

PAYNE COUNTY

**HISTORICAL REVIEW**

**DAVID LEWIS PAYNE MEMORIAL**



VOLUME XVI

SPRING 1995

## CONTENTS

The Very Last Run By David L. Payne (Second Cousin to Captain David L Payne)	5
David L. Payne and the Boomers From 1929-30 History Book by Muriel H. Wright	16
Yale Armory By Twylla Berger	21



**Captain D. L. Payne**  
"the Father of Oklahoma"

Taken by C. P. Wickmiller, Kingfisher, Indian Territory, this picture was donated to the Payne County Historical Society by George L. Bowman, October 23, 1958.

## THE VERY LAST RUN

By

David L. Payne  
(Fourth cousin to Captain David L. Payne)

“ON TO OKLAHOMA!--ON TO THE PROMISED LAND!” - promised Captain David L. Payne. He hadn't planned to spend much time in Wellington, Kansas; just enough to give a brief speech (one of his best, I'm told) and to rest overnight at a local hotel in Wellington. His plans were to leave the next day, along with his fellow Boomers, and travel to the present-day site of Stillwater, Oklahoma. But Captain Payne had to be left behind. He died suddenly from a heart attack on the morning of November 28, 1884 while having breakfast in the hotel dining room.

Captain Payne never had a home in Wellington, Kansas, but this town suddenly became his resting place for over 110 years. His dreams of settling the beautiful land of Oklahoma became the homes of thousands, but the man that made this all possible was never to step foot on or to see Oklahoma ever again.

Captain David L. Payne was given many titles: “Oklahoma's Moses;” for Captain Payne led the way to the Promised Land. He was also called “The Father of Oklahoma” for his efforts in helping open up the Oklahoma lands. Another title was “Prince Boomer” because he led the Boomer movement. He was also called “Ox Heart Payne” for his strength and courage. Another was “Cimarron Scout” because of his ability to lead others into the lands. Yet another was “Oklahoma Payne” because of his leadership and close association to the settlement of Oklahoma. It was the efforts of Captain David L. Payne that set the scene for the Land Run into the Unassigned Lands of Oklahoma on April 22, 1889.

It has been the desire of the Payne and Lewis families for nearly 100 years to have the remains of our relative brought to Payne County, Oklahoma. On Monday, January 30, 1995, it finally happened. In my hands I held the bones of my namesake and fourth cousin, Captain David L. Payne. More than a century after his death, Captain Payne is back in



Indiana Historical Society honors David L. Payne with a highway marker.

the land he worked so persistently to open for settlement.

It was because of this man's efforts we celebrate his memory. Those that knew him personally have long been gone, but generations of Oklahomans owe a lot to this man, because he gave his life fighting for what he believed in and he deserves a place of honor for the generations to remember. Captain David L. Payne was the "Father of Oklahoma"--the Prince Boomer of the Oklahoma Boomer movement. It was through his efforts that eventually led to the opening of the Unassigned Lands in central Oklahoma. The adventuresome and pioneering spirit was everywhere. Hope was high as people moved out west to seek their fortunes and to start their families. People needed land to survive, much like we need good jobs today. Good land was a ticket to a dream with the hope of providing a good life for their family.

In 1879, Captain Payne organized the Boomer movement and led his followers in several invasions into the Unassigned Lands. Each time, they were driven out by the army and suffered great hardships. For five years, Captain Payne had put all his energy into settling Oklahoma. Thousands of people supported Captain Payne and shared his dream of one day being able to settle and live in the beautiful land of Oklahoma. Movies about the Oklahoma Land Runs like "Far and Away" and "Children of the Dust" never tell the story about what led up this historical event. It didn't just happen!

David Lewis Payne was Born near Fairmount, Indiana on December 30, 1836. He was named after his second cousin, Davy Crockett who had been killed defending the Alamo earlier that year. Captain Payne was also a close relative of Daniel Boone, and distantly related to Meriwether Lewis of Lewis and Clark fame.

