

Chapter 25

“Put Northeastern on the map”

1937-1938

Since its beginning in 1935, the National Youth Administration had become increasingly important at Northeastern, both as a source of labor for the school and income for the students. The 260 Northeastern students on the NYA payroll constituted over twenty-five percent of the school's student body. Pay averaged fifteen dollars a month, with experienced students earning thirty cents an hour and others making twenty-five. E.J. Green and the Northeastern committee that administered the program spent the government's money with considerable care. Fewer than ten of the college's NYA students earned below a “C” average, and fifty-eight students during the first or second semester of 1936-37 made more than half “A”s.

Improving economic conditions nationwide and concern for the growing deficit prompted officials in Washington to slash spending for the New Deal in 1937. The dramatic reduction in federal aid sent the country into a deep recession that was keenly felt at Northeastern, where it may have been responsible for the disappointing enrollment figures school officials attempted to conceal. Professor Green was more candid when he explained the situation to the students who had lost their jobs. Funding reductions from the federal government had forced the institution to reduce the number of students employed on the NYA program from 260 to 79. Many students who had lost their jobs were fully qualified by confirmed financial need, high-grade college work, and unquestionable moral standing. Green explained that the needs of the college to provide labor for key projects on campus had been the deciding factor in identifying students for jobs.

One of those projects was the construction of three tennis courts west of the new football stadium. Construction began on September 17 with funding provided by the Works Progress Administration. Landscaping continued around the new dormitories, and planning began on steam tunnels to replace pipes that were unable to deliver sufficient steam from the school's power plant to the classrooms and

other buildings. M.E. Franklin supervised these and many other construction and landscaping projects on campus. By March 1938, the plot of ground southeast of the heating plant had been cleared and leveled for recreational purposes. An outdoor basketball court was built, and the remainder became a playground for Bagley students taking physical education classes. At the same time, work was proceeding on clearing and draining the area around the springs at the main entrance to the campus. Plans called for walls to be built along the stream, shrubbery planted, and terraces constructed. Much of the work on campus was performed by the reduced corps of NYA students.¹

Publicity had always been crucial in the college's effort to recruit students and enlist public support, but like many functions it had been administered in an ad hoc and decentralized fashion. In 1937, the college created a public relations department supervised by Dr. D.W. Emerson, whose primary responsibility was to direct the extension department. The school's network of personal relationships between its faculty and administrators and the teachers, principals, and superintendents of northeastern Oklahoma was the best possible means of recruiting students, but Emerson decided to "put Northeastern on the map" by undertaking an extensive campaign of promotion through the newspapers.

Using Mack Easley, a student from Stigler, to coordinate the effort, Emerson directed that student accomplishments be reported to hometown newspapers "in order that the folks at home may know what he is doing." At the beginning of the spring semester of 1938, Emerson invited presidents of student organizations, student reporters, and faculty members to a luncheon at the Wilson Hall dining room where President Vaughan discussed "Student Leadership and Publicity," and Emerson urged everyone present to cooperate with the new public relations department in its publicity campaign. In February the PR department established a news exchange with five daily and twenty county newspapers in the college's district; by fall the number had expanded to about fifty-five. Four additional students were recruited to work in the department under the direction of Easley.

Later in the year, Emerson changed the name of the public

¹ "New Tennis Courts Under Construction," *Northeastern*, 29 September 1937, 3. "N.T.C. To Have Better Heat," *Northeastern*, 13 October 1937, 3. "Recreation Ground Nears Completion," *Northeastern*, 2 March 1938, 1. "Springs On Campus To Be Protected," *Northeastern*, 2 March 1938, 2.

relations department to the Northeastern News Bureau and developed a new approach for reaching students in area high schools. In cooperation with the music and speech departments, he organized a Northeastern Student Lyceum Bureau. Northeastern students individually or in groups developed programs they could present in the public schools throughout the college's fifteen-county district. Three troupes of performers were assembled to "furnish an invaluable entertainment service, free of charge, to schools and civic organizations all over this section of the state." The acts included short plays, musical skits and performances, and readings. By the end of the school year, the speech department had presented sixty-five lyceum performances throughout the area.²

After a semester at George Peabody College, Flossie B. Templeton, former hostess of Wilson Hall, returned to Northeastern at the beginning of the spring semester. For the remainder of the school year, she served as assistant to Lector Hackworth in the rural school supervision program. With the beginning of the 1938-39 school year, she moved to the Bagley Training School, where she supervised the intermediate department. Templeton began her new duties at once. In mid-January, she and Hackworth conducted a series of training sessions for rural teachers in Cherokee County where they demonstrated teaching techniques designed to improve instruction in small rural schools with limited budgets and facilities.³

