

PAYNE COUNTY

HISTORICAL REVIEW

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CONTENTS		
		PAGE
Story of Boomers in Stillwater <i>Speech by William L. Couch</i>		1
Official Military Record: Boomer Settlement in Stillwater		3
Boomer Richard Courtright <i>by Elaine Courtright</i>		19
Boomer Ira N. Terrill <i>by Dr. Berlin B. Chapman</i>		22
Lieutenant Matthias Walter Day <i>by Dr. Berlin B. Chapman</i>		26



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HISTORICAL REVIEW

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Ann Carlson
Editor

Ward Hays
Contributing Editor

Iris Erwin
Distribution

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Story of Boomers in Stillwater

Speech by William L. Couch

February 3, 1885

Below is an excerpt from a speech William L. Couch made at the Oklahoma Convention in Topeka on February 3, 1885, four days after the Stillwater colony crossed the Kansas line. The speech appeared in the *Topeka Daily Journal* on February 5, 1885, and in *The Oklahoma Chief* on February 10, 1885.

We started from Arkansas City with 200 men, and moved slow, as we expected reinforcements to follow. We reached Stillwater, Dec. 12, [1884] and concluded to stand there, and again test the validity of our claims. We were on Oklahoma land, near reinforcements, supplies and the mails. A town company of eighty men was organized; houses were built and claims located on Stillwater creek, a tributary of the Cimarron.

On the 24th, we were approached by Lieut. Day, and a company of soldiers, and ordered to surrender at once, declaring he would open fire upon us if we refused. I asked by what authority he ordered us to surrender, to which he replied: "Military authority." I refused to surrender to anything but civil process. He said he didn't propose to discuss the matter but would form his line and give us five minutes to surrender or be shot down. We said we would return the fire. He then detailed five men to seize and tie me, but as the detail advanced we halted them, and after I made a little speech, he ordered his men back into line and ordered them to fire. Seeing we were determined to protect ourselves, he made the excuse that his men were freezing to death there, and that he would go to camp and allow us until morning to make up our minds.

He reported to Fort Reno that he was met with armed resistance and was powerless. General Hatch dispatched

reinforcements and issued a proclamation of warning to be quietly distributed in our camp. We answered that, too, saying again that we would not submit to military arrest. Just one month after that Gen. Hatch appeared with 600 men. Five soldiers had been detailed to keep a correct count of our forces, but the sergeant reported twice the actual number. A detail was also stationed to cut off our supplies.

An order was sent us Sunday, Jan. 25, [1885] to surrender. We again refused, but declined to fight only in self defense. Sunday night we received another order, which was likewise refused. Monday morning the military forces under Hatch were formed in line with two pieces of artillery. The Colonel rode over and asked us what we proposed to do. We told him that as long as we were free American citizens, we would not submit to being harassed by the military, since we were committing no crime. We found our rations would last but five days and we could not make a stand, so we concluded to vacate in two days, but not in obedience to any time set by Hatch, and we moved out without escort.

At Arkansas City we were met by an immense concourse of people with a brass band. Our colors were flying during our trip, and during our stay, an evidence of our loyalty to the United States government. We are now resolved to organize for another move March 4.

Official Military Record: Boomer Settlement in Stillwater

December 25, 1884

Lieutenant M. W. Day

The earliest available document recording a settlement at Stillwater is the report of Lieutenant M. W. Day, December 25, 1884. Settlers arrived there December 12, 1884.

Stillwater, Oklahoma, I. T.

December 25, 1884

To the

Post Adjutant

Fort Reno, I. T.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that I left Camp Russell on the 21st inst. and had to wait at the crossing until the 23rd, when I crossed on the ice after a great deal of labor. I arrived at Stillwater yesterday the 24th and upon attempting to arrest Mr. [William L.] Couch, was confronted by about 200 men, armed with double barreled shot guns and Winchesters. They refused to submit to an arrest without a resort to arms: though I had about 30 men on a skirmish line, as they were densely massed I hesitated to give the command to fire as the slaughter would have been great. I have done all I can to make the arrest without resort to arms, and would therefore request to be informed if I am to treat this body of men as insurgents, and after calling on them to give up their arms and submit to arrest, to open fire on them. If I am compelled to arrest them without firing on them I would request reinforcements.

There are now in this place 225 men, a few boys and one woman and there are about 30 wagons en route from Arkansas City to this place.

Mr. Couch the Pres. of the Colony is sending a telegram to the President of the United States requesting a stay of proceedings by the troops. I have 39 men, not counting the man I am sending as carrier. I have five days forage and rations, but will send in one wagon with five men for one week's rations and forage. There is an abundance of wood, water and grazing in this vicinity.

The settlers call this place the town of Stillwater. It is about 3 miles below the crossing of the Stillwater by the Ark. City (B & M) road. It has been exceedingly cold but the weather is moderating, so that wagons will be able to cross the Cimarron within a couple of days.

Requesting an immediate answer,

I am, sir, Very respectfully

Your obedient servant

M. W. Day

Lieut. 9th Cavy, Com'dg. Troop "I"

December 27, 1884

Major Thomas B. Dewees

On December 27, 1884, Major Thomas B. Dewees transmitted Lieutenant M. W. Day's report to Headquarters, Department of the Missouri.

Fort Reno, I. T.

