

T H E S I S

-----

A HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF RURAL SCHOOLS IN OKLAHOMA

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Submitted by

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In partial fulfillment of requirements

for the degree of Master of Science

Colorado Agricultural College

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I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER  
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### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to acknowledge his gratitude to the Honorable Joseph B. Thoburn and Professor Ira M. Holcomb for the use of their wonderful book, "History of Oklahoma". It has been of great help.

He wishes also to express his gratitude to Mr. Thoburn for the use of his four volumes of Oklahoma history.

The writer is also greatly indebted to the Oklahoma Historical Society for the use of their valuable educational reports, and to the librarian of the Law Library of Oklahoma for the use of the book, "Statutes of Oklahoma 1890".

## Chapter I

### PURPOSE AND PROCEDURE

The purpose of this thesis is to give to those interested in the development of rural school systems a brief history of the work that has been done in Oklahoma along that line from the pioneer days up to the present time.

The writer, who is one of the few remaining pioneer educational workers of Oklahoma, has seen the rural schools there grow from nothing at all into the present up-to-date consolidated system, and has worked toward the development and improvement of these schools for many years. Therefore, much of the material used here is taken from knowledge which came to him through his experiences as a teacher, county superintendent of schools, and member of educational committees, and through his association with founders and builders of Oklahoma, both as a territory and a state.

A study was made of books on the history of Oklahoma, of educational reports, and of statute books concerning enactment of school laws in order to trace the history of the schools from its beginning and to supplement the writer's memory of changes in the school systems as they occurred during his life.

The pictures of old time schoolhouses were obtained from friends of the writer, some of whom were pupils in

the schools represented at the time the pictures were made. The pictures of present day consolidated schools were made expressly for the writer to use in this thesis.

## Chapter II.

### EARLY HISTORY OF OKLAHOMA

In order to trace the development of rural schools in Oklahoma from the beginning of settlement and to give an idea of the class and character of the people who settled in that part of the country with the view of showing their attitude toward education, the writer thought it appropriate to give a brief account of the early history of Oklahoma.

The material in this chapter is taken from Thoburn and Holcomb's History of Oklahoma, some parts of it being directly and some indirectly quoted.

"The story of Oklahoma is full of interest. Unlike most of the older commonwealths of the American Union, the history of Oklahoma does not begin with a single clan or creed. Neither Goth nor Hun, Saxon nor Northman ever invaded its boundaries, yet Oklahoma is a land of many peoples. While, in a certain sense, most of its history is recent, nevertheless, it has much in common with that of other states of the Union. Within its limits live the remnants or descendants of not less than fifty different tribes and nations of Indians, the former homes of whose people were scattered over no less than thirty different states. Likewise, practically every state in the Union is represented by the white people who settled in Oklahoma.

"The history of Oklahoma is unique and remarkable in many ways. Probably never before, since men began to or-

ganize governments, was a state of such proportions founded and builded in the same length of time that transpired between the final settlement of Oklahoma and its development into a completed commonwealth, possessing all of the elements of civic greatness. In the short space of a third of a century, within its borders, the savage huntsman gave way to the herdsman, who in turn retired before the husbandman." (1)

#### Establishment of the Indian Territory

An Act of Congress approved May 26, 1830, made provision for the establishment of the Indian Territory. By the terms of that law the President of the United States was authorized to select a part of the undivided public domain to which the title of the aboriginal tribes had been extinguished, the same to be divided into a suitable number of districts or reservations for the reception of such tribes of Indians as might choose to exchange the lands where they then resided in states east of the Mississippi. There does not seem to have been any formal action on the part of the President in definitely fixing the bounds and limits of the proposed Indian Territory, but the eastern parts of Nebraska, Kansas and Oklahoma, with an indeterminate western boundary, were thus known as the Indian Territory until after the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill by Congress in 1854.

Within fifteen years after the passage and approval



of the act providing for the establishment of the Indian Territory, many tribes found their way thither from the states east of the Mississippi, there having been a concerted movement on the part of the Government and the missionaries to encourage such a migration.

The tribes which thus migrated to Oklahoma in the fifteen years preceding 1840 were all more or less advanced in the ways of civilization, being to some extent engaged in farming, stock raising, trading and other occupations common to their time and location. Missionaries had been laboring among them and churches and schools had been established. The Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, Chickasaw and Seminole Indians were called the Five Civilized Tribes.

The period of fifteen years which ended shortly before the outbreak of the Civil War was distinguished as one of quiet and peaceful development in the Indian Territory. During this period the people of the Five Civilized Tribes made great progress. Besides improving their farms and accumulating greater wealth in the way of flocks and herds and more comfortable homes, the people of these tribes gave other evidences of substantial development. They no longer depended on the missionary stations to furnish their only educational facilities, but began the establishment of tribal schools, academies and seminaries.

The results of the Civil War had a pathetic aspect from almost any viewpoint, but from none more so than that of the people of the Indian Territory. The representatives

of the Government found chaotic conditions in the Indian Territory when peace was proclaimed. Farms had been abandoned, buildings destroyed and stock run off or confiscated by contending forces. Churches and schools had practically ceased to exist, and social, business and industrial conditions were generally demoralized. The people were encouraged to return, to rebuild their homes and to reopen their farms. Stock, seeds and implements were purchased for them, and thus they began life under the new order of things.

#### The Cowman's Period

The close of the Civil War found the ranges of Western Texas abounding with great herds of cattle. At the same time the building of the railway lines westward toward the Rocky Mountains and the development of the meat packing industry at Chicago and other points tempted the owners to seek a market for some of their surplus stock by driving it northward from Texas through the Indian Territory to some point on the railway line in Kansas. The first movement of range cattle from Texas grazed slowly northward through Oklahoma in 1866, the destination being Abilene, Kansas. By 1871 it was estimated that over six hundred thousand cattle were being driven northward from Texas each year. During the earlier years of the Texas cattle trade the herds had to cross Oklahoma near the center of the state on account of the hostility of the

Indians of the wild tribes of the Plains. When the Indians became peaceable the cattle trails were moved farther west.

All of the Indian Territory was originally included in the range of the American bison, or buffalo. When the buffalo had about disappeared and the Indians had settled down to a quiet life on their reservations, the cattlemen crossed many parts of the Indian Territory with their herds. The nutritious grasses on which mighty herds of buffalo had grazed still grew luxuriantly and apparently there was every reason to believe that they would just as readily support herds of range cattle. The stockmen were not long in noting an opportunity for the development of the range cattle industry in such a promising field. Soon cattle ranches began to appear, lands being leased from the Indian reservations at prices that were little more than nominal. Unassigned lands were quietly occupied without waiting for permission. During the years between the close of the last general Indian outbreak (1875) and the beginning of the agitation for the opening of Oklahoma to settlement (1879) cattle ranches had been established in many parts of the western half of the Indian Territory, afterwards called Oklahoma.

### The Struggle

That part of the lands ceded to the United States by the Creek and Seminole nations by the treaties of 1866

which was bounded on the north by the Cherokee Strip, on the east by the Indian Meridian, on the south by the South Canadian River, and on the west by the Cheyenne and Arapahoe reservation, was never assigned to any Indian reservation. This tract, which embraced portions of what were later Payne, Logan, Oklahoma, Cleveland, Canadian and Kingfisher counties, was the one on which all of the intruding colonies of "boomers" proposed to locate in the various invasions which occurred between 1879 and 1885. From 1879 until the passage of the bill which provided that it should be opened to settlement, this tract was called "The Oklahoma Country" to the exclusion of any other part of the Indian Territory.

During the decade following the treaty agreement of the Indians of the Plains tribes to retire to reservations (1867) immigration to the West was very heavy. The fertile prairie lands of Missesota, Iowa, Kansas, Nebraska and Dakota were peopled by a hardy class of pioneers and settlements were made even as far west as the border of the Great Plains. With so many millions of acres of land available for homestead entry, it is not strange that the eyes of intending settlers were not cast immediately on the unoccupied lands of the western part of the Indian Territory, now called Oklahoma. But if prospective settlers did not see the opportunity, ambitious railway builders did, and they really instigated the agitation for the opening of the Oklahoma Country to settlement by

white people.

On April 15, 1879, General Attorney T. C. Sears of the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railway Company announced that, with Colonel E. C. Boudinot of the Cherokee Nation, he had been investigating the legal status of the lands of the western part of the Indian Territory; that they had thus learned that there were 14,000,000 acres which belonged to the public domain of the United States, the same being subject to homestead settlement.

