

McLoud, 1895 to 1949

By *Klaris Molder**

At one time all the land between the North Canadian and the South Canadian rivers belonged to the Creeks and Seminoles that were two of the Five Civilized Tribes. By a treaty with these Indians following the Civil War, the western lands of these nations was ceded to the government for use in locating other tribes from other parts of the United States.¹

The Potawatomi were allotted lands in severalty south of the North Fork of the Canadian river in what is now Pottawatomie county. Their surplus lands were opened to settlement, along with those of the Sac and Fox and Iowa tribes, September 22, 1891.

On May 25, 1895, the Kickapoo reserve lands lying in the already organized Lincoln and Pottawatomie counties of Oklahoma Territory were opened to settlement. The Kickapoo reserve lands assigned to the Kickapoo Indians by Executive Order August 15, 1883, lay directly south of the Iowa reserve between the Deep Fork and the North Fork of the Canadian river. They relinquished their common lands, September 9, 1891. Congress ratified the Kickapoo agreement March 3, 1893 and each member of the tribe was allotted eighty acres. Two years passed before allotment for the Kickapoo was completed, and their surplus lands were opened to white settlement by proclamation of Grover Cleveland. The Indian reservations in the western part of Indian territory automatically became a part of Oklahoma Territory by provisions in the Organic Act of 1890.

Two men who played no small part in the history of McLoud were Ewers White and John Seikel. Ewers White had much influence with the Potawatomi. He came from Fredonia, Kansas to the opening of "Old Oklahoma," April 22, 1889, as deputy U. S. Marshal. An early day postmaster at Tecumseh, he later owned thousands of acres in the fertile valley between McLoud and Dale. He was appointed U. S. Marshal under President Coolidge. He died at Oklahoma City, May 25, 1925 from exposure received in line of duty.

* *Klaris Molder* (Mrs. J. C.), whose home is at Sulphur, Oklahoma, was born in the Kickapoo country north of McLoud, the daughter of Douglas and Mary (Lincoln) Kerr, pioneer settlers who had staked a claim at the opening of the Kickapoo lands on May 25, 1895. As a writer, Mrs. Molder has had articles, and feature stories published in leading newspapers of Oklahoma and in magazines with a national circulation. She has dedicated her story of McLoud to her mother, Mary Lincoln Kerr, and other pioneers who have made it a substantial, enterprising community.—Ed.

¹ Reservations in the former Creek and Seminole cessions were assigned the Potawatomi, Kickapoo, Iowa, Sac and Fox, and Pawnee tribes from Kansas. The Potawatomi Reservation lay between the Canadian and the North Fork rivers, extending west from the Creek and Seminole boundaries to the Indian Meridian.—Ed.

John Seikel came to the Potawatomi country from Shawnee County, Kansas in 1892, when there was nothing but Indian villages in the Canadian Valley. He probably has been in McLoud longer than any other person. He has always been an influence for the good of the town. John Seikel and his sons, and his brothers, Mike Seikel and Leo Seikel have always been prominent in the business life of the town. John Seikel was in the gin business in 1907. He was a hog buyer for twenty five years and established a general merchandise store in 1923 in the building where it is now. He owns the building erected by Craddock and Allen. John Seikel has twice been mayor of McLoud. John Seikel's wife was Miss Anna McMamara. She was primary teacher at Dale when she married John Seikel in 1901. Mrs. Mike Seikel is an early day citizen of McLoud who came from the Potawatomi side of McLoud. She was Miss Amy Means.

Settlers in the Kickapoo country who had a part in the history of McLoud were the Bill Russell's of the White community; the J. L. Roughton's of the Dewey community; and the Douglas Kerr family who settled in the Buck community. Mrs. Charles Clinard is a daughter of Bill Russell; Mrs. Ike Dodrill and Mrs. Tom Hill, daughters of J. L. Roughton.

It was the merging of the settlers on Kickapoo lands north of the river with the pioneers in the Potawatomi country south of the river and the coming of the railroad that started the town. It actually started on the Kickapoo side. T. J. O'Shaughnessy, Public Relations Director for the Chicago Rock Island and Pacific railroad company, has this to say:

"Our east-west line through Oklahoma was started in the year 1890 by a corporation known as Choctaw Coal & Railway Company which constructed a line between Wister and McAlester in order to open up coal properties which it had acquired under lease through the Department of Interior, principally from the Choctaw nation of Indians. This corporation also constructed a line of railroad between Oklahoma City and Fort Reno, and in the year 1893 was commencing the gap between McAlester and Oklahoma City, between which points is the town of McLoud.

