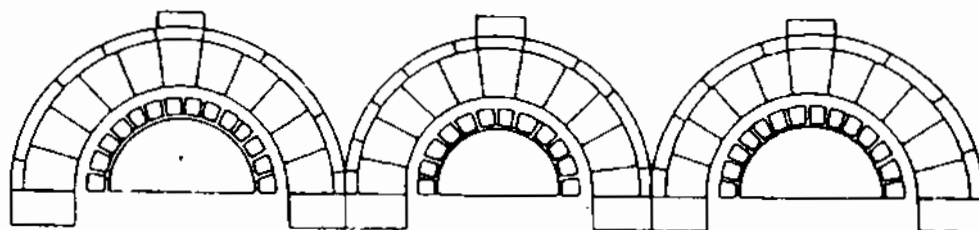


PAYNE COUNTY

HISTORICAL REVIEW



PAYNE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VOLUME XVII

FALL 1995

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History of Yale Public Library

1916-1994

by
Twylla I. Berger

When Yale was beginning to be a flourishing little oil center in 1916 a public spirited man named C. D. Webster opened a reading room in a vacant store building. The building stood in the middle of main street halfway between the intersection of Broadway and Boston. In connection with the reading room there was a place for farmers who came into town to rest and visit with their friends and acquaintances. Most farmers did their marketing and business transactions first.

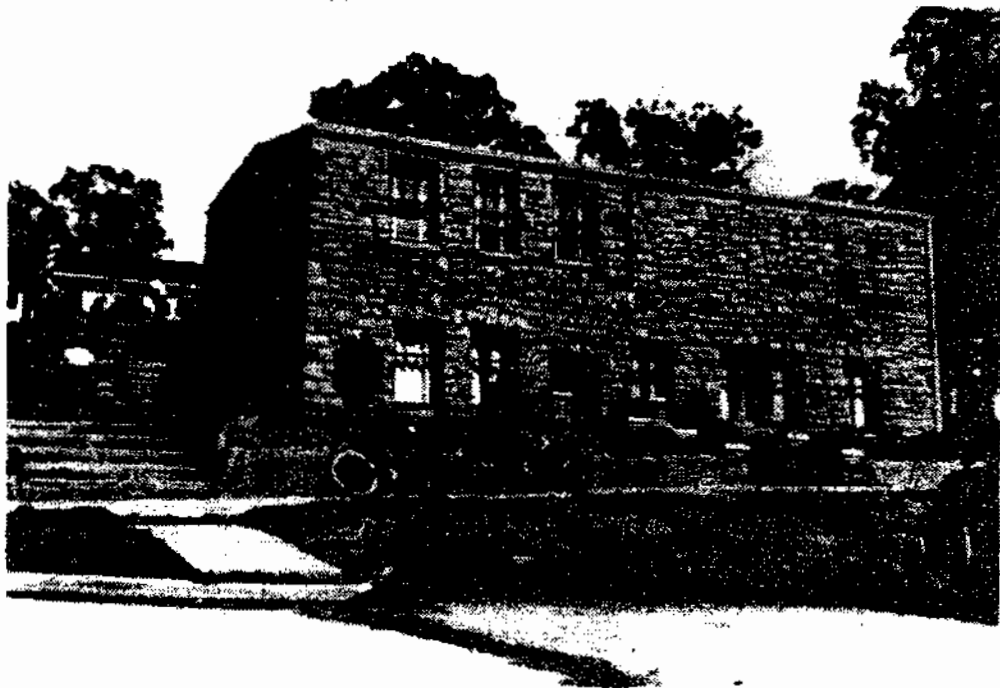
A short time later a Mrs. F. B. Hancock, promoter of Yale, suggested a public library. It was after World War I the little building which had been used as a shop for selling World War saving stamps that the city council turned the building over to a Library Committee on November 12, 1919. The building was located south of the Yale Theatre. The building was moved to a temporary location on the northwest corner of B Street and Broadway. Mrs. Fernaudeny owned the land and did not charge for rent.

A drive for funds was made which included a carnival, a tag day and many social events. The results being 2000 volumes of books and enough money to begin operation.

