

Payne County

Historical Review



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Contents

Editor's Notes.....2

Carla Chlouber

Notes of the Town of Ingalls:

The Pickering Journal.....3

Jacob Pickering

A New Suit of Clothes.....17

Twylla Berger

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www.cowboy.net/non-profit/pchs/

Editor's Note

This issue of the Payne County Historical Review brings us two very special stories, although they are quite different. One story is told by Dr. Jacob Pickering, one of the Ingalls' most respected physicians. His story is about the exploits of outlaws and lawmen in early-day Oklahoma Territory. The other tale is a heart-warming story by Twylla Berger that could happen only in Oklahoma.

My thanks go to the Washington Irving Trail Museum for allowing us to use their original copy of Dr. Pickering's Journal, as well as to Twylla Berger for sharing her family's history with us.

I also owe a debt of gratitude to Gloria Helmuth, of Tulsa, Oklahoma, for generously reading Dr. Pickering's handwritten journal and providing a typewritten and more readable form. The results of her efforts may be seen at the Washington Irving Trail Museum.

Carla Chlouber

Notes of the Town of Ingalls

The Pickering Journal

This is a revision of the journal, into modern language, with spelling (except for names, which I am not able to verify) corrected and written in true paragraph form. –

Gloria Helmuth



The 1983 gunfight at Ingalls, Oklahoma Territory, has become a legendary part of our Old West history.

1893 June 17

We came to Ingalls and bought from Mrs. Thomas our present home - for the Consideration of \$380.00. I hired Wm. Yowl to drill the well.

In July, Wm Doolan, Glin (alias) Bitter Creek, Slang Tom Jones, (alias Arkansaw Danimite, Tulsa Jack, and Bill Dalton) began to come here frequently and in a short time they all stayed here, except Dalton. He was at B. Dunn's. As a rule they were quiet and peaceable. They all went heavily armed and were constantly on their guard.

Generally, they went two together. They boarded at the O.K. Hotel, but stayed at B. Dunn's when not in town.

The last of this month a man by the name of Doc Roberts and a Red Lucas came to town looking for a proposed railroad route. Both parties took in the haunts of the outlaws; they were both jovial fellows and soon were drinking and playing cards with them. They left and came back in a week and said they were here this time to locate a booth - a place for intended settlers to register and get certificates to make their race for land or town lots. They stayed here until the last week in August, then left on the morning of Sept 1st.

There were 27 deputy Marshalls brought into town in covered wagons; they caused no suspicion as there were hundreds of Boomers moving the same way. Two wagons stopped at Light's Blacksmith Shop and one drove up by my house; they all proceeded to unload in a quiet manner and take positions. Doolan, Bitter Creek, Dynamite Dick, Tulsa Jack, and Dalton were in Ransom's and Murry's Saloon. Arkansaw Tom was in bed at the hotel.

Bitter Creek got his horse and was riding up to a small building where Said Coneley stayed and the Marshalls (thinking he was known to move on) fired on him. Dick Speed, the Marshall from Perkins, fired the first shot. The magazine was knocked off of his (Bitter Creek's) gun and he was shot in the leg. He made his escape to the southwest. Speed was shot about this time and instantly killed, also. Young Simonds was mortally wounded; he died at 6 PM. Then Tom Huston was mortally wounded.

The gun fire of the Marshalls was centered on the saloon. Old Man Ransom was shot in his leg, Murry in his arm and side. Walker was shot through the liver. By this time the outlaws had got to the stable and had saddled up their horses.

Doolan and Dynamite went out the back door and down a draw southwest. Dalton and Tulsa Jack made a dash from the front door as they came out. Dalton's horse was hit on the jaw and he had a hard time getting him started, but finally succeeded. Dalton went probably 75 yards when his horse broke his leg; Dalton then got off and walked on the opposite side for a ways. Then he went back to his saddle pockets on the horse, got out his wire cutters and used them to cut a hole in the fence. Dalton then got behind one of the other boys and rode off.

