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A Survey of the Educational Status and Responsibilities of Negro Teachers of Vocational Agriculture in Texas

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A SURVEY OF THE EDUCATIONAL STATUS
AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF NEGRO
TEACHERS OF VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE
IN TEXAS

BURNS

1947

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A SURVEY OF THE EDUCATIONAL STATUS AND RESPONSIBILITIES
OF NEGRO TEACHERS OF VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE
IN TEXAS

by

Andrew Jackson Burns



A Thesis in Agricultural Education Submitted in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

Master of Science

in the

Graduate Division

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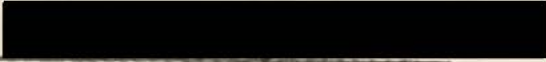
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Prairie View Agricultural and Mechanical College
Prairie View, Texas

August, 1947

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DATE: July 15, 1947

DEDICATION

To my wife, Mrs. Lillie M. Burns

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The writer wishes to express his appreciation to the Vocational Agricultural teachers of Texas for assistance given him in answering questionnaires.

The writer is very grateful to Dr. E. M. Norris for suggestions, criticisms, and supervision of this study, and to Mr. O. J. Thomas and Mr. W. D. Thompson for valuable information.

A.J.B.

BIOGRAPHY

The writer, Andrew Jackson Burns, was born October 18, 1913, in Jefferson, Texas.

His elementary school training was received at Jefferson, Texas and his high school training at Fort Worth, Texas. He graduated from high school in June, 1933, and entered Prairie View College in September, 1937, as a student in the Division of Agriculture.

In September, 1941, he was employed as Assistant Manager in the College Exchange, and in 1945 he was granted a leave of absence to complete requirements for the Bachelor of Science degree, which he received in August, 1946.

In September, 1946, he entered the Department of Graduate Study in Agricultural Education and pursued work toward the Master of Science degree.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>Chapter</u>	<u>Page</u>
I.	INTRODUCTION 1
	Purpose of Study 2
	Other Similar Studies 2
	Scope of Study 4
	Method of Securing Data 5
II.	PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA 6
	Ages 6
	Colleges Attended 9
	Graduate Study 9
	Teaching Experience 10
	Tenure 11
	Farm Experience 11
	Preparation of Lessons 12
	Responsibilities Other Than Teaching 13
	Religious Activities 13
	Leisure 14
	Difficulties 15
	Likes and Dislikes 16
	Attitude Toward Their Pre-Service Preparation 17
III.	SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS 19
	BIBLIOGRAPHY 21
	APPENDIX 22
	Data Sheet - The Education and Responsibilities of Negro Teachers of Vocational Agriculture in Texas 23

LIST OF TABLES

<u>Table</u>	<u>Page</u>
I. DISTRIBUTION OF THE 61 VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE TEACHERS, BY AGES	6
II. COLLEGES ATTENDED AND AMOUNT OF WORK TOWARD BACHELOR OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN AGRICULTURE	9
III. WORK DONE TOWARD MASTER'S DEGREE, BY COLLEGES	10
IV. TEACHING EXPERIENCE OF THE 61 VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE TEACHERS	10
V. TENURE OF THE 61 VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE TEACHERS STUDIED	11
VI. FARMING EXPERIENCE OF THE 61 VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE TEACHERS	12
VII. ATTENDANCE OF RELIGIOUS SERVICES AND THE CHURCH RESPONSIBILITIES OF THESE 61 TEACHERS STUDIED	14
VIII. HOW 61 VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE TEACHERS SPENT THEIR LEISURE TIME	15
IX. DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY THE VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE TEACHERS	16
X. LIKES AND DISLIKES OF VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE TEACHERS.	16
XI. RECOMMENDATIONS GIVEN BY THE 61 TEACHERS FOR IMPROVING PRE-SERVICE EDUCATION	17

LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure</u>		<u>Page</u>
1.	Organization Chart for Vocational Agriculture Work for Negroes in Texas	7
2.	The Geographical Location of the Vocational Agriculture Teachers Replying to Questionnaire	8

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The Smith-Hughes Act which was passed by Congress in 1917 made possible a system of Vocational Education of such broad scope and importance that it has become recognized as a permanent part of the public schools in the United States.

Since the passing of this act there have been vast changes in agriculture in Texas and in the United States, from the sickle to the combine, the ox to the tractor, four million people to 132 million, a rural civilization to an industrial civilization, free land to scarce high-priced land. These changes, Paul H. Johnstone¹ points out:

...have profoundly influenced the very essence and character of rural living. Even the philosophies, the ideas of right and wrong, have in some cases taken on a wholly new method of agriculture cultivation.