In September 1920 the land on which the building stood sold to the Southern Oil Corporation for a filling station.

April 4, 1925, the Committee or League gave the building to the City of Yale and in 1926 the city bought four lots for the cost of \$500.00 at 101 South B St. from Mr. George Canfield.

April 9, 1938, a movement of the city commissioners secured financial backing through a W.P.A. project which amounted to \$6,829.55. The city furnished \$2,089.28. The building was completed January 15, 1939 at a cost of \$8,198.83.



Above is the picture of the W.P.A. project built of Oklahoma Native Stone.

In 1983 City Manager Robert Wherry purchased a complex building on North Main Street. The library furnishings were moved to the new building on 213 North Main St., September 15, 1986.

Almost from the first Yale had paid and trained librarians. Some of those listed were Mrs. Bertha Peter Brown in 1919, a former teacher drew the salary of \$15.00 a month. Other Librarians were: Miss Beatrice Newell, Mrs. P. D. Mitchell, wife of a prominent lawyer who later became a member of House of Representative, Christine Woods (June 1920 received \$30.00 per month.) Mrs. Caksey was a Harvard graduate and wife of a local physician, Mrs. F. D. Mitchell and Mrs. Helen Hall (paid \$50.00 a month), Miss Sullivan, and Miss Cora Montgomery were hired August 1923 (salary \$125.00). Miss Wagner served for some time but resigned to go to college. Mrs. Baker, wife of Yale High School Principal served until 1928. Miss Hazel Whaley served until 1945 returning in 1965. Mrs. Janice Clark was hired August 30, 1972 as a part time aid and then full time librarian. Mrs. Linda Butcher has been assistant since February 1990.

Through the hard work, fund raisers and donation of the library board, storyhour mother, local organizations and many friends the City of Yale has an outstanding library

At the present time the Yale Library has an Interlibrary Loan Service, State Funded OTLN CAT and OTIS transmission site - Stillwater.

OTLNCAT is linked with CD Rom and Modem transmission at night to D. D. L.

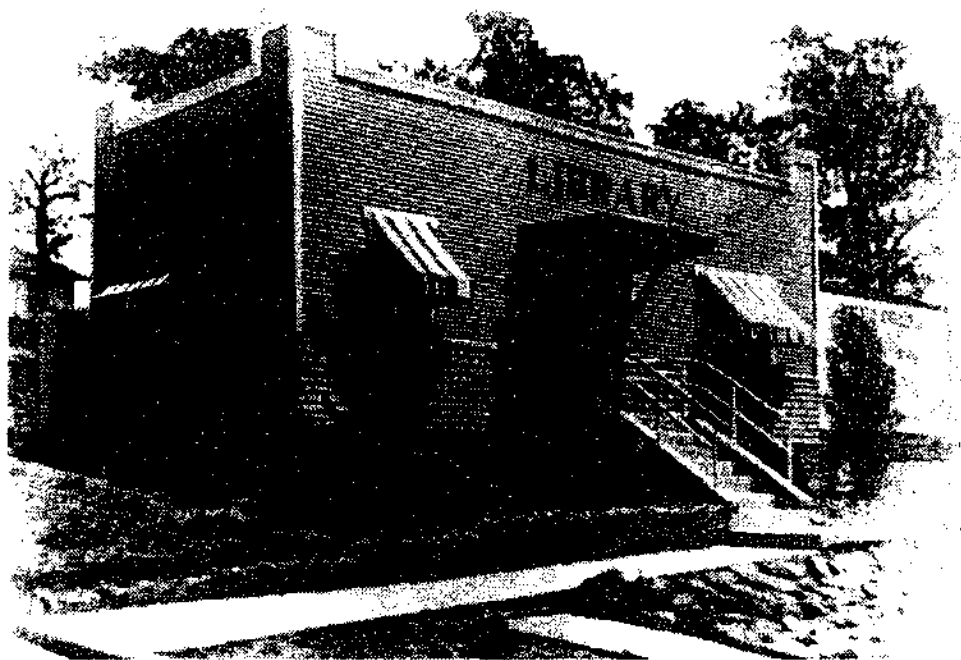
A Public use - FAX, Typewriter and a copy machine.

