

THE COMMUNITY AND GOVERNMENT OF TUSCALOOSA, ALABAMA

By

John T. Dorsey, Jr.

A THESIS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts in the  
College of Arts and Sciences in the  
University of Alabama

University, Alabama  
1950

## PREFACE

## Government: The Making of Decisions

There has been an increasing realization in recent years that no one of the various disciplines concerned with the study of man and his society, ranging from biology through the social sciences to philosophy, is sufficient unto itself. Human behavior and social processes are no respecters of interdisciplinary barriers. Many social scientists are therefore attempting to examine such behavior and processes as a whole - to integrate their own area of concentration with knowledge derived from other approaches. This is not to imply that the thinking of a political scientist, for example, should become a hash of indiscriminately compounded political science, economics, sociology, and anthropology, seasoned with psychology. The local organs of government and political processes should rather be studied in their larger societal context, and their relation to this context analyzed.

This approach is justified when government is conceived of as a function of society rather than as a formal structure. The function may be defined as the making and implementing of important decisions. The things about

T378  
D739C  
1950

ii

214257

which decisions have to be made are societal; specifically they may be described as tensions arising from mal-adjustments and conflicts in the social system. Society or segments of society act through the structure of government to formalize and carry out decisions which reduce tensions or which prevent them from becoming disruptive. The roots of such decisions, the limitations on them, the pressures and influences which shape them and determine how they are carried out - all these are to be found in the configuration and interrelations of society.

The community is the portion of society with which local government is concerned. Therefore, while the primary purpose of this study was to analyze the organs of government in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, it was considered necessary to precede this analysis with a limited though systematic description of the community of Tuscaloosa itself.

The problem of studying a community is intimately related to one's definition of the term. At first glance this should not be difficult, for everyone can tell when he sees a community. Its parts can be named, classified, and grossly described. But it will be seen that a community is a dynamic entity which is more than the sum of its parts. In the absence of an adequate definition, it

was decided that the best procedure would be to isolate what seemed to be some major characteristics of a community and to use these as the categories into which data could be arranged. Since a community is characterized at least by (a) a number of people, who (b) occupy a territorial area, who (c) use a related body of techniques in adjusting to their environment, both human and non-human, who (d) exhibit common patterns of social interaction which occur largely within the framework of a constellation of social institutions, and who (e) derive a certain degree of solidarity from all the above which is reflected in a shared body or system of beliefs or symbols to which they respond,<sup>1</sup> the data-groupings of the community study were accordingly designated to describe the environment, the people, their technology, their social organization, and their systems of belief.

In the analysis of the organs of Tuscaloosa's government, an attempt will be made to show the integration of the government with the structure of the community, and to assess the consequences for the community of the government and its activities. The guiding question will be, "What is

---

1. Adapted with modifications from Pauline V. Young, Scientific Social Surveys and Research, p. 447.

the municipal government's part in making and implementing community decisions?" Finally, in the hope that some utility other than a conjectural better understanding of government would result from the study, a few suggestions in the form of recommendations for the improvement of the functions of government will be included.

The limitations of this type of study should be acknowledged at the outset. The scope is obviously beyond what could be handled adequately by one researcher, working alone. Although use has been made of objective data where possible, there are many areas where such data is not available, or where limitations of time and facilities preclude it. It will therefore be necessary to throw into the breach the impressions and conclusions of the investigator based on experience and observation. Consequently the claim of scientific validity for many of the conclusions cannot be made. Again, the inclusion of the community at large in a study of government necessarily limits the thoroughness of the examination of the groups of people and activities which are formally designated "governmental." It is contended, however, that what may be lost in detail will be compensated for in perspective, and it is hoped that in spite of these limitations some accuracy of description and analysis can be achieved.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This thesis was begun under the supervision of Dr. Albert Lepawsky, Professor of public administration in the Department of Political Science at the University of Alabama. He saw it through most of the research and planning phase, but was unable to continue the supervision after he was granted a leave of absence from the University to serve with the United Nations Technical Assistance Mission to Bolivia in April, 1950. Dr. York Willbern, Head of the Department of Political Science and Director of the Bureau of Public Administration at the University, generously consented to supervise the remainder of the research and the writing. I would like to express my gratitude to both Dr. Lepawsky and Dr. Willbern for their cordial assistance and patience during the preparation of the thesis.

This study would not have been possible without access to certain previously compiled research materials. Mrs. Katherine Wade Thompson, former graduate student in the Department of Political Science, graciously allowed me to utilize material which she had gathered on the community and government of Tuscaloosa. To Mrs. Donald S. Strong I am indebted for her kindness in permitting me to make use

of material gathered for a survey of Tuscaloosa's government by the League of Women Voters.

While engaged in this work I talked to many citizens of Tuscaloosa, both in chance conversations and in formal interviews. They must remain unacknowledged individually at their own request, but I would like to thank them for their willing cooperation in helping an outsider to gain an insight into the structure and processes of their community.

All city officials and employees were most generous in giving time and information. I am particularly indebted to Mr. Wallace F. Dalee, City Clerk of the City of Tuscaloosa.

I would also like to thank Dr. Solon T. Kimball, Head of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, for reading and criticizing Chapter II, and Mr. Robert Daland of the Department of Political Science for reading and criticizing Chapters IV and V.

Finally, my deep appreciation is acknowledged to my wife, Ann Waller Dorsey, who had already been through the mill. She provided criticism and encouragement, and fought a strong but losing campaign for readability.

J.T.D.

## CONTENTS

| Chapter |   | Page |
|---------|---|------|
| I       | TUSCALOOSA: CONTEXT OF DECISIONS (A) . . . . .                              | 1    |
|         | Environment and Its Influence . . . . .                                     | 1    |
|         | The People of Tuscaloosa . . . . .  | 9    |
|         | The Technology . . . . .  | 23   |
| II      | TUSCALOOSA: CONTEXT OF DECISIONS (B) . . . . .                              | 34   |
|         | Social Structure of the Community . . . . .                                 | 34   |
|         | Sub-communities, Caste, and Class . . . . .                                 | 34   |
|         | The University . . . . .  | 35   |
|         | The Negroes . . . . .   | 42   |
|         | Social Class in Tuscaloosa . . . . .  | 51   |
|         | Institutions . . . . .  | 68   |
|         | The Value System . . . . .  | 77   |
| III     | GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT:<br>HOW DECISIONS ARE MADE . . . . . | 84   |
|         | Organization for Government . . . . .                                       | 84   |
|         | Voters and Non-voters . . . . .   | 84   |
|         | The Commission Board . . . . .  | 96   |
|         | Management of Public Affairs . . . . .                                      | 104  |
|         | Financial Management . . . . .  | 105  |
|         | Personnel Management . . . . .  | 112  |
|         | Planning . . . . .  | 117  |
|         | Reports and Public Relations . . . . .                                      | 124  |
|         | Legal Administration . . . . .  | 129  |
| IV      | REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES: WHAT DECISIONS<br>ARE MADE . . . . .             | 131  |
|         | Municipal Revenues: Where the Money Comes<br>From . . . . .                 | 131  |
|         | Municipal Expenditures: Where the Money<br>Goes . . . . .                   | 156  |

## CONTENTS (continued)

| Chapter           |  | Page |
|-------------------|--|------|
| V                 | <b>GOVERNMENTAL ACTIVITIES: HOW DECISIONS<br/>ARE CARRIED OUT . . . . .</b>  | 164  |
|                   | Law Enforcement . . . . .  | 164  |
|                   | Fire Protection . . . . .  | 170  |
|                   | Public Works . . . . .   | 174  |
|                   | Education . . . . .  | 185  |
|                   | Public Health . . . . .  | 188  |
|                   | Public Welfare . . . . .   | 192  |
|                   | Recreation . . . . .   | 195  |
| VI                | <b>CONCLUSION . . . . .</b>  | 201  |
|                   | Summary . . . . .  | 201  |
|                   | Recommendations . . . . .  | 208  |
| <b>APPENDICES</b> |  |      |
|                   | A. Map of Tuscaloosa. . . . .  | 226  |
|                   | B. City Commissioners of Tuscaloosa, Year<br>First Elected, Time Served, and<br>Occupation, from 1911 to 1950. . . . . | 227  |
|                   | C. City Commissioners of Tuscaloosa and<br>Number of Votes Cast in Municipal<br>Elections, from 1911 to 1949 . . . . . | 228  |
|                   | <b>BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .</b>  | 229  |

TABLES

| Number |  | Page |
|--------|--|------|
| I      | Population Growth of the City of Tuscaloosa, Tuscaloosa County, and the State of Alabama, 1900-1950 . . . . .  | 11   |
| II     | Composition of the Population According to Governmental Units in 1940 and 1900, by Sex and Race . . . . .  | 16   |
| III    | Population of the City of Tuscaloosa, Urban Alabama, and Urban United States, According to Age, 1940. . . . .  | 18   |
| IV     | Population of the City of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and the United States, According to Age, 1940 . . . . .   | 20   |
| V      | Percentages of Population 25 Years Old and Over of the City of Tuscaloosa and Urban United States, According to the Number of School Years Completed, 1940 . . . . . | 22   |
| VI     | Non-agricultural Employment of Persons 14 Years Old and Over by Industry Group for Tuscaloosa County and the United States, 1940 . . . . .                           | 26   |
| VII    | Non-agricultural Employment of Persons 14 Years Old and Over by Industry Group for Tuscaloosa County, 1940 and 1948 . . . . .  | 28   |
| VIII   | Non-agricultural Employment of Persons 14 Years Old and Over by Major Occupation Groups for the City of Tuscaloosa and the Urban United States, 1940 . . . . .       | 30   |
| IX     | Revenue Sources, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, Fiscal Year Ended September, 1949 . . . . .  | 142  |
| X      | Comparison of Tuscaloosa's Revenue Sources, Fiscal Years Ended September 1949 and 1939 . . . . .   | 146  |

## TABLES (continued)

| Number |  | Page |
|--------|--|------|
| XI     | Comparison of Tuscaloosa's Revenue Sources (1949) With Those of All U. S. Cities with Population of 25,000 to 50,000 (1947) . . . . .                          | 148  |
| XII    | Comparison of Tuscaloosa's Revenue Sources (1949) With Those of All Alabama Cities With 1940 Population of 10,000 to 30,000 (1944) . . . . .                   | 149  |
| XIII   | Objects of Expenditures, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 1949 . . . . .   | 157  |
| XIV    | Comparison of Tuscaloosa's Expenditures, Fiscal Years Ended September 1949 and 1939 . . . . .  | 160  |
| XV     | Comparison of Tuscaloosa's Expenditures for General Operations Only (1949) With Those of all U. S. Cities With Population of 25,000 to 50,000 (1947) . . . . . | 161  |

## CHARTS

| Number |   | Page |
|--------|---|------|
| I      | Division of Labor by Race and Sex in the City of Tuscaloosa, 1940 . . . . . | 32   |
| II     | Participation in Municipal Elections in Tuscaloosa, 1880-1949 . . . . .     | 88   |
| III    | Organization Chart, Government of the City of Tuscaloosa . . . . .          | 102  |

## CHAPTER I

### TUSCALOOSA: CONTEXT OF DECISIONS (A)

#### Environment and Its Influence

[When Thomas York brought his family with a small group of settlers to the Falls of the Black Warrior in the spring of 1816, he preceded a tide of immigration into the Lower South which would lay the foundations for a new America.] This was a significant period for the back-country, the vast regions West of the Appalachians. Only two years before, Jackson had broken the back of Indian intransigence in refusing to admit the white man to his hunting grounds of the West. Not many years had passed since the Yankee Whitney had shown Southern planters the vision of a new Empire, built on cotton. More important, perhaps, was the subsequent demonstration in South Carolina and Georgia of a practical means to this new Empire by the combination of slave labor with the gin in the plantation system. York and his tiny band were then but the first of what was soon to become a movement similar in many respects to the rush for wealth in California in 1849. [York may have seen the possibilities, for he set up a trading post.<sup>1</sup>]

---

1. Thomas Maxwell, "Tuskaloosa, The Origin of Its Name, Its History, Etc." p. 51.

[The location of the frontier settlement largely determined the nature of the community which has now grown to a city. The Falls of the Black Warrior River had for some time formed a landmark for travelers. They marked the stopping place for such upstream navigation as then existed, and they provided a convenient ford for east-west crossing. Earlier travelers, among them Davy Crockett, had spread news of the possibilities of the location as a settlement, and merchants in the north Alabama town of Huntsville began in 1816 to use the river to bring goods up from the port of Mobile. Wagons took the goods from barges at the Falls, carrying them north-east up through Jones Valley.<sup>2]</sup>

[This natural trading point at the Falls is located slightly south-west of the center of what is now Tuscaloosa County.] The county, located in the north-western portion of Alabama, is the second largest in the state; its 13<sup>40</sup> square miles make it a bit larger than the state of Rhode Island. Roughly three-fourths of the county lies in the rolling Coastal Plain, the north-eastern one-fourth being within the broken and near-mountainous Appalachian

---

2. Morris R. Boucher, Factors in the History of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 1816-1846. A bound master's thesis, University of Alabama, 1947, pp. 6-9.

province.<sup>3</sup> The county thus lies athwart the zone where the Black Belt merges into the hilly habitat of the legendary "yeoman farmer."

[This location influenced the county's political attitudes at the time of the Civil War and again in the Populist period of the 1890's. Few men owned slaves north of Tuscaloosa, for the land was not suited to the large-plantation agriculture of the Black Belt. The county was thus divided on the issue of secession. Most of the people opposed it, and the county's representatives to the Secession Convention led the opposition.<sup>4</sup> Union sympathizers attempted to form a federal state which would extend from just north of Tuscaloosa to Chattanooga.<sup>5</sup> The people of the Nickajack (pro-Union) territory failed in their efforts, however, as the state government was in the hands

---

3. Soil Survey of Tuscaloosa County, Alabama, Bureau of Soils, United States Department of Agriculture, pp. 5-6.

4. Thomas C McCorvey, Introduction to the History of Tuscaloosa, p. 18.

5. Ben A. Green, "Tuscaloosa - The Druid City - Through 130 Years of History," The Tuscaloosa News, July 31, 1949, Sec. C, p. 1.

of the wealthy Black Belters who were able to swing the state for secession. In spite of this the people of Tuscaloosa elected a Republican government several times between 1860 and 1865. The mayor was a Republican when Federal troops arrived a few days before Lee's surrender and burned a considerable portion of the town.<sup>6</sup>

This political heritage was undoubtedly a factor in the Populist revolt against the Democratic Party in 1892. Farmers from Tuscaloosa County led the movement in the state, and county government was for two years in Populist hands.<sup>7</sup>

In addition to these influences on politics, [the natural setting of Tuscaloosa has conditioned its economic development. As noted above, the community's original raison d'etre was trade. As a trading center for the region no serious competitor developed within a radius of 50 miles.] The natural resources of the county have also contributed to Tuscaloosa's growth. Coal and iron are found in the north-eastern portion; several small mining communities have grown there, while a foundry employs 1800-odd of Tuscaloosa's people.

---

6. Ibid.

7. Houston Cole, *Populism in Tuscaloosa County*, a bound master's thesis, University of Alabama, 1927, p. 65.

Forests, which with the exception of a few clearings covered the county in the early 1800's,<sup>8</sup> are now the basis for an important lumber industry. Three-fourths of the county's acreage is in forests and woods (although now largely second growth), and this large supply of shortleaf pine was perhaps the principal reason for the location near Tuscaloosa of a large paper mill in 1930.

The soils of Tuscaloosa County vary in fertility. In the eastern, north-eastern, and northern parts of the county there are but few lands of any great value for cultivation. The soil is sandy, though there are districts where the land is productive. Through the center of the county and in the western and southern portions are found the most valuable soils. In general the most productive land follows the Warrior River and the smaller streams. The county's farmers on the whole are not prosperous.

The climate of Tuscaloosa ranges from long, hot summers to damp, moderately cold winters. Snow is unusual though not unknown. The mean temperature over the last 50 years was 63.5 degrees, and the average rainfall is 50.5 inches annually.<sup>9</sup>

---

8. George Little, Memoirs of George Little, p. 23.

9. Tuscaloosa Chamber of Commerce, "Tuscaloosa Presents Industrial Opportunities," p. 3.

Alteration of his natural environment is a universal characteristic of man. The most striking such alteration in Tuscaloosa County is the city which has been built on the south bank of the Warrior River.<sup>10</sup> From a cluster of log cabins with mud and stick chimneys a hundred and thirty years ago,<sup>11</sup> Tuscaloosa has sprawled haphazardly into a typical representative of twentieth century urban American culture in its appearance. Glass-front stores characterize the business district which boasts two "skyscrapers" of about ten stories. Broad black-surfaced streets swarm with traffic during busy periods of the day, and multitudes of neon signs cast a dull red glow over the district at night. The attractiveness of older residential sections is enhanced by large oak trees lining the streets, but unplanned growth has resulted in many narrow and un-coordinated streets in the newer sections.

Tuscaloosa's growth has been mostly eastward, toward the educational and hospital institutions, of which the community has a large proportion of the state's total. Largest of these is the University of Alabama, with a large campus and many buildings, most of them adorned with the

---

10. See Map, Appendix A.

11. Boucher, op. cit., p. 12.

inevitable white columns. Close by the University are the grounds of Bryce Hospital for the insane, while further east is Partlow State School for the mentally defective young. Yet another important institutional asset is the large U. S. Veteran's Hospital which is located at the easternmost extension of the community. Stillman College, a Presbyterian junior college for Negroes, is located at the opposite, or western, end of the community in the largest Negro residential section.

Three railroad lines pass through the city: the Gulf, Mobile and Ohio, the Southern, and the Louisville and Nashville. Paved highways connect Tuscaloosa with Birmingham, 60 miles northeast, and Montgomery, 100 miles southeast, and with other points north, west, and south. Two steel bridges connect Tuscaloosa with Northport across the Warrior, one of these being a railroad bridge. A dam functioning as an aid to navigation crosses the river at the southwest end of town.

The largest manufacturing establishments are located outside the city limits. A tire manufacturing plant, built during World War II, is west of the city, while an iron foundry and pipe plant, a paper manufacturing plant, and a chemical plant were built along the river to the east. Within the city are several lumber yards and construction plants, a meat packing plant, and other

V

industries which are clustered generally at points south and west of the business district.

Changing styles of architecture have left their marks in the community. Pre-Civil War newly rich citizens translated their wealth into large white columned homes in accordance with the Greek revival in architecture then beginning in America. Many of these homes remain to contribute to the myth of the "aristocracy" of the Old South. The stately beauty of some of these structures contrasts with the survivals of the later Victorian period. With the expansion of Tuscaloosa many of these houses are being crowded out by filling stations, grocery stores, and garages.

Aside from a sprinkling of antebellum houses, Tuscaloosa's residential sections would present no novelties to eyes familiar with small American cities. There are subdivisions of small, trim houses placed squarely in the middle of neat, green lawns. There are streets of somewhat older, heavier looking, and not-so-neat houses built closer together and set closer to the street. There are a few neighborhoods of large, expensive looking homes with spacious and tailored grounds. Most numerous of all are the streets, often unpaved and unnoticed from the main thoroughfares and avenues, on which the houses vary from the small, unpainted and shacklike structures housing most

of the community's Negro population, to the small, unkempt (although painted) and close-packed houses of the people who, in Tuscaloosa, are described as "less fortunate."

In 1940, 24 per cent of Tuscaloosa's dwelling units had no running water and 37 per cent were without electric lighting. Forty per cent of the dwelling units used outside privies, and 11 per cent had no private flush toilets. Only 38 per cent were furnished with both a private bath and a private flush toilet. In 18 per cent of the dwelling units there was an average of more than 1.5 persons per room.<sup>12</sup>

These conditions may have improved since World War II (although the war created a severe housing shortage). Nevertheless such conditions have existed in greater or less degree for many years. It was only in 1950 that steps were taken to ameliorate them by means of a public housing project. All Alabama cities larger than Tuscaloosa and several smaller ones had adopted public housing programs at an earlier date.

#### The People of Tuscaloosa

The preliminary report of the 1950 Census places the population of the city at 46,364, including about 7,500

---

12. Compiled from Sixteenth Census of the United States, Vol. II (1940), pt. 2.

students. If a community is considered to be composed of all those people living relatively close together whose behavior, economically and symbolically, revolves around the community, the population of Tuscaloosa would probably lie between 55,000 and 60,000. The latter figures would include the town of Northport across the river, subdivisions not within the corporate limits, and people living in the immediate vicinity who are economically or otherwise linked to the community.

✓ This city, which is now the fifth largest in Alabama, has evolved steadily from a small country town of 5,000 in 1900 and is still growing rapidly. The average rate of growth over the first 50 years of this century was 57 per cent each decade. Table I shows this growth from 1900 to 1940 in comparison with the population growth of the county and the State.

This is not the first cycle of population growth which Tuscaloosa has undergone, however. In 1826, only ten years after the town was settled, the capitol of the State was transferred to the vigorous trading center on the Warrior River. Under the impetus thus transmitted Tuscaloosa grew to over 4,000 in 1845. But the community's location outside the Black Belt region brought an end to this first population boom. In the 25 years preceding 1840 the plantation system had burgeoned in the

Table I

Population Growth of the City of Tuscaloosa, Tuscaloosa County, and the State of Alabama, 1900-1950<sup>a</sup>

| Census Date | City of Tuscaloosa |                 | Tuscaloosa County |                 | State of Alabama |                 |
|-------------|--------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
|             | Popula-<br>tion    | % In-<br>crease | Popula-<br>tion   | % In-<br>crease | Popula-<br>tion  | % In-<br>crease |
| 1900        | 5,094              |                 | 36,147            |                 | 1,828,697        |                 |
| 1910        | 8,407              | 65.0            | 47,559            | 31.6            | 2,138,093        | 16.9            |
| 1920        | 11,996             | 42.7            | 53,680            | 13.1            | 2,348,174        | 9.8             |
| 1930        | 20,569             | 71.5            | 64,153            | 19.9            | 2,646,248        | 12.7            |
| 1940        | 27,493             | 33.7            | 76,036            | 18.5            | 2,832,961        | 7.1             |
| 1950        | 47,364             | 72.2            | 94,017            | 23.6            | 3,051,950        | 7.7             |

<sup>a</sup>Compiled from U. S. Census Reports for the years indicated. Figures for 1950 from preliminary report of 1950 census, published in Tuscaloosa News, July 28, 1950.

state - but less than one per cent of the large planters (those owning 50 or more slaves) were located in Tuscaloosa County.<sup>13</sup> Although the large planters of the state comprised only one-third of one per cent of the total white population by 1860, they owned 30 per cent of the slaves, 30 per cent of the real estate, and 27 per cent of the personal property.<sup>14</sup> This tremendous concentration of wealth was expressed politically in 1846 when the State Legislature voted to move the capitol to Montgomery in the Black Belt, the habitat of the overwhelming preponderence of the large planters.

This event was followed by an exodus of lawyers, businessmen, and politicians. The population dwindled to less than 50 per cent of its former number. But the State government's legacy of the University of Alabama, established permanently in Tuscaloosa while the seat of government was located there, supplemented the town's function as a regional trading center as the basis for regaining this population loss. The recouptment had occurred by 1861, when the Civil War began. After the war another

---

13. Compiled from Joseph C. Kiger, Some Social and Economic Factors Relative to the Antebellum Large Planter. A bound master's thesis, University of Alabama, 1947, Chapters I and II.

14. Ibid., pp. 24-25.

general exodus took place, this time to Texas and the West.<sup>15</sup> The census of 1870 showed that the town had again lost 50 per cent of its population; this time 30 years were required for Tuscaloosa to regain its population of 5,000.

Industrialization and urbanization, accompanied by a higher birth rate and lower death rate, were the foundations for Tuscaloosa's continued growth in the Twentieth Century. The first World War and the boom of the 1920's coincided with the evolution of a complex urban center from a comparatively slow-moving agricultural trading center. The trend was augmented by the second World War, when new industries were located in Tuscaloosa and when many people moved from rural to urban areas to work in war industries.

Through these years of growth the white population of Tuscaloosa has retained a homogeneity typical of most of the South. The wave of immigration which settled north Alabama in the early Nineteenth Century came in from the north-east, principally from the upper districts of the Carolinas and Georgia. They first migrated into the Tennessee Valley, and were afterwards lured down Jones

---

15. Little, op. cit., p. 19.

Valley (where Birmingham later developed) by glowing accounts borne by returning travellers and soldiers of the Indian campaigns.<sup>16</sup> The majority of the immigrants coming to the new settlement were farmers from the Piedmont, principally of Scotch-Irish, English, Scotch, and Irish descent. One historian describes the population of that period as "very rude," made up in part of "adventurers and land-sharks."<sup>17</sup>

Descendants of these people and of later settlers still constitute almost all of the white population of Tuscaloosa. The Census of 1940 listed only 223 persons of foreign birth in the County; 183 of these resided within the corporate limits of the city of Tuscaloosa. The countries of birth of this small fraction of the population were listed as follows:

| Country of birth  | City of<br>Tuscaloosa | Tuscaloosa<br>County |
|-------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| Russia (U.S.S.R.) | 35                    | 37                   |
| Greece            | 19                    | 20                   |
| Italy             | 17                    | 23                   |
| Canada            | 16                    | 18                   |
| England           | 16                    | 28                   |
| Germany           | 10                    | 11                   |
| Miscellaneous     | 70                    | 86                   |
| Totals            | 183                   | 223                  |

16. W. C. Richardson, "Tuscaloosa," in Smith and De Land (eds.), Northern Alabama, p. 507.

17. Ibid. For an interesting exposition of the origin and nature of the settlers of the South, see also W. J. Cash, The Mind of the South, Book I.

The most important fact of the composition of Tuscaloosa's population, politically, economically, or socially is its racial dichotomy. Ten thousand of the 1940 population of the city were Negroes, most of them descendants of former slaves of the region. The relations between the white and Negro segments of the population are defined by a caste system which characterizes the whole south-eastern region of the United States. The political and economic institutions of the region are decisively conditioned by this relationship, as are the mores and dominant beliefs of all the people, white and Negro.<sup>18</sup> Table II compares the percentages of Negroes and whites in Tuscaloosa's 1940 population with the percentages of 1900. It also compares the racial composition, by sex, of Tuscaloosa's 1900 and 1940 populations with the population of the county, the state and the nation. These percentages have probably changed by now (1950), but there is no reason to believe that the general trends of change will have altered, or that such changes in the past decade will be large compared to the difference between the 1940 and the 1900 figures.

---

18. Some of the aspects and consequences of this relationship are considered in Chapters II and III.

Table II

Composition of the Population According to Governmental  
Units in 1940 and 1900, by Sex and Race<sup>a</sup>

| Governmental<br>Unit and Sex | 1940          |            |            | 1900          |            |            |
|------------------------------|---------------|------------|------------|---------------|------------|------------|
|                              | Both<br>Races | %<br>White | %<br>Negro | Both<br>Races | %<br>White | %<br>Negro |
| City of Tuscaloosa           | 100.0         | 63.0       | 37.0       | 100.0         | 50.8       | 49.2       |
| % Male                       | 46.6          | 30.0       | 16.6       | 48.9          | 26.1       | 21.8       |
| % Female                     | 53.4          | 33.0       | 20.4       | 52.1          | 24.7       | 27.4       |
| Tuscaloosa County            | 100.0         | 68.2       | 31.8       | 100.0         | 59.5       | 40.5       |
| % Male                       | 49.7          | 34.4       | 15.3       | 51.1          | 30.6       | 20.5       |
| % Female                     | 50.3          | 33.8       | 16.5       | 48.9          | 28.9       | 20.0       |
| Alabama                      | 100.0         | 65.3       | 34.7       | 100.0         | 54.7       | 45.3       |
| % Male                       | 49.5          | 32.7       | 16.7       | 50.1          | 27.7       | 22.4       |
| % Female                     | 50.5          | 32.5       | 18.0       | 49.9          | 27.0       | 22.9       |
| United States                | 100.0         | 89.8       | 9.8        | 100.0         | 87.9       | 11.6       |
| % Male                       | 50.2          | 45.2       | 4.8        | 51.2          | 45.0       | 5.8        |
| % Female                     | 49.8          | 44.6       | 5.0        | 48.8          | 42.9       | 5.8        |

<sup>a</sup>Compiled from U. S. Census Reports for the years indicated.

Several facts are made clear by the table. The proportion of Negroes to whites in Tuscaloosa has decreased considerably since the turn of the century. The same change is evident in the county and in the state, but to a less marked degree. This trend is usually explained by the migration of Negroes to the North, which was accelerated by the two World Wars. In its population growth due to migration, Tuscaloosa has gained more whites than Negroes; the racial composition of the city is now more nearly like the average of the state as a whole. The excess of females over males in Tuscaloosa is consistent with the usual sex ratio which accompanies urbanization. The higher ratio of females to males among Negroes in the City of Tuscaloosa as compared to whites in 1900 may possibly have been due to the fact that Negro women could find employment in town as domestic servants, while agriculture offered employment outside of town to Negro men.

The age distribution of Tuscaloosa's people resembles that of the average for the urban portions of the United States more than it does that of urban Alabama. Table III compares the population of Tuscaloosa with that of urban Alabama and urban United States in 1940 according to age distributions. By comparing the figures in each five year age group it will be seen that the population of the urban U. S. is slightly "older" than that of

Table III

Population of the City of Tuscaloosa, Urban Alabama, and  
Urban United States According to Age, 1940<sup>a</sup>

5 Year Age Groups      Per cent of Population in Each Age Group

|             | Tuscaloosa | Urban Alabama | Urban U. S. |      |
|-------------|------------|---------------|-------------|------|
| Under 5     | 6.2        | 7.8           | 6.7         |      |
| 5 to 9      | 6.7        | 8.2           | 6.8         |      |
| 10 to 14    | 7.6        | 9.0           | 7.9         |      |
| 15 to 19    | 8.5        | 9.4           | 8.7         |      |
| 20 to 24    | 10.8       | 10.0          | 9.1         |      |
| 25 to 29    | 11.1       | 10.3          | 9.0         |      |
| 30 to 34    | 9.3        | 9.1           | 8.4         |      |
| 35 to 39    | 8.9        | 8.2           | 7.9         |      |
| 40 to 44    | 6.6        | 65.8          | 60.9        | 63.0 |
| 45 to 49    | 6.3        | 5.8           | 6.9         |      |
| 50 to 54    | 5.2        | 4.7           | 5.9         |      |
| 55 to 59    | 4.4        | 3.5           | 4.7         |      |
| 60 to 64    | 3.2        | 2.7           | 3.7         |      |
| 65 to 69    | 2.3        | 2.2           | 2.9         |      |
| 70 to 74    | 1.4        | 1.3           | 2.0         | 6.9  |
| 75 and over | 1.4        | 1.3           | 2.0         |      |

<sup>a</sup> Compiled from Sixteenth Census of the U. S., Vol. II (1940), pt. 1.

Tuscaloosa, while the population of Tuscaloosa is slightly "older" than that of urban Alabama. By combining the five-year age groups into larger groups, however, the population differences with social significance becomes more apparent.

The first bracketed groups, 0 to 19 years of age, represent portions of the population which are generally non-selfsupporting, because most of them are in school two-thirds or more of the time or are of pre-school age. Those over 65 are also among the non-working portion of the population for the most part. This leaves the group of people roughly 20 to 64 years of age to provide support for the younger and older people as well as themselves. This is particularly significant with reference to the quality of the schools provided for the young, for the smaller the percentage of school-age population and the larger the productive group, supposedly the better the school-system (insofar as expenditure per pupil is an index of the quality of the school system).

According to Table III, then, Tuscaloosa should be better off than either urban Alabama as a whole or the urban portions of the United States as a whole with respect to ability to support a school system. But Table IV indicates the nature of the problem faced by Alabama with its rural and urban population combined in supporting

Table IV

Population of the City of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and the United States, According to Age, 1940<sup>a</sup>

| 5 Year Age Groups | Per Cent of Population in Each Age Group |         |               |
|-------------------|--|---------|---------------|
|                   | Tuscaloosa                               | Alabama | United States |
| Under 5           | 6.2                                      | 10.5    | 8.0           |
| 5 to 9            | 6.7                                      | 10.7    | 8.1           |
| 10 to 14          | 7.6                                      | 11.1    | 8.9           |
| 15 to 19          | 8.5                                      | 10.6    | 9.4           |
| 20 to 24          | 10.8                                     | 9.2     | 8.8           |
| 25 to 29          | 11.1                                     | 8.6     | 8.4           |
| 30 to 34          | 9.3                                      | 7.4     | 7.8           |
| 35 to 39          | 8.9                                      | 6.6     | 7.2           |
| 40 to 44          | 6.6                                      | 5.3     | 6.7           |
| 45 to 49          | 6.3                                      | 4.9     | 6.3           |
| 50 to 54          | 5.2                                      | 4.2     | 5.5           |
| 55 to 59          | 4.4                                      | 3.3     | 4.4           |
| 60 to 64          | 3.2                                      | 2.6     | 3.6           |
| 65 to 69          | 2.3                                      | 2.2     | 2.9           |
| 70 to 74          | 1.4                                      | 1.3     | 2.0           |
| 75 and over       | 1.4                                      | 1.3     | 2.0           |

<sup>a</sup> Compiled from Sixteenth Census of the U. S., Vol. II (1940), pt. 2.

schools as compared with the United States as a whole. Alabama has a larger proportion of its population to educate than the United States average, and a smaller proportion of earning population to pay the taxes for that education.

