

BOOK REVIEWS

The Pioneer Judge. By Edward Everett Dale and James D. Morrison. (The Torch Press, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1958. Pp. xvii, 433. Ills. \$5.00)

The Pioneer Judge, by Dr. E. E. Dale and Dr. James D. Morrison, is more than a record of the life of Judge Robert L. Williams. It relates in a detailed manner the early life of an American youth affected by respectable poverty, but inspired by the opportunities for advancement and achievement which were available in his day.

The many incidents related in this volume are characteristic of thousands of young men and women who have not admitted defeat but by sheer grit and determination have conquered almost impossible conditions and have risen to eminence in professional, business, and scientific careers.

As a boy he loved to be employed. He had no distaste for hard work. In his early life he was determined to save something of his earnings, though it be ever so little.

He worked his way through the public schools and college, and was always recognized as a diligent and painstaking student. Upon leaving college he decided to study for the ministry, and after completing his ministerial studies, accepted appointment as a "circuit-riding" pastor in the Southern Methodist Church. He worked faithfully in this position although the task called for arduous labor and little pay. At this point, the authors have disclosed a chapter in the Judge's life which to many has been the object of much speculation and conjecture.

It was as a young minister that he met a charming and cultured young lady in Texas, with whom he fell deeply in love. He sought her hand in marriage, but her family, of modest wealth and high standing, did not look with favor upon this union, and apparently the young lady shared in the judgment of her family. The Judge, however, was not easily deterred in his matrimonial aspirations; he was never accused of being a quitter. He surrendered his license as a preacher and applied himself vigorously to the study of law (which he had previously begun in Alabama), and came to Indian Territory. Locating at Durant he worked night and day in his new profession and immediately began to build a lucrative practice.

His early habit of saving a portion of his earnings now asserted itself, and we find him investing in farm lands, bank stock, building and loan companies, and taking an active interest in politics. He was either the president or the general manager of every institution in which he was interested.

Never forgetting the secret affection for the young lady in Texas, he built a nice cottage in Durant, furnished it completely throughout and then sought to contact her. Learning that she was vacationing in Colorado, he secured her address and took the train to Colorado. He there told her the cottage was ready and again implored her to marry him. Her mind had not changed and he returned to Durant and the vacant cottage. Since that time while he respected the opposite sex, his affection for women changed to one of indifference, and he remained a lonely bachelor throughout his life.

The probability of statehood for Oklahoma and Indian Territories now increased his interest in politics and his record for the following years is an almost detailed history of the Democratic Party in Indian Territory during this period. He was a natural organizer and was early recognized as the leader of his party in the Durant section of the Territory. He was elected a member of the Constitutional Convention; was not only active, but a leader in that convention.

His ambition to become Governor of the new state began to assert itself, but there were other members of the Convention who had definite aspirations in that direction. A compromise was effected and while Haskell became the state's first Governor, Williams became the first Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

He made a great record on that court and thereafter became Governor. It is generally admitted that his record as Governor was one that reflected great credit not only upon himself but upon the state as well.

Upon the expiration of his term as Governor, he was appointed United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Oklahoma, and eventually he was elevated to the United States Circuit Court of Appeals from which he retired a few years before his death.

His election for Governor and his appointment to the Federal Court were bitterly opposed by his political enemies; in fact every victory he won was by hard work and over vigorous opposition.

In summing up the career of this man it may be said while he made many enemies, no one has ever questioned his honesty or integrity.

In emphasizing the many sterling qualities of Judge Williams, the authors have not attempted to conceal or ignore his faults, mistakes and indiscretions, but in a careful analysis of his record have with impartiality detailed in a most excellent style and manner the vices and virtues of this distinguished Oklahoman.

The book is intensely interesting and worthy of a place in any library.

Oklahoma City

—Edgar S. Vaught
Western District of Oklahoma
Judge, U. S. District Court

The Indian Territory. By Robert E. Cunningham. (University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma, 1957. Pp. xi, 174. Ills. Index. \$5.95.)

This "Frontier Photographic Record" is a departure from the usual histories on the Indian Territory. There are in this book some 106 fine prints from the original glass negatives of photographs made by W. S. Prettyman who carried his camera and recorded real life scenes among the people of the Indian Territory from 1880 to 1905. Prettyman had the eye of an artist in making 10,000 or more photographs in his time. He was a great favorite as a photographer among the Indians, his marvelous likeness of Chief Washunga of the Kaw tribe that appears as the frontispiece in this history having been pronounced by many Americans as one that looked "the way an Indian should."

