NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

HISTORICAL NOTES ON MASONIC ORGANIZATIONS IN INDIAN TERRITORY

The following items on Masonic organizations in the Indian Territory were contributed by Clarence Brain, of Oklahoma City, who settled in Atoka, Choctaw Nation, about 1894, and who has long been active in Masonry in the State.

Below is an account of the installation of the Officers of Oklahoma Lodge, No. 217 (now Oklahoma Lodge, No. 4) on Tuesday, June 24th, 1873. It was published in the Atoka Vindicator of Saturday, June 28th, and is as follows:

"ST. JOHN'S DAY"
"The Celebration."

"Tuesday, the 24th, the anniversary of St. John the Baptist, was celebrated in the Union Church at Old Boggy, by the Masonic Fraternity, of Oklahoma Lodge, No. 217. Among the large audience in attendance, we noticed representatives from Caddo, Atoka, Armstrong Academy and other parts of the country.

"Preliminary to the formal exercises the audience was pleasantly entertained by the singing of a few select hymns by Miss Carrie M. Griffith of New Boggy. Rev. W. J. B. Lloyd then read the 2 and 3 verses of the Third Epistle of John, after which the congregation joined in a welcome of the day by singing

"Again the kind revolving year
Has brought this happy day,"

which was followed by Prayer by Rev. G. W. Davis. Rev. J. B. Lloyd then took his text from the 3d verse of the Epistle of Jude, and preached an appropriate and able anniversary sermon; followed, after an interval of music, by a didactic address upon the symbolic and moral teachings of Masonry, by Rev. J. S. Murrow, the chosen orator for the occasion. There was another alternation of Music, when Mr. David Perkins interpreted the address in Choctaw—alternation of music, and Prayer by Rev. Allen Wright.

"At this juncture of the occasion several little girls took their stand around the organ in front of the pulpit, when one of the number, Miss Lucy Kingsbury, seated herself and played and sung, others joining in the chorus. Miss Fannie Hester also played and sung "Sweet Eden Shore", after which Mr. Murrow thanked them in behalf of the audience and his brother Masons, for the honor they had conferred upon the occasion. Rev. Mr. Davis also asked permission to make a few remarks; said he had heard, before coming here, of Indians, and their country, and had depicted to himself a barbarous people, a wilderness, and a desert; but before him stood a prodigy unlike anything he had conceived in his mind; that he had attended Sabbath School celebrations in Tennessee, at Murfreesboro and Nashville, and other large cities in other States, but that he had not seen deportment and performance which excelled this, and that he could not too highly commend the little girls and their teacher for the display they had made. Rev. R. J. Hogue then pronounced the benediction, after which the Marshal invited all to repair without to a well-spread dinner. After dinner the audience again repaired to the Church, to witness the Instalation of Officers. The exercises begun by singing of the hymn,

"Great Shepherd, to Thee we fly."

Prayer, by Rev. J. S. Murrow.

"Past Master J. S. Murrow, officiating, the following officers were installed,

Mr. G. B. Hester, W. M.
R. J. Hogue, Senior Warden.
Allen Wright, Junior Warden.
"Other officers were also installed.

"Mr. Murrow then made a few extempore remarks relative to the uncertainty of life, pointing to the vacant seats of brothers who had been called by the Great Master to eternity, with admonitions that, though Masonry was not religion, it was her handmaid, and that every brother had a high and exalted duty to perform in the moral of this life, and bade them look well to it. —J. H. M."

It is the good fortune of the contributor [Mr. Brain] to have known personally nearly every person mentioned by name in this item. The David Perkins who translated and interpreted Brother Murrow’s address was a member of the Lodge which was chartered by the Grand Lodge of Arkansas on November 18th, 1868, with 13 members. In 1873 it had 45. Brother Allen Wright, who was installed as Junior Warden, was an Indian and represented Oklahoma Lodge, No. 217, in the Grand Lodge of Arkansas in 1871 and acted as Grand Chaplain. The J. H. M, who signed the article, if a member of the Lodge, was probably Brother J. H. McVey.

SAINT JOHN’S DAY IN 1878.

