



CITY ON THE PLAINS: THE HISTORY
OF TULSA, OKLAHOMA

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PREFACE

Lay historians and a large number of scholars paint a romantic view of life on the American frontier. The myth of the yeoman farmer originated in medieval Europe, crossed the Atlantic with the first English and Spanish settlers, and was reaffirmed in the political and social philosophies of men like Thomas Jefferson. In the 18th and 19th centuries, fur trappers, explorers, Indian scouts and buffalo hunters achieved immortality from the pens of essayists, poets, and historians. Yet the literature on community life in the American West remains relatively obscure, a subject ignored by scholars. Ironically, just as Frederick Jackson Turner bemoaned the disappearance of the American frontier, the Midwest was experiencing a new phase of advancing civilization: the urban-industrial frontier.

Readers think of western cities as "boom towns," the overnight product of gold discoveries and land runs. Yet Tulsa, the second largest city in Oklahoma, had different origins and a distinct pattern of development which combined to give it a flavor and feel different from other cities in the state and the plains area. Petroleum dominated Tulsa, but the city offered more than petroleum to newcomers. The community leaders built their city with deliberate planning, considerable skill, and unwavering civic pride. Life on the frontier was not, in their minds, a romantic adventure, but a reminder of the advantages of living in a cultured society with the conveniences of western technology.

Businessmen founded the Tulsa Commercial Club, the parent of the Chamber of Commerce, to attract railroads and new industries, while social groups worked to bring cultural enrichment to the community. Attractions such as the Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art and the Philbrook Art Center are as much a part of Tulsa as the office buildings of Sun Oil Company and Texaco's refineries. As far as Tulsans were concerned, the past was something to remember but pride came from achieving technological and cultural advancement.

Few authors have written of Tulsa's past; only three histories have found publication, and all are dated and out-of-print. Clarence B. Douglas', The History of Tulsa, Oklahoma: A City With Personality, published in 1921, and James M. Hall's, The Beginning of Tulsa, are memoirs of early Tulsa and not scholarly. In 1943, noted historian Angie Debo wrote From Creek Town to Oil Capital, which is well composed, but she used only two hundred pages and concentrated her efforts on the Creek Indian period while devoting only thirty pages to the community after 1910. Authors too numerous to list have contributed both scholarly and popular historical articles to the Chronicles of Oklahoma whose usefulness varies widely.

I found invaluable primary sources in city records, Minutes of the Directors' Meetings of the Chamber of Commerce, the two major newspapers --The Tulsa Tribune, called the Tulsa Daily Democrat prior to 1920, and the Tulsa Daily World--as well as journals and magazines of earlier days which contain timely articles concerning many aspects of social, economic, and political life in the city during the twentieth century.

So many people have helped me in this work that I could not possibly acknowledge everyone. I do wish to give special thanks to the

staff of the Oklahoma State University Library for their consistent friendly assistance, the employees of the Tulsa Chamber of Commerce, especially Bruce Carnett, who not only opened the Chamber's files but also extended a warm welcome to me, and to Mrs. Hettie Green, secretary for the Tulsa City Commissioners, who graciously allowed me to rummage through city ordinance files and commission proceedings. Barbara Stiles expertly typed sections of the first draft. I cannot adequately express my gratitude to the members of my committee--Professors Robert Spaulding, Joseph Stout, Bernard Eissenstat, and Neil Luebke--for giving me their time and hopefully a small portion of their knowledge of history. I extend a special thanks to Professor Odie B. Faulk who directed this work and made a major impact on my life as a scholar. I dedicate this work to my loving partner, Courtney Ann Vaughn, and my devoted parents, Mary and Forrest Roberson, in partial payment for debts I can never repay.

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CHAPTER I

CREEK TULSA

Although Tulsa is relatively new compared to coastal cities, its origins are older than the nation. It began as a small quiet Creek village which sat on the banks of the swiftly flowing Tallapoosa River in the present state of Alabama. The date of its founding is lost in unrecorded history, but numerous state and federal documents, plus personal accounts from civilian explorers testify to its existence. The first white men to visit the settlement were members of a Spanish expedition led by adventurer Hernando de Soto in 1541. As governor of Cuba, de Soto had a commission from the Spanish authorities to explore and conquer the unknown, loosely defined area called Florida; while he and six hundred soldiers were carrying out this grant, they stumbled into the village.

It must have been an old, well-established community even then, for the Creeks called it "Tallahassee," meaning "old town." Unable to pronounce Muskogean words, the Spaniards mistakenly named it "Tallasi." Nested on the edge of a forest, its buildings were constructed of lumber cemented by hardened clay from the river bed. In traditional Creek style, all structures encompassed a village square where people performed religious rituals or comingled with travelers from neighboring tribes.¹

De Soto thought it a central governing point for outlying villages,

and there is a strong possibility that such was the case. The Creek Nation, which included Alabama and present-day Georgia, was organized in a confederation of towns loosely joined together for mutual protection against sporadic raids conducted by tribes inhabiting the immediate north.² Each community was virtually autonomous, but annual meetings of the various village chiefs were held in the larger settlements; Tallasi served as one of these gathering centers.

Sometime during the early years of the eighteenth century, a group of Tallasi citizens departed and formed an offshoot town named Lochapoka. Leaders periodically returned to the mother town and the citizens remained economically dependent until the United States government forced the Creeks to migrate to the Indian Territory, where the Lochapokas founded Tulsa, Indian Territory, naming it in honor of their former home.³

The founding of Lochapoka may have been partly the result of a disagreement over a long-standing policy of allowing non-Creeks to incorporate into the confederacy. Tribal laws permitted refugees from intertribal warfare or from regions taken by whites to immigrate. But the practice, while widely supported, caused serious political schisms.⁴ The Lochapoka faction was extremely bellicose over the issue, a position that placed them outside the mainstream of political attitudes within the tribe, and would eventually bring harm to the village when whites began to crowd into the area.

They were not alone, however, in their decision to move elsewhere. Other sizable minorities also determined that they could no longer abide by the consensus of the tribe and proceeded south and east as far as Florida; there at first they kept close contact with their homeland,

but eventually they developed a distinctive society. The Creeks named these dissenters "Seminole," meaning "people who camp in the distance."⁵ Incoming whites adopted the name, and by the second decade of the 19th century, the United States government, out of necessity, began to deal with the Florida tribes as separate groups not associated with the Creek Nation.

A head chief, who had only negligible powers as the presiding officer of the General Council, headed the government. Composed of one representative from each village, the Council functioned as an advisory body that decided overall policy for the confederacy and suggested government regulations, such as intertribal trade. But its aegis extended to discussing only inter-village relations and diplomatic ventures with the outside world. All agreements were orally reported to the villages, not as laws but as general "recommendations," the adherence to which varied from one community to the next. Even in times of war each community judiciously guarded its independence. If the tribe conducted military campaigns, a temporary head war-chief was appointed, and functioned as the national leader until hostilities subsided and peace ensued. But the power of the General Council was so limited that various towns might--and often did--fail to support the effort.⁶ Thus while Creeks were known as well-trained, fierce soldiers, they were notoriously ineffectual against well-organized opposition and rarely enjoyed numerical superiority.

Districts further decentralized the structure by dividing the nation into an intermediate level separating local and national governments. These were delineated geographically between those people residing in Alabama and the inhabitants of Georgia; the former were

designated the "Lower Creeks," the latter the "Upper Creeks."⁷ Both sent representatives to the General Council, but conducted district affairs independent of one another. The inner-district systems, nevertheless, were identical, and after the tribe came to the Indian Territory the two united.⁸

The village, composed of one or more clans, supported the entire system headed by a chief, or "miko," and a town council. Usually the miko was the elder of the numerically largest clan, and preferably the next-of-kin on the maternal side of his predecessor. Representation on the council was proportioned according to the relative population of each clan, but all had assurance of at least one vote. In contrast to the arbitrary enforcement of tribal decisions, those made by the town council were strictly enforced by the villagers because of the strong sense of honor ingrained into all Creeks. Individual actions were considered to be reflections on the clan, and unsocial behavior brought disgrace to a family.⁹

Local administration served both military and civil functions among the clans. The officials of civil administration, chosen from clans who traditionally governed during times of peace, decided matters concerning cultivation of communal fields, erection of public buildings, relations with neighboring towns, and other projects of civic concern. During war, military administrators controlled the village; when the town was at peace, they served as a police force apprehending those who violated laws established by the council.¹⁰ This system on the surface seemed intricate and complex, but it functioned smoothly until after the Civil War when the Creeks decided to install a more democratic and organized system of government copied from the constitution of the United States.

The constant danger of war with outlying tribes, such as the Catawba, Iroquois, Cherokee, and Shawnee, which forced the Creeks to organize a confederacy, also promoted the growth of a strong warrior class. Early in their history the Creeks instituted war titles, and every young man dreamed of someday being revered as a resourceful leader and courageous fighter. Nevertheless, before a male achieved warrior status he had to pass a series of demanding tests which required years of preparation and training; even the initiation rites lasted from four to eight months. The three higher titles--leader, upper leader, and great warrior--were battlefield citations. The miko conferred such distinctions after receiving the advice and consent of village councilors. Every village had several leaders and upper leaders, but the title of great warrior designated only one individual at a time. When the miko or councilors saw fit, they passed it to a deserving warrior. The holder of this cherished title had both social prestige and political prestige. When the council debated war or peace, the great warrior exerted considerable influence. If the council decided to make peace, the great warrior could, if he persisted in "raising the hatchet," lead those who would follow him into battle; in such cases the council was powerless to block any extra-legal mobilization.¹²

Despite the stress on maternal inheritance when choosing a miko--symbolic of the reverence displayed to mothers--women were socially subordinate to men. Their primary functions included bearing children--preferably sons--harvesting grain, weaving cloth, and preparing game. They were not permitted to participate in the council, as females were considered incapable of making governmental decisions. Never could a woman argue with her father, brothers, or husband, and she was expected

to act in the most modest manner. They did, however, play a major role when it came to the important decision of mate selection, either for themselves or their daughters. No courting was done without consent of the mother and maternal uncle. Prospective husbands sought approval by presenting suitable gifts to the girl's mother, grandmother, and aunts. The young people exercised some degree of choice, but no girl married without approval from the female members of her family.¹³ After a simple ceremony the newlyweds lived with the wife's family until the husband built a home of their own.¹⁴

Marriage was a sacred institution. Divorce was uncommon, and adultery was a serious crime restricted by severe punishment.¹⁵ However, the Creeks practiced polygamy; the husband married a second wife after obtaining consent from the first. Occasionally the husband married a sister of his spouse, especially if the sister was in her declining "eligible years." Women unmarried by the age of eighteen were considered abnormal and of questionable virtue, or carriers of evil demons; shame was their lot and that of their family. Therefore a dutiful son-in-law might remove the stigma by accepting such a woman in wedlock. Seldom did a man have more than two wives, for only the most prosperous could financially support several spouses and the inevitable children.

Creek society was agrarian in nature; grains, supplemented with fish and fresh meat, were the staple diet. Periodic harvests from the family garden plot, where various vegetables were nurtured, sustained the tribe. The tribe owned farm lands in common, with certain families responsible for designated strips passed from earlier generations (although de jure inheritance was nonexistent). The Indians stored the

harvest both in public granaries and in individual homes, apportioned by the council according to need.¹⁶ The chief periodically commissioned large hunting parties to search for meat and hides which were consumed by the townspeople or traded, although commerce with neighboring tribes was strictly regulated and, in some instances, prohibited.¹⁷ Such was life among the Creek people when whites began to descend upon their land.

During the first eighty years of the 18th century, the Creek Confederacy remained sufficiently cohesive to protect tribal territory and to deal with whites on terms favorable to the Indians. However, during President George Washington's first administration, the Creeks became increasingly disturbed by ambitious white settlers and alarmed by neighboring tribes that began ceding land to American citizens. In response the Upper Creeks agreed to enforce ordinances enacted in May, 1824, making land cession, without consent of the General Council, punishable by death.¹⁸ Bands of militant Creeks also met the problem by raids against intruders, and in 1811 the Upper Creeks joined the famous Shawnee Chief, Tecumseh.¹⁹ However, the governor of Ohio Valley, William Henry Harrison, aborted the plans of this uncommonly able chief at the Battle of Tippecanoe Creek in November, 1811, inaugurating a long and savage Indian War in the Northwest, but temporarily crushing Creek opposition in the Southeast. Andrew Jackson leading a sizable force of frontiersmen finished the job in 1820.²⁰

As more settlers forced the Indians off their land, a segment of the Creek leadership controlled by Chief William McIntosh began to realize that the best solution was to accept the offer of the United States and move to a new home west of the Mississippi River. McIntosh,

as chief of the Lower Creeks, was one of those leaders the Upper Creeks disdained because he had negotiated and signed treaties in 1802, 1814, and 1821, all of which ceded large amounts of Creek lands to the United States.²¹ Encouraged by McIntosh, President James Monroe, early in 1825, sent two representatives to Georgia to negotiate a final agreement which would remove the entire Creek Nation from the state. The meetings proved unsuccessful, for after much heated debate the General Council voted not to sell more territory. McIntosh and a few of his followers thereupon covertly agreed to meet with the commissioners at Indian Springs to continue discussing the question of removal. This second meeting convened in February, 1825, and, despite repeated warnings by the General Council that acceptance of any terms which might uproot Creeks from Georgia violated the law of 1824, McIntosh signed the treaty on February 12, 1825.²² The provisions included an acre-for-acre exchange of all Creek land in Georgia and Alabama for territory in the Arkansas Valley, and payment of \$400,000 to the Creeks for expenses incurred while moving.²³ A separate agreement signed by McIntosh stipulated that the United States would buy his home and property for \$25,000.²⁴

Almost universal hostility toward McIntosh and anger about what he had done erupted among the Creeks. Rumors spread that the chief had sold out the interests of his tribe for his own financial gain, and, because of the generous sum of money he had received, such attacks were hard to counter. What motivated McIntosh to commit acts contrary to the decisions of the General Council, and seemingly against his own interests, is still unknown and difficult to postulate. The chief controlled some of the richest land in the Creek Nation and owned more than

eighty slaves; during the negotiation of previous treaties, he vehemently had fought for and received guarantees that his holdings would not be included in the final agreements.²⁵ Perhaps this time the pot was sufficiently sweetened to change his mind,²⁶ or perhaps McIntosh recognized that the Creeks could not indefinitely stave off whites and decided to accept the white men's offer before they took his land by force.

His neighbors viewed him as nothing more than a traitor. The General Council wasted little time finding him guilty of violating the law of 1824 and sentenced him to death. Early on the morning of April 30, 1825, fellow Chief Menerva and one hundred braves executed McIntosh and burned his home.²⁷ Meanwhile, on March 7, 1825, the new President of the United States, John Quincy Adams, had announced the Indian Springs Treaty. Reports of McIntosh's questionable actions began crossing the President's desk, and eventually, he decided against the legality and authority of the agreement and invited the Lower Creeks to come to Washington to negotiate a new agreement.

