

NECROLOGY

EDWARD FERRIS McKAY

1876-1943

Edward Ferris McKay was born in Plains, Pennsylvania, August 5, 1876, and died in Washington, D. C., July 4, 1943. His interment was in Memorial Park Cemetery at Oklahoma City on July 7, 1943. Survivors are his widow, Florence Danson McKay, and his son, Dr. Edward D. McKay, Captain in the United States Army Medical Corps, Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

Edward F. McKay's ancestry is traced to Alexander McKay, who emigrated from Scotland in 1736 and fought in the American Revolution. On the maternal side, he was a descendant of Samuel Ransom, a captain in Washington's army, who lost his life at the Wyoming Massacre, July 3, 1778.

His father was Augustus Frank McKay, who, as a young boy served as a page in the House of Representatives during the Lincoln Administration, and later became a successful physician, practicing his profession in Pennsylvania and the mid-western section of the United States. After a brief stay in the Dakota Territory in 1883, the father changed his residence to Superior, Wisconsin, where young Edward McKay became an original member of the Boy's Useful Club, predecessor of the Boy Scouts of America.

During his nineteenth year, Ed McKay was a student at The Junior Preparatory School at Park College, Parkville, Missouri. He then joined his family which had moved to Chicago, attended Englewood High School and was graduated in 1897 with an excellent scholarship and athletic record.

After this graduation, he became a reporter for the *Colorado Springs Gazette*, and later was made Managing Editor of the *Colorado Springs Telegram*. As time would permit, he took special courses at Colorado College and studied law under the direction of Judge John W. Sleeper, a prominent attorney in the City.

In 1903, he married Florence Danson of Chicago, Illinois, whom he had known as a classmate at the Chicago Englewood High School. Three years later, at the instance of C. E. Sharp of Woodward, Oklahoma, now a resident of Oklahoma City, Mr. and Mrs. McKay moved from Colorado Springs to Woodward. There Mr. McKay owned and operated the *Woodward Dispatch*.

During the year 1907, he was publicity manager for the Honorable J. E. Love, the first Chairman of the State Corporation Commission. Thereafter, he sold the Woodward newspaper, moved to Guthrie and took a position with the State Corporation Commission. In the meantime, he continued his law studies, and in 1910 was admitted to practice by the Supreme Court of Oklahoma.

He remained in the employ of the Commission from 1907 to 1918. The next two years he spent in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, serving as an efficiency expert for Cities Service. From 1920 to 1923 he was again in the employ of the State Corporation Commission, and on June 1 of the latter year became Secretary of the Oklahoma Utilities Association, remaining there until 1935. Subsequently, he was connected with the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce. In 1938 he came to Washington, D. C., as Secretary and Legal Assistant to Paul A. Walker, member of the Federal Communications Commission, in which capacity he served until his death in 1943.

Mr. McKay had a variety of interests, but his great love was writing. He distinguished himself as an analyst with keen critical faculties and ability to express his ideas clearly and effectively.

He was especially interested in the history of Oklahoma, and in his personal files are numerous papers which he prepared, relating to the development of the Sooner State. In this same collection, there are poems and short stories which he wrote, done with no thought of publication, but for the sheer joy he derived from writing. Typical of his poetical style is the following which he wrote to his wife on the date of his twenty-fifth wedding anniversary:

MY CHOICE

A quarter century has passed,
 Yet what a little while
 Has seemed the time that I have lived
 Beneath your gracious smile.

If I could choose the music
 In which I'd e'er rejoice,
 'Twould be the same I've loved so long—
 The music of your voice.

If I could choose the flower for
 My future, all the way
 'Twould be the lovely daisy that
 Bedecked our wedding day.

If I could choose the sunbeam that
 I'd have from heaven above,
 I'd live for alway in the light
 Of the sunshine of your love.

If I could choose again, today,
 And live my life anew,
 I'd care to do it only if
 I might, again, choose YOU.