December 27, 1884

Respectfully forwarded to Head qrs. Dept. of the Missouri. My telegram of 26th inst, was based on the within report. As I do not think the one troop of Cavalry now there [at Camp Russell] would be sufficient force to eject the intruders I would urge that an additional force of at least two troops of Cavalry be ordered. The intruders are not scatter-

ing over the country as yet and will not until spring. The Mr. Couch named as President of the Colony is an old offender.

Thos. B. Dewees
Major 9th Cavalry
Commanding

January 1, 1885

Lieutenant M. W. Day

Lieutenant M. W. Day made two reports on January 1, 1885, giving a vivid account of events at Stillwater, and the route by which the cavalry unit came there.

Camp Russell
Oklahoma I. T. Jan. 1st, 1885

To the Post Adjutant
Fort Reno, I. T.

Sir:

I have the honor to report my return to Camp Russell last night in compliance with orders of the 28th ultimo. I will write a full report of my scout and send it in by the wagon which leaves tomorrow night for Fort Reno. As soon as the boomers found I was sending for special orders and would not push the arrest until their arrival, they became exceedingly friendly and stopped carrying their arms in their hands after the third day.

A wagon came in to Stillwater with a lot of new rifles for a good many men who only had shot guns.

A good many men have gone back to Kansas for their wagons and provisions and rations, so that there are now not more than from 150 to 175 men in Stillwater but more are coming continually.

They are located in a bend of the river where the banks rise in terraces.

Upon my arrival, I found that most of the squads of boomers had constructed dugouts behind their wagons and tents. When I

attempted to frighten them into a surrender after every peaceable means had been used, they fled into the dugouts and behind trees and wagons, determined to resist to the end, so that there was nothing left but to lay siege to the place or commence operations the same as against Indians.

I have left Sergeant Wilson and four men in Stillwater with rations and forage to include Jan. 10th. Sergeant Wilson will send me a courier every day to report plans, arrivals and departures. The boomers will not move further into Oklahoma as they say they want to settle the Oklahoma question at once and forever and to do this they must keep their men together, which they cannot do south of the Cimarron; then they say Stillwater is more easily supplied than they could be in any other place. No danger to Sergeant Wilson and his party is to be apprehended as his presence is of great material benefit to the Colony in keeping parties from straying off to get a foothold further in Oklahoma in advance of the Colony and when parties do stray or when outsiders come in we were always notified by Mr. [W. L.] Couch who would give every assistance to the troops. In this manner we were able to pick up and send out 65 men with very small detachments.

Seven wagons and seventeen colonists came in at Stillwater just as I was leaving and the leaders are sending for their friends to come as "the troops will not be allowed to arrest them."

The country has been a glare of ice so that we could not march more than 15 miles per day. All the stock should be rough shod, it would save the terrible falls and struggles of the horses in crossing the streams all of which have high banks. With the wagons I will send a list of property and commissaries needed.

We have been out without tents in all the heavy storms last month. Several men are on sick report with frost bites and one man with threatened pneumonia. The Doctor at Stillwater gave him some medicine and I sent him back to Russell; he is better now.

If we go out on any more trips we will need Strothers to haul tentage, etc. as we cannot load the wagons too heavily in this icy country.

The boomers loaned me a spring wagon and team to come

out and meet the ration wagon and carry rations to Sergeant Wilson the day we left Stillwater.

I am Sir
 Very respectfully
 Your obedient servant
 M. W. Day
 1st Lieut. 9th Cavalry
 Comdg Camp

Camp Russell, I. T.
 January 1st, 1885

To the
 Post Adjutant
 Fort Reno, I. T.

Sir:

I have the honor to report that with 40 mounted men Troop "I", 9th Cavalry and two six mule teams, I left Camp Russell Dec. 21 at 7:30 A. M. and marched 12 miles to Halsell's crossing of the Cimarron river (near summer camp of "C" Troop). Being unable to cross the Cimarron on account of high water and ice in the river I went into camp. Good wood, water and grazing.

Dec. 22nd. A heavy norther with snow came up during the night. Unable still to cross the Cimarron I moved camp half a mile up a creek into a Black Jack grove filled with a dense growth of underbrush and vines and remained in camp.

Dec. 23rd. Broke camp at 7:30 A.M. marched one mile up river and crossed on the ice. The first wagon broke through the ice near a sand bar. The wagon was then unloaded, the ice cut to the bar and the wagon pulled out with lariats. The 2nd wagon was then unloaded, taken apart and pulled over on sleds made of cottonwood branches.

About 30 horses and mules broke through the ice. Weather warm, marched 8 miles to B. and M. [Burk and Martin] ranch and at dark camped in a fine Black Jack grove, good wood, water

and grazing. Arrested two wagons and seven men.

Dec. 24th. A terrible norther came up during the night. Broke camp at 8 A.M. and marched 12 miles to crossing of Stillwater river. Arrested one wagon, five men. Marched 3 miles down the river to the intruders' town of Stillwater, was here met by about 200 men armed with double-barrelled shotguns and Winchester rifles.

I made every endeavor to arrest them peaceably, but they resisted.