Captain Payne came to Kansas at the age of twenty-two, seeking to make a living and experience the new expanding West. Payne at various times homesteaded, followed the trade of hunter, tried his hand at business, and worked as a guide and scout. During this period, he traveled over much of the Southwest and became personally acquainted with Kit Carson, Wild Bill Hickok, and Buffalo Bill Cody. By 1861, Payne was recognized as a resourceful and bold plainsman, large in stature, handsome, confident and well-mannered. He next served for Kansas in the Civil War and in the Kansas Legislature from 1864-65. During the Indian outbreaks in western Kansas, Payne was commissioned as a Captain under General George Custer's command, in the Kansas Cavalry. His extensive travels and earlier experiences led Captain Payne to realize the resources of the Unassigned Lands of central Oklahoma, and to see this great domain as an important part of the destiny of the United States of America.

When he served in Washington D. C. in 1875 as Assistant Doorkeeper of the House of Representatives, Payne took time to study laws concerning treaties and homestead rights. He returned to the frontier and, in 1879, started the "Oklahoma Boomer" movement to organize and colonize home-seeking pioneers and lead them into the promising area of the Unassigned Lands. According to Captain David L. Payne, these lands were public domain and open to homestead since they were bought and paid for by the United States of America.

He published a Boomer newspaper called "The Oklahoma War Chief." This paper provided a cohesive influence, without which the movement might have disintegrated. Attempts to settle Boomer camps in the Assigned Lands of Oklahoma always led to Captain Payne's being arrested by the Army and taken to jail. Captain Payne wanted this homesteading issue to be brought before the judge so they could finally get a ruling, but the judge didn't want to deal with the issue so Payne was always released.

In the summer of 1884, Captain Payne and the Boomers settled in the Cherokee Strip and established a camp called Rock Falls. He wanted to see if he would be treated differently. In August of 1884, he was arrested again and taken to Fort Smith, Arkansas, to stand once again before Judge Parker.

This journey from Rock Falls to Fort Smith took nearly a month. Captain Payne's health was not good, and he was very mistreated and suffered a great deal. Judge Parker still didn't want to deal with this homesteading issue, so later, Captain Payne was sent to Topeka, Kansas to stand before a Federal Judge. Thousands of people demanded a decision and for Captain Payne to be released. Federal Judge Foster made the ruling that no conspiracy against the United States was intended and that Captain Payne was not guilty of any crime, and that the Unassigned Lands of Oklahoma were indeed public domain.

This was a day of celebration! The enthusiasm of the Boomers was at its highest, but eight days later, their cause was dealt a stunning blow. During a brief stopover in Wellington, Kansas, where he was scheduled to give a speech, Captain David L. Payne became ill and died suddenly at breakfast on the morning of November 28, 1884.

With help of his friend William L. Couch and the other Boomers, Captain Payne's dream came true for thousands of people moving out west. But for Captain Payne, the dream never did come true. The "Father of Oklahoma" has remained in a forgotten grave in Wellington, Kansas for 110 years, but the family never forgot him.

I was born in Payne County, Oklahoma in Cushing, and my grandmother named me after my fourth cousin, Captain David L. Payne. When I was four or five years old, my grandfather, Charles T. Payne, handed me an old book "Making of a Township." It was about Grand County, Indiana. That's where my grandfather and grandmother were born, and where Captain David L. Payne was born. It contained stories about the early years of Grant County, Indiana, and the memories of many of my family members, including a chapter about my famous fourth cousin, Captain David L. Payne, for whom I was named.