With respect to the proportion of aged persons in the population, both tables show that Tuscaloosa has less than the United States but more than the State of Alabama. Because of the aging of the population, this segment of it may be expected to grow and the younger age groups to decrease with time.<sup>19</sup> This trend is usually interpreted to mean that there will be an increasing demand for pensions and other security measures for the aged in the future.

The amount of education received by the people of Tuscaloosa provides another basis for comparison with the urban population of the country as a whole. Table V indicates that as of 1940 the general level of education in Tuscaloosa was lower than that of the country as a whole. Tuscaloosa had twice as many persons as the average for urban parts of the United States who did not complete one year of school. In Tuscaloosa 38.8 per cent of the people

---

19. A comparison of age distributions for 1940 with those of 1920 reveals that the proportion of persons under 20 decreased about 6% for both Tuscaloosa and urban U. S. in these two decades. The proportion of persons over 45 increased 7% for urban U. S. but only 3% for Tuscaloosa. The census of 1950 will undoubtedly show a continuation of this trend.

Table V

Percentages of Population 25 Years Old and Over of the  
City of Tuscaloosa and Urban United States, According  
to the Number of School Years Completed, 1940<sup>a</sup>

| Years of School Completed  | Percentages of Population 25 Years of Age and Over |             |
|----------------------------|--|-------------|
|                            | Tuscaloosa   | Urban U. S. |
| No school years completed  | 7.2  | 3.6         |
| Grade School: 1 to 4 years | 15.7   | 7.7         |
| 5 or 6 years               | 15.9   | 9.9         |
| 7 or 8 years               | 17.8   | 33.3        |
| High School: 1 to 3 years  | 11.4   | 15.9        |
| 4 years                    | 13.8   | 16.7        |
| College: 1 to 3 years      | 8.6  | 6.1         |
| 4 years or more            | 9.1  | 5.7         |

<sup>a</sup> Sixteenth Census of the U. S., Vol. II (1940), pt. 1.

over 25 had less than 7 years of schooling. The same figure for the urban population of the United States was 21.2 per cent. The higher percentage of college educated people in Tuscaloosa is undoubtedly accounted for by the presence of the University of Alabama. The faculty of this institution reside in Tuscaloosa; also it is possible for more of Tuscaloosa's high school graduates to attend college than would be the case if they had to go away from home to attend.

Finally, the people of Tuscaloosa may be classified according to their religious affiliations. Unfortunately no accurate data is available for this purpose. As noted above, a prominent characteristic of the white population is ethnic homogeneity; one of the elements of this homogeneity is the predominance of Protestants in the area of religion - although the Protestants range from staid Episcopalians to some of the evangelical congregations of the Baptists and Methodists. Estimates by members of the Catholic and Jewish faiths would place their numbers at about 1,200 and 300 respectively, including the University.

### The Technology

A hundred years ago life was relatively simple and slow-moving in Tuscaloosa. The town was small and the people had much in common with the farmers of the county. There were a few industries, such as a small cotton mill,

a tannery, and a foundry, but these employed only a small fraction of the population.<sup>20</sup> Then the railroad came in 1871,<sup>21</sup> and four years later a Board of Industries was formed to attract industry.<sup>22</sup>

Technological change was slow, however; tools and skills related to agriculture continued to predominate in the county until well into the present century. But by 1930, of the total number of employed persons 10 years old and over in the county only 37.2 per cent were agricultural workers.<sup>23</sup> This figure was down to 27.2 per cent in 1940<sup>24</sup> and is probably lower than 20 per cent at the present time.

---

20. M. W. Clinton, Economic Conditions in Tuscaloosa City and County, 1865-1880. A bound master's thesis, University of Alabama, 1942, pp. 45-55.

21. Ibid., pp. 73-80.

22. Ibid., p. 59.

23. Fifteenth Census of the U. S., Vol. II (1930), pt. 1.

24. Sixteenth Census of the U. S., Vol. II (1940), pt. 1. This change was more rapid than that in both Alabama as a whole and the United States as a whole. In Alabama the proportion of the population employed in agriculture decreased 8.4 per cent. In the United States 18.5 per cent of the population over 14 was employed in agriculture in 1940 - a decrease of 3 per cent from 1930. (Employment figures in the 1940 census are given for persons over 14, rather than over 10 as in the 1930 census. This would make comparison in actual numbers inaccurate, but would not affect percentages appreciably.)

As a result of this basic change in the types of tools and skills used in adjusting to the non-human environment, Tuscaloosa today is a highly complex community. As an urban center in modern industrial society, its technology is characterized by highly precise mechanical implements, a great degree of division of labor and specialization, and a complicated system of exchange. As a community it is much less self-sufficient than it was 100 years ago; trade relations, communications and transportation systems bind the people of Tuscaloosa in their cultural entirety to the surrounding region, the nation as a whole, and to other parts of the world with varying degrees of interdependence.

The amount of division of labor and specialization is one index of the level of complexity of a society, and employment figures provide a basis for comparing these characteristics in Tuscaloosa with the average for the country as a whole.<sup>25</sup> Table VI compares the non-agricultural employment by industry group of Tuscaloosa County

---

25. Employment figures for Tuscaloosa County rather than for the city are used because, as noted above, most of the manufacturing establishments of Tuscaloosa are located outside the city limits. Many of the employees reside in areas close to their place of employment; although these are often outside the city limits, they are close enough to be considered a part of the community.

Table VI

Non-agricultural Employment of Persons 14 Years Old and Over by Industry Group for Tuscaloosa County and the United States, 1940<sup>a</sup>

| Industry Group                      | Per Cent of Employed Persons 14 and over |               |
|-------------------------------------|--|---------------|
|                                     | Tuscaloosa County                        | United States |
| Manufacturing                       | 27.0                                     | 30.8          |
| Lumber                              | 7.9                                      | 1.7           |
| Paper                               | 6.2                                      | .9            |
| Iron and steel products             | 6.8                                      | 3.7           |
| All other manufacturing             | 6.1                                      | 24.5          |
| Non-manufacturing                   | 73.0                                     | 69.2          |
| Mining                              | 5.1                                      | 2.7           |
| Construction                        | 5.9                                      | 6.0           |
| Transportation                      | 6.3                                      | 6.3           |
| Communications and utilities        | 2.1                                      | 2.7           |
| Wholesale and retail trade          | 18.8                                     | 21.9          |
| Finance, insurance, and real estate | 2.2                                      | 4.3           |
| Service industries <sup>b</sup>     | 28.0                                     | 18.2          |
| Government                          | 3.4                                      | 5.1           |
| Miscellaneous                       | 1.2                                      | 2.0           |

<sup>a</sup>Compiled from Sixteenth Census of the U. S., Vol. II (1940), pt. 1.

<sup>b</sup>Includes education and hospitals but does not include domestic service.

L

with such employment for the United States as a whole in 1940. In terms of the per cent of population employed in manufacturing Tuscaloosa did not differ markedly from the average for the United States. But while over three-fourths of the employees engaged in manufacturing in Tuscaloosa were concentrated in three industries, these same three employed only about a fifth of the manufacturing employees of the United States as a whole. This merely points to the generalization that Tuscaloosa specializes in lumber, paper, and iron and steel products, which are exchanged with the products of specialization of other parts of the United States. It does not necessarily justify the conclusion that Tuscaloosa is overly specialized in comparison with other manufacturing communities of the country, because it is probable that few communities are so diversified industrially as to resemble the manufacturing diversity of the whole United States.

Industrialization has continued since 1940, however, and the trend is toward more diversification in manufacturing. Table VII shows this growth from 1940 to 1948. The proportion of manufacturing employees had increased from 27.0 per cent to 33.7 per cent, and another major industry had been added. All categories of manufacturing had increased strikingly in actual numbers of employees.

Table VII

Non-agricultural Employment of Persons 14 Years Old and Over by Industry Group  
for Tuscaloosa County, 1940 and 1948<sup>a</sup>

| Industry Group                                   | Employed Persons 14 Years Old and Over |       |        |          |
|--|--|-------|--------|----------|
|  | 1940                                   | 1948  | Number | Per Cent |
| Totals   | 14,259                                 | 100.0 | 23,035 | 100.0    |
| Manufacturing                                    | 3,850                                  | 27.0  | 7,765  | 33.7     |
| Lumber   | 1,127                                  | 7.9   | 2,155  | 9.3      |
| Paper  | 882                                    | 6.2   | 1,175  | 5.1      |
| Rubber products                                  | 0                                      | 0     | 1,065  | 4.6      |
| Iron and steel products                          | 974                                    | 6.8   | 1,865  | 8.1      |
| All other manufacturing                          | 867                                    | 6.1   | 1,505  | 6.6      |
| Non-manufacturing                                | 10,409                                 | 73.0  | 15,270 | 66.3     |
| Mining   | 734                                    | 5.1   | 725    | 3.1      |
| Construction                                     | 838                                    | 5.9   | 1,350  | 5.9      |
| Transportation                                   | 897                                    | 6.3   | 1,105  | 4.8      |
| Communications and Utilities                     | 294                                    | 2.1   | 335    | 1.5      |
| Wholesale and retail trade                       | 2,676                                  | 18.8  | 4,295  | 18.6     |
| Finance, insurance, <sup>b</sup> and real estate | 312                                    | 2.2   | 460    | 2.0      |
| Service industries                               | 3,999                                  | 28.0  | 5,900  | 25.6     |
| Government                                       | 482                                    | 3.4   | 1,025  | 4.4      |
| Miscellaneous                                    | 177                                    | 1.2   | 75     | .4       |

<sup>a</sup>1940 data from Sixteenth Census of the U. S., Vol. II (1940), pt. 1. 1948 data from "Estimated Non-agricultural Employment" for Tuscaloosa County for December, 1948 "Alabama State Employment Service, local office, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, January, 1949.

<sup>b</sup>Includes education and hospitals but does not include domestic service.

The most significant category of employment is service industries, which included over one-fourth of the employed population in both 1940 and 1948. The average for the United States was in 1940 about 10 per cent less. This large proportion is accounted for by the presence in Tuscaloosa of the University of Alabama and the three aforementioned hospitals: Bryce, Partlow, and the U. S. Veterans Hospital. This type of employment overshadowed wholesale and retail trade in 1940 and in 1948, but the reverse is the case for the United States as a whole.

Another basis for comparing the technology of the community with the national average is provided by the census classification according to "major occupation group." Table VIII makes this comparison. Some rather significant differences, which were not apparent in the previous tables, are brought out in this comparison. The fact, for example, that 28 per cent of Tuscaloosa's workers are domestic servants and laborers has important implications for the social structure of the community. This compares with a total of only 12.0 per cent for the urban parts of the United States. Tuscaloosa has only 20.6 per cent in the two categories of craftsmen, foremen, and kindred workers and operatives and kindred workers, as compared with 34.7 per cent in the same two categories for

TABLE VIII

Non-agricultural Employment of Persons 14 Years Old and Over by Major Occupation Groups for the City of Tuscaloosa and the Urban United States, 1940<sup>a</sup>

| Major Occupation Group                  | Per Cent of Employed Persons 14 and Over |             |
|---|--|-------------|
|   | City of Tuscaloosa                       | Urban U. S. |
| Professional workers                    | 10.8                                     | 7.6         |
| Semi-professional workers               | 1.2                                      | 1.4         |
| Proprietors, managers, and officials    | 8.5                                      | 9.9         |
| Clerical, sales, and kindred workers    | 14.9                                     | 22.9        |
| Craftsmen, foremen, and kindred workers | 8.5                                      | 13.3        |
| Operatives and kindred workers          | 12.1                                     | 21.4        |
| Domestic service workers                | 18.0                                     | 5.3         |
| Service workers, except domestic        | 14.3                                     | 9.9         |
| Laborers                                | 10.7                                     | 6.7         |
| Other                                   | .8                                       | 1.6         |

<sup>a</sup>Compiled from Sixteenth Census of the U. S., Vol. II (1940), pt. 1.

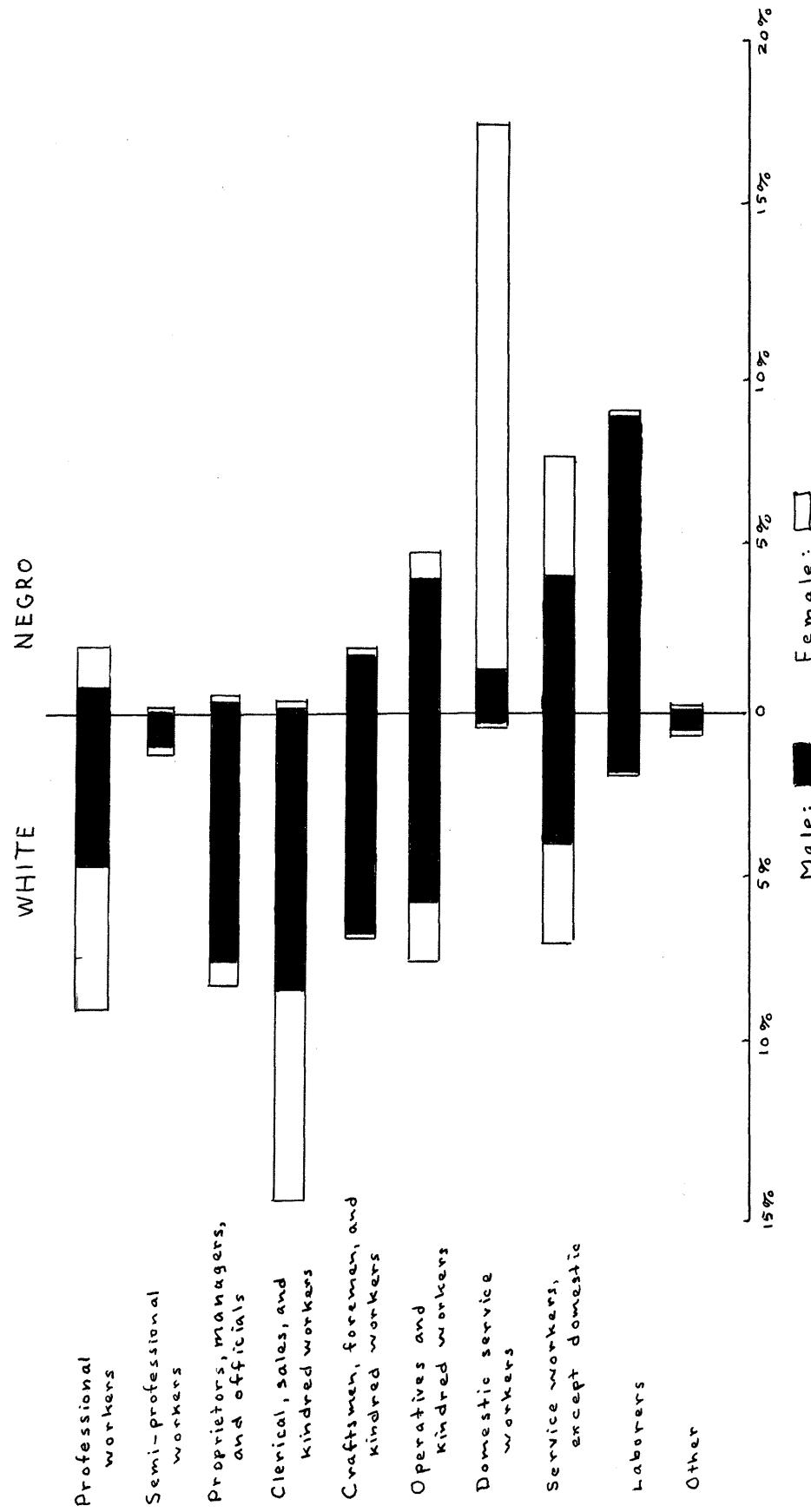
the urban United States. This indicates that although Tuscaloosa had in 1940 only three per cent less manufacturing employment than the U. S. average, this manufacturing must have required a smaller proportion of highly skilled workers. Again, Tuscaloosa lags behind the rest of the country in the two categories of proprietors, managers, and officials, and clerical, sales, and kindred workers.

These figures indicate that a considerably larger proportion of Tuscaloosa's people are lumped in occupations whose pay and social prestige is comparatively small than is the case in the rest of the country. This distribution is a reflection of the racial composition of the population and the system of relations that prevails between the races, as Chart I shows. Although Negroes comprise about one-third of the population of Tuscaloosa, they were greatly under-represented in the upper categories of employment and they dominated the lower categories. The only type of employment in which Negroes were represented approximately in proportion to their proportion of the total population was in the category of operatives and kindred workers.

It should be emphasized that these figures were based on employment in 1940. It is generally supposed that one of the effects of World War II was to increase opportunities

## CHART I

Division of Labor by Race and Sex in the City of Tuscaloosa, 1940<sup>a</sup>



a. Based on Sixteenth Census of the U.S., Vol. II (1940), pt. 1, Govt. Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1943.

for Negroes to obtain better employment. The Census of 1950 may reasonably be expected to show a decrease in domestic service employment, and possibly an increase in the proportion of Negroes employed as craftsmen, foremen, and kindred workers and as operatives and kindred workers.

In its changing technology Tuscaloosa is probably typical of many medium sized Southern cities. The South lagged behind the rest of the nation in industrialization; the term "Industrial Revolution" has become meaningful to Southerners only in the past two decades, although a start may be said to have been made in the nineteenth century. Some of the implications of this changing technology for Southern social structure will be traced in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER II

L

### TUSCALOOSA: CONTEXT OF DECISIONS (B)

#### Social Structure of the Community

##### Sub-communities, Caste, and Class

The complexity of the city of Tuscaloosa is manifested in part in the existence of many smaller "sub-communities" within the larger one. Among these are such sections as West End, Southside, Alberta, Holt, and others. Northport, which is incorporated as a separate city on the north bank of the river, is essentially a part of the larger community of Tuscaloosa.<sup>1</sup> There are also certain smaller neighborhoods, such as Pinehurst, Northington, Lee's Addition, Kaulton, Highlands, The Downs, etc., and other more or less sharply definable ecological areas which would have to be considered in an exhaustive analysis of Tuscaloosa's social structure. In keeping with the limited scope and functional approach of this study, however, only two of the more obvious sub-communities will be distinguished here: the University community and the Negro community. These will be considered less in terms of their

---

1. See map, Appendix A.

own internal structure and processes than in terms of their relation to and consequences for the larger community. Also, these are not communities in the sense that they have specific geographic areas and boundaries; many University students live in campus dormitories but a large proportion of them (and most of the faculty and staff) live throughout the community of Tuscaloosa. Likewise Negro residential sections and neighborhoods are scattered over various parts of the community.

#### The University

That the University comprises a distinct community is recognized by both townspeople and University people. One Tuscaloosan remarked that "the University is a separate little world. There are not many social relations between Tuscaloosa and the University people.... This may be because of lack of common interests, but I don't know for sure." A businessman, who regretted this lack of contact, commented that "the people of Tuscaloosa don't take advantage of their opportunities as far as the University is concerned. They don't go out to hear lecturers and men of international reputation brought here by the University. The lecture series has a small group of faithfuls from the city - but it's the same small group, year after year. Maybe it's because the University people live in

their own sphere, and don't have too much in common with the men in the business world. Fighting the battles of business, townspeople are too engrossed in their day-to-day affairs and don't mix much with University people."

These comments are borne out by the existence of a large number of social cliques, clubs, and associations composed of members of the faculty of the University, in which townspeople are only infrequently found. On the other hand, relatively few members of the faculty and their wives or husbands participate regularly in the social clubs and associations of the townspeople. Several townspeople remarked on the small number of University people in the Country Club, for example.

One exception to this social isolation grows out of the fact that many of the faculty have children who attend the city schools. This leads to some faculty contact with townspeople in Parent-Teacher Associations, etc. Other points of contact are the churches, women's study clubs, and to a lesser extent, businessmen's luncheon clubs. However, it may reasonably be doubted that many intimate "town and gown" friendships develop on the basis of these associations.

The strongest relationship between the University and Tuscaloosa seems to be an economic one. As one store proprietor said, "Economically the University is the

gyroscope. Tuscaloosa business is able to keep going on an even keel and at a higher level because the University is here. Tuscaloosa business people know it; they should never forget that fact." A somewhat cynical observation was that of an oldtime resident of Tuscaloosa to the effect that he was firmly convinced that the conscious desire of most Tuscaloosa businessmen is to have an ever-expanding student body. "Never mind the quality of education offered - just keep the student body large. When you multiply roughly five hundred dollars by the number of students a year, you can see the difference to Tuscaloosa business between a student body of 5,000 and one of 8,000."

Although the latter quotation may be an exaggeration, it cannot be doubted that local businessmen are interested in the size of the University. The following statement is indicative:

Tuscaloosa's Number One Asset, the University of Alabama, shattered all records in 1946 with a whopping (almost double any other year) enrollment of some eight thousand students. Conservative figures indicate that the University's annual payroll and the amount spent by students pour into local trade channels more than eight and a half million dollars per year.

Plans of the University, some already in the construction stage, will move it even farther to the forefront among the great educational institutions of the nation.

Whether you look at it from a cold "dollars and cents" viewpoint or the even more valuable assets it brings in cultural and educational fields, the University is a vital and important part of the community and the pleasant relationship existing between the Chamber and the University is a pleasant and important part of Chamber work.<sup>2</sup>

Given this interest, or economic stake, in the University, it is not surprising to find that some Tuscaloosa businessmen have been able to influence the University in some respects. Restaurant owners are a case in point. There have long been a number of cafes and restaurants clustered around the campus depending primarily on students and faculty for trade. Perhaps significantly, until the recent war there were no University operated eating facilities. When the University finally decided to operate cafeterias, the proprietor of the largest and most prosperous off-campus restaurant stringently opposed the idea. He went so far as to close his own establishment when the step was taken, thereby throwing a strain on the new University cafeterias. He later re-opened, however.

But perhaps one of the most important indications of the economic significance of the University for the

---

2. Tuscaloosa Chamber of Commerce, "Annual Report for 1946," pp. 3-4.

community is the integration of top levels of the University administration with several important local business groups, in contrast to the previously described general isolation at lower levels of the two communities from each other. The President of the University is on the board of directors of the Tuscaloosa Chamber of Commerce.<sup>3</sup> Jeff Coleman, business manager of athletics and purchasing agent at the University, and Dean Steward Lloyd of the School of Chemistry have both been on the same board of directors; the latter is now vice-president of the Chamber of Commerce.<sup>4</sup> Coach Frank W. Thomas, athletic director at the University, was added to the board of directors of the City National Bank in 1948,<sup>5</sup> and Dean Lee Bidgood of the School of Commerce and Business Administration is one of the directors of the First Federal Savings and Loan Association.<sup>6</sup> Gordon Palmer, President of the

---

3. Tuscaloosa News, January 17, 1950, p. 1. The University President is also a member of the City Planning Board.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., January 11, 1948.

6. Ibid., January 14, 1948.

First National Bank, is also a member of the University's Board of Trustees. These relationships provide channels for the participation (although neither necessarily direct nor conscious for the most part) of Tuscaloosa leaders in University decisions, and to some extent, vice-versa.

The University has not been without special influence on the community of Tuscaloosa. For example, it is illegal in the county to possess or sell alcoholic beverages. Other counties in the state, including all of those more populous and some of those less populous, some more industrialized and some less, are legally "wet." Some observers in Tuscaloosa attribute Tuscaloosa's "dryness" to the presence of the University.<sup>7</sup> One effect of this

---

7. Whether or not this is the basic reason must, of course, remain conjecture until more thorough studies of the community are made. It is worth noting, however, that the policy of the University is opposed to legalized liquor. During the most recent referendum on the question (which was decided on the basis of a very slight margin of votes) the president of the University argued on the radio that if Tuscaloosa were "wet," Alabama parents would hesitate to send their sons and daughters to the University, and that it would therefore cause the enrollment to drop.

situation is that the illegal sale of liquor is quite prevalent in the community.

The presence of the University, as noted before, is probably responsible for the large percentage of people with some college experience, although this figure is not enough to raise the mean level of education in Tuscaloosa to the national urban average.<sup>8</sup> As to the contribution which the University makes to the general intellectual "atmosphere" of the community, most would agree that the influence of the community (and the Southern region, or sub-culture, of which Tuscaloosa is a part) on the intellectual atmosphere of the University is greater than that of the University on the community.

A fact which is of some significance to the government of the community is that the large campus of the University, being the property of the State of Alabama, is exempt from ad valorem taxes. The same is true of the other State and federal property in and near the community, such as Bryce Hospital and the U. S. Veterans Administration hospital. The result is that a large area for which the municipal government must provide some services does

---

8. See Table V, p. 22.

not furnish revenues (at least directly, through property taxes) to help pay for the services.

To recapitulate briefly: the University community is distinct from the larger community, although there are naturally several areas of social contact between the two. The primary consequence of the University for Tuscaloosa is economic, in that the University provides Tuscaloosa merchants and businessmen with customers. Tuscaloosa businessmen therefore have an interest in the University, which is partially reflected in the links between Tuscaloosa and the University at the upper levels.

#### The Negroes

The other important sub-community which must be considered in Tuscaloosa is composed of the Negro population. Many scientific studies have been made of the significance for Southern communities and for the South as a region of the Negro population.<sup>9</sup> The extensiveness and intensiveness of such studies are of course far beyond the scope of this thesis. But some of the findings of these studies will be useful in characterizing Negro-white relations in

---

9. See, for example, Gunnar Myrdal, An American Dilemma, John Dollard, Class and Caste in a Southern Town, Davis, Gardner, and Gardner, Deep South, and V. O. Key, Southern Politics.

the larger regional context.

Reference has already been made to the caste system which defines the relations between the two ethnic groups. The term "caste" is used here to mean two socially differentiated groups, the social status of one of which is inferior or subordinate in relation to the other, and between which a "line" exists so that a person born into one or the other group is not allowed to pass from the one status to the other.<sup>10</sup> Interaction between individual whites and Negroes and between the two castes as wholes occur within prescribed patterns of racial etiquette" and taboo. Thus a white may offer a handshake to a Negro but never refers to a Negro or addresses one, regardless of the relative age or social position of the two, as "Mr.," "Mrs." or "Miss." A Negro, on the other hand, does not offer a handshake to a white, uses titles of respect when addressing a white, and generally interlards conversation with a white with frequent "sir's"

---

10. Myrdal points out the importance of distinguishing between the caste relation and the caste line. The social relations across the caste line vary from region to region (and within regions) and shows considerable changes in time, while the line "stays rigid and unblurred." Myrdal, op. cit., p. 668.

*Typical Southern Caste*

or "ma'am's." The strongest taboos are those related to sexual intercourse between a Negro male and a white female.

Relations between the two groups as wholes are characterized by segregation practices and by exclusion of Negroes from positions of economic, social, and political prestige and power. The latter is effected by various techniques of discrimination, both formal and informal. The result of the caste system is that the Negro population is generally poorer, less educated, and less healthy than the white population, although there are naturally exceptions. Since the caste system prohibits association on the basis of equality, the two castes are much more isolated from each other (and in a different way) than is the case with the University and the larger Tuscaloosa community. Negroes have their own churches and schools (around which, incidentally, there seems to revolve considerably more social activity than is the case with white churches and schools), and such recreational institutions as they possess are segregated.

Chart I indicated the economic place of the Negroes in Tuscaloosa as of 1940. Although, as was noted above, the economic position of Negroes has improved somewhat as a result of World War II, it is no less true that they still constitute the largest group of Tuscaloosa's

population in the lowest economic category. Except in rare instances Negro workers in industry are not allowed to hold supervisory positions, and it is still very difficult for a Negro to obtain a professional education.

The figures in Chart I indicating the subordinate position of the Negro population, plus the figures in Chapter I concerning Tuscaloosa's changing technology, point up a consequence which is crucial for the community - a consequence which most white Tuscaloosans refuse to recognize. The impact of industrialization is gradually disrupting the rigid caste system, and there is an increasingly powerful undercurrent of tension in the relations between elements of the two caste groups. The tension is expressed in Negro resentment of their subordinate position, and in the resentment of some white groups to the gradually changing relations with the Negroes. Yet, (particularly those in the middle and upper classes) many Tuscaloosa whites are fond of saying that their relations with Negroes are quite cordial, and that the Negroes are genuinely happy and contented in the place which is assigned to them. They buttress these affirmations with the insistence that they "know their Negroes" - that they understand them as no one can who has not "lived with them all their lives."

The fact is that Tuscaloosa whites do not "know their Negroes" - and the Negroes do not know their white neighbors. This is so because of the social isolation of each from the other. What the Tuscaloosa white "knows" is a set of stereotypes compounded of both truth and error. The stereotypes reflect only one aspect of Negro personality: that aspect which is visible to the whites in their interaction with Negroes.<sup>11</sup> These relations function on the basis of Negro subordination; thus the Negro is in a position of desiring the white's approbation and fearing his displeasure. Furthermore, Negro-white relations are for the most part restricted to the type which may be described as economic. That is, Negroes work in white homes as domestic servants, in industry under white bosses, or in white businesses as delivery boys, janitors, etc. It should be pointed out that all this does not preclude the development of genuine attachments between individual Negroes and whites; but such

---

11. Examples of lack of understanding of Negroes by whites are evident in the use of the term "nigger" in the presence of a Negro. This is not uncommon, but conversations with Negroes indicate that the term is insulting to them. Also, few whites in the community are aware of social class in the Negro community, or of the importance to Negroes of manifestations of social prestige.

attachments continue only so long as the Negro "stays in his place."

Nevertheless it cannot be denied that the Negroes resent the treatment which they receive from the whites. Their protest is evident in the Negro newspaper which is published in Tuscaloosa.<sup>12</sup> The content of this weekly journal can be divided into two categories: (1) news stories and features dealing with the relations of Negroes to whites - particularly with the struggle of the Negro to achieve a more favorable position in American society, e.g., law suits protesting segregation and discrimination; and (2) articles reporting activities of Negroes in the local community, such as club meetings, parties, etc. Articles falling in the first category usually dominate the first page and the editorial page. The theme of protest runs through all such articles; straight news items are markedly slanted to express it.

Negro resentment against their subordinate position is evident also in their conversation when there are no white ears within range. It is manifested in the

---

12. Replying to a comment about the "daring" expressions in some of this newspaper's articles and editorials, one leader in the Negro community said that it didn't matter what was said in the paper, because the whites didn't even know it was printed, much less read it.

constraint and deference of individual Negroes when interacting with whites. It becomes explicit in those rare instances when a white is able to establish such a condition of rapport with a Negro that the latter is willing to speak frankly of his own and his group's attitudes toward the whites.

Given this tension based on subordination, resentment, and striving, it is nevertheless true that Negro leaders in Tuscaloosa consider their group to be in a more favorable position than most other Southern Negroes. They point, for example, to the fact that Tuscaloosa officials make little or no attempt to restrict or impede their voting or their registering to vote - a fact which has much symbolic value to them.<sup>13</sup> They are also proud that

---

13. There are 10,758 registered voters in Precinct 16 (which includes most of the community of Tuscaloosa) of which about 500 are designated on the published list as "colored." Negro leaders stated that when they made this list available for Negroes to come by to find whether they were correctly listed, "about three out of four noted that there was no 'c' following their names on the list." Therefore they estimate that there are really about 2,000 Negro voters in the Precinct. This is probably an overly optimistic estimate; it is fairly certain that no more than five or six hundred Negroes vote regularly.

a Negro physician is a member of the Tuscaloosa Chamber of Commerce, and that a few Negroes own valuable property in the main business district. There is a Negro recreational center which is supported by the City government and the Community Chest. Also, there are two unofficial inter-racial committees which were organized to promote understanding between Negroes and whites; a group of ministers, five Negro and five white, and a group of Negro and white women. Some Negroes feel, therefore, that the prospects for further improvement of the Negroes' position in Tuscaloosa are good.

The growth of industry will provide more opportunities for Negroes to improve their economic status. As the standard of living rises, there will be an increased demand for better schools, better jobs, and fuller participation by Negroes in community affairs. Symbolic of the changing status of Negroes in Tuscaloosa was the strike for better wages by Negro construction workers and laborers which took place as this was being written. Negro workers picketed construction jobs carrying placards proclaiming "This job is unfair," and all construction was halted. It is doubtful that this form of behavior would have been tolerated by Tuscaloosa whites ten years ago.

The white people must be prepared to accede to some of the Negro demands, or the tension will increase

dangerously. Given the dominant values and goals of the American culture (which are desired by Negroes as well as whites), given the trend in Tuscaloosa toward industrialization and a more complexly organized community, the process of change in caste relations and structure is inexorable. Even so, cross burnings and Ku Klux Klan parades (activities which may reasonably be assumed to have as their purpose the intimidation of Negroes) continue to be reported not infrequently in the Tuscaloosa News. One of eight candidates for election to the Executive Committee of the Alabama Democratic party from the district including Tuscaloosa County distributed cards bearing the names of all eight proclaiming that they stood for "Eternal White Supremacy" in opposition to the "hellish danger of mongrelization." The card further advised voters to "fight for the altars of your sires, God and our near angelic race."

Although such extremists are only a small minority of the population, it is no less true that Negroes have little voice in community decision-making. The range of attitudes among the greater part of the white population is such that the tension between the two groups can be expected to increase as Negro demands for fuller participation in community activities increase. The community will be called

on to make important decisions through its government with regard to this tension.

