



**Friends of the
OKLAHOMA HISTORICAL SOCIETY ARCHIVES**

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DIRECTORS REPORT

FRIENDS of the OHS ARCHIVES

April 17, 2010

By William Welge

It has been more than six months since the board met at the conclusion of the 75th anniversary of the opening of the Indian Archives (1934-2009) at which time, the board voted to purchase 315 black and white images of Soil Conservation Service photographs taken around the state. The collection covers a time period from 1937-1962. This particular collection fills a major hole covering the pre-World War II era through the middle of the 20th century. The staff deeply appreciates the continued support from FOHSA that has enabled the Research Division to **collect** pertinent materials during adverse budgetary times.

As mentioned above, last fall the division along with a steering committee composed of various tribal members from across the state, planned and completed the “big event” of the Indian Archives milestone of serving a global patronage for 75 years.

The Thursday night event began with the Kiowa Black Leggings Society with a tribal flag processional accompanied by Jim Anquoe drum members providing appropriate tribal songs.

We were welcomed by Dr. Blackburn, Executive Director followed by prayer by Kiowa elder Jim Anquoe. Dinner was

splendid. We had two distinguished keynote speakers Principal Chief Chad Smith of the Cherokee Nation and Walter Echohawk of the Pawnee Nation provided well received comments. There were an estimated crowd of 160 persons in attendance.

Friday’s events included paper presentations on a variety of topics such as language, history and culture. We had several distinguished speakers come from out of state to help celebrate this event including, Dr. David Baird, Dr. Dan Littlefield, as well



Pictured is Chester R. Cowen, Photographic Archivist, now retired with division director Bill Welge with copy prints of glass plate collection the Friends assisted with requiring in June.

as scholars and researchers in-state such as Henry Willis on Choctaw language, Gus Palmer on the Kiowa language, Dr. Mary

Jane Warde, Ron Graham on Creek Freedmen and genealogy and Dr. Michael Lovegrove.

The noon luncheon was well attended with nearly 125 persons who heard flute music by Osage/Cherokee J.C. High Eagle and a stellar speech given by Jay Hannah, Cherokee tribal member. Dr. Blackburn was presented an commendation from Governor Brad Henry's office and yours truly received one from the Governor's office read with much sincerity by Mr. Hannah. At the conclusion of the two day event, a surprise presentation was made to Bill Welge of a special blanket called "the Record Keeper" by committee member Bat Shunatona of the Otoe / Missouriia Tribe.

This special celebration was a success. I'd like to thank the Friends for their enormous contribution to that success and to the members who attended both days.

Since July of 2009, the Friends have played a significant role in assisting the Research Division with its programmatic efforts namely collections development, continuing education of staff and outreach. It has been a difficult year for the OHS as it was cut 17.4% of its appropriated funds for the fiscal year 2010. This translated into loss of 9.5 staff in the Research Division. The outlook for FY 2011 will not be any better with a possible 12% additional cut. Hence the major contribution of FOHSA serving as a conduit for grant funds with the Oklahoma Historical Records Advisory Board (OHRAB), staff development by assisting sending staff to workshops in and out of state and the acquisition of importance collections cannot be over stated.

With regards to staff, two were able to attend a Society of SW Archivist digital workshop

in Chickasha while others were able to travel out of state to gather potential materials from the family of Chester Gould, creator and cartoonist of Dick Tracy. Gould, a native of Pawnee, Oklahoma, passed away several years ago. When this opportunity came up earlier this year, the board did not hesitate to help in a major fashion. All the staff involved have expressed thanks to FOHSA with letters of appreciation.

Blanket Ceremony Honors

William Welge.



Bat Shunatona recognizes Bill Welge

Last fall at the conclusion of the 75th anniversary of the opening of the OHS Indian Archives, Bat Shunatona, Otoe-Missouria tribal Treasurer, former director of the Oklahoma Indian Affairs Commission and long time researcher at the OHS took the podium that Friday afternoon and said that there was one more event that needed to be completed before the assembled group

departed. Bat asked for Bill Welge to come forward to the stage. Bill was completely unaware of what was about to take place. Bat then presented Bill a beautiful blanket that holds special significance.

Called the “Record Keeper”, the Pendleton blanket was placed over Bill’s shoulders and wrapped in a symbolic ceremony by Bat before an audience of tribal elders, scholars and colleagues all of whom have been friend’s of Bill’s for many years. Choked with emotion, Bill thanked the folks for their unexpected gift to him made more so by who presented to him and for the important meaning that the blanket symbolizes. He will treasure the moment as long as he lives.