It was several years later before I realized and could start to understand my mission and purpose. For over 100 years my family has desired

to see the remains of Captain Payne moved to Oklahoma from Kansas. In 1892 Captain Payne's baby sister, Elizabeth Jane, better known as Jenny to the family, signed a form to have her brother's remains moved to Oklahoma. Again in 1907 before her death, she requested that her brother be moved to Oklahoma to Payne County. Numerous efforts were made to have this done... many historical groups, some of the old Boomers and family members over this last 100 years have attempted to accomplish this task, but it never happened! I have records from August of 1948 that my grandfather, Charles T. Payne, was on the committee to move Captain Payne, but because of legal complications, finances, and being 80 years of age, he wasn't able to make it happen.

Twenty-three years ago, I wrote a report about my cousin and in it said that one day I would move the remains of Captain Payne to Oklahoma. I struggled with that commitment of not knowing how to begin. I was told by everyone it couldn't be done...it's already been tried numerous times and it can't be done! So I waited. . . .

In 1988, I wanted to be involved somehow in the Centennial Celebrations of the 1889 Land Run. I sent out 50 or 60 letters to historical groups, newspapers, magazines, museums, Tourism Department, and even the Governor, telling them my relationship to Captain Payne and my desire to be involved somehow. I received only two letters of invitation and a lot of disappointment. The mention of Captain Payne was almost non-existent! Why was he not mentioned? It was as though he never existed!

In my local community of Broken Arrow, they honored me as Parade Marshal of our annual Rooster Days celebration. The theme was "Boomer Rooster." I spoke at the Rotary Club and started a Land Run for children, but I still wasn't satisfied. Captain Payne was still left behind and his memory was fading away!

Every now and then, a light tap on the shoulder would remind me of this unfinished family business. I finally had to seriously deal with it, since I knew it was my turn to try to make it happen. I was aware of numerous attempts to have Captain Payne's remains moved from Kansas to Oklahoma. I also knew that over the past 100 years, all attempts had failed. but something on the inside of me told me this time it would happen.



In the Spring of 1993, I dedicated my efforts and started with the attitude of not giving up. Captain Payne's time was running out, and I was bringing him home. Using all my extra time and vacation days, I spent hundreds of hours researching my namesake and family. I wanted to legally disinter my cousin, but I had to know why it hadn't happened in the past.

Traveling throughout Oklahoma and Kansas, and a couple of times to Indiana to my family roots, and to Washington, D. C. to the National Archives, I located information to help make this dream possible. I worked hard locating family members and obtaining about 100 signed affidavits approving Captain Payne's disinterment. We wanted full support of the family and relatives, many of which I had never met. Attending the 75th Payne Family Reunion in Fairmount, Indiana, was a special treat since it was my very first.

While on this journey, I met with authors, relatives, relatives of old Boomers, visited museums, libraries, schools, historians, and actual Boomer campsites. I met with Mayors, City Managers, attorneys, Senators, former Governors, Hollywood movie producers, and the list goes on and on. I've spoken to historical groups, genealogical societies, and Rotary Clubs. I've also written two songs about Captain Payne and produced a video, shown on cable TV and in public meetings. This whole project has cost me a few thousands dollars, but it's been a labor of love.

On January 25, 1995, I left for Wellington, Kansas with all of my legal documents to secure permission from the city of Wellington to disinter Captain David L. Payne. The City Attorney of Wellington approved and signed the documents and a date was set.

After 110 years of waiting, the day finally came. On Monday, January 30, 1995 with the family, friends, historians and reporters in tow, we went to Wellington, Kansas to bring the remains of Captain David L. Payne home to Oklahoma.

At 1:00 P. M. I said a short prayer over the grave of Captain Payne. My family and I ceremonially started the disinterment with small shovels in hand. My parents Calvin C. and Norma Payne, along with my wife Jana and our two daughters, Jessica and Kimberly, plus my sister Sandra and her daughter Mallory, were the only family members present

to witness this day.

After digging for almost an hour and a half with the backhoe, the cemetery workers had dug a huge pit, 6 to 7 feet deep and approximately 12 to 14 feet wide. According to record, Captain Payne had been buried in a metallic casket, but we couldn't find any evidence of Captain Payne's remains. Where was Captain Payne? We had failed to find anything.

