

Peerless Princess of the Best Country

The Early Years of Tonkawa

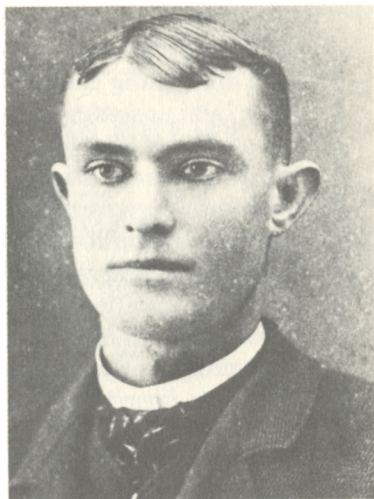
*By William P. Corbett**

Gale force winds stirred clouds of gritty dust, partially obscuring the sun, as a party of would-be homeseekers made their way east along the north bank of the Salt Fork River. "Look at that ground! I wouldn't give a dollar for a whole township of it," said one disgusted Kansan as they passed over the future site of Tonkawa. The only inhabitants, a colony of prairie dogs, paid little attention to the human intruders. Within the next six months, however, a handful of determined settlers with greater vision than the disappointed claim seekers would form the nucleus of a bustling rural commercial center on that very site in the southwest corner of Kay County, Oklahoma Territory.¹

At noon on Saturday, September 16, 1893, more than 100,000 homeseekers stampeded into the Cherokee Outlet, a 9,000-square mile, rectangular-shaped area in present northwestern Oklahoma. The 40,000 parcels thrown open to settlers represented to many adventuresome Americans the last opportunity to participate in bringing the white man's civilization to an untamed portion of the American West.²

Two of those pioneers, Kansas farmers Eli V. Blake and Wiley William Gregory, claimed adjacent quarter sections in section 4,

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Images of Tonkawa's early history—the land run of 1893; Wiley William Gregory, one of the town's founders; and the Santa Fe Railroad entering town in 1899 (Courtesy OHS and Tonkawa Public Library).

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township 25, range 1 west of the Indian Meridian. Federal land laws permitted claimants to organize townsites on their homesteads, and soon after filing claims, Blake and Gregory decided that a portion of their land possessed promise for an urban development. Their judgment was well founded. By February of 1894, more than 1,100 people lived on surrounding homesteads, providing a potential market for business. Moreover, the nearest town, Blackwell, Oklahoma Territory, was eight miles to the north, the Salt Fork and Chikaskia rivers ran nearby, and the agricultural potential of the surrounding farm land was excellent. Finally, Blake and Gregory no doubt saw an opportunity to make money by selling town lots.³

To promote their enterprise Blake and Gregory joined Thomas H. Martin to form the Oklahoma Townsite Company. Martin, a thirty-three year-old native of Strebard, Northern Ireland, had been a furniture salesman at Omaha, Nebraska, before coming to Oklahoma Territory. In January of 1894, he appeared at Yellow Bull Crossing, a much used ford and spring on the Salt Fork River about one-half mile west of Tonkawa. There, a local farmer told the Irishman of Blake's and Gregory's plan for a town. Martin contacted the two homesteaders, spawning a strong partnership from which grew the founding and development of the city of Tonkawa.⁴

Blake and Gregory contributed sizeable portions of their land to the venture. Blake's share of the townsite consisted of seventy-four acres west of the half section line dividing the two claims, and Gregory dedicated 127 acres east of the half section line. They hired J. Elmer Chapson, a surveyor, to lay out the town, which they named Tonkawa after the Tonkawa Indians who lived on a reservation three miles to the east. Between March 16 and 24, 1894, Chapson platted the city. A 100-foot wide east-west thoroughfare, designated Grand Avenue and lined with 25-foot by 134-foot lots, provided the locale for the proposed business district. Along the half section line Chapson laid out Main Street, an 80-foot wide north-south artery, which became Tonkawa's other principal roadway. He reserved 60-foot wide rights-of-way for other streets, and 16-foot accesses for alleys. Using two-inch-square wooden stakes, the surveyor's crew then marked 59 blocks, each containing thirty-two 25-foot by 129.5-foot residential lots. Included within the city limits as prescribed by federal law were four parcels totaling ten acres reserved for schools and parks.⁵

Also in March, the developers secured another ingredient vital to founding a permanent settlement. In the fall of 1893, Blake and Harvey L. Wile, a former school teacher from Kansas turned home-

The Ponca City Courier.

COL. I.
PONCA CITY, OKLAHOMA. THURSDAY, MARCH 8, 1894.
No. 18.

THE OKLAHOMA TOWNSITE Co.,

Has secured a tract of land most beautifully located on the north side of the Arkansas River, at a point commonly known as Yellow Bull Crossing, and they are now having it surveyed and laid off in Town Lots. They have christened their new find

TONKAWA CITY.

We Have No Rival Towns Within 14 Miles.

This tract is a large and fertile field to work in, which is more thickly settled than some of our eastern states. We have here proposed three miles of Town Lots just being chartered. This, with the great water power of the river and other Natural Ad.antages, together with the Capital and Money the OKLAHOMA TOWNSITE COMPANY possess, will make one of the best towns in this section of country.

