoma, 1865-1952," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1954), p. 23.

[11] Edwin C. McReynolds, Oklahoma: A History of the Sooner State, pp. 168, 187, 200.

wrote: "The early American traders in the Indian Territory owned a few slaves, but slavery as an institution was not widespread until the five tribes arrived from the south with their slaves."[12]

The attempt of missionaries to provide schools for the Indian tribes resulted in the opportunity for a few slaves to attend tribal schools, but it was not until 1866 that black children were given the same educational opportunities as Indian children.[13] Before the treaties of 1866 blacks living with Indians had not attained equal rights as citizens in the tribes.[14]

In 1861, prior to the Civil War, the Five Civilized Tribes formed an alliance with the Confederacy. At the beginning of the Civil War the tribes numbered 62,500. Of this total, there were 1,338 Indian slaveholders with 7,369 black slaves.[15] Even though slavery was abolished in 1863 by the Emancipation Proclamation, it continued in the Indian Territory until 1866, when formal treaties were signed between the Five Civilized Tribes and the United States

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[12]Nathaniel Jason Washington, Historical Development of the Negro in Oklahoma (Tulsa: Dexter Publishing Company, 1948), p. 64.

[13]Gene Aldrich, Black Heritage of Oklahoma, p. 34.

[14]Ollie Everett Hatcher, "The Development of Legal Controls for Racial Segregation in the Public Schools of Oklahoma, 1865-1952," p. 30.

[15]Arthur L. Tolson, The Black Oklahomans History: 1541-1972, p. 32.

government.[16]

Following the Civil War, the federal government paid strict attention to the cessions of land and the status of the free blacks. The treaties of 1866 provided for the Indian Territory to be divided into two parts: the eastern part was designated as "Indian Territory," and the western part was designated the "Oklahoma Territory." Free blacks were to enjoy the same political, civil and educational opportunities as all other citizens.[17] The shock of being devested of property and bitterness following defeat in combat caused many influential white southerners to hinder the establishment of black schools.[18]

In compliance with the treaties of 1866, the Cherokee Council provided two separate schools for blacks in 1867. The Chickasaw could not reach an agreement with the federal government as to the type of education for their former slaves, and this impasse resulted in no schools for blacks. The Choctaws did not make schools available for blacks until 1885, and then did so on a separate basis. The Creeks provided separate schools by tacit agreement with the federal government. The Seminoles accepted their former slaves as

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[16]Ibid., p. 41.

[17]Ollie Everett Hatcher, "The Development of Legal Controls for Racial Segregation in the Public Schools of Oklahoma, 1865-1952," p. 49.

[18]Gene Aldrich, Black Heritage of Oklahoma, p. 34.

equals and shared their schools with them until 1907.[19]

According to Aldrich, the racially separate schools provided by the Five Civilized Tribes, hindered black education. Much of the inferior education of blacks was due to the lack of understanding by the teachers of the needs of black children, and the inadequate education the teachers themselves had received. Aldrich does agree, however, that although the buildings were usually crude log cabins with holes in the walls for windows, stamped dirt for floors, and crude benches for seats, the effort to educate blacks gave them a flickering glimpse of how education could improve their lives -- individually and collectively. For this reason, perhaps many of the children took advantage of the opportunity to attend schools during the few months they were in session.[20]

May 2, 1890, Congress passed the Oklahoma Territory Organic Act, which provided for the organization of the Oklahoma Territory. Overall, the Organic Act designated the first counties within the Territory: Payne, Logan, Kingfisher, Oklahoma, Canadian, and Cleveland from the unassigned lands, and Beaver in the Panhandle.[21]

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[19]Ollie Everett Hatcher, "The Development of Legal Controls for Racial Segregation in the Public Schools of Oklahoma, 1865-1952," pp. 55-60.

[20]Gene Aldrich, Black Heritage of Oklahoma, p. 34.

[21]LeRoy H. Fischer, ed., "Oklahoma Territory, 1890-1907" in Territorial Governors of Oklahoma, vol. 1 (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, 1975), pp. 3-4.

By July 8, 1890, Governor George W. Steele called for the election of Territorial Legislature members.[22] Almost immediately during its first session at Guthrie on August 26, 1890, the newly elected Territorial Legislature gave attention to schools. Congress had provided, through the Organic Act, $50,000 for the development of common schools in the Territory.[23] There was little question about the educational needs for white children but a bitter fight was provoked within the Territorial Legislature over schools for blacks.[24]

Governor Steele was in favor of integrated schools, but strong advocates against integration of the schools were successful in getting a bill passed which left this issue within the purview of each county.[25] Council Bill No. 2, Section 113, was reviewed by Ollie E. Hatcher: "It would be incumbent upon the County Commissioners to provide for and hold an election in each county of the Territory to determine if there should be separate schools."[26] The first

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[22]Jack R. Yakey, "Robert Martin: Acting Governor of Oklahoma Territory, 1891-1892," in LeRoy H. Fischer, ed., Territorial Governors of Oklahoma, p. 25.

[23]Thomas Arthur Hazell, "George Washington Steele: Governor of Oklahoma Territory, 1890-1891," in LeRoy H. Fischer, ed., Territorial Governors of Oklahoma, pp. 13-16.

[24]Arthur L. Tolson, The Black Oklahomans History: 1541-1972, p. 125.

[25]Ibid., See, Kay M. Teall, Black History in Oklahoma: A Resource Book, p. 185.

[26]See, Arthur L. Tolson, The Black Oklahomans History: 1541-1972, p. 125.

election was held the first Tuesday of April, 1891, and was to be continued every three years thereafter.[27] Significant political events were occuring in the Oklahoma Territory between the Democratic, Republican, and Populist parties[28] and the school bill of local option was said to have been a compromise between the parties.[29] In the end, a majority vote was cast by all the counties for "separate schools."[30]

Due largely to the effort of Governor Steele, Congress passed an Act in 1891 which allowed the Oklahoma Territory to lease sections sixteen and thirty-six of each township for public schools. The proceeds from this authorization were to be used for maintenance of public schools in the Oklahoma Territory.[31] Exercising their local option, separate schools were established in Oklahoma

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[27] Ibid.

[28] Thomas Arthur Hazell, "George Washington Steele: Governor of Oklahoma Territory, 1890-1891," in LeRoy Fischer, ed., Territorial Governors of Oklahoma, p. 17.

[29] Kaye M. Teall, Black History in Oklahoma: A Resource Book, p. 185.

[30] Ollie Everett Hatcher, "The Development of Legal Controls for Racial Segregation in the Public Schools of Oklahoma, 1865-1952," p. 78.

[31] Harry E. Henslick, "Abraham Jefferson Seay: Governor of Oklahoma Territory, 1892-1893," in LeRoy H. Fischer, ed., Territorial Governors of Oklahoma, pp. 34-35.

City in 1891,[32] Kingfisher in 1892, and Guthrie in 1891.[33]

The passage of the school laws of 1890 created positions for black teachers in the Oklahoma Territory, and established the pattern by which subsequent Oklahoma school systems would develop.[34] The initial schools enrolled 20,085 whites and 1,252 blacks.[35]

Governor Abraham Jefferson Seay called for new public school legislation between 1892 and 1893. Compulsory attendance in grammar schools and authority for school districts to issue bonds for construction of brick school buildings were included in his legislative program. It was through Governor Seay's initiative that land was secured from the federal government for higher education, and section thirteen in each township was reserved for college endowment.[36]

The Territorial Legislature of 1893 designated a system of county ad valorem taxation as a base for financial support of both separate and majority schools. The Board of Commissioners was

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[32]Arthur L. Tolson, The Black Oklahomans History: 1541-1972, p. 126.

[33]Evelyn Richard Strong, "Historical Development of the Oklahoma Association of Negro Teachers: A Study in Social Change, 1893-1958,"(Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1961), p. 42.

[34]Ibid., p. 32.

[35]Gene Aldrich, Black Heritage of Oklahoma, p. 35.

[36]Harry E. Henslick, "Abraham Jefferson Seay: Governor of Oklahoma Territory, 1892-1893," in LeRoy H. Fischer, ed., Territorial Governors of Oklahoma, pp. 35-39.

given the task of levying a tax based on the valuation of the county property and the amount needed to maintain the separate schools.[37]

The Democrats and Populists, through their combined efforts, passed a law in 1894 stipulating that while both majority and minority schools should have equal facilities and the same length of school year, "it shall be unlawful for any white child to attend a colored school or any colored child to attend a white school."[38]

During the era of the Oklahoma territorial days, the U. S. Supreme Court rendered two decisions involving segregation: the Slaughter House case in 1893 and the Plessy case in 1896. The Slaughter House decision concluded that public school education was a state matter, and that the Fourteenth Amendment was not abridged so long as the states complied with the "equal protection" clause in the amendment. The Plessy case permitted segregation as long as "equal facilities" were furnished in order to comply with the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. The Oklahoma Supreme Court gave judicial sanction to these decisions in the form of approved statutory guarantee of segregation in the Oklahoma public schools. This judicial reasoning was carried into statehood

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[37]Ollie Everett Hatcher, "The Development of Legal Controls for Racial Segregation in the Public Schools of Oklahoma, 1865-1952," p. 100.

[38]Kaye M. Teall, Black History in Oklahoma: A Resource Book, p. 185.

and remained until the 1954 U. S. Supreme Court decision.[39]

By 1897 the first laws were enacted which spelled out three options for correcting violations of the 1894 separate school laws. First, a writ of mandamus could be brought against the local district school board, county commissioners, or county superintendent of public instruction compeling them to comply with the law. Second, a writ of injunction could be issued in the name of the plaintiffs to restrain any person, district or county commissioner or county superintendent of public instructions, from violating the law. Third, the county superintendent could unilaterally transfer the children of any race in the event there were not enough people to organize a school.[40]

Thus the laws of the Oklahoma Territory in 1897 (Article I, Sections I-II) closed the local option of counties for racially integrated public schools and established mandated segregated schools. This also applied to the Colored Agricultural and Normal University, which was created by the Territorial Legislature in 1897.[41]

Even before the establishment of the Colored Agricultural

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[39]Ollie Everett Hatcher, "The Development of Legal Controls for Racial Segregation in the Public Schools of Oklahoma, 1865-1952," pp. 86-90.

[40]Ibid., p. 82

[41]Ibid., p. 83.

and Normal University (which was later renamed Langston University), there were separate training institutes for black teachers. These institutes, which included teachers from 14 counties and 26 communities with separate schools, provided opportunities for teacher certification and social and professional interactions. In 1893 the training institutes were organized into the Ida M. Wells Teachers Association, through which efforts were geared toward the improvement of separate schools for black youth as well as professional growth for black teachers. The Ida M. Wells Teachers Association served as the nucleus for the Oklahoma Association of Negro Teachers (OANT) which was established after statehood.[42]

In 1896, aware of the need for broader and more advanced training, the OANT sought additional educational programs at the Normal School for the Oklahoma Territory in Edmond, Oklahoma. This effort involved the unsuccessful attempt to enroll Cynthia Ware in teacher education courses at the Normal School.[43]

In 1897 Governor William Carey Renfrow signed a bill establishing the Colored Agricultural and Normal University,[44] with the

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[42]Evelyn Richard Strong, "Historical Development of the Oklahoma Association of Negro Teachers: A Study in Social Change, 1893-1958," pp. 56, 57.

[43]Ibid., p. 53.

[44]James F. Morgan, "William Carey Renfrow: Governor of Oklahoma Territory, 1893-1897," in LeRoy H. Fischer, ed., Territorial Governors of Oklahoma, p. 63.

purposes: "The instruction of both male and female blacks in the art of teaching various branches which pertain to a common school education, and in such higher education as may be deemed advisable, under fundamental laws of the United States with rights and duties of citizens in agricultural, mechanical, and industrial arts."[45]

The blacks of Langston, Oklahoma, an all-black town, donated the site for the university, and the Legislature appropriated $6,500 for the first building. By 1901, the county board added 120 acres of land and 3 buildings at the cost of $15,000. About 75 percent of the initial students came from farms, and approximately 50 percent of the students worked their way through school.[46]

In 1901 a law was enacted which prohibited black teachers from teaching whites, and whites from teaching blacks. This law set penalties for violation of the Act.[47]

On June 14, 1906, the Enabling Act authorizing the merging of the Territory of Oklahoma and the Indian Territory was signed by President Theodore Roosevelt. This act required a system of public education. In 1908, in compliance with the requirement, Article 1, Section 5, of the State Constitution was written "for the

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[45]John J. Coffett, Don S. Hobbs and A. J. Brumbaugh, eds., Self Study of Higher Education in Oklahoma (Oklahoma City: State Regent for Higher Education, 1966), pp. 52-56.

[46]Nathaniel J. Washington, Historical Development of the Negro in Oklahoma, pp. 62-65.

[47]Gene Aldrich, Black Heritage of Oklahoma, p. 36.

establishment and maintenance of a system of public schools which shall be open to all the children of the state . . . not to prevent the establishment and maintenance of separate schools for white and colored children . . ."[48]

Also Article XIII, Section 2, states: "Whenever in this constitution the laws of this state, the word or words colored or colored race, Negro or Negro race are used, the same shall be construed to mean or apply to all persons of African descent. The term white race shall include all other persons . . ."[49]

Article XIII, Section 3, left no doubt that the doctrine of "separate but equal" was to be applied in the new state: ". . . separate schools for white and colored children with like accommodations shall be provided by the legislature and impartially maintained . . ."[50] Nathaniel J. Washington wrote that "like accommodations" too often resulted in inferior schools for blacks.[51]

The amount of ad valorem taxes that could be levied on

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[48]Oklahoma, Constitution (1908), Art. 1, Sec. 5, In Ollie Everett Hatcher, "The Development of Legal Controls for Racial Segregation in the Public Schools of Oklahoma, 1865-1952," p. 99.

[49]Oklahoma, Constitution (1908), Art. XIII, Sec. 2, in Nathaniel Jason Washington, Historical Development of the Negro in Oklahoma, p. 60.

[50]Oklahoma, Constitution (1908), Art. XIII, Sec. 3, in Ollie Everett Hatcher, "The Development of Legal Controls for Racial Segregation in the Public Schools of Oklahoma, 1865-1952," p. 99.

[51]Nathaniel Jason Washington, Historical Development of the Negro in Oklahoma, p. 60.

assessed value of property was limited by the Oklahoma Constitution. The local districts were authorized to levy fifteen mills, and the County Commissioner could levy two mills on county property designated for high schools and common schools of the county.[52]

House Bill No. 365, passed by the Oklahoma State Legislature in 1908, clarified the separation of education for blacks and enumerated the fines for failure to comply:

1. Maintaining an integrated institution of education, whether private or public, was punishable by a fine of $100 to $500 a day.

2. Teaching in an institution that received students of both races subjected the teacher to a fine of $10 to $50 a day.

3. Attending an integrated school subjected the student's parents to a fine of $5 to $20 a day. These were minimum and maximum fines and each day was a separate offense.[53] Each institution was to determine if their students were black or white, and even the uniting of black and white teachers for "teacher improvement" was banned.[54]

In 1909 four accreditation categories were given for schools: public high schools, state schools, private schools, and colored

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[52]Ollie Everett Hatcher, "The Development of Legal Controls for Racial Segregation in the Public Schools of Oklahoma, 1865-1952," p. 102.

[53]Gene Aldrich, Black Heritage of Oklahoma, p. 36.

[54]Ibid.

schools. No maximum number of units was required for schools to be approved. Keeping accreditation, however, depended largely upon "the progress of the schools in securing new buildings, making additions to old ones, better janitor service, adding more teachers, requiring more college training of the teachers, providing additional library and laboratory facilities, installing improved methods of keeping records, improvement of administration and supervision, and finally, a higher quality of actual classroom instruction."[55]

Later criteria for high school accreditation was "a one year high school, or schools accredited for not more than five units; two year high school, or schools accredited for not more than 10 units; three year high school, or schools accredited for not more than 15 units; four year high school, or schools accredited for 16 or more units; North Central school belonging to the North Central Association of Colleges or secondary schools."[56]

By 1911 county superintendents were in charge of governing the "minority" or "separate" schools; and they had authority to hire teachers for dependent districts. By 1913 separate schools were

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[55]A. L. Crable, "The Development of Accredited High Schools in Oklahoma During the Past Decade," (Masters Theses, University of Oklahoma, 1927), p. 2.

[56]Ibid.

defined as "the schools with the fewest children."[57]

Separation of black educators caused many black educators to see the need for establishing a network of communication between blacks in order to facilitate a statewide exchange of educational ideas. At a meeting held in 1907 at the Colored Agricultural and Normal University, sixty-seven black educators from the defunct "twin territories" met to reorganize the black territorial teacher's organization. Seventeen of the participants were principals. These principals emerged during the early statehood days as persons in frequent and advantageous contact with white state educational officials. The territorial teachers organization dissolved in 1907 and reformed as the Oklahoma Association of Negro Teachers (OANT).[58]

In subsequent years, workshops focusing on the quality of education in the separate schools were held by the OANT. Problems concerning student attendance in black schools, organization of parent and teacher associations, professional growth of teachers, accreditation of schools, and pedagogical and political circumstances surrounding the Colored Agricultural and Normal University were some of the specific issues addressed by the OANT.[59]

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[57]Ollie Everett Hatcher, "The Development of Legal Controls for Racial Segregation in the Public Schools of Oklahoma, 1865-1952," pp. 102-106.

[58]Evelyn Richard Strong, "Historical Development of the Oklahoma Association of Negro Teachers: A Study in Social Change, 1893-1958," pp. 83, 86-88.

[59]Ibid., pp. 69, 81.

The gradual growth of black high schools was of special concern to the OANT. The state constitution provided one mill for high school support, and one mill to supplement the common school funds. Most school districts accepted the premise that only one mill, rather than two mills, was to be used for the maintenance of both black high schools and common schools. Securing state legislation to relieve problems of financing the black schools quickly became the predominant goal of the OANT.[60]

As a result of a poll taken in 1919 involving sixty counties with black schools, the OANT learned that only five counties were even levying one mill, and some counties with several black schools were levying a half a mill or less. The result of the discovery prompted the OANT to lobby in the legislature. A law was passed in 1921 authorizing a two mill levy for the separate schools.[61]

Historian Nathaniel Washington states that despite the two mill provision, the financial difference in support between majority and minority schools still remained great. The white district schools could, and many did, vote a maximum of fifteen mills on all taxable property within their districts. Blacks could not come close to matching these levies.[62]

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[60]Ibid., pp. 81, 84.

[61]Ibid., p. 81.

[62]Nathaniel Jason Washington, Historical Development of the Negro in Oklahoma, p. 60.

The Teachers Journal, an official publication of the OANT, and small groups of black educators organized into subdivisions helped to promote the activities of the associations. The organization's subdivisions included the County Association of Negro Teachers in Creek and Okmulgee counties, the Associations of Negro Principals, and the Oklahoma Interscholastic Athletic Association. All of which focused local and national attention on black educational problems and philosophical attitudes of Oklahoma black educators.[63]

Since territoral days, black teachers and administrators in Oklahoma had shown interest in Booker T. Washington and W. E. B. DuBois' philosophies of education.[64] Washington's primary emphasis was placed upon race pride and solidarity evolving around central themes of self help, thrift, industrial education, and Christian character.[65] Washington's philosophy had spread throughout the nation in the early twentieth century.[66] The impact of Washington's influence in Oklahoma is vividly expressed through Tolson's account: on November 10, 1095, Booker T. Washington arrived in Guthrie,

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[63]Eveyln Richard Strong, "Historical Development of the Oklahoma Association of Negro Teachers: A Study in Social Change, 1893-1958," pp. 95, 102, 117.

[64]Ibid., p. 56.

[65]Melvin Drimmer, Black History: A Reappraisal (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1969), pp. 341, 342.

[66]John Hope Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans, pp. 389-397.

Oklahoma, and 10,000 persons greeted him.[67] He had become the most influential black spokesperson on vocational education in America. However, his leadership was challenged by DuBois.[68]

DuBois contended that problems of black Americans could most expeditiously be abated by the efforts of exceptional black people. His philosophy called for educating the "talented tenth": "It is the problem of developing the best of this race that we may guide the masses away from the contamination and death of the worst in their own and other races. . . .School houses do not teach themselves, piles of brick and machinery do not send out men. It is the trained living human soul cultivated and strengthened by long study and thought, that breathes the real breath of life into boys and girls and makes them human, whether they be black or white, Greek, Russian or Americans."[69]

The philosophies of Washington and DuBois had significant impact on black educators in Oklahoma. It is within the framework of the preceding historical conditions that F. D. Moon gained

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[67]Arthur L. Tolson, The Black Oklahomans History: 1541-1972, p. 91.

[68]International Library of Negro Life and History (New York: Charles Wesley Publishing Company, 1969), p. 178.

[69]Isidore Starr, The Negro in the Twentieth Century, ed. John Hope Franklin (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1967), pp. 265-271.

prominence as an educational leader.[70]

The question then becomes: What did F. D. Moon accomplish as principal for black youths before and after Oklahoma public schools were desegregated institutions? In what manner did he operate in order to be considered influential in furthering the development of education for blacks in Oklahoma? And during the period when Booker T. Washington's influence seemed predominant in Oklahoma, what philosophy did Moon adopt and how did he implement his philosophy of education as principal in Oklahoma?

Assumptions

1. There was a significant relationship between the social milieu of the period in question and the lack of quality education provided for blacks in Oklahoma. Out of this milieu, F. D. Moon's educational philosophy was shaped.

2. Legal sanctions in terms of separate school codes and philosophies of education for blacks and whites provoked F. D. Moon, as an administrator, to seek substantive changes in education for blacks.

3. F. D. Moon rejected the subservient role that was given to black educators of his era; and in so doing he became a

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[70]Evelyn Richard Strong, "Historical Development of the Oklahoma Association of Negro Teachers: A Study in Social Change, 1893-1958," pp. 86-88.

"militant" black educational leader.

4. F. D. Moon's Christian home background also shaped his educational philosophy.

Statement of the Problem

Specifically, the problem for this study was: An analysis of the educational philosophy and the accomplishments of F. D. Moon in Oklahoma.

Two major questions have been investigated:

1. How did F. D. Moon overcome the legal limitations imposed on black public schools as he sought to improve the educational facilities and curriculum opportunities for black students in the schools where he worked?

2. What philosophy or philosophies undergirded his efforts?

Methodology

This study has taken an historical approach. The content of this dissertation is based on an extensive reading of available materials -- journals, newspapers, books, official reports and documents -- and interviews with persons who knew and worked with F. D. Moon. In summary, three techniques were used in gathering and evaluating data for this study: (1) interviews with knowledgeable respondents; (2) examination of relevant documents, private files, and official and personal correspondence; and (3) examination of related studies. These techniques were employed in order to establish a

proper historical perspective. Primary sources for corroborating the historical data included:

1. Ollie Everett Hatcher, "The Development of Legal Control for Racial Segregation in the Public Schools of Oklahoma, 1865-1952" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1954).

2. Evelyn Richard Strong, "Historical Development of the Oklahoma Association of Negro Teachers: A Study in Social Change 1893-1958" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1961).

3. Kaye M. Teall, Black History in Oklahoma: A Resource Book (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma City Public Schools, Title III ESEA, 1971).

4. Gene Aldrich, Black Heritage of Oklahoma (Edmond: Thompson Book, 1973.)

5. Arthur L. Tolson, The Black Oklahomans History: 1541-1972 (New Orleans: Edwards Printing Company, 1974.)

Limitations

This study had certain limitations, including the following:

1. There has been no previous in-depth study of the life, accomplishments, and educational philosophy of F. D. Moon.

2. The continuity of the era within this dissertation relies on the writings found in the Black Dispatch, edited by Roscoe Dungee. Because Mr. Dungee, though not an educator, was a direct participant in many of the efforts involving the accomplishmebts of Dr. Moon, many of his accounts are subjective. This, however, was

not to imply that other newspapers and published sources are more reliable.

The rationale for the use of personal documents is similar to the one used for observational techniques: what observational techniques accomplish for overt behavior, personal documents can do for subjective experiences. That is, personal documents reveal to the researcher life as it was lived without the use of experimental research techniques. Admittedly, the number of situations that can be observed in an experimental setting on a day-to-day basis are considerable, while personal documents are extremely limited and relatively rare. Hence the scope of personal documents for research is greatly limited. Of equal importance is the matter of interpretation.

> The use of personal documents has been criticized on the grounds that they are rarely suited for treatment by statistical techniques; that their validity is hardly ever beyond doubt; that they can be the result of deception or self-deception; that they are subject to errors of memory and are at the mercy of passing moods. In addition, they are by no means easy to come by.[71]

While the above arguments are valid, it should be pointed out that the applicability of research technique is not determined by the nature of the data, but, instead, by the type of questions with which the researcher approaches the data. This research is limited

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[71]Claire Selitiz, Marie Jahoda, Morton Deutsch, and Stuart W. Cook, ed., Research Methods in Social Relations, rev. ed. (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1951), p. 327.

to the life and times surrounding a particular person.

In any case, the study of personal documents permits generalization only about the life of the document-producer, not the population at large. For this reason, research studies are used in order to make broader generalizations.

A final caution is in order: "Historical studies are best used for exploratory and descriptive rather than statistical purposes; for the development of insights and for illustrations rather than the verification or refutation of hypotheses; and in conjunction with other methods rather than by themselves."[72] It is precisely this use that this dissertation is written -- a description of F. D. Moon, black educator and renowned community leader.

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[72]Ibid., p. 330.

CHAPTER II

GROWING UP IN THE OKLAHOMA TERRITORY

In a small room petitioned within the library of Douglass High School in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma is an area designated as "The F. D. Moon Memorial Book Collection," on the south wall of the small room hangs a bronze plaque, dedicated to F. D. Moon. Beneath the likeness of F. D. Moon, on the plaque is this tribute: "In honor of Mr. F. D. Moon, Principal of Douglass High School 1940-1961 -- Who believes that in order for Negro youth to have a better appreciation of their race, it is necessary that they be informed concerning outstanding cultural achievements of the race . . ."[1]

The Moon Family

F. D. Moon's parents, Henry Clay and Pollie Twig Moon, migrated to the Oklahoma Territory and homesteaded fifty-five miles from where the bronze plaque hangs.[2] They had migrated to the Oklahoma Territory from Pine Bluff, Arkansas, the home of the earlier generations of the Moon and Twig families. Both families

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[1]See the F. D. Moon Memorial Book Collection, Douglass High School, 900 North Eastern, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

[2]F. D. Moon, taped interview held Oklahoma Christian College, Living Legend Library, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 11 April 1972.

lived in or near the area of Pine Bluff, Arkansas.[3]

Although the Moons did not make the runs in the Territories, like many blacks who had migrated to the Territory of Oklahoma, they came seeking better opportunities for themselves and their family. Pollie Moon had read of the new Territory in the Langston City Herold[4] distributed throughout the South by its publisher, Edwin P. McCabe.. McCabe described the Oklahoma Territory as a land of educational, econominic and political opportunities for black Americans,[5] and he became one of the leaders to promote the possibilities of Oklahoma as an all-black state.[6]

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[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Blacks coming to Oklahoma and Indian Territories during the 1890's had come because of the desire for a better life. This led to a continued increase in the black population. Most of them came from the South and Southeast where there were more restrictions on blacks than those in the newly settled land. Gene Aldrich, Black Heritage of Oklahoma (Edmond: Thompson Book Supply Company, 1973),p. 25.

[6]The chief leader in the movement of making a Negro state in Oklahoma was E. P. McCabe, who had risen to State Auditor in Kansas in 1882. Motivated in part by the Republican's refusal to renominate him for office, McCabe became deeply imbued with the idea of separation of the races and campaigned for an all-Negro state. So thoroughly did he work that in 1892, the year after Oklahoma was opened to settlement, there were seven towns in the Territory. Though he failed in his dream of a Negro-dominated commonwealth, with Senators, Governors, and Congressmen, it reached a climax in 1910. Of the twenty-five towns established the earliest was Langston 1891, the most famous Boley 1898. August Meier, Negro Thought in America, 1880-1915 (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1969), pp. 147, 148.

These opportunities appealed to Pollie Moon and she encouraged her husband to move the family to the Oklahoma Territory. Henry Clay Moon, however, was reluctant to take such a giant step.[7] To do so, he would have to leave his home and teaching position in the common schools. Besides, the Moon family had been among the more fortunate blacks before, during and after the Civil War. For example, before the Civil War Henry Clay Moon's father, Issac Johnson had developed into a physically tall strong heavy set mullatto slave. Issac's father, who also was his master, was only known to him as Mr. Johnson. Mr. Johnson took better care of Issac than most of his slaves. In addition, he used Issac as a stud for young healthy slave women in order to raise fine robust slaves for his plantation, or to sell for gain. Later Issac was sold to a Moon family, whose name Issac took and gave to his wife Matilda and their four children: Henry Clay, Alexander S., Madison, and Nannie. Henry Moon's middle name, Clay, had been given him by his father Issac in honor of a white friend he admired.[8]

During the Civil War, many crops and properties were destroyed and bails of cotton were thrown into the river. Issac Moon realized that after the war he would probably have to become the

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[7]F. D. Moon, taped interview, 11 April 1972.

[8]Ruth Moon, interview held 3741 Palm, St. Louis, Missouri, 6 January 1977; Irene Moon, interview held 405 West Vilas, Guthrie, Oklahoma, 14 February 1976.

sole provider for his family. With this in mind, he would wait until night, take his sons, a large hook attached to a long rope and catch the floating bales of cotton in the river. He managed to hide over twenty bales of cotton which brought a good price after the war. Using the money from the sale of the cotton Issac bought a small farm in the hills of Pine Bluff, Arkansas. There, he raised cotton, a truck garden, pigs, cows and chickens which he often sold in the market places in Pine Bluff.[9]

As time passed, Issac and Matilda Moon reared and educated their family on the earnings of their small farm in Arkansas. One son moved away and was never heard from again. Later, Nannie moved to Little Rock, Arkansas, where she lived the remainder of her life with her son, Henry McKay, and his family. In the meantime, Henry Clay and Alexander's public school education in Arkansas was fruitful. Both Henry Clay and Alexander became public school teachers in Arkansas. Their relationship with whites was basically positive.[10] This was unusual after the Civil War:

> When the old social and economic structure fell with the Civil War, the South began the erection of a new structure of racial discrimination based upon complete racial separation. From the Southern viewpoint, it was only logical that the old relationship should continue as before. Thus, the dominant whites sought in every possible way to subordinate and rule

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[9]Ruth Moon, interview, 6 January 1977.

[10]Ibid.

the blacks.[11]

While these ideologies existed among southern whites, Henry Moon's brother Alexander Moon, a former slave, had served as a court clerk. In fact, after Alexander's death, the Pine Bluff Commercial carried the following obituary:

> Professor A. S. Moon, age 75, probably one of the best known Negro citizens and educators in the State, died at 6 o'clock at his home, 914 West Third Avenue.
>
> During his life, Moon had probably had one of the most unusual careers ever known to a member of his race in this section. He was born in this county. In 1874 when the Republican regime held sway over this section, he was elected to the office of County Treasurer, in which capacity he served one term. After the expiration of his term as treasurer he served as deputy sheriff and collector until 1879. In 1880 he was elected Court Clerk and served one term.
>
> Professor Moon was the only Negro to serve on the School Board and it was while he was president of the Board, that he was responsible for establishing the Greenville school, of which he was principal until his death. Moon was highly respected by members of his own race, and has a host of friends among the white people of this county.
>
> He is survived by three children, Issac Moon, Edward C. Moon, both of this city, and Emma Moon of Evanston, Illinois. He is also survived by his wife, Lula Moon, and one sister, Nanny McKay of Little Rock, Arkansas.[12]

But separation of family life was not new for Pollie Twig Moon. Her parents, Sandy and Kitty Twig, were separated before the Civil War when they were sold to different masters in Missouri. Prior to this

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[11]Arthur L. Tolson, The Black Oklahomans History: 1541-1972 (New Orleans: Edwards Printing Company, 1974), p. 124.

[12]Pine Bluff (Ark.) Commercial, 20 July 1922.

separation they had one child, Henderson Twig, born in Missouri. When Kitty was sold to her new master, who lived in Arkansas, she was expecting her second child. Before she reached her new plantation her second child, Pollie Twig, was born. The birth of Pollie Twig left Kitty Twig with four children, two of the children were from a previous marriage. The oldest of Kitty's children was Porter Brown who grew up to become a successful plantation owner in Tucker, Arkansas. He later became a minister and pastored the Center Chapel Christian Church in Tucker.[13]

After her separation from Sandy Twig, Kitty made her home between Elison and Altheimer, Arkansas, where she met a Mr. Turner and the two of them raised three sons Elijah, Guideth, and Kalip Turner. Pollie had a shiftless stepfather; hence she had to help support her mother and care for the other children. Despite her problems, however, Pollie grew into a devout Christian woman.[14]

After Pollie's marriage to Henry C. Moon and the birth of their eight children (Issac and Vida had died in infancy), she felt that Pine Bluff, Arkansas, was not the best place to rear her family. According to Ruth Moon: "One day something happened in Pine Bluff which disturbed Pollie so much she could not stand the thought of living and bringing up their children in such an

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[13]Ruth Moon, interview, 6 January 1977.

[14]Ibid. Also Irene Moon, personal papers.

atmosphere . . . A black man was hung in the Court yard. That was more than Pollie could stand. She thought there must be a better way, somewhere to educate their children."[15] To her, the prospect of raising cotton, corn and general farming in Oklahoma seemed an ideal opportunity.[16]

Although Henry Moon had been crippled since childhood, when a shed fell on him, and the thought of farming was not too appealing, he agreed with Pollie. They came to the Oklahoma Territory in 1892. The Moon family arrived in the Territory with their six children - Ietta, Sampson, Henry Alexander, Sandy, Milton and James Clay.[17]

During this period many all black towns were being established in Oklahoma Territory. Pollie Moon's fundamentalist attitude caused her not to want to rear her children in sinful towns, but in what she believed was the decent and wholesome atmosphere of rural communities. To her towns contaminated people's morals, and she wanted her children reared in the admiration of the

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[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.,. Also, F. D. Moon, taped interview, 11 April 1972.

The possibility of cotton growing in the southwestern and central portions of Oklahoma attracted farmers from Texas, Mississippi and Arkansas. Edwin C. McReynolds, Oklahoma: A History of the Sooner State. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), p. 430.

[17] Irene Moon, personal papers.

Lord.[18]

The Moon's homesteaded on seventy-seven and three fourth acres of land, four miles south of a small developing town called Mission, in Lincoln County.[19] Lincoln County had been added to Oklahoma along with Pottawatomie in 1891, and named for Abraham Lincoln. Two years after the Moon's homesteaded their farm, the town's name was changed from Mission to Fallis, Oklahoma, in honor of the town's first postmaster. This was a common practice during the Territorial days.[20]

The Moon's farm was a forest covered area with Blackjack and Post-Oak trees. The land was composed of clay and sand. Working alone, Henry Moon cleared enough land to build his own log cabin and a stone well for water. He also cleared portions of the land for farming. The farm yielded very slowly from the very beginning, and the Moon's suffered privations. Cotton, along with corn and small gardens, were the chief products of the farm, which provided food and economical means for the family.[21]

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[18] Oklahoma Journal, 17 December 1975.

[19] Irene Moon, interview, 14 February 1976.

[20] George H. Shirk, Oklahoma Place Names, 2d ed., rev. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974), pp. 87, 142, 162.

[21] F. D. Moon, taped interview, 11 April 1972.

"Because of discrimination and the smaller amount of economic means, the blacks were forced to settle on the poorer farms." Gene Aldrich, Black Heritage of Oklahoma , pp. 28, 29.

The Early Social Order

In the 1890's the general social atmosphere seemed to reflect the U. S. Supreme Court's decisions in the Slaughter House case (1893), the Cruikshank case (1876), the civil rights cases (1883), and the Harrison case (1889). These decisions nullified acts seeking to enforce provisions of the 13th, 14th, and the 15th Amendments pertaining to civil rights of blacks. In addition, the Court ruled that racial discrimination against private persons were matters for local states to adjudicate. As a result of these rulings, the door for separate but equal laws was opened.[22]

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[22]Arthur L. Tolson, The Black Oklahomans History: 1541-1972, p. 58.

The U. S. Supreme Court in the Slaughter House cases although not dealing directly with blacks, ruled the 14th amendment's privileges and immunities referred only to the inherent characteristics of U. S. Citizenship. The minority opinion felt that the amendment applied to privileges and immunities which citizens enjoyed as citizens of states, agreeing with Congress that Negroes needed protection from hostile state laws.

The Supreme Court in U. S. v. Cruikshank decided the right of suffrage is not a necessary attribute of national citizenship . . . the right to vote in the States comes from the States; but the right of exemption from prohibitive discrimination comes from the U. S.

In the civil rights cases in 1883, the Republican dominated Supreme Court declared the Civil Rights Act of 1875 unconstitutional. It ruled that the Acts guarantee of equal rights went beyond the powers granted to Congress in the Reconstruction Amendments. In this year 52 blacks were lynched.

Benjamin Harrison during his message to Congress (1889) was the first President since Grant to claim that the Federal Government had to protect the free exercise of the ballot. See, Peter M. Bergman, The Chronological History of the Negro American (New York: The New American Library, 1969), pp. 273, 278, 301.

It was during that time that:

> The national toleration of racial discrimination encouraged white supremacy in the West, including Oklahoma Territory . . . . The gensis of trouble for blacks in Oklahoma dates the Run of 1889 and was due in part to whites resentment of efforts by black leaders to colonize masses for their race in new territory . . . local efforts, belittled the black plan for colonization and claimed that Oklahoma was not a black paradise.[23]

Meanwhile, the Democrats accused the Republicnas of colonizing blacks in the western Oklahoma counties. The President of the United States had appointive powers to choose the leading territorial officials, especially the governor; and the governor was bound by oath to protect the constitutional rights of all persons regardless of color.[24] In 1892, intensive racial discrimination was perceivable in the South, North and the Twin Territories as well.[25] In the Territories of Oklahoma, blacks were run out of Lexington. Governor Abraham Jefferson Seay interceded, indicting

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[23]Ibid., pp. 60-61.

[24]Ibid., pp. 61-62.

[25]Ibid., p. 62.

In 1892, Plessy, a citizen of Louisiana . . . boarded a train from New Orleans to Covington in the same state. The conductor ordered him out of the car for white passengers and to sit in the Negro car. When Plessy refused to obey the order, he was forcibly jailed by a policeman and convicted of violating a state statute of July 10, 1890, which required separate accommodations for white and colored passengers on railroads. . ..Plessy filed a demurrer against Ferguson, Judge of Criminal District Court. Plessy appealed on writ of error when relief was denied him in the state court. See Paul C. Bartholomew, Summaries of Leading Cases on the Constitution, 5th ed. (Tatown: Littlefield, Adams Company, 1965), pp. 230, 231.

and prosecuting the mob. By 1893 there were no blacks in Blackwell, and Governor William Carey Renfrow had to curtail the molesting of blacks in Ponca City.[26]

In 1894, although racial segregation and discrimination were quite evident throughout most of the Territory, the Moons continued to cultivate their farm and managed to steer their family away from areas where these conditions were most prominent. On June 10, 1894, Irene Moon was the first child to be born in the Moon's log cabin. The Moons then had seven children.[27]

It should be noted that during the next two years after the birth of Irene, unremitting racial discrimination occurred against blacks throughout the South, and to a lesser extent in the North as well. Likewise, there was an intensification of attacks on blacks in the Twin Territories which culminated in violence in 1896. Some persons from Lincoln County were among those involved.[28]

It was reported that:

> Whitecappers are expelling Negroes from the southern part of this territory. Not a colored resident remains in Norman. Last night eight whitecappers whipped an old Lincoln County Negro and his two sons and ordered the three out of the county. The same aggregation of whitecappers numbering about a dozen, warned a white man named Scott with many Negro tenants that

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[26]Arthur L. Tolson, The Black Oklahomans History: 1541-1972, p. 62.

[27]Irene Moon, interview, 14 February 1976.

[28]Arthur L. Tolson, The Black Oklahomans History: 1541-1972, p. 62.

all the latter must leave. The same work is going on extensively.[29]

Another report stated:

> In the southern portion of Oklahoma Territory, whitecappers are running Negroes out of the county. In the town of Norman, with a population of 2,000, not one Negro remains, and the inhabitants will not allow one to spend the night there.[30]

Further, it should be noted that it was during this year of racial violence in the Territories that the Supreme Court handed down the final decision on the Plessy case, which by dictum was to affect the Oklahoma Territories. In answering the question, Does the Louisiana statute providing equal but separate railway carriages for whites and colored violate the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Amendments? The Supreme Court reasoned:

> No, the object of the law is to ensure absolute equality of both races before the law. However, this is a political equality not a social equality. The case hinges itself on the question of whether or not this is a reasonable regulation. Thus, established usage, customs, and traditions, as well as the preservation of public peace and good order must be considered. Gauged by this standard, separate public conveyances are not unreasonable nor contrary to the Fourteenth Amendment. If the colored race assumes that this separation makes them inferior, it is not by reason of the act. If the civil and political rights of both races be equal, that is sufficient . . . .The Constitution cannot put them on the same plane socially.[31]

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[29] Indian Chieftain, 24 September 1896, in Arthur L. Tolson, The Black Oklahomans History: 1541-1972, p. 62.

[30] Kingfisher Free Press, 24 September 1896, in Arthur L. Tolson, The Black Oklahomans History: 1541-1972, p. 62

[31] Paul C. Bartholomew, Summaries of Leading Cases on the Constitution, p. 231.

It was within this atmosphere of political, social and legal turmoil that on May 4, 1896 Frederick Douglass Moon, the second child, was born in the log cabin home of the Moons. He was the seventh boy and tenth child to be born to Henry and Pollie Moon. The child was named in honor of a black abolitionist and publisher of the North Star.[32] Frederick Doublass' newspaper had the avowed purpose of opposing slavery "in all of its forms" and to promote the moral and intellectual improvement of black Americans.[33]

Between 1897 and 1901 the social order of the Territories remained vocally tense. Blacks were being molested and expelled throughout the Territories. Whitecaps warned blacks to leave Davis (in the Indian Territory) and Tecumseh in 1897. Failure to do so would mean bodily harm. In 1897 Governor Cassius McDonald Barns took action to protect blacks that were being run out of Pottawatomie County.[34] By 1901 Lincoln County Activities prompted one editor to criticize Governor William Miller Jenkins:

> . . . here in the twentieth century of our Lord 1901, the Negroes are being shot on every hand; shot and driven out of Stroud, Lincoln County; shot and driven out of Chandler, Lincoln County right here within 43 miles of Governor's office, almost under the dome of the Capital. All this have happened within 30 days in the confines of Oklahoma, in proud America, and not

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[32]F. D. Moon, taped interview, 11 April 1972.

[33]Louie Robinson, "The Black Press: Voice of Freedon," Ebony, August 1975, P 56.

[34]Arthur L. Tolson, The Black Oklahomans History: 1541-1972, pp. 62-63.

> a word of condemnationhave reached the public ear from his Excellency. Again on September 27, 1901, at Pond Creek, 3 men with Winchesters shot 15 shots into a poor defenseless woman's house wounding or killing her children for no reason, only that they are Negroes. Now the outlaws at Hobart have passed a rule that no Negro will be allowed in that town. Now will Governor Jenkins allow such outlawed people to incorporate a town to better enable them to carry out their hellish desires. We'll wait.[35]

From 1904 to 1907, as the Territories advanced toward statehood, disputes arose in Holdenville over the use of a local hotel to be erected for blacks by white merchants who had suffered financial loss because blacks were not allowed to stay overnight to trade. In Claremore, within the Indian Territory, a black man was wounded as strife arose when whites tried to run two blacks out of town and notices were posted for blacks to vacate the community in twenty-four hours.[36]

Meanwhile, Pollie Moon did not lose her faith as a Christian. She believed and had hope that conditions would change. According to F. D. Moon, "You had to have 'great hope' to live in that country."[37]

Early Childhood of F. D. Moon

Not only was Pollie Moon a woman of great hope for her family,

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[35] Oklahoma Guide, 3 October 1901, in Arthur L. Tolson, The Black Oklahomans History: 1541-1972, p.64.

[36] Arthur L. Tolson, The Black Oklahomans History: 1541-1972, p. 68.

[37] F. D. Moon, taped interview, 11 April 1972.

she was also a very healthy woman. Together she and Henry Moon, along with their children, worked their farm. Sometimes they were able to farm seventy-five acres of cotton. Often the crops were almost complete failures but she would go by wagon into Carney, Northwestern Lincoln County, to the market place to sell vegetables in order to help provide for her family. According to F. D. Moon, "We got by. We were poor people but we didn't worry about it. We had more to eat than we needed, a few clothes and fun as well as work."[38]

As for fun, Irene Moon states:

> Fred (F. D. Moon) was very obedient but mischievous as a child. He often teased members of his family. He especially liked to tease his father, all of us did. One time before dinner Fred had made it up with us that after papa asked the blessing, we children would all ask papa to pass the biscuits and pass the syrup all at the same time. Of course this was to upset papa. Well, we did just as Fred asked. Papa became so disgusted he went outside to get something to whip us with. Fred grabbed his plate and ran from the table to the log house. He called himself having fun.[39]

Though Henry Moon did not have as great an influence on his children as Pollie Moon in a religious aspect, he was nonetheless influential in shaping their moral values. According to F. D. Moon:

> He was a clean gentleman, a man of good character. One thing my father did that impressed me all my life -- he always said, 'My word is my bond.' I would always tell children in school,

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[38]Ibid.

[39]Irene Moon, interview, 14 February 1976.

> if you get me to make a promise, I don't make them so freely, but, once you get me to make one, you can go to sleep on it. I'll keep those I make.[40]

Travel during the early childhood of F. D. Moon included short trips, the reason being that:

> Ones method of travel in those days was either by wagon, or horse and buggy. I'd go to Carney which was about 3-1/2 miles northwest and Fallis, which was the Post Office south. This was pretty much the range. Once in a while I did get to Wellston, which was 11 miles away.[41]

Pollie Moon saw to it that her children always attended church and Sunday School. Every Sunday she would take them 2-1/4 miles by wagon to Great Hope Baptist Church, whether it was hot, cold or raining.

> If it rained on Sunday morning it was understood we would have Sunday school and church. If it cleared off we'd come on Sunday afternoon. I remember when it was real cold, she'd take us in the back of the wagon covered with what was called comforters, a kind of a heavy quilt, to protect us, but we went to church faithfully.[42]

Often she would heat stones and place them by the children's feet in the wagon to help keep them warm. She would carry dry kindling and wood to heat the church. Usually the Moons were the first to arrive. The Great Hope Baptist Sunday school was organized by Pollie Moon and Mrs. G. E. Boydwater in approximately 1893. The church was once known as the center of the Great Northeastern

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[40] F. D. Moon, taped interview, 11 April 1972.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid.

District Association. Pollie Moon served as the teacher of the primary and intermediate classes. All seven boys and two girls of the Moon family were in regular attendance of all church services.[43]

> We learned our alphabets in Sunday school before we were old enough to attend public school. This spark of love for Jesus Christ, was kindled and grew through an established alter of prayers in our home. Her desire was to train, to rear and to educate her children for religious service that they may be beacon lights.[44]

Pollie became a missionary throughout the Oklahoma Territory. She also was president of the Oklahoma Baptist Women's Convention, and the organizer of the Northeast District Association for the Women's Convention (which still exists).[45]

The language of Proverbs, 22:6, "Train a child in the way he should go and when he is old he will not depart from it," was dominant in Pollie Moon's mind. She influenced her children to follow somewhat in her footsteps, and to believe in the Christian way, as she often put it, "In the fear and admonition for the Lord."[46] While she did not know how everything would come out, she believed in God and had faith that everything would be all right. Pollie was a strict disciplinarian and did not overindulge her children. She required their obedience.

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[43] Ietta Moon, "Mother of Mothers," Black Dispatch, 7 March 1929.

[44] Ibid.

[45] F. D. Moon, taped interview, 11 April 1972.

[46] Ietta Moon, "Mother of Mothers," Black Dispatch, 7 March 1929.

Some of the blacks in Lincoln County, and neighboring counties held to the old idea that a farmer did not need a formal education. Many blacks kept their children home to work in the fields instead of attending shcool. Pollie Moon, on the other hand, was strongly committed to the idea of education for her children, even though her own education was limited to the fourth grade.[47]

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[47]F.D. Moon, taped interview, 11 April 1972. See Gene Aldrich, Black Heritage of Oklahoma, p. 35.

CHAPTER III

F. D. MOON'S COMMON SCHOOL EDUCATION

Prior to the time F. D. Moon entered the public schools, the Territorial schools were taking on the trend implied by the Plessy case of 1896. For example, the status of black education in the Oklahoma Territory had been established by County option extended by the first Territorial Legislature in 1890. Between 1890 and 1901 separate schools were designated by choice in the counties with white majorities. Furthermore, it was unlawful for a white child to attend a black school and a black child to attend a white school. In addition, the school district was held responsible for providing a school for blacks if as many as eight black children lived in a school district. There were penalties for teachers teaching students of the opposite race.[1]

Chester School

In 1902, at the age of six, F. D. Moon began his academic education at the Chester School, designated a common school because it only contained the first eight grades. The school had been established on the property of the Reverend Charles C. Chester, a black

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[1]See, Gene Aldrich, Black Heritage of Oklahoma (Edmond: Thompson Book Supply Company, 1973), pp. 36-37. Also, Kaye M. Teall, Black History in Oklahoma: A Resource Book (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Public Schools, Title III ESEA, 1971), p. 185.

minister, who had migrated to the Territory from Tennessee and settled in Fallis, Oklahoma. According to Lincoln Chester:

> Chester School was an all black school. It had one room, and was built to accommodate about forty children. Sometimes it was used as a church during nights and weekends. The seats were made of wooden benches, and the floor was of lumber. For heating purposes the county had furnished wood to burn in a pot-belly stove.[2]

When F. D. entered the Chester School, its school year was not more than six months. This was due in part to the cotton season. Children of that area were expected to help pick the crops. Later, the school year was extended to seven months. Whatever the length of the school term, Pollie and Henry Moon saw to it that each child attended the full time it was in session. However, when the cotton season came F. D. Moon was expected to pick cotton in the

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[2]F. D. Moon, taped interview held Oklahoma Christian College, Living Legend Library, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 11 April 1972. Also, Lincoln Chester, interview held 4835 S. Crenshaw Boulevard, Apartment 1, Los Angeles, California, 8 March 1977.

The common schools have been defined in many ways. They were usually elementary, and devoted to the cultivation of literacy and citizenship. The program of the common schools combined the skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic. These predecessors of the contemporary public school educated both black and majority people to carry out the duties and privileges of life in a republic. In this way, the common schools helped to weld a democracy that encompassed many people of various religious, ethnic, and social backgrounds.

During the nineteenth century and the westward migration of homesteaders, common schools were established in many of the new settlements. As early as 1827 the State of Massachusetts made the total support of schools by taxation compulsory. Other states followed gradually but the trend did not develop in the South and its bordering states until the Reconstruction period after the Civil War. See, Gerald Gutek, An Historical Introduction to American Education, ed. James C. Stone (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1970), pp. 49-60.

evenings and weekends along with the rest of the family. In addition to picking cotton during the season, he was required each day to help with other chores after school: "milking the cows, cutting wood, gathering water from the stone well, and other chores that had to be done in rural family living."[3]

Between 1902 and 1912, F. D. Moon's teachers were Mary Overstreet of Guthrie, the Reverend S. A. Clark of Fallis, Myrtle Greenwood of Guthrie, Theodoshia Jones of Guthrie, and a Mr. Gibbs.[4] To these teachers he gave strict obedience, a trait instilled in him by his mother. Irene Moon recalls:

> Fred was a light skinned person. His seat at the school was next to the stove. One day the fire in the old pot-belly stove got too hot, and Fred began to twist and turn, and wanted to move. But Reverend Clarke told him not to move, so he stayed there. Finally, one of his sisters couldn't take it any longer and went over and moved him from near the stove. After she did that, he left and went home, but his father brought him back . . ..He was always obedient like that to his teachers.[5]

Even though the parents and teachers worked together to provide wholesome activities for the students at the Chester school, most of the planning was done by the teachers. Many weekends were filled with baseball games with the separate schools in Bethleham, six miles from Fallis, Dudley, seven miles away; Shiloh and Luther,

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[3]F. D. Moon, taped interview, 11 April 1972.

[4]Lincoln Chester, interview, 8 March 1977.

[5]Irene Moon, interview held 405 West Vilas, Guthrie, Oklahoma, 14 February 1976.

approximately ten miles away. Parents would carry their children on horseback, in wagons or buggies to participate in these activities.[6]

F. D. Moon developed lifelong friendships with his peers at the Chester School: Willie Crumble, Willie Burgins, Johnny Arthur, Bertha Broston, and two sons of the Reverend Chester, Lewis and Lincoln. These friends considered F. D. Moon the school's best baseball catcher. Lincoln Chester reminisced: "Fred and I played baseball together at Chester School. We won quite a few baseball games together, too. He was the catcher and I was the pitcher. We worked well together. We all thought he was the best catcher there was."[7]

F. D. was a prolific speaker. Irene Moon remembers: "Many times Fred amused his family and friends by mimicking his teachers and the minister of his church. He would gather little sticks and set them around like people and give long talks to them, mostly about what he learned in Sunday School."[8]

In 1907 a drought hit the Oklahoma Territory. Many crops failed. The Moon's worked even harder, but the rains did not come

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[6]Lincoln Chester, interview, 8 March 1977.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Irene Moon, interview held 405 West Vilas, Guthrie, Oklahoma, 11 April 1976.

until 1911.[9] Even though F. D. and his "pal brother" E. C. Moon had to work, they still were able to complete their assignments at the Chester School.[10]

By 1912 F. D. Moon finished the eighth grade. His interest turned to a high school education, but there was no high school near his home. F. D. recalled: "There was no high school in the community where I lived. That was pretty general at that time; there weren't very many for whites and practically none for blacks."[11] In fact, during this period, there was not much concern for educating black children beyond the eighth grade. It wasn't until several years later that minority schools began adding high school subjects. After the opening of the Colored Agricultural and Normal University in Langston, Oklahoma (CA&NU), many black youngsters received a high school education there.[12]

Oklahoma had provided five public high schools for blacks from 1891 to 1912: The Manual Training High School in Muskogee, Boley

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[9]Earl Schewckhard, "Vocational Agriculture in Oklahoma," in H. L. Fitzpatrick, ed., Oklahoma Almanac, Golden, ed. (Norman: Oklahoma Almanac, 1957), p. 317.

[10]Irene Moon, interview, 11 April 1976.

F. D. and E. C. Moon were considered "pal brothers" because they were always together in work, play and school. Whatever F. D. told E. C. to do he would always do it. Ibid.

[11]F. D. Moon, taped interview, 11 April 1972.

[12]Kaye M. Teall, Black History in Oklahoma: A Resource Book, p. 185.

Public High School, Oklahoma City Public High School, Tulsa Public High School, Faver High School, in Guthrie, and the Colored Agricultural and Normal University (CA&NU).[13]

Even though F. D. wanted to attend high school, there were two main factors which made it unlikely that he would. First, with a family of nine children to provide for and limited finances, Henry Moon was reluctant to undertake the added financial responsibility.[14] Second, due to the long drouth between 1909 and 1911, the Moons had witnessed crop failures which necessitated borrowing four hundred dollars at the beginning of F. D.'s eighth grade school year (1911) in order to buy seeds and equipment to plant a yearly crop. By the end of 1912 the family had grossed only twenty-two dollars in profit. Consequently, portions of the farm land had to be leased to other farms in an attempt to recoup some of the family's losses. Clearly, no funds were available for F. D.'s room and board, an expense necessary to attend schools away from home.[15] But Pollie Moon still had hope and felt the Lord would provide. She strongly encouraged Henry Moon to send F. D. and E. C. Moon to the Colored and Normal University in Langston. She did not have a

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[13]U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Education, Negro Education: A Study of the Private and Higher Schools for Colored People in the United States. 38 (Washington, D. C.: Government Printing Office, 1917), pp. 464, 468, 469.

[14]F. D. Moon, taped interview, 11 April 1972.

[15]Irene Moon, interview, 11 April 1976.

difficult time convincing her husband. His experiences as a former teacher in Arkansas had impressed upon him the importance of education for black youths. Without knowing how their parents could help, F. D. and his brother were enrolled in the high school at CA&NU.[16]

The Colored Agricultural and Normal University in Langston, Oklahoma

The town of Langston, Oklahoma and the location of CA&NU is:

> about twelve miles northeast of Guthrie, Oklahoma's first State Capitol, in Logan County; and about forty miles northeast of Oklahoma City, the present capital of the state. It was founded and planned in 1890 by Edwin P. McCabe on a tract of land owned by Charles N. Robbins, a white citizen of Guthrie. The town was named for John M. Langston, a Negro educator and politician, from Virginia. For some time . . . after the town site was platted . . . the town grew and thrived . . . the population at one time exceeding 2,000. . . . Many drifted to other towns in search of employment reducing the number of residents to less than 1,000.
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> In 1897, however, there was a revival of interest in the town caused by the passage of a bill by the State Legislature creating a State educational institution for Negroes to be known as the Colored Agricultural and Normal University of Oklahoma and locating it on 40 acres of land adjourning the town of Langston.[17]

CA&NU's financial support was by state appropriations and federal funds as designated by the Morrill Act of 1890, and the Nelson Amendment of 1907 for agricultural and mechanical education. The

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[16] F. D. Moon, taped interview, 11 April 1972.

[17] Kaye M. Teall, Black History in Oklahoma: A Resource Book, p. 169.

institution was one of the seventeen separate land-grant institutions for blacks, so designated because public lands were granted to the state for their establishment or support.[18]

In 1912 F. D. and E. C. Moon came to enroll in CA&NU, arriving in a wagon drawn by two horses and driven by their father. They had traveled sixteen miles from their home to the school through near intolerable roads. F. D. Moon enrolled in the ninth grade and E. C. enrolled in the eighth grade. Ietta and Irene Moon were previously in attendance before and since 1910, respectively. Inman E. Page was still president of the school.[19]

Under the guidance and direction of Inman Page, there were forty-four Oklahoma counties represented within the student body of CA&NU. There were eight departments within the school: agricultural, mechanical, home economics, normal, commercial, elementary, college preparatory, collegiate, musical and nurses's training.[20] In 1912 the state appropriation for CA&NU was $36,000, federal funds totaled $10,000, and non-educational receipts were $18,327, of which $17,550 were from the Boarding Department. The school's land was estimated to be worth $16,000. The school site comprised 320 acres of land,

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[18]The Enclyclopedia Americana, 1959 ed., s.v. "Land Grant Colleges."

[19]Irene Moon, interview, 14 February 1976.

[20]Oklahoma, Fifth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instructions, 1914, p. 88.

200 acres of which were under cultivation. There were six school buildings and a barn. The main building containing offices, classrooms, instructional laboratories and an assembly room, was constructed of pressed-brick. [21]

No tuition was charged at CA&NU. Students fourteen years of age were admitted if they provided evidence of good moral character. They could secure board, fuel, lights and furnished rooms for six dollars but were expected to furnish their own bed clothing and text books. For a dollar extra per month students could have their laundry done, otherwise arrangements were made for students to do their own.[22] Irene Moon states: "There were six dollar tables and eight dollar tables. Students who ate at the eight dollar tables had a special waiter. The food was the same. Only students who were working their way through the University ate at the six dollar tables. Fred ate at the six dollar table.[23]

Like many of the students of CA&NU, F. D. Moon did not possess money or much clothing so he had to work. According to F. D.:

Langston in earlier years, had students who had to work. Then

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[21]U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Education, Negro Education: A Study of the Private and Higher Schools for Colored People in the United States, p. 465.

[22]Fifth Biennial Report of the Territorial Superintendent of Public Instructions of the Territory of Oklahoma, for two years beginning 1 July 1899 ending 30 June 1900, p. 87.

[23]Irene Moon, interview, 14 February 1976.

> there were those who were well-to-do, could change suits frequently and dress well. But my mother had told me when we (E. C. and I) went there, because we were poor, that clothes don't make a man and I accepted it. We had two old people over us in our dormitory who, in my opinion, shouldn't have been there because they would make remarks about students who couldn't dress well, called you poor ragged rounders used to sleeping in a dug-out. My mother had told me, 'Fred, clothes don't make a man' and I just accepted that, so it didn't matter about what they said. Many students had to work but they had high ideals.[24]

As to the kinds of jobs the brothers had in order to finance their attendance, F. D. Moon states:

> The first job I had was working in a little hospital. . . . My brother (E. C. Moon) and I milked cows, and later I got a job at the creamery which was a very good job, because I could get bread from the table at the dormitory and take it down (to the creamery) and I'd separate the milk and have half and half . . . so I really had a good time with that kind of food. I worked my way through school milking cows and just about anything else I could find. One time this teacher told me she'd give me 25¢ each for little pecan tree sprouts . . . . They were about three and half feet tall. This was in the winter and I lived about three miles from the Rock Island line. I got 16 of these little trees and I was going to catch the train and take them down to Langston, but I missed the train. Well, I had to carry those 16 trees on my back over to Langston. I learned a lesson that day -- it's hard walking in the snow. And, oh, I got so hungry! I walked by this woman's house and I thought about going up and begging her for some food. But I was too proud -- so instead I asked her if I could buy some food from her. She made me two blueberry sandwiches with butter on them. I paid her 15¢. Those were just about the best sandwiches I'd ever eaten.[25]

Irene Moon elaborated: "For four years one of Fred's jobs was building fires. He built fires early in the morning in the kitchen

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[24]F. D. Moon, taped interview, 11 April 1972.

[25]Ibid.

and filled lamps for lights in the dormitory."[26]

Teachers joined students in building stronger moral characters through reading scripture as well as singing and reciting prayers during daily opening exercises in each class. Furthermore, religious exercises were held in the dormitories at least two evenings a week. All students were required to attend the church of their choice at least once on the Sabbath day.[27]

Many of the teachers made lasting impressions on F. D. Moon, in particular Dr. Inman E. Page. To F. D. he was:

> A great educator . . . who was the first Negro to graduate from Brown's University in New England (Rhode Island) in 1877. He was first president of Langston. A man of sterling character and so a lot of us marked him. People have commented on my walking, the way I walk erectly and straight. That's because I copied walking after Mr. Page. "The Old Man", to those of us to knew him. He walked very erectly so many of the boys tried to walk like Mr. Page.
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> At Langston we had teachers like H. F. Mitchell who was a math teacher. He was not a good teacher because of his ability to teach math, but because of the splendid example that he always set for youth to follow. . . .Mrs. Zelia N. Breaux, daughter of Dr. Inman E. Page, who was a music teacher . . . had charge of the band . . . quite a number like that. They were people of high character. That was one of the things emphasized, good character. Persons who didn't have good character didn't last long at Langston University in the days of Inman E. Page.[28]

Written examinations were administered to all students at the

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[26]Irene Moon, interview, 14 February 1976.

[27]Fifth Biennial Report of the Territorial Superintendent of Public Instructions of the Territory of Oklahoma, pp. 87-89.

[28]F. D. Moon, taped interview, 11 April 1972.

end of each term. These examinations coupled with daily recitations, determined students' academic standings. Students were expected to maintain a score of at least 70%, and no student was allowed to graduate whose overall grade point average was less than 85%.[29]

The teaching interest at CA&NU at this time was centered on agricultural and mechanical education, a vogue for black education in the South which was commonly believed to have stemmed from an address by Booker T. Washington in 1893 at the opening of the Cotton States and International Exposition at Atlanta, Georgia. By 1903 Washington was publicly criticized by W. E. B. DuBois, who denounced separate and equal doctrines and industrial and vocational education for blacks and pleaded instead for higher education for black Americans. Unlike Washington, DuBois "was not only pleading for higher education but had begun to criticize the work of the industrial schools. Both men spoke of captains of industry but where the Tuskegeeian emphasized economic skills the Atlantic educator stressed a higher grade of culture."[30]

> At the time I entered Langston and before that, there was quite a controversy going on over the type of education Negroes should have. Booker T. Washington, on the one hand, favored what was called industrial education and W. E. B. DuBois and

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[29] Fifth Biennial Report of the Territorial Superintendent of Public Instructions of the Territory of Oklahoma, p. 87.

[30] August Meier, Negro Thought in America: 1880-1915 (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1964), pp. 197-201; The Encyclopedia Americana, 1959 ed., s.v. "Booker Taleaferro Washington."

> Kelly Miller, who was with Howard University, were opposed and advocated a college education. I was on the side against Booker T. Washington.[31]

Mechanical and industrial education were required courses at CA&NU. Consequently, F. D. enrolled in industrial education, but he believed in the DuBois approach. He liked literature, history, and law and read books extensively.[32] Because of these interests, he joined the literary society and debating team which enriched his ability as an orator.[33] To please the administration, he enrolled in carpentry but cut classes and made excuses until there were no more excuses to make. Later he enrolled in an agricultural course. His behavior was the same and as a result he never acquired mechanical skills. F. D. Moon admitted:

> I always was a bookworm, and did a lot of reading, studied and tried to get knowledge, but it's not because I thought the other type of education wasn't worthwhile. I thought each one was necessary. I didn't like industrial education very much. I didn't like to do those courses, I was interested in books.[34]

During the school year of 1914-15, the United States Department of Interior's Bureau of Education conducted a study of private and public higher education schools for black Americans in the United States. The report described CA&NU as "a secondary school with a

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[31]F. D. Moon, taped interview, 11 April 1972.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Irene Moon, interview, 14 February 1976.

[34]F. D. Moon, interview held 1314 Northeast 8th Street, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 7 August 1975.

large elementary enrollment and a few pupils in college subjects. Industries and agriculture are subordinate to literary studies. The institution has been seriously hampered by ineffective administration."[35]

The report also noted the enrollment to be 478 with a daily average attendance of 408. The number of attendance in the elementary department was 219, the secondary department 144, teacher's training 21, commercial 11, and collegiate 11. The total number of students above the seventh grade was 205: 82 males and 123 females. There were 168 boarders -- twenty were from the town of Langston, 129 were from other parts of Oklahoma, and 56 were from other states. There were 93 from farm homes.[36]

The total number of teachers and workers was 28. Of this total there were 18 males and 10 females. There were 12 grade and academic teachers, 2 music teachers, 2 agricultural teachers, 4 boys' industrial teachers, 3 girls' industrial teachers, 2 nurses training teachers, and 3 matrons. The school's organization was composed of:

> 1. Elementary: The elementary division, limited to the four upper grades, is the largest in the school. Owing to the small number of teachers assigned, the classes range as high as 65, 75, and 80 to a teacher during the winter

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[35]U. S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Education, Negro Education: A Study of the Private and Higher Schools for Colored People in the United States, p. 464.

[36]Ibid.

when the greatest number are in attendance.

2. Secondary: A large majority of the pupils above the elementary grades are taking a four-year course composed of the traditional high-school subjects, including Latin and German. One of the teachers reports Greek. Many of the schedules outlined by the pupils are too heavy and complicated for good work. The normal course continues the secondary work for two years with courses in physiology, theory and history of education, and a very limited amount of practice teaching in the lowest class in the institution. The commercial pupils combine secondary subjects with the study of stenography, typewriting, and bookkeeping.

