

PAYNE COUNTY

HISTORICAL REVIEW

VOLUME III NUMBER 4 SPRING 1983

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The **PAYNE COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

P. O. Box 194
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The *PAYNE COUNTY HISTORICAL REVIEW* welcomes reader's comments, news, or requests for information from readers. Family histories, memories, diaries, letters, histories of groups or institutions, articles, photographs, or maps are also welcome. No payment is made for articles published in the *REVIEW*.

Correspondance should be addressed to the Editor. The Society assumes no responsibility for statements made by contributors.

The Pioneer Families of Stillwater

Volume I

Among the treasures accumulated by the Payne County Historical Society are two typed booklets entitled "The Pioneer Families of Stillwater, Volumes I and II." We are pleased to print on the following pages the entire contents of Volume I as it was compiled July, 1938 by the Journalism Class.

In reading this material it may be beneficial to remember that this material compiled in 1938 uses references of that time such as location of stores, etc. These references may have changed or no longer be in existence today. The pioneers that form the basis for these articles were recalling events that happened forty to fifty years earlier. Time often alters such memories.

The Pearson Family

by Dick Cleverdon

Wanderlust or hope of a new start in life brought many people to Oklahoma. Comparitively few sacrificed a good job and a bright future to seek their fortunes in an Indian, desparado-infested territory, but among these few was E. Carey Pearson, who came to a country where the farmland was much less valuable than that which surrounded his former home.

When Carey, his wife Sarah, and their family came to Oklahoma, every possible hardship was endured because a heavy spring rain made it impossible for them to set up any form of house-keeping. They staked their homestead in the North-East section of Paradise Township on June 6, 1891.

Bakers were scarce in Oklahoma territory, so when Carey had done all to make his homestead liveable that he could until the next spring, he accepted a proposition that Tom Houston made to him to come to Stillwater and operate a small bakery which he had established.

The next spring Carey planted and harvestsed his first farm crop in Oklahoma. Although the crop was a success Carey decided that he could make a better living by operating a bakery in Stillwater than by farming 160 acres.

Buck Wilcoxin and Mr. Pearson founded Stillwater's first adequate bakery in 1894, at 916 Main Street. Shortly before the Cherokee Strip was to be opened, the brick oven was destroyed by fire while it was yet full of bread. The remainder of the day's bread which had not yet been molded was given to the town women who would otherwise have been without bread. During the opening of the Strip, Carey and his partner baked bread on a small kitchen stove.

After all the business of the bakery was finished Carey made a trip back to Indiana, his home state. When he learned that his brother Thomas had lost his job in a straw factory after a Wall Street slump, he made arrangements for Thomas to come to Oklahoma where he would have a better opportunity to make a living by teaching or farming.

Carey returned to Oklahoma where he made arrangements for Thomas to purchase the homestead south of his. Thomas, his wife, Lillia Jane, and their two daughters, Lois and Mary, arrived at their new home December 30, 1893.

Thomas and Carey harvested crops that summer; but Thomas began teaching the school at Marena that fall and Carey established another bakery in Stillwater in the fall of 1894.

The homestead law provided that those who homesteaded must signify their intentions by living on the property for a number of years to prove their claim. While Carey and Thomas worked at other occupations, their wives, Sarah and Lillia Jane, proved their claim.

In the spring of 1895, Stillwater became the proud possessor of a marble soda fountain and a refreshment parlor, which was made possible when Ed Davis and Carey Pearson became partners to purchase the necessary but crude equipment which was the only of its kind for miles around. All ice cream was frozen by hand and when a big celebration was held it was nearly impossible to obtain the necessary milk to provide for the large crowds which came to Stillwater. The fountain had a crude carbonated water system and only six syrups for the customers to choose from.

The brick oven of Carey's third bakery still stands behind the Oklahoma Tire and Supply store at 811 Main, where it was built soon after the refreshment parlor was founded.

Thomas bought Carey's bakery in 1902 and later moved to 715 Main, where all his equipment was destroyed by fire in 1907. Soon after this fire Thomas was able to establish another bakery at 705 Main Street. He was forced to close his doors in 1911 when he began working at the A & M campus as the college baker.

About 1913 the second generation of Pearsons began taking their places as business men in Stillwater.

In the spring of 1904 Carey bought a bakery from Charley Miller, which was located at 1001 Main. This bakery was given to his son Jim, who became Charley Pearson's partner in a combined restaurant and bakery. Early in 1913 Jim sold his interests to Charley, who sold his interests to Morgan Green that same fall.

In 1912 Carey bought a bakery at Drumright for Linley Overman. When Overman failed to make a success of the deal, the bakery was sold to Thomas in 1913.

