

Muskogee County Genealogical Society

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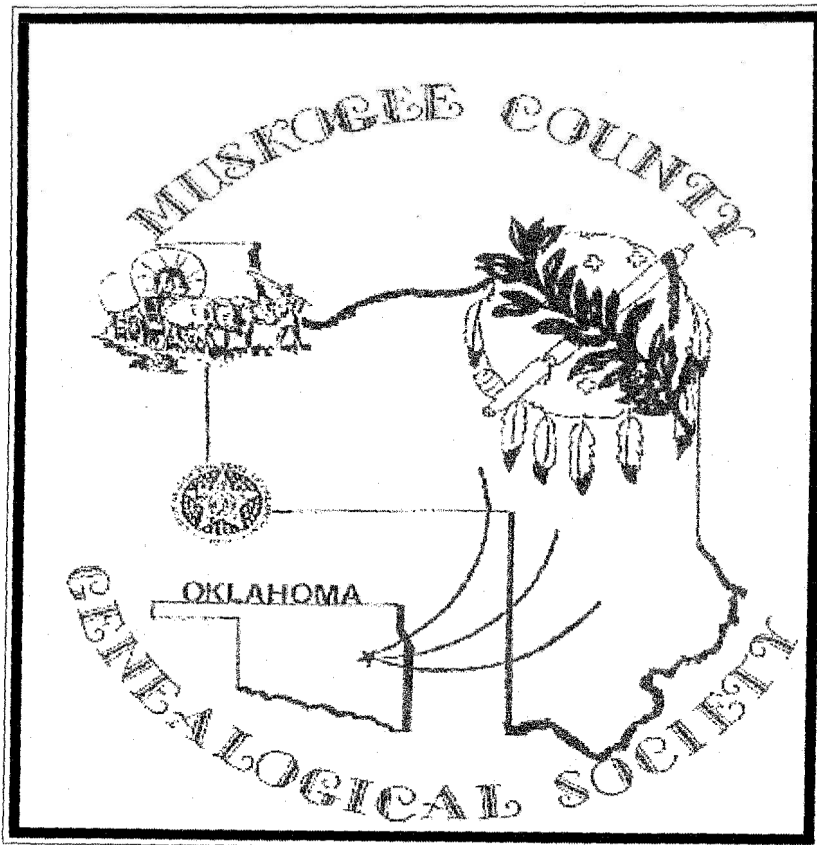


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Muskogee County Genealogical Society General Information

To defray the cost of postage for mailing your issue of the quarterly we are asking that you please pick up your issues at the monthly meetings in March, June, September, and December. Thank You!

Purpose:

The MCGS was formed in 1983 for the purpose of promoting the general study of genealogy through workshops, seminars, and monthly programs; and to discover and preserve any material that may establish or illustrate the history of Indian Territory and Muskogee County and its families.

Meetings and Membership:

MCGS meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of each month (except July and August) 6:00pm "How To" session; 7:00 pm Meeting and speaker at the Muskogee Public Library, 801 West Okmulgee, Muskogee, Oklahoma. The Board of Directors meetings are held the third Monday at 6:00 PM at the library. All members are invited to attend the Board meetings.

Membership in the MCGS is open to anyone promoting the purpose of the Society. Individual or family membership is \$21 per year and includes the Quarterly publication. A \$11 per year membership is available for those that do not wish to receive the Quarterly.

Publication and Research Request Information:

The MCGS Quarterly is published four times a year: March, June, September, and December. Back issues of the Quarterlies are available for \$5.00 each, plus \$1.50 for shipping and handling.

The Society also publishes books of genealogical interest, focused on Muskogee County and Muskogee Indian Territory. A current price list of our publications is provided on our website at: <http://rootsweb.com/~okmuscg/index.htm> or write to us for a list.

Our research assistance policy is outlined on our website, or you may write to us for a Research Request Form at:

Muskogee County Genealogical Society
c/o Muskogee Public Library
801 West Okmulgee
Muskogee, OK 74401

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International Society of Family History Writers and Editors Bestows Prestigious Myra Vanderpool Gormley Award of Merit

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS (June 8, 2006)

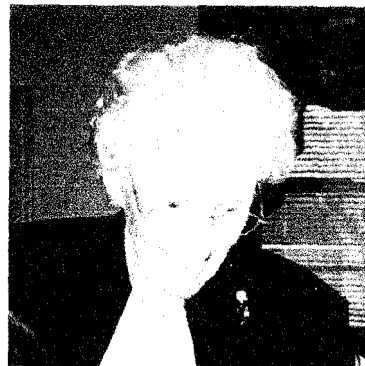
The International Society of Family History Writers and Editors (ISFHWE) announced at its annual Gala Awards Banquet held at the National Genealogical Societies this evening. At the dinner, awards were presented to winners in the organization's annual Excellence-in-Writing Competition. In addition, ISFHWE presented its first presentation of its newly-established and prestigious **Myra Vanderpool Gormley Award of Merit**.

The new award was established this year to commemorate the qualities of genealogical writer Myra Vanderpool Gormley, a Muskogee, Oklahoma native, who, through her many years in the genealogical community, has promoted scholarly writing, editing, and publishing. Ms. Gormley was one of the founding members of ISFHWE, has mentored many aspiring genealogical writers, has written hundreds of articles for journals and magazines, has been a nationally-syndicated genealogy columnist, and has promoted excellence in genealogy at all levels. She has been a tireless volunteer at RootsWeb and elsewhere in the community and has made our world a much better place for genealogists everywhere. Ms. Gormley was awarded a large plaque at the banquet commemorating the establishment of the award that is named for her.

The first recipient of the award is Loretto "Lou" Dennis Szucs, the Vice President of Publishing at Ancestry.com, the publishing arm of MyFamily.com, Inc. She is highly respected and much loved in the genealogical community. She has written, edited, and published a number of the most important genealogy reference books for genealogists. These include *They Became Americans: Finding Naturalization Records and Ethnic Origins*; *Chicago and Cook County: A Guide to Research*; *Finding Answers in U.S. Census Records* (with Matthew Wright); and the brand new third edition of *The Source: A Guidebook of American Genealogy*, which she co-edited with Sandra Hargreaves Luebking. In addition, Lou has mentored and encouraged hundreds of aspiring writers, editors, and publishers, kick-starting their careers and building friendships with them.

ISFHWE is proud to have presented the awards this evening and strives to promote the goals for scholarly genealogical writing, editing, and publishing in all media exemplified by Myra Vanderpool Gormley and Loretto Szucs Smith.

Interviewee: Nadine Moon Taylor
Interviewer: Ann Gardner
Interview Date: December 1, 2005



Legend: A (Ann Gardner); N (Nadine Moon Taylor).

A: I wanted to start off by saying Wally Waits, at the library, has on his email what I think is really profound. It was written by a man named John Morris who wrote "At most, living memory endures for a hundred years or so. Thereafter, even the barest outline of the past is forgotten unless it is recorded in writing." I believe that is really true and that is why I wanted to do this kind of thing.

A: The first thing I need is your name.

N: Nadine Moon Taylor.

A: Your address?

N: 905 Erie Street, Muskogee, Oklahoma.

A: Will you release the Muskogee County Genealogy Society of restricting copyrights of these transcriptions?

N: Yes.

A: The first thing I am particularly interest in is what Muskogee was like when you were little.

N: On Fondulac?

A: Yes, were you born in that house?

N: No, I was born at the Baptist Hospital, about two blocks of where I lived.

A: In your earliest memories, do you remember what Muskogee looked like early on?

N: Well, we had streetcars, for one thing, that ran up Fondulac. That street is now called Martin Luther King Street of Avenue (Boulevard). When I grew up it was Fondulac.

A: It was Fondulac when I grew up too.

N: As I said, for transportation in Muskogee we had streetcars.

A: Otherwise, did people keep animals, like horses, and were there more cars?

N: Not many (cars). I was probably six or seven years old before my parents had a car.

A: What kind of car was it?

N: It was a touring car that had curtains that you took off in the summer. The curtains were on the side to protect you in the wintertime. I remember that.

A: Did you get to ride in it much, or did you, as a child, walk most places?

N: Oh, as I grew up, I walked most places. That's why I can't understand the kids today. They all think they have to have a car even to go two blocks. I walked about eight to ten blocks, from my house out to West High School over on Sixteenth and Broadway, and never thought anything about it. We even walked in the cold weather. Sometimes, if it was rainy, Mother would take me in the car. This was when I was about twelve, when I went to West High.

A: I remember meeting your sister. Did you ever have any other brothers or sisters?

N: No, just two girls. Charlotte was my sister's name.

A: And Charlotte is younger than you are?

N: Yes, almost five years.

A: So you were not that far from downtown either?

N: Oh, it was probably about seven blocks. We lived at Ninth.

A: Not like walking to school?

N: No, but I walked to town a lot. Back then picture shows were the big thing. My girlfriend and I used to walk down to the Ritz and the Broadway shows.

A: I know Muskogee, earlier than that used to have a lot of theatrical productions before the movies. Did they still have them then?

N: Not so much. Once in a while they might have a play, but that was when my mother and dad were going together in 1911, 1912 or 1913. They married in 1913 and I know my mother talked about the plays and musicals that came to Muskogee. She had dates and they would always go to those things. That was before my time and after I was born in 1915. I don't think they had many after that.

A: I have seen in some of the old newspaper advertisements around the turn of the century that seemed to have a lot of those productions. So, while you were growing up you went to church?

N: I went to Sunday school. I seldom went to church, but I went to the St. Paul's Methodist Church on Seventh and Boston. Then it burned when I was ... I don't think I was in Junior High when it burned.

A: Seventh and Boston? I didn't realize it was ever there.

N: Yes, there is a parking lot now, for the First Baptist Church.

A: Are you a Baptist now?

N: No, I went to St. Paul's Methodist Church. Then I married Presbyterian and the only way I could get him to go to church was to go with him to his church. So I became a Presbyterian, at the Bethany Presbyterian.

A: I didn't realize that. My dad was an elder at the First Presbyterian Church.

N: I always went to Bethany.

A: That was my confusion. I used to go with Mother and Daddy to the First Church.

N: I knew your mother went to First Church.

A: You were talking about West High. Where did you go to grade school?

N: Franklin, which was at Market and Ninth Street. That was just two blocks south of where I lived.

A: That was handy.

N: I lived at Ninth and Fondulac and this (Franklin) was at Ninth and Market. No, wait. It was Emporia. Market was the street in between. But it was two blocks from home. We went first to Market then to Emporia.

A: You walked then.

N: Oh, yes.

A: Tell me about the outings you used to go on for entertainment. Like at Hyde Park. Did you ever go?

