

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS
IN DICKINSON COUNTY, KANSAS

by 680

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
PURPOSE	1
PROCEDURES	1
Research Design	1
Sources of Information	2
DICKINSON COUNTY	3
Geography	3
Early History	4
DICKINSON COUNTY SCHOOLS - EARLY HISTORY	10
District Number 1	10
Abilene	12
Herington	15
Hope	17
Solomon	17
Woodbine	18
RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS	19
School Buildings	20
School Furnishings	23
Early Teachers	24
DICKINSON COUNTY HIGH SCHOOLS	27

	PAGE
CONSOLIDATION	31
The Period of Waiting	31
The Period of Action	44
Unification	49
CONCLUSION	53
BIBLIOGRAPHY	55
APPENDIX	58

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
I. Organization, Consolidation and Unification of Dickinson County Schools	35
II. Consolidation of Dickinson County Schools to 1966	46
III. Unification of Dickinson County Schools	51

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	PAGE
1. Map of Dickinson County, Kansas	9
2. Unified School Districts of Dickinson County	52

PURPOSE

The purpose of this study was to trace the development of public school systems in Dickinson County, Kansas. The author, in so doing, tried to analyze the causes which led to the consolidation of the numerous school districts which existed in the county at the beginning of the twentieth century. The assumption was made that what happened in the development of the educational institutions of this county was in some way typical of what has taken place in the rest of the state, and that this knowledge would be useful in understanding the direction our educational system has taken.

PROCEDURES

Research Design

The basic research design used was an historical study of the development of the school systems in Dickinson County, Kansas. For the purpose of clearly demonstrating these trends, the report was divided into two major parts. The first was designed to trace the establishment of all

public school districts in the county. The second part of the report examined the consolidation of these districts.

Sources of Information

Much of the information used in this report came from the files of the County Superintendent of Public Instruction, and had never been published. The material for the years prior to 1882 came from the files of the Dickinson County Historical Society. A fire in that year which destroyed the county courthouse, also destroyed the records in the office of the county superintendent. Since that time, the individual histories of many of the early school districts have been written for the Historical Society and are on file there. This report relies heavily on those largely anonymous chronicles for its information on schools prior to 1882.

After 1882, the record of Official Acts of the County Superintendent of Public Instruction is available, and provides much of the pertinent information on the period when most of the school district consolidation took place.

Newspaper reports, particularly those dealing with school reunions, also provide valuable information on the early days of school history in the county.

In some cases, the only information available on pioneer school districts came from the remembrances of people who were there and told their story many years later. While the intervening years may have dulled their memories somewhat, some of these reminiscences have been included, in order that a more complete history may be obtained, and in order to catch the flavor of the period.

DICKINSON COUNTY

Geography

Dickinson County is located in north-central Kansas, in that part of the Great Plains, which, before the coming of the white man, was the home of vast herds of bison. The only distinguishing features of the landscape were the trees along the waterways which crossed the vast seas of grassland. The most distinctive of these water routes which lie within the county is the Smoky Hill River. It cuts across the county from west to east, dividing it

almost exactly in half. The remainder of the streams in the county are feeder streams of the Smoky Hill, coming into it from the north and south. The principal tributaries on the south side of the Smoky Hill, from west to east, are: Holland Creek, Turkey Creek, and Lyons Creek. The main northern tributaries, west to east, are: Mud Creek and Chapman Creek. These streams played an important role in the early history of Dickinson County, since most of the settlers tended to homestead in their bottomlands. The viewpoint of the Great Plains as the Great American Desert was still prevalent, since most of the early settlers believed the grassy uplands were incapable of supporting any domestic crops.¹

Early History

According to the historical records, the first white settlers, a family named Lenon, in what is now Dickinson County, moved into the Chapman Creek area in 1855. At

¹"Dickinson County History" (Abilene, Kansas: Dickinson County Historical Society, 1882), (Mimeographed.)

that time, the area was a part of Davis County (the name has since been changed to Geary County). During the following two years, other families moved into the area, settling along the Smoky Hill River and Lyons Creek.

In 1857, the western part of Davis County was detached by Governor Denver, the territorial governor, and organized as a separate county. It was named Dickinson County after Senator Daniel Dickinson of New York, who had gained minor fame at the time as a Republican abolitionist. At the time of its organization, there were six families living in the county.

The first town plat in the county, Newport, was also laid out in 1857. Although there was only one family living there at the time, it was designated as the county seat by the territorial governor. By 1858, there were enough people living in the county that the governor could appoint the first County Commissioners. They were: William Lamb, James Long, and William Mulhagen. At their first meeting, they appointed other officers, including William Frost as the first superintendent of Public Instruction, although, at the time, there were no schools located anywhere in the county.

In 1861, Kansas became a state, and a spirited contest developed between four communities for the honor of becoming the official county seat. An election was held to decide the outcome, with the winner assured of continued growth. The contestants were Newbern, which had the advantage of being the territorial county seat, Smoky Hill (Detroit), Union City, and Abilene. Union City also had an advantage, since it was the only one of the contenders located south of the Smoky Hill River, and enjoyed the united support of the settlers in that area. The backers of Abilene were finally able to unite enough support north of the river to win the election for their community. At the time, there were 378 people in the county.

Between 1860 and 1865, drought, a problem which was to plague the county throughout its history, struck Dickinson County, and increased settlement was severely inhibited during that period.

Many townsites were laid out in the county during the first thirty years of its history, but only a relative few were ever developed to the point where their population was large enough for them to become incorporated. In many

cases, those that grew owed their progress to some source outside their direct control, such as railroad routes. Towns such as Chapman, Detroit, Abilene, and Solomon each found themselves somewhat notorious during the late 1860's as the end of the line of the Kansas Pacific Railroad, later the Union Pacific. As such, they were the object of the famous cattle drives which have left such a romantic impact on our western history.

Later railroads insured the success, or at least slowed the demise of other towns in the county. The Rock Island railroad passed through Herington, Woodbine and Enterprise. The Missouri Pacific served Herington, Hope, Elmo, and Carlton. The Santa Fe touched Hope, Navarre, Enterprise, Talmage, and Manchester. So pervasive was the influence of the railroad, that no incorporated town survived which was not served by at least one of the above mentioned lines. Abilene, which was served by three railroads, the Union Pacific, the Santa Fe, and the Rock Island, and had the advantage of being the county seat, quickly became the largest city in the county.

