

A HISTORY OF THE TATUMS COMMUNITY

A THESIS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The history of education is usually recorded in terms of great educational leaders and movements. Educational history is also to be found in the struggle of communities to establish and maintain what they consider to be adequate cultural opportunities for their youth.

The colored people of Oklahoma have struggled for forty years to establish and maintain educational opportunities and privileges for their young people. Oklahoma history is a required course in the public schools of Oklahoma, but the course of study and the textbooks used in this course give little information about this struggle.

It is believed that a study of this effort in one community might serve to provide information concerning this aspect of educational history which receives little attention.

The Purpose of the Study

This study is being made to preserve the history of the school and community of School District 50, Carter County, Oklahoma, from the time of its beginning. It should point out to the coming generations the effort put forth by their ancestors and the sacrifices that were made in order to maintain this district. It is hoped that the study of this work

by boys and girls of the Negro race will inspire in them a new self-respect and confidence.

Sources of Data

The information obtained for this study came from records in the office of the County Clerk of Carter County, Oklahoma; records of the County Superintendent of Public Instruction; records filed in the office of the Principal of Intuss High School; and from the records of the County Treasurer.

A few of the early settlers are still available, and by personal interviews with former teachers, early settlers, early superintendents, and board members, considerable information was obtained for this report.

CHAPTER II

SETTLEMENT OF DISTRICT 50

Early Tatum

In 1894, over the land now included in District 50, one Lee B. Tatum, who died November 1, 1933, traveled in a covered wagon drawn by a team of ponies. He traversed Pickens County the now present site of Carter County, and stopped overnight along the bank of Wild Horse Creek. Something attracted his attention that caused him to pitch his tent. He saw in his imaginative way a site here for the establishment of a city.¹

The L. B. Tatum family were from Luke Forter, Indian Territory. After they had settled, they helped other Negro families to settle in surrounding areas. Among these families were the Robert Swindalls, the George Yates; the George Worleys, the Robert Pettuses, the West Phillips, and the Fed Prieses.²

Tatum stayed in this spot nearly a year, helping others to come, and in 1895 while he and his wife Mary sat talking one day, he decided to make application to the Federal

¹ Mary Tatum, "Personal Interview," August 15, 1948.

² Charlie Swindall, "Personal Interview," September 18, 1948.

Government for a postoffice. After much investigation the government saw fit to establish a postoffice, Tatum, Indian Territory, named after L. B. Tatum and his brother E. G. Tatum, with L. B. Tatum as postmaster.³

Along with the postoffice, in one corner of the house a few groceries were kept to supply the needs of the citizens of Tatum. From this started the growth of the community of Tatum.

In 1894 soon after the news circulated about the establishment of the postoffice, a citizen named Hunt established a Methodist Church and preached in his own limited way to the citizens in order that they might worship God as a group. Another pioneer development was the organization of a subscription school held under a brush arbor. Only the three R's were taught and school was held only three months each year. Jacob H. Carter was the first teacher of the school. He was compensated by the citizens of the community at the rate of twenty-five cents per pupil.

As the population increased, the school grew and after a short period of time a log cabin was built. Professor Black and J. Walls were also employed as teachers, and the

³ Mary Tatum, "Personal Interview," August 18, 1948.

citizens were proud to depend on the three for the education of their children.⁴

The citizens all worked hard raising crops, chiefly cotton and corn, and after setting aside the money that each father thought that it would take to supply the family with necessary food and clothing the next amount set aside was 75 cents for the three months of schooling for each child in the family. The amount the instructor received depended on the family income at the time of harvesting, and the population.

In 1907, the land known as Indian Territory was admitted to the Union as the state of Oklahoma. Those Negroes who were found living with the Indian tribes in this particular territory at the time of settlement were allotted land, 40 acres per person for each man over 21 years, and for each woman over 18 years of age. Because of the large number of children, many families received as much as three hundred acres of land. This enabled the farmers to farm on a larger scale.

After Oklahoma was admitted to the Union as a state, it was divided into counties. Each county elected a county superintendent. Mrs. Hiblack, a citizen of Ardmore, Oklahoma,

⁴ J. D. Hooks, "Personal Interview," August 15, 1942.

the county seat of Carter County, was elected as the first Superintendent of Carter County.⁵

Prior to this time, in 1904 when it was yet necessary for a physician to take the medical board examination in Pauls Valley, Indian Territory, a Doctor Henry fulfilled the requirements of the board and came to Tatum as a qualified medical doctor. These were still covered wagon days, and often Whites and Indians traveling would be in the vicinity of Tatum at night and would wish to spend the night. At this time Henry Taylor owned the largest home in Tatum. The citizens got together and suggested that Henry Taylor permit the travelers to stay overnight in his home. He had one room on the east side of his home that he reserved for this purpose.⁵

The citizens often played pranks around the town and there was a definite need for law and order. To help this situation Postmaster Tatum was appointed United States Marshall.⁶

⁵ J. D. Hooks, "Personal Interview," August 18, 1948.

⁶ Taken from "Police Court Docket," Tatum, Oklahoma, Carter County.

Figure 1

The home of Mr. and Mrs. L. B. Tatum. Built in 1880, Tatum's first home. The postoffice was also located in this building.



Figure 2

Later home of the L. B. Tatum.

Figure 3

The present home of the L. B. Tatum.



CHAPTER III

ENTERPRISES

I. Post Offices and Postmasters

L. B. Tatum served as the first postmaster of Tatum. The mail was brought from a neighboring town, Davis, Indian Territory, on a horse, or by wagon and team three times per week. Finding the duties of both marshal and postmaster tiresome and confining, in the year of 1908 he turned over the task of postmaster to Phillip Ware. Miss Sylvia Thrush, a young ex-school teacher assisted him in his duties and after two years he turned over the post office to her in full and she was commissioned postmistress. Miss Sylvia Thrush married Mr. P. T. Siegler, a prosperous farmer and business man of the community, and having to take care of housewife duties she hired her sister, Mrs. Tanna Thrush to assist her in the post office.¹

Mrs. Sylvia Siegler looked after the interest of the citizens as the prevailing conditions permitted. She worked diligently and untiringly to the extent that at the end of each fiscal year she was so absorbed in caring properly for her duties that she would not even take the fifteen day vacation allowed her by the government. In July in the year of

¹ Mrs. Sylvia Siegler, "Personal Interview," September 12, 1943.

1949 she retired after having given thirty-nine years of efficient service, without taking either a sick leave or vacation. She is now receiving retirement compensation from the United States Government.²

Many applications were placed for the position she vacated, and on July 1, 1949, Jimmy Lee Varner was appointed to act as postmaster for the citizens of Tatum. He received his commission November 10, 1949.

Jimmy Lee Varner, the newly commissioned postmaster, served his country in the United States Navy during World War II. He received his basic training at Great Lakes, Illinois, attended Naval Training College of Physical Instruction at Annapolis, Maryland, and after completing the required courses was stationed for the duration of the war at San Diego, California, Navy Field as a physical education instructor. After the war he returned to Tatum to join his family. His wife Mrs. Jewell Carter Varner was born, reared and attended public school at Tatum and is now employed as an instructor in the same school system.

II. Churches

The first church of Tatum was organized in 1894 soon after the news circulated about the establishment of the

² Mrs. Sylvia Ziegler, "Personal Interview," September 18, 1948.

post office. It was a Methodist Church and a Rev. E. B. Hunt was the first minister. The church did not function for many days because many of the early settlers from Alabama were Baptists.

In May, 1894, Bob Swindall and S. B. Carter sat one morning and discussed plans for a Baptist church in Tatum.³ They had had the opportunity to talk with the district missionary, and had invited him to come to Tatum for the purpose of establishing a Baptist church. On the fourth Sunday of May, 1894, Brown Fetters and Rev. Robert Jackson called together, one-half mile from the present site of Tatum, twelve citizens, namely: Mark C. Crookshank, S. B. Carter, Robert Swindall, Lizzie Crookshank, Mary Austin, Cornelius Austin, Evelyn Austin, and Maggie Swindall and banded them together as a band of baptized believers in Christ under a brush arbor, and named the church, Bethel.⁴

This brush arbor served as a meeting place until fall. The members then built an eighteen-by-eighteen foot log house. They chose for their first leader Rev. Mark Crookshank. He preached for the group one year after which Rev. A. W. Brooks served four years and during this time many members were added to the church.

