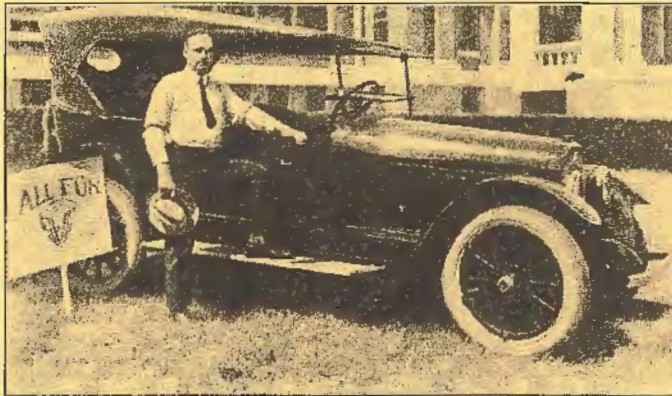
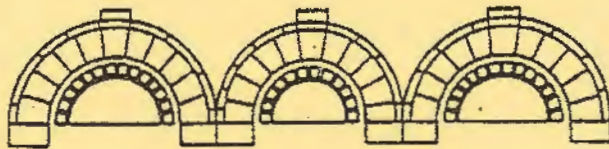


Payne County Historical Review



A. H. BURRIS: PIONEERING OKLAHOMA EDUCATOR



PAYNE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Volume XXIX

No. 2

2006

Contents

A. H. Burris: Pioneering Educator	3
<i>Gladeen Burris Allred</i>	
Keep Goin' Lad	6
<i>Gladys Toler Burris</i>	
Charles Albert Minnick	11
<i>Twylla Berger</i>	
A Letter from Helen Romann	15
Payne County Historical Society 2006 Members	19

The *Payne County Historical Review*, P.O. Box 2262, Stillwater, OK 74076, is published semiannually by the Payne County Historical Society. It is distributed without additional charge to the members of the Payne County Historical Society. Single issues, when available, may be purchased for \$3.50 each.

The *Payne County Historical Review* welcomes readers' comments, news, or requests for information. Family histories, photographs, or maps are also welcome. No payment is made for articles published in the *Review*. For more information about the Payne County Historical Society, visit the Society's web site at:

www.cowboy.net/non-profit/pchs/

Editor's Note

The history of Payne County is diverse. It includes cowboys, outlaws, Indians, homesteaders, railroads, oilfields, small towns, not-so-small towns, Stillwater (the county seat), Oklahoma A&M College (now Oklahoma State University), and much more. This issue of the *Payne County Historical Review* takes a look at two aspects of that varied history: one family's ties to education and Oklahoma A&M at Stillwater and another family's history as a part of the founding and growth of Yale. Our thanks go to Gladeen Burris Allred for sharing the story of her grandfather, A. H. Burris, and to Twylla Berger for writing about Charles Albert Minnick and his contributions to the town of Yale. Also, be sure to read Helen Romann's letter home. It is delightful!

With this issue we are listing the members of the Payne County Historical Society. They are the ones who make this publication possible, and we want to give recognition to those who support the preservation of Payne County history. We also want to encourage our members—and potential members—to become even more involved with the activities of the Society.

In 2007, the dues for membership in the Payne County Historical Society will increase from \$12 to \$15 for individuals and from \$17 to \$25 for families. Institutional and lifetime memberships will remain the same. If you haven't paid your 2007 dues yet, consider this to be a gentle reminder.

2006

Payne County Historical Society Officers and Board Members

President: Barbara Dunn

Vice President: Adelia Hanson

Treasurer: Elvis Howell

Secretary: Alice Cussner

Board of Directors:

Walter Price

Twylla Berger

Kent Carmain

Lawrence Gibbs

Bill Bryans

Payne County Historical Review

Editor: Carla Chlouber



A. H. Burris: Pioneering Educator

by

Gladeen Burris Allred

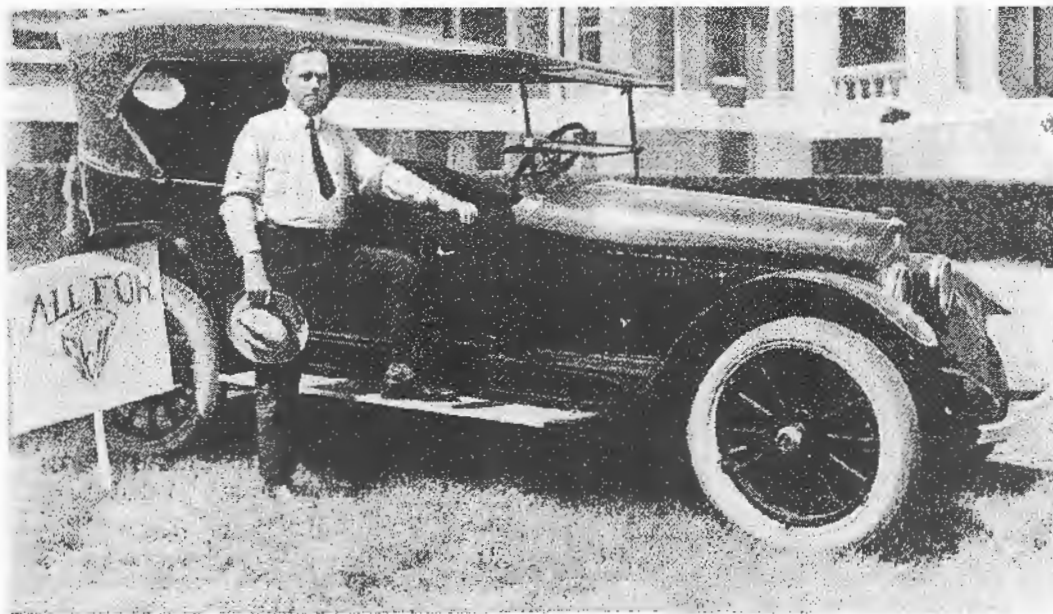
In the early days of Oklahoma's statehood, college professors were given the status of political appointees. This was before the era of tenure for professors or of an Oklahoma Board of Regents protected from political control. College presidents and teachers served at the pleasure of the governor. At times blanket resignations were requested from faculty members who supported the losing candidate in a political campaign. As a result, the turnover of college presidents was so frequent that it was joked

Gladeen Burris Allred is an adjunct professor at OSU and is employed as a Grief Counselor at Judith Karman Hospice. She is A. H. Burris's granddaughter and is the third generation of her family to serve as an OSU faculty member.

that a standing committee was formed to meet the new president at the train station.

This was the political environment when Alfred Henry (A.H.) Burris became president of Southwestern Oklahoma State University (then Southwestern State College) in 1921. Under his leadership the college enrollment tripled. The 1922 Southwestern yearbook states that President Burris's "influence is felt far and wide. He is a part of the student body as well as its leader, an ever ready listener to those seeking guidance and an ever willing helper to those in need. No words are too great to be said of him and his work in Southwestern this year, as a leader, as a teacher, or as a fellow citizen."

Politics, however, brought an end to A. H. Burris's presidency at Southwestern. When he supported the losing candidate for Oklahoma governor, he knew that his resignation as president of SOSU would be requested by the winning candidate. He decided to turn this to his advantage, offering his resignation in exchange for an appointment as



President Burris at Southwestern State College with his Buick.

head of the history department at Oklahoma State University (then Oklahoma A&M). His request was granted, and in 1923 he became head of the Oklahoma A&M College Department of History. At A&M, he established himself as a state leader in progressive education. He joined a publishing company in 1925 and continued his interest in education in Oklahoma until his death in 1934.

The effects on his family were far-reaching. Four of his children, as well as many grandchildren and great-grandchildren, became graduates of OSU. One son, Edward Burris, became an OSU economics professor and administrator for a span of four decades, retiring as vice-dean of the OSU College of Business Administration in 1971.



Keep Goin' Lad

by

Gladys Toler Burris

Alfred's mind skidded. He had no answer.

"Speak up, lad," the School Board Chairman squinted across the table at him. "What makes you think you're ready t' be a teacher?"

Something about big, gruff Mr. Callahan, with his booming voice and bushy eyebrows, flustered him. He glanced at the other two Board members and took heart from Mr. Hoyt's friendly nod.

"I have my certificate with me, sir," fumbling in his jacket pocket. "It says I'm ready to teach."

