

PAYNE COUNTY

# HISTORICAL REVIEW

**VOLUME I**

**NUMBER 2**

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# The Importance of Local History

*An Address by Dr. Douglas Hale*

Within the city limits of Stillwater, an event took place which had never occurred before in human history. We all know about it, but how many of us have stopped to reflect upon its uniqueness, its drama, or its significance in shaping the society in which we live? I refer, of course, to the great land run of April 22, 1889. In his book Six-Gun and Silver Star, Glenn Shirley quotes an observer who was on the scene that day:

It was a typical Bull Run.... Thousands uncorked their exuberance in shouts and cheers that fairly shook the ground.... It was a race free for all. None was barred. Neither sex nor circumstances were imposed as conditions.... Cheers and shouts from ten thousand souls, a refrain to the bugle notes, sent echoes o'er hill and plain. Fleet racer and plow horse were given free rein and plied with whip and spur. The long railway trains, too, with ear-piercing shrieks from the engine whistles joined in.... From the windows of every coach came shouts of cheer and the waving of rags and handkerchiefs to those who were racing to the south on either side of the fast-flying trains. The ranks of the racers are diminishing on every side; they are seen to leap from their horses; a happy shout, a waving

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Dr. Hale is a professor of history at Oklahoma State University

of the hat, the setting of a flag or stake. They have taken a homestead. Oklahoma was the home of the white man!

How many communities have had such a dramatic and colorful beginning? Here was something exceptional and unique. For better or worse, it marked our town apart from the very beginning. As though this great race was not enough, four years later one hundred thousand people lined up north of Stillwater and dashed in the other direction, competing for homesteads in the Cherokee Outlet. Stillwater began with a bang!

This well-known and elementary fact points up the first aspect of local history that I would like to emphasize: local history is full of drama and excitement. It is fun! For every locality, for every village, town, and county in America, there are dozens of episodes which rival the most fantastic fiction in their power to seize the emotions. In order to enjoy a place, one must know a little of this history. Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and Concord, Massachusetts, are interesting to all of us precisely because of this: we know at least a little about their history. First of all, therefore, "local" history is important because it gives us a sense of place; and it makes living in that place more fun, more interesting, and more rewarding.

Secondly, more than any other kind of scholarship, local history tells us about the real lives of the people. At long last, within the last decade or so, American historians are turning away from their preoccupation with the hackneyed themes of wars, presidential administrations, and diplomatic treaties to consider the real life of the people: their families, their fears, their follies, and their fortitude. After all; what is really important to people?

Take the Bishopric of Muenster in Germany, for example. For five hundred years, from about 1300 to 1800, this land changed hands dozens of times. It had about thirty rulers, each of whose reigns was meticulously chronicled and recorded. The Kappenbergs, the Hoyas, the Diepholzes, the Galens, etc., each had their wars, courts, ambassadors, and alliances for five hundred years. Was this important? Was it a matter of significance for the illiterate and impoverished peasants who, constituting 85 percent of the population, tilled the soil, grew the crops, and kept the little state alive? Hardly. What was important to them was that every time the head of the household died, half of the meager property which his family had accumulated over his lifetime had to be given over to the landlord in a death tax. Every generation started out by giving away half its property, from the cows in the stable to the spoons on the table. This meant, of course, that the peasants stayed miserably poor for five hundred years; their standard of living did not change substantially. This is an important fact, both for the people involved as well as for our understanding of their history. And we only know this because the local history of the Bishopric of Muenster has been studied and analyzed.

Or take another example from a more familiar place--London. Which was more important: that in 1854 Britain got involved in the Crimean War, or that in the same year London began to build a sanitary water supply system, which in time would wipe out the scourges of typhoid fever and cholera, diseases which had taken millions of lives? In terms of the real lives of the people, water pipes and sewage disposal facilities are more important than wars.

Here is another example from close to home. Which was more important to the people of Payne County? That between 1940 and 1950 we had a war, two presidents, and cold war? Or that during this period

the proportion of homes in the country with indoor plumbing increased from 42.6 percent 72.6 percent? A third of the population that had never had bathing or toilet facilities now had them. These are very mundane considerations and we tend to take them for granted; but they are important. Today, historians recognize that it is an understanding of the real lives of the people which constitutes the frontier of historical scholarship. They are realizing that the vast and unexplored realm has much to tell them about this frontier.

A third reason why I am fascinated by local history is that I am a teacher. I recognize that there is no more effective way to teach history than to begin with a local site or episode, or name--a place familiar to students which may serve as a take-off point for building of knowledge of larger historical movements, trends or epochs.

Every day, for instance, a high school student drives north across Stillwater Creek Bridge on his way to school. Does he know that within a few yards of this bridge W. L. Couch located his Boomer Camp in 1884? So what? Suppose you tell him. Suppose you visit the site, and then suppose you ask him some questions. Who were the Boomers? What did they want? What were the economic conditions in the country which prompted them to defy the law? Why did the railroads support them? Who was in the White House? Why did the federal government finally bow to the Boomers' demands? What were the consequences of all this? In a few short steps the student is led from Stillwater Creek to the great themes of American history.

Or take another example. Not long ago I went hiking with a group of Boy Scouts down the west side of Lake Carl Blackwell. We came to a German cemetery. The questions arose spontaneously. What were the Germans doing here? Where did they come from? What were the conditions in the old country

that persuaded them to leave and settle here? From Lake Carl Blackwell we moved freely and easily to a discussion of topics in world history.

But my students are not grade school or high school students. Many are mature and sophisticated graduate students. What possible benefit could an adult and knowledgeable graduate students derive from the study of local history? I would submit that there is no better research training for graduate students than the field of local history. Depending upon their area of inquiry, they must first learn a great deal about economic history, church history, or the history of transportation, say, before they can appreciate the local setting. And they must bring every research tool known to the historian into play. They must use archival records efficiently and effectively; they must be proficient in the collection and analysis of oral history; they must be able to evaluate a wide range of sources, from material artifacts to private letters. For the teacher, then, local history is a mine of undiscovered treasures and unexplored possibilities.

