

CHICKASAW MANUAL LABOR ACADEMY

By Carolyn Thomas Foreman

On December 5, 1844, the Reverend William H. Goode in his book, *Outposts of Zion*,¹ wrote of his visit to the Chickasaw Nation:

"The Chickasaws possess more public and private wealth, in proportion to their numbers, than any other tribe of Western Indians. In consequence, however, of their large indebtedness, their annuities have been withheld since their removal [in 1838] till the present year. Sixty thousand dollars is now in the hands of their Agent, to be disbursed *per caput* among men, women, and children. .

"The principal object of my visit to the Chickasaw Council was to confer with them upon educational matters, and to influence them to appropriate some portion of their large national income to educational purposes. . . . I found them inclined to look favorably upon the proposal. I accordingly drew up an act similar in the main to our own. . . . The act provided for the establishment and maintenance of a seminary of learning, to be known as Chickasaw Academy, and placed under the care of the Methodist Episcopal Church. A fund was provided for building, and in addition to this the sum of six thousand dollars a year for twenty years was appropriated for the support of the institution.

"The proposal was not finally acted upon before my leaving. A short time, however, after my arrival at home I was notified by letter that the act had been passed by the Council. It subsequently was ratified by the Department at Washington and carried into effect. . . . There is now before me a letter of acknowledgment from the Superintendent of our Mission Conference for services rendered in the establishment of the Chickasaw Academy, dated January 23, 1845."²

In the autumn of 1847 Chickasaw Agent A. M. M. Upshaw reported to Colonel S. M. Rutherford, Superintendent of the Western Territory, that there were no schools in the Chickasaw Nation. A young man of the name of Akin, who belonged to the Methodist Episcopal church, taught school for a few months that year and he had from thirty to forty pupils, but for some reason he left.

The Chickasaws were eager to have their children educated and the agent stated that the full-bloods showed as great a desire as the half-breeds; "but they are *all* very anxious on this all-important subject, and I am in hopes, in a few years, to see at least three large institutions of learning in the Chickasaw district."

¹ Cincinnati, 1863.

² Pp. 207, 210, 211.

The Chickasaws had been trying to make arrangements for three years for a manual labor academy and finally the commissioner of Indian affairs succeeded in carrying out their wishes through the Reverend J. C. Berryman.³

In 1848, Agent Upshaw sent thirteen Chickasaw youths to Colonel Richard M. Johnson's Choctaw Academy in Kentucky and returned a like number to the nation; all looked well, were well dressed and all could read and write, but the best news he reported was that a site for the Chickasaw Academy had been chosen about ten miles northwest of Fort Washita and work was begun on the buildings January first.

The first Chickasaw school was commenced by the Methodist missionary society in January, 1848. On the first of the month Superintendent Browning opened a road to the site of the proposed School. "We immediately pitched our tent, which with one wagon afforded us shelter, while two men went to making boards and the balance of our force engaged in cutting logs and putting up a cabin. The weather continued unusually dry and pleasant, and we plied our axes with such success that by the 10th of February we were enabled to move over the whole of our family from near the council ground. About the middle of Feby. I was offered the hire of 5 or 6 laboring hands—negroes—and finding I could do no better for the present season, I determined to hire them tho' at high rates—ranging from about 13 to 18 dollars per month." By the end of March a log cabin 14 by 20 feet with a clapboard shed at each end, which, with a tent, afforded shelter for eighteen persons. A hewed log smokehouse 18 by 20 feet, a corn house, 10 by 20 feet was "shedded round for horse and wagon shelters and nearly covered." Logs had been cut for a large carpenter shop which was to be used as a dwelling while the boarding house for the mission was being built. In addition thirteen thousand rails were being cut for fencing.⁴

The Reverend Wesley Browning visited Fort Coffee Academy during the great flood of 1844. He was on his way to "Nunnewaya Academy on Kiamichi river" to which he had been appointed superintendent. He had once been a prominent member of the Ohio Conference and was stationed at Cincinnati. Later he belonged to the Pittsburg Conference, from which he was transferred to the Missouri Conference and put in charge of the Shawnee Manual Labor school near Fort Leavenworth. He next became presiding elder of the St. Louis district and was sent to establish a seminary in the southern part of the Choctaw Nation. The floods made it impos-

³ Report Commissioner Indian affairs, 1847, pp. 884-5.

⁴ Grant Foreman, *The Five Civilized Tribes*, Norman, 1934, pp. 114-15; Office Indian Affairs, School File R. 285, 324-363, Choctaw Agency, Browning to commissioner Indian affairs, March 31, 1848.

sible for the minister to reach his destination and after a wait of five weeks he became discouraged and returned to St. Louis.⁵

A special report was made by the Reverend Wesley Browning, superintendent of the school, concerning the progress of the buildings, which consisted of "one rough log cabin with end sheds attached, affording shelter at present to fourteen persons. One hewed log meat house, eighteen by twenty feet, sufficient to hang twenty or twenty-five thousand pounds of meat, finished except the painting. One corn house, ten by twenty feet, shaded all around, for stable and wagon purposes. One hewed log building twenty by thirty feet, two stories high, covered, and doors and windows cut; designed according to the plan of the institution for mechanics' shops, but which will be prepared as soon as practicable as a domicile for our families, workmen and hands. The above buildings are intended, both in regard to structure and position, to form an integral part of the general plan of buildings, and are, consequently, put up in a substantial and durable manner." Owing to the illness of the three workmen little had been accomplished for six weeks.

Browning wrote that the interest of the Indians was increasing, but he did not approve of accepting any students until a large boarding house had been built and a sufficient supply of provisions had been raised to furnish food.⁶

Mr. Browning went east to secure "some good steady and pious laboring hands, some more materials and supplies, and to consult with the board of the Missionary Society about the expediency of building a saw mill." A poultry house and well had been constructed and logs cut for the carpenter shop. Browning brought back necessary irons and in the autumn a wheelwright was engaged to build a water mill on a creek about three miles from the mission, to saw lumber and grind wheat.⁷

On August 29, 1849, Upshaw reported that the Reverend Mr. Browning was progressing slowly with the academy buildings and hopes were entertained that they would be completed sometime during the next year. There had been very heavy rains during the spring and soon after the corn was up sleet and snow fell which destroyed all grains and fruit. Freshets did great damage in the nation; a saw mill, when completed by Browning, was seriously injured and grist and saw mills belonging to William R. Guy, on Boggy River, and to G. L. Love were destroyed. It required five weeks to repair the saw mill at the school and Browning wrote on October 6, 1849, that they were nearly ready to begin cutting lumber for the large buildings; the first was to be the boarding house

⁵ Henry C. Benson, *Life Among the Choctaws*, Cincinnati, 1860, pp. 193-200.

