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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LEGAL STRUCTURE AND THE PROGRAM
OF PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION IN OKLAHOMA

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	vi
 Chapter	
I. BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR THIS STUDY	1
The Setting for the Problem	1
Need for This Study	5
Related Studies	9
Purpose of the Study	11
The Problem	12
Scope of Problem	12
Definitions of Terms	13
Procedure Followed in the Collection and Treatment of Data	13
Organization of the Report	15
II. HIGH SCHOOLS IN OKLAHOMA BEFORE STATEHOOD	18
Introduction	18
High School Development in Oklahoma Territory	36
Summary	59
III. RELATION OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT TO DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS SINCE STATEHOOD	62
Introduction	62
The District System and the Development of High Schools	66
Reorganization of School Districts for Improvement of High Schools	75
Summary	93
IV. EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS AND FACILITIES SINCE STATEHOOD	96
Introduction	96

Chapter	Page
Development of High School Curriculum	98
Improvement of High School Physical Facilities	123
The Recent Decline in Construction of High School Buildings	130
Summary	136
V. PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL IN HIGH SCHOOLS SINCE STATEHOOD	139
Introduction	139
Qualifications of Teachers in the New State	140
Professional Improvement Since 1947	148
Summary	155
VI. HIGH SCHOOL ACCREDITATION SINCE STATEHOOD	157
Introduction	157
Beginning of College Accreditation	158
Development of the Accrediting Program Through the State Department of Education	161
Summary	170
VII. FINANCING THE HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM SINCE STATEHOOD	172
Introduction	172
School Revenues in the Early Years of Statehood	174
Increasing Need for State Aid to Finance High Schools	181
The Financial Problems Because of Excessive Small High Schools	191
Summary	196
VIII. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS	199
Summary	199
Conclusions	205
BIBLIOGRAPHY	208
APPENDIX A	212
APPENDIX B	223

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Public Secondary Schools in the United States with Total Enrollment and Average Enrollment by States, 1951-52	224
2. Number of School Districts in Oklahoma Territory at Statehood, by Counties, 1907	226
3. Number of School Districts in Oklahoma in 1914, 1946, and 1954, by Counties	227
4. Counties Losing Approximately One Half of School Population Between 1930 and 1950, with Number of High Schools and Total School Population for Each Year	229
5. Counties Having Approximately the Same School Population in 1930 and 1950 with Number of High Schools and Total School Population for Each Year	230
6. Counties Gaining in School Population Between 1930 and 1950 with Number of High Schools and Total School Population for Each Year	230
7. Total Enrollment in Districts Maintaining High School and in Those Which Do Not, with Per Cent of Each, at Ten Year Intervals	231
8. Number of School Districts Disorganized by Annexation, 1946 to 1954, by Counties	232
9. Number of Normal Training High Schools and the Number of Students Finishing the Course, by Years	233
10. Number and Type of Accredited High Schools with Size of High Schools by Units	234

Table	Page
11. Number of Junior High Schools for Selected Years	235
12. Number of Municipal Junior Colleges, by Years and Enrollment	236
13. Appropriations of State Aid for Each of the Nineteen Years Beginning with the First Minimum Program in 1935	237

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LEGAL STRUCTURE AND THE PROGRAM OF PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION IN OKLAHOMA

CHAPTER I

BACKGROUND AND NEED FOR THIS STUDY

The Setting for the Problem

The development of the high school program in the United States springs from a recognition of the necessity, in a democratic society, for a system of education more widely diffused and more advanced than that of the earliest schools in this country. In the Colonial era, the Latin Grammar schools and, later, the private academies, offered the principal types of group scholastic instruction, but these limited programs did not long meet the increasing need for better educational advantages. Both were privately supported schools. The academy was operated for the primary purpose of preparing for college, students from families whose wealth and social position entitled them to this privilege. Under these conditions, the secondary education program was limited in scope and was available only to those students the academies could accommodate.

The advantages of secondary schools were not long to be the privilege of a few families only. Early in the nation's history there developed a recognition of the importance of equal educational opportunities for all children and from this new concept came the public high school. This school was a distinctive American educational institution different from the secondary schools in many European nations. Instead of making its facilities available only to a selected group of the most capable students, its doors were open to every boy and girl who could meet its academic requirements and who could benefit from its instruction. This new educational program originally was organized and continues to be maintained, for the purpose of improving the educational status of all students rather than for giving specialized training to those of superior intellect.

The rapid expansion of the high school movement was encouraged by certain events which pertained to the political growth of the nation. A fact of considerable consequence to the later establishment of high schools was the creation of several new states. Beginning with Ohio in 1803, five states¹ were organized from a tract of public land known as the Northwest Territory. Subsequently, other areas of the public domain were granted statehood upon attaining the necessary minimum population and meeting other requirements prescribed

¹Indiana, 1816; Illinois, 1818; Michigan, 1837; Wisconsin, 1848.

by law. To provide public schools for these new states, Congress designated parts¹ of their area as "school land" and required that the revenues derived from the sale or use thereof be used for promoting public education on local and on college levels. School land became a valuable asset to the cause of education in these states and in the states that were admitted to the Union at later dates.² Revenue derived from a part of this land was used for establishing and maintaining institutions of higher learning known as Land Grant Colleges, which have been recognized during the intervening years as being an important part of the higher education system of the nation. Although these colleges were erected for the purpose of rendering an expanded service to the cause of public education, this service could be utilized only by those students who had adequate scholastic preparation. The academies were too few in number to furnish enough students who could profit from the college instruction which now became available. A new type of school -- the public high school -- became a solution to this problem.

High schools in considerable numbers began to appear about 1840, but a rapid increase did not begin until thirty years later. Shortly after the close of the war between the states, establishment of high schools began in earnest.

¹Sections 16 and 36 in every township of 36 sections.

²Oklahoma has (1954) assets in excess of \$100,000,000 in the Permanent School Fund.

Beginning in 1870, the total number of new high schools established during each ten year period for the next sixty years was double that of the preceding decade.¹ After four score years of this rapid expansion, in 1952, there were 23,757 public high schools and junior high schools in the United States, having a total enrollment of 7,693,140 pupils.²

Development of the high school program in Oklahoma was comparable to that of other parts of the nation. Being the third youngest state and one which was established after most states had learned to consider the high school as a definite part of the public school system, it was later than the others in getting its high schools into operation. Academies in Indian Territory and high schools in Oklahoma Territory, however, were the forerunners of a system of public high schools which, after statehood, developed speedily. The rapidity of the development of this movement produced problems which have been somewhat different from those in other states. One difference is the larger number of high school units in proportion to the total population of the State and the other is the relatively smaller high school enrollment per unit. To illustrate: in the United States, there is a public high school (including junior high schools) for

¹Harl R. Douglass, Organization and Administration of Secondary Schools (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1954), p. 4.

²United States Office of Education, Directory of Secondary Schools (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1952), p. 12.

approximately every 6,500 of the population.¹ In Oklahoma there is such a school for every 2,300 people.² The average enrollment in the public secondary schools of the United States is approximately 320 students but, in the State of Oklahoma, it is only 157, or slightly less than half the average for the nation. Regardless of the implications of these figures it should be noted that there are 773 public high schools and 214 junior high schools in the 671 school districts in Oklahoma.³

Need for this Study

A few studies have been made concerning the history of high schools in Oklahoma but they usually deal with some special phase of the subject. Recognized historians of the State have included in their books valuable chapters on education, but these often are broad in their treatment and deal with state education in general. A few educational historians have made valuable contributions to the knowledge of Oklahoma's history but no one has addressed himself only to the subject of all high schools in the State and studied this phase of educational history with reference to its historical,

¹Ibid.

²Calculated from data in the Twenty-fifth Biennial Report, State Department of Education, Oklahoma, 1954.

³Annual High School Bulletin, State Department of Education, Oklahoma, 1952, pp. 59-83.

political, geographical, professional, legal and other aspects.

Much valuable material pertaining to high school development in Oklahoma is available in official reports of different state offices, in texts of court decisions and legislative acts, in educational journals, and in several volumes of The Oklahoma Chronicles.

The fact that Oklahoma has nearly three times as many high schools, according to population, as the average for the nation and has an average enrollment per school of only half the national average, indicates a situation that justifies some study to determine the reasons therefor. If local conditions (wealth, population density, topography, etc.) make the number of high schools and the smaller enrollment necessary to provide adequate facilities for all high school students, this fact should be made known. If millions of dollars spent on high schools in Oklahoma could be expended more economically on fewer and larger schools, the people who pay for public education are entitled to know how it could be done. If better educational advantages are prevalent in schools with larger enrollments and more extensive curriculums, certainly those who want the best for their children need to be so advised. Douglass points out certain advantages of the larger school. He says:

(1) Schools have grown in size until the typical school for twenty years, has been one of from 75 to 250 pupils, the median enrollment in recent years being about

120 pupils. (2) Extra-curricular activities have increased in variety and emphasis, particularly competitive interscholastic activities, headed by athletics. (3) the field of vocational subjects; and the elective system has developed to extremes. (4) Teaching procedures have become more democratic and socialized. (5) Much more attention has been paid to the individual, his capacities, interests, and probable future needs. (6) Students remain in high school much longer than formerly, and fewer of them failed in their subjects.¹

Dawson observes that:

New and varied interests and needs called for revised curriculums, new courses, new shops, laboratories, and equipment, and additional specially educated teachers . . . In numerous small districts having from four to eight high school teachers, however, attempts to meet these new additional needs have been feeble; educational programs continue to the narrow, traditional, and academic.²

There is some evidence that the Oklahoma state-wide high school program is uneconomical in many respects, both financially and educationally. Studies made during the last few years have called attention to conditions which their authors claim point to basic weaknesses. Gaumnitz³ thinks small high schools, as such, are inherently weak. Ryan found in a study of Oklahoma's schools, that " . . . the inequalities are strikingly vivid when the small high schools . . . are compared with some of the larger . . . schools of

¹Douglass, op. cit., p. 4.

²Howard A. Dawson, Floyd W. Reeves, et. al., Your School District (Washington: Department of Rural Education, National Education Association, 1948), p. 19

³Walter H. Gaumnitz, The Smallness of America's Rural High Schools, U. S. Office of Education Bulletin No. 13, 1930, p. 2.

Oklahoma."¹ He also concluded that the middle-sized high schools are superior to the smaller high schools in twenty-five listed factors involving educational opportunity. It is known that some dissatisfaction exists among patrons of the high schools,² taxpayers,³ and others⁴ entitled to be concerned. There are some who believe that not enough improvement is being shown in attacking some of the major problems, especially those involving administration.⁵ Mention often is made of disproportionate costs,⁶ inadequate physical plants,⁷ obsolete curriculums, and other alleged inadequacies which, if true, should be corrected. Other states⁸ operating under comparable

¹James Cecil Ryan, "A Comparative Study of Educational Opportunities in Middle Sized and Small High Schools of Oklahoma." Unpublished Doctor's dissertation, College of Education, University of Oklahoma, 1936.

²More than 200 petitions were filed with the Oklahoma State Board of Education in 1949-51, and many since, asking for annexation to larger high school districts.

³Oklahoma Public Expenditures Council.

⁴Oklahoma Citizens Committee.

⁵Governor Johnston Murray, in an address to a joint session of the Oklahoma Legislature, March, 1953.

⁶The per pupil cost in the smallest high school in Garfield County was more than twice that of the largest high school (Enid) in the same county in 1952.

⁷State Superintendent Hodge, quoted by the Daily Oklahoman, March 31, 1954, says Oklahoma needs \$70,000,000 for new school buildings.

⁸Dawson and Reeves, op. cit., mention Arkansas, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, New York, and several others, p. 13.

conditions, are studying ways and means for making improvement. At least one non-school agency in Oklahoma¹ is doing considerable research at the present time trying to determine whether our school system is functioning as economically as it should.

Related Studies

In addition to the studies from which quotations are made elsewhere in this chapter, surveys have been made and theses written, relating to public education in Oklahoma, all of which studies have a bearing on the high school problem. In 1922 the office of the U. S. Commissioner of Education made a comprehensive survey of public education in Oklahoma and pointed out a number of factors which indicated the strength and weaknesses of the school system which were developing in the new state. The survey was made in compliance with a request of the Oklahoma Educational Survey Commission, which previously had been authorized to study the needs of the public schools of Oklahoma.²

In 1940, a commission was appointed jointly by Governor Phillips and the President of the Oklahoma Education Association to study the problem of financing the common schools of Oklahoma. This study was by Dr. John F. Bender

¹Oklahoma Public Expenditures Council.

²U. S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, Public Education in Oklahoma (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1922).

of the University of Oklahoma faculty.¹ The report of this survey called attention to the statement made in the report that "this growing high school enrollment has greatly increased the cost of public education."² Four doctoral dissertations have been written dealing with the history of major segments of public education in this State. The first of these was by Dr. F. A. Balyeat, now of the University of Oklahoma faculty. It was written in 1927 and deals with the history of education in Indian Territory.³ In 1941, Dr. E. Sherman Nunn, now of the Bacone College faculty used "A History of Education in Oklahoma Territory" as his subject.⁴ A more recent study concerned with the history of education in Oklahoma was made by Dr. O. W. Davidson, now a member of the University of Oklahoma faculty. This study included all educational activities in Oklahoma for a forty year period beginning with statehood in 1907.⁵

¹John F. Bender, Problems in Financing the Common Schools in Oklahoma (Oklahoma City: Bond Printing Company, 1941).

²Ibid., p. 92.

³Frank A. Balyeat, "Education in the Indian Territory." Unpublished Doctor's dissertation, College of Education, Stanford University, 1927.

⁴E. Sherman Nunn, "A History of Education in Indian Territory." Unpublished Doctor's dissertation, College of Education, University of Oklahoma, 1941.

⁵Oscar William Davidson, "The History of Education in Oklahoma 1907-1947." Unpublished Doctor's dissertation, College of Education, University of Oklahoma, 1949.

The other study to which reference was made was by Dr. Joe Jackson, now Dean of Central State College, Edmond, Oklahoma. He wrote exhaustively of educational history in Eastern Oklahoma for the period 1898-1915.¹

Purpose of the Study

This is not intended to be an evaluative study. No effort is made to justify the position of those who would maintain the status quo in the high school program or of those who would make revolutionary revisions in its content. That there are those who contend for each of these viewpoints indicates a lack of agreement on the subject and a need for information to clarify the thinking and help to coordinate the objectives of those who seek improvement in the public high schools in Oklahoma. The writer believes there is a need for study and research in this field because of the hope that these would disclose satisfactory answers to some of the pertinent questions which have been asked about our high schools. With these things in mind, it is proposed to discuss the origins and to narrate the story of the progress of the Oklahoma high school system, placing some emphasis on the current status. It is hoped that this study will provide a better understanding of the high school conditions which now exist and will assist in plans for future revision or reorganization

¹Joe A. Jackson, "History of Education in Eastern Oklahoma after 1898." Unpublished Doctor's dissertation, College of Education, University of Oklahoma, 1950.

if such action is found to be desirable. In other words, the primary purpose of the study is to trace the development of the high school in Oklahoma from its earliest years in Indian Territory and to show how this program has expanded into the present extensive system of public high schools and junior high schools in the state as of the year 1954.

The Problem

In the State of Oklahoma, the high school pattern has been determined, in large measure, by the existence of legal limitations inherent in the school district. Any study of the history of public school education in Oklahoma must reckon with this agency. The problem to be considered, therefore, is the search for an answer to the query

What has been the development of the legal structure and the program of public high school education in Oklahoma?

Scope of Problem

Because this study pertains only to the high school program it includes all public schools in Oklahoma which have, at any time, offered high school instruction, as defined herein. Except to clarify the origins of the entire program, only high school grades (9 through 12) are considered. No individual school is studied and no sampling attempted. No non-public schools of pre-statehood Indian Territory are included except to show how they influenced the later organization of public high schools.

Definitions of Terms

Public high school education is any program of instruction offered by tax supported high schools maintained primarily for the benefit of eligible persons residing within the school districts where such high schools are located.

Public high school programs, for the purpose of this study, consist of courses of instruction and related scholastic activities offered in grades 9-12, including single subjects and sequential courses offered in the classroom, shop, field, or elsewhere, by persons legally employed to offer such instruction. Reference will be made to junior high schools and junior colleges when desirable.

Professional personnel are instructional, supervisory and administrative persons legally authorized to perform the functions of their positions in public schools.

The legal structure, as used herein, shall refer to school districts organized in accordance with provisions of the laws of the state, and to their legal responsibility in the matter of maintaining public schools; to statutory and constitutional enactments pertaining to public schools and school districts; and, to the rules and regulations of any governing official, or board, acting with legally delegated authority to administer or supervise public high schools.

Procedure Followed in the Collection and Treatment of Data

In collecting, compiling, narrating and interpreting

the material contained in this study, the writer has employed the historical methods of research as defined by recognized authorities in this field and, in the matter of collection of data, methods, and procedures has followed suggestions made by Good, Barr, and Scates.¹ He has read exhaustively from official documents and contemporary literature in books, newspapers, magazines, and other narrations of historical events and of personal experiences by persons able to write from first hand knowledge or from reliable information. He has searched the files of various university and public libraries in order to avoid overlooking any pertinent data.

Primary data to which access has been had consists of constitutional and legislative acts of the United States Congress and of Oklahoma; Oklahoma court decisions; orders of the Oklahoma State Board of Education; reports on file in the office of the State Department of Education, and in other state offices. In addition, reference has been made to official reports of county and local school officials in this state and to proceedings of non-official deliberative bodies, e.g., the Oklahoma High School Conference of May, 1916.

Secondary data studied are reports of research organizations; Doctors' and Masters' Theses; published findings of study commissions; and comparable types of data produced by

¹Carter V. Good, A. S. Barr, and Douglas E. Scates, Methods of Educational Research (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1941).

by the United States Office of Education, the National Education Association, and Research Foundations.

Although the history of the development of high school education is essentially similar in most states, different conditions and circumstances attending any state make its story unique in many particulars. In attempting to give an account of events pertaining to the growth and development of the system of public high schools in Oklahoma, the writer has taken this into consideration and has attempted to record, as completely and as accurately as possible, the personal and group experiences making up the story and to generalize, without evaluation, historical events that concern this development. It is hoped that this study may give the reader a better understanding of the current status of the program and that it may provide a reliable guide to improvement if, and when, future research and evaluations are made.

Organization of the Report

Basically, the present report is organized around topics, with chronological arrangement within each topic. With one exception, each chapter deals with an assigned subject pertaining to the history of high school education in Oklahoma from the advent of statehood to the year 1954. The one exception is that of Chapter II which treats all the topics discussed in later chapters but limits the discussion to the period of time prior to statehood.

Chapter III is devoted to an account of the structure of the school district and the story of its importance in the total high school program. The history of this political agency is traced through its numerous phases of reorganization.

Chapter IV is given to description of the changes made in the high school curriculum and shows how the objectives of the high schools in Oklahoma have changed from the original concept of preparing students for college to that found in the modern type of secondary institutions which, in addition to the other, stresses vocational training and attempts to prepare high school graduates to attain more desirable places in society.

Chapter V contains the story of improvement in the qualifications of teachers, beginning with the time when there was a preponderance of teaching personnel holding county certificates based on examination. It proceeds to show the constant improvement made through the medium of various agencies, prominent among which is the Commission on Teacher Education and Certification.

Chapter VI covers the development of the accreditation program beginning with the era in which there was little uniformity of standards and no accreditation except as prescribed by the State University. This chapter describes the rapid development of the accreditation program until the time when it included every high school in the state.

Chapter VII is given to the history of the financial situation, with emphasis placed on the state subsidization of all public schools. This process was greatly accelerated by the expansion of the high school movement and by the increasing financial demands made by this unit of the educational program.

Following the chapters, as outlined, is an Appendix listing all tabular material, outlined curriculum programs, and other references mentioned in the text of the chapters.

CHAPTER II

HIGH SCHOOLS IN OKLAHOMA BEFORE STATEHOOD

Introduction

An account of the development of the public high school movement in Oklahoma has two approaches. This state was organized by combining Indian Territory and Oklahoma Territory, each of which previously was inhabited by tribes of Indians emigrating from other parts of the United States.

Indian Territory was not a single organized territorial government but comprised the combined areas occupied by the five Indian Nations, each of which maintained a government. The terms "Tribal Government" and "Nation" used herein refer to the political organization of each of these tribes, and the terms "Tribe" and "Nation" are used synonymously in discussing the Indians of Indian Territory. The land of each of these nations comprised an area set aside by the United States Government for the home of the Cherokee, Chickasaw, Choctaw, Creek, and Seminole Indian Tribes, respectively. They were known historically, as the Five Civilized Tribes, a designation applied because of the cultural status they had attained before coming to Indian Territory.

Oklahoma Territory was a governmental unit established by the Congress of the United States and operated as a centralized authority comparable to the territorial governments which preceded statehood in most of the states. The area of Oklahoma Territory, prior to its organization, was occupied by nomadic semi-civilized tribes known as Plains Indians. They had not attained the advanced cultural status of the Indians in Indian Territory and their relations with the white men had been of a warlike nature.

In the process of development of these two Territories, their people created and maintained public school systems, of which high schools constituted an important phase. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss the progress of those high schools from their earliest years until the time when Oklahoma became a state in 1907. Because the Five Civilized Tribes and the Plains Indians had different political backgrounds and educational standards, the chapter treats separately the history of the high schools in Indian Territory and in Oklahoma Territory. For reasons of its chronological priority and the extent of its educational achievements, Indian Territory is considered first. This part of the narrative deals with three phases of the problem: first, with academies which were established and operated by the Nations; next, with the high school situation concerning white children during the years before enactment of the Curtis Act in 1898; and, last, with the establishment of tax

supported high schools following the Curtis Act and prior to Statehood in 1907. Following the discussion of Indian Territory is an account of the organization and development of the high schools in Oklahoma Territory from the time the first of such schools was established in 1893 until the end of the Territorial form of government in November, 1907.

In the present chapter, the chronological story of the establishment of academies and high schools in each of the two Territories includes details of official authorization; creation of the school district and its importance; methods of financing the schools; influence of population groups; and, other pertinent factors which contributed to the nature of the high school program in the pre-statehood years.

The Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes were not advanced in the usual meaning of this term, nor were they, as groups, educated to an appreciable extent. However, no one who has studied their history doubts that there were those in all the tribes who were, by any standards, educated and cultured persons. Evidence is unmistakeable that many among them were leaders in various activities which encouraged the establishment of churches, schools, and other civic enterprises designed for community betterment. When these leaders and their people were transplanted to the undeveloped territory which was to be their new home, they took with them their ideas and plans for racial improvement. These plans included educational advantages for their children.

The first educational institutions in Indian Territory were commonly known as "Mission Schools." They were established by Christian churches whose membership consisted of white people who operated the schools as missionary enterprises during the first few years, although the Tribal governments later assumed responsibility for their maintenance and operation. The mission schools were forerunners of an educational system reaching into a large number of communities. They offered instruction in the elementary grades only but they are mentioned here because of their historical value as being preliminary to the establishment of academies and high schools in many of the same localities.

The nature and function of the Indian academies.--In order to understand the academies as they functioned in the Indian Nations, it is necessary to know something about the efforts of the Five Tribes in establishing and operating these schools. It is important, also, to know, in detail, something about those outstanding ones which were distinguished for their accomplishments.

The academy was the earliest type of high school established in any part of the area which became the State of Oklahoma. These schools were of the same general type but were variously known in different nations as academies, seminaries, or institutes. Usually they were boarding schools; were authorized by an official act of the tribal government; were supported largely from tribal funds; and, were operated

directly by the educational authorities of the tribe or, more often, under contract with some church. The function of these academies was to furnish cultural and vocational training for the most capable Indian youth. One school (Bloomfield)¹ was established by the National Legislature of the Chickasaw Nation with the specific stipulation that it be of high school grade. Students were chosen for their intellectual capabilities and their promise of leadership among their people. Only one student from a family was selected to attend school during any particular year. To be a student was a high privilege and one was not permitted to attend longer than five years. The ages of students usually were 12 to 15 years for girls and 12 to 18 for boys. Although a few academies were originally co-educational, this practice was discontinued as soon as schools of equal rank were established for each sex.

Academies in the Choctaw Nation.--The first educational institutions in any part of Indian Territory having some of the characteristics of a high school were the academies established in the Choctaw Nation. During the years 1841-43, the Choctaw General Council established and operated five boarding schools for girls and three for boys. Two of

¹Douglas N. Johnston, "Bloomfield Academy and Its Founders," Oklahoma Chronicles, II (1924), 377-379. Mr. Johnston was once Superintendent of Bloomfield Academy and later Governor of the Chickasaw Nation.

these, the New Hope Academy¹ for girls and the Spencer Academy² for boys, were of high school grade. New Hope was was operated under contract by the Methodist church and Spencer by the Presbyterians. Each school accommodated fifty students who were selected by the Tribal Board of Trustees.

Both schools closed during the Civil War but were reopened later. In 1870, the Choctaw General Council entered into a contract with the same churches which had supervised these schools during pre-war years. The council agreed to pay \$5,000 annually for each school and the church agreed to furnish teachers and to board and clothe fifty students for a full school term of nine months. It was during this second period of their history that these schools reached the peak of their usefulness and efficiency. Facilities were expanded until each institution had a student body of 133 members.

Both academies came to tragic ends. In 1896, the Spencer building was destroyed by a fire which cost the lives of four of the students. Not long thereafter the building at New Hope also burned. Diminishing need for these schools, due to the imminent establishment of public high schools under the supervision of local city governments, as authorized by the Curtis Act, discouraged the tribal authorities from

¹Located at Skulleyville, then an important center of Choctaw activities, about eighteen miles west of Fort Smith. Carolyn Thomas Foreman, "New Hope Seminary," Oklahoma Chronicles, XXII (1944), 272.

²Located ten miles northwest of Doakville.

rebuilding, and neither school was reopened.¹

Academies in the Creek Nation.--The Creeks were the second nation in Indian Territory to establish academies. In 1845, the Creek Tribal Council authorized the establishment of two boarding schools to be financed and maintained, one third each, by the Creek Nation, the United States Government, and the sponsoring church. These schools were the Tullahassee² Boarding School located six miles northwest of Muskogee and the Asbury Manual Labor Boarding School located near the present city of Eufaula. The former started as a day school under the supervision of the Presbyterian Mission Board but became a boarding school when facilities were available. The Asbury School opened in 1850 with a capacity of nearly one hundred pupils. Before the end of the first year of operation, it was closed temporarily due to an epidemic of measles and to a windstorm which cracked the walls of the building. "It did reopen and for years served the Tribe well."³ Historians are vague as to the time these two schools finally closed. This writer has located no record which indicates that either of them reopened after the Civil War.

¹"Acts of the Choctaw Nation," Phillips Collection MSS, University of Oklahoma Library.

²Wright spells it Tallahassee but Foreman spells it Tullahassee. The latter is the present day spelling of the Post Office located near the site of the school.

³Grant Foreman, The Five Civilized Tribes, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1934), p. 197.

Seminaries in the Cherokee Nation.--For those Cherokee people who were interested in education, the pride of their nation was their two high schools, Park Hill Seminary for young women and its counterpart, the Cherokee Male Seminary, both located in the vicinity of the Cherokee Capital, Tahlequah. Construction was begun on both buildings in 1849 and the schools opened for students on May 7, 1851.

Before the schools opened, Chief John Ross visited several eastern colleges for the purpose of selecting a faculty. The first two teachers for Park Hill were graduates of Mount Holyoke and the entire faculty consisted of instructors of such type as to make the four years of instruction comparable to that of the best academies in the United States. The Male Seminary burned after a few years of operation and was never reopened. The Park Hill Seminary closed during the Civil War but was reopened. The building burned in 1887 but was rebuilt and the school renamed the Cherokee Female Seminary.¹ This building is at the present time the Administration building for Northeastern State College at Tahlequah.

Academies in the Chickasaw Nation.--The Chickasaw people patterned their school system after the plans previously adopted by their neighbors, the Choctaws. Beginning in 1851, with a school for boys, several boarding schools

¹Mrs. R. L. Fite, "Historical Statement," Souvenir Catalog, Cherokee Female Seminary, 1904.

were authorized by the Chickasaw Legislature and were built and operated at public expense. Two, which were of high school grade, were distinguished for their service to the Chickasaw people. These schools were the Bloomfield Seminary for girls, located near the present village of Achille, in the southern part of Bryan County, and the Harley Institute for boys, located near Tishomingo.

Bloomfield Academy was one of the best known schools in Indian Territory. Opened in 1852 as a co-educational institution, it operated as such until the Civil War. After it was reopened in 1876, an act of the Chickasaw National Legislature required that it be, thereafter, a school for girls only, to be known as Bloomfield Seminary; that it be of high school grade; and, that it grant diplomas to its graduates.¹ Bloomfield Academy also was a teacher training institution which exerted a wholesome influence throughout the Chickasaw Nation. Johnston claimed that, by the time of statehood, teachers and other graduates trained in this school had taught almost all Chickasaw boys and girls to speak, read, and write the English language.²

Bloomfield Seminary building burned in 1914. The advent of statehood and the fact that local high schools and state supported colleges were meeting the educational needs

¹Douglas N. Johnston, op. cit.

²Ibid.

of the Indians, as well as of the white people who then lived in the former Chickasaw Nation, caused Bloomfield to be less useful than formerly and of relatively minor importance in the lives and activities of the Chickasaw people it had served so long and so well. The school was rebuilt on a new location near Ardmore where it continues to function as an Indian boarding school known as Carter Seminary.

