

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

ORDER INDEX FOR 1953—*The Chronicles*

The Index for Volume XXXI of *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, 1953, compiled by Mrs. Bella Looney, Clerk-Archivist, is now ready for free distribution among those receiving the magazine. Orders for this Index should be sent to the Secretary, Oklahoma Historical Society, Historical Building, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

MISS MARTHA MULHOLLAND, CHIEF CLERK, 1924 TO 1954,

OKLAHOMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

At the fourth quarterly meeting of the Board of Directors of the Oklahoma Historical Society, in Oklahoma City on Thursday January 28, 1954, Miss Martha Mulholland who has served this institution through much of the period of 1924 to 1954, offered her resignation, as Chief Clerk of the Society. Upon the departure of so valuable a member of the staff of this Society through the years, the Board expressed their profound regret and set forth the following resolution:

RESOLUTION

The resignation of Miss Martha Mulholland as Chief Clerk of the Oklahoma Historical Society through a long period of years, is received with deep regret. She has discharged her duties with such efficiency, honor and faithfulness that have made her name and place in the Oklahoma Historical Society the very substance of profound ability.

Each member of the Board of Directors extends to her a feeling of strong personal friendship and assures her that her health and happiness through the years to come will be of sincere interest and attended with the hope she may enjoy many more years of fine living which has marked her long and useful life.

This resolution sealed and signed by the President of the Oklahoma Historical Society, this 28th day of January, 1954.

W. S. KEY, President

Attest: Charles Evans, Secretary.

JOURNAL ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PAWNEE AGENCY IN
INDIAN TERRITORY

Barclay White was in charge of the Northern Superintendency, 1871-76, and had jurisdiction of several tribes including the Pawnee.

His *Journal* of over a thousand pages is in the possession of his family, and a microfilm copy of it is in the Friends Historical Library, Swarthmore College, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania.

The *Journal* has not been published, and Dr. B. B. Chapman is the first Oklahoma historian to use it. He edited lengthy extracts in the *Twins World Magazine*, May 10, 1953, and January 3, 1954. These concern the establishment of the Pawnee Agency in Indian Territory, the carrying of annuities to the agency, and the means of travel from the agency to Coffeyville. A segment of the *Journal* concerns the years White was superintendent. It tells of political problems and Quaker policies.

REPORTS OF RECENT ARCHAEOLOGICAL DISCOVERIES IN OKLAHOMA

Published reports on archaeological excavations in Cherokee County (1951-52) and in Grady County (1948-1952), sponsored by the Department of Anthropology at the University of Oklahoma, have been received in the Editorial Department of the Historical Society. These are in the form of two reprints from the *Bulletin of Texas Archaeological Society*, Vol. 24, October, 1953 (Austin, Texas), brief notes from which are as follows:

(1) "The Morris Site, CK-39, Cherokee County, Oklahoma," by Robert E. Bell and Charlene Dale, 71 pages. Illustrated with many photographs showing pieces of pottery and artifacts of stone, bone and shell. Bibliography.

The Morris Site is located about fifteen miles south of Tahlequah in Cherokee County and about one-half mile east of the old bridge which crossed the Illinois River at Standing Rock. This site is one of forty-three known archaeological sites located within the Tankiller Reservoir in eastern Oklahoma that will finally inundate nearly twenty miles of the Illinois River Valley in Sequoyah and Cherokee counties between Gore and Tahlequah. Archaeological field activities were carried on at the Morris Site under the supervision of Dr. Robert E. Bell, Department of Anthropology at the University of Oklahoma. Excavations revealed that this site was occupied by two different peoples in prehistoric times. The earliest of these was a semi-nomadic hunting people that existed between 2,000 and 5,000 years ago, the latest—400 to 600 year ago—a sedentary, agricultural people. The village location showed scattered house sites, a burial cemetery area, storage (cache) pits, fireplaces; yet no mounds, and no evidences of European trade.

(2) "The Brown Site, Gd-1, Grady County, Oklahoma," by Karl Schmitt and Raymond Toldan, Jr. 35 pages. Illustrated. Bibliography.