³ Robert Swindall, "Personal Interview," September 12, 1948.

⁴ Rexell Spigner, "Personal Interview," November 9, 1948.



Figure 4

Varnar's Grocery Store - The present Post Office is also located in this building.



Figure 5

The Industrial Arts Building, Tatum High School

The Knights of Pythias Lodge members were very active and all were members of the church, so the church and the Knights of Pythias Lodge united and built a two story room on the end of the church making an eighteen-by-thirty-six foot building.

As people came from other states and communities, Bethel grew. A church school was organized during its first year. In 1890, the members of Bethel Baptist Church called Rev. Miles Johnson as pastor. A controversy arose among the members. Rev. Johnson told the members of Bethel Baptist Church what God would have them do; however, he could not get them together. Rev. Miles Johnson and a few others then moved their membership from Bethel, organized another church and called it by the same name. When the District Association met, it recognized the original church as Bethel, and Rev. Miles Johnson, meek and humble, brought all of his followers back and each one asked for forgiveness; Rev. Miles Johnson was again pastor of Bethel Baptist Church. However, he was very unhappy and the first Sunday after he was appointed the second time, he spoke from the text, "I'll Go In and Out Before You No More" and resigned.⁵

⁵ Ronald Spigner, "Personal Interview," November 9, 1949.

Robert Johnson succeeded Miles Johnson. He was pastor three years. It was during this time, in the year of 1901 that the B. Y. P. U. was organized. The Knights of Pythias Lodge was finally forced to disband because of a decrease in membership, and in the year of 1901 the church was moved to Tatum proper. The Masonic Lodge, Order of Prince Hall Masonry, with the help of church members built a two story building that served for a number of years, as church, Masonic Temple, and school building.

In 1902 Rev. B. E. Givens was called as pastor. He served until 1903. Each year a number of new members were added to the church. In 1907 Rev. W. P. Mitchell was pastor of the church. In 1908 a very strong man came as pastor to the church, Rev. A. N. West. According to reports he spoke the things that became sound doctrine, but the people of Bethel Church turned a deaf ear to his preaching and asked him to resign before he ended his year of work.⁶ He threatened Bethel's members for their foolishness, and told them that a great drought would come upon them and it is said that the drought did come. The crops failed, and the trees perished. Signs of rain would appear but no rain would come. After long suffering the members of Bethel Church repented

⁶ J. D. Hooks, "Personal Interview," August 15, 1948.

and were blessed with rain and an able minister, Rev. B. E. Givens who was pastor for several years. Rev. A. C. Reeves succeeded Rev. Givens and served until the year 1916.⁷

In 1916 Rev. R. P. Russell accepted the church. He was a great builder and planned a new church building, sold the old church and started raising money for a new one, but resigned before his ideas could materialize.

In 1919 Bethel was without a pastor. In this year, however, the present building was completed, and Reverend E. D. Parker from Texas was called to serve the church as pastor. Bethel then, as now, belonged to the National Baptist Convention, U. S. A., of which Rev. H. C. Morris was president at the time; however, another convention existed with a Reverend Boyd as president. When Reverend E. D. Parker was elected as pastor of Bethel, he was a member of Rev. Boyd's convention. The members of Bethel felt that they had the right to choose the convention that Bethel Church should support, so Rev. Parker resigned. A few of Bethel's members joined Rev. Parker and organized another church, but it soon became disorganized, and the members went back to Bethel Church.⁷

In 1922 Rev. B. E. Givens again served as pastor but this time he died while serving the church. Reverend D. D.

⁷ J. D. Hooks, "Personal Interview," August 15, 1943.

Jones succeeded Rev. Givens. This was the first time that Bethel attempted to have a full time pastor. The previous ministers had preached only one Sunday per month. Not knowing the value of a full time pastor the members failed to support his program, and permitted him to preach only two Sundays each month. The members of Bethel followed this custom after Rev. D. B. Hill had resigned. This was in 1948.⁸

For the first 40 years no members of this church were called to preach. One day Aaron Winklett, a young man of the community, as he was going hurriedly to work, felt called to preach. He went to Bethel Baptist Church, opened the Bible and after reading several scriptures in the Bible made it known to the members that he had been called. A little later he was ordained as a Baptist Minister.⁹

In its fifty years Bethel has had sixteen ministers. These are: Mark Crookshank, A. W. Brooks, Miles Johnson, Robert Jackson, Ben Givens, H. P. Mitchell, Reverend A. H. West, A. C. Reeves, A. L. Russell, E. D. Parker, D. D. Jones, H. D. Spears, S. P. Cato, H. D. Wilson, Rev. D. B. Hill, E. F. Johnson, and the present pastor Reverend B. A. Armour.¹⁰

⁸ J. D. Hooks, "Personal Interview," August 15, 1948.

⁹ Ogalia Rogers, "Personal Interview," July 8, 1949.

¹⁰ Mary Tetum, "Personal Interview," August 15, 1948.

A. Deacons

Bethel Baptist Church started out with one deacon and as the membership grew others were ordained. During the fifty years that the church has existed there have been seventeen active deacons in the church. They are: Deacon Nute Graham, Charley Swindall, S. B. Carter, Willie Mitchell, Henry Taylor, Oale Hoffman, John Tucker, J. D. Hooks, E. R. Spigner, John Riley, John Miles, Robert Hooks, Conn Smallwood, Minor Leonard, Aaron Winslett, L. P. Young, Sr., and Echo Mitchell.¹¹

B. Early Members

There were twelve charter members of Bethel Baptist Church. Five of the twelve charter members are still living, and three of the members, S. B. Carter, J. D. Hooks, and Charlie Swindall are still serving on the board of deacons of Bethel Baptist Church.¹¹

The early members organized a Sunday School in keeping with the custom of most churches. It too has functioned through the years and still functions.

The Mission sisters are active with Lillie M. Evans serving as president of the Mission Circle at the present time. The Circle meets each week, and their most recent

¹¹ J. D. Hooks, "Personal Interview," August 15, 1948.

accomplishment was the furnishing of the parsonage with new furniture. The parsonage was built during the time that B. F. Johnson served as pastor to the church.

The Usher Board of Bethel was organized in March of 1947 under the leadership of Reverend B. F. Johnson. The board then consisted of four members, namely: Miss Mattie Riley, Dollie Hooks, Viola McConnell, and Vester Thrash. Miss Mattie Riley was the first president and served one year. Mrs. Dollie Mae Hooks was then elected and is serving at the present time. Many new members have been added to the board and even though the board is the very youngest of all the church organizations it has been considered one of the best.

C. Other Churches

In 1924 an Elder Cain and Phillip Varner of Ardmore, Oklahoma, members of The Church of the Living God, Pillar and Ground of the Truth, came to Tatum for the purpose of organizing a church of their belief. Many people attending the meetings enjoyed them and asked the Assembly to send a minister to the community. Elder Cain spent one Sunday each month in the community himself until the church had enough members to support a full time pastor. In 1925 an Elder Richardson from Texas came to Tatum. He brought with him his wife and children and served the members of this church

as pastor for two years. After the Assembly meeting in 1928 Elder Richardson was sent to another church and an Elder H. L. Gray was sent to Tatums as pastor. He served the members until the close of the year of 1948. It was at this time that the members of Tatums united with the members of Jacksonville in a neighboring community that Elder Gray served, also.¹²

The members of the Church of the Living God held their meetings in the lower part of the Masonic Temple. After they had united with the members of the same belief at Jacksonville, another group of baptized believers came to Tatums and organized a church. This group is known as the Church of God in Christ. A Reverend Jones of Dungan, Oklahoma, is pastor of this church and meetings are held twice each month. The church membership is small but it is partially supported by other churches in other towns of the same faith.¹³

III. Hotels

The first hotel, a simple rooming house, in Tatums was operated by Henry Taylor. It was located next door to the present post office. This was in 1899. The citizens

¹² Joseph Carter, "Personal Interview," July 2, 1949.

