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HISTORIC HOMES OF OKLAHOMA

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This paper was written partly in an attempt to try to bring together the various pieces of information available about the preservation of historic homes of Oklahoma, and partly as a possible guide for those persons interested in actually visiting historic homes or perservation districts in the state.

Widespread interest in historic preservation in Oklahoma is rising. Until recently the state was so new that little thought was given to preserving history on a major scale. Ofcourse, there have always been some farsighted individuals interested in keeping a record of Oklahoma history. As early as 1893 the Oklahoma Press Association established the Oklahoma Historical Society with the avowed intention of "promoting interest and research in Oklahoma history, encouraging the collection and preservation of the State's historical records, pictures, and relics"¹. Individuals such as Mr. George Shirk, now the Oklahoma Historic Preservation Officer and president of the board of Directors of the Oklahoma Historical Society,

¹ Oklahoma, Historical Society Constitution (Revised 1972). art. 1, sect. 2.

have worked tirelessly to retain the historic mementoes of the past. As Mayor of Oklahoma City Mr. Shirk led the fight to retain, in place, the worthwhile architectural parts of the downtown area, and when this proved impossible, he saved the better pieces and had them stored for some future use. Mr. Shirk also was the leading figures in the effort to obtain the Overholser Mansion as a national site and have it made into a museum. His most recent efforts have been toward discovering, buying, uncovering, and restoring the first and probably only winery ever established in Oklahoma during territorial days. Mr. Shirk is also author of the book Oklahoma Place Names, a work of primary research into the origins of the names of places in Oklahoma.

Another individual who has been interested for years in Oklahoma history is the writer, Kent Ruth. Mr. Ruth has written many articles about historic sites in Oklahoma which are published in the Oklahoma City newspapers. He recently also published a small book called Window on the Past which gives descriptions of seventy five locations of various sorts in Oklahoma which are on the National Register of Historic Sites. In all, there are approximately one hundred and sixty sites in the state which are registered with the National Register.² Other persons who have researched state history as their life work are Dr. Arrell Gibson of the University of Oklahoma and author of Oklahoma, A History of Five Centuries, and Dr. LeRoy H. Fischer of the history department of Oklahoma State University. Both Dr. Gibson and Dr. Fischer serve as members of the board of Directors of the Oklahoma Historical Society.

²Kent Ruth, Window on the Past (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Publishing Company, 1974), p.vi

Nevertheless, general public interest has not been great until the last ten years. The passing of the pioneer generation has made the younger generation of adults realize that unless the state heritage is saved now it will be gone forever. While the idea of preservation is extremely laudable as an overall objective, the results of the sudden rush have been to produce a chaotic situation as many different persons and organizations set about saving local sites. Some of the sites may not prove in the long run to have been worth saving. As far as historic homes are concerned, the ones which have been preserved form an excellent cross section of the home building tastes of Oklahomans since the first permanent dwellings were erected in the first half of the nineteenth century. The ownership of these homes is vested in a widely diverse group of organizations: the Oklahoma Historical Society owns and operates many sites, several of them early homes which have been donated to the state over the years; the Oklahoma Department of Tourism and Recreation also operates many sites, several of them homes. Other homes are owned by local county historical organizations, private preservation organizations, amusement parks, motels, private ownership, and some have no apparent owners at all. Conversely, some of the houses that are listed on the National Register of Historic Sites are privately owned and occupied as homes.

In order to take one type of historic site in Oklahoma, homes, and publish what is known about the individual locations in some kind of logical order, their relationship to Oklahoma history will be developed. The sites will be treated in chronological order rather than grouping them according to ownership, use, or physical location within the state. The historical divisions will be four: the time of the Indian tribal

removal, the time of Indian independence, the time of territorial settlement, and post-statehood. To establish a background for this study a short history of Oklahoma seems suitable, as well as a discussion of architectural design. In addition, criteria need to be established so that limitations for the inclusion or exclusion of specific homes can be set.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND

Oklahoma was land passed over for settlement by the white people moving westward. The land was less promising as farmland than that to the north, and less promising as pasture than the land further west. To the south Texas had been a settled area for many years, most recently as a state in the United States. Because Oklahoma land was already full of Indians who had been driven east from their Plains by the settlement of pioneers on their hunting grounds, and full of Indians driven west by the slow spread of agriculture westward from the Mississippi valley, it seemed to be the logical place to resettle other Indian groups. As early as the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 President Jefferson had suggested the removal of Indians to an area west of the Mississippi River. The first tribe assigned to what is now the state of Oklahoma were the Choctaws, who were moved west under the Treaty of Doak's Stand, 1820.³ During the next seventy years an additional sixty-six tribes were relocated from such diverse locations as Upper Michigan (Ottawa) and Arizona (Apache).⁴ These tribal removals produced some of the earliest homes in Oklahoma because many of

³Arrell Gibson, Oklahoma, A History of Five Centuries(Norman: Harlow Publishing Company, 1965), p.78

⁴Muriel H. Wright, A Guide to the Indian Tribes of Oklahoma (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1951) p. 13

the treaties carried clauses providing that the United States of America would build homes for the chiefs. Several of these homes still exist, and at least one is now occupied as a private home. During this early period the land which now comprises the state of Oklahoma was known as the Indian Lands and the whole area was divided among the Choctaw, Cherokee, and Chickasaw tribes. Clear boundaries were established for the eastern, northern and southern divisions between the three autonomous nations. Due to a lack of care and a lack of survey information, no clear western limits were set for these tribes. The whole area not already committed to specific states was considered part of the Indians' lands. The United States treated these tribes as foreign nations. For the purposes of this paper this first period covering approximately 1830 to 1850 will be called The Time of the Chiefs.

The second period covers the time from approximately 1850 to the beginning of legal white settlement which was first allowed in 1889. Between 1850 and 1889 all the additional tribes were relocated from their original homes to the Indian Lands. The United States government was pressured by the need for farming land for the growing population. Officials entered into a series of land purchase treaties with the original three tribes thereby gaining land upon which to settle other tribes through treaty bargaining. By this method the Creeks and Seminoles were moved into the eastern part of the Indian Lands. They joined with the Choctaw, Chickasaw and Cherokee to form the group known as the Five Civilized Tribes. The Osage were settled on a large reservation near the Kansas border. In the western part of the Indian Lands the Sac and Fox, Pottawatomie, Shawnee, Comanche, Kiowa, Apache, Cheyenne and Arapaho

were settled on lands originally designated as hunting areas for the first tribes. During this whole period the Indians were left on their reservations and tribal lands to establish their own forms of government and live their lives in their old ways. White men who saw a chance to own great quantities of land through marriage with Indian women established large plantations in the Indian lands. Indians, too, established huge plantations as they had previously in their Georgian homelands. On their earlier lands they had had the use of great quantities of black farming labor due to their ownership of slaves. These people had been brought to the Indian lands and continued to work in the old ways. From about 1850 to 1889 life was relatively peaceful in the Indian Lands except where the Civil War made inroads. The population, both Indian and white, were in the process of establishing a civilization. This time was the period of the construction of the earliest of the plantation homes. In this paper the second period of construction, from 1850 to 1889, will be called The Time of the Planters.

The third period, from the time of white settlement in 1889 to statehood in 1907, will be designated The Territorial Days. During this time two distinct types of homes rose on the virgin soil. On the prairie the settlers who came for the free land available built dug-outs and sod-dies to protect themselves from the harsh weather. As the cities grew, homes of a more comfortable and pretentious nature were constructed. Prior to 1889 the pressure had begun to build again on the United States government to open more land for settlement. By then, however, all of the available land except that reserved for the Indians had already been opened to settlement. The government turned to the land of the Indians as the

only remaining available land for settlement. A group of treaties were entered into between the United States of America and tribal governments. These treaties sold back to the United States land which it had previously either given or sold to the Indians under earlier treaty provisions. The land purchased was then opened to white settlement.

On April 22, 1889 the first of the purchased land was opened by land run. The land was allotted on a first come, first served basis with all the attendant fights, arguments, lawsuits, and "Sooner" activity which might have been expected. This area covered what is now Cleveland, Oklahoma, Canadian, Logan and parts of Kingfisher and Payne counties. From this beginning Oklahoma Territory grew rapidly. In 1892 the Cheyenne and Arapaho lands to the west of the first area were opened by land run. In September of 1893 the lands to the north known as the Cherokee Outlet in what is now Woodward, Woods, Major, Harper and Alfalfa counties were opened. In 1901 the Wichita and Caddo Indian holdings were opened by lottery, settling the counties of Caddo and Washita. In the same year all the counties surrounding Ft. Sill were opened by lottery out of the Comanche, Kiowa and Apache lands.

As early as 1890 the Organic Act establishing Oklahoma Territory was passed by the United States Congress. This enabling act added another piece of land to the territory. The panhandle area of Oklahoma was a governmental orphan. Its eastern boundary was established at 100° west longitude by the Adams-Onis Treaty in 1819. The southern boundary was the extension of the Mason-Dixon line along the 36° 30' north latitude. Since Texas was admitted as a slave state its borders could not extend above that parallel. The western limits were established by the organization

of New Mexico Territory in 1850. The northern border was established by the organization of Kansas Territory in 1854. Called 'No Man's Land' because it was not attached to any territory, the piece of land one hundred and sixty three miles long and thirty six miles wide was finally attached to Oklahoma. In 1896 a decision of the United States Supreme Court took away from Texas the land which lies between the north and south forks of the Red River and awarded it to Oklahoma Territory, adding all the land which is now Greer and Harmon counties and parts of Beckham, Kiowa, Jackson and Tillman counties. At last in 1906 an area known as the Big Pasture in Cotton county just above the Red River was opened to settlement by sealed bid, and the outline of western Oklahoma was complete.⁵ The Five Civilized Tribes still owned a restricted part of the total land of present day Oklahoma, consisting of the part of the state east of Osage county, down the side of Lincoln county, south down the east side of Pottawatomie county, south to the Canadian River, westward along the river as far as the east side of Caddo county and then straight south to the Red River. This meant that Bartleville, Tulsy Town (Tulsa), Seminole, Tishomingo, Purcell, Chickasha, and Duncan were all in the 'eastern' or Indian Territory. During territorial days, although the land was actually separated into Oklahoma and Indian Territories, for the purpose of this paper the whole area will be treated as one in the section dealing with territorial homes.

The fourth period from statehood in 1907 until 1930 will cover the mansions built by the early pioneers in oil and industry. This period will be called The Post Statehood Mansions. These homes reflect the strength

⁵ John Morris and Edwin McReynolds, Historical Atlas of Oklahoma (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965) p. 44

of the economy and the development of the state as a settled culture. Many of these homes are still used as private residences, but they will become more valuable as historic sites as the years pass. In addition to these groupings based on Oklahoma history, another division of homes must be treated if the present work is to be complete in its coverage. That division is the group of homes found in historic districts of the state. In many cases an individual home within an area could not stand on its own merits as an historic home, but as part of a neighborhood each plays an important part in the whole scheme. These homes will be discussed under the heading The Historic Neighborhoods.

In the midwest, all the architectural styles are later renditions of styles popular or current in the eastern United States at an earlier date. Why this should be is not quite clear, except for the lag of time between the establishment of a new fad or idea and its slow spread by imitation. Even today it is apparent that styles seem to be popular on the coasts before they reach the midwest. Considering the slowness of travel and the poor communication during the middle nineteenth century, perhaps it is not surprising to find Oklahoma in its early development depending on styles of architecture which had already passed from use elsewhere.

The building which the United States government did for the Indians in the early days of settlement very closely resemble Federal Era construction of the late eighteenth century, a lag of just at fifty years in design. In Oklahoma, as when the east coast was being settled, it was important to get construction completed during the summer months. Bricks had to be made, dried, laid and the construction finished before the coming of the first freeze, because no other shelter was available

for the laborers except the building under construction. Later when other shelter was available time was not of such great importance. This demand of time also limited the size of the buildings. The early ones were all quite modest in floor space. Later homes were both more spacious and more decorated. The home styles of the old south influenced construction in Oklahoma during the time of the planters and the time of the settlers. Many of the builders of plantation homes, both white and Indian, had lived in the south in Georgia and Mississippi. It is not unexpected that their homes would mirror those that they had left behind.

Victorian architecture also influenced building during the time the settlers were establishing the territory. The period covers 1889 to 1907 and the Victorian period proper ended in 1901 but the influence remained for a number of years after that time. An additional style which influenced home construction during the territorial period was the so-called Carpenter Gothic. While not truly a style but a method of decoration, Carpenter Gothic deviated enough from Victorian to become a distinct entity. Carpenter Gothic was based on the skill of the carpenter in cutting fancy wood designs for decoration of a non essential sort. The same sort of decoration was used on the river boats, which plied the Mississippi during the last years of the nineteenth century, as on smaller wooden homes. By 1907 styles seemed to diverge. Influences of Victorian remained. Other influences entered the field and homes became very different from each other. Spanish stucco and tile roofing came into use as did the use of paver brick with tile. Homes were built for sturdiness and comfort without much thought being given to exterior styling. Some homes even show the influences of several different styles at the same time. Even so the houses

represent the vigor and freedom of life in the new state.

Consideration must be given to the criteria which will control the inclusion of homes in this study. The National Trust for Historic Preservation has issued guidelines for judging historic sites of all kinds. These criteria are applicable to the more limited scope of historic homes. The guidelines read in part:

- A. Significance is ascribed to sites or districts which possess value or quality such as:
 - 1. Sites at which events occurred that have made a significant contribution to cultural, political, military, or social history of the state.
 - 2. Structures associated importantly with the lives of persons significant in the history of the state.
 - 3. Structures associated significantly with an important event
 - 4. Structures that embody distinguishing characteristics of an architectural style, valuable for the study of a period, style or method of construction, or representing the work of a master builder.
- B. For an historic structure, integrity is a composite quality derived from original workmanship, and original location. A structure no longer at its original location may have significance if the person associated with it was of importance to the history of the state.
- C. For an Historic District, integrity is derived from original workmanship, original location, and the intangible elements of feeling and association inherent in an ensemble of historic building, having visual architectural unity.⁶

While the national guidelines cover sites as well as existing structures, for the purpose of this work the additional restriction will be observed that a home must still exist in an intelligible form, even if it has been converted to other uses, before it will be included. Not too much emphasis will be placed on the requirement of original location because of the number of homes which have been moved, especially in eastern Oklahoma, to save them from the rising waters of man-made lakes. When

⁶U.S., National Trust for Historic Preservation Bulletin on Sites Preservation 1973. p. 2

a house has been moved, that fact will be noted.

With this as a background for the study of homes in Oklahoma, the following pages will be given over to descriptions of houses now standing in Oklahoma, which may be of interest to the traveler. Some discussion of the historic relationship of the home is given each time. The homes are grouped according to the periods discussed above, and are in chronological order within each group.