Picture of the Record Keeper Blanket – Pendleton

The actual blanket had not arrived in time for the ceremony, but was received within two weeks after the anniversary celebration ended. In a re-enactment of that ceremony, Osage Nation tribal member and Assistant

Curator of Indian Collections, Tara Damron placed the official blanket on Bill’s shoulders.

*The **F**riends would like to welcome the following new and renewing members:*

- Kathy Huber
- Caddo Heritage Museum-Kim Penrod, Museum Director
- Dr. Don Green
- Janice Whaling
- Kay Black
- Don & Karen Simmons
- Mary E. Maurer
- Norm Pence
- Clyde & Mary Pugh
- Ms. Jan Vassar
- Joe Todd
- Pen & Robin Woods
- Daniel F. Littlefield
- Niki Lorenzo

Friends Treasure Report - 2010

June 1-30, 2010

Starting balance:	\$104,847.78
Deposits:	0.00
Checks:	1,400.00
Service fees:	0.00
Ending balance:	\$103,447.78

Checks written for period June 1-30, 2010

June 9, 2010 ck# 1179

*Chester Cowen \$425.00 Memo:
Expenses for travel to Denver, Colorado
to retrieve glass plate collection.*

June 9, 2010 ck# 1180

Bill Welge \$425.00 " " "

June 20, 2010 ck#1181

*Francie Helm \$550.00 " :
Purchase software for Historia digital
project*

Total expenses: \$1,400.00

July 1-31, 2010

Starting balance:	\$103,447.78
Deposits:	\$340.00
Memo: New members and donations.	
Checks:	\$ 706.59
Service fees:	0.00
Ending balance:	\$103,081.19

Checks written for period July 1-31, 2010

June 22, 2010 ck#1182

*Ned's Catering \$506.59 Expense
pending from Volunteer luncheon of
December, 2009.*

July 19, 2010 ck#1183

*Cattlemen's Steakhouse \$200.00
Deposit for Volunteer luncheon
December 2010.*

Total expenses: \$706.59

Respectfully submitted August 31, 2010

William D. Welge
Ex-Officio member



Guthrie Collections



The Research Division is pleased to announce the addition of the valuable Guthrie Collections.

Guthrie collections

This is from a relative of John A. Guthrie. Mr. Guthrie has a long list of accomplishments and historically significant contributions. Among these are; rodeo director, Calvary rider, President of his own mortgage company, sure pistol shot, friends of Tom Mix, owner of largest horse farm in Oklahoma near Muscogee-Frozen Rock Ranch, etc.

He was also a Director of the Stampede. Several of the programs have an insert with the notation "Born on the Blackfoot reservation in Montana. He inaugurated Oklahoma State Penitentiary Rodeo, owned the original William F. Cody Deadwood estate (Buffalo Bill); starred in the World Famous St. Louis Cavalcade with the late Tom Mix. His brand was JAG.

These are some of the items that were featured in the Stampede.

- Don Wilcox in a thrilling display of trick and fancy roping
- Guthrie's Congress of real Oklahoma Plains Indians, featuring Chief Lone Eagle
- Champions of the world in an amazing exhibition of trick and fancy riding, starring: Vivian White, Pauline Nesbitt, Don Wilcox and Virginia Wilcox.
- Interesting picture showing Chief Long Eagle dancing with a number of live, ferocious snakes in his mouth.
- Grandstand program of Oklahoma Indian War Dancers, snake charmer's dance, and dynamic action drama of the West, etc.

Sources state he was originally married to an Indian woman. He later divorced her and married another. I believe that this is the Russell woman listed on the wedding certificate

Other items:

- 10x8" vintage photo of Tom Mix & John Guthrie seated. I believe this was on a TV set with cast members? Perhaps this was part of the St Louis Cavalcade? Nice sharp picture.
- Lot of 14 small photos of horse farm and workers. I believe the woman is probably his wife-not sure.
- 3 photos of John working.
- 4 photos 5x3.5" of the famous John A. Guthrie trained horses horse trailer full of women/workers?, John Guthrie stamped fencing.
- One medium photo of John with 2 horses and smaller photo of him working at the ranch.
- Large photo 7.4x5" of John on left with Indians in his stampede
- 2 large photo of John with group of Indians and a little boy
- 2 large photos of John on horses in uniform
- Large photo of John with Indians again in coat