⁶ Report Commissioner Indian Affairs, 1848, pp. 532, 533.

⁷ Foreman, *op. cit.*, p. 115; Office Indian Affairs, School File R. 285, Browning to Medill, June 30, 1848.

which would be large enough for a small school, until better accommodations could be erected. If mechanics and laborers could be secured it was hoped that school could be begun the next spring or summer; clothing and bedding had been bought and were on the way.⁸

Kenton Harper was the new agent for the Chickasaws in 1851; he had been delayed by illness and did not reach his post until the end of July. He reported to Colonel John Drennen, superintendent of Indian affairs at Van Buren, Arkansas, that the Chickasaw Academy went into operation early in the summer under the superintendence of the Reverend J. C. Robinson. There were sixty students during the few months of the session, although the plan was to accommodate sixty lads and sixty girls. In addition to studies the boys were to be instructed in agriculture and in the mechanic arts; the "females in housewifery, needle-work, and domestic industry." An allowance of seventy-five dollars for board, clothing and other expenses was made for each pupil. The academy was located twelve miles northwest of Fort Washita, two and one-half from the Washita River and fourteen west of the line dividing the Chickasaw and Choctaw nations. The fancy work made by the girl students was exhibited on examination days and sold to visitors; the cash so secured was used to buy books for the library.⁹

The missionary society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, contributed one-sixth of the cost for support of the school; the Chickasaws furnished the balance from their national funds. "Much good may reasonably be expected from this institution, under the management of its present worthy and accomplished principal."¹⁰

The Reverend Mr. Robinson was born in the north of England February 26, 1801; when only twelve years of age he left home and went to sea. Two years later, while crossing the Atlantic, he met a Mrs. Cook of Germantown, Pennsylvania, who became interested in him and persuaded the lad to accompany her to her home. His name is said to have been Robeson, but Mrs. Cook persuaded him to change the spelling to Robinson, thinking it more American, and she added her name to that given him by his parents, so that he was known thereafter as John Cook Robinson. He worked during the summer and attended school in the winter.

He joined the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1825, and two years later filled the chair of mathematics at Madison College, Uniontown, Pennsylvania, of which Dr. Henry Bidleman Bascom was president in 1827-28.¹¹ After he was licensed to preach he was

⁸ Report Commissioner Indian Affairs, 1849, pp. 1129, 1133.

⁹ Foreman, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

¹⁰ Report Commissioner Indian Affairs, 1851-52, pp. 397-99.

¹¹ Henry Bidleman Bascom, born in Hancock, Delaware County, New York, became bishop of St. Louis, Missouri, in 1850. Bishop Bascom was elected chaplain

pastor of churches in Ohio and Kentucky, and in 1850 became a member of the Mission Conference which had been organized at Riley's Chapel south of Tahlequah on October 23, 1844.¹² When he became a missionary to the Indians he was assigned to the Chickasaw Manual Labor Academy, where he remained until 1859. The school became so identified with the superintendent that it was generally known as the Robinson Academy.¹³

In 1853 Mr. Robinson wrote his annual report to Colonel A. J. Smith, agent for the Chickasaws, on August 18. "The past has been a year of checkered events—a mixture of prosperity and adversity. . . Our affliction . . . typhoid pneumonia, with which we were visited last winter. . ." The cloud passed away and the teachers and pupils were able to resume their duties until the close of the session on the first of July.

Ten days before the closing of the academy the trustees met and examined the school, class by class, and they expressed their high approbation of the improvement made. After a public examination the students returned to their homes, "flushed with health, and improved by intelligence. They had done well at their books, and also in the various departments of manual labor. Each one that could read took with him a copy of the New Testament."

The last annual session of the Chickasaw Council had changed the mixed school to one entirely for youths, so that the new students were beginners and many former pupils were attending the neighborhood schools recently established in the Nation. Many of the new pupils were grown, but knew neither their letters or the English language; ". . . they evinced a most ardent thirst for improvement, and could rarely be satisfied without a book in hand." The subjects taught "were spelling, and reading by all; arithmetic, eighteen, geography, five; English grammar, seven; writing forty." Robinson rejoiced in the attendance of the students at Sunday school "while others of their people were thronging by to their ball plays, and other wicked carousals." The flood in the early summer which damaged the saw-mill, overflowed the corn field and swept away part of the fence. The water rose in a few hours to many feet higher than had been ever known, and the loss to the school amounted to \$2,000.

of the lower house of Congress in 1823; he was president of Transylvania University and in 1840 the honorary degree of D. D. was conferred upon him by two colleges; in 1850 he was elected one of the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church. He died in Louisville in August, 1850, and was buried in the Eastern Cemetery of that city (Horace Jewell, *History of Methodism in Arkansas*, Little Rock, 1892, pp. 432, 435).

¹² Authority Mrs. Joseph Madison Robinson, venerable daughter-in-law of the Reverend John Cook Robinson; *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, June, 1926, "Harley Institute," by Johnnie Bishop Chisholm, p. 117.

¹³ *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, "A Cherokee Pioneer," by Carolyn Thomas Foreman, December, 1929, pp. 372-73.

About 170,000 bricks had been burned for additional buildings. One was to be three stories high, fifty-two feet long by twenty-two wide. Six rooms were to be nineteen feet square in the clear, with a fireplace in each. Two small bed rooms were to be cut off the halls on the second and third floors. The new mill was directly across at the south end of the old building, which formed a right angle with the new. A well had been dug fifty feet deep in the yard and it supplied excellent water and a "horse-power" erected for general purposes.¹⁴

The session of 1854 was one of prosperity, although two of the boys died; one was found dead in bed from an unknown cause and the other was a victim of consumption at his home. The four-year-old daughter of one of the mission family also died that year.

Mr. Robinson was pleased with the conduct of his students and with their proficiency in their studies, as well as the progress they made in industrial employments. The pupils had not yet passed beyond the common English branches, but a large proportion were then prepared to pass to higher studies. "Some have become interested in religion, (the only permanent foundation of their improvement and advancement,) and have united with the church."

