

Oklahoma and Dr. Dale--They Were Children Together...

weary land, a shelter in the time of storm." . . . Living so remote from all human help tended to promote a deep spiritual faith and a firm trust in a Higher Power.

In the fifteen years from 1892 to statehood in 1907, Oklahoma Territory grew rapidly, not only in population but in area, as Greer County and the Indian lands of the Cherokee Outlet and Kiowa-Comanche and Wichita-Caddo Indian reservations were opened to settlement and added to it. In the meantime, in March 1893 only four months after my arrival in Oklahoma, the Dawes Commission was created to negotiate with the Indians of the Five Civilized Tribes of Indian Territory relative to the allotment of their lands in severalty and the abolition of their tribal governments.

It took twelve years to accomplish this, but in 1905 the work of the Commission had been completed and the final details given over to the Department of the Interior. Then, after an abortive attempt of the Indian Territory to establish itself as a separate state to be known as the State of Sequoyah, Congress passed the Enabling Act in 1906, permitting the people of the two Territories to hold a constitutional convention to frame a constitution for a new state to include both regions. This was done in 1906-1907 and on November 16, 1907, the State of Oklahoma was born and its first governor inaugurated at Guthrie, which had been designated as the first capital.

It was my privilege to observe many of the events and movements of these fifteen years and have a minor part in a few of them. For example, it was my good fortune to be present at Oklahoma's first birthday in Guthrie on that memorable 16th day of November, 1907.

At that time I was attending the Central State Normal at Edmond. The college had a national guard company under the command of Captain Blake, who was head of the department of biology. The national guard had been ordered to attend the inaugural ceremonies, and Captain Blake announced in assembly that any of us who wanted to go with it might do so if we could find a uniform in the armory that we could wear, and if we would drill with the company as much as eight hours. A number of us rushed down to the armory, dug out some old dirty, ragged uniforms, which was all we could find, and washed

and patched them. We put them on though, of course none of them fitted, drilled our allotted eight hours, and on the morning of the 16th the entire company, with us as "temporary recruits," boarded the train for Guthrie eighteen miles away.

When we reached the town we found most of its inhabitants had come down to the station to see the train come in, since watching the train come in was about all the recreation most of the citizens of Guthrie had in those days. As we lined up on the platform the crowd took one good look at us and gave us a loud and raucous horse-laugh. We looked like veterans just back from a long, hard campaign in the brush country! Yet we did not march like veterans or do anything else like veterans. We only looked like them.

By mid-morning the town of Guthrie was overflowing with people from every part of the present state. From the station we were marched up to the Carnegie Library to witness the inaugural ceremonies, and to listen to Governor Haskell's address. We were then marched down to the park where a barbecue dinner was to be served. By the time we reached the park, however,

the fleet-footed crowd had eaten all the barbecue and was wiping its mouth on its sleeve! Back up town we eventually were given a sketchy lunch at state expense in a Greek restaurant, and were then presented with a ticket back to Edmond and released from our status as soldiers.

The vast crowd which thronged the streets of Guthrie that afternoon seemed to be in a holiday mood. Prohibition was to go into effect at midnight when all liquor was to be sealed and shipped out of the state. There seemed to be a determined effort on the part of many individuals to save the state any such transportation charges, and, since the clocks all seemed to be very slow, there was not much left to be shipped out when a belated midnight at last came.

Time does not permit more than a brief mention of Oklahoma's amazing development during the forty-five year period from statehood to the present. In 1907 the production of oil was already well under way. During the next twenty-five years it increased so much as to change the entire economic and social life of the state. At the same time railroads were being built, cities were growing up, agricultural production was vastly increased, and the coming of automobiles, paved roads, radio, and television all combined to revolutionize the pattern of Oklahoma life. During this period, also, came all those world shaking events and movements that have so vitally affected our state and its people. No discussion of these is possible, but it does seem

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that a few words should be said . . . about early education in Oklahoma and its growth.