The Brown Site is located on the left bank of Winters Creek near its junction with the Washita River, in Grady County. Excavations were carried on here at different times from 1948 to 1952, under the direction of Dr. Robert E. Bell and the late Dr. Karl Schmitt, of the Department of Anthropology at the University of Oklahoma. The material from the Brown Site show that the inhabitants were an agricultural, hunting people of the late Prehistoric Period, pre-dating the earliest European contact. Bone digging implements and storage pits were found, also charred kernels and cobs of corn, besides beans. Houses were plastered with a mixture of mud and grass.

These two reprints in the archaeological field are interesting contributions that add to the growing knowledge of the life of prehistoric peoples in Oklahoma.

M. I. W.

THE OLD VANN HOUSE IN GEORGIA

In a pleasant conversation with Mr. Robert H. Vann, 645 N. E. 35th Street, Oklahoma City, he gave into my hands a paper which has been read recently by Mrs. R. J. Bandy, a splendid exponent of southern womanhood, before the Rotary Club at Dalton, Georgia.

It is valuable in relation to the story of Will Rogers, perhaps Oklahoma's most distinguished son. The reader will find this paper interesting because it throws light upon "the rock from which Will Rogers was hewn, the hole or pit from whence he was digged." *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* extends its thanks to Mrs. Bandy and to Mr. Robert Vann for this contribution.

(Charles Evans)

Mr. President, and Members of The Rotary Club:

When Carl called and asked me to talk to you about The Vann House, I immediately tried to get Dr. Kelly, who heads the Department of Archeology at The University of Georgia, to speak to you on this subject, but failed. I have always been interested in the Indians and Indian Affairs, and I remember several years ago, when my good friend, Judge Tarrer was in Congress, that there was a great deal in the newspapers about the Indians in the West being practically on starvation. I wrote the Judge a letter, asking him if something could not be done to help those Indians. He answered immediately to this effect. "Dear Dickie, I think that The Committee in charge of Indian Affairs is handling the matter referred to in your letter, in the best way possible." The Judge was right. The subject was indeed too big for me to be meddling with it.

In thinking of The Vann House, I am reminded of the little girl in Adairville who was going to her Aunt's wedding. It was the second marriage for the Aunt, and she was not so young as she once was. When the little girl came home we were asking her all about the Wedding and wanted to know how the bride looked. She statted for a while, and then said-

"Well, she was just old and looked it." And that is the way of *The Yawn House*; it is just old and looks it.

Five years I have watched this old landmark of a civilization that has passed into history, deteriorate and crumble away, and I have wished from the bottom of my heart, as I am sure many of you have, that something could be done to save it for future generations. Knowing that the late Will Rogers was of the Yawn Family, I wrote a letter to Will Rogers, Jr., and tried to describe this old Yawn House in its fading grandeur, and saying that I wished that it could be saved. He answered my letter stating that his people came from Spring Place, and then this thoughtful sentence, "Mrs. Brady, I don't know what to do about the old house."

Time passed on, and public interest finally became aroused in saving this relic of the past. A group of ladies, including Mrs. W. M. Sapp, Mrs. Gertrude McFarland, and I, with Mark Pace, began negotiations with Dr. Bradford, who owned the property, to buy the house and a few acres of land. He gave us an option on it for \$3,000.00, and through gifts of public spirited citizens of Whitfield and Murray Counties, friends from other parts of the state, and the good publicity given by Mark Pace in *The Dalton Citizen*, the money was raised.

Mr. Wett Komerer, President of Whitfield County Historical Society, Mrs. W. M. Sapp, Mr. Chambers, President of the Cobutta Bank in Chattahoochee, and I, with Sam Calhoun along to take care of the legal details of the matter, handed \$5,000.00 in cash to Dr. Bradford and he, in turn, deeded the house and land to the Historical Commission of Georgia. This commission was appointed by your legislature and is composed of five men, Dr. A. H. Kelly of The University of Georgia, Milton Phetwood of Cartersville, G. E. Gregory of *The Atlanta Journal and Constitution*, Alexander Lawrence of Savannah, and H. A. Alexander of Atlanta.