Although the season had been unfavorable, crops for the use of the establishment had been raised; the farm had been enlarged and the brick building was completed "to the square" and was ready for the roof.¹⁵ When Robinson wrote his report for Colonel A. J. Smith, Chickasaw agent, on July 20, 1855, he appeared particularly happy over the progress of his charges. The boys had shown no inclination to run away and they dreaded expulsion for bad conduct more than any other punishment. All pupils at the close of school were able to read, and many of them had a "respectable knowledge of English grammar, geography, have thoroughly mastered Davies' School of Arithmetic, besides paying considerable attention to the study of history, ancient and modern. . . . While we have some sprightly scholars we have also some dull ones, but, as a whole, we hesitate not to say they have done well." Mr. Robinson wrote in high terms of the qualifications of his teachers, Mr. S. W. Dunn, the Reverend William Jones, and Mrs. . . . Perkins; all of the other assistants had also ". . . met their obligations with fidelity and labored in peace and harmony."

The text books and number of pupils studying each were as follows: "Goodrich's First Reader, and spelling, 20; Second do., 9; Third do., 21; Fourth do., 28; History of North America, (Goodrich's) 21; Ancient do., 7; Mitchell's Primary Geography, 52;. Besides which, all who are capable read a lesson in the scriptures every day and practice in vocal music." On the Sabbath the boys attended

¹⁴ Report Commissioner Indian Affairs, 1853, pp. 163-64.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 1854, p. 150.

Sunday school and regular preaching, besides reading books from the Sunday school library and Sunday school papers; they had memorized nearly six thousand verses from the Scriptures.

Because of a prolonged drought every crop except corn had failed; of that they had a fair prospect of about fifty acres, but there were no vegetables of any kind. Streams had dried; there was no stock water and the springs were failing; unless there were early rains the prospects for opening the next session of school were gloomy.

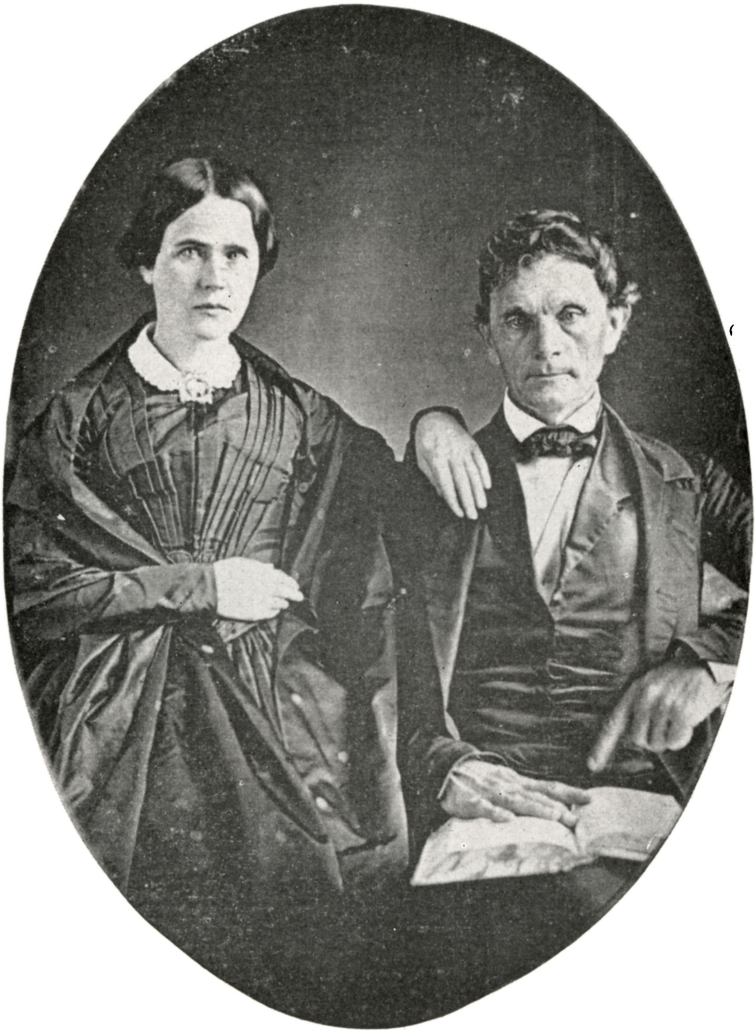
The general average of attendance during 1856 was about ninety and Mr. Robinson recorded another year of unusual good health among the pupils. "Their improvement in feeling and general deportment was no less marked than in their studies." Some twenty-two united with the church and many were decidedly religious. The students were examined in the presence of the trustees, Presiding Elder W. S. McAlister, and a large concourse of citizens who all expressed surprise and approbation at the progress made by the pupils. Robinson attributed the results to the unremitting toil of the teachers, Mr. S. W. Dunn, the Reverend William Jones, and Miss Ellen Steele, who were assisted by Mr. E. E. Jones, Miss S. Hughes, and Miss S. Sorrels.

In addition to another year of drought there was a plague of grasshoppers during the autumn, winter and spring, which caused a very short crop. Vegetables, oats, potatoes of both kinds were an entire failure, which caused an increase in the cost of living and a decrease in comforts. "The brick addition we have been making to our mansion is now wellnigh finished, which we regard as inferior to no other house, if not the best, in the Indian country."

The Chickasaws had recently entered upon an independent national existence, and it was their fixed determination to allow no other Indian tribe to excel them; Mr. Robinson felt it his duty to make all improvements at the Academy of the best kind so that the people would have something worthy of imitation. His ideas of teaching scientific agriculture were far in advance of his time:¹⁶

"We think it not enough, in order to make a boy a *good farmer*, merely to teach him to hoe corn, chop wood, and make a fence; but to bring the subject before him, as requiring also the full exercise of an enlightened and cultivated mind as a noble, elevated calling, requiring a good understanding of the nature and elements of the different vegetable productions; of the quality and adaptions of the soils; their wants, and how and with what to supply them; the best mode and time of culture, as derived from experience and observation, and the study of the best works on the subject within their reach; in short, to make our youths (or a portion of them) as far as in us lies, enlightened agriculturalists, thereby benefitting themselves and their people beyond all we can estimate."

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 1856, pp. 170-71.