Edward F. McKay possessed sterling qualities of character which commanded the respect of people and made him friends wherever he went. One hundred twenty-five years ago his grandfather, E. A. McKay, adopted seven rules as a guide to his life. Upon attaining his majority, the grandson subscribed to these same rules and consistently practiced them. As stated in the records of the McKay Family they are:

1. I shall endeavor at all times to be employed, though I may not receive as much for my services as I might wish.
2. I shall avoid all extravagance in dress, endeavoring at the same time to wear such apparel as shall be decent and becoming.
3. I shall hold myself aloof at all times from the society of the vile of both sexes.
4. I shall abstain wholly from the use of intoxicating liquors of whatsoever name or nature until such time as the same shall be deemed absolutely necessary for the preservation of health.
5. I shall avoid speaking evil of others when not in their presence.
6. I shall never permit myself to speak lightly of the Holy Bible or of the Christian religion.

His favorite hobby was collecting autographs of noted people, and one of his prized possessions was an album inherited from his father, bearing the signatures of about five-hundred prominent persons from Lincoln to Roosevelt.

From his earliest days, Mr. McKay took an active part in civic affairs. Wherever he lived he became a useful citizen and made valuable contributions to the community. In Oklahoma where he resided for many years, he was a leader in the Chamber of Commerce, was a member of the Men's Dinner Club, and for a time was a member of both the Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America and the Red Cross Board. He was an elder in the First Presbyterian Church of Oklahoma City for more than twenty-five years, and for approximately the same period was sponsor of the Junior Church.

He became a charter member of Amity Lodge, No. 473, A. F. & A. M., of Oklahoma City, in 1917, by transfer from Woodward Lodge, No. 189, where he had taken his first Masonic degrees. In October, 1932, he took the degrees in the McAlester Albert Pike Lodge of Perfection.

He was an active and long time member of the Oklahoma Society Sons of the American Revolution, serving as its State President in 1921. For many years he presented the S. A. R. Citizenship Medal to the Oklahoma schools which his son attended. In 1942 he also presented to the Oklahoma City Edgemere School a copy of THE AMERICAN'S CREED, personally inscribed and signed by its author, the late Honorable William Tyler Page.

Always keenly interested in the law, he maintained active membership in the Oklahoma Bar Association until his death in 1943.

After coming to Washington in 1938, he devoted much time to the work of the Oklahoma State Society. Following his death, this organization paid a glowing tribute to Mr. McKay, which reads in part as follows:

"In the passing of Edward Ferris McKay, America has lost a great patriot, his family is deprived of association with an ideal husband and father; his business associates are without the wise and loyal counsel of a keen intellect of the utmost integrity and his friends are the poorer for missing the cheerful Christian comradeship of a man who was in every inch a model that the world might pattern by.

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"Here was a man who measured up to the best of anybody's standards, who loved to do for others, who never was too busy, nor too tired, to work for his state, for his friends, for the underprivileged or for a Christian cause.

"The Oklahoma State Society of Washington, D. C., mourns his passing. He will be long remembered as a great citizen, a zealous patriot, a loving neighbor, a faithful friend and a true Christian."

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—Paul A. Walker

Washington, D. C.

DAVID BURDETTE BLUE

1886-1943

David Burdette Blue was born at Pleasanton, Kansas, on January 3, 1886, the son of John Frederick and Mattie Price Blue. He died at Tulsa, Oklahoma, on May 17, 1943, at the age of fifty-seven years. So began and so ended the full life of a great humanitarian who held the respect of all who were privileged to know him.

Mr. Blue received his elementary and high school education in the Pleasanton and Coffeyville Public Schools and was graduated from the University of Kansas in 1905 with a baccalaureate degree in law at the age of nineteen. He came to Oklahoma two years later and began the practice of law at Bartlesville, subsequently becoming the first City Attorney of that city, an office which he held for a number of years.

