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HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS OF CURRICULUM
DEVELOPMENT IN THE ELEMENTARY
SCHOOLS OF KANSAS

presented by

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ABSTRACT

HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT IN THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS OF KANSAS

by Philip Donald Rowley

This study explores the historical development of the elementary school curricula of Kansas from the period of the territorial legislatures beginning in 1855, to the early decades of the twentieth century.

The reasons for settlement in Kansas are explored, and related to the establishment of the schools. A discussion of the various ethnic and religious groups who migrated to Kansas is included, along with a survey of their special educational needs. Emphasis is given to the formation of the district school in Kansas, showing it as a feature which met the needs of the settlers well, although it was not uniquely a Kansas product.

The textbook commissions, legalized by the early state legislatures, are given heavy emphasis for two reasons: first, to show a situation which did not exist in many states - that of state printed and published textbooks, and prescribed textbook usage for all schools; second, to show the relationship which existed between these prescribed textbooks and the establishment of curricula and courses of study within the state.

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Two major contrasts are shown. One of these is the contrast which existed between the urban and rural areas of the state in regard to school needs, settlement, and school programs. The second contrast deals with the power struggle which developed between the educators and legislators of Eastern Kansas, and the rural people of Western Kansas. The conflict resulted from an apparent failure of the power group of Eastern Kansas to consider the special educational needs of those in the rural areas of the state.

The following general conclusions are reached:

1. Education was a primary concern of the early settlers in Kansas; drawing precedence over the construction of churches and permanent homes.

2. The school districts of Kansas were founded on an individual basis without any central authority to control the number or location of these districts.

3. Under the direction of the state and through the various officers appointed by it, the district of common school became the central administrative unit for Kansas' schools. As the basic school unit, the district was authorized to consolidate in several ways in order to offer a better program for all of the elementary school children involved.

4. Early in its history, Kansas became actively involved in structuring the curricula of the district schools. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction was given the

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authority, as early as 1873, to construct "Courses of Study" to be followed by the schools.

5. Through a series of enactments Kansas secured a general degree of uniformity in textbook adoption in the schools. By first suggesting and then requiring, the state forced each school to select their textbooks from lists made up by the School Textbook Commission, an agency of the Kansas government. The Commission was generally successful in its requirement of texts, and, because of this, became the most important agency of the state to influence education during Kansas' first one-hundred years.

6. The state institutions of higher education had only indirect influence upon the elementary school programs in Kansas.

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SCHOOLS OF KANSAS

by

Philip Donald Rowley

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CHAPTER I

DEFINITION OF THE STUDY

I. Purpose of the Study

There has never been a study dealing with the subject of elementary education and its history in Kansas. Without such a history the educational literature of the state is void of clarity when the matter of elementary school curricula is discussed.

This study will be concerned with an analysis of the curricular revisions which have taken place in Kansas elementary schools from the Territorial period, 1855-1860, to 1900. Some of the more important changes occurring in the last sixty years are also reviewed. Relevant background material, dealing with the establishment of the state and the several reasons for settlement, is presented to give a greater clarity to this document.

This study also shows those elements of school organization which were uniquely Kansas products and those which were incorporated from other parts of the country. An analysis of these various organizations is made to show the effect which each has had on the school system which now exists in Kansas.

II. Limitations of the Study

The study includes only those curricular changes which have taken place in the Kansas elementary schools, with the emphasis on happenings in the period 1861 - 1900. The private elementary schools of the state are not included in the scope of the study. Minor regional changes are not dealt with in terms of total effect on the schools; however, some of these changes are shown because of their unique characteristics, or to illustrate a contrast in school types.

Those changes which are presented are not intended to be all of the changes which have occurred in the elementary school curricula of Kansas, but they do constitute the majority of the changes which have taken place during the period under consideration insofar as material is available to make this presentation. Only those curricular changes begun at the state level of administration are considered.

III. Definition of Terms Used

Major curricular changes. Major curricular changes are defined as those changes in curriculum which, by intent or implication, were designed to affect the schools of Kansas as a total group, and which originated at the state level of government.

Public school. A public school is defined as one which is open to all students, and which receives its support from revenues of the public domain.

The term public school is further limited here to schools teaching subjects and grades commonly associated with the elementary level of instruction. By using this definition all high schools, and all junior high schools which are a part of the commonly accepted secondary school pattern, are eliminated from consideration.

Public school curriculum. The term public school curriculum, as generally used during the period of time under consideration in this study, is defined as a course of prescribed textbook study designed to be used in a public school of Kansas. At the time under consideration here, this did constitute a total curriculum, but it would not be considered as such in the schools of today. The course of study may be teacher prepared, or it may be prepared by an agency of the local school, the county or the state.

IV. Scope of the Study

Much of the development of education in the United States can be said to have been built by those who used earlier schools, curricula or methods as their model. The development of the elementary schools of Kansas followed this pattern. Little was new. Most of the earlier schools

which were established could be traced to their counterpart in the State of Missouri. Many early Kansas writers referred to the Missouri schools and their "wonderful ability to draw the best from the more advanced Eastern educational models."

From this early carbon-copy school the roots of a well-defined unique system of education grew. The changes which took place, both slight modifications and major revisions, form the center of focus for this study.

Many of these changes were the direct result of legislative action, and these actions are described and their significance pointed out. As the second generation of Kansans took an interest in their schools, certain individuals exerted their influence at the local and state level, and, in some cases, single-handedly altered the course of education in the state. In much the same way that Carrie Nation founded the temperance movement in this state by fighting it out in the saloons of the prairie settlements, so these people fought for what they felt was a minimum adequate education for their children. Their contributions will be discussed and measured in terms of the impact which was felt by the schools as the commentary dictates.

Probably the most significant and far-reaching changes in Kansas elementary schools had their beginnings during the period 1885 - 1900. During this time the Kansas

Text-Book Commission was formed. Because of the continuous, state-wide influence which this commission had on the formation of school curricula in Kansas, its origin, development and influence is described in some detail. As is shown, this agency of the state made its mark at all levels of education - city, county, district and state - and its lasting effect is still apparent today.

Following the discussion of the Text-Book Commission, a resume of curricula which were to be found in Kansas schools is presented, along with a discussion of the various other agencies responsible for influencing changes in curricula.

The course of educational history, where applicable, is followed with reference to its implementation or modification for Kansas schools. The discussions concerning the district school formation in Kansas are a case in point. Although not a Kansas school phenomenon, they did play an important part in the school district organization in Kansas.

Throughout, the impact of sociological and cultural developments on the changing school scene will be presented. Because Kansas was one of the later areas of the nation to be settled, many changes which took place in the period 1860 - 1880 can be directly related to the presence of new ethnic and religious groups on the scene. From the entry of these groups into Kansas, such unique developments as the use of

Roman Catholic clergy and nuns as teachers in the public schools, and the lease of church buildings for housing public schools have come. These two developments are not mentioned further in this study, but are representative of changes which came during the early development periods, and these practices have had continued use in the state since that time.

Economic conditions of the land have had some impact on Kansas schools and their eventual development, but despite economic depression and plagues of grasshoppers and the sparsity of settlement, money was found for school support. During times of distinct deprivation and depression Kansas schools continued to be founded, and even expanded, despite the fact that teachers were often paid in script, materials, or lodging rather than with currency. The only significant economic development during Kansas' early years which had any effect upon Kansas schools, and this in an adverse direction, was the opening of the railroads. Although this point may seem to be one of considerable controversy when one considers the many new towns which were created as a result of the Westward extension of the railroads, and the subsequent schools which were undoubtedly constructed, the overall effect of the railroads upon the economy was detrimental to school development during these early periods. Because of this importance of the railroads to school

development, a brief discussion has been devoted to the coming of the railroads and their subsequent failure to support the schools. Other than this discussion of economic impact on the schools, economics receive only passing attention.

Politics and education have never been completely divorced at any level, and this is also true of Kansas. Much of the curricular offerings for a particular school system, school district, or state are determined by political pressure. The major political emphasis in this study is stressed at the point of discussion concerning the important people in education during the past one hundred years in this state. Politics in education is also emphasized through the actions of the Kansas Text-Book Commission, and its later successor, the State School Book Commission, both functioning bodies of the State of Kansas. Much of this study speaks to this point, and to the accompanying problems which the schools faced as a result of working through these commissions. Politics forms much of the fiber for curriculum discussions.

The development of the various curricula, colored by the aspects of government and community just discussed shall receive major consideration, and these curricular changes are the basis for all of the research which was done.

Although direct reference to the elementary school is not made frequently, the period under study was one in

which elementary schools were the predominant public schools; therefore, it should be assumed that the remarks are directed toward elementary rather than secondary school development.

V. Review of Previous Studies in the Area

No previous studies of curriculum history of Kansas have been located. There have been many Kansas histories written, with small portions of the texts being devoted to a history of the schools of the state.

There have been no texts written in the field of elementary school history for Kansas. As far as can be determined, through research and a discussion with the Librarian, Kansas State Historical Society Library, Topeka, Kansas, this is the first study of its kind.

VI. Statement of Research Procedures

Method Used

All of the research for this study was accomplished through library use, from existing books concerning Kansas history, Kansas laws and legislation, and biographical sketches of Kansas personalities. Some few newspapers and magazine articles have been used to supplement these books, and most of those articles deal with well-known Kansans.

Several libraries within the state were utilized

for research purposes in gathering the materials for this study.¹

Treatment of Findings

Findings have been collected, analyzed, and reported without interpretation. The final chapter contains the opinions of the writer as he views the total change in Kansas elementary school curricula structures. Here some interpretations of the events in elementary education, which have taken place since 1900, have been made in the light of earlier curricular developments. This fact is noted in order to provide a framework for reading which may be more meaningful.

Throughout this study the focus is on change and the resultant school programs. The intent is to present a new situation, analyze its impact and importance upon the existing school scene, and then to move on to the next period of history and to the contributions which it made to the elementary schools of Kansas.

1. The libraries used for this research were: Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas; University Library, The University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas; Memorial Library, Kansas Wesleyan University, Salina, Kansas; Curriculum Materials Library, Kansas Wesleyan University, Salina, Kansas; and, Rocky Mountain Bibliographical Center, Denver, Colorado. The chief source for information was the Library of the State Historical Society in Topeka.

CHAPTER II

THE DEMAND FOR EDUCATION IN THE TERRITORY

I. Early Settlers in Kansas: Their Origins and Aspirations

The territorial period of Kansas' history was one filled with contrast, conflict and failure. The actual beginnings of the territorial period are not clearly defined, but most historians are in agreement that the major population immigration began, and the subsequent drive toward settlement and statehood of the territory came, in the year 1854 and in the years immediately following.

The year 1854 is an important one in the history of Kansas, for it brings to a close the period during which this region was used as a hunting ground by the Indians and marks the beginning of its use as a home for White people.¹

The year 1854 was the year of the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act.² The act made the position of the United States official concerning its intentions for Kansas, and it also sealed the fate of the Indians. Prior to this time, the lands of Kansas, and of the entire Nebraska

1. Anna E. Arnold, A History of Kansas (Topeka, Kansas: The State of Kansas, 1914), p. 57.

2. Leon H. Canfield et. al., The United States in the Making (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1940), p. 377.

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Territory, had been held by the Indians of the East and Midwest as treaty lands. When the Indians were moved to these territories in the early years of the 19th century, it was with the understanding that no attempt to move them would be made as long as one "red man" remained. By the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act the United States terminated, unofficially, all of the former treaties and indicated its intention to settle the land with a white population. So the lands that only thirty years before had been promised to the Indians "so long as grass should grow or water run" was now open for settlement by one and all.³

The early settlers who came to Kansas following the passage of the Act of 1854 were not peaceful. Because of the conflict which had been smoldering in the Congress of the United States since the passage of the Missouri Compromise in 1820, new hostilities were felt by the proponents and opponents of slavery.⁴ Missouri had been a slave state. It was the intention of the state of Missouri, and of the South, that Kansas should be introduced as a slave state when it applied for statehood. There were many in the North who disagreed. Among them was a native of Massachusetts, Eli Thayer, who became the founder of the New England

3. Arnold, op. cit., p. 48.

4. Canfield, op. cit., pp. 377-378. See also, John D. Hicks, A Short History of American Democracy (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1949), pp. 341-348.

