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## ANNUAL MEETING OF THE OKLAHOMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

By Emma Estill-Harbour, Ph. D.

The forty-first annual meeting of the Oklahoma Historical Society was held in Muskogee on April 18 and 19. The program was planned by such able leaders as Federal Judge Robert L. Williams and Mr. Grant Foreman, one of Oklahoma's outstanding historians. These men with the help of the Muskogee Historical Society provided a program and entertainment for the visitors which has had no equal in the history of the society.

Wednesday, the first day of the meeting, a most interesting drive was made, which was to make real to the visitors the history of eastern Oklahoma—a part of the State full of romance and history of the Cherokees. This trip was under the guidance of Mr. Foreman, who knows so well the history of the Cherokee country. It was a long procession of state historians and lovers of history which the twelve automobiles and a large bus carried on the trip.

The itinerary was carefully planned by Mr. Foreman. The party left Muskogee at ten o'clock. As the cars passed through Keefeton, near the old stage road between Muskogee and Fort Smith, Mr. Foreman indicated that ten miles southwest was Honey Springs on the Texas Road, the oldest and most important road in Oklahoma, where the greatest battle of the Civil War in the Indian Territory was fought. From a distance was seen Connors State Agricultural College.

At Webbers Falls the group gathered around Mr. Foreman who explained the history of the place, which dated back more than one hundred years and got its name from a Cherokee Chief named Walter Webber, who settled at the falls in 1829, and from the falls in the Arkansas River, which at one time had a drop of seven feet. Near here were the pioneer salt works of Webber and others, for the making of salt was one of the principal industries of this country at one time.

The tourists arrived at Sallisaw at noon, where they were greeted by Mr. Roy Frye, who had made plans for the trip to the

home of Sequoyah. After lunch the group continued on its way. The dogwood which covered the hills, the most beautiful to be seen anywhere, called for many Ohs! and Ahs! from the visitors. When they arrived at the home of Mrs. Pearl Mathison, the automobiles were left and from there it was only a short walk to one of the most historic places in Oklahoma, the home of Sequoyah. Here lived the most outstanding scholar of the Cherokees and most important factor in the history of Oklahoma. It is a log cabin and so well was it constructed that today, it is in good condition. Mr. Foreman explained that one room of the cabin was built by Sequoyah, also the fireplace, which is of native stone. The locks on the doors, had been made by Sequoyah, which reveals the fact that he could do other things besides invent an alphabet. The view from the log cabin was beautiful and just below the hill was the old spring, from which Sequoyah had obtained his water. Mrs. Mathison was a most charming hostess. On returning to her house, she exhibited a number of articles which had been the property of Sequoyah and presented Mr. Foreman with three plow points, for the Oklahoma Historical Society.

The next place of interest was the Dwight Mission, which had been established in Arkansas by Presbyterian missionaries in 1820 and moved to the present location in 1830. Mr. Harvey Hanson, the Superintendent met the visitors, took them first to the museum, where they saw a printing press used in the publication of Cherokee tracts and books; they were then conducted through the dormitories, visited the oldest house, which is said to be over a hundred years old; then escorted to the dining room, where the Indian students served most delicious refreshments. Mr. Hanson presented each guest with a Cherokee hymnal.

Passing through the towns of Marble City and Stilwell, the next point of interest was an overshot water wheel used to run the grist mill; one of the visitors found the hidden lock and started the wheel, which is an immense affair. Some of the visitors stopped for a few minutes at the home of Boback Christie to see the chairs and other furniture which were made by him and there in a small room, working by a lamp this old Indian was seen at his lathe doing very fine and skillful work. It was quite dark as they drove through the hills into Tahlequah, but the winding road revealed many beautiful streams and magnificent views which are never to be forgotten.

At Tahlequah, the end of the "Trail of Tears", they visited

the building where the Cherokee girls were educated. The drive from Tahlequah to Muskogee was delightful, although too dark to see the many interesting places that Mr. Foreman explained as they were passing. This is one day that history was actually made real in Oklahoma, a day never to be forgotten by those who were fortunate enough to enjoy it.

