NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

ORGANIZATION OF THE OKLAHOMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY BY THE OKLAHOMA PRESS ASSOCIATION IN 1893

A question on the exact date of the organization of the Oklahoma Historical Society has been brought to the attention of the Editor, and calls for a statement on the subject in this number of The Chronicles of Oklahoma for autumn, 1962 (Vol. XL, No. 3), preparatory to the 70th Anniversary of the Oklahoma Historical Society next year (1963).

The Oklahoma Historical Society was regularly organized at the business session of the Oklahoma Press Association held on Saturday morning, May 27, 1893, during the Annual Meeting of the Association at Kingfisher, Oklahoma Territory.

The outside front cover of The Chronicles since the summer number 1961 (Vol. XXXIX, No. 2) has carried the line: "Oklahoma Historical Society—Organized by Oklahoma Press Association, May 27, 1893." The line had appeared on the front of the cover of the magazine for thirteen years with the date "May 26, 1893" having been used for the first time in the spring of 1948 by direction of Dr. Charles Evans, then secretary-manager of the Society, at the instance of President Wm. S. Key and other members of the Society's Board of Directors. The organization date "May 26, 1893" followed that given in a pamphlet published in the late 1930's, under the title "The Oklahoma Historical Society," which submits "a brief statement relative to the history and administration of the Society" at the time of publication. The pamphlet had been prepared by Dr. Grant Foreman, a member of the Board of Directors, at the special request of the Board. The first paragraph of this pamphlet states:

"... In Muskogee on March 1888, the Indian Territory Press Association was organized largely through the efforts of the founders of the Muskogee Phoenix, Dr. Leo E. Bennett and Frank C. Hubbard. Three years later this paper first advocated the organization of a historical society for the Indian Territory but nothing was done about it. Two years afterwards on May 26, 1893, [italics editor's] at the annual meeting of the Oklahoma Press Association at Kingfisher, the Society was organized. Editors and publishers furnished all the officers and directors and William P. Campbell, a newspaper man from Kansas, was selected at the first custodian of the Society."

In 1961, the Editor had a part in preparing the inscription for an official Oklahoma Historical Marker to be placed at the court house site of the organization of the Society at Kingfisher. The marker was provided under the auspices of the Altrua Literary Club of Kingfisher, through the Oklahoma Historical
Society's program of marking historic sites in the state. The organization date of the Society is given *May 27, 1893* on this marker, verified in communications with Mr. H. E. Hubbard, publisher of the *Kingfisher Times and Free Press*, and Mrs. Hubbard, Chairman of the Altrua Club Committee, in addition to special research of records that had recently been brought to light in the Library of the Historical Society from various old files and unfilled materials. One of these records was the pamphlet giving the report of William P. Campbell in 1905, with a complete "Review of Inception and Progress; Accessions and Donors, Historic Papers" of the Oklahoma Historical Society at the time. This report states: "The Oklahoma Historical Society had its inception with the editors of the Territory at their annual meeting at Kingfisher, May 27, 1893." The line on the outside front cover of *The Chronicles* began carrying this date in the summer of 1961, and Mr. Campbell's complete report of 1905 was published in the next number of the magazine, autumn 1961.

Since the question was raised on the organization date of the Historical Society, the Editor has again made a special search of the records to determine the exact date and time of day that the organization of the Society took place in 1893. Among the items taken out of old, unfilled materials in the Library and just recently added to the file of the Society's records, is an original copy of the leaflet by W. P. Campbell, Custodian, printed at Kingfisher on *May 29, 1893*, two days after the Press Association meeting. This leaflet is "Circular 1" with the heading "Office of Historical Custodian, Oklahoma Press Association, Kingfisher, Okla., May 29, 1893," and a brief review of the Historical Society organized two days before. A facsimile of this leaflet is shown on the opposite page here in *The Chronicles*.

Another small pamphlet in the Library file was printed in 1915, with the title page: "Legal Status of the OKLAHOMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY—Constitution: Law Summary—State Capitol, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma." The following statements appear at the top of page three:

**OKLAHOMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

Inception

"Resolved, That The Oklahoma Historical Society of the Oklahoma Press Association be organized by this Association." W. P. Campbell placed in charge. (See proceedings Press Association at Kingfisher, May 27, 1893).


