

## NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

## COUNTY SEAT WAR IN MCINTOSH COUNTY

The contest between Checotah and Eufaula for the location of the county seat in McIntosh County soon after Oklahoma statehood was climaxed by a real battle. The following story is contributed to *The Chronicles* by Mr. W. R. Withington, an attorney of Oklahoma City and member of the Historical Society, who lived in Eufaula in 1908:

## CHECOTAH-EUFAULA COURT HOUSE RIOT

When I came to South McAlester in the Indian Territory as a boy in the Fall of 1907, I hardly expected to see, much less take part in, one of the historical events of the old Indian Territory part of Oklahoma.

One of my first employments was that of a telephone operator at Crowder, Oklahoma, some few miles north of South McAlester. After working at Crowder for awhile I was promoted in May, 1908, to the position of telephone operator at the flourishing town of Eufaula, then working for what had been originally the South McAlester-Eufaula Telephone Company. In 1905, the Pioneer Telephone and Telegraph Company bought the controlling interest in the South McAlester-Eufaula Telephone Company, and the name of the company was later changed to the Pioneer Telephone and Telegraph Company. I remember the company as the Pioneer Telephone and Telegraph Company, which I understand was the forerunner of the Southwestern Bell Telephone Company.

I was too young then to pay any attention to politics. However, I did know that about the time I commenced working at Eufaula both Eufaula and Checotah were competing for the county seat of McIntosh County. A special election had been called by Governor C. N. Haskell for Saturday, May 23, 1908, to determine which of these towns would become the county seat of McIntosh County, Oklahoma. According to an article appearing in the *Indian Journal*, which is still being published at Eufaula at this time, it appeared that Eufaula had won the county seat election by some fifty odd votes. Checotah also claimed to have won the election.

The building in which the telephone office was then located is still standing on the corner of Main Street and Foley Avenue across the street from the old Tully Building. The telephone office was on the second floor.

Nothing unusual occurred after the election until Sunday, June 7, 1908. About noon on this Sunday, I was on the job working at the telephone switchboard, answering the few calls that came in. There was no sign of impending danger; everything was calm and peaceful; and the atmosphere, you might say, was the usual one to be expected in a small town on a Sunday morning in the summertime—"all quiet along the Petomac" as it were.

Suddenly, things began to happen. The M.K.&T. ("Katy") train from Muskogee and Checotah was late and arrived in Eufaula about noon. A group of men from Checotah got off the train, stiff with guns, and they began scattering out over the town of Eufaula preparatory to taking it over. Part of them went north, circling around to the court house for the purpose of taking the county records and carrying them to Checotah. The rest of them went to different parts of the town. Some of them came up Foley Avenue between the Telephone Building and the old Tully Building, shooting as they came, some of the bullets hitting the telephone building. The intersection of Main Street and Foley Avenue, adjacent to the telephone building, was a "no man's land" and also the central point of the battlefield.

I sought security behind the telephone switchboard, and I did not come out until the shooting had subsided. A number of the citizens of Eufaula had appeared upon the scene armed and the situation was tense for quite awhile until an armistice was agreed upon. When I felt that it was safe to go down on the street, I found out that one of the men from Checotah, Mr. Frank Jones, had told Deputy Constable Woods of Eufaula and Deputy City Marshal Kleiser of Eufaula to get out of the street and out of town or he would give them the contents of his gun. A Mr. Parmenter of the Checotah group was said to have shot Deputy Constable F. M. Woods of Eufaula. Whether it was Mr. Parmenter or someone else, Deputy Constable Woods was badly wounded and died, as I recall, later that day. The Checotah group was not successful in securing possession of the County records. Eufaula became the county seat of McIntosh County, things quieted down, and I survived this "wild and woolly" event in the history of the old Indian Territory part of Oklahoma.

—W. R. Withington

#### THE NAME "LOOKEBA" IN CADDO COUNTY

Mr. Nat M. Taylor of Lookeba is a well known local historian and author of *A Brief History of Rorer Mills County* published in 1947. By special request of the Editorial Department, Mr. Taylor has kindly contributed the following item giving the history and the pronunciation of the name Lookeba:

## HOW LOOKEBA GOT ITS NAME

The name of the town Lookeba is probably the most mispronounced name in the state of Oklahoma. The first impression upon seeing the name of this Caddo County town is that it is an Indian word but it is not. There is no name like it in the United States, or in the World for that matter. Lookeba is a coined name, and has no connection with any other word in the English language. So in this respect, it is unique.