On April 22, 1826, a new treaty was signed declaring the McIntosh settlement null and void, and announcing new terms more favorable to the Indians. The Upper Creeks ceded portions of their land in Georgia for \$217,000 and a perpetual annuity of \$20,000.²⁸ For future purchase of territory, the United States agreed to pay a total of \$430,000 and another \$100,000 for the expense of moving west those followers of Chief McIntosh.²⁹ Approximately two years later, the first 780 immigrants arrived at Three Forks on the Arkansas River aboard the steamboat Fidelity.³⁰ Before the end of 1830 they had been joined by an additional 2,000 Lower Creeks. A large percentage of the settlers were

wealthy mixed-bloods (white and Indian) who owned slaves, and many of them built large plantations in the area.³¹

The more militant Lower Creeks of Alabama protested longer than had their eastern kin, but on March 28, 1836, government agents and tribal chiefs met at Lochapoka and arrangements were made for a treaty to be signed in Washington. Creek warriors and their families received expenses for the journey--a rifle, a blanket, and ammunition. Also, the government included an educational grant of \$3,000 annually for twenty years and enough money to hire a blacksmith.³²

All five of the Civilized Tribes experienced the "Trail of Tears." Suffering from hunger, exposure, and disease, the Indians moved overland from the southeast region of the United States to the Indian Territory. The ordeal was further aggravated by an uprising among die-hard Upper Creeks in Alabama. White settlers, eager to lay claim to the fertile area, swarmed onto Creek land prior to the date of removal. In desperation the Lochapokas joined other Upper Creeks in raiding nearby Columbus. The frontiersmen retaliated with a counterattack, driving the Creeks into the swamps and burning Tallasi and Lochapoka.³³ Demoralized by the onslaught, Lochapokas joined the stream of refugees without a backward glance. They silently marched to the new unfamiliar land across the Mississippi. No tribe suffered more from the ravages of war than did the Creeks. Their population declined more than forty percent between the years 1830 and 1836.³⁴

The small band of Lochapokas arrived at the bend of the Arkansas River in 1836. According to legend, the diseased and impoverished migrants reverently built a sacred fire from wood they had carried from Alabama. A giant oak, which still stands at 1730 South Cheyenne

Avenue, bears a bronze tablet to commemorate this solemn occasion-- the founding of Tulsa.³⁵

The refugees constructed an approximate duplicate of old Lochapoka and christened it "Tallahassee." Buildings formed the perimeter around the square; the giant oak marked the southeast corner of town. The settlers cut down trees in the surrounding forest and dragged them to a designated spot. Along the west side of the square, the men constructed a long rectangular public building. Here the village council met to decide various matters of public concern. On the south side stood the building where civil administrators, or members of the peace clans, met to decide matters of internal business--the direction of ceremonies, the organization of public works, and construction of public buildings. Families of the peace clans followed custom and erected their crude homes behind the south building, segregating members of the war clans to the north of the square. The young men who had not distinguished themselves as warriors lived in a row of buildings facing west and forming the eastern border of the square.³⁶

As months went by, the little village filled the small clearing along the north bank of the river. The forest echoed with the sounds of men cutting trees and dragging the fallen timber back to camp. Women transformed forest land into communal farms and private gardens. The Creeks possessed only the crudest tools to build their new homes and to plow the land hardened by thousands of years of undisturbed grass and foliage. Peeled saplings covered with clay composed the outside walls, while bark shingles served for roofs. Inside the homes exhibited furnishing of hard wooden chairs and makeshift beds; the less fortunate families slept on earthen floors. Meat and cornmeal were

cooked in clay vessels over round open stoves located in the center of the single room; a hole cut in the roof allowed smoke to escape.³⁷

The first few years proved hard for the community. Crops were planted immediately on arrival, but the people had to survive until harvest. Licensed traders brought needed goods from Fort Gibson, but there was a dearth of guns and ammunition because the tribe was forced to rely on the hunting and fishing expertise of warriors. Dishonest contractors often withheld merchandise promised to the dependent Lochapokas. On numerous occasions they lied about the amount of goods delivered to the Indians, selling less than that contracted.³⁸ Such problems did little to create an atmosphere of trust toward whites. Indian agents attempted to watch all transactions carefully, and all independent traders had to obtain a license.³⁹

Corrupt practices such as these not only angered the Creeks but also frustrated Indian agents. In his annual report of 1857 to Commissioner of Indian Affairs John W. Denver, Southern Superintendent of Indian Affairs Elias Rector stated there were numerous problems to be settled between the Creeks and the United States government. Neither whites nor Indians obeyed the liquor laws of either nation, he contended. Only a strong show of force, either by the United States Army or by the Indian police, would end the flow of smuggled liquor to the Creeks.

Rector further recommended that if the situation was to be rectified, Indian agents should be designated as law commissioners, or district courts should be established within the Indian Territory. He added that because few Creeks understood white laws there was a need for competent legal advisors, and that all persons who voluntarily lived

within the Creek Nation should be subject to Creek laws. The major judicial problem was the dual citizenship of whites and mixed-bloods. Rector believed that this and other legal complications could be solved if United States citizenship was granted to all members of the Five Civilized Tribes.⁴⁰ In the fall of 1860 the General Council sent a delegation to Washington to discuss possible remedies, but the outbreak of the Civil War prevented any settlement of the problems.

While such difficulties continued, finances of the Lochapokas and the other Creeks improved. In 1838 the Treaty of Fort Gibson authorized a payment in livestock valued at \$50,000 from Washington as compensation for losses during removal. Even the Lochapokas, who resisted until the last, received \$10,000. After the first year the size and number of cattle and horse herds increased because of the favorable climate and nutritious grass. The Indians added to their daily diet by picking wild berries in the woods, hunting the plentiful game, and embarking on extended buffalo hunts. What they did not consume, they sold at Fort Gibson or at the Indian Agency located near Three Forks. A brisk trade of pelts and buffalo hides for needed goods from the outside world developed up and down the Canadian and Arkansas rivers. The commerce led to closer ties with peoples outside the Indian Territory, and the first post office was opened at Three Forks in 1843.⁴¹ In 1848 Lewis Perryman, one of the members of the designated founding family of Tulsa, built a store at Tallahassee. There the locals carried pelts, corn, and nuts to exchange for bright cloth, farm tools, and ammunition.⁴² By 1850 real want for the necessities of life had been eliminated, and until the outbreak of the Civil War, the Creeks lived in relative prosperity.

The War between the States touched the lives of thousands of people, not only in the East but also in the Indian Territory. No group of people suffered more than the Creeks. The tribe contributed 1,675 men to the Union effort and 1,575 to the Confederates. Not much is known concerning the Lochapokas. They followed the Union troops of Upper Creeks and Seminoles under the direction of Opothleyahola, the revered leader of the Upper Creeks.⁴³ At the outset of war, Union forces under Opothleyahola organized an orderly retreat into Kansas. But close on their heels rode Colonel Douglas H. Cooper, a former Choctaw-Chickasaw Indian agent turned Southern general with a large detachment of Choctaws and Chickasaws. The two forces finally clashed on November 19, 1861, at the Battle of Round Mountain. This first battle of the Civil War in the Indian Territory was a resounding victory for the Confederate troops.⁴⁴ Opothleyahola's forces, disorganized, starving, and dying from exposure, fled into Kansas, not to return until the spring of 1862.

The war in the Indian Territory was savage and destructive. Guerilla tactics brought plundering, looting, and death. A few Creeks tried to stay neutral, but were burned out and often shot. Renegades stole large herds of cattle and drove them to Kansas railroad terminals where they were crowded onto trains bound for Eastern markets.⁴⁵ Partisan factions fought for control of the Indian nations. Among the Creeks, anarchy, poverty, hunger, and disease engulfed the natives. At the end of the war, a small band of Lochapokas crossed the Kansas line and traveled the northeastern Creek Territory to return to their home. Little remained of the once peaceful settlement. Former homes were ashes, public buildings barbarically plundered, and the sacred square

overgrown with grass and weeds; this made even the strongest warrior weep. Once again the Lochapokas faced the hardships of building a new settlement.

Like their neighboring Southerners, citizens of Tallahassee lived through a reconstruction policy designed to punish the vanquished. The price paid by Indian Confederates was the cession of large chunks of their land to Plains Indians. The United States Congress approved this procedure in 1863, and in the summer of 1865, the leaders of the various tribes received orders to meet with United States commissioners at Fort Smith by early September.⁴⁶

All five of the Civilized Tribes sent emissaries to Fort Smith. The American commission consisted of Dennis N. Cooley, a former senator from Iowa, Colonel Ely Samuel Parker, General Ulysses S. Grant's military secretary, and Thomas Wistor, a member of the Society of Friends. After discussions with Secretary of the Interior James Harlan, they departed for the Indian Territory carrying instructions to obtain a peace treaty and to negotiate new agreements replacing those signed with the Creeks prior to the Civil War. Also, they were to resolve animosities between the Creeks who had remained loyal to the Union and those who had fought for the Confederacy. Slavery, of course, had to be abolished, and the old tribal government was to be replaced by a new territorial government.⁴⁷

On September 7 the two parties met. The following day Cooley announced that because various tribes had joined the Confederacy the old treaties were no longer valid. He stressed the gravity of the situation and expressed hope that the Creeks would sign new treaties as soon as possible. At that point he outlined the necessary stipulations for

all future agreements.⁴⁸

The agenda both dismayed and surprised the Creeks. There was considerable confusion within the delegation as to the purpose of such treaties. The Lochapokas, who had supported the Union, had arrived expecting to outline a peace treaty with the ex-Confederate faction. A number of delegates argued they had not been given the power to negotiate new treaties with the United States.⁴⁹ Why, they asked, must they sign a peace treaty with a nation they had fought to defend. J. W. Dunn, Creek Nation agent and designated interpretor, advised Parker that the loyal Creeks resented being treated as if they had been the enemy, and proceeded to tell Cooley how the followers of Opoth-leyahola had fled to Kansas, fighting a rearguard action all the way and how, in the spring of 1862, they had reorganized and fought throughout the war. They had paid a high price for their loyalty and resented being "classified with the guilty."⁵⁰

The ex-Confederate Creeks added their own objections to the proposed treaty. Daniel Newman McIntosh, their spokesman, replied that they had no authority to sell tribal lands to the United States. But he conjectured that perhaps such powers could be obtained, if given time to confer with the General Council. He also objected to pledges to enforce the Fourteenth Amendment within the Creek Nation. Furthermore, he and his followers demanded compensation for the loss of their slaves. They agreed to allot portions of Creek land for freedmen, but that was as far as they would go.⁵¹ After several days of negotiations, a bargain was struck. The Creeks signed the peace treaty as presented, although not without resentment on the part of the loyalists, after procuring a guarantee that disputed points would be expeditiously

settled by a separate set of treaties.⁵²

In January and February of 1866, the second group of treaties between the United States and the Creek Nation were signed. The Creeks thereby ceded 3,000,000 acres of land for relocation of Kansas Indians and granted a possible settlement for freedmen; all ex-slaves were granted citizenship within the Creek Nation. Claims for losses during the war by the loyal Creeks were handled separately, but the entire tribe benefited from the land sale to Kansas Indians and freedmen.⁵³

Attempts to change the Creek system of government met with limited success. A General Council, or Intertribal Council, was as close to a territorial form of government as the Creeks would move. However, a minor clause in the treaty granted Congress the right to establish territorial courts, which years later posed direct threats to Creek law. Until statehood numerous people were able to escape Creek authority by appealing to these courts for action.⁵⁴

The Creek Treaty of 1866 was significant for two reasons. Because of what Secretary of the Interior Harlan called the "unprovoked war" of the Five Civilized Tribes against the United States, the government began formulating a new policy toward the Creeks and other Oklahoma Indians.⁵⁵ The Department of the Interior thereafter kept a close watch on inner-tribal affairs. Such actions required acquiescing in courts established outside Creek law. Also, the Creeks were forced to agree to military occupation, should the need arise. Thus the United States government assumed both active and potential policing power within the Creek Nation.⁵⁶ The government's aborted attempt to place the Creeks under territorial rule nevertheless indicated that Washington officials were determined to have more control over the Creeks.

Little is known about the Lochapokas in the years following the Treaty of 1866, but during the post-Civil War years they apparently experienced the same problems and changes as the rest of the Creek Nation. However, they suffered less than many Creeks, perhaps because the war came later to them than it had to others. Lewis Perryman, of the famous Perryman family, died in a Kansas refugee camp, but his brother George B. Perryman returned to build a business empire based on ranching.⁵⁷ In 1868 he married a young girl of the Lochapoka tribe, and the children from this union actively participated in building modern Tulsa.⁵⁸

In the years following the war the Lochapokas played only a minor role in Creek politics, although they supported the reorganization of the government under the constitution adopted in 1867. For a number of years prior to the Civil War, the progressive element of the Creek Nation, composed of mixed-bloods, had lobbied for a new system of government; but the conservatives, fearful that any change might change tribal customs, had successfully blocked its passage. In a letter to the Department of Interior in 1867, Major James W. Dunn, the Indian Agent, outlined the political problems facing the Creeks:

The laws as now administered, require four times the number of officers that would be necessary to execute properly and efficiently under a well-established code. These officers, whose numbers are scarcely known even to the authorities, are poorly paid, and are dissatisfied with their positions and salaries. Indeed, so imperfect is the government, that the duty of no officer is fully defined; so that it is difficult for them to determine when they attain or overstep their authority. They have many intelligent and energetic men among them who appreciate this position of affairs, and who are strongly urging reform.⁵⁹

The reformers, cognizant of the deficiencies in the system and astutely aware that they had allies in Washington, persisted in bringing

the situation to a head. Finally in October of 1867 the General Council wrote a constitution designed to eliminate the evils of the old system. This organic law was similar to that of the United States, yet a product of Creek tradition. In the preamble the signers declared: "In order to form a more perfect union, establish justice, and secure to ourselves, and our children, the blessings of freedom, we, the people of the Muskogee Nation, do adopt the following constitution."⁶⁰ Law-making power was vested in a bicameral legislative council, divided into a "House of Kings" and a "House of Warriors." The upper house--Kings--was composed of one representative for each town, elected by adult males for a term of four years. Members of the lower house--Warriors--also served four years, but each town elected one representative, plus additional representatives per two hundred citizens.⁶¹

A "Principal Chief of the Muskogee Nation" and a second Chief headed the executive branch. Elected by popular vote of all the male citizens, both served for a four-year term. A male had to be a citizen of the Creek Nation and at least thirty years of age to be eligible for office.⁶²

The constitution also established an independent judiciary, composed of "five competent recognized citizens," who met on the first Monday of October each year. The court had original jurisdiction over any case where the damages were more than one hundred dollars. Under the high court, six district judges heard litigations. In cases before the lower courts, a defendant had the guarantee of trial by a jury of twelve "disinterested men."⁶³

The ten-article constitution thus established a republican system

of government founded on the principles of "separation of powers," an indication that the white society expanding over the continent was having a major impact on the Creek Nation. Combined with a written code of laws, the organic law represented a major change in political structure. The system lasted until statehood in 1907, proving that Creeks were determined to live in harmony with the United States. By 1907 Creek leaders had an elementary education in legal procedures of white society, and this undoubtedly aided in the assimilation of the two societies after statehood.

The Creeks also learned of white society through the significant influence and admirable persistence of missionaries to the nation. Dedicated young men and women of the cloth began immigrating into the territory shortly after the first group of Creeks arrived. Inspired by dreams of saving souls and determined to spread the bounties of white society, the missionaries saw their goals as twofold: first, to Christianize the Creeks; and second, to build schools for the children. Their plans often were aborted, but they doubtless felt rewarded for their trouble.

At first the Creeks were not receptive to Christianity. In fact, they tended to resent white strangers. Sister Mary Agness Newchurch, one of the first Catholic missionaries to the Creek Nation, recalled that "the older Indians did not like the sisters or even religion."⁶⁴ Because the Creeks distrusted, feared, and resented the missionaries, all denominations suffered, especially Catholics, from antagonism and ignorance on the part of the Indians. Bishop Theophile Meerschaert recounted years later that the opening of the Catholic Church at Eufaula was marred by the antics of the Creeks.⁶⁵ Such resistance dampened the

spirits of many, and a good number of the "called" returned home to souls easier to salvage. A small number, however, remained and quietly resolved to work harder at their burden.