Search was also made recently for press reports on the or-
ganization of the Society in the Newspaper Department which is still in the steady process of reorganization and establishment of the new filing system under the microfilm program begun more than five years ago. Bound volumes of old newspapers covering literally millions of pages yet to be microfilmed, remain inaccessible to researchers, having been removed from the old, steel shelves and stacked from floor to ceiling in various parts of the basement of the Historical Building to make way for the microfilm machines and equipment in the floor space of the Department. These details are given here to point out some of the difficulties in making the recent search. It is a satisfaction, however, to have discovered newspaper reports of 1893 that apparently have not been read, nor cited for any history or report on the Historical Society. Data relating to the Press Association meeting of 1893 and to the participants in the three sessions of this meeting add much interest to the story.

The following territorial newspapers available in microfilm give detailed accounts of the Press Association meeting, covering the organization of the Historical Society: The Chandler News for Friday, June 2, 1893, Harry B. Gilstrap and Miss Effie Gilstrap, Editors; The Hennessey Clipper with a “Supplement” for Friday, June 2, 1893, James D. Campbell, Editor; The Hennessey Democrat for Saturday, June 3, 1893, Rube Weesner and Wm. P. Campbell, Editors. These are all weeklies giving reports on the Association meeting held at Kingfisher the week before.

The bound volume of The Kingfisher Times for 1893, still to be microfilmed, was located and brought out of the storage stacks. This shows The Kingfisher Times, Editor Frank Purcell, beginning regularly with the issue for July 27, 1893, covering 8 pages (20 x 24 inches). One of five small strays (12 x 20 inches) bound in front of this volume is The Kingfisher Times for Thursday, June 1, 1893, (Vol. 5, No. 10). This issue of the paper gives front page coverage to the recent meeting of the Press at Kingfisher in three columns, under the headlines (in part), “THE PRESS ASSOCIATION OF OKLAHOMA IN SESSIONS . . . A Banquet at the Johnson House—A Historical Society Organized to be located at Kingfisher . . .”

This same issue of The Kingfisher Times (June 1, 1893) reports the business session of the Association on Saturday, May 27, 1893, as follows:

“At the morning session the following officers were elected: President—J. A. Quein. Vice President—E. E. Brown. Secretary—H. B. Gilstrap. Treasurer—Effie Gilstrap. Executive Committee—Frank McMasters, Frank Purcell and Frank Greer.

“W. P. Thompson, W. P. Campbell and Frank Prouty were appointed a committee to arrange for a trip to the world’s fair.

“On motion of W. P. Campbell a territorial historical society was organized and Mr. Campbell was elected custodian to take charge of the collection when made. Each member was assessed $1 for this fund.
“Guthrie was selected as the place of the next meeting. It will take place the third Tuesday in May, 1894.

“The association decided to accept an invitation to visit Hennessey should such be extended.

“A vote of thanks was extended to the retiring president, the press and the citizens of Kingfisher for the hospitable manner in which the association had been entertained.”

All the newspapers cited above give practically the same report for the business session held on Saturday, May 27, 1893. Each paper states that a historical society was organized on this date for Oklahoma Territory, and that Mr. Wm. P. Campbell was chosen custodian to have charge of the historical collections. The Hennessey Democrat (June 3, 1893) adds the note that Frank H. Greer, Editor of The Daily State Capital at Guthrie, offered a series of resolutions relating to the Association (legal rates, card membership, dues, etc.), which were adopted on motion of W. P. Thompson of Guthrie, during the first part of the session on Saturday morning. The Chandler News (June 2, 1893) also reports that Greer’s resolutions were offered and adopted on Saturday morning. The News here comments favorably on Greer’s action in behalf of the Association, and reviews briefly his statements made: “That the press is subject to more imposition, is expected to do more work, and is less protected through organization than is any other business, and yet is the most necessary and influential of all vocations, the most poorly paid, and the least able to cut rates and lower its profession.”