On October 12, 1911 he married Violet Catherine Kroenert of Arkansas City, Arkansas. To them were born two sons: David Burdette Blue, Jr., and John Frederick Blue. In the summer of 1932, John met with a fatal accident. David, now a Captain serving with the United States Army at Ft. Lewis, Washington, is the father of a son, David Burdette Blue III. Besides Mrs. Blue, of Tulsa, and David, other members of Mr. Blue's immediate family are a half-sister Mrs. Grace B. Brydon of Bloomington, Maryland, and a half brother Fred O. Blue of Charleston, West Virginia.

In 1917, Mr. Blue associated himself with the late H. V. Foster and gave up the general practice of law to become General Counsel for the Indian Territory Illuminating Oil Company, one of the leading oil exploration and producing companies of the Mid-Continent Area. To the Indian Territory Illuminating Oil Company he devoted the remainder of his life with a passionate interest that ultimately made it a unique Company with unshakable bonds between employers and employees. His keen personal interest in each and every employee went hand in hand with his devotion to the development of the company itself.

In 1926, Mr. Blue became Vice-President and General Manager of the Company. Shortly after this time the Indian Territory Illuminating Oil Company became active in the Seminole Area and was responsible for the drilling of several discovery wells there. In 1928, this Company drilled the deep discovery well in the Oklahoma City Field. In 1935, Burdette Blue became President and General Manager of the Indian Territory Illuminating Oil Company in which capacity he served until that Company was merged with the Cities Service Oil Company on August 1, 1941. From that date until his death, he continued to serve the Cities Service Company in a legal advisory capacity, but removed his residence to Tulsa and established law offices in the National Bank of Tulsa Building, with the firm of Ramsey, Martin and Logan.

Burdette Blue's contributions to the advancement of Oklahoma were numerous. He was the thirteenth President of the Kansas-Oklahoma Division, Mid-Continent Oil and Gas Association. Serving his second term in that office, in the several months prior to his death, he had devoted almost his entire efforts to the promotion of sound secondary recovery practices, rules, regulations and laws. These matters he felt to be of pressing importance not only to the oil operators and the State, but to the Nation as a whole, particularly because of the war emergency.

Mr. Blue's leadership in the affairs of the petroleum industry followed many avenues. He was one of the organizers of the Osage Oil and Gas Lessees Association and maintained an active interest and leadership in that Association's affairs throughout the years. He was long an active member of the Independent Petroleum Association of America and served as Chairman of that Association's Public Relations Committee for a number of years. He also was a member of the American Petroleum Institute and maintained an active interest in its affairs.

Mr. Blue was a member of the American Bar Association, the Oklahoma Bar Association, the Tulsa County Bar Association, Phi Kappa Psi Fraternity, and a 32nd degree Mason. He was a Life Member of the Oklahoma Historical Society.

The friends who mourn the passing of Burdette Blue are countless. His sympathy, understanding, and warm humor made him an outstanding personality whose place cannot be filled by any other man. He was a friend of Labor, a practical business man with a great heart, a student who could quote the Poets or discuss political trends with equal accuracy. The memory of this man will live in the minds and hearts of his friends.

—MARTHA TOBIN HOKE

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

MAJOR EUGENE MORTIMER KERR

1869-1943

Major Eugene Mortimer Kerr, son of Col. Eugene Mortimer Kerr and his wife, and the grandson of Col. Thomas Kerr and his wife, of English ancestry, was born at Granville, Ohio, on November 11, 1869 and died at Muskogee, Oklahoma on July 16, 1943; interment in Green Hill Cemetery in Muskogee, Oklahoma.

Major Eugene Mortimer Kerr was married on November 21, 1894 to Edith L. Dill, daughter of Wallace C. and Adelia Anne Dill. To this union were born two children, to-wit: Eugene M. Kerr, Jr., and Catherine Kerr Gillespie who died in 1935, leaving a son, Bernard Gillespie, Jr., now a Lieutenant in the United States Army Air Corps stationed in North Africa. The widow, Edith L. Dill Kerr and the son, Eugene M. Kerr, Jr., now occupy the family home at 1625 Elmira Street, in Muskogee.