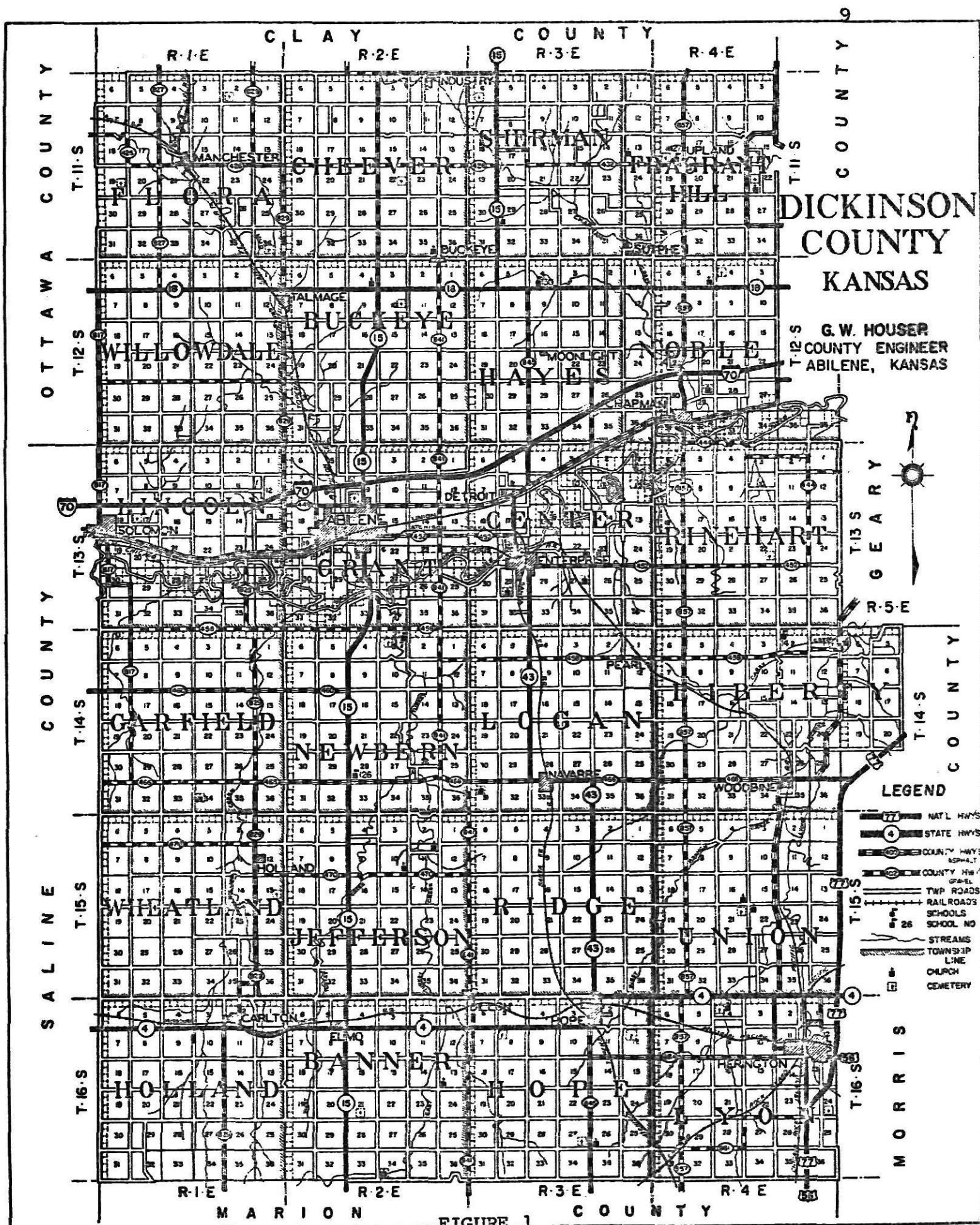
The most common unit of local government in both New England and the western part of the United States was

the township, and Dickinson County was no exception. There were eventually twenty-four townships set up in the county, although the first was not established until 1867. The names of these townships, with their dates of establishment were:

Grant	1867	Jefferson	1873
Lincoln	1867	Liberty	1873
Newbern	1867	Noble	1873
Sherman	1867	Banner	1877
Union	1867	Hayes	1877
Hope	1872	Logan	1877
Ridge	1872	Wheatland	1878
Willowdale	1872	Flora	1879
Buckeye	1873	Fragrant Hill	1880
Center	1873	Garfield	1882
Cheever	1873	Rinehart	1882
Holland	1873	Lyon	1886

Throughout this report, these townships were used to locate various towns and school districts. The location of the townships within the county may be found in Figure 1.

At least one common factor seemed to characterize the early settlers of Dickinson County. As soon as there were enough of them gathered together within five miles of a central point, they banded together to set up a school district. It is with the establishment of these school



MAP OF DICKINSON COUNTY, KANSAS

districts, and their consolidation and eventual unification that the remainder of this report is concerned.²

DICKINSON COUNTY SCHOOLS - EARLY HISTORY

District Number 1

The first school sessions in Dickinson County were held in what is now the town of Detroit in 1860. This early schooling was paid for with tuition by the parents of the children involved.³

During the following ten years, a number of schools were opened in the county, although no formal school districts with power of taxation were apparently established until 1867 with the formation of District Number 16 at Enterprise. It appears that during those early days, numbers were not assigned to school districts on the basis of their dates of organization, but were rather made on the basis of when school sessions were held in the district.

²Ibid.

³Florence Hatfield, "Dickinson County Schools" (Abilene, Kansas: Dickinson County Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1968), p. 16.

The honor of being District Number 1 went to Lyons, located on Lyons Creek in Liberty Township, where school sessions were held in the German Methodist Church, perhaps as early as 1859, but surely in the winter session of 1860. A separate building to house the school was built in 1868 with the cost being listed as 424 dollars. In 1869, the district was formally organized as Lyons Common School District Number 1. Early records indicate that there were two terms of school held each year during the early years of the district, one in the summer for two months and one in the winter for three months. It was also noted that during the spring months each year as late as 1890, the school grounds were used as a campsite by Indians on their annual migration northward.

The largest enrollment ever attained by the district was 89 pupils in the 1898-1899 school term. The school district continued in operation until 1954 when it was disorganized and its territory divided between District Number 32 at Woodbine and District Number 14 at Stony Point.⁴

⁴Esther Lower, Abilene Reflector, May 24, 1938.

Abilene

Of all the school districts formed in Dickinson County prior to 1900, only seven retained their original identity at the time of statewide unification in 1966. The oldest school district in the county in terms of continuous existence was Abilene District Number 5, which was organized in 1869, and was not disorganized until the School Unification Act took effect in 1966. There existed a school in Abilene at least as early as 1866, when a Jesse Nicolay reported that he attended school in a twelve foot by twelve foot log cabin with a dirt roof and a dirt floor, taught by a Miss Allingham.

