

Sooner Born, Sooner Bred, Sooner Yarn

This Is the Story Of
Early Oklahoma

Lo, the Poor Indians

They Jumped Out And
Cities Jumped Up

BY JOHN ALLEY
Professor of Government

Go west, young man, and grow up with the country! The young man did. In fact, he had been doing these things for some 200 years before Horace Greeley formulated this slogan.

The young man, alone on horseback, or in his ox wagon with his wife and baby, a few farming implements and some rude pieces of furniture crossed the borderland which marked the western fringe of settlements and plunged into the hunting grounds of the Indian.

Others followed, singly or in groups; the timber was cleared, prairie sod broken, crops planted and "the country grew up."

The general store was built at the crossroads; later came a blacksmith shop finally a post office was established, and the crossroads became a village. Soon, the village claimed the dignity of a town; wholesale distributing houses were added, a bank or two appeared, and the town became a city.

Cities Came First

By this process the west was populated, and territorial governments were organized which were soon transformed into states. In 47 of our 48 states, the development of the country came first. The cities came later as a matter of course. But in Oklahoma it was different.

Had a slogan been formulated there it would have been, "Gang up, young men, and build cities." For the city rather than the country, has held the spotlight from the first day to the present moment in the building of Oklahoma.

When one engages a traveler from Tennessee in conversation, he learns that the Tennessee is from East Tennessee or Middle Tennessee or West Tennessee. Not so in the case of an Oklahoman! He will tell you that he comes from Oklahoma City, or Tulsa, or Muskogee or Enid; never from Central Oklahoma, nor Eastern Oklahoma, nor Western Oklahoma. With Oklahomans the city is the darling; the country is the step-child. Like a Shot, It Came

Neither was there a "growing up" process in the making of this state. Oklahoma came into being with a bang! The shot of the signal pistol; the clatter of horses' hoofs carrying thousands of riders; the clanking of hundreds of wagon wheels behind galloping teams; the roar of railway trains with home seekers crowded in gondola cars, in cattle cars, riding the cowcatcher. Gradually the dust cleared away and there was Oklahoma!

The one distinctive mark of similarity in the White Man's conquest of Oklahoma, to that of other regions of America, was in the gentle art of displacing the original occupants, the Indians, of their domain. Some one has said that when the Pilgrim Fathers were safely landed from their perilous voyage, they fell on their knees to thank God for their deliverance; then they arose and fell on the aborigines!

So the game was started, the game which was continued down thru the centuries. The seizure of Oklahoma by the White Man marked the final inning of that great American game. When that inning had closed, the lands of the Indian were no more.

Idea Was Accepted

The idea of creating an Indian Commonwealth in the western fringes of the newly acquired Louisiana Territory, intrigued the mind of Thomas Jefferson. Such a project was highly pleasing to many of the older states, since it would enable them to clear away the Indians, who were feared out of their old homes at the point of the bayonet. In the closing years of Jackson's administration.

Notwithstanding the unhappy circumstances of their enforced removal, the Indians soon became reconciled to their new environment. . . . at a smile upon them. A mild and sunny climate comforted them. Rich and varied resources were available in abundance. Clear streams, wooded hills, lovely valleys and wide stretching prairies contributed the necessities of life. Crops were planted, herds

cattle multiplied; a respite from the White Man's encroachment ended; relative peace and contentment reigned.

Tragedy Hits Indians

Suddenly and without warning, a tragedy stalked into the midst of these peaceful tribes. The American Civil War overwhelmed them, robbing them of their allegiance, ruining their homes, leaving death and desolation in its wake. This White Man's war was none of the Indians' makings, but the latter became the unhappiest victims of the fratricidal strife.

At the close of the war, the Washington government abrogated their treaties, forcing the Civilized Tribes to cede the western half of their lands to make a home for the uncivilized tribes of the north and west. No 30 or more of these "Blanket Indians" tribes were parcelled out in the western half of the Indian Territory.

The northern states had taken a son from their southern sisters and well left their to the vacated reservations within their own borders.

It Was a Crazy Quilt

When this parceling-out process had been completed, the new map of the Indian territory presented the appearance of a crazy quilt, each patch marked with the picturesque name of a newly settled tribe. The patchwork list of these tribal names offers an interesting exposition of human nomenclature. Apache, Arapaho, Caddo, Cheyenne, Comanche, Kiowa, Kiokapoo, Kiowa, Mescalero, Modoc, Otoe, Ottawa, Pawnee, Pottawatomie, Sac and Fox, Shawnee, Tonkawa, Towahnee, Waco, Wichita, Wyandotte.

After the transplanting of the Blanket Indians from the north and west had been completed, it was discovered that an unassigned area of some 2,000 square miles remained, isolated in the central portion of the Indian Territory. The land-hungry white man was not long in discovering this choice parcel of unoccupied real estate. The civilized Indians had released this land to the Federal Government for the use of the "Blanket Indians." The Blanket Indians were now provided for and this parcel remained vacant. So when the

Editor's note: This is the first of a series of articles dealing with City Beginnings in Oklahoma Territory. The author, a member of the university faculty, has told the story in a vivid and interesting manner, pointing out that Oklahoma "grew up" differently from other states. The series will continue daily.

Life

Youth is a boat with crimson sails
That roams the sea in face of gales;
Age is a barge that hugs the shore
And sails the high seas nevermore

—DOROTHY QUICK.

Treaty Broken In Mad Scramble At Oklahoma Opening

Homeseekers Considered Land
Part of Domain

By JOHN ALLEY
Professor of Government

The homeseekers quickly solved the puzzle to their own satisfaction. Their logic was simple. The land belonged to the federal government. It was part of the national domain. Therefore it was subject to the operation of the existing homestead law.

Suggestions were immediately forthcoming that this particular portion of the national domain be thrown open to settlement. As the months passed the suggestions became more persistent. Soon they developed into an organized demand, increasing to a clamor growing ever in volume until it was heard from ocean to ocean, from the lakes to the gulf.

It was the irresistible cry of Anglo-Saxon for land, land, more land; this cry which constituted authority in the new world, had been heard and heeded for three centuries. It was

the cry which, from the very beginning of America, had aroused the avarice of a conquering race; which had impelled it to disregard aboriginal land titles, contemptuously evade treaties, sweep over international boundaries, crush opposition and attain its will.

It sounded the death knell to the Red Man's long cherished hope for an Indian commonwealth a hope sustained by solemn promises in written treaties, attested in the faith of the American nation; and in the faith of the God of nations; promises that the Indian was to remain in undisturbed possession of the lands of the Indian territory "as long as the grass grows and the water runs."

Cleveland Fought Rider

The Cleveland administration fought valiantly against this onslaught, printing out that this isolated area which had come to be known as the "Oklahoma" land, was not, in fact, a part of the national domain, but merely a tract of Indian land which the civilized Indians had placed in trust in the hands of the federal government, for the use of the plains Indians.

The victory of the "Home Seekers" was finally secured on March 2, 1889 by the familiar trick of attaching a "rider" to an appropriation bill. The particular bill selected by the congressional flacksters in this case was the one carrying the Indian appropriations for the forthcoming fiscal year.

President Cleveland was therefore, forced to choose between two evils as affecting the Indians; he could veto the bill in its entirety and wreck Indian administration finances or he could sign the bill and wreck the Indians' hope of a future commonwealth.

The Cleveland administration has been repudiated by the voters of the nation at the preceding November elections. Cleveland was worn out by the stress of a turbulent administration which had only two more days to run. He chose the latter course and signed the bill.

Harrison Issues Proclamation

Three weeks later, Cleveland's successor, President Harrison, issued the proclamation which the Indian appropriation "rider" made mandatory, and the date of the opening of the Indians' lands to white settlement was set at 12 o'clock noon, April 22, 1889. The first foundation stone for the state of Oklahoma had been laid. Jefferson's idea of an Indian commonwealth had met its doom. Anglo-Saxon lung hunger had scored its final American victory.

The drama of the home seekers' rush which opened at high noon, April 22, 1889, has been frequently told. It is not the purpose of the writer to re-tell this story. His theme is merely that in the settlement of Oklahoma the founding of cities rather than the building of another agricultural community held major attention.

The work of the congress of the United States has frequently been characterized by its utter lack of vision, but the congress which closed its session March 4, 1889, outdid its rivals in this respect, by its short-sighted stupidity affecting the matter of opening the unassigned lands of the Indian Territory to white settlement.

