

HISTORICAL NEWS ITEMS.

Mr. E. E. Dale, Assistant Professor of History in the University of Oklahoma, who has spent two years in Harvard since he received his Master Degree doing graduate work for his Ph. D. under Professor Frederick Jackson Turner in Western History has been notified that his thesis has been accepted. Mr. Dale's thesis, "The History of the Ranch Cattle Industry in Oklahoma," is one of special interest to Oklahoma and the southwest. Students interested in Western history will look with interest to the appearance of Mr. Dale's book, as it will form an important chapter in the passing of the pioneer days in Oklahoma and the southwest.

Teachers of history in Oklahoma will be interested to know that the University has secured Mr. J. B. Hedges as instructor in European History. Mr. Hedges is from Harvard having held for two or three years a teaching scholarship there under Professor Haskins.

In the death of Judge Walter B. Douglas, of St. Louis, on November 7, the Missouri Historical Society has suffered the loss of a devoted and indefatigable worker. His estimate of the place which St. Louis occupied in the history of the region between the Mississippi River and the Rocky Mountains, during the latter part of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth, naturally gave a wide scope to his interest and activities along historical lines. He was especially interested in the part which the Creole French pioneers of that place took in the fur trade during that period. The transfer of a large part of the Osage trade from the valley of the Missouri to that of the Arkansas, in the early part of the last century, followed by the appearance of Revard, the Chouteaus and other St. Louis traders who operated in Eastern Oklahoma, naturally links much of the earlier history of Oklahoma with that of St. Louis, and Judge Douglas was ever ready to aid the researches in that special field from this state. The available material pertaining to the early history of

Oklahoma is the more complete and interesting because of the patient and plainstaking work of Judge Douglas.

A notable figure as well as a most unique personality passed from the life of Oklahoma with the death of Captain George Washington Grayson, at his home in Eufaula, on Thursday, December 2. Captain Grayson was born in 1843, of parents who were of mixed white and Muskogee Indian descent. He was carefully educated, having graduated from the Asbury Manual Training School, near Eufaula, and was a student in Arkansas College, at Fayetteville, when the Civil War began. Although but eighteen years old, he enlisted as a private in Colonel Chilly McIntosh's Second Creek Regiment, in the Confederate Army, where he was soon promoted to the rank of captain and commanded a company during the greater part of his service, which ended with the war, in 1865. From that time onward, he took an active part in the affairs of the Creek people. He was secretary of the inter-tribal council at Okmulgee, which framed the proposed constitution for the Indian Territory, in 1870. He served as treasurer of the Creek Nation, held other positions of honor and trust under the tribal government and frequently represented it in negotiations at Washington. He was a master of the Creek language and was often called upon to act as interpreter in conferences between Government officials and full-blood fellow-tribesmen who could not speak or understand English. He was chosen as principal chief of the Creek Nation in 1917. In his later years, he gave a great deal of attention to the history of the Creek, or Muskogee people, and he was engaged in writing a history of the tribe when he was stricken with his last illness.

Although Oklahoma is popularly believed to be one of the younger states of the Union, and therefore, to have but little in the way of history, its age and the groundwork for its history become evident when it is learned that it has reached the period where centennials begin. The one hundredth anniversary of the signing of the Choctaw Treaty, at Doak's Stand, on the Natchez Road, whereby the first grant of land

in Oklahoma was made to an Indian tribe from east of the Mississippi, occurred on October 18, 1920. The centennial of the establishment of Union Mission among the people of the Osage tribe is at hand and plans are being made for its appropriate celebration during the coming spring. Mention is made elsewhere of the proposed Sequoyah centennial. The centennial of the establishment of Forts Gibson and Towson is only a little more than three years distant. The people of Oklahoma cannot afford to permit such incidents to pass unnoticed.

Because of the illness of the United States District Judge, Robert L. Williams, of the Eastern Oklahoma District, Judge David P. Dyer of St. Louis, Mo., presided over a recent session of the Federal Court, at Muskogee. Before adjourning court to return to his home, Judge Dyer addressed the members of the jury and court officials and, incidently, took occasion to urge upon them and through them, the people of Oklahoma generally, the importance of preserving the historic land marks of this State. His address in part was as follows:

“Some say that Oklahoma has no history,” he said, “but I know it has. And the best parts of it should be kept intact so that your children may know something of the early associations in this Territory.

“At Fort Gibson, for instance, within sight of the great national cemetery, are barracks and other survivals of the old fort going to pieces with but little attempt being made to save them. In other parts of Eastern Oklahoma are other buildings and memorials that should be kept for the future.

“You men come from all over Eastern Oklahoma. Though your communities, you should arouse your representatives in Congress to the necessity of appropriations for this purpose. The federal government should find a place for the old relics and should take steps to have the buildings and other equipment of the Territorial days preserved.

“Oklahoma is young and fresh in spirit, but it does have a history. I was here in 1901 when the big division of land

was made, in El Reno. As one of the Commissioners who help in the distribution, I know that many of the only Oklahomans were of the great spirit."

The growth of population interest in the collection and preservation of local history is emphasized by the organization incorporation of the Muskogee Historical Society. Among the objects specified in the articles of incorporation is one which provides that it is to co-operate with the Oklahoma Historical Society. Grant Foreman is president of the new Society and Bess Howard is secretary.

