No state in the Union has a more colorful history than Oklahoma, although much of that history could be encompassed in two lifetimes. Eastern Oklahoma has had an especially large part in a story which is intriguing, enlightening, tragic; built upon the hopes of a people brave and resolute, and determined against terrible odds to make their country a desirable place in which to live.

At the time our chronicle opens, the two groups of Cherokees had already come to the lands assigned them in the Indian Territory and had merged, in 1839, as the Cherokee Nation. The group known as the "Western Cherokee" had migrated west first, at an early date; the other group known as the "Eastern Cherokee" had remained in Georgia, opposed to the inequalities of the treaties with the United States, until enforced removal. The government of the Cherokee Nation, West, was democratic in type, with two houses of the legislature, called the National Council, and an executive, or principal chief, with courts, departments and lesser divisions of the typical state.

Early settlers, aside from the tribesmen or citizens of the Cherokee Nation, included missionaries, educators and tradesmen. Many of Indian descent were also found in these same walks of life, having been educated in the Eastern States though their interests had remained with their countrymen in their own Nation. As a result, many Cherokees of this class were highly favored in the matter of social attainments and had great influence upon the life and manners of their people. While politics, as in any democracy, was played with considerable earnestness and vigor, still altruism seemed to be a dominant feature in the Cherokee Nation, as evidenced by the establishment of churches, schools, orphan asylums, and lastly, an insane asylum.¹ No matter how religious, how well educated, a community may be there are still those who are orphans, and those who are dependent for other reasons, illness, indigency, insanity. All of these must be cared for. The safety of the state, the comfort of the individual, demand no less.

The First Insane Asylum

Around Tahlequah, which is still an educational center in Eastern Oklahoma, the Cherokees built their early schools of higher learning and within a radius of several miles were other units of the social scheme. The Male and Female seminaries were a few

¹Letter of W. A. Duncan to the Editor of The Cherokee Advocate. See Appendix.
miles out of Tahlequah and the National Jail and the printing office of The Cherokee Advocate, the national newspaper, were located in the town. The jail appears in our story later, while The Advocate was one of the principal means of news dissemination and of social integration. Under provisions of an act of the Cherokee National Council, in 1866, orphans were cared for in the two seminary buildings until a permanent site was selected for the Cherokee Orphan Asylum.3

About six miles south of Tahlequah, a site was selected for the Home for the Insane, Dumb, and Blind of the Cherokee Nation, the only organized Indian nation that seems to have found it expedient to establish a home or refuge for its insane or mentally defective. On October 31, 1873, an act was passed authorizing the establishment of a home for these people, including, also, the indigent, the blind, and the deaf. A committee, consisting of D. W. Bushyhead, National Treasurer, S. S. Stephens, Superintendent of Public Instruction, together with the Board of Trustees of the Orphan Asylum, met in December, 1873, to select the permanent sites for the two institutions which were to be established as soon as possible. The following news item appeared in The Cherokee Advocate for December 20, 1873.3

The Board for permanently locating the Orphan Asylum as also the "Home" for the Insane, Blind, etc., created by an Act of the last Council, have, we believe, performed this duty, by locating the Orphan Asylum at the Old Lewis Ross place, generally known as the Grand Saline (present town of Salina, in Mayes County), about forty miles from Tahlequah on the Grand River, for which place or improvement they pay $28,000, and also by locating the "Home" on the improvement of Lewis Ross, Jr., about six miles from Tahlequah, for which they pay $1,200. Thus, the much vexed matter is settled beyond appeal.

The Indian Appropriation Act passed by Congress and approved on February 14, 1873, provided the necessary funds for the establishment of the two institutions.4 On the order of the Cherokee National Council, proceeds from the sale of Cherokee lands to the Osages amounting to $100,000, were to be set apart; $80,000 to be invested as a part of the Cherokee orphan fund and $20,000 to be expended for the buildings and other improvements necessary in establishing the Orphan Asylum. Likewise, proceeds from the sale of the Cherokee Strip lands in Kansas under the Treaty of 1866, amounting to $100,000, were to be set apart for an asylum for the insane, deaf and dumb, blind and indigent persons of the Cherokee Nation; $75,000 of the amount to be invested as a separate fund

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3 Act of the Cherokee National Council, signed by Wm. P. Ross, Principal Chief, November 1, 1866, Indian Archives, No. 128, p. 125, Oklahoma Historical Society.
3 The Cherokee Advocate, December 20, 1873, p. 3, col. 2. The "Old Lewis Ross Place" at the Grand Saline included a large, handsome brick residence.
The remaining $25,000 was to be used in its establishment, $20,000 for land and improvements and $5,000 for furnishings. The last mentioned sum was appropriated for the purpose intended, by the National Council and approved December 5, 1875, by Charles Thompson, Principal Chief.

The affairs for this "Home" or Asylum were to be in charge of a board of trustees composed of the principal chief, the assistant principal chief, the national treasurer, and three trustees appointed by the principal chief, by and with the consent of the Cherokee Senate, and whose terms of office should expire with that of the principal chief appointing them. The board would appoint the steward, under bond, whose term of office was to be the same as and its interest semi-annually applied to support the institution, that of the board appointing him. He was to have general supervision over everything, and administer to the sick such treatments as were prescribed by the medical superintendent. He was to keep all accounts and records and make reports to the board of trustees not later than October of each year.