Meanwhile agricultural education also went through a period of early growth until the Land Grant College Act of 1862 granted large amounts of land to the states to be sold for funds to create and maintain agricultural and mechanical colleges.

The pre-service education of Negro Vocational Agriculture teachers in Texas has been primarily the responsibility of Prairie View A and M College.

The importance of preparing prospective Vocational Agriculture teachers adequately for their future work has long been recognized by the College. Continued efforts have been made from the beginning to offer effective pre-service preparation for these agriculture teachers. However, if the goal of improving the Negro farm and farm home is to be

¹Johnstone, Paul H. Yearbook of Agriculture, Washington, D. C., United States Department of Agriculture, 1940, p. 7.

reached so that it will be a source of health, happiness, comfort, culture and income to the family, further improvements in this present educational program must be made.

In order to provide the type of pre-service education needed by Vocational Agriculture teachers, information about the training and responsibilities of Negro Vocational Agriculture teachers now on the field would be helpful. For this reason it seemed desirable to obtain information concerning the education and the responsibilities of Negro Vocational Agriculture teachers in Texas and the conditions under which they live and work; and to offer some suggestions for the pre-service education of prospective workers in this field.

Purpose of Study

The purposes of this study are:

1. To secure information concerning the education of Negro Vocational Agriculture teachers in Texas.
2. To secure information concerning the responsibilities of these agriculture teachers.
3. To secure information concerning the attitudes of these teachers toward these responsibilities.
4. To become acquainted with the conditions under which these teachers live and work.
5. To use the information secured as a suggested guide in pre-service education of Vocational Agriculture teachers in Texas.

Other Similar Studies

A review of literature indicated that no study relative to the Ed-

ucation and Responsibilities of Negro Vocational Agriculture Teachers in Texas had been made. However, one study somewhat of this nature concerning Negro Agricultural Extension agents has been reported.

Boyer² studied "A Survey of Certain Personnel Aspects of the Co-operative Extension Service for Negroes in Texas". He found that in 1945 a majority of the total number of agriculture agents had earned Bachelor of Science degrees in Agriculture. He also found that fourteen institutions of higher learning were represented by the Extension Service personnel in Texas.

The "Summaries of Studies in Agricultural Education"³ has listed a few statewide studies made of Vocational Agriculture in the past twelve years.

Davenport⁴ studied in 1930 "How Teachers of Vocational Agriculture in Louisiana Distribute Their Time". He found that the full-time teacher of agriculture devotes 16.18 per cent of his time to classroom teaching and 1.73 per cent to day-unit and evening-class instruction. He also found that the teacher gives 6.95 per cent of his time to community service and 4.57 per cent to the supervised practice program. It appears that the full-time teacher is the most valuable teacher.

²Boyer, Jacob. A Survey of Certain Personnel Aspects of the Co-operative Extension Service for Negroes in Texas. Unpublished master's thesis, Prairie View A and M College, 1947.

³Summaries of Studies in Agricultural Education (Washington, D. C., United States Government Printing Office, 1935.).

⁴Davenport, Roy L. How Teachers of Vocational Agriculture in Louisiana Distribute Their Time. Library, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 1930.

Hammonds⁵ studied in 1930 "The Distribution of Time of Teachers of Agriculture, Its Relation to Distribution of Aid and to Teacher Training". He found that all teachers were on full aid during the three summer months. He also found that teachers worked enough if measured in terms of hours.

Wharton⁶ studied in 1925 "Community Activities of Teachers of Vocational Agriculture in North Carolina". He found that the factors observed in the development of successful community activities relate to guidance by an alert and capable teacher in helping to promote a well-rounded community program.

Vose⁷ reported in 1939 on "A Study of Work in Farm Mechanics Taught in the Departments of Vocational Agriculture of Western Nebraska and the Training in Farm Mechanics Received by the Teacher". He concluded that more farm mechanics work should be required of the prospective teacher and the work should be made more practical.

Scope of Study

This study is limited to information concerning the Education and Responsibilities of Negro Vocational Agriculture Teachers in Texas. It includes the amount of education these teachers have obtained, the teach-

⁵Hammonds, Carsie. The Distribution of Time of Teachers of Agriculture, Its Relation to Distribution of Aid and to Teacher Training. Library, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York, 1925.

