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THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

OKLAHOMA POLITICS: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO

THE ELECTION OF OKLAHOMA'S FIRST

REPUBLICAN GOVERNOR

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1964

OKLAHOMA POLITICS: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
THE ELECTION OF OKLAHOMA'S FIRST
REPUBLICAN GOVERNOR

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INTRODUCTION

In November, 1962, Henry Louis Bellmon, Noble county wheat farmer and former state chairman of the Republican party, became the first elected Republican governor in Oklahoma's history, and the primary focus of this work is to try to explain how Governor Bellmon came to occupy that office. But it was felt that a full understanding of this event required a rather detailed explanation of the Oklahoma political system within which it occurred and a recounting of numerous antecedent political events that reach well back into Oklahoma history. For example, in predominantly Democratic Oklahoma a large number of switch votes by Democrats are required to bring about a Republican victory; it therefore seemed pertinent to inquire whether the extensive switch voting in 1962 was a relatively new phenomenon in the state or whether certain factors present in 1962 operated to heighten an already existing predisposition to scratch the ballot. Hence this has become a study of Oklahoma politics to a large extent, rather than a study of a single election.

The approach to this study has been influenced strongly by the findings of the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan in its studies of presidential elections since 1948. These findings are set forth in two books, The Voter Decides and The American Voter, and in an article in the June, 1961, issue of the American Political Science Review entitled "Stability and Change in 1960: A Reinstating Election."

The Research Center's approach to the study of elections has been to concentrate upon three variables: (1) the long-range factor of political party allegiance, as reflected in the state as a whole in the partisan division of the vote over a relatively lengthy period, and the short-run factors of (2) campaign issues and (3) candidate personalities in a given election.¹ When the long-term and short-term influences impel the individual voter toward the same political party, he makes his choice of candidate earlier, is more firm in his decision, and is more likely to vote the straight ticket. When there is conflict between party preference and one or more of the short-term factors, this leads to a more equivocal decision and to split-ticket voting or to staying at home on election day.²

Of the three variables, party allegiance was found to be the most important--so important that it was adjudged "the single most potent force in shaping voter attitudes toward political events and candidates."³ Party affiliation was found to be far more important than economic status, social milieu, or deep-seated temperament in determining voter attitudes. It is especially important because it is an antecedent factor that colors the formation of attitudes toward issues and candidates.⁴ Most

¹Angus Campbell and Others, The Voter Decides (Evanston, Ill.: Row, Peterson, and Company, 1954), pp. 85-87.

²Ibid., pp. 161-162, 182-183.

³Angus Campbell and Others, The American Voter (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1960), p. 292.

⁴Ibid., pp. 136-137.

persons appear to evaluate political events in the light of their party allegiances: they tend to minimize the mistakes of their own party, where these are not too serious or too close to home, and to magnify the mistakes of the opposing party. Party allegiance is important also because it is a highly durable factor that is not easily changed; of the national sample of persons interviewed by Research Center workers, 56 per cent were found never to have crossed party lines in their voting.⁵ Belonging to a political party is comparable to belonging to any social group, it was found; the ties are psychological, not legal, and the longer one belongs the greater his attachment becomes, generally speaking.⁶ Only an event of "extraordinary intensity" can shake the political loyalties of any significant number of the electorate,⁷ and only two such events have occurred since the Reconstruction era: the Panic of 1893, the impact of which was evidenced in the 1896 election, and the Great Depression, felt in the election of 1932.⁸ The Research Center found, in short: "The partisan division of the vote over any period, as it may favor one party or the other, provides the point at which one must start to understand any specific election."⁹

Knowledge of the total number of Democratic and Republican partisans in the electorate, adjusted for the usual rate of voter turnout for the two groups, produces the normally expected vote for a coming

⁵Ibid., p. 148.

⁶Ibid., pp. 88, 295-296, 497.

⁷Ibid., p. 151.

⁸Ibid., p. 555.

⁹Phillip E. Converse and Others, "Stability and Change in 1960: A Reinstating Election," The American Political Science Review, LV (June, 1961), 273-274.

election. For example, the Research Center found that approximately 60 per cent of the national electorate has expressed a preference for the Democratic party since 1952. But the realistic voting strength of that party was placed at 53 to 54 per cent in advance of the 1960 election because voter turnout is low in the strongly Democratic South and because Democrats are somewhat less likely to vote than Republicans outside the South.¹⁰ Since voters do not always vote in accordance with their party preferences, the voting may be deflected from normal expectations in such a way as to give the majority party an even greater majority or to give victory to the minority party, depending upon the strength and direction of the short-term influences.

Even large-scale switch voting may not be indicative of wholesale party realignments. For example, the Research Center found that General Eisenhower attracted several million votes from the Democratic party and from previously inactive voters "without effecting any substantial reorientation in their attitudes regarding the parties."¹¹ Neither does extensive switch voting necessarily indicate a wholesale rise in political neutrality; only 3 per cent of those who called themselves Independents in 1956 said they did not feel closer to one of the parties than the other.¹²

Among the departures made by the Research Center from previous election studies is a de-emphasis upon the effort to predict political behavior from a classification of voters into sociological categories,

¹⁰Ibid., p. 274. ¹¹Campbell, The Voter Decides, p. 174.

¹²Campbell, The American Voter, p. 124.

such as socio-economic level, religion, or place of residence.¹³ Such factors are regarded as important, but more as reinforcing rather than controlling influences in many elections. Social class was not an important determinant of voter attitudes in 1956, the Research Center found, as the Eisenhower appeal cut across all social classes; however, social class does affect the degree of involvement in politics and may thus affect such factors as voter turnout in some elections.¹⁴

The influence of the Research Center's approach to the study of elections will be noted in the manner in which the material in this study is presented.

Part I will set forth general background information: a brief review of Oklahoma political history in Chapter I and an examination of Oklahoma social and economic characteristics in Chapter II. Part II will deal with the more long-range influences upon the 1962 election: the geographical bases of Democratic and Republican strength in Oklahoma, the relative strength of the parties, the extent of switch voting, the record of voter turnout in the various sections of the state, and the dynamics of the Oklahoma political system. Part III will take up the short-term influences that had a bearing upon the 1962 election as well as the election itself.

¹³Ibid., pp. 84-85, 292.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 304.

PART I

THE POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

OKLAHOMA POLITICS: WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO
THE ELECTION OF OKLAHOMA'S FIRST
REPUBLICAN GOVERNOR

CHAPTER I

A BRIEF HISTORY OF OKLAHOMA POLITICS

Oklahoma has been a predominantly one-party, Democratic state since statehood was achieved in 1907. But Republican candidates have registered a series of impressive victories since 1952, winning one gubernatorial and three presidential contests, and these raise important questions about the present and future status of Oklahoma politics. Slightly more than five hundred statewide officials were elected in Oklahoma from 1907 through 1960, excluding presidential electors and the few officials elected in special elections but including occasional elections to fill unexpired terms. Republicans therefore have won approximately four per cent of the statewide elections. A listing of all Republican victories in statewide contests from 1907 through 1960 will give some indication of that party's strength in Oklahoma prior to the Bellmon election in 1962.

Three-fourths of the Republican statewide victories came in the Republican landslide years of 1920 and 1928, when state candidates were carried into office on the coattails of Presidents Harding and Hoover.

TABLE 1.--The number of Republican statewide victories, 1907-1960

Year	Offices	Number
1920	Presidential victory for Warren G. Harding United States senator--J.W. Harreld Corporation commissioner Four justices of the state supreme court Judge of the criminal court of appeals	8
1924	United States senator--W.B. Pine	1
1928	Presidential victory for Herbert Hoover Corporation commissioner Three justices of the state supreme court Judge of the criminal court of appeals	6
1942	United States senator--E.H. Moore	1
1948	Justice of the state supreme court (unopposed)	1
1952	Presidential victory for Eisenhower	1
1956	Presidential victory for Eisenhower	1
1960	Presidential victory for Richard Nixon	1
		20

The fact that Governor Bellmon was elected in 1962 without benefit of presidential coattails increases the interest in his victory, for the only previous such successes occurred in the 1924 and 1942 senatorial races. And the fact that Bellmon's victory followed a Democratic landslide victory in the gubernatorial contest in 1958, when the Democratic candidate received 74.1 per cent of the total vote, adds additional interest.

It is believed that a relatively brief review of Oklahoma political history, with special emphasis upon past Republican victories

and the settings in which they occurred, can throw much light upon the recent series of Republican successes. To facilitate such a discussion, it has seemed convenient to divide the state's political history into five periods in which distinctive trends or common political factors appear to have been operative.

1. The period before statehood, 1889-1907. Nearly all the territory that is now Oklahoma was reserved primarily for the Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes and later the Plains Indians during nearly all the nineteenth century period of westward migration. Hence Oklahoma had few white settlers and little political history prior to 1889, the year in which six million acres of central Oklahoma land was opened to settlement by whites, or until 1890, the year in which Oklahoma Territory was organized under terms of the Organic Act signed by President Benjamin Harrison on May 2, 1890. Until achievement of statehood in 1907, most of what is now Oklahoma comprised two federal territories: Indian Territory, which occupied much of what is now northeastern, east central, southeastern, and south central Oklahoma, and Oklahoma Territory, which occupied most of the remainder of the present state. In 1890 the two territories had a combined population of only 270,000. Indian Territory population totalled 197,000, or more than three-fifths of the total;¹ the white population of Indian Territory was roughly equal to the Indian population in the mid-1880's but soon far outdistanced it.² Oklahoma Territory's population in 1890 was 74,167,

¹Edwin C. McReynolds, Oklahoma: A History of the Sooner State (Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1954), p. 414.

²James Ralph Scales, "Political History of Oklahoma, 1907-1949" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History, University of Oklahoma, 1949), p. 10.

which included 61,000 new settlers and 13,167 Plains Indians. By 1900 the combined population of the two territories was 790,000, and by 1910 the new state's population had risen to 1,657,155.

Because Oklahoma's voters cast rather heavy votes for Populist and Socialist candidates immediately before and after achievement of statehood, it is significant to note that the state was born in a period of national and local economic distress. The economic crisis of 1887 precipitated a new cycle of agrarian protest in the nation; in 1890, when crop prices began to fall drastically, various state alliances organized independent political parties called Peoples' parties as a means of expressing their protests. And times were especially hard in the frontier area of Oklahoma. Oklahoma Territory had not been opened in time to permit a majority of the new settlers to plant crops in 1889; there followed a very dry year in 1890, when crops failed wholly or in part; then followed two years of meager production.³ When prosperity returned nationally in the late 1890's farmers generally lost interest in building a new party and the Populist party passed out of existence. But the Panic of 1907 was to revive the interest of Oklahoma farmers in third party movements and to bring with it a heavy vote for the Socialist party.

In addition to the heavy voting for third party candidates, the hard times that accompanied the birth of Oklahoma and the strong protest movements generated by these hard times are reflected in the many liberal

³Dan Baker, "The Populist Party" (unpublished master's thesis, Department of Government, University of Oklahoma, 1926), p. 56.

provisions of the Oklahoma constitution, which was drawn up at the state constitutional convention in 1906. Farm and labor delegates of the Oklahoma Federation of Labor and of the Farmers Union met at Shawnee to draw up twenty-six demands upon the delegates to the constitutional convention, and most of these were incorporated subsequently into the constitution.⁴ Among them were provisions for the initiative and referendum, the Australian ballot, the direct primary, protection of labor, and regulation of railroads and of public service corporations. Among the provisions favorable to labor were those prescribing an eight-hour day on public projects, the right of unlimited recovery of damages in fatal accidents, compulsory education, no child labor in mines or factories, no irrevocable franchises, and popular election of the corporation commissioners, commissioner of labor, and mine inspectors.

2. Another era of agrarian protest and a period of weak political party ties, 1907-1918. Charles W. Haskell, a Democrat, became the first elected governor of Oklahoma in the election of 1907. He received 53.4 per cent of the total vote, a margin of victory which was close to the 54.9 per cent Democratic average for all the gubernatorial elections from 1907 through 1962.⁵ His Republican opponent, former Territorial Governor Frank Frantz, received 42.7 per cent of the total vote, which likewise compares favorably with the 41.4 per cent Republican average for the years 1907-1962.

⁴Scales, op. cit., pp. 32, 41-43.

⁵Bureau of Government Research, University of Oklahoma, Oklahoma Votes, 1907-1962 (Norman, Okla., 1964), p. 21.

Haskell and two subsequent governors, Robert Lee Williams and William H. (Alfalfa Bill) Murray, emerged as the triumvirate of early Democratic party leaders; Murray was president of the 1906 state constitutional convention. In the very earliest period the Democrats were united as to these objectives: securing immediate statehood, ousting the carpetbaggers, curbing the corporations, and putting the Negro in his "place." Once these were achieved, cliques and factions began to develop.⁶

One useful index for measuring relative party strength is the number of party members elected to the state legislature. Table 2 gives these figures for the 1907-1918 period.⁷

TABLE 2.--Number of Democrats and Republicans elected to the state legislature, 1907-1918

Year	House			Senate		
	Demo- crats	Repub- licans	Socia- lists	Demo- crats	Repub- licans	Socia- lists
1907	92	17		39	5	
1908	68	41		34	10	
1910	83	26		31	13	
1912	81	18		36	8	
1914	76	17	5	38	5	1
1916	85	26		38	5	1
1918	74	30		34	10	

Republican gains in 1908 perhaps are attributable not so much to

⁶Edward Everett Dale and James D. Morrison, Pioneer Judge: The Life of Robert Lee Williams (Cedar Rapids, Iowa: The Torch Press, 1958), pp. 204, 227.

⁷Figures compiled from the Directory and Manual of the State of Oklahoma (1961), pp. 145-177, published by the State Election Board.

the party's resurgence as to the fact that its real strength was not properly registered in the 1907 election, for ratification of the state constitution was also on the 1907 ballot and the Democrats were more favorable to ratification as they had dominated the state constitutional convention. The Republican party scored no statewide victories in the 1907-1918 period. However, Republican candidates captured three of the five seats in the lower house of Congress in 1907, two in four of the succeeding elections through 1918, and one in 1914.

The salient political feature of the 1907-1918 period is the large vote cast for Socialist candidates in Oklahoma, a vote which reached its peak in 1914 when Socialist gubernatorial candidate Fred W. Holt received 20.7 per cent of the total vote.

The Panic of 1907 was on during Oklahoma's first state election and times were again hard in the state. Oscar Ameringer, who came to Oklahoma in 1907 to tour the state on behalf of the Socialist party, wrote that the Oklahoma farmer's living standard in many cases was "so far below that of the sweatshop workers of the New York east side . . . that comparison could not be thought of."⁸ The time was ripe for another cycle of agrarian protest, given voice this time through the medium of the Socialist party. Table 3 shows the percentage of the vote received by the Democratic, Republican, and Socialist candidates for governor in this period.

⁸Oscar Ameringer, If You Don't Weaken: The Autobiography of Oscar Ameringer (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1940), p. 233.

TABLE 3.--Percentages of the vote received by the Democratic, Republican, and Socialist candidates for governor, 1907-1918

Year	Democrat	Republican	Socialist
1907	53.4	42.7	3.8
1910	48.5	40.2	9.9
1914	39.6	37.8	20.7
1918	53.5	42.6	3.8

Here was a state that was 80.7 per cent rural in 1910 and 73.4 per cent rural in 1920⁹ casting the largest Socialist vote proportionately of any state in the nation.

In his history of Oklahoma, Victor Harlow wrote that Socialist strength in Oklahoma came chiefly from unorganized common laborers and an increasing number of tenant farmers.¹⁰ But much recent research indicates that farm owners also probably participated heavily in the Socialist movement as well as other radical movements. Seymour Lipset found in his study of Great Plains radicalism that the stereotype of the American farmer as a ruggedly individualistic conservative is a myth that has been perpetuated without foundation.¹¹ V.O. Key added that the growth of farm tenancy may be contributing to the death of agrarian radicalism; "when an owner becomes a tenant he loses his spunk

⁹U.S., Bureau of the Census, Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1940, p. 8.

¹⁰Victor E. Harlow, Oklahoma: Its Origins and Development (rev. ed.; Oklahoma City: Harlow Publishing Corporation, 1955), p. 351.

¹¹Seymour H. Lipset, Agrarian Socialism: The Cooperative Commonwealth Federation in Saskatchewan: A Study in Political Sociology (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1950), p. 7.

and his concern about public affairs."¹²

The University of Michigan Survey Research Center added a new dimension to the understanding of why rural Oklahoma should have been a center of political radicalism in the early part of the century. The Center found that farmers generally are among those with the weakest ties to the political parties; hence little wrenching is required for many of them to leave the party with which they have been identified to vote for candidates of another party, especially when their pocketbooks have been affected.¹³ This was more so in the early part of the century than it is today, but even since 1948 the farmers' vote outside the South was found to have fluctuated more widely than that of any other occupational grouping. The principal reason given for the farmers' weak party ties is that he lives and works remote from the flow of political events and he is less exposed to political information. This was more true before the days of automobile and radio, but as late as 1952 it was found that only 7 per cent of non-Southern farmers were contacted by a political party worker during that campaign. For the great mass of farmers, their voting turnout is more irregular and they are more likely to split the ticket than either city residents or rural non-farmers. But the farmers' ties to the third parties were as weak as they were to the major parties; hence, when the economic grievance was relieved, the third party movement collapsed.

¹²V.O. Key, Southern Politics In State and Nation (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), p. 185.

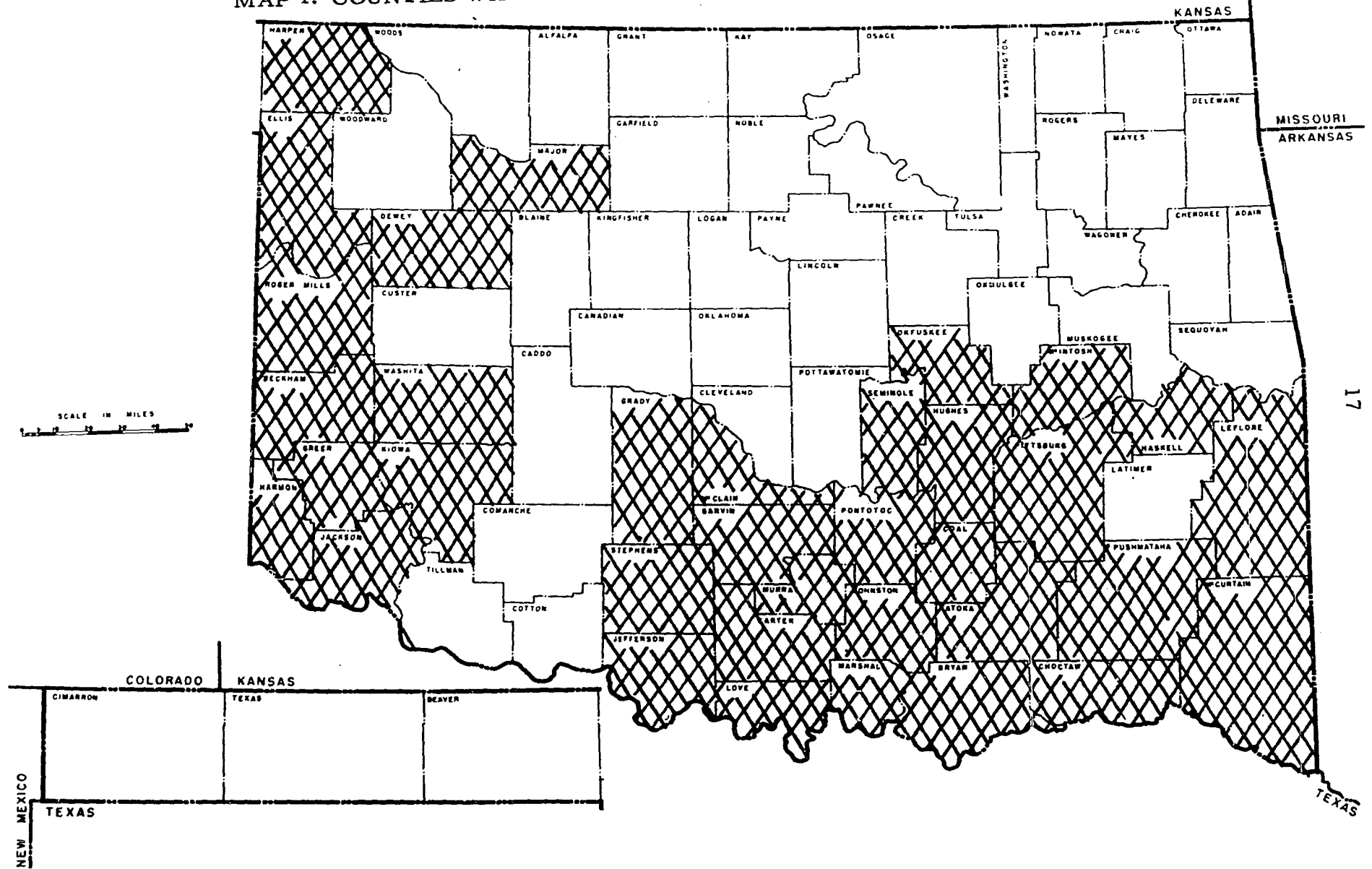
¹³Campbell, The American Voter, chap. xv.

Map I shows the location of the heaviest Socialist voting in Oklahoma in the 1914 gubernatorial contest. The shaded counties are those in which the Socialist vote was 24.8 per cent or more. Oklahoma's Socialist voting does not accord fully with the Lipset thesis that the wheat growing areas have been the predominant centers of radicalism in the Great Plains.¹⁴ Census reports show that the following eighteen counties were the largest wheat producers in 1920: Alfalfa, Beaver, Blaine, Canadian, Custer, Garfield, Grant, Harper, Kay, Kingfisher, Kiowa, Major, Noble, Texas, Tillman, Washita, Woods, and Woodward. Only four of these counties are among those in which a Socialist vote of approximately 25 per cent or more was cast. The Socialist vote in the wheat belt ranged from 6.4 per cent in Kay county to 20.1 per cent in Woodward county. Nor did the heaviest Socialist voting occur in those areas where unorganized common laborers would be most numerous; it definitely occurred in the most rural areas rather than the more populous ones. Instead, it appears to conform primarily with areas of lowest soil fertility and areas most subject to drouth, and hence to areas of low farm income. The soil is poorest in the eastern third of Oklahoma and the western third is most subject to drouth.¹⁵ Writing of the dissatisfactions abroad in Oklahoma in this period, historians Edward Everett Dale and James D. Morrison wrote that crops had burned up in western Oklahoma and that crops were poor in eastern Oklahoma; times

¹⁴Lipset, op. cit., p. 18.

¹⁵John J. Klein and Others, The Oklahoma Economy (Stillwater, Okla.: The Publishing and Printing Department, Oklahoma State University, 1963), pp. 19-24.

MAP I. COUNTIES WHERE SOCIALIST VOTING WAS HEAVIEST IN 1914



were hard, crop prices were low, and many farmers were burdened by large mortgages and high taxes. The historians concluded that many Oklahomans felt that the Democratic party had failed them, that perhaps the whole capitalistic system was at fault, and that only socialism could relieve their distress.¹⁶

3. Period of Republican successes, 1920-1928. Republicans won two of the three presidential elections in this period, Warren G. Harding in 1920 and Herbert Hoover in 1928. J.W. Harreld became the first Republican United States senator from Oklahoma in 1920 when he defeated former United States Representative Scott Ferris, and Republican W.B. Pine carried all but seven of the state's seventy-seven counties in his smashing victory over former Governor J.C. (Jack) Walton in the 1924 United States senate race. Walton had been recently impeached and removed from office.

The effect of national political events and issues upon Oklahoma politics is shown rather clearly in the elections of this period. Republicans won three of Oklahoma's eight congressional seats in the Republican landslide years of 1920 and 1928 and two seats in the presidential year of 1924; but in the off-years of 1922 and 1926 only one Republican was elected to the lower house of Congress in each year. The effect of national events also was reflected in the state legislative races, as shown by Table 4.

¹⁶Dale and Morrison, op. cit., pp. 206-207.

TABLE 4.--Number of Democrats and Republicans serving in the state legislature, 1920-1928

Year	House		Senate	
	Demo- crats	Repub- licans	Demo- crats	Repub- licans
1920	37	55	27	17
1922	93	14	32	12
1924	80	27	38	6
1926	87	21	35	9
1928	57	47	32	12

Republicans obtained an actual majority in the state house of representatives in 1920 for the first and only time in Oklahoma history; the fact that only half the state senators were up for reelection in that year undoubtedly preserved the Democratic majority in that body. In 1924 Democratic presidential nominee John W. Davis carried Oklahoma over Calvin Coolidge, and Republican W.B. Pine's smashing victory in the senate race was not enough to carry any considerable number of Republican legislative candidates into office. Though the Hoover landslide of 1928 did not give the Republicans a majority in the lower house, Republican legislators were able to select a Democratic speaker who was unfriendly to the Henry S. Johnston gubernatorial administration with the aid of Democrats who opposed the governor, and Governor Johnston subsequently was impeached and removed from office.¹⁷

Republicans had no success in these years with respect to the governorship or the great majority of secondary state offices, for elections of these officials are insulated from the effects of national politics by virtue of the fact that they are held in the off years.

¹⁷Scales, op. cit., pp. 297-298.

Democrats J.C. Walton and Henry S. Johnston won the two gubernatorial contests in this period, and by the customary Democratic majorities of 54 and 55 per cent. In 1920 and 1928, however, Republican candidates made a clean sweep of all the statewide offices that were voted upon.

The salient political developments of the 1920-1928 period were (1) the Republican victories already mentioned and (2) the change in strategy on the part of Oklahoma's "radicals," who decided in 1921 to work for their aims through one of the major parties rather than through a third party. The remainder of this section will be devoted to these two topics.

In 1920 the short-run influences favorable to the Republican party in Oklahoma were a deep split in the Democratic party and the sentiment against the League of Nations in this era of post-war disillusionment. Portents of a voter revolt against the 1920 Democratic nominees began to accumulate at least two years in advance of the campaign. In 1918 Democratic state leaders refused to invite United States Senator Thomas P. Gore to address the Democratic state convention because Gore did not support President Wilson's recommendation for a declaration of war against Germany; this was one of the early developments that led to the Democratic party split.¹⁸ Gore, who was to be up for reelection in 1920, had been a senator since 1907; he had received 75 per cent of the vote in the 1914 Democratic primary and he had many loyal Oklahoma followers. Another portent of trouble ahead for the Democrats was the victory of Republican Harreld in a special election

¹⁸Cortez A.M. Ewing and Royden J. Dangerfield, "History of Oklahoma Politics" (typewritten), pp. 729-737.

in November, 1919, to elect a successor to fifth district Congressman Joe B. Thompson, who had died; Harreld, an Oklahoma City attorney, became the first Republican to be elected to the lower house of Congress from the fifth district, which includes Oklahoma City. He was to oppose Gore in the 1920 senate race. In addition, the 1920 Republican state platform contained this plank: "We are unalterably opposed to the surrender to any international administrative body the political or national independence of this country; . . . we refuse to permit any combination of nations in the world to dictate to this country what it shall or shall not do."¹⁹ It seems evident that this sentiment was popular in Oklahoma, as indicated in 1920 when President Harding became the first Republican presidential nominee to carry the state.

The Democratic party split deepened during the 1920 campaign, when the Democratic state convention passed a resolution condemning Senator Gore in February, prior to the primary election. In the primary, Ferris defeated Gore in one of the most bitter primary campaigns in the Democratic party's history. Disgruntled Gore supporters formed the Jeffersonian Club to aid the Republican nominee's cause and to oppose the League of Nations.²⁰ The result was a landslide victory for all the Republican candidates for statewide offices in the November election.

Two years later, in the off-year election of 1922, Democratic nominee Walton was elected governor and the Democrats made a clean sweep of the contests for statewide office. Since the Democratic party split was still by no means healed, the election illustrates the strong role

¹⁹Ibid., p. 765.

²⁰Ibid., pp. 743-747.

that national issues played in 1920.

It was in 1921, in advance of the 1922 elections, that disaffected Oklahoma farmers and workers decided to work for their aims by capturing control of the Democratic party rather than through a third party. Farm discontent was brought on by the fact that commodity prices began falling in 1920 and by the nation's deflationist policies following the loss of European markets in the post-war period.²¹ Oklahoma's farm and labor leaders had become interested in the activities of the Non-Partisan League in North Dakota, which championed such causes as state ownership of grain elevators and of farm credit facilities--and which had decided to work for its aims by capturing control of the Republican party in North Dakota.

The genesis of the new Oklahoma farm-labor movement was the formation of the Farmers' Non-Partisan League in 1918; but members of this organization could not agree upon a gubernatorial nominee in that year.²² In September, 1921, the Farmer and Labor Reconstruction League was organized at Shawnee, and it was here that the three hundred fifty delegates decided to call upon their followers to vote as a unit in the Democratic primaries to capture that party. In February, 1922, the Reconstruction League endorsed Walton for governor at another meeting in Shawnee and drew up a platform similar to that of the North Dakota Non-Partisan League. This platform, as such, was voted down at the Democratic convention in August, but a number of its planks were incorporated in the Democratic platform on which Walton ran. The

²¹Ibid., pp. 786-790.

²²Ibid., p. 704.

Republican platform called upon Oklahomans to "choose between our established system of government and socialism."²³ A Democratic Anti-Walton Club was formed in Oklahoma City, but it failed to attract the expected following and the bolt against Walton did not materialize. Walton defeated the able Republican John Fields, agricultural scientist and farm editor, who had lost the 1914 gubernatorial contest to Robert L. Williams by only 4,693 votes. Fields carried most of the urban areas, Walton the rural areas--a further indication that the early "radical" sentiment in Oklahoma was centered in the rural areas.

In 1924 Republican W.B. Pine, Okmulgee oilman, won the United States senate race to become the lone Republican winner in that presidential year. His Democratic opponent was Walton, who had been impeached and removed from office in 1923 and who was nominated in the 1924 Democratic primary with only 36 per cent of the votes. Walton's activities as governor did much to prepare the way for the Republican victory. He precipitated a new Democratic party split by excoriating the Ku Klux Klan, which was at the height of its influence in 1923, "in order to divert attention from the deficiencies of his administration."²⁴ Very few of his platform planks were enacted into law. His fight with the Klan led him to declare martial law and suspend the writ of habeas corpus, in part of Tulsa county in August, in all of Tulsa county September 1, and throughout the state September 15. Less than a month later state legislators drew up twenty-two impeachment charges and Walton subsequently was removed from office.

²³Ibid., pp. 829-839.

²⁴Scales, op. cit., pp. 227-254.

Going into the 1924 campaign the Democratic party was still rent from the Ferris-Gore feud in 1920, the split in feeling over Walton's 1922 platform, a division of sentiment about the Ku Klux Klan, and from Walton's impeachment. The Farmer-Labor Progressive League, successor to the Reconstruction League, turned against Walton and some prominent Democrats resigned from the Democratic state executive committee because of his candidacy. Then, in late September, Walton was quoted as saying that 95 per cent of Protestant preachers were "lower than skunks." A Clean Government League was organized to oppose him, and churchmen spoke against him at district meetings. Retiring Democratic Senator Robert L. Owen came out against him. Friends of former Senator Gore, who was defeated again in the Democratic senatorial primary, formed an Anti-Walton Club.²⁵ The result: Republican nominee Pine received 61 per cent of the vote in his senatorial contest with Walton, carried all but seven of the state's counties, and joined Republican Senator Harreld in the United States senate to give predominantly Democratic Oklahoma two Republican senators for a two-year period.

In 1926 Democratic gubernatorial nominee Henry S. Johnston, who had received only 36 per cent of the vote in the Democratic primary, was given 55 per cent of the vote in the general election. No Republican candidates won statewide office in this off-year election.

In 1928, another Republican landslide year, the issues were largely national. The national Democratic party nominated Alfred E. Smith, a Catholic and an advocate of repeal of prohibition. This time

²⁵Ewing and Dangerfield, op. cit., pp. 854-856.

Oklahoma churchmen took an even more active part in the campaign than they had in the 1924 Walton-Pine contest.²⁶ The Rev. Mordecai Ham, pastor of First Baptist Church in Oklahoma City, invited Dr. John Roach Straton of New York to address four indignation meetings in Oklahoma. Former Senator Owen announced that he could not support the Democratic presidential nominee because of Smith's liquor policy and Tammany connections. The Anti-Smith Democrats announced that they had obtained the signatures of seventy-six thousand persons pledged to vote against Al Smith. The Ku Klux Klan sought unsuccessfully to block the endorsement of Smith at the Democratic state convention, and its members formed another opposition bloc. In overwhelmingly Protestant Oklahoma, the religious issue alone probably would have been sufficient to bring about Smith's defeat.

The result: Herbert Hoover received 64 per cent of the vote in the presidential contest to register the most lopsided victory of any Oklahoma presidential or gubernatorial candidate up to that time. His victory carried all Republican candidates for statewide office to victory and increased Republican representation in the lower house of Congress from one to three.

4. The New Deal and Fair Deal period, 1930-1950. In Oklahoma, still a predominantly Democratic state despite the Republican successes in the 1920's, the main effect of the New Deal-Fair Deal appears to have been to increase the average Democratic percentage of the total vote over the party's averages for the entire 1907-1962 period: by roughly

²⁶Ibid., p. 940.

3 per cent in the gubernatorial elections and by 11.5 per cent in the presidential elections. Democratic candidates received an average of 58 per cent of the vote in the five gubernatorial elections from 1930 through 1946; Democratic presidential nominees received an average of 63 per cent in the five presidential elections from 1932 through 1948. Oklahoma was represented by a full slate of Democratic congressmen from 1932 until 1940 and again in 1948. Table 5 shows the number of Democrats and Republicans elected to the state legislature in these years.

TABLE 5.--The number of Democrats and Republicans serving in the state legislature, 1930-1948

Year	House		Senate	
	Demo- crats	Repub- licans	Demo- crats	Repub- licans
1930	88	9	32	12
1932	112	5	39	5
1934	111	8	43	1
1936	114	3	44	0
1938	102	13	43	1
1940	113	7	42	2
1942	94	24	40	4
1944	98	22	38	6
1946	95	23	37	7
1948	104	11	39	5

The rising number of Republicans beginning in 1942 seems to indicate that the New Deal had begun to lose some of its magic in Oklahoma with the return of prosperity; however, when there was fear of an economic downturn in 1948 the voters apparently turned again to "the party of the common man" and the "party of social reform," indicating the possibility that the so-called conservative trend in Oklahoma since World War II may not be too solidly based.

Republican statewide candidates registered only two successes in this twenty-year period. Cecil Talmadge O'Neal became an associate justice of the state supreme court in 1948 when his Democratic opponent, Fletcher Riley, was declared ineligible to run because he had filed for both the United States senate and state supreme court contests. By the time the state supreme court ruled that Riley's filing for United States senator had cancelled his filing for state supreme court justice, it was too late for the Democratic party to put up another candidate.

The other Republican success was Ed H. Moore's surprise defeat of incumbent Democratic Senator Josh Lee in 1942, when Moore received 54.8 per cent of the vote. Moore, a seventy-one-year-old Tulsa oil millionaire, was substituted on the ballot by the Republican central committee after the original Republican nominee, W.B. Pine, died during the campaign. Moore said during the campaign that he still was a registered Democrat but was an anti-New Dealer. He had joined with Democratic Governor Leon C. Phillips in opposing the nomination of Franklin D. Roosevelt for a third term in 1940 and had organized the Democrats for Willkie organization in Oklahoma.²⁷

The short-term influences operative in 1942 generally were favorable to the Republicans. The country had been at war only a short time and political interest was low. The war situation worsened in the summer and fall of 1942, and the African offensive that brightened up the home front did not take place until a week after the election. Feeling against organized labor was rather strong, and newspapers were

²⁷Scales, op. cit., p. 424.

playing up the strikes in war plants. Moore and the newspapers hammered hard at the pensions for congressmen which the Democratic-controlled Congress had voted. Lee reportedly had neglected his correspondence with his constituents and was somewhat difficult for them to contact in Washington. And further, Lee remained in Washington until ten days before the general election and thus was able to conduct only a meager campaign.²⁸

A substantial decrease in voter turnout in the Democratic stronghold of Little Dixie in southeastern Oklahoma and an increase in turnout in strongly Republican Tulsa county was another factor in Senator Lee's defeat. Only slightly more than 370,000 voted in the senatorial election. But the vote increased by 21 per cent over the 1938 turnout in Tulsa county and decreased by as much as 42 per cent in the Little Dixie counties--42 per cent in Atoka county and 35 per cent in Choctaw county, for example. Lee's 1942 vote was 35 per cent below his 1936 total, and his general election vote was 22,000 votes below what he had received in the Democratic primary a few months earlier, indicating the possibility that many Democrats thought the Democratic ticket was a sure winner and did not go to the polls.

The other political events of the 1930-1950 period are stories of Democratic successes, though the increasing size of the Republican vote beginning in 1942 is noted in the presidential, gubernatorial, and senatorial contests as well as in the legislative races. William H. (Alfalfa Bill) Murray was elected governor in 1930 with 59 per cent of the vote, E.W. Marland in 1934 with 58.2 per cent, Leon C. Phillips in

²⁸Ibid., pp. 428-440.

1938 with 70 per cent, Robert S. Kerr in 1942 with 51.8 per cent, and Roy Turner in 1946 with 52.4 per cent. In the 1944 presidential contest Roosevelt's vote declined to 56 per cent from his high of 73 per cent in 1932. In the three senatorial contests from 1932 through 1938 the Democratic nominees won with an average percentage of 66.3 per cent; following the Republican senatorial victory in 1942, Democrat Elmer Thomas won in 1944 with 55.6 per cent of the vote. Ed Moore did not seek reelection to the senate when his term expired in 1948 and he was succeeded by Democrat Robert S. Kerr, who went on to become hailed by some as the "uncrowned king of the senate" before he died on New Year's Day, 1963.

Among the sources of disaffection with the national Democratic party in the 1940's and early 1950's were these: in 1942 there was concern over the fact that the Allied war effort was going badly; in 1946 there was resentment against continued price controls; in 1950 the disaffection reached its peak with United States entry into the highly unpopular Korean war and with the ensuing aggravation of the nation's inflation.

5. Period of political uncertainty and of more Republican successes, 1950-1962. In 1950, in the first gubernatorial election of this period, Republican nominee Jo O. Ferguson polled 48.6 per cent of the vote, the highest ever received by a Republican gubernatorial candidate up to that time. In 1952 Oklahomans cast 54.5 per cent of their votes for Eisenhower, and there followed further presidential victories in 1956 and 1960 and the Republicans' first gubernatorial victory in 1962.

But the political signs of the period were contradictory in

many respects, and that is why the period has been labeled one of political uncertainty. Despite the important Republican victories just enumerated, no Republican has been elected to a statewide office below the level of governor or senator in a contested race since 1928. At the local level, fewer Republican county officials were elected in 1958, 1960, and 1962 than at any time in Oklahoma history except for 1932.²⁹ Participation in Republican primary elections was lower in 1950-1962 than in 1922-1934; in 1962, when the first Republican governor was elected, the Republican primary vote was only 11.6 per cent that of the Democratic primary vote for governor.³⁰ The Republican congressional delegation did not increase in size in the 1950's: Republican representatives served six terms from 1940 through 1948 and the same number from 1950 through 1958. And Oklahomans still were electing a preponderance of Democrats to the state legislature, as shown by Table 6.

TABLE 6.--Number of Democrats and Republicans serving in the state legislature, 1950-1962

	House		Senate	
	Demo- crats	Repub- licans	Demo- crats	Repub- licans
1950	99	19	40	4
1952	101	22	38	6
1954	102	19	39	5
1956	101	20	40	4
1958	110	9	41	3
1960	107	14	40	4
1962	95	25	38	6

In short, by most indices commonly used to measure relative party

²⁹See Table 28 in chap. iv.

³⁰See Table 26 in chap. iv.

strength, the Republican party in Oklahoma was not shown to be improving its position with respect to the Democratic party to any appreciable degree. And yet the party scored victories in four major contests.

The reasons for the Republican successes appear to lie at least as much in what was going on outside Oklahoma, in national trends and developments, as in what was taking place within Oklahoma. Perhaps the two national developments most responsible for the change in political climate in Oklahoma and nationally, beginning about 1950, were these:

- 1) Frustration over the Korean war, "with its overtones of defeat and slight prospects of victory," and over the cold war in general.³¹
- 2) The increasing tax burden, plus the spiral of inflation that was aggravated by the Korean war.³²

"Some change in political climate" did take place nationally between the time of the Truman victory in 1948 and the Eisenhower victory in 1952, the Michigan Survey Research Center found, and the Research Center singled out the Korean war as perhaps the chief source of disaffection with the national Democratic administration throughout the early 1950's. The United States intervened in June, 1950, in the Korean war, probably the least understood war in American history. "If the personal appeal of Mr. Eisenhower is ignored for the moment," Research Center writers said in 1960, "we may say that a Democrat was kept out of the White House after 1952 as much by negative attitudes provoked

³¹Campbell, The American Voter, pp. 10-11.

³²Samuel Lubell, The Future of American Politics (2d ed. rev.; Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1956), pp. 173-178.

during the Korean action as by any other factor.³³

Inflation was equally important in contributing to the change in political climate beginning about 1950, in the view of Samuel Lubell. With fear of financial depression removed, Lubell wrote, the threat of inflation produced a changed attitude toward government aid. When depression is feared, farmers and others look to the government for help and this brings a Democratic trend; when fears of inflation are uppermost, resentment against government spending grows and this brings a Republican trend.³⁴ Lubell sees today's voting balance as hinging upon the shifting fears of these two threats, with some voters seeking a middle position by voting for a Republican president and Democratic congressmen to try to balance one party against the other.³⁵

Two sets of statistics alone appear to explain much about the change of political attitude that occurred in the 1940's and 1950's. With one set of figures V.O. Key points up the fact there were not so many have-not families to support New Deal in 1954 as there were in 1939; his figures compare the number of income units with annual incomes of \$5,000 or more in 1939 with the number earning \$5,000 or more in 1954:³⁶

1939	2.3 per cent
1954	32.0 per cent

And Samuel Lubell points up the increasing tax burden being borne by

³³Campbell, The American Voter, p. 555.

³⁴Lubell, op. cit., pp. 173-178.

³⁵Samuel Lubell, Revolt of the Moderates (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1956), p. 118.

³⁶V.O. Key, Politics, Parties, And Pressure Groups (4th ed.; New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1958), pp. 276-277.

these erstwhile champions of government spending programs with figures which compare the percentage of the federal tax burden borne by those with incomes of \$5,000 or more in 1936 with the percentage being borne by the same income group in 1952:³⁷

1936	5.0 per cent
1952	33.3 per cent

Hence there were far more persons earning \$5,000 a year or more by the early 1950's and their tax burden was much higher than it was in the 1930's.

Yet, in 1958, following a recession under Eisenhower in 1957, the Democrats registered a striking national victory in the congressional elections,³⁸ which seems to support the Lubell thesis that many Americans are uncertain as to just how much governmental activity they want or need. The effort of voters to play one party against the other in their efforts to avoid both inflation and depression adds to the political uncertainty of the period.

In Oklahoma in the 1950's a bifurcation developed as between the voting for President on the one hand and that for governor and United States senator on the other. The Republican vote for United States senator levelled off at about 44 per cent, with Republican candidates receiving 45.1 per cent of the vote in 1950, 43.6 per cent in 1954, 44.6 per cent in 1956, and 44.6 per cent in 1960. In the gubernatorial contests, Republican candidates received 41.3 per cent of the vote in 1954 and 19.9

³⁷Lubell, Revolt of the Moderates, p. 114.

³⁸Converse, op. cit., p. 273.

per cent in the Democratic landslide year of 1958, when Democratic nominee J. Howard Edmondson carried every county in the state.

But there were three successive Republican presidential victories beginning in 1952, and it is difficult at this time to assess their importance with respect to their effect upon the future course of Oklahoma politics. On the one hand, they probably broke many Oklahomans of the habit of voting the straight Democratic ticket and they unquestionably generated increased Republican party activity in the state; on the other hand, many voters did not look upon war hero Eisenhower as a "real" Republican³⁹ and the Nixon victory in 1960 unquestionably resulted from an anti-Catholic vote.

The accession of Lyndon Johnson to the presidency in November, 1963, following President Kennedy's assassination, gave promise of having a strong impact upon Oklahoma politics. The new President was well known in Oklahoma; he had been invited to come to Oklahoma City in May, 1963, to address a Democratic fund-raising dinner and to try to heal a serious Democratic party split. He was the presidential choice of the Oklahoma delegation to the 1960 Democratic party national convention. Otis Sullivant, long-time political writer for The Daily Oklahoman, made this appraisal of the new President's possible influence upon Oklahoma politics four days after Johnson took office:⁴⁰

President Johnson can't win the support of the great majority of state Democrats for the Kennedy civil rights program, but there will be less bitterness toward him than there was toward Kennedy. Johnson's liberalism also will not incite as much

³⁹Campbell, The Voter Decides, p. 64.

⁴⁰The Daily Oklahoman, November 26, 1963.

opposition among conservatives.

About three weeks later Sullivant wrote:⁴¹

The deep-seated opposition to the late President is out and, if economic conditions are good, [if] the nominee for vice president isn't too distasteful, and [if] the civil rights proposals are modified, Johnson is likely to return the state to the Democratic column for President by the normal Democratic majority of 100,000 or more.

Whether any major voter realignment is taking place in Oklahoma will be much clearer in eight or ten years than it was in 1964.

Brief Notes on the Oklahoma Political System

The Oklahoma governor's term is four years, and he is prohibited from succeeding himself immediately. The governor has been the recognized leader of the Democratic party prior to 1962, but the prohibition on his succession in office has prevented the development of durable factions. Very few Oklahoma governors have been successful in designating their successors.

Gubernatorial candidates are self-nominated for the most part. There are no political bosses, combinations of interest groups, leaders of party factions, or unofficial party associations that regularly assume the task of recruiting and backing party candidates.

Since legislative leaders and members of the congressional delegation often are able to continue in office for many years, and since they have their own sources of patronage, their influence may become highly important in the state's politics. The terms of state senators are four years and those of state representatives two years.

⁴¹Ibid., December 15, 1963.

Legislative sessions are held biennially.

Because the Republican party elected no governor until 1962 and has had relatively few other elected officials, power in that party was centered primarily in its national committeemen until very recently.

CHAPTER II

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Among the non-political factors that intrude into the political process are these: urbanization and its effect upon the state's urban-rural equation; the income and occupational status of the voters as these may affect political attitudes; the number of foreign-born, Negroes, and Catholics, whose political views might be shaped by their minority group status; and the age groupings of the electorate.

Population, Population Movement, and Urbanization

Oklahoma's population has been relatively stable since 1920. The greatest variation in state population since 1920 has been less than four hundred thousand, and Oklahoma's 1960 population exceeded its 1920 population by only three hundred thousand. Table 7 gives some of the more significant population data for Oklahoma, including the proportion of rural and urban population since 1910. Two columns are required for the urban-rural data because the Census Bureau changed its method of computing urban population after the 1940 census. Under Method 1, in use up to 1940, only persons living in incorporated towns or cities of 2,500 population or more were considered as urban residents. Under Method 2, beginning with the 1950 census, persons living in the densely settled fringes of urban centers were considered urban residents whether or not they lived

in an incorporated town or city. Under Method 1, Oklahoma became predominantly urban early in the 1950's; under Method 2, it became predominantly urban late in the 1940's.

TABLE 7.--Oklahoma population data, 1910-1960

	Total Population	Pct. Gain or Loss	Voting Age ¹ Population	Pct. Urban ² Method 1	Pct. Urban Method 2
1910	1,657,155		421,000	19.3	
1920	2,028,283	22.4	980,000	26.6	
1930	2,396,040	18.1	1,277,000	34.3	
1940	2,336,434	- 2.5	1,362,000	37.7	
1950	2,233,351	- 4.4	1,376,000	49.6	51.0
1960	2,328,284	4.3	1,416,000	61.0	62.9

These figures show that Oklahoma reached its population peak in 1930, suffered a population loss during the dust bowl days of the 1930's, then began gaining population again in the 1950's with the increasing industrialization that began during World War II. With increasing industrialization came increasing urbanization, and by 1950 Oklahoma ranked twenty-ninth in percentage of urban residents among the states of the nation.³

Table 7 points up the recency of the urbanization movement in Oklahoma, and this seems to call for caution in efforts to impute the same political impact to urbanization in Oklahoma as has been found in the older sections of the country. The United States as a whole was 45.8 per cent urban in 1910, when Oklahoma was 19.3 per cent urban; when

¹1961 Statistical Abstract, p. 360.

²1940 Statistical Abstract, p. 8; 1961 Statistical Abstract, p. 22.

³1953 Statistical Abstract, pp. 28-29.

the nation became predominantly urban in 1920,⁴ Oklahoma still was only 26.6 per cent urban. Manufacturing did not show a sharp increase in Oklahoma until about twenty years ago,⁵ and the state has been predominantly urban for only about fifteen years.

Over a longer span of time urbanization probably has greater potential for bringing about changes in traditional political party allegiances and for altering the partisan division of the vote in Oklahoma than any other socio-economic factor except wide fluctuations in income. V.O. Key wrote that urbanization "probably" will lead to "wider shifts in partisan attachment than would have been expected of the rural electorate of an earlier day," but he added that this will not occur overnight.⁶ Much evidence has been presented that party allegiances are highly durable and generally are not subject to wide fluctuations in short periods of time.

Among the more significant facts with respect to industrialization and urbanization in Oklahoma, in addition to the recency of their development, are these:

1) Recent Oklahoma population increases have been concentrated in a small number of cities or counties. Only eleven counties have shown population increases between 1940 and 1960, and the really significant increases have been confined to the state's three standard metropolitan areas of Oklahoma City, Tulsa, and Lawton. Hence, if urbanization has

⁴1940 Statistical Abstract, p. 8.

⁵Klein and Others, op. cit., p. 38.

⁶Key, Politics, Parties, and Pressure Groups, pp. 274-275.

had any significant political impact in Oklahoma, its principal effects should be noted in these three areas.

2) The largest population losses within Oklahoma between 1950 and 1960 occurred generally in the state's most rural counties. Twenty-three counties lost 20 per cent or more of their populations in this period. Since seventeen of these are strongly Democratic counties, the population movement factor appears to be operating in a manner unfavorable to the Democrats.

3) The influx of residents from outside the state has been relatively small in recent years. And, despite the fact that much is heard about the influx of executive personnel from the northern and eastern sections of the nation into Oklahoma City and Tulsa, more immigrants into those cities have come from the South than from any other section.

4) Though some degree of correlation may be found between increased Republican voting and heavier population concentrations in Oklahoma, the correlation is by no means perfect. Moreover, it seems doubtful that there is a cause-effect relationship between these two factors at this time. The traditional Republican areas of the state contain a larger number of the state's more populous counties, thus giving some seeming substance to the aforementioned correlation. The seeds of change may be there, but the development seems too recent to have altered Oklahoma voting habits appreciably by 1962.

The recency of industrialization and urbanization in Oklahoma.--

Prior to 1929 the manufacturing sector of Oklahoma's economy was relatively small, and as late as 1939 the state's manufacturing activity was centered largely around the products of its agriculture and mining.

Then, with World War II, came the aircraft industry and a sharp increase in manufacturing that continued to rise steadily until 1956, when a levelling off occurred. During this period of industrial growth the production of metal products and of oil field tools and machinery increased substantially. Among the smaller manufacturing firms, there was a marked increase in the manufacture of clothing products. The amount of industrial growth in this twenty-year period may be pictured from the fact that wage and proprietor's income from the manufacturing sector of the economy increased from \$65,000,000 in 1940 to \$442,000,000 in 1960, whereas income from the farm sector increased from \$153,000,000 to \$327,000,000.⁷

Location of Oklahoma population gains and the reasons therefor.--

Bringing in of new industries and increases in personnel at federal military installations account for most of the population increases in the eleven counties that have shown population gains since 1940. Those eleven counties and the amounts of population gains of each are shown in Table 8.

TABLE 8.--The eleven counties that have shown population gains since 1940 and the amount of gain in each

Oklahoma	195,347	Cleveland	19,872	Stephens	6,900
Tulsa	152,675	Washington	11,748	Texas	4,260
Comanche	51,815	Garfield	7,491	Kay	3,958
		Jackson	7,028	Cimarron	842

Oklahoma and Tulsa counties have registered the really significant population gains because most of the state's manufacturing activity is

⁷Klein and Others, op. cit., pp. 37-42, 83-94.

centered there, as attested by the fact that the two counties accounted for 52.5 per cent of the value added by manufacturing for the entire state in 1958.⁸ Kay county ranks third in this respect, but a rather distant third. Table 9 gives the value added by manufacturing in 1958 for the state's six leading counties:⁹

TABLE 9.--The six Oklahoma counties where value added by manufacturing was largest

Tulsa	\$240,044,000	Garfield	\$26,521,000
Oklahoma	140,253,000	Muskogee	22,315,000
Kay	53,169,000	Pottawatomie	19,982,000

Much of the population increase in Comanche county is attributable to an increase in military personnel at Fort Sill army base, and in Jackson county to the increased personnel brought in to develop the missile sites around Altus Air Force Base. Because of their high percentages of military or transient personnel, Comanche and Jackson counties were the only two counties in the state where less than 40 per cent of the eligible voters (persons over twenty-one years of age) cast ballots in the 1962 gubernatorial election. The voter turnout in Comanche county was 25.9 per cent and that in Jackson county was 28.6 per cent.¹⁰ Cleveland county is the site of the University of Oklahoma, and some of its recent growth is attributable to the fact that university students recently have been included in the census count of the county in which they attend school; some of the remainder is owing to the county's proximity to the military and manufacturing establishments in adjacent Oklahoma county.

⁸Ibid., p. 94.

⁹Ibid., p. 88.

¹⁰University of Oklahoma Bureau, op. cit., p. 106.

For the state as a whole, increases in births over deaths and increases in military personnel are the two principal reasons why Oklahoma gained rather than lost population between 1950 and 1960, according to a study made by Dr. James D. Tarver of Oklahoma State University. He found that only four counties, Oklahoma, Tulsa, Comanche, and Jackson, attracted more civilian migrants than they lost by emigration.¹¹

Location of Oklahoma population losses.--Of the twenty-three counties that lost 20 per cent or more of their populations between 1950 and 1960, twelve are 100 per cent rural farm or rural non-farm and all but two are more than 50 per cent rural farm or rural non-farm.¹² Hence they are predominantly agricultural counties with little or no manufacturing, and their young residents are leaving to seek job opportunities. These counties, and the percentages of population loss of each, are listed in Table 10.

TABLE 10.--Percentage population declines of the counties showing the largest population losses

Haskell	31.5	Atoka	27.5	Major	24.0
Coal	31.2	Hughes	26.7	Choctaw	23.4
Dewey	31.2	Jefferson	26.3	Grant	22.2
Roger Mills	31.2	Ellis	25.5	Kiowa	21.7
Seminole	31.0	Greer	24.4	Cotton	21.1
Okfuskee	30.9	Pushmataha	24.3	Alfalfa	21.1
McIntosh	30.6	Love	24.1	Latimer	20.1
Harmon	27.6			Pawnee	20.1

The exodus of young persons from the rural areas and from the state,

¹¹James D. Tarver, County Population Trends in Oklahoma, 1950-1959 (Stillwater, Okla.: Experiment Station, Oklahoma State University, Processed Series P-351, May, 1960), pp. 3, 9-13.

¹²Census Bureau, Oklahoma Social and Economic Characteristics (1960), pp. 141-142.

coupled with a proportionate increase in numbers of the over-sixty-five age group, has been recognized as one of the state's main problems in recent political campaigns. Asked to point out Oklahoma's biggest problem at the outset of the 1962 general election campaign, Steve Stahl, executive vice president of the Oklahoma Public Expenditures Council, a private organization that serves as a watchdog of state expenditures, wrote:¹³

We believe Oklahoma's biggest problem can be best expressed in a headline which would read: Oklahoma Loses 178,000 Workers.

That is the number of wealth-producing, tax-paying citizens between the ages of 20 and 44 Oklahoma lost from 1930 to 1960, according to U.S. Census reports.

Our loss in this age group from 1950 to 1960 was 77,700, although the state's total population showed a gain of 94,933. A continuation of this trend would be disastrous. It simply means that year after year the burden of caring for more aged people and educating more children will fall on fewer and fewer shoulders.

Immigration from other states.--The influx of residents from other states in recent years does not appear to be large enough to alter appreciably the political complexion of the localities in which they settle. Census data show that 27,411 persons living in the city of Tulsa in 1960 were living in a different state or abroad in 1955; the number of such Oklahoma City residents was only 2,189.¹⁴ Of the Tulsa immigrants, 10,187 came from the South; 9,398 came from the north central states; 4,909 from the West; 1,582 from abroad; and 1,335 from the Northeast. Of the Oklahoma City immigrants, 916 came from the South; 462 from the

¹³Sapulpa Daily Herald, August 16, 1962.

¹⁴U.S., Bureau of the Census, Oklahoma: Detailed Population Characteristics: 1960, pp. 281-282.

north central states; 437 from the West; 297 from abroad; and 77 from the Northeast. Hence the influx of out-of-state residents does not appear to be so much from the dominantly Republican areas of the nation as is often assumed. More is heard about the executive personnel brought in by the large manufacturing firms, but they are outnumbered by the less heralded influx from neighboring southern states.

The influx of residents over a longer period of time also shows that a larger number have come to Oklahoma from the South than from any other region. A total of 889,891 Oklahoma residents in 1960 either were born in another state or their place of residence was not reported. Of these, 417,012 were born in the South; 282,726 in the north central states; 59,874 in the West; 30,827 in the Northeast; 5,039 were born abroad or at sea of native parents; 1,136 in the outlying possessions of the United States; 20,003 were foreign-born; and the place of birth of 73,274 was not reported.¹⁵

The city and the suburb in Oklahoma.--Most new residents of Oklahoma's three standard metropolitan areas of Oklahoma City, Tulsa, and Lawton are settling in these cities rather than in the suburban areas around them, though there has been a fairly substantial growth around Oklahoma City and Lawton. The Oklahoma City metropolitan area comprises Oklahoma, Cleveland, and Canadian counties; the Tulsa area includes Tulsa, Creek, and Osage counties; the Lawton area comprises Comanche county only. The relative growth of these principal cities and of the suburban areas around them is shown by the data in Table 11.¹⁶

¹⁵Ibid., pp. 175-190.

¹⁶1961 Statistical Abstract, pp. 14-19.

TABLE 11.--Percentage increases in population of the central cities and suburbs of Oklahoma's three standard metropolitan areas, 1950-1960

Metropolitan Area	Pct. Gain, Central City	Pct. Gain, Suburbs
Oklahoma City	33.2	25.9
Tulsa	43.2	8.4
Lawton	77.5	42.6

Oklahoma's principal cities do not fit the classic pattern described as existing in the North, where the central city is overwhelmingly Democratic and the suburban areas around them overwhelmingly Republican. Rather, Oklahoma City and Tulsa appear to follow more the pattern found in the South, where the cities are potential sources of Republican growth. Among the points of similarity between Oklahoma's principal cities and those of the South are these: (1) They have only moderately active labor union movements by comparison with those in many northern cities. In 1962 there were approximately 18,000 to 19,000 union members in Oklahoma county and 21,000 in Tulsa county; the total union membership in the state is about 75,000.¹⁷ (2) They have small numbers of foreign-born residents or ethnic minorities that might be expected to support liberal or Democratic causes. Oklahoma City had a foreign-born population of 1.1 per cent in 1960, and only 3.4 per cent of its population was born of foreign or mixed parentage; the comparable figures for Tulsa were 1 and 3.3 per cent.¹⁸ (3) Though there have been modest industrial gains in Oklahoma's two principal cities, they are not smoke-

¹⁷Interview with Len Yarborough, vice president of the Oklahoma AFL-CIO, July 26, 1962.

¹⁸Census Bureau, Oklahoma Social and Economic Characteristics: 1960, p. 139.

blackened, slum-ridden metropolises where the more successful residents are pushing pell-mell into the suburbs and leaving the less successful behind in the cities. Hence there is not the political cleavage between city and suburb in Oklahoma that exists in some northern cities.

Does Republican voting increase as county populations increase in Oklahoma?--In a paper analyzing the 1962 Oklahoma gubernatorial election, Dr. Harry Holloway of the University of Oklahoma wrote that he found a "neat linear correspondence of size of county and Republican vote" in all the gubernatorial and presidential elections since 1950.¹⁹ After classifying the state's seventy-seven counties into five population categories, then computing the average Republican percentage of the vote in the elections mentioned, he reported that the Republican percentage of the total vote increased as county populations increased in all but one category of counties. Only the middle (third) category of counties did not fit the pattern of a steadily higher Republican vote as the sizes of the counties increased. His findings were shown in the following table.

County Categories By Population	Average Republican Percentage of Vote, Gubernatorial	Republican Percentage, Presidential
1. 100,000 or more population two counties	48.5	61.5
2. 50,000--99,999 four counties	42.5	58.8
3. 25,000--49,999 nineteen counties	33.6	49.4
4. 10,000--24,999 thirty-two counties	39.8	55.4
5. Less than 10,000 twenty counties	36.6	53.3

¹⁹Harry Holloway, "Oklahoma Goes Republican: Emergence of a Party or a Non-Party Vote?" (Mimeographed, 1963), pp. 9-10.

The question is whether there is a cause-effect relationship between the two variables of size of county and size of Republican vote, or whether the data constitute simply a description of the fact that the populations of the counties that normally return Republican majorities are generally larger than the populations of the counties that normally return Democratic majorities.

An analysis of the past voting records of the individual counties that are included in the five population categories listed in the foregoing table appears to lead to the conclusion that no cause-effect relationship exists. Each of Oklahoma's counties was classified as Democratic or Republican on the basis of its past voting record, by a process that will be described in Chapter III. Table 12 shows the number of Democratic and Republican counties that are included in the last four population categories in the Holloway table; the ratio of Democratic to Republican counties in each category also is given.

TABLE 12.--The number of Democratic and Republican counties in each category of counties classified according to population.

	Democratic Counties	Republican Counties	Democratic to Republican ratio
2. 50,000--99,999 four counties	2	2	2 -- 2
3. 25,000--49,999 nineteen	15	4	7.5 -- 2
4. 10,000--24,999 thirty-two	20	12	3.3 -- 2
5. Less than 10,000 twenty	13	7	3.7 -- 2

The data in Table 12 show that the largest ratio of Democratic counties to Republican counties is found in Category 3 of the Holloway table, the category in which the Republican vote is the smallest; the next

highest Democratic ratio is found in Category 5, where the Republican vote is next smallest. The most favorable Republican ratio is found in Category 2, where the Republican vote is second highest. Category 1 in the Holloway table includes only two counties: Tulsa county, which is strongly Republican, and Oklahoma county, where the voting has been very evenly divided in recent years; hence the Republican ratio is higher here than in Category 2. In other words, party allegiances, as demonstrated by the past voting records of the residents of the various counties, appears to be the critical factor in understanding the voting behavior in these counties.

Size of county population (urbanization) does not appear to be playing a critical role as yet in influencing the voting behavior of the residents of the various counties. Party allegiances appear to be holding quite firm in the more populous counties in the face of the increasing industrialization and urbanization of the last twenty years. Table 13 shows the Republican percentage of the total vote in Oklahoma's twelve most populous counties in all the gubernatorial contests since 1942. The counties are listed in order of size, with the largest county first. The last column gives the voting tradition of each county, with the strongly Democratic counties shown as St. Demo, The Democratic-oriented counties as Demo-or., the Strongly Republican counties as St. Rep., and the Republican-oriented counties as Rep-or.

TABLE 13.--Republican percentage of the total vote in the gubernatorial contests, 1942-1962, in the most populous counties

County	1942	1946	1950	1954	1958	1962	Tradition
Oklahoma	44.8	50.0	56.0	46.8	20.8	58.2	Swing
Tulsa	62.7	66.6	65.4	53.3	21.3	65.3	St. Rep.
Comanche	32.0	32.1	36.4	27.3	7.8	42.0	St. Demo
Muskogee	42.6	39.3	44.3	32.1	13.4	45.4	St. Demo
Garfield	68.5	66.9	64.7	63.0	27.6	71.8	St. Rep.
May	58.4	62.0	57.8	53.7	24.4	67.6	St. Rep.
Cleveland	38.7	40.7	51.8	39.1	16.4	53.1	Demo-or.
Payne	52.7	50.7	52.3	46.9	23.8	60.0	Rep.-or.
Washington	56.8	61.6	62.8	57.5	25.0	69.2	St. Rep.
Pottawatomie	44.4	43.9	42.9	35.4	14.1	51.6	Demo-or.
Creek	54.7	53.7	52.2	39.9	20.5	53.2	Rep.-or.
Carter	23.9	22.2	29.4	23.2	8.5	42.3	St. Demo

The foreign-born.--Oklahoma never has had a large foreign-born population; they totalled only 3.9 per cent of the total population in 1900²⁰ and nine-tenths of 1 per cent in 1960; second-generation foreign stock totalled only 3 per cent in 1960.²¹ The political impact of the foreign stock population is slight not only because of their small numbers, but also because they are widely distributed throughout the state. Only three counties had more than 10 per cent foreign populations in 1960: Major, with 13.6 per cent; Ellis, 10.7; and Kingfisher, 10. Most counties with foreign populations of 7 per cent or more are wheat belt counties in the north central and northwestern sections of the state. A number of Syrians and members of other nationality groups have played or are playing important roles in politics, but they perform these roles as individuals rather than as leaders of ethnic blocs.

²⁰1905 Statistical Abstract, pp. 45-46.

²¹Census Bureau, Oklahoma Social and Economic Characteristics: 1960, p. 141.

The Negroes.--Negroes constituted 6.6 per cent of Oklahoma's total population in 1960, and their number has been fairly constant throughout the state's history.²² They made up 8.4 per cent of the population in 1890, and that mark has not been exceeded since.

