

☆ NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

1972 INDEX

The Annual Index to *The Chronicles*, Vol. L, 1972, compiled by Mrs. Rella Looney, Archivist, is distributed free to those who receive the quarterly magazine. Orders for the Annual Index should be addressed to the Executive Director, Oklahoma Historical Society, Historical Building, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, 73105.

THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OKLAHOMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

It is not every day that one celebrates an 80th anniversary. Recognizing this fact, the Oklahoma Historical Society was proud to mark the occasion of its founding with a banquet and open house. The banquet was held on Saturday, May 26th, and honored both the Society and the Society's president, Mr. George Shirk. The event took place in the Silver Palm Room in Penn Square, Oklahoma City, and was attended by many interested people from across the state. Well-known Oklahomans, including members of the State Legislature, heard Mr. Jenkin Lloyd Jones of *The Tulsa World* give an informative and entertaining account of some of the more unusual place-names in Oklahoma. Mr. Shirk, as guest of honor, spoke on the meaning of heritage, stating that "Heritage is the collective gift to all of us from those who have gone before." Musical entertainment was presented by Oklahoma Christian College.

The Open House on Sunday included a preview look at the newly decorated, but not-yet-open, Confederate Room with its memorabilia of the Civil War, and, the dedication of a cupola from the old Baum building in Oklahoma City set on the grounds of the Oklahoma Historical Society. There was also the placement of a Time Capsule in the front lawn. Immediately following, in the midst of a remarkably high wind, there was the traditional firing of the Civil War cannon that stands in front of the Historical Building. Inside, punch was offered to all of the guests in attendance from the famous and beautiful sterling silver punch bowl taken from the *S. S. Oklahoma* sunk in Pearl Harbor December 7, 1941.



Faculty of Henry Kendall College at Muskogee and the College buildings, 1897
(Alice Robertson Photograph Collection, O.H.S.)

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RARE PHOTOGRAPHS BY MISS ALICE ROBERTSON IN OKLAHOMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTION

In the last weeks of 1972, Mr. and Mrs. Donald Sanders, Oklahoma City, undertook a special project for the Oklahoma Historical Society. Since 1948, there has been a small wooden box of glass negatives sitting unopened in the Editorial Office. Mr. and Mrs. Sanders include among their hobbies kodak and camera film development. They were sent the stoutly crated box and they gave their time, talent and the necessary paper to make photo prints from the glass negatives. Thanks to their efforts, the Editorial Office now has 76 interesting, rare old pictures of the early-day Muskogee area. The many glass negatives appear to have been crated in 1917. Also, Miss Alice Robertson is revealed as the photographer, some of the photos dating back to Indian Territory days in 1894.

CHIMNEY ROCK, 1973

Unlike the leaning tower of Pisa, which has been bolstered and reinforced from time to time, Chimney Rock, a notable and famous landmark in northwestern Oklahoma could not be saved by man. The rock column which rose to a height of 30 feet above its base in the SE $\frac{1}{4}$, Sec. 28, T25N, R 17W, was approximately $8\frac{1}{2}$ miles southeast of Alabaster Caverns State Park and 24 miles northeast of Woodward. In a day when ecologists and preservationists are fighting to preserve our national landmarks, it is interesting to note that the hand of nature cannot always be controlled.

Chimney Rock, a monument that marked the way for expeditions and travellers for centuries, served as a guide and finally as a curiosity of nature. This ancient landmark worn by the storms and winds through the years has fallen (1973), and is now a pile of rubble and broken stone that once stood a tall pillar on the landscape of Northwestern Oklahoma.

MEMORIALS TO DECEASED MEMBERS OKLAHOMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Golda B. Slief: Miss Golda B. Slief was born in Dover, Oklahoma Territory, on August 3, 1890. Miss Slief's parents were 89'ers and her father, John Anthony Slief, made the run and staked a claim $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles southeast of Dover in what is now Kingfisher County. Miss Slief received an A.B. Degree from Oklahoma City University and an M.A. from the University of Oklahoma. She attended summer sessions in Public Health Nursing at

Iowa University and Colorado A & M College. She received her R.N. Diploma from St. Joseph's Hospital, Ft. Worth, Texas, and served in the Navy Nurse Corp in World War I.

