

NECROLOGY  
ANABEL FLEMING THOMASON  
1874—1949

Anabel Fleming Thomason was born January 5, 1874, at Clarksville, Texas, and died September 15, 1949, in Pauls Valley, Oklahoma, where she was interred. She was the daughter of James Titus Fleming and Martha Amanda Childers Fleming. Anabel Fleming was the fourth of nine children. Mr. and Mrs. J. T. Fleming moved from Texas to Ardmore, Indian Territory, about 1886, where Mrs. Fleming was active in the organization of the Methodist Church. She also arranged for the first subscription school for white children in Ardmore (the only other schools being the scattered mission schools). Mr. Fleming was the first, or one of the first U. S. Commissioners at Ardmore. In 1895, Mr. and Mrs. J. T. Fleming and their children moved to Pauls Valley, I. T. where Mr. Fleming was Clerk of the Federal Court.

Anabel Fleming had gone to school in Clarksville, Jones Institute, in Paris, Texas, and in Austin, Texas. She came to Pauls Valley with her family and worked in her father's office of Clerk of the Court. On November 14, 1899, Miss Fleming was admitted to the bar, the first woman west of the Mississippi to be licensed to practice law, and as a result received notice in some of the leading magazines of that period.

On November 4, 1901, Anabel Fleming married Charles Harold Thomason, who had come to Indian Territory to practice law.<sup>1</sup> To this union were born four children: Harold Fleming Thomason, now a vice-president of the Retail Credit Company of Atlanta, Georgia; Donald Bryan Thomason, who died March 13, 1948; Charles McCampbell Thomason, who died in infancy; and Sara Thomason, teacher in the Pauls Valley Schools. Mrs. Thomason was a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution; charter member of the Saturday Club; Parliamentary Law Club, and an honorary Life Member of the Pauls Valley Art Club. She was a teacher of parliamentary law, and a writer of poetry, some of which has been published. Her church affiliation was Presbyterian.

The fact that Mrs. Thomason was the first woman lawyer licensed west of the Mississippi, and further that she had made a high rating on her Bar examination had led to notice of her in national magazines of the period. *Munsey's Magazine* (New York) carried an article about her admission to the Bar: *Harpers Bazaar* for January 13, 1900 (Vol. XXXIII, Number 2), p. 26, carried the following:

"A NEW LAWYER IN THE WEST"

"The Indian Territory is no longer a reservation. Its latest stride towards full development and probable Statehood is marked by the admission of Miss Anabel Fleming to practise law in the United States court that has jurisdiction over the Chickasaw Nation.

"She is a resident of the town of Pauls Valley, and acquired her law knowledge while assisting her father in the court in which she was recently enrolled as a counsellor. The town of Pauls Valley, where Miss Fleming

<sup>1</sup>R. L. Williams, "Charles Harold Thomason, 1870-1941," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XX, No. 1 (March, 1942), p. 103-04.

resides, is a place of several thousand inhabitants, and there are a score of murder cases pending upon the dockets. Upon the day of her admission to the bar Miss Fleming, as her father's assistant, attested the death warrant of a negro whom Judge Townsend had sentenced to be hanged on January 13, 1900.

"Miss Fleming, however, despite her association with the bloody justice of the frontier, is a young lady of highly cultivated manner, and though her legal attainments were only known to her intimate friends, her pre-eminent social and intellectual qualities have been recognized by all who know her. She is distinctly the leader of society in her community, and is thoroughly conventional. She is Southern born and Southern bred, of Scotch ancestry, and her family is among the best known and best connected in the State of Texas. Her father, Hon. J. T. Fleming, was one of the seventeen pioneers who organized the Republican party in Texas in 1868. Her grandfather, Hon. W. H. Fleming, commanded a regiment in the Confederate service, and was a member of the convention that reconstructed the Constitution of Texas after the civil war. Titus County, Texas, was named for Miss Fleming's maternal grandfather.

"Miss Fleming's lineage is from the family stock that settled in Wilmington, Delaware, in the seventeenth century, and held its reunion at Fairmont, West Virginia, in 1891, with thousands of representatives, including the governors of West Virginia and Florida."

*Pauls Valley, Oklahoma*

—Sara Thomason.