

NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

THE CUMULATIVE INDEX
Completed for *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*

The year 1961 is marked in the history of the Oklahoma Historical Society by the publications of the *Cumulative Index for The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, covering Volumes I to XXXVII (1921-1959). This book is an outstanding contribution to research in Oklahoma history, well bound in hard backs, and excellently printed in good sized, readable type, covering 569 pages with approximately 125,000 references set in two columns to the page.

Publication of the *Cumulative Index* has been accomplished through the work of Mrs. Rella Watts Looney. Mrs. Looney had spent five years in cataloguing the original records of the Five Civilized Tribes of the Indian Agency at Muskogee when the records were brought over to the Historical Society Building in Oklahoma City, and she was placed in charge of the Indian Archives Department in 1934. In addition to cataloguing and filing these records in the Archives, which now has 3,500,000 manuscript items and 5,000 volumes of original materials on Indian and pioneer history, Mrs. Looney was assigned the compiling and typing of the annual Index for *The Chronicles*, which she has continued, with the exception of about two years, since 1934.

As the years passed, *The Chronicles* were used more and more by researchers as a primary source for Oklahoma State and Indian data along with study of the original records in the Archives. Prompted by this demand and to give service to those who came for research in her Department, Mrs. Looney started keeping cards in 1945, listing subjects found in the magazine not generally in the annual index. It was through her own efforts and interest aside from her regular work that the cards increased during the years, and were in demand for reference by everyone who visited the Historical Society. In 1949, a special file case was purchased for these index cards in the Archives Department.

Within another five years, requests from outside libraries and research centers were increasing for a cumulative index to *The Chronicles*. The Editorial Department began plans for publishing such a volume in 1956, and two years later, the matter was approved by the Board. Mrs. Looney then started compilation of the manuscript based on the thousands of cards that she had made and kept, this manuscript a demanding task,—still extra-curricular from the regular duties of her department, which included cataloguing and filing new collections received in the Archives as well as answering letters of request for data, and giving her time and thought to assisting the many researchers

who daily visited the Indian Archives. She completed the final manuscript of 1,600 typed pages early in 1961, and it was sent to the Allied Printers, Publishers, Lithographers of Tulsa that had been awarded the contract through the State Board of Affairs, in behalf of the Society's Publication Committee. The completed volume came off the Press the last week in October.

The Publication Committee and Board of Directors of the Historical Society take great pride in presenting this fine volume, and have expressed deep appreciation for Mrs. Looney's contribution to the study of Oklahoma history, having honored her with the presentation of a special "Commendation Award" in the October (1961) meeting of the Board of Directors.

The *Cumulative Index* is monumental in the growing list of the Historical Society's publications which now includes thirty-eight volumes of *The Chronicles* (four numbers for each bound annually), and special reports on Oklahoma history as well as reprints of special articles from the magazine. A limited number of copies of the *Cumulative Index* are now on hand, subject to order at \$15.00 each. Orders should be addressed: The Index Department, Oklahoma Historical Society, Historical Building, Oklahoma City 5, Oklahoma.

—The Editor

THE NAMING OF OKLAHOMA

The name "Oklahoma" was provided in the Choctaw-Chickasaw Treaty of 1866, for a territorial government to be organized and to include all the Indian nations and tribes living within the limits of the so-called Indian Territory, now the state of Oklahoma. Three other treaties with the Seminole, the Creek and the Cherokee, signed separately by the respective delegations at Washington in 1866, sanctioned the proposed territory by including a short article for the creation of a "general council" or legislative body. However, it was Article 8 with its thirteen sections in the Choctaw-Chickasaw Treaty that gave the name and the details for the organization of the new territorial government.