¹³ Mrs. M. Jones, "Personal Interview," August 13, 1948.



Figure 6
Bethel Baptist Church



Figure 7
The Home of Mr. and Mrs. Gervin Hooks

selected Henry Taylor to keep people that might want to spend the night because his house was convenient and larger than the average home at that time. The house was made of logs, box shaped and on the east side one room was reserved for colored roomers and on the west side one room was reserved for whites. Bill Buck Garrick, the United States Marshall, often driving a buggy drawn by a team of paint horses, spent many nights here.¹⁴

In 1902 Mary Mannings came to Tatum, Indian Territory, when she was a very young girl with her parents Willie and Nora Williams. At the time this country was wild and undeveloped and the future was very uncertain. But to Mary Mannings it was home--a place to start anew. In 1903 soon after the family moved to Tatum, Indian Territory, Mary's father died. Mary's mother became engaged in hotel business. The mother died soon afterward, and Mary and her sister Viola, who was older than Mary in years but not in thinking, decided to continue the hotel in Tatum. The log building was crude, but well-kept, and served the purpose intended. A section of the hotel was reserved for the whites; the other part was used for the sisters and colored roomers.¹⁴

Many of the teachers of Tatum High School roomed from time to time at "The Hotel" as the place was always called.

¹⁴ Joseph Carter, "Personal Interview," July 2, 1949.

Mrs. Violet Lennor Hooks, one of the intermediate teachers of Tatum High School, ate her first meal here at "The Hotel" twenty-two years ago when she came to Tatum to teach. She has said, that they never found a more cheerful, freehearted woman in their lives than Mary Mannings, and none that would or could cook the meals that she could produce.¹⁵

In 1929, 1930, and 1931, when the oil fields were booming, many whites stopped with "Aunt Mary" as they called her. It was during this time that notorious "Pretty Boy" Floyd and a friend of his came to the hotel. Aunt Mary didn't know who they were because they had told her they were looking for jobs in the oil field, and in those days many young fellows came through looking for work. Floyd said they were tired and wanted to rest.

Aunt Mary assigned "Pretty Boy" Floyd and his friend to one of the rooms reserved for white folk. On the third day of his stay, Arthur Fletcher, a Carter County Deputy Sheriff, came by to rest at Aunt Mary's. Floyd was sitting out on the porch and saw Fletcher coming. He asked Aunt Mary who it was. She told him it was just a deputy law officer from the County. He told Mrs. Mannings to get him a glass of water and bring it to his room. When Mary Mannings

¹⁵ Irene Mannings, "Personal Interview," September 11, 1946.

left to get the water, he and his friend left the porch and went to their room. When Mary Mannings went into the room with the water, Floyd was sitting on the side of the bed polishing or rubbing a machine gun. Mary Mannings said it was the largest gun she had ever seen.

Deputy Arthur Fletcher did not do as he usually did. Usually he would go by and chat with the landlady, but this particular day he went into the room assigned to him when stopping and went to sleep. After a short while he got up and left in his car. Mary Mannings did not have time to wink at him or let him know anything because Floyd was watching her all the time.¹⁶

Soon after Arthur Fletcher had left, Irene Mannings, the daughter of Mary Mannings, came home from shopping and said that pictures of the man in the room had been posted in the post office as "Pretty Boy" Floyd. Floyd and his companion left soon afterward.¹⁶

After many years of toil and toiling in the old log house, Mary Mannings and her sister Viola decided to build a new hotel. They were successful in their planning and built an attractive frame building that now serves the community. Mary Mannings is the mother of one daughter, Irene. She

¹⁶ Irene Mannings Winslett, "Personal Interview," September 11, 1948.

educated this daughter in the public schools of Carter County and sent her afterward to Langston University, Langston, Oklahoma. She is now married to Virlee Winslett, a prosperous farmer of Tatum and is now a beauty operator. Mary's sister Viola Spigner has two sons, Harold and Carl Spigner, both of this community.

IV. Garages

In the year of 1918 Henry Carter, the son of Seaborn Carter, started a garage. He had been trained as a mechanic at Langston University, Langston, Oklahoma. He had also learned how to operate an electric power plant. He was successful in furnishing lights for the city. For the first time in its history Tatum had electric lights on the streets, in the church, in the homes and business places of the community. He did mechanical work for the citizens of Tatum who were fortunate enough to own cars.¹⁷

Henry Carter, Rufus Hooks, Joseph Carter, Willie Evans, Gus Austin, and T. S. McMillian were the first persons to own cars. Henry Carter learned at Langston University how to drive a car and in turn taught the citizens of Tatum.

Henry Carter and Moses Davis both young men of Tatum received their education by riding to Langston, Oklahoma, on

¹⁷ Lillie Evans, "Personal Interview," September 11, 1948.



Figure 8

The Home of Mr. and Mrs. J. C. Carter



Figure 9

The Home of Mr. and Mrs. William Hogg

bicycles. There were no paved roads. The road from Langston University at Langston, Oklahoma, to Edmond, Oklahoma, was brick and the remainder were dirt roads.¹⁸

Queenie Hooks married Henry Carter soon after his return from Langston University, and to this union one son, Buri, was born. Carter operated his garage until 1924 when he died. His wife, Queenie, and his son, Buri, still reside in Tutum.

Soon after the death of Henry Carter, Willie Evans started in the garage business. Willie was the son of Dan and Mattie Evans. Willie Evans operated in the same building as Henry Carter. He operated the garage for several years. After Willie Evans closed his garage the citizens of Tutum were left without the services of a mechanic. They were forced to depend on garages in surrounding communities. Immediately after World War II Thomas Taylor and Jasper Bryant opened a garage, "The T. and B. Garage" as it was called. It operated a short while and was closed.

V. Blacksmith Shops

Ben Austin opened the first blacksmith shop in Tutum in 1909. He operated successfully for a number of years.

¹⁸ Willie Evans, "Personal Interview," September 11, 1948.

until the cinders from the fire affected his eyes causing him to become blind.¹⁹

In 1908 Len Thrush and Justin Jones started the second blacksmith shop in Tatums. They operated until 1920. In 1920 Tom McDonnell opened a blacksmith shop and operated it until 1923.¹⁹

In 1924 Joseph Carter seeing the need of a blacksmith shop in Tatums went to Ardmore, Oklahoma, in search of a blacksmith. He found an experienced blacksmith, Joe Black, who consented to come to Tatums. He boasted of being such an expert that he could place nails in his mouth, take up the mule's foot, and fasten the shoe in place while the mule was backing.²⁰

Aside from his statement of recommendation it is true that he could do an expert job of sharpening plows and keeping tools in shape for farming. He served the community until a neighboring community of larger size offered him a better opportunity. After that time people began to equip themselves with tools on almost every farm which permitted them to do blacksmithing at home.²⁰

¹⁹ Ogelia Bogans, "Personal Interview," July 2, 1949.

²⁰ Joseph Carter, "Personal Interview," July 2, 1949.

VI. Gins and Grist Mills

In 1910 a company established a cotton gin, grist mill, and saw mill. The owners were Robert Swindall, Tommie Williams, Jim Rosenbrough and H. B. Carter. Most of the citizens at this time were farmers, and the company was able to gin all the cotton, and grind all corn raised by the citizens.⁸¹

In 1918 S. K. Hooks with his seven sons opened a grist mill and ground corn and wheat. This grist mill operated until 1924. Not having the services of his sons, who had married, he felt his business not large enough to employ outside laborers, and thus was forced to close the business.⁸²

Edward Abram owned and operated a gin in Zutana in earlier days, but the exact date is unknown.

In 1928 one year after Sam K. Hooks closed his grist mill, Elms Johnson, Doctor Brooks, H. B. Carter, F. T. Siegler and L. H. Tutum started another company. They built a new gin in Zutana. The company served the community for a considerable time, but it was finally destroyed by fire.⁸³

⁸¹ J. D. Hooks, "Personal Interview," August 15, 1949.

