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Wright, Eliphalet Kott

EXCERPT, THE INDIAN ARROW
HUGO, OKLAHOMA

Dr. Alphalet Nott Wright, eldest child of Rev. Alfred Wright and Harriet Mitchell Wright, Presbyterian missionaries, was born near Armstrong Academy, Choctaw Nation, Indian Territory (now Oklahoma), on April 3, 1858, and died at Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, January 9, 1932. He was named by his father after Alphalet Nott, who for over sixty years was resident of Union College, Schenectady, New York from which college the father, Allen Wright graduated in the class of '52 with the degree of A. B., subsequently graduating from Union Theological Seminary, New York City in the class of '55.

Alphalet Nott Wright spent his boyhood days at old Boggy Depot, where his father had established a home late in the year 1858, and attended the neighborhood school which was established and maintained for the most part by his father, who, with his wife, was deeply interested in education and especially the Christian education for the youth of that day. After spending one year in the preparatory department of Westminster College at Fulton, Mo., he went with his brother, the late Rev. Frank Hall Wright, to old Spencer Academy, a Choctaw Nation school located about ten miles from Doakesville, Indian Territory, where he finished his preparation for college. In the fall of 1879 he and his brother Frank entered Union College with the

class of 1882. In his junior year in college he gave up his college course and matriculated in Albany Medical School, at Albany, N. Y., to pursue the requirements necessary to his chosen profession. During the summer of 1883 he did limited practice in the country around his home at Old Boggy Depot and it was this work that enabled him to return to Albany to finish his medical education which he did, graduating in the class of 1884. Upon his return home where he actively entered into the practice of medicine which was attended with considerable success.

He soon discovered that the practice of medicine was being carried on by men poorly equipped for the work that they were engaged in and that this condition was not only a detriment to the duly qualified and regular physician but a positive menace to the public. He therefore sought to correct this situation and through his efforts the Choctaw Council passed an act creating a medical board and requiring a rigid examination by such board before one could obtain a license to practice medicine within its jurisdiction. To him is due this salutary law and the high standing attained by the medical profession thereafter proved his far-sightedness.

As to his standing in the medical profession, an article appearing in the Journal of the State Medical Association in February following his death, written by Dr. L. S. Willour, a prominent physician and surgeon of McAlester, Okla., says in

part:

"My first professional contact in Indian Territory when located here in 1905, was with Dr. E. W. Wright. Alert to the latest developments in medicine, trained in the methods of diagnosis, thorough, yet conservative in treatment, he stood in this new country, a tower of strength among his professional brethren. He not only recommended, but practiced a very high standard of professional ethics, and along this line helped to lay the foundation upon which has been erected in this state a structure of professional life second to none."

He was deeply interested in the education of his people and employed his sincere efforts along that line but probably his greatest concern was in the health welfare of the Indians and he never lost an opportunity to further this feature of educational work; this was natural because, trained physically that he was, he saw and recognized the great need.

In addition to his interest in the health and physical well-being of his people to seek and maintain throughout his life a constructive and positive stand for their material and spiritual welfare. He worked for the establishment of Jones Academy and Muskogean Academy and the locating and building of the Chickaw-Chickasaw Sanatorium at Talihina, Oklahoma. He was also active in the affairs of the community in which he lived near

Olney, Oklahoma. He promoted and gave generously of his time and money towards the building of the Marshall Memorial Church (Presbyterian) at Olney and worked indefatigably for the building of the high school and Union-graded school at Olney.

These are only a few of the outstanding worthwhile deeds attributable to the work and life of the subject of this sketch, and serve to prove his worth, the loss sustained by his passing and the true value of the work of the early missionaries to the Indians.