Harley Institute, located two miles west of the present city of Tishomingo, was another academy which was prominent in the educational history of the Chickasaw Nation. Founded in 1850, Harley originally was a mission boarding school for boys and was known as the Chickasaw Academy. It was operated under the auspices of the Methodist Conference in Indian Territory until 1876, when the Chickasaw Legislature decided to change the operational procedure and enacted the following legislation:

An Act to establish a Male School at C. M. L. Academy for Chickasaw children:

Section 1. Be it enacted by the Legislature of the Chickasaw Nation that there shall be established a "High School at Chickasaw Academy" for boys to be called the Chickasaw Manual Labor Academy. The boys selected to attend said school shall be between the ages of nine and eighteen years. Not more than one child from a family shall enter said school at the same time and no scholar shall remain longer than five years.

Section 5. Be it further enacted, that the party or parties agreeing to and contracting to carry on said school shall furnish tuition, bedding, washing, mending clothes, medicine, and medical attention and all the modern apparatus for successfully carrying on a first class school. . . . for a thorough English course of studies and all the other necessary stationery and fixtures that may be used.

Section 6. Be it further enacted, that the party or parties contracting to carry on said school shall receive for their services heretofore mentioned, not exceeding one hundred and ninety-four dollars per scholar for ten scholastic months.

Approved October 9, 1876. B. F. Overton, Governor¹

In 1880, Joshua Harley was made principal of the school. He was twenty-eight years of age at the time and spent the remainder of his life serving this institution, living to see the name of the academy changed to Harley Institute. Some time prior to 1885, the school building burned. Since the old location was not a desirable one, a new site was chosen approximately one mile north of the present city of Tishomingo², and a building was erected at the new location. After the relocation and the erection of the new building, the school entered upon an era of usefulness which made a valuable contribution to the advancement of the Chickasaws. The school rendered valuable service until its close shortly before statehood. By that time, local high schools were serving the purpose for which Harley was established and the need for the school practically had ceased to exist.

Boarding schools in the Seminole Nation.--The Seminoles probably came to Indian Territory with the least cultural development of any of the Five Tribes. For this reason, their interest in education was less in evidence and they were

¹Johny Bishop Chisholm, "Harley Institute," Oklahoma Chronicles, IV (1926), 116.

²Ibid.

slower in developing this interest than their neighboring tribes. This does not imply, however, that they were not interested in establishing schools. An interesting feature of their educational system was attendance of Indians and Negroes in the same school.

In 1865, the United States Government authorized an annual expenditure of \$3,000 for ten years to provide schools for the Seminoles but, because of the Civil War, the money was not used. In 1878, a boarding school for girls was established at Sasakwa with a capacity of thirty pupils. A boarding school at Makusukey near Wewoka was known as the Mee and Sasakwa school. Later it was relocated five miles south of Wewoka and renamed Amakaka Academy. Diligent efforts on the part of the writer have failed to locate an authentic record of the dates of their closing. Because of the relatively small number of Seminole Indians in Indian Territory, and the difficulties which prevented their attaining a more highly civilized status, it seems certain that these schools were not in operation as long as were the academies of other nations, neither did they influence educational history as much.

Types of instruction offered in the Indian Academies.

--The Choctaw academies at New Hope and Spencer offered instruction in both vocational and academic subjects. Practical farming was emphasized at Spencer for boys and homemaking for the girls at New Hope. In addition, cultural education was

stressed in both schools. The academy teachers were required to be college graduates and be able to teach two foreign languages. In the Creek academies, although elementary subjects predominated in the courses of instruction, high school courses were offered in algebra, natural philosophy, history, speech, and Latin.¹ The Cherokee Male and Female Seminaries offered Latin in each of the four years of instruction and in both schools there were courses in algebra, geometry, physics, chemistry, botany, English, and history. Especially did the Female Seminary stress the cultural aspects of education. In 1903, 72 of the students were enrolled for courses in vocal and instrumental music. The school had an excellent library, including subscriptions to 4 or 5 daily newspapers and more than 30 current magazines. This school periodically issued illustrated annuals and gave other evidences of being an educational institution where cultural advantages were available.

The Chickasaw's Bloomfield Academy stressed cultural education and had strong departments in music and in fine arts. Its paintings became widely recognized and won several high awards at the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904. As in the case of the school for girls at Bloomfield, Harley stressed cultural education. The faculty included a music teacher and, to insure the teaching of courses in science, the

¹Virginia Lauderdale, "Tulahassee Mission," Oklahoma Chronicles, XXVI (1948), 285-90.

contractor of the school agreed to furnish instruction in these subjects.

The writer does not consider it important, in the treatment of this subject, to give details of these courses of instruction. In large measure, the Indian Academies were comparable in this respect and the illustrations given above should suffice.

Adequacy of academy buildings.--That the Indian academies were housed in adequate and substantial buildings is indicated by pictures now in existence and by statements of competent authorities. Foreman described the Choctaw New Hope and Spencer Academy buildings as follows:

Each school consisted of two one story frame buildings each one hundred feet long with broad piazzas on either side. Buildings were parallel to each other and one hundred feet apart. They were divided into dormitories, school rooms, dining room, and kitchen. They were enclosed by a high picket fence.¹

The original Cherokee Seminaries were built from identical floor plans.² Each school originally was housed in a three story stone structure having 85 rooms well equipped for the purpose of providing living accommodations, kitchens, dining rooms, offices, class rooms, and other facilities needed for an institution of this type. The Seminole schools, prior to their closing before statehood, had commodious brick buildings each of which cost \$85,000 and accommodated 112

¹Foreman, op. cit.

²Mrs. Fite, op. cit.

pupils. They were constructed to conform to the latest designs in school building architecture, with steam heat and other facilities which were the best available at that time.¹

The Curtis Act provides for establishment of public high schools.--Discussion of the Indian academies has, to this point, taken into account high school advantages for Indian youth. Except for a few white students who, in some instances, were authorized by a tribal council to attend their Indian academy, there were no high schools in Indian Territory available for white children until after the passage of the Curtis Act in 1898. So long as the population was preponderantly Indian, the academies were adequate for the purpose of providing high school facilities. Until 1870, there were few white families in Indian Territory and the education of white children imposed no serious problem. Soon thereafter, however, whites began coming to this area in such numbers that, when the Federal Census was taken in 1890, 61 per cent of the entire population of Indian Territory were white people. Careful estimates indicate that there were 30,000 white children of school age in Indian Territory of whom 80 per cent had no free school advantages.² In 1904, the Congress appropriated \$100,000 to provide schools for

¹The Oklahoma School Herald, III (June, 1905), p. __, quoting the Indian School Journal, Chilocco, Oklahoma. n.d.

²F. A. Balyeat, "Education of White Children in Indian Territory," Oklahoma Chronicles, XV (1937), 191-97.

these white children. This amount was increased from time to time until \$300,000 was available during the last year before statehood. The money was used chiefly for elementary schools in rural areas with no specific provision being made for high schools.¹

The educational situation existing among these white people was due to their legal status. The Federal Government had promised the land to the Indians for their exclusive use and benefit. It was not anticipated that many white persons would become a part of the population. They did come to Indian Territory, however, in such numbers that eventually they outnumbered the Indians. Regardless of being in the majority numerically, the white population had no citizenship rights in the Indian Territory. They were not permitted to vote. They could not own land nor tax themselves for public purposes and there was no legal means for providing public schools for their children. These conditions were corrected in 1898, when the Congress of the United States passed the Curtis Act providing, among other things, for a reorganization of Indian Territory in matters dealing with local government, schools, and other matters of interest and importance both to the Indians and to the white population. This law temporarily attached to the State of Arkansas, for general governmental purposes, all the lands of the Five Civilized Tribes and made the statutes of Arkansas effective throughout

¹Ibid.

Indian Territory. The laws of Arkansas in force at that time authorized the establishment of a town or city if the population thereof was not less than 200. Such towns were to be governed by a locally elected council, one of whose duties was to "establish and maintain free schools in such cities and towns."¹ It provided, also, that "any such town might be organized into a school district" governed by a "board of directors" who were elected at the same time and in the same manner as the city council. One duty of this board was "to establish high schools to accommodate all the scholars of the district."²

Sources of revenue for public high schools.--When Indian Territory became subject to the laws of the State of Arkansas by the Curtis Act of 1898, all public schools, including high schools, but exclusive of Indian academies, were supported by state revenues and by local taxation. State funds consisted of a state-wide levy of two mills on each dollar of taxable property and of a poll tax of one dollar on every male citizen over 21 years of age.³ That the school districts in Indian Territory organized under the provisions of the Curtis Act might receive their proportionate share of the school revenues provided by the State of Arkansas, the

¹Indian Territory Statutes, 1899, pp. 933-96.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 884.

law specifically provided that:

All school districts organized under this act shall have and receive their full proportion and distributive share of the general school fund of the state in the same manner and according to the same rules as it is or may be apportioned to other districts.¹

In addition to the state revenues, the law authorized each municipal school district to levy on all the taxable property in said district not to exceed five mills in any year for the purpose of maintaining the public schools in said district and for paying any existing indebtedness.²

The provisions of this act made legally possible the first tax supported public high schools which all white children in Indian Territory might attend. That the towns and cities took advantage of the opportunity as rapidly as possible is indicated by the fact that in the nine years between the passage of the Curtis Act and the advent of statehood, "there probably were as many as 200 of these municipal schools established. Many of them grew rapidly in attendance and in efficiency even to the point of maintaining high schools of the first rank."³ The first published list of these schools was by the State Department of Education of Oklahoma in 1908.

¹Ibid., p. 936.

²Ibid., p. 884.

³First Biennial Report, State Board of Education, Oklahoma, 1912, p. 227.

This report lists the names of 33¹ high schools maintaining four years of work and 9² having three year courses.

High School Development in Oklahoma Territory

Historical background.--In 1890, Oklahoma Territory was organized from the combined areas of several tracts of land lying adjacent to Indian Territory on the west. Comparable to the latter in extent, it comprised lands which previously had been assigned by the Federal Government to certain Indian tribes. Unlike those of Indian Territory, however, these tribes were of a type designated as Plains Indians who were inferior to the Five Tribes in culture and advancement. They had little interest in the white man's civilization and were almost totally unconcerned about their own educational improvement. During the years immediately preceding the organization of a territorial form of government, the federal authorities had established for the benefit of these Indians a number of boarding schools. In addition, church organizations were sponsoring and operating mission schools. These schools were not well attended and were not comparable to the

¹Ada, Ardmore, Bartlesville, Bristow, Caddo, Checotah, Chickasha, Claremore, Coalgate, Collinsville, Hartshorne, Henryetta, Haileyville, Hugo, Kiowa, Lexington, McAlester, Miami, Muldrow, Muskogee, Nowata, Ochelata, Okemah, Okmulgee, Purcell, Stigler, Tahlequah, Tishomingo, Tulsa, Vinita, Wagoner, Wynnewood, and Waurika.

²Afton, Atoka, Broken Bow, Centralia, Lehigh, Poteau, Pryor, Sulphur, and Wilburton.

academies of Indian Territory nor to the high schools of the white men who settled Oklahoma Territory at a later date.

Prior to the establishment of Oklahoma Territory, the land from which these Indian assignments were made was unimproved public domain belonging to the Federal Government. Each tribe receiving an assignment was allotted a geographically defined area to be owned and occupied in common by the members of the tribe and to be designated as a reservation. After all such assignments were made, there remained, of this land, approximately two million acres to which no tribe or individual had a claim. The area became generally known as the "Unassigned Lands" although this was not a legal designation.¹ Existence of such a tract of land came to the attention of citizens in nearby states and they instituted a campaign for authorization to settle the area by citizens of the United States. Congress eventually enacted² such a law and made provisions for putting it into effect. On the basis of "first come, first served," the land was "opened" for settlement by the now noted "run" of April 22, 1889. Those who secured homes by this means have since been known as "Eighty-Niners," a term of considerable local distinction. The new residents lost no time in providing the necessary agencies for community life. Improvised places of shelter served as

¹Wright, op. cit., p. 199.

²Statutes of Oklahoma, 1893, pp. 34-36.

homes. Within hours, Oklahoma City, Guthrie, and several other towns were established and local governments organized. Businesses and offices were in operation before the first sunset. By the first Sabbath, church congregations had provided places of worship. Plans almost immediately were made for providing some kind of educational facilities and several small "subscription" schools were opened during the first summer.¹

Almost a year elapsed between the time of the "run" and the establishment of a legal agency of centralized government. As was pointed out in a preceding paragraph, Congress passed the Organic Act in 1890. This Act provided for a Territory of Oklahoma to comprise, not only the recently settled area, but also all the "Assigned Lands" if and when these reservations should be made available for white ownership. This soon was accomplished for, within five years, agreements had been made with most of the tribes of Plains Indians to purchase their lands. By 1895, all reservations except those located in the southwestern part of Oklahoma Territory and belonging to the Kiowa, Comanche, and Apache tribes had been "opened" and families from many parts of the United States had become resident citizens of Oklahoma Territory. Under the terms of the Organic Act, the President appointed a Governor for Oklahoma Territory and the voters

¹E. Sherman Nunn, op. cit.

elected a Legislature and local officials. County and city governments were organized and legal machinery was set up for the proper functioning of the new Territory. The first session of the Territorial Legislature authorized the creation of school districts and the establishment of high schools. These events provided the background for a system of public high schools in Oklahoma Territory.

Authorization and procedures for organizing school districts.--Taking cognizance of the need for educational facilities in the new communities being established so rapidly, the first session of the Legislature of Oklahoma Territory enacted a law which provided that:

Each school township shall be divided into four districts of equal size and square form with site for a school building fixed as near the center as practicable . . . the number of districts may . . . be made to conform to such existing topographical peculiarities as shall render uniform districts impracticable . . . in sparsely settled communities . . . districts shall be formed . . . (to) meet the requirements of such communities.¹

This law authorized the beginning of the school district system in Oklahoma Territory and, with slight modifications from time to time, was the legal basis for its development until, at the time of statehood in 1907, there were 3441 school districts within its borders.² The number of school districts in each county in the Territory in 1907 is shown on page 226

¹Oklahoma Statutes, 1891, p. 1114.

²Second Biennial Report, State Department of Education, Oklahoma, p. 108.

of the Appendix.

In order to understand how school districts could be established with reasonable uniformity in area and geometrical design, the reader should be reminded that the United States Government had made a physical survey of all public lands in Oklahoma Territory before they were opened for white settlement. This procedure consisted of platting the land into exact areas known as townships and sections. A township (for surveying purposes) was a plot six miles square (36 square miles). Each square mile was called a section which was sub-divided into four equal square plots one half mile to the side and called a quarter section. A "quarter" comprised 160 acres and was the maximum area the law permitted any family to "settle." This word was a colloquialism used to identify the fact of establishing legal residence on a tract of public land. Each "quarter" soon became the potential (and usually the actual) home of a family. It was the township, however, that was the basis for the school district.

High schools authorized by Territorial Legislature.--

In a law enacted by the First Territorial Legislature was the following provision:

One high school in each township and one in each city of 500 inhabitants may be established by a majority vote in each township and city, provided no township or city funds shall be appropriated to the support of any high school until there shall have been reserved therefrom funds sufficient to support the common and graded schools for a term of not less than 9 (nine) months.¹

¹Session Laws of Oklahoma, 1890, p. 118.

No report of that period makes any mention of a high school being organized under this law. Apparently the financial restrictions were too severe. At any rate, the law was repealed when the Second Territorial Legislature met two years later,¹ thereby giving legal authorization for establishment of a high school in any school district. Holley says: "The Territorial Legislature of 1893 made the high school attendance area or district coterminous with that of the elementary area or district."² From that time until the present, any school district has been free, so far as the law is concerned, to organize and maintain a high school regardless of the type, size, population, or wealth of the district.

In the beginning, high school courses were offered only in connection with the elementary schools. Nunn³ says there were high school students enrolled in the Guthrie schools in 1889, but no high school was organized in Oklahoma City until "the fall of 1894." It seems, however, that as early as 1893, several towns had high school units in addition to their elementary grade schools. The Oklahoma School Herald⁴

¹Statutes of Oklahoma, 1893, p. 1078.

²J. Andrew Holley, et. al., A Study of Local School Units in Oklahoma (Oklahoma City; State Department of Education, Oklahoma, 1937), p. 13.

³E. Sherman Nunn, op. cit.

⁴An early day periodical in Oklahoma Territory. Published by the Warden Company, Oklahoma City.

in October, 1893, said: "Oklahoma City schools opened Monday, September 23. The high school opened most auspiciously. It now numbers 90 with a prospect of 100." In November, 1893, issue of the same magazine was an editorial which expressed satisfaction with developments. It said:

It is gratifying to note that already in Oklahoma the high school is organized. Though, owing to conditions, buildings have not been erected, excellent beginnings have been made in Guthrie, Oklahoma City, and El Reno and doubtless in other towns.¹

To indicate the progress made in the "other towns" mentioned by the Oklahoma School Herald are a few quotations from that periodical. In the October, 1894, issue is found the following "News Note": "Perry schools reopened September 3 with 18 in high school." In the January, 1895, issue: "Kingfisher has 65 in high school." In April, 1897, the paper made the first announcement of a high school commencement at El Reno where there were four graduates.

From 1893, when the first public high schools were organized, to statehood in 1907, there were 185 such schools in the Territory. Of this number, 67 were four year high schools; 27 offered three years of instruction; 68 were two year high schools; and 23 offered one year.² The organization of these schools was not always an easy accomplishment. Financial and administrative reasons caused many districts to

¹Ibid.

²Second Biennial Report, pp. 174-180.

delay this phase of their educational development. For several years many communities in both Territories depended upon the preparatory departments of the colleges in Oklahoma Territory for the high school training of their youth. At statehood, although there were 356 towns and cities in Oklahoma Territory, only 185 high schools had been established and, of these, only 26 were sufficiently well organized to have an administrative principal to head the instructional staff.¹

School districts not designed to meet the high school needs of local population groups.--Although it was legally permissible for each of these 3441 school districts in Oklahoma Territory to operate a high school, obviously it was impracticable for many of them to do so. Even if the people in each of these districts had wanted a high school, inadequate funds and limited scholastic enrollment would have precluded this action in most of the districts. Because of these two restrictions, high schools usually were found only in cities and towns. Since most of the people in Oklahoma Territory lived outside the cities and towns, a large majority of the school children in Oklahoma Territory were denied high school advantages. It was this condition in the Territory that Cameron was describing, at a later date, in his first report to the legislature after statehood. He said:

¹A list of these schools appears on page 222 of the Appendix.

It is the opinion of this department that experience has shown that the average school district in that part of the State formerly known as Oklahoma Territory is too small for the best school work. In districts of the present size, it is impossible to grade the schools and for that reason, our citizens who live on the farms and have to educate their children mainly in the common district schools, are denied the privilege of educating their children in any kind of high school.¹

County high schools.--The Territorial law of 1893, reducing the high school attendance area from the township to the elementary school attendance area, was recognized by many as a hindrance to the establishment and maintenance of high schools. Accordingly, in 1901, the Legislature of the Territory enacted a law² authorizing the voters in any county having a population of not less than 6000 to establish a county high school for the benefit of all eligible students residing in the county. The governing authority was a seven member board of trustees consisting of the County Superintendent of Public Instruction and six members appointed by the County Commissioners. A tax of not to exceed one mill was levied on all assessed valuation of the county each year for the maintenance and operation of the school.

The first of such county high schools was established in 1903 by Logan County and located at Guthrie. The second, called the Woods County High School, was established by Alfalfa County in 1904, at Helena. Another was authorized

¹Third Biennial Report, State Department of Education, Oklahoma, p. 315.

²Second Biennial Report, p. 67.

by the voters of Cimarron County at Boise City, but it was never organized. Kay County voted three times on the establishment of a County High School but each time the proposition was defeated.

The Territorial Superintendent was hopeful for the success of these schools and was enthusiastic about their prospects. He stated:

Thus far two county high schools have been established and both have proved quite successful and satisfactory. We hope that the day is not far distant when every county in the State will find it advisable and profitable to establish a county high school.¹

The Logan County High School evidently was flourishing. By the time of statehood, it had a faculty of 19 members and an enrollment of 508,² while the enrollment at Helena was 171.³ Contrary to hopes of the State Superintendent, however, the county high school idea did not meet with general approval. This probably can be accounted for by the fact that every town and city was ambitious to have its own high school. Another reason is indicated by the action of the Farmers Institute of Logan County when it adopted a resolution, in 1905, calling for the repeal of the County High School Law for the reason that it taxed the whole county for the education of the children of the city where the school was located.⁴

¹Oklahoma School Herald, February, 1905.

²Second Biennial Report, p. 68.

³Ibid., p. 69.

⁴Oklahoma School Herald, February, 1906.

The County High School Law was repealed in 1905¹ without affecting those schools in operation at the time. The ones at Guthrie and Helena went out of existence voluntarily in a few years, but the last remaining one -- at Paden -- continued to operate until abolished by an Act of the State Legislature in 1933.²

University preparatory schools.--One other phase of the public high school program during the early years in Oklahoma Territory deserves some attention in this record. That was the state supported preparatory school, of high school level, established for the purpose of preparing young men and women for colleges and universities. On March 8, 1901, the Legislature enacted a law providing:

There is hereby created and established a University Preparatory School for the Territory of Oklahoma, which shall be located within one mile from the corporate limits of the town of Tonkawa, in Kay County, in the Territory of Oklahoma, to be known as the University Preparatory School.³

The following excerpts from the State Superintendent's report in 1910 give a brief account of the establishment, purpose, and function of one of these schools:

The school opened in September, 1902, with a faculty of seven instructors and an enrollment of 227 students. During the year the number of students increased to 315, and three additional teachers were employed. The school has already outgrown its building.

¹Session Laws of Oklahoma, 1909, p. 1645.

²Oklahoma Statutes, 1941, p. 2366.

³Statutes of Oklahoma, 1903, p. 1451.

The purpose of such school (The University Preparatory School) shall be to provide instructions for the students of Oklahoma, which will prepare said students for a university course of study.¹

Two years later the State Superintendent made the following statement:

There are in Oklahoma thousands of boys and girls who are ambitious to obtain these four years of education, but whose districts are too poor to afford a high school, and there are few districts that can afford a modern high school. The function, then, of the state preparatory schools is to offer to the boys and girls in the country and village districts modern schools of secondary education where they may go, free of charge, in those years so important in their social, moral, and mental development.²

The University Preparatory School at Tonkawa functioned in this capacity for several years after the general establishment of high schools in Oklahoma.

Legal authority for consolidating districts.--Very soon after Oklahoma Territory was organized, it became apparent that the common school district system would not permit the development of a satisfactory school program. A large majority of the school children of Oklahoma seemed certain to be deprived of high school advantages unless something could be done. The first effort was the authorization, in 1890, for each township to become a high school district but no high school was established. Legislation, in 1890, which made the common school district also the high school district

¹Third Biennial Report, 1910, p. 239.

²First Biennial Report, p. 117.

aggravated the situation. Those who wanted better schools, including high schools for their children, undertook to correct this situation by securing legislation to authorize larger and improved types of districts. In 1895, the Territorial Legislature enacted a law which provided: "Two or more districts may unite for the purpose of establishing a graded school in which instruction shall be given in the higher branches."¹ The procedure set out in the law for uniting districts were vague in their meaning. For this reason, the law seemingly was not the solution for the problem, because eight years elapsed before the first consolidated school district was formed.² In 1901, an effort was made to establish the county as the basis for high schools but this failed. In 1905 another tactic was tried when the Territorial Legislature passed a law for consolidation which was more specific in its provisions, but the conditions it imposed were so drastic that few districts were willing to meet them. For example, the law required that three-fourths of the voters in each participating district should give their approval before consolidation became effective.³ This law, like the first one, failed to give adequate relief. Not until after

¹Session Laws of Oklahoma, 1895, p. 242.

²Quay Consolidated District was formed from the territory of four districts having an area of 23 square miles lying in Payne and Pawnee Counties.

³Session Laws of Oklahoma, 1905, pp. 358-359.

statehood was the consolidation movement effective in promoting reorganization of school districts.

High school buildings.--As has been mentioned, high schools were organized as soon as possible after the white population had occupied any particular area in sufficient numbers to justify such a school and, by the time of statehood, there were 185 organized high schools in Oklahoma Territory.¹ Not many of these, however, had individual buildings. Most were housed in the same buildings with the elementary schools. In keeping with other local conditions in pioneer communities, many of these buildings were simple in design and constructed to meet immediate needs.

The First Territorial Legislature of Oklahoma made provisions for financing the erection of school buildings by authorizing the voters in any school district to vote a levy of 10 mills on the taxable property of the district ". . . for the purpose of building, repairing, and improving school houses . . ."² That the amount of funds secured from this source was small is apparent. It was insufficient even for small frame buildings in most school districts. The Second Territorial Legislature authorized the voting of school district bonds for this purpose in an amount not to exceed 5 per cent of the assessed valuation of the district.³

¹Supra., p. 37.

²Statutes of Oklahoma, 1890, p. 1135.

³Ibid., 1893, p. 1095.

Insufficient funds deterred local communities from erecting expensive buildings. Even had there been enough money for this purpose, proper building materials generally were not available locally and transportation conditions were difficult. For this reason, it would have taken too long to construct school buildings other than those which were needed for immediate use. Another reason was the fact that, in most districts, few pupils were sufficiently advanced, educationally, to profit by high school instruction. Since high school courses many times were offered as an extension of the elementary grades, there was no apparent need for high school buildings in districts where this type of instruction was offered.

Many small communities delayed construction of high school buildings pending determination of the success of the county high school. As has been mentioned, two counties had organized such schools and had erected large and well designed buildings. The Logan County High School building at Guthrie was a commodious structure which was calculated to meet the high school needs of the entire county. It was a rectangular edifice with three floors and a basement. The first story was built of light colored stone and the other two were of red sandstone and brick. It had a steep roof with a belfry and several ornate gables.¹ The Alfalfa County High School building was equally well designed and constructed but was

¹From pictures and from recollections of the writer.

not so large,¹ due to having a smaller potential enrollment.

It is not correct to say that no city high school buildings were erected during the years before Oklahoma became a state. That a few cities had provided such buildings is reported by the State Superintendent. He reviewed the situation existing before statehood when he said:

In all the larger cities of the State, splendid high school courses are maintained. . . . In Shawnee, Oklahoma City, Bartlesville, Tulsa, Muskogee, Ardmore, and Enid splendid high school buildings have been erected.²

Teaching personnel and high school instruction.--Most of the teachers in the public schools in Oklahoma Territory were poorly trained for their professional responsibilities and little improvement was apparent until after statehood. Few college trained teachers were available and schools were compelled to accept the best teachers they could secure.

The fact that teachers had meager qualifications does not imply that they lacked legal authorization to teach. One of the acts of the First Territorial Legislature created a Territorial Board of Education and authorized this Board to make provisions for licensing teachers. Teachers' certificates were of two kinds, Territorial and County. The former were issued by the Territorial Board of Education and authorized the holder to teach in any school within Oklahoma

¹The building still stands.

²Second Biennial Report, p. 67.

Territory. The lowest grade was an elementary certificate issued on the basis of an examination conducted by the Territorial Board of Education. Of a slightly higher rating was another elementary certificate based on an examination conducted by the state normal schools but under the direction of the Territorial Board of Education.

The professional certificate carried a higher rating and indicated that the holder possessed more advanced training and higher qualifications than was the case with elementary certificates. This type of certificate was issued in three categories. One was designated as "General" and permitted the holder to teach in any elementary or high school grade; "High School" entitled the holder to teach all high school grades; and "Special" which authorized the teacher to give instruction only in subjects for which the certificate was issued. The special certificate was the forerunner of the present day license to teach in the high schools of Oklahoma and merits some special attention at this point. It was granted on the basis either of college training or examination. Occasionally the Territorial Board of Education considered both college credentials and examination. In any case, it was necessary to give satisfactory evidence that the applicant was qualified to teach the subjects for which he sought a certificate. Applicants were required to be graduates of a reputable college and must have had not less than eight years of high school and college training. They were expected

to present credentials showing that they had not less than three years of special advanced training in the subjects for which they expected certificates. One half year of post-graduate work in some accredited university was another requirement but the Board was permitted to accept "any evidence of scholarship, education, experience, training, travel, or culture that it might consider to be the equivalent thereof."¹

Most of the teachers in Oklahoma Territory held county certificates which were designated First, Second, and Third Grades. In 1908, there were 8736 teachers employed. Of these, 7679 held certificates secured upon examination as follows: First Grade, 830; Second Grade, 2550; Third Grade, 3091; and Temporary, 1208.² County certificates were issued by the county superintendent in each county on the basis of an examination prepared by the Territorial Board of Education but conducted and graded in the office of the county superintendent. First grade certificates required a minimum age of twenty years with one year teaching experience and an average grade of 90 per cent in twenty subjects with no grade below 70. Second grade certificates required the applicant to be at least eighteen years old, to have three months teaching experience, and to make an average and minimum grade of 80 and 60 respectively. Third grade certificates were issued to

¹Second Biennial Report, p. 135.

²Ibid., p. 133.

persons sixteen years old making grades of an average of 70 and minimum of 50. First grade certificates were valid in any county in the state when endorsed by the county superintendent of the county in which the teacher was employed. Second grade certificates were valid in any county adjoining the one where it was issued and upon endorsement of the county superintendent. Third grade certificates were valid only in the county where issued.¹

Types of high school courses. The few high schools in operation within the first two or three years after the Organic Act of 1890, offered instruction in academic subjects similar to those in the Indian Territory academies and high schools and in the schools which prepared students for college. The programs of study of these schools followed generally the academic and classical curriculums of the high schools in the northern and eastern sections of the United States. The high school programs and curriculums consisted largely of foreign languages, history, the sciences, and English, although occupational subjects -- chiefly farming and homemaking -- were included in the programs of the academies and the larger schools. The latter subjects, however, were not included in the smaller schools for some years.

