



## NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

# **“No More Than Any Citizen Should Do”: Theresa Galloway Holman’s Memoir of Early-Statehood-Era Politics**

*Edited by Alvin O. Turner\**

*Theresa Galloway Holman was the wife of H. H. (Harvey Hilton) Holman, a Wetumka merchant and banker who served in the first Oklahoma Senate from 1907 through 1909. Mrs. Holman’s unfinished manuscript, penned circa 1943 and entitled “Cushion of Confidence,” portrays the years from her birth in 1879 through her early years as daughter of a Methodist minister in Louisiana, Texas, and Oklahoma, her marriage to Holman in 1900, and until shortly after H. H. Holman decided that he would not seek a second term.<sup>1</sup>*

[By 1905], we were always hearing about the good and happy time when we would have a governor with all the rest of the elected officers like the old states, “back where we all came from.” The newspapers were urging somebody, anybody, everybody, to do something to let Oklahoma Territory or Indian Territory or both become two states or one state. The Congress was never allowed to forget us. There were little statehood conventions in the little towns of Oklahoma Territory, and the big ones too, including Kingfisher, Enid, Guthrie, and Oklahoma City. Republican committees would go up and plead with those of their party. The Democrats would even dare to speak up in a more or less hostile camp! Rough Riders would be sent to appeal to Teddy [Roosevelt], their bubbling and exuberant leader. Prominent Indians were sent to ask for statehood and Booker Washington’s influence was sought to make the representation complete.



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*Theresa J.  
Galloway Holman  
(Courtesy Beverly  
Holman Dow).*

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Theodore Roosevelt's not one to mince matters; he spoke his own mind. He told the committees plainly he did not favor two states when one would do. So that was the word with the bark on it. . . .

Then the Choctaw Chief, Green McCurtain, sent out a call, and the other chiefs came running according to their rule. It seemed to them the white man had talked enough; now the Indians should act. Each chief would name suitable chairmen for mass meetings to elect delegates to a convention to write a constitution for a state and ask Congress to let us in the union as the State of Sequoyah. So said so done. Our Chief of the Creeks, Pleasant Porter, was elected president that fine August day in 1905 and Charles Haskell, vice president. The Chief looked nice and dignified and benevolent and Mr. Haskell looked sharp and straight-in-the-eye and the young secretary, Alec Posey, slim and romantic-and-handsome.<sup>2</sup> One hundred and fifty of the one hundred and eighty-two delegates were present and every body felt so "Boys-we're-making-historyish."

Eastern newspaper men had been sent to report the efforts of "Poor Lo" as he made his entrance into the white man's game of politics. If they came to jeer, they remained to cheer, for everything was done decently and in order according to Cushing's Manual. Chief

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[Douglas H. Johnston] of the Chickasaws couldn't come; so he sent William H. Murray, and he couldn't have sent a better hand. Bill had already read a book. He knew what the other states had in their constitutions and had marked the good spots and the bad ones too. . . .

Male adults voted November 7, 1905 for the constitution, fifty-six thousand with nine thousand against.<sup>3</sup> "Well anyway our men-folks got to vote on something" as my favorite Indian neighbor said, then she sadly added, "but Washington won't notice us." She was right, Washington was in no mood for another mess of Democrats and that's what Sequoyah could be expected to send as congressmen.

The west side of the state had thrashed out the question and were resigned to the will of Washington and said in their friendliest editorials that we should "hang together" rather than separately. In less than a year Teddy Roosevelt had signed the "Enabling Act" which let us call a real convention to write a real constitution for both territories. . . .

When the delegates met at Guthrie, there were ninety-nine Democrats and one Independent—as well as a round dozen Republicans. They wrote a radical document. The railroads and corporations were treated as Satan, chained for a thousand years. The Sequoyah experience had been merely a taste of blood and now the beast was out to kill all enemies of the common man. The farmer was the pet, the coal miner next. The poor man was to be protected in his struggle to get better off or to stay poor, as he preferred.<sup>4</sup>