This announcement naturally caused considerable excitement in the states adjacent to the Indian Territory. It was immediately proposed to effect the settlement of such lands by means of organized colonies. Three of these "colonies" were organized: one at Kansas City, Missouri, under the leadership of Charles C. Carpenter, who had aided in the opening of the Black Hills region in a like manner only three years before; one at Topeka, Kansas, under the leadership of J. R. Boyd; while a third organization was effected in Texas to move northward from a point near Caddo, Indian Territory. The Carpenter colony moved south across the line from Coffeyville, Kansas, May 7, 1879, but President Rutherford B. Hayes had previously issued a proclamation, April 26, 1879, forbidding the proposed settlement on the unassigned lands. The result was that General Wesley Merritt, with five troops of the 5th United States Cavalry, was ordered to remove the intruding party, which was promptly done.

But the colonists, or "boomers" as they were now called, were not deterred by this first ejection. Under the leadership of Captain David L. Payne, who had been assistant doorkeeper of the House of Representatives at Washington, D. C., and while there had learned about the so-called Oklahoma Country and had become convinced that it should be opened to homestead settlement, a second colony was led to the North Canadian River in April, 1880, locating near the present site of Oklahoma City. They were arrested and escorted to the Kansas border under a second proclamation issued February 12, 1880 by President Hayes.

Payne returned to Oklahoma within a month, where he was again arrested with a few of his leaders and taken to Fort Reno. From that post, Payne was taken to Fort Smith Arkansas, where he was cited to appear before the Federal Court, then released without bond and was not brought to trial.

During the fall of 1880 Payne was very active in organizing a new colony to enter the Oklahoma Country. The would-be settlers gathered in camp at Caldwell, Kansas. Payne planned to move across the border on December 6, 1880 but the War Department sent a strong force of troops to prevent the proposed invasion of the "boomers". Hundreds of the latter were gathered in camp, where many of them remained all winter closely watched by the soldiers who were encamped near by.

Baffled in their attempt to enter the Oklahoma Country

Payne's colony gradually dwindled in numbers. However, Payne's activity was incessant. The hearings of charges against him were always postponed and finally dismissed.

In order to force the issue he brought suit in the United States District Court at Topeka, Kansas, in May, 1881, for damages against General John Pope, Department Commander of the United States Army on account of his forcible removal from the Territory. In this effort he was again frustrated by repeated postponements. In July 1883, Payne applied to the United States District Court at Topeka, Kansas, for an injunction restraining the military authorities from interfering with colonists or boomers in their attempts to settle in Oklahoma. The hearing was repeatedly postponed on motion of the United States District Attorney.

Unable to secure any ruling from the Federal courts that would authoritatively determine the status of the lands of the unassigned district, Payne made several trips to Washington to see the Secretary of the Interior, who gave him no satisfaction.

The beginning of the year 1884 found the popular interest in the Oklahoma movement undiminished. Instead of going into Oklahoma in a body, the boomers went singly or in small parties. There were hundreds of settlers in Oklahoma all through the following summer. Military forces were active, but as fast as part of the settlers were taken out of the country others came into it. On July 31, 1884

President Arthur issued a proclamation forbidding the invasion of Oklahoma and warning all intruders to withdraw. The boomers were finally compelled to withdraw by reason of the fact that all of their supplies were systematically intercepted by troops under the command of General Edward Hatch.

The cattlemen, feeling Payne's influence, organized the Live Stock Association with headquarters at Caldwell, Kansas. They soon made their "teeth felt" through this organization, for in their list of stockholders were representatives in Congress, army officers of high rank, and other public officials.

The agitation finally reached Congress in 1887, when such men as Weaver and Springer, together with Representative Charles Mansur of Missouri, began to espouse the settlers cause. It was then that the "Oklahoma Question" began to attract attention and rapidly came to the front.

On March 3, 1889 the bill known as the Organic Act was passed opening the Oklahoma Country to settlement. On March 23, 1889, President Benjamin Harrison issued a proclamation setting the date of the proposed opening on April 22, 1889 at 12 M.

"As the appointed day for the legal opening of the Oklahoma country to homestead settlement drew near, throngs of people began to assemble on the border of the promised land. The multitude of intending settlers included many of the former "boomers", but they were in the minority.



Thousands of those who came to claim a settler's right had known little and cared less for Oklahoma until the announcement of its opening to settlement was made through the medium of a presidential proclamation. So, the 'boomer', who had spent his time and effort in the long and seemingly hopeless agitation and struggle for the right to settle in Oklahoma found himself crowded and jostled by thousands who had risked nothing in that effort and who were inclined to view him with suspicion and to discredit the part which he had played as a pioneer.

"The assembled throng included people from practically every state in the Union--people of all classes and conditions of life--farmers, mechanics, laborers and professional men composing the greater number, though adventurers, gamblers and sharpers were numerous. It was a good natured crowd, in the main, and peace and good order generally prevailed. Although many doubtless came out of curiosity, or were actuated by a mercenary or speculative spirit, yet most of those who came did so because of their desire to secure farms and homes." (1)

"Promptly at noon on the twenty-second day of April, 1889, the cavalrymen, who patrolled the borders of the promised land, fired their carbines in the air as a signal that the settlers could move across the line. A mighty shout arose and then the race for claims and homes began. Hundreds crowded the trains of the single railway line that entered Oklahoma; thousands rode on fleet horses, lightly

saddled; other thousands rode in buggies and buckboards, and others yet, in heavy farm wagons, drawn by slower teams; yes, and some even made the race on foot! ..... It was at once the culmination and climax of the story of American pioneering." (1)

On September 22, 1891 the surplus lands of the Iowa, the Sac and Fox and the Pottawatomie-Shawnee reservations were opened to settlement, the Indians of those tribes having had their lands allotted in severalty. From the lands thus opened to settlement, the counties of Lincoln and Pottawatomie were formed. The counties of Logan, Oklahoma and Cleveland were completed by the addition of a tier of townships on the east of each and Payne County was enlarged by the addition of that part which lies south of the Cimarron River.

The Cheyenne and Arapahoe Indians having accepted allotments of lands in severalty, the surplus lands of their reservation were thrown open to settlement April 19, 1892. The counties of Blaine, Custer, Washita, Dewey, Roger, Mills and parts of Canadian, Kingfisher, Beckman and Ellis were afterwards formed from these lands.

After several years of negotiation, the Cherokee Nation, through its principal chief and council, ceded its claims to the Cherokee Outlet, May 19, 1893. Together with the surplus lands of the Pawnee and Tonkawa reservations, the Cherokee Strip was opened to settlement on September 16, 1893. From this tract were afterwards formed the counties

of Alfalfa, Garfield, Grant, Harper, Major, Woods, Woodward and Pawnee, the greater portions of Kay and Noble, and parts of Payne and Ellis.

The surplus lands of the reservations of the Kiowa, Comanche and Apache of the Plains, and the Wichita, Caddo and affiliated tribes, were opened by registration and drawing on August 6, 1901. Three new counties, Caddo, Comanche and Kiowa, were thus added to the settled portion of Oklahoma.

(See map showing Oklahoma with the new additional lands opened to settlement.)





Openings and Additions to Oklahoma

1. Cherokee Nation, Indian Territory, November 16, 1907.
2. Creek Nation, Indian Territory, November 16, 1907.
3. Choctaw Nation, Indian Territory, November 16, 1907.
4. Chickasaw Nation, Indian Territory, November 16, 1907.
5. Osage Nation, 1893, 1907.
6. Kaw, 1904.
7. Ponca and Otoe Missouri, 1904.
8. Pottawatomie, Iowa, Sac and Fox, September 22, 1891.
9. Kickapoo, May 23, 1895.
10. Old Oklahoma, April 22, 1889.
11. Kiowa, Comanche and Wichita, August 6, 1901.
12. Cheyenne and Arapahoe, April 19, 1892.
13. Greer County, May 4, 1896.
14. Cherokee Outlet (strip), September 16, 1893.
15. No Man's Land, May 2, 1890.
16. A Part of the Cherokee Outlet.
17. Big Pasture, December, 1906.

### Chapter III

#### EARLY DAY SCHOOLS\*

The people who settled Oklahoma came from every state in the Union and were of a class that had come to make homes. They had been accustomed to good schools; so after getting settled in their homes, they turned their attention to preparing for school facilities.

Until May 2, 1890, when the Organic Act was passed establishing the territorial government, they were still under martial or military rule, having no civil government to direct them in their work, so in localities where there were a sufficient number of children of school age meetings were called and arrangements made for schools.

On the prairie there were no trees that could be used for building schoolhouses, so they built sod schoolhouses and covered them with sod, the floors being nothing but dirt. The work was done in most instances by donation.

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\* The writer regrets that statistical and financial data concerning the rural schools in Oklahoma could not be secured to be used as a part of this thesis. The capitol of Oklahoma was moved four times after statehood and not only the early records but school reports of later years were lost or destroyed. Repeated efforts were made to secure some of thesedata, but it was impossible to do so.