As the spring semester of 1938 began, school officials learned that federal NYA assistance to needy college students would be further cut by about one-third. Nonetheless, federally financed construction continued around the campus, but at a reduced pace. M.E. Franklin, who oversaw many of the projects, announced that with the completion of the three tennis courts west of the stadium, work would begin on a native-stone wall from the arts and crafts building to the west entrance of campus. Eighty-two students remained on Northeastern's NYA payroll, and their grades remained far above the school average.⁴

² "College Sends News To Home Papers," *Northeastern*, 24 November 1937, 4. "Dr. Emerson Entertains Publicity Workers," *Northeastern*, 19 January 1938, 4. "Northeastern Has Publicity Workers," *Northeastern*, 23 February 1938, 1. "News Bureau Is New School Campus Title," *Northeastern*, 5 October 1938, 3. "Husband To Speak On Assembly Program," *Northeastern*, 9 November 1938, 1. "Dramatics Class Presents Comedy," *Northeastern*, 9 November 1938, 4. "Students Present Lyceum Program [sic.]," *Northeastern*, 15 November 1939, 1. "Louise Merzinger On Lyceum Program," *Northeastern*, 15 November 1939, 1.

³ "Returns," *Northeastern*, 12 January 1938, 1. "Units Learned Are Stressed," *Northeastern*, 19 January 1938, 1.

⁴ "College Aid Is Reduced," *Northeastern*, 19 January 1938, 1. "New Tennis Courts To Be

An article in the student newspaper in early 1938 challenged students to “answer the question ‘What is the Natural History Collection of C.W. Prier?’” Without waiting for a response the reporter concluded, “It is doubted whether many of the students so questioned could give the proper answer.”⁵ The question and answer raise a poignant reality of college life; no matter how successful a student’s career or how long and productive the service of a member of the faculty, knowledge of their accomplishments seldom outlived the memory of those who knew them. For ten years from 1917 until his resignation because of poor health in 1927, Prier had helped shape Northeastern academically and physically by planning and nurturing its landscape. His prized collection of biological specimens was known around the state and helped establish the reputation of the school’s biology department. His death in early middle age cut short a promising career and deprived the college of a bright, productive professor. Although his collection remained on display and the older faculty members remembered him and his accomplishments, most of the academic community could not answer the reporter’s question. In little over a decade, for most of those who studied and taught at Northeastern, it was as if C.W. Prier had never existed. Institutions are frequently accused of having no loyalty, which may be true, but the underlying reality is that they have an extremely short memory.

For years senior classes left gifts to the school as they neared the end of their college days. If they hoped these tangible tokens of their presence would endure long after their departure, most were doomed to disappointment. Only the concrete benches in front of the old seminary building bequeathed by the Class of 1915 and the brick column dedicated to the memory of A. Florence Wilson by the summer school Class of 1914 survived to the 21st century. A student in the late 1930s mused, “The senior classes of yesterday would have felt a touch of disloyalty had they failed to leave their dear old Alma Mater a monument, which students scarcely observe today.” Referring to the sundial given by of the summer Class of 1930, he asked, “How many of the present student body are aware of the fact that the time of day may be found on the west side of campus as well as on the east?” The clock given the college by the Class of

Ready Soon,” *Northeastern*, 9 February 1938, 4. Ellen Rohner, “Newsettes,” *Northeastern*, 16 February 1938, 3. “Three NYA Students Make ‘A’ Average,” *Northeastern*, 23 February 1938, 3.

⁵ “Birds And Rats,” *Northeastern*, 16 February 1938, 4.

1929 "hangs in utter silence at Bagley. . . waiting for man's strong hand to turn the unwound keys," the student concluded.⁶

Since the establishment of Northeastern in 1909, many members of the faculty and administration had moved on, a few had died, but only one had become too old to continue his duties. After being designated the school's first emeritus professor, Leonard Logan had taught a few years more on a reduced schedule, but remained on the payroll at a monthly salary of \$100 until his death. He may have received preferential treatment since one of his sons had been a member of the legislature and another was an advisor to a governor. While Logan's treatment seems to have been unique, most of his colleagues felt they should be accorded similar treatment.

Oklahoma teachers had been campaigning for a retirement system since 1901, if not earlier. In 1917 the legislature enacted a teacher retirement law, but the measure was invalidated by the Oklahoma Supreme Court, which ruled that the statute violated a provision of the state constitution that read, "The Legislature shall not retire any officer on pay or part pay, or make any grant to such retiring officer."⁷ Teachers continued their campaign to win retirement throughout the 1920s and 1930s. In 1935, Congress enacted a social security law that provided a minimal income for many older Americans, but not school teachers. Retirement was now an issue of increasing concern in Oklahoma, which had no retirement system for state teachers, unlike most other states and all those surrounding Oklahoma.