The first Presbyterian missionary to experience noticeable success in Creek Territory was Reverend Robert M. Loughridge. Sent in 1841 by the Western Foreign Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Church, Reverend Loughridge ascertained the possibility of establishing a mission within the Creek Nation. He encountered hostility toward the idea of forming a church and school.⁶⁶ Although other missionaries had come before him, Loughridge found they had done more harm than good. None had established friendly rapport with the natives, and many so offended the locals with their behavior that they had been ordered to leave. After considerable bargaining, the Creeks tentatively agreed to allow Loughridge to stay, but on condition that he preach only at one of the old mission stations built years earlier by former men of God. Also, the missionary and his future assistants were not in any way to interfere with tribal affairs or government. In return, the Creeks promised to protect the mission and to allot pasture for cattle and food crops to the employees of the Church.⁶⁷

Loughridge and six assistants selected the mission at Coweta. In 1847 he found a more favorable site twelve miles from Fort Gibson. By this time the Creeks were well established in their surroundings and were prepared to assume responsibility for a mission school by the new treaty of 1845 which promised that the United States annually would appropriate \$3,000 for educating Creek children.⁶⁸ With financial aid available, the Creeks agreed to the mission school, provided that expenses were split evenly between the United States government, the

Creek Nation, and the Board of Foreign Missions.⁶⁹ The Creeks retained a voice in the day-to-day operation of the school by insisting that they had the right to choose a board of trustees to work with the Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Nation, provided by the Board of Foreign Missions.⁷⁰ The school was named "Tallahassee," and construction began in 1848 under Loughridge's supervision.

Once completed, the school became the center of learning for the Creek people. The main building stood three stories high. The Superintendent and his family lived in the south wing, which was separated from the north part of the building by a spacious hall and dining room where everyone ate meals. Male and female students were segregated at all times. The girls lived in quarters on the third floor of the north wing in the main building; the boys also were housed in rooms on the third floor, but occupied the south wing.⁷¹ Visitation by the opposite sex inside the living quarters was forbidden. Classrooms were on the second floor.⁷²

The school officially opened on January 1, 1850. William Schenck Robertson was the first principal and head teacher. Unfortunately neither he nor the teachers knew the Creek language, so students who spoke both languages served as interpreters. During the first eight years, the curriculum consisted of courses in reading, arithmetic, geography, English grammar and composition. By 1858, spelling, writing, algebra, natural philosophy, history, declamation, and Latin broadened the offerings.⁷³ Classroom activities occupied six hours a day, with two or three hours nightly of homework.

The school operated under a manual labor plan. Not only were students required to work hard in the classroom, but also they handled

certain jobs around the mission. Girls laundered and mended clothes and helped prepare meals. During the season, they also assisted in canning fruits picked from the orchard.⁷⁴ Boys worked in the small farm, planted and harvested the garden, and chopped fire wood.⁷⁵ Such activities were common in boarding schools where administrators believed that "an idle mind was the devil's playground."

Despite a four-year interruption during the Civil War, the institution continued to expand into a major school within the Creek Nation and as a successful Christianizing influence. Moses Perryman of Tulsa pursued his studies there and later served as a Presbyterian minister;⁷⁶ while Principal Robertson's daughter, Alice (the first Oklahoma Congresswoman in 1920), was educated at Tallahassee.⁷⁷ Although at no time did the school have more than eighty-one students, its contribution to education in the Creek Nation was immeasurable. Young children who labored long and hard at Tallahassee gained insights into white society which well served the Creek Nation in the years that followed. When the United States government's policy toward the Creek people changed during the latter part of the 19th century, from dealing with them as a separate nation to attempts at assimilation, the transition was easier because of the groundwork laid at the mission school.

A generation of Lochapokas were exposed to white society and changed by it. After the end of the Civil War, the Indians had adopted a system of government patterned after that of the United States. Missionaries, dedicated to spreading Christianity and a knowledge of western learning, invaded the Creek Nation, affecting people who would never return to the life of their ancestors. Thus the Dawes Act of 1887 only announced governmental sanction for a process begun long

before, and one which could not be reversed. An era was beginning, one which witnessed an increased influx of settlers and an introduction of the cattle industry, an era ending only when the state of Oklahoma entered the Union.

FOOTNOTES

¹Angie Debo, Tulsa: From Creek Town to Oil Capital (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1943), 4. Ohland Norton, "Early History of the Creek Indians," Chronicles of Oklahoma, IX (March, 1931), 17.

²Norton, "Early History of the Creek Indians," 17.

³Debo, Tulsa, 4.

⁴John R. Swanton, Early History of the Creek Indians and Their Neighbors (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1922), 42.

⁵Edwin C. McReynolds, Oklahoma: A History of the Sooner State (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1964), 98. Norton, "Early History of the Creek Indians," 24.

⁶Norton, "Early History of the Creek Indians," 26.

⁷Ohland Norton, "The Government of the Creek Indians," Chronicles of Oklahoma, VIII (March, 1930), 45.

⁸Ibid.

⁹An example of this was the custom of punishing an innocent member of a clan if the true fugitive went unapprehended. Antonio J. Waring (ed.), Laws of the Creek Nation (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1960), 17.

¹⁰Debo, Tulsa, 15.

¹¹Department of the Interior, Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to the Secretary of the Interior for the Year 1858 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1858), 143.

¹²Norton, "The Government of the Creek Indians," 43.

¹³Norton, "Early History of the Creek Indians," 18.

¹⁴McReynolds, Oklahoma, 100.

¹⁵Waring (ed.), Laws of the Creek Nation, 26.

¹⁶Angie Debo, The Road to Disappearance (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941), 19.

- ¹⁷Waring (ed.), Laws of the Creek Nation, 23.
- ¹⁸Ibid., 26. John B. Meserve, "The McIntoshes," Chronicles of Oklahoma, X (September, 1932), 315.
- ¹⁹Debo, Tulsa, 6. McReynolds, Oklahoma, 120.
- ²⁰Debo, Tulsa, 6.
- ²¹Charles J. Kappler (ed.), Indian Affairs: Laws and Treaties, II (5 vols., Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1904), 195-197.
- ²²Ibid., 214.
- ²³Ibid., 215, 216.
- ²⁴Ibid., 216, 217.
- ²⁵Ibid., 216.
- ²⁶Ibid.
- ²⁷Meserve, "The McIntoshes," 316.
- ²⁸Kappler (ed.), Indian Affairs, II, 264.
- ²⁹Ibid., 267.
- ³⁰Debo, The Road to Disappearance, 95.
- ³¹Debo, Tulsa, 7.
- ³²Kappler (ed.), Indian Affairs, II, 341-343. Debo, The Road to Disappearance, 99.
- ³³Debo, Tulsa, 8.
- ³⁴Ibid., 13.
- ³⁵Ibid., 15.
- ³⁶Ibid., 15-16.
- ³⁷Debo, The Road to Disappearance, 103.
- ³⁸27th Congress, 3rd Session, House Executive Document 219. Mary E. Young, "The Creek Frauds, A Study in Conscience and Corruption," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XLII (December, 1955), 411.
- ³⁹Waring (ed.), Laws of the Creek Nation, 27.

⁴⁰ U. S. Department of the Interior, Annual Reports of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, 35th Congress, 1st Session, 479-493; Debo, The Road to Disappearance, 138.

⁴¹ Grant Foreman, "Early Post-Offices in Oklahoma," Chronicles of Oklahoma, VI (Winter, 1938), 231.

⁴² Debo, Tulsa, 19.

⁴³ LeRoy H. Fischer (ed.), The Civil War Era in Indian Territory (Los Angeles: Lorrin L. Morrison, 1974), 21.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 25.

⁴⁵ The Creek Nation split over the war. Most of the Lower Creeks joined the Confederacy, while the Upper Creeks aided the Union though, ironically, they owned the vast majority of the slaves. Ibid. Waring (ed.), Laws of the Creek Nation, 23.

⁴⁶ Fischer (ed.), The Civil War Era in Indian Territory, 26.

⁴⁷ "Official Report of the Proceedings of the Council with the Indians of the West and Southwest," U. S. Department of the Interior, Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the Year, 1865 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1865), 315. Annie Abel, The American Indian Under Reconstruction (Cleveland: A. H. Clark Company, 1925), 219-226. Gail Bolman, "The Creek Treaty of 1866," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXXVIII (Summer, 1970), 188.

⁴⁸ Bolman, "The Creek Treaty of 1866," 188.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 189.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 190.

⁵¹ "Official Report of the Proceedings of the Council with the Indians of the West and Southwest," U. S. Department of the Interior, Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the year, 1865, 341.

⁵² Ibid., 344, 353.

⁵³ Kappler (ed.), Indian Affairs, II, 932. Roy Gittinger, The Formation of the State of Oklahoma 1803-1906: A Compilation of Treaties between the United States and the Indian Tribes (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1942), 810-818.

⁵⁴ Kappler (ed.), Indian Affairs, II, 936.

⁵⁵ McReynolds, Oklahoma, 235.

⁵⁶ Gittinger, The Formation of the State of Oklahoma 1803-1906, 114.

- ⁵⁷ John B. Meserve, "The Perrymans," Chronicles of Oklahoma, V (Summer, 1937), 173. Debo, Tulsa, 37.
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- ⁶⁰ Norton, "The Government of the Creek Indians," 49.
- ⁶¹ Ibid., 50.
- ⁶² Ibid., 51.
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- ⁶⁴ Charles E. Noland (ed.), "Recollections of Tulsa, Indian Territory, from Sister Mary Agnes Newchurch, O. Carm.," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XLIX (Spring, 1971), 95.
- ⁶⁵ Sister Mary Urban Kehoe, C.D.P., "The Educational Activities of Distinguished Catholic Missionaries Among the Five Civilized Tribes," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXIV (Summer, 1946), 171.
- ⁶⁶ Virginia E. Lauderdale, "Tulahassee Mission," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXVI (Autumn, 1948), 286.
- ⁶⁷ Ibid.
- ⁶⁸ Kappler (ed.), Indian Affairs, II, 408.
- ⁶⁹ Lauderdale, "Tulahassee Mission," 287.
- ⁷⁰ U. S. Department of the Interior, Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the year, 1869 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1869), 415.
- ⁷¹ Lilah Denton Lindsey, "Memories of the Indian Territory Mission Field," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXXVI (Summer, 1958), 83.
- ⁷² Ibid., 182.
- ⁷³ U. S. Department of the Interior, Annual Report of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs for the year, 1851 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1851), 391.
- ⁷⁴ Lindsey, "Memories of the Indian Territory Mission Field," 83.
- ⁷⁵ Ibid., 192.
- ⁷⁶ Meserve, "The Perrymans," 168.
- ⁷⁷ Lindsey, "Memories of the Indian Territory Mission Field," 187.

CHAPTER II

COWTOWN TULSA

While Christian missionaries and the national government were changing Creek society, the ranching industry was a third force working to move both Indians and Tulsa into the 20th century. The "Lochapoka Crossing" near the little settlement was a section of one of the first heavily used routes which began in southeast Texas and ended on the Kansas plains.¹ Although it was quickly abandoned for more defined roads east and west of town, the Texas cattlemen who supplied beef to the industrial East and the war-torn South relentlessly drove thousands of cattle across the Creek Nation, disrupting the quiet Indian life. Crops were trampled, deer and elk were scattered, and native livestock contracted "Texas fever," as the trails Creeks traveled to reach buffalo herds roaming the "great Plains" and to trading posts where they bartered for supplies became highways for the great cattle drives which characterized the American West after the Civil War.

The sight of whites moving across their land was a stark reminder to the natives of their earlier days in Alabama. In response to growing encroachment, the General Council passed a series of laws specifying the conditions under which a non-citizen might enter the nation and the length of time he might stay within its borders. Those who married Creek citizens were denied admission into the tribe, although mixed-blood offspring from such unions were granted citizenship.² The Indians

made it foolhardy to contemplate staying permanently in the Nation by legally defining all new arrivals as "sojourners" and subjecting them to threats of removal for minor offenses.³ The Council also came to grips with the controversial practice of engaging white employees. Mixed-bloods had taken up the custom after the Civil War and had since adamantly supported the move as an economic necessity.⁴ But increasing tensions within the tribe pressured the leaders to conclude that while the practice could continue, all employers were to pay a "head tax" for the right. Pure-bloods made certain that the ordinance was conscientiously enforced and that violators paid heavy fines.⁵ The tribe obviously remained divided over the issue of white residency, but there was a definite consensus that "outsiders" were not welcome as permanent residents.

Nevertheless whites habitually violated Creek statutes, protected by the inability of Indian leaders and the United States government to coordinate policies. Federal Indian agents regulated interaction between the two societies, but they were notoriously lax. Numerous agents were unqualified for the job or more interested in embezzling funds than in efficiently enforcing their orders. However, most agents were well-meaning individuals rendered powerless not by their misdeeds but by Creek distrust of representatives from Washington, D. C.⁶ Political divisions between pure-bloods and mixed-bloods and the dual court system under the treaties of 1866 fettered the tribal leadership. If the Creeks, frustrated over their seeming inability to control the situation, became too animated against unwanted whites, the federal courts activated the United States cavalry stationed at Fort Smith to prevent a full-scale war between the two opposing forces. Thus irregularly

enforced laws meant that few "squatters" were expelled and the chances of expulsion diminished. By the early 1880s, whites began moving their families into the area while resentment and frustration spread among the Indians.⁷

The geographical origin of this movement was southeast Texas. Abandoned by Mexican settlers during the Texas Revolution, longhorns roamed the open prairie, shedding traits of domestication. With no natural enemies and plenty of foliage and water, these cattle increased in number at an astonishing rate, providing a ready supply of meat on the hoof and an impetus for cattle ranching. During the immediate post-war era, Texas cowboys rounded up unbranded maverick cattle and pointed them north toward railroad terminals in Abilene and Dodge City, Kansas. "Mavericking" soon gave way to a more efficient, thus more profitable, operation of claiming animals and hiring men to oversee raising the herd.⁸ Whichever method was used, the result was enormous profits. A mature animal which sold for six dollars in Texas was worth ten times that in the north, and few men could resist the dreams of wealth which were conjured by such theretofore unheard of prices.⁹

The man on whose shoulders fell the burden of transporting the animals to the railheads was the trailboss. It took a rare individual to undertake the awesome responsibility, one who possessed supreme self-confidence and unfailing courage combined with intelligence and a level head.¹⁰ Trailbosses were not--as popularly believed today--employees of a single rancher, but professional herders commissioned to organize and manage the drive. Cowhands hired for the drive blended livestock from contiguous ranches at a predetermined location and fell into place around the milling mass of bawling, frightened cattle. The

trailboss, sitting on his horse, extended his hand above his head and gave the signal to begin by waving his hat in a circular motion.¹¹ Men and animals started north.

The company also drove sixty to seventy healthy horses chosen from previous trail experience. These were ridden by eighteen to twenty experienced men who understood the delicacies of controlling as many as 3,000 cattle in a single herd.¹² One rider, sometimes two, manned the point position at the front of the herd. The trailboss selected the point riders from the most experienced in the company, and they remained at that post throughout the drive. Their job was to guide the mass of cattle, directing them along the course mapped by the trailboss.¹³ On each side rode the "swings," twelve men divided into two groups of six who held the cattle in manageable formation, followed by the remainder of the group designated the "drag," pushing the cattle at a steady pace while choking on the dust which thousands of cattle could stir.¹⁴

Tallahassee was a favorite spot for these drivers. Cattle always lost weight on the long drives, and the area was rich in buffalo grass and sage, while blue stem grass was abundant.¹⁵ The numerous creeks, streams, and rivers provided a more than ample water supply, and the rolling hills, covered with varying shades of green and standing against the pale blue sky, presented a picturesque site where both animal and cowboy could move leisurely across the Indian Territory, enjoying a brief moment of repose.¹⁶

Motion pictures and television "westerns" have romanticized the open-range cattle industry. In fact, a cattle drive from Texas to Kansas was extremely difficult work, and wranglers were poorly paid for

their efforts.¹⁷ Few men remained ranch hands longer than five to seven years before changing to another more-profitable occupation, working only to send money home to their families or to save enough for marriage and a new start.¹⁸ Ranchers generally paid a predetermined fee, but often induced better care of stock by promising a certain percentage of the profits. Nevertheless, cowboys tended to be shiftless and unreliable, and problems with them were continuous sources of aggravation for ranchers.