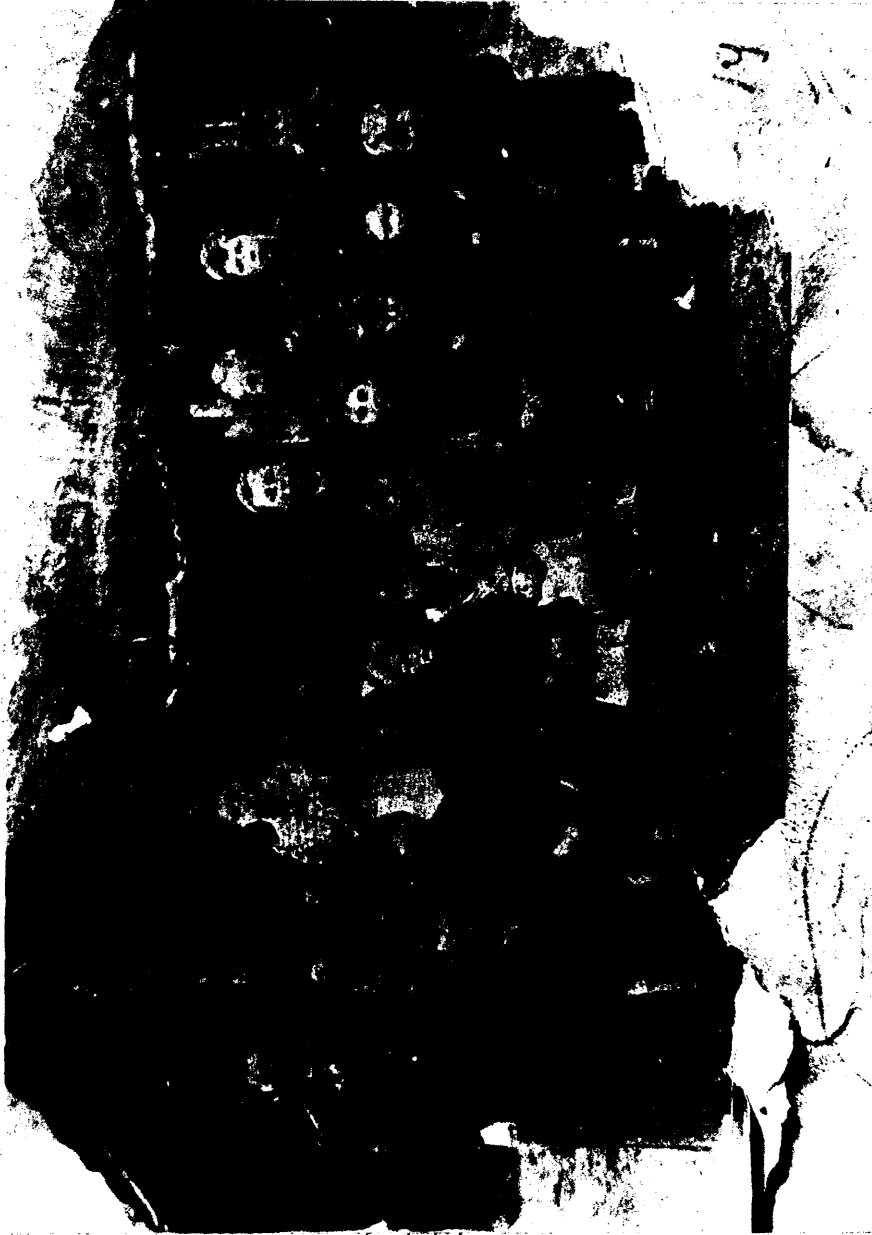


Figure 2. An early day sod schoolhouse





Figure 2. An early day sod schoolhouse

In localities where there was timber, the people would get together and cut the logs and, with their teams, haul them to the school site previously selected and, of course, donated. Then they would have a "house raisin'".

The women would prepare the dinner (luncheon), take it to the building site and serve the meal. In that way time would be saved.

If there should be anyone in the neighborhood who understood how to hew logs with a broad ax, he would come and hew the logs. The following picture shows a schoolhouse built of these logs in 1891.

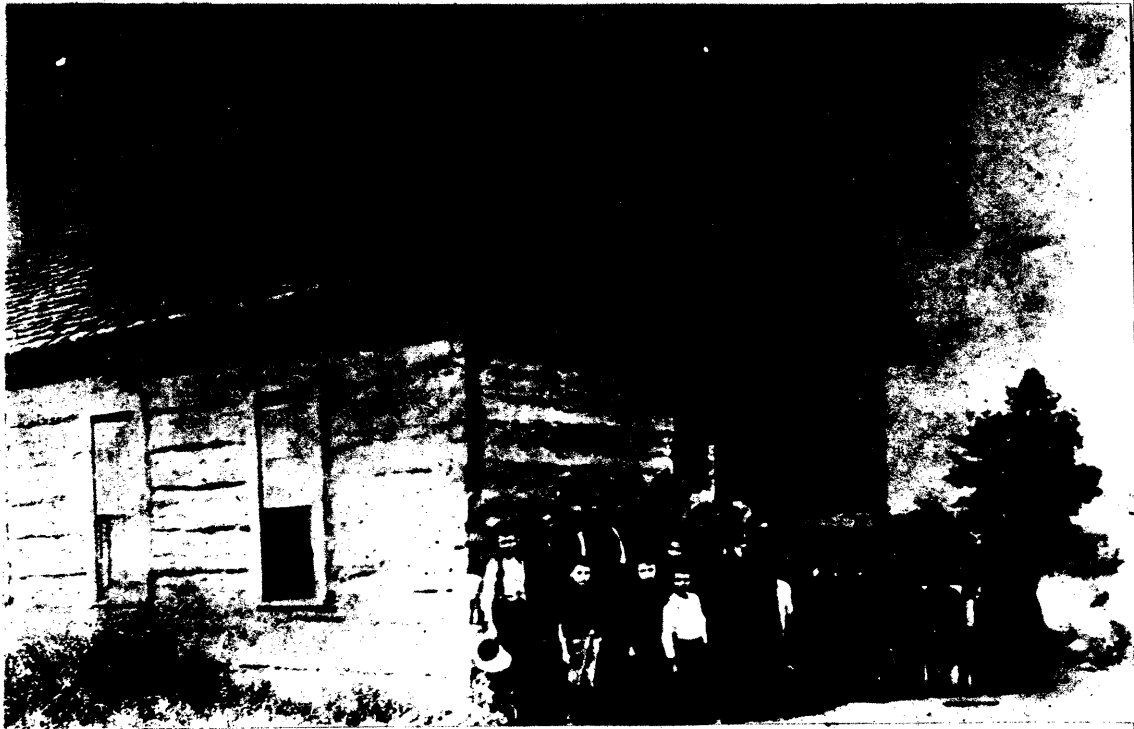


Figure 3.- An early day log schoolhouse.

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Figure 3.- An early day log schoolhouse.

The roofs of these houses were made of boards (shakes) rived out of blocks of wood three feet long, with a tool called a "frow".

In places where the logs were nothing but poles, they would be cut 12 feet long, and, after removing the bark, stood on end close together in a ditch two feet deep. The top ends would be sawed off level and a two by four plate nailed on to them, to which were nailed the rafters. The spaces between poles were plastered.



Figure 4.- An early day picket or stockade schoolhouse, 1891.

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Figure 4.- An early day picket or stockade schoolhouse, 1891.

After these schoolhouses were built, they were furnished with benches which were logs with the top side hewed smooth and legs (pegs) fitted into auger holes from the underside.

After the schoolhouses were built and furnished, the next thing was to employ teachers. There were no laws prescribing the qualifications of teachers nor any public funds with which to pay them; so the people decided upon the qualifications of the teachers, and the teachers solved the wage problem in the majority of cases by teaching the children free of charge.

The teachers were generally young men and women who had had experience, had "staked their claims" of 160 acres in the district and were willing to teach the schools free of charge in order to establish a reputation, so that when schools were established according to law they would have a better opportunity to get a school.

In some of the more prosperous communities the people paid a small tuition fee, and in some cases the people would help to build the teacher a cabin, either a sod or a log one, to live in or would break his land, and, in some instances, they would plant and cultivate his crops for him.

The writer lived among these people and learned all this from personal observation.

Pictures of Early Day Teachers

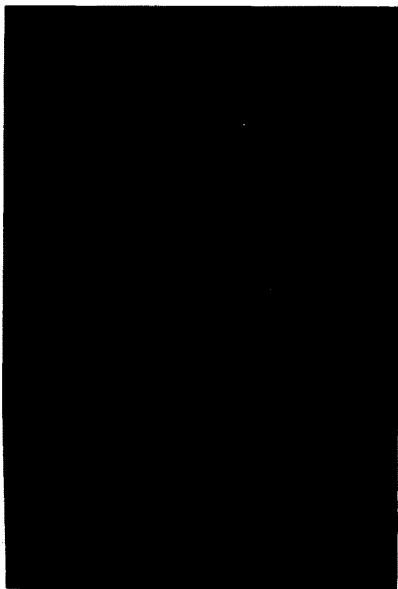


Figure 5.-George Wilson

One of the very early day pioneer rural teachers who afterward became President of the Oklahoma A. & M. College.