Every applicant for admission to the asylum, should by himself, guardian or friend, present to the steward an application in writing showing cause of admission, and that he was destitute of means of support, and had no relatives able, or willing to be burdened with his support, and the same was to be certified to under oath by two respectable citizens, who were to report the same to the board of trustees for final action, and they might call upon the medical superintendent for his opinion and examination of the patient. However, any insane person might be admitted upon proof of his insanity. If the friends of any lunatic refused to do so, any citizen might suggest to the proper authorities that the person be confined in the asylum.

The building was probably begun in 1874, for in that year the report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs stated that "the Cherokee Asylum is also being built, which will supply a home for the blind, deaf, dumb, insane and indigent of the Nation." The repeal of all laws granting pensions to any person whatsoever, after January 1, 1875, was effected by the National Council in 1875. Previously needy persons had been granted pensions, but the asylum was now to take care of this type of citizen.

FIRST MEETING OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Board of Trustees for the Insane, Indigent, Blind, Deaf and Dumb met in Tahlequah February 9, 1876. Those present were: Principal Chief, Charles Thompson; Assistant Principal Chief, D. Rowe; Trustees, S. Foreman and L. Keys, and Wilson Sanders, who

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5 Cherokee Papers 1874-1889, pp. 122-23, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society.
had taken the place of Jas. Sanders, first appointed but who died before the meeting had convened. Foreman was chosen secretary and W. J. Miller acted as secretary pro tem.

By October of 1876, progress on the building was far enough along to warrant placing some one in charge. "Wilson Sanders was placed in the asylum as a suitable person," and it was agreed to pay him for his services at the rate of ten dollars per month. The next day, October 5, L. Keys moved that the unfinished work upon the asylum building reported by the inspecting committee be now acted upon and that the building be considered finished and that it be accepted, and the amount retained be paid to the parties concerned.

At the meeting of December 5, 1876, John A. Foreman was elected steward at a salary of four hundred dollars per year, with his bond fixed at five thousand dollars. Dennis W. Bushyhead moved to set aside ten thousand dollars with which to start the asylum in 1877. Paragraph 10 of the by-laws of this meeting read: "It shall be the duty of the steward to secure the services of some member of the Gospel to hold religious services, or preach in the asylum every Sabbath, or as often as practicable." In January, 1877, a contingent fund of $3,000 was set apart for the purchase of furniture, groceries, wagon and team, and to build a smoke house. This particular wagon and team figured in nearly every report until 1893, when it disappeared and was replaced the same year by another.

OPENING OF THE ASYLUM

Finally, on February 13, 1877, the steward was authorized to notify The Cherokee Advocate that the Asylum would be opened March 1, the following notice appearing in this weekly paper, February 28:

Opening of the Cherokee Asylum for the Insane, Deaf, Dumb and Blind.

The Asylum for the Insane, Deaf, Dumb and Blind will formally open its doors for the admission of these unfortunate, for whose benefit it was erected, on tomorrow, March first. The appointment of Dr. E. Poe Harris as physician to the institution gives general satisfaction, and since it has become known that the inmates are to be under his supervision medically many who are not so perfectly disabled as to be entitled pensioners, but who are suffering from serious and chronic affections, are desirous of being admitted for the purpose of submitting themselves to his treatment. The doctor's reputation as a physician is a sufficient guarantee that those placed under his charge will receive the best medical attention, and if relief is possible, they may expect it.

The Advocate seems to have been somewhat overly optimistic in regard to Dr. Harris, as he was replaced by Dr. W. T. Adair in December of this year. However, a petition was presented to the board of trustees asking for the restoration of Dr. Harris, but no action was taken.
Steward John A. Foreman made his report October 1, 1877, as follows:

To the Hon. Board of Trustees
for Deaf Dumb &c Asylum
Gentlemen.

I have the honor to herewith submit my first written report of doings at the Asylum. . . . There has been received as inmates of the Asylum since its opening on March 1st 1877 the following No to witt during Mar. 4 Apr. 3. May 2, June 1. July 2, Aug. 3. Sep 7 Total 22. Males 14. Females 8.

Their complaints as follows. Genl. Debility 1. Rheumatism 2. Blind 11. Cripples 4. Insane or Idiots 3. Consumption 1. Four of the blind have left the Asylum the 2 first viz J. Davis and Polly Brogan. have been reported and acted on. of the last Richd Fool left for treatment elsewhere by another Doctor. Nellie Peacheater went home on leave of absence, to Return in one week, but as she slipped her clothes out, she has not disappointed us, by putting in an appearance since.

I would hereby have to suggest, that a change be made in the manner of receiving inmates into the asylum, and that such lines be drawn, as will prevent the Asylum being made a hospital, or other than a home for our Homeless Unfortunates. For it is easy to see that many who have come here are well supplied with both friends and relatives. More than that it is of the greatest importance that a law should be made compelling those who wish to live here to enter into an agreement, to remain and be subject to the rules and By laws of the Asylum, and not allowed to leave unless by permission, or by recommendation of the Physician, discharged as being capable of making a support.