Because the first high schools were primarily for the purpose of preparing students to attend college, the University of Oklahoma had an important part in prescribing the

¹Statutes of Oklahoma, 1890, p. 1121.

the courses offered. The range of subject offerings and the relative emphasis placed on them were determined largely by the college entrance requirements of the University of Oklahoma, the Agriculture and Mechanical College, and the other institutions of higher education in the state.

The University of Oklahoma, through one of its faculty members known as the High School Visitor,¹ prescribed the courses to be taken in high schools; determined which graduates would be permitted to enter the University; and, accredited the high schools "to the University." This person was selected by the University authorities and was responsible only to them.

It should be understood that prescribed courses of instruction and curriculum in the high schools of Oklahoma Territory permitted local initiative within these limitations. It is true that some basic courses were required of every high school in order that accreditation might be attained, but every school was allowed a number of elective courses as well as some discretion in the matter of maintaining the minimum requirements set by the University. For example, a minimum number of required courses were permitted to be selected from a large group within subject matter fields. An illustration is that of the field of English, where three courses might be elected from a list of four or more. The

¹Second Biennial Report, p. 158.

University courses followed two general curriculum outlines but individual high schools were permitted latitude in this respect. The two county high schools located at Guthrie and Helena, on their own initiative, adopted identical courses of study which came within the general purview of the requirements of the State University.

College affiliation for high schools.--In Oklahoma Territory, 227 high schools were established between the passage of the Organic Act in 1890 and the achievement of statehood in 1907. Some of these were four year schools whose work was recognized and accepted by colleges and universities. In many districts, however, high school programs of only one, two, or three years were maintained. Because there was no central accrediting agency in the Territory, each high school set its own standards concerning the qualifications of its teachers, the length of term, and the adequacy of its physical facilities. Any high school seeking official recognition by the State University was required to conform to the regulations and requirements that institution prescribed for high schools as prerequisites for affiliation. The graduates of these high schools were permitted to enter the University and the other colleges in the state without taking an entrance examination. The fact of being accredited then -- as now-- implied the status attained upon meeting certain minimum standards set by an agency authorized to perform this function. ~~The State University was this agency in Oklahoma Territory and~~

Indian Territory until after statehood, not because of a legislative act but by reason of its right to determine the conditions upon which its students should be admitted to that institution.

There were several reasons why many high schools in Oklahoma Territory could not immediately be standardized to an extent necessary to meet the minimum conditions for accreditation. The first of these was a lack of uniformity in the length of the school term. The law did not require that schools be maintained for more than three months of each year,¹ although most city schools were operated for nine months and the others for such length of time as financial conditions permitted. Regardless of this variation in length of terms, this was a local matter to be determined by the patrons in the district. Another reason was that there was a scarcity of teachers technically trained for offering instruction in the high school grades. Because there were so few high schools, the demand for high school teachers was limited and those teachers who were available were, for the most part, trained only for elementary schools, since these comprised the greater part of the public school system at the time. In many school districts, as has been noted, there were insufficient funds for maintaining school on the high school level. Because of this situation, many districts were unable

¹Statutes of Oklahoma, 1893, p. 1086.

to provide the necessary buildings and equipment for this purpose or to pay the salaries of teachers who would have been required.

Revenues for financing high schools.--Property taxes provided most of the money for operation of public schools in Oklahoma Territory. The First Territorial Legislature in 1890, enacted a law which said:

The county commissioners shall levy on the taxable property of the county a tax not to exceed one per cent (1% on such property) for the purpose of establishing and supporting public schools for not less than three (3) nor more than nine (9) months in the year.¹

This law also authorized ". . . the electors of each school district . . . to vote . . . a school tax of not to exceed 1 per cent on all taxable property therein for the support of public schools."² Although minor sources of revenue provided a small part of public school money, the Territory of Oklahoma largely supported its public schools, both elementary and high school, on the revenues derived from local advalorem taxation.

It is evident that the property tax was the major source of school revenue almost from the time the first public schools were established in Oklahoma Territory. This was because of the theory that schools were entirely a matter of local responsibility and that the district should provide the

¹Ibid., 1890, p. 1135.

²Statutes of Oklahoma, 1893, p. 1101.

funds to operate its schools. Later chapters of this study will reveal that this belief prevailed for many years and that the difficulties encountered in Oklahoma Territory before statehood were to become more pronounced as the school system developed in the new state. These chapters also will disclose the growing inability of the local districts properly to finance their schools and the consequent necessity for finding revenues outside the district.

Summary

The present chapter recounts the stories of the establishment of high schools in Indian Territory and in Oklahoma Territory prior to 1907, when these two Territories were combined to form the State of Oklahoma.

The first high schools in Indian Territory were organized and maintained during the years near the middle of the nineteenth century by the Indian Nations. They were known as academies, seminaries, or institutes depending on which of the Five Civilized Tribes was involved. These schools were established and maintained by the local Tribal Governments of the Choctaw, Creek, Cherokee, Chickasaw, and Seminole Indian Nations. There were established a number of boarding schools and academies of which at least two in each of the nations offered instruction on the high school level. For approximately a half century, no public schools, either elementary or high school, were available for the children of

white families who came into Indian Territory, even though the numbers eventually exceed those of the Indian population. Public high schools for white children were not organized until the enactment of the Curtis Act in 1898. During the nine years between that date and 1907 when statehood was achieved, at least 42 municipal high schools were established in Indian Territory.

Oklahoma Territory was first settled in 1889 when public lands which had not been assigned to any Indian tribe were made available for occupancy and ownership by white citizens. Following the first opening of lands, several other tracts of Indian land were purchased by the United States Government and opened for settlement.

Three years after the white settlers came in 1889, a few high schools were organized, principally in towns and cities. Others were established as rapidly as the newly settled lands were populated. At the time of statehood, Oklahoma Territory had 185 high schools in operation.

The history of this phase of the public school is largely the story of the evolution of the school district, a political structure originally intended to serve a rural population. Due to the limited geographical area, scholastic population, and taxable wealth inherent in most school districts as organized in Oklahoma Territory, it was difficult to establish high schools. It also imposed restrictions on the type and extent of the school building program. Inasmuch

as most available teachers were trained for rural non-high schools, there was a scarcity of teachers for high schools when they came into being. The courses of instruction usually followed the pattern set by the academies in Indian Territory and by previously established high schools in other states. These courses were intended, primarily, to prepare students for college and usually consisted of groups of academic subjects with little or no emphasis being placed on occupational training. The first high schools in Oklahoma Territory were independent of each other in the matter of curriculums, although the rise of a movement for college accreditation soon brought about uniformity in this respect.

Due to the inability of most school districts to provide satisfactory high school advantages, the Territorial Legislature authorized the establishment of two university preparatory schools and enacted legislation permitting counties to establish high schools of which only three were established. Neither the university preparatory schools nor the county high schools succeeded in providing facilities for high school education for many students. A law providing for consolidation of school districts was more effective, however, and eventually led to the establishment of hundreds of high schools.

CHAPTER III

RELATION OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT TO DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC HIGH SCHOOLS SINCE STATEHOOD

Introduction

No account of the development of the public high school program in this state would be complete without relating something of the school district structure, origin, type of organization, legal limitations, and distinguishing characteristics. The purpose of this chapter is to tell the story of the school district as it has affected the development of the public school system in Oklahoma, with emphasis on the part it has played in the high school program. The chapter attempts to point out the essential facts concerning the organization and reorganization of local school districts in the new state.

As has been related in Chapter II, school districts were established in Oklahoma Territory prior to statehood but this was not true in Indian Territory. School districts in Oklahoma after statehood were, in considerable measure, unsuited for high school purposes. For that reason, a campaign of reorganization was begun soon after statehood and

has continued until the present time. This reorganization included a movement for consolidation and annexation of existing districts. It also caused to be established a program of public school transportation which has brought a high school within reach of every child in the state.

The origin of the school district.--The school district as a unit of government for schools had its beginnings in the town schools of New England during early colonial history. Before tax supported high schools existed, public grammar schools were provided in towns and other centers of population. Whether tuition was charged or free school facilities were provided, the fact remained that children from small geographical areas attended these schools. Distance from the home to the school was a controlling factor because most children had to walk to school and the area served by the school was, therefore, limited in extent. When public schools were established and legal school districts were organized in later colonies, the same pattern usually was followed. After the colonial era, as states were organized, the small district continued to be the accepted type of unit for local taxation and administration of the public school. Typically, in the Middle West, such districts comprised an area of approximately three miles square, with the school building located in the center to make it accessible to all the children in the district. Oklahoma conformed to this pattern, making exceptions when a river or other natural

barrier constituted a convenient boundary or when some condition made it impracticable to follow the usual pattern. Also, exceptions were made when a town or city was located in the district. In most cases, however, school districts and attendance areas have been identical for purposes of legal resident attendance, taxation, and administration. Exceptions are found in districts having more than one school and the need for more than one attendance area. In these cases, the governing board has authority to divide the district into local attendance areas for convenience of the attending pupils.

Development of the Oklahoma school district system after statehood.--As was mentioned in the preceding chapter, the school district organization in Oklahoma Territory was practically complete at the time of statehood. It was an easy matter for the State to begin with what the Territory had developed. The task of setting up a system of school districts in that part of the State which had been Indian Territory was a more difficult one. The land had not been surveyed as in Oklahoma Territory and, except for the 200 municipal districts,¹ to which reference has been made, there was no previously established district pattern when the new state was admitted to the Union. One of the first educational responsibilities of the school authorities of the new state

¹First Annual Report, p. 227.

was to establish a system of school districts in the 41 new counties carved out of Indian Territory. The law of Oklahoma Territory was made effective throughout the entire state in so far as it applied to this responsibility¹ and immediately the newly elected county superintendents of schools took up the task of organizing school districts. Because there had been no previous surveys, they had more liberty in this matter than their colleagues in the western counties and the tendency was to organize larger districts. State Superintendent Cameron later commented on this policy as follows:

The people of the county are entitled to high school facilities, just as much as the people of the cities, if these facilities can possibly be secured. To try to meet this demand, we have laid off much larger districts in the new counties in that portion of the State formerly known as Indian Territory, and will organize graded schools in all these districts where it can possibly be done.²

This flexibility was possible because the law authorized the county superintendent to change boundaries, organize new districts, and otherwise correct the school district system to make it convenient and practicable. Under these conditions, there was no such marked uniformity in the area or in design of these school districts as had been the case in Oklahoma Territory. During the first year of statehood, 2200 new school districts were organized in the 41 counties located

¹Ibid., p. 228.

²Second Biennial Report, p. 74.

in former Indian Territory.¹ These, together with the 3441 in the 36 western counties, gave the new state 5641 school districts. Later, this number was increased because of adjustments and reorganization until, in 1913-14, there were 5880 school districts in Oklahoma.² This account of the organization of the school district system in Oklahoma is outlined here for the purpose of explaining the legal background upon which the public high school system has been developed.

The District System and the Development
of High Schools

Legal authority of school districts to provide high schools.--As has previously been indicated, all legally defined public school districts in Indian Territory were organized after passage of the Curtis Act and usually were identical in area with the town or city that each was intended to serve. In Oklahoma Territory, the high schools in the various districts were financed through taxation and administered by the governing boards of the school districts. The local citizens voted the taxes and elected the school boards. For several years after statehood, the location of the school buildings, the length of the school term, and, in many districts, the salary of the teachers, and other costs of

¹Ibid., p. 107. A list of counties with the number of districts in each appears on page 227 of the Appendix.

²Fifth Biennial Report, State Department of Education, Oklahoma, 1916, p. 158.

operation were determined for each district by vote of the patrons at the annual school meeting. Except for a brief period of time when the elementary schools of Oklahoma Territory had first claim on all district funds,¹ the people of any one of the several thousands of school districts legally could have required the local school board to establish and maintain a high school.

Limitations of school districts in maintaining high schools.--Obviously, only a relatively few of the school districts in the State of Oklahoma were able to establish and maintain high schools. Generally, a lack of financial resources and of high school pupils made this impracticable. This being true, maintaining of high schools was limited to a few types of districts, chief of which was the Independent District, one authorized to administer its educational program more or less independently of the county superintendent of schools. A brief discussion of this type district is in place at this point.

In 1913, the law passed by the Legislature of Oklahoma Territory was amended to provide that "each city of the first class and each incorporated town maintaining a four year high school, fully accredited to the State University, shall constitute an independent district."² This law remained in effect until 1941 when it was amended to read:

¹Supra, p. 36.

²Session Laws of Oklahoma, 1913, p. 522.

Each city of the first class, each incorporated town, and each unincorporated town having a population of 1200 or more maintaining a four year high school and accredited for not less than sixteen units, shall constitute an independent district.¹

When the School Code was enacted in 1949, the requirements for becoming an independent district were considerably changed. The principal requirements were, and continue to be, as follows:

- a. Shall maintain a fully accredited four year high school.
- b. Shall have a school plant, equipment, and faculty meeting minimum requirements prescribed by the State Board of Education.
- c. Shall be in good financial condition and give evidence of ability to administer fiscal affairs in the proper manner.
- d. Shall qualify under the State Aid Law for a minimum of eight teachers, or failing that, actually employ at least nine teachers.²

All former requirements relative to population and incorporated cities and towns were repealed by the foregoing act of 1949. A number of independent districts in Oklahoma currently are entirely rural in population. The reader is reminded that there are other districts which do not meet these standards. They are designated as dependent districts and are under the administrative supervision of the county superintendent. Dependent districts are more numerous than those which are independent.

¹Oklahoma Statutes, 1941, p. 2320.

²Ibid., 1949, p. 802.

Since the discontinuance of the county high schools and of the university preparatory schools, all public high school education in Oklahoma has been offered by school districts. During the years since Oklahoma became a state, these districts have had various designations. Among these were: consolidated districts, union graded districts, joint districts, united districts, and common school districts. All these names have pertained to the legal requirements of the various types of organization. At no time has the name or type of any district precluded the establishment of a high school therein. In fact, all types of districts have, at some time, established and maintained high schools.

With respect to administration, there have been but two types of school districts in Oklahoma at any time. These are Independent and Dependent. In 1949, the School Code abolished all school district designations except these two.¹ Both are permitted by law to maintain high schools when the requirements of the State Board of Education respecting high school establishment and operation have been met. At the present time (1954) public high schools in Oklahoma are maintained in 564 independent districts and 101 in dependent districts.²

¹Session Laws of Oklahoma, 1949, p. 527.

²Twenty-fifth Biennial Report, State Department of Education, Oklahoma, 1954, pp. 350-351.

How population changes have affected school districts.--During the first few years of the history of the State of Oklahoma, most of its people lived on farms and their children attended rural schools in which no high schools were maintained. In 1908, schools of this type were operated in 5361 school districts in the State.¹ In 1910, when the total population of the state was 1,657,115 and the total school enrollment was 422,399, there were only 10,612 high school students in all the schools of the state. This number was less than 3 per cent of the total. As late as 1919, the enrollment in rural districts (including consolidated and union graded schools in rural territory) was 358,405 compared to 203,422 in independent districts.² Except for those pupils who attended the small number of rural consolidated schools and for a few rural children who were transferred, high school attendance throughout the state was restricted to persons living in cities and towns where high schools had been established. Many of these places had small populations and the attendance in their high schools was limited.

As will be pointed out later in this study, the people in the school districts throughout the state were not long content with this situation and very soon began to take steps to change the school district pattern so that more

¹Second Biennial Report, p. 133.

²Eighth Biennial Report, State Department of Education, Oklahoma, 1920, p. 20.

high schools would be available. That these measures were reasonably successful is indicated by the increase in high school enrollment in proportion to the totals. In 1954, the total population of the state was approximately 25 per cent greater than in 1910¹ but the high school enrollment had increased 870 per cent² during this same period of time. In other words, the high school enrollment increased thirty-five times as rapidly as the general population. This marked increase was not occasioned by an increase in the number of high schools. In fact, the high schools actually decreased in number. The most noticeable change, in this respect, was in the number of rural school districts maintaining only elementary schools which were abolished and made a part of adjacent districts maintaining high schools. The rapidity of this decline in the number of rural districts is shown statistically on page 227 of the Appendix.

The principal reason for this decline has been the migration of farm families, beginning shortly after statehood and continuing at the time this is written. The decade 1930-40 was the period of the Depression and of the greatest migration in Oklahoma of rural population from the farms to the cities or to other states. In 1930, the rural population of Oklahoma was 1,574,359. In 1940, it was 1,456,771 a

¹The Federal Census in 1950 shows 2,233,351.

²From 10,612 in 1920 to 121,918 in 1953.

decrease of 117,588 in ten years.¹ Rural is classified in this report as those areas having a population of fewer than 2500. In 1930, the farm population was 1,021,174 and in 1940 was 926,741, a reduction of 94,433.² It was in the year 1940 that the ratio of high school enrollment to the total of all students in the public schools in Oklahoma reached 22 per cent, a figure higher than in any previous year.

High school enrollment rises while general population declines.--The highest population figures shown by a regular United States census report was in 1930, when 2,396,040 people were listed as being residents of Oklahoma.³ The same year 684,968 children,⁴ of whom 108,755 were in high school,⁵ were enrolled in the public schools. During the decade between 1930 and 1940, the total public school enrollment decreased 51,000⁶ but the number of high school students

¹U. S. Bureau of the Census, Sixteenth Census of the United States: 1940. Population, Oklahoma (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1941), p. 3

²Population (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Planning and Resources Board, 1945), p. 1.

³U. S. Bureau of the Census, Fifteenth Census of the United States, 1930 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1931).

⁴Fourteenth Biennial Report, State Department of Education, Oklahoma, 1932, p. 176.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Thirteenth Biennial Report, State Department of Education, 1930, p. 215.

increased 34,000¹ during the same years. In 1935, the total enrollment had decreased 167,301 from the 1930² figure but the number of high school pupils had increased almost 18,000³ in the same period of time. Several things account for this situation. One reason was a wider public recognition of the need for high school training for all children. Other factors included a law for compulsory transfer of high school students from non-high school districts, and a large scale program of annexation of non-high school districts to districts maintaining high schools. These conditions have operated to retain the identity of most of the high schools during the era of population decline and to prevent an appreciable decrease in their enrollment. Evidence of this relative stability in high school enrollment is indicated by Tables 4, 5, and 6 in the Appendix, which show the extent of migration of rural population and the current status of high schools in those counties from which the shift has been least or most pronounced. Table 7 points out the 6 counties in Oklahoma whose total population made little change either in total or in scholastic population during the years from 1932 to 1953. In these counties, the high school enrollment

¹Eighteenth Biennial Report, State Department of Education, Oklahoma, 1940, p. 265.

²Twenty-fifth Biennial Report, State Department of Education, Oklahoma, 1954, p. 413.

³Ibid.

doubled, although there was no appreciable change in the number of high schools involved. Table 6 lists 24 counties whose scholastic population declined approximately one half during the same years although the total number of high schools and their aggregate enrollment showed only small decreases. Table 8 shows data from 3 counties (Oklahoma, Tulsa, and Comanche) which experienced large increases in general population and more than a proportionate growth in high school enrollment without corresponding increase in the number of high schools.

In 1948-49, Oklahoma reached its smallest recorded scholastic enrollment since statehood (488,839).¹ Beginning with that year there has been a slight increase each succeeding year. Both the total and the high school enrollments have increased during each of the years since that date and in about the same proportion. It is true that the rural communities continue to show a slight decrease each year and the total enrollment increases are almost entirely in the cities. Table 9 in the Appendix shows that the rise in the ratio of high school to total enrollment continues to parallel the small but noticeable increase in urban centers at the expense of the districts which have only rural population. The tabulations referred to are not conclusive evidence that the migration to the cities is primarily responsible for the

¹Twenty-third Biennial Report, State Department of Education, Oklahoma, 1950, p. 275.

phenomenal rise in high school enrollment. It seems, however, that the shift in population has had a very important part in this phase of our educational history.

Reorganization of School Districts for
Improvement of High Schools

Recognition of a need for changing the school district pattern.--The foregoing account of the development of the system of school districts in Oklahoma is intended to give the reader a basis for understanding how the organization of Oklahoma's high school program has been restricted by the original pattern of school districts. It is worth repeating that the functions of a high school have been limited to the confines of a single school district and that no legal limitations are imposed that restrict high schools to a particular type or size of school district. Holley stated in his comprehensive study of school districts in Oklahoma in 1937 that:

The law permitted any district, regardless of size, to establish a high school in spite of limitations as to area and finances. Each district has been required to make provisions for the elementary grades. No law has been passed to prevent a district from teaching high school subjects where the people desired such courses. As a consequence, a large number of small high schools have been established throughout the State.¹

Since any school district has always had the legal authority to organize and maintain a high school, it was to have been expected that a large number of districts would do so at the earliest opportunity. Also, it is not surprising that many

¹Holley, op. cit., p. 25.

of these high schools have been unsatisfactory to their patrons as enrollment and financial ability have declined. Even though many high schools were established, they benefited only those children who lived in independent districts or those who were able to attend one of the three county high schools or one of the two university preparatory schools. For the others, the outlook for a high school education was very unpromising for several years after Oklahoma became a state. For rural children -- and this included most of the school children in the state -- there was small hope that they ever would be permitted to attend high school. The efforts to correct this situation covering the period from statehood to the present (1954) when every child in the state lives within 1½ miles of a high school or a high school bus route, is a record of a long and difficult struggle for reorganization of school districts. Early it became apparent that only if the school districts could be reorganized for greater areas, wealth, and scholastic enrollment, could schools hope to be greatly improved and that, without reorganization, there could not be high schools for any but a favored minority of school children in this state.

The remainder of the present chapter is devoted to a description of the various types of efforts and campaigns which were conducted in Oklahoma looking toward a satisfactory reorganization of school districts as a solution to the problem described. ~~Most reorganization activities have involved~~

three principal methods -- consolidation, annexation, and the creation of transportation areas comprising non-high school districts which were neither consolidated nor annexed. By these means, the total number of school districts has been reduced from 5880 in 1914 to 1833 forty years later. A large number of the 996¹ high schools and junior high schools in Oklahoma probably could not have continued to operate year after year except for transfusions of money and pupils made possible by this program of school district reorganization and the system of public school transportation necessitated thereby. The subject of transportation of pupils and the establishment of transportation areas is discussed later in this chapter.

The consolidation movement.--The term "consolidation" includes all types of legal procedures involved in uniting two or more school districts and creating one new district therefrom. Three different types of districts were formed by this method: "Consolidated Districts", "Union Graded Districts", and "United Districts." There were very few of the last named but several hundred of the other two. A consolidated school was one formed from two or more school districts by means of an election in which the legal voters of all the districts participated. A central building replaced all

¹High School Bulletin, State Department of Education, Oklahoma, 1954.

original buildings. All grades, including high school, were offered at the central building to which pupils were transported at the expense of the district. A union graded district was organized in a similar manner. The chief differences were that, in the latter, no transportation was furnished and all buildings remained in their original locations for instruction of pupils in the first six grades only. At the peak of the campaign for consolidation, one of these types of districts predominated in popularity in some counties and the other type elsewhere.¹

The First State Legislature, in recognition of the failures of the two consolidation measures passed by the Oklahoma Territorial Legislature, enacted a law² in 1908 amending the statutes in such way that made it reasonably possible for local consolidation campaigns to succeed. This act was responsible for the inauguration of a campaign for school district consolidation, a movement which reached its peak during the decade 1920-30. It must not be assumed that the enactment of this law resulted in the immediate organization of any considerable number of consolidated districts or that many people wanted better schools by this means.

¹In 1930, in Bryan County, there were eight union graded districts to four consolidated districts. In Grady and Jackson Counties there were in each county eleven consolidated districts and none of the other kind.

²Statutes of Oklahoma, 1905, pp. 358-59.

There was so much opposition to consolidation in most communities that it was accomplished only under difficulty. There were several reasons for this opposition. Perhaps the strongest was the unwillingness to pay the additional taxes required for new buildings and transportation facilities. Many believed that farm children did not need a high school education and that schools more advanced than the elementary grades did not constitute a proper claim against public school funds. Some people were unwilling for their small children to ride to school and others were reluctant to give up their local schools.

Leading school men took part in the movement for organization of consolidated schools. State Superintendent Cameron reported to the Legislature:

In districts of the present size, it is impossible to grade the schools and for that reason our citizens who live on the farm . . . are denied the privilege of educating their children in any kind of high school . . . If an average of four districts would unite . . . our State would soon be filled with schools doing good work in higher grades.¹

At the Fourth Annual Convention of the Oklahoma Education Association, December 29, 1909, the President addressed the Convention as follows:

One tremendously important gap (in our school system) must be filled and that is the gap between the rural districts and the State schools. That the gap must be filled with rural high schools commonly called the Consolidated Schools.²

¹Second Biennial Report, p. 74.

²First Biennial Report, p. 205.

The State Board of Education took part. In September of 1911, a committee appointed by this Board published a bulletin of information about consolidation of schools. Among other things, this bulletin said:

The State Board of Education is heartily in favor of the consolidation of rural schools (in order to) grade the county schools more effectively; provide more efficient teachers; secure better supervision; provide for additional instruction above the eighth grade.¹

Some consolidated districts were disorganized by action of the local people and several which were organized illegally were later dissolved by court action. The total number of consolidated districts organized for the first few years was small. At the end of fifteen years following establishment of the first consolidated school in 1903, there were only 56 districts of this type in the state of Oklahoma.² Once the movement began to gather momentum, however, the number increased rapidly. During the biennium 1919-20, there were 103 consolidated districts organized.³ State Superintendent Wilson in 1920 cites several reasons for this acceleration. He says:

Encouragement in the form of state aid for use in securing a suitable building has been a potent factor. The farm journals having a wide circulation in the State have consistently and persistently advocated this type of school for rural communities. The determination on

¹Ibid., p. 205.

²Eighth Biennial Report, p. 29.

³Ibid.

the part of the people in rural communities to provide more and better school facilities for their children is the principal cause.¹

The state aid referred to consisted of an appropriation of \$100,000 made by the State Legislature from the proceeds derived from the sale of School Land Section 33 in Greer County.² When a question arose concerning the legality of such state aid, the State Legislature, in 1917, passed an act which said:

Resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring therein: That it is hereby declared to be the policy of the State of Oklahoma that union graded or consolidated schools, heretofore, or hereafter organized as provided by law, shall have all financial assistance necessary to the development of said union graded or consolidated schools to their highest point of efficiency; and the revenues of the State are by this resolution pledged to the support of said union graded or consolidated schools along with other necessary expense of the State Government.³

After impetus had been gained, the movement became more popular in many counties. An outstanding example was that of the campaign in Jackson County. Superintendent Porter of that county reported that during his first term of office, 1919-20, he worked out a county-wide plan of consolidation and organized ten consolidated districts.⁴ Not

¹Ibid.

²Session Laws of Oklahoma, 1910-11, p. 245.

³Ibid., 1917, House Concurrent Resolution No. 25, p. 523.

⁴Eighth Biennial Report, p. 32.

all consolidations were formed by a vote of the people. In 1923, the State Legislature formed a consolidated district in Okmulgee County by uniting Districts 36, 55, and 56 and, by legislative act, located the school building in the town of Hoffman.¹

Mention has been made of Union Graded districts and Independent districts. While the latter always contained a town or city, it was not excluded from the provisions of the consolidation law. In order to have high school advantages in the shortest time, a large number of consolidated districts were formed from two or more districts, one of which contained a town or city. By this means, many villages and towns became consolidated or union graded school districts. The purpose of this rapidly growing movement was pointed out by State Superintendent Wilson in his report to the Legislature in 1920. He said:

The form of organization is not material if the desired results are obtained. The centralized districts were organized for the purpose of providing grade work and high school advantages for the rural children. In spite of the many advantages of centralization that have been pointed out in various publications, most of the centralized schools are organized for the one purpose of providing a high school.²

Another quotation from the State Superintendent's report to the Legislature in 1934 indicates the progress of the movement after it had begun to gather momentum:

¹Session Laws of Oklahoma, 1923, p. 396.

²Eighth Biennial Report, p. 32.

During the biennial period covered by this report (1928-30) the number of consolidated and centralized school districts increased. The county superintendents reported 20 such districts organized during 1928-29 and 34 during 1929-30. This numerical increase, however, does not represent the total changes that have occurred as a result of centralization, since a large number of the existing districts were enlarged through annexation of adjacent districts or parts of districts. In several instances, two or more adjacent consolidated districts have united into one large consolidated district. In at least one instance, several consolidated and union graded districts adjacent to an independent town district were attached bodily to the town district and the outlying schools closed.¹

The growth of consolidation had been slow but it finally reached the point where it had a significant bearing on the entire high school program in Oklahoma. It was the first phase of a reorganization movement which eventually resulted in the discontinuance of more than two-thirds of the rural non-high school districts in the state. It also made high school advantages available to rural children as well as to those who live in cities and towns. In 1931, Oklahoma had 361 consolidated and 113 union graded school districts. Of these, 121 were independent districts containing a city or town.² Regarding the importance this movement had on the growth of high schools, Holley says:

Between the years 1915 and 1935, the enrollment in white high schools increased 92,728 or 398%. The greatest increase occurred between 1920 and 1930. This period of growth coincided with the period of reorganization and

¹Thirteenth Biennial Report, State Department of Education, Oklahoma, 1930, p. 24.