Major Kerr and his family removed from Columbus, Ohio to Muskogee, then Indian Territory, on November 8, 1904, where he became associated with the late Col. Wm. E. Decker in the publication of the Muskogee Democrat. Col. Decker later disposed of all his interest in said paper to Major Kerr and removed to Fort Smith where he published a newspaper for a number of years until he retired and moved to Los Angeles, California where he soon thereafter died.

Major Kerr served as a Member of the State Legislature in both the house and senate and also for years was a member of the Board of Regents of the Oklahoma State University, of which for a time he was President, and also he was a member of the State Welfare Commission and of the State Budget Committee and performed many tasks of public service. He rendered great service to the state in a budget capacity. During World War No. 1 he was appointed by the Governor as a Major in the National Guard and in connection with the Adjutant General was an executive officer in the administration of the selective draft. In the latter part of the war he was notified that a commission would be issued to him as a Major in the United States Army in such a capacity as would take him to Europe, but the Armistice and the close of the war prevented the consummation of that service.

John Kerr, an ancestor, with three associates, located the State Capitol of Ohio at what is now Columbus. In 1812 they donated to the State two ten-acre tracts of land each for public buildings and agreed to build thereon structures that would cost not less than \$50,000.00. The offer was accepted by the Legislature and carried out and Columbus became the Capital of the State on December 1, 1817.

His father, the first Eugene Mortimer Kerr, was a Colonel in the Federal Army during the Civil War and in command at Camp Chase, a military prison near Columbus and years after the war, Major Kerr promoted an annual custom of decorating the graves of Confederate Soldiers who were buried there. The father of Major Kerr died while he was only four years of age and the widowed mother removed to Chicago but the change so affected the child's health that he was sent back to his grandmother with whom he made his home until his health improved. Young Kerr apprenticed himself to a brick mason whom he served faithfully for five years and was considered to be an unusually skilled mechanic in the art, but he never followed it as a business.

He entered Central College and sold books and chopped wood to secure means for his support while in the college and with a neighbor boy, Fred Dill, who later became his brother-in-law, went west and during the late 80's and early 90's the two boys were in Denver, Dill securing employment as bell-boy and later becoming assistant clerk at the Brown Palace Hotel and Kerr became a reporter on the *Rocky Mountain News*, and at the opening of the Cherokee Outlet was assigned there as a reporter and later joined in the run and staked a claim about eight miles from Enid and lived in a sod house but after such pioneering he returned

to Ohio and became a reporter on the *Columbus Press* and in 1899 a member of the staff of the *Columbus Citizen* and also correspondent for the *Cincinnati Commercial Tribune* and was associated with and a friend of Warren G. Harding who was a State Senator.

He became active in politics and identified himself with the Ohio Democratic organization, his first appointment in the public service in Ohio being on the Columbus Civil Service Commission.

Major Kerr, after acquiring control of the *Muskogee Democrat*, also acquired control of the *Muskogee Times* and consolidated the two papers as the *Muskogee Times Democrat*, which during the World War he sold to the Phoenix organization.

The last fifteen years of Major Kerr's life were spent in handling estates including the Okmulgee Democrat, Riverside Oil Company, the Exchange Trust Company and others. In 1932 he became associated with the Oklahoma Natural Gas Company as a public relations advisor and was so employed at the time of his death.

He had serious trouble from an impaired heart for twenty years, and on July 16, 1943 he was severely stricken while at the Tulsa Office of the Oklahoma Natural Gas Company. He was rushed to a local hospital and later removed to a Muskogee Hospital and then removed to the family home, then later to the Mayo Clinic at Rochester, Minnesota and then to a Lodge in Minnesota and back to the hospital and then his home again at Muskogee.

He was a member of the Presbyterian Church, of all the Muskogee Masonic Bodies, the Chamber of Commerce, the Muskogee City Council and Hospital Board. He had responded to any and all public calls before he responded to the call of the great reaper, after having spent a useful life.

—ROBERT L. WILLIAMS

Durant, Oklahoma