The Yawn House and the stated number of acres now belong to the State of Georgia, and your legislature has voted \$300,000.00 for restoring it. I believe that you can rest assured that it will be done authoritatively. Dr. Foreman and Dr. Billeau have been working on the project, and I understand that they are now ready to accept bids on the work to be done.

Now as to the history of *The Yawn House*.¹ James Clement Yawn was born in Scotland in 1698. He came to America and lived for a while in South Carolina, coming to Georgia in 1729 and establishing a trading post at Spring Place.

He married a Cherokee girl, Ruth Gans, and they reared a family whose thrift and achievements made not only Cherokee History but American History. James, the second was born at the trading post in 1735. He inherited thousands of acres of beautiful and fertile land in the rich valley near the blue Cobutta Mountains. He invited the Moravian Missionaries to build a church and school near his home, and today a marker stands designating that site.²

He went to England, and while there visited the great cathedrals, as well as many other places of historic interest. He also had an audience with the King. James was making plans to build this home at that time, shipped by boat and then hauled by wiggins from Savannah to Spring Place.

¹ "The Home of Chief Joseph Yawn" is described in the admirable article by Louis Selman Brown giving much of the history of "Homes of Distinguished Cherokee Indians" published in *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XI, No. 3 (September, 1933), pp. 927-41.

² This was Springplace Mission founded by Moravian missionaries in 1801, the first Protestant mission among the Cherokees in Georgia.—Muriel H. Wright, "Springplace, Moravian Mission, Cherokee Nation" (Guthrie, 1949), 93 pages, illustrated.

Everywhere Vann displayed his love and appreciation for the beautiful and historic things of the world. It is from this James Vann we had, a few generations later, Will Rogers, the great humorist and most beloved man of his times. I still think that the wittiest thing Will Rogers ever said was that he could not brag about his ancestors coming over on "The Mayflower," because they met the boat. It is said that the Vann Men were all tall and handsome, with clean, sturdy habits.

Joseph, the son of James II, and Margaret Vann, and the one we are most interested in, was born in 1775 at Vann's Trading Post. When his father died, he took over this house and his holdings and added to them until he became known as "Rich Joe Vann." Dr. A. Jobe, an uncle of Mrs. G. D. McCutchen, was born October 9th, 1817, kept a diary relating the events of his life. Mrs. McCutchen has this diary and allowed me to read Dr. Jobe's references to Joseph Vann. This is what he recorded, and what I read: "Joe Vann was not a public man, but he was exceedingly wealthy and influential. He owned 150 negro slaves and a great deal of stock when I knew him. All the prominent Indians owned slaves, but none so many as Joe Vann." It would be interesting for us to know how he made so much money.

We know that John Howard Payne, the Author of "Home Sweet Home" was arrested and held as a prisoner in the Vann House. He was accused by the Federal Government of being an Indian sympathizer and agitator, simply because he made the remark publicly that the government agents looked more like devils than the Indians did. Listen to Dr. Jobe's account of this arrest in his diary: "I bade Mr. and Mrs. Wallace farewell, after paying a reasonable bill, and resumed my journey over Sand Mountain, and on to John Ross's five miles from Ross' landing. Mr. Ross had moved on the Tenn. side preparatory to leaving for the Indian Territory. I followed on to his new home, for I was compelled to see him. John Ross was Principal Chief of The Cherokee Indian Nation, and when I arrived at his home, I was informed by his wife that he was not there, but would be home that night, and I awaited his return. When he reached home, John Howard Payne was with him. Ross and Payne were fast friends. Mr. Ross paid me the next morning for the flour, and I took my leave of the two gentlemen that I found to be sociable and friendly. Sometime afterwards, I learned from the newspapers that the night I left the Ross house, two federal officers came and arrested both Ross and Payne to take them to prison in Milledgeville. All four traveled on horseback, one officer riding by the side of Ross, and other by the side of Payne."

No doubt but they stopped enroute with the prisoners, and held the two captive at Joe Vann's house, as it was on the old Federal Road to the south.

You all know the sad story of the removal of the Cherokee. How they were a nation of some 20,000 men, women and children, living within the confines of a state and that state, Georgia. That they had become highly civilized, farmed their land, raised bees, traded in furs, had looms, and learned to worship God. That one, Sequoyah, through his own ingenuity invented an alphabet for his people, had a crude printing press and published a newspaper called *The Cherokee Phoenix* at New Echota, the capital of the Cherokee Nation, now Callahan, Georgia. The scriptures were also printed in the Indian language.

