

TOM HALE

1862-1941

By Robert L. Williams

Tom Hale, born October 5, 1862, near Clarksville, in Red River County, Texas, was a son of Thomas Hale, Sr. and his wife, Frances (Welborn) Hale, the former born February 14, 1822 and the latter June 7, 1825, in Tennessee, where they were married and then migrated to Texas in the 1840's and to this union came the following children, all born in Red River County, Texas: (1) John Guy Hale, born October 10, 1848, (2) Johnson Welborn Hale, born September 1, 1866, and (3) Elizabeth Sarah Hale, born July 23, 1856; all predeceased their brother, Tom Hale, who died in McAlester, Oklahoma, on April 25, 1941; interment in Hilcrest Mausoleum, Dallas, Texas.

Tom Hale was married to Julia Bryan Holloway at Woodland, Texas, September 11, 1884 and to this union came two sons—the elder, Eustace, who died when five years of age, and the younger, Elmer, born November 16, 1887, and his mother survive.

On January 5, 1913, his son, Elmer Hale, was married to Miss Opal Franklan Harvey and to that union has come two children, a son, Elmer, Jr. and a daughter, Cirrelda Julia, who is the wife of T. A. Barnard and they reside in San Gabriel, California and they have two children, Cierrelda Julia Barnard and Frances Ann Barnard. The son, Elmer Hale, Jr. is a First Lieutenant in the 18th Field Artillery at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.

Tom Hale received the education afforded by the local country schools following the Civil War. Leaving the farm when he was 21 years of age he became a clerk in a retail dry goods store at Honey Grove, Texas, and then in Paris, Texas, and later in Detroit, Texas, with Ed Byrd, he engaged in the retail hardware and implement business. In 1894, having sold his interest in the Detroit business he went to work for the Rock Island Implement Company of Dallas, Texas—its main office located at Rock Island, Illinois—and so continued until January 4, 1896, when he located at Durant, Choctaw Nation, Indian Territory, with one Taber of Dallas, Texas, under the firm name of Tom Hale & Company and engaged in the retail implement business, the late E. H. Smith being associated with them as an employee. Later he disposed of the business, and the late A. L. Severance¹ succeeded thereto.

In 1900 the late Hugh Halsell and A. B. Scarbrough of Bonham, Texas, and Tom Hale organized the Durant Wholesale Grocery Company, with Hale as Manager, and he also participated with them in the organization of the Durant National Bank at Durant. The wholesale grocery company in 1902 was expanded and the name changed to Hale-Halsell Company, with a branch at Coalgate, Oklahoma. In

¹ Vol. 18, *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, pp. 309-310.

1904, having acquired the Townsend Wholesale Grocery Company business at McAlester, Oklahoma, he removed to that point and continued said wholesale grocery business until his death. The grocery company as Hale-Halsell Company extended its branches to Muskogee, Tulsa, Okmulgee, Holdenville and Hugo—the Coalgate branch being removed to Ada in 1919. The capital of the organization expanded and at the close of the World War I it was \$1,400,000.00, since which time it has been reduced to \$1,000,000.00. Tom Hale was its President until age caused his transfer to the Chairmanship of the Board of Directors.

He was effective in the promotion of the Boy Scouts organization and various civic movements, a member of the Presbyterian Church at McAlester, and a 32d degree Mason.

Tom Hale was for years President of the First National Bank at McAlester and disposed of his interest therein and later organized the National Bank of McAlester and was its President from the date of its organization until his death. He was an able, active, capable, enterprising and progressive business man.

In 1898 in the territory tributary to Durant in which grain was raised he sold and delivered to the surrounding farmers as many as 100 grain binders,² on May 21, 1898.

By Act of March 18, 1915, the act of May 23, 1913 providing for construction of the State Capitol and creating a Commission therefor was amended, so that the Governor became "ex-officio chairman of the Commission," and Patrick James Goulding, William Bruce Anthony and Stephen A. Douglas, were continued as members thereof, to hold office until the completion of the Capitol Building, or until removed by the Governor of the State.² Soon after said Commission was thus re-organized, and a Citizens Advisory Committee was appointed by said Commission to advise in the construction of said building, to-wit: Joseph Huckins, Jr., Chairman, E. K. Gaylord, Vice-Chairman, Tom Hale, F. M. Pirtle, H. W. Gibson, Sr.,³ Edgar S. Vaught and S. W. Hogan. Said Capitol Building having been in due course completed⁴ the Sixth Legislature on March 16, 1917, passed the following House Resolution:

"Whereas, this great undertaking has been accomplished without suspection or intimation of graft or extravagance;
* * *

. . . Be it resolved, that we hereby tender on behalf of the people of the State our earnest commendation for their earnest and efficient efforts in building the Capitol, the intelligent care and supervision they have given to this great responsibility, and the value of their services in the discharge of their duty."

² Session Laws of Oklahoma, 1915, Chap. 166, pp. 292-297; Vol. 10, *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, p. 613; Daily Oklahoman, March 24, 1915.

³ Vol. 5, *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, p. 100-101.

⁴ The Capitol Building was completed and finished within the limits of the appropriation of One and One-half Million Dollars.

In the Capitol Building are two black marble plaques upon one of which is inscribed:

"State Capital Commission
R. L. Williams, Governor and Chairman
P. J. Goulding, Vice-Chairman
W. B. Anthony S. A. Douglas
Ira Mitchell⁵)
A. N. Leecraft) Secretaries
Edward P. Boyd, Superintendent"

and upon the other is inscribed:

"Citizens Advisory Committee
Joseph Huckins, Jr., President
Ed. S. Vaught Secretary
E. K. Gaylord H. W. Gibson
Tom Hale F. M. Pirtle
S. W. Hogan"

Architects
S. A. Layton and S. Wemyss Smith
Contractors
James Stewart and Co. Inc.
Building Commenced July 20, 1914
and Completed June 30, 1917."

The following members of the Citizens Advisory Committee have passed away: Joseph Huckins, Jr., H. W. Gibson, Sr., F. M. Pirtle, and Tom Hale. Those that still survive are: Edgar S. Vaught and S. W. Hogan. Of the State Capitol Commission, the Governor, Robert L. Williams still survives, but the other members, Patrick James Boulding, Stephen A. Douglas and William Bruce Anthony have passed away. S. A. Layton and S. Wemyss Smith, the architects, also have passed away.