Levi Keys followed as steward on October 5th, following the resignation of Foreman on the previous day. Dr. W. T. Adair put in a claim for six months' salary on April 2, beginning December 4, and ending June 4, 1878. The expenses for the year of 1878 amounted to $5,415.23. The third year of the institution's existence was marred by an act of nature. A storm passed over the Asylum on November 8, 1879, while the inmates were at dinner in the basement, harming no one but so damaging the building that it was necessary to remove the occupants to the National Jail at Tahlequah, although the committee investigating the situation had recommended that they be taken to the Old Doctor Ross place near the Orphan Asylum.

IN THE NATIONAL JAIL

Dr. Adair, in his report of October, 1880, said in part: "In consequence of this asylum building having been undergoing repairs for some months past. . . . we have been compelled to ask accommodations at the National Jail Building in Tahlequah. . . ." It was found necessary to discontinue receiving patients and a notice to that effect stated: "Friends and relatives of the inmates on hand will be permitted and are invited to receive them at their homes for the time being while necessary repairs are being completed."

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6 Cherokee Archives, Frank Phillips Collection, University of Oklahoma.
7 Loc. cit.
Another change in the steward’s position was made November 24th, 1879, when B. W. (Blue) Alberty and his wife were made steward and stewardess. The Cherokee Advocate of the day commented: “The Insane Asylum under the present management will soon be self supporting. Mr. Alberty has the will and the ability to do a good work where he is, and then he is aided by one of the best consorts in the world. Such is the general expression and we can’t help but mention it. Praise to those who deserve it never amounts to flattery.” Apparently The Advocate had unbounded optimism, not unlike many and probably all administrators of government who continually chase that will o’ the wisp, the self-supporting State institution. In this case some justification may be felt, because in his report to the trustees, S. Foreman, secretary, reported that under the present board an annual saving of over twelve hundred dollars was shown. The committee report for 1880 showed that the amounts received by Alberty, the steward, totaled three thousand dollars and found that to some extent the labor of the patients and employees made the institution self-supporting.3

Compiled Laws of 1881

The laws of the Cherokee Nation were first compiled and published in 1821, in Georgia. Several volumes represent the compiled laws during the existence of the Cherokee government in the Indian Territory. It was necessary in making up these compilations to employ both a translator and a compiler since the laws were printed in both Cherokee and English. In addition, the annual session laws of the National Council were often published in pamphlet form. Chapter XI of the Compiled Laws of the Cherokee Nation, published in 1881, under the title “An Act in relation to the Asylum for the Blind, Insane and Others,” is divided into five articles which relate to the organization, duties of the trustees, duties of the steward, admission of persons and miscellaneous provisions.9

In this year, also, we find that among the items listed for which appropriations were requested were loans made by the steward to the Asylum, and also bank loans to offset the deficiency caused by the light appropriation of $1,500 for the year. Evidently the appropriations committee had taken the word of the board of trustees too seriously, in the matter of the Asylum’s being self supporting. As the steward’s salary was only sixty-two dollars and a half per quarter, it would seem that his good nature was being thoroughly tested.

William H. Hendricks was made steward on January 1, 1882, and retained the position until November 15, 1883. It was in February of the latter year that he needed some fence rails, but no one cared to split them as they had to wait until the National Council met to get their pay. He suggested to Principal Chief Bushy-

8 Cherokee Archives, Frank Phillips Collection, University of Oklahoma.
9 Treasure Room, University of Oklahoma.
head that he be permitted to sell three head of inferior grade steers for forty dollars in order to raise the money immediately. The Chief quite properly told him to consult the board of trustees. Thus early a tendency to "have George do it" is manifest. Quite a turnover in personnel was experienced this year. Among the articles needed for the first quarter were flour, pepper, coal oil, soda crackers, soap and "ridding combs." 

The number of patients, on the average, was twenty-two. The following is an excerpt from a report:

Some patients take pride in doing some work about the place. Others are entirely helpless and require constant attention, as is the case of a man now in the institution whose mental and physical condition is such as to render him entirely helpless, and to such an extent that he does not realize, or obey the calls of Nature, and consequently it has become necessary to employ a man to wait on him constantly. It is a peculiar case and repugnant in the extreme, so that it has been very difficult to employ any person to take care of him for any length of time. Such cases as this cause considerable expense, and should be provided for by an ample contingent fund.

It was believed that as the medical superintendent in the Nation furnished his own supplies his salary should be increased from $250 to $500 per year. There had been twelve deaths since the establishment of the asylum. One of these was "articulo mortis" when she entered, and lived but a few days. From the following comments, it is seen that the modern idea of a hospital for the insane was not the idea in the minds of the Cherokee people in early days:

The Asylum is not intended as an infirmary for those who are poor and unable to pay a physician. Many are admitted under the head of decrepitude (sic) purely with a desire to obtain medical treatment. On these cases the law should be very expedit (sic). A young person cannot be decrepit. Inmates should be regular in habits, have regular exercise, and should not be allowed to straggle over the country ad libitum. They should be so managed as to forbid a free and unrestrained intercourse between the sexes.