⁶Wharton, Harry G. Community Activities of Teachers of Vocational Agriculture in North Carolina. Library, North Carolina State, Raleigh, North Carolina, 1925.

⁷Vose, Ralph H. A Study of Work in Farm Mechanics Taught in the Departments of Vocational Agriculture of Western Nebraska and the Training in Farm Mechanics Received by the Teacher. Library, Colorado State College, 1939.

ing experience of these teachers and some recommendations for improving the pre-service training of prospective Vocational Agriculture teachers for the Negro schools in Texas.

Method of Securing Data

The data for this study were obtained from personal interviews and from check lists sent to Negro Vocational Agriculture teachers in Texas (Appendix). Interviews were held with the agriculture teachers at the N. F. A. Convention at Prairie View A and M College in February, 1947. The lists were checked and returned by sixty-one of the agriculture teachers. Most of the checking was done at the time of the interview. Interviews were also held with the Teacher Helpers and the Itinerant Teacher-Trainer at Prairie View. The data were tabulated, analyzed, and evaluated. Findings were listed and a summary made.

CHAPTER II

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The State set-up for Vocational Agriculture in the Negro schools of Texas is composed of the State Board, State Director of Vocational Agriculture, and those that are in direct contact with Negro Vocational Education consist of State Supervisors in charge of Negro Work, located at Austin, Texas. The Department of Agriculture Education, Resident Teacher-Trainer, and Itinerant Teacher-Trainer are located at Prairie View College, Texas. The five Teacher-Helpers are located in different areas of Texas, namely, Area One with headquarters in Texarkana, Area Two - Tyler, Area Three - Caldwell, Area Four - Prairie View, and Area Five - Palestine, Texas.

The organization of the State Board for Vocational Education Division of Agriculture for Negroes in Texas is shown in Fig. 1 on the next page.

Ages

The ages of the Vocational Agriculture teachers as a whole range from 22 to 61 years as shown in Table I.

TABLE I. DISTRIBUTION OF THE 61 VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE TEACHERS, BY AGES

Ages	Number Reporting
22-25	7
26-29	7
30-33	9
34-37	12
38-43	8
45-50	7
51-61	4
No Reply	7
Total	61

