A SURVEY OF WPA SCHOOL LUNCH PROJECTS AS OPERATED

IN FOUR OKLAHOMA COUNTIES 1941-42
A SURVEY OF WPA SCHOOL LUNCH PROJECTS AS OPERATED
IN FOUR OKLAHOMA COUNTIES 1941-42

By
BONNIE BELL BUTLER
Bachelor of Science
Oklahoma College for Women
Chickasha, Oklahoma
1937

Submitted to the Department of Home Economics Education
Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE
1942
APPROVED BY:

Katharine W. Hambler
Chairman, Thesis Committee

Millie V. Pearson
Member of the Thesis Committee

Millie V. Pearson
Head of the Department

E. F. Quinlan
Dean of the Graduate School
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE OF CONTENTS</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgement</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description of Situation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusions and Implications</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Acknowledgements

The writer wishes to express her appreciation to Katherine K. Kumler, Associate Professor of Home Economics Education, for the inspiration and guidance which she has given for the writing of this thesis.

Also thanks are extended to Millie V. Pearson, Head of the Department of Home Economics Education, for her criticisms and helpful suggestions.

B. B. B.
Introduction

Until recently leaders in the field of nutrition have seemed to be more concerned with research and experimentation than with stimulating the practical application of the steadily growing mass of nutritional knowledge. Nutritional education may be thought of as any experience which leads the individual to discover the need for an adequate food supply and to meet this need by an intelligent selection and consumption of the necessary foods. Current surveys show that forty per cent of the population of this country (forty-five million people) is below the safety line nutritionally. Concern for narrowing the gap between nutritional knowledge and nutritional practice lead the writer to realize the need for a functional educational program emphasizing the relationship between adequate nutrition and buoyant health. This realization implies that the school must accept more and more responsibility for the physical well being of all its students. There appears an obvious relationship between physical well being and the individual’s ability to make functional use of educative experiences - whether in the realms of the intellectual, the aesthetic, or the social. In other words for any educational experience to be effective the student must be capable of becoming a part of that experience. He can do this only if he is both physically and mentally well adjusted.

The above concept leads to the conclusion that education to be functional must help the individual to select values and purposes intelligently and in relation to surrounding realities.
Therefore the teacher can only set the stage and encourage, through
the process of reflective thinking, the individual to undertake
activity which might help him to determine the relative worth of
conflicting values. The term reflective thinking is used here to
imply a deliberate choice following the careful weighing of pur-
poses and understandings. To do this the individual must appraise
factual knowledge in the light of the principles which are funda-
mental or basic to the culture within which he struggles. The
ability to think reflectively is only one step in achieving a
democratic personality. The democratic ideal calls for the
development in the individual of social sensitivity, reflective
thinking, creativeness and self-direction.

Any individual who exemplifies those characteristics
requisite to a democratic society is one who is capable of
thinking for himself and of determining his own conduct.
The survival of democracy in this country, as seen by many
educators, depends upon the individual becoming aware of
and building a loyalty for a democratic way of life.

Since the democratic ideal is primarily based upon faith in
the intelligence of the individual, democratic living must permit
the individual to develop to his greatest capacity through activity
which makes for worthwhile contribution to a richer life for all
people. This is better expressed as follows,

Democracy is a form of social organization within which
the institutional life is conscientiously organized in order
to help all people progressively participate more intelligently

---

1 Millie V. Pearson, A Study of Professional Home Economics
courses in the light of the Democratic Ideal, Ohio State University
1941, p 26.
in the creation of the values to which individuals give their allegiance.  

The achievement and maintenance of physical fitness plays an important part in helping the individual to become the kind of person who can make valuable contributions to democratic society, even while aiding himself to develop his own resources for his own greater satisfaction.

As soon as the individual realizes the necessity for proper nutrition and the many problems which he faces in attempting to satisfy this need, the first step in the process of making functional use of scientific nutritional knowledge has been taken. Nutritional education seeks to help the individual to enrich the quality of his life and to live it more abundantly. The individual who becomes interested in using the newer concepts of nutrition to achieve more positive health, usually must first change his attitudes, then his habits and values. From critical study on nutritional facts should emerge for each more intelligent nutritional practices which in turn should improve health, reduce medical costs, correct food budgets and make for finer social sensitivity.

The present national crisis has focused attention upon the health and well being of the people; and our first line of defense appears to be that against illness and disease. Logically, educators seem to be the best soldiers to man the defense.

---

2 Hullfish, E. Gordon, Recent Lecture on Oklahoma A. and M. Campus.
Moreover, educators are becoming increasingly aware of the fact that the schools have failed to take advantage of all resources for planning learning experiences into a total program designed to focus educational effort upon helping the individual to meet real life situations intelligently. The school feeding program serves to illustrate this fact. If full advantage were taken of the educative possibilities in the school lunch program, classroom experiences might be centered around the problems which grow out of it touching the lives of all students and drawing factual knowledge from various subject matter fields.

This study attempts to discover, in the light of the above assumptions, educative values in the school lunch project promoted by the Works Projects Administration (WPA) in Oklahoma District #1 (23 Western counties). It reflects the point of view of an area project supervisor after one year of experience (1941-42). It is confined to schools where lunches were served as a result of WPA labor and where supervision was supplemented with sponsor-hired labor. The WPA interpretation of a sponsor is any group or agency which furnishes the funds and equipment with which to operate a project.
Description of Situation

The Works Project Administration is that part of the Federal Works Agency which conducts a program of useful work in cooperation with state and local governments, in order to provide work and wages for the needy able-bodied unemployed. The state and local governments plan and sponsor various projects while the WPA helps to put them into operation. The Works Projects Administration is an outgrowth of the relief measures taken in 1933 to help create useful employment for those who found themselves in need as a result of the 1929 depression. During the period from 1929 to 1932 the national yearly income fell from eighty-one billion to thirty-nine billion dollars. In March 1929, there were 2,300,000 unemployed men and women in the United States. In January 1930, there were 4,065,000 and by October 1930, there were 5,481,000 unemployed. The Federal Government met this emergency by setting up the Emergency Relief and Construction Act of 1932, to distribute $300,000,000 to needy and distressed people. But conditions continued to become worse until in February 1933, when there were 35,875,000 unemployed persons in the United States.