3. College: The college division includes 11 students scattered through four classes. The waste involved in this is accentuated by the fact that the entire institution has only 12 grade and academic teachers, and classes range from 30 or 40 pupils in the preparatory division to 70 and 80 in the elementary classes.

4. Industrial: Four teachers of boy's industries are employed. The equipment is ample. The time required is 15 hours a week. The trades reported are blacksmithing with 7 pupils, carpentry 13, foundry work 7, and mechanical, electrical, and steam engineering 13. The school has neither equipment nor teachers for the engineering courses reported.

5. Courses in cooking and sewing are taught by three teachers. The equipment is satisfactory. The school boarding department is conducted without regard to the course in domestic science.

6. Agriculture: The elaborate courses of this division are handled by only one teacher. The equipment consists of a large farm and a good supply of farm implements. Only nine pupils have selected agriculture as their chosen vocation. Elementary pupils have theory and practice of gardening.

7. Discipline: Direction of students in the dormitories and on the grounds is weak. Supervision of the girls' dormitories is done by student monitors. No paid matron or teacher lives in these dormitories.[37]

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[37] Ibid., pp. 464-65.

A discerning observer during the time, F. D. stated that though a "very large portion was high school, and a small number in college, it was the only possibility for Negroes to get a college education that was near to them. So, providing a college education for a small number, I think, would be justified . . . it was the only opportunity Negroes had to get it."[38]

Beginning in 1914 the content of the CA&NU curriculum caused a rift between the Board of Regents and President Page.[39] The Board of Regents took exception to the amount of interest given higher education and decided not to rehire Dr. Page as president of CA&NU. Dr. Page had taken the position that black youths should have the same course of study as white youths; that blacks had the aptitude to receive the patterns of whites; and that black students' educational opportunities should be developed according to those patterns. This trend of thought had spread since the Niagra movement and was championed by W. E. B. DuBois. The Board of Regents, however, maintained that the emphasis should be placed on agriculture and trades, a concept championed by Booker T. Washington.[40]

> Dr. Page made a bitter fight against his removal, personally appearing before the board and being backed by a delegation of Negroes, fully fifty strong. In addition they presented

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[38] F. D. Moon, taped interview, 11 April 1972.

[39] Black Dispatch, 31 January 1935.

[40] Lewis, "Negro Education in Oklahoma," Oklahoma Historical Society Papers, 1939 (Mimeographed).

> a petition bearing nine hundred signatures asking the board to recind its action.
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> The board thoroughly discussed the matter and maintained its previous decision that President Page lacked executive and administrative ability and, while being a good scholar and moral man, was not suited for the management of Langston University.[41]

Despite support of leading black and white Oklahomans for his retention, Page was terminated as president at CA&NU in 1915. He had served seventeen years as administrative leader for the school.[42]

The loss of President Inman Page was not only a blow to many of the students of CA&NU but also a blow to education for black Oklahomans. The incidents surrounding his dismissal prompted the editor of one black paper to say:

> The Black Dispatch had its birth in 1914, when politicians first rambled their selfish, sordid fingers into affairs of Langston University with sheets circulated at that time by

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[41] Langston Alumni Bulletin, "The Grand Old Man of Education," February 1941, p. 11.

[42] Black Dispatch, 30 January 1930.

"During Dr. Page's administration at CA&NU, he increased the acreage from 40 to 320 acres. He increased buildings on the campus from a frame house to: (1) A fourteen room main building with auditorium (this burned and was replaced by the building now standing and is known as Page Hall). (2) A President's residence. (3) Two girls' dormitories, one a frame building now torn down the other now known as Phillis Wheatly Hall. (4) A boys' stone dormitory, now torn down and replaced with Marquess Hall. (5) An industrial plant, fully equipped (later destroyed by fire and replaced with the present Mechanical building). (6) A steam heating plant and appropriations for electric lights and water works. He added a College Department to the curriculum and increased the faculty from four members to thirty-five. A Library, farm house and a museum were also added." Langston Alumni Bulletin, "The Grand Old Man of Education," February 1941, p. 11.

the Tribune. The Black Dispatch was born fighting the editor of the Tribune and its attempt to soil the name of the Grand Old Man of Education, Inman E. Page.[43]

Joe E. Roberts, CA&NU class of 1910 recalled:

Our school (CA&NU) was born in a political scramble. It happened this way. Negroes were playing an important part in the affairs of the Territory at that time. A Negro was auditor of the Territory, another was clerk of Logan, the leading county in the Territory, and two were on the Board of Regents. Since Negro politicians had worked hard to get the school established, they took the lead in aiding the citizens in purchasing the 40 acres of land and had their slate for the president and the faculty of the school. I made it my business to know their plans, because I had a brother-in-law who was a member of the political gang.

They succeeded well enough in getting the school established, but failed completely when it came to their slate for the president and faculty. A man from the State of Arkansas was governor at that time. Barnes was his name. There was also a Baptist preacher in Langston who was from Arkansas. His name was W. C. Howell. Howell and Barnes knew each other in Arkansas and were good friends. Howell also knew Dr. Inman Page, who was at that time president of Lincoln University, Jefferson City, Missouri. Howell was able to get Dr. Page to become an applicant for the presidency of the new school at

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[43] Black Dispatch, 5 December 1931.

"The Black Dispatch like other newspapers being established throughout the States was to have tremendous impact upon American blacks during the first half of the twentieth century. Mostly ignored by the white press, except for crime stories or reports on exceptionally gifted sports and entertainment figures, blacks could find their achievements, activities and tragedies told only in the pages of black newspapers. This black press fought constantly and bitterly against racial discrimination. . . .

There were nearly 150 of them with 1,613,255 combined sales weekly. . . . In Oklahoma, Roscoe Dungee declared that members of his race, most of whom preferred the designation 'Negro', should be proud to say, 'I am a black man,' and thus founded the Black Dispatch." Louis Robinson, "The Black Press: Voice of Freedom," Ebony, August 1975, p. 56.

> Langston and he, being by far the best qualified man for the position, easily won over the political applicant. In the selection of the men who were to work with Dr. Page, the same rule was followed. There were some teachers, in the Territory who were not connected with the politicians who were better qualified than those on the politicians' slate and it so happened that the politicians got a clean shut-out. . . here for my first time, I observed the weakness and shortcoming of our Negro politicians. I shall state this because we are still contaminated with the same weaknesses and shortcomings and I think it is time we were snapping out of it . . . .
>
> Dr. Page made such a wonderful impression on the people that he easily won at least 90 per cent of them from the politicians. He not only won them but he held them, in that he made himself the master of the politicians and that accounts for his success and tenure as president of our school. These negro politicians never did work in harmony with Dr. Page. Some of them were so completely whipped by him that they dropped out of the struggle. Others camped on his trail for 17 years, until they finally wrecked the school doing so . . . .
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> Dr. Page's administration was rigid and firm in the enforcement of all rules governing the school, those affecting the teachers as well as students. He was deeply interested in the welfare of teachers and students alike. He never took unfair advantage of those who opposed him, but always tried, by kindness and fair play, to make them his friends. He usually had the best teachers available on his faculty. During his 17 years, all departments were well equipped with the supplies needed, with the exception of the last four years. This was one of the conditions caused by an aggravated political condition. . .[44]

When Page left CA&NU, both F. D. and E. C. Moon were affected. F. D. Moon remained at CA&NU, but E. C. Moon followed Page to Macon College in Macon, Missouri, and then to Roger Williams University in Nashville, Tennessee, where he met and

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[44]Joe E. Roberts, "Langston University As I Have Known It For Forty-three Years," Langston Alumni Bulletin, February 1941, p. 7.

married Vivian Lee Crawley.[45]

R. R. Taylor, professor at Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institution, refused the presidency of CA&NU. His decision was governed largely by the fact that he received scores of letters from Oklahoma blacks, who were followers of Page, urging him not to accept the position and advising him that by doing so he would be the cause of political strife.[46]

Between 1915 and 1916, before F. D. Moon finshed high school, there were two new presidents named for CA&NU. In August, 1915, Issac Berry McCutcheon was elected by the Board of Regents as successor to Inman Page. Of his tenure I. B. McCutcheon commented:

> When I took over the presidency of the institution, all was chaos; the atmosphere of discord prevailed. Dr. I. E. Page, the retiring president, was permitted to occupy the president's home for one month after my arrival and I had to find sleeping quarters and food in the dining room.
>
> During my short regime, electricity was installed, supplanting the kerosene lamps; running water supplanted the galvanized tubs for baths; window shades were put in the dormitories; dishes, including knives, forks, spoons, cups and saucers, pottery and platters were supplied for the dining hall; and song books were bought for the music department. One of the greatest disturbing elements was one John Hogan, whom I had dismissed. This later resulted in my resignation.[47]

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[45]Edward C. Moon, interview held 3100 Forest Park Terrace, 13 January 1977.

[46]Langston Alumni Bulletin, February 1941, p. 21.

[47]Ibid., p. 12.

In 1916, F. D.'s senior year in the High School Department of CA&NU, John M. Marquess was elected president of CA&NU by the Board of Regents. Marquess was the president until 1923.[48]

In April 1917 the United States entered World War I. F. D. continued his education at CA&NU.[49] It was during this time that President Marquess made application to the War Department for special army training to be given at CA&NU under the new draft. F. D. stated the most that happened on CA&NU's campus was, "a lot of drilling . . . a man who had been in the army . . . would train us. We had to do a great deal of marching, and execution of orders like soldiers. . . .I presume it helped students to develop good posture by walking and standing erectly."[50]

When F. D. Moon graduated from the Normal preparatory in 1919, Governor Robertson delivered the graduation speech to the twelve graduates and approximately 1,000 people in the auditorium at CA&NU. He was introduced by James A. Wilson, Vice-President of the Regents of the institution. Governor Robertson said:

> This visit has been quite an experience for me. I enjoyed my dinner immensely, and I have made a resolution since coming here that will mean much to you in days to come. I have enjoyed the music very much. I agree with Mr. Wilson that it shows the wonderful development that the race has made. I think . . . that one of the great troubles is that we don't

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[48] Ibid.

[49] F. D. Moon, taped interview, 11 April 1972.

[50] Ibid.

> understand each other, and we cannot understand each other if we remain strangers. There are a very few people who know something about this institution. When I became Governor, it was my boast that I had visited all of the state institutions.
>
> I do think that the state in locating this school should have located it on soil more fertile, but after all this thought comes, that this handicap has been rather to your benefit than to your loss. For if you have learned here to overcome the difficulties of nature, you have learned a lesson that will make it possible for you to live anywhere else. Remember this, that the education that you have gotten here should have developed you into a more serviceable creature to your fellowman. If it has done this, then all the money that the state has spent upon you, all the interest invested, and the struggle made by you and your mother and father has not been made in vain. After all, education is worth just what you make it.
>
> This institution here has been under the Governor and the Board of Education, but they figure that it would be best to have a separate board for each institution in the state, and so, the Board created a Board of Regents. It was the duty of the Governor to create that Board. Every member on the Board is a friend to the institution. It would have been an easy matter to pay political debts in selecting the members of this Board of Regents, and to get men whom you did not desire. . .[51]

Governor Robertson was referring to his appointees of the new Board of Regents for CA&NU: N. E. Fruin of Coyle, J. A. Williams of Stillwater, C. M. Crumbell of Guthrie, and C. W. Briles, all of whom were white. Blacks had made unsuccessful applications for these appointments. Despite the Governor's promise to black Oklahomans that he would consider blacks for appropriate appointments:

> It is said that several prominent and entirely qualified Negroes were under consideration by the Governor but their selection would have been protested by Democratic politicians

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[51] Black Dispatch, 19 April 1919.

who insisted on the selection of the undesirable . . .[52]

The Governor explained that:

. . . the purpose of the Legislature was to choose men who were acquainted with you. I've tried to do what the Legislature intended. I've tried to give you men who had your interest at heart. One of them, the Vice Regent of the University, is a man of much distinction and a representative of the federal government in this state. He said when I asked him to take this position, 'I will take it as additional labor, without a penny of compensation.' It is the purpose of the government and of this administration working through this Board to make this a great institution.

I have confidence in your president. He is your president and is the head of the institution and, as long as he does what is right, we're going to stay with him. No institution can succeed unless it is properly governed. I live to see the day come in Oklahoma when every employee, every teacher, every head of an institution will be chosen because of merit and not because of politics.

Senator Golobie and your good friend, Kernel Erwin, worked hard to impress me with your needs for $135,000 for a new dormitory. But I was not then able to see the light and cut $50,000 from the appropriation bill. But I confess now, since I have been here and see your wants and needs, that if I had it to do over again I would think a long time before I vetoed that bill.

You people ought to be proud of the accomplishments of your race, especially during these past war months. You've had a hard road to travel. I believe that the educated men and women of your race have found the proper solution of most of your troubles and if you will continue to follow such men as Booker T. Washington, we will get along pretty well. I hope to see great assistance and great aid given from the federal government to this institution. And you may rest assured that as far as the government and the members of the Legislature are concerned that we are your friends and have a warm spot in our hearts for you.

Senator John Golobie of Guthrie was introduced by President

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[52]Ibid.

> Marquess and made a short but earnest talk. He said this: 'Ignorance, be it black or white, is a millstone around the neck of the state.[53]

After F. D. Moon graduated from the normal school his interest was not in teaching. According to him, "I didn't have the interest to teach school after graduation, so I took a period of two years to sell insurance for the American Woodman, a company now in existance with headquarters in Denver. I sold insurance in Kansas City in 1920-21."[54]

He did not return to Oklahoma until the wheat harvest season in 1921. At this time F. D. Moon had decided to enter the profession as educator in the separate school system of Oklahoma.[55]

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[53] Black Dispatch, 25 July 1919.

[54] F. D. Moon, taped interview, 11 April 1972.

[55] Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

DOUGLASS SCHOOL IN CRESCENT, OKLAHOMA, 1921-1931

F. D. Moon returned permanently to the State of Oklahoma in the summer of 1921. He had visited Oklahoma on few occasions since leaving for Kansas. One visit in 1920 was to attend his father's funeral.[1] The post-war racial strife characterized by the "Red Summer" riots of 1919 continued to be a source of concern in Oklahoma as it was throughout America. Such racial strife had resulted in many blacks fighting and dying in their own defense. This in turn injected a new factor into America's social problems. The issue was no longer one race intimidating another into submission, but rather it was race war. Some blacks were determined to resist their would-be oppressors in order to maintain their self-respect and racial cohesiveness.[2] Clearly, the summer of F. D. Moon's return to the State had found black Oklahomans with many of the related

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[1] Irene Moon, interview held 405 West Vilas, Guthrie, Oklahoma, 14 February 1976.

[2] John Hope Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro America, 3rd ed., rev. and enl. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1967), p. 484.

"Violent manifestations of hostility to Negroes in the North and South were not new. In the early years of the new century an epidemic of race riots swept the country, which aroused the greatest anxiety and discomfort among the black population. Even though lynchings were decreasing slowly, riots had continued on the increase, few outbreaks equaling in proportion those of 1919," Ibid., p. 439.

difficulties confronting blacks in other parts of the nation. However, national attention focused on the May 31 to June 1, 1921 race riots in Tulsa, Oklahoma.[3]

When F. D. Moon returned to Oklahoma, he first stopped to work at a wheat harvest in the northwest part of Kingfisher County, about nine miles from Okeene, before making his first application to teach school.[4] The incident of getting his first job as a principal was recalled by F. D. as follows:

> I was stopping with a fellow who had an old T-Model Ford. He was to get me to Dover in Kingfisher County to catch a train. He was one of these fellows who was habitually slow; nobody could ever hurry him. His name was Will Jackson. I kept trying to hurry Will. He had four flats on his T-Model Ford that morning. He kept saying, 'Oh, that's all right, Fred, I'll get you there.' (That's my name). When we should have been half way to Dover, which was 22 miles from where I was, he started fixing flats. He got on the road, and down the road he went in this T-Model Ford, shuffling away with all

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[3]Edwin C. McReynolds, Oklahoma: A History of the Sooner State, 6th ed., rev. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), pp. 438-439.

In June, 1921, the blacks and whites of Tulsa, Oklahoma, engaged in what is preferably called a "race war", in which 9 whites and 21 blacks were known to have been killed and several hundred injured. The accusation of an assault on a white woman by a black man, Dick Rowland, caused blacks of Tulsa to take arms to protect the accused, whom it was rumored would be lynched. More than one million dollars worth of property was destroyed or damaged. Thus, Tulsa was added to the list of communities in which there was no interracial peace. John Hope Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans, pp. 439-440, 483-484.

[4]F. D. Moon, taped interview held Oklahoma Christian College, Living Legend Library, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 11 April 1972.

the speed one could make, about seven or eight miles. BOOM, and there was a flat! He calmly got out and fixed the flat, and I was pretty restless. He'd start out again. We passed through a little town that's now called Loyal, but during World War I it was called Kiel, mostly made up of Germans. Because of the persecution that they suffered in being Germans in World War I, they changed their name from Kiel to Loyal. That's the way it's named now. Just a little east of Loyal (some of you have been over in that area. You know there is a prairie dog town on the north side of the highway there), he had his second flat.

I could see the smoke of the Rock Island Railroad coming into Dover from the north and I started fussing about, 'You're missing the train.' But you can't quarrel very much with anybody who won't quarrel with you. So, we finally got to Dover. He went in by himself and I sat in the car pouting because I'd missed my train. He came back and told me that he'd take me over to Crescent and I could catch a train to Guthrie from there. That's where I was going, so, he drove those 19 miles from Dover over to Crescent through the sand and what have you. When I got to Crescent, I noticed a two-roomed frame school building in the Negro section in the northwest part of the town. The train I was to get to Guthrie was two hours and forty-five minutes late. So I said since I'd planned to come to Oklahoma to teach school and didn't have a school (thinking maybe I'd teach in Lincoln County, county of my birth), I said, 'Here's a school and, since I have two hours and forty-five minutes here, I'll just make application and see if I can get this school.' To make the story short, I got the school. Will Jackson's being slow was a blessing to me because it got the first school for me, and I remained there for ten years, principal of the Douglass High School, my first school, in Crescent, Oklahoma.[5]

The Community of Crescent

Crescent, Oklahoma, is located in the western part of Logan County, which in turn is in the north-central portion of the State. The county was named for Senator John A. Logan of Illinois. Crescent

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[5]Ibid.

established its post office in February 1890, taking its name from the crescent-shaped ring of nearby oak timber.[6]

> By 1921 Crescent had developed into a small agricultural town. This was due in part to the sandy loam soil which was suitable for farming. The town was one long street. There were two banks, the Farmer's Merchants' Bank and the Bank of Crescent. There were many stores along the street, including two drug stores. The business section started at the Jones Filling station on one end of the long street and went to the railroad about three blocks away. There were a few wealthy white people in Crescent. Among them were the Graff brothers, who owned most of the town. Blacks did not own any business in Crescent except a small cafe owned by Mama and Papa Starks. People raised a lot of cotton, sweet potatoes, watermelons and fruit.
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> The community of Crescent was made up of small homes. Some of the people were sharecroppers. They did pretty good, however, because they were farmers and raised their own gardens and crops, and some of them owned their own homes.[7]

The School System

On September 29, 1921, The Logan County News carried a news item stating: "Separate School Opens Next Monday Morning According to Announcements Made by Charles Graff of the School Board."[8]

Mr. and Mrs. F. D. Moon were the instructors in charge.[9] F. D. had married Alberta Jackson of Okeene, Oklahoma, and the two

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[6]George H. Shirk, Oklahoma Place Names, 2nd ed. rev. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974), pp. 63, 144.

[7]Mr. William H. Glover, interview held 3300 Coltrane Road, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 23 May 1977.

[8]Logan County (Okla.) News, 29 September 1921.

[9]Ibid.

of them started their work together at the Douglass School.[10]

Mrs. Nora B. Muslow was County Superintendent of Logan County, C. M. Howell was the High School Inspector of the State System of schools, and R. H. Wilson was State Superintendent. Crescent had two schools, one for white students another for blacks. The white school was located in the eastern part of the town of Crescent, situated on a level stretch of land. The school building was a large nine room brick structure, two stories high. There were eleven grades in the school, with seven teachers, one janitor, and an attractive yard.[11]

Douglass school was located in the northwest section of the town.

> The building had been built in the early '90s and just went through the ninth grade. It was a two room school and it was very dilapidated. We started in there. It had an old coal oil lamp up beside the wall. I started out early trying to make improvements. I went down and saw a board member of mine and got gas lights, and put the gas lights there. You pump them up some kind of way. I'm not good mechanically, but they'll make a light. That was an improvement of the lamps that you fill with oil to put on the walls, to have gas lights there.[12]

From the beginning of his principalship at Douglass School

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[10]Mrs. William H. Glover, interview held 3300 Coltrane Road, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 23 May 1977.

[11]The Logan County (Okla.) News, 24 November 1921; 2 February 1922.

[12]F. D. Moon, interview held 1314 Northeast 8th Street, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 7 August 1975. Also F. D. Moon, taped interview, 11 April 1972.

F. D. Moon geared his energies toward an improved academic program and building school and community relationships. He joined the OANT, the Negro Principals' Association, and the First Baptist Church of Crescent. He was made superintendent of the Sunday school and trustee of the church.[13]

Since the Douglass School at Crescent only went to the ninth grade, F. D. immediately made plans to develop a high school. One reason for this decision was that in as small a town such as Crescent, black students had very little chance of getting a high school education elsewhere. In fact, according to F. D.: "I doubt that they really had a great aspiration for high school, nor did they get it."[14] In addition, he realized that this would be a slow process:

> Grades of high school years were not just attached. First, students would have to be carried through the ninth grade, and the next year through the tenth grade, and on through the twelfth grade until finally students were given a high school education. Second, teachers were needed who taught those grades, and that presented necessities that comes with that. In fact, it would take three or four years or more to develop a four year high school.[15]

By 1923 F. D. had developed a solid relationship with both the black and white people of Crescent. In fact, "he was very highly thought of by the white people of Crescent. If they wanted something done which involved the black community, even in politics,

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[13]Mr. William H. Glover, interview, 23 May 1977.

[14]F. D. Moon, taped interview, 11 April 1972.

[15]Ibid.

they would talk with Mr. Moon."[16]

Crescent School Activities and Projects

In 1923 F. D. organized the Patron Teachers' Club (PTC), which functioned as a means of educational uplift for the community and also a source for facilitating combined community efforts to meet the educational needs of its students. Resource persons spoke at the meetings of the PTC on subjects such as agriculture and home demonstration projects.[17] When time came for the county fair, enthusiasm was usually high due in part to the encouragement of the parents to assist in PTC meetings.[18]

> When the county fair came, the children wouldn't have any probblems getting their activities together. Each child could have their own project at home, maybe a pig, chickens, canning or sewing they wanted to enter into the fair. If they won at the community fair, they would enter the county fair. If they won at the county fair they would enter the state fair. Many of the children had exhibits at the state capitol for many years. Aside from the teachers' and parents' aid, the students were helped by the county agent, Mr. G. M. Powdrell, a black man who worked out of Guthrie.[19]

In November of 1923 the PTC, under the directions of F. D., organized a night school. An article in the Black Dispatch read: "We have a night school at Crescent twice a week with F. D. Moon as

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[16]William H. Glover, interview, 23 May 1977.

[17]Black Dispatch, 15 November 1923.

[18]Mrs. William H. Glover, interview, 23 May 1977.

[19]Ibid.

teacher. This school is for all patrons and other citizens in the community. Prof. Moon is always ready to do all he can for the uplift of the school and community."[20]

The night school effort by F. D. was his first effort with black adult education. An educational survey conducted between 1921 and 1922 ranked Oklahoma 17th among other states with a 3.8 per cent literacy rate. This prompted public school teachers in Oklahoma during the 1923-1924 school year to organize 500 night schools for adults. The purpose of this adult education program was four-fold: (1) That illiterate persons be made literate and that further illiteracy be prevented by keeping the children in school. (2) That adults not illiterate but who desired more knowledge would have an opportunity to secure it. (3) That all persons in the State who could not already do so be taught to read, write and speak English. (4) That good citizenship be strengthened throughout.[21]

In 1923 financial compensation was given the public school teachers in Oklahoma who taught the adult pupils. In trying to abolish illiteracy, most programs tried to teach individuals until they could read and understand the newspaper, write a legible and understandable letter, use the four fundamental arithmetic operations, and spell 500 to 1,000 of the most used words. Adults in

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[20] Black Dispatch, 15 November 1923.

[21] Oklahoma, Tenth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instructions, 1924, p. 77.

the programs were able to secure knowledge of a general and practical nature in other subjects offered in the common school's curriculum of study. This actually marked the beginning of an adult education program in Oklahoma. Thus the program included not only the eradication of illiteracy but also the seeds for adult education.[22] F. D. Moon continued his night school program in Crescent, and by 1926 a newspaper account stated: "Douglass School of Crescent has a night school, in harmony with the American program to rid America of illiteracy, which is to run 18 nights. Those who can neither read or write are urged to take advantage."[23]

F. D. encouraged students to join the Douglass Literary Society, organized by him in 1923. This society provided opportunity for the Douglass students to develop skills in debating as well as increasing their knowledge and understanding of American history. This effort was a weekly activity: every Friday night there were debates with separate schools who had debating teams or literary societies at the school or in nearby towns. The debates were attended by members of the PTC as well as other members of the black community and also the white community.[24]

In 1923 F. D. and the PTC embarked on a new project for the

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[22]Ibid.

[23]Black Dispatch, 14 January 1926.

[24]Ibid.

Douglass School. This project involved adding another room to the two-room building. The PTC and two faculty members coordinated the fund raising activities. According to F. D., "What we did there was to raise money through my influence with the citizens, to get their support to help build on to the school."[25] Of the many activities to raise the money, selling tickets for a car to be given to the person holding the winning ticket was the major activity. F. D. led in the selling of the tickets; he sold 83. The drawing for the car occurred on Christmas Eve and Willie Chaney was the winner. Enough money was raised for the new addition. The PTC, members of the community, students of Douglass, and F. D. anxiously awaited the next school term, the tentative time for completion of the new room.[26]

In September 1924, ninety-two pupils enrolled in the Douglass School.[27] The junior high school curriculum was added that year. A new teacher, Miss Sarah Menser, was added to the faculty.[28] Recalling her employment, she said:

> I made my contact with Fred for a job at Crescent during the summer school at CA&NU. I had known him in earlier years at CA&NU when his brothers and sisters, Ietta, Irene, Sampson, Ed, and, of course, he were in school. I had finished the sixth and seventh grades there at that time. I was further down in grades than he was, however, but that's how I came to

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[25]F. D. Moon, taped interview, 11 April 1972.

[26]Black Dispatch, 17 January 1924.

[27]Black Dispatch, 18 September 1924.

[28]Black Dispatch, 4 December 1924.

> know him before I made contact with him for the position I had heard was opened at Crescent. He told me he was going to Crescent the next week-end and he would mention to the Board that he had found a teacher. When he came back, he told me the Board accepted his recommendation. I never had to go out to Crescent for an interview. On his recommendation they accepted me. I taught the sixth and seventh grades at Crescent.[29]

By October 1924 F. D. had to close the school for a week so that the carpenters could finish the new addition to the school. This inconvenience, however, did not mar the proud feelings of F. D., members of the faculty, and the community. The Black Dispatch reported: "Douglass is now at its best. It is blessed now with a junior high school and three teachers."[30]

The 1924-25 school year was filled with many achievements. F. D., Mrs. Alberta Moon, and Miss Sarah Mensor traveled often with the Douglass students to various separate schools near Crescent, providing opportunities for the students to participate in the county fair held in Guthrie as well as educational rallies which entailed spelling and oratorical contests. That year Douglass students won spelling and oratorical contests, with Odessa Cox, Sadie Chaney and Ruby Henderson winning honors for the school. The 4H Girls' Club sponsored by Mrs. Alberta Moon participated in a garden contest and the first, second, third and fourth grade girls won first prizes.[31]

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[29]Mrs. William H. Glover, interview, 23 May 1977.

[30]Black Dispatch, 9 October 1924.

[31]Black Dispatch, 4, 28 May 1925.

The school continued to expand its curriculum. By December 1925 there were ten students in the ninth grade. The school now had a junior high school and was offering high school work. The PTC remained active. At the beginning of the year, F. D. was promised another addition to the faculty. This promise was fulfilled in November 1925, when William Glover was added to the faculty, raising the number of faculty members to four. According to a report in the Black Dispatch: "Prof. Glover of Chandler, Oklahoma, began work in vocational agriculture. Douglass is very proud they are the only school in Logan County that has vocational work."[32] Glover recalled:

> When I went to Crescent to teach at Douglass, the building consisted of three rooms. The two older rooms remained and the new addition was very large and had a stage in it. It served as a classroom and as an auditorium. Mr. Moon occupied the new room. We had coal stoves, no library, and the textbooks were furnished or bought by the parents for their children. I had to have my classes in the Methodist Church which was not too far from the school.[33]

District poultry shows were one of the school year's highlights. The show for 1925-1926 was under the direction of F. D. and Glover. District 11 and the separate school of Pleasant Valley won the chicken showing. Douglass won first prize in the showing of eggs. The second highlight of the season was the marriage of Sarah Menser and William Glover at the home of the Moons.[34]

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[32] Black Dispatch, 5 November 1925; 3 December 1925.

[33] William H. Glover, interview, 23 May 1977.

[34] Black Dispatch, 11 March 1926.

In an effort to expand the interest of the students athletically, F. D. met with other black principals in Kingfisher, the county seat of Kingfisher County in west-central Oklahoma. This meeting led to the organization of the Westside Athletic Association. The organization offered opportunities for black boys and girls of designated areas to compete in basketball conferences. Conference games were held with separate schools of Dova, Enid, Kingfisher, Hennessy, Lacy, Chandler, Luther, and Seward. Often the Westside Teachers' Team would play against the students. The team of teachers was usually composed of F. D. Moon, Raymond King, William Glover, Wallace King, W. R. Patterson, Glen Smith, and Floyd King.[35]

Unlike the white school in Crescent, Douglass did not have a gym. This made it difficult for the team to practice and play home conference games. William Glover states:

> The Board rented the community Sweet Potato House so Douglass could have a gym to play basketball in. It was about four blocks from the school. This was a place where the community kept their sweet potatoes all winter. People in the community could go there and get sweet potatoes whenever they wanted to, but we used the Sweet Potato House for practicing and playing basketball.[36]

By 1926 F. D.'s leadership ability was receiving growing statewide attention. He was elected president of the Langston Alumni Association, superintendent of the First Baptist Church Sunday

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[35]Black Dispatch, 14 January; 11 March 1926.

[36]Mrs. William H. Glover, interview, 23 May 1977.

School, trustee of his church, principal of the separate school, and Chancellor Commander in the Knights of Pythais.[37]

> The Pythais Lodge was bigger than the Masonic Lodge ever was at one time in the State of Oklahoma. We had people like Dr. Wickum and A. J. Kirkpatrick. Every year we'd have the Grand Lodge meeting. We had our meetings at our Lodge Hall, a two-story building. F. D. helped to build this building. It's still there. We raised the money for the hall by giving box suppers, pledges, and membership fees.
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> People pledged their labor to build the hall. I laid some of the blocks for the building myself. Moon played a large part in this. He was the community leader; everything came

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[37] Ibid., Also, Black Dispatch, 14 January 1926.

In fact, F. D. stated: "My connection and association with the Langston University Alumni Association, as I remember it, dated from 1922 or 1923. The organization had ceased to function for several years, when ten or twelve of us met in the Tabernacle Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, at the close of the Oklahoma Association of Negro Teachers, one Saturday afternoon and effected a new organization . Nolan Purtle was elected president, Mary Page Purtle (I am not sure) was chosen for secretary. I was elected treasurer. I never received a dollar as treasurer . . .. On July 4, 1926, I was elected president of the Alumni Association upon nomination of Professor W. L. Gilmore. I was greatly surprised. Sam Sadler was elected treasurer . . . . Pennie Kennedy, now of Waukomis, was elected secretary . . . . Those were the days when one paid his own way to the Board of Directors meetings . . . For several years after 1926, the year I was first elected, a few of us struggled along without notice. This continued until the Association became more independent and militant. . . In 1934, the Board of Directors went on record as favoring a Board of Regents for Langston University whose term of office would not be coterminous with that of the governor. Officers and representatives met with E. W. Marland, Democractic nominee for governor, and went on record as posing the question of making Langston University accredited by the North Central Association or some other accrediting agency; second, that Langston University be removed from the domination of petty, partisan politics; third, that the state provide tuition for Negro students who must go out of state to do graduate and professional work; fourth, that an alumnus of Langston University be placed upon the Board of Regents of Langston University." Alumni Bulletin, February 1941, p. 3.

through him.[38]

F. D. added another teacher, Miss Leeoshia Harris, to the staff in September 1926.[39] She explained:

> Being just out of Kansas State Teacher's College, I was in need of a job. So, I made applicatons to various schools in Oklahoma and, of course, I sent an application to Crescent. Fred came to Oklahoma City to interview me. Later I had to go to Crescent to be interviewed by Mr. Charlie Graff. I shall never forget the million questions he asked me. Anyway, I was hired. Douglass didn't have physical education, so I coached the girls' basketball team. I also taught in the elementary department. Finally, I taught high school English and was the librarian.[40]

Early in the 1926-27 school year Alonzo Lewis of Enid came to Crescent to organize a band.[41] This was a community and school sponsored project. The School Board did not hire a band instructor but F. D. felt the need for this kind of instruction. Thus, with mutual agreement between Mr. Lewis, F. D. and members of the black community,

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[38]Mr. William H. Glover, interview, 23 May 1977.

During the twenties and even later, socially and culturally, it was often necessary that blacks maintain a separate existence in the South as well as the North. One of the manifestations of the black man's struggles to become socially self-sufficient was the remarkable growth of fraternal orders and benefit associations. Masons and Odd Fellows maintained large memberships. In addition, organizations like the Knights of Pythais and the Knights of Tabor competed for membership among black men. Some were strong in certain localities, others had memberships that extended over several states and owned the buildings which housed their main office. John Hope Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans, pp. 404, 406.

[39]Black Dispatch, 16 September 1926.

[40]Leeoshia Harris Moon, interview held 1314 Northeast 8th Street, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 14 July 1977.

[41]Black Dispatch, 21 October 1926.

the band was organized.[42]

> Teachers, students, and members of the community were participants in the band. Mr. Lewis came to Crescent on week-ends from Enid for band practice on Saturdays. There was no money to pay him. Sometimes members of the band would pay his train fare,
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> Teachers who participated in the band were: F. D. Moon, trumpet; William Glover, clarinet; Leeoshia Harris, saxaphone; and Mrs. Sarah Glover, violin. A few of the community participants were: William and Pledger Bufford, cornet, and Martin Clay, an ex-student of Douglass played the trombone. There were a few Douglass students who participated. The band would play for church programs, the Knights of Phthais meetings, and school pagents. Sometimes the band would play for a little community called Zion, not far from Crescent, and have parades between Crescent and Zion, though the roads were awfully sandy and dusty.[43]

Most of the students could not afford band instruments and the school district did not make appropriations for this kind of activity.[44] F. D., the teachers, and community leaders held fund raising drives to pay for band instruments and related expenses. One fund raising activity was the "Miss Crescent" contest. Contestants were: Leeoshia Harris of Douglass school, Ruth Thornton of Clay Valley school, and Mary Riley of Fraizer school. Miss Harris raised the most money and thereby won the contest.[45]

One of F. D.'s pet projects in 1927 was to organize a Douglass

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[42]Leeoshia Harris Moon, interview, 12 August 1977.

[43]Ibid.

[44]Ibid., Black Dispatch, 14 September 1926.

[45]Black Dispatch, 14 November 1926.

School football team. He went to two of his board members, Charlie Graff and I. W. Culp, and they decided to have weekly movies to help finance the project.[46] William Glover recalled:

> Moon got the project started. The Board rented an old movie downtown that the whites no longer needed. At first, this seemed to be a good idea, because the blacks couldn't attend the movie for whites. Moon felt that the black community needed some kind of recreation and this project would help in two ways. First, it would help buy uniforms for the football team, and second, it would give a relief for the need of recreation for the black community.
>
> The movie lasted about two years, and the money was used for athletics. But we just didn't have the crowd to take care of the expense of the movie, so the idea of the movie was taken to the school, every Friday night.[47]

The football team was organized during the 1928-29 school year and William Glover was appointed the coach. According to Mr. Glover:

> We didn't have much of a football team that first year. We only made one touchdown, and that was with Luther. The score was 40 to 6. Hartford Taylor made the first touchdown in the history of the Douglass school. Later, the team was fair, and we always beat Guthrie.[48]

The major problem confronting F. D. and Coach Glover was being able to provide adequate uniforms for the team. To outfit a player cost about $25 to $30. The weekly movies did not generate sufficient income to cover this expense. F. D. and Glover collected used uniforms from the University of Oklahoma, Oklahoma State University,

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[46]Mrs. William H. Glover, interview, 23 May 1977.

[47]Ibid., Also, Black Dispatch, 22 December 1927.

[48]William H. Glover, interview, 23 May 1977.

and CA&NU.[49]

Need for a New Building

During the summer of 1929 F. D. received his B.S. Degree from CA&NU, at the age of 33. This had been accomplished through yearly summer school enrollments. Pollie Moon died on February 2, 1929 and therefore she did not live to see F. D. receive his degree.[50] His most ambitious activity was his obvious actions toward building

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[49] Ibid.

[50] F. D. Moon, interview, 7 August 1975; Irene Moon, interview, 14 February 1976.

By 1929 F. D. was serving as President of the Langston Alumni Association; and elected (1929), President of the Oklahoma Association of Negro Teachers (OANT). Through the combined efforts of the Langston Alumni Association and President Zachary Taylor Hubert of CA&NU $1,000 was secured by donations, contributions, and Alumni fees to supplement $2,000 given by the State Legislature and the Julius Rosenwald fund to complete a $3,000 allocation for the library at CA&NU. From this effort over 8,000 books were added to the school's library. In addition F. D. Moon and the Langston Alumni Association in the form of a resolution condemned the student's strike at CA&NU in 1929 and went on record as favoring the administration of Z. T. Hubert. Black Dispatch, 10 January; 14 February 1929.

While accepting the presidency of the Oklahoma Association of Negro Teachers in February 1929, F. D. was described as perhaps taking the most courageous stand on the question of the school laws of Oklahoma than any Oklahoma black educator. He advocated seeking amendments which would partially correct evils in the statutes of the Constitution. If then, this could not be done, he advocated that the constitutionality of the law be attacked in the federal courts. Finally, he recommended the selection of a state supervisor for Negro schools in order to standardize the work of the separate schools over the State, and questioned the advisability of placing CA&NU under the control of the Board of Agriculture. See, Black Dispatch, 14 February; 7 March 1929.

a new Douglass School in Crescent. The new addition leaked and was in need of constant repair.[51] F.D. recalled:

> After my third year, I was able to add another room to the old building, which I know now was a mistake because when we built the new room onto the old building which had been built in the '90s, that kind of fixed the thing. I should have delayed it longer. But now, having caught onto the era of having built the new room to place onto the old building, I didn't make that same mistake.[52]

The three room structure, which had proven inadequate for grades one through eleven, housed more than 90 students in 1929. "The inadequacy of the three rooms, and more especially the new addition, was more evident during the time of school closing activities. These activities lasted sometimes as long as a week. Each class was represented during that week giving plays, operattas, and May Day exercises. Members of both black and white communities attended. It was too small."[53]

In spite of the conditions presented by the growing need for a new school building, F. D. worked successfully within the confines of the three room structure to develop a "model school."[54] This accomplishment was in harmony with the exerted efforts of the Oklahoma County Superintendents to increase interest in the rural public

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[51]Mrs. William H. Glover, interview, 23 May 1977.

[52]F. D. Moon, taped interview, 11 April 1972.

[53]Mr. William H. Glover, interview, 23 May 1977.

[54]Ibid.

schools. Better housing conditions, sanitation, health; satisfactory and sufficient equipment; organization of school work; community cooperation; attractiveness of surroundings; good citizenship; and careful expenditure of school funds were some of the standards and objectives of a model school.[55] According to Mr. Glover:

> We had a 'model school' in spite of certain problems. The school yard was clean. Mr. Moon was thought well of throughout the community. This was evident by the things the school and community did together. They had taken agriculture out of Douglass and replaced it with industrial arts. The school and community cooperated with this effort. We made and repaired furniture, tubs, plows, chicken houses, small rooms, and porches. People of the community furnished the materials and we'd do the work.
>
> Mr. Moon was as particular about play as he was about school work. He worked just as hard on the playground as he did in the classroom. We played volley ball. If the children made a mistake playing volley ball on the playground, to him that was just like making a mistake in the classroom.
>
> Sometimes our attendance was low, due in part to the cotton seasons. The children had to pick cotton. We managed to keep the sessions on a nine month term, however. Other members of the faculty taught most of the lower grades. Mr. Moon taught the upper grades. He taught mathematics, history, algebra, and English; he taught students Latin after the ninth grade. Those that were taught Latin had a better background than those that never knew about Latin. Every year Mr. Moon added units to the curriculum. With the growing enrollment and enlargement of the staff, there was a definite need for a

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[55] Oklahoma, Twelfth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instructions, 1928, p. 31.

During 1921 a bulletin entitled, Physical Features of Public School Centers, was issued by the State Department of Education. This bulletin was the beginning of the 'Model School' movement in Oklahoma. County score cards developed by County Superintendents furnished the base for a state model school score card adopted by the rural school division for use throughout the state. Ibid.

larger school building.[56]

The New Douglass

Between the later part of 1929 and the early part of 1930, F. D., with the assistance of County Superintendent Irene Sloan, qualified the Douglass School for financial aid from the Rosenwald Funds to help finance a new school building.[57] In addition to counting the Crescent population, one of the requirements of the Rosenwald Funds, he collected other needed data.[58] After the application and plans for the new building were approved, construction for the $18,000 school building was started in January 1930.[59] The end of

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[56]William H. Glover, interview, 23 May 1977.

[57]Black Dispatch, 3 April 1930.

"School officials desiring aid from the Rosenwald Fund had to have the County or City Superintendent secure an application from the Oklahoma State Department of Education. The application had to be signed by the County or City Superintendent having supervisory control of the school." See, E. A. Duke, "Rosenwald Buildings in Oklahoma," in John Vaughan, ed., Rosenwald School Day Program (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma State Department of Education, 1932), p. 11.

[58]F. D. Moon, taped interview, 11 April 1972.

[59]Black Dispatch, 23 January 1930.

"By 1932, there were in Oklahoma 197 separate Rosenwald school buildings. The total cost of these buildings was in excess of $1,100,000 of which the Rosenwald Funds contributed $145,055. The blacks gave more than $28,000, whites more than $5,000, and the public authorities more than $900,000. These buildings were located in 43 of the 77 counties in the state. In the program for aid the Fund cooperated directly with the State Department of Education. Carefully prepared plans were furnished. Buildings receiving aid had to be erected by plans approved by the state department and a

the school term was the projected time for the completion of the new building.[60]

In May 1930, F. D., the Douglass faculty, students and members of the black and white communities held a dedicational service in the auditorium of the newly completed school. Dr. A. Baxter Whitby, Grand Master of the Masonic Lodge, gave the dedicatorial speech.[61]

The following school year, F. D. added two new teachers, Anita Alexander and Lillie Bufford Andrews, to the faculty.[62] During the 1930-31 school year, Douglass High School of Crescent with 12 units was accredited as a three year high school by state standards.[63] The standard of accreditation for Douglass were standards set by the Bureau of High School Inspection for all schools of the state.[64]

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representative of the fund. The plan selected was usually based upon the study of the community made in advance for the purpose of determining its needs and the type of school program that it proposed to develop." E. A. Duke,"Rosenwald Buildings in Oklahoma," pp. 9-11.

[60] Black Dispatch, 3 April 1930.

[61] Black Dispatch, 8 May 1930.

[62] William H. Glover, interview, 16 May 1977.

[63] E. A. Duke, "Accredited Negro High Schools 1930-31," in John Vaughan, ed., Rosenwald School Day Program, p. 23.

[64] See A. L. Crable, "The Development of Accredited High Schools in Oklahoma During the Past Decade,"(Masters Theses, University of Oklahoma, 1927),p. 2.

"By 1930 the high school opportunities for blacks in Oklahoma were not more than 40 per cent of the average opportunities for all children in the state. Of the sixty-six black schools in the state

During the school year of 1930-1931, F. D. secured a library for the new school through the assistance of the Rosenwald Fund. The Rosenwald Fund secured books for both elementary and high school levels, underwriting one-third of the cost of books and paying all of the cost for delivery to the schools. Douglass, like most of the common schools in Oklahoma, included both elementary and high school.[65]

A considerable amount of time was spent by F. D. Moon during the school year of 1930-1931 beautifying the school grounds of the new school.[66] This was in keeping with suggestions of the Rosenwald

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in which some high school work was done during the school year 1930-1931, only 32 were accredited under the state standards set by the Bureau of High School Inspection. There was only one standard for accredited high schools and all schools both white and black had to meet that standard." Oklahoma, Fourteenth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instructions, 1932, pp.81, 84-85.

[65]F. D. Moon, taped interview, 11 April 1972; Also, E.A. Duke "List of Schools and Counties Qualifying for Library Aid Given By Juluis Rosenwald Fund to 1932," in John Vaughan, ed., Rosenwald School Day Program. pp. 12, 13.

The Rosenwald elementary library consisted of 155 carefully selected books for pupils in the first eight grades. This provision was for any black school with two or more teachers employed. The application for the library must be signed by the County Superintendent or the City Superintendent and presented to the State Department of Education. A school district warrant, check, in the amount of $80 payable to the State Department of Education Rosenwald Library Fund must accompany the application. The Rosenwald Fund added $40 to this amount and paid for the freight on the $120 library. A high school library could be secured on the same terms and for the same Amount. The receiving school was required to provide a suitable bookcase and to care for the books." E.A. Duke, "List of Schools and Counties Qualifying for Library Aid Given by Julius Rosenwald Fund to 1932", p. 11.

[66]F.D. Moon, taped interview, 11 April 1972.

Director of Schoolhouse Planning.[67] The effort was not a strenuous one to F. D. According to him:

> I always liked beauty. We leveled the grounds, planted flowers, shrubbery and trees. All of this was done to make it attractive around the yard. There are trees there now that were planted. There's a big tree I planted with my own hands. There is also one locust tree that I planted with my own hands. We'd go down on the creek where we could find them. I'd get the larger boys to go with me, and we'd get trees large enough to be replanted and planted them to make the place a beautiful place.[68]

During the summer of 1931, F. D. was offered three principalships, one at Crescent, another at Washington High School in Luther, Oklahoma, and the third at Douglass High School in Wewoka, Oklahoma. He signed with Luther but finally ended up as principal of the Douglass school in Wewoka. F. D. did not return to Douglass until the following year when the school had its first graduation exercises for the twelth grade students. Mr. E. W. Giddings of Rentiesville, Oklahoma, who succeeded him as principal, invited F. D. to give the graduation address.[69]

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[67] Frank Williams, "Suggestions for Rosenwald School Day Work Program," in John Vaughan ed., Rosenwald School Day Program, p. 18

"The teachers in charge of the planning of the Rosenwald school grounds were to outline a definite plan of development then add to this plan year by year until it was complete. A plan of future development was to be left in the school so that the next teacher may follow it. On this drawing the walks, driveways, buildings, play areas, were to be identified." Ibid.

[68] F. D. Moon, taped interview, 11 April 1972.

[69] Ibid., Mrs. William H. Glover, interview, 23 May 1977.

Students whom F. D. had known and worked with were among the graduating class, including William Bufford, Ezell Cox, Luther Crawford, Juanita Henderson, and Odessa Carr. He spoke to the graduating seniors on the subject of "Pioneering," bringing out the fact that they were pioneers in the State of Oklahoma in education for black people, as well as pioneers for education in Crescent. He shook hands with the class valedictorian, Odessa Cox. After a few pleasantries with both black and white people of the community, he returned to his new position as principal of the Douglass High School in Wewoka.[70]

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[70]Mrs. William H. Glover, interview, 23 May 1977.

CHAPTER V

DOUGLASS HIGH SCHOOL IN WEWOKA, OKLAHOMA, 1931-1940

During the summer of 1931, F. D. signed a contract for the principalship of Washington School in Luther, Oklahoma, a small town in northeastern Oklahoma County. In the meantime, he was offered a position with the Douglass High School in Wewoka, a position he wanted very much. This presented a perplexing situation since the Board of Education in Luther was not receptive to the idea of releasing him from the contract.[1] In reasoning with the board, F. D. proposed:

> This position is open in Wewoka now. It may not be opened again in five years. If it's open in five years, it may not be offered to me. It's a circumstance that doesn't occur every day. It's an opportunity, and this is my chance. It may be the only time in my life that I'd have it.[2]

This discourse impressed the Board. "They looked around at each other and relieved me from the contract . . . . It had taken me three weeks to get released, but I went on to Wewoka."[3]

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[1] F. D. Moon, interview held 1314 Northeast 8th Street, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 7 August 1975.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

The Community

Wewoka, a Creek word meaning "roaring waters," is the county seat of Seminole County.[4] The composition of the population included whites and Indians, often referred to as "natives," and a preponderance of blacks. The black and white communities were geographically separated.[5]

The black community was comprised of a considerable number of businesses: two drug stores, six grocery stores, two funeral homes, and a ladies ready-to-wear store. There were several physicians and lawyers. Many of the activities of the community evolved around the school, the First Baptist Church, United Methodist Church, and the A.M.E. Church.[6]

F. D. was hired under County Superintendent Calvin S. Vance to succeed Daniel W. Lee as principal (1927-1931) of Douglass High School.[7] He was requested to come to Wewoka in the night, and was impressed with what he saw.[8] There was a new high school,

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[4]George H. Shirk, Oklahoma Place Names, 2nd ed., rev. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974), p. 254

[5]Elnora K. Lee, interview held 1325 Northeast 34th Street, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 15 May 1977.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Ibid.

[8]F. D. Moon, taped interview held Oklahoma Christian College, Living Legend Library, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 11 April 1972.

a building which had been built in 1928[9] The old school, which housed the junior high and elementary departments, still remained. The school had been accredited by the state.[10] There were paved streets, shrubbery, and trees around the buildings. To F. D., "this showed evidence of development for beauty."[11] F. D. was hired as principal and superintendent of the elementary, junior and senior schools.[12]

The School Curriculum and Activities

During the first few years, very few conspicuous changes were made. The school maintained its 18 high school teachers and eight elementary school teachers. The high school curriculum consisted of the basic course of study.[13] In the elementary and junior high

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[9] Black Dispatch, 9 February 1928.

[10] Elnora K. Lee, interview, 15 May 1977.

[11] F. D. Moon, taped interview, 11 April 1972.

[12] Elnora K. Lee, interview, 15 May 1977.

[13] Ibid.

"In previous years state courses had been prepared largely by the supervisors based on text books. During this time high school courses of study were being prepared by committees of classroom teachers working under the direction of a State Central Committee. These courses of study were prepared around teaching units. The detailed unit outlines were suggested, and the teacher was expected to expand other units in the courses. Attention was given to the preparation of courses of study in both secondary and elementary schools. English, mathematics, science, Latin, foreign language, social science, industrial arts, commercial subjects, music, art and character education were courses of study for high schools." Oklahoma, Thirteenth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instructions, 1930, p. 74.

schools, basic courses of study were also taught, with special emphasis on reading in the elementary grades.[14] In addition, the school's activities included athletics, debating, band, a music club, and PTA. Some of these activities were in the county, others were interchangable with separate schools of neighboring counties.[15]

One change had occurred for F. D.; he had married Leeoshia M. Harris on August 20, 1935. Their daughter Freddye Lee was born October 16, 1938.[16]

By 1937 accounts concerning activities of Douglass High School appeared in the Wewoka Times Democract stating: "Douglass School Seniors Control Colored Section":

> Today was 'Senior Government Day' in the Douglass High School system, and during the day seniors took over the faculty positions in the high school, filled professions of the Negro race in Wewoka and have pursued trades or the vocations in stores, cafes, service stations, and undertaking establishments,

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[14] Ibid.

"In Seminole County during 1929-30, Miss Neva Kennon gave the Stanford Achievement Tests and found that children of the county ranked low in reading. During 1931 she emphasized the teaching of reading in order to bring the schools up to the national standards in this subject. A supervisory program was established. As a result of this supervision and the help of the Jeanes Teacher employed by the county, Seminole County had a greater number of elementary accredited black schools than any other county in the state. A great deal of the work was represented by bulletins and materials prepared by the County Supervisor and distributed by the office of the County Superintendent." Oklahoma, Fourteenth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instructions, 1932, p. 17.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Biographical Sketch of F. D. Moon (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Publishing Company, (1958).

> and even in the city police department, where one boy today followed the routing of the colored policeman, Bert Watts.
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> Superintendent F. D. Moon yielded his job for one day to Leodus Banks, president of the class. He said, 'The purpose of the day, held for the first time, is to acquaint students with the responsibilities of citizenship and provide them with some vocational guidance. Forty-five will graduate at Commencement . . . .'
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> This Friday, Douglass will sponsor a county wide 'Senior Day' for eighth grade graduates, inviting more than a hundred pupils to be guests of the Douglass freshmen class. School buses will bring the pupils in from twenty-one outlying separate school districts.[17]

In 1937 the eighth grade students sponsored a May Day program. The activities were planned by the physical education department, headed by F. H. Harris. Music for the activities was provided by the Douglass band under the direction of L. J. Webb.[18] The high school boys demonstrated marching and gymnastic exercises. The high school girls demonstrated cadet marching, stunts and pyramiding. Parents of the junior high participated in a Maypole activity. The activities ended with a softball game between the high school boys and the Douglass faculty.[19]

"Honor Night" was an annual affair at the Douglass school. At the end of the school year honor certificates were given to students for scholorship and perfect attendance. Dr. W. L. Knight of

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[17] Wewoka (Okla.) Times Democrat, 28 April 1937.

[18] Wewoka (Okla.) Times Democrat, 29 April 1937.

[19] Wewoka (Okla.) Times Democrat, 18 May 1937.

the Wewoka Board of Education presented the honor certificates for scholarship and perfect attendance. A trophy was given to the most useful citizen chosen by a committee to screen class nominees.[20] In 1937 Leodus Banks, a senior, and William Cremp, a junior, were presented the Most Useful Citizenship award by Ben D. Floyd, president of the Wewoka Board of Education.[21]

Also in 1937 F. D. Moon was elected to the State Athletic Board of Control during a meeting of the Grid in McAlester. The Board acted in the interest of black high school athletics throughout the state. Members of the Board served for six years. The Board helped direct the future course of the black high school football competition and to curtail inadequacies noted during the season. For example in 1937 Booker T. Washington High School of Tulsa, Oklahoma, was awarded the State championship for the separate schools. The Douglass Wildcats of Wewoka were named the second best grid team of the state when it was discovered that Douglass High School of Oklahoma City had played ineligible men during the season.[22]

Douglass High School Activities and Projects

By 1938 Ron Stevens, Works Projects Administration (W.P.A.) Administrator, approved construction for additions to the Douglass

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[20] Ibid.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Wewoka (Okla.) Times Democrat, 21 December 1937.

High School at a cost of $35,470. Overcrowded conditions of the school had warrented the addition.[23] This problem facing Douglass, as in many separate schools of the state, stemmed from two facts. First, state law required 85 per cent of the school budget be spent for specific purposes, not including new buildings. Second, the Rosenwald Fund had discontinued giving financial aid for the construction of school buildings for blacks. These two facts made it almost impossible for counties to provide the needed buildings for the separate schools. Thus the W.P.A. helped to relieve this problem in Oklahoma.[24]

The proposed W.P.A. construction for the Wewoka separate high school was an extension southward on the existing building for a distance of one-half of the original building's length. The addition was to include: a basement; a living and dining room, sewing room and kitchen added to the home economics department previously housed in two small rooms; a laboratory and recitation room for the vocational and agriculture department; a "Little Theater" with a

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[23] Wewoka (Okla.) Times Democrat, 6 January 1938.

[24] Oklahoma, Eighteenth Biennial Report of the Superintendent of Public Instructions, 1940, pp. 85, 86.

In Oklahoma, between 1935 and 1940, the Work Projects Administration (WPA) built at least 23 new black school buildings, repaired 72 and constructed additions to others. The counties found it extremely difficult to supply the necessary sponsor's contributions, under the terms of the present law. That condition is undoubtedly responsible for the small number of black separate school projects aided when compared with the district schools. Ibid., p. 86.

seating capacity for 140 persons, which also housed band, orchestra, music classes and dramatics; a room for the commercial department; and a new cafeteria.[25]

The cafeteria was under separate management. By state law school appropriations were not authorized to provide hot lunches for dependent separate schools. However, hot lunches could be furnished to students through the economics department. The cafeteria's expenses were derived from the sales of the lunches.[26]

In the meantime, during the end of the 1937-38 school year, the Douglass High School band participated with other separate school bands in a mass concert in Muskogee, Oklahoma. The Wewoka band led the parade of bands, which included the schools of El Reno, Ponca City, Oklahoma City, Sand Springs, Muskogee, and Shawnee. The mass concert was under the direction of Gene P. Benjamin of CA&NU.[27] Even though the band did a good job, one point seemed a source of concern for F. D.: "The contrast between the Douglass uniforms and those of the Oklahoma City band during the fall was an embarrassment to the boys and girls and the community."[28] In an effort to eradicate this embarrassment, he launched a campaign to raise money for the purchase

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[25] Wewoka (Okla.) Times Democrat, 6 January 1938.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Wewoka (Okla.) Times Democrat, 10 May 1938.

[28] Wewoka (Okla.) Times Democrat, 1 February 1939.

of new uniforms for the Douglass band. The Wewoka Times Democrat reported that the, "Douglass Officials Start Drive for Band Uniforms" to avoid embarrassment:

> F. D. Moon, Superintendent of Douglass High School, today launched a campaign to raise money for the purchase of new uniforms for the Douglass band. The school hopes to have the full amount of $1,272 pledged and the uniforms purchased in time for the state band meet which will be held in Oklahoma City next May. On that amount, $832 has already been pledged by Wewoka colored folks . . . The uniforms which the school plans to purchase will cost $29.76 each and consist of Sam Brown belts, a shako with ostrich plumes and suits. Forty-two of them are needed . . .[29]

In his request for financial assistance, F. D. stated: "Our policy is to reduce our request for aid from the public and friends to the very minimum, and only in instances of actual need . . . that time is now." The editor of the Wewoka Democrat observed that black supporters of the Douglass High School pledged generously, "because they believe in helping themselves before asking others to help."[30] Additional pledges came from many white people of the city.[31]

By March 1939 the Douglass High School Band Uniform Fund had gone over the top. F. D. announced a total of $1,362 pledged, an oversubscription of $186. If the pledges were paid in full, F. D. said, "It [the money] will be used to purchase an American Flag to

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[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Wewoka (Okla.) Times Democrat, 23 March 1939.

accompany the bank and to purchase additional uniforms or retain as a separate fund to provide necessary replacements.[32]

Accredidation, The Four Year Plan and Centralization

As the band project ended, E. E. Haley, Chief High School Inspector, and J. Andrews, Chairman of the State Committee of accrediated schools, issued the following report:

> The Douglass High School of Wewoka was admitted to membership in the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools at the annual meeting of the association which was held in Chicago, March 30, 31 and April 1st. Notice of the achievement was confirmed in a letter on April the 3rd which is the following:
>
> 'The Douglass High School of Wewoka was elected to the membership of the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools at the meeting in Chicago, March 30th, 31st and April 1st, 1939. I congratulate you and the members of your staff for this distinct honor'.[33]

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[32] Ibid.

[33] Black Dispatch, 15 April 1939.

The relationship of the high school to the college was a major problem of institutional articulation in the 1890's and the aspect affording the greatest concern was that of entrace or admission requirements to the college. In 1895, the North Central Association was established with a combinationmmembership of college and secondary schools for the purpose of establishing closer relations in the North Central states . . .

In 1902, the Committee on Unit Courses of the North Central Association defined as acceptable a high school which required fifteen units of work for graduation. Each unit was defined as a course covering a school year of not less than thirty-five weeks, taught in four or five periods of at least forty-five minutes per week. Furthermore, all high school curricula and requirements for college entrace were to include as constants three units of

This accomplishment placed Douglass High School in Wewoka as the third black high school to be accredited by the North Central Association, and climaxed a "Four Year Plan" which F. D. had presented to the Wewoka school officials in 1934. The plan included: (1) improvement in faculty training (faculty improvement was to be attained by attending graduate schools during the summers), (2) improvement in the physical plant of the school, and (3) North Central accreditation for the school year 1938-39.[34]

Faculty improvement was presented in such a way to the Wewoka officials that individual ratings would not result in a radical shake-up in the school faculty. The plan was accepted by the

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English and two units of mathematics. . ." See Gerald Gutek, An Historical Introduction to American Education, (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1970), p. 80.

[34]Black Dispatch, 15 April 1939

The number of state black high schools accredited increased from 66 located in 37 counties during 1938 to 71 located in 39 counties during 1940. No accredited black high schools by state standards were located west of a north to south line drawn through Watonga and Lawton, although some uncredited high school work was offered in black schools at Altus, Clinton, Frederick, Hobert and Mangum. A slow increase of black high schools accreditation in the North Central Association prevailed, so that by 1950 there were 11 black high schools accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, five of which were added during the year of 1949-50. Oklahoma, Eighteenth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instructions, 1940, p. 82. Oklahoma, Twenty-third Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instructions, 1950, p. 47.

county superintendent and the Wewoka Board of Education. School authorities proceeded with the improvement of the physical plant, while the teachers attended graduate schools. As a result, the Douglass High School was accredited by the North Central Association without recommending the transfer of a single teacher from the high school department to the junior high or elementary school due to certification.[35]

Centralizing educational efforts, a concept conceived in Massachusetts, seemed to achieve growing acceptance by school systems in the State of Oklahoma, especially in 1939. Centralization for the Seminole County school system was a part of the "Four Year Plan" and was started during the administration of County Superintendent Calvin Vance. Small, inadequate high schools were abolished and all high school work for the separate schools was centralized

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[35] Ibid.

"The year 1939 marked a little over a quarter of a century of public education in Oklahoma. When Oklahoma became a state, some of the teachers were only eighth grade graduates and practically all of them had less than two years of high school work. The County third grade certificate was held by more teachers than any other certificate. Since 1932, the average elementary teacher held a two year state certificate, based on four years of high school and one to two years of college work. Over eighty per cent of the high school teachers held standard college degrees based on four years of high school plus four years of college, for the teaching profession. Practically all high school teachers had acquired more than one-eighth of their college work in the special subjects they were teaching. Though the system was separate, standards required of white teachers were to be met by black teachers." See, Oklahoma, Fourteenth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instructions, 1932, p. 1.

in Wewoka. During this process of centralization, Superintendent Vance and F. D. had the assistance and council of William W. Fraizer, Jeans teacher and supervisor of separate schools.[36] The policy continued under the administration of County Superintendents Jack Cannon and Calvin T. Smith. Through this effort educational opportunities were made available to all black students of Seminole county. Students were bussed from all parts of the county to Douglass High School in Wewoka. Six buses covered the county. One school bus traveled 34 miles one way, covering the Okfuskee County line. This was considered the longest bus route in the State of Oklahoma. The other buses covered other parts of the county.[37]

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[36] Ibid. E. A. Duke, "Jeans Teachers in Oklahoma, 1930-31," in John Vaughan, ed., Rosenwald School Day Program (Oklahoma: State Department of Education, 1932), p. 28.

[37] Ibid.

Centralized schools had grown in number and importance throughout the States since 1838, when the Massachusetts legislature passed an act authorizing more districts to establish union schools. In 1875, the first well considered plan for centralizing schools and conveying children to a central school was worked out in that state. In fact, the school district system and the centralization of school districts originated in the State of Massachusetts. In Oklahoma, at least one type of these centralized districts was organized in each county before and after statehood. The practice of providing transportation for black students to one strong high school was found to be more economical than to maintain a number of inferior schools in the county. See, Oklahoma, Twelfth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instructions, 1928, p. 41. Oklahoma, Fourteenth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instructions, 1932, p. 82.

The W.P.A. additions, a part of the Four Year Plan, were completed by 1939 and the approximate cost of the entire school plant and grounds was $150,000. There were six buildings in the entire system, consisting of a senior high school, junior high school and an elementary or grade school. These schools were housed in two-wing school buildings. One building, entirely industrial arts, had 26 classrooms, two auditoriums (one combined with gymnasium), two offices, a "Little Theater," a study hall, a library room, and many other accessories. Thirteen acres constituted the school ground by the junior and senior schools.[38]

The overall success of the four year plan at the Douglass school depended partially on teachers pursuing higher education which was not available in Oklahoma. However, due to the aggressiveness of F. D. Moon, many of the teachers were able to secure out of state tuition to meet this goal.[39]

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[38]Ibid.

[39]Ibid., Also, F. D. Moon, taped interview, 11 April 1972.

Shortly after the elevation of Henry S. Johnson as governor of the State of Oklahoma, 1927-1929, Isaac W. Young, who was elected as president of CA&NU in 1923 by Jack Walton then governor of Oklahoma, was ousted as the institution's president. Zachary Taylor Hubert was elected as the institution's president by Governor Henry S. Johnston serving from 1927 to 1931, and favorably endorsed by the school's Alumni Association, the OANT and the Negro Principals Association.

When William (Alfalfa Bill) Murray was elected governor of Oklahoma in 1931, Dr. Z. T. Hubert was dismissed as the president of CA&NU and Isaac W. Young was again appointed as president of the

In order to improve his own educational skills, F. D. attended the University of Chicago during the summers and had received his M.A. degree in the summer of 1939. In 1939 the faculty consisted of: F. D. Moon, principal, B.S. Langston University, M.A. University of Chicago; E. D. Brown, vice-principal, B.S. Langston University,

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school. Young's reappointment as president of CA&NU was a shock to the Langston Alumni Association due to the fact that the newly elected governor in a conference with the Alumni officials and Senator U. T. Rexoat of Ardmore, had agreed to take his hands off the election of a president for CA&NU, and allow the new Board of Regents for the school, freedom to select the new president. Just what influences Governor Murray exercised for Young's election at the last moment was not officially known. It was known however, that the Alumni of the institution felt that they were doubled crossed by Murray, although the opinion of some was that Young performed a little political stunt at the eleventh hour.

Gloom and dispare engulfed CA&NU involving the dismissal of Dr. Hubert. CA&NU students were reported enrolling in out of state schools rather than have their graduation certificates signed by an individual who had not had as much scholastic training as they, that they would rather leave than submit to unbearable conditions imposed by Governor Murray and his political Board of Regents.

In addition to the student's attitudes toward Governor Murray placing a taxi-line owner and a medical doctor as head of CA&NU several faculty members were accepting positions in other states. By the time Dr. Hubert's term expired on August 31, 1931, many of the well qualified members of the faculty had left the state for less political educational fields.

