

## BOOK REVIEW

*Pawnee Bill.* By Glenn Shirley. (University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 1958. Pp. 258. Illustrated. \$5.00.)

This biography of Gordon Lillie, best known as "Pawnee Bill," written by an Oklahoman, Glenn Shirley, makes the reader feel a part of the thrilling scenes of American Indians and people and places all over the world.

When Gordon Lillie was born in 1860, Illinois was considered a western state. Stories of the west and of Buffalo Bill (William Cody) were discussed far and wide. Buffalo Bill was Gordon's hero, and from these stories he got the "western fever" as a very young boy. Later near his home was a reservation of Pawnee Indians, with whom he made friends, especially Blue Hawk, the Pawnee chief.

Gordon taught school, worked in his father's mill and saved his money with one purpose, to go west, for he had heard of the cattle drives along the Chisholm Trail and of life in the "cow towns." He went to Wichita, Kansas, where he met Victor Murdock and the two became lifelong friends. Among his other friends were Marshal Earp and David L. Payne. After a gun fight over an Indian, Gordon left Wichita for the new reservation of Chief Blue Hawk and the Pawnees, who adopted him into the tribe and named him Ku-luks-kitty-brechs (Little Bear). When the Pawnees started out on their annual hunt in 1876, he went along in company with Trapper Tom McCain, a big hearted, western trader. Trapper Tom knew the buffalo country, and taught Gordon how to select and buy good hides which he sold at Coffeyville.

The Pawnees sometime afterward held a council, and made Gordon the "White Chief" of the tribe, during an elaborate ceremony that lasted three days. He learned the Pawnee language, and served as tribal interpreter with the United States Army. He also taught school at the Pawnee Agency, which he thought the most interesting part of his career. He left the Agency service, and became a cowboy in the Cherokee Outlet.

Buffalo Bill (Cody) sent for Pawnee Bill and six Pawnees to join his Wild West Show in 1883, a thrilling, new life for the Pawnee Indian show was popular and successful everywhere. A few years later, Pawnee Bill decided to have a road show of his own, and in 1888, "Pawnee Bill's Wild West Show" was ready to go, with his young wife, May Lillie, as star performer. Annie Oakley, also, was one of his great performers.

When the show failed because of bad weather throughout the country the first year, Gordon returned to Wichita where crowds met him with a brass band and gave a banquet and a reception in celebration. That same night, remembering his late friend David L. Payne and his sympathy with the boomers in the efforts to settle the Oklahoma country, the "Pawnee Bill Oklahoma Colonization Company" was formed. Running this company was a test of his talents in the show business, and his report is amazing of how Oklahoma was advertised and how Congress was urged to make provision for the opening of the Oklahoma unassigned land. The run of 1889 into this central part of the Indian Territory was another event in the life of Pawnee Bill, and the opening made him famous.

Soon again on the road, Pawnee Bill's Historical Wild West Show and Indian Museum, made up of horsemen, lasso-throwers, cowboys and Indians was a success from Canada to Mexico clear across the country from the Atlantic to the Pacific. But Pawnee Bill kept in touch with Oklahoma, and was called back to lead the "boomers" in their efforts for the opening of the Cherokee Strip. After the opening of the "Strip" on September 16, 1893, that part of the country organized as 'Q' County by the President's proclamation became Pawnee County. The Lillie family purchased lots in the town of Pawnee, and from this time here was Pawnee Bill's home.

The show was a tremendous exhibition in 1909 at Madison Square Garden, as "Buffalo Bill's Wild West and Pawnee Bill's Great Far West Show." Four years later, Pawnee Bill, the best of all showmen gave the last performance of the greatest "Wild West Show" on earth.

Lillie gladly returned to Oklahoma, but did not retire. He took orders and sold buffalo meat successfully for a time; he went into the oil business; he opened "Old Town and Indian Trading Post" near Pawnee in 1931, where he showed a Pawnee Village of earth houses and kept a large store of Indian curios. He took part in politics on the side of his Indian friends, and as a civic worker, donated a quarter section on his buffalo ranch as a camp ground for the Boy Scouts.

When Mae Lillie died, Gordon said that he had lost his love and interest in life. He died in 1942 when he was preparing to celebrate his eighty-second birthday.

*Pawnee Bill* is a biography everyone should read. It gives the life of a picturesque character, world famous in the "wild west," who had a real part in Oklahoma history.

—Emma Estill Harbour

*Edmond, Oklahoma*

*The Oklahoma Revolution: Supplement and Group Photographs.*  
By William D. McBee. (Privately Printed, Oklahoma City,  
1959. Pp. 31. \$1.50.)

It is unusual to have at hand a supplement to a volume previously reviewed. Such, however, is the case with Judge McBee's *The Oklahoma Revolution*. (*The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXXV, No. 1 [Spring, 1957] p. 111). Attorneys often keep their law volumes current by inserting in a place provided by the publisher in the back of the book annual "pocket parts." Being an attorney, it is only natural that the author should utilize this plan in presenting additional supplementary material for his delightful volume on the impeachment and removal from the Governor's Chair of John Calloway Walton. The supplement is designed to be pasted in the inside back cover of the original book.

The supplement contains tables showing how each senator and representative voted on the separate charges. The highlight of the supplement, however, is the double page group photograph of the members of the House of Representatives for the two extra sessions of the Ninth Legislature. The photographs were assembled by the author at his own expense who has used this supplement as the means of making the group picture available. The interest to the Historical Society is heightened by its containing a picture of Edith Mitchell, now a member of the staff of the Oklahoma Historical Society, who served as a representative from Payne County. For completeness, all owners of the volume should acquire the supplement.

—George H. Shirk

*Oklahoma City Oklahoma*