All Land Is Taken

No provision whatever was made for any form of government in the new territory. Apparently those solons had no conception of the full significance of the crudely worded "rider" which they attached to the Indian appropriation bill in the closing days of their session. The record does not show whether these congressmen registered amazement on April 23, 1889,

when, in the comforts of their homes throughout the length and breadth of the nation, they read the headlines of the morning press.

Those headlines proclaimed that 60,000 settlers occupied every available foot of these 2,000,000 acres. There they were! More than 60,000 land-craving persons in the heart of the Indian Territory with not a shred of government to restrain their actions, nor one lot of authority to establish a government. For more than a year this anomalous situation continued. So much for the foresight of the American congress!

Land Tracts Large

In the rural areas, settlers established themselves on the quarter-section farms as provided for by existing homestead laws. Hence a half mile of prairie was the average space separating homes. The absence of law and authority regulating human conduct under such conditions was not keenly felt. Distance serves a useful purpose.

But on a score or more town sites which were quickly staked out by the town builders, the situation was different. Here hundreds and thousands of persons were jammed together on tudding sites 25 or 50-feet wide; sometimes two or more persons claiming possession of the same little plot of ground. The only semblance of authority in evidence of the more important centers was an occasional U. S. marshal or a squad of blue-shirted federal troops.

The natural reaction of the free American citizen now finally come into his own, was one of contempt toward these. Soldiers and marshals were the hated tools which an arbitrary government at Washington had used too long for the wrongful purpose of depriving the citizen of his rightful occupancy of the public domain. To hell with them! This was no longer an "Indian country!"

TWO LOVES

By Daisy Lemon Coldren of Perry, in
The Dallas Journal

I love these young, ingenious prairie,
So frankly bared to predatory sun,
To whispering rain or Boris' wildest passion;
Alike responsive to the urgency
Of shifting line or storm-god's stern decrees;
I love the bending sweep of far horizon,
The crimson dawn, low stars when day is done,
These yellow rivers' shooshies.
But think me not inconstant if I say
I love these not the less for loving wild
Woods more, eternal hills and silver spray
Of rock cleft springs—oh, I am still the child
Of forests' myriad charms, the subtle way
Of beauty that my budding feet be-sued.

End Is East

You have not taken root, you say;
I wonder what you mean;
You form new contacts every day,
And they are right, and clean.

Your western friendships are as kind
As you will find back east,
But older friends are on your mind,
The great ones and the least.

Too conscious of environment,
You miss familiar scenes,
And give your roots no nourishment;
Therefore, your life tree leans.

Transplanted though you may have been,
Your roots should learn to grow
Deep in the soil you put them in,
Wherever you may go.

For if your roots are deep and long,
Unspoiled by things they lack,
They will be healthy, sound and strong
When you transplant them back.

So east is east, and west is west,
And never the twain shall meet,
But friendship is made manifest
Wherever life is sweet.

—MARIE DODGE JONES.

Congress Failed to Provide For Building of Towns And For Government After Run

Guthrie Area Divided Into Four
Different Townsites

(Editor's note: This is the third of a series of articles on the development of cities in Oklahoma written by Professor Alley. The second ended with a description of the early citizens' hatred for U. S. marshals sent to the territory to maintain order.)

By JOHN ALLEY
Professor of Government

The absence of constituted government to preserve order was not the only oversight charged to a dilatory congress. Whether the imagination of this august body was capable of visualizing the fact that the building of cities would precede the development of farms in an area of some 3,093 square miles, destined to be occupied in a few hours, is likewise not in the record. The fact remains that no new provisions of law were enacted to fit this new situation.

The existing statutes which had been framed years before to fit normal conditions of development provided that a town site plot on the public domain must be filed with the registrar of the land office by the corporate authorities of the town, if incorporated; if no incorporated town existed, then the plot must be filed by the judge of the county court in which the townsite was situated.

Of course there were no corporate authorities of towns in the newly opened territory; neither were there any counties, nor county judges, nor courts!

Townsites Are 320 Acres

Another interesting feature of the existing statutes was the provision that no townsite plot should include more than 320 acres. Under the system of rectangular surveys in use, this acreage is exactly one-half mile wide by one mile long.

Within seven hours after the signal had been given opening the territory to settlement, it was estimated that some 15,000 settlers had swarmed over the area which was to become the city of Guthrie and had laid claim to town lots covering a space four times the size permitted by law.

How could this situation be made conformable to law? The answer is simple. The people merely laid out four different townsites, calling them respectively, Guthrie, West Guthrie, East Guthrie and Capitol Hill. The city of Guthrie originally attracted the greatest number of persons of any city in the new territory because it was near the east center of the area, was a station on the Santa Fe railway, the only line penetrating the territory, and was the site of one of the two land offices established by congress.

Land Office In West

The other land office was in the west center of the area, 30 miles from the railway. Guthrie was also the projected capital of the territory, hence the designation of one of the townsites as Capitol Hill. The chief rival of Guthrie in metropolitan and political honors was Oklahoma City, 25 miles to the southward, also a station on the railway.

In the long rivalry which followed, Oklahoma City was destined soon to win metropolitan honors by a wide margin; two decades later, after statehood had come, the southern city also captured the political honors by being designated as the capital of the new state. Guthrie still has her Capitol Hill, minus the capitol.

As indicated previously, the city of Guthrie seemed to be the chief prize sought by the townbuilders in the rush to Oklahoma territory. Before the sun went down on that memorable date, April 22, 1889, July 15,000 settlers had swarmed over the hills on each side of Cottonwood creek and covered the valley between. The little red frame building which housed the offices of the Santa Fe railway station marked "Guthrie," was the center of a surging mob of land-crazy home seekers.

Many Were Boomers

That many of these settlers had entered the territory before the noon hour set for the opening seems uncontested. Maj. J. A. Fickler, who was sent to Guthrie by the department of the interior, reported as follows:

"As I reached the hills overlooking Guthrie from the west, on my way from Kingfisher on the forenoon of Monday the twenty-second of April, 1889, the rise of ground where the land office is situated, and for some distance in all directions, was literally covered with men who were selecting, measuring and staking out lots."

The first care of these settlers was to establish title to their building lots. In order to do this they realized that the forms of the existing federal statutes relating to townsites must be observed in so far as possible. As previously indicated, the maximum area allowed for townsite purposes was one-half section of land, three hundred and twenty acres. The first arrivals at Guthrie spread up the Hill eastward from the railway station.

laying claim to individual building sites, until the entire half section was covered.

Town Named Guthrie

It was natural that they should call their townsite Guthrie, from the name on the railway station. Later arrivals swept over the east line of this townsite and proceeded to lay out another tract of 320 acres which they called East Guthrie; still later ones, finding no remaining lots in the East Guthrie townsite, continued the process farther to the east, calling their location Capitol Hill.

Likewise the land westward from the Santa Fe tracks was occupied, the process continuing across the low valley of Cottonwood creek and up the heights to the level of the surrounding prairie lands. The townsite plotted here was called West Guthrie. By nightfall all four areas were well occupied.

Having complied with the letter of the law affecting the maximum townsite area which would seem to assure the settlers of the ultimate title to their little blocks of real estate, the next problem which vexed their minds was that of political organization and settled government.

Caucuses Were Held

The absence of congressional authority for organized government deterred these sturdy settlers not a moment. Caucuses were held on the first night, April 22, and it was tentatively agreed that a convention was in order for the next day.

The following morning horseback riders circled thru the Guthrie townsite area announcing a meeting "at the big tent" on the corner of Division street and Harrison avenue, some three blocks east of the Santa Fe tracks. It has been estimated that upwards of 4,000 people assembled at that point. This gathering has been designated as the first convention to assemble in Oklahoma territory.

THE FALL

There is no time of year so sweet
And lovely as the early fall,
The gorgeous golden of the trees;
I just don't seem to grasp it all.

The cool air seems to give new
heart—
I think I'll tear the house apart,
Just sweep again beneath the rugs
And put some pickles in some
jugs.

I'm tired of chasing bugs and ants,
And tired of ironing white duck
pants;
With sheer delight I feel retiring
This summer I have spent per-
spiring.

And when the husband comes at
noon
I'll say just grab a greasy spoon
For I won't work today, that's all
It's too darn nice—this early fall.
KATE FESLER PARIS,
Oklahoma City.