After six years at Drumright, Thomas bought a bakery at Ripley and sold his Drumright property. After a period of four successful years Thomas and Lillia Jane decided to take a year's trip to Indiana. The bakery was leased for that time but when they returned they found the affairs of the bakery in such bad condition that Thomas sold his interests and retired.

In 1914 Charley established a newsstand at 624 Main. The newsstand was sold to Earl Kennicutt, who later remodeled it into a drug store.

Jim founded another bakery at 715 Main in 1915, but in 1920 he sold his interests and went to California.

Fred Pearson, another of Carey's sons, came from Pawnee to establish a plumbing shop, which is located at 106 W. 7th.

Carey sold his interests in his refreshment parlor to enter a semi-retirement of farming. He was forced by his health to retire completely in 1930. He died from

heart failure February 27, 1932.

Charley and W. H. Kuechenmeister founded the Stillwater Floral Shop in 1923. Charley sold his interests to Harry Blumer in 1926.

Henry Lehman and Glen Pearson founded a bakery in the 900 block of Main Street in 1925 but they sold it to Ed Kelly in 1926. Glen bought a bakery at Perkins which he operated until 1933 when he sold out so that he could begin to farm on his farm near Stillwater.

While farming Glen worked part time as a baker for all the Stillwater bakeries so in January of 1937 when his brother Jim asked him to come to Stillwater to bake for him, he sold his farm and built a home in Stillwater.

Jim returned to Stillwater in 1931 when he established the Aggie Bakery in Peck's Lodge near the A & M campus. After a year operating near the college, Jim moved his bakery to 715 Main Street where his now located.

After Charley sold his interests in the Stillwater Floral Shop, he became the agent for the Meadows Washing Machine Company for eleven surrounding counties. He retired in 1933 when he ceded the washing machine agency to Thompson-Parker Lumber Company.

To this point of the story, little has been said about Thomas's family. His daughters prepared for a business career but before their careers were well developed they were married. Lois, the first bride of the family, married A. Russel Cleverdon, a prominent Stillwater business man who later sold his interests in Stillwater but has since returned.

Lucille joined the string of brides when she married Elbert R. Weaver who is now secretary of the Oklahoma Pharmaceutical Association and representative from Payne County in the state legislature. Mary completed the list of brides when she married Earl C. Chase, a construction engineer who is now associated with the United States Civil Service.

All of Thomas's grandchildren are students of some school except Bill Cleverdon who is advertising manager of the Aggie and Mecca theatres in Stillwater and Tom Cleverdon, who is a first class hospital apprentice in the Naval Hospital at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Bob Cleverdon is working toward his master's degree while serving as a graduate assistant in the Biology department of the college. Lois's other children, Bedena Jane, Dick, Mary Lucille, Jack, Joan, and Joyce Cleverdon represent the family in all departments of the local schools from the grades to the A & M College.

Mrs. and Dr. L. A. Cleverdon

by Wanda Gudgeł

Mrs. L. A. Cleverdon came to Stillwater in 1902. At this time there was no paving, but we had city lights; these were turned on at 5 o'clock and turned off at midnight. Just before turning them off, they would blink them three times so if any one was not at home when the lights blinked, they hurried right home. The city light and water plant was located directly across the road from the present Stillwater mill.

The courthouse was a frame-building. Wooden-awnings were up and down main street, and sidewalks and street crossings were of wood.

First paving was located on Lewis Street about 26 years ago, and at this time, we had a horse drawn fire department. The first oil well was discovered on John Barnes farm which was located at the foot of Lewis Street. The well went down about 1,000 feet then was declared a dry hole.

Train service only went to Ralston. At one time they planned to put an interurban in between Stillwater, Morrison, and Guthrie. Mail service only went as far as Perry. It was carried there in a hack--small stage coach with trunk on back.

For entertainment they had medicine shows. At the show house, silent pictures were shown, lanterned slides, some one played the piano and some one else sang. Carnivals were wild and wooly.

Mrs. Cleverdon said, "The most interesting thing at this time was the large loads of cotton brought in. Wagons would be lined up and down Main Street. The first wagon of cotton usually got three or four times its value." In the spring small colts could be seen up and down Main Street.

There were four public wells. They were located in front of the present Holmes Music store; in front of the present Safeway store; Wallis Jewelry store; and in front of the Yost Hotel which is now the Stillwater Hotel.

Hueston Hotel (now Nicholas Hotel), Yost Hotel, Commercial Hotes, Santa Fe Hotel, and Lindon Hotel were the hotels located here. There is only one left which is serving meals, and that is the Commercial.

The present Katz Department store was only a men's clothing store and was located where Smith's Studio and Justice Jewelry store is now located.

Doctors Atberry, Cage, and Corn were the town's dentists. The physicians were Doctors Murphy, Yates, Janeway, Reece, and Nelms. The three drugstores were the McGeorge (now the Rexall), Powell, and Diamond Pharmacy, owned by Dr. L. A. Cleverdon.