In 1869, the year it was formally organized as District Number 5, a small stone structure was built on the south side of the tracks at a cost of 2500 dollars. It was later remodelled into a residence and still stands at the corner of Southwest Second and Mulberry streets in Abilene.⁵

A Mr. W. Fancher was placed in charge of the Abilene schools at this time and he resigned after a stay of two years, mainly because of a rowdy group of boys, whose

⁵Hatfield, op. cit., p. 17.

propensity for fighting teachers caused them all to resign after one term. This situation, typical of many early schools, prevailed until 1875, when A. V. Jewett of Valley Falls became Superintendent of Schools and somehow quelled the disturbances, and stayed on the job for the next fourteen years.⁶

In 1874, a four room school, known as the Central building, was erected north of the tracks at the site of the present Garfield School. In 1881, growing community needs made it necessary to build a four room, 25,000 dollar addition to this structure. In 1885, two additional schools were constructed, a brick structure on South Buckeye and a frame building on the west side. In 1886, another frame school house was built in the northeast part of town, and rooms were rented in the J. F. Augustine building, and the A. M. E. Church to provide space for the rapidly growing school population.

⁶E. L. Fiedler, "History of Public Schools of Abilene, Kansas", (Unpublished report, Dickinson County Historical Society, Abilene, Kansas, 1962), p. 1.

Between 1887 and 1895, hard times fell on Abilene. Between the drought which struck all of the northern plains during this period, and the opening of the Indian Territory in Oklahoma, the population of Abilene declined from 6,000 people to 3,400. This population decline necessitated the closing of the frame school houses in the northeast part of town and on the west side.

In 1895, the name of the Central School was changed to Garfield, and the South Side school to Lincoln, in honor of two of our martyred Presidents, a practice that was followed in the naming of all the subsequent elementary schools in Abilene. The Lincoln school became somewhat of a landmark in later years, since it provided the early schooling of the thirty-fourth President of the United States, Dwight David Eisenhower.

In 1905, part of the proceeds of a 35,000 dollar bond sale were used to build the McKinley school on the west side. In 1914, fire destroyed the Lincoln building and a new school was built on the same site.⁷

⁷Ibid., pp. 2-4.

No new elementary schools were then built in Abilene until 1942, when the old Garfield building was torn down, and a new 100,000 dollar building of the same name was erected on the site.⁸ In 1965, the newest of Abilene's elementary schools was completed and named Kennedy after our recently martyred President, John F. Kennedy.⁹

Herington

Herington was to become the second largest town in Dickinson County. The town was established in 1885 by M. A. Herington, a Chicago businessman, who came west to supervise his investment in Kansas land. He insured the growth of the town which bore his name by inducing the Rock Island Railroad to pass through the tiny frontier village.

Lyon School District Number 113 had been established in the area which later became Herington in 1884. The name of the district was later changed, so that it was the same as the town name. The first school in Herington was taught

⁸The Abilene Daily Reflector, June 26, 1942.

⁹The Abilene Daily Chronicle, September 1, 1965.

in 1887 by Clara Williams, who later served as high school principal in the town. School was held in a frame house the first year but the building quickly became insufficient for the purpose.

In 1888, a school building was built on the hill at the east edge of town. Once again, the name of Lincoln was given to a school building to honor the former President. By the year 1903, the population of the town west of the Rock Island tracks had grown so rapidly that another school building was erected on that side of town and given the name McKinley. In 1906, Washington grade school was constructed on the north side of town. With the exception of an addition to McKinley grade school in 1923, those three schools were to serve the elementary school needs of the community until 1956, when a modern structure named Herington Elementary School was built.¹⁰ Lincoln and Washington grade schools were razed, and the McKinley building was converted into a church.

¹⁰"Early Herington Schools" (Abilene, Kansas: Dickinson County Historical Society).

Hope

The town of Hope was located eight miles west of Herington in Hope township. Hope School District Number 100 was organized in 1880, with the first school being located in a frame house on the north edge of town. By 1886, the building had become inadequate for the needs of the town, and the school was moved downtown to the vacated Welsch Opera House. In 1887, a brick structure was built on the site of the present school building at a cost of 5,000 dollars. This building served the educational needs of the community until 1921, when the combination grade and high school which still serves the town was built directly in front of the old building.¹¹

Solomon

The community of Solomon was established along the west border of Dickinson County on the Kansas Pacific Railroad in Lincoln Township. Dickinson and Saline County Joint District Number 1 was established in the community in 1867.

¹¹John K. Lay, Jr., "History of the Schools of Hope" (Abilene, Kansas: Dickinson County Historical Society).

The first school term in the district was held in an old deserted stage warehouse. In 1873, a white frame two-story building was constructed at a cost of 2,000 dollars to serve the educational needs of the district. In 1882, a brick building was erected on the same site with the frame building being sold for a dwelling place. By 1907, this building had been outgrown and a two-story brick structure was built to replace it.¹² This building served the needs of the district until 1967 when a new elementary school was built adjacent to the high school.

Woodbine

Woodbine District Number 32 was organized before 1880, although the exact date was lost in the courthouse fire in 1882. The town of Woodbine was established eight miles north of Herington in Liberty township. The first school building was a frame structure which later became part of the house of a Mr. and Mrs. Hettenbach. A two-story frame school building was constructed at the north

¹²Solomon Valley Tribune, December 29, 1960, p. 1.

end of the town cemetery around 1885. In 1909, the brick building which still serves the community was erected.¹³

RURAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Between the establishment of Lyons District Number 1 in 1869 and the county courthouse fire in 1882, 107 school districts were established in Dickinson County. By 1895, the number of school districts in the county had risen to 122, and with the exception of Moonlight District Number 123, no new school districts were established in the county until 1950. The school districts established in the early days whose histories have not already been cited in this report, were for the most part, rural school districts with a small enrollment and a limited future. Those districts were all unique in some respect, but they had certain common characteristics which seem to set patterns for most, if not all, of them. Specific school districts, which illustrate those characteristics, were selected by the author in the remainder of this section of the report.

¹³"Woodbine School District Number 32" (Abilene, Kansas: Dickinson County Historical Society).

School Buildings

The first problem which faced all of the districts in the county was the location of a place in which to hold classes. The most common solution to the problem was to approve a bond issue for the construction of a building. Generally speaking, in the rural districts, this building was the typical one-room country school house in which classes were held for all eight grades under one teacher.

It was difficult in many districts to raise the necessary taxes to pay for a bond issue, since most of the settlers were homesteaders, whose land would not legally become theirs for a period of five years, and would not be taxable for that period of time. It was not unusual for a school district to be organized in which there was not one parcel of taxable land.

An example of this difficulty can be found in Center District Number 62 in Cheever township, which was organized in 1874, but was unable to hold classes until 1878, when enough of the settlers' homesteads had been "proved up" to allow a tax levy to be assessed.¹⁴

¹⁴Margaret Funston, "History of Center School" (Abilene, Kansas: Dickinson County Historical Society).

