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I. DEX CAP'S

Schools--Creek Nation
Churches--Creek Nation
Brewer, T. F.
Muskogee
Checote, Samuel
Caddo
Social gatherings--Creek Nation

BROOK, ECK E. (LRS.) HARRELL INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE.
HISTORY HARRELL INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE

Story given by Mrs. Eck A. Brook
537 N. 13th Street, Muskogee, Okla.
to Miss Robinson.

Harrell International Institute, the Methodist school for girls was founded in 1881 by our beloved Pioneer Reverend T.F. Brewer. Long before the school was established Methodist preachers had traveled great circuit throughout the Indian Territory establishing churches where Indian tribes were residing.

There is a halo of romance that some how attaches its self to voluntary undertakings amid conditions of physical hardship, and in that early day the luxury of modern travel was unknown.

The facilities for communication by post was few. Many times the necessities of life were not available.

Yet our early preachers rejoiced in their work with never a thought they were doing any thing heroic. How welcome were these early pioneers of the cross and how enduring the foundation that they laid.

Of particular interest to Muskogee was the work of Reverend T.F. Brewer and his wife whose life became as much a part of the early development of the Indian Territory.

Coming to Muskogee, when Muskogee, was a small village, he organized the first Methodist Episcopal South, and served as its first pastor. This church was built of native stone from quarries near by and for many years was affectionately spoken of as the little rock church. At this time the only school in the Indian Territory was tribal Government, and Mission schools. Schools maintained exclusively for Indian students. Mr. Brewer soon realized the need for the school for white children and it was in the little rock

church that stood at the corner of Cherokee St. and Okmulgee Ave. ³⁵⁸
 that a school was founded and that later grew into Harrell International
 School.

In August 1881 the trustees of the M.S. Church South, in
 Muskogee Indian Territory passed the following resolution: Resolved
 that in the opinion of this board a Methodist High School offering
 first class privilege should be open in the town of Muskogee.

Resolved; That we apply at once to the Hon. Samuel Checote
 principal chief of Muskogee Nation for permission to open such a
 school in said town of Muskogee on the first Monday in September 1881.

Resolved; That the Rev. T.F. Brewer be, and is hereby elected
 President of said school with authority of this board to engage the
 services of such assistants as he may need and to make all necessary
 arrangements for opening the school. Subsequently resolution of en-
 dorsement offered by the Rev. J.S. Thompson and James McHenry were
 passed by the Creek District conference. Similiar ones were offered
 by the Rev. J.S. Chapman, and J.W. Cowart and were adopted by the
 Cherokee District conference. These conferences also requested the
 trustees to name the school Harrell International Institute.

The school was offered to the trustees of the Indian Mission
 conference at the session held in Caddo Indian Territory Oct. 5th, to
 10th, 1881 were upon the conference has the following resolution.

Resolved; That the conference accept the offer of the trustees
 of Harrell International Institute at Muskogee tendering the school
 to the care of the conference, and we hereby adopt it under the care
 and patronage of this conference.

An act granting the request of the conference passed the Creek Council and was approved by Chief Checote November 2, 1881.

The first school year had three teachers Mr. Brewer, Mrs. M. A. Locke and Miss Alice Boardman. The pupils who came in from all over the Territory boarded at the parsonage and with the towns people. The little church had a small frame house in the rear, and it, and the parsonage were used as class rooms. The school soon out grew its small quarters and Mr. Brewer surmounting the great difficulties succeeded not only in securing a valuable building but also in making a success of the one of the highest grade schools in the Indian Territory. There was great rejoicing in Muskogee when the corner stone for the new building was laid. The structure was four stories in height, was built of brick with broad hall, large class rooms, art and music room, sunny well ventilated bed rooms, a large dining hall and a well equipped basement and laundry.

The yards, at first a plot of virgin prairie, under the care of Mrs. Brewer became a thing of beauty with flowers, well planned walks, and maple trees. The boarding department which sheltered the daughters of cattle men, merchants, doctors, farmers and etc. gave equal opportunity to Indian girls who, but for this aid, would have spent their youth in obscure homes with no opportunity for cultural or spiritual advancement. The children of the town flocked to Harrell to school Jews, Catholics, Protestants, boys and girls of all ages from first grade pupils to seniors were given an opportunity to study under cultured well educated, many times exceptionally talented, teachers.