⁸² Gervia Hooks, "Personal Interview," July 5, 1949.

⁸³ Wiley Hooks, "Personal Interview," November 27, 1949.

VII. Stores

L. B. Tatum, in 1895 soon after settlement on the present site of Tatum, saw the need of a grocery store. He placed a stock of groceries in one corner of his house, the post office in another corner, and he, his wife and brother lived in a third part. The house was crude (figure 1, page 7) but it served the three-fold purpose. The post office was a convenient place for a grocery store. Mail was brought to Tatum twice per week and as the families lived far apart, groceries were purchased twice each week when the head of the family came to the post office for mail.²⁴

Herl Canady, P. H. Mitchell, Robert Swindall, Mark Crookshank, and Will Brown were next to invest in the grocery business.²⁵

Anderson Hooks became interested in the grocery business in 1902 and discussed the matter with his wife Josia. Josia was a school teacher and Anderson Hooks felt that she would be of much value to him in the business and to the community. Their first store was located across the street to the left of the present post office. Anderson and Josia Hooks lived about three blocks northeast of this point. After a time they decided that it would be far more convenient to

²⁴ Mary Intuz, "Personal Interview," August 15, 1948.

²⁵ Wiley Hooks, "Personal Interview," November 27, 1949.

have the grocery store in their home. They set up the store in the front of the house and they lived in the back. They operated it this way for a number of years, until the place was destroyed by fire. They re-built the house and store and operated it until the death of Josia Hooks in 1930.⁸⁶

In 1905 Seaborn Carter and Augustus Austin opened a variety store. It was the best equipped store of its kind to be set up in Tatums, up to this time. Dry goods, notions of all kinds and groceries were stocked. The goods were hauled from Paula Valley, Indian Territory, in a wagon. Roads were of dirt, no bridges had been built between Tatums, Indian Territory, and Paula Valley, Indian Territory, and Wild Horse Creek had to be forded at the shallowest place. The horses could hardly pull a loaded wagon across as the banks on each side were steep. Seaborn Carter and Augustus Austin carried groceries up the bank to lighten the load to be pulled by the team. Seaborn Carter purchased Augustus Austin's share in the store after three years, and operated the store alone for several years. He retired from business in 1931.⁸⁷

Ronald Spigner started a grocery in 1909. He continued in business several years. He farmed, also. Later he

⁸⁶ Wiley Hooks, "Personal Interview," November 27, 1949.

⁸⁷ Seaborn Carter, "Personal Interview," October 14, 1948.

decided farming would require all of his time, so in 1913 he closed his grocery and devoted all of his time to his farm work.²⁸

Dan Evans and his wife Mattie Evans opened a grocery business in 1919. The building was made of concrete blocks, very spacious and was well-stocked. Dan and Mattie Evans were born in Texas, grew up and married, and then moved to Ryan, Oklahoma. Finding it difficult to operate a grocery in Ryan they moved to Tatum. Dan Evans operated a grocery store in Tatum from the time of his arrival in 1919 until his death in July of 1931.²⁹

In 1931 Nathan Spigner started in the grocery business in Tatum. His father Ronal Spigner was fortunate enough the year before to have had several oil wells drilled on his farm. These produced well and he built for Nathan a new store building. Nathan Spigner kept a large supply of groceries and had good patronage for a short period. Nathan Spigner was young and single. He found the grocery business a little confusing and he soon closed it.³⁰

In 1932 H. B. Mitchell, a young man who had spent his early childhood in Tatum, Oklahoma, but who had later left

²⁸ Ogalia Spigner Rogers, "Personal Interview," July 2, 1949.

²⁹ Willie Evans, "Personal Interview," September 11, 1948.

³⁰ Ogalia Rogers, "Personal Interview," July 2, 1949.

to travel and continue his education, returned to Tatums and made plans to operate a grocery store. Finding the store building vacant which had been prepared for Nathan's Grocery, he immediately contacted the person in charge and opened a store in the same building. He operated in this location two years. He then decided to build himself a building on property he owned one block from Nathan's place. Hiram Mitchell still operates a grocery store and at the same time manages his farm. In addition to this he operates an investment company, dealing in oil and gas leases, oil royalty and farm loans. He was appointed as the first chairman of the county election board of this precinct.⁵¹

In 1933 Jess Mitchell, H. S. Mitchell's uncle, started a grocery. For a short while he operated in Nathan Spigner's building, but because Ogalia Spigner Hooks had become interested in the grocery business and looked forward to using Spigner's building, Jess Mitchell was forced to move. He then bought a building and moved it to Tatums. He operated his grocery store in Tatums until 1948 when he was forced to close it because of failing health.⁵²

In 1935 Thomas Carter opened another grocery store in Tatums. He soon became discouraged because he had little

⁵¹ Ogalia Hogans, "Personal Interview," July 2, 1949.

time to devote to other activities and operated only a few months.

Later in the year of 1935 Ogalia Spigner Hooks opened a grocery store, which she operated for two years. She was forced to close because of her responsibility as the mother of several children.

J. J. Tucker opened a grocery store in 1936. He operated until his death. Afterward his widow Mary Tucker and his daughter Maybell Tucker continued in business until the year of 1947. They closed to invest in safe business in Ardmore, Oklahoma, a near by city.⁵²

Gene Smallwood and his wife Ora D. Smallwood were located on their farm near Tatum until 1944. They then moved their house to the town of Tatum and settled very near the school. Seeing a need for a small confectionary to serve the school children, his wife Ora D. Smallwood encouraged him to invest in things that would easily sell to any school group. Along with this, they stocked staple groceries. Since their investment they have found need for remodeling in order to stock more groceries to accommodate their customers.⁵³

In the fall of 1945 Jewell Carter Varner, and her father Joseph Carter discussed opening another grocery store

⁵² Ora D. Smallwood, "Personal Interview," May 20, 1949.

in Tutum. Previously only staple groceries had been stocked but the plans of Joseph Carter for his son-in-law and daughter included fancy groceries, also. Joseph Carter purchased the building that Seaborn Carter had built for his business and immediately had necessary repairs made.³³

December 5, 1946, the first groceries were purchased for Warner's Grocery. For the first time Tutum had a grocery store stocked with all kind of groceries, fresh meats, and confections.

January 19, 1946, Jimmy Lee Warner received an honorable discharge from the United States Navy. He came to Tutum and immediately went to work at the grocery store. Soon afterward he increased the stock, and purchased all new electrical equipment for the store. At the present time Warner's Grocery has the largest stock of groceries in Tutum. The building also houses the United States Post Office.³⁴

C. C. Riley invested in grocery business in 1947. In addition to the grocery store his sister Mattie Riley managed a cafe for him. C. C. Riley remained in business one year, after which he decided to go to a larger city.

There are, from this long list of grocery stores which were opened in Tutum, at present, three grocery stores which

³³ Joseph Carter, "Personal Interview," July 8, 1949.

are supplying Tatum and surrounding communities. They are Verner's, Smallwood's and Mitchell's.

VIII. Physicians and Drug Stores

In 1904 when it was still necessary for a doctor to take the Medical Board examination in Pauls Valley, Indian Territory, a Dr. L. H. Henry fulfilled the requirements of the board and came to Tatum as a qualified medical doctor. He encouraged John Collins to open a drug store, in order that prescriptions might be filled in Tatum. John Collins operated the drug store and a soda fountain.³⁴

In 1908 soon after John Collins decided to discontinue business, Doctor L. H. Henry invested in drugs. In 1918 Doctor L. H. Henry left Tatum, Oklahoma, and started practice in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Doctor J. E. Brooks came to Tatum in 1918. He practiced medicine and also owned one-half interest in a drug store. Rufus Hooks owned the other share. He helped to operate the drug store and practiced medicine here until his death in August, 1927.³⁴

Several years passed and the citizens had to use doctors in surrounding towns; however in 1938, a Doctor C. J. Smith

³⁴ J. D. Hooks, "Personal Interview," August 18, 1948.