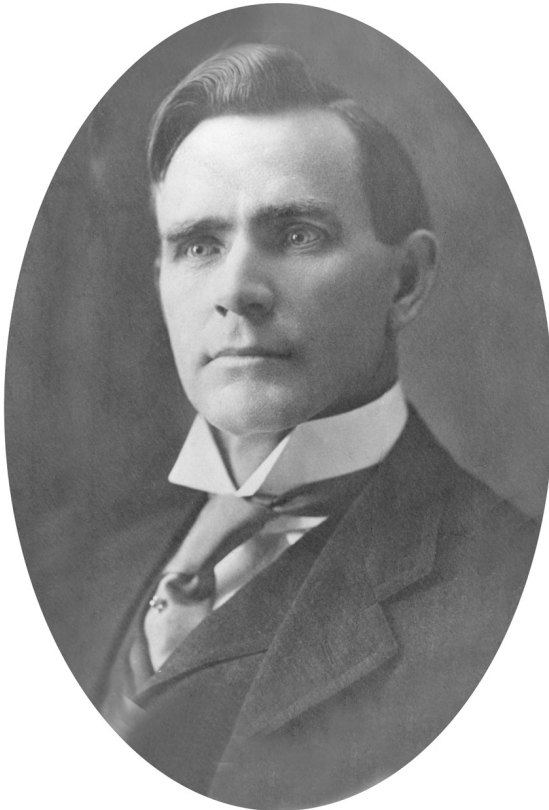
All the cartoons of Teddy with his big stick busting trusts were laid in the shade by these Oklahoma boys. They not only busted 'em, they busted the eggs before they hatched! It was too strong even for Theodore Roosevelt himself. We had misunderstood and had taken him too literally, it seemed. It had to be sandpapered a bit before he could sign it, but sign it he did. On September 17th, the male adults were to read it and vote to adopt or refuse. There were to be elected state and county officers also and the question of prohibition was to get a vote for or against it. Three big things to be done, but we could, and did.

The sparks began to fly. There was enough said and written about the liquor business to burn the left ear off every owner of a brewery or distillery. . . . Those days of that first campaign were never dull. The papers were full of politics including principles and personalities. And the public speaking . . . [offered] . . . everything but dignified proceedings. The candidates went together to the rallies over the country, each taking a turn at announcing and speak-

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ing for himself. Some were new at the business and got mixed up. One fellow running for county clerk had the previous speaker's bid for the sheriff's office still ringing in his ears, got up, and said he wanted to be our next sheriff. When the crowd roared, he stared and had to be told his mistake. He was that scared of an audience. . . .

It wasn't all sweetness and harmonious good fellowship by any means. I remember one night far into the woods we went for a speaking. The country people had gathered in the school house to be instructed. All was well until the candidates for county attorney got under way telling why the other fellow should not be elected. It was a grand fight. They called each other everything they could without being knocked down. This included everything from atheist to horse thief and when the meeting was over and we shuffled and "stomped" out, one old timer pushed back his broad hat, spat heavily and said,



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*H. H. Holman  
(Courtesy  
Beverly Holman  
Dow).*

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"I believe every word both o' them fellers said, and nary one of 'em ain't fitten for dog pelter."

I remember the young man who was H. H.'s opponent<sup>5</sup> for the state senate said the only sweetheart he ever had was his mother. He was quite sentimental and sweet when he gave this argument to prove his fitness for the office, but was cruel and harsh when he spoke of the dire calamities the public might expect if they failed in their duty and elected a banker! Some of the speakers and writers were lavish with words. I loved to see them sweat and shake back their hair and talk of the pioneers. . . . They had "come to this country in the prime of life" or "just lifting the curtain upon life's dreams and hopes." They had "bared their breasts to the fiercest storms, braved the forests and the deserts." They had "faced hardships and trials and established homes and firesides." We all felt pretty mellow when a candidate talked like that. We wanted to be worthy of those grand Old Timers.

Most of those offering themselves on the altar of public service talked of their own hardships and could easily locate a log cabin or farm as an honored birthplace. (Tom Lincoln and Miss Nancy surely worked a hardship on me when they built that log cabin that set the style of architecture for campaign orators). It seemed almost necessary to have an humble origin to be able to properly impress us with the extreme height attained from their lowly beginning.

The ground was well covered, even our little town was honored by visits of those seeking the highest offices, and I went to nearby bigger towns to listen to others. . . . Oklahoma Territory's last Governor, Frank Frantz, ran for Governor for the Republicans and Charles N. Haskell ran for the Democrats. . . . They were both interesting men, but Haskell's friends boasted he had never been "appointed to any position." He was a tireless campaigner, making three or four speeches a day.

Thomas Gore ran for the Senate and when he came to us, our hardware merchant, Walter Mackey, made him welcome. They had been schoolmates back in Mississippi and Walter had taken turns with the other boys in reading aloud to the blind student. We felt sorry when he rose and joked about being glad to "see" us, but we didn't need to, for he tore loose and made us a fine and fiery speech that got all the votes.<sup>6</sup> The other candidate for United States Senate was Robert L. Owen, whose father was a white man and mother a Cherokee. Everybody said as he rose to speak "Oo—doesn't he look just like a senator should look!"




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*A youthful Thomas  
P. Gore (OHS  
Research Division  
photo).*

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He spoke as a reasonable, educated Christian gentleman should speak, without buncombe, bad grammar or boasting. Here was another who had read a book. He not only got our votes then, but ever after as long as he would run. When the visiting political speakers spent the night with us, I sat and listened. I was amazed at the variety of interests and experiences of some of these men. I listened well to Bill Murray. He needed few questions from H. H. to keep him going on history and constitutional law. . . .