Political Battles Threatened Early Territorial Convention

32 'States' Are Represented At
First Election

By JOHN ALLEY
Professor of Government

The procedure followed by the Guthrie convention was to call the roll of States and Territories represented, and ask each group to designate a spokesman for membership on an organization committee. A total of 32 states and territories answered the roll call, so a "Committee of Thirty-Two" was set up. This committee met forthwith, named Charles W. Constantine, ex-mayor of Springfield, Ohio, as chairman, and Robert T. Hill, as secretary.

The committee's nominations were promptly ratified by the convention. Chairman Constantine introduced a cityhoods box and delivered his "key-note speech." The campaign for city organization was launched.

Election Is Called

Naturally, the first business in order was the election of an acting mayor. A bitter political fight ensued, which threatened at times to result in riot and bloodshed.

Pistols were strapped on many of the "delegates" present, and an occasional "Winchester" posed diagonally across a body, resting in the crook of the left elbow.

The fight gradually narrowed down to three candidates, Hill, of Oregon, Kelley of Kansas, and Hoggat of South Dakota. After an hour of viva voce balloting with no candidate mustering a majority a new method was devised. Three wagons were drawn up in line, each candidate mounting a separate wagon.

But They Still Cheated

The voters then formed in three lines, each line passing the wagon of his favorite, and a teller for each counted heads as they passed. A novel form of "ballot stuffing" soon became apparent.

It was discovered that many voters, after passing the wagons, would return to the rear of the line and pass the teller for a second counting. Despairing of an equitable decision, the convention finally adjourned, to meet at 9 o'clock the following morning.

The procedure of April 24 was similar to that of the first day and equally futile of decisive action. Another adjournment was taken until the morning of the twenty-fifth. During the night of the twenty-fourth a compromise was reached.

Kelley Quit Race

Senator Kelley of Kansas, had eliminated himself from the contest, and the two remaining candidates, Hill and Hoggat, in the interest of harmony, agreed to name three representatives each, and allow these six to name a seventh member.

This group was to constitute a committee of selection, and this committee was to propose a compromise candidate. The choices of this committee fell upon Colonel D. B. Dyer, of Missouri, who was made the unanimous choice of the convention in final session on April 25.

Colonel Dyer therefore became the first provisional mayor of Guthrie, proper, as a consequence of this strenuous three-day political contest. The intensity and bitterness of this mayoralty fight was an augury of the many forthcoming political battles to be staged at Guthrie periodically, for the next two decades.

Then the center of Oklahoma poli-

tical storms was shifted suddenly to Oklahoma City, 30 miles to the southward.

Following the election of mayor, a provisional city council was set up and a full-fledged government was launched without a shred of constitutional or legal basis. In the successful consummation of this enterprise, the theory of popular sovereignty scored an impressive victory in actual practice.

Some five weeks later the temporary election was confirmed by a general election held in due form, and carried thru in orderly fashion. Immediately thereafter a charter commission was set up, headed by Dennis T. Flynn, who was later to become the outstanding political leader of the Republican party throughout the territorial period, serving several terms as delegate to congress.

Flynn Worked Hard

The Flynn Commission spent a full month of arduous labor constructing a charter for the government of the city of Guthrie. The finished document was submitted to the people at a referendum election, July 23, 1889.

It was approved and remained the fundamental law of the city of Guthrie until August 1, 1890 when the Provisional Government gave place to the legal one, organized under the terms of the Congressional Organic Act of May 2, 1890.

The people of other townsites, West Guthrie, East Guthrie and Capitol Hill likewise established provisional governments in quick succession, following the general plan of Guthrie, proper.

These provisional governments proceeded vigorously with the problem to bring order out of chaos.

Jeffersonianism Prevailed

The energy and assurance which characterized their proceedings, notwithstanding the absence of any delegated power from higher authority, gives the impression that these people undilutely accepted the Jeffersonian philosophy without reservation.

They certainly acted on the theory that "it is the right of the people to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness."

These provisional governments passed and enforced ordinances, made contracts, chartered banks and public service corporations, levied taxes and created a public school system. In this latter enterprise a notable triumph in community co-operation was scored.

Trade Schools Set Up

While each separate municipality maintained its own school board, an agreement was entered into by which the general features of the system of the entire areas were co-ordinated and a shore-going grade school organization was set up and maintained.

When met by the present tragic situation of the public school system of the state of Oklahoma resulting from the vicious attack upon our school children engineered by our larger taxpayers under the guise of retrenchment, the commendable efforts and material sacrifices of those pioneers of 33 command our tribute.

(Editor's Note: This is the fourth in a series of articles on the development of cities in Oklahoma by Professor Alley. The last one ended with a discussion of the early political caucuses called in the unorganized territory after the rub.)

DEATH OF A FARM CHILD

The mother is not here. She is a-bed,
Grief is a storm to bend that strong, gaunt tree;
No more was Rachel scolded and comforted
Cursing the blessing of fecundity.

But there the father stands apart, and twists
His sweat-stained hat between his great brown hands.
The old coat sleeves leave bare his sunburned wrists,
And someone sobs, someone who understands.

The sound of earth upon the coffin breaks
Crisp air of afternoon. The farm folk sigh.
He starts and gasps, and all his body shakes,
He gulps small answers to the passers by.
He has five children, still, and has lost one.
But this child—this child was his only son.

—Dorothy McFadden

Oklahoma

Nature, Politics Smiled Favorably Upon New Village

Physical Environment Also Was
Additional Factor

(Editor's note: This is the fifth in a series of articles by Professor Alley on the establishment of Oklahoma towns. The last article ended with a description of the trade schools in the new territory and here Alley continues with a discussion of the founding of Oklahoma City.)

By JOHN ALLEY

Professor of Government

While these conditions were transpiring at Guthrie another interesting project in city building was being dramatized 30 miles to the southward. Oklahoma City was marked in advance for prominence in the settlement of Oklahoma Territory by reason of its location and environment. The locale of the future metropolis and capital of the State of Oklahoma, prior to the opening of the Oklahoma land for settlement, had been the recipient of material favors at the hands of the government, the Santa Fe railway and private interests.

Seven frame buildings were already in existence at this favored location. The Santa Fe had a railway depot, a section house and the home for the station agent.

The Federal government had contributed a shack to serve as a post office, as well as another government office structure. The stage company whose line passed thru the area had an old stockade here, and an enterprising family had been permitted to build and operate a boarding house.

Land Was Attractive

The physical environment was more attractive than the red hills of Guthrie. The wide sweep of the North Canadian river valley encircled the area, holding out a promise of abundant crops before the eager eyes of waiting agriculturists.

The Guthrie area was favored by congressional politicians, but the Oklahoma City area was favored by nature.

In the long rivalry which ensued, nature won over politics. Today, both nature and politics are on the side of Oklahoma City. Guthrie's ancient rivalry was bequeathed to Tulsa.

Originally the term "Booner" had a nasty implication. It meant nothing less than a cheat, a fugger, one who took an unfair advantage of his fellow homeseekers by sneaking across the border prior to the opening hour.

Meaning Has Changed

If one contentant for a claim or town lot could prove that the other party was a "Booner" he had his case won. Today the term has lost its evil connotation. Oklahoma accepts the nickname with a smile.

The transgression of "Booners" at Guthrie has been noted. In proportion to the numbers engaged in the initial rush, Oklahoma City was apparently more victimized by these transgressors than was her northern sister. An early day writer sums up the matter in these words:

"When the signal was given at the depot, then it was 12 o'clock, the country—for there was no Oklahoma City then—seemed alive with people.

They could be seen riding and running in all directions. Where they came from the Lord only knows. . . . At about 12:15, representatives of the Seminole Land and Town Company stepped off the Santa Fe's right of way and began to run a preliminary survey and to locate lots in accordance with their plat prepared before hand."

Colony Company Set Up

An hour later representatives of a rival company, known as the Colony Company, arrived by crossing company from the south. This company took its name from the town of Colony, Kan., where it was organized.

Whether the Colony Company was angered at the advantage in time gained by the Seminole Company by reason of their advantage party "jumping the gun," or whether this anger was the natural result of the bitter competition that followed, the fact remains that this rivalry contributed much discord and detriment to the early days of Oklahoma City's development.

The Seminole Company based their survey on Main Street and worked toward the north. When the representatives of the Colony Company arrived, seeing the northern area already occupied, they began their development southward from Grand Avenue.

The northern location was more attractive since the terrain rises gradually from a point about a block north of Main Street, providing a more slightly area for townsite purposes.