CHAPTER III

THE TIME OF THE CHIEFS

These five houses, built between 1830 and 1850 show as clearly as anything could, what life must have been like for the first Indians settled in the Indian Lands. The homes are small and primitive, but so well constructed that they have not only lasted but have remained in constant use. It is not surprising that most of the homes are in the eastern part of the state, for that is the place that the Five Civilized Tribes were settled.

Sequoyah's Cabin

Sequoyah became the greatest of the Cherokees by devising, without the benefit of any education whatsoever, the Cherokee written language enabling his people to further their education and to record their past. Sequoyah was the son of a Cherokee woman and a white man named Guist. He was born somewhere in the Appalachian mountains before his people were moved to the Indian Lands. He grew up in the mountains, following his mother in her business of storekeeper. Before he came west in early 1830 or 1831 he had begun to experiment with the alphabet he needed in order to reduce his spoken language to writing. He continued his work over many years, meanwhile working at his store to support his family.

By trial and error he finally produced the symbols which best represented the sounds of the Cherokee language. Over all these years he was suspected and rebuffed by his people, until he was able to convince them that the language both worked and carried no evil with it. Sequoyah's death is as shrouded in mystery as his birth, for he died on an expedition to Mexico on which he hoped to convince the Cherokees who had moved there to return to the Indian Territory.

The cabin that Sequoyah built is located eleven miles northeast of Sallisaw on State Highway 101 in Sequoyah county, one of the easternmost counties in Oklahoma. The building is of rectangular design, built of squared logs with mud filling. The roof is a pitched shingle one supported on pine ridgepole and pine stringers. A single fireplace at one end supplies heat and cooking facilities, while a door and two small windows are the only openings. The design is the absolute minimum in cabin construction; nevertheless, it served Sequoyah's family from about 1830 throughout his life, and it still stands today. The cabin is the property of the Oklahoma Historical Society and is operated as a museum.

Because of its great age for a cabin, the Society has had the building enclosed in a protective outer structure in order to preserve this sample of early Indian home



construction. The cabin is the only tangible piece of property left from the life of Sequoyah, although even as early as 1905 he was recognized as a great man. That year the Muskogee Convention of the Five Civilized Tribes convened to petition the Congress of the United States to admit the Indian Territory to the union as the state of Sequoyah as a memorial to him. The petition was rejected because the land area was so small. Today Sequoyah's name is carried only by the giant redwood trees which grow in California.⁷

The Rev. Charles Journeycake House

The house which was occupied by Chief Journeycake about 1867 after he moved his band of Delaware Indians to the Indian Territory from Kansas is believed to have been built in 1830. Siding was added over the original heavy logs at a later date, probably at the same time that the additions were made to the building. The house originally stood in an area now inundated by the Oologah Reservoir. It is now located on a hill six miles east of Nowata in Nowata county on U.S. Highway 60. It is the property of the Nowata County Farmers Union which hopes to restore the house to its original appearance and open it as a museum in memory of Chief Journeycake.

Charles Journeycake was a leader of the Delawares when they were still living in Kansas. In 1861 he became principal chief. Prior to that time he had been active both in tribal affairs and in the Christian church. In 1833 he was baptized a Christian and remained the only Christian among

⁷Oklahoma Historical Society Sequoyah's Cabin (Oklahoma City: Unpublished Pamphlet, 1974)

the Delawares for a number of years. He felt so strongly that the Indians should become Christians that he learned the Shawnee, Wyandotte, Seneca and Ottawa dialects in order to preach to those groups also. After the removal to the Indian Territory Rev. Journeycake organized the Delaware Baptist Church. He preached to his people and other tribes in the area. This was the beginning of the spread of Christianity among the Indians in northeastern Oklahoma.⁸

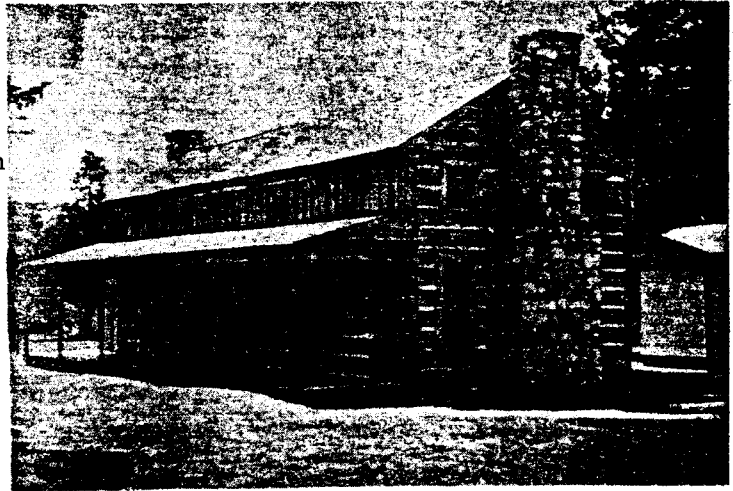
Chief's Old House

This relatively elegant log cabin was built in 1832 for Greenwood LeFlore, one of the district chiefs of the Choctaw, under the removal treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek, 1830. Since Greenwood did not immediately come to the Indian Territory, the house was occupied by his cousin, Thomas LeFlore, who served in his stead as district chief.

The building of the cabin was done under United States government contract by workmen who were already employed in the rebuilding of Ft. Towson. The home is a double cabin with a hall between the two main rooms. Both front and back are protected and graced by long covered porches. At each end of the cabin is a chimney of native stone which provide heat to the two stories of the building. The construction is of trimmed and squared logs rather than round ones, and the walls are filled with the dirt and wattle mixture common to the cabin construction of the day. This house is one of the many which were constructed under the removal treaties. The treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek provided for the construction of two

⁸Oklahoma, Nowata County Farmers Union The Rev. Charles Journeycake (Nowata County, Oklahoma: Unpublished Pamphlet, 118 East Cherokee, Nowata, 1960)

other houses as well as a main council house, but all of these have disappeared with the passage of time. This cabin is located two miles northeast of U.S. Highway 70 at Swink, Oklahoma, in Choctaw county, just above the Red River in south central Oklahoma. The location belongs to the Oklahoma Historical Society, which has restored it to its original condition and made it into a museum. It is open to the public at no charge.⁹



Chief Moses Keokuk House

This still imposing pink brick house was built for Chief Moses Keokuk by the United States government under treaty obligations with the Sac and Fox Indians whose agency was set up in what is now Lincoln county in the 1860's. Although it was actually built a little later than the actual period of the chiefs, 1830 to 1850, it belongs in this section because it is a home built under treaty requirements. The Sac and Fox had originally been from Mississippi, but had been pushed west to Kansas. The United States entered into negotiations with the tribe, convincing them to settle in the Indian Lands. Moses Keokuk was the son of Chief Keokuk who had led his people during their time in Kansas. He died in

⁹ Oklahoma Historical Society. Chief's Old House (Oklahoma City: Unpublished Pamphlet, 1974).

1848. His son, Moses, was noted for his fine character and for the ability to speak pure Sauk dialect, an ability which was dying out among the Sac and Fox peoples.¹⁰

The house that the government built for Moses Keokuk is of large handmade pink brick. It now has a corrugated iron roof, but no doubt at the time it was built it had the usual handmade shingle roof. The building is approximately twenty by forty feet, two stories tall. It has a single door which is on the west side and is flanked by arch topped windows at the lower floor level. The upper story has no windows on the east or west sides, but has a pair on the north and a pair on the south end of the house. The house is very simple but elegant in design. The brickwork shows artistry in the handling of the arches over the windows and in the naturally good proportions of the overall design. The house is set on a hill up a winding drive from the main road. It must once have been very impressive in its setting. Even today the roadside is still planted with giant cactus, at least a hundred years old. The west side of the house is graced by an old wisteria vine.



The home is privately owned and is still occupied as a dwelling. v
The Oklahoma Historical Society has been unsuccessful in its attempts to

¹⁰ Oklahoma, Historical Society Annual Preservation Report 1973
Edition(Oklahoma City: Unpublished Report, 1973) p. 35

purchase the property. At the present time the house is in a state of disrepair. The walls are supported by iron bars and boards, and it is hoped that purchase can be effected before restoration becomes impossible.

The home is located in Lincoln county, just off State Highway 99 which runs from Prague to Stroud. On the highway right-of-way is an historic marker noting the location of the old Sac and Fox Agency. A blacktop road turns off to the right one and a half miles north of the marker. The Keokuk house is two miles west on the blacktop and half a mile south on an unimproved road. It is recommended that sightseers go into this area in a dry season, as it is low-lying river bottom land which retains floodwater. The area has several old pecan groves which in themselves are attractive sights, and the whole region evokes impressions of an earlier time before the coming of white settlers and major highways.

The Tauhosan House

Not all historic house research is successful, although it seems unfair not to report a house simply because the directions to it were not clear enough, or the direction follower was not capable of following the directions given.

Research in the office of the Warrior, a weekly newspaper in Anadarko, Oklahoma, led to an interview with a Kiowa lady, Ileana Poolaw, who stated that her grandfather, who was a leader of the Kiowa people, had lived in a home which had been built for him by the United States government at the time the Kiowas were moved into the area.¹¹ A general

¹¹Interview with Mrs. Ileana Poolaw at Anadarko, Oklahoma, February 14, 1974.

discussion ensued which gave the feeling that others present at the interview had seen the house at one time or another. The house is said to be just on State Highway 9 between Anadarko and Lawton on the left hand turn of the Apache "Y", one quarter mile from the intersection. It is said to be a brick house, now occupied as a private residence by the family who purchased it from the Poonlaw family. If this house exists, and there is no reason to believe that it does not, it would have been constructed in the early 1870's. It is the house furthest west of the houses built under treaty obligations during the time of removal. The tribes who were settled to the west of the Arapaho and Kiowa groups were ones who did not ordinarily use permanent dwellings of any sort. This house probably establishes the west edge of the original area in which treaty removal construction was ever done.

CHAPTER IV

THE TIME OF THE PLANTERS

The second period, called The Time of the Planters covers approximately 1850 to 1889. Time periods cannot be absolute because the activities which were used to establish them overlapped. One plantation, the Murrell house, was built as early as 1844 during the time that tribes were still being settled. Nevertheless, it belongs with this second group of homes. The eight homes in the planter group fall into two natural divisions. The first four homes were built by Indians who had settled down to the farming of their own lands. The second four homes were built by white men who had married Indian woman and whose land holdings depended on their wives' land rights. Into the first group falls the home of Mr. and Mrs. Clem Rogers, parents of Will Rogers. Clem Rogers was active in Cherokee affairs and was also a delegate to the Oklahoma Constitutional Convention.¹²

Home of Chief Jefferson Gardner

The house at Bethabara Crossing on Mountain Fork River near Eagle Town is on State Highway 70, going east from Broken Bow in southern

¹²Muriel H. Wright, A Guide to the Indian Tribes of Oklahoma (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1951) p. 73

McCurtain county, the southeast corner of Oklahoma. This area of the state is full of pine trees, low mountains, and rapid rivers which belie its relationship with the prairies to the northwest. This country is part of the Choctaw Nation, and Bethabara Crossing was established in 1832 as the main crossing of the river. Chief Jefferson Gardner was a principal chief of the Choctaws when he moved to the Crossing in 1884 and built the house which still stands there.

The house is a two story frame building with porches and balconies along two sides. The exterior is lap siding hand cut from the local pine forest and the two large chimneys which warmed the nine rooms are built from the limestone common in the area. All the interior woodwork, including the solid walnut stairway and mantels were carved and planed by the Indian builder, James Dyer. Some affinity for Carpenter Gothic can be detected in the cut-work decoration of the exterior.¹³

This home is privately owned and is being allowed to deteriorate at a rapid rate. This house should be purchased and preserved for the future.

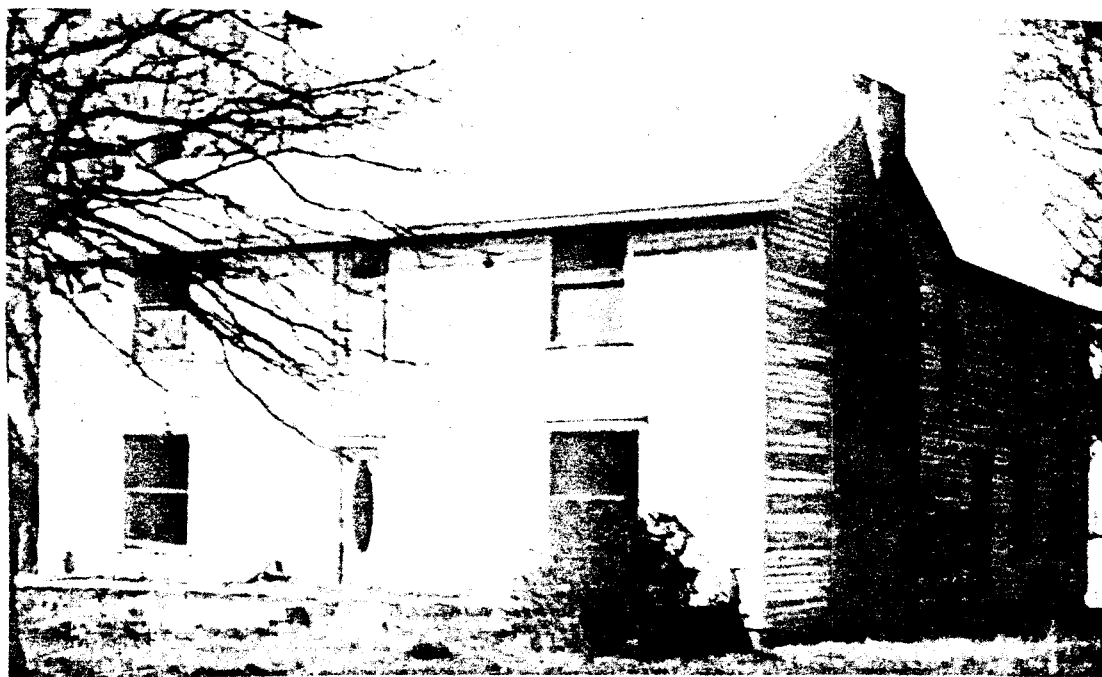
Home of Charles LeFlore

This is another historic home which is being left to run down. The home of Charles LeFlore is located just north of Limestone Gap, a small community on State Highway 69 northeast of Atoka in Atoka county, in south central Oklahoma. This home is unoccupied and in such a state of disrepair that it probably is not worth visiting at this time, but it

¹³"Showcase". The Sunday Oklahoman, 1 December 1974. p.14

could be a showplace and should be preserved for its historic significance as an example of the type of home the early Indian settlers built for themselves. The house is an ample two story frame structure with a deep addition on the back. There are no porches or balconies at all. The simple lap frame siding seems to have always been undecorated except for the use of the beveled oval glass in the front door. The depth of the addition overbalances the basic salt box design of the front section, but it is a well constructed house on a stone foundation.¹⁴

The home was built by Charles LeFlore, a prominent Choctaw leader who was active in the Lighthorsemen, the police society of the Choctaw nation. Captain LeFlore farmed the homestead on which this house stands and was an example of the substantial citizenry of the Choctaw Nation.



