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BUSINESS LIFE IN EARLY INDIAN TERRITORY DAYS

Story of William C. Patton

Given by his daughter, Mrs. F. B. Fite

North 16th. St., Muskogee, Oklahoma

William C. Patton was born August 1, 1829, twenty-five miles from Ashville, North Carolina, in Buncom County.

He was the youngest of fourteen children. His father was a wealthy land and slave owner. His family consisted of seven boys and seven girls.

The same house in which he was born is still standing. He grew to manhood on the farm and then went to Lafayette, Georgia, and engaged in the mercantile business with his older brother.

He was married to Jane Davis, a Cherokee girl, on May 1, 1861.

He enlisted in the Confederate Army at the beginning of the war and served the entire time. He was in the battle of Atlanta.

With every one else living in the state of Georgia, they lost everything they possessed but they were undaunted. He and his plucky wife moved to the farm where they stayed two years. There he made good use of his early training on the farm and was able in two years to again enter the

mercantile business in the thriving little town of Kingold, Georgia.

Hearing of the splendid opportunities in the fast developing west, he brought his family to Springfield, Missouri, in 1874. Here, he again engaged in the mercantile business until 1879.

Mrs. Patton, being of Cherokee blood, naturally wanted to live among her own people.

Vinita was a thriving little town in the Cherokee Nation of about fifteen hundred inhabitants. They moved there and he again engaged in the mercantile business.

As that was the terminal of the Frisco railroad and there were no towns west and none on the north nearer than Chetopa, Kansas; and as Muskogee was the nearest town on the south, Vinita drew its trade from a wide radius.

Mr. Patton opened his business in a small frame building but set about at once to build for the future.

Seeing the possibilities of the undeveloped country, he erected a building of native sand stone which is still standing. It contains several rooms which housed the numerous departments of his general merchandise stock. It consisted of a dry goods, grocery, and hardware department. There

was also a dryg store in the building. He carried farm machinery, saddles and harness.

Each department had an efficient manager, together with competent salesmen to carry on the business.

A registered pharmacist was employed in the drug store.

Mrs. Patton was a co-worker in the business and his most able assistant, doing all the buying for the dry goods department. She made trips to St. Louis as often as necessary to replehish the stock, as the people of Vinita were people of wealth and culture and the best that could be bought was none to good for them.

wealthy cattlemens' families lived there, although they spent a great deal of their time on the ranches in the tall grass regions in the northern part of the Territory.

After the Frisco railroad was built west, Mr. Patton opened a branch store at Catoosa, Indian Territory, which he operated for several years. The manager of the store was killed by a robber one night and he sold out the store.

Vinita was the home of Mr. W. E. Halsell, a rich cattleman from Texas, who was an intermarried Cherokee

citizen. His large brick home is still standing and is being used as a home for his son, Ewing.

Mr. and Mrs. Patton were identified with every enterprise tending toward the upbuilding of the town and were true and loyal supporters of the Methodist church.

They were loved and trusted by their patrons and their store became a common meeting place for their country friends.

The Patton family occupied the spacious apartment, beautifully furnished, on the second floor of the building; where their three daughters delighted to entertain their friends.

It was, indeed, a treat to be invited to dinner at Mrs. Pattons, as she ran her culinary department in true Southern style and her hospitality was widely known,

Possessing a fine business acumen, Mr. Patton was able to build up a prosperous business from which he realized satisfactory profits, which enabled him to retire in 1900.

Their three daughters had previously married. Mrs. F. B. Fite is the only one now living.

They built a comfortable home on North 16th. Street and moved to Muskogee. Mr. Patton died in 1909.