N: Oh, yes. We used to go there a lot. Our family went and we picnicked out there and I believe they had a merry-go-round and a Ferris wheel. We used to ride those. Always on the Fourth of July we went out there and shot firecrackers.

A: Not in town?

N: We did, but I don't know whether we fired the ones that went up in the air then went off. We used to have the kind that I would stand on the front porch with about five steps going down to the sidewalk. They had those torpedoes that you threw on the sidewalk to pop them. I would stand up on the porch and throw them down so they popped real good, and the small firecrackers. I don't remember doing any of the cannon types. We went to Hyde Park to watch those.

A: I remember Mother saying the Fourth of July was a big celebration with all-family picnics.

N: All the families and just about the whole town turned out.

A: What about Spaulding Park?

N: I have a picture in my living room of me, taken at Spaulding Park, down in the area where the little stand was out in the middle of the lake. My mother took a picture and they had it enlarged. I will show it to you. We lived at 1023 East Side Boulevard.

A: Who is "we"?

N: Mother, Dad and me. That's where they lived when I was born.

A: Not on Fondulac?

N: No, they moved to Fondulac when I was four years old. It was six months or so before Charlotte was born.

A: So, when you were very young you lived closer to Spaulding Park?

N: Yes, when we lived on East Side Boulevard we walked to Okmulgee, which was quite a walk. My folks didn't have a car and they used to walk down there. When I was a baby they pushed a buggy...one of those great big, white wicker type buggies. I have pictures in my baby book, of the carriages they had for me.

A: They were bonafide baby buggies then?

N: Right, everyone then had the big buggies.

A: What about Honor Heights? I remember Mother and Dad talking more about that than Hyde Park. I don't remember knowing anything about Hyde Park. I have just learned about in the last few years.

N: What did they call Honor Heights at that time? They had a lake there and a beach. We went out there swimming quite a bit.

A: When you went to Hyde Park, was there any swimming there in the river?

N: If there was, I never did go and I don't know if they swam in the river or not.

A: I remember when I was young my grandmother would let me go swimming in the river. In the first place, she didn't swim and couldn't save me. She thought it was much too dangerous. I just wondered if the lake at Honor Heights was different regarding swimming.

N: It was different. A lot of people went in there. It wasn't deep and I am not really sure whether they even had a diving board. Just a beach on a big lake. I say a big lake; it really wasn't all that big. They had it dammed up on the west side and we could walk around the lake and be above it a look down.

A: Where it is now?

N: Yes, it was in the same area it is in now. They had a sandy beach.

A: Sue Tolbert, at the library was mentioning that she thought there was a zoo at Spaulding Park. Do you ever remember one?

N: They had cages there with monkeys in them. They never had lions and tigers or things like that.

- A: When was that? There is a memory in my head going through about when I was younger.
- N: Well, 1920-25. I don't know the span of it, but that's when I was going to see them.
- A: I vaguely remember that as one of those things when I was a little child. I remember some park where there were monkey cages.
- N: They did have some there, but like you, I had forgotten. Of course I have forgotten a lot of things in ninety years.
- A: I have too, at seventy. We were talking about the Fourth of July celebrations. What did people do on birthdays? Did they celebrate birthdays like they do now?
- N: Well, my family didn't. I really don't know. We received birthday gifts, but they didn't make any big deal of it. I am not sure I ever had a birthday party, as such. Folks always remembered by birthday, and of course my sister's, but they didn't make much out of birthdays.
- A: What about Christmas? Did they make much of it?
- N: I remember we always had a Christmas tree, a real tree. When my sister and I were old enough, Mother let us decorate it and we thought that was great. We didn't decorate it as well as she did, I am sure, but she never complained if it didn't look good.
- A: She may have been like I was, glad when the children were old enough to decorate it and I didn't have to.
- N: That's probably what she was thinking too. As long as we were happy with it, she didn't care. We always made a big deal of Christmas morning. When we would go to bed Christmas night, when we were little, Santa Claus hadn't come yet. When we got older, they would let us open one package on Christmas Eve. But only one and we always wished we had opened some other one.
- A: So, Santa Clause came in the night and you had a big Christmas morning.
- N: Yes, Charlotte and I were always waking up before Mother and Daddy. We lived in a two-story house and we would slip downstairs and go peek around the tree to see what was there. Usually there was at least one gift open that we could see and I remember I was getting almost too old for dolls. But I had seen a doll in a store where I went several times a week and worked on a rug that I was making, when you punched your wool threads through. Mother had several of them for years before they wore out. But, anyhow, they had this one doll that cried like a real baby and I was just crazy about it. Mother said "well, you are getting a little old for dolls." I said "I know, but I sure do like that one." Then I went in one day and it was gone. I asked the lady about it and she said someone came in and bought it and she only had one. I was so disappointed, but on Christmas morning, there was my doll. She had slipped down there some time and got it for me. That was a big thrill for me. We always went to the picture show every Sunday night and the next Sunday night I had my doll with me. At intermission, I turned it on and it started crying, sounding like a real baby. My dad made me turn it off because people thought we had a baby down there, I guess. Another Sunday night we were coming out of the show and our car was gone. Someone had stolen it. Dad went over to the police station and reported it. The next day they found it and never did know who took it. It was okay, but all the gas was used out of it and the car was abandoned. Dad said it was probably kids joy riding in it. That was a shock. By that time, they had a few cabs, because the streetcars didn't run all night, so we had to get cabs to go home that night.
- A: You told me before your dad was an attorney. Did he practice in the courts here in Mus-

kogee, and did you ever get to hear any of the trials?

N: No. I am not sure whether my mother ever went. He wanted her to go one time because he would like for her to know what he did. He came to Muskogee in 1906, the year before statehood.

A: From where?

N: Cartersville, Georgia.

A: I know where that is.

N: That is where he was born and grew up. His parents were both gone by the time he was five years old and he had one baby sister. Their grandparents on their mother's side raised them. Then he had an uncle that live in Atlanta, Georgia who was a doctor and he helped put my dad through college.

A: Where? In Georgia?

N: That's the reason I brought the book. I am not sure. Does that say the name of the college?

A: The Pandora, 1906?

N: Well, that's the name of the book. This was his schoolbook (yearbook).

A: At the University of Georgia, where he must have gone to school.

N: What was the name of the town where that was?

A: Athens, Georgia is where the University of Georgia is still located today. It has the name of Charles Albert Moon, graduated from University of Georgia, 1906. He went to Muskogee, Oklahoma after graduation in 1906 to the law office of Bailey and Wine.

N: He went to work for them as what they called a clerk. He did research for them to help with the trials. He used the law books to look up information for them for their trial cases.

A: I have read that's what they used to do and still do now.

A: Did you ever go to baseball games?

N: No, I never was much interested in baseball games until my youngest daughter and granddaughter were both stars in basketball. So I went to a lot of those games when they were in school. I was never interested in sports until I went to West High and they had a football team and I was a cheerleader. Of course, we went to all the football games in and out of town. We went to Okmulgee and other places. I remember going to Okmulgee especially because that was a big game like Oklahoma University and Oklahoma State University now.

A: Talking about schools again, were there many colleges in Muskogee then?

N: I don't know when the Junior College over at the old Central High School was really started, but probably in the late 1920s.

A: My mother, I think, went there and she graduated in 1926. At that time that was the only college in Muskogee.

N: Well, they had Draughon's Business College there, downtown. They taught typing, shorthand and other business courses. I know they were still in Muskogee when my daughter graduated in 1958, because she went down there and took shorthand.

A: I remember Draughon's all over the state.

N: I think there are still some now. I think I saw something in the papers not long ago about someone going to Draughon's, maybe in Tulsa, Oklahoma City, or somewhere like that. We called the junior high school here the Bessie Huff School because she was the dean and the English teacher at the high school. When they decided to start this Jun-

- ior College, she was the dean of the Junior College. She also taught English at the college.
- A: I think I remember my parents talking about that.
- N: She was a very odd person; an old maid, and she was very outspoken and intimidating. But still, you couldn't help but like her, even though I was scared of her, putting it bluntly.
- A: Well, kids had a lot more respect back then.
- N: Definitely. They (teachers) were almost untouchable. You didn't dare do anything like being rude to them. You had to really mind your p's and q's around your teachers.
- A: You knew you would be in trouble at home if you didn't.
- N: Oh, yes. You just grew up.....They were your superiors and you behaved yourself around them. There may have been some kids that didn't, but they (the teachers) didn't have near the problems back then. It's horrible the way some act now.
- A: I think it is a shame what has happened to our public school system over the past few years. Our country was built on public schools.
- N: I went to the old Jefferson School kindergarten. They didn't have kindergarten in all the schools, but Jefferson did. It was down by the First Baptist Church Building. In fact they bought all the property and used it for Sunday school because they have such a huge church. Anyway, it used to be the old Jefferson School there.
- A: Where the First Baptist is located today?
- N: Not where the church is. It was down on Eighth Street. The church faces Seventh Street and Jefferson faced Eighth Street. They tore it down and there is a smaller building there that the Baptist Church built on the property they bought. Anyway, I enjoyed my kindergarten very much because Ann Maytubby was the teacher and she was a good friend of my mother. Then when I went into the first grade I went to Franklin School. I used to walk home for lunch since we only lived two blocks away. After two or three weeks, I walked home and announced to my mother that I wasn't going back. She said "why aren't you going back?" I said "because they expect me to work." I had played for a year at the kindergarten in a sandbox and sat at a desk and colored in a book and drew pictures. They really didn't teach kindergartners anything then. It was just to get them oriented to order, discipline and learning to play with others.
- A: More social than educational.
- N: Yes, but when I went into the first grade they wanted me to start doing ABC's, writing and beginning to learn words in books to read. I didn't like that very well because that wasn't what I had been doing and I thought school was going to be fun. My mother marched me right back to school and I didn't lose any time.
- A: Well, tell me, while you were growing up at home, did your mother work outside the home.
- N: No, she never did.
- A: Not many mothers did at that time, did they?
- N: Not too many, no. There were a lot of clerks in the stores, but most of them were men, and the same in pharmacies. Now they have women working in pharmacies but back then girls weren't even going to pharmacy schools. But in the dry good stores, like the old Durnil's at Fourth and Broadway Streets, the shoe clerks were men, but the store was mostly all women. Even in the business office, most of the help were men. There might have been one or two women that were bookkeepers or secretaries.

