

The Next 15 years (1916 – 1940)

Peyton Carter followed from May 2, 1915 to June 1920. Those were trying war years. The school farm, produced poorly and there was a shortage of funds besides a great turnover of the staff. We find that the student body took an active part in the war work during the First World War. Several boy students became soldiers, while the girls were active in Red Cross work. Six Indian boys and girls attended Wahpeton High School and three were enrolled at the State School of Science. A brochure for advising Indian people on reservations about the Wahpeton School Educational Program:

"The Wahpeton Indian School is an industrial School for Indian Boys and Girls. This Institution offers an unusual opportunity for young people to receive, at government expense, valuable elementary training in all the common industries."

For the Boys:

Gardening, dairying, farm carpentry, farm blacksmithing, farm engineering, farm masonry, farm painting, and shoe and harness repairing.

For the Girls:

Home-training, poultry raising, cooking, gardening, sewing, laundry, and nursing.

Advanced Vocational Training is offered the girls in Home Economics and Nursing.

Advanced Vocational Training is offered the boys in Agriculture, Carpentry and Engineering.

English is studied in all courses and corresponds to that given in the first eight grades of the Public School. Enrollment records for the year 1915 show 218 students. Records also show that 6 boys and girls attended the Wahpeton Public School during the 1915-16 school year. One graduated with high honors. There were 3 students that attended the State School of Science that year. The influences surrounding pupils are wholesome, and parents need not hesitate in selecting this as the school home for their children.

During the 1916-17 school year there was a reported shortage of funds so school closed early in May. The children went home before taking their examination which the Washington office sent out in those days. After the children were all home a mistake was found in the bookkeeping. It was learned that there would have been enough money to run the school until the end of the term. At that time cost for running the school was \$175 per student. Adding to the problems was a crop failure and no wheat, oats, or vegetables were raised on the school farm.

During Mr. Carter's administration the following buildings were erected. In 1917 an agricultural building for \$550, and a chicken house. In 1918 two employee cottages at \$3,000 and \$4,000 each, an oil and paint house at \$300. In 1919 another cottage for \$2,000. Records show enrollment of 187 in 1919-20. Of these, 105 were Chippewa, 58 Sioux, 20 Cree, 4 from Turtle Mountain listed as Chippewa and others.

Mr. Carter stopped enrolling the large athletes who came here just to play ball. He had stricter discipline. He tried to do away with the grades below the fourth but found it hard to do. .

He had only three teachers who were trying to follow a course of study sent out by the Washington Office to all Indian Schools.

A shoe and harness repair shop and a blacksmith shop were opened up for the boys' training. The farm was going poorly at this time. Mr. Carter had three farmers in two years. He felt that the great need of the school was a group of employees who would remain here for a length of time and make Wahpeton their home. He needed people who could develop a fine school spirit and loyalty to the school. He wanted better salaries for employees so he could expect better workers. The Wahpeton Indian School was now within the corporate limits of the City of Wahpeton, and from it received electric current and water as well as having sewer connection with the city system.

Jesse W. Smith came to the school as superintendent in 1920 and remained until July 1925. In 1924 the second schoolhouse was built consisting of an auditorium and 3 classrooms. An addition built in 1929 at a cost of \$53,000 resulted in 8 classrooms, and basement space under one section of the building. A barn, silo and chicken house were also built while Mr. Smith was here. Enrollment records show 239 students in the year 1924.

Carl Stevens came in 1925. He is well remembered by many of Wahpeton's citizens as Superintendent of the local Indian School for a period of 16 years (1941). The enrollment had now increased to 356 students. Mr. Stevens was responsible for a great many improvements. The year 1928 saw the beginning of a building program that added 6 classrooms, 5 employees' cottages, the Home Economics Cottage, Boys' Shop Building, garages, boiler house and central heating plant, laundry, and the Boy and Girl Scout cabins. Much landscaping was done, lawns were planted, roads were graveled and curbed and cement walks poured. The half-day school and half day work plan was abolished and all children were given a full day of instruction using the North Dakota State Course of Study as a basis. Enrollment for 1930 was recorded at 376 students. Mr. Stevens left Wahpeton on February 6, 1941 to become the superintendent of Indian Education in Oregon and Idaho. He remained in that position until his retirement. Mr. and Mrs. Stevens then made their home at Laffabra, California, until the time of his death.

OIA Inspector G.E.E. Lindquist, reports a visit at Wahpeton Indian School, South-eastern North Dakota in May 1930. Last year, this institution, enrolled 328 Indian pupils from the Sioux, Chippewa, Arikara, Mandan, Gros-Ventre, Assiniboiné, Piegan and Cree tribes in the States of North and Dakota, Minnesota and Montana. The following is an excerpt taken from Commissioner Lindquist's report:

"Wahpeton, established in 1907, was the last non-reservation Board School to be opened by the Indian Service. One would suppose that a school of so recent origin, comparatively speaking, would be able to boast of fairly modern buildings and equipment. But this is not the case. Of the 45 buildings connected with the school, only one, and that the academic building, shows any signs of modernity, and the architect who designed that building, together with its recent additions must have been in a futuristic mood. A similar situation prevailed at the time additions

were placed on the dormitories. The latter buildings need extensive repairs. In fact, repairs are needed which will once for all adequately take care of the deterioration so apparent and make the buildings presentable and a credit to the Government."

There are 260 acres of land, including the campus connected with the school. Besides this, 50 acres are leased. The buildings and plant are valued at about \$300,000, the equipment at \$35,000, the land and improvements \$23,000.

Nine grades are carried at the school. The first four continue in schoolwork all day, while the others are on the three-quarter day plan. Aside from the Academic Subjects, some instruction is also given in shop work, farming, and dairying for the boys, and Domestic Science for the girls. Where the so-called three-quarter day plan operates, assistants should be employed for the production work in the laundry, hospital, farm and dairy.

The general discipline of the student body is commendable. The merit system is in vogue and is regarded as successful by the school authorities. Desertions have decreased in recent years. Opportunities for boys and girls to mingle in a companionable way are offered by occasional socials, dances, and picture shows. More freedom of that sort is desirable. It is likely that if there were more social contact between the sexes, much of the clandestine courtship would be eliminated.

There is a school hospital of 28-bed capacity; a resident nurse and a contract physician are available. Although no epidemics occurred, during the past year, it is distressing that 2 children have been sent home or elsewhere on account of incipient Tuberculosis. This represents a larger number than in any previous year.

Besides the need of repairs at this plant, a new shop building, where wood and metal work and automobile mechanics, could efficiently be taught, is needed. Cottages for employees are also needed.

Encouragement should be given to those who have completed the courses at Wahpeton to continue their education at other schools, such as Flandreau, S. D., Haskell Institute, Lawrence, Kan. Of the 15 enrolled in this past year's ninth grade, 14 signed up to continue their work in some school in the fall. This is a splendid showing and highly commendable, a number of the older pupils were found available for outing work in the summer. Heretofore, not much attention has been given to such employment projects. A few boys have found work on nearby farms, but the number of girls who have gone into homes to work has been negligible. With the establishment of placement units in the Twin Cities and elsewhere, opportunity should be multiplied for both the boys and the girls to engage in profitable employment for the summer.