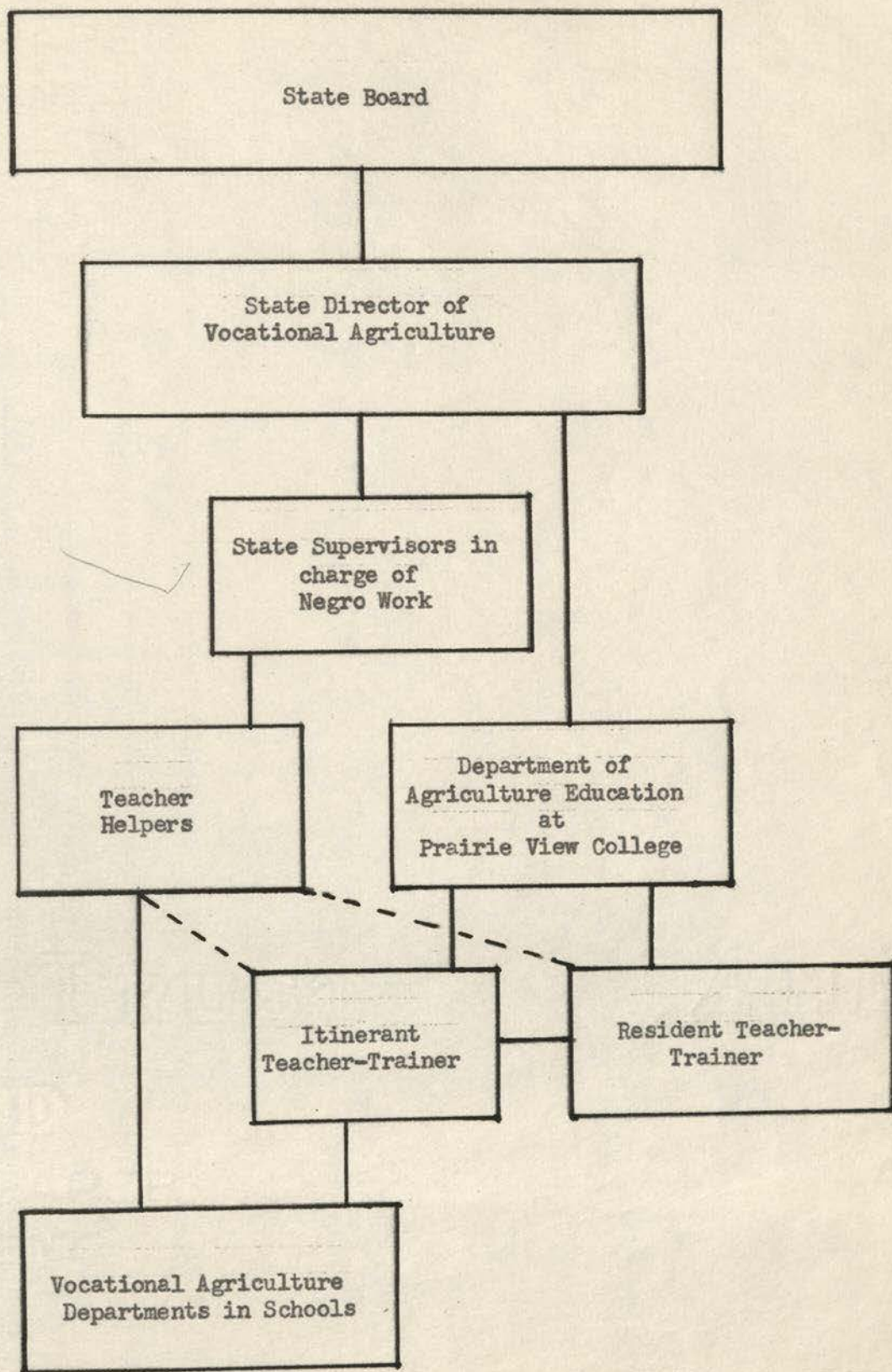
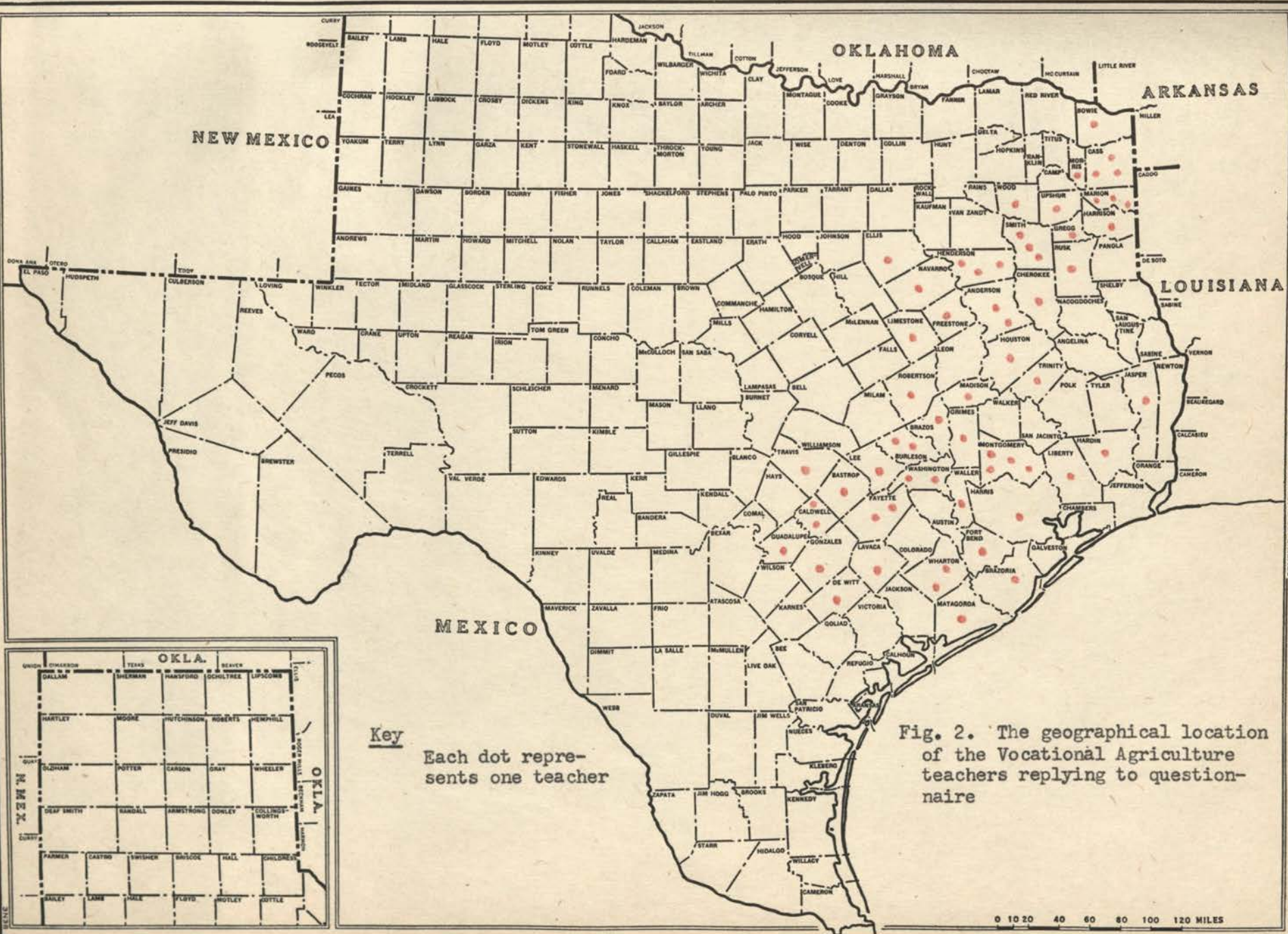
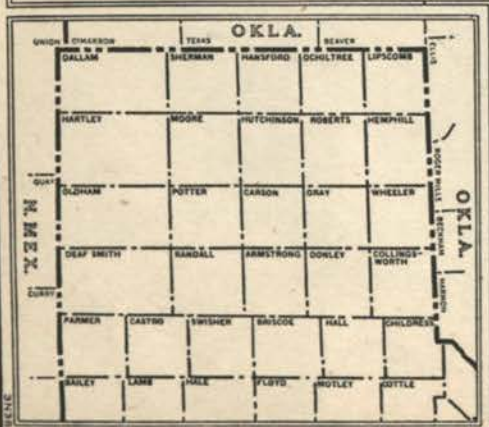