¹⁴Oklahoma. Historical Society Annual Preservation Report 1973 Edition (Oklahoma City: Unpublished Report, 1973) p. 48

Chief William Ross Home

The public was allowed to visit the home which once belonged to Cherokee Chief William Potter Ross when the Isom family held open house last year, 1974, to help celebrate the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Fort Gibson, a community in northeast Muskogee county.

The home which was occupied by Chief Ross from 1863 to 1879 is still used as a private residence and is not open except on special occasions. The basic structure consists of two large rooms made of hand-hewn logs, some of walnut, secured together by wooden pegs. Interlocking in such a way that they cannot be taken apart except from the top down, they have formed a structure which has stood for over a hundred and twelve years.

A double fireplace stands between the two rooms, back to back, drawing into one heavy chimney of native rock.

The mantel and woodwork framing the fireplaces, as well as the interior window and door trim, is much like that found in other homes of the early nineteenth century, for it is plain with hand-cut line decorations. 15

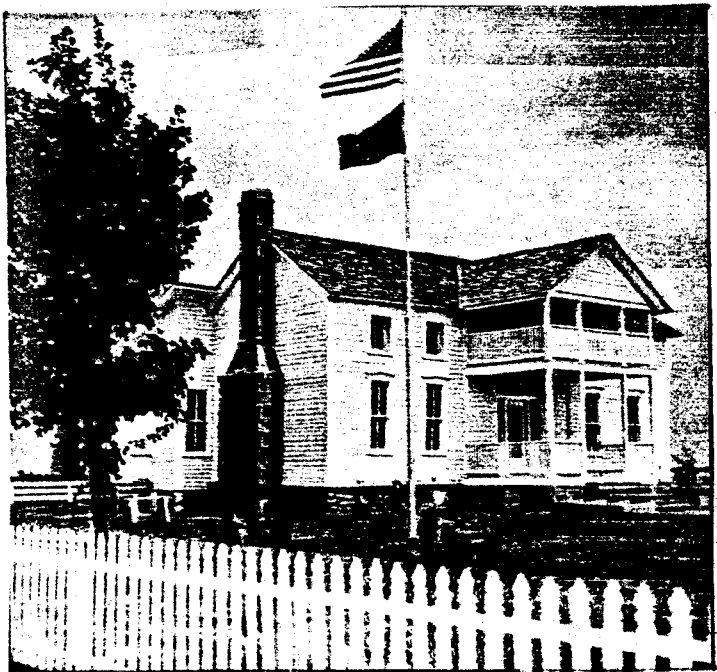
Fort Gibson is in the part of Oklahoma which was the Cherokee Nation. When the principal chief John Ross died on August 1, 1866 his nephew William Potter Ross was elected principal chief. William P. Ross was a graduate of Princeton University and the editor of the Cherokee Advocate, the newspaper which served the Cherokee Nation for a number of years.

¹⁵ Tulsa Daily World. 10 April 1974 p. A14

Will Rogers' Birthplace

Will Rogers' birthplace is known also as the White House on the Verdigris, and has been preserved in memory of Will, who was born there in 1879. Will's father, Clem Rogers, built his cattle ranch out of the wilderness of northeastern Oklahoma in the years shortly after the Civil War. The house which is now part of the Will Rogers State Park was built in 1875 on a fork of the Verdigris River, in what is now Rogers county. In 1959, anticipating the construction of the Oologah Dam and Reservoir, the Rogers family donated one hundred acres and the house to the state of Oklahoma, with the agreement that the house was to be moved to the land which was one mile west of its original location. It was restored and is maintained as a park by the Oklahoma Department of Tourism and Recreation.¹⁶

The house is a big two story log house with an added peak roof over a porch and balcony on the front of the house. At the back of the house a later two story frame addition encloses three rooms on each floor. Downstairs these rooms are a kitchen, dining room and a bedroom



¹⁶Oklahoma. Department of Tourism and Recreation Will Rogers' Birthplace (Oklahoma City: Unpublished Pamphlet, 1973).

in a row from west to east. The original front part of the house is on a foundation of native stone now set with concrete. The log section also has a native stone chimney at each end to serve the upstairs and downstairs fireplaces in the two large rooms in each half of the building. The original house was only the four rooms separated by a wide hallway. It is to this hallway that the entrance to the back rooms has been opened.

The addition was no doubt needed as the Rogers family grew in number. Although Will had only three sisters during most of his childhood there had been eight children born to the senior Rogers, of which Will was the youngest. The house was the center of a great deal of entertaining as well as being a family home for the Rogers were important people in their area and welcomed all travelers who passed their way.

The interior of the house has been decorated as it must have appeared during Will's young manhood. The furnishings have been purchased from families in the area. The house also was Will's adult home, as he purchased his sisters' shares after the deaths of their parents. Although he traveled a great deal the house remained in Will's ownership until his death in 1935. During much of the time that he owned the ranch it was managed for him by his nephew, Herb McSpadden. The house contains mementos of the life and times of Will Rogers and certainly is part of Oklahoma's heritage. Visitors who are interested in seeing this old home can reach it on State Highway 88 twelve miles north of Claremore, Oklahoma in Rogers county. The city of Claremore also has a museum which contains many of Will Rogers' personal items and is certainly worth a visit too.

The Murrell Home

George Michael Murrell was a white man, born at Lynchburg, Virginia, in 1808. His family was prosperous, owning a cotton and tobacco plantation in Virginia and a sugar plantation in Louisiana.

At the time of the forced removal of the Cherokees from Georgia to the Indian Lands George Murrell was in partnership in Tennessee with Lewis Ross, brother of Cherokee Chief John Ross, and was married to Lewis' oldest daughter Minerva. Lewis Ross decided to go with his people to the new land with his brother. He was accompanied by Minerva and George Murrell and all of the black slaves who were owned by Ross. In the fall of 1840 George Murrell established a plantation just south of the location of Tahlequah, the capitol of the Cherokee Nation.

For the first few years the Murrell couple lived in a small log cabin which can still be seen on the grounds of the big house. It is very modest in size, having only enough floor space for a sleeping frame for the bedding and a table and two chairs. The walls are of squared logs cut to fit together at the corners and filled inbetween with mud and wattle. Set up on a foundation of native rock it has a fairly large single fireplace which supplied heat and cooking facilities. The low roof rafters and the limited openings helped to keep the little cabin warm in winter. The small doorways directly across from each other must have supplied much needed ventilation in warm weather.

In 1844 Murrell built the plantation house with the help of slave labor and furnished it with the best furniture he could obtain from France. Since he was acquainted with plantation life in Virginia and

Louisiana it is not surprising that he built his home in the manner and style of the south. The house has a central hall running from the front doorway and ending at the library at the back. Between doorway and library are sitting and living rooms to the right and the left of the entrance behind which are the diningroom and drawing room. An opening in the livingroom wall makes it possible to see the interior construction of the house. The studs are blackjack logs slightly squared. The bark was not removed except where shaping took place. The lath is handcut timber of irregular shape but uniform thickness. The whole was then plastered with locally made plaster. The front rooms have large brick fireplaces for heat and light. The kitchen which is at the back of the house and down a step is dominated by a huge shallow stone fireplace for cooking. The whole house is set on a cut stone foundation with the main supports underneath the floor being oak logs only flattened on top where the floor boards were to be attached. The flooring is of wide pine throughout the house and is original except in the library.¹⁷ Because Murrell had plenty of labor on his plantation he was able to add to his house the useful but hard to make exterior



¹⁷ Oklahoma. Department of Tourism and Recreation The Murrell Home (Oklahoma City: Unpublished Pamphlet 1973)

shutters. The front of the house has the peaked roof over porch and balcony also found on the Rogers' house. Here it was probably original with the building. Since the Rogers home was log later covered with siding the porches were no doubt added.

The Murrell plantation house is on a gentle slope above a clear river supplied by a very active spring. The old spring house is of stone and covers the source of the rapid cool water. The whole setting and layout of the plantation grounds is not a pattern commonly associated in the public mind with Oklahoma. It much more resembles the eastern part of the United States in an earlier time.

Mrs. Murrell died in 1855 without having had children. Murrell married her sister Amanda. From this marriage were born four youngsters. Even so, when the Civil War broke out George Murrell returned to Virginia to raise troops for the Confederacy. He lived through the war but did not return to the Cherokee Nation. It appears that he abandoned his family at Tahlequah and devoted himself to the running of his Virginia and Louisiana plantations. When he died in 1894 the French furniture from the Cherokee plantation was sent to Virginia to the heirs there. However, since Cherokee law required a land owner to live in the Cherokee Nation the plantation at Tahlequah, along with its house, became the property of Murrell's Ross family heirs.

The property went from hand to hand until it was taken over by the state of Oklahoma in 1948. Some of the original furniture was donated to the home by surviving members of the Murrell family in Virginia and other pieces were donated by the Ross family of eastern Oklahoma.

Since the house is one of the few which survived the Civil War

in eastern Oklahoma it is extremely unique as an historic site. Not only is it an excellent example of a large plantation house but it is one of a very few from a period preceeding the Civil War.

The property is run by the Department of Tourism and Recreation and is open as a museum. It is located five miles south of Tahlequah on State Highway 82 in Cherokee county.

The Murray Home

Frank Murray came from Ireland in the 1850's landing at New Orleans. He drifted from place to place, arriving at Fort Gibson, Cherokee Nation in 1871. There he met and married Alzira McCaughey, a young Choctaw widow. They moved to Pauls Valley, but a short time later moved even further west to a little spot known as Elm Springs on the Washita River in the Chickasaw Nation. The place was only a stage crossing at the time but Murray decided to settle and farm the area. The nearest neighbors were twenty five miles away, but the land had water which was the basic requirement so far west. Little by little Murray put together twenty thousand acres of land, using his wife's land rights as the means of holding ownership in the Indian nation. Soon he had 26,000 head of cattle and the largest farm in all the Chickasaw Nation. Murrell changed the name of the location to Erin Springs to commemorate his Irish background.

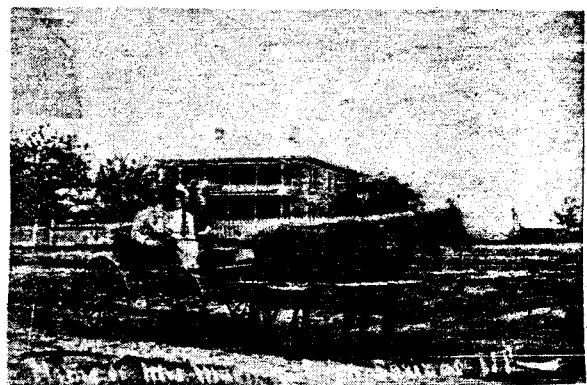
In 1879 he began the construction of a large home for his family. It was made of native rock, a great square mass with interior chimneys and porches and balconies supported by narrow columns in the New Orleans manner. The walls and partitions of the downstairs were

eighteen inches thick, of solid rock. Wood for the house was hauled across the Red River from Gainesville, Texas. The house was the only large one for miles around and it served as hospitality center and storm shelter for all those who worked for Murray as well as passing strangers.

In 1892 Frank Murray died. The following year Mrs. Murray had the house completely remodeled. The walls were stuccoed to imitate wood siding and a Greek Revival porch and pediment were added. Huge fluted columns of wood terminating in Ionic capitals support the new porch roofline.¹⁸ Inside, the walls were plastered and papered. Oak woodwork



Appearance Today



Original Appearance

is used throughout the house and is probably the original. True to the tastes of the nineteenth century, a crown molding which appears too light to twentieth century tastes was used. The baseboards and other trim are of the weight still popular today.

The room arrangement was not changed by Mrs. Murray in her renovation. The central hall is flanked by a drawing room and a sitting room in front with a library and bedroom behind. Upstairs are several

¹⁸Oklahoma. Historical Society The Murray-Lindsay House
(Oklahoma City: Unpublished Pamphlet 1974)

bedrooms of a modest size. The house now belongs to the Oklahoma Historical Society and is open as a museum. It was only acquired in 1968 and the job of gathering furnishings is still going on. The house had none of its original ones when it became state property. The house can be reached by State Highway 19, two miles south of Lindsay in Garvin county. Lindsay is on a line between Chickasha and Pauls Valley.

The Bill Washington Home

The Bill Washington home in rural Love county is known far and wide for its interesting construction. It is a large frame house, something of a cross between Victorian and Carpenter Gothic with a center dormer faced and roofed like an emerging tower in the roofline above the front door. This dormer is flanked by two others of triangular design, each with a double stained glass window. The porch is long and low. Its roof level and the triangle areas of the upper dormers are decorated with fancy cut-work in the best tradition of Carpenter Gothic designing. The front door is flanked by panels with fancy glasswork, and panels of stained glass decorate the space above the large windows on the front of the house.

All this, however, is not the basis of the house's reputation. It is known for its interesting wall construction: wood siding outside, pecan paneling inside, gravel inbetween. This construction was not based on the need for insulation from heat and cold but to protect the occupants from the flaming arrows so favored by the plains Indians as a manner of

¹⁹ Ralph Evans Frontier Days of Love County (Marietta, Oklahoma: Marietta Monitor Publishing Company, 1966) p. 51

ridding themselves of unwanted settlers. Bill Washington was one of those settlers who moved in long before the coming of legal homesteading. He married a Chickasaw woman and established a large plantation in the Chickasaw Nation just after the Civil War. He ran thousands of head of cattle, raised cotton, and maintained a store and commissary. He was in business with a sufficiently large number of persons that he issued his own script and coin.

Washington built the house in 1888, using the best imported materials. The hardwood floor is hand pegged and the walls covered with



Italian wallpaper. The rooms are large and airy, having twelve foot ceilings and eight foot doorways. The house is a most unusual one for its time and location. It is on the National Register of Historic Sites but is still privately owned and not open to the public. One can, however, drive by. The house is located four miles southwest of Marietta in Love county, just west of Interstate 35 on a bend of the Red River.

