

## NECROLOGIES

## JOHN ROBERT REINHARDT

1876—1949

John Robert Reinhardt, better known as J. R. Reinhardt, widely known resident, pioneer merchant and civic leader of Oktaha, Muskogee County, Oklahoma, died at his home on January 20, 1949, at the age of seventy-two years. Funeral services were conducted by the Reverends Max Holcomb and C. C. Williamson in the First Methodist Church in Oktaha January 22nd. Interment was in Memorial Park at Muskogee.

His ancestors, German, Scotch and Irish, were real pioneers and active patriots against the royalists in the American Revolution. They migrated from Europe to escape from the restraint of conscience, settled in southwest North Carolina Colony, and their indignant souls were stirred to energetic action when civil oppression lifted its ugly head in the home of their adoption.

Christian Reinhardt and his wife, Elizabeth Warlick, in colonial days lived on a farm one half mile north of what is now Lincolnton, Lincoln County, North Carolina. They were great grandparents of the subject of this article. This county was named after General Lincoln who defended Charleston in the Revolution. On this farm and around the Reinhardt home on June 20, 1780 the revolutionary battle of Ramsour's Mill was fought between the Tories and the Whigs or Patriots. Ramsour's Mill was on a creek about three hundred yards west of the Reinhardt house. Reinhardt and his neighbors learned that Lord Cornwallis, then encamped at Camden, South Carolina, planned to soon invade North Carolina to put down the rebellion there and to support the royalists. About 1,300 Tories assembled in camp about three hundred yards back of the Reinhardt home and Colonel Locke with about 400 Patriots decided to attack the Tories at sunrise on June 20th, and did attack. Locke pressed forward with his men and a severe battle followed. In two instances the parties were so close together that they beat each other with the butts of their guns. At first sound of firing Mrs. Reinhardt hurried with her young children across the fields, and crossing the creek found shelter in the midst of a cane brake. After the firing ceased Mrs. Reinhardt returned home, only to find the dead and wounded strewn on the ground around her house. The moans of the wounded mingled with the wails of the relatives of the dead who came to claim them. In this battle neighbors, relatives and friends fought against each other and as the smoke would clear they would recognize each other. All were in civilian clothes and it was hard to distinguish the Whigs from the Tories. Such was the spirit of the times. In this fight Christian Reinhardt was a leader with Colonel Locke of the Whigs or Patriots.

Later Cornwallis left Camden, S. C. taking his army into North Carolina on his way to Guilford Court House and enroute camped four days at Ramsour's Mill on the Reinhardt farm from January 24 to 28, 1781, then they marched to Beattie's Ford.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See *Historical Sketches of North Carolina* by Col. John H. Wheeler; *Greensboro Daily News*, July 1, 1931, Greensboro, N. C.; *Lincoln County News*, March 5, 1931, Lincolnton, N. C.

Michael Reinhardt was born at Lincolnton, N. C. in 1790, the son of Christian Reinhardt and Elizabeth Warlick. He was a Captain under General Andrew Jackson in the War of 1812, afterwards a member of the North Carolina State Senate 1827, 1828, 1836 and 1838, an extensive farmer and owner of a flour mill. In 1846 he moved to Marshall County, Mississippi, and in 1855 settled in Prairie County, Arkansas. Mary Moore born in New York 1795, a teacher in a girls' college at Rochester, New York, came south to teach school and married Michael Reinhardt at Lincolnton, North Carolina. Upon the death of Mary Moore, Michael Reinhardt married Maria Allyn, born at New London, Connecticut, 1790, who also came south to teach school at Lincolnton. Maria Allyn was a sister of Captain Francis I. Allyn, of New London, Connecticut, who at his expense brought to America in 1824 from La Harve, France, Le Marquis de Lafayette, his son, George Washington Lafayette, and the secretary, M. Auguste L'Assesseur. The Lafayettes and Captain Allyn were fond friends after.<sup>2</sup>

Michael Reinhardt and Mary Moore had the following children: Adolphus Wallace, Daniel, Augustus Michael, and Lizzie. Michael Reinhardt and Maria Allyn had children: Maria and John D.

