

INDEX CARDS

Buffalo hunting  
Chapman, Amos  
Indian fights--Buffalo Wallow  
Wheeler, Dan  
Guerriere, Edward  
Seeger, John H.

THE OLD TIMERS' BUFFALO ASSOCIATION

From a clipping in the Fort Worth Record, Sept. 27 1908 - seems to have been copied from a Guthrie paper - dated Sept. 26. Part of this was used re Joseph McNeal in article "Joseph McNeal - Oklahoma Pioneer" - but it seems of value to list all the old plainsmen and scouts and their respective stories where possible. Some of them may still be living and this will make possible a contact with them. This clipping, yellowed with age, was found in an old scrap book of J. W. McNeals ').

Guthrie Okla., Sept. 26 - (Special) - The recent organization here of an Old Timer's Buffalo Association, including only the men who came to Oklahoma in buffalo days, is expected to result in the preservation of much valuable material in connection with the early history of Oklahoma. This might easily be lost with the passing of the old timers. Anyone who lived in Oklahoma prior to white settlement as buffalo hunter, Indian scout, cow puncher or bull whacker is eligible to membership and a unique collection of picturesque characters is expected to result when the society is fully organized.

2

The charter members include, of course, only the old timers who live in Guthrie or the immediate vicinity. The organizers of the association, with their present residence and the date when they came to Oklahoma, are: Henry Garis, Guthrie, 1867; J. W. Lane, Guthrie, 1868; Charles O. Bothwell, Guthrie, 1868; E. C. Dodd, Guthrie, 1868; J. I. Brewster, Guthrie, 1869; J. W. McNeal, Guthrie, 1873; Charles Van Meter, Guthrie, 1873; Bird McGuire, Pawnee, 1881; J. E. Baker, Guthrie, 1881.

J. W. McNeal was elected president and E. C. Dodd, Secretary.

J. W. McNeal, the president of the association is one of the old timers who has prospered in material things and is now president of the National Bank of Commerce in this city. He is strictly a self made man, however, and hunted buffalo in western Oklahoma in the early days to secure money to complete his education.

He started out from Medicine Lodge, Kansas, with two friends in the fall of 1873 and found buffalo in large numbers. One of the party did the killing while the others in wagons, skinned the carcasses and cut up the meat. They returned home with 8000 pounds of dried meat and forty-eight hides and the following spring they started eastward to dispose of their meat and hides. They traveled

3

as far east as Warrensburg Mo., disposing of the last of their stock at Clinton. The entire receipts of their sales were \$900. Most of it was in "shin plasters" and Mr. McNeal says that they had what looked like a half bushel of currency in the old trunk which served as their bank.

Efforts will be made to enlist all of the old scouts and plainsmen who formed the vanguard of civilization in Oklahoma, in the new organization. Charles Bothwell, better known as Oklahoma Charley, is one of its charter members, and especial efforts will be made to round up others of the famous scouts and plainsmen, such as Amos Chapman of Cleo, who received special commendation from Gen. Miles; Deevy Wheeler of Geary, John Carvey of Woodward and N. D. McGinley of Guthrie, three survivors of the battle of the Arrickaree; Jacob Roessler of Guthrie and A. W. Edwards of Guthrie, both of whom have been scalped by Indians and lived to tell the tale; John Seger, the famous Indian educator; Ben Clark of Fort Sill; Chris Madson of Guthrie, Jim Duffy of El Reno, Edward Guerriere of Latonga, and the hosts of others who hunted and fought in Oklahoma when white men were almost unknown.

4

All of them have had exciting and romantic histories, but probably none more than Amos Chapman, who is now living quietly on his farm near Cleo, who helped in the march of civilization in quite a different way by handling a big grading contract recently when the Denver, Erie and Gulf was built thru this country. The exploit which gained Chapman special fame was performed in 1874, during the uprising of the Cheyennes and Arapahoes, and when the Kiowas and Comanches were also on the war path in the southern part of what is now Oklahoma.

#### CHAPMAN'S DARING

General Miles was then stationed at a camp on McClelland creek, in northern Texas, and a party of six soldiers, including Chapman was sent by him with dispatches to Fort Supply in northern Oklahoma. On the second day out, just as they reached the Washita river, they were attacked and surrounded by a band of 125 Comanches and Kiowas, who had just left their agency. All of them were wounded at the first attack; one of them fatally. Although they were under a fierce fire at short range, Chapman, himself, wounded, crawled upon his hands and knees a hundred yards to a buffalo wallow, and there, while the others with their rifles kept the Indians away, he made slight cover with his knife and hands. After this had been secured, they placed themselves in it, the wounded men walking with difficulty, while Private Smith,

who was mortally wounded at the first fire, was carried on the backs of his comrades. After the trench was reached he sat upright to conceal the crippled condition of the party from the Indians.