South Not So Desirable

From Grand Avenue southward for several blocks the land lies on a dead level, when it begins to break lower as it approaches the Canadian river bank.

In addition to securing the more

favorable location, the Seminole Company early developed more strength and leadership in city affairs, while the adherents of the Colony Company became a pestiferous and vociferous minority. They were dubbed "Kickers" by their opponents, and from this name "Kick-a-poo" became their accepted designation. Hence the constant strife between the factions was known as the "Seminole-Kickapoo War."

The "Seminole-Kickapoo War" left an ugly scar on the map of Oklahoma City. Today the motorist driving north or south thru the principal streets of Oklahoma City finds it necessary to make a sharp turn to the right or left, as he crosses Grand Avenue, in the heart of the business district.

This jog in the north and south streets resulted from the inability of two warring factions to adjust the difference which occurred at the meeting point of the two independent surveys conducted by the rival townsite companies.

Election Is Held

At 3 o'clock on the afternoon of April 22, the Colony Company started an election process, the purpose of which was to name a mayor and clerk.

The voting was done at a big tent erected near the present intersection of Grand Avenue and Broad-

way.

More than 400 votes were cast. When the counting had been completed, it was discovered the Reverend James Murray, of Baldwin, Kan., was well in the lead.

He was promptly declared Mayor-elect. Mr. C. P. Walker was elected City Clerk. This event apparently marks the first election held in Oklahoma Territory. While voting was in progress the Honorable Sidney Clarke, of Lawrence, Kan., and General James B. Weaver, of Iowa, both of the Seminoles, addressed the people from a wagon, protesting the election, urging a postponement of action and announcing a public meeting to be held the following evening at the corner of Main and Broadway.

Advice Disregarded

The Oklahoma people listened to their orations, disregarded their advice and proceeded with the election. At 3 o'clock on the following afternoon, Tuesday, April 23, a public gathering was held, in an attempt to bring an adjustment in the surveys of the two rival townsite companies.

Mr. A. C. Scott who still is living in Oklahoma City, formerly of Iowa, Kan., was selected as chairman and Mr. M. H. Woods, of Garnett, Kan., acted as secretary. At this meeting a committee of 14 was chosen to undertake the difficult task of adjusting the surveys.

Altho the committee worked strenuously and faithfully, securing some semblance of adjustment, the unfortunate street jogs were never wholly corrected.

Mass Meeting Called

On Saturday evening, April 27, another great mass meeting was held, presided over by Ledru Guthrie with Judge O. H. Violet, as secretary. The purpose of the meeting was to secure a political consolidation of the two rival townsite groups and organize a temporary city government.

The idea was engineered by the Seminoles, and the Kickapoos accented to their plan, altho its consummation meant that the skeleton government they had established by the election of April 22 would be superseded.

A set of "Articles of Confederation"

was submitted and adopted. The "Preamble" of these resolutions, paraphrasing to a degree that other famous Preamble of 1787, altho lacking its smoothness and rhythm, reads as follows:

"We, the people of Oklahoma City, in the Indian Territory, for the more adequate protection of property, and for the better preservation of order, and to form a more perfect union, do ordain these resolutions to be in force and effect."

Captain Couch, of Boomer Fame, Elected First Mayor Of Oklahoma's Metropolis

And Next Came Kingfisher, The
City of 'Wise Men'

By JOHN ALLEY

Professor of Government

The six resolutions which followed proved for the election of a temporary mayor for a term of five days; a temporary recorder to serve for a like period and until his successor qualified; authorized the temporary mayor to call an election for May 1, 1889; designate polling places; and appoint election officials and provide a system of police to maintain order.

An election was then held and there, with Captain W. L. Couch, of Boomer fame and one of the leaders of the Seminole Company winning "hands down" as temporary mayor. W. P. Shaw was chosen temporary recorder. Each official was to receive the sum of one dollar for his five-day service. In the words of a contemporary writer "The meeting closed with three rousing cheers and the singing of 'Praise God from Whom all Blessings Flow'."

Seminole Victorious

The Seminoles had scored their first victory! In conformity with the authority vested in him by the resolutions of April 27, the temporary mayor issued a proclamation providing the election of May 1.

The Seminole area was designated as Ward 1, and the Colony area as Ward 2, with balloting locations established in each ward.

Voters in each area were to participate in the election of mayor and administrative officers, while three councilmen were to be chosen from each ward. Grand Avenue, then called Clark Street, was made the dividing line between the north and south wards.

"The election was held in due form on May 1, with election officers, ballot boxes, 'n' everything. A total of 1,280 votes was split three ways as follows: W. L. Couch, 785; Ben S. Miller, 266; and James Murray, 228."

Other Officers Listed

Additional officers elected were James A. Blackburn, recorder; O. H. Violet, police judge; Ledu Guthrie, city attorney; M. C. Gulsion, city treasurer; and Charles Climbear, city engineer, together with Sidney Clark, F. G. Hudson, J. E. Jones, C. T. Scott, John Wallace and W. C. Wells, as councilmen.

An inspection of the returns of this election indicates that the three councilmen chosen from Ward 2, south of Grand Avenue, Jones, Scott and Wells, polled a considerable part of their votes in Ward 1.

The Reverend James Murray, who had been elected Mayor by the "Kickapoo" on April 22, ran a poor second in this race of May 1, polling less than half the vote of his successful rival of the "Seminoles."

Kingfisher Was Next

While the settlement of townsites and the establishment of provisional governments at Guthrie and Oklahoma City held major attention during the early months of Oklahoma territorial history, the founding of Kingfisher, on the western line of the original Territory midway from north to south, easily ranked third in importance.

In fact Kingfisher actually won the fight as the location of the territorial capital, by a legislative bill passed by the first Legislative Assembly in the fall of 1890.

She lost the prize by the veto of Governor Allen, the first territorial

Governor. In addition to winning and losing the capital, Kingfisher held within her precincts the most powerful and remarkable group of political leaders which, doubtless, were ever assembled in a single city in Oklahoma territorial days.

Names Tell the Story

Oklahoma politicians who read these lines may lift their eyebrows in doubt at so bold a statement. Let the following names and facts speak for themselves:

Abraham J. Seay, second territorial governor; Bill Grimes, United States marshal under President Harrison, and territorial secretary under President McKinley; Pat Nagle, founder of the Socialist party in Oklahoma; J. V. Callahan, the only democrat ever elected delegate to congress, and the only democrat to defeat Flynn; Mathew J. Kane, justice of the first state supreme court; Jacob Admire, founder and editor of the Kingfisher Free Press; and Jacob C. Robberts, territorial attorney general under President Harrison.

And Harry Thompson, United States Marshal under President McKinley; Bill Fossett, United States marshal; Cash M. Cole, power in Republican ranks and later member of the state board of affairs; Charles West, first attorney general after statehood; Bill McCartney, president of the first territorial senate; and Rev. J. H. Parker, territorial superintendent of public instruction.

To this list might be added Colonel John D. Miles, and Virgil M. Hobbs, early day mayors, and Dr. F. L. Winkler, J. C. Post and Dr. K. Cunningham, members of the territorial legislature.

Name Origin Explained

Many people today naturally assume that the name "Kingfisher" was derived from that of the fisher bird which is indigenous to the general area and climate. The explanation is not so simple and the actual naming of the town carries a more interesting significance.

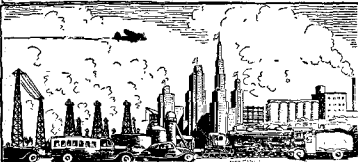
The townsite is located just south of the intersection of two small prairie streams. The one which forms the general eastern boundary of the city flows northward from the watershed thrust between the North Canadian river and Cimarron river drainage basins.

This little stream was known from early days as Uncle John's creek. The other one, coming in from the southwest, took its name from an Indian Territory cattleman who established his ranch headquarters on the sunny side of the timber belt of the creek bottom near its junction with Uncle John's creek.

His home was King Fisher. Near his ranch house, in the late seventies or early eighties, was established a feeding station for the stage line which was operated between Caldwell, Kan., and Fort Reno, Indian Territory. The stage drivers called this feeding and horse changing relay point "King Fisher's State Station."

(Editor's note: This is the sixth in a series of articles by Professor Alley on the establishment of municipalities in Oklahoma. At the end of the last article Alley gave the preamble to the "articles of confederation" adopted by the convention delegates who organized a temporary city government at Oklahoma City. Here Alley continues with a resume of the first election in Oklahoma City.)