- A: At home, who did the cooking.
- N: Well, we had a maid that did our cooking. Mother had a maid that came and did washing and ironing, and also a housemaid that came every day. She had one that came in and fixed lunch and helped with housecleaning. Mother was very methodical on everything she did. They washed on Monday, ironed on Tuesday, cleaned house on Wednesday.
- A: Just like the nursery rhyme; what was it? I can't remember.
- N: I can't remember either, but I know what you are talking about. On Thursday, I think that was Stella's day off. Then they cleaned, picked up and dusted. They had hardwood floors; not carpeted like we do now. They had to wax and clean the floors. It was harder to keep house then, I think.
- A: Especially in the summer when the windows were open.
- N: Right, because they didn't have air conditioning.
- A: Were most of the streets paved at that time?
- N: Oh, yes.
- A: At least they weren't as dusty.
- N: They were all paved. I don't know when they started paving the streets in Muskogee, but by the time I was born, while I don't know how much of Muskogee was paved, East Side Boulevard was paved. I would imagine the biggest part of it was paved by that time, being 1915.
- A: By the time they had trolleys they had to be paved. I also wanted to ask you about clothing. Did your mother sew, or buy everything?
- N: She came to Muskogee to visit her sister, who's husband and she were managers of the old Muskogee Hotel, which is still standing at Main and Broadway Streets. Of course now it is empty and they may have some transients in there.
- A: I just hope they don't tear it down. I would rather they renovate it.
- N: I would hope so, but I doubt it. In any case, they had the hotel there and the Katy Railroad was right east of it. A lot of trainmen that changed trains here.
- A: Didn't people on long trips stop and spend the night in town rather than sleep on the train.
- N: They might have, I don't know. But they had a nice restaurant downstairs on the first floor and my dad lived in a rooming house about four blocks away. It was a house right behind the old public library. He would go up to the restaurant and eat at night and he got acquainted with my aunt and uncle. One evening when he was there my aunt asked if he would like to come up to the apartment. He went with them and was looking around. My aunt sang and played a piano that had pictures on it. He was looking at them and said "who is this girl?" My aunt said "that is my sister Azella." He looked at it a while and finally he turned around holding the picture and said "I am going to marry her someday." My Aunt None (sic) just laughed and said "Good luck, she lives in Iowa and you will probably never meet her." Well, the next year she came to Muskogee to visit and decided to stay because her brother had died and her dad was still living at the time. She got a job in a millinery shop. In those days ladies came in and ordered hats. You didn't just go in and buy one. They would pick out the frame they wanted; the ribbons, lace and whatever else they wanted on it. Between them they would figure out what would make the hat look better.
- A: So each hat was unique?

- N: They wore a lot of fancy hats back then, so my mother would make the hat for a person. She enjoyed sewing, which she learned on her own. She got a chance to take a course on tailoring and up until we went into high school, not junior high school, but high school, she made all of our clothes. She made our coats, hats and dresses. She didn't make our underwear or things like that.
- A: Did she ever make men's suits?
- N: No, she never did make my dad's suits. She made them for us, as we got older and for herself. She made her own dresses and did a lot of sewing. After we got up into high school, while I don't recall that Charlotte or I rebelled or told mother we didn't want her to sew for us. People would ask where we got our dress and we would have to say our mother made it for us, rather than saying we got it at Calhoun's or Durnil's. She just gradually quit sewing for us, except on occasions when we wanted something real special. Then she would sew it for us. I sewed for my daughter. Not all of her clothes; she bought some, but in her high school days, the girls wanted a new dress at every season, holiday, or whatever occasion and we just couldn't afford it. One March her girlfriends were getting green and white dresses. For what holiday?
- A: I don't know.
- N: When they wear shamrocks?
- A: Oh, yes. St. Patrick's Day.
- N: They were all going to have green and white dresses. I went and bought green and white material and made the dress. Then, we had been in Durnil's and she saw a white jersey dress that she liked real well. She was bound and determined I was going to buy it for her. It was fifty dollars and that was a lot of money at that time. Right now you don't get much for fifty dollars. We went downstairs to the piece goods department and I found some jersey and looked through the patterns and found one almost identical to the dress she wanted. I bought the material and made a princess style dress with a wide sash that was sewed into the sides. So, I got white satin to line it with to give the jersey a little body and made the dress for her.
- A: Sounds pretty.
- N: It was. It was a beautiful dress and it wasn't that hard to make. I made it for her, tied the bow on the back and she was real pleased with it. I don't think she ever told anyone that I made it, but she got her new dress.
- A: You learned a lot of sewing from your mother?
- N: No, not really. I watched her sew a lot and watched her cut out, but I never did it myself. In fact I didn't sew until after I married. Back then we got married on eighty dollars a month. Of course five dollars for groceries would buy almost more than the two of us could carry home. We didn't do too badly on eighty dollars a month.
- A: Well, tell me, as a teenager, how did you socialize with friends and prospective boy friends?
- N: We used to have a lot of parties at home. We had a big living room with hardwood floors and mother would move the furniture back. She would invite ten or twelve of our friends, both boys and girls. There was a lady here in Muskogee who played the piano for five dollars an evening she would play and we could dance.
- A: What kind of music did she play?
- N: She could play anything. The kids would go up to her and ask for a special song and she would just play it.

A: All popular songs?
N: Oh, yes. All the popular songs and things to dance to.
A: Do you remember what was popular at that time?
N: No, not really. My mother would always have cookies and punch in the dining room for refreshments. About every hour or so, my dad would just stop things and ask her (the pianist) to come in and sit with them and have cookies and punch and rest a bit. After fifteen or twenty minutes she would go back and start playing again.
A: Do you remember what her name was?
N: No, I don't. I just remember she came to the house a couple of times, when we were able to get her.
A: That was as good, or better than the records.
N: Yes. The kids enjoyed it because she was very friendly and would talk and laugh with them. They would ask if she this or that song and almost anything they asked for she could play for them with no sheet music.
A: She played by ear. As a teenager, or a little older, when you finished high school, did you go to college?
N: Yes I went a year to junior college.
A: In Muskogee?
N: At the Central High School. Then I went to Northeastern. My dad always wanted me to go to Oklahoma University, but I didn't think I wanted to go to O. U. so I went to Oklahoma City University. I was there just a semester and my roommate decided to go to O. U. and the next fall I went down too. We didn't room together there because she had joined a sorority. I was pledged to it but they didn't have a room for me at the house. I had to stay in a rooming house about four or five blocks away. I had to go over there every evening and study.
A: Did you eat dinner there?
N: No, I ate dinner at the house where I was staying when I would walk over to the sorority house for studying. We usually studied for about two and a half hours. The pledges all had to be there. In the meantime I met my future husband and when that semester was over, I didn't go back.
A: When did you go to Northeastern?
N: I went there out of Junior College here.
A: So then you went to Oklahoma City University and then down to Oklahoma University at Norman?
N: Right and I found out I was right; I didn't like O. U.
A: Besides that, you met Carl.
N: I met him while I was at Oklahoma City University. He was already working for Southwestern Bell Telephone Company and a mutual friend introduced us. That is how we met.
A: How long before you married?
N: A year.
A: You dated in Oklahoma City and Norman?
N: Yes, he would come down on the weekends. Usually we would go back to Oklahoma City. There were two or three couples we ran around with. Once in a while I would go stay at his home with his parents. He had a sister that I shared a room with.
A: So that was while you were in college. Then you came back here to be married?

- N: Yes. That was in the summer and I didn't go back to school. Carl came over here and a couple of times I went there. We married in November of that year, 1937.
- A: Tell me, with the weather we have been having, do you remember what it was like then? Wasn't 1937 shortly after the dust bowl days?
- N: I don't remember Muskogee being in the dust bowl that much.
- A: I don't remember Mother and Daddy saying much about it in Muskogee. It must have been further west. Of course, at that time, they were in Tulsa.
- N: Didn't that (the dust bowl) happen before 1937?
- A: I know the depression was in 1929, I think about the same time.
- N: I don't know for sure. I know the depression was in 1929 and I am sure it was for more than just one year. I remember the fact that my dad's business had dropped off. By that time he was an attorney with Stone, Moon and Stuart (sic). Their business really dropped off and instead of Mother ordering groceries and having them delivered to the house, Dad would call her about three o'clock in the afternoon and ask her what she needed from the grocery store. There was a Piggly Wiggly on West Broadway, just west of Fourth Street, along about where Three River Pool Service is now.