The Oklahoma Historical Society has recently secured the original manuscript "Journal of Union Mission," which was the first mission and school established in Oklahoma. It covers the period between April, 1820, and February, 1826. Couched, as much of it is, in language that reflects the peculiarly austere spiritual atmosphere of the period, and also containing much in the way of small talk, it is also shot through and through with contemporary local history and throws a flood of new light upon conditions as they existed in the eastern part of this state at the time the first immigrant Indians from east of the Mississippi began to settle in this state. It is a valuable document. It is to be hoped that much of its pertinent material may be made available for popular reference.

Mr. Will H. Clark, of Oklahoma City, has deposited with the Oklahoma Historical Society a buffalo-skin lodge or teepee cover, which was secured by his father, the late Colonel John G. Clark, from the Sioux Indians, at Fort Rice, Dakota, in 1866. Although more than half a century has passed since that time, the lodge cover is still in a good state of preservation. Its exterior surface is embellished by about 100 photographs which delineate stirring scenes in the chase and on the war-path. It is to be regretted that, until the Society has more museum floor space at its command, it will be impossible to place this interesting and valuable specimen on exhibition.

In the election of Miss Alice Robertson, of Muskogee, as the representative in Congress from her district, the Okla-

homa Historical Society and its members find an interest entirely apart from any partisan significance, first, because of the long association and constructive activities of herself and her family in the making of Oklahoma what it is, and, second, because of her friendship for and co-operation with the Society in its efforts to gather and preserve the essential materials of the history of the state. Her maternal grandparents, Reverend and Mrs. Samuel Austin Worcester, went from Vermont to Georgia, as missionaries to the Cherokees, in 1825. Her grandfather suffered imprisonment in the Georgia penitentiary because of his fidelity to the duties thus assigned despite the hostile laws of that state. The subsequent labors of Doctor Worcester, after his release and his removal to the Indian Territory, as missionary, translator and publisher, are a part of the history of Oklahoma. Miss Robertson's mother, who was a daughter of Doctor Worcester, became the wife of William S. Robertson, a missionary among the Creek, or Muscogee people nearly seventy years ago. Mrs. Robertson mastered the language of the Creeks so that she became their great translator, even as her father had rendered similar service for the Cherokees. Miss Robertson's own part in the history of the state, personal, social, official and educational, has been as constructive and helpful as it has been varied and extended. Her kindly interest in the work of the Oklahoma Historical Society was testified in a practical way when she joined with her sisters in placing the priceless Worcester-Robertson collection of documentary material in its custody in 1917.

When the collections of the Oklahoma Historical Society were removed from the Oklahoma City Carnegie Library building to the new quarters in the basement of the Capitol, at the beginning of December, 1917, it was believed that it had ample room for expansion for a period of six or eight years at least. Since that time, however, the growth of these collections has been so rapid that its new quarters are already becoming noticeably crowded. The necessity of providing for additional floor space for storage, stack room and exhibition purposes will become apparent in the near future.

Two valuable mementoes of the administration of George Washington, as President of the United States, have been placed with the Oklahoma Historical Society for safekeeping and exhibition, namely, a silver peace medal, which was issued in 1793, and a military commission bearing the date of 1794. The peace medal is in the shape of an elliptical disk of silver, about five inches by three inches in dimensions, and is bound by a heavy rim of the same metal. Designs and inscriptions are engraved instead of minted, as in the case of the peace medals of all later administrations. It was deposited by Mrs. William Delesdernier, of Oklahoma City, whose husband secured it while trading among the Sac and Fox Indians, more than forty years ago. So far as known, there are but two others of its kind in existence—the Red Jacket medal, in the museum of the Buffalo Historical Society, and one which is in the National Museum at Washington. The military commission is that of a captain of militia, issued to the Chickasaw chief, Muckleischamingo, in July, 1794, and bears the signatures of George Washington as President and Henry Knox as Secretary of War. The chieftain to whom it was issued was to raise a company of his fellow tribesmen and join the army of General Anthony Wayne in its campaign against hostile Indians of the Maumee and Wabash rivers, in Northwestern Ohio and Northern Indiana. It was the property of the late William Guy, a former principal chief or governor of the Chickasaw Nation, by whom it was bequeathed to Mrs. W. L. Ingram (a niece), of Oklahoma City. Mrs. Ingram deposited it with the Society.

One of the most valuable documents on exhibition in the collection of the Oklahoma Historical Society is the original patent to all of the lands of the present state of Oklahoma between the Arkansas and Canadian rivers on the North and Red river on the South and extending from the Arkansas line on the East to the Texas Panhandle line on the West. It was issued to the Choctaw Nation in 1842, in conformity with the provisions of the treaty entered into at Dancing Rabbit Creek, Mississippi, nearly a dozen years earlier. It is signed by John Tyler, as President, and by Daniel Webster, as Secretary of

State; it also bears the signatures of John C. Spencer, as Secretary of War, T. Hartley Crawford, as Commissioner of Indian Affairs, and J. Williamson, as Recorder of the General Land Office. It was designed and executed with pen and ink, brush and water color and gold leaf in the office of the Chief of the Corps of Topographical Engineers of the United States Army, its pen text being a model of its class, and bears the marginal signature of Colonel J. J. Abert, as chief of the corps. It is still the property of the Choctaw people, by whom it has been deposited with the Oklahoma Historical Society.