The James Reynolds Home

Captain James E. Reynolds served in the Civil War and returned to his home without having decided on his future career. Once back home he married a young Choctaw girl and settled down to the business of making a living. In the meantime his mother-in-law traveled to the Indian Lands with the other members of the Choctaw tribe. Surprisingly, she liked the new country and returned to encourage the Reynolds to move westward also. They were persuaded to go, and thus Captain Reynolds became a landholder and rancher in the Choctaw Nation. The family settled in what is now LeFlore county just west of the Arkansas line. They moved several times but finally settled at Cameron, a small community just northeast of Poteau. There they built the home which today stands as a monument to Captain Reynolds and his knowledge of the world.²⁰

Out of native stone Captain Reynolds had built a home with walls two feet thick. Turreted and rounded, with its rock wall, the house most nearly resembles a Norman castle of the eleventh century. Even today the

²⁰"James E. Reynolds" Chronicles of Oklahoma (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, Spring 1954) p. 312

house is called The Castle. Across the south it has French windows opening onto a long veranda. Inside the rooms are large and well lighted, and heating is supplied by coal burning grate fireplaces. This type of heating was very new in 1889 when construction was begun on the home.

Outside, Captain Reynolds indulged his interest in gardening. He imported flowers and shrubs from eastern states, trying one variety and then another to discover which grew best in the new environment. It is said that cuttings from the original lilacs he imported are still blooming to this day.

The house is located just off State Highway 112, east out of Poteau in LeFlore county. It is still privately owned and occupied. Some years ago the heirs of Captain Reynolds sold the house out of the family. Other relatives who still live here in Oklahoma would like to regain ownership in order to preserve this piece of their family history and part of the history of Oklahoma.²¹

²¹Interview with Betty Nance Langdon concerning the Nance relationship to the Reynolds. Purcell, Oklahoma, Spring 1973.

CHAPTER V

THE TERRITORIAL DAYS

Territorial days actually did not begin until 1890 when the Organic Act was signed on the second of May, making Oklahoma an official territory of the United States. However, settlement of white pioneers in the Indian lands had legally begun no earlier than April 22, 1889, with the first run into the Unassigned Lands. Between April of 1889 and May of 1890 many thousands of people settled in Oklahoma. This third period of homebuilding called The Territorial Days will cover the years 1889 to 1907, the year that Oklahoma became the forty-sixth state of the Union.

These eighteen years encompassed a period of fantastic growth in Oklahoma. Many diverse elements were influencing the building of houses for the people who came to the new lands. On the prairies the homesteaders who had nothing but a willingness to work built the most simple of shelters. In the rural areas settled Indians and whites continued to build substantial structures to house their families. In the cities housing then, like now, ranged from modest to magnificent. The following sixteen examples from the territorial days will cover the whole range of housing types being built during the period. Oklahoma is fortunate that so many different kinds of homes have been preserved from the territorial period.

Four of the sixteen houses described here were the homes of

Territorial Governors. Nothing shows so clearly the diversity of living patterns during the period. The territorial government had its seat in Guthrie but there were no living accommodations for the governor. Abraham Seay, who was governor from February of 1892 to May of 1893 had a large home at Kingfisher where he entertained. Cassius M. Barnes who served from May of 1897 to May of 1901 had a comfortable but modest frame home in Guthrie. William Jenkins who served as governor for six months in 1901 had a two room stone house on a homestead farm at Newkirk, and Thompson Ferguson who was governor from 1901 to 1906 had a large frame home in Watonga. All four of these homes still exist, two as museums, one as a private residence and one as an abandoned farm building. Nothing shows so clearly both the diversity of living patterns then and the state of preservation ideas now. The state of Oklahoma was recently offered Governor Barnes home, but was unable to raise the modest purchase price of thirty-five thousand dollars. Nothing at all is being done about the home which belonged to Governor Jenkins at Newkirk.

The following homes will give an idea of the life of Territorial Oklahoma, with all of its diversity and vigor.

The Robert S. Kerr Birthplace

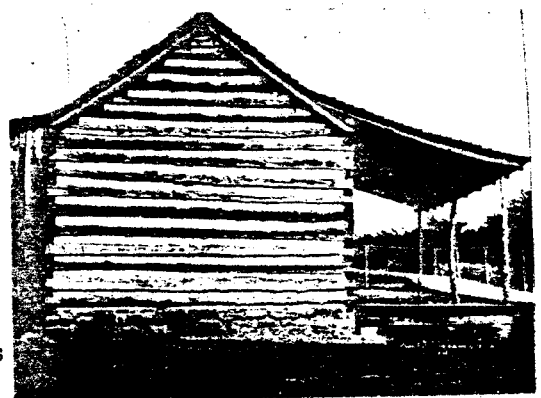
Robert S. Kerr was Governor of Oklahoma from 1943 to 1947. He was later elected to the United States Senate and served there until his death on New Year's Day of 1963. It is surprising to discover that this man who seems so much a part of the current events of the state was born in a log cabin on what was at the time the frontier in the Chickasaw Nation. When Governor Kerr was elected to office he was the first native born governor

the state had had, although he was the twelfth governor since statehood.

The cabin in which Senator Kerr was born is the usual rectangular design. This particular one seems to have had a little more filling between the logs than was usual in the area further to the east in the state. This may either be a variation of the individual builder or a reflection of the fact that wood was not so plentiful in western Oklahoma. The cabin has a lean-to porch on the west to provide protection from the sun and cast some shade on the doorway. The roof is supported on the porch by plain poles, trimmed but unshaped.

The cabin is a public site maintained by the Kerr Foundation near the Senator's impressive grave south of Ada in Pontotoc county on State Highway 3. A cooperation agreement exists between the Kerr Foundation and the Oklahoma Historical Society to the effect that the site will be maintained in good repair as an historic location. These agreements, which exist in several situations around the state, are an attempt to make sure that historic locations are saved for the future.²²

A large home built by the Senator and his wife at Poteau will also become a museum and public site within the next two years. This home is outside the scope of the present paper because it was not built until the 1960's. However, it will be an addition to the historic homes collection owned by the state of Oklahoma for future generations.



²²Oklahoma. Historical Society Annual Preservation Report 1973 Edition (Oklahoma City: Unpublished) p. 24

The Home of Quanah Parker

Quanah Parker was a Comanche chief, the son of a chief and of Cynthia Ann Parker, a white girl who had been stolen by the Comanches from her parents when she was a child. Quanah was born about 1845. He led the Comanche people during their reservation time at Ft. Sill. Since he had white relatives whom he visited from time to time, Quanah did not fear the whites as other members of his tribe did. He encouraged his people to surrender to the army at Ft. Sill and to adopt much of the white man's culture. He himself served as a judge on the Court of Indian Offences which handled many of the Indian problems of the day. He traveled to the United States capitol several times as a delegate from his tribe to the meetings held to determine Indian rights.

Quanah built his home near Cache, Oklahoma, not far from Ft. Sill. One idea which Quanah did not share with the white man was the value of monogamy. Quanah had seven wives, five at one time. This rather noticeably affected his needs in housing, and that need is reflected in the house he built.²³ The structure he built at Cache bears a strong



²³Kent Ruth, Window on the Past (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Publishing Company, 1973) p. 27

resemblance to a large frame boarding house, with porches upstairs and down all along the outside perimeter of the house. The story is told that the place became known as the "Star House" because Quanah had stars painted all over it after he discovered that the star was used as a mark to identify the chief men at the military fort. Since he considered himself equally important as a leader among his people, he identified himself with stars also. The house is reported to have fifteen stars painted on it.

Inside the house the furnishings are of no great artistic importance but they are interesting because Quanah felt that the best way to keep peace at home was to furnish all bedrooms exactly alike. While the house offers little from an architectural point of view, it is one of those homes which is strongly connected with a personage of local history, and it reflects his interests and ideas. Therefore it is an important part of the heritage of Oklahoma. At present the house is located in an amusement park on the north edge of Cache and is used as a tourist attraction. Hopefully, some day it may come under the ownership of the state to be preserved for the future.

The Governor Abraham Seay Mansion

The restored Governor Abraham Seay Mansion is located in Kingfisher, Oklahoma, county seat of Kingfisher county in northwest Oklahoma. Markers point the way to the museum along State Highway 81 as one enters the town from the south. Restored and operated by the Oklahoma Department of Tourism and Recreation in conjunction with the Chisholm Trails Museum, the house is a fine example of territorial homebuilding.

The house, called "Horizon Hill" was built in 1892 on a rise of land overlooking a wide expanse of valley. It is of brick with a great roof which comes down very low over the porches. Once of shingle, the roof and tower are now protected by composition roofing. The structure is dominated by the three story round tower with a silo shaped roof terminating in a point. The north and east sides of the house have covered porches. From photographs showing the governor and other dignitaries it is evident that the door on the east was most often used, but the main door is actually on the north. The front door opens into a central hall floored in oak parquet with darker wood patterning. On each side of the entrance is the parlour and the livingroom, each with a fireplace. Behind them are the diningroom and breakfast room on the east and the sittingroom on the west. Behind it is the kitchen area. A winding stair leads to the upper hall from which the bedrooms open. All the rooms are



furnished in furniture and personal possessions from the period of the use of the house, and many of the items are actually from the Seay family²⁴ A group of ladies of Kingfisher, acting as Friends of the Museum have been very successful in finding original arti-

²⁴ Harry E. Henslick "Abraham Jefferson Seay, 1892-1893" Chronicles of Oklahoma (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, Spring 1975) p.28

facts and family photographs to display in the museum.

Abraham Seay was the third Territorial Governor of Oklahoma, serving from 1892 to 1893. It may be that officially he is considered to have been the second governor, as Robert Martin who preceeded him was never officially appointed to the post. Governor Seay had been previously appointed as one of the first judges of the Territorial Supreme Court, which had been established by the Enabling Act of May 2, 1890. He was assigned to Kingfisher, Canadian and Beaver counties, a much larger area then than it is today, and was awaiting cases to reach the Supreme Court level of jurisdiction when he received the appointment to the governorship.

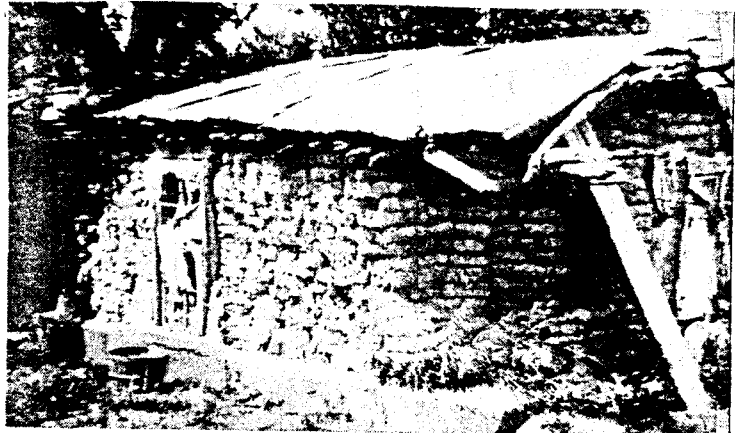
He established his home at Kingfisher, where he lived with his sister. He never married and she acted as his official hostess during the time he was governor. "Horizon Hill" was under construction before Governor Seay received his appointment and he hurried the completion of the home so that it might be used to entertain dignitaries who would be attending the opening of the Cheyenne and Arapaho lands to settlers. When the opening was finally held on April 19, 1892, the attendant festivities were the first social events ever held in the house. The Seay mansion gives the visitor a clear impression of life in the late nineteenth century.

McCully's Sod House

In sharp contract to Governor Seay's mansion is McCully's sod house built two years after the Kingfisher home and only a few miles away at Cleo Springs in Major county. It is the original home of Marshall McCully who made the Cherokee Outlet run of 1893. When McCully first

arrived on his land he lived in a dug-out, as he was single and therefore did not need shelter for a family. The next spring, 1894, he began work on the sod house, now the only one remaining in the state of Oklahoma. These houses, as their name implies, were made of sod chopped from the prairie and used in lieu of brick or wood. The pieces were normally cut in fourteen by eighteen inch rectangles.

McCully chose land which did not have a good covering of the buffalo grass which made the best sod, therefore he borrowed sod from a neighbor who farmed a mile to the north. It took almost a half acre's sod to build the type and size of house which McCully constructed. McCully chose to make his house two thicknesses, so that the walls were thirty-six inches in depth. The roof was constructed by laying a ridgepole the length of the house and attaching to it split blackjack rafters side by side. These in turn were covered with sod. In homes that had any free fabric the interior of the roofs were covered with sacking to keep the bugs and spiders from falling into the occupants' hair. McCully was fortunate in living near alkali beds on Eagle Chief Creek, for he was well supplied with the materials for making plaster. McCully plastered his house inside and out, helping to save it



²⁵ Oklahoma Historical Society Sod House (Oklahoma City: Unpublished Pamphlet, 1973)

from the effects of wind and rain. The house originally had a dirt floor, but in 1895 McCully laid the board floor which it still has today.

McCully and his family lived in the sod house until 1909, when he built a frame house just west of the old soddie. From that time on the sod house was used for storage. Speculation has been widespread as to what factors saved this particular sod house after all the others had returned to earth. It probably depended upon two factors: that it was protected by the other house and a tree which grew up, and that it was used and probably patched from time to time. Whatever it was that protected it, Oklahomans are fortunate today to be able to see this original sod house. It is owned by the Oklahoma Historical Society and is maintained as a museum. The old house is now protected from the elements in its own heated and airconditioned house, where it should last for many more years.

The Peter Conser House

This house was built in 1894 by Peter Conser who raised himself from a homeless orphan to be a leader of the Choctaw Nation. Conser was born sometime before the Civil War, the child of a Choctaw woman and T.X. Coinson, an early day French trader. In later life Conser changed his name from Coinson, because the French name was so hard to pronounce. The young boy lived hand to mouth until the time of the Civil War, when he went south to avoid the conflicts which were taking place in the Choctaw Nation. He ended up at the Red River plantation of a wealthy Choctaw Robert Jones. After the war Conser returned to his original home area, taking with him farming seeds and the knowledge to set about farming for

himself. Through hard work he put together a farm and considerable wealth. He built this home on his farm, and here most of his children were born. In addition to farming, Conser was active in the Choctaw Lighthorsemen, the Choctaw Nation enforcement officers. The house which



bears his name is a two story frame construction in the shape of an 'L'. At each end a tall chimney of native rock supplies the fireplaces on the lower floors. Porches and balconies are on the protected side of

the house. Inside are ten rooms, several of which open out onto the balconies. The outside construction is lap frame with a hand-cut shingle roof. This house continued to be Peter Conser's home until his death in 1934. In 1967 his heirs gave the home to the Oklahoma Historical Society. It has been completely restored and furnished in the manner of 1907. It is open to the public as a museum.