²Fifteenth Biennial Report, 1934, p. 26.

formation of consolidated and union graded districts.¹

Annexation of districts.--A far-reaching phase of the school district reorganization movement was, and has continued to be, that of annexation of one school district to another. This part of the program had the same general objective as those of consolidation, but the procedures followed have been different. Because annexation usually has been easier to accomplish, it has resulted in the elimination of more non-high school districts than has consolidation. Several conditions account for this situation. The area to be annexed usually is smaller than a consolidation project which tends to make it easier to obtain the necessary number of signatures on the local petition which is required for calling the election for either annexation or consolidation. The area seeking annexation often has a wider choice of districts to which it may be combined than is the case with consolidation. Decreased attendance in non-high school districts many times has made continued operation of the elementary school therein impracticable or unlawful. The principal reason in most instances, however, has been the desire to provide more satisfactory high school advantages.

Annexation of school districts to adjoining districts has proceeded almost continuously during the years Oklahoma has been a state. The First State Legislature gave the county

¹Holley, op. cit., p. 18.

superintendents authority to change school district boundaries. Several annexation laws have been enacted since statehood but their periods of usefulness usually were of short duration due to repeal or amendment by subsequent legislative sessions. The first law authorizing annexation by act of the people of the district was passed in 1909. It provided: "District boundary lines may be changed upon petition to the county superintendent and signed by one-third of the legal voters of the territory affected."¹ At the beginning of the annexation program, action was limited to certain types of districts. To illustrate:

All or part of a district adjacent to a consolidated district may be attached thereto when approved by a majority of the legal voters of the attached territory and by the board of directors of the consolidated district.²

The first law giving the county superintendent arbitrary power to annex a district was passed in 1919. It said: "Any district having fewer than eight children or failing to maintain school for one year may be disorganized by the county superintendent and attached to an adjoining district or districts."³

Although some elimination of districts resulted from these laws in the early part of the State's history, the principal results obtained from annexation by local elections

¹Session Laws of Oklahoma, 1910, p. 202.

²Ibid., 1919, p. 260.

³Ibid., 1919, p. 151.

have been in recent years. In 1949, it was provided by law that "all or any part or parts of any school district may be annexed to another district -- smaller districts to larger and common school districts to independent districts."¹ This was the beginning of the "partial annexation" policy which was to create considerable ill feeling in subsequent years. In 1943, the law was amended by restoring to their original boundaries certain changes made under authority of prior legislation.² Each subsequent session of the Legislature had made revisions of the annexation law but most of these have been of minor importance.

The annexation law which changed the school district pattern to an extent greater than had any previous legislation was the "mandatory annexation" law passed in 1947.³ It required that all districts having an average daily attendance for the preceding year of less than thirteen pupils, should be annexed by the State Board of Education to the district or districts maintaining high school in whose transportation area it was situated. Also, that all districts failing to maintain school during the next preceding year should be similarly annexed. This law had a revolutionary effect on the school district system in Oklahoma. Hundreds

¹Ibid., 1941, p. 319.

²Ibid., 1943, p. 208.

³Ibid., 1947, p. 499.

of non-high school districts whose attendance had declined to thirteen, or fewer, were annexed to districts maintaining high school. Many other annexations were effected by means of elections held in districts where the citizens realized that their districts soon would be abolished in the same manner. The advantage of the election was to give the people of the district a choice in selecting the district maintaining high school to which they were to be annexed. From 1947, when this law became effective to the time of the present writing, 2562 school districts have been annexed. Of these, 1886 were by mandatory action of the State Board of Education in compliance with the law, and 676 by voluntary vote of the people. Table 10 in the Appendix lists these annexations by number in each county. Of the total annexations, 84 districts maintained high school and 2478 were of districts in which no high school instruction was offered.¹

Transfer of students from one district to another.--

The school district reorganization program has been influenced in considerable measure during the years since statehood by legislation which has authorized, permitted, or required the transfer of pupils from one district to another, thereby enabling them to attend school in a district other than the one in which they lived. Originally this was only for the

¹Twenty-second Biennial Report, State Department of Education, Oklahoma, 1948, p. 7.

convenience of the pupil but eventually the chief purpose was to permit high school attendance by children who lived in a district where no high school was maintained. One of the first of such laws was passed in 1911. It provided: "Children may be transferred by the County Superintendent when they live at least two miles from the school house in the home district."¹ In 1924, this law was amended to provide that:

School may be dispensed with and the children transferred to an adjoining district when approved by the county superintendent and upon vote of a majority of the people. This was conditioned upon the fact of having insufficient money to maintain home school.²

In 1911, the same year the first transfer law was enacted, another law was passed providing for transferring rural children eligible to attend high school, but it was permissive legislation³ and not many rural children availed themselves of the opportunity to be transferred to a district maintaining a high school because the opposition of local school boards and tax payers who considered that a high school education was not a legal obligation of the non-high school district where they lived. Consequently, relatively few children from these districts attended high school. In 1920, 5340 rural children were transferred to nearby districts maintaining high schools but, in 1925, this number had

¹Session Laws of Oklahoma, 1911, p. 218.

²Ibid., 1924, p. 141.

³Ibid., 1911, p. 218.

increased to 12,706.¹ The period of discrimination against the rural child came to an end in 1933 when the Legislature in a new statute said: "The right of every child to an education, including high school, is hereby recognized."² This law made mandatory the transfer of children when their home district did not offer the grade they were eligible to pursue and required that a proportionate part of all local tax money be set aside for the transfer fees.

Public school transportation authorized.--The complete story of reorganization of school districts and its effects on the development of the public high schools of Oklahoma requires some mention of the school transportation system and the formation of high school transportation areas. As has been pointed out, the principal reason for making the original school districts small was to put the school building within walking distance of pupils in the district. When consolidated districts were created, the distance to the school house was too great for most children to walk. Transportation, therefore, became a prerequisite to the successful operation of the consolidated district. The first law which made provision for the transportation of school children was enacted in 1905 by the Territorial Legislature of Oklahoma Territory. This act provided that in consolidated districts:

¹Eleventh Biennial Report, State Department of Education, Oklahoma, 1926, p. 19.

²Session Laws of Oklahoma, 1933. p. 36.

It should be the duty of the district board to provide transportation to and from schools for all pupils living one and one-half miles or more therefrom in suitable vehicles of ample size with comfortable seats arranged to conform to the size of the pupils to be carried, with an adjustable cover for the comfort and protection of the children, drawn by stout gentle teams and driven by adult persons of good moral character who shall have control of said pupils during their transportation.¹

This law was amended in 1919 to provide motor transportation not only for consolidated districts but for any independent district having the area, valuation, and scholastic population required for consolidated districts.² Two years later, in 1921, union graded districts were empowered to furnish transportation to pupils above the sixth grade attending the central school.³ These legislative acts soon caused transportation to become a vital factor in the operation of the state public school system. The following year (1922) the State Superintendent reported that 129 districts were operating 386 transportation buses and that 59 districts were operating 249 wagons for the transportation of children to consolidated, union graded, and independent districts.⁴

Mention has been made of the mandatory requirements for transfer of rural children eligible to attend high school.

¹Ibid., 1905, p. 381.

²Ibid., 1919, p. 147.

³Ninth Biennial Report, State Department of Education, Oklahoma, 1922, p. 33.

⁴Ibid.

This made a high school education available for every child, except for one thing. Transferred rural children usually lived too far away to be able to attend the high school to which they were transferred and no public transportation was available. Those who lived in the district maintaining the high school, even if on a farm several miles from the high school, were transported but the transferred student who lived outside the boundaries of these districts were denied that privilege. This situation existed for six years before it was corrected. In 1939, a law was enacted which empowered any district eligible to transport its own children, with the consent of the Governor of the State, to send its buses outside the district to transport those high school students who were legally transferred.¹ Two years later the law was amended by eliminating mention of the Governor.² For a short period of time, this law gave rise to considerable confusion caused by different districts which had high schools sending their buses into the same non-high school districts and competing for the attendance of the students to be transported, but this situation was corrected in 1939, when the State Board of Education was authorized and directed to administer the transportation law.³ Regulations of this Board required

¹Session Laws of Oklahoma, 1939, p. 181

²Ibid., 1941, p. 426.

³Ibid., 1939, p. 178.

every non-high school district to be served by one or more high schools each of which was to have exclusive access to the area served. The aggregate area of all districts or parts of districts thus served became the "transportation area" of a district maintaining high school. A complete system of transportation areas was established and has been developed throughout the state to such extent that every non-high school district which is accessible to a school bus is served by some school district having a high school which is required to confine its transportation activities to the area assigned to it by the State Board of Education. Compliance is enforceable through the authority of the Board to withhold State Aid money to any district violating this regulation.

Current status of school district reorganization.--

The highest number of school districts in Oklahoma's history was reached in 1914 when there were 5880 districts of all types.¹ By 1954, this number has been reduced to 1833, a reduction of almost 69 per cent during the forty year period. The highest number of districts maintaining high school was in the year 1940 when there was a total of 841 such districts.² By 1954, this number had been reduced to 675, a reduction of 18 per cent. From these figures, it is obvious that most of

¹Supra, p. 58.

²Eighteenth Biennial Report, 1940, p. 50.

the school districts in Oklahoma which have been eliminated through the various processes of reorganization have been those in which elementary grades only have been taught. The movements outlined herein have been responsible, in large measure, for this situation, i.e., consolidation, annexation, transfer of students, and public school transportation. The reorganization procedures which have resulted in abolishing such a large number of non-high school districts have made it possible for a great many districts maintaining high school to continue operation, and, at the same time, has enabled other high schools to increase their enrollments.

The current status of the reorganization movement in Oklahoma consists of an occasional consolidation and of the annexation of a few¹ non-high school districts each year both due primarily to a decline in pupil attendance to a point below the required legal minimum. In some cases, annexations are effected by the voluntary action of the voters in the districts concerned. A few² high schools each year have an average attendance of fewer than the required 25 pupils and are therefore abolished by action of the State Board of Education.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the development of the Oklahoma school district system after statehood.

¹Eighty-five in 1954.

²Five high schools in 1954.

In Oklahoma Territory, school districts already had been organized and, when Oklahoma became a state in 1907, these districts became a part of the school system of the new state. In Indian Territory, however, only a few school districts previously had been organized but they were operated as a part of and in conjunction with the incorporated towns and cities which were in existence at that time. The chief reason for narrating an account of the evolution of the school district is to provide a background for the story of how the public high schools in the state have been developed. It is pointed out that a school district in this state has always had legal authority to establish and maintain high schools but this was not feasible because a large proportion of the districts did not have sufficient revenues for maintaining a high school and because the number of children eligible to attend high school in such districts was too small for this purpose. In this chapter, reference is made to the fact that the population of Oklahoma was predominantly rural during the first few years after statehood and that most of the schools were conducted in districts which did not offer high school advantages. After a large scale migration of farm families to the towns and cities had begun, the enrollment, in the schools from which they had moved, began to decline, a fact which eventually caused hundreds of districts to be abolished and the children residing therein to attend the schools to which these eliminated districts were annexed.

The consequence of this migration was to increase the enrollment of the high schools throughout the state.

It became evident in the very early years of the state's history that the small non-high school districts were inadequate for the purpose of providing the type of school advantages that the people required. This condition promoted a movement for reorganization of these districts, a program of major importance and one which still is being carried on, even though to a diminishing degree in recent years. This reorganization has consisted of consolidations of two or more districts; of annexation of districts or parts of districts to adjacent districts; and of the establishment of high school transportation areas which have permitted all children in the state, eligible to attend high school, regardless of the type of school district in which they live, to be transported to a high school. Without doubt, the public school transportation system is the largest contributing influence toward the success of the school district reorganization movement.

CHAPTER IV

EDUCATIONAL PROGRESS AND FACILITIES

SINCE STATEHOOD

Introduction

In order to appreciate the progress of the high school program in Oklahoma, it is important that the reader be acquainted with the development of the high school curriculum and with the types of physical facilities available at different times during the period being studied. The purpose of this chapter is to outline the high school development in terms of these two factors. The first part of the chapter details the story of the changes in curriculum content, beginning with the Legislative restrictions in the early days of statehood and, in addition, outlines the differences of emphasis during the years. Particularly, does this apply to the transition from cultural to occupational subjects. The last part pertains to physical facilities.

The total high school pattern has been affected by a few phases of the organization which were not in existence at the time the first high schools were established. Chief among these were teacher training instruction offered in

certain high schools; the establishment of junior high schools for the purpose of meeting a new need both in administrative and in curriculum improvement; and, municipal junior colleges which were intended to supplement the years of high school instruction by offering courses of college grade in the local high school. It was expected that the latter type of educational institution would obviate the need for a student's leaving home for college attendance until one or two years later than would otherwise have been necessary. The need for the teacher training high school soon ceased to exist and, after ten years, it went out of existence. The municipal junior college failed to live up to the expectations of its original proponents. At the time of this writing, there remain six of the original of these schools in operation but, owing to the fact that they are maintained on a tuition basis, most of them have only a few students in attendance. The story of the junior high school, however, has been one of greater success. From a few units organized during the first decade following statehood, the number and value of the junior high school have increased rapidly. No longer is it restricted to the large city school system but now is an integral part of the high school program in more than 200 school systems in Oklahoma. Any high school whose enrollment is sufficient may establish and maintain a junior high school. It is no longer an experiment in Oklahoma but accepted to meet a definite need in the high school program. It is intended

to provide proper organization, administrative procedures, and curriculum content to assist children in making a successful change from elementary to high school grades. The junior high school may, to a considerable extent, account for the consistent increase in the high school enrollment while the total enrollment in all schools has declined.

School houses at statehood were generally plain buildings intended only for essential needs. Improvements and changes in design and functional value came much later. Despite these advancements there has been in recent years a marked decline in the volume of high school building construction due, in large measure, to exhaustion of the financial ability of school districts maintaining high schools. Reasons for this financial situation are set down in the final pages of the present chapter.

Development of High School Curriculum

Influence of the colleges.--In a preceding chapter, it was related that the curriculum and courses of study offered by the high schools in Oklahoma Territory and Indian Territory were prescribed largely by the colleges and universities and that the University of Oklahoma, by reason of its educational status, took the initiative in this matter. After Oklahoma became a state, this situation continued until 1911, when the Legislature authorized the State Board of Education to classify the high schools of the State. In

order to carry out the purpose of this law, this Board appointed a high school inspector whose duty it was to visit the high schools and to make recommendations regarding their courses of instruction. Although this official was appointed by the State Board of Education, he maintained his office at the State University. For five years following this appointment, the curriculum of the high schools continued to be determined, in large measure, by the colleges and universities. High school attendance and graduation were considered to be primarily as preparation for college and the colleges were the most convenient and proper agencies for determining the courses and subjects which the high schools would offer in order to meet this requirement.

In April, 1912, more than 100 representatives of high schools and institutions of higher learning met in Oklahoma City for the purpose of discussing needed changes and desirable procedures in revising the high school courses of study. In 1916, the State Superintendent of Schools called the first of a series of conferences which resulted in changes that greatly affected the high school curriculum throughout the state and modified the role played by the colleges in this matter. Details of these conferences will be given in a subsequent chapter devoted to the history of accreditation of high schools in the state.

Beginning in 1918, when the matter of classification of the high schools was made the responsibility of the State

Department of Education, the curriculum content became a cooperative undertaking on the part of the local school system, the State Department of Education, and the colleges. The local school was permitted and has increasingly exercised a large amount of freedom in selection of high school courses to be offered, so long as they were within the minimum requirements agreed upon by the State Department for high school graduation and by the colleges for admittance.

Normal training high schools.--An instance of college influence on the curriculum development of high schools in Oklahoma was that of offering in certain high schools, college-type teacher training courses patterned after those in the state normal schools. This was an important phase of the development of the high school curriculum in the early years after statehood. It consisted of normal training courses in the Junior and Senior years and the granting of teachers' certificates to those who graduated from the high schools authorized to offer these courses. This movement was supplementary to the teacher training instruction offered in the normal schools and was designed to augment the number of teachers needed for the rapidly growing school system in Oklahoma. That the need was imperative is indicated by a statement made by the State Superintendent: "Our schools require, in round numbers, 2300 new teachers each year. The normal schools cannot supply these teachers."¹ Most of the

¹Fifth Biennial Report, p. 17.

teachers who received their training in these schools were employed in the rural schools which offered instruction only in the elementary grades but it was this expansion of the high school curriculum to include preparation of teachers which helped to meet the need for additional teachers.

To remedy this condition, the Legislature enacted a law in 1915 which provided:

Section 1. That the State Superintendent of Public Instruction may issue teachers certificates, valid for two years to all students who graduate from . . . fully accredited high schools when such schools have satisfied the State Superintendent that the courses of study completed . . . are equivalent to four years high school fully accredited with the State University and that the said schools have sufficient equipment for teaching Agriculture, Domestic Science, and Manual Training and that the students have completed such a course in Psychology and the Science of Teaching as the State Superintendent may prescribe. Certificates so issued shall license the holder to teach in Oklahoma for a period of two years.¹

In order that a high school might offer teacher training courses, it first must have made an application to the State Superintendent who, if convinced that the high school could satisfy the requirements of the law, would authorize such training.

There was no official relationship between the state normal schools and the normal training high schools. The former were primarily teacher training institutions supported by the state and established for the purpose of giving professional preparation to teach either in the elementary or

¹Session laws of Oklahoma, 1915, Senate Bill 364.

in the high schools. Two years of college level work after high school graduation were required to be devoted exclusively to this preparation. Normal training high schools were regular four year accredited public secondary schools offering elective courses designed to give sufficient specialized training for teaching in elementary grades. These schools were supported by the local school districts in the same manner as other high schools.

The first normal training high school courses were offered in 1915-16 when 50 high schools enrolled 559 students¹ in these courses and, at the end of the same school year, issued 439 teachers' certificates to students completing the required work. In 1922-23, there were 1114 certificates issued by 78 high schools.² This was the highest number reached in any year, for soon thereafter the program began to decline. In 1926-27, the program was abandoned after ten years of operation because during that year, no high school made application for approval as a normal training high school. Two reasons accounted for the cessation of this program. The demand for new teachers had become less acute and the enrollment requirements in teacher education programs were raised to such extent that such courses were available

¹Seventh Biennial Report, State Department of Education, Oklahoma, 1918, p. 45.

²Tenth Biennial Report, State Department of Education, Oklahoma, 1924, p. 59.

only to students who had finished most of the courses usually required for high school graduation. Prospective teachers thus were expected to spend an additional year in high school without receiving credit toward college graduation. Under these circumstances, students preferred to attend a normal school or a college. The State Superintendent described the situation in these words:

This course, organized as it is in Oklahoma so as to be supported entirely from local revenues, is very unsatisfactory and local school authorities are discontinuing it with the advent, next year, of the new rules and regulations making 15 units of high school work pre-requisites to enrolling in the course thus practically placing the course on a post graduate basis . . . very few will find it possible . . . to continue.¹

A table showing, by years, the number of normal training high schools, students enrolled, and certificates issued is shown in Table 9 of the Appendix.

Legislative restrictions on the curriculum content.--

From the time of statehood until the high school inspector was appointed in 1911, there were no important changes made in the subjects offered by the high schools in Territorial times, except for course requirements by the State Constitution and by the First Oklahoma State Legislature. The Constitution required that "the Legislature shall provide for the teaching of the elements of agriculture, horticulture, stock feeding, and domestic science in the common schools of

¹ Ibid.

the State."¹ In keeping with this mandate, the First State Legislature enacted a law that:

The elementary principles of agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, stock feeding, building county roads, domestic science, including the elements of economics, shall be taught in all the public schools of this State receiving any part of their support from the State. The State commission of Agriculture and Industrial Education shall have the authority and it shall be their duty to prepare a detailed course of study in these subjects adapted to the needs of instruction in the elementary and secondary schools of the State.²

The same act made it the duty of the State Superintendent, of the County Superintendent, and of the various superintendents of schools to require compliance with this law,³ but such compliance consisted of offering courses in agriculture and domestic science in the seventh and eighth grades of most elementary schools.

Few restrictions have been imposed on the high school curriculum during the years since statehood. There have been, however, certain legal requirements worth calling to the attention of the reader. In 1915, the Legislature enacted a law requiring the teaching of "the nature of alcoholic drinks and other narcotics and their effect on the human system . . . shall be included in the branches to be regularly taught . . .

¹Oklahoma State Constitution, art. xiii, sec. 7.

²Session Laws of Oklahoma, 1908, SB 109.

³General Statutes of Oklahoma, 1908, p. 1373. This reference is a compilation of all statutes enacted prior to 1908.

in the common schools (including high schools) of the State."¹
 In 1921, the Legislature required that "the teaching of American History . . . shall be compulsory . . . At least one hour in every scholastic week shall be devoted to such instruction."² The same act provided that: "No person shall be graduated from any high school in this State until he or she shall have satisfactorily completed at least one full year of work in American History and Civics."³ In 1926, the law was amended to require:

There shall be taught by reading and discussing regular courses, lectures, and instruction in the Constitution of the United States . . . (and) no pupil shall receive a certificate of graduation . . . unless he or she has satisfactorily passed an examination on the provisions and principles of the United States Constitution.⁴

As this is written (1954) the high school curriculum in Oklahoma is almost entirely free of legislative restrictions. Authority in this respect is vested in the State Board of Education by provision of the law which says:

The State Board of Education shall provide for the formulation and adoption of curricula, courses of study, and other instructional aids necessary for the adequate instruction of pupils in the public schools (including high schools).⁵

¹Session Laws of Oklahoma, 1915, p. 10

²Session Laws of Oklahoma, 1921, p. 138.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid., 1925, p. 275.

⁵State School Law Bulletin (State Department of Education, Oklahoma, 1953), p. 20.

In keeping with this legislative mandate, the State Board of Education has adopted regulations governing the curriculum.

Among these requirements are:

Courses of study . . . shall include such courses as are necessary to insure:

a. The teaching of citizenship in the United States, in Oklahoma, and in other countries.

b. The teaching of health, physical fitness and safety . . .

c. Teaching of the necessary basic skills of learning and communication . . .

d. The teaching of the conservation of natural resources . . .

e. The teaching of vocational education . . .

f. The teaching of such other aspects of human living and citizenship as will achieve the legitimate objectives and purposes of public education.¹

Changes in curriculum emphasis.--The cultural aspect of the high school program has been emphasized in the history of the high school movement during Territorial times and for several years thereafter. An illustration is found in the importance attached to the teaching of foreign languages. In 1919, there were 315 accredited high schools in the State of Oklahoma and, of this number, 300 offered one or more foreign languages. Latin was the most frequently taught of the languages. It was taught in 219 schools, 79 of which offered four years of instruction in this subject. The next most widely taught foreign language was German, which was offered in 148 high schools. Spanish was next, with 121 schools; and French was the least frequently taught, since only 103 high schools offered courses in this subject. Forty-one high

¹Ibid., p. 66.

schools offered all four languages.¹ Oklahoma City High School offered four years instruction in each of the four languages mentioned. For further evidence of this type of high school curriculum, the reader is referred to page 213 of the Appendix for high school curriculums of that period.

It soon was recognized that Oklahoma was primarily an agricultural state. Stimulated by the constitutional requirements mentioned in an earlier paragraph, stress began to be placed on agricultural and vocational instruction instead of purely cultural courses. It is desirable to point out the importance attached to the subject of agriculture in the first few years of statehood. In an official report published by the State Superintendent, is the following:

From the present trend of public sentiment, it is evident that the time is not far distant when education in Agriculture will be offered in every good school of the United States. In all states where the work has been introduced, the results have been highly satisfactory and extremely gratifying and there is no reason now why such should not be equally true in Oklahoma . . . The First Legislature enacted a law of which the following is a quotation: After July 1, 1909, no person shall teach and no certificate shall be granted to any applicant to teach, in the public schools receiving aid from this State, who has not passed a satisfactory examination in the elements of Agriculture and allied branches mentioned in this Act. This means that all teachers will have to take an examination on these subjects before they can teach after July 1, 1909. All teachers holding certificates extending beyond this time will also be required to pass a satisfactory examination in these additional subjects in order to teach after July 1, 1909.²

¹List of Accredited High Schools (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1919), p. 8.

²Second Biennial Report, p. 87.

Two years later the following report was made:

Let us see that Agriculture, Domestic Science, Horticulture, Road Building, Manual Training, Stock Feeding, together with all other branches that go to make up a complete industrial education system are placed in full and complete operation in all our schools from our great University and A and M College down to the smallest school in the State.¹

As industry became more important in Oklahoma's economic life and the cities became larger and more numerous, less emphasis was placed on the importance of agriculture than originally had been anticipated. However, in compliance with the law, the high schools offered courses in those subjects for many years. When the first list of subjects in accredited high schools was published in 1919, of 315 listed, only one-third (105) were not offering agriculture. Forty-seven schools offered it for one semester only; 157 offered a year; and 2 schools had two year courses in this subject.

Significant changes in the high school subject matter fields became evident early in the history of Oklahoma. In 1914, the State Superintendent reported:

The course of study has been adapted to the growing needs of the times. Manual Training, Domestic Science, Agriculture and Commercial subjects have taken their rank alongside the older subjects of the curriculum, even in the high school.²

Twenty years later important changes still were in process. In 1934, the State Superintendent reported:

¹Third Biennial Report, p. 33.

²Fifth Biennial Report, p. 33.

. . . There is a definite trend away from courses in sociology, economics, advanced civics, solid geometry, botany, zoology, and physiology. Corresponding gains may be found in Algebra II, ancient medieval history, problems in democracy, general history, general science, the geographies, biology, arithmetic, business English, and public speaking. There is a sharp increase in vocational agriculture, while home economics enrollments remain fairly constant.¹

Several interesting changes were taking place in academic subjects. In the field of mathematics, algebra was offered in 106 more high schools in 1935-36 than in 1930-31. Composite mathematics, however, was introduced during the school year 1934-35 and rapidly became a popular subject in the small high school. This was true to such extent that it soon began to supersede algebra as a Freshman subject and the latter took the place of plane geometry as a Sophomore course in many schools. Solid geometry and trigonometry had almost disappeared from the class schedule by 1936. In the social science field, Oklahoma History and community civics were offered much more frequently than formerly; while English History, advanced civics, economics, and sociology decreased proportionately. General science, vocational agriculture, and biology were rapidly taking the place of the more advanced sciences such as physics and chemistry. One of the most noticeable increases was in the frequency of offering public speaking in all groups of high schools, large and small.²

¹Fifteenth Biennial Report, p. 56.

²Sixteenth Biennial Report, State Department of Education, Oklahoma, 1936, p. 56.

This record would not be enriched by relating, year by year, the evolution of the high school curriculum. Basic subjects such as history, English, and mathematics have remained relatively constant in the number of courses offered during the years. A check of other subjects, however, will show how the curriculum tendencies have changed. The 1954 High School Bulletin shows that 83 different subjects are offered in one or more of the accredited public high schools of Oklahoma. There are 33 regular academic and vocational subjects and 50 other courses offered only in one or in a small number of high schools and then only to meet a local need. A list of these courses may be found on page 221 of the Appendix.

Two facts stand out in the 1954 list of courses offered in the high schools of Oklahoma. The first is the universal demand for instruction in commercial studies. With only three exceptions, every White public high school and more than half the Negro schools in Oklahoma offer typing.¹ Of the 769 White and Negro public high schools, 528 offer one or more years of shorthand. The other noticeable thing is the virtual elimination of foreign languages from the high school curriculum. In 1954, there are 769 accredited public high schools in Oklahoma. Of this number, only 122 offer a

¹These three are schools having fewer than 25 students enrolled in high school.

course in any foreign language. Spanish is the most frequently offered and is taught in 103 schools. Sixty-four high schools offer Latin; 15 have courses in French; while only 2 schools now offer German to the students. No other foreign language is offered.

Junior high schools.--In order to understand the development of that part of the high school curriculum which is included in the junior high school, it is necessary to know something about the historical background of the latter organization and the conditions which brought it into being.

When the first high school was established, it was just another unit of the educational program and included a level of instruction logically following in difficulty, the elementary grades. The high school was different from the elementary school in that it had a distinct type of organization; subject matter fields were different from those of the elementary grades; and it involved instructional techniques with which the elementary grade pupil was unfamiliar. There was little in common between these two phases of the school program except that both were maintained by the same school district and usually were in the same building. Also, they had little in common concerning continuity of school attendance. Most students did not attend school after finishing the elementary grades. In 1916, the first year for which state-wide junior high school records are

available, there were 515,493 pupils enrolled in the public schools of Oklahoma. Of these, 488,453 were in the elementary grades and only 27,000 in high school.¹

The first junior high school reported to the State Superintendent of Public Instruction was established in Hugo, Oklahoma, in 1913. Superintendent H. G. Bennett reported that he was well pleased with its success. From the same records in the office of the State Superintendent, it is shown that by 1916 there were 22 junior high schools² in the state and that plans were being considered by 20 other cities, including Oklahoma City. Holley said: "The first junior high schools were established in Oklahoma City and Tulsa during and immediately following the period of the First World War."³

Educators in Oklahoma, like those in other states, were seeking a solution to the problem of transition from elementary to high school. In 1916, State Superintendent Wilson justified the junior high school as follows:

¹Sixth Biennial Report, State Department of Education, Oklahoma, 1916, p. 39.

²Ibid.: Alva, Chickasha, Checotah, Clinton, Dewey, Drumright, Guymon, Hartshorne, Hobart, Hominy, Hugo, Mangum, Miami, Pawhuska, Ponca City, Ramona, Sallisaw, Sulphur, Thomas, Tulsa, Vinita, and Wagoner.