A summary of events that took place during the Press Association meeting of 1893 outlined in the foregoing statements, is in order here to verify further the organization day of the Oklahoma Historical Society:

Press Association members arrived in Kingfisher on Friday afternoon, May 26, 1893, most of them coming in on the north bound train at 5:30 p.m. (One report states about 35 persons were in attendance.) Carriages waiting at the station took the crowd around the City, and visited the Anheuser-Busch and the Pabst establishments where ice cold refreshments were served much to the “gratification of the party.” Ex-Governor Abraham J. Seay accompanied the visitors, and took them through his beautiful residence and over his fine farm a few miles west of Kingfisher. His niece, Miss Lula Marsh, entertained the visiting ladies, “Mesdames Greer and Nicholson of Guthrie, and Miss Effie Gilstrap of Chandler.”

A reception was held for the visiting editors that evening at the Opera House where the Association meeting was called to order at 7:30 o’clock, by the President, J. L. Admire of The Kingfisher Free Press. He announced the evening program which
opened with an address of welcome by Mayor J. C. Robberts of Kingfisher. The response was given by Frank McMasters of the Oklahoma City Gazette. J. E. Quein of the Edmond News gave a paper on "The Newspaper as a Town Builder." The meeting then adjourned until Saturday morning at 8:30. The Kingfisher Times (June 1, 1893) reports with regret that few attended the evening meeting since most of the visiting editors were under the impression that the Association sessions would be held on Saturday, May 27, with the banquet on Saturday night.

Instead, the banquet was held on Friday night after the meeting at the Opera House. The editors were soon congregated at the Johnson House where the doors of the dining room were opened at 10:30 p.m., and all were the guests of Vol Sayre, Manager of the hotel. A sumptuous banquet was served with plenty of the finest wines which added greatly to "the spirit of the occasion." A timely warning of some member of the arrangements committee ahead of time brought a glee club to the scene (one report says, "a quintal of colored folk") that furnished lively music and song. The Kingfisher Times states that most of the editors "had been without eating since noon, had driven several miles since arriving at Kingfisher, had missed their supper . . . and of course they ate." Frank McMasters was toastmaster, and "During the evening many witty things were said and many pleasant things were done."

The Hennessey Democrat reports a long list of "toasts" made during the banquet, including: "Oklahoma in general and its future," by Ex-Governor Seay; "The Grip was Opened," by C. E. Hunter; "The Subscription list as a Civilizer," by S. S. Cook of the Cloud Chief Herald; "Does the devil own the printing office or the printing office own the devil," by W. P. Campbell; "How can a newspaper man serve God, the devil and himself without a stomach," by Frank H. Greer; "Progress of Western Oklahoma," by H. B. Gilstrap; and "Can a Newspaper man enter Heaven," by J. E. Quein closed the banquet program. The Hennessey Democrat report, probably written by Campbell, lists only the title and the speaker of all the "toasts" but adds this note to Campbell's offering on "Does the devil own the printing office . . ." saying, "Mr. Campbell didn't digress but proceeded to unfold a tale, but before he sat down traced the origin of the live editor direct to the devil."

Members met for the business session as scheduled on Saturday morning, May 27, 1893. In the absence of the President, J. L. Admire at the opening of the meeting, Wm. P. Campbell was chosen temporary chairman, with Frank Prouty of Guthrie as secretary. Time was spent in "discussing the good of the order," and new members were added to the Association. After the election of officers, the important business of the session on
Saturday covered approval of Frank Greer's resolutions on legal rates and Wm. P. Campbell's motion for the organization of the Historical Society. Adjournment of the Saturday morning session ended the annual meeting of the Press Association for 1893. The following Thursday (June 1), The Kingfisher Times closed its report of the meeting: "Ex-Governor Seay did his part. He was in line from start to finish, and added greatly to the enjoyment of the occasion. . . . In truth Kingfisher was disappointed that the meeting should be over so soon." The next weekly issue of The Hennessey Democrat (June 3) reported the closing act of the Saturday business session: "A vote of thanks was tendered the citizens of Kingfisher, President Admire, and Frank Purcell, for their excellent treatment of the editors."