It is recorded in an old book I possess, named *Old Frontiers*, that a copy of the scriptures was brought to Old Chief Drowning Bear, and after hearing some of the passages read, said, "It seems a good book. It is strange that the white man who has heard it so long is no better than he is." I am positive that this Drowning Bear was the man who lived on the creek just south of Dalton, and for whom Bear Creek is named today.

To the lasting shame and disgrace of the United States, and to the State and while in England, bought much material and furnishings, these being shipped by boat and then hauled by wagons from Savannah to Spring Place, Georgia, these people were literally driven from their homes. United States soldiers and Georgia militiamen rounded them up, as you would cattle, herded them in stockades, and then loaded part of them on flat boats and floated them down the river. More than 10,000 were sent by wagons and horse-back, but mostly on foot. It is said that they were divided in groups of about one thousand each with two leaders to each group. An eye witness to the removal states, "It was mid-winter, the sick and feeble were in wagons, but by far the greatest number was on foot, a great many with heavy bundles strapped to their backs. The part averaged about ten miles per day. Twelve to fifteen dead were buried at each stopping place. When I witnessed the last detachment leaving, and thought that my countrymen had expelled them from their native soil, and the homes that they loved, I felt that every scalp, every burning, every massacre had been explained. The Cherokees had given their country." More than 4,000 of these Cherokees died from disease, exposure, and I am sure, heart-break, on "The Trail Where They Cried."

Before the first company took up their march to the west, John Ross, that great Cherokee Chief of the Nation, called a solemn council meeting for the last time in their old home land. They drew up and adopted the following resolution to be sent to Washington. I have read no finer language. Patient, realization of futility in contrasting further insurmountable barriers, injustice heaped upon a helpless people, literally streams from every sentence. Listen to it:

"The title of the Cherokee people to their lands is the most ancient, pure and absolute known to man. Its date is beyond the reach of human record; its validity confirmed by possession and enjoyment antecedent to all pretense of claim by any portion of the human race.

"The free consent of the Cherokee people is indispensable to a valid transfer of the Cherokee title. The Cherokee people have neither by themselves nor their representatives given such consent. It follows that the original title and ownership of said lands still rests in The Cherokee Nation, unimpaired and absolute. The Cherokee People have existed as a distinct national community for a period extending into antiquity beyond the date and records, and memory of man. These attributes have never been relinquished by THE CHEROKEE PEOPLE and can not be dissolved by the expulsion of the Nation from its own territory by the power of THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT."

The State of Georgia, as you know, divided the Cherokee Indian land into 160 acre lots with the exception of the land around Dahlonega, where gold had been found, and these lots consisted of only 40 acres. The lots were numbered and the numbers put in a barrel, and any citizen of the state of Georgia could draw a lot by paying \$25.00. I brought with me today, one of these land grants that is indeed a part and parcel of The Cherokee Nation. This land grant accompanied some old deeds that came with a tract of land B. J. bought from Lawrence Hovey that is now a part of the Sandy Farm at Hill City.

Someday, in the not too distant future, we hope to see the old VAN HONSE, that has been standing on this wind swept hill for more than one hundred and fifty years, restored to its former stateliness and grandeur, with ground landscaped, not with tree roses, burfordi holly, nandinas, pyracantha laden with red, red berries and Cherokee roses barked on the roadside, all planted from near by Fort Mountain, with an herb garden in the rear, redolent with the sweet smell of sage, thyme, catnip, sweet basil, mint, etc.

I hope that car loads of tourists will be wandering through the house and over the grounds, studying a civilization that has passed into history, and perhaps buying small sacks of the herbs from the garden to take as a souvenir from the real home of a real Indian Chief, Joseph Vann.