This Company will Sell a Limited Number of Shares

Each share entitles the holder to a deed to one lot and an undivided interest in all undrawn lots. No lot is worth less than \$10, and many worth \$200 and more. The Board of Directors have decided to award the Stockholders their Lots between the 1st and 10th of March.

THE OKLAHOMA TOWNSITE COMPANY has been fully organized and chartered under the laws of Oklahoma, with the following officers and trustees:

President - G. Steele Vice President - J. W. B. Williams Secretary - J. W. B. Williams Treasurer - J. W. B. Williams Trustees - J. W. B. Williams, J. W. B. Williams, J. W. B. Williams, J. W. B. Williams, J. W. B. Williams	Director - G. Steele Director - J. W. B. Williams Director - J. W. B. Williams Director - J. W. B. Williams Director - J. W. B. Williams
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TONKAWA CITY

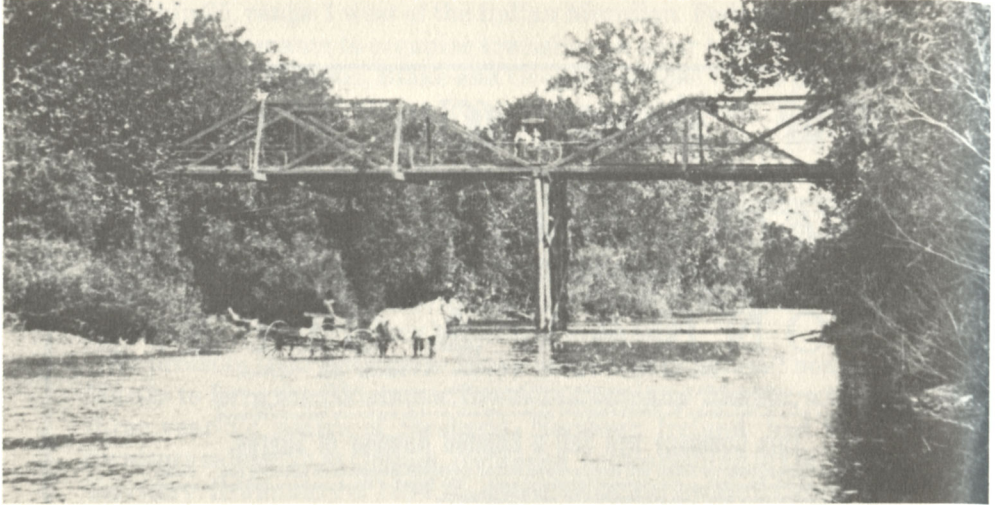
The Oklahoma Townsite Company has been organized and chartered under the laws of Oklahoma, and has decided to award the stockholders their lots between the 1st and 10th of March. The stockholders are advised to purchase their shares as soon as possible, as the lots are being sold in lots of ten shares each. The price of each share is \$10.00, and the balance of the purchase price is to be paid in installments.

Half-page advertisement in the Ponca City Courier, March 8, 1894, extolling the virtues of investment in the new townsite.

stead, circulated a petition throughout the vicinity requesting a post office. Early in 1894, Blake submitted the petition to the United States Post Office Department. On March 9, federal authorities established a post office at Tonkawa, and named Eli Blake the postmaster.⁶

Meanwhile, Martin, president of the Oklahoma Townsite Company, opened a real estate office at Ponca City, Oklahoma Territory, fifteen miles to the east, and began promoting Tonkawa aggressively. He recruited bankers, attorneys, and other businessmen from Blackwell, Ponca City, and Arkansas City, Kansas, to serve as directors of the company. The first week in March he purchased a full page, front page advertisement in the *Ponca City Courier*, a weekly newspaper, proclaiming the merits of the new, yet uninhabited community. The newspaper stories entreated interested persons to buy stock in the company. Investors received a city lot for each share purchased, and an undivided interest in all remaining parcels. Shares cost ten dollars—three dollars down and the balance in installments. On April 3,

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Two bridges that linked Tonkawa to surrounding farms—the Chikaskia River bridge, built in 1896 (above), and the Salt Fork bridge, built in 1904 (below right) (Courtesy Tonkawa Public Library).

1894, Martin held a lottery at Arkansas City to determine ownership of the lots. Approximately 300 people attended the drawing, but it failed to meet the expectations of the developers. Stories publicizing land fraud cases involving townsite companies in other parts of Oklahoma Territory appeared in local newspapers during the weeks prior to the lottery, no doubt discouraging many prospective buyers. Moreover, Blake and Gregory did not hold final title to their homesteaded land and could not grant deeds to the shareholders for town lots. As a result, the population of Tonkawa in 1894 approximated only forty people.⁷

In August of the following year, Blake and Gregory decided to obtain clear title to the townsite. They traveled to the federal land office at Perry, Oklahoma Territory, and commuted their tracts to cash. Apparently they borrowed the necessary funds from five local entrepreneurs, including Martin and Charles De Roberts, a Ponca City attorney. Collateral for the loan consisted of selected lots in each of the fifty-nine blocks. De Roberts then began attempting to collect the seven dollar balance due from delinquent shareholders, while Martin expanded his activities. Notices advertising lots for sale appeared in newspapers throughout 1895, and Martin made at least one extensive trip to Kansas to promote the town.⁸