Emigrant Aid Company. It was the purpose of this company to locate persons who were anti-slavery minded, and who were willing to leave their homes in the East and migrate to the new territory with the idea of making it a free state.⁵

Thus the stage was set for bloody conflict. The men from Missouri, being closer to the new territory, claimed much of the new land under the doctrine of "squatters' rights,"⁶ and they made the journey of the free-staters difficult. Many would-be groups of settlers were diverted from their set course before reaching Kansas, chiefly because of the deterring factor of hostile settlers along the Kansas-Missouri border.

A unique feature of emigrating in Kansas was brought about by the railroads. Rather than the usual pattern of settlement which was characteristic of most western states, the pattern of movement from one location in the United States to another, Kansas had people actively working in the area of immigrant recruitment. The major railroads in the state had offices established with the specific responsibility

5. Arnold, op. cit., pp. 65-66. Also, Canfield, op. cit., p. 379.

6. Canfield, op. cit., p. 364. This term, although popularly used in much of the literature discussing the period, is not found in any of the acts passed by the United States for the settlement of the territories. It was a popular term used to describe the persons who homesteaded land in the Western territories, and had special reference to the sovereign right of states to choose their form of government and location of residence within the territory.

of going to Europe to solicit immigrants for this new land. These officials traveled throughout Europe, advertising cheap lands in Kansas, and returned with large groups of people. The largest group to come to Kansas in this way was the Mennonites.

The railroads had been given land by the state of Kansas on a right-of-way basis, with the agreement that the railroads populate these areas. This was the railroad's answer to the agreement, and it provided a rather unusual method of gaining settlers in an otherwise unsettled area.

The Demand for Education

Despite the grave situation which prevailed during the early days of the territory, some slight advancements in the areas of education were evident. Many persons, both then and now, saw the period of transition as a blessing in disguise. Kansas became a true melting-pot, if such actually exists, and the result of this environment is still felt today in many parts of the state.

The transplanting of many races and nationalities into Kansas enriched the new commonwealth politically, economically, and socially.⁷

Education has usually enjoyed an esteemed spot in the minds and hearts of frontiersmen of all times. The same

⁷ Margaret Whittemore, Historic Kansas-A centenary sketch-book (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1954), p. 115.

was true of Kansas.

When Kansas was organized as a Territory and the white settlers began to make their homes here, the education of their children became one of their first interests...but the settlers' claims were so widely scattered and the dangers during the days of raids and warfare were so great that country schools were almost an impossibility during the first few years.⁸

With the pattern of conflict well established, schools became of secondary importance, even in the city areas. Few city schools were established and these were not meeting on a regular basis. Children usually attended school only when they were not needed at home. This was especially true for the older boys and girls.⁹ For these early settlers education was a luxury to be indulged in lightly.

Early School Beginnings

The first school to be established during the territorial period was "in Lawrence (where) Dr. Charles Robinson suggested the use of a room behind his office as a school. Here on January 16, 1855, twenty pupils started a three month term..."¹⁰ This school had not been provided for in any legislation prior to this time and no pattern for the organization of a common school existed. "In the summer of 8. Arnold, op. cit., p. 183.

9. Ibid., pp. 185-186.

10. Whittemore, op. cit., p. 137. See also, Arnold, op. cit., p. 183.

1855 the first Territorial Legislature passed a law providing for the establishment of common schools..., " but even here no provision was made for the curriculum or for support of the common school.¹¹ The territory had no provision in the law for the length of school terms, although most were open for only a three month term, nor did it state when any type of specific curriculum should be begun.¹² To carry the lack of provisions one step further it can be noted that it was not required that schools be conducted in the English language.¹³ It is well that English was not a required language in the schools, for had this been the law, many early migrant groups who settled in Kansas Territory would have been without schools due to their lack of familiarity with English. English was the most prevalent, and those who had a different native language soon became bilingual, with English being the dominant language.

Some state aid, or perhaps more correctly called Territorial aid, was forthcoming for the support of schools. As was indicated in an earlier paragraph, the Territorial Laws did not indicate a specific time for schools to operate, but they did specify that a school could not qualify for aid

11. Arnold, op. cit., p. 183.

12. William E. Connelley, ed., Kansas Historical Collections, Vol. XV (21 vols.), (Topeka, Kansas: The State of Kansas, 1919-1922), p. 242.

13. Ibid.

if it convened for less than a three month period.¹⁴ Many of the schools could not conveniently operate for this long a period, so some other method of revenue was sought to support the schools in session. One of the plans which met with some general acceptance was the subscription school.

Many of the earlier schools were 'subscription' schools, which means that they were not public schools supported by a tax levy, but that the teacher's pay came from a tuition charged each pupil who attended.¹⁵

From the foregoing material two distinct factors can be seen which had some bearing upon the establishment of early schools in Kansas. First was a desire for the education of children, which seemed to be dominant among all groups migrating to Kansas. Secondly, and perhaps of more importance, was the fact that few schools were established even though the provision for them had been included in several of the territorial constitutions. This was a pattern which could not be considered unique to Kansas, for historically similar situations existed throughout the development of the United States. Two good examples would be the reactions of the colonists to the passage of the Massachusetts Law of 1647 and the reactions in the Northwest Territories to the passage of the Northwest Ordinances of 1785 and 1787. In both cases the provision for the establishment

14. Ibid.

15. Ibid.

of schools was made, but few schools emerged for a considerable length of time despite the provision. The parallel between these historical events and the events which took place in Kansas may not be exact, but it is felt that there is a direct relationship between all three in the way in which people reacted to the formation of schools when they considered other problems to be of more immediate concern. In this regard Kansas was no exception.

School Ideas Brought by the Settlers

The few schools brought into the state, or established there, reflected the types of backgrounds of the early settlers, and, as a result, showed no pattern of uniformity or purpose. Perhaps, in all fairness to those who established these early schools, it should be pointed out that one common 'uniformity of purpose' could be drawn from the fact that they all desired to educate their children. The largest groups of settlers coming to Kansas were Scandinavians, Scotch, Germans, Austrians and the German and Russian Mennonites.¹⁶ In terms of numbers, the Mennonites were the largest single group to migrate to Kansas. With diversity of cultural background such as was represented by these groups, no commonality in educational curriculum was to be found in early Kansas.

¹⁶. Whittemore, op. cit., pp. 103-107.

Despite the fact that little in common can be identified among these several groups, the need for education of their young was present. Education was a means of maintaining tradition and ethnic solidarity, and, as such, it was needed to fulfill this purpose. This was especially true of the Mennonites who came to Kansas. They were, as a group, well educated and they wished to maintain this tradition. Beyond this, they wished to retain close group identification which could be accomplished best by educating their young in the group traditions. Other groups, with greatly different European backgrounds, wanted similar education for their children. Chief among those who continued the customs of the old country for many years were the Swedes and the Germans.

This drive for education, although not a unifying force in the sparsely populated areas of Western Kansas, made the construction of schools of prime concern to each new migrating group.

Indian Relations

Another major deterrent to the establishment of schools along the Kansas frontier was the constant harassment of the settlers by the Indians. During the frontier period and for twenty years beyond that time the pioneers were in constant danger from Indian raids. The Indian felt

that these lands which were rapidly being taken from him were rightfully his, and he was not willing to give them up without a struggle.¹⁷

...the red man did not give up his hunting ground without a struggle. The encroachments of the settlers had long been resented...Robberies and murders were committed along the whole frontier...Travel over the Santa Fe and other westward trails almost ceased and the lines of settlement were pushed eastward many miles.¹⁸

Few schools were built along the frontier. If school was to be held in these frontier regions, it was usually kept in the home of a settler where a greater degree of safety could be attained and where a teacher might be willing to work. Despite laws which said that schools might be established, the settlers were not willing to risk the lives of their children for the sake of an education. Only after 1879, when the last major Indian uprising had been put down, was there an increase in the building of schools along the Kansas frontier.

II. Early Territorial School Laws

Laws Borrowed from Missouri

The first territorial legislature of Kansas, which met at Pawnee on July 2, 1855, proslavery as is well known, adopted the Missouri statutes, as

17. Samuel J. Crawford, Kansas in the Sixties (Chicago: A. C. McClurg and Company, 1911), Chapters 21 and 22.

18. Arnold, op. cit., pp. 117-118.

revised and enacted by the general assembly of that state during the years 1844 and 1845, as the statutes of Kansas territory. By this action the Missouri school laws were made the basis of the Kansas school system.¹⁹

Kansas' school laws have never been completely changed from this first early enactment borrowed from Missouri. At the time of the passage of these first laws, there was a state of unrest because of the disagreements among the settlers as to the type of state government which each of several groups favored. The formation of this first territorial government and legislature at Pawnee was a strategic one. Being located close to the Missouri border it was possible for the early territorial legislature to get general support for its formation from those who resided in the area, and also from Missouri which sent troops to assist in the enforcement of the laws so established. This entire area was proslavery, and the laws enacted reflected this feeling. Under these early laws, Negroes were exempt from any type of apprenticeship education. This effectively removed the Negro from any opportunity to gain an education in the Kansas territory.

Because of the action taken by the proslavery legislature, the antislavery forces in Kansas became more actively

¹⁹. George W. Martin, ed., Kansas Historical Collections, Vol. XI (21 vols.), (Topeka, Kansas: The State of Kansas, 1909-1910), p. 424.

engaged in the business of assisting Negro slaves in escaping bondage through the use of the Underground Railroad to Canada.²⁰ This occurred in spite of both territorial and Federal laws prohibiting the assistance to Negroes. There are no examples found, however, of antislavery schools enrolling Negroes for the purpose of educating them in the public schools or in an attempt to bring the undesirable legislation before a court to test its constitutionality. Most of the conflicting issues came to a head when a letter was written to President Pierce in the summer of 1855 requesting the removal of Governor Reeder. The letter contained the signatures of the majority of the members of the proslavery legislature of 1855. Reeder had been in opposition to the entire proceedings at Pawnee, and had refused to sign into law any of the enactments from the Pawnee legislature.²¹ Despite the veto by the Governor, most of the laws were eventually passed by the Territorial legislature over his veto and they became law. The law regarding school support and formation was unpopular with the majority of those residing in Kansas territory, but nothing could be done until a

20. An interesting account of one case in point of the use of the Underground Railroad to free a slave is found in Lizzie and the Underground Railroad by Richard Cordley. It is one of a collection of stories in: Everett Rich, ec., The Heritage of Kansas (Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Press, 1960), pp. 50-56.

21. "Anon." Journal of the House of Representatives of the Territory of Kansas (Shawnee Mission Labor School, Kansas: John T. Brady, Public Printer, 1855), Appendix, pp. 10-13.

School Laws of the Territorial Legislatures

Little is said in the several Kansas histories about the establishment of schools by the antislavery forces during the years 1855 and 1856, but it can be assumed with the undercurrent of hatred toward the Pawnee legislature and all it stood for that few schools were created. An even more plausible assumption, in view of what is known of the state history, would be that some of the schools which were operating as public common schools became public subscription schools to avoid any conflict whatsoever with the laws.

By 1859, when Territorial conditions had become more settled, the Legislature turned its attention to the matter of education and passed a set of school laws that has served...as the basis of our system of education.²²

Between the time of the first Territorial legislature met in 1855 and the time of school law codification in 1858 several attempts were made at legislation designed to encourage the establishment of schools within the territory. None were truly successful because of the several conflicts which have been mentioned previously.

In "The Kansas School System - It's History and Tendencies," Clyde L. King summarizes the chaos which was evident in the Kansas schools from 1855 - 1861. Although his introduction covers a much longer period of Kansas'

²². Arnold, op. cit., pp. 183-184.

school history than the era in question, the remarks are pertinent to the period under consideration here. He says:

For fifty years Kansas legislators have been adopting the educational statutes of other states, with or without changes, and then, in succeeding legislatures, revising or amending them; or, less frequently, they have created new educational machinery which succeeding legislatures have thought necessary to repair or remodel. In this way the present school system has been assembled.²³

This reflection of a fifty year period of Kansas School history could be said to be mirroring the events of the five year period of Kansas history beginning with the Pawnee legislature of 1855.

Proposed Constitutions of Kansas Territory

Several important enactments came from these early legislatures. The laws which came from the legislatures of 1855, 1857, 1858 and 1859 are of some significance, and are summarized here.

Territorial legislature of 1855. The territorial legislature of 1855 provided for the establishment of the independent school district, provided for the establishment of the rural school districts, excluded Negroes from apprenticeship education and encouraged education by the exemption of school houses and other school buildings from tax payments.²⁴

²³. Clyde L. King, "The Kansas School System-It's History and Tendencies," in Martin, op. cit., p. 424.