Approximate circulation 16,819

Budget 93-94 \$27,522.

Estimate volume of 10,000 books.

Pictured below is one of the earliest libraries of Yale. The contrast with the prior picture shows the progress the small City has made.



Saint Francis Xavier Catholic Church: A Parish History

by
Mary Ellen Cooper

The settlement of Oklahoma Territory in 1889 brought thousands of people from all walks of life and from different ethnic backgrounds into this land. President Benjamin Harrison had signed the Homestead Acts which made the great land runs possible. The country was in an economic recession at the time, but poised on the verge of a great expansion of inventions and creative ideas. America the Beautiful would be set to music this year, physicist Roentgen would discover the X-ray, and a number of inventors were working on wheels and engines which would soon give the country automobiles. At this time, trains were the fastest means of traveling, but a good team of horses and a wagon could be bought for \$75.00

For those who have never lived in primitive conditions, it is almost impossible to visualize the hardships and difficulties our founding members endured. The early settlers, with empty purses but brave hearts, had first to build shelters for themselves and their families. Houses of sod and frame shacks dotted the land while dugouts were burrowed beneath the red soil.

There was no Bishop. There was no Diocese. There was only a traveling missionary priest from St. Gregory's, the Benedictine Monastery near Shawnee. With the appointment of Bishop Theophile Meerschaert as Vicar Apostolic in 1891, Father Felix de Grasse came at intervals. Due to the condition of the roads, it was impossible to maintain a regular schedule, and no written records remain of those earliest visits.

In the autumn of 1895, Father Willebrord Vooghden, a Benedictine priest, was appointed pastor of the parish at Perry and given Stillwater as a

mission. From that time on, Mass was said every month in some home in Stillwater, usually that of L. Jardot, father of Mrs. Tom Hoyt, a long time member of St. Francis Xavier Church.

Father Vooghdén was a native of Holland. He had been stationed in Dacca, India before coming to Oklahoma. Because of the poverty of the parish, no church was constructed for three years, but finally in January 1899, a church was built at a total cost of \$645. The lot at Sixth and West Streets was deeded to the church by the City of Stillwater with the stipulation that a church be built there. All denominations were given a similar opportunity by the city. The building measured 30' by 40'. The interior was unplastered, and the pews were rough planks. The altar was built by A. M. Greiner from a packing box. Very little money was collected - barely enough to pay the expenses of the visiting priest. Many of the parishioners were scarcely able to meet their own needs - some of them existing on cornbread and sorghum for many meals. At that time West Street was the farthest western edge of a growing town; beyond lay farm land. It was common even for city dwellers to have their own chickens or a goat or milk cow in their backyards.



The first Catholic church in Stillwater at Sixth and West Street. From left to right: Mary Wallace, A. M. Greiner, Father Dupret and P. M. Griner.

In 1900 the Bishop decided to locate a priest in the vicinity, at either Stillwater or Pawnee - depending on which parish could provide a residence for the pastor. A collection of \$250. was taken up and two rooms were added to the church for the first resident priest, Father John Dupret. During Father Dupret's assignment in Stillwater, the first pews were bought and the interior of the church plastered.

The wind whistled through the cracks of the frame church until a woman was overheard saying, "Those Catholics will be looking forward to Hell after the freezing they've gotten sitting in that church."

Despite all the hardships, the meager diet and the spartan furnishings, Father Dupret always maintained that his days in Stillwater were the best of his days in Oklahoma.



Father Heiring



Father Heiring (1901-06) and a First Communion Class.

On All Saints Day in 1901, newly ordained Father John Heiring came to succeed Father Dupret. For five years Father Heiring lived in the austere quarters behind the altar with only a cot for his bed, a box for his chair, and many a breakfast or lunch of only bread and water.

