INDIAN TERRITORY GHOST TOWNS

By A. C. Townsend

A peculiar state of affairs existed late in the last century in the present state of Oklahoma. There was an officially created Oklahoma Territory, but it refused almost without exception to use "Terr." on its postmarks. The postmarks read "Oklahoma" with but just four known exceptions out of the hundreds of towns and cities. And there was no officially declared Indian Territory by the Post Office Department until 1889—but without any exceptions locally every town in the Indian Territory had been using postmarks reading "Indian Territory" in one form or another for a period of fifty years!

By the Act of May 2, 1890, the official boundaries of both Oklahoma Territory and Indian Territory were defined, thus two territories were designated where only one had formerly been specifically designated.

Just to complete the record, the two territories were united and combined into the State of Oklahoma on November 16, 1907, and the old Indian Territory postmarks then became extinct. California and Nevada have no cause to brag of their "ghost towns," at least so far as numbers are concerned. We have a record now of 359 towns that used stamped postmarks, and of that number the Postal Guide shows that 132 of them are among the things that were. Over one third of them gone!

The first five Indian postmarks read:

Miller Court House, Choctaw Nation, 1824.
Cantonment Gibson, Cherokee Nation, 1827.
Nicksville, Cherokee Nation, 1828.
Fort Towson, Choctaw Nation, 1832.
Eagle Town, Choctaw Agency, 1834.

All but Fort Towson and Eagle Town are ghost towns now and covers with these postmarks are exceedingly scarce. The remaining two are pretty small; Fort Towson has less than 500 inhabitants and Eagletown (as the postmark now reads) is but what we call "a wide spot in the road."

Consider some of the names of the dear departed: Bald Hill, Badland, Cary's Ferry, Coody's Bluff, Echo, Frogville, Erin Springs (sentiment there!), Legal, Lyceum, Owl, Panther, Quarz (not gold, just quartz), Starville. Some of them the names of settlers who came to see and to conquer the wilderness and build cities. And their dreams crumbled to dust and their houses and towns crumbled to dust, and in many instances there is not a trace left.

1 See the Stamp Review (St. Joseph, Missouri), XV, No. 4, pp. 1, 12.
2 See Grant Foreman, "Early Post Offices of Oklahoma," Chronicles of Oklahoma (Oklahoma City), VI, Nos. 1-4; VIII, No. 1.
3 Charles N. Gould, Oklahoma Place Names (Norman, 1933).
Some of the army names naturally faded away, but what tales of Apache raids and other thrilling events could we shiver over if the old sites had a voice! Camp Supply, Cantonment, Fort Washita. And what became of the Irishmen who founded Erin Springs, MeKey, McLain, McKuskey, Reagan? They too are but ghost towns.

But it was not alone the white man whose dreams faded and whose homes disappeared. Look at the Indian towns: Catale, Choaka, Cooyah, Econtuchka, Juanita, Lukfata, Monido, Oconee, Oowala, Sageeyah, Sawokla, Wanhilla.

GEORGE SAMUEL RAMSEY
1874-1941

By Robert L. Williams.

George Samuel Ramsey, born August 18, 1874, in Warren County, Tennessee, near Viola, about eleven miles south of McMinnville, and died at Tulsa, Oklahoma, December 27, 1941, with interment in Greenhill Cemetery, Muskogee, Oklahoma, was the fourth and youngest of the four children of George Washington Ramsey who was born December 22, 1833 and died July 24, 1912, and his wife, Elizabeth King, who was born September 12, 1838 and died February 3, 1926, and who was the daughter of Thomas Jefferson King and, his wife, Francis (Fannie) Ramsey.

George Samuel Ramsey and Earline Young, daughter of Andrew M. Young, of Wartrace, Bedford County, Tennessee and his wife, Ollie House Young, were married on November 20, 1898, to which union came the following children: (1) Ollie, who died in infancy, with interment at Manchester, Tennessee, (2) George Cross Ramsey, born September 25, 1902 and died August 8, 1911, with interment in Greenhill Cemetery, Muskogee, Oklahoma, and (3) Margaret, born at Muskogee on October 18, 1913 and married William M. Smartt, and both reside at Nashville, Tennessee.

His wife, Earline Young, died at Muskogee, Oklahoma, February 24, 1918, with interment in Greenhill Cemetery, Muskogee, Oklahoma.

He received his academic education in the schools in Warren County, Tennessee and the Academy at Viola and at Burrett College of Spencer, Van Buren County, Tennessee, and read law under Captain George Cross of Manchester, Coffee County, Tennessee, and after such preparation, on September 2, (first Monday), 1895, at the beginning of term of County Court in Manchester after a hearing it was "ordered * * * that a certificate be granted G. S. Ramsey stating that he is a citizen of Coffee County, Tennessee, the age of twenty-one years and of good moral character," and "on September 3, 1895, George S. Ramsey * * * before M. D. Smallman, Judge of the 6th Judicial Circuit * * * and Walter S. Bearden, Chancellor of the 4th District * * * having applied for license to