Figure 10

The Home of Mr. and Mrs. Willie Brown



Figure 11

The Home of Mr. and Mrs. Gona Swilwood

of Arkansas came to Tutum well informed and anxious to serve. He remained until 1940.

IX. Other Enterprises

Some business enterprises in Tutum were of short duration.

<u>Name of Enterprise</u>	<u>Proprietors</u>
Recreation Hall and Club House . . .	Joseph Carter and Turner
Cafe	Edward Pettus
Cafe	Yeo Evans
Barber Shop	Bennie and David Hooks
Night Club	Daniel Hooks
Cleaners	Rev. B. F. Johnson & Riley
Night Club	Eddie Hooks
Grocery Store	Eddie Hooks
Grocery Store	Joseph Carter
Night Club	Joseph Carter
Recreation Hall	G. C. Wiley
Barbecue Stand	Rase Swindall
Barbecue Stand	Allie Pettus
Grocery Store	Levi and Grant Franklin

At the present time there are two night clubs and cafes combined in Tutum. They are operated by Joe Swindall, and Ida and Emma Green. Joe Swindall has been operating for

a number of years; however, the other night club and cafe has been recently established.³⁵

X. Oil Fields

Early Indian was filled with families that were in this area prior to statehood. Many of the families were born there and were called Freedmen of the Five Civilized Tribes. At this time a man could farm all the land he wanted. He was required only to fence it. Few people, however, took the initiative to clear land and cultivate it so that it could be used for farming purposes. In 1907 when Oklahoma was admitted to the Union as a state all adult Freedmen of the Five Civilized Tribes could claim land. Each person received forty acres. There were many families that received as much as three hundred acres of land as most of the families were large and had grown children at the time. Negroes in this area who were not born there even if they were residents at the time of allotment could not claim land.

Many of the freedmen farmed and improved their allotments; others sold their land for small sums to Negroes from other states who had moved in. From 1895 until 1937 farming was the chief support for the citizens. In 1938 an oil

³⁵ Ggalia Spister Rogers, "Personal Interview," July 2, 1949.

company that had previously leased Henry Carter's land drilled the first oil well in this community.⁵⁶

Various companies began to drill oil wells. In 1929 other wells were drilled on the following farms: Willie Hooks, one well; Quessie Carter, two wells; and on the Rufus Hooks and Doctor Brooks estate there were two wells drilled.

Rozell Spigner owned 160 acres of land very near property on which the other wells had been drilled and starting in 1930 there were sixteen oil wells drilled on his farm in succession. All the wells were drilled by the spring of 1931 and Rozell Spigner has received income from them each year since.

James Hook's farm joined Rozell Spigner's on the east side. In the same year seven oil wells were drilled on his farm; a total of sixteen wells on W. E. Mitchell's farm to the east of James Hook's farm; and four oil wells were drilled on the farm of Ethel Franklin.⁵⁷

In 1932 two oil wells were drilled on the farm of Joseph G. Carter. These wells produced both gas and oil. Five families have used gas from these wells to make their homes more comfortable and modern. Vanster Hooks obtained

⁵⁶ Mary Tatum, "Personal Interview," August 15, 1949.

⁵⁷ Joseph Carter, "Personal Interview," July 2, 1949.

oil production on his farm about the same time. Rufus Hooks, his son, obtained more production on his farm in 1934. Florence Lucas obtained one well in the same year; however, she did not receive any money because of the fact that oil was cheap at the time, and the expense of piping oil in small quantities would amount to far more than the value of the oil.⁵⁸

The price of oil has increased greatly since that time and several of the owners have received enough money to be mentioned in "Who's Who in Colored America." Rosell Spigner and Willie Mitchell are no longer residents of this city. Rosell Spigner first moved to Muskogee, Oklahoma, and then to Ardmore, Oklahoma. Willie Mitchell lives in Ardmore, Oklahoma, also. They have made investments there and in many other places. The other fortunate citizens are still residents of Datums, Oklahoma.

The oil fields continued to grow and at the present time new wells are being drilled on Queenie Carter, Ada Hooks, Joseph Carter, Willie Evans and Minor Lucas' property.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Joseph Carter, "Personal Interview," July 2, 1949.

CHAPTER IV

FRATERNAL ORGANIZATIONS

Masonic Lodges

The first fraternal organization of Tutum, Indian Territory, was the Masonic Lodge. The inspiration to organize this lodge came after the Sunset Chapter of Prince Hall Masons of Ardmore, Oklahoma, performed the burial ceremonies for one Alford Franklin. While the Masons were having their ceremonies, all around the church there was a manifestation of interest on the part of both men and women of the community. One year later a Masonic Lodge was organized.

L. A. Hill, a deputy of the Masonic Grand Lodge, was sent to organize the lodge at Tutum, Indian Territory. The lodge was named Friendship Lodge Number 79, Saint John Charter. The first Worshipful Master elected to lead the group was Walter Franklin. The first meetings were held in a dug-out, excavated by members of the lodge. The members were faithful, worked hard and looked forward to the time when they could build a more suitable meeting place.¹

In the year of 1890 the Masonic Brothers talked with the citizens of the community concerning a building in which

¹ J. D. Hooks, "Personal Interview," August 15, 1948.

a school and a Masonic Temple would be combined. At this time the school was financed by the citizens and they agreed to build a two-story building and use the first floor for a school and the second floor for Masonic purposes. This plan was carried out and the building was used in the manner planned for several years. Later a disagreement arose and the Masonic Brothers built themselves a building to be used solely by themselves. The new building was located one block west of the location shared previously with the school.

In the year of 1927 the Masonic Temple burned. The members purchased a building in a neighboring town and moved it to Tatum and placed it on the same lot.²

From 1898 to 1938 eight members served as Worshipful Masters. They were: Dan Spinger, Will Brown, John Collins, Willie Newberry, Jim Buckner, Jim Brooks, and J. D. Hooks. During the time that J. D. Hooks served as Worshipful Master several hundred Negroes were mining near Scalgate, Oklahoma. An accident occurred and several hundred men were killed, forty-eight of whom were Master Masons and affiliated with subordinate lodges in the state of Oklahoma. Their beneficiaries were to have received \$500.00 each and honorary burial. The Grand Chapter was unable to pay this amount. Many Masons became afraid to continue membership with the subordinate lodges.³

² J. D. Hooks, "Personal Interview," August 15, 1948.



Figure 12
The Home of Mr. and Mrs. Willie Young



Figure 13
The Home of Mr. and Mrs. Willie Young (Side View)

Finally Friendship Lodge Number 79 organized under the Prince Hall Charter of the state of Oklahoma became so weak that a deputy by the name of Clark came from the state of Texas and organized the same group under Texas jurisdiction, order of Saint Joseph. Later the Prince Hall Charter of Masons Saint John Order which had previously operated in Tutum, Oklahoma, re-organized and a law suit between Prince Hall Masons of Oklahoma and the Clark Order of Texas followed. The Prince Hall Order of the state of Oklahoma won, after which the Clark faction was ordered to withdraw from the state of Oklahoma.

The members of Friendship Lodge Number 79 of Free and Accepted Masonry hardly knew what to do. From 1934 until 1947 the organization made no progress. In the spring of 1947 a deputy from the state of Oklahoma Grand Lodge Order of Prince Hall Charter of Free and Accepted Masons, came to Tutum and re-organized the same lodge. Thirteen members were in the reorganization. This time the group chose for Worshipful Master, a long-time citizen of Tutum, Joseph Carter.⁵

The Worshipful Master worked hard and untiringly. The Masonic Temple that was built in 1938 was somewhat dilapidated and the first major task of Joseph Carter was to repair

⁵ J. D. Hooks, "Personal Interview," August 18, 1948.

the building. Funds were raised by the members and the building was repaired and made ready for use.