In addition to his small flock in Stillwater, Father Heiring drove a buggy to offer Masses at West Point, Yale and even Pawnee. This was in the days of fasting from midnight. He would then return by buggy to Stillwater for five o'clock vespers. In addition to other duties, Father Heiring responded to sick calls, driving out in the middle of the night to succor the dying.

At West Point there were about ten Catholic families who purchased farms because of the nearby church. Among them were the Walkers, Fehrings, and Rogers. Lucille Walker Schroeder has vivid memories of walking a mile

and a half to the church from her father's farm. West Point was a thriving community with eighty-nine pupils, not all Catholic, attending Council Valley School there. One male teacher taught eight grades. Since the school was not accredited the students were required to take qualifying exams at the County Court House in Stillwater. Many of them approached the tests with trepidation, including Anna Rogers, a former teacher, who bequeathed funds to St. Francis Xavier Church. Eventually the church at West Point was dismantled and the lumber used to add on to St. Francis Xavier. The altar and some of the furnishings from the West Point church were transported and used in the Stillwater church.

On December 3, 1901, the feast of St. Francis Xavier, the little church was dedicated. Although this was the first official visit of the Bishop, he had come many times previously to see the scattered parishioners. During one trip, Bishop Meerschaert almost drowned while fording the Cimarron River carrying the altar stone and vestments on his head to keep them dry. At the time of the church dedication, the bishop confirmed fourteen parishioners.

Father Heiring organized the first Altar Society and provided for the election of the first trustees of the parish, which were A. M. Greiner, H. C. Schaefer and R. J. Smith. Realizing that the parish would not grow without a school, he fostered an interest in such construction.

Building a school cost money and the ladies of the Altar Society staged the first of many successful money-making activities in the form of a dinner, which raised \$40. and an ice cream social that netted \$22. Many sacrifices were made by the early parishioners. Some of the women went without winter coats to donate money for the new school.

In 1904, an addition was constructed in front of the church to serve as a school. When it was almost finished it was blown down by a hard gale, but the men of the parish rebuilt it. Stillwater now had a Catholic church, complete with steeple, a sacristy, a school and a half-story house for the nuns, a tiny two room rectory and a half block of land midway between the business district and Oklahoma A & M College. No one could say exactly how this was accomplished, but Father Heiring went without pay, and sometimes without food, to put every available dollar into the parish. Father Heiring's nephew, Otto, was a member of the parish until his death.

The first school enrolled forty pupils and was taught by Sisters of the Most Precious Blood. Sisters Pancratia, Hillary and Genevieve were the first three teachers.

Despite all Father Heiring's efforts, the school was discontinued a short time later. In 1906, Father Heiring was transferred to Tulsa. The Bishop realized what an excellent pastor Father Heiring was and he desperately needed English speaking priests for the rapidly growing Tulsa area. (There were many missionary priests from Europe who were eager to serve in the new Oklahoma Territory, but their accented English proved a barrier to their effectiveness.) Father Heiring lived up to the bishop's expectations, building the Cathedral of Tulsa. (More about Father Heiring's life can be read in a book about Holy Family Cathedral written by Father James White, present day diocesan historian.)

Nearly every person in Stillwater signed a petition to keep Father Heiring in Stillwater, but the Bishop needed him in a larger field. Later that year, Father Theo Van Hulse arrived in Stillwater.

In 1907, panic hit the state with poor crops and low prices. President Theodore Roosevelt set aside 132 million acres, which was the foundation for our national park system, and over one million people arrived as immigrants in this country, mostly from Scandinavia and northern European countries. The people called that time the "turnip year" because they had to eat turnips in every form, since that was the only crop that thrived. Father's salary for the year was \$179. In spite of this, the school reopened. Sisters of Divine Providence came to teach and Sister Remigia was the first principal.

In 1912 Father Joseph Luzar was assigned to the Stillwater parish. While Father Luzar's brother was an exemplary priest, Father Luzar had some problems, eventually leaving the church and dying in an alcoholic ward. (In Bishop Meerschaerts' diary, he wrote that Father Luzar's mother had approached him in Europe and begged him not to allow this son to become a priest. Bishop Meerschaert confessed he wished he had listened to her warnings.) Father Luzar had big plans for the future, envisioning a new church and rectory, but his dreams did not materialize.