Between February and July, 1932, several incidents occurred on the CA&NU campus centered around the Hubert Young controversy and black educators of the State denounced the political domination of their educational system. In July F. D. canceled the regular July fourth meeting of the Association which was pointed up by some as a revolt on the part of the Alumni and the black people of the State in general. On November 24, F. D. met with one of the most representative groups in the history of the Alumni Association in the auditorium of CA&NU and in a speech delivered at the time declared the fault with Langston was too much politics and presented a five point plan which included out of state tuition for black graduate students. See Black Dispatch, 12 February, 13 April, 30 July 1931; 2, 9, July, 1 December, 1932.

graduate student of the University of Wisconsin; T. O. Whitlow, A. B. Samuel Houston College, M.A. Northwestern, Z. M. Harris, A.B. Hiram College, graduate student of Ohio State; L. J. Webb, B.S. Langston University, graduate of University of Southern California and Columbia University; V. E. McCain, B.S. Langston University, graduate studies at the University of Colorado and the University of New Mexico; N. L. Buckner, B.S. Langston University, graduate student at Colorado State; F. H. Harris, B.S. Kansas State Teacher's College, graduate student at the University of Kansas and Iowa State College; A. O. Dunlap, A.B. Lincoln University, Pennsylvania, graduate student at the University of Southern California and the University of Minnesota; E. A. Gorman, A.B. Langston University, graduate student at the Hampton Institute and University of Colorado; T. M. Phillips, B.S. Kansas State Teacher's College, graduate student at the University of Denver. Thus, F. D.'s goal to improve the teacher's academic standards at Wewoka seemed complete by 1939. This was done partially through the teacher's own initiative in addition to aid provided some of them through state tuition for graduate work.[40]

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[40]Ibid. Also F. D. Moon's personal papers.

In pursuing out of state tuition for black graduate students of Oklahoma F. D. stated at the time: "We feel as though the state should in justice give the Negro boy and girl the right to study law, medicine and any professional and technical course, just as it gives white boys and girls down at Norman." See Black Dispatch, 26 April 1934.

During the completion of the Four Year Plan, several activities involving students of Douglass were noted: In 1939 the school observed Negro History Week, with students of the speech department visiting various churches of the community, speaking on the achievement of blacks in America; the Douglass Cagers won the Westside Central Conference Championship; as guests of CA&NU Student Day State

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In addition, when F. D. worked in behalf of Ernest Whitwaith Marland, Democratic candidate for governor of Oklahoma in 1934, he denounced the Republican Party because of the lack of interest it had shown black people declaring in an address delivered in Eufaula, Oklahoma that "the hope of political prestige for the Negro in the South was in the Democratic Party and urged the election of Marland. See, Black Dispatch, 22 October 1934.

Early in the administration of Marland, F. D. and the Legislative Committee of the Langston Alumni sponsored Senate Bill 203 which was introduced to the State Legislature by State Senator Lewis Ritzhaupt in 1935. This bill provided State support for students who could not receive desired graduate courses in the State of Oklahoma. The bill passed the Senate and House of Representatives on April 25, 1935 and was approved on May 2, 1935 by Governor E. W. Marland provoking constitutional action on higher education for blacks entitled "Tuition." See, Senate Bill 203 Session Laws 1935, p. 3.

". . . The State Board of Education administered the law as found in Article 1 of Chapter 34, Session Laws 1935, as amended by Article 12 of Chapter 34, Session Laws 1939, providing for the payment of tuition and mileage to certain Negro students attending institutions of higher learning outside the state. For each of the fiscal years ending June 30, 1939 and June 30, 1940, the Legislature appropriated the sum of $5,000 for the purpose of paying tuition and mileage referred to. During the first year named, 226 pupils attended school under the provisions of the law and their tuition and mileage amounted to $7,351.57. Their claims, however, were paid only to the extent of the appropriation, leaving an unpaid balance of $2,351.57. During the year ending June 30, 1940, 252 students attended school and filed claims totaling $13,237.68. Claims were paid in the total amount of $4,999.85, leaving a balance of unpaid claims in the amount of $8,237.83. . ." See Oklahoma, Eighteenth Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instructions and the Fifteenth Biennial Report of the State Board of Education, 1940, p. 129.

Contest, Douglass student, Prascovie Hutton, won first prize in the typing contest and Lee Amy and Jean Scroggins won second and third prizes respectively. Prascovie Hutton won first prize in the Fourth District Colored American Legion Oratorical Contest.[41]

At the beginning of the 1939-40 school year, County Superintendent Calvin T. Smith ruled that black students could attend either Douglass High School in Wewoka or the Seminole High School

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[41] Black Dispatch, 18 February 1939; Wewoka (Okla.) Times Democrat, 13 March; 21, 30 April 1939.

By far the biggest annual project sponsored by the Langston Alumni Association was the State-wide Interscholastic Meet, held at CA&NU in April of each year. The events included curricular contests in English, Social Science, Home Economics, Mathematics, Science, Agriculture, and typewriting; Music contest included solos, quartette, double quartette performances; Speech Arts included, orations, extemporaneous speaking, interpretative reading and dramatic reading. It was the plan of the Association to assemble at one place at one time a series of contests representing the various activities in which black high school students of the State were engaged. It was intended to constitute a statewide competition in which the best work in these activities were to be recognized and rewarded. In planning and conducing the Meet the Association had the following ends immediately in view: (1) To afford an object upon which the enthusiasm of the high school students of the state may be centered. Coming as it did in the spring of the year when the students were very likely to tire of the confinement of class work, the meet served as a diversion and created an inducement for keeping him in school. (2) To afford a means by which the students of high schools in the various parts of the State were brought together in order to become better acquainted with each other and to learn of the activities of each other's schools. (3) To afford an opportunity for high school students to become more familiar with Langston University, that they may understand what it is, what it offered, and what it did. The numerous events served to bring out ability in widely divergent lines, tending to stimulate a diversification of activities in high school life, and in improving the standard of work in the high school curriculum by awarding certificates, plaques or trophies. See Langston Alumni Bulletin, February, 1941, p. 15.

located in central Seminole County. The superintendent's decision was made following a presentation of a petition signed by forty-five patrons of the black districts. The petition requested that the black students be allowed to transfer out of the Seminole High School into Douglass High School. It was pointed out in the petition that the Seminole school was located near dance halls and beer gardens, which the black parents said were detrimental to their children's moral development. Furthermore the "patrons wanted to send their children to Wewoka because of the superior ranking held by Douglass High School."[42]

During the summer of 1940, F. D. was offered and accepted the principalship of Douglass High School in Oklahoma City. Teachers, patrons, civic leaders and school board members, headed by Harry D. Simmons, gathered at the school's gym at a reception in honor of the nine years service rendered by F. D. during his stay at Wewoka. The reception was arranged by a committee chaired by E. D. Brown, vice-principal. During the reception a plaque was presented to F. D. by Mrs.T. M.Davis, a member of the Douglass High School faculty. In good spirits, F. D. embarked on a new experience as principal of the Douglass High School in Oklahoma City.[43]

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[42]Wewoka (Okla.) Times Democrat, 30 August 1939.

[43]Wewoka (Okla.) Times Democrat, 29 June 1940.

CHAPTER VI

DOUGLASS HIGH SCHOOL IN OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA, 1940-1942

During the summer of 1940, F. D. was teaching history at CA&NU as he had done in previous summers. According to him:

> I got a call to come to Oklahoma City. It came from the Superintendent of Schools. At that time Herbert E. Wrinkle had just been elected superintendent. I had been a graduation speaker at schools in El Reno and Bartlesville where he had been superintendent. He had heard me speak. He called me and had me to meet him in room 910 at the Skirvin Hotel, not at the Board of Education building, for an interview. Then the offer came. He didn't offer it to me that day. He told me when I left his room, 'I don't want you talking about this, having anybody pulling for you. It isn't going to be filled by pull or politics.' I said, 'Don't worry, I'm going out of here to 736 N. E. 5th street, get my wife and daughter and go straight to Wewoka,' and that I did. My wife wanted to talk to me about it, but I thought it was just another interview and I wouldn't talk. The next morning I had a call from an ex-coach of mine, Vernon McCain, who was up earlier than I am and had seen the Daily Oklahoman. He said, 'Congratulations', and I said, 'For what?" He said, 'You have just been elected principal of Douglass High School in Oklahoma City.' I went out and got my paper off the porch, and it was there. So, on the seventh of June, 1940, I was elected the principal of the Douglass High School in Oklahoma City.[1]

The Community

Oklahoma City is the county seat of Oklahoma County and the

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[1]F. D. Moon, taped interview, held Oklahoma Christian College, Living Legend Library, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 11 April 1972.

capital of Oklahoma since 1910. Although unofficially known since the opening of the Unassigned Lands as Oklahoma City, the name was not officially adopted until July 1, 1923. According to the 1930 census there were a little more than 17,000 blacks included in Oklahoma City's total population of 200,000.[2]

F. D. was familiar with the black residential areas in Oklahoma City. The 300 block on East Second Street was the main business section of the black community. More than $500,000 was invested by blacks in property and business ventures. Business establishments operated by blacks included: The Jewel Theater, the Jay Cola Bottling Company (an establishment that furnished most of the soda water used by blacks of the city and many outlying towns within a radius of fifty miles), the Roth Broom Factory (shipped its products to half of the states in the union), the Stonewall Finance Company a local organization that helped to underwrite black businesses and the Provident Mutual Life Association. There were beautiful churches, a hospital, drug stores, a hardware store, grocery stores, barber shops, pool halls, funeral homes, lawyers, doctors, a dentist, social workers, and the Black Dispatch (which distributed papers to every state in the union but mainly served Texas, Arkansas, Kansas and Oklahoma.)[3]

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[2] Black Dispatch, 25 December 1930.

[3] Ibid.

F. D.'s brother, Dr. E. C. Moon, Sr., his wife Vivian, and their three children -- Edward Crawford Moon, Jr., Vivian Pauletta Moon, and Inman Hale Moon (Named for Dr. Inman E. Page, whom both F. D. and his brother greatly admired) -- had moved to Oklahoma City in 1935. His sister, Ietta Moon, was teaching home economics in the Oklahoma City separate school system.[4]

The School System

The Oklahoma City separate school system was involved in a reorganization plan mandated by a new Board of Education, causing one of the most extensive shake-ups in its history. In a special session of the new Board, 14 of the 152 separate school teachers in the city were dropped from the "active list." Reemployment was deferred on 12 teachers; ten were sent letters questioning their qualifications to teach in the system based on their residential and marital status. Three teachers who were fired the previous year by the old Board were rehired.[5] Such actions prompted F. D. to comment:

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[4]Dr. E. C. Moon, Jr., interwiew held 3100 Forest Park Terrace, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 7 December 1977.

[5]Black Dispatch, 10 June 1939.

The school board's rule in regard to the residence of city teachers was that they must live in Oklahoma City or environs, but if the said husband of the teacher is living elsewhere and does not maintain a home in Oklahoma City the teacher's legal residence was declared to be wherever the husband resides. Ibid.

> I had no thoughts of coming to Oklahoma City. As old timers know, Oklahoma City schools in the '30's had reached a low ebb. At least two of the members of the Board of Education went to the penitentiary. If one didn't go, he was convicted and maybe through various delays didn't go . . . the charges of selling jobs, and the corruption of the Board of Education was widespread.[6]

F. D. replaced Charles O. Rogers (1935-40) as principal of Douglass[7] and was named chairman of the Oklahoma City black principals. However, the Black Dispatch explained the disposition of the Board to the public:

> Principal Moon would not assume his full duties in this capacity this year due to the crowded program in connection with his new position. But he will serve as administrator for the elementary schools and will be a medium through which all problems will be carried directly to Superintendent Wrinkle. He will not be responsible, however, for the instructional department of elementary schools, as that will come under the duties of Mrs. Lucy Winslett.[8]

The Douglass Junior-Senior High School was located at 600 North High, a new site since 1934. The $300,000 building, located in the heart of the thickly populated black community, had thirty-five classrooms, an auditorium, and a gymnasium. The reorganization of the separate schools in Oklahoma City under Superintendent Wrinkle for the 1940-41 school year resulted in forty-five teachers, three clerks, and four custodians comprising the Douglass Junior and Senior

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[6] F. D. Moon, taped interview, 11 April 1972.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Black Dispatch, 27 July 1940.

High School personnel.[9]

Establishing the School Norms

F. D. Moon was formally introduced to his staff along with Herbert E. Wrinkle at a program held at the Douglass High School auditorium and sponsored by the Oklahoma City Association of Colored Teachers. Professor W. C. Sneed, president of the OANT, was master of ceremonies for the occasion. Local school board members present were J. Riley Richards, Roy Turner, David McKowan, Edd Hisel, and Warren Edwards, president of the Board.[10]

Superintendent Wrinkle introduced F. D.:

> I want you to know that I am interested in the welfare of the separate schools, in perfecting the organization of schools, with Mr. Moon as head. I believe Oklahoma City has the best schoolman in the state. I hope when you meet these children each day you will be physically fit, mentally optimistic and enthusiastic in your work, for you must realize that each child is an individual problem and you should know what solution is best for them.[11]

F. D. was greeted by his staff with the singing of "When the Moon Comes Over the Mountain." In speaking to the staff, he said:

> Since I have been in this present position, I have been called by teachers who stated they feared the school board was about to dismiss them and others, who openly voiced fear of the loss of their positions in the school system. But I say to you now, if the teachers of Oklahoma City are freed from political dominance, we will build for you a

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[9] Black Dispatch, 8 February 1941.

[10] Black Dispatch, 7 September 1940.

[11] Ibid.

> school system on the Eastside of which you can be justly proud. I truly believe we have a School Board dedicated to that purpose.[12]

Long before becoming principal at Douglass, F. D. had learned to pray for divine guidance in making decisions. The problems confronting him in the Oklahoma City separate schools included job selling and graft involving the old Oklahoma City School Board. Most black teachers of Oklahoma and even members of the new Board were not sure conditions could be changed. But F. D. believed "God takes a hand in the every day affairs of men of faith and good will."[13]

From the beginning of his tenure as principal F. D. made a rule at Douglass that when there was an assembly in the school everyone must attend. Teachers were expected to go with their students to the assembly in which teachers and students participated in spiritual and cultural strengthening.[14] According to Maurice Benefee:

> F. D. was one of the most powerful believers in God that you've ever seen. If you were a devout atheist, you'd have to change if you worked for F. D. Moon. He was inspired by the image of Inman Page. He started school here spiritually. I don't care how you'd criticize, there was an assembly everybody went to. He read the scripture and he offered extemporaneous prayer, and the thing he asked of the Lord was to direct us in all our doings, that we may do the best job HE would have us do for

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[12] Ibid.

[13] The Oklahoma City Times, 2 March 1955.

[14] Maurice Benefee, interview held 1117 Carverdale Drive, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 17 August 1975.

> Your Children. If you went there to play, you changed. You changed in about the second year because you couldn't stand it when you realized what he was teaching you.[15]

Within one month after the school year began F. D. had organized a Teacher's Study Club. This club provided opportunities for teachers to keep abreast of the latest professional methods.[16]

Maurice Benefee observed:

> I've said many times that he forced many of us to be quality teachers and I'm proud of it. As I look back over it, it was hard at the time because no one had attempted it before. Of course, I think I really appreciated him more after seeing the things that he forced us to do. It was forced, but it was fair. What he did, he appealed to your better judgment. You had reasonable quality, and when he got through you could see things more clearly. I've talked to many people who have since passed who've said: 'Yes, I went to school and I've received a Bachelor's Degree, and I've received a Master's Degree, but really none of that was of much value until I met and worked with F. D.Moon.' Moon used the most intelligent approaches you ever saw. You just wouldn't believe how he could motivate people. He did it with pure common sense. . .[17]

F. D.'s use of common sense can be illustrated through the following example. The 1940-41 Douglass football team (the Trojans) played under two handicaps -- graduation of several outstanding players and the ineligibility of key players. F. D. encouraged the coaches to play only students who were scholastically eligible throughout the year, and not to allow academically low-achieving students to even work out with the team. Instead of placing emphasis

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[15]Ibid.

[16]Black Dispatch, 12 October 1940.

[17]Maurice Benefee, interview, 17 August 1975.

on winning at all costs, emphasis was placed on producing scholar athletes. The Trojans won only three of eight games during the season. This caused negative discussions among the Trojan fans. At the end of the season, F. D. responded: "As principal of Douglass High School, I wish to take this opportunity of conveying our graditude tc the citizens of Oklahoma City for the generous support and cooperation given our football team during the football season. We hope to warrant continued support and confidence."[18]

Ultimately the new program paid off. In 1945 the Trojans, under the leadership of Coach V. E. McCain, completed the second of two of the most successful years in the history of the school. For the second consecutive year the Trojans had won the state championship in football, going through an undefeated season against Tulsa, Muskogee, Wewoka and Ardmore. They also won from teams outside the state such as Terrill High of Ft. Worth, Lincoln High of Dallas, and Booker T. Washington of Wichita Falls, Texas.[19]

Often during faculty meetings F. D. led discussions on various subjects. The first year of his tenure and many times thereafter, he stressed: First, discipline should be impersonal and understood by the student. Second, the penalty should be adjusted according to the offense. Third, one should be certain of the guilt of the

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[18]Black Dispatch, 28 December 1940.

[19]Black Dispatch, 26 May 1945.

student. Fourth, primarily the teacher must be responsible for the discipline in his class. Fifth, a knowledge of the psychology of the adolescent is essential on the part of the teacher to handle discipline problems.[20]

In terms of students and teachers, there were no favorites.[21] F. D. was fair with the teachers but firm; teachers were expected to accept the responsibilities of their job. When teachers did not do this, they were called into his office. He tried never to embarrass a teacher. For these and other reasons, he had a great influence on his staff.[22] "This was difficult at first because the staff didn't like that kind of control. They soon learned to like him, but they didn't at first."[23] When he was ready to discuss a matter with a teacher, he or she was called into the office and he would close the door. Moses F. Miller recalled:

> He did this to me on several occasions. I appreciated it later. I didn't like it too much at that time. For example, we had what we called a varsity football team and, of course, we had the reserve football team which were fellows who weren't quite good enough to make the varsity team. So, we'd set up two schedules. We had different dressing rooms for the teams. One of the coaches took the reserve team to Guthrie to play on Thursday night. In the meantime, the varsity team played a game on Friday night. Sometime Saturday

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[20] Black Dispatch, 14 December 1940.

[21] Maurice Benefee, interview, 17 August 1975.

[22] Moses F. Miller, interview held 2800 Northeast 18, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 6 August 1975.

[23] Maurice Benefee, interview, 17 August 1975.

evidently, Dr. Moon went down to the stadium, as he would do from time to time, just looking over the things which he was custodian of as principal. And of course, he went down to what we called the reserve boys' dressing room. Helmets, pants, blocking pads and the like were strewn all over the area. On the other hand, the varsity dressing room was spic and span. After the game Friday night, I wouldn't leave until I saw that it was clean. But Dr. Moon went down there sometime Saturday or Sunday and checked it and found the varsity team's room O.K., but the other one was in disarray. Monday morning, he called for me to come to the office before school started. He said, 'Mr. Miller, I went down to the stadium.' I guess he said Saturday, 'and that Junior varsity dressing room is in terrible disarray with high priced football equipment scattered all over that floor.' And I said, 'Well, yeah, but Mr. Sharp is the Junior Varsity Coach.' He said, 'You are the Director of Athletics. You are responsible for the whole athletic program. I'm not holding Mr. Sharp responsible. He is working directly under you. You see that these things don't happen again, and if you can't do it as Director of Athletics, I'll get somebody who will.' He was dead right. That taught me a lesson. Even though someone else is working in a subordinate position to you, you've got to delegate the authority to him and see that he does it. Then you've done your job. I learned that lesson.[24]

F. D., on the other hand, gave this account:

I tried. I was pretty strict. I kept students so they were respectful and everything. Of course, I liked them, and that has a great deal to do with it. You've got to care about people. If you are highhanded . . . I don't know that that would turn out so well . . . . But I was firm but fair, gentle and yet persistent in trying to get them where they could see the point and, therefore, I imagine that's what counts.[25]

School Activities and Projects

During the first year F. D. contacted George Ragland, president

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[24]Moses F. Miller, interview, 6 August 1975.

[25]F. D. Moon, interview held 1314 Northeast 8th Street, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 7 August 1975.

of the Parents Teachers Association, and developed plans for the year's activities. The Hi-Y, sponsored by Bert V. Wadkins, published a "snappy weekly publication" which reported news of Douglass School. The Douglass Athletic Association worked toward sending the Douglass School Band and Bugle Corp (under the direction of Mrs. Zelia N. Breaux) to Memphis for the football game between Douglass and Memphis. A new cosmetology department was organized and a correspondence study project and commercial cookery were added to the school curriculum.[26]

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[26] Black Dispatch, 12 October; 23 November, 1940.

Mrs. Zelia N. Breaux began her teaching career at Langston University in 1898 when her father, Dr. Inman E. Page, began his tenure as the first president of CA&NU. She was the head of the music department of CA&NU from 1898 to 1918 when she resigned to become head of the music department of Douglass Junior and Senior High School, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and supervisor of music for all the separate schools of the city. She continued in this position for a period of thirty years, retiring at the close of the school year 1948.

Mrs. Breaux is remembered throughout Oklahoma and the Southwest as an outstanding musician, civic leader, and a friend and contributor to the well-being of black youth. In fact, during her fifty years of service at Langston University and in Oklahoma City she made many contributions: The band which she directed while at Langston had great influence in increasing the enrollment of Langston's CA&NU by attracting students from throughout the Southwest in such large numbers that the State of Oklahoma placed a tuition fee upon out-of-state students. Oklahoma City's separate schools were nationally recognized for the strength of its black schools and achievements, due largely to the leadership of Mrs. Breaux. In 1918, she organized the first black orchestra in the State of Oklahoma; in 1923, she organized the first Drum and Bugle Corps; and in 1936, she directed the organization of the first junior high school band in the State of Oklahoma among black schools. F. D. Moon, "Zelia N. Breaux Passes," 1959, F. D. Moon papers, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

The new cosmetology department was said to be the only one of its kind amoung black schools in Oklahoma. More than two thousand dollars of equipment for the department was purchased by the Oklahoma City Board of Education. The equipment included one permanent wave machine, a condensing lamp, three shampoo boards, and two all-occasional chairs. The students were taught to give spiral waves, croquignoles, shampoos, facials, and pedicures. Nila Jewell and Bernice Jenkins were hired as instructors for this program.[27]

The correspondence study project at Douglass was established through the Work Projects Administration and the Correspondence Study Department of the University of Oklahoma. This program provided an opportunity for students to complete their high school education through the University of Oklahoma. The program was supervised by accredited teachers under the sponsorship of the school. The supervisor for the program was Lemuel H. Harkey, a product of Douglass High School and a 1933 graduate of Langston University.[28]

Vocational courses available through the above mentioned project were acetylene, welding, radio operation and repair, motor mechanics, carpentry, mechanical drawing, aeronautics, meterology, and the operation and repair of gas engines. Training was also

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[27] Black Dispatch, 23 November 1940.

[28] Black Dispatch, 8 February 1941.

provided in bookkeeping, junior business training, commercial law, business correspondence, vocational mathmatics, typing, shorthand, and foreign language. These were in addition to commercial cookery, clothing, barbering, typing, and auto and shoe repair taught within the regular courses of the school. Trades and industries were also stressed in the Douglass regular curriculum. Many of the courses were acceptable for college entrance credits and all met the needs of the country.[29] All were under H. F. Rusch, director of vocational education.[30]

This vocational emphasis did not mean that F. D. had abandoned his liberal arts interest. He explained:

> I didn't necessarily change my mind. But at Douglass there was a larger student body, with different areas of interest . . . . You had to provide a variety of interests to meet the needs of the children. So, I wasn't changing, it was necessary . . . students have different interests and you must have something to meet those needs. You take some students, if you place them in a purely academic type of education, they won't succeed. But if you put him in one of an industrial type where he can do with his hands, and do it successfully, that's fine. But if you get him where he's got to read books he won't do it, and you can't deprive him because of the inability to read - - so give him what he can do. The real interest is providing the best students who can succeed in life, and one will succeed one way, and the other another way.[31]

A demonstration of the students' desire to learn vocations

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[29] Ibid.

[30] Black Dispatch, 31 May 1941

[31] F. D. Moon, interview, 7 August 1975.

and the establishment of vocational education at Douglass culminated in parental approval.

> Parents who long ago held the theory that their children would learn nothing at school realized that if the child did not learn, it was no fault of the teachers nor the school. For with the interest now placed on industrial education, Douglass is equipped to get the needed information and assistance to help the youth find his place in life.[32]

Visitors to open houses were treated to vocational activities, including commercial cookery, taught by Zelma Harper, where students passed out dainty hot rolls and other samples of foods. Actual demonstrations were given in preparing foods for hotels, cafeterias and other public places. A class in foods, taught by Mable E. Brown, was on display and students passed out recipes to their guests. Clothing students, taught by Mrs. Garvis Ricks, styled formals and other articles of clothing. Shoe repair displays by students, taught by C. C. Server, included shoes that were repaired and made by Douglass students. Auto repair classes displayed a car painted by the students. Demonstrations were held in physical education -- boys and girls enacted routines of daily class work. These students were under the direction of Miss E. M. Jones, Lola Pierre, Inman A. Breaux, and Kermit King. Art classes taught by Margaret Dabney, exhibited works in printing, lettering, designing, metal works, sketching, woodwork, clay modeling and book

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[32] Black Dispatch, 31 May 1941.

binding.[33]

During the 1940-41 school year, a misunderstanding involving students' participation in public dances caused much concern by parents. Parents thought that the Douglass faculty was sponsoring dances in undesirable places. This concern led F. D. to write an open letter to the public:

> I have been informed that many parents are of the opinion that the school sponsors such dances. This is not true. Douglass High School has not sponsored these dances, has no official connection with them, and receives no part of the proceeds coming from such activities. Now and then, a social may be promoted by a school organization, but these are invitational and carry the name of the school who has promoted the same.
>
> Even though the school has no connection with these socials, I am of the opinion that parents should take steps to provide the necessary social recreation for the Negro youth in Oklahoma City. In many schools of the State, socials are permitted in the school gymnasium under the supervision of the regular authorities, thus affording the best protection to our boys and girls.
>
> For the most part, our young people will be encouraged in this type of social recreation in spite of our personal attitude with reference to it. Therefore, it seems advisable that it should be provided for under the most wholesome conditions.[34]

In yet another issue, with regards to students' attendance at school, F. D. cautioned:

> We have a great many absences on Friday of each week. The same continues on Monday quite often. Notice of this regulation is being called to the attention of the parents in order that there will be an understanding of failures which come as a result of pupils not attending classes at least

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[33] Ibid.

[34] Black Dispatch, 21 December 1940.

> eighty per cent of the time. We hope to have our students attend as nearly 100 per cent of the time as possible. It is well known that there is a close correlation between average daily attendance and the number of pupils who pass.
>
> I should like to call your attention to the necessity of having students in school of mornings on time. It is a distinct handicap to students that they should form a habit of being late in coming to school. Classes begin at 8:30 in the morning and classes close at 3:45 in the evening.[35]

Although many positive things occurred during F. D.'s first year at Douglass, all was not sweetness and success. According to F. D.:

> The general situation . . . was quite depressive . . . In fact, I decided that I needed a night watchman for certain situations I knew were prevailing in . . . Douglass High School. I wanted to get someone as night watchman there for sixty days. How that leaked out? I presume it was because it was during the depression. There must have been a half dozen people who were trying to get that job. Members of the Board of Education were calling in saying; why don't you take this one and that. More than one time I wished I'd stayed in Wewoka because I never had had all that kind of interference about jobs.[36]

In addition, F. D. did not escape the pressure of those wanting to sell jobs.

> There was a minister here during my first year, and I shall never forget him. He was a well educated man, but he wanted to peddle jobs; he wanted to use me as an instrument for that purpose. He'd come to my office as sometimes I worked late hours. People soon learn your habits, and he'd come in after five, and have this person or that he wanted on. Most of them had been living in Oklahoma. I knew them fairly well and they didn't offer very much promise of competence. So, I didn't do what he wanted done. The first year was a

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[35] Ibid.

[36] F. D. Moon, taped interview, 11 April 1972.

> trying year, and I was as determined as Daniel in the Bible was when he was in a strange place, he wouldn't defile himself. I resolved under the pressure of this minister who was extremely smart, that I was not going to defile myself by engaging in any sell-outs or that sort of thing.
>
> At one of our churches, St. John Baptist Church in the month of May, at the installation of the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance, this same minister was there. At the close of the meeting he followed me to my car. He got in the car, and he said to me: 'I have worked with you delligently this year to try to get you to cooperate, and you have not. I've seen "the list" for next year.' In those earlier days they talked about "the list," who's on "the list" for next year. 'I'm sorry, Brother Moon, you're not on it.' I said to him: 'Now you and I have talked a great deal this year, but you've never become acquainted with me. There are certain things I stand for. I stand for those principles . . . and I think if I do that . . . that is, 'Do right as I see the right, be just and fair to everybody whether they be of high estate or low, and work hard. That's the philosophy by which I live. Now if that doesn't work in Oklahoma City, you tell them to go ahead and fire me because I have no intentions of changing. But, I think somewhere in the world that philosphy will work. He said, 'I didn't mean to be impertinent,' and I said, 'Neither do I, but since we've talked so much this year, I want you to really understand me from this day forward.' He never bothered me anymore.[37]

In 1941 there were ninety-eight graduates of Douglass High School. The commencement exercises opened with an invocation by Father Gustane A. Caution, vicar of the Church of the Redeemer. The Douglass High School chorus, under the direction of Zelia M. Breaux, provided the music. Warren Edwards, president of the Board of Education of Oklahoma City, presented diplomas to the graduates and George R. Ragland, president of the Douglass Parent and Teachers

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[37] Ibid.

Association, presented the organization's award.[38]

Platform guests represented black educators from Oklahoma City and surrounding areas: William Glover, L. R. Kirkpatrick, F. R. Tillman, D. G. Harden, Gellamar Harrison, H. G. Kinson, E. T. Busby, Alfonso Jordan, E. M. Watson, J. W. Sanford, James West, Ora C. Johnson, L. A. Hill, W. G. Sneed, L. L. McGee, Pearl Jones, Edna Hobbs, Professor A. M. Salone , W. H. McCane, Zelia M. Breaux, E. U. Byrd, Mrs. N. L. McMahon, H. J. Hendricks, K. C. King, Mrs. Bert V. Watkins, H. P. Greer and Mrs. L. L. Wiley.[39]

At the end of F. D.'s first year as principal of Douglass High School, several school-community projects had been completed. Community and business firms had cooperated in projects sponsored by the senior class, and F. D. wrote to the editor of the Black Dispatch:

> Accept this letter as an expresssion of appreciation on behalf of Douglass High School for the favorable publicity given in the last week's issue of the Black Dispatch.
>
> The carrying of our graduating class without charge to the school is highly appreciated. We hope to continue the very friendly relationship existing between your very outstanding publication and our public school.
>
> I wish it were possible to convey our best wishes to the different firms contributing to making the publication of the picture of our seniors possible. The members of the class were quite happy over the courtesy shown them.[40]

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[38] Black Dispatch, 31 May 1941.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Black Dispatch, 14 June 1941.

In an open statement to the community he said:

> At the close of my first year . . . in Oklahoma City schools I would like to take this method to express on behalf of Douglass High School our appreciation for the cooperation received from the entire community.
>
> We have been helped in many ways through the wholesome contacts made during the course of the current year. We shall spare no effort in doing our best to solve the many intricate problems of our community, in such a way as to promote the interests of Negro youth and the community in general. In this we invite suggestions and constructive criticism. May we all join forces to promote a pleasant and better community life.[41]

Organization of Girl Scout Troops

In the summer of 1941, F. D. called a meeting at Douglass Junior-Senior High School in room 309 to cormulate plans for organizing Girl Scout troops for blacks in Oklahoma City. The organization of the troops was instituted for the purpose of giving social guidance and recreation to girls. The meeting was initiated after a conference held with Ruth Fredricks, Executive Secretary of Girl Scouting, and Miss Floretta McNeese, Co-ordinator of Secondary Education.[42]

During the meeting a steering committee was named: F. D. Moon, chairman; Pearl Jones, secretary; Augusta P. Morgan; Elizabeth White; Mrs. Cleo McCain; Walter G. Snned, vice-chairman, A. M. Tompkins; Mrs. D. H. Johnson, and Father C. A. Roach, Through the efforts of the steering committee Girl Scout

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[41] Black Dispatch, 31 May 1941.

[42] Black Dispatch, 22 April 1944, 13 January 1945.

troops were formed at Douglass High School during F. D. Moon's second year as principal.[43]

The Second School Year

During the 1941-42 school year, F. D. appeared on the Oklahoma City School of the Air, a radio program sponsored by KOMA. He reported:

> Douglass High School is a six year institution including grades from seven to twelve. It has a staff consisting of forty-five teachers, three clerks, four custodians and a health department of three full time employees. The annual enrollment is approximately 1,100. Also, Douglass High School is one of the three high schools for Negroes in Oklahoma accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. The other two high schools are in Tulsa and Wewoka.[44]

F. D. discussed the crowded condition at the Douglass School:

> Although our plant is well constructed, it is terribly overcrowded. Although we have forty-five instructors most of whom teach five classes daily, we only have thirty-two standard classrooms. The average room utility of a school plant ranges from 70 per cent to 80 per cent. The room utility at Douglass is 99 per cent plus. This means that there is only one period in the school day when there is a single, unused room. If possible, our room utility exceeds 100 per cent if we take into account that French class is taught in a room built for an office and that several social science classes meet in the living room of the foods department, depriving girls of practice in this area. Study halls must be held in the auditorium and several classes meet in the balcony of the auditorium.
>
> Last semester it became necessary to hold one study hall in the woodwork shop during instruction. Several classes in national defense, including welding and aircraft and sheet

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[43] Black Dispatch, 13 January 1945, For information on F. D. Moon's contribution to Girl Scouts in Oklahoma City, See Appendix A.

[44] Black Dispatch, 27 December 1941.

> metal, have been approved. To find room to carry on these classes is very difficult.
>
> To aid in national defense and to relieve this over crowded situation, the Board of Education has applied to the division of Public Works in Defense, for approval of a vocational school. This project entitled, Oklahoma 34-158 Vocational School - Colored, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, has been approved by the District Office in Kansas City, Missouri, and is now up for final approval in the Central Office in Washington. A letter or telegram to our senate or representative at Washington urging approval of the project would enhance greatly our educational opportunities in Oklahoma City besides promoting our national defense program.[45]

According to Neil Pierce, the project entitled "Oklahoma 34-158 Vocational School Colored Oklahoma City, Oklahoma," was approved by the district office of Kansas City, Missouri, with final approval from the central office in Washington.[46]

> By 1946 until August 1952, veterans were taught vocational and academic subjects at Douglass High School. G. M. Dodson was one of the first instructors. Later Neil Pierce was hired to head the vocational program for veterans.
>
> Brick masonry, upholstery; carpentry, cabinet making, auto mechanics, electrical engineering, radio, barbering, and tailoring were taught. Academic subjects included English, mathematics, and social studies under the instruction of Elva Cooper, Francis Jackson, Alice Kornegay and Sidney Sanders.
>
> This program was established under two laws. The laws were Pl-16 for disabled veterans and PL-346 for able bodied veterans with completed services or duties.[47]

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[45] Ibid.

[46] Neil Pierce, interview held 2601 Northeast 17th Street, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 27 June 1977.

[47] Ibid.

During the radio broadcast, F. D. further stated:

> Members of the Douglass faculty have attended and hold Bachelors and advanced degrees from leading universities of America. Practically all instructors are teaching in their fields of major preparation. Did you know that our school makes adequate preparation for college bound pupils without forgetting the needs of the much larger group of the pupils not planning to go beyond high school? Between 40 to 45 per cent of our graduates enter college, although many of them drop out before graduation. With the great increase in the population of the secondary schools, occasioned with the rise of popularity of education during the last three or four decades, a high school with functional philosophy must not be concerned alone with the welfare of college preparatory students. Therefore, we are also interested in programs for the educationally neglected, and the hundreds of students who drop out before finishing high school.[48]

In discussing the needs of students who may drop out as well as those who would not attend college, F. D. said:

> Five courses -- namely, beauty culture for girls, restaurant service and management, vocational auto mechanics, metalwork and vocational agricultural -- have been initiated. Household maid and butler service were established previously. In our course in restaurant service and management, boys and girls are using the cafeteria as a laboratory for practice three hours each day. Some of these boys are available after school, on weekends and during holidays for service to restaurants, hotels and private homes. The commercial cookery school requires two years to complete the course. One of the most popular as well as profitable is our course in beauty culture. The equipment provided by the Board of Education is among the best. Girls in these courses learn at least three trades, which may mean a source of an honest living, and enhance their own personalities. These students are registered with the State Board of Cosmetology and after completing 1,000 clock hours, are issued certificates by the State Department of Vocational Education and an operator's license by the State Board of Cosmetology permitting them to work in or operate a shop. These girls are being trained in giving manicures, facials, permanent waves, pedicures and other phases of

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[48] Black Dispatch, 27 December 1941.

cosmetology.[49]

F. D. drew attention to other new courses initiated during the 1941-42 school year:

> Vocational auto mechanics offered for the first time this year meets three hours daily and requires two years to complete the course. Boys are trained in automotive techniques and such welding as may be incidental to the needs of the trade. Vocational agriculture providing training in poultry, horiculture and landscape gardening is a new course primarily for boys. One of the most useful among the terminal courses is that of mill work for boys. This class has made tables and glass encasements for the cosmetology department, tables for the cafeteria and numerous pieces of furniture such as cedar chests and tables. Our vocational course includes general metal, shoe repairing, laundry, barbering and general courses in food and clothing.[50]

Students of the Douglass Senior High School were already providing domestic services and filling positions in business establishments through their bureau of employment. Service of students in school was secured through the principal's office.

The extra-curricular program of the school included football, basketball, track, band, orchestra, chorus, numerous clubs, pep squad, students forum and student patrol. The student patrol, similar to those designed by the police was like the Kiwanis Club. The band, under the direction of Zelia N. Breaux, was nationally known. The art department had trained several commercial sign painters. The library contained approximately 5,000 volumes

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[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid.

and had an average daily circulation of between 260 and 270 books. The public address system used for football games was built and installed by shop students under the direction of the Industrial Arts Department. A school paper was published weekly by the Hi-Y. F. D., along with his staff members, defined their philosophy and function of education to be "the training of youth in good citizenship and an appreciation of the democratic way of life."[51]

Accepting the ideology of good citizens, both the students and staff pledged their fair share in national drives and supported the National Defense Program. The central office purchased defense saving stamps and sold them to students through their respective homerooms. Also, all Boy Scouts over fifteen years of age were organized and the guidance program in the school was strengthened. A course in education and vocational guidance was required of all ninth grade pupils.[52]

In an effort to provide better guidance, periodic school-community studies were conducted. The surveys included: (1) Job distribution of drop-out students, including occupations of all parents of students attending the school. (2) A study of Douglass High School graduates from 1937 through 1941. (3) A study of colleges attended by the school's graduates. (4) A study of the number of

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[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid.

churches, dance halls, night clubs, pool halls, theaters, and amusement centers in the community. (5) A survey study of the trade opportunities for black youth.[53]

The results of the surveys as reported by F. D. showed that by 1941:

> Students dropping out between the eighth and twelfth grades seemed to present an opportunity for a part-time diversified occupation program at Douglass. The graduate survey showed that a very small per cent of the students entering college remain the full four years. Therefore, more consideration should be given the group in regard to trade and industrial education. The greatest number of dropouts came between the eighth and tenth grades. Therefore, vocational training opportunities should be made by the school to take care of this condition. . . . .To the successful termination of these responsibilities to modern youth, to the promotion of our community's well-being and the preservation of the ideals of democracy and the American way of life, the lives of the personnel of Douglass High School are dedicated.[54]

F. D. conceived the idea that Douglass High School should serve as a laboratory for training students in the way of democracy. In line with this goal, the faculty of Douglass approved the organization of a student council in 1941. In formulating the plans for the organization, the school faculty compiled lists of the weaknesses and the strengths of such a student organization. With this information they concluded: (1) the student council at Douglass would not serve as a controlling agent, but as a

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[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid.

participating organization, and (2) it would have no authority to discipline, administer, or act as an administrative agency. The student council was placed under the direction of three faculty advisors, whose duties were to guide the students in the democratic processes through school participation in various activities.[55]

The school activities were numerous and appealed to varied interests of boys and girls. One of the activities was in the Lost and Found Department of the school. Student council members were on duty at booths located on the main floor of the school to receive lost articles. Their duty was to record the articles received and store them in an appointed place to be returned to owners upon request. "Students could be seen at different times of the day calling upon the representatives of the Lost and Found Department to turn in or inquire of lost items. It brings much happiness to students who have lost something of importance. Sometimes it results in tears turning to grins on the part of a lad who expects punishment from parents at home because of the loss of something of worth."[56]

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[55] Black Dispatch, 15 April 1954.

[56] Ibid.

During World War II, the student council was in charge of war bonds and stamps sales. They sold thousands of dollars worth of bonds and stamps.

During the year 1942-43 these students received from the general fund $40 to be used as a revolving fund in the purchasing and sales of stamps and bonds. At the end of the year, after having

In 1942 F. D. encouraged Douglass students and faculty members to delve into studies about blacks and their accomplishments. These activities were not only noticeable with Negro History Week activities[57] but also during appropriate times of the year. According to Maurice Benefee:

> I guess we could call it the 'black revolution.' He inpired us to learn a little bit more about black history. I shall never forget it. Not only in our classrooms but in general, in assemblies, and various presentations that he would make.

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sold approximately $2,000 worth of stamps and bonds at the booth reserved for this purpose, the students were only 75 cents short on the original $40 given for a revolving fund. They were too proud to permit the general fund of Douglass High School to lose this 75 cents so the committee put in the 75 cents, thus returning the entire $40 set up as a revolving fund. This year their sales have been even more remarkable. They handled the Fourth War Loan and Bond sale at Douglass which ran into the thousands of dollars. Black Dispatch, 19 February 1944.

[57] Black Dispatch, 10 January 1942.

"Carter G. Woodson conceived 'Negro History Week' as a period in which the contributions of blacks to the development of civilization would be sufficiently emphasized to impress blacks as well as whites. The Association for the Study of Negro Life and History studied scientifically all aspects of the black man in America and abroad.

The society publishes magazines, does research in black history, directs studies of clubs and schools, promotes the home study of blacks by mail, produces texts on blacks for schools and colleges, collects and preserves the valuable documents of black history and supplies libraries with special collections of rare books on the black man.

In 1926 the Association began the celebration of 'Negro History Week.' This was made an occasion for public exercises inviting special attention to the achievements of blacks. The thought emerged from the mind of the founder with the cooperation of ministers, teachers, professional and businessmen throughout the country. The celebration proved to be an unusual success." John Hope Franklin, From Slavery to Freedom: A History of Negro Americans, 3rd ed., rev. and enl. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1967), p. 545. Also Black Dispatch, 26 September 1929.

> And as I look back over it, that was a very smart move, because we never had enough black history, and he mentioned that. We never had a real opportunity for publications because we didn't have publishing houses. We didn't have a great number of authors, therefore we couldn't produce materials that should have been written. We didn't have control of the publishing houses, so how could we get it done?[58]

In 1942 F. D. was appointed state director for the Study of Negro Life and History affecting Douglass High School and all separate schools of Oklahoma. His concerns for the need of black history was expressed at the time:

> This story, so replete with events of real worth, has been largely excluded from current histories and unless Negro scholars delve into the archive of history and bring forth to the world the facts relative to Negroes, our youth will grow up with an inferiority complex.
>
> Negro youth should know that his is a glorious heritage. Much has been said about Greek civilization and the superiority of Greek culture. But it is interesting to note the extended character of the civilization which developed before the time of the Greek, and by which the Greek culture was largely influenced. Greek civilization was the fruit of Egyptian civilization and Ethiopian civilization.
>
> The discovery of iron which terminated the Age of Stone and ushered in the Age of Metal, is an African achievement . .
>
> . . . It is believed by many authorities that Hammurabi, who was King of Babylon about 2200 B.C., was a Negro. If this is true, and there seems little reason to doubt, then it was a Negro who gave the world its first great code of laws. This code can be seen today engraved on a great shaft of basalt. Stated in this code are many ideas of right and wrong which have come down to us.
>
> The story of these achievements of black people has not been revealed very fully to Negro youth. Consequently, the

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[58]Maurice Benefee, interview, 6 August 1975.

feelings of being inferior and nobody's children has grown apace.[59]

The observance of National Negro Health Week first occurred under F. D.'s principalship in the 1941-42 school year. Usually this activity included first aid demonstrations and joint assemblies for both junior and senior high school students. Films and presentations by authorities on health education constituted the week's activity. This observance was in keeping with Booker T. Washington's belief that "head, heart, and health education" made for more effective and wholesome living conditions for black people.[60]

In 1942 Douglass High School's Health and Physical Education Department, under the direction of Kermit C. King, director of Health and Physical Education Department, stressed "community

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[59] Black Dispatch, 21 February 1942.

During F. D. Moon's tenure as State Director of Negro Life and History, Oklahoma ranked second in the nation in support of the National Association. Black Dispatch, 15 January 1955. For F. D. Moon's contributions in Oklahoma as director of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History Association. See Appendix B.

[60] Black Dispatch, 4 April 1942.

"In 1914, the annual Tuskegee Negro Conference considered the conservation of Negro health. It was here for the first time that Dr. Washington proposed that a definite time be set aside which should be known as Health Improvement Week. He believed that more and more in the future we must emphasize not sickness and death, but health and life. Observance of this week comes during the first week of April and serves as a memorial of its founder, Booker T. Washington, who was born on April 5." Ibid.

preparedness." This was due in part to the fact that the school had a shocking experience in 1941 when organizaing its cosmetology program. Only seven out of twenty girls passed the Wassermann test. At least ten students were needed to begin the program. Douglass and the citizens of the black community joined in a drive to stamp out venereal diseases.[61]

During the 1941-42 school year, F. D. initiated a $1,000 beautification program to enhance the physical appearance of the school grounds at Douglass Junior-Senior High School. This was done through the schools own initiative and without cost to the Board of Education. The senior class of 1942, co-sponsoring this program, left a memorial for the benefit of future students of Douglass High School and presented a $170 check to Superintendent Wrinkle in a general assembly at the school. The presentation was made by Joseph Brown, president of the Senior Class. The money was to be used for purchasing shrubbery to be planted along the Fifth Street side of the school. Upon receiving the gift, Superintendent Wrinkle pledged the support of the Board of Education in seeing to

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[61] Ibid.

By 1946 thousands in the black community were given blood tests for syphilis and gonorrhea within a 45 day period at Douglass. The program was considered by F. D. as a symbal of an aroused social consciousness of the community and a program initiated to preserve life and contributing to the improved family happiness in seeing to it that children were born healthy. Black Dispatch, 6 April 1946.

it that the purposes for which the class had given these funds would be carried out. In addition to the check for $170, the class of 1942 purchased one hundred pillows for use at the Douglass school's stadium at a cost of approximately $30, making their total gift $200.[62]

The activities of the class of 1942 set a trend for other senior classes in Douglass High School. This trend existed throughout F. D.'s principalship and became known as the memorial contribution or the Senior Class Project. Class gifts to the school -community were financed by monies raised in concessions at basketball and football games. Each memorial contribution was different, ranging from scholarships to funds for the purchasing of caps and gowns to a memorial contribution of $1,200 for YWCA-YMCA fund.[63]

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[62] Black Dispatch, 27 December 1941; 40 May 1942.

[63] Lola Alexander, interview held 1311 Northeast 7th Street, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 2 February 1976. Also Black Dispatch, 4 June 1949; 18 March 1944.

In 1949, F. D. served as chairman of the Executive Committee for the community branch YMCA drive. E. K. Gaylord, editor of the Daily Oklahoman, was central chairman for the Y drive. This was a joint effort for YMCA-YWCA $1,250,000 building improvement fund, a project started in 1947.

During the campaign for $1,500,000 in 1947, $1,250,000 was set aside for the building of a new YMCA for whites,and $250,000 was designated for the black YMCA. By 1949, $1,000,000 was needed to adequately complete these two projects. The black community's goal was $30,000 of the $250,000 drive to be used to build a new YMCA for blacks.

By July 1949, the YMCA purchased eight lots at 606-620 North East 4th Street to erect a modern YMCA building for black boys and girls. The building committee consisted of: Dr. W. H. Slaughter, chairman, Earl Miller, George R. Ragland, George T. Ferguson, A. D.

F. D. explained:

> In 1943, our problem of renting caps and gowns was solved. We now own them, thanks to that class. We rent them each year to graduation classes . . . . Money raised in the rental of caps and gowns is used to give a scholarship to a member of the senior class, winner of the most useful citizen award. If not, then the money goes to the valedictorian.[64]

At the end of the 1941-42 school year, F. D. expressed to the public:

> As principal of Douglass High School, I wish to take this method of extending graditude to the community for the generous support given to Douglass during the school year 1941-42. We have closed our second year as your principal. During this time we have learned to appreciate more and more the high type of parents, civic organizations, students and general citizens represented in Oklahoma City.
>
> A fair measure of success has attended our way. We are no longer plagued with financial deficits in our school accounts. Our debts are paid, with bank balances in most accounts.
>
> We are at peace and in harmony with churches, Chamber of Commerce, and other civic groups. More teachers are contributing and holding membership in the Chamber of Commerce than usual.
>
> Many reports come that student discipline has improved at school. Our senior class left a class memorial of $200, accummulated by hard work, the intial step in a $1,000 beautification program.
>
> For two successive years principals and teachers in the separate schools have been elected at the same time as other instructors of Oklahoma City schools. This has not always been true. Instructors and other members of the staff are chosen through regular school officials in the open. Again

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Mathues, W. J. Edwards and Dr. J. M. Littlepage. Black Dispatch, 2 April; 14 May; 4 June; 23 July 1949.

[64] Black Dispatch, 18 March 1944.

there is a feeling of security among school employees, knowing that their position depends upon only two things; namely, faithful service and loyalty to our youth. Your support (the public) has made this possible. We thank you and repledge our best for Oklahoma City.[65]

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[65]Black Dispatch, 30 May 1942.

CHAPTER VII

DOUGLASS HIGH SCHOOL IN OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA

1942-1945

Principal Moon Speaks

Between 1942-44 school years there were forty-seven teachers in Douglass, three clerks, a doctor, a dentist, a nurse, two attendance officers, four custodians, and more than one thousand students.[1] F. D. expanded his interests within the community and the State of Oklahoma. In addition items appeared in the Black Dispatch entitled "Principal Moon Speaks." The items included interviews F. D. held with Douglass students, excerpts from speeches made by him to Douglass students, reports to parents and his observations of blacks and their accomplishments. For example, an article written by student Mozella Jackson quoted an address given by F. D. during a general assembly at Douglass:

> Everywhere youth in the teenage is faced with confusion. The war is on. The government is talking in terms of a 10,000,000 man army. Friends and relatives are being called to the Colors every day.
>
> People in authority are talking about dropping the draft age to 18 and 19 year old boys. The Navy is advertising for 17 year old volunteers. Women and girls are being trained in national defense to take the place of young men called to the

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[1] Black Dispatch, 19 December 1944.

Colors.

All this and more adds to the confusion. The problem with young people is, 'What shall I do in the time of such uncertainty?'

History has to answer the problem of modern youth. In our own country the present war marks the seventeenth occasion in which we have been involved involved in a major war. The total number of war years in our entire history has been approximately seventeen, not including the present emergency. The length of our national existence is now in its one hundred and sixty-second year. No more than approximately 10 per cent of our national existence has been concerned with our conditions.

This face of history should suggest that youth should pursue his education until the very minute his country calls. Much of youth's education procedure should continue to be for normal conditions which are devoid of the fact of war. The most of life will probably be concerned with peacetime conditions, at any rate the schools themselves are making many of the adjustments necessary to wartime conditions, so youth will find some sort of shoe for his walk.

Parents should see this thing through in its true light. There should be no let down on the part of youth themselves, nor in the insistence of their parents that their children go to school now as ever before.

This defeatist attitude on both the part of parents and youth is contributing to the delinquency and future illiteracy of Negro youth.

Too many, I fear, are allowing mushroom prosperity of the parents to allow their children to go off and secure 'blind alley jobs', to rob them of their rightful privilege of being educated. Just as in the time of peace one should prepare for war, so in time of war one must also prepare for living in the days when peace again covers our beloved land.

Education of today is geared to meet the ends of both war and peace. Youth must remain in school to achieve the fruits of both. . .[2]

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[2]Mozella J. Jackson, "Principal Moon Speaks," Black Dispatch, 26 September 1942.

In another article, Mozella Jackson quoted F. D.:

Years ago a white urchin passing through the Negro section of a southern city and seeing little or no shrubbery or grass upon the yards remarked, 'Grass won't grow in darkies' yards.' This remark coupled with the thought of many others of his race has proven a challenge to the students of Douglass High School. They set out to do something about it. First, they were persuaded to stay off the barren grounds lying on the Fifth Street side of Douglass High School and let the grass grow. Since then sufficient fertilizer has been added to assure permanent growth on the site. Sixty loads of rich humus were added last summer.

More than anybody else, the senior class of 1942 did something to refute the assertion that outside beauty takes wings and flies away when black people move in. This class refused to waste its money upon such a fruitless effort as an annual. They accepted the responsibility of taking the lead in adding outside color and beauty to the grounds of Douglass High School.

Beginning at the northeast corner of Douglass High School and extending southwest to the southwest corner and then surrounding the entire south side of the building to a point immediately east of the auditorium, a beautiful array of phitzer junipers, albia ponderosa pines and pyracantha, cherry laurals, and other types of greenery and shrubbery, added beautifully to the outdoor environment of the campus. As the result of hard earned savings of the class of 1942, coupled with the economic mind through the cooperation of the officials of the Board of Education, the contribution of the class amounts to $300.64 in retail value. The classes' actual contribution to the purpose was $170, but since it was their contribution which made possible the purchase of more than $300 worth of evergreens and shrubbery, the community will gladly commend them and give credit for the same.

This matter of beautification is still incomplete, however. The northside and the eastside of the campus are not commensurate in beauty with other portions. I believe that the Negro Chamber of Commerce, sororities, fraternities and various clubs of our city will join in helping to complete this program of beautification.

Benjamin Franklin said, 'God helps those who help themselves.' Since we have gone so far in this direction will not the

general public join hands to refute the challenge implied in the remark, 'Grass will not grow on darkies' yards.[3]

In recognition of "Arbor Day", a statewide celebration was observed each year by state schools of Oklahoma, F. D. advised:

> March 13 will be celebrated this year as Arbor Day. A state law requires that every school take part in the recognition of Arbor Day.
>
> No law should be required, however, to bring about a wholesome observance of this event. Few things are more significant, promote genuine enthusiasm, and add greater meaning to life than the planting of a tree. He who plants a tree, plants hope. To bury an acorn beneath the earth and to wait its transformation into new life through the process of nature, to see it burst through earth's crusts and flower into a full grown plant, one experiences hope and acquires knowledge, and sees before his very eyes the confirmation of immortality.
>
> He who plants a tree, or a shrub, or a flower, plants peace and tranquility. Years ago, when I first became principal of a small school, at Christmas boys and girls joined me in planting trees. In the years that have intervened, those trees have become full grown and spread their leafy boughs to make the environment about the little school very inviting.
>
> Now at the close of a very hard grind, the school children and teachers recreate their images while sitting beneath the shade of these trees. Often when I return to the scene of my beginning in school work, although my name appears upon the cornerstone of the brick building, I turn first to see and repose in the shadows of those emblems of peace and tranquility. . . . In the words of Oliver Wendell Holmes, 'Why plant a more wholesome and happier dwelling place for those who come after us, if not for ourselves.'[4]

In challenging students to acquire an education through hard

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[3]Mozella J. Jackson, "Principal Moon Speaks," Black Dispatch, 14 November 1942.

[4]Tommie Lou Spears, "Principal F. D. Moon Speaks: Arbor Day", Black Dispatch, 14 March 1942.

work, and cautioning parents to accept this effort, F. D. made this challenge:

> 'I am going to have to educate you boys so you won't have to work.' This was a remark of a parent to his child in an early stage in the period of acquiring an education. 'I cannot continue to go to school because I want to stop and work so I can buy some new clothes.' This was a remark of a girl dropping out of school before completing her high school education. 'I don't want to take typewriting; the teacher makes you work too hard.' Here you have an explanation of a student looking for something easy. 'I guess I can't take the NYA student aid job, Mr. Blake, if I have to report for work at 8 o'clock in the morning. I just can't get up that early. I have to sleep.' Here you have the comment of a boy who asks for an NYA job.
>
> These statements reflect the attitude of not all but of many Negro youths and sometimes of our adults as well. I make a great many commencement addresses but never fail to tell parents to cease telling their children that they are to be given an education so that they will not have to work.
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> During the administration of the late E. W. Marland, I was a member of a committee which called on the Governor as he was leaving his office. It was about 5:30 in the evening. The committee was received courteously by the Chief Executive but after discovering the importance of the matter which brought the committee to his office the governor remarked, 'Gentlemen, the matter you have in mind will call for fully one hour of discussion. Won't you come back another day, I'm dog tired.' He was tired. His care worn face told the story all too plainly. If the governor was tired of a hard day's work, what about the rest of us?
>
> Parents stop telling your children that 'I'm going to educate you boys or girls so you won't have to work.' Education should teach you to work more efficiently but none the less harder.
>
> There is also a challenge to you in each of the other remarks. The girl who quit school to buy clothes is following the lead of a blind alley. The boy who couldn't accept the NYA job because reporting at 8 o'clock was too early, is too sleepy-headed to go places in life. He did not want a job, he wanted money. All of these things and more represent a challenge for

> Negro youth and often mark the distance between what the world calls, 'Success and Failure.'[5]

During the fall of 1942, Etta Moten, black concert, stage, radio and screen performer, was guest artist at Douglass High School. This was a combined effort of community organizations and the school. The audience was composed of both blacks and whites. The occasion was in keeping with a trend set by F. D. Moon in the 1940-41 school year when Douglass High School presented Rowena Savage in concert.[6] The effort was a continuous project during Moon's tenure at Douglass. Or as one teacher explained:

> It was common practice for us to have great educators, artists and authors for commencement exercises. They would give addresses and presentations. We haven't done anything like that since . . . we had great educators and presidents of universities . . . this was inspiring to students, because in those days students were saying: 'Oh, what's the use of doing this or that.' In those days students didn't get a chance, a few got through but it was miraculous that they did.[7]

F. D. always emphasized the importance of democracy to the progress of black people, yet he recognized the struggle of all people for human dignity. In discussing this issue he stated:

> The struggle for human liberty in America today finds itself involved in a terrific struggle to preserve the American way of life. World War I seems insignificant compared with the present conflict. Unfortunately American Negroes are compelled to measure many things in terms of race. Negroes would

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[5]Tommie Lou Spears, "Principal F. D. Moon Speaks: A Challenge," Black Dispatch, 25 April 1942.

[6]Black Dispatch, 16 November 1940; 24 January 1942.

[7]Maurice Benefee, interview held 1117 Carverdale Drive, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 17 August 1975.

be glad to forget but circumstances compel the continuance of this type of thinking.

Remember discrimination, ostracism, and other ways in which opportunity is denied to the people of color. They pause, hope, wonder and even ask whether or not today will be the end for the black folk. When the smoke of battle has cleared away, when the visable empire of bed sheets and pillow cases greet our returning heroes this time as it did in World War I, such phamtoms creeps upon the Negro's mind. A backward glance covering the long struggle for human liberty warrants the opinion that out of this struggle there will dawn a new day.

We have come a long way. Every evidence of this upward sweep may be seen in the contrast between Plato's philosophy of the masses and of the master-teacher's philosophy of, 'Whosoever will' doctrine. It may be seen in the modern freedom of an individual in contrast with the suppression of the middle ages. It is to be observed in the evolution which took place between the declaration of equality in man as set forth in the Declaration of Independence and of the emancipation of the Negroes as couched in the 13th Amendment in our federal constitution.

It may be noted in the transformation of black people from the rules imposed by the black codes of early reconstruction following the Civil War, and the proclamation of fair play and practice enunciated by President Roosevelt in the summer of 1941. We see it again in the difference in the verdict of the Supreme Court and the Dred Scott case of Congressman Arthur Mitchell. These and many other instances picture the long struggle of man for human liberty and the great heights reached as a result of the struggle.

The hope of the Negro lies on the side of democracy. He must be eternally vigilant to protect all the social gains made thus far and give everything to preserve the way of life that has made those gains possible. The unwholesome incidents referred to above are but markers of the way over which black men have come.

When I was a small boy I learned the stanza of a little rhyme, 'Little drops of water, little grains of sand, make the mighty ocean, and the pleasant land.' The truth and the philosophy of these lines are seen in the success of Etta Moten on Tuesday night, January 27, 1942. Seven hundred and fifty-eight people paid to see the program. By 7:30 people were finding

> their seats. It seems everyone enjoyed a great evening. Looking at the ushers dressed appropriately for the occasion, seeing the ladies and gentlemen in their evening apparel, and listening to the beautiful renditions of the great artist, made the evening indeed a pleasant one.
>
> Do you see why the success was possible? It was because many people worked together: a committee of the faculty, numerous clubs of the city, the Chamber of Commerce, the Negro press and its staff of reporters, many school organizations and individuals too numerous to mention. I was extremely happy, not because considerable money was being collected, for the guest artist received a very large portion of that. I was happy because many people acted in unison to do a great job well.[8]

Student Forums

Student forums were held each Wednesday for the high school students of Douglass. This provided an opportunity for students to discuss social, economic and political problems with the help of teacher guidance. In 1942 the student forums were sponsored by Miss Vita Melton, an instructor at Douglass High School.[9] The activities of the forums prompted one writer to comment on "Negro Loyalty to America."

> While schools all over the country were observing Armistice Day in programs of their own making, it is doubtful if any celebrated their anniversary with a finer and more sincere patriotism than the student body of Douglass High School in this city, led by principal, F. D. Moon. Love of country and reverance of God were expressed in song and in prayer, comments of the principal and student forum boys and girls of the senior

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[8]Tommie Lou Spears, "Our Principal Speaks," Black Dispatch, 7 February 1942.

[9]Mozella J. Jackson, "F. D. Moon Speaks," Black Dispatch, 21 November, 30 May 1942.

class offered their own proposals for developing loyalties to America.

> Uppermost in their hearts was their desire to be regarded as Americans rather than as Negroes, and next in line their ambition is to achieve educational opportunity, which unfortunately cannot be had in many communities. However long it may take, the Negro expects ultimately to attain such a quality of opportunity and such respect of his personality that will leave him without lower status than that of other average American citizens. . .[10]

The points brought out by Douglass students in their discussions about loyalty to America were commented on by the writer as follows:

> Every child in school should be taught the full value of democracy. Every student should be trained in the duties of citizenship. One girl student urged her classmates to read the newspaper thoughtfully, believing as she does that it is the duty of all to be well informed and acquire an intelligent attitude. Loyalty to the nation, declared another, is predicated on loyalty to self as a person of dignity and worth. Another spirited youth, a leader of the forum, urged his classmates to exercise self control to restrain their baser impluses, an effort necessary, as he saw it, to live in peace with one's fellowman. 'If we are to cultivate loyalties we should stop brooding over brutal acts committed against members of our race,' declared a girl in the group. Others urged loyalty to the Christian religion, still others exalted the idea of human brotherhood. As opposed to the American way of life, one student filed a complaint against communism saying it holds back the man who wants to advance, and another could not accept it because it leaves out God.
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> . . . The Douglass school students manifest poise and dignity. On a previous occasion that same group handled with exceptional skill the matter of sex education and the program of social hygiene, which is being promoted by the American Social Hygienic Association. It has also discussed the problem of

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[10]Edith J. Johnson, "Negro Loyalty to America," in Mozella J. Jackson, "F. D. Moon Speaks," Black Dispatch, 21 November 1942.

> heredity and the obligation of the citizens to improve the race. In fact no matters, social, economic, or political baffled these young people. Who, through free discussion and free exchange of opinion, are preparing themselves for the responsibility of American citizenship. . . .
>
> If at times the way seems hard to them, they remind themselves and each other, that gains are best made through patient effort. It is the genius of their race that in seasons of discouragement they still are guided by the stars of faith shining through the darkest night, for after all, the progress they have made is amazing. Where else in human history is there anything like it?[11]

The 1943-44 School Year

By the 1943-44 school year, Douglass High School had an enrollment of 1,061, an increase of 192 over the previous school year. Thirty-eight students lived outside Oklahoma City. The utilization of classrooms at Douglass was almost 100 per cent; thus there was hardly a single room to be found vacant during the day school. The curriculum at Douglass continued to be geared toward meeting individual educational needs of its pupils.[12]

School Curriculum and Activities

To meet the individual needs, Douglass's curriculum was comprised of academic or college preparatory, general education, industrial arts, and home economics. For pupils who would not finish high school, the curriculum provided several terminal courses. This enabled them to complete training in a field which prepared them for

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[11] Ibid.

[12] Black Dispatch, 18 March 1944.

a job without further study. Some examples of terminal courses were: cosmetology, commercial cookery, welding, barbering, cabinet making, shoe repair, auto mechanics, and metal work. To enrich discovered special interests of pupils and to provide opportunity for leadership training, Douglass carried out an intensive extra-curriculum program. F. D. stated: "I do not like the term but it is still used. This so called extra-curriculum program is as much a part of school as any other.[13] The extra-curriculum program included Girl Reserve, Girl Scouts, various athletics, the student council, student forum, guidance forum, junior police, student marshalls, Junior Red Cross, Hi-Y, and many other activities which aided students in finding their own interests and abilities. In addition, there were numerous student assemblies and plays.[14]

Another feature in 1944 were senior class projects and undergraduate activities. The junior class (Crusaders) and the tenth grade (Commandos) were quite active. "All of these activities provide opportunities for school leadership, promotes school spirit, and increasingly stimulated among students the love for 'Dear Old Douglass'".[15] According to F. D.:

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[13]Ernestine Spears, "An Interview with Principal Moon," Black Dispatch, 18 March 1944.

[14]Ibid.

[15]Ibid.

> . . . How well these students are giving vitality to other school programs may be seen in the facts surrounding the change in attendance at basketball games. As I understand it, there was a time when basketball was a losing proposition in our city. We have constantly appealed to our students and they have responded in such a magnificent way that during the state tournament conducted here last week our attendance and financial records surpassed any previous state tournaments, including Tulsa.[16]

Douglass' football team, under Coach McCain, completed one of its most successful seasons in 1944. The school won the second place trophy in the State Tournament and the third place trophy in the National Invitational Tournament in Kansas City, Missouri. Nathanial Taylor was selected as one of the members of the All American High School Team.[17]

Douglass competed in 26 basketball games during the year and lost only four. Three of these games were lost to Tulsa, state champions of basketball in the separate schools, and one to national champions Sumner High School of Kansas City, Missouri.[18]

Boy Scouts

In April 1944 F. D. accepted the chairmanship of the Leadership Training Committee for black Boy Scouts of Oklahoma City, and inturn strengthened the Boy Scouts program at Douglass.[19]

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[16] Ibid.