Songs of Oklahoma



Illustrations by John S. Meiself From "Songs of Oklahoma"

THE DEATH TRYST

By Denon Jacques Stander, formerly of Tulsa, in The Morning Star

Many things she loved: the Indian-paint-brush;
Wind-driven trees naked on the sky;
And roads, gold-flecked with drifting dust and sun
Which wended by
She loved beyond all ken the pale blue-bonnets,
As bright as April is, when wild things wing;
She loved thorn-apples, red as blood incarnate,
And she loved spring!
She loved all poignant arts of earth: better still
She loved the strange, quick stiffness of her sleep
She dressed her best and combed her straight black hair
To silence keep
With death, she was all alone with memories,
Left with vibrant visions in her room; They found her dying, but they did not know
She loved the tomb!

Kingfisher's Birth, Lisbon's Short Life Began With Run

Altho 'West Liners' Reached Site
First, 'North Liners' Grew

(Editor's note: In today's portion of Professor Alley's story of the state's first town, the famous beginnings of the town of Lisbon are told. The series of articles will be concluded Tuesday.

By JOHN ALLEY
Professor of Government

It was at this station that the department of the interior located the government land office for the western portion of the Oklahoma area, just prior to the opening. The proximity of this office for filing land claims, as well as the rich agricultural bottom lands which stretched out on either side of each of these streams and joined in a wide sweep from east to west at their junction, constituted an impelling urge to homeseekers.

It is interesting to note that while Guthrie and Oklahoma City had rail connections from the beginning, with the outside world, Kingfisher had none. The Rock Island railway building south from Caldwell, Kan., did not reach Kingfisher until the fall of 1889.

The ninety-eighth meridian of west longitude, which formed the dividing line between the unassigned lands of the Oklahoma area and the Cheyenne and Arapahoe "Blanket" Indian Reservation, passed just a mile and a half west of King Fisher's state station.

Two Lines Formed

Along this meridian a host of homeseekers lined up during the days preceding the opening, casting hungry glances across the undulating prairies to the eastward. Some 20 miles to the north, an east and west boundary line blocked off the promised land from the Cherokee Outlet. Here another line of settlers formed, with King Fisher's Stage Station as their goal. The first group were known as "West Liners" and the second group as "North Liners."

With the opening gun the "West Liners" dashed forward, winning the race by a wide margin. The choice portion of the available townsite area was swooped down upon by this eager mass of humanity and none of the 320-acre tract remained when the advance guard of the "North Liners" came struggling in an hour or so later.

Robberts Avenue Named

The "West Liners" selected the tract, the center of which lay just south of the land office area. The north bound-

dary line they named Robberts avenue, after Judge Robberts, then receiver of the land office.

The half section line running south from the land office acre, which was the dividing line between the east and west quarter sections composing the 320-acre tract, was named Main street. Their tract rose gently to the southward, sloping northwest toward King Fisher's creek and eastward toward Uncle John's creek, the ridge between these lowlands pointing slightly to the southwest.

Site Named 'Lisbon'

It was ideal for townsite purposes. They named it "Lisbon." By 1 o'clock 2,500 settlers had established themselves in the area. The lucky "North Liners" had to take what was left. They selected the 160-acre tract on the north side of the east half of the Lisbon townsite, forming an "L" with Lisbon.

This acreage stretched across the bottom lands in the forks of the two creeks with a narrow strip on the north side of King Fisher's creek. They called their town "Kingfisher City."

On the evening of the first day, April 22, a mass meeting was held on the corner of Robberts avenue and Main street, just south of the land office. This meeting was sponsored by two distinct groups, the Independent Order of Odd Fellows and the G. A. R. Apparently this is the only instance in Oklahoma Territory where city organization resulted from the initiative of formal, non-commercial bodies.

Miles First Mayor

Tentative plans were laid and a second meeting was called for the following evening. Pursuant to this

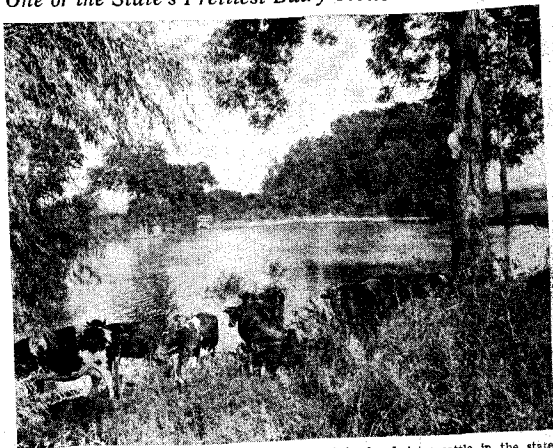
plan the mass meeting held on the evening of April 23 adopted a temporary form of government and elected their officials, John D. Miles, mayor; W. A. "Bill" McCartney, M. M. Duncan, W. L. Creech, J. H. Huff, and John Garvey, councilmen. The city of Lisbon came into being.

Two days later the first council meeting was held. The first official act of this provisional government was the selection of the city marshal and the city clerk. For the former office, D. P. Wyatt was chosen and for the latter, J. G. Burns.

The problem of adjusting conflicting town lot claims was delegated to a citizen's committee of four members. This board of arbitration was appointed on May 29, and consisted of the following men: R. C. Palmer, Josiah Hunter, Fred Ewart and J. O. Cross, father of Bill Cross, now secretary of the university athletic association.

The work of this board was carried thru in a masterful way, altho without a shred of legal authority. Public sentiment sustained its action and the city officials pledged their support to its decisions. Very few litigations followed, as compared with the numerous and long-drawn-out controversies which vexed other cities of Oklahoma Territory.

One of the State's Prettiest Dairy Scenes



GUERNSEY FARM AT SAPULPA—One of the finest herds of dairy cattle in the state. Guernseys, belongs to C. J. Davenport of Sapulpa. They graze on his farm just northeast of that city. Dairying is among the foremost farm activities in Creek county. It is perhaps one of the best organized farm phases. Other notable Guernsey herds belong to Clay Williams and R. L. Jones of Bristow, Bob Moore and M. W. Wheat of Sapulpa.

Used-Car Lots

Row on row of lonely cars,
By the sun careened,
Some are new, some are not,
And some are repossessed,
Mile, useless chariots,
Black and blue and brown,
Waiting for an owner who
Will pay a payment down;
A used car is a useful thing,
All shining and a-gleam,
It's some one's future happiness,
And some one's broken dream.

—Lathum Overa.

Luxury Taxes on Gambling Tables Were Part of City Government in '89er Days

Leaders Enforced Their Laws
When They Passed Them

By JOHN ALLEY

Professor of Government

An interesting example of the bold assumption of power by the city council of the provisional government (without legal authority) in the matter of raising revenue, is shown in the following ordinances:

"Council chamber, Lisbon, I. T., May 6, '89. At request of three members of the council, the council met in special session. On motion of W. A. McCartney, the city marshal was instructed to ascertain who are occupying streets and what streets are occupied and report the same to the council.

"Be it enacted by the mayor and city council of the city of Lisbon that there be levied and collected as an occupation tax as follows:

Gambling Taxes Collected

"On draw poker tables, \$5.00 per week on each table. On stud poker tables, \$15.00 on each table. On Chunk-a-Luck tables, \$5.00 per week on each table.

"This to be collected by the city marshal every Monday morning in advance, and the city marshal is hereby authorized and instructed to collect the same and in default of any payment of said tax the city marshal is authorized and instructed to close such place or places so refusing to pay said tax.

"Said assessment is to commence on Monday, May 6, 1889. Adjourned to meet at 4 p. m. May 6, '89.

Signed, McCARTNEY, clerk, pro tem. M. M. DUNCAN, chairman, pro tem.

Assessment Got Monday

It may seem that the superficial observer of today would condemn this ordinance on moral principles. But the same political thinker accepts it as wise and scientific taxation. It was a luxury tax. Its purpose was both fiscal and regulatory. It got the money and it localized and regulated a vice which under the hurly-burly conditions of those days could not have been suppressed.

The point was that the town was running wide open. The gamblers had moved their tents out into the open spaces or into the streets and were doing a thriving business. Councilman McCartney who proposed and pushed thru this ordinance "knew his onions" as usual.

Early in June the city council appointed a citizens committee to draft a charter for the government of the city. A month later this charter, providing for a mayor-council form of government, was submitted to a referendum vote and accepted. At the same election a full complement of city officials was chosen to succeed the temporary government set up in April.

