

BOOK REVIEWS

The Founding of Stillwater: A Case Study in Oklahoma History.
By Berlin Basil Chapman. (Oklahoma City: Times Journal
Publishing Company, 1948. Pp. xii, 245. Illustrations, Maps,
Appendix, \$3.00.)

This book makes the first historical use of "restricted records" in the War Department concerning the last serious raid of the Boomers into Oklahoma; makes the first historical use of names listed in the First Territorial Census of Oklahoma, 1890; demonstrates how unprinted records in the National Archives can be used in tracing the history of early towns in the western half of Oklahoma; and presents heretofore unused sources on the founding of the Oklahoma A. and M. College.

About half the sources used by the author are available only in Washington, D. C. He was enabled to visit these sources because of a grant from the Research Foundation of the Oklahoma A. and M. College, which has the copyright of the book. The thoroughness of the work, evidenced by footnotes and bibliography, will satisfy the most demanding scholar. There is a good index.

"Payne's Oklahoma Colony," consisting of over 300 armed men, established a settlement at Stillwater in December 1884. A thousand troops were at Stillwater, or en route there, when William L. Couch, Boomer leader, surrendered to Colonel Edward Hatch. The first two chapters of the book and the appendix, containing official reports of army officers and Couch, are a distinct addenda to Rister's *Land Hunger*.

The emphasis of the book is on the years, 1889-91, during which Stillwater was founded. Records of the General Land Office, and materials in the Oklahoma Historical Society and Kansas Historical Society are used to tell how the Stillwater vicinity was settled in the Run of April 22, 1889, how a townsite was selected by the Stillwater Town Company in May, and the town organized in June of the same year.

The intricate workings of the provisional city government, 1889-90, are described. Use is made of the minutes of the city council and contemporary newspapers. The charter of the provisional government and some of its ordinances are in the book.

A part of the book attracting national attention deals with the First Territorial Census of Oklahoma, Population, 1890, a special census taken in seven counties to determine representation in the

territorial legislature. In 1921 the United States census of 1890 was destroyed in a Washington fire, and the printed volumes of the census do not record names of persons. The portion of the special census dealing with "Stillwater City," is in the appendix of the book. It lists 569 persons, shows that 63% of the children under the age of ten were born in Kansas, and shows other trends in the western movement. The special census is in the Oklahoma Historical Society, and has been microfilmed.

Debo's *Prairie City*, and Scott's *Story of Oklahoma City* span the development of towns founded in Oklahoma Territory, but Chapman's contribution is the first book-length study of the founding of a town in Oklahoma Territory. Early towns in that territory were founded on government owned lands. Foreman's *Muskogee* and Debo's *Tulsa* deal with towns that grew up in Indian Territory on Indian lands, not on government lands.

A reader well informed on the founding of Stillwater knows the pattern on which many towns in Oklahoma Territory were established. This includes schools, churches, social events, and the work of a federal board in allotting a townsite.

The book is a guide to archival materials on the founding of scores of early towns in the western half of Oklahoma. For these towns, boxes of townsite papers, letter books, etc., parallel those cited by Chapman, often being on the same shelf. The book merits a place in every library of Oklahoma history.

T. H. Reynolds

Oklahoma A. & M. College

Persimmon Hill. By William Clark Kennerly as told to Elizabeth Russell. University of Oklahoma Press, 1948. 253 Pp. Binding in attractive boards, 8 octavo.

This book consists of 250 pages of intrigue to any reader who cares to indulge in reminiscent history. It is a charming saga of the Kennerly and Russell families through a period of almost ninety years.

Born in 1824 and dying in 1912, Clark Kennerly, heir to much of the wealth and fame that came through the blood-strain of General George Rogers Clark and his broad relations with the great names like Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe and their satellites, lived through a period most remarkable in this republic.

Persimmon Hill was Clark Kennerly's home in St. Louis for seventy years and because of his sterling graces, lofty life and high honor, the story of his home and his family reveals all the lights and shadows of the social order, the manners and customs, the high adventure and the wealth of wonderful events which converted St. Louis from a town of 5,000 in 1912, to a great, throbbing center of commerce, emigration and political leadership. The close of Ken-

nerly's active life as recorded in Persimmon Hill, with the Civil War, St. Louis had become one of the great communities of America.