Augustus Michael Reinhardt, the son of Michael Reinhardt and Mary Moore, was born at Lincolnton, North Carolina in 1825, moved to Mississippi in 1846, and settled in Hickory Plains, Prairie County, Arkansas in 1848. He was a public surveyor, slave owner and farmed extensively. With the coming of the war, he heard the call of the South, entered the Confederate Army, became a Captain in Turnbull's Battalion, under General Morgan and saw service at the battles of Lookout Mountain, Chickamauga, and other points in Tennessee, Mississippi and Arkansas.

Augustus M. Reinhardt married Mary Rebecca Harshaw at Hickory Plains and they had the following children: Annie Reinhardt Perkins of Hattiesburg, Mississippi; Henry Reinhardt of Wetumka, Oklahoma; Mamie Reinhardt Conway, a teacher in Draughon's Business College, other colleges, and Henry Kendall College at Muskogee, Indian Territory, now Tulsa University at Tulsa, Oklahoma; Emmett Reinhardt, merchant at Des Arc, Arkansas; Clara Reinhardt Brady, teacher of history at Henry Kendall College at Muskogee, Indian Territory, now Tulsa University; Sallie Reinhardt, a teacher in Indian schools in Indian Territory, Mattie R. Reid (Mrs. John Reid), Stillwater, Oklahoma; William Reinhardt, a land owner and cattle man of Hickory Plains, Arkansas; John Robert Reinhardt, of Oktaha, Oklahoma, the subject of this article. All are dead now except Clara R. Brady, living at El Paso, Texas.

John Robert Reinhardt was born March 25, 1876, on his father's plantation at Hickory Plains, Arkansas. On this farm he grew to manhood, learned the value of labor and hard work, attended the schools of that community, and like many men of his day his first position was as school teacher in a school not far from where he lived. On March 25, 1902 he married Cornelia Ellen Dunkum at the Dunkum home near Hickory Plains. As a small boy and a young man one of his running mates was Joseph T. Robinson, afterwards U. S. Senator and candidate for Vice President of the United States. In 1906, Mr. Reinhardt moved to Muskogee County, Oklahoma, and three years later settled in Oktaha, Oklahoma, where for many years he engaged in the mercantile business under the firm name of Oktaha Trading Company, a partnership composed of John C. Brady and F. E. Brady and himself. After some years he purchased the interest of his partners in the business and as sole owner conducted the business under

<sup>2</sup> See Lafayette Letters, by Edward E. Dale, 1925; *Arkansas Gazette* of Nov. 23, 1947; *The Daily Oklahoman* of April 4, 1926.

the same name until his death on January 20, 1949. He owned and operated several farms in Muskogee County and engaged extensively in the cattle and livestock business. Following a true American tradition, his means at first small, his business was small, but under his sensible management his business expanded immensely so that at his death his landed estate was extensive and his name and store were favorably known and spoken of at home and far away.

Mrs. Cornelia Ellen Reinhardt, his widow, and two charming daughters, Bida Reinhardt York and Rebecca Reinhardt Priest survive him. The widow and Mrs. York live in Muskogee, Oklahoma, and Mrs. Priest teaches school and lives in Tahlequah, Oklahoma.

Mr. Reinhardt was Mayor of Oktaha, member of the School Board and Vice President of Muskogee County Taxpayers League for some years and otherwise never sought political favor. He preferred to discharge his obligations to his country rather by obeying than the making of its laws. His manners were frank and candid; and the more intimately he was known the better was he beloved. Long will he be remembered as a true man, a faithful friend and an upright citizen, conscientious in the discharge of all of his obligations and in the performance of his duties. He was a Steward in the Methodist Church and died as he had lived, a true Christian, placing firm faith in the promises of the scriptures.

—By William B. Moore

*Muskogee, Oklahoma*

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## JOHN LEAF SPRINGSTON

### 1845—1929

John Leaf Springston was the son of Anderson Springston and Sallie Elliot, both of part Cherokee and white blood. Anderson Springston was born at Gunter's Landing in Tennessee and after his removal to the Indian Territory practiced law in the Cherokee courts of Delaware and Tahlequah districts.