### Social Class in Tuscaloosa

The terms "social class" and "class system" are used to describe that aspect of society or of a community by which the people may be classified into several broad groupings bearing a hierarchical relation to each other. Such a classification can be made on the basis of behavior patterns, such as the kind of house and neighborhood one lives in, the groups one associates with, the way one talks, the kind of goods one buys (such as clothes and automobiles), the way one gets his income, the way one spends his leisure time, etc.<sup>14</sup> Social classes may also be differentiated according to the degree of social power (i.e. participation in the making of important decisions) exercised collectively by the individuals and

---

14. Attempts have been made to set up categories of such behavior patterns with the aim of defining a standard to use in measuring a given individual's class status. See, for example, W. Lloyd Warner, Social Class in America. For an intensive treatment of social class in a Southern community, see Davis, Gardner, and Gardner, op. cit.

groups composing each class.<sup>15</sup> Although as yet there has not been developed an adequate frame of reference for describing and measuring social class, it cannot be denied that such differentiations in behavior and in power or influence are observable. The analysis of a community, particularly with reference to the decision-making or governmental function, must take such differentiations into consideration.

The words "social class" have a distasteful connotation for many Americans, probably because of their implication that some people are "better" than others or because of their association with Marxist "class struggle" theory. Some Tuscaloosans criticized a recent candidate for a public office for his frequent allegations that "poorer" people did not receive the same services and consideration from the office for which he was a candidate as did the "rich people" or "big shots."<sup>16</sup> As one businessman

---

15. Harold D. Lasswell, in his World Politics and Personal Insecurity defines the "elite" of a given society as those who have the greatest income, who enjoy the greatest safety, and who are accorded the most deference. This status is maintained through control of supplies, manipulation of symbols, and application of violence.

16. The candidate was defeated.

expressed the attitude, "There should be no class distinctions in this country, and particularly in the South. That sort of thing alleging class discrimination in a political campaign does no good."

Status systems seem to be characteristic of all cultures, however, and the United States is no exception. Tuscaloosans recognize the existence of status differences when they use such terms as "social climber," "family background," "the 'right kind' of people," "those 'big shot' people," etc., but they are self-conscious and reluctant in using such terms as "lower class," "upper class," or "middle class" to describe themselves or others.

Tuscaloosa's present class structure has evolved from the disorganized period which followed the Civil War. The group whose dominance had been built up in the forty years preceding the war on the basis of slave ownership and the plantation system was severely disrupted; few of them or their descendants retained their social positions after the defeat. Before the war, however, a few merchants and small businessmen had established themselves; those who survived the chaotic economic conditions of the Reconstruction<sup>17</sup> plus others who went into business after the war

---

17. See Robert K. Bell, *Reconstruction in Tuscaloosa County*. A bound master's thesis, University of Alabama, 1933, and Clinton, op. cit.

and were successful were the forbears of the core of the present upper class. The descendants of these business-men are described in Tuscaloosa as the "Old Families."<sup>18</sup> Some of them reside in the be-columned antebellum homes purchased by their fathers or grandfathers from the impoverished plantation owners after the war.

Tuscaloosa's class structure seems to have been comparatively stable in the period between about 1870 and 1915 or 1920. When the town began its rapid growth into an urban center, strains and cracks in the structure appeared; the class system may be said to be in a condition of comparative flux at the present. That is, there is a considerable amount of social mobility. Many have risen to upper and to middle class status in the past fifteen years. One observer remarked that some of the upper and middle class women's clubs have not adjusted to a Tuscaloosa which is growing and changing. Such clubs still refuse to recognize many people who have moved to Tuscaloosa and who are qualified for membership (that is,

---

18. There are families in the upper class who are not in the Old Family category, however. These are people whose behavior is the same as the Old Families', but who are distinguished from them because they have not been in the upper class long enough. There are only ten or fifteen Old Families, although a number of other families have become related to them through marriage.

possess the necessary class status). As a result some of the newer clubs have been gaining in prestige through their activities and the status of their members, and may eventually overshadow the older and more exclusive clubs.

One social club, which places a premium on exclusiveness, holds an annual costume ball to which some guests are invited. Guests, however, are not permitted to wear costumes, and they are not allowed to participate in certain dances. Membership in another club in Tuscaloosa can be achieved only through inheritance.

Some Tuscaloosa residents professed to see a reflection of the class system in the businessmen's civic clubs. Thus the Rotary and Kiwanis clubs would be placed at the more exclusive, conservative, and upper class end of the social class scale, while the Exchange and Lions clubs, composed of younger, more aggressive businessmen, would fall at the other end (although still not below the middle class), with Civitan somewhere in between.<sup>19</sup>

Several individuals interviewed (who were estimated by the interviewer to be of lower middle class status)

---

19. The validity of this assertion would depend on a check of the membership rolls of each of these clubs and knowledge of the social class position of each member. Unfortunately such an investigation could not be made.

remarked that Tuscaloosa was a "class conscious town." One said "The town is dominated by people who think they're aristocrats because their old man left them money." Another said "It's the aristocrats who are in the saddle. By 'aristocrats' I mean those families who control a great deal of the wealth." It seems that individuals of this status evaluate social class on the basis of wealth. For example, others remarked that the Old Families "worship at the shrine of the dollar." Among the Old Families, however, the emphasis seems to be on "family background" in determining a person's class position.<sup>20</sup> Evidence of this type of evaluation was manifested in a conversation with an elderly woman whose associations were primarily with Old Family people. Discussing a man who had become "quite wealthy" in the past ten years, she said "He seems to be a very fine man - but after all, no one knows anything about his family. I'm afraid he doesn't have much background."<sup>21</sup>

---

20. Anachronisms frequently appear in discussions of ancestry by members of the Old Families. One such woman (a grandmother) related how her grandfather had arrived in Tuscaloosa in an ox-cart and built a log cabin. Ten or fifteen minutes later she produced the family "coat of arms" for inspection by the writer.

21. Members of Old Families consider the upper class in Tuscaloosa to be more refined than their counterparts in other Alabama communities, because of the presence of the University and because Tuscaloosa is a few years older than most other Alabama communities. As one lady stated it, "other towns are jealous because we have the University. This, of course, works for a more cultured and better class of people in Tuscaloosa."

Class consciousness in Tuscaloosa is evident in the behavior of both high school and grammar school children, who form fraternities and sororities along class lines. Concerned about the value of such organizations for school children, one of the Parent-Teacher Associations conducted a city-wide survey of the subject in 1948. Students, teachers, and parents were interviewed to determine the attitudes toward the social clubs, and the findings were summarized in the local newspaper. Among the findings reported were the following:

The social organizations' memberships include only a small percentage of students;

Club members are drawn more from higher economic level families than from those on lower levels;

Frequent complaints are made that rejection by clubs leads to psychological depression...mothers of students frequently appear to derive considerable value from their sons' and daughters' affiliations.<sup>22</sup>

Who, then, may be said to be the "dominant" or "controlling" group or class in Tuscaloosa? If the people were divided into two groups, the "business" class and the "working" class according to the type work they perform in

---

22. Tuscaloosa News, May 19, 1948, p. 4.

getting a living, it would be seen that there are about twice as many in the latter group as there are in the former.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, there would be little, if any, dissent to the assertion that, as between these two roughly defined classes, the business class has a considerably greater proportion of power or influence in Tuscaloosa. For example, it is in this group that one would find the owners of land and businesses, the landlords, the leaders of community activities, and "prominent citizens" in general (with a few exceptions, of course). This is the group within which many community decisions are made, or the alternatives set.

Within this broad category there are wide variations in the amount of social power exercised by different individuals and groups. At the hub of the credit system, and thereby the locus of greatest power in the business class, are the city's two commercial banks, the City National and the First National.<sup>24</sup> The membership of the

---

23. See again Chart I. The "business" class would be composed of those in the first four categories of employment, and the remainder would comprise the "working" class. For an elaboration of this type of dichotomy, see Robert S. and Helen M. Lynd, Middletown, pp; 22-24.

24. The banks are cited here not only because of their self-evident position of power with reference to credit, but also because a number of people interviewed (among them lawyers and businessmen) readily named these two organizations as the centers of power in Tuscaloosa. One remark was that they are "more powerful than all the rest of Tuscaloosa's business and industry combined." Each bank has, since its establishment, been controlled by a single family.

boards of directors of these two institutions provides evidence of the strength of the Old Families in the city's affairs. Over half of the members of each board are members of Old Families either directly or through marriage. Furthermore, these individuals, with one or two exceptions, are the owners of enough land and buildings to be considered "large property owners" by Tuscaloosans. Several other members of the two boards, although not related to Old Families, are also owners of large amounts of property. These correlations lead to the generalization that property ownership is the basis of power in the community of Tuscaloosa, and that probably the strongest group of large property owners are the Old Families. As a corollary it might be noted that the Old Families have not retired from active participation in Tuscaloosa business, but are well represented in business and commercial organizations.<sup>25</sup>

If any group may be said to challenge the dominance of the Old Families in Tuscaloosa, it would be the real estate dealers, whose strength is also based on property.

---

25. Of the 24 directors of the Chamber of Commerce, at least 8 are members of or married to members of Old Families. A larger proportion are large property owners. An observer remarked that "there has been no revolution in Tuscaloosa in terms of any aggressive newcomers in the business class moving in and taking over. The Old Families and their representatives in Tuscaloosa business still have a strong grip on the community."

With the rapid expansion of the city over the last decade, several such dealers have literally been catapulted into wealth. The Tuscaloosa News commended editorially in 1948 that "Tuscaloosa's real estate situation, both residentially and commercially, has been on an ascending market for almost a decade."<sup>26</sup> One real estate firm (organized in 1940) advertised that its mortgage loans and property sales since 1945 amounted to more than \$10,000,-000 and that it had developed and placed on the market 721 lots.<sup>27</sup> Another advertised that it had sold "several hundred" homes in Holt alone. Thus, although rising land values have strengthened the propertied Old Families, the more active buyers and sellers of land have benefitted even more. The more successful of the real estate dealers have therefore become qualified in some measure for upper class membership.

Evidence of the ascendance of this group is in the fact that several real estate dealers have married daughters of Old Families. Several are directors of the Chamber of Commerce, one is a director of the First National Bank, and another firm controls the First Federal

---

26. Tuscaloosa News, August 14, 1948, p. 4.

27. Ibid., August 24, 1949, Sec. B, p. 3.

Savings and Loan Association. It is possible that the formation of a Tuscaloosa "Board of Realtors" in 1949 indicates a realization of the position into which the group has moved. Interestingly, two of the first set of officers of this group are related to Old Families (one by marrying an Old Family daughter) and one of them is the above-mentioned director of the First National Bank.

As examples of the influence of large property owners in community decisions, two recent elections may be cited.<sup>28</sup> Both were to decide whether or not a property tax would be levied to provide educational revenues, the need for which had been widely publicized. Certain Old Family property owners anonymously organized the opposition to the proposals. Presumably the opposition was successful in arguing and advertising that the weight of the proposed taxes would fall upon small property owners, for both measures were defeated by small margins. As is usual in such elections, the vote was light.

Again, the strength of property owners is often cited as the reason that Tuscaloosa had taken no steps

---

28. January 18, 1949, and November 30, 1949.

29

toward acquiring a public housing project before 1950,  
while other comparable cities in the state had acquired  
such projects with federal aid earlier. When a public  
hearing on the advisability of appointing a housing  
authority was called, the Real Estate Board mailed letters  
to all Tuscaloosa home owners declaring that public hous-  
ing was "socialism," that there was no need for it, that  
it would be a threat to "every business and professional  
man in Tuscaloosa," that it would reduce property values,  
and that "there is no justification for wrecking our own  
economy here in Tuscaloosa with public housing."<sup>30</sup> A  
young attorney was hired by opponents of the proposal to  
appear at the hearing and read a lengthy statement about  
the "evils of socialism." At the hearing, however, after  
the operation of a public housing project was explained  
(with emphasis on the point that it would not compete  
with private real estate dealers), several property own-  
ers, including real estate dealers, spoke favorably of

---

29. The property of some Tuscaloosa landlords con-  
sists of Negro residential units and other housing for  
low-income renters. It is this type housing which would  
be partly displaced by public housing.

30. Tuscaloosa News, February 28, 1950, p. 1.

the proposal. A public housing authority was subsequently appointed which included as one of its members a partner in one of the leading real estate firms.<sup>31</sup>

Yet another group, a much larger one, may be said to be rising in Tuscaloosa. This group, or more accurately, alliance of groups, is organized labor; it is not so much challenging the dominance of the Old Families of the upper class as it is challenging the entire business class for fuller participation in community activities and for a stronger voice in community decisions.

Most of Tuscaloosa's labor unions are trades unions affiliated with the American Federation of Labor. Thirty-one of these locals, comprising a membership of 7,500,<sup>32</sup> are joined together in the Central Labor Union which serves as a voice and coordinating agent for them. The backbone of organization of the CLU are the paper mill, which employs about 1,200, about 95 per cent of whom are union members, and the iron foundry, employing about 1800 union members.

In addition to these AF of L unions are four unions affiliated with the Congress of Industrial Organizations.

---

31. Ibid., March 19, 1950, p. 1.

32. Ibid., July 31, 1949, Sec. B, p. 13.

Of these the only large one is the United Rubber Workers composed of about 900 employees of the Goodrich Rubber Company, whose plant is located west of Tuscaloosa.

The labor unions, then, make up the largest organized group of people in Tuscaloosa, although it should not be concluded that they constitute a solid and unanimous bloc. They cooperate when one of the unions is engaged in a strike, but election returns from the predominantly labor districts indicate that they are not always unified politically.<sup>33</sup> Also, there has not been complete harmony between the AF of L and CIO unions in Tuscaloosa. Even so, the unions claim responsibility for ousting the previous Congressman from this district and replacing him with the incumbent.<sup>34</sup>

---

33. In the Democratic Primary of May 2, 1950, Precinct 15 (predominantly a union precinct) supported the union-endorsed candidates for Congress and for Circuit Solicitor by majorities of approximately 3 to 1 and 2 to 1, but unendorsed candidates for the State Legislature, sheriff, and the Board of Education got almost 50 per cent of the precinct's votes. (Election results published in Tuscaloosa News, May 3, 1950, p. 2).

34. Many reasons are given by union members for their opposition to the previous Congressman. One of the most interesting of these touches on race relations. It was asserted that when the federal government built Northington General Hospital in Tuscaloosa during World War II (not to be confused with the larger and permanent U. S. Veteran's Administration Hospital also located in Tuscaloosa), Tuscaloosa housewives began finding it very difficult to get domestic servants. The reason given was

Union spokesmen say that their relations with Tuscaloosa employers are generally cordial. This condition has developed as the unions have become firmly established as permanent institutions in the community, for they originally met the resistance on the part of employers and the business class in general which has been typical of the growth of organized labor in the United States. One union man commented that "labor has had to fight for every inch it has gained in Tuscaloosa." Only in the last decade have the unions become a significant factor in Tuscaloosa.

They are gradually being integrated into the community, as is tokened by the Chamber of Commerce membership of Central Labor Union representatives and in the appointment of representatives of organized labor to municipal

---

that Northington Hospital paid much higher wages for the same work than the eight or ten dollars a week paid by Tuscaloosans. Consequently, Tuscaloosans are said to have taken steps immediately after the end of the war to have the hospital moved away from the community - the instrumentality for this removal being the later defeated Congressman. One effect of this removal was the loss to the community of an employer of carpenters, plumbers, and other union members who had jobs in the maintenance of the hospital. (This is of course not presented as the sole reason for the removal of Northington Hospital nor as the primary reason for labor's opposition to the Congressman. It does illuminate, however, the evaluation by some union members of the power of the dominant classes in Tuscaloosa.)

governmental agencies.<sup>35</sup> One of the local motion picture theatres was quick to draw a public rebuff from the president of the CLU when that theatre invited several citizens and ministers to preview a picture about which controversy had developed but did not invite a union representative.<sup>36</sup> The unions, on the other hand, emphasize in their public relations that they are interested in all things for the betterment and progress of the community and not solely those things in which labor alone is interested.

Besides providing a channel for lower middle and lower class participation in community activities, the unions are potentially the most important vehicles for the crucially changing position of the Negroes in Tuscaloosa. If previous experience elsewhere is indicative,<sup>37</sup>

---

35. A union man was included in the recently established Public Housing Authority. Labor was also represented on a citizen's committee established to work out a plan for solving Tuscaloosa's problem of educational revenues, and in the Community Chest. The CIO unions do not look with favor on labor membership in the Chamber of Commerce, however.

36. Tuscaloosa News, February 7, 1950, p. 1. The picture, incidentally, was "Pinky," which concerned an interracial love affair. It was banned in some Southern communities.

37. Ruth Benedict, in Race: Science and Politics, pp. 189-90, cites the National Maritime Union as an example of a union which has succeeded in gaining equal and

Negro-white relations may be expected to improve as a result of working together under equal conditions.<sup>38</sup>

As yet only three AF of L unions in Tuscaloosa have both white and Negro members. Of the 900 members of the CIO United Rubber Workers about 13 per cent are Negroes. Thus the extent of Negro-white contact in the unions is not large. Furthermore, although these unions are non-segregated in membership a policy of informal segregation is followed in the relations of the two groups in the unions. Traditional Southern practices are too deeply ingrained to permit a radical change. Add to these the fact that many of the union leaders are handicapped to

---

unsegregated working conditions for its Negro members, with good results in reduction of prejudice. See also Report No. B-175, Information and Education Division, Army Service Forces, U. S. War Department, Washington, 1945. (Reprinted in T. H. Newcomb and E. L. Hartley, Readings in Social Psychology, pp. 542-46. This study, made after World War II, concerned the experiment of putting Negro infantry platoons in white rifle companies. It was found that white officers and non-coms overwhelmingly revised their attitudes favorably toward Negro soldiers after the experience of working with them in and out of combat.

38. Several white members of non-segregated unions in Tuscaloosa stated that the experience of working with Negroes had caused them to abandon "some of the ideas about colored people we'd been taught all our lives."

some extent by lack of education, and the obstacles to better race relations through the unions seem quite formidable. In spite of these limitations, however, the fact remains that some Negroes and whites are members of the same unions in Tuscaloosa and that the process of prejudice reduction has begun. It is not improbable that as the unions grow in Tuscaloosa (and in the South) they will be very effective agencies for the reduction of <sup>39</sup> interracial tension.

### Institutions

Attention thus far has been focused on the broader outlines of Tuscaloosa's social system, with only incidental treatment of the institutions around which the daily life of the people is organized. Institutions may be designated as those groups characterized by individuals related to each other through traditional practices,

---

39. President Sam Douglas of the Alabama Federation of Labor, speaking before the Central Labor Union of Tuscaloosa, declared that "most white Southerners are from birth indoctrinated with prejudice and uncompromising intolerance towards the colored populace among us. There must be an awakening to the real problem, which is in the image of sprawling slums with their tumbled down shacks, disease, hunger, despair, lack of education - lack of economic opportunity, lack of Christian attitude, and above all, low income. Yes, my friends, these are the basic causes of the very existence of racial dissension here in the South." He added that advancements made can be largely accredited to the AF of L which has enrolled "more than 500,000 Negro members." Tuscaloosa News, January 31, 1950, p. 1.

possessing a hierarchical organization, and having explicit or implied functions and goals.<sup>40</sup> This would include business and industrial organizations, schools, churches, civic clubs, etc. Such groups are important enough to a community's structure to warrant at least brief consideration here.

The significance of families has been discussed in relation to Tuscaloosa's upper class. Families, as the first primary group with which people interact as infants and children, are of vital importance in transmitting the basic ways of thinking and behaving of a culture. They are usually the units of which the class system is constructed, and it is generally accepted by students of social structure and processes that the ways of thinking and behaving which a child absorbs differ according to the class position of his family. Thus, in Tuscaloosa the sons of businessmen tend to become businessmen themselves. Although it is less common now, sons formerly joined the business organization of the father quite frequently.

The coming of industry and the expansion of the community have had the effect of reducing the number of

---

40. Solon T. Kimball, (ed.), Readings in the Science of Human Relations, Vol. I, p. 6.

family controlled business establishments, however. Although family ties have generally been considered to be stronger in the South than in the rest of the nation, it is plausible to suggest, in the absence of statistical data, that Tuscaloosa has felt the usual effects of urbanization and industrialization on its families. That is, many former functions of the family (e.g. recreation) have been increasingly taken over by other institutions, with the result that Tuscaloosa families are considerably less strongly integrated units than they were a generation ago. Nevertheless, a person's family is still of such importance in determining his class status that birth may be considered to be an important factor in the degree of a person's participation in community decisions. This is borne out by the fact that few, if any, of the top-level managers of the larger industrial plants of the community are accepted as members of Tuscaloosa's upper class, although their economic position and prestige qualify them for membership. The reason is that these plants for the most part are not locally owned and the managers have not lived in Tuscaloosa long enough.

That is not to say that such individuals do not wield influence in some community decisions, however. They are accorded deference in Tuscaloosa because of their economic

importance to the community: they are the agents of the transition from an agricultural to a predominantly industrial economy. That change is evidenced by the increase in the number of industrial plants in the county from 57<sup>41</sup> in 1939 to over 125 in 1947.<sup>42</sup>

These institutions, plus an estimated 650 retail establishments and 350 finance, utility, service, and construction organizations,<sup>43</sup> place the total number of economic institutions in the county somewhere near 1,100. At least three-fourths of these may be assumed to be clustered in the community of Tuscaloosa, which makes them the most numerous type of institution next to the family.

The importance of economic institutions to a community hardly needs to be pointed out. On their activities depends, to a great extent, the well-being of the people. Furthermore, since a large proportion of the people spend eight hours or more of their waking hours interacting within economic institutions, the latter are of great importance in conditioning the attitudes and beliefs of the people. Beliefs concerning what are and what are not

---

41. Alabama County Statistical Abstracts, p. 285.

42. Statistical Abstract of Alabama, 1949, p. 29.

43. Editor and Publisher Market Guide, 1950 Edition, p. 11.

proper functions to be undertaken by municipal government are generated and reinforced by economic institutions. This may be related to the fact that the only municipally operated utility in Tuscaloosa is the water works. Gas, electricity, communications, and transportation systems are left to private companies, although municipal operation of all of these except communications is not at all uncommon in other cities.

Of Tuscaloosa's educational institutions, the University is the largest, with about 7,500 students. Most of these students, of course, come to the University from other communities. Stillman College, a junior college for Negroes which is maintained by the Presbyterian church, also draws many students from other communities. In addition to these there is the school system operated by the community for its own children. This system consists of two high schools (one for Negroes and one for whites) one junior high school for whites, and twelve elementary or grammar schools (seven for whites and five for Negroes). Next to the family, schools are the most important institutions for transmitting to the oncoming generation the community's ways of thinking and behaving which they will need to adjust to living in the community.

Religious institutions occupy an important position in Tuscaloosa. The Tuscaloosa News, in its Saturday

announcements of church services, lists 45 white churches in the community. Estimating the white population of this area to be about 36,000, the average would be one church for every 800 or so white persons. A guess would place the number of Negro churches at about 20 or 25. It is impossible, however, to estimate the percentage of the total population which is affiliated with churches, although it would probably be high.

The religious homogeneity of Tuscaloosa's population has been referred to in Chapter I. There are two Catholic and two Jewish congregations. All others are Protestant, and of these 13 are Baptist and 12 are Methodist. The remainder range from Presbyterian and Episcopal to Jehovah's Witnesses and Seventh Day Adventists.

The churches differ as institutions from economic institutions in that each of the former tends to draw the core of its membership from the same social class, while an economic institution, if large, will include in its hierarchy persons from all classes. Thus one church congregation will predominantly upper middle class, while another (often of the same denomination) will be predominantly lower-middle or upper-lower. Generally the older churches in Tuscaloosa include members of the upper and upper-middle classes and are located in a group just south of the business district.

Other institutions which are quite numerous in Tuscaloosa may be designated as service and recreational, although this category is more difficult to characterize. Service institutions would include the large U. S. Veterans Administration hospital, Bryce Hospital for the insane, Partlow State School for the mentally defective young, and the two hospitals in the City, Druid City Hospital and Stillman Hospital (for Negroes). Another taxonomy might list all of these as governmental institutions, since they are all (with the exception of Stillman) operated by governments ranging from the local to the federal. Service institutions might also include some otherwise thought of as economic, such as the utilities, the newspapers, and radio stations. (Of the latter there are two.) Again, recreational institutions are often commercial and could be as easily thought of as economic (such as the moving picture theaters). Such institutions as civic clubs, study clubs, and other formally organized groups could be classified as both service and recreational. While it may not be entirely logically defensible to include Bryce Hospital and the Thursday Afternoon Bridge Club in the same category, it will be done here for the sake of convenience.

The largest number of institutions in this classification are the scores, perhaps hundreds, of study and

recreational clubs, most of which are made up of women. These organizations developed partly as a response to the not-yet-complete "liberation" of women from the home. They are for the most part organized along strict class lines, as was indicated earlier in this chapter.

With regard to the community's decision-making process, perhaps the most important institutions of this type are the Chamber of Commerce and some of the businessmen's service clubs. Some of the latter, for example, initiate various types of charity programs to benefit various "worthy causes." The Chamber of Commerce, with its office conveniently located in the City Hall building, has been a significant factor in the growth of the community. This group was primarily responsible for the locating of the large paper mill at Tuscaloosa, having itself bought from the City part of the property on which the plant was built, at the same time obtaining an agreement from the City to reduce the City limits to a point excluding the paper mill property in order to obviate city taxes on the plant.<sup>44</sup> The Chamber has indeed been so active in many community affairs that one citizen dubbed it the "businessman's legislature."

---

44. Green, op. cit., Sec. D, p. 6.

The final type of institution to be mentioned is the governmental. Tuscaloosa may aptly be described as the governmental center of West Alabama. In addition to the municipal agencies which are being considered in this thesis, there are 12 or 13 agencies of Tuscaloosa County government, 8 agencies of the State of Alabama, and about 20 agencies (including military) of the federal government with offices in Tuscaloosa. Thus there are at least 40 governmental agencies in Tuscaloosa (excluding the educational and hospital institutions mentioned above as well as municipal agencies). Also, Northport across the river is incorporated as a separate city and maintains a mayor-council form of government.

Insofar as institutions are thought of as mechanisms for social control, the governmental ones are the most important, since they possess and manipulate the ultimate sanctions in the community. The institutions of local government are the focal points of community decision-making, although it is hoped that preceding sections of this chapter will have demonstrated that these decisions are not made in a vacuum. It should also be kept in mind that the institutions which have been described above are interrelated both in the functions they perform and in their membership. The same individuals often are assigned roles

in three or more institutions. A business executive may be also a director of the Chamber of Commerce and a member of the Board of Education. A laborer may be an officer of a labor union and a church deacon, in addition to his roles as husband and father in his family. This is built up the extremely complicated web of human relations that makes a community.

### The Value System

Interacting in institutions generates and reinforces certain beliefs, goals, or values - or, a group of people who hold certain values in common may set up an institution to go about attaining them. Speaking generally, each type of institution has its own set of such values which its members are seeking, and these values become so thoroughly internalized in the people interacting in the institution that they are considered as "givens," as indisputable. Such are the central values of some of the types of institutions described above, which may be symbolized as monogamous marriage, private enterprise, universal education, monotheistic religion, and democratic government.<sup>45</sup> Since most of the people in the community

---

45. It will be noted that each of these implies a certain way of doing what each type of institution is supposed to do. These same types of institutions have been found in almost all cultures, but of course the ways of "doing it" vary from culture to culture. Hence the values of different cultures vary.

of Tuscaloosa interact at one time or another with all types of institutions, they all come to share the same general body of values.<sup>46</sup> All community decisions are made within the boundaries delimited by these values.

Since values (and the manipulation of symbols which refer to them) influence decisions, at least brief consideration must be given to a few of those which seem relevant to the decision-making process in Tuscaloosa.

Concerning government, the word "democracy" is used frequently with favorable affect in discussions, newspaper editorials, etc., especially since World War II. The charge of "undemocratic" can effectively block a proposal or an idea. But the symbol seems to have gained power fairly recently. In 1939 the Tuscaloosa News editorialized:

This newspaper believes in white supremacy, and it believes that the poll tax is one of the essentials for the preservation of white supremacy. It does not believe in a democracy with a little "d" because it knows this country never has had such a

---

46. This is not to imply that all the above values occupy places of equal importance in the subjective conceptions of all members of the community. Generally individuals consider most important the values of the institutions within which they most frequently and intimately interact. Conflict between individuals and groups may occur about which is most important.

democracy and never will have as long as white supremacy is preserved. . . . And as for us, if it is "undemocratic" to argue for white supremacy - as it certainly is - then we plead guilty to the charge.<sup>47</sup>

That sentiment has changed since 1939 is indicated by the returns of the 1950 Democratic Primary election in which district representatives to the State Democratic Committee were chosen. The foremost issue was Civil Rights for Negroes, although the lines were not drawn on a simple "for" or "against" basis. All candidates were at least nominally opposed to the idea of granting Negroes civil rights,<sup>48</sup> but the question was how should opposition be conducted. Candidates were split along lines which might be described as "extremist" (States Rights Democrats or Dixiecrats) and "moderate" (Loyalist Democrats). With each voter casting eight votes,

---

47. Tuscaloosa News, November 3, 1939, p. 4. (Cited in W. V. Holloway and C. W. Smith, Government and Politics in Alabama, pp. 120-121.

48. The words "civil rights" have become an emotionally charged symbol in Tuscaloosa as elsewhere in the South. This symbol usually evokes more of an emotional than a rational response. Its affective meaning may be said to concern disruption of the caste system with a breakdown of the policy of "White Supremacy" - itself an emotionally charged symbol.

Tuscaloosa County gave over two votes for the moderates for each vote for the extremists.<sup>49</sup>

Thus it is quite possible that, with the increased involvement of the United States in foreign affairs since 1941 in which ideology has been a much publicized issue, Tuscaloosans have become more aware of the conflicts of the values of American ideals ("equal rights, treatment, and opportunity for all") and the values of the caste system ("white supremacy"). Traditional rationalizations concerning inherent "racial" inferiorities and superiorities are less tenable than they were a decade ago, but that is not to imply that such rationalizations are not frequently and sincerely used in Tuscaloosa.

The value complex which is clustered about economic institutions also has relevance to a consideration of community decision-making. Such values as are represented by the symbols of business success and the system of

---

49. Tuscaloosa News, May 5, 1950, p. 1. Totals were: States Righters, 18,570; Loyalists, 39, 612. Precinct totals were unfortunately not available, so the vote in the City of Tuscaloosa cannot be given. The City has had a majority of the County's registered voters since 1932, and casts more than a majority of the County's votes in elections. It would be safe to say that urban residents were less receptive than rural residents to the States Righters' arguments.

private enterprise and competition are highly regarded by most Tuscaloosans. To say that one is a successful businessman and a self-made man weighs favorably for one in an election. A changing technology has introduced new values in some segments of the population which are related to labor unions. However, it can be plausibly suggested that middle and upper class Tuscaloosans, whatever else they may think of unions, tend to look upon them as representing "special interests," while the same attitude toward businessmen has not developed to any significant extent. Thus a businessman will be included in a board or group appointed to deal with a community problem because he is manifestly qualified, while a union executive will be included in order that organized labor will be justly represented.

It should not be concluded from the foregoing that politics and elections are largely a matter of class, caste, or other public issues. The values of personality are obviously highly regarded, and perhaps play an even more important part in attracting votes than do the principles which a candidate presents in his platform. Thus candidates must spend a good bit of time on the streets and visiting homes, shaking hands, smiling, slapping backs, and talking confidentially to prospective voters.

Voters will justify their support for a candidate because "he is an honest man" or "he knows how to get along with people." And, since such things are important in elections, suspicion of personalities and mud-slinging often obscure whatever issues may be involved. Individuals tend to impute personal motives to political opponents, and feeling occasionally runs high enough to erupt in fist-fights.<sup>50</sup>

Another value which ranks high in the community of Tuscaloosa may be symbolized in the word "progress." Progress is measured by the amount of population increase, by the addition of new industries or the expansion of old ones, by the annexation of adjoining areas to the City, by the expansion of the police department or the acquisition of a new fire truck. Increases or growth of almost everything except the crime rate are interpreted by the local press and by speakers for the local civic groups as indices of progress. Hence, individuals or groups who advocate or are responsible for such increases, additions, or growth are designated "forward-looking," "far-seeing," or "progressive." The implicit assumption is that the bigger the community is in every respect, the better it will be.

---

50. For examples, see Tuscaloosa News, August 19, 1949, p. 1, and September 27, 1949, p. 1.

There are of course individuals and groups in the community whose approach to "progress" is more cautious. Some of these are to be found in the Old Family and property owning groups, or in the upper levels of some of the business or financial hierarchies. They sometimes act as a restraining influence - and a strong one - on proposed policies.

The preceding discussion has of necessity been limited and impressionistic. Only a few values out of a much larger constellation (and they may quite possibly not be the most important) were selected for comment. Perhaps the few which were mentioned will serve to indicate the significance for decision-making of value-oriented behavior which can be evoked by the manipulation of symbols.<sup>51</sup> The importance of a consideration of values is particularly important in Tuscaloosa, where the technology and the social system are changing, thereby bringing about value conflicts.

---

51. For discussions of values, symbols, and meaning, see C. K. Ogden and I. A. Richards, The Meaning of Meaning, Stuart Chase, The Tyranny of Words, Suzanne K. Langer, Philosophy in a New Key, and Anatol Rapoport, Science and the Goals of Man.

