

## NECROLOGY

FLORENCE MCNEELY DRAKE  
1872-1967

Florence McNeely Drake was born in Coldwater, Mississippi, January 20, 1872, the daughter of Smiley Pharr McNeely and Sara Elizabeth Robinson. Her early schooling was in private schools and one year in a girl's seminary. She was married to John Whitfield Drake, January 1, 1889 in Burkner, Arkansas. She died in Shawnee, Oklahoma, January 10, 1967 and was buried in Tecumseh Mission Cemetery.

Mr. and Mrs. Drake moved to Texas in 1896 and two years later came to Oklahoma Territory where Mr. Drake had interest in cotton growing. He organized and operated the Tecumseh Oil and Cotton Company for more than twenty five years. Mr. and Mrs. Drake were the parents of eight children including twin sons. Two children, a son Oscar M. Drake, Cincinnati and a daughter, Mrs. Reuben W. Keller, Shawnee, survive her.

Mrs. Drake was the well known writer of published articles and other works. She wrote feature stories for the *Daily Oklahoman* and *Tulsa World* until late in life. Writing was always the principal interest of her life in addition to the cares of rearing a large family. She edited a department for a church magazine in 1910 and contributed articles to it regularly. She became interested in the history and lore of the Indians and devoted many years of her life to research and writing on various tribes settled in this part of central Oklahoma. The historical volume *Civilization as told to her* by Thomas Willcutt Alford was published by the Oklahoma University Press in 1934.

Mrs. Drake's early influence was felt in the cultural life of Tecumseh. She started the Delphian Study Groups there, and later organized the Sorosis Club. She was a lifetime member of the Presbyterian Church, a Charter member of the Wauwagies Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, and was instrumental in the organization of the Pottawatomie County Historical Society. She was kind and generous to all and gave inspiration to many young men and women who were seeking encouragement in their lives and work.

Mrs. Drake once wrote: "It is difficult for the younger generation to visualize the early days of this country. It may be hard too, to understand the culture and refinement of people who lived in tents, dugouts, shacks and two room houses. But refinement is inborn and culture is the result of association. The pioneer spirit caused many people to give up the comforts they had been accustomed to and start life in a new country but it did not destroy dignity nor quench the love of gracious living. In those days politeness was the order of the time, consideration of others was the basis of good society."

These were the qualities of her character. She was never too busy to lend a hand or a word of encouragement wherever it was needed. She has left her loved ones a heritage they will always cherish.

—Florence Drake Keller.

Shawnee, Oklahoma.