Welcome New Members

Joyce Perkins

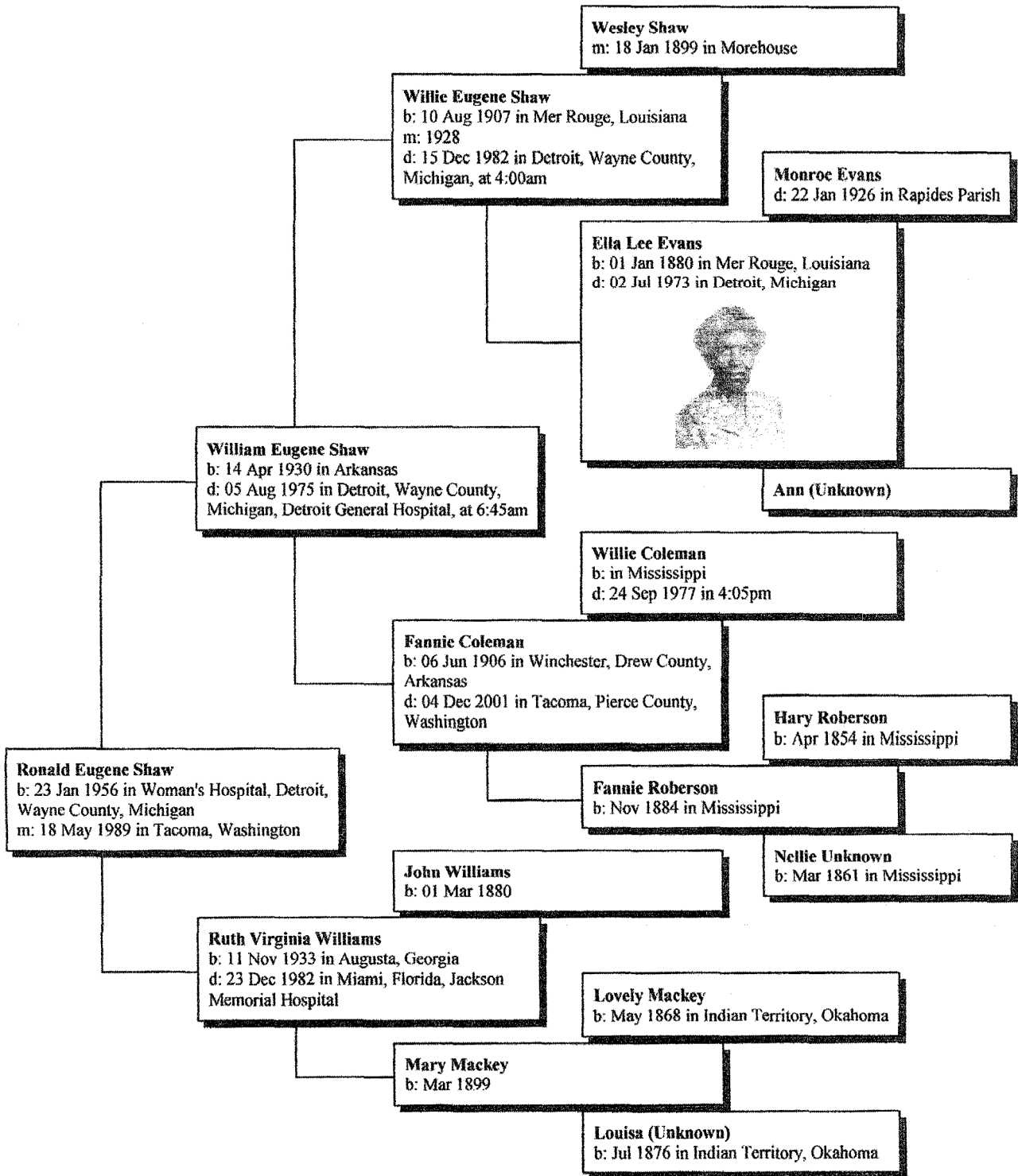
Janice Purser Fleming

Truck Morning

Angela Harader

George W. Swanson

Ancestors of Ronald Eugene Shaw



Muskogee Uprising 1915

Our father, Frank P. Rider, Jr. was one of the fourteen militia that was ordered to arms to guard the jail during this uprising in December of 1915.... Vera Ruth (Rider) Vanderpool.

December 26, 1915 at 2:20 a.m. shots rang out on East Okmulgee. Policeman Sam Neal had encountered two men burglarizing a building. One of the men, Charlie Green shot Sam Neal. The other man was Foreman Mathis. The two men were captured at Porum shortly after the crime and brought back to the county jail in Muskogee.

The rumor spread through downtown streets that a mob was organizing and that Green and Mathis would be LYNCHED at 8 o'clock. Hundred of people flocked to the jail. Perhaps half of them were curious to see what would happen. The other half were angry and clamored for the Negroes lives.

Early in the afternoon Mrs. Neal, wife of the murdered police officer, and her three children, Paul 5, Mary 4, and Owen 2, went to the Street-Eicholtz undertaking establishment to view the body of her husband. The grief of the widow and the eldest boy was pitiful. The two younger children gazed mutely at the body of their father, apparently not realizing the tragedy that had befallen them. "Oh Sam, Sam, I knew it would happen. I knew it, I knew it," Sobbed the heartbroken wife. Time and again she stretched forth a hand as if to caress the lifeless body of her husband. The older boy, deeply affected by his mother's grief, began to sob. Gazing into his father's face, he cried, "Oh, come home papa, come home, mama wants you."

In an adjoining room sat James Neal, 84 years old, his head and beard snowy white. His eyes were dry and he bore a fixed, vacant stare. Continually he bobbed his head up and down. For almost an hour he sat there not uttering a word. The old man was Sam Neal's father. His grief was too deep for utterance.

All afternoon a crowd surged back and forth in front of the county jail and the streets were filled with milling throngs. Mumbled threats of LYNCHING were heard on every hand. The crowds were changing, curious, yet menacing. Throughout it all Green and Mathis, unmindful of the threats made against their lives, and the hostile hundreds outside, slept a sleep of exhaustion. They were confined in a solitary cell and not allowed to speak with the other prisoners.

Before 6:30 p.m. men began gathering at the entrance to the alley near which Neal received his wounds and fell mortally wounded. They laid the plans for storming the jail. Under a tacit agreement entered into early in the afternoon there was an understanding that the party would march on the jail at 7 o'clock. The crowd grew to about seventy-five.

None were masked, though it was agreed that each man should tie a handkerchief over his face before the demand was made for entrance to the jail. "All we need is three or four good leaders," one man who acted as a "chairman" of a group said. He was a young fellow, well dressed, and apparently a Kentuckian.

"Fifty of us can go over there and if the mob there finds out we mean business, we'll

have no trouble in getting most of them behind us," he argued.

He was interrupted by another man who called for rope. None had been provided apparently. A man was sent to a nearby hardware store for a rope. He returned shortly with the information that no one connected with the store could be found. Then several men were sent out to get ropes. Another man suggested that someone owning an automobile be ready to start out as soon as the Negroes were taken from the jail. The plan was to drag them through the streets of the city.

As darkness fell the crowds rapidly swelled. They pressed against the windows and pounded on the doors. A deputy in the jail turned in the fire alarm and as the downtown apparatus responded, their dashing through the streets with clanging bells and shrieking whistles only added to the excitement. Officers had planned if the crowds became too menacing to use the fire hose to turn them back. But fear that such methods might only the more enrage the people, the companies were ordered back to their stations.

A man, apparently under the influence of liquor, approached Sheriff Barger as he walked around the jail at about 7 o'clock tonight and thrust a revolver to his stomach. "What are you going to do about this?" the fellow demanded of the sheriff. "Why, nothing," Barger replied in even words. "We're going to keep the "niggers" here and see that no harm comes to them, and that they get a speedy trial." "Like hell!!" the man snarled. Sheriff Barger then seized the revolver the man held and disarmed him.

The trouble was incited principally by young men under 20 years old, who were looking for adventure, and some older men who were drinking. In the crowd were half a dozen women who were excitable firebrands, and did more to stir up trouble than all the men.

Sheriff Barger was kept advised over the telephone and was well prepared to resist any attempt to take the men from the jail. He had his own force of deputies, heavily armed, and was assisted by Chief Depew and a squad of policemen and friends who remained at the jail with him. He had guards both in the front and rear of the jail.

Company F, the local company of the National Guard was ordered to arms by District Judge R. P. De Graffenreid at 7 o'clock tonight to protect the jail and Charlie (Willis) Green and Foreman Mathis (Homer Matthews) accused of shooting Patrolman Sam Neal during the early hours this morning.

Word of the Judge's action was immediately conveyed to Governor R. L. William by long distance telephone and he approved the order.

The militia company left the armory at Second Street and Okmulgee Avenue and marched to the county jail. The company, only fourteen strong, was greeted by the crowd with howls and jeers.

At 7 o'clock the "vigilantes" became impatient. "Let's get started" one said. "There's a crowd coming from the west side and ought to be here now," another said.

At twenty minutes past seven, the "vigilantes" started for the county jail. They left in groups and took the less frequented streets, in order to reach the jail from the Dennison Street side. It was reported that a man with a rope had gone on ahead and would meet the others at the jail.

Crowds had gathered about the jail, on Third Street between the county jail and the old

Brady Hotel. Chief of Police Depew, Reverend James C. Burkhardt, and W. J. Crump took turns in addressing the mob. Crump defied any man in the crowd to come forward and express his own sentiments openly if their sentiments were in favor of overriding the law. None came forward.

Rev. Burkhardt told the crowd that he had abandoned his pulpit to come before the mob with a plea to curb passions and to allow the law to take its course. "I am going to conduct a Christmas service at my church tonight. I shall preach the Gospel of Christ, which counsels wisdom and justice. The law has provided a punishment for these men, which is just punishment. Let us disperse."

The speakers were surrounded by a cordon of police and deputy sheriff's and although the crowds were plainly not in sympathy with delay, nothing was done to slow its disapproval, other than by hooting and jeering.

The militia had to endure jeers from the crowds which it was endeavoring to hold in check. Such remarks as "You'll break your wrist watch with that bayonet", "Look at the barn door sharpshooters" and "Don't spoil the shine on your shoes" were hurled at them from the unsympathizing mob.

At 7:30 o'clock policemen fired several shots, apparently at the crowd that had gathered around the jail, where a second throng had kept watch all afternoon, but only a few of the crowd left.

The militia was having difficulty controlling the crowds and the combined efforts of police and troopers only served to keep the crowd on the move.

The mob began to grow more restless towards 8 o'clock and demanded the Negro. They did not want Matthews but declared they were ready to string up Green.

As the crowds jammed about the jail, the door was opened and Sheriff Barger and W. J. Crump emerged. Two beer kegs were rolled to the sidewalk and Crump began to address the crowd. He told them we are in a new country and should meet conditions as they are. He urged them to go to their homes and let the law take its course, promising them that speedy justice would be meted out in a logical way. The crowd hissed and booed them. There were cat calls and cries of "We want the Negro." Crump continued to talk. He was interrupted with "We want no bunk from you."

Crump grew angry and, shouting at the crowd, declared that if they would not listen to him they had no sense. "You are standing out there crying out for a man's life. You are a lot of cowards. I dare any of you to set a foot upon this platform and speak out openly what you are crying out in that mob. You dare not do it. You are cowards."

The crowd began to grow angry. It jeered the speaker and yelled so that he could not be heard. He got down from the beer kegs and Sheriff Barger then addresses them.

Barger told them if they were his friends they would go home and let the state of Oklahoma punish the Negro for his crime. He said the officials of the county would see that the man got his just dues, but advised against mob law. He, too was jeered down.

At 8 o'clock the crowds that had gathered in front of the jail numbered nearly five thousand, while several hundred more watched the back entrance and the sides of the jail.

The militia with fixed bayonets charged in front of the jail, clearing the street. The throng fell back, but hooted the soldiers.

The available pieces of the fire department, having once been called to the county jail to dispel the crowds with their hose, were held in readiness for a second call.

The aid of the fire department was again sought at 8 o'clock when a hose wagon was rushed to the jail. Instead of causing the crowd to fall back, the clang of the wagon's gong only attracted the more people to the vicinity of the jail.

Fire Chief Smalley then declared that he would instruct the firemen that it would be useless to turn the hose upon the men, and the crowd would soon cut the hose to ribbons.

A score of men, armed with a railroad rail, plowed their way through the cordon of militiamen drawn about the door of the jail at 8:30 o'clock and sent it crashing through the door. They were driven back, but again they charged. Again they were repulsed. Across the street a Negro armed with a Winchester rifle said "Look out!"

Although the door was battered down, the iron bars which held it inside failed to give way and the mob was foiled in its first effort to reach the two prisoners.

Apparently not discouraged by the result of their attempt, the men who composed the active mob withdrew for further consultation and it was rumored that they would assault the jail again. The temper of the crowd became uglier as time went on and nothing was being done to satisfy the desires of those who were calling for the Negroes death.