## CHAPTER III

### GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION AND MANAGEMENT: HOW DECISIONS ARE MADE

#### Organization for Government

##### Voters and Non-voters

With the foregoing chapters to serve as a rather crudely sketched outline of the social structure of the community of Tuscaloosa, the area of investigation can be narrowed. The remainder of the thesis will be concerned with the structure and functioning of municipal government in the community. The preceding analysis was necessary because municipal government is not a thing apart from the community; studied apart from its context it is susceptible to inaccurate interpretation. Significant factors which might otherwise be overlooked are highlighted when government is seen in its relation to the social milieu.

As mentioned before, government may be considered as the making of decisions which are largely concerned with the reduction of tensions. The tensions arise, or are potential, in the social relations between the individuals and groups of the community, or in the relations of individuals and groups to their non-human environment.

Emphasis is placed on the potentiality of tensions because of the unspectacular character of by far the greater part of the operations of government. If garbage were not collected regularly, if no one decided the fire department was too small or underequipped for safety and consequently that more firemen or a new fire truck was needed, some of the potential tensions would become actual. Government, by its routinized day-to-day operation, prevents most tensions from rising to the level of community attention.

The process of decision-making itself forces the consideration of the community in a study of government. It is a process which begins in the community, is channelled through the policy-making level of the governmental structure where the more or less broad terms of the decision are formulated, to "lower" levels where it is refined by lesser decisions made within the framework of the larger one, finally back to the source of the tension in the community where the adjustment decided upon is made. The process is then a series of decisions of increasingly specificity,<sup>1</sup> which begins and ends in the community,

---

1. Traditionally the first decisions - those made by members of the community at large and by the upper echelons of governmental institutions - are referred to

passing through the machinery of government to be sanctioned, formulated, refined, and implemented.

It is through periodic elections that the members of the community make the basic decisions in their government by choosing the persons to govern them for the next four years and by prescribing certain basic policies, such as the imposition of a tax or the issuance of bonds. A few observations about elections in Tuscaloosa would not then be inappropriate.

Who can participate in decisions made by election? Alabama law requires that only persons registered as voters can participate. To register, one must be a citizen of the United States and at least 21 years of age. He must have been a resident of the state for at least two years, of the county one year, and of the precinct three months immediately preceding the election. Also, he must be able to read and write and have been at work

---

as "policy making," while the latter ones, made by the lower echelons, are labelled "policy executing." It is evident, however, that no line exists between the making and execution of policy. There is only a difference in degree of importance of the separate decisions in the series. Furthermore, it is quite possible for the latter and less important decisions in the process to alter or even negate the originally intended effects of the broader previous ones, as sometimes happens when lesser administrative officials are not in sympathy with the policy which is handed down to them.

for the greater part of the previous year, unless physically unable to do either. The literacy requirement can be waived for those who own or are married to someone who owns property assessed for at least \$300 on which all taxes have been paid.<sup>2</sup> In addition to registering, a person must pay an annual poll tax of \$1.50 before he can vote. For men this tax is cumulative from the year they became 21 years old or from 1901 (whichever is the latter date); for women the date is 1920.<sup>3</sup> Idiots and persons convicted of crimes are not allowed to vote.

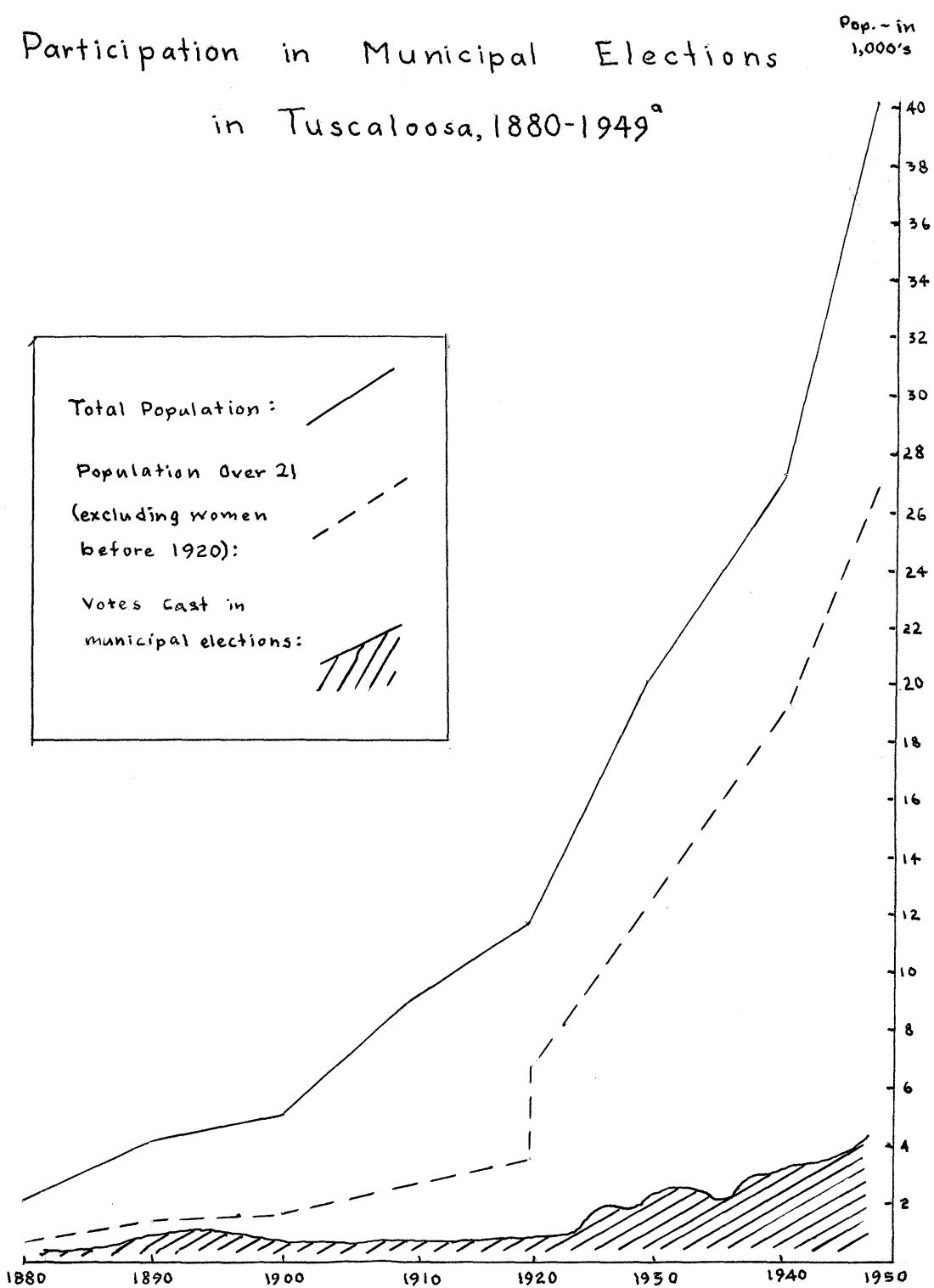
In effect, then, practically all of the population over 21 who can pay the poll tax is legally eligible to become a participant in electoral decisions, since the number otherwise disqualified by the above requirements would be negligible. But as a glance at Chart II will indicate, only a small proportion of the potential electorate actually votes in Tuscaloosa elections. Although it is impossible to state with precision who votes in Tuscaloosa and who doesn't, several generalizations may

---

2. Constitution of Alabama, Secs. 180-188.

3. Ibid., Secs. 177 and 178. War veterans and members of the National Guard are exempt from the poll tax requirement, as are all persons over 45 years of age.

CHART II  
 Participation in Municipal Elections  
 in Tuscaloosa, 1880-1949<sup>a</sup>



a. Election returns from Green, Ben A., "Tuscaloosa — Through 130 Years of History," Tuscaloosa News, July 31, 1949.

be ventured. First, Negroes account for no more than 9 or 10 per cent of the votes cast, on the basis of the percentage of Negroes registered as voters.<sup>4</sup> Also, men heavily outnumber women in participation,<sup>5</sup> although the number of women voters is increasing. Dr. Charles W. Smith, in a study of Tuscaloosa's electorate, estimated that approximately 60 per cent of the qualified voters were over 40 years of age.<sup>6</sup> Although this study showed that few of the registered voters were listed on the Tax Assessor's books as owning property, it may nevertheless be concluded that the average voter in Tuscaloosa is of

---

4. But see Note 13, p. 48 above. Observation and interviews indicate that by no means all registered Negroes actually vote.

5. Charles W. Smith, Jr., The Electorate in an Alabama Community. This is a study of the electorate in Tuscaloosa from 1931 to 1940. The town and the electorate have grown very much since 1940, but it is not likely that the composition of the electorate has changed radically since that date.

6. Ibid., p. 14. Dr. Smith points out, however, that since political participation generally declines in the age groups above 60, "it would not be safe to assume that 60 per cent of the persons actually voting were over 40 years old."

middle class status.<sup>7</sup> The data available points to the conclusion that only one out of every five or six adults in Tuscaloosa participates in community decisions to the extent of voting, and that most of the voters are white men of the middle class and of middle age.<sup>8</sup>

The unusual characteristic of the electorate in Tuscaloosa is its very small size in proportion to the total adult population. It is unusual, that is, from the perspective of democratic government as it is practiced in western Europe and in the Northern, Western, and some Southern states of the U. S., but is typical of most parts of the South. What are the reasons for this low level of political participation?

---

7. This statement is made because of the practice of vastly underestimating the value of property for tax purposes in Tuscaloosa (see below, Chap. IV). Also, Dr. Smith stated about the registrants of 1939 and 1940 (on whom more data was available) that "these figures seem to indicate that the average economic status of registrants would be middle class." Ibid., p. 30.

8. These findings tally with the statement of Dr. V. O. Key that "Analyses of voting made in many parts of the world demonstrate a remarkable uniformity of voting behavior: almost everywhere larger proportions of men vote than of women; larger percentages of the well-to-do, than of groups lower down the economic scale; smaller proportions of the young and of the aged, than of persons in the middle years." Key, op. cit., p. 510.

First, it should be noted that in Tuscaloosa no official pressure or policy of discouraging any group or class from voting (except Negroes, in some cases)<sup>9</sup> is used. The immediate cause of nonvoting is apathy and indifference, which even flaming oratory cannot stir. But to get to the basic reasons, one must consider the social structure of the community, which largely patterns the interests and attitudes of the people.

Negroes are apathetic because of the caste system. A basis principle of the system, phrased bluntly by Dr. Key, is that "the black man does what the white man says."<sup>10</sup> Government has traditionally been classified as among "white folks' business," and it is hard to break this ingrained habit of thinking, although there are signs that this is beginning to occur in Tuscaloosa. But a pattern of life that is characterized by subordination and varying degrees of fear permits little development of independent thinking and responsible citizenship. Negro participation will probably increase as the social structure changes, as more Negroes reach middle class status and acquire the attendant civic interests.

---

9. Negroes in Tuscaloosa report that they seldom meet opposition or discouragement when registering or voting.

10. Key, op. cit., p. 655.

The reasons for political indifference among the whites are more complex. An important factor is solidarity among the upper classes. There is little difference between the upper and middle classes on matters of political orientation. Some observers have concluded that the presence of the Negro is a constant deterrent to division along class lines among the whites.<sup>11</sup> Key notes the following additional reasons for political unawareness among Southern whites: "a low level of education; a high degree of insulation from the main stream of ideas; the siphoning off into the governing classes of men of ability by a social system still remarkably fluid;" (thereby depleting the leadership among the lower third of the population) and "a religious tradition of acceptance as divine purpose of whatever comes."<sup>12</sup>

Considering the size and composition of the electorate it is not surprising that the City Commissioners are almost invariably businessmen or lawyers. Since 1911, when the commission form of government was adopted, there have been ten businessmen, three lawyers, and one engineer elected. It is worth noting that at least two

---

11. See Cash, op. cit.

12. Key, op. cit., p. 655.

businessmen have been on the Board at all times since 1911, and that one of these has always been a real estate dealer, with the exception of one year.<sup>13</sup> Business success is considered an excellent qualification for membership; the present President of the Commission, elected in 1949, made frequent reference in his campaign advertising to the fact that he was a successful businessman.<sup>14</sup> It may be concluded then, that governmental decisions are likely to reflect the values of the business class more than those of the employee class.

Besides what might be termed "class continuity" in the City Commission, there have been several instances of individual continuity in the office - although the average length of service of the 14 men who have been Commissioners between 1911 and 1950 is only 8.4 years.<sup>15</sup> The average in this instance is a misleading figure, however. Of these 14 men, 6 have served 3 or fewer years, while 6 have served 12 or more years. Only 2 served for a time approximating the average; these served 6 and 7 years respectively.<sup>16</sup> Thus it can be said that neither

---

13. See Appendices B and C.

14. Tuscaloosa News, months of September and October, 1949.

15. See Appendix C.

16. Ibid.

frequent re-election nor rapid turnover is unusual for Tuscaloosa's City Commission.

There is at present no functioning group in the municipal government which could be termed a "machine," although an organization of sorts did exist from about 1916 to 1930.<sup>17</sup> There is no machine now in spite of the fact that two of the incumbents are now going into their fourth four year term. (The third incumbent is beginning his first term.) Although certain organizational reforms (such as the initiation of a Civil Service system) militate against machine politics, probably the primary reason for the absence of a machine organization is the lack of a genuine functional need for one. A machine exists for the purposes of financial and prestige benefits to its leaders and the provision of favors and jobs to groups in a community to whom other channels of gaining favors are not accessible.<sup>18</sup> Since 1930 two positions on the

---

17. This machine was one only in the sense that two or three Commissioners managed to perpetuate themselves in office over a period of time by effective political organization. After these Commissioners were ousted (in a contested election) the City's then antiquated system of financial management was reorganized. Other reforms included the placing of policemen and firemen under a Civil Service system.

18. See R. K. Merton, "Manifest and Latent Functions," in Social Theory and Social Structure, (especially pp. 73-81) for a discussion of the functional basis of political machines.

Tuscaloosa City Commission have been filled by four successful businessmen who would have had little to gain in wealth and prestige by the organization of a machine to perpetuate themselves in office. The third position has been occupied by two lawyers, who, although probably not as wealthy as the other commissioners, were of upper-middle class status and would also have little to gain. (A machine, to be effective, would have to include at least two of the three members of the commission.) People who need or want aid and support in the form of favors and jobs have not elected men who would organize a machine to provide them because (a) as pointed out above, not enough citizens in the lower-middle or lower class vote, and (b) the social system is in a condition of flux so that other channels for social advancement are available.

On the other hand, since the business class in general and the Old Family-property owner group in particular may be said to be dominant in Tuscaloosa, and since the City Commissioners are invariably from the business and professional class,<sup>19</sup> there would be little further

---

19. It is worth noting in this connection that in all years since 1931 at least one of the Commissioners has been the owner of considerable amounts of property.

advantage in organizing a machine to protect the interests of business and property.

The attitude of some upper-middle and upper class Tuscaloosans is indicative of an assumed relationship with the Commissioners. When several boys from "respectable" families were arrested for turning in a series of false fire alarms, the ministers of the largest churches called upon the Commissioner of Public Safety in the attempt to prevent prosecution by the City. Again, when a son of a "prominent family" was arrested for an alleged crime, pressure was brought to bear by "leading citizens and members of the oldest families" to have the charges dropped. The argument presented was that the boy was not a criminal, but had merely lost his temper.<sup>20</sup>

#### The Commission Board

The initial decision to establish a government in Tuscaloosa was made in 1820, one year after the town was incorporated, by the Legislature of Alabama. All white residents were invited to a meeting to select seven

---

20. In neither of these cases were the boys involved "let off." For an analysis of pressure for the protection of upper class law violators, see J. F. Cuber and R. A. Harper, Problems of American Society: Values in Conflict, pp. 162-63.

householders to act as "commissioners" of the town of Tuscaloosa.<sup>21</sup> The residents elected a mayor and six aldermen to direct their public affairs. The mayor-council form of government was retained for 91 years; in 1911 Tuscaloosa adopted the then-popular commission form in which three elected members comprised the Board of Commissioners. In contrast to the previous separation of powers, the legislative, executive, and judicial powers were placed in the collective hands of the commissioners, who served three-year staggered terms. Collectively, the commissioners were the city council; individually, each commissioner was made responsible for the functioning of specific departments of the city's government.

A local act of the State Legislature in 1935 modified Tuscaloosa's city commission in the following respect: the term of office of the commissioners was changed to four years, all three commissioners being elected at the same time.<sup>22</sup> This replaced annual municipal elections with quadrennial elections, and according to Tuscalcosans, freed the commissioners from continual

---

21. Green, op. cit., p. 1.

22. Alabama Code 1940, Tit. 62, Secs. 600-614. The first such election was held on the third Monday in September of 1941, with successive elections at four year intervals.

consciousness of "politics," allowing them to function more efficiently as administrators.

The present City Commission of Tuscaloosa was elected in 1949. The chairman, Mr. James S. Robertson, is a newcomer to municipal government, having been elected to fill the position vacated by the former chairman who retired at the end of his term in 1949. Like his predecessor, Mr. Robertson is a business man. As chairman, he presides over all meetings of the board of commissioners and at public ceremonies, and he signs contracts and correspondence in the name of the city. He is sometimes referred to as "mayor" (the statute vests him with "all the powers, jurisdiction, and functions possessed by the mayor of such city...except the power of veto")<sup>23</sup> and is charged with general supervision over all matters pertaining to the government of the City. In the division of labor which assigns specific responsibilities to each Commissioner, he is given direct supervision over the departments of streets, parks, and public health.<sup>24</sup>

Associate Commissioner Number One, Mr. J. Frank Livingston, is a lawyer. First elected in 1937, he was re-elected in 1941, 1945, and 1949. His governmental

---

23. Ibid., Tit. 37, Sec. 44.

24. Ibid., Tit. 62, Sec. 605.

responsibility is for "the departments of public safety, fire, police, and public affairs."<sup>25</sup> The third member of the Commission is Mr. W. H. Nicol, who was also first elected in 1937. Previous to his election he had served in the position of City Engineer for a number of years; he is now in the real estate business. He is the Commissioner of finance, taxation, accounts and budgeting,<sup>26</sup> and public buildings.

The position of City Commissioner is considered to be "part time." The group meets every Tuesday morning in the public meeting chamber of the modern city hall; special meetings later in the week are not infrequent. In addition, each Commissioner keeps in regular contact with the superintendents of the departments over which he has jurisdiction. Commissioner Nicol, for example, visits the city hall every morning as a matter of habit; he estimates that out of a 44 hour work week at least 25 per cent of his time is spent in municipal government's affairs. Commissioner Livingston, in charge of the Fire and Police Departments, describes the time he spends on the city's business as a never-ending succession of

---

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid. The duties of the various Commissioners may be shuffled by agreement.

little things - people calling or coming to him at all hours of the day or night with requests or complaints, plus frequent conversations with other city officials.

For their services the two Associate Commissioners receive \$225.00 a month; the chairman of the Commission is paid \$250.00.

The power of the Commissioners to govern, as the power of all local governments in the state of Alabama, is derived from the state government. State law vests in Tuscaloosa's Commission Board "the municipal powers, legislative, executive, and judicial now, or hereafter, conferred upon municipalities and governing bodies thereof."<sup>27</sup> This means that the government of Tuscaloosa is a limited government - perhaps in a more real sense than state and federal government, since the judiciary which decides whether local government has exceeded its authority is almost always the judiciary of a superior level of government. In making and carrying out decisions by enacting ordinances, appointing or instructing personnel, negotiating contracts, and approving expenditures, the traditional distinction between legislative and executive or administrative powers and functions becomes hopelessly

---

27. Ibid., Sec. 604.

confused. The judicial power of the Commission is limited to the appointment of a city recorder or judge to try cases arising from the violation of city ordinances,<sup>28</sup> and to the adjudication of certain disputes arising from the assessment of taxes for public improvements.<sup>29</sup>

The Commissioners are the only elected officials of the government. They have the power to appoint members of other governmental boards and authorities, and to employ persons for certain positions with the city government; the latter power is limited by the requirements of the Civil Service Board.<sup>30</sup>

The listing of the powers of the Commission Board and the duties of the individual Commissioners, however, provides little aid in visualizing the structure of the municipal government and the work of the individuals who compose it. The structure is better indicated in the organization chart shown on the next page, although the inadequacies of this type of formalized description should be kept in mind. For example, although the City School System and the Recreation Department are represented on

---

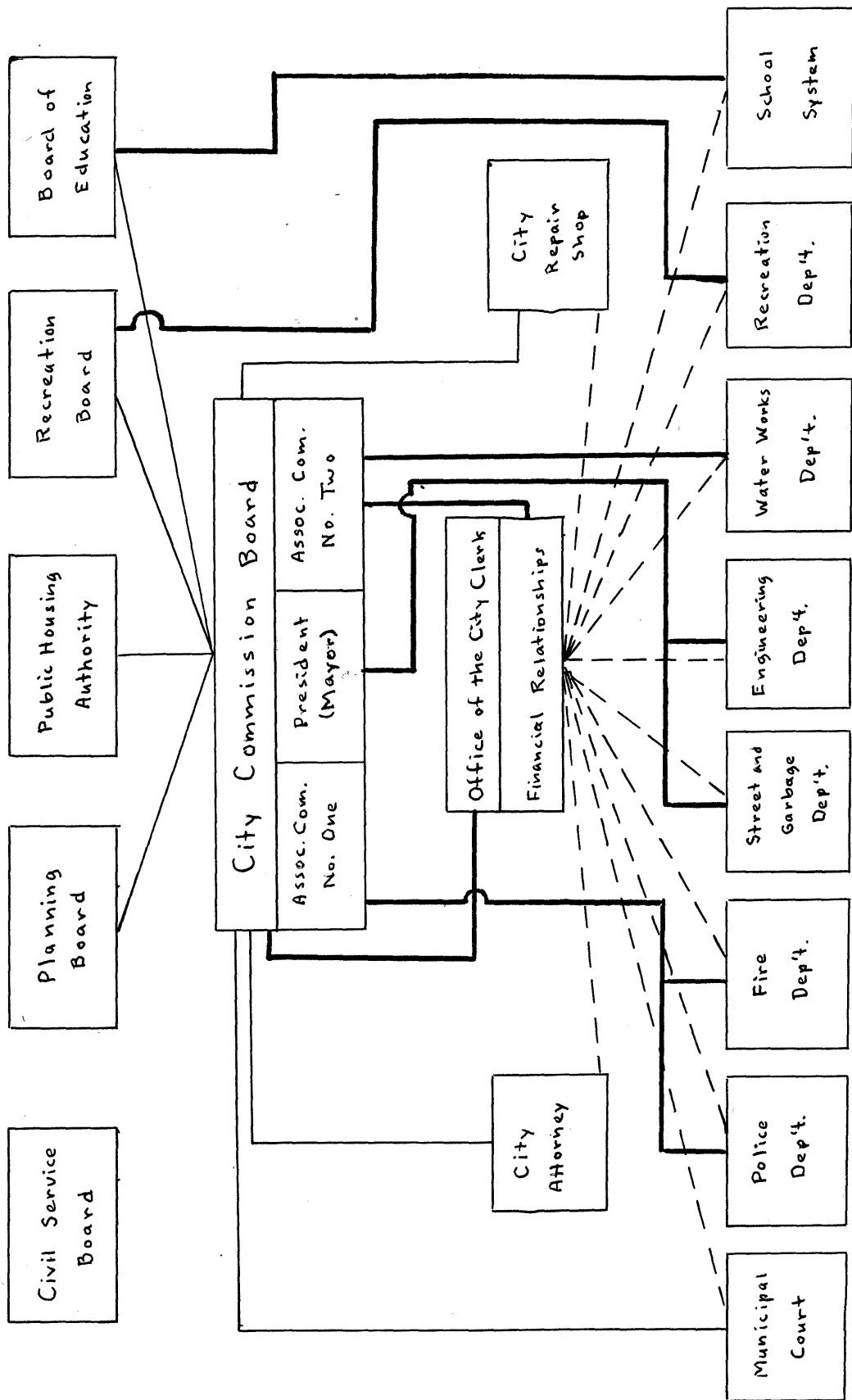
28. Ibid., Sec. 613.

29. Ibid., Tit. 37, Secs. 512-581.

30. See below, p. 114.

### CHART III

Organization of Government of Tuscaloosa, 1950



the chart by symbols of the same size, it is obvious that they are agencies of widely differing size and importance in terms of their community function, their number of employees, etc. The chart is useful, however, in showing the relationships between the elements of the organization.

The heavy lines represent the lines of responsibility and supervision between the operating agencies which carry out decisions and the individual or groups who are responsible for making them. The light lines show appointive and/or advisory relationships (with the exception of the Civil Service Board, which is independent of the City Commission), and the broken lines indicate financial control or support. These relationships will be made clearer in the later discussion of these agencies and units of government.

Some relationships are not adaptable to representation on the chart: each Commissioner, for example, is charged with direct supervision over certain departments, as noted above, yet the statute adds that "the administration of each department shall be under the supervision and control of the commission board as a whole, and such board shall be responsible therefor."<sup>31</sup> This clause

---

31. Alabama Code 1940, Tit. 62, Sec. 605.

points up the weakness in the theory of the commission form of government as it works out in practice. Each Commissioner comes to look upon the departments under his supervision as his private preserve. Generally two Commissioners will agree to the recommendation of the third which concern the functions under his supervision, but "there is a tendency for each to overemphasize the functions of his departments to the exclusion of the other departments, sometimes trying to get more than his share of appropriations, for example."<sup>32</sup>

#### Management of Public Affairs

If the Commission Board of Tuscaloosa is thought of as the organ of the community which defines the alternatives when a decision is needed, and then chooses one among them, the functions of the other parts of the government will be seen to consist of helping the Commissioners to make the decisions, carrying out the decisions, and helping the Commissioners to supervise and control the carrying out of the decisions. Those agencies which help to make and to control the execution of the Commissioners' decisions may be described as managerial. In this group would fall those agencies of the government which are

---

32. Interview, Commissioner W. H. Nicol, March 25, 1950.

concerned with financial management, personnel, planning, reports and public relations, and legal affairs.

#### Financial Management

Within the purview of Associate Commissioner No. Two are matters of finance, taxation, accounts, and budgeting. Financial control is the sine qua non of control of governmental activities; it is in terms of the amount of money available and the proportions of its allocation that most governmental decisions are made.

The Office of the City Clerk is the administrative agency which, under the supervision of the City Commission generally and Associate Commissioner No. Two specifically, controls municipal finances. The control is exercised through the functions of budgeting, purchasing, accounting, and auditing.<sup>33</sup> The Office is organized as follows:

- 1 City Clerk
- 1 Secretary
- 1 Stenographer-clerk
- 1 Accountant
  - (Usually 2 part-time University students as assistant accountants.)
- 1 Auditor (comptroller)
- 1 Collector
- 1 License Inspector

---

33. Collection of funds, also a function of financial control, will be considered in Chapter IV.

A budget, the primary instrument of financial administration, is a comprehensive plan of future governmental activities stated in terms of dollars and cents.<sup>34</sup> It organizes into manageable form the anticipated income of the government and allocates funds in advance to meet the needs of the community, as these needs are foreseen by the Commissioners. Spending, i.e., governmental activities, is then carried out in accordance with the plan. A system of accounting, by which a record of revenues and expenditures is kept so that officials may have at all times an accurate knowledge of the city's financial condition, goes hand in hand with sound budget control. In Tuscaloosa budget control and accounting have been integrated and made the responsibility of the City Clerk.

The annual budget is made up as soon as the detailed pre-final audit report is available, usually a month or so before the end of the fiscal year. The department heads, in collaboration with the Commissioners supervising their departments, make up detailed estimates of the amount of money which they will need in the coming year. All departmental estimates are then turned over to the City Clerk, who is the budget officer. He, the accountant and

---

<sup>34</sup>. Albert Lepawsky, Administration, p. 460.

the auditor check the estimates against their own estimate of the revenue which will be forthcoming. They also attempt to balance the requests of the various departments so that none will receive a share of the future appropriations which is disproportionate in terms of their past and present needs.

Usually the departmental estimates have to be trimmed. The department heads are called in for conferences in the attempt to reach agreement on reduced requests. A department, for example, may be asked where it can cut \$5,000 from its estimate.

The City Clerk then makes up a budget for the City which he recommends to the City Commission. If department heads have not been able to agree with the City Clerk on his recommendations, they appear before the City Commission to argue their cases. Before this time, however, they have already conferred with the individual Commissioners to whom they are responsible. The meeting then becomes a matter of working out an agreement among the three Commissioners, after which the budget is adopted by resolution.

After adoption of the budget, however, there remains the problem of its execution. If no control were exercised at this stage, the budget would be meaningless. Control begins with the appropriations of money made in

accordance with the budget. The Tuscaloosa City Commission follows the practice of adopting an itemized appropriation ordinance, which makes available specific amounts of money for specific purposes.<sup>35</sup> No work program or allotment system is used; rather the department heads spend as needs arise. However, if they use a disproportionate amount of their appropriation in the early part of the fiscal year, they are called upon to explain. There is a check at this point, however, in that the appropriate Commissioner must countersign each expenditure order of the department heads responsible to him. Also, a monthly report prepared by the accountant in the City Clerk's Office goes to the Commissioners and department heads. This report summarizes receipts and expenditures of the previous month.<sup>36</sup>

---

35. Students of municipal government usually recommend that lump sum appropriations be made to the various spending agencies. This allows flexibility in using the money, and the finance officer can exercise control through his finance department and the current audit, while the post-audit serves as the council's or commission's check. See, for example, Charles M. Kneier, City Government in the United States, pp. 666-67.

36. Hitherto a problem has existed in that these monthly reports were seldom complete until the middle of the month following the receipts and disbursements covered. An accounting machine is now being installed in the City Clerk's Office, by which it is hoped that a more up-to-date check can be kept on the accounts.

The next check in budget control is effected by the continuous audit. The Office of the City Clerk employs an auditor on a part-time basis to perform this function. At present the City is fortunate enough to have the head of the Accounting Department of the College of Commerce and Business Administration of the University as its auditor. All orders for expenditures pass under his surveillance; if he finds that the expenditure has been authorized and that funds are available, he issues a warrant for payment. Although some authorities consider that the auditor (or comptroller, as this officer is sometimes called) should also satisfy himself as to the quantity and quality of the goods or services for which the city is paying,<sup>37</sup> Tuscaloosa officials consider that adequate control on these points is obtained through central purchasing and the practice of holding responsible the employees who actually receive shipments of goods or supervise work.

The accountant, as mentioned before, records all receipts and disbursements in the appropriate fund. The accrual rather than the cash system is used for expenditures, whereby expenditures are charged against appropriations when invoices are received. Officials are then

---

37. Kneier, op. cit., p. 668.

able to know what obligations have been incurred and what unencumbered balance they have to operate on. On the other hand the cash system is used for revenues, since the officials need to know not only what revenues are due, but how much have actually been received. Accounting is performed under the supervision of the City Clerk.<sup>38</sup>

Tuscaloosa's government takes advantage of the benefits of a centralized purchasing system. The City Clerk is designated as the Purchasing Officer, and all purchases of materials must pass through his hands. The City is thus able to assure standard specifications for its purchases, and the discounts made available for consolidated bulk orders reduce costs. The government follows the practice of placing its orders with local dealers unless the latter are unable to supply needed materials. Incidentally, the City Clerk feels that this provides an added check on expenditures in that the quality of goods received is known on the basis of experience. Thus it

---

38. It is worth noting that Tuscaloosa's accounting system, set up in its present form in 1931, with the assistance of University staff members, has attracted wide notice for its efficiency and modernity. The City Clerk stated that municipal officials have often visited Tuscaloosa, some of them from a considerable distance, to inspect the system. Tuscaloosa's generally efficient financial management is possibly a reflection of the dominance of the business class, which values "business-like" methods highly.

becomes unnecessary for the auditor to check the quality of goods received before issuing a warrant for payment. All City contracts involving more than five or six hundred dollars are let on the basis of formal competitive bidding, while for smaller purchases the City Clerk merely contacts dealers informally (usually by telephone), "shopping around" until he finds a suitable price for the desired quality of materials. An effort is made to spread purchases among the various local dealers when this is possible without unduly increasing costs. This policy retains the good will of dealers and avoids the grounds of criticism of "favoritism" which would arise if one or two dealers received all of the City's business.

Midway through the fiscal year the state of the City's finances is examined in the light of the budget by the City Commission. If unavoidable expenses have indicated that the previous appropriations will be insufficient, or if revenues have not met expectations, the budget is revised and new appropriations are made.

The final fiscal check is the post-audit, performed once a year by an independent local auditor engaged for the purpose.<sup>39</sup> An examination of accounts for the

---

39. This audit is not to be confused with the continuous, or pre-audit discussed previously. The City employs a different auditor each year for the post-audit. This auditor has no other connection with the City government.

preceding year is made and a comprehensive report is prepared. This report, which is published by the City, includes a detailed statement of the status of all funds, including a record of the receipts and disbursements of each. The City's debt is analyzed, and the auditor makes recommendations as he sees fit for improving the City's fiscal management. This auditor's report is used as the basis for planning the next year's budget.

