# THE HISTORY OF VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION IN OKLAHOMA

By Carl Tyson

State Department of
Vocational and Technical Education

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State Department of Vocational and Technical Education
Stillwater, Oklahoma

# DEDICATION

This History of Vocational Education in Oklahoma is dedicated to Francis T. Tuttle in respect, gratitude and affection--respect for his leadership within the State and nationally; gratitude for the fact that he has seen in each of us more than we could see in ourselves; and affection in response to a man fully dedicated to his work. His dedication to the mission of vocational education has given those of us who work with him a stronger determination to contribute our best to the job.

Francis Tuttle, born on a farm near Wellston, Oklahoma, graduated from Wellston High School in 1938. His B.S. and M.Ed. degrees are from Oklahoma State University and the Ed.D. degree is from Oklahoma University. He was a vocational teacher in Kiowa County 1942 to 1951 and Superintendent of Schools of Gotebo, Holdenville and Muskogee from 1951 to 1964. In 1964 Dr. Tuttle joined the State Department of Vocational and Technical Education where he became the chief architect of the Area Vocational-Technical School system in Oklahoma. On July 1, 1967, Dr. Tuttle became State Director of Vocational Education in Oklahoma.

As State Director, Francis Tuttle provides a unique mixture of vision and practical administration. He personifies the term participatory leadership allowing each individual to contribute to the development and improvement of vocational education. He has demonstrated outstanding ability to view problems and challenges in the long range and has met the continually expanding expectations of vocational education with stability modified by innovativeness. Francis Tuttle's co-workers hope that the dedication of this history to him will somehow show our pleasure in his presence and our enthusiastic response to his leadership.

# PREFACE

Vocational and technical education for adult and school-age students has long been one of the economic foundations of Oklahoma and the nation. Without occupational training, unemployment would surely run rampant, while many positions needing skilled workers would remain unfilled. Despite the importance of this branch of learning, it has often gone unnoticed as more exotic fields have garnered the limelight. This volume is an attempt to correct this wrong.

As both an administrative and organizational history of almost six decades of activity, this work makes no claim or pretense of being comprehensive. To acknowledge each contribution--to simply list each contributor--would require several volumes larger than the present manuscript. The object has been to produce a narrative account of the major developments and the evolution of a working system, the State Department of Vocational and Technical Education. No doubt, worthy accomplishments have been deleted, for the history of vocational education in Oklahoma is filled with many dedicated individuals. But those persons were rewarded by doing; recognition would not add to their satisfaction. Moreover, whereas one brief chapter is devoted to the youth organizations, their importance calls out for an entire book.

Perhaps the most difficult problem encountered was producing a unified account of a living institution. Each day a new and important page is written in the history of vocational education in Oklahoma, and tomorrow this volume will be obsolete. But such is the plight of the contemporary writer.

Historians are notoriously difficult to satisfy, always wanting, as Henry James said, "One more fact than they can use." It has been the unhappy task of several members of the State Department of Vocational and Technical Education to listen to the questions of this writer, and each has responded with a smile and an answer. Foremost among these have been William W. Stevenson, Assistant Director for Research, Planning, and Evaluation and Paula Keller, Assistant Coordinator of Information Services. While they worked for the future, I bothered them with questions of the past. Without their assistance this volume would never have been written. Also, Byrle Killian, Assistant Director for Educational Services and Special Programs; Robert Price, emeritus professor of agricultural education at Oklahoma State University; and M. J. DeBenning, former State Supervisor of Distributive Education in Oklahoma, are worthy of praise; each has contributed to whatever may be good in the finished product. Also, thanks goes to the staff of the Oklahoma State University Library, especially John Dana, and to Cindy Ledford, who typed the manuscript.

Finally, the family of any writer deserves laurels at the completion of any work--for they have suffered the most. To my wife Toni and to my son Jon, I can only say, "Thank you."

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# CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTION

Benjamin Disraeli once asserted, "Upon the education of the people of this country the fate of this country depends." Of course, the noted statesman was referring to Great Britian but the meaning is applicable to every nation that has ever existed or that will ever exist, for education is the key to success for every individual. Through the ages of mankind's time on earth, education has been defined many ways and has taken many forms. Most often when referring to education one tends to think of students sitting and listening to a teacher discuss the finer points of grammar or the rise and fall of powerful empires. However, one type of education, which has roots deep in the past, relies not on the instructor explaining and detailing, but on a close relationship between student and teacher and on active participation by the student in every aspect of the learning. This is vocational education. Simply, vocational education is the acquisition of a skill or trade by actual experience in a learning environment--most often called a school.

Vocational education began when man first dared to venture from the caves into the sunlight. Informally, those who had somehow learned a skill--to make fire or to hone a rock--taught others to repeat the procedure. When man finally began to gather himself into cities and villages, it was apparent that the survival of the community demanded that there be a constant supply of skilled workers and technicians. Therefore, at some long forgotten time, the apprentice system was created to meet this demand. This system was the beginning of training in trades and industry.

The practice of apprenticing a young person to a skilled tradesman or artisan was at once the best and worst method of vocational education. It was the best because the one to one relationship of the master to the trainee allowed the latter to become intimately acquainted with every facet of the chosen profession. Constant attention and direction were inherent in the system. However, the system lent itself to abuse and mismanagement. Parenthetically, it might be added that with the coming of modern ideas and regulations the apprentice system has again become a useful tool in some vocational training. But in its original and purest form, apprenticeship could be as trying for the individual as it was instructive.

Until a better method was discovered it was necessary to utilize the apprentice system. Indeed, it was important to the extent that the Code of Hammurabi, a set of laws laid out two millennium before the birth of Christ by the King of Babylon, protected the master who accepted the responsibility of training a youngster from civil charges. Through the

ages the system slowly evolved and by the eighteenth century strict regulations had been codified.

A major step in the formalization of the apprentice system was the development of guilds. These organizations were created during the latter medieval period by merchants in England. Shortly after the commercial guilds were initiated tradesmen gained entrance. By the beginning of the fourteenth century craft guilds for artisans and tradesmen formed. Soon the growing division of labor created proliferation of guilds for each particular trade.

Protection and regulation of the apprentice system was a major goal of the guilds. Rules of the organizations forbade the enticing of apprentices from one tradesman by another, restricted the authority to take an apprentice to only master craftsmen and freedmen, and required individuals to receive apprenticed training before they could become a journeyman or master. Additionally, no one could practice a trade without the guild's approval nor could a tradesman take more than three apprentices.

With the guidance of the guilds the apprentice system was refined and embellished. By 1600 the guilds, which had been nationally recognized in England, had created schools--the forerunners of modern vocational schools--in which apprentices were continually instructed. With the founding of colonies in North America by Englishmen the practice of apprenticeship was naturally transported across the Atlantic. Most of the colonies passed laws providing for the teaching of a craft to children--especially poor children--to prevent them from becoming burdens on society. In America the apprentice often held the dual role of an indentured servant. Several schools to train apprentices were organized by the beginning of the American Revolution.

The training of students in practical arts--or vocations--began slowly in the United States. At first it was a trickle, a class in wood working or molding would be offered to interested individuals. Soon complete programs were organized. In 1880 the first manual training high school was founded in St. Louis, Missouri, in conjunction with Washington University. Founded under the guidance of Professor Calvin M. Woodward, this school operated for more than two decades. It was truly the precursor of modern vocational education.

After the successful demonstration of practical education by Professor Woodward's school in St. Louis, such institutions multiplied. Quickly the citizens of cities such as Chicago, New Orleans, and Atlanta enjoyed vocational training. In 1885 a benchmark was made in Toledo, Ohio; that year courses were first offered for girls. During the 1880's vocational training was also extended into pre-high school grades. With the widespread establishment of these "manual training" schools and programs, the stage was set for the development of modern vocational education.

It should be noted that the change in titles from "manual training" to "industrial arts" was gradual. Largely because of the influence of the arts and crafts movement which began in Russia, the emphasis in practical education was increasingly placed on training for vocational purposes. This emphasis was vital in the maturation of vocational industrial education.

The development of home economics education is similar to that of trade and industrial education springing from informal training. In America such training began formally about 1800, and it grew rapidly. Most often called "domestic science," vocational home economics training began as needlework and sewing and matured into each facet of managing a home, including cooking, dressmaking and millinery.

Undoubtedly the most important factors leading to the creation of modern home economics were the ten annual conferences held at Lake Placid, Chautauqua, and Boston between 1899 and 1908. These conferences served not only to determine a comprehensive plan for training but also solidified homemaking into a national movement. Certainly, the two most important conferences were held in 1903 and 1908. At the first, held in Boston, the conference was convened as an adjunct to the manual training section of the National Education Association, bringing much national recognition to home economics; the latter meeting was held at Chautauqua, New York, and the plans for the creation of the American Home Economics Association were promulgated. Another major event was the publication of the *Syllabus of Home Economics.* Printed in 1913, this work was an attempt to identify and define what topics belonged in home economics training. Although years would pass before a solid foundation was established for "home ec," these events provided a framework for subsequent developments which led to the modernization and standardization of this area of vocational education.

Like trades and industry and home economics, vocational agriculture evolved as an area of instruction from informal training sessions. There was no definite progression toward formalized vocational agricultural education dating from ancient times, such as in the case of trades and industry. However, existing records indicate that farmers in ancient Rome were mindful of the need to pass on the knowledge which they had acquired by experience. It was logical to prevent others from making the same mistakes that previously had been made.

The first vocational agriculture schools in America were organized in conjunction with the various colleges of agriculture. The College of Agriculture of the University of Minnesota founded the first vocational agricultural school in 1888 at St. Anthony Park. By 1900 three such schools had been created in Minnesota, and by 1911 California, Colorado, and Nebraska had organized programs for the instruction of vocational education in connection with state colleges. Additional vocational agriculture schools were started in several states independent of

agricultural colleges. Alabama was a leader in this area, founding two schools in 1889; soon most of the states were organizing some type of program to train agriculturalists.

A major step toward modern vocational agriculture was the trend during the period from 1907 to 1915, toward the granting of state aid to public schools teaching vocational agriculture. By 1917 more than fifteen states had taken this step; also by that year more students were receiving training in high schools than in independent agricultural programs.

The gradual development of training in the areas of trades and industry, home economics, and agriculture to meet the demand for skilled persons in the United States provided for the establishment of a comprehensive, nationwide vocational education program. The Vocational Education Act of 1917, frequently referred to as the Smith-Hughes Act, provided for federal matching funds for state vocational education. This was the beginning of vocational education in America and in Oklahoma.

# CHAPTER II

## VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN OKLAHOMA 1907-1927

President Woodrow Wilson signed the Vocational Education Act into law on February 23, 1917. With this action the United States dedicated itself to offering vocational education in agriculture, home economics, and trades and industry to the youth of the nation. The passage of this measure began an era--the era of modern vocational education.

The Vocational Education Act of 1917 is often called the Smith-Hughes Act in honor of its co-authors Senator Hoke Smith of Georgia, the Chairman of the Senate Committee on Education, and Representative Dudley Hughes of Georgia, the Chairman of the House Committee on Education. These men had joined with a legion of others for several years in fighting for federal support for vocational education. The passage of the act marked a distinct victory for progressive educators and governmental officials--and for the young men and women of America who desired vocational training.

The Smith-Hughes Act provided for various standards and regulations concerning vocational education, but the primary thrust was the provision that the federal government would reimburse the individual states for the expenses of maintaining vocational education programs in agriculture, home economics, and trades and industry. Under the act's provisions the states would be aided in training teachers for these areas to assure that there was a sufficient supply of qualified instructors. To receive the federal monies the states had to meet several restrictions: matching state funds had to be appropriated to meet the federal monies; individual state plans had to be submitted for approval by the national government; all funds had to be used for less than college level students; all necessary plants and equipment would be supplied by state or local government; and the primary goal of the program would always be to train individuals for useful--and gainful--employment.

Economically the bill appropriated ascending amounts of money annually from 1917 to 1926, ranging in the cases of vocational agriculture and trades and industry from five hundred thousand dollars the first year to three million the final year. After 1926 the yearly stipend would remain at three million. The states were to be allowed to spend up to twenty percent of the total expenditure for trades and industry for the instruction of home economics. Funds were also provided on an upward sliding scale for the financing of teacher training. The Federal Board of Vocational Education was created to assure compliance by the states with the regulations of the act.

It was now up to the states to react to the federal offer; Oklahoma was one of the first to accept. On March 24, 1917, a month after the federal action, the legislature of the state of Oklahoma passed House Bill No. 213 accepting the offer. The act read in part, "The good faith of the state is hereby pledged to make available for the several purposes of said act funds sufficient at least to equal the sums allotted, from time to time, to this state from the appropriations made by said act and to meet all conditions necessary to entitle the state to the benefits of said act." Beyond this acceptance of the provisions of the federal legislation the act also created the State Board of Vocational Education. This ex-officio board was "designated, authorized, and required to cooperate, as provided in and required by . . . the act of Congress, with the Federal Board of Vocational Education in the administration of the . . . act." The original configuration of the board was the state superintendent of public instruction, the president of the State Board of Agriculture, the president of the University of Oklahoma, the president of Oklahoma A. & M. College, and a Secretary-Director of Vocational Education. The first members of the Board were R. H. Wilson, Frank M. Gault, Stratton D. Brooks, J. W. Cantwell, and S. M. Barrett. Cantwell was the president of the board and Barrett, who was also the president of Oklahoma Military Academy, acted as the secretary and director.

Although the compliance with the Vocational Act of 1917 by the state legislature is frequently called the beginning of vocational education in Oklahoma, there had been determined efforts before that time to initiate a state-wide program. Indeed, Section 7, Article 13 of the Constitution of the state of Oklahoma demanded that "the legislature shall provide for the teaching of the elements of Agriculture, Horticulture, Stock Feeding and Domestic Science in the Common Schools of the State." In compliance with this provision the legislature provided that after July 1, 1909, all teachers wishing to receive certificates in the state should pass an examination qualifying them to instruct "the elements of Agriculture and allied branches mentioned" in the constitution. Also, the various normal schools and other institutions of higher learning in the state were urged to offer training in the needed areas. The *Third Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction* for 1908-1910 presaged modern techniques by stating, "We sincerely hope that these courses will not be purely theoretical, but that they will be made practical in every way possible." To this end the schools were advised to provide sufficient laboratory space and equipment along with "suitable field work in a school garden or farm adjoining these educational institutions." Finally, the report suggested that interested parties should contact Prof. B. Youngblood who had recently been appointed special agent for Oklahoma and Texas by the Department of Agriculture.