Miss Slief was active in many organizations and contributed her time and talent generously to them all. She had a life membership with the Oklahoma Historical Society, the Oklahoma State Nurses Association, The 8y'ers, Inc., The Catholic women's Activities Club and the American Nurses Association. Among her many honors, she was listed in "Who's Who of American Women." In 1951, she wrote "Oklahoma City Historical Markers" for *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*. She died in Oklahoma City on June 28, 1972, and was buried in the Slief family lot at Kingfisher, Oklahoma, Memorial Cemetery.

Greenwood Mitchell McCurtain: Greenwood Mitchell McCurtain was born in Indian Territory, in what is now McAlester, Oklahoma, on November 3, 1904. He was the son of Judge D. C. McCurtain and the grandson of the last tribally elected chief of the Choctaws, Governor Green McCurtain. Mr. McCurtain married Julia Ward of Tishomingo, Oklahoma, on May 28, 1923. Mrs. McCurtain was the great granddaughter of Jesse Chisholm, the Trail Blazer. In 1937, Mr. McCurtain moved to Texas as a member of the Railway Mail Association and at the time of his death on December 2, 1972, was chief illustrator with the Fort Worth Post Office. Mr. McCurtain is survived by his wife and five children, Betty, Mrs. James L. Ellis of Phoenix, Arizona; Greenwood and Julian of Fort Worth; Ward C. Chisholm of Beaumont; Wilma Miller of Somerville, N.J.; sixteen grandchildren and seven great grandchildren. He is also survived by a sister, Mrs. Elizabeth Sims of Silver Springs, Md., and a brother, Jackson, of Fort Worth.

PAYNE COUNTY DEMOCRAT, 1894

The *Payne County Democrat* began publication at Perkins, Payne County, Oklahoma, on Friday, June 8, 1894. A faded, torn copy of this issue sent to the Editorial Department for microfilming several years before the Society's microfilm program was perfected is an item of interest in the history of the Press Association in Oklahoma as well as in the stories of the first towns and the leaders in "Old Oklahoma" opened to settlement by the run on April 22, 1889. The copy of the *Democrat* was sent to the Editorial Department by Mr. Warren Spear of Perkins, Oklahoma, who was enthusiastic in the support of the Payne County Historical Society. He had been one of the hosts of an enjoyable meeting of Oklahoma Historical Society members with the Payne County group held recently at Perkins (1947).

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The old issue of the *Democrat* carries its first item headed "Salutory" by J. K. Allen, Editor, addressed "To the citizens of Perkins and vicinity":

This week we will mail you the first issue of the *Payne County Democrat*. Hitherto our county has had but one organ of that political faith, while each of the other parties has had but one organ of that political faith, while each of the other parties have from two to five papers in that county. The *Democrat* will advocate the cause of democracy as it understands it, and we believe the west and south construes the issues of the day. We favor bimetalism, tariff for revenue only and an income tax. The *Democrat* can not and will not at any time condone the act of any man whose official conduct has been at variance with the teachings of his party, nor will we yield principle to policy. In county matters we advocate reform and the election of men to office who will reduce the cost of conducting public affairs to a minimum. We believe the present price of county warrants at 50 cents on the dollar to be the result of mismanagement of public affairs.

The *Democrat* will work for the interests of Perkins and vicinity to the exclusion of all others. We ask and hope for your patronage, and will endeavor to make our interests mutual. . . .

The same issue of the *Democrat* (p. 1, col. 4) gave the speech of Roy Hoffman of the *Guthrie Leader* delivered before the Oklahoma Editorial Association on June 6, 1894. Hoffman, later usually called "General Hoffman," was known as one of the most gifted public speakers in Oklahoma during his life-time.¹

The Press of Oklahoma

Roy Hoffman Makes an Interesting Talk on That Topic

Nowhere in the vineyard of the Lord can there be found a more patient, lowly, hard-working, poorly paid set of handicraftsmen than they who make and wield the power of the press in Oklahoma. Strong in individual belief that every other is mentally a pauper and morally a starveling, there is yet in each of us a deep, well-grounded conviction that in our collective breasts is the seat of all intelligence and the home of a late pattern model of all the living virtues.