The first year of Robert Wofford's service as steward, he had, by practicing true and close economy, kept within the appropriation, a truly economic and business feat. The appropriation for the year was $3,332.94. During the year it had been found necessary to construct two substantial wooden cages and place them inside the northeast cell room, for the safe keeping of the more unruly and unmanageable inmates, at such times as it became necessary to restrain them from harm. Also of some importance, there had previously been no protection to the plastering, or walls or window panes. At the board meeting of January 4, 1884, the steward was "instructed and required not to permit any minister of the Mormon faith to preach at the asylum, but to solicit ministers of other denominations

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1 Frank Phillips Collection, University of Oklahoma.
to preach” as often as they could to the inmates of the asylum. The
secretary was authorized to have published in The Cherokee Advocate
the following preamble and resolutions:

The steward of the Blind Asylum has complained to the board of
trustees that the relatives and friends of the inmates and other citizens,
look upon the asylum as a public house, where they may come, eat, sleep
and lounge at pleasure, visit the different rooms occupied by the unfort-
unates without permission, and whereas, . . . Therefore, resolved that we
respectfully request the friends (and others) that their visits be made
any other day than the Sabbath, unless it be to attend religious worship,
. . . 11

In 1886, a list was made of those competent and not competent.
This competency referred to whether or not the patient was able to
be trusted with any funds which might be placed within his care
through any means. Of the twenty-one patients, five men and nine
women were found to be not competent. The expenses were kept
within the appropriation for this year also, but there was a note of
skepticism in the report of the board of trustees, for said a nota-
tion: “Repairs have been suggested so often by the Board and ig-
ored by the Nat’l Council it seems needless to refer to it again.
It will require not less than three hundred dollars and there will
be a loss to the nation and a wrong done the inmates if this is not
taken care of.”12

Crops for the year were almost an entire failure, but ten tons
of prairie hay had been secured. The same span of mules, presum-
ably, was still in service and must have seen about nineteen years’
work. It was suggested that in addition to the regular appropriation
for the next year that an additional $300 be allowed for the
purchase of instruments of restraint.

The Female Seminary building having been destroyed by fire
in the spring of 1887 and the institution temporarily discontinued,
Dr. Adair’s salary was cut and, of course, he was somewhat dis-
satisfied. The matter was referred to the Principal Chief, who this
time referred the debatable question to the National Council for
settlement. The first copy of the Tahlequah Telephone, dated June
10, 1887, commented favorably upon Dr. Adair’s rights in the matter,
and felt that his full salary should have been allowed. Under the
Cherokee law, the “Medical Superintendent” was paid $1,000 from
the school fund, $250 from the Asylum fund and $250 from the
general fund.13

The annual report for 1887, by Dr. Adair, as “Medical Super-
intendent of Cherokee High Schools [Seminaries], National Prison
and Asylum for the Indigent, Insane and others,” published in the

11 Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society.
12 Frank Phillips Collection, University of Oklahoma.
13 Laws of the Cherokee Nation (Tahlequah: National Advocate Print, 1861),
p. 326.
columns of The Cherokee Advocate, made the following statement concerning the Asylum.\footnote{\textit{The Cherokee Advocate}, October 12, 1887, p. 2, col. 7 and 8.}

The Asylum for the Indigent, Insane and Others.

No one who has seen this Institution, but will agree that it is by far the most beautiful of our public institutions. It is located about six miles south of Tahlequah—on the extreme west terminus of the range of mountains known as the "Park Hill" range of mountains. At present it is under the care of Mr. Robert Wofford, as Steward—Mr. Wofford has acted in the capacity of Steward for four years—and his time expires during the sitting of the next regular session of the National Council. Mr. Wofford has done a good work for the Nation in his management of this institution. There has been some repairing to this Asylum during this past year. There is, however, further repair needed there. The three rooms of its Basement and two of its Hall ways should be refloored. This done the institution could be said to be in excellent condition both as to comfort and sanitary condition. The building is always kept clean and nice, having like the other public institutions regular intervals for washing and scouring. The enclosure is always clean and free from trash and debris—is set with beautiful shade trees, regularly trimmed and kept. The yard is large and laid out in walks, with choice flowers bordering and fringing the side walk. The fencing around the enclosure is new and substantial.

There are now belonging to the Institution as inmates 20—of these there are two absent—one on leave and the other without leave. Present at the Institution 18—eight males and ten females.

We would suggest that the Steward be allowed an extra hand about the place as a sick nurse. There are three or four of these inmates who require constant care of a good, strong, able bodied nurse—one that is able to manage these persons.

The report of Dr. Adair to the Board of Trustees for the same year, made mention of the inmate absent without leave, Josephine Rider, from Canadian District: "We learned that she is improved to such an extent—that she will not return again, as an inmate—Let her go—and joy be with her. The buildings are in good condition with the exception, perhaps, of the floors in the basement. The dirt underneath, coming in contact with the planks causes them to rot and decay—thus vitiating, the air circulating in the basement." He then added a postscript about the inmate "absent on leave": "... a fact, a pleasant fact, that little George, has been able to cancel his expense to the institution by finding a home, and a person able, and willing to be burdened with his support—We say George, Go in peace, and joy go with you—your honorable Board has blessed this union, of George and his Bride, severed his connection, with our Institution—and placed him upon a level, with his neighbors—and we trust he will ever be mindful of his obligations to his country, in a substantial way..."\footnote{A neighbor's daughter had fallen in love with Little George. The neighbor kindly approved of the match and the two were married, a very satisfactory way out for George, it would seem.—Minutes of Board of Trustees, Blind and Insane Asylum, No. 686, p. 167, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society.} The steward, concerning the floors mentioned by Dr. Adair, remarked: "... Thus causing the floors to rot, and to give out a musty, unhealthy odor filling the air, that is circulating through the basement with a poisonous effluvia."
A total of 24 patients was treated in 1888. L. R. Gourd was secretary of the board of trustees, and was re-elected for the following year. He evidently had qualifications other than penmanship as his writing is barely decipherable. Robert Wofford was steward, while Dr. Jo M. Thompson was the medical superintendent. Robert L. Owen was Indian Agent at this time, with jurisdiction over the Five Civilized Tribes.