Several people say he shot Shadly, but I saw Shadly run from my place to Dr. Call's fence. In going through the fence, he was shot the first time. He then got to Ransom's house and was arguing with Mrs. Ransom. She ordered him to leave when he took the last shots. He fell there and crawled to Selphs' cave.

Many believe that Dalton shot Shadly. In fact, he thought so, for when Dr. Selph and I were working with him in the cave he said Dalton shot him three times quicker than he could turn around, but I think I know better.

Taking the lay of the ground into consideration (and I stood where I saw Dalton most of the time) I never saw him fire once. Shadly was hit in the right hip and all the balls tended downward. If Dalton had shot Shadly, he would have been shot in front, and the balls would have tended to range upward.

The outlaws crossed the draw south of town and stopped for a few minutes, shooting up the street toward my house. One of these shots hit Frank Briggs in the shoulder, but gave him only a slight flesh wound. I took him to my cave and dressed his wound, then I went to Walker and gave him temporary aid, as we moved him from there to Murrys. I laid his wound open and removed the shattered bone.

Some of the doctors wanted me to amputate but I fought for his arm. Two inches of radius bone was shot away. He had slight flesh wounds in the side. About this time I was called aside and told to go to the hotel - that Jones was up there, either wounded or killed. I, Alva Pierce, and a boy by the name of Wendell, about 12 years old, went over. I went in and called out but got no answer.

I was about to leave when Jones came to the top of the stairs and said, "Is that you, Doc?" I told him it was. I asked if he was hurt and he said, "No." He said for me to come up and I told him if he wasn't hurt I would not, but he insisted. So I went up. He had his coat and vest off, also his boots. He had his Winchester in his hands and other revolvers were lying on the bed.

I said, "Tom, come down and surrender." He said, "I can't do it for I won't get justice." He said, "I don't want to hurt anyone but I won't be taken alive." Then he said, "Where are the boys?" (meaning the outlaws) I told him they had gone. He said he did not think they would leave him. It hurt him bad. I never saw a man wilt so in my life. He stayed in the hotel until after 2 o'clock and then surrendered to a Mr. Mason, who was a preacher, and they took him off right away.

Of the wounded, Simonds died at 6 P.M., Shadly and Huston were taken to Stillwater. Both died in three or four days. Walker, who was shot through the liver, died on the 16th. All the rest recovered. The outlaws stayed close to town, as Bitter Creek was not able to travel. Dr. Bland of Cushion [perhaps Cushing?] tended him. I loaned him instruments to work on the wound with, although I did not know where Bitter Creek was hiding out. A piece of magazine was blown into his leg. It eventually worked out and he was able to again ride.

Tom was indicted for the killing of Huston. Speed and Shadley were tried on the Huston case and convicted of manslaughter in the first degree with no leniency of the court. Judge Dale sentenced him to 50 years at hard labor in the Lansing Penitentiary.

Dalton drifted away from the crowd and was killed near Ardmore; the rest stayed around the Dunns. Dynamite ordered a big gun sent to Tulsa. The Marshalls heard about it and watched for him, thinking he would come in at night to get it. But he rode in at 2 P.M., got his gun and was getting out of town before they knew it. They started after him and had a running fight from there to Turkey Track Ranch. They killed two horses from under him. They thought they had him surrounded in the timber and sent for more help, but when help arrived and they searched thoroughly for him, he was gone. He then left the territory for good.

Bitter Creek and Tulsa stayed here. Doolan disappeared and no one knew where he went. An Edith Elsworth also disappeared about this time; they probably went off together.

Bitter Creek, Tulsa, Peirce and others went to Dover and held up the train. They barely got away, and Tulsa, in trying to cover the retreat of the others, was shot and killed. Bitter Creek and Pierce came back to their old haunt and, in a short time, were killed on Dall Dunn's farm. It is the universal belief that they were betrayed by the Dunn boys, if not killed by them.