Nature, outlaws, and irate farmers added to personal hardships. Grass and water were necessities for the company; although this was seldom a major problem, the availability of both varied from place to place. Drives tested the stamina of both men and animals, and twelve to fifteen miles was considered a good day's drive. Many cattle arrived at their destination poor and unfit for human consumption, and a lighter-weight animal meant poorer quality beef and brought less money. Violent thunderstorms frightened and rustlers stampeded the herds, forcing the trailboss to place guards nightly around the stock. Until the herd had become "trail broke," half the company rode guard. After fifteen days to a month on the trail, two men were sufficient to watch as many as 4,000 head of cattle.²⁰ Even normally law-abiding citizens attempted to hinder progress; lynchings, while uncommon, occurred, and naturally spread fear among wranglers. A skilled trailboss ordered effectual safeguards, but ranchers still expected to lose a minimum of ten percent of their stock during long drives to Abilene or Dodge City.²¹ Creeks, tired of their crops being ruined, and Texans looking for ways to increase their profits were ready to try something new.

John Severs, a Tallahassee rancher, found a workable solution.²²

Why now allow Texas cattle to pasture on Creek land until they were ready for market? Ranchers thereby could sell a higher-quality product, and local landowners would profit by charging a fee for grazing rights. This not only meant increased revenue for all concerned, but also might end the cause of antagonisms. Such an idea found wide appeal, and by the late 1870s, Texans drove cattle by the thousands to the area, arriving in late spring or early summer. But instead of moving through, the herds stopped to graze and water throughout the summer until the number of cattle had increased and the stock were fatter. In the fall, cowboys organized roundups and pushed the cattle north.²³

When railroads began operating in and around Tulsa, the procedure proved — more successful as cattle were shipped to other points in Oklahoma to feed on the open range. Even mixed and scrub cattle of low quality prospered in the agreeable climate along the Arkansas River, and soon both Texans and locals joined in a combined effort to increase their profits.²⁴

Tallasi, or Tulsī Town as it had come to be called, became the center of a healthy ranching industry in the Creek Nation. By the early 1880s thousands of cattle lazily roamed the area, and Texans openly coveted good Creek land.²⁵ In 1881 Bill Jackson became the first Texas rancher to settle near Tulsī when he leased the huge Spike S Ranch near present Ingalls. Within a year he controlled a herd numbering 12,000 head of cattle.²⁶ Harry C. Hull, a railroad entrepreneur and one of the "fathers of Tulsa," had a typical business agreement with several Indian farmers. The partners fenced a large acreage of land (at a site near the present West First Street) and charged a rental fee per head to feed. Hull and his associates shared equally in the profits, and

all received a handsome annual return on their investment for several years.²⁷

Penning cattle added another dimension to the booming industry. Buyers from Kansas City and Chicago escaped the mercy of an unpredictable market. If the demand for beef dropped, they refused to sell their inventory until prices rose to a more acceptable level.²⁸ Creeks living in Tulsi Town and points east rapidly increased the size of their herds and thus added to the volume of business. George B. Perryman, a mixed-blood Creek and member of the already powerful family, doubled his personal fortune between 1881 and 1894 by renting thousands of acres south of town from the Creek Nation; there he raised one of the largest herds in the Indian Territory.²⁹ Because cattle in Texas cost seventy-five cents each and sold for \$15.50 a head in Kansas City in 1883, men such as W. E. Halsell, an Owasso rancher instrumental in bringing the Frisco Railroad to Tulsa, expected profits potentially ten times their initial investments. With opportunities such as these, few could resist the lure of the Creek Nation.

One such pioneer was James Monroe Daugherty of Denton, Texas. In 1866, when less than twenty years of age, he helped drive a herd of five hundred yearlings from South Texas to Missouri.³⁰ In returning to Texas, Daugherty hired four cowboys at forty dollars a month, promising to pay them expected profits; after buying provisions for the trip, also on credit, he left for Abilene, Kansas, with a dollar and fifteen cents in his pocket. There he sold a second herd for more than two hundred percent profit. In the next several years he returned many times, always with the same results.³¹ Nineteen years later, he invested his prodigious wealth in a ranch leased from Legus Perryman,

George's brother, for one-half cent per acre, and by 1890 he was pasturing 22,000 head of cattle for Texas ranchers. Within six years he doubled his operating capacity and retired one of the richest men in the Creek Nation.³²

Daugherty was not alone in his pursuit of riches. Tulsi ranchers Arthur J. Smith and William E. Gentry were two of a number of men who enjoyed a life of ease after years as ranchers in the area. Both men were in their late twenties when they arrived in the community in 1879 searching for employment. Within a few months, they leased acreage from Creek farmers and traveled to Texas. Twenty years later, they and other ranchers were earning sufficient profits to more than triple their original holdings, making two and three trips annually.³³

Booming industries are generally characterized by haphazard organization, and the ranching business around Tulsi was no exception. By the fall of 1884 the Creek ranchers found it beneficial to organize a livestock association. The men divided the immediate Tulsi area into two districts separated by the Arkansas River. Various ranchers had the responsibilities for patrolling for rustlers, gathering strays, and organizing roundups in the spring. The membership elected Chief Pleasant Porter as the first president, and Daniel Childres served as inspector at Tulsi and Catoosa, the two assembling locations. Childres judiciously checked each branch when cowboys crowded herds into the loading pen. The association paid him five dollars a month for his work, and at the time of his death he reportedly could identify more than one hundred brands.³⁴

Spring and fall were, of course, the busy and exciting times of the year. Every cowboy looked forward to them although the hours were

long and the job was hard, for there was little else to do except work.

Few advantages of late 19th century civilization were found in Tulsi at the turn of the century. The United States Postal Service provided the only direct link between the little community and the nation in 1879. When a post office was established at George Perryman's ranch, three and one-half miles north of town, they named it Tulsa Station.³⁵ Although the Creeks continued to call the town Tulsi, whites accepted the new spelling imposed by the federal government. Although the town's residents were excited by the prospect of communicating with old friends and loved ones back home, the station seldom was busy; sometimes months passed between letters, and service remained slow until the railroads provided a better, faster carrier.

Isolation from the nation brought the residents of the small cattletown closer together. They shared both hardship and plenty, helping neighbors when necessary, rejoicing with one another when possible. Although they were the personification of the rugged individuals who settled the American West, they exhibited feelings of togetherness, willingly expressed by a profound sense of civic pride and responsibility. Few families and no social club missed an opportunity to organize a communal event. Dances, held periodically in someone's home or at Heney Grove outside town, were the most popular entertainment.³⁶ On such occasions, women wore their best dresses and fixed their hair in the most flattering fashion, while men adorned themselves in the one good suit they owned or in freshly washed pants and shirt. The dancers whirled around the floor until well after midnight while onlookers talked of women's work or the newest prize bull from Kansas City.³⁷ All the while young men and women gazed at each other in romantic bliss, and

many a marriage resulted from such occasions.³⁸

Horse races attracted large, festive audiences. The cowboys matched their quarterhorse ponies, normally used for cutting cattle or for roping, in a frenzy of pounding hooves and wild cheers. Perhaps a man bragged for months that he had the fastest horse on the ranch or, if he really felt brave, the swiftest in the territory. Men lived by the speed of their horses, for it took quick animals to catch a yearling calf and nimbleness to separate a young bull from the remainder of the herd. So the men took great pride in their animals, and a month's wages often were lost or won within a few seconds.³⁹

Men spent quieter times fishing, hunting, or gathering nuts or berries. The wooded hills abounded with deer, elk, wild pigeons, turkeys, quail, prairie chickens, and mink. The streams supplied plenty of catfish, trout, and bass, and men boasted of being expert hunters or fishermen.⁴⁰ However, more than sport was involved, for an expert chef could turn a deer or prairie chicken into a delicacy.

Ranching nevertheless was a lonely life. Cowboys only spent one or two evenings each month in town, but they always made the most of such occasions. People gathered wherever they could find a place to "chew the fat;" although they were not particular, there were favorite spots. E. B. Harris remembered cowboys clustering around his father's store, whiling away the time telling intriguing stories and sharing jokes.⁴¹

Not only were the neighborhood stores frequent meeting places, but also the local church served an important social function. The "mother church of Tulsa" was the First Presbyterian, founded in a tent in 1882.⁴² The first superintendent was Agnes Slater, wife of a local

carpenter. Ironically she was a Congregationalist, but she soon discovered that she was the lone member of that distinguished church. Not to be denied her quest for religious satisfaction, she and a local Baptist, Dr. William P. Booker, organized a Sunday School christened the Union Sunday School, an appropriate name for a congregation composed of no less than eight different faiths. By 1884 Reverend William Haworth had arrived and served the people as their minister for fifteen years.⁴³ More than a desire to save one's soul brought men and women to church each Sunday. Members of the congregation always lingered after the services, engaging in conversation filled with laughter, back-slapping, and warm feelings. Church socials never lacked in attendance. Everyone shared food and drink, while enjoying a peaceful Sunday afternoon.⁴⁴

The quest for companionship also manifested itself in the founding of several fraternal orders and social clubs. On August 8, 1893, eleven men organized the Ancient, Free and Accepted Masons of Tulsa, Lodge No. 65. The first Worshipful Master was Philander Reeder. Later the lodge number changed to 71, but the members of the Masonic Lodge continued for years to boast the top civic leaders.⁴⁵

The first known social club was organized by Mrs. W. Albert Cook and five charter members in 1903. For several years thereafter, the Thimble Club held receptions, teas, parties and other entertainments to honor visitors or for the members and their families.⁴⁶ Three years later the ladies of Tulsa, under the leadership of Mrs. Mary E. Green, founded the Tulsa Women's Club, a literary society. For years Mrs. Green and her fellow members fought to get a library in Tulsa, and they finally succeeded in 1915.⁴⁷ Between 1906 and 1912 other organizations

followed these pioneers. In 1912, Jane Heard Clinton became the first president of the local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. That same year Miss A. W. Roth founded the Council of Women at a meeting at the First Presbyterian Church. In 1914 Jane Heard Clinton once again used her organizational abilities and prodigious civic-mindedness to lead in establishing the Philharmonic Society.⁴⁸

However, the most famous and most active of the social organizations was the Hyechka Club, founded by ten women in the studio of Mrs. Will L. Short, located over John L. Sell's drug store at 110 South Main Street in October of 1904.⁴⁹ The women selected "Hyechka" because it was the Creek Indian generic word for "music." The purpose of the club was to develop music appreciation in the homes, the schools, and the churches of the rapidly growing community. The membership elected the ever-available and able Jane Heard Clinton as the first president, a position she continued to hold until 1921. The major event sponsored by the club was the annual May Festival and Concert. First held in May of 1907, the show featured local musical talents for the enjoyment of enthusiastic audiences. From time to time the ladies reached out to showcase national and international artists of reknown. The Hyechka Club and companion organizations stimulated community interest in the arts, an interest which remains in Tulsa today.⁵⁰ Such forms of entertainment still exist in present Tulsa, but in the late 19th and early 20th centuries they had a different significance, for these were the only distraction from the day-to-day hard life of the frontier.

However, the world in which the cowboys lived was rapidly changing. As the ranching industry boomed, men continued searching for faster, more profitable ways of connecting Tulsa with the outside world.

More and more ranchers built pens, diminishing the need for open range and conversely increasing the need for railroads. Within a few years, railroad companies revolutionized the cattle business as enterprising businessmen, searching for new markets, extended their tracks into the Creek Nation. Railroads were the arteries through which passed the life-blood of industrialization and the bonds that tied the country together. From St. Louis to San Francisco, from Galveston to Abilene, communities welcomed the railroad with open arms.

The first to reach Tulsa was the Frisco, then known as the Atlantic and Pacific, in August, 1882. Seven years earlier, the company had constructed tracks from Pierce, Missouri, to Vinita, Indian Territory. Not satisfied with the volume of business, the owners were looking for a new terminus when they sold the enterprise to the Frisco Railroad Corporation in January of 1882.⁵¹ Within a matter of days the new operators had let a contract to extend the line from Vinita to a point southwest on the Arkansas River just inside the Cherokee Nation. But Harry Hall, business manager for the Frisco, knew Cherokee laws prohibited white men not intermarried and not citizens of the Cherokee Nation from doing business inside its borders.⁵² Under Creek statutes, however, white men, not citizens, could engage in business in the Creek Nation, provided they filed a \$10,000 bond with the Secretary of the Interior and paid taxes on the imported merchandise.⁵³ No business location could exceed two acres of land, and all enterprises required a permit.⁵⁴ While these laws were specific and always enforced, they did allow commerce by outsiders. Thus the contractors, Major Clarence B. Gunn of Kansas City, Missouri, Charles M. Condon, Harry C. Hull of Oswego, Kansas, and B. F. Hobart of St. Louis opted to move the terminus inside

the Creek Nation one hundred yards from the Tulsa city limits.

Gunn, as engineer, oversaw construction of the railroad and let subcontracts made by his partners. Hall controlled the finances, made out the payroll, bought supplies, and operated the general undertaking of railroad construction. Condon and Hobart were the financiers and made the final decisions on all prospective business arrangements.⁵⁵

James M. Hall, Harry's brother, was in charge of the company store that moved from terminal to terminal with each extension of the line.⁵⁶

The workers soon finished grading and laid the tracks as far as Catoosa. There construction halted for two months until Tulsa citizens joined the railroad gang constructing a bridge across the Verdigris and Arkansas rivers.⁵⁷ Camps of subcontractors periodically advanced along the right of way, surveying the geography between Catoosa and Tulsa. In early July the Hall brothers pitched the company store tent on the north side of the right-of-way between present Main Street and Boston Avenue. Thus arrived the two men designated the founders of modern Tulsa.⁵⁸

On August 1, 1882, the construction wagon, loaded with laborers and supplies, arrived from Catoosa, and work began on the terminus between present-day Boston and Main. The crew passed the night in a boarding tent operating by Tulsa rancher Chauncy A. Owen, who had the contract for feeding the workers.⁵⁹ Owen's tent served as headquarters until completion of the tracks in mid-August. The finished terminal, which later became Union Station, consisted of a small two-stall round-house and a section house. Owen moved his boardinghouse to the north side of the terminal, while stockyards with loading pens and chutes were built south of the tracks.

The first train arrived on the morning of August 21, and soon a mixed passenger and freight train began making regular trips to Vinita. The fare was five cents a mile, and James Hall recalled that the ride to Vinita was a leisurely one. The only connection was with the passenger train to St. Louis; thus "there was plenty of time to stop and let the passengers and crew shoot prairie chickens along the way."⁶⁰ The Frisco was Tulsa's only railroad for twenty years, connecting the theretofore isolated community with the nation.

Arrival of the railroad meant growth and prosperity for any town of the late 19th century, and the Frisco brought new life to the little hamlet on the Arkansas River. Several railroad employees stayed and made their homes, while people within the Creek and Cherokee nations began to move from Okmulgee or Muskogee to establish businesses. During the winter of 1882, Owen replaced his tent with a frame building christened "Tulsa House," the first hotel in town. The initial store belonged to Thomas Jefferson Archer, a young mixed-blood Cherokee who moved to the town in March of 1883. Harry Hall decided to open a store of his own in Tulsa in April of that year, although it was operated by James; and the Perryman brothers transferred their stores from Red Fork that same month. These enterprises employed two full-time clerks, and advertised "a complete full line of groceries, dry goods, and farm implements."⁶¹ By the late spring of 1883, the town had two physicians, a drugstore, a lumber yard, and a school under construction.⁶² In little more than a year, Tulsa had changed from a small isolated village to a thriving community.