"M'm. Let's have a look at it," he turned up the wick in the lamp, and Alfred listened tremulously as the booming voice read:

"I hereby declare Alfred Henry Burris certified to teach any grade in Lincoln County Schools during the years, 1898-1901.

Gladys T. Burris published many short stories and articles in her writing career. She was an English instructor at Oklahoma State University. She learned A. H. Burris's history as his daughter-in-law and wife of the late Edward C. Burris, OSU professor and vice dean of the College of Business Administration.

Signed, this 1st day of November, 1898, H. W. Hayes, Superintendent, Lincoln County Schools, Oklahoma Territory.”

With a grunt, he tossed it aside. “That paper just says you’ve got enough book-learnin’ t’ teach. Takes more ‘n that to be a teacher. H-m-m.” Bushy eyebrows drawn together, he tugged at his red beard. “You’ve been livin’ in Lincoln County quite a spell, accordin’ to my Mike.”

“Yes, sir,” moistening his dry lips. “Over southwest of Chandler. Since I was a kid, 15 or 16. Almost four years.”

“Then you otta know the kind o’ teacher we need,” the sudden bang of his fist on the table was like a clap of thunder before a storm. “I’m askin’ you, straight-out: Have y’ got guts? D’ you use your head or your heels when the goin’ ‘s rough?” He leaned so close his booming voice was a roar in the boy’s ears. “‘n can y’ hold your own when someone’s trying to put y’ down? Can you?”

Windmills seemed to be whirling inside Alfred’s chest. “Can you?” He didn’t know. “Always has his nose in a book,” folks said. He’d just wanted to learn – and be a teacher. But book-learning – wasn’t enough –

“You fellows got anything t’ say t’ the lad?”

And then he heard Mr. Armstrong’s slow, easy drawl. “Cal’s just trying to warn you, son. We’ve got a bunch o’ rowdies at Old Forest School. They’ll bully anyone they can. You gotta think fast and call their bluff. Takes guts.”

The quiet words slowed the windmills in his chest. This, he could understand.

“I’ll bet you can hold your own, big strong fellow like you,” the friendly nod again from Mr. Hoyt. “Your Pa says you played football at the University.”

“That’s right, sir.” He drew a deep breath. “Yes, I think I can – hold my own,” and in a sudden surge of boldness, added, “I can outwrestle my older brother, Oliver. He’s smart as a whip, and weighs 210. I don’t scare easily.”

If Mr. Callahan heard, he gave no sign. In the silence, he sat tugging at his beard and staring down at the table, and then, as though talking to himself, mumbled some-

thing about Oliver and Mike out coon hunting. It made no sense.

The man was ignoring him. Prickly heat crawled from his neck to the roots of his hair. In the lamplight, he saw his certificate still open on the table “. . . just a paper that says you’ve got book-learning. . .”

A chair scraped against the floor. Startled, he looked up as Mr. Callahan rose, looming over them.

“Time t’ wind up business,” he boomed. “Gettin’ late, and the lad has a long walk home.”

A harvest moon lighted his way as Alfred strode down the road, whistling. They’d hired him, by jiminy. A four-month term at \$25.00 a month. What would Father say to that! Cash, too, not cows or chickens. He could save enough for another term at the University.

The trail grew rough and dark, shadowed by trees. He noticed a clearing at the side of the road, an open field flooded by moonlight. Let’s see – would that be the Cansler farm? If he cut through there, he’d be home in half the time. Sure, he’d have to cross Old Deep Fork Creek, but that shouldn’t be any problem. Not much rain this fall.

Still whistling, he struck across the field. Mr. Callahan was’t such an old curmudgion, afer all. He’d shaken his hand and boomed “Keep goin’, lad.” And Mr. Hoyt had told him big news. Governor Barnes was all for education – putting a new school up north in Tonkawa, and a Southwestern Normal at either Weatherford or Granite. Made him proud he’d be a teacher here in the Territory. His whistle grew high and clear.

Must be getting near Deep Fork. Trees all around. Not much light here. He made his way slowly, crunching leaves with every step.

Was it an echo? He stood still, listening. No sound. Maybe the wind in the branches. He moved on. The sound again. He stopped. The sound stopped. Someone or something was moving when he moved, stopping when he stopped.

