

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The community of Rosedale and its schools have progressed significantly since the townsite was founded in 1872. The railroads moved west bringing with them the early Rosedale residents who were ready to face their new land with optimism and hope for the future. A rolling mill that produced iron railroad rails was established in the newly formed community in 1875. The town thrived because of the rolling mill, and Rosedale became a bustling center of economic activity.

The early residents showed a keen interest in music and quickly formed a rolling mill band that served as the focus for community and social activities. This interest in music carried over to the public schools, as evidence of music in the schools was apparent even before the turn of the century. The community continued to expand its musical activities and formed another local band and several vocal social clubs and performance groups. The Union Sunday School, formed by workers of the rolling mill community, had a large choir and an orchestra that added to the growth of religious and social musical activities.

By 1907 the Rosedale community had lost the rolling mill but had gained a thriving hospital that became Rosedale's most influential business. Eleanor Taylor Bell Memorial Hospital became the University of Kansas Medical Center which grew and developed rapidly. It added many new jobs for the residents and also brought in many laborers and medical personnel who added to community and school growth. As the Medical Center progressed, so did the schools and the music program.

Music was formally introduced into the public high school in 1911. As musical activities grew in the schools, community musical organizations gradually began to disappear. An orchestra was introduced in the high school as an extra-curricular activity in 1916. Vocal and instrumental music became very popular with Rosedale students as the school system formed and developed.

The year 1922 saw the consolidation of Rosedale with the larger first class city of Kansas City, Kansas. The consolidation had many positive effects on the community and the schools. A solid music education program was already established in the city schools under the leadership of Bessie Miller, supervisor of music. The music program at Rosedale adapted quickly to this new growth and direction.

A highly influential educator, Sarah Howard, came to teach at Rosedale in the fall of 1922. She would continue to lead the music department for the next 33 years. Howard was a curriculum leader who did much to shape and form an innovative program. Howard, along with the entire Kansas City, Kansas school system, believed in involving all children in music education. High numbers of students enrolled in music classes have been a trademark of the schools throughout the years.

The instrumental music department continued to grow and flourish, especially after World War II. High numbers of students involved in performance-oriented groups was the trend during the twenty year teaching tenure of Bill Stoskopf. The stability that Stoskopf's leadership provided, combined with a small town-like community deeply devoted to the education of its children, was the formula that provided an instrumental program that proved to be a huge success.

The late 1960s brought a change of community spirit for the Rosedale area. The community that had held on to its small town feeling was rapidly changing to an urban center. An urban renewal project in 1966 destroyed many single family homes to make way for further Medical Center growth. Many Rosedale families were displaced and eventually moved from the area.

The change in the community brought a decline in school enrollment. Declining enrollment signaled a move on the part of the public school administration to combine Rosedale Junior-Senior High School with the neighboring Argentine Junior-Senior High. A new school, J. C. Harmon, was built near 21st and Steele Roads in Kansas City, Kansas. The buildings at Rosedale and Argentine were converted into middle schools. The

change to middle school signaled an end of an era for the schools and the music program at Rosedale. This change to a middle opens new opportunities for further historical research.

Conclusions

The following conclusions were drawn from this study:

1. The philosophy of involving all children in music education that was adopted by the Music Supervisors' Conference during Sarah Howard's teaching tenure was also evident in the Rosedale schools and carried through until the early 1960s. Rosedale was not a large school, but throughout the year, many children were included in the program.
2. Consolidation of Rosedale with Kansas City, Kansas had positive effects on the music program of Rosedale. Joining the larger city school system gave the music program the much needed curriculum direction that was already established in the schools of Kansas City.
3. Throughout the years Rosedale was equal to or superior in the number of children involved in the music program, the activities presented, and the quality of teaching in comparison with the other Kansas City, Kansas schools. During the late 1930 through the early 1950s, Wyandotte High School, which was located in the wealthier area of Kansas City, did seem to have a superior program. This study did not try to compare the music education program at Rosedale to other schools outside of Kansas City, Kansas. A comparison of music education programs in the urban schools of Kansas City with other urban or suburban schools would be a topic for further research. For the thirty years that F. L. Schlagle was superintendent of the Kansas City, Kansas schools, no large group contest participation was permitted in any of the city schools. Therefore, contest results often used as an evaluation of music programs could not be used in this study.
4. When Bessie Miller was supervisor of music education in the Kansas City, Kansas schools, she strongly urged an aesthetic approach to music education. Evidence shows that in the schools of Rosedale a more performance-oriented philosophy dominated music education.
5. Many quality educators worked with the students at Rosedale Junior-Senior High School. The outstanding contributions of Sarah Howard and Bill Stoskopf did much to share the program. Three of Rosedale's music educators, Bill Stoskopf, Mildred Fulhage and John Albertson, all went on to music supervisory positions in the Kansas City, Kansas public schools.
6. Only two educators stayed with the music department at Rosedale a substantial number of years. The constant turnover of teachers had a direct effect on the progress of the program. No apparent reason surfaced for the constant change of teachers. The music department thrived during the tenure of Sarah Howard and Bill Stoskopf. These two outstanding educators stayed at Rosedale long enough to build a quality program.
7. The University of Kansas Medical Center had a great influence on the school and the music department at Rosedale. Early Medical Center growth paralleled the community and school growth. The Medical Center brought laborers, technicians and hospital and University personnel to the community. These workers settled in the Rosedale community, enrolling their children in the schools. Consequently, the schools and the music program grew. In the late 1960s, Medical Center growth had another effect on the community. Expansion of the Medical Center destroyed many single-family homes. Many long-

time Rosedale residents moved from the area, causing a decrease in enrollment in the schools and in the music program.

Recommendations

“The importance of educational history is usually identified as the knowledge that helps us move into the future, forearmed with the knowledge of the past.”¹

This study answered many questions about the school music program in the Rosedale district of Kansas City, Kansas. From the research presented in this project, the following recommendations are being made:

1. Closer ties should be established between the University of Kansas Medical Center and the community, schools, and the music department of the Rosedale community.
2. A historical study of the University of Kansas Medical Center should be completed.
3. Further historical research into the music programs in Kansas City, Kansas, especially Wyandotte High School, should be completed.
4. Continued research into urban school music programs should be made focusing on the elements of teaching that provide successful learning experiences for children in lower socio-economic areas.

¹ Michael L. Mark, “Unique Aspects of Historical Research in Music Education,” Bulletin of Historical Research in Music Education 6 (January 1985): 32.