Miles Named Mayor

Officers elected were John D. Miles, mayor, and J. V. Adams, A. Banks, F. L. Bolles, Cash M. Cade, J. C. Cross, John Garvey, O. K. Rogers, and F. L. Wallis, councilmen.

The "North Liners," organizing their own townsite, Kingfisher City, followed the general pattern set by the Lisbonites. A temporary government was set up on April 24, followed

by a formal organization and election on June 8. In this election, officers chosen for provisional government of Kingfisher City were Virgil M. Hobbs, mayor, and P. M. Blair, J. D. Bradley, W. F. Doorley, T. L. Hughes, and William Lomoy, councilmen.

The two townsites continued to operate successfully, side by side and in harmonious co-operation until after the Organic act of May 2, 1890, made provision for the creation of legal county and city governments, removing the embarrassments incident to congressional stupidity and lack of foresight at the time the Oklahoma lands were opened to settlement in the spring of 1889.

Towns Consolidated

On July 14, 1890, the two towns were consolidated under the name of Kingfisher. The same name was given to the county, of which this city became and has remained the county seat. Both city and county now became full legal entities, conforming to the general laws of the state of Nebraska, which laws had been set up in Oklahoma Territory by the terms of the Organic act. "In so far as they were locally applicable."

The reasons for the success of these twin-city provisional governments may be summed up in one phrase—constructive leadership. The character of that leadership was set forth in the opening paragraph of this article. The most of those politically minded, capable energetic men have passed on down the long, long trail. "Leaders of the people by their counsels. . . their works shall not be blotted out. . . their bodies are buried in peace, but their name liveth forever."

Editor's note: In this portion of Professor Alley's story of early beginnings of Oklahoma towns, the final consolidation of the towns of Lisbon and Kingfisher is told with a tribute to the constructive leadership that caused that co-operation.)

***E**DNA FERBER, American novelist, has no intention of returning to Mexico, she said when informed she had been barred from that country because of a short story she wrote in which she told of the discomfort from fleas in Mexican hotels.*



El Reno Had Two Rivals From Its Outset But Railroads, Unsettled-Town Builders, Turned Tables on Its Growing Neighbors

Nature Favored Reno City, And
Politicians Liked Frisco

By JOHN ALLEY
Professor of Government

In the establishment of the three cities previously discussed, Guthrie, Oklahoma City and Kingfisher, the requirements of federal law limiting townships to the public domain to 320 acres was circumvented by providing for two or more townships for each of these cities and organizing each township as a separate city.

Thus, there were four Guthries, Guthrie, West Guthrie, East Guthrie and Capitol Hill.

There were two Oklahoma Cities, Oklahoma City and South Oklahoma City. Likewise there were two Kingfishers, Kingfisher City and Lebanon.

In the other cities which will be discussed in this article, the settlers were more modest, or less eager.

One township of 320 acres, or less, sufficed in each case. In the founding and early development of Reno, later renamed El Reno, certain features are evidenced which present an interesting contrast from the more or less standardized practice followed at Guthrie, Oklahoma City and Kingfisher.

They Were Equal

These latter towns claimed their respective areas. No important rivals appeared to challenge their leadership, and each of them had become the county seat of its respective county as a matter of course.

But the case of El Reno was different. The township was located some two miles south of the North Canadian river, on the very western edge of the Oklahoma area, 25 miles due south of Kingfisher.

In fact, the ninety-eighth meridian which was the boundary line between Oklahoma and the Cheyenne and Arapahoe Indian reservation, was also the western boundary of the original township.

Two other towns sprung up simultaneously with El Reno, to challenge her leadership on this southwestern corner of the Oklahoma country. Three miles to the northward, across the Canadian river and in the very heart of the broad sweep of its rich valley lands, Reno City was founded.

Fort Reno Was Factor

The name of the town, like that of its rival, was determined by the proximity of both to the Fort Reno military reservation.

Twelve miles to the eastward a more ambitious rival to El Reno was staked out, also on the north side of the Canadian river, where the valley lands stretch out in more generous proportions than on the south side of this river.

These settlers called their township Frisco. In discussing the long rivalry for the commercial and political honors of Oklahoma Territory, which was waged for two decades by Guthrie and Oklahoma City, the writer remarked that the congressional politicians favored Guthrie while nature favored Oklahoma City.

In the three-cornered battle for local and county honors waged by Reno City, Frisco and El Reno, nature favored Reno City, the politicians favored Frisco, but the railroads favored El Reno.

And the railroads won by a wide margin. So decisively has El Reno's victory been registered that the other two towns were eventually "sunk without a trace," to use the vernacular of German submarine warfare.

They Are No More

Frisco and Reno City have not merely become "deserted villages." They have been wiped out, root, trunk and branch. Today they exist only in the memories of the old timers and

in the records of the historians. The technique used by the railroads in accomplishing their ends will be recounted later.

The second distinctive feature which characterized El Reno's beginning was the clever method used by the townsite company in securing the tract of land upon which the town was to be built.

The townsite company had selected two seasoned politicians as its leaders. Former Governor Crittendon of Missouri was its president and Former Governor Glick of Kansas was its vice president. The procedure used in expediting the acquisition of the land was as follows:

Two former soldiers were to file on adjoining quarter sections which they were to lease to the townsite company for a period of 9 years. After the homestead claims were proved up and the title acquired, the land was to be sold to the company.

Soldiers Had Privileges

The homestead law required ordinary settlers to live on their claims for five years before title was granted, but for former soldiers this residence period was but one year.

In executing this plan J. A. Foreman filed his claim on the northwest quarter of section 9, township 12, range 7, west. Since the ninety-eighth meridian, which formed the western boundary of Oklahoma, passed thru section eight at a point less than half a mile west of the section line which bounded Foreman's quarter-section on the west, there are no other full quarter sections available between Foreman's homestead and the western boundary of Oklahoma.

Since the ninety-eighth meridian was there and section eight was there, title law or trade required 1280 acres.

Fortified Was Short

Thus the little "fortified" was really the corner stone of the townsite company's plan to place under the federal title the 1280 acre townsite company was entitled to proceed on this basis and the title was marked off into lots for use of city dwellers.

In establishing their township and organizing their provisional government, the settlers proceeded in a more leisurely manner than was followed by the founders of other Oklahoma cities previously discussed.

Nearly two weeks elapsed before the first election was held on May 3, 1889. At this election, Dr. C. S. Rogers was chosen mayor. A provisional council of seven members was set consisting of W. B. Barker, A. C. McComb, J. A. Hoot, Neal W. Evans, W. L. Willford, Herman Hauser, and J. P. Scales.

E. E. Blake was named police judge, E. J. Simpson, city attorney, and C. W. Beers, city marshal.

In the meantime, Reno City had the start on El Reno and it was estimated that between 1500 and 2000 settlers had established themselves on the township north of the Canadian river.

The settlers in Reno City had every reason to believe in the future success and stability of their enterprise,

since the Rock Island railway company, building south from Caldwell, Kan., had already surveyed their line and the stakes marking the route across the Canadian valley were plainly visible, assuring the Reno City settlers that their town would soon have rail connections with the outside world.

But things took a different turn, and Prof. John Alley shows that turn in his next article.

(Editor's note: The methods by which El Reno survived the fight for existence in the southwestern corner of Oklahoma territory are told today in this article by Prof. John Alley in his series on Oklahoma town beginnings.)

Rock Island Railway Threw A Curve Around Reno City, Played Ball With El Reno

Even the Hotel Was Jacked Up
And Moved Away

(Editor's note: The important part the railroads played in the development of Southwestern Oklahoma territory is told in this installment of Professor Alley's story of Oklahoma town beginnings. The series of articles will be concluded Thursday.)

By JOHN ALLEY
Professor of Government

The Reno City people were so confident that the railway was certain to pass thru their townsite that when the representatives of the Rock Island later appeared and proposed that the townsite company divide their real estate holdings with the railroad company on a 50-50 basis, the offer was rejected.

Whereupon the Rock Island did business with Reno City's rival on the south side of the river.

When the road was finally constructed a year or so later, the route had been changed, making a wide sweep to the westward and leaving Reno City stranded on the fertile lands of the North Canadian river bottom, nearly two miles from railway connection. This is the story as told by "old settlers" in the area.

Reno City Fades Out
The railway line, as it exists today, curves back to the westward, after

crossing the Canadian river and passes thru the western limits of the original townsite of El Reno. This action eventually rang down the curtain on Reno City.