Reports on the Historical Society recently found in the Library and placed on file include a few, very small pamphlets that review briefly early activities of the Society. One of these pamphlets is a report for 1899-1900 by Lincoln McKinlay, President, which states that the Historical Society was organized on "May 26, 1893." This date given as "May 26" is evidently either a miscalculation or a typographical error in the printing, for McKinlay had written his report loosely from hearsay, apparently without consulting the records and newspaper reports of 1893, printed seven years before he made his report. Lincoln McKinlay is not listed among the editors at the Association meeting in Kingfisher, and seems to have come to the Territory at the opening of the Cherokee Outlet, September 16, 1893. He became editor of the Republican News-Journal at Newkirk, in Kay County.

William P. Campbell was Register of Deeds at Kingfisher. He had joined up with Rube Wessner as editor of The Hennessey Democrat early in May, 1893. The week before the Association meeting, this paper carried an editorial item which mentions a feud going on among newspaper publishers in the Territory over cutting rates and contracting for printing in one another's districts. The item particularly expresses feeling against the "Admire gang" at Kingfisher, and reveals the later importance of Frank Greer's action during the sessions of the following week of pouring oil on troubled waters with his resolutions and talk on the necessity of maintaining legal rates in the printing business. The Saturday session apparently closed in an atmosphere of high spirits and friendliness. The editors had been greatly heartened during their visit in Kingfisher over the exciting prospects of the opening of the Cherokee Outlet lands to follow soon after the Presidential proclamation that was expected out of Washington in the summer. Hundreds of thousands of settlers would run into the 6,000,000 acre tract in Northern Oklahoma, business would boom and the "starving" newspapers that were
already in Oklahoma along the borders of the Outlet would reap rich reward in the printing business. Wm. D. Campbell's motion to organize a historical society was right in line to preserve the printed records—registration of deeds, reports on land claims, court cases and many other items in the development of the Territory.

Campbell left the Historical Society in 1895, and was away from the organization for nine years. During the latter part of this period at one time or another, his name is found as editor of different papers in the Territory. He had also served as a news correspondent and had written a play or two. There is mention in one place that he had been an actor for a time. He was reinstated as Custodian of the Society in 1904, with his office in Oklahoma City. The next year (1905), he wrote and published his report which was reprinted in *The Chronicles* for Autumn, 1961 (Vol. XXXIX, No. 3). Two pages (220-221) of this report give a brief review of the history of the Press Association meeting at Kingfisher in 1893.

Campbell here reviews something of the Association program but confuses the order of the "forenoon session" with the "evening session" and the banquet leaving the impression that all had been held on the same day. He was writing from memory twelve years after the event. The closing statement in his two-page review in 1905, however, is corroborated by the old records of the Society brought to light in the recent research, on the date of the Historical Society's organization:

"Thus, the editorial association meeting at Kingfisher, May 27, 1893, inaugurated the move from which has evolved the Oklahoma Historical Society as a Territorial Institution, outclassing in many of its features and value of its collections, like societies of a quarter century or more existence."

—The Editor (M.H.W.)

*Oklahoma Historical Society*  
September 1, 1962

---

**LAND SURVEYORS WITH THE DAWES COMMISSION IN THE INDIAN TERRITORY**

Two surviving members of a land survey crew employed in the work of the Dawes Commission, or U.S. Commission to the Five Civilized Tribes in the Indian Territory before Oklahoma became a state, enjoyed reminiscing during the old Cherokee Seminaries' Homecoming at Tahlequah last May (1962). Notes about them and their survey experiences along with an old photograph taken at "Camp 7" in the Choctaw Nation in
1902, have been sent to *The Chronicles*, by Irvin M. Peithmann,¹ Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, Illinois. The two members of the crew are James Butler Bushyhead, retired St. Louis attorney-at-law who lives near Booneville, Missouri; and Mr. Peithmann's father, Edward M. Peithmann, a farmer who lives near Hoyleton, Illinois.