A somewhat unique situation prevailed in Carlton District Number 17 in Holland township, in that the only piece of taxable land in the district was owned by a man who lived in New York. The resourceful homesteaders voted a tax of 1500 dollars on this parcel of land and awaited the action of the man in New York when he received his tax bill. To their surprise and delight, he not only forwarded the entire sum levied, but sent fifty volumes of books to establish a library in the school.¹⁵

Due to the limited funds available, there is no record of any building in any of the rural districts established before 1882 which cost more than one thousand dollars. In many cases, this sum reflected only the cost of the building materials with the members of the district supplying the necessary labor to construct the building. This was the case in Prairie Union District Number 68 in Banner township and Carry Creek District Number 14 in Liberty township.¹⁶

¹⁵"Carlton School" (Abilene, Kansas: Dickinson County Historical Society), 1966.

¹⁶Hatfield, op. cit., p. 1, 3.

On occasion, the location of the school house caused friction to develop between the patrons of the district. The most extreme example of this kind took place in Victory District Number 56 in Wheatland township. The first school house was constructed in this district in 1872. Sometime later, the director of the school district, a Mr. Harris, and some of the patrons decided to move the school house to a section of the district which they thought was more heavily populated. The leader of the opposing faction, Orlando Bonner, obtained a court order saying that he must be notified before the school house could be moved. The Harris group then put the building on skids and hitched four yoke of oxen to it. As the building began to move, they sent a boy on foot to notify Mr. Bonner. Mr. Bonner then rode to Abilene to obtain an injunction to halt the removal of the building. By the time the sheriff arrived at the site, the building had been firmly secured to its new foundation for several hours.¹⁷

Most of the rural schools in Dickinson County served double duty as community centers. Practically every history

¹⁷Ibid., p. 18.

of the early schools makes reference to the fact that various community groups, such as the women's clubs and the farm organizations, held their meetings in the school house. Occasionally, tempers flared at these meetings, and on one occasion, at Elmo School District Number 47 in Banner township, a shooting nearly took place when one hot-headed young man pulled out a pistol. The meeting was swiftly adjourned.¹⁸

School Furnishings

An even more difficult task for the early school districts than constructing a building was furnishing the structure when it was completed. While the actual construction could be financed through a bond issue whose cost was spread over a period of years, the furnishings had to be paid for immediately. In most instances, this was done by borrowing the necessary money, usually less than one hundred dollars. The money then had to be repaid

¹⁸"Elmo School" (Abilene, Kansas: Dickinson County Historical Society, 1941).

as quickly as possible since the interest rate ranged from ten to fifteen per cent.¹⁹

By modern standards, the early schools were furnished in a spartan fashion. The Prairie Dell School District Number 70 in Sherman township was typical, in that all the furniture was homemade, except the chair for the teacher. The pupils sat on benches and there was a shelf along the wall for their books.²⁰

Almost all the country schools were heated by wood or coal-burning stoves, and they hauled water from the nearest farmer's well to a cistern near the school for a drinking supply. Outhouses were the standard sanitary unit at the schools, as they were for most of the homes in the area.

Early Teachers

The early teachers of Dickinson County were a hardy lot. Their salaries ranged from a low of six dollars per

¹⁹"Schools" (Abilene, Kansas: Dickinson County Historical Society).

²⁰Hatfield, op. cit., p. 18.

month at Talmage District Number 29 in Willowdale township to fifty dollars per month at Dillon District Number 120 in Banner township.²¹ A story on the county schools written in 1882 stated that the average salary for men teachers at that time was thirty-six dollars per month and for women teachers thirty-one dollars per month. At that time, there were 112 school districts in the county with 114 school buildings served by 133 teachers.²²

The duties of the teacher during that period normally included starting the fire in the school building one hour before the pupils arrived. The teacher was also expected to do the custodial work and to keep the building in good repair. One danger of which the early Dickinson county teacher had to be particularly aware was that of prairie fires. On at least one occasion, the Center school house was rolled into a plowed field when a prairie fire threatened, and moved back in place after the fire had passed.²³

²¹Ibid., pp. 7-15.

²²Ibid., p. 17.

²³Funston, op. cit.

The nineteenth century school term normally was only five months per year; two months in the summer between planting and harvest, and three months in the winter when it was too cold for any farm work. The teacher was paid only for the months school was actually in session and normally received his pay in a lump sum at the end of the school term. Most of the male teachers augmented their salary by working on farms in the area when school was not in session.²⁴

Very few of the early teachers had been to college. Most of them had received their teacher training at County Normal Institutes sponsored by the County Superintendent of Public Instruction. At the conclusion of the Institutes, examinations were given the prospective teachers. Those who had completed the eighth grade and passed the examination were issued Third Grade Certificates. Those with one year of high school qualified for Second Grade Certificates, and those who had two years of high school work qualified for a First Grade Certificate. The examinations were fairly

²⁴Hatfield, op. cit., p. 19.

rigid, since of 206 applicants in 1899, 74 failed the examination.²⁵

The teachers of Dickinson County apparently realized early the value of organization, since the Dickinson County Teachers Association was established in 1887 or 1888. At that time all of the teachers in the county were included. The organization has since divided into four different associations serving the unified districts in the county.²⁶

DICKINSON COUNTY HIGH SCHOOLS

High schools were comparative latecomers on the educational scene in Dickinson County. The early settlers apparently believed that eight years of schooling was enough for their children, since there were no high school graduates from county schools before 1800. The high schools that were established in the county were located in the larger towns and usually took in students from the surrounding rural grade school districts.

²⁵Ibid., p. 21.

²⁶Ibid.

The first high school in the county was established at Abilene in 1876, in the upper floor of the Central grade school building. The first five graduates in the county came from that school in 1880. It was common practice in most of the early high schools to occupy a part of the grade school building. In 1894, the high school at Abilene became a separate unit housed in the upper story of the old city hall. In 1919, a building was erected expressly to house the high school student. The present high school building in Abilene was constructed in 1955 at a cost of 1,500,000 dollars.²⁷

The next town in the county to establish a high school course was Solomon in 1882. In this case, the high school occupied a part of the grade school building until 1922, when the building which still serves the high school students of the community was built. In 1928, the high school district was separated from the grade school district, becoming Solomon Rural High School, serving parts of Dickinson, Saline, and Ottawa counties. The two

²⁷Abilene Reflector, May 22, 1956.

districts were not joined again until becoming a Unified School District in 1966.²⁸

In 1889, a unique educational institution came into being in Dickinson County. The first county-wide high school in the state of Kansas was set up at Chapman. The high school was organized as Dickinson County Community High School, District C1. Any student in the county was eligible to attend this high school. County Superintendent of Public Instruction J. S. Ford was largely responsible for the establishment of this school, whose first building was constructed for 12,000 dollars.