Finally, local history presents a microcosm of the world. There is something in or near your town which explains or adds a new dimension to the world around you. Local history has its parochial side to be sure; but it also has a universal aspect.

For example, in 1910, 85.5 percent of the people in this country lived in the country. There was a farmhouse on every quarter section. In 1970 only 23.3 percent of the people lived in the country. Payne County thus represents a microcosm of the worldwide trend toward urbanization in the last fifty years. What caused this movement of people away from the land? What are its consequences? Can it continue?

Or consider the energy crisis which we face in the United States today. It has become a major concern

only since 1973, when the OPEC nations discovered a way to control the price of oil by controlling its production. Where did they learn this? According to Anthony Sampson, the author of The Seven Sisters: The Great Oil Companies and the World They Made, they learned it from the oil fields of Oklahoma and Texas. "The implementation of 'pro-rationing' [in the oil fields of Oklahoma and Texas between 1930 and 1935] was a milestone in the industry," Sampson wrote. "Thirty years later, OPEC was to look back to [this] model for controlling Middle East production." Thus, to study the Cushing Oil Boom is more than an exercise in local history; it is a springboard toward the comprehension of one of the most crucial international issues of our time.

Local history, then, is important because it renders our lives more interesting and rewarding. It brings out the real concerns of the masses of the people rather than merely focusing upon the ambitions and achievements of an exceptional few. It provides teachers with the means to make all history attractive and appealing to students. Local history is a mirror for much of the history of all mankind. By understanding what really happened in your own town, you can much more easily perceive what has happened in the world at large. For all these reasons, we need a Payne Country Historical Society.

## **The Hopkins Sandstone House and Farmstead**

*by Dr. Annetta Cheek*

The Hopkins Farmstead is a rare remaining example of adaptation by white settlers homesteading the Unassigned Lands of Indian Territory opened by the run of April 22, 1889. The opening of these lands re-

Dr. Cheek is Director of the Historic Preservation Survey.

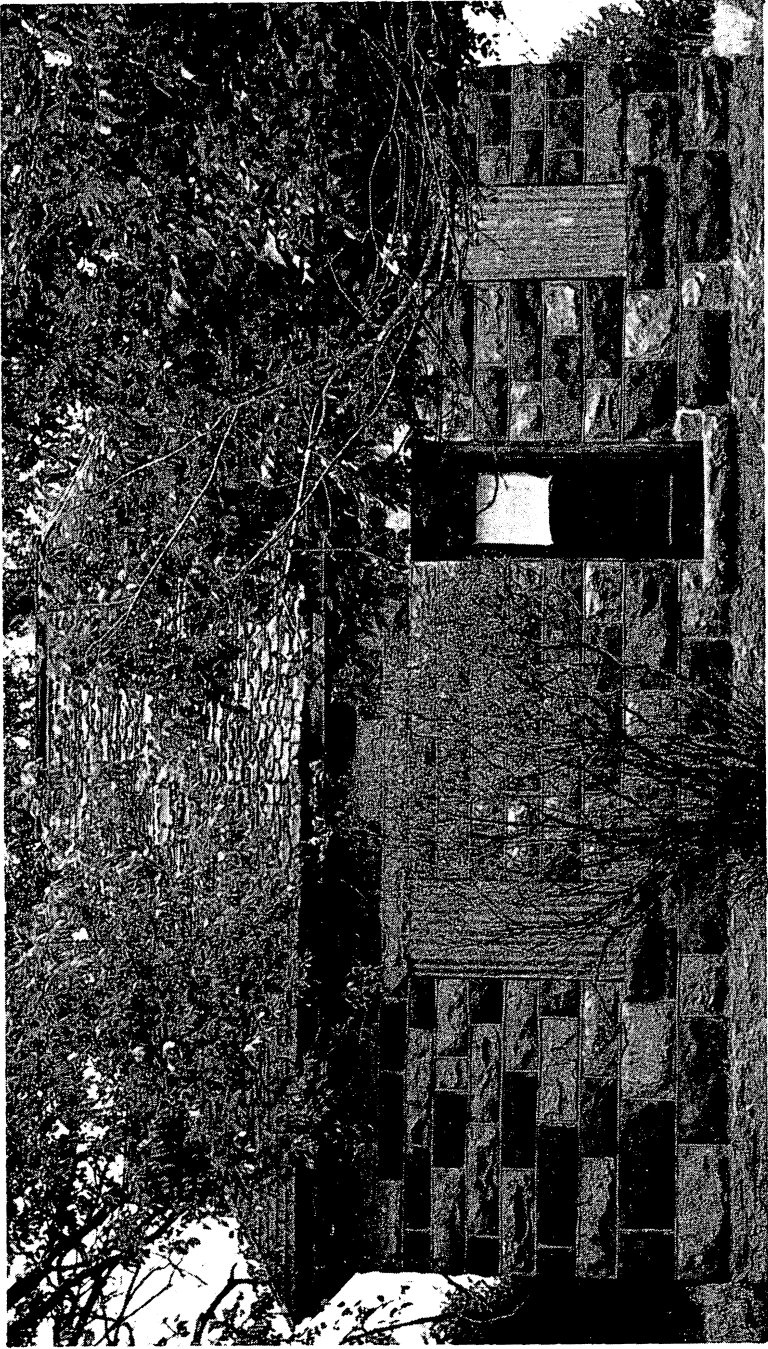


sulted in a massive influx of population into the area and the establishment of large numbers of farmsteads by individuals and families striving to make the new land into a home. Although once the local landscape was dotted with the physical remains of the efforts of those pioneers, very few sites remain to reflect the spirit of the early settlers. The Hopkins Farmstead, because of the skill with which it was built and the use of a durable construction material, is one of the few extant remnants of the pioneer heritage.

Located in a rural area near Ripley, the Hopkins Farmstead includes six structures and their immediate surroundings. The buildings include the original sandstone house, built shortly after the run, and the main house. A sandstone utility house, a cellar with a large brick entry, and two wooden sheds still stand. Currently, the buildings are empty except for the storage of some farm materials.