When the townsite of Lookeba was established in 1902, three men were interested in promotion of the town, and their names were Lowe, Kelly and Baker. When the three men were surveying the townsite in August, 1902, there was no restaurant around so they took their meals with a Mrs. Scholten who lived in a tent. One day after the survey was finished and the men had eaten their dinner, they were discussing what they should name the town. Several names were suggested but none suited them. Finally, Mrs. Scholten made the suggestion that they take the first syllable of the name of each of the three men and form a name in their honor. This was done, and the name of the town became Lowe-kel-ba.

When application was made for a post office, changes appeared in the spelling of the name Lowe-kel-ba: In the first syllable, e was substituted for we; in the second syllable, the l was dropped, and the third syllable remained intact. Thus, the name officially became Lookeba, pronounced by the founders and the present citizens Ló-ké-bá, with the accent on the second syllable. This is the correct name today.

—Nat M. Taylor

## HISTORY AWARD TO MR. R. G. MILLER

The American Association of State and Local History at its annual convention this September in Iowa City, Iowa, announced the presentation of an Award of Merit honoring Mr. R. G. Miller, Associate Editor of *The Daily Oklahoman* and *Oklahoma City Times*, for his stimulation of local history through his "Smoking Room" column in the *Times* and in statewide history tours. People in every part of Oklahoma are pleased that this honor has come to Editor R. G. Miller who is better known at large than any other person, with friends and acquaintances in every city, town and village and along every highway and country road in this state. Mr. Miller has done a great work in promoting local history, and the American Association's Award of Merit is justly due him who is held in high esteem throughout Oklahoma.

A special committee of the American Association of State and Local History annually seeks out individuals throughout

the Nation and makes the award "to pay tribute to those people who promote a better understanding of America's heritage at the local level."

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#### OKLAHOMA CIVIL WAR CENTENNIAL COMMISSION

Commemoration of the Centennial of the Civil War in the state, extending through 1965, will center around participation of the Indian nations of the Indian Territory in the great War as planned under the sponsorship of the Oklahoma Civil War Centennial Commission.

The Oklahoma Historical Society is honored in the appointment of several members from the Board of Directors to this Centennial Commission, named by Governor J. Howard Edmondson and announced last August: Mr. Henry B. Bass of Enid, to serve as Chairman of the Commission is well known as a specialist on Civil War history with a fine collection of Lincoln material, and has been a long-time member of the National Civil War Round Table; Col. George H. Shirk, President of the Oklahoma Historical Society, is well known for his writing and activities in the field of State History; Hon. Jenkin Lloyd Jones is prominent as Editor of *The Tulsa Tribune*; Mr. Elmer L. Fraker, Administrative Secretary of the Oklahoma Historical Society, serves as Secretary of the Centennial Commission. Dr. Charles Evans now retired and for many years connected with the administration of the Historical Society was appointed Chairman Emeritus of the Commission.

The other honored members of this Commission named by Governor Edmondson are: Dr. Rob Roy McGregor of the History Department, Oklahoma City University; Dr. Leroy Fischer and Dr. Homer L. Knight, both of the Department of History, Oklahoma State University; Dr. A. M. Gibson, writer on Oklahoma historical subjects and archival director in the Department of History of the University of Oklahoma; and Dr. Charles C. Bush, authority and writer on American military history, of the Department of History in the University of Oklahoma.

All the appointments to the Centennial Commission by Governor Edmondson extend to January 13, 1963. Centennial commemoration plans now underway through the Oklahoma Historical Society include the marking of the Civil War battlefields in the state and restoration work on some important historic sites of the period. The Annual Tours of the Historical Society during the Centennial years will point up events of the Civil War and will visit the sites where they took place in Oklahoma.

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The following list compiled by Mrs. Edith Mitchell, Cataloger, gives the titles of books accessioned and catalogued in the Library of Oklahoma Historical Society, from July 1, 1959 to July 1, 1960.

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