Expansion temporarily halted with the outbreak of the Green Peach War in 1883. This began when a group of militant anti-white Creeks

attempted to drive settlers away, but their efforts proved to no avail and the town continued to develop.⁶³ Cattle by the thousands boarded boxcars parked by the stockpens bound for points in the East. The Indian Journal in Muskogee described Tulsa and the Red Fork district as the largest shipping points in Indian Territory, and there is little reason to doubt such a claim.⁶⁴ In June of 1884 more than 150 carloads of "cornfeds" were shipped to Pauls Valley and other towns, and more embarked daily for Kansas, Missouri, and beyond. George Perryman once shipped in a single day more than five railroad cars of beef from Tulsa to St. Louis.⁶⁵ The massive volume of trade continued until the end of the grazing season in early fall, and even then Tulsans continued to receive and send a steady supply of goods and merchandise which found profitable markets.⁶⁶

Tulsa remained the terminus for the railroad for approximately two years when a spur line was extended to Red Fork. From there tracks later extended to Sapulpa, Oklahoma City, and Texas. Prosperity continued with each development, laying a foundation for the future when oil was discovered and Oklahoma entered the Union.

Like many towns on the American frontier during this period, Tulsa suffered from lawlessness. Whites were subject to Creek government, but justice could be thwarted by appeals to federal courts in Fort Smith, Arkansas, more than one hundred miles to the southeast.⁶⁷ Cattlemen worked hard and played hard, and many Saturday nights were spent drinking and gambling until the early morning hours. Joseph G. McCoy, one of the leaders of the cattle industry, vividly recalled in his memoirs:

Often one or more of them [cowboys] will imbibe too much poison whiskey.... Then mounting his poney, he is ready to shoot anybody or anything; or rather than not shoot at all, will fire up into the air, all the while yelling as only a semicivilized being can.⁶⁸

When drunken cowboys were not terrorizing the locals, gangs of cut-throats walked the streets, and law abiding citizens either remained at home after dark or carried protection.⁶⁹ Men with mysterious pasts and names such as "Texas Jack," "Cherokee Bill," and "Yockey" were familiar and fearful fixtures in Hall Brothers or Owen's Boarding House. Several outlaw gangs infesting the Indian Territory, robbing and rustling, found hideouts near Tulsa; in fact, many fugitives from justice were reared in The famous Dalton brothers--Grant, Bob, and Emmett--lived in Tulsa most of their lives. Though everyone knew of their exploits outside the law, most folks thought they were pleasant, courteous fellows.⁷⁰ Safes of local merchants were easy prey for outlaws, for Tulsa had no bank until 1885, and there were few law officials to protect property.⁷¹

United States marshals were headquartered at Fort Smith, Arkansas, but their jurisdiction covered all of the Indian Territory, an area too large for the officers to adequately police. Federal lawmen periodically traversed the territory to Tulsa, bringing with them many warrants for known criminals. But the size of the territory forced them to stay only a short time in each town before they returned to Fort Smith. Such a system proved inadequate to proper law enforcement, for too much time often elapsed between the criminal act and the arrest, and all too often the fugitive stayed on step ahead of his pursuers.

Logistics also hampered individuals in reporting crimes. If someone wanted to inform authorities of wrong-doing, he boarded the train to Monet, Missouri, and switched to another bound for Fort Smith. The

alternative route required a four-day trip overland by horseback. Both routes took time and money, and when coupled with the ever-present fear of retaliation, nearly everyone learned to mind his own business.⁷²

Vigilante committees were common--but not always productive. Shawnee Hardridge, Tulsa's first policeman, once had the ignoble misfortune of drafting men to help track two horse thieves, only to have his deputies desert when gunfire began.⁷³ Hoping to avoid a repetition, Hardridge thereafter offered immediate rewards for a citizen's aid. James Hall recalled helping track the Glass gang, which terrorized eastern Kansas and the Indian Territory. Tulsans and outlaws clashed outside the town's limits, and, although the villains escaped, a herd of stolen horses and a wagon loaded with illegal whiskey were captured. To compensate for not making arrests, Hardridge impounded the liquor and the men "had a sustained drunk."⁷⁴

Notwithstanding these impediments, lawbreakers faced swift justice, and rarely did a defendant, once caught, go unpunished. Federal Judge Issac Parker at Fort Smith well earned his nickname, "the hanging judge," and others who served on the bench followed a similar philosophy. If acquitted of one charge, defendants might find themselves confronted with other possible misdeeds. Once, when a jury in Tulsa found a black man innocent of horse stealing, the magistrate admonished the men and countered, "If that Negro didn't steal that horse, I know one he did steal and we will ship him anyway."⁷⁵ Such unorthodox justice symbolized law and order in Tulsa and throughout the Indian Territory.

Ironically the lack of law enforcement may have kept down crime and protected Tulsa's citizens from fates suffered by those living across

the border in Arkansas, Kansas, and Texas where laws were more strictly enforced. There apparently was an unstated "gentlemen's agreement" which said that in return for asylum the villains would not harm the community, and cutthroats of the Dalton clan, the Glass organization, and the Cook gang rarely harassed the locals.

Unfortunately such an understanding was doomed to failure. Cattle rustling was the major occupation of the outlaws, and no rancher could afford to have his livestock pilfered. Cattle often strayed into Cherokee Territory, and there the outlaws considered them fair game. As thieves became more brazen, citizens demanded better protection. To help pressured, overworked local officials, lawmen from contiguous states, who had no official jurisdiction in Tulsa, periodically offered rewards for information leading to the apprehension of a desperado, and information thus obtained helped capture numerous men outside the law.⁷⁶ United States marshals rode through Tulsa on their manhunts, stopping and eating in town, and outlaws reportedly climbed the surrounding hills and studied hitchracks through their field glasses to be certain that the marshals' horses were not standing outside a building before entering town.⁷⁷

The war conducted by the ranchers against thieves was at times bloody. Lawmen often returned with their quarry dead rather than alive, as witnessed by the fact that members of the Dalton gange and the Doolin raiders met an untimely demise. Naturally the gangs felt obliged to retaliate in kind, and nightly raids on unsuspecting families ended in gunplay and death.⁷⁸ Life in the small community was hazardous, and law-abiding townspeople interested in civic development organized to lobby for better protection.

Cries for law and order increased as the situation became more dangerous. The Indian Journal crusaded for an end to the violence and greater law enforcement. Local officers were often as bad as the outlaws or were noted for their incompetency rather than their devotion to duty.⁷⁹ If the Creek government would not protect its citizens and if officers would not, or could not, execute the laws, then community action was needed if the town was to survive. It was clearly a time for change, and white locals began demanding that the Creek Nation be admitted into the Union as a territory in order to have greater powers of self rule. The federal government was not deaf to the cries of Tulsa's settlers, at least not those uttered by whites.⁸⁰

The major obstacle had been the treaties with Indian tribes which allowed them self-governing rights. But in 1887 the federal government, heeding the needs of American citizens, removed these stumbling blocks with the Dawes Act, which forced the Indians to accept American laws and to give up part of their lands. In a series of dramatic "runs," Americans filled the vacuum of surplus land. The first of these was in 1889, and within a short time the Territory of Oklahoma was organized.

Tulsans were not immune to the excitement. Wagons by the thousands from every part of the United States passed through town. In 1893, Tulsans felt the stirring of this mighty movement when the Cherokee Outlet was opened to white settlement. The Cherokee Nation was no more, and the Creeks fearfully awaited the end of a way of life which had begun before the Civil War.

The same year that the Cherokee Run occurred, officials of the United States government appointed a Dawes Commission to close out the

affairs of the Cherokees, the Creeks, and other tribes living in eastern Oklahoma. These federal agents possessed the power to divide Indian lands into 160-acre tracts and to allot the surveyed strips to individuals currently farming the plots under the old traditional Indian system. Only persons of the Creek Nation were entitled to former Creek land, and in order to keep control of property males had to furnish proof that they were Indian. The commission registered these names on tribal rolls, and only those listed received an allotment.⁸¹ If the occupants did not claim the land within sixty days, it was sold at public auction at the bottom price of \$1.25 per acre.⁸² Revenue from the sale was used to compensate the Creek Nation for lost territory.

Incensed by Washington's overt destruction of Indian law, the Creeks refused to submit without a legal fight. If the United States government intended to enforce what the Creeks considered an insidious statute, then the Indians were no longer self-governing but were subject to the laws of the United States without the protection of citizenship. Not since the end of slavery had a group of people been legislated into such a precarious position.

Their attorneys appealed for justice and humane treatment with arguments documented with historical facts and legal precedents. But federal judges were unmoved. The courts held that any town within Creek Territory had the right to incorporate under existing statutes.⁸³ This decision ended any hopes the Creeks harbored that whites would not have their way, and they grudgingly submitted to the Dawes Commission.

Tulsans heard the news with wild rejoicing. The town by 1897 had thirty-eight business firms operating under trader's licenses and numerous "intruders" who had no legal right to do business within the Creek

Nation. If the town was incorporated, whites no longer would need fear expulsion, and all operations would become legal. White Tulsans wasted no time presenting a petition of incorporation to a federal court, and on January 18, 1898, the court approved.

Once the deed was done, the business at hand was to buy the property in Tulsa from the Creek Nation. The Curtis Act, passed the same year that Tulsa was incorporated, outlined the procedure for platting townsites and stipulated how occupants could receive large concessions from the sale if they made "improvements" on the property. Inhabitants hoping to receive easy profits entered into lively speculative development by erecting flimsy "improvements" and hastily filing for occupancy titles. Overnight fences surrounded grassy fields or one-room shacks decorated the landscape. Some of the most industrious men plowed strips of ground; others erected small outhouses in a frenzy of construction when virtually any structure meant "development."

The Dawes Commission supervised the platting. It soon realized that the so-called improvements would bring windfall profits not to the Tulsa Creeks but to whites. To avoid mutilating the intent of the Curtis Act, the commissioners determined to appraise the lots without regard to the value of the improvements and to sell the lots to occupant for a fraction of the appraised value. If the occupant did not buy the land, it was sold at public auction. The former holder received the revenue not exceeding appraised value. The commissioners placed the revenue from the sale in the United States Treasury as credit for the Creeks.⁸⁴

The intent of this procedure was to reward those who made legitimate improvements, but instead it opened the door to land speculators.

Individuals devised ingenious plans either for purchasing land at a discount or else making an extremely profitable sale. "Lot jumpers" were not well liked in the community, but nothing could be done to prevent anyone from making a fast dollar. Even honest whites wanted to entice settlers, and the best way to achieve success was to be liberal toward occupancy claims. Speculators claimed occupancy on additional lots by filing the names of distant relatives or fictitious friends.⁸⁵ Everyone hoped to benefit by corrupt use of the law.

The commissioners employed a surveyor named J. Gus Patton and his brother Dan to plat the town. Patton used the Frisco track as his baseline and accepted the old designation for Main Street.⁸⁶ Roads west of Main and parallel to it were named after Western American cities. Streets east of Main, Gus named after Eastern cities. After several months his work was finished and his map was approved in December of 1901. The town had a total area of 654.58 acres, all in the Creek Nation, and a townsite commission, operating as an adjunct to the Dawes Commission, fixed the value at \$1,071.73, an excessively low figure.⁸⁷ This deflated value was expected to entice further settlement, for local whites were more concerned with continuous growth than with raising revenue for the Creeks. The sale took place in 1902, and the Creek Nation realized only \$659. Immediately tribal leaders raised a cry of fraud, and for more than fifty years they fought the United States to recover the true value of the townsite.⁸⁸

The commissioners insulted the Creeks and also confused them by the methods they adopted. The more-educated Indians were familiar with the laws of the United States and the ways of whites, but no one had ever been forced to live under American laws and rule, and there was

mass uncertainty as to what constituted legal ownership or use of land. The commission received, from the time of its inception until the end of its work, a steady stream of letters of inquiry stressing both the extreme hardships the Creeks were suffering and the dire need for help in explaining a system alien to them.

Nor did the matter end there. Federal agents, fearing that unethical whites might virtually steal land from the Indians, stipulated that no Creek could sell his land for a term of years.⁸⁹ This the Creeks considered a slap in the face, an insinuation that whites were superior businessmen capable of outsmarting slow-witted Creeks.⁹⁰ This restriction was removed later, but only with the amendment that government officials must approve all sales. Nevertheless, numerous transactions initiated under the new ruling reaped handsome rewards for a few Creeks.

The major obstacle confronting the commission was disputed ownership of land.⁹¹ Private property was not part of the Creek tradition. For centuries the Creek tribe had held its lands in common, distributing responsibility to the family but still retaining control. The acreage worked by any individual varied according to his ingenuity and the size of his family. Thus when the Dawes Commission divided and distributed land to individuals, certain tracts were claimed by several families. The commission attempted to investigate the history of occupancy in such cases, but often the final decision was arbitrary.⁹²

Further difficulties resulted from delays in decision making. Once a farmer had claimed his land, he anxiously began cultivation or making improvements, such as erecting a barn or fence.⁹³ If the land was not his, why plant a crop he would not be allowed to harvest, especially if

the farmer rented by an agreement under the old land system. Of course, there also was the question of whether or not a person had the right to collect rent on land leased to someone else.⁹⁴ Time was precious to farmers, and yet the final determination of who owned the land was not to be taken lightly.

Members of the commission wanted to expedite matters as quickly as possible, but procedures for this initial determination often were slow and cumbersome, creating considerable adversity for the Creeks. Indians were required to state their claims in person before a federal judge or a civilian authorized to take petitions.⁹⁵ The time and expense it took to travel on the frontier proved a severe hardship for petitioners, and it was not uncommon for them to wait long hours, perhaps even days, before they received a hearing.⁹⁶ Yet the commission persisted, and the Creeks, faced with either complying with these directives or losing their lands, stood in line, hoping the officials would be fair, while the government opened Tulsa and the Indian Territory for settlement. For over twenty years, whites and Indians had lived together in the town, but federal enforcement of the Dawes Act drove the Creeks into the countryside, leaving the community to the whites.

The transition from an Indian community to an incorporated town opened the way for progress and paved the way for growth. Now that citizens held valid deeds to their property, taxes on real estate could be levied, construction of civic improvements could commence, and plans for future development could be made. A popularly elected commission wrote a city charter creating a city government and empowering the community to enact ordinances deemed necessary to regulate the city. Tulsans immediately began solving their problem of lawlessness by

electing a town marshal and levying fines for misdemeanors.⁹⁷ A Board of Health, established in April of 1901, regulated sanitary conditions, sewer systems, and building construction, and assessed penalties for such indiscretions as throwing garbage in the street or rearing hogs within the city limits.⁹⁸ The City Commissioners, with the support of the Board of Health, hired a trained City Superintendent of Health for the sumptuous monthly retainer of \$100.⁹⁹

Fire was a serious problem for the young town, as most of the buildings were made of lumber nailed together by iron nails. Therefore a modern fire department received top priority. On the night of June 6, 1900, a group of men met to organize a volunteer fire department. They elected Richard C. Alder as chief, for he was the only person present who had previous fire fighting experience (in his home town of Springfield, Missouri).¹⁰⁰ Volunteers earned five cents an hour and an extra \$1.50 during a fire.¹⁰¹ Within six years the city led the state in quality fire prevention with a fully staffed and paid department, a salaried fire chief, the first fire alarm telegraph system, the first motor pumping engine, and the only completely motorized department in the state.¹⁰²

While Tulsa made positive strides in those areas of civic services, an inadequate water supply and poor sewage system, essential for the well-being of any community, plagued the town for two decades. Prior to the days of public service, the City Commission contracted jobs with private companies on the basis of competitive bidding. Competition was fierce and often, to keep the bid low, companies cut not only their overhead but also the quality of service. The Tulsa Water Company, the first to win the water contract, unfortunately could not

supply enough water from three wells along the Arkansas River to meet the demands of the community.¹⁰³ No company, however, achieved better success until Spavinaw Lake was tapped in 1920. The only sewer system was one which dumped the town's waste into the Arkansas River. This unfortunately forced the town to import bottled water for drinking. Without a proper water system the town languished, unable to attract industry until wildcatters discovered oil.