James Butler Bushyhead is a member of a well known Cherokee family and great-great-grandson of Captain James Stuart whose story is given in Emmet Starr's *History of the Cherokee Indians* (Oklahoma City, 1921) and other volumes on the Cherokees. Captain Stuart was the junior commanding officer of two companies of Scots in the British Army stationed at Fort Loudon in East Tennessee (1755), who was rescued during a siege of the Fort (1760) by the famous Cherokee chief, Ata-kullakulla, and delivered to friends in Virginia. Captain Stuart's wife was Susannah Emory who was one-fourth Cherokee by blood and granddaughter of Ludovic Grant, a Scot. The Stuarts' son was called Oo-no-dutu (Uni-dutu) by the Cherokees, meaning "Bushyhead," because he had a shock of blond hair like his father. This name became the surname of his family. Bushyhead married Nannie Foreman who was one-half Cherokee. Their eldest son was Jesse Bushyhead who became the first Supreme Court Judge of the Cherokee Nation West (died 1844), a noted Baptist preacher who had brought a band of Cherokees to the Indian Territory (1838-39) from Georgia during the removal, over the "Trail of Tears." Jesse Bushyhead's wife was Eliza Wilkerson who was one-half Cherokee, and their son was Dennis Wolf Bushyhead who was born near present Cleveland, Tennessee, in 1826. Dennis Wolf Bushyhead went to California with some of the Cherokees during the Gold Rush of 1849, returned to the Cherokee Nation after the Civil War, was elected and served two terms as Principal Chief of the Cherokee Nation, 1879-1887. He died at Tahlequah on February 4, 1898. He also was known as Oo-no-dutu among the Cherokees, and his son, James Butler Bushyhead is one of this noted Cherokee family among the descendants who live in other states of the Union and in Oklahoma. Mr. Bushyhead was in the survey crew with the Dawes Commission in 1902, at "Camp 7" in the Choctaw Nation.

Mr. Irvin M. Peithmann contributed the following notes

¹ Irvin M. Peithmann is the writer of *The Choctaw Indians of Mississippi* published in pamphlet form by Southern Illinois University (1961). While the early history of the Choctaw people is touched upon very briefly, Mr. Peithmann gives his attention here to the history and the present day conditions of the Choctaws who stayed in Mississippi after the main part of the tribe was removed west to the Indian Territory in the 1830's.—Ed.
about his father who belonged to the same surveying crew in the Choctaw Nation:

Mr. Edward H. Peithmann, Richview, Illinois was first employed by the Dawes Commission in 1899 when he and other appointees began working at South McAlester, Indian Territory. This group of men was assigned the task of assembling the wagons and buckboards that had been shipped to this point by railway. Horses and mules to be used by the Government surveyors were shod and made ready for use to the different survey crews. These survey crews were soon scattered over the Indian Territory surveying lands which were to be allotted to the members of the "Five Civilized Tribes," namely the Chickasaw, Creek, Cherokee, Choctaw and Seminole. Mr. Peithmann continued to work for the surveyors until 1903 when he returned to Illinois.

He has often commented on the incidents that took place while working in the Indian Territory:

"The country was very wild when we worked there, ... There were no roads, bridges, only trails. The small rivers were forded, and the larger ones were crossed on ferries. When we moved from one location to another, we always tried to camp near a spring or a well. And if we could not find these, we would use creek water for drinking and cooking purposes.

"If you crossed a river on horseback and the horse could not swim in the swift current on account of your weight, you would slip off backward and grab his tail. He would pull you safely across every time but you were soaking wet.

"During the summer of 1902 while working in the Choctaw Nation, I often went out looking for supplies for the camp cook. I recall that one day the Negro cook sent me out to look for buttermilk which he used in making biscuits. I drove up in a buckboard hitched to two mules to the home of a colored family and asked the woman if she had any buttermilk for sale. She said, 'Do you mean sour milk? Why, I have lived in the Choctaw Nation all my life and I never heard it called buttermilk before.'

"While working in the Choctaw Nation in 1902 (now southeast Oklahoma), the surveyors, one of them James Butler Bushyhead came upon a fullblood Choctaw Indian sitting on a rail fence with a Winchester rifle lying across his lap. This Indian told them not to cross the fence. He raised his rifle and said, 'I will kill the first man that crosses my cottonfield.' The surveyors quickly retreated and left it to the United States marshals to handle.