Additionally, in his address to the state teachers' annual meeting, held in Oklahoma City on the last three days of December, 1909, State

Superintendent of Public Instruction, E. D. Cameron emphasized Oklahoma's leadership in the area of vocational education by stating,

> I want to especially call the attention of the teachers and the people of the State to our great public school system of industrial education. As has often been said, the Constitution of Oklahoma is the only constitution in the world that provides for the teaching of Agriculture, Horticulture, Domestic Science . . . and Stock Feeding in all the schools of the State. . . . I believe that this wave of industrial education that has spread over the United States in the last few years, finding its culmination in Oklahoma, the youngest State, is the greatest blessing to come to this republic since the adoption of the Constitution of the United States. In the olden days we educated our boys and girls to be ladies and gentlemen. Now, we are teaching them to be men and women.

A list of books on home economics was also included in the report, as was the lengthy essay on the attributes of manual education in public schools. The attitude of Cameron toward manual training--or trades and industry as it would later be called--was made clear in the opening statement of the essay, which read in part, "Shall we have Manual Training in our public schools is a question that more than one anxious teacher has asked himself, but we firmly believe that the time has now arrived when there can be no question about the advisability of introducing this work to some extent in country schools as well as city schools." Finally, Cameron asserted in his plans for the future that all the areas of vocational education should be placed in "full and complete operation in all our schools from our great University and A. & M. college down to the smallest school in the State."

Clearly, E. D. Cameron was a forward-looking leader and a friend of vocational education. He evidently was joined in his optimism for the future of manual instruction by many teachers for at the same state meeting in Oklahoma City "The Oklahoma Manual Training and Drawing Association" was organized. This group was designed to promote the teaching of their subject in Oklahoma and to ensure cooperation between the various programs. It seemed that "industrial education" was off to a successful beginning in Oklahoma. However, time would prove that more than optimism was needed for a viable vocational program in the state.

Despite the support of Superintendent Cameron and the constitutional demand for vocational education in Oklahoma, serious difficulties arose after 1910. The *Report of the State Superintendent for 1912* complained of the problem that has always plagued educators--too little money. This expressed itself in two ways: there were not enough properly trained teachers for all the schools in the state, and there was not enough suitable laboratory equipment. However, Oklahomans were not ready

to admit defeat. The Department of Education joined with Oklahoma A. & M. College in a campaign in the summer of 1911 to arouse interest in vocational education. Three professors from the college and one man from the Department of Education toured the state giving lectures and demonstrations. Also, jointly printed pamphlets entitled "School Gardening," "Beautifying School Premises," and "Boys' and Girls' Agricultural and Domestic Science Clubs" were distributed to schools across the state.

It is difficult to determine the success of the program to create interest in vocational programs among the public schools in Oklahoma. However, energetic vocational instruction programs were operating in several schools in the state by 1916; among these were Ponca City, Drumright, and Checotah. Two of the more successful vocational education programs for less than college level students were located at the state's university preparatory schools: State University Preparatory School at Tonkawa and Eastern University Preparatory School at Claremore. (The latter school became Oklahoma Military Academy in 1917 and today is known as Claremore Junior College.) Preparatory schools were maintained by the state so students from isolated and rural areas could obtain a high school education. It should also be noted that early in their history, many of the schools of higher learning, such as the University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma State University, maintained preparatory schools.

In 1914 S. M. Barrett, President of Eastern University Preparatory School, who would later be the first director of the State Board of Vocational Education, noted in his report to the Department of Education, "Originally this school was started to prepare students to enter the State University and other higher institutions of learning. In practice, however, it is found that this school can be of added usefulness to our commonwealth by giving vocational training, hence vocational subjects have been included in the curriculum." Barrett went on to note that this institution had two controlling purposes: "to prepare students to enter colleges and universities; and . . . to prepare students for life through vocational education. Its purpose is to give both vocational and cultural education; to educate for labor as well as for leisure." In accordance with this view more than a dozen separate vocational subjects were added to the school's program.

At the state's other preparatory school in Tonkawa the situation was similar, although it did not have the energetic leadership for vocational education that S. M. Barrett gave its counterpart. For first-year students agriculture was required for boys and domestic science for girls. Also, various vocational courses were offered as electives in the latter years of high school. The preparatory schools were able to give more complete vocational training because of available equipment and better financing.

There is no method to determine how many courses of vocational education were offered before 1917. There was no state-wide regulatory board and the records for the period are generally poor. However, from this brief survey it is possible to conclude that the educators of Oklahoma were interested in offering a viable vocational education program to the students--and so were the political leaders of the state. Clearly, the state was prepared to accept the challenge to create a comprehensive vocational education program offered by the Smith-Hughes Act in 1917.

After the creation of a State Board of Vocational Education, the next step was to submit a state plan to the Federal Board for approval. The Oklahoma State Plan for Vocational Education for 1917 was complied by the state board after consultation with members of the federal board in Washington, D. C. during August of that year. This first state plan contained information for every facet of vocational education, including qualifications of supervisors and teachers and requirements for equipment and buildings.

The first part of the plan dealt with the administration of the program. The state board was the final local authority, and below it were the supervisors of the various schools of agriculture, trades and industry, and home economics. It was the supervisor's job to watch over the working of each school and to act as liaison with the board.

Although the qualifications for the supervisors appear slight by contemporary standards, they were rather strenuous for the period. For the supervisor of vocational agriculture the regulations required that the person have graduated from a standard four-year agricultural course at an approved A. & M. college and that he have at least two years of actual experience in agriculture. Also, the person had to meet any other standards which were set by the Board of Vocational Education.

The supervisor of home economics had to possess a degree from a standard A. & M. College or the equivalent of such a degree and "must have had ample contact with practical problems of Home Economics." The regulations clarified this last statement by noting that the supervisor "must have been actually at work in housewifery or in some home economics vocation." Also, the person had to have two years experience teaching home economics.

The qualifications for the supervisor of trades and industry were the same as those for the teachers of the different fields. These, as laid out in the first state plan, were for trades: mastery of the particular trade which the individual taught; graduation from an elementary school; good health; good personality and ability to get along with others; and maturity in age. For technical instructors in trade schools the requirements were the same with the addition of graduation, or the equivalent thereof, from a technical school of high school level and experience in the particular subject. Teachers of technical subjects at industrial schools

had to possess a degree from a secondary school, to have graduated from a two-year mechanic art course, or to have completed a four-year engineering course. Also, they had be mature and have a congenial personality. To become a supervisor the person had to possess all those qualifications for a specific area as well as having proof of ample experience with actual trades or industry.

The requirements for teachers of vocational agriculture and for home economics were similar. Both demanded a degree from an approved A. & M. college. For agriculture a person had to have had two years of actual experience. Also, the teacher had to be willing to devote his summer months to supervising projects of his students. For home economics at least ten per cent of the college training had to have been in professional instruction in the teaching of home economics and practice teaching. Finally, the prospective teacher had to have two years of practical experience.

Provisions were also made in the state plan for the training of qualified teachers in each field. It was determined that one or more of the state's institutions of higher learning should be encouraged to "thoroughly equip for the training of Teachers of Vocational Agriculture." Although not specifically named in the state plan, Oklahoma A. & M. College was to become the major trainer and supplier of vocational agriculture teachers in the state. This school also would play an important role in the training of teachers in other areas. Inasmuch as the college was designed to train engineers, mechanics, and home economists, this was a natural occurrence.

The final portion of the *State Plan for 1917* was comprised of lists of material needed for the instruction of the various vocational courses. For example, twenty-four types of equipment, ranging from paraphernalia for treating and testing different types of soils to thermometers to be used for determining soil temperatures, were listed for a course in soils. The total expense of the equipment needed for this course was estimated at $15.56. The four thermometers needed were estimated to cost $3.00. Suggested courses were under three general categories: agronomy, horticulture, and animal husbandry.

Regarding trades and industry three types of schools were suggested--all day courses, part-time schools and evening schools. Each type was designed to meet the needs of interested individuals.

Finally, the state board offered two plans for the teaching of home economics, depending on the number of students and amount of funds available. A major requirement for a school to receive federal matching funds for home economics was the possession of a "properly equipped laboratory and other equipment." Because the Smith-Hughes Act demanded that the state or local community provide all the equipment necessary, each school had to purchase at least one stove and other

household materials. The state plan estimated that one proper cooking stove would cost fifty dollars. Thus this was a matter of serious concern for some of the less wealthy school districts.

The state plan for Oklahoma was approved by the federal board in November, 1917. Inasmuch as only seven months remained in the fiscal year, there was some doubt as to the ability of the state to begin operations the first year. However, because several schools in the state had anticipated implementation of the federal aid program twenty-eight applications were approved. Among the first schools to offer vocational education under the federal plan were Oklahoma City, Tulsa, Guthrie, Amber, Claremore, Cushing, Enid, and Chandler. Additionally, seven colleges, including Oklahoma A. & M., Panhandle State School of Agriculture of Goodwell, and Cameron State School of Agriculture at Lawton, applied for and received funds for their preparatory vocational education programs.

Reports on the extent of vocational education for the first year of operation are incomplete; however, the first report of the state board was encouraging. During the first few months that the vocational schools were open, the acceptance of the students of the state was demonstrated. In all, 1112 people received training under one of the provisions of the Smith-Hughes Act. Oddly enough, although the act relegated home economics to a minor role compared to the other fields, it was this branch of the program which attracted the most students. By March, 1918, more than 400 girls had enrolled in home economics courses across the state. Trades and industry was second in number of students, drawing slightly more than 300. Vocational agriculture enlisted 276. It should be noted that inasmuch as classes in vocational agriculture and home economics were already in existence before the application of the funds from the federal government, the numbers given here are not indicative of all the students in Oklahoma enrolled in these areas, only those who attended schools receiving funds under the Smith-Hughes Act.

Teacher training was also begun the first year. Seventy individuals were instructed in home economics, thirty in vocational agriculture, and thirteen in trades and industry. Again these figures reflect only those persons who were in training institutions which had applied for reimbursement from the federal government.

For fiscal year 1917 the legislature of Oklahoma appropriated more than $70,000 for the financing of vocational education. However, the reported expenditures from the state monies amounted to less than $15,000, primarily because of the shortage of time after the approval of the first state plan. Nonetheless, the more than $40,000 of local funds were spent as well as $17,000 of federal money. The appropriations from the state legislature for vocational education for the next two fiscal years was $35,416.00; similar amounts were given for this purpose during the 1920s.

As expected, interest in vocational education among the students of Oklahoma was quickly aroused and after the first year of operation many more schools applied for federal assistance through the State Board of Vocational Education. For the period between 1917 & 1927 vocational education underwent rapid growth in all areas of instruction. Likewise, teacher training programs developed at an ever accelerated pace, both in nature and in scope.

Regarding vocational agriculture, for which the most detailed and comprehensive records are available, the expansion of programs offered and number of students served was phenomenal. Although the number of students actually decreased the second year of the program, falling to 229 in fiscal 1918, the potential for growth was soon realized. During the third year of activity under the Smith-Hughes Act, enrollments in agriculture classes ballooned to more than 700 persons. Another setback was suffered the next year, but after 1921 the number of students continually increased. For the school year 1923-24 more than 2000 students were instructed in vocational agriculture. And by 1927 the number had risen to more than 4000 boys. In ten years, from 1917 to 1927, the number of students in vocational agriculture courses financed by the Smith-Hughes Act, had risen from 276 to 4125! An example of the success of the program is seen in the increased earnings from supervised student projects.

For the other two branches of vocational education in Oklahoma, home economics and trades and industry, it is more difficult to demonstrate the growth, although there was definitely sharp expansion of both programs. For home economics the number of students had grown from 405 in 1917 to more than 24,000 in 1927. Also, the types of classes offered in the area were expanded; whereas in 1917 the classes had been limited to cooking and sewing, by 1927 classes were offered in "The Home and Family Relationship," "Infancy and Pre-School," "The School Child," "Diet of the Family," and "Study of the Adolescent" as well as "Methods in Parental Education" and "Methods in Home Management." Of course, classes were still held in cooking and sewing.

Trades and industry had already begun a working relationship with commercial enterprises, such as mining companies, railroads, and other industries--which would last until the present--by holding conferences to identify the needs of the working world. As in the other branches the growth from 1917 to 1927 was great. From the 318 boys the first year enrollment in the program had increased to 6,639 the latter year.

Admininstratively, vocational education in Oklahoma underwent several alterations during the period from 1917 to 1927. Because the State Board of Vocational Education was partially made up of officials holding impermanent positions--the presidents of Oklahoma University and Oklahoma A.& M. College and the president of the State Board of

Agriculture--a certain amount of change was inherent. Also, the position of state superintendent of public education often experienced turnover.

A major reorganization in the state board during the period came in 1919 when S. M. Barrett stepped down from the directorship. He was replaced in this position by Charles W. Briles. A minor change was the separation in 1919 of the director's and secretary's job. That year Cora Smith was named secretary. By 1922 Florence Neff had been appointed Secretary beginning a long tenure of service in the vocational education system of Oklahoma. Ironically, by 1927 no member of the original board remained in office. That year the members were, Charles Briles, Director; John S. Vaughan, State Superintendent of Public Instruction; Harry B. Cordell, President of the State Board of Agriculture; Bradford Knapp, President of Oklahoma A. & M. College; W. B. Bizzell, President of Oklahoma University; and Florence Neff, Secretary.

The period of 1917 to 1927 was a formative era under the guidance of the federal government. It was a time of growth and experimentation, of many successes and few failures. It was a time of learning, and as the vocational education program of Oklahoma started its second decade of service, it was ready to assume new tasks and witness further growth.

# CHAPTER III

# VOCATIONAL EDUCATION COMES OF AGE

## 1927-1931

As the second decade of vocational education in Oklahoma began the future appeared bright. From a hurriedly arranged organization the State Board of Vocational Education had blossomed into a working body capable of handling the myriad of problems which constantly arose. By 1927 the administrators and teachers were ready to take on greater and more complex responsibilities.

The first major addition to vocational education in Oklahoma came in 1927. This was the creation of the civilian vocational rehabilitation program. The Congress of the United States had passed in June, 1920, the first measure allowing for the use of matching federal funds for rehabilitation. In 1924 work had actually begun in Oklahoma on a small scale under the jurisdiction of the supervisor of trades and industry. However, during the first two years of operation state funds had not been sufficient to warrant federal support. Therefore, in 1927 the state board created the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and funds were allocated by the state legislature.