One fact that distinguishes Oklahoma political history from that of other southern and border states is that the only slavery that ever existed in the state was on Indian plantations in Indian Territory. Hence there is no body of white descendants of former slave owners to constitute a political force in the state.

There is some feeling against Negroes among some residents of southern Oklahoma counties that have larger than average Negro populations. Among the counties with more than 20 per cent non-white populations are McCurtain, with 25.4 per cent; McIntosh, 24.2; Choctaw, 23.3; and Muskogee, 22.3. However, there was no Little Rock or Birmingham-type crisis in Oklahoma following the 1954 supreme court decision ordering school integration. Both Governors Johnston Murray and Raymond Gary handled the integration issue with skill and without ostentation.²³ On April 5, 1955, Oklahomans approved a legislative referendum to erase the constitutional provision calling for separate financing of Negro and white schools by a vote of 231,097 to 73,921. By 1963 integration of schools had been accomplished in all but portions of the southeastern section of the state.²⁴

²²Census Bureau, Oklahoma General Population Characteristics: 1960, p. 31.

²³Allan A. Saxe, "The Early Development of State Policy on Desegregation of Public Schools in Oklahoma" (unpublished master's thesis, Department of Government, University of Oklahoma, 1963).

²⁴Jack Dodson, "The Extent and Pattern of Segregation in Oklahoma's Public Schools" (Mimeographed, 1963).

Religious groups.--One fact alone demonstrates the important role that religious affiliation has played in Oklahoma politics: the Democratic percentage of the vote for President in Oklahoma has exceeded that for the nation as a whole in every election except the two in which Catholic nominees represented the Democratic party. Table 14 gives the Oklahoma and the national percentage of the Democratic vote for all the presidential elections.

TABLE 14.--Democratic percentage of the total vote for President in Oklahoma compared with that of the nation, 1908-1960

Year	National Per Cent	Oklahoma Per Cent	Year	National Per Cent	Oklahoma Per Cent
1908	43.17	48.1	1936	62.45	66.8
1912	41.91	46.9	1940	54.98	57.4
1916	49.42	50.6	1944	53.77	55.5
1920	34.3	44.5	1948	49.8	62.7
1924	28.98	48.4	1952	44.67	45.4
1928	41.24	35.4	1956	42.25	44.8
1932	59.14	73.2	1960	50.08	40.9

Only in 1928, when Alfred E. Smith was the Democratic nominee, and in 1960, when John F. Kennedy headed the Democratic ticket, did Oklahoma fail to return a larger Democratic vote than the nation as a whole. Oklahoma is not only overwhelmingly Protestant, but it is also predominantly Southern Baptist, and anti-Catholic preachments are not uncommon.

Oklahoma is 91.4 per cent Protestant, with 863,551 members of Protestant faiths as against 80,132 Roman Catholic parishioners and 3,971 members of the Jewish faith.²⁵ Slightly more than 70 per cent

²⁵Bureau of Research and Survey, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA, Churches and Church Membership in the United States: An Enumeration and Analysis by Counties, States, and Regions (3 vols.; New York City: By the Council, 1956), I, Issue No. 2, Series A, Table 2.

of the total church membership of all faiths is Southern Baptist and Methodist, with Baptists outnumbering Methodists by about two to one. The percentage of membership of the leading faiths to total Oklahoma church membership is given in Table 15.²⁶

TABLE 15.--Percentage of membership of largest Oklahoma church denominations to total church membership in the state

Southern Baptist	46.2
Methodist.	23.9
Disciples of Christ.	11.5
Roman Catholic	8.5
Presbyterian	4.2
Assemblies of God.	3.6
All Others	2.1

Baptists predominate in sixty of the state's seventy-seven counties, Methodists in thirteen, and Disciples of Christ in four.²⁷ Methodists outnumber members of other faiths in these counties: Alfalfa, Blaine, Canadian, Cimarron, Custer, Ellis, Grant, Harper, Major, Nowata, Texas, Woods, and Woodward; most of these counties are in the northwest section of the state, where Republicans also predominate. Disciples of Christ predominate in Dewey, Garfield, Kingfisher, and Noble counties. The Southern Baptists are especially predominant in the southern and north-eastern sections of the state, where Democrats predominate.

Church leaders played prominent roles in the 1924 United States senate race between J.C. Walton and W.B. Pine, as well as in the 1928 and 1960 presidential contests. They also constituted the leadership of the United Drys organization which fought the repeal of prohibition

²⁶Ibid., III, Issue No. 7, Series B, Table 12.

²⁷Ibid., III, Issue No. 46, Series C, Table 102; and Issue No. 47, Series C, Table 103.

in 1959. Southern Baptists constituted a large segment of the following of "Baptist Bob" Kerr and of former Governor Gary, both prominent Baptist lay leaders.

The young and the aged.--Oklahoma's young men and women have been declining in numbers in recent years, while its population of older residents has been growing, as shown by the following census data:²⁸

	1930	1940	1960
Age 20-44	890,633	868,485	712,000
Over 65	96,888	144,229	249,000

As a voting bloc, at least the more vocal and politically active young persons in Oklahoma are believed by many to be predominantly conservative and Republican. Several Republican leaders said more young persons were seen at Republican rallies than at Democratic rallies during the 1962 election campaign, and several Democratic leaders expressed the view that more must be done to attract young people to the party. If the more politically active young persons appear to be predominantly Republican, one possible explanation might be that there is more room for recognition and for active roles in the Republican party in Oklahoma because of the much smaller number of Republican registered voters. An article in the Daily Oklahoman put it this way:²⁹

Since the Democratic party has long ruled in Oklahoma, party workers and state employees from precinct chairmen and clerks on up are, for the most part, long-time job holders.

²⁸1941 Statistical Abstract, pp. 42-43; 1961 Statistical Abstract, p. 29.

²⁹The Daily Oklahoman, January 20, 1963.

This doesn't leave much room at the bottom--or at the top
--for members of the Young Democrats who want to participate
actively in party work.

The concept of the "political generation" has been used by some to explain differences in voting behavior between younger and older people.³⁰

In the 1930's young voters were predominantly Democratic, it is said, because they shared the distress of the Great Depression; in the 1950's they were more likely to be Republican because they shared the frustrations of the Korean war. The University of Michigan Survey Research Center found that the vote of the newly eligible electors "differed only negligibly from that of the nation as a whole" in the 1960 presidential election.³¹

As to Oklahoma's aged, the number of residents over sixty-five years of age has grown to the point where Oklahoma ranked eleventh in the nation in 1960 in the percentage of persons over sixty-five to the total population.³² The United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare has forecast that Oklahoma will rank seventh in this respect in 1970.³³ Generally the counties with the largest amount of manufacturing and hence of job opportunities, plus those with large military bases, have the smallest number of residents aged sixty-five or more.

Because the revenue from Oklahoma's 2 per cent sales tax is earmarked for welfare purposes, the state's more than 85,000 old age assistance

³⁰Robert K. Carr, Marver H. Bernstein, and Walter F. Murphy, American Democracy in Theory and Practice (4th ed.; New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1963), p. 269.

³¹Converse, op. cit., p. 272.

³²Family Life Institute, Extension Division, University of Oklahoma, Aging in Oklahoma (October, 1961), p. 5.

³³Ibid., July, 1962, p. 6.

recipients have become an important voting bloc with a vested interest in maintaining the welfare status quo. Undoubtedly they are predominantly Democratic.

Population differentials between eastern and western Oklahoma.--

Climatic variations explain why western Oklahoma is primarily agrarian and sparsely populated, while eastern Oklahoma is more densely populated and industrialized. Western Oklahoma has the most productive soil, but rainfall is lightest and evaporation is heaviest there. Hence, in 1950 that portion of Oklahoma "lying west of the thirty-inch annual mean precipitation line (43 per cent of the state's land area) possessed only 22.8 per cent of the state's population, 17.8 per cent of its urban population, and 17.5 per cent of its manufacturing employment, but accounted for approximately 61 per cent of the state's cash farm income."³⁴ The area west of the thirty-inch annual mean precipitation line comprises those counties west of Kay, Noble, Logan, Oklahoma, Grady, Stephens, and Jefferson counties, which lie roughly in the center of the state. Political campaigning is heavier in the central and eastern sections of the state, where the heavier population concentrations are. Map II shows the density of population per square mile for each of the counties in the state³⁵ and the location of the state's three standard metropolitan areas.

General Economic Characteristics

The three sectors of the economy which contributed most to

³⁴Klein and Others, op. cit., p. 17.

³⁵U.S., Bureau of the Census, County and City Data Book: A Statistical Abstract Supplement: 1962, pp. 292, 302.

A map of Oklahoma showing its 77 counties. Each county is labeled with a number and its name. The counties are arranged in a grid-like pattern, with some irregularities in shape. The numbers are placed within the county boundaries, and the names are placed around the boundaries. The map is bordered by Kansas to the north, Missouri to the east, Arkansas to the south, and Texas to the southwest. The number 57 is written vertically on the right side of the map.

County Name	Number
Adair	23
Alfalfa	10
Atoka	11
Beaver	4
Beckham	20
Blaine	13
Bryan	27
Boothe	14
Butler	18
Caddo	23
Carter	47
Cherokee	24
Cherokee	20
Cherokee	14
Cimarron	28
Cleveland	87
Coffey	19
Comanche	84
Concho	20
Cotton	13
Craig	21
Creek	14
Custer	21
Delaware	19
DeWey	6
Ellis	5
Garfield	50
Garvin	35
Grant	8
Grady	27
Greene	14
Harmon	11
Haskell	11
Haskell	19
Haskell	15
Haskell	75
Haskell	28
Haskell	42
Haskell	64
Haskell	18
Haskell	54
Haskell	19
Haskell	21
Haskell	61
Haskell	30
Haskell	29
Haskell	100
Haskell	105
Haskell	53
Haskell	17
Haskell	25
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Haskell	100
Haskell	105
Haskell	53
Haskell	17

TEXAS

Oklahoma's total personal income in 1929, in order, were: agriculture, retail and wholesale trade, and mining (particularly oil and natural gas). In 1960 the chief producers of personal income, in order, were: trade, government, and manufacturing. The major changes in the Oklahoma economy, then, have been a shift in primacy from agriculture and mining to government employment and manufacturing as sources of employment and producers of income.³⁶ The growth of retail and wholesale trade has tended to reflect the general well-being of the state's economy rather than being a determinant of it.

Expansion of federal civilian payrolls during the depression was the immediate cause of the increase in the relative importance of government as a source of employment in Oklahoma. Federal, state, and local government payrolls have continued to expand since the 1930's, to the point where they contributed 23.8 per cent of the state's total income in 1960.³⁷ The importance of federal installations to the state's economy can hardly be overestimated. Four members of the Oklahoma State University department of economics reported:³⁸

The federal government [alone] employs almost as many people as the state's leading private business--the oil industry.

The largest single employer in Oklahoma is Oklahoma City Air Materiel Area (Tinker Air Force Base), located in southeast Oklahoma City, which employed 18,529 persons from twenty-four counties in 1960; its payroll in 1963 was \$145,000,000 a year.³⁹ The Veterans Administration regional

³⁶Klein and Others, op. cit., pp. 38-42, 108.

³⁷Ibid., p. 95. ³⁸Ibid., p. 104.

³⁹The Daily Oklahoman, October 9, 1963.

office and hospital provides the largest payroll in Muskogee county, and the various army and air force bases in the state provide the largest payrolls in most counties where they are located. The importance of these installations to the state's economy was pointed up by the following editorial in the Oklahoma City Times:⁴⁰

The map of population changes [in Oklahoma between 1950 and 1960] . . . is a sober reminder of how much Oklahoma's prosperity in recent years has depended upon military installations and defense contracts. With the possible exception of Washington county, any [county] showing a census gain of 10 per cent or more either has a major defense installation or is right next door to one. In a state where sentiment is against centralization in Washington and federal spending in general, this situation should give pause.

In 1960 there were 42,000 federal civilian employees in Oklahoma, 29,000 state government employees, and 60,000 local government employees.⁴¹

The rise of the manufacturing sector of the state's economy, with its sharp increase at the beginning of World War II, was discussed earlier. In 1960 manufacturing contributed 13.2 per cent of the state's civilian income and accounted for approximately 10 per cent of the labor force.⁴²

Though agriculture still constitutes a major sector of Oklahoma's economy, it dropped from first place as a contributor to personal income in 1929 to fifth place in 1960; its contribution declined from 22.2 to 9.7 per cent.⁴³ Leading agricultural products, in order, are: cattle, wheat, cotton, and dairy products. The leading wheat counties are in the north central and northwestern sections of the state, where Republicans predominate, and the leading cotton counties are in the southwestern

⁴⁰Oklahoma City Times, May 8, 1963.

⁴¹Klein and Others, op. cit., p. 104. ⁴²Ibid., pp. 83, 94.

⁴³Ibid., p. 38.

section, where Democrats are in the majority.

Mining provided employment for approximately 45,000 persons in 1960, down from a peak of 53,000 in 1956.⁴⁴ The leading mineral products are oil and natural gas, which account for more than 93 per cent of the total value of minerals extracted. Though mining furnishes less than 8 per cent of the state's non-farm wage and salary employment, the industry is a large source of employment in particular counties, such as Washington, Seminole, Osage, Nowata, Garvin, and Carter.

Overall, the Oklahoma economy ranks roughly in the third quartile of states, according to selected economic indices, as shown in Table 16, which gives Oklahoma's national ranking as to each.⁴⁵

TABLE 16.--Oklahoma's national ranking as to selected economic and population characteristics

Total population	27
Per Capita Income	37
Manufacturing:	
Number of employees	34
Value added by manufacture	32
Farming:	
Cash receipts	18
Farm value per acre	37
Trade:	
Retail sales	27
Wholesale sales	26

If the top twelve states are regarded as constituting the first quartile, the next thirteen states the second, the next twelve the third, and the

⁴⁴Ibid., pp. 58, 62.

⁴⁵1961 Statistical Abstract.

bottom thirteen states the fourth quartile, then the third quartile of states would be those that ranked from twenty-sixth through thirty-seventh according to the various indices. Oklahoma's economy thus is seen to rank below the national average, but not among the lowest one-fourth of all the states.

Per capita personal income and median family income by counties.--

Oklahoma per capita personal income in 1960 was \$1,848, or 83.1 per cent that of the nation as a whole. In 1941, just prior to World War II, it was only 60.4 per cent that of the nation as a whole because of industrial underdevelopment. Then, with the industrial growth that came with the war, the state's personal income rose more rapidly than that of the nation from 1942 until the end of the war. Since that time Oklahoma has increased its personal income relative to that of the nation, but at a lesser rate than during the war.⁴⁶ In 1960 Oklahoma ranked thirty-seventh in the nation in this respect.

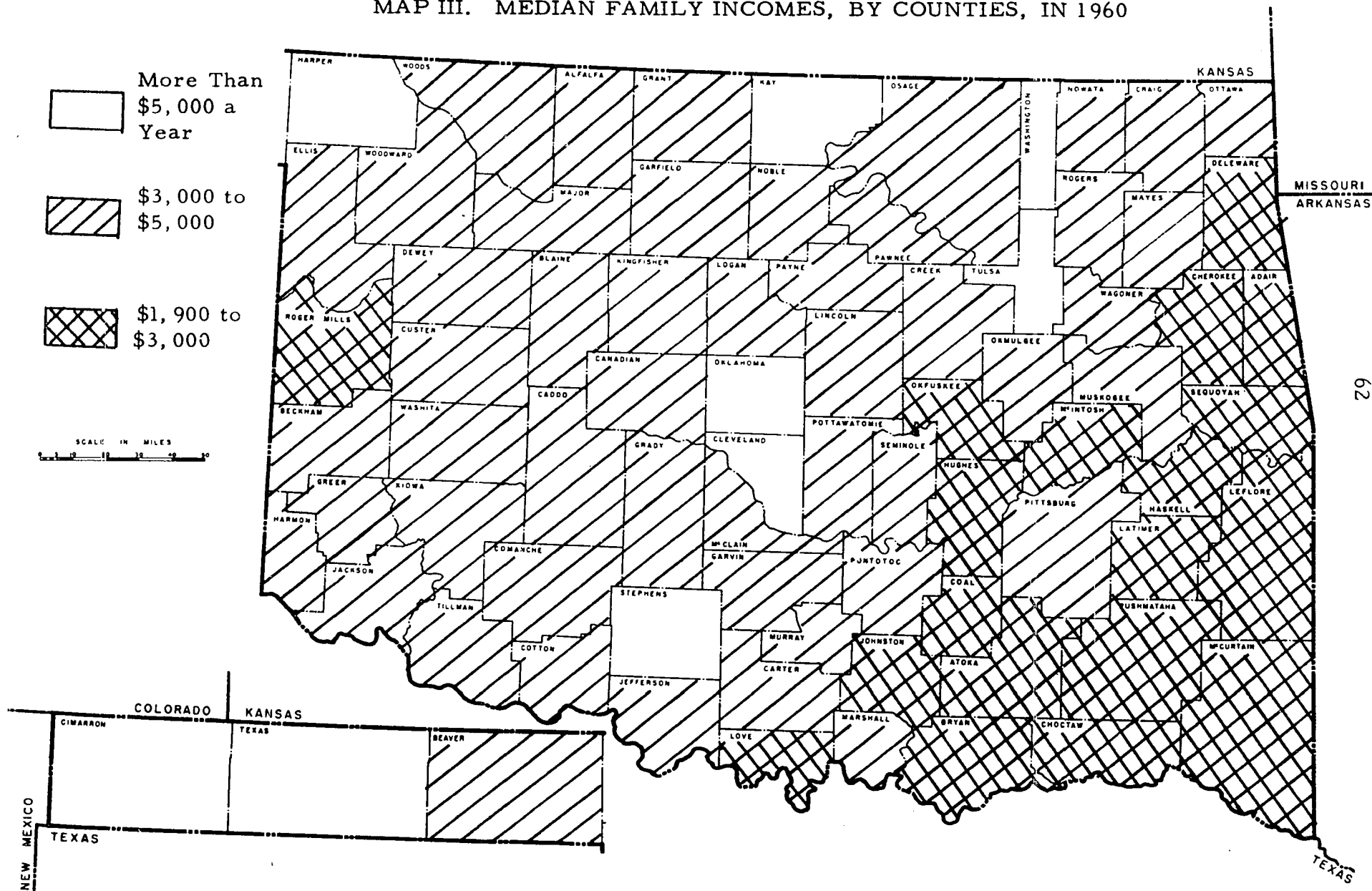
The state's highest income counties are scattered, while its areas of lowest income are relatively concentrated in southeastern Oklahoma and along the eastern border. Map III shows the median family incomes of each county, classified according to whether the median income is from \$1,900 to \$3,000, from \$3,000 to \$5,000, or over \$5,000.⁴⁷ They range from a low of \$1,919 in Adair county to a high of \$6,279 in Washington county.

Since there is relatively little industry in the areas of lowest

⁴⁶Klein and Others, op. cit., pp. 5-9.

⁴⁷Census Bureau, Oklahoma Social and Economic Characteristics: 1960, pp. 142-143.

MAP III. MEDIAN FAMILY INCOMES, BY COUNTIES, IN 1960



income, there is a rather close correlation between low farm incomes and low median incomes there. Eastern Oklahoma has the highest rainfall, but the lowest soil fertility. In addition, average farm sizes are lowest in eastern Oklahoma; Adair county has the smallest average farm size, 137.6 acres. The fact that Roger Mills county is the lowest income county in western Oklahoma is explained in part by the fact that it has the lowest non-farm employment in the state; 62.2 per cent of its residents are employed in agriculture.⁴⁸

Location of the highest income counties is explained generally by the presence of industry, high soil fertility, larger average farm sizes, or deposits of oil and gas. Western Oklahoma has the lightest rainfall but the highest soil fertility in the state. The average farm size in Cimarron county is 2,001 acres.

The highest income counties.--Counties that have median family incomes of more than \$5,000 a year are Tulsa and Washington, in northeastern Oklahoma; Kay, in north central; Cimarron, Harper, and Texas, in the northwest; Oklahoma and Cleveland, in central Oklahoma; and Stephens, in the south central or southwest. If the classification of highest income counties were begun at \$4,500 instead of \$5,000, they still would be rather widely scattered over the state, but a slightly stronger concentration of northern tier counties would emerge; Republicans predominate in the north central and northwestern sections of the state. The counties that would be added to the highest income classification would be Beaver, Canadian, Comanche, Garfield, Osage, and Woodward.

⁴⁸Klein and Others, op. cit., p. 55.

Two economic factors alone appear to go far toward explaining why the nine counties first mentioned have median family incomes of more than \$5,000 a year: (1) the dollar average value of all farm products sold per farm and (2) the number of manufacturing wage earners. Only Cleveland county does not appear among the top ten in one of these two respects, but this is explained by the fact that many Cleveland county residents work in Oklahoma county. Table 17 shows the ten leading Oklahoma counties in each of these two categories, with the counties ranked in order in the two listings.

TABLE 17.--Leading manufacturing and agricultural counties in Oklahoma according to selected indices

Value of Farm Products Sold ⁴⁹ Per Farm in 1954		Number of Manufacturing Wage ⁵⁰ Earners	
1. Cimarron	6. Grant	1. Tulsa	6. Okmulgee
2. Texas	7. Woods	2. Oklahoma	7. Garfield
3. Alfalfa	8. Jackson	3. Kay	8. Ottawa
4. Tillman	9. Harmon	4. Muskogee	9. Stephens
5. Harper	10. Kingfisher	5. Pottawatomie	10. Washington

Of the nine highest income counties, four are strongly Republican and three are Republican-oriented in their voting; one is strongly Democratic and one is Democratic-oriented.

High income undoubtedly has played an important role as a factor that has reinforced the Republican proclivities or traditions of the residents of these high income counties. But it seems doubtful that the income factor can be called the determinative factor. For an examination of Map III shows that median family incomes are between \$3,000 and \$5,000

⁴⁹Ibid., p. 53.

⁵⁰Ibid., p. 88.

in nearly all the counties of western Oklahoma; yet the northwestern counties are predominantly Republican and the southwestern counties are predominantly Democratic. There is some disparity in median incomes as between the northern and southern counties in western Oklahoma, but the disparity is hardly wide enough to be determinative of the divergent voting traditions as between the northern and southern counties. Table 18 shows the median family incomes by counties of the northwestern Republican counties and of the southwestern Democratic counties.

TABLE 18.--Median family incomes in the Democratic and Republican counties of western Oklahoma

Normally Republican			Normally Democratic		
Alfalfa \$4,406	Harper \$5,113	Beckham \$3,821	Jackson \$4,120		
Blaine 3,527	Kingfisher 4,053	Comanche 4,624	Kiowa 3,658		
Ellis 4,164	Major 3,681	Cotton 3,130	Roger Mills 2,976		
Garfield 4,893	Woods 4,413	Grady 3,895	Stephens 5,039		
Grant 4,237	Woodward 4,814	Greer 3,358	Tillman 3,330		
		Harmon 3,693			

Though Major county is regarded as the strongest Republican county in Oklahoma, its median income is lower than that of a majority of the Democratic counties. Major county is the only Oklahoma county that returned a Republican majority in the 1936 presidential election, it is one of only two counties in which Republican voter registrations outnumber Democratic registrations, and its 80.3 per cent Republican majority in the 1962 gubernatorial election was the highest in the state. Strongly Republican Kingfisher county is separated by one county from strongly Democratic Grady county, and the Kingfisher median family income is only \$158 a year higher than the Grady county median income.

It appears that primacy must be given to party allegiances, or

past voting traditions, as the determinant of the vote in most elections. Short-run economic and other factors may override party allegiances and cause some heavy switch voting in some elections; this occurred in 1948, when fear of an economic downturn apparently caused many residents of the northwestern counties to vote for Harry Truman. But, since 1907, residents of the northwestern counties have been quite constant in their Republican voting and those of the southwestern counties equally constant in their Democratic ways.

The low income counties.--Of the nineteen counties where median family incomes are less than \$3,000 a year, eighteen are in southeastern Oklahoma or along the eastern border. The major activity in these counties is agriculture, along with lumbering in the eastern border counties. Soil fertility is low and average farm sizes are small. Table 19 lists the twenty-one counties where the average value of all farm products sold per farm in 1954 and 1959 was the lowest among the state's seventy-seven counties; the counties are ranked in order.⁵¹

TABLE 19.--Oklahoma counties where the value of all farm products sold per farm in 1954 and 1959 was lowest

Rank	County	Rank	County	Rank	County
57.	Delaware	64.	Lincoln	71.	Seminole
58.	Pottawatomie	65.	Atoka	72.	Sequoyah
59.	McIntosh	66.	Okfuskee	73.	Cherokee
60.	Hughes	67.	LeFlore	74.	Latimer
61.	Pittsburg	68.	Adair	75.	Creek
62.	Haskell	69.	Okmulgee	76.	McCurtain
63.	Carter	70.	Choctaw	77.	Pushmataha

All but five of the counties with the lowest median family incomes are

⁵¹Ibid., pp. 53-54.

included in this listing. The seven higher income counties included in the listing of course benefit from such non-agricultural producers of income as industry and mining.

Naturally there is a close parallel between the areas where incomes are lowest and those where public assistance rolls are highest.

There are frequent references to Oklahoma as "the number one welfare state in the United States" because it leads all other states in per capita expenditures for welfare purposes, and the cost of public assistance to the needy is a continuing issue in Oklahoma politics.

Map IV shows the counties with the largest number of public assistance recipients, with the counties classified according to those in which public assistance is received by 20.2 per cent or more of the population, from 11.2 to 20.1 per cent, and less than 11.2 per cent.⁵² It shows that more than 20 per cent of the population received assistance in these four counties: Adair, Choctaw, McCurtain, and Sequoyah. More than 11.2 per cent receive assistance in twenty-six other counties.

The scope of the Oklahoma welfare problem was set forth in the first of a series of articles in the Tulsa World in 1963:⁵³

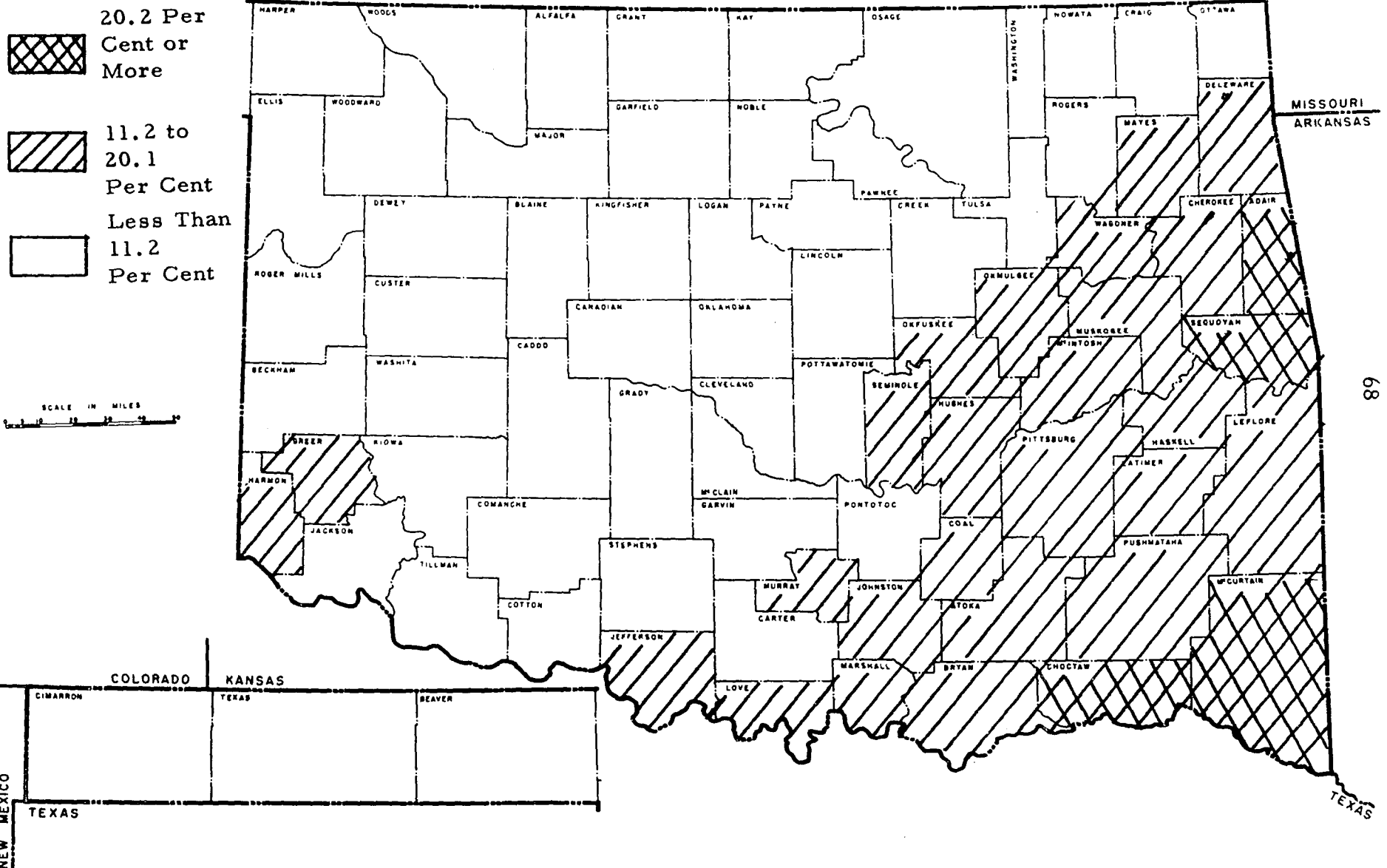
More than one of every 13 persons in Oklahoma receives state assistance. It takes about one of every three state tax dollars to support them.

All told their ranks last year averaged 181,316 each month. During the year the state spent more than \$55 million on welfare and the federal government provided an additional \$88 million.

⁵²Tulsa World, February 6, 1963.

⁵³Ibid., January 27, 1963.

MAP IV. COUNTIES WITH LARGEST NUMBERS OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE RECIPIENTS



The 181,316 Oklahomans who received welfare last year did not include an additional 126,235 people in the state who received some \$100 in Social Security benefits and received no form of welfare assistance.

Thousands of other Oklahomans received unemployment compensation and did not receive welfare assistance . . . Last year welfare was Oklahoma's most costly program. Including state and federal matching funds, it devoured more than twice the amount spent on highways in the state, about twice as much as the common school program, almost three times as much as the higher education program and more than 12 times as much as the mental health program.

Moreover, the burdens and benefits are unevenly distributed. With federal matching funds included, Adair county received \$19.81 in welfare payments for each dollar of sales taxes paid in 1961-1962, while Kingfisher county had a return of only thirty-two cents for each dollar. Though Oklahoma and Tulsa counties combined contributed 45 per cent of the 1962 sales tax receipts, which are earmarked for welfare purposes, less than 6 per cent of their residents received public assistance.⁵⁴

Residents of the low income counties have acquired a vested interest in the public assistance program, and because of their numbers they have become a voting bloc to be reckoned with. All but one of the thirty counties where the public assistance rolls are highest are predominantly Democratic, and the low income status of the residents of these counties undoubtedly reinforces their Democratic sympathies. However, it should be noted that Adair county, the heaviest welfare county in the state, is less consistently Democratic than Stephens county, one of the state's nine highest income counties.

⁵⁴Ibid., January 29, 1963.

PART II

LONG-RANGE OKLAHOMA POLITICAL INFLUENCES

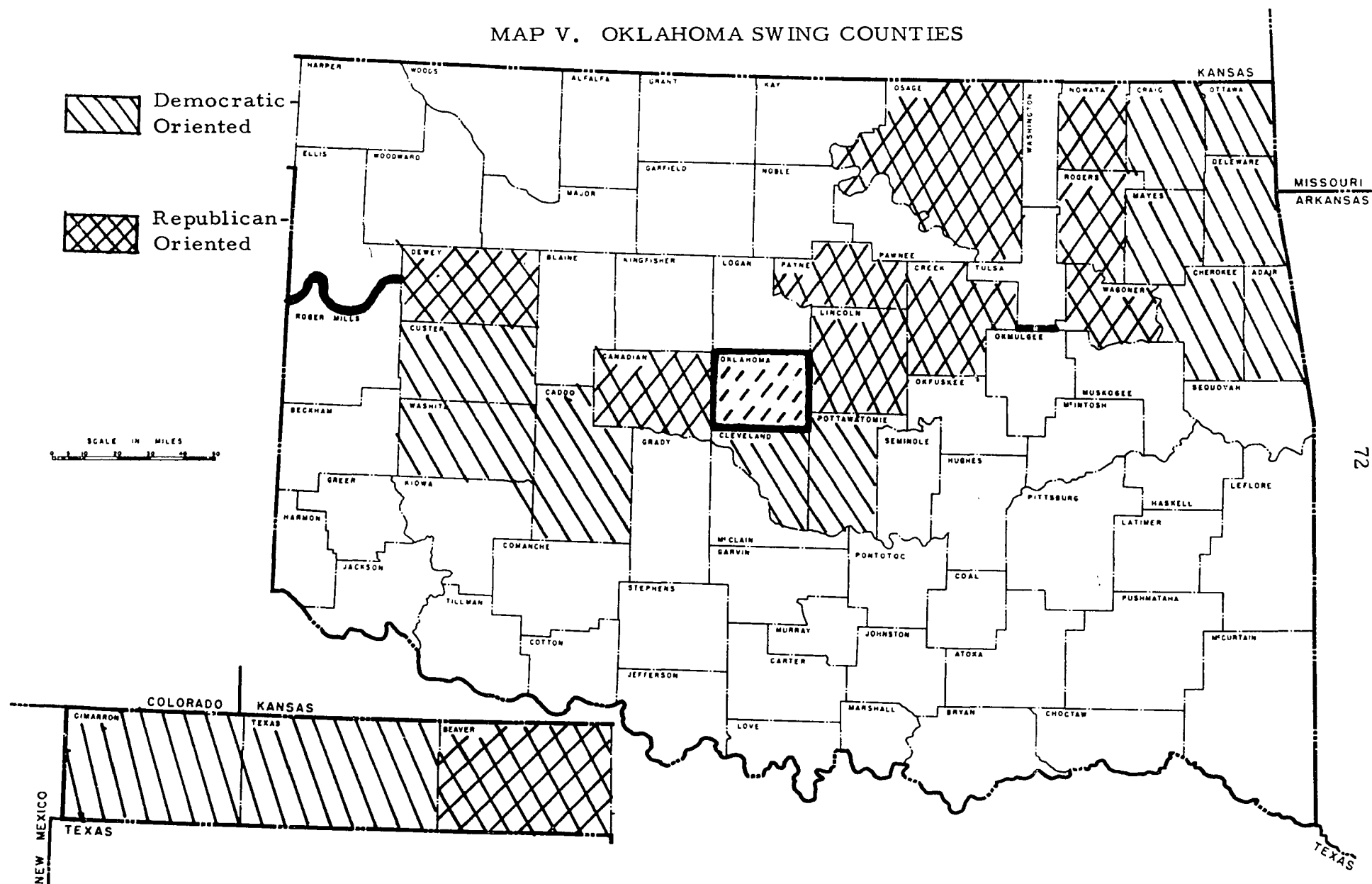
CHAPTER III

GEOGRAPHICAL BASES OF PARTY STRENGTH

The geographical location of Democratic and Republican party strength in Oklahoma has been fairly stable throughout the state's history. Broadly, Republican strength has been centered in a northern tier of counties, two to three counties deep, that occupy roughly two-thirds of the northern tier of counties below the Kansas border; these counties extend westward from Washington and Tulsa counties. Democratic strength has been centered in the southern half of the state, two to five counties deep. No single element of physical geography adequately marks off the division between the northern tier of Republican counties and the southern tier of Democratic counties; the Democratic section of the state is sometimes designated loosely as being south of the Canadian River or south of the Rock Island Railroad, but this is not entirely accurate.

The strongly Republican counties, which are mostly in north central and northwestern Oklahoma, are separated from the strongly Democratic counties by a band of middle tier counties that may be designated as political swing counties. The location of the twenty-four swing counties is shown on Map V. They are designated as swing counties because the majority vote for presidential and gubernatorial candidates

MAP V. OKLAHOMA SWING COUNTIES

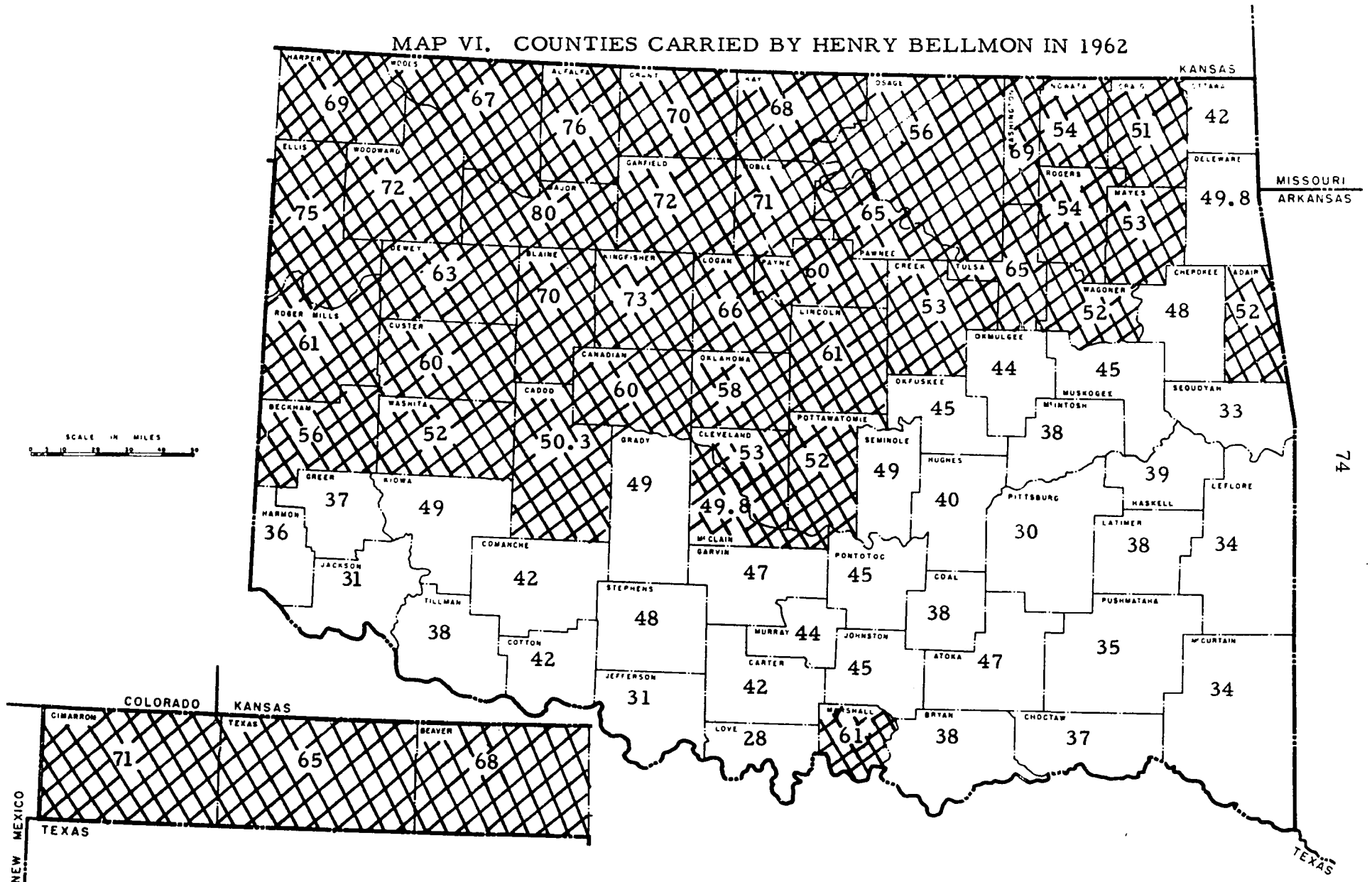


has alternated more in these counties since 1942 than in the remaining fifty-three counties. The swing counties extend from the northeast corner of Oklahoma roughly across the center of the state; they provide no separation between Republican Tulsa county and Democratic Okmulgee county or between Republican Ellis county and Democratic Roger Mills county. The three Panhandle counties of Beaver, Texas, and Cimarron are separated geographically from the remainder of the swing counties.

As would be expected from a situation in which party strength is split into north-south areas, in Oklahoma the Republican vote generally is higher near the Kansas border and becomes progressively smaller in the counties to the south; the Democratic vote is higher near the Texas border and becomes progressively smaller in the counties to the north.¹ This has produced some virtually imperceptible shadings of relative party strength in the central portion of the state; for example, the average Democratic percentage of the vote in Oklahoma county in the last eleven presidential and gubernatorial elections has been 49.8 per cent. Map VI shows the Republican percentage of the total vote in each county in the 1962 gubernatorial election, as well as the counties carried by the winning Republican candidate. In addition to illustrating in a general way the previously discussed shadings of voting as one moves toward or away from the Kansas or Texas borders, the map also illustrates how temporary local situations may deflect the vote from normal expectations; strongly Democratic Marshall county, on the Texas border, returned the first Republican majorities in its history

¹An exception to this general rule is found in the northeastern section of the state, for reasons that will be explained.

MAP VI. COUNTIES CARRIED BY HENRY BELLMON IN 1962



in 1962 because of a Democratic party split.

This produces a situation in which nearly all the swing counties show a definite orientation in their voting toward either the Democratic or Republican party. The swing counties adjacent to the strongly Democratic counties generally return more Democratic than Republican majorities, and those adjacent to the strongly Republican counties return more Republican than Democratic majorities. For this reason, all but one of the swing counties will be designated as Democratic-oriented or Republican-oriented swing counties. Only Oklahoma county, the most populous county in the state, will be designated as a crucial swing county, for reasons to be explained later.

The Method Used to Classify the Counties Politically

In classifying Oklahoma's seventy-seven counties politically, it was decided to employ only the voting results since 1942, to produce a result more in conformity with the present situation; Republican gubernatorial candidates began to poll a substantially larger percentage of the vote in 1942. Further, it was decided to employ only the results of the eleven gubernatorial and presidential elections in the 1942-1962 period; the United States senate races were not included because of the Oklahomans' rather pronounced tendency to return incumbents to office. The voting for secondary state officials was not considered because the voting in these contests has shown a rather consistent 60-40 Democratic majority;² since the focus of this study is upon the gubernatorial election, it was deemed necessary to consider only those races in which the maximum

²See Table 24 in chap. iv.

amount of swing voting takes place. To employ only gubernatorial contests since 1942 would yield too few contests to permit proper classification of the counties; to employ gubernatorial contests over a longer period would produce deviations from the current political positions of some of the counties.

A combination of two methods was used to characterize each county's political position:

1. Alternating majorities. First, each county was classified according to the number of times its majority vote had alternated between Democratic and Republican candidates in the eleven gubernatorial and presidential elections since 1942. Three alternations was set as the minimum for designation of a county as a swing county. Counties with an 8-3 record of alternation would constitute a set of swing counties with the smallest number of alternations and therefore with the strongest orientations toward either the Democratic or Republican party; those with 7-4 records were adjudged to be somewhat more likely to swing their votes, and those with 6-5 records to be the most truly swing counties.

2. Voting percentages. The results obtained from the alternating majorities method were corrected or revised by taking into account the average Democratic percentage of the vote in each county in the same elections. Counties showing the most even voting divisions, between 49 and 51 per cent Democratic, were considered the most truly swing counties--those with the least stable orientation toward either the Democratic or Republican party. Those with average Democratic voting percentages of 43 to 49 per cent were considered Republican-oriented, and those with Democratic percentages of 51 to 58 per cent to be Democratic-oriented.

The alternating majorities method produced these results:

- a.) The 8-3 Democratic-oriented swing counties were: Beckham, Caddo, Cherokee, Ottawa, Pottawatomie, Roger Mills, and Washita.
- b.) The 7-4 Democratic-oriented counties were: Craig, Custer, Delaware, Mayes, and Texas.
- c.) The 6-5 or 5-6 swing counties were: Adair, Cimarron, Cleveland, and Oklahoma.
- d.) The 7-4 Republican-oriented counties were: Beaver, Creek, Osage, and Rogers.
- e.) The 8-3 Republican-oriented counties were: Canadian, Dewey, Lincoln, Nowata, Pawnee, Payne, and Wagoner.

When the voting percentage of each county was taken into account, Pawnee county was re-classified as strongly Republican and Beckham and Roger Mills counties were re-classified as strongly Democratic. Pawnee county voters not only have compiled a rather strong Republican voting percentage, but they also have returned Republican majorities in the last eight senatorial contests, in the face of the rather pronounced statewide tendency to return Democratic incumbents to office. Roger Mills county voters had voted Democratic by an average percentage of 60.5 per cent in the last eleven gubernatorial and presidential elections; the Democratic percentage in Beckham county was 59.9 per cent, and in addition Beckham county is one of only nine counties in the state that has never returned a Republican majority in a county election. As to the evenly divided swing counties (those with 6-5 records of alternating majorities), only Oklahoma county's average Democratic percentage of the vote was between 49 and 51 per cent. Hence, both because of the even

division of its vote and because of its large population, Oklahoma county was designated as the crucial swing county of the state. All the other swing counties were designated either as Democratic-oriented, or Republican-oriented swing counties.

As revised, Oklahoma's seventy-seven counties were classified as follows: thirty-seven as strongly Democratic, thirteen as Democratic-oriented swing counties, sixteen as strongly Republican, and ten as Republican-oriented swing counties. In addition, Oklahoma county was singled out for special treatment as a crucial swing county. The counties in each classification are:

Strongly Democratic--Atoka, Beckham, Bryan, Carter, Choctaw, Coal, Comanche, Cotton, Garvin, Grady, Greer, Harmon, Haskell, Hughes, Jackson, Jefferson, Johnston, Kiowa, Latimer, LeFlore, Love, McClain, McCurtain, McIntosh, Marshall, Murray, Muskogee, Okfuskee, Okmulgee, Pittsburg, Pontotoc, Pushmataha, Roger Mills, Seminole, Sequoyah, Stephens, and Tillman.

Democratic-oriented--Adair, Caddo, Cherokee, Cimarron, Cleveland, Craig, Custer, Delaware, Mayes, Ottawa, Pottawatomie, Texas, and Washita.

Strongly Republican--Alfalfa, Blaine, Ellis, Garfield, Grant, Harper, Kay, Kingfisher, Logan, Major, Noble, Pawnee, Tulsa, Washington, Woods, and Woodward.

Republican-oriented--Beaver, Canadian, Creek, Dewey, Lincoln, Nowata, Osage, Payne, Rogers, and Wagoner.

Crucial swing county--Oklahoma.

In addition to giving special consideration to the voting behavior of the residents of Oklahoma county, special account also will

be taken from time to time of the voting behavior of the residents of Tulsa county. Tulsa county is the second most populous county in the state and, as such, it is the anchor county of the bloc of sixteen strongly Republican counties.

Voting Age Populations

A setting forth of the voting age populations of each of these categories of counties will help to picture the Oklahoma political situation in a very broad way and to point up the relative importance of Oklahoma and Tulsa counties in Oklahoma elections. By voting age population is meant the number of residents over twenty-one years of age, as shown by the census data.³

TABLE 20.--Voting age populations of the strongly Democratic, strongly Republican, and swing counties in 1960

	Voting Age Population	Totals	Per Cent Of Total	
Strongly Republican	378,147		26.7	
Republican-oriented	<u>134,014</u>		<u>9.4</u>	
Republican		512,161		36.1
Strongly Democratic	467,545		33.0	
Democratic-oriented	<u>172,521</u>		<u>12.2</u>	
Democratic		640,066		45.2
Oklahoma county		263,923		18.6

Oklahoma county's role as a crucial swing county can be seen from the foregoing data. If its voting age population (or votes) were divided equally between the Republican and Democratic blocs of counties, this would produce a Democratic-Republican ratio approximating 55-45; a

³Census Bureau, Oklahoma General Population Characteristics: 1960, pp. 94-99.

heavy preponderance of its votes for either party would be controlling. Tulsa county has 14.7 per cent of the state's voting age population, while the other fifteen strongly Republican counties have 12 per cent; hence the designation of Tulsa county as the anchor county of the strong Republican bloc.

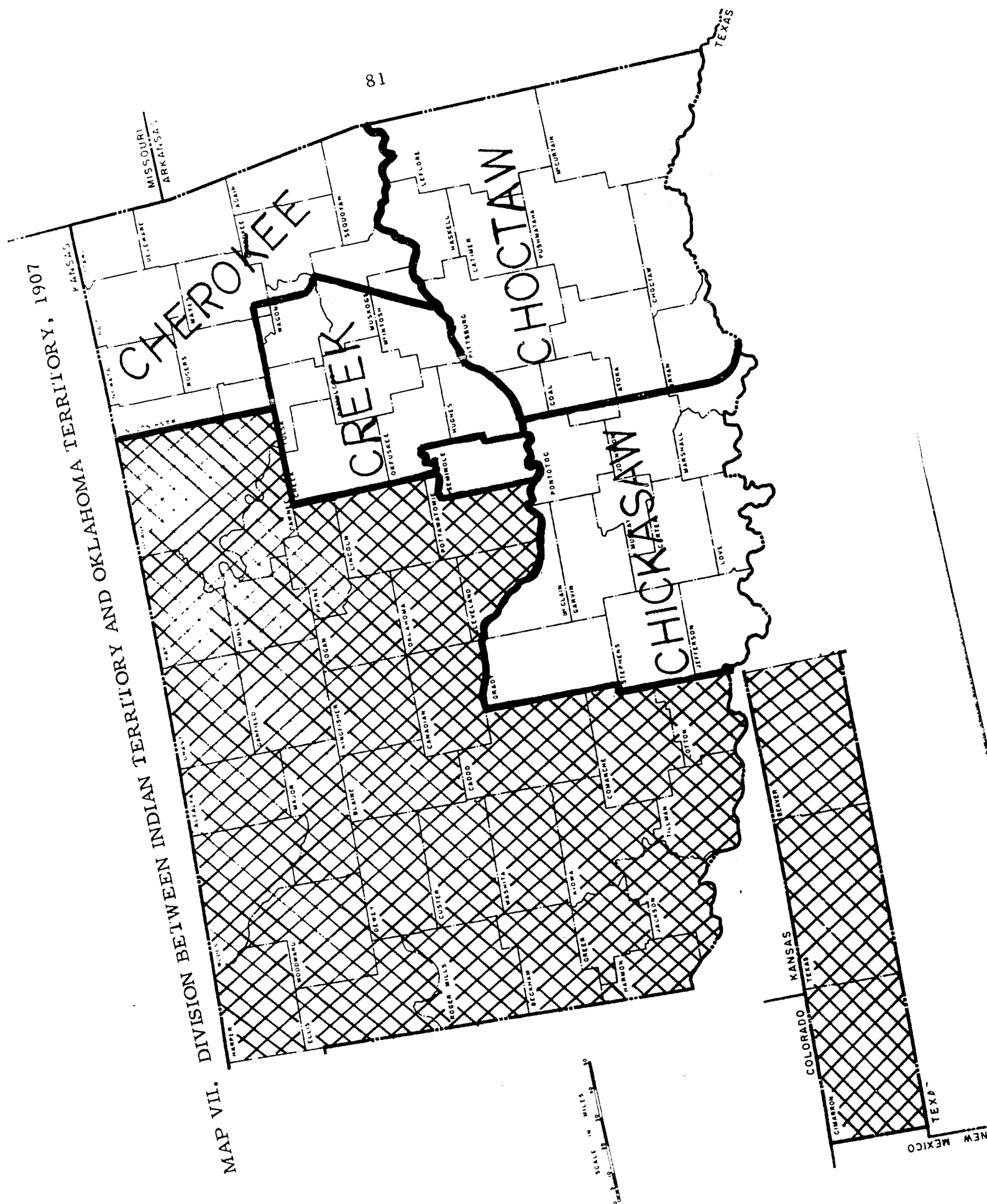
Historical Origins of Oklahoma's Geographical Voting Pattern

Now that the geographical bases of Democratic and Republican strength in Oklahoma have been set forth, there remains to be discussed how and why this geographical voting pattern developed.

As previously mentioned, what is now Oklahoma was made up of two federal territories, Indian Territory and Oklahoma Territory, from the time central Oklahoma was opened to white settlement in 1889 until achievement of statehood in 1907. Map VII shows the line of division between the two territories as of 1907.

The political predilections of the Indian and white residents of Indian Territory were not known with certainty prior to 1907 because they were not electing a territorial delegate to Congress as were the residents of Oklahoma Territory, but most observers of that day had strong reason to believe that Indian Territory was predominantly Democratic, and this later proved to be correct. The Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes, who constituted the bulk of the Indian population, had come to Indian Territory from the Deep South states of Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Tennessee, and Mississippi. Moreover, the tribal Indians had taken part in the Civil War and, though tribal factions fought on both sides in that conflict, the majority of the Indians sympathized with

MAP VII.



the Confederacy. The overwhelming majority of Choctaws and Chickasaws and probably a majority of the Cherokees were Confederate sympathizers, as were some factions of the Creeks and Seminoles, and their descendants remain Democratic in their party affiliations to this day. But some factions of the Creeks, Seminoles, and Cherokees sympathized with the Union cause and, as a result there are some precincts in Adair, Delaware, and Cherokee counties that today are as "Republican as Vermont."⁴

Further evidence of the kinship between members of the Five Civilized Tribes and the ways of the Deep South is shown by the fact that these Indians were slaveholders--the only slaveholders in Oklahoma history. It was through the Cherokees that slavery was extended into the northeast section of Oklahoma, and the Southern sympathies of these Indians has contributed to the political distinctiveness of northeastern Oklahoma; that section might otherwise be considered a logical locale for strong Republican sentiment because of its proximity to Kansas and because most of the remainder of the northern tier of Oklahoma counties is Republican. It is estimated that there were about 14,000 to 15,000 Negro slaves on the lands of the Five Civilized Tribes shortly before the Civil War.⁵

Another factor that contributed to the preponderantly Democratic sentiment in Indian Territory is that the bulk of white settlers came there from Texas and Arkansas,⁶ which adjoined Indian Territory on the

⁴Scales, op. cit., chap. 1.

⁵Interview with Miss Muriel Wright, author of A Guide to the Indian Tribes of Oklahoma, December 26, 1962.

⁶Ewing and Dangerfield, op. cit., p. 373.

south and east. These settlers penetrated into Indian Territory singly or in small groups rather than by "runs" (official openings of large blocs of land under federal auspices). Large numbers of the white settlers were tenant farmers on Indian lands.

Oklahoma Territory, on the other hand, was settled rather suddenly by a series of runs beginning in 1889. And here, as in Indian Territory, the Civil War sympathies or the dominant politics of the states of origin of the white settlers constituted the primary factors in establishing the geographical voting pattern of the territory.

An estimated fifty thousand white settlers lined up around the rim of the district to be opened to settlement on April 22, 1889, the larger number along the Kansas border; others gathered at Purcell and other places along the southern boundary of the district, while a smaller number encamped on Indian reservation lands to the east and west.⁷ Northern migrants tended to settle closer to the border from which they entered and southern migrants did the same. The two streams of immigrants came together roughly in the center of the state and gave central Oklahoma a more mixed political make-up and a more even division of the voting as between Democrat and Republican than is found in the northern and southern sections of the state. It is in the central and north-eastern sections of Oklahoma that the political swing counties are located.

Oklahoma Territory was gradually enlarged by subsequent runs into other areas in 1891, 1892, 1893, and 1895, and in each run northern

⁷Edward Everett Dale and Morris L. Wardell, History of Oklahoma (New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1948), pp. 248-253.

migrants tended to settle the more northerly areas of the state and southern migrants the southern portion. Moreover, the settlers brought their politics with them, and the northern tier of counties lying west of that fork of Indian Territory that extended into the northeast corner of the state soon became predominantly Republican, whereas the southern tier of counties early became established as a Democratic stronghold. Settlers who arrived after these patterns became established often took on the political complexion of the area in which they settled.

The economic characteristics of the various sections of Oklahoma also contributed to the settlement pattern: the cotton farming areas of southwestern and south central Oklahoma drew farmers from Texas, Arkansas, and Mississippi, while the wheat-growing area of north central and northwestern Oklahoma generally drew farmers from the Northern Plains.⁸

But Oklahoma's present geographical voting pattern did not become established immediately; rather, it was not until about the middle of the 1900-1910 decade that the present pattern began to take form. As a matter of fact, Oklahoma Territory was predominantly Republican in the 1890's and early portion of the 1900's. A majority of the early settlers voted Republican in the territorial delegate elections because they came from northern states or because they were homesteaders who were grateful to the national Republican administration for having enacted the basic law which permitted them to settle upon their lands. They elected Republicans to serve as territorial delegates to Congress in seven of the eight elections between 1890 and 1904; only in 1896 was the Demo-

⁸McReynolds, op. cit., pp. 414-415.

cratic-Populist fusion candidate able to defeat his Republican opponent.

Table 21 shows the voting divisions in these elections in Oklahoma Territory.⁹

TABLE 21.--Voting divisions in elections of delegates to Congress from Oklahoma Territory, 1890-1904

Year	Republican	Pct.	Democratic	Pct.	Populist	Pct.
1890	4,398	52.1	2,543	30.1	1,464	17.3
1892	9,390	44.5	7,302	34.6	4,398	20.9
1894	20,449	42.2	12,058	24.8	15,988	33.0
1896	26,267	48.9	27,435*	51.1		
1898	28,456	58.3	19,088	39.1	1,262	2.6
1900	38,253	52.1	33,529*	45.7		
1902	45,893	48.7	45,409	48.1		
1904	51,454	47.1	49,868	45.7	1,836	1.7

* Fusions of Democrats and Populists

The voting for Socialist and Prohibitionist candidates is not shown in Table 21.

Though the election results show Republican predominance in Oklahoma Territory in these early days, they also show that the Democrats constituted a strong minority.

The critical factor in establishing Oklahoma as a predominantly Democratic state in its entirety about the middle of the 1900-1910 decade is this: only 30,000 migrants came into Oklahoma from Kansas in this decade, while 109,000 came in from Texas, 82,000 from Missouri, and 70,000 from Arkansas.¹⁰

The election of 1906, when delegates to the state constitutional

⁹The Oklahoma Almanac and Industrial Record (Oklahoma City: The Daily Oklahoman, 1908), pp. 164-165.

¹⁰Scales, op. cit., p. 23.

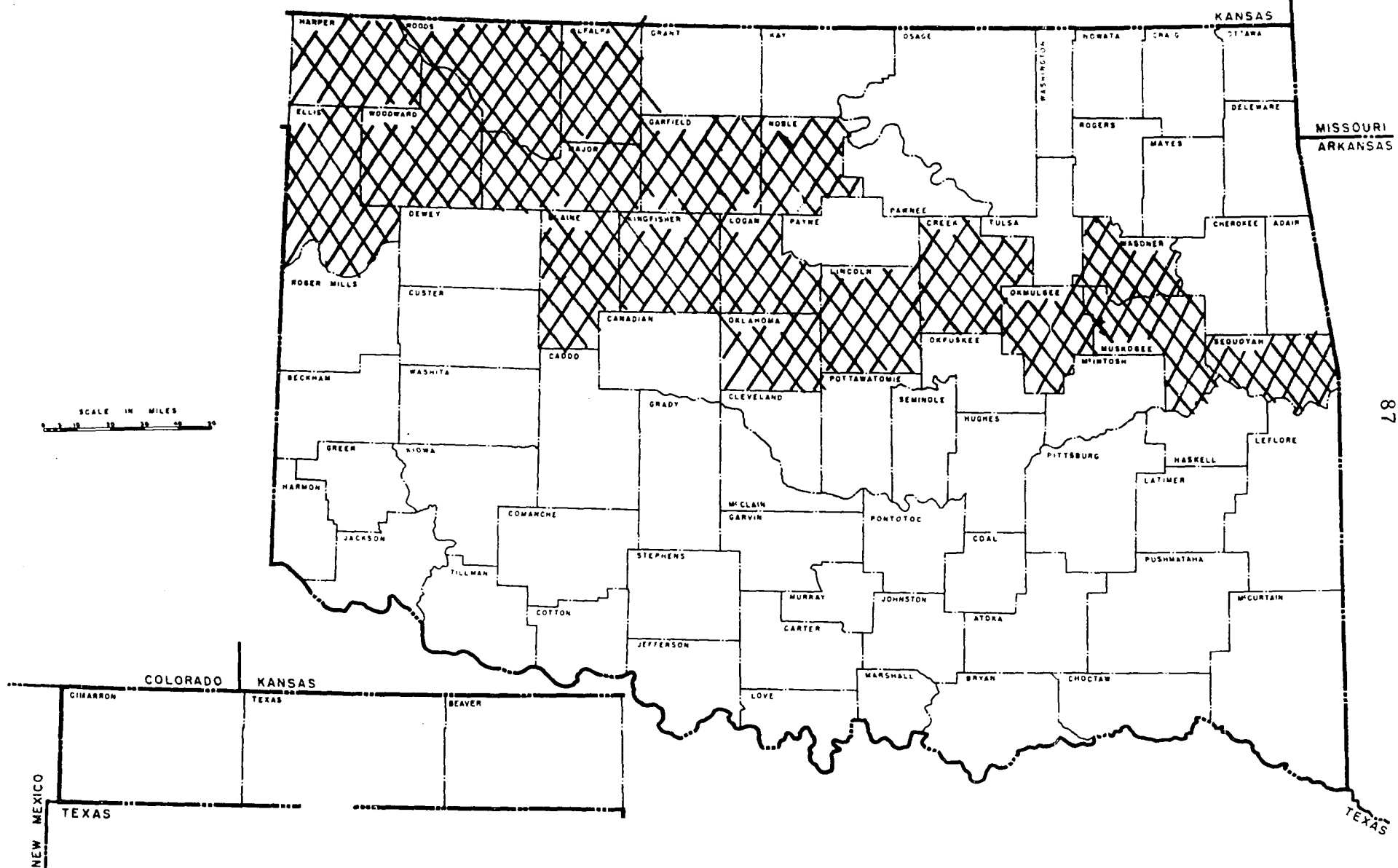
convention were chosen from both Oklahoma Territory and Indian Territory, may be said to mark the beginning of Democratic dominance throughout Oklahoma.¹¹ The citizens of the two territories elected 98 Democrats, 13 Republicans, and one Independent to the Oklahoma Constitutional Convention. Democrats polled 53.1 per cent of the vote in Oklahoma Territory and 54.5 per cent in Indian Territory. In the first statewide election in 1907, Democratic gubernatorial nominee Charles N. Haskell polled 53.4 per cent of the vote.

Maps VIII through XI show the evolution of the voting in the various counties in the first four gubernatorial elections, from 1907 through 1918; by 1918 the present geographical voting pattern had become fairly well established. The 1907 election results, shown on Map VIII, probably do not represent a true Democratic-Republican division of the vote because the question of ratification of the state constitution was on the ballot along with candidates for state offices, and the Democrats were identified with ratification because they controlled the constitutional convention. By 1910 the present voting pattern had virtually taken shape, but Tulsa county did not return a Republican majority until 1914, in the election that was complicated by a heavy Socialist vote.

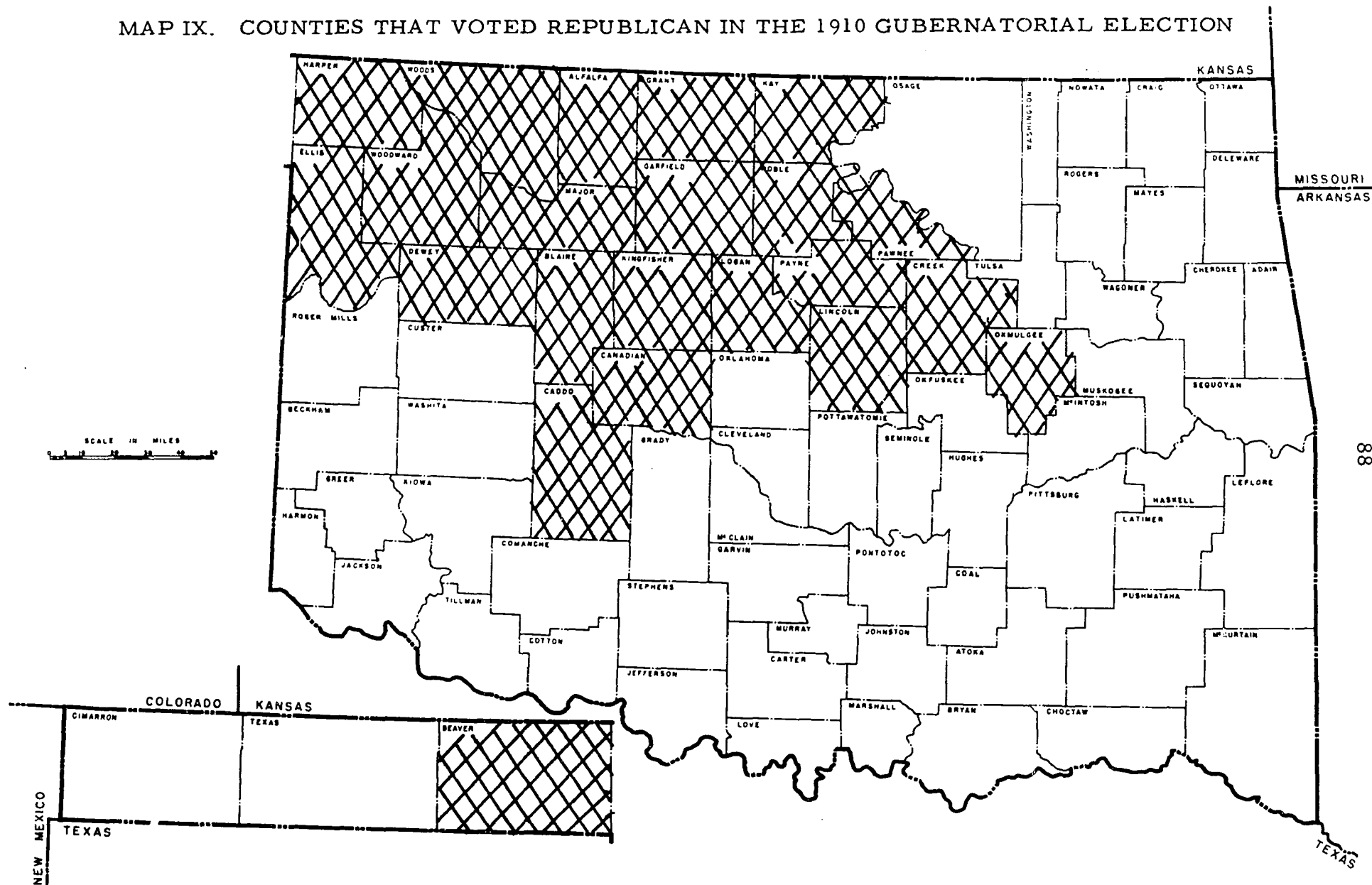
If this is the manner in which Oklahoma's geographical voting came into being, what has kept it that way through the years? V.O. Key wrote that the maintenance of Democratic or Republican traditions is "reflective of a highly integrated community life with a powerful capacity to induce conformity," and he added that this is more so in rural and small

¹¹Ewing and Dangerfield, op. cit., p. 385.