²⁴. Connelley, op. cit., p. 241. See also, Martin, op. cit., p. 425.

These laws also encouraged education by granting of state monies for school operating expenses, made a requirement of one free school in each county, and secured the use of federal lands for school operation on a continuing basis.²⁵ The statutes also provided for officers of each school district, giving them the titles of inspector and trustee.²⁶

Territorial legislature of 1857. The territorial legislature of 1857 made only a slight modification in the existing laws. The added requirements of census reporting for all school districts was the only change of significance. Although there was no defined age for school attendance, the district school inspector was required to report all children between the ages of five and twenty-one years who resided in his district.²⁷

Territorial legislature of 1858. The territorial legislature of 1858, under Kansas' first antislavery government, enacted most of the lasting and widespread laws concerning education. Under these laws the governor was instructed to appoint the first Territorial Superintendent of Schools. His duties, as defined by the law, were "to recommend textbooks and to attempt to secure uniformity in

25. Connelley, op. cit., p. 242.

26. Martin, op. cit., p. 426.

27. Connelley, op. cit.

their use, to discourage sectarian instruction and apportion school money among the several counties."²⁸ The county superintendent was also created by this legislature, and he was given the power to create and to alter existing school districts.²⁹ This was an important piece of legislation, for there were already many school districts organized prior to the enactment of this law and the duplication of educational effort was costing the supporters of education a high price. The district school officials had their titles changed to the present ones of director, treasurer and clerk and had their duties defined within these laws. A provision for a yearly election of these officials was also made.³⁰ The laws of 1858 were the first to specify an official curriculum for the use of the schools of Kansas. This law stated:

...in every school district there shall be taught orthography, reading, writing, English grammar, geography and arithmetic, and such other branches as the board of education may determine.³¹

A last major provision of the laws of 1858 was in the allowance for the voters of a school district to determine the length of the school year. This law continued in a slightly

28. Ibid.

29. Martin, op. cit., pp. 425 and 431.

30. Ibid., pp. 426 and 431.

31. Ibid., p. 426. This is quoted in this text from the Kansas laws of 1857-1858, Section 1, Chapter 8.

modified form for many years.³² Because of the fact that this and all succeeding legislatures of Kansas were, and are, antislavery in philosophy, the bulk of the enactments from the legislative session of 1858 still stand today with only slight modification. For the first time Kansas had a standard curriculum, established by the state, with officials elected at the local level to insure its compliance. The fact that it was not carried out successfully lies in the lack of competency on the part of those hired to teach, and does not reflect the great zeal of those appointed to carry-out this endeavor.

Another factor which may have contributed to the lack of implementation of this program lay in the fact that the program was not easily interpreted by those who were given the responsibility for carrying out this work. The level of education for these people was not such that they easily understood new innovations in teacher education.

An even further difficulty lay in the inherent problem caused by a program prescribed by the state, and left to the local superintendents to carry out. Channels of communication were not sufficiently established at this time to make smooth transition from state to county to local district a reality. For these many reasons, the laws enacted were slow in being implemented in actual school practice.

³². Arnold, op. cit., p. 184.

Territorial legislature of 1859. The legislature of 1859, reflecting the agreement, which has been indicated above, of the people with their new school laws made few alterations to the basic school statutes. For the first time it was noted that no exemption to the education of Negroes was made. The law did not specifically include them in the groups to be educated, but they were not singled out to be excluded as they had been in 1855. This omission was short lived, however, as they were specifically eliminated from the free schools by the laws passed in 1861.³³ The legislature also stated that the desired minimum school year should be three months.³⁴ During the sessions of 1859 the school laws which had been enacted during the previous year were codified and became the fixed laws governing Kansas schools. This codification made possible an acceptable standard for all the school districts to follow.

The End of the Territorial Period

From the passage of the laws of 1858 until Kansas became a state in 1861 a great growth in schools and school districts was evident. In 1858 there were between 56 and 60 organized school districts in Kansas territory.³⁵ By the

^{33.} Connelley, op. cit., p. 243.

^{34.} Arnold, op. cit., p. 184.

^{35.} Martin, op. cit., p. 425.

time of statehood in January, 1861, there were, as reported by the several directors of the districts in 1860, at least 480 school districts.³⁶ The reports from the State Superintendents of Public Instruction for the years 1860 and 1861, reflecting the year of education just previous, contain listings of the new textbooks which had been recommended and adopted by the various school districts. All of these were for use of the elementary school districts as the legislature had not yet made a provision for the establishment of public secondary education in Kansas. The report of 1861, the last one from the territorial Superintendent, gave the most complete listing of texts. These were recommended to the state and were adopted for use. They were:

Moral Instruction: The Bible
 Readers: McGuffey's series
 Geography: Cornell's series
 Mathematics: Ray's Mathematical series
 English Grammar: Pineo's³⁷
 Composition: Quackenbo's
 Writing: Spencerian System³⁸

The curriculum for the district school was now set, and the teacher, who usually had nearly the same training as her pupils, was ready to begin formal instruction of this new curriculum.

36. "Anon." Columbian History of Education in Kansas (Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas: Hamilton Press, 1893), p. 6. See also, Martin, op. cit., p. 425.

37. There seems to be some doubt about the correct spelling of the author's name. The spelling as it appears above is most frequent, but the spelling Pinneo appears in the 1863 report. No text or publisher is available to verify either spelling.

38. William R. Griffith, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Annual Report, 1861, p. 34.

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At this time the texts that were used determined the curriculum to be taught, primarily because of two factors. The first factor which can be isolated is the fact that there was no provision for teacher preparation, and, because of this, no opportunity for the teacher to understand or practice the principles of good curriculum construction. The second factor was that most of the teachers, because of their lack of formalized preparation for teaching, wanted a set course of instruction to use, and they did not question the right of others to determine their program for them, or the soundness of such a procedure. The textbook determining the curriculum pattern was of less importance than was the presentation of subject matter exactly as printed and prescribed by an anonymous expert.

It is interesting to note that the new state did not keep the highly popular McGuffey series of readers for long. They substituted a series called the Wilson's Spellers and Readers two years later.³⁹ In the next chapter the district school, a legislative creation of the territorial legislature of 1858, will be analyzed in some detail and the responsibilities of its officers presented and discussed.

39. Isaac T. Goodnow, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Annual Report, December 31, 1863, pp. 23-24

CHAPTER III

STATEHOOD AND THE DISTRICT SCHOOL

In the period which followed the Civil War the state of Kansas' school system began to take on a definite pattern of organization. The school which seemed to find most general acceptance in these areas was the district or common school.¹ The district school was not unique to Kansas. Most of the states along the American "frontier" adopted this type of school organization as the pattern which seemed best to suit the particular needs of their way of life. The organization did not vary much from state to state. The establishment of the district school in Kansas did not wait for statehood, but was well represented in the territorial period.

This chapter deals with the district school, not as a historical phenomenon, but from the point of view of what Kansas did within the framework of an already established organizational pattern for schools. The concern here is for the use to which the district school was put, and not to

1. For the purposes of the discussion in this and following chapters the term district school will be used to refer to "common" schools or to any other types of school found in the rural areas of Kansas, and excluding all schools in cities of the first and second class and all high schools (both rural and community).

explore fully the historical significance of the district school development in the state.

Kansas provided for the establishment of this district school in its constitution adopted in 1859.

The legislature shall encourage the promotion of intellectual, moral, scientific and agricultural improvement, by the establishment of a uniform system of common schools, and schools of a higher grade, embracing normal, preparatory, collegiate and university departments.²

This statement, although general in philosophy, became the basis for the establishment of the district schools. The state superintendent of public instruction was given the right to interpret this law and to establish those schools necessary to carry out the intent of the law. This authority came from Article 6, Section 1 of the Constitution of the State of Kansas. The procedure which was most frequently used to organize these schools was for the state superintendent to delegate his authority for school establishment to the county superintendent of public instruction, an office which he created.

The district school is created by the County Superintendent of Public Instruction. He is given the authority, by law, to create as many school districts in each county as is necessary to accommodate the existing population. Each district created had

2. Constitution of the State of Kansas, Wyandotte, July 29, 1859, Art. 6, Sec. 2, p. CXLIII. See also, Sallie Shaffer, Kansas: The State and Its Government (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1939), p. 128.

to have a potential of at least fifteen students of school age living in the district.³

From the foregoing it is possible to see that the line authority for administration of the district school is established. The local school district is responsible to the County Superintendent and he is, in turn, responsible to the Superintendent of Public Instruction in the state. With this delegation of authority it was not considered necessary for the State Superintendent to determine personally the need for new schools within the state. He could leave this decision for the County Superintendent who was much closer to the immediate needs of the people.

I. Administration of the District Schools

In an attempt to place the authority for the operation of the district schools directly in the hands of the people it was necessary to expand the line of authority from the local area to the state. "One of the smallest civil divisions which the State recognizes is the School District."⁴ It is established by the state and controlled by the local citizenry.

Common schools were administered by the school districts except in first and second class cities. Their boards of education consisted of a school

3. Edward H. Butler, History and Government of Kansas (Philadelphia: E. H. Butler and Company, 1894), p. 54.

4. Ibid., pp. 53-54.

director, a clerk and a treasurer. The officers were elected at an annual school meeting.⁵

These school officers, under authority of the County Superintendent of Schools, were responsible to the people within the district for the operation and maintenance of their schools.

The members of the district board of education were the director, clerk and treasurer. These members were elected, one each year, for a period of three years.⁶ They were to be elected on a non-partisan platform and were required to serve their time in office without pay.⁷

The three officers constitute the District Board; and to this is given the general charge of all District affairs. It levies the annual tax; has the care and keeping of the schoolhouse, and of all other property belonging to the District; hires the teachers; decides what text-books shall be used...and must visit the school at least once each term.⁸

This board represented the district and was charged with the total responsibility for the conduct of all business for a year. The board, ultimately responsible for school business, did have to answer to the district, however. These people who resided in the district were intensely interested in their school and in the services which it rendered to the

5. Shaffer, op. cit., pp. 68-69.

6. Butler, op. cit., p. 55.

7. Ibid., p. 58.

8. Ibid., p. 56.

immediate community. For this reason, the entire community made it a law to meet at least once a year for a complete report from the school board, and to conduct the general school business. The annual meeting, a gathering of all of the qualified male electors of a school district, was held on the last Thursday in July each year for the purpose of electing the school officers for the following year, and to conduct the other necessary business of the district. One of the major tasks facing the electors at the annual meeting was the determination of the length of the school term for the following year.⁹ The school district frequently extended the regular three month school term required by the state to a four month term, but the decision to do this was left to the district and the electors at their annual meeting.

Any District may, at its annual meeting, vote on the question of uniformity of text-books in the common schools of the county. If the majority of the School Districts in any county vote for county uniformity, then the County Superintendent calls for the election of one delegate from each township, which delegates constitute the County Text-book Board. It is their duty to select and prescribe the text-books to be used in the schools of the county. When this selection has once been made, the list cannot be changed for five years.¹⁰

The right of the district to determine the texts to be used in their schools meant that they could, to a large

9. Ibid., pp. 54-55.

10. Ibid., pp. 57-58.

degree, determine the curriculum which was to be offered in these schools. This was possible because the state did not prescribe any set curriculum for the schools during this early period. The notion of using a commission for textbook selection was introduced several times by the early State Superintendents in their Annual Reports and was cited as a means of gaining uniformity of instruction in the several counties of Kansas. There were set lists of texts from which these districts could select those which suited them best, and these lists were compiled by the State Superintendent. The freedom of curriculum determination came as a result of each district being able to determine what they would offer for a given year, and then selecting the texts to be used for this instruction. Frequently the texts were chosen first, and then the course offerings were built around these textbook selections.

The work in those days consisted chiefly of the three R's, "readin', 'ritin' and 'rithmetic." In most cases, the pupils started each year at the beginning of their books and worked as far as they could. This was continued winter after winter until the girls and boys were eighteen to twenty-one years of age, or even older.¹¹

The books these children used were those selected for them at the annual meeting. There are accounts of some district schools allowing the students to bring to school those books which had been carried West by their parents, and these

¹¹. Arnold, op. cit., p. 186.

became the texts with which the teacher and child toiled. This situation compounded the difficulties for many of the district school teachers, because many of them had little more education than the children they taught and many of the textbooks brought in were in one of several foreign languages.¹²

Perhaps at this point in the discussion of the district school it might be well to take a backward look at the schools of the prairie which preceded the actual formation of these districts. The history is one of interest to the people of Kansas, as it is an indicator-of-sorts of the arrival of many of the religious and ethnic groups on the Kansas frontier.