The first hospital was established by the late Dr. W. C. Whittenberg at about 404 Duck Street. He later moved it to the corner of ninth and Lewis. Later it was moved to its present location.

The college consisted of Old Central, the Engineering building which has just been torn down, Biology building, and the old barn that later burned. In 1902, there were ten or eleven graudates.

Resident Returned from China

by Wanda Barker

Mrs. M. A. Munger has spent the past seven years in China with her daughter, Elzina Munger, who is a missionary. This was Mrs. Munger's second trip to China for she had been there before with her older daughter, a nurse. She has spent twelve years in China altogether.

Mrs. Munger and her daughter lived in the province of Taiku Shansi where Miss Munger was in the English Department of the Oberlin Shansi Memorial School.

Miss Munger, 25, in 1915 took the place through the American Board of one of the two teachers of the school who was killed in the Boxer rising in 1900.

The school was re-established after the Boxer rising by Dr. H. H. Coon, a financier of China, and is still under his direction. One newspaper stated that Dr. Coon is the world's greatest financier living today. He is Chinese and attended college in Oberlin, Ohio. Also Dr. Coon has attended Yale University. Last spring he returned to the graduating exercises and received honorary degrees from that school. He was a member of the delegation sent from China to the coronation of King George.

Today the Oberlin Shansi Memorial School has two or three hundred boys and twenty or thirty girls enrolled. "Co-education is quite new in China," remarked Mrs. Munger at her home, 515 West 8th Street. The school is to train leaders, not to educate the mass, Dr. Coon stated, and that was the reason he gave for the school being so small.

A narrow escape which Mrs. Munger related happened a year ago during the Communist rebellion when they were given an hour and a half in which to collect their belongings and escape.

June 14 Mrs. Munger and her daughter set sail for America on the "Empress of Japan" because of the poor health of Miss Munger, and in July the hostilities broke out in China. At the present time Miss Munger is recuperating in the north.

A few articles which Mrs. Munger brought back with her are the following: a large pillow cover with a black background and embroidered in gold colored thread, a beautifully ornamented baby collar, a Chinese painting, Chinese coins which are not used today, a small carved metal chest, a weird paper-weight, and small dark vase with many gold waving lines.

A Teacher's Memories

by Rachel Adams

At the age of 84 years, Mrs. Augusta V. Adams is one of Payne County's oldest retired teachers. Now living with her daughter, Mrs. Willa Dusch-Adams at 1301 Duck Street in Stillwater, she came to Stillwater 47 years ago, and was one of the first teachers ever to teach in the county.

Her story can be told in her own words better than in any other way. It is as follows:

"When I came here in 1891, pioneering was nothing new in my family, as my father and mother came across the mountains from Virginia to Iowa in 1854. In fact, that is how I got my name of Augusta Virginia. My parents were so homesick for their home back there that they named me for the county and the state in which they had lived.

"So I was just carrying on tradition when I came down here to the new country. Everything was quite primitive then, and there were none of the conveniences that we have now. Stillwater was mostly a little mass of wooden buildings, all of which are gone today. The college was just getting started, and the campus as it is at the present time was undreamed of then.

"The rural and city schools were not very good at that time either. Some of the rural schools were taught in private homes and many of the schoolhouses were of logs. The windows in a large number of them were very poor, as they didn't have any window panes. The seats were often home-made affairs, and very few of the schools had any equipment at all. I think North Star had some charts but not much else.

"In Stillwater the first schools I remember were the Lincoln and Jefferson schools. They contained two

rooms each, with a teacher in each room. They were both frame buildings, and were torn down years ago.

The average enrollment in the country was about 75 pupils of all ages and all ungraded. A good many of the teachers drove to their schools with a horse and buggy, sometimes coming three and four miles. And after working hard for their salary, they usually had to accept warrants and discount them to get their pay.

"The schools I taught were North Star, the old Miller school south of Stillwater, and Spring Valley. Miss Thornley was the County Superintendent when I was at North Star. She was a fine county superintendent--one of the best we've ever had.

"One day she visited my school. I had 40 students present, and they all behaved very nicely. But I was terribly embarrassed anyhow, because I was wearing a new striped, kitchen apron which I had finished that morning and decided to wear. It didn't look bad, but we were taught at normal to wear good clothes to school, and I was afraid that she would think I wasn't doing that. But in spite of that apron, Miss Thornley said I had one of the best schools she had visited in the county. I certainly was relieved when she told me that!

"And speaking of normal school reminds me of the first normal school held in what was then Oklahoma Territory, at Oklahoma City. It consisted of four weeks review school and school management and methods of teaching, but we did not get any credit toward a degree or anything like that. I still have the picture of that first normal school. Another Stillwater resident, Metta Lytton, attended that first normal school, too, and I believe she is standing almost in front of me in the picture.