He waited, motionless, every sense alert, his eyes searching the shadowy under-

brush, and saw – yes, he was sure of it – the outline of a long powerful body crouching close to the bushes.

He almost stopped breathing. Father had said they still roved the timbered regions. A panther!

The animal had him cornered. No way to reach home without crossing Deep Fork. The minute he'd start down the creek bed, he'd be below the panther. Perfect position for it to spring on him.

Quietly, he edged on toward the creek, the great cat gliding in the same direction.
NOW!

In a swift sudden motion, he jerked his jacket high over his head and ran toward the panther, flapping the coat madly and screaming like a banshee.

Caught off guard, the animal crouched . . . then turned and fled.

“Come on. I'll show you just where it was,” he dared his brother next morning, and led three men to the tall trees that bordered Deep Fork: Father, skeptical Oliver, and his hunting buddy, Mike Callahan, who'd spent the night.

“Aw, phooey,” Oliver had scoffed. “No panther's gonna take tail and run from a kid that flaps his coattails at him. Some other critter, maybe a rabbit.”

Even when Father said, “It's Old Kickapoo Country. Still wild,” his brother had just shrugged.

All night, Alfred had tossed. He had to prove his story. No, that wasn't it . . . he had to prove . . .

Wincing there in the dark, he'd remembered that booming voice, “Can you?” He'd held his own with the panther, but that wasn't enough. Oliver had put him down – in front of Mr. Callahan's son, too. “Keep going', lad.”

He'd sat up in bed, then . . . By jiminy, he'd give it a try.

So in early morning, with the ground still moist from dew, he was down on hands and knees, crawling through the underbrush, ploughing aside dead leaves, trying to line up the place where he'd run at the animal. It had to show – somewhere –

“Come here!” at last, he gave a triumphant yell.

“See those claw prints? See how deep they are? When I ran at him, he dug in.

“Now, look over here. Same claw prints – HEADED THE OTHER WAY.”

Oliver and Mike, by this time flat on their stomachs, were measuring their own broad hands in the huge imprints.

“Well, I’ll be doggoned!” he heard Oliver mutter, as Mike scrambled to his feet.

“I’d sure hate to be huntin’ that rabbit.”



This photograph of Charles Albert Minnick and Sarah (Vass) Minnick is their 50th Wedding Anniversary picture, taken in 1930 at Yale, Oklahoma.

Charles Albert Minnick

1859-1945

by

Twylla I. Berger

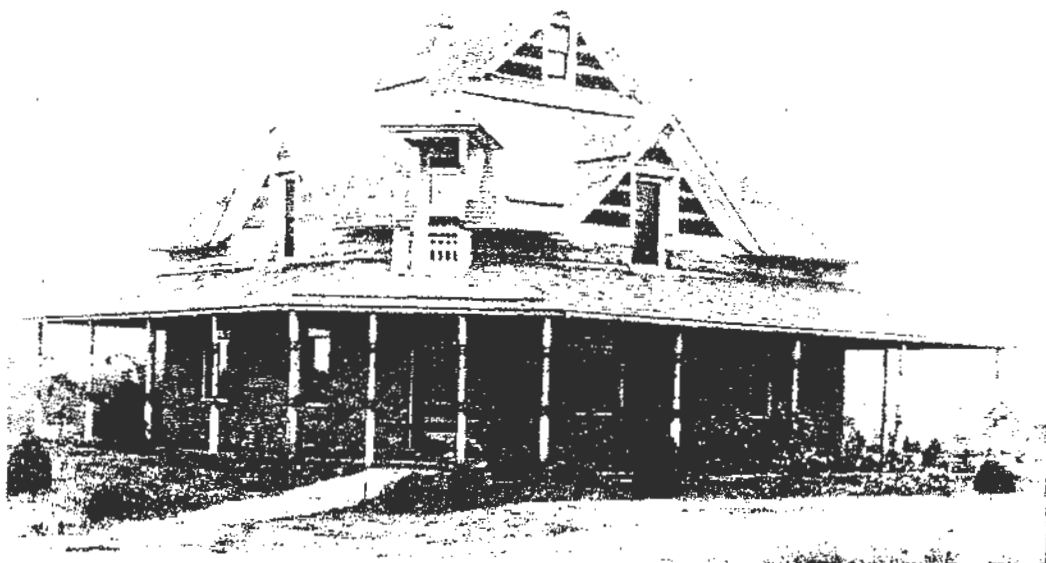
Charles Albert Minnick was born March 31, 1859, at Des Moines, Iowa. At the age of seventeen he attended school for six weeks and that was the extent of his schooling.