II. Early District Schools and Their Predecessors

Most of the early district schools were founded in Eastern Kansas and were in operation long before Kansas became a state. These early schools were chiefly church related and were organized as Indian missions.

Indian Mission Schools

The first mission school in Kansas was founded by the United Presbyterian Church among the Osage Indians in

12. "Anon." Thomas County Golden Jubilee, (Thomas County, Kansas: n.d.), pp. 95-96 et. passim.

1824.¹³ Several other denominations, including the Baptists, Methodists and Friends, came to Kansas within the next few years, and by 1835 all had established missions among the Indians.¹⁴ From the first establishment of the Indian schools in 1824 until 1850 these schools were operated entirely for the Indian.

(The Shawnee Baptist) mission became the first publishing house in Kansas in ... 1834 ... primers, booklets, and translations were published in the Shawnee, Creek, Choctaw, Otoe, Pottawatomie, Wea, Delaware, Osage, Kaw, Miami and Ottawa languages or dialects. Other missions (schools) used some of these books in their work.¹⁵

Most of these mission schools were taught by the clergy of the various faiths who established them. Frequently these clergymen founded several missions. Little is recorded of the activities of the various missions. Thomas S. Huffaker was in charge of the Kaw Mission school located at Council Grove, Kansas. It was operated and maintained by the Methodist Church.¹⁶ "In May, 1851, he opened a free school for white students in rooms adjoining those used for the Indian children."¹⁷ This is the first record of the

13. Arnold, op. cit., p. 217.

14. Ibid., pp. 217-218.

15. Whittemore, op. cit., p. 42.

16. Ibid., p. 48.

17. Ibid., p. 49. See also, George W. Martin, ed., Kansas Historical Collections, Vol. XI, op. cit., p. 231.

conversion of Indian missions for use by children of the settlers. As more settlers moved into Kansas the need for schools became more acute. The mission schools, which were already constructed, formed a logical place for the settler's children to begin their instruction until other schools could be constructed. Other schools followed the example set at Council Grove, and, by 1855, most of them had begun to accept white students or had become completely converted to schools for whites only. A list of fifteen of the early mission schools in Kansas, all of those which were known to have existed in the state, is presented in Appendix A.

Early Schools Built

As the settlers moved into Kansas in increasing numbers the opening of new school districts became more numerous. "Like many other states, Kansas set apart two sections of land in every township to provide funds for the common schools and certain lands for the University."¹⁸ The Federal Homestead Law of 1862¹⁹ opened the way for thousands of new

^{18.} Shaffer, op. cit., p. 67.

^{19.} This law provided that any person who is the head of a family, or who is twenty-one years of age, and who is a citizen of the United States or has declared his intention to become such, may acquire a tract of one hundred and sixty acres of public land on condition of settlement, cultivation, and occupy as a home for a period of five years, and on payment of certain fees. It also provided that the time that any settler had served in the army or navy might be deducted from the five years. (Arnold, op. cit., footnote p. 119).

settlers to migrate to Kansas. "Sometimes the settlers did not wait to organize their district, but gathered together and began to work on their schoolhouse."²⁰ Thus was the regard for education among these early Kansas people.

The early schools were strikingly similar in outward appearance. The sod school was most common; there were few schools made of logs or boards. In either type the floor was of hard-packed dirt.²¹

Most of the early teachers were educational volunteers. In the case of the early mission schools, they were usually the clergyman who maintained the mission, or possibly his wife. These people were not trained educators nor did they have much formal education themselves. It could be said that the education of early Kansas was inadequate, but this seems to be an injustice to the efforts of those who attempted to teach the rudiments of knowledge to these pioneer children.

Certification of Teachers

Beyond the mission schools some attempt was made to select and certify teachers on a local, district basis. The annual meeting selected the teacher for the district school in some cases, and, in others, the teacher was selected by

20. Arnold, op. cit., p. 184.

21. Ibid., pp. 184-185.

the elected board of education. In either situation it was necessary to use those who were available and who had the desire to teach, in spite of the fact that they might not be more qualified in the subjects taught than the students for whom they were responsible. The common school was a form of terminal education for most, and most of the teachers had the same level of education, or only a slightly higher level, than the students they taught.²² It is because of this apparent inadequacy of preparation that much is heard about the need for discipline in the early schools. With proper knowledge of subject matter and of means of keeping children busy at work much of this use of the rod could have been avoided.

Despite the fact that there was little professional instruction for teachers or that the qualifications for those who taught was unprinted and unknown, many of the educational leaders of early Kansas sought to unify and professionalize the teaching vocation. Early in 1863 Superintendent of Schools Isaac T. Goodnow advocated teacher institutes for drill in the subjects to be taught in the common schools.²³ The Annual Report which he submitted in 1863, also discusses the required "Oath of Allegiance" for

22. Ibid.

23. Isaac T. Goodnow, Superintendent of Public Instruction, Annual Report (Topeka, Kansas: State Printing Office, 1863), pp. 24-25.

teachers, as a law of the time. The "Oath" is not mentioned in other literature of that period. This report also lauds the beginnings of a state teachers' organization during the previous year as a powerful force within the state.²⁴

School Attendance

School children were not numerous in the early prairie schools. There were many reasons for the lack of attendance. The most significant reason seems to be the fact that children were needed for chores in and around the home and this left little time for school. Even those who were fortunate enough to be able to attend school part of the time often had to ignore their studies because of other family duties.

Another reason, and perhaps no less significant, was the fact that there were not many schools located on the prairie and the factor of distance to school was too great, especially for small children who could otherwise attend. As school districts began to be organized closer to the people this problem seems to have decreased, and the little children began to attend in increasing numbers. The school term was often extended beyond the minimum to benefit these smaller children.²⁵

24. Ibid., pp. 24-27.

25. Arnold, op. cit., pp. 185-186.

Children did not graduate from these district schools. They continued as long as they desired and then quit. For them graduation was accomplished by failure to return to school for the next term.²⁶ Interest for schools may have been high, according to some writers of early Kansas, but there were too many deterring factors for most students to gain much of an education. The interest appears to have been a verbal one on the part of some parents, and it faded quickly when work needed to be done at home. The state did not do much to encourage school attendance at this point, probably because of the feeling that any type of compulsory attendance law would be nearly impossible to enforce.

The school did serve one useful purpose, however, and this purpose may have been the motivating factor in causing some parents to send their children to school, even in the face of a need for them at home. The prairie school was a focal point for life for the early settlers. If you sent your child to school then you had occasional opportunities to see him perform at spelling bees, recitation programs, and promotion exercises. These were major social events of the year, and it is certainly a point for debate to determine whether the parents went to see their children perform or to have an opportunity to talk with their infrequently-seen neighbors. The school was often the only building to be

26. Ibid.

erected in the area, so it was pressed into service for many purposes not commonly associated with school buildings today.

...the little log and sod schoolhouses served the pioneers well. They were used not only for school purposes, but for religious services and for social gatherings, spelling schools, singing schools, and literary societies. The schoolhouses were the social centers of early Kansas.²⁷

The importance of the school for both the student and his parents is clearly shown by this writer. It seems strange that so little was written about the institution which contributed so much to pioneer society in Kansas.

Textbook Usage

From the very beginning of the district school, some person in authority over the school was given the initial power to recommend the textbooks which would be used in these schools. Frequently these lists were ignored. The book lists do, however, give a good idea of what was felt to be important by these early school leaders, and tend to focus upon what was available as a text for the district schools. As early as 1861 textbook lists that were recommended by the State Superintendent appeared in the Annual Report.²⁸ A list of textbooks which has been compiled from
27. Ibid.

28. William R. Griffith, Superintendent of Public Instruction Annual Report (Topeka, Kansas: State Printing Office, 1861), p. 34.

the Annual Reports of several of the early superintendents is presented in Appendix B. The lists, beginning with the earliest, were quite similar with only a few year to year changes. Additions to the lists formed the greatest area of change.

There were also recommended lists for texts to be used by teachers - some for instruction, and others to be used as guides for teacher improvement.

In 1876 a number of laws were passed changing the total operations of the district schools in Kansas in regard to texts and their usage. One of the laws gave the State Superintendent of Public Instruction the right to recommend texts and to attempt to gain statewide uniformity of text-book adoption. This was to be gained by working through the several county superintendents, who, in turn, were to work with the several districts toward the end of uniformity of selection throughout the state. The law was upheld to the extent that the recommended list was widely circulated and adoption was encouraged, but the ultimate objective was never reached.²⁹ This law was revised again in 1885 in an attempt to secure at least county-wide adoption of textbooks, and this law was much more successful. Many counties still retain county-wide usage today, and this is chiefly because of popular approval of the 1885 law.³⁰ The second half of

29. Connelley, op. cit., p. 246.

30. Ibid.

the laws passed in 1876 which has bearing on the discussion here dealt with the consolidation of school districts, and it is discussed more fully at the end of this chapter.

III. Origins of the Kansas School Text-Book Commission

The responsibility for the selection of books for use in the common schools of Kansas was slow in being satisfactorily resolved to the general agreement of all concerned. The question of common usage was not debated, but the method of selection of these books was the subject of much debate and the focal point of several Territorial and State laws between 1859 and 1897 when the first State Text-Book Commission was legally adopted by the Kansas legislature.

The statutes of territorial days gave to the district boards power to determine what textbooks should be used in their schools. However, the laws of the period bestowed upon the county and state superintendents the duty of recommending suitable textbooks, the laws of 1859 urging the state superintendent 'as far as practicable, to secure uniformity.'³¹

There were several interesting features about this early statute. Although it appears that the superintendents at both county and state level had the responsibility of selection or recommendation of textbooks, they actually had only the power to suggest possible book lists. The law

³¹. Martin, State Historical Collections, Vol. XI, op. cit., p. 452.

merely "urged" the state superintendent to suggest books, which he usually did, but it did not make mandatory the actual recommendation of adoption lists to be followed by the school districts. The ultimate responsibility for recommendation and adoption of textbooks rested with the many local boards of education. Frequently no action was taken on book selection, and certainly there was little countywide or state-wide effort expended toward book selection on any scale larger than the district basis.

The first change to take place in the pattern of local selection of textbooks came in 1869. The slight legal change specified that the local boards were required to select a "uniform series of textbooks to be used in each separate branch."³²

The next step in textbook legislation was a definite change toward greater control over school texts. This law, passed in 1879, stated that when a city or district board of education made its selection of textbooks it was necessary for the district to retain the chosen books for a period of at least five years.³³ Now a curriculum pattern could be established for it was not possible to change texts each year, and the teacher could become familiar with a certain set of texts. The district was also freed of the annual

32. Ibid., p. 453.

33. Ibid.

responsibility for selecting new books at their annual meeting. Another advantage of this five year adoption was the fact that texts could be handed down in a family, and the expense of school books became less burdensome for many families.

In 1885 another refinement, or modification, was made which further broadened the uniformity of adoption.³⁴ It allowed for county and district-wide uniformity.

In the matter of text-books, each school district must require a uniform series of text-books in each of the several branches taught in the school. This is the only requirement of law governing the great majority of school districts in the state. A uniform series of text-books may be adopted for any county, however, by the following means: At the annual meeting each district may indicate, by a majority of all the votes cast at such a meeting, a desire for a county uniformity of books, the vote to be submitted to the county superintendent immediately. If in any year a majority of all the districts shall indicate their desire for a county uniformity of books, the superintendent shall notify the districts of such vote, and call for one delegate from each municipal township and city of the third class in the county, such delegates to be elected at a meeting of the school boards of such townships. The delegates so elected shall constitute a county text-book board, and select and prescribe the text-books to be used in the county for the period of at least five years. More than half of the counties of the State have chosen a county text-book board under the provisions of this law, (1885), during the first eight years of its operation.³⁵

34. Ibid.

35. Kansas State Historical Society, Columbian History of Education in Kansas, 1893 (Topeka, Kansas: Hamilton Press, 1893), p. 21.