The Indian Journal published at Eufaula, Creek Nation, on June 26th, 1878, carried the following story—a high and well-deserved tribute to the people of the then “uncivilized” Indian Territory. The Oklahoma of today can point to nothing which equals it.

"ST. JOHN’S DAY."

"A Gala Day in Eufaula."

"Eufaula, on Monday last (June 24th), contained more of happiness than is usually attached to one modest little Indian town. At early morn, in fact the evening before, they had begun to gather in, Creek, Cherokee, and Choctaw to witness the Masonic celebration of St. John’s day, and to partake of the barbeque. On horse-back they came with the dainty bundle of humanity in front and another in the rear with black gleaming eyes, brilliant with wonder at the unwonted sight. In wagons and on foot they came, in holiday attire. Creeks born in the far off Eastern home, young men and maidens, ruddy, olive tinted, or dark of complection its true, but as happy as mortals may be.

"At ten A.M, the procession was formed at the lodge room and marched to the beautiful grove where perhaps six hundred people had gathered and listened to a practical and suggestive speech from Col. D. N. McIntosh on the present condition of the Territory, the dangers that threaten its perpetuity and the necessity of a united interest among the different Nations to secure a just recognition of their rights and privileges under the treaties.

"He clearly showed the danger arising from railroad corporations and illustrated this by a statement of the number of acres of land they had already secured from the United States—The enormous total of 285,000,000 acres and further grants of money and bonds of $80,000,000 more—thus showing the power of an influence that could secure almost an empire of land through Congress. And that the same power was at work to secure an illegal grant of land within our Territorial limits through the many Oklahoma bills introduced since 1867, any of which, if passed he solemnly believed would result in the sweeping away of all their vested rights. That the opening of the Territory to the people of the United States was synonomous with the annihilation of the race.

"At the close of the speech, which was listened to attentively, they marched to the enclosure of Messrs. Whitlow and Coody, in the rear of their store, where a bountiful dinner was served to nearly 1,000 persons. Tables had been prepared nearly 200 feet long, and were literally loaded down with meat, bread, green corn, tomatoes, pies and cakes to which they did ample justice. The Lodge, aided by the generous citizens of Eufaula, had prepared and roasted one beef, seven hogs and two sheep, five hundred ears of corn, two bushels of tomatoes, fifty pies and two hundred
large cakes, many of them frosted and ornamented most beautifully, two hundred substantial loaves of bread, berries, pickles, oyster pie and chicken pie enough for all and to spare. Four times was the immense table filled and emptied and then the modest stragglers came up for a share, and none went away hungry. The loud “hum bux chay, hum bux ma hox chay” of Uncle William reached all and was accepted a free will offering to all. Not an accident occurred, and nothing to mar the pleasure of a day long to be remembered by all who were so fortunate as to participate.”

“Several hundred loaves of bread, ten crates of peaches, and a large lot of oranges, lemons, and tomatoes were shipped Saturday by Rowley & Hollenbeck, City Bakery, to Eufaula for the barbeque at that place Monday.”—Denison News, Denison, Texas.

The Lodge that sponsored this celebration is Eufaula, No. 1, which was first located at the Creek Agency about three miles north-east of the present town of Muscogee and on the north side of the Arkansas River between the Verdigris and the Grand. It was chartered by the Grand Lodge of Arkansas on November 9th, 1855, as Muskogee Lodge, No. 93, the Indian country being then attached to Arkansas for political purposes. It appears to have been the plan of the Grand Lodge to name its lodges in the Indian Territory after the Indian Nation in which it was located for we find a Cherokee Lodge, a Choctaw and a Chickasaw as well as this Muscogee Lodge.

During the war between the States the Muscogee or Creek Nation was about equally divided in its allegiance with the North and the South but the Cherokees on the North had a large group sympathetic with the Federal government while the Choctaws on the South cast their lot with the Southern Confederacy. The Creek country was, therefore, over-run and ravaged by the troops and guerrillas of both sides. Many of them were driven from their homes and found a refuge at Fort Washita in the Chickasaw country or in Texas.