- Tear off of image for penitentiary rodeo and large photo of pen rodeo with guard shack up top in McAlester.
- Large photo of parade (lightened)
- Large photo of John on his horse
- 9 smaller photos 4.5x3.5" of the pen rodeo in McAlester, super sharp. One smaller view of setting up.
- 2 more of horse farm
- RPPC of John on his horse slightly blurred.
- RPPC of McLaughlin Bros: Bahamian Juvenile Trick Ropers of the World and a large photo of them 8x10".
- Postcard showing staple, writing slightly faded through and crease.
- 1959 large photo 8x10" of John with names on back. One is his son. #3 on left.
- Another 8x10: in front of bus 1959
- 8x10" photo of John presenting a 10 gallon Stetson to Hon. HE Bailey City Manager of Oklahoma City during the stamped.
- 8x10" of John with his horse in horse trailer Vinita, Oklahoma Will Rogers rodeo sign-super sharp
- 8x10" studio shot of John in uniform
- 8x10" photo of John and Tom Mix opening Tom Mix Circus Texarkana 1938.
- 8x10" of Tom Mix signed. To John A. Guthrie Jr. Champion Australian Whip Cracker 1936, Best Wishes Tom Mix.
- 4.75x6.5" photo of John in studio and uniform
- Several newspaper clippings about Rodeo
- Official Program Pryor, OK John Guthrie's World's Championship Rodeo and American Indian Cavalcade. 4 pages
- Bedouin Temple's First Annual Shrine Indoor Circus Muskogee. (no mention of Guthrie) 8 pages
- Oklahoma Free State Fair in Muskogee 1945. Worlds Championship Rodeo plus John A. Guthrie's Sensational Stampede. 10 pages
- 1943 "The Ranchman" with John Guthrie on the cover "the man pictured on our cover, though still young, is the last of the renowned western showmen the saga of whom is punctuated by such names as the Miller Bros, Tom Mix, the Mulhalls and Pawnee Bill. His ancestry of his father's side dates back to the Virginia Cherokees, yet he was born in a half dugout on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation in Montana where his father had moved his cattle business from Texas". Good short bio on pages 2-3.
- 24 page magazine in fair condition with front page loose, some creasing/water wear bottom right.
- Miller Bros 101 Ranch Wild West Show Daily Review 1930 29 pages. Smaller, not sure if Guthrie is mentioned. Famous group. Some signature top left.
- All American Rodeo program insert with John as the assistant arena director. 6 pages.
- Johnny Lee Wills 1960 stampede program out of Tulsa. 12 pages of rodeo action, middle fold.
- Oklahoma City Stampede and combined Thrill Circus 1943 with 18 pages, managing Director John, front page honoring the governor Robert Kerr. Fair condition with front and back cover loose, top right corner moisture wear/tearing.
- 10.5x13" large colored studio photo of John with several edge tears/creases, right edge tear taped.
- Program Ozark Empire Fair Springfield, MO 1945. 23 pages featuring Guthrie's Stampede.
- 1942 Robertson's All-American Rodeo program out of Kansas City, MO. 17 pages of action don't see Guthrie, very good.
- Kansas Free Fair 1944 with cover missing, back loose. 15 pages featuring the Stampede with daily program insert not filled out. Several pictures of his troupe performing.
- Camp Crowder World's Championship Rodeo and Guthrie Stampede. 12 pages, loose, fair condition, creasing.
- Coffeyville, Kansas 1943 program fair with top right corner moisture wear/creasing/tearing.
- Missouri State Fair 1945 program 31 pages with John's Stampede. Very good.

- Broadside advertisement of the Pioneer Days Rodeo 1942 in Cordell, OK. 17x10.5 folded no mention of John.
- back of envelope with John A. Guthrie (brand)
- 2 telegrams with marriage certificate of John Guthrie and Jewel Russell 1923. Marriage cert in excellent condition.
- Miscellaneous funeral notice of Mary Carey died in Shawnee, OK 1905.
- John A. Guthrie Mortgage Company 1925 out of Fort Smith, Arkansas. President, The John A. Guthrie Mortgage Co, Director, National Savings and Loan Association, General Manager of Union Insurance and Bonding Co. 4 pages.
- Note to John from Georgia historical Commission. Oklahoma Postcards: WH Jones house Hugo, A&M College Stillwater, Sparks Dealer in Groceries, Loewe Hotel & opera House Enid, Public School Crescent rppc, Indian Trail Motel McAlester, Chelsea residence street and Methodist church, McAlester street scene, Chickasha City Hall & Fire Station. Most good condition, some used and unused, c1910 most, some with creasing. \$50
- Lot of 8 photos 5x3.25" most and one smaller of Confectionery + Cunningham & Philips soda coupon 1939. I believe these to be out of the Anadarko/county area. Appears there is a fair/parade going on. Notice the Indians. Unsure of exact location. \$20
- Five vintage mineral grant/oil & gas leases out of Oklahoma c1920s. One Texas Mining Company stock certificate #110 Oklahoma City and Home Petroleum Company 1919. Some tears along folds, minor staining. \$25
- Tulsa College of Fine Arts 1923 (last of the booklets I have already sold you). Mr. John Knowles Weaver. This appears to be the second year of operation with 250 students enrolled the first year. Good condition \$10
- Flashes! Booklet Walkathon out of Tulsa, Oklahoma 1933. 6 pages loose, looks like a few pages missing. Full of entertainers with multiple signatures. Looks like lots of dancers. Fun. \$20
- Cabinet photo from Muskogee of what looks to be a distribution plant for roasted coffee with Oklahoma Natural Gas written above. Some scratching near the photographer's name. Looks to be Pierson out of Muskogee. So, I am guessing this is somewhere there. Sharp image. 10x11". Place where mom worked.
- In same box as other. Place where Daddy worked-Fields on backside. Same hand-writing as other. Could be elsewhere. Wondering if Marshall Fields or just Fields at that time??
- Little booklet with blank pages, but interesting cover of Mr. Border with 2 views of the Border Hospital and Goiter Clinic, and Franklin Hotel on backside. Mangum, OK with Dr. Fowler Border on the cover. Originator of hospital.3.5x5.5", some creasing. (#6,7 & 8) \$40