This textbook board provision was designed for use by the districts within a county, including small town schools, but it did not include the cities of the first and second class,³⁶ which were also located in these counties. These cities were given the option of sending an elected delegate to the assembled board of textbook delegates, and then were required to abide by the decision of this board for a period of five years.³⁷ It was not necessary that they take part in this county selection, however, and there is no evidence to show that many cities did join the counties in a common selection of books. It may be a fair judgment to say that one of the many differences which can be noted between the city and county schools began at this point. A city, in an attempt to distinguish itself from its county neighbors, usually made its own way in the educational world and rarely followed the lead of the county in new education matters. Some few schools did go along with the district school selection board, and, in these cases, the cities still are using the county selection board as the basis of book selection. Most cities of this type are the small rural ones with a population of five thousand or less.

36. For school purposes, cities of the first class were those with a population of 15,000 or more and cities of the second class with 2-15,000 persons. Columbian History, p. 16.

37. Martin, loc. cit.

In 1897 the final change in textbook laws took place. This law completely removed any local option for textbook selection, placed the responsibility for selection in the hands of the state, and formed a State Text-Book Commission for the purpose of carrying out the newly established responsibility.

After thirty-eight years, Kansas had a commission which made statewide commonality of textbooks a reality. This change was probably the most significant enactment in Kansas during its first half-century of statehood. It meant that all books, and, consequently, a large portion of the total curriculum was to be prescribed by a single agency, the state.

Despite this major change, one of the writers in Kansas Historical Collections, Volume XI, Clyde L. King, observed in an essay written in 1910:

About the only tendency noticeable, then, in the legislation pertaining to elementary education in cities of the first and second class, has been toward granting greater freedom and power to the board of education, and primarily there in the field of taxation. There is no provision for state supervision of such elementary schools, save a slight power over the course of study, which vests in the State Board of Education, a power that will be discussed later. Hence there is no necessary uniformity in the city schools of this state.³⁸

Apparently the power given to the State Superintendent and the Text-Book Commission was not seen as a power over

38. Ibid., p. 440.

education, nor was it viewed as a type of uniformity for schools. The "slight power over the course of study" to which he referred was a published Course of Study for District Schools written by State Superintendent McCarty in 1872 and a Course of Study for the Common Schools of Kansas issued in 1884. There were several courses of study published after this date, the next being in 1903, and they did dictate portions of the curriculum for both eight and nine month schools. His omission of any reference to the State Text-Book Commission is looked upon as being an indication of the fact that it was not considered of major consequence in the determination of curriculum for the district schools of Kansas. State control of education was the order of the day, the expected role of the state, and, thus, not given a second thought by educators or school patrons.

Most of the writers of this period saw a trend toward greater state control of education as a positive improvement in state education, and they did not hide their enthusiasm for even greater control by the state. Could it then be inferred that complete state control of education would have been viewed as the best type of system available to the students of Kansas at the turn of the century? Little was written to the contrary. Perhaps this accounts, in part, for the large number of state agencies which were formed for control of education in Kansas, and, also, for the fact that

there was little opposition to this tight state control. The State Text-Book Commission was only one of the many agencies to be formed, but its influence was felt by the districts more directly than most of the others, and for a longer time.

IV. District School Consolidation

With the establishment of school districts, a logical second step was for the several districts to consolidate for the mutual benefit of the schools concerned. The law of 1876 made it possible for two or more schools to join together in the formation of a new district. Out of this consolidation came two distinct types of school districts, differing in some respects from any type of school organization known to Kansas previously. These new types were referred to as the Joint District and the Union District.³⁹ The two new districts were similar in composition, but they varied in the administrative area covered.

Union School District

Sometimes two or more Districts unite for the purpose of securing a graded school for instruction in the higher branches. This is known as a Union District...the government is substantially the same as that of an ordinary district.⁴⁰

³⁹. Butler, op. cit., p. 57.

⁴⁰. Ibid.

The Union District was usually a combination of two or more districts from a single county or township; generally, county. The board of education resembled that of the district school before consolidation had taken place. Usually a new board was formed at the first annual meeting after the formation of the new district, but sometimes the board of the consolidated school was the complete board from one or the other of the schools combined.

Consolidation is generally looked upon as a method of bettering conditions in the rural schools. A consolidated district is one formed by the union of several districts. With its larger valuation and tax base the consolidated school can have plenty of teachers and equipment and can offer a greater variety of subjects.⁴¹

Here, then, were items presented for consolidation - better school facilities and more teachers so that a greater variety of subject matter might be offered each child. There is evidence to show that members of the local school districts were more willing to consolidate into more compact schools during the 1870-1880 period than later. Many consolidated districts were actually formed, and some of them have continued into the twentieth century as unified schools.

Joint School District

The Joint Districts, like the Union District, were formed out of financial necessity and resembled the original

⁴¹. Arnold, op. cit., p. 187.

district schools out of which they were formed.

Sometimes it becomes necessary to form a District lying partly in two or more counties. This is called a Joint District. When a Joint District is formed of territory lying in two or more counties, it is formed by the concurrent action of all the county superintendents concerned, and cannot be altered without their joint consent. Such District is under the supervision of the superintendent of the county in which lies the largest amount of territory embraced in the District.⁴²

This district was not so commonly found, and there are few to be found in Kansas today. These were formed of political and financial necessity and then only when some other means, or all other means, had been exhausted. Each school district which finally decided upon school consolidation did so after consideration of many factors and with the realization that they were losing some of the close identity which the early settlers had felt toward their schools. The effort to consolidate continues today, and has as its aim the betterment of educational opportunity for the students involved.

⁴². Butler, loc. cit.

CHAPTER IV

THE ROLE OF THE KANSAS SCHOOL BOOK COMMISSION

I. The Commission - Organizing Legislation

The first legislation for establishment of a state school book commission in Kansas came in 1897. In the early years of the twentieth century this initial law was changed and modified three times. Each change tended to give the state greater and more specific powers over the selection of textbooks for use in the several districts.

The most recent law, enacted in 1913, was:

An act creating a state school book commission, transferring to it the powers and authority belonging to the school textbook commission, with power to acquire by purchase, or by condemnation proceedings, the ground necessary on which to erect building or buildings additional to the present state printing plant, to construct buildings thereon, to purchase necessary machinery, type, and other printing and binding material to print and bind school books, to procure copyrights for same, or to contract for the right to publish said school books on a royalty basis; and to provide for the preparation, publication, purchase, sale and distribution of a state series of school textbooks at cost, making appropriations therefor, and providing penalties for the violation of this act and repealing all acts and parts of acts in so far as they conflict, or are inconsistent with this act.¹

1. R. E. McIntosh, General Statutes of Kansas (Topeka, Kansas: State Printing Office, 1917), Chapter 105, Article 20, Section 9365, p. 1896.

This law was passed in 1913, but it took a period of almost two years to make the transition to complete control by the state.

Inherent in this law were the provisions for utilization of the state as a writer, printer, salesman and distributor of books. Also included in the law was the right of the state of Kansas to exclude all competition for textbooks if it so desired. "This act was opposed by book publishers and educators generally, but was approved, and was favorably received by the school population of the state."²

Those who opposed this measure felt that Kansas had gone well beyond acceptable limits in giving itself rights to publish and distribute school texts. Previously this had been the right of private enterprise and it was generally felt, by educators, that the state had exceeded its authority at this point. The publishers sided with Kansas schoolmen, and with good reason. This was an expanding territory and the loss of a large sum of royalty money from the sale of textbooks was not a pleasant prospect. Despite these objections to the passage, there were favorable comments made by businessmen and laymen throughout the state, and from other states as well. State legislatures in other states referred to Kansas as a bright example of efficient

². Senator Harry Warren, Chairman, et. al., Report of the Committee for Investigation of the School Textbook Question, (No publisher or place, January 30, 1932), p. 5.

government in action because of the bill's passage. Several states sent representatives to Kansas to view for themselves the facilities which had been completed for the printing, distribution and sale of books.

Educators had little to say concerning the passage of this bill. Those educators who opposed its passage were accused of being guilty of having selfish interests in particular textbooks, or of securing personal gain from rebates given to them by publishers. There is no evidence to support either of these contentions, but the schoolmen lost the battle and were the focal point of some "mud-slinging" campaigns against them before final passage of the bill was made.

I. Practices of the School Book Commission

Once the school book commission had been formed, it was necessary for it to set to work immediately selecting textbooks which would become standard for the state. This was not done, however. The early Minutes from the School Book Commission indicate that the first several months of operation were consumed in organization of the body, determining meeting places, and times for meetings, dealing with the matter of the amount of money to be paid the secretary and his clerk, and selecting materials and equipment for the expanded State Printing Plant. Because of the slow

progress toward adoption of books, the School Book Commission voted, during its first year, to use the present high school texts for another year. This extended a previous five year adoption of these textbooks to six years.³ No mention was made of what textbooks were used in the elementary schools during this same time, but it is assumed that their texts were continued also.

After these preliminary meetings had been completed, the Commission set a date in mid-1913 for a special meeting to select a primer. Prior to the meeting, the secretary of the Commission had published widely a notice of bids-wanted, in an attempt to gain a wide range of books and manuscripts from which to select a textbook. The minutes from these meetings of the Commission, called for the purpose of selecting texts, indicate that a large number of bids were received. Some bids were received from regular publishing companies, from private publishers, and from individuals and groups working in their own interest. The offers were in the form of rental of electrotpe plates, sale of all publishing rights, sale of manuscripts, and long term rental rights on manuscripts. It is interesting to note, in reading these early minutes, the frequency of change in bids by the several publishing houses and individuals. Apparently

³. "Anon." Kansas State School Book Commission Minutes, (Topeka, Kansas: State Historical Society, April to December, 1913), Vol. I.

a considerable volume of correspondence passed back and forth between the publishers and the Commission. In some instances publishers submitted as many as four revised bids in an attempt to gain favorable consideration for their books. This competition was a bit surprising in view of the fact that Kansas had set a price ceiling on all textbooks, and the publishers were forced to sell books for less profit in Kansas than they would have sold them for in other states. The problem for the publisher was even more difficult because of the fact that the price was fixed for five years, with no provision for increase in price. Despite these facts, many publishers sent one or two representatives to Topeka on the day set aside for consideration of textbooks, even when they knew in advance that each one of the representatives would only be given fifteen minutes to present the case for his publisher or manuscript.⁴

The final selection of a primer came from an original manuscript, not from a previously published book. This manuscript, including the illustrations by a hired artist, cost the state less than half of the amount that the lowest bid by a publisher would have cost. This cost seemed to be the basis for final selection of the work.

This primer was printed, manufactured, published and used in the Kansas schools until 1926, bore the name of "Kansas Primer"; was the

4. Kansas State School Book Commission Minutes, June 27, 1913.

first state-owned school textbook manufactured, and published by the state of Kansas, and was placed in the hands of the pupils at a total cost of 14¢ per copy.⁵

This primer manuscript was prepared and submitted by G. G. Burton and contained 148 pages.⁶ This book was printed and published by December, 1913. The following year a Kansas history was published, again from an original manuscript, and subsequently a speller, a set of readers and a book on agricultural science were adopted and published by Kansas. The state continued to select, adopt and publish textbooks in the above mentioned fashion until 1959 when this law was repealed.

The selection of textbooks was not without controversy. The Commission was under fire constantly, and not without reason on several occasions. By law, the members of the Commission were the State Printer, the President of the State Agricultural College at Manhattan, the President of the State Teachers College at Emporia, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and three other members to be elected at large.⁷ There is evidence that the educators dominated the Commission, despite the fact that the State Printer was given the final authority for school book

5. Warren, op. cit., pp. 5-6.

6. Ibid., p. 5.

7. Ibid., p. 6.

selection. The report of a Committee of the State Legislature in 1932 sheds some light on some of the reasons why the educators did make these textbook decisions.

B. P. Walker, state printer, member and chairman of the State School Book Commission since September 1, 1921, testified, among other thing:

"Q. Do you understand that you have anything to do as an official with the matter of designating or selecting the state school books? A. I have a vote if I care to use it.

Q. I wish you would state in a brief way how you would reach a conclusion in selecting a state school book? A. I am mostly guided by what others say and the surveys made.

Q. To what surveys do you refer? A. Well, take history for example. Surveys are made by the department of history at Kansas University, and the surveys made by the State Teachers Association.

Q. Then on what these surveys recommend, and on what other members of the commission say, is what you take into consideration in reaching such a judgement? A. I might say yes. I just go according to my lights. I never taught school, or attended high school.

Q. In a general way, how much time does it take the commission to reach a conclusion as to a textbook?

A. It varies. Sometimes an hour, sometimes longer, like half a day.

Q. And what are the facts as to your part in the selection of the books? A. Well, in the first place, I pay practically no attention to the textbooks. I take no part in the discussion. I simply preside and put the questions.