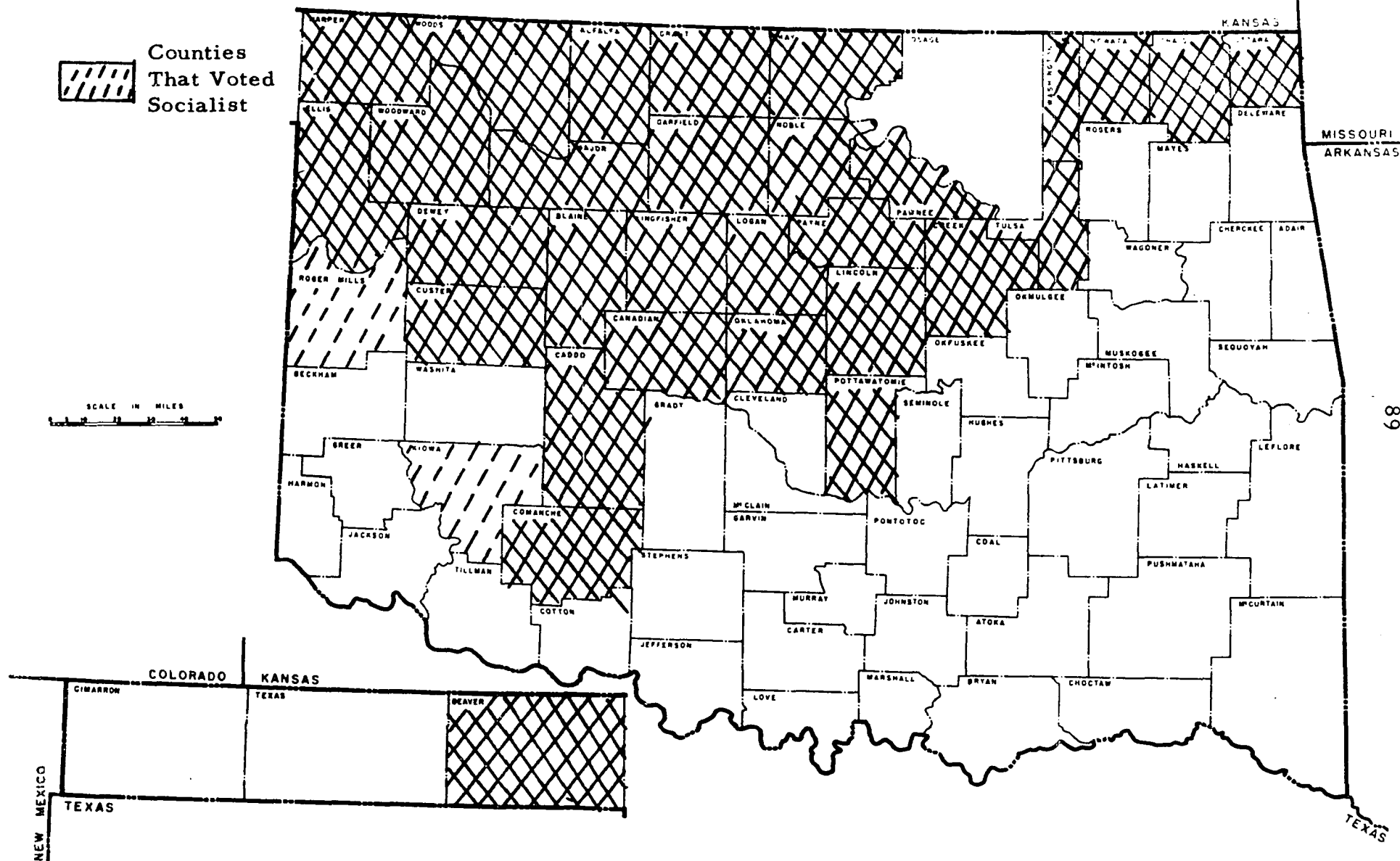
MAP VIII. COUNTIES THAT VOTED REPUBLICAN IN THE 1907 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION



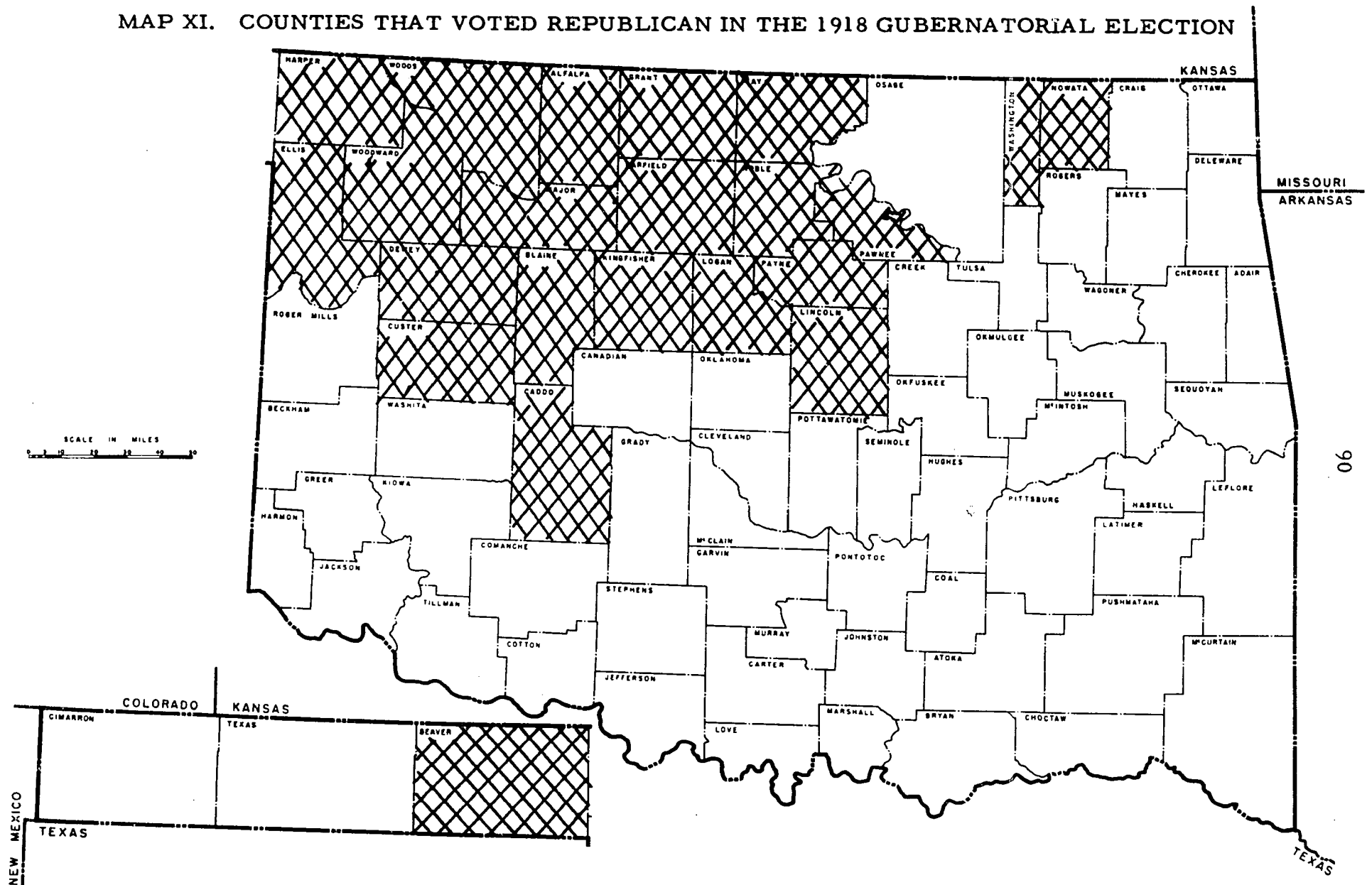
MAP IX. COUNTIES THAT VOTED REPUBLICAN IN THE 1910 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION



 Counties
That Voted
Socialist



MAP XI. COUNTIES THAT VOTED REPUBLICAN IN THE 1918 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION



town areas.¹² The University of Michigan Survey Research Center found that the longer the association with a "group" the stronger the attachment to it; and it was found that belonging to a political party is much akin to belonging to other types of social groups. Reference was made in Chapter II to the question of whether urbanization might be breaking down this sectional voting pattern, and the view was expressed that this development is too recent to have altered the pattern significantly as yet.

The East-West Split

The geographical voting pattern heretofore referred to has focused upon a north-south split between Republicans and Democrats, and this remains the principal division. However, there also has been a less pronounced split between eastern and western Oklahoma that grew out of the early division of the state between Oklahoma Territory and Indian Territory. In this sense, the terms "east" and "west" do not refer so much to the areas east and west of the state's geographical center as they do to a division roughly approaching that between the two territories; most of central Oklahoma is considered "western Oklahoma."

The east-west split was much more in evidence in early Oklahoma history than it is today, though as recently as 1958 some eastern Oklahoma residents were heard to utter such sentiments as, "It's high time we elected a governor from eastern Oklahoma."

Possibly the outstanding example of political party deference to east-west sentiment came in 1907 when Democratic party leaders agreed

¹²V.O. Key, American State Politics: An Introduction (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1956), pp. 227-228.

that the state's first two United States senators should be selected on this basis: every voter was to have two votes for United States senator, but the Indian Territory candidate with the highest number of votes was to be appointed as one senator and the leading Oklahoma Territory candidate the other.¹³ These were the results of the 1907 Democratic primary:

Robert L. Owen (Indian Territory).	. . . 48,885
Henry Furman (Indian Territory).	. . . 39,113
Thomas P. Gore (Oklahoma Territory).	. . 38,288

Though Furman received more votes than Gore, Governor Haskell appointed Owen and Gore to serve as senators and both were elected formally by the state legislature later.

Economic characteristics provide the basis for some difference in viewpoint as between the two sections on some issues and in some elections. Of the nineteen Oklahoma counties where median family incomes were below \$3,000 a year in 1960, eighteen were in eastern Oklahoma. Of the twenty-nine counties with median family incomes above \$4,000 a year, twenty-one were in western or central Oklahoma. Also, a residue of the early east-west feeling may be evidenced occasionally in arguments over such matters as distribution of highway funds.

Overall, however, the early east-west feeling appears to be on the wane as a political factor.

Oklahoma a Border State

The geographical voting pattern set forth in this chapter is described by John H. Fenton as being typical of some of the states

¹³Scales, op. cit., pp. 72-75.

classified politically as border states. In his study of four border states in the 1950's, Fenton referred to the "unique settlement pattern of the border states and the differential reaction of elements of the population to the Civil War" as factors that shaped the politics of these states. He added that the position of these between North and South gave them rather distinctive political systems. Fenton characterized the border states as being neither North nor South, but as partaking of the elements of both; "essentially they are middle states."¹⁴

The research staffs of both the Republican National Committee and Democratic National Committee classify Oklahoma as a border state. The Republican staff designates the following as border states: Kentucky, Maryland, Missouri, Oklahoma, and West Virginia.¹⁵ The Democratic staff adds Tennessee to the list.¹⁶

¹⁴John H. Fenton, Politics in the Border States: A Study of the Patterns of Political Organization, and Political Change, Common to the Border States--Maryland, West Virginia, Kentucky, and Missouri (New Orleans: The Hauser Press, Galleon Books, 1957), pp. 11, 204.

¹⁵Research Division, Republican National Committee, The 1962 Elections: A Summary Report With Supporting Tables (3d ed.; Washington, April, 1963), p. 8.

¹⁶Research Division, Democratic National Committee, The 1960 Election Report (Washington, January, 1962), Appendix, Table 7.

CHAPTER IV

RELATIVE PARTY STRENGTH: DOES OKLAHOMA HAVE A TWO-PARTY SYSTEM?

There were no official statewide party registration figures in Oklahoma prior to 1960, when county election boards first were required to file county registration figures with the state Election Board under terms of a recently adopted law. The party registration figures that do exist are highly misleading as indices of the relative strength of the Democratic and Republican parties, because thousands of Oklahomans who vote Republican regularly are registered as Democrats so that they may take part in what many consider to be the more meaningful or more interesting Democratic primaries. For the record, however, the party registration figures as of January 15, 1963, were:

Democrats	978,115
Republicans	227,144
Independents . . .	4,763

These figures would seem to indicate that Republican candidates normally could expect to poll 18.8 per cent of the two-party vote in a statewide election. Actually, Republican candidates have never done that poorly. The closest approximation to it in a major race occurred in 1958, when the Republican gubernatorial nominee received only 19.9 per cent of the total vote. But this was highly abnormal, for over the years Republican

candidates have received a substantial percentage of the total vote in the major statewide races, as shown by Table 22, which gives the average Democratic percentage of the total vote in the presidential, gubernatorial, and senatorial contests, both for the entire span of the state's history and for relatively recent years.¹

TABLE 22.--Average Democratic percentage of the total vote in gubernatorial, presidential, and senatorial races, 1907-1962 and recently

	All Elections	Recent Contests
Gubernatorial contests	54.9 (1907-1962)	55.4 (1942-1962)
Presidential contests	51.4 (1908-1960)	43.7 (1952-1960)
Senatorial contests	54.3 (1912-1962)	56.0 (1948-1962)

The figures show that Oklahomans have been somewhat less Democratic in their voting for President than for governor and senator, but not significantly so except for the 1952-1960 period. The fact that the Democratic percentage of the vote has averaged less than 55 per cent since 1907 might even seem to indicate that Oklahoma always has had a genuine two-party system of politics; however, Republicans have won relatively few statewide contests, as shown in Chapter I, and a reasonable prospect of victory, as demonstrated by past electoral successes, is one of the generally accepted criteria of two-partyism.

The Schlesinger criteria of two-partyism.--Among the more recent studies aimed at finding adequate criteria for measuring party competition within the states is one by Joseph A. Schlesinger, who lays down these two criteria for measuring party competition:²

¹University of Oklahoma Bureau, op. cit., pp. 19, 21, 23.

²Joseph A. Schlesinger, "A Two-Dimensional Scheme for Classifying the States According to Degree of Inter-Party Competition," The American Political Science Review, XLIX (December, 1955), 1120-1128.

- 1) The number of elections won by the two parties. He characterizes a state's political system as competitive where the dominant party has won 65 per cent or less of the elections over a reasonable span of time.
- 2) The rapidity with which parties alternate in control of an office, such as governor or senator. His criterion of a two-party system from this standpoint is that there be a change of party control in 40 per cent or more of the elections.

Judged by these standards, Oklahoma would be classified in Schlesinger's terms as a "one-party predominant state" with respect to its gubernatorial and senatorial elections, and possibly a "one-party cyclical state" with respect to its presidential elections. For, as to Schlesinger's first criterion, Democrats have won 93.3 per cent of Oklahoma's gubernatorial elections, 83.3 per cent of its senatorial elections, and 64.3 per cent of its presidential elections since 1907. As to the second criterion, there have been alternations of party control of the governorship in 6.7 per cent of the elections, of the senatorial office in 16.7 per cent of the elections, and of presidential successes in 21.4 per cent of the elections. Schlesinger describes a "one-party predominant state" as one in which the minority party wins only occasional single victories because of some sudden vulnerability of the majority party, a major national trend, or a split in the majority party.

The Ranney-Kendall criteria of two-partyism.--In another such study, Austin Ranney and Willmoore Kendall laid down these criteria for measuring party competition:³

³Austin Ranney and Willmoore Kendall, "The American Party Systems," The American Political Science Review, XLVIII (June, 1954), 477-485.

- 1) The percentage of victories by the two parties in presidential, gubernatorial, and senatorial elections over a reasonable span of time. They characterized a two-party system as one in which the minority party wins 25 per cent or more of these elections.
- 2) To distinguish between "modified one-party states" and "one-party states" in those states where the minority party has won less than 25 per cent of the presidential, gubernatorial, and senatorial elections, this criterion was provided: a "modified one-party state" is one in which the minority party receives a substantial percentage of the total vote. To be precise, a modified one-party state is one in which the minority party receives 30 per cent of the vote in more than 70 per cent of the elections and more than 40 per cent of the vote in more than 30 per cent of all the elections.

Judged by these standards, Oklahoma would be classified as a modified one-party state. Republicans have won nine of the forty-seven presidential, gubernatorial, and senatorial elections since 1907, or 19.1 per cent. Table 23 shows the number of elections in which Republican candidates received more than 30 per cent and more than 40 per cent of the vote.

TABLE 23.--Percentage of presidential, gubernatorial, and senatorial elections in which Republican candidates received more than 30 per cent or more than 40 per cent of the vote

Per Cent of Vote	President	Governor	Senator
30 per cent or more	92.9	86.7	88.9
40 per cent or more	64.4	73.3	66.7

Neither of these studies indicates what minimum span of time

might be acceptable as the basis for the data to be used in characterizing a state's political system. Schlesinger used the period from 1870 to 1950 in his study, and Ranney and Kendall used the period from 1914 to 1952 in theirs. Only by using the time period of 1950-1962 could the Oklahoma political system be made to appear more competitive.

V.O. Key provides additional indices for judging the competitiveness of a state's political system: (1) the division of the vote in the elections of secondary state officials; (2) relative participation in Democratic and Republican primaries; and (3) average party membership in the lower house of the state legislature.⁴ Discussion of these criteria will throw additional light upon the present status of Oklahoma politics.

The vote for secondary state officials as an index of two-partyism.--An examination of the voting statistics for all of Oklahoma's statewide contests shows that Oklahoma has been Democratic by an approximate 60-40 ratio in the voting for secondary state officials; when Oklahoma voters wish to register approval or protest they do so in their voting for the more highly visible offices of President, governor, or senator, and this has the effect of narrowing the ratio to approximately 55-45 in the gubernatorial and senatorial races and to less than 52-48 in the presidential contests.

Key is one authority who believes that the vote for secondary officials is a better index of true relative party strength than the vote

⁴Key, Politics, Parties, And Pressure Groups, pp. 312-317.

for the more highly visible offices. He distinguished between the voting for governor and for such lesser officials as state legislative candidates when he referred to the "high visibility of the governor's office" and to the fact that social tension is sometimes discharged by "temporary banishment of a Democratic governor" in one-party states.⁵ Referring to national rather than to state elections, the Michigan Research Center reported in 1961, "Our studies have shown that the popular vote for lesser offices is a more party-determined vote than the vote for President."⁶ Oklahoma has one of the longest ballots in the nation, and it is highly unlikely that most voters take the time to acquaint themselves with more than a few top-level candidates. It seems plausible to suspect that they might be more likely to vote their party affiliations rather than their personal preferences when voting for the long list of secondary state officials.

Oklahoma voters have been remarkably consistent in their voting for the secondary officials, as shown by Table 24, which gives the Republican percentage of the total vote in the contests for lieutenant governor, corporation commissioner, and state auditor. The impact of the Republican presidential victories of 1920 and 1928 and of the Roosevelt-Truman victories in the 1930-1948 period is reflected in the corporation commissioner races of those periods; these mark the biggest deviations from a highly consistent voting pattern throughout the state's history.

⁵Key, American State Politics, p. 70.

⁶Converse, op. cit., p. 280.

TABLE 24.--Average Republican percentage of the vote for three secondary state offices, 1907-1918, 1920-1928, 1930-1948, 1950-1962

Office	1907- 1918	1920- 1928	1930- 1948	1950- 1962	1907- 1962	Average
Corporation comm'r. (all years)	37.5	44.4	35.7	39.1	38.4	39.0
Corporation comm'r. (presidential yrs.)	34.9	46.7	35.6	39.1	38.6	39.0
Corporation comm'r. (off years)	39.0	40.1	36.0	39.1	38.1	38.5
Lieutenant governor	38.8	40.4	30.4	38.3	35.4	36.9
State Auditor	<u>38.3</u>	<u>39.4</u>	<u>36.1</u>	<u>32.6</u>	<u>36.3</u>	<u>36.6</u>
Average	37.7	42.2	34.8	37.6	37.4	38.0

An examination of the voting for secondary state officials in the Democratic, Republican, and swing counties shows that only the sixteen strongly Republican counties can be counted upon to return Republican majorities in these contests. Oklahoma county and the Republican-oriented swing counties regularly return Democratic majorities. Table 25 pictures the voting for corporation commissioner in 1952, 1956, and 1960.

TABLE 25.--Republican percentage of the total vote for corporation commissioner in the last three presidential years

	1952	1956	1960	Average
Republican counties	55.7	52.9	42.2	50.3
Republican-oriented	45.2	44.0	36.9	42.0
Democratic-oriented	42.0	38.1	33.5	37.9
Democratic counties	28.2	27.4	26.1	27.2
Oklahoma county	43.2	43.0	35.7	40.6

Since Eisenhower and Nixon received 54.5, 55.1, and 59.0 per cent of the vote in Oklahoma in these years, presumably they were years of maximum advantage for Republican state candidates.

The results of the contests for lieutenant governor and state

auditor in these counties in the 1950-1962 period were comparable to those for corporation commissioner in the presidential years.

It appears, then, that Oklahoma is Democratic by at least a 60-40 ratio in its voting for secondary state officials. To appraise what such a ratio signifies, most authorities appear to agree that it represents a decisive rather than marginal superiority in party strength. The research staffs of both the Republican and Democratic national committees concur in regarding a 55-45 per cent division of the vote as marking the breaking point between a marginal victory and a decisive victory. They refer to "safe" seats in Congress as those held by incumbents who won by a margin of 55 per cent or more.⁷ Malcolm Moos regards a 51.5-48.5 per cent division of the vote as indicating a "critical-marginal" victory, a 55-45 per cent or less division a marginal victory, and a vote of more than 55 per cent as a decisive victory.⁸ According to this index, Oklahoma could be said to be moving into a two-party system when the Republican percentage of the vote starts to approach 45 per cent in the contests for secondary offices.

Relative participation in Democratic and Republican primaries as an index of two-partyism.--V.O. Key found in his study of state political systems that the Democratic percentage of the total vote for governor averaged 48 per cent in Massachusetts and 43 per cent in Kansas over a period of years up to 1952. Yet, despite the narrow spread between the Democratic vote in these two states, it was a matter of

⁷Republican National Committee, op. cit., p. 23; Democratic National Committee, op. cit., Table IX.

⁸Quoted in Ivan Hinderaker, Party Politics (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1956), p. 435.

common knowledge that the Democratic party was very much stronger in Massachusetts than in Kansas. Key therefore employed the index of the primary participation ratio, or the ratio between the number of votes cast in the Democratic primaries to those cast in the Republican primaries, to provide a clearer indication of relative party strength in the two states. The results were: a 76.7 per cent ratio in Massachusetts and a 38.8 per cent ratio in Kansas.⁹

Table 26 shows the relative participation in Oklahoma primaries for each year since 1910.

TABLE 26.--Relative participation in Oklahoma's Democratic and Republican gubernatorial primaries since 1910

	Democratic Primary Vote	Republican Primary Vote	Participation Ratio
1910	123,734	84,158	.68
1914	131,741	31,770	.24
1918	107,919	41,404	.38
1922	269,538	87,809	.33
1926	237,580	68,859	.29
1930	340,569	76,137	.22
1934	513,486	69,070	.13
1938	593,695	52,549	.09
1942	394,392	35,921	.09
1946	385,952	41,139	.11
1950	507,936	55,411	.11
1954	522,146	55,773	.11
1958	513,594	61,518	.12
1962	534,298	61,873	.12
Average			<u>.216</u>

It appears that the morale of Republican partisans may have dropped sharply following the second successive Democratic sweep of all state-wide offices in 1910, for participation in the 1914 Republican primary declined by nearly two-thirds.

⁹Key, American State Politics, pp. 100-111.

The small number of registered Republican voters and the lack of interest in Republican primaries appear to be problems that the Oklahoma Republican party must overcome if Oklahoma is to have a system of genuine two-party politics. The small number of Republican registrants seriously hampers Republican leaders in their efforts to recruit strong candidates for statewide offices and has led to numerous instances of Republican failure to enter candidates in statewide contests in recent years. A full slate of Republican candidates was offered from 1907 until 1918, but there have been numerous failures to file for office since then, as shown by Table 27.

TABLE 27.--Number of statewide contests in which no Republican candidate was entered, 1918-1962

1918. . 3	1938. .5	1954. .11
1922. . 1	1942. .5	1956. . 4
1926. . 1	1946. .5	1958. .13
1934. . 3	1950. .9	1960. . 4
		1962. .13

Paradoxically, the period of the greatest number of failures to file for office in recent years coincides with the period of the most numerous Republican successes. This seems to lend support to the previously stated view that recent Republican successes are attributable as much or more to such national developments as inflation and an increasing tax burden than to Republican resurgence within the state.

Floyd Carrier, former Republican state chairman and more recently administrative assistant to Governor Bellmon, confirmed that Republican failure to recruit candidates for the secondary state offices, and for county and district races as well, was a serious problem for the party.

He speculated that Jo Ferguson would have been elected governor in 1950 "if even half the state ticket had been filled." Ferguson, the Republican candidate, lost the contest by 16,000 votes. Carrier put it this way: the more strong candidates a party has on the ballot at all levels, the more numerous are the friends of these candidates who will be drawn to the polls to vote where they otherwise would have stayed at home. As these voters are drawn to the polls to vote for a party's candidate for county clerk or state auditor, they also will cast their votes for the party's candidates for governor or President.¹⁰

However, recent strong Republican efforts to induce Democrats-registered-as-Republicans to re-register have been only modestly encouraging at best. In 1962 the Democratic gain in registrations was 5.35 per cent, as against a Republican gain of 4.92 per cent. In 1963 Republican gains exceeded Democratic gains percentage-wise, but not numerically. The Republican gain was 2.7 per cent and the Democratic gain nine-tenths of 1 per cent. The Republican numerical gain was 6,094, the Democratic gain 8,355.

Average membership in the lower house of the state legislature as an index of relative party strength.--V.O. Key's studies of state political systems showed that the dominant party in the definitely one-party states generally holds approximately 90 per cent of the seats in the lower house of the state legislature.¹¹ The number of Democrats and Republicans serving in the lower house was given for each historical

¹⁰Interview with Floyd Carrier, former Republican state chairman, September 4, 1963.

¹¹Key, Politics, Parties, And Pressure Groups, p. 314.

period in Chapter I. The data in Table 6 show that Republican membership has averaged slightly more than 15 per cent since 1950 and that it rose to slightly more than 20 per cent with Bellmon's victory in 1962. Average Republican membership in the lower house since 1907 has been 18.2 per cent.¹² Obviously, a number of Democratic legislators are being elected from counties or districts that normally vote Republican for President and governor. Possibly many voters are expressing the feeling that the Democratic party is dominant in the Oklahoma legislature and that more can be accomplished for the home district by electing representatives who can work with the legislative majority.

Number of county officials elected as an indicator of grass roots party strength.--While it is true that the electorate often votes more on the basis of personality than of party affiliation in political races at the county level,¹³ still the control of the county courthouses by the dominant party is an important factor in its grass roots strength. These county officials can constitute a political nucleus of party activists in local party affairs. Of at least equal significance is the importance of having a full slate of popular candidates for county offices on the ballot to draw a maximum number of their friends to the polls and thus to increase the party vote, as just discussed.

In Oklahoma, fewer Republican county officials have been elected in the 1930-1962 period than were elected from 1907 through 1928, and their number has been declining rather than increasing in recent years. Republican failures to file for county offices also have been increasing.

¹²University of Oklahoma Bureau, op. cit., p. 49.

¹³Key, American State Politics, p. 227.

The number of Republicans elected to county office since 1907 is given in Table 28.¹⁴ Because the number of county offices filled differs among the various counties, figures were compiled only for the eleven most commonly elected county officials: county judge, county attorney, court clerk, county clerk, sheriff, treasurer, superintendent of schools, assessor, and three county commissioners. The total number of these county officials elected in the state every two years is 847; hence the number of Democratic county officials elected each two years can be ascertained by subtracting the number of Republicans elected from that figure. For convenience, the election figures have been divided according to the historical periods discussed in Chapter I.

TABLE 28.--Number of Republicans elected to eleven county offices, 1907-1918, 1920-1928, 1930-1948, 1950-1962

1907-1918	1920-1928	1930-1948	1950-1962
1907 . .121	1920 . .378	1930 . .180	1950 . .143
1910 . .199	1922 . .189	1932 . .104	1952 . .152
1914 . .183	1924 . .246	1934 . .151	1954 . .141
1916 . .222	1926 . .245	1936 . .125	1956 . .133
1918 . .250	1928 . .259	1938 . .145	1958 . .110
		1940 . .140	1960 . .104
		1942 . .154	1962 . .105
		1944 . .158	
		1946 . .177	
		1948 . .136	

In their peak year of 1920, Republicans were elected to approximately 45 per cent of the eleven elective county offices throughout the state. At their nadir in 1932 and 1960, they were elected to 12.3 per cent of these county offices. That 1920 should be a peak Republican year conforms to

¹⁴Figures compiled from the State Election Board's Directory and Manual of the State of Oklahoma and Roster of State and County Officers.

normal expectations, in view of the Harding landslide. And it would be expected also that 1932 would mark a low point in Republican successes, in view of the depression and the Roosevelt victory. But it hardly would be expected that 1960 and 1962 would also mark a low point in Republican successes, in view of the Nixon and Bellmon victories in those years.

A partial explanation of the small number of Republican county officials being elected in recent years lies in the fact that no Republicans are filing for county offices in a large number of counties. In 1962 no Republican candidates filed in forty-one counties, and in nineteen other counties Republicans failed to contest a majority of the county offices, according to the Daily Oklahoman.¹⁵ This means that Republicans contested a majority of the offices in only seventeen counties. Democratic candidates were entered in all seventy-seven counties, and only in Major and Kingfisher counties did they fail to contest a majority of the county offices. There was a stirring of Republican activity in Oklahoma county, where Democrats "faced stubborn Republican opposition for the first time" in six races in 1962, but none was victorious.¹⁶ Map XII shows the sixty counties in which Republicans either failed to file for any county office or to contest a majority of the county offices.

Conclusion

At this time it appears that Oklahoma must be characterized as a "modified one-party state" or, with respect to presidential elections,

¹⁵The Daily Oklahoman, November 7, 1962.

¹⁶Ibid., November 7, 1962.

a "one-party cyclical state," according to those indices which focus upon long-term trends. To characterize the Oklahoma political system as a two-party system on the basis of one gubernatorial and three presidential victories since 1952 seems a bit premature, especially in the light of the fact that many voters did not look upon Eisenhower as a "real" Republican and the fact that Nixon rode to victory on an anti-Catholic vote. The present period may mark the beginning of a transition toward a two-party system, and the events of the next decade should disclose whether this is the case.

CHAPTER V

SWITCH VOTING

Two important facts stand out about recent switch voting in Oklahoma that go far toward explaining the Republican successes beginning in 1942:

- 1) The increase in Republican voting was greater in the thirty-seven strongly Democratic counties than in the swing counties or strongly Republican counties in the 1942 Republican senatorial victory, Eisenhower's 1952 and 1956 victories, and Nixon's 1960 victory. The increase in Republican voting in the strongly Democratic counties in the 1962 gubernatorial election was substantial and important. Switch voting in the strongly Democratic counties perhaps has been less evident than in the swing counties because it has resulted much less often in Republican candidates carrying a strongly Democratic county. In the swing counties, where the division of the vote has been narrower, less switch voting is required to push them into the opposing party's column. But the fact is that generally Republicans must hold down the usual lopsided Democratic majorities in the strongly Democratic counties in order to win.
- 2) The increase in Republican voting since 1952 has been as large in Oklahoma's rural Democratic counties as in the populous counties. The

Bellmon victory and the three Republican presidential victories have been attributed widely to the "big city vote" or to the drawing out of "new voters" in the big cities and their suburbs. These have been important, but the equally important role of the rural counties in these victories apparently has been overlooked. The ten least populous of Oklahoma's strongly Democratic counties registered an average 20 per cent increase in Republican voting in 1952 as compared with 1948, and an approximate 30 per cent increase in 1960 as compared with 1948. The increase in the five populous counties of Oklahoma, Tulsa, Garfield, Kay, and Washington averaged 15 per cent in 1952 and 16 per cent in 1960, as compared with 1948.

Increases in Republican Voting in Democratic and Rural Areas

The increases in Republican voting in the strongly Democratic counties and in the rural counties have been confined mostly to those years in which a strong Republican tide was running in the state. In 1954 and 1958, when the Democratic tide was strong, these counties returned their usual lopsided Democratic majorities.

The increase in Republican voting in the strongly Democratic counties in the good Republican years.--Table 29 shows the number of Republican votes cast in the thirty-seven strongly Democratic counties, the thirteen Democratic-oriented counties, the ten Republican-oriented counties, the sixteen strongly Republican counties, and in Oklahoma county in 1938 and 1942. Democrat Elmer Thomas defeated Republican Harry O. Glasser by 148,000 votes in 1938, and Republican Ed Moore defeated Democrat Josh Lee by 37,500 votes in 1942. Both were off-year

elections.

TABLE 29.--The number and percentage of increased Republican votes cast in the Democratic and Republican counties in 1938, 1942

	1938	1942	Per Cent Increase
Strongly Democratic	36,515	50,365	37.9
Democratic-oriented	24,235	28,275	18.5
Republican-oriented	27,103	33,685	24.3
Strongly Republican	59,733	73,331	22.8
Oklahoma county	12,148	18,057	48.6

Although the percentage increase in Republican voting was greater in the strongly Democratic counties than in the Democratic-oriented swing counties, it resulted in pushing only four of the thirty-seven strongly Democratic counties into the Republican column, as against nine of the thirteen Democratic-oriented counties.

A total of 185,712 switch votes was required to convert a 1938 Democratic senatorial plurality of 148,202 into a 1942 Republican senatorial plurality of 37,510. Of the required 185,712 switch votes, the strongly Democratic counties contributed 39.9 per cent, the Democratic-oriented counties 15.3 per cent, the Republican-oriented counties 13.3 per cent, the strongly Republican counties 21.6 per cent, and Oklahoma county 9.8 per cent.

There was a similar heavy increase in Republican voting in the strongly Democratic counties in the 1952, 1956, and 1960 presidential elections, as shown by Table 30. The data in Table 30 relate the size of the Democratic or Republican vote pluralities in 1948, the year of the last Democratic presidential victory, to those of the three years in which Republicans won.

TABLE 30.--Vote pluralities in the Democratic and Republican counties in the last four presidential elections

	1948	1952	1956	1960
Strongly Democratic	131,829 D	47,566 D	40,729 D	4,566 R
Democratic-oriented	27,261 D	12,674 R	6,801 R	17,800 R
Republican-oriented	13,687 D	15,353 R	13,244 R	18,857 R
Strongly Republican	8,595 R	81,352 R	80,989 R	82,361 R
Oklahoma county	19,793 D	25,293 R	27,883 R	38,344 R

A total of 271,071 switch votes was required to convert a 1948 Democratic presidential plurality of 183,965 into a 1952 Republican presidential plurality of 87,106. Of this number, the strongly Democratic counties contributed 31.1 per cent, the Democratic-oriented counties 14.7 per cent, the Republican-oriented counties 10.7 per cent, the strongly Republican counties 26.8 per cent, and Oklahoma county 16.6 per cent.

The number of Democratic votes decreased by 84,263 in the strongly Democratic counties as between 1948 and 1952. Eisenhower's plurality in the entire state in 1952 was 87,106.

In 1960, the thirty-seven strongly Democratic counties returned an actual Republican plurality of 4,566.

The increase in Republican voting in the rural Democratic counties in the good Republican years.--The rural Democratic counties chosen to demonstrate that there was a larger percentage increase in Republican voting in these counties than in the state's most populous counties were selected on these bases: (1) that each county have a population of less than ten thousand and (2) that each be classified as strongly Democratic. The eleven counties that meet these criteria are listed in Table 31, which relates the Republican percentage of the

total vote in each for the year 1948 to that of 1952, 1956, and 1960. The increase in Republican voting in these rural Democratic counties will then be compared with the Republican increase in Oklahoma, Tulsa, Garfield, Kay, and Washington counties; the first four of these counties are among the state's six most populous counties and Washington county is the ninth most populous.

TABLE 31.--Republican percentage of the vote in the eleven least populous strongly Democratic counties in 1948, 1952, 1956, and 1960

	1948	1952	1956	1960
Coal	17.9	38.6	36.5	44.5
Cotton	22.0	47.2	42.5	49.7
Harmon	10.2	35.6	32.4	47.4
Haskell	30.2	41.6	42.4	52.0
Jefferson	14.3	32.5	31.8	40.8
Johnston	16.5	35.0	34.1	44.1
Latimer	26.5	42.2	41.0	48.6
Love	10.2	29.0	29.3	39.2
Marshall	16.0	34.4	35.4	42.4
Pushmataha	20.9	38.8	39.7	51.4
Roger Mills	18.9	52.9	43.9	64.3
Average	18.5	38.9	37.2	47.7

The 1948 figures show the small percentage of the vote which Republican candidates often receive in the strongly Democratic counties. The 1952, 1956, and 1960 figures show the more substantial vote percentages which Republicans may receive in those years when a strong Republican tide is running in the state.

Table 32 shows the Republican percentage of the vote for the same years in five of Oklahoma's most populous counties. Oklahoma and Tulsa are the two most populous counties; the other three are the largest of the strongly Republican counties.

TABLE 32.--Republican percentage of the vote in five of the state's most populous counties in 1948, 1952, 1956, and 1960

	1948	1952	1956	1960
Oklahoma	40.1	57.6	59.7	61.4
Tulsa	52.6	61.2	65.5	63.0
Garfield	55.7	71.3	69.3	69.3
Kay	47.0	66.2	64.7	64.7
Washington	52.2	64.5	69.3	71.4
Average	49.5	64.2	65.7	66.0

The increases in the average Republican percentage of the vote over that of 1948 in the two sets of counties were:

	1952	1956	1960
Rural Democratic counties	20.4	18.7	29.2
Populous counties	14.7	16.2	16.5

The importance of the foregoing data may be challenged on the ground that there are not enough votes in the small counties to be of significant import in the election of a Republican. However, the intent was to picture the increased Republican voting in the very smallest Democratic counties preparatory to showing the increased Republican voting in the entire bloc of thirty-seven strongly Democratic counties, the greatest number of which are more rural than urban. Their average population is 20,730 and nineteen of the thirty-seven have populations of less than fifteen thousand.

Table 33 compares the numerical increase in Republican voting as between 1948 and 1952 in the thirty-seven strongly Democratic counties with that in the populous counties of Oklahoma, Tulsa, Garfield, Kay, and Washington. The two sets of counties had approximately equal populations in 1950: the combined population of the strongly Democratic counties was

500,552 and that of the five populous counties was 464,338.

TABLE 33.--The 1952 numerical increase in Republican voting in the strongly Democratic counties compared with that in five populous, mostly Republican counties

	Democratic Plurality, 1948	Plurality, 1952	Republican Increase, 1952
Strongly Democratic counties	131,829	47,566 D	84,263
Five populous counties	13,923	76,143 R	90,066

The two sets of counties, with relatively equal populations, contributed almost equally to the 1952 Republican voting gain.

The remaining increase of 96,752 in Republican votes in 1952 was contributed by the state's other thirty-five counties, the greatest number of which are more rural than urban. Hence it must be said that Oklahoma's rural counties contributed at least as much to the increased Republican vote as did the more populous areas.

Other Significant Aspects of Oklahoma Switch Voting

The role of the swing counties.--The voting age populations of the swing counties in 1960 were: the Democratic-oriented counties, 175,521; the Republican-oriented, 134,014; and Oklahoma county, 263,823. The Democratic-oriented counties had 12.2 per cent of the state's total voting age population, the Republican-oriented counties 9.4 per cent, and Oklahoma county 18.6 per cent.

Table 34 shows the Democratic or Republican pluralities returned by the swing counties in the last four presidential elections,

as related to the plurality of the entire state.

TABLE 34.--Democratic or Republican pluralities returned by the entire state and by the swing counties in presidential elections

	1948	1952	1956	1960
Entire state	183,975 D	87,106 R	88,188 R	161,928 R
Republican-oriented	13,687 D	15,353 R	13,244 R	18,857 R
Democratic-oriented	27,261 D	12,674 R	6,801 R	17,800 R
Oklahoma county	19,793 D	25,293 R	27,883 R	38,344 R
Net plurality of the swing counties	60,741 D	56,054 R	47,928 R	75,001 R

When the swing counties vote alike, they make a substantial contribution to election outcomes. And, since they are the more politically sensitive counties, they often do vote alike when the short-term influences definitely favor the Democratic or Republican party. For example, they contributed nearly 65 per cent of the total state Republican plurality in 1952, when they all voted Republican.

However, the division of the Democratic-Republican vote is usually rather narrow in these counties. Hence, when they vote differently the plurality in one set of counties sometimes virtually cancels out the plurality for the opposing candidate in the other set of counties. For example, in the 1950 gubernatorial election the Republican-oriented counties returned a Republican plurality of 4,646, the Democratic-oriented counties a Democratic plurality of 9,029, and Oklahoma county a Republican plurality of 11,038. The net result of the voting in all twenty-four counties was a Republican plurality of 6,655. But this was a very close election; the Democratic plurality in the entire state was 16,103.

The role of Oklahoma and Tulsa counties.--The combined voting age populations of the state's two most populous counties in 1960 was 33.3 per cent of that for the entire state, or exactly one-third. In terms of actual votes cast in recent elections, the combined vote of the two counties rose from 19.7 per cent of the state total in 1940 to 34.4 per cent in 1960.

As explained previously, Oklahoma county has been characterized as the state's crucial swing county and Tulsa county as the anchor county of the strong Republican bloc. As with the swing counties, when Oklahoma and Tulsa county voters return pluralities for candidates of the same party, the combined votes of these two counties may have a significant impact upon election outcomes for the state as a whole. But when they return pluralities for candidates of opposing parties, as they often have in the past, the impact of their combined vote is considerably reduced.

Table 35 shows the Democratic or Republican pluralities returned by Oklahoma and Tulsa counties and by the state as a whole in the presidential elections from 1944 through 1956. The net plurality of Oklahoma and Tulsa counties is also given, so that the effect of their combined vote may be related to that of the state as a whole.

TABLE 35.--Voting pluralities in Oklahoma and Tulsa counties related to total state pluralities in four presidential elections

	1944	1948	1952	1956
Entire state	82,125 D	183,965 D	87,106 R	88,188 R
Oklahoma county	15,348 D	19,793 D	25,293 R	27,833 R
Tulsa county	9,227 R	9,344 R	27,134 R	39,414 R
Net plurality	6,121 D	10,449 D	52,427 R	67,247 R

In 1944 and 1948 the two counties combined contributed only 7.5 and 5.7 per cent of the state's total Democratic pluralities, but in 1952 and 1956 the two counties voted alike and contributed 62.6 and 76.3 per cent of the state's total Republican pluralities.

In the 1954 gubernatorial election, Oklahoma county voters returned a Democratic plurality of 5,614, while Tulsa county voters returned a Republican plurality of 5,206. The net plurality of the two counties combined thus was 408 Democratic, or less than four-tenths of 1 per cent of the total state Democratic plurality of 105,578. But in 1962 both counties voted Republican, and together they contributed exactly two-thirds of the total state Republican plurality of 76,959 by which Bellmon was elected; Oklahoma county returned a Republican plurality of 21,691 and Tulsa county a Republican plurality of 29,561, making a combined Republican plurality of 51,252.

Extensive switch voting is not a recent phenomenon in Oklahoma.--

Examples of switch voting may be found in the elections that antedate statehood. In 1902, both Kay and Noble county voters returned Republican majorities in the contest for delegate to Congress and Democratic majorities in the contests for seats in the upper house of the territorial legislature.

A rather glaring example of switch voting occurred in two successive senatorial elections in Tillman county in 1920 and 1924. The total voter turnout varied by only twenty-five persons in the two election years, and presumably it was largely the same persons who were voting in both elections. The results were:

1920 Vote		1924 Vote	
Democrat	Republican	Democrat	Republican
2,667	1,571	852	3,449

A 60.9 per cent Democratic majority in 1920 was converted into a 78.4 per cent Republican majority in 1924. This occurred in a strongly Democratic county, and in a year in which the Democratic presidential nominee carried Tillman county by a vote of 2,653 to 1,326, a majority of 63.7 per cent.

An examination of all political contests extending back to 1907 and down to the county level shows that Love county is the only county in the state that has returned majorities for the candidates of only one party in all the county, district, and statewide contests.¹ Love county definitely is the most Democratic county in the state; its voters have registered the highest Democratic percentages in the voting for both governor and United States senator since 1907 and the second highest percentage in the voting for President.² Johnston county is the only other county that has never returned a Republican majority in a statewide contest, but its voters have elected three Republican county officials since 1907. Marshall county voters returned their first Republican majorities of any kind in 1962, when the Republican gubernatorial and senatorial candidates carried the county.

Only nine Democratic counties have never elected a Republican county official: Beckham, Bryan, Greer, Harmon, Jackson, Love, McCurtain, Marshall, and Pontotoc. However, all these counties except Love county

¹Source of this data is the individual issues of the State Election Board's Directory and Manual and Roster of State and County Officers, each published biennially.

²University of Oklahoma Bureau, op. cit., pp. 19, 21, 23.

have bolted the party in one or more statewide contests. All their bolting occurred in the 1924 or 1962 United States senate races, the 1928 or 1960 presidential elections, or the 1962 gubernatorial contest.

There has been much more switch voting in the strongly Republican counties than in the strongly Democratic counties. In Major county, the strongest Republican county in the state, a full slate of Republican county officials was elected in only six of the twenty-eight elections examined since 1907. Alfalfa elected a full Republican slate in five elections and Garfield in three. The following strongly Republican counties have never elected a full slate of Republican county officials: Grant, Harper, Kay, Pawnee, Tulsa, Washington, and Woodward. Bolting the party in the state legislative races and in the voting for secondary state officials is fairly common in these Republican counties.

Since 1920 the Oklahoma protest vote has been cast for major party candidates rather than for third party candidates.--The heavy vote for Populist candidates in the 1890's and for Socialist candidates from 1907 through 1918 was noted in Chapter I, as was the decision of Oklahoma farm and labor leaders in the 1918-1921 period to work for their aims through the Democratic party rather than through a third party. The largest third party vote polled since 1920 has been the 41,141 votes cast for the Farmer-Labor party presidential candidate in 1924, when the combined Farmer-Labor and Socialist party vote amounted to 8.7 per cent of the total. The next largest non-major party vote was the 31,840 votes cast for Independent candidate D.A. Jelly Bryce in the 1958 gubernatorial election.

The Dixiecrats and Henry Wallace Progressives failed to meet

the constitutional requirements for getting their electors on the ballot in 1948, and hence there is no good measure of extremist sentiment in Oklahoma in recent years.

However, the Republican percentage of the vote has been markedly higher since 1942, and the thesis was set forth in Chapter I that much of this vote may represent a protest against higher tax burdens and rising prices. The 1928 and 1960 Republican presidential victories were protests against the Catholic nominees of the Democratic party. The 1952 and 1956 Republican presidential victories embodied some protest against Democratic entry into and handling of the Korean war in particular and the handling of cold war problems in general.

A graphic picture of Oklahoma switch voting.--To complete the picture of Oklahoma switch voting, a series of ten maps is presented to show the counties carried by Republican and Democratic candidates in nine elections in which switch voting was very significant.

Map XIII is offered to represent what may be considered as a relatively "normal" election from the standpoint of the counties carried by the Democratic and Republican candidates. It shows the counties carried by Democratic gubernatorial nominee Robert S. Kerr in 1942 when he defeated Republican nominee William J. Otjen. The Republican nominee carried all the strongly Republican counties and all the Republican-oriented swing counties except Beaver and Canadian.

The remainder of the maps represent deviations from the so-called norm.

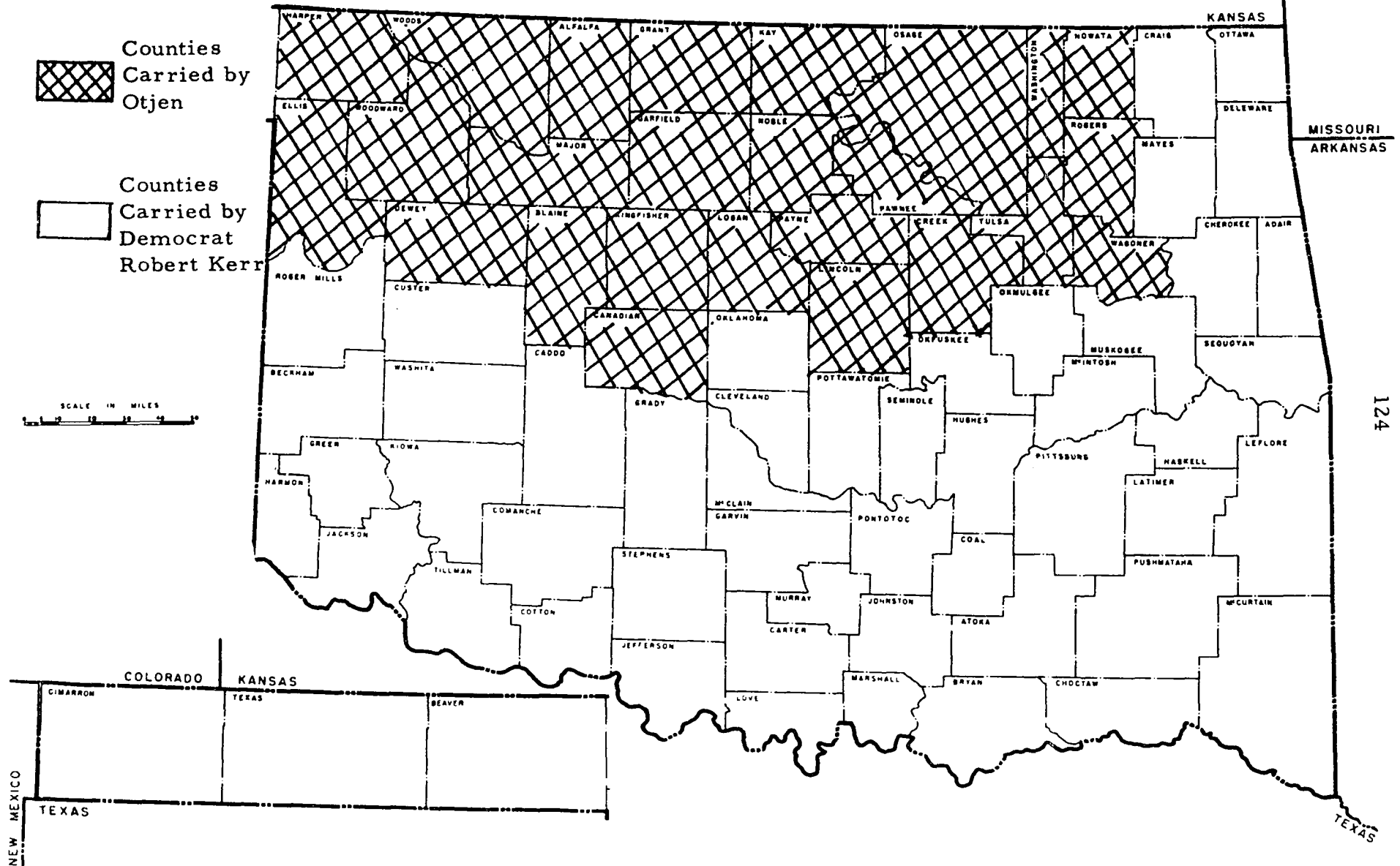
Maps XIV through XIX picture Republican victories and show the elections in which Democratic switch voting was heavy. Maps XX through

XXII picture Democratic victories and point up the fact that Republican switch voting also can be heavy.

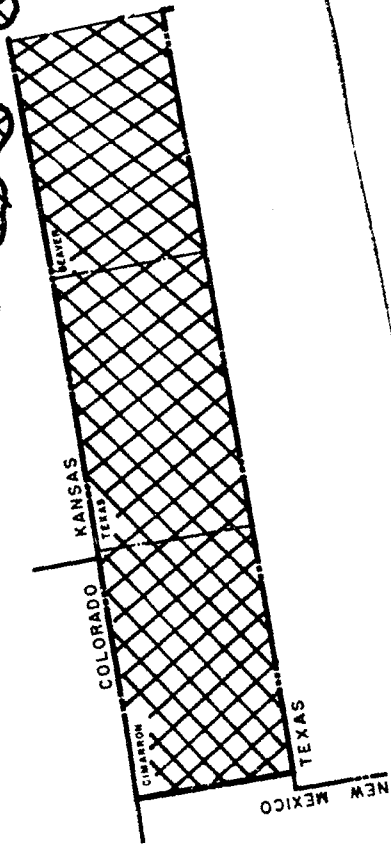
Maps XIV, XV, and XVI show how deeply the Republican tide penetrated into the strongly Democratic counties of southern Oklahoma in the 1920 presidential election, the 1924 senatorial election, and the 1928 presidential election. Map XVII shows the counties carried by Republican senatorial candidate Ed Moore in a somewhat narrower Republican victory in 1942; here the Republican trend penetrated into the swing counties, but not into the strongly Democratic counties. Map XVIII shows the strength of the sentiment for Eisenhower in 1952; Eisenhower carried all the Republican counties and all the swing counties, plus a couple strongly Democratic counties in southwestern Oklahoma. Map XIX shows the strength of the anti-Catholic sentiment in 1960, when Nixon carried a large number of strongly Democratic counties.

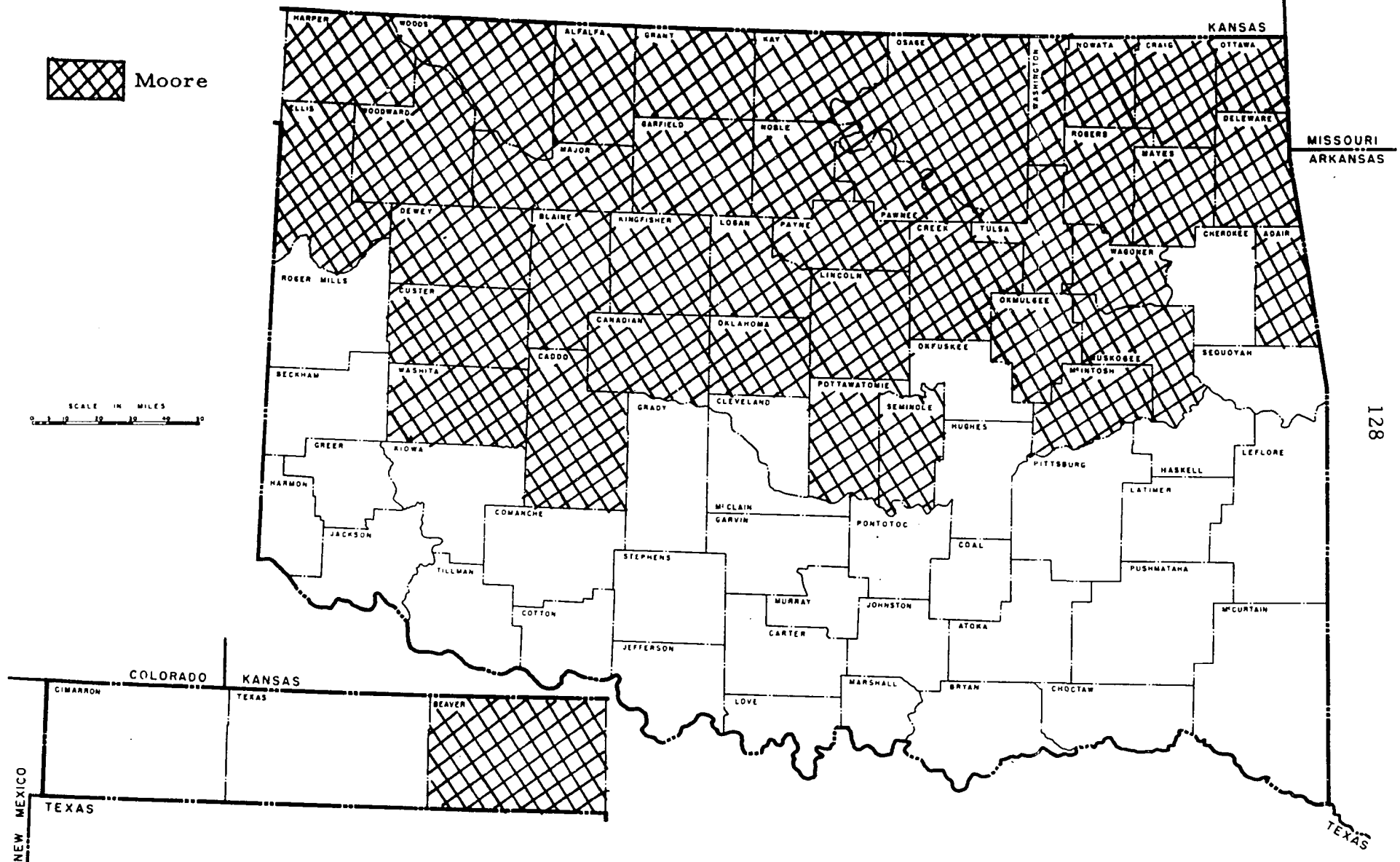
Map XX shows the counties carried by Democrat Harry Truman in the 1948 presidential election, when fear of an economic downturn apparently caused many strongly Republican counties to return Democratic majorities. Map XXI shows the inroads made into Republican territory by Democratic gubernatorial nominee Raymond Gary in 1954, just two years after Eisenhower had scored his impressive presidential victory--a reversal of voting which gives pause to one trying to find signs of a definite trend toward either major party in the 1950's. Map XXII gives the percentage of the vote received by Democratic gubernatorial nominee J. Howard Edmondson, who carried every county in the state in 1958; this constitutes the ultimate in Republican switch voting.

MAP XIII. COUNTIES CARRIED BY REPUBLICAN WILLIAM J. OTJEN
IN 1942, A RELATIVELY "NORMAL" ELECTION

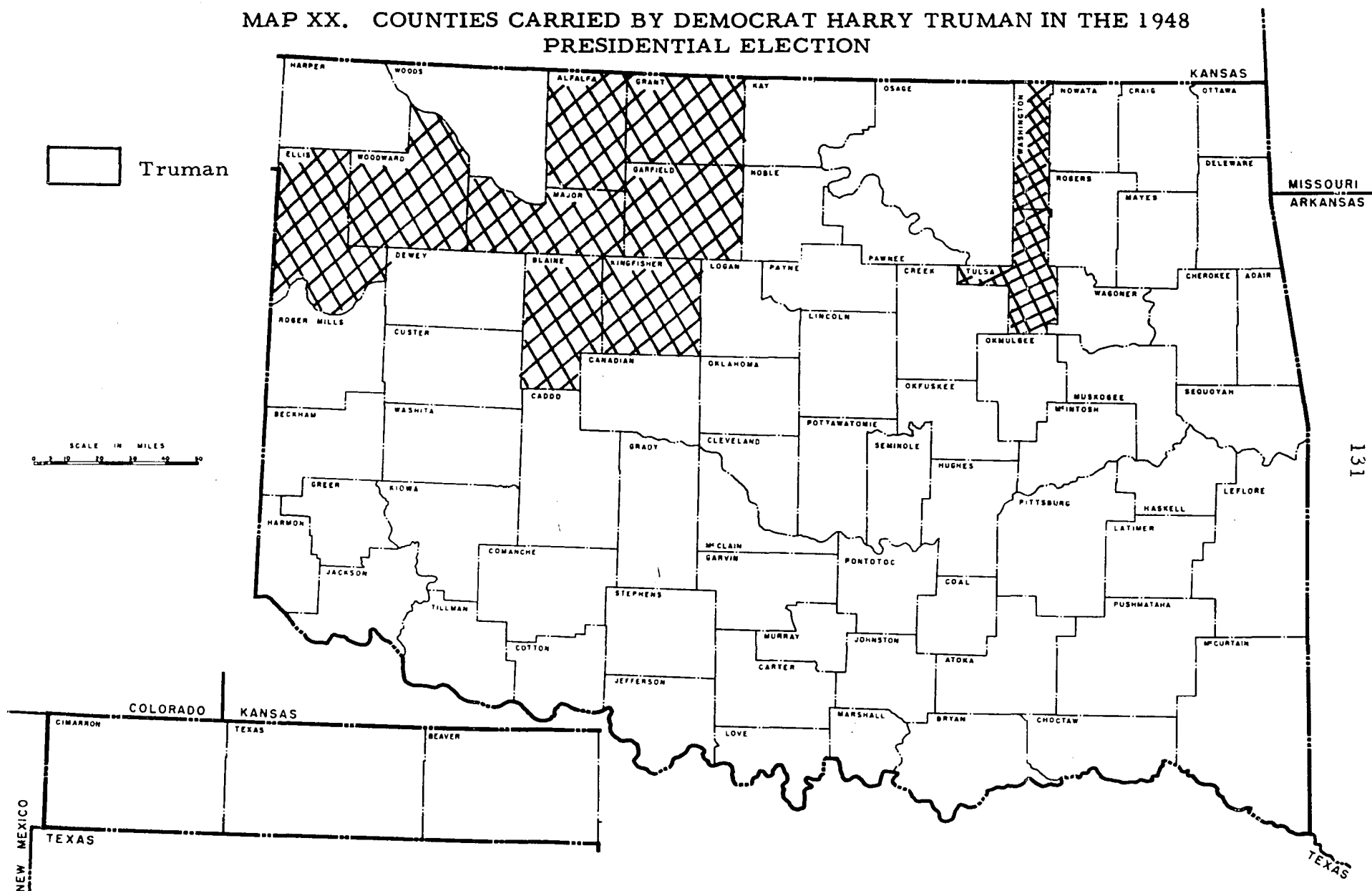


MAP XVI.