Now, today I know that you are all as proud as I, that we are going to keep Joseph Vann's house to treasure as a memorial of a proud people, who once owned this land that we now call ours. The Vann House is not all that they left and that we now have. They stamped their names on the creeks and rivers, and so long as civilization shall last, people will speak and hear the beautiful resonant and hauntingly sweet names of the Comanche, the Elnway, Comchulla, Talulah, Oostanwala, Golteway, Chettinchoocha, and one will be reminded of the proud people that are gone—The Cherokees.

A LEGEND OF THE CHOCTAW "SQUIRREL STICK"

Recently, Mr. Coleman J. Ward, of Smithville, Oklahoma, presented the Oklahoma Historical Society Museum collections with two old mauls, a wooden glut and an old fro, these implements having been used by his father, J. L. Ward in building his house on North Boggy Creek, in the Choctaw Nation in 1886. He also presented an old "pashels" mortar and pestle used for pounding corn and given him by Aunt Pehy McKinney, an aged fullblood Choctaw, who had said the mortar was made in 1848 by her mother who had recently arrived in the Indian Territory from Mississippi, the pestle having been made since that time. Another gift was an Indian hunting club, known long ago among the Choctaws as a "squirrel stick." In lieu of notes on this hunting club, Mr. Ward has given the Society his own version or story of its origin as follows:

NANI NIA (FAT FISH)

He was born, this Choctaw baby, very fat, and continued in this condition until near grown, and because of this fact he was named Nani Nia (Fish Fat or Fatty Fish). And as generally the way with very fat folks, Nani Nia was not prone to too much activity. Not that the boy lacked industry; he was ambitious, but until he was goaded by his contemporaries, especially that of the male side, he let nothing stir him beyond easy breathing.

"You are nothing as a man! You will not even do the work of a worthy Ohogo (Choctaw woman). You will not hunt nor fish; you will not dress game that the hunters bring in for all to eat. You can't keep the babies while the women plant the corn; the babies all cry when left in your care; even they know that you should be at some manly work. Even fat white men try to do something; if they can't care for the hedges or weed the gardens, they will make many days of study, so they will know how to trade and swindle their brothers, thereby making their brothers wiser while they are being swindled. One as fat as you could at least sit on a log and make bows and arrows for the hunters. Such work by you would be welcomed by all the hunters; they could always use more bows and many more arrows when they go among the flocks and herds of the whites."

All this and much more was said to Nani Nia. Even the girls and women would at times, by sly words and gestures, intimate Nani Nia as being some lazy, and as Nani Nia began reaching near maturity, his resent-

ment grew apace. However, for the longest time there seemed to be nothing that he cared to do about the matter.

He one day, sat on a log. The weather was very pleasant. It was in the fall of the year. The squirrels, birds, all small game of such kinds were very active.

There was a steady foot-fall approaching. Nani Nin feigned sleep, but with nearer approach of the foot-steps, Nani Nin squinted through half closed lids. One of the elders of the tribe was approaching; Nani Nin knew what to expect—he thought—when found asleep anywhere in daylight hours!

"You are here Nani Nin and not asleep as you would have me believe. I know that you are aware of all the wild activity that is going about you here and I know that there is something in your mind now besides your natural bent of forever wanting your fat self to be asleep or loitering in lazy comfort. There is something very deep within you; something that is of highest worth. Had you ever known where to look for inspiration, the betterment of you by others would have never penetrated your outer-skin, much less the inner soul!

"There is one, some younger than you, that you have never as much as exchanged smiles with, that has all faith in you. This one is my younger daughter. Now this message brought to you by one who knows, and that you know never indulges in idle talk, would you look and confirm for yourself this hope and expectation for you? I will pass on now with the feeling and hope that this one of whom I spoke to you has intuition that does not fail!"

Nani Nin sat long after the old Choctaw had passed on. Yes, there was a something, deep and stirring, that would never be satisfied until Nani Nin took some definite action. "But why take action?" thought Nani Nin, "until there is a definite knowledge as to what action to take?"

As the boy sat thus, without any plan in mind, he began whittling on a stick with his long knife. First he rounded one end of the stick then cut the end squarely across; this end resembled the bottom end of a whiskey bottle, and with some more whittling Nani Nin fashioned the shoulders and neck of the bottle. (Whiskey bottles, even made from wood, should be good for something.)