By 1920, 123 rural grade school districts were a part of that high school district. In 1959, a new building was constructed in Chapman at a cost of 900,000 dollars to house all the students who came to high school there. When unification came in 1966, most of those districts remained in the district which included the county high school.²⁹

²⁸Solomon Valley Tribune, December 29, 1960.

²⁹"History of Chapman High School" (Abilene, Kansas: Dickinson County Historical Society).

The high schools at Hope and Woodbine were never separated physically from the grade schools in the community, although both existed in name as separate rural high school districts. In 1963, Woodbine discontinued its high school, and disorganized their high school district, joining it with Hope Rural High School District Number 1.³⁰

The first high school in Herington was located in the Lincoln Grade School building, and the first graduating class in 1892 had 4 members. A separate high school building was not constructed until 1916. A gymnasium and auditorium were added in 1928. In 1965, a new building was completed to house the high school, with the old building becoming a junior high school.³¹

Four year high schools were also held for a time in Enterprise and Talmage, but both of these schools were eventually merged with Dickinson County Community High School at Chapman.

³⁰Hatfield, op. cit., p. 6.

³¹"Early Herington Schools" (Abilene, Kansas: Dickinson County Historical Society).

While the high schools in the county took in large areas almost from their beginnings, such was not the case with the grade school districts, particularly those in the rural areas. It took many years, and several acts of the state legislature before their consolidation was to approach that of the high schools.

CONSOLIDATION

The Period of Waiting

The period of time from 1900 to 1950 is almost devoid of any formal activity, insofar as the organization, disorganization, or consolidation of school districts is concerned. With the exception of the consolidated high school districts established at Woodbine and Hope in 1925, and Solomon in 1928, the only formal consolidations before 1947 in Dickinson County were the formation of Union District 1 (U-1) at Pearl in 1902 and Union District 2 (U-2) at Talmage in 1907.³² The reality of change lay hidden

³²"Record of Official Acts of the County Superintendent" (Abilene, Kansas: Superintendent of Public Instruction, 1881-1969).

beneath the facade of stagnation which would appear to follow from a close reading of Table I and Table II.

There were several logical and valid reasons for the lack of formal consolidation during this period. It was not uncommon for a school to simply close its doors when there were no longer enough children living within the confines of the district to continue operating. The students who remained in the district were sent to the nearest school district whose school was still open, and tuition was paid by the district which was no longer in operation.

A particular example of an instance of this kind was found in the history of the College Hill Joint District Number 66, Dickinson and Marion Counties. The last term of school held in this district was in 1936-1937. However, the district was not formally disorganized until 1950, when the parts of the district in Dickinson County became a part of Hope District Number 100.³³

³³Grace Dahlinger, "College Hill School" (Abilene, Kansas: Dickinson County Historical Society).

Another common practice during this period was the transfer of territory from a defunct district to one that was still operating. In time, this practice became so widespread that there were school districts which existed in name only, all their territory having been transferred without the district ever having been disorganized.³⁴

One of the primary reasons preventing any formal consolidation of school districts until after World War II was the lack of any state statute which spelled out the process by which a non-functioning school district could be incorporated into a functioning one. There did exist a statute which allowed two or more districts to disorganize and form an entirely new consolidated district, which was called a *Union District*. This law had been in effect since 1900, and Union Districts Number 1 and 2 had been created under its provisions.³⁵

However, the law required that the Union District adopt a new name not identified with any of the consolidating

³⁴"Record of Official Acts of the County Superintendent", op. cit.

³⁵General Statutes of Kansas, (Topeka, Kansas: Kansas State Printer, 1949), 72-903.

districts. Local pride apparently would not accept this factor, since there were no more Union districts established after 1907. Many of the people who lived in districts in which the school was not operating also believed that in time there would again be enough children living in the district to reopen the school. The harsh realities of modern farming practice, however, worked against this notion. As mechanized equipment took over the work formerly done by men, the rural population declined and the rural school districts, once closed, rarely reopened.

Sentiment undoubtedly played a part, too, in the decision not to disorganize a non-functioning rural school district during this period. Many of the people living in such a district had received their only schooling in the rural school house and they were reluctant to see its doors closed forever with no chance of revival. These people undoubtedly noted the declining rural population around them, and disorganizing the school district seemed to them an irrational act which would hasten the departure of those who remained.

TABLE I
ORGANIZATION, CONSOLIDATION AND UNIFICATION
OF DICKINSON COUNTY SCHOOLS

School Number	School Name	Date of Organization	Consolidated with District	Unified District
1	Lyons	1869	14, 32 D&M	473, 481
2	Prospect (Ziebell)		100	481, 487
3	Kellogg	1868	127	473
4	Music Dale		42	473
5	Abilene	1869		435, 393
6	Stony Hill (Rubin)		126	473, 481
7	Farmington		126	473, 435
8	Highland		5	435
9	Sand Springs		5	435
10	Purdy		13, 126	473
11	Detroit	1870		473, 435
12	Sanborn		80	473
13	Navarre	1880		473, 481
14	Carry Creek	1869		473, 481
15	Stony Point	1872	80	473

TABLE I (cont'd)

School Number	School Name	Date of Organization	Consolidated with District	Unified District
16	Enterprise	1867	80 D&G	473, 435
17	Carlton			473, 481 306
18	Union (Shady Brook)		32, 113 D&M	481, 487
19	Superior		100	481
20	Prairie Hill		42	473
21	Green Ridge	1872	127	473
22	Harmony		11	473
23	Central Buckeye	1877	U-2	473, 435
24	Pleasant View		127	473
25	Hedge Valley		100	481, 487
26	Johnson		5	435, 473
27	Pleasant Hill		7	435, 473
28	East Buckeye		128	473, 435
29	Talmage (Iliff)	1873	U-2	473
30	Rich Valley	1872	17	473

TABLE I (cont'd)

School Number	School Name	Date of Organization	Consolidated with District	Unified District
31	Hiawatha (Rinehart)		14	473
32	Woodbine			481, 473
33	Union Valley	1871	100	481
34	Garfield	1873	1 DS&O	393
35	Walnut Grove		128	473
36	Oak Creek		Jt. 2 C&D	473
37	Chronister (N. E. Buck- eye)	1872	128	473
38	Harvey	1873	71, U-2	473
39	Willowdale	1871	U-2	393, 435 473
40	Chase		U-2	473, 435
41	Fragrant Hill	1872	127	473
42	Wesley	1872	130	473
43	Miller		16	473
44	Knox		126	473
45	Michigan	1879	100	481
46	Tennessee	1879	100	481

TABLE I (cont'd)