The collecting of early photographs made in Oklahoma has long been the hobby of Robert E. Cunningham, graduate of Oklahoma State University and photoengraver. The identification of thousands of fragile glass negatives was a difficult undertaking, in which those that proved the hand of Prettyman were discovered. The ones selected by Mr. Cunningham for this his first book form a priceless record for the story of Oklahoma. Besides photographs of Indians and Indian life, there are many others shown here that were made by Prettyman in the days of the cattleman and of the Oklahoma boomers and even a few of outlaws in the 1890's. The most valuable one of all, a landmark in "news photography" of all time is that made under Prettyman's direction on the day of the run at the opening of the Cherokee Strip on September 16, 1893. This photograph has become a famous classic showing a run for land in Oklahoma history, its effect heightened in Cunningham's presentation by contrast with another view shown on the opposite page, taken two seconds later at the time of the run in 1893.

Mr. Cunningham has written a sketch of the life of W. S. Prettyman presented in the forepart of the book, as well as a brief resume of the periods covered and an explanatory caption under each photograph reproduced that round out *The Indian Territory* as a dramatic history of this part of the old West.

—Muriel H. Wright

Oklahoma Historical Society

The 46th Star. By Irvin Hurst. (Semco Color Press, Inc., Oklahoma City, 1957. Pp. 171. \$3.95).

Statehood brought practical as well as unique problems to those charged with the government of the new State. Many arose from the circumstance that the new State of Oklahoma was erected upon two separate and distinct territories, each with widely divergent laws, practices and customs. County government came to the eastern half of Oklahoma for the first time, and until a year had transpired there were no funds nor other practical ways to operate these new political entities. Then, too, the politics of the new State was of a different party than the one in Washington, and upon statehood adherents of one political doctrine were thrust the reins of government from those adhering to the other party. Finally, blended with all of the heady and virile excitement of admission into the Union was the capital removal controversy.

All in all, these made for exciting times. It is fortunate that the events may be chronicled now while some of the principals are yet alive and the records readily available. For this job, Irvin Hurst is uniquely qualified. As a statehouse newspaper reporter, he had the scent for anything newsworthy; and this knack has not failed him here. He here covers the span of time from the Constitutional Convention convened at Guthrie, pursuant to the Enabling Act of June 14, 1906, to the inauguration of the second governor, Ardmore banker, Lee Cruce. This is a delightful volume and reading it actually is great fun. Not often may the latter be said of a book of history, but this is the exception. For the "inside," with the word used in the newspaper man's vernacular, story of the first Administration, the years 1907 to 1910, here is a terrific book.

—George H. Shirk

Oklahoma City

Major General James Henry Carlton, 1814-1873. By Aurora Hunt. (The Arthur H. Clark Co., Glendale, California, 1958. Pp. 390. Ills. Bibliog. Index. \$10.00).

Much of the fascinating history of the Western Frontier is given in this life story of James Henry Carlton, for his activities offer a wide picture of America in his time. Following his service as an officer in the militia of his native state of Maine, he passed the test for a commission in the regular army, and was appointed second lieutenant of the First Dragoons on October 18, 1839. He trained for a year at the Cavalry School of Practice, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, Captain Vose Sumner, Commandant, who became his warm, lifetime friend. The army discipline of a century ago taught by Captain Sumner was that enforced by Carlton during his long years in the saddle as a dragoon and a cavalryman on the Frontier.

Carlton's experiences were firsthand in the settlements of the Indians and the pioneers in the region of the early military posts in Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas, Texas, Iowa, Wyoming, Arizona, New Mexico and California that are interesting sidelights on the great history of the West. He first saw regular service at Fort Gibson, and was stationed for a time at Fort Holmes near the noted Edward's Store and trading post at the mouth of Little River, Indian Territory. Under the command of General Matthew Arbuckle, he made a report in the case of two Negro slave boys, one acquired by Jesse Chisholm in Mexico and sold to Lucinda Edwards, an incident involving the importation of slaves under the Slave Trade Act of 1818. Lieutenant Carlton was also directed by Colonel R. B. Mason to report on evasions under the National Intercourse Law of 1834 by traders who engaged in whisky trade and traffic with the Indians on Red River. Another time, a grievous experience came out of his warm friendship for a fellow officer and graduate of West Point, Lieutenant Charles Wickliffe who was involved in trouble in the nature of a duel with an inter-married citizen of the Cherokee Nation. This brought on a General Court Martial at Fort Gibson, to which Lieutenant Carlton was summoned by Colonel Mason. All this history is a part of the military and rugged life around the early army posts in the Indian Territory.