Of the other murders committed, Maclasky killed his cousin one mile east of here. He said he was going to do it, so he went directly down there and shot him. He was indicted, tried, convicted, and sentenced for 99 years. Buckner of Guthrie got him a new trial after he had been in jail three years and he was again convicted, this time of manslaughter in the first degree and sentenced to twelve years in the penitentiary.

Lig Samples, in June of 1893, shot and killed Ernest Chivelee, his brother-in-law. He was indicted for murder, tried, and found guilty of manslaughter in the second degree. The jury recommended the greatest leniency of the court. He was sentenced to four years. The sympathy was greatly in favor of him and a petition was put in circulation for a pardon.

Bruce Miller was shot in Murry's saloon on the 23rd of April, 1893, at half past nine by unknown parties. This was the outgrowth of an old feud between George McElroy, Doc Bland, and the Miller Brothers. The Millers were accused of stealing stock and various other things in the Creek Nation. The Millers claimed they merely wanted to run him off a lease he held there. The first man killed was Ira Miller, one of the McElroy and Bland men. Bruce Miller was indicted for murder with Buck Campbell (alias Redbuck) as an accessory, to the crime on the 16th day of April, 1894.

A band of men unknown went to Millers house and laid siege to it. They killed Dutch John, a man that claimed to be a hired man of Millers (Miller had nothing but a garden patch to farm), and wounded a child in the shoulder. The Millers made their escape at night; the women brought the child to Ingalls for treatment. Millers had McElroy, Bland and three others indicted at Fort Smith for murder. They were tried and acquitted. There is bound to be many more deaths from this feud.

In April 1893 there came to Ingalls a notorious old quack representing himself to be a physician of 40 years experience and a preacher in the Campbellite church. He began preaching for them. Mr. Culbertson also preached for the same church. He called on Brother Johnson to treat his wife for some disability; the doctor continued to make regular trips, two and three a day. After the sister was able to work in the garden Culbertson ordered him to quit calling - as the people were talking about the matter.

About this time, a man by the name of Cunningham moved to town. He was a great temperance worker and as great a rascal as Johnson. Soon they were working together. They organized a temperance lodge and, of course, Sister Culbertson was a member. Then it became uncomfortable for old man Culbertson. He and his wife had frequent quarrels; finally they compromised; he deeded the property to her and the deeds were not to be recorded unless he died before she did. If she was to have the property, she was to stay away from Johnson and his following. But in the absence of Culbertson one day, his wife took the deeds and gave them to Johnson, who then took them to Stillwater and had them recorded.

When this was done, Mrs. Culbertson told her husband he had no right there and he could go. But he did not go - he commenced to investigate the character of Dr. Johnston and his wife. Culbertson showed that they were not decent citizens by sworn statements and court records that indicated they had lived in adultery and Mrs. Johnston had been in jail for it. The old doctor was given a chance to reply to the charges, pledging his word and honor (he never had any) that he would conduct the meeting in a gentlemanly manner. There was quite a crowd present as he made no defense, but at the close of the meeting, motioned to his wife who had moved behind Mr. Culbertson and she commenced to hit him on the head with a loaded whip.

Cunningham and a man by the name of Crow grabbed Culbertson and held him down until various other people forced them away. There was strong talk of lynching Cunningham and I guess it would of been done if he hadn't skipped out right then. The rest gave up and gave bonds. Mrs. Johnson pled guilty and was fined \$10 & costs. Johnson and his son, Crow, Fred Storms, and Cunningham's representative called for separate trials. Crow's came up first; everyone here thinks the jury was packed, as he was acquitted.

Storms then came up and he was found guilty as charged; he then appealed to District Court. Johnson then went to court; there they were thrown out by the prosecuting attorney, who is a populist and personal friend of the defendant.