I liked the positive way Campbell Russell talked of his interests from cattle and schools to Farmers Union and Anti-Horse Thief Association. He spent the night—most of it—talking—and his eyes snapped as fast and fine in the wee hours as they did at the supper table. He was to be senator from a nearby district . . . .<sup>7</sup>

But all these were old friends and toward some we felt almost like kin. The campaign was not over and the big visitors were already here. Mr. Taft came, so good natured and already getting plump. He tried to jolly us out of the whole thing. We didn't want such a constitution as that, now really, be reasonable, he pleaded. He didn't get mad at us for wanting a state but he didn't want us to do something we'd regret. He urged us to be sensible and trust the Republican Party to give us the benefit of their vast experience in fair government! He was so mild and we liked his pleasant rumbling voice.<sup>8</sup>

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He knew we liked him, but he knew he wasn't getting anywhere with his argument. Then William Jennings Bryan came. There was a speaker, a presence, a voice, a smile! We went wild! The old floppy woolen hats as well as straws went up in the air. The heavens rang with the noise that included everything from Glory, Hurrah, the Rebel Yell and just plain "hollerin' and carryin' on" to shoutin' and shootin'. There had never been the like before. All others had been mere men talking. Here was a voice, not of this world. He spoke first of our constitution, said it was the child of our best brains and conceived in honest hearts. It was the voice of the people, the voice of God. There could be nothing more fair than to let all these neighbors vote for it. . . .<sup>9</sup>

Then he was gentle. He wished women could vote on this matter of prohibition, for it meant more to them. They had the training of the children and they needed all the help they could get from a sober and respectable community. The people who listened to him were workers and had a right to the best place for a home. He knew it would be decided right. (Yes we'd vote dry.) Now he was on safe ground sure enough. He was talking about the men whose names were on the Democratic ticket. These men represented the workers of the world. The fate of the nation depended upon these toiling masses and labor must no longer be crucified on a cross of gold.

The roof was off. Men cried and yelled themselves hoarse. Women snatched off their bonnets, lost their tucking combs, and shook their hair down their backs. We could not hear a word but we saw his arms uplifted as he waved farewell to all of us his comrades, then a blessing upon us and the fight was over—all but the shouting. The papers told us the constitution was adopted as was statewide prohibition and the entire Democratic ticket was elected. President Theodore Roosevelt said it was enough. We were a state and our name was Oklahoma. . . .

President Theodore Roosevelt . . . said he would sign the proper document on a Saturday morning, November 16, 1907, that would make a state of the two territories. [On that date] the trains were crowded and late; so H. H. and I missed a little of the Pageant at Guthrie. The newspapers told us how pretty Mrs. Leo Bonnet [Bennett] of Muskogee looked as the Indian bride of the Oklahoma cowboy. The whole ceremony was printed, from C. G. Jones' proposal of marriage for the bashful and silent groom to Will Durant's giving the bride away and the Baptist preacher's pronouncement, "I pronounce you man and wife, one incorporate, through all eternity."<sup>10</sup>

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*Above, the crowd “pushing around in front of the Public Library” as Gov. Haskell takes the oath of office, shown below (OHS Research Division photos).*





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*Statehood Day parade, accompanied by the city's trolley car, on November 16, 1907 (OHS Research Division photo).*

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*Soldiers parade down Oklahoma Avenue on Statehood Day, 1907 (OHS Research Division photo).*

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With 30,000 proud and happy citizens of the new state pushing around in front of the Public Library trying to see and hear we may have missed some of the goings on, but we got the idea that it was highly satisfactory. Those who had felt otherwise had evidently stayed at home.<sup>11</sup>

There were too many speeches afterward with dinner time passing and poor old feet crying from the long standing. One poor old fellow collapsed and gave up the ghost, and probably caused more commotion thereby than in any act of his life. I was pretty tired but not tired enough to die, for there was the parade.

I loved the parade with horses and horses and bands and carriages full of newly elected officers and the proud committeemen who had engineered their election. The Anti-Horse Thief Association rode four abreast and rode as if man, horse, and saddle were one piece. I liked the good horses that carried the Indian Light Horse Police from Muskogee. Colonel Roy Hoffman looked young and dashing on a prancing steed that arched its neck and bowed and whirled, leaned and reared and showed off his fine points in all the ways a smart horse knows.