There is laid out in detail, perhaps too much detail, the births, family connections, marriages, and resultant influences of the Kennerly family with the historical family figures of General George Rogers Clark, General William Clark, the Sougrains, the Hancocks, and all of the outstanding lives they touched in their daily pursuits and exploits. In stretching out these connections the author discloses connections as we have pointed out, with Washington, Franklin, Hamilton, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe and most every powerful name in Virginia of the first thirty and forty years of its life after the revolution. Many of these names may be in the shadow but are so charmingly placed that the reader, if he has learned to revere these famous characters finds a calm pleasure in seeing them come and go in the dim light of one who almost touched them.

So you are led out by this volume to meet persons and places that made St. Louis the center of an early, marvelous history. A happy personal touch is offered as old school habits and customs; dress and manners are portrayed with a gentle and loving pen. One wants to go to the old field schools, to attend the gay parties, to make blissful excursions on Mississippi boats and meet with the gracious beaux and belles of the ante-bellum period.

Much of the history written here has been written before with more emphasis and detail than this volume offers. It is one of those volumes that could have been left out so far as rigid, positive history is concerned. Yet, to one who likes to revel in a world where fancy frames pictures of genuine and happy deeds of a worthy people, this book will prove not only popular but a genuine blessing.

—Charles Evans

Oklahoma Historical Society

Jeff Milton. A Good Man With a Gun. By J. Evetts Haley. University of Oklahoma Press, 1948. With drawings by Harold D. Bugbee. 417 Pp. Octavo bound in handsome board. Illustrated. Price \$3.00.

This book issued by Oklahoma University Press belongs to that group which brought before the book lovers of the country such fascinating volumes as *George W. Littlefield, Texan*, by Haley; *Western Words* by Adams; *The Horse of the Americas* by Dinhardt; and *No Man's Land*, by Rister. The University of Oklahoma Press chooses to call this list of many books from its splendid workshop, Books for a Western Bookshelf.

As long as the human heart responds to deeds of daring and adventure, life told here of Jeff Milton will appeal to thousands of readers. Recent surveys of the motion picture industry disclose

that the "westerners" with their dash and fury bring out the greatest crowds and ring the cash register of the box office longest and loudest.

This story as told by Mr. Haley is nothing more than the tale of a man who wandered far afield from the birth in the governor's mansion in Florida at the beginning of the Civil War. As Jeff Milton grew in years and stature a tremendous flair for adventure grew with him; this embellished with personal encounter, matching of wits with outlaws and criminals, the use of adopting the law of "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" even to the point of murder, he moved into the Wild West and lived its life for more than fifty years.

It is said that Charles Dickens was seen looking intently out a window in London, was asked what he saw. He replied, "A man". His companion made question, "Why such interest in a man?" Dickens replied, "If I could trace the complete life of that man I would write my best book." Since proof of this is given in this volume as you follow Mr. Haley at times with breathless interest as he delineates the experiences, the emotions, the grim serenity, the alluring dare-deviltry and sublime honor and justice found in this Texas Ranger, scout, peace officer, killer and lofty minded character, Jeff Milton, you understand the worth of the statement made by Dickens.

Mr. Haley while having Milton and his friends tell their own stories, also pictures the lands and peoples of Texas, Arizona and Old and New Mexico with those raw and rough days when the great Southwest was a region of strange mysticism and the home of high adventure. He uses a pen of western stamp and his style is as breezy and bold as the winds from the Rockies. His own language is as pointed and powdery as Jeff's. It makes of such good reading that if there is red blood in the reader's veins the hours spent with this book will have no weight.

Mr. Haley, the author, has a ranch at Spearman, Texas, and it is known that he spends much of his time on this ranch in the saddle. He is rated by those who know him best as "much of a man" for he can ride and rope with the best of 'em. Haley secured his education at West State Teachers College and the University of Texas. His books that have brought him national recognition are: "The XIT Ranch of Texas and the Early Days of the Llano Estacado," "Charles Goodnight, Cowman and Plainsman," and "George W. Littlefield, Texan."

The printing and binding of this volume is up to the high standards of the University of Oklahoma Press which has brought it the highest respect of book-makers of quality throughout America.

—Charles Evans

Oklahoma Historical Society.