³J. Andrew Holley, op. cit., p. 26

Students of educational problems throughout the country have reached the conclusion that the gap existing between the grammar grades and the first year of the high school may be closed by reorganizing the school courses so as to provide easy transition in subject matter taught and methods of teaching in the upper grammar grades. The movement to organize junior high schools is the outgrowth of this conclusion.¹

The superintendent of the Drumright Schools, Frank Peters, expressed the sentiment of many superintendents reporting on this subject when he identified the advantages of the junior high school to be:

First: It creates an incentive for another year of school. Graduating them at the end of the ninth grade instead of the eighth.

Second: It gives a better preparation for high school and materially reduces the per cent of failures in the ninth year.²

The reorganization mentioned by Superintendent Wilson followed different outlines in the various high schools. Some adopted what was (and is) known as the 6-6 plan, whereby the seventh and eighth grades of the elementary schools were integrated into the high school. Other schools used the 6-2-4 plan and made the seventh and eighth grades a separate unit. The one which came to be known as the Junior High Schools is the 6-3-3 plan which combines the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades into one separate organization unit. It is considered that this plan makes the transition from elementary to high school easier and it is the one which has come to be

¹Sixth Biennial Report, p. 39.

²Ibid., p. 40.

the accepted plan in most schools maintaining junior high school.

The original organization of the junior high school curriculum did not make many changes in the courses offered the students in the regular seventh, eighth, and ninth grades. In Miami, the Superintendent reported that the seventh and eighth grades remained the same but that some election of subjects was permitted in the ninth grade.¹ In other instances, the chief difference reported was that the junior high school classes were held for the same length of period as in the high school. Superintendent Sinclair of Pawhuska reported: "Both schools (junior high school and senior high school) have the same hours and are supervised in the same study hall; they meet in the same assembly; and engage in the same enterprises."²

Although the junior high school was publicly recognized in Oklahoma as an integral operating part of the public school system, its establishment and the development of its curriculum were for several years without specific legal authorization. The laws in Oklahoma did not mention the junior high schools until it had been in operation for fifteen years. The first reference of this kind was in 1929 when the State Legislature enacted a textbook law which

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 44.

included a reference to the junior high school. This reference said: ". . . The Textbook Commission shall adopt textbooks for junior high schools of the State approved by the State Board of Education."¹ After the law was passed, the State Board of Education authorized the Department of High School Inspection to set up standards for the approval of junior high schools. The report of the State Superintendent, in 1930, makes the following statement in connection with this movement:

An official committee, consisting of Dr. C. L. Cushman, Chairman, Galen Jones, F. L. Stewart, and J. Andrew Holley, was appointed by John Vaughan, State Superintendent, to draft tentative standards. This Committee has the advice and assistance of many leaders of the junior high school movement in the State. The Committee report was submitted to principals, superintendents, and teachers at the Junior High School Conference in Oklahoma City, and the State High School Conference in Tulsa, held September and October, 1929. The proposed standards were discussed in detail at these conferences. Throughout the school year, 1929-30, the program was discussed in conference with many junior high school principals, teachers and superintendents, and leaders in this field in different sections of the State. The final report represents the cooperative efforts of individuals interested in the junior high school in this State.²

During the first year following this action, 81 junior high schools were organized but several of them were unable to meet the minimum requirements for approval.³

¹Twelfth Biennial Report, State Department of Education, Oklahoma, 1928, p. 96.

²Thirteenth Biennial Report, p. 62.

³J. Andrew Holley, op. cit., p. 26.

In 1926-27, ten years after the first junior high schools were reported, there were 132 in operation. Fifty-nine of these included the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades; twelve had the seventh and eighth with the high school on a 6-6 plan basis; 49 included the seventh and eighth grades only; 5 included grades eight and nine; and 7 schools organized the sixth, seventh, and eighth grades into the junior high school unit. Two new plans were adopted by a few schools during this ten year period: grades eight and nine in 5 schools and grades six, seven, and eight in 7 schools.¹

The Textbook Law which mentioned the junior high school was repealed in 1931 thereby repealing the reference to junior high schools. This left such schools with no specific legal authorization but they continued to be operated voluntarily as a quasi-legal institution until 1935 when the Legislature again gave indirect authorization by providing for more favorable pupil-teacher ratio in the distribution of State Aid money to the school systems maintaining approved junior high school units.²

The organization of the junior high school originally consisted of three principal types of units which continue to be recognized today. Class "A" consisted of grades seven, eight, and nine with an organization separate from that of

¹Twelfth Biennial Report, p. 96.

²School Laws of Oklahoma, 1929, sec. 342.

the regular high school administration. Those in different buildings were designated as "segrated" and when housed in the same building with other units of the school system, as "combined." Class "B" included only two grades, usually the seventh and eighth, but occasionally the eighth and ninth grades. No new Class "B" schools can be approved under present regulations of the State Board of Education.

Although the junior high school has never had a specific legislative authorization and operates by virtue of discretionary power of the local board of education, it is a well defined unit of the public school system in Oklahoma. Its legal status is recognized by name in the distribution of State Aid money.¹ Approval by the State Board of Education is required for official recognition and such approval is granted only after complying with the standards, regulations, and policies determined by the State Board of Education. These standards involve qualifications of faculty members; maximum teaching loads; and, program of studies. The program of studies is set out in a bulletin published by the Division of Secondary Education and is as follows:

1. Three years of work in English, two years of social studies, three years in mathematics, one year of general science, one year of homemaking for girls and industrial arts for boys, and definite training in physical and health education, shall be required of all pupils. One year of vocational agriculture where farm shop is emphasized may be substituted for one year of

¹School Laws of Oklahoma, 1953, p. 109.

industrial arts for boys.

Note: In the "Class B" Junior High Schools, two years of English, mathematics and social studies shall be required. The other courses mentioned above shall be required in the two-year unit.

2. The number and variety of elective courses should correspond to the ability of the school to provide adequate buildings and instructional facilities. Appropriate elective courses include music, art, vocational information, foreign languages, speech arts, commercial subjects, and practical arts for both boys and girls.

3. The program of studies shall be organized into a unified curriculum with limited electives. The curriculum should take into account the integrating, exploratory, and differentiating functions of the junior high school.¹

No longer is the junior high school limited to the larger school systems in Oklahoma but may become a part of any school where the enrollment and school facilities justify. In 1954, there are 227 approved junior high schools in Oklahoma of which 191 are Class A and 36 are Class B.² The growth which lead to this number will be found in Table 11 of the Appendix.

Six year high schools.--In a preceding paragraph of this chapter, it was pointed out that, in the early years of the junior high school movement, some high schools combined the seventh and eighth grades with the four years of the regular high school curriculum and operated on the basis of what was, and still is, known as the 6-6 plan. This has been the least popular of the three recognized plans of high

¹Annual High School Bulletin, State Department of Education, Oklahoma, 1954, p. 51.

²Ibid., pp. 62-64.

school organization: the 8-4 plan (the regular high school); the 6-3-3 plan (the junior high school including grades seven, eight, and nine); and the 6-6 plan. The development of the six year high school in Oklahoma began at approximately the time the original efforts to establish junior high schools and, like the latter, was the outgrowth of the recognition of a need for a more successful advancement of the pupil from the elementary grades to the high school.

The first printed report of the six year high school in this state was made in 1930 when the State Superintendent, reporting the progress of the junior high school movement, called attention to the fact that a Class A, combined, junior high school was the junior high school division of a high school organized on a 6-6 basis. During that year, 29 of the 81 junior high schools in Oklahoma were of this type.¹ In 1932, the State Superintendent reported: "The reorganized six year high school in Oklahoma has yet to differentiate and provide amply for the needs of the pupils in grades seven, eight, and nine."² In 1934, the movement seemed to be making progress but still was far from being a success. In that year, the State Superintendent reported:

A trend toward the six year secondary school has begun in Oklahoma but as yet the fundamental characteristics of such organization are to appear. Many medium

¹Thirteenth Biennial Report, p. 65.

²Fourteenth Biennial Report, p. 42.

size and smaller systems have organized the upper six grades on a vertical plan of teaching assignments. However, few have recognized the curriculum so as to provide the proper differentiation for the lower three years.¹

One other reference indicates the difficulty which attended the development of this program. In 1936, the State Superintendent reported:

In the past few years, a considerable number of small and medium schools have partly reorganized on a 6-6 plan. The reorganization in many of these systems consists primarily of departmentalizing the seventh and eighth grades. The program of studies, the courses of study, and the methods of instruction have been modified only slightly.²

The 6-6 plan for high school organization has not proved to be very popular or successful. Of the 227 approved junior high schools in Oklahoma in 1954, only 35 are organized on this basis and, even in these instances, the seventh and eighth grades constitute a separate unit of the high school organization. (Shawnee is the one five year high school in the state. It has a junior high school organization which includes only eighth and ninth grades.)³

Municipal junior colleges.--Although the expansion of the high school curriculum to include the junior high school has served a very useful purpose, a comparable extension upward to include the junior college has been much less successful. The first municipal junior college in Oklahoma was organized in Muskogee in 1921 with an enrollment of 10

¹Fifteenth Biennial Report, p. 81

²Sixteenth Biennial Report, p. 67

³Annual High School Bulletin, 1954, pp. 62-64.

students. During the fifteen years following this date, the number increased to 26. At that time (1936), the outlook for this phase of the public school program was encouraging. State Superintendent Crable said: "Judging by the number and frequency of inquiries, the Junior College movement in Oklahoma will continue to spread during the next few years."¹ Following the establishment of the first junior college, additional units were organized each year and their enrollment increased rapidly until, in 1941, there were 2211 students of college level enrolled in these institutions.² Three years later, in 1944, the total enrollment had dropped to 375.³ There was an upswing in enrollment during the depression years but rapid decline began with the beginning of World War II.

Until recently, the municipal junior college has had no specific legal status in this state. At the present time (1954), however, legal recognition is accorded by the same law which authorized the regular public school system. This law reads:

PUBLIC SCHOOLS -- Definitions -- What included: The public schools of Oklahoma shall consist of all free schools supported by public taxation and shall consist

¹Sixteenth Biennial Report, p. 73.

²Eighteenth Biennial Report, 1940, p. 34.

³Twentieth Biennial Report, State Department of Education, Oklahoma, 1944, p. 89.

of nurseries, kindergartens, elementary, and secondary schools, not to exceed two (2) years of junior college work, night school, adult and other special classes, vocational instruction and such other school classes and instruction as may be supported by public taxation or otherwise authorized by laws which are now in effect or which may hereafter be enacted.¹

Courses in these schools are of college grade and must be approved in advance by a committee consisting of representatives of the University of Oklahoma, the Agriculture and Mechanical College, and the State Department of Education. Such approval may be given for two years of work or for only one year, usually the latter. These junior colleges are operated in connection with the local public school system under the supervision of the local board of education and superintendent of schools. They use the local school plant and facilities. Often the faculty consists of teachers who are regularly employed by and who give part of their time to the local high school.

The municipal junior college has failed to meet the expectations of its proponents in Oklahoma. As this is written (1954), only 6² of these institutions survive. Probably the chief reason for this failure has been the problem of finance. The Legislature has never authorized the use of public funds for maintenance and operation and private tuition, therefore, has been the principal means of support. The reader is referred to Table 12 of the Appendix for a list of these

¹School Laws of Oklahoma, 1935, p. 16.

²Altus, El Reno, Muskogee, Poteau, Sayre, and Seminole.

schools with the enrollment of each and the year when it was established.

Improvement of High School
Physical Facilities

Buildings and Equipment.--The high school buildings erected in the early days of the state were limited in beauty and usefulness when compared with those built more recently, but this condition was in keeping with other buildings, both public and private. They were plain, and lacking in what may be called modern conveniences. A brief description of the physical aspects of three high school buildings used early in Oklahoma's educational history will illustrate. In Tulsa, the high school building was of brick construction; was rectangular in shape; and was three stories high above the basement. It had a cupola and a flag pole near the center of a flat roof. Ardmore's high school building was two and one half stories high, surmounted by a roof ornamented by steep gables. Bartlesville had one of the most imposing buildings in the state so far as appearance was concerned. Some parts of the building were two stories above the basement; other parts were three stories high; and the central part was four stories. The building had two corner towers, one of which had clocks on the four sides.

One of the best illustrations of a type of building erected to meet local needs of communities in the first few years of Oklahoma's history was that of the new buildings

for consolidated schools, most of which were in rural areas. The organization of several hundred consolidated school districts, mentioned in a previous chapter, necessitated the erection of buildings to meet the needs of increased enrollments in many of these new schools. Several factors contributed to the need and to the enthusiasm for high schools and the necessary new buildings. Among these were: the novelty of riding to school; the fast developing concept of the value of a high school education; interest in indoor athletic contests; and other factors peculiar to many rural areas. These buildings were new because the old frame buildings in the district from which the consolidated district was formed were inadequate for the purpose. The consolidated school buildings were of varying designs, sizes, construction materials, and utility values. The writer knows of one high school building of six rooms and an auditorium which was three stories high. It is still in use but the top story has been removed.¹ Some of the smaller schools erected one story frame buildings, having two or three rooms in a row and an L shaped addition at the end.² Some frame buildings were of two stories and rectangular in shape, built to get

¹Faxon, Oklahoma.

²Third Biennial Report, p. 324. (picture)

the greatest possible classroom space.¹ Most consolidated district buildings, however, were of red brick construction, two stories high, rectangular, plain in design, and of a size barely large enough to care for the school. Most made some provisions for an assembly room or auditorium, often by sliding partitions between regular class rooms.²

Equipment of the original high schools usually was meager and primitive when judged by present standards. Most high school buildings were heated by coal burning stoves in the different rooms. Those buildings located in towns and cities, where electricity and public water and sewer systems were available, were equipped with the most modern facilities possible at the time. In the large number of high schools located in the smaller towns and in the open country, these advantages were not available.

Library and science laboratory facilities consisted of the minimum necessary for high school accrediting purposes. Transportation (in consolidated schools) consisted of horse drawn vehicles. All other equipment and facilities of most of the high schools during the beginning years of the state were comparable to those which have been mentioned. All were, no doubt, the best which could be provided at the time.

¹Fourth Biennial Report, State Department of Education, Oklahoma, 1912, p. 33 (picture).

²First Biennial Report, p. 206.

Increase in construction of small high school buildings.--The first high school buildings erected after statehood were principally in the cities and the larger towns. Obviously, these buildings were destined to house the large high schools of the state and their size was arranged with this purpose in mind. It soon became apparent, however, that the high school program would not be restricted to the urban centers but would include the small towns and villages and hundreds of non-urban communities. These places had limited population and, consequently, small high schools. This situation stimulated the construction of more than 400 school buildings in which the high schools were housed. This period of building for small high schools was during the first two decades following statehood. In 1924, the major portion of high schools in Oklahoma had been organized and had erected buildings to serve their needs. During that year (1924) the State Department of Education made a building survey of the 386 centralized districts maintaining high schools.¹ Excluding the larger cities, these districts included 90 Independent; 151 Village; and 145 other districts which maintained high schools. This survey reported 28 frame buildings; 14 built of stone; and the remainder, 344, of brick. The average building cost \$26,605; had a floor space of 2340 square feet; was rectangular in shape; and, had an

¹Tenth Biennial Report, p. 44.

average of 8.2 classrooms per building for elementary and high school grades combined.

Factors contributing to changes in type of buildings and equipment.--As time passed, a number of changed conditions contributed to improvement in high school building construction. In consolidated districts, good roads and improved methods of transportation enabled people to attend public assemblies in the high school gymnasium or auditorium. The school house became the community center for entertainment, school activities, and other events which were both educational and social in nature. This created a need for better types of construction. New buildings increasingly included better lighting, heating, seating, size, and other equipment. The improvement in professional abilities of teachers, teaching techniques, and the expansion of high school course offerings, encouraged improvement in classroom design and in the type and quality of physical equipment. Enriched curriculums contributed to the need for changes in the types of high school buildings. Most high schools in Oklahoma now offer occupational courses ranging from a single typing class to activities that sometimes occupy a major portion of the time and effort of the school. Homemaking courses often necessitate a suite of rooms especially built and equipped for such courses. Agriculture and mechanical courses require shops, either separate from the regular building or set off from the regular classrooms to avoid

disturbance and noise. Not only do vocational courses need special rooms but many academic and cultural courses require rooms and buildings especially designed. To illustrate: instrumental and vocal music rooms must be sound proofed or removed from proximity to other classrooms; English and dramatic arts require stages and special equipment; science classes must have space and design different from other courses; art and similar subjects must have special facilities.

The first high school buildings were designed primarily for lecture classroom purposes. Group activities occupied but a minor part of the time and attention of the instructional program. As a consequence, high school buildings were not designed to make provisions for such phases of school work as lunch programs and indoor athletic games. One important function of the high school today is that of providing lunch facilities for the students. So necessary has this become, that rarely, if ever, does a board of education erect a high school building without including a cafeteria and dining rooms convenient for the faculty. Most schools have school lunch room facilities but, in the smaller schools, the high school students are cared for with the same facilities that serve the elementary grades. The auditorium has come to be considered as an integral part of any modern high school plant. This was originally true of many rural consolidated buildings. ~~The most obvious improvements in the~~

auditorium in recent years have been in acoustics, lighting, orchestra pits, stage curtains, and seating arrangements. Basket ball, wrestling, and other sports have, for several years required indoor facilities, not as an addition to the school plant, but as a part of it. The smaller schools combine the gymnasium and the auditorium but the newer and larger buildings now require separate units for these functions. The current emphasis is upon larger and better gymnasiums and stadiums with extensive seating capacity.

Changes in architectural design of high school buildings.--There have been constructed in Oklahoma during recent years a number of high school buildings that conform to the latest and best planning of which school authorities and school building architects are capable. A new building in Norman, Oklahoma, erected in 1954, has been rated by the American Institute of Architects as the best secondary education building in the Nation.¹ Another is in the Velma-Alma district, a village near the center of a large oil field and rural area in Stephens County.² The most noticeable changes in the newest buildings are in the height and shape. No high school building erected in Oklahoma during the past five years is more than two stories high and most are of one

¹American School Board Journal, CXXXI (January, 1955), p. 77.

²Oklahoma Teacher, XXXV (February, 1954).

story only. Square or rectangular shapes are practically obsolete although some of the largest ones are built around a rectangular court. For the most part, there no longer is marked uniformity among high school buildings. Some of them are in the shape of an L or a cross, a hollow square or a combination of these. Very noticeable is the large area of plate glass walls and the increase of outside light which enters the rooms. Instead of a steep roof, sloping several ways, it is more likely for roofs to slope in one direction only and then barely enough to provide drainage. If the slope is in two directions, it usually is toward the center instead of toward opposite sides. Modern utilities have created more healthful living conditions. Neon lights and larger window space make for better lighting; insulation for less noise; individual room temperature control for better heating and ventilation; single loaded corridors and outside classroom exits for reduced confusion and congestion of traffic; scientifically tinted walls and ceilings for a more pleasant emotional atmosphere; better arrangement of classrooms for time saving; and many other characteristics which were not thought of when Oklahoma built her first high schools.

The Recent Decline in Construction of High School Buildings

Reasons for decline.--The magnitude of the high school building program mentioned in a previous paragraph was the ~~result of the necessity for providing the facilities essential~~

for the new schools. When that need had been met, there was a marked decrease in the number of buildings constructed and there has been no great increase, even to the present, except in the cities, there has been relatively little high school building construction since the late twenties or early thirties. Several reasons account for this situation. There was a decrease in population in the state as a whole and particularly in the rural areas, villages and towns. Those schools which constructed buildings large enough in the first place have had little need for new buildings.

Property assessment practices have drastically reduced district valuations and the consequent bond debt potential. The Homestead Exemption Amendment to the State Constitution adopted in 1937 greatly curtailed the financial ability of all districts to build new structures. A constitutional limitation of 5 per cent on a valuation reduced by the Exemption practically closed the door to a building expansion program in all school districts except those whose wealth increased. Added to this condition was a rapid rise in demand for public school transportation advantages required the purchase of new buses, which in many smaller districts, could be accomplished only by issuing bonds. Dissipation of the bonding capacity because of this situation has kept many districts from remodeling or replacing their old high school buildings.

Many communities have been unwilling to erect new high school buildings because of the increased taxes. Added to this is the fact that they may not long be able to maintain high school because of decreased enrollment and a possible program of reorganization of school districts which would include their own small district. This situation, of course, applies only to the districts maintaining the smaller high schools.

Legal restrictions on building funds.--Except in federal defense areas, there are, in 1954, only three legal sources of revenue for constructing high school buildings, viz: the General Fund;¹ Constitutional Building Fund;² and, proceeds of bonds issued by the school district.³ Due to reduced valuations and increased building costs, few school districts have sufficient money in their general funds to construct a high school building. The special building fund, which consists of the proceeds of a special levy of not to exceed five mills on the assessed valuation of a district, may be voted for one year at any time. While the funds derived from this source in one year are inadequate for a high school building in most districts in Oklahoma, a district is permitted to accumulate money from this source for a number

¹Oklahoma School Laws, 1933, p. 18.

²Oklahoma State Constitution, art. 10, sec. 10.

³Ibid., sec. 26.

of years by recurring annual authorization.¹ Special building fund money may be used to complete buildings, build shops, and pay for other minor construction. Ordinarily, it is used for purposes like these but very seldom is it adequate for any major construction projects such as a new high school building.

Aside from these sources, only school district bonds remain as the one which can produce enough money for construction of a new high school building. The State Constitution sets a limitation upon the amount of bonds which may be issued by a school district. This provision is as follows:

No county, city, town, township, school district or other political corporation, or subdivision of the State shall be allowed to become indebted, in any manner, or for any purpose to an amount exceeding, in any year, the income and revenue provided for such year without the assent of three-fifths of the voters thereof, voting at an election, to be held for that purpose, nor in cases requiring such assent, shall any indebtedness in the aggregate exceeding five per centum of the valuation of the taxable property therein. . . .²

Although 5 per cent of the assessed valuation would be sufficient in most districts to pay for any high school building the district might need, these districts would have no great building problems if they were clear of indebtedness. The fact is, however, that few school districts having high schools have failed to use all or most of their bond capacity to keep current buildings repaired, equipped, and supplemented

¹School Laws of Oklahoma, 1953, p. 18

²Oklahoma State Constitution, art. 10, sec. 26.

or for other capital outlay purposes.

Current need for high school buildings and equipment.

--Because of the effects of the foregoing factors, the need for buildings, both high school and elementary, has become acute in a great many school districts and at present (1954) there is no legal way to remedy the situation. Until such time as the people of the state see fit to amend the State Constitution and remove these limitations, there seems to be little or no possibility of providing the buildings needed for high schools.

It should be pointed out that under the present restrictions imposed by the law, the actual financial ability of the district is rarely, if ever, reflected. There is little doubt that most school districts in Oklahoma could afford, without serious strain on financial ability, bonded indebtedness far greater than is now the case. A School Facility Survey sponsored jointly by the U. S. Office of Education and the various state departments of education has found that the current school debt is smaller in Oklahoma than in a list of states reported by this Survey. The per pupil debt in each of these states is as follows: Indiana, \$620; Colorado, \$491; Texas, \$250; Oregon, \$193; Minnesota, \$186; Arizona, \$164; Missouri, \$131; New Mexico, \$131; Oklahoma, \$82; Georgia, \$80; and Alabama, \$35.¹ This survey

¹Twenty-fifth Biennial Report, p. 206.

found that the estimated needs in 1954 were \$97,326,000¹ for new construction in Oklahoma. Not all of this is needed for high school buildings but, since only 12 per cent of all pupils enrolled in the public schools in Oklahoma attend in districts which do not maintain high schools,² the districts maintaining high schools would be expected to need most of the money. The survey does not specify needs for elementary and high schools separately but some inference may be drawn. While not all the construction needed is for high school purposes, of the total enrollment in districts maintaining high schools, approximately 40 per cent are in high school³ and high school buildings cost more per pupil enrolled than do elementary schools. On this basis, it may be estimated that, roughly, from 40 to 50 million of dollars are needed in Oklahoma for new high school construction.

The need for high school buildings, especially in the small high school, is only one phase of the inadequate situation which exists in many districts. Schools which find themselves unable to provide adequate buildings also are unable to equip them in keeping with current demand. Evidence of this is seen in the condition of the library, laboratory equipment, musical instruments, school buses, and other equipment which is so important to a well operated school.

¹Ibid., p. 205.

²Ibid., p. 203.

³Ibid., p. 426.

The reason for this inadequacy in many cases is financial. Limited State Aid allocations for maintenance and transportation purposes together with insufficient money from local enrichment funds make it difficult to equip the small high school properly.

Summary

For a few years following statehood, the development of the high school curriculum in Oklahoma was influenced largely by the colleges, because high school graduation was intended primarily as preparation for college attendance. In 1911, the Legislature directed the State Board of Education to classify high schools and, in compliance with this authorization, the Board appointed a high school inspector who operated under the authority of the Board but who maintained his office on the campus of the State University and depended on that institution for determination of the basis for high school classification. Prior to this time, the courses of the high school curriculum had consisted chiefly of academic and cultural subjects but this situation gradually gave way to emphasis on vocational instruction. This was encouraged by a provision of the Oklahoma State Constitution which required that agriculture and allied subjects be taught in all public schools of the state. These courses soon were supplemented by other types of occupational instruction, thereby creating a tendency which was accelerated

during the following years and continues to the present time. So pronounced has been this change that commercial, vocational homemaking, and other occupational subject matter fields of this type have come to occupy a prominent place in the curriculum of the high schools in Oklahoma.

Immediately following statehood, the number of available teachers was insufficient to staff the schools which had been established. In order to increase the teaching personnel, beginning in 1915, designated high schools properly equipped for this purpose, were authorized to offer teacher training courses. When the purpose for these high school courses had been accomplished, this type of instruction was discontinued. Another supplementary program was initiated for the purpose of offering one or two years of college instruction in conjunction with the high schools meeting the requirements specified for this purpose. Due to financial difficulties, this program also was discontinued after a few years in all but six high schools of the state. The junior high school was set up as a part of the high school curriculum to supplement the courses offered by the regular high school and to provide for a more satisfactory integration of pupils entering the high schools from the elementary grades. Approved junior high schools are operated as separate administrative units within the total high school program. This arrangement has been so successful that now there are 228 approved junior high schools in Oklahoma.

Improvement in design and functional value of buildings and other physical facilities for high school purposes kept pace with the development of the curriculum for several years. More recently, however, there has been a decline in the construction of high school buildings due to the constitutional limitation on the amount of school district bonds which can be authorized and also to the decline in enrollment in many high schools. Because of these conditions, most high school building construction for several years has been limited to the larger cities where the total population has increased and the high school enrollment has risen proportionately.

CHAPTER V

PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL IN HIGH SCHOOLS SINCE STATEHOOD

Introduction

For several years after statehood, more than 5000 elementary schools were maintained in districts not offering high school instruction. To secure teachers for these schools, certification standards were low, due, not only to a need for teachers who could not be secured, but also to lack of teacher training facilities in the normal schools and colleges. This situation did not continue long, however, because the people of Oklahoma were not content to have inadequately trained teachers. As soon as practicable, steps were taken to improve this condition. Although county certificates issued on the basis of local examinations continued to be used for nearly three decades, teachers with higher qualifications were employed as rapidly as possible in districts maintaining high schools. Improvement in teacher training techniques and rapid rise in the professional qualifications of teachers has continued from the early days of statehood to the present time.

It is the purpose of this chapter to outline the progress which has been made. It is intended to summarize the professional status of the teaching personnel in Oklahoma beginning shortly after statehood was attained and to develop the story of the progress made during the intervening years. Particular attention will be given in the latter part of the chapter to professional organizations established for the accomplishment of this purpose; to legislative action leading to higher standards; and, to a revision of certification requirements which have been conducive to professional advancement.

Qualifications of Teachers in the New State

Special training not required for early schools.--

Professional training was not a legal prerequisite for securing a certificate to teach school in Oklahoma during the years immediately following statehood. A person of proper age was entitled to be issued a teaching certificate if he was of good moral character and could pass the prescribed examination. Even these requirements did not attract teachers in sufficient numbers to staff the schools in the 5000 or more school districts which were in existence in Oklahoma at the time.

Normal schools for the training of teachers were in operation at Edmond, Weatherford, and Alva when Oklahoma became a state. In 1908, the Legislature established three

teacher training institutions in that part of the state which had been Indian Territory and located them at Tahlequah, Ada, and Durant. Six normal schools, however, did not train teachers rapidly enough nor in adequate numbers to meet the needs of the public schools in the new state.

Regulations for issuing teaching certificates.--It was related in a previous chapter¹ that certificates for teachers in Oklahoma before statehood were, for the most part, issued by the county superintendent and upon the basis of examination. This continued for almost five years after Oklahoma became a state. Until 1912, certificates were issued upon the basis of the same regulations that were in force immediately prior to statehood. During that year, the State Board of Education adopted new regulations which were prefaced by a statement that: "The rules and regulations herein contained shall supersede all rules and former regulations governing the issuing of certificates in the state of Oklahoma."² Despite the changed regulations, however, county certificates of First, Second, and Third Grades continued to be issued and were widely used for several years. Reference to Chapter II³ outlines the requirements for high school certificates in Oklahoma Territory. Not many changes were made

¹Supra, p. 53

²First Biennial Report, p. 196.

³Supra, p. 53.

in these regulations when the State Board of Education revised the Territorial standards in 1912. Requirements for the general high school certificates remained essentially unchanged and those for teaching special high school subjects continued to be issued on the same basis as before. The professional certificate, however, was abolished. This was one which the State Board of Education authorized in 1910 for a person not less than 21 years of age, having at least twelve months teaching experience and able to satisfy the State Board of his ability to fill an executive position. Applicants were required to make an average grade of 90 per cent on an examination in 28 subjects with no grade below 70.¹ These certificates were not mandatory for school administrators and the regulations authorizing them were rescinded in 1912 by action of the State Board of Education.²

Although few high school certificates were issued during the first four years of statehood, this situation changed rapidly thereafter. Two factors accounted for this change. One was the large increase in the number of high schools and the second was the accreditation movement which began shortly after the appointment of a high school inspector in 1911. Although the law permitted employment of a third grade certificate teacher in the high schools, this was not

¹Third Biennial Report, p. 302.