Bruce Miller came to Ingalls in the spring of 1895 and started a butcher shop; he went around heavily armed all the time and made frequent assertions that if he met McElroy or Bland they would kill him or he would kill them. The people got him to lay aside his Winchester but he continued to carry his rifle.

On the night of April 23, he went to W. D. Murry's saloon to get a fiddle for his nephew to play for a dance at Pierces Hotel. He had just arrived and stepped to the bar to get a drink of water when two shots were fired in at the northwest window. One shot hit him, passing probably through his heart, and killed him almost instantly. From what those present said no doctor could be found that would go to him, so he laid in the saloon until morning, when the coroner came and held an inquest. It did no good as no one knew who could have done the shooting. There probably were two men; one a little smaller than the other. They went off on horseback in a southwest direction, judging from the tracks.

On Sept 25th 1895 a man named Foot shot and killed Levi Slaybaugh, one of the best men in the county. Charley Slaybaugh ran in the strip and located a claim; a man named Carpenter wanted it and got Foot (who was his uncle and half-witted) to contest Charley's claim. He got beat at Perry; he then appealed. In the meantime Carpenter went off on a visit (he had built a \$500.00 house on the claim) and, while he was gone, Foot settled with Slaybaugh for \$50.00, and gave a clear release. Then he left.

When Carpenter came back he hunted up Foot and took him to the county seat and had him judged insane; then Carpenter was appointed as guardian for Foot and he was trying to get the contest reopened.

Slaybaugh, on the eve of the 25th, was on the creek with Charley, cutting poles with which to fix the corn crib. Foot and Carpenter went to them and picked a quarrel. Foot shot the old man, Charley then knocked him down with an ax and Carpenter ran off. If it had not been for the Slaybaugh boys' pleadings, Carpenter would have been lynched.

The night he had a preliminary hearing before Judge Whiles, a poor demented fool (if I must call him such), who turned him loose and bound over a crazy man. What is our country coming to, with such judges in power?

On the 28th of October 1895, Dr. Briggs and his son, Rob, a boy probably 20 1/2 years old, got into a quarrel at the breakfast table and Rob shot two times in the house. The old man got out onto the street and was running for dear life. Rob shot at him again, hitting him in the left arm. Rob could have shot more but his mother and Mrs. Murry got hold of him and he gave up. I cut the ball out of his father's arm a few minutes later; it was a 45. The boy left and I suppose this is the last of this attempted murder.

On Friday night, October 11th 1895, a mob went to Date Miller's home just after dark and shot Mrs. Miller, who was in a dugout killing her instantly. They also shot Date Miller, her husband and mortally wounded Eleck, their boy. Eleck died in an hour; Mrs. Miller was shot in the breast and Date was shot through his body. The boy was hit in the arm and through the hips. Dorsey, and two or three other children escaped. Fred Myric came to Ingalls for a doctor. He got to my house and told me he wanted me to go and dress a wound on a boy who got hurt with a corn knife. I started out; after I had gone a ways, I found out it was a Date Miller, so I turned back. I did not know of the shooting

until the next morning. He told me a lie to get me to go. Nothing probably will ever be done with this killing. No one knows who did it. Probably this is more of the fight between them and the MacElroys.

On the 30th of September 1894, Andy Brazwell shot W.D. Murry in the head with a revolver. They had been having a lot of trouble over a gambling debt. On this day there was a show in town and there was a lot of drinking. The show did not open up at night for fear of trouble. A storm came up in the evening - Murry and Andy went to Bradley and Deans' grocery to get a lunch, all apparently in good humor. Just as they were getting it set out, Andy pulled his gun and shot, then skipped out. He was gone probably two or three months but they compromised and he came back. He then started in the saloon business with Tom Jones.

First big fire in Ingalls:

April 8 - About 9:30 PM the alarm was given that Pierces' Livery Barn was on fire. I ran down, found the barn as good as gone. Most of Murry's things had been carried out of his house; they had given up hope of saving it. Jim Vaughn and I went up on the roof and by hard work, saved it; by doing this, we saved the whole row of homes. There were five head of horses burned in the barns of Pearces, two of the Pawnee mailman's and one driven here by Lawyer Hall of
fire was probably incendiary. No clues to who did it were found and there was no insurance on anything.



