

INDEX CARD

Newspapers--Atoka
Smiser, Butler S.
Schools--Choctaw Nation
Townsites--Indian Territory
Standley, James S.
Immigration--Choctaw Nation
Federal Relations--Choctaw
Atoka
Mail Routes
Nelson, I. W.
Physicians--Choctaw Nation
Livery Stables
Blacksmiths--Choctaw Nation
Cotton Gins--Choctaw Nation
Planing Mills--Choctaw Nation
Snake Root
Fur Trade
Carpenters--Choctaw Nation
Masonic Lodges--Atoka
Tarrow, J. C.
Churches--Choctaw Nation

NEWSPAPERS OF ATOKA

ATOKA, Jan. 24,--from 1 to 5 o'clock this afternoon there will be an open house at the first Christian church of Atoka in honor of the golden wedding anniversary of two pioneer residents, the Rev. and Mrs. B. S. Smiser. Mr. Smiser, 74, has been pastor of the church for a number of years. Mrs. Smiser is 70.

Since entering the ministry in the early years of the century, Mr. Smiser has had only two pastorates, here and in Morris. However, the early years of their married life were spent in Atoka, and it was here that they were married on January 24, 1886, when Mr. Smiser was superintendent of Atoka schools. After their marriage, Mrs. Smiser took charge of the primary work in the schools, under her husband's direction. Both have been prominent in eastern Oklahoma since before their marriage.

COMBINED NEWSPAPERS

Soon after the marriage, Mr. Smiser resigned as superintendent of schools to take control of two newspapers, the Lehigh paper, and the Atoka Independent. He combined the papers and called the new paper the Indian Citizen.

Not many years later when the Choctaw townsite commission was organized, Gov. Green McCurtain of the Choctaws appointed Mr. Smiser townsite commissioner to represent the Choctaw Nation.

Mr. Smiser of course, had to give up his newspaper work, as the new position required all his time. Mrs. Smiser, who had helped in the newspaper office suggested that she run the paper. For seven years she was sole editor and business manager.

During that time she was the secretary of the Indian Territory Press association. The proceedings of the Ardmore convention in 1899 published in full the talk given by Mrs. Smiser on "The Indian as an American Citizen."

When the work of the townsite commission was completed, Mr. Smiser entered the ministry. He had always been interested in church work and for a number of years had been superintendent of the first Christian church Sunday school.

Mrs. Smiser is the oldest daughter of the late Capt. and Mrs. J. S. Standley. She was born on the old Standley plantation near Carrollton, Miss., July 15, 1851. Her father of the Choctaw nation, Captain Standley lived in Indian Territory in 1874 and settled near Canadian. He was soon appointed delegate for the Choctaws to Washington, D. C., and spent about 25 years at the nation's capitol. His family remained in the territory during his absence.

attended Kentucky College.

Mrs. Smiser, the oldest child, received all the advantages of the Choctaw schools and spent two years at New Hope academy in the Choctaw nation. When she was 15, she was sent to Harrodsburg, Ky., where she spent five years in college, being graduated in the spring of 1885, with highest honors.

During her absence, her family had moved to Atoka. She joined them there, and was at once employed as local editor of the Atoka Independent. When she had held this position for five months she was appointed postmaster at Atoka, and held that position until her marriage to Mr. Saiser.

ATOKA DEMOCRAT, _____ 1930.

February 23, 1884, Atoka citizens read their first copy of first paper. Its name was "The Branding Iron" so-called because one of the main financial supports was Iron t... cattlemen who carried yearly ads of the cattle brands. H. M. and L. H. Roberts, who were owners and publishers of Indian Journal, Muskogee, Indian Territory, got contract to issue the Branding Iron from the Choctaw Council. This paper was printed at the Muskogee office, but L. H. Roberts had a business and mailing office in Atoka.

Capt. J. S. Standley, recently from Mississippi was at this time attorney and delegate for Choctaws at Washington, and used large influence in getting an appropriation through Choctaw Council to establish this paper.

The town and its business on February 23, 1884:

Atoka the metropolis of the Choctaw Nation, nestles among the wooded hills near the western county line and on the C. I. & T. railway about 50 miles north of Denison, Texas.

At that date Atoka business houses were neat and clean and the town made a good impression to travelers passing through. The main business buildings were along the street now west of the depot. The population was about 500. Atoka merchants drew immense trade from the Lehigh, Midway mines, the cattlemen drove their stock to Atoka, and in fact Atoka was a thriving town. Atoka postoffice had six star routes--Loggy Depot, Lehigh, Wapanucka, Stonewall and others.

The largest merchant of the town then was J. J. Phillips in the two-story brick building now owned by the undertaking parlors. Mr. Phillips carried a large stock of general merchandise, furniture hardware, groceries, feed, etc. The business manager was Felix Phillips, nephew of J. J. Phillips. W. W. Merride, Joe Lindsey and Joe Benson were the clerks at that time.