#### Personnel Management

The success of a city government in performing the functions entrusted to it depends in large part upon its system of personnel administration. This involves the selection and retention of qualified persons. Promotion on the basis of merit, retirement of those unable as a result of advanced age to continue to perform their duties, a satisfactory salary schedule including equal pay for like work in all departments, the avoidance, or at least the peaceable settlement of labor disputes, are among the factors to be considered in working out a personnel program for cities.<sup>40</sup>

After the demise of the aforementioned machine in Tuscaloosa's municipal government, a Civil Service system

---

40. Kneier, op. cit., p. 587.

was instituted<sup>41</sup> which had as its main object the removal of policemen and firemen from political obligation and the "spoils system." Later a retirement pension system was established for policemen and firemen. Finally, in 1947, the State Legislature with a Local Act remodelled the system and extended it to include all City employees except the Commissioners, the City Recorder, the City Prosecutor, all employees of the City Board of Education, the hospital operated jointly by the City and the County, and the City Board of Recreation.<sup>42</sup>

If personnel management is considered to be an arm of administration, Tuscaloosa's Civil Service system cannot properly be considered a managerial function. The three-member board which administers the system is appointed by the Governor of Alabama "by and with the advice and consent of the Senate,"<sup>43</sup> and is thus independent of the municipal government. Because the Civil Service Board acts in conjunction with the municipal government,

---

41. Alabama Code, 1940, Tit. 62, Secs. 392-414.

42. Local Acts, 1947, No. 249, Sec. 2. Since the Act includes only employees who receive a regular monthly salary, day laborers employed by the City are excluded by implication.

43. Ibid., Sec. 4.

however, and because it performs functions which are in many cities within the jurisdiction of municipal government, it will be considered here.

Members of the Civil Service Board serve six-year staggered terms. They meet once a month and receive salaries (set by the statute) of \$200.00 a year, paid by the City. The City Clerk is custodian of all records of the Board and provides clerical assistance to the Board. The Board elects its own chairman; the present chairman is a Tuscaloosa furniture merchant.

The Board is directed by law to establish job classifications, prescribe qualifications for each class, fix minimum and maximum salaries for each class (subject to the City Commission's approval), make rules for dismissals, suspensions, layoffs, etc., hold examinations, establish registers, make promotions, hear and decide appeals of discharged employees, try employees against whom charges have been filed by a superior official or by a citizen of Tuscaloosa, take disciplinary action - in short, to operate a merit system from hiring to firing.<sup>44</sup>

Actually, however, the work of the Civil Service Board has been light, and the City has a merit system

---

44. Ibid., Secs. 1-22.

only in a negative sense - that is, removals are not made on a political basis. In the first place, the number of employees covered by the Act is only about 120, of whom about 65 per cent are in the Fire and Police Departments. Police and firemen receive the same salaries, but the classification which has been made of other municipal positions is nominal only, and not based on a technical study. The Board's work has consisted of handling applications and certifying people for employment; there have been only about 30 positions to be filled since 1947. Examinations are limited to physical examinations and questionnaires to be filled out by applicants. The occasion for a trial has not arisen. Promotion examinations are not given; promotions are instead made on the basis of seniority and general performance, and here the approval of the Board is perfunctory.

One reason for this situation is, of course, that the municipal government is small. A related reason is that the rate of turnover in personnel is very low. Most vacancies filled have been the result of expansion, primarily in the Fire and Police Departments. A large percentage of the City's employees look upon their work as a life-time career.<sup>45</sup>

---

45. The City Clerk and most of the department heads, as well as a number of other employees, have been with the City for long periods of time, ranging from 20 to 35 years.

This tradition of long tenure is probably responsible for the attitude of many employees that the Civil Service System is primarily a means of securing workers in their jobs in order that they will be assured of the benefits of retirement and pension.<sup>46</sup> In other words, they look upon the Board as a watchdog to enforce the provision of the Civil Service Act which prohibits hiring, promoting, firing, favoritism or discrimination because of an employee's political or religious opinions or affiliations.<sup>47</sup>

The Board established sick leave of ten days and an annual two-weeks vacation with pay. No organized programs of recreation for employees or other morale programs have been instituted, presumably because the small number of employees might seem to preclude the need for such measures.

One other personnel function of the municipal government, in-service training, is not handled by the Civil

---

46. Pensions are provided by both State and municipal contributions. Since the program is relatively new only two former municipal employees are now drawing pension payments.

47. Local Acts, loc. cit., Sec. 15. It might be added that the system has had no real test as yet, since there has been no change in control of the Commission since 1937.

Service Board, but by the departments which conduct such training. These are primarily the Fire and Police Departments, in cooperation with the University of Alabama. Each summer the University sponsors a one-week course to which fire departments from various cities in the state send personnel. A similar course for police is conducted.<sup>48</sup> In addition Police Department personnel are given courses approximately once a year by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and occasionally an officer is sent to Washington for a technical course lasting several months.

### Planning

Beyond the planning of its annual operations which a government unit must do, a community must make long-range plans for its overall social and economic development. This is particularly necessary for a community which is growing and expanding. If growth is not to result in overcrowded districts, chronically jammed traffic at vital intersections, dangerous or unhealthy buildings, blighted

---

48. The relationship with the University is reciprocal in that the Engineering Department accepts four civil engineering students on a part-time basis for training purposes. Two accounting students are employed part-time as a portion of their training. Also, the University receives extra fire protection from the City.

areas, and other evils of urbanization, then the community must plan to avoid them. Indeed, there are few communities which do not need planning to alleviate undesirable conditions already in existence.

Tuscaloosa's early citizens were foresighted enough to lay out extra-wide streets (two chains, or 60 feet in width) in a gridiron pattern.<sup>49</sup> Later expansion, beginning at the end of the nineteenth century, occurred according to no preconceived pattern, but followed the dictates of expediency and speculation. The city grew chiefly eastward, and although a few thoroughfares in that direction are fairly wide, many streets (both north-south and east-west) are of inadequate width. The latter, plus a number of dead-end and offset streets, have brought about a certain degree of confusion in residential districts. Only in the past two years has this condition been somewhat ameliorated by the installation of street markers.

Business establishments, such as groceries, drug stores, and gasoline stations, are located haphazardly throughout residential districts. The riverfront has not

---

49. See map, Appendix A. These streets covered an area bounded on the West, South, and East by 36th Avenue, 15th Street, and Queen City Avenue.

been developed, and sewers emptying into the river have created a serious pollution problem. Small industrial establishments were located with reference to the railroads, which were themselves so routed that two small depots are required (three, in the case of freight) rather than a single larger one. Railroad street-crossings often block traffic and in some instances constitute safety hazards. In sum, scientific city planning should have been begun many years ago.

The planning movement was slow to gain impetus in the South, however, and it was not until 1935 that the State Legislature undertook to encourage municipal planning by granting authority for the creation of municipal planning commissions.<sup>50</sup> Still it was only in January, 1945, that the Tuscaloosa City Commission instituted a planning board.<sup>51</sup>

The Planning Board is appointed by the City Commission. It consists of eight members, plus the City Clerk, who acts as Secretary-Treasurer. Of the eight, the Chairman of the City Commission and one other Commissioner are ex officio members. The City Commission appointed all

---

50. Alabama Code 1940, Title 37, Secs. 786-808.

51. Ordinances of the City of Tuscaloosa, Ordinance No. 937.

three of its members to the Planning Board, however. The Chairman of the Board is a real estate and insurance dealer, and three other members are businessmen. The eighth member is the Dean Emeritus of the University's College of Engineering. In addition to these eight, the President of the University was appointed to the Board, but does not take an active part.

The Planning Board serves without compensation. Regular meetings are scheduled for the last Thursday night in each month, but special meetings are not uncommon. There is sometimes difficulty in getting a quorum of five. The Board has only advisory powers, but the membership of the three Commissioners on the Board practically assures that recommendations will be adopted,<sup>52</sup> unless unforeseen interest group opposition prevents it. The Board employs no clerical or technical assistance at the present, although it is anticipated that a technician will be employed in the future.

In general, the State Law and the Municipal Ordinance direct the Planning Board to recommend to the City Commission a major street plan, subdivision regulations, and a zoning plan, along with such other plans as may

---

52. With the possible exception of the zoning plan, of course. See below, pp. 122-123.

seem appropriate. The major street plan, including maps, diagrams, and descriptive matter, should show the location and nature of streets and parks, grounds and open spaces, public buildings, properties, and utilities (whether public or private) which affect the general physical development of the community. Control over subdivisions includes those within five miles of the City limits. The zoning plan should divide the City into districts on the basis of land use, and should include regulations controlling the height and area, bulk, location, and use of buildings and premises, and the density of population.

Because city planning is a highly technical matter involving the collection and analysis of a wide variety of social, economic, and engineering facts, the State government maintains a State Planning Board which, among other functions, provides technical assistance to cities. The Tuscaloosa Planning Board has had contracts with the State Board by which traffic counts, surveys of the City, a land use map, and a proposed zoning map were obtained. Sharing expenses with the State government, these services cost the City \$400.00 a quarter. At the present time the City has no contract with the State Planning Board, since the technical work on a major street plan, subdivision

regulations, and zoning regulations was completed some time ago.

The City Commission adopted two elements of a plan, the major street plan and the subdivision regulations, in 1948. A zoning plan was prepared, but by a rather surprising lack of foresight, hearings on its adoption were held at about the same time that a large annexation to Tuscaloosa (Alberta City) was made by election. The Planning Board obviously had not anticipated this development, for an additional year was required to revise the zoning plan to include the new area. Another factor delayed even further the completion of the plan. Municipal elections were held in the Fall of 1949, and the Planning Board felt that zoning would become a political issue. This would have endangered the plan, so work on it was allowed to stop until after the elections.<sup>53</sup>

At the present time, copies of the zoning ordinance and maps are being prepared for publication and a public hearing. The hearing should take place in the near future. Although the major street plan and the subdivision regulations aroused no opposition, the Planning Board anticipates objections to the proposed zoning plan.<sup>54</sup>

---

53. Interview, Mr. H. A. Edwards, Chairman, Tuscaloosa Planning Board, July 31, 1950.

54. Ibid. Several groups and individuals protested the first zoning plan at the hearing before the annexation mentioned.

It is zoning which most directly involves the use of property, and property owners usually find reasons to object to zoning ordinances. This may be expected to be particularly the case with Tuscaloosa, due to the power in the community of property owners in general. However, it is possible that some of the opposition may have been avoided in advance by the two real estate dealers who are members of the Planning Board (one of the City Commissioners and the Chairman of the Board). Zoning plans can, of course, differ greatly in the degree to which they actually control property use, and, also, in the efficacy with which they attain their ends.

Once the City has adopted plans, they acquire legal status. Provision is made, however, for exceptions to the enforcement of the plan to be made in extraordinary cases. The City Commission will appoint a Board of Appeals composed of property owners and including one member of the Planning Board to hear appeals for exceptions to be made when a property owner feels that enforcement would be unjust. To be of any value, however, a plan must be executed without (or with very few) special exceptions. The effective execution of the plan will depend largely upon whether the Planning Board is able to promote enough public understanding of the purpose of planning to keep

such appeals to a minimum, and whether the Board itself will be willing to exercise the authority granted to them in this vital phase of community development.

#### Reports and Public Relations

Some governmental decisions may be made by "hunch," but a large part of them must be made on the basis of carefully gathered and analyzed facts.<sup>55</sup> To make facts available in manageable form to administrators and policy-makers, resort must be had to administrative reports within the governmental hierarchy. In order to promote public understanding of governmental decisions and operations as well as to effectuate public control, administrators have developed a related technique, public relations.

Monthly accounting reports have already been mentioned as one of the techniques of fiscal control used in the management of Tuscaloosa's public affairs. Another type of report is exemplified by the Planning Board's recommendations to the City Commission, also mentioned above. Other specially appointed fact-gathering and evaluating

---

55. John J. Corson, "The Use of Statistics in Management," in Lepawsky, op. cit., pp. 542-544.

agencies make reports to the City Commission which the latter uses to make decisions about particular problems, as for example the report of the ad hoc Citizens Committee for Schools which recommended long range plans for school revenues in 1950.<sup>56</sup>

Still another type of administrative report used in Tuscaloosa's government is the report on monthly operations made up by the various departments. The Police Department, for example, reports the number of traffic accidents, crimes, arrests, prisoners cared for, etc. The Fire Department includes in its report the number of fires, alarms answered, and estimates of fire damage. These and similar reports by other departments allow the Commissioners to form some estimate of how much is being done to meet the problems for which government is established. They provide more or less usable unit measurements of the degree to which decisions are being executed, and serve as rather rough estimates of the efficiency of governmental operations.

It is at this point that difficulty in reporting and evaluating becomes greatest. The difficulty has been lucidly stated by Stephen Story:<sup>57</sup>

---

56. Tuscaloosa News, April 18, 1950, p. 1.

57. Stephen Story, "The Place of the Budget in Fiscal Planning and as a Tool of Administrative Management," in Lepawsky, op. cit., p. 465.

...There are a whole series of operations of government which relate to people and not to things and most of what we do to and for people is not measurable. Who can measure the value of a life saved by vaccination or by the sterilization of a milk bottle? What yardstick can you apply to the arrest of a hit and run driver? By what standard of measurement can we gauge the incarceration of an insane person? Of course, we can measure vaccinations by numbers, or arrests by numbers, or numbers of persons maintained in an institution and fix the cost of a day's care, but these are not measures of true value as human relations can't be scaled or figured on a dollar and cents basis. So as a measure of true efficiency a work program has its defects.

Accurate efficiency reports must await further advances in governmental research and in social science research. It is perhaps not visionary to look forward to the day when the interrelations of societal factors can be understood and measured much more accurately than is the case now. Until that day administrators will have to rely upon the less accurate measuring techniques mentioned above.<sup>58</sup>

The other aspect of reporting, reporting to the public, is becoming of increasing importance to the

---

58. One technique not mentioned above for assessing overall efficiency is the comparative one, by which a city's operations are compared to those of similar cities. Some use will be made of this technique in Chapter IV.

maintenance of popular control over government. The mounting complexity of municipal government requires that serious attention be given by government officials to the problem of public relations. Information about their government must not only be made available to citizens; it must be actively and interestingly disseminated if it is to compete with the skillful bids for public attention of dozens of other high-powered special pleaders.

Tuscaloosa officials implicitly recognize this need when they complain of public indifference to municipal affairs. Remarks like "If they (citizens) would only take the trouble to inform themselves about what we're trying to do, our work would be so much easier" or "the man in the street doesn't have any idea what this business is all about" are heard from the City Commissioners on down. However, it is probably as much a case of the government's being outbid in the public attention market as it is of Tuscaloosa's being a community which "lacks civic interest."

The City's public relations efforts consist of quarterly financial reports which are published in the local press, annual publication of the auditor's report, and unofficial talks before civic and study clubs by Commissioners (chiefly the Commissioner of Public Safety,

Mr. J. F. Livingston).<sup>59</sup> In addition, the Tuscaloosa News gives fairly complete and sympathetic coverage to many governmental activities. The quarterly financial report includes quarterly revenues and appropriations of each fund, but no explanatory text. The City Clerk opined that "few, if any, citizens take the time and trouble to study the reports and figure out what's going on." The auditor's report, which includes very little explanatory material, is made available at the City Office, and no attempt is made to give it wide circulation. Talks before local groups by City officials occur at the initiative of the groups who desire the information, but this is not to imply that the officials at all levels do not respond cordially to requests for information. Such talks reach only the upper and middle classes, from which came the members of such groups.

It is evident that public relations need more attention from City officials. Although it can be pointed out that this is an almost universal need of American city

---

59. Occasionally the Commission holds a special meeting in one of the community's neighborhoods in an attempt to "bring government to the people." This might be developed further as an effective public relations technique.

Governments, it is nevertheless a vital need. Reporting to the public should be recognized as an important municipal function, and conducted for the purpose of selling City government to the citizens, not to sell the incumbent administration to the voters.

#### Legal Administration

The City Clerk remarked that there were two things to be considered in each decision of the government: "whether or not it needs to be done, and what the law says on the subject." Thus the final managerial function to be considered is legal administration. The City Commission employs for this function a full-time City Attorney.

The work of this official consists of drafting ordinances upon the direction of the Commission, advising the Commission as to "what the law says on the subject," making rulings concerning the power of the municipal government when such a question arises, preparing the City's cases in law suits and handling them in court, and handling any other legal affairs of the City. He usually attends meetings of the Commission so as to be available for counselling or to receive instructions.

The present City Attorney has been with the City for a long period; he was in fact one of the original

Commissioners when this form of government was adopted in 1911. In his office at the City Hall he has the assistance of a stenographer and a file clerk, whose work is divided between him and the Engineering Department.

## CHAPTER IV

### REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES: WHAT DECISIONS ARE MADE

Thus far attention has been directed to the machinery and process of decision making in Tuscaloosa. In this chapter the substance of some of these decisions will be considered. Since, as was pointed out in the preceding chapter, the most important decisions are weighed and made in terms of the amount of money they will involve, an analysis of revenues and expenditures should reveal what these decisions are about. It should also provide a measuring rod for finding the relative importance to the community of the various types of activities undertaken by the municipal government.

#### Municipal Revenues: Where the Money Comes From

During fiscal year 1949, the City of Tuscaloosa expended close to one and one-half million dollars. Where did the government get the money? Before considering the relative productivity of the various sources, it is necessary to present a summary of the elements of the local revenue.

### General Property Tax

Since the state requires that assessments of both county and municipal ad valorem taxes must be equal, the City of Tuscaloosa takes advantage of the state law which permits the county to assess and collect municipal property taxes and turn over to the city the amounts due it.<sup>1</sup> To collect this tax, property owners are required to appear before the county tax assessor annually and declare the monetary value of all real and personal property which they own. The tax assessor evaluates the property on the basis of the owner's declaration. The law requires that he then authorize a tax on 60 per cent of the value of the property at the rate of \$3.10 per \$100.00.<sup>2</sup> Of this \$3.10 the City of Tuscaloosa receives \$1.00, the county school system receives \$1.00, the state government receives \$.35, and the county government receives \$.75.<sup>3</sup>

The county board of equalization has the power to fix the final assessment on particular pieces of property.

---

1. Alabama Code 1940, Tit. 37, Sec. 698.

2. Ibid., Tit. 51, Sec. 17.

3. The Constitution of Alabama sets 10 mills as the maximum rate for the City of Tuscaloosa. (Amendment 13)

This board consists of three members selected each four years by the Governor and the state's Commissioner of Revenue, from a panel of nominees chosen by the county Board of Revenue (the governing body of the county), the county board of education, and the municipalities of the county. Periodically the board of equalization reviews and revises the assessments on property; the City appropriates money to help meet the board's expenses in carrying out this function.

#### Sales and Excise Taxes

Among the most important sources of revenue in Tuscaloosa are the sales and excise taxes. The city levies a tax of two cents on each package of cigarettes sold in the corporate limits, and a tax of one cent on each package sold within the police jurisdiction of the city but outside of the corporate limits. Another tax in this category is the amusement tax which is levied on all amusements which charge an admission fee, with the exception of non-profit charity amusements.<sup>4</sup> This tax amounts to five per cent of the admission price within the corporate limits,

---

4. The only other exception to this tax is athletic events sponsored by the University and held on University property.

and two and one-half per cent within the police jurisdiction but outside of the corporate limits. These revenues are collected by merchants or operators of amusements and paid to the City each month or whenever collected by non-permanent amusements.

An additional sales tax of one per cent on all transactions is levied jointly by the City and the County. Revenues from this tax are earmarked for a hospital building fund. With federal aid, construction has begun on a large new hospital. Since the needed amount has already been collected for the hospital, plans have been made to continue this tax within the City only after its previously calculated expiration date in 1951. Revenues from this proposed extension of the sales tax would be earmarked for education.

The final local tax consists of a levy of one cent on each gallon of gasoline sold in the City.<sup>5</sup> The tax is levied on all distributors and sellers, but it need be

---

5. In the Auditor's Report this tax is listed as a receipt from the County government, since the County levies a one cent tax on each gallon of gasoline sold in the county but outside of the City limits. The City's receipts from this joint levy are essentially a municipal tax, and are therefore included here rather than under the heading of Revenues from other Governments. The County collects the tax and pays to the City its share.

paid but once. Gasoline pumps are metered and each seller must pay the tax monthly to the City, or file statements proving that the tax was previously paid by the distributor from whom he purchased the gasoline.<sup>6</sup>

#### Licenses and Permits

Alabama law permits cities to employ the privilege license as a source of revenue in addition to its usual function of regulation. Tuscaloosa gets an important portion of its municipal revenues (larger than from property taxes in 1949) from this source. Those of whom licenses are required must procure them annually from the City Clerk.

Most retail merchants and manufacturers are included in general categories for licensing based on the gross receipts of the firm. A maximum tax of \$1,000 is placed on general merchandising, but there is no maximum for manufacturers, who are charged on a graduated basis with a

---

6. As of 1948, 180 cities and towns and nine counties in Alabama levied a local tax on gasoline. This is in addition to a tax of six cents levied by the State and the federal tax of one and one-half cents. Only 88 cities and towns in five other states, and three counties outside of Alabama, levy a local tax on gasoline. Tuscaloosa News, July 21, 1948, p. 4.

minimum of \$100.<sup>7</sup> In addition, numerous specified types of business are put in categories for licensing which excludes them from the general categories described above. The fees range from \$2.00 each for penny vending machines up to \$750.00 maximum for moving picture operators.<sup>8</sup>

Many Tuscaloosa licenses are levied at a flat rate, such as "Pet Shops, Each, \$15.00." Others, as noted above, are charged on the basis of the amount of business done, while still others are charged on the basis of the number of employees (e.g., cleaning and pressing shops) or on the amount of equipment used (bakeries are charged according to the number of trucks used).<sup>9</sup>

The City uses its licensing power as a regulatory instrument to keep undesirable businesses out of the community. For example, a rate of \$100.00 each was imposed on pinball machines operated in the City in 1950.<sup>10</sup> This measure seems to have been ineffective, however, as the

---

7. Ordinances of the City of Tuscaloosa, Ordinance No. 1,112.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid. See also Tuscaloosa News, January 13, 1950, editorial on p. 4.

number of such devices in cafes and restaurants has not noticeably diminished.

Another revenue source in this category (although relatively minor) consists of the small charges made for construction permits, which all builders must obtain from the City Clerk. The primary purpose of such permits is regulatory.

#### Water Works Receipts

The largest single source of receipts is from water sales by the municipally owned water works. This utility is operated as a business separate from other governmental operations, although it is supervised by one of the Commissioners and the City Clerk's office manages its finances. Also, water works profits are sometimes (although not in 1949) transferred to the General Fund to help defray the cost of the general operations of the City.

Water users are metered and charged on a graduated rate basis whereby the cost per thousand gallons decreases as the amount increases. Special lower rates are charged the large industrial users. Users are billed monthly and the money must be paid at the City Clerk's office by mail or in person.

### Fines, Forfeitures, and Penalties

Law enforcement by the City Recorder or Judge provides a substantial revenue source. This revenue consists of the fines collected in the municipal court for violations of traffic and other municipal ordinances.

### Parking Meter Receipts

In 1948, Tuscaloosa installed parking meters in the main business district. To park during the daytime on a metered street, motorists must deposit coins in the meters at the rate of one cent for each twelve minutes. A City employee collects the money from the meters once a week. Most of the money so collected is earmarked to pay for the meters, but some of it is already being used for general governmental purposes.

### Special Assessments

Special assessments consist of the levies made on the owners of adjoining property when the City makes improvements such as paving, sidewalks, sewers, etc. In 1938 an extension plan for payments was adopted, whereby property owners were accorded the privilege of paying assessments and delinquent interest outstanding as of July 1, 1938 at the rate of 1/15 each year. Current

collections from this source therefore do not reflect improvements made in the preceding year. When such special improvements are made, the City issues bonds to pay for them; assessment collections from property owners are then used to retire the bonds.

#### Charges for Local Services

The largest receipts from this source come from sanitary disposal fees collected from the several hundred homes in the City not served by sewers. The City Health and Sanitary Department collects 65 cent a month from such homes, which are served by the "box and can" method of disposal. Filled cans are replaced with empties once every two weeks. Another service for which charges are made is the inspection of meat sold at the local curb market and at small slaughtering places. This, plus sanitary sewer fees, account for the remainder of the relatively small revenues from this source.

#### Revenues from Use of Property

Another relatively unimportant source of revenues consists of rents. Practically all rentals come from the City Hall building, which in addition to the municipal offices also houses a moving picture theater, a radio station, a drug store, and other offices.

### Miscellaneous

This classification is included to cover the negligible proportion of the City's revenues received from sales of property and other sundry sources.

### Revenues from Other Governments

All the preceding revenues are collected locally by the municipal government (or, as the property tax, for the municipal government by special arrangement). They comprised 90 per cent of municipal receipts in 1949, excluding borrowing. The other ten per cent came from Tuscaloosa's share of State and County revenues.

Alabama municipalities share in the State-collected Financial Institutions Tax, State Gasoline Tax, and State liquor profits. Tuscaloosa receives an amount equal to one-half of the six per cent levy on banks within the City after the expenses of administering the tax are deducted.<sup>11</sup> The City receives a nominal amount of the State tax of six cents on each gallon of gasoline; the City's share is based on the ratio of Tuscaloosa's population to the population of all cities and towns in the State.<sup>12</sup>

---

11. Alabama Code 1940, Tit. 51, Sec. 429.

12. Ibid., Sec. 657.

The amount received must be used for streets or highways. The City shares in the profits of the Alabama Beverage Control system to an extent calculated on the basis of population.<sup>13</sup> This is the source of the largest single State-collected and locally-shared revenue, and, since there is no State liquor sold in Tuscaloosa County, it is the only revenue received by the City which is not in part collected in the City.

From the County the City receives a share of the automobile license fees which the former collects for the State. After the costs of collection are deducted, 30 per cent of the remaining receipts collected from the citizens of Tuscaloosa is apportioned to the City.<sup>14</sup> The City also receives one-half of the County levy of one-sixth of one per cent for road and bridge purposes on property located within the City limits.

#### Distribution of Revenues

The table on the following page shows a breakdown of the above summarized elements of municipal revenue, with the amounts and percentages of the total received

---

13. Ibid., Tit. 29, Sec. 11.

14. Ibid., Tit. 51, Sec. 713.

Table IX

Revenue Sources, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, Fiscal Year Ended  
September, 1949<sup>a</sup>

| Source  | Amount         | Percent<br>of Total |
|---|----------------|---------------------|
| <b>Taxes</b>                                  |                |                     |
| General Property Tax                          | \$173,480.49   | 12.6                |
| Sales and Excise Taxes <sup>b</sup>           | 217,282.74     | 15.7                |
| Licenses and Permits                          | 185,494.64     | 13.5                |
| Total percent                                 |                | 41.8                |
| <b>Other Local Revenues</b>                   |                |                     |
| Water Sales                                   | 359,587.31     | 26.1                |
| Fines, Forfeitures, and<br>Penalties          | 93,748.55      | 6.8                 |
| Parking Meter Receipts                        | 62,148.63      | 4.5                 |
| Special Assessments <sup>c</sup>              | 56,440.37      | 4.1                 |
| Interest and Investments<br>Sold <sup>d</sup> | 49,435.62      | 3.6                 |
| Charges for Local Services                    | 18,642.84      | 1.4                 |
| Revenues from Use of Prop.                    | 16,137.00      | 1.2                 |
| Miscellaneous                                 | 6,687.51       | .5                  |
| Total percent                                 |                | 48.2                |
| <b>Non-Local Revenues</b>                     |                |                     |
| Revenues from State <sup>e</sup>              | 94,048.65      | 6.8                 |
| Revenues from County <sup>f</sup>             | 43,413.84      | 3.2                 |
| Total percent                                 |                | 10.0                |
| Total Revenues and Receipts                   | \$1,376,548.19 | 100.0               |

<sup>a</sup>Report on Examination of Accounts, City of Tuscaloosa,  
September 30, 1949.

<sup>b</sup>Includes \$101,087.81 from local Gasoline Tax.

<sup>c</sup>Includes receipts of Capital General Fund.

<sup>d</sup>Sinking Funds receipts.

<sup>e</sup>Includes \$654.76 from Aviation Gas Tax.

<sup>f</sup>Excludes \$101,087.81 from local Gasoline Tax.

from each in 1949.<sup>15</sup> From this table a few generalizations can be made about who pays for Tuscaloosa's government. First, it is obvious that everyone pays to some extent. Water users account for the largest single item: 26.1 per cent. However, this group pays for little besides water service. Almost all water works receipts are required for the operation of that agency; in 1949 none of the profits were used for general governmental operations. Waterworks profits are sometimes diverted for such purposes, however.

The next largest source of revenues is sales and excise taxes, which exceeds even property taxes. This fact is significant in the light of the conclusions which were drawn in Chapter II concerning the power of property owners in Tuscaloosa. Both of these taxes are technically proportional in form; that is, the rate of the tax remains in proportion to the amount of property owned or the amount of taxed goods purchased (the base). But although proportional in form they are regressive in effect: the rate decreases as the base increases. This results

---

15. This and the following tables in this chapter show the combined receipts and expenditures of all funds maintained by the government of Tuscaloosa. Interfund transfers have been eliminated in the construction of all tables.

from two conditions. First, the property tax is inefficiently enforced while the sales and excise taxes are strictly enforced.<sup>16</sup> These characteristics are perhaps inherent in both taxes. Second, the sales tax is regressive because the poorer taxpayers pay out a larger proportion of their total incomes for commodities so taxed. They are therefore taxed to a larger proportion of their incomes than are the more well-to-do taxpayers. If the principle of taxation according to ability to pay is accepted as the most just principle of taxation, then that principle cannot be said to have guided the construction of Tuscaloosa's revenue system.

In the absence of a detailed analysis of the license schedule currently enforced in Tuscaloosa, it may be said on the basis of the scaled licenses summarized above that the system of licenses and permits is roughly proportional, although the use of legal maximums on some of them (particularly in the case of general merchandising) prevents them from being truly proportional.<sup>17</sup>

---

16. See below, pp. 150-154. Several Tuscaloosans interviewed estimated that the average assessment is somewhere between 25 and 35 per cent of true value, instead of 60 per cent.

17. The imposition of a maximum limit on merchant's licenses while no maximum is set for manufacturers might be suggested as a datum testifying to the relative power of these two groups in Tuscaloosa.

With regard to fines, forfeitures, and penalties, it seems plausible to assume that they are in effect regressive sources of revenue. Although there is no imputation here that they are an unjust source of revenue, there would probably be no objection to the proposition that they fall most frequently on individuals of the lower-middle and the lower classes.

The parking meter charges may also be characterized as regressive in effect since, although they do not touch everyone in the community, they are made on a flat rate. Special assessments, charges for local services, and revenues from the use of the City's property affect only special groups, while the revenue from interest on investments held and from the sale of investments does not necessarily affect local citizens. It may be concluded that the most obvious characteristic of the revenue structure of Tuscaloosa is its marked regressivity: the heaviest financial load falls upon those least able to bear it.

Table X is included to indicate the changes which have occurred in the sources of revenue since 1939. The overall increase in revenues was 115.3 per cent, but few sources increased in rough proportion. Special assessments showed the smallest ten-year increase, but this source is not one which is expected to be regular.

Table X

Comparison of Tuscaloosa's Revenue Sources, Fiscal Years Ended September 1949  
and 1939<sup>a</sup>

| Source                            | 1949<br>Amount | 1949<br>Percent | 1939<br>Amount | 1939<br>Percent | % Increase<br>in Decade |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Taxes</b>                      |                |                 |                |                 |                         |
| General Property Tax              | \$173,480.49   | 12.6            | \$119,957.19   | 18.8            | 44.6                    |
| Sales and Excise Taxes            | 217,282.74     | 15.7            | 42,981.70      | 6.7             | 405.5                   |
| Licenses and Permits              | 185,494.64     | 13.5            | 77,291.12      | 12.1            | 140.0                   |
| Total Percent                     | 41.8           |                 |                | 37.6            |                         |
| <b>Other Local Revenues</b>       |                |                 |                |                 |                         |
| Water Sales                       | 359,587.31     | 26.1            | 178,415.54     | 27.9            | 101.5                   |
| Fines, Forfeitures, etc.          | 93,748.55      | 6.8             | 26,616.83      | 4.2             | 252.2                   |
| Parking Meter Receipts            | 62,148.63      | 4.5             | —              | —               | —                       |
| Special Assessments <sup>b</sup>  | 56,440.37      | 4.1             | 41,367.67      | 6.4             | 36.7                    |
| Int. and Investments sold         | 49,435.62      | 3.6             | 103,360.29     | 16.2            | -108.7                  |
| Charges for Local Services        | 18,642.84      | 1.4             | 9,159.99       | 1.4             | 103.5                   |
| Revenues from Use of Prop.        | 16,137.00      | 1.2             | 10,447.80      | 1.6             | 54.5                    |
| Miscellaneous                     | 6,687.51       | .5              | 2,516.28       | .4              | 191.8                   |
| Total Percent                     | 48.2           |                 |                | 58.1            |                         |
| <b>Non-Local Revenues</b>         |                |                 |                |                 |                         |
| Revenues from State               | 94,048.65      | 6.8             | 7,119.83       | 1.1             | 1,211.7                 |
| Revenues from County <sup>c</sup> | 43,413.84      | 3.2             | 20,227.53      | 3.2             | 114.6                   |
| Total Percent                     | 10.0           |                 |                | 4.3             |                         |
| Total Revenues                    | \$1,376,548.19 | 100.0           | \$639,460.77   | 100.0           | 115.3                   |

<sup>a</sup>Reports on Examinations of Accounts, City of Tuscaloosa, 1949 and 1939.

<sup>b</sup>Includes Capital General Fund Collections.

<sup>c</sup>Excludes receipts from local Gasoline Tax.