Fig. 1. Organization chart for vocational agriculture work for Negroes in Texas



Key
Each dot repre-
sents one teacher

Fig. 2. The geographical location of the Vocational Agriculture teachers replying to questionnaire



The ages of the teachers in Area I ranged from 23 to 61 years, Area II, 23-57 years; Area III, 22-48 years; and Area IV, 22-51 years, while the ages of the teachers from Area V ranged from 36 to 49. The modal age is from 33 to 37 with 21 teachers covered by this range.

Colleges Attended

In order to teach Vocational Agriculture a man should be a graduate of a four-year course in a standard agricultural college and should meet the state requirements set up for agricultural instructors.

The colleges attended and the amount of college work done by these Vocational Agriculture teachers are shown in Table II.

TABLE II. COLLEGES ATTENDED AND AMOUNT OF WORK TOWARD BACHELOR OF SCIENCE DEGREE IN AGRICULTURE

Colleges	Years Pre-Training							
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Prairie View								56
Hampton Institute								1
Samuel Huston*				1*		1*		
Jarvis*		1*				1*		
No Reply	2							
Total	2	1		1				57 61

*These teachers had to attend Prairie View College to qualify to teach Vocational Agriculture.

All had attended college somewhere and most of them had attended colleges in Texas. The greater portion of the teachers from all five areas had Bachelor of Science degrees from Prairie View College. One teacher had attended a college out of the state.

Graduate Study

Forty-one of the 61 Vocational Agriculture teachers had done work toward the Master of Science degree as shown in Table III.

TABLE III. WORK DONE TOWARD MASTER'S DEGREE, BY COLLEGES

College	Number
Prairie View	29
Kansas State	4
Colorado A and M	4
Iowa State	2
Arkansas A and M	1
Cornell University	1
Total	41

Twenty-nine of the 41 teachers doing graduate work attended Prairie View College, twelve of the forty-one attended colleges and universities out of the state, while 18 of the 61 teachers have done no work toward their Master of Science degree. Two teachers have received their Master of Science degrees from colleges out of the state, and one teacher has completed three semester hours toward his Ph. D. degree.

Teaching Experience

The teaching experience of these Vocational Agriculture teachers ranges from one to 26 years, while two of the teachers had less than a year of teaching experience as Table IV shows.

TABLE IV. TEACHING EXPERIENCE OF THE 61 VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE TEACHERS

Number of Years	Number Reporting
Less than one year	2
1-3	16
4-7	12
8-11	15
12-18	10
19-26	5
Total	61

Temure

The writer found that six of the Vocational Agriculture teachers had been in their present positions less than one year. Most of the teachers had taught in their present positions from one to four years. Only two had taught from 26 to 28 years as shown in Table V.