Total Cost of collections \$1260



History in the Making

By Sammie Dennison-Harmon

*We are introducing a series titled, **History in the Making.** My goal was to include the first two interviews in this issue of the newsletter. Larry Sellers and Red Steagall are both amazing, positive, caring personalities and I wanted to share the entire in depth interviews with you. So I came up with a plan. Now that the Friends newsletter has a link on the OHS website, why not include the full interview online.*



Larry Sellers:

Our first interview was with fellow Oklahoman, Native American,

actor, teacher, and historian, humanitarian and just plain ole modest Larry Sellers. In addition to my interview, I was fortunate to sit in on Larry's oral video interview at the Oklahoma Historical Society Research Division. Larry has been in numerous movies and TV programs. He tells of his inspiring journey to gain this role in the in-depth interview. He is one with his spirituality. Larry's accomplishments are too many to name here. I was intrigued by his

warmth, wit and candor. He is active in the small community of his home town, Pawhuska and always eager to inspire young people to embrace their history through language classes and learning and preserving the "Old Ways" of their ancestors.

Many of you probably remember Larry from the long running television series, Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman. He portrayed Cheyenne Indian, Cloud Dancing. In addition, Larry has an impressive list of acting accomplishments and his body carries the pain of his tenure as a stunt man. "I learned to crash cars, fall from buildings and kick box," he said. He was an educator in Arizona. He eventually moved from Arizona to California, where he lived for 19 years working as a stuntman, translator and technical advisor. Larry now lives in Pawhuska at the Osage Indian Camp and is active in the Boys and Girls Club, teaches Osage language classes and is very interested in educating young people about their tribal history to rediscover their unique customs that at one time were suppressed. Larry has a dynamic personality and his life is an open book. I was very impressed with his directness and non-militant statements concerning the "Deculturization" of the Osage people.

Larry has traveled an exciting path in his acting career and had the opportunity of visiting other countries and working with many talented entertainers. His career is not limited to acting alone; however, he is a

teacher, stand-up comic, producer of documentaries and humanitarian. But if you were to ask him what is most important to him, in addition to his family, without hesitation he would reply, "My spirituality". To say Larry participates in the Sundance ceremonies would be an understatement – the ceremonies are more than that, they are one with him. He was offered a role in Kevin Kosner's film, *Dances with Wolves*, but turned down the role, because the producers would not let him have two days off for the Sundance Ceremonies. Larry was blessed for his sacrifice, after the ceremony, he returned to Los Angeles and got a call from the executive producer of *Dr. Quinn Medicine Woman* and was offered the part of Cloud Dancing. The character was originally called Black Hawk," he said. "They just wanted a representative American Indian, not a character. I came up with Cloud Dancing and became the technical adviser for Native American concepts and thoughts." His technical adviser role gave him a chance to present American Indians of the past as regular citizens in a town. "One of the things never represented in movies or TV is an interracial relationship between a white woman and an Indian man," he said. "Indian men treat their mates with kindness".

Larry's father worked on the 101 ranch in Osage county and he learned stunt riding from him. Larry grew up riding horses and the area where he experienced his childhood was a playing field to prepare him for his abilities to become a stunt man for movies in Hollywood, which later led into

acting roles. A hint of Larry's humorous personality was evident when he made the comment that all Indians cannot ride horses. He joked about his two younger brothers and said they were "City Indians" and that even as small as Pawhuska is, it is still considered a city. He laughed and said he can get by with saying that as the truth.