In March 1938, the dean of the University of Oklahoma School of Religion and president of the Oklahoma Association for Teacher Retirement addressed members of Northeastern's faculty on plans for a state teacher retirement program. College faculty members were urged to join a county organization to work for the enactment of a constitutional amendment that would authorize the legislature to introduce a measure providing for a pension for retired educators. Submitted to a vote of the people at the general election on November 8, 1938, the proposal was rejected by a margin of 35,000 votes out of a total of more than 400,000.⁸ Defeat only made state

⁶ L. Helms, "College Monuments," *Northeastern*, 30 March 1938. 4.

⁷ Oklahoma Constitution, Article V, Section 47. "State Teachers Vote to Push Pension Plans," *Daily Oklahoman*, 16 November 1941. "Special Election Declared Best On Retirement Plan," *Daily Oklahoman*, 19 November 1941. "State Teacher Pension Law To Be Sought," *Daily Oklahoman*, 26 November 1941.

⁸ "Comfort Speaks On Retirement," *Northeastern*, 9 March 1938, 2. State Question No. 242, Legislative referendum No. 76, submitted by House Joint Resolution No. 15, page 561, Session Laws,

teachers more determined to regroup and bring the issue to the people again as soon as possible.

Students and faculty at Northeastern continued forming organizations. In January 1938 Ulys M. Morgan, the NYA supervisor for Cherokee County student from Tahlequah, called a meeting to organize a political science club to affiliate with the State League of Young Democrats of Oklahoma. Open to anyone between the ages of 16 and 40, the group's goal was to persuade its members to join the Democratic Party on reaching voting age. By early March the club had been recognized by the state organization and enrolled about fifty students, faculty members, and administrators, including President Vaughan and Registrar McIntosh, both over 40. The new organization was not only active on campus, but its members quickly involved themselves in affairs at the state level. In February, the president of the Northeastern chapter, George Walker, was elected secretary of the state Young Democrats at a meeting at Central State in Edmond.⁹

In the spring of 1938, three state organizations held annual meetings on the Northeastern campus. Oo-na-lee, the school's Indian Club, hosted about seventy-five delegates from Indian clubs of other Oklahoma colleges at the third annual convention of Ittanaha. The first college organization of Native Americans to obtain a state charter, Oo-na-lee had stimulated the formation of similar clubs around the state and played a key role in promoting annual meetings at the state level. Jess Nevins presided at the meeting as the "chief" of Ittanaha, and R.K. McIntosh and Vaud Travis were the principal speakers at the banquet and luncheon. Fannie A. Baker, professor of modern languages at Northeastern, had served as sponsor of Oo-na-lee since the establishment of the organization in the fall of 1933. During the meeting, delegates passed a resolution changing the names of all local Indian clubs to Ittanaha, a Choctaw word meaning "Council Fires." The purpose of the local chapters and the state organization was to unite Native American college students, encourage greater activity in matters of education, and preserve Indian traditions and lore.¹⁰

1936-37, *Directory of Oklahoma 1981* (Norman; University of Oklahoma Printing Services, 1981), 808.

⁹"Organization Of Political Science Club Started," *Northeastern*, 12 January 1938, 3. "Young Democrats Secure Charter," *Northeastern*, 9 March 1938, 3. "Waller Wins Post In Democrat's Club," *Northeastern*, 1 March 1939, 1.

¹⁰"State Indians Meet At N.T.C.," *Northeastern*, 6 April 1938, 1. "Annual Convention Of Indian Students Held Here Last Week," *Cherokee County Democrat-Star*, 15 April 1938, 1. "State Indians

Miss Baker also played a major role in hosting the third state meeting of the Pan-American Student Forum on Northeastern's campus a week earlier. Established in the spring of 1934 to promote friendly relations between the United States and the nations of Latin America, the Northeastern club was one of forty-six high school and college chapters in the state. Over three hundred delegates including several national officers attended the two-day meeting where they were greeted by President Vaughan and the mayor of Tahlequah.¹¹

In early May, members of the Oklahoma Historical Society from all parts of the state convened in Tahlequah for their annual meeting. Former governor, Federal Circuit Judge R.L. Williams, president of the society, Oklahoma historian Grant Foreman, and other guests were welcomed at a reception at Haskell Hall, dined at Wilson Hall, and conducted their sessions at the college auditorium. An item on the organization's agenda was the appointment of a committee to create a monument to the late W.W. Hastings, long-time congressman from northeastern Oklahoma who had played a key role in securing the state normal school for Tahlequah in 1909.¹²