From the bed of an old dray wagon, drawn close to the curb in front of the jail, with Sheriff Barger and the Reverend C. B. Cross by his side, District Judge R. P. de Graffenreid, implored the mob of ugly looking men, to return to the homes from which they had come. "I do not know why you men are here," declared Judge de Graffenreid. "You may have gathered out of morbid curiosity. I hesitate to charge you with an illegal motive. But then, though your intentions may be of the best, you are setting an example which may put murder into the hearts of others." "I do not want to talk to you long. I only want to ask you in the name of law and order to return to your homes. I want to ask this for the reputation, which Muskogee has gained as a city where the residents allow the selected officers to carry out the law. I want to ask because you men, in saner moments, would know if these men are lynched it would be nothing but murder and because it will bring disgrace upon our city and our state." "I want to ask you to return to your homes in the name of Sam Neal, the patrolman who tonight lies dead, but who if he were alive, or if he could speak to you would raise his voice against mob law. He does not want his death avenged that way." "Return to your homes. I promise that these Negroes shall have a speedy trial and that the justice meted out to them, if they are convicted, will be equal, in the eyes of the law, to what you would desire."

A few men left the mob after Judge de Graffenreid finished, but each minute brought more until the crowd filled the entire street and extended for two hundred feet on each side of the jail. It was after the demeanor of the crowd had grown decidedly more threatening that the county attorney Fred P. Branson, was called upon to mount the dray wagon and attempt to persuade the mob to disperse.

"Don't stain the hands of this city and state with the blood of these two Negroes." Branson plead. "Let the law which you ask and expect to protect you, protect Sam Neal. Do not let the world believe that you are not law abiding citizens. Why you men would be cowards to

storm this jail and lynch these Negroes. They are blacks and you are whites. It wouldn't be anything for you to boast about to say that two thousand men had taken a couple of unarmed Negroes, tied them to a post, soaked them in oil and struck a match. Or it would not be anything for you to say that under like conditions you shot them or strung them to a telegraph post."

"Can't you think of some better way to show your manhood? This is the day after Christmas, The day of "Peace on Earth, Good Will to Men!" Don't blacken this religious season by so barbarous an act. Would our Savior sanction it?"

Right now I want every man in this crowd who is a friend of mine to go home. The officers guarding this jail are sworn to do their duty and to protect all the prisoners within this jail. You want your officers to do their duty don't you? You don't want to kill any of them do you? Yet if you men make an attempt to rush this jail, these things are going to happen. And the blame will be on your shoulders, for some of you will be shot down as you are attempting to force a push on a building of the State of Oklahoma, something you have no right to do, and in a deliberate attempt to commit a double murder while the officers will be acting in defense of the great majority of men, those who believe in law and order." "Once more I ask you to go home. Let the law reign supreme in Muskogee. Let your officers handle this situation and it will be handled well."

One group of men held its position in the center of the street, and efforts to force the men to move on resulted only in a slight shifting. Even while the militia stood by one man called out, "Who will go?" "We will!" shouted several from the sidewalks who, however, made little effort to join the group, which was composed largely of "vigilantes" who had organized an hour previously for the purpose of storming the jail and taking out the Negroes.

Is the presence of women and children more effective than the militia or speeches by prominent officials, in subduing a mob? This appeared to be true when several members of the crowd hanging about the county jail Sunday evening were heard to say "If they could get the women and children to go home, they could do something." Later one man was heard to cry out, "We would'a had 'em hung before this if it was not for these women and children hanging 'round here."

The police patrol dashed up in front of the jail shortly before 10 o'clock. Men in the crowd cried, "They're going to take him out now." From the front seat S. Morton Rutherford, a prominent criminal lawyer arose and addressed the crowd. "All you citizens go home!" he said. Mr. Rutherford then mounted the platform from which the other speakers had talked. "I want all of you who know me to go home and go to bed where you belong." He said. "If you go home these black fellows will go home also. Your presence here merely attracts others. If you persist on staying you'll precipitate a riot and many of our good citizens will be seriously hurt and perhaps killed." "Let the law take its course, and I promise you it will be a speedy trial. You can gain nothing by remaining here. These officers are sworn to do their duty, and they're not going to let a man of you enter that jail. Law violation and disorder never gained anything. You men, by remaining will only bring a stain and disgrace upon our city which so far has escaped."

Forty armed men, most whom arrived upon the scene in automobiles, started at 10:30 to clear the vacant lot west of the county jail of a crowd of Negroes, estimated at one hundred, who were reportedly armed and prepared to resist any effort by the mob to remove the two Ne-

gro prisoners from the jail.

Twenty-five men in automobiles went to an eastside hardware store at 10:30 o'clock, purchased revolvers and ammunitions and drove away. They refused to say what their purpose was, but the automobiles were driven rapidly away and in the direction of the county jail.

So insistent were the demands upon the owners of hardware stores that the proprietors of several stores, late in the evening, threw open their doors and prepared to meet the rush. Scores of revolvers were sold and large supplies of ammunition were bought by men who have probably not shot a revolver in years. The proprietor of one store announced that his store would be kept open during the night.

Two automobiles, reported to have come from Porum (where Green and Matthews were captured) drove up to one store. Ammunition for both Winchesters and revolvers was purchased. The occupants of the automobile, after making their purchases, hurriedly drove away.

After the mob had tried to batten down the jail door and was driven back by militia men with bayonets, Adjutant General Canten took charge of company F and drove the mob south on Third street about 200 yards from the jail, where the soldiers held the crowd. Soldiers were running here and there. Some were guarding the line and others marching up and down in front of the jail.

Two of the soldiers were taken into the jail where Green and Matthews sat huddled in fear. The soldiers took off their leggings, overcoats and campaign hats and made the prisoners put them on. They powdered their faces with white powder. Disguised as soldiers, the blacks were handcuffed together and taken to the door just behind the inner partition of the jail. Deputy Sheriff James D. Robbins, also dressed in a soldier uniform, stood waiting.

Presently an automobile, driven by Matt Thompson quietly crawled up in front of the door. The Negroes with military coat collars turned up and their hats down over their eyes, were rushed into the car and Deputy Robbins, Captain de Groot and two other militiamen went with them. The car then dashed away. At the corner of Sixth and Fon du lac streets, Sheriff Jno. Barger was waiting in another car. The prisoners were switched from Thompson's car to the Sheriff's car and whisked away out of the city. Thompson's car returned with the soldiers and rode right past the mob.

The crowd was completely baffled. At first it suspected that the prisoners were being taken away and became restless but when Thompson's car came back and in the seats were soldiers, the crowd believed the soldiers were merely making their rounds to keep order. It was fully half an hour after the blacks had been spirited away before the crowd found out what had happened, and they quietly disbursed and went home.

Just where the prisoners were taken was kept a secret. Sheriff Barger did not even tell his own men where he was going. It is supposed they went to either Tulsa or McAlester.

Monday Evening, December 27, 1915

Charlie Green, Negro burglar, who killed Policeman Sam Neal Sunday morning and who was, for nearly twelve hours, the center of the greatest turmoil Muskogee has ever known, is in the Tulsa jail awaiting a speedy trial. He was taken from the Muskogee county jail about 11:15 o'clock Sunday night through a ruse of officers who had for many hours stood between

him and a mob.

Sheriff Barger, about 10 o'clock Monday morning, notified officers here that he had placed Green and his accomplice, Homer Matthews, in the big, elevated, mob-proof Tulsa county prison to await the orders of Judge de Graffenreid of the district court, who, Sunday night, assured the crowd here that prompt action would be taken to bring the slayers of the policeman to trial.

Sources

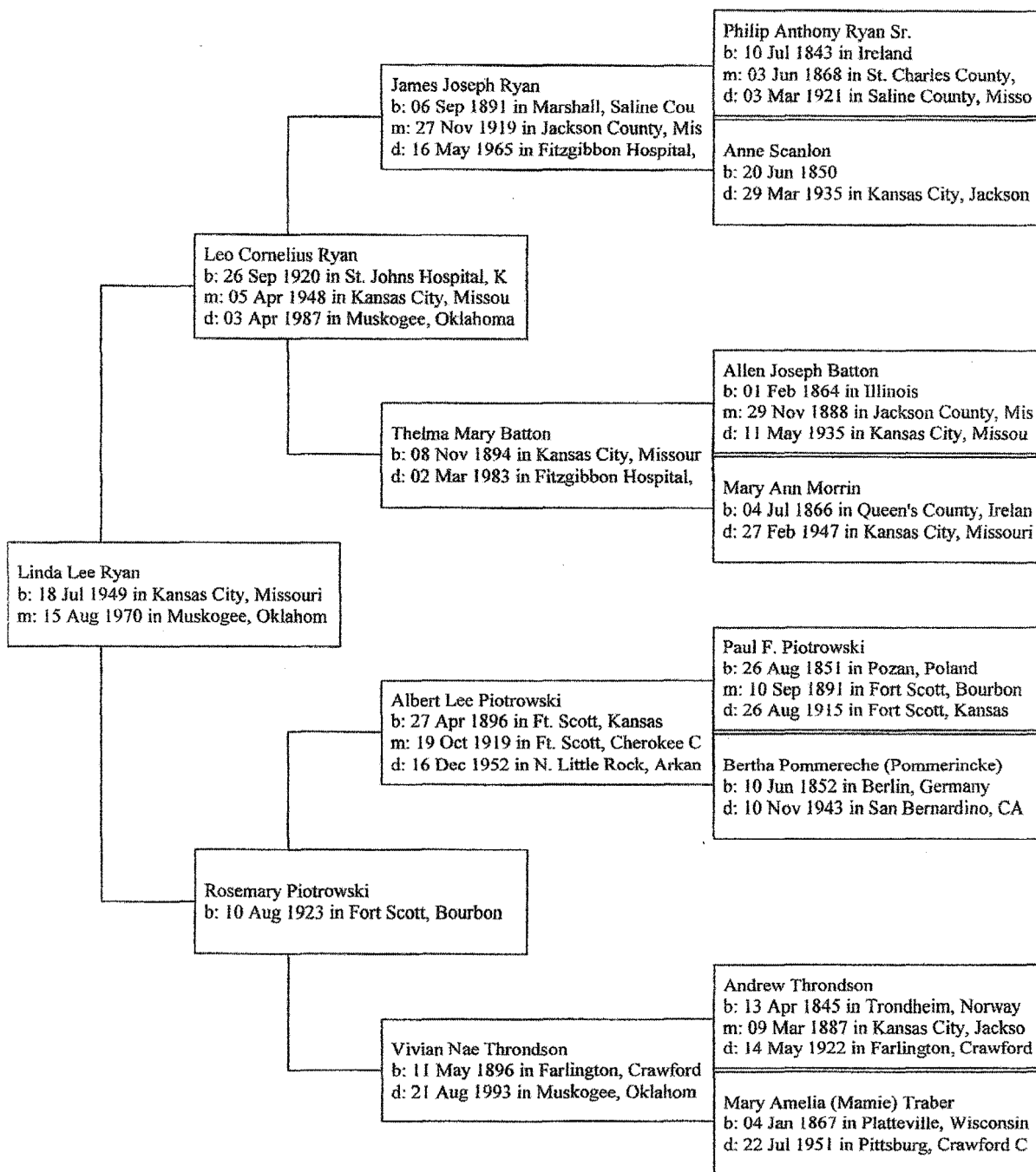
Muskogee Phoenix, Sunday, December 26, 1915, First Night Extra
Muskogee Phoenix, Sunday Midnight, December 26, 1915, Second Night Extra
Muskogee Times Democrat, Monday Evening, December 27, 1915
Audio Tape: March 9, 1975, Herman Louis "Red" Rider interviews our father Frank P. Rider, Jr.