Properly, the operation of a vocational rehabilitation program did not belong under the supervision of the State Board of Vocational Education inasmuch as that body's primary responsibility was the management of vocational education for students of less than college level. However, the board was pragmatically given authority over this area until a better system could be devised.

The purpose of vocational rehabilitation was--as stated by the first state plan--to allow any handicapped person to learn a trade or vocation to enable him to become a self-supporting citizen. As originally created, the rehabilitation program was placed under a state supervisor, who was responsible for the operation of the various schools and who was of equal rank to the supervisors of agriculture, home economics, and trades and industry. The requirements for this position were graduation from a standard four-year college and at least three years administrative experience.

The vocational rehabilitation program in Oklahoma operated under the direction of the State Board of Vocational Education for slightly more than ten years. In 1937 this branch was separated from vocational education and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation was created. Although the two vocational programs were no longer united, they continued to work together in a spirit of cooperation that has lasted to the present.

Between 1917 and 1927 the State Board of Vocational Education acted as an adjunct to the State Board of Education. It was an "ex-officio" body created as such for purposes of expediency. However, as the years passed it became increasingly apparent that vocational education should be made a regular member of the State Department of Education. This action was taken by the state legislature in 1929.

On September 18, 1929, the date that the act became effective, the Division of Vocational Education was born. This dissolved the State Board of Vocational Education and replaced it with the State Board of Education. The new board was comprised of six individuals appointed by the governor with the state superintendent for public instruction acting as chairman of the board and as director for the division. Inasmuch as John S. Vaughan was the state superintendent he became chairman of the board and state director of vocational education. The other members of the board were E. R. Willson, Tulsa; Jack Boyers, Byars; E. H. Bingham, Amber; Neil B. Gardner, Sentinel; J. L. Newland, Frederick; and J. F. Hatcher, Chickasha.

This major reorganization of the vocational education program was indicative of the expansion which the operation was undergoing during the late 1920s. The number of students asking for vocational education was growing rapidly each year. Vocational agriculture's enrollment swelled to almost five thousand by 1929 and in 1930 more than six thousand students received instruction in this area. Home economics and trades and industry witnessed similar growth, generally showing a five to ten percent increase annually.

The demand for vocational education had two primary results in the late 1920s. One was the enlargement of the staff of state supervisors; the other was the passage of the Vocational Education Act of 1929 by the United States Congress. This act, generally called the George-Reed Act in honor of its principal sponsors Senator Walter George of Georgia and Representative Daniel Reed of New York, provided for expansion and further development of vocational education in the states by increasing the annual appropriations for vocational agriculture and by making a separate appropriation for home economics. The act authorized the spending of $500,000 of federal money for the fiscal year beginning in July, 1929, and for subsequent appropriations for the next four years. Annually the amount was to increase $500,000 over the previous year. One-half of the appropriation was to be used for vocational agriculture--to be allotted to the states and territorities on the basis of their farm populations--and the remaining was to be spent for education in home economics--to be meted out on the basis of rural population. The conditions imposed on the states receiving these funds remained the same as under the Smith-Hughes Act with the exception that the percentage spent for home economics was not tied to the expenditure for trades and industry. The amount for home economics was left to the discretion of the Federal Board of Vocational Education.

Understandably, the act allowed Oklahoma to enlarge its programs in the two affected areas. However, even before the passage of this measure, the state had been forced to expand the number of persons engaged in regulating vocational agriculture. In 1927 the State Board of Vocational Education had recognized the need to lighten the burden of the supervisor of vocational agriculture, who at that time was E. B. Nelms of Oklahoma City. This was done by the appointment of Ross Floyd as Assistant Supervisor of Vocational Agriculture. Additionally, two local supervisors were appointed. These were J. B. Perky--who would later have a great effect on the development of vocational education in Oklahoma--and C. L. Bunyard. Perky, stationed in Woodward, was to watch over western Oklahoma and Bunyard, stationed in Collinsville, was to oversee the eastern portion of the state.

By 1930 Oklahoma was offering four types of vocational agriculture training: all day classes for farm boys regularly enrolled in high schools devoting a part of each day to vocational agriculture; day unit classes for boys who were enrolled in high school for less than five days per week; evening classes for adults wishing to receive systematic training in some particular set of problems for a minimum of ten lessons; and part time classes for boys and young men not enrolled in high school who wished to enroll in unit courses in agriculture or some related field in order to "improve their civic, as well as their vocational education." It is clear that the state was making every attempt to serve any individual who wished to receive vocational agricultural training.

The expansion of vocational agriculture is apparent from the number of students enrolled in classes, totaling almost seven thousand in 1931. It is further demonstrated by the increased amount of federal matching funds which were received. For the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1931, the allocation for Oklahoma was slightly more than $86,000 from the funds provided under the Smith-Hughes Act and more than $15,000 from the George-Reed Act. For the next year the combined amount from the two acts reached more than $112,000. Statistics for 1931 showed that there were 240,000 farms in operation in Oklahoma with 83,887 farm boys between the ages of fourteen and twenty. Of this number 42,394 were enrolled in school, the remaining were not enrolled in any type of educational institution. Almost one-seventh of all those enrolled in school were receiving training in vocational agriculture.

While agriculture expanded, home economics kept pace. Spurred on by the higher allocations allowed by the George-Reed Act, field classes were offered to school girls and to adult homemakers who wished to receive professional guidance and training. Continually, the supervisor of home economics, who was at this time Kate S. North of Oklahoma City, her staff, and the individual teachers attempted to adapt the various programs to meet the needs of the people of Oklahoma. Often this meant creating new classes for individuals interested in a specific

area or reaching into a new area with expanded operations. The rapid growth of this field is best illustrated by the number of home projects conducted in 1931 and 1932. The first year there were slightly more than 1,200 such projects, the next year the total rose to more than 1,700.

To increase the understanding of the home economics program--and to answer the requests of many school officials and students--the state began distributing explanatory materials and offering advisory services in individual high schools in 1931. This not only provided better relations between the state supervisor and the high schools but also allowed the students to understand more easily what was offered by vocational education in this field.

The third area of vocational education, trades and industry, also fulfilled the promise of growth and development that was apparent when the program began its second decade. By 1931 there were twenty school districts in the state cooperating with the State Department of Education to offer courses in trade and industrial education. Three types of classes were offered in this area: day training, part-time training, and evening extension work. Like the programs offered in vocational agriculture, the first two types were for students enrolled in school while the latter was for those not in school but who wished to receive training in some specific area.

In 1931 day trade schools were conducted in eight centers located in Oklahoma City, Enid, Langston, Okmulgee, Muskogee, Ponca City, Stillwater, and Tulsa. The various trades offered in these schools ranged from printing to applied geometry and from shoemaking to metal working. In that year more than 1,600 students were enrolled in some aspect of this instruction.

To maintain development of the occupational areas, teacher-training also had to be expanded. As noted above there had been a shortage of trained instructors before 1917 and the situation did not change immediately with the passage of federal legislation in 1917. It was a gradual process to locate and educate a sufficient number of persons for each area. However, by 1927 the State Board of Vocational Education, along with the various other people that comprised the vocational education program in Oklahoma, had made strides toward a long-range solution to the problem of too few adequately trained teachers.

One of the most important factors in solving the problem of teacher training was the cooperation of the institutions of higher learning in the state, especially Oklahoma A. & M. College. Most of the colleges and universities in the state had run some type of teacher training program before 1917. Inasmuch as Oklahoma had required each of its teachers to pass an examination in agriculture or home economics after 1909, this was a necessary part of any prospective teacher's studies. However,

most of the programs in existence in 1917 did not meet the needs or the qualifications of vocational education under the Smith-Hughes Act or the standards adopted by the State Board of Vocational Education.

Therefore, it was necessary to cultivate teacher-training programs. By 1930 the foundation--and much of the framework--had been constructed for a viable teacher-training program in Oklahoma. Regarding vocational agriculture a close working relationship, which would last until today, was established with Oklahoma A. & M. College. Because this school already possessed the necessary equipment and personnel it was natural that it become the supplier of teachers of vocational agriculture in the state. But the reasons went beyond mere pragmatism. Just as they do today, the administrators of the school and of vocational agriculture understood the problems which the other faced--and each attempted to help. Also, there was a mutual respect and cooperation inherent in the system because many of the people who staffed the vocational agriculture program were graduates of the college. No doubt the assistance of J. W. Cantwell, who was president of the school in 1917 and a charter member of the State Board of Vocational Education, and of his successors, including Henry Bennett, made the work of the administrators of vocational agriculture much easier.Oklahoma A. & M. was the only school accepted as a teacher-training institution with the exception of Oklahoma Agricultural and Normal College at Langston which trained black teachers.

The qualifications for training teachers in home economics and trades and industry were not as restrictive as for agriculture, and more schools were originally accepted in these areas. For home economics the various agricultural and normal schools in the state had approved programs as did the University of Oklahoma. Of course, Oklahoma A. & M. provided many of the home economics teachers in the state.

Immediately after the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act several schools in Oklahoma were approved as teacher-training institutions for trades and industry; however, by 1930 Oklahoma A. & M. dominated this area. A comprehensive program had been developed at the school and intensive summer sessions were held annually in Stillwater for prospective teachers and for those teachers already in service but wishing to receive further professional instruction.

In some program areas adult vocational education was inherent in the program from the beginning; however, most all the vocational teachers accepted the responsibility for providing instruction for adult "Farmer Classes" is well as "Meetings for Women." There were prominent features of local vocational programs in agriculture and home economics. In many instances such vocational education for adults served as a fore runner of the community school programs of later years.

The brief time between 1927 and 1931 was important to vocational education in Oklahoma. In four years major strides had been taken in providing service to the people of the state, and the program had become better equipped to meet the ever-increasing demands of the public. The administrative staff was enlarged, the number of teachers increased by almost one-third during the four years, and in 1929 the legislature had made the program a regular division of the Department of Education, lending stability and permanence to the organization. Just as the period from 1917 to 1927 had been a formative era, the years from 1927 to 1931 were a time of maturation and development. The stage was prepared for adulthood.

## CHAPTER IV

## TOWARD MODERNITY

The decade of the 1930s was one of hardship and trial for vocational education in Oklahoma, but it was also one of accomplishment and triumph. No phase of American life was left untouched by the Great Depression, and vocational education suffered the usual maladies of the period--economic hardships, pessimism, and hopelessness. However, vital steps were taken during this era toward improving the services offered, toward making vocational education relevant to an increasingly complex world, and toward fulfilling the original promises of the program.

No doubt one of the most important steps taken in any area of vocational education in this era was the appointment of J. B. Perky as state supervisor of vocational agriculture--for more than any other person Perky would dominate vocational education in Oklahoma for the next three decades. Perky was appointed to his new position in Oklahoma City by State Superintendent of Public Instruction John Vaughan in 1931, but this was not the beginning of his association with the vocational education program of the state. Indeed, vocational education had pervaded his life.

Perky was born on a farm near the small hamlet of Cleburne, Texas, in 1901. As a young man he had learned the joys of country life, such as hunting, fishing, and simply walking among nature's handiworks, but he had also learned the rewards of this life, such as working the soil to make it spring fruitful or watching the wonders of the birth of a calf. Surely it was here that the strapping lad who would grow to well over six feet decided that he would spend his life helping others to understand the bountifulness of nature.

After finishing high school in Cleburne, Perky entered the University of Wisconsin where he graduated in 1923 with a degree in agricultural education. That year he became the vocational agriculture teacher at El Reno, Oklahoma, arriving at last in the state where he would spend the rest of his life. Three years after coming to the small town he became the vocational agriculture instructor at Goodwell. The years he spent at Goodwell were filled with the joys that he had learned to love as a boy. One of his favorite pastimes was chasing the many coyotes which inhabited the region. Local ranchers and farmers--knowing of Perky's penchant for the hunt--would call the out-sized teacher after seeing the canines on their property. Early the next morning Perky would arrive with a friend and his Russian wolfhounds, and the chase would begin. Hours were spent listening and chasing; fences which threatened to delay the hunt were cut as Perky rushed his big Buick sedan across the

prairies. Neither Perky nor the farmers worried about the fences because each knew that the hunters would return to mend what they had damaged, often spending half a day in the process.

Although he enjoyed the amusements which the region offered, Perky moved his home to Woodward in 1921 to become local supervisor of the western district of Oklahoma. He was living there when he was appointed to head Oklahoma's vocational agriculture program.

In his new position Perky exhibited the traits that made him a good administrator. He was strong-willed but could compromise if necessary; he was decisive but understanding. And vocational agriculture needed a strong leader during the 1930s. While the entire nation was gripped by the depression, Oklahoma and several of its neighboring states were struck by an additional tormentor--the Dust Bowl.

One of the primary results of the Dust Bowl in Oklahoma was the depletion of the ranks of vocational agriculture teachers. When the federal government created the Civilian Conservation Corps and the Soil Conservation Service a great demand arose for persons schooled in techniques of modern farming and soil saving. Fortunately for the state many of the new positions could be filled with the vocational agriculture teachers of Oklahoma, but unfortunately for vocational agriculture this left many positions empty in the schools. However, stepped-up teacher training and pragmatic arrangements such as allowing teachers time off to handle government jobs overcame this problem.

Vocational agriculture suffered a decrease in student enrollment for the school year 1932, dropping from almost 7,000 in 1931 to less than 6,500 the next year. This loss can be attributed directly to the affects of the depression and the Dust Bowl since schools were either closed or forced to cease certain phases of their curricula, including vocational agriculture. However, the next year, 1933, enrollment jumped to almost 10,000. The 1930's were not a time of stability for any sector of American life and vocational agriculture was not immune to the anxiety of the period. Throughout the remaining years of the decade enrollments fluctuated, rising to a high of 12,500 in 1939 and sinking to slightly more than 8,000 in 1935. The primary cause of this was, of course, the economic difficulties of the era.

In the midst of the depression vocational education was faced with a major problem in 1934--the supplemental funds which had been provided by the Vocational Education Act of 1929 (the George-Reed Act) were due to cease with the expiration of the five-year plan. However, Congress was not unmindful of the needs--or the importance--of vocational education. Therefore, the Vocational Education Act of 1934 was passed. As with previous acts of Congress, and with subsequent acts, this bill was given the names of its primary authors and supporters, in

this instance Senator George of Georgia and Representative Charles Ellzey of Mississippi.