Miss Hunt has woven not only the military, but the cultural, social, genealogical and personal life of James Henry Carlton into her narrative. This book, listed as Number 2 in the Frontier Series by the publishers, has many fine illustrations including Carlton, his mother and his lovely young wife who died during his assignment at Fort Gibson. There are two beautiful prints of original paintings presented to the young officer of the U. S. Dragoons and personally inscribed by John James Audubon. There are also a number of maps valuable in the study of historic places in the West. Few books that have been judged historically sound are also rightly

pronounced delightfully readable as this by the historian, Aurora Hunt, of California.

—Muriel H. Wright

Oklahoma Historical Society

THE LITTLE BIG HORN

Custer's Luck. By Edgar I. Stewart. (The University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1955. Pp. 522. \$5.95.)

The death of General George Armstrong Custer on a forlorn hill in Montana Territory on June 25, 1876, stirred the American people as perhaps no single instance in previous peacetime military history. A swashbuckler, yet in many ways a brilliant officer, General Custer was never one to avoid the limelight nor not to enjoy publicity. As he was in life, so he was in death. The steamer *Far West* that returned the remains of his command to civilization was draped in black bunting; and the "massacre" on the Little Big Horn touched off a frenzy of mourning, sentimentalities and national excitement not seen since the death of President Lincoln. At once a clamor of recriminations, fault findings, excuses, justifications and outright scapegoat-seeking arose. Partisanship of Custer were on one side; and the anti-Custer forces, augmented by the friends and adherents of Major Reno and Captain Benteen, were on the other. Countless words have been written during the three quarters of a century that has elapsed. In fact, so much has been written that the precise truth will never be known. There are a half dozen versions extant on almost every circumstance of the encounter.

The entire volume is devoted to the Battle of the Little Big Horn. The first third of the book, dealing with the events leading up to the summer campaign of 1876, is a marvelous introduction. The chapter on the Belknap scandal is superb; and Custer's pointless participation therein leading to his clash with President Grant is excellently handled. The final third of the volume dealing with the events of that fateful day leaves nothing wanting nor more desired. Remarkably, in so well demonstrating the weaknesses of Major Reno, the author does not by so doing fall into the trap of becoming thereby pro-Custer.

It is extremely refreshing to be able to find here a book that successfully avoids all partisan controversy, but presents clearly and forthright all that is known pro and con on the battle. Granted, it is the task of a true historian to collect and to relate but also to explain and to interpret. This Author Stewart has done. If he speculates on what might have been, he does it well and nobly under that license as a historian.

Mr. Stewart ends the volume with seven conclusions assessing responsibility and liability. Wholly objective, they appear irrefutable. Surely nothing could ever be better written on the Battle of the Little Big Horn.

Did Custer Disobey Orders? By Dr. Charles Kuhlman. (The Stackpole Company, Harrisburgh, 1957. Pp. 56. \$1.50.)

For years a leading adherent of the anti-Custer group was Colonel Robert P. Hughes. A brother-in-law of Brig. Gen. Alfred H. Terry, Hughes had served as Chief of Staff for General Terry, Custer's immediate superior. Perhaps in a too zealous effort to make certain his brother-in-law came through the melee following the death of Custer with an undamaged reputation, Colonel Hughes devoted many years and countless written words in proving that Custer disobeyed the written orders given him by General Terry on June 22, 1876. It was this order that set in motion the chain of events that moved Custer's column of cavalry to its rendezvous with Sitting Bull and the fate there in store. This little volume is devoted solely to a rebuttal of the various arguments of Colonel Hughes. Being thus limited in purpose, of necessity Dr. Kuhlman aligns himself with the pro-Custerites. Actually Dr. Kuhlman is no more convincing than was Colonel Hughes. The book ends with a summary of eleven "evasions and patent falsehoods" the author finds in Colonel Hughes' writings. How evasive and how patent each may be must rest with the individual reader. We shall never know.

Oklahoma City

—George H. Shirk