Mystery Photo



This photo was sent in by Debbie Richards of Littleton, Colorado. It was a picture that was found in Craig County, Oklahoma, by her sister. The back of the photo states "Indian Preachers". Possible surnames are: Timpson, Buzzard or Woodall or Armstrong. Possible locations are Muskogee County, Craig County or Cherokee County.

Standard Pedigree Tree



100 YEARS AGO

Items extracted from the newspapers
by Barbara Downs

Muskogee Phoenix April 6, 1906

MARRIAGE LICENSES

The following marriage licenses were issued at the U. S. Clerk's office in this city Thursday. P. W. Edwards and Mrs. Nannie Brownson, Muskogee; G. B. Heath and Miss Minerva Clark, Muskogee; George Ash and Miss Maud Foreman, Webbers Falls.

Muskogee Phoenix, April, 11, 1906

MARRIAGE LICENSES

The following marriage licenses were issued at the clerk's office Tuesday; Wm. Heytz and Miss Leino Kerby, Muskogee; Ray W. Pottinger and Mrs. Mattie B. McCall, Muskogee; Dan Williams and Mrs. Rena Gibson, Muskogee.

Muskogee Phoenix, April 14, 1906

SIDEWALK ON BROADWAY PIKE

Brick were unloaded last night on Broadway and workmen will begin at once to build a sidewalk on the Broadway Pike, between the Fair store and the Barnes building on the north side of the street. C. W. Raymond, owner of the abutting property, asked W. A. Lubbes Friday afternoon to instruct Joe McCusker, with whom a contract was closed six months ago, to begin work this morning.

Muskogee Phoenix, April 15, 1906

MARRIAGE LICENSES

The following marriage licenses were issued by the clerk of the United State court Saturday; Robert M. Burton and Miss Edell Kirby, of Muskogee; Daniel Alkins and Miss Susie White, Coweta P. B. Townsend and Miss Jennie McMaken, Muskogee.

Muskogee Phoenix, April 17, 1906

ANOTHER CONTRACT FOR FREIGHT ON ARKANSAS

A. R. Peyinghause, president of the Muskogee Navigation Company, will leave for Tamaha the latter part of the week where he will make a contract for the Mary D to haul 6,000,000 feet of walnut, ash and cottonwood logs. The present river freighter is taxed to its capacity now and a new boat will probably be purchased by the company at once.

CRIMINAL TERM OF COURT OPENS

Grand Jury Organized And Sworn In – Real Work Will Begin Today.

The criminal term of court convened in Muskogee Monday morning. Very little headway was made and the real work of the court will begin this morning. Assistant District Attorney H. A. Leekly has charge of the grand jury, which was organized and sworn in in the forenoon.

The grand jury is composed of the following:

Grand Jury. J. B. Morrow, Checotah; foreman; McCoy Smith, Braggs, G. W. Phippin, Coweta; W. A. Woodward, Boynton,; L. R. Nash, Ft. Gibson; H. M. Rogers, Fort Gibson, G. D. Sleeper, Wagoner, J. D. Hazler, Tulsa; W. S. Harsha, Muskogee, C.C. Ayers, Muskogee, J. R. Kennon, Porter; W. H. Wainwright, Wainwright; Perry McKay; Haskell; W. M. Evarts, Bixby, Guy Bowman, Broken Arrow, B. H. Reddick, Council Hill, C. W. Thrash, Muskogee, Morgan Caraway, Muskogee, W. W. Harnage, Muskogee, Pat Foley, Porum

Muskogee Phoenix, April 18, 1906

CITY LOCALS

- --The Funny Man at the Opera House tonight.
- -- Don't forget the Grand Ball by Merchants' Ban tonight at Hyde Park
- -- We will be pleased to have our wagon go your way regardless of the amount of your purchase. TURNER HDW. CO.
- -- T. J. Way of Haskell is in the city attending court.
- -- H, F, Shepard and wife of Warner are visitor in the city.
- -- R, Brownbridge of Webbers Falls is a business visitor in the city.

Muskogee Daily Phoenix, April 19, 1906

HEADLINE

Over 750 Killed, Thousands Injured in Earthquake, San Francisco in Flames

Relatives of Muskogee People in San Francisco

A partial list of Muskogee people who are in California, and relatives of same are as follows: Will Ralls, formerly an employe of the Indian agency here, is now located in San Francisco. Clinton Tullis. Jack Evans and family. Mrs. A. L. Aylesworth. Ex-Mayor Pat Byrne. Mr. and Mrs. Geo. Elliott. Judge and Mrs. Porter. George C. Butte of this city, has a mother and two sisters who reside in Frisco. David P. Hall of the Viavi company, located in the Iowa Building.

Muskogee Daily Phoenix April 26, 1906

NEW STATE NEWS

The Post Office Department has taken notice of Marble City at last. The postmaster, J. E. Hotchkiss, has been notified that the name of this office has been changed from Marble to Marble City and that from and after July 1st it will be a money order office.

Muskogee Phoenix, May 8, 1906

DAM BUILDER HERE MAY 14

Sam Brown will co-operate with Home Company on Power Plant

A Telegram received Monday by W. D> Ford of this city from Sam Brown, the well known capitalist and largest stock holder and builder of the Lowell dam and power plant, says he will arrive in the city about May 14 for the purpose of closing a deal with the local power company, and work on the Grand river dam will begin at once.

At least a million dollars will be expended on the plant, which will be not less than 12-000 horse power. This will insure Muskogee of the cheapest power in the world , and as a manufacturing center it will outrank any city in the twin territories.

Muskogee Daily Phoenix, May 9, 1906

MARRIAGE LICENSES

The following marriage licenses were issued at the office of the United States clerk Tuesday; Rufus Mackey and Miss Mary Mackey; Braggs; John Freeman and Miss Pate Bennett, Boynton; William Cloe and Miss Josie E. Eoof, Grits.

Muskogee Phoenix, June 17, 1906

CITY LOCALS

- J. M. McKeloy was here yesterday from his home at Roff. I. T.
- A. H. Wear is in the city from is home in Springfield, Mo
- Try Alley Bros. & Co.'s pure leaf lard. Every pail guaranteed.
- Prompt and reliable service; that's us. Muskogee Tansfer Co.
- F. G. Gillipsie, of Tulsa, was here Saturday transacting business at the court house.
- Jos. S. Eaton and wife from Okmulgee, spent Saturday in the city shopping and transacting business.
- A regular 20 cent ruled or unruled tablet for 10 cents at the Orton & Howe's , Barnes bldg.
- Frank A. Kemp, of Tahlequah, arrived yesterday and will remain in the city over Sunday visiting with friends.
- R, C, Martin, a well known Okmulgee man was here yesterday looking after business at the court house and commission.
- Absolutely pure distilled water used in all our sodas waters, Muskogee Bottling Works, phone 318.
- I. H. Swofford, from Dustin, the city of destiny, was here yesterday spending the day transacting business at the departments.
- We will be please to have our wagon go your way regardless of the amount of your purchase. Turner Hardware Co.
- The Helen May Butler ladies' band closed its engagement at the park last evening and will depart this morning for Fort Scott, where they have a week's engagement.
- The Mary D. arrived in port late Friday evening, after having been delayed on account of being unable to go beneath a bridge located down the river. The boat had a good cargo. On the return trip the boat will be equipped with the new life boats which recently arrived.

Muskogee Phoenix, June 17, 1906

MARRIAGE LICENSES

The following marriage licenses were issued a the office of the United States clerk Saturday: J. L. Gassett and Miss Josie Putnam, Webbers Falls; Dorie W. Wallace and Miss Grace N. Andrews, Muskgoee.

Muskogee Phoenix, June 30, 1906

SOCIETY

- Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Longston and Mr. and Mrs. Price will leave the city Sunday for the Jungles on a few days' fishing and hunting.
- Miss Shingo Rector has returned home after quite an extended visit in Paris, Texas and Fort Smith, most of the time absent having been spent in the later.
- Miss Kate Kenyon, of Kansas City, who has been visiting Mr. and Mrs. Ben Bellis, of Garrett Heights, ahs departed for Chicago, where she will enter a conservatory of music for instruction.

Old Agency Cemetery

LOCATION: T15N R18E Sec. 9
LAT/LONG: 354726N 0952402W
SURVEY DATE: 1937, 1988, 1985, 1987

SURVEY LOCATION: Indian Pioneer History Collection,
55:337;

Cemeteries of Muskogee County Oklahoma, 1:1;

Our People & Where They Rest, 12:48;

Muskogee County Genealogical Society Quarterly, 4:1;

O n l i n e :

<http://www.usgennet.org/usa/ok/county/muskogee/>



FURTHER INFORMATION: Predominantly Creek Freedmen.

Located 1 1/2 miles East of Fern Mountain just East of US69 in Muskogee. According to the *Indian Pioneer History*, volume 55, pages 338, 339: "Soon after the Creek agency was established at Fern Mountain in 1857, the Agency burial ground was started on the hill one and a half miles east of the agency on the first road between the Agency and Ft. Gibson, and the old deeply worn road that winds its way through the old cemetery today is a part of that same old Agency-Ft. Gibson trail.--Fannie Renty, Creek Freedman, born and reared in the vicinity gave the information contained in the preceding paragraph. It would be difficult to estimate the number or graves in this old cemetery with any degree of accuracy as none of the older graves have markers with inscriptions and many of them have a heavy growth of brush and briars over

them indicating many years of neglect. Some of the later graves have expensive and beautiful monuments and tombs, but sadly neglected and several have fallen down."

Burial place of Rev. Sugar George prominent Creek and Harry Island, interpreter for the Creek Nation.