Attendance at the three state meetings was small in comparison to the throngs of high school students who descended on Northeastern's campus for the fifteenth annual interscholastic meet in April. The 1938 competition featured a new element—a band festival organized by Henri Minsky that closed the three days of interscholastic competition. In addition to a band contest, the festival exposed high school musicians and their teachers to "several renowned band directors," featured individual demonstrations and group lectures, and offered participants the opportunity to participate in a massed concert.¹³

Oklahoma colleges had not earned a reputation for pushing the limits of intellectual inquiry, but in 1938, Miss Tamzie Sexton, home economics instructor, explored "Love, Courtship, and Marriage" in one of her classes. The same semester, Dr. Alfred Kinsey, a biologist with a Harvard Ph.D., became part of a team

Meet At N.T.C.," *Northeastern*, 13 April 1938, 3. *Northeastern State College Bulletin*, 1939-40, 19.

¹¹ "Pan American Clubs To Open Meet Here Friday Afternoon," *Cherokee County Democrat-Star*, 1 April 1938, 1. "Forum Plans State Meet," *Northeastern*, 12 January 1938, 1. "N.T.C. To Be Host To State Forum," *Northeastern*, 23 February 1938, 4. "State Forum Plans Made," *Northeastern*, 23 March 1938, 4. "Northeastern Is Host To Pan-American Forum," *Northeastern*, 6 April 1938, 1, 4.

¹² "State History Group Meets," *Northeastern*, 4 May 1938, 1. "Monument Planned to W.W. Hastings By History Group," *Cherokee County Democrat-Star*, 13 May 1938, 5.

¹³ "N.T.C. Interscholastic Meet And Band Festival Attract Many Students This Week," *Northeastern*, 13 April 1938, 1. "Band Festival Closes Meet," *Northeastern* 20 April 1938, 1.

teaching a new course on marriage at the University of Indiana. Other than the name, the Northeastern course had little in common with the class Kinsey directed—a candid examination of human sexuality that shocked those born in Victorian American, but proved popular with college students. Northeastern’s class was much less provocative, examining such issues as “Should the wife help ‘bring home the bacon’? Should ‘till death us do part’ be removed from the wedding ceremony?”¹⁴

Following the unsuccessful effort of the women of Wilson Hall to persuade President Vaughan to relax the closing hours, in April at a special assembly, Deans McIntosh and Fullerton sought to deal with student unrest. McIntosh, who explained that “laws are not made for the strong in their strength, but the weak in their weakness,” issued “a plea to the students to observe the school regulations.” His appeal was reinforced the following week by an editorial on the “discipline problem.” The writer warned that schools that allowed students “individual freedom” were “doomed to fail in the process of developing true American citizens.” Rather she urged, “College students should listen respectfully to older people who have had wider experience and can point out the ‘pitfalls’ that college students confront.” Some students were not convinced; at another special assembly they voted to have the student council “draw up a number of proposed changes and present them to President John Vaughan for his approval.”¹⁵

As always, May at the college was hectic. On the first Friday of the month, members of the State School Board held a regular business session on Northeastern’s campus. In the evening they were entertained at a fish fry at R.K. McIntosh’s cabin at the Northeastern Outing Club. The next morning they, Northeastern students, and faculty members joined Cherokee seminarians in celebrating the eighty-seventh anniversary of the dedication of the tribe’s boarding school at Park Hill. Governor Marland addressed the annual reunion and viewed a dramatization of Cherokee history written and directed by Eula E. Fullerton, Northeastern’s dean of women.

During their business session, members of the seminary students’ association created a Sons and Daughters of the Alumni of

¹⁴ “Class Discusses Love And Marriage,” *Northeastern*, 16 March 1938, 2.

¹⁵ “A Happy Medium,” *Northeastern*, 13 April 1938, 2. “Students Discuss College Rules,” *Northeastern*, 13 April 1938, 3.

the Cherokee Male and Female Seminaries Association "for the purpose of carrying on the work of the older group." Mose Frye of Muskogee was elected the first president of the descendants' organization.

The college's students and organizations contributed to the centennial celebration of the founding of Tahlequah and observance of the Trail of Tears on Wednesday, May 18. Members of the Redmen band, Ittanaha, the Pan-American Student Forum, and Rho Theta Sigma, the college honor society, participated in a parade sponsored by the American Legion. Waldo Emerson, a Northeastern student from Checotah, had created a special cachet for letters mailed from the Tahlequah Post Office marking its one hundredth year of operation and the twentieth anniversary of air mail. Following the parade, letters bearing Emerson's cachet were transported from Tahlequah in an historic stagecoach to Muskogee, where they were air mailed to locations throughout the United States.¹⁶