The main structure, built in 1899 by John and Tom Hopkins, is an imposing example of folk architecture. Made of large sandstone blocks, the house measures thirty feet square and is twelve feet in height. The sandstone blocks were put together using a strong ash mortar, prepared in fire pits near a stream a short distance south of the house. The roof is hip-ped with a central chimney. The lower floor is divided into four rooms, with a central stair leading to a single attic room--a design harking back to colonial floor plans. Although the interior is badly deteriorated, the exterior remains sound, testifying to the skill of the pioneers who built it. The Hopkins Farmstead is an enduring tribute to the spirit and industry of the men and women who opened North-central Oklahoma to white settlement.

To reach the Hopkins Farmstead, go north from Ripley across the Cimarron one mile; go two and one-half miles east, and one-half mile south. The farmstead is just to the east on the right.



Hopkins Sandstone House

# Sources for Historical Research

*by Michael and Diane Everman*

Sources for historical research are abundant in the geographical area of Payne County. Researchers can find information on the history of the county in the county courthouse, newspaper files and private collections in the various towns, and in vertical files and secondary sources at libraries. The Edmon Low Library at Oklahoma State University offers secondary and primary source material such as newspaper files and maps, photographs, and manuscripts housed in the special collections area. The social science division and general reference areas as well as the extensive government documents collection are extremely helpful. In addition, numerous and varied sources relating to Payne County and its people are available outside the county. Two often neglected sources exist in the State Capitol Complex in Oklahoma City--the Oklahoma Department of Libraries and the Oklahoma Historical Society. Specific and general information is available from these two agencies which will complement the material found locally.

The Oklahoma Department of Libraries is the state agency responsible for coordinating information services in the state and is the switching center for the interlibrary loan system in Oklahoma. Technology and expertise utilized by department personnel make it possible for specialists and the general public to acquire primary and secondary

Michael Everman is a Ph.D. student at Oklahoma State University and is presently employed at the Oklahoma State Department of Libraries in Oklahoma City.

Diane Everman recently completed her M.A. degree in history at Oklahoma State University and presently works for state government as well.

informational material not immediately available to them. Requests sent to the Department of Libraries from public, academic, and special libraries are linked with the appropriate lending institutions in the state or in the nation. The department maintains an extensive general circulation collection of fiction and non-fiction to assist in this effort.

The Governmental Services Collection, located in the State Capitol, provides sources for legal research in Oklahoma territorial and state law and government as well as basic resources in United States law. The Oklahoma Department of Libraries is also a regional depository for United States Government documents in the state of Oklahoma. This section receives all government publications sent to depositories in either printed form or microform. They also maintain a comprehensive collection of reference tools to aid in utilizing government publications.

The Department's commitment to providing for the information needs of Oklahomans is reflected in the existence of the Oklahoma Resources Branch. This branch coordinates all the materials at the Department specifically relating to Oklahoma. Within this branch are the Archives and Records Division, the Oklahoma Publications Clearinghouse, and the Oklahoma Collection. Information of several types available from each of these divisions complements the information available in the other divisions.

The Archives and Records Division, located on the third floor of the Allen Wright Building, has the responsibility for maintaining records for the state which are of permanent value. The division staff acquires, organizes, and provides access to records of state executive, legislative, and judicial bodies, agencies, boards and commissions. These include files of major entities such as the Office of the Governor, the Attorney General, the State Board of Public Affairs, the Corporation Commission,

the Commissioners of the Land Office, the Secretary of State, the State Supreme Court and the Court of Criminal Appeals. Official minutes and other significant documents of smaller licensing and regulatory boards and commissions such as the Board of Medical Examiners, the Board of Cosmetology, and the Aeronautics Commission are also included. In addition to providing access to retrospective files of these agencies, the division is engaged in a vigorous program of records management for state agencies. Through consultation with agency personnel and evaluation of agency records, the archivists determine, with the approval of the Archives and Records Commission, the groups of records which are to be transferred eventually to the Archives. This has the advantage of allowing state agencies to dispose of duplicate insignificant paperwork and allows for significant documentation of agency action to be acquired and made available for future research.

In addition to the records of state agencies, the Archives has acquired various special collections from which researchers can glean a wealth of documentation. Tract books, homestead registers, and patent registers for land sales are available in bound volumes for most of the land offices operated during the territorial period. Copies of field notes and township plats created during the original surveys have been deposited with the Archives and Records Division. These date from 1871 and indicate township and section boundaries and topographical details. The Division also has records of several Federal agencies. Among these are administrative records of the Civilian Conservation Corps and the Works Progress Administration; photographs from the Farm Security Administration, the Civil Works Administration, and the Office of War Information; and copies of territorial records of Oklahoma from the Department of the Interior. A valuable resource on political events and personalities is the indexed manuscript and clipping file of Roy M. McClintock,

a prominent political journalist from the 1920s through the 1940s. Various other special collections and microfilm copies of newspapers and periodicals offer potential insight. A description of the holdings of the Archives and Records is available in the first two of several published guides to the Archives (available at a minimal cost from the Division.) These provide more extensive description of the volume and types of information in both the record groups and the special collections.

The Oklahoma Publications Clearinghouse, located on the second floor of the Allen Wright Building, is the central depository for those publications which are produced by the authority of governmental entities supported wholly or partially by state funds. These include materials originally produced in any physical format for public distribution. The Clearinghouse maintains official depository copies of these official state publications for permanent retention and distributes copies to selected depositories throughout the state as well as to the Library of Congress and the Center for Research Libraries. This enhances the Department's systematic approach toward the dissemination of information.

The Oklahoma Collection, located on the first floor by the main entrance, offers extensive and diverse materials for the study of topics relating to Oklahoma at several levels. It is the policy of the Oklahoma Collection to acquire and maintain a comprehensive group of published material about Oklahoma or written by Oklahomans. This includes fiction as well as non-fiction about all aspects of Oklahoma history and culture. This information ranges from specific Oklahoma topics to regional treatments to national trends which pertain to Oklahoma. Specific information such as would be of value to researchers of Payne County history is contained in books, vertical files, city and state directories, town and county histories, biographies, atlases and assorted periodicals.