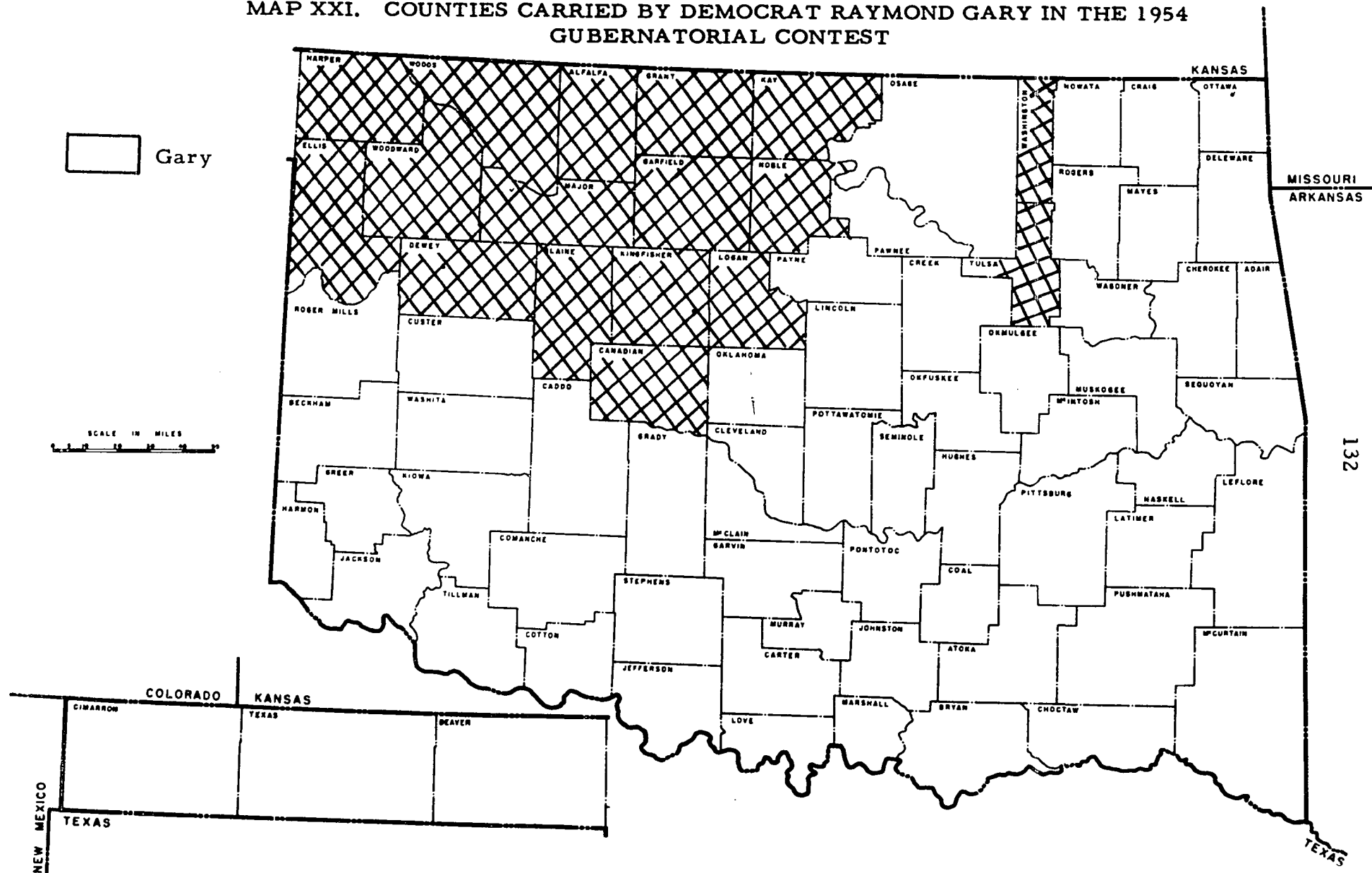


 Moore

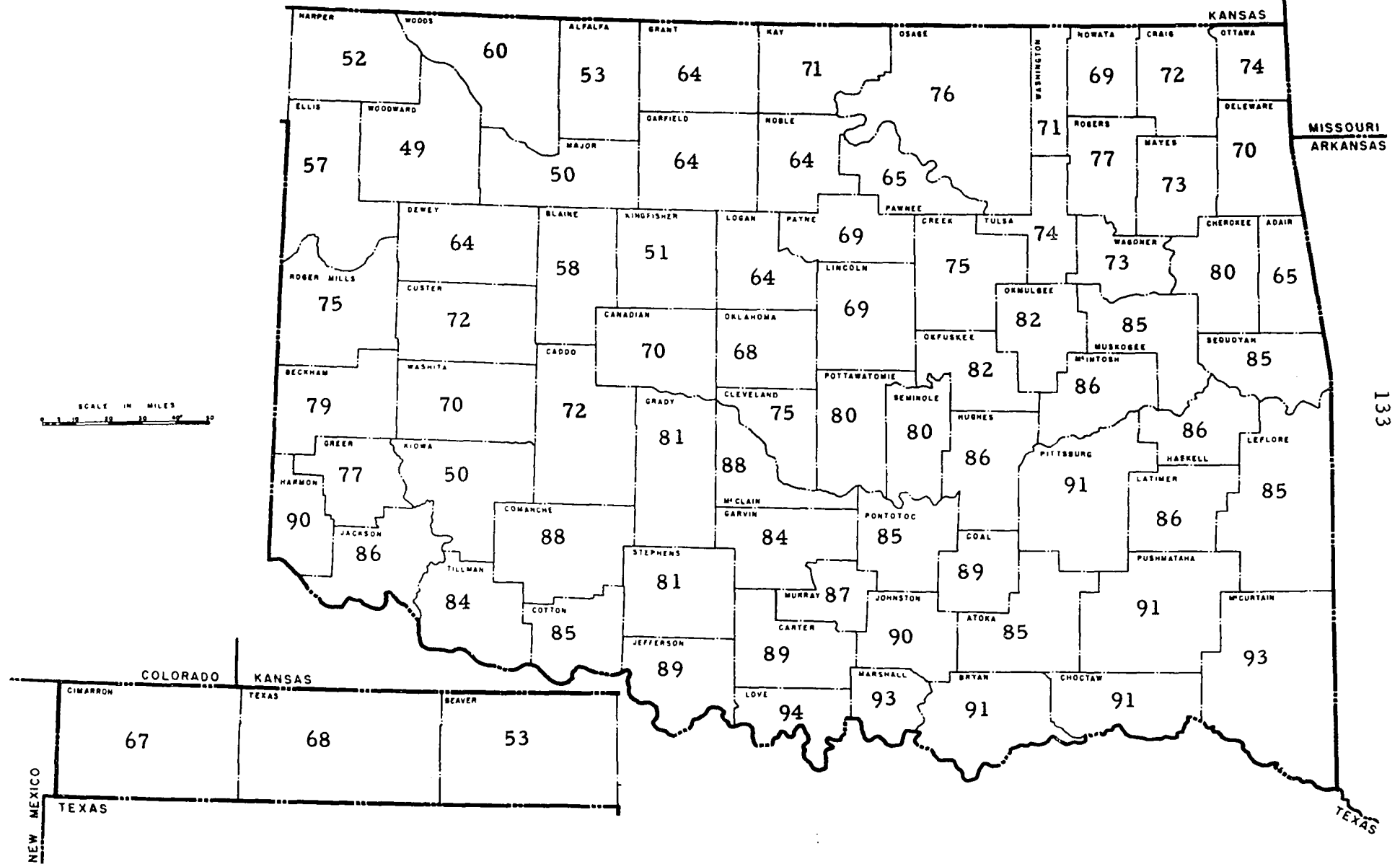
MAP XX. COUNTIES CARRIED BY DEMOCRAT HARRY TRUMAN IN THE 1948
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION



MAP XXI. COUNTIES CARRIED BY DEMOCRAT RAYMOND GARY IN THE 1954 GUBERNATORIAL CONTEST



MAP XXII. PERCENTAGE OF THE TOTAL VOTE RECEIVED BY DEMOCRAT
J. HOWARD EDMONDSON IN THE 1958 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION



CHAPTER VI

VOTER TURNOUT

On the national level, the theory has been widely held that a light voter turnout is favorable to the Republican party, though this is subject to some dispute as to given locations and given elections. The theory and at least one notable exception to it are stated by Michigan Survey Research Center writers:¹

[It is a] commonly held belief that a large turnout in national elections should favor the Democratic party. This belief is based on the fact that the traditionally pro-Republican classes uniformly have a high turnout, even when the vote as a whole is light, so that increases in size of vote might be expected to come mainly from working-class groups. This expectation was clearly not fulfilled in the 1952 election.

. . . [N]o single demographic class was responsible for the great increase in the Republican vote. . . . General Eisenhower won because virtually every major demographic group in American society gave him more votes than it had given the preceding Republican nominee.

In Oklahoma, the theory has been advanced by Otis Sullivant, political writer for the Daily Oklahoman, that a light voter turnout is favorable to the Democratic party rather than the Republican party.² This theory is based upon the idea that there is a "hard-core Democratic vote" of approximately 300,000 to 350,000 in the voting for governor;

¹Campbell, The Voter Decides, p. 75.

²Interview with Otis Sullivant, November 20, 1963.

therefore, the total vote must be more than twice these figures if the Republican candidate is to overcome the hard-core Democratic vote. The size of the hard-core Democratic vote was arrived at by an examination of Democratic voter turnout in fairly recent elections. Table 36 gives the size of the vote for all candidates, the number of Democratic votes, and the percentage of the Democratic vote for each gubernatorial election since 1930.

TABLE 36.--The size of the Democratic vote related to the size of the total vote in all gubernatorial elections since 1930

	Total Vote	Democratic Vote	Per Cent
1930	511,320	301,921	59.0
1934	628,426	365,992	58.2
1938	507,956	355,740	70.0
1942	378,781	196,565	51.8
1946	494,600	259,491	52.4
1950	644,276	329,308	51.1
1954	609,194	357,386	58.6
1958	538,879	399,533	74.1
1962	709,763	315,357	44.4
Average	559,022	320,144	

The table shows that Democratic nominees won every election except that of 1962, when the off-year voter turnout exceeded 700,000 for the first time in Oklahoma history.

In his newspaper articles Sullivant elaborated upon his theory that a light vote benefits the Democratic party in Oklahoma in this way: "Democrats benefit by the so-called welfare vote, [control of] the state and federal set-ups and the county set-ups, and voters influenced by party organization strength," whereas "the heavy vote brings out voters in the cities and suburban areas, where

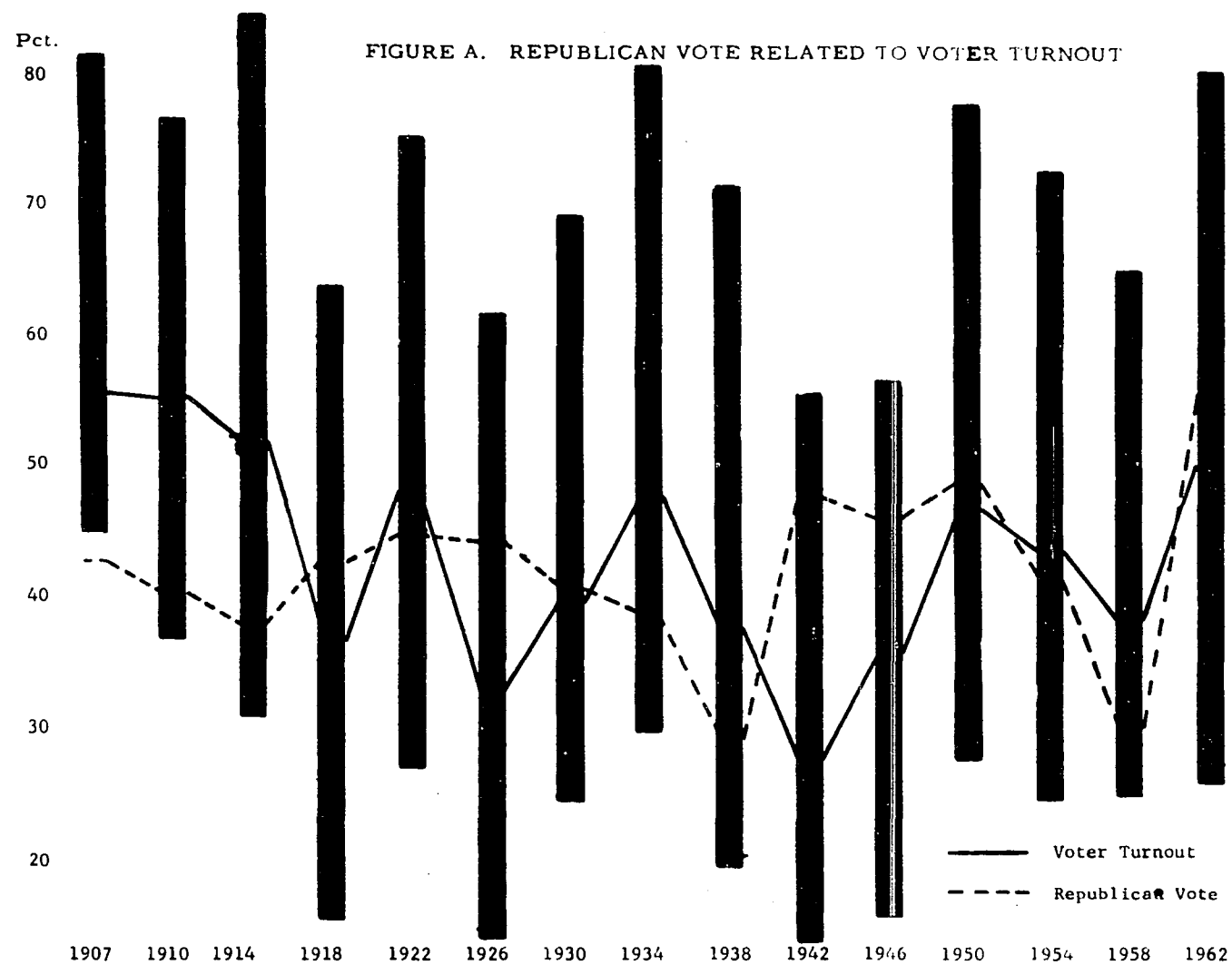
the trend is with the GOP."³ He added that "the big majorities in the last three presidential races of Eisenhower and Nixon resulted from heavy turnouts in the big city areas."⁴

However, despite the fact that the election of Oklahoma's first Republican governor was accompanied by a heavier than usual voter turnout, it has been impossible to establish a positive correlation between an increase in the total vote and an increase in the Republican vote. Full acceptance of the theory is subject to some question on the following grounds:

- 1) When the average percentage of voter turnout for the state and the average percentage of the Republican vote in all gubernatorial elections since 1907 are plotted on a chart, no consistent relation between the two factors emerges, as shown by Figure A. During some periods of Oklahoma history the Republican vote decreased as voter turnout increased. In Figure A, the range of voter turnout extends from that of the county with the lowest percentage of voter turnout to that of the county with the highest turnout percentage. The solid line represents the average percentage of turnout for the state as a whole; the broken line shows the average statewide Republican percentage of the total vote for each election. It seems clear that the Republican vote has not always increased as voter turnout increased.
- 2) The data in Table 36 do not wholly support the theory. It is true that the two best Republican showings in the history of Oklahoma

³Daily Oklahoman, September 16, 1962.

⁴Ibid., September 26, 1962.



gubernatorial elections came in the high turnout years of 1950 and 1962. But, on the other hand, Democrat Gary received 58.6 per cent of the vote in 1954 when the turnout was 609,194, while Democrats Robert Kerr and Roy Turner received only 51.8 and 52.4 per cent of the vote in 1942 and 1946 with light turnouts of 378,781 and 494,600. Table 37 relates the percentage of voter turnout to the percentage of the Republican vote in all the gubernatorial elections since 1942. The figures for the six gubernatorial elections are arranged so as to begin at the left with the election in which the Republican vote percentage was the lowest; they continue in the order of the next best Republican showing, with the 1962 Republican victory at the far right. If the theory under examination were wholly valid, there should be a steady increase in voter turnout percentages from left to right to correspond with the steadily increasing Republican vote percentages.

TABLE 37.--Republican percentage of the vote related to percentage of statewide voter turnout in six gubernatorial elections

	1958	1954	1946	1942	1950	1962
Republican pct. of total vote	19.9	41.3	45.9	47.6	48.6	55.2
Percentage of voter turnout	38.2	43.6	35.9	27.6	46.6	49.8

While the 1950 and 1962 election results would seem to constitute arguments for the fact that a large voter turnout is favorable to the Republican party, the 1954 and 1958 results appear to be arguments for the fact that popular Democratic candidates can attract large numbers of votes from Republican areas, including the big city areas. It seems plausible to suspect that there would be a better correlation between

Republican candidate popularity and size of Republican vote than between size of voter turnout and size of Republican vote, modified in some elections by campaign issues or national trends.

3) It was shown in Chapter V that the hard-core Democratic areas are capable of switching their votes to Republican candidates when these candidates are especially popular or when the short-term influences bearing upon a particular election favor the Republicans. The Eisenhower and Nixon victories are attributable only in part to large turnouts in the big city and suburban areas. The popularity of these candidates extended into Oklahoma's rural areas, and the increase in Republican voting was almost as great in the rural areas as in the populous areas. Moreover, the increase in Republican voting was almost as great in the strongly Democratic areas as in the strongly Republican areas. It appears that the Eisenhower and Nixon victories are attributable more to heavy Democratic switch voting than to a drawing out of "new voters" in the cities and suburbs.

4) In the Oklahoma general elections, voter turnout is highest in the sixteen strongly Republican counties and lowest in the thirty-seven strongly Democratic counties, as shown by the figures in Table 38. This table gives the average percentage of voter turnout for the Republican, Democratic, and swing counties and for Oklahoma county in five recent elections. The data show a steady decline in voter turnout as the voting areas become less strongly Republican and more strongly Democratic. Hence it is mostly Democrats who are staying at home on general election day, not Republicans. If there were as many Republican partisans as Democratic partisans in Oklahoma, the advantage in a year

of light voter turnout should be with the Republicans. For the voter turnout in the strongly Democratic counties has been averaging approximately 14 per cent less than that in the strongly Republican counties.

TABLE 38.--Average percentage of voter turnout in the Republican, Democratic, and swing counties in five recent elections

	1948	1950	1954	1960	1962	Avg.
	Pres.	Gov.	Gov.	Pres.	Gov.	
Strongly Republican	59.8	61.5	57.4	73.4	65.6	63.5
Republican-oriented	58.1	55.2	51.7	69.4	58.5	58.6
Democratic-oriented	57.1	51.7	50.1	66.1	57.3	56.5
Strongly Democratic	50.2	43.6	42.3	60.6	51.1	49.6
Oklahoma county	49.4	41.6	38.6	63.5	46.6	47.9

5) That large numbers of politically conscious Democrats in the strongly Democratic counties are staying at home on general election day is substantiated by the fact that the total vote in the general election is considerably lower than the total vote in the primaries in these counties. In the Republican counties, the total vote in the general election is considerably higher than the total vote in the primaries. This means that there is a rather large reservoir of politically conscious voters in the Democratic counties who are not voting in the general election. The term "politically conscious voters" is stressed in the light of studies which indicate that the "group of non-voters is relatively constant over time."⁵ In other words, roughly the same persons vote in most elections; the others are so low in political involvement that they are drawn to the polls with the greatest difficulty. Table 39 compares the voter turnout in the Democratic and Republican primaries in the thirty-seven strongly Democratic counties with that in the sixteen strongly Republican counties for the years 1950, 1954, and 1962.

⁵Campbell, The American Voter, n. 15, p. 111.

TABLE 39.--Size of primary and general election vote in Democratic counties compared with that in the Republican counties

Year	Demo. Vote in Primary	Repub. Vote in Primary	Demo. Vote Gen. Elec.	Repub. Vote Gen. Elec.
1950				
Democratic counties	247,978	2,658	139,895	69,118
Republican counties	76,476	34,522	66,403	114,963
1954				
Democratic counties	242,310	3,344	144,457	47,657
Republican counties	83,639	34,795	76,157	100,033
1962				
Democratic counties	235,211	4,063	123,241	90,644
Republican counties	93,040	38,457	64,328	137,142

The figures show a decline of approximately 100,000 Democratic votes in the strongly Democratic counties as between the primaries and general elections. Since the Republican vote increased by an average of approximately 50,000 votes in 1950 and 1954, this would indicate that approximately half the 100,000 decline in Democratic votes in those years resulted from Democrats staying at home. In 1962 the total vote in the general election showed less of a decline from the total vote in the Democratic and Republican primaries, but the Democratic vote dropped sharply in the general election; this means that fewer Democrats stayed at home but that there was a much higher degree of switch voting.

Summary

The assumption that there is a good-sized reservoir of stay-at-home voters in the Republican areas who are drawn to the polls in years of high voter turnout does not seem warranted from the foregoing data. Rather, it appears that the greatest reservoir of politically conscious voters who are staying at home during the general elections is in the strongly Democratic areas.

Recent Republican successes appear to be attributable more to the offering of popular candidates, to Democratic switch voting, to Democratic party splits, and to other short-term influences favorable to the Republican party rather than to high voter turnout.

With continued urbanization, a more consistent relation might develop between high voter turnout and an increase in Republican voting. For, as explained previously, there are more populous centers in the Republican areas of the state than in the Democratic areas; also, seventeen of the twenty-three counties that lost 20 per cent or more of their populations between 1950 and 1960 were rural Democratic counties. A continuation of this trend would be favorable to the Republican party.

General Voter Turnout Statistics, 1928-1962

Table 40 gives the average percentage of voter turnout in Oklahoma for the nine presidential elections since 1928 and for the nine gubernatorial elections since 1930.⁶ Here again voter turnout percentages are based upon the number of those who voted in relation to the total number of Oklahoma residents over twenty-one years of age. The most marked trend appears to be a higher motivation to vote in the presidential elections beginning in 1952. Otherwise, it appears that voter turnout is determined for the most part by how much interest is generated by the candidates or issues in given elections. In the gubernatorial elections, turnout was relatively low in 1938 and 1958, the years in which Democratic candidates won by the biggest majorities;

⁶University of Oklahoma Bureau, op. cit., pp. 64-68, 88-106.

it was relatively high in 1950 and 1962, years of strong Republican showings, indicating that the prospect of a close race may bring out the voters.

TABLE 40.--Average percentage of voter turnout for the state as a whole in presidential and gubernatorial elections since 1928

Gubernatorial Elections		Presidential Elections	
1930	39.7	1928	50.1
1934	47.6	1932	54.0
1938	37.5	1936	56.1
1942	27.6	1940	60.3
1946	35.9	1944	52.5
1950	46.6	1948	52.3
1954	43.6	1952	68.3
1958	38.2	1956	61.2
1962	49.8	1960	63.7

CHAPTER VII

REPUBLICAN PARTY LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

Since Oklahoma Republicans elected no governor until 1962 and since only three Republicans have been elected to the United States senate for single terms, leadership of that party necessarily has rested primarily with party organization officials, especially with its national committeemen, rather than with elected public officials, as has been the case with the Democratic party. And, except for one four-year period, the Republican national committeeman was a Tulsa area oil millionaire from 1916 until 1956.

The real power of the national committeeman in the Republican party began with Jim McGraw, the wealthy Ponca City and Tulsa banker-oilman, who assumed that office in 1916. Federal patronage was the source of the national committeeman's power in the party, and Oklahoma got little federal patronage prior to 1916. According to Parker LaMoore, Daily Oklahoman political writer, McGraw was the nearest approach to a political boss that Oklahoma had in its early history.¹

McGraw was succeeded as national committeeman in 1920 by Jake L. Hamon, Ardmore oilman, who was killed shortly after assuming the post.

¹Daily Oklahoman, August 18, 1929.

Following his death a three-way fight for control of federal patronage in Oklahoma broke out between Hamon's successor, James A. (Big Jim) Harris, Wagoner merchant; Hamon's lieutenants; and newly elected United States Senator J.W. Harreld, the first Republican to be elected to the senate from Oklahoma. It was Senator Harreld who soon got control of most federal appointments, and his slate of party officials was elected over the Harris slate at the 1924 Republican state convention.²

It was at this same 1924 state convention that W.G. (Bill) Skelly, wealthy Tulsa oilman, first was nominated for the post of national committeeman, a position he was to hold from 1924 until 1940. Born in Erie, Pennsylvania, the son of an oil field teamster, Skelly began his career as a tool dresser in the Pennsylvania oil fields at eight dollars a week. He entered the oil business on his own in Indiana when he was twenty-three years old. Shortly thereafter he moved to Oklahoma, formed the Skelly Oil Company in 1919, bought into the Burkburnett, Texas, oil field when it was first opened in 1923, almost went under financially in the 1930's, and then rebuilt the company to a point where its capital exceeded \$100,000,000 by 1948.

Skelly, his successor Lew Wentz, and Patrick J. Hurley constituted the core of the Republican party leadership in the 1924-1940 period.³ Hurley, who served as secretary of war under President Herbert Hoover, has been Oklahoma's only cabinet appointee.

There is some difference of opinion as to which of the two long-

²Oklahoma City Times, April 24, 1924.

³Interview with Herbert Hyde, prominent Republican, July 19, 1963.

time national committeemen, Bill Skelly or Lew Wentz, was least interested in building up the Republican party at the grass roots in Oklahoma. Both appeared to operate under the philosophy that it was impossible to elect a Republican governor in Oklahoma, and hence it was wise to send the big party donations to Washington and be content for the most part with receiving federal patronage. The combined terms of the two as national committeemen spanned a lengthy period, from 1924 to 1949, and little effort was expended in building up the party in those twenty-five years.

There were several revolts against Skelly's leadership, particularly in 1928 when the Lew Wentz-Grant McCullough faction demanded that State Chairman Byron Shear be replaced by Frank A. Parkinson. A dispatch from the Daily Oklahoman Washington bureau said in 1928:⁴

Since the death of Jim McGraw of Tulsa, Oklahoma Republicans have been without a leader from the standpoint of the powers that be in Washington. . . .

Senator John W. Harreld has been retired to the ranks. Neither Senator W.B. Pine nor Representative M.C. Garber, the two Republicans in Congress, evidence either the inclination or the adaptability to become party bosses in the accepted sense. William G. Skelly of Tulsa is on the national committee, but Skelly with many interests does not spend much time on matters political outside of campaign years and a leader is wanted who is on the job year in and year out.

But Skelly weathered all the storms until he and Wentz had a serious difference of opinion over whom to support for President in 1940. Wentz was strongly for Dewey and Skelly for Willkie.

In 1940 the post of Republican national committeeman went to Wentz, a bachelor-philanthropist who also rose mercurially in the oil

⁴Daily Oklahoman, June 5, 1928.

business from humble beginnings. Born in Mount Vernon, Iowa, the son of a blacksmith, his family moved to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, when he was young. He came to Ponca City in 1911 to look after the financial interests of John G. McCaskey of Pittsburgh. In 1924, after McCaskey's death, he organized the Wentz Oil Company and a few years later he was reported to be one of seven persons in the United States who was paying federal income tax on a yearly income of more than \$5,000,000.⁵ He gave heavy donations to crippled children's funds, played Santa Claus to Ponca City children and inmates of the county home, and provided several hundred thousand dollars for scholarships for Oklahoma university students.⁶ In 1948 Wentz led the fight for Dewey for President, and it was reported that he was to become secretary of the interior if Dewey won. Some of his friends believe that the disappointment over Dewey's loss and the strenuous effort he put into the campaign contributed to his death on June 9, 1949.⁷

Baillie Vinson of Tulsa, owner of the Vinson Supply Company, which is in the oil refinery and oil field equipment field, succeeded Wentz. Vinson was a Skelly protégé, and he was opposed for the post by a Wentz protégé, Herbert K. Hyde, Oklahoma City attorney. Supporters of Vinson stressed that he was privately wealthy and therefore could afford to devote time to party work. Neal Sullivan, of Newkirk, a Hyde supporter, wrote the following to the Republican central committee members

⁵Oklahoma City Times, June 29, 1927.

⁶Ponca City News, September 10, 1939.

⁷Daily Oklahoman, June 10, 1949.

in reply to this argument:⁸

This is one of the things wrong with the Republican party in Oklahoma. We are pointed out as the party of millionaires instead of the party of the people.

This letter proved to be one of the harbingers of change in Republican party leadership in Oklahoma, for it was during Vinson's tenure that a group of Republicans who wanted to build the party at the grass roots wrested some control from the Tulsa group.

The change in Republican party leadership began to take form shortly after the election of Eisenhower in 1952. The Tulsa oilmen had backed Robert Taft for the Republican presidential nomination. The Oklahoma City and wheat belt Republicans were for Eisenhower. Skelly, a strong Taft man, led the Oklahoma delegation to the 1952 Republican national convention. C.E. Barnes, Oklahoma City attorney, who had served as Republican state chairman from 1948 until 1950, was the leader of the Eisenhower forces in the Oklahoma delegation. When Eisenhower won the nomination, "the Taft leaders, headed by Skelly, did not take their defeat kindly" and their ill feeling extended into the post-election period.⁹

The grass roots Republicans of this post-1952 period were led by Barnes; Floyd Carrier, who was Republican state chairman from 1950 until 1954 and who had served as a state legislator from the Enid area since 1935; and Mrs. H.H. Sayre, Republican national committeewoman.

The Republican party had been without federal patronage since

⁸Ibid., September 9, 1949.

⁹Paul T. David and Malcolm Moos (eds.), Presidential Nominating Politics in 1952 (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1954), III, 292-312. See chap. xiii on "Oklahoma" by Cortez A.M. Ewing and Mrs. June Benson.

1932, and now a strong difference of opinion developed between the grass roots Republicans and the Tulsa group over distribution of the newly found patronage that came with Eisenhower's election. The pro-Eisenhower group wanted State Chairman Carrier to dispense it; the Tulsa group wanted National Committeeman Vinson to make the decisions.

This intra-party strife was a strong factor in the failure of the party to capitalize immediately upon the Eisenhower victory with a strong grass roots movement. Otis Sullivant wrote in 1953:¹⁰

When Floyd Carrier, state chairman, and his forces took charge of the central committee to name Robert L. Aitken [Oklahoma City filling station operator] party treasurer, it cut out the Tulsa Republican leaders who have been counted upon to finance the party in the past.

It is no secret that party headquarters is having trouble raising funds. . . .

Table 27 in Chapter IV showed that Republican failures to enter statewide contests increased rather sharply in 1950 and continued through that decade and into the present one. The Tulsa group became less interested in supplying campaign funds, and this hurt the party.

In the contest for Republican state chairman in 1954 the Vinson forces supported Douglas McKeever, Enid attorney who was serving as assistant solicitor in the Postoffice Department in Washington. The Barnes-Carrier group backed Aitken. The state committee chose McKeever, and he worked out this compromise on the distribution of patronage: local appointments were to be made upon the recommendation of local Republican committees; the higher appointments were to be made upon recommendation of a committee composed of the state chairman, the

¹⁰Daily Oklahoman, August 8, 1953.

national committeeman, and the national committeewoman.¹¹ This apparently eased, but did not end, the party strife.

In 1956 Vinson announced that he would not be a candidate for national committeeman and threw his support to Reuben Sparks, Woodward lawyer-rancher, who had been the party's gubernatorial nominee in 1954. His selection made Sparks the first non-Tulsa area oil millionaire to hold the post since 1924. But Sparks lived in the northwest corner of the state, far removed from the state capital, and he was unable to devote the time required for building up the party.¹²

In 1960 Sparks did not seek reelection and it was reported that "there seems to be less interest in the post than in the past."¹³ It was about this time that William Robbins, county chairman of Oklahoma county, placed an advertisement in the Oklahoma City newspapers asking Republicans interested in becoming candidates for political office to contact him. Party morale was not at all high.

However, State Chairman John Tyler, of Bartlesville, operator of the Portland Cement Company at Dewey, oilman, and rancher, announced his candidacy and was chosen virtually without opposition. As state chairman in 1959, Tyler had devised a neighbor-to-neighbor Republican program in which local party workers were asked to call upon every registered Republican in their areas to solicit funds and to ask for more party participation. The program, which began in May, 1959, was designed to answer the question: What would happen if the party tried to organize

¹¹Interview with Douglas McKeever, September 6, 1962.

¹²Daily Oklahoman, December 2, 1959. ¹³Ibid., February 1, 1960.

by precincts and to raise funds when no election campaign was in progress?¹⁴

Henry Bellmon, as county chairman of Noble county, organized one hundred party workers and they called upon approximately twelve hundred of the eighteen hundred registered Republicans in Noble county. They raised \$870 in party funds, as opposed to the usual \$85 to \$100 that was raised during previous election campaigns. Bellmon's efforts attracted Tyler's attention, and after Tyler became national committeeman he asked Bellmon to take the post of state chairman.

It was under the Tyler-Bellmon leadership that the seeds of grass roots Republicanism planted by Carrier, Barnes, and Mrs. Sayre began to bear some fruit. There were token county organizations in all but seven of the state's seventy-seven counties when Bellmon took over as state chairman, but not more than thirty were at all active. And there was no money in the state party treasury; the party had \$3,000 left after the 1960 campaign, but this was spent to finance the recount in the Clyde Wheeler-Victor Wickersham sixth district congressional race. It was only after six weeks' deliberation that it was decided to keep the Republican state headquarters office open year round.

A two-year party building program called Operation Countdown was devised to raise money and to strengthen the Republican county organizations. It was aimed at giving the newly elected party officials some tasks to perform in order to keep them interested in party affairs. But also it was designed to bring out the weak places in the party organ-

¹⁴Interview with Governor Bellmon, August 28, 1963.

ization by permitting Chairman Bellmon to learn which party committeemen were willing to work and which were not. In addition, with the Democrats in power in Oklahoma, the Republican party needed some publicity to maintain public interest in its affairs.

In addition to revitalizing Republican county organizations, the Operation Countdown program was aimed at (1) raising funds for the party throughout the state, to relieve the party's dependence upon the Tulsa group and (2) to induce "the 300,000 Democrats who voted for Republican candidates in the last three presidential elections" to change their party registrations. The success of the latter phase of the program was discussed in Chapter IV. The program was carried out under the direction of a state task force, fifteen regional task forces, and as many county task forces as were needed to take over where the regular Republican county committee would not function.

Under party rules in 1960, the state chairman could not replace ineffective county chairmen, who were elected by local Republicans. Hence, where county officials did not perform the tasks assigned to them in the Operation Countdown program, a separate county task force was appointed to perform the program's functions in that county. Asking county leaders to do some work caused some to resign; appointment of a special task force in some counties caused others to do the same. Invariably, Chairman Bellmon appointed younger men to replace the older hands who resigned--men who had less of a defeatist view about Republican prospects. At the 1961 Republican state convention the party rules were changed to permit the state executive committee to remove ineffective or disloyal party

officials.¹⁵

That Chairman Bellmon himself had no defeatist views about Republican prospects in Oklahoma was shown by the fact that Republican county chairmen and vice chairmen were named in the seven counties where no county organizations existed: LeFlore, Latimer, Coal, Johnston, Murray, Marshall, and Delaware counties.

The foregoing shows that power in the party no longer is concentrated so much in the hands of the national committeeman; it is being shared more with the state chairman and other party officials. Nor is it necessary any longer that the party leader be privately wealthy so that he may devote time to party affairs. Chairman Bellmon was paid \$100 a month for expenses when he first became state chairman in 1960; this soon was increased to \$600 a month. Forrest Beall, who became state chairman in March, 1962, received a salary of \$10,000 a year plus expenses. The present state chairman, William Burkett, receives \$15,000 a year plus expenses.¹⁶ And, since Bellmon's tenure, the state headquarters has been kept open the year round. New life has been infused into the party and the competition for top party posts has become spirited.

Legal Obstacles to Republican Growth in Oklahoma

Because the Democratic party has dominated the lawmaking process

¹⁵Rules of the Republican Party of the State of Oklahoma (May 27, 1961), p. 8.

¹⁶Stephen Jones, "Oklahoma Politics in State and Nation" (Type-written, 1963), pp. 135-136.

for all but two years since 1907, the state's election laws have been designed to favor the Democratic party and to retard the growth of the Republican party.

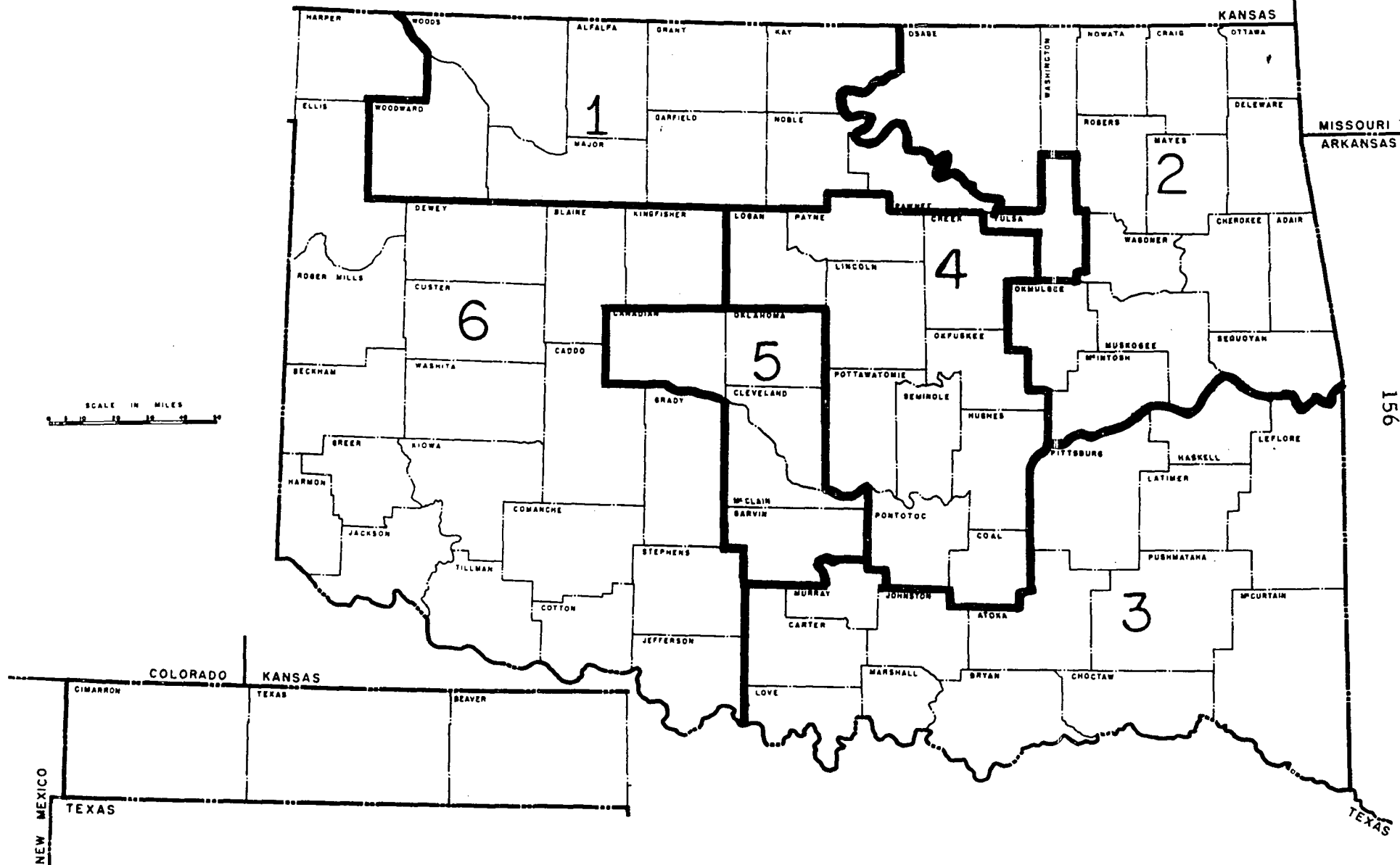
The election laws that do the most to help the Democratic party are these:

- 1) The provision that gubernatorial elections and contests for most statewide offices shall be held in the off years rather than in the presidential years. The only state officials elected in the presidential years are one corporation commissioner, one judge of the criminal court of appeals, three or four justices of the state supreme court, and sometimes a United States senator. The purpose is to isolate the election of the governor and most statewide officials from national trends in the presidential years so that a strong Republican presidential nominee or a strong trend favorable to the Republican party will not carry an entire slate of Republican state officials into office.
- 2) The law, enacted in 1943, which provides for four separate general election ballots: for county, state, congressional, and presidential contests. State legislators had their contests put on the county ballot, where revolts against Democratic leadership are least likely to be expressed. The purpose here is to hold down straight-ticket voting for all offices in a strong Republican year, whether it be a presidential year or off year.
- 3) The gerrymander of the state's congressional districts in such a way as to make it difficult for Republicans to elect more than one of Oklahoma's six United States representatives. Although the Democratic percentage of the congressional vote has varied from 54.8 per cent in

1960 to 64.9 per cent in 1954, five Democrats and one Republican have been elected in every biennium since 1952, when the number of representatives was reduced from eight to six.¹⁷ An examination of Map XXIII, which outlines the present congressional district boundaries, shows the following combinations of counties in the six districts: District 1 contains ten Republican counties, including a slight stretch to include populous Tulsa county, and generally is conceded to the Republicans; District 2 contains five Republican and ten Democratic counties; District 3 is a Democratic stronghold; District 4 combines four Republican and six Democratic counties; District 5 comprises one Republican and three Democratic counties, as well as populous Oklahoma county, a crucial swing county as to the major races but a Democratic-oriented county as to the congressional contests and those involving lesser state offices; District 6 combines six Republican and seventeen Democratic counties.

¹⁷University of Oklahoma Bureau, op. cit., pp. 14-16.

MAP XXIII. OKLAHOMA'S SIX CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICTS, AS GERRYMANDERED



CHAPTER VIII

DEMOCRATIC PARTY LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATION

In contrast to the Republican party, where leadership has been relatively concentrated and reasonably identifiable, the Democratic party is much more fragmented and its leadership more diffused. Because the Democrats have controlled the executive and legislative branches of Oklahoma government throughout nearly all of Oklahoma history and have supplied the great bulk of the congressional delegation, the Democratic party has seldom spoken with one voice. Its record is made by its governors, other elected state officials, its state legislators, its congressional delegation, and in lesser degree its party organization officials. To attempt to answer the questions, Who runs the Democratic party in Oklahoma? or What does the Democratic party in Oklahoma stand for? is a very difficult task.

Political bosses comparable to those in various other states have been unknown in Oklahoma. For one thing, the law which prohibits a governor from succeeding himself makes it virtually impossible for a leader or group of leaders to build up any sort of continuing organization that is committed to a given set of goals or principles. If there is a fault in the Oklahoma political system, it lies in the other direction:

political leadership has been so diffused that the electorate has found it virtually impossible to know where to give credit or place blame. Confronted with a largely new set of faces in the gubernatorial contests every four years and not knowing who is running things, the principal aim of Oklahoma voters apparently has been to find the "fresh new face," the man unscarred by past political connections, the man who will give them their money's worth in the operation of state government. Such an attitude exalts personality above principle, favors the honest amateur over the man with experience, and implies that one man can clean up state government almost unaided.

It has been just as difficult to ascertain what the Democratic party stands for as to learn who is running things in the party. The Democratic party has not drafted a state platform for approximately twenty-five years. In actuality, the Democratic state platform is the platform of the nominee who wins the Democratic gubernatorial primary, a program which the Democratic majority in the state legislature sometimes will enact into law and sometimes will not. And since Democratic gubernatorial candidates are largely self-nominated, this can lead to a wholesale revision of the "party platform" every four years, as occurred in 1934 and 1938. In 1934 Democratic candidate E.W. Marland campaigned on a platform of "Bring the New Deal to Oklahoma" and of building 100,000 subsistence homes for needy families, but the Democratic members of the state legislature took over and adopted their own program in large part. In 1938 Democratic candidate Leon Phillips campaigned on a program of severe retrenchment, and this time the Democratic members of the state legislature concurred.

Therefore, in discussing the Democratic party and its leadership, it is necessary to break down the party into its component parts and discuss each separately. For, in addition to the party in the electorate, the term political party also includes the party in the legislature and the party in the executive branch, as well as the official party machinery.¹ And the various elements of the party are not always tied together into a coherent whole under united leadership.

The Party in the Executive Branch

James Arrington, the current Democratic national committeeman from Oklahoma, explained that the Democratic party in Oklahoma is built around the governor.² This is so because the governor has a bundle of powers which, if wisely and energetically used, give him a big advantage over any other person or party element in providing unified leadership for all party elements. Among his more important powers are these:

1) His patronage powers. Though the heads of many of the most important executive departments are elected by the people, the governor's patronage powers still are considerable. He names five department or bureau heads and the members of approximately forty boards, commissions, authorities, and committees with senate confirmation, plus four department or bureau heads and the members of thirty-five agencies without senate confirmation. Among the more important executive officials appointed by the governor are the members of the highway commission, the budget officer, tax

¹Key, Politics, Parties, And Pressure Groups, Introduction to Part Two.

²Interview with James Arrington, July 19, 1963.

commissioner, welfare commissioner, president of the board of agriculture, and conservation commissioner.

2) The governor's control of the eight-member highway commission is worthy of special mention because there are many persons with vested interests in the state's highway building program, and out of this web of relationships can develop a sizeable organization. Many civic leaders such as bankers, doctors, lawyers, and insurance men are willing to serve as county campaign managers for gubernatorial candidates almost solely to have access to the governor to obtain needed highways or highway improvements for their communities. There are approximately three hundred fairly large road contractors in Oklahoma, and they have been a good source of campaign funds for many gubernatorial candidates. The sale of performance bonds to highway contractors who receive state contracts is a highly profitable business for certain insurance men. In sum, the eight highway commissioners can become the political eyes and ears for the governor over the state and the nucleus of his political organization during his four years in office.

3) A strong governor can exert considerable control over the state legislature because, by custom, he usually designates the speaker of the house, the president pro tempore of the senate, and the floor leaders. The speaker and president pro tempore in turn generally control the make-up of the legislative committees and assign the bills to the committees. However, Oklahoma's governors have by no means been uniformly successful in controlling the legislature, as already indicated.

4) A strong governor usually has considerable control over the Democratic party's official machinery from the fact that his choices for national

committeeman and state chairman generally are accepted by the party's central committee members, who actually elect the state chairman, and by the delegates to the Democratic national convention, who nominate the national committeeman and committeewoman. But here again Oklahoma's governors have exerted varying degrees of control. The reasons why Governor J. Howard Edmondson lost almost all control over the party machinery in 1960 will be discussed later.

To provide the unified leadership of all the elements of the Democratic party that is expected of him, Oklahoma's governor must have a good program, the political know-how to maneuver it through the legislature, considerable public backing for his program, good rapport with the members of the legislature, and the capacity and temperament to use the powers of the office energetically and wisely. When a governor stubs his toe, leaders of one or more of the other elements of the party always are ready to step in and take over.

A capsule summary of how well Oklahoma's last four Democratic governors have succeeded in leading the party is provided by Otis Sullivant of the Daily Oklahoman, who has observed the workings of Oklahoma state government for more than thirty years.

Roy Turner, 1946-1950: He lacked the drive of Leon Phillips (1938-1942) in pushing difficult legislation through the legislature and the salesmanship of Robert S. Kerr (1942-1946) in dealing with legislators and party officials. But he exhibited a quiet tenacity and strong determination to be an effective governor, and he left office with more popularity than almost any other outgoing governor.³

³Daily Oklahoman, January 12, 1950.

Johnston Murray, 1950-1954: Though elected on an economy and reform program, he did not display the firmness or leadership required to drive much of his program through the legislature. There was much "vacillation" and "indecision." He designated the party state chairman but lost control of the delegation to the 1952 Democratic national convention to Senator Robert Kerr.⁴

Raymond Gary, 1954-1958: As a veteran legislator, Gary had excellent rapport with the state legislature; the question is whether he allowed the legislators too free a rein.

[His administration] could have been much better if Gary had held to a minimum the use of patronage, favors and promises of roads. On the other hand, without the free use of the power and influence of the office, the governor might not have been in full control. . . .

He designated the state chairman and controlled the delegation to the 1956 Democratic national convention.⁵

J. Howard Edmondson, 1958-1962: His troubles with other elements of the Democratic party leadership began in 1958, shortly after the close of the first legislative session of his term, when he decided to initiate three reform proposals, two of which were especially bitterly opposed by rural elements of the party. Two of his initiative petitions called for legislative reapportionment and for curbing the powers of the county commissioners with respect to road building and maintenance; the third called for a constitutional highway commission to take road building out of politics. When the Democratic state chairman resigned in September, 1959, the rural-dominated Democratic executive committee chose an avowed

⁴Ibid., January 9, 1955.

⁵Ibid., January 4, 1959, Magazine Section.

opponent of the governor's reform petitions for state chairman. After the three petitions were defeated overwhelmingly by vote of the people, in September, 1960, Edmondson "had less influence and control in the Democratic party . . . than any governor since the 1920's."⁶ He did not control the Oklahoma delegation to the Democratic national convention in 1960 and the only legislative leader he was allowed to designate for the 1961 legislative session was the Democratic floor leader.

Without a strong and popular governor to lead it, the Democratic party can easily become fragmented, for there are numerous competitors for party leadership.

The Party in the Legislature

The most formidable contestants of the governor for Democratic party leadership are the legislative leaders, including the leaders of the various blocs within the legislature. The governor sometimes meets especially strong opposition from members of the state senate, who sometimes act in concert with the county commissioners and sometimes with leaders of private pressure groups.

Because the Oklahoma legislature has been overwhelmingly Democratic in all but two sessions since 1907, several strong blocs have developed within the Democratic majority. There has not been sufficient Republican membership to instill a strong spirit of unity and discipline in the Democratic members. One former influential legislator identified the three major blocs as the school, welfare, and road users-county

⁶Ibid., December 16, 1962.

commissioners blocs. There are also public utility and retail merchants partisans, but they are not numerous enough to be considered as major blocs.

The school bloc includes the higher education bloc, made up of legislators representing districts that contain one of the state's eighteen institutions of higher learning, and the common school bloc, which works in close cooperation with the Oklahoma Education Association, widely regarded as the most influential lobby in the state. The welfare bloc comprises the legislators from counties or districts in which there are large numbers of public assistance recipients, particularly the counties in southeastern Oklahoma. The road users-county commissioners bloc is made up of legislators who sell highway building equipment and supplies to the county commissioners or who have other vested interests in the way in which the state road users' tax revenues are being spent. A collision often develops between two or more of these blocs over division of the state's funds when the appropriation bill is being enacted.

In the lower house, veteran legislators have estimated that about thirty to thirty-five members usually can be counted upon to respond to the wishes of the governor. Total membership is about one hundred twenty, but it varies because of the existence of floterial districts. The house speaker also can control a substantial number of votes through his ability to grant such favors as placing members on desired committees. The governor customarily makes trades with a sufficient number of legislators to get his important bills enacted.

In the state senate, each senator is virtually a power in his

own right, for the senators have these patronage powers that enable them to build up strong individual political organizations:

1) The county tag agents, who receive a fifty-cent notary fee for each automobile license tag sold in their counties, are designated by the state senators. By custom, the State Tax Commission follows the wishes of the state senators in appointing the tag agents. These are prized jobs, and the tag agents become the political lieutenants of the state senators. In 1950 the Tulsa county tag agent was reported to be clearing \$30,000 a year.⁷

2) County Election Board personnel also are designated by the state senators. The State Election Board actually makes the appointments, but the Democratic majority on the board usually follows the wishes of the senators. The secretary of the state senate is the secretary of the State Election Board; the other two board members are one Democrat and one Republican appointed by the governor from names submitted by the party central committees. The Democratic member customarily votes with the secretary of the senate.

3) Many applicants for jobs at the state institutions are "cleared" for employment with the state senator from that district.

Thus are individual political machines built up by the state senators, who also enjoy close ties with the county commissioners through a mutual interest in county road building and maintenance. Nearly all the state senators are important political influences in their home districts. Many are important figures in the affairs of the state

⁷H.O. Waldby, The Patronage System in Oklahoma (Norman, Okla.: The Transcript Company, 1950), p. 47.

Democratic party.

The Democratic legislators constitute one voice of the Democratic party in Oklahoma, and the records they make in the various legislative sessions contribute heavily to the party's public image. The Oklahoma City Times intimated editorially in 1963 that the recent record of the Democratic-controlled legislature may have had much to do with the election of a Republican governor in 1962. The editorial was prompted by the efforts of some Democratic legislators in the 1963 session to kill the merit system law that had been enacted in the early days of the Edmondson administration. Edmondson had been elected on a reform platform and the promise to "clean out the Old Guard" of Oklahoma politics. The editorial said:⁸

Intra-party bickering and a concern for patronage, often at the expense of responsible and effective administration, both helped to spark the prairie fire that put J. Howard Edmondson in the governor's chair. His election was, in effect, a warning by the state's voters.

When it went largely unheeded, the voters decided last November to try a Republican governor.

The 1961 legislative session, just ahead of the 1962 election, was the longest, costliest, and one of the most wrangling sessions in the state's history.

The Official Party Machinery

Though officials of the Republican party organization generally have constituted the principal voice of that party in Oklahoma, until very recent years those holding posts in the Democratic party organization

⁸Oklahoma City Times, April 18, 1963.

have constituted a relatively minor voice of the Democratic party. Such organization leaders as the state chairman and national committeeman have been overshadowed by elected Democratic public officials, especially the governor. Most of the top party officials have owed their positions to the governors who supported them.

The national committeeman with the longest tenure was Scott Ferris, of Lawton, Pauls Valley, and later Oklahoma City, who served from 1924 until 1940. His term began four years after he defeated incumbent Senator Tom P. Gore in the bitter 1920 Democratic senatorial primary, then lost to Republican J.W. Harreld in the general election. He was personable and well liked, but at no time during his sixteen-year tenure did he dominate the party. Robert S. Kerr had the next longest tenure, from 1940 until 1948, but he came to exert more influence upon the party after he left the post than while he held it. However, he gained much recognition outside the state in those eight years. He was keynote speaker at the Democratic national convention in 1944 and was rumored as a possible successor to both Secretary of the Interior Harold Ickes and National Democratic Chairman Robert E. Hannegan in 1946.

Former State Chairman Sam Battles summarized the usual importance of the post of state chairman in this way: "The state chairman can recommend that a party worker be given a job, but if the state senator or representative doesn't want him he doesn't get it."⁹ Such state chairmen as Judge Samuel W. Hayes, who served from 1930 until 1932, and R.M. McCool, who served from 1932 until 1934, were men of very high

⁹Interview with Sam Battles, July 23, 1963.

caliber, but neither dominated the party. Governor W.J. Holloway persuaded Judge Hayes to take the post to help give the party a better image following the impeachment and removal of Governor Henry Johnston and the 1928 Hoover landslide.¹⁰ Judge Hayes had been chief justice of the Oklahoma supreme court. McCool was president of Murray State Agricultural College at Tishomingo when Governor W.H. Murray chose him for the post.

The post of state chairman assumed somewhat more importance beginning in 1960, for Governor Edmondson lost control of the party in that year; with the Republican gubernatorial victory in 1962, the Democrats were without a governor for the first time in history. However, it appears that the party has been run by a coalition of party organization leaders headed by State Chairman Gene McGill, members of the congressional delegation headed by Senator Kerr prior to his death and later by Senator Mike Monroney, state legislative leaders, plus some large-scale financial contributors and leading political figures. The decision making apparently has shifted from one person or group to others on given matters; as to the state legislative program, for example, indications are that this has been and will continue to be shaped by Democratic legislative leaders, with little or no outside help.

The Congressional Delegation

Each of the state's United States senators and representatives has his own campaign organization, varying greatly in size and importance. Each also controls a certain amount of federal patronage in Oklahoma,

¹⁰Interview with Otis Sullivant, Daily Oklahoman political writer, August 2, 1963.

with the patronage of the senators being especially important. However, the influence of the congressmen upon Oklahoma politics has varied greatly, depending in part upon the inclinations and temperaments of each.

Senator Robert S. Kerr's organization was especially important in recent Oklahoma politics and is thought by many to have played an important role in helping W.P. Bill Atkinson defeat Raymond Gary in the 1962 Democratic runoff primary. The Kerr organization comprised nuclei of from ten to fifty active Kerr supporters in nearly all the state's seventy-seven counties,¹¹ plus the support of many members of the Southern Baptist faith, the Farmers Union, and the oil interests; late in Senator Kerr's career he acquired the support of chamber of commerce and business interests, particularly in eastern Oklahoma, as a result of his promotion of the Arkansas River navigation project.

According to Aubrey Kerr, the senator's brother and former campaign aide, the organization had its genesis on the University of Oklahoma campus in the 1925-1926 school year, when Aubrey was a law student there. Aubrey took a hand in the Independent group's campaign to elect a member of the student council against the fraternity combine candidate. Aubrey became president of the Independent group the next year and helped bring about Independent victories in that year and the following year. In so doing he made contacts with students from throughout the state, and these friends later became the nucleus of the original Kerr organization.

By 1936 Robert Kerr had become president of the Kansas-Oklahoma

¹¹Interview with Aubrey Kerr, September 18, 1963.

division of the Mid-Continental Oil and Gas Association, and a number of Oklahoma state senators were seeking to raise the gross production tax on gas and oil. Aubrey said that he and Robert decided to back about twenty-five to thirty candidates for the state legislature who would oppose the tax increase. Aubrey called upon his former friends from the University of Oklahoma to help recruit candidates and raise campaign funds. Two years later the organization supported Leon Phillips for governor, and in 1942 its members helped to elect Robert Kerr himself as governor.

The organization expanded as time went on. As Robert Kerr became more and more prominent in Baptist lay work, he acquired a larger following among the Southern Baptists. The patronage appointments he made as governor, and later as United States senator, added more active supporters. As Senator Kerr acquired increasing stature in the United States senate the oil and gas interests looked to him for help, as did members of other political interest groups. Lobbyists of several political interest groups said that Senator Kerr kept in much closer touch with Oklahoma interests than did Senator Monroney.

Though there were ten to fifty active Kerr supporters in nearly all Oklahoma counties, generally it devolved upon the one or two most active workers to perform such tasks as bringing together fifteen to twenty key men in each county to meet with Senator Kerr when the senator toured the state in campaign years. Aubrey coordinated the work of bringing together these representatives of labor, farm groups, merchants, and other key groups in the various counties. He also briefed Senator Kerr on the way to each meeting as to who would be there and what they

avored.

The extent to which the Kerr organization intervened in political contests other than those in which Robert Kerr was a candidate becomes a problem in semantics. Aubrey said the organization never actively intervened in any other contests except the 1938 gubernatorial contest. However, in reply to a question, Aubrey said that frequently many members of the Kerr organization followed the lead of the Kerrs when they knew whom the Kerrs were supporting.

The extent of Senator Kerr's influence upon Oklahoma politics is difficult to pinpoint precisely, but several top-level Democrats agreed that if he had not established himself as the Mr. Democrat of Oklahoma to quite the same extent that Sam Rayburn earlier had become the Mr. Democrat of Texas, he certainly was on the way toward becoming Oklahoma's Mr. Democrat at the time of his death on New Year's Day, 1963. A head-on clash with former Governor Gary in the 1964 Democratic senatorial primary appeared to be shaping up following Gary's defeat in the 1962 gubernatorial runoff primary, and it is probable that a Kerr victory in that contest would have established Kerr as Oklahoma's Mr. Democrat.

It has been the policy of Senator Mike Monroney, on the other hand, to avoid becoming too entangled in state party matters. Senator Monroney said in 1955, "I've always taken the position that the governor is the leader of the party and pretty well entitled to have his choice for national committeeman and state chairman."¹² But in January, 1964, when the Democrats had no governor, Monroney openly objected to two

¹²The Daily Oklahoman, September 13, 1955.

candidacies for national committeeman and state chairman and called for new leadership in the party.¹³ In his new role as leader of the Oklahoma congressional delegation following Senator Kerr's death, and with Oklahoma having no Democratic governor, Monroney may deem it necessary to take a stronger hand in state party affairs than formerly. But it seemed certain that he never would attempt to achieve the influence in state party affairs that Senator Kerr sought.

Summary

Republican party organizational resurgence under State Chairman Henry Bellmon and his Operation Countdown program began at just about the same time that Democratic Governor Edmondson precipitated a serious urban-rural split in the Democratic party with his three initiative petitions.

The record of the Republican party since the early 1950's has been one of transformation from one-man dominance, lack of interest in grass roots growth, and an image as a "party of millionaires" to somewhat less concentrated leadership, infusion of new life into the party organization, and the image of a party whose 1962 ticket was headed by "just a country boy from Noble county."

The record of the Democratic party since the early 1950's has been one of a series of party splits growing out of the bitter William O. Coe-Johnston Murray fight in the 1950 Democratic primaries, the Coe-Gary battle in the 1954 primaries, and the urban-rural split precipitated by the Edmondson petitions in 1959-1960.

Going into the 1962 campaign, Republican party morale was high and Democratic party morale was not.

¹³Ibid., January 29, 1964.

CHAPTER IX

SUMMARY OF LONG-TERM INFLUENCES UPON THE 1962 ELECTION

A look at the entire span of Oklahoma political history shows that there have been two cycles of definite Democratic dominance, 1907 to 1920 and 1930 to 1942, and two cycles of more competitive politics, 1920 to 1932 and 1942 through 1962. These cycles are pointed up in Table 41, which gives the Democratic percentage of the two-party vote¹ for governor and President for these periods.

TABLE 41.--Democratic percentage of the two-party vote for governor and President by historical periods²

	1907- 1918	1922- 1926	1930- 1938	1942- 1962	1942-1954, 1962
For Governor	54.2	52.0	63.2	56.4	51.9 (omits 1958)
For President ³	56.5	45.3	66.0	49.9	43.7 (since 1952)

Since the Socialist candidates undoubtedly took more votes away from the Democratic candidates than the Republicans in the 1907-1918 period, as

¹Because of heavy third-party voting in 1907-1918, figures giving the percentage of the total vote, rather than the two-party vote, do not picture properly the relative Democratic-Republican strength in this early period.

²University of Oklahoma Bureau, op. cit., pp. 62-106.

³The periods of presidential voting are 1908-1916, 1920-1928, 1932-1940, 1944-1960, and 1952-1960, the periods that correspond most closely to the gubernatorial periods.

the Populist candidates did in the 1890's, it is probable that the 54.2 per cent average vote for the Democratic gubernatorial candidates under-represents Democratic strength somewhat in that early period. Likewise, the 78.7 per cent of the two-party vote received by Edmondson in 1958 raises the Democratic average for the 1942-1962 period to a point where it obscures the fact that Democratic candidates received less than 54 per cent of the vote in all but two elections in that period.

Manifestations of Liberalism and Conservatism

Manifestations of liberalism in Oklahoma.--When the delegates to the 1906 state constitutional convention inserted a number of provisions into the state constitution providing for regulation of railroads and public utilities and others protecting labor, they were expressing a willingness to increase the regulatory powers of government in the interest of the less privileged. In their voting for Socialist candidates soon thereafter, Oklahomans were expressing the sentiment that the government should exercise its powers in the interests of what they viewed as economic justice. In the 1919-1921 period the Farmer-Labor Reconstruction League members were seeking an increase in the service (welfare) functions of government, such as having the state government take over the grain elevators and farm credit facilities, and they were expressing a willingness to have the government spend the money required to accomplish these ends. These latter sentiments were expressed again in the New Deal period, when Franklin D. Roosevelt polled 73.2 per cent of the vote in 1932 and 66.8 per cent in 1936.

The most prominent correlation that suggests itself with respect

to the cycles of definite Democratic dominance and of more competitive politics is that the former correspond generally with periods of economic distress and the latter with periods of better economic times. However, this explanation would oversimplify what lies behind these cycles, for other factors contributed.

Manifestations of conservatism.--A sort of moralistic-patriotic-nationalistic type of conservatism appeared to manifest itself in the 1920's with the rejection of Senator Gore because he did not support Woodrow Wilson's request for a declaration of war against Germany, with opposition to the League of Nations, and with the thumping rejection of Catholic, anti-prohibitionist Al Smith. This seems to be pointed up by the fact that 1924 Democratic presidential nominee John W. Davis, whose candidacy was sandwiched between that of League of Nations proponent James Cox and that of Al Smith, received a 48.4 per cent plurality in Oklahoma as against only 29 per cent of the vote in the nation as a whole. Apparently there were no moralistic-nationalistic grounds upon which to reject the Democratic corporation lawyer, and so the normal Democratic majority in Oklahoma asserted itself. This type of conservatism, given voice through such movements as that of the Ku Klux Klan, appears to develop rather commonly in almost wholly Anglo-Saxon, religiously fundamentalist environments. It must be recalled too that the 1920's was a period of serious Democratic party splits, which also contributed to the Republican successes in this period. However, the Democrats were by no means united when Davis won in 1924 and the Klan contributed to the Democratic split in 1928.

Since the early 1940's manifestations of conservative sentiment

again outweigh manifestations of sentiment that would be regarded as liberal. On domestic issues, the most likely bases for increased Republican voting in this period appear to be protests against heavier tax burdens, inflation and rising prices; on foreign issues, the protests appear to have been against the Democrats' handling of the Korean war in particular and the cold war in general. In assessing the mood of the voters in 1962 Democratic State Chairman Gene McGill said, "Many are in debt and making installment payments, and they've got to blame someone. . . . There's been a realization since the Russians launched their Sputnik that we're not the sole big power we used to be. . . . The time was when no one would put a Yank in jail because they were afraid to do so. . . ." ⁴ Here again some strains of moralistic-nationalistic conservatism appear to be interwoven with a measure of economic discontent.

Samuel Lubell expressed the view that the location of support for the Henry Wallace Progressive movement in 1948 proved that today's radicals or liberals are those elements of the population most sensitive to civil rights issues rather than those motivated by economic discontent. ⁵ In this respect, overwhelmingly Anglo-Saxon Oklahoma, with the size of its ethnic minorities at a bare minimum, is on the side of conservatism.

Further manifestations of conservatism in Oklahoma in recent years include these: (1) the 1963 Oklahoma legislature endorsed two of

⁴Interview with Gene McGill, state chairman of the Democratic party, November 23, 1962.

⁵Lubell, The Future of American Politics, pp. 218-219.

the so-called states' rights amendments: one to prohibit any federal court from exercising jurisdiction in legislative apportionment cases, the other to permit two-thirds of the states to propose constitutional amendments without a constitutional convention or the approval of Congress. The lower house also rejected the proposed anti-poll tax amendment on the ground that it would constitute interference in the business of other states.⁶ (2) In May, 1963, Oklahoma wheat farmers rejected the Kennedy administration program of high wheat support prices with accompanying stricter governmental controls by about a 61-39 ratio.

Some of the foregoing examples of expressions of conservatism are not entirely adequate. Some are derivative rather than direct; for example, there is little way of knowing whether the Oklahoma legislature's endorsement of the states' rights amendments reflects the sentiment of the majority of Oklahomans, though there is reason to suspect that it might. The vote of the Oklahoma wheat farmers came from the predominantly Republican areas of the state. Some of the examples are drawn primarily from the national experience rather than from Oklahoma in particular; however, it seems probable that frustration over the unpopular Korean war and resistance to inflation constitute sentiments that are shared quite generally throughout the nation.

The best indication of a conservative trend in Oklahoma would be a record of voting for political candidates who espoused obviously conservative viewpoints. On the national level, there seems to be rather

⁶Oklahoma City Times, May 23, 1963.

general agreement that the political positions of the Republicans and Democrats have been closer together in recent years than for some time. In Oklahoma, political contestants almost never couch their campaigns in liberal-conservative terms or present the electorate with any sort of clear-cut choice between a liberal or conservative approach to governmental problems. Border state politicians traditionally have been adept at striking compromises between northern and southern and other political viewpoints. Nor are there any continuing political factions or associations that assume the task of espousing liberal or conservative principles or recruiting liberal or conservative candidates.

The 1962 United States senate race between Republican B. Hayden Crawford and incumbent Democrat Monroney has been one of the very few political contests--possibly the only one in recent years--in which a fairly clear choice was presented between a liberal and conservative approach to governmental problems. The choice was not as clear-cut as it might have been: Crawford was militantly conservative, but Monroney was not militantly liberal. Crawford adopted the slogan "Turn Right" as his campaign theme and stressed anti-socialism, anti-communism, and opposition to medicare and federal aid to education in his campaign speeches. Monroney's liberalism was deduced as much or more from his voting record in Congress as from his campaign speeches. One conservative and two liberal organizations rated Monroney as being more liberal than conservative in his voting,⁷ but some political observers have expressed the view that his voting record has been less liberal in recent

⁷"Non-Party Groups Rate Each Senator, Representative," Congressional Quarterly Weekly Report, October 26, 1962, pp. 2019-2024.

years than it formerly was.