In 1890 there were three deaths among the inmates. An extra hand was recommended at a salary of fifteen dollars per month, "as a good and efficient female nurse cannot be obtained for constant work for a less amount." The crops were only moderately good on account of the drouth; there were forty six hogs and twenty six head of cattle; the mules were old and completely broken down, and had been condemned by the board. The expenses for the year were $72.53 per patient, or 21 cents per day.

On November 16, 1891, Silas D. Clark was elected steward replacing Wofford, who had served eight years. Colonel Johnson (C. J.) Harris was now Principal Chief. The first typewritten letter in the files appeared in 1892, when an insurance company informed the Principal Chief that the policy on the Asylum was cancelled because the company was not allowed to write policies on insane and poor asylums. The Orphan Asylum and the Seminaries were not subject to the above restrictions. This year saw a population of 34 at the asylum, the highest of any number recorded. Governor Steele, of Oklahoma Territory, reported six idiotic and six insane in Oklahoma Territory.

The Asylum, while free from politics in the main, nevertheless had some value in this regard. The stewards were usually selected with considerable care and served faithfully. Silas D. Clark resigned on September 30, 1893, on account of illness of his wife, and John R. Meigs was placed in his stead for a period of about ten months. The place had become rather badly run down and the new steward's report was not very reassuring. He found it advisable to make a special report at the outset, as well as an inventory of property found at the time he took over. As his report seems to sum up the situation very well it is given, together with the inventory:

Special Report, John R. Meigs, to C. J. Harris, Principal Chief, Cherokee Nation:
1. No crops made or attempted. A man has been arranged with for the entire cultivation next year, upon reasonable terms, by which the Nation will not be out any expense.
2. The condition of the inmates is about as favorable as could be expected, excepting that they could be made more comfortable with better

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17 Territorial Auditor, J. T. Lawhead, to Gov. George W. Steele, Frank Phillips Collection, University of Oklahoma.
provision of necessary suitable bedding. Suggest and recommend early attention to bedding and wearing apparel.

3. Some early action should be taken to relieve the institution of the care and custody of unauthorized inmates. "P. S." a white U. S. citizen, with no claims to Cherokee citizenship whatever—and "Jonas" the colored adopted Cherokee Freedman who is at the Asylum without "due course of law."

4. Resupplying the Asylum with another wagon and team for hauling firewood and water. A new stable is needed as the old ones are about rotted down.

5. Repairs on the Asylum buildings are needed, such as furnace grates for both male and female wards. Replacement of broken window panes, cistern pumps and pipes and c. in bath rooms, water shed on the roof, and many of the doors.

6. Recommend special committee of the Council at the earliest date to inspect and suggest needed repairs.

7. Recommend that indebtedness authorized by the Board of Trustees be covered by necessary appropriation.

The following is schedule of property and effects found and inventoried, as belonging to that institution on August 19, 1893: "No work mules on the premises or to be found; no farm wagon on the premises or to be found; no wagon harness on the premises or to be found; there were no provisions of any kind found at the institution; there was no money turned over as belonging to the Institution."

The Principal Chief had informed the party making this inventory that the appropriation had been exhausted, and that no warrant could be issued to defray the necessary expenses of the said asylum. Expenses to September 30, 1893, were itemized and amounted to $391.31, including supplies furnished by the steward and the merchants of Tahlequah. In January of 1894, the Senate Office Committee recommended that the deficit be taken care of and a bill appropriating $429.50 was approved by Principal Chief Harris. An appropriation in the previous December provided for new mules, wagon and harness. The year 1894 also had its deficit of $121.30.

Oklahoma had in the meantime attained Territorial status, and in 1891 had contracted for her insane to be cared for at the Oak Lawn Retreat in Illinois. By 1895, the burden of transportation had become so great that the contract was given to a company within the state and the patients were returned. The non-citizens of the Indian Territory, those who had been permitted to live in that country, and by no means trespassers, had trouble with taking care of their unfortunate. This state of affairs had been noted by different agents in their reports to Washington. Dew. M. Wisdom, in his report to the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, on September, 1897, recommended: "That an asylum for the care of the insane white people, or, in other words, citizens of the United States, be founded in this territory and supported by congressional legislation or ap-

18 Frank Phillips Collection, University of Oklahoma.
The number of insane in the Territory exclusive of Indians, who ought to be confined, will approximate 200, upon the assumption that there are about 400,000 non citizen residents in the Territory."

An abortive attempt to meet this need was made in a contract with St. Vincent's Hospital in St. Louis, which ran from about 1905 to 1909. The insane of other Indian tribes than the Cherokees had been provided for in 1899 by the building of an asylum at Canton, South Dakota, which served until June 30, 1933.

