

Radio 4114/34—

Seminole county received its name because of a condition that almost divided this nation—slavery. In 1750 the great Muskogee Nation of Indians was living among the creeks and rivers of Alabama. Slaves ran away from the plantations of the Carolinas and Georgia. The Muskogee nation refused to accept the slaves and a minority party departed with the slaves and finally settled in ~~the~~ Florida. They were called Seminoles or wanderers. Thus comes the name of the Tribe and this county.

When the Seminoles were forced to leave their home~~x~~ land in the Everglades of Florida and were conveyed to the new country of the West, not unlike the Acadians of old, they were brought to Ft. Gibson by boat and turned loose in the wilds of what to them was a vast wilderness.

During the Civil war the tribe divided and many went to Leroy, Kansas, for refuge. After the war E.J. Brown a white man, and the first to be adopted into that tribe, was designated by the government to return them to their reservation. He did this and established a store that afterwards became the townsite of Wewoka. In 1867 a post office was established at Wewoka and E.J. Brown was appointed the first postmaster. After the treaty of 1866 the Seminoles formed a government. It consisted of two representatives from the fourteen bands. Two of these bands were negroes—being the old slave families that ran away from the slave holders of the South.

In 1897 a townsite was laid out, platted and dedicated to the use of the Seminole Indians. In 1902 the Wewoka Realty & Trust Co., began to sell lots. In 1906 the townsite was approved by congress and the United States court incorporated the town by proper order.

Wewoka is a Seminole word meaning "Barking Waters." There were several other communities in those early days: Hiliswa, meaning "Medicine" just south of Seminole; and Sasakwa, (meaning wild goose) in the southern part of the nation.

In 1895 the Choctaw, Oklahoma & Gulf Ry Co., built through the nation and was followed by the Frisco in 1900 and the Katy in 1904.

Wewoka and Sasakwa remained the principal towns of the nation for many years although the settlements of Tate, Cheyharha, Sylvian, Irene (now Schooltan) Little, Vamoosa, Thrace and Price had sprung up and were given postoffice, or at least designations on the maps.

In 1905, Konawa, (meaning beads) was incorporated and later Hazel about half way between Konawa and Maud sprang into life.

In 1906 the Ealice Carter allotment was platted and dedicated as the town of Seminole. Prior to that time the trading post was a mile west and was called Tidmore, and before that: "Mekeykey Switch."

The Settlement of Tidmore was moved to the new townsite and to-day Seminole is a city of eleven thousand people and more.

Lima, a negro town was incorporated in 1908 and after the advent of oil the post office and depot was moved a half mile east and called New Lima,. It is for the whites.

The history of the county has been unique in its political influence upon the state. In those days before the world war it was a hot bed for the socialists and one election saw a majority of that ticket elected. Just prior to the election of Jack Walton as governor the Reconstruction League was fomented, organized and started to function in this county. In 1917 the W.C.U. rebellion started in the southern portion of the county. It was part of a nationwide plan to defeat the draft and prevent our participation in the world war. More than three hundred men composed of whites, negroes and Indians gathered near the town of Sasakwa; armed themselves, burned bridges, demanded and took supplies from the citizens and started a march toward the national capitol. It was broken up by the local officers, however, and many of the participants were sent to the federal penitentiary for sedition.

As early as 1901 attempts were being made on the Wewoka townsite to produce oil. In July 1907 a fair well of heavy oil was discovered. In 1913 a leasing campaign for oil and gas was had and practically every acre of land in the county was leased. Royalty that has produced as much as twelve thousand dollars per acre, from the royalty alone, sold for twenty five cents per acre.

On St. Patrick's day, March 17th, 1923, R.H. Smith brought in a well a mile and half southeast of Wewoka which opened what is today known as the greater Seminole era. In March 1924 the Cromwell pool was brought in. This developed into a good sized field and the town of Cromwell was platted and incorporated. It was known in those days throughout the nation as "Cromwell, the wicked." It was at this place and during the boom days that Bill Tilgman, the famous old marshal of the West met his death at the hands of Wylie Linn.

In 1925 the first Wilcox well was discovered two and half miles south of Wewoka and in August, 1926, Bob Garland drilled in the first real producer in the Seminole City Section. This created a panic and drilling started in every direction. It made the town of Seminole a veritable beehive. Supply houses moved in, industry picked up, fortunes were made.

The Konawa pool came in in the early part of 1930. The depression prevented Konawa from getting the full benefit of that pool but the

little town soon became a city of three or four thousand.

The county lines of Seminole county were fixed by C.N. Haskell and Wm. H. Murray, the first and last governors of this state, in the constitutional convention. Wewoka was designated the county seat. Two county seat fights developed, one in October, 1908 and another in May, 1920. Wewoka remains the county seat.

With the advent of oil fine homes and churches, excellent schools; the best hard surfaced roads in the state, were built. The old citizens who had pioneered the county remained to direct the affairs of the cities and county, in prosperity. The county has a population now of nearly 80,000 people.

The redman's fires are in ashes; their arrows are broken; wherethey once hunted the deer and wild turkey oil wells give forth the fluid that runs the world; where their council met and made the laws and punished the offenders, the white's man's court functions; their great national academies of Mekusukey and Emahaka have gone with the years; the stomp dance and the Greencorn festival are but seldom heard and the old missionaries have passed with the old men of the tribe. What was a vast wilderness but a few years ago has seen a transition swift, romantic and amazing.