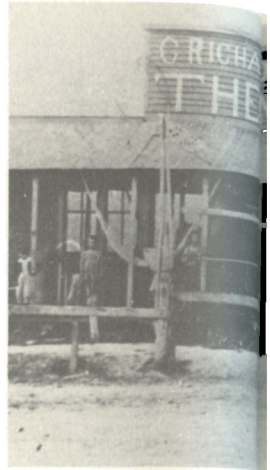
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Despite a disappointing beginning, a small cluster of buildings inhabited by a group of determined settlers arose on the townsite. By the end of May, 1894, Grand Avenue and Main Street boasted no fewer than seven businesses housed in wooden structures on land apparently leased or rented from the developers. Charles H. Martindale opened the first store when he moved a small frame building to the townsite from a claim four miles northeast of the village. Initially, Blake operated the post office from a shack next to his frame homestead cabin, but in the spring he moved the post office to a small clapboard building on the north side of Grand Avenue. Other members of the first business community included C. S. Reed, who sold dry goods from a partially completed two story building on the northwest corner of Grand Avenue and Main Street; Moses Truesdale, who owned a store/bakery at the northeast corner of Grand Avenue and Ninth Street; and Charles W. Robinson, who opened a blacksmith shop. The Tonkawa Restaurant, a feed store, and a meat market completed the commercial buildings in the business district.⁹

Another enterprise added a flair to the development of the fledgling community. On May 26, 1894, the *Tonkawa Chief*, a weekly newspaper, published its seventh edition. The front page contained stories of



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The first building boom in Tonkawa occurred in 1894 and 1895. These images show Grand Avenue looking east (left), Richard's Hardware and Harness shop between 9th and Main (center), and Thomas Martin's real estate office and Charles Martindale's grocery store (right) (Courtesy Tonkawa Public Library).

national and international significance, while the remaining three pages consisted of advertisements, personal items, and articles boosting Tonkawa. On one occasion, in a fit of literary hyperbole, the editor predicted the town would soon become the "Peerless Princess of the best country in Oklahoma Territory." D. O. Brown, secretary of the townsite company, served as the first editor, and a six month subscription cost fifty cents in advance. The newspaper changed names and editors frequently, but never deviated from its motto: "To Advertise Tonkawa and the Salt Fork Valley and to Create Plethoric Pocketbooks for the Publisher."¹⁰

Unfortunately, the promoters' vigorous activities produced limited positive results. The major problem was economic depression following the poor harvests of 1894 and 1895. Dry hot summers parched most of the crops in the fields, with broom corn producing the only real income for area farmers. Additionally, high winds hampered effective farming. One weather forecast simply stated, "wind from the north, dust going south; next day, wind from the south, dust going north." Local merchants received a measure of relief from the Tonkawa Indians. In March of 1895, the tribe received part of its annual payment from the federal government, and many tribal members spent a portion of their annuity at stores in Tonkawa.¹¹

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Limited expansion of the business district occurred in 1895 as a few new firms constructed buildings along Grand Avenue. Shorty Brookhoven and Joseph Hamil, Sr., opened the town's first two saloons. Both establishments were located on the south side of Grand Avenue, with Brookhoven's between Seventh and Main streets, and the other tap room at the southwest corner of Grand Avenue and Main Street. Hamil's barroom/billiard parlor almost closed before the first keg was tapped. Strong winds blew the partially completed frame building off its foundation, but workmen using screw jacks managed to right the structure. Thomas Martin, the enterprising president of the townsite company, formed a partnership with Edward J. Richard. Together they opened a lumber yard and a real estate office on Grand Avenue. The lumber yard provided essential building materials for the community, while the real estate office offered for sale nearby farms as well as town lots.¹²

The Tonkawa Hotel, owned by Sylvester James, soon opened with lodging for one dollar and meals for twenty-five cents. A frame building located immediately west of Reed's dry goods store, it probably functioned more as a boarding house than a hotel, providing bed and board for transients, salesmen, and residents of the town. On the same lot occupied by the Tonkawa Restaurant, Joe Hedrick built the first barber shop. Aside from his tonsorial talents, Hedrick owned the first public, and at that time probably the only, bathtub in town. He drew water from a well at the rear of the shop, and heated it on a coal stove. Because the tub and stove were in a small building behind the barber shop, patrons often endured a Turkish bath while trying to

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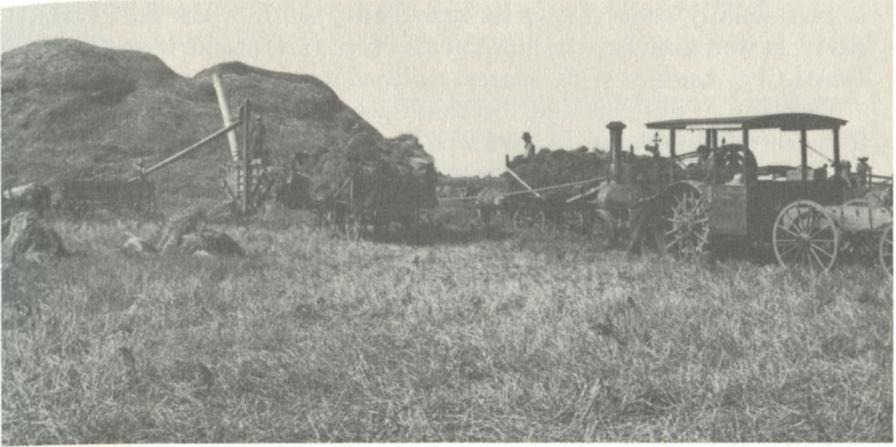
scrub clean. In April of 1895, Cornelius Richards, who owned a hardware store on a lot east of Truesdale's grocery, began construction of an addition to the rear of his building. Richards used this new area for a harness shop. The opening of two new businesses and the expansion of another indicated a confidence by merchants in the local economy. This optimism was well founded, for a contemporary observer reported no less than forty-seven teams and wagons as well as seventeen horsemen arriving at Grand Avenue establishments on a single Saturday afternoon in May.¹³