They said that for years the Army had broken faith with them by promising them a trial in the U. S. Courts if they surrendered and that they had been dragged to the State line and turned loose without trial; that they had been recommended by prominent attorneys that as they were on public domain, an arrest by the military authorities was illegal, and that resistance to such arrest was lawful; that they had tried to obtain a case last May by resisting an arrest by this same Troop, but no trial could be had although Lieutenant Stevens had sworn out indictments against them before the Grand Jury. Now they were going to resist to the end by force of arms.

As the intruders were massed together four or five deep and there were children in the crowd and one woman in range, I would not open fire, but taking advantage of a request made by their leader that we would give them a chance to communicate with the President by telegraph, I placed the Troop in camp in town and sent a courier to Fort Reno for instructions. The Committee of the intruders wrote a telegram to the President asking for a stay of proceedings by the Troops, pending legislation, and asking if he would declare them insurgents, I having called them insurgents after failing to persuade them to submit to arrest.

The inhabitants are in dugouts and upon my arrival numbered about 225 people.

I gave permission for a number of intruders, not old offenders to return to the State Line.

Among the intruders are about 40 old offenders including Mr. Wm. Couch, Leader of Colony. Mr. H. Couch and 3 sons. Mr.

Stafford, surveyor. Col. Wilcox, Capt. Eichelberger, Messrs. Ketchum, Courtright, Odell, Mix, Foster, Miller, McCord, Stadl, Streaton, and Brown. Mr. Allen has his wife and 2 children and all his household furniture.

Stillwater has a bakery, three surveyors, a doctor and Democratic Presidential Elector. The colonists are as a rule men of more than average intelligence and men of means.

Dec. 25th. Sent one wagon back to Camp Russell for rations. Weather cold and wet. Remained in camp.

Dec. 26th, 27th, and 28th. Remained in camp. Weather rain and sleet.

Dec. 29th. Rain and sleet. At noon received order by courier from C. O. Fort Reno, to return to Camp Russell and await reinforcements.

Dec. 30th. Heavy norther with snow. I left Sergeant Wilson and four men at Stillwater as couriers to observe the movements of the intruders, this being desired by the Colonists as it would keep hunters from straying off and going south in advance of the Colony.

There is now a most amicable feeling existing between the colonists and troops and for self protection the colonists keep me informed of the movements of the other intruders not belonging to the Colony so that by using small detachments I have been able to arrest and send out about 65 intruders with very little labor.

Broke camp at 8 A.M. and marched 15 miles, and camped on a branch of the Stillwater at 8:30 P.M. where I met the ration wagon. The country was a glare of ice and all the stock smooth-shod. The wagon had to be unloaded at every arroyo and pulled up by hand. The cold increased in intensity in the afternoon.

Dec. 31st. Very high norther. Broke camp at 8 A.M. and marched 20 miles to Camp Russell. One wagon broke through the ice into the Cimarron. We worked at it till an hour after dark, when a number of men getting frost bitten, we abandoned the wagon and marched to camp. Mustered Troop at 9 P.M.

Jan. 1st, 1885. Brought abandoned wagon to Camp.

No field notes accompany this report because there is no compass in Camp. When I left Stillwater, there were from 150 to 175 people in town.

Very respectfully,
Your obedient servant
M. W. Day
1st Lieut. 9th Cavy.
Comd'g Camp

January 30 and 31, 1885

Colonel Edward Hatch

The following telegrams were sent by Colonel Edward Hatch when his troops and Payne's Oklahoma Colony approached the southern boundary of Kansas:

Caldwell, Kansas
January 30, 1885

Adjutant General
Dept. Mo.

Turn the boomers over the line today. Capt. Moore will come up to Hunnewell to look after a party camped there, then return to his camp at Caldwell. Troops "B" and "M" 9th Cavalry will remain at Ponca Agency after escorting the boomers out—As there is forage and rations for twenty days. Ordered Troops "C," "G" and "F" to Camp Russell. Major Dewees' Troop, "I" and "D" companies Infantry to Ft. Reno. Have telegraphed Cusack [Lieutenant C. C. Cusick] at Russell to stop with his troops, with two hundred coming from Arkansas with seventy five wagons, by way of Sac and Fox Agency. Will send troops to station as soon as country is clear.

Hatch, Col.

Caldwell, Kansas

January 31, 1885

General Augur:

I left the boomers yesterday, Ponca agency. Came up to Hunnewell. Telegraph the U. S. marshal asking him to take the leaders, intending to turn them over in person. So far, can not find an official to take them. Will march them over the line today. The leaders are already under indictments for the same offense. Letter today will explain all concerning them.

Hatch.

February 7, 1885

Colonel Edward Hatch

On February 7, 1885, a week after Colonel Edward Hatch moved Payne's Oklahoma Colony from Stillwater to southern Kansas, he made the following report covering the entire expedition:

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

February 7th, 1885

Adjutant General

Department of the Missouri, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
Sir:

I have the honor to submit the following report of operations of the troops under my command ordered to Oklahoma, in the Indian Territory for the purpose of removing persons who were there in violation of law.