"It's been a long time since then, and the educational facilities of the county and of Stillwater have changed greatly, and I am glad to see all the improvements come, for education is coming to mean more than ever before in the present age."

Boomer Runs Second-hand Store

by Nancy Durst

When Mr. L. A. Laughlin, an early pioneer of Oklahoma, settled southwest of Stillwater in 1891, he was proud to be called a boomer. He still boastfully claims that title as he runs his second-hand store on Main Street.

He came with his wife from Merryville, Missouri, in the fall of 1891 in a covered wagon to make a rush for the 160 acres of the Cherokee Strip. After the tiresome trip was made, Laughlin began a new home here and reared a family of six children, all but one of whom are living now.

Cecil, his eldest daughter, died in November, 1918. Florence married Norval Martin and continued to live in Wichita, while Everett Laughlin lives in Stillwater, and Dennis Laughlin lives in Oklahoma City. Arlo, his youngest son, is in Perry, Oklahoma.

Mr. Laughlin has established numerous trades since his residence here. "I've worked at a lot of things, but I'd take my second-hand store anytime for a choice of any trade I know of," Laughlin said. He has been working in the second hand business now for five years.

Forty Years of Stillwater

by Mrs. E. E. Hopkins

"I came to Stillwater forty years ago and naturally many changes have taken place. Travelling facilities were meager as we had no bus lines—one from Perry and another from Orlando, and that was our only way of transportation in and out of Stillwater. As I had never travelled across country in a stage, I got quite a thrill coming over from Orlando and also some bad scares when we crossed the deep ravines.

"There were no bridges at that time and I felt sure we would never get up the opposite bank because the horses might get so tangled up in their harness, but the driver was an expert with the lines and I had all my worry for nothing. There was a relay station half way on the road where they changed horses.

"It was a clear frosty morning in January and I enjoyed the trip after all. Stillwater looked rather primitive to me just then, as I had come from quite a large town—Fort Scott, Kansas. There were no sidewalks, but those down town and they of course were boards and not very good boards at that. It was the horse and buggy age and plenty of hitching posts lined Main Street. There was also the proverbial town pump with a tin cup chained to it so everyone could get a drink who wanted it. "Who said anything about things sanitary?"

"This well as in the 800 block just south of the Stillwater National Bank. Everybody had water wells as we had no water works and it was a number of years before we did have.

"As I remember, we had no electric lights and used Kerosine lamps but it was not long until we had electricity and also gas. There was only one hotel, the Yost House, which stood where the Anthony store is now.

"Churches also were scarce and our old Presbyterian Annex was the church house and stood on the corner now occupied by the fire station. There was no Christian church but finally they built a small frame building where the Delaney grocery now is.

"A & M College was here but it was not very imposing, as Old Central was there and a small acreage. It had been established here about four years before I came to Stillwater. The spring of 1899 there were six graduates--four boys and two girls. With the exception of one house it was all prairie between the college and town and nearly all the southeast part of town was a big wheat field. Hester Street was the very outer limits with a few scattered houses and the Lincoln homestead was in the country: the location is now Sixth and Lincoln.

"The only public school building I can remember was the old Alcott building located where the Junior High now stands.

"Eventually we acquired a railroad, which was quite some acquisition, because it was the only way of getting in and out of Stillwater quickly. Then people began building homes and a few brick sidewalks, so gradually other improvements came and the old, ugly livery stables were replaced with filling stations. Stillwater never had a boom, just a gradual growth into the fine little city it is today. I have lived the major part of my life here and have always loved Stillwater."

My Memories of Early Days

As told to Betty Joe Kerby

by Mrs. W. A. Watson

"At the close of a long day in March, 1889, Mr. Watson stopped the team on a spot of wide, open prairie two miles north and one mile east of Stillwater, saying, 'We are here; this is our new home.' That sounded mighty good, although there was no house on it.

"Our very first home was made sod. But it was surprising how attractive a coat of white wash, muslin curtains, and a wild cactus in the window made it.

"The first crops were cane, turnips, and always some corn. Mr. Watson was kept busy breaking ground, building fences, and making other general improvements which included digging a well, but still he found time to do some freighting.

"As we had a good three horse team and a stout wagon, he was much in demand as a freighter, because all supplies for Stillwater were hauled in from Orlando, Yale, Guthrie, and Perry. On these trips several wagons would usually go together as the roads were so bad it was necessary to double teams and help each other up the hills.

My time was occupied in doing a little gardening, raising a few chickens, and attending to the thousand and one other things one finds to do around a new home, besides caring for three small children.