He married Sarah Thompson Vass on May 16, 1880, near Monroe, Iowa. To this union seven children were born.

Mr. Minnick purchased two farms here about the turn of the century, before Yale was ever dreamed of. However, he did not move from Iowa to Oklahoma until after Yale was started on the Ed Myers 160-acre farm.

Soon after coming to Oklahoma, Mr. Minnick had 97 acres of his east farm adjoining the town of Yale platted out into town lots and small acreage tracts. Many families then living in the Minnick addition of west Yale had nice homes only because he sold the lots and tracts on small payments and was lenient with their obligation to him. In his 40 years handling of this addition to the city, he never brought a single foreclosure proceeding.

Charles and Sarah Minnick were known for their influence in the development of Yale. He was always a city booster, investing much money in various enterprises that were started, including the Washing Machine Factory, Canning Factory, and others. He was owner and editor of the Yale Record from 1908 to 1916 and was in the real estate business for several years.



The Minnick Home, at 501 West Broadway, Yale, Oklahoma, was built in 1906. The home was one hundred years old in 2006.

The unique family always bought a high chair for the first child in each family. At Christmas time they bought a stalk of bananas as their gift for all the family when they came for Christmas dinner.

Mr. Minnick was especially happy about the safe return of all his grandsons who had spent four to five years in the service of their country.

From the Diary of Charles Albert Minnick

These observations are from the diary of Charles Albert Minnick. They represent just a few of the many entries in his diary describing significant events he witnessed during his lifetime.

Dec. 1, 1905. The United Brethren organized a church of 9 members in Yale. Today signed the statehood club of Yale and paid 50 cents as my share of sending a delegate from Yale to Washington to work for statehood at this term of Congress for Oklahoma.

August 18, 1906. Went to a darky picnic in town and stayed for church at night. An Indian preached in the schoolhouse.

April 8, 1907. The telephone Co. put a phone in our house at a dollar a month rent.

Dec. 11, 1907. Made a deal with C. F. Ford for the printing property. Made a contract with Ford to continue as editor and manager of the newspaper and work as needed in the office.

July 4, 1912. Today is 115 degrees in the shade and is the hottest day on record for Oklahoma and all of the U.S. east of the Rocky Mountains.

Jan. 4, 1912. An oil well is reported completed near Tager[?] post office, about fifteen miles southeast of Yale of about 35 barrel production. The Yale City Council has closed all of the pool halls in town and this is the complete victory of my fight against the outlaw element in Yale.

Oct. 1924. Went to see the asphalt (ash fault) paving work on the north main street, the first of this kind of work done in Yale.

April 1, 1925. I am 66 years of age today and in good health but our financial affairs are badly cramped but are slightly better than at this date last year and slightly better future prospect.

April 5, 1925. Heard a radio set for the first time in operation receiving from Bristow Okla. quite clear and distinct.

April 19 1928. Put up a lard can full of prunes and raisins with a can of carbon in them for summer use.

**Sarah Minnick's recipe for
treating diphtheria, 1905**

*The best thing for diphtheria is to get some real
side fat meat of a hog and sprinkle it with black pepper and
hold it by the fire and get it warm, and lay it on the throat
and cover over with flannel cloth, change and keep the
meat good and warm all the time.*

A Letter From Helen Romann*

July 14, 2006

To the Sheerar Museum:

Enclosed for you are some pieces of Stillwater history from 1944. The letter “home” to Perham, Minnesota, from Stillwater not only speaks to your city’s hospitality during the war times, but includes some historical notes about the town.

The letter was originally published in the *Perham Enterprise Bulletin* newspaper on August 24, 1944. I have been involved in a project to compile the local newspaper articles from 1940 through 1945 that are related to the second world war. After the articles were organized, audio recordings were produced.

As I read Helen Romann’s letter for recording, it occurred to me that this is not only a piece of history for Perham but for Stillwater as well. I hope you will enjoy the look back from her young perspective.