Complying with Special Orders 243, Department of the Missouri, December 29th, 1884, proceeded the same day to Caldwell, Kansas, arriving there on the 30th day of December, finding at that point one troop of the 9th Cavalry ("L" Moore's). This troop was at once placed in condition for winter field service, horses shod for marching

over ice and snow. Teams were hired to move this troop, and the two from the 9th Cavalry from Fort Riley, arriving on the 5th of January ("B" Dawson's) and ("M" Rucker's). These troops having each one six-mule team, hired teams were required to move with them. The country being covered with snow and ice, it was necessary to haul long and short forage. The last troops were re-shod and ready to move on the 7th, when the weather, which had been very cold, changed to warm rains, flooding the streams, breaking up the ice. It was not until the 11th January, Bluff Creek, near camp, could be forded, when the command moved; roads heavy, snow falling, making sixteen miles that day, though the hired wagons did not reach their first camp until the following day. On the 12th arriving myself with a small escort on the Salt Fork of the Arkansas River, succeeded in crossing the next morning, in some places swimming the animals of the escort. That night, the weather again turned cold. The troops arrived at the river, and were occupied on the 15th in making an ice bridge that would carry safely the wagon train, created by reliefs of men working steadily, twenty four hours with buckets, camp kettles, cooking utensils throwing water on to the roadway selected, until a sufficient thickness of ice was made to bear the command.

Captain Moore placed in command of the three troops, was ordered to proceed to the armed colony on Stillwater Creek, to take a position to the north and east of the same, cut off supplies and parties going to the colony, and awaiting arrival with the troops from Camp Russell and Fort Reno. Proceeding in person to Camp Russell, arriving there on the 17th January, learned the troops from Fort Reno, under command of Major Dewees had not arrived. The troop stationed at Camp Russell ("I" Bennett's) 9th Cavalry was at once moved to camp near the Boomer colony, with orders to intercept parties and supplies. Lieut. Day, 9th Cavalry, when withdrawing from Stillwater in December, after his attempt to remove the intruders, had left Sergeant Wilson and six men of "I" Troop at their settlement, who every second day dispatched a courier to Camp Russell with information, counting all animals and departures. On the

17th he reported strength at 375 men; the 19th it had increased to 400 men, one woman who had charge of the baking.

Instructions from the General Commanding the Dept. impressing upon me the importance of removing these intruders without resorting to measures that might result in loss of life decided me to employ, apart from his instructions to cut off all supplies and re-inforcements, other agencies that might suggest themselves, therefore issued the paper, copy enclosed, which was circulated in the evening through the colony by Sergt. Wilson, the sergeant leaving copies at many of the huts. The effect resulted in a loss of a large number from the colony.

Captain Moore, on the 19th had made his appearance on the Stillwater in time to intercept the party from Coffeeville [Kansas]. The leaders at Stillwater claim there were 400, probably 200, will cover the number. These re-inforcements became so alarmed that they hastily moved back crossing the Arkansas River, with scarcely a halt.

Major Dewees reached Camp Russell on the 20th January with troops ("G" Cusack's) ("C" Valois) 9th Cavalry and Company ("D" Bradley's) 20th Infantry, which were at once moved to Stillwater Creek.

The movement of all troops was unavoidably slow, heavy snow drifts to cut, streams bridged, and owing to the ice, all wagons lowered down the crossings of streams and rocky canons, by cable and hauled out by men. The character of the the country is such, streams and canons have abrupt high banks, and so frozen and covered with ice, it was necessary sometimes to assist the animals out. All this time the weather was intensely cold.

On the 20th Sergeant Wilson informed me [W. L.] Couch and party were throwing up rifle pits, no easy matter in frozen ground, and also notifying me that they would fight. Desirous of knowing what was their condition for resistance, rode over on the 23rd alone, quite sure I was unknown to any of them, and thoroughly examined the settlement. The rifle pits would contain fifty men. The dugouts

were so arranged, they were capable of being used for this purpose also. On the evening of the 24th, the entire command was up and in camp, about 400 yards from the colony. After deducting force left at Camp Russell, and other detachments watching roads, and patrolling, we had a few men over 300 for action.

On the same day, Lieut. Finley visited the colony, read to them the instructions of the General of the Army. The answer made to him by their leader, Couch, was, that he had it from the newspapers some two days before, and that he declined to leave, neither would he do so, as long as he could resist with arms.

The 25th was spent in working upon the fears of the timid, though one of the citizen teamsters learned there were but two days rations in the Boomer Camp, and that they were anxiously looking for one hundred men from Kansas by way of Hunnewell, also that our force was exaggerated to 600 men by themselves. It was also discovered during the night there was dissension among the leaders, as to the best course to pursue. This with the fact that we should be out of forage and rations in two days, not being assured that the rations on the way would reach me, promptly decided to move boldly upon them in the morning, trusting the result would be favorable. The usual orders were issued for going into action, care being observed that the order should reach their camp that night. This with a note by a friendly party to the only woman begging her to leave early in the morning.

In the morning the command formed for moving. The company of Infantry to seize a hill covering the rifle pits and defensible dugouts. Major Dewees with four troops dismounted to move directly upon the headquarters of the leaders.

Captain Moore, with three troops dismounted on Dewees' left, and should we be compelled to fight to take their camp in reverse. I then with my adjutant rode into their camp, telling them as much as we regretted bloodshed, we should

open fire at the first effort at armed resistance. Couch, at first refused to go, then asked for time which was declined. Finding the troops would be upon him in a moment more, gave up further opposition, and would do as directed. It was apparent he had his followers under reasonable control. It then became a question as to the best means of removing them to Kansas border; should they be placed under guard, it devolved upon us to ration them and forage their animals. It was known to me the leaders were abundantly supplied with money, and in a days march we could reach the Pawnees, where rations and forage could be obtained.