[17] Black Dispatch, 25 March 1944.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Black Dispatch, 29 April 1944.

F. D. gave as his reason for accepting the chairmanship as follows:

> Now, here in the situation. Everywhere is talk of juvenile delinquency and what our young people are coming to. Volumes are being written along the same line. Be it understood that I make no brief in defense of delinquency of youth. The young people with whom I am associated every day at Douglass High School know that I believe in high ideals. But now, seriously talking about the problem of delinquency does not solve the problem. We need leaders for our boys and girls .
>
> . . . First of all, the leader must have a high ideal and clean habits. A Boy Scout troop seeks the level of the scout master. If the scout master has high ideals, the scout troop tends to become the say way. The scout master needs to be enthusiastic, a real lover, a real friend and admired by the boys, and he needs to like activity. Good habits are taught to the Boy Scouts through action rather than too much moralizing. There was a time when I cooperated with the Boy Scout movement simply because I found prominent people in the community connected with the organization. It was simply my duty. But with the coming of an enthusiastic, wide awake scout master, I became enthusiastic as chairman of the troop committee.
>
> There are other things needed in a Boy Scout leader. He may not know all about scouting to begin with. In fact, he may not know anything about it, but in addition to the attributes already mentioned, he must be willing to learn himself . . . . The leader needs to have the ability to read and understand. The more trained he is the better provided he is to give the boys the right slant on life.[20]

State Question 314 and 316: Financial Relief for Douglass and other Separate Schools

During the 1944-45 school year F. D., like many black principals throughout the state, continued experiencing difficulty in housing an over capacitated school. Douglass with over a thousand students in a plant built to accommodate 900 students was

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[20] Ibid.

overcrowded, and the constitutional laws of the state in regards to the two mill levy yielded a residual effect of the Reconstruction years negatively affecting financial means to eradicate the problems. Clearly, a new strategy was needed for raising funds to build accommodating facilities for blacks.[21]

Furthermore, the difficulties presented black principals in securing money for adequate facilities were twofold: First, the two mills only provided for maintenance. Second, black educators experienced difficulties in securing enough votes to authorize bonds for building adequate school buildings, despite the legislative act of 1941 authorizing counties to finance separate school buildings by issuing County Separate School Improvement Bonds, when authorized by three-fifths of the votes cast upon the question submitted. This law had been discussed previously by black principals in a meeting at Douglass High School as early as 1940. The principals suggested several alternatives to relieve the difficulties derived from the law.[22]

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[21] Black Dispatch, 9 December 1944.

[22] See, Oklahoma, Twenty-First Biennial Report of the State Department of Education, 1946, p. 29.

"In December 21, 1940, black principals from various high schools over the state met at Douglass High School in the regular biennial session of the Oklahoma Association of Negro Principals to study methods of securing building funds for separate schools. The two mill levy for the support of black schools was for maintenance of the school only. It was pointed out during this meeting, the

However, in December 1944, four proposed amendments were issued for the people's consideration. One proposal provided free text books for all students of the state. The second proposal would decide a definite method by which money as appropriated by the state for the support of education in local school districts and counties was to be determined. These two amendments were to affect both separate black and majority white schools.[23]

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difficulty in securing money for building black schools is experienced because separate schools could not float bonds to be paid by taxpayers over a period of years as it was done in white schools. Black schools must depend on levies which must be paid by taxpayers in one year. Further, it was pointed out that a proposed levy for building a black school in Tulsa was defeated, because of the large property owner's objection to paying out a huge sum of money in one year. The proposal presented during the meeting by J. W. Sanford was that the legislature should pass a bill mandatory upon the excise board to levy five mills other than the original two mills for separate schools, including building funds to be repaid within five or ten years in counties where educational facilities were not equal. Another proposal by E. W. Woods was that black schools be placed among those institutions for which bonds could be voted. E. K. Weaver proposed minimum amounts to the legislation needed by the schools to be determined by an unbiased state planning board consisting of both blacks and whites and that the counties be assessed by the state tax assessors for the real taxable value to determine the ability of the county to pay the addition to the two mill levy, the amount needed to maintain the minimum school to be provided by the state.

Legislation centered around the above mentioned suggestions was proposed during the 1941 Legislature." Black Dispatch, 28 December 1940.

[23]Black Dispatch, 9 December 1944.

According to the State Department report: "Complying with the constitutional mandate that the schools for the two races shall be 'impartially maintained' . . . The state aid law, S. B. 14, S. L. 1941, makes no distinction between the district and the county separate schools with respect to teachers' salaries, length of school term, allowance for maintenance, and transportation of pupils. The state

The other two amendments proposed were in the form of State Questions 314 and 316. These state questions were of interest to majority (white) and separate (black) schools respectively. State Question 314 proposed an additional levy of five mills to the support of majority schools, while State Question 316 proposed an additional one mill for separate schools to be used for the acquiring of sites and erecting buildings with the right to equip and furnish the building.[24]

F. D. proposed that the black citizens of Oklahoma should support the proposed amendment to Article X Section 9 of the State constitution which provided: "that upon certification of the need therefore, by the governing board, an additional levy not to

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school inspector's visit and apply the same standards to both types of schools. The subjects taught in the schools for whites are also taught in the schools for Negros." See, Oklahoma, The Nineteenth Biennial Report of the State Department of Education of Oklahoma and The Sixteenth Report of the State Board of Education of Oklahoma, 1942, p. 39.

"The Free Textbook System of Oklahoma was established by Act of the Twenty-First Legislature and became effective July 1, 1948. The law was made possible through a proposed amendment to Section 6, Article XIII, Oklahoma Constitution, directing the Legislature to provide a system of free textbooks for use by all pupils in the common schools of the state, and requiring the Legislature to authorize the Governor to appoint a committee composed of active educators of the state, whose duty shall be to prepare official multiple textbook lists from which textbooks for use in such schools shall be selected by committees composed of active educators in the local school districts in a manner to be designated by the Legislature." See, Oklahoma, Twenty-Second Biennial Report of the State Department of Education, 1948, p. 154.

[24]Ibid.

exceed one (1) mill on the dollar valuation on any property within the county shall be levied by the excise board, the proceeds derived, therefrom to be used exclusively for the purchase of equipment, acquisition of sites, erection of buildings for separate schools for white and Negro children. . ."[25]

In pursuing the additional aid or restricted three mills offered by the State Question 316, F. D. gave the following considerations:

> For many years Negro schools have suffered because the 2 mills provided are inadequate to take care of current expenses and justify needs in the way of building and other capital expenses. The executive committee of the Oklahoma Association of Negro Teachers and the legislative committee of the OANT, prefer an additional mill, unrestricted. However, they know that an additional mill for acquiring sites, erecting buildings, and furnishings will go far in relieving a condition with which separate schools have suffered for twenty-five years.
>
> The legislative committee of the Oklahoma Association is now making a study to justify the additional mill unrestricted. In the event the facts justify it, the legislature will be asked to propose such an amendment. Be that as it may, while we have amendments being initiated now, Negroes must improve their lot and take no chance on waiting for the legislature. If the legislature should fail us, then Choctaw School in Oklahoma City must remain a shack and firetrap unless rebuilt at expense above the central needs of the Negro youth of Oklahoma City. Orchard Park School, Oklahoma City, must continue without an auditorium and cafeteria unless it be at the further reduction of the Negro teachers' salary. Booker T. Washington High School, Tulsa; Dunbar High School, Okmulgee; and Manuel Training High School, Muskogee, will have nothing to replace antiquated physical plants, nothing except the same old frustrated efforts of the last decade . . . no good can

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[25]Black Dispatch, 25 March 1944.

come of this . . .[26]

The proposed relief of the additional one mill for the separate schools by State Question 316 stimulated discontent among some blacks. While very few black leaders would have argued for the abandonment of State Question 316 there were those who did question it. For example, Roscoe Dunjee questioned the implications as set by the separation of the two State Questions. To him the two questions should have been combined. If not, it was considered by him as racial strategy. In addition, his resistance to State Question 316 was based on the fact that it was allowed with restrictions. This was very little if any difference from the current two mill levy generally interpreted by its spread to taxable properties.[27]

F. D. was immediately challenged by Roscoe Dungee:

> Moon says in his article the legislative committee of the Oklahoma Association of Negro Teachers is thinking of going to the legislature asking that body to grant an unrestricted 1 mill. This is at once an admission and a guide to what should be done. It is an admission that the legislative committee realizes that the proposed 1 mill is so restricted as to perhaps make it ineffective, and in most instances useless, to the separate schools. In fact, Professor Moon, when he appeared before the Oklahoma Education Association fought for an unrestricted 1 mill.
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> If we are going to build the Negro school plant up to the place where it should be, the 1 mill should be an outright grant which the excise board should levy. Professor Moon answers his own question. It would be far better to ask the

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[26]Black Dispatch, 9 December 1944.

[27]Ibid., Black Dispatch, 16 December 1944.

> legislature to initiate a bill giving an unrestricted 1 mill to Negro schools than to surrender our opportunity to a constitutional provision as proposed in the State Question 316, which will hamper the separate schools of this state for the next quarter of a century.
>
> This is a serious question. White schools already provide for 1 to 15 mills in the district. The white taxpayers voted this unmolested by excise boards. They now ask for an additional 5 mills making a total of 20 mills, but Negroes are bound to 2 mills, which they may or may not get.[28]

F. D. understood and was empathic to the opposition of the proposed program, but he asked, "Shall we discard the opportunity to get something done about conditions which have aggrevated Negro education for a quarter of a century? Or shall Negroes substitute the honor of opportunity, even if not perfect, with nothing but fault finding which offers nothing constructive to replace the shacks and outmoded buildings housing Negro youth in Oklahoma."[29]

In an effort to answer his own question, he continued:

> The only alternative is to get the best possible out of this proposed program now. Why ask that excise boards be authorized to approve the additional mill for buildings? If the people voted, the county would have to vote on the proposal. This is impracticable as has been shown in Tulsa County and Logan County. People at Edmond will not vote for a new building at Choctaw School in Oklahoma City. White citizens in Seminole will hardly vote for the erection of a Negro grade school in Wewoka, nor will Cromwell vote to erect a much needed building for Booker T. Washington at Seminole. Distance and lack of contact destroy the interest. . .[30]

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[28] Black Dispatch, 9 December 1944.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

After examining F. D.'s position, Dunjee reacted:

> Now that's the best argument we know of against State Question 316. Our suggestion is that if the proposal passed in its present form it will be of doubtful value. . . .Let's put it this way. What's the difference in principles? We'd be doing a county in a statewide levy. What would cause people to change their opinion in a state election from that the same person had in a county election? In Tulsa and Logan counties Mr. Moon agrees, that a county election was called to vote an extra mill for the support of Negro schools and voters went to the poll in droves and voted against it. This is the reason why . . . we argued good faith would have caused the Oklahoma Educational Association to tie State Question 314 to State Question 316 . . . We would have more confidence in good intentions of white voters had the two measures been tied together . . . We now have a situation where 200,000 Negroes labor in a statewide election for their mill, while 2,000,000 whites, who have already expressed their intentions in Tulsa and Logan counties, will have an opportunity to vote against the 200,000 Negroes . . .[31]

As to the statement that "distance and lack of contact destroys interest," Dunjee suggested:

> There are somewhere around thirty counties in the state where Negroes do not live. We wonder how those whites in a statewide election so 'distant and lacking in contact' with Negroes will vote in respect to State Question 314. Since Mr. Moon assumes, 'white citizens in Seminole would hardly vote for a Negro grade school in Wewoka, 'we wonder what Mr. Moon assumes the attitude would be of white people living in Harper and Negroes living in Pushmataha and McCurtain Counties . . . will be toward voting an extra mill. We think his argument is sound, although we realize he has never thought of its destructive application to his philosophy . . .[32]

In order to determine how excise boards over the state were voting two mills as allowed by the law for separate schools F. D.

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[31] Black Dispatch, 16 December 1944.

[32] Ibid.

asked the questions, Are excise boards now voting the two mill allowed by law for separate schools? This, he stated, was a sound question. What is the practice in counties where the black population is large -- where two mills are necessary to comply with the state constitutional provisions of separate but equal facilities? Do excise boards vote for two mills? F. D. then interjected:

> To aid the public in deciding, it needs to be understood that during the administration of Governor Murray a law was passed which provided that any money received by schools for income taxes should go to reduce the levy. Although this law was repealed several years ago, some money continues to come to schools in small amounts which were due in the period the law referred to was in effect. Any such money must still be used to reduce the levy, therefore, in any case where the excise board approves 1.93 to 1.98 mills one usually finds that 2 mills are allowed, the difference between the income tax money, which by law must be used to reduce the levy as passed during the Murray administration.[33]

In answer to the question posed, Do excise boards appropriate 2 mills? F. D. cautioned the public to keep in mind the explanation mentioned above. He was willing for the public to look at the records of several counties for the school years 1943-44 and 1944-45 in order that they could determine how Excise Boards were supporting the millage in counties named. This he did as shown in Table I, declaring that Excise Boards were approving the two mills.[34]

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[33] Black Dispatch, 9 December 1944.

[34] Ibid.

TABLE I

MILLAGE APPROVED BY THE EXCISE BOARD
FOR OKLAHOMA COUNTIES
1943-44 AND 1944-45

Counties	1943-44	1944-45
Oklahoma	1.991	1.9972
Tulsa	1.993	1.998
Okmulgee	1.996	1.99
Creek	1.998	1.994
Muskogee	1.997	1.992
Logan	2.1980	2.2940
Choctaw	2 mills	2 mills
McCurtain	1.989	1.992
Carter	2 mills	2.0387
MacIntosh	1.9641	1.997
Seminole	1.998	1.995
Okfuskee	1.999	1.971
Hughes	1.99	1.98
Pittsburgh	2 mills	2 mills
Atoka	2 mills	2 mills

Dunjee countered by citing Moon's article published in the Daily Oklahoman:

> Prior to running his article in the Oklahoman, a white daily that goes into the majority of the white homes in Oklahoma, Mr. Moon read his article in the Black Dispatch. In the article Mr. Moon lists thirteen counties where Mr. Moon alleges that the 2 mills are levied annually for Negro schools. . . .
>
> Although there are seventy-six counties in Oklahoma, we want to ask Mr. Moon if he was fair and just to the Negroes of the state when he leaves the impression that excise boards all over Oklahoma are doing what they are not doing. Mr. Moon knows that the county excise boards are doing better right now during the period of prosperity than they have ever done before by Negro schools. But even in prosperity would it not have done more for Negro education in Oklahoma if Mr. Moon had used the space he secured in the Oklahoman to expose what is going on in some of the neighborhood counties of the state?

> Would it not have done Negro education more good to have told the Daily Oklahoman that up in Wagoner County last year only 1-1/2 mills were allowed, and where the schools that are more black are mere shacks and the teachers poorly paid? Would it not have been better if the space in the Daily Oklahoman had been devoted to the story of 1.33 mills levied in Tillman County and, the fact that down in Bryan County only 1/2 mill was for many years the Negro schools' stipend?
>
> Instead of this, all of the white people who read the Moon story on the editorial page of the Daily Oklahoman will be duped with the thought that the white people are doing everything that is equitable and fair to the separate schools, and that Negroes approve of what is being done in the administration of the tax for education. Mr. Moon may have helped the Negro teacher in the big counties which he names in his article, but he has done irreparable damage to the backwoods school teacher. Paychecks are short and even now the snow is crunching through the cracks in the walls of the delapidated buildings.[35]

Dunjee continued his opposition of State Questions 314 and 316 based on the belief that State Question 314 should be tied to State Question 316, allowing the two questions to rise and fall together without restrictions. In the meantime Governor Robert S. Kerr's requested the Legislature to give the proposed amendments to the constitution serious study.[36]

Later, Dunjee contended that "the ease with which this measure recently slipped through the House of the Legislature indicates that there are subtle intentions to do something fundamental that does not appear on the surface."[37]

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[35] Black Dispatch, 16 December 1944.

[36] Black Dispatch, 13 January 1945.

[37] Black Dispatch, 12 May 1945.

In addition, he stated:

> A bill providing that districts may vote an extra mill for separate schools was introduced and slipped through both houses like glass. No one stopped to remember the bitter experience down in Tulsa County where under the existing statutes Negroes sought a county wide levy for the separate schools. All the whites voted against the measure and, of course, it simply meant that the proposed levy was snowed under, with a 10 to 1 vote. What reason is there to suppose that the white taxpayer in other districts will assume a different attitude. It should be obvious to the Negro taxpayer that his only salvation is to be found in a manatory law admitting no equivocations. Certainly the Negro educators need a little coaching in politics . . . There's a great deal of difference between a constitutional amendment and a legislative enactment . . . Negro educators were probably sold down the river. . .[38]

The amendment was submitted to the voters, and was adopted by a 195,597 margin.[39] In a general election November 5, 1946, initiative petition 226 was passed proposing an amendment to Section 9, Article X, of the State Constitution. This amendment provided that upon certification of the need by the governing board an additional levy not to exceed one (1) mill on the dollar valuation on any property within the county shall be levied by the excise board, the proceeds to be used exclusively for the acquisition of sites, and the erection of buildings for separate schools for white and Negro children. This petition carried by 97,578 votes.[40]

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[38] Ibid.

[39] Oklahoma, Twenty-First Biennial Report of the State Department of Education, 1946, p. 26.

[40] Oklahoma, Twenty-Third Biennial Report of the State Department of Education, 1950, p. 47.

CHAPTER VIII

DOUGLASS HIGH SCHOOL IN OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA 1945-1950

F. D. started the 1945-46 school year at Douglass by adding two innovations. First, he formally organized the Douglass Alumni Association.[1] Second, he added distributive education to the curriculum.

Distributive Education

The distributive courses at Douglass were under the supervision of the Board of Education. The program included vocational subjects organized for students engaged in merchandising activities in distributing products to consumers, retailers or wholesalers.[2] The purpose was to train out-of-school adults and students in the field of merchandising. Cooperative part-time classes were held for students sixteen years or older who desired such training.[3]

Students enrolled in distributive courses worked on an average of fifteen hours a week for at least thirty weeks a year on

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[1] Black Dispatch, 17 November 1945.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Oklahoma, Twenty-Third Biennial Report of the State Department of Education, 1950, p. 81.

distributive jobs. Each student's job served as laboratories where students gained on job training. Student supervision was under the direction of the teacher coordinator. Specifically, students had the opportunity to try out and put into practice the best selling and merchandising methods previously studied in the classroom. They received regular high school credits for their classroom work and supervised job experience.[4]

In 1945 there were fifteen Douglass students who enrolled in distributive courses. They were placed in training stations at local grocery stores, drug stores, beauty parlors, churches, and dinner clubs. Students learned something of the social adjustment and necessary selling skills required to give the best service to their employer.[5]

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[4]Ibid.

By 1949-50, the State Board of Vocational Education, Division of Distributive Education, consisted of: one state supervisor, one assistant state supervisor, one teacher trainer (employed on a one-half time basis), one itinerant instructor, one secretary and one typist.

The itinerant instructor was employed jointly by the State Board for Vocational Education and the Division of Commerce, Oklahoma A. and M. College. Nineteen itinerant instructors were employed jointly by the State Board for Vocational Education and the local school boards. These instructors in each instance were qualified in special fields of merchandising. Their duties consisted of helping to organize and teach classes for personnel employed in distributive occupations. Ibid. p. 85.

[5]Black Dispatch 17 November 1945.

The Dunbar Revolt

Early in the 1945-46 school year F. D.'s position as supervising principal for the city's black schools was questioned. The question arose in reaction to an editorial by Dunjee inquiring into the status of black educators in Oklahoma City. Dunjee had become convinced that the 1945-46 teacher's list was so conceived to make the coordinator of black schools, Miss Adelle Llewellyn, supervisor over the principals of the separate schools. This assertion had grave implications for F. D.'s status as supervising principal. While Superintendent H. B. Bruner denied the implication, fourteen Dunbar teachers appeared at the Board of Education with a petition declaring they wanted a man as supervising principal of the Dunbar School. Later at Dunbar School, Dr. Bruner indicated clearly that the supply of information and teacher contact with the Board of Education must come through Miss Llewellyn.[6]

It was not surprising that the principals of the separate schools of Oklahoma City sought clarification of Miss Llewellyn's duties, whether she had been given authority over the principals. Principals visited Dunjee in order to determine whether anyone in authority at the Board of Education had given out the controversial information appearing in his paper. Dunjee replied:

No one there gave me such information, but I can read diagrams

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[6] Black Dispatch, 8 September 1945.

> and graphs with understanding respecting interrelationships in the program. For instance, in the list of teachers prepared by the Board of Education, and I presume the outline was made by Dr. Bruner, Miss Llewellyn is placed at the top of the list. The principals follow, and then the classroom teachers. In the graph of the white instructors, the principal led out, then the classroom teachers, and the coordinators find their place at bottom, with the custodians, service and the office help. There is something strange about the printed page.[7]

The consequences surrounding the interpretation of the graph by Dunjee was partially explained when the question was raised by W. J. Edwards at a meeting called by the Oklahoma City School Board. The meeting was called by the Board to unfold plans for a $4,000,000 bond issue for both black and white schools to the executive committee of the Oklahoma City Negro Chamber of Commerce. In order to follow through on the plans an election was necessary for the black schools. This was due to the fact that the revenues for black separate schools were secured through a county-wide levy, while the white schools' fund were secured through a city-wide levy.[8]

Overall, the plan discussed during the meeting included a proposed bond issue of $595,484 for improvement of separate schools of the county. $329,500 was designated for a vocational technical school in Oklahoma City for the 10th through the 14th grades. The location of the new school as determined by Dr. Frank Hart, educational consultant, was the Washington Park site on N. E. 4th Street

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[7]Ibid.

[8]Black Dispatch, 22 September 1945.

where the Douglass Stadium stood. The plan also included the scrapping of the old Wheatly School site; $70,000 was allocated for additions to neighborhood schools including the Walnut Grove area; $51,704 was proposed for repairs and modernization for Douglass, Carber, Dunbar, Edwards, Orchard Park and Page.[9]

W. J. Edwards interrupted the discussion and tried to clarify the status of F. D. Moon. He stated. it had always been the rule in this city that the man principal of Douglass High School would serve as supervising principal of all the separate schools. Roy Turner, president of the Board of Education, asked Dr. Bruner, Superintendent of public schools to answer the question. Before Dr. Bruner could answer, George Ragland leaped to his feet and delivered a five minute eulogy of the school board and Dr. Bruner. Without answering the question, the discussion returned to the school bond, aborting an effort of the superintendent to explain F. D.'s status. Ragland's outburst delayed Dr. Bruner's discussion of the issue concerning F. D. but Roy Turner, board chairman, reopened the subject, stating that since the issue had been raised, he felt the superintendent should express his views. F. D. was then called upon to express his views:

> He pointed out that when he was elected his contract read that he was the Supervising Principal. He also stated that even up to this year that teachers applying for positions in the system were instructed to see him and that under the conditions he was forced to labor, he was many times

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[9]Ibid.

embrassed.[10]

The $700,000 Bond Issue 1945-1946

By November 1945 the Oklahoma City Board of Education took its first positive action towards floating the bond issue in the interest of separate black schools of the county. The bond issue was in the amount of $700,000 and included $380,000 for a new vocational technical school for blacks in Oklahoma City, $4,000,000 bond for majority white schools and a $15,000,000 bond for city improvement.[1]

Organization

In the interest of the $700,000 bond for separate schools of Oklahoma County, but more pointedly in the interet of a new high school in Oklahoma City, the Negro Chamber of Commerce organized a Citizens' Committee composed of the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance, members of the Housewives' League, and Thomas McNealy,

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[10] Ibid.

Shortly after "The Dunbar Revolt" involving inquiry of F. D.'s position as supervising principal of Oklahoma City separate schools, F. D. left for columbus, Ohio, to attend the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History. The meeting was sponsored by the Ohio Historical and Archaeological Society at Ohio State University. This meeting was inclusive with a three month exhibit of the black man in Ohio, the United States and Africa. F. D. delivered an address during the mass meeting of this occasion on Sunday, October the 28th, speaking on "The Fifth Freedom of the Negro." Black Dispatch, 13 October 1945.

[11] Black Dispatch, 24 November 1945.

head of the County Negro Democratic Association. F. D. was elected chairman of the executive committee of the citizens' committee to help direct the campaign. Despite the fact that black citizens volunteered their services a budget committee was formed to raise finances in order to defray incidental expenses for the campaign. In addition, a committee was appointed to request Superintendent Bruner and the school board members to relieve F. D. from his regular work as principal that he might organize the community, and register every qualified citizen to vote on the issues.[12]

Many black citizens were aroused as never before with regard to the school and road issues. Under the leadership of F. D. they marshalled their strengths. Street meetings were held with J. W. Sanford as Master of Ceremonies at the corners of 7th and Rhode Island, 4th and Laird, and West California and Ellison. The Douglass High School Band participated by giving concerts at 4th and Laird, 7th and Kellum and East Second Street. The Speaker's Bureau provided speakers for neighborhood gatherings and neighborhood street meetings.[13]

During the campaign F. D. advised the community:

> On December 4th, the citizens will make a momentous and far reaching decision; namely, should the schools for Negro youth move forward? The citizens of Tulsa were asked this question for their schools on November 20. What was their

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[12] Ibid.

[13] Black Dispatch, 1 December 1945.

answer? It was 'Yes' - and they voted $1,000,000 in bonds for their Negro youth.

On December 4th, the citizens of Oklahoma City and Oklahoma County will answer by deciding whether they will vote bonds of $700,000 for their children. In Tulsa County the bonds carried at a rate of three to one. We lost to Tulsa in football at a rate of two to one. Let's beat them voting on our bonds issue by putting ours over by the tune of four to one.

What will we get out of these bonds? Here is the answer. $380,000, site not included, will provide a new technical vocational high school to relieve the overcrowded conditions at Douglass High School where classes are now being held in the balcony of the auditorium, in the auditorium itself and in other areas, wholly unfitted and unplanned for classes.

If you doubt this, you should go up to Douglass and see for yourself, or ask your children. There are sixty classes at Douglass ranging in size from forty to sixty-four pupils. The North Central Association recommends that high school classes not exceed 30 pupils.

Although there are swimming pools in several white schools there is no swimming pool for Negroes in Oklahoma City. 'We have a few wading pools.' A number of lives have been lost because boys have drowned in the Canadian River and other places where they were trying to swim without supervision and without having been taught how to swim.

If you citizens say we can go forward on December 4th, you will remove this hazard and vote $60,000 for a swimming pool for Negro youth.

No inside toilets are provided at Sandtown; this brings shame upon a great city. There is no auditorium at Orchard Park. Page School has many needs including an enlarged auditorium. Dunbar is similar to Page.

With the influx of our citizens to Edwards Addition and to Carvodale, Edwards School needs more rooms. Two new schools costing $30,000 each will be located in Walnut Grove and Sandtown. All of these improvements rest upon the decision of the voters December 4.

The majority schools are to vote bonds in the sum of about

> $4,000,000. Should we support this issue too? Yes - leading white citizens are going down the line in support of our bonds. They did in Tulsa and they are doing it here. We need them and they need us. While Negroes are less than one-tenth of the population of Oklahoma City, we are to receive more than one-fifth of the bonds to be voted for Oklahoma City Schools.
>
> Of the $4,610,000 to be voted for all Oklahoma City schools, the Negro schools are to receive $560,000. Let us vote 'Yes' on the majority and separate school bonds on December 4.
>
> Wishing us well but staying at home on December 4 is another way to fail Negro youth at this decisive hour. Wishing us well, urging your friends and neighbors to vote, and above all vote yourself on December 4, is the answer to the challenge of the hour. Let us move forward.[14]

Roscoe Dunjee, editor of the Black Dispatch, gave full support to the bond issue stating that the bonds election should find every believer of justice and fair play at the polls voting for the $700,000 bond issue to improve the separate school structure of Oklahoma County. He stated further that:

> It should be kept in mind that there is another proposal that should receive the okay of the voters. Too often the Negro is inclined to serve the matters in which they feel a direct concern. Every Negro and white citizen in the county should be interested in this bond issue, although most Negroes will assume the greatest interest lies in the $700,000 proposal for Negro schools. The Negroes have direct concern in good roads and roads points to be voted . . .means Oklahoma County is going to march forward during the post war period as never before . . .[15]

While black citizens apparently portrayed a cooperative attitude toward the proposed bond issues, further positive implications

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[14]Ibid.

[15]Ibid.

of white citizens' attitude was recognizable through the efforts of H. B. Bruner, Superintendent of Oklahoma City Schools and the Board of Education, who had set up a plan of strategy which included cooperative participation on the part of teachers, parents and businessmen. A committee of leading citizens had accepted the cooperative program of improving financial support for education. Unquestionably, it seemed that the election of the school bonds was a challenge to both black and white communities.[16]

The challenge for the black community seemed obvious when J. W. Sanford declared, "This is one time when Negroes of the city should spend their own money, organize their own campaign and finance it with their own dollars."[17] As if in response to Sanford's declaration, the black community donated $1,200 above the requested amount of $1,000 by the budget committee. This marked the first campaign financed by blacks in the community's history.[18]

County Commissioner Peebly outlined the conditions of the separate schools in a public statement.

> The obligation of Oklahoma County to provide the facilities for the proper education of colored children residing in Oklahoma County has long been neglected. The colored population comprises more than ten per cent of the entire population of this county, and the school grounds, school buildings, and the school equipment are inferior in most areas to that of the majority schools.

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[16] Ibid.

[17] Black Dispatch, 24 November 1945.

[18] Black Dispatch, 1 December 1945.

> The separate school bond issue is in the sum of $700,000 and is designed to correct this inequality and to provide for the separate schools equal opportunity, to provide for the educational opportunity as well as the opportunity to learn trades and receive at least the fundamentals of technical training.
>
> The Luther separate school is in a bad state of repairs and is in urgent need of new equipment and repairs and modernization. The bond issue makes provisions for that.
>
> The same condition exists in the Dunbar School; Consolidated No. 5 at Arcadia; and at Harrison, district number 36; and Meridian, district number 32. The Choctaw Consolidated district number 4 is completely inadequate, insufficient in size to meet the demands and needs of modernization; dressing rooms and auditorium facilities, no classrooms in home economic and shop departments. All of this is provided in the bond issue for the Choctaw Consolidated, district number 4.
>
> The Board of Education of Oklahoma City has made an intensive survey of their building needs. Together with additional equipment and building repairs for Douglass, Carver, Dunbar, Edwards, Orchard Park and in the Page School in Oklahoma City. The survey and recommendation of the Oklahoma City Board provides for two new neighborhood schools to accommodate the colored population in the southern part of Oklahoma City. It also will provide for the purchasing for the site and construction of a completely new vocational technical school, which for many years has been badly needed, and could not be constructed during the war period. This will definitely be a part of the post war educational program in the separate schools . . .[19]

On December 4, 1945, the first county-wide election for separate schools in the history of Oklahoma County was held. The election determined the issues of the $700,000 bond issue, while at the same time approved a bond issue in the sum of over $4,000,000 for the majority white schools. Both majority and separate bonds carried by very large majorities as shown in Table II.[20]

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[19] Ibid.

[20] Black Dispatch, 8 December 1945.

TABLE II

RESULTS ON MAJORITY AND SEPARATE SCHOOL BOND ISSUE IN SEVEN BLACK PRECINCTS OF OKLAHOMA CITY, 1945

Precinct	Ward	Majority School		Separate School	
		Yes	No	Yes	No
5	2	96	6	108	4
7	2	198	7	147	7
8	2	200	5	204	4
12	2	153	1	153	1
14	2	157	1	160	1
21	2	136	1	143	0
16	3	143	1	145	1
Total		1,033	22	1,060	18

Source Note: In the seven all black precincts the climax of cooperative effort is shown in the vote on the separate and majority school bonds. The portion in support of the majority school bonds in seven all black precincts was in support of the bonds.

Thus, Oklahoma County became the second county to float improvement bonds for black separate schools in Oklahoma. Clearly, the improved legislative acts providing County Separate School Improvement Bonds had subsequently contributed to the dissemination of funds for building and improvement of black schools in Oklahoma County. [21]

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[21] See Oklahoma, Twenty-Fourth Biennial Report of the State Department of Education, 1952. p. 50

Curriculum, Activities and $120,000 Swimming Pool

By the 1947-48 school year Douglass faculty included Mr. Harlish V.Greer, vice-principal and 41 teachers. This was four less in comparison to the 45 teachers on the faculty during the second year of F. D.'s tenure as principal, but the curriculum and activities of the school continued to grow. In fact the curriculum at Douglass remained comprehensive with a few new innovations. For examples: The veterans' program comprised the largest enrollment of any separate school in the state. More than two hundred veterans enrolled in evening classes and two hundred more were on the waiting list. Several new members were added to the faculty in order to accommodate the instructional load. Distributive education had grown rapidly and F. D. hired a full time coordinator for the program. This was due in part to the positive responses of business establishments to the program. In addition an instructor for typing, shorthand and general business courses was added in order to strengthen the distributive program.[22]

During the 1947-48 school year, H. B. Bruner, Superintendent of the Oklahoma City schools, emphasized a unified subject program for the school system. This marked a tendency away from the

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[22]Black Dispatch, 30 August 1947.

narrow specialization which had been the custom of the Oklahoma City public schools for over twenty or twenty-five years. Unified subjects were based on the concept that an instructor who qualified in combination majors would function best in that combination. In 1947-48 Douglass offered fifteen unified subjects. Miss Nellie Douglass, a graduate of Douglass and Atlanta University, was employed as one of the instructors for the unified courses.[23]

By the 1949-50 school year, Douglass High School had an enrollment of approximately 1,400 students, with a school capacity for approximately 900 students and for all practical intent, the school was seriously overcrowded. In spite of these conditions however, students' activities were numerous and designed to provide opportunities for individual expression and participation. These activities included New Farmers of America, New Homemakers of America, and Future Business Leaders of America.[24]

In September 1949, F. D. along with Oklahoma City's Mayor Allen Street, representatives of the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance, the Oklahoma Negro Chamber of Commerce, and other community organizations dedicated a new $120,000 swimming pool at Douglass. It was the first swimming pool in the State of Oklahoma for black boys and girls. The dedication culminated the results

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[23]Ibid.

[24]Black Dispatch, 8 April 1950.

of the $700,000 bond drive in 1945. John Pearson, president of the Oklahoma City Schools, Charles A. Litton, chairman of the Board of County Commissioners and F. D. assisted in the dedication.[25]

During the 1949-1950 school year, F. D. included career conferences in the program of Douglass. The conferences were sponsored by the Guidance Department of Douglass High School. Mrs. S. A. Haywood and Cenoria Johnson, Executive Secretary of the Urban League, coordinated the conferences. Students were selected who had not chosen a trade, vocation or profession. About 90 girls qualified for the nursing session; 60 students chose music; 31 students chose medicine and six students enrolled in law sessions.[26]

Not all of the students were in the uncertain job classification. A total of 75 students were enrolled in brick laying, carpentry, commercial art and auto mechanics courses. Students enrolled in vocational courses were not expected to attend the career conferences.[27]

The first sessions of conferences included a general summary of possible jobs for black youths in Oklahoma. Otis Freeman of the United States employment service was utilized as one of the resource persons. Separate sessions were held on job classification

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[25] Black Dispatch, 17 September 1949.

[26] Oklahoma City Times, 30 March 1950.

[27] Ibid.

including brick masonry, carpentry, cabinet making, commercial art, cosmetology, commercial cookery, radio, law, medicine, plumbing, tailoring, barbering and music.[28]

In January 1950, the masonry classes of the Douglass vocational schoolwere started. The expressed purpose and objective of the course was to teach high school boys the skill and knowledge of useful trades, in order to prepare them for useful employment, increase their earning capacity and provide security and financial stability. In addition it was designed to help develop productive citizens and to prepare students for service to society.[29]

The masonry courses at Douglass consisted of 15 hours per week. Students were taught theory for about 30 minutes, and received a large percentage of practical experiences. For example, they constructed partitional walls in the vocational building at the fairground site, and completed projects at Douglass and white schools. After school hour jobs were available to the students. These included small jobs of brick or concrete block laying. One instructor explained that "such enriching experiences obtained from the class enabled the student to develop his manual skills, sharpen his intelligence, and to possess social, emotional, and economical

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[28] Ibid.

[29] Black Dispatch, 22 January 1954.

security."[30]

The Confusing Parley

In January 1950, F. D. along with members of the black community met with Dr. Chester Swanson, head of the vocational department of the Oklahoma City Public schools, to discuss the kind of vocational technical high school desired by blacks in Oklahoma City and which had been promised them since the 1945 bond issue.[31]

The account of this conference as reported by the Black Dispatch stated in part that:

> Dr. Chester Swanson, head of the vocational section in the Oklahoma City schools, was a very perplexed man last Thursday morning when he discovered the Negro committee called into conference had already made up its mind respecting the type and character of vocational technical high school desired in Oklahoma City.
>
> The unanimity of opinion among members of the committee, developed out of the fact that the committee had met Wednesday in the Urban League office and selected two spokemen in the persons of Reverend E. W. Perry and Mrs. Cernoria Johnson, who were instructed by a vote of the entire group to tell Dr. Swanson the Negroes in Oklahoma City want the same instruction and instructional equipment in the new vocational school being set up for them, as is to be found at present and hereafter in the white high schools of the city.
>
> The committee went further than this in instructing Rev. Perry and Mrs. Johnson. They were told to tell the representatives of the Oklahoma City Board, if after scouring the nation that they could not find competent and qualified Negroes to man these vocational and technical courses, the Negroes would be satisfied if white instructors were selected 'We are interested in the instruction and we don't care who teaches us,' said one of the committee members in the

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[30] Ibid.

[31] Black Dispatch, 7 January 1950.

Wednesday afternoon parley . . . [32]

While initiating the conference, Dr. Swanson stated:

> We have many financial problems and many limitations. We want to discuss these matters with the Negroes of the city. Education in part should give the child all of the culture of the ages and in addition provide the individual with some know - ledge to make him a success. The child should have around twelve years of high school work and a curriculum that fully meets his needs.
>
> Schools must train the child for the community. We are trying to match our training to job opportunities. . . . We cannot set up a training school where there are no occupational opportunities.[33]

Responding to Dr. Swanson's statement F. D. said:

> The committee felt that it should be determined what are the occupational opportunities in the area irrespective of race. . . . The courses at the Negro vocational center should be geared to total occupational opportunities, rather than to what might be characterized as Negro occupations. Many opportunities are being offered to Negroes in this area all over the U. S. . . . We feel in this program of integration we are getting better and better jobs.[34]

In view of the localized needs expressed by Dr. Swanson, Reverend Perry revealed: "I've reared quite a large family . . . . Most of them live outside Oklahoma. If I had educated them in Oklahoma City solely for such opportunities as this section offers, they would not today be holding the valuable positions they now possess. We would like to have the same courses at Douglass as you offer at

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[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid.

Central."[35]

During the course of the conference Mrs. Cernoria Johnson presented a printed schedule of white high schools, and read a list of vocations offered by the schools. In the process, she pointed out that Central High School, composed of white students, had a training schedule covering almost an entire page while Douglass High School's contracted courses were confined on a memographed sheet of only four lines. It was Mrs. Johnson feelings that black youths of the community, should be trained to fit any environment. In fact the census report presented by Mrs. Johnson indicated that the more educated an individual became the greater the degree of his mobility. To this point the black representative expressed that if the majority of the Negro children in Oklahoma City were going to live somewhere else, the needs of this future migrant should be anticipated and the program of the new vocational school should provide a program that would qualify the student to be effective whereever he went.[36]

Ruby Hall inquired about the new vocational high school promised blacks when the 1945 bond issue was voted.[37] But:

> Swanson, who had recently been annexed to the school system, quite evidently did not know about the delinquency of the

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[35]Ibid.

[36]Ibid.

[37]Ibid.

> school board along this line, and as he hesitated in quite evident embarrassment at Mrs. Hall's question, Principal Moon supplied information to Dr. Swanson, which was unquestionably and quite evidently illuminating to the vocational head. He said, however, several times, 'Professor Moon and I will get together and make these decisions.[38]

Later interpreting the conference as he observed it Editor Dunjee concluded:

> Dr. Swanson disclosed three different times during his talking with the Negro committee, that the school board only has $22,000 to invest in instructional equipment . . . . No trade school worthy of the name would seek to offer adequate training to youth with such limited funds. One might get along fairly well in a liberal arts school with a few books and a black board, but in a trade school the base of activities rests entirely in instructional equipment.
>
> In the daily paper quite recently appeared a news story showing the school board is going to spend almost twice this much for printing machinery alone for Central High. This sort of expenditure will be made in order to add to a printing unit where perhaps already $75,000 is invested . . . . The new purchase means the printing department at Central will have with its new order around $100,000 value.
>
> In the cabinet work, the machine shop has an outlay of some $60,000 and the sheet metal department is adequately and fully equipped. You can readily see that Central has a total of conservatively $200,000 invested in instructional equipment in its trade department.[39]

In comparing vocational courses between Douglass and those offered by Central, Dunjee emphasized:

> It might be wise to report what Douglass has that Central does not have: Central has no shoe repairing, no tailoring, no cosmetology, no agriculture, no commercial cooking, but Douglass

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[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid.

> at present has all these courses. Could it be that those that have charge of vocational education in Oklahoma have decided that these are the only fields in which Negroes can find community employment? Why offer these subject to Negroes and not white students? . . . [40]

Dr. Swanson disclosed during the conference that the new vocational trade school for blacks would be located at 10th and Eastern and would be open by January 15, 1950. Dunjee stated, "this was an overnight attempt to allege to have that which one does not have."[41] He added:

> We all recall the effort of the state some time ago to supply a law college for Ada Lois Sipuel over night. This trade school effort is an exact duplication. For instance, it would be physically impossible to install instructional equipment comparable with equipment at Central High in this extreme limited period, and in addition, it would be utterly impossible for the school board to secure a faculty for this school within fifteen days. There is serious doubt that a full Negro personnel can be recruited within the next twelve months .
>
> . . . You notice also there has been a change in the language employed. Up to quite recently we always referred to the new vocational technical high school, the latest report converts the former language into "vocational training center.' Now if you do not know the difference between the two . . . we will give information supplied by Dr. Swanson. . . .The Training Center will not be a high school at all, but will be a part time temporary vocational establishment, installed in the 4-H and FFA building . . . [42]

The data tended by Dunjee surrounding the conference supported the notion, by some, according to Dunjee, that the erection of the

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[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid.

promised new high school for blacks in Oklahoma City was being affected by time lapse and the manner in which the need was being administered. To this Dunjee added:

> Do you recall the Vocational Technical High School Oklahoma City promised several years ago and for which almost $400,000 was voted and set aside? Do you remember the blueprint of a beautiful structure which was to be built on the fairground site facing 10th Street, which outlined a broad street sweeping down from Eastern from about 9th Street? Well, just forget about the building as a reality in the immediate future. For the man charged by the Oklahoma City School Board for implementing the vocational program for Negroes in the Sooner capital, doesn't know a thing about any such structure. He got his first information when the principal of Douglass High School told him about the matter, now so vague in the mind of the school board they apparently haven't said anything to Dr. Swanson about it.
>
> We presumed across a period of time the State Fair would finally move to its new location in the western part of the city, despite the fact that progress at the new location is presently at a standstill. No development can be made without the floating of a huge bond issue.[43]

The $35,000 Bond Issue

It should probably be noted that during the early history of the black community in Oklahoma City, blacks purchased a large portion of land in the North Canadian bottom. Inclusive areas were Walnut Grove and Packing Town, commonly known as Sandtown. The lands, included areas East on 10th Street past the Edwards Addition, and were targets of the proposed $35,000 Bond Issue to construct a canal system, and road improvement. Many black businesses had turned

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[43] Ibid.

thumbs down on the bond issue because it would disturb the flow of traffic to their businesses. Obviously black members of the community were not aware of the proposed bond issue, and how it would effect their needs. Thus, the Negro Chamber of Commerce gave attention to the bond issue.[44]

In April 1950, the Negro Chamber of Commerce investigated the prospects of the $35,000 Bond Issue as it would affect the black community. A committee was formed composed of Jimmy Stewart, chairman, Earl Miller, W. M. Taylor, F. D. Moon, W. C. Price, and George Ragland. The Chamber's decision respecting the bond issue was based on the report of the committee. In addition, the committee consulted the Park Board concerning a report of a recreational center to be erected on the site of N. E. 4th Street and Eastern. The committee was instructed to stop the prevention of other business establishments in the mentioned area which was adjacent to the proposed new high school, and to ask stoppage of a reported recreational center project.[45]

Mr. Jimmy Stewart, chairman of the committee reported on Thursday, April 27, (signed by F. D. Moon, George Ragland, W. M. Taylor, Earl Miller, A. D. Mathues, W. C. Price and John Simmons) that as of the given date:

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[44]Black Dispatch, 15 April 1950.

[45]Black Dispatch, 22 April 1950.

> . . . The committee appointed by the Negro Chamber of Commerce has not completed their charge and I, as chairman, have not attended any meetings, or been advised of any official meeting of the Negro Chamber for the purpose of endorsing or rejecting the bond issue of May 9, 1950.
>
> The committee of which I am Chairman has had two meetings this week with the Greater City Committee and the Oklahoma City Park Board. Both of these meetings were highly successful and certainly beneficial toward the general welfare of all Oklahoma City.
>
> Until the information requested by this committee and promised by the two above named committees is made available and acted upon, the Oklahoma City Negro Chamber of Commerce could not intelligently say we are for or against the bond issue.[46]

By May 6, the bond issue committee appointed by the Negro Chamber of Commerce reported: "Practically everything that the committee requested had been considered and in most cases granted. The major items upon which an agreement was reached were extension of sanitary sewerage down Page Avenue from Northeast 16th to 10th Street to service Edwards School and join the new sewerage at Bryant."[47] The committee reported the expressed need for the bond to aid in the removal of the old fairgrounds on North East Tenth Street and Eastern to its new location in the west part of the city before the new black high school would be built. Likewise, the committee reported that the ultra modern park with a golf course, swimming pool, recreation center, tennis court and gymnasium requested for the black

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[46] Black Dispatch, 29 April 1950.

[47] Black Dispatch, 22 April, 6 May 1950.

community could not be built until the bond issue was voted.[48]

Taking into account the report of the bond issue committee the Oklahoma City Negro Chamber of Commerce endorsed the proposed $35,974 Bond Issue. Although the bond issue did not yield money toward building a new high school for blacks they reasoned that the proposed bond issue would insure inestimable increase in the value of the properties involved. Then too, within the proposed bond issue was an item covering the removal of the fairgrounds which would draw the time closer for building of the new vocational school for blacks.[49]

On May 9, the black community cast a positive vote for the city bond issue. Though the total vote electorate in Oklahoma City affirmed their approval for the $35,974 bond issue 4 to 1, the 10 black precincts voted 10 to 1. This indicated, according to the Black Dispatch that "the community voted two and one-half times more in favor of the improvement issue than their white neighbors,"[50] and carried the voting results as shown in Table III.[51]

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[48]Ibid.

[49]Black Dispatch, 15 April 1950.

[50]Black Dispatch, 3 May 1950.

[51]Ibid.

TABLE III

ELECTORATE VOTE OF THE 10 BLACK PRECINCTS ON THE

$35,974 BOND ISSUE IN OKLAHOMA CITY

MAY 9, 1950

Ward 2			Ward 3			Ward 4		
Precinct	For	Against	Precinct	For	Against	Precinct	For	Aainst
6	90	7	16	126	5	8	99	15
7	197	12						
8	166	10						
9	80	17						
12	109	28						
14	64	0						
27	110	9						
52	135	6		—	—		—	—
Total	951	89		126	5		99	15

Source Note: The vote in the black precincts showed some opposition to the bond issue. Precinct 14, Ward 2, voted 100% for the bond issue, while the total vote in three black wards affirmed their approval with precinct 52 in Edwards Addition allowing only 6 demurrers.

A Decade of Service

The end of the 1949-50 school year marked a decade since F. D. was elected principal of Oklahoma City's Douglass High School. He was third in tenure of previous principals, preceded in tenure by Inman Page, thirteen years, and J. H. A. Brazelton, twelve years. Since 1940 the school's bank balance was $19,997.56 more than the year when he accepted the position as principal of Douglass.[52]

Douglass Junior Senior High school was not only serving its students along with adult education but it was also the core of the community.[53] F. D. wrote:

> At Douglass we like to think of ourselves as a community school. Many community agencies utilize our school plant from Monday through Friday. Something begins at Douglass at 7:50 in the morning and continues until 9:30 p.m. These 7:50 in the morning activities include recreation in the gymnasium, voluntary reading in our library of approximately 5,500 volumes, or volunteer meetings of Junior Red Cross Council, the student council, and the junior high school band.
>
> On Saturday morning from 9 o'clock to 11:30, sixty or seventy of the Gray-Y boys from the elementary schools of the city have a great time in our gymnasium. They also have access to our new $125,000 swimming pool.
>
> On Tuesday and Thursday nights Douglass helps to meet the needs of mature men and women through its Adult Institute . . . grown men and women are taught tailoring, millinery, clothing, typewriting, shorthand, and art.
>
> On Mondays and Thursdays, 115 veterans and non-veterans are pursuing courses at the college level leading to a liberal arts degree at Langston University. This is known as

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[52] Black Dispatch, 17 June 1950.

[53] Black Dispatch, 8 April 1950.

> Langston University Extension Center. . . .The Douglass veterans' school began in the spring of 1946. At first it consisted of one class with one instructor. Since that time it has grown to its present size, consisting of twenty classes with a faculty of twenty-two teachers, one director and one clerk.
>
> Some of the results of this training may be seen from the following: When the carpentry class completed its course in August 1946, fourteen out of the eighteen students were doing carpentry work as their sole means of support. We now have twenty veterans whose entire income is derived from the building trades. In radio, several of the graduates have established businesses of their own. There are three employed at appliance stores. In upholstery, several men are engaged in upholstering furniture in their small home shops, and three men are working in upholstery shops here in Oklahoma City . . . . More than a year ago the tailoring department had made eighteen suits for men, sixty-four pairs of trousers, sixteen shirts and one overcoat.[54]

In 1950 Fordie E. Ross observed: "One thousand four hundred students and countless graduates hold abiding faith and deep adoration for Moon, who is now known as Dean of Educators."[55] In addition, his work within the community had marked measures of success. He was serving as vice-president of the Board of Management with the Urban League, chairman of the steering committee of black Girl Scouts, Chairman of the Committee of Management for the YMCA, and service with the Tabernacle Baptist Church.[56]

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[54]Ibid.

[55]Ibid.

[56]Ibid.

By 1950 a religious innovation of interdenominations was observed in Oklahoma City. F. D. aided in its origin. More specifically, "a religious movement, interracial in its character, was

At the close of the 1949-50 school year, F. D. publically expressed his philosophy for living to black youths of Oklahoma: "Do right as you see the right, be just and fair to everybody whether they be of high estate or low, whether they be black or white, and work hard . . . My whole advice to youth can be summed up in this quotation from the Holy Bible, Micah, the 6th chapter and the 8th verse, 'What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God'"[57]

In June 1950 F. D. reinforced his philosophy during an address for senior graduates of Booker T. Washington High School in

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launched by six Oklahomans in 1942. The American Baptists entered into an annual observance of simultaneous revivals. A religious spirit of brotherhood rapidly spread to revival programs of other denominations. This great spiritual renaisance was launched in the study of the Tabernacle Baptist Church in Oklahoma City, April 2, 1942. At which time Dr. E. W. Perry, vice-president of the National Baptist Convention called a group of six men together at the suggestion of Dr. J. Howard Williams, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Oklahoma City . . . It was in this meeting Dr. Williams unfolded a dream of religious regeneration and spiritual revival that would encompass every Christian of the Baptist faith irrespective of race. Following several meetings the idea took form. The six men who formulated the idea of simulataneous revivals which spread around the nation and Canada were: Dr. J. Howard Williams, executive secretary of the Texas Baptist Convention; Dr. J. W. Perry, Vice-President of the National Baptist Convention; Dr. J. B. Rounds, Superintendent of Indian Work of Southern Baptist Convention; Layman F. D. Moon, Principal of Douglass High School, Oklahoma City; Layman Samuel Lattimore, Assistant Attorney General, Oklahoma City; and Dr. U. M. Johnson, Calvery Baptist Church, Oklahoma City." Black Dispatch, 1 April 1950.

[57]Ibid.

Colgate, Oklahoma. Speaking on the subject, "The Role Ahead" F. D. urged:

> Believe in yourself, that you can do it . . . greatness does not depend upon your being sophisticated or in being haughty. You have a great responsibility . . . With every increasing opportunity in public relations, be honest and reliable. Be reliable so people can depend on you. My philosophy is to do right as you see the right, be just and fair to everybody, whether they be of high estate or low, whether they are black or white, and work hard . . . . I set before you an open door and there is no power under heaven except yourself, that can close it for you.[58]

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[58]Ibid.

CHAPTER IX

DOUGLASS HIGH SCHOOL IN OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA 1950-1951

Curriculum and Activities

As the 1950-51 school year opened, 1,200 students enrolled at Douglass during the first enrollment period. This was 200 less than the previous year. In addition, F. D. announced the appointment of Professor Wyatt F. Jeltz as vice-principal of Douglass High School, replacing Professor Harlish V. Gear, retiring teacher of history and vice-principal. In addition, new staff members added were: Eldridge Logan Lima in the Commerce Department and Otis Lawrence in the Chemistry and Mathematics Departments. Maurice Benefee was transferred from the veterans' unit to instruct in upholstering and furniture repairing.[1]

By November 1950, a massive Parent Teachers Association (PTA) membership drive was completed at Douglass. In securing aid to increase interest and participation of the community in the PTA, F. D. and the officers of the organization utilized the assistance of the Aldridge and Jewel theaters, along with radio stations KLPR and KBYE. At the close of the massive drive the Douglass PTA

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[1] Black Dispatch, 19 August, 9 September 1950.

membership was over 300. This represented the largest PTA membership in the history of Douglass High School.[2] Ruby Hall recalls:

> Our PTA grew in interest. One night it rained so hard Mr. Moon was very sure we would not continue with our regular meeting night. When we arrived at the school to have our meeting, no one was there to let us in. We had to contact Mr. Moon to bring us the keys. When he arrived and so many of us were there, he said, 'You have surprised me, but I like persistence.'[3]

Vocational Courses

F. D.'s immediate attention at Douglass in 1950-51 turned to the lack of student's interest in vocational education. Though the problem existed the need to offer the program persisted. Specifically, the problem was how to increase the sensitivity of students whose level of achievement warrented such motivation. In addition, the anxiety generated by student's decreased interest in vocational education had caused classes so small that securing teachers for the number enrolled became increasingly difficult.[4]

F. D., accompanied by several black citizens held a closed conference with J. Chester Swanson, Superintendent of Oklahoma City Public Schools, in which they made the problem confronting the administration of the vocational courses at Douglass known. F. D.

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[2] Black Dispatch, 11 November 1950.

[3] Ruby Hall, interview held 733 Northeast 20th, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 12 August 1977.

[4] Black Dispatch, 10 February 1951.

pointed out to the superintendent the inability to secure qualified teachers for such a small number of interested students. In addition, he expressed the need for qualified vocational teachers to conduct the vocational courses rather than relying on teachers of unrelated fields. Not to do this, he said, "training would not be as diligent in guiding and orienting the students in the direction of vocations as it would be for teachers whose special training was in that field."[5] While admitting there had been some opposition to vocational training among black teachers, F. D. stated: "At the present time the thinking of black instructors had changed radically, to the point where they were all committed to the idea that the young Negro must support this field."[6]

A further report of the conference by the Black Dispatch gave the following account.

> The conference held last week by Dr. J. Chester Swanson, superintendent of the city's schools, with the Negro citizens raised several interesting questions which need answers. For two years now without a hindrance, the school board was supposed to be operating a vocational school which served the needs of this community. No one has said a word while the school board has been functioning so that the school board must assume full responsibility for any delinquencies discovered in 1951.
>
> When the citizen committee met with Dr. Swanson two years ago, the question of training and building trade courses was stressed. The committee, before it went into conference

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[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

> united in the thought that the students should be skilled in these branches of labor. When they arrived at the Administration Office they spelled out the names of the courses they were insisting upon: brick laying, carpentry, plumbing, and electricity were the four main and specific branches of training stressed, and the committee was told that this outline would be carried out.
>
> In the conference last week, it was discovered that nothing had been done about organizing classes in plumbing, electricity, and in the carpentry division. The students' work is confined to building furniture, allied arts, and upholstering. There's no question about the skillfulness of the students in this field as was demonstrated as the committee passed through the classrooms. We doubt seriously that any one of those students confined to the manufacturing of furniture knows anything about building a house, where there is a present opportunity in this growing community for Negroes to make an excellent living.
>
> One of the conferees, Mrs. Cernoria Johnson, raised the question of counseling and guidance. The Urban League Secretary feels that if sufficient time is given the counseling there will be no dearth of pupils. This writer feels the same way about it. We believe that such counseling should be made the responsibility of vocational instructors. We doubt seriously the sympathetic, interested instructor, trained entirely in the liberal arts field, would have a suggestion to students that they follow a line of effort which his life has not touched. If the task before Douglass School regarding vocational training is carried fully to fruition, it must be done largely by instructors who know and love the field of training in which they instruct.[7]

During the beginning of the 1951-52 school year, 1,388 students enrolled the first day of school and by the middle of September the enrollment was over 1,400. The school board had done more than $3,000 worth of redecoration for the school's auditorium. Ice water fountains at a cost of $1,180 and donated by the 1947-48 senior class

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[7] Black Dispatch, 17 February 1951.

were installed on each floor of the school. Concession stands costing $1,500 were installed under the grandstand at Page Stadium by the classes in brick masonry, carpentry and electricity. Also, $2,000 worth of typewriters and calculators were added to the commercial department.[8]

The Continued Need and Considerations

In addition to administering the school during the 1951-52 school year a large portion of F. D.'s energies was directed toward building a new high school. To do so would help relieve the crowded conditions existing at Douglass. In fact, F. D. had not relinquished this effort since the 1945 bond issue. For example, in a meeting with the Urban League Board of Directors in 1950, F. D. presented the existing need for an administrative and classroom building for Douglass High School. This building program, he disclosed, would involve the renovation and repair of existing buildings on the fairground site. In addressing himself to the need, F. D. revealed that:

> In view of the plans for moving Fair Park to the [N.W.] 10th and May Avenue location, we of the separate schools are facing more definitely the problem of building an adequate educational plant. To do this will require an outlay of approximately $1,500,000. Under our present system of school financing it would take ten years for us to accumulate enough for a building program . . . .
>
> The problem is acute and can only be met through the floating of a county bond issue which will have to first be approved by

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[8] Black Dispatch, 15 September 1951.

the City Board of Education and County Commissioner.[9]

It should be recalled that the germ of a new high school for blacks in Oklahoma City came into being in 1944, when Washington Park was first suggested as its location. Vigorous opposition to the Washington Park location by black citizens caused the idea to be abandoned. Attention was then turned to the Fair Park location on N. E. 10th and Eastern. This location was purchased in 1948 after a $700,000 bond issue was floated on December 4, 1945. #380,000 was allocated as the first positive action taken by the school board to build a new high school for blacks. The amount had proven inadequate to complete the new high school, but had helped to purchase portions of the old fairgound site which included twenty-six acres of land, the 4-H Club building, the FFA building, the livestock pavilion and several smaller buildings at a price of $405,000. Two hundred and fifty thousand dollars of the purchase price came from the $380,000 voted in the bond issue of 1945. The other $58,000 of the bond money had been used to improve the purchased buildings for vocational education. Two thousand dollars of the purchase price came from accumulated funds of the one mill building levy for separate schools.[10]

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[9] Black Dispatch, 15 April 1950.

[10] An Open Door to New Horizons: Douglass High School (Oklahoma City: Douglass High School, 1955), p. 10.

By March 1951, the Oklahoma City Council approved the construction of a new high school for blacks to be fronted on Eastern rather than behind the grandstand utilized by the fairground officials. The complete agreement for the overall plan however, was left to representatives of the Chamber of Commerce and the Board of Education.

Black citizens were concerned about the land adjacent to the school site.[11] Also, they were concerned about the over $150,000 separate schools of Oklahoma City would secure annually under the one mill building levy and how it would aid in completing the new school. F. D. stated at the time, "If we rely upon the one mill building levy to erect the new high school, and counting the $310,842 now in the building fund, it would take approximately ten years to accumulate the additional $150,000 to complete the new high school. To wait ten years, five years, or even two years will mean

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[11] Black Dispatch, 3 March 1951.

It should be kept in mind that the fairground tract contemplated by black citizens of Oklahoma City to be evacuated by Fair Officials extended from Eastern Avenue to the Katy tracts and N. E. 4th Street to N. E. 10th Street. This tract of land was in an unsatisfactory state. Only 26 acres of this land had been definitely designated for black school purposes. The remainder being left to the city and could easily be later converted into objectionable use by black citizens' standards.

The contentions of some black citizens were, that to convert the remainder of the land to residential uses would consolidate the older black section of the city with the Edwards and Carverdale Additions, thus surrounding the proposed new vocational high school with a type of environment by which adolescents would daily be sheltered. In addition, no semi-industrial districts would be near the school. See Black Dispatch, 12 March 1949.

it will be done at a terrific cost to education for black youth."[12] F. D. substanuated his thoughts with the following reasons:

> Douglass High School now has a capacity for 950 students. The enrollment as of Friday, September 14, was 1,435, or approximately 500 students beyond the capacity of the building. Now it is obvious that an adequate educational program cannot be carried on under such over crowded conditions. This over crowding means that classes are being conducted in places not at all equipped for a particular type of instruction. To illustrate, the junior high school band classes are conducted in the hall leading from Sixth Street into the high school gymnasium. This means that horns are continually being blown which serves as a distracting element for teachers who are trying to carry on physical education classes in the gymnasium. . . .Teachers at Douglass High School who have taught in the institution for years, in one case for as many as fifteen years, have never had a regular classroom. Such teachers must move from one room to another . . .[13]

Quoting from the Oklahoma City Advertiser, dated Thursday, September 20, 1951, F. D. advised:

> I believe voters will soon have an opportunity to vote on a county bond issue to complete our urban highway system and other projects. The amount of this bond issue probably will be between $6,000,000 and $7,000,000. If there is to be a

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[12] Black Dispatch, 15 April 1950, 29 September 1951.

[13] Black Dispatch, 29 September 1951.

In the years after World War II, there were acute challenges in education. In the early 1950's, the wartime babies' entrance into the schools created unprecedented pressures on the educational system. Facing a serious shortage of teachers and classrooms, the schools were forced to resort to double sessions held in emergency facilities. To cope with the overflow, more buildings, classrooms, and teachers were made available as educational expenditures increased. See, Gerald Gutek, An Historical Introduction to American Education, James C. Stone ed. (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co. 1970), p. 148.

> county wide vote, it would save the taxpayers money to have the bond issue for the separate schools presented at the same time that the county-wide bond issue is presented.[14]

But discontent continued to linger with the Negro Chamber of Commerce over the possible use of the adjacent lands to the purchased school site as a recreational area or park for black citizens. However, in a meeting of the Negro Chamber of Commerce, the citizens voted 25 to 5 to postpone their decision concerning the recreation area until a positive disposition could be met with the park official's position on converting the adjacent lands to a recreational park. The Chamber of Commerce agreed during the meeting with F. D.'s observation that a bond issue would have to be voted before a new high school could be erected.[15]

In a later meeting of the Negro Chamber of Commerce, F. D. presented his views regarding the proposed new school location and recreational park issue, stating: "the matter of the school's location and the park issue should be separate, which was the principle point of difference."[16] This was in opposition to his earlier position in which he had "supported the idea that such land as was not utilized for school purpose should be turned by the city into a

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[14] F. D. Moon, Personal Papers.

[15] Black Dispatch, 21 July 1951.

[16] Ibid.

residential development."[17]

Nevertheless, following F. D.'s views on the disposition of the land sites, Roscoe Dunjee offered a motion that the school site at N. E. 10th and Eastern be endorsed. His motion included the provisions that the selection of the new site would in no way impair or diminish the accrual in county funds and earmarked for building the proposed new technical-vocational high school. The motion was seconded by George Ferguson and unanimously passed.[18]

With the decision made to accept the location of the new black high school and to put aside the opposition to the recreation park issue, the Negro Chamber of Commerce and interested black citizens opened their campaign to promote a $1,500,000 bond issue asked for by F. D. to build a new black high school. Their first action was to circulate a petition among the citizens seeking their approval.[19]

The $1,500,000 Bond Conflict

On October 1, 1951, a request for a $1,500,000 bond issue was presented to the Oklahoma City Board of Education by the Negro Citizens' Committee. In addition to presenting the proposed bond issue the black delegation promised the school board to produce petitions signed by qualified voters of Oklahoma County who were in accord

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[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Daily Oklahoman, 6 October 1951.

with the proposal.[20] The delegation stated in part, "Since almost six years have passed since we started on this program of a new high school; and becuase an emergency exists in the consequence of the terrible overcrowded situation at Douglass High School, we request speedy relief be granted . . . by using your full influence toward having the Honorable Board of County Commissioners call such an election at the earliest date possible."[21]

The delegation's request to the Board of Education for a $1,500,000 bond issue was based on the facts that: (1) Douglass High School with a capacity of 950 had an enrollment of 1,440 students, a condition existing since 1945, when on December the 4th Oklahoma County voted $700,000 of which $308,000 was allocated for the erection of a new Douglass High School; (2) Since the passage of the one mill levy, the school had received only $310,000, about $150,000 annually. Through this method ten years would have elapse before a new Douglass could be erected; (3) Douglass High School is so congested that the junior band must rehearse in the hallways.[22]

The Board of Education unanimously agreed with the black citizens on the need for a $1,500,000 bond issue to complete the new

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[20]Negro Citizen's Committee, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma to the President, Members and Superintendent, Board of Education, 1951, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Black Dispatch, 29 September 1951.

black high school and to request the County Commissioners to include the question in the seven million dollar county-wide bond election for urban and county roads. The agreements were affirmed in a motion made by Vernon Beals, ward one Board member, with the understanding that the County Commissioners must call the election. This was based on the fact that bond funds for black schools were voted on a county-wide basis and administered by the County Commissioners, with the supervision of the school board where the black school resided.[23]

The first six sets of petitions bearing 4,435 signatures for the $1,500,000 bond issue was formally presented to the Board of Education on October 5, 1951, and accepted by the board's president, R. Lewis Barton. The Petition signers were not restricted to blacks, but contained several white citizen's signatures as well. During the presentation F. D. drew attention to this fact by interjecting that though the signers were predominantly Negro, the petition contained the names of 94 from the League of Women Voters and a number from the Federal Council of Church Women as well as other leading civic groups. By October 15, 1951, a seventh Petition was presented to the Board increasing the citizens' signatures to 4,842.[24]

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[23] Daily Oklahoman, 2 October 1951.

[24] Negro Citizens' Committee to the President, Members, Superintendent, and Board of Education, 1951, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. F. D. Moon personal papers.

On October 10, 1951, an editorial appeared in the Daily Oklahoman declaring the new high school for blacks in Oklahoma City as, "An Undeniable Need."