School Number	School Name	Date of Organization	Consolidated with District	Unified District
47	Elmo	1872	17, 100, 126	473, 481
48	Morley		47, 17, 126	473, 481
49	Dayton	1893	100	481, 473
50	Mt. Ayre	1872	100	481
51	Maple Grove		13, 100	473, 481
52	Fairview	1886	126	473
53	New Basel		126	473, 481
54	Philomathian		6, 13, 111	473
55	Scotia		125	473
56	Victory	1872	17, 82 S	306
57	Pleasant Hill	1877	13, Jt. 80 D&G	473
58	Fairview	1872	80	473
59	Heart's Content		U-2	435
60	Abby		13	473
61	Stone		71 D&O, U-2 Jt. 2 C&D	473
62	Center	1874	U-2	473

TABLE I (cont'd)

School Number	School Name	Date of Organization	Consolidated with District	Unified District
63	Rosedale	1872	U-2	473
64	Pleasant Valley		128	473
65	Reich Pleasant Valley		100	481
66	Jt. College Hill D&M	1876	100, 110 M	481, 397
67	Fairfield	1873	100	481
68	Prairie Union	1875	100	481
69	Oread		6, 13, 100	473, 481
70	Pauper (Prairie Dell)	1874	127	473
71	Manchester	1877	71 D&O	473
72	Pleasant Hill		100	481
73	Delhi	1878	U-2	473
74	Buckeye		1 DS&O	393
75	Grove Hill		1 DS&O	393, 435
76	Sunnyside		1 DS&O	393
77	New Liberty		17	473

TABLE (cont'd)

School Number	School Name	Date of Organization	Consolidated with District	Unified District
78	Walnut Grove		32 D&M, 13, 101	473
79	Prairie Cottage		80	473
80	Chapman			473, 475 481, 435
81	Keystone		71 D&O	473
82	Pleasant Hill	1873	17, 86 S	306, 473
83	Pleasant Valley	1873	17	306, 473
84	Grandview		13	481, 473
85	Probasco	1876	128	473
86	Winsor		127	473
87	Aroma		113 D&M	487
88 G&D	Tell		Jt. 6 G&D Jt. 23 G&D Jt. 24 G&D 41, 42	
89	Eureka		7, 10, 13, 16	473
90	Redwood		123, 113 D&M	397, 487
91	Flora		U-2, 71 D&O	473

TABLE I (cont'd)

School Number	School Name	Date of Organization	Consolidated with District	Unified District
92	Rosebank		100	481, 397
93	Rainbow (Hannan)		124 3, 24, 35, 42	473
94	Pyke		5, 11, 16	435, 473
95	Glenwood		U-2	473
96	Laney		U-2	473
97	Pearl		U-1	473
98	Bonnacord	1879	5	435, 393
99	Ninety-nine		13	473
100	Hope	1880		481, 487 397
101	Liberty Center	1881	14, U-1, 32 D&M	473, 481
102	Union Center	1880	126	435, 473
103	Big Bonanza		U-1	473
104	Pleasant Ridge		U-2, 23	473, 435
105	Harmony Hall		126	473
106	Independence		5, 8, 1 DS&O	473

TABLE I (cont'd)

School Number	School Name	Date of Organization	Consolidated with District	Unified District
107	Baker		80, 124	473
108	Mount Ceniz	1882	41, 70, 3	473
109	Spring Valley	1882	3	473
110	Centerdale	1883	11	473
111	Lively Hall	1883	126	473
112	Quaker	1884	17	473
113	Herington	1884		487
114	Victory	1884	113 D&M	487
115	Kapp	1885	5, 11, 28	435, 473
116	Pearl	1885	8, 126, 1 DS&O	393, 435 473
117	Bell Valley	1885	126	473, 435
118	Jeffcoat	1885	24, 36, 64, 85	473
119	Ash Grove	1885	125	473, 306
120	Dillon	1885	100	481
121	White Cloud	1888	71	473
122	Ross	1888	71 D&O	473
123	Lyon Valley	1895	100, Jt. 90 D&M	481, 487 397

TABLE I (cont'd)

School Number	School Name	Date of Organization	Consolidated with District	Unified District
124	Moonlight	1908	130	473
125	Scotia	1950	126	473, 306
126	Rural Center	1951		435, 473 481, 306
127	Upland	1953		473, 379
128	Unnamed	1953	130	473, 435
130	Blue Ridge	1959		435, 473
D&S I	Solomon		DS&O I	393
DS&O 1	Solomon Grade School	1900		393
U-1	Pearl	1902	14 D&G, 80 D&G 32 D&M, 13	473
U-2	Talmage	1907		435, 473 393
71 D&O	Manchester	1947		473, 393
Jt. 2 C&D	Industry	1954		473, 379
1 D&M	Woodbine High School	1925	H.R.H.S. 1	481, 473 487

TABLE I (concluded)

School Number	School Name	Date of Organization	Consolidated with District	Unified District
C1	Dickinson Co. Community High School	1889		473, 435 481, 306
1 DS&O	Solomon Rural High School	1928		393
1 H.R.H.S.	Hope Rural High School	1925		481, 473

The Period of Action

Following World War II, most of the factors which had been working against formal consolidation were to diminish in importance, and what had been a trickle became a flood. The law, Kansas Statute Annotated 72-903, which had set up the Union districts was amended to encourage the formal consolidation of non-functioning and fringe operation school districts with their more robust neighbors, and allowing the latter to keep their

identity.³⁶ At the same time, improved roads and methods of transportation were making it feasible to transport pupils greater distances to attend the consolidated schools which were then being actively encouraged.

The sentimental factor was also being lessened with the passing of many of the "old settlers" whose attachment to the rural schools was so strong. Many men who had seen military service in all parts of the country and the world were also returning to the county, acutely aware of the handicaps of education in the one-room country school house.

The net result of all these factors may be seen in Table II. In 1946, there had been 127 common school districts in the county, of which only two, Abilene and Herington, contained high schools, and four separate high school districts. By 1965, consolidations had reduced this number to sixteen common school districts and three separate high school districts.³⁷

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷"Record of Official Acts of the County Superintendent."