Q. Now, Mr. Walker, you understand, do you not, that one of your duties as a member of the commission is to select or designate, from time to time, what textbooks shall be used for the state of Kansas? A. I suppose it is. I know it is.

Q. And yet you practically rely upon the advice you receive from other members of the commission?

A. Yes, sir.

Q. You recently had a meeting for the purpose of adopting some textbooks for Kansas? A. Yes.

Q. Did you know anything about what texts would be submitted? A. No, sir; I just knew about them because they sent me a lot of samples.

Q. Had you reached any conclusion as to what your action would be in the selection of the books to be submitted? A. No, sir.

Q. And you made no particular examination of the books submitted? A. No, sir.⁸

There were no educational qualifications for the position of State Printer, yet he was required to select textbooks for all of the children of Kansas, and he was criticized for failure to override decisions of educators in matters of textbook selection. The man, at least in this instance, realized his shortcomings and was willing to abide by the decisions of those who had been educated to make such book selections. Apparently the legislators viewed texts and their selection more from the point of view of a business venture than as a means of securing a better education for the students of Kansas.

As each new book was selected and adopted by the School Book Commission it became a required text for use by all elementary schools. "No school authority was to have power to authorize the use of books other than those designated by the Commission, except for reference only."⁹ The public schools of the state took maximum advantage of the final clause which said, "except for reference only," and there were many schools where the number of "reference" books far exceeded the regular texts.

8. Ibid., p. 7.

9. Statutes of Kansas, Laws of 1913, Chapter 288, Sec. 6.

A final practice of the Commission, which should be mentioned here, was that of allowing a single dealer to become the distributor of all books sold in Kansas and published by outside publishing firms. The state records show that a Mr. H. L. Shirer, owner of the Kansas Book Company, was given sole right to distribute Commission approved books within the state. By his own admission, he increased the set price of all books sold by him in Kansas by sixty percent prior to their sale to the schools.¹⁰ The schools, of course, had no choice but the purchase of the approved texts from this man, and out of such business practices and agreements between the Commission and private business resentment grew. The school families who had seen in the School Book Commission a chance to reduce their textbook costs each year found that it was costing as much or more to purchase from these private dealers. The school districts did have a single line of recourse. They could purchase only state printed and published books, but this limited them to a single consideration for each area of the curriculum. This practice of the Commission was investigated by the legislature and reported to the governor, but Mr. Shirer and his counterparts who followed were allowed to continue their work at the expense of the people of Kansas.

10. Warren, op. cit., pp. 10-12.

III. Effects Upon the School Caused by the Commission

Probably the most lasting effect of the Kansas School Book Commission on the elementary schools of Kansas lay in the loss of control over their curricula. Prior to the formation of the Commission each school district was given several options for the selection of their books - they could have uniform county adoption, could revert at the end of any five year period to complete district adoption only, or they could remain completely autonomous in the selection of their books. It was strongly urged during this period, prior to the formation of the School Book Commission, that the districts select their books from the adopted lists of the State Text-Book Commission, but it was not mandatory. The school district had the right to slide along with almost no books, or they could select elaborate libraries for their students. They could select the books and then plan a curriculum around them, or plan their curriculum first and then choose the texts which best fit this program. All of this was at the option of the districts.

With the legalizing of the State School Book Commission all of this changed. Now all of the elementary schools were forced to purchase books, either from the State or from their designated distributors, and the freedom of choosing your method of book purchase and selection was

completely removed.¹¹ This compulsory purchase led to a narrowing of the variety of curricula to be found in the state and rapidly pushed the schools into a fairly standard curriculum. Although it is not believed that the members of the Commission intended to establish a new curriculum by prescribing certain books, nor did the State have this as their goal when they enacted the legislation forming the Commission, this became the end result. The curricula of the various counties and districts varied only to the extent that these areas selected different books from a rather narrow basic list. Even supplementary books to be used by either teacher or student had to be approved by the Commission prior to their purchase by a district.

IV. Curricular Structuring Caused by the School Book Commission

The adoption lists from the State School Book Commission were published at least once yearly and were subsequently distributed to all of the school districts and cities of the state. The adoption of any book lasted for a

11. "Anon." Report of the Joint Committee on Printing of the General Assembly of South Carolina, (Columbia, South Carolina: Gonzales and Bryan, State Printers, 1924), p. 6. This committee was formed in South Carolina to visit several states, including Kansas, for the purpose of investigating state textbook adoption plans and state printing plants. This report was written after the committee had made such a visit to Kansas in 1924, and had seen Kansas' textbook operation firsthand.

period of five years, but there were frequent additions to the list of previous adoptions.

As these adoptions became reasonable standard, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction set about the task of writing courses of instruction for the schools. Some of the varieties which can still be found in historical collections are: Course of Instruction for Nine - Month Schools, Course of Instruction for Cities of the First and Second Class, Course of Instruction for Eight - Month Schools, and Course of Instruction for Rural Schools.¹² In all cases these "Courses of Instruction" were based upon adopted textbook lists and reflected the content contained within these books. These books were printed and distributed by the state printer as curriculum guides, and they were frequently distributed at the same time as the book adoption lists.

These course guides became the standard for most Kansas schools. They gave a complete outline of the work to be followed in each curricular area for the entire school term. Supplemental reading material, again from the recommended lists, was included in the guides. Thus, the State became the director of curriculum for the schools. They

¹². Courses of study for Rural and Graded Schools for the years 1913, 1914, 1915, 1916, 1917, 1919, 1920, 1922-1927, and 1956 with a 1958 revision are on file with the Kansas State Historical Society Library, Topeka, Kansas.

prescribed both texts and course guides. Although the use of these guides was not compulsory, there were few county or district superintendents who failed to encourage and enforce their use. This pattern of influence continued, virtually unchanged, until the period of World War II. After this time, many schools began to write their own guides, consistent with the recommended book lists, but outside the curricular guides of the State. The State did continue to publish curriculum guides of a more general nature; the last one being published in 1963 through the Department of Public Instruction.

There is some evidence to show that a few schools did attempt to write their own curriculum guides. In some cases these guides were highly successful, and, in at least one case, the guide was considered sufficiently well done to be adopted and published by the State for distribution on a state - wide basis.

...the state school book commission was created to take over the work of the text-book commission, with additional powers and duties.¹³

Kansas forced publishers to sell copyrights, manuscripts, plates and royalties for books to them by purchasing, for state use, manuscripts from local authors and writers and using these as the adopted base for required texts.¹⁴

13. Milton Tabor, "School Textbook Commission, March 13, 1897," This Day in Kansas, as published in The Topeka Daily Capital, March, 1929, p. 264.

14. Report - South Carolina, op. cit.

The State was, thus, in complete control of educational programs within the state for thirty or more years. From 1913 until the mid 1940's there was little change to be found in this pattern of control.

CHAPTER V

CURRICULUM STRUCTURING PATTERNS OF KANSAS
ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

I. Needs for Education

The state of Kansas became involved early in the establishment of programs of study for its many school districts. There were, however, times when there was a lag between the passage of a law and the complete compliance on the part of the school system in implementing the law. In the following discussion some of the reasons for this slow trend are shown. It should be noted, however, that by 1897 when the State Text-Book Commission was formed most of the districts of Kansas complied with the law. There was a slight loophole left for cities of the first and second class, and these cities tried to take advantage of this shortcoming of the law. Their advantage did not last long, and by 1913 they were forced into the same curricular policies as were the other districts of Kansas. The discussion below also shows the attempts which were made in both eastern and western Kansas to avoid the inevitable changes which came to all districts of Kansas. The effects upon the schools of Kansas and their curricula are the focal point of the chapter.

Education in Eastern Kansas¹

Eastern Kansas has been the urban area of Kansas from the period of statehood to the present time. With the growth of population centers in this part of the state, many cities of the first and second class soon emerged. These cities had growing industry and commerce, and a school program was needed which would prepare students for these vocational areas. Emphasis here was heavy on the subjects of mathematics, bookkeeping, commerce and other business related courses. In terms of politics, these people were bound together by the common purpose which had brought them to Kansas. In these city areas strong emphasis was placed upon government and history, especially the history of Kansas, and the part which these people had played in its development. It was required teaching in most cities.

The people who lived in Eastern Kansas were more settled people. They had gathered into villages, and, later, into cities. Because of the settled air of these cities, a greater amount of time was to be devoted to schools and to education. By 1880, less than twenty years after statehood, most of the cities in Eastern Kansas were operating eight

1. For the discussion here, the Eastern - Western division of Kansas has been made by separating the state with a vertical line drawn just west of Salina. The line would pass through Belleville, Concordia, and Hutchinson, Kansas, with all of the area east of this line called Eastern Kansas.

or nine month schools, compared to four month schools in the West. The nine month school eventually became standard in the cities of the first and second class.

There was one area where these cities did not have much commonality. Few of them wanted to adopt textbooks from the lists of adoptions of the Kansas Text-Book Commission, chiefly because they did not want to share their individuality with their rural neighbors. Apparently most cities felt that they would lose their power of decision making in curriculum matters if they went on a county-wide basis of textbook usage. Only after cities were forced into common book usage by the Statute of 1913, can a uniformity of books be shown for Eastern Kansas.

The schools of Eastern Kansas reflected the prosperity of the people, and the curriculum was geared to the needs of these people.

Education in Western Kansas

In contrast to the expanding urban areas of Eastern Kansas, the Western part of the state was almost entirely a rural area. There were few cities of any consequence to be found here. This area was populated at a much later date than were most of the Eastern regions, and the people who eventually did move to these regions were of a wide variety of ethnic and religious groups. These groups lived in

isolation, maintaining customs and institutions of their former homes. The economic base of these people was extremely low primarily because of the uncertainty of the crops which were solely dependent upon nature. Money was a commodity in short supply.

There were some characteristics common to all of the schools in this area which can be isolated. Most of the schools were on a short term, usually four to five months, and this term frequently split into two sessions.² A second common area was that of school program. These programs were highly utilitarian, teaching only to impart those rudiments which were necessary for the young to get along in a rural area. Attempts to place a high premium on language usage, composition and advanced work in mathematics usually resulted in low attendance at these rural schools. Many of the older boys, and their parents, did not need much encouragement to forego school for work in the fields. A large number of these rural schools were denominationally controlled by one of the several religious groups in the area. This fact tended to keep from the curriculum any course of study which might appear sectarian, or which posed as a threat to the internal unity of the denomination. Although these schools were a part of the state system, their major allegiance was to their sect rather than to the state. A

2. Martin, op. cit., p. 438.

final common area which can be noted was in the willingness of these people to select common educational goals on a county-wide basis. The County Superintendent was able to weld together a much firmer unit in these rural Western areas than was evident in the East.³ The most general adoption of textbooks was on a county-wide basis here. The County Boards of Education were strong units. All of this was true because these people did not have large cities competing for their allegiance, but, rather, they associated themselves with the county as a major political - social unit.

II. Changes in Curriculum Structure and Their Cause

Factors Causing Changes in Curriculum Structure

By the time that the decade between 1880 - 1890 had passed in Kansas, the sharp differential in areas which was so evident during the earlier period is not seen. The people of Kansas were beginning to think in terms of their membership in a state, and some of the strong regional, ethnic and religious bonds were broken.

As Kansas became a major terminal for the cattle industry of Southwestern United States, its economy began to prosper. The wild towns of our Western lore became settled,
^{3.} Ibid., pp. 437-438, 455.

thriving communities. Money, although still not abundant, became more readily available. As the money came, so did a new look at education. Better schools were built, teachers were paid a higher salary, and more children were able to attend the state elementary schools on a full-time basis than at any time previously.

The railroads. One of the chief economic factors which changed the entire perspective for Kansas was the coming of the railroads. Because of these new railroads, new cities sprang up, and an Eastern market for the grains and cattle of Kansas was found. The several railroads which located within the state were of such importance to the state that large tracts of land were given to them for right-of-way, to be used generally as they saw fit.⁴ A number of problems also arose as a direct result of the railroads being in Kansas.

Frequently the lands which were leased to these companies encompassed much of the 16th and 36th sections of townships within the state. These lands had, at an earlier time, been given to the schools. In the eyes of the law, the railroads were to have paid a part of their lease money directly to the school districts involved in this double land grant. In actual practice the railroads usually did not pay

4. Arnold, op. cit., p. 178.

these monies to the schools, the schools had a substantial resultant loss in revenue from lands which they could not control, and they had no way of forcing the more powerful railroads to make payment. This issue was not resolved until a commission was formed to regulate railroad activities within the state, and the railroads cut back their operations in Kansas.⁵ When this took place, much of the land which the railroads had controlled by land lease reverted back to the state for lease payment forfeiture, and the schools regained their lands.