Restoration of this cemetery began in the Spring of 2005. For information or to help with restoration and clean up work contact Sue Tolbert: tolbert6@cox.net



INDIAN PIONEER PAPERS VOL. 9

Ella Robinson, April 15, 1937

History of Patterson Mercantile Experiences of Miss Ella Robinson, Employee Transcribed by Barbara Downs

James A. Patterson founder of the first mercantile company of Muskogee was born in Lincoln County, Tennessee, 1819. He was the son of William and Anna Newbury Patterson. At the age of 15 he moved with his parents to Cherokee County, Alabama. There his father died in 1848, leaving him the main support of his mother and younger children. In 1854 he came west to the Creek Nation, Indian Territory in the employ of Colonel William H. Garrett, who at that time was the agent for the Creek Indians. He taught school for two years near the Agency, until he became an employee of Mr. G. W. Stidham, who owned and operated a mercantile business at that place. In 1860 he went into partnership business with Mr. Stidham and they opened a store at Shieldsville, near the original site of the town of Okmulgee, Oklahoma. They continued in business there until the beginning of the Civil war, when they were compelled to move their stock back to the Creek Agency. Soon after the beginning of the Civil War he was appointed Sutler for the refugee Creeks at Fort Washita, in the Chickasaw Nation. A position he retained during the entire period of the war. At the close of the war he went into business with Major J. Harlin, dealing in merchandise and cattle at Tishomingo, Chickasaw Nation. In 1867 he returned to the Creek Agency and again was connected with Mr. G. W. Stidham in the mercantile business. Their trade extended over a large part of the Cherokee, Creek and Seminole Nations. In 1872 The M. K. & T. Railroad was built into the Indian Territory, running a straight line from Parsons, Kansas to Dennison, Texas. Immediately thereafter, in 1873, Mr. Patterson opened the first dry goods store at the present site of Muskogee. Mr. Andrew W. Robb, who was living at that time at Fort Gibson, and had held the position of Quartermaster at the Fort, moved to Muskogee and was employed by Mr. Patterson. They formed a partnership in 1876 and this relation lasted until the death of Mr. Patterson in 1897. In 1889 a stock company was formed. The stockholders were, A. W. Robb, President; Herbert J. Evans, known as Jack, Secretary: The store was divided into departments, being the first department store at the time in the Territory. Mr. Joseph S. Schmitt, an experienced Dry good man from Evansville, Indiana, was put in charge of the dry goods department. William H. Keys was manager of the clothing and Mr. William Reeves the shoe department, Mr. Keys and Mr. Reed came from Fort Smith, Arkansas. Chas. Seekings, an English Immigrant boy who has entered the service of the company years before as a errand and general handy man, and later trained in the grocery business was made manager of the grocery department. All heads of the departments were stockholders. Mr. Levi Ackley was credit man. The company also owned and operated a mill and gin in Muskogee and more than 60 people wer(e) employed and the payroll of \$30,000 per anum was maintained. They erected an improved round bale cotton gin and compress in 1897. In 1891 William N. Patterson, familiarly know as Major, a nephew of Mr. J. A. Patterson, came to Muskogee from his former home in Alabama, having just finished school. Mr. Patterson took him into the firm at once and gave him an interest in the business.

The first store building was located on Main and Broadway, facing east, where the Turner

Block now stands. When Muskogee had its first disastrous fire the entire business part of town was destroyed with the exception of Captain F. B. Severs store just south of Okmulgee on Main Street. At that time Mr. Patterson and Mr. C. W. Turner who had formerly occupied the site of the old Patterson building exchanged lots and substantial brick buildings were erected on each lot facing west and Main street was moved west the distance of one block. It created quite a protest from the citizens as the larger part of the town was located on the east side of the Katy railroad. Cherokee Street being the principle residence street. The people didn't want to walk that extra distance, but as the railroad company wanted to lay more track it was thought advisable. The proprietors were quite prod of their new store and increased their stock to suit their more commodious quarters and employed additional help.

Among the early employees before the stock company was formed were; Mr. Wm. N. Martin, a prominent citizen of Muskogee for many years was in the dry goods dept.

Taylor Chisso, a member of the Creek tribe, who afterward became prominent in Creek school affairs, was a member of the force. Mr. J. Bolander, a native of Sweeden, was the first bookkeeper.

Mr. Joe Herring, now living in Muskogee, was employed in the grocery department resigned to join the Rough Riders, in 1898.

Miss Nettie Graves was the first woman employed in a store in Muskogee. As it was an unheard of thing for a woman to work in a public place, it created quite a lot of interest and comment when she began working. As she was also a stenographer she did not stay long as she secured a position in a lawyers' office. Miss State Comby was the next young woman to be employed by the firm in 1894. She had moved with her mother and sister from Missouri. All white people employed in the Indian Territory were required to secure a permit from the Indian Governments, Mrs. Chas. Garrett, a Creek official, at once called upon her and informed her that she would be required to pay \$2 per year for a permit. As he looked very much in earnest she handed over the \$2. She was the first woman to pay for a permit in the town. Miss Comby was one of the most popular saleswomen ever employed in the town. Her bright smile and her willingness to be of service to her customers endeared her to the entire patronage. Miss Rilla Towns and Miss Della Curts, a young woman from Kansas, were also employed there. Mr. Charles Hart, a popular chap from Missouri, was assistant manager of the dry goods department. In 1897 I went to work there. I began just as an experiment on my part and perhaps a greater one on theirs. They wee to have their midsummer sale the last two weeks in July, and I asked Mr. Robb who was my mother's good friend, if I might work during the sale and he gave his consent. I think he thought lightly of my ability, however. It was my first experience of standing on my feet all day. In that mad rush for bargains the store was filled with customers all day, stand and almost fighting for bargains. Sometimes the goods was badly damaged in the fray. Remember one dozen fine napkins that were badly damaged that they were charged to the woman who fought for them and would not take them. They were delivered to her the next day. When I got home in the evening of the first day I announced to my mother that I was through with business it was too strenuous for me, but after a good meal, a hot bath and a nights rest, I was ready for the fray the next morning. The next morning after the sale was over Mr. Robb asked me if I would like to continue working as he had noticed how well I got along with the negro customers as they has an enormous negro patronage. I had received a dollar per day during the sale and was to get \$10 a week on a permanent job. No one could afford to turn that down so I became a member of the regular force. We had semi-annual sales in July and January to reduce stock and make room for the next seasons goods. They were real sales. High

class merchandise at little above cost prices. Long before the doors were opened in the morning the sidewalks would be crowded with people and the grand rush began when the doors were open. The people would look forward with much interest to the sales realizing that they could secure fine merchandise at little cost. As the store drew patronage from a radius of 75 miles it was necessary for people to spend the night in town. Those who could afford it stayed at a rooming house or a hotel, went to a show at night, shopped early the next morning and left for home. Others who could not afford such luxuries came prepared to camp in the wagon yard, located at the corner of Cherokee Street and East Broadway. It was enclosed with a high board fence and the gates were locked at night insuring safety. As the firm dealt heavily in cotton, farmers coming from a distance, always stayed in the wagon yard. They came in late in the afternoon, sold their cotton, went to the gin and got weighed in. They received their weight checks and unloaded very early in the morning and were paid at the store and proceeded to spend the money. As that perhaps was their only shopping trip for the season, the buying was heavy. I always tried to be on hand as early as possible in order to get in a big day. Many days I sold as much as \$250 worth of merchandise in an hour and often the cash sales in our department alone would run as high as \$1,000 or \$1,500 a day. We carried the highest grade merchandise obtainable from St. Louis, Chicago and New York markets. Heavy silks for dresses were in demand and ranged in price from \$1 to \$4 per yard. As the styles were not designed with any idea of economy it required from 8 to 10 yards of material for a dress. The findings and trimmings would cost several dollars more. Bringing the entire cost of one dress to \$30 or \$40. We also carried the finest grade of table linens. Mr. Schmitt took great pride in his assortment of fine damask. A dinner arrayed in the best linens from Pattersons, French china and cut glass from the Turner art department and sterling silver from a leading jewelry house, presented a setting at a dinner fit for a King, and as dinner parties was one of the most popular social occasions, the demand for our linens never slackened. In order to save time and for convenience the firm conceived the idea of opening and maintaining a kitchen and dining room for the employees. It was located on the third floor with a good trustworthy negro man, Charley Hunter, installed as cook and he was a good one. We were served dinner every day and supper on nights when we worked extra and Saturday nights. The dinner consisted of meat well cooked, at least two vegetables, a plain salad and a dessert. Men who came on business with the office force and visitors were always invited to dinner if it was near meal time. They always seemed to enjoy it. During the summer when business was not so brisk, the firm provided us with meal tickets from a nearby restaurant, owned and operated by Mr. J. C. Fast. That saved time and a trip home through the heat. Miss Bertha Divins, now Mrs. J. C. Fast, was one of our popular salesladies at that time.

In 1895 a dress making department was opened on the third floor of the building. Miss Stella Cobb, from Carthage, Mo., was in charge. That proved both profitable and convenient to the house as well as to the customers. They also maintained a millinery department but discontinued that for lack of space.

In the early days there were no banks in Muskogee and the firm instituted a system of banking for the benefit, largely for the out-of-town customers. Wealthy cattlemen would leave their money which they carried in stout canvas bags to be placed in the safe until they came for it. Later a real banking system was organized with real checks and was carried on exclusively for the benefit of their customers and with no profit for themselves. The store was a meeting place, not only for the town-people but for the country people as well. "Just stand around Patterson's store awhile and the fellow you wanted to see same along". You soon had to learn the art of

waiting on several people at one time and keeping them all in a good humor. As it was not an easy matter to secure help as there was no unemployment problem in the town, after you began working and was giving satisfaction, it was hard to get released. When I was taking my vacation in the summer I stayed away from the store, for just as sure as I went in, MR. Schmitt would say "take off that funny looking hat and get behind the counter. Don't you see people waiting". We were given two weeks vacation with pay after we had been there one year. On returning from my first vacation and was given a check I had not worked for I felt like a Wall Street Broker in pre-depression days. If you were ill nothing was deducted from your salary. Neither were you paid for over time, but all in all the employees were not the losers. All employees got their drygoods at 10 per cent above cost and groceries at 10 per cent reduction. Everyone received a substantial remembrance at Christmas time. We were paid every Saturday Morning. As my salary had been advanced to \$25 per week there was nothing in town I could not buy if I so desired. It was a comfortable feeling that I had.