Resources found at the Oklahoma Department of Libraries can provide numerous types of information on specific topics relating to the history of Payne County. Research facilities and assistance are available for use of these materials. Researchers are encouraged to call or write in advance of a trip to facilitate use of the material. For further information about policies and procedures for research, photocopying, interlibrary loan or circulation, write to the appropriate division at the Oklahoma Department of Libraries, 200 Northeast 18th Street, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105, or call 405/521-2502.

A few hundred yards to the northeast across Lincoln Boulevard is the Oklahoma Historical Society housed in the Wiley Post Historical Building. The divisions of this agency provide services and information connected with state involvement in historical activity. The greatest amount of research information is contained on the first floor in the Historical Society Library. Numerous secondary sources concerned with various Oklahoma topics and general works containing information about the Southwest and Indian history, as well as specific topics such as biographies and history of cities and counties, can be found here. An extensive vertical file encompasses clippings, pamphlets, articles, and brief manuscripts grouped according to general and specific topics. The biographical card file provides citations to published information about Oklahomans. The library also maintains city and state directories which provide information on town development and residents. There are many maps and photographs covering a wide geographical and chronological span. One of the strengths of the Oklahoma Historical Society Library is its collection of sources for genealogical research. These include published family histories, cemetery records from many states, as well as census data and military records from the Federal government all of which are extremely helpful in tracing migration into Oklahoma.

Connected to the Library is the Newspaper Room which maintains hard-bound and microfilm copies of most newspapers and some periodicals published in Oklahoma dating from the mid-19th century. An index compiled by the Works Progress Administration workers during the late 1930s provides access to selected newspapers, a list of which is in the newspaper room. This index, which covers only a few newspapers, can often lead the researcher to events covered in more detail in other newspapers also available on microfilm. Not all newspapers on microfilm are indexed; therefore, if a certain paper or time span is of interest, a look in that county drawer to peruse the papers on film might be helpful.

The Archives section in the basement of the Oklahoma Historical Society provides resources for research on early Oklahoma settlement and culture. Included in these resources are the Grant Foreman Collection, the Indian-Pioneer Papers, and the Indian Archives, all of which are indexed. The collection of noted historian Grant Foreman contains material which he collected on many subjects, pertaining to both individuals and tribal groups. These documents range from clippings to drafts of his various articles. The Indian-Pioneer Papers are transcripts of interviews done during the depression with a wide range of people from around the state about their recollections of life in early Oklahoma. The Archives contain original records dealing with the establishment and maintenance of reservations and related correspondence and reports.

In addition to the library-related services, other divisions of the Oklahoma Historical Society perform services and might contain information about particular topics. The Museums and Sites Division and the Office of Historic Preservation coordinate state activity regarding historic sites and monuments. These include photographs, maps, drawings, and historical and descriptive notes about well-known and relatively obscure people and places of historical interest throughout the state, including Payne



County. The Oklahoma Historical Society also sponsors publications such as the state historical journal, the Chronicles of Oklahoma; the Historical Society newsletter, Mistletoe Leaves; the Oklahoma Series; and various smaller publications pertaining to particular sites and museums which are owned and operated by the State of Oklahoma. For further information concerning collections, use procedures and policies, contact the Oklahoma Historical Society, 2100 North Lincoln Boulevard, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73105, or call 405/521-2491.

Both the Oklahoma Department of Libraries and the Oklahoma Historical Society have resources for the study of topics relating to the history of Payne County. Both are state agencies oriented toward serving the information needs of the public. Persons researching local, county, state, or national topics will find a visit to the State Capitol Complex both rewarding and informative.

## **Historic Sites in Payne County**

*by Karen Curths*

The National Register of Historic Places helps us keep in touch with the achievements of the past by providing an inventory of sites related to the cultural development of the United States. Broad criteria for considering the nominations for inclusion on the National Register include sites which

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Karen Curths is a Ph.D. student in Western History at Oklahoma State University. She spent the past summer working for the Oklahoma Historic Preservation Survey.

are related to a significant event, the life of a significant person, a distinctive architectural style, or an information-bearing property. Besides cataloging our cultural heritage, the National Register serves as a guide for federal, state, and local governments, as well as for private groups and individual citizens. This enables these groups to protect and sustain this heritage for future generations to enjoy.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in the recognition and preservation of historic sites in Payne County. In fact, various individuals and groups have already submitted twenty-seven nominations to the National Register for properties in Payne County and possibilities still abound. The nominations vary with the interest of the groups or individuals responsible for their submittal. The large number of nominations which resulted from a grant Dr. George Carney received to study the Cushing Oil Field are examples. Most of the sites listed below are still in the process of being nominated to the National Register, which requires the review and approval of the Oklahoma Historic Preservation Review Committee and then the review and decision of the National Register. Only those properties marked with an asterisk (\*) are actually included on the National Register of Historic Places, as of September 1, 1980.

\*Magruder Plots Farmstead, West of Oklahoma State University Campus, Stillwater. Originally planted in the fall of 1892 by A. C. Magruder, first professor of agriculture at Oklahoma A. and M. (now Oklahoma State University); the test plots continue to provide valuable information about wheat production.

H. C. McCroskey #1 Well, 2 miles north of Yale (off old highway 51). The McCroskey well, the first well drilled in the northern part of the Cushing field, opened up the oil field in the area of Yale and Quay.

Norfolk Bridge, about one mile south of Yale. Built in 1909, this bridge served as a major artery to the Cushing Oil Field, and it also supported the pipes for the water supply of Yale.

\*Old Central, Oklahoma State University Campus, Stillwater. Dedicated in 1894, Old Central was the first permanent building on the campus of present Oklahoma State University.

Perry Land Office, five and one-half miles east of Stillwater. The only remaining land office of those serving the Cherokee Outlet during the last of the great land runs in 1893. It was the first building in a small community called Perry and is now serving as the Spurgeon family's farmhouse.

Santa Fe and Katy Railroad Gauntlet Bridges, about one mile south of Yale. Built in 1903, this is one of only two gauntlet bridges left in the United States which allowed two different railroad companies to utilize the same bridge.