> Of the request that an additional high school building be provided for the Negro population of Oklahoma City, two things can be said quite positively. The additional building is needed badly and will be needed sorely before it could be completed. The district interested is well able financially to pay for the proposed building and little else needs to be said.
>
> The steady growth of the city's population has created a real problem in nearly every school in the city. It is the serious problem of overcrowding and a real lack of adequate facilities. A school building that was ample just a few years ago is ample no longer. That is true always when the population of a district increases.
>
> Up until fairly recently, the facilities at the present high school for Negroes were adequate. But they are adequate no longer. The Negro population has grown exactly as the white population has grown. An additional high school building for Negroes is sorely needed and it should be built. The city is able to build it. It is the duty of the city to built it.[25]

By mid October a group of 35 black citizens assembled at the Court House during a meeting held by the County Commissioners, with the expressed purpose of requesting that the $1,500,000 bond issue be included in the county road election. The delegation had attended the meeting under the misunderstood assumption that the Commissioners were ready to discuss the separate school's bond issue. The fact was, the Commissioners hadn't called the meeting for that purpose, nor had they been asked to. Phil Daugherty, chairman of the Urban Road Committee, explained to the delegation that the meeting was

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[25] Daily Oklahoman, 10 October 1951.

called to decide whether the committee would include anything else on the road bond election, and for no other purpose. Further, the delegation was informed by Stanley Draper that the urban road program was twofold. First, it provides additional right of ways, and second, it provides a primary road system near Edmond. "We cannot clear the fairground for a new high school until the railroad tracks are moved, which is a part of the urban road program."[26]

The black citizens pointed out during the course of the meeting that on several occasions since 1945 the matter had been brought to the attention of the school authorities and the County Commissioners. In addition, they made reference to the petition signed by over 4,000 citizens requesting the $1,500,000 bond issue for the black school, and that if the school request was not acted upon, the matter would be turned to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People for action. In the form of a resolution the black delegation read:

> While we recognize that there are liberal and fair-minded white citizens who are willing and anxious to correct this condition, it appears that they are helpless in the matter of doing very much. In the meantime our Negro youth are denied, and may be denied for many years to come, unless we take forthright action. Therefore, be it resolved that if it cannot be done now that we take immediate steps toward securing the admission of Negro youth to the junior high schools of Oklahoma City and the admission of senior high school youths to senior high schools

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[26] Oklahoma City Times, 18 October 1951, Daily Oklahoman, 19 October 1951, Black Dispatch, 20 October 1951.

carrying courses not offered at Douglass High School. . .[27]

After F. D. assured the road committee that he understood all issues of the proposed election were to be presented at the meeting of the commissioners, he explained the congested conditions existing at Douglass.

> This condition creates nervous tension, inability to teach students properly, and a serious hazard as far as education is concerned. Is it any surprise that we would get out to get petitions for the need we have observed the same as you have done regarding the need you have seen? Why can't we unite our efforts here because both needs are justifiable?[28]

F. D. then attacked the idea that $1,500,000 was too much to pay for a high school enrollment for 582 students. Citing the increased cost of materials and the problems separate schools undergo, he stated: "Tulsa with less than 600 Negro high school students paid $1,749,991.69 for their new school and they started only one week before we did in 1945. Children now attend this school.[29]

A second meeting was called by the commissioners later the same day during which time J. Chester Swanson, Superintendent of the Oklahoma City Schools, set the need for the new black high school at $1,250,000, half of the original request of the black citizens. The board members explained that $900,000 would be needed for construction of a new building, $150,000 for equipment,

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[27] Oklahoma City Times, 18 October 1951.

[28] Black Dispatch, 20 October 1951.

[29] Ibid.

$100,000 for additional land at the Fair Park site and $100,000 for remodeling buildings purchased on the site.[30]

Following the bond talk with the commissioners Edd Hisel, chairman of the Board of Commissioners, estimated it would take at least a week before the county commission would take action on the proposed urban rights of way, county roads, and the school issue. However, the black delegation left the meeting with the feeling that "no action would be taken."[31]

The consequences of the meeting with the members of the Board of Education and the commissioners caused black citizens to delay plans on securing admission of black students in white schools. In a Citizen's Actions Committee meeting, Reverend Jackson explained, "If the commission decides before too long it can go along on the recommendations by the board, that's what we want."[32]

It should be noted, however, there was no commitment made by the Board of Commissioners as to a definite amount they would recommend for the bond proposed to be floated for the black high school. In fact, Edd Hisel, chairman of the commissioners, in a later statement said:

> I told Professor Moon (Douglass Principal) the other day if we could get the new school idea on the bond election at all, it

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[30] Daily Oklahoman, 19 October 1951.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

> would not be for $1,250,000. That would be the most expensive high school I know of anywhere. You folks are going to have to be satisfied with a little less. I'm still of the same opinion. I still have more figuring to do before I say what I'm going to do on the whole thing. I just can't see that much money. We are not ready now to say what we will do.[33]

The desire of F. D. to draw attention to the comparison of the $1,749,991.69 cost of the new Tulsa Booker T. Washington High for less than 600 students characterized the statement by Hisel, "We . . . are concerned only about the funds of this county, and please understand, that only $770,000 were required to build the Southeast High School with an enrollment of over 700 students. There are only 583 at Douglass."[34]

Meanwhile, the black citizens had reorganized and upon a motion by Reverend Taft Watts, formulated the Negro Citizens' Committee, naming Reverend W. K. Jackson, pastor of the St. John Baptist Church, as chairman of the committee. In reviewing the situation confronting the blacks during the uninvited meeting with the commissioners and a second meeting within the same day, Reverend Jackson commented:

> It is now time that we must act. We were virtually told yesterday by the County Commissioners that they would do what they wanted to do and, in fact, refused to say whether they would or would not comply with the will of 4,842 Negro citizens who signed petitions on a vote for the new school. We want a new school now or we are ready and willing to enroll in Central and

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[33] Black Dispatch, 20 October 1951.

[34] Ibid.

Classen. This meeting has been called to express that wish and desire.[35]

The reformation of the Negro Citizen's Committee was a result of the inability of black citizens to secure any disposition regarding the petition request for conjunction of a $1,500,000 school bond with the urban road bond election. Also, it was brought to the attention of the Negro Citizen's Committee that other proposals were under consideration by the county commissioners: (1) A special committee had been formed with A. W. Gilliand, local attorney, as its chairman to formally request of the commissioners to air-condition the court house, (2) The Arcadia school district requested of the commissioners a quarter of a million dollar bond issue for their school. As the situation stood by late October 1951, the commissioners were involved with four proposals: (1) a bond issue to air-condition the court house; (2) $1,250,000 for Douglass High School; (3) Urban roads; (4) $250,000 for the Arcadia school district.[36]

On October 29, 1951, the county commissioners agreed to submit a $7,427,000 road and black high school bond issue to the vote of the people on December 11, 1951. The bond issue proposed "$6,327,000 for new county roads and rights of way for 52 miles of urban expressways, $900,000 for a black senior high school in Oklahoma

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[35]Ibid.

[36]Ibid. Also see Black Dispatch, 27 October 1951; Oklahoma City Times, 13 October 1951.

City and $200,000 to air-condition the courthouse."[37]

The $900,000 Bond Question

The County Commissioners had reduced the request of $1,250,000 made by the Oklahoma City Board of Education, which in turn was reduced from the original request of $1,500,000 made by F. D. and the black citizens, to $900,000 based on the cost of the new Southeast Junior and Senior High School for white students. Southeast's construction had cost less than the $900,000 and at the time housed 750 students. In comparison, Douglass had an enrollment of 525 senior high school students and 900 junior high school students.[38]

Black citizens, still pressed their plea for $1,250,000 needed for the construction of a new black high school as recommended by the Board of Education. During a meeting of the Negro Citizens' Committee at the Urban League, representing 32 black organizations of the community, thumbs were turned down on the proposal of the county commissioners to allocate $900,000 for a new black high school. Reverend Jackson declared:

> I do not think the county commissioners are qualified and prepared to arbitrarily pit their views of our educational needs up against that of the school board of Oklahoma City. This body has declared that we need $1,250,000. They have made a professional survey of this question and so far as I am concerned it's $1,250,000 or this committee should get

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[37] Daily Oklahoman, 30 October 1951.

[38] Ibid.

> squarely behind the alternative plan of placing Negro children in the white senior and junior high schools of this city.[39]

A further account was that:

> Emotionalism ran so warm during the meeting that, despite the presence of a large number of ministers of the city, some short ugly words were used by several of the speakers as they discussed the unwillingness of the county commissioners to allow the Negroes the amount set by the Oklahoma City School Board, while at the same time willing to throw away $200,000 cooling the court house.
>
> 'They are not inclined, however, to give us the extra $200,000 despite the fact their own lawyer has said it will be unlawful for this money to be used for the purpose they had in mind,' one speaker declared.[40]

In a later meeting held with the County Commissioner, requested by the Negro Citizens' Committee, Edd L. Hisel informed the delegation that the entire proposed $900,000 was for a school building only, The land would be provided otherwise, and the blacks in Oklahoma City would have the finest plant in the nation when it was completed. The land needed to complete the school cost $100,000 as proposed by the Board of Education. Under the bond issue called, the entire sum of the $900,000 was for construction only. In addition, the project would include 56 acres of land, the fair grandstand for a stadium, and the 4-H and FFA buildings would be available. The total value of the project would be far in excess of the $1,250,000, first

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[39] Oklahoma City Times, 3 November 1951.

[40] Ibid.

requested. Black citizens, were not certain what position to take. F. D. stated during the meeting with the commissioners that: "Some of our people are talking about voting against the whole thing. I don't know what will happen."[41]

At a later meeting of the Negro Citizens' Committee at St. John's Baptist Church, F. D. offered an explanation of the commissioners' action and suggested that the Negro Citizens' Committee support the bond issue reasoning that "$300,000 was available then from the annual one mill levy and about $100,000 more would be available from the same source before the school could be built. He admitted, however, that the technicality was that the money had been earmarked for a new elementary school. The fact remained that the $100,000 needed for purchase of the site would have to be provided from other sources.[42]

Many black citizens still declared the proposed $900,000 bond issue as insufficient to build the contemplated technical-vocation high school. In fact, during the meeting upon a motion by Reverend W. J. Harvey, a committee was named to seek legal advice on the advisability of asking an injunction forbidding any action on the bond issue.[43]

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[41]Ibid.

[42]Oklahoma City Times, 7 November 1951.

[43]Daily Oklahoman, 10 November 1951.

Almost all representatives of 32 organizations present during the Negro Citizens' Committee meeting spoke during the session and the general attitude seemed to be either: (1) Negroes should support the $900,000 and try to get the additional money from other sources, (2) They should support the $900,000 and make it very clear they were not compromising and that efforts would be made immediately to get Negro children admitted to white schools. Dunjee and Jimmy Stewart, secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, insisted they would not be bound by such promise and indicated they expected to proceed with placing black students in white schools no matter whether the full bond issue was provided or not.[44]

Before any action was taken by the N.A.A.C.P., the Negro Citizens' Committee voted to support the entire $7,427,000 Oklahoma County bond issue, including the $900,000 proposed for the new black high school. The group dropped all consideration of possible legal action to hold up the vote after a report of a special committee was named to study the bond issue proposal. According to F. D., the action came after the Negro Citizens' Committee was assured that none of the bond, money or any money in possession of the separate school, would be used for purchase of the fairground site.[45]

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[44] Oklahoma City Times, 7 November 1951.

[45] Oklahoma City Times, 15 November 1951; Daily Oklahoman, 16 November 1951.

The fact was that the white Chamber of Commerce gave the Negro Citizens' Committee this assurance in writing. The Letter of Assurance was signed by Stanely Draper, Director Manager of the Chamber of Commerce, who assured the black citizens that the $100,000 for the purchase of additional land to complete the black high school would be forthcoming "within a reasonable time after the favorable vote of our people on the forthcoming bond election."[46] Reverend Jackson cited the total plan as positive.

> It has secured on the bond issue $900,000. According to Mr. Hisel and the county commissioners and Mr. Phil Daughtery, only the road issue was intended. No amount was intended to be allocated to Negroes. Because of our alertness and the work and interest of this committee we have $900,000 for a new school.
>
> Because of the alertness of this committee we have a commitment of $100,000 more, and the Board of Education has made available all funds allocated to us at our disposal.[47]

Phil Daughtery, head of the Urban Road Bond Committee, in an effort to coordinate and unite all forces for the total bond election, suggested A. D. Mathues, president of the Negro Chamber of Commerce; George R. Ragland, insurance executive; and Attorney J. J. Bruce, to formulate the general committee. The Negro Citizens Action Committee recommended that Reverend Jackson be added to the committee. In completing the plans for the black community the Negro Citizens' Committee elected F. D. as bond director; Cernoria

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[46] Black Dispatch, 17 November 1951.

[47] Ibid.

Johnson and George Ragland were elected as co-chairman on the Speaker's Bureau; and a committee of fifteen persons was elected as an executive committee to keep abreast of all developments.[48]

The initial meeting for the eastside citizens of Oklahoma City to explain the issues involved in the Oklahoma County school bond election was held at Douglass High School. F. D. along with other representatives working for the passage of the bond issue for the new school and the urban road addressed their attention during the meeting to the following questions and answers:

> Are there enough students at Douglass High School to justify the building of a new high school?
>
> Yes, Douglass High School now has a capacity for 950 students. The enrollment as of Monday, November 26, was 1,483 or 533 students beyond the capacity of the building. Now it is obvious that an adequate educational program cannot be carried on under such overcrowded conditions. This overcrowding means that classes are being conducted in places not at all equipped for a particular type of instruction.
>
> Are there other evidences for the need to build a new high school?
>
> Yes. Very young children, twelve and thirteen years of age, are compelled to associate with children seventeen, eighteen and nineteen years of age when they are together in one school. The social age of children at the earlier ages will be different from that of those who are older. Therefore, it would be a better program to have the junior high school separate from the senior high school.
>
> Is there some other practical method of financing the building of the new high school other than by a bond issue?
>
> No. The one mill building levy amounts to about $150,000 per

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[48]Ibid.

> year. Therefore, if we depend upon the one mill levy to build the new high school, it will take at least ten years. In the meantime there are over 500 students beyond the capacity of the building enrolled in Douglass High School, and this enrollment is constantly increasing.[49]

When the tabulations were made in the County Election Board offices after the December 11 election, the results showed that the voters approved the $900,000 for the new separate school four to one. For the urban road bond the vote showed 18,575 for and 7,767 against. The separate high school bond carried 21,386 for and 4,767 against.[50]

While the election seemed peaceful it was noted by one reporter that:

> Nothing marred the day but an unsigned handbill scattered the last two days of the campaign asking citizens to vote for the high school bonds but to defeat the road bond issue. While these handbills were scattered mostly in the rural sections, it was in the hinterlands the bonds picked up their greatest strengths. The attempt to pit the ruralities against Oklahoma City failed.

On the morning after the bond election F. D. stated:

> All of us at Douglass High School, staff members and students, appreciate very much the support received by the entire community in securing the passage of the bond issue for our school. While our first request of $1,500,000 was more in line with our needs, we are very much farther along the way as a result of our securing the $900,000. We wish we were able to express our appreciation to each individual personally, but that is impossible; therefore, we must take this method of expressing our gratitude.[51]

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[49] Black Dispatch, 15 December 1951.

[50] Ibid.

[51] Ibid.

In an interview with Shirley Ruth Williams, a Douglass student F. D. advised:

> Nothing worthwhile just happens. Somebody goes out and makes things happen. Since this is true, we are always indebted to some persons when worthwhile achievements take place. The Citizen Action Committee, the Education Committee of the Negro Chamber of Commerce, the city ministers, the staff and students of Douglass High School, each and all played stellar roles in the drama which has been enacted here during the last six weeks. And then too, there is the press represented by the Black Dispatch, the Oklahoma City Advertiser, the Daily Oklahoman, and perhaps other newspapers. Each of these has a role. Most of all in this achievement are the fine parents, the friends and the voters of all Oklahoma City and County.
>
> As principal of Douglass High School, I wish to convey my deepest appreciation to each and all who helped to make possible another progressive step in the education of Negro youth in Oklahoma City. God bless each one of you. And now as the Yuletide season rapidly approaches, may the true spirit of Christmas permeate your hearts and may God's riches benedictions abide with you always. [52]

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[52] Black Dispatch, 15 December 1951.

CHAPTER X

DOUGLASS HIGH SCHOOL IN OKLAHOMA CITY

1951-1952

The Aftermath of the $900,000 Bond Issue

Immediately following the passage of the $900,000 bond issue by Oklahoma County for a new black high school in Oklahoma City, the County Commissioners set December 31, 1951, for bids on printing of the bonds. January 15, 1952, was the time set for bids on the sale of the bonds. This action was to make possible the assurance of cash on the bonds by early 1952.[1]

C. G. Baker, manager of the Oklahoma State Fair, rushed the completion plans for the new state fair site with engineers and architects. Completion of the plans however depended upon the removal of railroad tracks from the new fair site at Northwest Tenth and May. With the railroad tracks moved the State Fair could move from Northeast 10th and Eastern to its new location and the new black high school could be built. Thus it seemed the passage of the 1951 bond issue pulled the plug on virtually the entire construction program.[2]

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[1] Oklahoma City Times, 12 December 1951.

[2] Ibid.

Land transfers and sales involving the tentative agreement between the school board and the State Park agencies in February 1951, permitted construction of the new black high school along Eastern, but provided "legal headaches",[3] requiring conferences between the city council, school board and fair officials and resulting in a "community land swap."[4]

The Community Land Swap

The "community land swap" would provide an additional 22-1/2 acreage to the 26.65 acreage already purchased in 1948, as the result of the $700,000 bond issue in 1945. In the community land swap, the school board was to sell to the city, at the original cost of $200,000, the entire 160 acres located at Northwest Tenth and May. The land was originally purchased by the school board as a site for a white majority vocational-technical high school. These acreages had been purchased under the administration of H. B. Bruner as superintendent of the Oklahoma City public schools but the plan was later abandoned during the superintendency of Fred Hosler "as being impractical and too expensive."[5]

While the city council had agreed to the transaction in 1951, and the Fair and school boards seemed willing to enter into the

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[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Daily Oklahoman, 20 December 1951.

"community land swap", the accumulated legislative acts of the state regarding finances of white majority and black separate schools pointed to all implications that money derived from the sale of the white school site at Northwest Tenth and May could not go into the black separate school's budget. In addition, during the conferences between the school board, city, and fair officials, no efforts were established to honor the promise made by the white Chamber of Commerce to help secure finances for additional land without cost to the separate school. Thus, during the conferences, a request was made to the school board to pay $94,000 for additional land for the new black high school.[6]

The Controversial Promise

Between December 11, 1951, and December 21, 1951, problems encountered by the Board of Education in securing $94,000 for purchase of additional land to complete the new black high school mounted. The problems were intertwined with the interpretation of a promise made by the white Chamber of Commerce and the County Commissioners and proposed in writing to the Negro Citizens' Committee by Stanley Draper, director manager of the Chamber of Commerce. The director manager of the white Chamber of Commerce stated:

> We hereby pledge to you that, within a reasonable time after the favorable vote of our people on the forthcoming bond

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[6] Ibid.

> election, we will be responsible for seeing to it that land is provided on a location within the present fairgrounds, for the Negro high school, without drawing on the $900,000 provided for in the bond election, or any other funds that are necessary to the construction of the high school building.
>
> We are not prepared at this time to suggest the means by which the land may be made available for this purpose, but will work with the school board and other elements involved in seeing to it that the land is made available at the location within the fairgrounds to be decided upon mutually between the elements involved.[7]

F. D. wrote to E. K. Gaylord, editor of the Daily Oklahoman, concerning the problems confronting the black citizens and the school board in which he revealed:

> The Negro citizens requested a bond issue in the sum of One Million, Five Hundred Thousand Dollars ($1,500,000). The Board of Education approved that amount as being necessary, but in an effort to cooperate with the other agencies calling for bond money, reduced the former request to One Million Two Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars ($1,250,000). In spite of the support of your fine papers, the County Commissioners reduced this amount to Nine Hundred Thousand Dollars ($900,000). On the day that the County Commissioners made $900,000 as their final decision, Mr. Edd Hisel, in the presence of Mr. Charles Litton, another County Commissioner, Mr. John Pierson and Dr. J. Chester Swanson, representing the Board of Education, and about a dozen Negro citizens stated that they were going to set the bond call at $900,000 but there would be no cost to the separate schools for the site. He stated that they did not know just how they would do it but that it would be done.
>
> Before our citizens made a final decision to support the bond issue, this promise on the part of the County Commissioners was taken into consideration. In addition, since Mr. Stanley Draper was playing such an important role in the whole matter, a committee of our Citizen Action Committee was appointed to get a statement from Mr. Draper relative to this matter of not charging the separate school with the cost of a site. The

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[7] F. D. Moon Personal Papers. Also Daily Oklahoman, 21 December 1951; Black Dispatch, 22 December 1951.

committee met with Mr. Draper and secured a statement from him, a copy of which is here enclosed. After receiving these assurances, our Citizen Action Committee voted to support the bond, and how well that was done is now history.

It has recently developed that in spite of these promises which are very fresh in our memory, that the Board of Education is going to be asked to pay $94,000 in order to secure the site. I believe it will be easy for you to understand what the keen disappointment and loss of faith in the leadership of our community will be should the breach of promise be carried through.

You may be interested in knowing that preliminary estimates as determined by Dr. N. L. George, Business Manger, Board of Education, show that the cost of our new building will be approximately $1,466,000, not including equipment. As you know, the $900,000 voted in the bond issue and other monies accumulated under the one mill levy fall considerably short of being enough to do the job. Besides, it is going to be necessary for us to find money to erect a new elementary school in the Edwards addition. Since all of this is true, you can see that we can ill afford to lose an additional $94,000 for a site.

We shall appreciate anything that you can do in the premises to prevent such a thing happening in our community.[8]

It was obvious that in order to pay the $94,000 for the additional land without dipping into the building funds, the school board would have to take the finances from the capital outlay account of the operating budget, ordinarily used as a cushion from which other separate school accounts were supplemented as necessary. In effect, however, "any money taken from the operating budget would be needed for the building proper."[9] In addition, money from the majority school site at Northwest 10th and May could not go into the

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[8]F. D. Moon to E. K. Gaylord, 1951, F. D. Moon Papers, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

[9]Daily Oklahoman, 21 December 1951.

separate school budget so the problem of $94,000 remained with the school board.[10]

In the matter of the accumulated problem, Stanley Draper pointed out he had "no legal authority . . . it will work out and the Negroes will not be unhappy about it . . . . The question of where the site money will be obtained is a matter of bookkeeping within the school system and the school board should be able to work it out."[11]

Edd Hisel, in the meantime, stated he "had only assured the Negroes that none of the $900,000 would be spent for land. I thought the city, county and school would work everything out by swapping land . . . . I don't think I went so far as to say that no money for land would come out of any school funds."[12]

One newspaper account emphasized: "Bad Faith Looms Already in Bond Issue Promise."

> This information relative to the call upon the Oklahoma City Board of Education for the additional $94,000 is confirmed by the daily press . . . . This proposed action marks one of the most flagrant breaking of promises to Negroes ever perpetrated in the history of this city. It will be recalled that Negroes asked for a bond issue of $1,500,000 to erect their new high school. The commissioner finally and reluctantly called the election for $900,000.
>
> Now with the Negro high school bond issue being inadequate

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[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

> by $600,000 to complete the new high school; with the words of the Commissioner still ringing in their ears; with the ink on Mr. Draper's signature hardly dry, carrying his promise of no additional cost for the new high school, the Negro citizens are little prepared to accept this ruthless betrayal of confidence.[13]

In fact, F. D. along with the Negro Action Committee won a delay in the final action on the "community land swap". This was done in a meeting held between the Community Action Committee and members representing the school board. The black leaders argued they wished a delay on the land deal "until we see if someone can't produce that $94,000 which was promised us, so we'd have the site free."[14]

While the black leaders won the delay in the $94,000 transactions surrounding the land purchase, they were made aware of several existing problems: (1) The entire $900,000 bond issue money could be spent for no purpose except the school building; (2) The $310,000 in the separate school's "building funds" produced by a one mill levy each year would not be touched; (3) There were "surplus funds" available which could be used for the additional $94,000 without handicapping the separate school program too materially; (4) There still existed the question of whether the City Park Board would own the adjacent land to the high school site for use as a black park and community center or whether the separate school fund

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[13] Black Dispatch, 22 December 1951.

[14] Ibid.

would be tapped for $94,000 so that the Board of Education could have 40 acres for the black school; (5) Under the original plan the city was to obtain part of the Wheatley school property from the black schools, but it was discovered that while the separate schools had used the property for years, it belonged to the majority schools. This posed a complicated situation between the city, white majority schools, and separate schools. It was made even more difficult by the state law which prohibited transfer of majority school funds to black or separate school funds, or black separate school funds to white majority school funds; (6) John Prigmore, school board auditor, suggested one alternative to the black leaders in his statement, "You only need about five acres for the school - - Why don't you just deed back to the board some of the land and save the $94,000?"[15] This suggestion was met with immediate objection.[16]

The multiplicity of the situations drew a response in the Black Dispatch.

> One could by no stretch of the imagination be mistaken regarding the promise made by Mr. Draper, and most assuredly assume he consulted with other responsible agencies of government before he made that promise, otherwise he would, as the secretary of the Chamber of Commerce, be intellectually dishonest. The assumption is that Draper was authorized by others officially responsible as representatives of the taxpayers to make

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[15] Oklahoma City Times, 21 December 1951.

[16] Ibid.

the . . . statement, and yet last week we are advised this promise cannot be carried out.

Of course there has been a deal of putting heads together since exposure was made regarding repudiation, and there has been forthcoming additional promises. But nothing can do away with the fact that someone in Oklahoma City has already spoken in bad faith, and is of the opinion it will be all right to take the Negro population for a ride.

We did not have too many with us when sometime ago we demurred to the football that had been made of the separate funds voted to build a new high school, but the entire amount was dissipated without the construction of a single room . . . the latest statement that all of the $900,000 must be used for construction purposes will not hold water for the reason that the first money raised under a similar bond issue was spent for land, and if that act was illegal the time has come to carry someone to court. Of course, if it was legal to spend the first bond money for land, it is equally legal to spend any or all of the current $900,000 for land. No one need go to sleep on the theory that no portion of the latest $900,000 we have secured for building purposes cannot be spent for land. . .

For many moons we have assumed the old Douglass High School, later named Wheatley School, at the corner of Walnut and Reno, was separate school property. We do know the separate schools had another site at a point east of this property on California some forty years ago. When the school burned down Negro students were later transferred to the plant at Walnut and Reno. The notion of the Black Dispatch is that this property should be checked, and also some determination be made of what happened to the old separate school site farther down the street. . . .No better task for the Citizen Action Committee than to employ a good land lawyer to inquire into what happened to the old Douglass School site, and to determine whether at any time the title to the property at Walnut and Reno was ever vested in the separate school system . . . .

It is indeed unfortunate that communities considered as backward in the treatment of Negroes, such as Shreveport, Louisiana, will forge ahead of Oklahoma City in the matter of building schools for blacks.[17]

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[17] Black Dispatch, 29 December 1951.

In the meantime the Oklahoma City Council, who had nothing to do with initiating any part of the "community land swap", but had cooperated in various trades and land purchases involved in 1948, discovered they had been "pushed into the role of arbiter"[18] in the black high school and park development dispute. This, of course, was the step taken by representatives of the City Park Board, State Fair Association, School Board, County Commissioners, white Chamber of Commerce and the Citizen's Action Committee following a long series of conferences and meetings seeking relief for the complicated transaction developing fast under the desire of both the Oklahoma City's School Board and the Citizen's Action Committee to front the new black high school on Eastern. This could only be done through the extension of the land already purchased by the School Board and would cost the School Board $94,000. The Citizen's Action Committee had already objected to the use of surplus separate school funds for the purchase of the additional site and during the series of meetings between the agencies involved had used the white Chamber of Commerce's letter of promise for funds to purchase the land as a means of bolstering their position.[19]

On December 28, 1951, the Board of Directors of the State Fair Association asked the City Council to take under consideration

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[18] Oklahoma City Times, 28 December 1951.

[19] Ibid.

an entirely new approach for a compromise settlement of the controversy. The proposal as presented to the City Council carried the following components: (1) The School Board would retain about 8 acres of the 26.65 acres of the old fairground land it now holds, but trade the other 19 acres to the city for an additional 30 acres fronting on Eastern. (2) The difference in appraised values of the tracts would be accounted for by the value of buildings located on the respective tracts.[20]

According to Baker, the proposal involved essentially the request made by the Citizen's Action Committee. It had met with the favor of the School Board members and seemed to be the only compromise that could be acceptable.[21]

In fact, the proposal as presented by the State Fair Association to the City Council would provide the existing grandstand in the old fairground site, the FFA building, and the Fairground's main entrance structure. The city could then salvage the value of the steel livestock pavilion, three other new livestock structures, the grandstand roof structure, and all the other buildings existing on the exhibit side of the proposed community park site located along Eastern. With the hearing of the proposal, additional time was ordered by the City Council in order that a thorough study of

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[20]Ibid.

[21]Ibid.

the situation could be made because "complications of the entire transaction were so tangled."[22]

In May 1952, the City Council officially accepted the final deed and legal complications were removed. This sanctioned the development of the new state fairgrounds located at Northwest Tenth and May, the new black high school and Community Center at the Old Fair Park, both of which would be located at Northeast Tenth and Eastern.[23]

The deeds had been worked on by the Oklahoma City School Board and State Fair officials with the following actions taken: (1) The city bought 160 acres southwest of the corner of Northwest Tenth and May. This land was for the use of the State Fair and was purchased from the School Board. Originally, it had been acquired by the school board for a proposed majority vocational high school, now dropped. (2) The School Board deeded some portions of its land and acquired other acreage in the old Fair Park tract, which made its total amount of land holding approximately 40 acres along the northwest corner fronting on Eastern and Northeast Tenth, for the new black high school. The site for the new black high school would be located along Eastern, instead of back within the park area as first proposed. The school board acquired the entrance

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[22]Ibid.

[23]Oklahoma City Times, 13 May 1952.

buildings, and the grandstand, with the provisions that the roof would be moved to eliminate that expense to the school board. Included also was the FFA building which was used, except during the fair, as a vocational training department for blacks. (3) The city kept 120 acres of the old fairgrounds including the 4-H club building for development as a black Community Center.. It also obtained the newly constructed stone dairy barn on the site to be utilized as a shop for city park equipment.[24]

The cash transaction involved in the final disposition was a payment of $212,907.93 from the State Fair bond money for the site at Northwest Tenth and May. This was made necessary by the fact the separate school laws prevented transfer of separate school property to white schools, or vice-versa. The State Fair was given permission to use the old location until it could be moved to its new location.[25]

Selling of the Bonds

While the "community land swap" had taken weeks of negotiation by involved agencies, the County Commissioners continued in their efforts to secure bond money by the early 1952 deadline. The contract for printing the county highway and separate school

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[24]Ibid.

[25]Ibid.

bonds was let by the Commissioners to the Southwestern Stationery and Bank Supply, Incorporated. This was done at a cost of $1,677.50 plus $30 for additional interest rate for printing.[26]

Though some problems arose surrounding the approval of the sale of the highway bonds to the Southwestern Voluntary Credit Restraint Board of Dallas, a board set up by investment bankers, there was approval for immediate sale of the $900,000 bonds for the new black high school. Approval was given, however, after intensive questioning of county representatives as to what the money was to be spent for. More pointedly, questions were posed concerning the construction of the stadium and other facilities for the new black high school. Thus, in the light of the problems of the County Commissioners with the original sale of $7,427,000 bonds for the road and separate high school, the bids were later readvertised for $5,900,000 of which $900,000 was designated for the separate high school.[27]

The bonds were sold in full to a firm headed by Halsey Stuart and Company of New York and represented in Oklahoma City by C. Edgar Honnold and Merrill Lynch, Pierce, Fenner and Beane, with a top bidding interest rate of 1.915. After a 30 days protection period expiring March 5, 1952, the bonds were delivered to the

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[26] Oklahoma City Times, 31 December 1951.

[27] Oklahoma City Times, 1, 11 January, 1 February 1952; Daily Oklahoman, 6 January 1952.

purchaser and the money was turned over to the Oklahoma City School Board of Education to erect the new black high school.[28]

In the meantime, the city school district sought the passage of a 4 million dollar bond issue for white majority schools. This bond issue provided for new secondary classroom additions for John Marshall and new additions for Britton and Taft Junior High schools. In addition, it provided for converting Taft Junior High school into a senior high school in anticipation of a Taft, Classen building swap. To aid this effort and dispite the fact that all problems involving the building of the new black high school were not settled, F. D. urged the cooperation of black voters in approval of the bond issue through his communication with black ministers of the city.

> During the Fall you will recall that we had a tremendous fight to get the County Commissioners to include in the bond issue an appropriation to build a much needed new high school for Negroes in Oklahoma City. You will recall that we conducted a very strenuous campaign to promote the passage of our bond issue. Although under great pressure from those who were opposed to us, the Board of Education of Oklahoma City and the Superintendent stood by us in our fight. They appeared before the County Commissioners; they presented our cause to all of the white schools of Oklahoma City and in every way possible, worked for the passage of our bond issue.
>
> It is now time for us to help them. Next Tuesday, March 25, we are called upon to join with them in the effort to secure the passage of a Four Million Dollar Bond Issue necessary to relieve their overcrowded schools and to take care of the children who have not yet entered our schools but who are on their way. I think that you know the story so well that we

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[28] Oklahoma City Times, 17 January, 1 February 1952.

need not go on to say how much we need and must help each other.

I am sure that you will be willing to join us in urging your members to vote 'Yes' on the measures necessary to operate good schools for white children. We must not say, 'Well, we have ours so we will sit down.' We hope you will urge your members and friends to go to the polls and vote 'YES' on the bond issue and other measures and thus help in educating all our youth.[29]

Request for Delay

During the summer of 1952, two asserted actions occurred which apparently caused the State Fair Board concern. First, with $900,000 bond money available plus some $350,000 in building levy monies for the separate school, architects had speeded up building plans for the new black high school. Second, approval of the blue print plans for the State Fair had been protested for the 42nd time, and Baker was not sure the fair park transfer to Northwest Tenth and May could be made by the 1954 deadline.[30]

In a letter to J. Chester Swanson, Superintendent of Oklahoma City Public Schools, the State Fair Board requested the school board to delay construction of the new black high school. The letter pointed out that the "fair could not operate at the present site without a great loss of revenue if the school was

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[29]F. D. Moon, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma to Black Pastors, 1952, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

[30]Oklahoma City Times, 19 August 1952; Daily Oklahoman, 3 September 1952.

completed by 1953 fair time."[31] The problem had arisen particularly due to the fact that the State Fair had been given permission to remain on the old fairground site until their new site was completed.[32]

The fairground board suggested in their letter to the Board of Education that "the black high school students be housed temporarily in the existing fair park buildings."[33] Emphasis had been placed on the fact that the loss of track and concession space would cost the fair about $150,000 in revenue the next year.[34]

According to Swanson the request for delay on completing the construction of the new black high school "would cost the schools some $100,000 to put Fair Park buildings in shape for temporary use. It is a matter of who loses money. . . . Personally I'm prejudiced."[35]

In truth, prior to the "community land swap," the Oklahoma City School Board owned other acreage at the Fair Park site for four years. By 1949, the Douglass Junior-Senior High School vocational classes were moved into the 4-H and FFA buildings on the Fair Park site. Under an agreement with the Fair Park Board the vocational classes had continued to vacate the buildings every year,

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[31] Daily Oklahoma, 3 September 1952.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid.

a month before fair time. This was done in order to accommodate the needs of the fair. In 1952, the vocational classes had vacated the buildings as in previous years, and classes were being held in the Douglass stadium, an elementary school, the newly completed $500,000 YMCA, and were doubling up with other classes at Douglass until the fair was over.[36]

In response to the fairground board request, F. D. stated: "We are certainly not willing to accept the Fair Board's proposition . . . . We have been inconvenienced for several years. I think they could make some adjustment . . . . It sets our program back badly."[37]

> Ironically, earlier Tuesday, Moon and A. D. Mathues, presicent of the Negro Chamber of Commerce, had appeared before the City Council at Baker's request. They spoke to counteract the protest of property owners against placing the proposed Northwest 10th and May fairground's entrance on Northwest 10th. Not yet informed of the Fair Board's action . . . the Negroes asked approval of these plans in order to rush construction at the new fair location.[38]

The request to delay construction of the new high school drew response from several organizations. For examples, the Negro Action Committee, in view of the fact that blacks had waited over eight years for the new high school, agreed to "oppose as a group any effort to delay construction of any part of the new Negro high

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[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid.

school."[39] The Oklahoma City Building and Trades Council filed a formal response with the School Board, stating:

> Organized labor of Oklahoma City does not approve of any program that denies the right of an education to any person in order that a minority group may satisfy their desire for money . . . . We feel the Fair Board has exaggerated the loss of money they would incur if this Negro high school is built at the present time.
>
> We are of the opinion that the education of the Negro youth of Oklahoma City is by far more important than any one amount of money the Fair Board or anyone else could gain by having a large number of concession stands at the fair . . .[40]

On September 8, 1952, a resolution was written by Avery Methodist Episcopal Church members, Official Board and Robert H. Alexander, pastor, stating:

> WHEREAS the citizens of Oklahoma City floated a bond to erect a new high school for Negroes to be located in what is now known as the Fairground, embracing Fourth Street on the south, Eastern Avenue on the west and Tenth Street on the north, and
>
> WHEREAS the program of the now Douglass Junior-Senior High School is unable to function in keeping with the best standards, due to the tremendously overcrowded conditions, and
>
> WHEREAS the enrollment at Douglass Junior-Senior High School continues to increase making this overcrowded condition more acute.
>
> THEREFORE, that Avery Chapel A.M.E. Church joins all civic organizations of the community in a protest against the Fair Board in the idea of deferring the erection of the new high school another year.
>
> Be it futher resolved that a copy of this resolution be sent

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[39] Daily Oklahoman, 15 September 1952.

[40] Ibid.

to the local press and to the Fair Board registering our protest.[41]

An editorial appeared in the Black Dispatch entitled, "THE HIGH SCHOOL MESS" found the editor rehashing the original purchase of land for the new high school and "community land swap," and commenting:

> Technically, we believe the law was violated in this instance . . . we paid with our $350,000 the highest price ever paid for 26 acres of undeveloped land . . . . While we do not get excited when we find the fair directors persisting in doing what they have been doing for several years when they ask postponement of the new high school . . . we do get excited . . . why anyone would feel afraid to turn the Oklahoma City school situation over to the NAACP. . .[42]

In the meantime, the Oklahoma City Branch of the NAACP Redress Committee was ordered by the Negro Citizens' Committee to study the proposed delay in construction of the new black high school and to determine if legal actions should be taken in the matter. The NAACP decided one course of action was to enroll black students in white schools.[43] In response to this decision the Black Dispatch editorial declared the situation "IN THE RIGHT HANDS NOW." The editor expressed that: "When it comes to the question of legal action respecting race rights, citizens have no right to have such matters resolved by mushroom organizations such as a Citizen's Action

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[41] Black Dispatch, 13 September 1952.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Black Dispatch, 27 September 1952. See Daily Oklahoman, 15 September 1952.

Committee."[44]

The NAACP's decision to enroll black students in white schools, met with difficulty in finding a "guinea pig."[45] Therefore, the NAACP's efforts to make its own way in the avenues of the school and State Fair situation drew its own lines of uncertainty.[46]

In the meantime, Baker appeared before the Oklahoma City Council charging the Oklahoma City School Board with being uncooperative. In this pursuit he emphasized:

> A great deal of planning has gone into proposed fairgrounds at Northwest Tenth and May, but 'the great Negro recreation and education center in the old Fair Park has not had this sort of planning. The Park Board and the fair have worked together very closely, but the school board has refused to coordinate its Negro school site planning with either the fair or the Park Board, or any other agency charged with orderly development of Oklahoma City.
>
> . . . The Negro school plan as now drawn, places an auditorium within 80 ft. of a grandstand . . . danger to the public could result from traffic jams, or football hysteria, for instance. . . .The fair must use the present site until the new grounds are ready'.[47]

In taking action on the charges brought by Baker, the Oklahoma City Council requested the Oklahoma City School Board's construction plans for the new black high school to be studied by the Park Board, Planning Commissioners, Fire Department, and Engineering Department.

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[44] Black Dispatch, 27 September 1952.

[45] Black Dispatch, 4 October 1952.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Oklahoma City Times, 23 September 1952.

The School Board complied immediately, but was met with a final request by Baker that the Commissioner's action be withheld until after the current fair when the Fair Board could help study the plans.[48]

Later in a parley with the Fair Board, F. D. stressed the effect a delay in construction of the new black high school would have on the existing situation at Douglass. He placed emphasis on the difficulty of administering approximately 1,700 students through the "zero hour classes," pointing out:

> This is a hardship when you consider the fact that Douglass is the only high school for Negroes in the city. . . .They come here from the four corners of the city. We can't separate students into residential areas, so they have to make the classes if they are assigned to them.
>
> It is impossible to maintain order between classes. We would like to keep pupils two to four abreast, but with five minutes between sessions and with classes scattered, we just have to let them out and every man is for himself.[49]

Further evidence of a large enrollment at Douglass Junior-Senior High School was noted from the first enrollment period of the 1952-53 school year when:

> School opening day brought 373 seventh graders pouring into Douglass from all parts of the city, coming from elementary schools: Bannaker, Page, Dunbar, Orchard Park, Wheatly, Edwards, and Carver. This formed the largest 7th grade class in the history of the school. The class is so large that the 7th grade students have been divided into ten

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[48] Ibid.

[49] Oklahoma City Times, 30 September 1952.

> sections, an unprecedented number of divisions within a class. Each class section was placed under the guidance of special homeroom teachers. 317 enrolled in the 8th grade, 315 are enrolled in the 9th grade, the sophomore class leading in the high school enrollment with 268 students, the 11th grade or junior class is second in enrollment with 198 students, 151 students are seniors and slated for graduation in May.[50]

But F. D. called attention to the fact that equipment for the only vocational program for blacks in the city was housed in the FAA building located at the old fairground site, some 14 blocks away from the main building. Tailoring and drafting classes were instituted in the improvised classrooms at the YMCA building. He admonished: "When we have to use other peoples' buildings, we obviously cannot move in the type of heavy equipment we need to teach properly. There are some classes where we just go through the motions of teaching. In addition, all equipment in the FFA building has to be moved out at school expense every year so that the fair can use the building. Pupils lose five weeks of school."[51]

During the parley, the fairground manager requested the Board of Education "to drop the building of an auditorium for the school and use either the Fair Board's 4-H or Liberal Arts building for that purpose."[52] Baker declared, "We want to be fair to the school situation . . . we are willing to let you use our FFA and

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[50] Black Dispatch, 27 September 1952.

[51] Oklahoma City Times, 30 September 1952.

[52] Ibid.

4-H buildings, which you have been doing, even though you don't own them and have no legal right to them."[53] Attempting to deal with Baker's request, F. D. replied: "His offer was very generous . . . considering that both those buildings were on our property until we switched sites last May. We spent $58,000 putting a heating plant and partitions in the FFA building so we could use it. . . .We use the auditorium for instructional purposes daily, and the use of your buildings would add two to five blocks more to our already scattered system."[54]

While F. D. had obviously based his argument against the fair manager's suggestion on the expenses and further dispersion of the Douglass students, further assessment of the situation revealed that since 1945 Douglass had encountered a 42 percent increased enrollment. In fact, within the first few weeks of the school year of 1952, 163 pupils who were not enrolled in the separate Junior Senior high school in Oklahoma City the previous year had enrolled at Douglass. Of those students enrolled, 52 were from Oklahoma County, 65 from other areas of the state, and 46 were from outside the state. In noting the increase in enrollment, F. D. stated: "Of new students enrolled this year, 35 went to the 7B class and 39 to the 9B class. This increase alone is enough for two new classes . . . .

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[53]Ibid.

[54]Ibid.

It's a part of the general trend of migration to the city, and the crop of war babies in 1940 hasn't even caught up with us yet."[55]

The lack of alignment between the Park Board, the Oklahoma City School Board, and the concerns of F. D. involving the existing situations of Douglass High School was obvious during the parley. The struggles to solidify the agencies and not to turn back on the movement of building the new Douglass plant were possibly reflected in the attempt of John C. Pearson, school board president, to assure F. D. and the black delegation that "no stop order had been put on anything. It would get the Fair Board out of their predicament, if our funds wouldn't permit the building of the gym for another year."[56]

Dr. Swanson's observation emphasized:

> Our financial arrangement might solve the Fair Board's troubles . . . we plan to build as many buildings as we have money for. We won't know until the bids are in whether we may have to drop the gym or not . . . .
>
> I sympathize with their problem but we need that school.

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[55] Ibid.

Douglass High School's enrollment in 1952, exceeded the enrollment of 1951 by a large number. 163 new students entered Douglass in September 1952, coming not only from other towns in Oklahoma County but also from other counties within the state and from other states. Coming from other states were students listed as follows: one each from Colorado and Nebraska; two each from Alabama, Arizonia, Louisiana, Illinois, Michigan and Missouri; three from Kansas; four from Arkansas; five from Mississippi; eight from California; twelve from Texas. See Black Dispatch, 27 September 1952.

[56] Ibid.

> They will just have to make some plans to redistribute their concessions and operations on the grounds that are left when the school starts going up.[57]

In October 1952, F. D. along with members of the Negro Chamber of Commerce, the Urban League Board of Directors, and the Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance met in a closed session with the Oklahoma City Board of Education to plead for immediate start on construction of the new black high school. At the onset of the meeting the school board president John C. Pearson reassured the representatives that bids would be taken in the immediate future for the construction of the new black high school. Further, he declared that not then nor had it ever been the intention of the school board to delay the building of the school.[58]

F. D. again enumerated the problems existing with the separate high school of the city, describing the enrollment increase at Douglass High School of over 40 percent since the first bonds were voted in 1945, and how at the time of the meeting 1,700 were crowded into a school built for 900 students. He stated, "You can see what this does to the emotional and mental health of the child and the teacher to say nothing of the physical crowding. I think our people have been very patient. To ask further delay would be out of

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[57] Oklahoma City Times, 24 September 1952.

[58] Black Dispatch, 4 October 1952.

reason."[59]

By November 1952, bids were taken for the construction of the new separate high school. Lippert Brothers Construction Company received the contract to construct the main buildings for the campus-type high school, as well as remodeling of the old fair grandstand. The proposed gymnasium, with an estimated cost of $391,311 was stricken from the contract because of insufficient funds. Lee Sorey, architect who drew the plans for the new black high school, estimated the bids to be $200,000 below his original estimation for the buildings. In addition, J. Chester Swanson advised that the contract would leave no money available for other black school construction in Oklahoma City before 1953. In fact, all anticipated income up to that date had been set aside for the new black high school, with no money set aside for furnishing and equipping the new buildings.[60]

On January 2, 1953, the Citizen Action Committee with F. D. Moon as chairman of the program committee, sent invitations to various city heads and organizations inviting them to the ground breaking ceremonies for the new high school. On January 7, 1953, at 2:30 P.M., as the Douglass High School band played a swing arrangement of "Dry Bones," over 2,000 persons witnessed the launching of the construction for the new Douglass High School. The ground

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[59]Ibid.

[60]Oklahoma City Times, 25 November 1952.

breaking ceremonies at the old fairground site were a history-making occasion for the separate school system of Oklahoma City. Blacks had waited a long time for the construction on the new building. F. D. stated earlier, "We have three gold shovels and at least 15 folks to use them . . . . I'm going to move a little of that dirt myself."[61]

Participants in the ground breaking ceremonies included: Dr. J. L. Randolph, whose father was the first black school principal of Oklahoma City; James Stewart, southwest regional head of the NAACP; A. D. Mathues, president of the Negro Chamber of Commerce; Mayor Allen Street; F. D. Moon, principal of Douglass High School and chairman of the committee on management (YMCA); John C. Pearson, retiring president of the Oklahoma City Board of Education; C. B. McCray, Oklahoma City School Board President; R. Lewis Barton; Jim Lookabough; Mrs. L. D. Melton; J. Chester Swanson, superintendent of Oklahoma City public schools; Maude Brockway, president of the City Federation of Colored Women; Ira D. Hall; Reverend E. W. Perry and S. Kellam Shields, chairman of the Board of County Commissioners. The first shovel of dirt was turned by Mayor Street; C. B. McCray, Oklahoma City Board president; Cernoria Johnson, secretary of the Citizen Action Committee for Separate

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[61]W. K. Jackson and F. D. Moon to Presidents of City and Civic Organizations, 1953, F. D. Moon Personal Papers. Also Black Dispatch, 10 January 1953; Daily Oklahoman, 6 January 1953.

Schools; and F. D. Moon.[62]

Reverend W. K. Jackson, president of the Negro Citizens' Action Committee, was principal speaker for the occasion. He declared, "This is an hour of destiny . . . . We are beginning to erect an institution which will shape the lives of our citizenry. The buildings which will compose the modern high school plant will be a landmark and memorial to each one who has taken part in this portion of the project."[63]

Earl Scarborough, president of the Douglass High School senior class represented the student body. In thanking those who helped push the project through to reality, while summing up the occasion he stated in part: "Now it is no longer a dream, we shall not betray your trust."[64]

F. D. also held a trust which had sustained him to this time of his life. He declared a few months later:

> Acceptance of Christ at 14 was an experience, not a mere formality. Out in the country near Fallis, Oklahoma, at the time of my conversion, one was expected to make a real decision, to have a recognized experience such as Paul encountered on the road to Damascus. Of course, the experience might be less dramatic and confounding. The search for confirmation of my experience has effected my life greatly. The experience came to me on a certain Friday in the month of August. I sought Divine confirmation, to make certain

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[62] Black Dispatch, 10 January 1953, Daily Oklahoman, 8 January 1953.

[63] Black Dispatch, 10 January 1953.

[64] Ibid.

that I had made no mistake. I was led to read the Scriptures for an answer to the anxiety of the hour .

. . . As a sequence to my religion, my philosophy of life grows largely out of the scriptures. For people who are trying to climb to be recognized, the way is prescribed in: 'He who would be greatest among you, let him be the servant.' Honor comes to those who serve unselfishly. As enriching as they are, no one needs to peruse the 'Great Books' of the ages for an outline of a good life. Micah, the sixth chapter and the eighth verse, gives the pattern so plainly and vividly: 'And what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with they God.'[65]

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[65] Oklahoma Journal, 11 March 1953.

CHAPTER XI

DOUGLASS HIGH SCHOOL IN OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA 1953-1954

Curriculum, Activities and Concerns

By the 1953-54 school year, as the growing debate waged in America on the quality of education, or more pointedly equality of educational opportunities for blacks, black citizens of Oklahoma City awaited the completion of the new black high school. Despite the fact that educational facilities were taxed at Douglass, quality education remained the desired aim of F. D. and the Douglass staff. As if compounding the philosophical view of the era, biology and related sciences were among the most popular courses offered in the curriculum as was noted in their laboratory, science, and field trip activities since 1952. In addition, physical education grew in interest and objectives. For example, Lola T. Alexander and Emma Freeman, co-directors of the physical educational program for the girls at Douglass, aimed their objectives towards clean living, good sportsmanship, self-adjustment, fun and happy life experiences. Their instructional activities included emphasis placed on health, safety, first aid, games and sports.[1]

[1] "During the early 1950's arguments raised by critics of the

In fact, Douglass teachers like most black educators in Oklahoma were challenged by the standards of OANT to direct subject matter, as set by state and local boards of education and social behavior demonstrated by black youths, toward opportunities that would aid them in achieving definite, realizable goals in "Education for Citizenship in a Democratic Society."[2]

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public school program and the counter-arguments of its defenders reached a fever peak. Some of the major faults found were that American public schools had deteriorated in quality, as non-intellectual programs of life adjustment and progessivism had weakened the intellectual disciplines of mathematics, science, and foreign languages. Neglect of academically gifted students it was felt by some, had resulted in a generally mediocre level of education. After the Supreme Court's segregation decision in Brown v. the Board of Education of Topeka in 1954, equality of educational opportunity for Negroes and other minority became a nationwide concern. Civil rights leaders and others demanded an urgent reassessment of schools and their educational programs." See Gerald Gutek in An Historical Introduction to American Education, ed. James C. Stone (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1970), pp. 146-147. Also see for example, Black Dispatch, 29 November 1952, 21 February 1953.

[2]For example see F. V. Wilson, "Education for Citizenship in a Democratic Society," in F. D. Moon, ed., Program Journal of the Oklahoma Association of Negro Teachers, 1952, pp. 3-5.

Upon the black school revolved the responsibility for educaing the black youth of Oklahoma into a genuine appreciation of an intelligent preference for those activities which made for a complte belief and dynamic participation in the privileges, duties, and responsibilities of American citizenship. Further, Oklahoma teachers were challenged to this as workable in any given situation, curricular or extra-curricular, and each individual teacher was considered answerable for helping each individual student to extract from situations those virtues, experiences, and strengths which would enable him to make worthwhile contributions to life and living." As a matter of fact F. D. stated that: "The Negro along with other minority groups, must be prepared to enter the new era." Ibid., p. 3. See F. D. Moon, "The Negro and Democracy." F. D. Moon, Personal Papers.

In keeping with this challenge students of the social science department of Douglass under the instruction of Mrs. S. M. Harris involved themselves with learning by doing. For example, one such activity involved the problem of how to fill income tax forms. Each student was given small sample copies of tax forms from which he followed instructions. They were taught the various advantages of using long and short forms. As future voters students participated in activities involving actual contact with city councilmen. This activity led to televised interviews between city councilmen and Douglass students. Mrs. Harris expressed at the time, "We feel that this is very beneficial in developing our young men and women of tomorrow. This program is designed to give the boys and girls a feel for our government and its functions."[3]

During the month of October, 1953, F. D. released the following news article:

> Last week we pointed out that our enrollment increased to the point that we would have about 1,800 students at the end of the semester and that the total staff not including custodians is approaching 70. This week we want to help the community to

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[3] Black Dispatch, 6 February 1954.

The kind of activities at Douglass by 1953-54 seemed to follow the thinking of John Dewey, who was a keen observer, critic, and theorist of American society and education. In fact he exercized tremendous influence on the development of twentieth-century American education. His 'complete act of thought' was a rendition of an educational methodology which was used by some educators as the activity method or the problem-solving approach to learning. See Gerald Gutek, An Historical Introduction to American Education, ed. James C. Stone (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1970), pp. 176, 191, 194.

understand some of the changes that are being made as a result of our greatly expanded program.

Did you know that it is a problem to preserve individuality in such a large school? It is difficult to keep every individual a living personality different from any other personality rather than just being a lifeless cog in a machine. To aid in the objective of perserving individuality we have 46 different homerooms ranging in enrollment from about 25 to a maximum of about 45 or 50 students. Each homeroom has a teachers whose job in a nutshell is to be a counselor or a parent for each child.

The homeroom teachers aid children in solving their personal problems, advising them as to subjects they should take, and in discussing future careers. Do you realize that these homeroom teachers remain with the students an average of three school years? How intimately these homeroom teachers get acquainted with their children and fall in love with them may be seen from this true illustration. From year to year some changes must be made in homeroom assignments, as pastors in different churches. At the beginning of this year we changed a homeroom teacher from a senior high school group to a new 7B section. Although this teacher was mature in years she hated so much to separate from her group that I found her crying. Of course, we changed the assignment to allow her to proceed with her 'darlings' of the senior high school. Her love for these particular children illustrated precisely what we are trying to do to provide a home life and parental feeling as between the homeroom teacher and the homeroom pupil.

Homeroom teachers will accept more fully their responsibility if all of our parents would learn the names of all of our homeroom teachers for their children, and feel free to call upon them for any help in connection with their particular children. In short, to each of the six grades 7 through 12, we have six class advisors, one each for the six grades. Class advisors have the responsibility of assigning pupils to the various homeroom teachers, supervising the activities of the homeroom teachers in their particular grades and participating in general counseling programs for special grade levels.

In administering the program of such a large and expanding system there must be a division of labor. We feel that our parents and community will be helped by understanding this division of responsibility. We begin with the principal. The

> principal has an overall responsibility for administration within his particular school. It is obvious, of course, that no one person can perform the details of such a big job successfully. Since this is true, the principal is generally expected to assume the major responsibility for supervision of instruction, exercising leadership and public relations, giving general leadership with respect to the multiple activities carried on in the school.
>
> Another important member of the administration is the vice principal. In our school, this person is Mr. W. F. Jeltz. Mr. Jeltz has three assistants, including the attendance clerk. This is primarily the responsibility of dealing with the problem of attendance, and discipline. Attendance involves seeing whether a student is in school and if not, why. To his office should be directed all calls from parents concerning whether a child was in school or whether he was in school the day before. The reports of parents when children are not in school should be directed to his office.
>
> Did you know that the work of children is hampered many times when parents thoughtlessly request that their children be excused from school to pay a bill, or to go to town to buy something that could just as well be bought after school? Do parents see such requests leading to absence of their children may be the cause of the child passing or failing a grade? It would add greatly to the success of your child if you, the parent, will arrange to have children to attend to business off school time rather than on school time.[4]

It was during this time due to the complexities of the program at the Douglass Junior-Senior High School, a new element was induced within the school. Margaret Dabney, junior class advisor organized the parents of the junior class into a permanent organization. This organization was the first of its kind in the separate school. The direct purpose of the organization was to acquaint the parents with the activities of the students in the junior class which included homeroom events, various contests,

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[4]Black Dispatch, 24 October 1953.

parades for Junior Day activities, proms and many other activities participated in by the class so that parents could be given the opportunity to share the responsibilities of the students' class activities.[5]

900,000 Dollar Bond Issue 1953

At the beginning of the school year 1953-1954, the new black high school for Oklahoma City was nearing completion. It should be remembered that the construction of the basic $1,214,927 plant was contracted for without a gymnasium, health building, swimming pool or library as opposed to the original plans for the school. Also, the County Commissioners had not pared the Board of Education's bond request of $1,250,000, nor the original request of F. D. and the Negro Citizens' Action Committee for $1,500,000 in 1951 but called an election for a $900,000 bond issue instead. This reduction of bond money posed the problem of completing the high school with respect to the original construction plans and was a source of concern for the Board of Education and the Negro Citizens' Action Committee. In fact by 1953 the school board contemplated the options for advancing further funds for completion of the new black high school through federal assistance. But the additional fact was that the State Fair for 1953 was held on the

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[5]Ibid.

old fairground site hiding the new million dollar plant.[6] One editor of the city newspaper commented:

> It's amazing, but with a new one million dollar Negro high school almost completed on the grounds the Oklahoma State Fair, 1953, one will hardly notice it. People coming to the fair through main front gates will come squarely into the incompleted auditorium . . . . Some of the new buildings will be used. One building will be occupied by a huge furniture show, another will house the police exhibit . . . . The big use will be for the state administrative force, including the hospital, police station and various tax collecting agencies which will be in the new building . . .[7]

In fact, the State Fair did not culminate its 46 years activities at the old fairground site and move to its new location at N. W. 10th and May, until Saturday night October 3, 1953. On the following Monday the workers returned to the old site, to aid in the completion of the new black high school.[8]

In July 1953, F. D. reported the progress on the construction of the new black high school during a meeting of the Negro Citizens' Action Committee held at the St. John Baptist Church. F. D. stated:

> Lippert Brothers, the contractors constructing the new Douglass High School, expected to have the building ready for classes by the January semester, 1954. Facilities might be functioning just a little earlier but for the September state fair, which would delay the contractors at least thirty days. All of the furnishings for the new plant have been

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[6] Daily Oklahoman, 6 October 1953.

[7] Oklahoma City Times, 22 September 1953.

[8] Daily Oklahoman, 4 October 1953.

> contracted for, but the $900,000 allocation some time ago for the structure has already proven not to be sufficient. Some plans have to be developed to supply additional funds. The accrual from the mill levy for this year has already been utilized and put into the structure.[9]

Reverend W. K. Jackson, president of the Negro Citizens' Action Committee, appointed a committee to (1) pursue the question of additional money for the completion of the new black high school with the Board of Education and (2) to draw the attention of the school board to overcrowded conditions existing at the Dunbar Elementary School.[10]

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[9] Black Dispatch, 11 July 1953.

[10] Ibid.

The Dunbar Elementary School for black students in Oklahoma City, located at 1432 Northeast 7th was drastically overcrowded by 1953 with more than 1,200 pupils. J. T. McNeely, in a meeting with the Board of Education, pointed out that prefabricated structures placed there to relieve the situation had greatly reduced the playground space. Children who attended Dunbar came from as far north as 18th Street in the vicinity of Bath where only a majority school was available for majority students. There was no direct bus service for the Dunbar students. Black students who attended Dunbar had to cross 7th, 8th and 10th Streets, all of which were heavy traffic streets. In addition, the school records revealed that the Bath School's enrollment had decreased from 369 in 1951 to 199 at the close of 1952-53 school year. This was due to members of the white majority moving out of the Bath School area as black families moved in. On the strength of the evidence mentioned, the Negro Citizens' Action Committee requested of the Board of Education to convert Bath Elementary School at 1324 North Kelham, into a black school. The problem at this point as pointed out by school superintendent J. Chester Swanson was the fact that, while the population move pointed toward the eventual switch of Bath from a majority to a separate school, such a changeover would require months of planning and probably a year's advance notice to the community. Black Dispatch, 11 July 1953; Daily Oklahoman, 16 July 1953.

An account on the actions of the committee appointed by Reverend Jackson revealed a written request to the Oklahoma City Board of Education on July 15, 1953. The request urged the board to recommend to the County Commissioners a $900,000 bond election to complete the new high school and to build one elementary school for blacks. It was noted that when the contract was taken for the new high school board members voted to support the Negro Citizens' Action Committee's desire for another bond issue to complete the school as originally planned.[11]

The proposal of a $900,000 bond issue by the Negro Citizens' Action Committee to the board recommended $400,000 of the $900,000 for building and equipping a gymnasium and health building; $150,000 for a swimming pool; $100,000 for a library, and $250,000 for an elementary school. In total the committee declared $1,150,000 "immediately necessary" to carry on an adequate program for the separate schools, adding that a second elementary school could be financed from the building levy.[12]

The main question hovering over a definite decision by the Board of Education at the time was the possibility of federal aid or a complete exploration of pay-as-you-go expansion program. In explaining these possibilities Superintendent Swanson stated:

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[11] Daily Oklahoman, 16 July 1953.

[12] Ibid.

> First of all, we have to wait until the new federal aid bill and its allocations are clarified . . . . The bill is now before a senate education subcommittee. With the increase of Negro workers at Tinker Field, we have a chance for an appreable amount of federal help for separate schools - - - possibly $200,000 to $300,000. At this point, separate schools actually have a better chance for federal aid than majority schools.
>
> Second, the school board will launch an exhaustive study of pay-as-you-go plan expansion, or perhaps a compromise between immediate and long-range action.
>
> We've got to hang on to Bath School as long as possible . . . . at least until enrollment goes below 100. Since majority and Negro school funds are completely separated, the separate school district would have to purchase the school after long, complicated preliminaries.[13]

But the Negro Citizens' Action Committee contended that:

> A pay-as-you-go financing method would take too long, requiring a minimum of six years to do the job . . . while some of the majority high schools do not yet have auditoriums, gyms and swimming pools, these facilities are offered in several of the white high schools.
>
> We feel that inasmuch as our is the only school for Negroes, equality of opportunity is not provided unless the Negroes have in their one school everything that you have in any one high school for whites.[14]

During the course of the meeting with the School Board F. D. along with Reverend William J. Harvey emphasized the need for "one absolutely complete high school."[15] In this regard they asked the board to continue its support of their building program.[16]

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[13] Oklahoma City Times, 16 July 1953.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

The conference between the school board and black citizens was cited in an editorial of the Daily Oklahoman as "Planning in the Dark."

> Proceeds of a building bond issue proposed by the Negro Citizens' Action Committee would be used largely to bring the facilities of Douglass High School up to the standards of the best equipped high school for white pupils in Oklahoma City.
>
> It is the feeling of the committee that 'equality of opportunity is not provided' unless the facilities of the city's one high school for Negroes are as good in every respect as those of the best equipped high school for white pupils.
>
> This is a manifest reference to the Supreme Court's traditional position in segregation cases. Since 1890 the court has taken the position that segregation does not abridge the 14th amendment's warranty of the rights and immunities of citizens so long as facilities provided the separate races are equal. It is around this interpretation of the 14th amendment that all of the states in the south and many states elsewhere in the country have built their segregated school systems.
>
> But waiting determination in the Supreme Court now is a challenge of segregation which skirts the 'separate but equal' doctrine entirely. Pending in the court is a consolidation of five cases sponsored by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People on the behalf of parents of Negro school children in Virginia, South Carolina, Delaware, Kansas and the District of Columbia. The plaintiffs are contending that even though facilities are equal, segregation on grounds of race is an act of discrimination in itself, and therefore is unconstitutional. Seldom has the court been called on to return a decision fraught with such far reaching implications. If it adheres to the 'separate but equal' doctrine it almost certainly will have to stipulate that facilities must be equal in fact. Otherwise Negro plaintiffs could go into court with the argument that in many southern schools the 'separate but equal' treatment is a fiction.
>
> Certainly the court is juggling an extraordinarily hot potato. The social implications of this case are so tremendous that in some states the question of dismantling the public school

> system may get serious consideration in the event of a decision against segregation. On the other hand, a decision upholding segregation, but insisting on real equality of treatment could entail staggering financial problems for many states.
>
> Whatever the outcome, the question has cast a heavy shadow over all segregated school planning, and not much progress may be expected until the issue is resolved. That would seem to apply to Oklahoma City and to every other community in the country that practices segregation.[17]

If the Oklahoma City school board took notice of the mentioned editorial it was not evident in their actions on October 5, 1953. It was on this date the Oklahoma City school board voted on the petition submitted by the Negro Citizens' Action Committee requesting the County Commissioners to call an election for additional funds to complete the new Douglass High School and for the use of Bath Elementary School for black students.[18]

Upon approval by the school board to request of the County Commissioners a $900,000 bond issue for the separate schools, the Negro Action Committee, in a meeting on October 6, 1953, at the St. John Baptist Church, was informed by F. D. that the school board's president, C. V. McCray, would not at this time grant the Bath Elementary School for the use of black students because of the great number of white children still in attendance there. While the need for Dunbar Elementary School was a growing concern for the black organization, the Negro Citizens' Action Committee moved ahead with

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[17] Daily Oklahoman, 18 July 1953.