At no time and place have the vicissitudes of journalism been greater or the field broader than in the settlement and upbuilding of this territory. Here was a frontier upon the interior, a face without expression; a history without a written record; a banquet without guests; a fountain sealed; a poem frozen; an uproar

¹ Roy Hoffman settled at Guthrie in 1889, and was admitted to the bar the next year at the age of 21. Some months after the run into the Cherokee Outlet in 1893, he established the *Guthrie Leader* that became the outstanding Democratic newspaper in Oklahoma Territory. He was active in civic and political affairs, and served in many public positions in his county and the state until the time of his death (1953). He was the ranking officer of the Oklahoma National Guard from 1900 to 1917. He was commissioned brigadier general in the National Army in August, 1917, and was a commanding officer with the Army in France during World War I. After the war, General Hoffman was an officer in the Reserve Army, and one of the organizers of the American Legion.

of color; a tumult of tradition, a riot of savage beauty; a language eloquent in a thousand tongues and yet mute with unspoken sublimity in all.

States are not great except as newspapers make them. For the rapid development of this country, for its spontaneous recognition among the commonwealths of the nation, for its high rating among the resources of the republic, a common impulse and a common justice pay tribute to the press.

It is no little thing—this building up a newspaper. Napoleon thought that 3 o'clock in the morning to be the rarest, but the Oklahoma newspaper must have a courage that burns all night, bright and steadfast as the stars, and which bubbles up at daybreak, joyous as the first burst of beams upon the morning dew. It may only sleep when the storm sleeps; its work is only done when the history of the future state is written.

He who enters journalism in Oklahoma embarks on a sea of trouble. Upon the unknown waters strange sirens signal and hidden rocks gore. He must know how to meet all the petty annoyances that crowd into daily life as well as engage in the "big wars that make ambition virtue." He must know how to know all and double up and double quick. He must know that the thing of least value in a newspaper office is brains and the thing most desired is a capacity to make one dollar do the work of two. He must crimp the locks of the fellow that needs it and back it up with a heroic display of courage even though he have it not. He must look with resignation upon all the ills that "make calamity of fortune." He must charge his contemporary with all the crimes in Newgate calendar, point with decision to his mental laches, drive coaching expeditions through his moral makeup, lament the fact that his mental pestilence poisons the community, and then meet him 'round the corner when the shades of night have gathered fast and clasp him fast to your bosom as a brother while you wink the other eye and schedule a pool of rates on printing or plan new methods to bilk the big-hearted public out of a livelihood. If the occasion demands he must put an upper case eye or an italicized expression upon the face of a bellicose visitor. He must praise the rank goodness of his party's candidate with the blandness of unconscious innocence. He must lie on a kite shaped track for the merchant of his town and then smother a wild-eyed desire to jam his hell box down into his vermiform appendix when he refuses to pay for the advertisement. He must give long primer always and must be satisfied with solid agate in return. He must see his circulation drop into ruin and decay or get licked for telling the truth. He is constantly between the Scylla of bankruptcy and Charybdis of a "scoop." He must print acres of church announcements without money and without price, and then be told that his chance for salvation is not worth a small piece of em. He must pick up and curry and scrub and groom and boost the politician into power and then submit to his exchanging plums for little words of kindness from rival newspapers. He must shout double leaded over the meteoric display of genius in the amateur theatrical and then when the participants fail to pay for their puffs make a histrionic effort to keep from saying that their ability is on a par with his paste pot. He must know how to caricature a fault, crystalize a virtue or cauterize a

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chump. He must know where to take hold and when to let go. And then when he goes to that land where no "scoops" are ever served, when the "far" takes are all up, the strings measured and cashed in, when his life has gone out in the work which burns the candle at both ends, he will drop aside unnoticed and unused, and the community for which he gave his toil without stint will not even mark the neglected spot with the heathen benediction of a headstone. They could not repay him in sum or kind with all the golden glories of the New Jerusalem.

It is too long a story to enter upon the individual characteristics of the press of Oklahoma. Our 213 newspapers and publications contain the wisdom of the ages with the dash and vigor of the times. But even this poor mention would be more sadly incomplete did I not pause long enough to speak the name of him who led where we might follow, who blazed the path of Oklahoma journalism and early gave up his life in the work. Where dust was mingled with the soil and sunshine of this territory who was first to come and soonest to go—who was first to tell the beauties of the land of the fair God and who told them as no other can, and this association will long hold in tender reverence the name of Milton W. Reynolds, the "Kicking Bird."¹

It rolls a billowy wealth of affection into his waking hours, and steals upon him as he sleeps and stoops above him, glad to rain its gold into his dreams.

And so we go, each our separate way, evolving the history which we make, in which we mingle and of which we form a part. We can but write the preface. We can only lay the corner-stone of the edifice. But when our pencils are worn away to the tip, when our copy is all in, when "go" is called, may they who are to follow say of us that we played our many parts unselfishly and without complaint, and the work was well begun.