When the backhoe's diesel engine turned off, it became very quiet. Sadness and disappointment filled the air. I knew if we didn't find his remains that day, we would never look again.

With seven television cameras stuck in my face, tired reporters started to ask the questions "What are you going to do now?" "What's next??" "He's not here!"

A man standing next to me with the Oklahoma Historical Society, who had been on archeological digs in the past, stressed that he didn't notice any difference or change in the soil coloring--something that can indicate foreign matter. He did desire digging a little deeper in one corner of the hole. Others suggested covering up this huge pit and digging south from where we had been looking.

Stopping to pray quietly, I asked the Lord for help and direction. Knowing it was now or never, I needed help. I didn't know what to do but pray. When I looked down again into this enormous hole, I noticed a shimmering quality to the earth in a corner of the pit. There was something different about that spot. The sunshine was causing that part of the dirt to sparkle like a light dusting of glitter. I wondered if anyone else could see it, but I just said "There's something different about that spot." I found out later that my oldest daughter Jessica, 9 years old, saw this same glistening to the soil, but no one else saw what we saw. It was then that I directed the workers to dig a little deeper in that area, and within minutes, Captain Payne's casket was discovered; small chips of wood first, and then the tedious task of uncovering the rest.

Everyone was surprised to learn that Captain Payne, contrary to everything ever written about him, had been buried in a wooden coffin--a coffin that quickly crumbled as workers unearthed it. When Bill Bernhardt Jr., Joe Perry, Tim Green, and L. H. Erwin tried lifting the

remains and transferring them to a carrier, the bones of Captain Payne were exposed. They were then shoveled onto a board, which was used and hoisted out of the pit by backhoe operator, Aaron Hines.

It was then, for the first time, that I touched the bones of my cousin and namesake. As I examined his jawbone and looked at his teeth, I thought about his smile and all the talking he must have done. I held his leg bone and thought about his 6' 2" structure and the many miles he had traveled walking this earth. I felt peaceful inside and also like a weight had been lifted from my shoulders. As we loaded his remains into the hearse in the early evening, Captain Payne rode off into a beautiful sunset as he left Wellington, Kansas on his 16th journey into Oklahoma, after waiting over 110 years to finally go home to the place of his dreams.

A memorial site and monument will be dedicated to Captain David Lewis Payne, overlooking Boomer Lake in Stillwater, Oklahoma, April 22, 1995, the 106th anniversary of the 1889 Land Run. At the sound of the cannon at 12 noon on April 22, 1995, a personal land run for Captain Payne will start at the actual 1889 boundary line one mile north from his final resting place. A horse-drawn hearse will be used, along with Civil War reenactor soldiers on horseback and a full military funeral service with a color guard, drum corps, bugles, and gun salute.

The Governor of Oklahoma has been invited, as well as other state and Payne County officials and Stillwater V. I. P.s and dignitaries. The Payne family members will follow in horse-drawn carriages to the memorial site. It will be a special day to remember and commemorate and honor the memory of the "Oklahoma Boomer" and "Oklahoma Moses," Captain David L. Payne, the "Father of Oklahoma."

I am grateful to the Payne County Historical Society for their help and support, and to the City of Stillwater, located in Payne County--the county named after Captain David L. Payne. May his spirit finally rest in peace.

Copyright 1995 by David L. Payne. Used by permission of David L. Payne for the Spring, 1995 publication of the Payne County Historical Society.



**This is a picture of David L. Payne, fourth cousin of Captain David L. Payne standing beside the marker of Captain Payne's grave in Wellington, Kansas. The marker will be moved to the Boomer Lake location after the remains are reinterred.**



## The U.S.S. OKLAHOMA SILVER

In 1913 the Fourth Oklahoma Legislature appropriated \$7,500 for the design and manufacture of a silver service to be placed on board the U.S.S. Oklahoma. The gift was made to express the state's appreciation for having the country's newest battleship named in its honor.