If Tulsans had their problems, at least the town began to take on a more modern appearance after 1900. First and Second streets were paved with brick by 1902, and by 1907 Main Street had been transformed from a dry dusty road in summer and a muddy, at time impassable, avenue in the winter to a modern asphalt highway.¹⁰⁴ The City Charter decreed sidewalks had to be twelve feet wide in the business area, and five feet wide in the residential end of town. The first ones made of wooden planks posed continual potentials for bodily harm by splintering or working loose from the foundation, but public safety took a step forward when the citizens passed an ordinance in 1903 specifying that all walkways must be constructed of flat brick, asphalt, or cement.¹⁰⁵

The paving of streets became a hot political issue between ranchers and farmers on one side and city dwellers on the other. Pavement harmed hooves, the primary source of transportation for those who lived in the country, but it was essential for automobiles. Riders complained that cars frightened their horses, causing them to buck or run away if left untied. Therefore the townspeople passed an ordinance setting the speed limit for automobiles, "or conveyances such other vehicles are propelled by steam, gasoline, or electricity, or any other power, at a rate of speech in excess of 8 mph...." Men on horseback always had the

right-of-way at intersections, and violations in speed or yielding were met with either fines of \$100 or ninety days in the city jail.¹⁰⁶ By 1909, with the townspeople making a strong run for the oil business in northeast Oklahoma, they reduced the fines and raised the speedlimit to 20 miles-per-hour, an example of the town's evolving from an agricultural community to an industrial and commercial one.¹⁰⁷

To support public education the city council sold school bonds to local businesses, thus ensuring proper schooling for children when Central High was erected from bond sales totaling \$50,000. Staffed with eight instructors each paid a salary of \$65 per month, the school graduated its first class of three girls in 1905.¹⁰⁸

Tulsans even then were noted for their religious fervour. The old Presbyterian Church experienced continual success during the early years, even when joined by three rivals. By 1903 the Christian Church, founded by W. L. Darland in 1902, was "showing a promising future." The Methodist Church on North Main and Second Streets held seats for three hundred, and the Methodist Church South had "a fine brick building with the largest audience room of any building in town, except for the opera hall."¹⁰⁹

Proudly reporting all this activity were two newspapers, the Tulsa Daily Democrat, founded by William Stryker, and the Tulsa World, owned and operated by John R. Brady. Both were fledging enterprises in 1904, although the World had operated under other names since 1882. Politically at odds, the Tulsa Daily Democrat was staunchly loyal to the Democratic Party, while the Tulsa World, with a few exceptions, was Republican. They nevertheless shared a common muckraking passion coupled with unswerving dedication to promote Tulsa as the most "American" of

American communities.¹¹⁰

Efforts to entice new settlers were not in vain. By 1904, the town boasted three prosperous banks and four hotels,¹¹¹ and two hundred people owned telephones. But the new appliances apparently were confusing to operate, for the daily papers frequently ran columns explaining how to use them.¹¹² The population grew to more than 2,000 during the first five years of the new century; this still was smaller than Oklahoma City or Muskogee, but Tulsans were proud of the substantial increase which had expanded the boundaries of the town beyond those plotted by Patton. Streets were in poor condition, but there were ten of them in 1904, although no street signs identified their location, "a deplorable situation," said the editors of the Tulsa Daily Democrat.¹¹³ Others thought there were far more serious problems in the town. Eliza Moffitt, a missionary, while addressing a church crowd in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1895, described Tulsa and Oklahoma as "a waste land," a view the people of Tulsa took issue with on several occasions.¹¹⁴ But the old Tulsa which Lilah D. Lindsey, a teacher from Highland Institute in Hillsboro, Ohio, castigated as "a place where civic pride does not manifest itself, as cattle, horses, cows, and pigs roam the streets at will. People sat on their front steps, ate their watermelons, and threw the rinds to the obliging pigs in the street," was gone forever.¹¹⁵

During the time when Tulsa was a frontier town, the United States became the strongest economic power in the world, transformed from a nation of yeomen farmers to one where John D. Rockefeller personified success. Creek and white ranchers had provided food for the population of the East, and thus had made a major contribution to industrial

development. But Tulsa's role in America's path to economic greatness was just beginning. The stage was set for a new wave of settlers and the event that produced a modern city--the discovery of oil.

FOOTNOTES

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²Antonio J. Waring (ed.), Laws of the Creek Nation (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1960), 25.

³Ibid., 20.

⁴Ibid., 24.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Joel D. Boyd, "Creek Indian Agents, 1834-1884," Chronicles of Oklahoma, LI (Autumn, 1973), 37.

⁷Debo, Tulsa, 49.

⁸An excellent economic history of the ranching industry is Jimmy M. Skaggs, The Cattle-Trailing Industry; Between Supply and Demand 1866-1890 (Lawrence: The University of Kansas Press, 1973), 1.

⁹Joseph G. McCoy, Historic Sketches of the Cattle Trade of the West and Southwest, ed. by Ralph Bieber (Glendale, California: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1940), 94.

¹⁰J. Evetts Haley, Charles Goodnight, Cowman and Plainsman (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1949), 244.

¹¹Ibid., 247.

¹²Ibid., 245.

¹³Grant Foreman (ed.), Indian-Pioneer History (124 vols., Oklahoma City: Oklahoma Historical Society, Indian Archives Division, 1937), IV, 414.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid., III, 28.

¹⁶Ibid., IV, 285.

¹⁷Ella M. Robinson, "The Daugherty Ranch, Creek Nation," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XLVIII (Spring, 1960), 76.

- ¹⁸Foreman (ed.), Indian-Pioneer History, IV, 285.
- ¹⁹Robinson, "The Daugherty Ranch, Creek Nation," 77.
- ²⁰Haley, Charles Goodnight, 128.
- ²¹Foreman (ed.), Indian-Pioneer History, IV, 414.
- ²²Ibid., III, 28.
- ²³Ibid., 422.
- ²⁴Ibid., IV, 415.
- ²⁵Ibid., III, 28.
- ²⁶Ibid., VI, 21.
- ²⁷James M. Hall, The Beginning of Tulsa (Tulsa: The Pioneer Association of Tulsa, 1933). James Hall and his brother Harry are credited as the "founders" of Tulsa. This small book is his recollection of the early days in the community.
- ²⁸Indian Journal, July 19, 1883, 4. Debo, Tulsa, 64.
- ²⁹R. M. McClintock, "Tulsa--A Story of Achievement," Tulsa Tribune, July 31, 1927, 4.
- ³⁰Robinson, "The Daugherty Ranch, Creek Nation," 76. McClintock, "Tulsa--A Story of Achievement," 1.
- ³¹Robinson, "The Daugherty Ranch, Creek Nation," 77. McCoy, Historic Sketches of the Cattle Trade of the West and Southwest, 99.
- ³²Robinson, "The Daugherty Ranch, Creek Nation," 76.
- ³³Foreman (ed.), Indian-Pioneer History, I, 195.
- ³⁴Debo, Tulsa, 71.
- ³⁵Hall, The Beginning of Tulsa, 41.
- ³⁶Foreman (ed.), Indian-Pioneer History, IV, 374.
- ³⁷Ibid., VI, 2.
- ³⁸Ibid.
- ³⁹Ibid., V, 446.
- ⁴⁰Ibid., IV, 373.
- ⁴¹Ibid., 374.

- ⁴²Hall, The Beginning of Tulsa, 11.
- ⁴³Ibid., 9. Philip Dickerson, History of Tulsa, I.T.: Her Natural Advantages of Location, Climate, Fertile Soil, Etc., A Railroad Center of the Creek, Cherokee, and Osage Nation (February, Tulsa: n.p., 1903).
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- ⁴⁷McClintock, "Tulsa--A Story of Achievement," 23.
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- ⁵⁷Cheyenne Transporter, May 10, 1883, 4.
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- ⁵⁹Indian Journal, April 24, 1882, 2. Debo, Tulsa, 55.
- ⁶⁰Indian Journal, May 2, 1883, 3. Debo, Tulsa, 55.
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- ⁶²Indian Journal, April 22, 1883, 3.
- ⁶³Debo, Tulsa, 56.
- ⁶⁴Indian Journal, July 19, 1883, 4.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷Hall, The Beginning of Tulsa, 38.

⁶⁸McCoy, Historic Sketches of the Cattle Trade of the West and Southwest, 204.

⁶⁹Indian Journal, September 2, 1900, 3.

⁷⁰Hall, The Beginning of Tulsa, 53.

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⁷²Hall, The Beginning of Tulsa, 38.

⁷³Ibid., 52.

⁷⁴Ibid., 53.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶L. M. Williams, "A History of Wagoner, Oklahoma," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXXVIII (Winter, 1970), 492.

⁷⁷Debo, Tulsa, 75.

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⁷⁹The practice of hiring criminal types to police a community was not uncommon in the American West. As McCoy recalled, "no quiet turned man would take the office (marshal). McCoy, Historic Sketches of the Cattle Trade of the West and Southwest, 204.

⁸⁰Indian Journal, October 19, 1904, 3.

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- ⁹⁶ Dickerson, History of Tulsa, I.T., 3. McClintock, "Tulsa--A Story of Achievement," 19.
- ⁹⁷ City Ordinance No. 12, January 7, 1901, City Ordinance Files, Municipal Building, Tulsa, Oklahoma. (From hereon, all ordinances shall be cited by number and date).
- ⁹⁸ City Ordinance No. 11, January 7, 1901.
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- ¹⁰³ McClintock, "Tulsa--A Story of Achievement," 12.
- ¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 23.
- ¹⁰⁵ City Ordinance No. 48, July 9, 1903.
- ¹⁰⁶ City Ordinance No. 309, March 24, 1908.
- ¹⁰⁷ City Ordinance No. 486, March 23, 1909.
- ¹⁰⁸ Dickerson, History of Tulsa, I.T., 3. McClintock, "Tulsa--A Story of Achievement," 19.

- ¹⁰⁹Dickerson, History of Tulsa, I.T., 5.
- ¹¹⁰Tulsa Daily Democrat, September 30, 1904, 5.
- ¹¹¹Ibid.
- ¹¹²Ibid., August 28, 1904, 4.
- ¹¹³Ibid., September 9, 1904, 3.
- ¹¹⁴The Cushing Herald, August 16, 1895, 2.
- ¹¹⁵Lilah D. Lindsey, "Reminiscences of Lilah D. Lindsey," in Foreman (ed.), Indian-Pioneer History, LXI, 336.

CHAPTER III

OIL CAPITAL

There were early evidences of petroleum in Oklahoma. Chief John Ross had discovered it in 1859 while manufacturing salt at Grand Saline on the Grand River.¹ Other Indians and traveling whites had seen rivulets of oil seeping from cracks in the earth north of Tahlequah at New Spring Place, or in Going Snake district, Cherokee Nation, and around the modern-day town of Ardmore. But during frontier days, it was a source of exasperation, not wealth. Dark liquid skimmed water holes in northeastern Oklahoma, and ranchers bemoaned the first signs of its pollution. Not until gasoline engines and high-speed machinery replaced horses and buggies and oil was adapted to modern technology would the cowtown of Tulsa virtually explode into a modern city.

Because there was no market for oil, little prospecting was done in Indian Territory except at Bartlesville, Muskogee, and Chelsea. Indian hunting parties often camped at these places and built their night fires by driving a hollow tube into the ground and igniting the escaping gas.² On occasion, people used oil as a lubricant, although axle grease was preferable. Coal and firewood served as fuel for manufacturing in the nation, while whale-oil and coal oil lamps and candles furnished illuminates for most occasions.

Petroleum was not, however, without its uses. Advertised for its alleged miraculous power as a "wonder" drug, it had few competitors.

Enterprising salesmen bottled the dark, slimy liquid and sold it throughout the American West to gullible settlers who dreamed of recapturing their long departed youthful vitality or whose sufferings were obviously psychosomatic. In his annual report of 1853 the Indian agent for the Chickashaws reported:

The oil springs in this nation are attracting considerable attention, as they are said to be a remedy for all chronic diseases. Rheumatism stands no chance at all, and the worst cases of dropsy yield to its effects. The fact is, that it cures anything that has been tried.³

While fields lay unexplored, the Texas Spindletop discovery startled the world and began the rabid scramble for "black gold."

News quickly spread that more oil could be found in the Indian Territory, and Tulsans shortly began feeling the fallout of the Spindletop strike. On November 9, 1899, an independent driller, John S. Wick, sub-leased 410,000 acres of Red Fork land from Chief Lucas Perryman and other prominent Creeks. The lease began at the Arkansas River, ran north to the Frisco Railroad, and extended across the river into Oklahoma Territory.⁴ Wick had closely examined the geology and had concluded that oil was somewhere under the property. Anxious to drill, he was, however, without equipment. Dreaming of becoming another John D. Rockefeller, he tried to sell his lease to any oil man who would stand still long enough to listen. His constant prattle finally convinced Jesse A. Heydrick, an experienced Pennsylvania oil man, that Wick might own more than dreams. The two men joined in a partnership; Wick controlled the land, Heydrick furnished the rigging. Unfortunately before the workers could begin drilling, the lease expired, and a new contract was made. This new agreement on July 16, 1900, included the signatures of all the signers of the original lease, plus that of Mrs. Sue A. Bland,

the half-blooded Creek wife of Dr. John C. W. Bland of Red Fork. In the late spring of 1901, Heydrick moved his cable-tool rig to Red Fork. But he found no one who would cash his New York draft. Finally Dr. Bland cashed it with the stipulation that the prospectors drill the first well on his wife's forty acre tract at Red Fork.⁵

Heydrick and Wick did not know it at the time, but Bland and his good friend and professional, Dr. Fred S. Clinton, were planning to use the first strike in a scheme to place Tulsa on the map. According to Dr. Clinton, "we decided on a rational development of the community and state, with oil as the magic lure when we found and publicised it."⁶ With Heydrick and Wick indebted to them, the two men collaborated to develop what oil that might be there. Clinton raised the money to pay freight and workers, while Bland convinced the drillers that the Bland property should be the site for the first well. Clinton appealed to Henry H. Adams, the Frisco agent at Red Fork, and borrowed \$300 to purchase equipment, pledging that the donor would be rewarded handsomely for his trust.⁷ With all the preliminary work finished, Heydrick began the well on May 10, 1901. At first the going was slow, but shortly before midnight on Monday, June 24, 1901, oil shot over the top of the derrick.

The strike came at a most inopportune time. Heydrick was in Pennsylvania reassuring some of his eastern stockholders that their investment was safe. Dr. Bland was bed-ridden, unable to attend to business. Wick was sleeping under the rig, and one of the workers, Luther Crossman, young and inexperienced, was in charge of the drilling. Heydrick had previously warned Wick to close down the well if oil was struck. But duly elated, the latter wired the message, "Send packer,

oil is spouting over the top of the derrick."⁸ News such as this could not be contained. His message, picked up by listening operators, began a stampede of oil adventurers to Red Fork.

Bland asked Clinton to accept a power of attorney for Mrs. Bland and to travel to Muskogee to file the strike with the Creek Indian Agent, as required by the Curtis Act. On June 25, the day after the strike, Clinton, armed with a quart bottle of the oil, climbed into his buggy and crossed the Arkansas River to Tulsa, where he boarded the first train for Muskogee. He arrived late that evening at the home of his good friend Dr. F. B. Fite. Together they tested the oil by pouring a few drops over wood shavings. After igniting the pile, the doctors watched joyfully as the flame burned bright and strong.⁹

The following morning Fite took Clinton to meet with Allison Aylesworth, the Dawes Commission Secretary.¹⁰ After proper introductions, Dr. Clinton explained that he represented Mrs. Bland and was there to file a homestead allotment on her behalf. Aylesworth agreed to the request and by four o'clock that afternoon, Dr. Clinton, accompanied by Dr. Fite, was on his way back to Red Fork.