The buildings at that time in Muskogee were not well lighted and we used electric light continuously through the day in winter. Weeks would go by and I would not see sunshine as I came so early and went home late. The Patterson firm was the first one to institute a six o'clock closing hour. All business houses had been keeping open until 7:00 P. M. and later. The firm took the position that shorter hours would be beneficial to all concerned. When the labor unions became active in Muskogee and an organizer came around and said we would be compelled to form a retail clerks union or lose the labor patronage. We protested as we thought we were already getting everything coming to us as employees and were quite well satisfied but Major Patterson advised us to join the Union and avoid any trouble that might possibly arise. The firm paid our initial fee and we went into the Union to please the firm principally and for the benefit of those employed by other firms who were not getting as short hours as we were and much shorter pay checks. The office force believed in recreation as well as work and promoted the first base ball team ever sponsored by a business concern in Muskogee. They had the material with which to form a fine team and the firm furnished the equipment free of charge. The suits were gray with Patterson in big black letters across the front of the shirts. John Cobb, Dewitt Blackston, Charles Hart, Spencer Summerlin, Jim Hamer, Arthur Reid, Mark Minter, Charles Seekings and Henry Poareod (sp) composed the first team with Mr. Will Reeves little boy, George, as the mascot. When our team played on Friday afternoon they closed the store and we all went to the game. We girls sat on the side line and rooted for our team. Shows were another side attraction for the boys. The front row of the balcony of the old Turner theatre, was pre-empted by the same boys, headed by Major Patterson, himself. Every time a good show and some that were not so good came to town, they were there in full force, with plenty of peanuts and chewing gum. We girls might have been inclined to have been envious at them had not our good friend Charley Moore, the town's only florist and undertaker, supplied us, not only with tickets to the show but provided us with a cab to take us safely home. So they had nothing on us. The newspaper wanted a picture of the entire force to accompany a write up they were going to publish. We met at the studio on Sunday afternoon for the ordeal. It was rather amusing when we saw each other in our Sunday best as we were not accustomed to meeting except in our everyday clothes.

During the smallpox epidemic here things were not so pleasant as there was no board of health at that time. The only way they had to handle unruly people who persisted in spreading the disease was to call in Mr. William Herring, the town Marshal. He was very tall and had a commanding appearance and always carried a gun in plain sight. When his big form loomed up

in the door they immediately moved out. They would bring their children in, broken out with smallpox and put them up on the counters. We never touched the money taken from their hands. It was taken from their hands and placed on the counters. It was raked off on a paper ad taken to the office and fumigated. Mr. Lubbes, the U. S. jailer, furnished a disinfectant that was kept continuously on the stove and smelled to high heaven. We girls were advised to eat onions as a precautionary measure and I think we consumed the greater part of the stock in the grocery department. Had it not been for the vile smelling stuff boiling on the stove the customer could not have endured us. However, there was not a case among all of the employees. Some of our best and most interesting customers were the full blood Indians. There was a platform along the side of the grocery dept., just the height of the delivery wagon, made so in order to load barrels and boxes without extra lifting. The Indians would sit along the east wall in the summer with their bright colored shawls wrapped about them until it was time to go home. They were nice to wait on as they know what they wanted and did not argue about the price.

For two weeks before Christmas the store was kept open at nights until 9:00 o'clock and until midnight on the night of the 24th. Then they drove the customers out and locked the door. We could sell anything in sight, regardless of price. The store looked like a wreck the morning after Christmas and we were the wrecked of all. When I awoke for late breakfast on Christmas morning, for all I cared it could have been the 4th of July. But it was a great life. If you possessed a strong constitution, a keen sense of humor and had an understanding knowledge of human nature, you came out alright. A feeling of unity and friendliness characterized our association, due largely perhaps, from the fact that the management always made us feel that we were a part of the institution and not merely hired hands.

When Major Patterson was married, in April 1900, to Miss Katherine Rector, the charming young daughter of Captain J. B. Rector of Muskogee, she also became a part of our family and later their two attractive little girls. As a saving of time and work for the office force the company issued coupon books to their credit customers ranging from \$2.50 to \$25.00. They were entered as a charge account and the customer could trade them out as they desired. The coupon ran from five cents to one dollar. Our negro customers were extended the same courteous service as the white received. They always had a favorite clerk and would indefinitely (wait) for them. You not only had to know what to offer them but you also had to know their minds as well. Each individual was a study in negro character. You also had to know their expressions and names for things. When they asked for quarters worth of boss ball, you gave them twenty-five cent ball of cotton thread for hand sewing. Ten yards hickery meant ten yards of striped cotton shirting. Saturday was a gala day for the colored population. They came early, spent the day, did their shopping late in the afternoon after visiting with their friends and have a hood time socially. It was a painful ordeal when the negro man, especially the old ones, were commissioned by the feminine members of their family to purchase women's underwear. "Lady Unions" were the name they applied to several of the garments. One old gray-haired uncle asked as if we had lady unions. I replied that we did and to come right up stairs. He said, "I don't want era now, I just ax'ya is ya". They always turned their backs while you wrapped them up. The () they furnished us offset the many annoyances that some of our enlightened white customer caused us. It took the patience that Job is accredited with, to keep smiling and give your best service when in the middle of a busy day our city friends came in to get 2 yards of val lace at 7 ½ cents per yard. After having spent an hour or to looking over the entire stock they made a selection. Perchance during that time several of their church and society friends ad stepped to talk over the latest news and sometimes scandal, forgetful of the fact that the clerks

were live and had ears. Had the conversations in front of the dry good counter been repeated there would have been war in high circles. We also knew all of the family troubles and physical ailments of our customers before we even knew their names, sometimes. We designated them as the woman with the stingy or grouchy husband, and the one with the liver or stomach trouble. Our advice was asked on numerous subjects. For instance, "what color do you think would be most becoming to me," to "how to feed the baby," We were always glad to see our friends in the morning as they passed through the store to the store to the grocery department. Our genial friend, Judge John R. Thomas, (father of Mrs. Grant Foreman, of Muskogee), always stopped to chat with us and admonished us to work harder and earn our salary. Mr. Joseph Sondheimer never passed by without a pleasant word. He and Mr. Schmitt would converse in German, greatly to our discomfort, for we thought they were talking about us. There were four delivery boys, two for each side of town, as that was in the days before autos, good strong wagons and horses were used. In continued wet weather the streets became rivers of mud and loaded wagons would bog down on Main street. The traveling salesmen from whom we bought our goods are welcome visitors. As Muskogee was the largest town in this section in this part of the Territory and had the best Hotel accommodations, the salesmen spent Sunday ere whenever possible. They came in on Friday night, took their orders early Saturday morning and were free for the rest of the day. They would get behind the counters on busy days and sell goods as if they were employed there. They were a fine genial lot of men. Mr. William Milay, from Herzogs in St. Louis, handled ladies coats and suits. Phil B. Oliver, from Marshal Fields in Chicago, handled piece goods as did Searcy Williams from Carson, Peirie, Scott and Co., also of Chicago. AL Parnell and Emmitt Skinner represented Ely Walker of St. Louis. They always treated the men folks with fine cigars and we girls got a box of good candy. In 1907 when the Territory became a state and the negroes were allowed to mortgage and sell their land, money flowed like water. Our difficulty was getting good(s) shipped in fast enough. They were especially fond of silk petticoats. They liked the kind that rustle and of the very bright colors. Many boxes of skirts and shirts waists were sold out before they were ever worked and put in stock. While the clerks were called upon for loads of advice and help in selling materials, our negro customers were very appreciative and were really your friends. The Fourth of August was the biggest day of the year with them. That was when they celebrated their emancipation. Altho the proclamation was signed in April the 4th of August was the day set apart for the celebration. They would economize for weeks in order to buy clothes and food for that occasion. We sold bolts of white dress goods and miles of ribbon. Blue being their favorite color. No dusky belle thought she was properly attired unless she was arrayed in white with a profusion of ribbon bows on her dress and her hat bedecked with () colored flowers. The celebration consisted of a two days picnic and barbecue, held at some popular picnic grounds a few miles from town. An invitation was always extended to their white friends, who were their honored guests and received the most courteous attention. I can testify to that as I attended several. The whites were always served dinner before they began to eat. The negroes also depended upon the men in the office to advise them on all business matters and felt that their interest would be well taken care of.

Mr. A. W. Robb, who formed a partnership with Mr. Patterson in 1876, after the death of Mr. Patterson became the senior member of the firm. His fine personality endeared him to the entire force during all his years of service. He was compelled, through illness, to retire a few months before his death, which occurred in 1909. Among the outstanding citizens of Oklahoma today is Mr. Connie Foley of Eufaula. As a young lad he was employed in 1876 by Mr. Patter-

son. He began service as a general helper around the store and later as a salesman. Messrs. Patterson and Robb recognizing the true worth of the young man became especially interested in him. His keen business acumen, sterling traits of character, and his close attention to business, bespoke a bright future for him. They did not lose sight of his fine qualities. He remained in their employ until 1881 when he formed a partnership with them and opened a general mercantile store at Eufaula, known as the Foley Mercantile Company which for many years was the leading firm in that section of the country. He also owned and operated a cotton gin there. Mr. Foley as continuously made his home in Eufaula since that time. He is a mason of the highest rank and a citizen which Oklahoma is justly proud to honor.

At the end of 8 years I resigned from the employment of the firm to take a position with the Schmitt Dry Goods Company, a new store opened with Mr. Joe Schmitt, John Laldor (sp) and Charles Hart as proprietors. It was located on west Okmulgee just west of the Fite-Rowsey building.

Major Patterson had never particularly cared for indoor life. The oil business which was rapidly developing in the country at that time appealed to him and the store was closed in 1913. Mr. Patterson established his headquarters in Tulsa and entered the oil business. But was forced to retire on account of ill health and died April, 1920.

The Patterson Mercantile Company stood at the forefront through the years from 1873 to 1913 a place well deserved through the merits of those who managed its affairs. The building they occupied now stands at the Corner of Broadway and Main Streets with the date, 1887, on the front, bearing a silent tribute to the pioneers of Indian Territory days.

Congratulations Graduates!!!

Matthew Charles Clabaugh, age 6, grandson of Charles & Mary Downing is a 2006 kindergarten graduate of Hilldale Elementary School.

Geoffery Kennedy, grandson of Les & Susan Chriestenson is a 2006 graduate of Blackwell High School.

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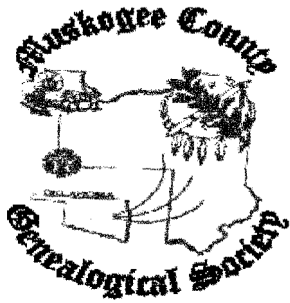
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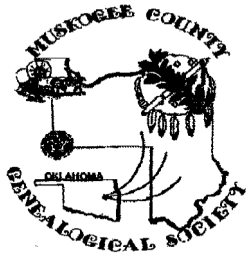
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