TABLE V. TENURE OF THE 61 VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE TEACHERS STUDIED

Number of Years	Number Reporting
Less than one year	6
1-4	25
5-8	15
9-13	7
16-21	4
26-28	2
No Reply	1
Total	61

The modal temure was one to eight years with 41 teachers in this grouping.

Farm Experience

A teacher of Vocational Agriculture must have completed a four-year course of college grade in agriculture from an approved Teacher-Training Institution. He must be at least 21 years of age and must have had at least two years of practical farm experience, and must be familiar and in sympathy with the problems of farm life. Table VI shows that the farming experience of these 61 Vocational Agriculture teachers ranged from three to fifty years, while one teacher had experience of farming over fifty years. The modal farming experience ranged from eight to thirty years with forty-five teachers covered by this range.

TABLE VI. FARMING EXPERIENCE OF THE 61 VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE TEACHERS

Number of Years	Number Reporting
3-7	7
8-14	10
15-18	15
19-23	11
24-30	9
39-50	4
Over 50	1
No Reply	4
Total	61

Preparation of Lessons

Planning is the keynote to success, yet too many teachers are of the opinion that teaching plans have little value and even though they are worked out they cannot be followed. Many superintendents require all their teachers to keep daily plans of their work. While to the beginner this may seem unnecessary, the value of them will be appreciated more as time goes on.¹

The Vocational Agriculture teachers were asked when they prepared their lessons. Of the 61 data sheets returned, 15 stated that they prepared their lessons in the evenings and 11 stated that their lessons were prepared over week-ends, while four gave no reply. The remaining 31 teachers gave the following answers concerning the time of lesson preparation:

1. In the summer
2. Daily
3. Off Periods
4. Two weeks in advance
5. Whenever convenient

¹Cook, Glen Charles. Handbook on Teaching Vocational Agriculture, Danville, Illinois: Interstate Printers, 1938, p. 103.

6. Prior to class

Responsibilities Other Than Teaching

The Vocational Agriculture teacher has one of the most difficult jobs to fill. He ranks next to the superintendent and principal in this respect. The agriculture teacher not only must be in the classroom from 9:00 A. M. to 4:00 P. M., but he must be ever ready to assist with the problems of the community.

All of the Vocational Agriculture teachers had some responsibilities other than teaching their regular classes. The responsibilities checked most frequently were:

1. Community Drives
2. Coaching Basketball
3. Conducting Assemblies
4. In Charge of Library
5. Principal of School
6. Assistant Principal
7. Coaching Football
8. Sponsor Student Publication
9. Financial Drives for School
10. Chairman of P. T. A.
11. Sponsor of Senior Class
12. Scout Master
13. Sponsor of Y. M. C. A.

Religious Activities

Table VII shows that the Vocational Agriculture teachers were generally active in religious services to the extent that they were at-

tendants at these services.

TABLE VII. ATTENDANCE OF RELIGIOUS SERVICES AND THE CHURCH RESPONSIBILITIES OF THESE 61 TEACHERS STUDIED

Religious Services	Number Reporting
Sunday School	20
Church Day Service	14
Young People's Union	6
General Church Work	5
Deacon	5
Church Choir	4
District Layman Leader	4
Pastor	1
Church Clerk	1
Superintendent of Sunday School	1
Total	61

The religious services most regularly attended were those that were held in the daytime and commonly called Sunday School and "eleven o'clock" services. These were checked more frequently than any of the others. Twenty attended Sunday School, fourteen attended "eleven o'clock" services, and six attended the Young People's Union. Church responsibilities assumed by teachers were as follows:

1. Church choir
2. District Layman Leader
3. Pastor
4. Church clerk
5. Deacon
6. Superintendent of Sunday School
7. General Church Work

Leisure

The number of hours that the Vocational Agriculture teachers had

for leisure--that is, time to do as they wished--ranged from one to 24 hours weekly. The most popular leisure time activity was hunting (Table VIII). Fifteen teachers indicated hunting as one of their favorite ways of spending leisure time.

TABLE VIII. HOW 61 VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE TEACHERS SPENT THEIR LEISURE TIME

Leisure Time Activity	Number Reporting
Hunting	15
Playing Games	14
Fishing	11
Movies	11
Ball Games	9
Visiting	4
Swimming	2
Scout Camping	1
Listening to Radio	1

Twenty-five teachers indicated playing games and attending movies as other ways of spending leisure time. The ways of spending leisure were limited, yet they did not limit themselves to activities which gave them rest and relaxation. On a whole, there were not many activities in which they participated.

