

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

HISTORY OF OKLAHOMA EMBLEMS

The following history of Oklahoma emblems by Dee Paradis Jackson is from a pamphlet *Oklahoma Emblems and Historic Places* published by the Oklahoma Library Commission, Mrs. J. R. Dale, Secretary, in 1937, and now out of print:

ORIGIN OF THE NAME "OKLAHOMA"

The name of Oklahoma was derived from the two Choctaw words, *okla* meaning "people", and *humma* or *homma*, meaning "red". The name was proposed in 1866 by the Rev. Alen Wright, Chief of the Choctaws. The occasion was as follows:

At the close of the Civil War, the authorities at Washington compelled each of the Five Civilized tribes to cede back to the government, part of its land, and representatives of these tribes were summoned to Washington to complete treaties.

When the draft of the Choctaw-Chickasaw treaty was being written, the Commissioners of Indian Affairs asked the tribal delegates: "What name would you call your territory?". Allen Wright, one of the Choctaw delegates, replied: "Oklahoma". The name was adopted.

Sources: Charles N. Gould, *Oklahoma Place Names*. 1933, p. 21.

Muriel H. Wright, *The Story of Oklahoma*. 1929, p. 165.

OKLAHOMA STATE MOTTO

"Labor Omnia Vincit"

This is a Latin quotation meaning "Labor Conquers all Things." It was made a part of the Territorial Seal in 1893, and reincorporated in the State Seal by the State Constitution.

The election adopting the Constitution for the proposed State of Oklahoma was held September 17, 1907, by proclamation of the Territorial Governor, Frank Frantz; the new state was formally admitted into the Union November 16, 1907, by proclamation of President Theodore Roosevelt.

Sources: *Oklahoma Constitution*, Article VI. Section 35.

Clara R. Farr, *Oklahoma Emblems*. 1932, p. 34.

OKLAHOMA STATE COLORS

Green—White

The Ohoyohoma Circle, composed of the wives of the members of the Fifth Legislature, recommended the adoption of the colors Green and White. They were adopted by a Concurrent Resolution of the House and Senate in 1915.

Sources: *Oklahoma Session Laws*. 1915. p. 595.

Clara R. Farr, *Oklahoma Emblems*. 1932. p. 34.



SEAL OF THE STATE

Section 35. Constitution of the State of Oklahoma—

In the center shall be a five-pointed star, with one ray directed upward. The center of the star shall contain the central device of the seal of the Territory of Oklahoma, including the words, "Labor Omnia Vincit". The upper left hand ray shall contain the symbol of the ancient seal of the Cherokee Nation, namely: A seven-pointed star partially surrounded by a wreath of oak leaves. The ray directed upward shall contain the symbol of the ancient seal of the Chickasaw Nation, namely: An Indian warrior standing upright with bow and shield. The lower lefthand ray shall contain the symbol of the ancient seal of the Creek Nation, namely a sheaf of wheat and a plow. The upper right hand ray shall contain the symbol of the ancient seal of the Choctaw Nation, namely: A tomahawk, bow, and three crossed arrows. The right hand ray shall contain the symbol of the ancient seal of the Seminole Nation, namely: A village with houses and a factory beside a lake upon which an Indian is paddling a canoe. Surrounding the central star and grouped between its rays, shall be forty-five small stars, divided into five clusters of nine stars each, representing the forty-five states of the Union, to which the forty-sixth is now added. In a circular band surrounding the whole device shall be inscribed: "GREAT SEAL OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA, 1907."

MANY SEALS COMBINED IN THE MAKING OF THE GREAT SEAL

To make an adequate description of the Great Seal of Oklahoma, which is only 2 3-16 inches in diameter, it is necessary to cover a period of thirty-seven years of Oklahoma's interesting history and to describe three great seals—that of the Territory of Oklahoma, that designed for the State of Sequoyah, and our own artistic seal.