Gradually its settlers filtered across the river and established themselves in El Reno, taking their buildings with them. One particular job of house-moving is notable.

A preposterous three-story hotel building which had been constructed in Reno City in the flush times of early days was jacked up, put on rollers, and started southward to El Reno. It was a long, tedious job actually requiring the construction of

a temporary bridge to get it across the river.

During the weeks involved in the movement, the guests of this now famous "Caddo hotel" continued to occupy their rooms and enjoy the free ride southward. The Caddo hotel finally arrived in El Reno and for many years was one of its leading hostelrys.

Highway Misses Reno City

Today the motorist driving north from El Reno on U. S. highway 81 will pass what used to be the townsite of Reno City, about a mile north of the Canadian river bridge. The casual driver will merely observe the wide stretch of fertile lands extending northward from the river for two or three miles with occasional farm buildings and luxuriant fields of alfalfa and wheat.

But the informed motorist can locate the exact spot of this "deserted village" by marking the country school house about 50 yards east of the pavement and noting occasional small piles of building stone, together with a caved-in basement, here and there.

El Reno's nearest rival was thus put out of the running. But the job of disposing of her other, and more persistent rival for leadership in what has become Canadian county was not so easy.

Railroad builders again entered the fight and again won, but the factor of territorial and county politics figured prominently and to the detriment of El Reno's prestige for many months.

Frisco Was Rival Town

The rival town was Frisco, 12 miles east of Reno City and on the north side of the river. The railroad line in this case was originally the Choctaw Coal and Railway company, building west from the McAlester coal fields.

The name was later changed to Choctaw, Oklahoma and Gulf and the line was soon acquired by the Rock Island. It has become the main east and west trunk line of the latter company, carrying traffic from the Mississippi valley to California, passing thru the central part of the present state of Oklahoma.

In the location of this railroad route Yukon became the immediate rival of Frisco. When the Choctaw company finally decided on the route south, rather than north of the Canadian river, Frisco was doomed and Yukon was made. But Yukon arrived on the scene too late to supplant El Reno for the reason that the latter town was now well on its way to maturity, with two trunk lines of railways crossing at right angles and connecting with the outside world at the four cardinal points of the compass, north, south, east and west.

Also, El Reno had become the county seat of Canadian county and that county's area had been approximately doubled by the opening of the Cheyenne and Arapahoe Indian reservation to white settlement.

The town of Frisco, while it existed, held a unique place in Oklahoma history and politics. It was established by 60 veterans of the Union army and their families. The first Veterans Post of the Grand Army of the Republic of Oklahoma territory was established here, honoring the original Oklahoma Boomer, being named Captain Payne post. Here the "Frisco Herald" was published by George W. McClintock, who held the interesting distinction of becoming editor of three different papers, successively, in three different towns in the same county, in the sixty years of Oklahoma territory.

Yukon Is the Winner

When Yukon finally won over Frisco in the location of the Choctaw railway route, McClintock moved his paper to Yukon in the fall of 1891, likewise becoming the first newspaperman in the latter town.

A year or so later he established the Canadian County Courier in El Reno. Eventually, McClintock returned to Kansas, where he edited the Kansas American in McPherson, until his death.

The important place of Frisco in the fight for town supremacy will be told in Professor Alley's Wednesday installment.

Memory Book

*She wanted a Memory Book, she said,
Bound in her favorite shade of red,
In which to keep all manner of things,
Worthy of later remembrings.*

*Can you paste in a book the blue of skies,
Seen through widening youthful eyes,
Or the green of trees after summer rain,
Or the white of almost exquisite pain?*

*What book could ever hold the half
Of the ecstasy of a baby's laugh,
Or the mountain look in a boy's brown eyes,
Or a father's smile, profoundly wise?*

*No book preserves the ocean air,
Or the feel of wind blowing through the hair,*

*Or the soft serenity of night
On a little lake when the moon is bright,
Or the breathlessness, the speed, the thrill
Of a long red sled on an icy hill.*

*I found her Memory Book today;
She left it when she went away,
Forgotten in a well-worn trunk,
Along with other similar junk.*

—MARIE DODGE JONES.

Frisco Convention Started Long Struggle for Capitol

Canadian County Election Was
Important Event

(Editor's note: The happenings at the Frisco convention and the Canadian county seat election are recounted in this installment of Professor Alley's story of the development of Oklahoma towns. Thursday the series of articles will be concluded.)

By JOHN ALLEY

Professor of Government

Frisco organized as a city during the first week of May, 1889, electing J. T. Godfrey as mayor of the provisional government. Later Godfrey was appointed the first sheriff of Canadian county by Governor Steele.

The second mayor was C. H. Howe, and before his term closed the town had passed the peak of its career, with Yukon rising to the southeastward across the river to eclipse the eastern part of Canadian county.

The third chief executive of Frisco was E. C. Rhodyback, who assumed the more modest title of chairman of the Board of Trustees, now organized as a village board under the laws of Nebraska, made effective by the Organic act of May 2, 1890. The glory of Frisco was passing.

Frisco Prominent in Election

Two important political incidents in which Frisco figured prominently in the heyday of its career are worthy of mention. The first was the "Frisco convention" of July 15, 1889, and the second was the Canadian county seat election of March 17, 1891.

The famous Frisco convention was the outstanding political incident of the first decade of Oklahoma territorial politics. The importance of this gathering is significant since it was the original political caucus which shaped the direction of the capitol location line-up, extending down thru nearly 20 years of strife and turmoil.

While the meeting was strictly political in character, it was also non-partisan. Here republicans, democrats and populists fraternized freely, representing the southern and western interests of the territory and having as their chief hope and aim the defeat of Guthrie's hopes for political leadership. The initiative was taken by the mayors of the provisional governments of the cities in the interested area.

Convention Call Issued

The call for the convention was inspired by a previous call emanating from Guthrie for the purpose of organizing a provisional government for the entire territory. The strategy of Guthrie was to have a de facto government already on existence when the Congress of the United States met in December, 1889, and then demand that Congress make the de facto government the de jure or legal government.

The Guthrie convention was scheduled to meet July 17, so the politicians of the rival towns of Oklahoma City and Lisbon (Kingfisher) sided by those of Norman, El Reno and others put in their call for July 15.

The gathering at Frisco was a notable one. Col. John D. Miles, provisional mayor of Lisbon (Kingfisher), was named chairman and A. C. Scott, then and now of Oklahoma City, was chosen secretary.

Mayors Are Delegates

Other mayors who served as delegates were Mayor Virgil M. Hobbs, of Kingfisher City; Mayor C. S. Rogers, of El Reno; Mayor J. T. Godfrey, of Frisco; Mayor W. L. Couch, of Oklahoma City; Mayor T. R. Waggoner, of Norman; and Mayor L. L. Stone, of Noble.

The strategy used by the Frisco convention in order to defeat the plan of Guthrie for the immediate organization of a provisional territorial government was to memorialize Congress to set up a formal legal government for the territory. Sidney Clarke, prominent Oklahoma City politician and a former Kansas congressman, was named chairman of the committee on resolutions. Clarke brought in a skillfully drawn and eloquent set of resolutions, setting forth the remarkable progress of the new territory and urging Congress to pass an Organic act, creating a territorial government at the earliest possible moment.

Guthrie's Strategy Fails

The Frisco movement took the wind out of the sails of the Guthrie movement. The convention which met at Guthrie two days later, July 17, aroused little enthusiasm, and adjourned after a brief session, to meet August 26. The provisional government was never formed.

The leaders of the Frisco convention laid the basis for future co-operation and this co-operation succeeded later in repeatedly defeating Guthrie's ambition to become the permanent capital of the territory of Oklahoma.

After the Organic act was passed by Congress, providing for the election of a territorial legislature, it was the town of Frisco that selected the representative who was to become the speaker of the first house and exert a powerful influence on early territorial politics.

This man was Arthur W. Daniels, popularly known as "Deafy Daniels." Daniels was born in Illinois and educated at Knox college. A lawyer by profession, he was a fluent speaker and took to politics as a duck takes to water. A colleague in the first legislative session writes of him as follows:

"No man of the territory knew more of the public men of all parties than did Daniels. . . . He was something of an expert in a convention and his 'fine Italian hand' often turned the tide in a close political fight. When he arrived at Guthrie, having in his organization the balance of power, Daniels was in a position to get results—and he did."

