

NECROLOGIES

WILLIAM FRANKLIN DURHAM

1870-1944

William Franklin Durham was born near Baker Field in the State of Arkansas, June 26, 1870. He was the son of John Durham, and his wife Margaret (Grimsley) Durham, who had come to that county from Tennessee about the time the War between the States ended. John Durham was of English descent, and traced his ancestry back to the family home in England, Durham castle.

John Durham and his wife Margaret had three other children—a daughter who died in early childhood, a son who died in early youth, and Virgil M. Durham who became a school teacher, and served as superintendent of schools in Tecumseh, Shawnee, Holdenville, and in other Oklahoma towns. He died in 1940, at his home in Oklahoma City.

William Franklin Durham attended rural school at the County Line school which was located on the line of the two states, Arkansas, and Missouri. He later entered college at the West Plains College, in West Plains, Missouri.

After he had graduated from the West Plains college, he read law, and was admitted to the bar at Springfield, Missouri at the age of twenty years. He served six years as assistant attorney for a railroad running from Kansas City to Memphis, which line was later taken over by the Frisco Railroad company.

While in school in West Plains college he met Lola Cater, and a romance was started that led to their marriage in West Plains Methodist church, on June 26, 1900.

After living in West Plains for two years the couple came to Oklahoma, and settled in Tecumseh, in 1902. He entered the practice of law in the then Oklahoma Territory, and became a member of the Pottawatomie County Bar Association. He was appointed assistant county attorney under S. P. Freeling, and served in that capacity until the territory was admitted as a state.

A Democrat, imbued with a strong spirit of patriotism, he ran for and was elected as a member of both the First and Second legislature, and helped materially with the establishing of the state laws and regulations. In both sessions of the Legislature in which he served, he was appointed as parliamentarian. His text, *Durham's Manual of Parliamentary Law*, was adopted by both houses of the legislature of Oklahoma. The Legislature of 1931 designated him as the state parliamentarian, which office he held to the end.

In 1928 he compiled and annotated the laws of the state relating to crimes and criminal procedure, which he termed *Durham's Criminal Code*. This work is used extensively by attorneys entrusted with the defense of those charged with violation of laws of the State.

After serving in the state legislature, Mr. Durham served ten years as Assistant County Attorney. He was known as a forceful, vigorous prosecutor, but also as a just and fair attorney. He was a kind-hearted friendly man, a member of the Baptist church, a profound student of the Bible, and of classic literature, and of history. He was a member of the Masonic Lodge.

In 1919 Mr. and Mrs. Durham removed from Tecumseh to Shawnee, where he continued in the practice of law. Mrs. Durham became a teacher

in the high school of the city. Later Mr. Durham was elected as Justice of the Peace, in which capacity he served for seven years. He passed away on July 9, 1944, and was buried in Shawnee.

William Franklin Durham will be remembered in his county and the state as a kind man, a devoted husband, and a good citizen.

By Florence Drake

Shawnee, Oklahoma.

EDGAR AUGUSTUS JONES

1860-1943

Edgar Augustus Jones born August 1, 1860, at Douglas, Nacogdoches County, Texas, was a son of Scotch-Irish parents, George W. and Helena Jones. His mother was from Lebanon, Tennessee, a descendant of the Hill and the McMinn families. His grandfather, Jefferson Young Jones, migrated from the Sequatchie Valley, Tennessee, and established a land claim on the present site of the city of Tyler, Texas.

The family of George W. Jones migrated westward and located in Audubon, Wise County, Texas, when Edgar Augustus was twelve years old. He later attended Audubon Seminary, long since closed, and graduated in the study of medicine from Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee, in 1885. He was married on September 6, 1885, to Annie Gertrude Riffe, daughter of Doctor J. C. Riffe, a native of Houstonville, Kentucky, who was a practicing physician in Audubon at this time.

Two years later, Doctor Jones became the owner of a drug store in Alvord, Texas. In 1888, he moved his drug stock from Alvord and opened up the business in a tent on the plains of Texas, a location which is now "old town" in Amarillo, Texas, which had been designated the division point of the Ft. Worth & Denver Railroad. Three months later he opened up his drug store and his office in a new building which he had had erected. He was appointed local surgeon for the railroad company at Amarillo but sometime afterward sold his drug store to David Aikens of Graham, Texas, and moved to Vernon, Texas, forming a partnership with Doctor J. C. Roberson who is now a resident of Amarillo (700 Belleview Street).