J. M. Sanders was in charge of the Cherokee Asylum, beginning with August 16, 1894, Sam Manus taking over October 1, 1896. It seems likely that A. N. Lowery might have served for a short time in between, but of this we are not quite clear. The secretary of the board of trustees was W. E. Johnson.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES ABOLISHED

Under act of the Cherokee National Council December 7, 1898, and approved by the President of the United States, the Board of Directors was abolished and with it the law providing for the appointment of a steward for the asylum, and leaving the management and control of the institution in the hands of the then steward and the medical superintendent.

The United States was gradually assuming more power in the directing of Indian affairs, and in his report of October, Mr. Manus, in some doubt, but feeling his responsibility nevertheless, addressed the Principal Chief, S. H. Mayes. "Therefore," said Mr. Manus, "feeling it my duty to report to some authority, I very respectfully make this my report to you and through you to the Natil. Council."

Abstracted, the report read, somewhat lugubriously: The building needs some repairing—the roof leaks, the gallery was blown down by the storm some months ago. Some ten foot high steps leading to the second floor and the main hall are not safe for ascent or descent. The yard fence is about rotted down. Need some more bedding. Stoves are old but will last . . . . 10 inmates, 5 each male and female. 2 died, 1 male pneumonia, 1 female, female trouble. Expenses by the steward $1442.67. There was a deficiency of 67 cents. There were 6 head of cattle, 1 wagon, team and harness, 2 turning plows and 1 double shovel plow.

THE DAWES COMMISSION

In the year 1899, Tams Bixby, as acting chairman of the Commission to the Five Civilized Tribes, made a report dealing with a very important movement, affecting all members of these tribes, viz.,

19 33 Stat. at Large, p. 539.
20 Fifty Fifth Congress to Seventy Second Congress, inclusive.
21 Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society.
the formation of a part of the Indian Territory and the assignment of many of their former responsibilities, as well as of their privileges, to the United States. Agreements were to be made with each separate tribe, covering questions interesting to it only, and each tribal government held an election for ratification. The Cherokees were somewhat slow to take the suggestion, but finally an agreement was "produced" January 14, 1899. Cherokee allotments were agreed upon, each enrollee was given 120 acres of land, and all the titles were guaranteed by the Federal government. The agreement of this year was modified somewhat the next year, when with Bixby still as acting chairman, a discussion of and revision of the agreement of the year before was taken up and the following provisions made:

57. The following land shall be reserved from the general allotment herein provided:

   * * * *
   (v) Forty acres for the Cherokee Insane Asylum . . .
   * * * *

59. (Public Buildings): The buildings of the Cherokee Insane Asylum, together with 40 acres of land upon which they are now located, to be selected by the Commission, shall be conveyed to the United States gratuitously to be used by it for the maintenance of an asylum for the insane of all classes within the Indian Territory and the United States shall make appropriations of money necessary to provide suitable accommodations within said institution for the insane of said Territory, and to maintain the same in a manner commensurate with such purpose, and all insane Cherokee citizens shall be cared for in such institution free of charge.
   * * * *

62. Whenever a state government is established, including the Cherokee country, the Cherokee Asylum and the School for the Blind, Deaf and Dumb Children, with all property pertaining thereto, may be transferred by the United States to such state government.

The steward serving at least for a short time was T. F. Wagoner (or perhaps Wagnon), in 1900, and J. George Wright was Indian Inspector. The Principal Chief, T. M. Buffington, had some difficulty in getting insurance on the Asylum in the amount of $5,450, but by distributing it among five companies he was able to obtain policies to run for a period of two years. At the same time the Orphan Asylum was able to get $7,333 in one company and $10,000 in another. Evidently the Asylum had reached a new low in desirability as an insurance risk. Ironically, perhaps, the year 1903 saw the burning of the Orphan Asylum and found the National Jail being prepared the second time for the reception of the inmates of the Asylum, this time to make room for the orphans. For pure

23. Frank Phillips Collection, University of Oklahoma.
dogged adherence to a principle the insurance companies were not to be outdone, for immediately after the orphans had moved into the buildings vacated by the insane, a policy of $4,000 for a period of three years at the rate of $150, was possible, according to a clause in the policy, which stated that "The Insane Asylum is being used as an orphans' home at the time of the contract."

In 1902, the resignation of Henry Houseberg was chronicled. He had made a good superintendent, according to The Advocate, and the inmates were well cared for. Matt Sanders was elected to take his place and it was predicted by the same paper that he would fill the position with credit to himself. Such is the attitude of all good newspapers. The last of the stewards took over his duties on the third Monday in November, 1903. According to the Cherokee Agreement with the United States, the Interior Department was now in charge of the Asylum and the local representative was John George Wright. Funds were still appropriated by the Cherokee National Council with the approval of the President. The steward, E. W. Alberty, used in 1904, an appropriation for the repair of the Asylum which was now domiciled in the Old National Jail. Bids for furnishing material and making necessary repairs found S. M. Latimer low bidder, for $1,809.30. The repairs were to be completed by April 30.

It was during this year, 1903, that the Cherokee Orphans' Home, at Salina, burned. The fire occurred November 17, and on November 19, most of the orphans were moved to the Whittaker's Orphan Home, where they remained for six months, and from which place they were removed to the Insane Asylum Buildings, the inmates of this latter having as indicated been moved to the National Jail. This move must have occurred about April of 1904, as we find: "We, the undersigned, received from E. R. Alberty the sum of $2.00 each for hauling our load of goods from the Insane Asylum to the National Jail, the new asylum." Then followed the names of twelve signers.

