



## LAND UTILIZATION SURVEY OF CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 3 OF DEWEY COUNTY, OKLAHOMA

Vay H. Williams, Leedy, Oklahoma

In recent years teachers of geography everywhere are becoming more and more convinced that the real way to study and teach geography is to study it first hand out in the field. While most of our surveys are made by governmental agencies, national, state, city and corporation, yet any school may make a land utilization survey of a local area thereby assembling information of permanent value and also making the geography class of vital interest to the child.

Three things have become evident in late years with regard to local studies: (1) The type of a regional or local survey tends to vary according to the outlook and personal interest of the individual. Of course a regional survey is incomplete to some extent because of the wide divergence in the method of work and of the initial facts to be recorded. However, such work is of value to institutions interested in Regional Survey for Sociology, which attempts to coordinate surveys and to plan the work on a geographical basis, the structure, physiography, and climate having first consideration, showing the productivity of the soil, growing season and the kind of crops grown. Such facts would form a foundation

for the work of town planning and the establishment of factories according to the location in general.

(2) The educational value of the work itself being carried out by schools and other educational institutions is now fully recognized. It offers a training in appreciation of observation, in the correlation of related groups of phenomena, and in civic pride and local spirit.

(3) The permanent value of the work is evident not only as a lasting record of facts otherwise likely to become extinct in the course of time, but as forming a sure foundation for the different stages of growth and types of civilization. Since all countries pass through the same changes, the first stage is one of hunting and fishing; the second, the pastoral stage; and the third the present period in most sections of the United States, is represented by agriculture in its different phases; the fourth and last is the manufacturing stage. How interesting to see some sections pass through these four stages while others never get out of the first stage. Such a survey would enable a comparison of the different periods with similar conditions present.

#### THE PURPOSE OF THE SURVEY

The primary purpose of the survey was to make a complete record of the uses to which the land was put at the time the map was made; pasture, and permanent grass, arable land including orchards, gardens, and land not suited for agricultural purposes. The location of occupied and unoccupied houses, fence lines, farm to market roads, and state highways.

Some would ask the question, "What will be the value of such a survey when completed?" There are no permanent records of a number of important facts, and among these facts is the utilization of the surface of the country at the present time. As time goes on this utilization changes and there is no record to show exactly where the tillage land has passed over to permanent pasture or is used for other purposes. It is perhaps best to regard the Land Utilization Survey as a special survey which may be used for a great variety of purposes. At the present time the agricultural statistics show variable proportions of each section of the country as waste or non-agricultural land, but there is no means of knowing actually what is included under such classification and whether there are tracts of land which might be made productive. It is impossible to determine the relative benefit of such factors as elevation, drainage, soil, and other factors actually signifying the areas themselves where the change has been brought about in various localities. With a set of such land utilization maps at hand a large number of facts would be readily available. When the time comes, especially in the West, for more intensive farming surely it will be the topographical, the rainfall, soil, and land utilization maps, that will make possible better use of land now used for more extensive purposes. It is very apparent to notice the close correlation between facts of arable land and certain types of soil or geological formation. It is indeed out of the question at this time to prophesy the use to which this type of map may eventually be placed, but separate from the immediate value there is the historical importance. This being noticed now how cotton for example, has spread through northwestern Oklahoma at a higher altitude and invading land which was once used for cattle or for ranches. How much information is there at the present day as to the areas, which are or were under different uses? If there were records of such facts one might also know what areas are suitable for certain types of forests, fruit trees, and different kinds of crops in those older regions where civilization has been established for a long time;

whereas at the present time much labor and expense are lost by experimenting.

From crop acreage, it may be seen that pasture land occupies 8,317 acres as compared with cotton which has 1,993, wheat 2,700, alfalfa 176. The large acreage in pasture land is due to rough topography.

#### CONCLUSION

It is noticed, that the utilization of the land is usually planted in the crops best suited to the soil.

If Land Utilization Surveys were made by the schools of the country they would be of very great value in regard to the influence of physical geography on the human settlement of the country.

It would appear that the value is mainly in providing an exact record of the extent of land utilization at a definite period. Such a map would form an important part of the census of the land from time to time. If the plan is to be of service there must be repetitions of the survey at regular intervals, just as census taking.

◆ ◆ ◆ ◆