As the school year neared its end, President Vaughan entertained the graduating seniors at a breakfast in the Wilson Hall dining room and continued the tradition of honoring them at a lawn party at his home. The senior day picnic at the Cookson Hills Project took place over a week before graduation, leaving sufficient time for sunburned noses and arms to fade before the ceremonies. Club receptions, banquets, or other activities for the departing students continued at a hectic pace until the seventy seniors received their degrees at Northeastern's twenty-ninth spring convocation.¹⁷

As the graduates prepared to leave, school officials were completing plans for summer school. The spring semester ended on Friday, May 27, and enrollment for summer started the next day and continued on Monday. Classes began Tuesday, May 31. The list of speakers and programs arranged for summer focused almost exclusively on students planning to become teachers and reflected a sharp decrease in federal relief programs and the steep recession that had eroded tax revenue in 1937-38. In earlier years national authorities on education from prestigious eastern universities had

¹⁶ "Tahlequah Ready To Entertain Centennial Celebration Visitors," *Tahlequah Citizen*, 12 May 1938, 1. "City Relives Historic Days," *Northeastern*, 18 May 1938, 1, 4. "N.T.C. Takes Part In Celebration," *Northeastern*, 25 May 1938, 2. "Historical Coach To Carry Mail May 18," *Cherokee County Democrat-Star*, 13 May 1938, 1, 4.

¹⁷ "Seniors Entertained," *Northeastern*, 18 May 1938, 3. "Spring Class Includes 70," *Northeastern*, 25 May 1938, 1, 4. "Seniors Entertained At President's Home," *Northeastern*, 25 May 1938, 3. "Seniors Have Day Of Picnic Pleasure," *Northeastern*, 25 May 1938, 4.

been invited to campus; in the summer of 1938 guest speakers came from Muskogee, Tulsa, Oklahoma City, and the State Department of Public Instruction.¹⁸

Enrollment in the summer session was described as “unusually large” with so many cars that “parking spaces looked like a parking lot at a world series ball game.” Most of the license plates in the lots were from Oklahoma, but a few came from Texas, Missouri, and New Mexico. Both dormitories were full, and housing space in town was “taxed to capacity.” Although “college officials agreed that this is the heaviest enrollment in the history of Northeastern,” statistics reported to the state indicate a total enrollment of 1,082, a decline of 274 from the previous summer. Almost all of the regular faculty taught during the summer term, including George Ogle, L.P. Woods, and Harry Peeler, who had just returned from leaves of absence. Two extension instructors were also brought to campus, and three individuals not part of the regular faculty were added for the summer. The official figure and the reports do not agree. One article said most students were teachers and another says they were students who were enrolled in the regular semesters. The summer band camp begun a year earlier barely attracted enough students to justify offering it. With so few students, the recreational features of the camp were abandoned although band and music lessons continued. Enrollment at the Bagley Training School was also small, which meant that those attending received almost individual instruction from the 232 Northeastern students doing their practice teaching. The summer term of 1938 was uneventful, but the 158 who received their degrees on Thursday, July 28, constituted the largest graduating class in the college’s history. The August intersession was almost four times larger than the previous year with 239 students enrolled.¹⁹

Federal funds had been cut, but projects continued on and near the Northeastern campus. Construction on a \$10,000 infirmary building east of Haskell Hall began during the summer; at the same

¹⁸ Northeastern Teachers College Bulletin, 1937-38, 3. “Summer Educational Program Arranged,” *Northeastern*, 25 May 1938, 1.

¹⁹ Vaughan’s enrollment statistics, Records available in Archives, Northeastern State University. “Unusually Large Enrollment At Summer Term,” *Cherokee County Democrat-Star*, 3 June 1938, 1. “Large Enrollment At Northeastern,” *Cherokee County Democrat-Star*, 10 June 1938, 1. “Summer School Underway With Heavy Enrollment,” *Tahlequah Citizen*, 2 June 1938, 1. “Bagley Has Small Summer Enrollment,” *Tahlequah Citizen*, 2 June 1938, 1. “158 Receive Degree A [sic.] N.S.T.C. Tonight,” *Tahlequah Citizen*, 28 July 1938, 1. “Enrollment Over Three Thousand,” *Northeastern*, 7 December 1938, 1.

time 1,200 feet of steam pipe were laid on campus. About half were placed in tunnels connecting the college's heating plant, the administration building, and the auditorium/gymnasium. Previously, steam pipes had been buried in trenches where they were subject to corrosion and heat loss; the new pipes, insulated with asbestos, were suspended in concrete tunnels, constructed by NYA workers. Plans called for a 100-foot extension of the heat tunnels to the new infirmary. Despite the abundance of oil and natural gas in Oklahoma, Northeastern still heated with coal. In the winter, the college fireman at the heating plant shoveled about half a ton of coal an hour into the furnace to provide steam to heat the campus.²⁰