The George-Ellzey Act was designed to continue the flow of supplemental funds to the states; for a period of three years, 1935 to 1937, three million dollars was appropriated annually for vocational education. The total was to be divided evenly among the three areas: vocational agriculture, home economics by rural population, and trades and industry by urban population. The minimum allocation for each state was $5,000.

The funds from this act were welcomed by the leaders of vocational education in Oklahoma, but they did not ensure success. As has been shown, vocational agriculture suffered difficulties during this period, but progress was made. The same was true for the other areas.

Of all the branches of vocational education in Oklahoma, home economics received the biggest boost from the George-Reed Act of 1929 because that act allowed the states to spend larger percentages of the allotted funds for that area. In spite of the difficulties created by the depression home economics began the new decade with unprecedented growth. In 1930 there were less than sixty home economics programs in Oklahoma which were aided by federal matching funds, and there were less than 10,000 students, both adults and school girls, enrolled in classes. With the addition of the funds from the legislation, the number of schools offering home economics more than doubled in 1931 with more than 150 districts holding classes.

Certainly the leaders of home economics in Oklahoma had reason to be confident despite the continued downward spiral of the state and national economies. At this time the state supervisor for home economics was Kate North of Oklahoma City who had replaced the original supervisor Mabel Potter in 1927. No doubt Mrs. North, her staff, and the teachers of the state looked forward to further expansion, especially after the passage of the Vocational Education Act of 1934 which continued the supplemental funds. However, the depression was a determined foe of any progress and growth in the 1930s.

The radical extension of home economics programs in 1931 had caused the enrollments of classes to bulge to more than 20,000, but by 1935 enrollment had fallen to 16,000. The reasons for this decline were similar to those which damaged vocational agriculture's enrollments, with economics as the basic cause for difficulty. There was little anyone could do about this situation, either for home economics or for the nation, and the slide continued through 1936 and 1937. In 1938 enrollment was slightly more than 8,000, lower than the figures for a decade earlier. These figures are somewhat misleading because the earlier totals included evening classes for adults which the latter did not. However, a sharp decline in enrollment is apparent.

Despite the problems created by the Depression home economics survived, and toward the end of the decade--when the national economy appeared to revive and when the flow of people from Oklahoma slowed with the end of the Dust Bowl--enrollment in classes again rose radically. Like a barometer of the national economy, home economics was readying for renewed growth in the Forties.

Ironically it was during the rather unhappy days of the 1930s that the motto of home economics was adopted. Written by Grace Noll Crowell, it is called "A Girl's Creed."

> I believe that the home is a woman's natural environment. I believe that there is as much art in making a barren house into a glistening comfortable home as there is in painting a picture or in writing a poem.
>
> I believe that there is dignity and beauty in service; that as a career for women, homemaking offers greater opportunity for leisure, for growth of mind and spirit, for exercise of the body, than any other occupation.
>
> I believe that one who has an intelligence to keep her own house in order is wise enough to be a force in any community.
>
> It is my desire to be one of the countless women of the world to make life easier and better because I live and do my work well.

Although some may contest the aptness of the philosophy of this poem in today's life, it remains a moving statement of the homemakers of America.

Naturally, the third area of vocational education, trades and industry, was not free from the troubles of the thirties. Decreasing enrollments were apparent in each phase of the program, especially in the schools which were located in outlying or isolated districts. However, this problem did not become acute because many of the major trade schools and industrial centers were in larger urban regions, such as Oklahoma City, Tulsa, and Ponca City.

During most of the decade trades and industry were under the tutelage of L. K. Covelle, who replaced Scott McGinnis in that position in 1931. Three types of programs were offered during the period: day-trade classes for students enrolled in the regular high schools, part-time continuation classes which were divided into part-time cooperative classes for students receiving on-the-job training in specific occupational areas, and part-time continuation classes for students who had left school for employment but wished to receive further instruction in

specific areas. Additionally, classes were offered to adult workers who wished to improve their trade skills through the part-time extension and the evening trade extension programs and to individuals wishing to ready themselves for apprenticeship through the part-time trade preparatory programs.

The expansion of the trade and industrial program, which doubled in size during the period from 1931 to 1941, is demonstrated by the increase in the advisory staff. When the decade began the central staff had consisted of Supervisor McGinnis and his secretary. By 1938 the number had grown by four, consisting of Mr. Covelle and his secretary and four assistant supervisors: M. L. Curtis, R. P. Lewis, Nina Clover, and Mildred Thompson.

The enlarging of the staffs of each administrative area is indicative of the growth of vocational education. In vocational agriculture Supervisor Perky had five assistant supervisors, whose job it was to coordinate the various sectors of the state. In 1938 these were Bonnie Nicholson, S. M. Crosonoe, Roy Craig, W. R. Craig, and Roy P. Stewart. The last member of this group would later become a well-known writer in Oklahoma, beloved by many as the "Country Boy." In home economics Kate North, who had been state supervisor for this branch, became assistant supervisor for adult education. The state supervisor was Mary Russell and her assistants were Vera Drake, Helen Nichols, and Ann Buntin. Lenoulian Gandy was the district supervisor for home economics for blacks.

For almost two decades the vocational education system which had been established in the United States by the Smith-Hughes Act had remained static. The only permanent alterations had come at state and local levels. (The addition of civilian vocational rehabilitation had been temporary.) By 1936 it was apparent that a major addition was needed, and the Congress of the United States heeded this need in that year with the passage of another vocational education act--commonly called the George-Deen Act. The purpose of this measure was two-fold: to continue the supplemental funds first appropriated by the Vocational Education Act of 1929 (George-Reed Act) and renewed by the act of 1934 (George-Ellezy Act) and to add distributive education to the list of areas which would be financed with federal matching funds.

Economically, this measure provided for a substantial increase in the funds available to the states for vocational education. Twelve million dollars annually was to be divided equally among trades and industry, home economics, and vocational agriculture. As in previous acts the money was to be distributed to the states on the basis of farm, rural, and urban populations. This sizable increase in the amount of money allowed each area of vocational education in Oklahoma to expand its operations.

Although the financial aid was welcome, the addition of distributive education to the list of areas suitable for federal funding was equally important. Distributive education is the instruction of students who wish to learn some phase of "distributing merchandise to the public." This includes all activities necessary to transfer goods and services from producers to consumers. Among the functions involved are "assembling, transporting, buying, selling, grading and standardizing, processing, packaging, storing, financing, risk bearing and collecting and using market information." Since the beginning of the century increased production and rising demand for consumer goods had made this area correspondingly important. Therefore, it was natural that the Congress should react to the demands of the people. The legislative provision appropriated $1,200,000 for distributive education, one million dollars for teacher training, and $200,000 for administration of this area. These funds were to be distributed annually to the states according to the ratio of the population of each to the population of the United States. This act became law on June 8, 1936.

Oklahomans had already begun distributive education before the act was passed by the national legislature. In 1929 a course in "retail selling" had started in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and by 1936 such classes were held in six cities in the state--Bristow, Oklahoma City, Ponca City, Shawnee, Tonkawa, and of course, Tulsa. Although the number of these classes was small and the methods often crude, a foundation existed for further building. In 1937 the first federally funded distributive education classes were held in the state. Initially, two types of classes were offered, regular full-time classes for juniors and seniors in high schools and part-time evening classes for persons already engaged in some aspect of merchandise distribution. Additionally, Oklahoma A. & M. was designated as the teacher-training institution for distributive education.

Because it was impractical--and unnecessary--to create a separate branch for distributive education immediately, the new program was placed under the administrative wing of the supervisor of trades and industry, L. K. Covelle. Nina Clover was appointed assistant supervisor for trades and industry in charge of distributive education.

The number of programs offered and the number of students enrolled were small at first. During the first two years of operation, 1937-1939, under federal guidance and assistance, classes were centered in only seven cities and less than 800 students received instruction. However, by 1941 distributive education was beginning to take its place as a major branch of vocational education. That year cooperative selling classes were held in Duncan, Enid, Heavener, Hobert, Lawton, Muskogee, Norman, Oklahoma City, Okmulgee, Ponca City, Sayre, Tulsa, and Shawnee high schools. Additionally, programs were offered at Tonkawa Junior College and Northeastern Junior College at Miami. At seven

centers across Oklahoma evening classes were organized in speech, retailing, salesmanship, grocery merchandising, credits and collections, modern retail selling, and display. Enrollment in this area totalled more than 1,500. Also, distributive education business clinics in cooperation with the Office of Price Admininstration were held for merchants and their personnel in Ardmore, Bartlesville, Enid, Lawton, McAlester, Muskogee, Oklahoma City, Ponca City, and Tulsa to inform retailers of the price control regulations which had recently been initiated by the federal government. More than 2,200 persons were instructed at the nine centers.

The addition of distributive education to the vocational education system of Oklahoma was indicative of the future. Vocational education had suffered through the Great Depression with the nation, and all those involved looked forward to the next decade with renewed optimism and dedication. Both of these factors were needed, for in 1940 the United States was facing the most determined threat to its existence in its history--World War II. Vocational education in Oklahoma and across the nation stood ready to help withstand the challenge of totalitarianism to the Republic.

# CHAPTER V

## THE WAR YEARS AND AFTER

In June, 1941, J. B. Perky became the director of vocational education in Oklahoma. The office had been created two months earlier by the state legislature because vocational education had become a complex organization which demanded constant supervision. The selection of Perky for the job was natural inasmuch as he had demonstrated his talents as an administrator as supervisor of vocational agriculture since 1931.

The new director had never been one for resting on past accomplishments. His philosophy was best expressed in a speech made to an annual conference of the Oklahoma vocational agriculture teachers while he was supervisor of that division:

> When you all pull off your britches and crawl in bed at night, don't turn over twice until you think about what you have done, and more important, what you have not done that day. Think about your salary and the amount of money you are to receive for your services during the last twenty-four hours. Now be honest, what in the world that was worth a tinker's damn did you accomplish? Think, think hard, and if you're honest a good many of you will get up, pull the britches back on and go to work!

This admonition to work was meant for every person employed in vocational education in Oklahoma, including, and especially, J. B. Perky.

Administering the needs of vocational education in Oklahoma was never an easy task, and Perky's burden was compounded by the fact that he remained state supervisor of vocational agriculture. Thus, he was not often sympathetic to teachers and subordinates who complained of overwork. If he could do the jobs of two men, the others should have the time to do their jobs--and do them well.

Both as state supervisor of vocational agriculture and as director of vocational education, Perky was concerned about the teachers. Were they doing their jobs? Were the students receiving the type of education they deserved? Perky realized that the tax dollars that came to vocational education were repaid in one way: teaching. Moreover, he not only wanted his teachers to perform well during class periods, he expected them always to be ready to serve the needs of anyone in their area. If that meant knowing the price of wheat, the teacher should be ready to give the most recent quotation from the market. It was this

attitude that helped make the vocational agriculture teachers of Oklahoma not only skilled instructors but also respected leaders of their communities.

One of Perky's strongest points as a successful Director of Vocational Education was his ability to get along with the governmental officials of the state. As the executive officer of a state organization it was necessary to answer the questions of legislators and other officials and sometimes to demonstrate the need for support for vocational education. Perky excelled at each task.

No doubt the one aspect of Perky's character that made him an able administrator was his ability to obtain all information available, listen to the opinions of his advisors, and make a clear-cut decision. Once a decision had been made the director did not worry about it anymore. He had done the best he could.

A decisive leader was needed in 1941 because vocational education had been called on to aid the nation in preparing for war. Just as vocational education had not been immune to the difficulties of the Great Depression, it did not operate in a vacuum during World War II. In 1940, the Congress of the United States passed the Defense Training Act, anticipating the needs of the nation should it become involved in the war that was raging in Europe and Asia at that time. This act placed the responsibility of training defense workers in the Vocational Division of the United States Office of Education.Additionally, the various state boards of vocational education were charged with the task of training workers, and in Oklahoma the state director of vocational education, J. B. Perky, was given the job of administering the new program. Each division affected--home economics, trades and industry, and vocational agriculture--was required to submit plans and select staffs to provide vocational education courses and other necessary instruction deemed esssential to the national defense. Therefore, Perky became director of the War Training Program and the supervisor of Food Production Training. In trade and industrial training Edward Schirmer was appointed by State Supervisor M. L. Powers as assistant supervisor in charge of national defense. Also, Byrle Killian, who had been the vocational agriculture instructor at Guthrie, Oklahoma, was appointed by Perky to become assistant state supervisor of agriculture education in charge of national defense. At the age of twenty-seven Killian, who Perky had noted for his dedication and talent, was charged with operating the training program and purchasing all necessary materials. Throughout the war vocational education in Oklahoma was dedicated to training workers needed in each area. By 1944 this cause pervaded each branch of vocational education. That year there were more than 64,000 adults enrolled in various vocational classes under the control of the Rural Training and Food Production War Training Program offered by vocational agriculture. In addition to the training program, vocational ag-

riculture aided in the war effort by operating war bond programs across the state, by collecting scrap metals, and by regulating the rationing of gas to farmers.

The other major war training branch of vocational education in Oklahoma was trade and industrial education. During the period from 1940 to 1945 more than 150,000 workers received training in this program. In 1944 alone more than 35,000 were instructed in more than fifteen specific occupations, ranging from aircraft mechanics to arc welding. Additionally, home economics was involved with teaching food preservation techniques and the basics of first aid. Although not directly a part of the War Training Program, home economics made an important contribution via its emphasis in school and adult classes on nutrition. According to the Selective Service the largest numbers of rejections for military service were the result of poor nutrition. Home economics teachers not only taught good nutrition in their classes but also many volunteered to instruct Red Cross classes for interested adults.

The creation and operation of the War Training Program in the state did not hamper the development of normal vocational education. As the Depression had eased during the latter years of the previous decade all areas had grown rapidly, especially after the passage of the George-Deen Act in 1936. Generally, this trend was disrupted by the war years, with almost every area showing a decrease in enrollments during the war years, exclusive of the students enrolled in war training classes. This decline in students was the normal result of the war.

However, vocational education did not remain static during the war. One of the most radical changes in the configuration of the program came in 1945 with the division of trade and industrial education and distributive education. Under the direction of M. J. DeBenning, who replaced Nina Clover as the assistant supervisor in charge of distributive education in 1941, this area had become increasingly important. By 1945 it was no longer possible to properly administer it under the auspices of trades and industry. Thus, DeBenning was appointed the first state supervisor of distributive education. That year, 1945, more than 5,000 students were enrolled in the various types of distributive education classes which were offered.