Born in Pawhuska, Oklahoma on October 02, 1949, Larry lived in the Osage Indian Camp. He is from the *Wah-Zha- Zhi* (Osage) Buffalo Bull Clan on his mother's side. His parents were Kathleen and Carl Sellers. His Osage name is He-pa-to-he He is very proud of his Osage and Cherokee heritage; however, he celebrates great pride in his adoption into the Lakota tribe and he has deep respect for his Lakota adopted mother. As a young man he realized the Lakota Nation continued the spiritual ceremonies that the Osage had lost. The Osage at one time were one with the great Sioux Nation and still have a biological blood tie with these people. In the 1970's when he was 29 years old, he went among the Lakota people to find answers to his spiritual gifts. His Osage family could not answer these questions. They would always say, "We have put them away", meaning the old beliefs". He found the answer to his questions in the Lakota Pipe Beliefs. The authority from which he speaks is given and directed by the Heyoka [Thunder Cloud] spirits. The altar at which he sits is a Heyoka Altar and the various ceremonies that he leads are by the direction and authority of the Heyokas. He participates in the *Wiwang Wacipi* [Sun Dance]

Ceremony, having been a helper or a leader for many of those years.

Seller's destiny to his spirituality began at the young age of six when he first saw a white light and a man standing above it. He did not understand what it was, but he never forgot the experience. "We put that away and there was no one to *interpreter* it". At the age of 29 the spirit man came back to him. "I went with my mother to my grandfather's abandoned Native American church. My mother's cousin had rented it to a non-native and they had used it for a pig sty. Boy was my mother livid! I had never seen her that upset. There was a moon on the altar and I asked her what it meant, but she was not seeing the same thing I was seeing. She was seeing the physical moon. I was seeing a white light above the moon that turned into a man. The same man I had seen as a young boy".

Larry states "The influence of white Christianity worked to break down the family and tribal connection and the mistreatment of many boarding schools along with a dominate white society was responsible for the mindset to become as white as possible. The abuse was devastating and caused great fear. The fear led to teaching their children to be more white. The boarding schools worked to break down the family and tribal connection. Dominate society as white as possible. Lose the passion and practices of an honorable warrior or man. The warped European dignity and integrity and even respect were different from Native

American respect". Sellers's belief is the white man's concept of respect is a respect of fear, where the Native American respect is true respect of nature, man and Creator.

"I knew there had to be more to our ancestors than what white America was telling us. Our parents and grandparents told us to "Put those things away", meaning the ceremonies and close spiritual connection which today is referred to as Vision Quest. The transition from the Old Beliefs System to the Native American Church assimilate and cultruisum was a result of being constantly told to put those away and inevitably they moved away from the old beliefs".

"Thinking Osage, being Osage, investing ourselves, we can't do it the way they did back then. Culture has changed; society has changed mentality and how we think has definitely changed. They think in terms of what they can do for themselves and permeate the Osage nation. It has to do with the change in relation from the forced civilization process because of the missionaries. In 1854 there was man who was the head of the Dept of Interior named George Mannypan. He made a speech back in DC talking about changing the values of native people. Part of his statement was we need to change the Indian value to say, *I instead of me and me instead of us and my instead of ours* and that is what happened. I hate to use the term chief because there hasn't been anyone in a long time who understood those qualities. Indians never had chiefs that European term was pushed

on us and on indigenous people on this continent to make it easier for the government to rip the Indian off. We had hereditary leaders and they were taught to make decisions, but those hereditary leaders from the time those kids were born they were taught to make decisions that had to do with tribal thought and the decision that person makes is with the council and the entire tribe - all the people. One of the things that we have learned in this nation is to be decisive in how we do things. The leader here does not unify the people, he divides them. And that is for power and control. It is purely egoistically. It is purely satisfying an individual need - *because it does not benefit all the people*. What is good for the survival of the people is good for me and that and is the decision I should be making, not what I should be getting out of it. How can I have more power, how can I have more control and that is white thinking. And it is not that I hate white people; I don't hate white people. All, I am trying to say is, this sort of thinking is not Native American and it is not indigenous and has nothing to do with those traditional values - those tribal values - or cultural values - those spiritual values. I think about those **Little Old Men* who made those decisions to keep a balance in the universe what they identify that is good for all people. Our morals are different than European morals. So whose morals do we have to live by? Those forced on us? I wrote a movie one time that was a comedy and I took it around to Hollywood and they said oh we don't want to represent Indian