"The year 1890 saw many new improvements. Our first country school, now called North Star, was built one mile north of our home, and Stillwater was booming. A new ice plant and a larger mill were built. We bought shares in this business and Mr. Watson worked there instead of freighting.

"Between busy times, we built our new frame home, 20 by 24 feet. As time passed, and funds increased, additions were made until it reached the size of five rooms and two porches, surrounded by cedars, fruit trees, and flowers, a generous supply of out buildings and a drilled well. Years after we moved away the house burned leaving only the memories of yesterday surrounded by the cedars. Now, in 1938, Mr. and Mrs. Carl Andrew have a lovely home built in the shadow of our evergreens.

"Although the early years were close and hard, there was always plenty to eat and fine neighbors. Very few tramps visited our neighborhood, but many movers stopped on their way to or from somewhere. Every spring and fall the Indians would camp by our road as they went on their pow-wows. They never molested us in any way, but many a night we slept very little for there was always the memory of stories we had heard. After all, an Indian was an Indian to us and something to be feared.

For entertainment during these times, we had picnics in summer, literary society in the school house during the winter, and singing bees the year around. These were usually held in the homes. And always there was the community Christmas tree.

"In 1903 we moved one-half mile west and built our present farm home. Our five children were educated from here and from here were eventually married, and scattered to make homes of their own. (Claud went to Colorado, Dell to Jenks, Oklahoma, Flo to New Mexico, Wayne to Minnesota, and Glenn to Hennessey. Now, Flo is back and she and I live alone in Stillwater, as our husbands have been called to their other home.)

"After forty-nine years, few of the early neighbors and settlers survive. Many have moved away and many others have gone to that other world. But all in all, life has been good to us."

Early Days Around Stillwater

by Claud Grissom

When the strip opened, O. P. Furman made the run but did not stake a claim, but in September, 1895 he came with his family and bought a farm for a small sum.

Before he came to Oklahoma he lived in Kansas where he and his brother owned a well driller. He sold the well driller and bought a farm which is lots one, two, three, and four in section thirty-two, township twenty, north, range two east of the Indian Meridian, at Stillwater, and a wagon and team.

When he arrived he had only a dime and the wagon and team. By the help of the neighbors he managed to get through the rest of the winter.

The winter was very hard, and they had to live in a dugout of just one room. It was below the ground and the centipedes and snakes bothered a lot. The barn was made of straw and did not furnish much protection for the few stock they had.

The next spring in order to get enough money to live on and to get his crop started, he worked for the neighbor just south of him and was paid twenty-five cents each day.

He was still badly in need of more money, so he went to the bank in Stillwater, and they let him have it at quite a low rate.

The Furmans set out an orchard and in a few more years were peddling the different fruits to help make a living.

After two or three years of this, they were beginning to make a little money so they built a one room house fourteen feet by fourteen feet, which they lived in for a while, and soon they got enough money

ahead to buy and build an addition to the house.

As the time went on and only a few Indians hindered the progress of this part of the country, they saved enough to build a barn and make some more improvements on the house.

During this time, the Furmans were rearing a family of three boys. These were Arthur, who is now in California, Leroy, who lives about a mile and a half from the homestead at Stillwater, and Clarence, who lives in Tennessee. There were also two girls, Genet and Cora, who reside in California. Mr. and Mrs. Furman are living in California at the present time.

Early Stillwater

In April of 1889 the run for the land around Stillwater was begun from a point near Boomer Dam. People from the age of twenty-one up were permitted to participate and claim 160 acres apiece. After a contestant had staked his ground he had to go to Guthrie to file his claim. Guthrie at that time was the only town in Oklahoma.

The original townsite of Stillwater was near Boomertown, located near Stillwater Creek. From there it spread northward. The first houses and stores were of course tents, and the Swiler Brothers General Store was one of the first set up. Others were Walker's Second Hand Store and W. J. Hodge's Opera House.

The first hotel was known as the Yost and is still standing where C. R. Anthony's is now located. The Nichols Hotel was also among the first.

Land in and around Stillwater was naturally very cheap. A hundred and sixty acre plot could be secured for as low as \$450.

Stillwater's first houses were constructed of cottonwood boards cut at a sawmill on the banks of the Stillwater Creek. Gradually, however, better materials arrived and several very nice residences were built.

The first water supply was a cistern on the corner of 9th and Main Street. This was used only for fire fighting and watering livestock, however, as most people had their own wells.

The first serious drouth occurred in the year 1891. It was called the turnip year since that was almost the only thing that could be grown.

The College was granted a charter in 1891 and the city churches were used as the first classrooms. The

Letter from C. L. Kezer to Wilbur Simank

November 12, 1931

Mr. Wilbur Simank
Eugene Field School
Stillwater, Oklahoma

Dear Wilbur:

I am much pleased to reply to your letter asking for some account of the early history of the city of Stillwater. I shall not tell it all, but will give you an outline of the general development of Stillwater since I knew it.