As the end of World War II neared, the leaders of vocational education in the nation and in Oklahoma realized that the task of assimilating the returning veterans and war production workers into the economy would require a massive increase in classes and instructors. This had been apparent for several years and teacher training in Oklahoma had been accelerated. However, help was needed from the federal government to adequately prepare for the influx of students. Therefore, the Vocational Education Act of 1946 was passed by the United States Congress.

Called the George-Barden Act, this measure provided for a sizable increase in the amount of federal aid to vocational education and allowed for greater flexibility in the use of funds. Vocational agriculture received the largest boost, $10,000,000 annually. Other appropriations were $8,000,000 for home economics, $8,000,000 for trades and industry, and $2,500,000 for distributive education. The money was to be distributed to the states in the manner established by the previous laws. Minimum allocations for each state for vocational agriculture, home economics, and trades and industry were $40,000; for distributive education the minimum was $15,000. Unlike the previous measures, the George-Barden Act did not restrict specific amounts to be spent for teacher-training and it allowed the individual states to make determinations concerning the use of funds for equipment, salaries, and travel. However, the act did provide that after June, 1950, not more than ten percent of the total state allocation could be used for purchasing new equipment. Finally, funds were provided for occupational information and guidance operations.

The passage of the act did not mean an immediate increase in the amount of federal money which Oklahoma received for vocational education. Since the passage of the George-Deen Act in 1936, the amount of federal money reimbursed to the state had risen gradually until 1944. By 1946 the totals for each area were $202,524.98 for vocational agriculture; $109,051.40 for home economics; $101,234.27 for trades and industry; and $20,101.12 for distributive education. No funds were received for program administration. In 1947 the first major increase in federal funds was received from the George-Barden Act. That year the totals were $272,852.87 for vocational agriculture; $135,726.51 for home economics; $113,704.59 for trades and industry; and $28,517.28 for distributive education.

The growth supported by the George-Barden Act is not only demonstrated by the amounts of federal dollars received by the state but also by the numbers of students who received occupational training. The year before the funds were made available, slightly more than 12,000 were enrolled in vocational agriculture. The next year, fiscal 1947, more than 17,000 were taught, increasing more than one-third. Also, in 1946 vocational education was given the task of organizing "institutional-on-farm training" for veterans. A contract between the Veterans Administration and the State Board of Vocational Education resulted in the creation of the Veterans Agricultural Training Program. By July of 1947, more than 15,000 former soldiers were enrolled in the new classes.

Although the numbers were not as large as in vocational agriculture, home economics exhibited marked growth during the postwar period as a result of the new funds, with enrollment increasing more than 2,000 between 1946 and 1947. Distributive education, the newest of the areas offered in Oklahoma, was also aided by the funds, showing an increase in enrollment from 4,881 in 1946 to 5,828 in 1947. Although distributive

education was relatively young, its operations were already reaching into most areas of the state. Using the original basis of classes, including cooperative part-time classes for students in high schools and evening school classes for workers already engaged in some aspect of distributive occupations, the program had been expanded to serve as many individuals as was possible with the limited staff. A major problem during the middle forties was an insufficient supply of qualified teachers and it was this problem that limited the number of programs which could be offered. Despite this limitation, by 1947 the number and types of classes had proliferated. In 1946 there were fifteen centers where cooperative classes met and eleven for adult evening classes. A major area of expansion during this time was the increase in conferences with various organizations and employers to foster a better understanding of distributive education. In 1947 a total of 122 such conferences were held with eighteen different groups, including the National Retail Dry Goods Association, the Oklahoma Retail Grocer's Association, and the Oklahoma Retail Hardware and Implement Association. Also, a number of classes were offered which were not designed to receive federal assistance but which the leaders of distributive education deemed useful to the people of Oklahoma.

Perhaps more than any other sector of vocational education in Oklahoma, trade and industrial education made the greatest advances during the first seven years of the 1940s. Although the additional funds appropriated by the George-Barden Act allowed the program to expand, growing from an enrollment in 1946 of 3,442 to 5,584 the next year, much had already been done to modernize and develop trade and industrial education. After 1940 and the inception of the War Training Program, this branch had received special attention because of its importance to the war effort, and the apparent shortage of industrial workers during the war demonstrated the need for continued emphasis. By 1947 trades and industry offered four different types of classes: general industrial classes taught in the public schools; part-time general continuation classes which were divided into diversified occupations classes for public school students who were employed in half-day apprentice programs and part-time continuation classes for students who were employed as regular wage earners; part-time trade extension classes for workers wishing to improve and hone their skills; and evening trade extension classes for similar persons offered at night.

In addition to the normal activities of trade and industrial education, the branch initiated a Fire Training Program as a public service operation in the early 1940s. Many of the growing towns and cities in Oklahoma had recently created fire departments and purchased fire fighting equipment; therefore, itinerant fire instructors were employed by the trade and industrial division to travel around the state as a part of the adult training classes.

While the occupational branches of vocational education were involved with the war effort until 1945 and with helping the nation readjust to a peace-time economy, the teacher-training section of the program had been undergoing several changes. When the United States entered the war the number of prospective teachers in training classes naturally diminished. However, by 1944 when the end of the war seemed near it was clear that the demand for teachers would soon overwhelm the number which was available. Quickly, the leaders of vocational education in Oklahoma, guided by J. B. Perky, set about to rectify the situation.

The process was slow, however, by 1946 the number of students in teacher-training programs had almost doubled. By that year Oklahoma A. & M. College had expanded its dominance of vocational teacher-training to a monopoly. Both teacher-training and the college had changed drastically since the submission of Oklahoma's first state plan in 1917.

The most noticeable alterations were the result of changes in the qualifications for teachers which had been promulgated during the thirty years between 1917 and 1937. It was natural that as vocational education evolved into a complex and modern organization the qualifications for teachers should keep pace.

The qualifications for teachers in the various branches of vocational education as stated by the State Plan for 1917 were simple and brief, noting only that a teacher was to be physically capable of leading an energetic vocational program. Unstated in the state plan, but manifestly plain to all those who knew Director Perky, the vocational agriculture teacher was to be much more than an employee of the public school. He was to be the man who the people of the community looked to for leadership and assistance.

Teacher-training qualifications in the other fields were similarly rigorous. However, there were approved home economics programs at four institutions of higher learning: Oklahoma A. & M. College, Oklahoma College for Women at Chickasha, the University of Oklahoma, and Langston University. As for trade and industrial education teacher-training was centered at Oklahoma A. & M. A thirty-hour course especially designed for this purpose was required for most teachers rather than a complete degree program. For each of the three areas Oklahoma A. & M. was the major supplier of teachers. This was because that school had been willing since 1917 to adjust to the needs of vocational education, such as creating specific departments for teacher-training and offering special programs, such as extension classes for trades and industry teachers.

The requirements for teachers of distributive education were similar to trades and industry. Oklahoma A. & M. College offered a series of courses which were accepted by the State Board of Vocational Education and State Supervisor DeBenning to qualify individuals as teachers. Oklahoma A. & M. was the only approved institution for distributive education teacher training.

Expansion and up-grading of college and university instructional programs designed for the preparation of vocational teachers were such as to ensure a continued supply of qualified instructors. Significantly, more was given to the concept that providing quality learning experiences for prospective vocational teachers was most essential to the progressive improvement and maintenance of superior programs of vocational education at the local level.

Generally, the increased requirements for teachers were reflected in an up-grading of the entire vocational education system, including stiffer qualifications for supervisors and assistant supervisors. This up-grading is illustrative of the standardization and modernization of vocational education in Oklahoma.

The last years of the 1940's were a time of consolidation and continued growth for two branches of vocational education. Vocational agriculture's solid rise from 1940 to 1950 is indicative. The first year the number trained was slightly more than 17,000; the next, almost 19,500; and the final year, almost 22,000. During the biennium of 1948 to 1950 the number of high schools offering vocational agriculture rose from 257 to 323; evening classes increased from 249 to 323.

Vocational homemaking was included in the expansion of the period. For 1948-49 enrollments were more than 22,000, the next school year almost 4,000 more were instructed, bringing the total to 26,209.

The other two divisions did not show increases in enrollments. Trade and industrial education had a total decrease of students from 1948 to 1949 of almost 500 students. This was generally the result of the cancellation of day trade schools at two centers and cancellation of several other evening and part-time programs. Distributive education showed a decrease of enrollment and of programs, dropping in total students from 5,362 in 1948-1949 to 4,449 in 1949-1950.

As the first half of the twentieth century drew to a close the administration of vocational education in Oklahoma bore little resemblance to that of a decade previously. In 1940 the office of the director of vocational education had not existed; ten years later J. B. Perky was solidly in charge of the program. Perky, who with most of the other officers was stationed in Stillwater, was also the supervisor of vocational agriculture. He was aided in this job by Assistant Supervisor W. R. Felton and

District Supervisors Bryle Killian, Hugh D. Jones, Cleo A. Collins, and B. F. Thompson. Additionally, former district supervisor Bonnie Nicholson headed the Veterans Agricultural Training Program in conjunction with Oklahoma A. & M. Nicholson was assisted by Earl C. May and C. D. Maynard. The increasing complexity of the vocational education system was demonstrated by the creation in 1947 of an auditor for the division. S. D. Center held this position in 1950 and was aided by fourteen district supervisors.

M. J. DeBenning remained as the state supervisor of distributive education with C. R. Millard acting as assistant supervisor and Frank Barrett as training specialist. In 1945 Lela O'Toole had become state supervisor of home economics after several years as a regional supervisor. She entered teacher training at Oklahoma A. & M. in 1948, where she would eventually become dean of the College of Home Economics and an internationally recognized leader in her field. Filling her shoes as state supervisor was Blanche Portwood. Her staff included Assistant Supervisor Marguerite Scruggs and District Supervisors Mae Rollow, Maurine McNall, and Helen Jensen.

Finally, the administrative staff of trade and industrial education consisted of State Supervisor L. V. Ballard and assistant supervisors J. Perry Norris, who had previously been state supervisor, E. B. Schirmer, and Orland A. Foster.

The entire vocational education organization in Oklahoma had matured by 1950. Each branch was firmly implanted, offering useful and needed programs. Also, viable teacher-training operations ensured a continued supply of qualified instructors. It was time to build on the foundation which had been laid during the previous thirty-three years and to reach out to other individuals who wanted occupational training.

# CHAPTER VI

## GROWTH AND THE SPACE AGE

No dramatist arranges the scenario for the educator. Successes do not burst onto the scene with brilliance and fervor but creep slowly from years of hardship and work. Failure is likewise obscure; climaxes are few and often hidden. But there is no doubt that the decade of the 1950s marked the success of vocational education in Oklahoma. During this period each facet of the system was expanded, and new programs in health occupations and technical training were created as the decade ended.

Vocational agriculture led the way, as it had since the creation of a federally funded vocational education program in Oklahoma. It had been the initial purpose of vocational agriculture to install programs in every community and school in the state where students wished to receive vocational training. This goal was not attained, but strides were made in the 1950s toward locating classes in each locale. The increase in number of programs offered and the natural increase in number of students attending public schools resulted in the start in growth of vocational agriculture during the early and middle years of the decade.

In the school year 1952-1953 the enrollment for vocational agriculture rose to 27,000, which was 3,000 more than the previous year. With the exception of a small decline in 1952, enrollments continually increased until 1954. For 1953, 29,320 students were taught. The enrollment for 1954-1955 was the highest during the decade, totalling 31,558. From this peak the number of students leveled to 28,000 for the remainder of the period.

Although the largest numbers of students for the decade were enrolled in vocational agriculture, it was not the only area of occupational instruction that expanded during the fifties. In fact, during the period from 1952 to 1955 vocational homemaking actually outnumbered agriculture, showing enrollments of 28,978, 28,654, 29,755, 33,037, and 32,158. Again, much of the increased count was the result of expansion into areas previously not served by home economics classes.

As with vocational agriculture, the enrollments in home economics began to stabilize after 1955. Whereas the number of students had been increasing almost three thousand per year, enrollments dropped slightly in 1956 and in 1957, and throughout the last years of the decade continually held at approximately 27,000.

Trade and industrial education had experienced the greatest attention after the war because of the increased demand for skilled artisans and industrial workers. And the situation did not measurably change in the Fifties. As the decade began enrollments hovered around 6,000 for all classes. However, by 1953 more than 9,000 students were receiving occupational training in various trade and industrial classes. Although the number dropped to 8,527 the next year, enrollments continually increased from 1955 to 1960, reaching 10,000 in 1956 and 12,000 the next year.

The fourth and youngest branch of vocational education in the state, distributive education, also experienced rapid growth during the middle of the decade, burgeoning from an enrollment of slightly less than 2,000 in 1952 to more than 4,000 the next year. That year, 1953, 4,664 received instruction. A primary cause for this growth was the continued effort of the leaders of distributive education to innovate and create new programs which would better serve the public. Because distributive education was the most recent addition to vocational education, this constant reassessment of established classes and addition of new ones was natural and necessary. After 1956 the enrollment for this area settled to about three thousand per year.

The success of each division of vocational education demonstrated to the public and to governmental officials that not only was there a demand for occupational training but also that it was to the nation's and state's benefit that a constant supply of skilled individuals be maintained. Moreover, it was plain by the middle of the 1950s that vocational training programs were needed in other areas inasmuch as vocational education was the only method to ensure a viable source of workers.

Realizing that the success of vocational education in agriculture, home economics, trades and industry, and distributive education could be attained in other areas, the Congress of the United States passed the Health Amendment which provided for the addition of vocational education in practical nurse training to the list of areas which were qualified for federal assistance. As an amendment to the Vocational Education Act of 1946 (George-Barden Act), this measure placed the same restrictions on the states regarding funds for nurse training as the previous act had for agriculture, home economics, trades and industry, and distributive education. Annually, the federal government was to appropriate $5,000,000. The first year of the program the national government agreed to pay seventy-five percent of the total cost of maintaining a nurse system and fifty percent of the costs for the next three years. Further stipulations were that the State Board of Vocational Education should act as the sole administrator of the nurse training programs, the state supervisor should be a registered professional nurse or should have the "consultative services of a registered nurse;" the state plans for a nursing program should demonstrate the effectiveness

and efficiency of the training procedure; qualifications for teachers should be explicitly stated; and reports should be submitted to the national government to assure adequate operation of the program.