The Cherokee Advocate, January 9, 1904, quoted Mr. Alberty as saying: "There are at present 18 persons confined in the asylum. Their clothing is good, sufficient to keep them warm, as is also the bedding, but the building is sadly in need of repair, especially the windows, as they are nearly paneless." Jack Spaniard, the oldest inmate, was one hundred and eight years old, while the youngest was only eight.

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24 The Cherokee Advocate, April 19, 1902, p. 2, col. 4.
25 Grant Foreman, "J. George Wright," The Chronicles of Oklahoma, XX (June, 1942), pp. 120-23.
26 Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society.
27 Ibid.
DESCRIPTION OF INSANE ASYLUM AND NATIONAL JAIL

In the Grant Foreman Transcripts (Vol. I), one finds this description of the situation, as outlined by Joe B. Coppock, November 9, 1904, who had been assigned to the task of making a survey of the boarding institutions in the Indian Territory:

The Insane Asylum Reservation, five miles south of Tahlequah, now used as an orphanage, 40 acres at $25 per acre. The building is brick, three stories, 40x148 feet. On the first floor is the kitchen, dining room, assembly room, sitting room for boys, one for girls, and a store room. Second floor: eight large, four small rooms. Third floor: eight large, five small rooms, thirty one rooms in all, accommodating offices, employees and eighty orphan children.

The Insane Asylum is now in the National Jail at Tahlequah. This is a two story and basement stone building, of four rooms to the story, or a twelve room building suitable for jail purposes. The value of the former Insane Asylum property is estimated to be worth $22,500, while the jail in which they are now located is estimated at $8,500 with two lots. There is remaining in the Insane Fund Account $8,500.

In his report of November 1, 1905, Alberthy said, “Health of the inmates is good—not one being sick. Have done the best we could without help of some things we needed. Expenses kept within the appropriation, 16 inmates. . .” The salary list of October included the medical superintendent, Dr. R. L. Fite, $19.44; steward, $50; matron, $18.75; laborer, $30; cook, $15; washwoman, $15. This is the first typewritten report found, and henceforth a duplicate copy was made of all accounts, quite an improvement over the old handwritten sheets. The above is a fairly typical salary sheet for the latter years of the asylum. An average month was $148.19; the year $1,778. Other expenses for 1905, maintenance, wood and stove costs amounted to $1,607.67, or a total of $3,385.67.

The salaries for 1906 ran about the same, but there was an increase in the over all expense, which ran the amount up to $4,064.40. Considerable repair work accounted for much of this increase.

LAST YEAR OF THE ASYLUM

The expenses for the last year of the Asylum were $3,679.21. E. W. Alberthy was still in charge and Dr. Fite was medical superintendent. William C. Rogers was Principal Chief. His duties had been reduced to more or less perfunctory action. Statehood for Ok-

38 *Ibid.* (In 1914, William C. Rogers, last elected principal chief of the Cherokee Nation, was authorized to sell and convey the forty acre reserve and all buildings of the former Cherokee Insane Asylum to the United States for $5,000. The institution was placed under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of the Interior to be conducted as an industrial school for restricted, orphan Indian children of Oklahoma, an appropriation of $25,000 being made by Congress for the year, for continuation and maintenance of the institution. An act of Congress in 1925 changed the name of the school to “Sequoyah Orphan Training School,” in honor of the celebrated Sequoyah, inventor of the Cherokee alphabet. This institution has had many improvements and is one of the well known Indian schools in Oklahoma to-day.—M.H.W. ed.)
The Home for the Insane, Deaf, Dumb and Blind

Oklahoma and Indian territories was in the offing. Chief Rogers did not even call a meeting of the National Council because he felt the expense unnecessary. Frank Frantz was Governor of Oklahoma Territory. The two territories were admitted as one state on November 16, 1907. On May 22, 1908, ten patients from Cherokee county arrived at Norman. This represented the last of the people which the Cherokee Nation had so valiantly assisted through trial and misfortune due to mental ailments. Not all of the inmates of the Asylum had been insane by any means, but in later years, at least, it seems that the proportion had risen. It is difficult to state the exact proportion, but the ten patients coming to the sanitarium at Norman, must have been more than half the total inmates as the census of recent years at the Cherokee Asylum ran about eighteen.

Throughout the life of the institution the stewards had played the major part in the management of the unfortunates. Their wives, also, had on small salaries, and we can imagine by considerable skimping, helped in the process of getting this large family through on the minimum expenditures. When appropriations ran out the steward had to dig down into his own pocket or ask the banks, merchants and laborers for funds and supplies to tide over to another meeting of the Council. Through it all one rarely finds where any of these servants of the people made any complaint not fully justified by the circumstances.

The medical superintendents also must have had no small degree of worry, trial and tribulation. Having to furnish their own supplies and with the meagre salary allowed them they must have been hard put many times to take care of this very troublesome type of patient. The nursing situation was probably their most difficult problem, with many untidy patients and no way of combating infections. In fact, at that time, people still wrote of "healthy pus."

