

# How Our Boundaries Got in This Shape

**I**F a political convention or a federal bureau were carving up the United States today how do you suppose it would turn out?

Circumstances that led to establishment of state boundaries and state governments largely were temporary considerations that may have only limited significance in modern times.

The shape of Oklahoma, for example, was determined by the fact that land all around us already had been made into states, except for a 35-mile boundary adjacent to New Mexico Territory.

Counties within Oklahoma were structured partly according to Indian land allotments, partly by natural boundaries and partly by wishes of delegates to the Constitutional Convention.

Movements to consolidate some of our 77 counties in the interest of more efficient government have been initiated a number of times but none ever got off the launching pad.

Economists are not restricted by existing boundaries as they regroup people, cities or areas into patterns

they believe may serve their purposes.

Oklahoma is a pivotal state where Will Rogers said "All the weather in the country comes to change." Often it is attached to the "Old South," identified as one of "The Great Plains States" or counted as one of "The 17 Western States."

Some federal agencies include Oklahoma with Texas, Arkansas and Louisiana to make up a variegated package called the "South Central Region." Others designate it only as the "Texas-Oklahoma Region."

The Federal Land Bank of Wichita includes Oklahoma with Kansas, Colorado and New Mexico. The Federal Reserve Bank divides Oklahoma between its Kansas City and Dallas districts.

The Census Bureau publishes figures on 323 Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas. These include Oklahoma City, Tulsa and Lawton. An area adjacent to Arkansas is included with Fort Smith.

An organization called "Geodemographers," according to reports, has matched income and buying habits

with the nation's 36,000 postal ZIP codes.

Latest publicized restructuring of the states was done by Management Horizons, Inc., Columbus, Ohio. It combines Alaska and Hawaii into a single region and splits other states into a patchwork of 14 regions said to have "roughly similar" population growth rates, income levels, ethnic backgrounds and other considerations.

Most of Oklahoma falls in what is called "Plains Energy," with its capital at Dallas and extending into Kansas. Southeastern counties are included in "Dixie," headquartered at Atlanta. The Panhandle is classified as part of "Hispanic America," a huge territory with dual capitals at Los Angeles and Houston.

If this pattern should come into widespread use, Oklahoma's identity as a state would be diminished. That might not hurt business, however, because this area was identified as one of the two "most shopping mall saturated regions" of the country.