"However, the Choctaw Coal and Railway Company did not make a success of developing its coal properties and went into receivership in 1893. The following year a group of eastern capitalists became interested and through foreclosure sale, acquired the coal mining property and the railroad as then constructed. Principally, because all of the properties were located in Indian territory and under the control of the United States government, the reorganized railroad was chartered in 1894 under an Act of Congress which permitted the reorganizers to chose their own corporate name. The name selected was the Choctaw, Oklahoma and Gulf Railroad Company. This new company then proceeded to prosecute the construction of the railroad between McAlester and Oklahoma City and opened the line for operation on October 1, 1895, on which date between the points named, a through service of freight and mixed trains was put into effect, through passenger service being established at a later date.

"The Choctaw, Oklahoma and Gulf Railroad Company was leased to the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railway Company in March, 1904. This lease was continued through the years until terminated by our recent reorganization January 1, 1948. The new Company—Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific—was authorized as part of the reorganization plan to dissolve the Choctaw, Oklahoma and Gulf Railroad Company, and in the recent session of Congress, in June, 1948, a special Act was passed voiding the congressional charter of the Choctaw, Oklahoma and Gulf. Consequently, this east-west line through Oklahoma is now simply a part of the Chicago, Rock Island and Pacific Railroad Company."

The original townsite of McLoud was owned by Edward J. Kelly and deeded to McLoud Townsite Company June 21, 1895. The townsite was surveyed by J. C. Wilkinson, and it is interesting to note that the certificate of survey was acknowledged by Cash Cade, an 89'er pioneer of Kingfisher County, and later resident of Shawnee, Pottawatomie County.² The original plat was filed June 22, 1895; the Craddock Addition filed December 3, 1901; Mendonca Addition, April 14, 1902; Rosedale Addition, January 30, 1918; High School Addition, February 25, 1947 and amended plat out lot addition, filed April 4, 1947.

A petition for a city election was filed June 2, 1896 and the election held June 30, 1896; incorporation was declared July 7, 1896. The town of McLoud actually started with the Indian village on the Kickapoo side of the river.

George Rose started the First National Bank in 1896. The town's only bank, The Bank of Commerce, was organized September 12, 1901. The first directors were Charles E. Billingsley, president; M. Lauheimer, vice president; H. E. Green, cashier; J. C. Hodges and P. O. Sullivan. It was chartered for fifty years May 1, 1907 as the Bank of Commerce. Directors were J. Edd Craddock, Emmett Craddock, A. H. Young, secretary. George Boggs was President, and Sam Whitson, Cashier. According to the minutes, the president was allowed a salary of one hundred dollars a month. January 5, 1918 Willard Johnson, Shawnee, became president and J. C. Miller, McLoud, cashier. Ike D. Barrett, managing officer of the bank since 1926, was elected president, January 7, 1937. On April 11, 1949, there were \$792,429.20 on deposit in the Bank of Commerce, McLoud. Directors are Ike Barrett, Essie Barrett, Edgar Ellsworth, Jr. and Lee Melton.

²The original townsite of McLoud commenced at the section corner of the southeast corner of the southeast quarter of Section 9, Township 11, Range 3 East, Indian Meridian, Oklahoma Territory, running fence along the south line of said quarter section for 2929 feet to south half of said quarter section 2640 feet to the east line of said quarter section, thence south along east line of said quarter 4370 feet then to the south line of the Choctaw railroad right-of-way, thence easterly along the south line of the same right-of-way to a point where said line intersects the south line of Section 10, Township 11, Range 2 East, thence west along south line of said section 1470 feet to place of beginning."—Records in Office of County Clerk of Pottawatomie County, at Shawnee.

The earliest newspaper obtainable in the preparation of this article was a copy of *The Weekly Observer*, dated September 21, 1906.³ It was a consolidation of *The McLoud Sunbeam* and *The McLoud Standard*. Items of interest from *The Weekly Observer* were that the silver-tongued orator, T. P. Gore, was scheduled to speak in Hollis Hall, McLoud. In the city Democratic primary, J. M. Howard and A. J. Carlton tied; J. W. Hatfield 38 and J. C. Mooney 18; J. A. Stidham 35 and E. Myers 18; Ben Venable 32 and Walter Franklin 18. Winners were to be delegates to a convention for the purpose of selecting delegates to the Constitutional Convention.