"As far as I can recall, this was the only time we were ever threatened while surveying in this, then wild country."

The photograph of the survey crew at "Camp 7" in the Choctaw Nation, taken in 1902, is accompanied by the following identification list of the men in the picture:

*Back row standing, left to right:* Bill Hailey (Choctaw), native of Indian Territory—axeman; John Howell, native of Arkansas—head chairman; John Clark, native of Indian Territory—buckboard driver; Charles Knight, native of Texas—axeman; James Butler Bushyhead (Cherokee), native of Indian Territory—buckboard driver; Wallace Freeman of Mill Creek, Indian Territory—mound man (set the corner tones); ? White-
The Chronicles of Oklahoma


Members of the Dawes Commission were appointed by the President under a congressional act of March 3, 1893. Its first members were Henry L. Dawes, Chairman, former U. S. Senator from Massachusetts; Meredith H. Kidd of Indiana and Archibald S. McKennon of Arkansas. The work of the Commission continued twelve years, in which it carried on the division of approximately 20,000,000 acres of land belonging to the Five Civilized tribes and the closing of their tribal governments before Oklahoma statehood. This stupendous task included the survey and appraisal of lands in the Indian Territory (east half of the present state) down to forty-acre tracts and completing allotment of lands in severalty; the registration and enrollment of every Indian member of the tribes, besides the separate registration and enrollment of the Negro freedmen (old ex-slaves from before Civil War times and their descendants) who were given land tracts. During the twelve years (1893-1905), over five hundred clerks besides other employees served in the work of the Dawes Commission, and members of the Commission itself changed. At the death of Mr. Dawes in 1903, Tams Bixby of Minnesota, the vice-chairman since 1897, was appointed to head the Commission. Other members who served on the Commission were Frank C. Armstrong (1895-1905), whose father and uncle had served by appointment of President Jackson as Indian agents in the Indian Territory in the 1830's; Thomas B. Needles of Illinois (1897-1905); Clifton R. Breckenridge of Arkansas (1900-1905); William E. Stanley of Kansas (1903-1904). It was through the influence of Thomas B. Needles that Edward H. Peithmann was employed on the survey party in the Indian Territory (1899-1903).—Ed.

MONUMENT AT TRAIL OF TEARS PARK, CAPE GIRARDEAU

The Trail of Tears Park at Cape Girardeau, Missouri, was the scene of the formal dedication of the Princess Otahki Monument on May 27, 1962, in a ceremony planned by the Cape Girardeau Rotary Club. Hon. C. W. Boutin, former chairman of the Missouri State Park Board who was largely responsible for the creation of the Trail of Tears Park and the monument at Cape Girardeau, was made honorary member of the Cherokee tribe and Ambassador of Goodwill by Justice N. B. Johnson, of the Oklahoma Supreme Court, representing the Cherokees during
the ceremony. Mr. Rush Limbaugh, Sr., gave the main address, telling something of the history of the park's creation and how it got its name. He pointed out that, in 1837 and 1838, thousands of Cherokees passed through the park area during their removal from the eastern mountain region of the Great Smokies on their way west to a new country in the Indian Territory (now Oklahoma). The Cherokees suffered great hardship during a terrible blizzard when they came to the Mississippi River, and many died at the Moccasin Springs crossing of the river. Among them was the daughter "Princess Otahki" of the noted Cherokee leader, Jesse Bushyhead who conducted a large group of his people west. The only marking on her grave was a small stone and cross until the Cape Girardeau Rotary Club erected the monument with its octagonal pagoda in the State Park this year.

The Trail of Tears State Park comprising 3,000 acres was a gift of Cape County to the Missouri people. The Missouri Park Board maintains the area, and much progress is being made in the building of roads, camping sites and lakes to make the park one of the finest in the state.