Difficulties

These Vocational Agriculture teachers indicated, as shown in Table IX, that they were not without their difficulties.

Their greatest difficulties as shown in Table IX were too many responsibilities to do best work, insufficient salary, getting cooperation from the community, securing equipment and teaching material, making sufficient teaching plans, working out reports, setting up projects, disciplinary problems and getting along with principal.

TABLE IX. DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED BY THE VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE TEACHERS

Difficulty	Number Reporting
Too many responsibilities	15
Insufficient salary	10
Securing equipment and teaching material	10
Community cooperation	7
Making sufficient teaching plans	1
Insufficient time for vacation	1
Working out reports	1
Setting up projects	1
Disciplinary problems	1
Getting along with principal	1

Likes and Dislikes

The Vocational Agriculture teachers took part in many activities in order to carry on their work; however, as a general rule they have likes and dislikes as shown in Table X.

TABLE X. LIKES AND DISLIKES OF VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE TEACHERS

Likes	No.	Dislikes	No.
Teaching all V. A. classes	28	Low salaries	12
Project work	7	Judging contests	11
Attending V. A. conferences	6	Poor cooperation	9
N. F. A. organization	4	Lack of equipment	7
Coaching basketball and foot- ball	4	Too much routine	5
Adult classes	2	Too many supervisors	4
		Too many meetings	4
		Long hours	4
		Too much work required	3
		Coaching basketball and football	1
		Teaching literary subjects	1
		Crowded classroom	1
		Teaching adults	1

The writer found that the activities liked best and checked most frequently by the Vocational Agriculture teachers were teaching all agri-

culture subjects, N. F. A. work, supervising projects, attending N. F. A. conferences, and refereeing basketball and football games.

The dislikes of the Vocational Agriculture teachers were low salaries, poor cooperation, lack of equipment, too much routine, judging contests, too many supervisors, too many meetings and that so much was required of them that their best work could not be done.

Attitude Toward Their Pre-Service Preparation

The writer found that 41 of the Vocational Agriculture teachers stated that their pre-service training had been adequate, while two teachers gave no reply.

Some of the agriculture teachers checked one or more of the recommendations shown in Table XI for the improvement of the pre-service education of Vocational Agriculture teachers in Texas.

TABLE XI. RECOMMENDATIONS GIVEN BY THE 61 TEACHERS FOR IMPROVING PRE-SERVICE EDUCATION

Recommendation	Number Reporting
More practical work	18
Longer student teaching periods	10
Adequately equipped classrooms	8
Make provision for living on farm	5
Have specialist in field	3
Discontinue summer student teaching	2
More chemistry	2
Making reports	2
Closer supervision	2
More instruction on planning lessons	1
More work in mathematics	1

The recommendations occurring most frequently, and in the order of their frequency, were: (1) more practical work, (2) longer student teaching periods, (3) adequately equipped classrooms, (4) make provision for

living on farm, (5) have specialist in fields, (6) offer more chemistry, (7) closer supervision, (8) more instruction on planning lessons, (9) discontinue student teaching in summer, (10) more work in mathematics, and (11) making reports.

CHAPTER III

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The writer has made an attempt to disclose the facts as they were found, and as reported on the questionnaires which were distributed among the Vocational Agriculture teachers in Texas.

This is a study of the education and responsibilities of the Negro Vocational Agriculture teachers of Texas and the conditions under which they live and work.

All of the teachers had attended college. The greater portion of them were graduates of Prairie View College with Bachelor of Science degrees in Agriculture. The writer found that 41 of these teachers had done work toward their Master's degrees in Agriculture, while 12 of the 41 teachers had done work in colleges out of the state.

The teaching experience of these teachers ranged from one to 26 years while two of these teachers had been teaching less than one year.

The writer found the tenure of these 61 Vocational Agriculture teachers ranged from 1 to 28 years with 53 in this grouping. Two of these teachers had been teaching from 26 to 28 years in the same school.

The leisure time activities of the Vocational Agriculture teachers were limited largely to hunting, playing games, movies, and fishing. They attended regular church services in the daytime but assumed few other church responsibilities.

Some of the Vocational Agriculture teachers indicated on the questionnaires that they had difficulties in doing their work. Many of these were: (1) too many responsibilities, (2) insufficient salaries, (3) teaching material, and (4) community cooperation.

