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INTERVIEW WITH MRS. ECK E. BROOK
Muskogee, Oklahoma

William M. Martin, a Muskogee pioneer, was born at Evansville, Arkansas, in 1848. He was the son of David DuValt Martin, a native of Alsace-Lorraine, and Isabel Black, of Stanton, Virginia. His father, a prosperous land owner and merchant, died in 1860 just as war broke out between the states, leaving his mother with five small children.

Harrassed by the Indians under the command of northern soldiers the family refugeed, with other neighbors, to Texas, making the trip with the protection of the Southern Army. At the close of the war they returned to find very little remaining of their once prosperous life. The family broken up by the War, the young lad went to work on his mother's farm, but finding time for reading and study. Fortunate in having a good teacher in the neighborhood, and being close to Cane Hill, the former seat of Arkansas University, he continued his studies until he was able to take charge of a school.

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In 1874 he was appointed superintendent of the Asbury Indian Mission School at Muskogee, Indian Territory. This was a manual training school and a large farm in connection with it was worked by the boys. His duties as teacher, and as superintendent of the work of the boys, kept him very busy, but also gave him a wide acquaintance among the Indians, who, throughout his life were his staunch friends. In later years these friends sought his advice on many affairs, trusting him as they did few men.

In 1878 he married Hannah Lindsey, herself a teacher and the daughter of Dr. Harvey Lindsey, who was helping to make Indian Territory a better place in which to live.

While Muskogee was a small village there was culture in the little town. Early day stories tell of dinners, dances, a literary club, etc, small gatherings, but interesting affairs.

In 1880 Mr. Martin, with his wife and a baby daughter, moved to Muskogee where he entered the mercantile business as manager of a general store. Wishing a congenial neighbor, he built his home next door to the New Methodist Church and its small parsonage, rejoicing that he would have good neighbors in his old friends Rev. and Mrs. T. T. Brewer, whom he had known at Asbury Mission. The new home was one of the first built in the little village of Muskogee.

The family grew until nine children were born, Matie (Mrs. Eck, E. Brook), William L., Ethel (Mrs. Rees Evans), Bettie (Mrs. Joe Bailey Allen), John DuValt, Nellie, Eugene and Sybil.

He was made a trustee of the new Methodist Church, and in August, 1881, he presented to the Board the following resolutions:

"Resolved, that in the opinion of this Board, a Methodist high school offering first-class privileges, ought to be opened in the town of Muskogee.

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Resolved, that we apply at once to the Hon. Samuel Checote, Principal Chief of the Muskogee Nation, for permission to open such a school in the said town of Muskogee, on the first Monday in September, 1881.

Resolved, that the Rev. P. F. Brower be, and is hereby, elected President of said school, with authority from this Board to engage the services of such assistants as he may need, and to make all necessary arrangements for opening said school."

Subsequently, resolutions of endorsement were passed by the Creek District Conference, and the Cherokee District Conference. These Conferences also requested the trustees to name the school Harrell International Institute. The school was offered by the trustees to the Indian Mission Conference at the session held in Caddo, October 3-10, 1881. The offer was accepted and an act granting the request of the conference passed the Creek Council and was approved by the Chief November 2, 1881.

Thus was started, in the little rock church, a school that was to grow into an institution of learning far-reaching in its influence. Dr. Martin was a trustee of the school throughout its entire existence.

He helped to organize the first Masonic Lodge in Muskogee. When the public schools were opened he was a member of the School Board. He was appointed postmaster by President Grover Cleveland when the office in Muskogee became one of the first class. He served as Steward in the Methodist Church for thirty-three years, and as superintendent of the Sunday School for seventeen years. He died February 19, 1914.

Always interested in civic and public affairs he exemplified the true pioneer who loved his land and his friends. At his death the following memorial was adopted by the Sunday School, the First M.E. Church South:

"As Lind David mourned for his great general, Abner, declaring 'Now ye not there is a prince and

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a great man fallen this day in Israel, 'so we, the members of this First Methodist Sunday School, mourn the loss this day of our beloved brother and colaborer W. N. Martin, who was suddenly stricken with paralysis, from which he never regained consciousness, on last Thursday afternoon, February 19, 1914.

"One of the greatest and best among us has gone to his eternal reward. His going will prove a personal loss to the most of us. As a citizen his life was above reproach. As a member of this Church and Sunday school he has been so intimately connected with it for so many years that we can scarcely think of any of the Church's interests apart from him. His life is a noble example to each one of us in his loyalty to the church and all its varied interests.

"He has served in every official capacity, having been for many years the superintendent of the Sunday school, and during the most of all these years a Steward and Trustee. He was most exemplary in his daily habits.

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We looked upon his coming and going as one who loved his fellow men, and one who was on good terms with his Lord. He loved the Bible as his daily counsel, was familiar with its teachings and delighted himself in its deep spiritual truths.

"But now that he is gone from us we look forward to a time somewhere out in the future, far away from sickness, pain and sin, when we shall meet him again, where there shall be no more separation, no more tears, and where we shall be forever with the Lord."