Soon after the Territory of Oklahoma was created in 1890 it set up a system of public education. In 1891 sixty-five school houses were built at an average cost of \$125.50 each, and in 1892 a great many more. By the time of statehood in 1907 the Territory had more than three thousand school buildings and the average value of each had risen to \$840.00. The University of Oklahoma had opened its doors to students in September, 1892, just two months before my arrival in Greer County. It began with 57 students and 4 faculty members. Even at the time of statehood, it had only 641 students and a plant with an estimated value of \$288,500. When I graduated from the University of Oklahoma at the close of the summer session of 1911 there were two bachelor's degrees conferred—that of a maiden lady and my own.

I was unmarried at that time, and as this lady and I walked down the aisle side by side to receive our degrees I suddenly remembered that the president, Dr. A. Grant Evans, was a Presbyterian minister. The same idea must have occurred to the girl for she cast a hunted look at the open win-

dow on her side of the room while I fixed my attention upon the one on my side. As we came to a halt in front of the preacher I saw a quizzical look in his eyes but he only cleared his throat and began in proper fashion. He said: "By virtue of the Authority vested in me I hereby confer upon you—" If he had begun: "Dearly beloved, we are assembled here in the presence of God and this company—" I am sure that the girl would have jumped through one window and I would have gone through the other.

In 1914 I returned to the University with an A. M. degree from Harvard to become an instructor in history at a salary of \$1,000 a year. President Brooks wanted me to come for \$900 but I held out for a thousand, declaring that in my opinion I was worth that much a year to the institution—a boast upon which I tried to make good annually for the next thirty-eight years!

By 1907 Oklahoma Territory had seven institutions of higher learning and within a few years after that date many new ones were established in the old Indian Territory area. Eventually came World War I and the deluge of college students following its close. Then came the depression and New Deal followed by World War II and the even greater deluge of young men who

entered college under the terms of the G. I. Bill of Rights.

The effect of the movements and events of the past sixty years so briefly sketched are readily apparent in Oklahoma today. The great runs of western Oklahoma brought in a population of eager, ambitious, young persons, with a supreme faith in themselves and in the future. Curiously enough, about the time the free lands of western Oklahoma were all gone there came the allotment of the tribal lands of Indian Territory in severalty and a fresh influx of the same type of people to purchase for a low price the surplus lands of these Indians. Even more important, there came about the same time the beginning of that marvelous oil development of eastern Oklahoma. Here the discovery of each new oil field brought a new "run" of aggressive young people—a run not for homesteads but for oil leases and royalties, jobs, or business opportunities. So Oklahoma became a veritable "kingdom of youth."

As the years went by, this great oil development, together with the building of paved roads, the increased use of automobiles, and the growth of mechanized farming, brought great shifts in population. The ratio of urban to rural dwellers rapidly increased. Farm units, especially in western

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Oklahoma City

Oklahoma, steadily became larger. Today many deserted farm houses may be seen in that portion of the state. A one crop system took the place of the former subsistence farming, and farming became a business rather than a way of life. At the

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same time the larger towns were growing very rapidly while the smaller ones were steadily shrinking in population due to the coming of automobiles and paved highways. Towns which were thriving hamlets forty to fifty years ago are today little more than deserted villages. County seat towns and some others, however, were increasing in population with amazing rapidity, and the development of nearby oil pools or the coming of military installations led to still further growth. This sometimes created grave problems. Some towns outgrew their water supply, storm sewers, paving, sidewalks, and the recreational facilities afforded by parks and playgrounds. Some outgrew their schools and hospitals and, worst of all, their civic leadership. It is most unfortunate for any town to outgrow its facilities for living, but it is tragic when it outgrows the men responsible for the direction of its civic and economic affairs. Yet it seems certain that in Oklahoma, even today, could be found at least a few .45-caliber towns whose affairs are directed by .22-caliber men.

No area of similar size in all the world made as much material progress as did Oklahoma in the first quarter of the last century. This enormous material advancement, however, has had interesting results. Sudden wealth, often due to oil development, has given to the state a great deal of accidental leadership. Sometimes it is good and sometimes the reverse. A man may have acquired a tract of poor land and may have tried desperately to sell it, but nobody would buy. Then oil was found on it and he sold it for five million dollars. Immediately he became head of the local chamber of commerce, chief stockholder in the local banks, and owner of a controlling interest in many large business enterprises. In many cases these men of accidental wealth had fine minds and excellent hearts, and used the power which great wealth had given them wisely and well for the benefit of the community and the state.