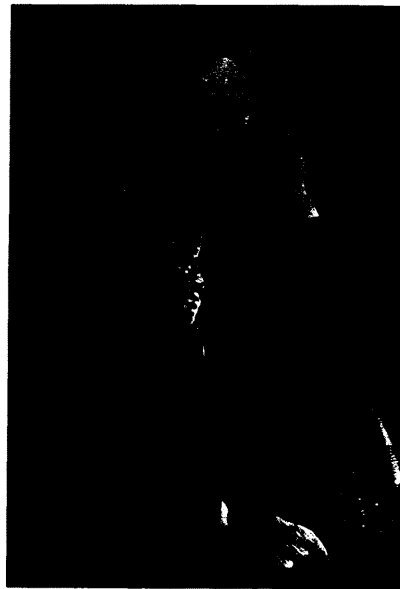


Figure 6.-E. S. McCabe

One of the pioneer rural school teachers. Afterward he became associate professor of English in Oklahoma A. & M. College.

Pictures of Early Day Teachers



Figure 5.-George Wilson

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Figure 6.-E. S. McCabe

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Oklahoma had been under martial or military rule until May 23, 1890, when President Harrison appointed George W. Steele of Indiana governor of the territory.

The Organic Act provided that there should be seven counties organized in the new territory, named as follows: Logan, Oklahoma, Cleveland, Canadian, Kingfisher, Payne and Beaver. Governor Steele appointed a county superintendent of schools for each of these counties.

"Governor Steele's message to the Territorial Legislative Assembly which met August 29, 1890 was not an extended one, but he called attention to the necessity of legislation for the organization of the public school system of the Territory." (2)

The Legislative Assembly passed the following school law:

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

"Section 1. The Territory of Oklahoma is hereby divided into school townships as follows: All boundary lines extending from east to west shall be one-half mile north of and extend parallel with the Congressional township lines east and west, and all boundary lines extending north and south shall be one-half mile east of and extend parallel with the Congressional township lines north and south.

"Section 2. Each school township shall be divided

Pictures of Early Day County Superintendents

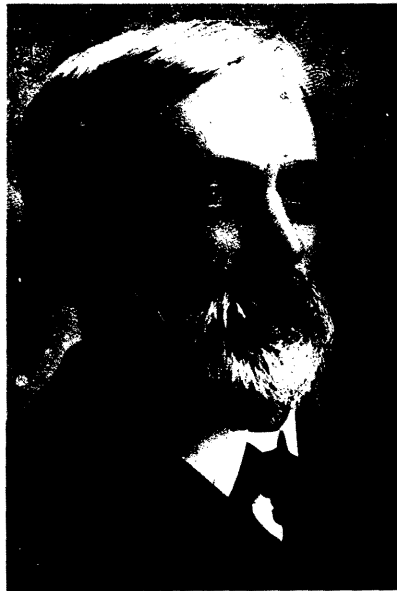


Figure 7.- Rev. J. H. Parker. First County Superintendent of Schools of Kingfisher County and the Second Territorial Superintendent of Schools of Oklahoma.

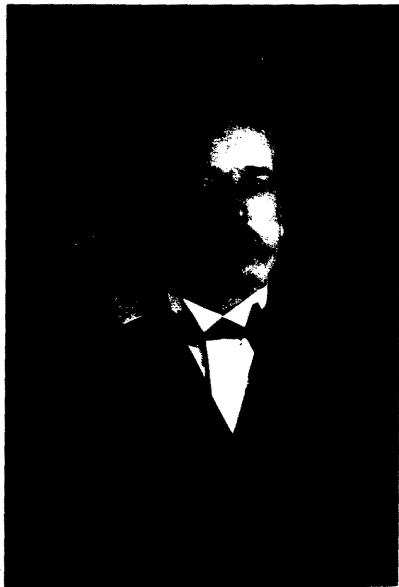


Figure 8.- J. A. J. Baugess First County Superintendent of Schools of Oklahoma County.



Figure 9.- R. B. Foster. First County Superintendent of Schools of Payne County.

Pictures of Early Day County Superintendents

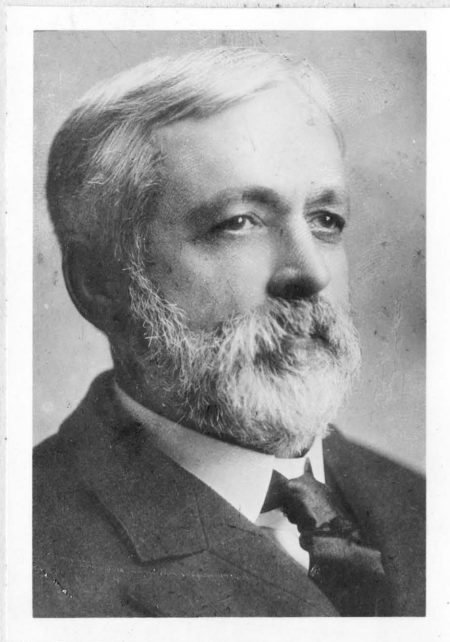


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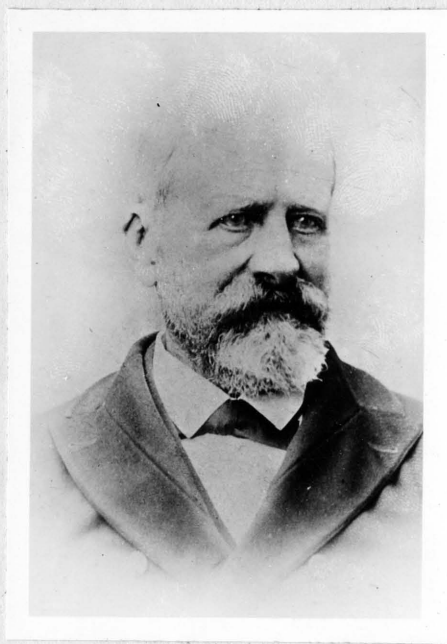


Figure 9.- R. B. Foster. First County Superintendent of Schools of Payne County.

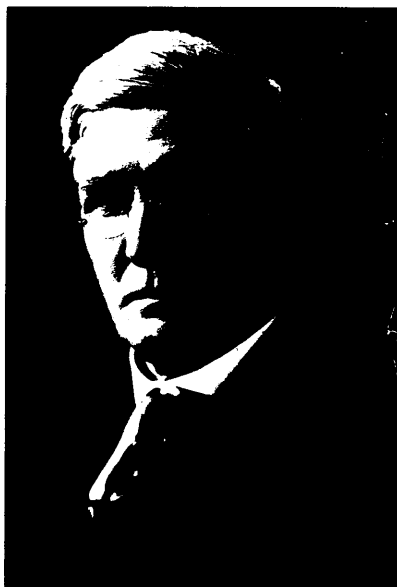


Figure 10.-  
Rev. H. A. Doty  
An Early Day  
County Superin-  
tendent of  
Schools of King-  
fisher County  
and a Pioneer  
School Man.

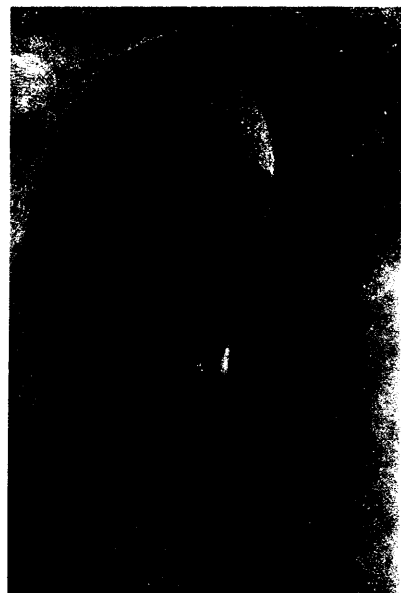


Figure 11.- George Rainey.  
First County Superintendent  
of Schools of Blaine County.

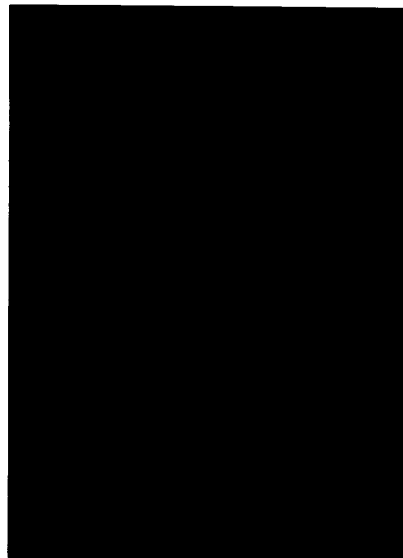


Figure 12.- E. L. Crabe.  
First County Superintendent  
of Schools of Cleveland  
County.