One of the most significant developments during these first years involved the organization of a municipal government. In 1894 community leaders applied to territorial authorities for a city charter, and on July 6 officials approved the Articles of Incorporation for the town of Tonkawa. In a subsequent election, residents selected the town's first public servants. Thomas Martin, John A. Hall, who owned the local feed store, and William Gregory filled the seats of the city council, then known as trustees, with Martin serving as president. By March of 1895, the trustees had enacted no fewer than five ordinances dealing with such matters as unattended horses on Grand Avenue after Midnight and requiring merchants to maintain fire barrels at their stores.¹⁴

Construction of a jail became the first major undertaking of the fledgling city government. This project resulted directly from the



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The turning point in the history of Tonkawa was the "golden age of agriculture," a period of farming prosperity that began with increased rainfall, higher prices, and rail transportation in 1899 (Courtesy Tonkawa Public Library).

aftermath of a calamitous grand opening of an unidentified saloon—probably Hamil's—on April 18, 1895. The proprietor advertised free beer and stood by his promise. When the keg ran dry, his competitor also offered free beer, and soon both barrooms were filled to capacity. Over indulgent patrons became unruly, spawning arguments, fist fights, and a few wild gunshots. This incident raised the ire of many townspeople who apparently agreed with the local newspaper editor when he wrote, "such scenes are neither courted nor desired." The following week volunteer laborers joined city trustees to erect a jail.¹⁵

Ready access to Tonkawa from surrounding farmsteads became another major concern of business and community leaders. In the spring of 1895, a petition circulated throughout the village calling upon Kay County officials to designate Main Street a county road. Upon granting this request, Amos M. Thomas, the county commissioner whose district included Tonkawa, secured funds to construct a bridge across the Salt Fork River. At that time South Main Street terminated on the north bank of the stream. The commissioners obtained bids for the project, and crews commenced construction early in November. By the end of the year, workmen had completed the 440-foot-long, \$2,100 wooden structure, which rested on piles driven into the river bed. The next year Commissioner Thomas obtained money for construction of a bridge over the Chikaskia River northeast of Tonkawa. Completion of these two projects made the

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village readily accessible to farmers living south of the Salt Fork River, as well as easing the movement of goods and people to and from Ponca City, the site of the closest railroad station.¹⁶

The pace of development increased perceptively during the last four years of the decade. In 1896 farmers who lived within Tonkawa's trade area experienced only a mediocre harvest. Bad weather, and, perhaps for some agrarians, inexperience in techniques required to produce crops on the Great Plains, attributed to a lackluster crop. The following year, however, exceptionally good wheat and corn crops and high prices brought a measure of prosperity to the region with some local farmers boasting a fifty-bushel per acre yield from their wheat fields. This situation continued for the next three years, fostering important changes for the city of Tonkawa.¹⁷

The sale of town lots accelerated with population growth and home construction. Pioneer merchants who lived in their stores built new homes, and other residents, some of whom lived in tents, constructed more substantial dwellings. As the expanding economy and promotional activities attracted new businesses to the community, the owners and their employees erected houses on the townsite. Additionally, some prospering farmers abandoned their rural domiciles for houses in Tonkawa, while others purchased lots for speculative purposes. This building boom resulted from a population that increased from an estimated 200 persons in 1896 to 707 people in 1900.¹⁸

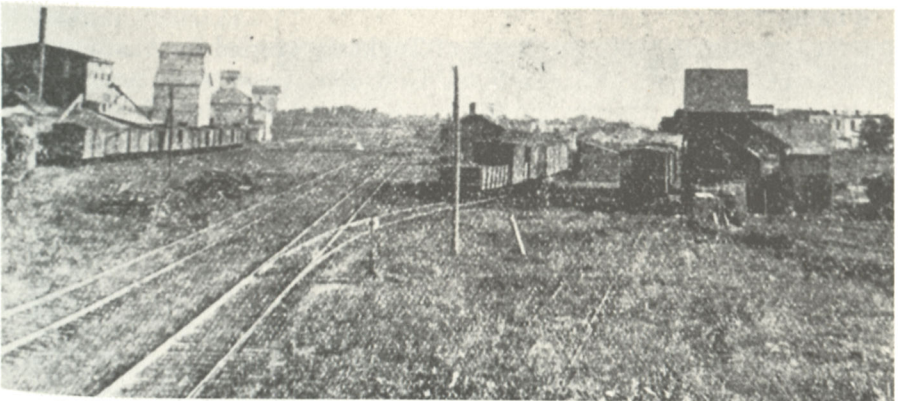
Major improvements in communication and transportation occurred as the agricultural economy of the region strengthened. In the summer of 1896, the Pioneer Telephone Company, the major telephone firm operating in Oklahoma Territory, constructed a single line to Tonkawa, installing a pay station in a Grand Avenue drug store. Three years later, Pioneer employees built an exchange at the corner of Grand Avenue and Main Street, making available home service for the town's residents. Also in 1899, community leaders succeeded in bringing a railroad to Tonkawa. In 1896, Blake and Gregory had deeded in trust to Martin numerous lots for the purpose of raising capital for the construction of a railroad. Subsequently, Martin, Gregory, and Edward Richard formed the Santa Fe Construction Company as a means of enticing the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railroad Company to extend operations south from a recently completed line to Blackwell. Residents who owned property in the path of the proposed right-of-way brought lawsuits against the local construction firm to halt completion of the spur. Martin, Gregory, and Richard surmounted these barriers, and the tracks of the Blackwell