In May, 1933, President Roosevelt approved the Federal Emergency Relief Act which appropriated $500,000,000 to be used for immediate national relief. At this time four million destitute American families looked to the Federal Emergency Relief Agency for their very existence.
The Civil Works Administration was created November 9, 1933 by executive order of President Roosevelt under the authority of the National Industrial Recovery Act. This put four million needy people to work immediately. The Civil Works Administration ended in the spring of 1934 and was succeeded by the Works Projects Administration in May 1935. This became a part of the present Federal Works Program which was created to care for all emergency public works. In a newspaper release July 1, 1942 the following report was given. 1

The WPA and its predecessors, the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) and the Civil Works Administration (CWA) have expended since 1933, more than $14,000,000,000 employing at various times a total of 8,000,000 persons.

The WPA spent $2,250,000,000 in the 1938-39 fiscal year, with an average of 3,000,000 on its rolls. Last July 1 it was employing 1,168,000 persons, but this number had dropped last month to 700,000. The 1941-42 appropriation was $875,000,000. In the next fiscal year the agency must get along with $280,000,000 and an enrollment averaging 400,000 with a large number of its beneficiaries being persons temporarily unemployed during the conversion of industries to war production.

WPA projects include - (1) Constructing and re-building farm-to-market roads; draining facilities; clearing road sides; bridges and culverts. (2) Draining swamp land. (3) Constructing buildings for public gatherings, study, recreation, and music. (4) Building airports and landing fields. (5) Sewing, planning, and preparing school lunches; canning and training for housekeeping services. (6) Community sanitation. (7) Music, art, recreation, record preservation, and education projects.

1 Tulsa Tribune, July 1, 1942.
The need for "made work" has subsided because of the war and the accompanying opportunity for employment in private industry. Therefore, the more popular 1942 interpretation of the program is that of a "work" program rather than a "relief" measure. More emphasis is being placed upon the quality of the work and the ability of the workers to undertake consistently more worthwhile and constructive projects than has been in the past. Among the latter type is the school lunch.

The school lunch project was first approved by WPA on a national basis to employ workers to provide for the feeding of those children who were of relief families or for those who gave evidence of malnutrition and for whom food could not be obtained from other sources. Each of these workers must be certified as an American citizen, or as having pledged his allegiance to the United States, each must be 18 years of age or older, able bodied, unemployed and currently certified by the local relief agency as being in need. It was the policy in district #1 during the years 1938-40 for certified WPA workers to assume the duty of preparing and serving surplus commodities. Surplus commodities are foods which have been purchased throughout the country in excess and have been bought by the government in order to establish a market price level. Unfortunately the school lunches using only surplus commodities resulted, in most cases, in a menu of soup and fruit.

However during 1940-41 a well balanced lunch was served to all children; and to the needy it was served free of charge. Those
financially able paid for their share of the food cost. This income made it possible to supplement the surplus commodities with additional food to make a well balanced lunch. The new presidential letter 1941-42 states:

Prepare and serve meals to all children; provide matron service in all schools; and operate gardens, and can gardens, donated and surplus food stuffs for free distribution to the needy, to public institutions, public camps, for use in other WPA projects or for use in meals on this project.

During this year then a well balanced lunch was served by WPA labor to all children in the school. The use of surplus commodities supplemented food purchased by a sponsor.

In Europe school-feeding has been a regular part of the school curriculum for over 100 years. In this country emphasis has been placed on school lunches only in recent years and then only for the larger schools which were financially able to operate a school cafeteria. At the present time the WPA school lunch project offers to all schools the advantages of the school lunch program. During the 1939-40 school term 148,100,000 mal-nourished children were fed, while during the term 1940-41 there were 271,500,000. During the period from May 1935 to June 1940 official records show that 584,213,000 WPA school lunches were served in the United States and 13,000,000 of these were served in Oklahoma schools. In 1940 there were 22,000 schools distributed among three-fourths of the counties in the nation participating in the school lunch program.

The school lunch project is operated much the same as any other WPA project. This implies that the sponsor is expected to furnish at least 25% of the cost. For this particular project the sponsors'
contribution includes the space, equipment, and utilities and part of the food. It is the policy in District #1 to ask the sponsor to furnish food amounting to four cents per plate. The State Board of Public Welfare furnishes surplus commodities for use in the school lunch and WPA has a supplemental fund which may be used to buy food in case the sponsors' funds are not adequate to furnish a well balanced lunch. WPA furnishes the labor and supervision, where certified labor is available. The county-wide garden and food preservation project may be operated in connection with the school lunch project. This makes it possible for the schools to use WPA labor and supervision in the raising and the canning of foods for use in the school lunch. This year WPA also furnished seeds, cans and some canning equipment.

The State Health Department helps to sponsor the project by regularly inspecting the units and helping the sponsor, supervisor and workers to solve health and sanitation problems satisfactorily. The State Health Doctor gives all workers the "Food Handlers Health Examination" every six months. This examination includes a Wasserman test, tuberculosis test, inoculation with typhoid, diphtheria and smallpox serums, case history of communicable diseases and a thorough physical check up.

Supervision of the school lunch is furnished by the WPA. It is the duty of the area supervisor to contact sponsors and to explain the project. Where the sponsor desires to open a school lunch, she helps in making plans for equipping and operating it. After the unit
is open for operation she continues to help the workers to gain increased skill which in turn results in better efficiency unit operation.

The county WPA supervisor makes the menus and grocery orders, helps the sponsor work out details in lunch room management, and acts as mediator for the sponsor and workers. All decisions concerning labor problems are handled by the supervisor. Regular inspection visits are made by her to each unit to check for safety, sanitation, work habits and operating procedure. These inspection visits are made in conjunction with the regular training visits. The supervisor goes to each unit and works with the workers for training purposes. Often she plans her itinerary so that she can work half the day in one school and one half the day in another one nearby. The next time that she goes to these schools she will alternate the hours during which she works in the respective lunch rooms. Thus she can help workers with each of the scheduled activities, i.e., preparation of the food, serving, cleaning and next day's preparation.