And here came the Governor's carriage. He was waving his hat to the crowd and they sent him back a grand cheer. With him rode the Lieutenant Governor George Bellamy, Judge Dale and Leslie Niblack, the young Guthrie editor who was sweet on one of the pretty Haskell girls.<sup>12</sup>

A lot of bands from over the state squeaked and honked and pounded away for dear life between carriages of the winners and notables. The city Mayor was riding with Supreme Court Justices. The Corporation Commission took one carriage and were followed by the two United States Senators, Robert Owen and Thomas Gore, with the preacher, Reverend W. K. Dodson.<sup>13</sup> So we had benefit of clergy along with military authority and wisdom and law and odd bits of pomp and circumstance.

One tiny wee woman was an officer and rode with the great. She was Miss Kate Barnard, Charity Commissioner, in her little green and gold one sided turban and friendly smile. She well

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*Kate Barnard (OHS Research Division photo).*



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*Musicians preparing to play at the Statehood Day barbecue in Guthrie's Island Park, now called Mineral Wells Park (OHS Research Division photo).*

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represented the sex afterward in the legislature, always appearing from nobody knew where just in time to knock down some bad man's playhouse and rescue the helpless. I think she attended most of the one hundred and sixty days<sup>14</sup> of that first term and took off that turban only to go to bed at night. When the parade reached the park, the Methodist church women were in charge with high school boys and girls to help see that we had sandwiches and coffee. Judging by the looks of the park afterward there was enough food for everyone and bread crusts for the birds.

The banquet at night was more formal, having benefit of talcum powder and best clothes. The collars of the men were open and high, those of the ladies were boned under the ears. The older ladies ran to black peau de soie with cream lace and jet, the rest of us used all the colors and wore flowers. . . .

The grand march about ten o'clock was led by Governor Haskell in his best and his wife looked sweet and as imposing as a short woman can look. Their daughters had been so excited all afternoon with their girl friends, doing their faces with ice and heat and creams as if their peach bloom complexions needed any improvements. Our room at the Royal Hotel was near theirs and we enjoyed the flittings and giggles of every new arrival of girl friends come to go to the Inaugural Ball. . . .



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*Gov. Charles N.  
Haskell, first gov-  
ernor of the State  
of Oklahoma  
(OHS Research  
Division photo).*

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We had a good time with everybody being on the band wagon. All over the state the towns were celebrating, for at last Mr. Haskell's campaign cry had meant something. "Let the people rule," he had shouted. Well, the people would try their hand.

When I think of those busy days of early history I know how other people must have worked, especially politicians and editors of our state papers. There were no combines of the press among us. Every little fellow was free to speak his mind and try to feed his family from the job printing.

The little society reporting was wordy and monotonous but evidently satisfying to the subscribers. Advertisers were dignified in their claims for the virtues of their goods and the meaningless words of the radio food sponsors had not been coined. Truly the news has been replaced by desperate efforts to sell us what we don't need and could well do without.

We took all the papers of our county as well as the *Weleetka American* and *Okemah Ledger* in the other county in the twenty-second district. We got the *Dallas News* too. H. H. read them and I read them, but I enjoyed the little details that he skipped. I loved the little neighborhood news turned in by some one who received a copy of the paper as part pay and the privilege of putting the family name in every issue.

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I liked their harmless efforts at humor, such as the teasing little questions about who the young lady in the case might be that a certain young man should so often be seen going north, or south. The cordial invitations to come out and hear Brother So and So on his appointed Sunday at the school house were there every week along with reports of the singing all day and dinner on the ground. Most of these family names are still familiar to the businessmen of our little town.

Names have always charmed me and I liked the given names that often show ingenuity in their home made way. All the papers had these correspondents and they signed themselves as just plain Bill, or Captain, or Gopher Hill. Ours wrote unbelievable things about well known fellow townsmen, and signed himself as Violet Eyes.

The *Henryetta Free Lance* had George Riley Hall for editor for many years and his popular verses appeared there first. He also published some of Alexander Posey's verses too, for they were the closest friends and nearly kin, having married sisters, the Misses Harris.

The *Calvin Enterprise* always named the citizens who crossed the River, for they lived on the far bank of the treacherous South Canadian that ran through the middle of our county.

My sister and I looked in on that first legislature several times. A lot of the wives and kin could always be seen in the gallery listening to the exchange of wit and wisdom that were parts of . . . days of actual law making. This job of starting the government to running took a lot of setting up and oiling of machinery and adjusting as well as a lot of fitting things together by trial and error.

Needless to say these ordinary men with new and far from ordinary work spent some time in learning. We heard men talk too long considering what they added to the sum total of knowledge. Some were tiresome because they were trying to cover the ground so another speaker could see no cracks in his plan, and some were dull because they were made that way. But there were quick turns and sparks of wit that kept a session from being too drab even to a disinterested and uninformed woman.