TABLE II
 CONSOLIDATION OF DICKINSON COUNTY SCHOOLS
 TO 1966

School District Name	District Number	Former Districts Included Date of Consolidation
Abilene	5	8 (1959), 9 (1951), 26 (1951), 94 (1951), 98 (1953), 106 (1951), 115 (1951), 116 (1951)
Detroit	11	22 (1947), 94 (1951), 110 (1950), 115 (1951)
Navarre	13	10 (1962), 51 (1947), 54 (1947), 57 (1958), 60 (1947), 69 (1947), 78 (1954), 84 (1950), 89 (1951), 97 (1902), 99 (1947), 101 (1955), 103 (1902), U-1 (1957)
Carry Creek	14	1 (1954), 31 (1952), 78 (1954), 97 (1902), 101 (1955), 103 (1902), U-1 (1957)
Carlton	17	30 (1953), 47 (1963), 48 (1954), 56 (1950), 77 (1950), 82 (1951), 83 (1950), 112 (1950)
Woodbine	32	1 (1954), 18 (1951), 78 (1954), 97 (1902), 101 (1955), 103 (1902), U-1 (1957)

TABLE II (cont'd)

School District Name	District Number	Former Districts Included Date of Consolidation
Chapman	80	12 (1947), 15 (1947), 16 (1962), 43 (1951), 57 (1958), 58 (1952), 78 (1954), 79 (1949), 89 (1951), 94 (1951), 97 (1902), 101 (1955), 103 (1902), 107 (1951), U-1 (1957)
Hope	100	2 (1953), 19 (1950), 25 (1950), 33 (1950), 45 (1950), 46 (1950), 47 (1963), 48 (1954), 49 (1956), 50 (1952), 51 (1952), 65 (1946), 66 (1946), 67 (1950), 68 (1950), 69 (1947), 72 (1950), 90 (1951), 92 (1950), 120 (1950), 123 (1954)
Herington	113	18 (1951), 87 (1951), 90 (1951), 114 (1951)
Rural Center	126	6 (1951), 7 (1962), 10 (1962), 27 (1951), 44 (1951), 47 (1963), 48 (1954), 52 (1951), 53 (1951), 54 (1947), 55 (1950), 69 (1947), 89 (1951), 102 (1951), 105 (1951), 111 (1951), 115 (1951), 117 (1956), 119 (1950), 125 (1959)

TABLE II (concluded)

School District Name	District Number	Former Districts Included Date of Consolidation
Upland	127	3 (1954), 21 (1954), 24 (1954), 41 (1954), 70 (1954), 86 (1954), 88 (1953), 93 (1953), 108 (1922), 109 (1951), 118 (1951)
Blue Ridge	130	4 (1951), 20 (1951), 28 (1954), 35 (1954), 37 (1954), 42 (1959), 64 (1954), 85 (1953), 88 (1953), 93 (1953), 107 (1951), 115 (1951), 118 (1951), 124 (1959), 128 (1953)
Solomon Grade School	DS&O 1	34 (1955), 74 (1950), 75 (1950), 76 (1953), 106 (1951), 116 (1951), D&S 1 (1900)
Manchester	D&O 71	38 (1946), 61 (1957), 71 (1947), 81 (1947), 91 (1947), 121 (1922), 122 (1947)
Talmage	U-2	23 (1949), 29 (1907), 38 (1946), 39 (1947), 40 (1907), 59 (1957), 61 (1957), 62 (1950), 63 (1947), 73 (1947), 91 (1947), 95 (1947), 96 (1947), 104 (1947)
Industry	C&D 2	36 (1954), 71 (1947), 118 (1951)

Three of these common school districts, Rural Center District Number 126, Upland District 127, and Blue Ridge District Number 130 were the result of the formation of entirely new districts with a new name, made up of the consolidation of many former districts. The rest were older districts which took in the smaller districts around them as they disorganized. It was at this time that another law was passed which further hastened the process of unification.

Unification

In June of 1965, Kansas Statute Annotated 72-6743 was passed which provided that by July 1, 1966, all school territory in the state would become part of consolidated school districts to be called Unified School Districts.³⁸ Certain standards were prescribed for these unified districts which prevented the existing school districts in Dickinson County from unifying as they were then constituted.

³⁸Laws of Kansas, (Topeka, Kansas: Kansas State Printer, 1965), 72-6743.

Herington District 113 had anticipated passage of the Unification Act, as it was called, and with some territory in Morris County added, became Herington Unified School District Number 487 on July 1, 1965. This was the first unified district for all purposes formed in Dickinson County.

At the same time, what were to become the other four Unified School Districts with headquarters in Dickinson County became interim districts for one year, becoming fully unified on July 1, 1966. Two of these districts, Hope Unified School District Number 481 and Solomon Unified School District Number 393, had large areas of territory outside Dickinson County. Abilene Unified School District Number 435 and Chapman Unified School District Number 473 lay almost wholly within the confines of Dickinson County. Centre Unified District Number 397, which was mostly in Marion County, took in a small portion of territory in southern Dickinson County. A map of the Unified School Districts in Dickinson County is shown in Figure 2. The former school districts, both

TABLE III

UNIFICATION OF DICKINSON COUNTY SCHOOLS

Unified District Name	Unified District Number	Consolidated Districts Included
Herington	487	113, 100
Solomon	393	5, 100, DS&O 1, D&O 71, U-2, Solomon Rural High School
Abilene	435	5, 11, 80, 126, 130, U-2, C-1
Chapman	473	11, 13, 14, 17, 32, 80, 126, 127, 130, D&O 71, U-2, C&D 2, C-1, Hope Rural High School
Hope	481	13, 14, 17, 32, 80, 100, 126, C-1, Hope Rural High School

