

NECROLOGIES

LENA ELLEN PEYTON

1885—1950

The life of this daughter of a pioneer family, both as a pupil and as a teacher, has a real part in the story of the State's public schools from their beginnings. Her family interest goes back to even earlier history of education in Oklahoma for her mother's cousin, Joseph Hervey Nourse of Washington, D.C., came to the Indian Territory in 1854, to serve as a teacher in the well known Spencer Academy for boys in the Choctaw Nation.

Lena Ellen Peyton, born at Fredonia, Kansas, on February 8, 1885, was the youngest child of Richard Leander Peyton and his wife, Sarah Helen Nourse Peyton. They were the parents of eight children who reached maturity. Richard Leander Peyton, a native of Kentucky, came from Kansas to Oklahoma at the opening of the Potawatomi-Shawnee reservation lands on September 22, 1891. He secured a homestead claim under Government rules for U. S. Army veterans, and soon brought his family from Kansas to his location near Tecumseh, in present Pottawatomie County. He had served throughout the Civil War in the Union Army: commissioned 2nd Lieutenant, 25th Regular Kentucky Volunteer Militia, October 22, 1861; 2nd Lieutenant, 8th Cavalry Regiment, Kentucky; and Lieut. Colonel, 47th Regular Kentucky Militia, October 31, 1863.¹ Colonel Peyton died in 1892, and was the first white man buried in the Old Friends' Mission Cemetery near Tecumseh.

The mother, Sarah Helen Nourse Peyton, born December 14, 1842, was a native of Butler County, Kentucky, the daughter of James Hervey and Sarah (née Neel) Nourse. James Hervey Nourse was the grandson of James and Sarah (née Fouace) Nourse, who came from England and established their home and family in Virginia, in 1770. The children and grandchildren as well as later descendants of this remarkable American family served as officers in the Colonial and U. S. armies, as officials in Washington, and as preachers and teachers.² Joseph Nourse, the oldest son of James Nourse, was military secretary to General Charles Lee, Commander-in-Chief of the Southern Department, U. S. Army, and was elected first register of the U. S. Treasury in President Washington's administration, serving in this same office until the election of Andrew Jackson as President in 1829. Sarah Nourse Peyton was reared as the daughter of a prosperous slave-holding, planter family of Kentucky. She was a member of the Old School Presbyterian Church, her life typifying the life of the pioneer mother in Oklahoma. After the death of her husband, she remained on the homestead farm for some years until she moved to Shawnee to be near schools for her youngest children.

Days on the farm were happy ones for Lena, affectionately called "Dutchie" by her brothers. Always a lover of outdoor life, birds and

¹ Colonel Peyton's original commissions bearing the signatures of two Governors of Kentucky, Beriah McCoffin and Thomas E. Bramlette, are on exhibit as part of the historical collections in the Union Army Room of the Oklahoma Historical Society.

² Maria Catherine Nourse Lyle, *James Nourse and His Descendants*, (Lexington, 1897).

flowers, her cabin and acreage near Shawnee was a source of great pleasure in summer during her last years. She had first attended a country school taught by a Quaker lady, and later, the public schools of Shawnee. An excellent student, she qualified as a teacher immediately after her graduation from high school, and began her life's work in the public schools of Shawnee. Small in stature with a faultless complexion and red gold hair, she was one of the prettiest and best loved teachers in the primary grades. A year away from teaching and many summer vacations, besides attendance at night school, were spent in study at leading universities. She received a degree from Oklahoma City University and from Chicago University.

In 1918, soon after the death of her mother, Miss Peyton came to Culbertson School in Oklahoma City. Counted among the successful teachers in the City, she was awarded the Certificate of Merit by the Board of Education when she retired from teaching, at the close of the school term in May, 1950. She was also awarded Honorary Life Membership by the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce for her loyalty and interest as a citizen of the City. Miss Peyton was a member of the Oklahoma Historical Society. She attended the First Presbyterian Church in Oklahoma City. Her death came suddenly from a heart ailment on the evening of June 13, 1950, at her apartment home, 716 N. E. 14th Street. Funeral services were held in Oklahoma City, and interment was in the family plot in Tecumseh Cemetery. Her immediate, surviving relatives, besides several grand-nephews and grand-nieces, are a sister, Mrs. M. Grace Knowles, a niece, Mrs. Melvin Race (née Helen Knowles), and a brother, R. I. Peyton, all three of Shawnee; and a brother, Frank Peyton, of Salem, Oregon.

The fact that Lena Ellen Peyton taught successfully for thirty-two years in the same second grade room in Culbertson School in Oklahoma City was an outstanding record, an achievement that is worthy of a memorial among classroom teachers in this State. She will long be remembered with warm affection by her many friends and the hundreds of her pupils who loved and admired her through the years both in Shawnee and in Oklahoma City.

By Muriel H. Wright

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

GIDEON GRAHAM

1867—1950

In the death of Gideon Graham, on February 10, 1950, at his home in Collinsville, Oklahoma, this State lost one of its "grand old men of the out-of-doors." His career was a most unusual one. Much of his life was spent on farms and ranches. He always enjoyed the hunt, but he always fought valiantly to protect the "hunt-ed" from needless slaughter. In his busy life he found time to serve as a clerk in a store, to act as a book-keeper, a mine foreman, a rancher and a banker. His first political honors came at statehood when he was elected a member of the Board of County Commissioners of Rogers County. He twice represented his district in the State Senate. For two years he was Superintendent of the State home at Pryor, and for a period was on the Fish and Game Commission. In all his political ventures he proved a worthy servant of the people.