people like that. It was a comedy and because Hollywood had the tendency to keep native people in history. They either want to romanticize them like my character was in *Dr Quinn*. Although *Cloud Dancing* was multi dimensional - which is great. It was a good outlet for Indian people and Indian cultural. The character was still romanticized. I was serious all the time. A lot of people said you were always angry on that show. I was angry all the time. We always got taken advantage of. The title of the movie I wrote was *The Adventures of Big Little Man and four skins*. Most Indian people who live in the native world understand you're talking about four Indian guys, but non Indian people immediately thought of something else. It was kind of the genre as *ace Ventura*. It was funny, I know these four guys they are funny. Indians can be just as stupid as anybody. That would affect Hollywood's image and they don't want to be politically incorrect. The studio felt that Indian people could not be funny. Why can't an educated native person be funny? You can use humor to address certain social issues and injustices you use humor to do that but they won't let you. Being angry all the time is tiring".

The real life Larry Sellers is kind, courteous and civic minded. He finds humor as a close companion. He does not ask anyone to believe in his form of spirituality. He asks only that you respect his right to believe, as he respects yours.

There were three of us from the Friends board that were invited into Larry and

Amy's home for the interview and both of them made us feel welcome as if we were old friends. The love and respect the couple share is very apparent when you see them together. Larry proudly showed us pictures of his children and grandchildren. I have met his son, Wolfman, who would like to continue the family legacy and have a career in the entertainment industry. When Larry agreed to let me invade his privacy for this interview, I thought of him as an interesting person I thought to write about. I now think of him as a friend. After all, we are Wah –Zha - Zhi.

* A group of Wah' Zha' Zhi elders known as the **Little Old Men** established and maintained rules and customs according to the Old Beliefs System.

Please feel free to submit potential candidates for inclusion in future publications to Sammie Dennison at



Red Steagall:

Our second interview was with, Red Steagall. Red is an accomplished

songwriter, entertainer, radio personality, Texas state Cowboy Poet Laureate, motivational speaker, etc. who has overcome obstacles in his life to carve out a career that inspires people all over the world. He contracted polio when he was a teen and with the help of a devoted mother overcame a physical impairment that threatened the loss of his leg. There was also a career that faded away and a new career that emerged from the ashes. This interview inspired me to become a more positive person. Red personifies a way of life that is dear to those of us who were fortunate enough to encounter. Red Steagall is all about a person's handshake binding your word, old fashioned morals, positive thinking and neighbors helping neighbors. He has proved this many times over by helping new artists, such as Reba McEntire achieve their dream. In essence – Red is just an old fashioned down to earth guy.

Red Steagall is mostly a “Texan”. And you know what they say about Texas – well he is definitely bigger than life. Texas may be his home, but he was born in the Gainesville area and Texans call that, Lap Land the back door to Oklahoma. As many times as Red

has performed in Oklahoma, our state must seem like his second home; however, Red is welcomed all over the world like a next door neighbor. A man of many talents, Steagall is a songwriter, poet, radio host, and motivational speaker and after all of this – is still just a good ole boy whose handshake is binding and his word is gospel. I discovered all of this about Red Steagall as I transcribed twenty-eight pages of Steagall's interview with Bill Welge and myself.

Red has had an inspiring journey to bring him to success. In fact, he has created several successful careers. He contracted polio at the age of fifteen and with determination and a dedicated mother, was able to save a leg that was threatened. His mother bought him a mandolin and a guitar to strengthen and improve the physical damage to his right hand. He did not let the impairment stop him from a musical career. When speaking of his mother, he said, "My mother was the grandest lady on the face of the earth".

In college Red took a turn as a rodeo bull rider and tells of the experience, "It was a fun time in my life – a very exciting time. I did something I never dreamed I could do and it was a motivator, it made me realize I might not be able to do it just like that next fellow, but I can do it". This attitude enabled Red to accomplish a successful career in the entertainment field. An interesting fact that gives meaning to Red's statement is that his right hand had to be tied down, as he would be disqualified if he touched the bull

Red moved to Los Angeles at the request of his childhood friend, Don LeMere and college friend Jimmy Bowen. He said, "Donnie and I wrote a song one night called, *Here we Go Again* and it was recorded the first time by Ray Charles, instant hit". This was the beginning of his lucrative songwriting career that has lasted for decades. "By 1969 I had sixty of my songs recorded by other people". I really got into writing songs when I went to Hollywood". In 69 I started recording and my first label was Dot".

It was at the 1974 National's Final Rodeo in Oklahoma City, that Red met Reba McIntire for the first time. Red spoke of this experience, "I had been watching the girl sing the national anthem and got cold chills and I think it was that night her mother stopped me in the hallway of the hotel and said", "Can I bring my little girl up here to sing with you"? "I said sure and she sat down beside me and blew me away".