The writer found that most of the Vocational Agriculture teachers thought that they had been adequately prepared for their jobs. The assurances on their part may have been due to the proper pre-service training they had while in college.

Some of the Vocational Agriculture teachers offered these recommendations for improving the pre-service education in the field of Agriculture: more practical work, longer student teaching periods, adequately equipped classrooms, make provision for students to live on farm, have specialist in field and closer supervision.

The results of this study indicated that the pre-service education for Negro Vocational Agriculture teachers in Texas should include:

1. A wide range of courses covering all phases of work in agriculture.
2. Practical and usable instruction in all agriculture courses.
3. Intensive instruction especially in record keeping and farm management.
4. Instruction in extra-curricular activities.

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APPENDIX

24. Do you attend church in your community? _____
25. In what type of church work do you engage? _____
26. Do you assist in local or county relief work? _____
27. Do you assist in other community enterprises or undertakings? _____
If so, which ones? _____
28. What responsibility toward PTA do you have? _____
29. In what local organization or clubs do you participate as a member? _____
30. Are you asked to give talks? _____ (a) For what occasions? _____
Approximate number during the year _____
31. Are you asked to appear on programs in other capacities? _____
(a) If so, in what? _____
(b) Approximate number during year _____
32. Are you responsible for any of the janitorial work in your classrooms? _____ If so, how much? _____
33. Do you assist in County Fairs? _____ Local? _____
34. Do you prepare materials for exhibits and fairs? _____
Kinds _____ (b) Approximate number during year _____
(c) How important are these in your school? _____
(d) How much class time does this require? _____ How much of your personal time? _____
35. Do you have adequate allowance for Farm Shop expenses or must the shop be self-supporting? _____ (a) If self-supporting, how is it done? _____ (b) How do you obtain funds for additional equipment? _____
36. Do you include projects in your class work? _____
37. How much time do the supervision and home contacts require in addition to your regular work? _____
(a) Where do you do this? _____
38. Are you and your agriculture classes responsible for a school garden? _____ (a) What other responsibilities do your agriculture classes have? _____
39. Are adult classes offered in your school? _____ (a) If so, what are your responsibilities to them? _____
(b) If responsible for them, when are these classes taught? _____
(c) How often do they meet? _____
(d) For how many weeks? _____ (e) How many miles do you live from school? _____
40. List any other responsibilities you have in your community. _____

41. What are your greatest difficulties as a teacher? _____
42. What do you do for recreation? _____
(a) Approximately how much time per week do you have for recreation? _____ (b) What type of recreation does your community offer? _____
(c) Is public opinion in your community in favor of or against teachers playing cards? _____ Dancing? _____
43. How much time do you spend daily on school work and school activities? Average number of hours _____ (b) On Saturday _____

- On Sunday _____
44. Of what professional organizations are you a member? _____
45. Do you subscribe to any Ag Journals? _____ (a) What other professional magazine? _____
46. What professional meetings do you attend each year? _____
47. Do you attend all Agriculture conferences in your district? _____
48. Do you have an N.F.A. chapter in your school? _____
49. How frequently do you attend summer school? _____
50. How much professional reading do you do during the school year? (In hours per month) _____ What do you read? _____
51. Would a teachers institute help you do a better job in teaching? _____
If so, in what way? _____
52. Were your undergraduate training and preparation adequate for your job as a teacher? _____ (a) In what respects were they inadequate and lacking? _____
53. How could the course in Agriculture Education have been more helpful? _____
54. How could the course in Student Teaching have been more helpful? _____
55. How might other courses have been made more helpful in your teaching? _____
56. Did you have sufficient preparation for all your extra-curricula activities? _____ (a) What would you suggest for better preparation along that line? _____
57. Do you feel that your responsibilities as a teacher are too great for you to do your best work? _____
58. Do you feel that too much is expected of you? _____
59. What do you consider a reasonable load for an Agricultural teacher? (Include subjects to be taught, and all school and community activities to be directed or assisted with) _____
60. What do you enjoy most in your work as a teacher? (a) _____
(b) _____ (c) _____
(d) _____ (e) _____ (f) _____
61. What do you dislike most in your work as a teacher? (a) _____
(b) _____ (c) _____
(d) _____ (e) _____ (f) _____
62. Do you feel that an increase in salary would affect your efficiency as a teacher? _____
63. If so, in what way? _____