Perham is about to open a unique Veterans Museum that will include some of the components from my audio project. Hopefully, you may have the opportunity to visit!

Thank you,
Sonja Kosler

* This letter from Sonja Kosler introduces us to the story of Helen Romann and her stay in Stillwater in 1944. Our thanks go to Adelia Hanson and the Sheerar Museum for sharing this letter and the newspaper article with us.

Helen Romann Writes at Yeoman School

The following letter was written by Helen Romann to her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Romann, Jr.:

Yeoman School U.S.N.R.
Sunday, Aug. 13, 1944

Dear Folks:

No doubt you are wondering about my trip from "boot" camp to Oklahoma A&M. I kept a log of all our experiences, so I could write all this to you more easily.

We left Hunter on Monday evening. There were 360 of us on our troop train. Once more I was delighted to hear the train rumbling westward. Some of the larger cities that we passed through were Buffalo, NY; Meadville, Penn.; Akron, Ohio; Chicago; Decatur, Ill.; Springfield, Capitol of Illinois; Moberly, Mo.; Kansas City, Mo.; Arkansas City, Kan.; and finally Stillwater. This took us three days and three nights. Most of the girls enjoyed their trip. Our food was good and we enjoyed eating in a diner. We all took our turn at night watch duty. In many of the cities we were met by Canteen Mothers who treated us with oranges, cookies and ice cream. One town in Missouri was waiting for us; they knew we had a 15 minute stop-over. Here they had hot coffee and fresh home-made doughnuts which soon evaporated. Many of the girls marvelled at the sight of the flat lands, and at seeing so much tall, green corn. It did seem like as far as one could see was only corn. Each state has its beauties, though; nature did a wonderful job. The Mississippi river was a grand and welcomed sight to many of us. Twice an army troop train stopped along side of ours. We exchanged magazines and food with some of the fellows.

Now for a little about the Oklahoma A.&M. Yeoman's college. Stillwater has done a wonderful job in showing her hospitality to the army and navy. This little city is pretty, neat and quite spread out. There are 12,000 people in Stillwater, one bowling alley, 21 churches, 3 theatres, 1 gorgeous swimming pool and wide streets. Their city buses are blue and white; 5 cents will take you anywhere you want to go. They have a very good taxi service which is 10 cents for the Waves. We usually go to church downtown or the Crystal Plunge by taxi.

The college campus is large and there are many buildings, all of which are red brick trimmed in white. Our dormitories are spacious, 4 stories high and u shaped. Our cafeterias are taken care of by Stillwater mothers. The food is delicious, all home cooked. It reminds me of home. Someone can bake a cherry pie like yours, mom. During this hot weather they have more fruits and juices out for us. Our room is done up in white maple furniture with double bunks. I got a top one again. There is plenty of closet and drawer space for each girl. There are no bells ringing here to get us up, etc. A bugler does all the work. Our classes start at 8 a.m. and end at 15:40. There are 7 classes a day for us to attend. We are reviewing all our shorthand, speeding up our typing, improving our spelling, English, naval correspondence and learning naval personnel. Every Saturday we are given a strict test on work covered during the week. You must pass. So you can see we really study. Each week night we have two hours of "quiet hour" in which everyone studies.

On weekends we are free. We have planned one trip to Tulsa and one to Oklahoma City.

Our instructors are civilians and we like this very much. I know now what people mean by Southern hospitality. I have never seen such wonderful people. Everyone is kind, courteous and so patiently helpful. They aren't in a hurry to come and go. The atmosphere and living conditions are grand.

This being my first Sunday in Oklahoma, I asked the driver to find my church for

me. I was met at the door by a lovely woman who had visited Minnesota several times. She immediately asked me, "How can you get along without all those lakes?" She hit my sport. I swam everyday at Hunter, or was their life guard. I found the Stillwater pool the first thing this weekend. Oh, everyone has a real Oklahoma tan. It takes only 15 minutes and most of the girls are pink. I believe one could turn brown just standing in the shade.

Just a word about my roommates: "Spottsy" is from Wisconsin; "Bea" from Maine; and "Katty" from Long Island. We didn't know each other at first, but now no one could separate us.