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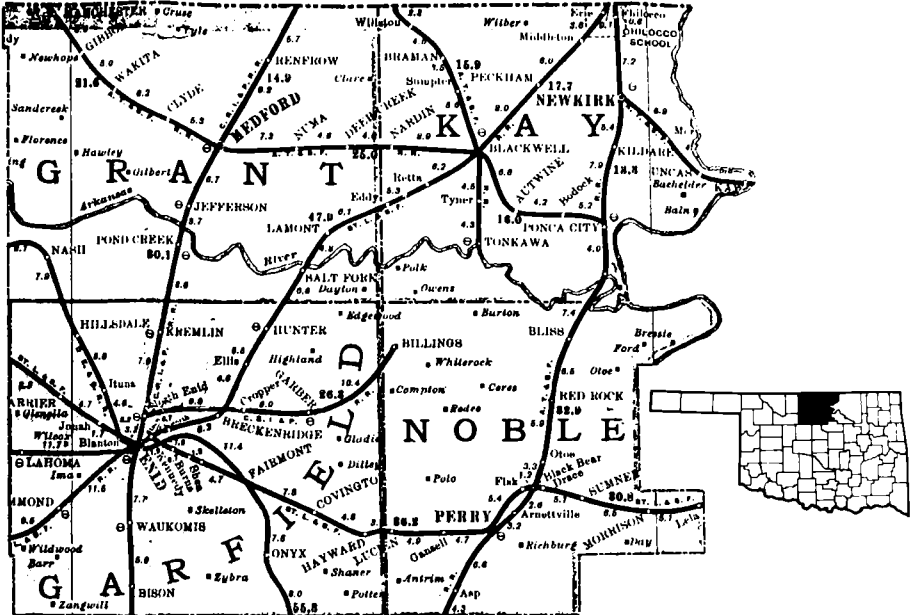
and Southern Railroad, a Santa Fe subsidiary, reached Tonkawa by mid-August of 1899, in time for farmers to ship a portion of their wheat crop by rail.¹⁹

The founding of Tonkawa's first financial institution occurred during the rapid growth period experienced in the late 1890s. In the summer of 1898, W. H. Poffenberger, a banker from Iowa, arrived in Tonkawa. Poffenberger had traveled to Oklahoma Territory to explore the possibility of opening a bank. At Ponca City he learned of the excellent wheat harvest area farmers had completed and decided to visit Tonkawa. Once in town, he made the acquaintance of community leaders, who convinced him that Tonkawa offered all of the necessary prerequisites for a successful bank. Poffenberger returned to Iowa to inform Dr. Samuel T. Goodman, the senior partner, of his discovery. Goodman decided to visit Tonkawa, but, because of previous business experience, he preferred to locate the bank in an area

After 1900 economic development accelerated and a new generation of brick buildings appeared. Physical improvements included the Tonkawa State Bank at 7th Street and Grand Avenue and the Santa Fe railyard (Courtesy Tonkawa Public Library).



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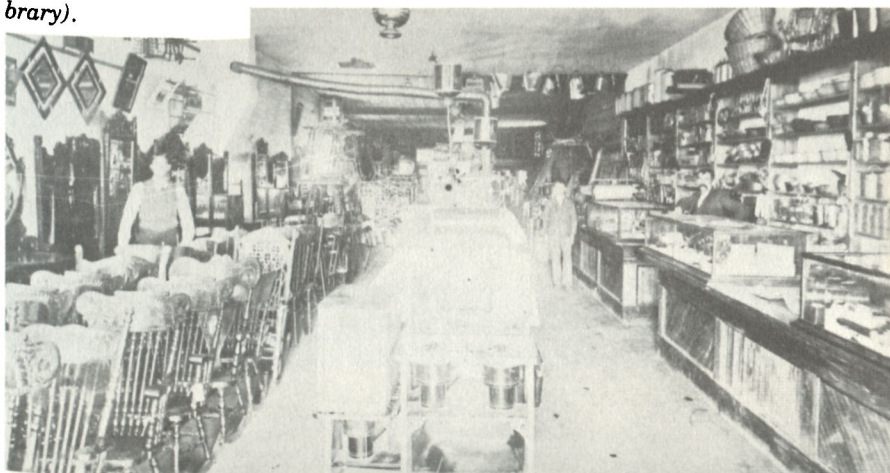
Tonkawa, located in the south-central part of Kay County, was strategically placed at rail's end in a rich agricultural area (Adapted from a 1909 Railroad Map issued by the Corporation Commission, OHS).