A REMINDER OF INDIAN TERRITORY DAYS ON THE SANTA FE RIGHT-OF-WAY NEAR EDMOND

The following note from Mike Gerald of Edmond points out a historical site showing a marked date of 1886 beside the Santa Fe Railroad track, with some history of this region when it was still Indian Territory:

¹ Milton W. Reynolds, well-known press correspondent for the *New York Tribune* and other papers, wrote of important events from the close of the Civil War to the opening of the unassigned lands (Old Oklahoma) in 1889. He was present at the great council with the leaders and chiefs of the Plains tribes at the Medicine Lodge in 1867, where he became the friend of the Kiowa chief, Kicking Bird. Reynolds adopted the name and became better known under this *nom de plume*—"Kicking Bird"—as a writer than under his own name. He championed the cause of the "Boomers" and the opening of Old Oklahoma in 1889. A few days after the opening, he started the *Guthrie Herald*, and founded the *Edmond Sun* within a few weeks. Reynolds was the most distinguished man elected to the First Legislative Council of Oklahoma Territory on August 3, 1890, but died before the Council convened a few days later.

A Note Worthy of Remembering

Travel via the Santa Fe Railroad tracks south from Edmond to Oklahoma City has become an almost indistinguishable jaunt through a scattered ten mile suburb. Edmond began to lose its distinct identity from the Oklahoma state capitol years ago.

However, traveling by foot, an Oklahoma historian would have to hike only a couple of miles from the Edmond depot to encounter the solemn remnants not of early Oklahoma but of Indian Territory before the famed land run of 1889!

Upon first indication of the site, one would acknowledge only a pensive lilac bush straddling a barbed wire fence which borders the west side of the track. Drawing nearer, the hiker may distinguish that a fence post emerging from the lilac bush is actually a crudely-fashioned cross keeping sacred and solitary vigil over two weathered mounds of dirt. Only on close examination does one realize that these mounds are graves and that they are over 86 years old:

Both graves are marked. Letters scratched upon a stone slab read:

FRANK
MOSIER
DIED
SEP 17, 1886
AGE 22

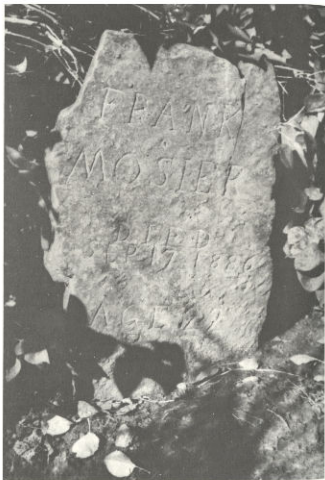
A small iron cross records only "Willie Davis" on the other grave.

Santa Fe trackmen over the years had kept up the graves somewhat and had apparently planted the lilac bush to shade them. It was 1919 when trackman F. L. Tanner of Ralston first saw the graves. But it wasn't until 1950 that he was assigned to maintain that section of track which he did until his retirement in 1965. It was during this period that Tanner took upon himself the responsibility of tending the graves. "There had been changes in the track forces and they did not seem to care about the graves, so I took over the maintenance of them, which I did for the next 15 years," Tanner recalled.

Originally, there was also a headstone marking Willie Davis' grave listing his age at 14. Tanner understood from "oldtimers" however, that a Catholic priest had come to Edmond many years earlier searching for a missing younger brother. The priest found his brother, Willie Davis, and replaced the stone marker with a more permanent iron cross which he fashioned with two iron spokes from a wagon wheel.

Other tales of old timers have it that the men's deaths resulted from a fight in the track construction camp. The date, 1886, is reasonable since the construction of the track was begun in 1885 and completed in 1887. However, other rumors claim the two were victims of a fever which swept the camp. It is unlikely that the true story will ever be known.

Shortly before Tanner retired to Ralston, he erected the wooden cross, scraped the ground around the graves, cut back bushes from the headstone and grave marker and spread weed killer over the area.



Gravestone at the forgotten grave of Frank Mosier

"Shortly after I had cleaned them up the last time, some vandals came there and dug out the headstones and dug about half-way down into one of the graves when, apparently they were frightened away," Tanner recorded.

It is certainly likely that these graves will suffer future attacks of vandalism unless a local historian sees fit to maintain and preserve them. They are, indeed, an unusual remnant of pre-statehood history dug three years before the run of '89.

