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INTERVIEW WITH RAY McNAUGHTON ATTORNEY
AND DR. GUY P. McNAUGHTON.
MIAMI, OKLA
FIELD WORKER NANNIE LEE BURNS.
April 27, 1937

Thomas B. McNaughton, a native of Scotland, came at an early day to this country through Canada. Here he met Kathrine Prior, a native of Ireland, and they were married in 1832. Drifting southward they settled in Tennessee, where they raised their family. Thomas McNaughton Jr. was a Captain in the Confederate Army. Thomas McNaughton Sr. also a soldier, took part in much active fighting and was wounded at Shelbyville, Nashville, Dover, Fort Donelson, and at Shiloh received wounds that incapacitated him for six months.

A younger son, the subject of this sketch at Winchester, was born in Franklin County, Tennessee, June 13, 1853, where he attended the local schools till he was thirteen years of age; when desirous of seeing the world and pioneering, he came by steamboat to Fort Smith.

Bapiste Peoria, the Principal Chief of the Peorias, who came with the Peorias when they came from Southern Illinois to Eastern Kansas, had been active in the tribal affairs for some years as we find that he was one of the signers by mark to the

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treaty signed with the government at Edwardsville in 1818 and also to the treaty at Saint Louis on 1832 negotiated at Lewistown, Illinois, the year before. The treaty including the Peorias pertaining to their removal to Kansas in 1867 was signed by Bapiste Peoria, John Mitchell and Ed Black. Ed Black was Bapiste's assistant in his later years as he was an orphan and had been looked after by Bapiste Peoria and educated by him and he did much of the clerical work, as he had been taught to read and write. Bapiste Peoria continued active during their stay in Kansas and came with his tribe to the present Peoria Nation and remained active in the affairs of the tribe here till his death when quite old. He is buried in Tribal Cemetery near Peoria.

He had a daughter, Elizabeth, born in 1842, who was educated and graduated from the Sacred Heart Institution in Saint Louis. She married David L. Peery, a white man, of French descent who was born in Indiana, May 31, 1834, and came with the Peorias on their removal to Kansas, serving Bapiste many years as Clerk, and his life is closely associated with that of the Peorias.

Elizabeth Bapiste Peoria and David L. Peery were

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married at Paola, Kansas, September 23, 1860, and they had a daughter, Clara Ellen Peery, who was born at Paola, Kansas, Oct. 1, 1863 and she came to the present Indian Territory in 1876 and settled near Seneca, Missouri, just west of the line in Indian Territory.

McNAUGHTON'S EARLY LIFE.

Returning to John Patrick McNaughton, the subject of this sketch. On his arrival in Fort Smith, he secured employment as a laborer and worked on the first brick building on Garrison Avenue in that city. The next year (1867) he secured a job of hauling cotton from Fort Smith to Springfield, Mo., then the terminus of the Atlantic and Pacific Rail Road, now the Frisco. For three years, this boy in his teens drove a six mule team to and fro through this unsettled country, with practically no roads and no bridges, fording the streams and enduring but enjoying his life and saving his money.

By this time having saved his earnings, he began looking around for other employment and to better himself and joined a party of Government surveyors.

These surveyors were to make a survey of the Indian Territory and with them in 1870 for the first time he came to the

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Indian Territory, working southward with them. After some months he left them and spent the following year in Fort Worth, Texas. Adventure still calling, he went from there as a "Bull-whacker" with a wagon train to Salt Lake, Utah. From Utah he made his way to Arizona as a "mule-skinner" with a freighting crew,. From here learning of the various gold mines and fired by the stories of the wealth of Mexico, he joined a party bound for Mexico. They made their way in but were so closely watched that when their object was discovered the party was killed one by one till he was compelled to make his way out on foot alone to southern California. From here he made his way back to Texas, this time to Sherman, where he secured a contract to supply the Texas and Pacific Rail Road, then building, with timbers and rail road ties.

While working here, his eyes fixed on the Black Hills in Dakote as his next destination, he came in contact with a Shawnee Indian, Homeless, homesick and broke and as his way lay north, he decided to bring the Indian back with him, which he did paying his fare and feeding him. Grateful to him, the Shawnee on the way told him of the old Spanish

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Mines located in Northeast Indian Territory, so Mr. McNaughton decided to stop and have a look at them. Making his way from Vinita to Seneca, Mo, he hired a buckboard and drove northwest through the thinly settled and mostly wooded country till he located his object.

