

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF POLITICAL BOUNDARIES OF OKLAHOMA AS EXPRESSED IN THE VALUE OF FARM BUILDINGS

LESLIE HEWES, Norman

ABSTRACT

Natural differences, differences in economic production, and differences in historical development may be the basis for regional differentiation. However, the geographer is prone to neglect the historical factor as a cause of diversity in cultural landscapes. The major political boundaries of Oklahoma, both the state boundaries and the Indian Territory—Oklahoma Territory boundary, have considerable expression in the landscape because of their marking off areas of unlike historical development. In some places these boundaries have the characteristics of cultural "fault lines". Of the elements of the cultural landscape, few contribute so largely to the "tone" of an area as farm buildings. In this study the average value of farm buildings per farm by counties was determined from the 1930 census. The most abrupt changes in value were, in general, found along the state boundaries and along the Indian Territory—Oklahoma Territory boundary.

Indian Territory is almost everywhere marked by the poorness of its farm buildings. On all four sides, the counties bordering Indian Territory have more valuable farm buildings than the adjacent Indian Territory counties. Obviously, the explanation depends on the peculiar historical development of Indian Territory since in many cases there is little natural difference between counties on the two sides of the boundary. Among the important cultural factors deserving emphasis are the continuing importance of Indian land, the high degree of tenancy, and a selective immigration of white renters and intruders in the last decades of Indian control.

A comparison of the average values of farm buildings along the two sides of the eastern boundary of Oklahoma is representative.

The following values are for counties arranged from north to south.

Oklahoma County	Bordering County or Counties
\$1188	\$ 1248; 933
720	933; 1267
632	1198; 739
440	739
474	779; 614; 580
409	580; 484; 352

Oklahoma Territory also differs from neighboring areas in the value of farm buildings. In general, its agricultural settlement came at a later date than that of the areas bordering it. In spite of its more recent settlement its farm buildings compare favorably with those of adjacent parts of Indian Territory, but elsewhere the comparison is generally unfavorable. The chief exceptions occur in Osage and Kay Counties, along the Kansas border of Texas County, along both the northern and the western edges of Cimarron County, and in the old Greer County area. Larger land holdings in the Kansas and Texas counties adjoining Oklahoma Territory, providing a more adequate basis of support for the farm population, may well be the

chief reason for the better quality of farm buildings in those counties. The inequality in size of farms, in turn, may be assumed to have resulted largely from a liberal policy relative to the disposal of public land in Texas, and to a somewhat longer time for the land holdings to acquire the necessary size for profitable operation.

Further study of the cultural geography of Oklahoma will probably emphasize the diverse historical development of the several parts of the state.