In Tanner's own words, "It seems no more than right that men who died while building the railroad should have the courtesy of having their graves cared for."

RECENT EVENTS AT THE WOUNDED KNEE IN 1973 RECALL THE BITTERNESS OF THE TRAIL OF TEARS, 140 YEARS AGO

Indian tragedy described in a piece titled "Fate of the Indians" that was quoted in *Town's Fourth Reader* in 1847, has been received by the Editorial Office of *The Chronicles* through the interest of the Reverend Vernon A. Pendleton, Enid, Oklahoma. Mr. Pendleton gives the source of this description relating to Indian history: "Quoted from *Town's Fourth Reader*, by Salem Town; Publishers: Phinney & Co., Buffalo; Sanborn & Carter, Portland; 1847; In the Clerk's office of the District Court of the State of Maine; Pages 90, 92."

Mr. Pendleton offers his own comments on the Indian tragedy portrayed: "... It is the first almost contemporary description I have ever seen of 'The Trail of Tears.' It appears in *Town's Fourth Reader*, 1847. No author is listed for the story, so I assume that the editor of the book, *Salem Town*, wrote it. The information is given in the article. This book is in my collection." (Letter to Mr. George Shirk, April 9, 1973, from Vernon A. Pendleton, Superintendent of Missions, Perry Baptist Association, First National Bank Building, Enid, Oklahoma.)

Fate of the Indians



1. There is, indeed, in the fate of these unfortunate beings much to awaken our sympathy, and much to disturb the sobriety of our judgment; much which may be urged to excuse their own atrocities; much which may be urged to excuse us into an involuntary admiration. What can be more melancholy than their history? By a law of their nature, they seem destined to a slow, but sure extinction. Everywhere at the approach of the white man, they fade away.

2. We hear the rustling of their footsteps, like that of the withered leaves of autumn, and they are gone forever. They pass mournfully by us, and they return no more. Two centuries ago, the smoke of their wigwams and the fires of their

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councils rose in every valley, from Hudson's Bay to the farthest Florida, from the ocean to the Mississippi and the lakes.

3. The shouts of victory and the war-dance rang through the mountains and the glades. The thick arrows and the deadly tomahawk whistled through the forests; and the hunter's trace and the dark encampment startled the wild beasts in their lairs. The warriors stood forth in their glory. The young listened to the songs of other days. The mothers played with their infants, and gazed on the scene with warm hopes of the future. The aged sat down; but they wept not.

4. They should soon be at rest in fairer regions, where the Great Spirit dwelt in a home prepared for the brave, beyond the western skies. Braver men never lived; truer men never drew the bow. They had courage, and fortitude, and sagacity, and perseverance, beyond most of the human race. They shrank from no dangers, and they feared no hardships.

5. If they had the vices of savage life, they had the virtues also. They were true to their country, their friends, and their homes. If they forgave not injury, neither did they forget kindness. If their vengeance was terrible, their fidelity and generosity were unconquerable also. Their love, like their hate, stopped not on this side of the grave.

6. But where are they? Where are the villages, and warriors, and youth; the sachems and the tribes; the hunters and their families? They have perished. They are consumed. The wasting pestilence has not alone done the mighty work. No; nor famine, nor war. There has been a mightier power, a moral cancer, which hath eaten into their heart-cores; a plague which the touch of the white man communicated; a poison which betrayed them into a lingering ruin.

7. The winds of the Atlantic fan not a single region which they may now call their own. Already, the last feeble remnants of the race are preparing for their journey beyond the Mississippi. I see them leave their miserable homes, the aged, the helpless, the women, and the warriors, "few and faint, yet fearless still."

8. The ashes are cold on their native hearths. The smoke no longer curls round their lowly cabins. They move on with a slow, unsteady step. The white man is upon their heels for terror or despatch; but they heed him not. They turn to take a last look of their deserted villages. They cast a last glance upon the graves of their fathers. They shed no tears; they utter no cries; they heave no groans.

9. There is something in their hearts which passes speech. There is something in their looks, not of vengeance or submission, but of hard necessity, which stifles both; which chokes all utterance; which has no aim or method. It is courage absorbed in despair. They linger but for a moment. Their look is onward. They have passed the fatal stream. It shall never be repassed by them; no never. Yet there lies not between us and them an impassable gulf. They know and feel, that there is for them still one remove farther not distant, nor unseen. It is to the general burial-ground of the race.