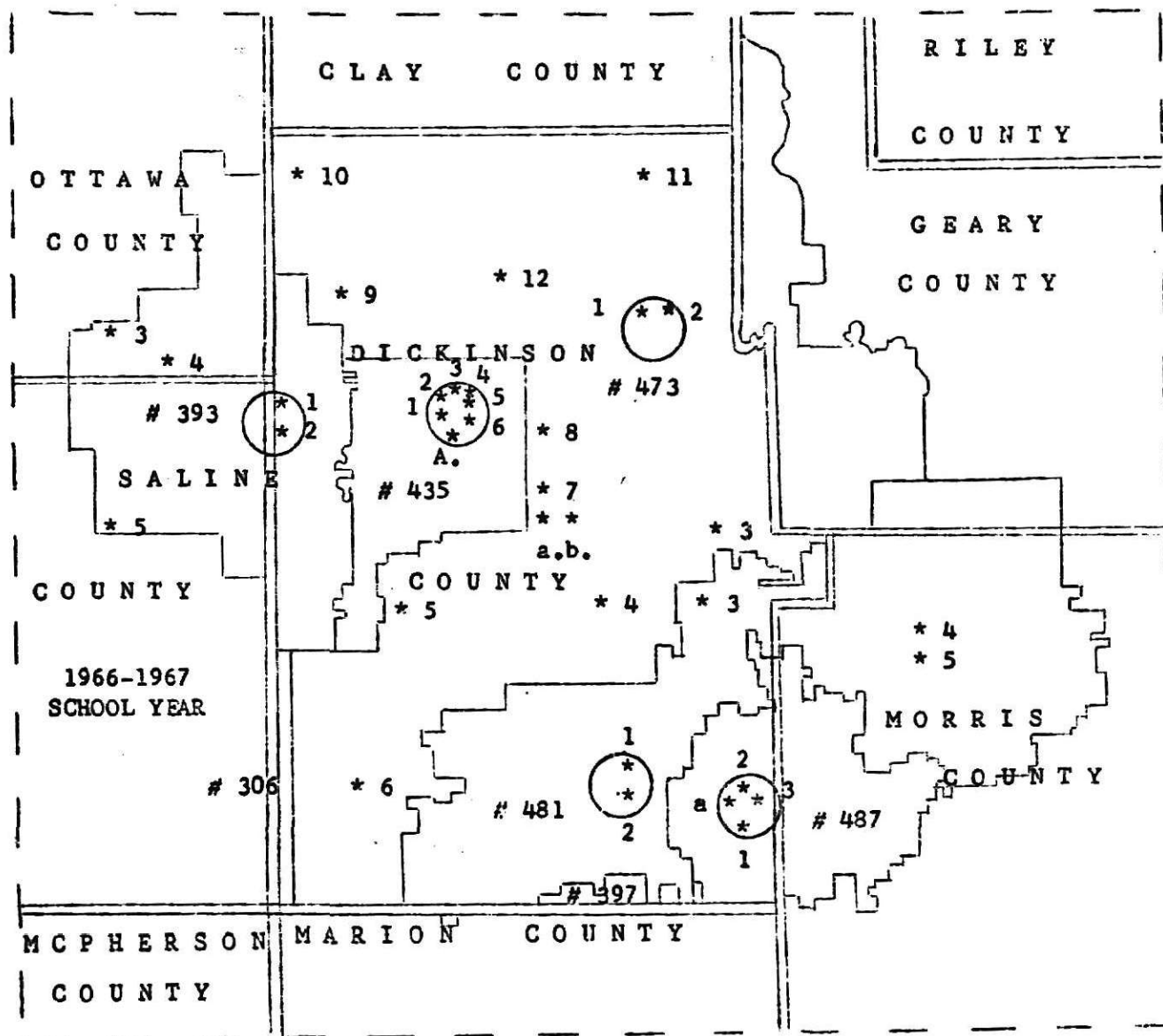


FIGURE 2
UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICTS OF DICKINSON COUNTY

common and rural high school which are now included in these districts may be determined from a study of Table I.

As an outgrowth of the Unification Act, it soon became apparent that the need for the County Superintendent of Public Instruction, whose office had been instrumental in securing consolidation, was greatly reduced. Therefore, an act of the state legislature was passed eliminating the office after July 1, 1969.³⁹ Mrs. Florence Hatfield was the last person in Dickinson County to carry on in the office which was first held in Dickinson County by William Frost in 1858, and carried on so forcefully by the twenty-two men and women who held the office in the intervening years. A list of all the superintendents of public instruction in the county with their term of office may be found in the Appendix.

CONCLUSION

This report was not intended in any way to be a comprehensive history of all the schools of Dickinson County. It only tried, by studying the development of school districts within this particular county, to show the causes

³⁹Hatfield, op. cit., p. 16.

which led to the wild proliferation of county schools during the early days of its history, the reasons why consolidation was so slow in developing, and the factors which have hastened the process of consolidation in the last twenty years.

The author found the chief cause of the multiplicity of school districts in the early days was the lack of any convenient means of transportation. This was coupled with the desire of the early settlers to provide some kind of education near at hand for their children.

Consolidation was slowed by the lack of any firm legal foundation upon which to proceed until after World War II. A contributing factor was the reluctance of the patrons of a district to lose the identity of their school district. The process of consolidation was hastened after World War II by the passage of laws enabling formal consolidation, and later, by the passage of the Unification Act.

The author believed that by presenting this report, he could show in microcosm, what has happened throughout the state of Kansas in the development of school systems since the establishment of the state, and contribute some understanding as to why and how our public school systems came to be as they are at the present.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX

DICKINSON COUNTY SUPERINTENDENTS
OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

Name	Term of Office
William Frost	1858-1861
Samuel Ruthruff	1861-1864
E. W. Bradfield	1864-1865
Samuel Ruthruff	1865-1866
William Frost	1866-1868
William Ramsey	1868-1870
Cyrus Kilgore	1870-1871
D. R. Emery	1871-1874
D. W. Wilson	1874
A. M. Crary	1874-1883
D. D. Hornaday	1883-1887
J. S. Ford	1887-1891
A. C. Vandyke	1891-1893
D. S. Shirk	1893-1897
S. M. Humbargar	1897-1901
R. V. Dyer	1901-1905

Name	Term of Office
E. S. McCormick	1905-1909
M. F. Aumiller	1909-1911
W. O. Steen	1911-1916
Gracelee Woolverton	1916-1917
Mary E. Woolverton	1917-1925
C. A. Martin	1925-1933
Frank E. Correll	1933-1955
Dorothy Elliott	1955-1959
Ronald Derrick	1959-1965
Florence Hatfield	1965-1969

THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS
IN DICKINSON COUNTY, KANSAS

by

JOHN WILLIAM KOEPKE

B. A., Kansas Wesleyan University, 1964

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

College of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY
Manhattan, Kansas

1969

The purpose of this paper was to examine the development of the public educational institutions of Dickinson County, Kansas. The author believed that such a study would be of value to all researchers who studied the history of schools in Kansas, since there would be found characteristics common to all the counties of Kansas. The author also tried to show the reasons for the development of the numerous school districts in the early days of county history. The trend toward the consolidation of those early school districts, which has taken place throughout the state, was also shown in the framework of this particular county.

The procedure used to implement this report was a historical study of the schools of Dickinson County, with a particular emphasis placed on the establishment and consolidation of the school districts of the county. The sources used in the report were the original records found in the office of the Dickinson County Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Dickinson County Historical Society. Most of the records were either written in longhand or typewritten and had never been published.

The author examined the geography and early history of Dickinson County in order to set a background for the

report. The report dealt in detail with the establishment of the school districts in the larger towns in the county, since more than one building was erected in most of them. A separate section of the paper dealt with the establishment of the rural school districts in the county. It was found that most of those districts financed their building by a bond issue and furnished the building by borrowing money. The author found that finances and poor transportation were the two biggest problems faced by those early districts. The establishment of high schools was studied and it was noted that they led the way toward the consolidation of school districts in the county.

The second section of the paper traced the consolidation of the school districts in the county. The author found that the primary reasons school district consolidation had not taken place in the county prior to World War II were the lack of suitable legal statutes and pride in the local school. When these conditions were alleviated following the war, two periods of consolidation followed. The first, which lasted until 1965, was concerned primarily with grade school districts. The passage of the Unification Act in 1965 forced

the further consolidation of all school districts in the county, with grade and high schools being put in the same Unified School District.

The report was not intended to be a comprehensive history of the schools of Dickinson County, but to point out the factors which were important to the nature of this study.