As the project was planned first, workers in each county met each month for a day of training. In this particular situation one day each in November and December was spent in training activity. On these days demonstrations were given for breadmaking and vegetable cookery, and discussion was conducted concerning such topics as sanitation, intelligent substitution of foods or menus, cutting down food wastes, personal appearance and personal conduct. Since the rationing of tires and the current gasoline shortage this plan for training has been given up.
In addition it is the supervisors' responsibility to keep records and reports for each county, which are compiled from unit reports. The unit report is kept by the forewoman on each school lunch unit. This person is assigned to take the responsibility for the preparation and serving of the food and directions of other workers. She keeps a daily itemized record of changes which have been made on the menus, quantity and cost of groceries or supplies which were bought, amounts of surplus commodities used and the number of children fed. These are mailed to the supervisor each week who in turn compiles a monthly report for the county showing the number of lunches fed, cost of surplus commodities used, costs of food purchased by the sponsor, costs of supplies, utilities and equipment furnished by the sponsor, cost of WPA labor, total cost of the project, total food costs, average food cost per lunch and average total cost of serving each lunch. Each month she makes a complete report of all sponsor contributions to the project, listing quantity, unit, unit cost and total cost of each item. From these she sends a report to each school superintendent showing how much he has spent, the value of the commodities which he has used, the value of the labor used in his unit and the number of children that were fed. Other reports made regularly show financial estimates for the project, employment records, six types of progress reports, and reports relative to the expenditure of federal funds for the purpose supplemental foods. The supervisor also makes accident reports and
fills out other forms relating to special situations, requisitions, receipts, etc.

The success of any school lunch project depends upon the cooperative planning and thorough understanding of its purpose and operation by the supervisor, sponsor, and workers.

This survey of the project, made during the school year 1941-42, includes 35 school lunch situations in which an average of 4700 children were fed daily. During this summer the feeding program is operated in but two schools and 85 children are fed daily. Of the 48 different school superintendents in the four counties surveyed, twelve did not operate school lunches this year under the supervision of the WPA. Of these, some already had other arrangements for conducting a school lunch and others made plans with the supervisor for a WPA School Lunch project to be put into operation next year. As the project operated in this area, approximately 110 different workers received training in quantity cookery and school lunch sanitation through experience in the above cited school lunch units.

The attitudes of the superintendents interviewed might be divided into three groups - (1) those who are enthusiastic about the project and offered full cooperation for sponsoring it, (2) those who were opposed to cooperating with WPA due to earlier unfortunate experiences, with the projects or to a misconception of the way it was to be operated, and (3) one who is opposed to school feeding under any plan.

The survey here reported was made in Ellis, Woodward, and Dewey counties in the western part of Oklahoma from September 1941 to
February 1942. One of the difficulties in operating school lunches was that there were not enough certified WPA employees to operate all of the projects which the counties wished to sponsor. This may be attributed to the sparse population of the section and to the nature of agricultural enterprise carried on there. Many of the people in these three counties own ranches on which they have lived since the country was settled in 1892. At the time of this study, two dams were being built in this area which absorbed most of the need for employment of day laborers and transients.

School districts were prosperous and able to furnish and equip first class school lunch units. This being the first year that many of the schools cooperated in this project, the idea of operating it as a total school nutritional program was accepted generally, and all children in the schools were anxious to participate in the school lunch. Since there was not enough certified WPA labor to man the projects many schools had to supplement that which was available with workers whom they could hire themselves. Because of keen interest in the school lunch program, however, many organizations and citizens in the communities contributed money and labor to support and assure the continuance of this addition to their school curriculum. Nevertheless some of the schools could not take advantage of the WPA project because there was no available certified WPA labor in the community.

Situations existing in this area at the time the survey was started in September were as follows.

Ellis, Woodward, Dewey Counties

There are five schools in Ellis county with a student enrollment
which justifies the cost of a school lunch unit. As a general policy, operating costs make the cost per lunch too high to justify the project unless a school feeds at least 50 children. The superintendents of two of the five schools mentioned above were anxious to have the project; but after checking the available certified WPA labor, it was found that there was none in either of the communities. At one of the schools during the preceding year the students prepared, each day, hot food which supplemented the lunches carried to school. This plan proved sufficiently successful to justify its continuance into the current year. No plan for school lunches was made in the other school.

In one consolidated school 250 children were riding on the school buses and many of them as far as 30 miles. Therefore, there seemed to be a real need for hot lunches as well as the breakfast feeding program. WPA provides for the latter by furnishing, where needed, a worker to prepare cereal and hot chocolate for those who wish to sponsor morning "snacks" either when the children arrive or at the mid-morning recess. The supervisor went to see the superintendent of this school four times, hoping to discuss the school lunch project with him, but each time she was unable to see him. The fifth time he agreed to talk with her for five minutes—all the time he had before another scheduled meeting. During the five minutes he explained that his interest in the project had been killed by an earlier attempt to operate a similar project in a home economics laboratory. This attempt had ended disastrously. The supervisor agreed with him that
it was impossible to successfully operate a school lunch and a teaching laboratory in the same room. This tended to create a more friendly atmosphere. In addition they found that they had the same standards for efficient lunch room management. As a result, the superintendent became sufficiently interested in new plans for a school lunch to postpone his previous engagement, and plans were made to organize a school lunch for the following year. Twice afterwards the superintendent appealed for help in planning a new cafeteria to be built before the opening of school in September, 1942.

