

Senator Owen Only Indian Ever to File for Office of United States President

When Senator Robert Latham Owen of Oklahoma announced his candidacy for the office of president of the United States he made history. He is the first presidential candidate in the history of this country whose ancestors inhabited this continent before its existence was even dreamed of by the inhabitants of the old world.

Senator Owen's great-great-great grandmother was Quatsis, the sister of Caulunna (The Raven), who was the chief and ruler of the Seven Classes of the Cherokees.

About the year 1700 a young English clergyman named John Beamor came to America as a missionary to the Indians. When he reached the country of the Cherokees and saw Quatsis, who was then about 16 years of age, he was so captivated by her beauty that he married her and settled among her people.

One of Senator Owen's most distinguished ancestors was Oconostota a son of Quatsis and John Beamor.

Speaking both English and Cherokee from infancy, Oconostota also acquired French through contact with the American settlers of that nationality. The careful and thorough education given him by his father, combined with the native eloquence inherited from his maternal ancestors, made Oconostota an orator of such prominence and power as to earn for him a tribute in Ramsey's History of Tennessee.

The encroachment of the English and French settlers of America on the territory inhabited by the Indian tribes of this country led to constant warfare in which the Cherokees played a conspicuous part. The sympathies of John Beamor were divided. Desiring to effect a permanent peace between the Cherokees and the English he persuaded Oconostota and a number of other prominent men of the Cherokee nation and their wives to agree to go to England for the purpose of effecting a treaty.

Returned to This Country.

The arrangements for the journey were completed, and the party arrived in Charleston, S. C., where they were to embark in the month of June, 1730. None of the Cherokees had ever seen the ocean and the sight so terrified the women that they refused to board the ship which was waiting to transport them to England. Oconostota and the other Cherokee warriors, however, sailed with John Beamor for England where they remained until the treaty of peace was concluded, returning to this country during the month of September, 1730.

Another important mission undertaken by Oconostota was when he, accompanied by thirty of the head men of his clan, appeared before Governor Littleton of South Carolina, to whom Oconostota made an eloquent speech of the treaty concluded by him while in England.

John Bemer also attained prominence as a member of the House of Burgesses of South Carolina, the qualifications for which were that the member should not be in the pay of the land proprietors, should own a farm of not less than 500 acres, and should have at least ten negro slaves.

Chisholm Was Ancestor.

Another well known in history ancestor of Senator Owen was Thom-

as Chisholm, a grandson of Quatsis and John Beamor, and the father of Narcissa Chisholm (Owen) Senator Owen's mother.

Thomas Chisholm was the last hereditary chief of the Cherokee people. He spoke French and English as well as Cherokee and took part in the adjustment of the numerous treaties that were made between the five civilized tribes and the government of the United States.

One of the most treasured possessions of Senator Owen is a heavy silver "peace and friendship" medal which President Thomas Jefferson presented to Thomas Chisholm in March, 1808, in recognition of his services and as an evidence of the president's desire to promote peace and friendship with the Cherokees.

Recovered Through Newspapers.

This medal was inherited by Alfred Finney Chisholm, an uncle of Senator Owen. When Alfred Chisholm died in 1862 the medal was not among his effects and no trace of it could be found for many years. Its recovery by Senator Owen's mother in March, 1905, was due to the publication in the Evening Star of Washington in the Kansas City Journal.

It seems that a man by the name of F. Fancher, of Snyder, had been hunting in the Wichita mountains. His dogs ran a rabbit to cover and when he removed the stones that blocked the entrance to the hole into which the rabbit had run, he discovered that it led into a large cave. Upon exploring the cave he found the bones of a man with an old flint lock gun lying near him and attached to a rusty buckle lying near the bones was the Jefferson medal. Senator Owen's mother opened correspondence immediately with Fancher and through his courtesy the medal was restored to the family and is now kept in a cabinet in Senator Owen's apartment in this city.

About Owen's Mother.

Senator Owen's mother was a very cultured and talented woman. She early showed a decided talent for music and painting which she developed by study. Several splendidly executed portraits and paintings by her adorn the walls of Senator Owen's apartment in Washington, and in the cabinet with the Jefferson medal is a medal presented to Mrs. Owen by the officials of the exposition held in St. Louis in 1905, for two group portraits painted by her and exhibited at the exposition. One of these was of Thomas Jefferson, Martha Jefferson Randolph and Thomas Jefferson Randolph.

The other was of Mrs. R. G. H. Kean (a great grandmother of Presi-

dent Jefferson.) Mrs. John S. Morris (great granddaughter of the President), and her two children Adelaide and Pattie, who were born at "Monticello," Senator Owen's country place in Oklahoma, which was given that name by Senator Owen because of his admiration of President Jefferson.

Mrs. Owen was a woman of unusual physical courage and presence of mind. On one occasion in Lynchburg when her husband was absent and there was no male member of the downstairs she captured and ejected a burglar. On another occasion when she was in bathing in Flint River, Tenn., she rescued two young women companions who were unable to swim and would have drowned but for Mrs. Owen's heroism and proficiency as a swimmer.

Father Built Railroad.

Senator Owen's father was Col. Robert Latham Owen of Lynchburg, Va., who, as an engineer, located and constructed the Virginia and Tennessee railroad and became its president. He was also a senator in the legislature of that state. He and Mrs. Owen were married at the Mansion House, Jonesboro, East Tenn., by Rev. David Sullins of the Methodist church.

Senator Owen was born in Lynchburg, Va., and in addition to the name by which he is known to his associates in Congress, his mother gave him at birth the name of his eloquent and distinguished ancestor, Oconostota, and it is by that name alone that he is known and addressed by members of the Cherokee nation.

Senator Owen attended Washington and Lee university from which he graduated with high honors. Even at that time he showed an ability in debate which showed later in his maiden speech in the senate of the United States evidenced the inheritance by him of the eloquence of the Cherokee ancestor for whom he was named. In the later part of December Miss Daisy D. Hester, of Oklahoma, the daughter of Captain George B. Hester of North Carolina.

Is Oklahoman.

Senator Owen has lived in Oklahoma since he was quite a young man and in addition to representing the state in the Senate ever since its admission to the union, he has taken a prominent part both in the state and in the senate in all matters of legislation which have tended to advance the moral, physical and financial welfare of the citizens of this country.

Under the tribal laws of the Cherokee nation, children took the tribal name of the clan of the mother. It was the mothers who preserved the history of the tribe from generation to generation by the stories told by them to the children. Senator Owen therefore, was born to a recognition of the importance of women in national life. In addition to this inheritance there existed between him and his mother a most unusual bond of sympathy and comradeship.

Advocated Suffrage.

His profound admiration and respect for his mother exercised an important influence in determining Senator Owen's attitude toward the question of women's suffrage. He

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