The result of the contest was that Monroney received 53.2 per cent of the vote and defeated Crawford. However, the result of one such contest could hardly be offered as a measure of liberal-conservative sentiment in Oklahoma. The issues were not that clearly drawn, the electorate is not accustomed to thinking in liberal-conservative terms, Crawford was a once-defeated candidate (1960), and there is a tendency to return incumbent congressmen to office in Oklahoma. Moreover, Monroney was highly popular personally, and it seems highly probable that many Oklahomans voted on the basis of personality rather than issues.

Summary

The best available evidence indicates that a conservative trend has been operative in Oklahoma since about 1942, when the Republican percentage of the vote began to rise markedly. The fact that Oklahomans gave Harry S. Truman 62.7 per cent of the vote and that a number of strongly Republican counties returned majorities for him provides some indication that the conservative trend might not be solidly based. Further indication of this might be seen in the 1958 congressional elections, following the 1957 recession under Eisenhower, when the Democratic congressional candidates received a higher percentage of the total vote than in any congressional election in history except that of 1932.⁸ To the extent that Oklahomans vote more heavily Democratic when an economic downturn looms and more heavily Republican when the economic spiral is upward, this seems to lend support to the Lubell thesis that

⁸University of Oklahoma Bureau, op. cit., pp. 143-145.

the voters may be trying to steer a middle course between the threats of depression and inflation.⁹

Despite the conservative trend, the partisan division of the vote since 1942 still favored the Democrats, though by a reduced margin. This and the other long-term political influences favored the Democrats as the 1962 election approached. Republican voter registrations and participation in Republican primaries continued low; Democrats continued to elect the great majority of county, district, legislative, and statewide officials.

The extent to which the long-term political influences favored the Democrats perhaps can be set forth best by ascertaining the vote which the 1962 Democratic gubernatorial nominee normally could have expected to receive in 1962, provided that the short-term political influences in that year did not favor either the Democratic or Republican candidate to any significant degree.

The Normally Expected Vote for the 1962
Democratic Gubernatorial Nominee

On the basis of Oklahoma voting and turnout performances since 1942, the Democratic nominee for governor should normally have expected to receive 53.38 per cent of the vote in 1962.

The normally expected vote was calculated on the basis of two factors: (1) the average Democratic percentage of the gubernatorial vote in each county from 1942 through 1954 and (2) the average percentage of voter turnout for each county based upon an average for the years 1950

⁹Lubell, Revolt of the Moderates, p. 118.

and 1954.

The 1942-1954 period was selected as the base period from which to compute the average Democratic vote percentage for reasons already given: fairly common political influences seem to have been operative through most of this period; the 1958 vote was omitted because it was an abnormally high Democratic vote.

The voter turnout figures were computed from a more recent span of time in an effort to take account of the most recent influences in this respect. The year 1950 was the best Republican year of the decade and 1954 was the best Democratic year except for 1958; an average for these two years should not give undue stress to the highest voter motivations of either Democrats or Republicans. Estimated populations for each county as of April, 1962, supplied by the Bureau of Business Research of the University of Oklahoma, were used to take account of population changes in each county between 1960 and 1962.

In short, the effort was to capture the most recent possible trends with respect to voter turnout and to average out the trend with respect to Democratic-Republican voting over the longest possible period of time in which common political influences have been operative. The latter was deemed desirable to minimize local or regional influences that might distort the vote in particular elections.

The fact that the Democratic nominee received only 44.4 per cent of the vote signifies that the short-term influences bearing upon the 1962 gubernatorial election were favorable to the Republican candidate. What those short-term influences were and how they favored the Republican candidate will be discussed in Part III.

PART III

SHORT-TERM INFLUENCES UPON THE 1962 GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION

CHAPTER X

THE 1950-1960 DECADE: GRIEVANCES ACCUMULATE AGAINST THE DEMOCRATS AND THE DEMOCRATS SUFFER A SERIES OF PARTY SPLITS

There was some change of political sentiment nationally in favor of the Republican party at the outset of the 1950-1960 decade. It resulted in part from frustration over the unpopular Korean war, from charges of corruption in the Truman administration, and from resistance to continued inflation.

In Oklahoma, the Republican party was undergoing a transformation that was to result in its being strengthened considerably in the early 1960's. The virtual one-man control by national committeemen who displayed little interest in building the party at the grass roots was being broken. The state chairmen began to assume more power and party leadership was democratized to some extent. This process, which began after the Eisenhower victory in 1952, was momentarily painful for the party because it was resisted by the Tulsa group that had been supplying much of the party's finances, and the party fared poorly throughout most of the 1950's. It was not until State Chairman Bellmon assumed party leadership in 1960 that the party began to capitalize upon the series of presidential successes which Republicans had in Oklahoma

in this decade. The self-styled "country boy from Noble county" was determined to transform the "party of millionaires" image which the Republicans had acquired and to infuse new life into the party organization at the grass roots.

For the Democrats in Oklahoma, the 1950-1960 decade was one marked by a series of party splits that culminated in the serious split between the urban and rural segments of the party in 1959 and 1960. Furthermore, it was a period in which a series of grievances accumulated against Democratic management of state affairs. Except for the 1921 legislative session, the Democrats had been in control of all branches of state government since 1907. And while party control is sufficiently fragmented as to make it difficult for the electorate to know precisely where to place the blame for particular grievances, there comes a time in most predominantly one-party states when the electorate begins to get the broad impression that "it's time for a change."

That "time for a change" sentiment was strong in Oklahoma by the late 1950's is shown by the fact that two unusual gubernatorial elections occurred in succession in 1958 and 1962.

1) In 1958, despite two successive Republican presidential victories in 1952 and 1956, Democratic candidate Edmondson carried every county in the state on the basis of his promises to "clean out the Old Guard" of Oklahoma politics and to bring about a speedy vote on the question of repeal of prohibition. Though he was almost a political unknown outside his home area at the outset of the 1958 primary campaigns, Edmondson received the biggest vote ever accorded a gubernatorial candidate in Oklahoma, 74.1 per cent.

2) In 1962, just four years later, Bellmon became the first elected Republican governor in Oklahoma history on the basis of his promises to eliminate "waste, graft, and corruption" from state government and to operate Oklahoma government efficiently without the tax increase which Democratic nominee W.P. Bill Atkinson said was necessary.

The most plausible explanation as to why the first Republican gubernatorial victory followed upon the heels of a Democratic landslide is that many voters felt they were voting for the same thing in both elections: they were deeply dissatisfied with many aspects of the management of state affairs, they thought it was time for a change, and they wanted reform of state governmental practices. It seems probable that the time was ripe for a Republican gubernatorial victory in 1958--if the Republicans had nominated a popular and aggressive candidate who would have advanced a strong reform program and if the Republican party transformation had been completed by then. Instead, as had happened before, the candidate with the strong reform program in 1958 appeared from within the Democratic party. The Republicans nominated a former Democratic congressman--a situation displeasing to many long-time Republican party workers--who conducted an ineffective campaign. When Edmondson precipitated the urban-rural split within the Democratic party in September, 1960, by submitting to the people three reform petitions that antagonized rural Oklahomans, the rural segment of the electorate especially thought it was time for a change again, and this time they joined with the urban "good government" forces who had supported Edmondson in 1958 in turning to the Republican candidate. Bellmon took up where Edmondson left off in 1958 in promising to clean up state government, but he went one step

further: he charged that Edmondson had been unable to control the Old Guard elements of the Democratic party and argued that the only real solution to Oklahoma's problems was to elect a Republican governor and to begin enjoying the advantages of two-party politics.

Republican gubernatorial nominee Jo O. Ferguson came within 16,104 votes of becoming the first elected Republican governor in 1950, on the basis of national trends and developments and a Democratic party split that grew out of the bitter Democratic primary of that year. In 1962, the Democratic party split was much more serious, reaching deep into the Democratic rural strongholds; a series of political scandals occurred between 1950 and 1962; and the Republican party organization was stronger in 1962 than it was in 1950.

This chapter will be devoted to an elaboration of the political scandals and other grievances that lay behind the "time for a change" sentiment in 1958 and 1962 and to the reasons for the series of Democratic party splits. In doing so it has seemed convenient to treat these developments under the following headings: the Johnston Murray administration of 1950-1954; the Raymond Gary administration of 1954-1958; the 1958 Democratic primary, in which the 1962 Democratic nominee figured strongly; and the Edmondson administration of 1958-1962. By dividing the decade into periods of gubernatorial administrations, it is not intended to link the governors themselves with all the scandals and grievances that occurred during their respective tenures; rather, the division is one of convenience.

The Johnston Murray Administration

Murray, son of former Governor W.H. (Alfalfa Bill) Murray,

campaigned in 1950 on a platform of economy and no tax increases. He got his principal support, especially in the runoff primary, from western Oklahoma, which is less public assistance-oriented than eastern Oklahoma. Murray's chief opponent, William O. Coe, appealed to the public assistance recipients and war veterans. Of the thirty-two counties which he carried in the runoff, twenty-seven were in eastern Oklahoma. The primary battles were bitter. Coe charged that Murray deserted his wife and child and that he had resigned from the National Guard just prior to World War II. The first charge was denied by Murray's former wife¹ and the second by Murray,² but the fact that Coe trailed Murray by eighty-eight thousand votes in the first primary and by only 962 votes in the runoff primary would seem to indicate that Coe's allegations had influenced thousands of Oklahoma voters. The primaries produced a Democratic split, and a number of Coe's aides actively supported the Republican nominee in the general election.³ In his contest with Republican Jo Ferguson, Murray received a bare 51.1 per cent of the vote, the closest gubernatorial race in the state's history up to that time.

Murray's has been characterized as a status quo administration. He "didn't rock the boat." In fact, he was so conservative that many Democrats charged that he was a Republican in Democratic clothing. But neither did he exhibit the leadership required to effect the economy and reform which he said were needed.⁴ His relations with the state legislature were not cordial. In his final address to the legislature just

¹Daily Oklahoman, July 17, 1950. ²Ibid., July 19, 1950.

³Ibid., July 12, 1954. ⁴Ibid., January 9, 1955.

before leaving office, he lambasted the legislators for permitting increases in utility rates, for failure to reduce school administration costs, and for what he called reckless spending.⁵

After leaving office Murray gave an interview to a Saturday Evening Post writer that resulted in an article entitled "Oklahoma Is In a Mess."⁶ Murray was quoted as saying that a "maze of unsolved problems shame my state and hold it in the category of the retarded." He said earmarking of tax revenues was too prevalent, that the practice had its roots in a general public mistrust of the legislature and was perpetuated by mighty pressure groups. Murray was quoted further as saying that investigations showed that Oklahomans may be getting as little as fifty cents worth of roads for their county road dollars because county commissioners were paying up to double the price for road materials. He said the legislature would not correct such practices because some legislators are former county commissioners, some sell road materials to the county commissioners between legislative sessions, and because the County Commissioners Association "is perhaps the most politically powerful organization in Oklahoma" and can make or break a political candidate.

One of the major political scandals of the decade broke just before Murray took office and dragged through the legislative halls and state and federal courts for nine years. The Selected Investments Corporation scandal began in April, 1950, when State Bank Commissioner O.B. Mothershead revoked the corporation's right to sell securities in the state. In the 1951 legislative session the state senate refused to

⁵Ibid., January 4, 1955.

⁶Saturday Evening Post, CCXXVII (April 20, 1955), 20.

confirm Mothershead as bank commissioner. Further, Assistant Bank Commissioner M.B. Cope, under whose direction the study of Selected's affairs was made, was legislated out of his position under terms of a highly controversial bill passed in the closing hours of the 1951 legislative session.⁷ Cope was serving as securities commissioner in the State Banking Commission. The bill provided for separating the Securities Commission from the State Banking Commission and for the creation of a new three-member body to head the Securities Commission.

Selected Investments apparently had many friends in high places in the state government. The authors of the controversial bill were two state senators who were Selected attorneys. William C. (Bill) Doenges, Democratic national committeeman and chief financial backer of Murray's gubernatorial campaign, was charged with supporting the bill by the Democratic floor leader of the state senate. The floor leader also charged that Friday Fitzgerald, Murray's patronage assistant, was putting pressure upon the more reluctant members of the lower house to get the bill passed.⁸ The bill delayed a scheduled Thursday adjournment of the legislature and was passed in a stormy Friday night session. Discussing passage of the bill some years later, a Tulsa World reporter wrote:⁹

. . . It was openly known what some lobbyists would pay or give for a vote for the bill and in some instances legislators had their own lists of what they wanted.

Selected President Hugh A. Carroll was reported to have been in Governor

⁷Daily Oklahoman, May 19, 25, 1951.

⁸Ibid., May 16, 1951.

⁹Tulsa World, January 27, 1963.

Murray's office, along with Doenges, on the night the bill passed.¹⁰

In February, 1958, just as the 1958 gubernatorial campaign was getting under way, an auditing firm reported that the \$39,000,000 invested in Selected by nearly ten thousand Oklahomans had shrunk by more than \$11,000,000, and the following month the corporation was declared bankrupt. Testimony about Selected's affairs and the dealings of its officials with various state officials was being taken in federal court as the 1958 gubernatorial campaign progressed. All this occurred as Edmondson was promising that he would "clean out the Old Guard" of Oklahoma politics.

In October, 1958, a United States district judge ruled that the securities commissioner appointed in September, 1951, to head the newly created Securities Commission was guilty of neglect of duty in his handling of the Selected Investments case. Later that month five Selected officials were indicated by a federal grand jury. Four were convicted of various charges in March, 1959.

The Raymond Gary Administration

Gary was a veteran of fourteen years in the state senate, where he served as chairman of the appropriations committee for six years and as president pro tempore for two years, when he announced for governor in 1954. Again the principal contender in the Democratic primaries was Coe, who led Gary by 2,746 votes in the first primary but lost in the runoff primary by 18,841 votes. It was another pair of bitter Democratic primaries, and again a party split developed. In 1950 some of Coe's

¹⁰Daily Oklahoman, May 19, 1951.

principal aides supported the Republican nominee in the general election; in 1954 Coe himself declared his support for Republican nominee Reuben Sparks. But, despite this, Gary received 58.6 per cent of the vote in the general election to score a decisive victory.

Another mild party split developed shortly after Gary's election when he sought to replace National Committeeman Doenges with an appointee of his own choice. Gary claimed that Doenges had resigned when he announced his candidacy for governor in 1954. The claim was based upon a letter written by Doenges to the Democratic state chairman in which, according to Gary, Doenges expressed his willingness to resign; Gary said Doenges made similar statements to newspaper men. In April, 1955, the Democratic party executive committee voted not to oust Doenges, but the committee reversed its decision in August. The fight was then carried to the Democratic national committee, which is the judge of its own membership, and the credentials committee of that body voted nine to six to uphold Doenges. A friend of Senator Robert Kerr, Nebraska National Committeeman Bernard J. Boyle, represented Doenges before the committee.¹¹ Upon hearing the national committee's decision, Gary commented that this would make it more difficult for the Democrats to carry Oklahoma in 1956.¹²

Gary is credited by many with having a closer knowledge of Oklahoma government and its problems than any other single Oklahoman. In addition, he was one of Oklahoma's hardest working governors, and he enjoyed excellent relations with the state legislature. As a result, most

¹¹Ibid., November 13, 1955.

¹²Ibid., November 18, 1955.

of his program was adopted, and among his accomplishments was that more highways were built or modernized during his administration than in any previous term, and without any increase in taxes.

However, numerous allegations of "playing politics" were made during Gary's term. The role of Highway Commissioner A.B. Green, for example, was the subject of frequent criticism. In November, 1955, Green denied rumors that he donated \$50,000 to Gary's campaign, that he and Gary were associated in the gasoline business, or that he had tried to pressure the Highway Patrol into buying gasoline from his chain of service stations.¹³ He said that Joe Gary, the governor's brother, was vice president of the oil company of which Green was president, but that the governor was neither an official nor stockholder. In April, 1956, Green announced that he had sold a lot in Clinton which he had bought as a filling station site on a new U.S. Highway 66 routing; he said Gary asked him to sell it.¹⁴ In October, 1957, H.E. Bailey, supervising engineer for the Oklahoma Toll Road Authority, alleged that Gary was building a "crony road" to a filling station owned by Green in Purcell.¹⁵ Highway Director C.A. Stoldt replied that the four-lane street was programmed before Gary became governor.

Officials of the Oklahoma Rural Electric Cooperative Association reacted violently to what they termed a Gary-engineered contract signed

¹³Ibid., September 27, 1955.

¹⁴Oklahoma City Times, April 26, 1956.

¹⁵Ibid., October 25, 1957.

between the state's Grand River Dam Authority and Public Service Company of Tulsa. Under the contract, signed in the summer of 1957, electric power from the state-owned facility was to be supplied to seven Oklahoma REA cooperatives and others under terms which REA leaders said were favorable to the Tulsa utility and unfavorable to REA. Floyd Gibson, REA general manager, alleged that Gary pushed through the contract "to pay a political debt."¹⁶ Farmers Union leaders joined with REA leaders in criticizing the contract. Jack Rorschach, REA attorney in Vinita, said the contract had the effect of turning the state facility over to the Tulsa utility from an operational standpoint, eliminating competition and giving the utility a monopoly over electric power in the area.¹⁷ Gary replied that REA is required to pay only two per cent interest on its investment to the government and that this is not fair to private enterprise. He added that REA was trying to build a political empire, not only in Oklahoma but throughout the nation. Gary said further that the contract was essential to the sale of bonds required to finance the Markham Ferry power project for GRDA.¹⁸ A Tulsa newspaper supported Gary's stand, saying there is room for public power but not as a giant squeezing out private utilities.¹⁹ But REA and the Farmers Union militantly opposed the contract, and if there was any chink in Gary's

¹⁶Ibid., July 24, 1957.

¹⁷ Interview with Jack Rorschach, REA attorney in Vinita, August 18, 1962.

¹⁸Oklahoma City Times, August 5, 1957.

¹⁹Ibid., July 30, 1957.

otherwise rather solid rural support in the 1962 Democratic gubernatorial primaries, it came from this source.

The Wagoner county scandal.--The most explosive political scandal of the decade, the Wagoner county relief check case, occurred midway through Gary's term. It was coupled with an inquiry into the issuance of an unusually large number of absentee ballots in Wagoner county in connection with a hotly contested state senate race. Incumbent State Senator John Russell was opposed by Tom Payne in the Okmulgee-Wagoner county state senate district. Gary said later that he "favored Russell" but could not condone the methods used to try to reelect him.²⁰

More than eleven hundred requests were made for absentee ballots in the relatively small county of Wagoner in the 1956 runoff primary and a court hearing developed over the question of invalidating the absentee ballots. Payne led in the tabulation of the regular ballots but his lead was overcome by Russell's big margin in the absentee ballots. During the hearing one witness testified, "Somebody has forged my ballot. That's not my X. I put a tail on my X."²¹

In the midst of the hearing on the absentee ballots, it was disclosed that Russell aides had paid approximately forty campaign workers with twenty-dollar Oklahoma emergency relief checks in July, during the runoff campaign. Bob Jeffrey, Wagoner farm implement dealer, was Russell's Wagoner county campaign manager. It was testified that the campaign workers went to Jeffrey's store and signed the relief checks, which were face down

²⁰Daily Oklahoman, November 29, 1956.

²¹Interview with Noel Bulloch, Tulsa Tribune reporter, August 29, 1962.

on the store counter. The checks were cashed by Jeffrey and the proceeds paid in cash to the workers, with nearly all not knowing that they were signing relief checks. The case came to the attention of authorities after one woman worker turned a check over while Jeffrey was answering the telephone and saw that it was a relief check. She put the check in her purse and contacted the Tulsa Tribune.²²

The Oklahoma Emergency Relief Board was then separate from the Oklahoma Welfare Department. A field representative for the board could certify a person or family for emergency relief. The state office customarily sent one check for twenty dollars upon such certification, then had the need for relief investigated. Generally, such recipients could receive only three emergency relief checks, for by that time the Welfare Department was presumed to have had time to determine whether the recipient was qualified to receive another form of relief.²³

The governor was chairman of the Emergency Relief Board. The administrator was Frank Easley, a fellow townsman of Gary's from Madill. Easley had been a field representative prior to Gary's election and Gary appointed him administrator. Earl Johnston, the field representative for Okmulgee and Wagoner counties in 1956, was a patronage appointee of Senator Russell.²⁴ The Emergency Relief Board was reported to be "highly political," with legislators considering its employees their

²²Ibid.

²³Oklahoma City Times, August 8, 1956.

²⁴Ibid., August 9, 1956.

patronage and exercising influence over the distribution of relief checks.²⁵ However, in this case Jeffrey testified in court that "to my knowledge Russell knew nothing of the use of emergency relief funds in the campaign; I never talked to Russell about the use of relief checks."²⁶ And Russell was cleared of any implication in the matter.

Grand jury indictments were returned first against Jeffrey, Easley, Johnston, and Jeffrey's secretary. A month later indictments were returned against Jenks Craig, administrative assistant to Gary in the capacity of patronage adviser, and Senator Russell.

Jeffrey testified that he met with Gary, Craig, Russell, and others at a filling station cafe outside Wagoner on July 6, nearly three weeks before the July 24 primary. Jeffrey said he told Gary, "We are having a rough time." He said Gary replied, "We'll see if we can't help you."²⁷ Gary agreed that such a meeting occurred, but said it was only a chance meeting that took place while he and his party were on the way from Muskogee to another city, and he branded Jeffrey's testimony as the "rankest perjury."²⁸

Field representative Johnston testified at his preliminary hearing that he was told by relief administrator Easley in July that his relief rolls were low in Wagoner county and that there was leeway to increase them. He said he was told to contact Jeffrey. He added that he talked later with Jeffrey and two other men in Wagoner and

²⁵Ibid., August 10, 1956.

²⁶Ibid., January 17, 1957.

²⁷Ibid., November 21, 1956.

²⁸Daily Oklahoman, January 18, 1957.

that he gave Jeffrey a large number of relief applications, which he picked up on three occasions.²⁹

Gary said that as soon as he knew of the charges he contacted three state agencies to ask each to make an investigation and turn over whatever evidence was found to the Wagoner county grand jury. He issued an executive order placing the Emergency Relief Board under the Welfare Department in September, 1956, and ordered that no more emergency relief checks be issued until after the investigation was completed. He suspended Easley after the latter was indicted and gave his administrative assistant, Craig, a leave of absence so that Craig could clear himself. Later he asked the legislature to organize the relief agency along the lines set forth in his executive order and to tighten up the laws as to absentee ballots; these steps were taken.

The trial of Senator Russell resulted in a hung jury. Jeffrey and Easley pleaded guilty to charges of conspiracy to defraud the state and were fined.³⁰ Charges against the others were dismissed.

Gary ordered a special primary held December 11 and a special general election December 22 to fill the state senate seat. It was won by Payne, who was the only state senator to support Edmondson in the 1958 Democratic primary. District Judge Andrew Wilcoxon, who presided at the absentee ballot hearing, became a gubernatorial candidate in 1958.

This case extended into the summer of 1957, about six months prior to the start of the 1958 gubernatorial primary campaigns, and lent

²⁹Ibid., November 21, 1956.

³⁰Ibid., July 9, 1957, and July 10, 1957.

further substance to Edmondson's good government appeal. The Wagoner county scandal undoubtedly was more politically explosive than the Selected Investments case because no knowledge of the intricacies of high finance was required to understand what it meant to pay political campaign workers with state relief funds.

The Tulsa bypass.--The next major political scandal, that of the Tulsa bypass, did not come to light until late 1959, but it developed out of a road built in the last half of Gary's term. The twenty-three-mile, ten million dollar Tulsa bypass, built around Tulsa to link the Turner and Will Rogers turnpikes, was opened to traffic November 21, 1958. Portions of the bypass deteriorated rapidly, and less than a year after it was opened the Tulsa county attorney opened an investigation into charges that inferior materials were used in the construction of the bypass.

Additional investigations soon were under way by a United States House of Representatives public works subcommittee, the United States Bureau of Public Roads, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, a special task force of the Oklahoma Highway Department, and a special subcommittee of the Oklahoma Legislative Council's roads and highways committee.

In March, 1960, the Tulsa county grand jury indicted three partners in the road construction firm on charges of defrauding the state of \$146,289.35 through the use of faulty or inferior materials. Former Governor Gary charged that the Tulsa county attorney was an "Edmondson lieutenant" and added, "They would like to find something wrong with the Highway Commission under my administration."³¹

³¹Ibid., March 17, 1960.

Among the charges aired in the investigations were that the roadbed was to contain sand and gravel at least eight inches thick and that actually it varied from nothing to ten inches;³² that an Oklahoma Highway Department inspector had been transferred to another job after reporting some road building deficiencies to a superior;³³ and that another Highway Department employee in charge of a field materials laboratory doctored some materials samples to cause them to meet specifications.³⁴

Some political overtones crept into the investigations, with Republican members of the congressional subcommittee stressing that it was the state inspectors who failed to detect any irregularities; Democratic members of the subcommittee felt that it was more the fault of the inspectors of the Republican-controlled Bureau of Public Roads.³⁵ As a result, the reports issued by the five agencies investigating the bypass could be used to support either the notion that the bypass was properly built or not properly built.

The investigation took a new turn in May, 1960, when one of four partners in the D & G Construction Company told the subcommittee that H. Tom Kight, Jr., who was a member of the Oklahoma Highway Commission until January, 1960, was a silent partner in the D & G Company when it obtained a \$10,681 subcontract to sod the bypass. The witness added that sod contractors had held a number of meetings at an Oklahoma

³²Oklahoma City Times, April 15, 1960.

³³Ibid., May 2, 1960.

³⁴Daily Oklahoman, May 4, 1960.

³⁵Ibid., May 3, 1960.

City hotel over a period of years to "divvy up" state contracts. He said state estimates of the cost of performing each contract were furnished to the contractors before the contractors submitted their bids. He added, "The state estimates were generally high; you could bid under them and make a reasonable profit."³⁶

However, all charges against Kight and the partners in the road construction firm were dismissed by the Tulsa court on the ground that the charges, if any, should have been brought in Oklahoma county instead of Tulsa county. No further legal action was taken, but the Bureau of Public Roads temporarily suspended all federal payments on Oklahoma highway projects employing anyone who worked on the Tulsa bypass.

Thus a mixed record emerges from the 1954-1958 period. On the one hand the potentially troublesome question of racial integration of schools had been handled skillfully, a major highway building and improvement program was carried out, school teacher salaries were raised by an average of \$1,076 a year, more funds were provided for higher education and mental health, the Department of Commerce and Industry was created to attract industry, and such reforms were accomplished as a tightening up of the absentee ballot law and a welfare agency reorganization. All this was accomplished with no increase in taxes except for a temporary one-cent gasoline tax to meet emergencies caused by the 1957 floods.³⁷ On the other hand, there were the Wagoner county and Tulsa bypass allegations and the various allegations of "playing politics."

³⁶Oklahoma City Times, May 5, 1960.

³⁷Daily Oklahoman, May 8, 1962.

The 1958 Gubernatorial Campaign

Edmondson, then a thirty-two-year-old Tulsa county attorney, came out of nowhere in 1958 to poll 21 per cent of the vote in a field of eleven candidates in the Democratic first primary and to get into the runoff primary with W.P. Bill Atkinson, millionaire Midwest City home builder who had been regarded as the "man to beat" from the beginning of the campaign. Other strong contenders in 1958 were three-time candidate William O. Coe, State Senators George Miskovsky and Jim A. Rinehart, Doenges, and former House Speaker B.E. (Bill) Harkey. Edmondson was so much of a darkhorse at the outset of the campaign that one veteran political writer speculated as late as April that Edmondson might not remain in the race.

Atkinson was regarded generally as the man to beat because he had the support of more Gary administration employees and more state senators than any other candidate, the support of the largest number of voting blocs and interest groups, and at least the quiet support of Gary. He received statewide recognition when Gary appointed him to the Economic Development Commission, which operates the Department of Commerce and Industry. And he had been laying the groundwork for his 1958 campaign for at least eighteen months, during which time he gave speeches in more than four hundred Oklahoma towns and cities.

But, as the candidate believed to be out in front, Atkinson's opponents levelled a number of charges at him in an effort to cut him down. Among these were:

- 1) That he would not take a stand on the issues. On repeal of prohibition, Atkinson said he was a personal dry, but he added that he would submit the repeal question to the people for a vote if a proper

petition were presented to him; however, his opponents said it was not clear whether Atkinson would submit the question at a special election, where the silent vote would not count against it, or at a general election, where the silent vote would count against it.³⁸ On right to work, Atkinson told an Oklahoma Press Association meeting that he did not know how he stood on that question, that he would do some research on the subject before taking a stand.³⁹ Such positions as these led Miskovsky to have some cards printed saying of Atkinson, "Have Fence-- Will Straddle." Other candidates charged that Atkinson lacked knowledge of state government and state problems.

- 2) That he was a "rich man trying to buy the office." Atkinson's campaign was the best financed of all the candidates. One of his opponents, Andrew Wilcoxon, filed suit in Oklahoma county district court in April, 1958, seeking to enjoin Atkinson from filing in the governor's race on the ground that Atkinson's expenditures had exceeded the sixty-thousand-dollar campaign limit before the filing period opened.⁴⁰
- 3) That he was linked to Gary and that both were part of the Old Guard of Oklahoma politics.

Atkinson's platform was geared primarily to maintenance of the status quo: he would allow the state legislature to handle the legislative apportionment question; he saw no need for change in the operation of the Highway Commission or for shortening the ballot, as advocated by Edmondson; and he did not favor a tax increase.

³⁸Ibid., July 11, 1958.

³⁹Ibid., April 15, 1957.

⁴⁰Oklahoma City Times, April 30, 1958.

Edmondson's campaign was almost the antithesis of the Atkinson campaign. He was a definite darkhorse at the outset because he was virtually unknown outside his home area and because he had no voting bloc or interest group support. He was forced to conduct a "cheese and cracker" campaign because of limited funds. And he offered a positive reform program: (1) he advocated a new constitutional formula for legislative apportionment that would guarantee each county at least one representative in the lower house of the state legislature but would remove the existing ceiling on the number of representatives allowed to the larger counties; (2) he proposed that a constitutional Highway Commission be created so as to take highway building out of politics, since commission members could not be removed at will by the governor; (3) a shorter ballot; (4) a merit system for state employees; and (5) central purchasing of state supplies. As to repeal of prohibition, he promised a special election on the question within ninety days after the general election. And one of his major promises was that he would "clean out the Old Guard" of Oklahoma politics.

The other two principal contenders were Coe and Miskovsky, with Coe competing primarily with Atkinson for the rural and welfare bloc vote and Miskovsky competing primarily with Edmondson for the urban-progressive vote. Coe adopted much more conservative positions in 1958 than he had in his previous campaigns, even supporting the right to work proposal; however, the election results indicate that he got most of his votes as a result of the residue of support which he enjoyed from his previous campaigns, for he ran strongest in the rural, low income counties. Miskovsky was the most openly avowed advocate of repeal of prohibition

among all the candidates, and this stand gave him strong support in the urban areas.

As the campaign was nearing its close, Edmondson's aides saw that a contest might be shaping up between Edmondson and Miskovsky for a place in the runoff with the favored Atkinson. Taking note of the strong support Miskovsky was receiving in the urban areas on the basis of his strong stand for repeal, it was decided that Edmondson should start stressing repeal more, for it was in the urban areas that Edmondson also was strong. This decision was made less than two weeks before the end of the campaign.⁴¹ With the repeal issue added more forcibly to his reform program, Edmondson not only overtook Miskovsky but Atkinson as well. The results of the voting for the four leading candidates were:

Edmondson . . .	108,358
Atkinson . . .	107,616
Miskovsky . . .	87,766
Coe	72,763

Atkinson carried thirty-eight counties, twenty-four of which had populations of less than fifteen thousand; but, though his support was predominantly rural, he finished second in seven of the twelve most populous counties. Coe carried fourteen counties, seven of which had populations of less than ten thousand and eight of which were in the Little Dixie section of southeastern Oklahoma.

Miskovsky and Edmondson together carried eleven of the state's twelve most populous counties; Washington county voters returned a majority for the home area favorite, Doenges. Miskovsky carried ten

⁴¹Interview with Whit Pate, op. cit.

counties, which included six of the twelve most populous ones. Edmondson carried eleven counties, five of which were among the twelve most populous.

Map XXIV shows the counties which Edmondson carried and those in which he ran second. The boundaries of the second congressional district in northeastern Oklahoma also are outlined. Edmondson enjoyed an advantage in that district because his brother, Ed Edmondson, had represented it in Congress since 1952.

Among the more notable features of Edmondson's 1958 first primary campaign are these: (1) he probably brought more middle class persons, including women, into active politics than any previous political candidate;⁴² (2) he was the first political candidate to demonstrate--possibly more by necessity than design--that it was possible to win a Democratic primary with a campaign concentrated largely in a relatively few of the more populous counties, and in so doing his candidacy dramatized Oklahoma's increasing urbanization; (3) he demonstrated that, in 1958 at least, the electorate was highly receptive to a reform platform and good government appeal; and (4) he made the most effective use of television that had been made up to that time.

As to the 1958 runoff primary, Edmondson's reform-repeal program swept the state like the prairie fire proclaimed by the Edmondson billboards. In contrast to the "cheese and crackers" first primary campaign, offers of financial and organizational support came in substantial amounts to the primary front-runner. Edmondson carried seventy counties and received 69.6 per cent of the vote in his contest with Atkinson, who carried

⁴²Interview with Phil Dessauer, associate editor of The Tulsa Daily World, August 29, 1962.

MAP XXIV.



only seven rural counties. Youth and new faces triumphed in other run-off contests: thirty-one-year-old George Nigh defeated sixty-six-year-old incumbent Cowboy Pink Williams in the lieutenant governor contest and thirty-three-year-old William A. Burkhart defeated seventy-eight-year-old veteran office holder A.S.J. Shaw in the state treasurer race.

The Edmondson prairie fire swept on in the 1958 general election as the youthful Democratic nominee swamped his Republican opponent, Phil Ferguson, by a margin of nearly four to one. Edmondson carried every county in the state and received 74.1 per cent of the total vote to register the most lopsided gubernatorial victory in Oklahoma history. Ferguson's stand against homestead exemption alienated many voters, and in general he staged an ineffective campaign. The Republican organization still was relatively ineffective, and many Republican party workers were not enthusiastic about supporting a former Democrat; Ferguson was a former Democratic congressman who had been elected from the normally Republican eighth congressional district in the New Deal years of 1934, 1936, and 1938. But, more importantly, Edmondson had seized the initiative with respect to cleaning up state government by coming out with a strong reform program in the Democratic primaries--a program that should have been exploited by the Republicans in 1958.

The J. Howard Edmondson Administration

The new governor enjoyed some important successes early in his administration. Prohibition was repealed by a vote of the people at a special election in April, 1959. And his proposals for a merit system for state employees and for central purchasing of state supplies were

adopted in the 1959 legislative session.

However, before the first half of his term was completed Edmondson had lost complete control of the Oklahoma Democratic party and his actions had contributed to an urban-rural split within the Democratic party that was one of the most severe splits in the party's history.

Edmondson's troubles began when he decided, shortly after the close of the 1959 legislative session, to initiate three initiative petitions, all of which were opposed by rural legislators and rural residents. One proposal would have put the spending of county road funds in the hands of the State Highway Department rather than the county commissioners, on a county option basis. Another would have changed the existing legislative apportionment formula to one of electing both the old and new state senators on a population basis; state representatives also would have been elected on a population basis, but each county would have been guaranteed at least one representative. The third would have created a constitutional highway commission whose members could not be removed at will by the governor. An urban-rural cleavage began to take form when the governor's plans were made known.

The seriousness of the split became known in September, 1959, when the Democratic state executive committee ignored the governor's wishes in selecting a new Democratic state chairman following Loyd Benefield's resignation. Edmondson let it be known that his choice for state chairman was Pat Malloy of Tulsa. However, the committee chose an avowed opponent of the governor's three initiative petitions,

Gene McGill of Alva.⁴³ Some committee members said after the meeting that they resented the fact that they were not called by the governor and retiring chairman Benefield and asked to vote for Malloy; they said they were contacted instead by the chairman of the third district.⁴⁴ However, it is probable that the rural orientations of the majority of the executive committee were more significant.

Edmondson had virtually no control over the Democratic party organization from then on. He did not control the Democratic state convention which selected delegates to the Democratic national convention in 1960. State Chairman McGill headed the delegation; Edmondson was placed on the delegation and given a one-half vote because of his position. He was unable to control the organization of the state legislature for the 1961 session, though under terms of a compromise he was allowed to designate the majority floor leader of the house of representatives.

The three initiative measures were voted upon in September, 1960, and all three were defeated by heavy margins. It appears to have been a tactical error to submit three such controversial measures on the same ballot, for this apparently had the effect of solidifying all possible elements of rural opposition to the measures. Rural leaders formed a statewide organization, Oklahomans for Local Government, to fight them and this organization had the active support of the rural legislators and county commissioners. Chairman McGill sent a letter to

⁴³Oklahoma City Times, January 19, 1960.

⁴⁴Daily Oklahoman, September 20, 1959.

Democratic county officials asking them to get out the vote to defeat the measures.⁴⁵ The result was that only three urban counties, Oklahoma, Tulsa, and Washington, returned majorities for the three proposals. The measure to permit changing the system of spending county road funds was defeated 353,446 to 183,173; the results as to the other two proposals were comparable.

The 1960 presidential election occurred just six weeks after the voting on the initiative measures, when the Democratic party split was at its deepest. Though the religious factor alone probably was sufficient to bring about President Kennedy's defeat in Oklahoma, the party split and the unpopularity of the governor and his program undoubtedly contributed to the size of the Nixon victory.

The election of a Catholic President was displeasing to many Oklahomans, and this contributed further to a sense of dissatisfaction with the Democratic party.

The state Democratic party's image was shaken still further by the lengthy, wrangling 1961 legislative session, described as "the longest, costliest, most wearisome and frustrating session in the history of the state."⁴⁶ Organized and operating almost independently of the governor, the session was marked by repeated grabs for patronage, by efforts to scuttle the merit system and central purchasing laws, and by approval of the biggest spending program in the state's history. Overall, it was not the dignified, businesslike type of session that

⁴⁵Ibid., September 8, 1960.

⁴⁶Ibid., July 30, 1961.

inspires confidence in its actions among the electorate, a fact which many Oklahomans undoubtedly took into account when the Democratic gubernatorial nominee recommended in 1962 that the sales tax be increased to provide more money for the operation of state affairs.

As the 1962 elections approached, relations were sorely strained between the urban and rural wings of the Democratic party, as well as between the legislative and executive elements of its leadership and between the governor and the official party organization. The accumulation of grievances against Democratic management of state affairs and dissatisfaction with the national administration were sufficient to cause many to think it was "time for a change."

CHAPTER XI

THE DEMOCRATIC FIRST PRIMARY

Twelve candidates entered the 1962 Democratic gubernatorial primary. This compares with an average of nine in all such primaries since 1910 and with an average of ten since 1942. The large number of primary candidates is one indication of a multifactional political system and of fragmented party control.

The filing period opened February 26 and the election was held May 1. The 1962 primary was the first to be held in May; previously the voting had been held in July.

The legal limit for expenditures in a gubernatorial contest is \$60,000 in the first primary and \$30,000 in the runoff primary. When the limit was raised to \$60,000 for the first primary, the law made the candidates responsible for money raised by local organizations as well as by state campaign headquarters. The limit is unrealistically low and invariably is exceeded by the major candidates. Unofficial estimates of the range of spending by the major candidates in the 1962 first primary are from \$100,000 to \$300,000.

Generally, it has been necessary to poll one hundred thousand or more votes in the first primary to win a place in the runoff. In the six election years through 1958 in which the runoff primary has been employed, only twice did the second-place candidate receive less

than one hundred thousand votes, the last such occasion being in 1946. And only once in those years did the candidate who finished second in the first primary go on to defeat the front-runner in the runoff; that was in the 1954 Gary-Coe contest. In 1934, Tom Anglin withdrew from the runoff against E.W. Marland after trailing 156,885 to 101,698 in the first primary. In 1962 second-place candidate Atkinson not only received less than one hundred thousand votes in the first primary, but he also went on to overcome Gary's staggering lead of more than eighty-five thousand votes and to defeat Gary in the runoff.

The candidates and the votes they received in the first primary were:

Raymond Gary	176,525	William A. Burkhart	4,055
W.P. Bill Atkinson	91,182	Max B. Martin	1,199
Preston J. Moore	85,248	Thomas Dee Frasier	1,123
George Nigh	84,404	Harry R. Moss	1,101
Fred R. Harris	78,476	Paul J. Summers	987
George Miskovsky	9,434	Ben Elmo Newcomer	564

Three of the candidates withdrew from the contest, but their withdrawals were made too late to have their names taken off the ballot. Frasier withdrew and announced his support of Harris. Summers and Moss gave their support to Moore.

At the outset of the campaign there was speculation that Gary and Atkinson would be competing for the anti-Edmondson, largely rural, generally status quo vote and that Moore, Nigh, and Harris would seek to establish themselves as the "fresh political face" in an effort to capture the vote that went to Edmondson in 1958. Gary and Atkinson were expected to project the image of stability, whereas the younger trio would appeal to the urban-progressive elements of the electorate. Though this occurred to some extent, Atkinson changed his appeal markedly from

that of 1958, took a forthright stand on the issues, appealed to the urban-progressive elements of the electorate while retaining his image as a sound businessman, and dissociated himself more and more from Gary. This gave Atkinson a somewhat separate image in the field of candidates, and the fact that he was the only candidate advocating a sales tax increase to solve the state's financial problems contributed to his fairly distinctive position. Gary's position was the most distinctive of all; with a platform that was even more rural-oriented than his 1954 platform, he emerged as the champion of the rural, anti-Edmondson elements of the electorate. There was a substantial overlapping of support for Moore, Nigh, and Harris, and this hurt the candidacy of each. Moore and Harris especially sought to find a position on one of the major issues that could be dramatized and which would give them a distinctive position, for they suffered the disadvantage of being least the widely known of the major candidates.

It seemed apparent almost from the outset that Gary was the only candidate certain to win in the first primary, and the question soon became: Which of the Anybody But Gary candidates has the best chance of getting into the runoff with Gary and of defeating him in the runoff? For virtually no one was neutral toward Gary; most voters were either strongly for him or strongly against him, and this feeling was enhanced by the urban-rural split within the party. Gary's popularity began to rise in the state in 1959 and 1960 as Edmondson's popularity fell, and one primary candidate alleged that Gary was the real power behind the Oklahomans for Local Government organization that was formed to fight Edmondson's initiative petitions.

The search for the Anybody But Gary candidate introduced a strong irrational factor into the 1962 first primary. Instead of voting their own preferences, many voters were trying to guess who had the best chance to defeat Gary. There was much fear of "wasting my vote" on one of the lesser known and less well financed candidates.

Atkinson emerged as the successful Anybody But Gary candidate with only 17.1 per cent of the total primary vote, and among the reasons for his second-place finish in the first primary were these:

- 1) Only Atkinson could match Gary with respect to campaign finances and strength of campaign organization. These factors created some "bandwagon effect" in his favor.
- 2) The fact that Atkinson and Nigh were the best known of the four major Anybody But Gary candidates gave them a big advantage over Moore and Harris. Nigh became established early in the campaign as the front-runner among the four, partly because he was well known as a result of having served four years as lieutenant governor and partly because Atkinson delayed the opening of his campaign until two months after the other candidates began stumping the state. The front-runner position was as disadvantageous to Nigh in 1962 as it was to Atkinson in 1958, for it prompted his opponents to center their fire upon him; his opponents' charges that he had no carefully considered program were especially damaging to Nigh. As Nigh's campaign began to fade, Atkinson's began to rise because his finances and organization were superior to those of Moore and Harris.
- 3) Atkinson had an important residue of support from his 1958 campaign. Though he was soundly defeated by Edmondson in the 1958 runoff, he still

polled 158,780 votes. Some of his 1958 support remained with him in 1962; for example, many Rural Electric Cooperative Association leaders supported him in 1958 because he opposed the Gary-sponsored contract between Grand River Dam Authority and Public Service Company of Tulsa, and a number of them continued to support him in 1962. Such rural support was important to Atkinson, for he was competing with Moore, Nigh, and Harris for the urban vote.

4) Atkinson's advocacy of a sales tax increase not only gave him a distinctive position in the crowded field of candidates and a base from which to deal forthrightly with the major issue of the campaign, but it also drew some important organizational support to him. The school bloc was seeking higher teacher salaries and the Oklahoma Municipal League was seeking additional revenue for the towns and cities. Atkinson had something positive to offer to such groups as these.

Table 42 shows how broadly based the support of each of the candidates was.

TABLE 42.--Number of first, second, third, fourth, and fifth place finishes by the candidates in the seventy-seven counties

	First	Second	Third	Fourth	Fifth
Gary	60	11	3	1	2
Atkinson	1	25	32	13	6
Moore	7	16	18	22	14
Nigh	3	16	21	33	4
Harris	6	9	3	8	51

That Gary had by far the broadest base of support, which cut across nearly all segments of the electorate, is shown by the fact that he ran first or second in all but six counties. Despite his rural-oriented

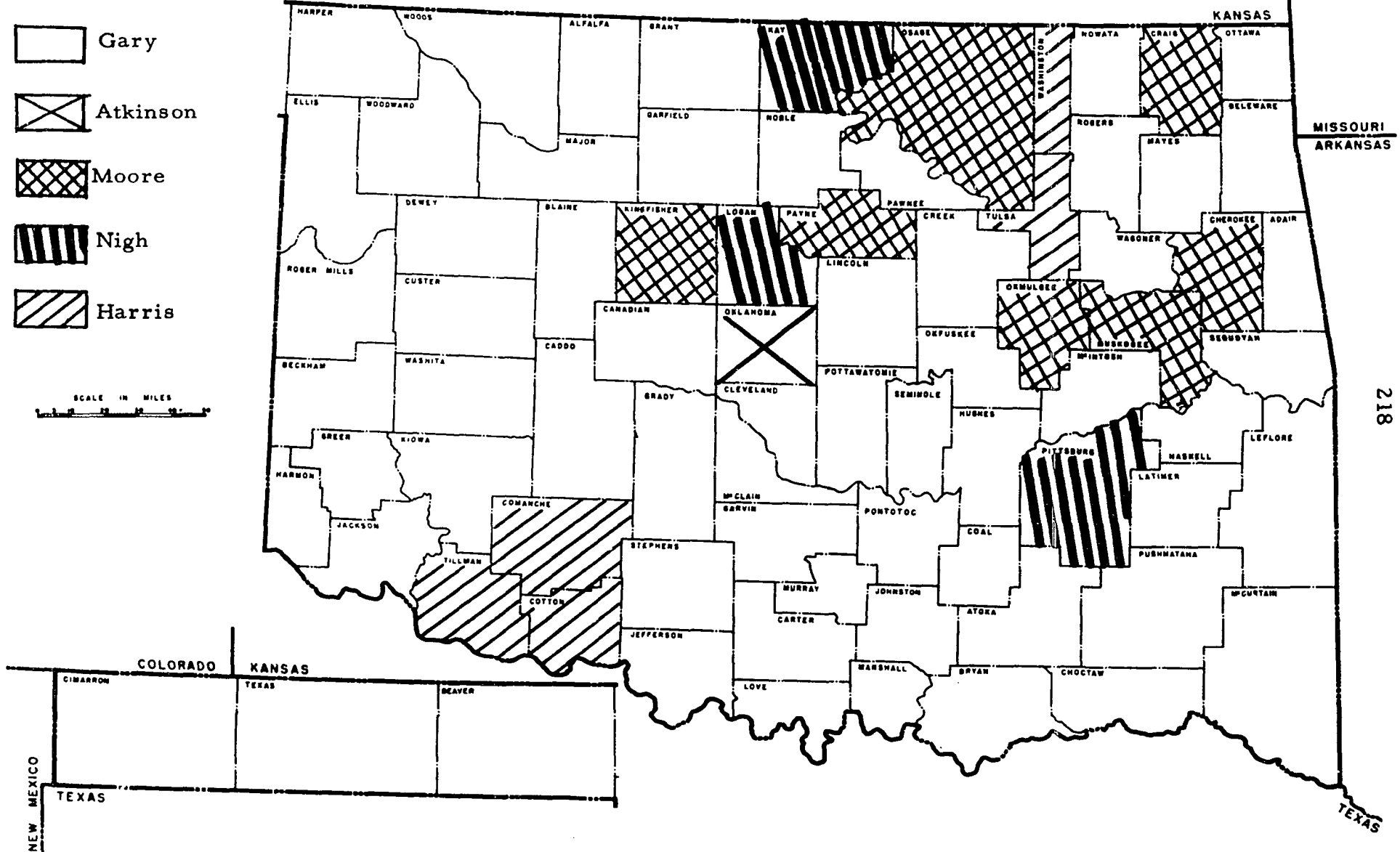
program, he even made strong showings in some of the more populous areas, owing in part to his labor and Negro support; Gary also is a prominent lay Baptist and has a strong following among Baptists in all sections. Atkinson carried only his home county of Oklahoma, but he finished second or third in fifty-seven counties, and it was this rather broad base of support that put him into the runoff.

Moore and Harris carried the most counties of the Anybody But Gary candidates, but their support was spotty; they ran well where they were well known or where their county organizations were strong.

Map XXV shows the counties carried by the candidates. It shows that Gary carried most of the counties in northwestern, southwestern, and southeastern Oklahoma, plus the less populous counties in northeastern Oklahoma. Obviously he was strongest in the rural areas. For one thing, he was the only major candidate who did not favor the constitutional formula for reapportioning the legislature; instead he proposed that representation in one house be based upon population and that in the other upon area (political entities), a plan which Gary said was modeled after that of the national Congress. Gary was weakest in these areas:

- 1) Northeastern Oklahoma. Both the Wagoner county and Tulsa bypass scandals, which developed during Gary's term, occurred in the northeastern section. The Tulsa newspapers bitterly opposed Gary's reapportionment stand and they charged that northeastern Oklahoma did not receive a proportionate share in Gary's road building program. Grand River Dam is in northeastern Oklahoma; while the Grand River Dam Authority-Public Service Company contract had repercussions through-

MAP XXV. COUNTIES CARRIED BY THE CANDIDATES IN THE 1962 DEMOCRATIC FIRST PRIMARY



out the state, its effects were felt especially strongly in the northeast.

2) The more populous counties of central and northeastern Oklahoma. However, he finished a strong second in Oklahoma county, partly because the Oklahoma City newspapers adopted a strong anti-Atkinson stand and did not attack Gary's rural-oriented program.

The principal issues in the campaign were these: (1) how to finance state government operations; (2) the brace of issues that were of especial interest to rural residents, including legislative reapportionment, consolidation of rural schools, the Edmondson program of equalizing ad valorem taxes among all the counties, and curbing the powers of the county commissioners; (3) the size of the highway program; (4) the proposed right to work law; and (5) various local issues.

The remaining developments in the primary will be discussed from the standpoint of the campaigns of each of the five leading candidates.

The Gary Campaign

Gary, who was fifty-four years old, served fourteen years in the state senate before being elected governor in 1954. A resident of Madill in Marshall county, he was a political leader in Little Dixie. He had been a school teacher and county superintendent of schools prior to his election to the state senate. He was superintendent of the Sunday School at Kingston Baptist Church for sixteen years, chairman of the board of deacons, and a member of the board of trustees of the Oklahoma Baptist Convention. In the 1940's Gary and a Madill banker joined with Kerr-McGee Oil Company to buy out a wholesale oil and gasoline

distributing company, Commercial Oil Company, the name of which was changed to Sooner Oil Company. Gary's brother Joe bought the banker's stock after the latter's death, and in 1949 the brothers bought out the Kerr-McGee interest. Gary still operates Sooner Oil Company and has a farm of more than four hundred acres.

The issues.--In drafting his platform for the 1962 campaign, Gary took account of the fact that the school and welfare blocs were the two largest voting blocs in Oklahoma and that an appeal to them would be essentially a "liberal" one, but he also felt that Oklahoma was drifting gradually toward a "conservative" point of view.¹ He cited the three Republican presidential victories since 1952 and the fact that a "majority" of Oklahoma congressmen were voting more conservatively in recent years as the basis for his view that Oklahomans were becoming more conservative. To win in Oklahoma, Gary expressed the view that a candidate's program must be sound enough to attract the business interests, but liberal enough to appeal to those who depend upon the state for pay or support, including the school and welfare blocs.

Gary officially announced his candidacy January 16, when he set forth his platform at a press conference. He set the tone of the campaign by proposing a \$210,000,000 bond issue to help finance a seven-year road building program which, with federal matching funds and general revenue appropriations added, would cost an estimated \$581,000,000. This was the heart of both his highway program and his plan to finance state

¹Interview with Raymond Gary, July 31, 1962.

government operations, for the proceeds from the bond issue not only would make possible an extensive highway building and improvement program but would also lessen the drain on the general revenue fund for highway purposes and thus make available more general revenue funds for school, welfare, and other purposes. This was the basis of his appeal to those voting blocs. To the businessmen, he said that a first-class system of highways and expressways is essential to industrial expansion.

No increase in taxes was another strong plank in the Gary platform. Gary explained that his twenty-five-year, tax-exempt highway bonds were to be issued at the rate of \$30,000,000 a year for seven years and were to be backed by the full faith and credit of the state. They were to be retired from "economic growth." Gary estimated that existing road user taxes would produce \$36,000,000 in the current fiscal year, but he said they would produce increasingly higher revenues in the future. He estimated that in the next fifteen years the road user taxes would produce \$340,000,000 above what they were then producing. This "surplus" above the current \$36,000,000 a year revenue from the road user taxes was to be pledged to retiring the highway bonds. Thus no increase in taxes would be required to liquidate them. Gary promised further to submit the list of highways to be built to the voters before they were asked to approve the bond issue.

Gary's positions on the issues of interest to rural residents probably gave him an even more distinctive position among the field of candidates than his highway bond proposal and no tax increase stands, for he established himself as the avowed champion of Oklahoma rural interests. On equalizing ad valorem taxes among the counties, he said

such assessments were the responsibility of county equalization boards and he expressed his opposition to blanket increases for entire counties. On consolidation of rural schools, he said no additional legislation beyond the 1947 school consolidation and reorganization act was needed. On county commissioner spending practices, he advocated no additional regulations. And, of course, with respect to legislative reapportionment he stood alone; as to this issue, he never spelled out the details of his plan, such as which of the two houses of the legislature was to have its representation based upon population and whether there was to be an increase or decrease of membership in either or both houses.

There even was an urban-rural cast to the issue of highways in 1962. Gary said he would build highways where they were needed, not according to population. Moore insisted that highways should be built where the traffic count justifies them.

Gary's opposition to the proposed right to work law earned him the support of labor. AFL-CIO leaders supported Gary because, according to Len Yarborough, executive vice president, Gary had declared his strong opposition to the law and had promised to make speeches against it if he were nominated.² The AFL-CIO did not endorse Gary officially until early in the runoff, but the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers endorsed him in the first primary.

Organization and finances.--Gary had the largest, most experienced, and most effective campaign organization of all the candidates, and only the Gary and Atkinson campaigns were adequately financed.

²Interview with Len Yarborough, executive vice president of the Oklahoma AFL-CIO, July 26, 1962.

Gary had county headquarters in at least fifty of the seventy-seven counties and active campaign workers in most of the remaining counties. A top Gary campaign aide said, "We had just the kind of organization we wanted in about fifteen to twenty counties."

His campaign manager was State Senator Robert L. Bailey, of Cleveland county, a young man who had been active in the senate on school matters because he represented the district in which the University of Oklahoma was located. Other top aides included James C. Hamill, Oklahoma City attorney; Gary's son, Raymond Jerdi Gary, of Denison; Martin Hauan, Oklahoma City public relations executive; Mrs. Sue Rubel, Oklahoma City, woman's coordinator; Don Simmons, Muskogee, Negro coordinator, and six district coordinators who worked with the county chairmen. B.E. (Bill) Harkey, former speaker of the state house of representatives, headed the Oklahoma county organization and Robert L. Hicks, insurance executive, the Tulsa county organization. Hicks was aided in Tulsa county by George Norvel, former Tulsa mayor, and Walter Findley, editor of the weekly Tulsa Citizen-News.

In Oklahoma county, where Gary ran strongly, there were approximately one hundred fifty active workers, plus nearly one thousand persons doing some sort of part-time work.³ One hundred women made door-to-door calls in Wards 1 and 3, twenty in Ward 4, and fifteen in Ward 2. Four women were used full-time to make telephone calls in those areas of the city where it was felt that Gary was weakest and where no house canvass was conducted. In addition, a

³Interview with B.E. (Bill) Harkey, Gary campaign manager in Oklahoma county, August 20, 1962.

Voluntary Telephone Club was organized; twenty-five to thirty women agreed to make telephone calls to their friends.

The house canvassers and telephone callers compiled lists of persons definitely for Gary, those definitely against, and the undecided. This list served as a private poll of Gary strength in Oklahoma City and also as a basis for enlisting the support of the nearly one thousand part-time workers. Postcards were supplied to Gary county managers throughout the state, and these managers were asked to send in the names of pro-Gary former residents who had moved to Oklahoma City from the rural areas, where Gary was especially strong.

Throughout the campaign Harkey met frequently with the four full-time telephone callers to learn what the voters were talking about. Two meetings were held with the women house canvassers to brief them on the issues and to learn what Oklahoma City residents were saying about the candidates. Among the principal problems were how to explain Gary's stand on legislative reapportionment in an urban area and how to answer questions about the Wagoner county and Tulsa bypass cases. Late in the campaign bulletins were sent every three or four days to the one thousand part-time workers to provide them with information on the campaign and the issues.

The main effort of the Gary organization in Oklahoma City was concentrated upon the working-class areas of Wards 3 and 4 and among the Negroes in Ward 2. The same was true in Tulsa, where door-to-door canvassers were used in seventy-six of the city's two hundred twenty-five precincts; these were principally working-class precincts on Tulsa's north side.

In the smaller counties the Gary organizations might consist of a few veteran organizers who quietly enlisted the support of key persons in the various areas of city and county, sometimes without benefit of county headquarters offices. Asked how he went about enlisting the support of key persons in his county, a county manager in a medium-sized county said, "Maybe he would be satisfied if his daughter could work in the precinct election and earn five dollars; maybe he wants to earn ten dollars hauling voters to the polls; maybe he can be persuaded by someone who will just take the time to sit on his front porch and talk with him." It is in the area of having engaged in politics long enough to know who the key persons in the area are, and on what basis they can be persuaded, that experience counts. Another mark of experience appears to be in knowing where to concentrate the campaign effort; the county manager for one of Gary's opponents bemoaned the fact that he spent too much time and money in the rural and Negro areas, "where we were beaten by Gary to begin with," and not enough time holding coffees in the city residential areas, "where the people were more receptive."

The campaign.--Newspaper polls and private polls showed that Gary and Nigh jumped off to an early lead in the campaign. But since it was virtually conceded that Gary would lead in the first primary and since the real fight was for second place, the opposing candidates concentrated their fire at least as much upon Nigh as upon Gary.

However, Gary's program was roundly criticized. His opponents pointed out that bills proposing highway bond issues had been introduced in the legislature many times, for amounts less than \$210,000,000,

and had been voted down consistently. The largest bond issue approved up to that time by the voters was the \$68,000,000 authorized to build the Will Rogers turnpike, a self-liquidating project. Atkinson charged that the program would cost \$80,000,000 in interest, attorney fees, and other expenses.⁴ Edmondson said the voters did not have sufficient confidence in the Highway Department to approve a bond issue of that magnitude.⁵ Harris said highway bond issues are wise only in small sums and for non-recurring purposes.⁶ It was charged further that Gary alone would be determining Oklahoma highway expenditures for seven years, that there would be a sparse highway program after the seven-year boom, and that the bond issue constituted a mortgage to be passed on to the next generation.

But some voters liked the no tax increase aspect of Gary's program. Others felt their communities would get more highways and get them faster than could be accomplished under a pay-as-you-go plan. Gary benefited from his 1954-1958 reputation as a highway builder, and his promises of new highways caused many communities to feel that they had a personal stake in his candidacy. That Gary benefited from his past road building was shown by election returns in the cities and counties along U.S. Highway 66. During his term as governor Gary had kept his promise to put the highway through the towns and cities rather than to adopt the straight-line route, favored by the Bureau of Public Roads,

⁴Daily Oklahoman, April 12, 1962.

⁵Ibid., January 2, 1962.

⁶Ibid., February 1, 1962.

that would have bypassed the cities by as much as eight miles. These cities showed their gratitude by their voting in the first primary. Against eleven opponents, Gary received 67.6 per cent of the vote in Beckham county, 61.6 per cent in Custer county, and 40 per cent in the city of Bethany, just outside Oklahoma City. Of course, Gary's rural-oriented program also helped him in all these areas except Bethany.

Gary was virtually unbeatable in rural Oklahoma. In Sequoyah county, Wheeler Mayo, publisher of the Sequoyah County Times, decided not to enter the congressional race in his district so that he could work against Gary in the gubernatorial contest. Mayo had been a member of the Grand River Dam Authority board of directors when the contract with the Public Service Company was signed, and he bitterly opposed Gary's efforts on behalf of the contract.⁷ His newspaper endorsed Harris. But Sequoyah county voters gave Gary 47.6 per cent of the vote, Harris 8.8 per cent, and Atkinson 18.2 per cent.

Gary also was challenged to spell out the details of his legislative reapportionment proposal. Harris noted that the smallest counties were awarded a state representative on as little as a half-population ratio under the existing constitutional formula, but he pointed out that some of these counties would lose their representative if representation in the house were based upon population and if the membership of the house were not increased.⁸ But some observers expressed the view that this

⁷Oklahoma City Times, February 20, 1962.

⁸Ibid., April 16, 1962.

issue was too complex to be understood fully by many voters. Large numbers of rural voters just knew that Gary was on the side of the rural folks.

To many, a vote for Gary was a vote against the Edmondson administration. Gary occupied the most distinctive position in the large field of candidates: most of the rural, anti-Edmondson vote could be concentrated upon him, while most of the urban-progressive votes were being distributed among the other four leading candidates. As a result of this distinctive position, his excellent campaign organization, the gratitude of many for highways already built and the expectations of others for highways promised, Gary polled 33 per cent of the votes and led the field by a wide margin.

But what was an asset to Gary in the first primary became a liability to him in the runoff, when the urban votes could be concentrated upon a single opponent.

The Atkinson Campaign

Atkinson, who was fifty-five years old, had served as a member of the Economic and Development Commission under Governor Gary and a member of the Planning and Resources Board under Governor Kerr. His principal achievement was to develop the city of Midwest City in Oklahoma county from a wheat field to the sixth largest city in the state in a period of from fifteen to twenty years--and to become a multi-millionaire in the process. Atkinson was teaching journalism at Oklahoma City University in the 1930's when he took a job selling real estate on weekends to learn the home building business. He went into home building on a shoestring and soon became a major builder. In

1941, he said, newspapers carried stories that an air depot would be located within ten miles of downtown Oklahoma City, no nearer than four miles to an oil field, on a railroad and on a highway accessible to the city. Atkinson said he studied maps of the county, narrowed the prospective location of the air depot to three possible sites, then purchased two farms totalling three hundred ten acres at a price of one hundred fifty dollars an acre. This land became the site of Midwest City. Atkinson skyrocketed into prominence in the home building field and in 1951 became president of the National Association of Home Builders. He has been prominent in Methodist Church affairs.

The issues.--Advocacy of a one-cent increase in the state sales tax, from two to three cents on the dollar, was the heart of Atkinson's 1962 platform. It was partly to overcome Atkinson's 1958 campaign image of lack of forthrightness that he and his campaign advisers decided to advocate the sales tax increase as the means of overcoming the state's deficit financing and of laying the groundwork for ushering Oklahoma into an era of industrial growth.⁹ Late in 1961 his advisers sounded out the sentiment of key persons throughout the state on the tax increase. The results were about fifty-fifty. On the one hand, any form of tax increase was almost certain to be opposed by many housewives, by labor leaders, and by old age pensioners and others tied to small fixed incomes. But, on the other hand, a tax increase would be appealing to teachers seeking higher pay, to the revenue-starved towns and cities, to

⁹Interviews with H.W. McNeill, campaign coordinator, August 3, 1962; Chan Guffey, press aide, August 3, 1962; E.L. Roederer, Oklahoma county coordinator, August 20, 1962; Clarke W. Ford, Tulsa county coordinator, August 29, 1962.

local chambers of commerce interested in the "Build Oklahoma" theme, and possibly to young persons interested in greater job opportunities.

The fact that such a platform plank would permit Atkinson to be forthright and specific in telling how the state's problems could and should be met weighed heavily in the decision to advocate the tax increase. Also, such an approach to the state's problems would give Atkinson a separate image in the eyes of the voters, especially if his opponents were less forthright than he in spelling out how to meet the problems.

It was decided to take the calculated political risk of advocating the sales tax increase. It could be softened a bit by referring to it as a "penny increase," as Atkinson invariably did. And certainly it was better to specify the tax to be raised than to talk in general about raising taxes, for that would alienate almost everyone. Overall, a proposal to increase the sales tax probably would meet less resistance than any other form of tax increase. It does not hurt industry and is more acceptable to the wealthy than the income tax, and most persons appear to fear the sales tax less than any other.

The sales tax increase plank permitted Atkinson to advocate a \$435,000,000 pay-as-you-go highway program within the next four years. Of the \$27,000,000 increase in revenues in the first year, Atkinson proposed to allocate \$10,000,000 to the Highway Department and twenty per cent (\$5,400,000) to the financially hard pressed towns and cities.