Two other small town schools in Ellis County operated very successful school lunch units the previous year but this year both schools found no WPA labor available for opening the units. Finally three workers were located in a nearby town who were willing to drive to one of these schools to work and the unit was opened. In spite of the fact that previously no charge had been made for lunches while this year five cents per plate was collected from all students who could pay, half the students enrolled ate lunch. In the other school a priority change in workers made it possible for WPA to furnish two workers while patrons of the school lunch project made monthly donations to hire another worker. During the year the sponsors of both these units bought new equipment generously and redecorated the cooking and serving rooms.

In Woodward county three schools asked for the school lunch program. They were unable to have it however, because there were no certified WPA workers in these respective communities.
The superintendent of the largest school in the area was bitterly opposed to the school lunch project. In effect, he said—there was no need for nutritional education; that most people followed an adequate diet. He cited the fact that he had "grown up" on beans and corn bread, had never been served lunches at school, and rarely had been sick. He further warned that the school tends to accept too much responsibility which should rest with parents; and if the children were fed at school, dormitories would soon be demanded so the children could also sleep at school. The president of the local Parent-Teachers Association, the secretary of the city Chamber of Commerce, and the State Representative from that county started community agitation to try to establish a school lunch program in spite of the superintendents opposition. However, the superintendent succeeded in convincing the school board that this project had no place in the schools, so no school lunch was started.

Five schools in Woodward County operated successful school lunch units. In one rural high school located 25 miles from any village or shopping center, it was difficult to find enough labor to operate the project. To meet this emergency the school hired one worker, WPA hired one and the members of the Farm Women's club voluntarily took turns in helping to prepare and serve lunches. When a man moved into the community who was a certified WPA worker, the Farm Women's club discontinued this voluntary service. A few weeks later the woman hired by the school resigned. To fill her place, a certified WPA worker was transferred to this project from another county. By
February three men, farmers by trade, were preparing and serving lunches daily to the entire school, about 140 students.

In one small town school a project had operated the year before and the community was anxious to reopen the school lunch room. Unfortunately there was but one certified WPA worker available in the community. A pie supper held in the school house brought together representatives from all of the families in the community. Here were explained both the local situation with respect to the school lunch and the rules and regulations for operating a WPA project. The group decided that each family should contribute one dollar monthly to hire a woman worker for the year. Later an additional WPA worker, a man, was transferred from road work to the school lunch unit, so sufficient labor was assured to feed the 150 children enrolled.

Another school lunch unit was opened in a small town school with adequate facilities and labor. The first lunch was served to only 23 students although plans had been made for feeding 150 children. It was discovered that because one of the workers had a questionable reputation in the community, parents would not let their children eat in the lunch room. The worker could not be discharged as long as she was doing satisfactory work and continued to be certified by WPA as eligible for employment. After one week of serving lunches to but 23 students the lady in question was discharged because the project was "over-manned." The lunch unit was continued, however, with a decreased staff, and the daily attendance increased immediately.
The two other Woodward county school lunch units were supported by combined community and school interests. The superintendent of one of these schools believed that the use of surplus commodities tended to keep the market prices of these foods too high, hence the average family could not afford to buy them. Therefore he refused to use surplus foods and the sponsor bought all of the foods used.

One man was assigned to work in this unit who was very dirty. The superintendent, school board members and several patrons in the community protested his right to work in the lunch room and to handle food. However, since it is a rule of WPA to let any worker work five days to prove himself adequate or inadequate, he was permitted to work. During his pre-service training, the importance of cleanliness was stressed and specific instruction was given to him for improving his personal appearance. He was told to cut his hair, wash his head, bathe and shave daily, clean his fingernails and change all his clothing three times weekly. He was given three white uniforms with instructions for launcering them and a schedule for making changed. This is not only a report of what happened in this school, but an example of the type of instruction given to many workers before they are permitted to handle food in school lunch rooms even though they have passed physical examinations. When this worker returned he was as clean and neat as the other workers on the project. Further result of this project was the superintendent’s compilation of a bookkeeping method for use in WPA school lunch projects. This method of bookkeeping was copyrighted and can be secured by those interested.

2 Allen A. Auron, Quinlain, Oklahoma.
In Dewey county there were three schools unable to have a school lunch because of no available certified WPA labor. In spite of the fact that the superintendent of one of the schools approved the school lunch program and had promoted it in the school in which he had formerly taught, he was not interested in promoting it in this school because of the extra responsibility which it would put upon him. As yet there has not been displayed enough community enthusiasm for the project to cause him to make this addition to the school program. Moreover, in Dewey county there was only one school which had operated a school lunch the preceding year. This year however, four new units were added. The unit in operation last year reopened this year under decidedly improved working conditions. Furniture and equipment were added which had been made by the National Youth Administration. Cooking utensils were donated by the Farm Women's Club. The local Chamber of Commerce paid for the lunches for the indigent children.

In one small town, the superintendent was disinterested and felt that the community had neither space nor money to take care of the project. However, county commissioners and local business men became interested in understanding the policies for project operation. This knowledge inspired them to ask the school board and supervisor to meet with them. Later their interest became so keen that the school superintendent was asked to meet with the group to discuss lunch room possibilities. Before the meeting adjourned, plans were made for remodeling a nearby county building into a school cafeteria. The school gave a benefit program and all local organizations gave contributions for developing the unit. When the project was completed and
put into operation the lunch room was well equipped and 90% of the
students came there for their noon meal. The project was really
a community undertaking and the community was well pleased with
the results. Business men and patrons visited the school lunch
frequently and continued to contribute to its support throughout
the year.

Before the opening of one of the new school lunch units a
check was made to see how children in that school were being fed
without a school lunch program. One day's report showed ten child-
ren in the drugstore with a candy bar and soft drink (ten cents)
and six others with an ice cream cone and soft drink (ten cents).
In the local cafes there were nine children with hamburgers (ten
cents), five with soup (fifteen cents) and three with plate lunches
(thirty cents). Even though the school lunch unit was planned by
this school to accommodate only 250 students, 312 lunches were served
on the opening day. For five cents each child had creamed beef on
mashed potatoes, green beans, carrot and raisin salad, brown bread
and butter, a baked apple and a cup of hot chocolate. On the second
day of operation, the cafeteria expanded permanently into adjoining
rooms.