My first visit to Stillwater was in 1893 when the town was four years old. It was a small town with buildings of wood; many of them of lumber taken from trees which had grown along the banks of the streams. The sidewalks were all of wood, many from native oak timber. The streets were dusty and, of course, had no paving. Wagons with canvas covers lined either side of the streets where horses were tied to hitching racks. There were only a few buggies and spring wagons.

There was no railroad and goods for the merchants were brought to Stillwater in freight wagons from Guthrie or Perry and often pulled by four horses or mules. The products of the farms which had been bought by the merchants were hauled away in the same freight wagons. The roads were poor and the bridges and culverts were at the bottom of steep hills. Mail came from Perry once a day and from Orlando once a day. As we drove through the town the road angled off to the northwest by Old Central, the oldest building at the college. This building was then at the top of the basement only. No other buildings were on the campus. That night we camped about one-fourth mile

John Barnes Reviews Early Stillwater

by Bob Wallace

When Stillwater was first opened in 1889, it was an illegal townsite, so the government had no post office here. Mail was carried from Red Rock to Otoe and from there to Stillwater. Just once a week was not enough for people to be long satisfied, letters must be delivered oftener than that. Later it was brought to Pawnee. Then the citizens of Stillwater pitched in a dime apiece each week to pay a boy to bring over twice weekly.

When the mail reached Stillwater, it was put in the Swiler Brothers' store where the people called for it.

As soon as Stillwater's townsite was legalized, a post office was set up in a drug store owned by Bob Lowry, who was appointed post master. It was located on the lot just north of the present site of Walker's second hand store.

As the demand grew the office was moved across the street to a frame building owned by Doctor Pierce. The northward progress of this rapidly growing little town was soon evident, because in just a short time the office went from the 100 block to the middle of the 900 block. From there it went to the north end of Main where Searcy's grocery now stands.

After some time the Stillwater National Bank building housed this much sought after business, and there it remained until the new structure was erected on its present site on Husband Street.

Some of the post masters were Swiler Brothers', Bob Lowry, Bost and Billy Walker, and Charley Nearman. Later came Tom Kelly, and now Hal McNutt holds the treasured position.

Pioneers of Stillwater

by Ross Floyd

The settlement of Oklahoma was on April 22, 1889. The city of Stillwater was settled on June 11, 1889.

Lewis E. Haycraft, 619 Lowry Street, was one of the first men to come into this community. Haycraft can remember the days when he stood on Main Street and shot a deer and other animals.

The first Main Street centered around what is now Stokes Paint store. When the settlers started constructing Main Street they took two grass mowers and mowed down the grass. The first brick building built in Stillwater was located where the Camera theater is now. The first post office was located between ninth and tenth avenues. Schools were located on the Lincoln grounds and Jefferson grounds; these old buildings have been destroyed. At one time the Old Opera House was turned into a school, where chicken shows were so popular.

The first church in Stillwater was called the Congregational Church.

The Cherokee Strip was opened in September, 1893, and it is estimated by Haycraft that between 3500 and 4000 registered here for the run.

In the early days of Stillwater History they did not have a first class fire department as there is today. Blazes were controlled by volunteer firemen who worked when called upon. Fires were numerous in those days. Probably the largest fires were the burning of the court house and the big Swiler store and the west side of Main Street.

In those days bandits were not scarce, and a man always had a six-shooter at his side. The trail of Tex Jones, who shot down three United States marshalls at

Ingalls, brought much excitement to this community. Jones was sentenced to fifty years in the state prison. Cowboys were frequent visitors from the surrounding ranches, the most popular and well known ranch being the old Z-V. "All in all," states Haycraft, "this town was not very rough and tough."

The first term of Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College was held in the Old Presbyterian church, which was at that time located behind the city hall. Old Central was built in 1893 by a man named Ryan. Prairie chickens were often seen on the land which is now the college campus.

Amusements in those days were mostly square dances, parties, and fiddlers contests. Mr. Haycraft had an orchestra consisting of first and second fiddles and organ. Some of the members of his orchestra were Bill Swiler, Mr. Higby, and Mr. Metcalf.

The first automobile in Stillwater was owned by Herbert Ricker. When the car ran down Main, people became very excited. Some of the people said that the car would never become very well known or used.

Stillwater has grown from a small town to a prospering city of 10,000 population.

Some of the men who played a great part in developing this city are: L. E. Haycraft, Bob Lowry, Jim Pearson, Bill Swiler, John Barnes, Higby and Metcalf.

Letter from C. L. Kezer to Wilbur Simank

November 12, 1931

Mr. Wilbur Simank
Eugene Field School
Stillwater, Oklahoma

Dear Wilbur:

I am much pleased to reply to your letter asking for some account of the early history of the city of Stillwater. I shall not tell it all, but will give you an outline of the general development of Stillwater since I knew it.