Couch was then informed he should keep his men together, arms packed in wagons and all effects should be transported by them, that they should furnish their rations and forage and be marched out to the Kansas line, subject to being at any time placed in the hands of the U. S. Marshal, all parties out to be called in, and any wagons that he was aware of coming into the country, which might escape the troops to be turned back by him. In doing this I was enabled to send Major Dewees to the south side of the Cimarron, and dispatch a force towards the Arkansas River, to prevent the arrival of a large number of intruders who were reported coming from Arkansas, by way of the Sac and Fox agency, and also to send a troop to look after and intercept the men from Hunnewell. It would have been more satisfactory, to have taken them out under close guard, under the circumstances, believe the other was the best action to be taken, camping with them until their last night when I rode to Hunnewell, having the proper warrants served by the U. S. Marshal on the leaders, with arrest for unlawfully entering on Indian lands with the view of permanent occupancy. They are held for unlawfully and feloniously conspiring together to levy war against the United States, and to oppose by force the authority of the Government, and to prevent, hinder and delay the execution of the laws. They are now held for a hearing on February 10th; such is the sentiment of southern Kansas on this question, it will be questionable whether a conviction can be obtained.

It is the intention of a number of associations known

as Oklahoma Colonies, to attempt entry to this territory, March 1st, probably in greater numbers than ever known before.

The movement of the troops, demonstrated that nothing is so worthless and expensive as hired citizen transportation to move with troops. Each troop of Cavalry should have three six mule teams attached to it for field operations, and each company of Infantry two.

As long as the Arctic overshoes lasted the men, we had few frost-bitten; they were soon worn out. Apart from frozen feet, the command is in good condition, not an animal lost in the expedition.

It is with great pleasure I testify to the cheerful manner men and officers performed their duty in a season of exceptional severity.

Very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
Edward Hatch,
Colonel 9th Cavalry.



Ira N. Terrill



*Lieutenant
M. W. Day*



Richard Courtright and Family

Boomer Richard Courtright

by Elaine Courtright

Richard Courtright came from a long line of Courtright's who were always fighting for their principles.

The original Courtright ancestors, who came to American many generations before Richard, were from Kortryk in the Province of West Flanders, Belgium. They came, via Holland, to New York state during the period when the Dutch West India Company was active. The men settling during this time span, according to one historian, were ". . .not criminals escaped from justice, speculators lured by the hope of plunder, nor idlers coming thither to enjoy the luxuries which their own country did not afford; they were generally men persecuted on account of their love of civic liberty, or their devotion to their religious tenets. . . .It was by their activity, integrity and resolution that they rendered themselves obnoxious to the tyrannical and bigoted governments which drove them from their native lands, and these virtues they carried with them to their adopted country." The Courtright's eventually migrated to Pennsylvania.

Richard Courtright was born May 30, 1836, at Wilkesbarre, Pennsylvania, to Joseph R. and Lydia Klinetop Courtright. The following is a chronology of his life as we know it.

In 1837, at the age of one, Richard came with his parents to Dixon, Illinois. His father, Joseph, was the first permanent settler of Lee County, near Dixon. Joseph died in 1840 at the age of 30 when Richard was only four years old.

Richard and his mother moved into the town of Dixon at that time. Little information is known about influences in Richard's early life. Richard had an uncle, Issac, who was active in state and county politics from approximately 1840-1850. Richard also had a distant cousin, Elizabeth Kortright Monroe, wife of President James Monroe.

Richard was apparently an educated man. It is believe he went to Princeton or another eastern university, but this has not been proved. There is also a Princeton, Illinois, not far from where Richard grew up, and there may have been an university at that location.

In 1859, at the age of 22, Richard was living in Colorado near Pikes Peak. Two letters he wrote to his mother at that time were published in local newspapers. Unfortunately the newspapers were very thin and did not microfilm well. What is readable tells the weather conditions and that good money could be made mining if one works hard. At age 25, Richard enlisted in the 21st MD CAV, Co. E. His Civil War service was for a period of three years.

At approximately age 31, he married Hannah Slater in Kansas. They had thirteen children while they lived in Kansas, the youngest of whom was born December 18, 1884, while Richard, at age 48, was with Payne's Colony in Oklahoma. His wife must have been a very patient person. Some say Richard was a school teacher in Kansas; others say that he was a surveyor.

Little is known about Richard's boomer activities other than his signature on the list of persons that made entry into Stillwater in 1884. His name is mentioned in military correspondance, and not favorably. His certificate from the Payne Colony was displayed at one time in the library at Ponca City. He did make the run in 1889, and successfully defended his claim which was southwest of Stillwater, in court. Ironically he stated that the other man had soonered. He stayed on the claim until 1899. Although unknown whether

it was coincidence or cause, there were several deaths in the family at the time and he rented or lived with his married children from this point on. He or his parents always owned land somewhere.

His wife, Hannah, passed away in 1909, and Richard passed away, at the age of 79, in 1915. They are buried at Fairlawn Cemetery in Stillwater.

Richard was a very strong-willed individual. He was either very well liked, or intensely disliked. This seems to be a common thread among many Courtright's. "Longhair" Jim Courtright, marshall and gunfighter, is said to have been a first cousin to Richard. There is a strong physical resemblance.