Outlaw Bill Doolin

In March 1896 Bill Doolan was captured in Eureka Springs by Bill Tilghman of Perry. He was brought back and lodged in the Guthrie jail. I went to see him there. In June, Dynamite was caught in Texas for bootlegging, tried and sent to county jail for sixty days. They suspected him of being one of the Doolan gang and sent Hagel, the U.S. Marshall, word. Hagel sent a man there to identify him and they brought him to Guthrie.

The Marshalls charged several murder cases against him but on Sunday night, July the 5th, Doolan and a Negro overpowered the guards, locked them in cells and fourteen of the worst men made their escape. I think they got away for good, because rumor is that they were helped to get out. Time will tell as there is to be an investigation. Toward the last of August Doolan and his small band was located on Mud Creek, 12 or 15 miles east of Ingalls. He was seen to go to Lawson post office several times and the Marshalls laid a trap for him. Between 9 and 10 o'clock Monday night August 24 he walked into it, was shot and killed. I have no particulars yet in regard to it. I will note them when I get a full account. They say Dynamite and three others are in hiding close by.

Later

Doolan was at Lawson making arrangements to leave the country with his supposed wife. He had just left the women and was walking down the road when he was shot from an ambush. He was killed, put in a wagon and taken to Guthrie that night. The pistols that killed him were from Heck Thomas, Dall, Bee, George and John Dunn with one or two others. They had Dr. Call's Number 8 shotgun. This one did the work, for he had the buckshot in him, also two Winchester balls. His wife went to Guthrie to get his body but failed to get it. On the morning of the 25th the Marshalls sighted the remaining outlaws a

few miles from where they killed Doolan, but they were on the move heading for Turkey Track Ranch and it is doubtful if they ever get there.

Now there were four left in the bunch. Friday, November 6, at 4:30 PM, George Dunn rode into Ingalls very fast and said that his brother Bee had been shot by Deputy U.S. Marshall Canton in Pawnee. They left for there immediately. Saturday afternoon Mr. Cots of Stillwater and family, also Mrs. Bee Dunn, arrived with the body of Bee. They took him to his step-father's house and kept the body until Sunday noon, then buried it. There was a large funeral procession.

They found no bill against Canton for the killing and set him loose at once. The feeling in Pawnee is all in favor of Canton. Past reputation is what hurts Dunn. All kinds of reports are afloat in regard to his past life at Ingalls. People are divided on the case; all were looking for Dunn's to be killed, but expected it to come from some of the remaining outlaws. There is bound to be more killing over this. I think it only a matter of time until more of the Dunn boys are killed or they get Canton.

After Bee's death, John Hall and George went on the scout; there are a number of bills against them in Pawnee for cattle-stealing. T. Boggs and Bill Long left for Kansas to avoid some charge. They got into trouble there and were sent to jail. As soon as their time was up, Havelin wrote for his stepson, Bill Long, to come home. He thought there was nothing against him but just as soon as he got here they took him in. He stayed in jail at Pawnee a month or so and gave bond for two thousand to appear at the September 1897 court. Bob Boggs went to Texas to get away and stole 47 head of cattle down there. They caught him and sent him over the road for four years. Pawnee County will get him when his time is out.

Bill Chappel, Tom Boggs, A.E. Peirce, and several others left the country for good. McIlhiney (Narrow Gauge Kid) skipped his bond and is gone for good. Some think he went to Cuba. J McLain, Dr. Steel, and W. Wilson are his bondsmen. In May the Grand Jury in Texas found bills against John and All McLain at our place, and several others in Stillwater for perjury. They gave bonds; it was for scheduling their property for taxes.