The superintendent of a two room grade school in another part of
Dewey county had labored for two years under the false impression
that to have a school lunch program the community would be obliged
to furnish all of the things that were listed in a WPA bulletin
describing a model school lunch unit. Having obtained everything
on the list as a result of sustained community effort, the sponsor finally - in the fall of 1941, requested assignment of WPA laborers to operate the project.

This project was made a reality as a result of two preceding years of concentrated community effort. At an earlier meeting of all families in the community the requirements for equipping the unit were read and each family agreed to donate any equipment which could be spared. In addition each family gave fifty cents with which to buy materials and the manual training students built the furniture. One woman in the community donated a garden, the products of which were canned for the school lunch project by the Farm Women's club. When the school lunch became a reality, the whole school participated in the operation. The students took turns in arranging exhibits for the bulletin boards, saying grace at the table, being host or hostesses at the table, assisting with serving, et cetera. The seventh grade boys carried the wood and ashes and the eighth grade boys carried the water. A very efficient young woman was assigned by WPA to do the cooking and cleaning. It was necessary for her to ride the school bus to and from work. The fifty children representing the entire enrollment ate there.

One of the school lunch programs in the county was sponsored by the local school with the help of the local Chamber of Commerce. The unit was dirty and poorly organized. It seemed impossible to raise the standards of the workers during the brief training periods that were provided. The superintendent was partially responsible for this
deplorable condition because of his low standards for efficiency. The whole school system was dirty and unorganized. There was no form of discipline in the school and the lunch hour was a "riot." Since this condition existed in the school the workers could not be held to high standards of organization because they could not get the necessary cooperation of the superintendent and teachers. The unit was allowed to continue operation until the end of the school year even though it was generally unsatisfactory from the point-of-view of the supervisors. Ironically the sponsor and the community were well pleased with the lunch program because "the children got so much food and had such a good time."

Another school in Dewey county had the distinction of being the only school in this survey that assumed the entire responsibility of operating the school lunch. The unit was planned originally with the WPA supervisor, and in due time WPA laborers were assigned to the project. However, the workers selected did not prove acceptable to the school board. Accordingly, they were dismissed, the school hired its own laborers, and the home economics teacher did the supervision.

Caddo County

The study of school lunch projects was continued from February through the remainder of the year in Caddo county in a situation almost opposite the labor situation cited above. At one time there were more than 12,000 certified WPA workers in Caddo county. In general, there were more workers than projects. This situation
might be traced to the cotton farming in the county which attracts a more or less transient group of people. The fact that much of the farm land in this vicinity is poor and that cotton is a seasonal crop may explain why so many farm families seek subsistence through relief agencies.

In February 1942, the situation described below seemed to exist, with respect to the WPA school lunch project. In earlier years the school lunch project had been operating as a feeding program for indigent children, hence many communities had stamped the school lunch as a "WPA Soup Kitchen." In spite of the fact, then, that since 1941 the school lunch program had been attempting to serve the entire student body, all children were not taking advantage of the school lunch and sponsors were neither concerned with attracting a greater number of children nor improving their lunch room facilities. For some reason both certified workers and sponsors assumed that WPA labor and projects could be controlled by political activity. Sponsors were not making their contracted contribution because they did not realize that they were obligated to do so. They did not understand the projects which they were operating and they did not appreciate the fact that they operated on sound business principles.

In Caddo county there were 23 operating WPA school lunch units. Five of these were small schools which fed an average of only 30 children daily. The small number of lunches served made the operating costs so high that these units cannot be reopened next year if WPA operates under the present policies. One school with only 50 students
was able to keep down the cost per capita because their school
garden helped them to defray expenses.

At the time this survey was started there were four schools
in this county which had not opened their lunchrooms although
labor had been assigned to them since November. Consequently,
three new units were opened the second week in February; but, the
fourth was not opened until March because the workers who had
been assigned had found work elsewhere.

In February, two of the larger schools in the county were
feeding only an average of 60 children each. Both schools were
operating under the old policy - food for the Indians and for the
children who can not get food elsewhere. Both of these schools
have possibilities for adequate and attractive lunch rooms and
are planning to remodel the units next year and open the cafeteri
to all students in the school.

Six schools in this county are rural high schools. All of
the children attending these schools ride to and from school on
buses and eat in the school lunch room. Even though these units
were not elaborately equipped they proved to be conducted in an
effective manner. The noon hour was a time for worthwhile social
activity, fun and training. The teachers served as hostesses in
the school lunch rooms, encouraged the children to eat all of the
food on the plates, gave instruction in etiquette, and entered
into the spirit of friendly relationship.

In the case of the two remaining small town schools, a large
percentage of the total enrollment was participating in the school lunch. Serving arrangements in both of these schools were not only inconvenient but constituted a safety hazard. The sponsor realizes the danger and plans are being made to move to better quarters next year.

Two larger schools in Caddo county have well equipped, community sponsored school lunch units. Both schools fed over one-half of their respective enrollments this past school year. They are now raising gardens and planning for expansion next year.

Also, in Caddo county, there is one school lunch project operating for colored children. Colored WPA workers fed 150 different students during the school year.

Only one school in this county was unable to have a school lunch because of the lack of certified WPA labor in the community. Here plans were made for a cafeteria to be built this summer and the school patrons plan to make contributions to pay for labor to operate a school lunch the coming school year.

Four schools in the county were not operating school lunches with WPA labor this year because of misunderstandings between the school superintendents and preceding WPA supervisors. In one of these schools however, NYA students prepared lunches under the supervision of the home economics teacher. Three of the schools plan to sponsor WPA school lunch projects next year.

All of the schools in this county which are now participating in the school lunch project and which plan to continue through next
year have accepted sponsorship of the county garden project. Plans have been made in every unit for improvements for next year and remodeling is being done during the summer months.
Discussion

No superintendent in this area who has operated a successful school lunch has discontinued it. This spring, plans were made in each unit for improvements for next year. Most sponsors have a "long term" plan for developing a school cafeteria and are making additions each year.