Senator Graham was born in Coryell County, Texas, January 21, 1867, and was named for his paternal grandfather Gideon Graham (1818-1912). The grandmother was Elizabeth Minnix (1823-1899). His father was John Wesley Graham (1844-1903), his mother Missouri Ann Dawson, (1846-1912).

His mother was the daughter of James Dawson (1816-1891) and Temperance Butler (1826-1893). James Dawson was the son of Samuel Dawson, born in Ireland in 1773, came to Texas at an early date, locating at San Saba. He died in 1874. Samuel Dawson's wife was Polly Ann Rogers (1792-1857) granddaughter of Captain John Rogers, Chief of the Western Cherokees. Gid Graham was married in 1886 in Texas to Elizabeth, daughter of a respected German, Julius Edward Sydow. Mrs. Graham died suddenly in Tulsa in 1925, while making plans for a trip to Denver, Colorado. They were the parents of nine children: John, of California; Julius Edward, of Tulsa; Wm. Francis, former water Commissioner for the City of Tulsa; Captain Jesse Ellis, a graduate of West Point and an army officer; Grace (Mrs. Edgar R. Nagle) of Springfield, Missouri; Florence (Mrs. Robert B. Sale) of Ponca City; Sallie M. (Mrs. Milton B. Yarbo) of Ada; Alexander Travis of Tulsa; and Mary Elizabeth (Mrs. Louis Brannin) of Ramona, Oklahoma. One of Mr. Graham's accomplishments was the preparation and publication of *The Dawson-Graham and Allied Families*, a history of his people, into which he wove much of his philosophy of life. It concluded with these words: "It is neither birth, nor rank nor state, BUT—the get-up-and-Git that makes men great."

At the age of sixty, Gid Graham married secondly the widow Edith Misamore, a long time friend of the family. The ceremony was performed at the Connie Gibson Ranch in Osage County by Judge John R. Charlton, of Bartlesville, before an audience of members of the Wolf and Fox Hunters Association. The second Mrs. Graham proved a most worthy helpmate, doing much of his reading and typing when his eyesight began to fail.

He prepared and published a book *Animal Outlaws*, which went thru two editions. It was a most worthy contribution to the literature on wild life and brought him national fame. His short stories of "The Eagle—the Emperor of the Air," "Bob White—the Optimist," and "Old Dutch—the Outlaw Horse," are classics. In many pamphlets he cried out incessantly against the wanton destruction of birds and wild life, pointing out that such wanton waste was robbing the youth of today and tomorrow of one of their richest heritages.

His crusade took various forms. In one of his numerous brochures he pointed out that the use of thousands of trees for Christmas decorations was a crime against nature. He fought needless expenditure of public monies and on many occasions railed out against the practice of damming up streams, pointing out that it was an interference with God's plan. In the thirty minutes preceding his death, he sat at his desk preparing a plea against what he termed useless strikes and concluded an appeal to Congress to pass needed legislation to fortify America, for the conflict he foresaw, for "armed power makes Dictators tremble." He died as he lived—battling for the country he so passionately loved, and for the "hunt-ed." His masterpiece was "My Last Appeal," a powerful plea for the wild life. It is worth a place in all huntsmen's libraries.

"Gid" as he always called himself, had a favorite poem, which he was wont to repeat over and over again:

"I want to go way out yonder
Where nature is supreme
Where the clouds kiss the hill-tops
And the deer drink in the stream.
Out beyond the smoky city
Miles and miles from anywhere.
Where the blue peaks guard the valleys
Let my last Trail lead me there."

As he approached the "end of the Trail," he acquired a tract of land some twelve miles north of Claremore, where he blasted out of the rock on a high mound the last resting place for himself and his helpmate. He left implicit directions for his funeral as follows:

"RED SIGNALS mark life's highway, and I decree that the following procedure be carried out—with brevity.

FUNERAL PROGRAM FOR GID GRAHAM

Place: H. S. Auditorium, Collinsville. Time 10:30 A.M.

Coffin to be decorated with quails, Prairie Chickens, standing in Flowers:

Judge N. B. Johnson of Claremore to Preside.

Buck Fields to play: Swedish Anthem: "OVER THE WAVES"

Choir to sing: "Home on the Range."

Address by Judge Johnson, he to read, "MY LAST APPEAL."

Choir to sing: Abide with Me, and farmer Edwin Schroeder,—pray briefly.

Then to be taken to the Gid Graham Wild Life Monument for the Long Sleep.

His wishes were carried out and Gid Graham was laid to rest on his mound in the wide open spaces, out "where the cattle range, the birds sing and the coyotes play" and a place where he could attain the Indians' Dream of Heaven, which he voiced in these words:

"The ancient Jew and Egyptian prized Gold and Glory. Their Poets and Prophets, Savants and Sovereigns longed for an Eternal City with streets of Gold, where they could disport themselves in Pearly Gates and wear a Golden crown.

"I cannot vision a Heavenly City of Golden Streets that would soothe tired feet and to wear a Crown of Gold and play on a Golden Harp—is not inspiring to me.

"Where the Planet of Heaven is, I know not? I have dreamed of its Flowered hills, radiating Eternal Beauty; Its Lofty Peaks clad in evergreen foliage and Deep Canyons of Rugged and Wild Grandeur. Where stately forests grace the margins of Clear Streams and broad prairies teem with Animals and Birds, living in everlasting Peace.

"There—In Elysian Fields where Flowers bloom Eternally and the Song of Birds is a Benediction of the Great Spirit—where every soul who suffers here may find Peace and Solace there, I hope to greet my loved ones, Cherished Friends, and realize the Vision and Dream of Heaven."

By Redmond S. Cole.

Tulsa, Oklahoma