The Cassius Barnes House

Cassius Barnes was the fifth Territorial Governor of Oklahoma Territory. He was born in Michigan but grew up in Ohio. After service in the Civil War he settled in Arkansas, where he married a young lady whose family put him in touch with political appointments. He served as a member of the governor's staff in Arkansas, and later as United States

²⁶ Oklahoma. Historical Society The Peter Conser House
(Oklahoma City: Unpublished Pamphlet 1972)

marshall for the western district of Arkansas. In 1889 when the unassigned lands were opened for settlement, Barnes was appointed by President Harrison as receiver for the United States Land Office at Guthrie. Under Barnes' management the office was run efficiently and honestly. Nevertheless, when President Harrison who was a Republican was replaced by President Cleveland who was a Democrat, Barnes was not reappointed to his job.

Barnes read law and was admitted to the Territorial Bar in 1893. He was active in the legal profession as well as in business in Guthrie in the latter years of the nineteenth century. He was extremely active in church and fraternal affairs. Private reports still current suggest that he enjoyed other less legal actives also, such as games of chance. Barnes backed William McKinley for president against the faction of the Oklahoma Republican party led by Dennis Flynn. When McKinley became president, he appointed Barnes as Territorial Governor.

The house which Barnes owned in Guthrie at 411 East Noble was built in the 1890's and is of frame construction. It had then and still has a sidewalk of large slabs of cut stone leading up to a gracious porch decorated with cutwork trellis supports. Inside, the doorway gives directly into a square room which serves as the front hall. To the left is a sitting room and ahead is the livingroom. To the left of the livingroom through a ornate cutwork doorway is the diningroom which at one time was an enclosed porch. At the back is a large kitchen which today looks out over a brick patio made of historic Oklahoma and Indian Territory bricks.

Upstairs is reached either by a front stairs rising from the front hall or a back stairs going up from the kitchen. Several bedrooms of interesting shapes are on the second floor. Throughout the house the

woodwork is the light weight line cut type popular during the latter nineteenth century.²⁷ The present owner has restored the house as much as possible to its condition of about 1900 (with the addition of such things as airconditioning however). Wallpaper designs, kitchen utensils on display, furniture, and floorcoverings are as near to those of the Barnes' occupancy as the owner could find. In some cases the furniture pieces actually belonged to the Barnes family. Although the state of Oklahoma has given up the idea of buying the house for a museum, it is still on the open market. Some interest has been shown in it by other groups interested in historic preservation. The recent designation of Guthrie as a National Historic Area may help to preserve this home as it is not far from the preserved area and it certainly is part of local history.



²⁷ Nudie E. Williams, "Cassius McDonald Barnes, 1897-1901" Chronicles of Oklahoma, Spring 1975 (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society)

Governor Douglas Johnston Home

Douglas Johnston was governor of the Chickasaw Nation for two terms 1898 to 1902 and from 1904 to 1906. The act which made Indian Territory part of the new state of Oklahoma provided that an elected tribal governor in office at the date of the act should continue in office for an indefinite term. Therefore, Governor Johnston served for several years before being replaced. The home which the Johnstons built in 1895 is a spacious frame with exterior Carpenter Gothic decoration. Inside the house is finished in hand hewn pecan boards, which were at one time covered with wallpaper. The proportions of the main rooms are a little unusual because the ceiling areas are very high in relationship to the dimensions of the rooms. Since almost no molding was used in the bonding of ceiling and walls,



the ceilings seem even further away. Perhaps the design was for the purpose of catching the breezes, for the house is located in a low meadow where the air is very still.

The house is tightly woven into early Oklahoma history, for not only is it the home of Governor Johnston, but the place where his niece was married to William Murray, a governor of the state of Oklahoma. It is also the birthplace of William Murray's son, Johnston Murray, who himself became a governor of Oklahoma. The house has recently been obtained by

the Oklahoma Historical Society. Although the house had been occupied it had not been cared for and extensive cleaning and repair will be necessary before the home can be opened as a museum. The house is located northwest of Emet in Johnston county. Emet lies south of Milburn, which itself is east of Tishomingo on State Highway 78. A visitor to Johnston county should also see the county courthouse, which is the original Chickasaw Council House. Although renovated to the needs of modern offices, the early plan can still be seen. The building is of handcut stone blocks with interior walls of brick. On the grounds of the courthouse is a small museum housing the original cabin which served as the first meeting place of the Chickasaw Nation. This cabin has been moved from its original site some few miles away.

The Lindsey House

The house at 508 North Peters Street, Norman, Oklahoma, is the new home of the Norman-Cleveland County Historical Society. The city of Norman and Cleveland county purchased the house jointly and together have set about restoring the two story frame which was built in 1895 by W. S. Moore. The home became the property of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Ginter Lindsey, who were in the lumber business in Norman, in 1986. It remained the Lindsey home for most of its life.²⁸ The house is of lap siding, with an unusually large round tower on the northeast corner of the building covered in feather cut shingle. A decorative band of Carpenter Gothic designing runs along the sides of the house at the second story line. A wide band also decorates

²⁸Oklahoma City Times, 11 November 1974. p. 14

the upper level of the tower, which helps to visually tie it back into the roofline. The roof of the tower is concave conical construction, terminating in a tall lightning rod. The tower and the decorative cutwork on the wood trim of the house are its most outstanding exterior features. They are heightened by the use of butter yellow paint for the house. Stained glass windows were used in the tower, but they are more easily seen from the interior than the exterior of the house. The woodwork inside is oak and golden gum, in line cut decorations. The mantel in the livingroom is especially well designed. Furniture is being gathered to make the main floor of the house into a museum of the turn of the century. Already the



the diningroom furniture which belonged to the Lindseys has been returned to the museum. The four chairs have seatcovers needlepointed by Mrs. Lindsey during the time that she and her husband lived in the house.

The second floor of the house on Peters Street is to be a museum of the development of Cleveland county and the city of Norman. It will contain artifacts and photographs detailing the history of the area. The third floor of the house will be used for storage for the museum properties not on display.

Outside, in the garden of the house, an historic landscaping project is underway. As Mrs. Lindsey was very interested in gardening the beds and trees are to be those of the late nineteenth century. Flowers popular at that time will be planted and the types will be identified by markers for the information of visitors.

The Governor Jenkins Home

William Miller Jenkins who became the fifth Territorial Governor of Oklahoma made the Cherokee Outlet run in 1893, settling in Kay county. He and his family lived for several years in a dug-out until he had time from his farming to build a house. In 1897 Jenkins built a two story rock house with a single room on each floor. The lower story is half underground, while the upper story door is reached by a steep flight of wooden steps. The house has a shingle roof and it is an example of the type of home which the early settlers were able to



construct for themselves from materials found on the land. The house still stands, neglected, where Governor Jenkins built it, two miles east and one mile south of present-day Newkirk, in Kay county.

Jenkins was basically a settler. He became governor by the most unusual set of circumstances, and was removed by an equally unusual situation. While living in Kansas he had been elected a delegate to the National Republican Convention held in 1888. Ignoring the pleas of the other Kansas delegates he cast the first vote for McKinley as Republican nominee for President of the United States. Although McKinley was not elected that year he did not forget Jenkins. When McKinley was elected to the presidency in 1897 he appointed Jenkins to the office of Territorial Secretary of Oklahoma. Jenkins took office in June of that year. In May of 1901 President McKinley appointed Mr. Jenkins to be Territorial Governor. In the fall of that year President McKinley was assassinated, and Theodore Roosevelt became president. One of his first actions was to remove Governor Jenkins and place his own choice of a man in the governorship of Oklahoma. William Miller Jenkins had been in office a total of six months. After his removal Mr. Jenkins went back to his farm. Later he went to work for the railroads and ended his days in Sapulpa, Oklahoma.²⁹

The Thomas-Foreman Home

The Thomas-Foreman home in Muskogee, Oklahoma, is a modest frame house at 1419 West Okmulgee Street, built in 1898 by Judge John Robert Thomas, who had been appointed as Federal Judge at Large for Indian

²⁹Delmer W. Porter, "William Miller Jenkins, 1901" Chronicles of Oklahoma, Spring 1975 (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society) p.83

Territory in 1897. Muskogee lies within the boundries of the Creek Nation, Muskogee Courthouse being the center of one of the six political divisions of the nation. Judge Thomas served at-large which meant that he heard cases from all over the Indian Territory, including the other four nations. Judge Thomas' daughter, Carolyn, married a young lawyer Grant Foreman who came to Indian Territory with the Dawes Commission. The young couple lived with the Judge. In 1920 Mr. Foreman gave up his law practice to devote himself to his writings about Oklahoma and Indian history. He and his wife between them have written some of the most definitive works on these subjects which have ever been written. One of Mr. Foreman's special subjects was Indian Removal Treaties.³⁰

The house, which was given to the state of Oklahoma in 1969 by the heirs of the Foremans, is operated as a museum by the Oklahoma Historical Society. This house falls into the catagory of homes which are historical because of their association with persons of significance in state history. The home is a simple square building with a small front porch protected by a peaked roof. Inside, the hall leads to a library past the front sitting room and parlour. A kitchen area at the back is devoted to a collection of early utensils and a display of turn of the century clothing which belonged



³⁰Oklahoma, Historical Society The Thomas-Foreman Home (Oklahoma City: Unpublished Pamphlet, 1972)

to Mrs. Foreman. The back of the house has a single room upstairs which, surprisingly, is a shower room with a very early porcelain shower basin on display. The main portions of the house are full of the possessions of Judge Thomas and Mr. and Mrs. Foreman. A complete library of the works of the Foremans is also there, but is not open to the public for research. The house is located on a quarter block of land planted with many large old trees, and is within three blocks of the downtown shopping area of Muskogee. It is a clear example of what life was like in the early days of city living in Oklahoma.

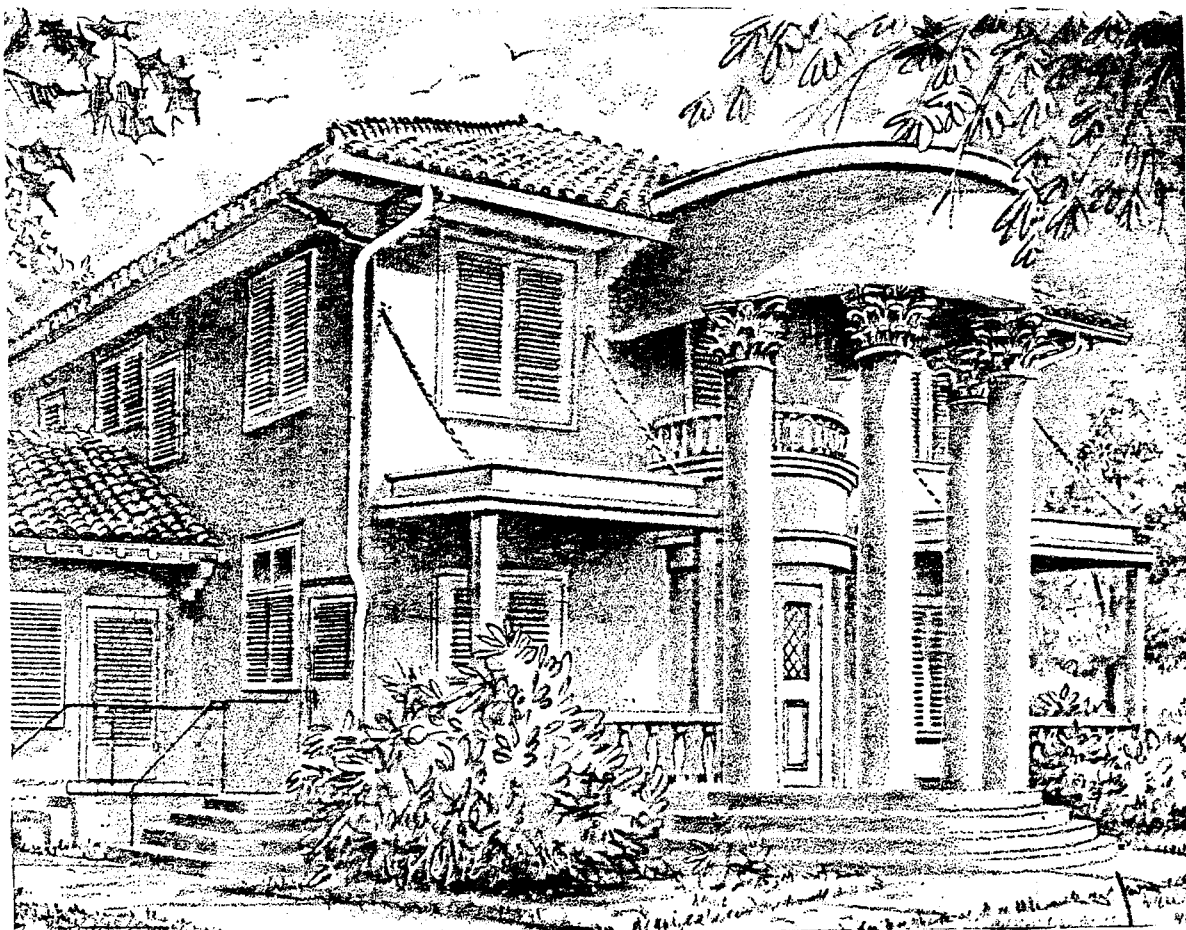
The Mattie Beal Home

The Mattie Beal home in Lawton, Oklahoma, is the most historic home in town having been completed in 1907 by Mattie Beal Payne, who drew the lucky number Two in the lottery for the opening in 1901 of the Comanche, Kiowa, and Apache lands. The number allowed her to select any hundred and sixty acre plot not selected by the person who drew number One. She chose a piece of land just south of the townsite of Lawton, at a location which is now the intersection of Fifth and Summit Streets. Mattie Beal was a telephone operator in Wichita, Kansas, when she joined the lottery for homesteading. The news traveled quickly that a single woman had obtained such a desirable piece of land, and Miss Beal received over five hundred offers of marriage. However, she chose to marry Charles Payne who was the manager of the local lumber company from whom she purchased the materials for her large house.³¹

³¹Lawton Constitution, 18 May 1973. p. 1

The house is of unusual design for the area in which it is built. It is of wood framing, heavily stuccoed. The roof is red Spanish tile. These two elements would have given it a Spanish missionary air, but on the front a deep roof, semi-circular porch was added. The roof is supported by four stone columns with Hellenistic stone capitals. Flanking the center porch are two square side porches. These have roofs which are square and are now supported on simple square columns, but it is evident that these roofs were at one time cantilevered, their only support being the heavy chains which extend down from the second story level of the wall.