The funds appropriated by this act could be used to encourage the creation of training classes in communities not already served, to stimulate the expansion of existent operations, to develop programs of training for other "approvable health occupations," to insure the success of existent operations, and to secure necessary educational information and data as the basis for future operations.

Almost immediately after the passage of the Health Amendment, the State Board of Vocational Education for Oklahoma composed and submitted the first state plan for practical nurse training. In November, 1956, the plan was approved by the United States Office of Education, and on February 1, Ruth Burris was employed "on a one-half time basis as a State Supervisor of Practical Nurse Training." After June 1 of that year she was employed full time. Originally, the nurse training program was housed administratively under the Division of Trades and Industrial Education. However, by the state plan for 1957 it was separated from trades and industry and the independent division of practical nurse training was established with Mrs. Burris as state supervisor.

According to the first state plan for nurse training there were two types of courses offered: extension classes for nurses already working but needing additional training and preparatory classes which were divided into two categories, one-year preparatory schools operated in hospitals for adults and preparatory courses operated for high school students during the senior year.

The initial operation of nurse training was limited. The first year only twenty-three extension classes were offered in twelve communities in the state, instructing 252 students. There were no one-year preparatory school classes offered. However, by June, 1957, contracts had been signed for three such programs. The second year of operation thirty-five extension classes were held, totaling 459 students. Also, the new one-year classes were offered in nine community hospitals, enrolling 152 students. Several communities expressed an interest in the creation of preparatory classes for high school seniors the first two years; however, no programs were authorized. During the final years of the decade nurse training remained limited; however, progress was made. By 1958 ten one-year preparatory schools, with a total enrollment of 343 students, were operating. Additionally, almost 200 practical nurses were enrolled in extension classes in six communities across Oklahoma. The next year the respective figures were 497 in preparatory courses and 184 in extension classes. The latter marked the first time students had been trained in a health occupation other than nursing when 514 students enrolled in nursing aides programs.

Because of the newness of the nursing program, it would remain smaller in proportion to the other divisions for some time. However, the first years were instructive to administrators of the program, allowing them to find what combinations worked best. More important, 300 trained practical nurses were instructed the first four years, helping to alleviate the serious shortage of nurses in Oklahoma.

While the addition of nurse training to vocational education was the result of congressional recognition of a problem that had been brewing for years, the demand for the second addition to occupational training arose almost overnight with the national awakening that the Soviet Union appeared to be technologically ahead of the United States. The most dramatic signal of the supposed science lag was the successful launching of the first "Sputnik" by the U.S.S.R. into outer space in early October of 1957. For the first time since World War II the United States seemed to have slipped from the leadership of the world's scientific community. It was clearly an unsatisfactory situation.

The reaction of the nation was swift. Within months of the launching of the sputnik, Congress passed the National Defense Education Act in September, 1958. This measure had manifold purposes, including the institution of federal grants and loans to individuals and universities in order to spur education in the nation. However, a major part of the bill was concerned with amending the Vocational Education Act of 1917 (Smith-Hughes Act) and with appropriating additional funds for vocational education. Fifteen million dollars were appropriated for each of the three fiscal years after June 30, 1959 on, for use in the vocational education programs of the states. The apportionment of the money was to be based on the same criteria as previous acts; however, the funds were not to be used for all areas of vocational education. The provision of the act which regulated the payment of funds to the states demanded that "funds appropriated shall be used exclusively for the training of individuals designed to fit them for useful employment as highly skilled technicians in recognized occupations requiring scientific knowledge in fields necessary for the national defense." Designation of the proper areas of technical training was left to the individual state boards of vocational education.

Specifically, the measure allowed funds to be expended on various purposes, including administration, supervision, teacher-training, purchasing equipment, and planning. Also, the states were required to fulfill several qualifications, generally, the same that had been specified for eligibility for nurse training funds. In one act the Congress had created the machinery for a nation-wide technical training program.

With characteristic celerity, the State Board of Vocational Education moved to qualify Oklahoma for federal assistance; by November, 1958, the State Plan for Technical Training had been submitted and approved,

and the first steps toward the actual creation of a working program had been taken.

According to the act, it was the responsibility of the states to determine what fields were "necessary for the national defense," and this was the first task to be accomplished. The state plan identified drafting and design, electronics, air conditioning and refrigeration technology, industrial electronics technology, electrical power technology, aircraft maintenance technology, and electronics communications technology as eligible for funding. There were to be both full-time and part-time programs offered to train and retrain skilled technicians.

The first courses in technical training were offered in 1958 on a limited basis. Only two programs were approved the initial year, one at Oklahoma State University Technical Institute and the other at Oklahoma State Tech, a vocational education branch of the university located at Okmulgee. Both of these were, of course, for post high school students who wished to either learn new skills or improve their occupational standing, and both programs offered only full-time classes. Despite the limited scope of the original operation, more than 700 students were enrolled. For 1959-1960 twelve new programs were approved by the State Board, including post high school classes at Cameron State Agricultural College at Lawton and Northeastern Oklahoma A. & M. College at Miami. High school classes were approved at Broken Arrow, Oklahoma City, Poteau, and Sayre; the last three also offered post high school training. For the second year the number of students almost doubled, totalling 1,256 for both full-time and part-time classes.

Also included in the National Defense Education Act of 1958 were provisions and funds for teacher-training for technical education. As was the case with the other divisions, technical training found it practical and advantageous to work with Oklahoma State University in technical teacher training. Therefore, in 1959 the Technical Teacher Education Department was created and staffed at the school for the purpose of producing qualified instructors for the new program. The first year there were fourteen undergraduates enrolled in this study, with thirty graduate and extension students.

Naturally, the staff of the Division of Technical Training was initially small, consisting only of the state supervisor, Roy W. Dugger. However, the operation would expand quickly and demand greater guidance and regulation.

The foundation had been laid for the growth of a new area of vocational education. It was estimated in 1958 that the nation needed 50,000 new technicians each year, by 1961 this number had doubled to 100,000 per year. From the inception of technical training there appeared to be little chance of failure. As the decade ended the new division seemed destined to limitless expansion; vocational education and the nation were entering the Space Age.

# CHAPTER VII

# THE AGE OF EXPANSION

As the 1960s began it was clear that vocational education in Oklahoma would continue to expand. From the small program in 1917 that had been administered by a director and three supervisors, the system had blossomed into a huge, multi-faceted organization demanding the attention of dozens of individuals. The size of the administrative staff in 1960 is indicative of the complexity and maturity which had been attained in four decades.

The executive officer of the hierarchy was, of course, J. B. Perky, who had sat atop vocational education like a protective giant since 1941. However, Perky was one of the few constants spanning that time period. The demands of the directorship were such that even the hard-working and determined Perky was aided by two administrative assistants, Thelma Dennis and Paul D. Bryant, and Accountant Dolores E. Hains.

Many changes had taken place in the staffs of the occupational divisions, but Perky remained as the state supervisor of agriculture. His subordinates for this position were Assistant State Supervisor Byrle Killian, District Supervisors Cleo Collins, Benton F. Thomason, Ralph R. Dreessen, and J. B. Morton. In home economics Blanche Portwood was the state supervisor, a position she had held for more than a decade. Her district supervisors were Mae Rollow, Helen Jensen, Martha Frizzell, and Nedra Johnson; Marion Hunt acted as coordinator of public relations.

Trade and industrial education and distributive education were both managed by a state supervisor and one district supervisor, H. T. Archibald and Charles R. Haraughty in trade and industrial education and M. J. DeBenning and Ted Best in distributive education. Nurse training was likewise administered by a state supervisor, Ruth E. Burris, and a district supervisor, Guila M. Aker. Larry O. Hansen had replaced Bonnie Nicholson as supervisor of veterans agriculture training and Roy W. Dugger remained as the pilot of technical training services, although he would soon leave that position.

Vocational education was beginning to strain at the confines of the Department of Education, and the expansion had barely started. Before the new decade was two years old the national legislature assured further growth by passing the Area Redevelopment Act in 1961. This measure was designed to aid in the rebirth of regions that had suffered deterioration. It was a comprehensive act which attempted to attack all the problems that were inherent in ghettos and economically deprived

areas; and Congress demonstrated its understanding of the importance of vocational education by noting that a major step toward redevelopment was the training and retraining of the unemployed. Therefore, the states were encouraged to provide vocational training in the stricken areas.

Before the vocational education system in Oklahoma could act effectively concerning the Area Redevelopment Act, the Congress broadened the scope of the measure by passing the Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962. The purpose of this measure was best expressed by the prologue which the legislators added to the final act:

> The Congress finds that there is critical need for more and better trained personnel in many vital occupational categories, including professional, scientific, technical, and apprenticeable categories; that even in periods of high unemployment, many employment opportunities remain unfilled because of the shortages of qualified personnel; and that it is in the national interest that current and prospective manpower shortages be identified and that persons who can be qualified for these positions through education and training be sought out and trained, in order that the Nation may meet the staffing requirements of the struggle for freedom.

Perhaps a stouter endorsement of vocational education has never been penned. Additionally, the legislators had determined that many of the nation's unemployed had been made jobless by economic dislocation arising from automation and other technical advancements. It was the burden of the national government to prevent the benefits of progress and automation from turning to dust. Therefore, the act provided for several programs of analysis and evaluation to determine the best means to alleviate the growing problems.

Regarding the establishment of occupational training and manpower research, the secretary of labor was authorized to make agreements with the various states. In 1963 the manpower development and training program was added to the services of the Oklahoma vocational education system. Its first supervisor was Larry O. Hansen, who had moved from the veterans agricultural training program which was phased out of vocational education.

The federal government was not finished with its additions to the responsibilities of vocational education. In December, 1963, an act was passed to "strengthen and improve the quality of vocational education and to expand the vocational education opportunities in the Nation." This was the Vocational Education Act of 1963, a comprehensive reevaluation and expansion of the national vocational education system. Included was an ambitious federal assistance appropriation, providing

$60,000,000 for fiscal 1963, $118,500,000 for fiscal 1964, $117,500,000 for 1965, the same amount for 1966, and $225,000,000 annually thereafter. These funds were to be distributed to the states according to the number of persons in the various age groups needing vocational education; the specific age groups were defined as fifteen to nineteen, twenty to twenty-four, and twenty-five to sixty-five. The minimum allocation was $10,000.

The measure did not stop at providing the much needed funds; major new additions to vocational education were accommodated--and urged. Primarily these were the creation of business and office training programs, the alteration of practical nurse training to health occupations training, and the developing of area vocational schools. Also, funds were provided for research and ancillary programs, including the appropriation of federal funds for work-study jobs for vocational education students.

Probably no federal action since the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act in 1917 created as much change in the vocational education system of Oklahoma as did the Vocational Education Act of 1963. Quickly, the leaders acted to take advantage of the federal offer, and by the summer of 1964 the increased appropriations were put to work. Although the new funds enabled all the areas to improve and expand their offerings, the greatest changes were of course in business and office, which was created under the new measure, health occupations, which was also created by the measure from practical nurse training; and area vocational schools.

On October 1, 1964, the Division of Vocational Business and Office Education was born. Victor Van Hook was the first state supervisor. Inasmuch as the division became effective after the beginning of the school year, little was accomplished regarding the instruction of occupational training. However, the remainder of the year was spent organizing the division, developing policies and procedures for implementation of the program, and disseminating information to the local high schools across the state. This foundation laid, instruction began in the fall of 1965.

The purpose of this program was to initiate students to the basic techniques of commercial management and operation and to prepare them for "employment and advancement in business and office careers." This was accomplished in two ways: cooperative office education in high schools and out-of-school youth and adult classes. The first classes in business and office were taught in twenty-nine high school level programs and thirteen out-of-school programs. The initial enrollments respectively were 744 and 310.

The second major alteration was actually the re-creation of the Division of Health Occupations. In a limited manner the training of practical nurses and nurse's aides had been in effect since the passage of the Health Amendments Act of 1956. However, as demonstrated previously this was a small operation, usually training less than 400 nurses and a similar number of aides each year. The additional funds provided by the Vocational Education Act of 1963 made possible drastic expansion of the nurse training program. The operation was suitably named the Division of Health Occupations, in line with the broader occupational training responsibilities assigned to the division.

The new division became effective in the summer of 1964. It should be noted that some of the courses and operations which were assumed by health occupations had already been established, such as the nurse preparatory school in Tulsa operated by the recently formed branch. This particular school had been created previously by funds made available by the Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962. Additionally, after the initiation of instruction in health occupations, several schools under its authority continued to receive financial assistance from the funds appropriated under the Manpower Act and the Area Redevelopment Act.

The need for nurses was still acute in Oklahoma when the program began. Federal estimates showed that the state ranked fourth from the bottom in number of registered nurses in proportion to the population, having only one nurse per 100,000 persons. Thus it was mandatory that the nurse training program be expanded -- quickly.

Three types of courses were offered in the health occupations program: preparatory nurse training in conjunction with cooperating hospitals for persons wishing to qualify for licensure as practical nurses; preparatory courses for students wishing to qualify in "sub-professional work," such as scrub technicians, medical office assistants, or nurse assistants; and extension courses for licensed practical nurses wishing to increase their competence in nursing and for nursing assistants in hospital and nursing homes wishing to receive professional training.

During the first year of operation the health occupations division ran eleven preparatory schools for practical nurse training, enrolling 437 and graduating 204. Forty-five classes were offered for nurse assistants, enrolling almost 700 students; six scrub technician programs were offered to 51 persons. The number of practical nursing programs was expanded from nine to twelve, and the number of students rose from 229 to 600.

Ruth Burris, who had been the state supervisor of the practical nurse training program, remained in that role for the Division of Health Occupations. However, the expansion of the operation necessitated ad-

ditional administrative staffing. This was accomplished by the appointment in 1965 of Yvonne Bender as assistant state supervisor of health occupations.

The final major addition under the Vocational Education Act of 1963 was the establishment of the Division of Area Vocational-Technical Schools. This move presaged a trend which would in the future become the basis for vocational education. The idea behind the area school concept was simple. To adequately provide instruction for many occupational areas, expensive and complex equipment was needed, and proper facilities were often hard to obtain in each district. Thus, it was determined that it would be easier--and more economical--to establish magnet schools or area schools which would be equipped to serve large numbers of students. Then the students would be brought to the school, rather than attempting to bring all the needed equipment to the students.