THE REVEREND JOHN ROBINSON AND WIFE,
MARY MADISON ROBINSON

A devoted instructor in the Chickasaw Academy was Miss Elizabeth Fulton, a daughter of the Reverend Defau Tallerand Fulton. She was born in North Georgia in 1839; completed her education at the Southern Masonic Female Seminary at Covington, Georgia, and in 1856, at the age of eighteen went to the Indian Territory to teach. Two years later she was married by the Reverend Mr. Robinson, at Tishomingo, to George Benjamin Hester, a merchant. She continued teaching until the Civil War, when the family moved to Boggy Depot.¹⁷

Mr. Robinson's first wife was Cornelia Ann Baldwin of England. They were married in Ohio and she became the mother of his five children, Baldwin, Joseph Madison, Thomas, Cornelia and Ann. Baldwin Robinson left home and years after his parents gave him up for dead he saw his father's name in a church paper and returned from Australia; Thomas died when young; Cornelia became Mrs. Daughters and died in Kentucky when quite young; Ann's married name was Oldham. After his first wife's death Mr. Robinson married Miss Mary C. Madison, a niece of President James Madison.

In 1856 Miss Ellen I. Downs, of Champlain, New York, became matron at Bloomfield Academy, the school for girls in the Chickasaw Nation; she remained there until the close of the school in 1861; later she taught in a private school in Paris, Texas, before being engaged to teach and serve as matron in Lamar Female Seminary in the same city. Miss Downs remained at the seminary until her marriage to the Reverend J. C. Robinson.¹⁸

The archives of the Oklahoma Historical Society contain a photostatic copy of the proceedings, in long hand, of the second session of the Chickasaw Legislature, which met at Tishomingo October 5, 1857. This record contains a copy of a letter from Douglas H. Cooper, Indian agent for the Choctaws and Chickasaws, dated February 28, 1857, addressed to Colonel N. Cochnauer, at Fort Towson, with reference to the boundary line between the Choctaw and Chickasaw nations, run by the Reverend J. C. Robinson with reference to Hunter's map.¹⁹

On August 21, 1857, the report of the Chickasaw Academy was sent to Agent Cooper by Mr. Robinson, who wrote of an attendance of one hundred forty. Owing to an increased demand for admission the previous autumn, the superintendent of schools directed twenty more pupils to be received, and he promised to recommend that provision be made for them by the legislature.

¹⁷ *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, "Elizabeth Fulton Hester," by E. McCurdy Bostic, December, 1928, p. 448.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, "Bloomfield and its Founder," by Mrs. S. J. Carr, December, 1924, p. 371.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, June, 1933, p. 869. This document was presented by Hon. Robert L. Williams, president of the society.

The school was under the immediate control of the Indian Mission Conference and that body appointed the superintendent, who had government of the school; it was part of his duty to employ the staff and fix their salaries, his own being settled by the Conference. This position must have been a hard one to fill satisfactorily, as the head of the Academy was accountable to the board, the Conference and the authorities of the Chickasaw Nation; in addition he was supervised by the Presiding Elder of the district. At that period the nation was paying seven thousand dollars a year for the hundred pupils, while the missionary board supplied fifteen hundred dollars until the past two years, when two thousand was given because of the successive droughts. That fund met the expenses for board, washing, making and mending garments, teaching, books, stationery, medicines and for medical care. Material for the clothing was supplied by the parents of the students—many of them grown men. The last session of the Chickasaw legislature had appropriated an additional twelve hundred fifty dollars for clothing, and the board agreed to furnish two hundred fifty for the same purpose, so that the school then had a budget of ten thousand dollars a year.

There were three teachers besides the superintendent: the Reverend F. M. Paine, who also filled the position of physician to the institution; the Reverend William Jones and Miss Ellen Steele. The salaries varied from three hundred to six hundred dollars and included board. Miss S. M. Hughes and Miss Lizzie Sorrels were employed in the sewing department at one hundred fifty dollars, with board. All of these teachers were natives of the South, and all were unmarried except Dr. Paine.

Mrs. Robinson had entire control of the domestic department and the servants she supervised were a chief cook, with one assistant; two persons to wash, iron and milk the thirty cows; there were two in the dining room and one house maid. All of this staff were colored and hired from Indian owners. Four hundred fowls were raised that year and about sixty turkeys. In 1856 the domestic department made one hundred thirty yards of carpeting, forty-five of which was woolen girting. The wool was carded by hand, spun, colored, and woven at home. The rest was cotton chain, and filled with rags.

Two hundred acres were enclosed, one hundred sixty in cultivation. Ninety acres were in corn and the good superintendent wrote: ". . . the best, by fifty per cent, we have ever had; about fifteen in oats, also good; and fifty in wheat, which was middling . . . besides, a general vegetable patch of five or more acres. . . . We think we have nearly three thousand bushels of corn, and perhaps about four hundred bushels of wheat, and three hundred of oats. . . ." The farm was under the supervision of Mr. E. E. Jones, who was paid three hundred fifty dollars per annum. From four to six

Negroes were hired, besides regularly a blacksmith and carpenter at thirty dollars a month each.

There were on the place six working mules, four horses, and six yoke of work cattle; a full supply of wagons, harrows, rollers, reaping machine, thresher and necessary implements. They were daily expecting the arrival of a Hoard & Sons' eight-horse portable steam engine and a portable saw mill.

Names of the Students.

The list of students for the year 1857 contains names prominent in the annals of the Chickasaw Nation and it stands as a monument to the enterprise of these Indians and the faithful instructors who prepared the students to take a useful part in the advancement of their people:

John Crocket,	Bynum Hays,	Benjamin Brown,
Thomas Allen,	Samuel Gamble,	Arnold Folsom,
B. F. Rook,	David Seely,	J. K. P. Kemp,
Benjamin Birnie,	Jesse Paul,	T. J. Prottzman,
Johnson Bright,	Samuel Paul,	Robert Coll,
Alfred Griffith,	C. C. Nelson,	Gibson Kemp,
Shelton Brown,	Joseph Kemp,	Daniel Love,
Joslyn McFerris,	Solon Borland,	Eastman Hamey,
Wm. Hawkins,	Wm. Byrd,	Lewis Priddy,
Gibson Slater,	Shelton McClish,	Willis Seely,
Martin Robinson,	Johnson Kays,	Lewis McAlister,
Overton Keel,	Peter Maytubby,	John Adams,
Silas Fillmore,	Albert Gaines,	Lewis Parker,
Lyman Bennet,	Noah Albertson,	J. W. Parker,
Wm. Sutton,	Robert Miller,	David King,
John Willis,	Henderson Watkins,	Isam Cooper,
Hamp Porter,	Silas Steele,	John McClish,
Eastman Frazier,	Martin James,	Hardy Bynam,
Silas Wolf,	T. J. Thompson,	Levi Colbert, Jr.,
John Wilburn,	George Colbert,	Kixon Robbins,
Thomas Wilson,	Culbertson Harris,	James Kline,
James Wilson,	A. Gooding,	Sloan Hawkins,
James Parmer,	Eastman Chico,	C. Williams,
Eastman Loman,	Abram Chico,	James Scotland,
Thomas Perch,	J. Ross Bynum,	Laban Pearce,
James Reynolds,	C. Davidson,	Mon[t]ford Johnson,
Levi Colbert,	J. D. Collins,	Hensley Anderson,
Harrison Colbert,	Wall Alexander,	E. Stephenson,
J. J. Colbert,	William Bacon,	Thompson Jones,
Wilson Colbert,	John Bruce,	Samuel Green,
William Thompson,	Joseph Walton,	Gilbert Corbett,
Philo Steward,	Martin Acker,	Dixon Lewis,
Hogan Maytubby,	John Ellis,	Forbis Mosely,
Robert James,	Wm. Miller,	W. H. Harrison,
Amos Russell,	Adkins Day,	Isaac Folsom,
David Fulsom,	Wesley Browning,	George Folsom,
Stephen Tyner,	Richard McClish,	Alish Peaboddy,
Thomas Fletcher,	Dickason McClish,	Jefferson Pitchlynn,
Humis Kays,	Gabriel Albertson,	Logan Jones,
Dickson Thomas,	Walton Kemp,	Silas McKee,
Joseph James,	Charles Went,	Wilson Fillmore,

A. C. Bacon,	Alex. Went,	Alfred McClish,
Alex. McClish,	Esau McCoy,	Davis Bynum,
Alan N. Bonapart,	Henry Russell,	Nathaniel Colbert,
Alfred Wallace,	Brashears Frazier,	Dixon Ward,
Lorin Benton,	Robinson Kemp,	Thomas Pitt,
Wm. Guy;	Thomas Mix,	T. B. Josey,

The first division of the school was made up of ten classes taught by F. M. Paine; the second of five classes, with the Reverend Wm. Jones for teacher; and the third of four classes which were taught by Miss E. N. Steele.

The legislature granted Mr. Robinson leave of absence, and he, with his family, departed for a visit in Kentucky with their friends whom they had not seen for seven years. The school was closed a month earlier than usual and there were no public examinations, but a few days before the close, the superintendent, Mr. Mitchell, Governor Cyrus Harris, and Mr. H. Colbert, the national secretary, and the special trustee of the academy, Major Humphries, spent two days in giving the pupils a thorough test in their studies. The examiners were not only satisfied, but surprised at the progress and proficiency displayed by the youths. "In short, they are a peaceable, decent, orderly set of boys that we would be proud of anywhere. . ."

Agriculture was still a vital subject and year by year the farm was enlarged and improved. In addition to corn, wheat and oats, eight acres were planted in Chinese sugar cane. Clover, blue grass, timothy, herds grass, lucerne and millet were being cultivated. All of the crops were flourishing except wheat and oats, which were injured by rust. In addition to the saw-mill there was then on the place a flour mill which was run by an eight horse power steam engine. They were building barns, sheds for cattle and sheep; corn house and a stable. A report stated:

"Our object in all is to teach, not only our scholars, but the nation, not the knowledge of books alone, but of things practical, profitable, and useful; and to place before them the advantages of useful machinery and farming implements: as reaper, thresher, cornsheller, cob-crusher, cultivator, roller, as well as the most approved of those more common. And with the same object in view we take at the institution and seek to circulate among the people those most excellent agricultural periodicals The Cotton Planter and Soil of the South, and the Valley Farmer, which, I think, are doing great good."²⁰

The Chickasaw Academy closed on Wednesday, July 1, 1859, after a full examination before parents and friends. There had been some illness and two deaths among the one hundred five students.

²⁰ Report commissioner Indian affairs, 1858, pp. 167-68. *The Chickasaw and Choctaw Herald*, Tishomingo, on February 12, 1858, announced that Dr. William P. Worthington had "permanently located at the Chickasaw Manual Laboring Academy" (Foreman, *Oklahoma Imprints*, p. 133).

Superintendent Robinson gave the exact location of the academy as twelve miles northwest of Fort Washita, and about fourteen miles due west from the line between the Choctaws and Chickasaws. At that time salaries of the teachers varied from three to five hundred dollars a year. The youths were employed about two or three hours a day at work on the farm, and other affairs, for the benefit of the institution. The crops were bountiful that year, so there was a supply of grain and vegetables for the people and stock. Robinson reiterated in several of his reports: "There is nothing paid by individual Indians."²¹

Mr. Robinson sent a note to the *Chickasaw and Choctaw Herald*, Tishomingo City, asking the editor to contradict rumors that there was a great deal of illness at the school: "There is not a single case of sickness about the Institution; and has not been for several weeks." This item appeared in the edition of February 11, 1859.²²

School closed on June 22 in 1860 and the superintendent was grateful that no severe affliction befell them ". . . or the sad wail of death being heard among our midst." The wheat had been injured by blighting frosts and a long drought in the summer left them short of supplies, but Mr. Robinson could see "nothing to prevent the school from going on to a high degree of prosperity; working out, by the blessing of a kind Providence, a great good not only to the youth, but to the nation at large."

In a report dated September 24, 1860, Mr. Robinson gave an interesting account of the persons employed at the academy in addition to the three regular instructors: The Reverend William Jones, native of Arkansas, was thirty-eight years old. He had been employed at Fort Coffee. Choctaw Nation. G. R. Buchanan, an Englishman, aged twenty-four, had been working in Texas; Dr. W. H. Pierce, twenty-six, was born in Tennessee and taught the irregular classes at the Academy; Miss M. S. Hughes was only twenty-two, and was employed in her native Arkansas when she went to the Chickasaw Nation as a seamstress in the school; the farmer, Stephen S. Hail, and Mrs. Hail, were both born in Tennessee. He was about thirty-five and Mrs. Hail was five years younger. The steward, J. H. Carter, a native of Virginia, was forty-two and Mrs. C. Carter, a year younger, was born in Kentucky.

Of himself Mr. Robinson wrote that he emigrated to the United States from England in 1816, that he was appointed to his position from Kentucky; his age was fifty-six. His wife, Mrs. M. C. Robinson, was the matron of the establishment. She was born in Kentucky and was forty-three in 1860.²³

From the temporary office of Choctaw and Chickasaw Agency, at Le Roy, Coffee County, Kansas, on September 30, 1862, Indian

²¹ Report commissioner Indian affairs, 1859, pp. 581-83.