My first visit to Stillwater was in 1893 when the town was four years old. It was a small town with buildings of wood; many of them of lumber taken from trees which had grown along the banks of the streams. The sidewalks were all of wood, many from native oak timber. The streets were dusty and, of course, had no paving. Wagons with canvas covers lined either side of the streets where horses were tied to hitching racks. There were only a few buggies and spring wagons.

There was no railroad and goods for the merchants were brought to Stillwater in freight wagons from Guthrie or Perry and often pulled by four horses or mules. The products of the farms which had been bought by the merchants were hauled away in the same freight wagons. The roads were poor and the bridges and culverts were at the bottom of steep hills. Mail came from Perry once a day and from Orlando once a day. As we drove through the town the road angled off to the northwest by Old Central, the oldest building at the college. This building was then at the top of the basement only. No other buildings were on the campus. That night we camped about one-fourth mile

north of Old Central. We cooked our meals out doors with a few sticks. Father bought a few potatoes from a farm woman whose family lived in a one-room house. The potatoes were small on account of the drouth and were about as big as hulled walnuts. We returned to our former home in Kansas and did not come back for five years.

When we returned here to make our home, we found that the town had grown considerable. Buildings were better, but still much board sidewalk. The merchants were busy buying wheat, corn, cotton, and castor beans. The railroad came the winter of 1899. The college began to put up new buildigs and this caused more people to come and Stillwater organized as a city with city officers. At that time the Alcott School was the only permanent school building. With the coming of the new people, the city built the Lincoln School and the next year the Jefferson School to take care of the large number of pupils. Later they built the Horace Mann School which has now been torn down.

The city was improving and decided to change their form of government to the Commission form. This was but the beginning of much improvement-new brick and concrete sidewalks and the first paved street, reaching from the depot to the college.

Then came on the World War and many of our boys went away in the army. A number of them came back; many others were scattered, and some were killed. About this time, we built the Senior High School because the schools were full of young people seeking an education. Then a little later the Junior High School and still later the Eugene Field School was built. The latest school, as you know, is the Norwood which has not yet been equipped and occupied.

Stillwater is now a clean little city of about seven thousand people. It has many beautiful trees where once was bare prairie. It has much paving and an extended sewer, water, and light system. The business firms are enterprising and the stores are much like those in the large cities. Many automobiles for profit and pleasure are used by the citizens for travel in and

out of Stillwater on the good roads which lead in every direction.

The college is the special pride of Stillwater. Its new buildings cover the large campus and its students now number 3500, indicating the importance which the state attaches to this kind of education.

The county has built a beautiful new court house and many churches have invested in large and attractive buildings for the benefit of their members. Altogether, Stillwater is a place to be proud of. The citizens are interested in furnishing a good opportunity for the boys and girls of the Eugene Field School to get the very best education that they can think of.

Please extend my greetings to your teachers and to your classmates.

Sincerely your friend,

C. L. Kezer

CLK:mg

Mrs. Al Shively

by Betty Joe Kerby and Maurine Peaden

Mrs. Al Shively has made her home in Stillwater since a year after Old Oklahoma was opened. She has seen the town grow from a few shacks to a thriving college town. She and her husband, who owned a livery barn, had many exciting experiences in the early days of Stillwater.

Mr. Shively was a strong, athletic type man and could usually handle drunkards who molested him many times at his barn.

Mrs. Shively recalls the Fourth of July celebrations as the most interesting part of early Stillwater. It was a big day for the hard working pioneers and they enjoyed dressing up and coming to town for the affair.

Mr. and Mrs. Shively made their home on Lewis Street soon after arriving here. Mrs. Shively is still living in the old homestead, but Al Shively passed away a few years ago.

Pieces of the old Shively livery barn are still standing on the south part of Main Street. It is more of a treasured memory to Mrs. Shively than merely an old barn, and she feels that it should be left there.

The Shively family is one of the oldest and best known families in town and were true pioneers. They have one son named Rex Shively, who is working in Pennsylvania.

The Donart Family

by Bob Murphy

In 1889 the Donart family, Mr. and Mrs. Donart and their three sons, Elmer, Harry, and Chauncy, homesteaded where the fair grounds are now located. They obtained this homestead as a result of the Oklahoma run. Chauncy and his brothers were unable to participate in the run because they were too young.

At this time there was a peaceful little boom town located on the banks of the two Stillwater creeks. Most of the buildings were built of cottonwood. a farm of 160 acres could be bought for \$450.

The first school house was built on the site of the present Jefferson building--just a little one room, frame structure. Chauncy Donart was one of the first teachers here, and one of his brothers was on the school board.