Richard's surviving grandchildren, who were very young when he passed away, remember him as being demanding and a perfectionist. His neighbors, however, knew him as Uncle Dick and thought very highly of him. He was very active in Clayton Township activities, especially with the development of the schools.

It almost seems possible that he set such high goals and ideals for himself that he expected too much of his own children and grandchildren.

There are many Courtright descendants remaining in the area, and many have moved on. Most are hard-working, involved in many different types of trades and professions.

It will be interesting to see in the years to come how many of these descendants move on again to new lands.

Boomer Ira N. Terrill

by Dr. Berlin B. Chapman

Ira Nathan Terrill, at age 31, was among the boomers who left the Kansas line about December 8, 1884, and established the first settlement of Stillwater.

He was a native of Illinois, acquired a ninth grade education, married Eliza Jane Parsons of the state in 1874 and they became parents of eight children.

At the land opening on April 22, 1889, Terrill located a 70-acre claim on the north bank of the Cimarron, southwest of Stillwater. As a member of the Territorial Legislature he was influential in securing a college for Payne County. Terrill was an inventor, lecturer, and author. His three-act play, "A Purgatory Made of a Paradise," is a tragedy in which he takes a leading role. Terrill died at Wichita Falls, Texas, on October 14, 1921.

In 1908 he wrote the following account for "Sturm's Oklahoma Magazine."

"Twenty-four years ago boomers made the last of many heroic efforts to convert Oklahoma from the land of the longhorn into the land of the free born. The writer and 164 comrades were in camp at Stillwater. We were surrounded by the U.S. Army with all supplies cut off and enduring pangs of hunger that attention of the nation might be called to this land of promise, and that it might be settled by people who today are feasting and frolicking in the fattest country on earth.

"Boomers had made many raids into Oklahoma under leadership of Capt. David L. Payne, but each time had been arrested and carted from place to

place by soldiers, only to be finally released without trial.

"The part of Oklahoma opened on April 22, 1889, is now called old Oklahoma. Payne and his boomers claimed that under treaty of July 19, 1866, between the Creek Indians and the government and a treaty of same date between the government and the Seminoles, old Oklahoma was public land subject to settlement under squatter sovereignty. Wealthy cattle companies were using the lands for pasture. They had prominent politicians as stockholders and had caused boomers to be repeatedly driven out.

"After the death of Payne, William L. Couch was elected captain and it was determined to attempt another settlement in Oklahoma. Under the new leader about 500 boomers moved to Stillwater Creek and made a camp about a mile southeast of present Stillwater. There they selected claims, began improvements, platted a townsite (where Stillwater now is) and built several houses thereon, but all kept together at the camp where about 42 strong dugouts were built in a horseshoe bend of the creek. Dugouts were for the double purpose of shelter from the cold and as fortifications--for boomers were determined not to again surrender to soldiers.

"Boomers had a mail carrier who made frequent trips to Pawnee Agency and brought mail to camp. They were busily engaged in building homes a few days before Christmas, 1884, when one of their hunters brought word that troops were advancing upon the camp. All were quickly called from work.

"On Christmas Eve, Lt. M. W. Day with one troop came upon the boomers and demanded their surrender within five minutes or he would order his soldiers to fire upon them. When the five minutes were up Day, still holding his watch in hand, extended the time five minutes and as at the end of that time not one boomer had put down his gun, Day said, addressing Couch. "Well, Captain, where is a good place to camp? My men are freezing here." Couch

replied, "Camp down the creek; we will be neighborly."

"Day pitched camp about 80 rods from the boomers and sent a courier for reinforcements. Couch also sent a courier to Arkansas City and from there sent a telegram to President Arthur that it was unnecessary to send more troops against the boomers, for if he would send one U.S. marshal with a legal warrant and promise them a trial in any court, everyone would submit to arrest. The boomers wished for a trial to test title to the land and the cattle barons and their political allies did not want, would not permit, a trial.

"President Arthur sent Col. Edward Hatch and seven more troops of soldiers to surround us. We expected a siege and began to move in supplies from Arkansas City. Some of our wagons with provisions got to camp. Several were delayed by not being able to cross Salt Fork which was high and filled with floating ice. So, when Hatch surrounded our camp we had only provisions for a few days. He inspected the camp and demanded that we surrender. We would not do so and it finally was agreed that Hatch was to open his lines and we were to strike camp and drive through and into Kansas.

"The ground was covered with snow and sleet and we had three days of strenuous travel to reach Arkansas City. A hungry lot of men we were. But we were not long hungry, as the Arkansas City people had a big feast prepared for us. After eating to our satiety we assembled in the rink and agreed to disperse to our homes and again assemble for a raid into Oklahoma on March 4, 1885, when Grover Cleveland would become president of the United States.

"At a later council it was decided to raid Congress instead of again raiding Oklahoma. The poor boomers drained their purses to keep a lobby in Washington and to get action by Congress and,

after four years; were successful in their efforts to have this fair country opened to the settler.

"Twenty-four years and what a change! The writer took part in the '89 horse race and has seen every step which is changing Oklahoma from a pasture into a paradise. I was also a member of the convention which named Payne County in memory of Payne, who had set the ball rolling that made possible this great new commonwealth."