In 1914, in a blinding snowstorm, Father Victor Van Durme came to Stillwater. Father Van Durme came from a musical family, and was a talented

organist himself. His brother conducted a symphony orchestra in Europe. Father Van Durme was immensely popular, not only with Catholics but with the townspeople at large. He belonged to the Ministerial Alliance, an ecumenical act unusual in those days. Possessing a wonderful baritone voice, he was often requested to perform by the Kiwanis Club and at college functions. Sophie Zvonek, an aunt of Amelia Heid Darnaby, was Father Van Durme's housekeeper for many years. The present day rectory was built at a cost of \$3,245, which included some furnishings which are still in use.

In the first early days of the parish, Catholics were no more discriminated against than most other Christians, as the crowds which gathered when Bishop Meerschaert came to speak are evidence. Later, the rise of the Klu Klux Klan began an ominous time in the parish history. The Klu Klux Klan paraded down Sixth Street in Stillwater, and parishioners heard prejudicial speech against Catholics. Discrimination against Catholics was felt for many years up until recent times. At the conclusion of World War I, the Holy Name Society was established. The Altar Society earned \$500 that year by various dinners, bake sales, etc. The parish celebrated a silver anniversary with banquet, programs and speeches.

Father Van Durme oversaw the building of a red brick two story schoolhouse, with basement in 1919, built at a cost of \$7,458. The Sisters lived upstairs on the second floor, and there was a little chapel across the hall from their rooms. Behind the school and rectory was a hitching rail and also a garden and grape arbor.

Father Emil Ghyssaert was assigned to Stillwater in 1922. He brought his sister, Amanda, who kept house for him and who was also president of the Altar Society. Father Ghyssaert loved to travel and often mailed postcards home to the parishioners. The Newman Club was organized to serve the college students, and once a month the parish provided breakfasts for the Catholic Students.

The country was sliding into the Great Depression when Father Clarence McGinty was assigned as pastor in 1932. He also said Mass in Pawnee, which was a mission of Stillwater. A ham radio operator, Father McGinty rode a motorcycle.



St. Francis Xavier Church in 1930.

In 1939 Franklin Delano Roosevelt was president. Sisters of Divine Providence left the parish, while Sisters Adorers of Precious Blood came to staff the school, since they already staffed the hospital here.

When Father Victor Reed came to Stillwater in 1940, the parishioners learned he was a dynamic speaker, a kindly and caring pastor, who not only visited each home in the parish but reached out to others outside the parish, serving in many capacities. He would later be elevated to Bishop of the Oklahoma Diocese.

Pearl Harbor was bombed December 7, 1941, starting World War II and many members of the Armed Forces were stationed on campus. An Army chaplain, Father Freeman assisted the parish, while later Father F. E. McGoldrick was the assistant pastor.

August 1945 saw the end of W.W. II. Four young men from St. Francis Xavier parish gave their lives in the conflict. Two years later, in 1947 Father Eric Beevers came to Stillwater. A native of England, he established a parish library, donating many of his own volumes for that purpose. A gifted speaker, he asked help from the Catholic Extension Society and started on building the present church. Father Celestine Pfannenstiel, a member of

Missionary Servants of the Most Holy Trinity, was his assistant. The church was dedicated in 1950. A year later, Father Beevers oversaw the building of a small yellow brick building south and east of the rectory, which would house the Kindergarten. Father also saw that the white frame house across the street from the school was purchased and was used for a convent by the Sisters.

During this time Father Celestine arranged the purchase of lots 13 through 26 on North Knoblock, where St. John's would eventually be built.

In 1957 Father Bernard Loftus came to Stillwater. His sisters, Miss Nora and Miss Kathleen kept house, did secretarial work for the church and helped out as teachers. He was assisted by Father Joseph Dillon, who served as interim pastor after Father Loftus was reassigned.

