

Launcey O. Moore, Supervisor
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James R. Carselowey
Research Field Worker

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LUCIEN BURR (HOOLEY) BELL

The subject of this sketch lived a neighbor to me for about fifty years. He died in Vinita somewhere about 1906 and was buried in the Fairview cemetery at Vinita. His wife lived only a few years and died at Stilwell. There is only one child born to Hooley Bell by his first wife and there is no relative living nearer than Stilwell, in Adair County, Oklahoma, where he has some nephews, named Starr. Hooley Bell was a very prominent man and did much in Cherokee politics and I am going to write what I know about him, lest it be lost.

His father was John Adair Bell, who married Jennie Martin. They were the parents of four children, as follows: Andromache, who married Harvey Shelton; Josephine, who married William Wirt Buffington; Charlotte, who married James Washington Ivey and Lucien Burr (Hooley), who married Sabra Ann Cunningham and Mary Frances Starr.

His mother, Jennie Martin, was a daughter of John Martin and Nellie Daniel. John Martin was born October 20, 1781. He was a member of the Cherokee Constitutional Convention of 1827, was the first treasurer and the first Chief Justice of the Cherokee Nation. He died October 17, 1840 and was buried in Fort Gibson.

Hooley Bell was living on Cabin Creek twelve miles south of Vinita within a mile and a half of my father's place when I was born. I do not know what district he came from here or how old he was but must have been born about 1840.

Following are some of the offices of trust held by him:

He was a member of the Confederate Cherokee Convention held at Tahlequah, from May 22, to June 1, 1863.

He also served as a member of the townsite commission that platted Tahlequah on 160 acres of ground in 1881.

Lucien Bell and John Gunter Schrimsher were sent as delegates to Washington in 1883 and he was sent again in 1900 with Percy Wylie, Benjamin Hildebrand and Jesse Cochran. (I have the instructions that Hooley Bell and John G. Schrimsher received from Chief Bushyhead when they went to Washington in 1883 and will send it in with my report tomorrow)

Hooley Bell was a member of the Cherokee Senate from Delaware District for three consecutive terms, from 1885 to 1891; was elected president of the Senate each term. He was defeated for his last race for the senate in 1891 by Thomas M. Buffington and thereby lays a tale. Hooley had become so popular with the people of Delaware District that it was thought no one could defeat him for the senate, and when Thomas L. Buffington who was his neighbor came out against him it made him so mad he made the statement that "He put Buffington's first white shirt on him, now he was going to take it off". But he failed to get the white shirt off Buffington. He not only defeated Hooley but went on and was elected Chief of the Cherokee Nation the very next term.

This writer was born in 1875 and from the time I was big enough to remember Hooley Bell was a prominent figure in Delaware District.

Hooley Bell's Old Farm

If my memory serves me right, I think Hooley Bell came to Delaware District from Flint District and settled on the south bank of Cabin Creek on the old Military trail and he owned the land where the battle of Cabin Creek was fought and which spot the state of Oklahoma voted to erect a monument. He lived there until the Shawnee Indians came to the Indian Territory when he sold the place to Fred Chouteau and moved up the creek about a mile where he employed my father, James M. Carselowey, to build him a new house and barn. The house was a very fine one for the time and when it was finished Hooley gave a big neighborhood dance and supper. The occasion made such a hit with his neighbors that he got the habit of giving an "Old Time Country Dance" every time he was elected to office.

Raised Fine Horses

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When Hooley Bell moved to his new home he started in raising fine saddle horses. He had a fine stallion shipped here from Kentucky and in a few years had more good saddle horses than any one in the country. He had a nephew in Vinita by the name of Lucien Bell Buffington, who ran the first livery stable in Vinita and many of Hooley's fine horses found their way into this early day hostelry. He only had one child and she was by his first wife. They called her "Little Hooley" and she was a great horse woman.

"Little Hooley" married Marion Maddox, a white man, and they moved to Vinita and lived where she died and left two sons, Lucien and Robert Maddox. They were the only near relatives Hooley had in this part of the country and after their mother's death their father took them and moved to Florida where Lucien died and when last heard of Robert Maddox was chief of police in some town in Louisiana.

Had Many Ox Teams

After Hooley Bell moved to his new home, about a mile west of the old Military trail road, twelve miles south of Vinita he owned many fine ox teams, and he broke out several hundred acres of prairie sod with ox teams. I saw my first ox team at his place and his men had three yoke hitched to one plow.

Ice from Cabin Creek

Hooley Bell had the only Ice House I ever saw constructed on the farm. He made a double wall and filled in between with saw dust and got the ice from Cabin Creek. The creek in those days would freeze to a depth of three feet and his men would take a one man cross cut saw and saw out large chunks of the ice and stow it in the ice house and they had ice all summer.

An Old Piano (A Grand)

Hooley bought his daughter a Grand Piano which was most likely the first piano brought to Delaware District. His daughter never took the piano to her

home after she married and Mrs. Bell moved the piano with her to Stilwell after her husband's death. She told me she was offered \$1000 for it after moving it to Stilwell for a relic.

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Moved to Vinita

In the early 90's Hooley Bell moved to Vinita and shortly thereafter was elected mayor of the town. He held the office for several terms when Thomas M. Buffington moved to Vinita after serving as chief of the Cherokee Nation and the two old timers were again aligned against each other for mayor. Buffington beat him again and held the office until he broke his hip when he stepped from a passenger train when he resigned the mayorship and thus ended the political career of the two great Cherokees.

Relatives All Dead

Hooley Bell has no living relatives in Delaware District and I do not know of a near relative anywhere on his side of the house. Lucien Bell Buffington, his nephew, who lived in Vinita, since it started followed him in death a few years, then in a few years Buffington's wife died. Buffington had no children and his large estate went to distant relatives which I shall report on later.

Hooley Bell, no doubt, left a mass of old documents in some of his possessions which I shall keep on the look for and will no doubt find some of them before we close this project.

An Old Violin

When Hooley Bell lived on the farm he had an old violin made in 1714. His father had made a trip to New Orleans to buy a violin and secured this one from a pawn shop. My father used to repair the violin for him and finally the mice got into it and gnawed holes in the two S's and he sent it to St. Louis and had it repaired. When he got it back he placed it in the vault at the Vinita National Bank to keep the mice out. After his death, Mrs. Bell let Thomas M. Buffington take the violin up to his house and it was there I saw and played on and can say it was by far the best one I ever saw. I made a trip to Stilwell

to try and buy the violin from Mrs. Bell but she said she was going to give it to one of Hooley's nephews, (One of the Starr Boys) who must be a nephew on her side of the house.

After Hooley's death, Mrs. Bell moved back to her former home at Stilwell; where she died.