At the close of the school year every superintendent, in schools where the project operated successfully and continuously, felt that the WPA school lunch project was a worthwhile addition to the school program. They were convinced that such expenditure of Federal funds was legitimate because so many people receive direct benefit from the project. Not only did the children receive good food and training through the plan, but workers had been given an opportunity to earn a living wage by working at an occupation which had social significance. Many superintendents stated that the school lunch project was the only WPA project that should be continued during this period of national emergency.

The school lunch program of WPA has served to bring the school and community together to plan and work for a common cause. Several superintendents expressed their gratitude for having discovered this means of interesting the rural people in helping support school enterprises. They cited the fact that in the past it had been hard to gain the interest of school patrons in intangible school activities but that most people are ready and anxious to work together for any
cause so obviously related to the welfare of their children.

Newspaper publicity in each community helped to stimulate interest and kept the continuous achievements of the lunch room before the public. Information concerning special dinners, special attainments, additions to equipment and even menus was often published.

Some superintendents in cooperation with the State Health Department are keeping growth records for their students and making comparative studies of the growth and health records of children who are eating in the school lunch and those who are not. In the schools that did not have the lunch project last year but where it operated this year the child's growth will be compared with his growth the previous year. These records are not available as yet.

The social opportunity which the school lunch offers has been welcomed by all superintendents and teachers involved. One superintendent expressed the opinion that, "Eating together helps students and teachers to meet on common ground and to become better acquainted thus gaining a better understanding of each other."

Superintendents have expressed themselves as preferring to have some part in the hiring of the laborers and to be able to assume some of the authority over workers. They would like, also, to have some provision made for hiring substitute laborers. Their argument is that it seems only fair that they should share in labor responsibilities as well as in costs and benefits since the type of workers
found in the lunch room often prejudices certain school patrons
against the school lunch program itself.

The school lunch is especially attractive to rural children
because it replaces the lunch basket of cold food. Many of them
also, enjoy the school lunch because it is their best meal of the
day. Some school superintendents went to far as to say it was
the only real meal of the day for many of them.

The high percentage of children who participated and the
enthusiasm with which they attacked their food is accepted as
sufficient proof of their interest in the project. Menus for the
week were posted on the bulletin board. Students always read the
menus for the following day and looked forward to the days on
which foods would be served which they especially liked. As a part
of their class work children often made health posters which were
displayed on bulletin boards. These posters never failed to cause
comment and discussion from both the pupils and workers.

When children were given an opportunity to participate in any
responsibility pertaining to the serving of the lunches they did
so enthusiastically. Student participation was offered in giving
grace, acting as hosts and hostesses, assisting with serving,
serving as monitors for hand washing and assisting in the kitchen
in the absence of regular workers. All of these activities offered
opportunity to further the individuals' social adjustment even while
they made contribution which benefited the group. Their reward was
found in self satisfaction and the approval of their mates.
Approval of the project by patrons of the school is evidenced by their general cooperation and participation in its installation and operation. The cordiality with which the supervisor was received in the communities and the willingness of the business people to assist in project operation reflected the community pride and entered in the work that was being done.

One school was threatened with losing their school lunch unit because of lack of sanitation and efficiency in management. Many of the leading citizens in this community contacted the supervisor to insist that they be allowed to continue operation.

Most schools faced the emergency of being without workers at some time during the school term. There is no fund for hiring substitute laborers; therefore, volunteer help was used. Yet, no community had trouble securing volunteer workers when needed.

The workers may be classed into two groups. The first group is composed of middle-aged women who have been left as the head of a family and are not trained to hold jobs demanding skilled labor. These women are thankful for the opportunity to work and are interested in the feeding of children. They have a feeling of responsibility to the school and the community as well as a personal satisfaction for having done a job well. The second group is composed of public charges who feel that society owes them a living. Unfortunately there will be such people in most communities for some time. From this group there are workers who have lived in filth and degradation for many years and have had little earlier opportunity for
establishing socially desirable standards for living. They tend to carry their unsanitary practices into the lunch room and seem desirous of doing the least amount of work possible to keep their jobs. Some of these workers look upon the school lunch project as another opportunity for them to earn an easy living and for their children to get another free meal.

In both cases the workers are agreed that the school lunch project is a desirable part of the school but the differences of opinion arises in the standards by which it is operated.

From the standpoint of a Home Economist, there is very little institutional equipment in these kitchens. Dishwashing units, serving counters, cabinet, etc., are usually made in the school. Cooking utensils are rarely adequate and are of poor quality. Many times in rural schools running water and fuel are difficult to obtain and sewage and garbage disposal becomes a problem.

WPA workers are allowed to work only 30 hours per week. Many of these workers are slow and it becomes impossible to do the best job of cleaning in the limited time left after the food has been prepared and served. Moreover, most of these workers lack managerial ability or have had little opportunity to develop efficient habits of work, and, therefore, are not able to do the work in the most efficient manner. Few of them have ever cooked in large quantities and many are not willing to accept instruction. This situation results in unpalatable food in many cases.
Because this is a relief job there is a rapid change in laborers and usually by the time a worker becomes fairly able as a cook, he finds private employment. This forces the school lunch project to take on another unskilled person and helps him to learn to do his share in preparing meals.

In schools where there are home economics teachers they often act as faculty advisors for assisting with lunch room supervision. They usually buy the groceries, make necessary changes in menus and give incidental training to workers to supplement the area supervisor's efforts. In schools where there are faculty advisors and dependable workers the preparation and service is sanitary, quick and orderly.

The type of service used is determined by the superintendent and the teachers, because WPA personnel does nothing with the children. Usually the superintendent and the supervisor plan together for serving so that it will be planned for the convenience of both the children and the workers. It was observed that those schools in which cafeteria service was used have better discipline, quicker service, and the food is hotter and more attractive than those using other forms of table service.