In April 1897 Gov. Renfrow pardoned Lige Samples. He got back to Ingalls about the 15th and went to work at his trade, carpentering. Everyone seems to want to help him and I think he will make a good citizen. He'll have to stay here and live down his trouble. No one ever blames him for the act committed.

About the 10th of February 1898 a man by name of Amos (and a farmer by the name of Ellwood from Morrison) came to Ingalls and started to organize a lodge of "Modern Tonties." They soon had 15 or 20 to start with. I commenced and examined nineteen people he sent for the examinations and got policies in return. He failed to come back as agreed to do, but sent Mr. Ellwood in his place, promising to follow him in a few days, and finish the work. The boys began to get restless.

Husselton came down and gave us a talk in regard to the Morrison lodge and said he would see Professor Amos and hold him to his promise. Another week has passed and still no word. The lodge is at a stand-still; nothing is being done. One half of the people are of the opinion it is a fraud; the other half think it is all right. I have written tonight (3/15/98) to the Sheriff at Wichita, also to Judge Dale at the same place, making inquiries in regard to the matter. I suppose they will know, as the head or supreme lodge is located in Wichita, Kansas. This is the first lodge ever organized in Ingalls.

The Masons are fixing to have a lodge here and have rented the hall over the schoolhouse but have not gotten it up and running yet. They have had quite a number of preliminary meetings up to this date.

The first church building was begun the last of February 1898. Jonathan West had the contract to build it for \$385.00 Thee plans have been changed somewhat, which adds more to the cost of the building. It is being built by the Methodist people - M.E. North.

Mr. West has just finished a fine two-story school building for the Ingalls district, at a cost of over \$1200.00 - two rooms below and a hall above. There will be several good buildings put up this spring.

Background Information:

From website:

<http://skyways.lib.ks.us/genweb/mhgs/1902%20Wichita%20City%20Directory%20Names.PDF#search=%22Tonties%20Wichita%20%22>

The Lodge of Modern Tonties was indeed headquartered in Wichita, Kansas. The 1902 city directory shows the lodge and the various officers. W.M. Glass was the national secretary of the organization.

From New Collegiate Dictionary--

The lodge was named for an Italian (Lorenzo Tonti, a banker b.1695) who started a "scheme" – a joint financial arrangement whereby the participants would contribute equally to a prize that is awarded entirely to the participant who survives all the others.

From website: <http://www.trophyelkoutfitters.com/html/habitat.html>

Prior to Oklahoma statehood the Turkey Track Ranch was the largest cattle and horse operation in Indian Territory operated on land allotted to and leased from the Sac and Fox Indian Tribe. The ranch lands were included in the Oklahoma land run. In 1889 the man with the fastest horse and greatest determination claimed it for his own.

A New Suit of Clothes

by

Twylla Berger



Yale, Oklahoma

Back in 1910, 1920, and especially in 1925, Oklahoma was getting a real reputation as an oil producing state. Word of the success Oklahoma oilmen were having soon reached Pennsylvania; especially around Titusville in Venango County, which was the birthplace of the oil industry and where most everyone was sorta thought of as a driller. Or, thought they knew all about the oil business, although some did and some didn't. At any rate, there were a lot of Pennsylvanians who headed west. Among them was Mr. Walter Oscar (Bill) Persing who was an experienced oilman. Another immigrant coming to Oklahoma, although from Missouri, was Boise Cleveland Briggs. He had started to work in the oil fields when he was 14 and by the time he was 17 he was a full-fledged cable tool driller. His early success was due in large part to Mr. Persing,

who took the time to teach Mr. Briggs about the oil industry and how to be a driller. Needless to say, the two men became good friends. In fact, such good friends that the friendship was sealed for life when Mr. Briggs fell in love with Mr. Persing's daughter Edna, and married her.