Some of the women were tatting, some crocheting or otherwise using their fingers; and some sat primly listening, even awed by the situation. It was a pretty important occasion and a woman was put on some nervous strain when she saw her husband as one of those chosen to work for the common good, and besides that he might rise any minute and speak! We hoped he'd get it right! George Bellamy was a patient chairman, and the senators were respectful. Camp-

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bell Russell was still batting his eyes and looking both ways, missing nothing and usually had a paper ready to send up to the reader after a few dozen eye-snappings.

H. H. was on the Banking Committee and had grave doubts of some of the plans for guaranteeing state bank deposits.<sup>15</sup> He was interested in the care of children of widows, and widows of drunkards. Charles Page, a poor man made rich by oil, had worked out his plan for giving just such children a chance for an education and to stay with their mothers too. He builded even better than he planned, for the enormous investment near Tulsa does what he hoped and makes it pay. H. H. rejoiced and approved of Charles Page's plan and said it was a much better scheme than to trust to any political set-up. His bill was No.14 in the senate's calendar but was frazzled out in the committee because other things seemed more pressing to these servants of the people, I reminded him that women and children had no votes. . . .<sup>16</sup> I was remembering the experiences o[f] our Indian friends who had been sent to Washington asking things for their people all these years.

I have heard Canards and Tigers and Porters say they could hardly say these were business trips, for they never did nor saw any business.<sup>17</sup> They were treated kindly, like children asking to go somewhere when mama has a room full of company and says "run along" and quietly but firmly pushes them out and closes the door without hearing what they wanted. The Indians never seemed exactly resentful, but took it as a natural condition. They told the truth when they ended a bit sadly with, ["They couldn't give us much time when we have no votes to give them in return."

I told H. H. those mere matters of the heart were not so dignified as big things like election laws, taxes and sending official greetings to congress! He took my banter in high good humor and replied in kind but knew I was glad his heart was still leading his head around.

The work was hard and the workers new. They had to make all those provisions in the constitution work and find the money to pay for them. The railroads had to be put under control and kept there. There were bills to make them provide separate coaches and waiting rooms for Negroes, bills to make them run trains on time with full crews and carry medicine chests and to dig drainage ditches beside their tracks, as well as put electric head lights on their engines. I never dreamed a railroad man had to be told so much. I don't see how they ever managed before we came along.<sup>18</sup>

Then there was the bill defining the Sabbath and how it might risk desecration and [another that] a man must live here a year be-

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fore he could get a divorce. . . . The bill to enforce prohibition was a bunch of nettles to handle, for a man had rights whether he sold, bought or eschewed or drank intoxicating liquor. When one bill was introduced declaring an office holder “unfit for his trust” when he was proven a breaker of this law, one distressed solon rose to protest saying, “Gentlemen, we can’t do a thing like that; we dare not or the state will go Republican in three years!” Another speaker was on his feet to say, “We must do our duty, as we see it. This state won’t go Republican in thirty years if we do our duty honestly now!”



*Charles N. Haskell signing the Prohibition Bill (OHS Research Division photo).*

The women of Guthrie spent themselves generously in doing nice things for the wives of the first legislature. There were rides about town, for most of them drove their own carriages. There were a few cars but they were very precious and were driven by colored [sic] men with patent leather covered bills to their caps and wide cuffs on their leather gloves and such an air! There were teas and parties in the afternoon, and the law makers were included in the bigger affairs in the evening.

Mrs. Haskell didn’t run about enough to suit some; her heart belonged to Charles. The Governor worked harder than anybody, for




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*Lucille E.  
(Mrs. Charles N.)  
Haskell (OHS  
Research  
Division photo).*

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that was his habit and his wife was ready to fill in with proper food and rest any odd moments he could spare. Nobody could blame her after knowing her, for all the affairs of this world could be interesting to her only in their connection with C. N. Haskell. She looked after the children, yes, but they were to remember their father first. His work, his health, his comfort, his wishes the children knew and considered before any other plans or people.

The oldest of the girls played the piano and when the parlor was free she had me sing old songs. Among others I remember "Afterward," "Forgotten," "September" and "Her Bright Smile Haunts Me Still."

We were invited to some parties at Oklahoma City too, but Mr. Haskell had spoken clearly and early against the men's wasting their time in accepting social invitations out of town. We could go without being counted as "capitol [*sic*] influenced." Guthrie was to keep the state Capitol until 1913 . . . [and] we were never allowed to forget the permanent location of the state capitol. . . .<sup>19</sup>

When we visited the Lower House, we were kept busy watching and listening, for the room was bigger, had about twice as many men . . . [as the senate chamber] . . . and they were far from reticent. Bill Murray's voice boomed and his gavel pounded, but the bad little



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boys were like the grade school in their determination to speak without permission. The things they wanted were usually reasonable but they had no time nor patience to wait for another fellow to have his say unless he made it short. There was also a tendency to get personal and even threatening. I loved it. There was life, liberty and the pursuit of something if ever I saw the thing in action.