Within three months four old members were re-instated and in November in the year of 1949 the lodge received applications from several outstanding men of the community. The Masons are stronger now than ever in the history of their existence in this community. Each year they make cash contributions to the Grand Chapter for the purpose of furthering the cause of education and other contributions to charity.⁴

Friendship Lodge boasts of having the oldest Masons alive in the state of Oklahoma. Charter members still living are Willis Newberry, Will Brown, and Dan Spigner who for more than fifty years have been associated with Masonry. Mr. Newberry's son, Wiley, who is fifty-one years of age, tells of his early school days when the school was located on the first floor of the Masonic Temple and the Masons met upstairs. He says that many meeting days his father Mr. Willis Newberry would recognize his voice as he would create disturbances in the school room and would call from a window up above for him to obey the teacher.⁴

Friendship Lodge Number 79 has thirty-five members, three of which are thirty-second degree Masons.⁵

⁴ Wiley Newberry, "Personal Interview," December 27, 1949.

⁵ Joseph Carter, "Personal Interview," July 2, 1949.

II. Eastern Star Lodges

In 1899, a short time after the organization of the Masonic Lodge in Tatums, an Eastern Star organization was established. Alice Carter was the first Worthy Matron of this group. Emma Taylor was Associate Matron; Lottie Hooks, Secretary; Mollye Newberry, Treasurer; other charter members were: Essie Hooks, Jennie Hooks, Liza Hooks, Carrie Jenkins, Josie A. Hooks, Susie Hooks, Lucie Williams, Maggie Swindall, and Ella Davis. Alice Carter rendered efficient service for this group for years, and afterwards the following women served as Worthy Matrons: Elise Williams, Almedia Hooks, Henrietta Franklin, and Callie Rosenbrough. Like the Masonic Lodge, interest lagged and this group disbanded. The name of this lodge was Mount Mariah No. 145.⁶

In 1934 the deputy Clark who re-organized the Masonic Lodge also re-organized the Eastern Star Chapter. This time Gracie Brooks was chosen for Worthy Matron and Effie Austin as Secretary. As with the Masonic Order the Eastern Star group was forced to disband also. In 1948 soon after the setting up of the Masonic Order for the second time under the Prince Hall Charter, the defunct members of Mount Mariah had the Masonic Lodge to contact the Grand Chapter, Order of

⁶ Mollye Newberry, "Personal Interview," December 27, 1948.

Eastern Star for some one to again organize Mount Harish Chapter. Blanch M. Bruner, the Grand Worthy Matron of the Order of Eastern Star, State of Oklahoma, came to Tatum and re-instated the Eastern Stars of Mount Harish Chapter Number 145. This time there were eleven charter members.⁷ Gracia Brooks was elected Worthy Matron of this group. Effie Austin, Associate Matron; Delia Hooks, Secretary; Mollie Newberry, Treasurer; other members were: Jennie Carter, Audrey Newberry, Alberta Winslett, Mary Mannings, Viola Mannings, Julia Williams, and Irene Winslett.

As time passed minor disagreements arose. The lodge made no progress. Knowing the joys of a harmonious group and the misery of a disagreeable group several of the charter members asked for a division of the lodge. Again the Grand Worthy Matron of the Order of Eastern Star Lodge of the State of Oklahoma came to the group, heard the complaints and divided the chapter. Ten members remained in Mount Harish Chapter and in June, 1940, twelve members organized a new chapter known as Sheba Chapter Number 5, Prince Hall Charter, Order of Eastern Star Lodge, Oklahoma Jurisdiction. The Worthy Matron of this group is Effie Austin; Lillie Evans, Associate Matron; Annie Mae Pettus Perry, Secretary; Mollie

⁷ Effie Austin, "Personal Interview," December 29, 1949.

Newberry, Treasurer; Audrey Newberry, Conductress; Frankie Plummer, Associate Conductress; Dorothy Malone, Jannie Carter, Blanche Strong, Jewell O. Varner, and Madine Hogg, Women of the Star; and Geneva James, sentinel. This group is said by their Matron to be loyal, agreeable, and progressive.⁸ Mount Mariah is still organized and progressing under the leadership of their Worthy Matron, Gracie Brooks.⁹

III. Knights of Pythias

The Knights of Pythias Lodge Number 36, King David Charter was organized at Tatum, Oklahoma, in 1926. B. P. Williams was chosen for Chancellor Commander; Willie Newberry, Under-Chancellor Commander; Robert Richardson, Keeper of Records and Seal; Dave Plummer, Master of Finance; Edgar Barr, Chaplain; Lonnie Williams, Harrison Prince, and Steve Buckner, Trustees; other charter members were: Earnest Powell, J. H. Newberry, Sam Buckner, Will Kindrick, and U. S. Richardson. This organization was short-lived but attracted much attention during the few years of organization. Many men affiliated with it.

⁸ Ernie Austin, "Personal Interview," December 29, 1949.

⁹ Irene Mannings, "Personal Interview," September 11, 1948.

The depression of 1931 saw the disbanding of the organization. The members were unable financially to pay their dues and were forced to withdraw.



Figure 14

The Home of Mr. and Mrs. J. L. Varner



Figure 15

Home of Mr. and Mrs. Jimmy Lee Varner (Side View)

CHAPTER V

ORGANIZATION OF SCHOOL DISTRICT NO

1. Later Schools

A description has been given elsewhere of the earlier schools. As time passed on a marked improvement was noted in the school attendance, physical plant, and teacher personnel.

When Oklahoma was admitted as a state in 1907, this meant much for the schools as now they were to be supported by the state rather than by individual families.

Where schools had previously been held only three months out of a year, they were being held eight months with salaries being paid by the county.¹

From a crude building built by the citizens, to a fairly comfortable one story rock house was the first change made by the government. Better seating facilities and materials for pupils to work with were provided. Instead of one teacher, three teachers were employed and parents were urged to see that their children were kept in school. For the benefit of the families most of whom were farmers, the school term was divided into two parts. Two months were held in

¹ Willie Evans, "Personal Interview," September 11, 1948.

the summer, then school was dismissed for a period of about two months for the harvest, then resumed in the latter part of November. Most of the families took advantage of the many opportunities offered them and their children through the schools and co-operated with authorities to keep their children in school.²

Schools cannot be developed over night nor in a year. So it was with the schools of Satuma. The school was put under the supervision of a local school board and the county superintendent. Most of the board members were without previous experience in handling school affairs, so the trial and error method was resorted to with many errors being made. The monetary element crept into the picture and teachers were forced through bad politics to pay a remuneration before they would be employed, and at one time were forced to live at designated homes in the community.³ Teachers who were prepared and independent did not wish to continue under such conditions, so there was a large turnover of teachers. Every year saw changes in the faculty personnel. Such conditions in many instances brought some persons who were not qualified teachers. Despite the fact that these conditions existed

² Joseph Carter, "Personal Interview," July 8, 1949.

³ J. D. Hooks, "Personal Interview," August 15, 1949.



Figure 16

Tatum High School - Main Building



Figure 17

Rear View of the High School Gym

for several years, the school continued to operate and conditions gradually improved.⁴

2. Financial History of School District 50

Little is known about the financial history of School District 50 from statehood in 1907 until 1929. This lack of knowledge is contributed to the fact that prior to 1929 school boards controlled all finances of the district and little record keeping was done. In 1929 when the school was placed under the direct supervision of the county superintendent of schools, all records of finance were handled and filed in the office of the county clerk.

Table I on page 54 contains information concerning the finance of School District 50.⁵

From July, 1940, until the present time the State Department of Education has sent the funds for all of the separate schools of Carter County together; therefore, it would be difficult to show the exact amount of the appropriation for Satus school; however, it is a known fact that the salary of the principal increased from \$100.00 per month to \$800.00 per month, and teachers' salaries from \$80.00 per

⁴ Joseph Carter, "Personal Interview," July 2, 1949.

⁵ Report taken from records in the office of the County Clerk, Ardmore, Oklahoma.

OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
 STATE OF OKLAHOMA
 OKLAHOMA STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

TABLE I

TEACHERS' SALARIES, MAINTENANCE, TRANSPORTATION, JANITOR'S SALARY, PRIMARY AID, AND STATE AID, DISTRICT 60, TATUM, OKLAHOMA

Year	Maintenance	Transportation	Janitor's Salary
1930	\$ 800.00		
1931	600.00		
1932	400.00		
1933	600.00		
1934	300.00		
1935	395.00	\$ 800.00	
1936	500.00	800.00	\$160.00
1937	500.00	1,400.00	300.00
1938	1,716.16	900.00	500.00
1939	1,307.44	1,320.00	800.00

Year	Primary Aid	Homestead Exemption	State Aid	Salary
1930				\$5,150.00
1931				5,500.00
1932				4,825.00
1933				4,720.00
1934				4,729.00
1935				5,240.00
1936				5,540.00
1937				5,240.00
1938	\$3,661.34	\$1,167.00	\$2,106.34	5,440.00
1939	3,070.00	603.96	3,356.00	4,600.00

Read table thus: For the year of 1930 the amount of money received for maintenance was \$800.00, and for salary \$5,150.00. Read in like manner for succeeding years.

month to \$135.00 per month. In 1948 salaries were increased to \$2,000 per year for teachers. In 1949 salaries were raised to \$2500.00 per year for teachers. The amounts mentioned refer to minimum wages for teachers with degrees and five years of teaching experience.⁶

In later years, even though the amount for Tutum school cannot easily be determined, there appears to be a steady increase in school expenditures. In 1948 appropriations included funds for the following: Administration, teachers' salaries, state aid for teachers' salaries; supplies; state aid for supplies, maintenance for equipment, plant operation, state aid for plant operation, up keep of real property, state aid for up keep of real property, auxiliary activities, transportation operation, state aid for transportation operation, new equipment for education system, state aid for education equipment, veterans and building fund.⁷

⁶ Gloria B. Ainsworth, "Personal Interview," August 3, 1949.

⁷ Report taken from record in the office of the County Clerk, Ardmore, Oklahoma.

CHAPTER VI

TEACHERS OF DISTRICT 50

Before statehood eight persons taught school in Tatums. They were: E. R. Carter, P. R. Black, J. Wells, W. H. Ware, C. R. Green, H. F. Franklin, F. R. Gee, and Sylvia Thrush.

After statehood in 1909 W. F. Lewis was chosen as the first principal of Tatums, School District 50. Professor Craig succeeded W. F. Lewis in 1914. The school enrollment had increased considerably and two other teachers, Mary Malone, and E. D. Buchanan, came to assist him. In 1915 Porter Sims was sent to Tatums as principal. Mamie Carter and Doll Beatty were chosen to teach with him. In 1916 A. L. Jenkins served as principal. In 1917 J. J. Thurman was hired as principal and he chose a M. E. Aldrige, Beulah Carter, and H. C. Cozka as the other teachers.¹

During 1916 school enrollment more than doubled. T. J. Slaughter was hired as principal. Teaching with him was his wife Letha Slaughter, Ada Sims, Electra Elliott, Fannie Kennedy, and Alma Jace. This faculty worked together until 1923. In 1923 all the teachers except T. J. Slaughter and his wife Letha Slaughter were moved and Winnie Ike

¹ Winnie Leonard, "Personal Interview," November 1, 1949.

Leonard, Alice Simmons, C. C. Jessie, and L. E. Huggins came to replace them.²

In 1922 B. C. Fox was appointed principal. Charlene Williams, Ethel Kanyon, Esther Lay, and Winnie Leonard taught with him.

In 1926 B. L. Hamilton, who had served as principal in 1924, came back to Fatums as principal. He served the school two terms. Levi Vickers and Mattie Webb taught with him along with other teachers previously named.

In 1933 an L. L. Eldridge was chosen as principal. Gamelia Sanford, W. E. Simpson, Violet Kemner, Mary Mack, and Gloria Ainsworth served as teachers.³

The short tenure of teachers has been discussed elsewhere; however, this helps to point out why it was necessary to change the supervision of the school from the local board to that of direct supervision of the County Superintendent.

In 1929 the first year after the County Superintendent took over the school, L. H. Harris was chosen principal. W. E. Franks was director of the school. L. H. Harris served until 1933. During this time the following teachers served: Endora Phillips, Mamie Simmons, Fannie Smith, Winnie Leonard,

² Winnie L. Franks, "Personal Interview," November 1, 1949.

³ Violet Kemner Hooks, "Personal Interview," July 3, 1949.

Geneva Smith, Clevia Perry, M. Smith, Gladys Lee, W. E. B. Hill, M. G. Turner, Lillian Daily, H. F. Smith, and Violet Kenner Hooks.⁴

In 1935 I. H. Jackson was chosen as principal. W. E. Franks, Dorothy Jackson, Winnie Leonard, Lillian Daily, Hattie Simmons, Violet Kenner Hooks, Audrey Wilson, Lillian Johnson, and D. H. Cook served as teachers.

In 1936 W. E. Franks was chosen as principal. George Hill, Audrey Wilson, H. F. Smith, Hattie Mae Smoots, Violet Kenner Hooks, Hattie Simmons, and Cleo Cherry were the teachers.⁵ W. E. Franks served as principal until 1947, longer than any other principal in the history of the school. Other teachers who taught with him were: Theodore Mitchell, Lillian Guest, Winnie Leonard Franks, E. Owens, Ann Alexander, D. G. Hannah, Gaynelle Tolliver, Carl Totton, Jewell Carter, Blanche Carter Spigler, Doris Gause, Lula Carter, Bernice McIntyre, Irene McKernan, Thomas Taylor, William Hogg, Carl Crisp, Bessley Mitchell, William Gayles, Eula Jackson, and Ruth Ella Gee.⁶

In 1947 T. J. Malone was elected as principal. He appointed as teachers his wife, Dorothy Malone, and Doris

⁴ Violet Kenner Hooks, "Personal Interview," July 3, 1949.

⁵ Hattie Sanford Simmons, "Personal Interview," October 10, 1949.

Hanton, Curtis Hall, A. G. Hill, Violet K. Hooks, Willie Faye Roberts, Jewell C. Varner, and William Hogg. Doris Hanton resigned. Mildred Grant succeeded her. Shortly afterward Mildred Grant resigned and H. E. Burrow succeeded her. T. J. Malone is principal at the present time and he still has with him the faculty named.⁶

Tatum High School has accepted a number of former students as teachers. Of the teachers named, there have been eight who were former students. They are: Glora D. Lucas, Beulah Carter, Winnie Leonard Franks, Jewell Carter Varner, Beasley Mitchell, Thomas Taylor, Blanche Carter Strong, and Lela Mae Carter. Other qualified former students have had offers but refused to accept.

Qualifications of Teachers

Before 1939 the qualifications for teaching at Tatum were very low. First, because it was a pioneer field for teachers; second, because of the many inconveniences which teachers were subjected to, such as poor transportation (no railroad runs through the town; there was no bus transportation until about 1933, and few citizens owned cars); third, living conditions were very poor and teachers were placed

⁶ Lillian Hoggins, "Personal Interview," October 12, 1949.

rather than having the privilege of selecting a place to live; and, last but not least, teachers had to pay remuneration to get the job. Few of the teachers had more than a high school education.⁷

After the year of 1929 there were two teachers with degrees. They were W. E. Franks and Geneva Smith. Other teachers had two-year certificates. In 1938 there were five teachers with degrees. In 1939 there were nine teachers with baccalaureate degrees. In 1948 one faculty member received her M. S. degree. At present three others are doing graduate work.⁸

Other School Helpers

Through the years there have been several school bus drivers. They were: Willis Lee, Eugene McConnell, Henry Shannon, Henry Riley, Hemish Thrash, and Lyman Pickens. Eugene McConnell has rendered the most efficient service for the longest period of time. He and Lyman Pickens are the present school bus drivers.

Bud Winalett was the first school custodian. He died while rendering service. Coss Smallwood is custodian at

⁷ Joseph Carter, "Personal Interview," July 2, 1949.

⁸ Violet K. Hooks, "Personal Interview," July 3, 1949.

present. He has rendered efficient service for a number of years.⁹

⁹ V. K. Hooks, "Personal Interview," July 3, 1949.