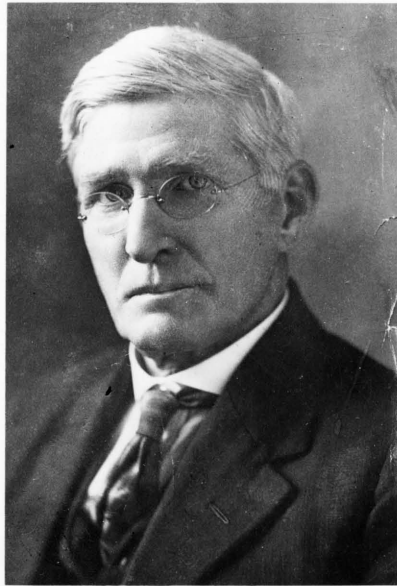


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Figure 11.- George Rainey.  
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Figure 12.- E. L. Crabe.  
First County Superintendent  
of Schools of Cleveland  
County.

into four districts of equal size and square form with site for school building fixed as near the center as practicable. But schoolhouses already built shall remain as at present located until changed to the center by a majority vote of the qualified voters of the district at an election called by the board of such township....." (3)

The map on page 31 of this thesis shows school district and township boundaries and location of schools.

After the passage of the above school law, which took effect October 11, 1890, the governor, having already appointed the county superintendents of schools, required them to organize their respective counties into school townships and districts and to establish school sites. After that was done it was found that there was no fund that could be used for school purposes.

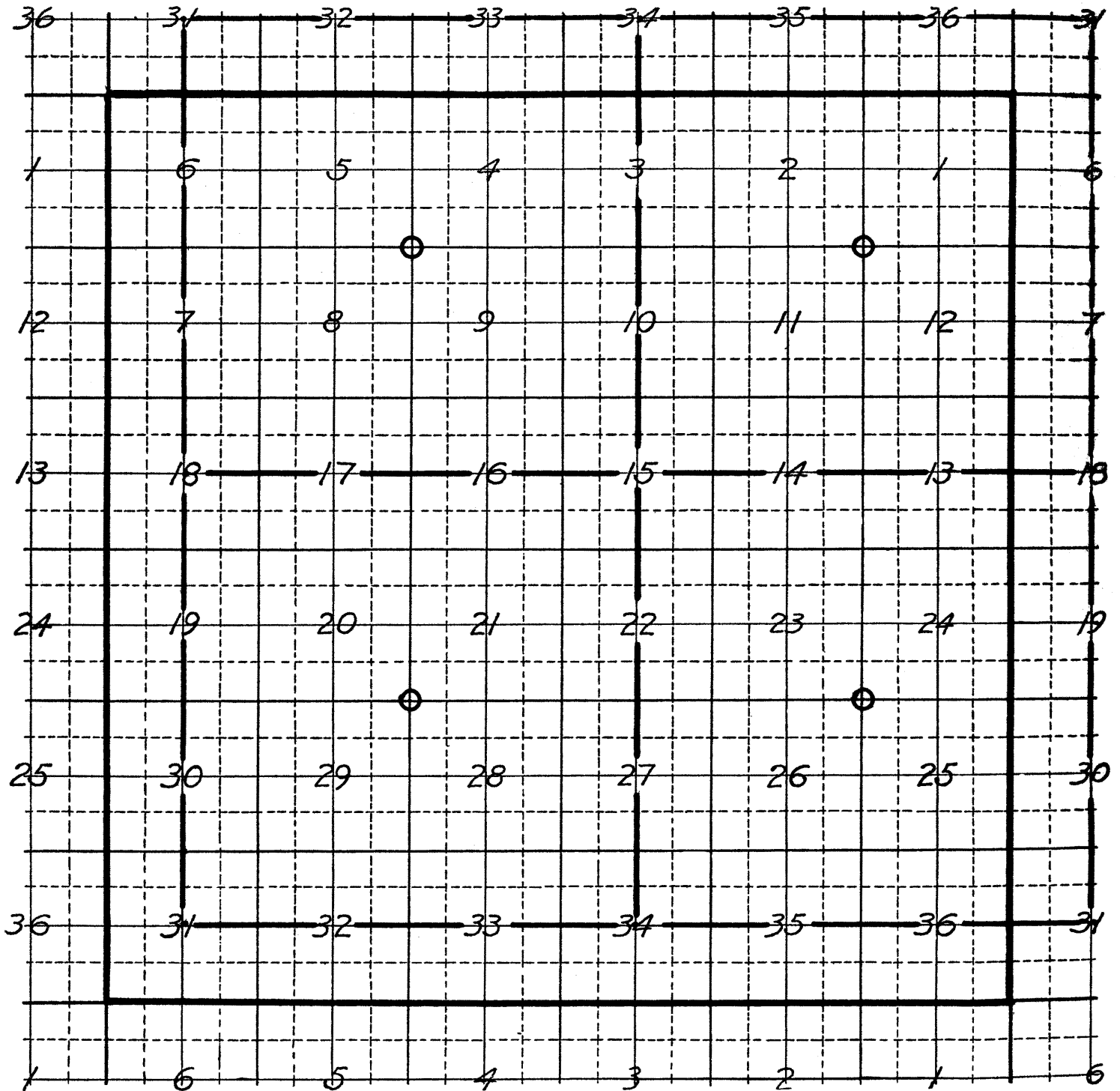
It was discovered that there was an unexpended sum of money to the amount of \$50,000.00 that had been appropriated by Congress for the Mississippi flood sufferers.

Congress passed a resolution transferring that money to the school fund of Oklahoma to be used for paying teachers.

It was agreed by the county superintendents and school boards that teachers with first grade certificates should receive \$35.00 per month; those holding second grade certificates should receive \$30.00 per month; and teachers holding third grade certificates should receive \$25.00 per month. (The writer learned this by being secretary of a township school board.)

TOWNSHIP No. .... OF RANGE No. .... WEST OF THE ..... PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN.

NORTH



Scale, 1 inch=5,000 feet.