\*Stillwater Santa Fe Depot, 400 E. 10th St., Stillwater. In 1900, the existence of Oklahoma State University was threatened in Stillwater, and energetic citizens managed to get a railroad track through town. By 1915 this red brick depot was built and remains in original condition.

Sun Oil Refinery and Camp, southwest corner of Yale. This refinery and Camp (which still includes an office building, shipping and receiving building, pipe yard, two houses used by supervisors and a social barn) was built about 1916 as the first operation that Sun Oil had in Oklahoma.

Texaco (Phillips) Tank Farm, one mile South of Yale (south and west of the Norfolk Bridge). Texaco built the first tank farm near Yale around 1920 and twelve of the original thirteen tanks are still in use.

Yale First Baptist Church, Southeast corner of Broadway and B.St. Yale. The church was erected with money donated by Vida Tull and Mable Dale, who owned leases in the Cushing Oil field. Built between 1903 and 1909, this buff brick, two-story church has a corner pulpit.

Yale refinery, west of Main Street, one-half mile north of Chicago Ave, Yale. The only remaining refinery of the thirteen refineries in Yale. Built in 1916, it still includes several brick structures (office, pumper, cooling tanks and distilleries).

C. R. Anthony Store, 118 E. Broadway, Cushing. This one-story, red brick building, built in 1922, was the first store which quickly developed into the national chain of C. R. Anthony stores.

Franklin N. Bacon House (Spurgin House), 1116 S. Chester, Stillwater. In 1900 Franklin Bacon who had been a member of the 101 Ranch Rodeo Company, designed and built this two-story brick house. The house's most famous resident was Chester Gould, creator of Dick Tracy.

James E. Berry House (Gilliam Interiors), 502 S. Duck, Stillwater. An impressive two-story wood frame home, built in 1908, the house is one of the oldest residents in town and after 1926

\*Jim Thorpe House, 704 E. Boston St., Yale. This is the home of the "world's greatest athlete," Jim Thorpe. In the 1912 Olympics he became the first person to win both the pentathlon and decathlon.

White Way Historic District, Intersection of Broadway and Main, Yale. The original central business district of Yale flourished during the oil boom period and many of the buildings are still being used.

became the home of James E. Berry, lieutenant-governor of Oklahoma from 1934 to 1955.

Canfield House (Jimmy Johnston House), 223 S. B. Street, Yale. Wilbur Canfield, one of the founders of the city of Yale, built his clapboard home around the turn of the century.

Citizens Bank Building, 107 E. 9th St., Stillwater. Built in 1894, this one-story sandstone and brick masonry Romanesque revival building served as the a number of commerical enterprises. It is currently being rehabilitated in accordance with federal guidelines for historic structures.

\*Cottonwood Community Center, four miles west and two miles north of Stillwater. Built in 1889 from local cottonwoods, this clapboard school has served as a community center for years. It is the only remaining one room school still in use in the Stillwater area.

O. C. Dale House (Jack Berry House), 316 S. Street Yale. Following 1900, this was the childhood home of Vida Tull and Mabel Dale, two local philanthropists. It served as a hospital from 1916 until 1918 when the Mabel Dale Hospital was completed.

Charles Donart House (Wilber M. Smith House), 1301 S. Perkins Rd., Stillwater. Homesteaded in 1889 on the original Couch townsite (part of the Boomer movement which forced the government to open the land to white settlement) by Charles Donart, his home later became associated with his family's support of education in Stillwater.

First Church of Christ, Scientist (Sheerar Cultural and Heritage Center), 7th and South Duncan, Stillwater. Built in 1917, this blonde brick, non-classical revival church is currently used as a museum.

William Frick House (Una Faye Sexton House), 1016 S. West Street, Stillwater. One of the best remaining examples of Victorian style cottages in Stillwater, it was built in 1903 by William Frick, owner of one of Stillwater's first feed stores.

\*Hopkins Sandstone House and Farmstead, Ripley. This farmstead serves as a vivid reminder of settlement and adaptation to the environment in western Oklahoma with a series of local sandstone farmstead structures built following 1889.

Site of Ingalls, Vicinity of Ripley. Established as a town in 1890, this site became the headquarters for the Doolin-Dalton gang, and in 1893 it was the location of the famous shootout between the marshals and these outlaws.

\*Irving's Castle, two and one-half miles southwest of Ingalls. A natural hilltop formation of reddish, lichen-traced rocks, this was the site visited by Washington Irving on his tour of the prairies which he poetically described as the "ruins of some Moorish castle."

Lawson Home/Root Hotel (Hap Fielding House), Quay. Lawson founded the town of c. 1903 and during the oil boom period (1914-1915), his two-story, wood frame home was converted into the Root Hotel.

## **Dr. O. L. Gibson's *Historical Highlights of the First Baptist Church***

*Edited by Mary Jane Warde*

[In 1972 the First Baptist Church of Stillwater observed its eightieth anniversary. On that occasion Dr. O. L. Gibson, minister of the church from 1927 to 1940, wrote the Historical Highlights of the First Baptist Church. The following article contains

exerpts from Dr. Gibson's history. It is especially interesting to the Payne County historian in that it demonstrates how changing times in Stillwater affected the church and how the church came to act as the parent body to several other congregations in response to the growth of the city.]

\* \* \*

The First Baptist Church of Stillwater was organized on November 25, 1892, in a school house located on the present Lincoln School site, the Rev. Sam H. Huntsberry acting as moderator. Listed as charter members were: Rev. and Mrs. Berry, Mr. and Mrs. George Lewis, Mr. and Mrs. W. G. Clingenpeel and Mrs. Janey Fishburn, a sister of Mr. Clingenpeel. Rev. Berry served as pastor during the early months... The church continued to meet in one room of the school building for a time until lots were purchased at the corner of Ninth Avenue and Duncan Street, where Ninth Avenue Christian Church is now located. On this spot the First Baptist Church's building was finished in 1898, following a city-wide revival meeting which added many new members to the church.

During the pastorate of L. H. Holt, 1908-1910, the present location at the corner of Seventh and Duncan was purchased to erect the second building. It was dedicated on June 20, 1909. Being built of brick and presenting a neat and cozy appearance, it was adequate for the present. During the pastorate of Rev. A. F. Wasson, 1917-1927, an annex was built on the back of the lot to provide additional space for the growing Sunday School....