It is interesting to note that all the inmates were considered as custodial cases and cures were not expected, although benefits might be gained. The Asylum was just that—a place of refuge.
LETTER OF W. A. DUNCAN TO EDITOR CHEROKEE ADVOCATE
Mr. Editor.

The Orphan Asylum is a new thing in our country. There has been but little said about it. And some of the people seem not to understand how it is. I will try to explain it. But I will say two or three other things first.

1. Our people should be true to one another. They should have confidence in one another. They should all know whatever is done by the National Council. They should, also, feel free to speak, and to interchange their views about the affairs of the country.

2. Every Cherokee loves his country. He loves its soil, its sunshine, its streams. He loves his people also, and would be glad to see them happy and prosperous. And every one is willing to labor for the good of his country. But the main thing is to find out what is best. It is by examining things and talking about them, then the Nation may find out what is best.

3. It is the whole people then make the National Council. They pick out, in each of the nine districts, five of the wisest and best men they can find there. They send those men to Tahlequah every fall. And those men do not go there on their own business. They are the guardians of the whole country. And they are to inquire and find out what is best for the whole country. And when they find out what is best, they then say it shall be that way. This is called making law. And a law in this way, is just the same as if it had been made by the people. Because the Councilors act for the people, and their act is the act of the whole people. And in Council they also speak for the whole people; and their voice then, is the voice of the people. It is thus that the people make their own laws.

The Council, at its last session, passed a bill to establish the Cherokee Orphan Asylum. They thought this would be best. They had for a long time noticed the old orphan system. And it appeared to have some faults. Under the system the orphans did not receive as great benefit as was desirable. This had been the opinion of wise men for a long time. Mr. H. D. Reese had been Superintendent of the schools for a number of years. He had noticed the schools with a great deal of care. And in a report which he made to the National Council, he said, there ought to be an Asylum started for the Orphans. And this was the opinion of the Councilors last fall.

So the Cherokee Nation has now an Asylum for the orphans. But this Asylum don't belong to me, nor to you. It don't belong to this church nor the other church. It belongs to the whole Cherokee people. All have an equal interest in it. Every one should do his part to build it up, so as to make it to the greatest amount of good. It ought not to be treated like a lone tree in a prairie. One traveller will go by that tree and break a switch. Another one will go along and break a branch. A wagoner will drive along, and chop into the side of it. At last another comes along and builds a big campfire at its roots. And in a short time the tree is dead. But the Asylum should be treated like a flower garden. Every one should do his part to make it grow, flourish and bloom, so as to lend a charm to the entire Nation. It should be warmed with the heart's truest feelings, and made light by gentle smiles and generous words.
The Home for the Insane, Deaf, Dumb and Blind

The Asylum is intended to be a home for the orphan. And it is the intention to make it a good home. It must be a far better home for them than they can find anywhere else. They eat three times a day. Every person eats as much as he wants. And the table is about as good as we generally see in the country. And all persons about the place eat at the same table, and eat of the same victuals with the pupils. There is no exception in this case. It is intended to clothe the pupils comfortably, but not with extravagance. But I will tell more about the inside arrangements of the Asylum in another paper. I will close this paper by making a few general remarks.

Our little Nation is not wholly out of sight. Some stars are so little and so far away that some men cannot see them. But there is one eye that sees them. It is the eye of God. God put those little sparks up there to do their part in lighting up the universe. So God sees our little nation. He intended that our influence, small as it may be, should be felt among the great nations in shaping up the affairs of the world for a better state of things. So good men, too, are looking at us. A bad heart makes the eye so dark that a person can see no good in anything. But a good heart so gives light to the eye, that a man will see the smallest good, though it be a long way off. And good people are looking upon us from every way. They see the good we are trying to do, and are glad to give us encouragement. Fond eyes are turned toward us from the shores of the two great seas they are looking at us. They want to see what we are going to do by way of improvement. And they are glad when they see that we are doing what we can to educate our people and to make them good, and wise and great. But many of the people at a distance know but little about the Indians. They think the Indians are yet as they were two hundred and fifty years ago. And whenever they hear the Indians mentioned, they at once think of great scary savages, like the pictures they have put into their books—like the pictures they drew around the picture of John Smith, with great war-clubs and tomahawks in their hands. And they think all the Indians are of their sort. This is the way they get wrong views of the Indians. People are always more ready to tell of evil, than they are to tell of good. And the newspapers ready to tell of evil, than they are to tell of good. And the newspapers Indians. But they are slow to tell of the good that is here. Now this is not fair. In this way the best person in the world might be made a very bad one, to those not acquainted with him. And not only so. But some of the papers do really tell stories on the Indians. And they do this on purpose to hurt the Indians. They want all the people that read their papers to believe that the Indians are all ignorant, lazy and vicious. And then they argue that because the Indians are this way, they ought to have their houses and lands taken away from them. This is bad reasoning. And it is reasoning for a worse purpose. How would they like to have the same reasoning applied to themselves. Their lawyers say, "It is poor rule that worketh not both ways." I presume they would not like it at all. What if the world should adopt the rule that every lazy, ignorant, and wicked man should be compelled to leave his house and lands for some one else? Don't you think in such case, many a white man in every state would have to "get up and dust?"

W. A. Duncan.

*Cherokee Papers* 1815-1874, pp. 229-234, Indian Archives, Oklahoma Historical Society.