Property taxes are again conspicuous - this time because they showed the least percentage increase, except for special assessments. On the other hand, this table indicates the efforts which have been made to tap new sources of revenue. The revenues from the State show the most spectacular increase although the change in their proportionate productivity is only 5.7 per cent. The increase is due primarily to the City's share of liquor profits. State liquor-selling had not begun in 1939.

The next-sharpest increase was in sales and excise taxes. The only such tax in 1939 was the gasoline tax; the others (sales, cigarette, and amusement) have been imposed since 1939. Parking meters also provided a new source of revenue.

The only source which was smaller in 1949 than in 1939 was interest and investments sold. Fluctuation in the amounts produced from this source are to be expected.

Tables XI and XII compare Tuscaloosa's revenue structure with comparable cities in Alabama and in the United States.<sup>18</sup> In general outlines, Tuscaloosa's sources

---

18. For purposes of comparison, only the profits from Tuscaloosa's water utility were included in these tables, rather than the total water works receipts as in the two preceding tables. This accounts for the difference in the percentages listed in the "Tuscaloosa" column.

Table XI

Comparison of Tuscaloosa's Revenue Sources (1949)<sup>a</sup> With  
Those of All U. S. Cities with Population of 25,000 to  
50,000 (1947)<sup>b</sup>

| Source   | Tuscaloosa | All U.S. Cities with<br>Pop. 25,000-50,000 |
|--|------------|--|
| <u>Taxes</u>   |            |  |
| General Property Tax   | 16.0       | 58.3                                       |
| Sales and Other Taxes  | 20.0       | 1.4  |
| Licenses, Permits, and<br>Other  | 17.1       | 5.8  |
| Total percent  | 53.1       | 65.5                                       |
| <u>Other Local Revenues</u>  |            |  |
| (Includes water profits<br>instead of total water<br>sales in Tuscaloosa<br>column.) | 34.3       | 15.5                                       |
| Total percent  | 34.3       | 15.5                                       |
| <u>Non-Local Revenues</u>  |            |  |
| Revenues from State  | 8.6        | 18.0                                       |
| Revenues from County   | 4.0        | 1.1  |
| Total percent  | 12.6       | 19.1                                       |
| Total Revenues   | 100.0      | 100.0                                      |

aReport on Examination of Accounts, City of Tuscaloosa,  
September 30, 1949.

bC. E. Ridley, and O. F. Nolting, (eds.) The Municipal  
Yearbook, 1949, Table 2, p. 208.

Table XII

Comparison of Tuscaloosa's Revenue Sources (1949)<sup>a</sup> with  
Those of All Alabama Cities with 1940 Population of 10,000  
to 30,000 (1944)<sup>b</sup>

| Source                                  | Tuscaloosa       | All Alabama<br>Cities of<br>10,000 to<br>30,000 pop. |
|---|------------------|--|
| <b>Taxes</b>                            |                  |  |
| General Property Tax                    | 16.0             | 22.2   |
| Sales and Other Taxes                   | 20.0             | 10.6   |
| Licenses and Permits                    | 17.1             | 19.4   |
| Total percent                           | 53.1             | 52.2   |
| <b>Other Local Revenues</b>             |                  |  |
| Profits from Utilities                  | 6.4              | 15.3   |
| Fines, Forfeitures, and<br>Penalties    | 8.6              | 10.3   |
| Special Assessments                     | 5.2              | 3.3  |
| Income from Investments<br>and Property | 6.1              | 1.3  |
| Fees, Charges, and<br>Other Licenses    | 1.7              | 2.7  |
| Other                                   | 6.3 <sup>c</sup> | 3.1  |
| Total percent                           | 34.3             | 36.0   |
| <b>Non-Local Revenues</b>               |                  |  |
| Revenues from State                     | 8.6              | 10.1   |
| Revenues from County                    | 4.0              | 1.7  |
| Total percent                           | 12.6             | 11.8   |
| <b>Total Revenues</b>                   | <b>100.0</b>     | <b>100.0</b>   |

<sup>a</sup>Report on Examination of Accounts, City of Tuscaloosa,  
September 30, 1949.

<sup>b</sup>Condensed from The Alabama Revenue System, Report of  
the Revenue Survey Committee, Table IX, p. 33.

<sup>c</sup>Includes Parking Meter Receipts.

resemble closely those of other Alabama cities in the same population category. Again, however, the differential between property taxes and sales and excise taxes makes Tuscaloosa unique. While other cities derive twice as much revenue from property as from sales and excise taxes, Tuscaloosa obtains four per cent more from the latter than from the former. The second table indicates the much greater difference between Tuscaloosa's revenue sources and those of other cities in the country at large in the same population bracket.

The unique regressivity of Tuscaloosa's revenue structure as compared to other Alabama cities and of Alabama cities as compared to comparable cities in the United States demands further comment.

First, the use of sales and excise taxes in Alabama is unusually large because property taxes yield so little - i.e., not being able to get sufficient revenues from property taxes, governments must work other sources harder. But the reason for such a low yield from property is more complex.

There is first the organization for assessment. The tax assessor is an elected official. It would scarcely be the sagest political course for him to break the long tradition for low assessment. Second, in few Alabama counties is the assessor provided with sufficient funds to

finance a modern assessment function.<sup>19</sup> The assessment procedure, whereby the taxpayer lists and estimates the value of his own property, and whereby the assessor is not required to inspect the property, or to obtain any particular descriptive material other than insurance coverage, is conducive to low assessment. The assessor is further limited by the provision that the previous year's assessment of real estate is *prima facie* the basis of value for the current year.<sup>20</sup>

Also, it should be pointed out that the Board of Equalization<sup>21</sup> has the definite responsibility to fix all assessed values, not merely to review and settle complaints of individual taxpayers. The Revenue Survey Committee noted that creation of these boards merely superimposed what is in effect a board of assessors without abolishing the single assessor. The Committee had the "definite impression that the creation of these boards has acted further to demoralize the tax assessor."<sup>22</sup>

---

19. The Alabama Revenue System, Report of the Revenue Survey Committee, p. 88.

20. Ibid.

21. See above, pp. 132-33.

22. Op. cit., p. 91.

The preceding comments account for the low property taxation in Alabama as a whole; there still remains the question of why Tuscaloosa's property taxes produce an even smaller proportion of total revenues than is usual in the rest of the state.

The reason usually advanced is that there is a considerable amount of untaxable government property in the community. A generous estimate would place the amount of such property at about ten per cent of the community's area. Assuming that this property were taxable and that it were valued and taxed at the same rate that other Tuscaloosa property is taxed, this would have added only \$17,348 to revenues in 1949 - an increase of less than two per cent in the total. Also, it should be kept in mind that the University, which accounts for a large share of such property, provides most of its own services, such as police and garbage collection. Furthermore, University people and the inmates and staff of other non-taxable institutions trade in Tuscaloosa and pay the same sales and excise taxes as do residents of Tuscaloosa.

The reasons for a low property taxation would seem to lie elsewhere. There remains the proposition previously advanced: property is the basis of power in Tuscaloosa, and the power of property owners in Tuscaloosa is such that property assessment has been kept low.

Two further data might be advanced to support this thesis. First, of the three-man Board of Equalization in Tuscaloosa, one is a real estate dealer and another is a well-known owner of large amounts of property in the County. Second, the newly appointed third member of the Board recently charged publicly that the majority of the Board's adjustments "have been on property owned by people who would not find it possible or profitable to take their cases to court."<sup>23</sup> The published statement continued, in part:

I have made a careful study of the work done in connection with these cases and have found that the great majority of them affect small property owners and relatively low value pieces of property. I have also found that certain classes of valuable property have been overlooked in this adjustment. Specifically, no adjustment has been made in the values of local apartment houses and a resolution was passed by the board on Tuesday which in effect closed any adjustment whatever on apartment houses for the current year. This resolution was passed over my protest....<sup>24</sup>

This member of the Board called on the public to insist that the Board rescind its previous action and make

---

23. Tuscaloosa News, April 6, 1950, p. 1.

24. Ibid.

a more proper adjustment in assessments. It should be pointed out that the chairman of the Board (the real estate dealer) responded that the Board had done all the work possible within the time allowed by law, although he agreed that substantial amounts of revenue were being lost because of low assessments. He denied that the work of the Board had been either "prejudicial or partial."<sup>25</sup>

Low receipts from the property tax will probably continue to be the basic limitation on governmental revenues and hence on governmental activities, since as the preceding tables show, other sources of revenue are already being tapped to the limit. Until a substantial adjustment is made in the administration of this tax, the burden of financing Tuscaloosa's government will continue to fall upon those least able to support it. Because the problem is statewide, a genuine adjustment will probably have to await the initiative and leadership of the State Revenue Department.<sup>26</sup> However, a partial solution could be made by the Tuscaloosa County Board of Equalization in revising upward the present evaluations. Although strong opposition from the property owners of the community would be

---

25. Ibid., April 7, 1950, p. 1.

26. Report of the Revenue Survey Committee, op. cit., p. 91.

expected, the City government is the logical agency to provide the leadership and to promote public sentiment in favor of such an adjustment, if it is to be made.

Nothing has been said as yet about the City's receipts from borrowing. This is not a revenue, because money borrowed has to be repaid with money received from non-debt-incurring sources, if the debt is ever to be liquidated.

During 1949 the City borrowed a total of \$175,500, of which \$70,000 was the result of bond issues. Also during the year, the City retired \$180,000 of its debt, of which \$113,500 was bonded. Thus the total debt reduction during the year amounted to \$4,500.<sup>27</sup> The total debt at the end of the fiscal year was \$2,613,000, of which \$2,502,500 was bonded. The Constitution of Alabama sets a limit on the City's debt of seven per cent of the assessed valuation of property within the City, but borrowing of certain types is excepted from this limit.<sup>28</sup> Thus, although the limit for Tuscaloosa is \$1,231,005.51 for

---

27. The bonded debt was reduced by \$43,500, whereas the unfunded debt was increased by \$39,000 over the amounts outstanding at the end of the 1948 fiscal year.

28. Constitution of Alabama, Sec. 225.

1949, all but \$300,500 of Tuscaloosa's present debt is exempt from this limitation.<sup>29</sup>

#### B. Municipal Expenditures: Where the Money Goes

The degree of importance which Tuscaloosans attach to the various activities of their municipal government is roughly indicated by the amounts of money which they have decided to expend for each purpose. Table XIII outlines this pattern of expenditures for 1949.

As was the case with revenues, water service accounts for the largest amount of expenditures. The amount was unusually large in 1949 because of capital expenditures. Debt service also received a large share of the City's money. These two, plus the amount spent on investments, account for 50 per cent of the City's total expenses.<sup>30</sup>

The only other large single items are the expenditures for public safety and for streets and garbage

---

29. All figures in the preceding paragraph were taken from Report on Examination of Accounts, City of Tuscaloosa, September 30, 1949.

30. Investments are not actually an expenditure, since the City will presumably regain the amount, with profit. They are included in the table in order to get a comprehensive view of the year's financial operations.

Table XIII

Objects of Expenditures, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 1949<sup>a</sup>

| Object                                       | Amount       | Totals         | %     |
|--|--------------|----------------|-------|
| General Governmental Expenses                |              | \$ 89,702.38   | 5.2   |
| Administrative Expense                       | \$ 33,566.89 |                |       |
| Legal and Judicial                           | 17,404.37    |                |       |
| Equipment Purchases                          | 26,698.34    |                |       |
| Maintenance of City Property                 | 4,487.63     |                |       |
| Contingencies and Misc. <sup>b</sup>         | 7,545.15     |                |       |
| Public Safety                                |              | 254,402.11     | 14.9  |
| Police Protection                            | 147,323.08   |                |       |
| Fire Protection                              | 107,079.03   |                |       |
| Streets and Garbage Disposal                 |              | 209,997.37     | 12.3  |
| Engineering                                  | 16,665.71    |                |       |
| Street Repairs and                           |              |                |       |
| Garbage Collection                           | 178,606.83   |                |       |
| Street Lighting                              | 14,724.53    |                |       |
| Sanitation and Health                        |              | 31,340.48      | 1.8   |
| To County Health Dep't                       | 14,440.69    |                |       |
| City Health and Sanitation                   |              |                |       |
| Dep't  | 16,889.79    |                |       |
| Public Welfare and Other                     |              | 41,883.75      | 2.5   |
| Donations                                    |              |                |       |
| Park and Recreation Dep't                    | 12,450.00    |                |       |
| To County Welfare Dep't                      | 25,138.30    |                |       |
| Other (Library, etc.)                        | 4,295.45     |                |       |
| Education <sup>c</sup>                       |              | 81,559.40      | 4.8   |
| Water Service                                |              | 459,116.32     | 26.9  |
| Operation <sup>c</sup>                       | 255,332.12   |                |       |
| Plant Improvement                            | 203,784.20   |                |       |
| Public Improvements (Cost<br>to be assessed) |              | 113,368.49     | 6.6   |
| Special Projects <sup>d</sup>                |              | 32,268.75      | 1.9   |
| Investments                                  |              | 70,000.00      | 4.1   |
| Debt Service                                 |              | 323,743.84     | 19.0  |
| Bonds and Notes Retired                      | 180,000.00   |                |       |
| Interest on Bonds and Notes                  | 108,720.65   |                |       |
| Parking Meter Payments                       | 35,023.19    |                |       |
| Total  |              | \$1,707,382.89 | 100.0 |

<sup>a</sup>Report on Examination of Accounts, Tuscaloosa, 1949.<sup>b</sup>Includes \$7,079.59 from Special Rev. Funds for streets.<sup>c</sup>Excludes debt service.<sup>d</sup>Excludes \$70,000 for retirement of future obligations.

disposal, which are basic municipal functions. Education's share was comparatively small, while public health and welfare were among the smallest expenditures.<sup>31</sup> The percentages spent for recreation and libraries were even smaller.

One implication of these figures might be that public health, welfare, education, and recreation are held to be considerably less important in Tuscaloosa than police and fire protection, street maintenance, and garbage disposal. It is possibly more the case that there is not enough money remaining to support the former activities after even minimum amounts have been allocated to the latter. However, an evaluation of comparative importance might still be involved, in that Tuscaloosans have not yet made the decisions concerning revenue which would be necessary to support health, welfare, education, and recreation activities more adequately.

---

31. Alabama law permits only the county government to exercise any local public health functions. Alabama Code 1940, Tit. 22, Sec. 6. Although city welfare activities are not prohibited, county welfare agencies are the only ones recognized. Ibid., Tit. 29, Sec. 70. Municipal expenditures on public health and welfare therefore consist of contributions to the county agencies. It should be noted that municipal expenditures on sanitation and garbage collection are in effect preventive health measures.

Table XIV shows the growth of governmental expenditures over the past ten years. The overall increase was 137 per cent; most of the activities have retained roughly the same proportions. Public welfare and other public donations shows the largest increase, which may indicate that the welfare function has increased in importance in the minds of Tuscaloosans. The allocations for public safety and for streets and garbage disposal also grew at a considerably greater rate than the overall expenditures.

Table XV is based on expenditures for general operations only. In its general outlines, Tuscaloosa's pattern of expenditures does not deviate markedly from the norm, although differences of emphasis do appear. Unfortunately the figures for national average amounts were not available, so a better comparison was not possible.<sup>32</sup> However, it is possible to conclude that Tuscaloosa lags

---

32. In the fall of 1946 the Tuscaloosa Chamber of Commerce conducted a questionnaire survey of all cities in the U. S. in the same population range as Tuscaloosa. Defects in the questionnaire and in some of the answers vitiated the results somewhat, but it was fairly clear that Tuscaloosa's revenues and expenditures were in that year somewhere between one-half and three-fourths of the average. Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and Its Sister Cities, Tuscaloosa Chamber of Commerce, pp. 2-4.

Table XIV

Comparison of Tuscaloosa's Expenditures, Fiscal Years Ended September 30, 1949 and 1939<sup>a</sup>

| Object                                     | 1949<br>Amount         | 1949<br>Percent | 1939<br>Amount         | 1939<br>Percent | % Increase<br>in Decade |
|--|------------------------|-----------------|------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| General Governmental Expenses <sup>b</sup> | \$ 89,702.38           | 5.2             | \$ 33,694.90           | 4.7             | 166.2                   |
| Public Safety                              | 254,402.11             | 14.9            | 72,230.08              | 10.0            | 252.2                   |
| Streets and Garbage Disposal               | 209,997.57             | 12.3            | 55,835.21              | 7.8             | 276.1                   |
| Sanitation and Health                      | 31,340.48              | 1.8             | 14,745.70              | 2.0             | 112.5                   |
| Public Welfare and Other Donations         | 41,883.75 <sup>c</sup> | 2.5             | 2,928.25               | .4              | 1,327.0                 |
| Education <sup>d</sup>                     | 81,559.40              | 4.8             | 35,000.00              | 4.9             | 133.0                   |
| Water Service Operation                    | 255,332.12             | 15.0            | 96,108.38              | 13.4            | 165.7                   |
| Plant Improvement                          | 203,784.20             | 11.9            | 27,076.27              | 3.8             | 652.6                   |
| Public Improvements                        | 113,368.49             | 6.6             | 39,811.84              | 5.5             | 184.8                   |
| Special Projects                           | 32,268.75 <sup>e</sup> | 1.9             | 13,291.64 <sup>f</sup> | 1.8             | 142.8                   |
| Investments                                | 70,000.00              | 4.1             | 34,353.88              | 4.8             | 103.8                   |
| Debt Service                               | 323,743.84             | 19.0            | 293,682.63             | 40.9            | 10.2                    |
| Total                                      | \$1,707,382.89         | 100.0           | \$718,758.78           | 100.0           | 137.5                   |

<sup>a</sup>Reports on Examinations of Accounts, Tuscaloosa, September 30, 1949 and 1939.<sup>b</sup>Includes same items listed in Table XIII.<sup>c</sup>Includes Recreation expenditures.<sup>d</sup>Excludes Debt Service.<sup>e</sup>Excludes \$70,000 for retirement of future obligations.<sup>f</sup>Includes appropriation for WPA.

Table XV

Comparison of Tuscaloosa's Expenditures for General Operations Only (1949)<sup>a</sup> with those of All U. S. Cities with Population of 25,000 to 50,000 (1947)<sup>b</sup>

| Object   | Tuscaloosa<br>Amount     | All U.S. Cities<br>% Pop. 25-50,000 |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| General Control                                  | \$50,971.26 <sup>c</sup> | 7.3 8.3                             |
| Public Safety                                    | 254,402.11               | 36.2 25.2                           |
| Highways, Streets,<br>Garbage, and<br>Sanitation | 226,897.16 <sup>d</sup>  | 32.3 20.9                           |
| Public Health                                    | 14,440.69 <sup>e</sup>   | 2.1 4.9                             |
| Public Welfare                                   | 25,138.30 <sup>e</sup>   | 3.6 5.9                             |
| Schools  | 81,559.40                | 11.6 24.0                           |
| Libraries  | 2,955.00                 | .4 1.7                              |
| Recreation                                       | 12,450.00                | 1.8 5.1                             |
| Miscellaneous                                    | 32,991.97 <sup>f</sup>   | 4.7 4.0                             |
| Total  | \$701,805.89             | 100.0 100.0                         |

<sup>a</sup>Report on Examination of Accounts, City of Tuscaloosa September 30, 1949.

<sup>b</sup>C. E. Ridley, and O. F. Nolting, (eds.) The Municipal Yearbook, 1949, Table 2, p. 208.

<sup>c</sup>Includes Legal and Judicial expenditures.

<sup>d</sup>Includes appropriation to City Health and Sanitation Dep't.

<sup>e</sup>Appropriations to County Health and Welfare Dep'ts.

<sup>f</sup>Includes Equipment Purchases, Maintenance of City Property, Contingencies, and appropriations to Civil Service Board, Alabama National Guard, Eastwood Park, and the Planning Board.

(Note: This table is based on General Fund expenditures only, excluding amounts for Special Projects and Debt Service. For purposes of comparison with Municipal Yearbook figures, certain Tuscaloosa classifications were broken down and others were combined.)

behind other cities in its class in education, public health, public welfare, libraries, and recreation. The larger proportions going to public safety, highways, streets, garbage, and sanitation do not necessarily indicate that Tuscaloosa spends more than the average on these activities. As previously suggested, it is probable that the maintenance of minimum programs in the latter activities in Tuscaloosa simply leaves little to spread around elsewhere. To bring Tuscaloosa's expenditure pattern more in line with the average pattern, it will probably be necessary not to change Tuscaloosa's conception of what is needed, but to change Tuscaloosa's revenue pattern. However, the decisions necessary for making such a change will probably not be forthcoming until social tension centered around the problem has considerably increased.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, the class which would benefit the

---

34. Tension concerning the inadequacy of funds for the community's school system recently rose to the point of forcing a community decision. After considerable publicity and agitation on the subject of the overcrowdedness and poor condition of the City's school buildings, two proposals for revenue were advanced. Both involved the levying of an additional property tax. As previously mentioned, large property owners were able to organize enough opposition to defeat the proposals when they were submitted to the community in referendums. The tension continued, however, and the third proposal, this time for a bond issue to be paid for with a sales tax, was accepted by the voters. It should be pointed out that this proposal was supported strongly by many civic clubs and other groups of the middle and upper classes. Such groups had supported the two earlier proposals, but obviously not strongly enough to secure their adoption.

most from increased appropriations to public health and welfare activities is the one which so far has the least influence in community decisions. It seems plausible to suggest that the revenue from property taxes will not be significantly increased unless limited revenues prevent the public safety, street, and garbage services from growing in proportion to the growth of the community. If the latter activities were curtailed, the middle and upper classes would possibly become concerned enough to make the necessary decisions.

## CHAPTER V

### GOVERNMENTAL ACTIVITIES: HOW DECISIONS ARE CARRIED OUT

This chapter will survey the various operating agencies of Tuscaloosa's municipal government. As noted before, it is the normal functioning of these agencies which permits the people of the community to live organized lives and which prevents potential tensions from becoming actual. Without a police department to enforce standard patterns of behavior, or without a system for disposing of garbage and other wastes, urban life would be impossible. Furthermore, when the community makes specific decisions such as the extension of paving or the initiation of an inoculation program, these are the instruments by which the decisions are carried out.

#### Law Enforcement

##### The Police Department

Tuscaloosa maintains a Police Department of 46 men under the supervision of Associate Commissioner Number One. This force consists of the following specializations:

- 1 Chief
- 1 Assistant Chief
- 1 Sergeant

3 Desk Sergeants  
4 Plain-clothes Detectives  
5 Motor Scouts  
12 Regular Patrol Car Officers  
16 Regular Foot Patrol Officers  
1 Record Clerk  
1 Part-time Foot Patrol Officer  
1 Part-time Radio Repairman

The Department provides Tuscaloosa with the standard police functions, including foot and motorized patrolling, traffic regulation, crime detection, and fingerprint services. The Commissioner takes an active interest in the Department, is in frequent contact with the Chief of Police, and is in general well informed concerning the condition and activities of the force.

The Department maintains three patrol cars equipped with two-way radio apparatus. Radio contact is also kept with one Northport Police Department car, with cars operated by the Marshal's office of the University, and with the Tuscaloosa Fire Department. Three more automobiles are used for patrolling and for investigations. Five motorcycles are operated. The Department possesses gas guns and sawed-off shotguns for use in emergencies.

There seems to be an excellent spirit of cooperation with the County Sheriff's Office, the Alabama Highway Patrol, and with the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

There is little or no duplication of effort among these agencies, with the maximum effect being realized from the facilities available.

The police force is divided into three eight-hour shifts: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., 4 p.m. to midnight, and midnight to 8 a.m. Because each officer has one day off each week, and because one or two are always on vacation, the average number available for each shift is from 11 to 13. The night shifts are smaller than the regular daytime shift because of less traffic, so the day shift consists of 17 or 18 officers on the average.

Foot patrolmen are assigned general beats based on a combination of geographic area and need. Special officers are assigned to school zones when children are coming to or leaving the school grounds. The Department tries to keep a minimum of three patrol cars operating at all times except during the period from midnight to 8 a.m., when experience has shown that only one or two are needed. Two patrolmen are used in each car.

There are no assigned patrol beats for the motorized patrol. However, the patrolmen on each shift make informal arrangements among themselves, dividing the town into two or more geographic areas so that patrolling will not overlap.

All personnel of the Department participate in at least two training schools annually. One, conducted by the F.B.I., is held at Police Department Headquarters; the other is conducted at the University.<sup>1</sup> In addition, representatives from the Department participate in State and national traffic and safety conferences.

In 1949 Tuscaloosa police made 10,294 arrests. Of these, 5,213 were white men and 3,050 were Negro men. Arrests for reckless driving and speeding were numerous, totalling 1,209. Convictions were obtained in 1,108 of these cases. The greater portion of the remaining arrests were for traffic and parking violations, public drunkenness, and prohibition violations. The Department investigated 419 accidents, of which 6 resulted in death and 106 in hospital cases.<sup>2</sup>

Prisoners are kept at the City Jail, which also houses Police Department Headquarters and the City Court. The present jail was built in 1936-37. It contains six cell blocks with separate accommodations for whites, Negroes, males, and females. Although still in good

---

1. See Chapter III above, "Personnel Management."

2. Preceding figures from interview with Associate Commissioner Number Two J. Frank Livingston, February 13, 1950.

condition, the jail is now inadequate for a community which is growing as rapidly as is Tuscaloosa. The cell blocks are frequently overcrowded.

The City employs a local lawyer on a part-time basis to serve as recorder or judge at sessions of the City Court where violations of municipal ordinances are tried. Sessions are held once a week. Another lawyer is employed to prosecute City cases.

The efficiency of the Police Department and the municipal judiciary are closely intertwined in the law enforcement function. If the ratio of convictions to arrests is any indication, Tuscaloosa would seem to be relatively well-off with respect to law violation. The figures on reckless driving and speeding have already been given; in addition, convictions in 464 out of 566 trials of prohibition violation cases were obtained in 1949. Another indication of efficiency is that the community is free of organized gangsterism and red light districts. Bootleggers and prostitutes may be found in Tuscaloosa, but they are kept dodging most of the time.

The greatest problem faced by the Police Department is traffic supervision. Commissioner Livingston estimates that the City needs at least 18 or 20 more patrolmen, so as to provide an average of 20 patrolmen on duty at all

times. At present there are times when heavy traffic areas are completely without supervision. Night patrolling is also inadequate.

This problem of course reverts to the question of revenue, which has already been discussed. The addition of 20 more patrolmen would cost the City approximately \$60,000 a year. The probability that such an amount could be obtained from any source other than an increased property tax is slight.

Commissioner Livingston's attitude is that the inadequate strength of the Police Department should not be publicized, saying "if I publicly kicked up a lot of sand it would just invite crooks - they would naturally be attracted if they knew how few police we have." However, an increase of revenue through a more equitable property assessment in Tuscaloosa is largely dependent upon public demand. The latter will not be aroused if the City's needs are not publicized.

There are, however, some opportunities for increasing the Department's efficiency without the addition of more personnel. Some authorities consider that one-man patrol cars are as adequate, or even superior to the two-man motor patrol teams which Tuscaloosa utilizes.<sup>3</sup> If one-man motor

---

3. Municipal Police Administration, p. 245. See also O. W. Wilson, "One Man v. Two Men In Patrol Cars," Public Management (April, 1940).

patrolling were initiated, three or four men would be freed on each shift for either motor or foot patrolling. Also, a carefully planned system of motor patrol beats would conceivably increase efficiency. A study of the geographic distribution of law violations might show where frequent patrolling is most needed and least needed.

### Fire Protection

#### The Fire Department

Also under the supervision of Associate Commissioner Number One is the Tuscaloosa Fire Department. The Department's total personnel of 41 maintains three fire stations in the City. The City has a contract with Northport across the river by which the latter pays the salaries of two firemen, in return for which Tuscaloosa furnishes fire protection to Northport. The University fire protection system has been integrated with the Tuscaloosa Department also. The No. 2 Station is on the University campus and the City leases two trucks from the University, in addition to two trucks used by the City which were purchased by the University's Department of Vocational Education. Ten students sleep at the No. 2 Station and are available for emergency firefighting, and the No. 3 Station at Northington has accommodations for seven students to work under the same arrangement.

Excluding students, the Tuscaloosa Fire Department is organized as follows:

1 Chief

2 Assistant Chiefs

Station No. 1

1 Captain

1 Lieutenant (Chief Inspector)

1 Assistant Inspector

1 Fire Alarm Superintendent

1 Mechanic

2 Telephone Operators

5 Drivers

10 Hosemen

Station No. 2

1 Captain

1 Lieutenant

3 Drivers

5 Hosemen

Station No. 3

1 Captain

1 Lieutenant

4 Hosemen

The personnel at each Station is organized into two shifts. Each shift is on duty for 24 hours and has the next 24 hours off. Each man receives an extra day off every 36 days.

The Department is equipped with 9 firetrucks: one 65 foot aerial ladder truck that carries 1,000 feet of hose, 200 feet of ground ladder, and has a pumping capacity of 750 gallons per minute; one 1,000 gallons per minute pumper; two old 750 gallon pumpers; two new 750 gallon pumpers; and three 500 gallon pumpers.

In addition, the Department has a resuscitator, an inhalator, and a portable iron lung, for treating persons suffering from suffocation or drowning; a fresh air mask, an oxygen mask, and 6 all-service masks, for fighting fires where excessive fumes are present. The Department is equipped with 1,500 feet of fire hose. The newest additions to the Department's equipment is a fire alarm system, installed in 1948, and a two-way radio communication system. Placed throughout the community are 116 fire alarm boxes interconnected by 47 miles of wire. The boxes are equipped with a reserve battery system for use in case of a power failure; they are wired so that the severing of one line to a box would not incapacitate its operation.

The fire prevention activities of the Department include regular inspection of property, educational programs in the City's schools and in industrial plants, and publicity programs. The latter activity is manifested primarily during the week of each year which is designated

as "National Fire Prevention Week." During this week the National Fire Protection Association sponsors intercommunity competitions based on Fire Department efficiency and training, educational activities, structural conditions in the community, and building laws. Since 1934 Tuscaloosa has won the first place award for Alabama cities nine times, second place three times, and honorable mention once. In 1942 the seventh place award for the entire United States was won.<sup>4</sup>

Tuscaloosa is placed in the second class with respect to fire insurance rates by the Alabama Inspection and Rating Bureau. The second class rating is due to insufficient water pressure.<sup>5</sup>

The Tuscaloosa Fire Department seems to be quite well-organized and efficient. As is the case with the Police Department, however, it is short of men. The inclusion of Alberta City within the Tuscaloosa City limits in 1948 has added to the strain on the Department's facilities, and an additional station is needed for this area.<sup>6</sup> Lack of funds restrains this expansion.

---

4. Tuscaloosa News, July 31, 1949, Sec. G, p. 12.

5. "Survey of Department of Public Safety of Tuscaloosa, Alabama," Provisional League of Women Voters, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, August 25, 1949.

6. Interview with Associate Commissioner J. Frank Livingston, February 13, 1950.

## Public Works

Tuscaloosa's public works activities are handled by three agencies: the Street and Garbage Department, the Engineering Department, and the Water Works Department. Several lines of relationship connect them, but they will be discussed separately here.

### Street and Garbage Department

This Department is the largest single agency of the municipal government, with 83 employees. It is responsible for maintaining and repairing streets and sidewalks, collecting trash and garbage, and maintaining sewers and providing other sanitary services. The Department also cuts grass on City property (such as cemeteries, parkways, and playgrounds) and on vacant lots. It is headed by the Superintendent of Streets, who is responsible to the President of the Commission.

The organization of the Department consists of separate crews for each major function. The personnel is distributed as follows:

- 1 Superintendent
- 1 general foreman for use wherever needed
- 1 time-keeper
- 1 prisoner guard

#### Street Repair and Maintenance Crew:

- 1 black-top foreman

1 sidewalk foreman  
32 laborers

**Trash and Garbage Collection Crew:**

1 Garbage Inspector  
25 men on 5 garbage trucks  
12 men on 4 trash trucks

**Sanitation Crew:**

4 men (sewer maintenance)  
3 men (box and can collection)

In addition to the above, the Department usually has about 15 City prisoners assigned to work with the Street Repair and Maintenance Crew. During the summer months the Department employs four more men (one superintendent and three helpers) to carry out its mosquito-spraying program.

Employees of the Department work 44 hours a week: eight hours a day five days a week and four hours on Saturday. Headquarters (plus a garage and parking lot) are in a building in the western end of Tuscaloosa; the same building houses the City Repair Shop and the Water Works repair shop.

The Commission President does not supervise the Street and Garbage Department as closely as the other Commissioners supervise their departments, probably because he is a comparative newcomer to the Commission, and because his other

duties as head of the government require more time. Thus the Superintendent makes most of the day to day decisions, such as which street repair job will be undertaken next; on the more important repair jobs he receives instructions from the Commission Board or its President.

Tuscaloosa's streets were originally paved with concrete. Later the use of black-top pavement was adopted. This consists of single surface treatment bituminous binder or a six inch clay gravel base, with a wearing surface of plant mix seal. Many of the concrete streets have been resurfaced with black-top pavement, and it is now used on all new paving projects. Paving has fallen behind with the annexation of territory, and the Superintendent estimates that there are now about 150 miles of unpaved streets within the city limits, most of which are in the Alberta City end of town.

The City is not equipped to do its own paving and resurfacing jobs, but contracts for them. Thus the Department undertakes only maintenance and repair jobs.