[By 1927] building number two was completely outgrown. The church members were quite aware of this and had been looking forward to a larger and more commodious building.... On August 30, 1927, the building committee recommended that the effort to build the entire church structure be disbanded

for the present and only the Sunday School unit be built. This unit was to be built according to plans and specifications, together with the alterations and amendments hereafter set out. The contract was to be awarded to T. J. Jardot & Sons for the sum of \$13,981. Thus the work on the Sunday School unit was begun....

On October 26, 1927, Dr. O. L. Gibson, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Guthrie, Oklahoma, was called as pastor and the work on the erection of the Sunday School unit was continued. However, Dr. Gibson felt that it would be a mistake to defer the erection of the sanctuary indefinitely in view of the opportunities and responsibilities facing the church in a growing college town. He, therefore, urged the church to seek a loan large enough to complete the Sunday School unit and to erect a large auditorium with a basement. There followed a period of earnest effort to secure a loan large enough to complete the program as originally planned....

[After many difficulties the building program Dr. Gibson favored was financed; but hard times came to Stillwater, as to the rest of the country, in the Depression that struck within a very few months. Some members saw Dr. Gibson as having placed the church in a bad financial position at a time of economic crisis, and for a time they withdrew from the church and attempted to form a new congregation in the Katz Hall. But, according to Dr. Gibson forebearance on his part helped reunite the church; and it continued to grow.]

[In 1950] after a period of prayerful consideration, the church appointed a building committee with the authority to act on its behalf. By August additional lots were purchased, giving the church a half square block with the exception of a small lot 40 x 70 feet on the southeast corner of the present property. In September building plans calling for three distinct steps in the building



program were presented and approved by the church. First, the building of an auditorium which, when finished, would seat 1,200 persons; then, the erection of an Elementary Education Wing; third, the remodeling of the old sanctuary for educational use. This occurred during the pastorate of Rev. Sidney Maddox....

Following the morning worship service, December 17, 1950, the congregation gathered for ground breaking ceremonies. On April 16, 1951, at the morning worship service plans for financing the new sanctuary were finalized. More than three hundred people signed notes that day for one thousand dollars each, this number being increased to over four hundred later. The total note was for \$250,000. Other financing was needed which also was done by personal signatures on notes. Personal pledges for the building fund received represented a most heroic effort. Worship services were held in the new sanctuary on May 11, 1952....

[The First Baptist Church also helped found four other congregations in the Stillwater area as well as the Baptist Student Union at Oklahoma State University.]

In the year 1928 Mr. A. C. Webb, then a student, but now a business man in Stillwater, came to the pastor, Dr. O. L. Gibson, and said, "Brother Gibson, don't you think we need a BSU [Baptist Student Union] in our church?" In reply, Dr. Gibson said, "What do you know about a BSU?" He replied, "Don't know very much." Dr. Gibson said, "I don't either, but I know we need something. Suppose we write the Sunday School Board for information on this matter." This we did, and with the fine cooperation of our Baptist students in the church, the organization was begun in the basement of the new sanctuary on a Saturday afternoon around banquet tables. This date preceded the first meeting of the BSU Council which was held October 30, 1928....

The BUS has had five meeting places as follows: First Baptist Church, 701 South Duncan; a temporary location in the 300 block of South Ramsey; a building of its own at 216 South Jefferson; a commodious building at 323 South Knoblock, presently a part of University Heights Church; and the splendid Baptist Student Center which it occupies now at 1015 West University, just across from the heart of Oklahoma State University.

For a number of years the Baptist Student Secretary, as it was called then, was supported jointly by the First Baptist Church and the Student Department of the Baptist Sunday School Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. In 1971 the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma employed the BSU Director of Oklahoma State University. Program funds are provided by the four Baptist churches of Stillwater and the Cimmaron Association.

The Baptist Student Center was financed through the Baptist Foundation of Oklahoma. The foundation sought \$100,000 in pledges and gifts from former students of Oklahoma A & M College. Ground was broken for the center on November 22, 1952. A parking lot was added to the building in 1967 as a gift from Mr. R. A. Young of Oklahoma City. The paving was provided for by local friends of the BSU....

[Besides the BSU, the Church helped organize other congregations in the Stillwater area as the city expanded. The first was Paradise Mission.]

On January 2, 1938, the first oil well in the Ramsey oil field, southwest of Stillwater, was productive and there were high hopes that a major oil field had been discovered. A boom town was thought to be in prospect and real estate became in demand. Temporary buildings sprang up and businesses were started. However, it soon became apparent that the scope was a limited one and prospects for a boom town began to fade.

Dr. Gibson and a committee from the Baptist Church of Stillwater made a trip to the site [of the oil field] to investigate the possibilities of establishing a mission church. It was noted that many buildings were being dismantled and the prospect for a town of any proportion was rather gloomy. The committee thought it unwise to make any recommendation pending further developments.

Even though the scope was limited it became apparent that a real oil field was being developed and the First Baptist Church of Perkins became interested. An auction sale of lots was held in October, 1946, and Floyd R. Merrill, acting on behalf of the trustees of the First Baptist Church of Perkins, purchased a lot on contract, December 2, 1946. Later the trustees of the Perkins church conveyed this lot, in a quit claim deed, to Roy E. Bostain and W. W. Turnham, the trustees of the Paradise Mission. The claim was filed at the Payne County Court House on April 16, 1948. Lyle Jones, A. L. Pickell and Vernal Wells were the trustees of the Perkins church. Foy E. Bostain and W. W. Turnham, then conveyed this property to the First Baptist Church of Stillwater on August 26, 1949. The first part of the present building [Paradise Mission] was started by the First Baptist Church of Perkins which was assisted by contributions from various sources and were augmented by First Baptist Church of Stillwater.

The first service was held in the church on April 13, 1947, with 13 in attendance. The first Baptist Church of Stillwater assumed sponsorship of the mission the second Sunday in June, 1948, and assumed the responsibility of funding the remaining indebtedness with an offering taken at the mission.