A second factor of railroad influence upon the schools was one of indirect pressure. A complaint against the early railroads was their high cost of shipping to Eastern markets and the constant increases of these rates which were felt by the farmers.⁶ As railroad rates went up, uncontrolled, the farmer found himself without money for the crops he had harvested, and the economy once more took a downward trend. Again, the regulatory commission was necessary to set maximum price rates charged the farmer for shipment of his crops. As this market pluctuated, the money for school construction, salaries, and books did likewise. There were times when it appeared likely that the railroads would force the schools out of the state, especially in the rural areas.

5. Ibid., pp. 180-181.

6. Ibid., p. 180.

Vested business interests. Some of the vested interests in Kansas, especially those involved in commerce, had an influence upon Kansas' elementary schools. The influence was mainly indirect, coming to the elementary schools because of the more direct influence which was felt at the high school level. The high school, being largely a terminal education for those in attendance, was expected to teach courses which would qualify its students to step into commerce upon graduation. These businesses were in a position to influence the schools and force the curricular revisions which they demanded by either supporting or failing to support the schools financially. The elementary school, in an effort to prepare its students both for a terminal education and for entry into high school, was required to emphasize the areas of business arithmetic, elementary bookkeeping and English more than they would otherwise have done. This pressure was felt more by the urban areas than by the rural, and was unfair to both. Although few students pursued commercial vocations after leaving school, all were required to learn these requirements.

III. Establishment of the State

Colleges and University

The establishment of a state university had been an objective of state and territorial legislatures for nine

years when it finally "organized by an act approved March 1, 1864."⁷ It was made possible by a rather large grant of money from Amos A. Lawrence, and was established at Lawrence, Kansas.⁸

The State Agricultural College, now called Kansas State University, was organized on March 1, 1863, largely because of a 90,000 acre land grant made possible by the Morrill Act.⁹

Kansas was among the first states to accept the endowment, and the next year Bluemont Central College, a Methodist school at Manhattan, was given to the state and made the State Agricultural College.¹⁰

This school did not meet with wide popularity, chiefly because it taught the old, classical curriculum frequently found in colleges of the day. In 1873 it dropped Latin and Greek from its curriculum and added Home Economics and Agricultural Science.¹¹ It became popular with farmers and was looked upon as a signal contribution to farming and agricultural engineering.¹²

7. Martin, Kansas Historical Collections, XI, op. cit., p. 445.

8. Ibid., p. 444.

9. Ibid., p. 446.

10. Arnold, op. cit., p. 193.

11. Ibid.

12. Ibid., p. 195.

The third state institution, the State Normal School at Emporia, began its operations in 1865.¹³ The stated purpose of this institution was to "train teachers" and to keep abreast of the changes in educational methodology for the benefit of schools and teachers.¹⁴ The school is now called Kansas State Teachers College; the only college in the state to retain the word "teachers" in its title.

All three of these colleges had a department, or branch, for the preparation of teachers from their beginnings. They were tied-in rather closely with the schools of the state through the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, at least for their first few years of operation.¹⁵ He sat as a member of the governing board of each, and had the responsibility to demand certain reports from them on an annual basis. He also appointed teams of visitors to inspect the Agricultural College and the Normal School each year. "In 1873, the duties of the State Superintendent related to the state institutions of higher learning were eliminated..."¹⁶

13. Ibid., p. 191.

14. Ibid., pp. 191-192.

15. John L. Eberhardt, Kansas State Department of Public Instruction. Research Series Number 14. (Lawrence, Kansas: Governmental Research Center, University of Kansas, 1955), pp. 48-49.

16. Ibid., p. 49.

Certification by the State Institutions

Prior to 1873 no state uniformity of certification for elementary school teachers was to be found.

Before 1915 the certification of persons to teach in the public schools was primarily a decentralized function of local government. The county was the most important unit of certification. Detailed provisions of law authorized county examining boards to examine applicants for county teachers' certificates. Boards of education in first and second class cities were permitted to examine and certify teachers for their own school systems. The state normal schools were also authorized to issue teacher's diplomas and certificates valid throughout the state, but few people attended these institutions.¹⁷

The state college and the university could have certified teachers on the basis of a degree in education, but few students were willing to go to the four year college when they could acquire a certificate in some other fashion. Even the Normal School had little success in the field of certification, and for the same reason. The prospective teacher found easier means of securing the certificate. To compound the difficulties of the state institutions in gaining control over schools and teachers through the right to certify "the legislature of 1873 established a State Board of Education for issuing state teachers' certificates."¹⁸ This board's influence eventually spread to the certification of Directors

17. Ibid., p. 57.

18. Ibid.

of institutes and to all of the instructors for these institutes. The state institutions of higher education were denied any of these certification privileges.

In 1893 the state colleges were given the right to certify their teacher graduates, mainly through the State Board, but, then, only if their program of instruction was similar in content to that offered by the State Normal School.¹⁹ One other plan, involving the University of Kansas, was also available to teaching candidates. They could avoid taking teacher examinations if they had completed a course of instruction in "education" comparable to that offered on the various examinations.²⁰ The State Board of Education did the actual certification, based upon the accreditation of the college in question, and in no case did they accredit a program from a state other than Kansas. These programs continued, with slight modification in 1911, until 1915 when the State Department of Education assumed the responsibility for all accreditation and certification.²¹ In the years from 1945 - 1952, a reorganization of state agencies took place, and the State Department of Public Instruction took over the certification of teachers and the accreditation of colleges and universities.²²

19. Ibid., p. 58.

20. Ibid., p. 59.

21. Ibid., pp. 84-85.

22. Ibid., pp. 172-173.

The State University never had much of a voice in the certification of teachers or elementary schools. The elementary school certification situation differed somewhat from that of teacher certification, and it does merit some consideration here.

Through indirect action, the State University and the State Agricultural College to a lesser extent, did influence the district schools. Certain courses were required for admittance to the University, and to the degree that a district wanted its students certified for admittance it followed these programs established by the University. The University was able to raise the over-all offerings of these district schools because of their requirements.

Curriculum Changes Resulting from University Influence

Those changes which came about as a result of influence by the State University can be categorized in two major areas. These were an increased emphasis upon combining written and oral language, as opposed to the former drill on grammar and composition, and the encouragement of science teaching in the schools. The schools were forced to broaden their curricular offerings.

Mathematics was taught on a more systematic basis, designed to be a more logical transition of numbers than had previously been used. After World War II the Kansas

schools followed most of the remainder of the United States schools in adopting the integrated units of Language Arts and Social Studies. These were endorsed by all of the agencies of education in Kansas, including the University and the State Department of Public Instruction.²³

These two agencies were not always in agreement as to the requirements for schools in the state. Until very recent times the requirements of the State University were greater than those of the State Department of Public Instruction. This was a pattern that was common in many of the mid-Western states. The University had a tendency to be less lenient with local needs than was the State. There were a number of reasons for this conflict.

The states wanted to make educational standards rise, but they still wanted to meet the needs of various areas of the state. For this reason, the state was willing to be more flexible in its attitude toward individual curricula than was the State University. This seemed to be an unresolvable conflict until legislation forced the State College and University to accept all qualified graduates of state accredited high schools. Thus the state supported itself and it forced the State University into a compromise which it had been unwilling to make.

²³. This information was not specifically stated in any source, but was derived by inspection of the Certification Handbooks of Kansas for the years before and after World War II.

The local district has now become a records keeping, administrative unit of the state, with little remaining decision making power over its programs or administration. Many of the new laws which are being enacted in Kansas are drawing the school districts even closer to complete control by the state. These laws have caused the individual school districts to be drawn into similar patterns of administration and have required schools to adopt the state programs if they are to continue to be accredited by the state.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

I. Summary

This study has shown the progress of the elementary school in Kansas through six major points. Each of these was designed to illustrate a factor which contributed to the type of curriculum now in existence in this state. The following have been shown:

1. Education was a primary concern of the early settlers in Kansas; drawing precedence over the construction of churches and permanent homes which are usually associated with a settled area.

2. The school districts of Kansas were founded on an individual basis without any central authority to control the number or location of these districts.

3. Under the direction of the state and through the various officers appointed by it, the district or common school became the central administrative unit for Kansas' schools. The County Superintendent was given the administrative authority for coordinating the activities of these district schools. As the basic school unit, the district was authorized to consolidate in several ways in order to

offer a better program for all of the elementary school children involved.

4. Early in its history, Kansas became actively involved in structuring the curricula of the district schools. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction was given the authority, as early as 1873, to construct "Courses of Study" to be followed by the schools. The schools were not required to respond to these study guides, but County Superintendents were expected to encourage compliance. The state believed that centralization of school program was the answer to improved school curricula.

5. Through a series of enactments Kansas secured a general degree of uniformity in textbook adoption in the schools. By first suggesting and then requiring, the state compelled each school to select their textbooks from lists made up by the School Textbook Commission, an agency of the Kansas government. The Commission was generally successful in its requirement of texts, and, because of this, became the most important agency of the state to influence education during Kansas' first one-hundred years.

6. The state institutions of higher education had only indirect influence upon the elementary school programs in Kansas. In most instances the state failed to maintain as high a standard for school curricula as did the State College and University, and this caused a conflict between

these two agencies and the schools they were attempting to influence.

II. Conclusions

Kansas had its beginning with small, virtually unrelated groups of settlers, each with their own ethnic and racial backgrounds. These early settlers planned education for their own local group needs, and, as a result, any commonality of school organization was a matter of coincidence rather than intent.

After the enactment of early legislation by the various territorial legislatures, changes toward state control of education began to show themselves. At first these changes were difficult to implement. There were several reasons for this fact. One reason was that there was too much distance between those passing the legislation and the school systems actually affected by these potential changes. Another reason was the fact that most of these small, isolated school districts did not want to lose any of the control which they had over their school programs. Despite the fact that they did not wish to have the changes take place, the state prevailed and a system of control for administration of the schools emerged in Kansas.

This control manifested itself in several ways. One of the major ways in which the state controlled education was

in prescribing courses of study to be followed by all school systems. These courses of study were not actually time and subject schedules, but, rather, lists of textbooks which had to be adopted and used by the school districts. The state devised a means of securing adherence to this list by passing laws establishing commissions for the purpose of selecting and recommending textbooks. At first, the school districts were given the right to select their own books. Later, the state adopted a policy of state-wide uniformity, and finally it regulated textbook adoption by both publishing and prescribing the texts to be used. With each of these steps the local school district lost more of its former control over the operation of its schools.

It is interesting to see these developments in historical perspective, for the people of Kansas seem to be extremely locally oriented, more concerned with their immediate county and their schools than with matters which are of statewide interest. That they allowed the state to take away from them their control of the schools is difficult to understand. One of the best possible explanations lies in the fact that they have always regarded education as a necessity, and that they were willing to accept the word of educators in matters pertaining to their youngsters despite the fact that it meant the loss of most of their local authority.

During the past few years, through added state legislation, Kansas has been successful in decreasing the number of one room schools from over 1900 in 1959 to approximately 1300 at the present time. Within the state there are still more private than public kindergartens, many secondary schools without foreign language instruction or adequate science teaching, and schools offering only minimum preparation in English. These are changing, however, due to the influence of the State Department of Education.

The most recent area of change has been in a new state law requiring a greater degree of unification within the counties of the state than has ever been known before. The law was passed in 1962 and has a target date for implementation of 1966. It is the intent of the state to gain a more consistent quality of education by decreasing the number of existing districts of the state by seventy to eighty percent, and requiring that all remaining districts offer a complete program from Kindergarten through grade twelve.

Throughout the history of Kansas, the state has slowly removed the control of schools from the hands of the communities and has replaced this local control with a statewide, prescribed program. It has not done this to be autocratic, but in a sincere attempt to upgrade the quality of education within the state.

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Throughout the study an apparent conflict between the forces which controlled the state educational structure and state legislature and the opposing forces of the local district has been mentioned. The conflict, it it can rightly be called such, existed because of the fact that legislation for school program was often enacted without any kind of a mandate from the people of the rural areas of the state. Most of the legislation has tended to favor the urban over the rural areas. Without a doubt, there was good cause for this during the time under study here.