The first area school was opened in 1965 at Tulsa. The results were encouraging; of the 321 students who enrolled in the program, 309 satisfactorily completed the training. Also, during 1965 four more area schools, at Oklahoma City, Ardmore, Duncan, and Enid, were approved. The first three opened in September, 1966, and the latter opened one year later. By 1967 more than 2,000 day students and evening adult students were receiving vocational-technical training in area vocational-technical schools. To manage this promising program, Francis T. Tuttle was appointed state supervisor of the Division of Area Vocational-Technical Schools. Increased student reaction and expansion of the number of schools resulted in 1966 in the appointment of Dale Hughey as assistant state coordinator.

In 1965 the Division of Special Services was created to handle the various functions which were required in the operation of a comprehensive vocational education program but which were not properly the domain of any one of the specific occupational divisions, including the vocational work-study program, vocational education programs for persons with special needs, coordination of the related activities of the State Board of Vocational Education with other branches of the state government, coordination of all research activities, and coordination of adult vocational education. It was, in effect, the trouble shooter for unique problems and situations. Bonnie Nicholson, who had served in various capacities in vocational education for three decades, was appointed supervisor. As the operation and management of vocational education became increasingly complex, this division became vital in determining the needs and goals of the program.

The new programs were, of course, the "showcase items" of vocational education in the 1960s; however, the creation of area schools did not impede or impair the workings of the veteran divisions. They too were

on the move. Possibly, of all the divisions of occupational training vocational agriculture faced the greatest challenge in the sixties. Since the inception of vocational education in 1917 many changes had occurred in the nation and the state which affected the role and the demand for agricultural training. The largest alteration was the de-emphasization of farming among the work force of the state. At the time of the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act, a majority of the people of Oklahoma were engaged in some aspect of agriculture, and most of them lived in a rural environment. Therefore, it was natural that most young men would desire to learn the rudiments of agriculture. By the mid-sixties, the conditions had been changed drastically. No longer did the population live in the country, nor did most people survive by some connection with the soil. Simply, the total number of individuals wanting or needing training in production agriculture had decreased.

This situation was compounded by another result of the modernization of America: the marked increase in scientific and technological knowledge. In 1917 farming and farm-related work had been a relatively uncomplex business compared with the volumes of technical material which had been compiled by 1960. The bulk of the responsibility for distributing and explaining the newly acquired information fell to the vocational agriculture instructor. Thus, while the enrollment in vocational agriculture declined, settling at approximately 23,500 in 1966 and indicating on the surface that the need for instructors and programs had waned, the ever-expanding schism between the number of teachers and the time it required to adequately perform the task at hand actually demanded more people and money.

Additionally, the entrance of farming into the Space Age created the problem of obsolescence of equipment. Many schools which had once been able to handle the instruction of agriculture found that almost overnight progress had made their machinery and tools outdated. Often new techniques required new material.

Although the problems were new, vocational agriculture and its leader, J. B. Perky, knew the answer--hard work and perseverance. It is impossible to measure the success of this effort, other than to note the continued vitality of vocational agriculture--and possibly the continued expertise and acumen demonstrated by the farmers of Oklahoma.

The complexity of the era touched every branch of vocational education. The need to adjust to the demands of modern America was reflected in the expansion in the Division of Vocational Home Economics of classes which were designed not only to prepare the students for careers as homemakers but also to enable them to obtain gainful employment in occupations using home economics knowledge and skills. This service was offered to both students in the public schools and adults through full-time, part-time, and extension programs. Also during the Sixties

home economics instructors were increasingly involved with informal adult education via group and individual meetings. The usefulness and success of this measure is demonstrated in the number of people reached during the 1964-65 and 1965-66 school years. The first year slightly more than 127,000 adults were instructed informally, the next year more than 145,000 were reached.

The secret to the success of home economics during the period was, as with agriculture, hard work mixed with continued willingness to innovate and change to meet the needs of the day. Flexibility was the key word--flexibility not only regarding new programs but also toward alteration and readjustment of existing courses.

As the vocational-technical program greatly expanded and was subjected to the stress of increased needs, it became evident that much more sharing of knowledge of planning was needed between the different divisions and among the three groups: local teachers, supervisors and administration, and teacher-educators. Director Perky urged members of the various groups to bring about a more complete understanding and commitment to the total program of vocational technical education. The response by teachers, teacher educators, and supervisors was most gratifying.

Indeed, the decade of the sixties was symbolized in all branches of vocational education by change and innovation. For just as the demands on agriculture and home economics had changed with the passage of time, the needs and wants regarding trade and industrial and distributive education had altered. The former division shared the problem of obsolescence brought on by progress with agriculture. However, this and other difficulties could not slow the expansion and development of trade and industrial education because of the increasing demand for its students. Just as this area had grown through the previous decade, it continued to expand. By 1966 the number of students enrolled in both day and evening courses was approaching 20,000, almost doubling each ten-year period.

Although enrollments in distributive education did not increase, methods to better serve the people of Oklahoma were developed. This was done by re-evaluating classes and programs and by offering new courses in needed subjects. Indicative of the attitude of the individuals involved with distributive education--and all vocational education in Oklahoma--was the assertion by State Supervisor DeBenning in 1966, "An earnest effort was made to see that each DE student learner was placed in a distributive training station which would provide the type of environment most conducive to his happiness and success." Failure is difficult with such dedication.

The period between 1960 and 1967 was one of accomplishment and

expansion. Not only had vocational education in Oklahoma maintained the high standards which had become its trademark, but also the addition of business and office, the area vocational-technical schools, and the expansion of health occupations had made it possible to reach many more people. The most precise statement of the achievements came from the pen of the Director, J. B. Perky, who wrote in 1966:

> Vocational education is an integral part of the complete education which all persons should secure. It makes a contribution to this complete education, particularly to the development of good citizens, including their health, social, civil, cultural, and economic interests.

# CHAPTER VIII

## AN END AND A BEGINNING

Since 1941 J. B. Perky had dominated vocational education in Oklahoma, and he had also made his presence felt nationally, serving as an officer of the America Vocational Associaton, as a member of congressional advisory committees, and as a leader in the profession. In 1967, after forty-four years in vocational education and twenty-six as its director, Jim Perky retired, passing on the mantle of responsibility and authority which he had worn so well.

Strong men such as Perky are often unaware of the impact they have had on others, forgetting that a few words of praise or of criticism can leave a subordinate elated or ashamed. Everyone who knew Perky respected him, it was impossible not to feel the vitality and force of the man. And many feared him, for the six-foot-six giant could invoke terror when angered. However, there was the human, common side which more frequently surfaced.

William W. Stevenson, now the assistant state director for research, planning, and evaluation for vocational-technical education in Oklahoma, recalls one incident of Perky's kindness--of Perky's willingness to help others. The situation was a mid-winter conference at the technical school at Okmulgee. After the meeting, Stevenson, who was then a vocational agriculture instructor, left the hotel only to find that the streets had become iced, and that his car, which was parked on an incline, would not move. As the frustrated driver spun his wheels Perky happened by, asking, "Won't your car go?"

"No, sir, it doesn't seem to," came the answer from Stevenson, whose unhappiness had been compounded by the appearance of the legendary figure.

Perky, undaunted as usual, replied, "Well, I'll help you."

Stevenson, still amazed by the turn of events, remembers, "There he was, pushing the car and I was backing it up--you know, now there's a big man."

Like Stevenson, everyone involved in vocational education owes Perky a debt of gratitude. Determined, forceful, and sometimes tyrannical, Perky shaped and molded the success of vocational education in Oklahoma. Three years after his retirement, on September 8, 1970, the giant passed away, assured of the continued growth and development of the organization to which he had devoted his life.

Although the retirement of Perky left a great gap in the entire organization of vocational education, it was left to those who had trained and assisted to carry on the fight for occupational instruction. The greatest burden fell on the capable shoulders of Francis T. Tuttle, who had previously been the state supervisor of the area vocational-technical schools; Tuttle became the new director of vocational education. To fill Perky's other position, state supervisor of vocational agriculture, Byrle Killian, his long-time assistant and friend, was selected.

There was little time to survey the task at hand before the job was compounded. Less than a year after Perky stepped down, the Congress of the United States approved the Vocational Education Amendments of 1968, altering the Vocational Education Act of 1963 in order to assist the states:

> ...to maintain, extend, and improve existing programs of vocational education, to develop new programs of vocational education, and to provide part-time employment for youths who need the earnings from such employment to continue the vocational training on a full-time basis, so that persons of all ages in all communities of the States--those in high school, those who have completed or discontinued their formal education and are preparing to enter the labor market, those who have already entered the labor market but need to upgrade their skills or learn new ones, those with special educational handicaps, and those in postsecondary schools--will have ready access to vocational training or retraining which is of high quality, which is realistic in the light of actual or anticipated opportunities for gainful employment, and which is suited to their needs, interests, and ability to benefit from such training.

Thus came the comprehensive capstone to federal aid to vocational education. Not only would the government help each person to receive adequate training, but also it would assist in determining what training would lead to useful and profitable employment. To finance this program the Congress appropriated $335,500,000 for the first fiscal year, beginning July 1, 1969, $565,000,000 for the next year, $675,000,000 for the next two years, and $565,000,000 for the succeeding years. The allotment of the funds to the states was to be the same as by the Act of 1963, according to the ratio of persons in the various age groups.

The first new provision under the "Amendments" was the creation of national and state advisory councils for vocational education. The national council, which was to be appointed by the president, consisted of twenty-one members possessing expertise in the various areas which related to vocational education. This council was to act as the regulatory agency over the programs initiated by the measure. Additionally, any

states which wished to receive federal funds were required to develop individual advisory councils, consisting of an undetermined number of persons with experience in each of the affected areas, to advise the state board on vocational education, evaluate programs, and compose and submit annual reports to the national council. The state councils were to be appointed by the governors of the individual states.

Regarding the occupational divisions, the area vocational-technical schools were given the greatest boost by this measure; $40,000,000 of the first two annual appropriations were set aside for further development of these schools and the construction of new schools. Funds were provided for all areas under general provisions for vocational education for high school students, students who had left school, and individuals who were already in the labor market but needed additional training. Specifically, funds were provided for vocational guidance and counseling, curriculum development, residential vocational schools, consumer and homemaking education in economically depressed areas, cooperative vocational education programs to allow the states to reimburse employers for on-the-job training, additional work-study programs, leadership development programs, teacher-training, and administration. The states were admonished to create facilities which would evaluate "vocational education programs and services in light of information regarding current and projected manpower needs and job opportunities."

To assure the success of the effort to determine what contemporary and long-range occupational needs and job opportunities were, ten percent of the funds available to each state was marked for use in research and evaluation projects. The importance of this provision cannot be overstated. It allowed the state vocational education systems to cease operating "by the seats of their pants" and to begin analytical and comprehensive programs to meet the needs of the people.

The alterations brought on by the congressional action were welcomed by the leaders of vocational education in Oklahoma. However, before action could be taken to take advantage of the new opportunities and to satisfy the federal requirements, the state government also provided for changes. Since 1929 vocational education had been a regular division of the State Department of Education, and since 1941 the State Board of Education had acted in the dual role as the State Board of Vocational Education; however, the growing size and importance of vocational education in Oklahoma demanded in 1968 a more efficient and streamlined administration. Therefore, on July 1, 1968, vocational education was separated from the Department of Education, and the State Department of Vocational and Technical Education was created. Also, the State Board of Vocational and Technical Education was authorized. Vocational and technical education had become an autonomous entity. Close ties with the Department of Education were assured with the

stipulation that the state superintendent of public instruction serve as chairman of the State Board of Vocational Education.

After the implementation of the new provisions the administration of vocational education and its various branches was considerably altered. First, the new governing board consisted of D. D. Creech, president; M. C. Collum, secretary, and members, Harry C. Shackleford, Otto Thompson, Charles C. Mason, J. Don Garrison, Glenn Yahn, Mrs. N. B. Musselman, Tom Vanderslice, Clyde Ford, Ernest Prudhom, Oliver S. Wilham, Stan Ullmer, and Joe Robinson.

The actual administration was Director Francis T. Tuttle, who also acted as the executive member of the state board, Assistant Director Arch B. Alexander, and Assistant Director Bryle Killian. This group was located at the central offices of vocational and technical education in Stillwater.

At this time the state supervisors of the eleven divisions of the department were Byrle Killian, vocational agriculture; John Talbott, technical education; Roy Ayres, trade and industrial education; M. J. DeBenning, distributive education; Victor Van Hook, business and office; Clara Brentlinger, who had recently replaced Ruth Burris in health occupations; Blanche Portwood, home economics; Larry O. Hansen, finance; Dale A. Hughey, area vocational-technical schools; Hugh Lacy, manpower development and training; Ronald Meek, supervisor of curriculum and adult education; Olen Joyner, coordinator of industrial and technical services; and Bill Stevenson, director of the research coordinating unit.

With the administrative and organizational changes completed the vocational-technical education program in Oklahoma could attack the challenges which had been offered by the Amendments of 1968. One of the areas of drastic and noticeable progress was the division of area vocational-technical schools. When the new law was promulgated eight schools were either in operation or had been approved for opening. Immediately planning was begun for expansion of the program. By 1975 nineteen area schools had been opened with two more approaching completion. Additionally, adult training centers were added to the offerings of the department to provide vocational training to every level of society.

Another major accomplishment made possible by the funds provided by the measure in 1968 was the creation of a comprehensive research program. Occupational Training Information System (OTIS) was created by the Manpower Research and Training Center at Oklahoma State University, through the aid and assistance originally of the Industrial Development and Park Department of the state of Oklahoma. It was initiated in 1968 and since its inception the State Department of

Vocational and Technical Education has relied heavily on the data contained in the annual reports. Because of the importance of OTIS to vocational and technical education and because the State Department was one of the primary financial supporters of the system, the entire operation was turned over to the Division of Research, Planning, and Evaluation when that branch was created in 1970.

Overall, the new funds supplied by the congressional action in 1968 allowed vocational education in Oklahoma to progress and expand. However, it was not the policy of the leaders of the program to simply wait for the national government to buy advancement, and a self-initiated alteration of the management and administration of vocational education in the state was begun in 1969.