J. J. Scratch & Co.

The company being run by Mrs. Scratch's brother--was the biggest lumber company of that date, February 14. The company carried a \$15,000 stock. The later Company at that time occupied the J. J. Wilson building, but were building a two story building and running the business. The upper story was to be Atka's first public hall.

Branding Iron Office

was just opposite the Robb & Flosson store.

Robb & Flosson

This business carried general merchandise of every description. D. N. Robb and J. Flosson were the owners and proprietors. Ed McLaughlin and James Martin were the chief clerks.

Nichols

was the postmaster and also agent for the Adams Express Company. Mr. and Mrs. Nichols established and named the "Nichols House," a popular and good hotel, located on the corner where the Phillips Petroleum Filling station is now located.

J. R. Brown was the day agent and also agent for Pacific Express Company. Mr. and Mrs. Brown were proprietors of a hotel located about a block north and west of the present depot.

Walter Cox and John Brown (colored) were the barbers located north of the Nichols house.

J. W. Owens had a grocery business located opposite the John Ades store, but here White Grocery is now.

Ramsey, the jeweler set the watches and clocks regulated and had a small stock of jewelry and notions.

John A. Millon called his business the Family Grocery and kept a full line of choice eats. He was one of Atoka's oldest citizens.

Dr. W. M. Folsom was Atoka's leading physician and he had a good stock of drugs. Located on a further street corner of block west of present depot.

Dr. Langdon a practicing physician was the first subscriber to Branding Iron.

Doctors Salmon & Dunn were the third physicians to locate in Atoka and enjoyed a good practice.

Mrs. Martha Moore was Atoka's first and only milliner and carried a neat and complete line of goods and was just south of Dr. Folsom's Drug Store.

John Mahrker then made and kept your shoes in repair and a large stock of all kinds of harness. Mr. Mahrker enjoys the

distinction of 50 years in business, and needs no commendation-- his life and work have made his records. He is the only business man of 1884 who still survives.

Mr. Lumley had a shoe shop and a good workman, but left Atoka soon after this date.

Brisco and Lorden owned and ran Atoka's Livery Stable located where Claud Brown's business is now. They were well equipped and sent the traveling men all through the country into the Chickasaw Nation.

John Frinzel was Atoka's leading blacksmith and had a fine business and a man of word and honor.

Tom Brown (Colored) was a blacksmith and did a good business.

H. Y. McBride & H. Y. Lindsey were proprietors of McBride, Lindsey & Co. with a large stock and general merchandise, and Jim Doolittle was clerk. This business house was located just west of the present depot.

Cotton Gin was owned and operated by McBride, Lindsey Co., west of town and did a large business.

The Planing Mill was owned and operated by S. B. Scratch & Co. The mill was run by a twenty horsepower engine and a large number of oxen were busy hauling in the pine from the hills east and the products of this mill were hauled and shipped to a large area adjoining Atoka.

Carpenters

~~That did good work and always busy were W. W. Russell (Mrs.~~

Emma Telle's father). Mr. Larden, Will and Lew Disrel, and Mr. J. H. Jackson.

Boarding houses were run by O. Kello, Lurley, and Mrs. Sullivan and each enjoyed a good business.

The School--Prof. File was superintendent, assisted by Mr. Miller. About 50 pupils. The Choctaw Nation paid \$2 per pupil and non-citizens paid more. The building was across the street from the present high school. Atoka has always had good schools.

Julius Haas was one of Atoka's largest business men. His line was furs, hides and snake-root. His trade came from all parts of Indian Territory and his shipments to markets gave the M. K. & T. a large business from Atoka. Julius Haas was known for his generous and fair dealings--especially among the Indians. Mrs. Haas was his able assistant.

J. R. Harris was another among Atoka merchants and his line of trade was timber, such as railroad ties and posts.

LODGES

The Masons led a prosperous lodge with rooms over the J. J. Phillips' store. Atoka has been called the headquarters of Masonry in Indian Territory, and Rev. J. S. Murrow, Father of Indian Territory Masonry. The Odd Fellows also met in the Phillips building.

CHURCHES

The Baptists with Pro. J. S. Murrow, pastor, and their old

church, was located on lot between Mrs. Eva Ralls and Mr. Williamson homes. This was the only protestant church building and the generous Baptists cheerfully allowed all Christians of different faith and practice to use it.

The Catholic Church was across the trolley tracks north and east of present depot. Father Robert held occasional services and there was always some one living in rooms joining the church building.

BRANDLING IRON, largest subscription list in country more cattle ads than any other paper.

article, (by Mrs. E. S. Siser) apparently from The Atoka Democrat, April 4, 1935.

(End)