[18] Daily Oklahoman, 6 October 1953.

organized efforts to confer with the County Commissioners regarding a $900,000 bond issue to complete the new black high school.[19]

Reverend W. K. Jackson appointed: George Ragland, Attorney H. McKinely Rowan, A. D. Mathues, F. D. Moon, Cernoria Johnson, Reverend C. C. Abram, H. A. Berry, George Ferguson, Reverend Bagsby, W. C. Price, Meredith Mathews, Reverend M. H. Braggs, J. M. Jenkins, A. O. Tennyson, and Ann Sawyer to contact city organizations for support. In addition, he appointed Ira Hall, A. D. Mathues, Reverend Thomas Griffin, Commissioner Ralph Adair, George Ragland, F. D. Moon, Reverend E. W. Perry, Commissioner S. K. Kelham, Thomas McNeeley, Reverend J. C. West, L. D. Jenkins and Commissioner T. Ray Phillips, Jr. to confer with the city's County Commissioners.[20]

In the meantime, Attorney Robert H. Sherman and C. E. Grady, County Superintendent, filed a suit in the district court on behalf of 18 blacks of Spencer, Oklahoma, school district 35. This was an effort to force the County Commissioners to build a separate school for blacks of that district. With 96 black children in the district, and according to the state law, a separate school was to be provided when 10 black children lived in a district. A previous request for the school district was denied in a report by the county superintendent October 26, 1953. Further, the petition as presented contended

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[19]Black Dispatch, 10 October, 1953.

[20]Daily Oklahoman, 2 November 1953.

that when commissioners receive such a report from the school superintendent it is their duty to prepare a specification and advertise for bids for construction of the needed building.[21]

In the final decision, the County Commissioners approved a $2,083,000 bond issue for Oklahoma County. $1,083,000 was earmarked for improvement of County roads and highways and the construction of bridges across the Canadian at Northeast 4th east of Foundry, Portland south of Southeast 15th and Meridian, south of Southwest 156. The remaining one million dollars was earmarked for separate schools of Oklahoma County. Specifically, $900,000 was designated for the completion of a new black high school in Oklahoma City, $60,000 was earmarked for the erection of a black elementary school at Spencer, Oklahoma and $40,000 was for a 12th grade building at Arcadia.[22]

Three Oklahoma City citizens, L. A. Macklanburg, local manufacturer, R. Lewis Barton and R. L. Peebly, were named to spearhead white citizen groups to press for the approval of the city and county bond issue. The sponsors gave the theme of "follow through" for the bond issue denoting the bond money as primarily for the completion

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[21] Daily Oklahoman, 4 November 1953.

[22] Daily Oklahoman, 15 November 1953.

Both Spencer, Oklahoma and Arcadia are located in Oklahoma County. Spencer is located five miles Northeast of Oklahoma City and Arcadia is adjoining Oklahoma City. See George H. Shirk, Oklahoma Place Names, 2d ed., rev. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974), pp. 11, 255.

of projects already under way.[23]

F. D. was elected as general director to direct the public interest in favor of the separate school bond issue by the Negro Citizens' Action Committee. In spite of his other obligations, by November 28th he reported that the black committee was "far ahead of the downtown group, and the Chamber of Commerce in Edmond had endorsed the bond issue."[24]

In organizing the campaign, F. D. assisted in selecting speakers for churches and acquainting citizens with facts surrounding the bond issue. For example, he warned the community of the delicate situation existing, due to the recent changes involving proper registration to vote and cautioned citizens to register as soon as possible.[25]

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[23]Ibid.

[24]Ibid.

In November, 1953, F. D. was elected president of the Urban League Board of Directors, the first black to hold this position in Oklahoma City, succeeding Reverend Frank O. Holmes. He had remained as Executive Secretary of the OANT; Second president of the Study of Negro Life and History, Board member of United Funds; Chairman of the Steering Committee for Girl Scouts of Oklahoma City and County; Chairman of the Committee of Management for the Northeast 4th Street YMCA; and general superintendent of the Tabernacle Baptist Church Sunday School. See Daily Oklahoman, 22 November, 18 December 1953.

[25]Black Dispatch, 28 November 1953.

In 1953 it was common knowledge that many voters in Oklahoma County were registering at business offices and other places under the impression they had a right to designate a legal residence

However, F. D. was cognizant of the urgency of a large number of registered voters for the passage of the separate school bond issue. This was due in part to the emphasized opposition for the approval of a separate school to be erected in Spencer. In fact an article in The Oklahoma County News carried:

> The colored people of the Spencer school district up to this time have apparently cared nothing about the law enacted in the horse and buggy days which said that when there were ten children of school age in a district, they could petition the county commissioners for a separate school, until probably some outside influence came in and influenced these people to petition for one.
>
> Knowing the people, where they live, how they are divided, and the transportation problem involved, we do not believe the colored people would favor such a move if they fully understood what it meant to them.
>
> The Spencer district is a district without a single Negro living in the town of Spencer, but there are two colored settlements within the district, one in the extreme northeastern corner just a quarter mile from Jones separate grade school, one of the most modern of its type in the country. The other settlement is about two and a half or three miles away in the southeast corner of the district and one and a half miles from the ultra modern Dungee high and grade school.
>
> Since the separate schools are financed by a county-wide levy, district lines have not been adhered to in Oklahoma County. There is not a transferred colored student in the entire county, since district colored students have for years attended the Jones separate and Dungee schools. The county has levied the funds for the building and maintenance of them.

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outside their homes. This was changed when George Miskousky, State Senator, presented a new registration law for Oklahoma County. Under the new law in 1953, all county residents had to reregister before they could vote. Each precinct registrar was requested to reject any person's application to register outside the precinct of his actual residence or abode. See Daily Oklahoman, 28 October 1953.

These students are properly housed at present and the taxpayers have been taxed once for buildings for these children. If another building is built for them you taxpayers will be again taxed to build them another set of buildings which are unnecessary under the present setup. They do at present have equal or above equal opportunities with the white children of the Spencer school -- at least the Spencer white children walk to school, while the colored children are transported to their schools.

During the year 1952-53, the average daily attendance at Jones separate school was 109, with five teachers. This would be far from the 40 per room mentioned in the previous statement.

If there are 81 enumerated in the district, we are sure many are high school students and many are non-attendants, therefore the attendance would be small. We believe we have been making forward steps in Oklahoma County as regards separate schools, and that it would be a calamity to try to turn back to the little one, two or three-room colored school stuck back in some out-of-the-way place.

For the year 1953-54, there has not been enough money in the county funds to support the separate schools of the county. It is believed that some cannot have a full term of school, yet this bond issue, if carried, would add from twenty to forty thousand dollars per year operating expenses, this added to the present strain.

If this bond issue carries, don't think for a minute this will be the end. Star has no separate school, but has many more colored children than Spencer. We happen to know that Star has been moving in the same direction for some time.

If this move materializes we believe there will be one of the greatest moves for bond issues, and small separate school buildings set off that Oklahoma has ever seen. Most of the districts of Oklahoma County could find 10 colored children living within their boundaries. There could not be a more backward step, and the extra tax burden would be terrific.

In the elction Tuesday, December 8, you will be voting for or against $900,000 for Douglass school in Oklahoma City, $60,000 for Spencer, and $40,000 for Arcadia. These taxes would be collected from the taxpayers of the entire county, not just from the three named districts. Vote against these

bonds and avoid a backward step, and also save a lot of tax money.[26]

Nevertheless, F. D. soon reported that approximately 66 organizations, schools, fraternities, churches and civic groups contacted for financial aid to the bond election budget had responded immediately with financial assistance. Likewise, a group of businessmen in Midwest City, a predominantly white area, went on record in support of both county questions to be voted on December 8, 1953.[27]

As the bond issue campaign moved into its final stages the Douglass students and staff took an increasingly active role. In fact, the Douglass Home Economics Department offered baby sitters for persons needing baby sitters while voting at the polls. Two options were available for this service: Parents could bring their children to the Home Economics cottage at Douglass High School or request a baby sitter to be sent to their home. In addition, students answered telephone requests for cars made available for transportation to the polls located at Douglass, Bannaka, Carver, Dunbar, Edwards, Inman Page, Carter G. Woodson and Orchard Park schools as well as Mathues Service Station. The Douglass band under

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[26] Oklahoma County News, 27 November 1953.

[27] Daily Oklahoman, 26 November 1953.

Midwest City is a separate municipality adjoining Oklahoma City on the Southeast but still within Oklahoma County. Incorporated March 11, 1953. Took its name from adjoining Midwest Air Depot, now Tinker Air Force Base. See Names, p. 160.

the direction of G. L. Buford drew attention to the campaign by performing at Jones, Luther, Arcadia, Edmond and Britton, Oklahoma. This activity was performed by three bus loads of Douglass students. George Ragland urged the public during the band performances to vote for the bond issue. The day before the election Douglass junior high school students boosted the election of the bond issue with a parade through the northeast sections of Oklahoma City.[28]

On December 8, 1953, the $3,896,000 city-county bond issues for separate schools, roads and river floodways were approved. The $1,000,000 separate school proposition carried 16,009 for the separate schools and 4,960 against, meeting the 60 percent approval of the participating voters, and carrying over the road issue in a town made up of the majority.[29]

In extending his thanks to the Oklahoma citizens, F. D. stated he was "very grateful, extremely so, to the citizens of

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[28]Black Dispatch, 5 December 1953; Daily Oklahoman, 5, 7 December 1953. Also, G. L. Buford, interview held 5212 Stonewall Drive, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 7 August 1977.

[29]Daily Oklahoman, 9 December 1953.

The approval of both county questions required 60 percent of the participating voters. The city floodway carried 7,361 to 6,016. The $1,083,000 county road and bridge proposal squeezed by the required 60 percent margin with a vote of 12,556 for and 8,269 against. Indication of voters attitude toward both county questions was strongest in Edmond, Oklahoma, a predominantly white town. The Edmond voters voted against the road improvements but voted approval of the separate school construction program. Ibid.

Oklahoma City and County for voting favorably on the separate school bond issue. Your vote for education for youth in Oklahoma City is passing into a new era. A million thanks to you all."[30]

Renaming Douglass Junior Senior High School

On December 11, 1953, during a meeting of the Negro Citizens' Action Committee and the absence of F. D., Reverend J. C. West, minister of the Bethel Star Church, took the floor and informed the group that since the new high school would inherit the name of Douglass it would leave the present junior high school without a name. He then proclaimed that the Douglass Junior-Senior High School be named F. D. Moon Junior High. This recommendation was met with persons present joining in the praise of F. D. Reverend West continued, "The time has gone when buildings are named for great leaders after they have died, and they know not what great buildings, monuments or other high honors are bequeathed to them."[31] Members present raised their voices in a staccato chant for F. D. and each person asked for recognition from the chair so they could express esteem for F. D.[32]

Following the citizens' demonstration, a formal motion was made by Reverend West to name the Douglass school, F. D. Moon Junior

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[30] Black Dispatch, 12 December 1953.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

High School. The motion was seconded by representatives of the Negro Chamber of Commerce, Separate Schools' PTA Council, City Federation of Colored Woman's Club, Oklahoma City Negro Teachers' Association, Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance, NAACP, Urban League, Baptist Minister's Union, Alpha Phi Alpha and Omega Psi Phi Fraternities and the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority. Over 24 organizations and 40 churches were represented in the unanimous vote.[33]

Spearheading the actions for naming the junior high school for F. D., Reverend W. K. Jackson, president of the Negro Citizens' Action Committee, appointed Mrs. Cernoria Johnson chairman of a committee to seek the approval of the Oklahoma City Board of Education. In doing so the committee was instructed to investigate the method of naming separate schools in Oklahoma City and to request the school board to waive the rule in naming a school for a living person if any existed.[34]

A check of the method used for naming separate schools in Oklahoma City revealed that the initiative for such names came from some segment of the black community. In fact, the old Bryant School was changed to Inman Page at the suggestion of the black community. The same was true for all the schools, without exception. In addition, at least three of the separate schools in Oklahoma City were named

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[33] Daily Oklahoman, 18 December 1953.

[34] Ibid.

for living people. For example, Inman Page School was named for Mr. Page while he was principal of Douglass; Edwards Elementary School was named for Walter J. Edwards; Carter Woodson School was named for Carter Woodson several years before his death. In fact, the committee contended that Douglass High School was established in 1896. If then the elementary school from which Douglass evolved had the same name, then the Douglass school was named for Frederick Douglass before he died in 1895.[35]

Upon presenting the petition for renaming Douglass F. D. Moon Junior High School to the Board of Education, Mrs. Johnson pointed out that the set precedent of naming schools for deceased persons had been relaxed on several occasions. She emphasized the fact that all groups in the east side community as well as others among the white population had endorsed the action. White citizens joining the Citizens' Action Committee in naming the junior high school for F. D. included: E. K. Gaylord, Roy J. Turner, J. Wiley Richardson, Tom Sterling, W. McFerrin Stowe, Dr. Waldo Stephens, Mrs. Freda Ameringer, George Green of the Liberty National Bank, Mayor Allen Street, Norman McCleod of the Y.M.C.A., and Fire Chief McAlphine. "No recommendation from the Negro community on the naming of a school had ever received so many endorsements. It took the Board of Education less than a minute to accept F. D. Moon's name for the new junior

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[35] Oklahoma City Times, 27 August 1954.

high school in February, 1954."[36] The motion covering the action was made by Mr. C. B. McCray and seconded by Mr.Jim Wright, Oklahoma City board member.[37]

Approximately 300 persons attended the F. D. Moon Junior High School's dedicatory program which was held at the school's location, 600 North High Street, August 26, 1954, Reverend W. K. Jackson, presided. Those participating and representing community organizations were: Members of the Board of Education; Zelia N. Breaux, a former teacher of F. D. at Langston University and director of the Community Band; Reverend E. W. Perry, pastor of the Tabernacle Baptist Church; Reverend Thomas J. Griffin, Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance; Mrs. Maude Brockway, City Federation of Colored Women; James E. Stewart, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People; L. E. Richardson, Negro Chamber of Commerce; Purcell Graham, Oklahoma City Urban League; Meredith Mathews, Young Men's Christian Association; Mrs. E. B. Young, Young Women's Christian Association; W. F. Jeltz, Separate School Teachers; Miss Grace Perkins and Leonardo DeBose, Douglass High School Music Department; Reverend J. T. Abram; William Johnson, vice principal of Douglass Junior Senior High

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[36] Ibid.

[37] C. B. McCray, interview held 900 N. Klein, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 12 August 1975.

School; J. M. Jenkins, teacher and committee chairman; Reverend J. C. West, Bethel Star Church. Attorney H. McKinley Rowan was speaker for the occasion honoring F. D. "in recognition of his deep insight into the needs of youth, his indomitable courage, and his tenacity of purpose in helping create an institution to meet those needs."[38]

In addition to the community's honor of naming the junior high school for F. D., the students of the Douglass Junior High School assembled in the auditorium of their school to give tribute to F. D. and his accomplishments. The program for the occasion was started with the reading of the prayer and scripture by Jerry Pat Rucker, a student. F. D. accepted very humbly the honor bestowed upon him, then he admonished all who were present to "keep their feet on the ground."[39] He then stated to the students his three point philosophy for living: "(1) Do right as you see the right. (2) Be just and fair to everybody, whether they be of high state or low, whether they be black or white. (3) Work hard."[40] The admonishment to the students to keep their feet on the ground can possibly be explained in a subsequent news article in which F. D. wrote:

In every advance I have made I have tried to keep my feet on

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[38]F. D. Moon Junior High School Dedication Program (Oklahoma City: F. D. Moon Personal Papers [1954]), p. 2.

[39]Black Dispatch, 13 February 1954.

[40]Ibid.

the ground. I test myself constantly to see if I am keeping the common touch. Recently an illiterate man put his arms around me, as a brother, and I was thrilled. I have something inside of me which keeps me from being inflated. If people are nervous with me I stop and ask myself why am I failing with them?[41]

In addressing the Junior High assembly he stated in part:

Through the thoughtfulness of The Carver Achievement Club of Oklahoma City and the proclamation of Governor Roy J. Turner we observe Carver Day. When Dr. Carver was questioned as to what advice he would give to his contemporaries and the prosperous he answered, 'Take What You Have and Make The Most of It.'

His life was filled with many experiences: (1) He was deprived of a mother in infancy. (2) He put up with unkindness. (3) He never had a birthday, for no one ever told him when he was born. In spite of his hardships, Dr. Carver learned valuable lessons which he used throughout his life. He leaned upon himself. He learned to endure hardships. His independence flourished. He had great pride even in his early teens. All he asked was work to do and fair play . . . .

Dr. Carver went from town to town working, getting a little schooling when and where he could. Most of the time he was studying where he was going to sleep the next night, how to get his next meal or how to get the next book he needed. He had a deep desire to go to college even though he had little formal education. He was refused entrance to Hiland University in Kansas because he was a Negro. He never complained but suffered such indignities in silence.

In spite of these indignities, Carver believed that when one door was closed to him, two opened. So, Simpson College admitted him in 1890 when he was 26 years old. The second door opened in one year when he was accepted at Iowa University. He was offered a teaching position at Iowa University, but preferred to teach his own people at Tuskegee . . . .

He always rose at 4:00 A.M. and went forth to commune with God and get his orders for the day. He called his workshop

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[41] Oklahoma City Advertiser, 12 March 1954.

at Tuskegee "Gods Little Workshop." He said there the consumation of a long felt desire, from the time he could think the burning thoughts, "I want to know" which was followed by his corollary "I can do that," was the dynamo which powered his life. He only knew that what he had given the world had come from a power greater than himself. He always wore a flower in his buttonhole and the love of God in his heart. A wanderer and an outcast, he reached the pinnacles of success and acclaim . . . .

He had the blessings of the president of the U. S. and was sought after by Thomas Edison and Henry Ford. In 1931, 18 schools were named for him, and even a southern white child bore his name. Many honors were bestowed upon him for his outstanding work in science. 70 boots were given Dr. Carver and he covered the distance in one allegorical step, but the other 13 million are following swiftly after him . . . Take What You Have and Make the Most of It.[42]

But perhaps another aspect of F. D. during this time is asserted in an article appearing in the Oklahoma Advertiser:

Professor F. D. Moon, principal of the city's Douglass High School, knows how Jacob felt when he worked and waited fourteen years before he could marry his beloved Rachel. Moon cited the Biblical comparison this week in pointing out that he has been principal for fourteen years, and in September will move into the fine Douglass High School nearing completion at the old fairgrounds.

Often referred to an the "Dean of Negro Education in Oklahoma," Moon has had a distinguished career and has received many honors in the teaching field. The latest is the recent decision of the city board of education to name the present Douglass school the "F. D. Moon Junior High School," next fall.

A fine looking man with a humble spirit, he has brought credit to his race, his profession and his city. He has a definite philosophy by which he lives. 'The Bible is the greatest guide for living we have,' he says. 'I see people all around struggling for recognition and grabbing for this and that, and I feel like going up to them and telling them that the way up

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[42] Black Dispatch, 13 February 1954.

is really simple. The Master Teacher told us plainly, 'He who would be greatest among you, let him be the servant of all.' It's as simple as that.

'You don't need a 500 page book to tell you how to live. You need only Micah 6:8, 'What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.' The greatest satisfaction in life comes from giving of yourself to people and dealing with them fairly and justly . . .' . . . Professor Moon has never been too much concerned about the race problem. 'My solution is very simple,' he says, 'All people need is freedom to make contacts with other people. When it becomes a stigma to be seen together, you can't see what is noble and fine in the other person . . .'

. . . Human nature hasn't changed much through the years. People are people no matter where or when they live. Many persons are unhappy simply because they haven't learned how to live. Some worry when the sun shines because they think it will rain, We must learn to adjust to things and conditions. There is no point in wailing about something you can't help.'

Life is worth living because it is so full of opportunities for thrilling experiences. There is nothing in the world which would make one happier than to go to bed at night knowing that he has made life a little richer for someone that day. It may have been only a 'good morning' or 'you can make it' but it was a lift. Life is full of chances like that. Recognition is the greatest need of mankind. People want to be consulted and recognized, and a cherry "hello" and a warm handclasp mean much to us all.'

. . . 'I think the average person tries to do the right thing. They differ only in what they think is right. If people will make an effort to understand one another they'll get along. I have found that really great people are commonplace when you get to know them.' He recalls that when the great Marion Anderson was here for a concert a few years ago and filled the auditorium on a rainy day, a reception was given for her in an east side home. 'The people tracked in mud, and after they all left Marian Anderson stayed and helped clean up the rugs. That's the kind of person she is. 'He tells of a man who had a leg amputated, and shortly afterwards his two-room shack burned to the ground.' They carried him out, laid him on a blanket, and he lay there laughing, he recalls, 'how many of us can do that . . .?'

> . . . A deeply spiritual but not a sanctimonious man; a kindly figure and a friend to all, everyone who knows this fine man loves him. In talking with him you don't feel that you are talking with a Negro, or with an educator, but rather with one of God's creatures. He is doing things for his community which will be remembered gratefully for all time. Respected equally by both races, Professor Moon has won the admiration of all, and his influence has been felt by many thousands. He has simplicity of true greatness. He says of himself, 'I'm just an ordinary man; trying to do my best.' But all who know him know that he is more than that, and everyone who has come in contact with F. D. Moon has had his own life enriched by the experience.[43]

The First Baccalaureate and Commencement Exercise in the New Douglass High School

On May 30, 1954, the fifty-second commencement exercise for the Douglass Junior and Senior High was held in the auditorium of the new Douglass High School. There was no attempt to hold an open-house since furnishings for the new school were not complete and minor corrections were still to be made, but rather it was an effort to prevent total disappointment to the 1954 graduation class, which had expected to enter the new school in January 1954. The formal opening of the new plant was scheduled for the next fall when the entire plant was to be completed.[44]

The Baccalaureat services for the senior class of 1954 was witnessed by a crowd of eager parents and friends overflowing the beautiful auditorium with a seating capacity of 1,300. The 155 graduates marched proudly down the slanting isles and listened attentively

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[43]See, Oklahoma City Advertiser, 12 March 1954.

[44]Black Dispatch, 5 June 1954.

to the Reverend Robert H. Alexander, pastor of Avery Chapel A.M.E. Church, Oklahoma City and former president of Shorter College, Little Rock, Arkansas.[45]

Following the Baccalaureate services, the Douglass Parent-Teachers' Association gave a benefit tea to defray expenses for delegates to the National P-T-A Congress to be held at Langston University. This offered an opportunity for the public to see the new cafeteria and some small portions of the new plant.[46]

On Friday, June 4, the commencement exercises for the 1954 graduating class were held in the auditorium of the new Douglass High School. The commencement address was delivered by Dr. R. O'Hara Lanier, President of Texas Southern University, Houston, Texas, and former Minister to Liberia.[47]

Though the mentioned exercises were a first for the Douglass family, another first was occurring within the family, for this year marked the first time the 9th graders, who totaled 300 in 1954, wore academic dress. This was being done "because of the embarrassment which had come to students unable to buy a new dress or new suit for the 9A promotion exercises." [48] It was the feeling of F. D. and members of the faculty that "the academic dress costs very

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[45] Ibid.

[46] Ibid.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid

little and puts all on the same level of appearance whether the parents of the children be well-to-do or extremely poor."[49]

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[49] Ibid.

CHAPTER XII

DOUGLASS HIGH SCHOOL IN OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA 1954-1955

Between Two Supreme Court Mandates

As the 1954-1955 school year opened for the new Douglass High School, two factors were apparent. First, nine justices, three of them southerners, had rendered a unaminous decision stipulating segregation in public schools solely on the basis of race as unconstitutional.[1] Second, Douglass High School was occupied for the first time with the swimming pool, library and gym constructions still underway.[2]

The decision as set by the Supreme Court with regard to segregation in public schools reversed the Plessy decision of 1896, and was recognized in Oklahoma, as elsewhere, to be a revolutionary step in American education. F. D. wrote of this decision:

> In my opinion, the decision handed down by the Supreme Court of the United States at 11:14 A.M. Monday, May 17, 1954, is the greatest and most significant decision that the court will render during the twentieth century. It is interesting to note that the Dred Scott decision which was perhaps the greatest decision made during the nineteenth century,

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[1] See, for example, Arthur L. Tolson, The Black Oklahomans History: 1541-1972 (New Orleans: Edmond Printing Company, 1972), p. 175.

[2] Oklahoma City Times, 28 July 1954.

rendered in 1858, was related to the rights of Negroes.

> The unanimous decision of the Supreme Court on Monday is quite meaningful. To me, it means that the Negro has moved much farther in his ambition to secure first class citizenship. It also means that people of color throughout the world will have greater faith in our democracy. Glib words about the free world will not compare in their effect with this decision in the struggle between the idologies of democracy and communism.
>
> Since the implementing of the decision of the court is left to future planning, it immediately becomes the responsibility of Negro and white people to meet, discuss and plan how we shall give full effect to the decision of the Supreme Court. In any meeting, it seems to me, it should be made clear at the outset that whatever steps are taken to implement the decision of the court that there must be no evasion. Any decision reached must be in line with the letter and the spirit of the Court's decree.
>
> It is my hope and prediction that the social conscience of the people of America and especially in Oklahoma has developed to the point that little trouble will follow in giving full force and effect to this momentous decision. Just as the Supreme Court has measured up to the high ideals of our country, so must the state and local governments follow suit and plan to give life and substance to the edict of the highest Court of the land.[3]

F. D. spoke before the Oklahoma Education Committee of the Legislative Council, with reference to Oklahoma's revision of state school laws in order to conform with the 1954 Supreme Court's decision. During his discourse to the Committee he advised: "If white and Negro children attend the same schools, Negro teachers should teach some of the classes and should be selected without regard to their race -- teachers should be chosen on the basis of their experience, and

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[3] F. D. Moon, "The Supreme Court's Decision," F. D. Moon's personal papers. See for example, Author L. Tolson, The Black Oklahomans History: 1541 - 1972, p. 175

should have tenure, the same as white teachers . . . . Desegregation is being kicked around because it is too hot."[4] He urged legislators to prepare then for a smooth operation of white-black schools when segregation was finally ended in the State. "There will be many problems to solve on the local level . . . . I hope we can approach these problems in a democratic way so we won't have repercussions but will be able to work them out to the best advantage of all."[5] In addition, he urged the State Board of Education, the Legislative Council and the local school boards to study the problems together.[6]

In Oklahoma, basic problems of a desegregation movement confronting the Boards of Education were: (1) the assimilation of separate school funds, and (2) the matter of student transfers. The latter posed the alternative of whether to adopt a strict policy of no transfers or to be lenient with transfers where the population was sharply divided.[7]

In addition to the state problems the Oklahoma City Board of Education faced the complexity of school boundary lines. In anticipation of the Court's final mandate the Oklahoma City school board's research office had provided a population survey for future boundary

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[4]Daily Oklahoman, 14 September 1954.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid.

[7]Daily Oklahoman, 18 May 1954.

planning. Yet, the Oklahoma City Board of Education had made no attempt to redraw its boundary lines for the 1954-55 school year pending the final decree which was not handed down until May 1955.[8]

Thus Douglass High School, as all Oklahoma public schools functioned during the 1954-55 school year under the State Board's disposition clarified in a notification to all school authorities by Dr. Oliver Hodge, State Superintendent of Public Schools:

> The U. S. Supreme Court banned segregation in public schools but delayed its final decree until at least October. Our schools . . . are operated under the Oklahoma Constitution and the statutes passed under the Oklahoma Legislature. It is believed that no substantial changes should be made until further action has been taken by the U. S. Supreme Court and until Oklahoma's Legislature makes a change in our present law.
>
> The reason for this letter is that I have had so many inquiries as to what we should do the next year. Your Board of Education should plan your budget program and policies for 1954-55 according to our present laws and constitution. I suggest that you do not plan any changes until you are directed by the competent authorities.
>
> The State Regents of higher education have taken no official notice of the Supreme Court's decision. But it is understood State Universities and Colleges plan to continue present policies unless directed otherwise by the State Attorney General.[9]

The New Douglass High School Plant

Students entering the forty acre site in 1954-55 could observe

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[8]Ibid., See, Robert Lasch, "Along the Border" in Don Shoemaker, ed., With All Deliberate Speed (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957), p. 58.

[9]Daily Oklahoman, 28 May 1954.

the Douglass plant laid out in a semi-campus style. This included the: administration office, classrooms, auditorium, Little Theatre, home economics area, heating plant, stadium, cafeteria, athletic field and vocational building. The incomplete portions of the school's construction were: the $430,000 gymnasium north of the old Fairground grandstand; the library and swimming pool for a total of $350,000, with more than two-thirds allotted for the pool; and the $110,000 library delayed in construction due to the demolishing and removal of the old fairground buildings. All were under construction by the Lippert Brother's Construction Company.[10]

In addition, major remodeling was underway at the Future Farmers of America building, used since 1950 by Douglass students for vocational classes, at which time students were moved out each year during the state fair. Only temporary partitions and equipment were kept for this purpose. Now that the building was unreservedly school property, the Board of Education workmen made the 31,254 square feet of the FFA building into shop areas for future vocational classes.[11]

F. D. along with some of the faculty members moved into the new office facilities during the summer months. This move gave

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[10] An Open Doors to New Horizons: Douglass High School (Oklahoma City: Douglass High School, [1955]), p. 12. See, Oklahoma City Times, 28 July 1954.

[11] Oklahoma City Times, 28 July 1954.

leeway for the old Douglass Junior and Senior High School site to be used as Moon Junior High School, with William Johnson as principal.[12]

Nevertheless, students observed the vividly colored decor of the school planned by committees set up by F. D. to study the different areas within the buildings. These committees were composed of citizens of the community and teachers of the faculty who knew and understood the problems of the black students. They had reported their needs and desires for the school plant to the central offices of the administration. As far as was practicable the suggestions of these committees had been followed in completing the functional plant.[13]

The classroom section of the Douglass High School constitutes a two story structure with the remainder of the plant as a one story design. The basic structural frame of the building is reinforced concrete for floors, slabs, beams and columns. The floors of the plant are covered with asphalt tile, with the exception of those in rest rooms, locker rooms, kitchen and auditorium. The roof of the building is without the use of parapet walls and has

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[12] Ibid.

[13] N. L. George, Ph.D. "Oklahoma City's Magnificient Douglass Senior High School," American School Board Journal, July 1955, p. 33.

ample expansion joints.[14]

The exterior of the school has three-toned coloring with light colored brick in the classroom section and parts of the auditorium. Deep red brick and brown synthetic granite in the office area, hall and auditorium entrances acuates the light brick.[15]

The first floor of the academic unit is composed of classrooms with eight interchangeable instructional areas. The second floor has instructional areas constituting two biology rooms; a greenhouse; physics room; chemistry room; a business department to accommodate stenography, typing, bookkeeping, and business machines; as well as distributive education and diversified occupation display areas.[16]

Classroom features include: acoustically treated ceilings, woodwork finished in natural light color, lockers for teachers, green chalkboard and tan tack boards with map rail attachments. Book shelf space and map storage are a part of the ventilators in each classroom. An electric clock and flag brackets are installed in each classroom. The classroom used for typing instruction has electric timers for practice. Several classrooms have provisions for visual education.[17]

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[14]Ibid.

[15]Ibid.

[16]Ibid., p. 35.

[17]Ibid.

The homemaking wing contains two art rooms with northside lighting. The home training suite includes a clothing laboratory, community center, food laboratory with vinyl-covered metal kitchen cabinets of five different colors, a master kitchen, dining room, bedroom, fireplace in the living area, and an area for cosmetology.[18]

The corridor's floors are asphalt tile with ceilings of fissured acoustical tile. The walls of the corridors are glazed tile brick with glass windows for light. Display areas and show cases are placed along the corridors. Along the corridors are lockers 15"x15"x60" high. Inside the lockers are units for wastepaper and fire extinguishers. Standard items along the corridors are recessed floor mats and double faced electric clocks. Removable mullions near the music room allows large openings for passage of pianos and large instruments when transported to an outside patio and stage.[19]

The windowless auditorium contains a lobby consisting of display areas, a stage, rooms for stage craft and stage property, dressing rooms, five sound treated practice rooms for music, band instruments, room and storage facilities for choral robes, recording room, Little Theater with stage and dressing rooms, a music theory room, speech room with stage, music library, listening area, office for music instructors, check rooms for wraps, public

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[18]Ibid.

[19]Ibid. See Oklahoma City Times, 7 September 1954.

telephone booths, ticket stations and a catwalk for access to ceiling lights. Special features of this area, aside from being segregated from the rest of the plant by plastic folding doors, includes: public dressing rooms, lounge, room for maid custodial help, check room for clothes, picture projection room, peep holes on each side of the stage procession arch, piano storage, elevated seats in band and choral music, area for public meetings and permanent music staff lines on chalkboards in the band, choral, and music theory rooms. The seating of the auditorium is situated on one floor. Both the large auditorium and the Little Theater are acoustically treated. This area was constructed so that air conditioning may be added.[20]

The administrative suite is located adjacent to the two-story classroom unit. This area consists of the general office with a vault, record room, room for central intercommunication instrument, miemograph and supply room, storage room, room for coats and wraps, offices for the principal, secretaries, assistant principal, two guidance offices, evening principal's office, and the staff conference room. Space is provided for the student body office in the classroom unit, with a student store and conference room, health suite, state textbook storage, head custodian's office, and a teacher planning center. The PBX telephone board, master clock and

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[20]N. L. George, Ph.D. "Oklahoma City's Magnificient Douglass Senior High School," p. 33.

program instruments are located in the general office area.[21]

Steam heat is generated from the boiler room. An outside incinerator is tied into the boiler stack. A transformer vault, office, work counter for custodians, shower and bath facilities are a part of this area. Large areas of the plant are equipped with zone control heating so that they may be operated separately.[22]

Building facilities include rest-rooms with ceramic tile floors, glazed tile walls, metal partitions, mirrors and vitreous china fixtures. Custodial rooms which are provided for both male and female contain slop sinks, shelves, spaces for hanging mops with lavatories and shower facilities in designated areas, space for extra furniture and custodial and instructional supplied.[23]

The adjacent social hall and cafeteria are divided by plastic folding curtains. This allows space for teacher's dining room, commercial cooking instruction, a committee room, ventilated and refrigerated storage rooms, lobby, toilet rooms, and cafeteria kitchen. The cafeteria kitchen area, which is completely separated from the dining room area by sliding doors, has classrooms for instruction, refuge, food storage, office, dish storage, and locker rooms. Within this area are the snack bar, cold water stations,

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[21]Ibid.

[22]Ibid., p. 56.

[23]Ibid.

planter boxes, book shelves, clothes hanging facilities, washing facilities, and continuous windows along the south wall overlooking the adjacent court.[24]

Furniture and equipment in the classrooms consists of a teacher's desk and chair. Extra chairs are available for visitors. Throughout the plant three varieties of student desks are provided. These include: chairs with large table arms, trapezoidal tables with chairs, and standard tables with library chairs. One large table is included for conferences and a legal size filing cabinet with lock. Furnishings provided are blond in color. Furnishings and equipment were selected for flexibility and fitting into the color scheme. Florescent lighting installed in the instructional areas throughout the buildings aid in accommodating evening activities and most especially evening educational classes.[25]

The First Assembly

On September 13, 1954, F. D. waited in the auditorium of the new Douglass High School as students composed of the record breaking enrollment rushed in to occupy the seats especially arranged for comfort. Student's eyes were upon the stylish array of colors and objects. As they stared at the angled lights from the ceiling, it seemed as if they were placed beams. The sparkling glow and the

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[24]Ibid., p. 35.

[25]Ibid., p. 36

light blue curtains added a new modern look to the stage. Each student recognized the slanting floors, because of the difficulty of maintaining a steady pace as they progressed toward the front.[26]

F. D. opened the special assembly with a prayer. He introduced his 43 staff members and gave detailed information pertaining to classes, teachers and schedules. He then spoke of "The Land of Beginning Again," stressing (1) the kind of music desired for the cafeteria, (2) public opinion of students' conduct and (3) a divided school session.[27]

With regard to the latter, F. D. emphasized a divided school session or a two session school held responsibility for both teachers and students. When either leaves the grounds at noon, though they come back, it may seem to someone who does not know to be purely unimportant. But, he stated, "Realizing the circumstances of our

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[26] The Douglass Informer, Oklahoma City: Douglass High School, 1954, pp. 2-4.

[27] Ibid.

"Forty-three faculty members greeted the Douglass students in their new school. These were: Wyatt F. Jeltz, assistant principal; Walter E. Seward, L. Marie Robertson, Lola Alexander, Louis B. Washington, Minerva A. Sloss, T. Odessa Temple, Evelyn R. Strong, Augusta P. Morgan, George L. Buford, Geneva Johnson, Erma M. Moore, Sara Jane Bell, Margaret A. Dabney, Maurice Benefee, Sherman M. Harris, Viola J. McClinton, Charles C. Miles, Jake A. Diggs, G. Douglas Waterford, Jessye J. Moore, Cornelius Pittman, Natalie J. Watson, Ella Lee Clement, Hillard H. Sharp, Otis O. Lawrence, Goldie D. Moore, Thelma B. Tilman, Neil Pierce, Geraldine A. Williams, Gladys M. Tomlin, Dorothy Burnett, Zelma R. Love, Moses F. Miller, Paul L. Strong, G. M. Dodson, Lawrence C. Dorden, Albert B. Howard, Leroy O. Alexander, Alphonzo Pyle, Lee F. Wiley and Major B. Talton." See An Open Door to New Horizons: Douglass High School, p. 12.

school, with adequate facilities for all, there is no need for this two session school."[28]

In addition to F. D. Moon posing the question, "What shall we change or improve?" F. D. suggested:

> (1) Teachers must realize that teaching is an all day responsibility; (2) Permits must be gotten to leave the grounds at lunch time, students must use available forms for requests and requests will be granted for good causes and respectable places; (3) All food must be eaten in the cafeteria whether bought there or not . . . . We must improve the ethics of student-teacher relationships to one of mutual respect and reverence. I have my own anticipation of knowing students personally . . . . Students calling teachers by their last names shows courtesy still pays . . . . Love the fulfillment of law, and develop an appreciation for your school property. The site and FFA stadium cost $450,000, completed new construction $1,300,000, gymnasium $450,000, swimming pool $230,000, library $110,000 and equipment over $210,000, making a total of $2,750,000.[29]

He then challenged the students:

> Do you deserve this? Not unless you keep it and see that we turn over a new leaf in the care of it. Will you mar its beauty and show you are unworthy of beautification planned?
>
> With all of this investment for you, who is it who will mar its furniture and feel it too much to support the whole program, including the cafeteria? Must there be a lowering of our standards of music to get support? Is there someone who cannot find pleasure in a wholesome atmosphere of beauty? Will you help?
>
> Whatever changes, we hope will be of our own recognition. Sometimes change must be forced - - restriction for those who are stingy in loyalty - - too much received, too little given.

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[28]F. D. Moon, The Land of Beginning Again," 1954, F. D. Moon Personal Papers.

[29]Ibid.

> Today, I have set forth a goal for our land of beginning again. I am deliberate and determined. It must be accomplished. How shall I count you?
>
> I shall be grateful for whatever support from faculty or students who may volunteer to turn a new leaf, build more stately mansions. Will you help or hinder? The plant is not enough. Shall we build a new mansion of spirit.[30]

Curriculum and Activities

During the 1954-1955 school year, the curriculum at Douglass developed into a comprehensive program. Guidance, Languages, Fine Arts, Social Studies, Business Education, Science, Mathematics, Physical Training, Home Arts, Vocational Training, Industrial Arts, Student Activities, Special Services, and Adult Education made up the comprehensive program as explained by F. D.:

> Douglass High School is a comprehensive type of high school, meaning that we make provisions for the academic and vocational needs of youth in the same institution. In a society already too much divided by class, it seemed best to provide for the imperative needs of young people without intensifying class by separating youth into so-called vocational and academic high schools.
>
> Under the comprehensive high school system we meet the needs of our students through fourteen vocational courses meeting from two to three hours daily. They are auto mechanics, brick masonry, commercial art, drafting, upholstery, furniture building, barbering, commercial cooking, cosmetology, printing, tailoring, radio, carpentry and cabinet making, secretarial practice and vocational dressmaking.
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> In the academic offering we include sufficient mathematics, such as advanced algebra and trigonometry, to qualify students for entering schools of engineering. We meet modern language requirements and offer ample courses to meet

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[30] Ibid.

> strict requirements in science; in the art of public speaking, we are almost nationally famous. In the field of music, students have their needs met through courses in chorus, harmony, music appreciation, and instrumental music. In other fields, the fundamentals are met through English, social studies, art, bookkeeping, home management, economics, Negro history and several other functional courses.
>
> In our comprehensive high school these needs are met under a common name Douglass High School. They have a common school song, "Dear Douglass"; they play in the same band; they sing in the same chorus; students are advised by the same counselors; and all recite the same creed and pledge allegiance to the same American flag.[31]

In October 1954, the first homecoming football activity was held by the new high school. Students were dismissed following a homecoming assembly in the auditorium to allow participation in the homecoming parade assembled at Northeast Fourth an High, routed through the black community and disbanded at Bath and Seventh Street. Other homecoming activities included the crowning of queens and representatives of organizations of Douglass. These included "Miss Homecoming," "Mr. and Miss Senior," "Miss Y-Teen," "Miss Art," "Miss

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[31] F. D. Moon, "What Kind of School is Douglass?" in An Open Door to New Horizons, p. 6.

"As early as 1930, the American high school was fairly well established as an institution enrolling adolescents from all kinds of backgrounds and offering an entire range of subjects. Despite the controversies which surrounded it as a social institution, the high school seemed to function as an agent of social and cultural integration, a place where students learned studies in common, mixed socially, and participated in common activities." See Gerald Gutek, in An Historical Introduction to American Education, (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1970), p. 83.

English," "Hi-Y Sweetheart," and "Miss Trojan."[32]

The Douglass Trojan's, coached by M. F. Miller, A. S. Pyle and J. A. Diggs, coach and assistant coaches respectively, played the first homecoming game for the new school with the Muskogee Bulldogs. Since 1951, the Douglass Trojans had held the Big Three Championship and in addition had thirty-five consecutive winning games to their credit. By the end of the school term, in 1954, the undefeated Douglass Trojans had 40 consecutive winning games to their credit and was Oklahoma City's only all-victorious high school team.[33]

The first Douglass yearbook, "The Trojan," was published under the supervision of the student council with students Ruby Hardeman, editor in chief, and Effie Dean Taylor, assistant editor. The theme for the annual was based on the "sleek new plant provided for the Douglass students."[34]

To meet the requirements of the English Literature classes, students of the English V class utilized the Little Theater. Various scenes were enacted by the students depicting several periods of English Literature. For example, readings were done by students from the epic Beowulf. In the interest of the medieval period, students read and studied the works of Geoffrey Chaucer,

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[32] Black Dispatch, 23 October 1954; Daily Oklahoman, 1 December 1954.

[33] Black Dispatch, 23 October 1954.

[34] Oklahoma City Times, 31 May 1955.

often called Father of English Poetry. The Elizabethan era was represented by the study of William Shakespeare, English poet and dramatist.[35]

Early in January 1955, members of the 1951 senior class of Douglass and their sponsor, Bert V. Wadkins, inspected the beautification project of the new school's campus. Their interest stemmed from a $1,066.11 gift left by the 1951 seniors for shrubbery and plants for the new school.[36] In fact, the $1,066.11 gift by the 1951 class had resulted in a big-league beautification project based on a modest budget and the cooperation of some white Capitol Hill High School students. This co-operative scheme was believed by some to be the first of its kind in the history of education in Oklahoma. The situation stood that F. D. and his building committee had a little money and a desire to see landscaping started during the ideal season. Herb "Farmer" Jones, veteran landscaper and FAA instructor at Capitol Hill, had young workmen who needed practical experience in addition to their classroom agronomy and horticulture studies. With the Board of Education's approval a plan was formed. The Capitol Hill's FAA morning work at Douglass became a class project. After school hours many worked for hourly wages, helping to dig, ball and burlap shrubs at the several local nurseries where

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[35]Black Dispatch, 29 January 1955.

[36]Black Dispatch, 8 January 1955.

materials were purchased. They planted Nandinas and Japonica trees along the west side of the classroom and administration areas; sixty-four Japanese Quince and Boston Ivy on the west side of the long corridor of the school; and Oregon Holly was planted around the auditorium and music room sites. Meanwhile, vocational teacher Neal Pierce and his students at Douglass designed and made a netting frame on which the ivy emerged forming a diamond shaped pattern along the sweeping, unbroken front wall.[37]

The Douglass Office Club, composed of approximately forty-three students, was organized under the sponsorship of Mrs. Gladys E. Tomlin. These students volunteered their services within the administrative suite, for the purpose of improving the efficiency of the general office service.[38]

Gym Opening

In January 1955, Douglass High School opened its new $430,000 gymnasium. The gym has a student capacity of 2,300. The main floor of the new gym is 100' x 112' when cleared for utilization. This includes a playing court of 94' x 50' with 8' on all sides after the folding bleachers are extended. Two 42' x 74' courts are available for physical educational purposes when the electric folding door is closed. There are two tempered glass backstops

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[37] Oklahoma City Times, 20 November 1954.

[38] Black Dispatch, 15 January 1955.

installed for official matched games and four portable backstops are installed for physical education. Special features include the lobby with bulletin boards, ticket booths, public telephone stalls, trophy cases, wall photo mounting strips, and in-wall cuspidors. Other special features include drinking fountains at each end of the gym floor and provisions for broadcasting, wall-hung sanitary facilities, hand rails, metal safety nosing, mirrors in dressing areas and kick plates on the doors are standard fixtures. Rubber mats at entrances, electric water coolers, an area for cleaning shoes, arm, leg, and hip bath, and a separate sound reinforcement connected to the inner communication system are also special features.[39]

The first floor includes boys' and girls' locker rooms with towel storage, rest-room facilities, drying rooms adjacent to the swimming pool, custodians' closets, storage area, an office for physical education directors equipped with first-aid equipment, shower and rest-room spaces. Incorporated on the first floor is the boys' 19' x 25' corrective gymnasium, storage for yard tools, and public rest-rooms for men and women adjacent to the lobby.[40]

The second floor of the gym has space for mechanical equipment, a game room, concession kitchen with an electric food warming

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[39]N. L. George, "Oklahoma City's Magnificient Douglass Senior High School," pp. 35-36.

[40]Ibid.

unit, public rest-rooms, custodians' closet, and areas for recreational purposes when folding seats are stacked. These areas are provided with dropped screens from the ceiling to the floor for protection and control of play equipment. The acoustically treated ceiling contains recessed lights serviced from a catwalk located above level.[41]

Floors of the gymnasium are of white clear northern grown maple. The wood in the entire building is pressure treated, wolmanized or vacuum treated woodlife. The walls in the gymnasium proper are brick and aggregate blocks. Walls in showers and dressing rooms are glazed tile with ceramic tile floors.[42]

The opening of the gymnasium, with F. D. throwing the first ball, was marked with a night basketball game between Muskogee and the Douglass Trojans. According to one report it also marked:

> . . . a great step forward in the evolution of basketball at Douglass. In the old Douglass located on East California, basketball had its beginning with outdoor courts and homemade uniforms. When the site of Douglass was moved from California to 600 North High Street, a new gymnasium modern in every respect made its appearance. Basketball was new and did not pay for itself, depending largely on football to pay the way. An appreciation for the sport developed rapidly and quite a number of championships were won. Young people who knew basketball grew to manhood and served to be the best customers of basketball.[43]

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[41] Ibid., p. 36.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Black Dispatch, 8 January 1955.

In fact, the featured presentation for the gymnasium's opening night was the first boys' and girls' basketball teams of Douglass Junior Senior High School organized in 1921 as the "Red Machines"; the first Douglass Trojans, organized in 1934; the Douglass National Championship team of 1945; and the 1949 team.[44]

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[44] Ibid.

Honors were given to Douglass Pioneers of basketball during the opening of the new Gym in 1955.

Honoree for the girls' basketball team organized in 1921 was its coach, Mrs. Eudaily Temple. Members of the team were Maybell Webster, Leeoshia Harris (Mrs. F. D. Moon), Eloise Tillry, Espanola Dunn, P. G. Jones, Beulah Bunn, Elizabeth Canty, Addie Seibles, Jessie Ellis, Vivian Wells, Ester Stevens and Ida Bailey. During this era the Red Machines girl's team won state-championships among the separate schools for six straight years. Mrs. Temple remained the coach until the school was relocated in 1934 on Sixth and High.

Honorees for the boy's "Red Machine" basketball team organized in 1924, were Mrs. Eudaily Temple and Mr. Lucius McGee (then deceased) as coaches. Honored members of this team were Sercy Bailey, Louie Bailey, Willie Perry, Roosevelt Harris, James Cotton, Willie Jones, Samuel Moore, Lonnie Stroud, Hansel Amos, Elihue Sharpe and Willis Montgomery.

Other honorees for the evening were the Douglass High School Trojans, organized in 1934. This era marked the first indoor games for the Douglass School. The honorees included Henry "Runt" Johnson, coach, and members of the team: Johnny Knox, William Neal, James Armstead, James Lydia, and Ollie Williams.

Between 1934-1945, Douglass had had one national champion team. The honorees for this era were Vernon "Skip" McCain, coach, along with members of the team, Nathaniel Taylor, Clifford Stevens, Benjamin Honeybus, Carl Carter and Cuney Nelson. State Championship titles were won by the Douglass Trojans in 1946 and 1949. Honorees for these championship titles were Moses F. "Pie Yi" Miller, coach for both years and still coach in 1955, along with members of the 1946 team, Carl Carter, Clifford Stevens, Clarence Griffin, Edward Gosa, Cuney Nelson, Henry Newton and Wilbert Williams. The honored team of 1949 were: Charles Nelson, Donald Burns, Calvin Williams, Foreman Littleman, Elmer Robertson and Robert Caruthers. Ibid.

Library Opening and The Big Move

In March 1955, representatives from the Board of Education inspected the library of the new school and gave approval for F. D. and staff to utilize its facilities.[45] Features of the library included shelf space for 12,000 varied size books, a stock-room with sink and rest-room facilities, a librarian office, discharge desk, display facilities, space for periodicals and a reading room. Adjacent to the reading room of the library is an audio-visual room for showing of films and storage of audio-visual materials.[46]

The ceiling of the library is treated with acoustical materials. The walls are of brick, aggregate block and glass. The floors of the library are a grade "C" asphalt tile. Shelving and woodwork are finished with a natural varnish and stain. The main lobby of the library was designed to seat 80 students around study tables. The browsing room accommodates seating for 30 students and is separated from the reading area by a low book stack. The area has three library conference rooms separated by one glass partition and folding door.[47]

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[45] N. L. George to F. D. Moon, 1955, F. D. Moon's Personal Papers, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

[46] N. L. George, "Oklahoma City's Magnificent Douglass Senior High School," p. 36.

[47] Ibid.

F. D. immediately organized the move into the library with the English Club members in charge. This effort was known throughout the plant as the "Big Move." Stations for the "Big Move" were in the conference room, which had been utilized until the completion of the library, and the library. Students' responsibility for these areas as designated by F. D. were English Club students under the direction of their sponsor and the school librarian. The students handed books to the movers in proper order from the conference room and accompanied the movers to the library directing them to proper stations and checking for proper placement.[48]

The day of "The Big Move" students were furnished name labels. Students formed a line beginning at the north end of the circulation desk, passed west then south out of the conference room, north down the hall to the library, then west and directly to areas prepared for their books. Students properly deposited books on shelves, passed through the outside library entrance, reentered by way of the west door of the classroom building, passed south then west until they reached the third floor, entered the third floor and waited for further directions . . . . At the end of the "Big Move," F. D. invited the student movers to "have a Coke."[49]

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[48]F. D. Moon, "The Big Move," 1955, F. D. Moon's Personal Papers.

[49]Ibid.

Completion of the Swimming Pool

During May 1955, the Douglass High School's swimming pool was completed. It carries an over-all size of 71'6" x 105'2" with a seating accommodation for 350 spectators, and a standard size pool of 75'2" by 36'. Glass in the office wall allows full view of the pool by instructors at all times. Chalkboards, tackboards, in-wall drinking fountains, a cuspidor, storage space for supplies, a custodians' room with a slop sink, floors of ceramic tile, walls of glazed structural tile, sound treated ceilings with perforated asbestos board, covered baseboards, and underwater electrical lighting are part of the area. The idea of the underwater lights which reflect colors came from the Beverly Hills High School, Beverly Hills, California. Its completion was in time for the dedication of the Douglass plant.[50]

Douglass High School's Dedication

On May 1, 1955, at 3:30 P.M. 2,000 persons gathered at the new Douglass Auditorium for the dedication of the first black high school in Oklahoma City. Of this day J. Chester Swanson, superintendent of Oklahoma City public schools, stated:

> Today we think of this building. It is beautiful. It represents a large investment in public funds. It is the result

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[50]N. L. George, "Oklahoma City's Magnificent Douglass Senior High School," p. 36. Also Black Dispatch, 24 May 1957.

> of a cooperative effort of industry, government, the public and education. We all rejoice in the successful culmination of this effort. However, in the pleasure and pride of its reality we should not fail to recognize and accept the responsibility it entails -- a responsibility to continue cooperatively, as a community, to effectively use these facilities for the betterment of mankind. I would like for all those who are a part of Oklahoma City Public Schools to pledge with me that we will use all of the skill, the intelligence and the energy at our command to develop and maintain an educational program within these walls that will create future citizens skillful with hands, alert in mind and dedicated to all that is good.[51]

N. L. George, Assistant Superintendent of Oklahoma City Public Schools, observed:

> In planning modern school plants, a basic concept is that each school plant is a separate and specific problem. The problem is based on the educational needs of the youth and adults who use the plant. When the plant is finished, four particular services are evident. First, the plant is a safe shelter located on a generous sized site. Second, spaces are provided for tools of instruction for the immature and the adults of a community. Third, a creative environment, technologically controlled, is provided. And fourth, the plant is the pride of the community as a symbol of the power of public education.
>
> The school is a home away from home. Thus, it is free of institutionalism, informal and colorful. Two essential characteristics of modern plants are that they are both expansible and flexible. The total plant is functional for the defined educational program for this community. It is attractive, inexpensive in first cost, and economical in terms of operation and maintenance. May this school be the tool which assists in improving the educational opportunities for the youth and adults who use it.[52]

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[51] J. Chester Swanson, in An Open Door to New Horizons: Douglass High School, p. 4. Also see Black Dispatch, 7 May 1955.

[52] N. L. George, in An Open Door to New Horizons: Douglass High School, p. 5.

F. D. presided during the dedicatory program. Invocation was given by Reverend E. W. Perry, pastor of the Tabernacle Baptist Church. . Music was rendered by the Douglass High School Choir, Evelyn R. Strong, director; W. K. Jackson, President of the Negro Citizens' Action Committee, spoke of the Douglass High School as "A Dream Come True"; E. W. Lippert, president of the Lippert Brothers Construction Company, presented the keys to the school to Mrs. L. D. Melton, President of the Board of Education, and Ruby Jean Hardeman, a Douglass High School student. The dedicatory prayer was offered by Reverend Thomas J. Griffin, Pastor of the East Sixth Street Christian Church; J. Chester Swanson, superintendent of the Oklahoma City Public Schools, spoke of "The Challenge"; acknowledgement of platform guests was made by Cernoria D. Johnson, Executive Secretary of the Urban League; Reverend Robert H. Alexander, Pastor of the Avery Chapel A.M.E. Church, gave the benediction at the close of the program.[53] Benjamin Mays, President of Morehouse College, gave the dedicatory address, he proclaimed that the:

> New Douglass High School stands as proof that the days of building inferior facilities for the Negro, with the idea of making him feel inferior, are gone forever . . . . Not long ago, you could ride in the South and tell with 100 per cent accuracy whether that school was for white or Negro children - - those days won't be back any more . . . .

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[53] An Open Door to New Horizons: Douglass High School, p. 3.

> Negroes should not be able to 'cry' about segregation any longer but at the same time, Negroes should not 'squeal' when they face the competition of a desegregated society. On the whole, you will have to work longer and perspire harder than the white boy for he who started behind in this race, must stay behind or run faster than the man in front . . . . I have faith that if you meet the challenge, the doors of opportunity will open.[54]

In praising the Negro Citizens' Action Committee in their efforts in accomplishing the building of the new high school, and asserting that there were millions of white people who believed any kind of legalized segregation based on race is undemocractic and unchristian he said:

> The initiative must be taken by the person whose feet the shoes fit . . . . If he doesn't try, he has no right to expect relief . . . . If you don't spearhead something and give them an opportunity, they can't assist you . . . . Unless Negroes had spearheaded the movement, the nine justices would never have handed down that decision. If a man is not willing to make a move for better conditions, he should not have them.

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[54] Black Dispatch, 7 May 1955.

Benjamin Elijah Mays, president of Morehouse College since 1940, was previously dean of the Howard University School of Religion in Washington, D. C., at which time the school was rated Class A by the American Association of Theological Schools.

A 1920 graduate of Bates College, Lewiston, Me., he received his masters of arts degree and Ph.D. degree from the University of Chicago. Seven universities conferred honorary degrees upon him.

Dr. Mays was vice president of the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America from 1944 to 1946, the only Negro to hold that position. He was named on Schomberg Honor Roll of Race Relations as one of twelve Negroes who have done exceptional work in building better race relations in America and was the recipient of other awards. Ibid., See, Daily Oklahoman, 25 April; 2 May 1955. Also The Negro Handbook, ed. Editors of Ebony (Chicago: Johnson Publishing Company, 1966), p. 408.

> . . . The two races have been drawn closer together in working for the new high school than if you'd talked about it a thousand years and had done nothing.
>
> We come to dedicate a building to human beings . . . . They exist only to try to improve the human product and make people better.[55]

Mays dedicated the new school first of all, to the Negro Citizens' Committee, and Principal F. D. Moon; second, to the superintendent and Board of Education, who said this thing ought to be; and third, to the taxpayers, teachers, parents, and to the kids.[56]

> They won't have to ask why this building isn't as good as somebody else's - - something happens to a boy coming out of the slums when he puts his feet down in a building like this . . . . He throws his shoulders back. He is somebody. He gets new hope and inspiration.[57]

The Spirit of Giving

During the week following the dedication of Douglass High School the "Douglass Family" gave a surprise breakfast for F. D. In accepting this effort, F. D. commented:

> This is one of the most pleasant surprises I've ever received. I knew something was up when I was asked out of the last faculty meeting but as I said Sunday, I thought that the letter for the dedicatorial service was it.
>
> I don't know how you manged all this without my catching even a whiff of it from anywhere. But, it just shows how a family in any institution can be. My humble thanks goes out to

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[55] Black Dispatch, 2 May 1955.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid.

everyone of you and I'll always think of this occasion and practical gift not only in my trip abroad but in years to come.[58]

This relative consistency of surprises and giving seemed to permeate the attitude of the "Douglass Family" for the remaining weeks of the 1954-55 school year. For example: During special assemblies, the NHA Club of Douglass presented a check for $125 to F. D. for continued beautification of the school grounds; the Douglass Student Council with Wayne Cogbin as president honored the entire "Douglass Family" at a dinner inthe cafeteria of the school; Ruby Jean Hardiman, graduating senior of the English Club sponsored by Mrs.Minerva A. Sloss, made a presentation of $50 to a deserving student; Leonardo DeBose, president of the senior class of 1955, presented a check of $1,000 to Mr. Otto Thompson, representative member of the Board of Education, for a neon attraction to be placed at an appropriate location for the school. Sponsors of the senior class with Margaret A. Dabney, sponsor advisor, were Jake Diggs, Mrs. Z. R. Love, Mrs. A. P. Morgan, Mrs. A. S. Pyle, Neil Pierce, Mrs. C. V. Thomkins (home room teacher), and L. Marie Robinson.[59]

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[58] Ibid.

F. D. affectionately named the Douglass High School's staff, personnel and student body, the "Douglass Family," See Douglas Informer, June 1958, p. 8.

[59] Black Dispatch, 7, 28 May, 11 June 1955.

The first official senior class graduating from the new Douglass High School in 1955, was composed of 195 students. Hillard Bowen, head of the Department of Education of Tennessee State University and a Douglass graduate, delivered the commencement address.[60]

Citizens' Tribute

On June 10, 1955, the citizens of Oklahoma City and the State gave a testimonial dinner in honor of F. D. citing his services as an educator and civic leader. The Black Dispatch carried:

CITIZENS IN TRIBUTE TO ABLE EDUCATOR

> 'No man learned to walk by being carried . . . . perhaps some day scholars will write of the spiritual strength that is gained as men grapple with the basic law of life - that an individual gains strength only through struggle.' In this statement the Rev. William J. Harvey III, pastor of the Macedonia Baptist Church, Pittsburg, Pa., summed tributes paid to F. D., 'Oklahoma City's foremost ambassador of goodwill between the races,' by 250 persons who attended a testimonial dinner in honor of the prominent educator last Friday night . . .[61]

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[60] Black Dispatch, 4 June 1955.

[61] Black Dispatch, 18 June 1955.

By 1955, F. D.'s service to the field of education, civic and community could be numerated as follows: President of the Oklahoma Association of Negro Teachers in 1929; 12 years service on the Executive Committee of the Oklahoma Association of Negro Teachers, serving longer than any other person; 14 years as president of the Langston University Alumni Association; Second vice-president of the National Association for the Study of Negro Life and History; First vice-president of the Associated Publishers, a corporation publishing books by and about Negroes; state chairman of Negro History for Oklahoma; Executive Secretary of the Oklahoma Association of Negro

The testimonial dinner for F. D. was held in Gaylord Hall of the white YMCA, under the sponsorship of the Fourth Street YMCA, in cooperation with the Citizens' Action Committee and the Oklahoma Association of Negro Teachers. Committees in charge of the affair described it as "one of the most inspiring demonstrations of interacial goodwill ever witnessed in Oklahoma City."[62]

The dinner honoring F. D. served two purposes. First, it served to "honor the black educator, often referred to as the dean of Oklahoma Negro School leaders, for his work in the field of education, and second, it served as a 'send off' for a trip to the Mediterranean countries."[63]

F. D. was certified as a delegate to the assembly of the World Confederation of Organizations of the Teaching Profession, meeting in Istanbul, Turkey, by the National Education Association, one of

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Teachers; Chairman, Steering Committee of Oklahoma City and County Negro Girl Scouts since 1942, when it was organized; Chairman of the Committee of management of the Northeast Fourth Street Branch Y.M.C.A since its organization in 1945; General superintendent of the Tabernacle Baptist Church Sunday School and vice chairman of the church's board of deacons; First black president of the Oklahome City Urban League; a member of the Board of Directors of the Oklahoma City United Funds; and a member of the Board of Directors of the Oklahoma County Health Association. See F. D. Moon, personal papers; Daily Oklahoman, 9 June 1955.

[62]Ibid.

[63]Oklahoma City Times, 10 June 1955.

the teacher's groups from 40 nations. His six weeks journey included England, France, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Isreal and Syria.[64]

According to the Daily Oklahoman:

> Moon was instrumental in seeing one dream of his people become a reality.
>
> With gentle persistence, he worked for the construction of a complete senior high school for city Negroes, a project which ended with the opening of the modern Douglass plant on Eastern last Autumn.
>
> Now his friends are seeing to it that one of his personal dreams comes true.
>
> 'So far back as I can remember I have wanted to go to the Holy Land.' Moon said Wednesday. 'I am looking forward to that part of my trip more than anything else. As a child going to Sunday School with my mother, I longed to visit there.'
>
> The 59 year old educator, rushing his school chores in order to make the July 12 departure date, is also refreshing himself on ancient history, his favorite subject . . .[65]

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[64] Daily Oklahoman, 9 June 1955.

[65] Ibid.

CHAPTER XIII

DOUGLASS HIGH SCHOOL IN OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA 1955-1956

The Year of Decisions and Intolerance

Early in the administration of Governor Raymond Gary (1955-1959),[1] district patterns to comply with the Supreme Court's decision in the 1954 Brown decision were generated, First, the Governor launched a decided effort to amend the State Constitution as it affected the process of financing public schools in Oklahoma. This was an attempt to keep within the public schools' finances, $8,000,000, received from a four mill levy secured in 1948 through the efforts of F. D. and black educators of Oklahoma. The attempt was launched in the event that the U. S. Supreme Court's final decree pertaining to the Brown decision rendered the levy invalid.[2]

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[1] See Arthur L. Tolson, The Black Oklahomans History: 1541-1972 (New Orleans: Edwards Printing Company, 1972), p. 173.

[2] Daily Oklahoman, 4 April 1955.

In 1947, F. D. arranged a conference with Governor Roy Turner. The conference was an effort on the part of F. D. to secure an unrestricted one mill levy for the enrichment of separate school funds. This he proposed could be done through the resubmission of a constitutional amendment to be passed by the current legislature.

F. D. invited high school principals from over the state to accompany him to the capitol. Included in the delegation were:

The Oklahoma PTA Council, Oklahoma Education Association, Oklahoma League of Young Democrats, and school administrators, including F. D., led in the movement.[3]

On April 5, 1955, the finance amendment to the state constitution was adopted by Oklahoma voters in a special election. Seventy of the seventy-seven counties returned a majority vote in favor of the new constitutional provision. The total vote exceeded

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Calvin Johns, Semonole; Sam Sadler, Boynton; George Tillman, Harmony; E. Tilman, Guthrie; J. A. T. West, Tulsa; E. A. Woods, Tulsa; Gloria Ainsworth, Ardmore; Alfonso Jordan, Wewoka; R. T. Gracey, Bartlesville; Nat Watson, Shawnee; Bob Smith, Bristow; William Fraizer, Wewoka; Henry Whitlow, Tulsa; Ira Hall, Oklahoma City; and George Ragland, insurance man, Oklahoma City.

In a preconference at Douglass the delegation agreed that in addition to requesting the governor's assistance in securing an unrestricted one mill, they would also seek an appropriation from the legislature to equalize teachers' salaries. This argument they based on the ineffectiveness of the additional one mill levy which rendered three mills for black schools.

During the conference with the governor they argued on the premise that the adoption of the extra five mills for the majority schools in 1946 had operated to broaden the distance between appropriations for white and black schools. They called to the governor's attention that the restricted one mill could only be used for sites and buildings, and then only at the discretion of the government's board. No provisions had been made for the increase of teachers' salaries. F. D. pointed out during the conference that the first mills for whites could be used for increasing white teachers' salaries.

When the legislature met on July 6, 1948, a joint resolution of the legislature Article X, Section 9, of the Oklahoma Constitution, proposed a one mill on the dollar valuation on property in the county to be levied by the Excise Board for unrestricted purposes for the separate schools. This amendment when voted on carried a 147,329 majority. See Black Dispatch, 8 February 1947. Also see Oklahoma, Twenty-Third Biennial Report of the State Department of Education, 1950, p. 48.

[3]Ibid.

300,000. In adopting the new school finance bill, Oklahoma recaptured the four mill levy, achieved by F. D. and black educators, as a financial county wide basis for separate schools to be apportioned to school districts on the basis of average daily attendance, resulting in the Amendment of Article X of the Oklahoma Constitution.[4] According to F. D.