Later the mission bought a small two-room house and added it to the sanctuary for class rooms. At another time another addition was built with four class rooms, a kitchen and space for a rest room.

Fifteen hundred dollars were borrowed from the First National Bank of Stillwater for this project. In 1965 the Womens Missionary Society of the First Baptist Church of Stillwater gave the mission \$300.00 for improvements. A water well was drilled and water piped into the kitchen. In 1968 the First Baptist Church gave the mission \$500 more for improvements, which included a foyer on the front of the church....

At a business meeting of the First Baptist Church [in 1947] the Mission Committee recommended the following: that a mission church, to be known as the Southside Baptist Mission, be organized. Its purpose would be to conduct regular Sunday services, in the Women's Building located in the Stillwater Fair Grounds. The Rev. Floyd Merrill, as acting pastor, was to assist in the organization and Mr. George Armstrong was to act as mission superintendent. Regular services were to be started on Easter Sunday, April 7, 1947. A Cabinet of Missions was to be adopted for the purpose of directing and co-ordinating the activities of local mission points selected by the church mission committee and the pastor, Dr. DeWitt Mathews. This cabinet was to be composed of the regular church committee and the church officers.

The church services began as stated above on Easter Sunday, April 6, 1947, with 34 being present in Sunday School and an offering of \$13.87. There were four additions to the church on this first day.

The First Baptist Church then purchased a site for the new building and authorized \$25,000 for the building and equipment. Then Rev. Floyd Merrill was added to the staff of the First Baptist Church.

The mission moved to the present location, 1223 South Perkins Road.... the following July (1947) when First Baptist Church purchased a two-story concrete block residence for \$9,000. The first

building construction was a 34 X 60 concrete block sanctuary, begun in January, 1949, at a total cost of \$10,000.

The Southside Baptist Church was constituted as a church on July 3, 1949, with five deacons: N. M. Boyles, Jon Williams, John Adams, Jess White, and J. R. Cole....

At a special called buisness meeting Wednesday, May 5, 1954, the church, on the recommendation of the deacons, voted to enter wholeheartedly into a mission opportunity in the northern area of Stillwater.... The Hillcrest Baptist Mission was organized into an independent Southern Baptist Mission church on December 4, 1955.... Dr. O. L. Gibson, who had been serving as Interim Pastor when Hillcrest was a mission, was chosen as pastor until the church could secure a full-time pastor. After a few months of searching, the church was able to secure the services of Rev. Thomas Tipton, a recent graduate of the Golden Gate Seminary....

[The latest off-spring of the First Baptist Church is University Heights Baptist Church. It was organized September 30, 1954, with the name College Heights Baptist Church of Stillwater.]

[Over the past eighty-eight years the First Baptist Church of Stillwater has grown from its original 7 members to a current resident membership of 774, with a total of 2703. Remodeling and redecoration of the buildings are being planned, but the church should be debt-free by 1994. The present minister is Gary Fenton. Dr. Gibson concludes his history with a list of the twenty men who preceded him:

Rev. Berry	1892-1893
Rev. J. M. Purce	1893 (Supply)
Rev. T. B. Cross	1894-1895
Rev. O. L. King	
Rev. F. L. Butler	

Rev. G. O. Guthrie	
Rev. R. M. Cooper	
Rev. L. H. Holt	1908-1910
Rev. J. M. Anderson	1910-1912
Rev. Elmer Ridgeway	1912-1913
Rev. J. M. Page	1913 (Supply 4 months)
Rev. ?. W. Vermillion	1914-1916
Rev. A. F. Wasson	1917-1927
Rev. O. L. Gibson	1927-1940
Dr. C. E. Wilbanks	1940-1945
Dr. C. DeWitt Mathews	1945-1949
Rev. S. M. Maddox	1949-1957
Rev. Richard Peterson	1957-1969
Rev. Bob Lee	1969-1970
Dr. Charles L. Wood	1970-1979

## **A Place Called Floyd and a Lame Horse: The Braswells Remember**

My parents, Floyd C. and Leona V. Jessee, came by covered wagon in 1891 from Centralia, Kansas, to Nora, a small community in the Sac and Fox Nation, near Agra, Oklahoma. One of the two wagons they brought was driven by a cousin of my mother. They built a small store at Nora and also hauled freight from Guthrie for other merchants.

When the Cherokee Strip opened in 1893, my father acquired a claim two miles east and one and one-half mile south of the present town of Glencoe. He built a store near his claim and got a post office in his store. It was called Floyd, O.T. He op-

erated this business and post office as well as his farm until the railroad was built and Glencoe sprang up on the railroad. He then moved his store to Glencoe where he operated it for several years. Floyd, Oklahoma, became a thing of the past, but I shall always remember that there was once a United State Post Office named after my father.

\* \* \*

Eunice Jessee Braswell  
Chelsea, Oklahoma

My father, Porter H. Braswell, came out from Clinton County, Kentucky, in August, 1893, to make the "run" into the Cherokee Strip. He was a young school teacher, having taught two terms in Kentucky. Although he was only twenty years old, he left behind in Kentucky a wife and an eighteen-month-old son. They were expecting another child in October. As he had a brother and a brother-in-law who had settled near Ingalls in 1889 in Oklahoma Territory, he was not without help.

The day of the run he borrowed a horse from one of my uncles and headed toward a spot on Camp Creek east of the present-day Glencoe, where there was plenty of wood and water. But fate had another plan. The mare he was riding was fast enough but happened to be "moon-eyed," at least that was what they called it then: at certain times she would fall down repeatedly. The second time she fell she broke the saddle cinch. Dad threw the saddle aside and went on bare-back. The next time she fell she lamed herself and could not go on, so Dad's dream of wood and water vanished because of a lame horse. He drove his stake on the prairie on the northeast quarter of 29 R-20, 4 E. four and one-half miles southeast of Glencoe--a place that had neither a tree nor a drop of water visible at that time.

Wilbur G. Braswell  
Chelsea, Oklahoma

# Christmas Notes

Some Hints and Suggestions That May Prove Valuable

in Making Selection of Presents

*The Stillwater Gazette*

December 26, 1901

Don't try to shop while you are tired or hungry.