This Lodge made its last report to the Grand Lodge of Arkansas in 1860 and, during the trying times of civil war, became inactive because its members were scattered but it does not appear to have been entirely dormant. When such brethren as had escaped the war returned to their homes it seems very probable that they resumed work although the Grand Lodge had withdrawn the Charter in 1867. It was restored in 1874 with a new number and a new location, Muscogee, No. 90, at Eufaula, the railroad station for the older Indian North Fork Town, and, at the formation of the Grand Lodge of the Indian Territory, it became No. 1. When a Lodge was formed at town of Muskogee in 1888 the Eufaula brethren generously surrendered the name, Muscogee, to the new Lodge which had been named Checote Lodge after a great Creek chief, army officer and Christian minister.

The Colonel D. N. McIntosh, who was the speaker at this celebration, was a prominent Creek with an admixture of Scotch blood. He, too, was an ordained minister, a colonel in the army of the Southern Confederacy and a great patriot who had served his people long and faithfully as well as his Masonic Lodge.

It may seem to the Mason of today that the celebration and speech was of a political nature; however, that is not the case for it was inspired by the highest sense of duty to his people and race. After a long series of promises made to the Indian but never kept, Congress had voted to the first railroad constructed across the Indian country each alternate square mile of land within five miles on either side of the railroad should the country revert to the United States. At the time Brother McIntosh spoke a project was under consideration to sell a strip at least three miles wide on each side of the line to the railroad. The Creek Council had voted to sell a strip three feet wide saying it fulfilled the condition, being less than three miles. Inasmuch as the Congress had no title
whatever to the land its plans are hard to explain but certainly would excite the wonder, admiration and envy of the modern politician. Later, it cost the Choctaw Nation $750,000.00 in attorney fees to defeat the idea.

You will notice the use of the word, "Oklahoma", in this story, a name given to the Indian country at the suggestion of another Indian Mason. Brother Allen Wright, who helped negotiate new treaties with the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations after the war between the States. It is formed from two Choctaw words: Okla, meaning people and humma, red.

The Indian sentence in the last paragraph of the story is in the Muscogee language and seems to mean, "Come and get it". Verily, we of today live sixty-five years too late.

CHEROKEE HISTORY

When Most Worshipful Brother Nat G. Smith was Grand Master of Masons in Arkansas in 1855, he said in his report to the Grand Lodge:

"All over the length and breadth of our State the Order is flourishing, and amongst our red Brethren, in the Indian Territory, it is taking deep hold, and now embraces a goodly number of Lodges and Brethren. The members of these Lodges compare very favorably with their pale-face neighbors. In fact, it is reported of them that they exemplify practically the Masonic teachings and ritual by living in the constant discharge of those charities and moral virtues so forcibly inculcated in our lectures, thereby demonstrating to all that Masonry is not only speculative, but that it is a living practical reality; of great utility to the human race, and of eminent service to a social community."

The Grand Lodge of Arkansas then had Cherokee Lodge, No. 21, at Tahlequah, Fort Gibson, No. 35, at Fort Gibson, Choctaw, No. 52, at Doaksville, Flint, No. 74 at Flint, and Muscogee, No. 93 at the Creek Agency. Brother Smith was to grant his dispensation for the formation of Chickasaw Lodge at Fort Washita in 1856. All of these with the exception of Flint, No. 74, and the probable exception of Muscogee, No. 93—kept alive by its faithful brethren—were to be wiped out by the war between the States.

Cherokee Lodge, No. 21, was chartered in 1848, the same year in which Belle Point Lodge, No. 20, at Fort Smith received its Charter. It became one of the outstanding lodges of the Arkansas jurisdiction but its membership was dispersed during the civil war and its Charter withdrawn in 1867. What few brethren remained petitioned the Grand Lodge in 1870 for permission to meet under their charter which they had preserved. For some reason, possibly the animosities of the time, this was denied and they then returned the Charter and asked for a dispensation to form a new Lodge. This was also denied on the ground that the brethren asking for the dispensation had not exemplified their ability to confer the degrees although a charter had been issued to the same brethren in 1848. It was not until after the formation of the Grand Lodge of the Indian Territory that these brethren resumed work as Cherokee Lodge, No. 10.