CHAPTER VII

SUPERINTENDENTS AND SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS

Mrs. Mary Hiblack was elected the first Superintendent of the public schools of Carter County soon after statehood. She served as County Superintendent from 1907-1910. Fred Tucker succeeded her and served until 1912. L. M. Thurston then served until 1917. Another woman, Mrs. Katie G. Zanies, entered the race for County Superintendent and was elected. She served until 1926.

In 1926 A. E. Dickerson was elected to the office of County Superintendent. He was defeated in the next election by B. E. Barber. A Mr. Hankie succeeded Superintendent Barber. Superintendent Hankie died while serving his second term of office. His wife and Charles L. Parker completed his term of office. Charles L. Parker was then elected as County Superintendent and served until 1941. It was during the time that he was serving as County Superintendent that the classroom building now in use was erected, also the County employed its first County Supervisor, Mrs. A. A. Wilson. She supervised the separate schools of the County.¹

Elmer Leroy Baker succeeded Charles L. Parker. He employed Mrs. Gloria B. Ainsworth as County Supervisor of

¹ M. L. Thurston, "Personal Interview," August 8, 1946.

the separate schools of Carter County. When the United States entered World War II, he resigned to serve with the United States Navy. His brother, J. Kelly Baker, completed his term and was then elected to the office of County Superintendent. He served until 1946 when Omar Rowe was elected as County Superintendent. It has been said by the citizens of Carter County that Omar Rowe was by far the most efficient superintendent ever elected.²

Five school boards served School District 50 from 1909 until 1929. The board members were: First: Tommy Williams, J. D. Hooks, and John Tucker; Second: Barry Carbins, W. W. Williams, and P. T. Zeigler; Third: Minor Leonard, Minor Lucas, and Tom McConnell; Fourth: Mary Tutum, Joseph Carter, and Eugene McConnell; Fifth: Phillip Ware, Mack Williams, and Joseph Carter.³

Willie Evans, Ausby Mitchell, and Rufus Hooks served as an acting board in 1929.

Since 1929 the separate schools of Carter County have been under the direct supervision of a County Superintendent.⁴

² Ogelia Hogan, "Personal Interview," July 2, 1949.

³ Joseph Carter, "Personal Interview," July 2, 1949.

⁴ J. D. Hooks, "Personal Interview," August 15, 1948.

CHAPTER VIII

PUPILS OF DISTRICT FIFTY

1. Enrollment

When Enoch H. Carter started a school in Tatum to teach the three R's only forty children enrolled. This was a subscription school. As time passed more families moved to this area and there was a steady increase in enrollment.¹

After Oklahoma was admitted to the Union as a state and public education was provided for the children of Tatum, the enrollment increased from forty in 1907 to two hundred and fifty in 1940. It was in this year that enrollment reached its peak.²

An examination of Table II, presented on the following page, will show the number of students graduating from the eighth grade, also the twelfth grade for the years 1930 to 1948 inclusive. The figures in this table will show that there has been an increase in enrollment until 1940. The decrease in enrollment since 1940 may be due to the fact that many families went to larger cities during World War II to work in war plants; most of these remained in cities after the war.

¹ Mary Tatum, "Personal Interview," August 15, 1948.

² Information taken from permanent records filed in the office of the principal, Tatum High School.

Table II also shows that a total of 173 pupils graduated from the eighth grade from 1930 to 1948, and a total of 109 pupils graduated from the twelfth grade. The number finishing the twelfth grade is approximately 64 per cent of the number graduating from the eighth grade.

TABLE II

NUMBER OF STUDENTS GRADUATING FROM TATUNG SCHOOL,
FOR YEARS 1930-1948 INCLUSIVE

Year	Eighth Grade Graduates	High School Graduates
1930	19	3
1931	10	1
1932	17	5
1933	8	6
1934	5	1
1935	6	7
1936	14	7
1937	9	4
1938	12	2
1939	4	2
1940	10	3
1941	5	15
1942	9	4
1943	11	2
1944	8	11
1945	12	3
1946	10	4
1947	8	9
1948	5	10
Average	10	5

Read table thus: In 1930 Tatung High School had 19 pupils to graduate from the eighth grade and 3 pupils to graduate from the twelfth grade. Read in like manner for succeeding years.

CHAPTER IX

HISTORY OF BUILDINGS

Despite the fact that the school at Tatum was at one time housed with the Masonic Lodge, the pupils of Tatum have had the privilege of enjoying some new buildings built for school purposes only.

In 1914 during the time that Professor Craig was principal, a one story rock building was built for the children of Tatum. The school progressed rapidly and in 1917 immediately after T. G. Slaughter was elected as principal another story was added to the one story rock building. Then in 1928 a new one-story rock building was erected giving additional room and better facilities for the children. Professor J. L. Hamilton was principal of the school at this time.¹

In 1936 under the principalship of I. H. Jackson the present brick building was constructed. The music department gained much recognition under Mrs. D. M. Jackson, his wife. Later in the year, Mr. W. E. Franks was named principal and under his administration the new building was equipped with electric lights, running water, butane gas, and a telephone. The library was classified and the home economics department was equipped.

¹ Gloria B. Ainsworth, "Personal Interview," August 3, 1949.

In 1945 soon after the end of World War II Principal Franks impressed upon the minds of the citizens the urgent need of a gymnasium. Nearly all the surrounding high schools had gymnasiums and Principal Franks found it hard for the boys and girls of Tatum to compete with children from other schools in basketball and other indoor sports. He discussed his plans in a parent-teacher meeting. Jimmy Lee Varner, who was president of the Parent-Teacher Association at the time, immediately appointed a committee to work with Principal Franks on plans for getting a gymnasium erected in Tatum. Ogalia Rogers, Quennie Carter, Jimmy Lee Varner, W. E. Franks, and Mrs. Gloria S. Ainsworth, the County Supervisor, made up the committee. They worked untiringly. Soon afterwards an election of County Officers was held. The superintendent at the time, J. R. Baker, was defeated and Omar Rowe elected. W. E. Franks then went to Purcell, Oklahoma, as principal; however in 1947 plans for the gymnasium were completed and in May of 1948 the gymnasium was completed and dedicated.²

In addition to the gymnasium there was built a manual training building, a modern hot lunch room, and a double garage for the two school buses now in use. The school is completely modern, well furnished, and owns many types of

² Violet K. Hooks, "Personal Interview," July 3, 1948.

equipment for modern education, including a film projector and a film strip machine.³

³ Violet K. Hooks, "Personal Interview," July 3, 1949.

CHAPTER I

SUMMARY

Tatum, which has an all-Negro population has grown from a small village to a rather progressive town. Numerous business enterprises have been undertaken at various times and those which remain compare favorably with the ones of many other towns of similar size.

The people have enjoyed many of the comforts of life, and some luxuries due to the good fortune of oil being drilled on their land.

Some took advantage of their wealth by building modern homes in Tatum, and educating their children. Others, however, took their wealth to other towns and deprived Tatum of the development which their money might have helped to promote. The property of those who moved away helped to support other school districts.

Several of the students who graduated from high school have gone to college and received degrees and appear to be making valuable contributions in the professional fields. Others are making good home economists and helping to contribute to the future of Tatum.

The school has grown from a one teacher school to a school employing nine teachers. It offers in addition to the regular course of study--music, art, industrial arts,

agriculture, commerce and a special agricultural class for veterans.

The only active church now is the Baptist. The Methodist started a church but had so few supporters that it was useless to build. The Church of God in Christ and Church of God likewise failed to build permanent churches. Some members of the Church of God attend church in a neighboring community.

The people of Tatums are still progressing. There is a very active Farm Women's Club. This club every year wins a number of first prizes at the county fair for their canned goods and hand work. The 4H Club of the school won second place in Carter County 4H Round-up.

Because of the lack of funds to purchase modern equipment, interest in farming has lagged. People went to cities during the war to work in war plants. Most of these remained there after the close of the war, and other relatives have likewise gone to the cities to join them.

This record shows that it has not been easy for the people of Tatums to establish and maintain their churches, or other community agencies. It also shows that, despite hardships and sacrifice, the people have made steady progress in raising their standard of living and in improving cultural opportunities for themselves and their children.

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PERSONAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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A HISTORY OF THE TATUMS COMMUNITY



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