The silver service was designed by Walter Dean of Oklahoma City and crafted by Cornea Silvermiths of Rhode Island. The most impressive piece, the punch bowl, incorporates the state seal and a depiction of the Sun of 1899. The handles of the bowl are sculpted in the likeness of Sequoyah, inventor of the Cherokee syllabery, and David L. Payne, leader of the movement to open Oklahoma to non-Indian settlement. The other pieces in the set also carry the state seal along with the United States Navy's seal.



This is an enlargement of David L. Payne  
as it appears on the punch bowl.

## DAVID L. PAYNE and the BOOMERS

All through the years between 1870 and 1879, many bills were brought up before Congress to organize the Indian Territory. The railroads worked for these bills in order to force the Indians to give up the title to their tribal lands, so that the companies could secure the promised land grants. The citizens of the bordering states also wanted the Indian Territory opened up that they might make claims there. The Five Civilized Tribes were opposed to these bills, because the most of their people wanted to continue to hold their lands as tribal property. They also thought the different bills introduced before Congress did not protect them in their property and rights. In those days, too, the Government had to watch the politicians who were up to all sorts of tricks to make money. The railroads frequently gave bribes to get votes for their bills in Congress.

At last, in 1879, a new question about the land in the Indian Territory was made public. In that year, a measure known as the "Dorsey Bill," for opening up the Indian Territory, failed to pass Congress. People of the United States were beginning to think it wrong to give the railroads so many millions of acres of land free. The railroad lawyers and their friend, Col. Elias C. Boudinot, of the Cherokee Nation, said that the Indians did not own that part of the Indian Territory, known as the Unassigned Lands. Colonel Boudinot published a letter saying that this section of millions of acres belonged to the United States Government. It meant that the settlers had a right to claim farms there. This was great news to everyone.

Within a few days, settlers, especially from Kansas, were making preparations to start for the Unassigned Lands, from this time known as "the Oklahoma Country." The settlers wanted to claim farms in this fine region, so they planned to go together in bands. Each band was known as a "colony." Several of these "colonies" entered the Indian Territory, during the spring of 1879 but all were expelled from the Territory by soldiers of the United States Army. At the same time, many ignorant people, not knowing where the Oklahoma Country was located, ran across the border anywhere into the Indian lands and drove stakes to claim farms for themselves. They had no right to do this. It made the Indians suspect all the settlers, and look upon them as wanting to get something for nothing.

With this state of affairs, the Government had to put a stop to the settlers. The Government had given promises to the Indians about their lands. For the settlers to rush in within a few days or weeks, would not

be rendering justice. The Oklahoma Country, itself, was connected with the Creek and Seminole treaties, to which tribes it had belonged, and these treaties had to be considered. Therefore, President Rutherford B. Hayes issued a proclamation warning all settlers from the United States to stay out of the Indian Territory. He ordered the soldiers to arrest and remove any intruders.

There appeared a new leader of the settlers in person of Captain David L. Payne, who became well known with the early attempts to colonize the Oklahoma Country. David L. Payne was born near Fairmont, Grant County, Indiana, in 1836. He had little chance to go to good schools, but a church pastor and his wife became interested in him and loaned him books from their library. This gave the youth a store of information. His strong, tall figure was familiar at the "house raising" in the vicinity, and he easily won over all his young friends in their races and games. In 1858, he went to Kansas, where, as a pioneer, he claimed a homestead. He served in the Federal Army during the Civil War. He afterward saw service in the campaigns against the Indians of the Plains. In 1870, he took another homestead near Wichita, being soon after elected to the legislature of Kansas. Three or four years later he went to Washington, D. C., where he stayed until 1879. Part of the time there, he was assistant doorkeeper of the House of Representatives. When he heard of Colonel Boudinot's idea of the Oklahoma Country, he returned to Kansas.