The Beal home changed hands many times over the years and it finally came to be used as small apartments. In 1973 it was the possession



of Southwestern Hospital of Lawton, which is across the street from the house. Plans were made to demolish the old house in order to make a parking lot for the hospital. At that time a group of local citizens organized themselves into the Lawton Historical Association with the intention of saving the house as a museum to early Lawton history. They gathered \$3,000. in a short time. They approached the Oklahoma Legislature with the request for help in funding the purchase of the site, and they were appropriated \$5,000. from the 1973 funds and promised an additional \$10,000. from the 1974 funds. With these monies and more local commitments the house was purchased for \$21,500. and it is now a preservation project of the citizens of Lawton. At the present time the house is undergoing extensive renovation in order to show it to the public as the mansion that it once was.

The Thompson Benton Ferguson Home

The Thompson Benton Ferguson Home at Watonga is operated as a museum and memorial to the man who was eighth Territorial Governor of Oklahoma, by the Oklahoma Department of Tourism and Recreation. It is located at 521 N. Weigel Street, Watonga, in Blaine county. The house is a block off of State Highway 281 as it enters the city from the south. This is another historic home which has been saved by the action of a group of local citizens. In this case the ladies of Watonga went to the Oklahoma Legislature to complain that a Territorial Governor's Mansion was being allowed to be demolished. In 1971 the state purchased the house and began immediate restoration. It had fallen into such disrepair that the work took an additional year to complete than had been

anticipated. The house was finally opened to the public in the fall of 1972.³¹ The house is a gracious white frame house three full stories tall, with a tower on the front capped with a dunce cap style of roofline. The house is large but undecorated outside except for the exceptionally slender columns which support the porch railing and the upper balcony railing. Inside, the livingroom is to the left as one enters and beyond it the diningroom. The rooms are tall and gracious, cool and inviting, rather than pretentious. The house contains furniture and artifacts from the time that Governor Ferguson was in office, 1901 to 1906.

Thompson Ferguson was the owner and publisher of the main newspaper in Blaine county during territorial days. He was reported to have made the statement that no man in his right mind would ever seek or accept public office. Even his activities in the Republican party were only those



of a public minded man who took an interest in the activities of his government. Nevertheless, in 1901 President Roosevelt wired him to come to Washington to accept appointment as governor of Oklahoma Territory. He reluctantly went. Ferguson was no one's

³¹ Enid Morning News, 15 October 1971, p. 3

first choice, but a compromise acceptable to all. Factionalism within the Republican party made neither of the other two choices acceptable, but everyone agreed that the new governor must be a local man. Many of the previous governors had been men active in political jobs in other parts of the United States who were simply known to the President of the United States and therefore received the appointments.

Governor Ferguson served for almost six years and served the state well, although he annoyed a great many people by his disregard for the show which they felt should be part of the duties of a governor. He took office on the ninth of December 1901, with only a few close friends present. After the ceremony he went straight to the executive offices and began work. During his term of office he apparently developed headaches to relieve him from the necessity of attending social functions but applied himself studiously to the affairs of government.³²

University of Oklahoma President's House

The white frame house with the Greek Revival columns and pediment across Boyd Street from the main campus of the University of Oklahoma is one of the early homes of Oklahoma. Oklahoma had hardly been settled before thought was given to the education of the young. The University of Oklahoma accepted its first enrollment in September of 1892, three years after the opening of the land to settlement. The first president of the University was David Ross Boyd, who had the home built for himself in 1902. Frame was used throughout the construction, and the interior of the

³² Jerry L. Gill Thompson Benton Ferguson, 1901-1906 "Chronicles of Oklahoma Spring 1975 (Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society)

home is designed on the Federal Era plan of a central hall flanked by drawing and sitting rooms. The central hall in this particular house is wide and high, giving a graceful air to the home. In 1914 the building and grounds were purchased from President Boyd by the state of Oklahoma. At that time the house was enlarged and made into the official home of the presidents of the University. It served in this capacity until 1968, at which time a house on Lindsey Street on the south side of the campus was purchased for the same purpose. From then on, the house had had several different uses, but has remained state property. A Cooperation Agreement exists between the University of Oklahoma and the Oklahoma Historical Society pledging that the house will be maintained in good repair, and that at some future date the house will be considered as a possible candidate for being made into a state museum.³³ The Historical Society would like to obtain the control of this house were funds available to care for it, but no such funds are available at the present.



The Overholser Mansion

The house which Henry Overholser built for his young wife in 1903 was out in the country on the very edge of Oklahoma City. Now its location is being pushed by the development of the outlying portions of

³³ Oklahoma. Historical Society Annual Preservation Report 1973 Edition (Oklahoma City: Unpublished)

the downtown business district. Mr. Overholser had made a business success in Oklahoma City and was in a position to built a house worthy of himself. He engaged Mr. John Mathews of London, England, to design and build the house. Mr. Henderson who was a graduate of Kensington Art School was engaged to decorate the interior. The house which Mr. Mathews designed is a Victorian castle. It has twenty major rooms and upward of eleven additional ones. The exterior is of yellow brick laid in a fine butter bond, a very narrow bonding pattern. The corners of the house are chamfered with cut white stone and the pillars and railings are of Pecos Valley brown stone, a type of sandstone which has weathered rather badly during the years since it was laid. The many angled roof is set in red tile of a pattern called French Pattern. Dormer windows and other angles are decorated with scroll work in cut tin, painted to match the wooden trim of the house. The wide eaves which carry the copper guttering are decorated with cut wood dentils.

The house is on a quarter block at the corner of Northwest Fifteenth Street and Hudson Street. For many years the house was numbered on Hudson which is the street the house actually faces. Over the years traffic increased on that street, so Mr. Overholser had the address changed to 405 Northwest Fifteenth, and the side door became the main entrance. From the doorway on Hudson Street one enters a wide hallway with painted walls in decorative patterns, the original work of Mr. Henderson. The woodwork is dark mahogany, well carved and heavy. To the left the stairwell ascends in a circle. Underneath it is a sitting alcove in the window of the tower. To the right are the living and music rooms decorated alike and opening on to each other through an archway with Doric columns. These rooms have canvased walls painted egg shell color and then decorated with panels of

handpainted flowers in blues, shades of rose, and pinks. Unlike the hall which has Oriental rugs, these rooms have some of the earliest of wall to wall carpeting. Carpet at the time was made in twenty-seven inch strips. These have been sewn together to cover the floor and attached with regular house construction nails. In places where insets occur, such as bays for windows, the floor has been covered with additional, non matching carpet. These pieces are not noticeable because of the heavy curtains which cover the floor by the windows. The furniture in these two rooms is Louis XVI style in gold leaf, except for a grand piano in mahogany. An antique music box complete with its sixty tin records is also in the music room. This box still plays and is used on special occasions, when the house is opened for parties.

Across the hall from the music room is the library. Its canvased walls are painted in a dark color and decorated with a geometric pattern in off-white. The furniture in this room is mahogany Victorian with plush upholstery. A large free-standing bookcase which matches the woodwork in the hall dominates the room. The dining room is west of the south hallway, and is furnished with massive mahogany furniture influenced by Louis XVI period designing. In this room is located the great cut glass punch bowl with its punch goblets, and part of the collection of Chinese porcelains which belonged to Mrs. Henry Ione Overholser Perry, the daughter of Henry Overholser.

Upstairs in the old house are several bedrooms, the most interesting one being the old nursery. Originally it was the room in which Henry Ione stayed as a small child. Later when the house was occupied by her and her husband, Jay Perry, the room was changed into an office for Senator

Mike Monroney, United States Senator from Oklahoma, whom Mr. Perry served as executive assistant. The Monroneys had also a sitting room and bedroom in the Overholser Mansion during the time that it was occupied by the Perrys, and it was the Monroneys' official Oklahoma residence. Since the house has been made into a museum the room has been changed back into a nursery by a group of ladies who were childhood friends of Mrs. Perry and who remember the house as it was during her early years there. Some of the items donated to the nursery project were in the house during the time



it was occupied by the Henry Overholsters. The third floor of the old house is now only storage, but in the early years it was a ballroom with a side room in which the ladies could rest. Servants' rooms are also on the third floor.

After the death of Mrs. Perry, Henry Overholser's daughter, Mr. Perry placed the Overholser Mansion on the market. However, by the late 1960's the house was too big for the majority of purchasers to be interested in it. At that time George Shirk was mayor of Oklahoma City, and with his help the old house became the property of the Oklahoma Historical Society. The Housing and Urban Development Department of the United States made a matching grant of \$100,000. which was matched by the Oklahoma chapter of the American Institute of Architects. The architects' chapter holds a long term lease on the property from the Oklahoma Historical Society. With some of the money the carriage house at the Mansion was renovated into rooms for the chapter offices of the architects. At the present time work is underway on the house itself, to make the basic repairs before any interior work is begun. A contract has been let to completely renew the sealing of the roof and replace all the missing tiles. The contract between the American Institute of Architects and the Oklahoma Historical Society requires that the architects hold the Mansion open as a museum for the benefit of the public. This will be done when the renovation is complete. In the meantime, the house is open to groups by prior arrangement.

The Harn House

William Fremont Harn came to Oklahoma Territory as a special agent of the General Land Office of the United States to assist the United States

Attorney with the prosecution of perjury committed in connection with the land run claims following the opening of April 22, 1889.

Mr. Harn homesteaded a hundred and sixty acre tract in what is now northeast Oklahoma City, between Sixteenth and Twenty-third Streets, and Santa Fe and Phillips Streets. He built his two story frame house at a location near the intersection of Northeast Sixteenth Street and Stiles Street.³⁴ The house is a comfortable unpretentious home which has little of the fancy wood decoration popular in 1904 when the house was constructed. Its only exterior adornment is feather cut shingling as a band of design between the level of the first and second floors, and the same decoration in the interior of the pitch of the eaves.

The Harn house was occupied by Miss Florence Wilson, the niece of Mr. Harn, until 1967 when she gave it and several acres of land to the city of Oklahoma City to be used as a park and for the benefit of the public. Nothing was done with the house except to protect it from vandalism until earlier this year when it was designated an historic landmark by the Historic Preservation Commission of Oklahoma City. Work is now being done on the house, and it is expected to be open to the public within another year.

The Hightower House

The house now known as the Hightower House was built by Mr. Frank Johnson in 1907. Mr. Johnson came to Oklahoma from the south and engaged in business in the Territory for a number of years. In 1907 he decided to

³⁴Oklahoma City Daily Oklahoman, 23 April 1974. p. 12N.

build a home not far from the four year old home of Henry Overholser. The houses are now on opposite ends of the same block, the Hightower home having been given the number of 439 on Northwest Fifteenth Street. At the time it was built however, there were no city streets and the house was on a gentle slope in the country. As streets were cut the yard began to be a steep terrace. Sometime in its history the house was surrounded with a wall and the front yard was filled in, so that it now sits on its own grassy pedestal among its neighbors. The house is extremely well built and massive. Its present exterior of Greek Revival pillars, pediment, and Sphinx guardian statues was built by the present occupants, Mr. and Mrs. Frank Johnson Hightower. Mr. Hightower is the grandson of the original builder.

Inside the house is decorated in French Empire period on the first floor. The entry hall is flanked by Empire pier tables topped with mirrors. On the right the livingroom is decorated in grey and gold, with one end of the long room papered in an early French wallpaper. On the left two rooms have been put together to make an 'L' shaped library which has an exit to the walled back garden. Beyond the library is the diningroom which has been kept in the period and decorations of late Victorian. A carriage room on the east behind the livingroom is decorated with handblocked wallpaper with scenes of the pyramids.

The second floor is mainly bedrooms except for a small sitting room paneled in fruitwood purchased from a castle site in France. The work is of the eighteenth century and of provincial design.

The third floor, once the ballroom, is now additional bedrooms and a game room. Here all is decorated in modern furniture. This is the location of the family collection of Indian paintings as well as some of

the modern art.

The walled back garden is unusual in Oklahoma when yards tend to be large and open. The garden at the Hightower home can be reached by going down a winding iron stairwell out of the library. The walls are lined with raised flower beds usually kept full of flowering plants raised in the greenhouse behind the garages. Flowering trees cast their shade over brick walks alternated with patches of shady lawn grass. Marble statues decorate niches in the wall. The whole atmosphere is one of a much older and more protected environment than the prairies of Oklahoma.

CHAPTER VI

THE POST-STATEHOOD MANSIONS

This period will cover the years just after statehood, from 1907 to 1930. During these years the men who had come to Oklahoma as young people built their successful businesses in farming, oil, or industry. Some of those who built spectacular fortunes spent them, in part, on spectacular residences. Several of those homes are discussed in the following pages. Other equally large and equally old homes have not been included for a number of reasons: some like the Brady house on the north side in Tulsa are so deteriorated and in such poor neighborhoods that there seems little hope that they will survive; others are not especially unique, being only one example of which many remain; others are grouped together in such close proximity that treatment by neighborhoods is the only feasible manner to cover them.

There is nothing magic about the year 1930. People went on building homes but the coming of the Depression slowed down for a while the construction of really huge homes and when the economy had recovered the time of the pioneer generation had passed. By then it was their sons who were building successful businesses and building mansions for themselves. All of the following homes are in public ownership of one sort or another and most of them are public museums.

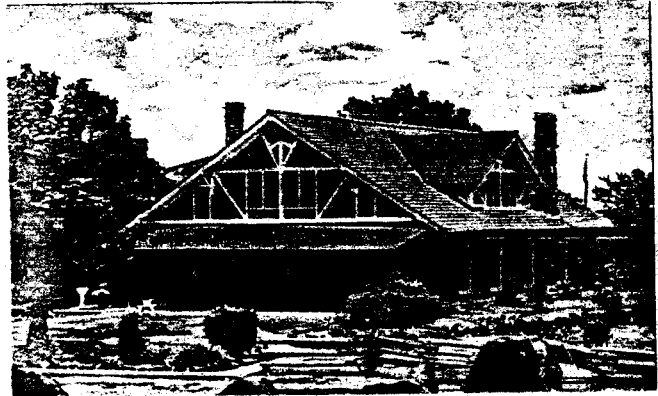
The Pawnee Bill Museum

Located on two hundred and eighty acres of land just west of the city of Pawnee in Pawnee county on U.S. Highway 64 is the home of Pawnee Bill which is a museum owned and operated by the Oklahoma Department of Tourism and Recreation. Pawnee Bill as Major Gordon W. Lillie was known, made his fame and fortune in the wild west show which he developed and acted in for many years.

The money from the shows was spent in great part on the home and ranch which Pawnee Bill owned and operated. He was interested in the development of buffalo herds, cattle, and horses. He purchased the land for his home from Chief Blue Hawk, a Pawnee Indian who had helped train Pawnee Bill in his earlier days. The land was tribal land which the Indians had purchased in 1875 as a place for themselves in the Indian Lands during the time of the tribal removals. Chief Blue Hawk's cabin is still on the grounds of the museum.