On Thursday, April 19, the forty-first annual meeting of the Oklahoma Historical Society was called to order by Judge Robert L. Williams of Muskogee, in the City Hall, who introduced State Representative Benj. Martin; Mr. Martin introduced Dr. Emma Estill-Harbour, Vice President, who presided in the absence of the President Hon. Charles F. Colcord of Oklahoma City. The hall was most artistically decorated with American flags, and Oklahoma state flags, beautiful ferns and flowers. The Daughters of the American Revolution were the hostesses. Invocation was given by Reverend M. L. Butler of Okmulgee, who came to Indian Territory in 1878. Mr. Chal Wheeler in behalf of Mayor Reynolds welcomed the members of the Historical Society to Muskogee, telling them of historic Muskogee and of the surrounding country; he expressed the pleasure of the citizens of Muskogee that the Society had brought its annual meeting to Muskogee.

The first address was by Dr. B. D. Weeks, President of Bacone College and also President of the Muskogee Historical Society, who reviewed the early history of Indian Territory. Before beginning his talk, Dr. Weeks paid the highest tribute to Judge Robert L. Williams and Mr. Grant Foreman. In speaking of their interest and work in the Historical Society, Dr. Weeks said, "An organization is but the length and shadow of a man," and these men had left a "long shadow indeed throughout the years." In his talk which was most impressive and eloquent, Dr. Weeks spoke of the land of Sequoyah, of the honor due him, of Dr. Worcester, the missionary imprisoned in Georgia for preaching to the Cherokees, who is buried near Muskogee, of Fort Gibson and the many prominent people who visited there and of its place in Oklahoma history. He also told of Millie Francis, "the modern Pocahontas." The next address was given by Hon. John B. Meserve of Tulsa, who talked on the American Indian and the history of Oklahoma. Mr. Meserve gave a most interesting talk, for he has much knowledge of the history of the Indians of Oklahoma as well as all American Indians. He feels keenly that the white man has mistreated the Indians.

One of the most delightful parts of the program was the music, which was in keeping with the occasion. The Bacone College Men's Glee Club was first on the program. They sang "Dear Land of Home" and "Old Man Noah". Later they sang "Home on the Range". Mrs. B. D. Weeks was the accompanist. These songs were one of the high spots of the meeting.

Another musical number was that of Mrs. Harriette Johnson Westbrook of Okmulgee, who sang three songs, two of her native songs in Mohawk, and one was a prayer in her native tongue. She was dressed in a gorgeous Indian costume, which was made for her by the wife of the late Chief Young Bear of the Arapaho tribe. The ornaments on the dress are at least one hundred and fifty years old. Mrs. Westbrook is a descendant of Sir William Johnson, first commissioner of Indian Affairs in America, and Joseph Brant, Chief of the Iroquois.

After the program the society proceeded with its business session. A resolution was adopted expressing gratitude to Congressman W. W. Hastings for securing passage of the bill transferring the records of the Five Civilized Tribes and other Indian Tribes to the Oklahoma Historical Society. Judge Williams presented a picture of the first federal court building in Oklahoma to the society and also a copy of a historic protest against allotment of Choctaw lands. These were unanimously accepted by the society. Two amendments were passed, one was to prevent amendments from being presented in future state meetings and the other amendment was that a two-thirds vote of the entire state membership is necessary to amend the constitution. Sixty-nine new members were voted into the society. Okmulgee invited the 1935 convention, and the invitation was endorsed by all the leading organizations of the city of Okmulgee. The members of the society voted to accept the invitation.

A letter was read from Superintendent J. Stanley Clarke of Boynton, giving the names of the two winners in a contest, and as they were present, they were asked to stand and were most enthusiastically received.

The gavel used in the morning session was made by Chief John L. Templeton, and was presented to Dr. Harbour. With a vote of thanks to everyone who had been so very kind to us in Muskogee, Sallisaw, Dwight Mission, and other places, Dr. Harbour, with the gavel which had been presented to her, declared the

forty-first annual meeting of the Oklahoma Historical Society adjourned.