Lieutenant Matthias Walter Day

by Dr. Berlin B. Chapman

Lieutenant Matthias Walter Day, age 31, brought 40 soldiers of the 9th Cavalry on Christmas Eve of 1884 to Stillwater to remove the boomers. He demanded the surrender of the boomers within five minutes or he would order his troops to fire upon them.

What manner of man was Lt. Day who on Stillwater Creek held watch in hand while soldiers and settlers faced each other with guns? This question demands examination of official sources.

Lieutenant Walter Day was of ruddy complexion, had blue eyes, brown hair and stood "5 feet 6 inches." He was born in Ohio on August 8, 1853, and from that state was appointed to the U.S. Military Academy. He was a cadet, 1873-77, and ranked 70th in a class of 76. At graduation he was promoted in the army to Additional Second Lieutenant, 10th Cavalry. His career in the army as recorded in the West Point "Register" would fill more than a page of events and dates. No mention is made of the contact Day had with Stillwater boomers.

His pre-Stillwater experience is worthy of note. Day was on frontier duty at Ft. Concho, Texas, and scouting, January to June, 1878. In the meantime, March 1 he came Second Lieutenant, 9th Cavalry. He was at Ysleta, Texas, and scouting to April 1879, being engaged with Mescalero Indians at Cornuda Mountains, April 16 of that year.

Day was at Ft. Bliss, Texas, at Ft. Bayard, New Mexico, and scouting to January 1880, being engaged in fights with Apaches September 18, 29-30, and October 1879. Therein for bravery in

action, Day was awarded a Medal of Honor for singly advancing into the enemy's line and carrying a wounded soldier of his command on his back down a rocky trail under a hot fire, after he had been ordered to retreat.

On November 27, 1879, Day and Emilie Schultz were married at La Mesilla, New Mexico. The ceremony was performed by Warren Bristol, associate justice of the supreme court of the Territory of New Mexico. The marriage ended in divorce on May 1, 1885. In the meantime, Day was at Ft. Stanton, New Mexico, and scouting to December 1881, being engaged in fights with Apaches January 12, February 17 and 28, 1880.

On August 21, 1883, Day became First Lieutenant, 9th Cavalry, a rank he held on arrival at Stillwater. He was at "Ft. Reno and Scouting" to May 4, 1885. In army annals his "Scouting" to Stillwater was less important than his presence with "Rifle Teams and leave of absence, August, 1884 to January, 1885." Day ranked second among sharpshooters in the army of the United States for the target year ending September 30, 1884.

In years after Day held watch in hand at Stillwater Creek, he engaged in national and foreign activity. In June 1885 he took command of Indian scouts and remained with them more than a year. On August 7 and September 22, 1885, they engaged Geronimo's Band at Sonora, Mexico. Day was with rifle teams in 1888.

In 1890 he was promoted to the rank of Brevet Captain. This was for gallant services five years earlier in actions against Indians during the attack on Geronimo's stronghold in the Sierra Madre Mountains and in the Terres Mountains. In 1891 Day was a "Distinguished marksman" and captain of the 9th Cavalry.

During 1890s he engaged in a variety of activities. In his native Ohio he was Professor of Military Science and Tactics at Mount Union College; on riot duty at Butte, Montana; and he

did general recruiting service at Cleveland, Ohio. In 1898 Day was Lieutenant Colonel, 1st Ohio Volunteer Cavalry.

By the turn of the century his activity extended to foreign service. In the Philippine Islands he supervised the census. He commanded Camp Overton on the island of Mindanao. In 1908 he "engaged in fight with Moros under Ampuanagus at his stronghold." During June 1909 Day served with "2nd Squadron, 6th Cavalry; D.S. at Sea with Capt. Siquors' Squadron, Bamboo Fleet in Sulu Sea, chasing Fikiri pirates." In the meantime, 1907, Day was "commanding Santa Clara, Cuba." His rank was Lieutenant Colonel, 6th Cavalry.

The last decade of Day's 30 years of service is less readable than that of his mission to Stillwater. He was stationed in Iowa, Indiana, and Texas. At Ft. Riley, Kansas, in 1911 he took a three-month special course at Mounted Service School. On his request he retired on February 28, 1912, with the rank of Colonel. All of his papers were lost in a fire in 1906. His personal file in the National Archives comprises 800 pages and on microfilm costs \$240.00.

At Oakland, California, on August 31, 1916, Day and Henora Cassady were married by James C. Irwin, justice of the peace. The new Mrs. Day was born in Kentucky and her parents had migrated from Ireland. The Days made their home in Los Angeles. There Col. Day died on September 12, 1927, at the age of 74. A copy of his pension file is in the library of OSU. His widow drew a pension of \$30.00 per month, the highest rate to which she was entitled by law.

Minutes

September 11, 1984

The PCHS met on September 11 at the Roxie Weber Plaza. The meeting was called to order by President Carol Bormann.

Treasurer Bill Warde reported a checking account balance of \$202.70 and a savings account balance of \$335.18. The certificate of deposit is earning interest of \$38.48 per quarter.

A motion was made by David Baird and seconded by Doris Scott to send membership information through the November City of Stillwater billing provided funds are available. Motion passed.