Among those attending the ceremony was James Butler Bushyhead of Pilot Grove, Missouri (retired St. Louis attorney), a grandson of the Rev. Jesse Bushyhead and great nephew of "Princess Otahki." Another attending the ceremony was Mrs. Mary Spitzmiller, executive director of the Otahki Council of Girl Scouts, who told briefly why this name had been chosen by the Council. The Girardarian published by the Cape Girardeau Rotary Club reported the event:

Sunday afternoon, in spite of threatening rain clouds, a sizeable crowd attended Rotary's dedication of the monument and grave of Princess Otahki in Trail of Tears Park. Among the many fine things going on, the outstanding one to your writer's mind was the presence of representatives of the Cherokee Nation and the forgiveness and great good will exemplified by them. Mistakes of the past cannot be changed but honorable people can prevent them multiplying and continuing into the present. For decades to come people will visit this shrine in its beautiful setting and be a little kinder because of its message.

THE EUFALUA DAM ON THE CANADIAN RIVER,
A CORRECTION

A note on the history of the Grand River Dam Authority appearing in The Chronicles for summer, 1962 (Vol. XL, No. 2), p. 185 (1st paragraph) has an error in the statement: "Now nearing completion is the great dam near Eufaula and another at Keystone west of Tulsa, both on the Arkansas River . . ."

Correctly stated, the great dam near Eufaula is on the Canadian River. The Keystone dam is on the Arkansas River west of Tulsa. Both of these dams are in the Arkansas River Basin and will form two large lake areas in Eastern Oklahoma.
The Eufaula dam is on the Canadian River, an airline distance of about fourteen miles east of the City of Eufaula, McIntosh County. This dam is nearing completion at the site in Sections 23 and 27, Township 10 North, Range 14 East.

WHERE IS THE MAIN CANADIAN RIVER IN OKLAHOMA?

Researchers in history become confused on the location of the different Canadian rivers given on early maps of Oklahoma when compared to the Canadian rivers shown on present day maps of the state. Readers of narratives on early explorations and trading expeditions in this region are also apt to wonder about the different Canadian rivers mentioned.

One of the earliest maps showing the beginning of place-names in the Oklahoma region as a part of Arkansas Territory is the “Map of Arkansa” by Stephen H. Long, Major of U.S. Topographical Engineers, published in 1822. This map gives three streams with the name Canadian in the country west of the Arkansas River: (1) The Canadian River (main Canadian) flows into the Arkansas from the west, a few miles downstream from the “Falls of the Arkansa” (present Webbers Falls); (2) the North Canadian, or North Fork of the Canadian pours into the main Canadian on its north side (left bank), about 35 or 40 miles upstream from its confluence with the Arkansas; (3) the South Canadian also a tributary to the main Canadian, flowing in on the south side (right bank) about 6 or 7 miles above the mouth of the North Canadian.

Present day maps of the state show only the South Canadian River with its principal tributary the North Canadian, or North Fork of the Canadian. The question arises, “What has become of the main Canadian River?”

The name of the South Canadian was changed to Gaines Creek some years before the period of the Civil War, the name being that of George Gaines U.S. Agent for the Choctaws who visited this country in the early 1830’s. Gaines Creek is a stream in present Pittsburg County, a branch of the “South Canadian” given on present day maps. Maps for many years kept on showing the Canadian River and the North Canadian, or North Fork of the Canadian. Finally, in spite of protests by those interested in Oklahoma nomenclature, not many years ago, the main Canadian disappeared from maps leaving in its place the South Canadian with its branch the North Canadian.

The main Canadian is a principal stream across Central Oklahoma, west to east. Back in the 1700’s, this river was thought to be a water route from the Arkansas River to Santa Fe, New Mexico, and many attempts were made by early-day explorers to ascend the river to that trading center far west.
The Canadian River was first called the St. Andre River by French explorers and traders in this region in 1740. The name Canadian was applied to the river in the later 1700's when traders from Canada, or Canadians were granted large tracts of land near the mouth of river and along the Arkansas by the colonial government at New Orleans. A discussion of this bit of Oklahoma history is given in "Naming the Canadian River" by the late Dr. Joseph B. Thoburn, in Chronicles of Oklahoma, Vol. VI (1928).—Ed.