News and Notes

Letter to the Editor

Present and future members of our Society will be interested in the history of our organization. This history is fading with the years.

My letter of resignation as president summarizes events, 1946-1966. I herewith hand you a copy with the suggestion that you insert it at a proper place in the *Review*.

I commend you on the *Review*. Best wishes for continued success of our Society.

Cordially yours,

Berlin B. Chapman
Professor of History, Emeritus
Oklahoma State University

Stillwater News-Press, September 18, 1966

Dr. Chapman Ends 20 Years As Head of History Society

Mrs. A. W. Johnson, Secretary
Payne County Historical Society
Stillwater, Oklahoma

Dear Mrs. Johnson:

I hereby submit my resignation as President of the Payne County Historical Society, after 20 years with that delightful position. I have joined the faculty of Florida State University, where such time as I have for local history will be fully occupied.

Remarks in retrospect, and a few tips for the future may be in order. The county society is one of the finest educational forces I have ever known. It served as a laboratory for thousands of students in

"Oklahoma History 162." It was a unifying force in the community, where it created and maintained an appreciation of our heritage. It was a social force, in that it brought together people of the county, having a common interest, and on occasions it brought into the county persons from distant areas.

It was an economic unit, in that from time to time it secured contributions from divers persons and firms, which were consolidated for erecting an historical marker or monument.

A few locations may be mentioned. Just north of Stillwater is a marker designating the location of Registration Booth No. 1, when the Cherokee Outlet was opened, 1893. On U. S. Highway 177 is a marker designating an east and west line through the Stillwater Municipal

Airport, from which the run was made in 1889 into Stillwater; and from which the land run was made into the Cherokee Outlet.

West of Stillwater is the marker, 7 x 14 feet, designating the Indian Meridian, from which line all of Oklahoma, except the Panhandle, is surveyed. South of Stillwater is a marker on the campsite of Washington Irving, 1832, on Wild Horse Creek.

East of Stillwater on State Highway 51 is a monument, and a tract of nearly two acres. This marks the site of the first battle of the Civil War in present Oklahoma, and is the most valuable asset of the county society. Here was the largest attendance of any program ever sponsored by the society, for in 1961 at the centennial commemoration of the battle, 4,000 persons were present.

The Payne County Historical Society was a unifying agent or "holding company" for other organizations in the county and state. A score of affiliated organizations participated in the centennial commemoration.

The county society promoted the interests of the Oklahoma Historical Society in that it placed there artifacts, and manuscript volumes of local history. This was true for a number of projects. For instance, a compilation was made of every known contemporary account available, concerning the campsite of Irving on Wild Horse Creek, and to it was added a full, illustrated account of proceedings of the dedication of the marker. These are duplicate volumes, one being in the Oklahoma Historical Society, and the other in the Rare Book Division of the OHS Library.

Our largest and most expensive

volume in the Oklahoma Historical Society is "Original Sources." It is a compilation of every known contemporary source concerning the Civil War battle east of Stillwater. In all these compilations there was much student assistance, help from the Research Foundation of OSU, and from depositories, including the National Archives.

Payne County is a paradise for the study of local history. It is centered by a university, and surrounded by cooperative groups like the Early Day Settlers of Guthrie, the Lincoln County Historical Society and the Noble County Historical Society. The local and state press, KSPI, and civic clubs give a cooperation that meets all requirements.

A final word is reserved for students of OSU, the one factor in the institution that never failed me in promoting the study of history. Students tire of classroom routine and delight in reality. They enjoy explaining history to a civic club, more than to their classmates. Programs they decorated with historic art. Numerous articles they helped prepare for newspapers and magazines; and manuscript volumes in the Oklahoma Historical Society bear witness of their performance. "History is of no value unless we can use it," was more than a classroom slogan.

The work of the Payne County Historical Society has only begun, but the promise of the future is great. All around us is change, and history should record it. The harvest truly is plenteous, and the laborers are not few.

Cordially yours,

Berlin B. Chapman

Payne County Historical Society

Life Members

**Claude Bradshaw
Bob Donaldson
Kathleen Bird
Edna Couch
Leroy Fischer
Bill Simank
Bob Simon**

Honorary Life Member

Angie Debo

PAYNE COUNTY

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Payne County Historical Society is organized in order to bring together people interested in history, and especially in the history of Payne County, Oklahoma. The Society's major function is to discover and collect any materials which 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 *Review* free. In addition, the Society sponsors informative meetings four times a year, the first Thursday in March, June, September, and December. Two outings; one in the fall and the other in the spring, are taken to historical sites in the area.

Board meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month that a regular meeting is not scheduled. These luncheons are held at 12:30 pm in the meeting room at the Holland House Restaurant, 9th and Main, Stillwater. All members are encouraged to attend.

Payne County Historical Society
P. O. Box 194
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