where corn, not wheat, was the major agricultural commodity. Forewarned of Goodman's prejudice, Thomas Martin and other businessmen took the banker on a tour of area farms that cultivated corn, favorably impressing the Iowan. Upon returning to his native state Goodman dispatched Poffenberger to Tonkawa with \$26,000 to start a bank.²⁰

In October of 1898, the Bank of Tonkawa opened for business. Poffenberger operated from a hotel room, doing most of his business in small loans to farmers for draft animals and implements. In December, Goodman arrived to formally organize the bank, and, early in 1899, he relocated the office in a Grand Avenue building. More than good business sense seems to have dictated the location of Goodman's bank in Tonkawa. Soon after the financial facility moved to permanent quarters, Gregory, Martin, and Edward Richard, Martin's business partner, deeded to Poffenberger 387 city lots for the sum of \$150. Whatever the reason for its founding, the Bank of Tonkawa brought to townspeople and surrounding farmers a financial institution essential to the economic well-being of the area.²¹



Evidence of growth abounded during the years from 1900 to 1914. Teamsters hauled poles for the first telephone lines in 1902 (above); E. W. Allen, the first Santa Fe station agent, built a new house; and Charles A. Bull displayed a wide variety of merchandise in his Furniture and Hardware store (Courtesy Tonkawa Public Library).



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Development of important social and cultural institutions coincided with the growth of the business district. Concerned about the education of their children, the women of Tonkawa organized a subscription school. Subscription schools, institutions common to frontier towns, functioned by directly assessing parents of students a fee based on operating costs. J. Calvin Richard, hired as the first instructor, commenced classes in a building on south Main Street in April of 1895. Approximately twenty aspiring scholars attended sessions, which lasted two months. By fall, a public school district had been organized, and a school board with members Thomas Martin, William Gregory, and Eli Blake had been elected. On October 7, 1895, the board opened bids for construction of a schoolhouse. Al Myse, a local blacksmith, received the contract. A portion of the agreement required Myse to hire the school board as part of the work force at \$4.50 a day. Either due to a lack of funds or shoddy construction techniques, or both, Myse's crew erected a rather flimsy structure immediately west of Blake's post office on Grand Avenue. The school board hired Louis A. Shaw as instructor, and by the first week of November no less than thirty students regularly attended classes. When the weather got cold, the building became uninhabitable, and Shaw moved his students to the post office. In 1896, the citizens of Tonkawa, reflecting the increasing prosperity and population of the village, raised money to construct a substantial two story building on



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As in most frontier communities, school and church played central roles in the public life of Tonkawa. The Tonkawa School, built in 1896, was located on 7th north of Grand (below left); the Baptist Church was dedicated in 1898 (above) (Courtesy Tonkawa Public Library).

the school reserve on Seventh Street, one block north of Grand Avenue. This facility served the community for many years.²²

Church life commenced at Tonkawa soon after the first settlers arrived at the townsite. As early as June of 1894, William Davis, a Presbyterian Sunday school missionary, began holding Sunday evening services in the unfinished second floor above C. S. Reed's dry goods store. Davis welcomed members of all denominations, "particularly infidels and sceptics [sic]." In January of the following year H. J. Hazzard, a Baptist preacher, organized the first denominational congregation in Tonkawa. Hazzard, who one early settler described as "long on theory and short on practice," recruited seven members before leaving his flock in the fall. For about eighteen months the Tonkawa Baptist Church had no permanent pastor, but, in February of 1897, Reverend W. M. Hoover, associate minister at the Perry Baptist Church, assumed full time duties in Tonkawa. Hoover's aggressive proselytizing quickly drew a congregation of ninety-five members. Under his tutelage the faithful raised more than \$500 to build a permanent church building, which they dedicated in April of 1898. Also, the Methodist Episcopal Church established an effective presence in Tonkawa during these early years. Reverend Frank Onstott organized a local congregation on March 1, 1896. Although Onstott left town in July and the local Methodist pastorate experienced frequent turnovers—four preachers in four years—the congregation met regularly in the schoolhouse.²³

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In the process of building their community, Tonkawans did not neglect leisure activities. By May of 1894, Reed's Hall had become the site of irregularly scheduled Saturday night dances. These gatherings provided a popular distraction for townspeople and area farmers alike, as they increased in frequency and intensity. Apparently some partygoers imbibed more than music and casual conversation. Occasionally a few errant revelers involuntarily remained in the hall when church services commenced the following day. Eli Blake and Joseph Hamil also opened their buildings to the public. By the fall of 1895, Saturday night dances had become a bi-weekly event with Professor Harry Holt, a one-armed violinist, a favorite performer. Sometimes these outings acquired an air of pretension. In September, Mrs. F. M. Spoon, proprietor of the newly opened De Spoon Hotel, hosted a "ball" complete with ice cream, cake, and fresh fruit for refreshments.²⁴