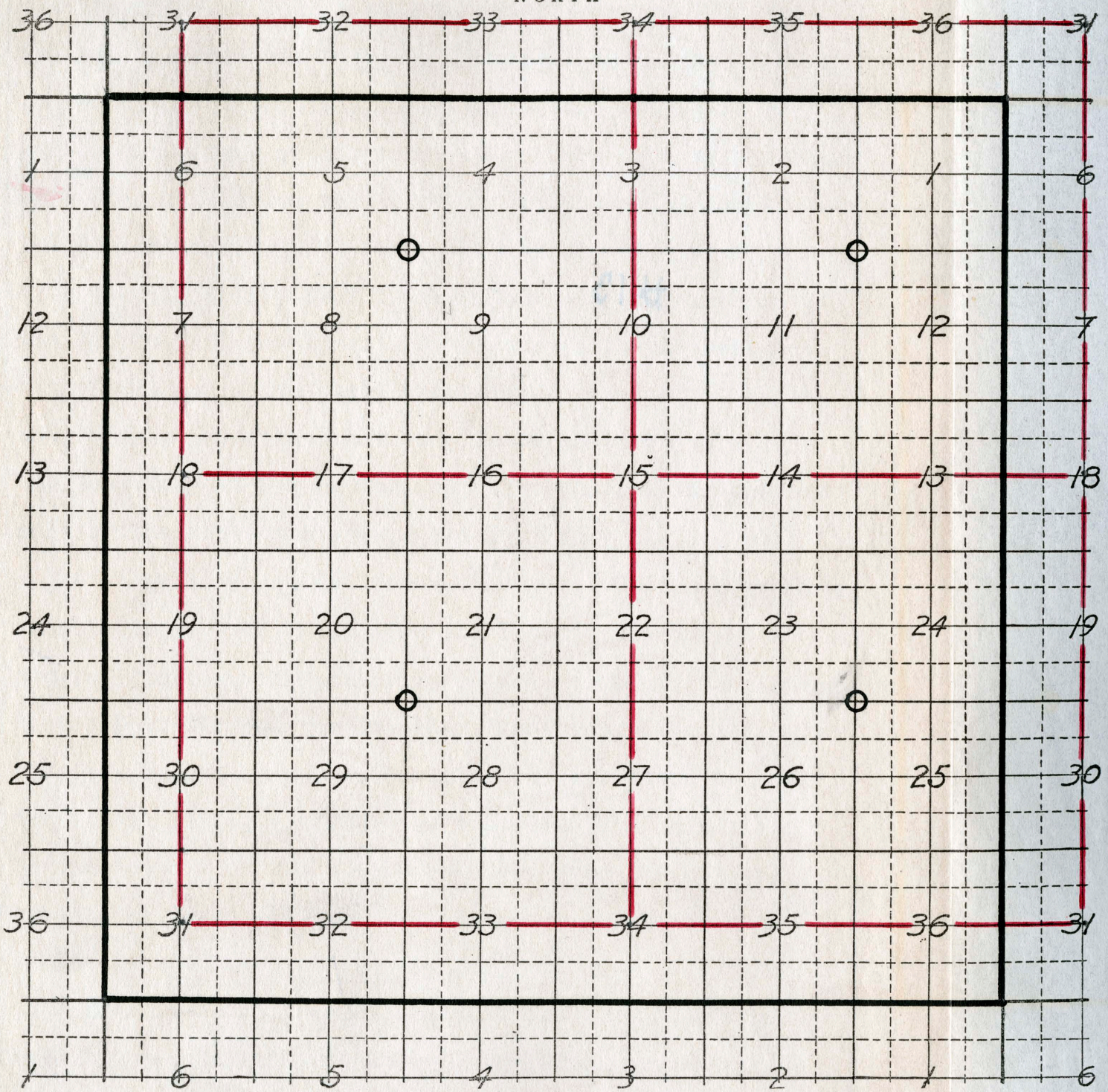
LOCATION OF TOWNSHIP AND SCHOOL DISTRICT BOUNDARY LINES--STATE OF OKLAHOMA

- School District Boundaries
- Township Boundaries
- Location of School

Figure 13.

TOWNSHIP No. .... OF RANGE No. .... WEST OF THE .... PRINCIPAL MERIDIAN.

NORTH



Scale, 1 inch=5,000 feet.

LOCATION OF TOWNSHIP AND SCHOOL DISTRICT BOUNDARY LINES--STATE OF OKLAHOMA

- School District Boundaries
- Township Boundaries
- Location of School

Figure 13.



"The act of Congress under which the lands of the Oklahoma country had been opened to settlement provided that two sections of each township (Sections 16 and 36) should be reserved for the benefit of the public schools. When all of the vacant public lands which were open to homestead entry had been taken up, there yet remained unoccupied over 100,000 acres of school land, much of it being fine land with fertile soil. Immediately after the organization of the Territorial government, Governor Steele was besieged with inquiries as to the disposition of the school lands, many people expecting that such lands would be sold by the Territory at low prices, as most school lands had been sold by the various states. The Territory did not have the right to sell its school lands, however. Offers were then made to lease such lands from the Territory. Governor Steele, doubting his authority to act, referred the matter to the Secretary of the Interior, upon whose recommendation Congress passed an act authorizing the Territory to lease its school lands, applying the proceeds from such rentals to the support of the public schools. The policy thus adopted has been followed ever since as new lands were opened to settlement." (1)

After provisions were made for the support of the schools, the legislature seemed to think, and rightly too, that some standard should be established in regard to the qualifications of teachers, hence they passed a law concerning certificates, Article 4 of Chapter 79 of the 1890

Statutes of Oklahoma, which read as follows:

"Section 2. Certificates issued by county superintendents shall be of three grades: first, second and third; and shall continue in force respectively three years, two years and one year.

"Section 3. Certificates of the first grade shall certify that the person to whom issued is proficient in and fully qualified to teach orthography, reading, writing, English grammar, composition, geography, arithmetic, United States history, constitution of the United States, bookkeeping, physiology and hygiene, the theory and practice of teaching and the elements of natural philosophy and shall not be issued to persons under twenty years of age, nor to such as have not taught successfully 12 school months; Provided, That persons who receive first grade certificates shall make a general average of not less than ninety percent, and in no case shall a person receive a certificate of the first grade who shall fall below seventy percent in any one branch.

"Section 4. Certificates of the second grade may be issued to persons of not less than eighteen years of age, who shall have taught successfully not less than three school months, and who shall fully satisfy the county superintendent as to their ability to teach all the branches prescribed for the first grade certificate, except bookkeeping and the elements of natural philosophy; Provided, That persons who receive a second grade certificate shall

make a general average of not less than eighty percent, and in no case shall a person receive a second grade certificate who shall fall below sixty percent in any one branch.

"Section 5. Certificates of the third grade may be issued to persons of not less than sixteen years of age, who shall have passed the same examination as required for a second grade certificate, except physiology and hygiene, constitution, and theory and practice of teaching, and made an average of not less than seventy percent, and in no case shall a person receive a certificate of the third grade who shall fall below fifty percent in any one branch and no third grade certificate shall be issued more than twice to the same person." (3)

The legislature next turned its attention to the qualifications of the county superintendents, which were as follows: (Chapter 79, Article 6, 1890 Statutes of Oklahoma.)

"Section 3. The county superintendent shall be twenty-four years of age, or over, and shall hold a diploma from a state normal school, or shall hold a Territorial certificate, or a first grade county certificate, or shall possess attainments equivalent thereto."

"Section 7. The County Superintendent of Public Instruction in counties containing one thousand and not more than twelve hundred persons between the ages of six and twenty-one years, shall receive four hundred dollars

per annum; in counties having a school population of from twelve hundred to fifteen hundred he shall receive five hundred dollars per annum; and in counties containing more than fifteen hundred persons of school age, he shall receive five hundred dollars, and twenty dollars for each additional one hundred such persons per annum; in counties having a school population of less than one thousand, the county superintendent shall receive three dollars for each day actually and necessarily employed in the discharge of the duties of his office for a number of days not to exceed one hundred in any one year. Provided, That no county superintendent shall receive to exceed one thousand dollars per annum, and that in determining the salaries of county superintendents, the school population of cities of the first and second class shall not be included." (3)

At this time, 1890, Oklahoma had no colleges nor normal schools, teachers' training schools, but the legislature realized the importance of teachers better preparing themselves for their work and passed the following law: (Chapter 79, Article 2, 1890 Oklahoma Statutes, entitled "Normal Institutes")

"Section 1. County superintendents of public instruction shall hold annually in their respective counties for the term of not less than two weeks, a normal institute for the instruction of teachers and those desiring to teach: Provided, That in sparsely settled portions of the Territory two or more counties may be united in hold-

ing one normal institute as hereinafter provided.

"Section 2. The county superintendent of public instruction, with the advice and consent of the Territorial Superintendent of Public Instruction, shall determine the time and place of holding such normal institutes and shall select a conductor and instructors for same: Provided, That no person shall be paid from the institute funds for services as conductor or instructor of said institute who shall not have received a certificate from the Territorial board of examiners as to his special qualifications for the work.

"Section 3. To defray the expenses of said institute, the county superintendent shall require the payment of a fee of one dollar from each candidate for a teacher's certificate, and the payment of one dollar registration fee for each person attending the normal institute.

"Section 4. The fund thus created shall be designated as the 'normal institute fund' and the county treasurer shall be the custodian thereof.

"Section 6. All disbursements of the 'normal institute fund' shall be upon the order of the county superintendent, and no orders shall be drawn upon said fund except for claims approved by the superintendent for services rendered or expenses incurred in connection with the normal institute." (4)

Very early in the history of Oklahoma Territory the question of separate schools for negro children was agitat-

ed. As a result, the Oklahoma Legislative Assembly in 1890 passed the following law: (Chapter 79, Article 13, Statutes of Oklahoma, 1890, An Act to Establish Separate Schools for the White and Colored Children in Oklahoma)

"Section 1. Separate schools for the education of white and colored children may be established in the Territory as follows, and in no other way:

"Section 2. In each county at the first election for township school officers and on the first Tuesday of April 1891 and on the first Tuesday of April every three years thereafter, there shall be held an election where all persons who are qualified school electors may vote for or against the maintenance of separate schools for white and colored children in said county.

"Section 3. If a majority of the votes cast at said election be against the establishment of separate schools in said county, then the white and colored children shall attend the same school in such county; but if a majority of votes cast be in favor of the establishment of separate schools for white and colored children, then there shall be established such separate schools for white and colored children as hereinafter provided.

"Section 6. ----- In all counties in which the electors have voted to establish separate schools for white and colored children, the board of county commissioners shall annually levy a tax in addition to the tax provided for in section eighty-six of this act, sufficient to

maintain such separate schools."

When Oklahoma became a state in 1907 the constitution as adopted made the maintenance of separate schools for white and colored children obligatory.

The second session of the Territorial Legislative Assembly convened in January, 1893. This legislature repealed the school law passed by the first legislature in regard to the school township system where there were four districts to the school township, and made it obligatory upon the county superintendents to redistrict their respective counties into independent school districts.