Deserted Cabin

*Just at the edge of the little wood
Many a decade the cabin stood,
Lonely and mated with solitude.*

*Trackless dust is still on the floor,
A rusted chain holds the sagging door,
And locks all the memoried years before.*

*Silence dreams with the shingles on the roof,
Silence inside is shadowproof . . .
Only the log walls stand aloof.*

*Only the wind—the wind and the rain;
Patter the roof, and rattle the chain,
Seeking an entrance always in vain.*

*Flowers and weeds in the summer time;
And the tall pines nod in their lordly prime,
Making a pattern of checkered rhyme.*

*Once there were people loved of their own,
Pioneer flesh and pioneer bone;
Now, but their life dust, evermore blown.*

*Echoes voices imprisoned there,
Eloquent of the souls that dare,
Speak to me through the sun and air.*

RUDOLPH HILL

El Reno Retained Canadian County Seat in Court Battle

Frisco Fades From Picture As
Election Is Repudiated

(Editor's Note: With this article, the series of accounts of the founding of Oklahoma is concluded. Professor Alley's final article discusses the early history of the city of El Reno.)

By JOHN ALLEY
Professor of Government

In the election of March 17, 1891, which was to determine the relocation of the county seat of Canadian county, temporarily located at El Reno by the Organic act, Frisco and Reno City "ganged up" on El Reno and won the location for Frisco by a narrow margin.

However, El Reno set up a claim of fraudulent practices in the conduct of the election, took the matter into the courts and eventually won the right to keep the county seat.

This was the "last straw" and Frisco faded out. Today her existence is but a memory.

El Reno Is Triumphant

El Reno had emerged triumphantly over both of her rivals. Within a year after the county seat election was held, the Cheyenne and Arapaho Indian reservation was thrown open to White settlement.

The site of Canadian county had been doubted and a great expanse of prairie area, extending westward to the Texas panhandle, was awaiting exploitation.

Likewise, El Reno had become a railway center, with two lines, the Rock Island and Choctaw, at her door and establishing trade arteries leading out to the four points of the compass.

Plans Are Defeated

El Reno was happy, confident of her future prosperity and visualizing herself as the coming metropolis of the great state of Oklahoma which was to be.

Bobby Burns has said:

"The bells laid schemes o' mice
and men,
Gang aft a'gley;
And lee' us naught but grief and
pain
For promised joy."

Such was the case with the El Reno Townsite company, under the leadership of these two master politicians, former Governor Crittenden of Missouri, and former Governor Glick of Kansas.

The clever scheme devised by this organization was explained in the early part of this series. The program went thru its early stages as scheduled. Lots were sold and certificates of possession were issued.

Settlers Felt Secure

After title to the land had been secured from the government, deeds were to be issued to the holders of these certificates. In the meantime, the settlers, feeling secure in the possession of their lots and fortified by their certificates, proceeded with their building preparations.

But contests were filed, charging that the homesteaders had not acted in good faith; that they were not genuine homesteaders in fact, seeking land for agricultural purposes, upon which they proposed to live as agriculturists.

The specific charge was set up that the homesteaders were merely agents in a real estate transaction for profit.

The case was argued before the local land office, appealed to the commissioner of the General Land office at Washington, and finally carried to the secretary of the interior, who cancelled the homestead entries and turned everything topsy-turvy. When the news of the action reached El Reno, everything "went bloozy." A wild orgy of lot-jumping prevailed. Uncertainty and bewilderment followed.

Controversy Lagged

The whole mixup was finally straightened out by a long and tedious process which dragged out thru three years. The matter as eventually solved was based on an act of congress, approved May 14, 1890, and entitled "An Act to provide for townsite entries of land in what is known as Oklahoma, and for other purposes."

Under the terms of this act the secretary of the interior was authorized to appoint boards of townsite trustees, for three members each with "not more than two members being appointed from one political party."

The board which handled the El Reno situation was known as "Board No. 4, Townsite Trustees at El Reno, O. T."

It was appointed by Acting Secretary of the Interior George Chandler, on October 7, 1891, and consisted of James M. Bishop, Samuel T. Leavy and Delbert L. Larsh.

The whole problem of determining ownership and issuing deeds for lots in the city of El Reno had to be handled by this board.

Everything started over again "from scratch." Individual claimants appeared before this board, presented their evidence and, if the board was satisfied, a deed was issued.

Many Claimants Appeared

In many cases two claimants appeared and the case was argued, as before a court of law, the board deciding the issue by a majority vote.

A transcript of the evidence in each case was made, signed by the board, or by two of its members, and forwarded to the secretary of the Interior. In case of division on the board, the minority member had his dissenting opinion typed out, which he signed and forwarded it along with the majority opinion.

Delbert L. Larsh, one of the members of this board, is still living in Norman, his original home at the time of his appointment, 44-years ago, and has very courteously given the writer access to duplicate copies of reports and other papers relating to this service.

Cases Were Long

I have before me as I write, a carbon copy of the report of the board on one of the contested cases. It covers five legal sized pages of typewritten paper, single-spaced, and included both the majority decision signed by Bishop and Leavy, and the dissenting opinion signed by Larsh.

In going thru the remnant of fugitive papers and carbons which Larsh still has in his possession, reference was found to "case No. 618," which is indicative of the extent of the work of this board.

Of course the entire story of this could be found by delving into the records of the secretary of the interior, at Washington. Perhaps some future historian will undertake a more exhaustive treatment of these significant cases.

Enough evidence has been presented to convince the casual reader that the story of the founding and early history of the city of El Reno is interesting and unique.

"Aw, Shucks---"

Ambling along, his shrewd kindly eyes
Shyly viewing the beauties
Of a new land—
Seizing the hand of an old crony,
Or of a president, fellow-ambassador, senator,
Or prince—
Grinning wistfully- and humbly before his
Creator

Perhaps saying, whimsically:
"Y'know, Lord, all I know is what I've read
In the papers
'N' picked up as I gaddied around
Hither 'n' yon;
But all this stuff that's in the papers
Just now,
Page on page—'n' all the pictures—
Aw, shucks, Lord,
I wish I coulda earned
A little mite of it.
They mean well, Lord—don't hold it against
'em,

Let's just call it good-intentioned
Exaggeration;
They're just bein' kind
To an ignor'nt ol' cowhand
From Oologah.
Y'know, Lord, that's a great bunch
You've got down there,
Senators 'n' all;
I'm gonna miss 'em for a while,
But they'll be comin' along.
I had no idy
They felt—that way—about—aw, shucks,

Lord—
After the way I've kidded 'em,
'N' all—
But I've never hurt 'em till now
An' I'm just wonderin', Lord,
If there ain't some way
You can ease it up for 'em?
Just tell 'em that—shucks—it ain't bad like
that a-tall—
An' that this round-up's just fine an'
Prettier than the song.
Y'see, Lord, that down there gets right
next to me, an'
Shucks, there ain't nothin'
I c'n do about it;
So do what you can, won't you, Lord?
I've got lots of confidence in Your ability
Along that line,
Well, there goes those bells—my time's up,
So I'll be moseyin' along.
Say, Lord! Ain't that ol' boy over there
From Claremore?"

—WALDO WETTENGEL
RUSH SPRINGS, OKLA.

COMPLIMENTS OF THE RUSH SPRINGS GAZETTE

Country editor in Oklahoma has written
the best tribute to Will Rogers that has
yet appeared, say critics.

This prose-poem was read over a national
broadcast of the Columbia system, which
received requests from every state in the
union for copies.

It was read at the Congressional memo-
rial to Will Rogers, and printed in the
Congressional Record.

Poetry

CLAIR DE LUNE

By Katherine Shepard Hayden, formerly of Norman, in "Saturday Review of Literature."

Above the lapis wells of dark
Swirlly you move tonight—
Around you all your cloudy veils
Blow light.

Diaphanous saffron mists that drift
Along the lustrous air—
Mother-of-pearl foam, distilled,
Dissolving there!

Clear moon, that sailed the cobalt
strata
Of midnight over Greece—
A silver argosy that bore
A golden fleece!

Fair moon on medieval Chartres,
Where pools of light would lie
Around the soaring silhouettes
Against your sky!

Young moon—so timeless old—that
threads.

Transfiguring, the arc
Of onyx space, and silvers all
The shapeless dark—

We have seen mortal night and day,
Amra and indigo,
And which is fairer and more true
We do not know—

Only I know I love the air
Hold in unearthly light—

The tripled beauty of the world
Tonight!

C.
Hayden