

## BOOK REVIEW

*Pushmataha, American Patriot.* By Anna Lewis. (Exposition Press, New York, 1959. Pp. 204. Ills. \$3.75)

This is a valuable history relating to the North American Indians as it gives the life of Pushmataha, a great Choctaw chief, written by Dr. Anna Lewis, Professor Emeritus of History of the Oklahoma College for Women at Chickasha. Dr. Lewis is well known for her book *Along the Arkansas* and other works in the Oklahoma historical field. She comes from a family long prominent in the history of the Choctaws, and is now retired making her home near Clayton, in Pushmataha County, where she owns the old Tuskahoma Academy property.

Dr. Lewis' book brings to light many phases of the life and career of Pushmataha, the most famous of all Choctaw chiefs. Little is known of his ancestry. He was an orator in his native language, a statesman of high order and a soldier, rising to the rank of "Brigadier General" in the American Army during the War with England in 1812. Dr. Lewis tells of the Chief's well known friendship for the Americans, of his love for horse-racing, of his hunting expeditions across the Mississippi to the western prairies and the area of present Oklahoma that was later to become the last homeland of the Choctaws; and tells of his plans for the settlement of his people in this new domain in the west. His death occurred in Washington, in 1824, while negotiating with the United States government for this new Choctaw land, preliminary to their final removal west some years later.

In his expeditions to the western prairies beyond the Mississippi, Pushmataha encountered the Osages who were occupying what is now Northern Oklahoma. The Choctaws and the Osages were bitter enemies in those days, and sometimes became involved in bloody conflicts. Pushmataha was a friend of President Andrew Jackson, and participated in the Battle of New Orleans. These contacts and the friendship must have had considerable influence with President Jackson on what was finally guaranteed the Choctaws in the Removal Treaty in 1830. Under the terms of this Dancing Rabbit Treaty, concluded on the Pearl River in Mississippi, September 25, 1830, the Choctaws relinquished all claims to their lands in Mississippi. While Pushmataha laid the ground work for the exchange of lands in Mississippi for the country in the west (now southern Oklahoma), he did not live to witness the Removal. He was a full-blood Choctaw who was born and lived in Mississippi. He died very suddenly in Washington at the age of sixty years, and was

buried in the Congressional Cemetery there with military honors.

As Dr. Lewis points out, Pushmataha was always a friend to the white people, and he realized the folly of going to war with the Americans. He wanted his people, the Choctaws, educated and adjusted to the white man's way of living. Dr. Lewis gives an interesting account of an outstanding event in Pushmataha's life that no doubt had its influence on the outcome in the Second War with England. It was the famous debate between Tecumseh, the renowned Shawnee Chief, all of the British, and Pushmataha, friend of the Americans. Tecumseh had led the Indian tribes living north of the Ohio River into war against the Americans, and his program sponsored and aided by British agents was to bring all the southern tribes into his camp. He succeeded in winning over the Creeks, much to their detriment, but failed to win the Choctaws. In a great assembly of Choctaw warriors, Tecumseh addressed them on the issues of the war. Pushmataha listened carefully and then replied to this address, saying that the Choctaws had lived in peace with the Americans and that he saw no occasion for going to war against the white neighbors but that such a conflict might mean the ultimate ruin of his people. His speech was clear, convincing and eloquent to a high degree.

This book by Dr. Lewis on the life of Chief Pushmataha is well documented with citations to the most authentic sources of information on the Choctaws, and is a distinct contribution to the history of this once powerful tribe of North American Indians.

—William F. Semple

*Tulsa, Oklahoma*

---

*The Oil Century.* By J. Stanley Clark. (University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 1958. Pp. xxii, 279. Ills. Append. Bibliog. Index. \$3.95.)

This is an interesting study commemorating the Centennial of the "Age of Petroleum" since the discovery of the first commercial oil well near Titusville, Pennsylvania in 1859. The book briefs the history of oil development and thus serves a long felt need both for the lay reader who wants to know the real story in this field as well as for the researcher who plans to delve farther in some special phase of the subject. There is a spread of fine illustrations from rare photographs that glimpse this dramatic and powerful story.

Dr. Clark, the well-known Oklahoma author, whose interests lie in industrial as well as general history, has made this volume

one of his most valuable contributions in the historical field. His text is well documented, giving the essential high points in an over-all history that touches on the great social and industrial transformations which have come from the marvels of the petroleum industry through one hundred years.

Prospecting for oil is mentioned as it extended westward from Pennsylvania through the states of the Ohio Valley to Kansas, Oklahoma (once Indian Territory), Michigan, Montana, California and Texas. Great discoveries of oil in the Mid-Continent Field in the Southwest brought problems in the industry, which are reviewed in such chapters as "Economic Waste," "Experiments in Controlled Production," and "Conservation through Co-operation." The chapter on "The Problems of Imports" mentions production in the foreign field since 1890, including that in the Baku Field on the Caspian Sea in Russia as well as those in Mexico, Venezuela, Dutch West Indies, Iraq and Saudi Arabia, bringing the reader up-to date at the close of this first century in the commercial uses of petroleum. This world-wide development has required necessary legislation and court decrees in some instances in this country yet today the voluntary-compliance plan is being watched with interest in the production of oil in the United States.

—Muriel H. Wright

*Oklahoma Historical Society*  
*Oklahoma City*