In 1900, Doctor Jones moved from Texas to Oklahoma and was successively located in Oklahoma City (1900), Sayre in Beckham County (1901), and Avant in Tulsa County (1911). He established claim to a homestead near Sayre and was the first practicing physician in this western Oklahoma town with his office on Main Street, in the first frame building which he had had erected from lumber hauled from Weatherford by wagon. At Avant, he served as mayor during its flourishing days as an oil field boom town.

Upon his return from service as a first lieutenant in the Medical corps during World War I (enlisted October 30, 1917), Doctor Jones settled at Stinnett, Texas, where he owned an emergency hospital, a necessity in the new oil field with its numerous accidents. He served as county health officer for two years in this location.

In 1941, he returned to Avant, Oklahoma, where he was residing at the time of his death, July 15, 1943. He was survived by his wife, 6 children, 19 grandchildren, and 7 great grandchildren. The oldest daughter, Trixie (now Mrs. George Gideon), born March 29, 1889, was the first girl born in Amarillo. The other children are Major Charles Shelly Jones, U. S. Army, Lucille Jones Sherrill, and Stanley, Byron, and Edgar Jones.

Doctor Jones was always young in thought and action. In July, 1941, when visiting in Sayre, he remarked, "Well, I am going to Avant, Okla-

homa, to celebrate my sixtieth birthday." Someone replied, "Are you sixty years old? You sure do not look it."

Citizens in every town where he resided knew Doctor Jones for his good cheer, always looking at the happy side of life and enjoying every day. He was prominent in the medical profession for fifty-eight years. His passing has been mourned by many friends and patients throughout the country, all holding his memory in honor for his long and useful life.

By Mrs. J. M. Danner

Sayre, Oklahoma.

ALEXANDER DONNELL JONES

1868-1943

Alexander Donnell Jones born June 8, 1868, at Douglas, Nacogdoches County, Texas, was a son of George W. and Helena Jones, and a brother of Doctor Edgar Augustus Jones, a pioneer physician in western Oklahoma.

As a young man, Alexander went to West Texas and filed a claim on land that is now a part of the present site of Amarillo, Texas. He was a telegraph operator and an employee of the Fort Worth & Denver Railroad Company until 1893 when he moved to Washita County, Oklahoma, and established a homestead claim near Cloud Chief, his home until 1900. He taught school for a time in Washita County and served as deputy County Treasurer for several years. He was married in Vernon, Texas, on February 8, 1890, to Carrie Irene Thomas.

In 1900, Mr. and Mrs. Jones moved to Roger Mills County, Oklahoma, and opened up the first general merchandise store in the town of Sweetwater. Goods for the store were freighted by wagon eighty-five miles from Weatherford. When the Rock Island Railroad was extended west in Oklahoma and the town of Sayre was established, Mr. Jones sold the store in Sweetwater and bought a general store in Sayre, of which he was owner for many years operating the business in connection with cotton buying. In 1908, a year after Beckham County was formed from parts of Greer and Roger Mills counties and Sayre became the county seat, Mr. Jones established the Sayre Abstract Title & Guaranty Company, which he operated as owner ably assisted by Mrs. Jones who has continued the work. He died September 2, 1943. Besides his wife, he is survived by a son, Newlin Jones, an attorney in Sayre, and a grandson, Gene Jones, who as First Lieutenant, U. S. Army Air Corps, saw action in Africa and in England during World War II.

Alexander Donnell Jones was a life long Democrat. He was elected the first Registrar of Deeds in Beckham County, which office he held three terms. He also was elected and served two terms as Representative from Beckham County, in the 13th and the 14th state legislatures.

He was an active member of the Methodist Church from 1892 and was serving on the Board of Stewards at the time of his death. He joined the Masons in Washita County in about 1894 and was among the first to join the Shrine at Oklahoma City and, also, the Consistory at Guthrie, from Sayre. He was a member of the Eastern Star at Sayre, joining in 1904 and serving as Worthy Patron of the Order different times. He was a member of the Odd Fellows Lodge and a Rotarian at the time of his death.

Noted as a fisherman and hunter, Mr. Jones enjoyed fishing and hunting trips to Colorado and New Mexico for thirty-eight years, in early days driving overland with a team of mules and a light wagon made convenient for camping. Returning from one of his fishing trips, he enter-

tained the Board members of the Methodist Church and their wives (a group of about forty persons) with a fish fry. This was a rare treat, for Mr. Jones not only furnished the fish but adept in the art of cooking them he also prepared them for the table. When talent was needed for plays or other entertainment in Sayre and in Beckham County, Mr. Jones was always ready to play a part.

In the history of southwestern Oklahoma, Alexander Donnell Jones will be remembered for his genial disposition and fine public spirit, an outstanding pioneer citizen from Beckham County.

By Mrs. J. M. Danner

Notes compiled
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