They arrived at the well on the morning of June 27, 1901, to a scene of mass confusion. Heydrick had not returned to take charge and Clinton found several people had taken the "liberty to assume authority to run the business and give orders...."¹¹ News of the strike had spread throughout the Tulsa-Red Fork area, and hundreds of people were on hand to work or simply to stare. However, Clinton took command and restored order to the operation.

Rumors spread that the Red Fork strike was the greatest in the history of the oil business and that the well might produce more than

300 barrels per day.¹² Heydrick, who returned on June 27, knew otherwise, stating, "When let loose it [the well] flows high into the air but soon blows out. In the present state it is not more than ten barrels per day."¹³ Drs. Bland and Clinton, however, were elated: "Our dreams were to find oil and let the world know about it...."¹⁴ Paul Clinton, Fred's son, telegraphed Fred Barde, a reporter for the Kansas City Star who lived in Guthrie.¹⁵ Within two days after the strike, the news reached Kansas City, and the Kansas City Times ran banner headlines, "OIL WELL GUSHER FIFTEEN FEET HIGH."¹⁶

Heydrick's prediction turned out to be correct. Red Fork was not the largest strike in the Tulsa area. The yet-to-come Glenn Pool and the field at Cushings would dwarf the Red Fork in total production. But Bland and Clinton had succeeded. The rush to the oil fields surrounding Tulsa was just beginning. In the years to come, Tulsans would look back and thank the two enterprising doctors for their daring scheme that made their town one of the most famous in the world. The stage was set for the drama of the oil industry in Oklahoma. The Red Fork strike proved that oil was there; the Glenn Pool discovery proved the oil industry would last.¹⁷

The show was not long in coming. Two wildcatters, Bob Galbreath and Frank Chesley of Tulsa, acting as agents for the newly established Tulsa and Creek Oil and Gas Company, leased the Ida Glenn farm on a hunch that oil was somewhere under the ground. They began drilling on September 17, 1905, and two months later, on November 22, hit a "natural" at a depth of 1,481. Oil propelled into the air by the natural gas trapped below averaged 600 barrels daily during the first year of operation.¹⁸ Two additional wells were quickly drilled, and

together they produced almost 2,500 barrels daily.¹⁹ Galbreath and Chesley made their fortune and realized the dream of every oil prospector--the discovery of the bonanza pool.

Word spread quickly. On July 2, 1906, a Chicago based firm, the Tide Water Oil Company, wired one of its agents, David F. Connolly, to "check up on the Ida Glenn farm and if things looked promising, to obtain leases in the surrounding area."²⁰ Connolly contacted his Tulsa friend D. O. Brown. The two hired a covered buggy and rode the thirty miles to the Galbreath and Chesley wells. The site of three wells pumping 1,100 barrels a day astounded the two men, and they immediately contacted Glenn about leasing other portions of his farm. Connolly offered thirty dollars per acre, but Glenn made a counter proposal of seventy-five dollars per acre, and the deal was finally closed for a total of \$1,200.²¹ Neither Connolly nor Brown had the authority to purchase leases; they most assuredly would be fired if the company balked, and would probably be subject to a civil suit from Glenn, but they knew time was important. Competitors were on the way and Glenn, who was no fool, could at any moment up the lease price. They were so convinced that the price was worth the gamble that they purchased a few leases for themselves.

Three days later they purchased the contiguous Corbrary farm and immediately began drilling. In the early morning hours of July 13, 1906, they hit a gusher capable of producing at least 3,000 barrels daily. Connolly hurriedly sent a telegram to Tom Riter, an executive at Tide Water Oil Company, informing him of the exciting news and ordering "men and steel tanks as soon as possible."²² Two dozen workers and forty-two tanks arrived within a few days, and the drilling began

in earnest. During the first twelve months of operation, a total of 1,375,000 gallons of oil were pumped into the tanks and sent to the refinery.²³ Connolly ordered more tanks as poor transportation hindered production. It seemed that the company could not send enough supplies to keep up with the steady flow of black gold roaring from the pipe. The Tide Water Company drilled thirty-five wells during the first year of operation, producing a grand total of 6,000,000 barrels sold for a total of \$2,000,000.²⁴

Success on such a grand scale induced other companies to flock to Glenn Pool, and by 1907 there were 125 wells pumping oil from the ground at a fantastic rate. In August of 1906 the field was hit with a series of natural disasters. Weeks of hard rain and striking lightning destroyed 11,000 barrels of crude, but the total production continued to reach unprecedented heights.²⁵ The apex of monthly production was February of 1907 when seventy-seven companies sold an average 6,954,330 barrels a day.²⁶ The Daily Oklahoman reported in March, 1907:

In the past week thirteen new wells produced at least two hundred barrels each every day. Number Two well alone spouted over one thousand; wells One and Three contributed eight hundred each; five wells produced five hundred more barrels; and the remaining five wells brought in an average of five hundred barrels each every day.²⁷

Glenn Pool grew in one year from an eighty acre farm to a field of over eight hundred acres, the largest oil tract in the world.

The price of crude oil fluctuated from 39¢ to 42¢ a barrel, low by today's standards, but sufficient to encourage operating in the Glenn Pool area. Other positive characteristics of the Glenn Pool facilitated expansion. The grade was extraordinary, in fact, the highest recorded by any field to that date. Also, the wells were "natural

producers," meaning that the pressure from natural gas trapped under ground pushed the oil through the sunken pipe like a geyser in such great abundance that pumps were not needed.²⁸ The low overhead made drilling relatively inexpensive, which overcame the low price.²⁹

The activity at Glenn Pool gladdened the hearts of native Tulsans. In a letter to his son, William E. Campbell, a Tulsa lease and real-estate agent, wrote a vivid description of the daily scene at the Glenn Pool where workers dug:

Wonderful wells, some earthen, others shaped like lakes. A large number of men and teams are also busy making excavations in the earth with plows and scrapers to hold the oil that cannot now be received by the pipe lines from the Glen to the Gulf and the Standard line now to the north will have all they can handle.³⁰

Campbell had a right to be exuberant, for he and his associates owned two of the most valuable tracts at the pool. "Some of these wells," he gleefully reported, "have flowed 2,500 to 3,000 barrels in twenty-four hours."³¹ Leases in the Glenn Pool area were astronomically high. One group of investors refused an offer of \$2,500,000. Land that two years previous had sold for thirteen dollars an acre could not be purchased at any price.³²

All the initial operations were done by small independent companies. The major oil companies were reluctant to join for fear of over-speculating the worth of the field. But by late 1906 the Standard Oil Company was ready to allow its subsidiary, the Prairie Oil and Gas Company, to build two eight-inch pipe lines to Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Their completion on August 15, 1906, was celebrated by breaking a bottle of wine over the line.³³ As Campbell predicted, there was more than enough oil to go around, and competing firms were no longer hesitant to build lines into the pool.

These initial pipelines were joined by a third and fourth constructed by the Gulf Production and Texas Company. The lines extended from the Gulf of Mexico to the field and were completed in February of 1907. The Gulf Company had existed since the Spindletop strike, and when the Texas drilling declined the company shifted its sights to Glenn Pool. The new pipe carried approximately 16,000 barrels daily and so certain were the executives of the Gulf Company that the supply of oil was abundant enough to promise a continuous flow that they soon expanded their operations into the American Southwest and the South.³⁴ The company later, at the request of the Tulsa Chamber of Commerce, built a secondary line to Tulsa.³⁵

A younger company, Texaco, was not far behind. In December of 1907 executives found a site for a tank farm and pumping station on the west bank of the Arkansas River southwest of Tulsa. Quickly construction began on ten 37,000-barrel steel tanks. Texaco was joined by the Associated Producers Company which paid \$17,500 for 160 acres in the northern part of the field. This firm's first well produced 1,500 barrels of oil per day. When Associated sold the leases two years later, it had on storage more than 1,100,000 barrels.³⁶

Standard Oil following suit, reaped huge profits from newly acquired wells. Both the national and local oil companies were operating at full capacity by 1908 when the pool hit its peak of 1,117,440 barrels of oil per day.³⁷ By 1912, investments in 4,986 wells had totaled approximately \$11,000,000 in drilling, salaries, and field equipment. Pipeline companies had invested another \$50,000,000 in lines running from Oklahoma to the Gulf of Mexico or the Atlantic Ocean.³⁸ The Tulsa and Creek Oil and Gas Company never failed to pay a dividend to its

stockholders. Other companies paid monthly royalties up to \$15,000 per stockholder.³⁹

No one could argue that the oil business was not highly successful --if somewhat dangerous. Fortunes were made and lost overnight. Ralph A. Josey, a native Texan, arrived in Tulsa in May of 1905 in quest of a "grub stake." Living on less than one dollar a day, he struck a friendship with Jack McConnell, a wildcatter from Kansas. The two men pooled their money and purchased a lease of five acres just south of the Tidewater Oil Company. Twenty-four months later they had earned almost one million dollars and sold a portion of their holdings to two companies for \$115,000.⁴⁰ William H. Malliken owned the largest share of land at the Glenn Pool site. His wells produced more than 3,000,000 barrels until his lease expired.

Some people were not present when their luck turned good. Zeke Moore, a black man serving a sentence for stealing a horse, just happened to own 125 acres east of the Glenn Pool. He entrusted two adventurers with the lease to his property at the height of the rush. Four years later, Zeke walked from jail directly to his bank and collected royalties totaling \$400,000.⁴¹ But no one fared better than the original drillers, Galbreath and Chesley. They were at one time offered \$1,500,000 each for their leases--an offer they politely refused.⁴²

Glenn Pool was a mixed blessing for Tulsa and the oil industry. The millions of barrels pumped from the ground brought a virtual flood of people and revenue that stimulated the frontier economy beyond anyone's wildest dreams. But it also glutted the oil market and drove down demand to unprofitable lows. From a price of fifty-nine cents per barrel for top grade crude in 1906, the price plunged to thirty-nine

in 1907, and some petroleum sold for as little as twenty-three cents.⁴³ Oil producers petitioned the federal government for aid, suggesting that governmental restrictions hindered development and that if officials desired to see the industry survive immediate steps must be taken to bolster demand.⁴⁴

The real cause of their woes was, of course, over-production. In 1907, there was simply too small a market for the quantity on hand. As supply continued to increase, storage tanks were constructed. Operators decided to hold their inventory in anticipation of a time when oil would be at a premium, a practice that continued to be a major operating device for several years thereafter.⁴⁵ From time to time, free and open competition did bring a nominal increase in the price, but demand remained low until the United States entered World War I.⁴⁶

Bleak prospects did not discourage those whose minds were set on attaining almost unrestricted wealth and the coveted status of "oil baron." As in the case of the gold rushes to California, Montana, and Colorado during the middle of the preceding century, the lion's share of profits were made by the major corporations. Small oil companies were too hastily organized and inadequately financed to compete with enterprises having large capital support. Nor could the gambling, devil-may-care, rich-today-poor-tomorrow prospecting wildcatter last long in the boom-or-bust industry. There were a few like Bob Galbreath and Frank Chesley who succeeded, but by and large they were the tragic characters in the oil story--perpetual dreamers whose thirst for riches were exceeded only by a craving for adventure.⁴⁷ Of those who did find wealth, a sizable number lost their fortunes in later speculative ventures and ill-conceived undertakings. Yet this breed of men discovered

Glenn Pool which made Oklahoma the temporary leader in oil production by 1906, supplying more than fifty percent of the petroleum consumed,⁴⁸ and who pioneered the Cushing discovery in 1912, a find that overwhelmed seasoned oil men throughout the world.

For so important a find, Cushing had humble beginnings. Three now-forgotten men had attempted test holes five to ten miles west of Tulsa as early as 1908, but they were only mildly productive, and sporadically operating by the time young Tom Slick arrived in Tulsa. Slick was twenty-nine and an agent for Charles B. Shaffer of Chicago, charged to investigate the Tulsa area and to acquire promising leases.⁴⁹ Shaffer and Slick were aware that predecessors had failed to find oil in the Drumright area southeast of Tulsa, where they had drilled several dry holes at a high cost. Yet they were convinced of the presence of oil there. The v-shaped valleys with narrow flood plains and out-croppings of sandstone and limestone were features of an anticline, usually a location for petroleum-producing sand.⁵⁰

After numerous disappointing ventures, Slick procured a lease for a small tract of land one mile north of the present town of Drumright from Frank Wheeler, a stoneman and farmer. Slick moved his rig onto the Wheeler land in January of 1911 and began drilling. Slick shrouded the activity in secrecy; workers came to and from the site never whispering a word about what was happening.⁵¹ Such unusual happenings created mild excitement and speculation in Tulsa. Some people deduced that Slick had struck a gusher, while others laughed that he was dodging his backers by creating a mystery.⁵² When Shaffer and an assistant arrived from Chicago in mid-March, talk spread that Slick had hit a strike. The young wildcatter met Shaffer at the depot, and after a hurried greeting they

walked to the Chicagoan's room at the Tulsa House. Within an hour Slick, Shaffer, and the assistant discretely rented as many horses and wagons as they could find.⁵³ It was true; on the cold, windy morning of March 10, 1912, oil had bubbled from the hole, first in a slow trickle, then had erupted into the air.

At first the news electrified the town, and hundreds of men tramped to the Wheeler sands to see the well. But eventually everyone realized that Slick had been premature in judgment, the well barely pumped twenty barrels a day. The Tulsa Democrat failed to publish the story for almost a year after the strike, and when it did appear it was on a back page.⁵⁴ Shaffer's was one of only two wells operating in the vicinity. Undaunted, Slick an enterprising young man continued buying leases, and by the end of 1912, he had severed his business ties with Shaffer and had founded the Slick Oil Company using an initial investment of \$500,000 collected from a new set of partners, B. B. Jones, a banker in Bristow and Charles J. Wrightsman, a lawyer in Tulsa.⁵⁵ By March of 1913 Shaffer and Slick held more than 2,000 acres, and the first Wheeler well was producing a much larger supply of oil. Slick succeeded where others failed primarily because he dug the holes 2,347 feet, some 100 feet deeper than previous wells.⁵⁶

When the Tulsa Democrat reported that the Wheeler No. 1 was producing 400 barrels a day, other drilling began and within a year wells were producing in all directions from the original Wheeler Well.⁵⁷ Early drilling was done along a line extending six miles north of Drumright where independent oilmen Tommy Atkins and Lete Calvin hit numerous strikes. Working in teams ten to twelve hours a day prospectors filled tank after tank destined for refineries in Kansas and Texas.⁵⁸ Yet

delivery could not keep pace with production as the oilmen went on an orgy of producing.

As the land became over-crowded, owners of small firms gambled that more was to be had in other directions, especially after geologist Frank Buttram completed his survey of the Cushing field for the state of Oklahoma in 1913. Buttram's findings ushered in a new era in the Cushing Sand. He concluded that the field was very large and that oil reserves were "being progressed at a tremendous rate and there is no sign of cessation."⁵⁹ The year 1913 saw increased activity in the area. In January the field averaged producing 11,000 barrels of oil per day; within thirty days companies were extracting more than 20,000 barrels per day. The largest single producer belonged to B. B. Jones, supplying 2,934 barrels a day and earning for Jones the pleasing sum of \$2.30 a minute.⁶⁰ The McMann Oil Company stretched the perimeter of the field southward with discoveries near present day Oilton; although the wells were not major producers, they did stimulate exploration to the southwest between Oilton and Drumright and further south. Drilling cost more there, for it was necessary to dig deeper, but the wells were very productive, bringing in an average of 8,000 barrels a day.⁶¹ The Oklahoma Oil Company, Producers Oil Company, and the Mid-River Oil Company extracted thousands of barrels daily around the Cimarron riverbed, the scene of greatest activity.⁶²

The mad rush to the refineries brought a continually mounting supply of crude oil which the market could not absorb. As after the Glenn Pool strike, the price of crude dropped drastically. Bartlesville, one of the later fields to open, had 160 wells, pumping daily 160,000 barrels. The Healdton sands, although producing a lower-quality

petroleum, peaked in May of 1915 with 95,000 barrels every twenty-four hours.⁶³ By October of 1916, the total output from the Cushing Field reached 165,000 barrels.⁶⁴

An oil field producing 25,000 barrels daily in 1913 and 3,000,000 daily one year later brought only one result--over production, the chronic problem of the oil industry in the early years.⁶⁵ The decade saw the price of oil from the Tulsa area fields drop drastically from \$1.05 per barrel for crude in April of 1914 to 55 cents per barrel in February of 1915, and a number of operators sold below that floor.⁶⁶ Many individuals proposed solutions to the problem, all centering on a belief that either the federal or state governments must eventually intervene.