Unfortunately there were doubtless a few who suddenly acquired riches that had formerly been bitterly poor in every sense of that word. Such men, even with great wealth, still remained just as poor, intellectually, spiritually, and sometimes morally as they had been before and yet had a position of leadership purely due to their money.

The most important effect of Oklahoma's history has been its influence upon our people themselves. It has given to them that intangible quality which we call "Sooner Spirit." Broadly speaking, this is only the indomitable spirit of youth, of daring, of optimism, and of willingness to take

a chance. It is a pioneering spirit. Newcomers sometimes say it is a boastful spirit; but, if so, it is contagious for, if they stay long, they get it to a greater degree than the natives.

The people of Oklahoma feel that with God's help they have built here a magnificent material prosperity. They point with pride to their cities with tall sky scrapers, the paved highways, the oil wells, factories, and refineries and all other things which their hands have wrought. But theirs is not the vulgar pride in mere wealth.

They are proud of these things because they represent the "substance of things hoped for—the evidence of things not seen." They are the fruit of toil and sacrifice and vision of a people over a period of sixty years. They are proud that in the lean, hard years of pioneering they kept the faith and, having kept it, perhaps it should not be surprising that they feel they have earned a "crown of glory eternal in the Heavens." That flaming Sooner Spirit has built towns and cities, schools and colleges, and wrung the rich mineral treasures from the heart of the earth. It glorifies the past and holds out high hopes for the future.

Very young persons sometimes assert that the past generation has not done too much. They say that, on the contrary, we have messed up pretty badly the world which must soon be committed to their hands. I would remind them that

Hal Muldrow, Jr.

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only sixty-three years ago the site of Oklahoma City, and of every other town and city in western Oklahoma, was only a bare prairie. Every man-made thing we see has been put here in the short space of a little over sixty years.

I wonder if they will do more in the three score years that lie ahead. I hope so. If they do, it will be like Deacon Jones of western Kansas who was picked up by a cyclone and whirled through the air at dizzying speed for two miles, and set down in a cow pasture, unhurt. When he told his experience at prayer meeting the next

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Wednesday night his pastor remarked: "Well Deacon, that was a terrible experience. The Lord must have been with you all the way." "I don't know," said the deacon, "but if He was, He was goin' some!" If the next generation does more in sixty years than the past one has done, it will truly "be goin' some!"

Remarkable as have been the material achievements of a people thoroughly imbued with this Sooner Spirit, it may carry with it some elements of danger. In our abundant youth we have the faults of youth. There may be too little regard for the man of thought as distinguished from the man of action, and too little respect for wisdom that comes from training and experience. We have seen such great changes, always for the better, that we may come to regard all change as progress when change is not inevitably progress. It may be only change. There is some danger that we may come to regard magnificent buildings and costly furnishings as ends in themselves rather than as means to an end. We may tend to stress the material without proper regard for cultural and ethical values.

Yet, the old time pioneer had his vision. He saw his crude sod house transformed into a beautiful farm home, the little straw covered shed grow to a big red barn, the little nearby town with its two stores and a blacksmith shop advanced to the stature of a beautiful city, the one room school house replaced by a beautiful consolidated school. Like Christian he had caught afar off a glimpse of a Celestial City and he

worked early and late to make his dreams come true.

In his eager seeking for "things of the flesh" it is not surprising that he seemed at times to give too little attention to things of the spirit. Yet there are many Oklahomans today who have a vision of a new Celestial City. They visualize and Oklahoma with a greater and more wide-spread culture, a broader tolerance, a deeper charity, and a larger emphasis upon educational and spiritual values without which any state must be poor indeed. Imbued by the old time Sooner Spirit of their pioneer forebearers, they too are working early and late to make their dreams come true.

Recognizing Accomplishment

Achievement Day, the University's and the Alumni Association's time for honoring individual contributions to the nation, state and community, will be held April 8 on the Norman campus.

Originated in 1948, the activities are aimed at recognizing alumni and state citizens who have achieved something more than material wealth. Not more than five individuals may be awarded distinguished service citations at any one year's ceremonies. Kenneth Harris, '39ba, '49Law, executive secretary of the Oklahoma Bar Association, is chairman of the "Day."

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