Lawrence Erwin, chairman of the Payne Colony Centennial committee, reported that the Mayor of Stillwater issued a proclamation on September 10th, 1984, declaring 1984 as the centennial of "when Oklahoma began." The proclamation sets aside December as the month to celebrate. Lawrence Erwin reported on the activities for the celebration and asked for ideas.

Carol announced the need for a program chairman.

Ruth Maxson, professor in Clothing, Textiles, and Merchandise at OSU, presented an informative program about clothing worn during the period from 1889-1900. Women's dresses were high collared, ankle length, with leg-of-mutton sleeves, and often trimmed in lace. Men wore three piece suits with rather full, straight jackets.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Peggy McCormick
Secretary

Minutes

June 12, 1984

Plans for the citywide celebration December 8 of the Payne Colony Centennial were announced by Dr. Lawrence H. Erwin, chairman of the historic sites committee, during the Payne County Historical Society's annual business meeting on June 12.

About 35 members met for a banquet at the Stillwater Station to hear J. P. and Bob Bryan discuss their renovation of the historic Santa Fe Railway station.

During the business meeting, Carol Bormann was re-elected president; Dr. Erwin, vice-president; and Peggy McCormick, secretary. All will serve one-year terms. Dr. Bill Warde is serving a three-year term as treasurer. Named to the board of directors were Dr. W. David Baird, who will fill the remainder of Dr. Erwin's term which expires in 1986, and Doris Dellinger, whose term will expire in 1987. Other board members serving unexpired terms are Dr. Hobard Stocking, Julie Couch, and Lawrence Gibbs.

J. P. and Dorothy Bryan and Bob and Teresa Bryan were recognized with certificates acknowledging their work in restoring the Stillwater Station, now a restaurant. Dr. Berlin B. Chapman, a retired Oklahoma State University history professor now living in Florida, was named an honorary life member for his contributions in preserving early state history. Presentation of a plaque will be made to Dr. Chapman when he returns to Stillwater for the centennial.

Respectfully submitted,
Doris Dellinger, secretary

The Oklahoma Land Rush of 1889

by Stan Hoig

The Oklahoma Historical Society is pleased to present the first complete history of the West's greatest grab for land—the Run of 1889.

Hoig goes beyond the scope of previous histories to include material on more than just the events of April 22. He begins with chapters on the boomers and the ultimate announcement of the opening, then follows the army of settlers who trekked west to the borders of the Un-assigned Lands. His verbal portraits of the people and places in this human drama capture the hopes, sacrifices, and challenges of up-rooted home-seekers.

Includes 26 line drawings, 300 pages, 6 by 9 inches, four-color dust jacket, index, endnotes, bibliography.

David L. Payne

by Stan Hoig

David Payne's life was full of controversy, and he was probably the most loved and the most hated man on the Kansas frontier when he died suddenly in November 1884. There can be no doubt that Payne was the driving force behind the settlement movement and the man who first saw fully the dream of Oklahoma.

How to Order

Order from the Museum Store, Oklahoma Historical Society, Historical Building, Oklahoma City, OK 73105.

<i>The Oklahoma Land Rush of 1889</i>	\$14.95
<i>David L. Payne</i>	\$9.95

Please add \$1.00 for postage and remember all Oklahoma Historical Society members receive a 10 percent discount.



PAYNE COLONY 1884-1984 CENTENNIAL

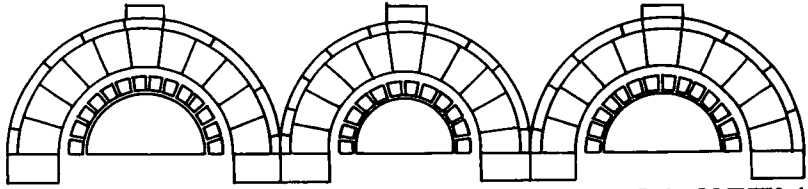
SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Friday, December 7, 7:30 p.m., Old Central, OSU
Presentation and discussion on "The Boomers: who they were and what was their significance" by Danney Goble, author of *Progressive Oklahoma*.

Saturday, December 8, 9:30 a.m., Downtown Stillwater
Parade

Saturday, December 8, 11:00 a.m., Middle School Auditorium
Commemorative ceremony with speaker A. M. Gibson, author and Oklahoma historian.

Saturday, December 8, 2:30 p.m., Allred Farm
Colony site rededication with Senator Bernice Shedrick



PAYNE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

OFFICERS

Carol Bormann, *President*
Lawrence Erwin, *Vice-President*
Peggy McCormick, *Secretary*
Bill Warde, *Treasurer*

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Hobart Stocking, *term expiring 1985*
Julie Couch, *term expiring 1985*
W. David Baird, *term expiring 1986*
Lawrence Gibbs, *term expiring 1986*
Doris Dellinger, *term expiring 1987*

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

Membership in the Payne County Historical Society is open to anyone interested in the collection and preservation of Payne County history.

All members receive copies of the *Review* free. In addition, the Society sponsors informative meetings four times a year, the first Tuesday in March, June, September, and December, 7:30 p.m. Two outings; one in the fall and the other in the spring, are taken to historical sites in the area.

Board meetings are held the second Tuesday of each month that a regular meeting is not scheduled. These luncheons are held at 11:45 a.m. in Stillwater at the Luncheon Junction. All members are encouraged to attend.

Payne County Historical Society

P. O. Box 194

Stillwater, Oklahoma 74076