National holidays and national pastimes provided additional diversions for early settlers. In 1895 merchants and residents of the fledgling city organized a July 4 celebration. The festivities commenced with a 10:30 A.M. parade led by a marching band down Grand Avenue to a makeshift park at the east end of town. There a choir of forty-five little girls, each representing a state of the Union, sang the national anthem. Mayor Martin and Postmaster Blake then delivered patriotic speeches. That afternoon spectators sipping complimentary ice water viewed several athletic events, a horse race, and Indian dances. The festive occasion ended with a nighttime fireworks display. The summer of 1895 also spawned Tonkawa's first baseball team. In May local enthusiasts laid out a diamond between north Seventh and Main streets. Exhibiting an awesome array of talent, the Tonkawa Baseball Club became a source of community pride as the team endured a two-month, erratically scheduled, and undefeated season. Throughout the balance of the decade dances, public gatherings, and spectator sports provided welcome distractions from the daily routine of the residents of Tonkawa.²⁵

Between 1893 and 1900, the town of Tonkawa grew from a prairie dog colony into a thriving rural commercial center. Development of the town involved a dynamic process starting with the determination of Blake, Gregory, and Martin to make their venture succeed. Once they recruited an initial corps of businessmen, the village began to take shape. Despite the absence of a rail connection throughout most of this period, the merchants worked to attract customers to their shops and sought the local Indian trade. Also, political, religious, and

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Music and celebrations were other sources of community activity. Here, the Tonkawa Band poses with instruments (above) and marches in the Indian Fair in 1902 (Courtesy Tonkawa Public Library).

social institutions brought order and character to the community. But the economy of the town was tied directly to the surrounding farmers, and when they prospered, so did Tonkawa. Thus, the early years of Tonkawa, Oklahoma Territory, revealed the late nineteenth century promotional activities and economic realities of extending the urban frontier to a region previously devoid of permanent non-Indian settlements.

ENDNOTES

* Dr. William P. Corbett is a History Instructor at Northern Oklahoma College at Tonkawa. He received his Ph.D. in History from Oklahoma State University. The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Sally Caughlin, Librarian at the

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Tonkawa Public Library; the National Endowment for the Humanities; and Dr. E. E. Vineyard, President of Northern Oklahoma College.

¹ "Notes and Documents," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXI, No. 4 (December, 1943), pp. 422–23.

² Arrell M. Gibson, *Oklahoma: A History of Five Centuries* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1981), p. 180; George Rainey, *The Cherokee Strip* (Guthrie: Cooperative Publishing Company, 1933), pp. 273–75, 277–79, 282.

³ *Federal Tract Book of Oklahoma* (microfilm), Vol. XLII, p. 62, Oklahoma Historical Society, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; *Abstract of Title*, August 16, 1918, pp. 1–4, Mr. and Mrs. Dave McWilliams, Tonkawa, Oklahoma; *Ponca City Courier* (Ponca City, Oklahoma Territory), March 1, 1894, p. 1; *Ponca City Democrat* (Ponca City, Oklahoma Territory), May 18, 1894, p. 1; *Revised Statutes of the United States* (2 parts, Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1875), Vol. XVIII, Part I, pp. 438–39; *Statutes of the United States* (2 parts, Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1890), Vol. XXVI, Part I, pp. 91–92; Amos M. Thomas, "Pioneer History," unpublished manuscript, Pioneer Stories General Area Around Tonkawa, Tonkawa Public Library, Tonkawa, Oklahoma, p. 8; *Tonkawa News* (Tonkawa, Oklahoma), May 13, 1909, p. 1.

⁴ *Ibid.*, March 23, 1922, p. 3; "Thomas H. Martin," unpublished manuscript, Tonkawa Public Library, n.p.; "Blake-Gregory," unpublished manuscript, Tonkawa Public Library, p. 2.

⁵ *The Last Run, Kay County, Oklahoma, 1893* (Ponca City: Courier Printing Company, 1939), p. 316; *Deed Record Book 1*, County Clerk's Office, Kay County Courthouse, Newkirk, Oklahoma, pp. 499, 501; *Tonkawa News*, January 27, 1983, p. 11; "Map of Tonkawa, 1894," County Clerk's Office, Kay County Courthouse; "Plat of Tonkawa," County Clerk's Office, Kay County Courthouse.

⁶ Fourth Assistant Postmaster to Eli V. Blake, February 27, 1894, Records of the Post Office Department, Record Group 28, National Archives and Records Center, Washington, D. C.; "Harvey and Francis Wile," unpublished manuscript, Tonkawa Public Library, n.p.; George H. Shirk, *Oklahoma Place Names* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), p. 207; "Notes and Documents," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXI, No. 4, p. 429.

⁷ *Tonkawa News*, March 23, 1922, p. 3; *Ponca City Democrat*, March 23, 1894, p. 1, March 30, 1894, p. 1, April 6, 1894, p. 3; *Ponca City Courier*, March 1, 1894, p. 1, March 15, 1894, p. 3, April 4, 1894, p. 3.

⁸ *Deed Record Book 1*, County Clerk's Office, Kay County Courthouse, pp. 480–81, 499–501; *Tonkawa Weekly* (Tonkawa, Oklahoma Territory), July 6, 1895, p. 3, September 14, 1895, p. 3, October 5, 1895, p. 3.

⁹ "Notes and Documents," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXI, No. 4, p. 429; "Blake-Gregory," unpublished manuscript, Tonkawa Public Library, p. 2; *Tonkawa News*, March 30, 1922, p. 7, April 6, 1922, p. 2, January 27, 1983, p. 11; *Tonkawa Chief* (Tonkawa, Oklahoma Territory), May 26, 1894, p. 2–4.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*; *Tonkawa Weekly*, May 11, 1895, p. 2, June 15, 1895, p. 1, September 14, 1895, p. 3, October 26, 1895, p. 2.