Garbage and trash collections are made twice a week. Open trucks are used for trash collections, while garbage trucks are covered. The Garbage Inspector enforces the following garbage regulations;

1. All garbage cans shall be water tight and fly tight and not over thirty gallons capacity.

2. No ashes, cinders, or any refuse from fire shall be placed in garbage cans.
3. Garbage cans shall be located conveniently and be accessible for collector.
4. All trash, tree trimmings, leaves, etc. shall be placed at street curb fronting property, as no trash truck will be permitted to enter premises.
5. No garbage will be collected by truck unless stored as above stated.
6. Cans must be stored to prevent dogs or other animals from turning them over.<sup>5</sup>

The Superintendent of the Department reports that these regulations are well-observed in Tuscaloosa.

Garbage disposal is the responsibility of the Engineering Department. The land fill method of disposal is used, whereby the garbage is spread out in thin layers and covered with a layer of dirt by a bulldozer. For several years the City has used what was formerly Stallworth's Lake (now drained) which is located near the river about two blocks from the center of the main business district. When it is completely filled, this area will be usable public property. It is estimated that low areas along the river bank will take care of disposal needs for many years.

---

5. City of Tuscaloosa Garbage Regulations, Residential.

The Street and Garbage Department's function with regard to sanitary sewers is limited to minor maintenance and repair jobs. As of January, 1950, about 600 acres of developed property in the City was not served by sewers. Many dwellings use individual septic tanks for sewage disposal, but about 1300 use the antiquated box and can method of disposal. A large percentage of these are Negro dwellings. Barring further annexations, it will be about five years before sewer service will be extended to the entire city.<sup>6</sup> The seven men employed by the Street and Garbage Department who comprise the Sanitation Crew are listed in the auditor's report as the City Health and Sanitation Department, and a separate appropriation is made for this activity.

Twelve different sewer pipes empty raw sewage into the Warrior River at different points above the dam, thus polluting the stream. Planning for the elimination of this problem is complicated by the fact that the University, Bryce and Partlow Hospitals, and several large industries use the river for disposal of waste and sewage. A collection and treatment system would cost at least \$1,000,000,<sup>7</sup>

---

6. Estimate of the City Engineer.

7. Estimate of Associate Commissioner J. Frank Livingston.

while about \$500,000 would be required for a system which would only transport raw sewage to a point below the dam before emptying it, untreated, into the river.<sup>8</sup> With its present revenue problems the City will probably have to continue with the present method for some time. Meanwhile pollution will continue to constitute a health menace and an esthetic blight in addition to limiting use of the stream for recreational purposes such as swimming, boating, and fishing.

#### Engineering Department

The public works responsibilities of the Engineering Department are broad and diverse, interlocking in some respects with those of the Street and Garbage and the Water Works Departments. As presently constituted it is the City's primary instrument for public works functions.

The work of the Engineering Department includes:

1. The planning, mapping, making of preliminary surveys, and setting of specifications for all City construction or important repair projects, including paving, sewers, and drainage.
2. The letting of contracts for such projects and the supervision of the work.

---

8. Estimate of the City Engineer, "Public Health and Sanitation - City of Tuscaloosa," League of Women Voters, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, January 27, 1950.

3. The execution of smaller construction and repair jobs through the Public Works Department.
4. The supervision of garbage disposal.
5. The supervision of water works plant operation and maintenance, including the reservoirs and pumping and filtering stations.
6. Supervision of the Public Works Department.
7. The inspection of private construction to assure adherence to the City's building, plumbing, and electrical codes.
8. The drafting of special assessment ordinances for the Legal Department.

The Department is organized for these functions as follows:

1 City Engineer (Head of the Department)  
2 Assistant Engineers  
1 Building, Plumbing, and Electrical Inspector  
1 Stenographer (shared with Legal Department)  
1 File-clerk (shared with Legal Department)

Drafting Room:

2 Full-time employees  
2 Part-time engineering students from University

Field Supervision and Surveying:

2 Full-time employees  
2 Part-time engineering students from University<sup>9</sup>

---

9. Drafting room and field supervision and surveying employees vary in number according to the amount of work or size of projects being undertaken. As many as 15 are sometimes employed in these positions.

Public Works Department:

1 Foreman  
4 Machine operators  
1 Oiler  
10 Laborers

Equipment of Public Works Department:

2 tractors  
1 trenching machine  
1 half yard drag line - also used as crane  
1 pan for hauling dirt  
1 "lowboy" equipment transport truck  
2 trucks  
1 air compressor and jack-hammers

The Public Works Department was organized under the City Engineer to provide a single pool of City construction and repair equipment. No budget appropriation goes to this agency; instead the equipment and personnel to operate it are rented out to the Departments who need them, such as the Water Works Department, the Street Department, or the Engineering Department. The Public Works Department is used on City force account construction and repair jobs. As stated previously, most construction and repair work is done by contract; such projects as laying only five or ten miles of sewer lines are within the range of the Public Works Department.

The Engineering Department offers an example of the not uncommon administrative phenomenon wherein administrative relationships in practice do not conform to the

organization chart. This Department is nominally under the supervision of the President of the City Commission. However the City Engineer works more closely with Associate Commissioner Nicol than with Commissioner Robertson. Several factors contribute to this relationship. First, the Water Works Department is responsible to Associate Commissioner Nicol. The Superintendent of the Water Works Department is an elderly man whose active days are in the past; the City Engineer supervises the operation of the Water Works at the source of supply and at the pumping and filtering stations. Since the Water Works takes more of Mr. Nicol's time than his finance responsibilities, he is in frequent contact with the City Engineer. Second, Mr. Nicol was originally an engineer himself, and at one time served as Tuscaloosa's City Engineer. He thus has an interest in the Engineering Department's activities. Add to these the fact that Mr. Nicol has been on the City Commission for 13 years, while Mr. Robertson is still in his first year, and this departure from assigned administrative channels is easily understandable. In fact, insofar as this arrangement tends to bring the Water Works and Engineering activities into one line of authority and responsibility, it is in accord with good administrative practice.<sup>10</sup> The difficulty in this case is that the

---

10. Weldon Cooper, Municipal Government and Administration in Alabama, pp. 179-82.

President of the Commission is responsible for engineering activities, while the authority tends to flow from a different source. Also, the arrangement brings about a tendency toward separating the Engineering Department from the Street and Garbage Department, which is also responsible to the Commission President.

#### Water Works Department

Tuscaloosa's source of water supply is spring-fed Harris Lake, nine miles north-east of the City. Water is piped through a tunnel under the river to the filter plants at Riverview, which is on the river bank behind Bryce Hospital. Three filtering plants are maintained which have a total capacity of nine million gallons a day. In addition to supplying Tuscaloosa, the Water Works Department has a contract with the City of Northport by which the latter buys its water from Tuscaloosa and handles its own meter installations and collections.

Harris Lake is 175 acres in size. Need for greater storage capacity has led to the planning of another dam to be built above the present one which will be 80 feet higher. This will add 365 acres to the size of the Lake. Ultimately a larger water main than the present 24 inch one will be laid from the Lake to the City. Increasing

rate of consumption recently necessitated booster pumps to be added on the main.

The Department maintains three storage reservoirs in addition to Harris Lake. One of these, at the Riverview filter station, holds 40,000,000 gallons of unfiltered water. Another, the tank at Castle Hill, contains 3,000,000 gallons of filtered water. The third, located at Hopewell Hill in Alberta City, contains 650,000 gallons of filtered water.

The present rate of consumption is about 7,200,000 gallons a day - 1,800,000 gallons short of the daily filtering capacity.

The pumps at the Riverview station were formerly operated by steam power, but the steam pumps have recently been converted to electricity. This measure is expected to save from \$500 to \$700 a month in operating because of the level to which coal prices had risen. The new system cuts the cost of labor, is more flexible, and is cleaner to operate.

The Water Works Department requires 28 employees for its operation and maintenance. These employees are distributed as follows:

**Management:**

- 1 Superintendent of the Department
- 5 Billing and Collecting clerks

Riverview Pumping and Filter Station:

1 Chief Engineer

3 Assistants

Maintenance and Repair:

2 Foremen

3 Meter Readers

13 Repairmen

The Water Works Repair Shop is located in the same structure which houses the City Repair Shop and the Street and Garbage Department office and garage. The work consists of meter repairs and repairs to water lines. Construction work, such as laying new lines, is done by the Department of Public Works if small; large jobs are contracted.

City Repair Shop

The final agency concerned with public works is the City Repair Shop, which services City-owned automobiles, trucks, and other mechanical equipment. The shop is operated by a Superintendent with five white mechanics and two Negro assistants.

Education

City School System

The Tuscaloosa school system is not an operating department of the municipal government, as were the agencies discussed above. It is operated by a Board of Education

appointed by the City Commission, however, and the City contributes a substantial amount to its operation each year. A brief consideration of the school system is therefore warranted.

The Board of Education is composed of five members who are appointed for five-year staggered terms. The chairmanship rotates, going to the member who is serving his fifth year on the Board. The Board serves without pay. Meetings are held once a month.

This agency is the policy-making body of the school system. It appoints a Superintendent of Education for a one year term to act as the chief administrative officer of the system. In practice the Superintendent has the initiative in policy matters, since the Board generally acts on the matters which the Superintendent presents for consideration. The school system is fiscally independent of the City, but is subject to State control, since annual budgets must be submitted to the State Superintendent of Education for approval.

The only requirement for the position of Superintendent of Education is the possession of a superintendent's certificate. The present one holds a doctor's degree, as did his predecessor.

In the office of the Superintendent are the following personnel:

1 Superintendent  
1 Director of Guidance Services  
1 Lunchroom consultant  
1 Musical consultant  
1 Attendance Supervisor  
2 Secretaries  
1 Clerk-stenographer

With the assistance of this staff the Superintendent is responsible for the operation of the City's fifteen schools. The schools are segregated, nine being for white children and six for Negroes. Each school is headed by a principal who is responsible to the Superintendent. A total of 236 teachers were employed by the school system in 1949-50 to teach about 7,500 children.<sup>11</sup> Attendance is high, averaging 93 per cent for white children and 92 per cent for Negroes.<sup>12</sup>

The greatest problem of the school system for several years has been the lack of adequate buildings. Most of the existing buildings are old and in poor condition. A survey conducted by the Junior Chamber of Commerce in 1949 pointed out that classrooms were crowded, sanitary facilities were inadequate, and equipment was in poor condition

---

11. "Education in Tuscaloosa," League of Women Voters, Tuscaloosa, Alabama, October 27, 1949.

12. Ibid.

in most of the schools.<sup>13</sup> About 2000 children attended classes in rooms not built for and not suited for school purposes in 1949-50.<sup>14</sup>

These conditions caused the building up of tension in the community after World War II. The failure of proposals for an additional property tax in Tuscaloosa has already been alluded to. The plan finally adopted provided for the issuance of \$3,000,000 in bonds to pay for immediate needs and a long-range building program. To provide revenue to pay for the bonds the City committed itself to continue the present hospital sales tax after the hospital is paid for. Bonds in the amount of \$500,000 were issued in the summer of 1950 so that construction and repairs could begin at once.

#### Public Health

It was noted in Chapter IV that municipalities are not allowed to exercise any public health functions. The community is served in this respect by the County Health Department, which is supported by the State and County governments, the City Board of Education, and by

---

13. Tuscaloosa News, March 10, 1949, p. 4.

14. "Education in Tuscaloosa," op. cit.

contributions from municipal governments. Tuscaloosa's budgeted appropriation for 1950 for this purpose amounts to \$18,372, which is 36 per cent of the Department's receipts.<sup>15</sup>

The Health Department is advised by a County Board of Health composed of five physicians appointed by the County Medical Association. Members serve staggered terms of five years. In addition the County Probate Judge is an ex officio member of the Board. Control of the Department is in the State Health Department, which handles the County Department's finances. The County Health Officer, who administers the Department, is appointed for a three year term by the State Health Department on the recommendation of the County Board of Health. The County Health Officer and all personnel of the Department (whom he appoints) are subject to the merit system requirements of the State Health Department. The personnel of the Welfare Department is as follows:

- 1 County Health Officer
- 4 Nurses
- 6 Sanitary Inspectors
- 2 Veterinarians
- 2 Clerk-stenographers

---

15. "Public Health and Sanitation - City of Tuscaloosa," op. cit.

The Department's activities are concerned with the prevention and control of disease through maternal, infant, and child hygiene programs, immunization programs, clinics, and sanitary inspection programs.

Maternal and infant hygiene activities consist of three pre-natal and post-natal clinics per week at the Health Department, and supervision of midwives through the operation of a permit system and holding monthly classes. Local physicians serve in the clinics and are paid from Federal Children's Bureau funds obtained through the State Health Department. About 30 per cent of all deliveries in the County are home deliveries, almost all of which are attended by midwives. Negroes account for 90 per cent of the home deliveries, although Negro hospital deliveries are increasing.<sup>16</sup>

Pre-school check-up clinics are conducted in all City schools each year by local physicians and Public Health nurses. One white and one Negro Public Health nurse are assigned to the City schools. Voluntary immunization programs are held in all schools, and an annual hook-worm survey of all children is conducted.

Tuberculosis and syphilis are the only two communicable diseases which present a major problem. Monthly X-ray

---

16. Ibid.

clinics detect tuberculosis cases, which are sent to sanatoriums in Birmingham and Montgomery. X-rays are made of anyone requesting them, provided there are reasonable grounds to suspect tuberculosis (such as exposure to someone in the same family who has the disease, or the recommendation of a physician that X-rays be made). There is an urgent need for more sanatorium facilities to care for indigent tuberculosis patients. Syphilis cases are referred to the U. S. Health Service Rapid Treatment Center in Birmingham.

All milk and meat sold in Tuscaloosa is inspected by Health Department inspectors, and a veterinarian is kept on duty at the meat-packing plant located in the City. The one curb market in town is inspected by a lay inspector. Food handling establishments are inspected and graded every month.

A serious need of the Health Department has been more adequate quarters. The present quarters are too small, and are located on the third floor of the City Hall building. Falls on the steps have occurred, and the climb is difficult, if not prohibitive, for pregnant women and the sick, lame, or weak. This obstacle will be overcome when the new hospital is completed. The Department will have a ground floor health center there.

### Druid City Hospital

The City participates in the maintenance of the hospital with the County and the City of Northport. Each of these governments appoints two members of the hospital's Board of Trustees. In addition, the County Medical Association appoints two members, and two more are appointed by the County's circuit judges. The operation of the hospital is independent of the City government, and its employees are not subject to the City's Civil Service regulations. It employs 67 graduate nurses and 41 student nurses. There are 187 beds, 38 of which are for Negroes.

The hospital is at present located in a section of the building formerly occupied by the Army's Northington General Hospital. Construction of a new hospital has begun. When complete it will have 209 beds, 40 of which will be for Negroes.

### Public Welfare

As is the case with public health functions, the City's participation in welfare activities is limited to a contribution to the County Department. The contribution assumes an importance out of proportion to its size, however, because of the arrangement whereby the State and federal governments contribute amounts equal to those given by the local governments.

The County Welfare Department operates under the supervision of a County Board of Welfare which is appointed by the governing body of the County - the Board of Revenue. The Department is nevertheless an agency of the State Department of Public Welfare, and its personnel is subject to State merit system requirements.

The County Board consists of seven members who serve six year terms without pay. Its powers include the hiring of all personnel of the Department, including its Director. The Board has the power of optional approval of all cases carried by the Department. The organization of the Department is as follows:

1 Director  
1 Finance Officer  
4 Stenographers

1 Case Work Supervisor  
7 Case Workers  
2 Child Welfare Workers

The Department of Public Welfare provides aid to six categories of persons in need. These are: (1) old age assistance, (2) aid to the blind, (3) aid to dependent children, (4) aid to the handicapped, (5) aid to families facing temporary crises, and (6) aid to children receiving foster care. In addition the department provides services to a large number of cases which do not receive monetary assistance. Most of these cases involve some specialized

child welfare service, such as investigations of adoption petitions for the Probate Court, investigation of and planning for children who come before the County Juvenile Court, and assistance to unmarried mothers in planning for themselves and their children. The Department acts as probation office for the Juvenile Court.

The applicant's need is determined by a careful check of his listed needs, his income, and his resources. No applications are refused, although often the Department is unable to provide funds for the approved persons in need. Recipients' needs are re-evaluated annually and eligibilities are re-established if such is warranted.

The State matches all local funds in all categories and the federal government matches in three categories: old age assistance, aid to the blind, and assistance to dependent children. Through the involved matching system, the federal government provides about one-half of the Department's funds. Thus any reduction in local appropriations would be keenly felt in the ensuing decrease in federal funds.

A summary of the cases handled in one month gives some idea of the volume of the Department's work. In June, 1949, the Department gave financial aid to:

1,946 aged persons  
31 blind persons  
1,147 dependent children

6 children in foster homes  
138 handicapped persons  
8 persons temporarily in need.

During the same month the Department approved but was unable to assist because of lack of funds:

4 blind persons  
157 dependent children  
53 totally handicapped persons  
4 persons temporarily in need.<sup>17</sup>

#### Recreation

##### City Recreation Department

Until 1946 the City of Tuscaloosa had no organized recreation program. In that year the City Commission established a City Recreation Board to initiate a program for the white people of the community. This Board, which consists of five members who serve staggered terms of five years (without pay) is appointed by the City Commission. The Board employed a full-time Superintendent of Recreation, and in 1947 the first recreation program was launched. The City Commission does not supervise the program, but budgets a limited amount of money for the Recreation Department each year. The Department is staffed by the following personnel:

---

17. Tuscaloosa News, July 31, 1949, p. C-11.

Full-time personnel  
1 Superintendent of Recreation  
1 Secretary-bookkeeper

Part-time personnel  
3 Playground leaders  
1 Swimming Pool manager  
1 Swimming Instructor  
1 Men's basketball director  
1 Boys' and men's softball director

The part-time personnel varies from season to season and from year to year. Substitutes and volunteers are sometimes used in various supervisory capacities.

During the past winter the Department carried out the following program:

- (1) Six supervised afterschool playgrounds
- (2) Two "Teen-age nights" a week at the Alberta School and the Elks Club
- (3) Social affairs for elderly people
- (4) Friday night "Community Night" socials at Rosedale

The current summer program consists of:

- (1) Three supervised playgrounds
- (2) Free swimming instruction with 885 enrolled
- (3) Softball leagues:
  - 12 men's teams
  - 17 junior and senior boys' teams
  - 5 girls' teams

These programs are substantially the same as were carried out in the preceding year. The Department has the

use of school grounds, the City's parks, the National Guard Armory, and some civic clubs' facilities in its work.

The Recreation Department is hampered by two factors. First, of course, is finance. The funds budgeted for recreation activities are among the smallest assigned to any governmental activity. The second problem is related to the first: the lack of a long-range plan to guide the development of the Recreation Department. Without an increasing source of revenue to depend upon, no long-range plans can be made. Thus the Department has to operate from one year to the next without knowing whether its appropriation will be increased, cut, or will remain about as it was. Thus far there has been a small increase each year, the highest being this year's \$12,450 from the City plus a donation from the Community Chest.

There is in Tuscaloosa a recreation program for Negroes, also. It is not operated by the City, although the City makes small contributions to its expenses. The primary facility of this program is a large house at the western end of town which was purchased by the City to use as a Negro Community Center.

The program is directed by a Negro board of directors appointed by the City on the recommendations of the Tuscaloosa Religious Council, a white organization. The board

of directors employs a director for the Community Center, who organizes and operates the recreation program. The personnel employed during the summer of 1950 are the following:

1 Director

1 Librarian

1 Caretaker

Part-time personnel:

6 Playground supervisors

1 Concession operator

The librarian operates the small library at the Community Center, and during school months operates a library service for Negro schools in the County. She also assists the Director in the operation of recreation activities at the Center. The six playground supervisors are five more than have been employed in previous summers. The concession operator has charge of the soft drink and candy counter at the Center.

Three supervised playgrounds are being maintained during the current summer. During the month of June, 1950 a daily average of 497 children used the playgrounds, which are on school property. The Community Center is kept open for general use during afternoons and evenings. In addition, the following program is conducted:

- (1) One "Teen-age Night" each week
- (2) One night a week devoted to younger children
- (3) Motion pictures one night a week
- (4) One weekly broadcast over a local station, consisting usually of a musical program presented by teen-agers (fifteen minutes)
- (5) An annual community-wide Christmas broadcast (one hour)

The Director is presently planning to establish a nursery at the Center to care for 25 or 35 children. A swimming pool is to be built in the near future as a result of a large contribution by the owners of the local paper mill. It is hoped that the pool (which will be the first to which Negroes in the community have access) can be made self-supporting.

This program is at present supported by contributions of the Community Chest and by smaller contributions of the City. Operating expenses for 1950 are about \$9,000, of which \$7,000 came from the Community Chest. In addition to \$2,000 for operating expenses, the City gave \$3,200 to purchase property for the projected swimming pool.<sup>18</sup>

As with the City Recreation Department, the greatest problem of the Negro program is limited financial support.

---

18. Interview with S. W. Washington, Director of the Community Center, July 12, 1950.

The City's contribution for the current year has been larger than in previous years, but was not large enough to permit the operation of an adequate program. A minimum of two more supervised playgrounds is needed, for example, to provide facilities for areas of the City not yet served. Also, such support as is received from the City and the Community Chest is uncertain; the Director cannot plan for the future with the assurance that funds will be forthcoming.

One step toward overcoming the last-mentioned problem would be for the City to incorporate the Community Center and its activities with the Recreation Department, placing it under the supervision of the Recreation Board. This might be done without changing the present arrangements for financial support, although the City would probably be expected to increase its proportion of support, if it assumed responsibility for the operation of the program. Even so, the amount needed to continue the present level of activities would be only a negligible proportion of the City's budget. The benefits which the Community as a whole receives from the program certainly would seem to warrant increased support.

## CHAPTER VI

### CONCLUSION

#### Summary

The function of municipal government may be conceptualized as the making of community decisions. The operation of government keeps many potential social tensions from becoming actual and disrupting the community. Decisions are required when maladjustments or disharmony among societal elements create tensions or strains. When such strains become intense enough for individuals or groups in the community to demand relief, they rise to the level of government for decision, the result of which is relief or abatement of the tension.

Tensions arise in Tuscaloosa during the changes which are continually produced by the use of an increasingly complex technology, from a growing population, etc. The adoption of the industrial technology in Tuscaloosa has been influenced by its location near raw materials and by external events such as the two World Wars. The community's location has influenced its development as a trading and commercial center for the west-central region of Alabama. At present the community is in transition from a

predominantly agricultural and commercial center to a commercial and industrial center. As yet a larger proportion of its population consists of domestic workers and relatively unskilled workers than is average for urban parts of the United States. The community has a large share of Alabama's educational and hospital institutions, which gives it a large proportion of people employed in service industries. The level of education is lower in Tuscaloosa than the U. S. urban average level. The most significant characteristic of the population is its racial dichotomy.

The social system of Tuscaloosa is undergoing changes as a result of technological change and population growth. The University is largely a community distinct from Tuscaloosa, although there is integration at top levels with Tuscaloosa business and finance. The University is regarded in Tuscaloosa primarily as an economic asset.

Relations between whites and Negroes in Tuscaloosa (as in the Southern Region) are characterized by a caste system which isolates Negroes from whites and subordinates the former to the latter. As a result Negroes participate little in community activities and have little voice in community decisions. The changing technology and consequent social flux have caused an increasing tension to develop in the relations between Negroes and whites, although this tension is not acknowledged by large segments

of the white population. The caste system has begun to crack under the strain in some respects, and will probably continue to do so.

Other evidences of social change are found in the class system. Although the business class in general and the Old Families and large property owners in particular are still the dominant class, other groups are bidding for power. The real estate dealers, for one, are increasingly powerful; some of them seek incorporation with the Old Family group. Organized labor is demanding a more active voice in community decisions and has increased its strength considerably in the past decade. There are some signs that this group can point the way toward reduction of the tension between Negroes and whites in Tuscaloosa by providing channels for Negro participation in community decisions.

Institutions are likewise undergoing change. The family is still of great importance, but Tuscaloosa along with the rest of the country is feeling the effects of industrialization and urbanization. The number and importance of economic institutions is increasing, but top-level elements of the industrial hierarchies are not yet fully accepted in Tuscaloosa. The churches, which are predominantly protestant, are numerous and to some extent organized on class lines. Among service institutions the Chamber of Commerce is quite important in Tuscaloosa,

acting in some instances as an instrument of business and finance in community decision-making.

Some of Tuscaloosa's values seem to be undergoing change; an example is "democracy." Conflict between the values of democratic ideology and those of the caste system has developed, and the latter seems to be losing ground. Strong conservative elements of the community restrain rapid change, however. Personality values are of great importance in decisions made by elections.

Only a small proportion of the population participates in election decisions in Tuscaloosa (one out of every five or six adults) and most of the voters are white men of middle class and middle age.

Tuscaloosa's municipal government is the commission form. It has, since its adoption in 1911, been controlled by businessmen. There is no machine controlling municipal politics, although there was one about 20 years ago. Business class dominance, plus the structure of a social system which is otherwise in flux, are probably the reasons for the absence of a machine now.

The Commissioners must spend a considerable portion of their time on their official duties, and their function as the makers of the most important governmental decisions sometimes conflicts with their loyalties to the departments which they supervise.

The City's financial management, integrated in the Office of the City Clerk, seems to be quite efficient. In all major respects approved methods are used, such as effective budgeting, a modern accounting system, continuous auditing, central purchasing, and an independent post-audit.

The personnel function is administered by an independent Civil Service Board. Its primary effect has been to prevent political removals, although it is empowered to operate a fairly complete merit system. The City has no organized morale program for its employees. In-service training is limited to the Police and Fire Departments, and the City cooperates with the University by providing part-time training for student assistant accountants, engineers, and firemen.

Planning has only recently begun in Tuscaloosa, and a zoning plan has not yet been submitted by the Planning Board. A major street plan and subdivision regulations were adopted two years ago. The Planning Board has no full-time personnel. The efficacy of zoning will probably depend on how much public support the Planning Board is able to promote and on the degree to which the Board (on which property interests are represented) is willing to exercise its authority.

Internal reporting is fairly well organized as a management tool of the municipal government, but an organized public relations program is lacking. There is some feeling in the government that the public doesn't understand and doesn't care much what the government is doing.

Tuscaloosa's revenue system is unusually regressive in its effect on the community. Those who can least afford it must pay a larger proportion of their income in taxes, etc., than those who have larger incomes. This situation is primarily due to the limited productivity of the property tax. Available data points to the conclusion that this is a result of the power of large property owners in the community.

Because revenues are limited, municipal contributions to such activities as public health, welfare, education, and recreation account for smaller proportions of total expenditures than is usual in similar cities. Significant increases in appropriations to these activities probably will not be made until enough tension is built up to bring about decisions which will change the revenue pattern by increasing property tax revenue. Sufficient tension will probably not be generated unless limited revenues become clearly reflected in inadequate public safety, street, and garbage services.

Tuscaloosa's police and fire protection is well organized, although both of these functions are restricted

because of lack of sufficient funds. The Fire Department needs an additional station at Alberta City, while the Police Department needs more patrolmen to supervise traffic adequately. The resources of the latter might be extended a bit by planning motor patrol beats and by using one instead of two men in each patrol car.

Public works activities are divided among three agencies: the Street and Garbage Department, the Engineering Department, and the Water Works Department. A Department of Public Works rents heavy repair equipment to all three as needed. The Engineering Department has a considerable amount of supervisory responsibility with respect to Water Works operation, while the head of the engineering Department has a closer working relationship with the Commissioner in charge of the Water Works Department than with the Commissioner to whom he is nominally responsible. A consolidation of some of the activities of these three Departments might effect a saving and increase efficiency.

The City schools were in a serious plight for lack of funds for building and repair work, but a bond issue to be paid for by a continuation of the hospital sales tax has eased the tension which had built up about this matter.

The City undertakes no public health or welfare functions itself, but instead makes annual contributions to the County Departments of Public Health and Public

Welfare. Insufficient funds limits the effectiveness of these agencies. The City's recently begun recreation program for whites is developing slowly because of insufficient funds and the lack of a long-range plan. The recreation program for Negroes, centered around the Community Center, is inadequate, and its stability is affected by the fact that it is not maintained as a regular governmental activity.

#### Recommendations

##### General Governmental Organization

Tuscaloosa's present government is an efficient one, and is a good example of the commission form of government. The community is to be commended for the type of men and women which it has chosen to formulate and carry out its public decisions. If the community were not growing and changing, and if the election of men of the same ability, honesty, and interest were assured for the future, there would be little profit in recommending a change in the organization of Tuscaloosa's municipal government. But the community is growing and changing rapidly, and Tuscaloosans know that the best qualified men have not always directed their public affairs. Any consideration of the future of the government must be made in the light of these facts.

In its present form, certain defects in the government are traceable to its structure. Authority and responsibility are divided among the three Commissioners, so that blame cannot be specifically assigned nor credit be taken for many governmental acts. Administrative duties of each Commissioner take a large amount of their time, which limits the time available for thorough consideration of general policy and planning for the future development of the community and its government. Also, each Commissioner develops a greater interest in and knowledge of the departments for which he is responsible than in other departments. Thus the Commission often yields to the recommendations of the individual Commissioner on matters within his jurisdiction. Or, as at the time of budget adoption, there is a tendency for each to try to get a large share appropriated to his departments to the exclusion of the others. The result is a lack of coordination and unified planning on community-wide matters. Also, activities not directly related to one of the Commissioners' departments, such as public health, welfare, and recreation, do not receive adequate attention, and are left with the scraps after the division of appropriations among the regular departments. The departments individually, since they are not responsible to a single administrative authority, do not have the

proper sense of coordination with other departments. Since the Commissioners share the administrative authority of the department heads, the latter are handicapped in developing the needed sense of responsibility and initiative.

These obstacles to efficient management will probably become more serious and more apparent as the community expands and its governmental activities become more complex and extensive. Also, should less capable or conscientious Commissioners replace the incumbents, the level of efficiency would immediately reflect that fact.

These considerations point to the need and desirability of changing the structure of the government so as to make a single administrator responsible for the supervision of the various department heads, and to withdraw the Commissioners from administrative activities. A trained and capable manager would be able to coordinate all activities of the government and increase efficiency by preventing overlapping and duplication of effort. All of the government's resources could be directed toward the execution of the same general policy, with conflicts and cross-purposes minimized. Interdepartmental jockeying for larger appropriations would be removed from the top policy level.

Being given the authority to administer the government's functions, such a manager would be held singly

responsible. With authority and responsibility fixed, the general effect would be that the government would be more responsive to the will of the community as expressed by the Commissioners: the government would be more democratic. The Commissioners would have more time to deliberate and plan, and they would not be hindered by having "vested interests" in specific departments. An additional benefit is that capable men would be more likely to offer themselves for election as Commissioners, since the position would not require such a sacrifice of time and energy.

Unfortunately, Alabama law does not provide for the council-manager form of government as described above. There is a provision which permits commission-governed cities to employ a manager, but the law provides that he would appoint and remove all City employees except those in charge of the fire, police, and water departments (and any other utilities).<sup>1</sup> This, of course, would limit his effectiveness considerably. Tuscaloosa probably would not benefit by the employment of a manager under the present law, since it is only a half-way measure. It would not eliminate the problem of coordination, nor would it remove the Commissioners from administrative activities as completely as would be desirable.

---

1. Alabama Code 1940, Tit. 37, Sec. 419.

It is therefore recommended that the law be changed so as to allow the City Commission to employ a manager who would control all of the departments of the government. If such a change were made, then Tuscaloosa would benefit by employing a manager. The man employed should be one who is trained and experienced in municipal administration, and he should have the character and personality which would justify the confidence of the Commissioners and the community. Should the man chosen prove unsatisfactory to the community, he could be replaced without having to wait three or four years for the next election.

If the law were changed in the above-mentioned respects, a manager could be employed without increasing the cost of government in Tuscaloosa. The present Commissioners are paid a total of \$700.00 a month. Without administrative duties, they would naturally be expected to receive much less. If they each received no more than \$50.00 a month, there would be \$550 a month available for a manager's salary.

#### Office of the City Clerk

With the employment of a manager, the City Clerk would remain as the chief financial officer; the name of his Office might be changed to Finance Department. He should then be relieved of his miscellaneous part-time

duties as secretary to the Commission and the other governmental boards. These duties could be transferred to the Secretary in the Clerk's Office.

• • • • •

The following recommendations are made for consideration regardless of whether the foregoing change in the government becomes possible.

#### Financial Management

The system of financial management in use in Tuscaloosa is efficient and modern, and it meets the present needs of the government quite effectively. It should nevertheless be kept in mind that as the City grows, so will the government grow. Details which seem relatively unimportant now may well become more important later. Therefore the attempt should be made now to bring all practices of financial management into accord with the principles which experience has shown to be the most effective.

The City Commission should adopt the lump sum method of appropriating money to the departments, rather than itemizing appropriations. This would allow the departments the necessary flexibility in using the money made available. (The budget document should of course continue to be itemized so that the Commission may know how the totals

have been reached.) The post-audit would serve as the Commission's check, and responsibility would be centered in each department head for use of the money.

In connection with the lump sum appropriation, the work program and allotment system, by which the money appropriated is made available on a periodic basis (monthly or quarterly) has been found useful.<sup>2</sup> This assures that no department will exhaust its appropriation before the end of the year. The proportions made available for each period should be based on each department's carefully planned work program for the month or quarter.

This system is particularly useful when expenditures and revenues are uncertain and unpredictable,<sup>3</sup> as is the case with a growing community, or during depressions and wars. It requires careful estimates, by months or quarters, of both revenues and expenditures. Provision should be made for adjustments when expenditures or revenues exceed or fall below expectations.