A lot of the choicest bits were always overlooked when the minutes were read, and I felt like the cream had been skimmed and only blue John was to be saved for posterity.<sup>20</sup> I think so now as I read their proceedings, but my memory fills in with some spicy flavors.

I feared for the consequences when a bill was offered against carrying concealed weapons. You might have thought a man's right to health and life were being taken away. Must a man go defenseless? Must a man go undressed? A six-shooter on the hip was what socks were on the feet. The other side came up to remind us that there was law now in the land. Our lives were protected by this new state we loved. The old law of tooth and claw was out-moded and each man was now his brother's keeper! Let us exalt the law of love in our daily lives and the country would be safe! My Methodist background made me ready for an exhortation to get on board, the old ship of Zion and sail on to glory, but the gavel had called the wise men to consider a bill for the comfort of the traveling public.

There was a long drawn out discussion about hotels and their shortcomings. They should not expect a man to pay money and sleep between sheets too short to stay put. Nothing made a man madder than to have the cover crawl up toward his navel and leave his feet sticking out. Oh, they were definite!<sup>21</sup>

There was the one who rose to remind the speaker that the day had been but yesterday when two sheets were unknown and a man was lucky to sleep with his head on his saddle and cover with a blanket or a soogen.<sup>22</sup> They were always like that, playful and prone to sentiment, but the result is a law that makes the Oklahoma hotel furnish its beds with sheets three yards long.

Another thing that roused the ire of the man who ate away from home was cracked dishes. Who wanted to eat food from a platter, bowl, or plate that held in its crevices remains of ancient servings soaked in stale dishwater? One vehement objector roared, "[I]t's not sanitary I tell you and worse than that it's not healthy." My, but we were getting nice.

Now there was one who objected to street begging or house to house begging. The resulting law won't let a man on an Oklahoma

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street take a quarter without giving something in return. This may be nothing more than a lead pencil or a paper of pins or needles. One legislator rose to ask a question. He wanted to be assured there was no intention in this bill to interfere with our street singers. He said there would be a loss to mankind if these itinerant vendors of the old ballads and other heart touching songs were prevented from taking a collection in return for their singing on the street corners and in public places where people pass or wait for trains. He asked if anyone ever heard a good old cowboy song in an opera house. No one rose to defend the concert singer's repertoire. He was launched into his subject and sailing. He said this world was already moving too fast toward the materialistic and leaving behind the old fashioned virtues, and soon, all too soon, we would be a nation of business interests without a heart.

He warned us further. The very men he was addressing had come from all points of the compass and from "all walks of life." I was sure of something good when a speaker used phrases like "all walks of life." The words sounded like all creation might be out for interminable excursions with indefinite destinations but sure to include some thrills in exploration. He was sure our happiest memories included songs from these varied homes of our land. He was mentioning some of his favorite songs as a child and I was touched by the picture of a little hymn singing boy who was now so bald and so fat.

He took us to the West, out on the rolling prairie under the stars where he sang to the cattle. "Must those songs die? Nobody sings them anymore. The prairie is being plowed up or drilled full of holes in man's mad search for oil. The cowboy's life is fast becoming a thing to read about, but can there be a more tender memory than his singing in his loneliness on the wide and limitless plains?" It seemed these songs would be lost to us if they were not sung by the lovely minstrel with his guitar, banjo, or accordion, to accompany his voice on our streets. Fortunately this was one place the blind were especially fitted to fill and their opportunities for combining the earning of a living and giving pleasure were all too few.

The author of the bill could bear to hear no more and was on his feet with arm extended to make plain that the singers should sing. When a singer gave a song he was surely entitled to remuneration. We sat back and sighed. Justice was done once more.

My sister said, "If those fellows had to work in the First National with a fellow at the south window droning 'Get Along Little Doggies' and 'Old Joe Bowers' all day they wouldn't be so sentimental."

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The little children ran up and down the sacred halls but were quieted when they saw the room filled with dignified gentlemen sitting behind their desks. One little girl piped, "They look like they are playing school." She was shushed and said, "Where's papa?" Her mother pointed him out and she was still a few minutes, then demanded something more lively. As she was led out she was still piping high with, "Mama, what are those men hollering for?" Poor little thing[;] she couldn't sympathize with the program of literally blowing a state into existence.

I enjoyed this law making business and I liked the wives and children of the men elected to do this hard work. H. H. got pretty tired of it. There was so much that was irrelevant, so much that was monotonous repetition. He came home as often as possible and said early and late he was not cut out for a politician.