"Glen Sutton and I had ridden a Rock Island freight train, they had a special from Amarillo to Memphis and we were on that train to write songs. The stations were much like Holdenville and they would have big signs out there for us and the train would stop and they would bring us sandwiches. The people at the stations all across Oklahoma were so good to us. We wrote a song and asked Reba to make a demo in Nashville. It took us a while to get the record deals. The guy who was working for me actually made the contract. You got to remember in the early and mid seventies

girls did not sell tickets or records. Reba created the whole world of girl singers. She gave them a chance to rise to fame”. When asked if he still had contact with Reba, Red replied, “I have never had a closer friend”.

Red fell in love with poetry at the age of three when his mother entered him in a poetry contest, but it wasn't until his career took a down turn due to the crooner era fading away to the new country music of stars like Garth Brooks and a newer younger audience. “I was pretty disappointed and disillusioned, because I did not know what I was going to do with the rest of my life. I heard about Cowboy poetry gatherings in Alco Nevada and it was the very first. Brother Danny and I got on a plane and went out there to see what it was all about. I realized this was where my heart was. I came home and for five years, I did not write one single song. I had never allowed myself to write poetry. It took away from my creative time I needed to write songs. “The poetry just poured out because it had been stored up. And then I started writing cowboy songs”.

Red is in demand, not only for his music, he has a sixteen string band, but as a motivational speaker for large corporations who want to instill honesty, integrity, loyalty and work ethics which characteristics are a way of life for Red.

Last but not least, Red's radio show, Cowboy Corner is carried by approximately 170 radio stations in 43 states and last fall he produced the first show of the 17th season. And all of the

shows and interviews are done by two people – Red and his producer. All this and he just launched a new television show on RSD TV, called *In the Bunkhouse with Red Steagall*.

Red speaks briefly during the interview about the Iraqi people and their war with the Iranians and how an Iraqi man helped him to appreciate being a part of the United States. “Our driver from our embassy was from Bagdad and just got back from the war zone and he focused on all the atrocities and how horrible it was. He looked at me and said”, “Son the Iraqi people are not at war with the Iranians. Our king forced invasion”. “And it got me to thinking, he laughs the same way I do, cries the same way I do and our blood is the same color. He helped me to understand that I had not taken the time to appreciate being a part of this great US. And that was one of the greatest events in my life. But the greatest event that affected me was when Gail said she wanted to spend the rest of her life with me”.

And folks, there speaks a man who has his priorities in the right order!

News from the Board

Hi Everyone,

Once again it has been a while since our last newsletter, but the board has been busy working on ways to assist the Research Division. It seems like I am always apologizing for the delay in publishing; however, in spite of our busy lives and careers, the board officers and directors are never too busy to take time to do our part to assist the Research Division in all ways possible. As I stated in our last issue, the *Friends* are still in the non-profit business of assisting the Research Center and helping to preserve history. Please read the director's report in this issue to see an in-depth account of our activities. Because of you our members and benefactors we really do assist the Research Division in preserving history by purchasing valuable collections, photos and numerous items..

We are very saddened at the loss of Dr. William Ward, a long time friend of the OHS and supporter of the Research Division. Bill was the husband of **F**riends board member, Dr. Mary Jane Ward. Bill will be missed greatly by so many people and causes he worked so passionately for. He was very active in the Boy Scouts of America and influenced the lives of countless young men.

Please mark your calendars for the Authors Book Showcase October 8th & 9th at the Embassy Suites – Tulsa, OK, hosted by Gregath Publishing Company. We hope you can attend and please bring guests.

Have a great fall and winter! And please encourage your family and friends to join our *Friends* group. We appreciate all of our members and benefactors. Without your support, we could do nothing. *I cannot stress how imperative it is for all of you to renew your membership.* The past is ours to treasure.

Our board meetings are open and we love to have visitors!

God Bless You.

Sammi

A Nation In Transition

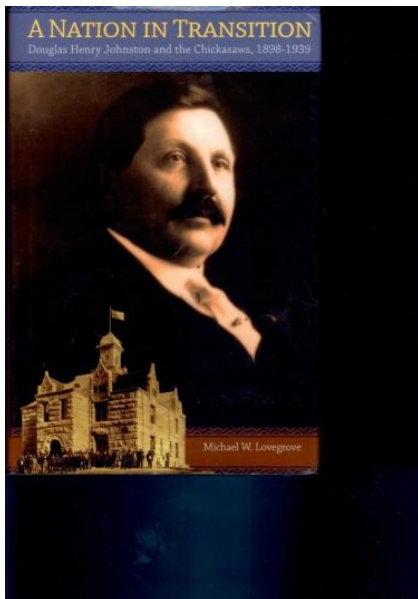
Douglas Henry Johnston and the Chickasaws, 1898-1939

Dr. Michael W. Lovegrove

Reviewed by Sammie Dennison-Harmon

Dr. Michael W. Lovegrove offers readers a fresh perspective to an era in history that has perplexed the avid researcher for over a decade. The author has ploughed through endless records of Chickasaw tribal history during a crucial time for all the Native American tribes of Oklahoma to recreate the past of the great Chickasaw nation and Douglas Henry Johnston their governor. Johnston was the leader for forty years and had for many years stood as the last Native American chief executive.