¹¹ "The McCoy Story," unpublished manuscript, Tonkawa Public Library, p. 1; *Tonkawa Weekly*, March 16, 1895, p. 3, March 23, 1895, p. 3, April 6, 1895, p. 3, April 13, 1895, p. 1, April 20, 1895, p. 3, May 18, 1895, p. 3, June 8, 1895, p. 3.

¹² *Ibid.*, March 16, 1895, p. 3, April 20, 1895, p. 3; *Tonkawa News*, April 6, 1922, p. 2, January 27, 1983, p. 11.

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¹³ *Ibid.*, January 29, 1914, p. 1, March 30, 1922, p. 7, April 6, 1922, p. 2, January 27, 1893, p. 11; *Tonkawa Weekly*, March 16, 1895, p. 2, April 6, 1895, p. 3, May 18, 1895, p. 3.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, March 30, 1895, p. 3, May 18, 1895, p. 3; *A Brief Record of the Founding of Tonkawa Lodge No. 57, A. F. & A. M., Oklahoma Territory, and the next Seventy-Seven Years of Tonkawa Lodges No. 57 A. F. & A. M., and No. 157 A. F. & A. M., Tonkawa, Oklahoma* (Tonkawa: Tonkawa Lodge No. 157 A. F. & A. M., n.d.), p. 1

¹⁵ *Tonkawa Weekly*, April 20, 1895, p. 3, May 4, 1895, p. 3.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, March 16, 1895, p. 3, July 27, 1895, p. 3, October 26, 1895, p. 3, November 2, 1895, p. 3, November 10, 1895, p. 3, November 16, 1895, p. 3; *Ponca City Democrat*, December 3, 1896, p. 4, December 10, 1896, p. 1, December 17, 1896, p. 1; Amos M. Thomas, "Saga of A Pioneer Told on the Fiftieth Anniversary," unpublished manuscript, Tonkawa Public Library, p. 2; "First Elected Board of County Commissioners," unpublished manuscript, Tonkawa Public Library, p. 1; *The Last Run, Kay County, Oklahoma, 1893*, p. 316; "Notes and Documents," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXI, No. 4, pp. 429-30.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 430-31; "The McCoy Story," unpublished manuscript, Tonkawa Public Library, p. 1; *The Last Run, Kay County, Oklahoma, 1893*, p. 318.

¹⁸ United States Department of Commerce. Bureau of the Census. *Thirteenth Census of the United States taken in the Year 1910* (3 vols., Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1913), Vol. III, p. 458; *Deed Record Book 2B*, County Clerk's Office, Kay County Courthouse, pp. 136, 186, 473, 567-68; "The First Decade," unpublished manuscript, First Baptist Church, Tonkawa, Oklahoma, p. 1; *Ponca City Democrat*, November 6, 1897, p. 1, January 6, 1898, p. 1; *Tonkawa Weekly*, April 27, 1895, p. 4; *Tonkawa News*, March 23, 1922, p. 3.

¹⁹ *The Last Run, Kay County, Oklahoma, 1893*, p. 316; *Times-Record* (Blackwell, Oklahoma Territory), August 17, 1899, p. 1; "Notes and Documents," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXI, No. 4, pp. 430-31; *Deed Record Book 2B*, County Clerk's Office, Kay County Courthouse, pp. 316-17; *Deed Record Book G*, County Clerk's Office, Kay County Courthouse, p. 535.

²⁰ *Tonkawa News*, April 6, 1922, p. 2.

²¹ *Ibid.*, April 6, 1922, p. 2, January 29, 1914, p. 1; *Sights and Scenes in and around Tonkawa, Oklahoma* (Tonkawa: P. H. Ritchey Company, 1905), n.p.; *Deed Record Book 8*, County Clerk's Office, Kay County Courthouse, pp. 379-81.

²² "Blake-Gregory," unpublished manuscript, Tonkawa Public Library, p. 2; *The Last Run, Kay County, Oklahoma, 1893*, p. 316; *Tonkawa Weekly*, April 20, 1895, p. 3, June 8, 1895, p. 3, October 5, 1895, p. 3, November 2, 1895, p. 3; *Tonkawa News*, March 30, 1922, p. 7, April 6, 1922, p. 2, January 27, 1922, p. 11.

²³ *Ibid.*, March 23, 1922, p. 3, March 30, 1922, p. 7, April 6, 1922, p. 2, April 13, 1922, p. 8; *Seventy-Fifth Anniversary, First Methodist Church* (Tonkawa: First Methodist Church, 1971), pp. 2-3; "The First Decade," unpublished manuscript, First Baptist Church, pp. 1-4; *Tonkawa Chief*, May 26, 1894, p. 4

²⁴ *Ibid.*; *Tonkawa Weekly*, April 6, 1895, p. 3, April 13, 1895, p. 3, May 11, 1895, p. 3, September 7, 1895, p. 3; *Tonkawa News*, April 6, 1922, p. 2.

²⁵ *Ibid.*; *Tonkawa Weekly*, June 1, 1895, p. 3, July 6, 1895, p. 3, July 27, 1895, p. 3.