I have some letters . . . [from H. H.] that are full of his disgust at the rag chewing over things that mattered little then, and less now. He was learning, he said. He learned about how strings are pulled to get something done, for among his fellow legislators were a few sharp lawyers who had practiced in other states. There were laws against lobbying, but there were ways to keep the letter and break the spirit. The most innocent looking chip could be turned over and there was a bug. . . . All who had won election under the flag of the Democratic Party wore not Democrats. . . . If we could have had the magic eye to patrol our state borders we should have discovered piles of figurative clothing left by some of our politicians as they entered Oklahoma. Just outside the state line were dropped Republican robes, Socialist suits and Populist pants, and their owners were newly fitted out in regulation Democratic dress. . . .

H. H. was among the cautious, inclined to quiet reason and listened patiently to a lot of droning because he hoped to find something substantial that would help, and was sometimes rewarded. H. H. said he was entitled to a vacation after so much wear and tear from his spell of politics. He said he had worked harder and done less than in any year of his life. He didn't begrudge the inconvenience, the time taken from his business, nor the breaking up of his domestic peace if there had been anything constructive accomplished. It was no more than any citizen should do, and doubtless other men had sacrificed as much or more, but of one thing he was certain—there'd be no more!

## ENDNOTES

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<sup>1</sup> Harvey Hilton Holman, born in Louisiana on November 19, 1866, came with his family from Texas to Indian Territory in 1878. Self-educated, Holman was a teacher for several years in the Creek Nation. He operated a general store in Wetumka and in 1901 organized the First National Bank there. Theresa Galloway, daughter of Rev. T. G. Galloway, was also born in Louisiana and was raised in Texas. The Holmans married in 1900. With her husband's death in 1923, Teresa Holman moved to Norman with her four children. Her daughter, Catherine Elizabeth Holman, soon graduated from the University of Oklahoma and joined the English faculty there. Mrs. Holman wrote her autobiographical reminiscence circa 1943. She remained active in church work and gardening until her death in 1965. Joseph B. Thoburn, *A Standard History of Oklahoma* (Chicago: The American Historical Society, 1916), 1759; Holman family materials in the author's possession; *Daily Oklahoman* (Oklahoma City), September 27, 1923.

<sup>2</sup> Alexander Posey was a noted Creek poet and writer.

<sup>3</sup> The exact count of votes in the election approving that document was 56,279 to 9,073, as reported in Amos Maxwell, "The Sequoyah Convention: Part II," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* 28 (Autumn 1950): 322.

<sup>4</sup> Both critics and proponents of the new document acknowledged the scope of the reform measures embraced by the Oklahoma Constitution. Since that time, most objective analyses have agreed that it has proven less effective as a governing document than those of most other states. The impact of the reform measures is less clear. The editor argues an aspect of that question in "Oklahoma Poverty, Religion and Politics: Lessons from Economic History," in *Alternative Oklahoma*, ed. Davis D. Joyce (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007), 153–70.

<sup>5</sup> Holman won election from Senate District 22, created from portions of Hughes and Okfuskee Counties. Other candidates from the district included W. H. Howerton, a Republican. Holman addressed his commitment to all citizens in a notice published shortly after his election. Noting that farmers' groups had made an issue of his being a banker, he invited attention to his action in the senate, promising that farmers' interests would be represented along with those of every other citizen. He concluded, "I am at your service, command me." *Wetumka* (Oklahoma) *Gazette*, September 9 and 28, 1907.

<sup>6</sup> Gore, a Lawton attorney, had been blinded while still a youth and enjoyed a reputation as a skilled and fiery orator throughout his legal and political careers. The senatorial race was only an indication of public preference as the legislature would elect the senators, a common practice in states prior to passage of the Seventeenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. Gore actually received fewer votes than Henry Furman of Ada, who withdrew in accord with a Democratic Party agreement to assure there would be one senator from the western half of the state. See Monroe L. Billington, "Senator Thomas P. Gore," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* 35 (Fall 1957).

<sup>7</sup> Russell was noted as the rancher who had introduced Hereford cattle into Oklahoma and had organized one of the first local chapters of the Farmers' Union in Indian Territory. He was elected from Senate District 27, serving portions of Haskell, McIntosh and Muskogee Counties. *Rules of State Senate 1907–1908* (N.p.: n.p., n.d.), 48; *Muskogee* (Oklahoma) *News*, February 3, 1950; William H. Murray, *Memoirs of*

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*Governor Murray and True History of Oklahoma*, vol. 2 (Boston: Meador Publishing Co., 1945), 296.

<sup>8</sup> William Howard Taft, future president and already recognized as the political heir to Pres. Theodore Roosevelt, had the thankless task of trying to convince the voters of Oklahoma to reject their proposed constitution, thereby adding to an almost twenty-year wait for statehood. As a result, his remarks at various locations in Oklahoma that August were received coolly, even by many Republicans.