The schools in Caddo county had not accepted this method of service and the methods which they used for serving was not conducive to establishing routine or efficient plans for serving large numbers of children. Equipment is now being added which will permit the Caddo county schools to use cafeteria service next year.
Well balanced plate lunches are being served in every school where this project operates and children are always given opportunity for second helpings. Typical menus were:

- Baked ham (C)
- Baked sweet potato (C)
- Brown Bread (Flour C) Butter (C)
- Cabbage Slaw (C)
- Oatmeal cookies (Meal C)
- Milk
- Vegetable soup made with milk (C)
- Cheese sandwiches
- Egg (C) Custard
- Apple (C) and Celery Salad
- Grapefruit juice (C)
- Milk

Each child was given one half pint of milk in some form daily.

The menu pattern used in an attempt to provide children with an adequate daily luncheon was:

- Main dish = soup, meat or meat substitute
- Supplementary dish = potato or other vegetable
- Green vegetable or salad
- Breadstuff
- Simple dessert
- Beverage

Supervision of WPA school lunch units proves to be a most stimulating experience for the supervisor. As liaison for the Works Projects Administration, sponsors and workers, the supervisor is challenged to try to meet every type of problem and to tactfully help solve these problems so that all may be benefited. The work calls for a combination home economist, social worker and executive. It is a most gratifying experience to sell the project to a school where no provision has been made for an adequate noon meal.

* C = Surplus Commodities
meal; and then to watch the project grow until hot lunches become a reality for many children. It is also satisfying to be able to help the sponsor operate the lunch creditably in a plant in which the assembling of equipment has tested every bit of community ingenuity. It is a real accomplishment to establish and furnish an efficient kitchen and attractive dining room with little or no money. To follow sympathetically the growth of the various workers and their ultimate placement in private employment is also a part of the supervisor's reward in having done the job well.

This job offers a rich variety of experiences because of the many types of things that must be done and of the various classes of people with which it is necessary to work in order to operate a project. The person who enjoys "people" finds in this an ideal situation for meeting business people, teachers, women's club members, civic club members, social workers, and public health officers, as well as the underprivileged who are seeking employment.

Like all government work there are certain phases of working with the WPA lunch project which are particularly desirable and others which might prove taxing upon one's patience and ingenuity. In fact many rules and regulations may seem unnecessary to the uninformed. The lunch room project offers many opportunities to put democratic values into practice even though its operation is controlled by regulations which seem arbitrary. The supervisor must sometimes be dictatorial in order to operate according to
project policies. He must in fact sometimes use undemocratic procedure in order to secure the necessary democratic result quickly. The continual changing of policy sometimes indicates an improvement of working procedures and other times indicates a whole new staff of superiors, reflecting political unrest.

Fortunately the tendency now is to decrease the number of reports made by the supervisor. However during 1941 much time was spent in making seemingly needless reports which should have been spent in lunch room supervision.

In this work the supervisor has an opportunity to gain insight into the "fearful and wonderful" workings of the Federal government, as well as an opportunity to work closely with many different schools and communities. The relative efficiency of the various superintendents was reflected in the school lunch programs in the different schools. Some took advantage of all opportunities to expand the total program of the school. Wherever superintendents insisted upon high standards of cleanliness, neatness and efficiency in the whole school, such standards were maintained in the lunch room. The relative tendency of the superintendent to encourage social sensitivity by insisting upon respect of property and recognition of the rights of others, generally became apparent during the lunch hour activity. The extent to which sound business principles were used in the operation of the school indicated the extent to which the school lunch might be expected to operate on sound business principles. Their respective willingness to accept community
cooperation in operating the total school program was reflected in their readiness to accept community cooperation in establishing and maintaining a school lunch project.
Conclusions and Implications

The assumption made earlier in this study that the school lunch can be made an educative experience in the school program which will help all participants to enjoy more abundant life, supports the following conclusions:

1. This has been an opportune year for experimenting with the inclusion of the school lunch program in the school curriculum. It has gained popularity from the "Nutrition for Defense" theme given so much prominence this year.

The slogan, "Food for Freedom" has also stimulated interest in the school lunch garden project. Two thousand children are participating in one county garden project alone. Besides the one 23 acre central garden in Caddo county, five schools have planted their own "Victory Gardens" with vegetables which can be kept in dry storage at the school.

2. The school lunch program provided in many schools real life situations for worthwhile teaching experiences in many subject matter areas. Manual training classes in some places have made furniture for the school lunch unit, often times remodeling buildings for housing the project. Agriculture students have made lunch room equipment as a part of their shop work and are raising vegetables and meat for consumption in the school lunch. Art classes made health posters and kept interesting material on the bulletin boards. Science and health classes kept growth records and conducted
rat feeding experiments for which the school lunches supply the balanced rations. Homemaking classes center many of their activi-
ties around this project including studies in nutrition, experience in the selection of equipment and the preparation and service of food.

Luncheon etiquette and adequate nutrition became topics intro-
duced into many classroom experiences, especially those of the lower grades where topics to give reality to reading and language exercises are always welcome. Youngsters soon discovered that it was the "thing to do" to become versed in the list of School Lunch Room Man-
ers compiled by the supervisor and distributed in the various schools. These were used as discussion topics in home room and chapel programs. Mimeographed copies were made by teachers and given to each student in many schools.

3. The WPA worker has reported many self directed experiences car-
rried on in his own home which have been inspired by training received while working on the school lunch project. For example, many workers who were wasting the dry milk received from the Surplus Marketing Administration because they did not know how to use it, commenced to use the milk after receiving instruction on its use in the lunch room.

4. School lunch units which were made possible by intelligent group planning and community endeavor were more successful than those planned exclusively by the supervisor and/or the superintendent of the school. They were more adequately equipped and fed more
children. However school lunches operated under the immediate supervision of a faculty advisor proved to operate more efficiently than those having no advisor.

5. Training for lunch room workers is obviously inadequate. Years of education and experience are indicated if they are to raise their standards to the maximum level. However with the little help given them changes have been noted in their work habits, attitudes and their acceptance of responsibility.