The delegates to the convention, which was called to frame a Constitution for a state to be formed of Indian Territory, convened at Muskogee, July 1905. This was called the Sequoyah Convention and the new state was to be named Sequoyah honoring the Indian who gave to his brothers the Cherokee alphabet.

Dr. A. Grant Evans, former president of Oklahoma University and then president of Henry Kendall College, was asked to suggest a design for the proposed state. "Dr. Evans designed and had carefully drawn a five-pointed star. In the angles of the star were placed the tribal seals of the Five Civilized tribes.¹ Above the star, and between the two upper points, was a half length figure of Sequoyah holding a tablet upon which appears the words "We are brothers" in the Cherokee text. In the other spaces between the points of the star were placed forty-five small stars, emblematic of the constellation to which a forty-sixth was to be added."

The Seal of the Territory of Oklahoma is described in the record of the Second Session of the Territorial Legislative Assembly which convened at Guthrie, January 1893, as follows: Under the motto "Labor Omnia Vincit" shall be Columbia as the central figure representing Justice and Statehood. On her right is the American pioneer farmer; on her left is the aboriginal American Indian. These two representatives of the white and red races are shaking hands beneath the scales of Justice, symbolising equal justice between the white and red races of Oklahoma, and the Federal Government. Beneath the trio group is the cornucopia of plenty and the olive branch of peace, and behind is the sun of progress and civilization—farmer plowing, rural home, railroad train, compress, mills, elevator, manufacturies, churches, schools, capitol and city. The two scenes are symbolic of the peaceful conquests of the Anglo-Saxon and the decadence of the red race. Under all shall be the words, "Grand Seal Territory of Oklahoma."

When the Constitution of the State of Oklahoma was being drafted, Dr. Evans, Gabe Parker, a Choctaw Indian, and J. J. Quarles, citizen of Osage county, were appointed to present a new seal to the state. The rearrangement was as described above. The actual drafting of the Seal was by Japp E. Peddicord, a reporter for the Daily Oklahoman.

The significance of the ray of the star pointing upward, while none point downward, is that this union shall result only in good, and never in evil.

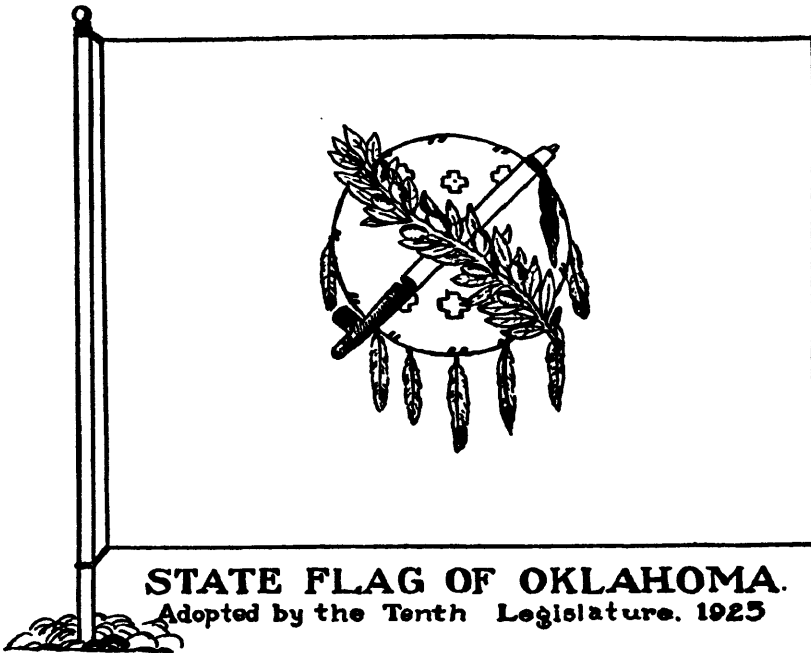
The original pencil sketch for this state seal is on file with the State Historical Society.

Sources: *Constitution of Oklahoma*. Article VI. Sec. 35.