The indebtedness that had been incurred under the old township system was pro-rated among the new districts according to the value of the property inherited by the respective districts.

This redistricting brought about a great deal of strife and bitter feeling and caused a number of county superintendents to fail to retain their offices at the next election.

The 1893 Oklahoma legislature also changed the school law by making provisions for a board of examiners to assist the county superintendents in holding teacher's examinations and grading the manuscripts of the applicants for certificates.

The 1893 school law gave the county superintendent the right to endorse first grade county certificates issued in other counties for their unexpired time upon the

payment of a fee of one dollar; while under the 1890 law he could endorse such certificates only until the next regular examination in his own county.

The 1893 Territorial legislature also passed a law in regard to pupils who were completing the common school or eighth grade course of study.

It provided that the pupils must be examined in orthography, reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, history, physiology and composition; that they must make an average of 70 percent and not fall below 50 percent in any one branch.

The next legislature, in 1895, raised the standard for graduation from an average of 70 percent to an average of 80 percent, with no subject below 60 percent.

The 1895 statutes made provisions for consolidated schools, but, like all new ideas, the people did not grasp the idea for some time, and not until after statehood in 1907 did they seem to realize what consolidation meant to their children who were ready for high school.

#### Summary of Advancement Made up to 1907

The people had now passed through the stages of advancement from the early settlement to territorial government with definite school laws to direct development. They began to build better schoolhouses and that, naturally, called for better teachers. The first sod schoolhouses with their dirt floors gave way to the improved sod house





Figure 14. Improved sod schoolhouse. 1891



Figure 14. Improved sod schoolhouse. 1891

with a good floor and improved furniture. Then came the small frame building furnished with its patent desks, that, though cheap enough, were still superior to the first hand-made kind. Still later came the larger and more commodious frame building with a good raised rostrum suitable for entertainments and possessing a very good library that included an unabridged dictionary and a several volume encyclopedia set.

In the early days there were no books except those brought from "back home" and no money to buy any others. Consequently, the subjects taught were principally reading, writing and mathematics.

By 1907 not only were good books available, but numerous subjects had been added. Among these were: elements of physical and commercial geography; composition; civics; such elements of animal husbandry as selecting and caring for good dairy cows and selecting a good beef type, or, in the case of poultry, the selecting and feeding of a good "layer" and the caring for young chicks; such elementary topics of manual training as the way of handling the saw and of making such things as bird cages; work in home economics which included not only preparing an ordinary meal, but canning fruit and vegetables. The rural schools had now passed the "three R's" stage.

The schoolhouse grounds had been enlarged from one-half an acre to two and sometimes four acres. Outbuildings had been built in a more sanitary way. The grounds had



Figure 15.- The small frame schoolhouse furnished with  
cheap patent desks



Figure 15.- The small frame schoolhouse furnished with  
cheap patent desks



Figure 16.- The larger and more commodious schoolhouse  
with library



Figure 16.- The larger and more commodious schoolhouse  
with library

been laid out in a more attractive way; in some cases flower beds had been made which gave beauty and charm to the grounds.

Sheds for the horses ridden by the pupils had been built, with boxes for feed grain and mangers for hay.

Wells or cisterns had been located with regard to sanitary conditions and covered with cement tops which kept them sanitary.



Chapter IV.

SCHOOLS OF THE PRESENT DAY IN OKLAHOMA

On November 16, 1907 the state government of Oklahoma was inaugurated, the state being composed of the Oklahoma Territory and the Indian Territory combined.

With the coming of statehood the people seemed to realize that there was a need for more advanced school facilities in the rural districts, so the children might have a high school education and still remain a part of the rural life. Also it became apparent that the younger children could get better advantages in a graded school, and a demand went out for better schools. Better schools demand better qualified teachers and now practically all teachers are graduates of institutions of higher learning and many have master's degrees.

To meet the demand for better schools, consolidated school systems have been established in most of the rural communities. This desire to "step up higher" and not remain at the "foot of the ladder" is having its influence upon our state institutions of learning by giving us more and larger and better equipped buildings.

But the best part of it all is, according to the writer's viewpoint, ~~that~~ the rural people think nothing is too good for them and theirs. Now we have become the home of consolidated schools with a four-year high school course in each, where the rural girls and boys can secure

Schools of the Present Day in  
Oklahoma

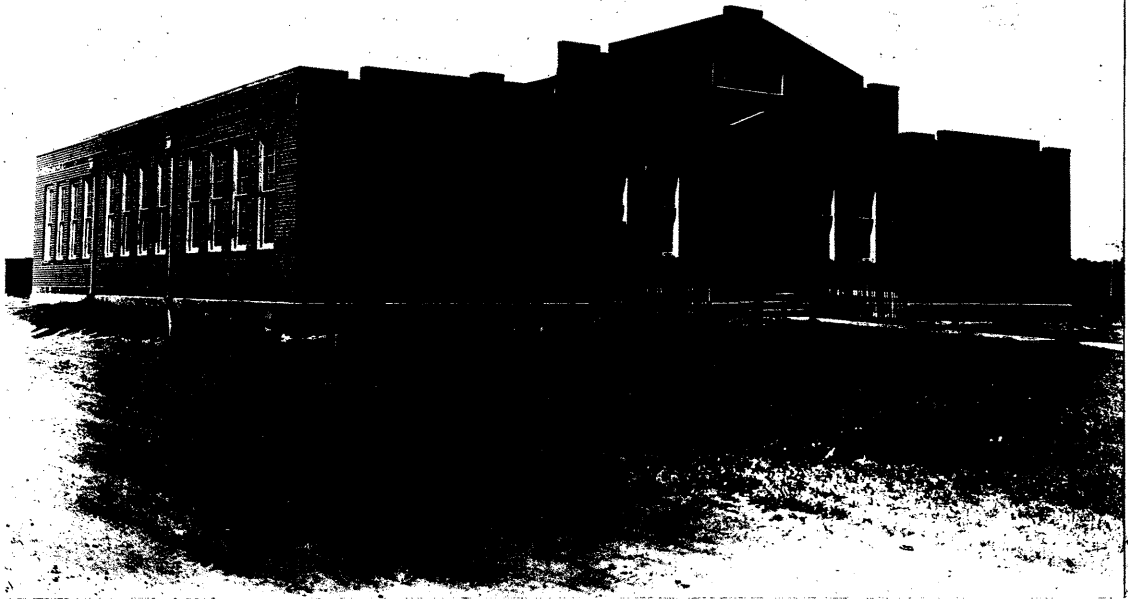


Figure 17.-Lacy Consolidated School  
for white pupils.

Schools of the Present Day in  
Oklahoma



Figure 17.-Lacy Consolidated School  
for white pupils.



Figure 18.- Dunbar Consolidated School  
for colored children.



Figure 18.- Dunbar Consolidated School.  
for colored children.

a high school education without leaving the community.

More courses have been added to the curriculum of the rural schools. The pupils must be well-grounded in civil government, agriculture, animal husbandry which includes dairying, poultry, botany and zoology. This fact has forced teachers to better prepare themselves educationally and compelled the training schools and teachers' colleges to enlarge their courses of study and find instructors who could teach these subjects.

The teachers' colleges have added to their courses of study for the benefit of the teachers: the general sciences; the technique of composition and rhetoric; English, in order to instill or rather to develop in the pupils a love for good literature; decorative art, to the extent of more effectively decorating schoolrooms; the principles of landscaping, in order to better prepare the teachers to arrange the school grounds, making them a place to admire as well as a playground; animal husbandry; poultry raising; elementary agriculture in the way of seed selection, preparation of the soil, etc.; manual training; and home economics, so the teachers could instruct the girls in cutting and fitting dresses and preparing and arranging meals.

The Agricultural and Mechanical College and the University of Oklahoma have not only added the same courses as the teacher training schools, but their courses are more extensive in manual training, animal husbandry,

dairying, agriculture and home economics; also a more advanced study in mathematics. The result was an increased attendance at these institutions from 500 or 600 to 1200 or 1500 during the regular sessions, and the summer terms increased their attendance from 700 or 800 to 1500 or 2500.

Today the teachers' colleges, Edmond, Weatherford, Alva, Ada and Durant, have become the admiration of the entire country. But the demand for teacher training has been so great that the junior agricultural colleges at Cameron, Murray and Connors have added a teacher's training course.

The new courses added to the rural schools made it necessary for someone to see that the work was carried out as the law directs. Consequently, rural school inspectors were appointed, with E. A. Duke as chief. These inspectors are supported by the General Education Board, a Rockefeller Foundation. It is the duty of these inspectors to visit the rural schools at least once a year, and, if necessary, examine the pupils to see whether the work has been properly done.