John L. Springston was born in October, 1845, near the locality known as Lynch's Mill, a few miles east of the site of the present Spavinaw dam. He received his education in the common schools of Delaware District. As a child he knew only the Cherokee language, but soon learned to speak English fluently. At the early age of fifteen he was employed as clerk and court reporter in Saline District but, ambitious to secure an education, he made plans to enter Shurtleff College at Alton, Illinois. However, before these plans could be realized the Civil War broke out and he volunteered for service in the Indian Home Guards, commanded by Colonel William A. Phillips. In this organization he served in Company I, commanded by Captain Whitecatcher. The service of this company was limited to an area not more than one hundred miles from the Spavinaw vicinity. With his company he saw service in the battles of Cabin Creek near Vinita and Honey Springs south of Muskogee.

Because of his education and natural qualifications, Springston was called upon to perform valuable clerical duties and to act as interpreter in connection with the operation of his regiment. After his service in the war Springston was employed as translator and associate editor of the *Cherokee Advocate*, published weekly at Tahlequah, where he was associated with William P. Boudinot, William P. Ross and other talented Cherokees whose influence did much to develop the character and education of

the young Springston. It was only natural that in this capacity he should have come to the attention of the Cherokee officials and that he should have advanced to the position of secretary to the Cherokee chief and official translator under that executive. During those days, he later recalled, he was personally engaged in every transaction between the Cherokee Nation and the federal authorities in Washington. In the early seventies he served as sheriff of Saline county and a few years later as clerk of the Cherokee senate.

While he retired from the *Advocate* staff in 1886, he continued his interest in newspaper work and in 1894 he was the editor of the *Tahlequah Morning Sun*, which expired when he terminated his connection with it in order to assume the important position of interpreter in the United States court at Fort Smith presided over by Judge Isaac C. Parker. For a number of years this court had exclusive jurisdiction over criminal matters arising in the Indian Territory, and as many parties to these cases, together with their witnesses, were Cherokees, it was important to both the government and litigants that an interpreter of the highest qualifications be a member of the staff of that court. The qualifications and character of young Springston having become widely known, it was only natural that Judge Parker should have selected Springston as his official interpreter. Here he continued an eventful and useful career.

During the first two years of Bushyhead's administration as chief of the Cherokees Springston was clerk of the senate and official interpreter during the entire administration. He also acted as interpreter for a special commission on citizenship. After the war he continued to practice law and devoted much time to attending to pension claims of Indians who had served in the Civil War and their heirs.

Mr. Springston was first married in 1867 to Sarah Eliza Moseley, granddaughter of George Fields, by whom he had two daughters, Ruth and Elizabeth. By a second marriage he had two daughters, Viola Dacre and Wenona. In 1885 he married Miss Alice Caroline Gray, daughter of Adolphus Gray, a white man of Raleigh, North Carolina, by whom he had one son, W. P. Boudinot Springston.

For some years Mr. Springston lived in Sallisaw, where he was known as a useful and public spirited citizen. Here he constructed a building near the Kansas City Southern Railroad station that was known as the Springston House. Later this house was occupied by the first Sallisaw public school. Afterwards he removed to Vian, where he became one of the principal builders of the little town. From here he removed to Owassa and still later to Tulsa to spend his declining years with his son, William B. Springston, with whom he was living at the time of his death.

Mr. Springston was described as a handsome man six feet tall, weighing 236 pounds and a splendid specimen of his race. He had much charm of address and was capable of strongly impressing the juries before whom he practiced.

In his late years Mr. Springston suffered from a heart ailment which caused his death on the sixth day of January, 1929, at the age of eighty-four years.

Records of historical interest and value kept by Mr. Springston at Fort Gibson during the Civil War, connected with the service of his regiment were recently presented to the Oklahoma Historical Society by his son, Mr. W. B. Springston.

By Grant Foreman.

*Muskogee, Oklahoma*