Thoburn and Holcomb. *History of Oklahoma*. 1908. p. 266.

Farr, *Oklahoma Emblems*. 1932. pp. 16-19.

¹ Description, history, and interpretation of each of the seals of the Five Civilized Tribes is found in "Official Seals of the Five Civilized Tribes" by Muriel H. Wright in *The Chronicles*, XVIII (December, 1940), No. 4, pp. 357-370.



DEVICE: In the center field, the circular shield of an Osage warrior, made of heavy buffalo rawhide, fringed with pendant eagle feathers; superimposed across the face of the shield, the red man's calumet, or pipe of peace, and the white man's olive branch.²

COLORS: Field, sky blue; shield, buckskin or light tan; feathers, white shading into brown tips; small crosses, white; calumet, stem light buff, with pipe brown and pendant tassel, dark red; olive branch, olive brown.³

SYMBOLISM: The blue field signifies loyalty and devotion; the shield implies defensive or protective warfare, when justifiable; the small crosses on the shield are the Indian's graphic sign for stars and may indicate lofty ideals or a purpose for high endeavor; the shield thus surmounted by, but always subservient to, the calumet and olive branch, betoken a predominant love of peace by a united people.

²The Eighteenth Legislature adopted a resolution providing that the word "Oklahoma" in white letters be placed underneath the shield or design of the official State flag of the State of Oklahoma.—*Session Laws of Oklahoma* 1941, p. 90.

³The cover design of *The Chronicles* shows the State flag in colors as near to the original description as possible with a metal cut and printer's ink. Every effort was made especially to secure the correct shade of blue for the field of the State flag on the cover, by members of the Committee of the Board of Directors (namely, Dr. Emma Estill-Harbour, Mrs. Frank Korn, and Mrs. Jessie R. Moore) and the editors.

HISTORY: The Tenth Legislature specified that the State Flag of Oklahoma should have the following design:

"A sky blue field with a circular rawhide shield of American Indian Warrior, decorated with six painted crosses on the face thereof, the lower half of the shield to be fringed with seven pendant eagle feathers and superimposed upon the face of the shield a calumet or peace pipe, crossed at right angles by an olive branch."

This design had been selected by the Oklahoma Society of Daughters of the American Revolution from many submitted to them for consideration. The Committee in charge, appointed by Mrs. Andrew R. Hickam, then state Regent, chose Mrs. George Fluke Jr.'s sketch, described above.

Mrs. Fluke had consulted with Dr. Joseph B. Thoburn, formerly research director, Oklahoma Historical Society, about a suitable flag, the need for one having been pointed out by him to Mrs. Hickam.

In the museum of the Oklahoma Historical Society was a framed silk flag which had been carried as the standard of a Choctaw regiment in the Confederate military service during the Civil War. In the center of its blue field was a white circle containing the tribal emblem of the Choctaw Nation—a red bow, two red arrows and a red tomahawk, all crossing centers.

Mr. Thoburn suggested the use of blue for the field of this new flag, and also, since this was a red man's state, that it would be appropriate to use the red man's shield, usually circular in outline.

Near the Choctaw regiment's flag hung an Osage Indian shield. It had been made of the thick, tough hide of an old buffalo bull and fringed with the pendant feathers of the war eagle.

He further suggested that crossed on this shield might be placed the peace emblem of the two races: the Indian calumet or peace pipe, and the white man's olive branch.

Mrs. Fluke's finished design met with enthusiasm everywhere. The flag adopted in 1925 superseded the banner adopted in 1911, "Consisting of a red field with a five pointed star of white, edged with blue, in the center thereof, with figures 46, in blue, in the center of the star." This flag had lacked individuality. Very few citizens of Oklahoma knew that a state flag had ever been adopted.

Sources: *Oklahoma Session Laws*. 1925 p. 340, State Flag.

Oklahoma Session Laws. 1911 p. 394.

Joseph B. Thoburn, "State Flag of Oklahoma." *Oklahoma Teacher*, January, 1926. p. 9.