On the rural issues, Atkinson adopted a somewhat more middle of the road position than Moore and Harris. With one eye on the big urban-progressive vote that went to Edmondson in 1958, he advocated

legislative reapportionment according to the constitutional formula. With another eye on his residue of rural support from the 1958 campaign, he did not make equalization of ad valorem assessments or reform of county commissioner spending practices an important part of his platform. He qualified his support of reorganization of rural school districts by pointing out that many rural roads were poor and that many pupils were leaving home before daylight in the wintertime and not returning until after dark.

On the proposed right to work law, Atkinson handed out a prepared statement of his position when he appeared before the Oklahoma Press Association April 1. It said:

The question is of such a nature that it should not disrupt the legislature again. For this reason, I believe it should be settled by the people. It is now in the process of being initiated. I do not intend to be active for or against. If the drive is successful and the petitions found valid, the people will decide by their ballots. At that time, and as an individual, I shall vote against the measure.

It was a good stand on a potentially divisive issue. It permitted Atkinson to take a positive stand as an individual, but recognized that the people and not the governor would decide the issue.

Organization and finances.--Atkinson or Nigh had the second largest campaign organization, but the Atkinson organization had far more experienced campaign workers in it than Nigh's. And Atkinson's campaign probably was the best financed of all. The Atkinson campaign began with a nucleus of about thirty-five county organizations; this was expanded to fifty-one by late March.

H.W. (Coach) McNeill, Oklahoma City oilman, former campaign manager for Governor Turner and leader of the successful 1959 campaign

to repeal prohibition, agreed to serve as state coordinator of the Atkinson campaign about October, 1961. McNeil is one of the very few Oklahomans who can put together a statewide political organization by telephone from his office. Other top campaign aides were Dave Vandivier, former Chickasha newspaper publisher; Chan Guffey, former city editor of the Daily Oklahoman and later publisher of the weekly Prague News-Record; and former Governors Turner and William J. Holloway, who served as advisors.

McNeil chose the county managers in the key counties carefully, avoiding those experienced men who had accumulated a number of enemies from previous campaigns and where possible selecting men already identified with large vote-getting organizations. In Oklahoma county, the county coordinator was E.L. (Jim) Roederer, Oklahoma City insurance executive who had just served as chairman of the Voters for City Improvements Committee, an organization formed to work for passage of a \$39,850,000 city improvements bond issue. The bond issue was voted upon October 24, 1961, and Roederer joined the Atkinson organization the next day, bringing with him much of the Improvements Committee organization. In Tulsa county the coordinator was Clarke W. Ford, young Tulsa lawyer who had served for five years as administrative assistant to Mayors George Norvel and James Maxwell. He too was able to obtain the assistance of former city officials and of large numbers of workers who had taken part in city bond issue campaigns. In Muskogee county, the coordinator was Andrew Wilcoxon, who as district judge presided at the Wagoner county absentee ballot hearings.

There was a wealth of know-how at the top, there was much

experience throughout the organization, and finances were adequate. The only question is whether Atkinson generated much enthusiasm among the lower echelon workers.

The campaign.--In addition to the decision to advocate a sales tax increase, a second major decision made before the start of the campaign was to conduct an intensive six-week campaign, with an all-out drive in the last three weeks. This meant that Atkinson's campaign would start approximately two months after those of the other candidates, and this was another calculated risk. The decision was made because it was felt that Atkinson had gotten out in front too early in the 1958 campaign and had become the target of the other candidates; also it was believed that his 1958 campaign had peaked too early and that there was some loss of support in the latter stages. In addition, the Tennessee legislative reapportionment case was pending, and there was a possibility that the decision in this case might have an important bearing upon the stand to be taken on this issue.

The risk taken in delaying the start of the campaign until mid-March was demonstrated in the results of the first statewide newspaper poll, which were released March 18, the day before Atkinson's kickoff speech. The poll showed Gary leading with 495 votes, Nigh second with 436, Harris 199, Atkinson 152, Moore 125, Miskovsky 70, and 471 undecided.

The reaction to Atkinson's opening speech was generally favorable, and by the time the second United Press International statewide poll was taken he had climbed to third place and appeared to be gaining. The results of this poll were published April 10.

By mid-April the Atkinson campaign was in high gear, with a saturation television and radio campaign, statewide newspaper advertising, and signs and placards appearing on the highways. On April 22 the Tulsa World endorsed him in a front-page editorial which said, "He is frankly telling the truth about our state finances--without offering any puny or 'painless' solutions." This was in reference to the fact that both the 1959 and 1961 state legislatures had appropriated less than the sums required by the public schools and institutions of higher learning; in both sessions the legislators relied upon "economic growth" to overcome all or part of the deficit by the second year of the biennium. The situation in 1962 was that the next legislature faced the prospect of picking up a "hot check" of up to \$13,000,000 to make up the school and college deficits. In addition, the state's highways were below average, its mental hospitals were under-financed, and the cities and towns needed more revenue badly.

When the results of the final statewide newspaper poll were released April 30, Atkinson was in second place behind Gary.

Most of the campaign strategy appeared to work as planned. Atkinson maneuvered himself into a desirable position on the issues: the proposed sales tax increase gave him a separate image in the eyes of the voters and attracted some important organizational support. He avoided alienating the rural supporters who backed him in 1958, and his positions on reapportionment and industrial progress gave him some support in the urban areas. His platform was geared to progress, while his age and business background gave his candidacy an air of stability. Voters who opposed "youthful idealism" or "turning the clock back" found him a more

middle of the road candidate. And, what is very important in a many-sided scramble, his campaign was well financed and his campaign organization was sufficiently strong to convey the impression that he had a good chance to win a place in the runoff.

The Moore Campaign

Moore, who was forty-two years old, was born in Okmulgee county and was reared in Bartlesville, in Washington county. In more recent years he had practiced law, first in Stillwater in Payne county and later in Oklahoma City. He had not held political office. He gained prominence first as state commander of the American Legion, then as national commander in 1958-1959. He made many political contacts as a campaign worker for Lyndon Johnson in five southwestern or western states in advance of the 1960 Democratic national convention. And he was on good terms with Senator Kerr, another former American Legion state commander and a Lyndon Johnson supporter. Among his political assets were that he was a good speaker and that he was not identified with the Old Guard, the Edmondson New Guard, or the legislative branch.

The issues.--Moore had difficulty with his positions on at least two of the major issues, and this was harmful to his candidacy. He took a stand against an increase in taxes in the opening speech of his campaign, but he said at that time that he would consider recommending a sales tax increase if it appeared that increased revenue was absolutely necessary. Later in the campaign, in an effort to occupy a more distinctive position on this paramount issue, he ran advertisements which read: The Only Candidate Who Stands Between You And A Tax Increase.

On the right to work issue, there is some difference of opinion as to what Moore said or intended to say with respect to this issue at his campaign kickoff rally at Stillwater February 10. But the opening paragraph of the Daily Oklahoman news article which gave an account of the rally quoted Moore as saying, "I cannot and will not support a right to work law."¹⁰ Moore was quoted as saying further, "I don't believe it is going to bring the great strides in industry some persons would have us believe it will bring to Oklahoma," but as adding, "it might help in some instances." These remarks were not part of his prepared text; they were made in answer to reporters' questions following his speech. Some of his aides indicated that he did not intend to take such a strong position against right to work, and much effort was expended in ensuing weeks in an effort to establish a more neutral position on the issue. The effect of his taking such a strong position at Stillwater was to alienate some supporters of the right to work petition and, equally importantly, to make fund-raising more difficult, at least for a time.¹¹ The moneyed interests generally favored the proposed right to work law.

Moore's proposed \$351,000,000 highway program for the coming four years was the smallest of all the major candidates. He advocated that no appropriations for highways be made from the general fund as one means of avoiding a tax increase. On legislative reapportionment and related issues, his positions generally were urban-oriented.

¹⁰Daily Oklahoman, February 11, 1962.

¹¹Interviews with Dick Trent, Moore campaign manager, July 27, 1962; C.J. Wright, campaign coordinator, August 17, 1962; Bruce Hickman, press aide, August 11, 1962; and Hollis Hull, campaign aide, August 23, 1962.

Organization and finances.--Because of Moore's strong American Legion connections, his campaign aides worked through local Legion posts to obtain county managers. Though an effort was made to avoid the appearance of "too much Legion," it was necessary to rely rather heavily upon Legionnaires as county managers. But Legion strength and activity is spotty in Oklahoma, and so was the strength of Moore's statewide organization.

There were county headquarters offices in about ten counties. The headquarters list showed that there were county managers in fifty-nine counties, but many of these did not work actively. Few persons in the top or lower echelons of the organization had had any previous political experience. And there was virtually no organization down to the precinct level, even in Oklahoma City or Tulsa.

Moore's campaign manager was Dick Trent, an Oklahoma City insurance executive, who was taking part in his first political campaign. C.J. Wright, a Vinita businessman and former state commander of the American Legion, joined the headquarters staff in March as coordinator of the county organizations; he also was without previous political experience. Bruce Hickman, radio station news editor and a recent chairman of Citizens for Constitutional Reapportionment, became Moore's press aide, but he received a public relations contract during the campaign and was unable to devote full time to it. Hollis Hull, Oklahoma City insurance executive who also was without previous political experience, served alternately as coordinator of county organizations and as publicity director at various stages of the campaign. A group of twelve to fifteen business and professional men, also without

political experience, met regularly with these top campaign aides in an advisory capacity.

In Oklahoma county the campaign initially was headed by an Oklahoma City businessman who was unable to devote sufficient time to the campaign. About April 1 the post was assumed by Tom Harley, Oklahoma City lawyer, who had been a member of the speakers' bureau for Coe in 1946 and for Murray in 1950. There were four active workers at the county headquarters in addition to Harley. There was no ward or precinct organization in Oklahoma county, and the principal effort there was this: five thousand bumper stickers were issued, small hand cards were passed out by young girls and boys on three days, the headquarters staff passed out hand cards in front of the headquarters office as time permitted, and a half-hour coffee was given for Moore at the county headquarters office.¹² In the Capitol Hill section of Oklahoma City a headquarters office was staffed by one woman, and it was reported that she had approximately one hundred fifty large yard signs built. Three Negro women were engaged to make telephone calls in the Negro area, but only one remained in the last two weeks of the campaign.

In Tulsa county the campaign was headed by Ray Williams, thirty-six-year-old oil company attorney and independent oil operator. He said approximately thirty women volunteers were given ten precincts each and asked to try to find one woman in each precinct who would make telephone calls or write letters on Moore's behalf. Williams said this effort was not entirely successful. For one thing, it was impossible to obtain

¹²Interview with Tom Harley, Oklahoma county manager for Moore, August 23, 1962.

lists of current Democratic voters for the telephone callers; for another, it was found that another candidate was offering ten dollars a day for telephone callers and some Moore volunteers began telephoning for him.¹³ Three weeks before the primary, following the Tulsa city elections, District Court Clerk Samuel W. (Wes) Fry and his organization joined the Moore effort in Tulsa county. Fry, a brother-in-law of the late William O. Coe, was an experienced political organizer and had an organization of fifty-five to sixty men, mostly his employees. In addition, Moore had at least the quiet support of a number of prominent Tulsans, including Ed Hughes of the Farmers and Merchants Bank, Robert Pleasant of the North Side State Bank, County Commissioner Frank O'Brien, and M.J. Patrick, longtime mayor of nearby Skiatook. Some of these men were supporters of Senator Kerr, indicating the possibility of some Kerr support for Moore in the first primary.

There were hard-working, effective Moore organizations in perhaps a dozen counties, but some of them worked against heavy odds in the strong Gary areas.

Under-financing was another Moore problem. Raising funds required almost the full-time attention of his campaign manager until less than a month before the campaign ended. The rather widespread belief that Moore could not win made fund-raising more difficult. In February his campaign leaders contracted for sixty-six billboards in an effort to combat rumors that the campaign was under-financed; in March eighty-eight more were added. Actually, however, the campaign till was virtually

¹³Interview with Ray Williams, Tulsa county manager for Moore, August 27, 1962.

empty for at least two weeks in late March and early April.

The campaign.--Midway in the campaign Moore's aides decided that all the leading candidates had established a separate image except Moore and Nigh, and hence that an issue was needed that would set Moore apart. Gary was alone with his highway bond issue and legislative reapportionment proposals, Atkinson with his sales tax increase, and Harris was attracting attention with advertisements which proclaimed that he was The Only Man Who Can Beat Gary. It was decided to proclaim Moore as the No Tax Increase candidate and newspaper advertisements were drawn up saying of Moore: The Only Man Who Stands Between You And A Tax Increase. Whether this was effective is highly problematical. Harris had maintained a consistent no tax increase position from the beginning, while Moore had entertained the possibility of considering a sales tax increase in his opening speech; also, Gary was associated with a no tax increase position.

However, Moore did succeed in setting himself apart from the field to some extent by adopting a more aggressive posture in his campaign appearances late in the campaign. To many he conveyed the impression of "There's a fighter; he's against those people who are taking our money." He was continuing to make the same good government appeal he had made from the beginning, but he was couching it in fighting language. Experienced campaign managers agree that a thin line separates the "There's a fighter" image which attracts votes from that of the overly aggressive attacker. Moore's posture, which apparently was a natural development rather than a planned one, had a wide appeal and did more to give him a separate image in the race than any other single factor.

But it came very late in the campaign.

Moore's strong third-place finish was the biggest surprise of the first primary. The private polls of the candidates and the newspaper polls did not show such strength on Moore's part at any stage of the campaign. Private polls taken by Gary aides from November, 1961, through January, 1962, showed Moore to be running fifth, as did the statewide newspaper polls in March and April. A Tulsa World poll, published April 22, showed Moore to be running such a distant fifth that it gave rise to a news article which began, "The Democratic gubernatorial primary race May 1 apparently has narrowed down to four men-- Fred Harris, W.P. Bill Atkinson, Raymond Gary, and George Nigh." News articles in the Oklahoma City newspapers also indicated that Moore's candidacy was lagging. Such articles were demoralizing to Moore campaign workers and damaging to his campaign. They caused some of his aides to feel that Moore was being "read out of the race."

The only plausible explanation for Moore's strong finish, despite these difficulties, is that an unusually large number of Anybody But Gary voters remained undecided on their choice of candidate until the closing days of the campaign and that Moore got a large portion of the "against" vote from this group. One major reason why Moore got much of the undecided vote was this: when the Moore campaign ran out of funds late in March, his aides decided that future campaign contributions would be used to purchase television time "from April 30 backwards"--that is, it was decided to make certain that Moore was on television in the closing days of the campaign, even if that meant no television appearances through much of April. As it turned out, the Nigh and Harris campaigns ran out

of money by the last week and the television field was left to Moore, Atkinson, and Gary in that crucial period. One Moore aide characterized this decision as "the smartest move we made in the entire campaign."

Taking into account the weaknesses in the Moore campaign organization, Moore's lack of consistency on two of the major issues, and the under-financing of his campaign, Moore made a strong race. He missed being in the runoff by less than six thousand votes.

The Nigh Campaign

Nigh, who was thirty-four years old, had served as lieutenant governor since 1958 and had been a member of the state house of representatives for eight years prior to that. He was a teacher of history and government at McAlester High School when he was elected to the state legislature, where he served as chairman of the house penal committee (the state penitentiary is at McAlester) and as chairman of the Legislative Council's education committee. His opponents charged during the campaign that Nigh had played no major role in the legislature. He was a former state president of the Oklahoma Young Democrats and a state director of the Oklahoma Junior Chamber of Commerce. Among his political assets were that he was widely known in the state and that he was a personable young bachelor who appealed to young persons and to women.

Nigh was \$17,000 in debt from his campaign expenses on the day he was inaugurated lieutenant governor in 1958, and he still owed \$3,000 of this sum when he called ten close friends to gather at his home in Norman in January, 1962, to help him decide whether to run for governor.¹⁴

¹⁴Interviews with George Nigh, August 10 and September 11, 1962; Joe Johnson, Nigh campaign coordinator, September 4, 1962; Charles

One of these close friends was Joe Johnson, Stillwater lawyer, who had been in Europe from September until January. Johnson made a swing around the state immediately upon his return from Europe to sound out Nigh's probable chances in the governor's race. At that time "Gary had not built up a full head of steam" and Johnson's soundings indicated that Edmondson's popularity was up from its 1960 low. It was decided that the time was ripe for Nigh to run. Though Nigh was not part of the Edmondson inner circle of advisers, he was identified by many with the Edmondson administration because of his position as lieutenant governor. And, as things developed, he had the quiet support of Edmondson in the campaign.

The issues.--It was decided that Nigh would campaign on a "U-Nigh-ted Oklahoma" platform, with the rather idealistic aim of trying to unite all the warring elements of the party behind his candidacy. This led to what Nigh's opponents characterized as a fuzzy stand on some of the more controversial issues. Though Nigh supported the constitutional formula for legislative reapportionment and said he was personally opposed to the proposed right to work law, he was charged with playing down these issues by characterizing them as issues that divide, rather than unite, Oklahomans. In his opening speech he proposed a four-year highway program that would cost \$600,000,000, a program that was even larger than Gary's. But this was not consistent with his stand on the question of state revenues, for his initial position here was that he would examine all existing revenues and expenditures before recommending

McWilliams, campaign director, August 17, 1962; O.E. Richeson, eastern Oklahoma coordinator, August 31, 1962; and Dean Rinehart, western Oklahoma coordinator, September 10, 1962.

a tax increase; he added that there should be no tax increase unless it were approved by the people. He suggested a two-year "grace period" in which all state agencies would be asked to economize or at least to hold the line on expenditures; then, if the state's economic growth was not sufficient to permit efficient operation of state government from existing revenues by the end of the two-year period, Nigh would go to the people to ask for a tax increase. Initially, Nigh's principal suggestion for making available more general revenue funds for such purposes as highways was to transfer more eleemosynary agencies to the Welfare Department; since Welfare Department functions are financed by the two per cent sales tax, which is earmarked for welfare purposes, this would ease the drain on the general revenue fund. It was neither a no tax increase stand nor an unqualified call for more revenues, and Nigh admitted that this position had little political appeal. Nor did it square with a \$600,000,000 highway program, for a large increase in revenues obviously was needed to support a program of that magnitude. Later in the campaign he proposed an increase in automobile drivers' license fees as a supplement to his earlier suggestion for increasing general fund revenues. This came after repeated charges by his opponents that he lacked a carefully considered program. For example, Moore said "it's easy to talk about spending millions [for highways] for a playboy who doesn't have a family grocery bill, school books to buy . . ."¹⁵

Apparently somewhat more attention was devoted to campaign strategy than to the drafting of a platform in the initial stages.

¹⁵Daily Oklahoman, March 27, 1962.

Here the plan was to focus the appeal upon women, teachers, and young married persons. Talks for Nigh were arranged before dozens of women's clubs throughout Oklahoma and direct mail literature was sent to nearly every women's group in the state. Young married persons were reached through the members of the Junior Chamber of Commerce and the Young Democrats.

Organization and finances.--Nigh's organization probably was as large as Atkinson's, but the two organizations were about as unlike as they could be. Whereas the Atkinson organization was long on experience and somewhat lacking in enthusiasm, the Nigh organization was short on political know-how but long on enthusiasm.

There was somewhat more political experience in the top echelon of the Nigh organization than in the ranks. Johnson, the coordinator of the county organizations, had served as Nigh's manager in 1958, as Payne county manager for William A. Berry in the 1950 fifth district congressional race, as a member of the Gary speakers' bureau in 1954, and had served as state representative from Payne county from 1955 until 1957. Charles McWilliams, of Broken Arrow in Tulsa county, joined the campaign in mid-March as campaign manager and concerned himself primarily with revising the Nigh platform and with publicity. The publisher of one daily and six weekly newspapers, he had had no previous political experience; he joined the campaign because "George Nigh is my kind of guy--no drink, no smoke, no cuss." O.E. (Pete) Richeson, of Henryetta, a former state representative, served as eastern Oklahoma coordinator. Dean Rinehart, El Reno lawyer, served as western Oklahoma coordinator.

The county managers were recruited primarily through contacts

of Nigh and Johnson in the Young Democrats and Junior Chamber of Commerce. There were county organizations of varying degrees of strength in approximately seventy counties, but only about six or eight county managers had had previous political experience. The chief forte of the campaign workers generally was their enthusiasm for Nigh. There was much random activity rather than planned vote-getting effort in many of the counties, but the Nigh volunteers made their presence known on the streets and at the shopping centers and their enthusiasm was contagious.

In Oklahoma county, the campaign was headed by John Ingram, a dancing school operator, and David Bridges, insurance man, neither of whom had engaged in politics previously. They were assisted by six to eight persons who worked almost full time and by approximately two hundred part-time volunteers who reported in the evenings to make door-to-door calls, put up yard signs, and distribute campaign literature at the shopping centers. Approximately fifty coffees were given to recruit volunteer precinct workers. There were designated workers in about half the Oklahoma City precincts, but little effective precinct work was done except in the Negro areas of Ward 2. Nigh finished fifth in Oklahoma county.

In Tulsa county, the county manager was Quentin Mantooth, an accountant who found that he was unable to devote full time to the campaign because it occurred at the height of the tax season. Two Okmulgee men, Phil Stekall and Elmer Wilson, took over in the last five or six weeks; Wilson had worked in the Edmondson and Kerr campaigns. There was no precinct organization and little central direction of the one hundred seventy-five volunteer workers who reported to campaign

headquarters in the evenings and on weekends. As one campaign worker put it, "We held strategy meetings, but we didn't accomplish much; we would work up a chore for a particular night, but that was about all." The association of some prominent names with the Nigh campaign aided the effort; they included Harold Stuart, television and radio station owner, and Mike Pedrick, member of the State Board of Affairs. Despite the organizational difficulties, Nigh finished second in Tulsa county, forty votes ahead of Atkinson.

The Nigh campaign, like those of Moore and Harris, was underfinanced. The fact that Nigh was unable to make any television appearances in the crucial final week of the campaign because of lack of funds contributed to the fading of his effort in the late stages.

The campaign.--The story of the Nigh campaign is almost a reversal of that of the late-surging Moore campaign. Nigh jumped off to an early lead along with Gary, but he finished in fourth place, 844 votes behind Moore.

One factor that contributed to the slipping of his campaign was his loss of much school bloc support as a result of his appearance before the Oklahoma Education Association legislative committee late in February or early in March. It is customary for this forty-member body to invite all the gubernatorial candidates before it to hear an explanation of the association's aims and to make any statements they wish to make.

According to one of Nigh's aides, Nigh was tired out from heavy campaigning when he appeared before the committee, arriving an hour late for the meeting. As a member of the association, he felt that he had the support of most of its members; he went to the legislative committee

meeting with the thought that he could relax among friends.

But when OEA committee members set forth their aims, Nigh characterized them as "unrealistic." In the ensuing discussion Nigh was asked questions about various school bills that had been before the legislature in recent years, and Nigh reportedly was not conversant with the provisions of some of them. His aide said that Nigh had not briefed himself on school matters before attending the meeting because of his heavy campaigning, and the aide described this as probably one of the biggest mistakes of the campaign.

The upshot of the meeting was that Nigh lost much of the school bloc support that he had virtually taken for granted. For the association's leaders had other friends among the gubernatorial candidates. Gary, a former Marshall county school superintendent, had been friendly to the school bloc during his term as governor. Harris was a former Parent-Teacher Association president in Lawton, and Moore's mother was a member of the school retirement system by virtue of the fact that she was an employee of the county agent's office in Stillwater. But it was Atkinson's proposal to increase state revenues by raising the sales tax that apparently attracted most of the association's leaders, since most of their aims were predicated upon larger expenditures for schools.

In addition, Nigh's lack of familiarity with some of the school laws became known to his opponents and they used this against him in their campaigns. The Daily Oklahoman reported on April 8:

Nigh didn't make a good impression before the legislative committee of the Oklahoma Education Association on the school program. It is reported that members of the committee were astonished at his lack of knowledge of school problems, the school code, and finances . . .

The other camps have quietly made use of the committee reaction.

Nigh's lack of leadership and his failure to play an important role on major issues in the legislature will be used against him.

Nigh campaign leaders made an effort to counteract the adverse effect of his appearance before the OEA committee by writing letters to school teachers over the state, saying that Nigh would promote the realistic parts of the OEA program.

To try to counteract charges of his opponents and newspaper articles to the effect that his campaign was slipping, full-page newspaper advertisements were run showing that Nigh was running a strong second to Gary according to results of the second statewide newspaper poll, released April 10.

But the opposing candidates continued to insist that the Nigh campaign had passed its peak and to charge that Nigh had no carefully considered program. The combination of these factors, plus the lack of funds that cut off his television appearances in the last week, led to his fourth-place finish.

The Harris Campaign

Harris was thirty-one years old, the youngest of the candidates. He was elected to the state senate in 1956, when he was twenty-five, and was serving his second term from the Comanche-Cotton county district. A native of Cotton county and a practicing attorney in Lawton, he had lived in Lawton only a little more than a year when he was elected to the state senate. In the 1959 legislative session Harris was one of four leaders of a fight to reform county commissioner spending practices

and was the only one of the four to be reelected in 1960; he also led the fight for adoption of the merit system for state employees. In the 1961 session he got through the bill authorizing construction of the southwestern turnpike that connects Oklahoma City and Lawton, led the fight to save the merit system, authored a series of economy bills, and led another unsuccessful fight to put through the county commissioner reform bill.

The issues.--Harris's program definitely was urban-oriented. He favored legislative reapportionment according to the constitutional formula. He advocated reorganizing high school districts that had a daily attendance of less than fifty-five. He was on record as favoring bills to reform county commissioner spending practices. On the issue of state revenues, he was consistent throughout the campaign in opposing a tax increase; instead, he advocated governmental economies, along the lines suggested by the economy bills which he introduced in the 1961 legislative session. He opposed a sales tax increase on the ground that Oklahoma per capita income was lower than that of surrounding states, while per capita state tax collections and state expenditures were higher. On highways, he called for a \$402,000,000 program with no increase in taxes, to be financed by a \$9,000,000 annual appropriation from general revenues and an anticipated four per cent increase in existing road user tax revenues.

Organization and finances.--Harris's campaign strategy was consistent with his urban-oriented program. He concentrated his campaign in a relatively small number of populous counties. Edmondson had demonstrated in 1958 that it was possible for a gubernatorial candidate with

limited campaign funds to get into the runoff by carrying a small number of counties, and Harris tried to do the same. Among the counties in which he concentrated his campaign efforts were Oklahoma, Tulsa, Comanche, Washington, Garfield, Cleveland, Stephens, Muskogee, and Carter.¹⁶

Harris began to build his campaign organization in September, 1961. He started by attending coffees in private homes throughout the state. At the close of each coffee a paper was passed and all who were interested in taking part in his campaign were asked to sign. In October, the Onward Oklahoma Committee was organized, with attorney James Work of Oklahoma City as secretary. With a letterhead containing the names of twenty-five persons of prominence throughout the state, forty thousand letters were mailed out saying, in part:

. . . Many of us throughout the state, who are concerned about Oklahoma's future, feel that [Fred Harris] possesses the combination of qualities which ideally fit him to provide the dignified, progressive and effective leadership which Oklahoma needs.

. . . If you feel as we do, . . . please forward your comments on the enclosed post card, which need not be signed, in order that your reaction may become a part of Senator Harris's decision on whether or not to enter the race for Governor.

A one-page reprint of newspaper comment about Harris's legislative activities was enclosed. The letters went to bankers, doctors, lawyers, dentists, and members of various farm and women's organizations. It was financed by a loan of \$3,000 which Harris obtained from a bank.

The replies to the Onward Oklahoma Committee letter, plus the names obtained at the coffees, produced the names of 3,750 potential

¹⁶Interviews with Fred R. Harris, August 9, 1962; James Work, campaign aide, August 20, 1962; Markham Johnson, Jr., Tulsa county manager, August 27, 1962; Ross Hutchins, Tulsa county coordinator, August 27, 1962.

Harris supporters and campaign workers, some of whom were willing to give additional coffees on Harris's behalf. Altogether, he attended approximately one hundred fifty coffees in the process of enlisting support and building his organization.

In December, 1961, Harris announced his candidacy at a press conference in the capitol. The name at the Onward Oklahoma Committee headquarters was changed to Onward Oklahoma With Fred R. Harris, Democrat For Governor. "Onward Oklahoma" was adopted as the campaign slogan.

Harris's campaign manager was Highway Commissioner J.C. Kennedy of Lawton. Five district coordinators also were named: Highway Commissioner John B. Doolin, of Alva, in the northwest; Anthony Massad, Frederick lawyer, southwest; William C. McCandless, Oklahoma City wholesale furniture dealer, central Oklahoma; Joe Mountford, Miami lawyer and state representative, northeast; and James Gassaway, Ada lawyer, southeast. As indicated by their positions, the majority of these coordinators had had political experience. But the district and county organizations were not uniformly effective.

The Tulsa county organization approached the ideal and may have been the single most effective county organization of any candidate in the 1962 campaign. It was headed by Markham Johnson, Jr., thirty-three-year-old insurance executive, with attorney Ross Hutchins in charge of the area coordinators whose job it was to organize the county's two hundred eighty-one precincts.

Four or five coffees were held in January, 1961, to interest key Tulsa residents in the Harris campaign. More numerous coffees were held, beginning in January, 1962, to recruit precinct workers and

to round out the organization. Approximately seventy-five coffees were held early in 1962, and an especially high caliber corps of workers was obtained.

Hutchins supervised the work of sixteen area coordinators, each of whom was responsible for organizing from thirteen to fifteen precincts. All the area coordinators were men, most of whom were lawyers and one of whom was a graduate in economics from Harvard University. The area coordinators were charged with selecting a precinct captain for each precinct, and in turn the precinct captain was to enlist the help of others in the precinct. One entire area was organized to the point where there was a Harris worker on each side of the street in each block. Others were less effectively organized. When gubernatorial candidate Thomas Dee Frasier withdrew from the race in mid-April, he made his organization available to the Harris forces.

A steering committee of twelve active workers assisted in making campaign plans throughout the campaign. In addition, fifteen or more prominent Tulsans lent their names to the Harris effort.

The campaign leaders raised six thousand dollars in campaign funds; sent out twenty thousand letters to school teachers, businessmen, and oilmen; staged three automobile caravans in areas outside Tulsa county to try to bolster the Harris effort in the more rural areas; staged a twenty-two-car parade through Tulsa two days before the election to combat any "we don't want to waste our vote" sentiment; had fifteen costumed girls passing out literature on the streets and a dozen high school boys distributing literature in outlying office buildings and at shopping centers; and they made contacts with such key organizational

leaders as the union officials at the aircraft plants.

One of the most effective campaign devices in Tulsa was the staging of three live, thirty-minute television appearances for Harris. Each was staged like an informal coffee, with prominent and representative Tulsans asking questions of Harris. Effort was made to have such a wide representation of Tulsa citizens on the program that viewers who did not know Harris would be certain to recognize at least one member of the group. Two of these three shows were staged in the final week of the campaign.

Harris polled 11,249 votes in Tulsa county; Nigh, 9,110; Atkinson, 9,070; Moore, 7946; and Gary, 6,802.

In Oklahoma county, there was no ward or precinct organization. The principal effort there consisted of holding approximately fifty coffees, with each attended by thirty to forty persons, plus one larger coffee attended by six hundred; a large direct mail effort was directed to members of many organizations; one distribution of pamphlets was made to every home in Capitol Hill and the Negro areas; and the support of a number of prominent Oklahoma Cityans was enlisted. Harris finished a fairly poor third behind Atkinson and Gary in Oklahoma county.

Harris failed to get into the runoff, in part, for these reasons:

- (1) the failure of his county organizations or of his appeal in several of the populous counties in which he planned a concentrated effort and
- (2) the almost total lack of organization or effort in a very large number of the smaller counties. It will be recalled that Harris finished fifth in fifty-one counties; he received less than one hundred votes in eleven counties and less than two hundred votes in twenty-six. Because

of this, he could not afford the setbacks which he received in several of the more populous counties; he received only 4.9 per cent of the vote in Carter county and 9.5 per cent in Muskogee county.

The campaign.--Harris presented a sound program and was consistent in his advocacy of it, but he experienced difficulty in developing a captivating appeal. He thought he was taking somewhat of a gamble early in the campaign when he advocated legislative reapportionment according to the constitutional formula, but soon all the leading candidates except Gary took a position close to this. He considered his opposition to the proposed right to work law another major early decision, but soon there was little to differentiate the candidates on this issue.

Under-financing prevented him from carrying out his campaign plans on schedule throughout much of the campaign. For example, he decided to try to get into contention in mid-January by "splurging" \$3,500 on billboards and \$8,000 on television appearances. But it was late in February before the necessary funds were raised, and by that time two other candidates had beaten him to the punch in these respects.

It was not until he began to stress the I'm The Only Man Who Can Beat Gary theme in the last four weeks of the drive that his campaign began to pick up momentum. Some of Harris's advisers opposed the idea of challenging Gary; they were hoping by April that Gary would poll a tremendous vote and thus reduce the number required for the second-place candidate. The original Harris goal was to poll 125,000 votes in the state, but by April it seemed clear the he would not poll more than 90,000.

But the new theme gave a boost to Harris's campaign in the first

half of April. Stressed in his speeches and advertisements, it caused the other candidates to react to him, gave his candidacy a better play in the newspapers, and brightened up his press releases and television talks. It appeared to accomplish more than any other campaign development to convince many that Harris could get into the runoff.

Then, in the last ten days of the campaign, Harris ran out of money and the late surges of Moore and Atkinson took away whatever initiative he had enjoyed. Gary said Atkinson spent large sums of money in the closing days of the first primary.¹⁷

Harris polled 78,476 votes, 12,706 less than Atkinson received.

Other Campaign Developments

The Oklahoma City newspapers endorsed no candidate in the primary, but they adopted a strong Anybody But Atkinson stand in the closing days of the campaign. On April 30, the day before the election, a front-page editorial in the Daily Oklahoman denounced Atkinson in such terms that it resulted in Atkinson filing a ten-million-dollar libel suit against the publishing company. Political observers still are debating the question of whether the editorial was so intemperate that it made a martyr of Atkinson and thus increased his vote or whether it reduced his vote. There is a possibility that it may have increased the Atkinson vote outside Oklahoma county, where the Daily Oklahoman's views on such matters as legislative reapportionment are none too popular, and reduced his vote in Oklahoma county.

Atkinson carried his home county of Oklahoma, but by a plurality

¹⁷Tulsa World, May 4, 1962.

of only 1,881 votes over Gary. All the other major candidates carried their home counties also. Moore not only carried Payne county, his more recent home, but also Okmulgee county, where he was born. Harris carried three counties in his home area, Comanche, Cotton, and Tillman. The friends and neighbors influence is another mark of a multi-factional political system. However, although this influence is strong in the immediate area of the candidate's home in Oklahoma, it is not sufficiently important to serve as the basis for a statewide victory, as is the case in a few Southern states.

CHAPTER XII

THE ROLE OF OKLAHOMA VOTING BLOCS AND POLITICAL INTEREST GROUPS

Questions have been raised about the importance of bloc voting and the influence of political interest groups in Oklahoma elections since Edmondson won the Democratic first primary in 1958 with virtually no organizational support. Further questions were raised when Bellmon won the 1962 gubernatorial election with a minimum of organizational backing.¹

It appears, however, that organizational influence varies according to: (1) whether the particular campaign is dominated by one or more captivating issues that are strong enough to override organizational ties and the influence of organizational leaders or whether it is a relatively issueless campaign marked by low voter interest, in which case organizational and financial support may be more important; and (2) whether the claims upon the members of the voting blocs and interest groups are uni-directional or whether they create numerous cross pressures upon the members. It seems safe to say that the influence of group leaders, like that of newspapers, is more effective when these leaders are able to swim with the tide of sentiment among their followers and

¹Tulsa World, November 11, 1962.

when cross pressures are at a minimum.

In 1958 the primary campaign was dominated by the issues of good government and repeal of prohibition, and these unquestionably overrode organizational ties with many voters. In 1962 both the primaries and general election were dominated by the issue of good government combined with a division of sentiment between the urban and rural segments of the electorate, growing out of controversies spawned in the Edmondson administration. In that year Bellmon combined opposition to a sales tax increase with an appeal to anti-Edmondson sentiment in the rural areas and an appeal to good government voters everywhere to win.

In the 1962 Democratic primaries especially the rural-urban split excited the strongest reactions on the part of the voters. Insofar as the rural voters were concerned, the principal cross pressure was that caused to Rural Electric Cooperative Association members by Gary's efforts on behalf of the Grand River Dam Authority contract. Otherwise, Gary had the preponderant support of all the groups that had been allied under the name of Oklahomans for Local Government to fight the Edmondson initiative petitions in 1960.

Moreover, the strong showing made by Gary in some of the more populous areas was attributable to organizational support. Here he had strong backing from the AFL-CIO, the Negroes, the Retail Merchants Association, and the Baptists.

Four candidates competed for the urban and Anybody But Gary vote, and no one of them could find an appeal comparable in captivation to that of the 1958 repeal issue to set his campaign apart from the

others. Except for the issue of state finances, their programs were not too dissimilar. The question of state finances is highly important, but it did not appear to excite the great mass of voters. In this setting a strong campaign organization, plus adequate financial and organizational backing can tip the scales in favor of a candidate.

The non-rural groups were by no means solid in their voting in 1962, but Gary and Atkinson appear to have benefited most from their support. Atkinson had the support of a majority of school bloc and REA leaders, of many industrialists and large farmers who favored his pay-as-you-go policy of financing state government over Gary's bond issue, and of some city officials and others to whom the prospect of increased revenue was appealing. Moore appealed to the war veterans through the American Legion; one of the counties he carried was Muskogee, where the Veterans Administration regional office and Veterans Hospital together provide the single biggest payroll in the county. Nigh appealed to women through their various organizations and to young persons through the Young Democrats and Junior Chamber of Commerce. Harris probably had the least organizational backing, and his principal support appears to have come from the higher income groups and from those impressed by his logic and consistency. In Norman he led decisively in the areas of greatest University of Oklahoma faculty concentration; in Oklahoma City he led in such higher income areas as Nichols Hills, The Village, and Warr Acres; in Tulsa he carried the fashionable south side.

The larger voting blocs in Oklahoma, with some indications of their voting behavior in 1962, were:

1) The welfare bloc. The number of Oklahoma residents over sixty-five years of age totalled 248,831 in 1960. Of this number, 95,284 received old age assistance payments from the state of Oklahoma and 126,236 received federal social security benefits in 1962. Principal spokesman for the old age assistance recipients is the Oklahoma Welfare Federation, founded by the late Ora J. Fox and now headed by Dr. F.G. Conley of Tulsa. The Federation was said to have approximately 67,000 members in 1962. Its aims are to keep sales tax revenues earmarked for welfare purposes and to oppose the adoption of a lien recovery law or relative responsibility law. Gary, with a no tax increase platform and a record of having raised welfare payments from an average of \$58.22 to \$72.84 during his administration,² carried all but four of the state's thirty-one heaviest welfare counties in the first primary and all but five in the runoff primary. The heavy welfare counties are also strongly rural counties.

2) The school bloc. The Oklahoma Education Association has more than 20,000 members, and its influence is augmented by the fact that its leaders work closely with the 125,000 members of the Oklahoma Parent-Teacher Associations and the more than 300 members of the Oklahoma School Board Association. The OEA's principal aims in 1962 were: to raise the minimum pay of beginning school teachers from \$3,600 to \$4,400 in 1963-1964 and to \$4,600 in 1964-1965; to seek a sufficient increase in legislative appropriations to pay off the 1961-1962 school deficit; to seek an increase in operational aid funds (funds that may

²Oklahoma City Times, December 6, 1958.

be used for any purpose) for school districts; and to protect those revenues that are earmarked for educational purposes.³ OEA leaders did not endorse a candidate in the Democratic primaries, but many were known to favor Atkinson because they felt his proposed sales tax increase would produce the revenue required to help accomplish some of the association's aims.

An examination of the voting in four precincts in Norman and four precincts in Stillwater where University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University faculty concentrations are greatest showed these results: Harris, 771; Atkinson, 520; Moore, 413; Nigh, 352; and Gary, 219. The precincts were 11, 12, 13, and 14 in Norman and 4, 6, 11, and 12 in Stillwater. When allowance is made for the fact that Moore was especially strong in his home town of Stillwater and that Harris was much stronger in Cleveland county than in many other counties, Atkinson's showing appears somewhat stronger. Admittedly, such a method does not pinpoint the school vote with precision, but it gives some indication that the vote was divided, that Atkinson probably fared fairly well among this group and that Gary probably fared rather poorly.

3) The labor bloc. Labor union membership in Oklahoma is estimated to be 85,000.⁴ The AFL-CIO has 266 locals and approximately 68,000 to 69,000 members. The Railroad Brotherhoods, United Mine Workers, Teamsters Union, and various independent unions have 46 to 49 locals and approxi-

³Interview with Ferman Phillips, executive secretary of the Oklahoma Education Association, August 6, 1962.

⁴Interview with Len Yarborough, executive vice president of the Oklahoma AFL-CIO, July 26, 1962.

mately 16,000 members. Union membership is concentrated in the northeastern and central sections of the state, with about 58 per cent of the AFL-CIO membership in Oklahoma and Tulsa counties. Estimated memberships in the more unionized areas of northeastern Oklahoma are: Tulsa county, 21,000; Okmulgee county, 4,000; Ottawa county, 2,400; and Washington county, 1,800. In central Oklahoma the principal counties are: Oklahoma, 19,000; Kay, 5,000; Garfield, 2,200; and Comanche, 2,000. In 1962 the principal concern of Oklahoma labor leaders was opposition to the proposed right to work law, but in the past they had stressed their opposition to the sales tax as a revenue measure on the ground that it falls hardest on the lower income groups. Union leaders also favored higher workmen's compensation benefits.

Gary and Harris were favored by most AFL-CIO leaders in the first primary, with a big edge to Gary for two reasons: (1) Gary agreed to make speeches against the proposed right to work law if he were nominated, according to Len Yarborough, AFL-CIO executive vice president; and (2) the AFL-CIO leaders, like many other Oklahomans, were lukewarm toward the election of another young governor. Their particular grievances against Edmondson were that he had opposed increases in workmen's compensation payments and vetoed a bill to allow an injured worker to select his own doctor; his young Department of Commerce and Industry director endorsed the right to work proposal. However, if Gary had not been in the race, it was estimated that 95 per cent of the union leaders would have recommended Harris to the membership. The AFL-CIO made no official endorsement in the first

primary, but the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers endorsed Gary.

However, the labor vote appeared to be widely split in the first primary, according to voting results in twenty-seven labor precincts in Oklahoma City, Tulsa, and Muskogee. Oklahoma City precincts used as a basis for obtaining at least a rough approximation of how labor voted were 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, and 26 in Ward 1 and 5, 8, 9, 35, 37, 38, 39, and 49 in Ward 4; in Tulsa the precincts were 112, 116, 117, 118, 167, 190, Red Fork 3, and Red Fork 4; in Muskogee they were 2, 4, 9, 10A and 10B. The results were as follows, with the number of precincts examined in each county given in parentheses:

	Gary	Atkinson	Moore	Nigh	Harris
Oklahoma (14)	978	826	685	568	634
Tulsa (8)	247	181	228	239	242
Muskogee (5)	300	306	460	219	156
	<u>1,525</u>	<u>1,313</u>	<u>1,373</u>	<u>1,026</u>	<u>1,032</u>

This sampling indicates that Gary probably led in the labor vote and that this constituted one of his sources of strength in the more populous areas.

4) The Retail Merchants Association, largest group within the business bloc. There are 30,000 retail proprietors in Oklahoma, and the Retail Merchants Association reaches a substantial number of these. However, such proprietors as gasoline dealers have their own association. In 1962 the chief political concern of the merchants was their opposition to the proposed sales tax increase; they feared declining sales if consumer costs were increased and they feared being put at a disadvantage with merchants in neighboring states.

Approximately half the retail merchants supported Gary in the

first primary and a majority of the remainder supported Harris, according to estimates by T.C. Knoop, executive secretary of the association. He said most merchants considered these two candidates to be the more "conservative and stable."⁵ Knoop himself worked closely with Gary, traveling the state extensively with him.

The business bloc as a whole comprises too many diverse political views to permit being treated as an entity. For example, E.J. O'Connor, executive secretary of Associated Industries of Oklahoma, composed primarily of industrialists, said the members of his association were very interested in seeing that Oklahoma cities and towns got more revenues with which to carry out their functions. He expressed the view that, if additional revenues were needed, "the sales tax is the fairest tax."⁶

5) The farm bloc. Leading spokesmen for farm interests in Oklahoma are the Farmers Union, Farm Bureau, and Cattlemen's Association, and this bloc also contains many diverse views.

a) The Farmers Union has 51,000 members that are fairly well distributed over the state, with probably its strongest membership in southwestern Oklahoma. There was conflict within the organization over which Democratic primary candidate to support in 1962. Farmers Union leaders supported Gary's legislative reapportionment proposal and his opposition to curbing the county commissioners' powers, but they opposed Gary's efforts on behalf of the Grand River Dam Authority-Public Service

⁵Interview with T.C. Knoop, executive secretary of the Oklahoma Retail Merchants Association, August 7, 1962.

⁶Interview with E.J. O'Connor, executive secretary of Associated Industries of Oklahoma, August 2, 1962.

Company contract; the Farmers Union has very close ties with the REA, since the national Farmers Union sponsored the REA legislation before Congress in 1936-1937. But the group also opposed Atkinson's proposal to increase the sales tax. Apparently the GRDA contract weighed most heavily in the minds of the organization's executive board. George W. Stone, president, said the seven members of the board were divided between Atkinson, Gary, and Moore in the first primary, but that all but two supported Atkinson in the runoff. Since the Farmers Union also had close ties with Senator Kerr, it is possible that his influence may have been felt here.

b) The Farm Bureau has 41,000 members, with two-thirds of them living in the western half of the state and probably the greater number in the northwest. Here too there was conflict within the organization. Farm Bureau leaders supported Gary's legislative reapportionment proposal, but opposed his highway bond issue. They also opposed Atkinson's proposed tax increase. From his examination of the election returns and his knowledge of where most Farm Bureau members live, Ken McFall, executive secretary, said he believed the majority of the organization's members voted for Gary.⁷ Since McFall worked actively for Republican Bellmon in the general election, it is possible that Farm Bureau leaders took relatively little interest in the Democratic primaries.

c) The Cattlemen's Association has from 5,000 to 6,000 members fairly well distributed over the state.⁸ The association's fourteen-

⁷Interview with Ken McFall, executive secretary of the Oklahoma Farm Bureau, August 6, 1962.

⁸Interview with Ellis Freeny, executive vice president of the Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association, February 25, 1964.

member executive board authorized a contribution to Oklahomans for Local Government to assist in the fight against the Edmondson petitions in 1960, indicating some possible support for Gary from the association's members. Since former Governor Roy Turner is an association member and since he actively supported Atkinson, it can be assumed that he enlisted some support for Atkinson. But the executive board also adopted a resolution endorsing the proposed right to work law, indicating that Bellmon was not without some support from this group in the general election.

6) The Rural Electric Cooperative Association. The twenty-four Oklahoma REA cooperatives and four non-member cooperatives serve 124,000 families with electricity. Most of the members are rural, and the largest number live in the southern and eastern sections of the state.⁹ The political positions of the REA leaders were virtually the same as those of the Farmers Union. The various REA cooperatives had close ties with four of the Democratic primary candidates. Atkinson had REA's support in 1958, when he opposed the GRDA contract. Moore was an attorney for the cooperative in Stillwater and Harris for the cooperative in Walters. And, because Gary was the rural champion in 1962, managers of four of REA's twenty-four local boards were for him, as were many REA clients. Czar Langston, REA general manager, said REA local leaders were divided in their support of Democratic candidates in the first primary, but that the majority worked hard against Gary in the runoff. Some effort was made to induce the forty-eight members of the state board of

⁹Interview with Czar Langston, general manager of the Oklahoma Rural Electric Association, August 3, 1962.

directors to endorse Atkinson in the runoff, but no action was taken. There was some opposition to Atkinson's positions on legislative reapportionment and the sales tax. It seems probable that there was more support for Atkinson among the leaders than among the membership, for it cannot be overlooked that Gary carried the rural areas of Oklahoma by preponderant majorities. However, Atkinson finished second or third in many rural counties, and this support was important to him.

7) Negroes. There are approximately 80,000 Negroes of voting age in Oklahoma, and samplings indicate that approximately one-third of them voted in the first primary. Edward Goodwin, editor of the Oklahoma Eagle in Tulsa, and John Dungee, general manager of the Black Dispatch in Oklahoma City, said a majority of Negroes were for Gary because the Oklahoma National Guard was integrated during Gary's term and because of the skill with which Gary handled the school integration issue.¹⁰ Goodwin said that Gary promised in 1962 to integrate the Highway Patrol, to give Negroes posts on college boards of regents, and to give them jobs in the Highway Department.

Voting results in forty-one Negro precincts in Oklahoma, Tulsa, Muskogee, Garfield, and Comanche counties indicate that Gary had a substantial lead in the Negro vote, another factor that helped his showing in the more populous areas. Precincts examined in Oklahoma county were 1, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 14, 16, 17, 19, 22, 27, 31, and 38 in Ward 1 and 8 in Ward 3; in Tulsa county they were 3, 8, 11, 12, 13, 21, 22, 28, 37,

¹⁰ Interviews with Edward Goodwin, editor of the Oklahoma Eagle in Tulsa, August 28, 1962, and with John Dungee, general manager of the Black Dispatch in Oklahoma City, August 20, 1962.

138, 143, 153, 175, and 208; in Muskogee county 15B, 31A, 31B, 31C, 36B, 19 and 20B; in Garfield county 1, 2, and 3 in Ward 3 in Enid; in Comanche county Precinct 1, Ward 1 and Precinct 8, Ward 5 in Lawton. The results were as follows, with the number of precincts reported upon in each county given in parentheses:

		Gary	Atkinson	Moore	Nigh	Harris
Oklahoma	(15)	1,108	820	538	871	298
Tulsa	(14)	916	346	173	260	206
Muskogee	(7)	504	315	272	122	75
Garfield	(3)	55	25	31	35	53
Comanche	(2)	118	26	7	12	554
		<u>2,701</u>	<u>1,532</u>	<u>1,021</u>	<u>1,300</u>	<u>1,186</u>

In the runoff primary, Gary polled 64 per cent of the votes in these same precincts.

8) War veterans. As former national commander of the American Legion, Moore appealed to Oklahoma's 258,000 war veterans and much of his campaign organization was built from Legion support. Judging from his showing in Muskogee county, site of a Veterans Administration regional office and a Veterans Hospital, it seems probable that Moore polled a substantial portion of the veterans' vote. Nigh was the other veteran in the race.

9) Junior Chamber of Commerce. The five thousand present members of this organization, plus their wives as members of the Jaycee Jaynes and former active members now beyond the thirty-six-year age limit, make up a rather sizeable group. Nigh made a special appeal to members of this organization. Harris also was an active member.

10) The League of Young Democrats. As past state president, Nigh also made a special appeal to the Young Democrats. Moore also had been active in the organization.

11) Public officials. State legislators and county commissioners especially exercise a political influence disproportionate to their numbers, for some of them devote a large portion of their time to political activity. The county commissioners distribute surplus commodities to needy persons, and from this activity a following may develop despite the fact that recipients are certified by the State Welfare Department. The commissioners also may develop an organization built around their road and other employees; each commissioner in Oklahoma county supervises about sixty employees.¹¹ It was mentioned earlier that the Tulsa county district court clerk, Samuel W. (Wes) Fry, who is politically active in Tulsa county, has fifty-five to sixty county employees. The patronage of the state legislators was discussed earlier. City officials generally are somewhat less "political"; approximately 75 per cent of Oklahoma City elections are non-partisan.

Gary had the preponderant support of the state legislators, county commissioners, and city and county officials of the rural areas, with a number of them serving actively in his campaign organization. No other candidate had the support of more than two or three state senators. Most of the rural officials had been mobilized to fight the Edmondson petitions under the banner of Oklahomans for Local Government in 1960, and feelings still were strong on the rural-urban issues in 1962. Atkinson's promise to allocate a minimum of 20 per cent of the revenue from his proposed sales tax increase to the towns and cities probably gave him an edge among the city officials of the larger cities. But

¹¹Interview with Ralph Adair, county commissioner of Oklahoma county, August 20, 1962.

the support of Gary by the great majority of public officials and their organizations goes far toward explaining the overwhelming vote which Gary piled up in the rural areas.

Other political interest groups.--Other political interest groups figured in the 1962 elections, but more as suppliers of campaign funds and as molders of opinion rather than as voting blocs comparable in size to those already discussed.

Among the larger suppliers of campaign funds in 1962 were members of Associated Motor Carriers of Oklahoma, representing truck and transportation interests; the Association of Oklahoma General Contractors, representing the large road contractors and asphalt and cement interests; Associated Industries of Oklahoma, representing industrialists, mine owners, and oil companies; Mid-Continent Oil and Gas Association, representing the major oil companies; the Oklahoma Independent Petroleum Association, representing the independent oil producers; the Oklahoma Malt Beverage Association and Oklahoma Wholesale Liquor Association, representing the beer and liquor interests; certain public utilities officials, certain bankers, certain insurance men, large farmers, and persons interested in horse racing and pari-mutuel betting.

It is customary for the candidates or their representatives to call upon the executive secretaries (lobbyists) of most of these organizations early in the campaign to show how their aims square with the aims of the individual associations, for it is known that the executive secretaries often make recommendations to their memberships as to whom to support and that the members of the associations sometimes contact their executive secretaries before making campaign contributions.

The executive secretary of one interest group said quite frankly, "We're like all the other associations; we get a few friends behind each of the leading candidates, then use the ones that backed the winner to get the governor's ear on what we need." But the larger and more numerous contributions go to those candidates who appear to have the best chance to win.

Campaign aides of Moore, Nigh, and Harris indicated that fund-raising was somewhat more difficult in 1962 than it had been in past years, owing in part to the fact that many large contributors had guessed wrongly as to who would win the 1958 Democratic primary. As a result, they appeared to be more cautious about parting with their money in 1962.

Gary and Atkinson had the bulk of the political interest group support. Gary's opponents said that members of Associated Motor Carriers were a good source of financial support for Gary; for one thing, Gary's Sooner Oil Company is a member of the Association. The majority of Associated Industries members were said to favor Gary and Atkinson in the first primary; in the runoff, the majority were believed to have shifted to Atkinson because Gary had received the endorsement of the AFL-CIO, there was some opposition to Gary's highway bond issue proposal, and because Atkinson had a more positive program for aiding the towns and cities.¹² Sentiment among members of Oklahoma General Contractors was reported divided in the first primary, with an edge to Gary and Atkinson "because their programs were somewhat more positive."¹³

¹²Interview with E.J. O'Connor, op. cit.

¹³Interview with Glen (T-Bone) McDonald, manager of the Association of Oklahoma General Contractors, August 2, 1962.

Contributions from the major oil companies were reported to have followed the lead of Senator Kerr to a large extent in recent years, partly because many oil men felt that Kerr had the power to keep the national oil depletion allowance at its present figure; also, Kerr was a former president of the Kansas-Oklahoma division of Mid-Continent Oil and Gas Association. Kerr's quiet support of Atkinson in the runoff primary reportedly had the effect of cutting off most of the oil money that went to Gary in the first primary.¹⁴

The Oklahoma Bankers Association takes little part in the campaigns as an association, but individual bankers, acting on their own as civic leaders, constitute one of the most influential groups of political activists in the state at the county level. Some bankers openly assume direction of county campaigns for candidates, others operate through lieutenants who hold the title of county manager, and still others limit themselves to making sizeable campaign contributions. It is not uncommon for the presidents of a small city's two banks to be the county managers for the two leading gubernatorial candidates. Gary said, "Every town has two or more factions. Where I carried counties by especially big majorities I was able to get the support of both factions; in McCurtain county both banks supported me." What these bankers expect in return generally are civic improvements, usually highways. It appeared in 1962 that most bankers had guessed correctly that Gary and Atkinson would be the two leading Democratic candidates.

¹⁴Interview with Otis Sullivant, Daily Oklahoman political writer, November 20, 1963.

Summary

The "bandwagon effect" in favor of one or two candidates can be an important factor in a multi-sided scramble for the Democratic nomination, especially in those years in which no especially captivating issue dominates the campaign. In 1962 Gary was virtually assured of a place in the runoff primary as a result of his rural support. But there was a scramble for second place in the first primary, and the interest group support which Atkinson received helped him to edge out the other Anybody But Gary candidates.

CHAPTER XIII

THE DEMOCRATIC RUNOFF PRIMARY; REPUBLICAN ACTIVITY DURING THE DEMOCRATIC PRIMARIES

When Atkinson's aides examined the results of the voting in the May 1 primary, they saw that Atkinson must poll approximately two-thirds of the votes cast for the defeated candidates in order to edge Gary in the runoff. The results in the first primary were:

Gary	176,525
Atkinson . . .	91,182
All others . .	266,591

If Atkinson were to poll 66.7 per cent of the votes of the defeated candidates, he would edge Gary by 268,998 to 265,300, assuming that the voter turnout remained the same. And Atkinson had only three weeks in which to try to win over the followers of the defeated candidates.

Actually, the voter turnout declined by 71,517, Atkinson polled 72.1 per cent of the total increase in votes received by the two runoff candidates, and Atkinson won by 953 votes. Gary's vote increased by 54,389 over that of the first primary, Atkinson's by 140,685. Atkinson's margin of 953 gave him the narrowest gubernatorial runoff victory in the seven elections in which the runoff primary has been used in Oklahoma. It was rivalled only by Johnston Murray's margin of 960 votes over William O. Coe in 1950.

The results of the runoff primary, following a recount of the

votes, were:

Atkinson . . .	231,867
Gary	230,914

Map XXVI shows the counties carried by Atkinson and Gary. Though Atkinson led in only twenty-one counties, as against Gary's fifty-six, Atkinson carried the nine most populous counties: Oklahoma, Tulsa, Comanche, Muskogee, Garfield, Kay, Cleveland, Payne, and Washington. Most of the counties carried by Atkinson also were in the northeastern quarter of the state, where Gary operated under his greatest political liabilities. Thirteen of these Atkinson counties were within the primary circulation area of the Tulsa World and Tulsa Tribune, perhaps the most strongly anti-Gary dailies in the state.

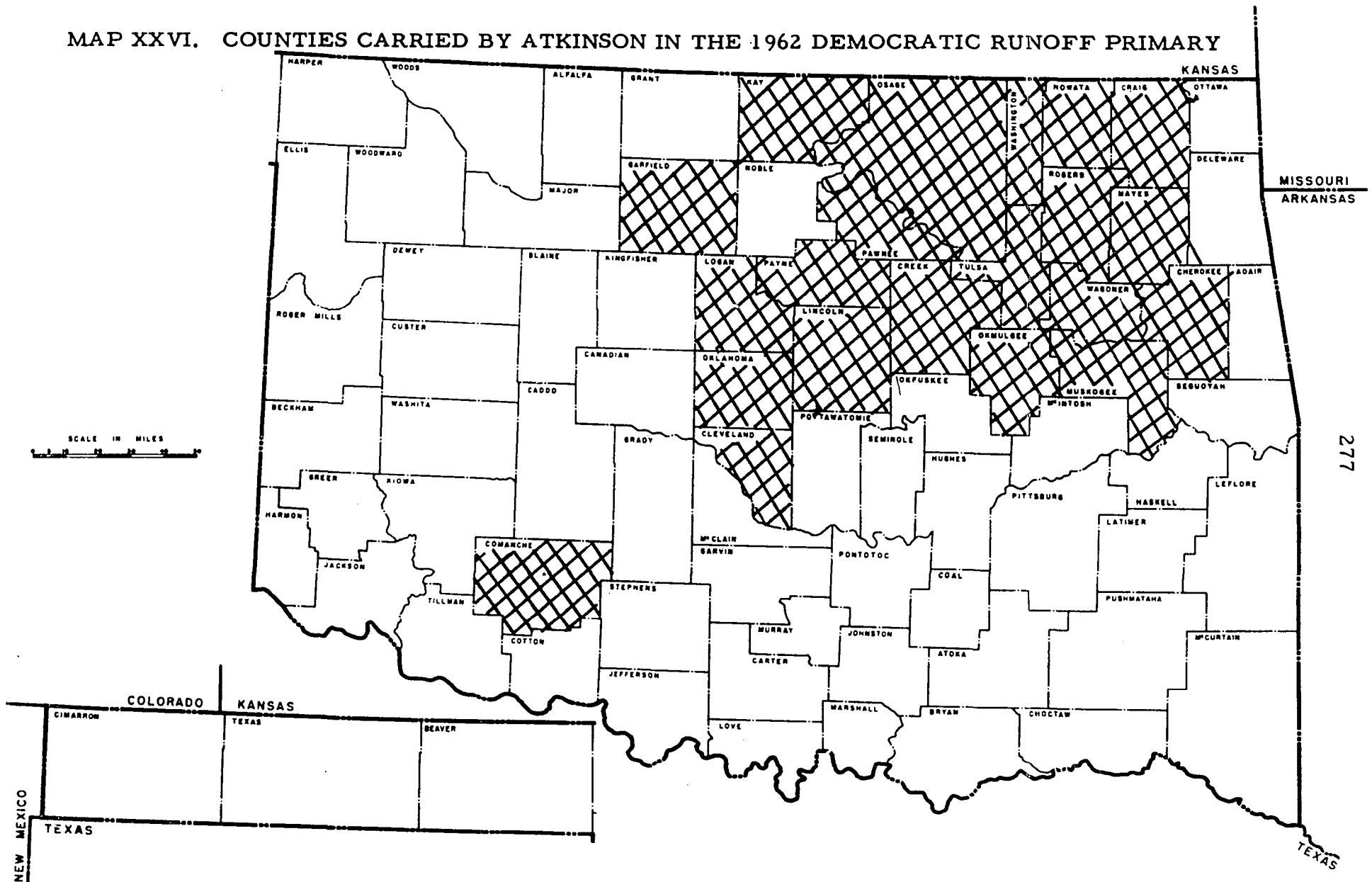
Candidate Organizations

Moore and Nigh declared their support of Atkinson less than a week after the close of the first primary campaign and merged their campaign organizations with Atkinson's. They called upon their supporters to join them in the fight against Gary, and many members of their state and county organizations worked actively for Atkinson in the runoff. Harris declared himself to be neutral, but a number of his supporters also joined the Atkinson campaign.

Thus, although Gary had the superior campaign organization in the first primary, the Atkinson organization probably was its equal in the runoff.

Moore and Nigh not only merged their campaign organizations with Atkinson's, but they joined Atkinson on his speaking tours. Gary characterized the Atkinson runoff campaign alternately as a "three-headed

MAP XXVI. COUNTIES CARRIED BY ATKINSON IN THE 1962 DEMOCRATIC RUNOFF PRIMARY



monster" and a "three-ring circus," but the fact is that the three speakers carried the attack to Gary so effectively and so steadily that Gary was on the defensive through much of the three-week runoff campaign. The triple-pronged attack also created an abundance of anti-Gary newspaper copy and headlines.

The Issues

Personality attacks figured largely in the campaign speeches in the runoff primary, with little fresh material added to what already had been discussed in the first primary. What discussion of the issues occurred was concentrated principally upon (1) state finances, including the financing of highways, and (2) legislative reapportionment. Atkinson continued to insist, as he had from the outset, that state finances was the issue of the campaign, and Gary was willing to meet him on this ground with his no tax increase program. There was some effort by Atkinson and his co-campaigners to draw Gary out on the details of his plan to reapportion the state legislature, for Gary had not yet explained which of the two houses was to have its representation based upon population or whether there was to be an increase or decrease in membership in one or both houses.

The two rival camps succeeded mostly in taking much of the meat out of both the principal issues and leaving the voters only with the question of whether to vote for or against Gary.

The issue of state finances was watered down by repeated Atkinson charges that Oklahoma voters never would approve Gary's proposed highway bond issue and by Gary countercharges that neither the state legislature

nor the people would approve Atkinson's proposed sales tax increase. If a considerable number of the voters were convinced of the truth of both these allegations, which seemed plausible, then neither candidate had any program on state finances. Travis Walsh of the Tulsa World reported at the very outset of the runoff that Gary appeared to be backing off somewhat from his proposed highway bond issue:¹

Gary is sounding more and more like he is not sure the voters will approve his \$210 million road bond issue.

Atkinson contends that Gary won't have a program if his bond issue is turned down and state government will be back in the same financial fix it is in now. Gary is trying to convince the voters that he can finance government even without his bond issue.

Two days later the Daily Oklahoman said editorially that it had reliable information that Atkinson himself never was as committed to the idea of a sales tax increase as were his campaign advisers:²

. . . It is reliably reported Atkinson wanted to back down to a tax if necessary shortly before coming out on the positive stand for a sales tax [increase], but his state coordinator, H.W. McNeil, insisted upon it.

At a Gary rally in the Oklahoma City Municipal Auditorium on May 6, Gary pointed to approximately twenty state legislators sitting behind him and said, "There's the reason why Mr. Atkinson would never be able to get a [tax] increase into law."³ On May 18, in a speech at Norman, Atkinson said he might bypass the legislature and take his proposed tax increase directly to the people, since the Old Guard members of the state senate

¹Tulsa World, May 6, 1962.

²Daily Oklahoman, May 8, 1962.

³Ibid., May 7, 1962.

had declared they would block his program.⁴ Many voters must have gotten the impression that neither candidate's plan had much chance of passage.

Much of the meat also had been taken out of the legislative reapportionment issue by the time of the runoff, for the United States Supreme Court had ruled in March that federal courts may take jurisdiction in legislative apportionment cases. In an appearance before the Oklahoma County Commissioners Association a week before the close of the runoff campaign, Atkinson said:⁵

You and I know that no governor is going to say how this state is apportioned, and we are now in violation of the fourteenth amendment to the federal constitution.

On the same day Gary was citing Atkinson's stand on reapportionment in the 1958 campaign and contending that it was much like Gary's 1962 position.⁶ Thus was the other principal issue of the runoff watered down, though it unquestionably had served its purpose of causing many to take sides along urban-rural lines.

