

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON HISTORIC SITES, 1960

DR. JAMES D. MORRISON, CHAIRMAN

Eleven on-site markers have been placed at various locations within the state, the sites determined, permission granted by the present landowners for erection on the premises and the final setting up of the markers being completed this year. One of these was in Payne County at the site of Registration Booth No. 1 for the run into the Cherokee Strip September 16, 1893. Two such markers were set in the Rock Mary vicinity of Caddo County, one of which is at the top of this historical landmark. In Leflore County an on-site marker has been placed on the old military trail, and in McCurtain County one has been set at the Chitto Harjo grave. A similar marker was set at old Doakesville in Choctaw County. The others of the eleven on-site markers erected in 1960 are site of Yellton Store and camp ground, Western Cattle Trail, Harper County; Whilwind Mission, Blaine County; Cowboy Hill, Kay County; George C. Sibley Expedition, Alfalfa County; Cherokee Strip Opening, Registration Booth No. 1, Payne County; Choctaw Chiefs' House, near Swink, Choctaw County; Abert Expedition, Blaine County. It costs \$54.50 to manufacture each of these markers. The one at the top of Rock Mary cost \$115.50.*

The Committee on Historic Sites also erected four roadside type of Oklahoma historical markers in 1960, indicating important historical locations on the now obliterated route of the old California Road (1849) through Oklahoma. These official roadside markers cost \$125.00 each, the actual sites being determined through the work of the Historical Society, and the placing of the markers on the state highways being contributed by the State Highway Commission, continuing the co-operative program of the Society and the Commission since the project of marking Oklahoma historic sites was begun in 1949.

The four roadside markers erected along the California Road in 1960 are located to indicate the sites of old Shawnee Town, Hughes County; Delaware Mount and Natural Mound in Pontotoc County; and Steen's Buttes in Caddo County.

*A complete list of all Oklahoma historical markers and monuments erected in 1959-60, giving the caption, the inscription of history and the location of each is found in *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 2 (Summer, 1960), pp. 208-17.

The completion and erection of both the on-site and the roadside markers involves much work in the historical records and in the field. It was through the Committee on Historic Sites that a specially appointed committee of historians and geologists determined the correct identity of Rock Mary in Caddo County this year. From this field research and study of the original records of the California Road of 1849, the Committee on Historic Sites sponsored the production of a very fine map with data contributed by Mr. Robert H. Dott, Petroleum Geologist, giving the entire route of the California Road across Oklahoma with respect to county locations in the state today. This map was drawn to scale by a draughtsman of the Geological Survey at a cost of \$100.**

A beautiful granite marker is being erected at the site of old Fort Cobb. This stone will stand eight feet in height and will have an engraved likeness of the old fort buildings, with a brief inscribed history of the fort. This marker is similar to the one erected last year to the Wyandot Tribe in Twin Rivers Park in Ottawa County. The cost of this marker will be \$540.00. Local citizens at Fort Cobb are helping to pay for it.

Probably the most ambitious undertaking of the year has been the restoration of the Old Chief's House near Swink. This is the oldest residence still standing in Oklahoma, having been erected in 1834. Contracts for plumbing the walls, repairing the roof and floors, rebuilding the chimney, and making new window frames were let last spring. This work was completed about the first of November. In time this is likely to become one of the most widely visited historic sites in Oklahoma. Up to the present the cost of restoration has amounted to \$2,011.65.

A total of \$2,884.40 has been expended this year on restoration and marking of historic sites. This does not include travel and other expenses incurred in securing titles and making locations.

The most spectacular acquisition of the Society during the year was that of the oil well derrick on the Historical Society grounds. Realizing that oil derricks throughout the state would eventually be torn down, the Society sought to preserve the derrick located on the Society's grounds. Through the generosity of the British-American Oil Producing Company, Phillips Petroleum Company, and Harper Oil Company,

** This map published in *The Chronicles of Oklahoma* (Summer, 1960) appears in a reprint brochure titled "Rock Mary and The California Road" which can be ordered for 75¢ a copy, from the Oklahoma Historical Society, Historical Building, Oklahoma City 5, Oklahoma.

the derrick was given to the Oklahoma Historical Society when the well ceased to be a producer in the summer of 1960.

The Society is now in the process of repairing and refurbishing its properties at Fort Gibson. Surveys were recently made to find the exact extent of the lands owned by the Society there. Arrangements are now being made to fence the grounds on which are located the powder house and the old bake oven. To complete the work in this vicinity will take considerable time and money.

Closely associated with historic sites work was the annual Oklahoma Historical Society tour. In June the tour visited many historic sites in northwestern Oklahoma and the Panhandle region. Among these were Autograph Rock in Cimarron County, Beaver City and the Beaver County Museum, and No Man's Land Museum in Texas County. Pictures were taken and preserved of many signatures and names engraved on Autograph Rock.**

During the year all properties of the Society were carefully maintained in the matter of repairing fences, cutting weeds, and other details of maintenance. These properties include Union Mission Cemetery in Mayes County, Rose Hill Cemetery in Choctaw County, Confederate Cemetery in Atoka County, Cowboy Hill in Kay County, Garland Cemetery in McCurtain County, and Worchester Cemetery in Cherokee County.

In joint action with the University of Oklahoma, surveys and excavations were made at the old Fort Washita site. This work was done under the direction of an archaeologist from the University of Oklahoma. The amount expended by the Historical Society on this project was \$404.63.

** Report of Committee, Survey of Inscriptions along Santa Fe Trail in Oklahoma," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXXVIII, No. 3 (Summer, 1960), pp. 310-22.