> . . . I had the good fortune to serve as executive secretary of the OANT and chairman of the Legislative Committee of the same organization over 12 years. My job was to watch and deal directly with the legislature and to see how it would be possible to get additional finances to make possible good schools for Negroes in Oklahoma. . . .Mr. Gaylord of the Daily Oklahoman has been a good friend of mine throughout the years and he has cooperated with me through the use of his newspaper organization, which has helped us tremendously because of the amount of finances we had to promote. Constitutional amendments were limited. But in two instances we secured the passage throughout the State of Oklahoma of two constitutional amendments. One in 1946 which added one additional mill.
>
> For a number of years we had two mills as a maximum to support Negro schools, no matter what the number of schools might be in a county . . . two mills within the county. That was inadequate so we secured, in 1946, the passage of one additional mill to support the Negro schools.
>
> In 1948, we secured the passage of an additional mill which made a total of four mills to support the schools instead of two mills as prevailed prior to 1946. The total amount (we've checked it up) we secured over that period of time that those mills prevailed to support Negro schools, equaled a little more than 27 million dollars. Now that was no longer necessary after the Supreme Court decision in 1954, or rather not the Supreme Court decision in 1954, but rather in the month of April 1955, the people of Oklahoma voted to abolish separate schools, or so called Negro schools in

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[4] Daily Oklahoman, 6 April 1955. Oklahoma School Code, 1955, p. 24.

> Oklahoma. Therefore, you put all the finances together. Incidentally, the two mills which we secured has enhanced many, many schools throughout Oklahoma that otherwise would have been devoid of such support had it not been that we secured the passage of those two mills in 1946, 1948 - - so, all of them gained from the legislation which we secured from the legislature in the passage in 1946 and 1948.[5]

Second, irregardless of the fact that a new financial policy was voted by the people of Oklahoma in 1955, the prophecy made by Governor Johnston H. Murray in 1954 with regard to the status of black teachers' employment due to integration seemed apparent. Even though immediate impetus was given the desegregation of public schools by Governor Gary, racial discrimination directed toward black teachers manifested itself during his administration. Governor Gary and state superintendent, Oliver Hodge's position of leaving the problem of employment to local school districts imperiled their jobs. This mode of operation for hiring black teachers in Oklahoma became a concern of black educational leaders throughout the state.[6]

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[5]F. D. Moon, taped interview held Oklahoma Christian College, Living Legend Library, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 11 April 1972.

[6]See Arthur L. Tolson, The Black Oklahomans History: 1541-1972, p. 182. Also Black Dispatch, 22 March 1956.

In 1954, Oklahoma's Governor Johnston H. Murray (1951-1955), in a meeting of the Southern Governors' Conference in Dallas, Texas, stated he expected his state to school its white and Negro children separately yet legally comply with anti-segregation edicts. "I'm very much for liberalizing exchange of students between districts. That will let the whites go to the white schools and the colored to the colored schools . . . . Negro teachers will suffer in Oklahoma

But the predicted attitude of the State toward integration of black teachers by Governor Murray in 1954 had not been taken lightly by the Oklahoma Association of Negro Teachers. By 1955, while Oklahoma like many border and southern states was standing pat waiting for a mandate or decree from the U. S. Supreme Court with regard to the Brown decision, the OANT, with F. D. as Executive Secretary, had laid a plan of action as recommended by its Committee on Integration. The actions included:

> (1) That Citizens' Committees be activated on local and district levels, made up of key people, and that this Committee be familarized with the proposals of the Integration Committee for definite action thereon; that representatives from citizens' committees be invited to attend the District Workshops to report and coordinate their activities. (2) That the Oklahoma Association of Negro Teachers employ legal counsel to represent its members in legal action, in application and interpretation of the law; that the Oklahoma Association of Negro Teachers plan legislative lobbying in the interest of Negro teachers. (3) That a definite portion of the Association's budget be earmarked for the support of legal action; that an extra assessment on the state be provided if additional financing is necessary. (4) That District Workshops be held prior to the annual meeting of the O.A.N.T. for the implementation of the proposals of the Integration Committee. (5) That a meeting be planned of the Integration Committee and superintendents of schools to form a common course of action in integration in the interest of all. (6) That the Executive Secretary of the O.A.N.T. be requested to plan conferences and contacts with the O.E.A. Administrator's Council or any group for the purpose of implementing the proposals. (7) That specific instances of successful integrated teaching experiences be brought to

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when the separate but equal system ends. It will destroy the profession of colored teachers. I don't know of any law in the world that can tell its school board who it can hire." See Black Dispatch, 10 July 1954.

the attention of the public through clubs, radio, television, and other media of communication.[7]

Imogene Patrick of the Daily Oklahoman expressed after an interview with F. D.:

> How do the qualifications of Oklahoma's Negro teachers compare with those of other educators?
>
> Using the yardstick of training and experience against certified teachers listed by the State Department of Education, the Negro teacher shows up at least as well equipped for classroom posts as the white schoolman.
>
> A greater percentage of Negro teachers have bachelor's degrees and the number of white teachers with master's degrees is only slightly higher percentage-wise than the number of Negroes.
>
> A comparative study of their professional fitness for teaching assignments was completed this week by F. D. Moon, Executive Secretary of the Oklahoma Association of Negro Teachers and principal of Oklahoma City's Douglass High School.
>
> The question of whether the Negro teacher measures up 'becomes very important in the light of the Supreme Court decision and the present threat to the jobs of our Negro teachers.' Moon explained.
>
> His association, fearing its members will not be integrated along with their pupils, is asking that they be judged by a board of education on the basis of qualifications only.
>
> Moon examined state department statistics for the 1953-54 school year during which 1,536 Negro and 19,104 white teachers were employed in Oklahoma.
>
> White teachers who have not graduated from college and are employed on an emergency certification outnumber the Negroes in the same category, his survey shows. 'Only in the case of the master's degree do white teachers slightly exceed in

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[7] F. D. Moon, ed., Program of the Oklahoma Association of Negro Teachers, Forty-sixth Annual Session, October 1954, pp. 6-11.

qualifications as compared to those of Negro teachers,' Moon reported. He found 25.8 percent of all white teachers have master's degrees as against 24.7 percent of Negro teachers.

'When one takes into account the recency of admission of Negroes to graduate training in the higher institutions of learning in Oklahoma, it is more remarkable that the Negro teachers compare so favorably with white teachers in the matter of master's degrees,' Moon commented.

His check of the five categories in which teachers are placed disclosed that one-half percent of both the white and Negro teaching force have less than 102 semester hours of college training.

But the next bracket of non-graduate teachers - - those with 102 to 115 semester college hours - - is made up of slightly more than two out of every 100 white teachers and less than one of every 100 Negro teachers.

Slightly more than 70 of every 100 white teachers hold bachelor's degrees compared with 73 out of 100 Negroes.

Moon said his study also revealed that the Negro teachers usually stay longer on the job, 'a situation that prevails because of limited job opportunities in other desirable categories of labor.'

His findings will be reported in this month's issue of the association Journal, off the press in mid June.

'In light of the national and critical shortage of teachers, it would be a waste of human resources to keep in teaching positions unprepared white teachers simply because they are white, holding emergency certificates only, when we have well prepared and professionally awake Negro teachers.[8]

Third, the Oklahoma City Board of Education attempted to remove racial barriers in the public schools as boundaries were redrawn for 13 of the school district's 77 elementary schools. In

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[8]Imogene Patrick, "Negro Teachers Get Good Marks," Daily Oklahoman, 6 June 1955.

the final analysis 9 previously black or separate elementary schools and 6 traditionally white schools served mixed populated districts. No disposition involved Oklahoma City's only black high school. The new system for the Oklahoma City public schools was aimed at having schools, whether previously for white or black, accommodate a natural geographic area or serve an area it could handle without overcrowding. Students were given the right to continue in the schools they attended during the previous year.[9]

The Friendly Debate

By August 1955, several black citizens were becoming disenchanted with the desegregation plans of the Oklahoma City School Board. A local newspaper account revealed:

> Oklahoma City's desegregated schools came in for criticism Tuesday when a delegation of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People took to task the Oklahoma City School Board at a special meeting. . . .City schools are not, as was promised, allowing Negro children to enroll in schools of districts where they live, a half dozen Negro representatives charged before the board. . .[10]

Another article appearing in the Black Dispatch and pertaining to the same special board meeting revealed:

> 'Douglass High School is a shell. It's a fake,' Editor Roscoe Dunjee declared before the Oklahoma City Board of Education in its new quarters on 9th and Western. Dunjee pointed out that the Central High School where at least 20

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[9] Daily Oklahoman, 2, 31 August 1955.

[10] Daily Oklahoman, 24 August 1955.

Negroes seek admission offers 128 units of credits in industrial education while Douglass offers only 23. Central offers 9 units in foreign language while Douglass offers only 4. Negro students are not seeking admission to Central High to rub up against white folks, Dunjee emphasized. They are coming up there to rub up against a curriculum or course of study.

The board in a special meeting heard Jimmy E. Stewart, President of the NAACP local branch, who told a meeting at the Bethlehem Star Baptist Church, where 10 to 12 Negro students told of unsuccessful attempt to enroll in Central High. Stewart said he was told by the students they were asked to go back and talk with their parents. The Central officials told them the advantage of enrolling at Moon Junior High and that their transportation would be offered at 5¢ a trip to go to Moon Junior High. A member of the board advised me several years ago in a public meeting, it was against the law to provide transportation of students within the limit of the city, and I don't think we have changed the law on this subject.[11]

A later article in the Daily Oklahoman predominately quoted

F. D.

Douglass high school course of instruction ranks with the best in the state, officials told Oklahoma City school board members Thursday in answer to an attack made on the Douglass program earlier this month.

Dr. J. Chester Swanson, superintendent, asked F. D. Moon, Douglass principal, to outline the school's course offerings for the board.

'We want you to know something of the quality of work done at Douglass,' he told the board.

Roscoe Dunjee, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People leader, last month charged, 'You have a pretty shell at Douglass High, not a school . . . .' He claimed Central offers 128 units in "industrial education" while Douglass has only 23.

Moon said the same report from which Dunjee's figures were

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[11] Black Dispatch, 25 August 1955.

taken also shows that Douglass has 38 units of vocational education, compared with 4-1/2 at Central. Both industrial and vocational courses are 3-hour-a-day job training units, the only difference being that one is state reimbursed and the other is not. Combining the two, Douglass rates third in the state in the number of vocational courses offered, surpassed only by Oklahoma City's Capitol Hill and Central High School, he told the board. 'No high school in Tulsa offers as many units as Douglass,' he said. Moon emphasized that 'merely giving the number of units a school has, does not show whether the school is good . . .'

Douglass has been accredited by the North Central Association since 1939. It was the second Negro high school in the state to qualify for this rating.

In order to keep its accreditation it has had to measure up against 'evaluative criteria' which include the school objectives, pupil activity program, library service, guidance program, outcomes of instruction, qualification of teachers, school plant and administration, as well as instruction and educational program which covers both the courses of study and methods of teaching.

Comparing Douglass with other state schools on courses of instruction only, Moon said that the school has more industrial arts courses (one hour a day classes) than all other state schools with the exception of Oklahoma City's Central and Tulsa Central.

Douglass offers 7-1/2 fine arts units, ranking fourth in the state in the number offered. The two Central high schools and Tulsa's Will Rogers have more. The Negro's social studies program is in line with Oklahoma City's Classen, Central and Northeast high school. It offers the same number of math courses, 4-1/2, as Classen, Central and Northeast.

Douglass gives students three sciences-biology, chemistry and physics, less than Classen (with 8) and Central (12-1/2) but adequate to allow students to meet pre-medical and pre-nursing requirements, Moon said.

He conceded the school was a 'little low' on language, offering only Latin and Spanish . . .[12]

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[12]Daily Oklahoman, 2 September 1955.

Some indication of how serious the publicized attack on Douglass High School by Editor Roscoe Dunjee was can possibly be observed in a second article written by F. D. appearing in the Black Dispatch advising:

> It has been eleven years since I wrote an article for the Black Dispatch in disagreement with Editor Dunjee. During the eleven years mentioned, I have found myself in accord with him many times and not in agreement several times. I had hoped that I would never deem it necessary to express a difference of opinion again. I regret that it is necessary now. I do not intend to engage in answering every article that may follow, but considerable fog has accumulated, so reluctantly I turn from a busy job to add some information which may help in clearing the atmosphere.
>
> Recently your nationally famous Douglass High School has been classified as 'a fake and a shell.' This charge grew out of the understandable, just to get Negroes into Central High School and other previously all-white schools. With this I have no quarrel.
>
> F. R. Born, now a supervisor and former principal of Central High School, will witness that last year, just after the racial clashes in Baltimore and Washington schools, I called at his office to plan with him ways to avoid such clashes when Negro students came to Central. He agreed with me and we started on such a program last year.
>
> Since Carver and Orchard Park are in the Central District, why was it necessary to bring Douglass High School up for smearing? The only thing, it seems to me, necessary was to insist on the constitutional rights of these children to attend the school nearest to them and in their district, if they wish to do so.
>
> To try to smear the quality of instruction carried on at Douglass was an unnecessary affront to its administration, faculty, student body, alumni, patrons, and interested citizens. To say that the attack was directed at the superintendent and the Oklahoma City Board of Education in no way diminishes the damage to Douglass. If the virtues of Central are so attractive, can they not be pictured without trying to smear a cherished institution which is dear to thousands of our citizens.

Let us look at the facts. The whole case for Central as contrasted with Douglass has rested on the number of units offered at Central and the number offered at Douglass. In last week's issue of the Black Dispatch, referring to units offered at Douglass and Central, Editor Dunjee says: 'A cross-the-board survey of the courses offered at the two schools shows that Central offers a total of 200-1/2 units of credit, while Douglass offers 101-1/2'. By inference, Central is twice as good!

Out distinguished editor has chosen the wrong yardstick for determining the quality of instruction offered in determining a good high school. Next week I will write an article on how to tell what a good high school is. The number of units to be found on page 72 of the annual high school bulletin is not the way. But since Mr. Dunjee has used that as a measuring rod in trying to recruit students for declining Central High School, I will accept it although no one who knows how to evaluate a high school thinks it is so simple as to count units on page 72. It measures quantity, not necessarily quality.

But Editor Dunjee has staked everything on the number of units, so here we go. If Douglass is a 'fake and a shell,' and only half as good as Central, because it offers about half as many units, the new Northwest Classen, with its $4,000,000 plant, is also 'a worse fake and shell' than Douglass because it has only 81-1/2 units. In fact, it is only about four-fifths as good as Douglass!

What a waste for the Oklahoma City Board of Education to keep spending such vast sums of money on these 'fakes and shells.' Let us all go to Central!

More about units. Editor Dunjee made Douglass the bright and shining light among Negro high schools by saying in his Black Dispatch editorial on August 25: 'Tulsa's Booker T. Washington High School in no way compares with Douglass High in the sooner capital.' (Thanks Editor Dunjee for a little respite from the 'fake-and-shell' uppercut). But Douglass accepts the fact that no longer are there Negro and white schools, and for a long while we have been working to be a top ranking school regardless of race, creed or color. Back to units. Except for our friendly foe, Booker T. Washington of Tulsa, let us see how Douglass rates in units with the largest--hitherto all-white high schools. ONLY THREE HIGH

SCHOOLS IN THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA HAVE MORE UNITS THAN DOUGLASS HIGH SCHOOL OF OKLAHOMA CITY. THEY ARE CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL, OKLAHOMA CITY: CAPITOL HILL HIGH SCHOOL, OKLAHOMA CITY: AND CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL OF TULSA.

By the yardstick of units, Douglass is 'eating high up on the hog!' Look and see: Tulsa's famous Will Rogers has only 70 units (beautiful shell); poor old nationally famous Webster High of Tulsa has only 39 units (old fake, you are short on your units); Booker T. Washington of Tulsa has only 42 units (shame on you with your beautiful new shell); Enid, Shawnee, Muskogee, Ardmore, Lawton, Ponca City -- none rise in units of credit beyond 70-1/2, as compared with Douglass and its 101 units.(poor fakes and shells. Check this on page 72 of 1954 high school bulletin.)

Wonder why parents in all other white high schools of Oklahoma City are not rushing to unit filled Central? They fall way behind Douglass. 'the fake and beautiful shell with air-conditioned office.' I told you the new, four million dollar Northwest Classen has only 81-1/2 units; Northeast has only 53-1/2 units (and here I have been saying Northeast was a good school -- old fake); Southeast has 44 units; the almost new John Marshall has 38-1/2 units; and poor U. S. Grant has only 12 units on page 72. (Well, U. S. Grant may have about 20 units by now in its brand new shell).

See you next week. Number of units is not the measure of a good high school. Will tell you how to tell a good high school. Will tell you why I referred to Central as a dying school and not the bright shining light that has been pictured. After next week, please excuse me, I have more important work to do.[13]

The intensification of the public debate seemed apparent as Dunjee answered F. D., drawing attention to his thinking that F. D. had changed the subject. In addition, he cautioned the public that there was no anger between the two of them but that:

The Black Dispatch is glad to get this subject out in the open

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[13]F. D. Moon, "How Not to Rate a Good High School," Black Dispatch, 8 September 1955.

> where both black and white will start talking, and we in the language of McBeth, 'Lay on McBeth and Damn be he who first cry, hold enough! . . . One should get a little suspicious when Moon says Douglass gives more vocational courses than Central. Moon believes what's good for the goose is good for the gander. Why should Douglass give more of anything in the educational field to Negroes than whites give to whites. We are going to show that what Principal Moon is talking about is as full as siege. Moon says Douglass give 38 units of vocational education while Central gives 4-1/2 units. We'll stipulate on that without further discussion.
>
> Now Principal Moon should agree without discussion that Central High School offers this year 137 units of credit in industrial education while Douglass offers only 54. The figure we used in our previous discussion was taken from the 1954 annual high school bulletin. But our readers want to understand and know that this same high school bulletin makes a marked distinction between vocational education and industrial education. We charge the board of education is giving 137 units of credits to white children in industrial education and 54 units to Negroes. But Mr. Moon refuses to discuss this question. He rushes off to discuss vocational education, something we did not mention once in our talk to the Oklahoma City Board of Education and which we have not mentioned in our editorial column. What our readers need to know is the distinction the State of Oklahoma makes between industrial education and vocational education. If you want to point Mr. Moon down to cases, ask him whether Douglass gives as many units in industrial education as Central. That is the issue. Far be it from us to suggest that Mr. Moon is willfully attempting to confuse the readers of the Daily Oklahoman. . .[14]

With the issue stated, the editor of the Black Dispatch continued to persue the question at hand, rectifying:

> Now let us get down to the question of industrial education. We have argued this issue with almost every Negro principal in the state. They have surrendered to the policy adapted some 30 years ago by the State Board of Education that they would not educate Negroes in any field where there were no

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[14]Roscoe Dunjee, "Principal Moon Changes the Subject," Black Dispatch, 8 September 1955.

current occupational opportunity. That is the reason why principal Moon admits Central offers more industrial education than Douglass. The white schools place great emphasis on industrial education for white youth. The State Board of Education assumes that Negroes will end up in several capacities and places great stress on such vocations as barbering, cosmetology, shoe repairing, drivers safety, educational home making for girls, manicuring, and a lot of other avocations in which Negroes can be made useful as servants around white people's homes. Auto mechanics in most Negro schools never gets beyond car washing and greasing. You can readily see how white folk can feel they should give more of these courses to Negroes at Douglass than whites gives at Central. When Mr. Moon tells you that Central gives 4-1/2 units of vocational education to whites while Negroes gives 38 to black boys and girls you can get a clearer picture of what he is talking about. In reality vocational courses given at Douglass by principal Moon are intended to prepare Negro children to be servants of the upper class . . . Education in our high schools should trend students toward scientific discoveries. They should be trained as psychologists, mathematicians, agronomists, astronomers, historians, writers and language experts. It is out of such groups that we develop cultural background and expand our wisdom and knowledge. Suppose Ralph Bunch, Percy Julian and Dr. Carver had been trained to serve only the baser needs of the white people? Or that Walter White and Roy Wilkins had been reared on Mississippi planatations? Where would Joe Lewis have ended had his parents kept him in Alabama? The Negro child needs full and free exposure to all types of development, then leave it up to the resourcefulness of the black boy and girl to bossum his usefulness.

But back to the subject. We are like the bulldog, we don't want to get but one hold on the hide of our opponent. We are not going to let Principal Moon change the subject. We are taking about industrial education while he confines his remarks to vocational education, defined as southern white folks want to define it for Negroes. The Negroes want to cease being hewers of wood and drawers of water; he wants to assume the full stature of citizenship and manhood. He is not trying to enter the integrated school in order to rub against white people, what he desires to do is rub up against the same course of studies, the same curriculum, the same sort of future here in America as any other citizen.

Incidentally we would like to inform Principal Moon that he

> can continue this discussion in the column of the Black Dispatch. He does not have to resort to the columns of the Daily Oklahoman. The people, especially the Negro people are entitled to the fullest discussion possible.[15]

Needless to say, F. D. counteracted the previous editorial with an article appearing in the Black Dispatch giving an aspect on "HOW TO RATE A HIGH SCHOOL."

> Last week I promised to explain how to tell what a good high school is.
>
> After years of quick, hurried inspection and awarding of 'units,' the Cooperative Study of Secondary Education was established in 1933 to find out how to tell WHAT A GOOD HIGH SCHOOL IS. Our outstanding colleges and universities and 200 high schools participated in the study, and over two hundred thousand dollars were spent to find the answer. After six years of intensive study, the measuring rod evolved. It is nationally known as the EVALUATIVE CRITERIA. It is widely used. It was first used in 1939 - sixteen years ago.
>
> Every high school that has been accredited by the North Central Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools since 1939 has used the Evaluative Criteria (not the number of units) as the measuring rod. It is much more comprehensive than a mere counting of Carnegie units.
>
> The Evaluative Criteria checks a school on thirteen different areas. To name a few outstanding principles, it checks a school upon its School Plant, the qualifications of the School Staff, the Philosophy and Objectives of the School, the Pupil Activity Program, the Curriculum and Courses of Study, the Library Service, the Guidance Service, the Outcome of Instruction, and a few other areas.
>
> Let us see how the Douglass plant rates on the Evaluative Criteria. Guess we need not dwell here long, since Douglass received NATIONAL recognition in a feature article of the American School Board Journal, July issue, 1955 (See copies at Douglass Library). Dr. Benjamin Mays, nationally known educator, rates it among the best, and Editor Dunjee begrudgingly compliments it as "a beautiful shell."

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[15] Ibid.

On the qualification of the school staff, suppose we rest the case with our distinguished Editor. In his Black Dispatch editorial September 1, 1955, he says he told the Oklahoma City Board of Education: 'We not only did not intend to impute a deficiency to the faculty at Douglass --- what we know is that the average Negro teacher in the city schools is superior in training and experience to the white teacher.' How are we doing? EXCELLENT PLANT and SUPERIOR FACULTY! Is there any question about our pupil activity program when our high school chorus is in such demand, our football team unbeaten in forty games, our debate and speech students receiving regional acclaim beyond Oklahoma's borders, our Student Council holding its own in the National Student Council Association, our National High School Honor Society taking top honors, with a Hi-Y that has received the highest rating in the state for fifteen consecutive years, and with Editor Dunjee himself referring last school year to our band as the best. Do we need to go further on our pupil activity program? If so, there is plenty yet to be told!

I assume that someone might want to know how we measure on curriculum -- fourth in the state in terms of units, but that is not enough. We rate high in academic and vocational areas. Let the results speak. We have several students in the engineering school of the University of Oklahoma and other leading universities, which indicates adequate mathematics. Our graduates have, or are now serving as nurses in the Veterans Hospital, University Hospital, and numerous hospitals throughout the country. (Would you like to have their names?)

This refutes the untrue statement that the Douglass High School does not offer enough science to equip students for nursing. Someone might have been rejected because she failed to take the required courses while at Douglass. If I failed to take law while a student of the University of Chicago, can the university be blamed for my not passing the bar?

Our students have no trouble entering pre-medical courses. The first Negro doctor to graduate from the University of Oklahoma is from Douglass. The first Negro, so far as I know, in the south to take the difficult examination for a Rhodes Scholarship is a graduate of Douglass. Two Douglass graduates are being admitted to the University of Oklahoma medical school this fall; at least three of our graduates have been employed as technicians at the Medical Research Foundation out on Thirteenth Street; an outstanding young chemist who is a Douglass graduate,

has been brought to the Foundation in recent months; other Douglass graduates have served as laboratory technicians at Tinker Field, Homer Phillips Hospital in St. Louis, and other institutions.

The science department at Douglass is one of the best equipped in the state, especially in chemistry and physics. The chemistry teacher, with a master's degree in chemistry from the University of Iowa, received high praise for his contributions to a workshop in Nashville this summer, and the same is true for a biology teacher who won high acclaim in a workshop at the University of Oklahoma.

In our vocational auto-mechanics (not a car-washing shop, but real auto mechanics -- come see for yourself) the instructor ranked high in a mixed class of white and Negro auto-mechanics taught by General Motors this summer. (Can anyone question that?) The teachers of carpentry, brickmasonry, printing (and he has over $30,000 worth of printing equipment in his shop -- and it is new) -- all are recognized tradesmen. The teacher of upholstery and furniture rebuilding attracted much attention for his contributions at a workshop at A. and M. College this summer. We could go on down the line but time will not permit.

Well, I have worked with you people in this city for sixteen years. I do not mislead you when I tell you Douglass rates high in most of the areas of the Evaluative Criteria and is outstanding in a large number of them.

Now, a few words about Central High School. It is a good school, yet it is a declining school. Ten years ago, Central had an enrollment of 2300 students; but in spite of the vast sums appropriated to provide life for it through vocational courses, its enrollment had declined to less than fifteen hundred at the close of school in 1955.

Do you know why there are two Classen High Schools in Oklahoma City? I will tell you. When the new Classen moved to a new site, the old Classen was scheduled to become a junior high school, with a part of the old area to serve in giving additional students to build Central up. There was such protest against having these students to go to Central, that another way had to be found to build up declining Central; namely, make it a junior-senior high school for the first time in history.

> The point of this information? The people of the race using Central or living nearby did not see what our Central recruit-Editor saw.
>
> Now, after this week please excuse me to serve the finest students of the most wonderful parents of the best community in the world. These two articles were written to inform the public. There is much work to be done -- get tracks moved on the south side of Tenth Street, get more jobs for Negroes, fight the common foe of the Negro, and make our city a better place in which to live.
>
> Incidentally, I am not mad at Roscoe Dunjee. We have differed before and had fun. Hope the Editor lives to be a hundred to fight for the race.
>
> Editor, you are invited out to swap jokes in the air-conditioned office of our 'beautiful shell.'[16]

As it seemed apparent F. D. was going to leave the question of Douglass as "a fake and a shell" to the public. Editor Dunjee continued the debate on the "FAMOUS DOUGLASS HIGH SCHOOL":

> Principal Moon's article in the last week's Black Dispatch is amusing. He confines the major portion of his article to tell our readers Douglass is as good as the worst high school in Oklahoma. That is not our contention. We said Douglass High School is not as good as the best. This writer set up Central High School as the best in the State, and we said that the measure by the standards of the Douglass High School was just as good as Central. Does Principal Moon deny this? We say that Central offers 2-1/2 units of credit while Douglass offers only 1-1/2, and we feel any 8th grade student would agree with that argument. That 202 is twice as much as 101.
>
> We could get somewhere arguing with this erudite scholar if he would stop bicycling away from every point we try to make. We have never referred to any other school except Booker Washington High School in Tulsa and we take this position that Principal Moon when he attempts to refer to Douglass High

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[16] F. D. Moon, "How to Rate a High School," Black Dispatch, 15 September 1955.

School as nationally famous should tell his auditors what makes the school he heads nationally famous. By what yardstick does he determine that the school he heads is outstanding to the point that he can actually say that the institution is nationally famous? No other school in the city has an air-cooled principal's office, no other school in the city occupies a one story building a block and a half long, but Principal Moon directs a faculty that offers one half the unit of credits as does the Central High School. It would be famous in that it offers in the most beautiful building in the city only half that is offered whites. That should unquestionably make it famous.

Now we have all the argument that is being made about the competence of this writer to determine what is a good school, but Superintendent Swanson is a little hazy as to what units represent and Principal Moon says they don't mean much. We are inclined to offer a lay opinion regarding what units really represent and amount to.

As the carpenter unit is the inch and the grocery unit is the quart and a peck, the unit is the determination of the quantity in the educational arena. So much of this and so much of that is added together in determination of what is given to an individual as a strong well balanced educational background. That is our idea what units represent in a cultural arena. Now, the quality comes in the instructional staff. One might be offering an adequate number of units but have poorly prepared individuals to impart their information.

But we are not going to be bumped off with the term units by Principal Moon. It sounds good and we remember too, it was Abraham Lincoln who said, 'God must have loved the common people because he made so many of them.' We will not be fooled. Educators use the term units entirely too much for Principal Moon to wave his arms and shout that units don't mean much, and he has never stopped long enough in his unrighteous indignation to tell the Black Dispatch readers what units actually represent. It is not enough to negate and say units mean nothing. Let's have an affirmative statement. What does unit mean?

Principal Moon unwittingly runs himself into a corner when he preceives in his article last week to drag in Northwest, Classen, Grant and all the rest. He pointed out that all of these schools have less units than Douglass, the famous school we have called a fake and a shell.

Now for the sentimental drivel about Douglass being smeared. This is done when Moon said, 'to try to smear the quality of instruction carried on at Douglass was an unnecessary froth to his administration, faculty, student body, patrons and interested citizens. To say that the attack was directed at the superintendent of the Oklahoma City Board of Education in no way deminishes the damage of Douglass. If the virtue of Central is so attractive, can they not be pictured without trying to smear a cherished institution which is dear to thousands of citizens?'

In that subtle manner Principal Moon attempted to arouse the citizenry generally against the position of the Black Disparch. But to this demagoguery we arise to say it is the high school bulletin that smears Douglass not the Black Dispatch. All we depend upon is the fact that Central High School offers 2-1/2 units and Douglass 1-1/2. That's the truth. Surely we have a right to tell the citizens about this alarming disparity between the two schools and we want Principal Moon to know that Douglass is not cherished by this writer. Just now it is the only thing that stands between the Oklahoma City black man and educational freedom. We're going to publish at an early date the total units offered in Oklahoma City school districts for white and colored school children so that Mr. Moon will be forever ashamed he dragged in the other white schools in the area to prove his point.

In justice to the Douglass High School principal, we believe he has told the fable about Douglass High School being famous so long that he actually believes this fiction himself

By the way, did you notice in the article about the glories of the segregated school he failed to refer to the distinction we made in our article between industrial and vocational education? He may argue until his face is purple that units mean nothing to education but in this discussion the difference between industrial and vocational education is the most unit of this squabble. We think the principal of the famous school out on Eastern Avenue owes it to us to give just one more article in which he deals with the unwillingness of the State Department of Education dispite the mobility of the population to educate a Negro child in the field where there is no occupational opportunity and then square up this strange phenomenon with a dissertation on the difference of what he is.

talking about and what we present to our readers.[17]

Despite the verbal attack drawing attention to Douglass High School, by September, 1955, for the first time in Oklahoma City's history, black and majority students attended integrated classes. An early system wide poll revealed 52,138 students enrolled in the public schools with Capitol Hill showing the largest enrollment of 2,061 students, and integrated classes were in eight previously majority schools. Blacks were enrolled at Central High School; Franklin and Webster Junior High Schools; Creston Hills, Culbertson, Lincoln, Riverside and Walnut Grove elementary schools. Over 60 students helped comprise the enrollment of 1,660 students at Central High School. Douglass' enrollment of 722 students showed no majority white count.[18]

Curriculum and Activities

Although Douglass High School did not participate as a pioneering integrated school in the Oklahoma City school system during the first year of integration, F. D. continued to administer a comprehensive high school. In fact, the "Douglass Family" increased all areas of instruction. For example, one noted activity was

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[17]Roscoe Dunjee, "Famous Douglass High School," Black Dispatch, 15 September 1955.

[18]Black Dispatch, 4, 7 September 1955; Oklahoma City Times, 7, 14 September 1955.

their continued interest in black achievements during Negro History Week, at which time:

> An interesting brochure of facts concerning the achievements and contributions of Negroes to all phases of contemporary life was compiled by the Douglass High School staff and students and distributed to all students during the Negro History Week observance. Douglass's vocational printing students under the direction of Mr. Lawrence Dorden printed the booklet.
>
> Through daily broadcast over the Douglass High School address system, many students were acquainted with the achievements of Negroes in the field of social science, sports, science and music. These broadcasts were conducted by students themselves in these fields at Douglass . . .[19]

Another school activity which seemed to draw community interest was the Douglass High School's Verse Choir. This organization was the only one of its kind in Oklahoma and one of the few in the United States. Consuelo Tompkins, public speaking instructor at Douglass, was originator of the Verse Choir in 1950. The choir made music of poetry by reading it in unison and dividing it into parts for different voices and effects. The choir made annual appearances with the interdenominational choir and other special church programs throughout Oklahoma City and the State.[20]

Mrs. Thompkins revealed:

> The idea was unusual. Many of her students were poor readers, she discovered in teaching public speaking. So many read poorly . . . and they had trouble memorizing poems. 'I devised this plan in the hope that they could get beauty out of

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[19] Black Dispatch, 16 February 1956.

[20] Ibid.

> reading and enjoyment out of learning'. . . The plan worked. The students at Douglass now like the plan. More of them want in the choir than the limit of twenty-four will accommodate. The main purpose was to create in the children the desire to read and develop their appreciation of what they were reading . . . some of them are slow, but put them in a group and they just go on with the rest.[21]

Most of the selections read by the choir were standard poems. Some of the materials were especially written for the choir. In 1955 Squire Watkins, a member of the choir, wrote the Christmas story which was presented at several churches during the season.

Future Business Leaders of America was organized at Douglass in 1956. The membership of 75 students were primarily students interested in business education and were under the supervision of their instructors, Dorothy Burnett and G. A. Williams.[22]

Integrated Firsts and Students' Achievements

As the first year of integration in public schools unfolded in Oklahoma City, several first integrated experiences happened for the "Douglass Family." For example:

> A brusing high school football game in Capitol Hill . . . carried Oklahoma City past another racial desegregation milestone.
>
> The hard-fought contest in which Capitol Hill beat Douglass, 13-6, was the city's first Negro-white game. Even during the storybook ending when the Capitol Hill youngsters surged past

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[21] Ibid.

[22] Black Dispatch, 3 May 1956. Dorothy Burnett, interview held 2915 Creston, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

the Negro squad with only 27 seconds remaining in the game, there were no incidents.

A capacity crowd of 8,000 was on its feet but outside of shouting itself hoarse, showed the same conduct as the players on the field.

Police reported the same show of sportsmanship continued into the post-game celebrating.

Unknown to many fans, the contest was perhaps the perfect ice-breaker for desegregated play because the two schools have had amiable athletic relations for several years.

They have met previously in baseball and have engaged in informal scrimmage sessions at the start of football campaigns in previous years.

The Capitol Hill victory ended a 46-game winning streak for Douglass, dating back to the 1951 opener. Capitol Hill had clinched at least a tie for its eighth straight Mid-State conference title.

The match may go down as one of the Oklahoma City classics, so cleanly but bruisingly was it fought. The outweighed Douglass Trojans, through fierce tackling and blocking, kept the score knotted at 6-all until the drive by the Redskins in the final minutes of the fourth quarter.

A heroic goal line stand by Douglass failed to hold the heavier forces when Capitol Hill marked up a first-and-ten on about the one-foot line, on a fourth-down try.

Pre-game ceremonies included Capitol Hill cheerleaders introducing their Douglass counterparts to the Redskin cheering section, with the process repeated in front of the Douglass section.[23]

Further:

It was voted here January 6, 1956, to accept Douglass School as a member of the once powerful Mid-State Athletic Conference. The four member loop is the first group in the State

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[23] Oklahoma City Times, 4 November 1955.

> to take a Negro school into a hitherto all white conference. The other members of the conference against which Douglass will seek competition are Northwest Classen, Capitol Hill, Enid, and Shawnee . . .
>
> The Capitol Hill School and Douglass of Oklahoma City made football history last November when they met in a game which marked the first time in the State that a Negro school played a white team . . .
>
> The action admitting Douglass High School into the Mid-State Athletic Conference was taken here during the first day of a two day meeting of the Oklahoma High School Athletic Association.[24]

The acceptance of Douglass into the Mid-State Conference seemed a fundamental change in Oklahoma's attitude toward black high school students' participation in integrated sports. Likewise, this attitudinal change was noted during the same year on the college level. For example, "Prentice Gauntt, gridiron powerhouse of Oklahoma City's Douglass Trojans,"[25] announced that he would attend the University of Oklahoma in Norman in 1957. Although a senior at the time of the announcement, Gauntt stated: "I figure that since it

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[24] Black Dispatch, 12 January 1956.

[25] Black Dispatch, 23 February 1956.

Prentice Gauntt was captain of Coach Moses Miller's 1955 powerhouse at Douglass High School. He aided the Trojans in their string of 1956 straight games without defeat. At Douglass High, Gauntt was president of the senior class, won the Civitan Club award, was a member of the National Honor Society, voted the outstanding back in 1956 and played in the Oklahoma high school all-star game scoring two touchdowns, one of them an 86 yard kick-off. When Prentice Gauntt stepped onto the blue grass turf of Pitt Stadium in Pittsburgh, it was the first time a black athlete had ever worn the Crimson and Red of the University of Oklahoma against a foe. Black Dispatch, 18 October 1957.

is for Oklahoma, and no boy of our race has ever been on the team at Oklahoma University, I would go there and do my best and try to make a way for other Negro boys. I hope it will encourage more of them and be a beginning."[26]

On February 14, 1956, the Douglass High School Student Council was host to eleven predominantly white city schools. These included: Harding, Capitol Hill, Northwest Classen, Northeast Central, Putnam City, Midwest City, Classen, U. S. Grant, John Marshall, and Southeast. This occasion was in cooperation with a get acquainted visitation program. All schools participating, including Douglass, belonged to the Interstate Student Council.[27]

On April 28, 1956, sixty-five Douglass chorus members joined choral members from Northwest Classen, Capitol Hill Senior High School, Central Classen, Grant, John Marshall, Northeast and Southeast Junior-Senior High Schools in a secondary choral festival. The mass concert was under the direction of Henry Foth, music supervisor of Oklahoma City's secondary schools.[28]

During the year the 12th grade Y Teen Club made up of senior girls had as their project a cooking class sponsored by the Oklahoma Natural Gas Company. The gas company furnished the recipes,

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[26] Ibid.

[27] Black Dispatch, 1 March 1956.

[28] Ibid.

cooking books and foods to be prepared. This activity marked the first time a club of black girls had participated in the program.[29]

In the meantime the:

> Trade and industrial awards were received by 36 Douglass students who participated for the first time in the annual trade and industrial field day held April 26, 27 during the Southwestern Exposition of Science and Industries at the Oklahoma City fair grounds. Awards of honor and skill performance, technical information and identification were taken in the field of brickmasonry, auto mechanics, cosmetology, drafting, printing, and upholstering.
>
> Receiving the honors in brickmasonry were Alphonso Whitby, Willie Fizer and Simon Arberthia. These boys received 'superior rating' in the field. Roy J. Evans received the rating of 'good' in the field of auto mechanics. 'Excellent' rating was received by Luke Black, Sherman Carther, Jeromey Washington, William Johnson and Mark White in skill performance, and Luke Black, Willie Dean, George Jensins and Jerome Washington were rated 'good.' In carpentry, Fred Eakers received an 'excellent' rating in technical information; rated 'good' was L. Thomas Douglass. In cosmetology, the 'excellent' mark was won by Thelma Booker and Cleo Crawford; Shirley Glover and Joyce Moreland received 'good' ratings . . . . In printing, Russell Perry took a 'good' rating in skill performance . . . rated 'good' in upholstering were students Sidney Stell and Henry Johnson.[30]

In May 1956, Douglass High School instrumental students won six awards during a Tri-State School Meet in Enid, Oklahoma. According to director G. L. Buford, band director at Douglass at that time, there were more than 8,000 students from 14 different states represented during the festival. Oklahoma City schools represented besides Douglass were Capitol Hill, Southeast Classen,

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[29] Ibid.

[30] Black Dispatch, 10 May 1956.

Harding, Putnam City and Taft. In fact:

> William Pitts, Douglass High School twirler, won the first award - a maroon-white ribbon and bronze medal. Second place was won by Oscar Jenkins, trumpet solo; Don Tillman, clarinet solo; Ronald Harding, clarinet solo; Everett Green, baritone . . .
>
> Another first was made by Douglass inasmuch as it was the first and only Negro school allowed to enter the contest activities in the twenty-four year history of the organization. . .[31]

Aside from the noted particulars happening for the "Douglass Family" during the first year of integration in the Oklahoma City school system several Douglass graduates were doing well in colleges of their choice. For example:

> F. D. Moon, Principal of Douglass High School, announced . . . he had received notice that Ruby Jean Hardiman, Frances Hawkins, and Shirley Ann Richards, members of the 1955 graduating class, had attained college honor status for the first semester of 1955-56. . . .
>
> In a letter to Mr. Moon, Collis H. Davis, Hampton registrar, stated: 'Please accept my sincere congratulations to you and to your instructional staff on the fine preparation which has been given these students. Without a solid high school foundation, it would have been very difficult for them to attain honor roll status in college. We appreciate the good work of your faculty in training these students, and we look forward to having more of your qualified graduates enrolled in this college. . .[32]

By the same token:

> Miss Ora Marvienne Jenkins and Miss Gwendolyn M. Strong, 1952-53 Douglass graduates . . . respectively, listed as students

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[31] Black Dispatch, 17 May 1956.

[32] Black Dispatch, 12 April 1956.

> of superior standing at Central State College at Wilber Force, Ohio. Both have been placed on the Dean's Honor List. Howard H. Strong, Dean of College, in a letter to F. D. Moon stated: 'We are glad always to inform high schools of the success of their graduates at Central State College. You will undoubtedly be interested in the accomplishment of your graduates Ora M. Jenkins, music major, rating 3.27 and Gwendolyn M. Strong, social welfare, major rating, 3.31. This cumulative record is a summary of all the work they have done in this college and is based on a scale running from 0-4. The average cumulative rating of our students is approximately 2.4. You will recognize of course the superior standing of your graduates which qualifies placing them on the Dean's list of honor. Usually not more than one-tenth of the students achieves the dean's list. . .[33]

Nearing the end of the school year 1955-56, the Douglass Hi-Y under the sponsorship of Otis Lawrence and Maurice Benefee presented four pictures of "two great Americans"[34] to the "Douglass Family" during a general assembly. The presentation included two large and two small photographs of Frederick Douglass, abolitionist, and Frederick Douglass Moon, educator. The large pictures were hung in the lobby of the auditorium and the small pictures were hung in the principal's portrait gallery.[35]

Douglass graduated 155 seniors at the end of the 1955-56 school year. John Lester Buford, president of the National Education Association and superintendent of schools in Mount Vernon, Illinois, was speaker for the commencement exercises.[36]

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[33] Black Dispatch, 3 May 1956

[34] Black Dispatch, 1 June 1956.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Black Dispatch, 24 May 1956.

CHAPTER XIV

DOUGLASS HIGH SCHOOL IN OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA 1956-1958

In 1956, F. D. along with members of the Oklahoma City Negro Citizens' group including Ira D. Hall, chairman, Reverend W. K. Jackson, Cernoria D. Johnson and George Ragland sought aid for displaced black teachers in Oklahoma in a conference with Governor Raymond Gary. Specifically, the problem was "what to do about qualified Negro teachers displaced by school integration."[1] The Governor's personal recognition of the problem lead him to promise the delegation a conference with state department heads in an effort to absorb qualified persons into state department jobs.[2] In fact, in addition to concern for displaced black teachers in Oklahoma due to school integration, F. D. and the Urban League, as well as other black organizations, pursued the abolishment of racial discrimination in state jobs.[3]

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[1] See Arthur L. Tolson, The Black Oklahomans History: 1541-1972 (New Orleans: Edmond Printing Company, 1972), p. 184.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Black Dispatch, 30 November 1956.

In 1945, the Council of Social Welfare invited the National Urban League to make a survey of social and economic conditions among blacks in Oklahoma City. As a result of the study the Urban League was organized. Ten of the charter members were: Mrs. Zelia

During the 1956-1957 school year 44 of 96 segregated schools

N. Breaux, Carrie L. Edwards, M. B. Glismann, Harry S. Schafer, W. K. West, Jessie T. Owens, George R. Ragland, L. D. Lacy, Dr. John F. Burton, and Reverend M. L. Bethel.

The Urban League of Oklahoma City, and nationally as envisioned by Cernoria Johnson by 1955, was a social welfare agency using social work techniques in helping to relieve problems of health, housing, employment and race relations. To this means F. D. had served five years as president of the organization in Oklahoma City by 1956, and serving as Chairman of the Committee on Education in 1949.

By March, 1955, there was a membership of 1,383 members of the Urban League. Various committees functioned under F. D.'s administration in an effort to draw the Urban League closer to all segments of the community through clarity and interpretation of the League's role.

The Industrial Relations Committee marked its first six months of operation by October 18, 1955. The focus of this committee was in three major areas: job development, vocational guidance and public relations. Through this committee's effort the first black clerk in the X-ray department was hired at the University Hospital, a route salesmen was hired at Steffen's Dairy, three women were hired as candlers at the Bretwood Egg Company, a postlogger was placed at the Walker Electric Statistic Company, four women were placed in the clerical department at Tinker Field and five men were hired in the production department at Tinker Field. All of which were referrals from the Industrial Committee under the presidency of F. D. by 1956.

In addition, the Vocational Service Committee of the Urban League under the chairmanship of George R. Ragland sponsored career conferences at Douglass High School, securing consultants and speakers. The league financed the purchase of materials and supplies from governmental and private organizations for the conferences. There was a close working relationship between the League and the vocational Guidance Department at Douglass High School.

F. D.'s tenure as the first black president of the Urban League ended in November 1956. In expressing his appreciation to the officers and board members of the League he expressed: 'One of the healthy signs in the Oklahoma City community . . .is its growth in interracial understanding which has mounted steadily during the ten year existance of the Oklahoma City Urban League. As remarkable as the growth in interracial understanding has been, the community must be alert to the fact that growth in human relations and racial cooperation requires constant vigilance!' Ibid., Also, Black Dispatch, 3, 24 December 1949. Oklahoma City (Oklahoma) Urban League: Minutes of Meetings of the Urban League Board, 8 June 1954, 18 October 1955.

remained. Of the remaining segregated schools 9 were located in all black communities. "Actual integration was reported in 161 school districts with policy integration."[4] Douglass was counted among the 44 remaining segregated schools located in an all black community.[5]

Dispite the fact that integration was not observable within the Douglass plant, F. D. executed policies for the betterment of the school. In fact, during an assembly the first few weeks of the school year:

> Mr. Moon, principal; Mr. Jelts, vice-principal; Mrs. Thelma Wilson, dean of girls; and M. F. Miller, head of physical education, brought their findings and conclusions, after several sectional and faculty meetings concerning policies, that would be put into execution immediately for the betterment of Douglass.
>
> Proper decorum in the auditorium, correct passage in the halls, designated time for students to go to lockers, duties of the student patrol, importance of hall permits, checking in and out of school, showing appreciation for the beautiful school by keeping it beautiful, were explained in detail to the student body who listened attentively to the instructions given. At the home room period that afternoon home room teachers emphasized the observance of these policies.[6]

Several changes occured at Douglass during the beginning of the 1956-1957 school year. For example, F. D. made three assignments within the Douglass family and introduced one new faculty member during the initial faculty meeting. Mrs. Sarah Jane Bell was appointed

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[4] Black Dispatch, 21 September 1956.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Black Dispatch, 12 October 1956.

as sponsor of the School Student Council; Mrs. B. Ragland, English instructor, was appointed to replace Mrs. M. J. Watson, retired teacher, as sponsor of the National Honor Society; Mrs. Minerva A. Sloss was appointed as head of the Language Department; and Mr. Thursty M. Graham joined the "Douglass Family" as foreign language instructor.[7] In addition, the "Douglass Family" dedicated its new stadium in a ceremony preceding a football game between the Trojans and the Cardinals of Central High School.[8]

Interracial Participation and Students' Achievements

In 1956, the Douglass faculty participated in its first District Oklahoma Education Association (OEA) workshop held at John Marshall High School. This organization's membership was previously extended to white educators of Oklahoma. During the Douglass Family's initial meeting with the OEA, F. D. along with Evelyn R. Strong served as discussion leader and recorder for their groups, respectively.[9]

The Douglass Trojan band was awarded two trophies during the State Fair's Golden Anniversary contest, a contest previously closed to black participants. One trophy represented the grand championship

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[7] Black Dispatch, 14, 21 September 1956.

[8] Black Dispatch, 19 October 1956.

[9] Black Dispatch, 21 September 1956.

between 51 marching bands and was based on the highest points received. The second trophy represented the class A division. The two trophies were presented to Verlene Johnson, band gueen, by L. Hardmitt, vice chairman of the Junior Chamber of Commerce. A third trophy won by the Trojans during the year represented first place in Class AA for marching in competition with 27 State bands during the Capitol Hill's Homecoming event.[10]

The Douglass School attended the tenth annual meeting of the UNESCO in Oklahoma. Student guests from twelve foreign countries were in attendance sharing information on their country's thoughts of America. Each school represented decorated tables for the occasion. Douglass students' table included dolls from foreign countries holding ribbons leading to a glove in the center of the table which held the flag of the United Nations.[11]

In November 1956, forty-five members of the Douglass High School chorus and their director Evelyn Strong, participated in the first all state mass chorus and band festival held at Central State College, Edmond, Oklahoma. Choral and band performance clinics were included during the festival. Guest conductors were Harry Robert Wilson of Columbia University, and Cheyney Pittman of

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[10] Black Dispatch, 5, 12, 19 October 1956.

[11] Black Dispatch, 2, 16 November 1956.

Southern Methodist University.[12]

"Twenty Douglass students were initiated into the Thespian Club at Central High School. They were the first Negro students to be initiated into the club in the nation."[13] The Thespian Club was composed of students aspiring in dramatics. Mrs. C. V. Thompkins, director of speech at Douglass, presented the charter to F. D. during a special assembly. Charter members of the Thespian Club were: Calvin Brown, Henry Hawkins, Shirley Christopher, Hallie Whittenburg, Jessie Mae Patterson, Chester Mitchell, Gladys Williams, Nell Smith, Theola Brown, Carol Kimbrough, Francille Dennis, Kenneth Hopgood, Don Muse, Joseph Bruner, Leon Deere, Anita Golden, Lonzetta Peters, Earlene Vickers, Dorithia Hill and Clarence Watkins.[14]

To exemplify further, at least in part, F. D. and the Douglass Family participated in interracial understanding in 1957, it should be noted that on January 8, 1957 upon an invitation extended by Dr. Leonard Cox, principal of Capitol Hill High School, F. D. and Alva Jean Spence, soprano student of Douglass' music department, participated in the Men's Brotherhood Program at Capitol Hill Baptist Church, an all white organization. The purpose of the program was to foster improvement of race relations. F. D. spoke on "How to

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[12] Black Dispatch, 16 November 1956.

[13] Black Dispatch, 23 November 1956.

[14] Black Dispatch, 23 November 1956.

Build a Better World."[15]

> Mr. Moon pictured a world situation in which nations and people are keenly alert to the activities of each other. Due to the revolution in the media of communication and transportation he said, 'The world has become so small that what happens to one area of the world is quickly transmitted to the most remote part in the same or next day. What happens in the United States is known almost immediately in the other parts of the world.' Pointing out that the majority of the world population represents the colored race, Mr. Moon continued, 'We are dependent on distance areas for many vital and needed resources. Magnesium, for example, is essential to the life of this country and much of our source of supply lies in countries of the near East and Middle East, where the people are predominately nonwhite. There is close kinship between all colored people. It is closely being observed with interest what is happening in the United States today as well as elsewhere, with regard to people of the minority group.'
>
> Mr. Moon urged that all people, whether from Indonesia, Africa or the Middle East, or wherever, should know about the blessings of modern inventions. 'All must share,' he said, 'in the benefits and be conscious of what democracy can mean. America has emerged now as a world power. She is under close observance and all can see clearly the inconsistancies when democracy does not apply to all alike.[16]
>
> A further example may be noted as:
>
> The Douglass High School English Club and sponsors were special guests of the Midwest City High School . . . when they presented a special prepared brotherhood program for the Midwest City school students.
>
> Carol Kimbrough, president of the club, was assisted by Wanda Bradley as program chairman, in preparation of the program. A short talk by Carol Kimbrough was given on 'Brotherhood in the Classroom.'

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[15] Black Dispatch, 18 January 1957.

[16] Ibid.

> A talk, 'The Challenge of Youth Today,' by Ezekiel Hill and an interpretive dance by Marilyn Phillips were given, followed by a poem stressing love for one's fellowman by Ann Lewis and final remarks by the president.
>
> Students and sponsors were quite happy. The audience at Midwest City was one of the most appreciative and receptive ones ever witnessed.
>
> Following the assembly the club members enjoyed further hospitality of the Midwest City High School students who toured them through the attractive school area.[17]

In addition, one hundred members of the Douglass High School chorus and glee club participated in the Oklahoma City's Secondary School Chorus Festival, held on February 14, 1957, at the Capitol Hill High School field house. Schools participating in this activity were Classen, Capitol Hill senior high school, Central, Grant, Harding, John Marshall, Northeast and Southeast junior and senior high schools. The Douglass students were in mass concert directed by several Oklahoma City high school chorus directors. Also included in the massive performance were more than one hundred members of the Moon Junior High Schools' chorus and several members of the Douglass High School's orchestra. Evelyn R. Strong of the Douglass family and Freddye Mae Ray of the Moon Junior High School faculty served as accompanists during the concert.[18]

While black Oklahomans were increasingly concerned with

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[17] Black Dispatch, 22 February 1957

[18] Ibid.

demolishing racial segregation in the public accommodation areas,[19] it was noted that:

> Mrs. Thelma F. Wilson, Mrs. Evelyn R. Strong, Mrs. B. B. Ragland and Mr. Leroy Alexander, Douglass building representatives of the Classroom Teachers Association, were delegates to the South Central Regional meeting of the NEA department of Classroom Teachers held January 31, February 1 and 2, at the Biltmore Hotel, Oklahoma City. Also present as a platform guest was Principal F. D. Moon, executive secretary of the Oklahoma Teachers Association.
>
> Oklahoma City was host for the first time to this meeting which was attended by more than five hundred delegates from seven states: Arkansas, Missouri, Louisiana, Kansas, Nebraska, Texas and Oklahoma.
>
> Arrangements for the conference were in charge of the OEA and the Oklahoma City Classroom Teachers Association.
>
> Problems concerning the welfare of the teachers, merit

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[19] See, for example, Arthur L. Tolson, The Black Oklahomans History: 1541-1972, pp. 188-189.

While school integration was progressing in a somewhat haphazard way throughout Oklahoma during Governor Gary's administration, blacks continued to attack racial discrimination in another area, that of racial segregation in public accommodations, by utilizing a very unorthodox approach to the problem. Noting that the Congress of Racial Equality had staged in 1943 its first sit-in demonstration in a restaurant in the Loop in Chicago, black Oklahomans adopted this technique in an attempt to demolish racial segregation in the public accommodations area.

It was a black organization, the Youth Council, led by Barbara Posey, president, and Mrs. Clara Luper, their advisor, who initiated the attack in May, 1957. For a year, they utilized peaceful negotiations, involving a series of discussions with the business elements, trying to convince them of the necessity of 'opening their doors to black patronage on an equal basis with whites.' Meeting with very little success they, on August 19, 1958, began the first sit-in at a Katz Drug Store. Ibid., p. 188. The Youth Council was joined in their efforts by adult members of the local NAACP chapter. Dr. Edward C. Moon, Jr., a former Douglass graduate and nephew of F. D., was president of the local chapter at this time. See Black Dispatch, 29 August 1958.

> ratings, discipline, extended service of the NEA and other professional trends, were cited by the interesting speakers of the NEA, from Washington and from various participating states.
>
> Among the speakers were Dave Guhl and Margaret Stevenson, president and executive secretary respectively of the NEA Department of Classroom Teachers; Margaret Schowengerdt, teacher of Webster Grove, Missouri, high school; Jennings Flather, ex-president of the Texas Classroom Teachers Association; Ferman Phillips, executive secretary, Oklahoma Education Association and Mrs. Elsie Parnell, president of the Texas Education Association.[20]

Again by February 1957, major emphasis was placed by F. D. and the "Douglass Family" on the study of Negro life and history. Numerous activities were noted during the week under the direction of Sherman H. Harris, instructor, and students of the social studies department. An all school assembly and program patterned after the $64,000 television quiz program highlighted the week's observance. Each department was represented by student participants. Their knowledge on several phases of Negro history was observable as they answered questions posed by Douglass staff member, G. E. Waterford.[21]

In March 1957, Mrs. C. V. Thompkins accompanied ten Douglass students to Ada, Oklahoma to participate in the East Central State College Forensic Meeting. Douglass students placed as follows:-

Leroy Dolly and Leon Greer, superior in standard oratory;

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[20] Black Dispatch, 22 February 1957.

[21] Ibid.

> Otis Brett, superior in original oratory and excellent in dramatic literature; Leroy Dolly and Francile Dennis, good in radio speaking; Anita Golden and Hallie Jean Whittenburg, good in analysis of public address; Ruth Joyce Colbert, good in standard oratory; Florene Newton, fair in humorous literature.
>
> In the speech tournament held at Oklahoma City University, Brett was rated superior in standard oratory.
>
> Students who rated superior are eligible to participate in the state speech tournament to be held at the University of Oklahoma in April.
>
> Brett also won second place in the American Legion Oratorical Contest held at Central High School, February 21.[22]

By the end of the 1956-1957 school year, a news article held "DOUGLASS HIGH SCHOOL, A MODEL IN STUDENT PRIDE" in their institution and acclaimed:

> Not many white folks have been sufficiently interested in their investment of three millions in Douglass High School to visit the Negro plant on the old eastside fair ground site. What you see there would please you. You have the word of F. D. Moon, principal, that this modern education complex has raised the standards, increased the efforts, and improved the outlook of all the Negroes of this community. Many improvements, the old railroad spurs which served the exhibit have been removed, the main storm sewer which is basic for the drainage of the acreage is underway. Soon the service roads will be improved, sidewalks will be installed, entrance from Tenth Street will be adequate and eventually the golf course will be built.
>
> Students walk long distances between the main structure and such class buildings as the old 4-H headquarters. It is a soggy trek in the usual wet weather of this April. Scars of old building sites have not been eradicated, but such unsightly elements are supposed to disappear under the administration of Pat Murphy's Park Department this year . . .

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[22] Black Dispatch, 15 March 1957.

. . . More than 800 students attend Douglass presently. The teacher-pupil ratio is equal with that of white schools, the boys and girls are staying in school longer, improving their grades, and a greater percentage are fitting themselves for college instruction.

Dr. Moon related many incidents of efforts among his student body to maintain jobs at odd hours of the night in order to get the support money with which to continue themselves in school. 'Our people take great pride in this plant,' Dr. Moon said, 'The buildings are as clean as when we occupied them three years ago. I challenge you to find any pencils scrawls on the walls, or pocket knife carvings anywhere. Look at that grass, the walks are at long angles, but they stick to the walks because they have pride in their premises.'

Touring the classroom, the corridor, the cafeteria, the field house, the kitchen, the place really was a good advertisement for Old Dutch Cleaner or its modern equivalent.

Dropping unannounced into Mrs. George Ragland's tenth grade English class, Mrs. Ragland was in the midst of trying to pound some essentials of writing into a class of boys and girls. She said some of them couldn't even spell Douglass correctly, but this was not in derogation, for we know some Classen graduates who are wretched spellers. One thing she insisted on - that Oklahoma City must not be abbreviated in the salutation of letters. We like that - Okla. City looks as shabby as Frisco for San Francisco. . . .

Fred Moon answered a question as to why integration had been so easy in Oklahoma so far with the statement that progress looked good here largely because of the races in some communities looked so bad. These elements he credits with helping in Oklahoma: long time interracial contact among Baptist and other church denominations, the work of the Ministerial Alliance, the Urban League, the polyglot population of Oklahoma in the mass opening of 1889 and the experience of many thousands of young men and young women all over the world in World War II.

In Moon's book, personal contact, he states, the working out of common problems is the biggest integrater.

The educator thinks Oklahoma City is ready for Negro teachers in mixed schools. He feels particularly sad about the jobless among 400 or more Negro teachers eliminated by

consolidation in Oklahoma. Moon was a leader in the effort to get these Negro teachers placed elsewhere. He thinks more than 200 have been employed in other states but admits the record is not accurate. Oklahoma school patrons really voted for modernizing Douglass in order to stave off integration. This thought should be forgotten for the taxpayers have built a community of great hope for the minority within Oklahoma City's gates.[23]

1957-1958 Activities and Achievements

The all black "Douglass Family" opened the 1957-58 school year with a series of professional staff meetings devoted to professional growth. This was done through professional discussions, presided over by F. D. and the school's administrative council.[24]

During the course of the 1957-58 school year:

National recognition for the mathematics of Douglass High School, Oklahoma City, was received with the granting of the high school's Charter Membership in the National High School Mathematics Society, Nu Alpha Theta.

Charter membership is granted to a high school only after a careful examination of courses offered in mathematics by the national officers of the National High School Mathematics Society.

Charter members had to show work of high distinction on at least four semesters of solid mathematics and must be enrolled in the fifth semester.

Mathematic stars from Douglass High School who received Charter memberships along with the high school included: Goldie Battles, 2044 N. E. Grand Boulevard; Shirley Bobo, 2044 N. E. 18th; Ezekiel Hill, 708 N. E. Park; Celestine

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[23]"Douglass High School: A Model In Student Pride", 2 May 1957, in library files of Douglass High School.

[24]Black Dispatch, 27 September 1957.

Roberts, 1702 N. E. 10th; and Odell Anderson, 1604 N. E. 12th, all of Oklahoma City. Ella L. Clement is faculty advisor of this group.

National Headquarters for the high school club, which is now coast to coast, is at the University of Oklahoma.[25]

The Douglass High School band "ran one of the most successful contests in the history of the band."[26] The annual gueen contest brought approximately $705. The money raised was for new, modern plastic band hats.[27]

Earlier in the school year the Oklahoma City Schools sponsored their first All-City String Orchestra, under the direction of Dr. Guy Frasier Harrison. The Douglass Orchestra, with Mr. C. E. Pittman as director, provided 11 of their orchestra members for audition. Three of the 11 Douglass members were accepted, these were: Ronald Harding, viola; Frank Mathis, bass; and Vinata Pierson, cello.[28]

Later in the year, the Douglass orchestra members were recommended for the All-State String and All-State Symphony Orchestras. These orchestras convened in Norman on the Oklahoma University campus. Eight of the Douglass members were accepted for the All-State String Orchestra. These members were: Barbara Posey, violin;

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[25] Black Dispatch, 20 December 1957.

[26] The Douglass Informer (Oklahoma City: Douglass High School, 1955) p. 20.

[27] Ibid.

[28] The Douglass Informer, 1955, p. 23.

Sandra Flowers, violin; Marsha McCauley, violin; Vinata Pierson, cello; and Frank Mathis, bass. Ronald Harding was accepted to play viola in the All State Symphony.[29]

Though many firsts were happening to the all black "Douglass Family" since the final decree of the Supreme Court in May 1955, Mr. Maurice Benefee, vocational upholstery instructor and faculty sponsor of the Hi-Y and the Hi-Y club, sponsored another first within the family:

> During the noon hour on Monday, May 5, 1958, the Douglass High School Hi-Y initiated the first all-school birthday party honoring Principal F. D. Moon. Acting as host and hostess for this occasion were Marvin Provo, a senior . . . president of the Hi-Y, and Miss Hattie Broadnax, another senior . . . Hi-Y sweetheart of 1958.
>
> More than 800 students and staff members who are affectionately referred to by the Principal as the 'Douglass Family' were on hand for this mammoth birthday party honoring a wonderful and deserving Principal, friends and citizens.
>
> The idea for the gala birthday part for Principal Moon originated with a group of new members to the Hi-Y who went through a pre-induction training period for six weeks. Each new group of Hi-Y club inductees is required to sponsor some project where something is done for some other group or individual around the school or in the community, and these students chose the Principal.
>
> Principal Moon's favorite flower, song, color, poem, music and everything that could be found which represented 'his favorite' were on hand to make this 1958 birthday one that would be among his warmest memories.
>
> Appropriate organ selections served as background music for the hour's activity and a revolving 'Happy Birthday, Principal Moon' greeting which hung from the ceiling, served as

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[29] Ibid.

the center of attraction.

> At the appropriate time, the host and hostess escorted the honoree into the beautifully arranged school banquet hall (the school cafeteria) where the tables were arranged in the shape of a huge "m". The tables were covered with embossed banquet table cloths, and multi-colored party candy and nut baskets were set in artistic arrangements on the giant family table. A personal birthday cake adorned the center spot of the table and beautifully decorated sheet cake and frosted line punch were served everyone by the club's auxiliary members who were dressed in formal evening dresses. The embossed napkins rang 'Happy Birthday' messages to Principal Moon and served as momentoes for the occasion. The ceiling in the banquet hall figuratively collapsed when the party guests sand 'Happy Birthday' to the honoree as he entered the hall. Many students presented personal birthday greetings and gifts. All present signed one of the giant size birthday greeting cards prepared by Miss M. A. Dabney and her art classes . . .[30]

Even though the Hi-Y Club had staged the first all school birthday party within the "Douglass Family", other positive elements surrounded the total picture of the Hi-Y club for the 1957-58 school year. For example:

> During the year the Hi-Y Club of Douglass participated in quite a few history making events. One of the most outstanding of these events was taking part in the Annual State Hi-Y Conference. This was such an outstanding event because it was the first integrated conference held in the State of Oklahoma. The Conference was headed by co-officers, one from each of the former separate Conferences.
>
> By using the co-system of leadership it abolished any hard feelings on anyone's part. There will be many more conferences but in the eyes of the fellows who journeyed to Norman, Oklahoma, on April 19-20, this was one of the best.
>
> Those who attended the conference were: Roy Branon, Lee

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[30] The Douglass Informer, 1955, p.16.

> Benefee, Fredrick McCann, Marvin Provo, John Muse, Winifred Warren, Van Osborne and Dewitt Neal. The very fine sponsor, Mr. Benefee, journeyed with these fellows and gave his advice both religiously and helpfully. The very effective and emphasized theme of the conference was, 'Do We Dare Be Christians?'[31]

In addition, like all Hi-Y boys around the world, Douglass's Hi-Y Club considered the White Crossed Hi-Y emblem significant of the life that Jesus lived and gave for others. Thus, the Douglass Hi-Y stressed Christianity, every meeting was begun with a scripture, prayer and song, and ended in prayer. In fact during the year the Hi-Y Club: presented Vesper Services for the Pre-Legislature Council, held at the University of Oklahoma upon the invitation of the Southwest Area Council; presented the Sunday Morning Vesper Services for the 7th Annual Oklahoma Youth Legislature at the state capitol; continued its practice of attending one of the member's church once a month; and published the annual publication of the Douglass Informer, a school service project in fulfillment of one of the requirements of each Hi-Y chapter.[32]

After four years of operation Douglass High School's modern campus-type plant had no corner stone to set forth historical data pertinent to the school. This project was undertaken by the Hi-Y Club to add to its many gifts to the school since its sponsorship

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[31] Ibid., p. 16.