As with most of the campus NYA construction projects, M.E. Franklin supervised the work on the steam tunnels. With the beginning of the 1938 school year, the head of the industrial arts department was also given the responsibility of supervising two student work crews of about twenty-five men each. One was assigned the construction of a concrete drain for the track at Gable Field, a thirty-foot stone wall near the education building, a one hundred-foot iron fence on the south side of campus, and curbing near the shop building, as well as earth moving and leveling. The other crew built eleven bookcases for Haskell Hall, oak tables and benches for the art department, and stage scenery for the drama department in addition to repairing desks, chairs, and tables around the college.²¹

Just north of campus on August 1, the new seventy-five-bed Indian hospital named for W.W. Hastings opened in a \$320,000 complex of buildings made of native stone, quarried nearby. Located on a fifteen-acre tract of land donated to the city by the Cherokee Nation, the facility's staff of twenty-five doctors and nurses added significantly to the community's economic base and improved its educational and cultural level. The Northeastern band played, and President Vaughan represented the college at the hospital's formal dedication on Monday, October 3. Half a century later, in 1988, Northeastern acquired the hospital's buildings and land as the home for its College of Optometry.²²

²⁰ "Turn On The Heat! It Costs Something To Warm College," *Northeastern*, 14 December 1938, 2.

²¹ "AD Building To Get New Pipe Line," *Cherokee County Democrat-Star*, 8 July 1938, 1. "College Heating Plant Improved," *Northeastern*, 28 September 1938, 2. "Two Projects Give Work To Students," *Northeastern*, 5 October 1938, 2. "Student Workers Improving Campus," *Northeastern*, 9 November 1938, 2.

²² "25 Patients In Indian Hospital," *Tahlequah Citizen*, 11 August 1938, 1. "Dedication of The

The beginning of Northeastern's thirtieth year brought many changes in the school's faculty. In August, Miss Eula Fullerton, dean of women for the past thirteen years, took a leave of absence to accept an appointment made by U.S. Senator Josh Lee as director of women's activities and white-collar projects in the state WPA office. In May 1939, she was named director of the Professional and Service Division of the Oklahoma WPA and never returned to Northeastern's faculty. Lois Gillis Hall, head of the English department since 1921, was appointed dean of women for the next school year.²³

Ruth Allison, professor of art since 1923, and Mildred Randels, associate professor of education since 1932, were granted leaves of absence to work on doctorates at New York City University. Miss Mary Best, A.B., Berea College, was employed as assistant professor of arts and crafts to replace Allison during her leave. The leave of absence of Robert N. Tarkington was extended, but he eventually accepted a position in the commerce department of New York University and never returned to the Northeastern faculty.²⁴

George Ogle and L.P. Woods, who had also returned to the faculty from leaves of absence in the summer, continued their teaching assignments in the fall. Woods also resumed his position as dean of men. Sue Thornton, who had spent the past school year in graduate study at the University of Oklahoma, resumed her position as Northeastern's librarian. To replace Jewell Golden Briggs, Eugene Schauer, A.B., Northeastern, M.S. Oklahoma A&M College, was hired as professor of Business Education. Alice Faye Kenney, A.B., Oklahoma Baptist University, M.S., Colorado State College of Education, was hired as Schauer's assistant in the commercial department.²⁵

Gerald Forbes, A.B., M.A., University of Oklahoma, a long-time newspaperman, joined the Northeastern faculty as a temporary replacement for Eula Fullerton as professor of history and journalism. E.G. McCurtain, B.A., M.A., University of Oklahoma,

Wm. W. Hastings Hospital," *Tahlequah Citizen*, 29 September 1939, 5. "Northeastern Band Plays At Dedication," *Northeastern*, 5 October 1938, 1.

²³ "N. T. C. Dean Of Women Accepts New Post," *Cherokee County Democrat-Star*, 12 August 1938, 1. "Miss Eula Fullerton Gets New WPA Post," *Tahlequah Citizen*, 11 May 1939, 1. "Mrs. Hall To Fill Dean Of Women Post," *Cherokee County Democrat-Star*, 2 September 1938, 1.

²⁴ Letter to Charles W. Hunt from John Vaughan, 16 January 1940, NSU Archives. "Mrs. Tarkington Final Rites Sunday," *Tahlequah Citizen*, 20 April 1939, 1.