However, one thing stood out plainly in the runoff that was not clear in the first primary: the identity of the Anybody But Gary candidate. The anti-Gary votes that were divided sharply in the first primary now could be concentrated upon Atkinson. Hence anti-Garyism was Atkinson's best issue in the runoff, and it was pressed to the fullest. At the outset of the campaign Atkinson said the issues were

⁴Tulsa World, May 19, 1962.

⁵Oklahoma City Times, May 15, 1962.

⁶Daily Oklahoman, May 16, 1962.

"big debts, big bonds, and big scandals."⁷ Replying to Gary's charge that the Atkinson campaign was a "three-headed monster," Atkinson answered:⁸

There's Tom Kight, Jr., of the famous Skelly bypass scandal, who took the fifth amendment and who leads the campaign for Gary in his home county [of Rogers].

Then there's A.B. Green, the Gary highway commission chairman who always was so lucky in his guesses as to where to buy farm land so that a highway would pass right by it.

And then there is Jenks Craig, the right hand man of Gary-- the man who was accused of delivering the relief checks to buy the votes in the Wagoner vote scandal.

The next day Atkinson said Craig had gone to work for Green's oil company after Gary went out of office, and "now he's fronting for the Gary campaign."⁹ Referring to Gary as "hog trough Gary," Moore said in Tulsa, "Soooo--eeeeee. That's the way old Raymond's calling his cronies together these days, and they're just knocking each other down trying to get to the trough."¹⁰ Nigh charged that Gary "in speech after speech promised the people anything they desired in highways." He added that Gary had made his home county of Marshall the "concrete capital of the world" by spending five million dollars there during his administration while spending \$173,000 in much more populous Washington county.¹¹ These attacks kept Gary on the defensive and drew thousands of anti-Gary votes to Atkinson.

Through all this Gary retained the support of a majority of rural Oklahomans. The Anybody But Gary segment of the electorate appeared to

⁷Ibid., May 9, 1962.

⁸Tulsa World, May 14, 1962.

⁹Ibid., May 15, 1962.

¹⁰Ibid., May 14, 1962.

¹¹Loc. cit.

divide roughly into three groups:

- 1) Some were for Atkinson and his program, including school bloc and Rural Electric Association leaders.
- 2) A larger number were more anti-Gray than pro-Atkinson, a view attributed to Moore in this Tulsa World report:¹²

Before the Vinita rally, Moore met with a group of his more active supporters at the home of C.J. Wright, his state campaign [co-ordinator], and won their pledge to support Atkinson . . .

At the meeting at Wright's home and again at the Vinita rally Moore made it increasingly clear that his stand in the runoff campaign is more anti-Gary than pro-Atkinson.

'I can't tell you if Bill Atkinson will be a great governor,' said Moore. 'I don't know whether he will be or not, but he's 1,000 per cent better than nothing and that is what Gary is.'

- 3) Some were disappointed with the outcome of the first primary and either hesitated or declined to support either candidate in the runoff. Some expressed the view that both candidates were cut out of the same Old Guard cloth and said they would support the Republican nominee in the general election. A poll of 725 Tulsa Democrats by the pro-Atkinson Tulsa World, released three days before the close of the runoff campaign, showed that Atkinson was leading Gary 371 to 196. But it was added, "A surprisingly large number--158--said they intended to vote, but did not favor either candidate, and were presently undecided."¹³

Senator Kerr's Role

Followers of Senator Kerr were divided in their support of the Democratic candidates in the first primary, with most of them apparently behind Moore, Atkinson, or Gary. Both Atkinson and Gary had sought Kerr's

¹²Ibid., May 13, 1962.

¹³Ibid., May 19, 1962.

support by promising not to run against him in 1966; the question of who his future opponents might be was a subject of recurring interest to Senator Kerr.

The Tulsa World reported on May 6:¹⁴

Supporters of Senator Robert S. Kerr are reported to be moving into the Atkinson camp in large numbers. The senator will stay out of the campaign publicly, but there are many who believe he is against another term for Gary.

Gary and his aides noted an increasing number of Kerr supporters coming out for Atkinson in the runoff. For example, the Altus Times-Democrat published front-page editorials favoring Atkinson on May 9 and May 13. The Altus newspaper is published by Harrington Wimberly, who was named Democratic party state chairman in 1944 and later was appointed to the Federal Power Commission, with Kerr's help in both cases. Though the Altus newspaper had endorsed no candidate in the first primary, Wimberly was thought by many to be favorable to Gary. After the runoff Gary said:¹⁵

I know Senator Kerr supported Atkinson in the runoff. The Kerr influence was not statewide. Not all his followers knew he was supporting Atkinson, but his key people did.

Word went out two weeks before the runoff. Rex Hawks, United States marshal for western Oklahoma, filtered the word to the peace officers.

Robert Bailey, Gary's campaign manager, said that the number of prominent Kerr men coming out for Atkinson during the runoff spelled out a picture of Kerr support of Atkinson.

Kerr's position was a delicate one. He would not want to risk losing his rural support by opposing Gary, for Kerr's support originally

¹⁴Ibid., May 6, 1962.

¹⁵Interview with Raymond Gary, July 31, 1962.

had been much more rural than urban--many urban residents were not impressed early in his career when he campaigned in a work shirt, galluses, and flowery tie--and only in very recent years had his urban support increased. In seven gubernatorial and senatorial primary, runoff, and general election campaigns prior to 1960, Kerr had carried Tulsa county only once; that was in the 1948 senatorial first primary, when he led Gomer Smith 5,990 to 4,533. His urban support increased, especially in Tulsa county, after he advocated the Arkansas River navigation project, which promised to be a big boon to Tulsa county and eastern Oklahoma. However, Kerr still relied heavily upon his rural support and would not wish to alienate any portion of it by declaring for Atkinson in the runoff.

Hence Kerr could give only quiet support to Atkinson, through certain of his supporters, but his was an important factor in helping Atkinson overcome Gary's big first primary lead.

Voter Turnout

Total voter turnout declined by 71,517 from that of the first primary, and Gary contended that most of those who stayed away from the polls were rural Gary supporters who were working in the fields or who were lulled into overconfidence by his big primary lead. It is true that this did occur, but the figures show that voter turnout generally was higher in the fifty-six counties carried by Gary than in the twenty-one counties carried by Atkinson. Overall, voter turnout for the runoff was 86.6 per cent that of the first primary, but in the twenty-one Atkinson counties the average was 81.4 per cent.

Only Cotton, Pontotoc, Pushmataha, Sequoyah, and Tulsa counties registered a larger turnout for the runoff than for the first primary. Of these five counties, only Tulsa county returned a majority for Atkinson. Of the twenty other counties where turnout exceeded the state average, only two (Oklahoma and Wagoner) were Atkinson counties.

One voter turnout factor unfavorable to Gary was that there was a 6.8 per cent increase in Tulsa county, where the Junior Chamber of Commerce sponsored a get-out-the-vote drive by giving away an automobile, a boat rig, and other prizes to those who voted. Atkinson's vote in Tulsa county increased from 9,070 in the first primary to 34,659 in the runoff.

The Voting Results

Of greater importance in explaining Gary's defeat than the location of areas showing increases or decreases in turnout is the fact that Atkinson got the largest number of the votes from supporters of the defeated candidates in every county except Jefferson. Only in Jefferson county did Gary's runoff vote show a greater numerical increase over his primary vote than the increase registered by Atkinson. Gary had reached almost the peak of his strength in the first primary, and once the anti-Gary voters had only one alternative choice they voted for Gary's opponent.

Gary polled fewer votes in the runoff than in the primary in these fourteen counties: Adair, Atoka, Beaver, Bryan, Cimarron, Delaware, Harmon, Harper, Johnston, Love, Marshall, McClain, Texas, and Woodward. Atkinson polled four less votes in Cimarron county, the only

county where his vote declined.

In Oklahoma and Tulsa counties, Gary's runoff vote increased by a total of 18,346, while Atkinson's vote increased by 49,560. Outside these two counties, Gary's biggest vote increase was the 2,190 additional votes he received in Comanche county. Atkinson registered gains in excess of 2,190 in these counties: Caddo, Cleveland, Comanche, Garfield, Grady, Kay, Muskogee, Okmulgee, Payne, Pittsburg, Pontotoc, Pottawatomie, Stephens, and Washington.

Analysis of the Atkinson Victory

In an election in which the victory margin is only 953 votes out of 462,781 cast, the victory may be attributed to any number of factors. But, largely by way of summary, the more important factors that helped Atkinson overcome Gary's first primary lead of 85,343 were the following:

- 1) Exploitation of Gary's political liabilities, especially in the northeastern quarter of the state. These include the Wagoner county relief check and Tulsa bypass scandals, the Grand River Dam Authority contract, the feeling that the northeast had not fared well in Gary's highway building program, and the linking of Gary with a number of "political cronies."

- 2) Support of Atkinson by the more populous counties, partly because of the legislative reapportionment issue. Some of this vote also was a progressive-good government vote.

- 3) The support of Moore and Nigh and their campaign organizations. The triple-pronged attack kept Gary on the defensive, gave the Atkinson campaign a strong play in the newspapers, and lent enthusiasm to his campaign.

- 4) The strong pro-Atkinson, or anti-Gary, stands of the Tulsa newspapers, which was buoying to Atkinson campaign workers and demoralizing to Gary workers.
- 5) The quiet support of Atkinson by Senator Kerr, which was felt in the area of campaign contributions as well as in the voting.
- 6) Overconfidence of some Gary supporters and the fact that others worked in the fields. Both these factors, plus the lack of enthusiasm for either candidate on the part of some, helped to account for the decline of 71,517 in the runoff vote.
- 7) Adequate Atkinson financing and a strong campaign organization. H.W. McNeil, Atkinson's campaign manager, is one of Oklahoma's most experienced campaign directors. His care in selecting campaign workers who had a minimum of political scars, his care to avoid antagonizing Atkinson's primary opponents, and his stress upon laying down a carefully considered program and sticking with it were important factors in the campaign.
- 8) Support of Atkinson by the leaders of several important organizations, including the school bloc, at least the large city wing of the Municipal League, the Rural Electric Association and Farmers Union.
- 9) There are indications that, in at least some counties, Gary workers made little or no effort to enlist the aid of the supporters of the defeated candidates immediately following the first primary. Some supporters of defeated candidates said it appeared to them that, in view of Gary's large first primary lead, the local Gary workers did not want to "let us in on a good thing."

Atkinson Liabilities for the General Election Campaign

As Atkinson was gaining second place in the first primary and winning the runoff primary he was also building up two big liabilities to carry into the general election campaign:

1) His proposed sales tax increase gave him a separate image in a crowded field of candidates in the first primary. It also enabled him to be forthright in his approach to state problems and specific in promising aid to agencies or organizations that needed more money. But this proposal, which helped to put him into the runoff, was to prove a big burden to carry in the general election. For one thing, Atkinson's opponents in the two primaries had convinced many of the inadvisability of a sales tax increase, or that it stood little chance of adoption, before the general election campaign began. For another, many lacked confidence in the state government and were unwilling to vote for a candidate advocating a tax increase.

2) His anti-Gary statements in the runoff unquestionably attracted many votes and helped greatly in his efforts to overcome Gary's big primary lead. But they led Gary to demand a public apology from Atkinson following the runoff and to Gary's refusal to support Atkinson in the general election. The party split, between the Gary and anti-Gary partisans, helped to pave the way for a Republican victory in November.

In short, the two issues that appeared to benefit Atkinson most in the primaries were to prove to be among his biggest liabilities in the general election campaign.

Republican Activities During the Democratic Primaries

Republican nominee Henry Bellmon had one opponent in the

Republican primary, Leslie C. Skoien, 51-year-old founder of the Sunshine Gospel Tabernacle in Tulsa, real estate man and tax accountant, and former justice of the peace. Skoien was virtually unknown in Oklahoma, and Bellmon defeated him 56,560 to 5,313 without a campaign. For all practical purposes, there was no Republican gubernatorial primary contest in 1962. There was some prospect of a spirited contest in January when John N. (Happy) Camp, president of the Waukomis State Bank in Garfield county and a state representative for twenty years, announced that he was considering entering the race. However, he withdrew February 2 when it became apparent that most key Republicans already were committed to Bellmon and that Bellmon, as Republican state chairman, would have the backing of the official party organization. Since the only other Republican primary contests were those for lieutenant governor, commissioner of charities and corrections, and three congressional races, relatively little was heard of Republican activities during the Democratic primaries.

Bellmon formally announced that he would run for governor on February 12, Lincoln's birthday, saying that "just as Lincoln was the first Republican to be elected president of the United States, I intend to be the first Republican elected governor of Oklahoma."¹⁶ He predicted that a Republican governor would be able to get along with a Democratic legislature and added:¹⁷

The Democratic aspirants . . . fully realize that no permanent, far-reaching change or improvement in Oklahoma's government is possible so long as the same group is in control of the state-house.

Any Democrat elected will be forced to make one of two choices.

¹⁶Daily Oklahoman, February 13, 1962.

¹⁷Loc. cit.

He can either surrender to the Old Guard politicians who prey upon Oklahoma's taxpayer, or he can suffer the same humiliating experience of Governor Edmondson.

Bellmon continued to serve as Republican state chairman until March and devoted his time trying to recruit Republican primary candidates until the filing period ended on March 2.

Once the Democratic primary campaigns had begun, Bellmon said there was no reason for him to go around the state making speeches because he could not compete for attention with the Democratic contestants. Instead, he toured the state shaking hands and attending a large number of two-party tea parties, the first step in building up a statewide Bellmon organization that was to operate almost independently of the Republican party organization in the general election campaign.¹⁸

Bellmon visited seventy-two towns and cities between March and August, accompanied by his wife, Shirley, a former Republican state committee-woman, his three daughters, and part of the time by eleven-year-old Koalani Han, of Hawaii, whose father was a close friend of Bellmon during World War II.

The value of the handshaking visit to a city, according to Bellmon, was that he was able to reach more uncommitted voters in this way than by holding political rallies. The usual procedure was for Bellmon to walk up and down the main street shaking hands while his wife and daughters made door-to-door calls in the residential sections.

The procedure for staging the two-party tea parties was to contact a key Republican woman in a county, often the Republican county vice chairman, and ask that she contact six to ten other women living in various

¹⁸Interview with Governor Henry Bellmon, August 28, 1963.

sections of the county who would be willing to invite friends from both political parties to their homes. The tea parties were arranged at one-hour intervals generally, and Bellmon spoke for twenty minutes or more at each gathering. The largest number of parties arranged for a single day was sixteen, in Woodward county. Nearly three hundred tea parties were held between March and June, and Bellmon's goal was to enlist the active support of ten thousand campaign workers by this method.

From a statement made by Bellmon early in May, it appears that he kept his plans for the general election campaign somewhat fluid until it was determined in the May 22 runoff who his opponent would be. In a television appearance with Gary and Atkinson in Tulsa on May 8, Bellmon said:¹⁹

I should be able to carry the municipal areas if Gary gets the nomination. . . . But, if I run against Atkinson, I should be able to carry the rural areas.

As to the urban areas, Bellmon was on record as favoring legislative reapportionment according to the formula laid down in the state constitution, and Eisenhower and Nixon had run well in Oklahoma's more populous areas. As a Noble county wheat farmer opposing a multimillionaire Oklahoma county home builder, Bellmon was certain to be popular with many rural residents.

As the general election approached, Republican prospects looked brighter than they had in many years: the party organization had been revitalized under Bellmon's direction as state chairman; Bellmon was well known as a result of his two years' service as state chairman and his extensive tours during the Democratic primaries; and, as usual, the party had not torn itself apart in the primaries as the Democrats had.

¹⁹Daily Oklahoman, May 9, 1962.

In 1964, after Louisiana Republicans staged their strongest campaign there since the Civil War, newly elected Democratic Governor John J. McKeithen said that Louisiana Democrats must consider abandoning their primary if the party is to face strong Republican opposition. He added;²⁰

While we've been running against each other, the Republicans have been standing on the sidelines and clapping their hands.

²⁰Ibid., March 5, 1964.

CHAPTER XIV

GENERAL ELECTION CANDIDATES, ISSUES, AND ORGANIZATIONS

"Time for a change" sentiment was especially strong in the northern half of the state prior to the 1962 Democratic primaries, growing out of a dissatisfaction with Democratic management of state affairs since the Johnston Murray administration. This was the meaning of the gubernatorial election in 1958, when all the Republican counties returned majorities for the Democratic nominee for the first time in Oklahoma history. It was a mandate to Edmondson to make good on his promise to "clean out the Old Guard." To many voters in the northern half of the state, especially in the more populous areas, Gary symbolized the Old Guard in the 1962 primaries. Nearly all the counties carried by Atkinson in the runoff were in the north central and northeastern sections of the state, in the area of the state's larger population concentrations.

Now, following the 1962 primaries, "time for a change" sentiment gathered momentum in the Democratic counties in the southern half of the state. To those who subscribed to the principles of the Oklahomans for Local Government organization, and this no doubt included many in the rural northwestern counties, Gary symbolized opposition to Edmondson and opposition to the urban forces gaining domination over the rural forces in the state. Many rural Oklahomans had been deeply dissatisfied with

the Democratic state administration since 1959-1960, when Edmondson announced the content of his controversial initiative petitions and then had them put to a vote.

Shortly after the 1962 runoff Gary announced that he could not support Atkinson in the general election, and this perpetuated the split between the urban and rural wings of the Democratic party that had been in existence since 1959. With Gary's help, possibly the breach could have been healed before the general election. A key Democrat who had a prominent role in the general election campaign summarized the Democrats' situation in this way following the election: "With Gary's support, the race would have been close; there may have been a narrow Democratic victory." In short, the Democrats were operating under some disabilities even without Gary's refusal to support Atkinson; Gary's action contributed to but was not the sole cause of Atkinson's defeat.

With much of the northern half of the state disturbed about the Old Guard and with much of the remainder of the state disturbed about the Edmondson New Guard, there probably was no Republican better suited to capitalize upon both sources of dissatisfaction than Henry Bellmon.

In the more populous areas of northern Oklahoma he pledged to eliminate "waste, graft, and corruption" from state government. And it was the fact that Bellmon exuded a quality of rugged honesty that made his pledge convincing. In addition, Bellmon and the Republican party were on record as favoring legislative reapportionment according to the constitutional formula.

In the rural areas, where the Edmondson administration was none too popular, he provided a contrast both to the more urbane "crewcuts"

of the Edmondson administration and to multimillionaire Atkinson. To these audiences he was able to say, "I am your kind of folks because I'm a farm boy from Noble county." And here he was able to concentrate his fire upon the New Guard. Referring to the Edmondson administration at Talahina, in LeFlore county, Bellmon said:¹

After four years of a governor who had nothing but scorn for even the sincere and honest members of the house and senate, [the state legislature] is in the mood for economy and reform.

In short, he could take up the job of reform that Edmondson had promised to do in 1958, but he could do it better because he could get along with rural legislators where Edmondson could not. And it was a mark of the Edmondson administration that the governor was "inaccessible to most members of the legislature."²

Voter reaction to the personalities of the candidates is one of the more important short-term influences that affect election outcomes, and in 1962 this factor must be said to have favored the Republicans. The tendency of many voters appeared to be to link Atkinson with the ills that flowed from fifty-five years of Democratic control of the statehouse, while regarding Bellmon as the "fresh breeze" in Oklahoma politics. Bellmon had served as a state representative from Noble county from 1946 until 1948, but as a Republican he could hardly be accused of having shared in the spoils of office.

¹Daily Oklahoman, October 28, 1962.

²Ibid., December 16, 1962.

Candidate Personalities³

Henry Louis Bellmon, who became forty-one years old during the general election campaign, is a non-smoker and non-drinker who announced before assuming the governorship that he planned to serve nothing stronger than milk at receptions in the governor's mansion. A former elder in the First Presbyterian Church of Perry and teacher of its largest adult Sunday School class, he requested a 6:45 a.m. communion service there on the morning of his inaugural. Bellmon also is a twice-decorated veteran of World War II, in which he took part in the invasions at Roi, Namur, Saipan, Tinian, and Iwo Jima as a platoon leader of a Marine Corps tank company. He received the Legion of Merit in the Saipan campaign and was decorated with the Silver Star for bravery on Iwo Jima. His conversation occasionally is peppered with the salty language familiar to Marine Corps veterans.

The Republican nominee summed up his political views in this way, "Basically I am a conservative, but I am sure as hell not a John Bircher nor an isolationist."

Bellmon is a successful farmer. He farms 1,400 acres, four hundred acres of his own and a thousand acres that he leases, and his annual gross income has been estimated at \$20,000 to \$25,000.⁴ In addition to growing wheat and maize, he raises calves and lambs.

A close friend described him as a "not real social person," in the sense that he is a hard-working farmer who "hardly ever comes to

³Some facets of Bellmon's personality are illustrated by actions that occurred after he became governor, but it is believed that he displayed these qualities in one form or another prior to his election.

⁴Daily Oklahoman, September 2, 1962.

town" and who does not attend many social events. Shortly after his election he announced that he would not wear a "cockeyed tuxedo" to the inaugural ball because he had never worn one and did not see any sense in starting now. Another friend said of him that he is "sometimes a little rough around the edges; he's just what he is . . . there's no pretense."⁵

But he also is described as a very sociable person, in the sense that he enjoys being with people and is at ease with them. A complaint often heard during his campaign was that it was difficult to keep him on schedule because he liked to stop and chat.

Bellmon also has the vigor and habits of a man of the soil. During the campaign he was up at 5:30 a.m. and kept going until after midnight. On his first Saturday in office the new governor was virtually alone in the capitol when he arrived at his desk at 8 a.m. A week later he designated 7:30 a.m. each Monday as the time for a coffee and doughnut session with his top aides.

His sense of humor is as earthy as his other mannerisms. In his first speech to the state legislature he likened the handling of some of Oklahoma's problems to the handling of a litter of kittens brought home by the family cat. He said nobody wants to take the kittens to the river, but added:⁶

Some of these nice kittens that came into being some time ago have grown up into mean, mangy, vicious tomcats. About all they can do is hunt quail and suck eggs. It's time to sack them up and haul them to the river.

⁵Loc.cit.

⁶Ibid., January 16, 1963.

Bellmon's earthiness and folksiness lies behind one political development that may prove important: since he became Republican state chairman in 1960, he worked to change the image of the Republican party in Oklahoma from that of a party dominated by Tulsa millionaires to that of a party of the people. To what extent this goal has been accomplished is difficult to say, but it seems certain that the Republican candidate's traits were an asset to him in his campaign.

The fact that he exuded a quality of rugged honesty was another asset to his campaign, since his pledge to eliminate "waste, graft, and corruption" from state government was at the heart of his platform. Joseph Dever, a writer for the New York World-Telegram who landed side by side with Bellmon on Iwo Jima, said of Bellmon after his election: "This is the most honest man [Oklahomans will] ever get."⁷ Former Governor Henry S. Johnston, a fellow resident of Noble county, said of him, "He's a good man, honest and fairly well informed."⁸

His greatest liability was his lack of governmental experience. That he offered little in the way of a positive program in the 1962 campaign will be discussed later. However, Oklahoma voters seem prone to prefer honesty to governmental experience in their gubernatorial candidates, as was noted in Chapter VIII.⁹ Hence his lack of experience was not so much a liability to him during the campaign as it was after he assumed office.

W.P. Bill Atkinson also is a non-smoker and non-drinker, and he is a prominent Methodist. He taught a children's Sunday School class at

⁷Ibid., January 15, 1963.

⁸Oklahoma City Times, December 29, 1962.

⁹See chap. viii, pp. 144-157.

Wickliffe Methodist Church and was on hand every Sunday during the 1962 campaign. At a party in his hotel suite for delegates to the Democratic national convention at Chicago in 1956, Atkinson was reported to have served buttermilk.¹⁰ But, unlike Bellmon, he did not see service in World War II. It was during the war period that he was beginning to build Midwest City from the ground up. This was unfortunate for him politically, and was often referred to in the 1958 campaign.

That he came out of the 1958 gubernatorial campaign with a relatively poor political image is a factor that Atkinson had to try to overcome in 1962. As the front-runner in 1958, he had been charged by his opponents with being vacillating on the issues, as knowing little about the problems of state government, with being a rich man trying to buy the office, and with having the bulk of the Old Guard support. As already mentioned, the proposed sales tax increase in 1962 was seen by Atkinson and his aides partly as a platform plank that would permit the candidate to be forthright in dealing with the issues in his second try for the governorship. In the interim between 1958 and 1962 he studied problems of state government and improved his speaking technique.

Atkinson was characterized by the pro-Atkinson Tulsa World two days before the election as a "man of contrasts."¹¹

Many people get the impression that he lacks warmth. Perhaps this is because on a public platform he foregoes the glib phrases and the warm-up jokes and is so deadly serious when he talks about his program.

But those who have travelled with him have seen a different image of a man with rare personal charm and a wry sense of

¹⁰Oklahoma City Times, August 13, 1956.

¹¹Tulsa World, November 4, 1962.

humor. Associates feel he is at his political best when he shakes hands and greets people individually on the streets and a warmth comes through which is more difficult for him to achieve before a large audience.

That he did not enjoy full rapport with all his audiences was referred to by another Tulsa World reporter who accompanied the fifty-six-year-old Democratic nominee on one of his campaign swings in the runoff primary. He wrote:¹²

Gary, a veteran of the political campaign trail, generally has drawn bigger and more responsive crowds in his tour of the state. Atkinson has improved considerably over his first unsuccessful campaign in 1958 . . . but he still is not able to project to the crowds like Gary.

An observer who watched Atkinson's campaign closely said Atkinson was more persuasive when he appeared before small groups of businessmen than when he addressed large audiences.

Discussing Atkinson in 1958, when the Oklahoma City Times was not so anti-Atkinson as in 1962, a reporter for that newspaper characterized the Democratic nominee in the following way after interviewing associates of Atkinson in his university days, former employees, and others: "Composite memories of folks who 'knew Atkinson when' sketch a genial but somewhat humorless man who arouses more awed respect than warm admiration."¹³

In a lengthy biographical sketch, printed at the outset of the general election campaign in 1962, a Daily Oklahoman reporter wrote:¹⁴

Talk to people about the Midwest City builder and you run into conflicts. They can't agree. Few people adopt a middle-of-the-

¹²Ibid., May 20, 1962.

¹³Oklahoma City Times, July 16, 1958.

¹⁴Daily Oklahoman, September 2, 1962.

road attitude toward him--most people like him very much or they don't like him at all.

.
He's fastidious. He has a huge ego. He's a meticulous dresser. He insists on respect from those around him and yet he is still seeking the respect and acceptance of the big men in the state. Despite an apparent gregariousness, he is really uneasy with people. . . .

But on the other side you get a different picture. You hear of his generosity to his personnel and to institutions in Midwest City. You hear he is friendly, gracious, and even-tempered. People speak of the loyalty he earns from associates. You hear of his affection for and attention to children. You hear him described as a man with vision and planning ability that few can equal.

The Oklahoma City Times, more anti-Atkinson in 1962, characterized Atkinson a month before the election as a "man who does not evoke natural enthusiasm even among partisan Democrats."¹⁵

Democratic Organization and Campaign Strategy

The Democrats were faced with some difficult problems following the May 22 primary: trying to merge the Atkinson organization with the regular Democratic party organization, attempting to heal the breach with the Gary supporters, and reorienting their campaign strategy in such a way as to fashion an appeal to the strongly Democratic rural areas.

The northeastern quarter of the state had been a happy hunting ground for the Anybody But Gary candidates in the primaries and much of their campaign efforts were concentrated there. But much of this area is Republican territory, and some of the anti-Gary vote that went to Atkinson there in the runoff would go to Bellmon in the general election.

¹⁵Oklahoma City Times, October 5, 1962.

Moreover, Atkinson no longer enjoyed the great preponderance of anti-Gary newspaper support there that he had enjoyed during the primaries; the Tulsa Tribune's support of Bellmon now countered the Tulsa World's support of Atkinson. It was time for the Democrats to look to the strong Democratic sections of southeastern and southwestern Oklahoma. But that was Gary territory, and Gary was saying he would support the Democratic party but not the Democratic gubernatorial nominee.

The first step in Democratic campaign strategy was to seek out Gary's support. Atkinson made an airplane trip to Gary's home in Madill in July to talk with him, but Gary was quoted as having told Atkinson:¹⁶

If I campaigned for you, I think it would hurt me and hurt you; and the reason would be that people would be saying, 'I wonder how much old Atkinson is paying Gary.'

Later Gary was said to have laid down four conditions for supporting Atkinson:

- 1) That Atkinson publicly retract the charge that Gary kept Jenks Craig from going to jail in the Wagoner county relief check case.
- 2) That a retraction be made of the charge that Gary built the Willis bridge across Lake Texoma and its approaching highway to serve his farm property.
- 3) That Atkinson withdraw his proposal to increase the sales tax.
- 4) That Atkinson abandon his advocacy of the constitutional formula for legislative reapportionment.

Obviously these conditions could not be met, and Atkinson's aides decided to follow several courses of action aimed at trying to

¹⁶Tulsa Tribune, August 29, 1962.

overcome or minimize the opposition of Gary and his supporters to Atkinson. They were:

- 1) Atkinson would do relatively little campaigning before mid-September, and above all he was to avoid controversy throughout the summer. It was hoped that the tempers of Gary supporters might cool after several months. Also, an intensive six-week campaign had worked well in the first primary and it was hoped that a similar effort would produce good results in the general election. In addition, Congress would be adjourned by then and the congressional team headed by Senator Kerr would be home to join in the Democratic "team effort."
- 2) The Atkinson organization was to be subordinated to the regular Democratic organization in the general election campaign, a procedure that always takes place in theory but seldom in actual practice. It was deemed necessary to do this in 1962 in the hope that the Gary supporters, including those on the state executive committee, could thus be induced to work on behalf of the entire Democratic ticket. The initiative for this move came from the Atkinson organization, not the party officials.
- 3) The Democratic fall campaign would begin with a dinner honoring a prominent Democrat from deep in the heart of Gary territory, Carl Albert, Democratic majority leader in the lower house of Congress. Albert, hailed as the "Little Giant from Little Dixie," represented the third congressional district in southeastern Oklahoma. The Carl Albert appreciation dinner was arranged to honor the majority leader, raise funds, and--it was hoped--heal party wounds.

But none of these courses of action worked entirely satisfactorily. The tempers of the Gary supporters did not cool during the

summer and many worked openly or covertly for Bellmon in all sections of the state. In fact, Gary supporters constituted the most effective support Bellmon had in a number of counties.

The support of Atkinson by Senator Kerr and other members of the "team" probably was less than was hoped for. Republican senatorial nominee B. Hayden Crawford began making gains in his contest with Monroney by September, and many felt that Kerr began concentrating more upon helping to reelect Monroney than upon electing Atkinson. A number of state legislators did not want to be too closely identified with Atkinson because they thought his proposal to increase the sales tax was unpopular in their districts.

Nor was the Atkinson organization effectively meshed with the regular Democratic party organization. Workers identified with a successful primary campaign are reluctant to take a subordinate role in the general election. State Chairman McGill said after the election that there was "no cooperation at all" between the two organizations in at least ten or twelve counties.

Party organization troubles developed in the two most populous counties, Oklahoma and Tulsa, and throughout southeastern Oklahoma. In Oklahoma county, the Atkinson county coordinator and six ward workers reportedly were dismissed in mid-September and were told that the Atkinson campaign would be run by the Democratic county central committee; but about ten days later the coordinator and most of the ward workers were said to have agreed to work under the county committee. In Tulsa county, county chairman Ed Parks was reported to be lukewarm toward the Atkinson candidacy and a local Democratic party split was said to exist between

the adherents of Parks and those of primary gubernatorial candidate Thomas Dee Frasier. A top Democratic aide said that Democratic county organizations were weak throughout the third congressional district.

The Carl Albert dinner did not succeed in healing the party split, and in general Democratic party morale was not high as the general election campaign got under way in September. Phil Dessauer, associate editor of the Tulsa World, wrote late in September:¹⁷

Enthusiasm--that's the element missing from the Democratic efforts to this point. . . .

In all truth, there is a lack of fiery ardor in the party. It was noted by observers at the Carl Albert appreciation dinner last week, and it has marked the previous preliminary phases of the campaign.

Republican Organization and Campaign Strategy

With virtually no primary campaign of his own to conduct, Bellmon was able to spend the time from February until August building up a Bellmon organization in the various counties, and there was little discontinuity in his efforts as between the primary and general election campaigns.

Bellmon began the campaign with the knowledge that he could not win unless he could attract the votes of a large number of Democrats--about 200,000 was a commonly used figure. Hence his campaign strategy was to advocate a change in control of state government, but in such a way as not to alienate too many Democrats. This strategy was evidenced in a number of ways:

¹⁷ Amarillo (Texas) Daily News, September 27, 1962, "Inside Oklahoma" column.

1) A Bellmon organization, mostly separate from the Republican party organization, was developed by the nominee so that he could avoid being identified with support of national issues of the type that would alienate many Democrats. For example, Bellmon did not wish to be identified with Republican senatorial nominee Crawford's allegations that Democratic Senator Monroney was "soft on communism."¹⁸ Bellmon especially wanted to avoid attacking Monroney so that he would not alienate the Gary supporters; in addition, it was felt that financial support would be easier to obtain if Bellmon did not attack the popular Monroney. Another reason for the separate organization was that Bellmon supporters felt that their candidate had a better chance to win than Crawford and the other statewide nominees. The Bellmon organization was developed primarily through the two-party tea parties held between February and August; there was, however, some overlapping of the Bellmon and Republican party organizations.

In some counties Crawford also had an organization separate from both the Republican party and Bellmon organizations. For example, in Tulsa county Congressman Page Belcher and Dale J. Briggs, candidate for lieutenant governor, operated out of Republican party headquarters at 515 South Boston. Crawford and Bellmon headquarters were at Seventh and Detroit; there was a partition between the staffs of the two candidates. Irwin Musgrove, Republican county chairman in Tulsa county, said that the disadvantages of having separate organizations were that key persons sometimes were pulled out of the regular Republican organ-

¹⁸Interview with Wayne Mackey, Bellmon campaign manager, January 2, 1963.

ization to work for one of the individual candidates; also, he said there was poor communication between the Bellmon and Republican organizations until three or four weeks before the election. But he said one advantage of having separate organizations was that some workers were drawn into the campaign who otherwise would have taken no part in it.¹⁹

2) Bellmon headquarters sought close liaison with former Gary supporters.

It was felt that Bellmon had the Republican vote and was well known in Republican areas as a result of his service as state chairman. The main task was to go after the Democratic vote, and one of the best ways to accomplish this was to capitalize upon the party split that grew out of the Democratic party primaries. Gary followers constituted the most effective support Bellmon had in such counties as McClain, Garvin, and Pottawatomie, as well as in Bryan and other Little Dixie counties.

3) Bellmon made a much stronger bid for Democratic votes in the southern half of the state than Republican nominees usually make. He made a swing through the southeastern section in July and again in October, as well as an extended swing through the southwestern section early in November. Bellmon billboards were seen in areas that normally are preponderantly Democratic.

4) Bellmon himself had no printed platform, and he ignored or disavowed those portions of the Republican party platform, adopted at the party's 1961 state convention, that might alienate large numbers of Democrats. For example, he assured the welfare bloc in southeastern Oklahoma that

¹⁹Interview with Irwin Musgrove, Republican chairman of Tulsa county, January 29, 1963.

he would not raid welfare funds, despite the Republican party platform plank which called for elimination of earmarked funds.

5) When Bellmon announced a 15 to 20 per cent reduction in the number of state employees as one of his platform planks, he was careful to make clear that this meant no mass firings of Democratic office holders. He said the reduction in state personnel would be accomplished by not replacing workers who resigned rather than by a wholesale housecleaning.

The strategy of capitalizing upon the Democratic party split and of going after the Democratic votes was successful. Bellmon carried all the Republican counties, ten of the thirteen Democratic-oriented swing counties, and the four strongly Democratic counties of Beckham, McClain, Marshall, and Roger Mills. Equally importantly, he received more than 30 per cent of the vote in every southern county except Love. In fact, he received more than 40 per cent of the vote in approximately half the southern counties, an area where Republican vote percentages of 15 to 25 per cent have been common.

Wayne Mackey, forty-one-year-old registered Democrat, was the manager of the Bellmon campaign. He was Sunday editor of the Daily Oklahoman when he resigned to join the Bellmon organization in July. He and Bellmon had been friends as schoolboys in Noble county. Drew Mason, thirty-four years old, was the coordinator of the county organizations. He is a native Iowan who first came to Oklahoma in 1960 as a fund-raising consultant with a Kansas City firm that was engaged to raise funds for the Nixon-Lodge campaign. He returned to Oklahoma in April, 1961, to work in a similar capacity with the Republican central committee; he became executive secretary of the central committee and continued in

that capacity until he joined the Bellmon organization in July. State Senator Robert Breeden, fifty-four years old, the research, legislative, and press liaison director, is a former publisher of the Cleveland American and was state senator from Pawnee and Noble counties until 1962. Though he was a candidate for corporation commissioner in 1962, he devoted most of his time to the Bellmon campaign. Robert Newhouse, of Tulsa, retired executive of Pan American Petroleum Corporation, headed the Bellmon finance committee. Mrs. Darla Hunt, of Tulsa, Bellmon's niece, was director of the Bellmon Belles, an organization of five hundred women from throughout the state who appeared at Bellmon rallies in costume, passed out campaign literature at shopping centers, did door-to-door canvassing, and staged coffees and chili suppers.

Other campaign aides upon whom Bellmon relied for advice were the twelve district coordinators who headed the Bellmon organization in the state's six congressional districts or in parts of those districts. They were: District 1, Martin Garber, Enid; District 2, Phil Rhees, Bartlesville, and R.L. Kershaw, Muskogee; District 3, Morris Carr, Atoka; District 4, E.L. (Bud) Stewart, Shawnee, and Hugh Jones, Yale; District 5, Jack Wells, Oklahoma City; District 6, Albert Stone of Marlow, Gordon Thomas of Altus, Earl Goerke of Watonga, Gordon Ray of Laverne, and Cooper West of Elk City. District 6 is not only the largest congressional district geographically, but it also is the district in which Republican Clyde Wheeler almost defeated Democratic incumbent Victor Wickersham in the 1960 congressional race.

The strongest Bellmon county organizations, according to Mason and Breeden, were in these counties: Beckham, Carter, Cleveland,

Muskogee, Okmulgee, Pottawatomie, and Seminole in the Democratic areas in the southern half of the state; Alfalfa, Grant, Kay, Kingfisher, Lincoln, Major, Noble, Oklahoma, Payne, Rogers, Texas, Washington, and Woodward in the northern half.

There were fairly strong Bellmon organizations in Garvin, Jackson, Pontotoc, and Stephens counties in the southern half and in Beaver, Cimarron, Garfield, Harper, Logan, Nowata, Tulsa, and Woods counties in the northern half.

Bellmon had no organization at all in the strongly Democratic counties of Harmon, Jefferson, Johnston, Love, and Roger Mills.

In general, Republican party morale was high, and there was a strong feeling that "this is the year." Organizationally, the Republicans were much stronger and the Democrats weaker than in previous years.

The Central Campaign Issue

State finances was the central issue of the general election campaign, and it was put in this way by the two candidates:

Atkinson: A one penny increase in the state sales tax is essential to overcome the state's deficit financing, to operate state government efficiently, and to effect those improvements required to usher Oklahoma into an era of space age industrial growth.

Bellmon: Existing state revenues are adequate if "waste, graft, and corruption" are eliminated from state government.

With respect to this paramount issue, the superiority of the Republican position rested upon several factors:

- 1) There was a general reaction against Democratic control of the state-house as a result of the scandals, charges and counter-charges, and

legislative bickering that had occurred since the early 1950's. A prominent Tulsan said that Tulsa residents were not reluctant to vote city bond issues, but they lacked similar confidence in both the state and national levels of government. Similar sentiments were heard in Democratic areas.²⁰

Sentiment for change is apparent among Democrats. Some of it stems from opposition to Atkinson because of the bitter runoff primary, but voters sounded in polls and voting for Bellmon didn't seem bitter toward the nominee.

It was more disgust with Democrats in control and an inclination to give the Republicans a chance.

With confidence in state government low, Atkinson was fighting an uphill battle when he asked the voters to give state officials more money to spend.

2) With inflation and heavier tax burdens already keenly felt, and with figures showing that state taxes and expenditures were higher per capita in Oklahoma than in surrounding states, the burden of proof that a sales tax increase was essential definitely was upon the Democratic nominee. If the Republican candidate could just raise a doubt in the minds of the Oklahoma jury, the verdict would be for the Republicans. The voters preferred to look upon a tax increase as a last resort measure that might be forced upon a reluctant governor than as a step that an incoming governor was committed to take because of his campaign promises. Bellmon got some help in this respect from Atkinson's Democratic primary opponents, all of whom argued against a tax increase.

3) Bellmon's promise to make existing revenues adequate by eliminating waste, graft, and corruption was what the voters were predisposed to

²⁰Daily Oklahoman, September 16, 1962.

accept. It was not only Edmondson's 1958 campaign that gave the voters reason to believe that waste, graft, and corruption existed, but this was pointed up in the 1962 Democratic primaries as well.

There was no difference in the stands of the two candidates on legislative reapportionment, which had been a major issue in the Democratic primaries. But Bellmon's stand on this issue had not hurt him as it had hurt Atkinson, for Bellmon had not been forced to campaign against a rural champion.

The Atkinson Campaign

To confound an already disadvantageous situation with respect to the sales tax issue, Atkinson made perhaps the most serious error of his campaign not long after the Democratic runoff when he told a group of Democratic state senators that he was "not married to the sales tax increase." The remark was made at an unannounced party given by Atkinson for Democratic state senators at his home on July 8. When first asked about the remark, Atkinson was quoted as saying that the Democratic general election campaign would not start until after September 15, that many things could happen between July and September, and that a firm decision on the tax issue should be reserved until after the fall campaign began.²¹ Atkinson's headquarters said the next day that Atkinson's full remark to the state senators was that he was not married to the sales tax increase--if anyone had a better plan for solving the state's problems.²²

The real source of the damage here was that the Democratic

²¹Ibid., July 12, 1962.

²²Tulsa World, July 13, 1962.

nominee appeared to vacillate on the issue that constituted the heart of his platform, on the issue that he alone had espoused, and on the issue as to which the burden of proof of its wisdom rested squarely upon him. If the sole advocate of a sales tax increase was at all doubtful about the wisdom of it, it is certain that the voters would be. Moreover, the apparent vacillation probably damaged the image of forthrightness which Atkinson and his aides had worked so hard to build up in an effort to combat his 1958 campaign image.

Atkinson probably erred in meeting with the state senators as a group. Since many state senators are interested primarily in what can be done for their own constituencies, Atkinson would have done better to meet with them individually to ask each what was needed in his home district. Instead, he put himself in the position of allowing the pressure of the entire body to be brought to bear upon him.

To make matters worse, Atkinson was charged with changing his position on another issue later in the campaign. This was the right to work issue. Relatively little had been said about this issue prior to September 29, when both candidates appeared before a state meeting of the AFL-CIO Committee on Political Education in Oklahoma City. Up to that time it had appeared that right to work would not become much of an issue in the general election campaign. On the night before the AFL-CIO meeting, Atkinson told the Oklahoma City Press Club that right to work was a matter for the people to decide but that as an individual he would vote against it. But on the following day Atkinson made these two commitments to the COPE delegates: (1) if a right to work measure were passed by the state legislature, he would veto it; (2) if an

initiative petition were submitted to him, he would put it on the general election ballot, where the silent vote would count against it.²³ This was a much stronger stand against right to work than Atkinson had taken up to that time, and his campaign aides were caught by surprise at their candidate's stand.

Atkinson obtained the COPE endorsement following his unusually strong stand, but in doing so he alienated some important support. A number of industrialists and large farmers had been favorably disposed toward Atkinson's pay-as-you-go plan of financing state needs, several high level Democrats pointed out, but they also were strongly for right to work. In addition, here again it appeared that Atkinson had vacillated on an issue. H.S. (Tex) Newman, president of Oklahomans for Right to Work, charged that Atkinson previously had proposed to submit the matter at a special election rather than at a general election. He was quoted as saying:²⁴

Mr. Atkinson in a major public appearance before the Oklahoma Press Association in Oklahoma City as well as to Tulsa leaders, both in public and in private, made it clear that he would not be active for or against right to work, but that if the petition were sufficient would call a special election.

The high level Democrats previously referred to expressed the view that Atkinson lost more than he gained by going all-out against right to work, in view of the fact that Oklahoma is not a strong labor state and the fact that the state's labor leaders had been only lukewarm toward his candidacy, partly because of his sales tax increase proposal. In the twenty-seven labor precincts in Oklahoma City, Tulsa, and Muskogee pre-

²³Daily Oklahoman, September 30, 1962.

²⁴Ibid., October 5, 1962.

viously referred to in connection with the voting in the primary, Atkinson polled less than 45 per cent of the vote in the general election.

Late in the campaign Atkinson headquarters sent a letter to welfare recipients promising these benefits if Atkinson were elected: (1) an increase in welfare payments, commensurate with the cost of living increase, to be effected within six months after the election, and with assistance checks to be mailed twice a month instead of once; (2) an effort to raise assistance payments to \$100 a month during the Atkinson term; (3) creation of a system under which welfare recipients might pay their doctors for both home and office calls; and (4) creation of a system under which they might pay their druggists for prescription medicine.²⁵

The Oklahoma Public Expenditures Council, a private treasury watchdog agency, said it would cost more than \$36,000,000 to raise the checks of the state's 85,198 old age assistance recipients from the current average of \$64.73 to \$100 a month. It was pointed out that Atkinson's proposed one cent increase in the sales tax would yield about \$30,000,000 a year and that a number of other expenditures had been pledged from this revenue. Council leaders said Atkinson's pledge to raise teachers' pay \$800 a year would cost an estimated \$14,000,000 to \$16,000,000 for the biennium. Also, Atkinson had pledged 20 per cent of the increased sales tax revenue to the towns and cities.²⁶

In a front-page editorial printed three days before the election, the Daily Oklahoman tabulated Atkinson's promised expenditures as follows:²⁷

²⁵Ibid., November 2, 1962.

²⁶Ibid., November 1, 1962.

²⁷Ibid., November 3, 1962.

Welfare increase	\$36,000,000
Aid to cities.	10,000,000
Teachers' aid.	8,000,000
Mental health.	? ? ?
Higher Education	? ? ?
Good roads	? ? ?
	\$54,000,000 plus ? ? ?

Atkinson carried twenty-four of the twenty-nine strongest welfare counties, most of which are strongly Democratic counties. But his strong welfare stand undoubtedly alienated many voters in such areas as western Oklahoma, where welfare rolls are low.

Meanwhile, the Democrats were finding it somewhat difficult to attack Bellmon's program for the simple reason that the Republican candidate's platform was very brief and highly general. As mentioned previously, Bellmon had no printed platform; the Republican party had one, but Bellmon did not run upon it. The Democrats could not attack the Old Guard, as they had in the primaries, because they needed rural Democratic support. They could not attack the New Guard, as Bellmon was able to do, because Edmondson was supporting Atkinson and his help was needed. Moore and Nigh could not be used as campaign speakers because they were associated with the heavy attack on Gary in the runoff. Hence Atkinson was forced to concentrate his attacks primarily upon (1) the Republican party platform, much of which Bellmon either ignored or disavowed, and (2) E.K. Gaylord, publisher of the Daily Oklahoman and Oklahoma City Times, who opposed Atkinson in the primaries as well as the general election. Atkinson charged that Bellmon was a "puppet" of Gaylord and that there was a similarity in their political views. His most telling points were scored against the Republican party platform, to be discussed in connection with the Bellmon campaign.

Atkinson had a positive program to offer, and it was on the side of progress in that it called for making many state improvements, a number of which Atkinson contended were essential if Oklahoma was to be launched into an era of industrial growth. But he was operating under two severe liabilities: Gary's refusal to support him hurt his candidacy in the Democratic rural areas and his proposed tax increase was unpopular with many.

The Bellmon Campaign

Bellmon took a calculated risk when he decided to set forth a minimal program, for he laid himself open to the charge that he had no program at all. But the offsetting advantages of such a platform were, as one of his aides put it, that the Democrats could not concentrate their fire upon it and Bellmon could choose the time and place for bringing up various issues.

The Republican candidate set the tone of his campaign in his kickoff speech at his home town of Billings on September 8, when he said that Oklahomans had the choice of cleaning up their state government or coughing up more taxes.²⁸ Beyond that the most specific platform planks which he set forth in his speech were these: (1) on highways, the accelerated federal program coupled with existing revenues would provide more than \$100,000,000 for road building and improvements in each of the first two years of his term; (2) on mental health, he recommended a one-third increase in appropriations; (3) on modernizing and reforming state government, he promised to reduce the number of state employees by

²⁸Ibid., September 9, 1962; Tulsa World, September 9, 1962.

not less than 15 per cent by 1966 and to reorganize the executive departments to gain more efficiency; (4) as to welfare payments, he would raise them by removing grafters from the welfare rolls; (5) on education, he said the school code must be adequately financed and teacher pay adjusted upward.

Since there was little to attack here, Atkinson and the Democrats were forced to concentrate their attacks upon the Republican party platform. And it appeared for a time late in October that the Democrats might be putting Bellmon on the defensive with respect to three issues drawn mainly from the party platform. They were:

1) The party plank which advocated eliminating earmarked funds. Because the two per cent sales tax is earmarked for welfare purposes and thus is of prime concern to the welfare bloc of voters, Democratic speakers charged that Bellmon planned to finance state government without a tax increase by raiding state welfare funds. Bellmon denied it and replied that the state's financial picture was so sound that there was no reason even to consider tampering with the welfare program.²⁹

2) The party plank saying that "local government should bear a larger share of the financial support of our schools." This was linked to a Bellmon speech at Norman in which, according to Democratic speakers, Bellmon said he would increase the school levy from twenty to thirty mills. "That's an increase of 50 per cent in ad valorem taxes on businesses, farms, and ranches," Atkinson said.³⁰ Atkinson told Pushmataha county voters that this would increase their taxes by

²⁹Ibid., September 29, 1962.

³⁰Tulsa World, September 25, 1962.

\$73,938 a year, whereas his proposed sales tax increase would increase taxes there by \$49,718. Bellmon replied that his Norman speech was misunderstood. He said he proposed only that schools be permitted to use their five-mill building fund levy for any purpose they wished.³¹

3) The party plank which said, "We stand for the principle of homestead exemption as it was originally conceived to protect the small home owner but we oppose the homestead exemption as an escape for taxpayers who are able to bear their fair share of the tax load." Atkinson charged that Bellmon was a "puppet" of E.K. Gaylord and said Gaylord had advocated doing away with the \$1,000 homestead exemption for more than twenty-five years. Bellmon replied that if he were elected governor he would veto any proposal to do away with homestead exemptions.³²

Two top-level Republican aides said after the election that these Democratic charges appeared to be damaging the Bellmon campaign. They said a large number of persons contacted Bellmon headquarters to inquire whether they were true. These aides expressed the view that if the charges had been raised prior to late October and had been exploited more fully, they might have turned the tide in Atkinson's favor.

Bellmon's most effective weapons against the Democrats were these:

1) He kept alive the doubt that Atkinson's sales tax increase was essential. The Democrats employed the full machinery of the state in an effort to establish that more state revenue was absolutely essential for the coming biennium. In an unprecedented action, the State Board of

³¹Ibid., October 31, 1962.

³²Daily Oklahoman, October 31, 1962.

Equalization announced in mid-September that the 1963 legislature would have \$4,000,000 less to spend than the 1961 legislature; such reports on revenue estimates usually are not released until late December.

Early in October the state budget officer announced that requests for funds by state agencies exceeded estimated state revenues by \$117,000,000. Bellmon charged that these actions of the state agencies were "political" and countered with the statement that the state could expect at least \$40,000,000 more income in the next biennium. He added that reducing the number of state employees to a point equal to the national average would save \$12,000,000 to \$15,000,000 a year. He also issued a reminder that Edmondson and the Democrats had said in 1958 that the additional liquor taxes following the repeal of prohibition would be adequate to take care of the state's needs. "Raising taxes in this state is like pouring water into a leaky bucket," he said. Late in the campaign he said representatives of the Mid-Continent Oil and Gas Association went to the statehouse to get the financial facts and found that the next legislature would have \$20,000,000 more to spend than the last one. As the campaign closed, it appeared that Bellmon had at least created doubt about the necessity of the tax increase.

2) He kept alive the charges of Democratic mismanagement of state affairs and supplied some new data which might be added to the electorate's accumulation of grievances. When the Insurance Commission approved an increase in automobile insurance rates in October, Bellmon charged that no increase was warranted because car insurance losses had declined in 1961. Less than a week later the commission's action was rescinded and the Republicans received some credit for saving car owners \$4,700,000.³³ About

³³Ibid., October 13, 1962.

a week later Bellmon charged that state checks made out to a consultant for the Department of Commerce and Industry were later endorsed by the department director or his secretary and deposited in the director's account.³⁴ The director later was tried in district court on a charge of grand larceny and a mistrial was declared when the jury was unable to reach a verdict.³⁵ About two weeks later Bellmon charged that \$5,000 in state funds was spent to move the home of the superintendent of the Ardmore Veterans Home two hundred yards away from the noise of a busy highway and to have the home air conditioned. The superintendent replied that the home was moved to provide a site for a needed recreational facility.³⁶ Then, although no wrongdoing was alleged, Bellmon's cause was probably helped when the Oklahoma City newspapers made a big issue out of the fact, late in October, that Edmondson and three friends had purchased a quarter section of land near Oklahoma City for \$96,000 and that Edmondson planned to build a \$56,000, ten-room home on his acreage.³⁷ The news articles caused Edmondson to go on television on two successive days a week later to explain how he financed the purchase of the land and the home.³⁸

The campaign issues constitute another short-term factor that may deflect the vote from normal expectations in an election. In 1962 it appeared that the Republicans had the better of it with respect to the issues, even though Bellmon had relatively little to offer in the

³⁴Tulsa World, October 18, 1962.

³⁵Daily Oklahoman, February 21, 1964.

³⁶Tulsa World, October 30, 1962.

³⁷Daily Oklahoman, October 21, 1962.

³⁸Ibid., October 29, 1962.

way of a positive program. Bellmon was swimming with the tide when he contended that there was no need for a sales tax increase and that it was "time for a change" in state government. As to the latter, he was taking up where Edmondson left off in 1958.

After the election Bellmon expressed the view that perhaps the principal reason for his victory was the mobilizing of a large number of women to work on his behalf. He said he worked almost entirely with women in the early stages of his campaign.³⁹ At other times he attributed his victory to the turning out of many "new voters" and to the fact that "party barriers are breaking down."⁴⁰ Other favorable factors cited by Bellmon were his brief and simple platform, his handshaking with voters of the type who do not attend political rallies, his decision to act "as if you're going to win" to overcome the feeling on the part of many voters that they might be wasting their votes on a Republican candidate, the contracting for four hundred billboards to give substance to his campaign and to help create a bandwagon effect, and the adoption of an "aggressive position" with respect to the issues--"don't defend yourself; if you're hit, hit back harder with something different."⁴¹

An analysis of the voting will be given in the next chapter.

³⁹Ibid., April 27, 1963. ⁴⁰Ibid., December 9, 1962.

⁴¹Interview with Henry Bellmon, op. cit.

CHAPTER XV

AN ANALYSIS OF THE VOTING
IN THE GENERAL ELECTION

Bellmon received 55.2 per cent of the vote and carried forty-one of the seventy-seven counties, including most of the populous ones. Atkinson received 44.4 per cent of the vote and carried the remaining thirty-six counties, nearly all of them by margins that were well below the usual Democratic majorities. L. Richard Zavitz, the Independent candidate about whom virtually nothing was heard during the campaign, received less than one per cent of the vote. Bellmon was the only Republican to be elected in a statewide contest. Republican senatorial nominee Crawford received 46.3 per cent of the vote and lost to incumbent Democrat Monroney.

An examination of the voting returns shows the following:

- 1) In terms of the number and location of counties carried by Bellmon and the size of the Republican vote in the various areas of the state, the 1962 gubernatorial election results conformed rather closely with those of previous elections in which a strong Republican tide was running in the state.
- 2) The most important reason behind the Bellmon victory was this: reaction in the Democratic counties against the Edmondson administration's efforts to reduce rural influence in state affairs and to rural champion

Gary's defeat in the primaries coincided with a reaction in the Republican counties against Democratic mismanagement and--in the more populous Republican counties--against rural domination of state government. As Edmondson and the New Guard Democrats were associated with what were regarded as the anti-rural initiative petitions of 1960 in the minds of most rural Democrats, so Gary and the Old Guard Democrats were associated with the Wagoner county and Tulsa bypass scandals and with rural domination of state government in the minds of most Republicans. Bellmon was able to turn both these sources of dissatisfaction to his advantage: he benefited from the anti-New Guard vote in the Democratic counties and from the anti-Old Guard vote in the Republican counties. The Republican candidate's percentage of the vote exceeded the 1942-1954 Republican average by approximately eight per cent in the Republican counties and by approximately twelve per cent in the Democratic counties, showing that there was a rather uniformly high motivation to vote for him in both sets of counties.

3) Switch voting in the Democratic counties was more significant in Bellmon's election than the turnout of "new voters" in the Republican areas. Of the 369,000 switch votes required to convert a 1958 Democratic plurality of 292,000 into a 1962 Republican plurality of 77,000, the Democratic counties contributed approximately one-third. Voter turnout increased by nearly 171,000 over that of 1958, but 50 per cent of this increase occurred in the Democratic counties and 30 per cent in Oklahoma county; only 20 per cent of the voter turnout increase occurred in the Republican counties. The area where there was a substantial turnout of new voters and where nearly all voted Republican was Oklahoma

county.

4) Disaffection with Atkinson's candidacy was rather general throughout the state. He trailed the Democratic ticket fairly uniformly in all geographic areas and in both urban and rural areas.

5) Bellmon was about equally popular in the urban and rural areas, in both the Democratic and Republican sections of the state. His victory was not a predominantly urban one, but one that must be attributed to general approval of his candidacy.

6) Members of the welfare bloc and Negroes voted Democratic, but Bellmon polled a substantial vote among the other large voting blocs.

Comparison of the Bellmon Victory With Other Republican Successes

The 1962 gubernatorial voting followed the pattern of those years in which a Republican tide has run in Oklahoma: the Republican percentage of the vote rose to 65 to 80 per cent in most of the north central and northwestern counties, to 50 to 60 per cent in the middle tier counties, and to 30 to 49.8 per cent in the southern counties.

Bellmon carried all sixteen strongly Republican counties, twenty-one of the twenty-four swing counties, and four strongly Democratic counties. The only swing counties he did not carry were Ottawa, Delaware, and Cherokee, all in the northeastern corner of the state. The four strongly Democratic counties which he carried were Beckham, McClain, Marshall, and Roger Mills, all counties in which the Gary influence was very strong. Atkinson's best showing was in the rim of counties along the Texas border and in the southeastern section, traditionally the strongest Democratic counties.

A comparison of Maps VI and XVIII shows much similarity between the 1962 gubernatorial and 1952 presidential election results, with Bellmon and Eisenhower carrying much the same counties, many by approximately the same percentages. Eisenhower carried forty-three counties, including all the swing counties and the strongly Democratic counties of Beckham, Kiowa, and Roger Mills.

When allowance is made for the fact that Republican Senator Ed Moore was from Tulsa and was better known in the northeastern section than in far western Oklahoma, the results of the 1962 gubernatorial and 1942 senatorial elections appear not too dissimilar, as shown by Maps VI and XVII.

In short, the 1962 gubernatorial election results conform generally with those of previous years in which a Republican tide was running in Oklahoma. It was not a Republican landslide year comparable to 1920 and 1928, when Republican majorities were returned in a sizeable number of strongly Democratic counties¹ and all Republican statewide candidates were carried into office. But the Republican tide was enough stronger than that of 1950 to produce a Republican victory rather than a close contest. In 1950 Republican gubernatorial nominee Jo Ferguson was strong enough to carry nearly all the Republican counties, but he carried only one Democratic-oriented swing county and none of the strongly Democratic counties.

The Gary influence is responsible for the principal surprises of the 1962 gubernatorial election: the fact that Marshall county returned a Republican majority for the first time in its history, that

¹See Maps XIV and XVI.

McClain county returned a Republican plurality by a one-vote margin, and that Atoka and Johnston county residents gave Bellmon 45 and 47 per cent of their votes.

The Voting in the Democratic, Republican and Swing Counties

The number of votes cast in the fifty strongly Democratic and Democratic-oriented counties, in the twenty-six strongly Republican and Republican-oriented counties, and in Oklahoma county was as follows:

Democratic counties . . .	307,233
Republican counties . . .	274,599
Oklahoma county	127,931

With Oklahoma county excluded, the vote in the Democratic counties exceeded that in the Republican counties by 32,634. If the Oklahoma county total vote were added to that of the Republican counties because of the fact that this crucial swing county voted Republican in the 1962 gubernatorial contest, the total vote in the Republican counties would then exceed that in the Democratic counties by 95,297.

Bellmon's plurality of 72,000-plus in the sixteen strongly Republican counties was more than enough to offset the Democratic plurality of 32,000-plus in the thirty-seven strongly Democratic counties, the only set of counties which returned a Democratic plurality. But it could hardly be said that Bellmon won the election in the strongly Republican counties alone, for the heavy switch voting in the strongly Democratic counties severely reduced the size of the customary Democratic plurality there.

Voting in the thirty-seven strongly Democratic counties: the

Gary influence.--Atkinson's vote was approximately 14 per cent below the 1942-1954 average Democratic percentage of the vote in the strongly Democratic counties, and much of this loss is attributable to the Gary influence.

Gary himself did not work actively against Atkinson in the general election. He served as chairman of the Democratic fund-raising drive in the third congressional district in advance of the Carl Albert appreciation dinner, which signalled the start of the Democratic general election campaign. And he escorted the Democratic candidates for secondary state offices on a stump tour through Little Dixie. But he remained steadfast in his refusal to announce his support of Atkinson. However, many of Gary's active supporters worked openly for Bellmon and many Gary followers switched their votes to Bellmon, in part because they were chagrined over Gary's defeat in the runoff. Hence there was a "Gary influence" in the general election, and this was one of the more important short-term influences that deflected the vote from normal expectations, especially in the thirty-seven strongly Democratic counties.

In assessing the Gary influence, it should be noted first that it did not operate uniformly throughout the strongly Democratic counties. There was a relatively strong anti-Gary or pro-Atkinson vote in some of them. In the 1962 runoff the Atkinson vote increased by a greater amount than the Gary vote in all but one county, indicating that the anti-Gary campaign of Atkinson, Moore, and Nigh, plus the quiet support of Senator Kerr, struck a responsive chord with a substantial number of Democratic voters. Atkinson received more than 40 per cent of the runoff vote in nearly half the thirty-seven strongly Democratic counties: Coal, Comanche, Cotton, Grady, Haskell, Hughes, Jackson, Jefferson, McIntosh, Muskogee,

Okfuskee, Okmulgee, Pontotoc, Pushmataha, Seminole, Stephens, and Tillman.

Secondly, it seems certain that the Gary influence was the primary factor in Bellmon's carrying Marshall, McClain, Beckham, and Roger Mills counties. One has only to note the small vote which Atkinson polled in three of these counties in the runoff against Gary to understand why he lost them in the general election: 8.6 per cent in Marshall, 19.1 per cent in Beckham, and 24.4 per cent in Roger Mills.

Two methods were used to assess the Gary influence in the strongly Democratic counties:

1) Gary's percentage of the vote in the runoff primary was compared with Atkinson's vote in the general election. Such a comparison showed that Atkinson's general election vote was from 5 to 52 per cent below Gary's runoff vote in fourteen counties; there was a differential of less than 5 per cent in twelve; and Atkinson's general election vote exceeded Gary's runoff vote by from 5 to 19 per cent in the remaining eleven counties. This indicates that the Gary influence was especially important in the first category, of more moderate importance in the second, and of minimal importance in the latter.

2) Atkinson's percentage of the general election vote was compared with the average Democratic percentage of the vote in the gubernatorial elections from 1942 through 1954 in each county. This showed that Atkinson's vote percentage was from 19.5 to 44.1 per cent below the 1942-1954 average in nine counties, from 10.1 to 19 per cent below the average in seventeen, and 10 per cent or less below the average in eleven. Only in Sequoyah county did Atkinson's vote exceed the long-term average; that was by eight-tenths of one per cent.

Quite comparable results were obtained from both methods. For example, in Marshall county Atkinson's general election vote was 52.6 per cent below Gary's runoff vote there and 44.1 per cent below the 1942-1954 average Democratic vote in Marshall county. In Roger Mills county the comparable figures were 37 per cent and 29.3 per cent; in Beckham county 36.9 and 21.1; in McClain county 12.9 and 20.3. As to those counties in which the Gary influence was shown to be minimal, in Okmulgee county Atkinson's general election vote was 19.4 per cent above Gary's runoff vote there and only 6 per cent below that county's 1942-1954 Democratic average. In McIntosh county the comparable figures were 10 per cent and three-tenths of one percent; in Comanche county 18.9 and 10; in Muskogee county 9.6 and 6.

Counties in which the Gary influence was shown to be strongest by both methods were Marshall, Roger Mills, Beckham, McClain, Johnston, Murray, and Atoka. Other counties in which it was shown to be very strong were Bryan, Garvin, McCurtain, Carter, and Choctaw. Except for the two far western counties, these are mostly Little Dixie counties.