At the present time many changes have tended to nullify the strong position and arguments which the state had held in the matters of local school program development. Teachers are much better prepared, and they will continue to be prepared in an even better fashion in the immediate future, due primarily to the recent requirement for a degree as a minimum requirement for all new teachers. This minimizes one reason for the necessity of state control over programs of the local schools as has been true in the past. With competent administration in the local districts being virtually assured with the Unification Proposal of 1962, the school now has professionally qualified teachers and administrators combining to make a powerful team within the local area. These people should be given the opportunity to exercise their professional knowledge in a more positive manner



at the local level, with the state acting as an interested bystander to insure that minimum standards are respected.

If those in the local community were given an opportunity to work out their own programs, select their own textbooks and govern their own destinies to a greater degree than they have been allowed in the past, perhaps some of the unpopularity of school laws enacted, especially in the rural areas, would be removed. The schism between state and local school authorities would be mended in a positive fashion. It becomes increasingly more difficult for any state to control a growing school population from a single vantage point with any measure of total success. A clear-cut statement of philosophy on the part of the state which could form a guideline for program preparation at the local school level would seem to be the best course of action.

The road to education which Kansas has followed is not novel. The settlement, development of the local districts, eventual establishment of a strong state control and the conflict between local and state school authorities have been typical patterns of development in most states. The formation of a strong state teachers' association has also been seen elsewhere. The real factor of difference comes in the area of continuing strong control by the state in local educational matters, and it is perhaps at this

point where Kansas now needs to reexamine its philosophy and purpose for education in an attempt to further strengthen its system of schools.

11

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

EARLY MISSION SCHOOLS IN KANSAS

The following information concerning early mission schools has been taken from Anna E. Arnold, A History of Kansas, pages 217 and 218.

Presbyterian Missions

Two Presbyterian missions were established among the Osages in what is now Neosho County in 1824. One was the Boudinot mission. The work was in charge of Rev. Benton Pixley.

Rev. S. M. Irwin established a mission among the Iowas, Sacs and Foxes in Doniphan County, near the present town of Highland, in 1837. Highland College, one of the oldest colleges in the State, still remains as a school of this church.

Methodist Missions

In 1830 the Shawnee Methodist mission was established a few miles southwest of where Kansas City now stands. This mission was in charge of Rev. Thomas Johnson. A few years later it had a manual-labor school and a farm and was one of the largest and best known of the missions in Kansas.

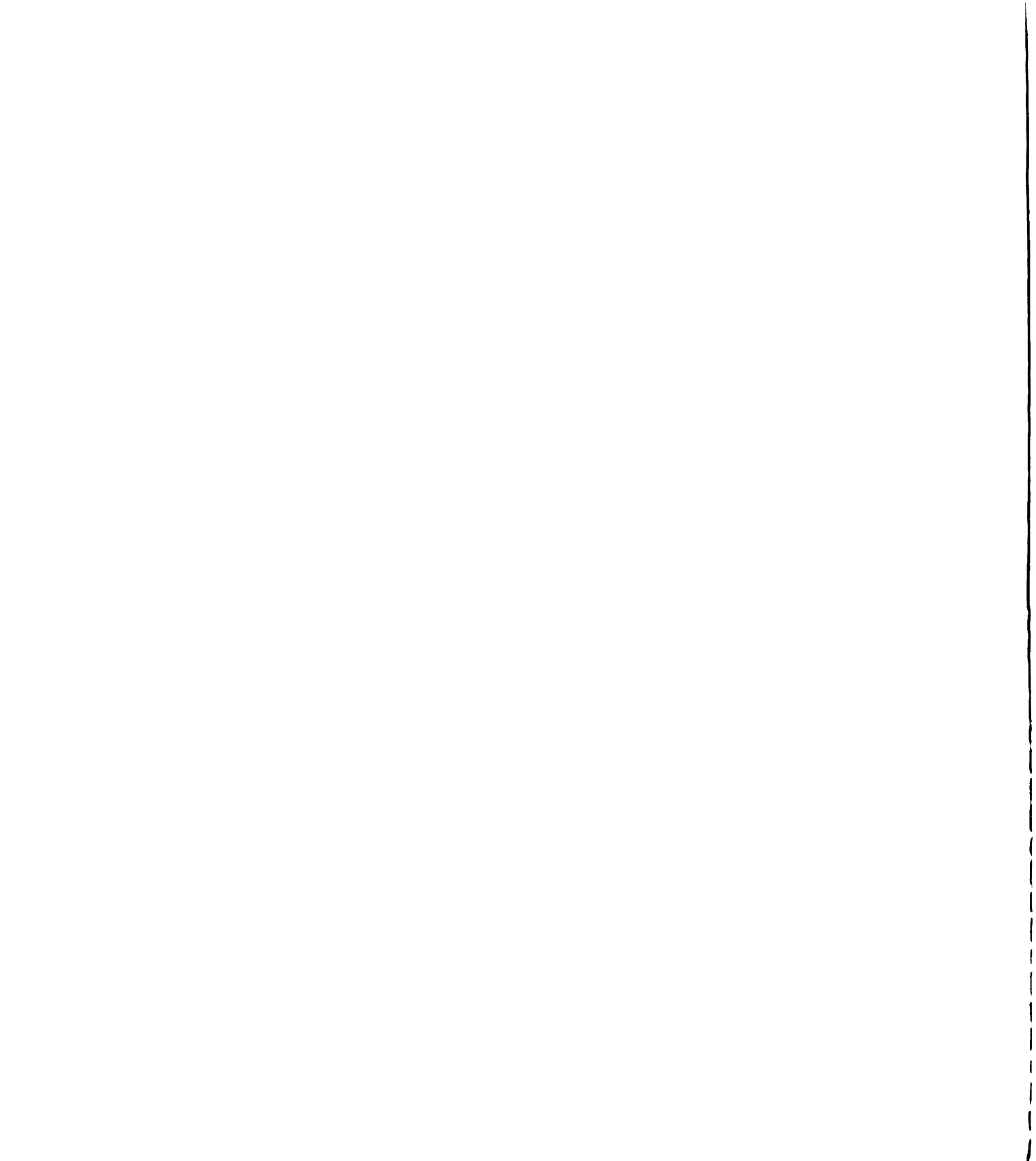
In 1832 a mission was established among the Delawares in Wyandotte County, on the site of the town of White Church, by William Johnson and Thomas B. Markham. Rev. E. T. Peery was in charge.

A mission for the Kickapoos was founded in 1833. It was just north of the site of Leavenworth and was in charge of Rev. J. C. Berryman.

In 1833 a mission was established for the Kansas(sic) at Mission Creek, Shawnee County, by Rev. William Johnson, who continued work for seven years. When the Kansas were moved, the mission was located at Council Grove. It existed from 1850 to 1854.

Baptist Missions

The Baptist Church established a mission among the Shawnees in 1831. It was about two miles northwest of the



Shawnee Methodist mission. The leader was Isaac McCoy, and he was joined later by Dr. Johnson Lykins and Rev. Jotham Meeker. Mr. Meeker was a printer, and in 1834 issued the first book printed in Kansas, a primer in the Indian languages.

A mission was established among the Ottawas in 1837, on the present site of Ottawa, under the charge of Rev. Jotham Meeker. This mission survives in Ottawa University.

A mission was opened among the Pottawatomies in 1837, by Rev. Robert Simmerwell, near the site of Osawatimie. When this tribe moved to the new reservation the mission was situated at Mission Creek in Shawnee County. It was abandoned in 1854.

In 1840 Dr. David Lykins established a mission among the Miamis, about ten miles southeast of the present city of Paola.

Dr. Johnson Lykins opened a mission among the Delawares in 1832.

Friends Mission

The Society of Friends established a mission among the Shawnees in 1834, about three miles west of the Methodist mission. Henry Harvey, M. Mendenhall, and the Hadleys were teachers in this Mission.

Catholic Missions

In 1822 Father La Croix visited the Osages, just across the line in Missouri, and baptized several Indian children. At different times Father Van Quickenborn visited the Osages and preached. In 1847 Rev. Shoenmaker established the Osage Mission, now St. Paul, in Neosho County.

The Catholic Mission was founded in 1836 by Fathers Van Quickenborn and Hoeken for the Kickapoos, near the junction of Salt Creek with the Missouri, in Leavenworth County.

St. Mary's mission among the Pottawatomies was established in Miami County in 1838, and moved to Linn County in 1839, where it remained until the removal of the tribe to Pottawatomie County in 1849. The mission was then established at St. Mary's where it survives to-day in St. Mary's school for boys.

APPENDIX B

RECOMMENDED TEXTBOOK LISTS FOR EARLY DISTRICT SCHOOLS OF KANSAS

Student Texts

The following textbooks were recommended in the Annual Report of William R. Griffith, Superintendent of Public Instruction, in 1861. The list appears on page 34 of the Report.

Moral Instruction - the Bible
Readers - McGuffeey's series
Geography - Cornell's series
Mathematics - Ray's Mathematical Series
English Grammar - Pineo's
Composition - Quackenbo's
Writing - Spencerian System

The following textbooks were recommended in the Annual Report of Simeon M. Thorp, Superintendent of Public Instruction, in 1862. The list appears on page 55 of the Report.

The textbooks from the previous year's list were endorsed. The following books were added to the list.

Bookkeeping - Bryant and Straton's Common School
Edition
Natural Philosophy - Quackenbos
United States History - Quackenbos
Physiology - Cutter

The following textbooks were recommended in the Annual Report of Isaac T. Goodnow, Superintendent of Public Instruction, in 1863. The list appears on pages 23 and 24 of the Report.

Changes from 1862 -
Geography - Monteith's and McNally's series, 4 books
History - Wilson's Primary American History, Wilson's
History of the United States, Wilson's Outline
of History, embracing ancient and modern history

Natural Philosophy - Wells'

Additions to the list of 1862 were -
 Dictionary - Webster's Unabridged, and the common
 school edition

The remainder of the list was -
 Moral Instruction - Bible, Cowdery's Moral in-
 struction, Wayland's Moral Science
 Readers - Wilson's series of readers - consisting
 of Wilson's Speller, Primer, and a graded
 series of seven readers
 (It is interesting to note that, despite the
 great popularity of the McGuffey series, it
 had only a two year adoption record by the
 State Superintendents of Early Kansas.)
 Mathematics - Ray's series of seven books
 English Grammar - Pinneo's Primary, Pinneo's Analy-
 tical Grammar
 (The spelling of this name is different here
 from that on the recommended list of 1861. No
 copy of either book was available to verify a
 spelling.)
 Composition - Brookfield's First Book, Quackenbo's
 (Here, again, there are two different spellings
 of this name, and no means of verification for
 either.)
 Penmanship - Spencerian System
 Bookkeeping - Bryant and Stratton's Common School
 edition
 Physiology - Cutler's (Spelled Cutter on earlier list)
 Charts - Wilson's, twenty-two in number, on the object
 and system for general school exercises, and as
 illustrating Wilson's Readers, in the hands of
 competent teachers can but wake up an interest
 in any school.

The list for 1864 was submitted by Mr. Goodnow also,
 and it contained the same list of recommended texts. Until
 1876, when recommended textbook lists became law, there
 were only minor year to year changes from those shown here.

The Teacher's Texts

The following list was submitted "as a teacher's
 library for special references and study...(and the) fol-
 lowing works should be in the hands of every school teacher.
 They are valuable works, based upon the idea that the child
 is to be educated, for the first years of his life, through

the senses of sight and hearing, consequently these must be systematically cultivated." The list was submitted by Isaac T. Goodnow in 1863 and was found on pages 24 and 25 of his report.

The School Teacher's Library, Eleven Volumes

1. Pages Theory and Practice of Teaching
2. Mansfield's American Education
3. Northend's Parent and Teacher
4. Tocqueville's American Institutions
5. Dwight's Higher Christian Education
6. Henry Barnard's History and Progress of Education
7. Mayhew's Universal Education
8. Chas. Davies' Logic of Mathematics, with methods of instruction
9. Institute lectures on Mental and Moral Culture
10. The Normal, or Methods of Teaching the Common Branches (Procure this if no other.)
11. Taylor's School Amusements

Martin's Orthoeptist

Clark's New Grammar

S. A. Welch, Object Lessons

Things Taught by Lillienthal and Robert Allyn, A.M.

Object Teaching by Calkins or Sheldon

No other lists of books were recommended for teachers during this early period.

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