

☆ NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

Oklahoma Historians Hall of Fame— William P. Campbell

By Bob L. Blackburn

The Oklahoma Historical Society inaugurated the Oklahoma Historians Hall of Fame in 1993 to recognize individuals who devoted their careers to publishing, researching, teaching, and collecting Oklahoma history. To mark the Society's centennial, the OHS inducted four historians who played important roles in the development and growth of the OHS, Joseph B. Thoburn, Grant Foreman, Muriel H. Wright, and Berlin B. Chapman.

In April, 1994, the Society inducted William Parker Campbell, Edward Everett Dale, Angie Debo, and Richard E. Bell. Like last year, the honorees included a founder of the OHS.

William Parker Campbell

Born in Missouri in 1843, William P. Campbell moved with his parents first to Illinois, then back to Missouri until the start of the Civil War. The family eventually moved to Nebraska, where Campbell began a career in journalism. While living in Kansas, Campbell watched with interest the establishment of the Kansas Historical Society.

In 1892 Campbell moved to Kingfisher, Oklahoma Territory, to become Registrar of Deeds. A year later at a meeting of the Oklahoma Territorial Press Association, he suggested the formation of the Oklahoma Historical Society and became the first curator. He held that position for two years, when the Territorial Legislature moved the OHS to Norman. In 1902 the OHS moved back to Oklahoma City and Campbell was recalled. Over the next 20 years of service his abiding passion was collecting Oklahoma history. Campbell's philosophy was "Bring it in, if the future don't want it, let the future throw it away."

To apprise Oklahomans about the work of the Society, he began publishing *Historia*, a popular quarterly that was the forerunner of *Mistletoe Leaves*.



William Parker Campbell (r), 1994 inductee into the Oklahoma Historians Hall of Fame (Courtesy Oklahoma Historical Society).

William P Campbell died in 1924. He lit the fire for the cause of Oklahoma history and kept it burning when few people cared. Campbell's abiding passion continues today as the Oklahoma Historical Society begins its second century of publishing, researching, teaching, and collecting Oklahoma history.