STATE FLOWER OF OKLAHOMA

"Land of the mistletoe, smiling in splendor,
Out from the borderland, mystic and old,
Sweet are the memories, precious and tender,
Linked with thy summers of azure and gold."

—George Riley Hall.

The Territory of Oklahoma adopted the Mistletoe as the State flower by act of the Legislature in 1893. Oklahoma was the first state to officially adopt a state flower.

After statehood the Legislature passed an act "That the Mistletoe is hereby designated and adopted as the Floral Emblem of the State of Oklahoma. That this act be immediately in force upon its passage and approval."

STATE TREE OF OKLAHOMA

The Redbud became the official tree of the State of Oklahoma by Senate Joint Resolution No. 5, Sixteenth Legislature. Approved by the Governor the 30th day of March, 1937.

Sources: *Oklahoma Statutes*. 1893. Sec. 5990.

Oklahoma Compiled Laws 1909. Sec. 8424.
Clara R. Farr, *Oklahoma Emblems* 1932. p. 38.
B. E. Little, *Mistletoe*. c1927. p. 15.

RUTHERFORD COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY ORGANIZED
IN TENNESSEE

Word has come that Mr. James W. Moffitt, formerly Secretary of the Oklahoma Historical Society, continues constructive plans in the field of local history and has been active in organizing the Rutherford County Historical Society in his home State of Tennessee. He is chairman of a committee promoting the erection of a monument to General Rutherford, for whom the County was named. Plans for this monument are being sponsored by the Tennessee Historical Commission. Mr. Moffitt is a member of the faculty in the History Department of Tennessee College for Women, Murfreesboro. He is listed in *Directory of American Scholars* as a member of the Society of American Archivists, Association of State and Local History (councilor), Southern Historical Association, Southern Baptist Historical Society (executive committee), and the Mississippi Valley Historical Association. Mr. Moffitt's friends and acquaintances throughout the State will be interested in learning that he has in preparation a History of Baptist Missions among the Five Civilized Tribes for his thesis in this study for the Ph. D. degree from the University of Oklahoma.

OLD FORT HOLMES AND OTHER HISTORIC SITES MARKED

The Holdenville Garden Club reviewing its beautification and civic activities in its Report for 1943-44 states that the Club has erected a stone marker on the Holdenville Lake shore by the side of State Highway 68, five miles south of the City, pointing out the site of Old Fort Holmes near Bilby, Oklahoma, and other places in the vicinity, noted in State history, located a few miles away. Contributions to this important project were made by other Holdenville clubs and organizations including Business and Professional Women, Shubert, Rotary, American Association of University Women, Chamber of Commerce, Kiwanis, the Legion Auxiliary, besides interested citizens—Mrs. Wyatt Holmes, Mrs. N. B. Bilby, and Mrs. Frank L. Warren. The marker is a large marble slab in the shape of a hide representing the Indian's means of recording history and bears in the upper left hand corner the personal symbol of the designer, Mrs. Tony Lyons, and in the lower right hand corner, a replica of the design of the Oklahoma State Flag. This unusual marker set upon a concrete foundation and steadied by heavy log supports bears the following Legend:

GARDEN CLUB 1943

1-M. S.E. to Site of Ft. Holmes, Est. 1834, to keep order among Nomadic Indian Tribes, 1836-56. This Region co-owned by Creeks & Seminoles, became Creek Indian Nation 1856.

2½-M. S.W. to Site of Edward Trading Post, Est. 1835, Home of Jesse Chisholm 1850, Wagon Train Supply Base, Indian Camp. Cellar Jail held Spanish Captives ransomed at Ft. Gibson.

3-M. N.E. to Site of Oak Ridge Presbyterian Mission, Est. 1848-57, by Rev. John Lilly & John Bemo, Seminole Interpreter & Instructor.

—B.P.W.

Schubert
Rotary

A.A.U.W.

C. of C.

Kiwanis
Legion