

NECROLOGIES

FREDERICK SIMPICH

1878—1950 .

Many readers of *The Chronicles* who are also readers of the *National Geographic Magazine*, will have heard with deepest regret of the death of Mr. Frederick Simpich, an assistant editor of the *Geographic*.

Mr. Simpich was not only a warm personal friend of the writer of this sketch, but he had a peculiar hold on the affections of Oklahomans because of the sympathetic and absorbing article which he wrote about Oklahoma and which was published in the *National Geographic Magazine* for March, 1941. Mr. Simpich came to Muskogee and labored diligently to secure the most interesting material that went into his article which he entitled "So Oklahoma Grew Up." and which covered forty-four pages of that excellent magazine.

The editor of the *Geographic* wrote to the undersigned that Mr. Simpich's death "was a great shock to all of us who worked with him here and his passing leaves an irreplaceable gap in the Society's staff." He died January 25, 1950, at Garfield Hospital in Washington. He was seventy-one years old. "World traveler, writer and former diplomat, Simpich was taken ill at Washington National Air Port shortly before he was to board a plane for Texas to start work on an article for the Magazine."

He had been apparently in good health. Colleagues who talked to him only the day before said he was in excellent spirits and looking forward to his Texas trip with enthusiasm.

"First as a young newspaper reporter, then in the U. S. Foreign Service, and for the past 22 years as a roving correspondent and editor for the *National Geographic Magazine*, Simpich traveled by almost every means of transportation and to almost every major city and country in the world.

"He liked to recall that his travels started at the age of 16 when he left his home, then in Missouri, and embarked on a trip around the world.

"His complete itinerary would read like a somewhat abbreviated index to the world atlas, including such romantic and intriguing places as Shanghai, Baghdad, the Nile Valley, the Bahamas, Afghanistan, the Philippines, the Argentine pampas, Manchuria, Sonora, Mexico, and the mystic Arabian city of Nedjef—not to mention the length and breadth of the United States.

"Born in Urbana, Illinois, on November 21, 1878, the son of Charles Frederick and Sarah Elizabeth Simpich, young Simpich spent his early career as a newspaper man in Shanghai, Manila, San Francisco and other cities, traveling much and frequently contributing feature material and articles to such magazines as the *Saturday Evening Post*, *Nation's Business*, and *Argosy*.

"In 1909 he temporarily forsook journalism to take a post with the United States Foreign Service. Literary work, however, continued his principal avocation, and his first article, a piece of the Garden of Eden written from Baghdad, to appear in the *National Geographic Magazine* was contributed in 1914.

"Simpich's diplomatic assignments took him to Germany, Turkey, and Mexico. During the Carranza revolution, at which time he was U. S. consul-general in Nogales, Mexico, he performed services for the British, German, and Chinese nationalists living in the ravaged areas so satisfactorily that he received the official thanks of the three governments.

"His years in the Foreign Service, from 1909 to 1923, were interrupted temporarily in 1918, when he served with the U. S. Army Intelligence.

"Simpich rose rapidly in the ranks of the diplomats, becoming consul-general at Guatamala in 1920; later in the same year, an assistant foreign trade adviser in the Department of State; and finally, until his retirement from foreign service, a member of the State Department's Division of Western European Affairs.

"His return to literary work, in April, 1923, immediately plunged him into a heavy program of travel and writing. His first journey took him to Puerto Rico, Panama, and Mexico, where he made a study of economic and trade conditions and contributed articles to various American magazines.

"Then, in 1927, at the invitation of Dr. Gilbert Grosvenor, he joined the *National Geographic Magazine* staff. Since then, he has participated in several National Geographic Society expeditions, and roamed the Pacific, South America, the United States, Europe, and the Middle East, gathering material for his articles. He was made an assistant editor of the publication in 1931.

"In all, he contributed more than 80 articles to the *National Geographic Magazine*, with the subject matter ranging from the Ozarks and the Orient to chemistry and the industry of the Ruhr.

"For recreation, Simpich collected wood carvings—a hobby he pursued for 30 years—and play the guitar."

"His clubs included the National Press Club, the Cosmos, the Overseas Writers, and Chevy Chase.

"Mr. Simpich is survived by his widow, Mrs. Margaret Elliot Edwards Simpich, and three sons—Frederick Edwards of Honolulu, and George Cary and William Norris, both of New York."

Funeral services were held Saturday, January 28th, at St. Alban's Episcopal Church, and interment followed in Rock Creek Cemetery, Washington, D. C.

—GRANT FOREMAN

Muskogee, Oklahoma.

MERRITT JULIUS GLASS

1879—1949

Among the many pioneers of ambitious and vigorous character in an undeveloped land, Merritt Julius Glass, better known as "M. J." or Merritt, to his intimates, helped to make the Indian Territory and the new State of Oklahoma, a more thriving and progressive place in which to live.

Merritt Julius Glass was born August 17, 1879, at Cherokee, Colbert County, Alabama. He died at his home in Tulsa on August 9, 1949, and was laid away in the family mausoleum, Oaklawn Cemetery. His father was George Hezekiah Glass and his mother, Charlotte Linton Glass. In 1882 they, with their two children, Margaret Rebecca and Merritt Julius, moved

to Colorado City, Texas, and later to Coleman County, Texas. After the death of the father in 1892, Charlotte Linton Glass, with her children, moved to Duncan, Indian Territory.

Merritt Julius Glass attended North Texas Normal School, Denton, Texas, where he studied two years, after which he entered Peabody College at Nashville, Tennessee. Two years later he studied at Morgan Park Academy, Morgan Park, Illinois, and at the University of Chicago.