From early morning to dark, outnumbered twenty-five to one, fighting often at such close range that they used their revolvers, and without food or water, the little band successfully defended themselves and their dying comrade. After dark the Indians gave up the attack. It was thirty-six hours after that before they secured food or medical assistance, withstanding in the meantime the bitter cold of an incessant storm. Although several of the party were seriously wounded, Smith was the only one who died. Chapman was struck in the hip and never fully recovered from his wound. Like many of the old timers Chapman married an Indian woman of the Cheyenne tribe, Wilshusan by name, and later became a man of great influence in the Indian tribe which he had fought so many years in his young days. His wife also proved herself a heroine and by prompt action about five years ago prevented an Indian massacre at Talage, when the Cheyennes went on the warpath as a result of the killing of a member of the tribe by a deputy sheriff.

ASSOCIATE OF KIT CARSON

Another pioneer with probably as interesting a career as Chapman is Day Wheeler of Geary, known to his friends as Dewey, who has been a plainsman and scout since 1857, when he joined the famous Salt lake expedition under General Kearney. On that trip he was intimately associated with Kit Carson and Jim Bridger who were always afterward his closest friends. He returned home when the Civil War broke out, served through that war with the Eighth Mo. regiment and after the war re-enlisted in the Third Illinois Cavalry, which was sent to Fort Snell Minn. to quell an Indian uprising.

He first came to Oklahoma as a scout under General Custer in the Indian campaign in 1868 and 1869, and has been here ever since, continuing in the service of Uncle Sam until 1888. Although his clothes were riddled with bullets many times during his adventurous life on the plains, Wheeler was never wounded but once. With two companions he started from Fort Sill to Fort Dodge Kan. in 1873, and was overtaken by a band of Indians. Both of his companions were killed, himself wounded and the horses killed. Sheltering himself behind a dead horse, he killed several of the Indians

7

and finally drove them away. There, helpless with a bullet in his leg, he lay on the prairie without food or shelter for thirty-six hours, until picked up by another party from Fort Sill.

Another famous scout who is a neighbor of Wheeler is Edward Gueriere, son of a French trapper and an Indian Woman, who figured prominently in the Indian campaign of forty years ago. He was especially trusted by General Sheridan, who speaks in his memoirs of Guerier's ability as a scout. He is now about 75 years old but still well preserved. His wife is Julia Bent, half-breed daughter of Major William Bent, famous as an Indian trader on the upper Arkansas.

#### CONJURER TRICK SAVES HIM

Most of the earlier settlers had more or less trouble with the Indians, who were inclined to be surly and troublesome even when not actually on the warpath. John H. Seger of Calony is one white man who has always had great influence with the Indians, but according to Seger's own story it was due in the first place mainly to an act of strategy. When some of the Indians were inclined to become troublesome



during his early residence in Oklahoma he convinced them that he was a medicine man and had no further trouble.

It happened that Seger when a boy in the East had gone to a show, and like most boys, lingered when the performance was over. He found out in that way that the show was "busted" and could not get to the next town, twenty miles away. He made a bargain that he would take them to the town if the conjurer would show him the secret of his tricks. He was taught the ring trick, sticking a knife through his wrist, and others which are a familiar part of such performances. He became quite expert at it and used his ability along that line to entertain his friends. During his early experiences at Darlington when the Indians became obstreperous, he thought of his old conjuring tricks. He slipped back and got his huge, savage-looking knife, passing it out to the red men to examine. The novelty of it started them and they wanted to know what he was going to do with it. Then apparently, without further explanation; they saw him apparently plunge it through his wrist. They turned and fled precipitately, spreading among their friends the word, that Johnny Smaker, as they had nick-named Seger, was a medicine man. Thereafter he had no trouble with the Indians.

NOTE. \* General Alva J. Niles stressed the value of contact with Chris Madson of Guthrie. He gave his address in care of his son-in-law, Frank A. Derr, Secretary of the Consistory. Mr. Niles reports that Mr. Madson has had a very colorful and interesting career.