A squirrel was running along a fallen log. Nani Nin threw the bottle-shaped piece of wood at the squirrel; the throw was accurate, the squirrel was killed. For an hour, or more, Nani Nin kept throwing his wooden bottle at the squirrels and birds; he killed several of these but he would throw many times when he would not make a kill; there were many clear misses. He soon saw that his new weapon was out of proportion; the neck was too short for the body—it would not balance right. He made another wooden bottle and made the neck much longer. This one was better but the lower end being flat it would not slip through the air when thrown, as it should. He rounded the lower end to match the shape of the whiteman's rifle bullet. This was better, too.

Nani Nin was tiring but his efforts had rewarded him with several squirrels and some three or four rabbits, also numbers of quail and lesser birds. These would make meat for a number of people.

The boy walked toward the village, that was composed of some dozen or so cabins, inhabited possibly by fifty Choctaws.

Nani Nin had thrown his club into some thick bushes before reaching the village. He was carrying nothing in his hands but his game. There were wondering looks from all those seeing him enter the village; he had meat for many at one time, but he carried nothing showing how he had pro-

cured his game. True, many boys had gone out into the woods and brought in game that they had killed with rocks and clubs, but these boys had ordinary industry. This fellow, Nani Nia, had no getup and go about him at all, and the question in every mind was "Why and how?"

No, there was one mind without question. Nani Nia looked toward the girl that he had never looked toward before. There he saw triumph. There was a smile, ever so shallow, but with all the meaning in the world to Nani Nia. It was answered in kind by the boy as he passed on. He dropped his game, careless like. The girl snatched it from the ground and disappeared. Soon there was a meal prepared for all that did not consist altogether of corn dishes. There was just too!

Nani Nia now had all the incentive now needed to try doing things. A day did not come that he would not slip away to the woods by himself to hunt. He had found the club he had made while idly whittling, to be one of the best game getters, and too, it required no expensive ammunition; it made no roar through the forest as the rifle when discharged. Up to within twenty-five to thirty yards it was a most deadly weapon when used by an expert as Nani Nia was getting to be. And he found that by having two or more clubs in his left hand served to give him balance and leverage, making for better aim and power. The rabbit, squirrel or such larger game that lingered time enough, if such were required, for a second throw had but little chance of surviving. When a pot-throw could be had at quail, ducks or wild turkeys, there was but little chance that there would be no meat.

For several years Nani Nia used nothing but his clubs for hunting. Always though, he had kept his clubs a secret. He had heard of the usage when the Choctaws and other tribes of Indians had used clubs as war weapons and he had reasoned that these clubs might have been something like his. Of their efficiency with such use he had no doubt. He had killed deer with his clubs; some of these he had knocked over with a single throw. An animal's size or weight made but little difference; the club, when striking big and first, would crush the skull of a bull and being silent in use as they were, why not use them in war?

By constant exercise with his hunting Nani Nia became slim and lithe; there was no superfluous flesh. The girl with whom he had exchanged smiles was a very proud woman; her man was one of the most honored of any tribe. Mostly he went alone and kept his own counsel. When he would bring in several fowls of the domesticated kind, a hog or a cow, all dressed in convenient hanks, or carcasses for carrying, none would ask questions. All knew that such meat only came from some of the white settlements, and that there had been no sounds made nor tracks left as evidence.

When war broke out between the states Nani Nia enlisted under General Stand Watie. He served usually as a scout; his duties as such, kept him back and forth between lines, and these, as it happened to be his pleasure, he would penetrate mostly at will and there were many Yankee soldiers found with bursted skulls but who had "busted" no one knew.

The war being over and Nani Nia coming to the end of his days, he called about him his sons and nephews. He gave into their hands his remaining clubs. "Take these and use them for the procurement of meat," he said. "There will be days again when you will have nothing with which to buy rifle and ball. Use these until you are stirred by high ambitions; when this comes you will know how and what to do—maybe you will reach your goals by whittling, inspired by a smile!"

During the latter part of the 1800's and some few years of the 1900's the Choctaw boys going to school at Spencer and Jones Academies used such clubs for hunting. They named the clubs "Spencer Rifles," after the once famous powder and ball rifle of that name.

—Coleman J. Ward.