Among the teachers in early days were Mrs. Marcia Marvin, daughter of Bishop Marvin of the M. S. Church South. Mrs. Augusta Wilson sister of Bishop Alpheus W. Wilson. Miss Kate Tennehill an accomplished musician

of Richmond Virginia. Miss Alice Callahan, daughter of the late Captain S. B. Callahan, a prominent Creek Indian. Miss Fannie Locke niece of Rev. T. F. Brewer was one of the music teachers.

The boarding department of the school was well conducted. Under the plan of Mr. and Mrs. Brewer there was no withdrawing into separate president's house. At all times Mrs. Brewer's room was a haven for any home sick or lonesome girl. Out of school hours it usually held a merry crowd, for boarding school life was just home life on a big scale.

Every year there was six or eight students, usually Indian girls who were being helped to get an education. The student body always wore uniforms and these girls were not only given free board but were furnished with clothing and books. At all times the home folks of the students were welcome visitors to the school. There were always a guest room and no one who needed its comfort was turned away. This was an opportunity for service too great to be slighted.

To the ministers of the Indian Mission conference, most of whom were at poor pay or on a poor circuit, Harrell became a mecca and there was always a welcome for the men and shelter for his ~~board~~.

For many years the town depended upon its school for entertainment. Concerts, lectures, recitals and banquets were always attended.

The teachers of Harrell added much to the social life of the town. Charming, attractive young women were very popular socially. Miss Jessie Weir (Mrs. A.S. Bonnell) Miss Kate Williman (Mrs. C.L. Jackson) Mrs. Robert Jones came as a teacher and remained to make her home in Muskogee. Miss Fannie Locke called Muskogee her home until her death.

While primarily a school for girls, boys were always admitted to the day school. Finally the demand for a boarding department for boys was met by the erection of a new dormitory and an athletic hall.

It was not an easy task to equip and maintain a large school with a large teaching force with the only available funds, the tuition and board paid by the student. Many times the money came in slowly, many times the president and the trustees were forced to ask the aid of the board of Missions, but never once did they falter or lose sight of the purpose of these schools which was to educate, to teach christain religion, and to lend a helping hand, when ever they could. After 15 successful years Mr. Brewer resigned the presidency, and entered the regular ministry. The school then came under the direction of Rev. W. R. Thornton, who in turn was succeeded by Prof. R. A. Crockett and Rev. C. M. Coppedge. In 1899 the name of the school was changed to Spaulding College. In recognition of liberal donations made by Mr. H. B. Spaulding. Soon afterward the main building and the gymnasium were destroyed by fire. The school was immediately reorganized in some what crowded quarters and plans for a new and better building begun. The corner stone of the new building was laid Oct. 24, 1901. When the building was completed Mr. Brewer again took charge of the school, remaining until Mrs. Brewer's health made it necessary for him to give up the work.

Mr. J. B. Staples then became president. The school was closed under the presidency of Rev. O. S. Goddard and the property sold with the expectation of putting the money into a new and larger school on Agency Hill. This plan was never realized.

There are men and women all over Oklahoma to day who give grateful acknowledgement and heartfelt thanks for the work that was done at Harrell Institute.

A graduate of the school, while visiting here said, "I wonder if you feel as I do about old Harrell? We had splendid teachers and they

gave us a great deal more than we realized at the time." (302)

A young lad said "you know that Professor Savage who, taught mother Latin, must have been a whiz. I took the boys home with me just to show mother off, she can read Latin as well as I can read English, and she has been out of school for twenty years." Methodism has always placed emphasis upon the the religious, and cultural training of children and youth. Harrell was distinctly a church school

It's a long look behind us but the most distinct impression that comes from a review of the years at Harrell was the faithful, loyal service of Mr. and Mrs. Brewer. They gave royally and withheld nothing. Their time, their money, their personal influence went into the work. The good that they did was builded into the lives of all those around them and lives today in many homes throughout the state of Oklahoma.