Jess Barnett had bought the Staley Butcher shop; W. P. Ravellette advertised as a house mover; W. S. Beesley had been visiting J. W. Cook; the Catholic Ladies were serving a dinner to help buy a cemetery site at Riverside; there was a column of local news from Minneha; the Rock Island advertised excursions to Colorado. In a local interest column, Wardie Proctor had gone to work for O. H. Plater; Dr. J. I. Lyons' team had run away, and the buggy was a wreck. J. L. Nations was looking over Platt National Park in the Chickasaw country; Tom Hayes had malaria fever. The First National Bank, with Tom Hollis, president and L. B. Heliker, Cashier, advertised a general banking business with a capital of \$25,000.

Dill Barnett was manager of the Farmers Market House in the old Seikel building. There was a Whittet studio; and Mesdames Enlow and Gray were to have a grand opening of Millinery; Arthur Hollis was Worshipful Master of the Masonic lodge; Goldie Kennedy, Noble Grand of the Rebekah, and W. Bourke, Noble Grand of the IOOF; R. M. C. Hill, Commander of the Maccabees. All lodges met in Younkman Hall. J. A. Mendonca sold wagons. J. W. Terry had a farm for sale. And Chill Tonic ads were plentiful.

Sam Elzo had the first theater and also the first roller rink. The theater was called "Rex." Breckenbridge Glass and Scott Yates built the first telephone system in 1903. It is said that Dr. R. C. Kaylor had the first automobile.

Mrs. Mattie Ross was pastmaster under President Grover Cleveland; and Marsh Younkman, postmaster under President McKinley. Dr. Charles Craddock was one of the early mayors of the City. The Corner Drug Store, now owned by Courtney Lisle, was started by Dr. J. I. Lyons at the opening of the town. It was later owned by J. C. Mooney and Dr. J. Frank Cox. Lisle has owned the drug store since 1920.

Much of the town's social life has centered around the Eastern Star. Beatrice Chapter No. 91, was instituted by Shawnee Chapter at Masonic Hall, June 19, 1907, with Fannie Post, Oklahoma City,

³ Copy of *The Weekly Observer* for September 21, 1906, has been placed in the collections of the Oklahoma Historical Society, by Klaris Molder.—Ed.

instituting officer. Mrs. Carrie Boggs was Worthy Matron and J. W. Hatfield, Worthy Patron. Charter for McLoud chapter No. 193 was granted February 12, 1909.⁴

January 17, 1948 McLoud Masons celebrated their fiftieth anniversary in fitting ceremony. The nucleus of McLoud Masonic lodge was one instituted at Dale and moved to McLoud June 22, 1899. A charter was granted McLoud Lodge No. 126, February 10, 1909. There were eighty charter members. A list would duplicate the men's names found among the Eastern Star charter members.⁵

The oldest church building in McLoud, still in use, is the Methodist, built in 1897. It was called the Arcadia charge of Oklahoma Conference of Indian Mission of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. Ben Venable, owner of the town's first hotel, hauled rock for the foundation of the church. There was no money for pews, and each family bought their own. The Reverend O. T. Noble was the first pastor, followed by J. E. Desch. The Reverend Amos, father of Mae Rose, formerly Mrs. Ewers White, was pastor in 1906. Some of the charter members were the Venable family, Mrs. Rose, Mrs. Mary Craddock and Mr. and Mrs. B. F. Gillis. The Catholic Church was built in 1903. John Seikel has been a member of the board of trustees since it was organized.

The first school was a frame building where Mrs. Ike Dodrill now lives. School board members in 1908 were John Seikel, Edd Craddock and George Boggs. A \$16,000 bond election for a new building was in 1909. A red brick building was erected at the south end of Main street. In 1920 this building burned. Bonds were again voted in 1921 and teachers held school in churches till the new building was completed. At the state school land sale in 1920, John Seikel bought the school lease and deeded the site where the building stands to the district. One of the early school superintendents was George Johnston. Mrs. Josephine Roseberry was the first principal of the consolidated school. An early day teacher of the community who might be mentioned here was Charles Holtzman, the