One day during the treaty making period in Washington after the Civil War, government officers and the delegations from the five tribes had met and were discussing the general plans for the territorial organization, when one of the government commissioners inquired, "What would you call the territory?" A member of the Choctaw delegation, Allen Wright, immediately said, "Oklahoma." It happened that he was working on the draft of the Choctaw-Chickasaw treaty, at the moment under consideration when he made his quick reply. There was no objection to the name so it was written in the treaty and

was generally accepted in the meeting as appropriate for the proposed Indian territory. *Oklahoma* means "red people" in the Choctaw language, from the word *okla* meaning "people," and *homma* (or *humma*) meaning "red."

The proposed territorial organization in the treaties of 1866 never went into effect yet the name "Oklahoma" became popularly and widely known in the persistent efforts for the development of the Indian Territory, by the interests in favor of the railroads and the opening of this country to homestead settlement. Mr. Sidney Clarke, who served several terms in Congress from Kansas, was always active politically for the cause as well as Elias C. Boudinot, the noted Cherokee attorney recently aligned with the Confederate States, who was the leader in his nation after the war for the industrial development of this country.

Several bills introduced in Congress soon after the Civil War for a territorial organization suggested the name "Territory of Lincoln." In 1870, U.S. Senator Benjamin F. Rice of Arkansas introduced a bill for the territory to be called "Oklahoma." The most controversial of the Oklahoma bills before Congress was the so-called Weaver Bill (H.R. 4842) introduced by Congressman J. B. Weaver of Iowa in 1886, and bitterly opposed by delegations of the Five Civilized Tribes because it threatened the Indian land titles in the country. The bill failed to pass but Sydney Clarke succeeded in getting the unoccupied Indian lands opened to white settlement in 1889, and the western part of the Indian Territory was organized as the "Territory of Oklahoma" a year later. The name was perpetuated as that of the State of Oklahoma admitted as the 46th State in 1907.

During the years, beginning with the early 1880's, the meaning of the name "Oklahoma" was a matter of much interest, the meanings offered by different persons including "home of the red man," red earth," and "beautiful Indian Territory." Early in the 1890's, the Reverend J. S. Murrow, the well known Baptist missionary and Masonic leader who lived at Atoka among the Choctaws, told how Allen Wright had named the proposed "Territory of Oklahoma" in 1866, and that the name was from the Choctaw meaning "red people." Dr. Murrow had served as a missionary in the Indian Territory since before the Civil War, and had been personally well acquainted and associated with Reverend Allen Wright before the latter's death at Boggy Depot in 1885.

The territorial newspapers took up the story after the organization of the Oklahoma Historical Society. Among these, the *Daily Oklahoman* for December 27, 1897, published Dr. Murrow's account about the naming of Oklahoma by Allen

Wright and gave the meaning of the name "red people." The *Cleveland County Leader* and the *Blackwell Times Record* for December 6, 1900, published the story in their editorial columns. The *Kingfisher Free Press* for December 13, 1900, said that Governor Cassius W. Barnes of Oklahoma Territory gave the meaning of "Oklahoma" as "red earth," and that Allen Wright had suggested the name in 1866.

One day after the time that the Historical Society's *Report* of 1905 was published, Joseph B. Thoburn, a member of the Society's Board of Directors, was told by Mr. Sydney Clarke in an interview in Oklahoma City, that in drafting one of the Oklahoma bills, probably the "Weaver Bill," Elias C. Boudinot had advised the use of the name "Oklahoma" for the proposed territory since the name had been given in the Choctaw-Chickasaw Treaty of 1866 and was popularly known.

The story of the naming of Oklahoma in 1866 had come down as a tradition first told by Allen Wright to Dr. Murrow and friends when *Oklahoma Lodge* was founded by the Masons at Boggy Depot, the first Masonic lodge organized in the Indian Territory after the Civil War. Mr. Wright always told the story with much amusement of how the older Indian members of other tribal delegations had looked as if he had spoken out of turn with his quick response suggesting the name "Oklahoma" during the treaty making at Washington. Little did "Governor" Allen Wright (elected Chief of the Choctaws, 1866) realize in his lifetime the importance of offering the name *Oklahoma* as that of a future great state.

(M.H.W.)