The Cherokee Advocate, a paper printed at Tahlequah in both the Cherokee and English languages, published on July 23rd, 1879, the following story, under the title:

"Freemasonry Among the Cherokees"

"Thirty years ago the first Masonic Lodge was organized in the Indian Territory at this place. The installation took place in the Supreme Court room in the presence of quite a number of spectators, who were impelled by curiosity to see and hear as much of the great secret as was possible under the circumstances.

"The officers of Cherokee Lodge, No. 21, were installed by the representatives of the Grand Lodge of Arkansas, M. W. R. P. Fullham, Grand Masters of the Masonic Lodges in Arkansas. The installation took place in the Supreme Court room in the presence of quite a number of spectators, who were impelled by curiosity to see and hear as much of the great secret as was possible under the circumstances.
Master. The occasion was one of unusual interest to the Free Masons of the Cherokee Nation, from the circumstance of its being the first Lodge of Masons ever established among the North American Indians. The officers installed were:

Walter S. Adair, W. M.
N. B. Dannenberg, S. W.
Joseph Coody, J. W.
Thomas Emmerson, S. D.
W. L. Holt, J. D.
W. P. Ross, Secy.
John L. McCoy, Tyler.

"The times that followed that first installation were the balmiest days of free masonry in the Cherokee Nation. The Lodge at Tahlequah started with thirteen members. Applications for membership began to come in, and although the brethren were extremely careful as to the quality of the material admitted, the Lodge in a short time became strong in numbers.

"After the Lodge had been at work two years, we were visited by Grand Master Wm. H. Sutton of Little Rock, Ark., who spent several days with us, giving us wholesome instructions as well as exemplifying the work. His visit was of great advantage to the Lodge, and he expressed himself as being delighted with the general appearance and characters of the membership. In fact he went as far as to assure us that Cherokee Lodge, No. 21, was the Star Lodge of the jurisdiction.

"In all the time that the Lodge was in operation up to the time of the war of the rebellion, but one solitary member was expelled—a white man from Tennessee, who absconded from his creditors, and was never heard of more.

"Opposition? Oh yes! Masonry had opposition, even here away out in the west, among Indians. But the reasons given for opposing Free Masonry, at least the principal reason, was that it was a mutual insurance company; that their affairs and doings were hidden from the outside world, and that it could not be possibly clear of wrong doing or it would not be hidden. The chief opposer was a worthy clergyman, who had left the east in the days when Masonry was being blended with politics, and when the great Dewitt Clinton, who was a prominent free mason, was being strongly opposed by a political party, and defeated.

"But the institution flourished notwithstanding, until every thing of the kind was broken up by the war of the rebellion."

Brother Wm. H. Sutton does not appear among the Grand Masters of Arkansas. It is probable that he was the deputy or representative of Brother Whitfield who was Grand Master about that time and had an intense interest in Masonry in the Indian country. He was Grand Lecturer in 1851 and 1852. Walter Scott Adair was of Cherokee-Scotch ancestry and long prominent in the affairs of the old Nation east of the Mississippi. Nathan B. Dannenberg was another citizen of distinction who had seen service in the war with Mexico. Joseph Coody, Sr., was half Cherokee and had served his people with honor and distinction. He was born in North Carolina in 1779 and it is related that a Masonic jewel given him by his Lodge was buried with him. William Potter Ross was also of Cherokee-Scotch ancestry and a Cherokee chief who was made a Mason in Federal Lodge, No. 1, at Washington City. He spent much of his time at Washington on business connected with Cherokee affairs and it is said that, on his initiation, he found other Cherokees, with whom he differed, in the Lodge and that all animosities were healed and all differences reconciled through Freemasonry. The Adairs, Dannenbergs, Coodys and Rosses were all very active and prominent in the affairs of the Nation and in Masonry in the Indian country and in Western Arkansas.
It may be that the Cherokee Lodge, chartered ninety-five years ago, is entitled to a continuous existence and to the first place in the Grand Lodge of Oklahoma. However that is, no Lodge in the Jurisdiction, then or now, has ever had so distinguished a membership as this, the first Lodge to be erected among the North American Indians and, in the beginning, composed largely of brethren of Indian blood.—Notes by Clarence Brain.