²First Biennial Report, p. 196.

permitted in an accredited school. In 1912, the first printed rules and regulations issued by the State Board of Education dealing with accreditation of high schools in Oklahoma provided that:

A high school teacher must be the graduate of a university or college of the standard of the North Central Association of Colleges and Universities, of one of the institutions of this State authorized by law to issue a State Certificate, or the holder of a State High School Certificate valid in Oklahoma.¹

There were two bases upon which high school certificates were issued. A person was eligible for such a certificate if he were a graduate of one of the Oklahoma state normal schools or of the College of Liberal Arts of the State University. In the latter case, he must have completed a course in the School of Education and have to his credit not fewer than fourteen units in educational subjects of which at least six units must have been in the subject of psychology.² A unit of college work for this purpose, was interpreted as a minimum number of class recitations during a prescribed period of time. An illustration: A class in one subject meeting five times in a week for an entire school year earned ten units.³ Graduates of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College and of colleges of equal standing in Oklahoma and in

¹Ibid., p. 194.

²Ibid., p. 199.

³Ibid.

other states also were entitled to a high school certificate upon completion of the same amount of college work that was required in the State University.¹ The other basis was that he already be the holder of an intermediate and grammar grade certificate and be able to pass an examination in the following subjects: high school algebra, botany, chemistry, plane and solid geometry, English, history, Latin, one modern language (German or French), philosophy of education, political economics, and zoology.

Provisions made for improving teacher qualifications.

--Because the teacher training institutions were unable to furnish enough teachers for the public schools during the first few years of statehood, other means were employed to supplement the work of the "Normals", as they were called. Two of these devices were the County Teacher Institute (sometimes called the County Normal) and the Teachers Reading Circle. In 1893, the Oklahoma Territorial Legislature enacted a law² authorizing the various counties to conduct county teachers institutes during the summer months for the purpose of offering courses of instruction to prospective teachers preparing to take examinations for certificates. Three periods of four weeks were conducted each summer in any county where there was sufficient demand. Each institute

¹Ibid.

²Statutes of Oklahoma, 1893, pp. 1408-09.

was under the direction of a "Conductor" and such helpers as he might need to conduct the classes. The county commissioners of the county where the institute was held were required by law to appropriate \$200 from county funds to help defray expenses. This law remained in effect after Oklahoma became a state.

The County Teachers Institute was an expedient to meet an urgent temporary early day need. That its usefulness was about finished was indicated by a statement made by the State Superintendent in 1912:

The best school men and women of the State are coming to realize that the old county summer normal with its mediocre faculty and its annual flock of applicants for certificates, has about served its day in Oklahoma; we have six State Normal Schools for the specific purpose of giving our teachers both academic and professional training and the intelligent citizenship of the State are warning us that the time is coming when nothing short of professionally trained teachers will be given work in any of our schools.¹

Another program of teacher improvement activity was the Teacher Reading Circle, the purpose of which was to prepare prospective teachers for teacher certificate examinations. This program was operated in co-operation with the County Teachers Institute but independently of and supplementing the latter. It had the advantage of continuing throughout the year instead of being limited to four weeks in the summer as was the Teachers Institute. It was also more extensive than the latter in its professional scope

¹Fourth Biennial Report, State Department of Education, Oklahoma, 1912, p. 14.

because it was operated under the direction of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction and the State Board of Education. A Board of Directors selected courses of professional and literary reading matter and adopted a list of textbooks for use by the teachers who were preparing to take the reading circle examinations. The grades resulting from these examinations could be applied toward a state certificate.

The reading circle program was divided into three categories, depending upon the type of certificate the member was seeking. These were Grammar School, High School, and Professional reading courses. Upon completing the first two, the applicant was entitled to receive a state high school certificate licensing him to teach in any grammar school or high school in the state. The professional reading circle course included the other two and, in addition, the subjects of psychology, pedagogy, history of education, and Oklahoma School Law. Upon completion of a reading circle course, an examination was given and the test papers sent to the State Superintendent for grading and recording. A passing grade of 85 per cent was required in each subject and a filing fee of \$3.00 per course was charged. The reading circle program proved to be popular among the teachers of the state. Three years after statehood the State Superintendent reported that more than 3000 teachers were enrolled for this type of work for professional advancement. This popularity receded,

however, when the supply of teachers became adequate for the public schools.

Advancement in certificating procedures.--At statehood, and for several years thereafter, teachers' certificates were issued by the State Board of Education and by the county superintendents. With so many certificating agencies operating within the State, confusion and inefficiency were certain to exist. The State Superintendent described the situation in a report to the Legislature in 1912 when he said:

Under the present plan of issuing county certificates we have about as many standards as there are counties in the state. In order to have a higher standard and a more uniform standard for all grades of county certificates than we now have, we should provide a state examining board to pass on the manuscripts of all applicants for county certificates who desire credentials that are valid throughout the state. . . .¹

This situation was further complicated when, in 1913, a law was enacted by the State Legislature to permit boards of education in independent districts to issue certificates to the teachers in their schools.² This additional confusion lasted until 1929 when the State Legislature enacted a law providing that: "All authority in the matter of examination and certification of all teachers in Oklahoma is hereby vested in the State Board of Education, and the county and city examining boards are hereby abolished."³ From that time

¹Ibid., p. 14

²School Laws of Oklahoma, 1913, p. 528.

³Ibid., 1929, p. 33.

until the present all teachers certificates of every kind have been issued only by the State Board of Education and in compliance with uniform regulations applying to all teachers in every type of public school in the state. These regulations have been revised from time to time but such revisions usually have been calculated to improve the professional standards of teachers.

In 1947, the State Board of Education adopted a regulation requiring professional certificates for all county superintendents, all superintendents of districts maintaining high schools, and elementary and secondary principals who devote no more than half their time to classroom teaching. All administrators certificates require not less than two years professional experience and a minimum of one half year of graduate work in public school administration.

Professional Improvement Since 1947

Establishment of Oklahoma Commission on Teacher Education and Certification.--As outlined in the preceding paragraphs of this chapter, there has been consistent progress made in the improvement of qualifications of teaching personnel in Oklahoma. In February, 1947, the State Department of Education, several educational institutions, and other agencies concerned with the improvement of teacher education, established the Oklahoma Commission on Teacher Education and Certification. This commission came into being as a

voluntary cooperative effort. The purpose of the commission was to act in an advisory capacity to the State Board of Education and to the institutions of higher education participating in the training of teachers. It is now definitely sponsored by the State Department of Education and the Oklahoma Education Association but, among several additional agencies joining in its objectives, are the various colleges and universities of the state, the Oklahoma Congress of Parents and Teachers, the State School Boards Association, and many interested local units, groups, and committees.¹ This commission makes its recommendations to the State Board of Education whose official action is necessary for making regulations governing teachers and teachers' certificates. The constitution of the commission provides for "a council on Teacher Education to act as an advisory body to the Commission on all matters pertaining to teacher education in Oklahoma."² This council includes all the members of the commission and, in addition thereto, representatives of agencies, groups, and institutions interested in improvement of teacher education in Oklahoma and includes approximately one hundred persons in its membership.

¹Summary of Progress, Oklahoma Commission on Teacher Education and Certification. Commission Bulletin of Information, August, 1954, p. 1. (mimeographed).

²Constitution, Oklahoma Commission on Teacher Education and Certification, 1952. (mimeographed).

Current regulations governing professional training for teachers.--Mandatory administrators certificates for superintendents and principals represent but one phase of the program for improvement in teachers' qualifications. In 1949, the State Legislature enacted the Oklahoma School Code which clarified all certification policies and procedures. This act provides that the State Board of Education shall:

Have full and exclusive authority in all matters pertaining to standards of qualifications and the certification of persons for instructional, supervisory and administrative positions and services in the public schools of the State, and shall formulate rules and regulations governing the issuance and revocation of certificates for county superintendents of schools, district superintendents of schools, principals, supervisors, librarians, school nurses, school bus drivers, visiting teachers, classroom teachers and for other personnel performing instructional, administrative and supervisory services. . . .¹

On the basis of this legislation and on recommendations made by the Commission on Teacher Education and Certification, the State Board of Education has revised its regulations for licensing teachers and other instructional personnel in the schools of this state. In order to encourage teachers to remain professionally qualified, the granting of life certificates was discontinued in July, 1950. The regulations of the State Board of Education provided that, after that date, there would be issued Standard teaching certificates valid for five years; Provisional teaching certificates effective for three years; and Temporary teaching certificates valid

¹Oklahoma School Code, 1949, p. 8.

only until the end of the fiscal year in which it was issued. In each of these categories, high school teachers are required to have a special certificate to teach in any one of 17 subject matter fields.¹ Prerequisites for standard and provisional certificates include minimum qualifications of the Bachelor's Degree, including sufficient college work to insure a cultural background and, in addition, specialized training in subject and professional education for teaching the subjects for which the certificate is issued.

In a previous paragraph, mention was made of administrators certificates. These consist of standard and professional certificates granted to county superintendents of schools, district superintendents, secondary school principals, and elementary school principals. All superintendents and county superintendents are required to have these certificates but a principal of a secondary or of an elementary school is required to have one only if he devotes more than half his time to administrative duties.

All certificates are issued on the basis of an application to the State Board of Education and includes an official transcript of the courses completed in college. Standard certificates may be renewed if

¹Agriculture; Art; Bookkeeping; Business; Foreign Language; Health and Physical Education; Home Economics; Industrial Arts; Language Arts; Librarian; Mathematics; Music; combined Instrumental and Vocal; Music, Instrumental; Music, Vocal; Science; Social Studies; and, Speech.

Evidence is submitted of at least three years of satisfactory school experience during the last five year period of the validity of the certificate. There must be at least one year teaching experience at the level (elementary or secondary) for which the certificate was issued.¹

For renewal of administrators certificates, the three years experience must have been in public school administration. Provisional certificates are not subject to renewal but the temporary certificate may be renewed if the holder completes eight semester hours of resident college credit during the time the certificate is in force.

The standard certificate, whether for administration or teaching, is the most advanced type of credential issued by the State Board of Education. Oklahoma History and 6 semester hours of college credit in American History and Government is required as a part of the general education courses prescribed. Otherwise, the chief difference between this type of certificate and the other two (provisional and temporary) is the length of term for which it is issued.

In addition to certificates for teachers and administrators, the State Board of Education has exclusive authority to issue certificates for school nurses; teachers of special education for handicapped children, supervisors of school census and attendance; and vocational certificates in the

¹Laws and Regulations of the Certification of Teachers and Administrators, State Department of Education, Oklahoma, 1953, p. 12.

fields of Distributive Education, Trades and Industrial Education, Vocational Agriculture, and Vocational Home Economics.

Two factors have had an important bearing on the improvement of teacher qualifications in Oklahoma. One of these is the program of co-operation between the State Board of Education and the institutions of higher learning offering teacher training courses. As has been mentioned previously in this chapter, the Oklahoma Commission on Teacher Education and Certification, which acts in an advisory capacity to the State Board of Education, consists, among others, of representatives from the State University and certain colleges in the state. By this means, there is provided an avenue for securing agreement concerning the courses to be offered by the colleges and which are required by the State Board of Education for teacher training purposes. When an agreement is reached, it becomes the recommendation of the commission and is thereupon presented to the State Board of Education. This procedure has made possible a teacher training program which has the approval of the colleges and of the State certification authorities.

The other phase of this program having a significant bearing on improving teacher qualifications in this state is a provision of the State Aid law which prescribes minimum technical qualifications for any teacher receiving a part of his salary from the State Aid fund. By the process of raising these qualifications each year, teachers have been induced

to attend college in order to meet the requirements of the law and be eligible for the increased salary which the additional college training provides. Beginning in 1949, the lowest qualifications accepted in a state aid district was 70 college hours. During that year, 1815 teachers in Oklahoma were entitled to be paid the minimum state aid salary for those having 70-89 college hours.¹ In 1952, the minimum was raised to 86 hours. During that year, only 683 teachers were in the minimum salary bracket.² Each year the minimum requirements have been increased 8 college hours over that of the preceding year. In 1954, the lowest qualification eligible for state aid money was 102 college hours and only 403 teachers were listed in this category.³

More pronounced than the increase in minimum requirements for certification has been the increase in the number of teachers in Oklahoma holding degrees. In 1949, 12,216 teachers held the Bachelor's Degree; 3112, the Master's Degree; and 16 teachers in the public schools of Oklahoma held the Doctor's Degree. In 1954, the number of teachers holding the Bachelor's Degree had increased to 13,580; those

¹Twenty-Third Biennial Report, State Department of Education, Oklahoma, 1949, p. 281.

²Twenty-Fourth Biennial Report, State Department of Education, Oklahoma, 1951, p. 337.

³Twenty-Fifth Biennial Report, State Department of Education, Oklahoma, 1954, p. 422.

holding the Master's Degree to 5,327; and the Doctor's Degree to 29.¹

Summary

For a few years after Oklahoma became a state, teachers were not required to have special professional training. Had such requirements prevailed there would have been few teachers available either for the few high schools or for the larger number of districts which did not maintain high schools. In order to remedy this state of affairs, the County Normal Institute and the Teachers Reading Circle were established to assist teachers in securing certificates and to increase the number of teachers. These aids provided personnel for the non-high school districts and released for the high schools the teachers who had some professional training and those who were willing to improve their qualifications by attending a college or normal school.

A legislative act authorizing the State Board of Education to classify high schools and the consequent appointment of a high school inspector for this purpose, provided a strong incentive for securing high school affiliation and for the employment of instructional personnel in those high schools capable of meeting the requirements for such affiliation. Attainment of this status made it necessary for a high school teacher to be a college graduate or the possessor

¹Ibid., p. 340.

of a high school certificate.

In 1947, there was established the Oklahoma Commission on Teacher Education and Certification. This is an organization sponsored by the State Department of Education and the Oklahoma Education Association which agencies act in co-operation with other professional and lay groups whose principal interest is improvement of teaching. This commission has no official status but is an advisory group for the State Board of Education which body has the authority to formulate certification standards. In 1949, the law gave the State Board of Education clear jurisdiction in all matters pertaining to teacher certification, a fact which has resulted in raising certificate requirements to a level beyond that of any former time. Because of this authority, the State Board of Education formulated a regulation making mandatory professional certificates for all superintendents and non-teaching principals both in elementary and secondary schools. Other regulations limiting teaching certificates to a maximum of 5 years validity; providing for issuing special teaching certificates in all major subject matter fields; and, requiring continued experience and additional college training for the renewal of the short term certificates, have had the effect of improving teacher qualifications to an extent hitherto unknown in Oklahoma.

CHAPTER VI

HIGH SCHOOL ACCREDITATION SINCE STATEHOOD

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to trace the high school accreditation program from statehood until the present time. The original purpose of high school graduation was to enable students to enter a college or university and successfully pursue its courses of instruction. For this reason, the colleges had much to say about the type of curriculum a high school should offer. When these courses were approved by the University and were taught under conditions satisfactory to that institution, the graduates of the high school in question were considered as being prepared for college and the high school was listed by the University as approved. The first act of being approved was known as "accreditation." The development of this accreditation program, therefore, constitutes an important phase of the growth of the high school movement in Oklahoma.

During the first decade after Oklahoma became a state, the purpose of high school attendance began to change and more emphasis was placed on non-academic instruction.

This brought about a need for different types of high school courses and for a willingness on the part of the colleges and high schools to co-operate in determining the needs and objectives of the latter. The success of the accreditation program, therefore, largely has been the result of policies lying behind two events. One was the decision in 1911, to accredit high schools on the basis of an inspection by a member of the staff of the University of Oklahoma. He was designated as the "Inspector of High Schools." The other event was a legislative act, in 1919, placing this responsibility with the State Department of Education and the creation therein of a Department of High School Inspection. The progress of the accreditation movement is outlined in this chapter.

Beginning of College Accreditation

State Board of Education authorized to classify high schools.--In 1911, the Legislature passed an act making it the duty of the State Board of Education to "classify the public schools of the state and properly accredit them to the various higher educational institutions of the state."¹ This law was approved and became operative on March 6, 1911. In compliance therewith, the State Board of Education created the position of State Inspector of High Schools on October 12, 1911, and appointed A. C. Parsons to the position.²

¹First Biennial Report, p. 75.

²Ibid., p. 80.

Inasmuch as the accreditation of schools was to the higher educational institutions, these were the agencies which prescribed the standards for accrediting.

Purpose of accreditation.--During the period of growth and expansion, high schools were accredited "to the University" and consequently to other institutions of higher learning in the state. The High School Inspector, while owing his position to the State Board of Education, made his reports to the State University Committee on Affiliation. There was considerable adherence to the idea that the four year accredited high school was primarily a college preparatory institution and that, since the college was entitled to prescribe the conditions of entrance, these conditions should be incorporated into the courses of study and the operational procedures of the high schools. This situation accounts for the traditional academic and cultural courses offered by the first high schools. The larger high schools often were able to offer occupational and vocational courses in addition to the prescribed college preparatory subjects. In the smaller schools, however, the limited number of students and inadequate financial resources usually made it difficult to offer instruction in any but the courses which were required for college entrance.

Regulations and requirements for accreditation.--A University bulletin listed the following instructions as ~~preliminary to high school accreditation with the institutions~~

of higher learning in Oklahoma:

When the authorities of any school desire to have their school affiliated, formal application for inspection should be made to the High School Inspector, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

The High School Inspector will visit the school and will make a report to the Committee on Affiliation which, with the advice of the High School Inspector, will determine the units of entrance credit to which such school is entitled. A formal notice of affiliation and a list of these units will be sent to the school.

In determining the amount of credit to be granted to any school, such subjects will be considered separately. Credit will be granted for such subjects as are taught, in accordance with requirements stated below, by competent teachers who have the use of adequate library and laboratory facilities. High Schools which meet the standards for affiliation with regard to qualifications of teachers, library and laboratory equipment, and length of term, but offer less than four years work may be accredited for such subjects as are sufficiently well taught to meet the requirements.¹

The University bulletin also prescribed the following regulations and requirements for standard high schools:

1. Accredited high schools shall offer a one, two, three or four-year course of study.
2. The length of the school term shall not be less than thirty-six weeks.
3. Not less than sixteen units as hereinafter described shall compose a four-year high school course, twelve units a three-year high school course, eight units a two-year high school course, and four units a one-year high school course.
4. A unit shall consist of one subject pursued for thirty-six weeks with a recitation period of not less than forty minutes daily, with ample outside preparation.
5. A high school teacher must be the graduate of a university or college of the standards of the North Central Association of Colleges and Universities;²

¹Affiliation of Secondary Schools (Norman: University of Oklahoma, 1919), p. 5.

²An accrediting agency operating in 19 mid-western states.

- one of the institutions of this State authorized by law to issue a State certificate; or the holder of a State high school certificate valid in Oklahoma.
6. The library and laboratory equipment must be ample for the work to be offered.
 7. Not more than four units may be carried by a student at the time except in instances of extraordinary students, in which five units shall be the maximum.
 8. Teachers shall not be required to teach more than six classes.¹

When a high school was found to be meeting these standards, it was assigned to its proper classification in one of the following groups, and notice to that effect was contained in the next Bulletin of Affiliated Secondary Schools. These classifications were:

1. Those accredited for 15 or more units.
2. Those accredited for from 12 to 14½ units.
3. Those accredited for from 8 to 11½ units.
4. Those accredited for from 4 to 7½ units.²

Development of the Accrediting Program Through
the State Department of Education

Rapid increase in number of high schools.--During the four years between statehood and the time of the appointment of a high school inspector, in 1911, the number of high schools in Oklahoma increased rapidly. By 1912, there were 54 such schools of which 29 offered four years of work. Two years later this number had increased to 175 of which 107 were fully accredited.³ There were about 400 public high

¹First Biennial Report, p. 194.

²Affiliation of Secondary Schools, p. 9.

³Sixteenth Biennial Report, p. 46.

schools in the state at that time;¹ a fact which indicates the growth of the high school movement.

Obstacles encountered.--Inspector Parsons reported to the State Board of Education that there were certain obstacles to satisfactory program of high school accrediting. He mentioned these:

First. Very few cities in Oklahoma can maintain their schools on a five mill levy. This makes it necessary to hold a special election in order to vote additional taxation. The opposition to increasing taxation for school purposes usually takes the form of a criticism upon the school officials and is injurious to school sentiment.

Second. Throughout Oklahoma the schools have inclined this year to the policy of retrenchment. The terms have been shortened in some instances and in others the number of teachers has been reduced below that absolutely necessary to do efficient work.

Third. There is a scarcity of well qualified teachers for high school work.

Fourth. In some communities the unity of the school spirit has been destroyed by local feuds; contention on the part of banks to control school funds; and tendencies on the part of boards of education to elect teachers because of personal favoritism rather than because of their qualifications.²

Progress made through co-operative efforts. In May, 1916, the State Superintendent and the High School Inspector called a meeting of school men of the State representing the high schools. It was the first of several Oklahoma high school conferences. This conference adopted the following resolution:

¹First Biennial Report, p. 194.

²Ibid.

The accredited high schools of Oklahoma will accept the rating given high schools by the Committee on Affiliation at the State University, and will require all applicants from non-accredited high schools to pass a thorough-going examination for all credits granted.¹

On December 1, 1916, representatives of the colleges met and approved resolutions stating that, effective January 1, 1917:

1. No student entering our schools shall be given a greater number of credits toward graduation than is allowed to the school by the latest bulletin sent out by the University.
2. No credit will be given for work in non-accredited schools or in non-accredited subjects, except upon a thorough examination in those subjects in which such credit is sought.²

The following institutions approved these resolutions:

Kingfisher College, Henry Kendall College, Catholic University, Methodist University of Oklahoma, Baptist University, Phillips University, Central State Normal School, East Central State Normal School, Northwestern State Normal School, Northeastern State Normal School, Southeastern State Normal School, Southwestern State Normal School, Oklahoma College for Women, Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, University of Oklahoma, Eastern University Preparatory School.³

The University of Oklahoma took a long step towards complete co-operation with the high schools when it adopted, on November 5, 1918, a policy removing barriers to industrial and vocational courses in high school. Following is the text of the resolution setting forth this new policy:

¹Ibid., p. 4.

²Ibid.

³Ibid.

Graduates of fully accredited high schools will be admitted to Freshman standing in the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Engineering and the School of Fine Arts. Students planning to continue their work beyond the high school should consult their school authorities and elect such courses as will best fit them for their chosen college or professional school.¹

A bulletin issued in June, 1919, in explaining the attitudes of the University, made this significant statement:

It is understood that the high school exists for the training of the greater number who do not go to college, rather than for the smaller number who do go. The courses that constitute the best education for the duties of practical life constitute also the best preparation in general for the college or technical school.²

Legal authority for accrediting vested in the State Department of Education.--In 1919, the State Legislature enacted a law placing authority for high school accrediting with the State Department of Education. This Act read:

Section 1. There hereby is created in the office of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction the Department of High School Inspection, which shall have exclusive and sole authority to define official standards of excellence in all matters relating to the administration, course of study, instruction in the high schools of the State and to accredit those schools in which the specified standards are maintained.

The State Superintendent of Public Instruction shall be at the head of the Department of High School Inspection.

Section 2. It shall be the duty of the High School Inspector to visit all schools in the State of Oklahoma doing high school work, consult with high school superintendents, principals, and Boards of Education, assist them in standardizing their schools and affiliating them with the State University, and A. and M. College, the Oklahoma College for Women, the six State Normal schools

¹Ibid., p. 5.

²Ibid.

and all other colleges in the State of Oklahoma doing school work of college rank. When any high school has been visited and accredited, it shall be the duty of said inspectors to notify in writing the high school visited, together with all institutions in the State college rank, of the standards of said high school and the number of high school units for which it is approved. The State Superintendent shall file with the State Board of Education and the State Board of Agriculture a monthly report covering the work done and recommendations made during the month by the State High School Inspectors.¹

In keeping with the provisions of this law, the State Superintendent recommended to the State Board of Education the appointment of three high school inspectors: M. A. Nash, C. M. Howell, and C. W. Turner, who assumed their duties July 1, 1919.² Ten years later, in 1929, an assistant high school inspector was added to the staff which was thereafter designated as the Division of Examiners and Inspectors in the State Department of Education.³ In 1941, the Legislature again changed the name of the Division to that of the Division of Examination, Auditing, and Inspection and authorized the employment of six assistant examiners whose sole responsibility was to inspect and recommend for accrediting the high schools of the state.⁴

Results achieved by the campaign for high school accreditation.--The conditions which had obstructed the

¹Session Laws of Oklahoma, 1919, p. 129.

²Eighth Biennial Report, 1920, p. 64.

³Session Laws of Oklahoma, 1929, p. 282.

⁴Session Laws of Oklahoma, 1941, p. 414.

progress of the accrediting movement became less formidable after the appointment of a high school inspector. Under his leadership, a movement immediately was started to classify the high schools in the state. One of the first steps was taken when:

On January 9, 1912, the State Board of Education adopted a uniform course of study for high schools in Oklahoma. Courses were arranged covering one, two, three and four years of high school respectively. A synopsis of this course was printed and distributed among the high schools and teachers of the state.¹

Although the State Board of Education prescribed rules and regulations and otherwise adopted policies pertaining to standardization, it must not be assumed that all procedures were "handed down" from the Inspector, the State Board of Education, or the institutions of higher learning. These agencies all had a part in the formulation of accrediting regulations. Indicative of the formulation of common objectives designed for the benefit of high schools and colleges alike:

A meeting of the city superintendents and high school principals together with the presidents and representatives of the various state and private institutions of higher learning, was called in Oklahoma City, April 26 and 27, 1912, to discuss the changes and conditions to this course as appeared to be desirable. Committees were appointed to prepare and submit to this meeting outlines of suitable courses of study in the various high school subjects. Over one hundred of the leading school men and women of the State contributed to this work.²

¹First Biennial Report, p. 194.

²Ibid., p. 195.

Since 1919, when the Department of High School Inspection was created and made a part of the State Department of Education, the Legislature frequently has amended the law, usually only to the extent of changing the name of the department, modifying some of its functions, or revising the number of staff personnel. Mention has been made of the action of the Eighteenth Session of the State Legislature which combined the Divisions of High School Inspection and of Rural School Inspection. In 1949 the Legislature enacted a measure known as the "Oklahoma School Code"¹ which abolished all technical department designations previously imposed by the legislative action and authorized the State Board of Education to create divisions within the State Department of Education and to determine the number of persons employed therein. Since that time the personnel concerned with the administration and supervision of high schools has been known as the Division of Secondary Education.

Regardless of the designation or the number of staff members of the department having authority in the matter of high school inspection its manner of operation has remained essentially unchanged during the years. Its chief function has been to check the high schools for compliance with the regulations and standards for accreditation as set by the State Board of Education. In recent years, however, the

¹Session Laws of Oklahoma, 1949, p. 517.

tendency has been away from the "inspection" type of operation and toward one of service to the local school authorities by means of supervision and co-operation in an advisory and consultative capacity. Today (1954) this duty is performed by a staff of one director and seven assistant directors, one of whom is a Negro who devotes his entire time to Negro high schools. For several years there have been no public high schools in Oklahoma that are not accredited. The law provides that only accredited high schools are eligible to receive State Aid funds.¹ Inasmuch as State Aid money is essential to maintaining a full term of school, non-accredited schools usually are unable to operate for lack of adequate financial resources.

Purpose and value of North Central Association affiliation,--At the time of this writing, all public high schools in Oklahoma are accredited by the State Board of Education which implies that they have complied with the rules and regulations of that Board with respect to attainment of prescribed standards concerning quality of instruction and of physical equipment. It does not imply, however, that the level of the standards is identical in all accredited schools. Local economic and other conditions often prevent some schools from offering the same quality of school work which is possible in other communities. The general criterion for state

¹Ibid., 1953, p. 109.

accreditation was described in the official high school bulletin issued June 1, 1922, as follows:

The State Department of Education seeks to take as its criterion in determining the creditability of a school not an ideal standard but the standard shown to be attainable by the average high school operating under the limitations of the educational facilities available under the laws of the State of Oklahoma.¹

Those high schools aspiring to higher rating and able to exceed the minimum state requirements may become members of the North Central Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges, an accrediting agency whose affiliation represents the highest accredited rating available to high schools in the states it represents.

The north Central Association was organized in 1895 for the purpose of establishing closer relationships between the colleges and secondary schools in the nineteen states² where it functions. Affiliation with this agency is granted only after a thorough inspection and rating to determine whether its standards have been met by the high school or college seeking membership. The first high school in Oklahoma to become a member of the North Central Association was the Oklahoma City high school in 1910. The following year,

¹State Accredited High Schools, State Department of Education, Oklahoma, 1922, p. 2.

²Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Dakota, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming.

Enid, McAlester, Muckogee, and Tulsa were approved for membership.¹ By 1920, 49 high schools had met the requirements of this accrediting agency and had been granted full recognition thereby. At the present time, (1954) 125 White public high schools and 13 Negro high schools are members of and accredited by the North Central Association. For a high school to have membership in the North Central Association is evidence that it has attained a level of excellence higher than that usually required for state high school accreditation. This is true to such extent that 15 counties in Oklahoma have no North Central Association high schools, although in each of these counties are several high schools and all of them are accredited by the State Board of Education. The reader is referred to page 215 of the Appendix which outlines the requirements for membership in the North Central Association and to page 219 which lists the public high schools in Oklahoma holding this rating.