The house itself was started in 1908 and completed in 1910 at a cost of \$100,000. It is built of native stone and roofed with red tile. Downstairs the woodwork is solid mahogany and upstairs solid chestnut. Tile was used in the bathrooms from ceiling to floor and trimmed with twenty-two carat gold, and also pearl inlay. The entrance hall and den are tiled in Italian tile and the walls covered in embossed leather from the same country. To add to the unusual combination of styles and periods used in the house, the walls are hung with eighteenth century tapestries, the ceilings covered in Belgian linen and the draperies made from the robes worn by elephants in the show! Nowadays the front hall contains a stagecoach, hopefully a later museum addition to the decor. Actually, much

of the money spent on the house went for really good construction and for such items as a complete sewer system, a private power plant, hot and cold running water throughout the twenty room house. Considering that the house is still miles out in the country from a small community, the engineering feat must have been substantial for 1908. It would still be substantial today.³⁶ The home of Pawnee Bill is one example of the homes indulged in by those who made fortunes in the early days of the frontier. It is a strong reminder of the days of the wild west, which are now gone forever.



The Frank Phillips Home

Frank Phillips was a member of a large and hard working family, several of whom made fortunes in the oil business in the early days of Oklahoma. It is from Frank's oil activities that the Phillips Oil Company of Bartlesville developed. As their wealth grew the Phillips gave money to various public works in Bartlesville including the Phillips Memorial Hospital and Woolaroc Museum, which they established. They built themselves the home at 1107 South Cherokee Avenue in 1908. While called Greek Revival, the house is actually one of those well built homes made of the very best material, but which does not adhere strictly to any previous style. It is graced with an extremely well designed Greek Revival porch and upper

³⁶Oklahoma. Department of Tourism and Recreation Office file on Pawnee Bill Home, 1975.

pediment. The large front veranda is of red tile and it is said that when Mr. Phillips was alive he required that it be polished once a week along with all the floors in the house. The house itself is of mottled pink brick, chamfered at the corners with cut white limestone. The sloping roofs are of tile and the flat ones of sheet copper in lapped sections.

Inside the main house the woodwork is well proportioned dark mahogany. The central hall gives access to the library on the left and the music room on the right. Behind the library is the morning room and behind the music room the dining room and the kitchen areas. This area includes the cooking kitchen, the preparing kitchen, the butler's pantry, and the servant's dining room. The house upstairs has been remodeled.³⁷ Especially changed at this time was the bathroom in Mrs. Phillips' suite. It is now of pink marble with gold fixtures. The ceiling has been covered in mirror, which in turn is painted with vines and flowers. Mr. Phillips' suite is somewhat less large, but it too has an elaborate bath including an early steam bath. In addition to these two groups of rooms there is a large room which belonged to the two Phillips granddaughters when they lived in the house, plus several bedrooms reserved for guests.

On the third floor, off the ballroom, are several bedrooms which were used by the houseboy and the maids. The furnishings in the house reflect the catholic taste of the Phillips. The furniture in the library appears to have been in use since the 1930's. An excellent Tiffany still remains on the library table. The music room has a large Sarouk rug from about the same period. The paintings which remain in the home range from

³⁷ Phillips Petroleum Company, Public Affairs Department The Frank Phillips Mansion (Bartlesville: Unpublished Treatise, 1973)

a portrait by Sargent and a small painting of "The Sea at Bath" by Gainsborough to Teniers, Italian genre of the nineteenth century, and American of the twentieth century. Sculpture seems more limited to the late nineteenth century, and modern works most of which are of Mr. Phillips. The heirs elected to keep the collection of Picasso paintings. Whether or not they also kept some of the sculpture collection is not known.

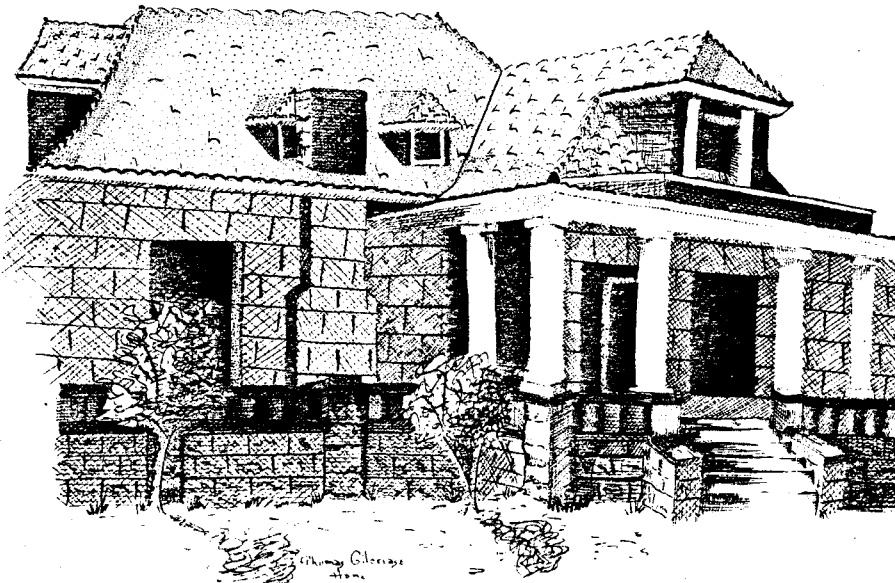
Many items of silver have remained with the house, some of which belonged to Mrs. Phillips' parents, the Reverend and Mrs. John Gibson. These pieces are interesting as they date from the mid-nineteenth century.



In 1973 the heirs to the Phillips fortune decided to give the home in its entirety to the state of Oklahoma and move to their castle in Ireland. After months of extensive work, conferences, reviews by the Internal Revenue Service and listing of all the many items in the house, the exchange finally took place at a party given in the house on November 28 and 29, 1973. The house is now operated by the Oklahoma Historical Society and is open daily to the public. The public is also welcome to see the greenhouse, summer house, gardeners' cottages, and formal gardens all to be found on the grounds of the house in Bartlesville, Oklahoma.

The Thomas Gilcrease Home

Thomas Gilcrease was an early day Oklahoma oil man who elected to spend his extensive fortune on gathering Indian artifacts and paintings. He also collected paintings and sculptures about the west. He established the Foundation for the Gilcrease Museum, which has become one of the most extensive western arts and Indian museums in the United States. The collection is housed in a building on the grounds of the original Gilcrease home in northwest Tulsa, Oklahoma. The house is said to have been built by a couple named Carrie and Flowers Nelson. The story is told that when Mr. Gilcrease saw the house under construction he immediately liked it, he made a deal with Mr. Nelson and took over the ownership on the spot. This was supposed to have been in December of 1913, which is a very possible date for the construction of the house.³⁸ The house is of local materials,



being mainly built of stone from a quarry on the Gilcrease property. The house has a tin roof in the Spanish tile design, now painted green. The ample porch surrounding the two sides of the house

³⁸ Interview with caretaker on the Gilcrease grounds, Fall 1973.

has rails and posts of sandstone, relieved with Doric columns of wood. The porch floor is of concrete. Inside, the house has a central hallway flanked by a living room with rock and tile faced fireplace, and on the right of the hallway is a dining room. Further back are the rooms which must have been the breakfast room and kitchen. Upstairs are several small rooms which must have been bedrooms, although they have ceilings which are less than eight feet high and side walls cut by the sloping of the roof.

Nothing is being done to present this house as a home. It is used as the bookstore and lounge in conjunction with the museum which is some few yards away in another building. Even so, the house can be visualized as it must once have been when it was the home of Thomas Gilcrease.

The Jim Thorpe House

The Jim Thorpe Home is certainly not a mansion, but it is one of those homes which is preserved in memory of an outstanding man who is closely associated with the state of Oklahoma. Not only was he known worldwide as the most outstanding athlete of his time, he was also known worldwide as an Oklahoma Indian. For all his fame Jim Thorpe did not buy possessions for himself, and this modest frame house at 706 East Boston in Yale, Oklahoma is the only home he ever owned. Yale is due east of Stillwater in Payne county on State Highway 51. The house was built in 1916 for a couple named Burdick who sold it to Jim and his wife, Iva, in 1917 when Jim was at the height of his professional career. They occupied the house until 1923 and three of their four children were born there.³⁹ The Thorpes broke up

³⁹Oklahoma. Historical Society, The Jim Thorpe House (Oklahoma City: Unpublished Pamphlet, 1974)

housekeeping in 1923, selling both the house and the furniture. Although the house was sold to a couple it was not occupied again until 1948. During all the intervening years it stood empty and neglected. In 1948 it changed hands again and was renovated and occupied. It changed hands again in the early 1960's, but 1968 it had been purchased by the Oklahoma Historical Society to be made into a public museum. Fortunately both Mrs. Iva Thorpe Davies and Mrs. Lottie Burdick were available and willing to help with their memories of the house and its possessions. They both gave unstintingly of their time to help in the renovation planning for the old home. Additions which had been made through the years were removed from the little house. It was repapered and repainted in the manner Mrs. Davies remembered it to have been. The regathering of the furniture met with some success. Mrs. Mae Foss who had purchased the dining room furniture in 1923 still had it and was willing to sell it for use in the new museum. Other pieces of furniture from the same time period were purchased locally. Artifacts which were suitable were added to make the home as much like the 1917 residence of Jim Thorpe as it could possibly become. It is now open to the public.



The Judge Hefner House

This house, located at 201 Northwest Fourteenth Street in Oklahoma City, was built in 1917 by F.L. Mulky and purchased by Judge and Mrs. R. A. Hefner in 1927 when Judge Hefner moved from Ardmore to serve on the

Oklahoma Supreme Court. He retired from the Supreme Court in 1933 and went into the private practice of law. In 1939 he was persuaded to run for mayor of Oklahoma City and he remained in that office until 1947. Judge Hefner lived in the house on Fourteenth Street until his death at the age of ninety-six in 1971. He left the house and its possessions, including his extensive cane collection, to the Oklahoma Heritage Association.⁴⁰

The house is now used as the headquarters of the Heritage Association as well as a public museum. To the house itself the Association has added a memorial chapel, a large



library and the gardens have been completely redesigned and renovated, the latter financed by a grant from Mr. C. R. Anthony. The house proper is maintained in the manner and with the furnishings which the Hefners had collected over their lifetime. Mrs. Hefner was an avid antiques collector and the home reflects her tastes. The gracious entry hall leads to a large living room on the east which is decorated with fabriced walls and heavy moldings painted off-white. The furniture in this room is Louis XVI style in gold with satin upholstery in grey. Beyond the living room is the side porch which some years ago was changed into a display room for porcelains. Here in lighted shelves are the Meissen dishes and crystal which Mrs. Hefner collected. North of these rooms is the music room, decorated in Victorian furnishings. On the west side of the front hall is the dining room which has an elaborate floral plaster ceiling from which is suspended a very

⁴⁰Oklahoma Heritage Association The House (Oklahoma City: Unpublished Pamphlet 1975)

large, handsome crystal chandelier. The furniture in the dining room is ornately carved teak in a Victorian design, covered in red fabric. Upstairs the bedrooms are furnished in Victorian period except for one great mahogany four poster bed in Empire design with a complete wooden canopy lined in green satin. Upstairs is also the display location of the Judge's cane collection. The third floor, once a ball room, has been made into the picture gallery of the Association, which is the parent organization of the Oklahoma Hall of Fame. The Hall of Fame portraits and photographs are displayed here on the top floor of the Hefner house.

The library which has been added is large enough to accommodate a group of sixty to seventy-five persons and is used as a meeting place for such organizations as the Heritage Hills general meeting and the yearly seminars on Oklahoma history organized by the Heritage Association. It is hoped that the library will become the depository of the private papers of outstanding persons in Oklahoma, and that it time it will develop into a research library. The chapel, which will seat about twenty persons, is for memorial services or public use on a reservation basis. Several weddings have already been held there since the chapel was completed in 1974. The Hefner house is both a memorial to an important Oklahoman and an active part of the daily community in which it operates.

The Governor Marland Homes

Ernest W. Marland came west to seek his fortune at the time of Oklahoma statehood and by 1920 he had made a fortune reported to have been around eighty-five million dollars. He became interested in the cultural activities of his adopted home, Ponca City, and gave of his time and money

to further those interests. His most enduring fame in this field came from his gift of the statue of the Pioneer Woman. In the early 1900's Mr. Marland built a white stucco house at 1000 East Grand Street in Ponca City. It has an indoor pool, a hanging stair well, and very large rooms. This home was given to Ponca City and is now used as the Ponca City Cultural Center and Indian Museum. In 1926 he began the construction of a home in the country just north of Ponca City. Of locally quarried stone, the building is three stories tall and is seventy eight by one hundred and eighty four feet in perimeter. Basically in Fransiscan monastery style, the house has round top arches, iron grillwork, window balconies and red Spanish tile roofs. The rooms are huge and numerous, as might be expected by the size of the structure. In addition to the house the grounds accomodate servants' homes, stables, administration buildings, and several gate houses.⁴¹ By 1930 the Marland fortune was beginning to dwindle, due to investments in the stock market. Soon nothing was left of the huge income from oil. Mr. Marland turned his interest to politics and was elected a United States Congressman in 1932. He served one term in Congress and then decided to run for governor of Oklahoma, winning the 1934 election easily on his promise to bring the New Deal to Oklahomans. His experiences with the Depression had made him a devout follower of President Roosevelt.

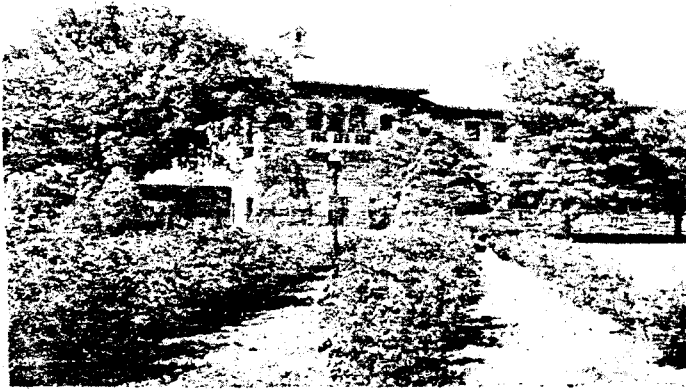


PIONEER WOMAN

In 1941 Governor Marland was able to sell his country estate to an order of Catholic Nuns to be used as their Mother House. It was amply big

⁴¹Oklahoma. Department of Tourism and Recreation Oklahoma Museums List (Oklahoma City: Unpublished Booklet 1974)

to serve both as a convent and as a headquarters for the Order. Within the past ten months the establishment has come back on the market at a reported asking price of three million dollars. The state of Oklahoma considered attempting to obtain ownership of the home, but the price was



prohibitive. At the present time efforts are under way to raise by public bonds a sufficient fund for the city of Ponca City to become the owner of the property. Whether or not this will happen remains

to be seen. If it does not, the future of this historic estate is in question.