Our recreation program is well worth praising. Shows are given in the base. There are 40 bikes out here for us to rent. The physical educational department has every kind of game equipment for us. We have dances every Saturday nite. What do we advance with? There is a naval radio technical school here on the north end of the campus and some army branch has an engineer corp near by.

It seems strange to meet a marching platoon of cadets, our section leader will yell "By the right flank" and they flank to the left at the same time. After we have passed, everyone wonders why we gave them so much of the road. Many of the fellows watch us on the drill field evenings. They are being convinced women can be very regimentary.

We have seen a beautiful sunset every night. There are many things here that remind me of Minnesota.

I'm looking forward to September and October here. They have told me their fall weather is wonderful.

Bye Now,

Love, Helen

Payne County Historical Society

2006 Members

The following have paid their dues for 2006 or have lifetime or institutional memberships.

Dr. Ted Agnew Stillwater, OK	Frank & Vonda Evans Stillwater, OK	Judy Hull Stillwater, OK	Cynthia Shawley Stillwater, OK
Allen County Public Library Ft. Wayne, IN	William & Barbara Dunn Stillwater, OK	Mary J. Leigh Cushing, OK	Sheerar Museum Stillwater, OK
Arts & Humanities Council Stillwater, OK	Dr. Lawrence H. Erwin Tulsa, OK	Elizabeth Ann Matoy Stillwater, OK	Jimmie Shields Stillwater, OK
Twylla Berger Yale, OK	LeRoy H. Fischer Stillwater, OK	Dr. Terry P. Miller Stillwater, OK	Jim Showalter Stillwater, OK
Bill Bernhardt, Jr. Stillwater, OK	Richard & Malinda Fischer Stillwater, OK	Matt P. Moore Stillwater, OK	Carolyn Simank Stillwater, OK
Loretta Bertholf Stillwater, OK	John Gage Stillwater, OK	D. Earl Newsom Stillwater, OK	Bob Simon Yale, OK
Alvena Bieri Stillwater, OK	John Gardiner Seattle, WA	Northwestern Okla. State J.W. Martin Library Alva, OK	Stillwater Airport Museum Stillwater, OK
Kathleen Bird. Stillwater, OK	Dorsey Gibson Stillwater, OK	Oklahoma Historical Society Oklahoma City, OK	Stillwater High School Library Stillwater, OK
Gerald & Jeanette Bradshaw Stillwater, OK	Dorsey Glover Stillwater, OK	Oklahoma State University Stillwater, OK	Stillwater Public Library Stillwater, OK
Kent & Dorothy Carmain Stillwater, OK	JoAnn Hill Stillwater, OK	Greg Olds Austin, TX	David & Mary Margaret Sylvester Ponca City, OK
Dale & Carla Chlouber Stillwater, OK	Adelia Hanson Stillwater, OK	Mary L. Parker Linden, MI	Bill & Catherine Thompson Stillwater, OK
Brenda A. Bose Stillwater, OK	John & Merle Harshbarger Glencoe, OK	Charles Platt Tulsa, OK	Eldon Townley Stillwater, OK
Reta Crotzer Stillwater, OK	Elizabeth Jo Heiliger Stillwater, OK	Walter and Jane Price Stillwater, OK	George R. Waller Stillwater, OK
Alice C. Cussner Yale, OK	Winfrey Houston Stillwater, OK	Wanda Raper Stillwater, OK	Barbara Wells Stillwater, OK
Art Daugherty Stillwater, OK	Elvis & Jana Howell Stillwater, OK	W. David Sasser Perkins, OK	Kelli Renee White Stillwater, OK
Dearinger Printing Stillwater, OK	Dr. Eugene Hoyt Stillwater, OK	Doris J. Scott Stillwater, OK	Leon Wood Stillwater, OK

Payne County Historical Society

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

Membership in the Payne County Historical Society is open to anyone interested in the collection and preservation of Payne County history. All members receive copies of the *Payne County Historical Review* free. In addition, the Society sponsors informative meetings and historical outings several times a year.

Yes, I want to be a member of the Payne County Historical Society. Enclosed is my check for:

- \$15.00 for Individual Membership
- \$25.00 for Family Membership
- \$20.00 for Institutional Membership
- \$100.00 for Life Membership

(Membership includes subscription to the *Payne County Historical Review*.)


Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mail to:

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



PAYNE COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 2262, Stillwater, OK 74076