Summary

Prior to 1911 there was no central high school accrediting agency in Oklahoma but high schools meeting the requirements of the State University were accredited to that institution. During 1911, the State Board of Education became the legal agency for this purpose and thereafter it accredited high schools to the various colleges and universities in the

¹Eighth Biennial Report, p. 72.

state. Regulations were prescribed to classify and standardize the high schools. This action resulted in an increased number of accredited schools and in an improvement in the high school program from the standpoint of instruction and physical equipment.

Conferences in 1916 and 1917 between representatives of the high schools and of the colleges resulted in a better understanding of the objectives of high schools and of the procedures necessary for their attainment.

In 1919, all authority for high school accrediting was vested with the State Department of Education, which body has been responsible for this duty since that time. In addition to state accreditation, many high schools in Oklahoma have become members of the North Central Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges.

CHAPTER VII
FINANCING THE HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM
SINCE STATEHOOD

Introduction

Development of the public high school program in Oklahoma has been influenced greatly by the financial conditions with which high schools have had to deal since statehood. Inequities in the distribution of wealth and of population in the state have imposed formidable difficulties which restricted the operation of high schools almost from the beginning. Following statehood, the first school revenues consisted of school district taxes and of income from an endowment known as the Permanent School Fund. Although both of these sources later increased in amount, the former was, from the first year, the principal source of financial support for public schools.

In recognition of the fact that local revenues could not meet the needs of certain districts, the State Legislature, in 1919, appropriated \$100,000 for the benefit of "weak" schools which, originally, were those maintaining elementary grades only. The amounts of subsequent appropriations were

increased year after year until State Aid money became a major source of support for a large number of the high schools in Oklahoma, as well as for the elementary schools.

In 1927, State Aid funds were increased to an amount which exceeded \$8,000,000. With this appropriation, the Legislature required that the money thereafter should be distributed to all public schools and, in addition, prescribed an equalization formula to determine the amount any school should receive. In 1935, the law was further amended to provide for the guarantee of prescribed minimum payments for salaries, maintenance, and transportation to those districts which were legally qualified to receive this money. For the time being, these appropriations provided sufficient funds for a full term of school in all districts, but they did not permanently solve the financial problem. Mounting costs of the large number of high schools continued to aggravate the conditions to such extent that the State Aid funds again became inadequate.

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize the means whereby all public schools in Oklahoma, and particularly the high schools, have been financed. This account will include the story of the Permanent School Fund from its original status to the present time and, in addition, will relate the part that local property taxes have played in providing funds for operating schools. In addition to the account of these two sources of revenue, the chapter includes a record of the

state's financial participation, beginning with the small appropriations for elementary schools and increasing in amount until 1954, when all public high schools in Oklahoma receive state financial aid.

School Revenues in the Early Years
of Statehood

The Permanent School Fund.--When the Congress of the United States passed the Enabling Act which admitted Oklahoma to the Union, it provided for financing a system of public schools in the new state. For this purpose there was created an endowment fund consisting of certain designated lands in that part of the state which had been Oklahoma Territory, and for a cash fund in lieu of land, in former Indian Territory. This Act provided:

That upon admission of the State into the Union, sections 16 and 36 in every township in Oklahoma Territory are hereby granted to the State for the use and benefit of the common schools . . . There is hereby appropriated . . . the sum of \$5 million for the use and benefit of the public schools in lieu of sections 16 and 36 in Indian Territory.¹

The land set aside for the benefit of the public schools comprised approximately 1,415,000 acres, exclusive of lands set aside for the benefit of the state institutions of higher learning. This land and the \$5,000,000 appropriation constituted Oklahoma's Common School Fund. Because the common schools (a term used interchangeably with "public

¹General Statutes of Oklahoma, 1908, The Enabling Act, p. 65.

schools") were permitted to receive only the revenue derived from the earnings from grants, the income did not amount to any considerable sum. The first apportionment, in 1908, was for a six months period and amounted to 65 cents for each child of legal school age. A year later the amount was \$1.50 per child for the first full year. In the beginning, some school authorities believed this revenue would support the schools. In 1910 the State Superintendent said:

Five per cent (5%) on this amount ^{total} principal of the fund⁷ will give the children of the common schools . . . nearly \$4.00 per capita for every child in the State. It can be safely said that the public schools of Oklahoma can be run in every district in the State for four months in the year on the State apportionment for many years to come without any taxation whatever and in many districts in the State school can be run for six months in the year on this apportionment without any taxation.¹

Most of the granted land was sold during the first ten years after statehood.² At the present time (1954) there remains to the credit of the Common School Fund, 399,247 acres of unsold land having an appraised value of more than \$15,000,000.³ As this land has been sold, the proceeds have been invested in high class securities until the total of such investments now amounts to more than \$70,000,000. This sum, plus the unsold lands, makes a capital amount in excess

¹Third Biennial Report, p. 16

²Sixteenth Biennial Report, p. 201

³Biennial Report, Oklahoma School Land Commission, 1954, p. 31

of \$85,000,000.¹ The revenue therefrom regularly has been paid to all school districts on the basis of scholastic enumeration.

When the Permanent School Fund was created, no differentiation was made between elementary schools and high schools. Because most of the public school enrollment in the new state was in the rural non-high school districts, these were the ones which were given the greater consideration in financial planning. It is evident that no thought was given to providing more money for high schools than for those districts which offered instruction only in the elementary grades. For this reason, the revenues from the Permanent School Fund were of minor significance in the matter of financing the rapidly expanding system of high schools in Oklahoma.

School district advalorem taxation.--That the Common School Fund would provide sufficient revenue for the proper support of the public schools soon was obvious. The authors of the State Constitution already had written into the fundamental law an authorization of a levy of 5 mills on the taxable property of a school district for purposes of operation, and for an additional levy of not to exceed 10 mills when the voters of the district approved the levy at an election held for that purpose.² The Constitution also

¹Ibid., p. 23.

²Oklahoma State Constitution, sec. IX, art. X.

authorized the people of any school district to vote a special levy of not to exceed 5 mills in any year for construction of school buildings.¹ These continued to be the maximum levies until 1946 when the Constitution was amended to increase the additional General Fund levy from 10 to 15 mills, making a maximum of 20 mills, exclusive of sinking fund and building fund levies. These constitutional enactments have provided the chief sources of revenue for maintenance and operation of the public schools from statehood until the present time. An illustration is shown by the record of the year 1911 when the total revenue for school purposes amounted to \$7,875,000, of which amount \$4,900,000 came from local school district taxes. Income from the Common School Fund and minor non-advalorem sources of local funds accounted for the remainder. From the first years of statehood until the present, most school districts have used the 5 mill levy and have found it necessary to vote all, or a considerable part, of the extra 10 mills and, since 1946, the additional 15 mills.

In many districts there was opposition to the excess levy during the first few years and the campaign for the 10 mills additional levy was an annual feature of school district activities. Even in a few cities the public school authorities found it necessary each year to make a special

¹Ibid., sec. X, art. X.

effort to acquaint the voters with the needs of the schools in order to prevent rejection of the additional levy proposition at the polls. Despite this, it was not an unusual thing for the voters, occasionally, to disapprove. This method of raising money was unsatisfactory. The State Superintendent, in his recommendation to the Legislature in January, 1913, said:

The present law provided that the people at the annual meeting shall determine the length of the school term. The school board makes an estimate for funds accordingly and submits it to the County Excise Board for approval. In case more than a five mill levy is required and approved, the question is referred to the people for a vote. This method of procedure is unsatisfactory.¹

The law was amended in 1917 to authorize, by majority vote of the district electors, an additional levy of 10 mills in excess of the 5 mills provided by law.² This statute continued to be in effect until 1946. The difficulty in securing the approval of the local electors in making the extra levy no longer is a major problem. Although the law continues to require the approval of the voters before any district can make a general fund levy in excess of 5 mills, such approval has become a routine matter. The writer, who is in a position to learn of such cases has not, for more than ten years, heard of an instance where the people in the district have disapproved the general fund levy. Two reasons account for

¹Fourth Biennial Report, p. 10.

²Session Laws of Oklahoma, 1917, p. 411.

this change in the attitude of the voters. The first is the fact that the people know that a school program can not be carried on without the funds derived from the additional levy, and the second reason is that the State Aid law withholds funds from any district which does not make an additional levy of at least 10 mills.¹

Property taxes have continued to account for the major share of public school revenues during the years since Oklahoma became a state. Almost all school districts levy the legal maximum advalorem tax rate. In 1954 the amount of money secured from local taxes was in excess of \$53,000,000. This is more than ten times the \$4,900,000 derived from the same source in 1911.

Inadequacy of revenue for high school purposes.--

High Schools have become increasingly expensive. It became evident early in the history of the state that most school districts could not long continue to support high schools unless financial assistance came from sources outside the revenues then provided by law. Members of the Legislature, responsive to the situation in their respective districts, attempted to meet the needs of the schools by appropriating state funds to supplement the resources of the school districts. As has been pointed out, first appropriations were in small amounts and the money was restricted to the use of

¹Session Laws of Oklahoma, 1949, p. 594.

elementary schools in districts which did not maintain high schools. The high schools, however, had more pressing financial needs than did the others and many were faced with the necessity either of closing their doors or so lowering their standards as to cause them to lose their accredited ratings. To avoid this, the Legislature continued to increase State Aid appropriations as the local needs required. However, the extent of the financial requirements of many school districts, particularly those having high school, was slow in securing legislative recognition. Likewise, the amounts of state funds provided for meeting these needs were small for several years.

An indication of the increasing needs of the schools is shown by the following statistics. At the close of the first year of statehood, the total expenditures of all public schools in Oklahoma was approximately \$3,000,000. Out of this amount was paid the salaries of 8,736 teachers and the operating expenses of 5641 schools enrolling 297,057 children.¹ Four years later the enrollment had increased almost 50 per cent; the number of teachers had increased by 1200; and, the total expenditures had approximately doubled.² It was during this four year period that the number of public high schools in the state increased, according to the State

¹First Biennial Report, p. 227.

²Ibid., p. 232.

Superintendent, "about 400."¹

Because school districts originally were required to finance their school program largely from local revenues, it is impossible to differentiate, with statistical data, between the financial problems of the elementary schools and of the high schools, whether the calculations are for schools in the same district or are on a state-wide basis. It is a fact, however, that the financial difficulties in which school districts found themselves shortly after statehood, and which continued for more than two decades, were during the years which coincide with those of the rise of the high school movement. In discussing the financial needs of the school program, therefore, it should be remembered that large scale state participation in financing public education in Oklahoma has been, in considerable measure, a matter of financing high schools.

Increasing Need for State Aid
to Finance High Schools

Legislative appropriations to supplement local revenues.--It has been mentioned that, in 1919, the Legislature made an appropriation of \$100,000 from the General Fund of the state to supplement the revenues from the Permanent School Fund. This new money was for the benefit of only non-high school districts which levied the legal maximum of 15 mills.

¹Ibid., p. 194.

No district was permitted to receive, in one year, more than \$500 from this appropriation.¹ Two years later the Legislature increased the appropriation to \$185,000, to be apportioned and expended under the same restrictions.² Although these districts were assumed to be the only ones needing financial assistance, it quickly was recognized that the independent districts and others maintaining high schools were the least able to support their schools for a full length of term. In view of this condition, in 1923, the Legislature appropriated \$650,000 and authorized its distribution to needy districts which levied 15 mills and which did not spend for salaries of teachers and for total operating costs more than the maximum amounts specified in the law for a school district eligible to participate in the fund.³ Maximum expenditures, for districts providing transportation and/or maintaining high schools, were permitted to be in excess of those in districts not maintaining high school. This was the first instance of state participation by direct legislative appropriation specifically for maintenance of high schools in Oklahoma. In 1925 the State Aid appropriation again was \$650,000 and in addition, the Legislature appropriated an emergency fund of \$500,000 which was to be used only for the

¹Session Laws of Oklahoma, 1919, p. 98.

²Ibid., 1921, p. 24.

³Ibid., 1923, p. 174.

purpose of paying teachers salaries in elementary and high schools.¹

In addition to direct appropriations, the Legislature in 1925 provided for a levy of $\frac{1}{4}$ mill on all taxable property in the state to be used for the purpose of supplementing other school funds to a point not exceeding the maximum local expenditures that were permitted by law.² This act was repealed in 1933 when the State Constitution was amended to abolish all state advalorem taxes.

Creation of the Common School Equalization Fund.--

Lump sum appropriations did not solve the financial problems either of the elementary schools or of the high schools in Oklahoma because the actual needs were not known in advance and the amounts appropriated were estimates only. Four consecutive sessions of the Legislature, beginning in 1919, made such appropriations but the amounts usually were inadequate for the intended purpose. Often the appropriation act was passed too late in the school year for the most effective use of the money. In order to correct these conditions, in 1927, the Legislature made the customary appropriation in an amount greater than at any previous time and prescribed the conditions under which it might be apportioned to the eligible school districts. This Act created the Common School

¹Ibid., 1925, p. 174.

²Ibid.

Equalization Fund and allocated for its purpose 25 per cent of the State Gross Production Tax in any amount needed, but not to exceed \$1,500,000 annually. This law was an improvement over former legislation which only made appropriations and imposed restrictions regarding the use of the money provided. The Common School Equalization Fund law specifically recognized the needs of the high schools by providing for the distribution of money in an amount per pupil twice that allocated to the elementary school. This apportionment was on a basis of funds needed in any district, except that the total expenditures should not exceed \$90 per high school pupil and \$45 per pupil in the elementary grades, based on the average daily attendance of pupils in the school for the previous year.² The law provided for a continuing appropriation which obviated the necessity for biennial legislative enactment and made it possible to plan for financing the school in advance of the actual receipt of state funds.

This legislation was an improvement in the matter of financing public education, but it was a disappointment in that it was insufficient in amount to provide for a full term of school. The Legislature thereupon resumed the expedient employed before the passage of the Act and again began making

¹Session Laws of Oklahoma, 1927, p. 86.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 174.

supplemental emergency appropriations. The amount was \$250,000 for each year of the ensuing biennium.¹ The appropriation for 1931² was \$750,000 and in 1933 two supplementary appropriations were made,³ one for \$250,000 and the other for \$600,000.⁴

Other sources of state school revenue.--When the high school movement expanded so greatly during the years from 1925 to 1943, the increase in the number of high schools and in their operation costs induced the Legislature to provide new sources of state revenue for schools in addition to the direct appropriations which previously had been made. Chief among these sources were those described in the following paragraphs:

In 1925 an advalorem tax of one-fourth mill was levied on all taxable property within the state and the revenue therefrom was credited to a newly created fund legally designated as "The State Fund for Aid of Weak Schools." Money from this source was apportioned to all the school districts in the state on the basis of their scholastic enumeration.⁵ Enumeration is defined as the number of children

¹Ibid., p. 174.

²Ibid., 1929, p. 369.

³Ibid., 1931, p. 335.

⁴Ibid., 1933, p. 208.

⁵Ibid., 1925, p. 2.

between the ages of six and twenty-one. This act was repealed by an amendment to the State Constitution in 1933.¹

In 1931 the State Legislature enacted a state income tax law, the purpose of which was "to provide for the reduction of the rates of advalorem taxation." The statute specified that three-fourths of all revenue derived from this source should be used for support of the common schools and should be distributed on a scholastic enumeration basis.² Funds from the income tax law were available to the schools for a period of only four years. In 1935 the Legislature amended the law by omitting all reference to schools.³

In 1933 a consumers sales tax was passed by the State Legislature "to provide relief to the common school districts."⁴ Fifty per cent of the money derived from this tax was to be used for the benefit of the public schools and was to be apportioned on the basis of scholastic enumeration. In 1941 the law was amended by placing all money derived from this source into a fund to be used for the benefit of the public welfare program (old age and dependent children assistance.)⁵

¹Referendum Petition No. 61, 1933.

²Session Laws of Oklahoma, 1933, p. 236.

³Ibid., p. 490.

⁴Ibid., 1933, p. 456.

⁵Ibid., 1941, p. 286.

In 1935 the Oklahoma Constitution was amended to exempt from advalorem taxation any property which was defined by law as constituting a homestead, provided that the amount of exemption should not exceed \$1,000 and that the owner of the property actually resided thereon as of January 1, of the taxpaying year.¹

Another source of school revenue was a tax on "non-intoxicating beverages." In 1934 the Legislature apportioned to the common schools 95 per cent of the funds derived from this source and prescribed that it should be apportioned on a scholastic enumeration basis.² Two years later the law was amended to eliminate reference to schools and to place the revenue from this tax in the General Revenue Fund of the State.³

Two sources of special revenue which, through the years, have yielded considerable money for school purposes are the Gross Production Tax and the Automobile License Tax. The funds derived from these sources are earmarked and used for the benefit only of those school districts which maintain high schools.

Since 1910, the State has collected severance taxes on various minerals produced in Oklahoma. One of the most

¹Initiative Petition No. 138, September 24, 1935.

²Session Laws of Oklahoma, 1943, p. 107.

³Ibid., 1945, p. 490.

important of these is a tax on the gross sales of oil as it is produced. The law provides that one-tenth of the money collected shall be returned to the county of its source and apportioned to the various school districts. Since 1947 this apportionment has been made only to those districts which levy the maximum number of mills authorized by law and maintain a fully accredited high school.¹ In addition to, and greatly exceeding the amount derived from the Gross Production tax, is the revenue provided by a license tax on passenger automobiles and farm trucks. Ninety-five per cent of the amount collected in each county by the Oklahoma Tax Commission is returned to the county where collected and apportioned to districts maintaining high school and under the same conditions as the Gross Production Tax is apportioned.

Minimum Program State Aid law enacted.--In 1935 the Legislature took steps to correct the inadequate and unsatisfactory methods of financing the public schools. It was evident that legislative appropriations to supplement the revenues from the Common School Fund and local taxes could not adequately support Oklahoma's school system and that the state must assume a larger share of this obligation if the schools were not to suffer. Perhaps the greatest contributing factor to this condition was the rapid expansion of the high school movement. In 1918 there were 295 accredited high

¹Ibid., 1947, p. 494.

schools in Oklahoma; 475 in 1920; 578 in 1922; 708 in 1924; 771 in 1926; 842 in 1928; 838 in 1930; 850 in 1932; and 686 accredited high schools in 1934.¹ It was evident that the school districts had about reached the limit of their ability to finance their schools. In 1920, all General Fund expenditures in the public schools of Oklahoma amounted to \$22,826,949.² In 1933 the total amount had increased only to \$23,105,947.³ Although the financial depression undoubtedly contributed to this condition, the fact that the number of accredited high schools had increased in number 340 per cent was one of the most important reasons why the school system had reached this condition and why the State Superintendent said: "During the school year 1933-34, the problem of securing sufficient funds to operate the schools to a normal term became highly acute."⁴

In 1935 the Legislature passed a Minimum Program Act which made major changes in the State Aid law.⁵ It replaced the act appropriating 25 per cent of the gross production tax and, in lieu thereof, made direct State Aid appropriations of

¹Fifteenth Biennial Report, p. 34.

²Eighth Biennial Report, p. 10.

³Fifteenth Biennial Report, p. 174.

⁴Ibid., p. 170.

⁵School Laws of Oklahoma, 1935, p. 142.

\$8,200,000 from the General Revenue Fund of the state. This sum provided sufficient money for teachers' salaries, maintenance, and transportation for a mandatory nine months term of school in every district in the state complying with the provisions of the law.

Although the minimum program law has been revised and amended by subsequent sessions of the Legislature, its essential features have been continued and are in force and effect when this is written (1954). The chief revisions during the years have been increases in teachers' salaries, maintenance apportionments, and transportation allocations. In 1935-36, the appropriation was increased (in round numbers) to \$12,000,000 for each year of the ensuing biennium; to \$15,000,000 in 1945-46; to \$26,000,000 in 1949-50; and in 1954 the annual appropriation available for this purpose is slightly less than \$31,000,000. The amount of the State Aid appropriation for each year since 1935 is shown in Table 13 of the Appendix.

Federal participation in financing the high school program.--Although the state funds have been the chief factor in supplementing local revenues, Federal money has made it possible for many high schools to maintain a program which otherwise would not have been possible. In 1917, the Congress passed what is known as the Smith-Hughes Act, providing for co-operation between the Federal Government and the various states in the matter of a program of vocational education to

be offered and administered in local school systems. This act has been supplemented from time to time by extending the scope of the program and by making available increased funds for the purpose. Oklahoma has participated in this movement to a substantial degree. An illustration is that of the vocational agriculture program in which 358,910 high school students in Oklahoma have been enrolled in the 37 years of this Federal program.¹ Federal funds for the vocational program amounted to \$877,757 for the biennium ending June 30, 1954.²

The Financial Problems Because of Excessive
Small High Schools

Increasing costs of high schools.--One phase of the record dealing with the mounting costs of schools in Oklahoma concerns disproportionate increase in the costs of high schools whose enrollments have decreased to a point below the level necessary for economical operation. Reference was made in a previous chapter to the shift in general population and to the effect of this movement on the number of school districts. It was pointed out that hundreds of non-high school districts have been eliminated and their territory attached to adjacent districts. Not only did this migration affect the rural elementary schools but it also caused the population to decline in many consolidated, village and town school

¹Twenty-fifth Biennial Report, p. 77.

²Ibid., p. 120.

districts which maintained high schools. In this program of reorganization, relatively few high schools have been eliminated, although their enrollments have declined to such extent that almost two-thirds of all the high schools in the state now have fewer than 100 pupils.¹ While this study is not concerned with the state's responsibility in this matter, it is concerned with an account of the development of the financial problems of the high schools because it has a bearing on the history of the development of the high school program.

Reasons for retaining small high schools.--For several years after statehood, a feature of the high school movement was the organization of accredited high schools offering fewer than four years of instruction. In 1924 there were 475 accredited high schools in Oklahoma of which 70 were three year schools; 57 were accredited for two years work; and, 47 were accredited for only one year high school instruction.² Four years later the number of high schools had increased to 708 and the number of one, two, and three year schools had also increased. There were at that time 57 one year schools; 66 accredited for two years; and 79 offering three years of high school work.³ Soon thereafter the number of high schools

¹Annual Statistical Reports of local schools to the State Board of Education, Oklahoma, 1954.

²Fifteenth Biennial Report, pp. 34-35.

³Seventeenth Biennial Report, State Department of Education, Oklahoma, 1938, p. 55.

offering less than four years of instruction slowly decreased but the small schools were not discontinued. Some were consolidated or otherwise reorganized, but many offered additional years of high school work and became four year high schools. The State Superintendent described this condition when he reported in 1934 as follows:

The number of small one and two-year high schools has decreased sharply since 1928, when 118 such schools were accredited. This does not signify that the majority of these struggling high schools were abolished. Most of them added the third and fourth year work which thereby brought about an increase in the number of high schools offering three and four years of class work. In other words, once a high school is started, no matter how justifiable, there is a strong likelihood that it will become a four year school eventually.¹

A large number of elementary schools have been eliminated by virtue of legislative acts which made mandatory the discontinuance of such schools when their attendance decreased to a prescribed point below which they were considered uneconomical, professionally and financially. The same results have not been achieved in dealing with the small high schools. On the contrary, certain laws enacted by the Legislature have made it possible for high schools to continue in operation despite declining enrollments and increasing costs. Among these factors have been provisions of the State Aid law which guarantee a full term of school in districts whose attendance had not declined to a number lower than a prescribed minimum. As the attendance in these schools has

¹Fifteenth Biennial Report, pp. 34-35.

declined, the required minimum attendance also has been reduced. In 1927, the minimum average daily attendance which high schools were required to have in order to participate in the State Aid fund was 40 pupils.¹ In 1945 the number was reduced to 25;² again was raised to 40 in 1937;³ and later was reduced to 25 in 1949⁴ which is the required minimum number at the present time (1954).

Despite the various legal decreases in the minimum number of students required, many high schools had been faced with closing unless means other than local revenue could be provided for their continued existence. These means were found by enactment of provisions in the State Aid law authorizing the "isolation" of high schools when the distance from another high school was greater than the prescribed minimum distance. Under these conditions, a high school may be maintained regardless of the average attendance. There are a number of high schools in Oklahoma so situated, because of geographical location or condition of the roads, that the high school students living therein could not attend high school except for this isolation provision. In many cases, however, the distance required for isolation has been reduced by legislative act, apparently, to permit high schools to

¹Ibid., 1927, p. 141.

²Ibid., 1945, p. 314.

³Ibid., 1947, p. 506.

⁴Ibid., 1949, p. 599.

continue in operation even though there is no physical hazard and when they are only a few minutes drive on paved roads from other high schools.

For more than a decade there has been no appreciable reduction in the number of high schools in this state and all those which remain are fully accredited for four years of instruction. This fact, coupled with the integration of all non-high school districts into the transportation area of the various high schools, has the effect of "freezing" the size of the area of high school districts. During the school year 1953-54, only five high schools¹ were discontinued because of their attendance decreasing to a number fewer than the legal minimum required for State Aid, and there have been but two instances of voluntary consolidation of high school districts recorded in the past six years.² Enrollment in the small high school shows little indication of increasing. There are now 434 high schools in Oklahoma with an average attendance of fewer than 100 pupils and there has been practically no increase in their attendance for a decade. In 1947-48 the average attendance for these schools was 54 students. In 1948 the average was 58; in 1951-52 it was 56; and in 1953-54 the average was 57.

¹New Liberty, Homestead, Humphrey, Grainola and Wilson.

²Custer City and Independence in Custer County; Byron and Driftwood in Alfalfa County.

Higher costs of high schools having low enrollments.

--The State Aid law guarantees the payment of minimum program salaries to three teachers in high schools having as few as 25 high school students in average attendance. The same number of teachers is provided for high schools of 54¹ students. Comparable provisions are made for transportation and maintenance costs in these schools. Two high schools, each having the minimum required attendance of 25 pupils, could ordinarily be operated for approximately the same cost as one such school if they could be organized as one administrative unit. The per pupil expenditure of each of these two schools obviously is almost twice as large as would otherwise be the case if they combined into one school.

Summary

Data on appropriations or costs are not identifiable by elementary and by high school. The record system in vogue in this state does not produce this information and never has done so with any reasonable degree of accuracy or validity. The reason for this is that the public schools in Oklahoma have always been financed on the basis of individual school districts. Because those districts maintaining high schools also operate elementary schools and finance the two as a single unit, there is no satisfactory means for determining

¹Session Laws of Oklahoma, 1953, p. 108.

the financial status of the high schools separately from that of the elementary schools. Any discussion of the problem of financing high schools, therefore, must have a background based on the entire school system program of finance.

So long as most of the schools in Oklahoma were of the non-high school type, the revenue provided by law made reasonably adequate provision for financing them. Early in the history of the state, however, high schools began to be organized in the cities, towns, and rural consolidated districts. This initiated a movement which imposed an unexpected and unusual financial burden on the several hundred districts in which high schools were located, and made it necessary for them to find other sources of revenue. Because school districts had practically exhausted their legal ability to increase local funds, the State Legislature undertook to supply the needs by making direct appropriations from the state General Revenue Fund. These appropriations, although made in increased amounts each successive session of the Legislature, failed to provide sufficient additional money to care for the needs of the high schools in face of the rising costs necessary for their operation. From 1919 to 1935, demands always exceeded the amount of appropriations made for this purpose. This condition prevailed for a period of sixteen years until the Legislature enacted a Minimum Program State Aid law and made an appropriation each year in

an amount sufficient to guarantee a nine months term of school in every district. Although the needs have continued to rise since that time, the State Aid appropriation usually has been commensurate with this increase.

For two decades the major part of the State Aid money has been from appropriations made from the State General Fund. In addition, several sources of earmarked money have been provided, thereby reducing proportionately the total amount of needed appropriations. Among these sources have been the State Income Tax, Sales Tax, Beer Tax, Auto License Tax, and Gross Production Tax. The major portion of the last two of these taxes still is used for schools. In addition to the development of the high school program which has been a substantial factor in the greatly increased financial needs of the public schools, this situation has been augmented by the disproportionate costs of more than 400 high schools, each of whose enrollment has declined to fewer than 100 pupils in attendance. The State Aid law, which guarantees sufficient money to employ three high school teachers if the attendance is not less than 25 pupils, has been instrumental in retaining a large number of these high schools which otherwise probably would have been compelled to close.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

Literature dealing with the history of education in Oklahoma is extensive, considering the age of the state. All studies of this kind, however, have been concerned with specific phases of education or have been limited to definite periods of time. Comprehensive as this material is, no research has been completed which includes data involving all the public high schools in the state. The writer believes there is a place for research of this kind and, in this study, has undertaken to meet that need. With this objective in mind, he has attempted to trace and record the significant events which have contributed to the development of the public high school program in Oklahoma.

The account opens with the establishment of academies in Indian Territory, beginning about 1845, and traces the growth of the high schools through the years before and following statehood in 1907. It closes with a review of the most pertinent factors responsible for this phase of education in Oklahoma in 1954. In relating the story of high

school development before statehood, however, events in Indian Territory and in Oklahoma Territory are outlined separately to make a division of the study which is prefatory to the remainder of the text.

Except for the chapter which outlines the events during the years preceding statehood, this historical study is developed topically. Each topic is a phase which is necessary to a complete record of high school development, i.e., importance of the school district; curriculum changes; expansion of physical facilities; growth of the accreditation movement; improvement of instructional personnel; and, the difficulties encountered in securing adequate financial support. Within each chapter, the story is arranged sequentially and chronologically. For the reader who is unable to read the study in detail, a brief summarization of the more important findings are outlined in the remaining paragraphs.