6. Well balanced lunches were served in all schools. This not only improved the nutritional status of the students but served to set for them a good example of nutritional standards applicable to all situations.

7. The present school lunch plan is in an experimental state. To date it has served to make creditable demonstrations of the educational opportunities and values lying dormant in the idea back of this experiment in feeding school children.

8. The school lunch project offers an opportunity for the school and community to work together on a problem of mutual concern to all parties. Such cooperative training illuminates the meaning of democracy and makes for more widespread satisfaction in sponsoring the undertaking.

9. Even though three-fourths of the families in the United States in 1929, our richest year, had to follow a subsistence diet, there is still no provision for school feeding under the present financial plan in this country for school maintenance. Small schools can not
afford to operate a self supporting school lunch program and this
cooporative endeavor of WPA, the State Board of Public Welfare
and the community makes it possible for rural children in a poor
community to have the advantages of an adequate noon meal. Care-
fully shared planning and shared interest in operating a lunch
room results in both an acceptable lunch room situation and a
worthwhile community project. The greatest problem which appears
to be hindering the fulfillment of the fondest expectations for
the WPA school lunch project seems to be that of finding ways and
means to bridge the differences in standards for good lunch room.

10. From the standpoint of a home economist with experience in
college cafeteria operation it seems that the average WPA school
lunch room is a rudimentary substitute for a real cafeteria. This
condition will continue to exist until money is appropriated to
properly equip and furnish the plant and until workers can be hired
according to their skills and potentialities.

11. The present trend toward consolidating small rural schools
with adjoining larger schools has made it necessary for many child-
ren to ride many miles on the school buses, some leaving home as
early as six o'clock in the morning. Many times they do not have
time to eat an adequate breakfast before they leave home and can
carry only cold foods for their lunches. Hence provision for a hot
school lunch seems to be one of the most tangible ways for the
school to meet an important need of the individual and through him
that of the community.
The rapid growth of the school feeding program suggests that the school lunch might advantageously become an integral part of the educational program in all schools regardless of their size or location. More and more schools are cooperating with WPA in providing school lunches. Indications show that had there been available WPA workers there would have been from 75 per cent to 99 per cent participation by the schools in the four counties studied.

During these days while the school lunch is still in the experimental stage in many schools and is in its primary stages of overall development, there is need to work out a sound basis for planning and organizing such an activity on democratic lines. Operating procedures need to be discovered which will make the school lunch an indispensable part of the school rather than an extra burden for the administrators and faculty advisors. If the idea justifies the procedure the popularity of the project will continue to grow and modern educational trends may soon make the feeding the children at school as traditional as the three "R's".

If this program could become an actual part of the school, independent of all other agencies, with trained workers and qualified supervision it could be one of the most educative activities of the school system.

As has been pointed out the school lunch has established itself in many Oklahoma schools as a definite part of the educational program. It should be so organized that it meets the nutritional need of the students as well as offering them an opportunity for
focusing study upon related problems. It also should provide evidences of physical and mental growth for students in order to justify its existence and prove its worth. It should provide examples of the best nutritional practices known to date for everyone in the community. It should operate under the guiding force of democratic principles and so provide an opportunity for the community to participate "more intelligently in the creation of the values to which individuals give their allegiance."

This project definitely lends itself to democratic procedures in that the planning and organization of the lunch room can be based on intelligent cooperative effort where individuals and the community share in the benefits. Moreover it provides opportunity for promoting individual growth for children and workers.

While the definite rules and regulations which are set up by WPA might seem to be arbitrary, some of them are actually minimum standards for efficient operating procedures. Supervisors should be qualified to use democratic methods in educating sponsors and workers to understand and accept these standards.

The expense which the school lunch project entails necessitates full utilization of the opportunities which it offers. Because it is nutritional in nature it recently has become a national defense measure worthy of the expenditure of Federal funds for its continuance. Since this is a tax supported project

1 E. G. Hullfish, op. cit. p 2.
sponsors and supervisors should realize their social responsibility for getting full value for the money expended. This means careful planning as well as the making of intelligent decisions if the most efficient operation with the least amount of equipment is to be achieved.

The inclusion of workers in planning conferences might help them assume responsibility for efficient operation. Because WPA workers are unskilled and inexperienced in this type of work and because there is such limited time for training, jobs often are assigned arbitrarily without giving the worker a chance to express his preferences. Further, the practice which requires the supervisor to make a time schedule and job analysis for each worker tends to relieve him from the development of any initiative.

The WPA lunch project should provide for more intensive training of workers in order to develop better work habits and to make possible the conservation of time and resources. These workers are employed as temporary relief measure, whereas working in the lunch room should be a training period for a vocation which will lead the worker to private employment in the future. This can be accomplished only through cooperative planning of the work of supervisor and workers. Through such planning the worker might develop a wholesome attitude, a sense of responsibility, and pride for his work. This having been accomplished the worker could become a part of this experience to such extent that, "it just gets in him."
It is reduced to a mechanical routine unless workers see the technical, intellectual and social relationships involved in what they do, and engage in their work because of the motivation furnished by these perceptions.

There also appears need for some provision by which the supervisors and superintendents can share in the hiring of the laborers. This would eliminate much of the labor difficulty and provide for more efficient project operation. A supplemental fund should be established for the hiring of substitute workers in case of emergency. Many times the supervisor, as a substitute for an absentee worker, spends time cooking which could be spent more profitably in supervision.

The public health workers and the school lunch sponsors should attack the problem together and solicit the aid of the children in a common effort to develop each to his maximum level.

---

Bibliography

(Books)


Pearson, Millie V. A Study of Professional Home Economics Courses in the Light of the Democratic Ideal. Ohio State University, 1941 pp. 504


(Magazines)


McJormick, Mary G. "The Educational Possibilities of the School Lunch." *Journal of Home Economics* 31:226-228, April, 1939

Petry, Helen D. "Food For Health in the School Cafeteria." *Journal of Home Economics* 30:559-560, October, 1938


Typist: Vestagene Etchison