Dr. Lovegrove paints a picture with words of the career and history of this complicated and painful era of changes for the Chickasaw under the wise council of Governor Johnston. This



author is a “straight shooter” and tells it exactly how it was and has the footnotes to back him up. This in-depth book covers a multitude of events and critical history. For the researcher it is a “*treasure chest*” of text.

Ironically, chapter one begins at the end for Governor Johnston who had a fatal heart attack, June 23, 1939, and is followed by a brief introductory bio. However, in the pages to follow the reader has ample opportunity to gain insight into the public and private life of Governor Johnston and his journey to political life and his forty year tenure as the Governor of the Chickasaw Nation.

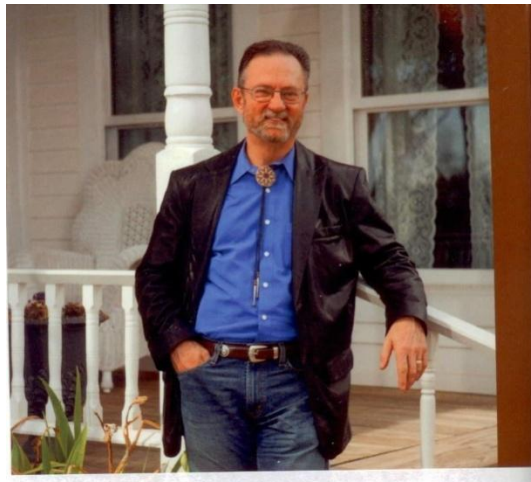
Chapter three deals with congress granting the Dawes Commission the power to prepare tribal roles and for the first time in the tribe’s history they were recognized as “*Court Citizens*”. This tumultuous period in Chickasaw history thoroughly covers the government’s “*Take Over*” policy of the Indians and the people who fraudulently enrolled on the tribal role. Dr. Lovegrove displays the tenacity and intelligence of the Chickasaw nation to stand up against it and the lawyers who represented them.

Chapter four describes the impact of the Supplementary Agreement while Chapter five documents 1903, and in Dr. Lovegrove's words, "the year that marked the beginning of the allotment process and the beginning of the end of the Chickasaw government".

Chapter six may very well speak of the tenacity of the Chickasaw nation and their leader. A series of well covered events are covered in this section, such as the vanishing of the old government and the final tribal election.

Chapter nine, the final chapter, "*The End of an Era*" was a time of constant stress for Governor Johnston. Dr Lovegrove states, "Johnston labored to get as much assistance for his people as possible during those difficult times". This period also brought the fateful time for the Chickasaw's to select their homestead and another fear for the full-bloods – the fear that the government would control the selection. Johnston considered the "*Restriction Bill* ", one of the greatest achievements of his life because it prevented Chickasaw land from being sold for taxes. On the last page of this chapter, Dr. Lovegrove sums up the man, Douglas Henry Johnston, in a short bio that simply describes Johnston as he was "Clearly, not a perfect man". "Johnston always fought for what he believed his people were entitled to, and that was his greatest legacy".

Dr. Michael W. Lovegrove is a professor of history at Rose State College in Midwest City, OK. He served on the Friends board for ten years and is a past president.



Editors Footnote:

It has been a privilege and a pleasure to write this book review for my very good friend, Dr. Michael W. Lovegrove. Michael's love for the Chickasaw nation and all their members is evident, not only in his dedication that is presented in the 194 pages of this book, but in his actions and deeds. I think Chickasaw Governor, Johnston's message to the 1912 meeting of the Treaty Rights Association of the Chickasaw and Choctaw Nations personify the motives of Dr. Lovegrove, "If the rights and interests of the Chickasaws are to be adequately protected", Johnson proclaimed, "constant and devoted service upon the part of the accredited representatives of the tribe is required".

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The Friends board celebrates the wonderful news that our US soldiers are coming home. Our country is the greatest in the world. We honor those brave soldiers who have lost their lives to defend our freedom and our prayers are with their families. We salute those soldiers who will be coming home. We offer our thanks to our Oklahoma soldiers and all service men and women across our nation.

God Bless America!