The factor which has been most instrumental in shaping the pattern of the high school program in Oklahoma has been the school district. Originally, districts were platted according to specifications of the Legislature, either of Oklahoma Territory or, later, of the state. This legislation required that school districts conform to a specified area and shape which would enable children to walk to the school in the district where they lived. The district was a complete and exclusive unit for attendance and for purposes of administration. By virtue of this fact, a high school usually

was limited to the enrollment and the funds such an area could furnish, making most districts incapable of maintaining a high school.

Efforts to effect reorganization of school districts were made during the subsequent years and have resulted in worth-while changes in the structure and in the consequent usefulness of these districts. In recent years, these efforts have included consolidation of districts; annexation of districts, one to another; development of high school transportation areas; and, other efforts at unification which have had a marked bearing on the high school program. Irrespective of these changes, however, the school district has continued to be an independent unit of administration and, for this reason, the high school program has been restricted to its legal and geographic limitations.

Coincident with the limitations and the reorganization of school districts this study is concerned with the effect population changes have had on high school enrollment throughout the state. Emphasis is placed on the fact that Oklahoma had a preponderantly rural population in the early years of statehood and that most of the schools in the state were organized for the purpose of meeting the needs of these people. However, due to a number of factors, the rural population soon began to migrate and thousands of families left their farms for the towns and cities.

Changes in the high school curriculum constitute an interesting phase of this study. The first high schools laid emphasis on cultural and academic subjects, particularly foreign languages, science and advanced mathematics. Later, however, the purpose of the high school movement underwent a reinterpretation and a change occurred in the type of courses offered the high school student. After high school advantages came within the reach of all children, it became apparent that the high school was destined to be a terminal educational institution for a major portion of the high school student body instead of being a preparatory school for those who expected to enter college. With the rise of this idea, the curriculum underwent a change from cultural emphasis to one in which occupational and vocational instruction occupied a more prominent place.

In the story of the development of the high school curriculum, attention is paid to the growth of the junior high school movement and the junior college program. Reasons are enumerated showing why the former has grown to large proportions and the latter has failed to meet the expectations of its adherents, causing it to decrease in number, popularity, and usefulness.

The standards of excellence reached by the public high schools in Oklahoma could not have been attained without a noteworthy program of improvement in qualifications of teachers in the high schools. Many teachers in the early

years after statehood were not professionally trained. County certificates, based on examination, represented the qualifications of high school teachers as well as those in the elementary schools. A lack of sufficient training institutions and the failure on the part of school authorities and of the public to recognize the need for professional training for teachers were great hindrances in the early part of the program.

Efforts to correct this condition have been numerous and, for the most part, successful. First were the County Normals, Teacher Training Institutes, and Reading Circles. In recent years, the most pronounced improvements have been made as a result of vesting in the State Board of Education exclusive authority to prescribe standards and to issue licenses to all teachers.

In the early day high schools there was a noticeable lack of uniformity in administration and instructional standards. This was due largely to the fact of there being no central accrediting agency having authority to require adherence to rules and regulations governing high schools. This condition improved after the State Board of Education appointed a High School Inspector in 1911, but since his responsibility was to the University of Oklahoma, that institution largely determined the policies and regulations governing accreditation. This was the status of the program until

1919 when the Oklahoma State Legislature vested in the State Board of Education all authority for accrediting high schools in this state. This state agency thereupon appointed three high school inspectors whose duty it was to visit the high schools and to recommend for accrediting those meeting the standards prescribed by the State Board of Education. This change in status caused the accrediting program to expand rapidly and eventually to include all schools in the state. It also encouraged many high schools to aspire to higher standards and ratings by becoming members of the North Central Association, an accrediting agency consisting of high schools and colleges operating in 19 mid-western states.

The study closes with an outline of the development of the financial structure of the schools of the state, with emphasis being placed on the growing inability of school districts to finance their schools. This condition prompted the Legislature to provide State funds for aid to "weak" schools. Such appropriations were inadequate, however, for the reason that the needs expanded and the cost of education increased faster than the revenues. Reference is made to the increasing gravity of the financial situation and to the efforts of the Legislature in trying to solve the problem by making large appropriations. A minimum program aid law was enacted and funds were appropriated in sufficient amounts to enable the high schools in Oklahoma to function despite the fact that approximately two-thirds of them have an attendance

of fewer than 100 students.

Conclusions

Development of the high school program in Oklahoma has been restricted by the political structure of the school district. The progress of this phase of education, impressive as it is in magnitude, has been greatly curtailed in its qualitative aspects because of the limitations imposed. Evidence of this fact is clearly indicated in this study by references to the limited curriculums, inefficient administration procedures, inadequate buildings, dwarfed financial framework, and lack of professional preparation in many small high schools. The same inherent weaknesses of the school district promise to preclude any desirable program of reorganization.

There are two controlling reasons why excessive numbers of small high schools in this state continue to operate. First is the lack of proper legal procedures necessary to a satisfactory program of reorganization. Current statutes, although apparently sufficient for the purpose, are obviously inadequate. An almost complete lack of success in effecting the consolidation of school districts maintaining high schools of this type points to an urgent need for revised legislation to meet this need. It is pointed out in this study that effective reorganization has been accomplished in the case of hundreds of rural non-high school districts. If comparable results are to be attained in the high school

program, new legislation is required.

The other factor which accounts for this condition is the lack of reliable information concerning the effectiveness of the small high school. The public, especially the patrons of these schools who are most directly concerned, often do not have an accurate perspective which reveals the relative adequacy of their high schools, when compared with their potentialities or with other high schools operating under different circumstances. This study has attempted to emphasize the need for extensive study in the professional area of the small high school. This research should inquire into costs, cultural and social relationships, curriculum deficiencies, economic and occupational attainments of graduates, and other aspects of life for which the high school is designed to prepare its students.

No fact which has been disclosed in this study is more obvious than that there has been a continuous struggle to provide sufficient revenues for the needs of the schools. Expansion of the scope of the high school program produced financial difficulties more pronounced than before. At the present time adequate funds are available to meet the legal needs of the high schools in Oklahoma. That this status may be temporary in nature is shown by the insecurity of the financial structure. Great dependence must be placed on biennial appropriations which are subject to the economic

condition of the state and to the personal judgment of members of the Legislature.

This study has called attention to the instability and the heterogenous nature of the financial structure which supports the high school program in Oklahoma. Clearly, a failure to correct this tenuous condition is an invitation to further difficulties in the years ahead.

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APPENDIX A

NON-TABULAR MATERIAL REFERRED TO IN TEXT

UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL COURSE

FIRST YEAR

First Semester	Second Semester
English Composition	English Composition
Latin (first year)	Latin (first year)
Algebra	
Physical Geography or Elementary Agriculture	Physical Geography or Elementary Agriculture

SECOND YEAR

First Semester	Second Semester
Rhetoric and Composition	Rhetoric and Composition
Latin (Caesar)	Latin (Caesar)
Plane Geometry	Plane Geometry
History (Ancient, Modern or General)	History (Ancient, Modern or General)

THIRD YEAR

First Semester	Second Semester
English Literature	English Literature
Latin (Cicero) or German	Latin (Cicero) or German
Algebraic Theory	Solid Geometry or some elementary science
Botany or Zoology	Botany, Zoology or Manual Training

FOURTH YEAR

First Semester	Second Semester
American Literature	American Literature
Latin (Virgil) or German	Latin (Virgil) or German
American History and Govern- ment and Oklahoma History	American History and Gov- ernment and Oklahoma History
Physics	Physics

Allen and Greenough's Latin Grammar is to be used throughout the course in the study of Latin.

The above is suggested as a single source where the teaching force is limited; it includes the $9\frac{1}{2}$ prescribed units and also offers $6\frac{1}{2}$ additional hours making in all 16 units.

In some places bookkeeping and reviews are given in the place of one of the units.

Where the teaching force and equipment are sufficient, additional electives may be offered, and can be given with profit. In such cases, we advise courses in Manual Training. We also recommend that part of the time of the fourth year be devoted to the study of Oklahoma History. We recommend one-half year of Algebra be given after the year of Plane Geometry, and also, that at least one-half year of Advanced Algebra should be taught after the Plane Geometry.

High School United States History should be given the third or fourth year of the course, instead of the first year. The last point is of special importance, for if high school United States History is attempted immediately after the eighth grade work, it will be found to be almost as elementary as the eighth-grade work. Doub's book is admirably adapted for the third or fourth year of the high school.

Of the fifteen units that are required, $9\frac{1}{2}$ are specified and $5\frac{1}{2}$ are left to election. The $9\frac{1}{2}$ prescribed are such as all high schools will naturally have.

The University requires at least 3 units or years of English, 2 units of some foreign language, $2\frac{1}{2}$ of Mathematics ($1\frac{1}{2}$ of Algebra and 1 of Geometry), 1 of History, 1 of Physics, $5\frac{1}{2}$ electives from anything of high school grade; total 15.

J. S. BUCHANAN
Chairman of University Committee
on High School Entrance Credits

THEO F. BREWER
Professor of Secondary Instruction
and High School Visitor

September 14, 1908

POLICIES, REGULATIONS AND CRITERIA
OF THE NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION

POLICIES

1. A school of five years membership not dropped without a year's warning, except by three-fourths vote.
2. A school may be dropped which persists in a violation about which it has been warned.
3. Secondary schools are approved for an indefinite period, and such approval is valid as long as the school meets the conditions for approval as defined by the Association.
4. Teacher preparation may be increased by extensive summer school, etc.
5. Designation of Chairman of State Committee. He must be from the State Department of Education or State University.
6. Designation for interim authority for interpretation of rules.
7. Relates to warning and dropping of schools.
8. Provides conditions for reasonable deviation from rules, etc.

REGULATIONS

1. Annual report required for consideration.
2. Report must include all grades in the school.

3. A. Qualification of staff.

1. All members of instructional staff must have Bachelor's degree.
2. Professional preparation of fifteen (15) hours required.
3. Adequate preparation in teaching field.
4. Official transcript must be on file.

B. Full-time librarian when 500 pupils are in school, proportionate time for smaller schools.

C, D, E. Other professional, clerical and custodial personnel must meet state requirements.

4. High school principals and superintendents must have Master's degree and two years experience.
5. School year must have thirty-six (36) weeks with a minimum of 172 days of classes.
6. Relates to length of class periods.
7. Prescribes 120 hours or 160 hours for graduation from three-year senior high school or four-year regular high school.
8. Number of teachers must be one greater than the number of years in the school organization.
9. Only in exceptional cases may a pupil graduate with less attendance than the full time prescribed.
10. Teaching load set out.
11. Minimum library expenditures. Minimum: \$200. If 1,000 enrolled, 50 cents per pupil.

12. School must have financial support to permit an efficient administration.

CRITERIA

1. School should develop its philosophy and objectives to meet the several needs of the community.
2. A. Education Program.
 1. Basic principles should be concerned with developing interests, attitudes, etc. rather than preparation for college.
 2. Curriculum should be adapted and developed to guide youth in areas for living. All staff members should participate in the program.
 3. Programs should provide for student activity, good library service, proper pupil guidance service, satisfactory classroom and other instruction and proper evaluation of the outcomes of these services and factors.
3. Pertains to quality and professional attainments of instructional staff, librarian and all non-instructional members of the staff.
4. Sets desirable standards for the policies of board of education, the administration of the school, its supervision and the records and reports.
5. Provides minimum criteria for the school plant in respect to buildings and sites, sanitation, safety, instructional

equipment, library, special services, and protection of pupil records and school equipment.

HIGH SCHOOLS IN OKLAHOMA WHICH ARE MEMBERS
OF THE NORTH CENTRAL ASSOCIATION
BY COUNTIES, 1954

County	School	County	School
Adair	Stilwell	Grady	Chickasha
	Westville		Lincoln
Alfalfa	Cherokee		Minco
Atoka	Atoka	Grant	Medford
Beckham	Elk City	Greer	Mangum
	Erick	Harmon	Hollis
	Sayre	Hughes	Holdenville
Blaine	Okeene		Wetumka
Bryan	Durant	Jackson	Altus
Caddo	Anadarko	Kay	Blackwell
	Lincoln		Newkirk
	Carnegie		Ponca City
Canadian	El Reno		Tonkawa
	Yukon	Kingfisher	Hennessey
Carter	Ardmore		Kingfisher
	Fox	Kiowa	Gotebo
	Healdton		Hobart
	McMan	Latimer	Red Oak
	Wilson	Le Flore	Heavener
Cherokee	Tahlequah		Poteau
Choctaw	Houg	Logan	Guthrie
Cleveland	Moore		Favor
	Norman	Love	Marietta
	University	Marshall	Madill
Comanche	Cache	Mayes	Pryor
	Lawton	McClain	Purcell
	Douglass	McCurtain	Broken Bow
Cotton	Walters		Idabel
Craig	Vinita	McIntosh	Checotah
Creek	Bristow		Eufaula
	Drumright	Murray	Davis
	Oilton		Sulphur
	Sapulpa	Muskogee	Haskell
Custer	Clinton		Muskogee
	Weatherford		Manual Training
Delaware	Grove	Noble	Perry
Garfield	Enid		Blaine
	Garber	Nowata	Nowata
Garvin	Lindsay	Okfuskee	Weleetka
	Pauls Valley		

County	School	County	School
Oklahoma	Bethany	Pottawatomie	Maud
	Edmond		Shawnee
	Harrah	Rogers	Claremore
	John Marshall	Seminole	Seminole
	Northeast		Wewoka
	Southeast		Douglass
	Capitol Hill	Sequoyah	Sallisaw
	Central	Stephens	Duncan
	Classen		Marlow
	Douglass		Velma-Alma
	Putnam City	Texas	Guymon
	Crooked Oak	Tillman	Frederick
Okmulgee	Henryetta		Granfield
	Okmulgee		Tipton
	Dunbar	Tulsa	Broken Arrow
Osage	Barnsdall		Jenks
	Fairfax		Sand Springs
	Hominy		B.T. Washington
	Pawhuska		Central
	Shidler		Rogers
	Skiatook		Webster
	Wynona	Wagoner	Wagoner
Ottawa	Miami	Washington	Bartlesville
Pawnee	Cleveland		Douglass
	Pawnee		Copan
Payne	Cushing		Dewey
	Stillwater		Ramona
	Yale	Woods	Alva
Pittsburg	McAlister	Woodward	Woodward
	L'Ouverture		
Pontotoc	Ada		
	Horace Mann		

LIST OF COURSES OFFERED IN ONE OR MORE OF THE ACCREDITED
HIGH SCHOOLS OF OKLAHOMA, IN ADDITION TO THE 33
REGULAR ACADEMIC AND VOCATIONAL SUBJECTS,
1953-54

Consumers Education
International Problems
Conservation
Art
Arts and Crafts
Electricity
Metal Work
Vocations
Aeronautics
Business Machines
Family Relations
Home Mechanics
Photography
Occupations
Family Living
Woodwork
Business Problems
Audio-Visual Education
Commercial Cookery
Guidance
Human Relations
Library Science
Life Adjustment

Geology
Handicraft
Personal Problems
Citizenship
Visual Aid
Cosmotology
Vocational Science
Nursery
Home Living
Social Living
Home Service
Salesmanship
Art Appreciation
First Aid
Stenography
Physiology
Government
Botany
German
French
Farm Shop
Constitution
Zoology
Vocational Agriculture Shop

LIST OF HIGH SCHOOLS IN OKLAHOMA HAVING ADMINISTRATIVE
PRINCIPALS AT STATEHOOD, 1907

High School	High School
Altus	Lawton
Alva	McAlester
Blackwell	Mangum
Bartlesville	Muskogee
Chandler	Norman
Chickasha	Oklahoma City
Claremore	Pawnee
Elk City	Pauls Valley
El Reno	Purcell
Enid	Shawnee
Hobart	Vinita
Holdenville	Weatherford
Kingfisher	Wynnewood

APPENDIX B

STATISTICAL TABLES

TABLE 1

PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED STATES WITH TOTAL ENROLLMENT AND AVERAGE ENROLLMENT, BY STATES, 1951-52*

State	Number of Schools	Total Enrollment	Average Enrollment
United States	23,757	7,693,140	323
Alabama	755	200,528	265
Arizona	85	38,904	457
Arkansas	568	131,824	232
California	624	533,622	855
Colorado	282	78,381	278
Connecticut	128	79,016	617
Delaware	50	17,901	358
District of Columbia	36	34,176	949
Florida	464	172,013	370
Georgia	683	157,444	231
Idaho	158	43,391	274
Illinois	861	341,333	396
Indiana	799	220,266	278
Iowa	948	150,818	159
Kansas	670	110,057	164
Kentucky	528	135,611	256
Louisiana	538	117,223	218
Maine	192	40,062	208
Maryland	208	125,947	605
Massachusetts	441	216,014	489
Michigan	703	349,445	497
Minnesota	563	180,895	321
Mississippi	625	119,909	183
Missouri	702	166,791	237
Montana	199	32,934	108
Nebraska	524	68,363	130
Nevada	37	7,209	195
New Hampshire	104	26,284	252
New Jersey	236	184,540	701
New Mexico	144	39,906	277
New York	950	640,138	674
North Carolina	931	212,032	227
North Dakota	392	33,576	85
Ohio	1,155	421,461	364
Oklahoma	867	157,020	181
Oregon	260	78,888	303

TABLE 1--Continued

State	Number of Schools	Total Enrollment	Average Enrollment
Pennsylvania	1,088	565,208	518
Rhode Island	61	31,895	522
South Carolina	529	121,635	230
South Dakota	280	32,541	116
Tennessee	495	161,460	326
Texas	1,792	410,637	234
Utah	138	63,492	460
Vermont	81	16,262	201
Virginia	511	158,972	311
Washington	349	133,882	383
West Virginia	370	144,478	390
Wisconsin	496	168,814	340
Wyoming	103	19,942	193

*United States Office of Education, Directory of Secondary Schools (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1952), p. 12.

TABLE 2

NUMBER OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN OKLAHOMA TERRITORY
AT STATEHOOD, BY COUNTIES, 1907

County	Number of Dists.	County	Number of Dists.
Alfalfa	102	Kay	97
Beaver	168	Kingfisher	117
Beckham	73	Kiowa	107
Blaine	106	Lincoln	104
Caddo	160	Logan	97
Canadian	74	Major	104
Cimarron	46	Noble	74
Cleveland	68	Oklahoma	86
Comanche	148	Pawnee	72
Custer	96	Payne	96
Dewey	107	Pottawatomie	125
Ellis	108	Roger Mills	96
Greer	85	Texas	112
Garfield	126	Tillman	72
Grant	122	Washita	101
Harper	70	Woods	109
Jackson	61	Woodward	116
		TOTAL	3,441

TABLE 3

NUMBER OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN OKLAHOMA
IN 1914, 1946, AND 1954, BY COUNTIES

County	1914	1946	1954
State of Oklahoma	5,845	4,450	1,888
Adair	40	39	36
Alfalfa	95	78	10
Atoka	57	60	34
Beaver	127	87	17
Beckham	74	32	15
Blaine	95	68	17
Bryan	73	57	39
Caddo	131	97	33
Canadian	101	81	23
Carter	64	34	18
Cherokee	80	74	64
Choctaw	46	51	30
Cimarron	46	28	7
Cleveland	67	59	29
Coal	47	38	17
Comanche	78	64	27
Cotton	66	55	9
Craig	74	72	31
Creek	76	56	28
Custer	93	64	14
Delaware	72	63	39
Dewey	105	64	9
Ellis	108	69	7
Garfield	123	108	22
Garvin	74	61	37
Grady	97	73	37
Grant	113	112	15
Greer	49	19	10
Harmon	43	10	8
Harper	74	44	7
Haskell	56	56	33
Hughes	70	45	23
Jackson	67	19	13
Jefferson	60	29	13
Johnston	58	31	18
Kay	98	100	39
Kingfisher	111	77	10
Kiowa	90	56	10

TABLE 3--Continued

County	1914	1946	1954
Latimer	36	33	18
Le Flore	107	86	55
Lincoln	140	108	37
Logan	91	73	20
Love	34	22	12
McClain	49	38	20
McCurtain	87	68	54
McIntosh	63	47	34
Major	105	88	23
Marshall	44	34	16
Mayes	64	64	41
Murray	30	22	10
Muskogee	83	69	53
Noble	79	72	19
Nowata	50	36	19
Okfuskee	49	47	28
Oklahoma	81	51	33
Okmulgee	48	39	24
Osage	65	63	36
Ottawa	48	43	32
Pawnee	67	55	20
Payne	94	69	24
Pittsburg	107	91	57
Pontotoc	64	54	33
Pottawatomie	120	91	41
Pushmataha	60	57	25
Roger Mills	99	32	11
Rogers	41	41	27
Seminole	54	41	26
Sequoyah	69	58	40
Stephens	75	59	25
Texas	105	55	12
Tillman	82	53	13
Tulsa	40	25	20
Wagoner	64	61	27
Washington	26	23	15
Washita	95	63	16
Woods	114	105	15
Woodward	118	84	9

TABLE 4

COUNTIES LOSING APPROXIMATELY ONE HALF OF SCHOOL
POPULATION BETWEEN 1930 AND 1950, WITH NUMBER
OF HIGH SCHOOLS AND TOTAL SCHOOL POPULATION
FOR EACH YEAR*

County	1930		1950	
	Number of High Schools	Total School Population	Number of High Schools	Total School Population
Totals	290	217,764	230	111,100
Alfalfa	11	4,712	10	2,712
Beaver	10	3,810	6	2,066
Beckham	12	10,565	11	4,703
Coal	7	3,981	5	2,298
Cotton	6	5,304	5	2,975
Creek	15	23,170	14	12,061
Dewey	10	4,457	7	2,598
Ellis	8	3,302	5	1,878
Grant	9	4,230	9	2,667
Greer	17	6,930	9	2,940
Harmon	11	4,885	6	2,481
Harper	5	2,639	5	1,540
Hughes	14	10,118	12	6,273
Jackson	20	9,776	12	5,214
Jefferson	12	6,086	10	3,554
Kiowa	12	10,036	10	5,407
Le Flore	16	15,046	15	4,543
Lincoln	12	11,398	12	6,483
Pawnee	9	6,504	7	3,790
Pottawatomie	16	23,374	15	12,219
Roger Mills	11	5,047	5	2,192
Seminole	19	24,192	16	10,648
Tillman	13	8,009	11	4,825
Washita	15	10,193	13	5,033

*Source: Official reports, State Department of
Education, Oklahoma, for the years indicated.

TABLE 5

COUNTIES HAVING APPROXIMATELY THE SAME SCHOOL POPULATION
IN 1930 AND 1950 WITH NUMBER OF HIGH SCHOOLS AND
TOTAL SCHOOL POPULATION FOR EACH YEAR*

1930			1950	
County	Number of High Schools	Total School Population	Number of High Schools	Total School Population
Totals	31	36,086	32	32,935
Adair	4	5,304	4	4,742
Atoka	5	4,921	5	4,419
Cherokee	2	5,730	2	5,280
Mayes	6	6,021	7	5,561
Rogers	8	6,282	8	5,610
Washington	6	7,828	6	7,323

TABLE 6

COUNTIES GAINING IN SCHOOL POPULATION BETWEEN
1930 AND 1950 WITH NUMBER OF HIGH SCHOOLS AND
TOTAL SCHOOL POPULATION FOR EACH YEAR*

1930			1950	
County	Number of High Schools	Total School Population	Number of High Schools	Total School Population
Totals	34	113,081	36	134,405
Comanche	8	9,737	9	11,564
Oklahoma	12	53,426	12	68,391
Tulsa	14	49,918	15	54,450

*Source: Official reports, State Department of Education, Oklahoma, for the years indicated.

TABLE 7

TOTAL ENROLLMENT IN DISTRICTS MAINTAINING HIGH SCHOOL
AND IN THOSE WHICH DO NOT, WITH PER CENT OF EACH,
AT TEN YEAR INTERVALS*

Year	Maintaining High School		Not Maintaining High School	
	Enrollment	Per Cent of Total	Enrollment	Per Cent of Total
1910	166,496	39.5	255,903	60.5
1920	314,953	53.5	274,329	46.5
1930	359,428	52.7	323,222	47.3
1940	455,365	74.6	156,453	25.4
1952	477,813	93.7	32,463	6.3

*Source: Statistical Reports, State Department of
Education, Oklahoma, for the years indicated.

TABLE 8
NUMBER OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS DISORGANIZED BY
ANNEXATION, 1946 TO 1954, BY COUNTIES*

County	Districts Annexed		County	Districts Annexed	
	By Law	By Election		By Law	By Election
State	1,935	713			
Adair	2	1	LeFlore	20	14
Alfalfa	54	14	Lincoln	53	20
Atoka	19	10	Logan	48	9
Beaver	27	43	Love	5	5
Beckham	12	6	McClain	11	7
Blaine	32	21	McCurtain	15	1
Bryan	17	4	McIntosh	11	2
Caddo	51	14	Major	43	25
Canadian	48	14	Marshall	11	7
Carter	10	6	Mayes	19	8
Cherokee	6	5	Murray	8	4
Choctaw	22	0	Muskogee	11	6
Cimarron	15	6	Noble	26	29
Cleveland	26	5	Nowata	15	3
Coal	18	6	Okfuskee	15	4
Comanche	39	1	Oklahoma	9	9
Cotton	41	5	Okmulgee	14	2
Craig	35	8	Osage	20	8
Creek	11	19	Ottawa	9	4
Custer	49	3	Pawnee	20	16
Delaware	14	13	Payne	38	7
Dewey	45	9	Pittsburg	29	6
Ellis	61	1	Pontotoc	14	8
Garfield	73	13	Pottawatomie	40	11
Garvin	16	9	Pushmataha	26	8
Grady	29	9	Roger Mills	11	10
Grant	72	25	Rogers	10	5
Greer	2	7	Seminole	0	17
Harmon	2	0	Sequoyah	15	3
Harper	25	12	Stephens	15	22
Haskell	20	4	Texas	29	15
Hughes	15	10	Tillman	36	5
Jackson	1	5	Tulsa	2	3
Jefferson	12	4	Wagoner	25	10
Johnston	6	8	Washington	2	6
Kay	42	22	Washita	39	8
Kingfisher	63	5	Woods	78	13
Kiowa	43	2	Woodward	61	14
Latimer	7	10			

*Source: Records in office of Oklahoma State Board of Education.

TABLE 9
NUMBER OF NORMAL TRAINING HIGH SCHOOLS AND THE NUMBER
OF STUDENTS FINISHING THE COURSE, BY YEARS*

Year	Number of Schools	Number Finishing the Course
1915-16	50	439
1916-17	57	571
1917-18	60	536
1918-19	63	471
1919-20	66	488
1920-21	66	533
1921-22	68	629
1922-23	76	1,114
1923-24	78	477
1924-25	32	542
1925-26	1	5

*Source: Biennial reports in office of State Superintendent of Schools, Oklahoma.

TABLE 10
NUMBER AND TYPE OF ACCREDITED HIGH SCHOOLS
WITH SIZE OF HIGH SCHOOLS BY UNITS*

Year	North Central	State Board of Education		Accreditation	
		16 units	9-15½	Less than 9 units	Total
1912	11	18	25	0	54
1914	15	93	36	31	175
1916	16	116	39	14	185
1918	29	195	48	24	296
1920	49	254	85	73	461
1922	64	295	129	94	582
1925	76	432	115	85	708
1926	82	350	224	97	753
1928	109	369	246	118	842
1930	109	348	294	93	834
1932	113	398	292	49	851
1934	109	443	285	31	868
1936	109	471	247	15	842
1938	111	533	196	19	859
1940	123	551	183	17	874
1942	125	612	110	11	858
1944	124	623	87	19	853
1946	124	606	101	18	848
1948	126	674	20	5	827
1950	131	640	8	1	780
1952	138	630	4	1	773
1954	142	625	2	0	769

*Source: Official records in office of State Superintendent of Public Instruction .

TABLE 11
NUMBER OF JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS FOR SELECTED YEARS*

Year	NUMBER
1916-17	22
1927-28	50
1939-40	69
1943-44	95
1944-45	123
1947-48	145
1949-50	182
1951-52	214
1952-53	219
1953-54	227

*Source: Official reports in office of State Board of Education.

TABLE 12
 NUMBER OF MUNICIPAL JUNIOR COLLEGES,
 BY YEARS AND ENROLLMENT*

Year	Number	Enrollment
1922	1	27
1924	4	81
1926	4	92
1928	7	170
1930	4	130
1932	5	354
1934	14	737
1936	14	1,043
1938	15	1,150
1940	20	1,724
1942	11	689
1944	9	375
1948	12	1,116
1950	10	1,151
1952	6	722
1954	6	962

*Source: Official reports in the State Department of Education, Oklahoma, for the years indicated.

TABLE 13

APPROPRIATIONS OF STATE AID FOR EACH OF THE NINETEEN YEARS
BEGINNING WITH THE FIRST MINIMUM PROGRAM IN 1935*

Year	Appropriation
1935-36	\$ 8,200,000
1936-37	8,454,000
1937-38	12,233,733
1938-39	12,737,945
1939-40	11,435,322
1940-41	11,500,000
1941-42	8,600,000
1942-43	8,100,000
1943-44	8,600,000
1944-45	9,542,543
1945-46	15,599,920
1946-47	14,086,149
1947-48	18,331,856
1948-49	18,100,000
1949-50	25,825,500
1950-51	24,782,979
1951-52	28,224,464
1952-53	27,110,466
1953-54	30,750,000
TOTAL	\$305,215,877

*Source: Session Laws of the State of Oklahoma, for
the years indicated.