The first step toward a more efficient and streamlined organization was the creation of the Division of Research, Planning, and Evaluation. The purpose of this branch was to ensure the smooth running of vocational and technical education by attempting to determine what was needed for the future as demonstrated by OTIS, to define how to meet those needs, and to find if the actual operation was apropos for the present. William Stevenson, long time vocational agriculture teacher and more recently director of the Research Coordinating Unit, was appointed to head the new division. Actually, this new branch was the expansion of the research coordinating unit.

Under the leadership of Francis Tuttle the reorganization continued until the configuration of the State Department of Vocational and Technical Education was a model of administrative effectiveness. Or as Assistant Director Stevenson asserted, "I think at that time we really began . . . to systematize the delivery of vocational education." The result of Tuttle's alterations was an administrative set-up that allowed constant supervision, exchange of information, and cooperation, splitting the department into six interwoven divisions: business, finance and manpower training; area vocational-technical schools; research, planning, and evaluation; educational services, which included the individual instructional programs; and administration and special services.

The new director was not satisfied with simply retooling the workings of his operation. The Amendments of 1968 also provided federal funds for the training and development of vocational education personnel in order to improve the effectiveness of each individual, from the director to the teachers. The provision was "to provide opportunities for experienced vocational educators to spend full-time in advanced study of vocational education. . . ." As part of the overall upgrading of the vocational and technical system of the state, the Professional and Personnel Development Council was created to establish priorities and systems to insure the continued excellence of the training which was delivered to the people of Oklahoma.

This measure and others were designed to maintain the vitality of the vocational education program of the state. Any organization which stops innovating and looking for better methods of accomplishing its tasks will soon stagnate. The federal government broadened its support through additional educational amendments in 1972 providing for the expansion of post-secondary occupational education and the establishment of the Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education. In 1974 after recognizing the need of many Americans, bilingual vocational education was mandated. These additional federal funds, supplemented by local and state monies, have fostered the provision of the best possible vocational and technical education available. This has meant continued evaluation of programs, continued dissatisfaction with partial success, and adamant distain for failure.

As a result of this policy the administration of the State Department of Vocational and Technical Education has changed frequently. In 1975 the organization and personnel had been altered from the configuration of 1973. Francis Tuttle remained as the director, with Arch B. Alexander the deputy director of Supportive and Administrative Services. There were three assistant directors; Byrle Killian, Educational Services and Special Programs; Larry Hansen, Area Schools and Manpower Training; and William W. Stevenson, Research, Planning, and Evaluation.

Through the four divisions--Supportive and Administrative Services; Educational Services and Special Education; Research, Planning, and Evaluation; and Area Schools and Manpower Training--the entire process of delivering vocational and technical education flows. Education is the practice of taking ideas and needs, mixing them together, studying the possibilities, establishing the methods, and providing the product to the student. From the State Board of Vocational and Technical Education, through the director, via the various divisions, this process takes place. It is a successful system, but if a better way exists, the system will be changed and improved.

# CHAPTER IX

# THE HEART OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

The key to any successful educational experience is to give the students a sense of belonging, of mission, and of contribution. In no other area of education has this been developed more perfectly than in vocational education; for the student associations which accompany each of the divisions have fulfilled this purpose--and more. Youth organizations have been the motivation--the heart of vocational education.

Presently, each of the various occupational areas has a youth organization; however, when vocational education first began in Oklahoma after the passage of the Smith-Hughes Act such organizations did not exist. They, like the educational system which they support and complement, had to be evolved and molded by hard work and dedication.

Because of the nature of vocational agriculture and home economics, which relied heavily on home projects and out-of-the-classroom cooperation among the students and teachers, these branches were the first to develop student associations. They began as local and state groups which eventually evolved into nationally chartered associations.

The movement toward the creation of the Future Farmers of America began, of course, with the organization of vocational agriculture programs in Oklahoma. At first, vocational agriculture students joined with 4-H members, who shared similar interests. However, by 1924 there was definite impetus to segregate agriculture students. This culminated at the Oklahoma City State Fair that year in meetings and discussions only for "vo-ag" students. Because of the camaraderie and high spirits among the participants and general success of the meetings, similar affairs were held the next year.

As the number of students in vocational agriculture increased, it became evident that there was a need for some type of permanent organization for those interested in agriculture. The result was the formation in 1926 of the Farm Boys' Country Life Achievement Club, a precusor of the Future Farmers of America. The original officers of this organization were Webster Allen of Maramac, president; Charles Gardener of Quilan, vice-president; and Oral Reese of Union City, secretary. This club was designated for the leaders of the vocational agriculture programs in the state, and only those "who had demonstrated achievement and accomplishment" were included. Soon numerous chapters of the Achievement Club, known as "Aggie Clubs" or "Smith-Hughes Pig Clubs," sprang up across the state, including Tulsa, Humphrey, and Collinsville.

After the creation of the Farm Boys' Country Life Achievement Club in Oklahoma, it was natural that a more formal group would soon follow. In May, 1927, a group of students and their instructors organized the Future Farmers of Oklahoma while attending the annual interscholastic league meet at Oklahoma A. & M. College in Stillwater. The new organization was founded with fifteen member chapters, including the groups which had been centers of the Achievement Club. Five other schools were represented at the first meeting and were granted chapter status within a year.

Little was done at the first meeting other than the election of officers, including President Ralph Runnells of Claremore, Vice President Richard Sallee of Collins, Secretary Edward Miller of Fargo, Treasurer Wilbur Kent of Nash, and Reporter Roy Craig of Leedey. An executive committee, comprised of Quincy Johnson of Fargo, Roy Martin of Greenfield, and Harold McAlfresh of Vera, was also appointed.

Later in the year, at the Tulsa State Fair, the officers and some 100 representatives met again to finish the work which had not been completed in Stillwater. There the members voted to create annual dues of ten cents per member and to send delegates to the Future Farmers of America national convention in St. Louis. With aid of the railroad companies in the state, which provided free trips to the meeting for the leaders from the various chapters, approximately 100 boys represented Oklahoma at the convention.

After the successful participation of the delegation from Oklahoma at the convention of the Future Farmers of America, it was only a matter of time before the state organization applied for membership in the national association. This was done in mid-1928, and on December 20, 1928, the Future Farmers of Oklahoma officially became the Oklahoma branch of the Future Farmers of America, receiving Charter No. 7.

As the oldest of the national student associations the Future Farmers of America in Oklahoma led the way for other groups. Problems which confronted the agriculturalists were challenged and overcome, and the experience gained was passed on to the other organizations.

After obtaining national status, the Future Farmers of the state set out to make their organization viable and respected. Childhood is never easy for any organization, and the Future Farmers were not immune to the normal "growing pains." However, each challenge was met with the same determination and dedication which was characteristic of vocational education in Oklahoma. No doubt the early years would have been much more worrisome and trying without the professional leaders of vocational agriculture, especially Charles Briles, E. B. Nelms, Floyd Ross, and, of course, J. B. Perky, who throughout his career held FFA near to his heart. Hardship only serves to harden the bonds of fellow-

ship, and the period between 1928 and 1940 is indicative of this axiom. From the students who made up FFA, to the teachers, up to Perky, who was the state advisor of the Future Farmers of America, each person was inspired to achievement.

For the Future Farmers to be successful, it was mandatory that they have public support; therefore, from the beginning it was the policy of the leaders to make information concerning the activities of the organization available to the press. And the newsmen were accommodating, realizing the importance of the organization not only to the boys involved but also to the future of the state.

A major difficulty of the association in the formative era was the alliance with the 4-H Club. This was particularly a problem at meetings where the Future Farmers wished to enter competition. Often they were forced to enter as 4-H members rather than FFA members. This situation was finally resolved when Perky and other leaders laid out the policy that if members could not enter under their own organization's banner, they would not participate. After the Future Farmers continually demonstrated that they were viable competition in most contests, the regulations were altered to allow entrance under the auspices of FFA. This problem is only one instance of the difficulties which the association faced during its early years, the time during which it was "the new kid on the block."

It was always a primary purpose of the association to spur its members to excellence. This was done by participation in competition between the various chapters and with other groups and by establishing leadership awards. Such was the Master Junior Farmer designation, which was reserved for the top two percent of the members of vocational agriculture students in the state. The success of the program is indicated by the fact that the members from Oklahoma have received the highest ratio per capita of American Farmer degrees, the most prestigious recognition which the national association can give, of any state in the Union.

Like the Future Farmers of America the second oldest student association in Oklahoma, the Future Homemakers of America, was the offspring of independent local organizations which were formed in the state. Immediately after the passage of the Smith -Hughes Act and the initiation of home economics programs in the schools of Oklahoma, the students involved created local clubs. Various names were adopted, including Homemaking Circles and Student Homemakers. However, it was not until 1937 that the Future Homemakers of Oklahoma was officially declared a state-wide organization. Before this the several clubs either operated independently or were affiliated with the American Home Economics Association, a national group which was formed in 1926. At the creation of the FHO there were 101 chapters in the state, totalling more than 3,500 members.

The purposes of the Future Homemakers of Oklahoma were similar to its forerunner, to create an atmosphere of friendship and cooperation among the members and to demonstrate to the public the accomplishments that were made in vocational home economics.

For seven years the Future Homemakers of Oklahoma operated independently of any national organization, reaching a maximum number of members in 1941 of more than 8,500. The success of Future Homemakers in Oklahoma and other states resulted in 1944 in the organization of the Future Homemakers of America, a national association corresponding to the Future Farmers of America. In August of that year the state clubs were affiliated with the national group and became the Oklahoma Association of Future Homemakers of America.

Without question one of the most important activities of the Future Farmers and Future Homemakers was their contribution to America's war effort during the Second World War. It had always been a goal of the groups to serve others and during the conflict they were able to fulfill this purpose nobly. The aid to the war effort came in many ways. As the war began in 1941, the Future Farmers started their program by holding war bond drives; planting victory gardens; repairing machinery; collecting scrap iron, rubber, and paper; and assisting in the collection of burlap bags, as well as various other specific assignments that were given by the Navy Relief Drive or the Red Cross. While continuing the normal activities of the association, which included in 1941 winning first prizes in several events at the American Royal Livestock Show in Kansas City, Missouri, the young men planted more than 7,000 gardens, repaired more than 7,000 machines, increasing their value by more than $100,000; purchased more than $90,000 worth of war bonds and stamps; and collected 3,205 tons of scrap iron, 34 tons of scrap rubber, and 176 tons of scrap paper.

The young women of FHA were equally ambitious. Just as the Future Farmers had collected usable materials in their areas, the Homemakers searched the countryside for discarded iron and rubber which would ease the shortages created by the war. During 1941 and 1942 every member of the local chapters purchased war bonds and stamps.

By the end of the war both groups had drastically eased the hardships which had been brought on by the conflict, collecting millions of pounds of scrap material, purchasing more than $2,000,000 worth of bonds and stamps, and giving assistance to anyone in need. However, the public services did not end when the fighting stopped, just as they had not begun with the war. Continually--until the present--the members of both organizations have been ready to help whenever the need arises.

During the last thirty years, the Future Farmers of America and the Future Homemakers of America have been joined by four more student

associations: the Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA), the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), the Vocational Industrial Clubs of America (VICA), and Oklahoma Health Occupations Student Organization (OHOSO). DECA was the third student organization to be formed in the state.

The actual formation of the Distributive Education Clubs of America came about in 1947 at the first national convention, held in Memphis, Tennessee. However, in Oklahoma local distributive education classes had formed clubs, usually called "D. E. Clubs" almost since the introduction of this area into vocational education in the state. The Association of Oklahoma Distributors Clubs was officially organized in 1943 as a state-wide body, making Oklahoma one of the first states to possess such an association. An example of the strength of the club was the publication of the national organization, *The Distributor*, in Oklahoma during the late 1940s.

The fourth youth organization chartered nationally in Oklahoma was the Future Business Leaders of America, FBLA. Although the Division of Vocational Education did not possess a branch of business education at the time, this association was chartered in the state in 1954 for college-age students. From that time until the creation of the Division of Business and Office Education, the organization was sponsored by the schools of business at Oklahoma State University and Oklahoma University. In 1965 the sponsorship of the Future Business Leaders of America was assumed by the Division of Business and Office Education. The introduction of FBLA into the vocational education system of the state spurred its growth radically. By 1966 the membership had almost tripled and the number of chapters in the state had doubled. That year the success of the state organization was signaled by the election of one of its members, Joe Edwards of Oklahoma City, as the national president of the Future Business Leaders of America.

Although trade and industrial education was one of the original areas established in Oklahoma it was not until 1965 that the Vocational Industrial Clubs of America was nationally chartered in the state. But this was not the beginning of youth associations in Oklahoma. Since 1935 various high school programs had sponsored "T&I Clubs." When the national organization was formed Oklahoma became one of the fourteen original members. The acceptance of the new association was indicated by the increase in membership during the first two years, growing from 1,970 to 2,247.

The final student organization, Oklahoma Health Occupations Student Organization, is still in its infancy and remains chartered in the state. The first organizational meeting was held in October of 1974. Although the association has been in existence less than three years national affiliation appears near, and continued growth with the division is certain.

The importance of the student youth organizations cannot be overstated. They are what makes vocational and technical education unique and alive. They urge the members to be better than they are. As the *Handbook for Officers of the Future Business Leaders* loudly asserts, "Leadership isn't a mystical trait that one individual has and another has not. It is learned behavior that anyone can improve by study and application. You can become a leader if you have the determination to develop the abilities that make a leader."

# CHAPTER X

# TODAY AND TOMORROW

Today, the State Department of Vocational and Technical Education of the state of Oklahoma is one of the most advanced and progressive educational bodies in the nation. Since 1917 when vocational education began in Oklahoma it has been blessed with gifted leaders, dedicated instructors, and willing students. Its record of achievement stands unsurpassed by any other state in the Union; the accomplishments of its leaders and students are legion. Its history is filled with years and decades of service to the people of Oklahoma.

Looking backward with pride and satisfaction would be easy, but the people who make up vocational education in the state have never been--and probably never will be--satisfied. Vocational education was born only a decade after statehood in Oklahoma and the ambition and drive which has characterized the people of the state has spilled over into vocational education. J. B. Perky's admonition to the teachers of vocational agriculture--to think not of what they had accomplished but of what they had not accomplished--is symbolic. Change and development were indicative of Perky's leadership; a constant searching for perfection was the mission.

This attitude did not retire with Perky. Under the leadership of Francis Tuttle vocational education has moved forward, developing new programs, such as the expansion of the area vocational-technical schools. Certainly, the constant search goes on.