Payne claimed the right to settle the Unassigned Lands and began to organize the settlers, who came to be known as the "boomers." He and some of his friends organized the Southwestern Colonization Company. To those who wished to join, they charged a membership fee of two dollars. Circulars were printed and handed out by Payne's company, headed with "On to Oklahoma." The circular read in part: "To the effect a settlement upon these lands is the object of this association. It proposes to organize a colony from 5,000 to 10,000 strong and move upon these lands in one body on or about the 15th of March, 1880." It further promised to help each of its members put thirty acres of his new farm under cultivation the first year. People eagerly joined Captain Payne's organization, the money flowing in from the membership fees.

Payne worked steadily to begin his first settlement of the "boomers." He wrote to the United States Attorney, in Kansas, asking his opinion on the matter, stating he was going to start his first colony; he wished the Government would arrest him before he left for Oklahoma Country if it thought he was wrong, as he wanted the court to decide the Question. He received no answer. This did not encourage the "boomers."



The thousands of settlers whom Payne had thought would make up his first Oklahoma colony, only amounted to twenty-one men.

Late in the afternoon of April 20, 1880, Payne and his twenty-one men started from Kansas for the Oklahoma Country. They moved quietly across the border of the Indian Territory that night. Secretly, they moved forward on their journey, keeping on the watch for the Indians and the United States soldiers. No danger arose. The men had a good time, hunting and camping along the way. All were supplied with venison, turkey, and fish. In six days, they arrived near the present site of Oklahoma City, in the valley of the North Canadian.

There upon a high knoll with a forest of black-jack and post oak trees on all sides, a townsite was selected to be the future capital of the country, and called by Payne's men "Oklahoma City." The men first built a large stockade cabin and covered it with brush, grass, and earth. The cabin was made tight and strong. A well was dug, and a large supply of wood was piled up for fuel. While they were working, they kept on the watchout for trouble.

George F. Goodrich, the engineer of the party, surveyed the townsite, and the men located their claims for their 160-acre homesteads. At the end of fifteen days, one could stand at the center of the townsite and look down eight future streets of the city, all cleared of brush for the distance of a mile!

In the meantime, Lieutenant G. H. G. Gale, of the United States Army, with some troopers, had been looking for the "boomers." They caught a glimpse of a covered wagon standing in a grove of trees. They dashed up to camp to find Payne calmly smoking a pipe before the stockade. Gale sternly commanded Payne and his men to surrender, because they had entered the land against the orders of the Government. They obeyed. Payne was very pleasant and invited the soldiers to rest, providing them with coffee, flour, bacon, and other supplies for their supper. The next morning the colonists broke camp to go with the soldiers. They left a note tacked upon their stockade, which read:

Indian Territory, May 15, 1880.

We have accepted the invitation of Lieutenant G. H. G. Gale, 4th U. S. Cavalry, to accompany him to Fort Reno, but will return as soon as convenient for us to do so. Make yourself at home, but leave things just as you find them.

D. L. Payne, President

Payne and his men were taken to the northern border of the Indian Territory, where they were kept in a camp on Polecat Creek for two weeks. In the part of June, General John Pope ordered them set free over the border of Kansas. They were warned not to come back again. Their friends in Wichita rejoiced at their safe return.

The "boomers" under Payne's leadership continued their attempts at colonizing the Oklahoma Country. Each time they were arrested by the soldiers and taken back to the border of Indian Territory. People in the neighboring states began to think this a great game and had many a joke over the affair. Payne sought to have his case brought up before the courts of the United States, but he was not successful. He still claimed the colonists had a right to enter the Unassigned Lands. The Government maintained that these lands belonged to the Indians, the Creeks and Seminoles having an unsettled claim in them.

The "boomers" had many enemies working against them. The cattlemen of the Cherokee Strip Live Stock Association did not want to see the western lands in the Indian Territory opened for the farmer, as they did not want the cattle ranges broken up by settlers. They began to fence up large pastures in the "Strip" which they had leased from the Cherokee Nation. This did not suit the "boomers." In some cases, the wire fences were cut, at one time amounting to twenty-five miles of wire. The cattlemen blamed the "boomers" for this.