Counties in which the Gary influence was shown to be weakest were Sequoyah, McIntosh, Okmulgee, Muskogee, Comanche, Pittsburg, Haskell, and Pushmataha. Other counties in which it was fairly weak were Okfuskee, LeFlore, Hughes, and Jackson. The majority of these counties are in east central Oklahoma and several are among the state's more populous counties. Reaction against the Wagoner county scandals was especially strong in Okmulgee county, which Moore carried in the first primary; Moore also carried adjacent Muskogee county and ran well in nearby McIntosh. The Kerr influence was strong in Jackson county.

In a number of these counties it appears that the strong Democratic allegiances of the voters outweighed their Gary sympathies when the time came to vote in the general election. There was a feeling among some Democrats that Gary had bolted the party in his refusal to support Atkinson; the fact that Gary ran third in the 1964 Democratic senatorial primary indicated that his 1962 stand was not popular with some Democrats. Though LeFlore county voters gave Gary a 66.3 per cent majority in the 1962 runoff, they gave Atkinson a 65.6 per cent majority in the general election; this was only 5.9 per cent below the 1942-1954 average Democratic percentage there.

Since factors other than the Gary influence contributed to Atkinson's reduced vote in the general election, as previously discussed, it seems fair to assume that the Gary influence reduced his vote by approximately 15 to 20 per cent in a third of the strongly Democratic counties and by 5 per cent or less in the remainder. Roughly this produces an average loss throughout the Democratic counties of approximately 10 per cent that may be attributed to the Gary influence. Reference to Table 46 shows that nearly 125,000 voters cast ballots in the thirty-seven strongly Democratic counties. Taking 12,500 votes from Atkinson's total and adding them to Bellmon's total--since switch voting has the double effect of reducing one candidate's total and increasing that of the other--puts the Gary influence in the strongly Democratic counties at approximately 25,000 votes. These 25,000 votes represent nearly one-third of Bellmon's statewide plurality.

Voting in the Democratic-oriented swing counties.---Ten of the thirteen Democratic-oriented swing counties returned majorities for

Bellmon, and the Republican candidate received a plurality of more than four thousand votes from this bloc of counties.

Atkinson's vote was below the 1942-1954 Democratic average and Bellmon's vote was above the 1942-1954 Republican average by approximately 11 per cent in these counties. Previous Democratic gubernatorial nominees had received an average of 57.1 per cent of the vote; Atkinson polled an average of 46 per cent.

When the 11 per cent decrease in the Democratic vote in the Democratic swing counties is combined with the 14 per cent decrease in the strongly Democratic counties and an average of the two is taken, it shows that the 1962 Democratic vote for governor decreased by more than 12 per cent in the state's Democratic areas.

The principal reasons behind the decrease in the Democratic vote in the Democratic swing counties appear to be these: (1) the pro-Bellmon portion of the vote stemmed from the good government influence and the favorable reaction to Bellmon's personality; (2) the anti-Atkinson portion resulted from the Gary influence and resistance to Atkinson's proposed sales tax increase.

More than 93,000 votes were cast in these thirteen counties. Bellmon's increased vote of 11 per cent gave him more than 10,000 votes in excess of the number usually received by Republican candidates in the Democratic-oriented swing counties.

Voting in the sixteen strongly Republican counties.--In these counties Bellmon's vote averaged 8.9 per cent higher than the average Republican percentage of the two-party vote for governor in the 1942-1954 period. Previous Republican gubernatorial nominees had received an

average of 61.6 per cent of the vote; Bellmon received an average of 70.5 per cent.

The major reason behind this strong motivation to support the Republican nominee here was the good government influence; the reaction of Republican voters against the Democratic "politics" and mismanagement of the 1950's. Many voters in these counties had expressed a similar reaction in 1958 when they voted for the Democratic reform candidate, Edmondson. Some new voters were drawn to the polls in these counties, but not nearly so many as in Oklahoma county. There was even some possible Gary influence in the more sparsely populated northwestern counties, where Gary ran well in the primaries.

More than 200,000 votes were cast in these sixteen counties. Since Bellmon polled approximately 9 per cent more votes than previous Republican gubernatorial candidates here, approximately 18,000 votes may be attributed primarily to the stimulus of the good government influence from this bloc of counties. This represents about one-fourth of Bellmon's statewide plurality.

Voting in the Republican-oriented swing counties.--In these ten counties Bellmon's vote averaged 7.1 per cent more than the average vote polled by Republican candidates from 1942 through 1954. Previous Republican candidates had polled an average of 51.2 per cent of the vote; Bellmon received an average of 58.3 per cent.

Bellmon's vote therefore averaged about 8 per cent more than that of his predecessors in the Republican areas of the state: 7.1 per cent in the Republican swing counties and 8.9 per cent in the strongly Republican counties.

The motivation to support the Republican candidate in the Republican swing counties was much the same as that in the strongly Republican counties.

More than 72,500 votes were cast in the Republican-oriented swing counties. Bellmon's 7.1 per cent increase here accounts for approximately 5,000 more of his statewide vote plurality.

The voting in Oklahoma county.--Bellmon polled 8.4 per cent more votes in the state's largest county than the average polled by Republican gubernatorial candidates from 1942 through 1954. His predecessors polled an average of 49.8 per cent of the vote; Bellmon received 58.2 per cent.

Oklahoma county was the biggest source of new gubernatorial election voters who voted Republican. The county's voter turnout was 37,689 greater and the Republican vote cast was 24,753 higher than in any previous gubernatorial election. The extent of these increases was much higher than in Tulsa county, where the turnout was 5,830 greater and the Republican vote 13,338 higher than in any previous gubernatorial election. In all the other more populous counties the voter turnout and Republican vote increases were less than 5,000 above previous highs; in most of them voter turnout increased by less than 2,000 and the Republican vote by less than 3,000.

Nearly all the short-term influences that bore upon the 1962 gubernatorial election appeared to converge in this crucial swing county: the good government influence, Bellmon's personality, the Gary influence, resistance to the sales tax increase, and the influence of the Daily Oklahoman.

Voter turnout exceeded normal expectations by 19,176 in Oklahoma county,² and the Republican vote exceeded normal expectations by 20,310. Hence it appears that nearly all of Oklahoma county's 20,000 new voters cast Republican ballots.

Summary.--It is difficult to pinpoint with precision the influences that gave Bellmon his 75,000-plus plurality of votes in 1962, but a composite of the foregoing analysis produces this rough accounting:

25,000	-- the Gary influence in the strongly Democratic counties
10,000	-- the good government and Gary influences in the Democratic-oriented swing counties
18,000	-- the good government influence in the strongly Republican counties
5,000	-- the good government influence in the Republican-oriented swing counties
20,000	-- new voters in Oklahoma county
<u>78,000</u>	

The foregoing represents a summary of the major influences that were operative in the various categories of counties. Such contributing influences as Bellmon's personality and resistance to Atkinson's proposed sales tax increase also were important.

Disaffection with Atkinson's Candidacy Was Rather General

A comparison of the percentage of the vote received by Atkinson in each of the seventy-seven counties with the percentages received by Senator Monroney and Leo Winters, Democratic candidate for lieutenant governor, shows that Atkinson trailed these Democratic candidates by a fairly uniform percentage throughout the state. Monroney received 53.2 per cent of the vote in the state as a whole, Winters 53.7 per cent, and

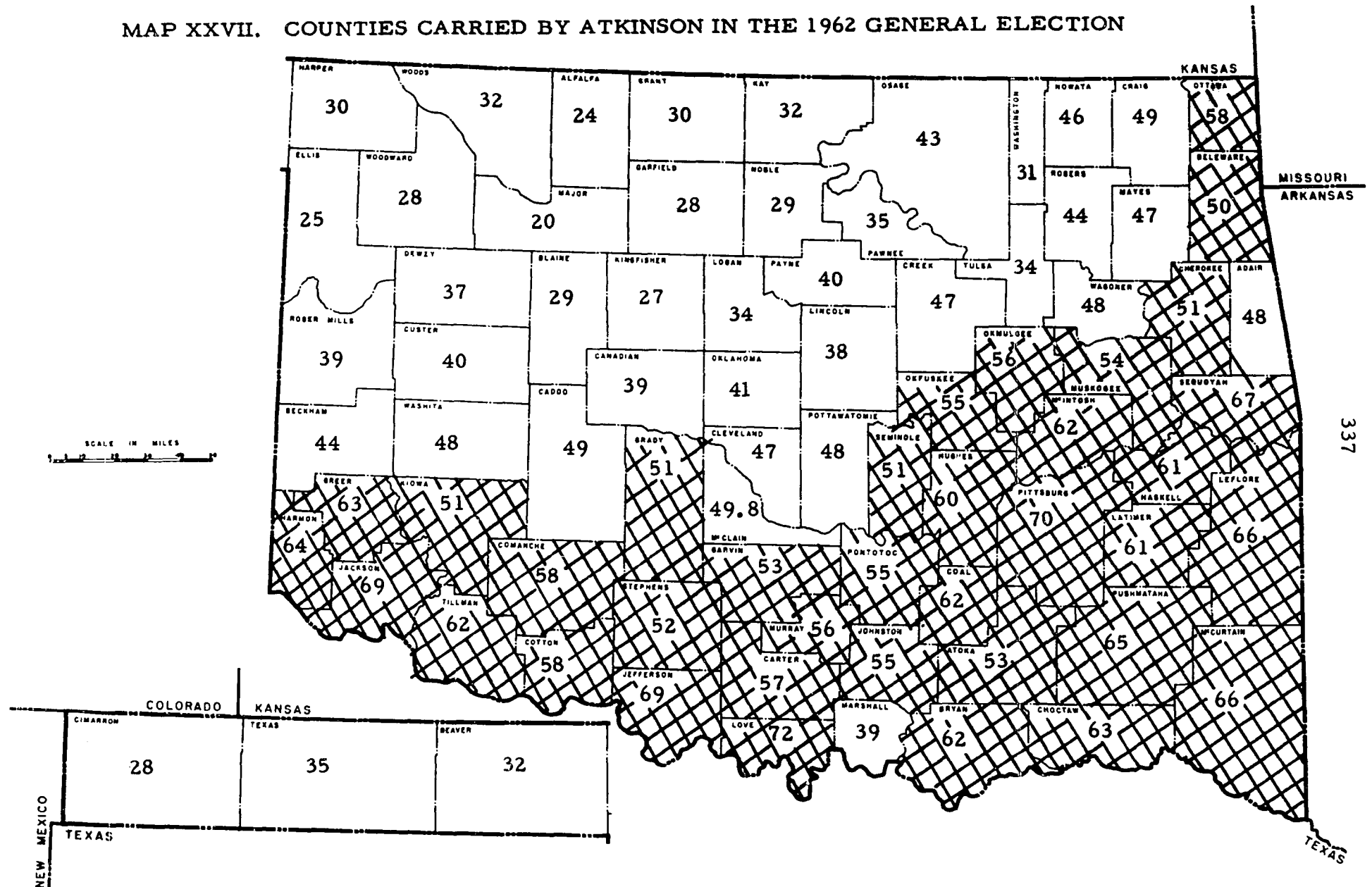
²See Table 47.

Atkinson 44.4 per cent. Hence Atkinson's percentage was 8.8 per cent below that of Monroney and 9.3 per cent below that of Winters in the state as a whole. And Atkinson's vote percentage was more than 5 per cent below those of Monroney and Winters in all but these ten eastern counties: Adair, Cherokee, Delaware, Haskell, LeFlore, McIntosh, Okmulgee, Ottawa, Sequoyah, and Washington. He trailed Winters in all seventy-seven counties and Monroney in every county except Sequoyah. Sectionally, Atkinson fared slightly better in the northeastern and southeastern sections of the state than elsewhere and slightly worse in the west central and northwestern sections, but in general he trailed the Democratic ticket rather uniformly throughout the state.

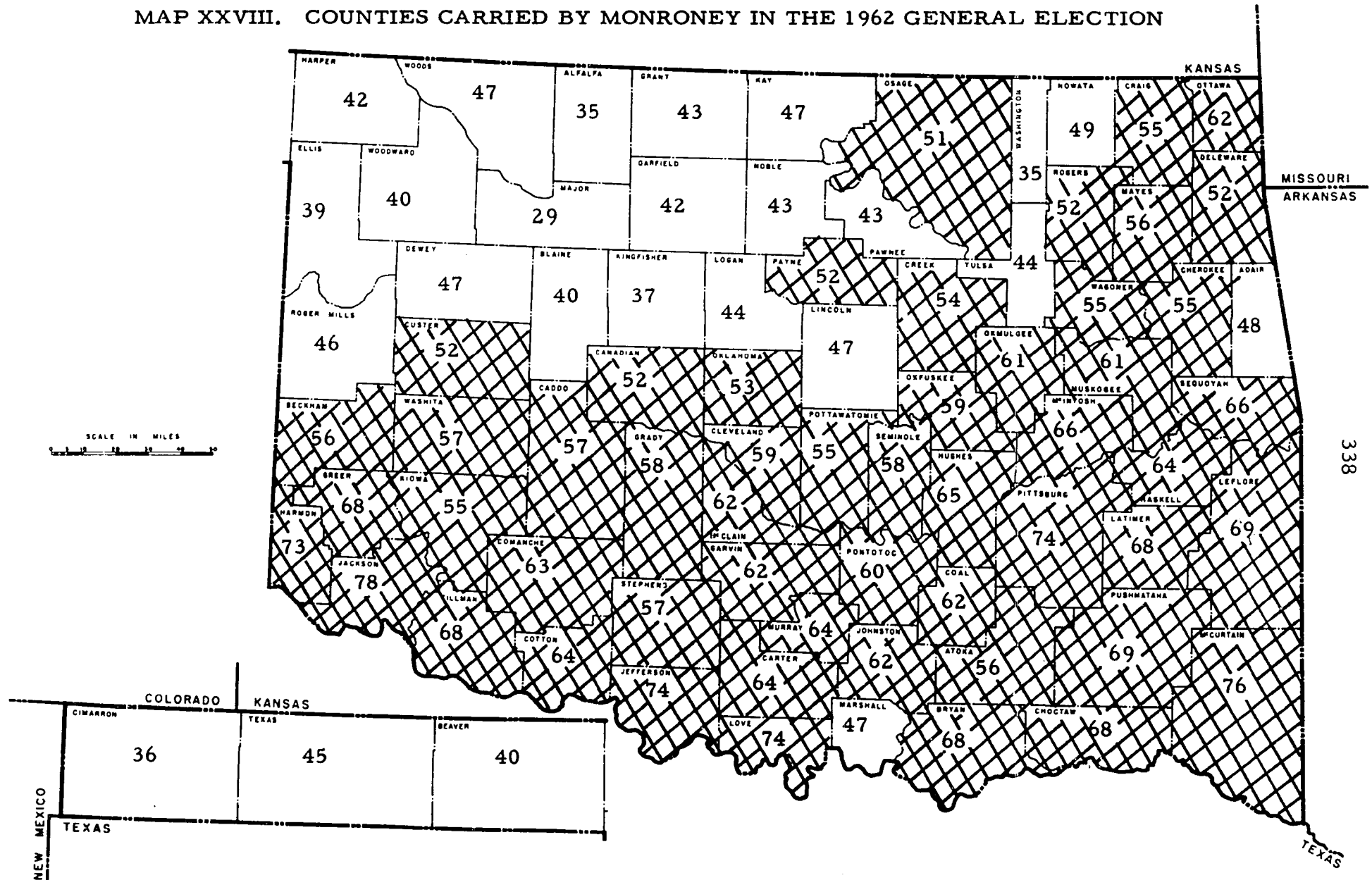
Nor was there much variation in the percentages by which he trailed his Democratic colleagues in the urban and rural areas. In the twelve most populous counties Atkinson's vote averaged 9.3 per cent below Monroney's and 8.9 per cent below Winters'. In the twenty least populous counties, his percentage averaged 7.1 per cent below Monroney's and 12.3 per cent below Winters'.

Maps XXVII, XXVIII, and XXIX show the counties carried by Atkinson, Monroney, and Winters and the percentage of the vote which the three candidates received in each county. Map XXVII shows that Atkinson carried only three of the twenty-four swing counties, Cherokee, Delaware, and Ottawa, and that he lost four strongly Democratic counties. Monroney carried sixteen of the twenty-four swing counties and Winters eighteen; Winters carried all the thirty-seven strongly Democratic counties and Monroney lost only Marshall county.

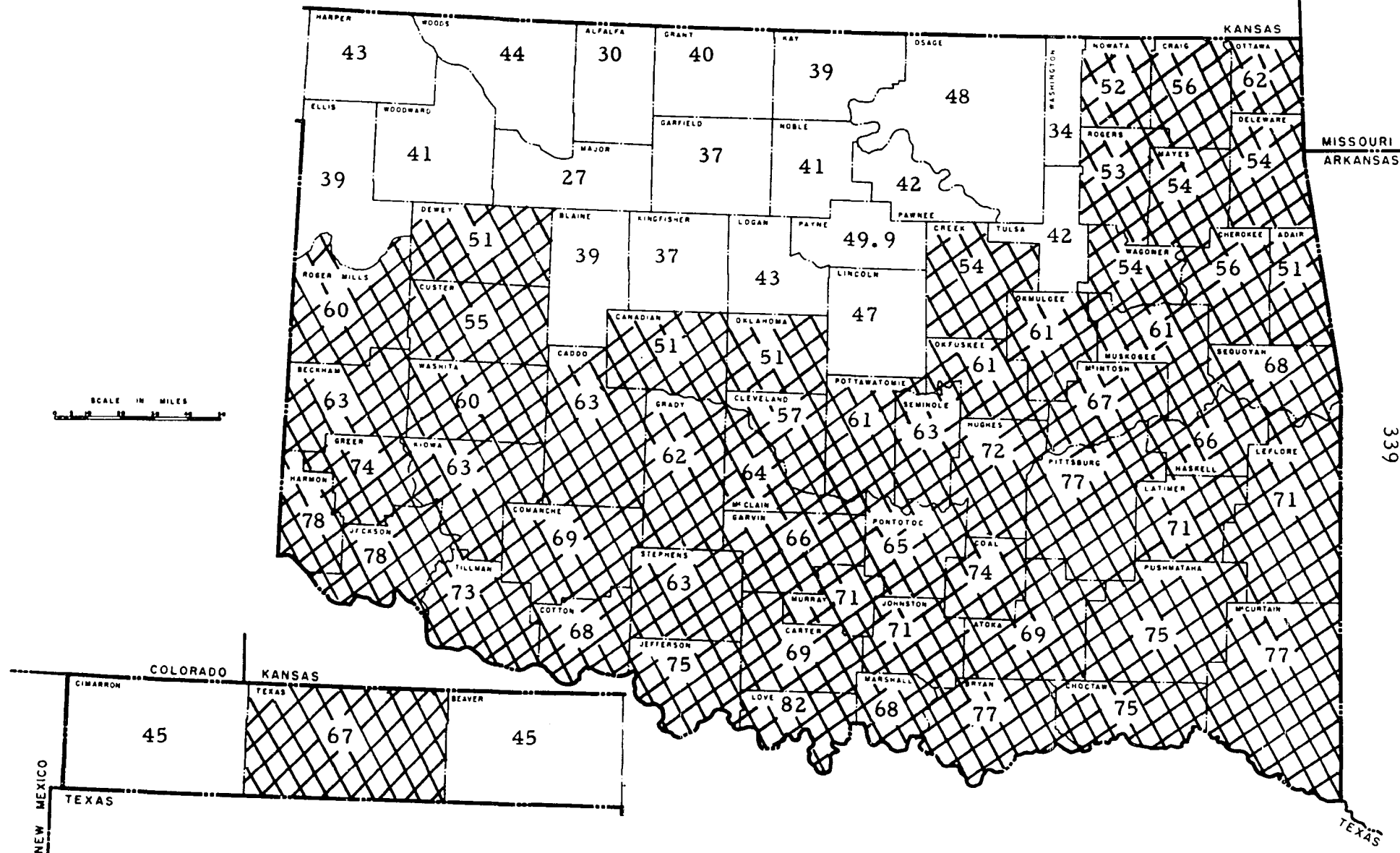
MAP XXVII. COUNTIES CARRIED BY ATKINSON IN THE 1962 GENERAL ELECTION



MAP XXVIII. COUNTIES CARRIED BY MONRONEY IN THE 1962 GENERAL ELECTION



MAP XXIX. COUNTIES CARRIED BY LEO WINTERS IN THE 1962 GENERAL ELECTION



Democratic Switch Voting More Significant
Than Republican New Voters

Of the 369,000 switch votes required to convert a 1958 Democratic gubernatorial plurality of 292,000 into a 1962 Republican plurality of 77,000, the Republican counties contributed slightly more than half, the Democratic counties approximately one-third, and Oklahoma county the remaining one-sixth, as shown by the data in Table 43. In assessing this switch voting, it will be recalled that the more populous Republican counties returned heavy majorities for Edmondson in 1958; hence, in the light of the heavy voting there for reform candidate Bellmon in 1962, the switch voting in the more populous Republican counties was certain to be heavy.

TABLE 43.--Number and percentage of switch votes cast by the Republican and Democratic counties in 1962 as compared with 1958

	1958 Pluralities	1962 Pluralities	Number of Switch Votes	Pct. of Total
Republican counties	78,427 D	72,814 R	151,241	40.9
Republican-oriented	28,723 D	11,273 R	39,996	10.8
Democratic-oriented	35,068 D	4,175 R	39,243	10.6
Democratic counties	113,351 D	32,634 D	80,717	21.9
Oklahoma county	36,460 D	21,691 R	58,151	15.7

The importance of Democratic switch voting to Bellmon's victory may be pointed up by this one fact: if Atkinson had received the 113,351 plurality in the thirty-seven strongly Democratic counties that Edmondson received in 1958, he would have won by more than 3,000 votes.

Bellmon's victory has been attributed by some observers to a large turnout of "new voters" in the more populous Republican areas of

the state. Total voter turnout did increase by 170,884 over that of 1958, but exactly half the increase took place in the Democratic counties, 30 per cent in Oklahoma county, and only 20 per cent in the Republican counties, as shown by Table 44.

TABLE 44.--Republican counties' increase in turnout in 1962 over 1958 compared with that in the Democratic counties

	1958 Turnout	1962 Turnout	Increase	Pct. of Total
Republican counties	181,027	202,037	21,010	12.3
Republican-oriented	59,145	72,562	13,417	7.9
Democratic-oriented	67,645	93,348	25,703	15.0
Democratic counties	154,101	213,885	59,784	35.0
Oklahoma county	76,961	127,931	50,970	29.8
	<u>538,879</u>	<u>709,763</u>	<u>170,884</u>	

There was a substantial turnout of new voters in Oklahoma county. But the increase over 1958 was quite small in the more populous Republican counties: 5,830 in Tulsa county, 2,764 in Garfield, 1,595 in Kay, and 3,979 in Washington.

A "Good Government" Bloc?

One reason for the smaller increase in turnout in the north central counties than in the southern Democratic counties in 1962 appears to be that the former were more motivated to vote in 1958, when Edmondson ran, than the latter. The smaller turnout in the Democratic counties in 1958 might be explained partially by the fact that the contest did not appear to be a close one and hence excited less interest; but also Edmondson's pledge to "clean out the Old Guard" was not popular with

some Gary supporters, and some of these undoubtedly stayed home in 1958.

Therefore, if there has been a temporary bloc of "good government" voters who voted for Edmondson in 1958 and for Bellmon in 1962, for the same reasons, it appears that large numbers of them are residents of the north central counties. For, with very little increase in turnout-- indicating that largely the same persons voted there in 1958 and 1962-- the voters of the north central area gave quite comparable majorities to both Edmondson and Bellmon, as shown by the following vote percentage figures:

	Democratic Pct., 1958	Republican Pct., 1962
Garfield	64.0	71.8
Grant	64.2	69.6
Kay	70.5	67.6
Logan	64.0	66.2
Noble	64.1	70.7
Pawnee	65.0	64.6
Tulsa	74.2	65.3
Washington	70.5	69.2

To the voters in the north central Republican counties might be added those in the swing counties. For the voters in twenty-one of the twenty-four swing counties returned majorities for Edmondson in 1958 and for Bellmon in 1962, and the sizes of the majorities for the two candidates of opposite parties were quite comparable in such counties as Canadian, Cimarron, Dewey, Lincoln, Payne, and Texas.

Bellmon's Popularity in the Urban and Rural Areas Was About Equal

The voting results in thirty-one representative counties of varying sizes and locations were examined to try to determine Bellmon's relative popularity in the urban and rural areas. The voting in the

principal towns and cities of each of these counties was separated from that in the smaller towns and rural precincts, the percentage of the urban and rural vote for Bellmon in each county was computed, and then an average was taken for all the Republican, Democratic, and swing counties. The results are shown in Table 45, with the number of counties examined given in parentheses.

TABLE 45.--Percentage of the urban and rural vote received by Bellmon in thirty-one Democratic, Republican, and swing counties

	Urban Pct.	Rural Pct.
Republican counties (7)	69.3	70.7
Republican-oriented (5)	57.0	60.3
Democratic-oriented (5)	49.2	56.7
Democratic counties (14)	47.0	44.6

The data show a disparity of less than three per cent in all but the Democratic swing counties, where Bellmon was more popular in the rural areas.

Since the disaffection with Atkinson's candidacy was rather general throughout the state, it follows that support for Bellmon was quite general. Bellmon's victory therefore cannot be termed a pre-dominantly urban victory. Oklahoma and Tulsa counties combined to contribute nearly 35 per cent of his total vote and 36.6 per cent of the switch votes required to convert the 1958 Democratic plurality into the 1962 Republican plurality. This corresponds closely to the voting strength of these two counties with respect to that of the remainder of the state. When the counties are ranked in order according to the highest percentage of Republican vote cast in the 1962 gubernatorial election, it is found that ten of the top twelve counties are those with populations of less

than fourteen thousand. These counties are, in order of the highest Republican vote cast: Major, Alfalfa, Ellis, Kingfisher, Woodward, Garfield, Cimarron, Noble, Blaine, Grant, Harper, and Washington.

The Normally Expected Democratic Vote
and Voter Turnout

Another useful tool for analyzing the voting results is to construct an approximation of the vote which the 1962 gubernatorial candidates normally could have expected to receive in 1962, then to note the deviations from it. As explained earlier, the normally expected vote for the 1962 nominee was computed on the basis of the average Democratic percentage of the vote cast in each county from 1942 through 1954 and upon the basis of the voter turnout in each county in the relatively good Republican year of 1950 and the good Democratic year of 1954.

These computations showed that the Democratic nominee normally could have expected to receive 53.38 per cent of the total vote in 1962, provided that the short-term influences bearing upon the election did not favor the Democratic or Republican candidate to any great degree. It is interesting to recall that Democrat Monroney received 53.2 per cent of the vote and Democrat Winters received 53.7 per cent.

Actually, Atkinson received 44.4 per cent of the vote, or approximately 9 per cent below normal expectations based upon past voting records. Voter turnout increased by 66,262 over the average turnouts for 1950 and 1954. Thus two facts stand out from a comparison of the normally expected Democratic vote and the voter turnout with the actual vote and actual turnout: (1) the short-term influences in 1962

were favorable to the Republican candidate and (2) a fairly substantial body of new voters cast ballots in 1962; but here again, when 1962 voter turnout is compared with that of the average for the years 1950 and 1954, the biggest increases occurred in the Democratic counties and in Oklahoma county.

The normally expected Democratic vote.--Table 46 contrasts the normally expected Democratic vote with the actual Democratic vote in the various categories of counties, and the data confirm previous observations that disaffection with the Atkinson candidacy was quite general throughout the state.

TABLE 46.--The normally expected Democratic vote contrasted with the actual Democratic vote

	Expected Vote	Actual Vote	Per Cent Decrease
Republican counties	72,371	64,328	11.1
Republican-oriented	33,486	30,525	8.8
Democratic-oriented	48,092	44,484	7.5
Democratic counties	134,971	123,241	8.7
Oklahoma county	54,595	52,779	3.3

The average percentage decrease in the Democratic vote below normal expectations approximates the nine per cent decrease by which Atkinson trailed the Democratic ticket.

The Democratic vote held up best in Oklahoma county. When this is related to the fact that Oklahoma county had a large increase in voter turnout over normal expectations and that Bellmon carried Oklahoma county by more than 21,000 votes, it shows that a substantial number of new voters cast Republican ballots there.

The Democratic vote fell 30 per cent or more below normal expectations in the following counties: Marshall, 52.6; Cimarron, 42.3; Harper, 41.7; Beaver, 36.6; Ellis, 33.9; and Texas, 30. Except for Marshall county, where the Gary influence predominated, these are all rural, far western counties. All adjoin one or more other states; Cimarron county adjoins four and the other Panhandle counties two. In addition to other reasons already given for the disaffection with the Atkinson candidacy, it should be noted that Atkinson's proposed sales tax increase was especially unpopular in counties that adjoined other states where the sales tax was less than three per cent. Also, most of the western Oklahoma counties are among those that receive the least return in welfare expenditures in proportion to the amount of sales taxes paid into the welfare fund. There was some Gary influence throughout western Oklahoma, for that section voted almost solidly for him in the Democratic primary and runoff; it will be recalled that western Oklahoma is almost entirely rural. The director of Oklahomans for Local Government was a resident of Woodward county.

The number of Democratic votes cast exceeded normal expectations in only fourteen counties, ten of which were eastern counties. These counties, and the percentage by which the vote in each exceeded the number expected on the basis of past voting records and past voter turnout, were: Cleveland, 13.3 per cent; Greer, 11.9; McIntosh, 8.3; Muskogee, 8.2; Okfuskee, 6.1; Ottawa, 5.7; Okmulgee, 5.4; Pittsburg, 5.4; Stephens, 5.0; Wagoner, 4.0; Hughes, 3.4; Nowata, 2.9; Harmon, 1.8; and Cherokee, 1.0. The fact that the size of the Democratic vote exceeded normal expectations in these counties does not mean that Atkinson carried all of

them; in some cases voter turnout increased significantly and most of the new voters were Republicans, as was the case with Oklahoma county. However, these were the counties in which the Democratic vote held up best in relation to past voting records. Eight of the fourteen counties might be classified as northeastern, the section of the state where the Cary influence was weakest. Two others, Greer and Harmon, are southwestern counties where welfare expenditures are relatively high.

Normally expected voter turnout.--Table 47 contrasts the normally expected turnout with the actual turnouts in the various categories of counties. It shows that Atkinson's defeat cannot be attributed to a heavy turnout in the Republican counties and to the residents of the Democratic counties staying at home, for the largest increases over normal expectations were in Oklahoma county and in the Democratic counties.

TABLE 47.--Normally expected voter turnout contrasted with the actual 1962 voter turnout

	Expected Turnout	Actual Turnout	Per Cent Increase
Republican counties	189,952	202,037	6.4
Republican-oriented	68,604	72,562	5.8
Democratic-oriented	84,350	93,348	10.7
Democratic counties	191,840	213,885	11.5
Oklahoma county	108,755	127,931	17.6

Voter turnout increased by 20 per cent or more above the 1950 and 1954 averages in these thirteen counties: Cleveland, 38.6; Stephens, 36.1; Greer, 33.8; Harmon, 30.3; Roger Mills, 30.0; Major, 25.0; Beckham, 24.4; Pontotoc, 23.1; Garvin, 22.4; Carter, 22.1; Alfalfa, 21.1; Hughes, 20.5; and Muskogee, 20.0. Ten of these thirteen counties are

strongly Democratic counties, where the general election vote traditionally declines most sharply below the vote cast in the primaries. The feeling that the gubernatorial contest would be close, increased organizational activity by both parties, and the desire of some Gary supporters to cast an anti-Atkinson vote undoubtedly contributed to the increased turnout in these ten counties.

The only counties in which the voter turnout fell below normal expectations were: Jackson, 17.7 per cent; Harper, 14.5; Pawnee, 13.2; Creek, 12.6; Sequoyah, 6.4; Bryan, 5.1; Comanche, 4.5; Blaine, 2.3; and Grant, Ottawa, and Atoka, less than 1 per cent. Approximately half these counties are Democratic and half Republican. The two Democratic counties of Jackson and Comanche have had notoriously low voter turnout records because of their large military and transient populations. No particular pattern emerges to explain why turnout was relatively lower in this group of counties; possibly less effective organizational work may account for some of it.

At any rate, it can be said that the size and location of voter turnout in 1962 were not critically unfavorable to Atkinson.

The Behavior of the Voting Blocs and Interest Groups

Retail Merchants Association and Farm Bureau leaders were among those supporting Bellmon in 1962. The majority of the leaders of the school, welfare, and labor blocs and of the Rural Electric Cooperative Association were friendly to Atkinson.

The claims upon the members of most groups were contradictory in 1962, and hence their votes were divided. For example, though Atkinson's

position on the proposed right to work law was more to labor's liking than Bellmon's, labor union members had long been schooled to oppose the sales tax. And though Atkinson made a strong appeal to the welfare bloc with his promise to increase old age assistance checks, Bellmon was able to score some telling points with this group--especially the housewives--by pointing out how much of a bite the sales tax increase would take out of their limited, fixed incomes.

The welfare bloc.--Atkinson carried twenty-four of the twenty-nine strongest welfare counties, sixteen by majorities of 60 per cent or more. Of the seventeen counties which are both strong welfare counties and where median family incomes are below \$3,000 a year, Atkinson carried all but two. But, though Atkinson made a good showing in the welfare counties, Bellmon cut into that vote to a much greater extent than Republican candidates usually do. For example, Bellmon received 46.9 per cent of the vote in Atoka county, 44.7 per cent in Johnston, and 44.2 per cent in Murray. The Gary influence was a factor in this voting.

The Little Dixie vote.--There is much interest in the voting of the southeastern counties because they constitute such a Democratic stronghold. In 1962 the thirteen counties in the third congressional district cast about 5,000 fewer Democratic votes and 10,000 more Republican votes than their average since 1950, as shown by the following figures:

	1950	1954	1958	1962
Democratic votes	48,916	53,816	44,188	41,995
Republican votes	17,672	13,278	4,230	26,065
Republican per cent	26.5	19.8	8.7	38.3

It is seen that the Little Dixie counties move with the sentiment in the

remainder of the state to a large extent. The Republican percentage of the vote rose substantially in the good Republican years of 1950 and 1962 and declined in the good Democratic years of 1954 and 1958. The large Democratic vote in 1954 is attributable to the fact that Gary was the nominee.

The labor vote.--This vote was so sharply divided in the general election that labor leaders seemed reluctant to discuss the subject more than a year after the election. A sampling of twenty-seven labor precincts in Oklahoma City, Tulsa, and Muskogee indicates that Bellmon may even have received a majority of the labor vote. The results were as follows, with the number of precincts examined in each city given in parentheses:

	Bellmon	Atkinson
Oklahoma City (14)	3,319	2,265
Tulsa (8)	1,185	1,044
Muskogee (5)	762	861
	<u>5,266</u>	<u>4,170</u>

The voting in the labor precincts corresponded very closely to that in the county as a whole in Oklahoma City and Muskogee. In Tulsa the vote in the labor precincts was approximately 12 per cent less Republican than the vote in Tulsa county as a whole.

The Negro vote.--Atkinson received 60.2 per cent of the vote in forty-one Negro precincts in these five cities: Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Muskogee, Enid, and Lawton. The results are given below, with the number of precincts examined in each city given in parentheses. The vote appears to correspond with results found in other studies, which show that the majority of Negroes have been voting Democratic since the days of Roosevelt.

	Bellmon	Atkinson
Oklahoma City (15)	1,891	2,494
Tulsa (14)	1,114	1,956
Muskogee (7)	536	807
Enid (3)	327	280
Lawton (2)	125	491
	<u>3,993</u>	<u>6,028</u>

The school bloc.--Bellmon received 53.6 per cent of the slightly more than three thousand votes cast in the eight precincts in Norman and Stillwater where University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University faculty concentrations are heaviest. The voting results in four precincts in each of these cities were:

	Bellmon	Atkinson
Norman	891	886
Stillwater	766	547

The fact that Bellmon polled a larger vote in Stillwater than in Norman is attributable in part to the fact that he is an Oklahoma State University graduate and in part to the fact that Payne county has been a Republican-oriented county while Cleveland county has been Democratic-oriented.

While these figures are far from adequate to pinpoint the division of the school bloc vote, they provide one indication that it probably was sharply divided. Top Republican campaign aides said after the election they felt that Bellmon received a substantial portion of the school vote; they based this upon the fact that a number of teachers worked actively for Bellmon throughout the state and that a number of others were seen at Bellmon rallies.

CHAPTER XVI

THE PRESENT STATUS OF OKLAHOMA POLITICS

Oklahoma has had a combination of unusual gubernatorial elections in 1958 and 1962: the greatest Democratic victory in the state's history in 1958 was followed by the election of the state's first Republican governor in 1962. In addition, the Republican percentage of the vote in the major races has been appreciably higher since 1942 and there have been three successive Republican presidential victories in Oklahoma since 1952. Offsetting these seeming trends in favor of the Republican party is the fact that increases in the number of registered Republican voters have been minimal, participation in Republican primaries currently is only twelve per cent of that in the Democratic primaries, Republicans have had only fifteen per cent of the seats in the lower house of the state legislature in recent years, no Republican has been elected to a secondary state office in a contested race since 1928, and the number of elected Republican county officials has been declining since 1952.

Various theories have been advanced to explain the one gubernatorial and three presidential victories registered by Republicans since 1950. It has been suggested that a "non-party vote" is developing in the state, that an "end of ideology" in political party operations has left little basis for distinguishing between the parties, or that--especially with reference to the gubernatorial elections--a "good govern-

ment bloc" has come into being and that its members are ignoring party lines in favor of electing officials who will clean up the state government.

The non-party vote concept appears contrary to the recent findings of the University of Michigan Survey Research Center, which found from extensive national surveys that political party affiliation still is the single most important determinant of the vote. Even among those who styled themselves as Independents, it was found that only a tiny fraction did not feel closer to one political party than to the other. This concept was advanced by Dr. Harry Holloway of the University of Oklahoma.

The end of ideology concept was suggested as a possible explanation of recent political developments in Oklahoma Votes, 1907-1962, a publication of the Bureau of Government Research of the University of Oklahoma. It was said;¹

. . . the sweeping Democratic victory in the governor's race of 1958, in the midst of recent Republican successes, seems to strengthen the opinion that in contemporary political contests electoral success is based on issues which do not rest upon traditionally Democratic and Republican points of view. If this pattern of party 'flip-flops' continues (a pattern which has been thought to indicate 'the end of ideology'--meaning party ideology) it may presage a future of more competitive elections, but an era not encompassed within the realm of party systems.

Attachment to a political party may rest upon bases other than subscribing to its principles. In fact, the Michigan Research Center found that only ten per cent or less of the electorate has a coherent political philosophy, plus the interest or capacity to relate a personal philosophy to the positions of the political parties.² To the great mass of

¹University of Oklahoma Bureau, op. cit., p. 53.

²Campbell, The American Voter, pp. 216-217.

politically apathetic or less well informed persons, belonging to a political party is more akin to belonging to a social group, around which one builds up in-group and out-group feelings, than an exercise in logic. Moreover, "there is psychological economy in depending upon the party as an organizing principle;"³ it requires much less effort to give allegiance to a political party and to assume that its principles are correct than to give serious consideration to party differences--or the lack of them.

The idea that a "good government bloc" of voters has come into being in Oklahoma was suggested editorially by the Oklahoma City Times shortly before the 1962 election:⁴

One can build a case for the idea that recent elections have been decided by a disorganized anti-Old Guard bloc of voters. This includes not only progressives and idealists but 'againers.'

This bloc helped give J. Howard Edmondson his smashing majorities four years ago, split the vote badly in this year's first Democratic primary to allow Raymond Gary a commanding lead, and then turned around and knocked him off in the runoff primary to give Atkinson the nomination.

Some credence must be given to the view that a so-called "good government bloc" contributed heavily to the results of the 1958 and 1962 gubernatorial elections, in view of the imposing list of grievances detailed in Chapter X and the data in Chapter XV showing that comparable majorities were returned for Edmondson and Bellmon in a number of counties where the voter turnout varied little as between 1958 and 1962. That a good government appeal can create a strong political tide in Oklahoma seems indicated by

³Ibid., p. 328.

⁴Oklahoma City Times, September 12, 1962.

the fact that the two largest gubernatorial majorities in the state's history have been given in reaction to the extravagance or "politics" of previous administrations: the 70 per cent majority given to Leon Phillips in 1938 and the 74.1 per cent majority given to Edmondson in 1958. Phillips offered economy and retrenchment following the extravagance of the Marland administration and the political manipulations of some of Marland's aides. Edmondson promised to clean out the Old Guard following the "politics" of the 1950's. Bellmon promised to eliminate waste, graft, and corruption from state government. However, this so-called good government bloc does not seem destined to become any sort of permanent force in Oklahoma politics. Experience seems to have shown that "mismanagement and corruption are not issues that are easily kept alive after a change in the control of the government."⁵

The approach to the understanding of the 1962 gubernatorial election in this study has been to present first the long-term partisan division of the vote, which has been favorable to the Democrats, and then to present the short-term influences that deflected the voting from normal expectations in 1962. On the basis of past voting records, it was shown that the Democratic nominee for governor normally could have expected to receive 53.38 per cent of the vote in 1962. Earlier it was shown that Democratic candidates for the secondary state offices had been receiving approximately 60 per cent of the vote through the years.

The major departures from normal expectations in 1962 were that

⁵Campbell, The American Voter, p. 50.

the Democratic gubernatorial nominee received only 44.4 per cent of the vote, that the Democratic nominee for state treasurer received only 51.4 per cent, and that the Democratic nominee for lieutenant governor received 53.7 per cent. Other Democratic candidates for the secondary state offices received from 56.3 to 61.9 per cent of the vote. The Democratic nominee for secretary of state polled 56.3 per cent; for attorney general, 57.3; for commissioner of charities and corrections, 56.4; for commissioner of insurance, 61.9; for corporation commissioner, 58.4; and for justice of the state supreme court, 58.3.

In the state treasurer's race a fairly strong Republican candidate was pitted against a rather vulnerable Democrat. Republican nominee Tom R. Moore received considerable publicity earlier in the year when he considered making the race for governor. Democratic nominee Cowboy Pink Williams was decisively defeated in the 1958 Democratic runoff primary by George Nigh in another of the fresh breeze-Old Guard contests. In the lieutenant governor's contest Dale J. Briggs, a Tulsa attorney who had been prominent in the fight for constitutional reapportionment of the state legislature, put on a much more spirited campaign in 1962 than has been customary for Republican candidates for secondary state offices.

The principal short-term influences that led to Bellmon's victory and to Atkinson's defeat, as found in this study, were these:

- 1) Dissatisfaction with Democratic management of state affairs was deep and widespread, resulting from an accumulation of grievances that dated particularly from 1950. These grievances included the "politics" involved in the Selected Investments case, the Wagoner county absentee

ballot and relief check scandals, the Tulsa bypass case, and the wrangling, patronage-seeking sessions of the state legislature. In the more populous areas the demand for reform was accompanied by a demand for legislative reapportionment. This dissatisfaction was especially deep in the north central counties and in a number of the swing counties, giving rise to what may be called a "good government bloc" of voters, a temporary and unorganized segment of the electorate that returned comparable majorities for the Democratic reform candidate in 1958 and the Republican reform candidate in 1962. To them, for the time being at least, reform of state government appeared to be more important than party affiliation. Prior to the Bellmon election, this dissatisfaction was expressed in the election of Edmondson in 1958 and in the vote against Gary in the 1962 Democratic primaries. The Anybody But Gary candidates made their best showings in the north central and northeastern counties in the 1962 Democratic primaries. But, although this dissatisfaction was more pronounced in the Republican areas of the state than in the Democratic areas, as would be expected, it was not confined wholly to them. This is evidenced by Atkinson's strong showing throughout the state in the 1962 runoff.

2) The foregoing coincided with another form of dissatisfaction that was more pronounced in the rural Democratic areas: a deep dissatisfaction with the Edmondson administration and something less than general approval of the national Kennedy administration. These grievances dated from 1959, when Edmondson made known that his aides would circulate three initiative petitions calling for legislative reapportionment, curbing the powers of the county commissioners, and insulating the Highway Commission

from the influence of the governor. The feeling about legislative reapportionment in these counties was of course the opposite of that in the more populous north central counties, and the feeling was equally strong in both areas. Prior to the Bellmon election this dissatisfaction was expressed through formation of the Oklahomans for Local Government organization to fight the Edmondson petitions and through stripping Edmondson of virtually all control over the Democratic party. The effect of the fight over the initiative petitions was to solidify the rural Democrats in their opposition to the Edmondson administration, of increasing Gary's popularity in the rural areas, and of creating a deep split between the Edmondson and Gary partisans. As Gary was the symbol of the Old Guard in some parts of the state, in the rural Democratic areas he was a symbol of "fair representation" and a "fair share" of highways for the rural areas. To some of these Democrats the principles of Oklahomans for Local Government, their opposition to Edmondson, and their sympathy for Gary were more important than their party affiliations in the 1962 election.

3) Bellmon was the "right man at the right time" for the Republicans in 1962, in that he had the capacity and the personality that permitted him to turn both these tides of dissatisfaction in his favor. In the northern areas he made himself the symbol of opposition to the Old Guard; he and the Republican party were on record in favor of constitutional reapportionment of the state legislature, and his promise to hold the line on taxes by eliminating waste, graft, and corruption from state government were highly popular there. In the rural Democratic areas he was "the country boy from Noble county" running against a multimillionaire

who demonstrated that he did not understand the problems of the common folks when he suggested a sales tax increase. In these areas he also fanned the anti-Edmondson and anti-Kennedy fires. Since there was nothing to choose between the Atkinson and Bellmon stands on legislative reapportionment, the Democrats were estopped from making Bellmon's stand on reapportionment an issue in the rural areas. Since Atkinson needed all the help he could get from Gary supporters, he was estopped from continuing his anti-Gary campaign into the general election. And, since Atkinson needed Edmondson's support in the northern areas, he was similarly estopped from attacking the Edmondson administration. Hence the "against" vote went to Bellmon in 1962, both in the northern and southern areas. Atkinson, a relatively poor campaigner, was left with his promise to improve the state's financial position and to launch Oklahoma into an era of industrial growth.

4) Republican voting has been higher in Oklahoma since 1942, stemming in part from a not too solidly based conservative trend that is related to national trends and developments. There was dissatisfaction with the way the Allied war effort was going in 1942, there was resistance to continued price controls in 1946, and then came the highly unpopular Korean war in 1950 and the ensuing aggravation of the nation's inflation. Not only was the not-too-Republican military hero Eisenhower highly popular in Oklahoma, but the 1952 Republican issues of Korea, corruption in national government, and too much taxing-spending struck a responsive chord. Then in 1960 came the Democratic party's second Catholic nominee and a third successive Republican presidential victory. These national trends and developments, coupled with the dissatisfactions as to Oklahoma affairs, have reduced the Democratic margin of superiority

in the gubernatorial races to 55 per cent in the period since 1942. The three Republican presidential victories since 1952, especially the Kennedy-Nixon contest, undoubtedly introduced the idea of split-ticket voting to some die-hard Democrats. In sum, the major trend in Oklahoma politics since 1942 has been somewhat more favorable to the Republicans than to the Democrats.

5) As to candidate personalities, Bellmon struck the more responsive chord with the electorate. He possessed the political assets of the two previous governors, but at the same time he provided a contrast to both of them in the areas of their greatest political liabilities. Like Gary, he was popular in the rural areas, but unlike him he was not identified with the Old Guard; he was able to establish himself as a relative "fresh breeze" in Oklahoma politics because he had virtually no political scars. Like Edmondson, he was a reform candidate who was popular in the more populous areas, but unlike him he was popular in the rural areas; where the controversial outgoing governor was young, urbane, not too accessible to rural legislators, but without Old Guard connections, Bellmon was not too young, earthy, easily met, at home with the rural folks, and without either Old Guard or New Guard connections. As to Atkinson, the pro-Atkinson Tulsa World said of him that "many people get the impression that he lacks warmth" and that "he still is not able to project to the crowds like Gary." Though many who were close to him saw him as a man of warmth and charm, he was unable to project these qualities to many of his audiences. He emerged from the 1958 gubernatorial political campaign badly defeated and with a relatively poor political image, he altered his 1962 platform and appeal considerably from that of 1958, and he appeared

to change his position on two of the more important issues in the 1962 general election campaign. Bellmon led the eight Republican candidates for secondary state offices by an average of 11.9 per cent, while Atkinson trailed the eight Democratic candidates by an average of 12.3 per cent.

6) As to the campaign issues, Bellmon was swimming with the tide of public sentiment when he contended that state government could be operated on existing revenues if waste, graft, and corruption were eliminated. Taking into account that there was a rather general lack of confidence in 1962 in the state agencies that appropriate and spend the state's tax money and that a tax increase never is entirely welcome, the burden of proof that a "penny increase" in the state sales tax was wise or essential definitely was upon Atkinson. Bellmon not only created doubt that a tax increase was needed, but he supplied more examples of Democratic mismanagement during the campaign to dramatize his position on this issue. This not only further established Bellmon as the "fresh breeze" and as the man who will "give us our money's worth," but it also lent substance to his contention that a more competitive political system would bring many advantages to Oklahoma. Atkinson, on the other hand, was made to suffer the brunt of all the ills that flowed from the Democrats' fifty-five-year control of the statehouse, a disadvantage that was less onerous upon Senator Monroney and the candidates for the secondary offices. Such "against" votes often are directed at the office of the governor. The Democrats tried to overcome the natural opposition to the sales tax increase by citing to the important voting blocs the advantages that would accrue to them from the approximate \$30,000,000 annual increase in state

revenues that the tax increase would produce. But the claims upon the members of most of the voting blocs were contradictory and their votes were sharply divided. To many voters subjected to contradictory claims, Bellmon's personality and his good government appeal probably tipped the scales in his favor.

7) Organizationally, the Republicans were much stronger and the Democrats weaker than in previous years. As state chairman of the Republican party from 1960 until 1962, Bellmon had reorganized and revitalized the party. He had infused much new and younger blood into the organization, eradicated some of the defeatist attitude that had beset some of the old hands in the party, made the party somewhat less dependent financially upon the Tulsa group that had dominated the party for so many years, and by his own personality had generated much enthusiasm for his candidacy among his followers. Republican party morale generally was high in the 1962 campaign, while that of the Democratic party was not too high. The Democratic party had suffered a series of party splits of varying degrees of intensity since 1950, culminating in the serious urban-rural split of 1959 and 1960. Atkinson himself failed to generate any surge of enthusiasm for his candidacy among the Democrats, and his proposed sales tax increase cost him the all-out support of many Democratic state legislators and "took the wind out of the sails" of many Democratic precinct workers. In the words of Democratic State Chairman Gene McGill following the election, "When the precinct workers heard every third or fourth person they called upon say they would not vote for a candidate who wanted to raise taxes, it took the wind out of their sails."⁶ The state legislators hesitated

⁶Interview with Gene McGill, 1962 state chairman of the Democratic party, November 23, 1962.

to identify themselves too closely with the head of the ticket because they felt that the tax increase was unpopular in their districts.

These were the principal reasons for the Bellmon victory and the Atkinson defeat, as found in this study.

The major question remaining is: What do the Bellmon victory and the three recent Republican presidential victories signify as to the future of Oklahoma politics?

Three possible answers suggest themselves: (1) a major voting realignment is taking place in Oklahoma, with more voters becoming Republican; (2) party barriers or loyalties are breaking down, with more voters becoming political independents; or (3) there have been specific causes that motivated many Oklahoma Democrats to switch their votes in these four elections; with these causes removed, the normal Democratic majority will reassert itself.

As to a voter realignment, unquestionably there has been a gnawing away at the margin of Democratic superiority in Oklahoma since 1942, the result of a conservative trend based in large part upon resistance to heavier taxes and inflation and upon frustrations over the Korean war and the cold war. However, according to the numerous indices employed in Chapter IV, Oklahoma still must be classified as a "one-party predominant state" or as a "modified one-party state." Recent election results are more confusing than enlightening with respect to the question of voter realignment. In the senatorial races since 1950, Republican strength appears to have levelled off at 44 per cent of the vote; Republican senatorial candidates received 45.1 per cent in 1950, 43.6 in 1954, 44.6 in 1956, and 44.6 in 1960. In the presidential races, Republican nominees have received an average of 56.2 per cent in the

three contests since 1952. But, sandwiched between these Republican presidential victories were two resounding Democratic gubernatorial victories: Gary received a 58.6 per cent majority in 1954 and Edmondson a 74.1 per cent majority in 1958.

It is these contradictory election results that apparently has given rise to the thesis that party barriers or loyalties are breaking down. It is not that thousands of Democrats have switched their votes to Republican candidates while retaining their Democratic loyalties, according to this thesis; rather, many voters have become political independents or political neutrals and their vote is being determined by other than party considerations. A partial answer to this thesis was given earlier in the chapter. A further answer is that, when each of the four recent Republican victories is analyzed, specific causes that motivated thousands of Democrats to switch their votes can be found.

The University of Michigan Survey Research Center found that the 1952 and 1956 Republican presidential victories constituted "deviating elections" for the nation as a whole. A "deviating election" was defined as one in which a sufficient number of voters ignore their normal party allegiances temporarily to elect the candidate of the opposing party. Such an election is unlike a "realigning election," in which the popular feeling associated with the election is so intense as to cause a change in the basic allegiances of a portion of the electorate.⁷ The Research Center found that a majority of the national electorate was Democratic in its party allegiance in 1952 and remained so through both Eisenhower

⁷Campbell, The American Voter, pp. 531-534.

terms. The Center's writers reported:⁸

General Eisenhower attracted the votes of several million people from the ranks of the Democrats and the young and previously inactive voters without thereby effecting any substantial reorientation in their attitudes regarding parties, and with only partial agreement from them with the Republican position on issues. . . .

It was found that many voters did not see Eisenhower as a "real Republican," but rather as a candidate who was above political parties. Only five per cent of the national sample of persons interviewed by the Research Center said they liked Ike because he was a Republican; they liked Ike primarily because they thought that he, personally, could do something about the unpopular Korean war in particular and about the cold war in general.⁹ The Democratic congressional victories from 1954 through 1960 indicate further that the electorate was voting for Eisenhower personally and not for the Republican party and its principles in the 1950's. This was the case nationally, and there is little reason to doubt that it also was the case in Oklahoma.

But Eisenhower was elected by a Democratic switch vote, not by a so-called non-party vote, according to the Research Center. The Center found that the nation's normal Democratic majority reasserted itself by electing John F. Kennedy in 1960. This was termed a "reinstating election," defined as an election in which the political party enjoying a majority of party identifiers returns to power.¹⁰ That a majority of the national electorate retained its Democratic allegiance through the Eisenhower terms is shown by the fact that more than fifty per cent of the national sample of persons interviewed by the Center prior to the

⁸Campbell, The Voter Decides, p. 174. ⁹Ibid., pp. 57-58.

¹⁰Converse, op. cit., p. 280.

1960 election said they were pro-Democratic. The Center placed the "realistic voting strength" of the Democratic party at 53 to 54 per cent in 1960.¹¹ A major reason why Kennedy received only 50.08 per cent of the vote was found to be his Catholicism.¹² This was especially true in overwhelmingly Protestant Oklahoma. It was shown in Table 14 that the Democratic percentage of the vote for President in Oklahoma has exceeded that in the nation as a whole in every election except the two in which Catholic nominees have represented the Democratic party. The religious factor alone appears sufficient to explain the 1960 Republican presidential victory in Oklahoma, but it will be recalled also that the Democratic party was badly split in advance of the 1960 election. The vote on the Edmondson petitions was held about six weeks prior to that election, and the fact that Edmondson was supporting Kennedy did not help the Kennedy cause in the rural areas. It appears that the factors which motivated Democrats to switch their votes in 1960 were stronger in Oklahoma than in the rest of the nation. For Oklahoma, this was another deviating election.

Bellmon's 1962 gubernatorial victory resulted from a combination of factors that was highly fortuitous for the Republican candidate: many rural Democrats were highly motivated to switch their votes to the Republican nominee in protest against Gary's defeat and efforts to reduce rural influence in state affairs at the same time that nearly all Republicans and some Democrats were motivated to vote Republican in protest against Democratic mismanagement of state affairs. The issue of the sales tax increase and candidate personalities were other factors that contributed

¹¹Ibid., p. 274.

¹²Ibid., p. 280.

to Democratic switch voting.

There was extensive switch voting in Oklahoma both in 1958 and in 1962--by Republicans in the former year and by Democrats in the latter. But there were specific motivations that explain the switch voting in both years, as there were in the 1952, 1956, and 1960 presidential elections. These have not been elections for which no explanation exists other than that the voters see no differences between the parties or that their party ties have weakened greatly. No positive support was found for either of these contentions

The switch voting that occurred from 1950 through 1962 was not a new or unusual phenomenon for Oklahoma. The decade of the 1920's was another period of Republican victories attributable to Democratic switch voting, and the causes of the switch voting in the two periods are not too dissimilar. In the 1920's there were severe Democratic party splits brought on by the Gore-Ferris feud and the Jack Walton candidacy; post-war disillusionment and the reaction against American entry into the League of Nations; and the Catholicism and prohibition repeal stand of the 1928 Democratic nominee.

But there is this important difference in the Oklahoma political situation as between 1928 and 1962: whatever political gains the Republicans made in the 1920's were eradicated quickly by the Great Depression that began in 1929; a similar reversal of Republican gains was not in prospect in 1962. There are, on the other hand, one or two trends that auger well for continued Republican growth. Present population trends within Oklahoma appear favorable to the Republicans; Table 10 showed that seventeen of the twenty-three counties that lost more than twenty per

cent of their populations between 1950 and 1960 were strongly Democratic counties. Further, most of the population losses have resulted from young persons leaving to seek better job opportunities out of state or in the more populous areas of Oklahoma. Since young persons are among the groups known to have the weakest political party ties,¹³ their movement to less preponderantly Democratic areas may prove to be a factor favorable to the Republicans. Though Oklahoma's infant urbanization movement has not had great political impact as yet, in time it may; most of the populous centers are in the Republican areas of the state. And, additionally, if the recent Republican victories should prompt any considerable number of Republicans-registered-as-Democrats to change their voter registrations, as University of Oklahoma football coach Bud Wilkinson did when he announced his candidacy for the United States senate in 1964 on the Republican ticket, this would do more to assure continued Republican growth than anything that has occurred to date. It not only would increase interest in Republican primaries and Republican affairs generally, but it would provide a much larger pool of talent from which the Republicans could draw more and better qualified candidates for office.

Among recent developments favorable to the Democrats is that the accession of Lyndon Johnson to the presidency has removed one source of dissatisfaction with the national Democratic party. If legislative reapportionment is settled by court order, as it appears that it might be, the vestiges of Oklahomans for Local Government influence probably will disappear and the Democratic party's urban-rural split probably will heal.

¹³Campbell, The American Voter, pp. 160-165.

The fact that rural champion Gary lost the three-cornered 1964 Democratic senatorial primary to urban-progressive candidates Edmondson and Fred R. Harris may indicate that some rural Democrats already have become more moderate in their views. However, the fact that Edmondson was the incumbent and that this was a senatorial rather than gubernatorial contest were factors here; Gary could not promise to build more highways or to balance the state budget as a senatorial candidate.

Most signs seem to indicate that Oklahoma will have a somewhat more competitive politics in the future than it has had throughout most of its history. But a two-party system has not developed as yet. The answer as to whether Republican gains will be sufficient to bring about a two-party system should not be too long in coming.

APPENDIX

Because there appears to be no complete list of Oklahoma Democratic and Republican state chairmen and national committeemen anywhere available, their names, home towns, occupations, and dates of tenure since 1907 are recorded here for the benefit of the future historian of Oklahoma politics. The names of the party officials are listed according to the chronology of their tenures. In order to preserve the chronology, occasional names are repeated where succeeding terms were not served consecutively.

Democratic National Committeemen

R. A. Billups, Cordell, lawyer and county judge, 1907-1908.
W. T. Brady, Tulsa, hotel operator, 1908-1912.
Robert Galbreath, Tulsa, Oklahoma's first oil millionaire, 1912-1916.
Tom Wade, Marlow, bank president, 1916-1920.
George L. Bowman, Kingfisher, lawyer, 1920-1924.
Scott Ferris, Lawton, Pauls Valley, and Oklahoma City, congressman-financier-office building operator, 1924-1940.
Robert S. Kerr, Ada, lawyer-oilman, 1940-1948.
Elmer Harber, Shawnee, bank president, 1948-1950.
William Doenges, Bartlesville, automobile dealer-oilman, 1950-1956.
James Arrington, Stillwater and Oklahoma City, real estate and oil, 1956-1964.

Democratic State Chairmen

Joseph B. Thompson, Pauls Valley, lawyer-congressman, 1907-1910.
Fred P. Branson, Muskogee, lawyer-judge, 1910-1912.
Tom Harrill, Wagoner, bank president, 1912-1914.
Alger Melton, Chickasha, lawyer, 1914-1918.

Ben F. Lafayette, Checotah, merchant and cotton gin owner, 1918-1922.
 Ed L. Semans, Oklahoma City, insurance and real estate, 1922-1924.
 Robert L. Davidson, Tulsa, lawyer-state senator, 1924-1926.
 George D. Key, Oklahoma City, lawyer and toll bridge owner, 1926-1930.
 Samuel W. Hayes, Oklahoma City, supreme court justice, 1930-1932.
 R. M. McCool, Tishomingo, college president, 1932-1934.
 J. B. Moore, Ardmore, lawyer, 1934-1936.
 Sam Battles, McAlester, book company representative, 1936-1938.
 France Paris, Tulsa, merchant-banker, 1938-1943.
 George D. Key, 1943-1944.
 Harrington Wimberly, Altus, newspaper publisher, 1944-1946.
 H. I. Hinds, Tahlequah, merchant-state legislator, 1946-1948.
 James Arrington, Stillwater, real estate-oil, 1948-1952.
 Smith Hester, Purcell, lawyer-oilman, 1952-1956.
 Loyd Benefield, Chickasha, lawyer, 1956-1959.
 Gene McGill, Alva, rancher, 1959-1964.
 Smith Hester, 1964-

Republican National Committeemen

Cassius M. Cade, Shawnee, royalties and leases, 1907-1912.
 James A. Harris, Wagoner, merchant-real estate-oil, 1912-1916.
 James J. McGraw, Ponca City and Tulsa, bank president-oilman, 1916-1920.
 Jake L. Hamon, Ardmore, oilman, 1920.
 James A. Harris, 1920-1924.
 W. G. Skelly, Tulsa, oilman, 1924-1940.
 Lew Wentz, Ponca City, oilman, 1940-1949.
 Bailie Vinson, Tulsa, oil field supplies and equipment, 1949-1956.
 Reuben Sparks, Woodward, lawyer-rancher, 1956-1960.
 John Tyler, Bartlesville, cement and oil, 1960-1964.

Republican State Chairmen

Jake L. Hamon, Ardmore, oilman, 1907-1908.
 Joseph Norris, Guthrie, Indian inspector, 1908-1910.
 James A. Harris, Wagoner, merchant-oilman, 1910-1912.
 Arthur H. Geissler, Oklahoma City, lawyer-foreign diplomat, 1912-1918.
 Vernon Whiting, Pawhuska, lawyer-real estate, 1918-1920.
 James A. Harris, 1920.
 A. C. Alexander, Oklahoma City, internal revenue collector, 1920-1926.
 Byron D. Shear, Oklahoma City, lawyer, 1926-1928.
 Frank A. Parkinson, Enid, automobile agency owner, 1928-1929.
 Fred C. Clarke, Oklahoma City, insurance broker, 1929-1932.
 Charles C. Hawk, Shawnee, businessman, 1932-1936.
 W. G. Johnston, Oklahoma City, postmaster, 1936-1938.
 Tom R. Blaine, Enid, lawyer, 1938-1942.
 C. R. Nixon, Tulsa, lawyer-state legislator, 1942-1946.

Carl Morgan, Guthrie, lawyer-state legislator, 1946-1948.
C. E. Barnes, Oklahoma City, lawyer, 1948-1950.
Floyd Carrier, Carrier, merchant-state legislator, 1950-1954.
Douglas McKeever, Enid, lawyer, 1954-1956.
Walter E. Curry, Oklahoma City, oilman, 1956-1957.
Carl Morgan, 1957-1958.
John Tyler, Bartlesville, cement and oil, 1958-1960.
Henry Bellmon, Red Rock, farmer, 1960-1962.
Forrest Beall, Nash, farmer-editor-professor, 1962-1963.
William Burkett, Woodward, lawyer-state legislator, 1963-

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- Schall, Herbert L. Director of Community Development, Oklahoma State Chamber of Commerce and Development Council. August 1, 1962.
- Sellers, Dick. President, Citizens State Bank, Drumright. August 15, 1962.
- Snipes, Al. Republican County Chairman of Oklahoma county. January 4, 1963.
- Stahl, Steve. Executive Vice President of the Oklahoma Public Expenditures Council. August 2, 1962.
- Stone, George W. President of the Oklahoma Farmers Union. August 8, 1962.
- Sullivant, Otis. Political writer, The Daily Oklahoman. September 7, 1962; August 2, 1963; and November 20, 1963.
- Swickey, Carroll. Executive Secretary of the Oklahoma Association of Insurance Agents. September 5, 1962.
- Tant, Roy. Executive Secretary of the Oklahoma Association of Auto Dealers. August 23, 1962.
- Trent, Dick. Preston Moore campaign manager. July 27, 1962.
- Wheeler, Clyde. Republican congressional candidate in 1960 and prominent Republican. January 28, 1963.
- Wilcoxon, Andrew. Muskogee county manager for W. P. Atkinson. August 30, 1962.
- Williams, Ray. Tulsa county manager for Preston Moore. August 27, 1962.
- Work, James, Fred W. Harris campaign aide. August 20, 1962.
- Wright, C. J. Preston Moore campaign coordinator. August 17, 1962.
- Wright, Muriel. Author of A Guide to the Indian Tribes of Oklahoma.
- Yarborough, Len. Executive Vice President of the Oklahoma American Federation of Labor-Congress of Industrial Organizations. July 26, 1962.