TUCKABATCHIE MICCO’S GRAVE

Historic sites, graves of individuals prominent in their day, and old land marks date back over one hundred and twenty years within the boundaries of Oklahoma. Many of these locations are being obliterated and lost with the passing seasons. A few of these places have been marked with suitable monuments, yet there is still a great work to be done in this respect to save something of the atmosphere, color, and romance in Oklahoma’s history. The following contribution is that of George Riley Hall, well known writer and former editor of the Henryetta Free-Lance, Henryetta, Oklahoma:

Back in 1935 I had a letter from Dr. Grant Foreman apprising me of a rumor that some road builders had dug into the grave of one of the early day great leaders of the Creek people, and urging me to investigate. Tuckabatchie Micco was a man of great influence among his people, and had made his home along the north side of the South Canadian River—that stream being the boundary between the Creek Nation and the Choctaw Nation.

I was familiar with that region, for it is only about twenty miles west from Eufaula where I landed in the Creek Nation, back in September of 1888. I lost no time after receiving Doctor Foreman’s letter, but embraced the first opportunity to make the trip.

There is no road at all leading directly to the place I wished to go, but having chased up and down that river in earlier years, I knew how to reach my destination, although by devious ways. I drove first to Checotah, thence to Eufaula and from there up the river region by farm roads as chance might offer.

My route led me close to the place at the mouth of Mill Creek where I spent the first year of my sojourn in the Indian Country on the Doughty farm, trying to grow cotton. I thought I might as well stop over and take a look at the place, and I soon ran into some startling facts.

In order that the reader may get a clear idea, I should say here that the farm was a mile and a half up the creek from its juncture with the river. On the south west side was a peninsula of level bottom—sand and alluvium, partly timbered. On the northeast is a rather high bank of red clay and sand—possibly fifty feet above the creek and sandy peninsula. The creek had swung close to this clay hill, and pitched from one level down to a lower level of slate shale for the creek bed.

James A. Doughty, a teacher in early day schools, had married a Lizzie Smith who was half Indian. Her father, John Smith, was a white man who had married a Creek wife before the Civil War. Smith must have been an enterprising man, for he left plenty of evidence of the fact.

He visioned easy power from the creek, and proceeded to harness that power and put it to work for himself rather than idle along, only to be swallowed up in the Canadian a mile and half down stream.

Accordingly he built a great stone dam across the creek, using the shall bottom as a foundation. He anchored the northeast end of the dam
in this clay hill, but the southwest end had to depend on some twenty-
five or thirty feet of sandy bottom for an anchorage. Of course Smith
was not a civil engineer.

This dam was something to challenge attention. The work was beau-
tifully done and by expert hands. It was built of cut stones about eigh-
teen by twenty-four inches, and the wall was about ten feet high as well
as I remember. Then Smith built a three-story wooden structure for
a mill. When I first saw the place the mill machinery had long been
gone, but the building stood up in very good condition.

But what about the mill pond? Why, there simply was no mill pond.
The bare slate bottom of the creek was dry. A glance told the story. Out
at the southwest end of the dam was a fine place to fish—out beyond
the end of the dam. The water was very deep. I fished there often.

Now what had happened was that the water simply went out into
that sandy bottom and made a nice new channel for the stream, but as
if to thumb its nose at puny man, it made a deep, deep hole at the end
of the dam. Evidently what Mr. Smith did not know was the patent fact
that the original creek bed was on—not a rock bottom, but merely a
shelf. And his dam reached almost to the edge of the shelf. Beyond
that point it might well be a hundred feet to a solid bottom. I do not
know.

But always I carried a picture of that splendid bit of cut stone dam
in my memory. So when I stopped my car some distance away—on ac-
count of loose sand—I tried to locate the mill site and the stone dam.
Remember, this was forty-five years later. I seemed unable to get my
bearings, and I called a “native” renter and asked him to show me the
dam. We went trudging along in what looked like a cleared space a
hundred or more feet wide. Timber on each side. Then the man told
me that this had at one time been Mill creek, but had been filled up
by the river. We soon came to the old mill site, but not a vestige of
the dam was there. He showed me a point directly above the dam, but
that mass of cut stone was somewhere under us, and the ground was
smooth as if there had never been any disturbance at all. The renter
told me that this continued on to the river and that there simply was
no Mill creek at all. Questioned as to the fate of the creek, he said it
had crossed the valley some three miles up, and had made itself a new
channel and a new mouth. Going on westward I found this true. I
crossed this creek on a little bridge.

