

PIONEER PUBLISHER, FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER IN INDIAN TERRITORY

By Ora Eddleman Reed¹

The death of Mary Daugherty Eddleman, December 14, 1943, at her home in Muskogee, Oklahoma, marked the close of a long, full and useful life. Mrs. Eddleman's age was ninety-five years, eight months and two days, and the last fifty years of her life were spent in Muskogee. She was the widow of the late David J. Eddleman, pioneer newspaper man of Indian Territory and Texas, whose death occurred November 15, 1922 in his eighty-ninth year. The story of David and Mary Eddleman's long life together—they celebrated fifty years of married life in 1916—and the life of their pioneer ancestors, is packed with the thrilling experiences and vicissitudes attendant upon the early settlers of Kentucky, Missouri, Texas and Oklahoma.

David Jones Eddleman was born in Kentucky, June 2, 1834, a son of James Eddleman and Cynthia Ann Douthitt. His great great grandfather, Peter Eddleman came to America from Germany in 1762, with his wife, Margaret Sharer and five sons. All of the sons served in the Revolutionary War. The youngest, Peter Eddleman, Jr., went at the age of eighteen into Kentucky with Daniel Boone, settled there and married Rachel Elrod. They cleared a cane brake about nine miles from the present site of Lexington, and there improved a farm, where they lived, died and were buried, never having left this farm during their lifetime. They celebrated their 75th wedding anniversary there, having reared four daughters and two sons, one of whom, James, was as stated above, the father of David J. Eddleman. James Eddleman moved his family from Kentucky to Missouri in 1841, settling near California, Missouri. Their family consisted of three daughters and four sons, including David. James Eddleman, the father, died in 1846, and in 1849 the widow and her children moved to Texas, settling at Pilot Point. The old home established there still remains in the family, now owned by a descendant's widow.

Young "Dave" Eddleman grew up in Texas, becoming a leader in that community of hard-working pioneers. He and two of his brothers became successful ranchers and stockmen, and the other brother, William, was a doctor well known throughout that part

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of the State. During the War between the States, all of them served the Confederacy. After that conflict David J. Eddleman was an important factor in the upbuilding of the town of Denton. He served twice as its mayor and was interested in most of its leading enterprises. He led in the organization of the first Christian Church in Denton more than seventy-five years ago. He was Masonic Grand Lecturer of Texas from 1871 until 1880, and during that time traveled all over the State. He made many friends—and some enemies, too, as men must who stand firm for their own principles and rights. He was known as a man of great courage and strong convictions, and was never swayed by impulse.

David J. Eddleman and Mary Daugherty were married at Denton, Texas, April 15, 1866. Both had been popular in the social life of the community, and the wedding was long recalled by old-timers in Denton, for "Dave and Mary" were well-loved. She was the only sister of "the Daugherty boys"—Lum, Tom, Boone, Matt, Will and Jim, stalwart sons of a pioneer family. All gave devoted service to the Confederacy when the great crisis came, giving not only of their worldly possessions but serving as soldiers throughout the four hard years of the War. Three of them were stationed in Indian Territory under Gen. Cooper and Gen. Stand Watie. While her brothers were away at war, Mary Daugherty was placed in McKenzie College, a Methodist Boarding School at Clarksville, Texas. Returning home the Daugherty boys helped to rebuild and develop that part of Texas. Lum Daugherty became a merchant, Tom a successful lawyer, Boone a farmer, Matt was also a lawyer and Will and Jim (J. M. Daugherty) were associated together in the cattle business, being among the most successful stockmen of Texas and Oklahoma. All have now passed away. Their parents died before the war between the States.

Mary Daugherty Eddleman was born April 12, 1848, near Houstonia, Missouri. She was the daughter of James Madison Daugherty, a Cherokee Indian, whose father was William Daugherty who traced his ancestry to a William O'Daugherty who came to America from Ireland in 1760, settling first in New York and later in Georgia. He was adopted into the Cherokee Tribe of Indians and married a Cherokee woman. His son William married Sally Bunch, a Cherokee, and they were the parents of James Madison Daugherty, father of Mary Daugherty, the subject of this sketch.

William Daugherty and his wife Sally Bunch had left the old Cherokee Nation in the East, moving West with a number of Cherokees and settling in the territory now embraced within the limits of the State of Arkansas, between the Arkansas and White rivers, which was then part of the country ceded to the Cherokees as a future home, but which was afterwards changed according to the treaties of 1828 and 1832 and definitely established in the treaty of 1834.

The Daugherty family made and improved a comfortable home near the town or settlement of McGehee, in Arkansas, this town being named for Ansburn McGehee, a Scotchman who had come there in an early day from Maryland, with his wife, Mary Tabor. Young James Madison Daugherty married Eleanor McGehee, daughter of Ansburn McGehee. The young couple set out with the intention of joining the Cherokees in Indian Territory, but went instead to Missouri. There their children were born, six sons and the daughter Mary. The family moved to Texas when Mary Daugherty was three years of age, settling at Old Alton, near Denton, in 1850. James Madison Daugherty did not long survive their move. His death came November 5, 1853, hence his wife was left to bring up their large family. She was an energetic, intelligent and determined woman, and by excellent management reared her family, saw to their education despite the many handicaps of those times, and acquired considerable property and slaves. She died, however, before having accomplished one purpose she and her husband had always had in mind: to return to the Cherokee tribe now in Indian Territory.

It remained for Mary, who had married David J. Eddleman, to make the effort to carry out her father's long cherished wish to rejoin the Cherokees.

Mr. and Mrs. Eddleman moved to Muskogee, Oklahoma (then Indian Territory) in 1894 and became identified with the events of that time. Mr. Eddleman bought from Theo. Gulick the *Muskogee Morning Times* which had been established only a few months and was the first daily paper in Indian Territory. It was pioneering all over again, for the country was new and unsettled and scarcely ready for a daily newspaper. But Mr. Eddleman was a born pioneer, and fighting of any sort just suited him. His paper was successful at last, and is today, as the *Muskogee Times-Democrat*, an important afternoon newspaper. Mr. Eddleman's paper was the first to put on the Associated Press service in Indian Territory, and it was all owing to his indefatigable will and determination as well as the work of his now grown sons and daughters, that the venture was a success.

Mr. and Mrs. Eddleman were instrumental in organizing the First Christian Church of Muskogee and were loyal members to the end of their lives. They were actively interested in all that meant good government and clean, wholesome living. It is to such rugged, fearless, whole-hearted Christian pioneers as these and their like that Texas and Oklahoma owe much of their progressive spirit. Mrs. Eddleman, who survived her husband almost twenty-two years, was active until past ninety, when she became blind. Even then she retained her keen interest in life and in her friends, her church, and in the United Daughters of the Confederacy, (General Forrest

Chapter in Muskogee) of which she was a life member. She was especially interested in young people, and among the friends of her grandchildren she was known lovingly as "Gram". She was gifted in the art of story telling and her tales of early days in Texas were thrilling and entertaining.

David and Mary Eddleman are laid to rest in the family plot in Greenhill cemetery near Muskogee. A son, George, a veteran of the Spanish-American War, lies beside them.

Surviving children are Miss Pearl Eddleman, Mrs. Myrta E. Sams, A. Z. Eddleman, Mrs. Ora E. Reed, and Mrs. Erna E. Miller, all of Muskogee, Oklahoma.