The Waite Phillips Home

Waite Phillips was a brother of Frank Phillips, and had a twin brother according to the limited records available at Woolaroc Museum, the museum which Frank Phillips established outside Bartlesville. Family photographs show several Phillips sons, including these three. Nothing seems to be known of the demise of the twin, but Waite went into the oil business in Tulsa. While not as well known as his brother Frank, Waite made a substantial fortune in oil also, and he built for himself an Italian Palladian house equal to any ever built. The house is in the southeast residential section of Tulsa, Oklahoma, and is now the home of Philbrook Art Museum. The house is limestone outside and almost completely marble inside. It makes a wonderful setting for a museum although it must have been a very cold atmosphere for a home. The entry is up a flight of wide marble steps which lead to a transverse hallway. Ahead and down two steps is the living

room which is dominated by a huge fireplace between French doors which lead out onto a wide stone veranda, which in turn overlooks the waterfall and formal Italian gardens. The interior transverse hall, all in pink marble, leads at one end to several picture galleries which must have been drawing rooms and sitting rooms. At the other end of the house, past other galleries, the hall terminates in a marble garden room with a fish pond, statuary, and waterfall. Down stairs which lead off the living room are several basement rooms now given over to the display of Indian and early culture artifacts, but the rooms appear to have been the kitchen and service rooms when the house was occupied as a dwelling. This building which serves so admirably as an art museum was once a home of extremely graceful proportions. It should be seen for itself alone as well as for the art it now contains.

CHAPTER VII

THE HISTORIC NEIGHBORHOODS

Historic neighborhoods are areas in which the homes have a cohesive relationship in time and historic value. The homes need not be, indeed probably will not be, of the same architecture or of the same physical size because the very nature of neighborhoods is that they grow by accretion, a little at a time. Neighborhoods could be, but seldom are, building developments in which the houses were built at one time and of one style. Most historic neighborhoods, in Oklahoma at least, have grown by the addition of individual homes built for the use of specific families.

There is a difference between historic neighborhoods and historic preservation districts. Historic preservation districts are historic neighborhoods for which special protective legislation has been passed by some unit of government. Usually that unit of government is a city, but in the eastern part of the United States where sites are related to national history that governmental unit might be a state or the national government.

The use of preservation laws has only recently come into being in Oklahoma. The first legislation in the state dealing with preservation was only passed in 1969.

The following neighborhoods are not the only ones in Oklahoma, but they are the only ones which their own people consider historic at this time. No doubt the number will increase with the passage of time.

The Historic Area of Tahlequah

Tahlequah is the county seat of Cherokee county, Oklahoma, in the eastern part of the state. The town is one of the earliest settlements in the state, having been platted in 1843. It is the town which the Cherokees established as their capitol after they came west, and the building which now serves as the Cherokee county courthouse was built in 1867 as the Cherokee Capitol. The County Superintendent's office was built by the Cherokees as their Supreme Court building in 1844. These structures are of handmade brick with tall windows topped by gentle arches. The general feeling is of early American Federal design.

Many of the homes in Tahlequah which are in the area near the downtown are some of the earliest homes in the state. One old cabin,⁴² belonging to Dr. Leoser, is dated 1833. Many of the homes date from just after the Civil War because the part of Oklahoma which is Cherokee county was touched by the war and many homes destroyed. Unfortunately there are no markers on the homes to assist the visitor with identification, but the public offices are, ofcourse, open during the week for the curious to see the buildings from the inside.

Miss Beth Herrington, a school teacher in Tahlequah, has collected information about many of the historic homes in the town and published a booklet about them, but no legal action has been taken to preserve and maintain the integrity of the historic neighborhood in the town. Hopefully, something will be done in time to preserve this part of early Oklahoma for future generations to see.

⁴² Beth Herrington Historic Homes of Tahlequah (Tahlequah, Oklahoma: East Central Baptist Press, 1973) p.1

The Historic Area of Elk City

Elk City is in Beckham county on the western edge of Oklahoma. It was settled as part of the opening of the Cheyenne and Arapaho lands in 1892, and its historic neighborhood contains homes built just after the turn of the century. The area, referred to locally as the Brick Road Area, is two blocks south of Main Street and slightly to the west of the principal shopping section. The Brick Road is five blocks long and is a brick section of West Broadway Street. Both east and west of the brick section the road has been refinished in other surfacing, so that the part is quite identifiable. The homes in this five block area cover a range of construction popular between 1902 and 1905. The large frame house at 805 sits on a hand cut stone foundation. Its doors have the oval beveled glass windows which were available then. The house at 522 West Broadway is a very large frame with a domed tower on the front. Across the street at 521 is a square red brick house with a red tile roof which was built in 1905, three years after its neighbor across the way.⁴³

An attempt has been made to get the Brick Road area historic zoning, but the efforts have so far failed with the city council. Some attempts have been made also to maintain the old fronts on the more interesting of the downtown buildings, but this has also failed. The demand for modern fronts and new housing has the upper hand in Elk City at the present time. Hopefully, some compromise can be reached so that the Brick Road can be preserved for future generations to see.

⁴³ Interviews with Mrs. T. L. Heffley and Mrs. Roy Gowdy in Elk City, 14 February 1974.

The Territorial Homes Tour of Wagoner

Wagoner is the county seat of Wagoner county in eastern Oklahoma, southeast of Tulsa. It is a short drive on State Highway 51 off the Muskogee Turnpike. The city lies within the boundaries of the old Creek Nation, and grew in importance because it lies at the crossing of the Arkansas Valley Railroad and the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad, which in their day supplied all the needs of the shipping on the Arkansas River.

Wagoner has an active local Historical Society which has identified and placed markers on most of the early homes in town. These signs tell who built the house and the date of construction. Notices at the edge of town inform the traveler that an historic homes tour lies ahead. Most of the houses are along State Highway 51 going out of town toward the southeast. Almost all of the homes are large frames of two and three stories, set in broad lawns shaded by large old trees. The designs are basically Victorian with some Carpenter Gothic decorations. Most of the homes are still private residences with an occasional antique shop. The drive along the highway brings back the feeling of what life must have been like in territorial days in Wagoner.

As far as could be ascertained, no written material is available about the tour or about the homes themselves.

The Historic Preservation Districts

Some years ago an effort was made in Tulsa to declare the area just southeast of downtown an historic preservation district in order to save it intact for the future. The homes are large and the neighborhood had been the home of such persons as Mr. Skelly of Skelly Oil and others

of the same stature. The area was sufficiently large that it could have been a unit unto itself producing within the city another community which would preserve the early appearance of the city while keeping the downtown surrounded with well kept homes. Due to differences of opinion among the voting members of the city government, the zoning did not pass. Now that part of Tulsa is being opened up for the passage of a four lane highway and overhead interchange. Part of this construction is going to go through the parking lot of the historic Boston Avenue Methodist Church. Whether zoning would have saved the area is not certain, but it might have helped. Zoning would have given the area as a unit some force with which to fight against being destroyed. Now not only are the homes lost to Tulsa, but its downtown will be surrounded with concrete and cars.

The Heritage Hills Area

In Oklahoma City the tearing down of the Colcord home on Northwest Thirteenth Street brought an awakening among persons interested in preservation. The Colcord house was a beautiful Colonial home of red paver brick trimmed in white limestone. It had stood since before statehood among the other mansions just north of downtown, but had been purchased by the Standard Life and Accident Insurance Company in the late 1950's with the understanding that the house would be retained in its current form, although used as a business building. Within a year the company made a large matching addition on the back of the house to accommodate more offices, but this did not cause concern. Then, in 1964 demolition on the main house began. A public hue and cry went up, but nothing could be done as the work was being done by the lawful owner of the property. Suddenly the idea of

historic preservation for the remainder of the near northside neighborhood began to take hold. Preliminary work was done. Records were gathered on the history of the houses in the area. By 1967 a Preservation Committee had been formed and was asking the city government what the Committee needed to do in order to have protective legislation passed. Verbal battles were fought between those who wanted the laws in order to preserve their neighborhood and those who did not want the laws because passage would mean that homes could not be sold for business locations.

Finally in July of 1969 the first Historic Preservation District in the state of Oklahoma came into being.⁴⁴ A resolution signed on the twenty-third of December of 1969 by the Mayor gave the name of Heritage Hills to the new preservation district. The zoning laws in Oklahoma City as applied to historic districts restrict, in addition to the plat restrictions, the following things, among others:⁴⁵

1. Quarters may not be used as rental property.
2. No businesses may be operated in or from the home.
3. Parking on grass or dirt areas is a violation of the traffic laws.
4. No changes may be made in the exterior appearance of the house without written permission of the Preservation Commission.
5. No fences may be raised without written permission.
6. Houses may not be sold for any other use than one family occupancy.

While these add restrictions on the free use of ones own property, there is as much gained as lost. With a protected neighborhood owners feel that they will not lose money put into improvements. Consequently homes are better kept and the values in the area go up. The neighborhood association made up of people within the area form a community within a community, so that preservation districts tend to gain the atmospheres of small towns,

⁴⁴Vote of the Oklahoma City Council, 29 July 1969, on the Resolution of the Oklahoma City Historical Preservation Commission, dated 8 May 1969.

⁴⁵Ordinance 12224, Adopted by Oklahoma City Council 11 February 1969.

the residents both the friendliness of a small community and the advantages of living near the center of a large community.

Within the boundaries of Heritage Hills lie the Overholser Mansion, the Judge Hefner home and the Hightower home. All of these homes have received the seal of the Oklahoma City Historical Preservation Commission as especially outstanding historic sites. The seals can be seen attached to the walls of the homes. In addition to those homes mentioned separately, Heritage Hills has such homes as the following:

401 Northwest Fourteenth: A home designed by Layton and Hawk, completed in 1911. It is constructed of concrete faced with limestone. All the floors are concrete faced with wood, and as it so happens the house exceeds the United States government requirement for fallout shelters.

431 Northwest Seventeenth: The seventeen room house which Governor Walton purchased just after he took office in 1923. It was this home that was fortified against the Klu Klux Klan when his life was threatened.

1414 North Hudson: Built in 1908 this Spanish adaptation of stucco and red tile has a marble columned entryway which at one time contained a fishpond. The entry hall is a full three stories tall receiving light from a stained glass sky light.

327 Northwest Eighteenth: The Slick-Urshel home from which Mr. Urshel was kidnapped in a spectacular ransom attempt. The home was later sold to Senator Kerr for his residence in Oklahoma. This house also has the historic seal.

All of the above houses plus some three hundred and sixty more are occupied as private dwellings in the near northside district known as Heritage Hills.

The Putnam Heights District

In 1972 a second Historic Preservation District was approved in Oklahoma City, under the general preservation ordinances passed in 1969. This area lies between Classen Boulevard and McKinley Street north of Thirty Fifth Street. Business had become very much in evidence up and down Classen, but little thought was given to it until plans were put forward

to build a tall office building which would overlook many of the homes in the Putnam Heights area. The building was to have been on lots then occupied by homes. Placing this area under preservation precluded the construction of the office building and has kept the neighborhood in tact. The Putnam Heights homes are somewhat later than those in Heritage Hills, but are varied and historic. The district is especially blessed with wide boulevard streets and large trees which add to its appeal.⁴⁶

The Lincoln Terrace District

On August 3, 1974, a third Historic Preservation District was approved in Oklahoma City.⁴⁷ This one, composed of approximately one hundred and fifty five homes lies between Northeast Twenty-First Street and Northeast Thirteenth Street, and between Phillips and Santa Fe Streets. This is the area directly south of the state capitol and was originally part of the farm that William Harn homesteaded. These homes were built soon after the section directly north of downtown, and the area was mostly homes of persons involved with the state government. The battle for survival in Lincoln Terrace has been a long one. The inroads of business, the medical school, the capitol complex and deterioration have been working at the edges of the district for a long time. With the coming of preservation zoning a renewal of life is apparent in the neighborhood and it is expected to make a complete come back as its homes are large and well built, and its location one to be envied in these days of gas shortage. Zoning will also stop the continued purchasing by the state of homes for office space.

⁴⁶Oklahoma City Daily Oklahoman 25 August 1972 p. City Page

⁴⁷The Oklahoma Journal 3 August 1974 p. 5

The Guthrie Historic Preservation District

Since Guthrie, Oklahoma, was the first capitol city of the state many preservationists have felt that it should be a preservation district. The combination of the fact that the Oklahoma Territorial Press Association started the Oklahoma Historical Society and that Guthrie has a particularly attractive old building downtown which was the home of the local newspaper at the time that the city was the capitol tie together to make an especially strong effort at preservation for Guthrie by the newspapermen of the state.

Their efforts bore results earlier this year when Guthrie was made a Federal Historic site with the State Capitol Press Building as a Registered Historic site on the National Register. Plans are now underway to make the old newspaper building into a museum of printing. The Oklahoma Historical Society has pledged to do whatever it can toward bringing the museum into being.⁴⁸

Conclusion

The preceeding discussion of homes and districts which are considered historic in Oklahoma show how uneven the work of preservation is at the present time. Much rethinking needs to be done in order to bring some sort of order to the process of saving our past for the future. A step has been taken in the right direction when the public has begun to think about saving old homes for further use, but a plan should be devised to bring some continuity to the effort. Some standard of excellence needs

⁴⁸Resolution of the Oklahoma Historical Society, quarterly board meeting, 23 January 1975.

to be established so that everything that is old is not preserved for that reason alone. An old house does not embody good design simply because it has by chance escaped the bulldozer longer than its neighbors.

In addition to standards of excellence in making the decision to save a property, the idea of museum usage needs to be thought through again. Because a house was the home of an important historic figure it does not automatically follow that the house should become a shrine forever, frozen at some specific time in the past like Sleeping Beauty waiting for her Prince.

The National Trust for Historic Preservation finds itself offered over a hundred homes a month which it could make into museums. The state of Oklahoma faces the same problem on a smaller scale. It is becoming the view of the National Trust that homes or other old sites should be renovated as carefully as possible into useful building for modern living, or working. Otherwise, the country will simply fill up with house museums.

The National Trust also recommends the saving of districts rather than single buildings if feasible, in order to preserve the atmosphere which stays with an area but not necessarily a single site. On the other hand, when Oklahoma City was considering its first historic preservation district the question was asked 'where will it all end?'. At the time it seemed like a silly question. Now that there are three districts in six years and three additional neighborhoods clamoring for preservation zoning in order to preserve them from one disliked situation or another, the question becomes very real. Where will it all end? Districts cannot become preservation districts simply to stop the growth of the city for the city has as much right to grow as the old neighborhood has to stay.

Preservation is in its infancy. A step has been taken toward saving the past, now thoughtful consideration must be given to handling the future.

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