That river! Its criminal tendencies crop out at intervals of both
time and space. I wondered what some future man can think in case
he should dig a well, and find a cut stone wall deep under surface. It
is most unfortunate that I do not have a photo of the scene as back in
1888, and in 1935. But who ever could have thought of such precautionary
steps?

I drove on, my mind full of the strange antics the South Canadian
cuts when it feels capricious. I passed places—now a sandy waste—where
I had worked on fine farms in the earlier years. Those farms may be
nosing out of the water at the mouth of the Mississippi by now—forming
new islets for the frogs and water fowl from the Gulf.

Going westward the terrain slopes southeast and all of it is sandy—
very sandy. But I had a Standard Dodge Six coupe, and they are strong
pullers. I made all roads, but frequently had to change to second gear
where the sand was dry.

Eventually I reached my destination. Some sandy table land where
farms might be productive and easily cultivated. A school house occupies
a section corner number “40” if I remember correctly. And sure enough,
there was a stretch of road that had been graded down and had edged
ever into an old place where fruit trees and foundation stones indicated
habitation long ago. And the men really had cut into an old graveyard.
The big road machines in use now make nothing of such soft, sandy loam.
It was well along in the afternoon when I reached the place. If there had been school that day it was already dismissed. No workmen were in sight, but I finally found a neighbor who knew most of the facts. It seemed that the road crew members were innocent of wrong intention when they cut into this old family grave yard, but what followed was not to be condoned or dismissed so lightly. The trinkets that they uncovered in those graves was property not in any sense theirs. And they divided these things among them.

The most inexcusable piracy was a silver head-band bearing the name of Tuckabatche Micco. I was told that the men broke this into three pieces and each of the men took a piece. I got the names of these men but it was then too late in the day to hunt them down and recover the silver pieces. I had no power to bring to bear. I simply intended to buy these relics and place them as nearly as possible as before, and donate the band to the Historical Society.

But my work at home made it imperative that I return that day, and I was never able to locate and recover these articles. By dint of driving difficult roads I finally made my way to Hannah from which point I had reasonably good roads to my home.

It is regrettable that such things happen. But in the course of building roads in a land where no roads formerly were, it is inevitable that some unfortunate incident may occur to jar the sensibilities of those of us who venerate the old people and their way of life in this region. If only the proper steps be taken in such cases, we should all be happier about it. The restoration of bones and other things thus disturbed would be easy. And it is the least we can do if by inadvertence one should disturb the grave of a pioneer.

OKLAHOMA MILITARY ACADEMY IN WORLD WAR II

The attention of the Editorial Department has been called to the names of three graduates of Oklahoma Military Academy who have given their lives in the service of their country, brief biographies of whom appeared in the "Oklahoma War Memorial—World War II" published in The Chronicles for December, 1943. It is a matter of regret that information on the education of these three young men had not been forwarded to the Editorial Department: Woodrow Dick, graduated from Oklahoma Military Academy, High School, 1936; Charles W. Locke, graduated from Oklahoma Military Academy, Junior College, 1934; and Garrett H. McCallister, graduated from Oklahoma Military Academy, Junior College, 1939.

The following statement on the record of this Oklahoma State educational institution at Claremore is from its President, Captain John C. Hamilton, U.S.A., Ret’d, in a letter dated February 17, 1944:

"By last November 11th, twenty-one graduates of this institution had given their lives. These were all Oklahomans and do not include men from other states who at one time were enrolled here. Of approximately eleven hundred men who have attended this institution, seven hundred sixty are now in the Armed Forces, a percentage which I do not believe is surpassed by any institution in the United States. Oklahoma Military Academy continues to operate twelve months a year with its Senior Division R.O.T.C. Unit to furnish trained leaders for the Armed Forces, and many young Oklahomans here have gone continuously since September, 1942, without a break of over ten days in preparation for their future responsibilities."