Father William Pace was the next pastor, arriving in 1961. He hailed from Pennsylvania and put an emphasis on the solemnity of liturgical functions. His assistants were Father Clement Pribil and Father Naberhaus. He oversaw the purchase of the corner lot across from the rectory and the removal of the building there, so that the land could be used for a parking lot. He also oversaw the construction of the new yellow brick one story school on the corner opposite the church, which is now used for C.C.D. classes.

St. John's parish was dedicated in May, 1965 by Bishop Reed. This was after the close of Vatican Council II, when changes were made in churches around the world, with altars facing people and English replacing Latin. Father Howell who had just come to St. Francis Xavier as pastor, oversaw the changes. His mother accompanied him as his housekeeper.

Father Fintan McMahon served as pastor from 1970 until 1973. Although he was in frail health, he was beloved by the altar boys. Father Vicent McGouldrick then became pastor. He was a kindly and caring priest. The Diocese of Tulsa was formally established with Bishop Bernard J. Ganter in charge. Stillwater was assigned to the Tulsa Diocese, since Oklahoma University in Norman was in the Oklahoma City Diocese.

Father John Lundberg came to Stillwater in 1974. At the bicentennial of our nation, there were special celebrations. He raised money to burn the mortgage on the church and closed the school, which was a financial drain. In 1979, Father Don Smith was appointed pastor. An ardent sailor, Father Don had lakeside services at Lake McMurtry with the Methodists. Father Paul

Wiryono from Indonesia, who was a student at the university here, assisted Father Don. Father Don died suddenly in 1984. Following his unexpected death, several priests served in the interim. Deacon Allen Tillman served as custodial pastor for a time. Father Tom Carpender came often for Masses, as did some Benedictine priests from St. Gregory's.

Father Ivan Hughes was appointed pastor in 1989. He was the first American of African decent to serve as pastor, but after less than a year he resigned due to ill health and died in 1993. A devout, highly intellectual priest, he was often in demand to speak at religious retreats. His early death was a loss to the diocese. Father Dick Bradley came to Stillwater in 1990. He had an affinity for the youth of the parish, having special sermons for them in the basement. In 1993 Father Bob Schlitt, who had formerly been pastor at St. John's University Parish came back to Stillwater and continues as pastor today. He grew up in the south western Oklahoma town of Verden, graduated from the University of Oklahoma, attended St. Mary's University and Seminary in San Antonio, Texas. He loves to travel, is a gourmet cook, enjoying cooking contests, is a gardener who especially loves roses, and was responsible for organizing and encouraging the monthly activities of the parish throughout the centennial year.

President's Annual Report

January 27, 1996

The 1995 Officers of the Payne County Historical Society:

President: Lawrence H. Erwin, (also served as PC representative to the Washington Irving Trail Museum Board of Directors)

Vice President: Mary Jane Warde

Secretary: Heather Lloyd

Treasurer: Fred Koich (also served as PCHS representative to the Pleasant Valley School Board)

Past President: Bill Bryans

Directors:	Mahlon Erickson	1997
	Carol Bormann	1997
	Doris Dellinger	1996
	Virginia Thomas	1995
	Julie Couch	1995

Editors for the *Payne County Historical Review*:
Ray and Helen Matoy

To say the least, 1995 was a busy year for the Payne County Historical Society. Our Annual Meeting was held January 15th at the Stillwater Parks and

Recreation Building on East 9th Street (this was the old National Guard Armory). A very interesting program was given by Dr. Mary Jane Warde on the National Guard Armories in Yale, Cushing, and Stillwater. All the armories were built between 1935 and 1937 by the W. P. A.

January 31 saw members of the family of Captain David L. Payne and PCHS in Wellington, Kansas, for the disinterment of the remains of Capt. Payne and removal to Stillwater. A special expression of gratitude is extended to Bill Bernhardt, Jr., of Strode Funeral Home and David Fultz and John Harshbarger of Stillwater Monument Company, for their assistance in the removal of Captain Payne's remains.