When Mr. Briggs first came to Oklahoma he, like numerous others, lived in a dugout. And, he found work on the huge E.C. Mullendore ranch near Cleveland, Oklahoma. Eventually he drilled wells at Drumright for Gypsy Oil, spent 41 years working for Magnolia Oil, wildcatted in Kansas, Texas, and Oklahoma, and also drilled for William "Bill" Dempsey of Yale, Oklahoma. The main event, so to speak, of his career took place while he was drilling a wildcat well near Merrimac, Oklahoma, which is north of Yale and on the other side of Laguna Creek. As was usual back then, there were just two crews working two tours (pronounced "towers" as the French do a holdover from the World War I doughboys). Mr. Briggs and his tool dresser, Culus Spann worked the evening tower, which lasted from midnight until noon the following day. Charlie Armstrong, the other driller, and his tool pusher worked the other tower from noon until midnight.

Now it just so happened that Dempsey, who owned the rig and was drilling the well, also owned another outfit that was drilling a well that would offset the one that Mr. Briggs was drilling on. To spur things up a bit, Dempsey told his crews that the first driller to bring his well in and that brought in the first production would get a bonus. He would personally take that man down to the Hub Clothing store in Pawnee and have the tailor there make him a new suit. Now Mr. Briggs had never owned a custom tailored suit of clothes in his entire life, and he decided then and there that he was going to have the suite of clothes. At the same time, although it was never proved, the drillers on the competing rig were making plans to slow down the opposition as much as possible.

In order to get to the drilling site at midnight, Mr. Briggs and Culus had to cross the Salt Creek Bridge at 11:30 p.m. The creek had pretty high banks on each side. That

meant there was a steep down-slope to get to the bridge and then a steep up-slope to go up the other side. There were no houses nearby to show any light at night. Instead, both sides of the road were lined with trees and a thick undergrowth of bushes which at night gave travelers the feeling of riding through a dark tunnel – a spooky place indeed where owls flew and one’s imagination could run wild.

The first night of the competition, as the two men rode over the bridge on their way to work, they saw lights flashing along either side of the road and under the bridge. Neither one said anything to the other that night; the next night there was some more of the same. Then the third night there was a sheet that floated across the road from tree to tree. Mr. Briggs turned to his tool dresser and asked, “Did you see what I saw?”

“Yeah, I sure did,” was the reply. “I’m wantin’ to get outta here.”

Mr. Briggs said, “No, that’s not a ghost, that’s somebody playing some pranks on us. Let’s just don’t pay any attention to it. By the way, did you see those lights the other night?”

“I sure did,” answered the tool dresser. “I’ll tell you, I’m ready to leave this place.”

But Mr. Briggs talked to him, saying, “No, let’s just go ahead and beat them other fellows. Let’s get our well drilled in ahead of them.”

So, sure enough, they worked harder. They got their well drilled in first, and the drilling superintendent had them go to the tailor and get the best material made into the best suits they could buy. At that time a custom tailored suit cost around \$150, which was a lot of money. Mr. Briggs kept that suit – it was his pride and joy – the rest of his life. In fact, he was buried in it when he was 88 years old – buried in the same suit he had won in a drilling contest when he was a young man.

Twylla Berger is the wife of Bill Berger and the daughter of Boixe Cleveland Briggs. She is also the granddaughter of Mr. Persing.

Payne County Historical Society

The Payne County Historical Society is organized in order to bring together people interested in history, especially the history of Payne County, Oklahoma. The Society's major function is to discover and collect any materials that may help to establish or illustrate the history of the area.

Membership in the Payne County Historical Society is open to anyone interested in the collection and preservation of Payne County history. All members receive copies of the *Payne County Historical Review* free. In addition, the Society sponsors informative meetings and historical outings several times a year.

Yes, I want to be a member of the Payne County Historical Society. Enclosed is my check for:

- \$17.00 for Individual Membership
- \$27.00 for Family Membership
- \$22.00 for Institutional Membership
- \$100.00 for Life Membership

(Membership includes subscription to the *Payne County Historical Review*.)

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