²² Carolyn Thomas Foreman, *Oklahoma Imprints*, Norman, 1936, p. 131.

²³ Report commissioner Indian affairs, 1860, pp. 375-77.

Agent Isaac Coleman wrote to Superintendent of Indian Affairs William G. Coffin at Leavenworth as follows:²⁴

"You are well aware that the rebels from Arkansas and Texas have been in possession of the Indian Territory ever since the beginning of the present rebellion, and as the Choctaw and Chickasaw agency is located on the southern border of the Territory. . . . they have succeeded in suppressing all the loyal feeling of the full-blooded Choctaw and Chickasaw Indians, in consequence of which I have been unable to reach my agency. . . . I entered upon the duties of my office at Fort Roe in February last, where I found the southern refugee Indians encamped on the Verdigris river. I took charge of the Chickasaws, who numbered at that time about one hundred and eighty-five. . . .

"These loyal Indians had been driven from their homes by the Texas rangers and hostile Indians, and were in a most destitute and suffering condition. . . . In April last I removed the Chickasaws and Cherokees from the Verdigris to the Neosho, near Le Roy . . . their present location. . . . Within the last ten days about forty loyal Chickasaws have arrived here from Fort Arbuckle. . . . The Chickasaws . . . are all very anxious to go to their homes. They want to get there this fall, so that they can make preparations to raise a crop next year. . . ."

In 1864 Isaac Colman was urging that the refugee Chickasaws be returned to their homes from the vicinity of Fort Gibson so that they could plant crops to sustain themselves, otherwise it would be necessary for the government to subsist them another year.

One of the students at the Chickasaw Academy when the Civil War started was William Leander Byrd. He was born in Marshall County, Mississippi, on August 1, 1844, and his parents took him to the Indian Territory when he was only three months old. His youth was spent on his father's farm near Doaksville. In January, 1864, when Colonel Tandy Walker raised the First Choctaw-Chickasaw Regiment, young Byrd enlisted and became adjutant of the company commanded by Captain Edmund Gardner. In 1881 he became superintendent of schools in his nation and the next year he was a delegate to Washington. In 1887 he was one of a committee of three to revise and codify the Chickasaw laws, and in 1888 he defeated William M. Guy for the governorship. The remainder of his life was devoted to his private business and affairs of his nation, in which he took a prominent part to the day of his death at Ada, Oklahoma, on April 12, 1915.²⁵

In 1863 reports were put in circulation that the citizens of the Indian country were dissatisfied with General Douglas H. Cooper and John Cook Robinson was sent to Richmond, Virginia, with documents to refute the rumors that a change in commanders for the Territory was desired. On December 28, 1863, Robinson wrote James A. Seddon, secretary of war for the Confederate States, saying that he left Fort Washita on October 28 and arrived in Rich-

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 1862, pp. 140-41.

²⁵ *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, December, 1934, "Governor William Leander Byrd," by John Bartlett Meserve, pp. 435-43.

mond December one; he delivered the documents from all of the Five Civilized Tribes to President Davis and he had since learned that the papers had been referred to Seddon.²⁶

"Owing to the great difficulty of communications reaching the Indian country from Richmond, it was the special request of the Indian people that I should bring the answer back with me, and especially that they may know, at as early a day as possible, on what to depend in this time of peril. I have thus delayed, though many urgent reasons call me home. Not the least is the danger of the country west of the Mississippi becoming impassible should the season become wet.

"Should you desire to communicate with me, you can do so through the Sentinel office, or a letter sent to the Commissioner of Indian affairs would reach me."

In May, 1866, Joseph Madison Robinson, the son of the superintendent of the Academy, was married in Preston, Texas, to Miss Ella Flora Coodey, daughter of the late celebrated Cherokee, William Shorey Coodey. Miss Coodey and her family were refugees in Texas. Young Robinson was a student at Emory and Henry College in Virginia when the Civil War started, and he joined the Confederate forces and served under General Braxton Bragg. He was in the army four years and was wounded.²⁷

The Reverend Mr. Robinson and his family were left in charge of the academy during the war, and his son and new daughter-in-law joined him there when Joseph was mustered out of the army. They occupied three large rooms on the ground floor of the building erected in 1848. Mrs. Robinson relates that her father-in-law had become a great friend and adviser of the Indians on the western frontier. "They would come there in companies, riding their little spotted ponies and carrying their tepees. They always camped on the creek, and the first thing they wanted of Mr. Robinson was a beef to kill. He always had one to give them. Then the men in the party would come up to the house for a conference. These were Comanche and Kiowa Indians. Before Mr. Robinson was sent to the school, these same tribes had been in the habit of making raids into the Chickasaw Nation and driving off cattle and horses. With the help of the United States agent he had been able to stop that."²⁸

On one occasion several braves visited the Robinson home and asked for the loan of the large iron wash kettle in the yard; Mrs. Robinson agreed to let them take it and she was surprised when they started away without it. When she called them back and asked if they had changed their minds, one of the men replied: "No,

²⁶ *The War of the Rebellion, Official Records* Washington, 1888, Series I, Volume XXII, Part II, p. 1116. Robinson delivered nine documents.

²⁷ *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, December, 1929, "A Cherokee Pioneer," by Carolyn Thomas Foreman, p. 372.

²⁸ *Oklahoma Historical Society, Indian Pioneer History*, Foreman Collection, No. 13833.

send squaw." A slim little woman came later and carried off the kettle.

When a party of Indians came to the academy for a conference they were shown into the living room; one of the men was smoking and when Mrs. Robinson entered the room he remarked to her: "Maybe you no like smoke—you go out in the yard 'til we finish."

G. D. James, superintendent of schools for the Chickasaw Nation, reported to Captain George T. Olmstead, Indian Agent at Boggy Depot:²⁹

"Chickasaw Manual Labor Academy,
Chickasaw Nation, August 8, 1870.

"Sir:

" . . . at present we have no high schools or academies in operation. Previous to the late war we had five in highly prosperous condition, educating about 350 scholars; by the war they were stopped, and have not since been renewed. . . . For five of our schools we use the buildings of our former academies. They were formerly, when in use, very good, and cost the nation upward of \$40,000, but the most of them are now very much out of repair. . . ."