Our Spring Quarterly Meeting was on a cold, rainy, April 22, when Captain Payne was reentered with full military honors in a beautiful area of Boomer Lake Park, the soil he so tirelessly strove for. Again, Strode Funeral Home and Bill Bernhardt, Jr., David Fultz and John Harshbarger of Stillwater Monument Company, as well as Burl Carrier of Carrier Ditching and Excavating Company, were much involved in providing services, Carrier Ditching and Excavating prepared the site and opened and closed the grave. The lady who made it all come together was Virginia Thomas, Chairperson of the David L. Payne Memorial Site Selection Committee. The ceremonies were elaborate and impressive and certainly did honor to the "Father of Oklahoma", Captain Payne. All of this was sadly overshadowed by the bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma City on April 19.

On April 28, a committee consisting of members Mary Jane Warde, Dr. LeRoy Fisher, Walter Price, Shelly Hartman, and Elvis Howell, Chairman, met with the Board of Directors of the Oklahoma Historical Society at their Annual Meeting in Enid, Oklahoma, and were successful in securing the 1996 Annual Meeting of the OHS for Stillwater, April 18, 19, and 20. Thanks for a job well done.

For our Summer Quarterly Meeting on Sunday, July 23, we traveled to Guthrie, Oklahoma, to visit the first capital of Oklahoma. We viewed the Territorial Museum and the Carnegie Library, where the Territorial Legislature once met.

On October 20, David Payne of Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, cousin of the famed Captain Payne David L. Payne, presented Judge Robert M. Murphy,

Jr. a photographic portrait of Captain Payne to permanently be displayed in the Payne County Court House.

We traveled to Perkins, Oklahoma to view the Perkins Museum and hear Mrs. Elizabeth Wise give her impressions and memories of her father, the Late Frank "Pistol Pete" Eaton, for the Fall Quarterly Meeting, November 12. It was a delightful and rewarding occasion. David Sasser, curator and owner of the Perkins Museum, is doing a good job of preserving much of Perkins' history. After the meeting, we went to visit the grave of "Pistol Pete."

In October, a Captain David L. Payne Memorial Development Committee was formed with Mr. Glenn Redding as Chairman. A final draft of the specifications for the memorial was completed by the City of Stillwater Parks and Recreation Department and a plan to build the memorial was made. Target date for completion is April 1, 1996, with the dedication of the memorial to be held April 20, during the Oklahoma Historical Society Annual Meeting in Stillwater. Several of us have co-signed a note with Bank NA in the amount of \$7,000.00 to finance the start-up of the memorial project. A fund raising has been launched to repay the loan, plus enough to complete the project. A fund raising has been launched to repay the loan, plus enough to complete the project. We very much need the help of everyone for this project.

Our Library Committee, chaired by Robert Brown, has been working to equip our archives room in the Stillwater Library. He still needs help putting up shelving and organizing historical materials that have been contributed. Your volunteer help is much needed for the project.

The PCHS annual awards for outstanding contributions to Payne County's History in 1995 went to 1) David L. Payne for his research, time, miles and dogged determination to bring his famous relative, Captain David L. Payne, home to his resting place in the county that was named for him. 2) Bill Bernhardt, Jr. for his many hours and much expense devoted to the removal of Captain Payne to Stillwater. He provided the professional services required in the disinterment and reinterment of Captain Payne's remains as well as the funeral costs. He arranged for the archeological studies of the remains with the Archeology Department at the University of Oklahoma. 3) Virginia Thomas for all of her work, time, concern and organizational skill as Chairperson of the David L. Payne Site Selection Committee. She was determined to complete the job in spite of many obstacles, including inclement weather. Thanks, Virginia, for a job well done!

As I come to the close of a three and one-half year term as your president, I would like to thank my fellow officers and directors and the entire membership for your help and cooperation in accomplishing what I believe has been a very successful year for the Payne County Historical Society. I view two projects left unfinished, the David L. Payne Memorial project and the Oklahoma Historical Society Annual Meeting. I trust the new officers and directors will see that these projects are completed. I look forward to continuing on the Board as Past President and serving with our new President.

Sincerely,

Lawrence H. Erwin, President

Editorial Policy

The *Payne County Historical Review* is published twice a year 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.

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.

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 dues should be sent to the treasurer.

Payne County Historical Society
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PAYNE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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