[32] Ibid., pp. 16, 20.

under Bert V. Wadkins.[33] After many detailed discussions of the plan and project, Mr. Louis B. Washington, brick masonary instructor, assigned Curtis Johnson, a Douglass student, to develop a series of plans and sketches for the masonry part of the project:

> The first one or two sample planters were beautiful to all who saw them but Curtis was not pleased, rather he asked for more time to plan and develop a more appropriate piece of masonry to blend with the sprawling campus type plant. This he accomplished and the finished product is a thing of beauty.
>
> Johnson exhibited great patience, pride, skill, trade interest, and faithfulness during the entire course of the job, even though he had a minimum of close adult on-the-job guidance. He was to be found even on Saturday giving 8 to 10 hours of his time to make his project what he felt it ought to be, in every way.[34]

The concave designed planter was constructed of red brick which stands about 20 feet high and is trimmed in rollock brick.

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[33]Ibid., pp. 16-28

Between 1936-1950, the Hi-Y of Douglass High School under the sponsorship of Bert V. Wadkins (Brother Bert) won each year the award of the most active club at the State Older Boys' Conference. A few of the Hi-Y Club's projects were: publication of The Douglass Informer, a weekly school paper, Special Home Coming and Commencement editions, Father and Son Banquets, Annual Plays, furnished leadership in the local YMCA program, Sweetheart parties, annual induction programs and many others. The Hi-Y efforts at Douglass were to aid the development of Christian character among younger men.

In 1949 at a meeting of the Older Boys' Conference, Bro. Bert was awarded the YMCA official Jeweled Pin for fulfilling ten years or more of active service in the movement. Rev. G. H. Fortner, of Tulsa, was the only other person in the state who had received the award by 1950. The Douglass Hi-Y Club under the direction of Brother Bert used democratic methods to achieve the embodiment of Christian principals in individuals and groups. Black Dispatch, 27 May 1950.

[34]Ibid., p. 28.

This portion of the masonry was designed both for plants and to allow sitting by admirers. In the center of the concave is a red brick pedestal, about 3 ft. high and 5-1/2 ft. wide, which stands at a 45° slant angle and is filled with sand and cement, on which rests a bronze plaque costing about $600 and was designed by Maurice Benefee. The bronze plaque has raised letterings of the school's creed, the dates of the ground breaking, erection and other information about the school.[35]

As the "Douglass Family" ended the 1957-58 school year graduating more than 200 students, the largest graduating class in the sixty year history of the school,[36] and culminating its commencement activities with an address delivered by Oklahoma's Governor Raymond Gary,[37] F. D. advised his students to, "Be A Blessing."

> Standing here at this monument which was designed, conceived and paid for by the Douglass Hi-Y Club, one's mind turns to the great virtue of being a blessing. From my window, I have observed the many people who have paused to read the words of our school creed, the date of the establishment of Douglass and other significant features of this marker. Many times I have thought what a blessing Mr. Benefee and our Hi-Y are to the institution of which they are members.
>
> I am honored to have my name inscribed on the plaque by the Douglass Hi-Y Club. However, I know the spirit of all the principals of Douglass, J. W. Sharp, Mr. Porter, J.H.A.

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[35]Maurice Benefee, interview held 117 Carverdale Drive, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 9 December 1977. See also, The Douglass Informer, 1955, p.4.

[36]Black Dispatch, 23 May 1955.

[37]Ibid.

Brazelton, T. R. Debnam, S. R. Youngblood, Inman E. Page and C. O. Rogers, share in honors of our great high school. The Hi-Y blesses us all by erecting this symbol of gratitude. Moreover, many fine teachers, still with us or departed, the loyal staff members not classified as teachers, and the thousands of loyal Douglass youth are also represented in this beautiful marker. The Hi-Y by being a blessing, brings all this into appropriate perspective and thus received in turn the blessings of every thoughful soul.

The lesson is clear. This memorial says to each one here at Douglass, as well as the passer-by who pauses to look, that I, too, may become a blessing. I may also live in 'a house by the side of the road and be a friend to man.'

The names of Maurice Benefee, Hi-Y sponsor, and Marvin Provo, Hi-Y president, provide a lesson to all who will read and learn. Each is a student or a former student of Douglass. By his diligence each has won promotions and by the faithfulness of each in his sphere of influence, the cooperation of others followed his leadership. By thus being a blessing in his particular area of trust, each becomes a recorded part of the history of Douglass.

Go thou and do likewise. 'He who would be the greatest among you, let him be the servant.' These are the words of the Master Teacher. Be a blessing and you will be blessed. This great truth has no geographical boundaries or limitations with regard to time.[38]

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[38]F. D. Moon, "Be A Blessing," in The Douglass Informer, 1955, p.4.

CHAPTER XV

DOUGLASS HIGH SCHOOL IN OKLAHOMA CITY, OKLAHOMA 1958-1961

A System of Integration

By the 1958-1959 school year, racial barriers dropped in three more Oklahoma school districts. Black students were admitted to previously all majority white classes in various sections of the State.[1] In fact, according to the Black Dispatch:

> Little Dixie, stronghold of our position of school integration, was the locale of two of the school districts, a fourth Little Dixie district has had integrated classes for the first time when its term started Wednesday, August 22, Negroes enrolled for the first time in white schools last Monday, August 25, in Atoka, Ft. Gibson and the Graham district in Carter County.
>
> Wednesday another Atoka district, Springtown, enrolled Negroes in formerly all white classes.
>
> This fall desegregation is also scheduled to extend to at least three other districts, Bristow in Creek County, Springer in Carter County, and Star northeast of Oklahoma City.
>
> Classroom integration will also be expanded to all twelve grades in Lenapah, Nowata County, and in the new Waco Turner School in Love County. The Waco Turner School serves the old Meadow Brooks and Burneyville districts and part of the Courtney district. Previously only the high school grades were desegregated in these two areas.
>
> These developments came as federal court law suits were filed against two Okmulgee County school districts accusing them

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[1] Black Dispatch, 29 August 1958.

of interfering with admission plans of Negro students.

> Meanwhile in Okmulgee County, the Preston School which has a Negro school across the road from the white building, is desegregating its elementary school for the first time Monday, August 25. The Preston board admitted a Negro boy to the white high school a year ago under the federal court order, but the court granted the district additional time to arrange for elementary desegregation. [2]

Dispite the fact however, that students were being admitted into intergrated classrooms, on elementary, secondary and higher education levels, black teachers' dismissal due to loss of their students was of avowed interest to F. D. other black educators, and citizens of Oklahoma. In fact, it was during this time F. D. presented a study on this problem entitled "Policy and Status of Teacher Integration in Certain Border States," during the annual meeting of state superintendents at Camp Redland. "This marked the first time in the history of the state superintendent's meeting that Negroes were on their program."[3] During his presentation to the state superintendents, F. D. stated:

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[2] Ibid.

[3] F. D. Moon, "Report of the OAT Executive Committee, "Presented at the Annual Meeting of the Oklahoma Association of Teachers, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 1958.

Oklahoma was slow in responding to earlier court decisions affecting higher education at both graduate and undergraduate levels. Thurgood Marshall complained of this delay in 1948 when arguing for the immediate admission of G. W. McLaurin to the University of Oklahoma before a three-judge Federal court in Oklahoma City. However, once McLaurin was admitted, things changed rather rapidly.

McLaurin was admitted to the University of Oklahoma during the first semester of the school year 1948-49 by court decree. A state law passed later, required that Negroes be taught in separate

> The black mark, so far against Oklahoma is what it has done to its qualified Negro teachers. Approximately 350 Negro teachers have been discharged, 304 teachers being discharged the first two years of desegregation. This situation has been carried in newspapers and magazines all over America and in some foreign countries.
>
> The policy is developing in Oklahoma that Negro teachers are used only in cases where there is an all-Negro faculty. It is somewhat hopeful to know that we now have approximately 20 Negro teachers in Oklahoma who are successfully serving on

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all-Negro classes or be separated from other students by some physical barrier .

. . . It should be stated that this situation did not grow out of the wishes of the administration, faculty, or students of the University. Previous polls had shown a majority of all groups at the University of Oklahoma favored the admission of Negroes . . . .

At first only Negroes qualified for admission to graduate schools and those pursuing courses at the undergraduate level not offered at Langston University, the state college for Negroes, were admitted. Some Negro students deliberately selected such courses as engineering, pharmacy and the like so as to be accepted.

There was no change of policy with reference to the admission of Negroes to the institutions of higher learning the year following the May 17, 1954, decision of the Supreme Court. Institutions of higher learning and public schools in Oklahoma did not act until after the May 31, 1955, decision of the Court, although preparations were being affected to comply with the Court's decree by making necessary constitutional changes by vote of the people on April 5, 1955.

On June 6, 1955, the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, the over-all policy making board for higher education in Oklahoma, adopted this policy: The governing boards and the respective presidents of the state supported institutions within the State System of Higher Education are hereby authorized to accept qualified Oklahoma resident Negro students for admission effective at the opening of the fall term 1955.

The acceptance of Negroes into institutions of higher learning in Oklahoma proceeded cautiously, especially the first year. The usual fear that when certain barriers are removed, Negroes will rush across in great numbers seemed to prevail. The table of enrollment by years show, as is usally the case, such concern was unwarranted, since only 143 students enrolled in 13 different colleges. See F. D. Moon, "High Education and Desegregation," The Journal of Negro History, No. 3 (Summer 1958), pp. 300-302.

integrated faculties. The score is entirely too low.

In the interest of good human relations and racial understanding, it should be known that it is as bitter as gall to Negro teachers and many Negro citizens to hear remarks about teacher shortages and searches on college and university campuses for beginning, inexperienced teachers as though qualified members of the minority group are not teachers.

To go on with the practice of discharging Negro teachers when schools are desegregaed means another major battle when integration of teachers takes place, as surely it will. Recently the president of the board of education of Washington, D. C., commented on how wise they were to have covered the whole thing at first, thus eliminating the recurring fights of opposition as each weak and halting step is taken in the area of personnel integration. . .[4]

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[4]F. D. Moon, "Policy and Status of Teachers Integration in Certain Border States and Cities," 1958 (Memeographed), p. 14.

It was agreed among the members of the OAT that Oklahoma City and Tulsa were the key cities to widespread teacher integration. Thus, in an effort to achieve the desired objectives F. D. reported: 'A very thorough and careful study entitled "Policy and Status of Teacher Integration in Certain Border States" has been completed and distributed rather widely in strategic circles. I am of the opinion that many persons do not realize the amount of time involved in making such a study. The study includes Delaware, in part, West Virginia (all fifty-five counties), Missouri and Oklahoma. To secure accurate information from such a wide area and check its accuracy represents a great deal of work. (If one doubts this, just take on one such job). After this collection of data is completed, the work of putting the study into form is tremendous and time consuming.

Since the strain of such work is so great and too often not comprehended, I would definitely decline to continue the job, were it not for the fact that I fear the future of Negro teacher integration would just drift. This will leave the future of Negro teachers very dark and the prospects of employment of Negro youth in the future dim, as it relates to teaching.

The states and cities involved in this study have been included because they have similar backgrounds. Each of the states and cities had segregated schools prior to the Supreme Court Decision of 1954. No doubt each state and city has had its share of incidents growing out of racial antagonisms.

He stated further:

Practices in determining qualification of teachers include training and experience as basic standards. Our leading cities and states usually take this into account in determining the salary of a teacher. The same has been true in the State of Oklahoma for many years -- teachers with degrees and a certain amount of experience receive greater salary than teachers without degrees and with little or no teacher's experience. The accepted standard has been that a teacher is better, in the main, who is possessed of training and experience, up to a point, so more money is paid to such a person.

How do white and Negro teachers in Oklahoma compare in relation to these accepted standards? According to the State Department of Education total 1953-54, Oklahoma employed 20,640 teachers, and of this total, 19,104 were whte and 1,536 were Negroes. In other words, the white teachers constitued 92.6 percent as against 7.4 percent for Negroes.

In the bachelor's degree classification, white teachers amounted to 13,446 and Negro teachers account for 1,122. Seventy and four-tenths percent, or slightly more than 70 out of 100 white teachers, possessed the bachelor's degree as against 24.7 percent of Negro teachers.

When one takes into accouunt the recency of admission of Negroes to graduate training in the higher institutions of learning in Oklahoma, it is more remarkable that the Negro teachers compare so favorably with white teachers in the matter of master's degrees. It seems clear that the reason white teachers slightly exceed in percentage the number of Negro teachers who hold the master's degrees is that until recently Negroes were not admitted to graduate training in the State of Oklahoma.

A Negro has been lynched in the heart of St . Louis. There was a race riot in Springifield, Missouri. Many Negroes in Oklahoma City still recall the days when a member of their group was not safe on Capitol Hill in Oklahoma City after sundown. Race riots or lynchings have occured in Washington, D. C., Missouri, Oklahoma, and West Virginia. Equal evidences of deep racial prejudice could be related for each state and city included in this study.' F. D. Moon," Report of the OAT Executive Committee." , 1958.

> As pointed out earlier, experience is also considered in determining the qualifications of teachers, at least up to a point. This study reveals that Negro teachers usually have longer tenure than do white teachers. This is especially true where the years of experience range from 5 to 15 years. Even though this situation prevails because of limited job opportunities in other desirable catagories of labor, the fact still remains that Negro teachers possess the accumulated knowledge in teaching which comes from greater experience.[5]

Oklahoma City and Tulsa were determined by the OAT as key citizens to observe as they kept vigilance over the assimilation of qualified black teachers into the mainstream of the profession as integration increased in the State of Oklahoma.[6] The effect to realize the objective in Oklahoma City was reported by F. D.:

> You have been fortunate that such persons as Mrs. Cernoria Johnson, Executive Director of the Oklahoma City Urban League; Reverend Robert Alexander, Pastor of Avery Chapel Church; Reverend E. J. Perry, Associate Pastor of Tabernacle Baptist Church; A. D. Mathues, President of the Negro Chamber of Commerce; Reverend J. C. West, former President of the Oklahoma City Ministerial Alliance and Pastor of a prominent Baptist church of the City; Mr. Earl Temple, head of the Negro funeral directors of Oklahoma City, and others have given so much of their time in this cause.
>
> A few of our many activities include securing the endorsement of integration of Negro teachers by the powerful Oklahoma City Council of Churches (All white except four or five), The Council of Oklahoma City Church Women, the Oklahoma City Advertiser and Mrs. Freda Ameringer (the editor), the Citizens' Action Committee, and the Negro Chamber of Commerce. All of these groups, and more, either appeared before the Oklahoma City Board of Education or sent letters of endorsement, or had a conference with Oklahoma City's superintendent

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[5] Ibid., p. 6.

[6] F. D. Moon, Report of the OAT Executive Committee, 1958.

of schools.[7]

Though the initial meetings of the Oklahoma City Citizens' Committee to keep vigilance on the assimilation of black teachers into integrated situations were held by black citizens of Oklahoma City, the group later included white members who supported the effort: Mrs. Walter Gray, chairman of the Oklahoma City Library Board; Attorney Martin Bulla; Reverend Frank Holmes, pastor of the Uuniterian Church; Rabbi Joseph Levinson, Jewish leader; Vivian Reno, Executive Secretary of the Oklahoma City Council of Churches; W. McFerrin Stowe, pastor of St. Lukes Methodist Church; and Attorney Ben Head, chairman of the Major's Commission on Human Relations assisted the black citizens as F. D. coordinated activities undertaken by the committee.[8]

Nonetheless, F. D. expressed:

> Our success has been considerable, especially when one considers the opposition we have faced. We now have a full time counselor on the faculty of Webster Junior High School, we have a Negro as a regular teacher in the television set-up which covers Oklahoma City and much of the State of Oklahoma; Mrs. Lelia Lovejoy has her office in the Board of Education building along with all other supervisors; we have a librarian who works out of the central office library located in the Board of Education; we have four or five Negroes who integrated as carpenters, painters or electricians in the maintenance department and cafeteria employees are so widely integrated with white cafeteria workers that we cannot enumerate them; we now have three white principals who have

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[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

> requested that they be permitted to have Negro teachers in their schools; one person holding one of the highest positions in the central office is willing to employ a Negro clerk in his office; above all, Dr.Melvin Barnes, Oklahoma superintendent of schools, is quietly working with us in our endeavor to integrate Negroes in teaching and other positions of the Oklahoma City schools. . .[9]

Activities and Traditions

In Oklahoma City, despite the effort toward teacher integration by the Citizens' Committee and Dr. Barnes, by September 1958, as public school districts of Oklahoma accepted approximately 7000 black students into integrated classes,[10] F. D. greeted the city's only all black high school in a general assembly. He emphasized at the time:

> 'It is just as essential for schools to have rules and regulations as it is for towns and cities to have laws to govern its citizens,' stated Principal F. D. Moon, after greeting the student body in assembly Wednesday.
>
> Mr. Moon stated some of the rules and regulations that are essential for a wholesome life at Douglass. He also stated to the sophomore class some of the traditions carried on for years by the Douglass Family.
>
> 'Douglass is growing and it may have to change over to a three lunch period schedule in the near future in order to accommodate the increased enrollment,' stated the principal. Mr. Moon said he did not care to do this because 'it would mean that one class period would have to be run into two sections, half before and half after lunch.
>
> Fees are a necessary evil, said Moon, and must be collected.

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[9] Ibid.

[10] See Kaye M. Teall, Black History in Oklahoma: A Resource Book (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma City Public Schools, Title III ESEA, 1971), p. 279

> The principal told the student body that all Oklahoma City schools have the same fee schedule. They are still the same. 'It is always important that fees are paid early in order that supplies may be purchased for the current school year. Students at Douglass who live close enough may go home for lumch. They may also eat off the campus but are responsible for returning before the next class begins. There may be some eating places that are not respectable,' the principal warned the students, 'let us stay away from those places.'[11]

The traditional spirit of giving was still a way of life within the Douglass Family. For example:

> . . . In a special assembly program held Monday morning, October 20, 1958, in the Douglass High School auditorium a special purchase of school equipment amounting to, in round figures, a total of $3,064 was donated as class gifts to the school by the 1953 and 1956 graduating classes.
>
> Otto Caldwell, class of 1953, and Miss Joan Green Brown, class of 1956, were representatives who shared the presentation of the equipment to Dr. Melvin W. Barnes, Superintendent of the Oklahoma City Public Schools.
>
> F. D. Moon, principal of Douglass, expressed the deep appreciation of the school for such an enormous and valuable contribution . . .
>
> Included in the purchase are the following: 8 FM radios-table models distributed to the Fine Arts Department - 3, Language Arts Department - 1, to the Social Studies Department - 1, Vocational - 1, Health and Physical Education - 1, Home Economics - 1, and 1 to Science and Math. A Royal typewriter with long carriage was included for the Business Education Department. Five record players were purchased for the following departments: Language Arts, Social Studies, Vocational Science and Math; Eight tape recorders, including one which is equipped with stero tape and amplifier, were purchased for the following departments: Fine Arts - 1, Language Arts - 2, Social Studies - 1, Vocational - 1, Health - 1, Home Economics and Science - 1, Math. - 1.

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[11] Black Dispatch, 19 September 1958.

Class advisors for the two classes making the class gift possible were Mrs. Lela F. Wiley and Mrs. Minerva E. Sloss.[12]

During the month of October 1958, Douglass High School Hi-Y sponsored students' participation in Oklahoma City's annual Father-Son Week activities. The activities culminated in the county and city offices. Douglass students served as Common Plea Judge, City Clerk, Director of Research and Director of Personnel.[13]

By mid-term of the 1958-59 school year, Mrs. George Ragland, sponsor of the National Honor Society Chapter at Douglass High School, reported fifty-five Douglass students on the National Honor Roll. Of the total mentioned, eighteen students were seniors, eleven were juniors and twenty-six were sophomores.[14]

Citation for Principal of the Year, 1959

In January 1959, F. D. was cited for a Special Citation in a "Principal of the Year" contest, a national competition on the basis

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[12] Black Dispatch, 24 October 1959.

[13] Black Dispatch, 17 October 1959.

[14] Black Dispatch, 12 December 1958.

of nominating statements prepared by the teachers if his school. "More than 20 teachers at Douglass High School prepared nominating statements, one of the basic requirements in the competition, detailing the excellence of their principal as an administrator, as a guide and counselor of students and teachers, and as a civic leader."[15]

The award program, sponsored by Arthur C. Croft Publications of New London, Connecticut, producers of professional services for school board members, administrators and teachers, was designed to "name the first American Principal of the Year."[16] In nominating F. D. as the first American Principal of the Year, the Douglass teachers stated:

> Mr. Moon, who was elected principal of our school on June 7, 1940. . . is highly recognized in all circles of the city and state as an outstanding educator and leader. . .
>
> As a principal, Mr.Moon meets all and every standard listed as criteria for a good administrator. 'He believes that one is no bigger than the very smallest component. In other words, our school is big if every child is provided for and given ample encouragement to succeed. Always with him the children comes first, in spite of his many, many other activities and responsibilities. He says our school is for our children and if we properly teach them, they make our school a 'big' school; then and only then, he says will our teachers and administrators be also made 'big', wrote Minerva A. Sloss.
>
> Another statement which helped to win the citation for Mr. Moon was signed by five teachers, Mrs. D. Burnett, Mrs. G.

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[15] F. D. Moon, personal papers.

[16] Ibid.

A. Williams, Miss Ella L. Clement, Mrs. I. H. Bruce and Mr. J. A. Diggs. It read in part: 'Mr. Moon has constantly faced situations requiring creativity and productivity in the schools in which he served as principal. One outstanding instance . . . is the promotion of legislative bond issued by this dynamic leader which resulted in the separation of the junior and senior high school and the construction of a million dollar plant for senior high school students. The need for a new school was vivid in his mind, and was pointed up by him after working untiringly in the combined junior and senior high school which had an enrollment of 1200 but a capacity of only 900.'

Another Douglass staff member, Cornelius E. Pittman, wrote in part, 'His intense pride in his work and his unstinting devotion to our school down through the years can clearly be illustrated. Our student body is considered generally to be the best self-disciplined group in the state . . .

When Mr. Moon became our principal in 1940, our school was more than $1,000 in debt, and nothing could be charged without approval of the school auditor. At the present time our average bank balance ranges from $12,000 to $21,000, and we have purchased as much as $6,000 worth of band uniforms on open account.[17]

A local newspaper gave this account:

F. D. Moon, principal of Douglass High School, has been named one of the thirteen finalists to receive a Special Citation of Honor for the national competitive "Principal of the Year" contest, sponsored by the Arthur C. Croft Publication of New London, Connecticut.

Although Principal Moon missed the top honor which went to John T. Warburton, Grossmount, California, it is quite a distinctive honor that he is recognized among the top for honors, especially since he is not only the only Negro named in the group, but the only state principal listed among the finalists.

Moon was nominated by the Douglass High School teachers who cited him for his outstanding school and community leadership

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[17] Ibid.

and the good example for service, he set for Douglass students.[18]

F. D. was awarded the special citation of honor by Editor Ben Brodinsky of the Arthur C. Croft Publications in February 1959. Citizens joined the "Douglass Family" in a special assembly for this occasion at the Douglass High School.[19]

Other Activities, Traditions, and Retirement

In May 1959, the Douglass Family graduated more than 200 seniors. S. G. Wright, president of Fisk University, was commencement speaker. Reverend Joe Edwards delivered the Baccalourate sermon.[20]

By the 1959-60 school year, integration of Douglass's faculty and student body could possibly be coupled with the knowledge of a news article appearing in the Black Dispatch charging "Segregation Still Exists in Schools."[21] The article charged that:

> Double-talk from the Oklahoma City Board of Education this week revealed that segregation is still very much a part of the educational system here.
>
> The revelation came to light as an estimated 61,500 elementary and high school children ended their vacation and trooped back to the classroom this week.

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[18] Black Dispatch, 6 February 1959.

[19] Black Dispatch, 20 February 1959. Also see, F. D. Moon's personal papers.

[20] Black Dispatch, 22 May 1959.

[21] Black Dispatch, 4 September 1959.

> The system is working this way. If you are white and live in an integrated school district you can transfer to an all white district with no delay. On tne other hand, if you are Negro you can transfer within so-called Negro districts.
>
> The fact was revealed last week when four Negro families tried to enroll their children at the Harmony School, 24th and Jordan. Three of the families want transfers because of the Harmony School being closer to them than Culbertson, which is in their district.[22]

On the other hand, by 1959 a total of 344 black teachers lost their jobs in the State of Oklahoma according to Raymond Gary, former governor of the State.[23] The Black Dispatch reported that:

> In a single article in the new issue of Look Magazine, Gary reported that only about ten Negro teachers are working in the integrated schools becuase individual school boards, with rare exceptions, have not yet seen fit to hire Negro members.
>
> He termed this the one really disturbing problem that has resulted from integration. Otherwise, Gary said, school integration in Oklahoma has benefited taxpayers, teachers, and students, pointing out that the continuing elimination of separate school systems for whites and Negroes has saved taxpayers a million dollars a year, enabled teachers' salaries to be raised, and spared the building of 4,200 new classrooms.
>
> Gary noted in the Look article that integration was presented to Oklahoma as a means to achieve better schools and that, 'A single fist fight was the only violence that occurred.' He warned, however, that some areas of the South with special problems will require ten to twenty years to accept integration and urged Northerns, 'not to push them into attempting changes that cannot be made overnight.'[23]

Apparently running parallel to the thought that changes for Douglass would not come overnight, F. D. opened the 1959-60

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[22] Ibid.

[23] Black Dispatch, 20 March 1959.

school year with "Quality Teaching" as its theme for the professional week activities. The theme provided "the most effective and well planned school faculty professional conference week in the history of the school.[24]

F. D. listed four new faculty members in September 1959.

> Mrs. H. Howard Brown, instructor of Spanish and English, a graduate of Prairie View State College. Mrs. Brown is a distinct honor to the "Douglass Family." She is a life member of the National Education Association, and at this point F. D. Moon was the only other life member of the National Education Association.
>
> Another new faculty member, Robert A. Reese, Instructor of Printing, replaces L. D. Darden. He is a graduate of Lincoln University of Jefferson City, Missouri.
>
> C. L. Sloss, former athletic director and vocational masonry instructor of Dunjee High School, will replace Mr. L. L. Washington, who resigned to accept work in Colorado. Mr. Sloss is a graduate of Langston University, and has a master's degree from Oklahoma University.
>
> Anderson Sanders, a former student and graduate of Douglass High School, will replace Mr. G. Dodson, as carpenter instructor. Mr. Dodson resigned to work in business for himself. Mr. Sanders received his schooling at Langston University, Langston, Oklahoma.[25]

The first assembly in 1959-60 of the Douglass Family was in the form of orientation for the new students. In fact:

> During the first assembly of the entire student body of Douglass High School, September 3, Professor F. D. Moon made a charge especially directed toward orientating the new students to the traditions and customs of Douglass High

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[24] Black Dispatch, 4 September 1959.

[25] Ibid.

School, as well as serving as a reminder to former students.

They were informed that, 'It is not enough to be aware of the achievements of others in the past but that you must measure up to the responsibility of those who have gone before.' He hopes they will, especially, 'learn early the tradition of giving youself to the school.'

Along with other traditions of Douglass High School is the care of public property and a sincere regard for personal safety.

He closed these challenging and inspiring remarks with a charge to each individual student, 'You enter at Douglass High School an open door and what comes out of it will depend on you.'[26]

During the year F. D. and the "Douglass Family" remained active in educational activities throughout the city and state.

For example, at a banquet of the Oklahoma Collegiate Conference Championship honoring the Langston University Lions football team during December 1959, F. D. addressed the teams's staff and nearly fifty alumni and coaches of Langston. As the Alumni gathered he stated: "Sports and allied activities centered around athletics were a prime factor toward building good will and implementing the integration process in Oklahoma. . . .Many persons of all races and groups have discussed and envisioned the possibilities of an integrated society; but he seriously doubted if too many sought it and the changes which are the end results of desegregation."[27]

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[26] Black Dispatch, 18 September 1959.

[27] Black Dispatch, 18 December 1959.

But integrational changes affecting education in Oklahoma had provided black high school graduates with increasing advantages for their access to State and out-of-state institutions of higher learning. In order to enhance this trend, F. D. and other black educators of all black high schools throughout the State exposed their senior classes to what was called the "Annual College Day,"[28]

In May, 1960, F. D. and the Douglass High School seniors hosted the Annual College Day activity. Oklahoma schools participating in the activity were: Booker T. Washington High School, El Reno; Douglass High School, Lawton; Dunjee High School, Choctaw; Faver High School, Guthrie; Langston High School, Langston; and L'Ouverture High School, McAlister. Representatives from AM&N College, the Armed Forces, Central State College, Draughon's Business and Technical Institute, Fisk University, Hill's Business University, Oklahoma City University, Langston University, Lincoln University, Oklahoma State Technical University, Tuskegee Institute, University of Oklahoma, and Wiley College conducted individual conferences with students from the represented schools, giving personal and detailed infomation concerning their institutions.[29]

Douglass High School, held to many of its traditions for the school year 1959-60. As in the years past, at the end of the school

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[28]Black Dispatch, 4 March 1960.

[29]Ibid.

year clubs and organizations presented gifts to the school, and the staff presented students' awards for the: All Around Boy and Girl, English Club, Haywood activity, Oklahoma Federation of Colored Women, Oklahoma State University Technical Training scholarship, Civitian, Seward Engineering, The American Legion, Phi Beta Kappa, Socialaires Club, DAR Good Citizen, American History, American Citizen, and The Sons of American Revolution. In addition, students' awards included scholarships from: The Homemakers Economics Department, Wiley College, Oklahoma State University Technical Training, the Nu Vista Club, Sears and Roebuck, The National Honor Society of Douglass High School, and E. K. Gaylord for Mathematics and Science. Trophies and certificates were presented to: Mr. and Miss Hi-Y, Miss Douglass, Miss Auxillary member, Attendent to Miss Douglass and Attendent to Miss Hi-Y, and outstanding Religious Emphasis.[30]

Among the gifts presented to the school in 1960, was the traditional gift of the school's Hi-Y Club. The club added to their previous gifts a marker, for the beginning of the sidewalk leading to the main office. The marker constructed of brick, surrounded by shrubbery, with aluminum letters identified Douglass High School Entrance.[31]

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[30] Black Dispatch, 20 May, 3 June 1960.

[31] Black Dispatch, 15 April 1960.

> As the school year 1959 and 1960 became history, one of the prettiest and most enjoyable events connected with the closing of school lingers in the memory of many members of the "Douglass Family." It is the bon voyage breakfast given by the Douglass High School student council on the last day of school for their teachers, office staff, custodians and cafeteria personnel.
>
> Prayer was offered by Mr. Moon, offering a blessing for the morning after which a short informal program was rendered. Larry Davis, president of the student council, welcomed the guests.
>
> Mr. Moon made the final remarks and assured the members of the student council that the teachers and other honored guests appreciated their efforts through the year and thanked them for the breakfast. . .[32]

At the close of the school year Judge Juanita Kidd Stout of Philadelphia and a Douglass High School graduate of Wewoka, Oklahoma, under F. D. , delivered the address for the 1959-60 graduating class of Douglass High School. The "Douglass Family" graduated more than 200 students making the fifty-seventh commencement exercise for the school.[33]

Douglass opened the 1960-61 school year with three major changes basic to the rationale of the school board's desire to relieve crowded conditions at F. D. Moon and Webster Junior High Schools. The changes included: (1) The shifting of ninth grade classes to Douglass which had previously operated on a 10-12th grade system,

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[32] Black Dispatch, 17 June 1960.

[33] Black Dispatch, 20 May 1960. Also F. D. Moon, interview held Midwest Christian College, Living Legend Library, 11 April 1972.

resulted in (2) the hiring of additional teachers, and (3) the use of additional buildings for the first time since the school was built. The five portables standing on the Douglass grounds in 1960 were moved from the Dunbar elementary school where crowded conditions were alleviated with the reorganization of F. D. Moon Junior High as Carter G. Woodson, elementary school.[34]

Nevertheless, F. D. added a Vocational Arts Department to the curriculum of Douglass in 1960. Paul Strong, former instructor of Auto Mechanics, headed the Vocational Industrial Arts Department, and became the ninth grade class advisor and assistant principal. This marks the first year that such a position had been allotted the school.[35]

Additional teachers added to the faculty of Douglass due to the inclusion of ninth grade students made a total of fifty-seven instructional staff members, I full time nurse, a custodial staff of 12, and a cafeteria staff of 13.[36]

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[34] Black Dispatch, 2 September 1960.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid. See Trojan: Pursuit of Excellence (Oklahoma City: Douglass High School, [1955]), pp. 18-29.

New faculty additions for the 1960-61 school year at Douglass included: Mrs. Cavannah M. Clark, B.S. degree. Langston University, M.S. University of Oklahoma, English; Ruby Alexander, B.S. Morris Brown College, M.S. Boston University, Social Studies; Frezonia Cudjoe, B.S. Langston, M.S. Oklahoma University, Social Studies; Geneva John, B.S. Oklahoma City University, M.S. Central State College,

But despite the physical changes of the school's campus and changes in both faculty and student body of Douglass, the "Douglass Family" did not dispair. In fact, the student council, with Augusta P. Morgan and Lola T. Alexander as sponsors, planned and executed a "Howdy Day" for the entire "Douglass Family." The two day activity placed emphasis on greeting everyone with a smile and a big "Howdy." On the second day a prize was given during assembly to the person wearing the "Howdy Badge" if his/her name was drawn.[37]

Throughout the year activities were noted within clubs and organizations which included the: Student Council, English Club, Thespian Club and Verse Choir, National Honor Society, Student Librarian Club, Spanish Club, ninth through the twelfth grades Y-Teens, Paramedical Career Club, Future Teachers of America, Trojans Lettermen's Club, Future Homemakers of America, Hi-Y Club, Future Business Leaders of America, Red Cross, Senior Girl Scouts, Troop 81, Chorus, Band and Orchestra, Cheerleaders and Trojanites Pep Club, Pepette Club, Physics Club, Chemistry Slide Rule Club, and Soci-Amen ..

Social Studies and Assistant Librarian; Richard D. Jones, B.S. Langston, M.S. University of Oklahoma, Social Studies; Eleanor K. Powell, full time registered nurse; Berry Henstead, Jr., B.S. Arkansas State, M.S. University of Arkansas, Science Department; Lola Greer, B.S. Wilberforce, M.S. Denver University, Mathematics; Willie E. Perry, B.S. Bishop College, M.S. Oklahoma University, band and orchestra; Dovie B. Tilman, B.S. Langston University, M.S. Oklahoma University, home economics. Black Dispatch, 2 September 1960.

[37] Black Dispatch, 14 October 1960.

Club.[38]

The philosophical pattern of the "Douglass Family" followed the pursuit of excellence, a theme chosen by the 1960-61 yearbook staff. Specifically, the faculty expressed: "We guide the youth of our school who aresent to us for enlightenment and stability of character. We represent a group of dedicated and well prepared individuals who in every aspect of our work attempt to pursue standards of excellence for the educational advancement of all youth."[38] The Administrative Council's aim was to "discuss and give assistance and suggestions towards improvement of school policies and standards leading to successful accomplishments of goals and objectives."[39]

Each organization within the "Douglass Family" in 1961 pursued excellence through the maintenance of the highest possible standards as the students pursued common interests in after-school fun and fellowship leading to the development of well-rounded personalities. For examples, The Student Council was a laboratory for democracy. It helped to adjust the entire student body, and furnished opportunities for the development of student leadership, initiative and school pride, it encouraged students to cooperate willingly and to accept responsibilities.

The English Club created a sense of responsibility for

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[38]Trojan, Pursuit of Excellence, p. 11.

[39]Ibid., p. 17.

achievement in scholarship, encouraged participation, provided opportunities for supplementary training in English, and contributed to the social, intellectual and cultural growth of the school and community. The Thespian Club stimulated interest in dramatics, and provided opportunities for dramatic work. The Spanish Club, a member of the National Spanish Society, learned to understand and appreciate the language and culture of Spanish America. The Trojan World encouraged student's interest in journalism and provided newspaper experience for students, produced a monthly publication, utilizing the school's vocational print shop. The Y-Teens built fellowship between female students devoted to the ideals of Christian living. The Paramedical Career Club encouraged students interest in medicine or medical careers. Future Teachers of America enabled students to study, identify and develop potential qualities basics to successful teaching. Trojan Lettermen's Club fostered good sportsmanship characteristics, high ideals, and upheld the traditions of Douglass. The Hi-Y Club created, maintained, and extended throughout the home, school and community, high standards of Christian character. The Future Business Leaders of America Club developed student's interest and understanding in the intelligent choices of business occupations. The Red Cross Club helped people in poverty strcken areas, and the sick. The Cheerleaders, Trojanite Pep Club and the Pepette Club boosted the morale of the Trojan Teams. The Physics and Chemistry

Club developed student's interest in the study of each course respectively, competing each year in the annual Science Fair. The Soci-Amen Club developed student's ideals in human behavior.[40]

Activities noted within the Douglass classroom in 1961 were geared towards Language Arts, where students developed an understanding and appreciation for better writing processes, learned to communicate effectively and to exchange ideas and opinions intelligently. Classes in this department included English, journalism, and foreign languages. In Social Studies, students compared the development of the city, state, national and the world with their present day environment and historical events. Students acquired knowledge and skill in bookkeeping, accounting, typing, shorthand, and secretarial practices. In an effort to stimulate student's ability to think critically, students experimented in science and mathematics drawing conclusions in biology, chemistry, physics, high school arithmetic, business mathematcis, algebra, geometry, trigonometry, and math analysis. Through vocational and industrial education, students were provided studies in tailoring, upholstery, vocational printing, vocational carpentry, welding, metal work, driver's training, photography, automechanics, cosmetology, and commercial arts.[41]

The Athletic Department was composed of the: Trojan Football

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[40]Ibid., pp. 67-92.

[41]Ibid., pp. 102-113.

Team, Trojan Basketball Team, Girls' Softball Team, Track Team, Wrestling Team, Tennis Team, Golf Team, Swimming Team and the Girls' Softball Team. The Girls' Softball team was the champion team in 1960-61.[42]

These along with the academic subjects mentioned including literature, French, home economics, and classes in hygiene formed the basic activities and curriculum at Douglass during F. D.'s retirement year.[43]

And yet, another aspect of how the "Douglass Family" sought the pursuit of excellence can possibly be gathered from the Douglass Creed:

> I believein the Douglass High School and in the things for which it stands: HEALTH in MIND and BODY, SERVICE to others and to myself, SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT, ECONOMIC SECURITY and REFERENCE FOR THE SPIRITUAL. I believe in LOYALTY to our school and to its traditions. I pledge upon my honor to help in all its undertakings; in all that will make it a stronger and nobler school. And I promise to do all in my power to become a student to match its ideals.[44]

But the saturation of F. D.'s influence within the "Douglass Family" is calculated in the conscientious family's judgment of him in his retirement year, as they wrote:

> The key man in our school is our Principal. He has led the Douglass Family for twenty-one years. During this time

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[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid., pp. 93-100.

[44] Ibid., p. 2.

> he has established not only high intellectual standards but has been instrumental in the development of certain traditions which are now loved and recognized by all loyal Douglass students (present and former). Such traditions as honesty, pride in physical surroundings, habits of orderliness, fair play, good sportsmanship and loyalty are a recognized part of the average Douglass student's life.
>
> In a stately, firm, and yet highly approachable manner, he has administered the overall responsibilities and functions of our school thereby winning the love, respect and gratitude of those with whom he works, the students and the entire community.[45]

The Douglass High School Family was joined by community and state organizations in giving recognition to the retiring principal. For example, in a special assembly during the National Library Week, April 16-22, 1961, under the direction of Sarah J. Bell and Geneva Johnson, librarian and assistant librarian respectively, the school compiled and dedicated to F. D. a collection of books by and about the Negro. In fact, at the time F. D. was serving as a member of the state-wide committee on National Library Week, he had often expressed the belief that "in order for Negro youths to have a better appreciation of their race, it is necessary that they be better informed concerning cultural achievements of

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[45] Ibid., p. 13.

At the time of his retirement year 1960-61 F. D. was serving on numerous boards of the community and state. These included: The Board of Directors Oklahoma City United Funds, The Metropolitan YMCA, The Last Frontier Council of the Boy Scouts of America, The Oklahoma City and Oklahoma County Girl Scouts, The Oklahoma Education Association, and numerous others. Black Dispatch, 19 May 1961.

the race."[46] It is this thought which served as a guide in selecting the books for senior high school students at Douglass.[47] The F. D. Moon Memorial Book Collection in the library of Douglass contains a bronze plaque projecting the likeness of F. D. and taken from a mold left by the 1945 Douglass senior class.[48]

F. D.'s natal day, May 4, 1961, was designated as "F. D. Moon's Recognition Day" by the "Douglass Family." The family based their activity on the theme "Stairways to the Stars." Six stars honoring F. D.'s accomplishments as Runner-up in the search for the First National Principal of the Year, Dean of Negro Education, F. D. Moon Junior High School named in his honor, Listed as Who's Who in American Education, Honored at Testimonial Dinner, and Membership in Phi Delta Kappa. Steps to the stars included: Courage and perseverance; loyalty and service; second vice-president of the National Association for the Study of Negro Life and History; Chairman of the steering committee for the Oklahoma County and City Girl Scouts since 1942; B. S. Langston University and M.A. University of Chicago; Head teacher at Crescent, Oklahoma, ten years; Executive Committee Oklahoma Association of Negro

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[46] S. J. Bell and G. W. Johnson, The F. D. Moon Memorial Collection of Books By and About The Negro (Oklahoma City: Douglass High School, [1961]), p. 1.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid.

teachers, twelve years; Principal, Douglass High School, Wewoka, Oklahoma, nine years; Executive Secretary, Oklahoma Association Negro Teachers; Principal, Douglass High School, Oklahoma City, twenty-one years; President, Oklahoma Association of Negro Teachers; President, Langston University Alumni Association, fourteen years; First Vice-President, Associated Publishers; State Chairman of Negro History for Oklahoma; Chairman of Management, 4th Street YMCA; General Superintendent, Tabernacle Baptist Sunday School; President, Oklahoma City Urban League; Vice Chairman Tabernacle Baptist Church Board of Deacons; Member of Board of Directors, Oklahoma City United Funds; Member, Board of Directors, Oklahoma County Health Association; Spearheaded building new Douglass High School.[49]

On May 26, 1961, F. D. was honored at a banquet at Douglass High School sponsored by the school, state and civic organizations. The program included tributes by Melvin Barnes and Jack Parker, both representing the Oklahoma City Board of Education; J. Frank Malone, representing the Oklahoma Association of Secondary School Principals; Charles Bennett, managing editor of the Daily Oklahoman and the Oklahoma City Times; W. F. Jeltz, vice-principal of Douglass; Reverend J. C. West, president of the Citizens Action Committee; and Freda Ameringer, representing community

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[49] Trojan: Pursuit of Excellence, p. 10.

organizations. Main speaker for the occasion was Dr. C. Wesley Morgan, an Oklahoma City physician. Specifically, "about 500 persons gathered at the high school that the 'dean of Negro education' was credited with building to say thanks for the job he had done.[50]

Three speakers presented F. D. with mementos during the mentioned occasion. One for $1,500, a donation collected by a committee and presented by A. D. Mathues, a service station operator. The other two mementos were plaques. Bert V. Wadkins, Dunbar School principal, presented one on behalf of the school and the other was presented by E. J. Perry, assistant pastor of Tabernacle Baptist Church. Upon acceptance F. D. stated: "I've enjoyed greatly the work I've done here and elsewhere. Now that I think about it, I don't know all there is to know about secondary education. I owe my success to knees. I knelt before my mother's knees to pray. . . . and was flattened across my father's knees for discipline."[51]

Probably the most heartwarming honor to be given F. D. was the unusual invitation extended by the 250 graduates in 1961, requesting him to address the class at its 59th annual school commencement. The 1961 graduates brought the total number of Douglass grades to exactly 4,701 and held the distinction of being the

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[50] Daily Oklahoman, 27 May 1961; Oklahoma City Times, 17 May 1961.

[51] Ibid.

largest graduating class in the fifty-nine year history of the school, "a monumental increase from 8 persons who comprised the first graduating class in 1903."[52]

Nevertheless, F. D. made several observations concerning black education and race relations in Oklahoma City nearing the end of his retirement year.

> 'Negro education and race relations have undergone tremendous changes in Oklahoma City during the last 21 years,' F. D. Moon reminisced as he sat in a large cushioned chair behind his desk.
>
> The retiring Douglass High School principal turned slowly in his chair, pointed to several piles of books and papers and remarked about the difficult task of sorting out the material which has collected during his 40 years as teacher and school administrator.
>
> The 65-year old educator seemed slightly saddened about leaving Douglass yet satisfied with the part he has played in obtaining better educational facilities for Negroes and upgrading his race in society. Moon will leave his post July 1 under the state's retirement law.
>
> A moderate in the Negro's quest for integration, Moon nevertheless works steadily and persistently to find for his race an equal place in society.
>
> Moon said educational facilities provided for Negroes in Oklahoma City 21 years ago included one school housed in an old dilapidated frame building and another school consisting of two frame buildings that hadn't been painted in years.
>
> Oklahoma City Negroes now attend modern schools, including Douglass a $3 million modern educational plant.
>
> Negroes have been making continuous progress in Oklahoma City in their fight for equal rights, but Moon admits 'there

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[52] Black Dispatch, 19 May 1961.

isn't very much integration.'

Moon terms the racial situation in Oklahoma City 'de-segregation, not integration.'

Why has integration been slow? The Negro educator pointed out two reasons. 'First,' he said, 'the residential pattern keeps the races apart and slows down the integration process. Secondly, the lack of communication,' he said, 'keeps like minded people from discovering each other.'

'In time,' Moon said, 'I think there will be rather complete integration.' 'This he explains, will be achieved through working and talking with people and using dramatic means such as sit-ins. 'Meditation does work with some people,' he remarked. 'With others you have to be more dramatic.'

The principal glances out the office window, turned back and said: 'Like President Roosevelt said when the country was trying to fight its way out of the depression, we have to attack on many fronts.'

Moon said he does not work for integration with emotions. 'I've never been intellectually dishonest. I don't tell any one an untruth about it,' he added.

'I object to the stigma attached to Negroes by some whites,' Moon said. 'It is not a question of trying to sit with a white person.'

He said he found inter-school activities involving both races very encouraging.

Moon said one problem Negroes face is the limited employment opportunities. He said many pupils from Douglass go on to college because they are unable to find jobs in the city as easily as whites and must prepare themselves for work in some specialized field.

Asked about his many speaking engagements throughout Oklahoma, Moon pointed to a large calendar on the office wall which is covered with notations to remind him of engagements. 'I speak to numerous groups,' he commented, 'and more often to whites than Negroes.'

What will the educator turn to in his retirement years? I may try some writing on education and race relations. I know

> those subjects best. Guy Bellamy, of the Baptist Book Store, wants to collaborate with me on writing a book on race relations, I may try that.'
>
> Moon said he has always been interested in the law and probably will spend some time observing the workings of the different courts.
>
> 'My brothers wants to try to make a fisherman out of me,' he said after a moment of thought,' 'but he will probably give the idea up. I've caught only one fish in my life and that one was only as long as my thumb. Maybe if I caught a few more, I would get to like it.'
>
> Moon said he has done considerable traveling and would like to do more during his retirement.[53]

Yet, during the 40 years as an educator in the State of Oklahoma, perhaps few years seemed to F. D. to be more filled with anticipation for the educational future of black youths than those ahead in the 60's. Such an idea would seem commonplace since the Brown's decision in 1954 and based on the history of education for blacks in Oklahoma by 1960-61, that is, if it were to be applied simply to school desegregation. But the beginning 60's marked the retirement year for F. D. as principal in the public schools of Oklahoma. To these anticipations the 65 year old principal gave consideration as he reminisced:

> When the shadows have begun to lengthen slightly toward the sunset, the suggestion of going back to 21 quickens the imagination.
>
> At 21 again, I would still stake my future on the philosophy of the Prophet Micah and the Master Teacher, respectively:

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[53]See Oklahoma City Times, 25 May 1961.

'What doth the Lord require of thee, O man, except to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.' And, 'He who would be greatest among you, let him be the servant.'

Out of my first 21 flow such names as Woodrow Wilson, Lloyd George, Clemenceau, Von Hinderberg, Col. Charles Young and General Pershing. One hums again such songs as 'Keep the Home Fires Buring,' 'It's a Long Way to Tipperary,' and, maybe, 'The Beale Street Blues.'

One recalls significant events as the mass migration of Negroes to the north to work in the factories and the re-birth of the Ku Klux Klan as a device for dimming the hopes of black soldiers returning from Flanders Fields and the Argonne Forests in a crusade to 'make the world safe for democracy.'

Back to 21 a second time for me would find new words, new concepts and new horizons - 'sputniks,' 'in orbit,' 'space age,' 'jet propulsion,' ' ballistic missiles,' 'integration,' 'White Citizens' Councils,' 'open heart surgery' and 'Civil Rights.'

New names, such as Eisenhower, Khruskchev, DeGaulle, Nehru, Nkrumah, Nasser are on the tongues of millions.

The spotlight of teeming millions has shifted now to India, Pakistan, Red China, Israel, Jordan, Sudan, Ghanna, Egypt, Ethiopia, Liberia, Kenya and Japan.

Since the educational, economic and social patterns for my people today have a much brighter hue, if I were 21 again I would urge Negro youth to move into many new vocations of semi-skilled and very technical types.

I would urge them to prepare to answer the call for entrance into petroleum, and other branches of engineering, architecture, mental health careers, aviation and all areas of productive labor, relying upon the despening social conscience of justice and equal opportunity to be the yeast to leaven the whole gamut of job opportunity in our society.

There is a common thread which runs through these four decades. In spite of all the modern miracles in medicine, outer space, longer life span and the staggering evolution of the mass media of communication and transportation,

human nature remains largely unchanged.

Shall I cite an illustration in support of the consistancy or similarity of human nature down through the ages? The Oriental Institute on the campus of the University of Chicago houses relics of Egyptian, Assyrian and Babylonian antiquity.

In the Babylonian department were many inscriptions written upon tablets of clay. When translated one inscription read, 'A receipt for 20 donkey loads of hay.' Another translation was entitled, 'A promissory note to repay a loan for so many donkey loads of hay.'

The promissory notes and receipts were written from 1,000 to 1,500 years before the birth of Christ. Even then, human beings required permanent records to compel compliance with agreements or contracts. They are still needed in 1960. . . Therefore, I would, at my second 21, rely again for success upon the old and tested values of being honest, reliable, friendly, and true:

> Truth never dies, the ages come and go.
> The mountains wear away,
> the stars retire.
> Destruction lays earth's might cities low;
> And empires, states and dynasties expire;
> But caught and handed onward by the wise.
> Truth never dies.[54]

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[54] Oklahoma City Times, 10 October 1960.

CONCLUSION

Two important factors have greatly affected the completion of this dissertation. First, it is impossible to capture within one volume the life of an individual -- especially an individual as involved in the education of Oklahoma children and adults as F. D. Moon was. Second, most of the data is previously unknown to the public. Three considerable variables associated with the analysis involve: (1) Oklahoma's school laws as they affected black education within the period of the analysis, (2) the social milieu of the time and its affect on the making and implementation of the laws, and (3) Oklahoma's black educators and other citizen's efforts to maximize the educational opportunities for blacks. Thus these several complex variables make difficult the development of a clear analysis of the educational philosophy of F. D. Moon, and more precisely, his accomplishments in the three schools where he served as principal. Yet, it is only realistic that neither his philosophy nor accomplishments as principal in the State of Oklahoma between 1921 and 1961 would have relevant meaning without an analysis of these variables. Also, the writer is cognizant that among the underlying objectives of any research is to formulate generalizations and conclusions.

Hence, two major related questions were, how did F. D. Moon

overcome the legal limitations imposed on black public schools as he sought to improve the educational facilities and curriculum opportunities for black students in schools where he worked? What philosophy or philosophies undergird his efforts? These questions take on added meaning when put within the context of the 1954 Brown decision. A study of Moon's life does much to reveal the quality of education provided blacks in Oklahoma -- legal sanction of separate school codes, accepted philosophical views with regard to black education and militancy of black educational leaders. His philosophy provided a focus on the black education during the period in question.

Various historians including Tolson, Strong, Aldrich, Hatcher, and Teall, projected the unrest among blacks during and, in some instances, after the period of separate schools in Oklahoma. But the question encountered by the writer as a result of analyzing the data is: Why do Oklahoman history texts provide little or no discussion of educational conditions from the perspective of blacks? More importantly, why have blacks like F. D. Moon been relegated to a few footnotes?

The challenges encountered by F. D. as principal have implications for two distinct eras in the history of education for blacks in Oklahoma. The first era consists of the Slaughter House decision (1893) and the Plessy decision (1896). During this period, "separate but equal" educational systems were sanctioned in the

State Constitution of Oklahoma. The second era began with the Brown decision of 1954. In view of the analysis then, the first inferred era of F. D.'s career as principal can be designated as between 1921-1954, and the second era designated between 1954-1961. Thus efforts to improve school facilities or curriculum during the first era of F. D. Moon's career as principal rested with legal control of spearate schools and a social milieu of separatism. Historically, lynching of blacks, separate churches, separate public facilities, and inferior schools rendered blacks relatively powerless.

The analysis of the Moon family and early childhood education of F. D. captured the separate educational and social systems of the time. But more pointedly, it provided evidence that "the clue to man's true nature is to be found in man's highest cultural attainment." It stands to reason that in order to understand the highest attainment of an individual or group it is advantageous to know from whence he or they have come. Irregardless, the analysis of circumstances surrounding F. D.'s childhood and early education reveals influential parental moral attitudes and ideals. These attitudes and ideals were highly religious and they incorporated the belief in hard work for survival. At Langston, F. D. perceived work as a necessary evil in order to attain an education. Clearly his early parental religious influences were reinforced. But perhaps one of the most interesting revelations was the lasting influence

of Inman Page on F. D. The words and deeds of President Page seemed to inspire F. D.'s career as principal. Admittedly, the philosophical black educator's views of the time were conflicting, especially those of DuBois and Washington. The extent of the rigidity of positions are seen when Page was ousted from his position as president of Langston University because of his efforts to lean toward DuBois' liberal education philosophy. It is interesting to note that it was at this time F. D.'s early appraisal of education for blacks shifted to the DuBois philosophy. Even more intersting is the fact that as principal F. D. tried to maintain a balance between the two philsophies for black Education. He did this in order to better meet the unique needs of his students. For him, both perspectives -- vocational and liberal education -- were important for a well developed curriculum.

More directly, the question of F. D.'s philosophy of education is both important and complex. As principal, he responded to state and national trends of thought that education is the training of youth in good citizenship and an appreciation of the democratic way of life. His activities within the schools pointed in this direction. Added to the complexity was his own philosophical views of what he determined black students and teachers should be about doing -- that is, do right as you see the right, be just and fair to everybody whether they be of high estate or low, whether they be black or white, and work hard. A persistant educational

theme showed up in his speeches and writings -- hard work, stable family life and adherence to basic religious tenets.

One interesting finding in this analysis is that Oklahoma did not voluntarily increase mill levies for financial support of black schools, nor did the state voluntarily make provisions for black graduate students. As executive secretary of the OANT, and president of the Langston Alumni Association, F. D. spearheaded the efforts to increase the millage to four in order to support black schools and out-of-state tuition for black graduate students. This not only helped to relieve the problems encountered in his schools but also relieved the needs of other separate schools within the state.

Further there is evidence within the data which substantiates the idea that dispite the separate school code, F. D. as principal through his initiative, persistence, patience, and communication skills, did much to improve the curricula and co-curricula activities for black children and their parents.

In conclusion, this study has attempted to place F. D. Moon's achievements within an educational philosophy. Such an endeavor does not adequately honor one who believed "that in order for Negro youth to have a better appreciation of their race, it is necessary that they be informed concerning outstanding cultural achievement of the race."

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APPENDIX A

F. D. Moon and the Girl Scout Organization in Oklahoma City, 1942-1955

In 1941 F. D. initiated the Girl Scouts for separate schools in Oklahoma City, at which time he was elected as a member of the steering committee. At a fall session in 1942, a leader's organization was formed. Officers included: Miss Pearl Jones, president; Mrs. D. H. Johnson, vice-president; Miss Emma Lee Stewart, secretary; Mr. F. D. Moon, treasurer; and Mrs. Malinda Pyles, reporter.[1]

Troop organizers in 1942 were: Father C. A. Roach, Mrs. Nilar J. Butler, Mrs. Malinda Pyles, Mrs. Elizabeth White, Mrs. Saddie Boyd, Mr. A. M. Tompkins, Mr. F. D. Moon, Mrs. D. H. Johnson, Mrs. A. P. Morgan, Mrs. Edna Hobbs, Miss Lola Greer, Miss Emma Lee Stewart, Miss Pearl Jones and Miss Arreatha Sharp Smith. These organizers organized troops in their designated areas.[2]

Girl Scout troops formed by troop organizers were: one each at Blessed Martin, Douglass, Page and Carver; two each at Dunjee, Dunbar and Edwards, making a total of ten troops containing one hundred and sixteen girls. Later Douglass High School

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[1] Black Dispatch, 13 January 1945.

[2] Ibid.

formed two troops: the Senior High School Girl Scouts under the auspices of Mrs. Augusta Morgan, and the Junior High School troop under the supervision of Mrs. Leeoshia Moon. Edwards Elementary school also organized two troops, four each were organized at Dunbar and Page, one each at Avery Chapel Church and New Hope Church making a total of sixteen registered troops by 1945. These troops had an enrollment of two hundred and seventy-three girls, 34 leaders and assistants.[3] There were approximately 20 troops at one time in Oklahoma City. All elementary schools had troops. Camping at Lake Murray was an annual affair. Day camping was held often in Oklahoma City at Edward's and Tolan Parks.[4]

During the government rationing period the Girl Scouts of the separate schools acted as ushers for persons coming into the schools to register for rations. Other activities were combined efforts of all the separate schools in order to raise fees for state troops' registration.[5] According to Leeoshia Moon:

> One problem we had with our Girl Scout troops was meeting deadlines for paying registration fees. The fees were for promoting camping. There were troops from other places in the state who would register for camping at Lake Murray, at Ardmore, Oklahoma, in June each year. We had to raise funds to pay registration fees on time in order to have a site for camping. All of the separate schools came

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[3]Ibid.

[4]Mrs. Leeoshia Moon interview, held 1314 N. E. 8th, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 2 May 1977.

[5]Black Dispatch, 22 April 1944.

together at various times of the year for activities to raise these fees.[6]

At Douglass School, the senior Girl Scouts sponsored a Girl Scout Circus held each year in the gymnasium in order to help defray expenses for the camping at Lake Murray. In 1944, they contributed to Douglass's project for beautification of the school plant. Their contribution was two evergreen trees which were planted on the north side of Douglass High School. This organized effort of providing Girl Scouts among the separate schools of Oklahoma City received the entire support of the Oklahoma City central office; Mrs. A. P. Murrah, wife of the federal judge; Miss Ruth Fredricks, Girl Scout executive and many other white citizens.[7]

It was not generally known that the steering committee aided by white representatives of the central office helped to secure the use of the Hassman Park used only by whites for blacks in Oklahoma City. It was through this organized effort that the city council of Oklahoma City gave official permission for black Girl Scouts to use Hassman Park during the summer of 1943.[8]

F. D.'s wife, Mrs. Leeoshia Moon, was professional field director for Girl Scouts in Oklahoma City for several years. In 1954, she received a ten year service badge. In 1955, F. D.'s

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[6]Leeoshia Moon interview, 2 May 1977.

[7]Black Dispatch, 22 April 1944.

[8]Ibid.

daughter, Freddye Lee, received the ten year service pin from the Girl Scouts, having been a continuous member throughout elementary and high school.[9]

F. D. served over 12 years promoting Girl Scouting in the community. He remained on the Steering Committee, retiring as the committee's chairman in 1955. A tribute was accorded F. D. during a local council of Girl Scouts 20th anniversary dinner meeting at the St. Lukes Methodist Church, February 10, 1955. He received one of the rare "Thanks Badges" presented by Mrs. Freda Ameringer, member of the board of Girl Scout Council. In an analysis of the honor she stated:

> Girl Scout "Thanks Badges" are given not alone for service in our own ranks but also for devotion to our community as a whole. In every city there are men and women who write the heart and conscience record of their community, which has to do with good government, good schools, libraries, art centers, symphonies and welfare groups which provide help and guidance where needed. . .[10]

In reference to the reason for the honor for F. D., Mrs. Ameringer continued:

> He has given long and able service to the cause of education and good government. I have heard him speak in meetings dealing with the problems of government when feelings ran high and rash statements were made. But always his were the quiet, well considered words which commanded attention from all within hearing. He has served long and well in the ranks of the Boy Scouts, the YMCA and the Urban League. In

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[9] Black Dispatch, 19 February 1955.

[10] Ibid.

hearings of the United Fund Budget Committee, no one spoke more effectively, He knew well the problems and needs of each agency, and had a ready answer for guestions.[11]

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[11] Ibid.

APPENDIX B

Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, 1942-1955

In January 1942, F. D. Moon was appointed by Dr. Carter G. Woodson, director of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, as state director of the annual drive for funds for the association. The activities for the association were centered around "Negro History Week" which included a fund raising campaign to promote the study of black history. The appointment was made upon the request of Editor Roscoe Dunjee, member of the Executive Council of the association, who had served as state director of the Oklahoma campaign funds for the society for five years prior to F. D.'s appointment.[1]

In a published statement F. D. Moon acknowledged:

> In accepting the chairmanship of the Oklahoma state committee of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, I realize that I am assuming a great responsibility. Although my duties are already quite heavy, I feel that an increased study and understanding of Negro life should be of extreme importance to every member of the race.
>
> Even though this is true, I would have declined accepting this responsibility had it not been for the confidence I have in my associates in the educational field and in many other Negro leaders and layman in our state.
>
> We need volunteers in every section of the State who will

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[1] Black Dispatch, 6 June 1942.

> assume the leadership in this respect . . . Therefore, I am using this column of the Black Dispatch to invite volunteers who will serve as chairman in their respective communities. This is of importance; where the offer of your service will not be considered egotism but rather a willingness to serve where such service is needed.[2]

F. D.'s appointment as state director for the Association came during World War II. The distraction and confusion of war was not to be taken by him, however, as a reason to cease the promotion of black history. To him, the organization through its continuous publication of year books since early 1900's, contained a storehouse of information concerning blacks which otherwise would have died in obscurity. He surmised that there were still many areas of black life with valuable contributions still untouched. This he felt, was due to the lack of finances necessary to bring them to light.[3] To raise finances was one of the primary purposes of the Negro History Week. The funds raised were to be used to stimulate and encourage research in the study of black life and history. In relating to the communities throughout the state the need for support and the allocating of finances raised, F. D. urged:

> It is very necessary that each community send a grater contribution for Negro History. . . The increased cost of living, the need for authentic information to counteract post war reactions and to enlarge our programs of activities

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[2]Black Dispatch, 10 January 1942.

[3]Ibid., 29 January 1944.

> embraced by the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History, justify the urgent suggestion . . . Except for necessary clerical expenses, stationary, printing and stamps, all money collected in the State of Oklahoma goes to the Association . . . this means, except for the introduction of the pro rata share of money coming from each unit to cover expenses mentioned, for each three dollars one may receive a subscritpion to the Journal of Negro History for one year, and for each one dollar members may receive the Negro History Bulletin.[4]

F. D. outlined suggested procedures for organizing communities throughout the state. He suggested: (1) Organize your community through committees. (2) Appeal to your Board of Education for the adoption of test books on black history and literature. (3) Interest your libraries and schools in securing a shelf on scientific works on blacks. (4) Set aside one day of the week as a book and picture fun day . . . . "There will be a day when all will be called upon to assist in raising funds to buy the books and pictures of blacks for your school.[5]

In the beginning of his appointment as state chairman of the History Week funds, F. D. collaborated with Roscoe Dunjee of the Black Dispatch and instigated a statewide essay contest in order to stimulate the effort. The contest offered two prizes: a $10 prize to the student producing the best paper dealing with ancient history of black people and a five dollar prize for the student producing the best manuscript dealing with medieval and

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[4]Black Dispatch, 29 January 1944.

[5]F. D. Moon, personal papers, 1944.

modern history of blacks.[6]

The rules of the contest as prepared by F. D. were: (1) The essay must be original and must be the work of the student submitting the essay. (2) All source of material must be properly documented. (3) There must be evidence that the writer is thoroughly familiar with his subject. (4) The essay must not be less than 1,000 words or more than 1,500 words. (5) The essay must be presented in good form using acceptable English and correct spelling. (6) The judging of the contest was to be based on straight thinking, logical structure, a good expression, a good form, original style and diction. Grammatical correction is a necessity. (7) The decision of the judges will be final. (8) Mail essay to F. D. Moon, 600 North High, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Further, he recommended that those who entered the contest make a thorough study of the formal and informal essay process giving special attention to the structure and style of the type of essay used. F. D. provided three judges for the essay contest. The Judges were: Dr. G. Lamar Harrison, Langston University; J. W. Sanford, president of the Oklahoma City Negro Chamber of Commerce; and Professor W. G. Sneed, principal of Page School of Oklahoma City. Each judge was to make individual decisions.[7]

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[6]Black Dispatch, 17 January 1942.

[7]Black Dispatch, 7 February 1942; 21 March 1942.

F. D. remained with the Association and became its second vice-president, member of the Executive Committee, and first vice-president of the Association's publishers. By 1952, as a result of yearly memberships and contributions more researchers were able to delve into the neglected phases of black history. In addition, it became possible through F. D.'s efforts to place in the schools and churches of Oklahoma 258 monthly edidtion of the Negro History Bulletin and 24 quarterly additions of The Journal of Negro History. Both magazines contained historical information concerning blacks.[8]

In October 1955, F. D. resigned all positions with the Association in a letter to Charles Wesley in which he stated:

> It is with much regret that I find it necessary to resign as second vice-president of the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History,and from the membership on the Executive Council of the Association. May this carry with it also my resignation as first vice-president of the Association's publishers.
>
> For some time I felt the need for reducing the responsibilities I carry as the result of spreading myself too thinly by participating in too many different activities. I shall long treasure the many pleasant memories and associations developed through my contacts in the Association of Negro Life and History. Of course, you have my best wishes for continued success in carrying out the high purposes of our founder, the late Dr. Carter G. Woodson.
>
> I had intended to attend the annual meeting where I could make a verbal resignation. I shall be denied this privilege, however, because the annual meeting has been placed in a different week this year, thereby conflicting with the annual meeting of the Oklahoma Association of Negro Teachers of which I am the

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[8]Ibid., 8 November 1952.

Executive Secretary and host principal.[9]

Dr. Wesley, president of the Association and Council, and Tren Holmes, vice-president, both expressed regret and requested that F. D. reconsider the resignation. Both men paid high tribute to the service rendered the association by F. D. during the twelve years in which he served the association for the State of Oklahoma, during which time the average contributions from Oklahoma increased to the point that Oklahoma ranked the second in the nation in the support of the National Association.[10]

F. D. stated to the people of the state: "I wish to thank the school people and especially the editor of the Black Dispatch for the loyal support given me during the twelve years that I served as the director. I request that you give the same loyal support to my successor which you have given me."[11]

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[9] Black Dispatch, 15 January 1955

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.