²⁵ "Fall Session At Northeastern To Begin September 5," *Cherokee County Democrat-Star*, 19 August 1938, 1, 8.

was added to the faculty to instruct in sociology, and Miss Grace Parks, graduate nurse, was employed as the college's resident nurse. Of the fifty-nine faculty and staff members in the fall of 1938, fourteen were former Northeastern students.²⁶

Enrollment reached 1,545 during the 1938-39 academic year, a record not equaled until after World War II. Most of those attending were from northeastern Oklahoma, but students from fifteen counties beyond the college's district and from eight other states were represented in the student body. Even though three days were devoted to fall registration, "lines of enrolling students extended from one end of the administration building to the other as gangs of busy and bothered students jammed the halls." For days students besieged the residents of Tahlequah seeking lodging since both dorms had been filled to capacity for weeks. Two hundred students enrolled in twenty-five classes in seventeen different disciplines taught at the Northeastern campus on Saturdays.²⁷

Sobered by the magnitude of the economic downturn and the results of 1938 elections, Democratic officials in Washington reversed the effort to cut spending and appropriated generously for programs to provide relief to the unemployed. Several days after the beginning of the new semester, the National Youth Administration established a resident project on the Northeastern campus. The program provided assistance to high school graduates unable to afford college. The NYA paid those selected to participate a maximum of twenty-six dollars a month, all of which was used for room, board, fees, and books. Students selected for the program worked eighty hours at a rate of 32.5 cents an hour. The college was authorized to enroll twenty-five men and an equal number of women in the program. In January of 1939, Ulys Morgan, resident supervisor of the program, reported that all authorized slots were filled. The men, under the direction of M.E. Franklin, worked on campus projects or in the industrial arts department and the women in the home economics department.²⁸

²⁶ "Former O. U. Man Is New N. T. C. Professor," *Cherokee County Democrat-Star*, 26 August 1938, 1. "Faculty Has 9 New Faces," *Northeastern*, 28 September 1938, 3, 4. "E. G. M Curtain Weds Oklahoma City Girl," *Northeastern*, 26 October 1938, 2. "Fourteen Graduates On Northeastern Staff," *Northeastern*, 26 October 1938, 4.

²⁷ "Enrollment At Northeastern To Reach 12 Hundred," *Cherokee County Democrat-Star*, 9 September 1938, 1, 8. "Seventeen Subjects Are Offered Saturday Students," *Northeastern*, 28 September 1938, 4. "Nine States Send Students To Campus," *Northeastern*, 5 October 1938, 1.

²⁸ "NYA Supervisor Attends Meeting at Oklahoma City," *Cherokee County Democrat-Star*, 27 January 1939, 1.

Most of the NYA resident program students came from Cherokee, Adair, and Wagoner counties. The school arranged lodging for the students at boarding houses in the city. Their labor on campus projects augmented that of other students employed by the college with funds provided by the NYA. Of approximately two hundred students employed by Northeastern through the NYA and the College Employment program, 67 were engaged in stenographic and clerical work for faculty and school officials; nine were lab assistants for the science department; twenty-two worked in the library; and the remainder were employed in miscellaneous projects around the campus.²⁹

The careful screening of NYA students ensured that their grades were well above the college average, but in the spring semester of 1939, school officials imposed hour limitations on students employed by the college. E.J. Green, director of student employment, announced that students who earned \$10 per pay period should not enroll in more than sixteen semester hours of class work. Students earning more had greater limitations although some latitude was allowed for those with above-average grades.

Work apparently did not adversely affect the grades of stronger students. In the spring of 1939, three-quarters of the members of Alpha Chi, the school's national honor fraternity, had jobs; most of them had worked throughout their college careers. Thirty-three of the forty-nine members of Rho Theta Sigma, the local honor society, also worked, and all but four of this group had since they first enrolled at Northeastern. Six members of the student council, including all of its officers, held jobs, as did the presidents of many of the campus organizations.

Class limitations placed on student employees and the school's tutoring program suggest that grading standards at Northeastern were more rigorous than they had been earlier in the decade. In the fall semester of 1938 only 4 students of 1300 enrolled earned straight "As," and fewer than 10% earned above a "B" average. Northeastern's grading scale was based on a three-point system with an "A" counting three points, two for a "B," one for a "C," and nothing for a "D" or an "F." Grade reports were issued every six weeks.³⁰

²⁹ "NYA Resident Project Set-Up At Northeastern," *Tahlequah Citizen*, 22 September 1938, 1. "Forty-One Special Students Enroll," *Northeastern*, 28 September 1938, 4. "200 Students Are Working On Campus," *Northeastern*, 5 October 1938, 3.