The Interior Department officials and army officers were against the "boomers," too. The Interior Department looked upon most of the colonists as adventurers who lived on the border of the Indian Territory, looking for excitement. It looked upon Payne as working the "colonists" for the money he could get out of them. The army officers felt that their orders had no effect, when the "colonists" returned to the country again and again. They did not like to wear out their men and horses playing such a game. They thought the Government was being put to a great expense for nothing, and that Payne should be shut up in a guard house.

Payne continued his attempts to have his case brought before the courts, but he could not get them to consider the charges against him. The "boomers" grew bitter. They claimed the cattlemen were selfish because the latter wanted the lands for cattle ranges. The "boomers" also thought the Government was afraid of them since it would not try Payne's case in court.

At length the "boomers" lost their untiring leader. Captain Payne died in the fall of 1884. He was the wedge that brought about the final opening of the Oklahoma Country. William L. Couch now headed the

movements of the "boomers." They continued to invade the Indian Territory. Soldiers were finally kept guarding the border of Kansas most of the time. Supplies being taken across the border to the "boomer" camps were seized by them, and the "colonists" had to either leave the country or starve. At last Couch and some of his friends were arrested and thrown into prison. Some of the witnesses against them failed to go before the court and the men were set free.

The last attempt of the "boomers" to enter the Oklahoma Country was in October, 1885. They were again forced to leave by the soldiers. A bill had been introduced in Congress, in December, 1884, for the opening of Government lands in the Indian Territory, so the "boomers," hoping victory was in store for them, made no further attempt to enter the Oklahoma Country against the wishes of the Government. But it took nearly four years longer to end the struggle.

The "boomers" had succeeded in gaining staunch friends in Congress. Representatives James B. Weaver, of Iowa, and William M. Springer, of Illinois, brought up the Oklahoma Bill in 1884. They kept up their work every session of Congress.

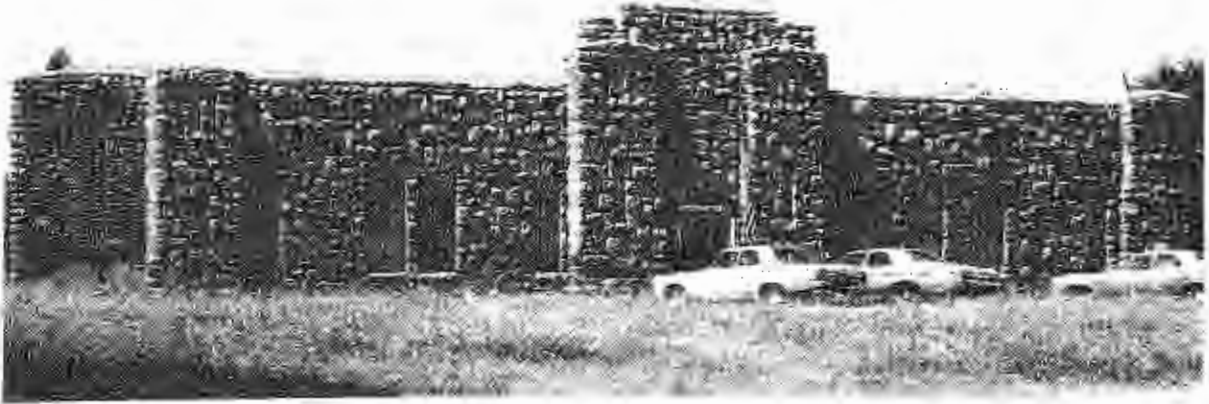
In January, 1889, the Government came to an agreement with the Creek Indians in regard to the Unassigned Lands over which they had a claim, with the result that the Creeks were paid over two million dollars. The Seminoles were later paid nearly the same amount for their claims. The Unassigned Lands now belonged to the United States Government.