Here in the fall of 1877, near the present site of Peoria, he found the abandoned diggings and was surprised at the magnitude of the operations that had been carried on, and which covered forty acres and showed extensive operation. Here he found crude shafts, deep, round in shape, similar to those that he had seen in Mexico and appearing to have been excavated by stone instruments. By ropes he had with him, he descended into the ground and began exploring. He found drifts, extending out in different directions from the shafts and in some of them could feel fresh air which indicated that these tunnels extended for considerable distance and possibly connected with other openings. Making as thorough an exploration as cave-ins and fallen rock would permit, he was certain that he had found a mine, though he found no ore. At last here was one of De Soto's or Cortez's explorations, and knowing from the extent of the operations carried on that from 500 to 1000 men must have been employed, he returned to Seneca. He gave up all

thought of the Black Hills and applied to the Indian Agent at the Agency there for a permit to prospect for ore in the Indian Territory. The agent, now knowing of his explorations, refused him and also refused to let him enter the Indian Reservation. Enthused over his find, he returned to Sherman, Texas, where he interested Geo. W. Newcombe of that city in his prospect and thus financed, they decided to appeal direct to Washington, D. C. So McNaughton went to Washington and secured a permit from Carl Shurz, Secretary under President Grant, allowing him to prospect but not to mine or sell the ore.

Returning to the Indian Territory, he found that the Peoriss had bought a strip of land $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles wide, extending from the Neosho River on the west to the Missouri State Line on the east containing nearly 50,000 acres, paying \$1.25 per acre for it, and this contained the territory he was interested in at this time. Thinking now that they had bought the land they should be able to deal with him, he took the matter to the Chiefs and in a general Council, they decided to lease to him. So in 1878, he leased several sections of land near Peoria. These leases were witnessed or rather signed by mark

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by the two Chiefs and signed by Ed. Black Clerk, the man trained and educated by Bapiste Peoria. Thinking himself now doubly secure, he began extensive prospecting in the vicinity of Peoria and west of the Spanish mines where he thought the geological formation favorable. Here he found, not gold but lead, close to the surface in sheet or bunch formations about twenty feet in depth. Along with this he found the zinc but he discarded this. Elated at his success and the discovery attracting attention, the Secretary of the Interior refused to recognize the Tribal Leases, fearing that it would set a harmful precedent and instructed Mr. McNaughton that he was limited to prospecting.

In order to remain near, he secured employment in nearby Baxter Springs in a General Store owned by Jim Charley, one of the Chiefs.

While here on November 1, 1881, he married Clara Ellen Peery, daughter of David L. Peery, then Clerk for the Peories. They were married at the Seneca Agency by the Agent.

The couple located an eighty acres near Seneca, living in a small log house and began to farm. They remained here only a short time for in 1885 Mr. McNaughton bought from Jim Charley a permit (Often referred to as the first deed in Ottawa Co.) to

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the location of the present McNaughton Farm, six miles east of Miami and moved his family here. The homesite is located on a beautiful knoll on the prairie and the view here caused Mr. McNaughton to name his home Max Hirage.

Mr. and Mrs. McNaughton were the parents of Willis, Earl, Ray, Guy and Pearl of whom three are still prominent in the life of this County. Willis and his family continue to farm on a part of the old home; Ray is an attorney in Miami; and his brother, Guy has attained recognition in his chosen field, that of radiology. Willis is the present Chief of the Peorias.

Still watching and waiting for an opportunity, it came nearer when, in 1889, the Peorias were allotted, each of the 153 members of the tribe receiving 200 acres. Major Spencer Hartwig, the Government Representative who superintended the allotment, while here made the McNaughton Home his headquarters. Under the Allotment act they were prohibited from selling for twenty-five years but no restrictions were placed on leasing. So again, Mr. McNaughton began to lease. He leased 8000 acres for grazing purposes and several thousand acres for mining. The former for five years and the latter for 10 years.

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The 8000 acres were immediately fenced with wire and posts and this was the first large acreage to be fenced in Indian Territory. In the mining game again, Mr. McNaughton brought over word from Texas in 1890s a horse power drill and organized the "Peoria Mining Co", with a capital stock of \$1,000,000.00 to mine in the Indian Territory. The incorporators were; W. C. Peery, President, of Fort Scott, Kansas; J. P. McNaughton, Vice President and Manager; W. H. Turner, Secretary and Treasurer, Baxter Springs, Kansas; with J. C. Wilson of Topeka, Kansas, and Col. J. R. Hallowell of Columbus, Kansas, as members. In 1891 just northwest of Peoria they began prospecting with the new drill and sank their first shaft.