It was arranged that on Thursday afternoon following the program and business meeting, the visitors should visit Fort Gibson and it was with pleasure that about one hundred and fifty members accepted the invitation to luncheon of the Old Fort Club, at the American Legion Hut, in Fort Gibson. Only one thing marred another perfect trip and that was the absence of Mr. Grant Foreman, who was too ill to accompany the visitors to Fort Gibson. Immediately after lunch, the President of the Old Fort Club, expressed pleasure at having as their guests the members of the Oklahoma Historical Society and Dr. Harbour responded by thanking the club for their kindness and the delicious luncheon.

Dr. Weeks assisted by Mrs. Edith Walker was to guide the visitors through Fort Gibson, which is probably the most historic place in Oklahoma. The first place visited was the oldest house at the Fort, the home of Miss Bess Howard, built in 1818 of native stone. In the house is a rose-wood piano, the first to be purchased in the Indian Territory. The house was used as officers' quarters while Fort Gibson was being constructed. From the old house the group wended its way to the National Cemetery, the only one in Oklahoma; here Dr. Weeks presented the members to Superintendent Harry A. Williamson, who conducted them through the cemetery pointing out the grave of Tiana Rogers over which is a stone with this legend

Sacred to the Memory of

TAHLIHINA

Cherokee wife of

Gen. Sam Houston, Liberator of Texas.

Died at Wilson's Rock, Cherokee Nation.

In the year 1838

Removed to Fort Gibson, May 30, 1905.

In any event, the name of the gravestone is incorrect. Tah-li-hina is a Choctaw word. Also graves of Captain Billy Bowlegs; Vivia and Charles O'Collin one of the architects of Fort Gibson. These graves and many more of historic interest are laid out in a circle. Another marker of interest, although not in the cemetery, is that of Montfort Stokes, probably the only revolutionary war soldier buried in Oklahoma. The history of Montfort Stokes is interesting. One-time United States Senator and also Governor of North Carolina. Andrew Jackson sent him to Indian Territory as Com-

missioner for the Indians. He died in 1842 at Fort Gibson and his life there has been noted by the Daughters of the American Revolution. Next were visited the remaining buildings at the old Fort, the non-commission officers' quarters, the old blacksmith shop and the chapel. These buildings should be preserved, for the masonry is still good and they are of real historic value to Oklahoma. Here it was that Jefferson Davis served as a lieutenant before he went to Kentucky to marry Sarah Knox Taylor daughter of Zachary Taylor. Here also John Howard Payne visited. From here Thomas Nuttall, English naturalist, professor at Harvard College, made trips to the plains and studied vegetation. George Catlin studied Indian life and painted Indian portraits, and Washington Irving made a visit at the Fort as the guest of Col. Matthew Arbuckle and gathered material for his "Tour on the Prairies". If your imagination is good, you close your eyes and see all the gaiety at Fort Gibson in the early nineteenth century as Mrs. Walker told of the important events that had taken place at this romantic spot. The old well was visited, which was used during the life of the old Fort.

At Okay, on the bank of the Verdigris River, the Muskogee Indian Territory Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution have placed a stone marker, which bears the following inscription:

**"TEXAS ROAD** The most ancient and important trail through Oklahoma.

**THREE FORKS** At the head of navigation of the Verdigris River the oldest trading post in Oklahoma dating from 1812.

**CREEK AND OSAGE** Indian Agencies on the east and west banks of the river below the falls of the Verdigris in buildings acquired from Col. A. P. Chouteau in 1828.

**THE FIRST PARTY** of emigrating Creek Indians were landed here in February, 1828. Between here and Fort Gibson Sam Houston resided during his stay with the Cherokee Indians, 1829-1832

**IRVING TRAIL** Near this spot on October 10, 1832 Washington Irving forded the river on his 'Tour on the Prairies'."

From Okay, the visitors went to Bacone College, where they were most charmingly entertained by Dr. and Mrs. Weeks and the faculty of Bacone College. Tea was served at the Art Lodge where the visitors were welcomed by Ataloo, noted Indian prin-

cess. Bacone College is one of the outstanding schools for Indian students in the United States.

After a most pleasant visit at Bacone College, the visitors returned to Muskogee to leave for their homes. It was with regret that this most interesting and most successful meeting had closed.

But the members left with a feeling that historic Fort Gibson and the home of Sequoyah, the two most historic places in Oklahoma should be the property of the State of Oklahoma.