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BIOGRAPHY OF REVEREND ORLANDO SHAY

Reverend Orlando Shay was born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1867. He is a son of George C. and Maria Shay. The Shay family came to Missouri in 1830 and settled in Union and worked for a railroad company. He joined the Confederate army and served under General Price at the beginning of the war. He took part in the battle of Wilson's Creek, and was afterwards transferred to General Lee's command; participating in the battles of Vicksburg, Shiloh, Shenandoah, and others. He was wounded three times, and was with Lee at the time of his surrender.

At the close of the war he located in St. Louis, Missouri, where he lived until 1893. He then came to the Creek Nation and settled near Callisaw. From there he moved to Checotah. He and his wife were the parents of Orlando, the only child.

Mr. Shay received his education in Altus, Arkansas. For many years he walked and preached in private homes, school houses, and ranches. At that time the large pastures were filled with long horned Texas cattle which had no more respect for the Reverend than they had for the wolves and coyotes, and would often give him quite a chase.

The houses were very far apart and he walked the distance between what is now McIntosh and Muskogee Counties. Some of the good natured cowboys around where the town of Henryetta is now located felt sorry for the Reverend and offered to give him a wild pony if he would ride it. They said they would also furnish him with a saddle, bridle, and blanket. The Reverend was very pleased with their offer and said he would try and ride the unbroken mustang. The cowboys went out on the prairie and roped the pony and brought him up to the ranch where the Reverend often stopped over night. The cowboys saddled the pony and held him while the Reverend mounted and placed his feet in the stirrups. They then turned the pony loose and he made several jumps. The rider went high in the air, and lit on the soft prairie grass, and the boys whooped and threw their hats in the air and went over and helped the Reverend up. Brushing the dirt off his clothes, they asked him if he was hurt. He looked up at the cowboys and said "No", and that he believed he could have ridden that wild horse if he could have kept his seat.

In 1901, Mr. Shay married the widow of Judge Leblance, who formerly was Minnie Bowles, a Cherokee, and a daughter of James Bowles, and his wife, Chough Yonk. The latter was a half breed Cherokee. The grandfather of Mrs Shay,

Captain Bowles, was chief of the Cherokees of Texas in an early day, and a personal friend of General Sam Houston, with whom he served during the wars of 1836 and 1848.

Mrs. Shay's parents died when she was a very small child leaving her and her brother Richard.

Mr. Shay was a large stock holder in the Checotah Light and Ice Plant, and also purchased the Henson two-story brick building which is on the corner of Main and Gentry. Mrs. Shay's allotment was on the east side and at the foot of the Bird Doublehead Mountain, about eight miles east of Checotah. On this place Mrs. Shay had a very fine peach and apple orchards. Mr. Shay died in Okmulgee in 1936, but Mrs. Shay had passed away several years before the death of her husband.