The following is a partial outline for the grounds and buildings of a standard rural school:

"1. GROUNDS

Site:

Size

Drainage

Location

Landscaping:

- Plan of grounds
- Shade trees
- Fruit trees at teacher's home
- Ornamental shrubs
- Flower beds
- Grass
- Walks

Playground Equipment:

- Enclosed sand pile
- Swings
- Trapezes
- See-saws
- Merry-go-round
- Slide

Water:

- Adequate supply apparently free from contamination
- Well or cistern with concrete platform

Cleanliness:

- Grounds free from weeds or rubbish
- Mud scraper at entrance

THE BUILDINGS

A. THE SCHOOLHOUSE

Foundation

Material

Roof

Entrance

- Steps in good repair
- Platform at front door
- Roof over platform

Chimneys and flues in good repair

Paint

- Schoolhouse, outside and inside
- Outbuildings
- Name of school

Doors

- Open out
- Open and close easily
- Door checks on outside doors
- Locks in good repair
- Transoms over doors



Windows

Arranged on left or left and rear only  
Glass area equal to 20 percent of floor space  
All window panes in sashes  
Open easily from top and bottom  
Three feet or more above the floor  
To within six inches of the ceiling

B. OTHER BUILDINGS

Toilets

Substantial  
Pits or receptacles  
flytight  
treated

Free from obscene language  
Blinds in front  
Indicated by painted sign." (5)

It would seem that all had been done for the rural schools that could be done. Consolidated schools had been established and that was thought by some to be the climax. Then came better qualified rural teachers with their state certificates; then life certificates; and lastly, teachers with college degrees.

It was discovered that it was impossible to have consolidated schools for all on account of topographical and physical features. The one-room buildings needed to be rebuilt, and also there were districts where new two-room buildings were needed, in others as many as three.

There were but few architects available and the contractors of that day did not care to build schoolhouses except in the "old way". Because of this fact some educators were compelled to take interest in the study of school architecture, not only to insure buildings better arranged

for regular school work, but also to include certain features with regard to the health of school children, and a "National Council on Schoolhouse Construction" was formed.

At their Raleigh, North Carolina, meeting in October, 1928, Mr. Haskell Pruett of Oklahoma projected a scheme for the organization of the Schoolhouse Building Divisions in all of the State Departments of Education into an Interstate School Building Service.

"The plan of this Service contemplated a central clearing house where all of the better plans and specifications of the different State Departments would be assembled and, through an organization, distributed to the member states.

"A temporary organization was immediately formed and a method of procedure agreed upon.

"An executive committee composed of Dr. F. B. Dresslar of Peabody College, Chairman; Mr. S. L. Smith, Director of Rural Schools for the Julius Rosenwald Fund, Secretary; and Mr. Haskell Pruett, was appointed. This committee immediately went to work formulating plans for the operation of the Service.

"Through the good offices of Mr. Smith, the Julius Rosenwald Fund made an appropriation of \$20,000.00 with which to finance the work over a period of 5 years. Five thousand dollars was to be used for organizing the work, assembling plans for school buildings, home economics

cottages, teachers' homes, shops, perspectives for school ground layouts, etc.

"The General Education Board made it possible for representatives of the Interstate School Building Service in 13 State Departments of Education to meet in conference at Peabody College during the entire week of June 17, 1929.

"At the close of the first meeting the membership divided into committees. Each committee had for its task the writing of specifications for some phase of the school-house planning and construction.

"At present 13 southern states are in the organization. Other states may join this service by cooperating in standard building practices. Information as to this may be had by writing to the Interstate School Building Service, Peabody College, Nashville, Tennessee." (6)

The writer has gone into details in regard to this Interstate School Building Service because he feels that it shows the great interest manifested by the leading educators with progressive ideas in regard to the needs of the rural schools, and, from the writer's viewpoint, it presages greater strides for the improvement of the rural schools. The schools already have teachers with progressive ideas, but better buildings are needed so as to have better equipment; and last, but not least, better surroundings for better health.



TWO TEACHER SCHOOL BUILDING

2 E A 1

Figure 19.

This picture is taken from "For Better Schoolhouses", Interstate School Building Service, Peabody College, Nashville, Tennessee.

(This style of schoolhouse is now becoming quite common in all parts of Oklahoma and indicates the progressive spirit of the rural people of the state.)

Chapter V.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Before the Civil War that part of the country which is now the state of Oklahoma was populated only by Indians. Soon after the close of the Civil War cattlemen from Texas began to seek a market for their surplus stock by driving it northward through the Indian Territory to points on the railway line in Kansas. They were not long in noting an opportunity for the development of the range cattle industry in the Indian Territory. Soon cattle ranches began to appear. The unassigned lands were quietly occupied without waiting for permission.

On April 15, 1879, General Attorney T. C. Sears of the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railway Company, announced that, with Colonel E. C. Boudinot, of the Cherokee Nation, he had been investigating the legal status of the lands of the western part of the Indian Territory; that they thus learned that there were 14,000,000 acres which belonged to the public domain of the United States, the same being subject to homestead settlement. It was immediately proposed to effect the settlement of such lands by means of organized "colonies", but President Hayes issued a proclamation forbidding the proposed settlement on the unassigned lands.

Captain David L. Payne of Kansas, formerly assistant door-keeper of the House of Representatives at Washington, D. C., had become convinced that the so-called Oklahoma

Country should be opened to homestead settlement. He joined the "boomers" and became the leader of these colonies but was arrested and ejected on every occasion.

Finally, after a long hard fight, the Oklahoma bill (Organic Act) was passed and became a law, March 3, 1889.

On March 23, 1889 President Benjamin Harrison issued a proclamation setting the date of the proposed opening of the Oklahoma country to settlement on the twenty-second of April, 1889, at 12 M.

After the opening of the Oklahoma country and the people were settled on their claims of 160 acres, although they were under martial or military rule and without any civil government, they turned their attention to establishing schools, which was done by building sod and log school-houses by donating the work.

Then came the teacher problem with no law defining the qualifications of teachers and no funds to pay the teachers. But the teachers solved the "pay problem" by offering their services free; though in many instances the patrons turned out and helped to build the teacher's cabin.

Then came an appointed governor with civil authority. Legislators were elected, laws were enacted, and civil officers appointed, which included county superintendents of schools. A school law was passed which directed the county superintendents to organize school townships and the school townships into school districts.

School houses were built and the laws defining the

qualifications of teachers were passed. Schools were established and something more than the "three R's" was taught.

The legislature made provision for five normal schools (teachers' training colleges) at Edmond, Weatherford, Alva, Ada and Durant.

Later the legislature passed a law enabling the people to establish consolidated schools. This gave the rural people a high school course at home.

Rural school inspectors were next added; then the "model school" with its larger school grounds, swings, see-saws, slides, and basket ball grounds; then the landscaping of the school grounds.

Better and more sanitary one, two and three room school buildings were built through the "National Council on Schoolhouse Construction", with headquarters at Peabody College, Nashville, Tennessee.

Now Oklahoma has many consolidated schools with a four year high school course in each, where the rural girls and boys can secure a high school education and still be a part of the rural life.

Oklahoma has grown from its bare prairies and sod schoolhouses to improved farms and consolidated school districts with modern brick buildings and large, well-selected libraries. What the outcome will be rests with us, for, in the words of Redpath, the great historian, "The Past has taught us its lesson; the Present has its

duties, and the Future its hope."



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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

A HISTORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF RURAL SCHOOLS IN OKLAHOMA

BY G. D. MOSS

The purpose of this thesis is to give to those interested in the development of rural school systems a brief history of the work that has been done in Oklahoma along that line from the pioneer days up to the present time.

The writer, who is one of the few remaining pioneer educational workers of Oklahoma, has seen the rural schools there grow from nothing at all into the present up-to-date consolidated system, and has worked toward the development and improvement of these schools for many years. Therefore, much of the material used in this thesis is taken from knowledge which came to him through his experiences as a teacher, county superintendent of schools, and member of educational committees, and through his association with founders and builders of Oklahoma, both as a territory and a state.

A study was made of books on the history of Oklahoma, of educational reports, and of statute books concerning enactment of school laws, in order to trace the history of the schools from its beginning and to supplement the writer's memory of changes in the school systems as they occurred during his life.

The pictures of old time schoolhouses were obtained from friends of the writer, some of whom were pupils in the schools represented at the time the pictures were made. The pictures of present day consolidated schools were made expressly for the writer to use in this thesis.

Before the Civil War that part of the country which is now the state of Oklahoma was populated only by Indians. Soon after the close of the War cattlemen from Texas began to seek a market for their surplus stock by driving it northward through the Indian Territory to points on the railway line in Kansas. They were not long in noting an opportunity for the development of the range cattle industry in the Indian Territory. Soon cattle ranches began to appear. The unassigned lands were quietly occupied without waiting for permission.

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