From Boggy Depot, August, 1871, T. D. Griffith, Chickasaw agent, wrote to Hon. H. R. Clum, acting commissioner Indian affairs, that the condition of the Choctaws and Chickasaws was very satisfactory in many respects. Of the missionaries he stated:³⁰

" . . . the civilizing and christianizing influences thus exerted are seen now in their development, while those who began the work 'rest from their labors.' Under the efforts and influence of these missionaries, many of the children and youth of thirty years ago were aroused to efforts to obtain an education, the results of which we now see. The leading men among these people now are those who were educated under the influence and direction of these humble laborers, some of whom lived to see much good from their work.

"The institutions of learning thus begun were unfortunately brought to a close during the late rebellion, and the buildings, which were large and commodious, were occupied by armed men and left, at last, nearly destroyed and entirely unfit for occupancy, while the nations were without means to repair and almost without heart to reopen them."

Governor B. F. Overton approved an act, on October 9, 1876, passed by the Chickasaw Legislature establishing a female seminary at Bloomfield Academy, and a male high school at the Chickasaw Manual Labor Academy. The two institutions were to be carried on upon the same plan, which called for forty-five students between the ages of nine and eighteen who were able to "read well in McGuffey's Fifth Reader, spell well, and read in the New Testament, and be of good moral character." Only one child from a family would be received and no pupil would be allowed to remain longer than five years.

²⁹ Report commissioner Indian affairs, 1870, pp. 296-9.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 1871, p. 569.

The school board, with the Superintendent of Schools was directed by the act to make a contract with responsible people to carry on the seminaries for a term of years. "The contract shall not be made but with those of the highest moral character, or Christian standing, with practical and successful experience in teaching and managing a first-class boarding school. . . . the party or parties . . . contracting to carry on said school, shall furnish tuition, bedding, washing, mending clothes, medicine and medical attention. . . . and furnish all the books and stationery for a thorough English course of studies. . . ."

The contracting parties were to receive not exceeding one hundred ninety-four dollars per student, for ten scholastic months, to be paid semi-annually.³¹

Joshua Harley³² brought his bride to the Chickasaw Nation in 1868 and started a school in the Manual Labor Academy; when the institution was placed under the contract system by the Chickasaw Legislature Harley took the contract for the high school and, except for five years, spent the remainder of his life there. Gradually the school came to be known by his name and finally was so recognized in official records.

John Q. Tufts, United States Indian agent, reported in 1880 that the Chickasaws expended \$58,000 for educational purposes; in proportion to their numbers they had more seminaries and students than any of the other civilized tribes. There were sixty students at the male academy; the contractors furnished everything except the clothing for the boys.³³

The buildings were partly burned between 1880 and 1885 while Benjamin Winsor Carter was superintendent, and when rebuilt occupied a site on Pennington Creek one mile north of Tishomingo.³⁴

"The academies are let out to the lowest bidder, who, in taking the school, is to hire teachers, board them and the students at his own expense. The male academy is only three miles from Tishomingo. Mr. Benj. W. Carter, a Cherokee, is principal. He took the contract of teaching, supplying two assistants, furnishing books and stationery, and boarding teachers and students for nine thousand dollars per annum. . . ."

A handsome two-story brick building was erected which was to accommodate sixty boys, but frequently housed as many as eighty-five. Mrs. Zula Burris Lucas, a teacher of music between the years 1885 and 1895, declared it was a wonderful school and the music department was unexcelled.³⁵

³¹ Constitution, *Treaties and Laws of the Chickasaw Nation*, Atoka, I. T., 1890, pp. 98, 99.

³² Harley was born in Mississippi in 1839 and educated in that state.

³³ *Report* commissioner Indian affairs, 1880, p. 96.

³⁴ *The Graphic News*, May 21, 1887, "Among the Chickasaws," by John R. Musick, pp. 326-27.

³⁵ *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, December, 1937, "Education of the Chickasaws, 1856-1907," by Caroline Davis, p. 428.

A student paper called the *Chickasaw Academic Leaflet* was issued in the school in 1881; the publication appeared monthly with twenty pages and H. H. Burris and two of his companions were the editors.³⁶

Benjamin Carter took charge of the Academy in 1882 and served three and a half years, after which it was suspended during 1887. Benjamin Winsor Carter was born in Alabama January 5, 1837, and brought to the Cherokee Nation the next year. He was captain of Company I, First Cherokee Regiment, during the Civil War. He was twice married, the second time in 1866 when Miss Serena Josephine Guy became his wife. She was a sister of Governor William M. Guy of the Chickasaw Nation and the mother of Charles David Carter who was born near Boggy Depot August 16, 1868, educated at the Chickasaw Manual Labor Academy and Austin College at Sherman, Texas. After holding several important positions in the Chickasaw Nation he was elected to the House of Representatives in 1907 from the Third Oklahoma District, and served until 1927. He died April 9, 1929.³⁷

Professor Harley again signed a contract in 1888 for five years but he died at the school December 24, 1892, and his wife carried on to the end of the term. The next superintendent was Joseph Kemp, who held the position until 1898 when S. M. White took over for five years, and he served until the expiration of the Chickasaw government prior to statehood in 1907.³⁸

On October 20, 1885, Governor Jonas Wolf approved an act to build a new Male Academy in Tishomingo County. It was recited in the act that the academy, "from its long continued use, has become much out of repair, and the locality and surroundings of the place render it in no wise a healthy home for our children, who spend the greater portion of their youthful days there." As it would have cost thousands of dollars to make necessary repairs, it was deemed economical to build a new school. The Legislature of the Chickasaw Nation authorized the governor to appoint two competent persons to act in conjunction with the school superintendent to select a suitable location in Tishomingo County to "supply the place of the 'old Chickasaw Male Academy.'"

The building committee was to "use discretion and good judgment in selecting a location convenient to wood and water . . . suitable for a first-class boarding school . . . and the committee shall proceed at once to let the contract for the building . . . to the lowest

³⁶ Carolyn Thomas Foreman, *Oklahoma Imprints*, Norman, 1936, p. 130.

³⁷ *Who Was Who in America*, Chicago, 1943, p. 199.