⁴ Charter members for McLoud Chapter were: Mr. and Mrs. T. L. Courtney, Mrs. J. B. Allen, Mrs. R. F. Anderson, Mrs. Minnie L. Brown, Mrs. H. L. Brown, Mrs. Lou Craddock, Mrs. Goldie Franklin, Mrs. Minnie Fry, Mrs. Myrtle Glass, Mrs. Monta Hayes, Mrs. W. H. Hollis, Dr. R. C. Kaylor, Mrs. Abbie Kohler, Mrs. Rachel Proffitt, R. M. Proffitt, M. J. Smith, J. E. Son, Mrs. Pearl Stowell, Mrs. Amanda Wallingford, Mrs. Mamie Young, Mrs. Lyons, Mrs. Emma Hollis, Mrs. Dixie Yates, Mrs. America Hayes, Mrs. Emma Hatfield, Mrs. Idella Hayes, Mrs. Etta Grocian, Mrs. Ada Anderson, Mrs. Susan B. Allen, Mrs. Verna Oliver, Mrs. Lucy Hampton, Mrs. Dora Hayes, Mrs. Lillie Son, Mrs. Alice Younkman, Mrs. L. A. Hampton, M. A. Younkman, A. E. Grocian, George Boggs, J. W. Hatfield, Ella Kaylor and Mr. and Mrs. C. M. Hayes. The writer was initiated into McLoud chapter No. 193 February 23, 1918.

⁵ Others not named there include Brack McGlathery, George Monroe, Otto Loessin, George Prince, John Phillips, Bill Russell, Frank Routh, George Stowell, Clinton Shreve, Dillard Saylor, William Wanhoover, Nathaniel Whittet, Chris Kohler, James Kennedy, William Jarvis, Thomas E. Cooley, Arthur Cole, Otto Baade, William Beasley, Ezra Bullard, William Baade.

writer's first teacher. He attended normal school at Chandler and studied under J. B. A. Robertson who later became Governor of Oklahoma. Charles Holtzman's son, Glenn, was the first baby delivered by Dr. R. M. C. Hill after he established practice in McLoud.

The Garner family was among the earliest families. Isaac Newton Garner, owner of the first lumber yard and father of Mrs. R. C. Kaylor came in 1900. He built and lived for years in the house now owned by the widow of Douglas Kerr, Mrs. Mary L. Kerr. The writer was married in this home on May 20, 1923.

The Rooker family came to McLoud from the Potawatomi side. They had come to the river bottom near Dale from Blue Springs, Georgia in 1901. Since 1920 Fred Rooker and Dewey Rooker have been prominent business men in McLoud.

Mrs. Walter Franklin owns the post office building and the Owl Drug Store. She came from Wapanucka, Indian Territory in 1899 as Goldie Kennedy. She married Walter Franklin in 1908. Walter Franklin had staked a claim on the Kickapoo side. Dr. R. C. Kaylor has maintained an office in the Owl Drug store since he came out of school and started practice in 1900. Dr. Charles Craddock and Dr. Emmett Craddock were first owners of the Owl Drug Store.

Hayes Brothers (Charles, Tom and Richard) were early day merchants. They came from Arkansas and worked for Craddock Brothers till the Craddock building burned in 1900.

The first census gave the town a population of 787. The 1949 population is about twelve hundred, two hundred of which are Negroes. It is on U. S. Highway 270, has had electricity since 1912, gas since 1928 and water and sewerage since 1928.

The town of McLoud has no bonded indebtedness. It boasts the softest water and the lowest taxes in the state. There are forty-five businesses exchanging goods for profit. At different times it has been a state leader in hog market, cotton, sweet potatoes. Now the big industry is blackberries and bids fair to continue.

The annual Blackberry festival was held on July 4, 1949, in Memorial park that was donated to the town by John Seikel in memory of War dead. Thousands participated in the double celebration. Sixteen-year old Patsy Harwell, Tecumseh, reigned as Blackberry Queen.

The festival opened with a parade of beautifully decorated floats, headed by the American Legion with music by Harrah High School Band. Typical of a McLoud Fourth of July celebration was an Indian stomp dance, and the usual fireworks.

As an advertising stunt, the McLoud Chamber of Commerce, headed by B. M. Seikel, sent President Harry S. Truman a crate of blackberries on June 28, the peak day of the harvest. They reached the president by overnight-air-freight. On June 29, 1949, McLoud made the front page of *The Daily Oklahoman* with a story about the President receiving the blackberries.