Attracting attention by their operations, the validity of their operations was again questioned, so, backed by his associates, he again journeyed to Washington and secured the passage of a Bill by Congress, "Declaring the Peorians to be citizens of the United States (as they had accepted their allotments and owned their individual lands) and, as such, granting them all the rights, privileges and benefits as such, citizens;" and the parents were declared to be legal guardians of minor children without process of court.

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Again the Peoria Mining Company began leasing this time for 25 years. These leases were approved by Congress that same year. By now, his associates were becoming discouraged, first by their legal difficulties and now by the low price of ore. Lead selling at \$50.00 and less and zinc \$12.00 to \$15.00 per ton with no railroad closer than Baxter and no smelter close. So the company suspended operations, but McNaughton still had faith in it so he took an option on their holdings and went to New York City where he sold their holdings for \$1,000,000.00, retaining a third interest for himself. The new owners in February, 1892, reorganized under the New Jersey laws and with a \$3,000,000.00 capital stock. Now real mining began and in the years of 1892 & '93, they took out and shipped 3,000,000 pounds of free lead ore and 12 carloads of zinc ore, easier now because a smelter had been established at Webb City, Mo.

PEORIA

Peoria, as Indian Territory's first mining town, was booming, hundreds of people were coming in, houses were being built, stores and various business concerns must be housed. Steam shovels were being brought in and shafts were being sunk to a 100 feet or more to the deeper runs of ore. The town was incorporated and to this Peoria lays its claim to be the first

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incorporated town in Indian Territory. Also a Post Office which some claim to be the first Post Office in this section but this is doubtful as the Post Office of Max had been opened in the fall of 1891 (and that of Jimtown 3 miles north of Miami even earlier) in the home of Mr. McNaughton with himself as Postmaster. With the deeper drilling, water was encountered which they were not able to control, so one after another the various companies began to quit, the people began to drift away. The boom was over and soon nearly abandoned.

LATER LIFE.

This resourceful man now turned his attention to stock raising at Max Mirage, where he had recently built a twostory ten room basement house, bank Barns, etc., The home is surrounded by a thirty acre grove of stately trees that he had set in rows (now 48years ago). Here he was among the first to specialize in the raising of pure blood Shorthorn and Angus cattle, Percheron and Clydesdale horses. From an old Book of Records now in the possession of his son, Ray, we find that when the Post Office of Max was established in 1891 his sole equipment consisted of \$15.46 cents in postage stamps. Also the same shows the cancellations for the month of November were 20 cents, and for the month of December 76 cents.

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When the Kansas City, Fort Scott and Gulf Railroad was built south to Miami, from Baxter, he invited the officials of the road to his home for a "Prairie Chicken Shoot", which event was for several years an annual event. This railroad later became and is the Frisco.

In 1895 he moved his family, (excepting his oldest son who remained at Wax Mirage) to Miami where he established a home at 203 D St NW. Here he maintained a home till his death and his wife continued to remain till hers.

On coming to Miami, he assisted in building the Friend's Church, still standing at 102 A St NE, and he was instrumental in obtaining the First Rural Route out of Miami. Always active and alert he made frequent trips to Washington in the interests of the Peorias. During the recent mining operations from 1907, Mr. McNaughton took an active part in the early leasing and remained interested and at last saw the field around Peoria and Lincolnville, de-watered and much ore taken out, justifying his judgment of many years ago.

One of the last conversations that the writer remembers with him was in their office in Miami some years ago when he had returned from a trip to the old Cherokee lands of Georgia,



Alabama and Tennessee, in which he was describing in glowing terms the gold mining possibility of that country. This colorful, resourceful active man, a man whose life has meant so much to the tribe that he became identified with, passed on to other hunting grounds on November 13, 1934, and is buried in the Peery Cemetery; in sight of the home where he spent so many years.

His wife, Mrs. McNaughton, a true friend, neighbor and helpmeet, a fitting mate for the brave pioneer, continued at the family home in Miami surrounded by her sons and grandchildren till her death on April 10, 1935, when she was placed beside her husband in the Peery Cemetery. Thus has passed two of the most useful of this county's pioneers.