

~~STOCKTON, MARY J.~~

PIONEER PHYSICIANS

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PIONEER PHYSICIANS OF ROGERS COUNTY.

Field Worker.....Mary J. Stockton.

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Conversations with old-timers in various sections of Rogers County, Oklahoma, formerly Cooweescoowee District, Cherokee Nation, Indian Territory; brings to light the fact that "The Old Family Doctor" heroes, the horse, saddle and "pill-bags," played an important part in the development of the country; that he "was here" during the early days and looked after the health of the people, went with them through the valleys and the shadows, comforted them at the grave and met "new comers" on their entree into life. The old family doctor was more than an individual, he was an "institution"--conducted more for the benefit of humanity than for profits; in fact profits, as the term is now understood, never entered his mind.

While the writer has not been able to "dig up" all the data--has been compelled to leave "unhonored and unsung" several whose names should be chiseled in marble--but it is hoped there is a place where they will be remembered (and rewarded) for the good they did for God's children in a new country where comfortable homes were few and far

between and where modern methods were unknown. All I can say, by way of comment, is this: All honor to the memory of the old family doctor-whose name is known or unknown; he who braved the storms on horseback, often in the darkest hours of night, who made long and lonely rides across desolate regions in answer to the call of distress; and actually "performed wonders" under very unfavorable conditions.

One whose memory former neighbors delight to honor is Dr. G. W. Morrison, for many years located at Chelsea; a native of one of the eastern states and a physician both by ^{and} nature by preceptory training, he was a useful man in the community of his adoption for many years. His son, Richard T. Morrison, has for several years conducted a drug store in his native town, Chelsea. Dr. Morrison died about twenty years ago and his passing brought tears to the eyes of many. Your field worker was unable to gather much information, other than the facts above given and the further fact that he never failed to answer the call of the distressed; allowing his fees only secondary consideration. Yet he provided a comfortable home and wholesome food for his family, was a kind and indulgent husband who sent his children to the best schools available (for a man of his circumstances) and finally passed to his reward, leaving many tear-dimmed eyes behind.

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Another "early day" physician residing in the same community was Dr. Thomas Denton Dickson; a native of Georgia who located in the Cherokee Nation (at the village of Chelsea) in 1889--the year Oklahoma Territory was opened to settlement--the year of the "Big run," at which time the region now known as Rogers county was a rolling and largely unbroken prairie--where wild game was plentiful, where such "vermin" as deer, wolves and wild hogs were common and the long-horn cow held full sway. Chelsea at the time was a new station on the Frisco railway, a mere village of some 200 population; no streets worthy of name--mere roads or trails, no sidewalks, no modern homes. He was a native of the grand old state of Georgia, born in Adairsville in 1863--February 14. His father was Thomas Dickson, a prominent farmer and stock raiser; while his mother was formerly Miss Tillie Stallings, daughter of a Baptist minister who worked for many years in and around the City of Atlanta, capital of the state. While a young man he determined to become a physician, entered Hospital Medical College at Memphis, Tennessee, and in due time graduated with high honors in 1886. He went, soon after, across the Mississippi river into the wilds of Arkansas where he practiced for three years, after which he came

direct to Chelsea and began practice among pioneer settlers, cowboys and Indians. He soon had plenty of friends and a large practice.

Two years after his arrival at Chelsea, he was married to Miss Cynthia Parrot, a Cherokee of about half-blood; her father was William Parrot, who died when she was a mere child and about whom she remembered but little other than the fact that he was a soldier and was wounded during the Civil War--1861-'65. Her mother was a Miss Carter (Christian name unknown) a relative of Charles Carter who served for several years in the Congress of the United States from Oklahoma after its admission into the union. Mrs. Dickson was a kind, refined and popular woman, a good neighbor and a devoted wife and fond mother.

Dr. Dickson practiced his profession in and around Chelsea for about thirty years; after which he retired to his farm in what is now Washington County, Oklahoma, and died in Kansas City, Missouri, while looking after ^{the} interests of his live stock business a year or two later.

Many citizens of what is now Rogers county were met at the threshold of life by Dr. Dickson. He did his part, nobly, as did Dr. Morrison, and others.

Another "old family doctor" about whom too much cannot be said, is (or was) "Old Doc." (B.S.) Tinsley, for forty years a resident of Rogers County, most of the time at Foyil, where he died in 1927 at the age of eighty-six. He was a native of Missouri, born near Smithville in 1841. His medical studies were interrupted by the outbreak of the Civil War, at which time he enlisted in the Confederate Army and served under the famous (or, as some folks would express it- notorious) Charles Quantrell, the guerrilla chief of the Missouri-Kansas border.

Dr. Tinsley was a rugged character, a kind man who delighted to do real good in the world without ostentation or display. His wife, who died a year after his passing, was formerly Miss Mollie Taylor, also a native of Missouri, a childhood friend of Frank and Jesse James and an acquaintance of the "Younger boys."

Still another "old timer" who devoted the best years of his life to the healing art, who reared a fine family of children of Indian blood- Delaware; was Dr. Andrew J. Lane, who came here, to Claremore, during the late seventies from Texas, but little is known of his family or of his childhood. Arriving as a young man in the village of Claremore,

he "took up board" at the home of Major D. W. Lipe, in what is now Cowala precinct--eight miles north of Claremore, and was soon riding around in answer to the call of the sick or wounded and for many years performed excellent service to afflicted humanity. He died about thirty years ago. His wife, nee Lucinda Journeycake, (of Delaware Indian blood), passed on a few years later. A year or two after his arrival in the Indian country, and about three years after his graduation from Tulane University at New Orleans, he married the lady above named, she was then a young widow with three fatherless children, all of whom were raised and educated by Dr. Lane. He and his wife became the parents of five children: Shasta, (now dead) who became the wife of J. P. Johnston, prominent real estate dealer at Claremore, an organizer of the first abstract company in what is now Rogers county. Thomas Lipe, who married Miss Nora Matheson (now a widowed teacher in the Claremore schools). He was, for a few years, cashier of the Bank of Foyil, he died about 1924; Gordon, the second son, married Miss Catherine Cushionberry and lived for many years on the "old home place" in Cowala

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✓ township but now resides in Claremore; Rosa Gazelle (as yet unmarried) for several years a teacher in the public school of Rogers county; for two years City Clerk at Claremore, and now connected with the County welfare board at Claremore. The youngest child, ^{see} Andrew Denny Lane, married Miss Odeyne Henry about twenty years ago; he served one term as County Clerk of Rogers county and is now a resident of Oklahoma City.

Information for this article was obtained from various sources, all of which your field worker considers reliable; that of Dr. Morrison and Dr. Dickson from J. M. Maupin, B. H. Hester, J. C. Parks, J. B. Massey, John Ketchum and others of Chelsea; that of Dr. Tinsley from Robt. Kittrell, James Hallford, L. A. Lafferty, M. A. Andrews and others of Foyil; that about Dr. Lane from J. J. Faulkner, Miss Nannie Lipe, Miss Gazelle Lane and others of Claremore.

It is almost impossible to secure details but, in the writer's opinion, what has been said about these pioneer physicians is correct--only I realize that "The half has not been told"--regrettable fact.