<sup>9</sup> Bryan had followed Taft into Oklahoma prior to the ratification vote, speaking at Vinita, Claremore, Tulsa, Sapulpa, Bristow, Chandler, and Oklahoma City. He returned on December 21, 1907, to speak to the Oklahoma Legislature and others who assembled at the Brooks Theater in Guthrie. He then proceeded to speak to a Democratic Party rally and then a massive public gathering in Oklahoma City on December 23. *Daily Oklahoman*, December 22, 1907.

<sup>10</sup> Special trains had been arranged to deliver the crowds who traveled across Oklahoma to Guthrie for the first Statehood Day, but the numbers exceeded the railroad's capacity to deliver all on time, leading to delays such as those experienced by the Holmans. That day's frantic round of official activities actually commenced within minutes of President Roosevelt's signature. Within minutes of his receipt of a telegram notifying him of that action, Haskell took an oath of office in private and immediately directed actions preventing Standard Oil's completion of a pipeline into Oklahoma. Two hours later the public ceremonies were witnessed by crowds of more than ten thousand people who gathered to watch the symbolic wedding of the territories and administration of a public oath of office to Governor Haskell. Frances Haskell, interview by Nancy Devore, February 1, 1975, 8, Vertical File, Oklahoma Territorial Museum, Guthrie, Oklahoma; D. W. Peery, "Twenty Seven Years a State," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* 12 (Winter 1934): 393-40; Muriel Wright, "The Wedding of Oklahoma and Miss Indian Territory," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* 35 (Fall 1957): 255-64.

<sup>11</sup> Mrs. Holman had made numerous prior references in her manuscript to Native American opposition to statehood and related concerns. See also her subsequent comments herein and Gaston Litton, *History of Oklahoma at the Golden Anniversary of Statehood*, vol. 1 (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1957), 508, 521.

<sup>12</sup> Leslie Niblack, who administered the oath of office to Governor Haskell, was editor-owner of the *Guthrie Daily Leader*, which had been established to offset the influence of Frank Greer's *Oklahoma Daily Capitol*, the state's leading Republican newspaper. Niblack and Frances Haskell, C. N. Haskell's daughter, would marry in 1909. Frances Haskell interview, 9; Dennie Hall, "Everyone Got His Two Cents Worth," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* 60 (Winter 1982-83): 460.

<sup>13</sup> Dodson was pastor of the First Baptist Church of Guthrie and had conducted the mock wedding uniting the two territories.

<sup>14</sup> The Enabling Act provided for a special 160-day legislative session to address the varied issues facing the new state; the legislature would use exactly that number with the session running from December 2, 1907, through May 26, 1908. Litton, *History of Oklahoma*, 1:511; Irvin Hurst, *The 46th Star: A History of Oklahoma's Constitutional Convention and Early Statehood* (Oklahoma City: Semco Color Press, 1957), 43.

<sup>15</sup> The Bank Guarantee Law was one of the more notable successes of the first Oklahoma Legislature and would serve as a model for subsequent national legislation guaranteeing bank deposits. Holman also served on senate committees for roads and highways, the geological survey, hospitals and charities, and as chair of the finance committee. Ironically, his death in 1923 precipitated the crash of his Wetumka

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bank. That development coincided with a statewide banking crisis that triggered the demise of Oklahoma's Bank Guarantee System. *Rules of State Senate 1907–1908*, 45–48; Norbert Mahnken, "No Oklahoman Lost a Penny," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* 71 (Spring 1983): 42–63.

<sup>16</sup> Page opened the home he had proposed at Sand Springs the next year despite his failure to gain state support. *The Least of These* (N.p.: n.p., 1950), 16–17.

<sup>17</sup> These references are to three Creek chiefs, Pleasant Porter (1899–1907), Moty Tiger (1910–18), and Roly Canard (1935–39 and 1943–51).

<sup>18</sup> These comments and those following by Mrs. Holman give some sense of the scope of the legislation achieved and the flavor of the debates. Ten bills were passed in the first eleven days and another seven in the two weeks that followed. Litton, *History of Oklahoma*, 1:509, 512, 516–21; Murray, *Memoirs of Governor Murray*, 2:114; Hurst, *The 46th Star*, 43–48.

<sup>19</sup> Mrs. Holman does not discuss Governor Haskell's subsequent actions to remove the capital to Oklahoma City.

<sup>20</sup> This was a term frequently used for skim milk.

<sup>21</sup> One of the more unusual laws passed by the state legislature required hotels to have top sheets nine feet long; the *St. Louis Times* for June 26, 1908, reported on passage of that law with an assurance to its readers, "We are not jesting." As reported in James R. Scales and Danney Goble, *Oklahoma Politics: A History* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1982), 101; *Oklahoma Session Laws 1907*, chap. 43, sec. 7.

<sup>22</sup> A "soogen," regularly spelled "sougan" also spelled "suggan," is a quilt or blanket in a cowboy's bedroll.