A handsome lamp shade seldom comes amiss as a Christmas gift for a woman.

Better a small gift where love is than a costly present for the sake of being in the swim.

The Christmas turkey and not the Christmas conversation should be stuffed with chestnuts.

It is the wise man that shows no surprise when his wife jumps and hides something these days.

Hatpins are always acceptable to a woman. The dull gold beads set with small colored stones are pretty and the large beads are novel.

"Absence makes a heart grow fonder"  
Does it? Really oft we ponder  
If at Christmas 'twould be pleasant--  
Were there absence of the present.

Girls should not send any gift, even a card to a young man they have known but a short time. Nice young men do not care for such tokens of friendship, and there are few men that would look upon them as evidences of a regard that is never appreciated unless solicited. Do not make yourself cheap.



A sachet bag redolent of violet powder and puffed up in the pride of lace ruffles and satin ribbons may be in your eyes "just too sweet for any thing" but don't give it to your grandmother on that account. To her a plain cloth affair to hold her spectacles and her knitting would be an appreciated gift.

There are other considerations beside appropriateness that go to make up the value of a Christmas gift, independent of the price paid for it. One of these is the spirit in which it is given. A duty present - one that is made simply because it is expected and not because of real affection or esteem that flowers out in the shape of a gift - is valueless, no matter how much money it has cost.

\* \* \* \* \*

The Gazette force will take a layoff tomorrow, Christmas, in order to cast up the large and valuable list of presents our friends will put into our several and respective stockings, consequently no paper will appear tomorrow evening. We feel sure the Daily readers will indulge us in this luxury.



Our hint and suggestion that may prove valuable in the selection of presents for Christmas 1980 is membership in the Payne County Historical Society. Since each membership includes a subscription to the Payne County Historical Review for that year it is an excellent way to be remembered.

As a special bonus we will send this issue and the previous issue to the next 25 new memberships. Just send the name, address, \$5.00, and name of the giver to Payne County Historical Society  
c/o History Department  
502 Math Science Building  
Oklahoma State University  
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74078

## **The Payne County Copper Mines**

*by Mary Jane Warde*

Coppermining in Payne County? Most people react incredulously to the idea as this area of Oklahoma is much more famous for its oil wealth. But there really are copper deposits in the county that were mined in the early part of the century. Remains of these small-scale operations still exist around Stillwater.

On Saturday, May 10, 1980, twenty-one people gathered for the first field trip sponsored by the Payne County Historical Society. Guides for the two-hour tour were "Ike" Hesser, who remembers copper miners working a deposit on the farm where he grew up, and Dr. Zuhair Al-Shaieb, Associate Professor of Geology at Oklahoma State University, who has made a study of copper-mining in the county.

On the way out to the copper mine, the group drove northeast of Stillwater beyond Yost Lake with

one stop at the old Eureka School building. A two-story, white-painted brick structure, it has not seen classes for years and most recently served as a chinchilla farm. But Ike Hesser remembers it as the place he attended all grades of elementary and high school. At the Glencoe Township Section 26, the group parked and assembled for the hike cross-country to the site of the copper mine on the old Hesser property. The route lay across two pastures and two ravines, a distance of about one-quarter mile; but no one found the going particularly hard even though the age-range was from three to eighty. Crossing one pasture, Dr. LeRoy Fischer pointed out a scattering of shallow depressions, buffalo wallows, reminders of the days Payne County was still open prairie, and rock retaining walls built by the Civilian Works Administration during the New Deal era. Where a clear stream trickled out of a shaft part-way down the side of a ravine, the group sat down while Dr. Al-Shaieb talked about how the copper deposits were formed and mined.

Most of the deposits were laid down as sediment during the Permian Era, roughly 250,000,000 years ago, when this part of Oklahoma was desert. Streams flowing into the sea that lay north of Oklahoma left pockets of copper ore in their beds. These ores are high-grade but so small, according to Dr. Al-Shaieb, that modern equipment could clean one out in a couple of hours. However, just before the First World War, when Mr. Hesser remembers the mines being worked, two or three men spent several months taking out the ore on his father's land.

Today only the tunnel remains along with a litter of rusted machinery and a pile of tailings where tiny greenish nuggets of copper ore appear mixed in with the gravel. Copper mining in Payne County never caused any rushes or boom towns and must be considered a mere curiosity when compared with the wealth of the Cushing Oil Field.

## News and Notes

The Payne County Historical Society has as its purposes the preservation of documentary materials, historical sites, and published materials that relate to the history of the region. It also seeks to promote interest in the past by, among other things, publishing a quarterly historical journal. The Payne County Historical Review welcomes readers' comments, news, or requests for information from other readers. Family histories or memories, histories of groups or institutions, articles, or suggested topics for articles are also welcome and may be sent to the Review in care of the History Department, 502 Math Sciences, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma 74074.

The constitution calls for quarterly meetings of the membership in March, June, September, and December. The executive board of the society meets at noon on the second Monday of those months when a general meeting is not scheduled. All members of the society are invited to attend.

\* \* \*

Thanks to Mrs. Doris Scott for suggesting the articles on the First Baptist Church of Stillwater and for providing the materials for the articles.

## **New Members in the Payne County Historical Society**

Mrs. Della Bennett	Mr. J. Conner Fitzgerald
Mr. Don Berry, Jr.	Mr. Douglas Hale
Mrs. Eunice Braswell	Ms. Anna Lafferty
Mr. George Carney	Mr. Russell Lawson
Mr. Ronny J. Coleman	Mr. Charles Platt
Ms. Edna Couch	Mr. N. L. Reinsch, Jr.
Mrs. Dan Davis	Mrs. Laura Rice
Mr. & Mrs. Michael Everman	Mrs. Marsha Townley

## **Charter Members Not Included on Previous List**

Mrs. Helen Daugherty  
Mr. R. H. Donaldson  
Mr. Ward Hays  
Dana Hicks

**Payne County Historical Society  
c/o Department of History  
502 Math Science Building  
Oklahoma State University**