---

2. Kneier, op. cit., p. 667.

3. Tuscaloosa's government underestimated revenues by \$100,081.50 and expenditures by \$112,378.23 in 1949. (*Report on Examination of Accounts, City of Tuscaloosa, September 30, 1949*, pp. 10 and 11.)

Concerning the continuous audit, the Municipal Finance Officers Association (and other municipal finance authorities) recommend that:

before approving a bill for payment, the chief financial officer must determine that commodities have actually been received or the services performed, that such commodities and services are in accordance with specifications, that the prices charged are fair and those agreed upon, that the expenditure is legal and will be charged against the proper appropriation, and that it is not in excess of such appropriation.<sup>4</sup>

The financial officer should also assure himself that the claim has not already been paid and that a sufficient amount remains to cover the claim. These requirements assure the centralization of financial control in the finance department, and prevent waste or possible misuse of funds. Tuscaloosa follows only the last two practices recommended by the Municipal Finance Officers Association, and the two subsequently listed. To assure continued efficiency as the City government grows, the continuous audit should include all the practices described above.

#### Personnel Management

The Civil Service Board should establish a genuine job classification system. The need for such a system will

---

4. Cited by Kneier, op. cit., p. 669.

increase as the municipal government expands. The Board might avail itself of University skill on this matter. Professional or graduate student assistance probably could be obtained from the Bureau of Public Administration at little cost to the City.

The Board should also prepare examinations which would test applicants' general intelligence and knowledge of the work to be performed. This is the only way to insure the employment of the most qualified personnel.

The City Clerk should investigate the possibilities of a morale or recreational program for City Employees. Social functions could be combined with information programs to develop a genuine esprit de corps among the City's personnel.

#### Planning

The City should employ a full-time planning technician to expedite the work of the Planning Board. Tuscaloosa's rate of growth makes scientific planning a vital function of the municipal government.

The Planning Board should think in terms of the eventual incorporation of the City of Northport into the City of Tuscaloosa, if this development is not already being considered. Several governmental functions are at present carried out on a cooperative basis between the two

municipalities, such as fire and police protection and water service. It is logical to anticipate the time when the two Cities will merge as a means of more effective solution to common problems.

#### Reports and Public Relations

There is need for a more positive public relations effort by the municipal government. The government will have to take the initiative in informing citizens of its activities. Several suggestions for such a program are submitted for consideration:

(1) In addition to the auditor's report, the City might print an annual booklet which would summarize its activities, showing clearly just what the government had been doing for the past year. The citizen should be told how his community had changed as a result of municipal decisions. Such a booklet should be widely distributed, perhaps by giving them out as people come in to pay taxes.

(2) Another booklet might be prepared which would explain in simple terms the organization and functions of the entire municipal government.

(3) Explanatory matter might be included with the quarterly financial reports which are published in the press. More complete explanatory matter might accompany the annual auditor's report, in the attempt to make it

intelligible to those unacquainted with the government and the terms used to describe its financial actions.

(4) The Mayor of Louisville, Kentucky, found that weekly "Beef Sessions" increased citizen interest in municipal government. They consist of open meetings attended by the Mayor and his department heads. Citizens who have complaints to make or questions to ask come to the meetings and state their complaints or ask their questions. The Mayor then turns to the department head who has jurisdiction over the matter and lets him answer or explain. This technique also has the effect of keeping department heads alert. Tuscaloosa might experiment with similar sessions.

(5) A series of radio programs on some theme such as "Know Your City Government" might be organized and presented.

#### Revenue

The most serious problem faced by Tuscaloosa's government, and the one to which no adequate method of solution can be addressed, is the revenue problem. It has already been pointed out that increased receipts from property taxes offers the most equitable solution - possibly the only one. But this merely defines the problem.

Although, as noted before, a real adjustment will probably have to be statewide, it is perhaps possible that

some progress might be made in Tuscaloosa under the present system.

First, the Commissioners should make known to the public generally, and to such organizations as the Chamber of Commerce and the leading civic clubs specifically, the deficiencies of their departments. It is true that it might prove impossible to persuade people to take action which would result in their having to pay higher taxes, but an appeal to civic responsibility might get some response. The possibility of increased property tax revenues depends to a great extent on the degree to which pressure is brought upon the Board of Equalization to make revisions, and on the amount of time and facilities made available to that Board for carrying out such revisions, if they could be convinced of the necessity of such a policy.

The labor unions and women's clubs should not be overlooked as potential instruments to increase the tension for a solution for this problem.

It is by no means certain that these measures would have significant effect on changing the structure of Tuscaloosa's revenues. They are suggested in the absence of knowledge of a better recommendation based on experience. It is necessary, however, that "something be done." It is

furthermore the responsibility of the leaders of the government to take the initiative in trying to increase revenues by a more equitable distribution of the financial burden.

#### Police Department

To increase the effectiveness of police protection, it is recommended that the Police Department establish definite beats for its motor patrol. A study should be made of the distribution of law violations throughout the community, so that beats could be laid out on the basis of need.<sup>5</sup> Also, the practice of using only one man in each patrol car should be adopted until such time as the Department is assured of more adequate funds. This would free three or four patrolmen for use elsewhere.

In order to increase the effectiveness of dealing with Negro law violation, as well as to reduce some of the tension centering about relations between the two races, the Department should employ one Negro detective and one or more Negro patrolmen to deal with law violations in Negro districts of the community.

#### Public Works

An increase in efficiency and a reduction of expenses might follow from a modification in the City's organization

---

5. Cooper, op. cit., pp. 164-65.

for public works. The Street and Garbage Department, the Engineering Department, and the Water Works Department each carries on separate repair activities. Garbage collection is the responsibility of the Street and Garbage Department, while disposal is handled by the Engineering Department. Much of the maintenance and supervision of the Water Works is handled by the Engineering Department. Sewer maintenance and minor repairs are handled by the Street and Garbage Department while more extensive repairs and all construction is the responsibility of the Engineering Department. All Departments draw upon the same supply of repair equipment, which is managed by the Engineering Department through a Public Works Department.

These conditions suggest that a consolidation of public works activities would improve efficiency. The following re-organization is recommended:

Since the Engineering Department at present fulfills functions touching all three Departments, it is the logical agency in which to organize all public works activities. The name of this Department should be changed to "Public Works Department," or "Public Service Department."<sup>6</sup> Its Director should be the present City Engineer. This

---

6. The latter name might have some psychological value in public relations.

Department would have responsibility for (a) planning and supervising all public constructions and repairs including streets and sewers, (b) operating the garbage and trash collection and disposal service, (c) operating the Water Works, and (d) carrying out building, plumbing, and electrical inspections.

The organization of the Department for carrying out these responsibilities should be as follows:

1 Director (the present City Engineer)

2 Assistant Directors

1 full-time Secretary

1 full or part-time filing clerk, as needed

1 Division of Plans and Specifications  
(Present drafting room staff)

1 Division of Garbage and Trash Collection and Disposal (present employees engaged in this activity in Street and Garbage Department and Engineering Department. This Division to be headed by present head of Street and Garbage Department. The Division should also operate the box and can sanitary disposal.

1 Water Works Division

This Division to be responsible for operation of the Water Works and for billing and collecting for water service. It should be headed by a Director or Supervisor of the Water Works.

1 Construction and Repairs Division

This Division to be headed by an engineer with the assistance of as many foremen to supervise construction and repair crews as are needed. In the Division would be consolidated the present Public Works Department and the maintenance and repair

crews of the Street and Garbage Department and the Water Works Department. These would be organized into crews according to work done, such as a sewer construction and repair crew, a street maintenance and repair crew, and a water works repair crew. This division would have charge of the equipment of the present Public Works Department, thus allowing the abolition of the latter as a separate agency. The consolidation might allow a reduction in the present number of employees engaged in repair and maintenance work.

The re-organization outlined here would be in accord with the recognized principles that public works activities should be unified in one department, and that the service and construction or repair functions should be divided between agencies responsible to the same authority.<sup>7</sup>

The Director of this consolidated Department should be responsible to the city manager, if one is appointed. If not, with Tuscaloosa's present Commissioners, it would probably be advisable for the proposed Public Works Department to be placed under the supervision of Associate Commissioner No. Two who now supervises the Water Works Department. This Commissioner's finance responsibilities could then be given to the President of the Commission, who now supervises the Street and Garbage Department but who

---

7. Ibid., pp. 179-82. Also Henry G. Hedges, City Management, pp. 511-13.

would be without an operating Department if the proposed Public Works Department were adopted.

#### Education, Public Health, and Public Welfare

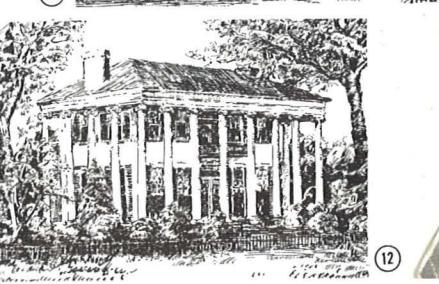
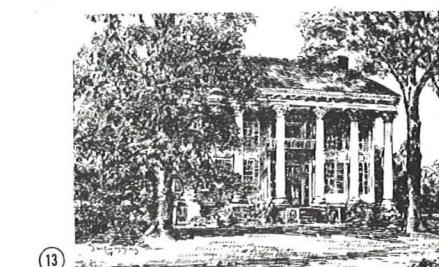
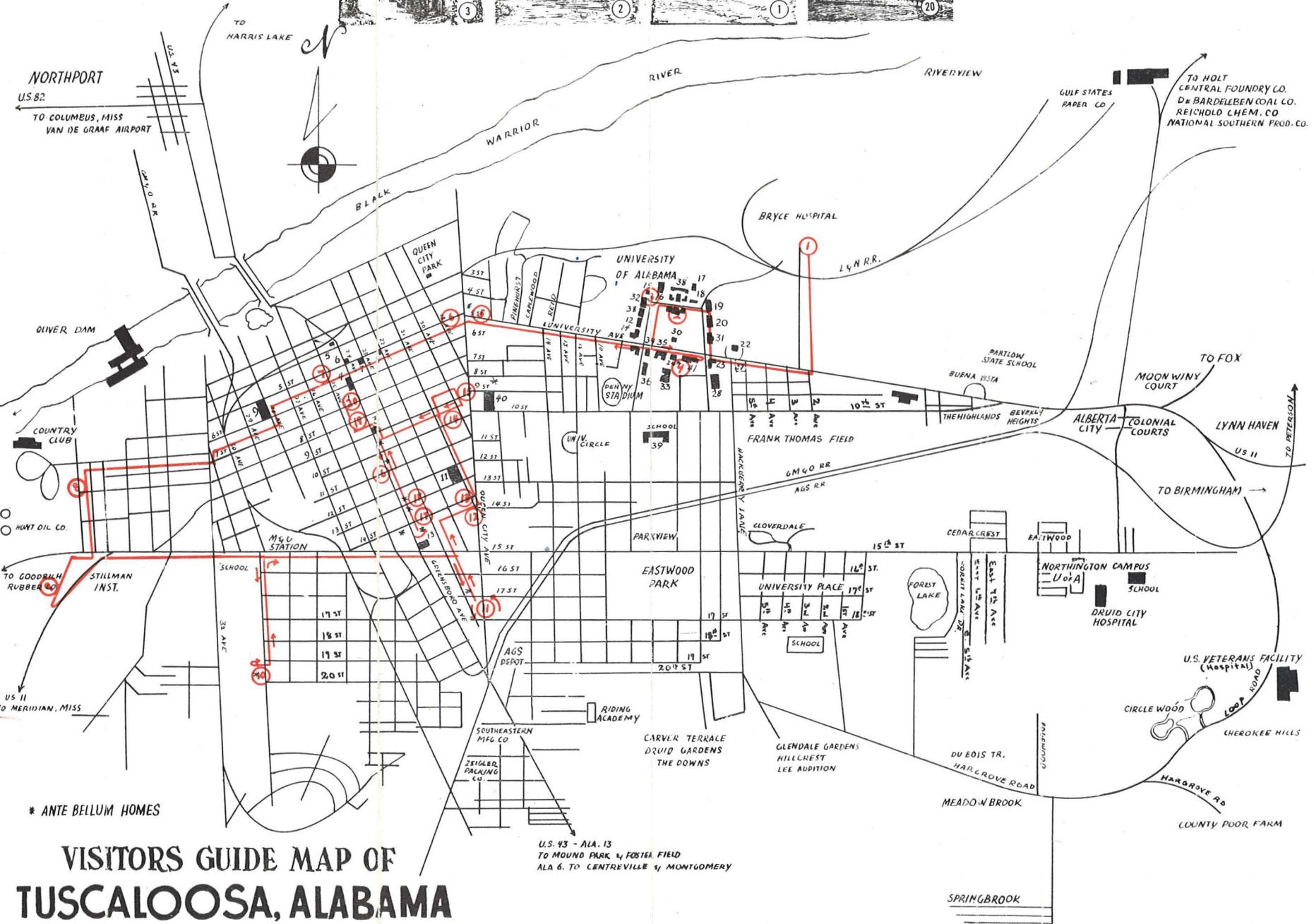
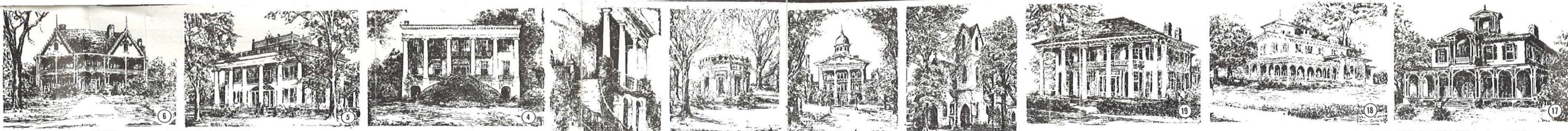
Since these functions are not directly supervised by the municipal government, no recommendations concerning administrative organization or practices will be made. The only suggestion offered is that more money be appropriated to these functions as it becomes available. They do not now receive a normal proportion of the City's revenues.

#### Recreation

The Recreation Department would probably receive more adequate support if it were made a regular Department of the City Government, operating under the supervision of a city manager or of one of the Commissioners. It is possible that it would operate more efficiently if it were subject to the regular financial control of the government. It is also recommended that the Community Center for Negroes with its recreation program be placed in the City Recreation Department. This would enable coordination of the activities of the two agencies, and would place the Community Center on a more stable financial basis.

## Miscellaneous

The changes which are taking place in the caste system in Tuscaloosa have been described. It is plausible to suggest that unless the fact of change is recognized and planned for, it will occur all the more painfully. The need for a sincere attempt on the part of both Negroes and whites to understand each others' personalities, aims, and limitations is evident. Therefore it is recommended that the City Commission appoint a Committee composed of five or six perceptive leaders of the white community and an equal number of similar leaders of the Negro community. The function of this group would be, first, to try to learn to understand each other on a basis of sincere good will, and second, to study, discuss, and make recommendations to the City Commission about the problems of both white and Negro communities, as they are concerned with the relations between them. If the members of this Committee were carefully chosen, and if it received genuine encouragement from the municipal authorities, it could aid greatly in preventing tensions from rising to the danger point from the change which is taking place in the caste system.

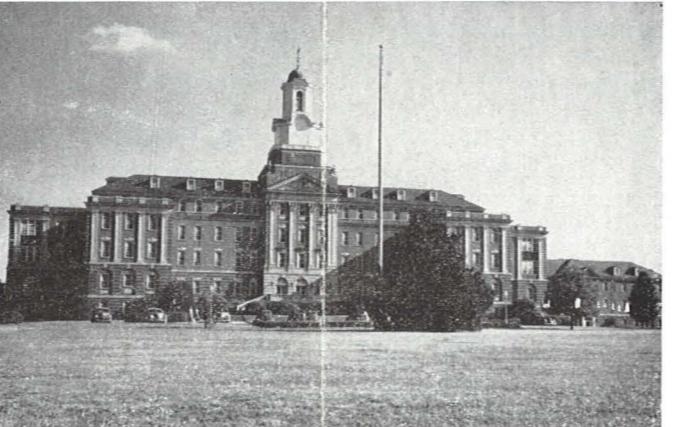
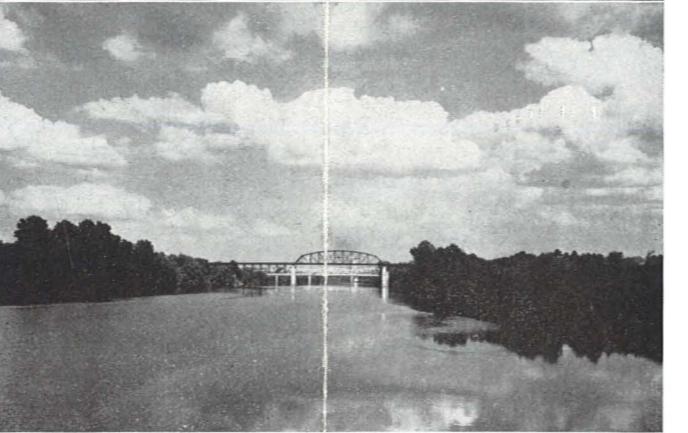
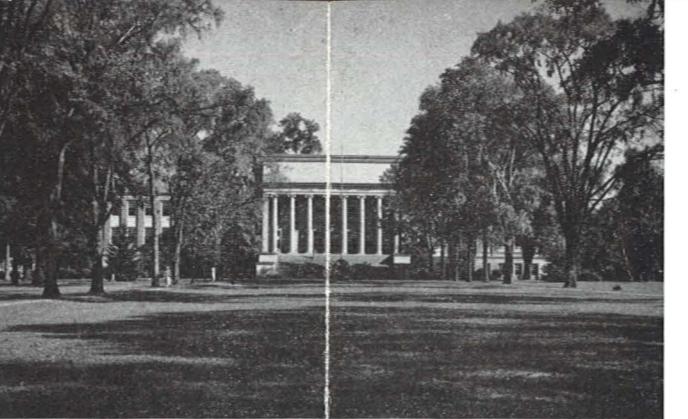




Top: Greensboro Avenue

Center: Broad Street

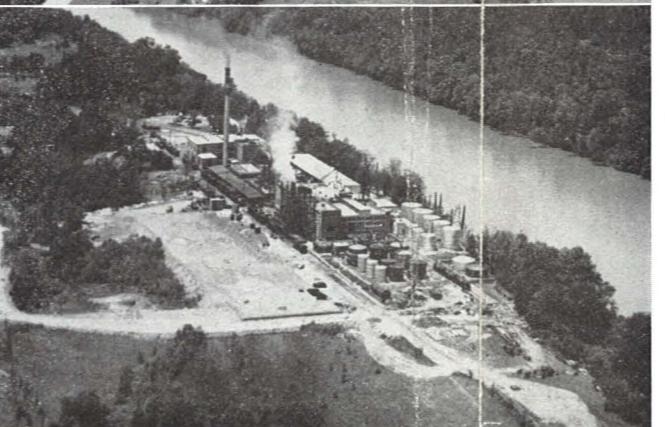
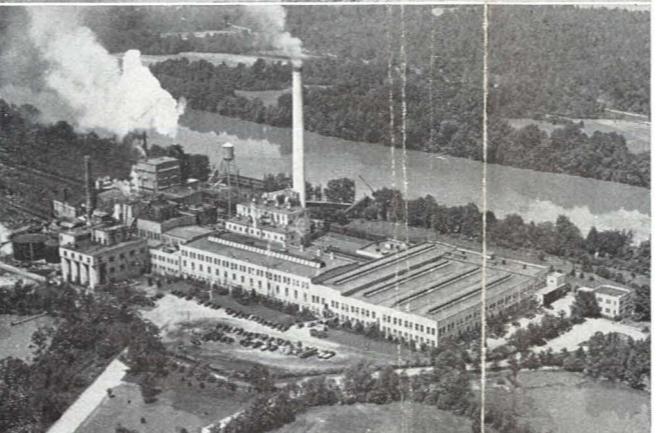
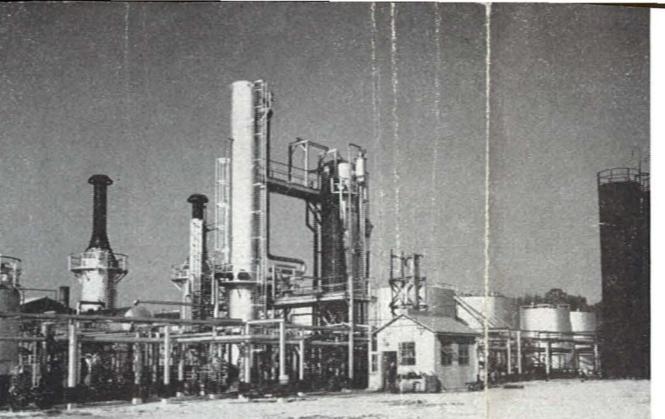
Bottom: Tuscaloosa Country Club



Top: Gorgas Library, University campus

Center: Black Warrior River at Tuscaloosa

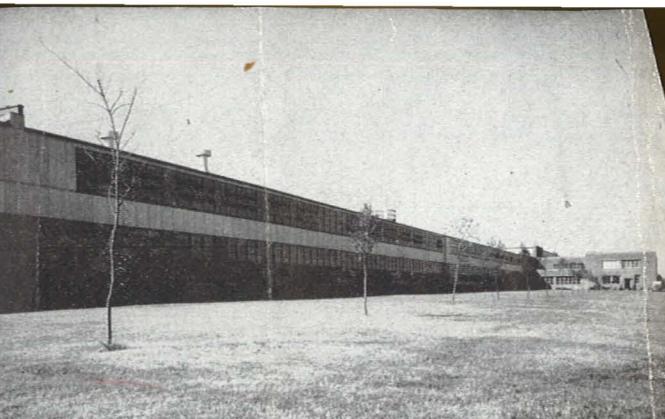
Bottom: U. S. Veterans Hospital



Top: Hunt Oil Company Refinery

Center: Gulf States Paper Corporation

Bottom: Reichhold Chemicals Company



Top: B. F. Goodrich Rubber Company

Center: DeBardeleben Coal and Coke Co.

Bottom: Central Foundry Company

## APPENDIX B

City Commissioners of Tuscaloosa, Year First Elected, Time Served, and Occupation, from 1911 to 1950. Compiled from Green, Ben A., "Tuscaloosa - The Druid City - Through 130 Years of History." The Tuscaloosa News, July 31, 1949.

| Name             | Year<br>First<br>Elected | Years<br>Served | Terms<br>Served | Occupation                |
|------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| Weatherford      | 1911                     | 1               | 1               | Printing Co.              |
| Friedman         | 1911                     | 2               | 1               | Real Estate, Banking      |
| Sprott           | 1911                     | 3               | 1               | Lawyer                    |
| Rodes            | 1912                     | 3               | 1               | Engineer                  |
| Prince           | 1913                     | 15              | 5               | Real Estate               |
| Robertson, B.    | 1914                     | 12              | 4               | Produce Co.               |
| Atkinson         | 1915                     | 3               | 1               | Real Estate,<br>Insurance |
| Harris           | 1916                     | 15              | 5               | Livery Stable             |
| Davis            | 1926                     | 23              | 7               | Druggist                  |
| Pearson          | 1930                     | 7               | 2 1/3           | Lawyer, Insurance         |
| Parker           | 1931                     | 6               | 2               | Real Estate, Banking      |
| Livingston       | 1937                     | 13              | 3 1/4           | Lawyer                    |
| Nicol            | 1937                     | 13              | 3 1/4           | Real Estate               |
| Robertson, J. S. | 1949                     | 1               | 1/4             | Gasoline Agency           |

## APPENDIX C

City Commissioners of Tuscaloosa and Number of Votes Cast in Municipal Elections from 1911 to 1949. Compiled from Ben A. Green, "Tuscaloosa - The Druid City - Through 130 Years of History." The Tuscaloosa News, July 31, 1949.

| Year<br>elected | Names               | Votes<br>cast                   |
|-----------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1911            | Weatherford, C.W.*  | Friedman, S.W. Sprott,S.H. App. |
| 1912            | Rodes, R.E. (App.*) | 741                             |
| 1913            |                     | Prince, Hugh 615                |
| 1914            |                     | Robertson,B. 733                |
| 1915            | Atkinson, Cliff     | 746                             |
| 1916            |                     | Harris, Norfleet 781            |
| 1917            |                     | Robertson ?                     |
| 1918            | Prince, Hugh        | 607                             |
| 1919            |                     | Harris Unopp.                   |
| 1920            | Prince              | Robertson 980                   |
| 1921            |                     | 1126                            |
| 1922            |                     | Harris 875                      |
| 1923            |                     | Robertson 1994                  |
| 1924            | Prince              | ?                               |
| 1925            |                     | Harris Unopp.                   |
| 1926            |                     | Davis,Luther Unopp.             |
| 1927            | Prince              | 1639                            |
| 1928            |                     | Harris Unopp.                   |
| 1929            |                     | Davis Unopp.                    |
| 1930            | Pearson, John C.    | 2023                            |
| 1931            |                     | Parker, D.O. 2430               |
| 1932            |                     | Davis 2848                      |
| 1933            | Pearson             | Unopp.                          |
| 1934            |                     | Parker 2541                     |
| 1935            |                     | Davis 2220                      |
| 1936            | Pearson             | 1728                            |
| 1937            | Livingston,J.F.     | Nicol, W.H. Davis 3338          |
| 1941            | Livingston          | Nicol Davis Unopp.              |
| 1945            | Livingston          | Nicol Davis Unopp.              |
| 1949            | Livingston          | Nicol Robertson,J.S. 4313       |

\* C. W. Weatherford was re-elected in 1912 by the vote given, but resigned shortly thereafter. The two remaining Commissioners appointed R. E. Rodes to complete the term.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

## Books:

- Alabama County Statistical Abstracts. Bureau of Business Research, University of Alabama, University, Alabama, 1944.
- Benedict, Ruth, Race: Science and Politics. Viking Press, New York, 1945.
- Cash, W. J., The Mind of the South. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York, 1941.
- Chase, Stuart, The Tyranny of Words. Harcourt, Brace and Co., New York, 1938.
- Cooper, Weldon, Municipal Government and Administration in Alabama. Weatherford Printing Co., Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 1940.
- Cuber, J. F. and Harper, R. A., Problems of American Society: Values in Conflict. Henry Holt and Co., New York, 1948.
- Davis, Allison, Gardner, Burleigh B. and Gardner, Mary R., Deep South. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1941.
- Dollard, John, Class and Caste in a Southern Town. Yale University Press, New Haven, 1937.
- Editor and Publisher Market Guide, 1950 edition. Editor and Publisher Co. Inc., New York, 1949.
- Hodges, Henry G., City Management. F. S. Crofts and Co., New York, 1939.
- Holloway, W. V. and Smith, C. W., Government and Politics in Alabama. University Supply Store, University, Alabama, 1941.
- Key, V. O., Southern Politics. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York, 1949.
- Kimball, Solon T. (editor), Readings in the Science of Human Relations, Vol. I. University of Alabama Press, University, Alabama, 1949.

- Kneier, Charles M., City Government in the United States, Harper and Bros., New York, 1947.
- Langer, Suzanne K., Philosophy in a New Key. Penguin Books, New York, 1948.
- Lasswell, Harold D., World Politics and Personal Insecurity. McGraw-Hill, New York, 1936.
- Lepawsky, Albert, Administration. Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York, 1949.
- Little, George, Memoirs of George Little. Weatherford Publishing Co., Tuscaloosa, 1924.
- Lynd, R. S. and Helen M., Middletown. Harcourt, Brace and Co., New York, 1929.
- McCorvey, Thomas C., Introduction to the History of Tuscaloosa. Weatherford Printing Co., Tuscaloosa, 1925.
- Municipal Police Administration, The International City Manager's Association, 1943.
- Myrdal, Gunnar, An American Dilemma. Harper and Bros., New York, 1944.
- Merton, R. K., Social Theory and Social Structure. The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois, 1949.
- Newcomb, T. H. and Hartley, E. L., Readings in Social Psychology. Henry Holt and Co., New York, 1947.
- Ogden, C. K. and Richards, I. A., The Meaning of Meaning. Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., Ltd., London, 1923.
- Rapaport, Anatol, Science and the Goals of Man. Harper Bros., New York, 1950.
- Ridley, C. E. and Nolting, O. F. (editors), The Municipal Yearbook, 1949. R. R. Donnelly Sons Co., Chicago, 1949.
- Simplified Municipal Accounting. Municipal Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada, Chicago, 1950.

Smith, A. D. and De Land, T. A. (editors), Northern Alabama. Donohue and Henneberry, Chicago, 1888.

Smith, Charles W. Jr., The Electorate in an Alabama Community. Bureau of Public Administration, University, Alabama, 1942.

Statistical Abstract of Alabama, 1949. Bureau of Business Research, University, Alabama, 1949.

Tuscaloosa, Alabama and Its Sister Cities. The Tuscaloosa Chamber of Commerce, Tuscaloosa, 1946.

Warner, W. Lloyd, Social Class in America. Science Research Associates, Chicago, 1949.

Young, Pauline V., Scientific Social Surveys and Research. Prentice-Hall, New York, 1939.

Pamphlets:

"Annual Report for 1946," The Tuscaloosa Chamber of Commerce, Tuscaloosa, 1946.

"Education in Tuscaloosa," The League of Women Voters, Tuscaloosa, October 27, 1949.

"Estimated Non-Agricultural Employment for Tuscaloosa County for December, 1948," Alabama State Employment Service, Local Office, Tuscaloosa, January, 1949.

"Public Health and Sanitation--City of Tuscaloosa," The League of Women Voters, Tuscaloosa, January 27, 1950.

"Survey of Department of Public Safety of Tuscaloosa, Alabama," The League of Women Voters, Tuscaloosa, August 25, 1949.

"Tuscaloosa Presents Industrial Opportunities," The Tuscaloosa Chamber of Commerce, Tuscaloosa.

Articles:

Green, Ben A., "Tuscaloosa--The Druid City--Through 130 Years of History," The Tuscaloosa News, July 31, 1949.

Wilson, O. W., "One Man v. Two Men in Patrol Cars,"  
Public Management, April, 1940.

Newspapers:

The Tuscaloosa News, January 11 and 14, 1948; May 19, 1948; July 21, 1948; August 14, 1948; March 10, 1949; July 31, 1949; August 19 and 24, 1949; September 27, 1949; January 13, 17 and 31, 1950; February 7 and 28, 1950; March 19, 1950; April 6, 7, 18, 1950; May 3 and 5, 1950; July 28, 1950.

Government Documents:

Acts of the Legislature of Alabama of Local and Special Character Passed at the Regular Session of 1947, Birmingham Printing Co., Birmingham, 1948.

The Alabama Revenue System, Report of the Revenue Survey Committee, Montgomery, 1947.

Census volumes:

Twelfth Census of the United States, Vol. I (1900), pt. I. U. S. Census Office, Washington, D. C., 1901.

Thirteenth Census of the United States, Vol. II (1910). Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1913.

Fourteenth Census of the United States, Vol. III (1920). Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1922.

Fifteenth Census of the United States, Vol. II (1930), pt. 1. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1932.

Sixteenth Census of the United States, Vol. II (1940), pts. 1 and 2. Government Printing Office, Washington, D. C., 1943.

City of Tuscaloosa Garbage Regulations, Residential.

The Code of Alabama, 1940. The State of Alabama, 1941.

Ordinances of the City of Tuscaloosa.

Report on Examination of Accounts, 1939, City of Tuscaloosa.

Report on Examination of Accounts, 1949, City of Tuscaloosa.

Skinner, T. E., Alabama Constitution Annotated,  
Birmingham Printing Co., Birmingham, 1938.

Soil Survey of Tuscaloosa County, Alabama, Bureau of Soils, United States Department of Agriculture, Government Printing Office, Washington, 1912.

Manuscripts:

Bell, Robert K., Reconstruction in Tuscaloosa County. A bound master's thesis, University of Alabama, 1933.

Boucher, Morris R., Factors in the History of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, 1816-1846. A bound master's thesis, University of Alabama, 1947.

Clinton, Matthew W., Economic Conditions in Tuscaloosa City and County, 1865-1880. A bound master's thesis, University of Alabama, 1942.

Cole, Houston, Populism in Tuscaloosa County. A bound master's thesis, University of Alabama, 1927.

Kiger, Joseph C., Some Social and Economic Factors Relative to the Antebellum Large Planter. A bound master's thesis, University of Alabama, 1947.

Maxwell, Thomas, "Tuscaloosa, The Origin of Its Names, Its History, Etc." Paper read before the Alabama Historical Society, July 1, 1876.

Personal Interviews:

The following officials of the City of Tuscaloosa were interviewed by the author one or more times between the months of January and August, 1950:

Da Lee, W. F., City Clerk  
Edwards, H. A., Chairman, Planning Board  
Garner, S. P., City Auditor  
Livingston, J. F., Associate Commissioner No. One  
McKinley, J., Superintendent, Street and Garbage Department  
Nealeans, Mary, Secretary-bookkeeper, Recreation Board  
Nicol, W. H., Associate Commissioner No. Two  
Parker, A. C., City Engineer  
Reid, C. S., Superintendent, Water Works Department  
Robertson, J. S., President, City Commission Board  
Sprott, S. H., City Attorney  
Washington, S. W., Director, Negro Community Center  
(Not a city official)

In addition to the above, the author talked more or less briefly with other City employees.

The greatest number of interviews were with citizens of Tuscaloosa not connected with the government. Because many of these requested that they remain anonymous, it was decided not to list any of them.