The Oklahoma Bill by this time had gained many friends in Congress. However, there was so much business before Congress that it looked as if the bill would not be voted on before the close of the session on March 3, 1889. A few hours before Congress adjourned, an amendment was hurriedly attached to the Indian Appropriation Bill, providing for the opening of the Unassigned Lands. This amendment was called a "rider." This meant that when Congress passed the Appropriation Bill that the "rider" was passed and became a law, too. The Oklahoma Country was at last open for settlement.

On March 23, 1889, President Benjamin Harrison made a proclamation that from 12 o'clock, noon, April 22, 1889, the Oklahoma Country was to be opened to homesteaders. The settlers could then lawfully enter the country.

Note: This article was taken from "The Story of Oklahoma" by Muriel H. Wright Published in 1929-30. It was used as the Oklahoma History book for boys and girls.

The Yale Oklahoma Armory  
By  
Twylla I. Berger



"The Yale Armory was built under a State wide blanket project, we do not have the exact figures on same and, are sure our estimates are low. This project furnished work for between 60 and 80 men for some twelve months time. It is a very beautiful building, and previous to its completion we did not have a building in the City large enough for a community center, this building has been used several times as such since its completion, it appears to us that this type of project is very desirable, as they furnish an abundance of labor and leaves a permanent improvement in the community." (This report was submitted to the Board of City Commissioners, February 23, 1938.)

Several diaries gave information on events from the building of it.

March 31, 1937, from the diary of Mr. Minnick. " Mr. Minick and his wife Sarah attended the dedication of the Yale Armory building. This was an elaborate affair of bands marching - worth seeing."

“Armory is on lots where my father Ed Williams ran a livery Barn During the oil boom days” - from Margaret Williams Booth, Stillwater.

We do know the stone came from quarries in somewhere in Payne County, and L. L. Hitt Sr. was the project manager for the Armory and Homer Ramsey was the project manager for the Library. To pinpoint the exact area is difficult. The following areas were suggested:

The Minnick Farm  
The Freeman Farm  
South of Norfolk School  
Over by Ingals  
From school lease two and one-half  
miles north.

The Government Works Progress Administration gave many men work when it was badly needed.

## Editorial Policy

The *PAYNE COUNTY HISTORICAL REVIEW* is published semi-annually by the Payne County Historical Society. It is distributed without additional charge to members of the Payne County Historical Society. Single issues, when available, may be purchased at \$3.50 each.

The *PAYNE COUNTY HISTORICAL REVIEW* welcomes reader's comments, news, or requests for information from readers. Family histories, photographs, or maps are also welcome. No payment is made for articles published in the *REVIEW*.

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

Editor, Helen Matoy  
Associate Editor, Ray Matoy  
Distribution Manager, Iris Erwin

## PAYNE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### OFFICERS

Lawrence Erwin, President  
Mary Jane Warde, Vice President  
(Also served as PCHS representative  
to the Pleasant Valley School Board)  
Heather Lloyd, Secretary  
Frederick Kolch, Treasurer  
Bill Bryans, Past President

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Doris Dellinger, 1996  
Virginia Thomas, 1995  
Julie Couch, 1995  
Carol Bormann, 1995  
Mahlon Erickson, 1995

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.





Payne County Historical Society is organized in order to bring together people interested in history and 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. Membership dues are: \$12.00 for Individual Membership; \$17.00 for Family Membership; \$20.00 for Institutional Membership; Life Membership is for those paying \$100.00 in one year. Membership applications and dues should be sent to the treasurer.

All Members receive copies of the 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 checkfor:

- \$12.00 for Individual Membership
- \$17.00 for Family Membership
- \$20.00 for Institutional Membership
- \$100.00 for Life Membership

(Membership includes subscription to the Payne County Historical Review.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Payne County Historical Society  
P. O. Box 2262  
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74076

Payne County Historical Society  
P. O. Box 2262  
Stillwater, OK 74076