³⁸ *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, June, 1926, "Harley Institute," by Mrs. Johnnie Bishop Chisholm, pp. 116-128. Among the teachers mentioned in this article are Mrs. P. H. B. Shearer, Mrs. H. A. Hatcher, Mrs. Joshua Harley and Mrs. Benjamin Winsor Carter.

and best bidder." Fifteen thousand dollars were appropriated and no payment on the contract was to be made before March, 1886, and further payments were to be paid by installments until completion of the academy.³⁹

Among the pupils of the Chickasaw Academy were: Newton Galloway Frazier, a son of Principal Chief Jackson Frazier. Frazier was a student of the "Robinson National Academy" where he remained fifteen years; he filled many useful offices in later life and was a credit to his school.⁴⁰

Lewis Keel, son of Cus-sap-po-li, was educated at "Parson Robertson's [sic] old academy, Tishomingo. He served as a member of the House of Representatives for almost twenty years; was twice elected to the Chickasaw Senate; he was Public School Trustee and a member of the committee for the distribution of the Chickasaw Net Proceeds Claims.⁴¹

Joseph B. Wilson was born in 1859, son of a white man and Susan Mitchell, one-fourth Chickasaw. He completed his education at the academy, after which he went into the stock business on Beef Creek.⁴²

Montford P. Johnson was the son of an Englishman and Rebecca Courtney, "of the house of Intel-le-bo." He spent five years at the academy before starting farming on the Washita.⁴³

Edmund Turnbull, born in 1854, was the son of Robert Turnbull, at one time the wealthiest member of his tribe. He was educated at the Chickasaw Academy. He married Laura Buckley in 1878 at Bennington; he died of consumption February 8, 1886, and Mrs. Turnbull then sent her children to the academies.⁴⁴

Tipton Shirley Harris, youngest son of Governor Harris, was born at Mill Creek in August, 1869; he received his education at the Male Academy.⁴⁵ Another son of Governor Cyrus Harris was James M. Harris. He attended school at Boggy Depot; he spent one session with Professor O. P. Starks, Paris, Texas, before being sent to the academy, which was then under the care of Professor Joshua Harley. He remained in that institution for six years until his education was completed.⁴⁶

Edward Sehon Burney, a brother of Governor B. C. Burney, was born January 20, 1861, near Fort Washita and educated by Professor J. M. Harley at the Male Academy.⁴⁷

³⁹ Constitution, *Treaties and Laws of the Chickasaw Nation*, Atoka, I. T., 1890, pp. 165-67.

⁴⁰ H. F. O'Beirne, *Leaders and Leading Men of the Indian Territory*, Chicago, 1891, p. 215.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 277.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 278.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 284.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 285.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 299.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 313.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 221.

Samuel M. White, a native of Illinois, came to the Indian Territory in 1871 and held several important offices in the Chickasaw Nation before he was appointed superintendent of Harley Institute in 1898, for five years. He was well qualified for the work and promoted untiringly the work of the school.⁴⁸

Greenwood Thompson, son of two Choctaw Indians, was born near Tishomingo in 1871; he first attended neighborhood schools, after which he was a student at Harley Institute.⁴⁹

Tilford T. Johnson was born in Johnson, Indian Territory. He studied at the Sacred Heart Mission and Harley Institute.⁵⁰

Newton Galloway Frazier, a son of Chickasaw Chief Jackson Frazier, was born October 7, 1850; he was educated at the Chickasaw Male Academy, Bloomfield Academy and Cane Hill College, Arkansas. He served as sheriff for five years, was a member of the legislature and a delegate to Washington; president of the senate.⁵¹

Thomas Benjamin Thompson, who was in business with Governor Johnson, was born four miles south of Tishomingo on May 20, 1865. His early education was gained in the public schools and completed at Harley Institute. He filled the position of clerk of the supreme court for five years and was interested in the welfare of his community.⁵²

Samuel W. Maytubby was a son of Captain Peter Maytubby, a Chickasaw Indian who lived in the Choctaw Nation. Samuel was given a thorough education in the old Robinson Academy and the Southwestern Presbyterian University at Clarksville, Tennessee. He became postmaster of Caddo in 1900.⁵³

Robert Miller Johnson, born in Johnson, Chickasaw Nation, February 21, 1874, was a son of Montford Thomas Johnson whose name appears on the list of students at the Manual Labor Academy in 1858. Robert M. Johnson was educated at the Sacred Heart Mission in Pottawatomie County and at Harley Institute; he finished his education at the State University of Missouri. He has since been prominent in banking and Masonic affairs.⁵⁴

Thomas Juzan was the son of a Choctaw father and a Chickasaw mother; he was born in Panola County, Chickasaw Nation, in 1847 and studied at Robinson Academy.⁵⁵

⁴⁸ D. C. Gideon, *Indian Territory . . .*, New York and Chicago, 1901, p. 260.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 292.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 378.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 415-16.

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 541-42.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 598.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 744-45.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 754.

J. Wesley Parker, born about 1848 in the Chickasaw Nation, was studious and acquired a good education at Robinson Academy and Drury College at Springfield, Missouri. He was national interpreter under governors Guy and Wolf, a delegate to Washington and chairman of the National party of Tishomingo.⁵⁶

County Judge Scott Hawkins of the Chickasaw Nation was born in the Choctaw Nation about 1840. He was a son of Lopany Tubby and a grandson of Chief Chapoga, but he took the name of Hawkins. He was graduated from Robinson Academy in 1854, since which time he has filled important offices in the nation.⁵⁷

William T. Ward was born near Emet, Chickasaw Nation, October 23, 1870; his mother was a member of the Chickasaw tribe and when he was twelve years old he entered Harley Institute where he remained five years. Later he studied at Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee; he held several high offices such as secretary of the senate, district attorney, superintendent of schools and treasurer of the nation.⁵⁸

Hindmon H. Burris is said to have been an important factor in the public affairs of the Chickasaw Nation. He was born at Stone-wall, Indian Territory, June 28, 1862; he attended various schools before going to Robinson Academy for two years and a half. The school was then under the charge of Professor J. M. Harley. He served on a commission to revise the laws, was a member of the house of representatives and speaker of the house in 1896. In 1886-7 he was auditor of public accounts under Governor William L. Byrd and in 1896 he was appointed treasurer.⁵⁹

In Lebanon, Indian Territory, on April 20, 1871, Guy Keel was born and he became a student at Harley Institute.⁶⁰

Before attending Vanderbilt University Jacob L. Thompson attended Harley Institute. He was appointed attorney general of the Chickasaw Nation and clerk of the house of representatives. He served as judge in the election which brought about the Atoka treaty and is regarded as a leading citizen.⁶¹

Albert Pike Coyle, born at Tishomingo in 1857 died December 19, 1897. He was educated at Harley Institute and was a prominent man among his people.⁶²

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 827-28.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 829-30.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 832-33.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 872-73.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 911.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 921-22.

⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 940.