³⁰ "Working Students Limited In Study," *Northeastern*, 18 January 1939, 1. "Four Straight 'A's"

Although it seemed to be no part of a national craze, roller skating suddenly became popular at Northeastern. At the suggestion of Eula Fullerton before she left for her new position with the WPA, the student council purchased fifty pairs of roller skates for the use of students. The new tennis courts north of Wilson Hall were designated a roller rink, and roller skating became part the Activity Night program sponsored by the student council. Dean Fullerton obviously sensed the mood of the students, for enrollment in Activity Night sessions of roller skating and dancing reached record levels and exceeded capacity during the fall semester.³¹

The lack of student interest in the weekly assemblies continued to concern members of the student council and the administration. E.J. Green, director of student employment, urged all student employees that if they were not working at 10:00 Wednesday morning, to obey the college's by-laws by attending the assemblies. The final eight assemblies of the fall 1938 semester are typical of the programs provided by the auditorium entertainment committee. Two were lectures by the general secretary of the Student Christian Association and a professional speaker in the school's lyceum series. A troupe of Northeastern's Student Lyceum Bureau, the college band, and the school's men's glee club all gave programs. Students from Connors Agricultural College and the Sequoyah Training School presented two others, and in mid-December a Christmas program was staged.³²

Students also realized that their college had no school mascot. The presidents of the school's three social sororities informed the student newspaper that the lack of such a college symbol deprived students of a focal point for their "hopes, faith, and trust." Attributing the school's lack of "enthusiasm for its various sports and activities," the women declared themselves 100% in support of the selection of a school mascot. Miss Delmoine Clingenpeel, president of the Delta Sigma Epsilon sorority, declared, "A mascot is a part of college life, and is absolutely necessary for the promotion of school spirit." The members of the three sororities also

[sic.] Recorded For Term," *Northeastern*, 22 February 1939, 1. "Two Freshmen Make A Grades," *Northeastern*, 8 December 1937, 1. "The Papoose Says," *Northeastern*, 22 March 1939, 1.

³¹ "Skating And Archery Will Be 'Activity Night' Features," *Northeastern*, 28 September 1938, 2.

³² "Green Urges All Student Employees To Attend Chapel," *Northeastern*, 28 September 1938, 2. "Program In Assembly Draws Unusual Crowd," *Northeastern*, 5 October 1938, 1. "Plays Wednesday," *Northeastern*, 26 October 1938, 1. "Committee Reports On Assembly Schedule," *Northeastern*, 8 November 1938, 1.

were in agreement concerning the type of symbol the school needed. In view of Northeastern's Native American heritage, they proposed "a little Cherokee Indian boy, dressed all in Indian regalia, would make an ideal mascot." Wesley Miller, the president of the student council, gave his "wholehearted support to this scintillating idea," and urged every campus organization to nominate a candidate for the school's mascot.³³

Although other ideas were advanced, including a Cherokee princess, a dog with a red coat like an Irish Setter, and a paint pony, the little Cherokee boy won overwhelming support. The only question to be resolved was just who would be chosen for the role. By mid-October, the students had selected Billy Joe Cooper, the six-year-old son of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Cooper of the Sequoyah Training School, as the school's mascot. The only candidate nominated, "Little Chief Cooper" was supported by Ittanaha and elected without opposition.³⁴

Selection of a mascot was just part of an orchestrated campaign to raise school spirit and give the alums a victory at the homecoming game. The student council decreed the week before the game as "School Spirit Week," and staged a series of events to mobilize the college, alums, and community in support of the Redmen. A series of special assemblies was called during the week. Fraternities and sororities were asked to stress pep at their meetings and sing the Northeastern pep song. A special edition of the *Northeastern* was published in green ink, and campus leaders were asked to write "peppy editorials" for the paper.³⁵

Friday before the big game, the student council sponsored a bonfire and pep rally. After roasting marshmallows and apples over the fire and exhorting fans to rally behind the team, participants followed the band on a snake dance down Muskogee Avenue. Members of Ittanaha set up two tepees on campus and continued the tradition of beating a tom-tom throughout the night before the game. Despite these concerted efforts and the "faith, hope, and trust of every loyal student, member of the faculty, athlete, and alumnus," NSTC's new mascot's medicine proved ineffective against the Southwestern Bulldogs who defeated the Little Chief's Redmen 21 to 7 before 3,000 homecoming fans at Gable Field, Saturday,

³³ "Movement Starts To Choose Mascot," *Northeastern*, 5 October 1938, 1.

³⁴ "Billy Joe Cooper Chosen First Mascot Of Redmen By Proclamation," *Northeastern*, 19 October 1938, 1.

October 22.

Despite the loss, spirits remained high at the homecoming dance following the game, for many of the coeds probably shared the feelings of Marion Brown, a freshman from Tahlequah who explained, "I was more interested in boys than football."³⁶

³⁶ "Southwestern Bulldogs Trounce Redmen 21 To 7 In Homecoming Game," *Northeastern*, 26 October 1938, 3. Telephone interview with Marion Brown Hagerstrand, 5 March 2006. "Ittanaha Ceremony Friday For Homecoming Victory," *Tahlequah Citizen*, 20 October 1938, 1.