Meaning of the Creek Indian Name Eufaula

An inquiry on the meaning of the Creek name “Eufaula” came to the Editor recently. This spelling Eufaula is a corrupt form for “Yufala” which is closer to the pronunciation in the Muskogee, or Creek language.

Authorities in their studies of the Creek, or Muskogee people, including Albert S. Gatschet (1884) and John R. Swanton (1946), have offered no interpretation of the name. However, the spelling Yufala given by both Gatschet and Swanton may be freely interpreted, “at this place, they split up and went into many parts of the country.” This interpretation of Yufala—a contraction of yu-falah-le—is from the Creek words yu meaning “this place” or “here”; and fah-le, “split into many parts or places.” This spelling Yufala and its derivation and meaning are significant of the tradition and history of that part or band of the Muskogee people, known as the Yufala or Eufaula who lived in several different places at one time or another, on the rivers in Alabama.

Early in the historic period, the Eufaula people lived on Talladega Creek in what is now Talladega County, Alabama, where their community became known as “Eufaula Oldtown.” The people remaining here were apparently later a part of the Upper Creek Division in the tribe. Soon after 1700, most of this “town” had moved to the Tallapoosa River in the central part of Alabama. By 1733, another colony known as “Lower Eufaula” had moved many miles away, down the Chattahoochee River, and there were several villages of the Eufaula band living farther down this same stream, by 1800.

The name Eufaula is well known today as that of a city, both in Alabama and in Oklahoma. In Alabama, Eufaula is located on the west side of the Chattahoochee River, in Barbour County, where the name perpetuates that of the Creek “towns” of the ancient “Eufaula” people in that state.

In Oklahoma, the City of Eufaula is located on the north

side of the Canadian River, about two miles west of the mouth of the North Canadian River (or North Fork of the Canadian), in McIntosh County. This region was settled by the Upper Creek Division at the time of the removal of the tribe from Alabama, about 1836. One of the Upper Creek “towns” located near the Canadian River, some six miles southwest of the present City in McIntosh County, was founded by the people that originated from the “Eufaula Oldtown” group back in Alabama, this new “town” known as “Eufaula Canadian,” or “Yufala No. 1.” The name is perpetuated in that of the present City that has developed from a small village planted beside the M. K. & T. Railway when it was built through the Indian Territory in 1872.

There is a lot of history connected with this early railroad town in the old Indian Territory, for it was the outgrowth of the pre-Civil War trading post called North Fork Town, located about two miles east of present Eufaula, near the mouth of the North Canadian River. The first U. S. post office was established here and named Eufaula, on February 6, 1874, with John H. Simpson as Postmaster. A post office had been established at or in the vicinity of North Fork Town, called “Micco” on August 4, 1853, with Catlett J. Atkins as Postmaster. Confederate treaties were signed with the Choctaw, Chickasaw and Creek nations at North Fork Town in 1861, with the noted Albert Pike serving as Commissioner for the Confederate States. The old site of North Fork Town will be inundated soon when the Eufaula Dam is completed on the Canadian River.—Ed.

The Joseph B. Thoburn Collection of Historic Papers Catalogued

Valuable historical materials of upward of 10,000 manuscript items—letters, notes and reports—of the Joseph B. Thoburn Collection are now being processed and catalogued for the first time, through the interest and steady efforts of Mrs. W. R. Holway and her sister, Miss Clare Kerr of Tulsa. This collection was placed by Dr. Thoburn’s daughter, the late Mary Thoburn in charge of Muriel H. Wright in the Editorial Department several years ago, and has lain untouched except for some attempts to make an orderly arrangement of a few of the papers. Mrs. Holway and Miss Kerr have made a fine contribution in giving their time and efforts in this work for the Historical Society, having come from Tulsa at their own expense to do this work two or three days at a time, for the past three years. Collection contains original data covering biography and early-day events in Oklahoma history gathered in Dr. Thoburn’s connection with the Historical Society for nearly forty years before his death in 1941. Particularly interesting in the field of archaeology are the letters and notes that form reports on the Thoburn archaeological expeditions in Oklahoma.—Ed.