While he was attending school in Nashville, his mother remarried and moved to a large ranch of government leased (Indian reservation) land, with post office at Hope in the Chickasaw Nation, Indian Territory. Here, for a number of years, Mr. Glass led the life of a frontier herdsman, on an eighteen thousand acre ranch. While engaged in this activity, he studied law, working late into the night and arising at four o'clock in the morning to apply himself to his studies. He finished this course and was admitted to the Bar, in the western district of Oklahoma, before he reached the age of twenty-one.

While residing at Hope, Mr. Glass was appointed postmaster there. He combined this responsibility with managing a store of general merchandise and overseeing the ranch where he formerly punched cattle. This ranch included farm lands and had twenty-one tenant houses on the premises. When the Kiowa-Comanche territory was opened for settlement in 1901, Mr. Glass engaged in the practice of law with his half brother, James H. Wolverton and a friend, at Lawton.

In 1905 he entered law practice as a member of the firm, Hussey and Glass. It was at this time that he met his future wife, Florence Elizabeth Shaw, in the social circles of the First Christian Church in Lawton. Miss Shaw was the daughter of Walter Clark Shaw (a builder and contractor) and Movernon Delsie Shaw. In October of 1907 Merritt Julius Glass and Florence Elizabeth Shaw were united in marriage, in the parsonage of Reverend Curtis, pastor of the First Christian Church of Lawton, Oklahoma. Florence E. Glass, a woman of rare capabilities, proved to be a very helpful life partner.

Mr. and Mrs. Glass had four children, two daughters and two sons: Melba Glass Davis, deceased, and Wilson Vernon Glass, who was associated with his father in business and continues as a member of the firm, M. J. Glass Company.

In 1909 Mr. Glass, with his wife and mother, moved from Lawton to Tulsa, Oklahoma, where he opened real estate office. He kept a large office force and much business went through his hands. Besides helping numerous others to buy and sell, he and his mother, made investments of their own. They believed in the value of corners, and were once owners of sites now occupied by some of Tulsa's largest buildings. They platted and sold several additions to the City of Tulsa, two on the north side and one on the west. Mr. Glass finally built a permanent home for his family on the corner of Oklahoma and North Denver Avenue, on property which he had developed and brought into the City, as the Hobbs Addition.

Mr. Glass helped organize the Tulsa Real Estate Board and became its second president. He was a charter member of the Oklahoma Association of Real Estate Boards, served as its president and supported Oklahoma's first Real Estate License Law, which was similar to the one passed by the legislature in 1949. For a number of years he was a member of the State Excise and Equalization Board and was looked upon as the most reasonable, reliable and exact appraiser of real estate in the country. He assisted in naming many of Tulsa's streets and was instrumental in the development

of several highways leading out of the City. During World War I, Miller and Glass had the largest ground-floor real estate office in Tulsa.

Mr. Glass was a consistent booster of his own home town. The following is an excerpt from *The Tulsa Daily World*:

"Mr. Glass is remembered as an after-dinner speaker at many conventions and public gatherings. For years he was chosen by the Real Estate Board to represent it at Town Cup Contest, featured at the annual convention of the National Associations of Real Estate Boards.

"Many old-timers will remember his famous speech on 'Tulsa, The Oil Capitol of the World', climaxed by the assertion that, 'without Tulsa oil, the world would squeak on its axis and civilization would rust in idleness.'"

Mr. Glass was a member of the Sons of Confederate Veterans, which was a thriving organization while Oklahoma was still a young State. He served as president of that organization and also as president of the Trans-Mississippi Division of the Sons of Confederate Veterans. In 1918 Tate Brady and Mr. Glass were the men most responsible for bringing the National Confederate Reunion to Tulsa. Later through their efforts, Tulsa sent a special train to Washington, D. C. to the National Reunion there.

During early statehood the Democratic party formed an organization known as the "Cotton Sox Club." The members were not confined to Oklahoma but included several surrounding states. The first Governor of Oklahoma, C. N. Haskell, was a member of this organization. Mr. Glass also served as president of both the Cox-Roosevelt and the Roosevelt-Garner Clubs. He was an active member of the Tulsa Pioneer Association and also of the old-time Cherokee Strip Cow Puncher's Association.

Although Mr. Glass did not practice law after he moved to Tulsa, he retained his membership in the Oklahoma Bar Association through the years. He was a Mason, member of Tulsa Lodge No. 71 A. F. & A. M., and was a member (32nd degree) of the Scottish Rite, Indian Consistory No. 2, at McAlester, Oklahoma. Both Mr. and Mrs. Glass were Christian Scientists, having joined the First Church of Christ, Scientist, soon after their arrival in Tulsa and remaining active in this church organization from that time.

Genealogists of Europe and America claim great antiquity for the Glass family and through history trace them to the days of Robert Bruce in Scotland. Samuel Glass and his wife, Mary Gambol, were the first of the Glass family to come from the old country to America, arriving in 1735. They were Scot-Irish Presbyterians and descendants of the Covenanters. On his paternal grandmother's side, his ancestral chart dates back to David Street, who was a member of Captain Terrill's Company, 5th Virginia Regiment, during the Revolutionary War. This Company was also known as Captain William Fowler's Company.

His father, George Hezekiah Glass, was born in Alabama and served in the Confederate States Army in the Civil War. Mr. Glass was a second cousin of Hugo Black, who has served on the United States Supreme Court Bench since 1937.

Merritt Julius Glass was a man who always maintained a kindly attitude toward those in distress and though never thought of as a philanthropist, spent many hours in his office with no thought of remuneration helping some friend or stranger to work out a business problem, or to find his way out of financial stress. His normal relationship with his fellow-men patterned the neighborliness of the old west.

—Thelma Brookes