In a few cases government intervention added to the problem. State courts in Oklahoma ruled that operators must drill wells within thirty days after a lease was signed. The courts intended the ruling to prevent monopoly, but succeeded only in outlawing a method of keeping the supply down to marketable quantity.⁶⁷ Such unsettled conditions resulted in cutthroat competition, hampering the most superficial attempts to bring business ethics, long adopted by other industries, to the petroleum industry.⁶⁸ Unfortunately business realities did not change until the outbreak of the Great War in Europe.

World War I forced Europeans and Americans to realize just how much the western world depended on petroleum. "Oil," confessed French Prime Minister Georges Clemenceau, "is as necessary as blood."⁶⁹ Modern technology altered military strategies. The availability of petroleum products often decided the outcome of battle; ships, trucks, and modern weapons required oil lubricants and gasoline. As the world's major

petroleum producer, the United States contributed to less than eighty percent of the Allied oil supplies.

Wartime demands increased corporate profits to a national high of \$1.40 a barrel by 1916, and eventually to \$3.50 a barrel by the time the war ended.⁷⁰ Driving to supply the Allied war machine, petroleum corporations expanded operations in the Cushing field, Glenn Pool, and throughout the world, inflating the value of virgin territory. Where once sand leases were relatively inexpensive, the cost rose to outlandish prices. In 1918 the Mid-Continent Petroleum Company sold eighty acres to the Katie Fixico Company for \$2,000,000.⁷¹ The immediate five post-war years saw the value of oil and land decline, however, but Glenn Pool and the Cushing field remained major sands for exploration and production for another decade. Operators averaged 9,000,000 barrels annually from the latter until the depression of 1929.⁷²

Tulsans responded slowly to the first stirrings of the oil movement in Indian Territory. The Red Fork strike excited local citizens, but, as Heydrick prophesied, it never achieved the overly optimistic expectations. When the roar of erupting oil from the Glenn Pool reached their ears, local leaders moved quickly. Although the town was unprepared for the human flood, Tulsa and oil were familiarly intertwined by people throughout the United States and the world by 1918.

The city leadership reasoned that the future center of the industry would not necessarily be the town closest to the oil fields, but the one in which the refining was done and the place where oilmen made their homes. It would become not only the economic mecca for the state and possibly the American Southwest, but also the hub of culture and

politics. If Tulsa would someday control the oil industry, then Tulsa had to take certain steps. In January of 1904 the first was taken when M. L. Baird, J. D. Hagler, and George T. Williamson completed a toll bridge across the Arkansas River. Constructed with federal money, the steep spans and plank flooring were strong enough for any size wagon carrying cargo weighing tons. Transporters no longer feared the treacherous waters of the river; the bridge closed the watery gap between the oil fields west of town and the ambitious community. Williamson, proud of their accomplishment, hung a sign which Tulsans readily understood, "You Said We Couldn't Do It, But We Did."⁷³

That same determination brought the first refinery in 1906. It was named the Uncle Sam, and a special committee armed with a generous bonus of \$5,000 and twenty free acres of land gave it a good beginning. But unsound financing and poor transport systems, plus missed opportunities, ended the venture only months after its inception.⁷⁴ However, the Commercial Club, the forerunner of the Tulsa Chamber of Commerce, learned from the failure and tenaciously searched for prospective new businesses. The La Tomette smelter came in 1905 for a bonus of \$1,735, and finally in 1913 the Waters-Pierce Oil Company built the first complete refinery in the Mid-Continent field for the small fee of \$2,000,000 and 320 acres of land.⁷⁵

Bonuses were an accepted business practice in those days. If a town needed industry, the community leadership met representatives from differing firms with open arms--and open pocketbooks. And when Tulsans embarked on the road to success, few towns could match the all-out effort put forth by local boosters. When ambition combined with the inevitable effects of the oil industry, Tulsa grew by leaps

and bounds. Although critics later admonished the community for not reacting immediately to the boom, certainly by 1912 it typified a thriving city.⁷⁶

A year before the Red Fork Strike, Tulsa had a population of 1,390. Most of these settlers were engaged in enterprises dependent on cattle.⁷⁷ Yet even then Tulsa appeared wealthier than its size indicated. In 1903 the community had four banks with a total capital stock of just over \$250,000. The First National controlled the largest holdings--\$117,835.⁷⁸ In 1905, two new banks opened: the Farmer's National, with deposits of \$85,394, and the Bank of Commerce, holding a total of \$130,000.⁷⁹ The First National Bank, owned and operated by William H. Halsell and Jay Forsythe, moved its prodigious accounts to 2nd and Main into the five-story "skyscraper of Mid-Continent," featuring Tulsa's first elevator.⁸⁰

Business expansion notwithstanding, banking firms, socialized by the stable, no-nonsense fiscal policies associated with ranching, perceived the "fly-by-night" oilmen with their dreams of hidden wealth as financial lunatics who desecrated the sacred tenets of economics. To combat local conservatism, oilmen opened their own banks, severing the financial ties to Wall Street and bringing petroleum financing to Tulsa. When Harry F. Sinclair and Pat J. White reopened the old Farmer's National as the new Exchange National Bank, with an initial capital of \$400,000, the first day of business saw \$424,674.14 in deposits.⁸¹ Other banks soon fell in line or faced ruin. The bankers, determined to minimize financial risk and to structure petroleum financing, managed to do so by appointing oilmen to their boards of directors. Oilmen now leaned to their own kind, and, just as the old financiers hoped, the new

directors became more stringent with loans. Soon the industry was receiving ample support from local banks, and by the beginning of the 1920s the initial advantage of Eastern establishments had been overcome as Tulsa firms became oil banks specializing in the petroleum business.⁸²

While local financiers adapted to the new environment, the construction industry and real estate agencies joined in a cooperative effort to build living accommodations for the newcomers. Within a few months after the Glenn Pool strike, William N. Robinson opened his still-unfinished hotel at the corner of 3rd and Main.⁸³ During the early days of the oil boom, the Robinson Hotel served as a temporary home for oilmen from across the United States. It was known as the place with clean sheets, good food, and speedy service. No doubt hundreds of business deals were settled within its walls; in fact, the story persists that the White-Sinclair Oil Company, at one time the largest independent petroleum firm in the world, originated while Sinclair walked pajama-clad down the hall from his room to the lavatory. The hotel, the finest west of the Mississippi and east of the Rocky Mountains, had five stories with 126 rooms and an elevator.⁸⁴

Activity in real estate increased in proportion to the growing demand. By 1904 there were four agencies in Tulsa searching for land that was hard to find. Within a year after the Glenn Pool strike Tulsa suffered its first housing problem. The Northern Realty and Abstract Company urged prospective land owners, "Don't trust your own judgment," lest they fall prey to charlatans and thieves.⁸⁵ The Oil and Gas Real Estate Company, as did its competitors, cried for more land, saying "We have more clients than property."⁸⁶ Twenty years

previously, Tulsans feared the demise of their town; now their anxieties vanished, blown away by the winds of progress.

By 1909 if one walked south of the Frisco tracks along Main Street he passed the Oil Well Supply Company, a store catering strictly to the new industry. The three-story Baxter Furniture Company, one of the first in town, sat on the corner of First and Main, with the New State Hotel at Second and Third.⁸⁷ Next door to Baxter's, the Wright Clothing Company featured the "best in dress," but had stiff competition from Lynch and Calhoun Men's Store where one could purchase the "finest of hats."⁸⁸ If one needed equipment ranging from household utensils to used oilfield pipe, Hale and Reynolds Hardware was the place to go, although Hall General Store had earned a solid reputation over the years. What neither of these places had, Trees Brothers probably did. When all else failed, the National Supply sold everything from wrenches to overalls. City Bank marked the end of First Street, while the Robinson Hotel did the same for the southern end of Main. Neither was far from the community's leading firm, the First National Bank.⁸⁹

Consumers purchased salt-cured roast and newly plucked chicken, not to mention fresh vegetables, when they were in season at Morrison and Son's Grocery, a sign that the community was no longer self-sustaining.⁹⁰ The town served as the breadbasket for oilmen who, unlike the Creeks, ranchers, and farmers, could not grow their own food. This changed the course of local agriculture. Merchants and husbandrymen supplied food-stuff at skyrocketing prices. Beef and vegetables, formerly sold only to Kansas City or St. Louis, now had a market in Tulsa. The demand for food increased proportionally to the increased population.

Sells Drug and Reeder's Pharmacy sold patent medicines to cure all

varieties of afflictions.⁹¹ Oldtimers laughed, recalling the days when the substance being fanatically pumped from the ground was taken both internally and externally as the "miracle drug of the century."⁹² Perhaps the ointments, pills, and lotions sold over the counter were just as fraudulent as the petroleum medicines of bygone days.

Although oilmen were like cowboys, a motely crew who enjoyed a strong drink, a high-stakes poker game, and a good fight for relaxation, the town provided a wide range of entertainment. There were plenty of saloons south of Main where a man could buy a wide variety of diversions. The existence of this community was the major political issue in the young city. Each campaign brought promises to clean up the gambling halls and the brothels.⁹³ But somehow the process took almost twenty-five years of extensive investigation by all political parties.

For family nights the Dreamland Theater offered traveling thespians possessed of real enthusiasm but suspect talents. The management of Dreamland was first to show a moving picture, "The Gay Deceiver," on June 7, 1906.⁹⁴ The Lyric Theater challenged the old movie house in February of 1908, boasting "the first motion picture theater in the state...presenting two complete reels every day for the week."⁹⁵

However, the two offered little competition to the hub of cultural activity, the Grand Opera House. Built by promoter George H. Johnson, it opened its doors on February 1, 1906, and did not close them for almost thirty-five years.⁹⁶ "The Chaperon" played that night, and throughout the years the management featured such national renowned performers as "the famous funny fellows, Wood and Wand, in the jolly jingling musical farce, Two Merry Tramps."⁹⁷ Serving a dual capacity as playhouse and public meeting center, the hall constantly echoed with

music, speeches, and frivolity. People came to be entertained by vaudeville shows and to discuss issues of civic concern; the house even withstood competition from the Theatorium, which opened the year after the Glenn Pool strike featuring "Edison's moving pictures."⁹⁸

The residential area extended eastward from Main Street. There the old wooden planked houses of the Creeks and ranchers intermingled with the more luxuriously constructed homes of the social elite. During the boom days, the most noticeable residences were the canvas tents which dotted the avenues of the community and gave it an air of impermanence. Someday the oil might be gone, and with it dreams for the future.⁹⁹

Not that the town lacked population. By 1912 more than 18,000 residents were crowded inside the city limits. Agrarian Tulsa was quickly dying, evolving into an industrial city at the prodigious rate. Approximately 114 oil and gas companies employed 15,000 field workers and averaged \$15,000 in royalty payments per month.¹⁰⁰ In the northern and eastern sections of the state, twenty refineries, each constructed at a cost of \$2,000,000, operated around the clock; Gulf Coast and Atlantic seaboard corporations' investments in oil pipelines totaled \$50,000,000.¹⁰¹ In the single year 1911, nationally and locally based firms drilled 4,986 wells at a combined cost of \$11,000,000 and lost approximately \$800,000 on speculative sands that produced nothing but 675 dry holes.¹⁰² Of the 114 petroleum companies in the state, 95 had located their home offices in Tulsa.¹⁰³

Joshawa S. Cosden controlled one, located on eighty acres in west Tulsa. A native of Baltimore, Maryland, he had been operating a small plant in the Osage nation until 1911 when he decided to sell out and

move closer to the action. In 1925 he named his refinery the Mid-Continent Petroleum Corporation, at that time one of the world's largest independent petroleum firms.¹⁰⁴ The other major firm of local origin was the Williams Company, today one of the world's largest pipeline firms with annual sales of \$7 billion and assets of well over \$1 billion.¹⁰⁵ Two brothers, David R. and S. Miller Williams, organized the business in 1915 to release other oil firms of the troublesome task of laying pipe from the field to the processing plant.

In 1914 the Tulsa Chamber of Commerce invited Prairie Oil and Gas Company, a subsidiary of Standard Oil, to relocate its main offices and build a major refinery on the outskirts of town.¹⁰⁶ It later received the contract to supply natural gas to the community, and remained for many years one of the largest enterprises in the state.

Official recognition as the oil center of the world came in 1908 when a small weekly publication named Oil Investor's was purchased by Patrick C. Doyle and moved from Beaumont, Texas, to Tulsa. Texas retained its title as the oil state, but the new journal stayed. Doyle changed the name to The Oil and Gas Journal and built it from a weekly pamphlet into what old-timers called "the bible of the oil industry." Published in five languages, its worldwide circulation brought international acclaim to northeastern Oklahoma.¹⁰⁷ Even Tulsa's arch rival, Oklahoma City, grudgingly acknowledged that Tulsa might someday "be the Pittsburg of the Southwest."¹⁰⁸

By 1909 the city directory listed 19,000 names, an increase of more than 3,000 from the previous year.¹⁰⁹ To accommodate the heavy influx, the City Commission expended more than \$1,000,000 improving the downtown area: renovating old buildings, widening streets, and

improving sewage systems for shoppers and workers.¹¹⁰ Private entrepreneurs also expanded downtown. In 1910 the Mayo brothers, John and Cass Allen, furniture store owners from Missouri, built a five-story building at Fifth and Main. Within seven years a connecting and an additional five stories completed the Mayo Building. The brothers kept the furniture store on the first floor and rented the remaining nine stories to incoming businesses for office space. Residents considered it "the finest building in Tulsa."¹¹¹

By the beginning of the First World War, Tulsa had drastically changed. The city had seventy-one miles of paved streets, a far cry from the old dirt avenues characteristic of the town just ten years previously. Thirty-two passenger and freight trains arrived and departed daily, bringing new people and products from all sections of the United States. Tourists had a choice of twenty hotels; two of them, the old Robinson and the new Hotel Tulsa, were six stories high and centers for petroleum business activity.¹¹² The increasing demand for office space was supplied in 1917 and 1918 when two "skyscrapers," the ten-story Kennedy office building and the sixteen-story Cosden Building were finished.¹¹³

Everything was new. Oilmen had replaced ranchers as the leaders of Tulsa, just as the latter had overpowered the Creeks before them. Within thirty years Tulsa had grown from a population of less than 1,000 to a bustling city of 35,000. The streets were littered with pipe and wood as construction moved at a rapid pace. Private homes fell before the symbols of progress, commercial buildings, but they were resurrected on the fields and grasslands north and east of downtown. Dr. Clinton's dream had become a reality; oil had propelled the once quiet

Creek village into national prominence. By 1920 the unchallenged "Oil Capital of the World" supplied the life blood for industrial 20th century America.

FOOTNOTES

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⁷ Ibid., 313.

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⁹ Clinton, "First Oil and Gas Well in Tulsa County," 315.

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¹⁵ Ibid.

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- ⁴⁵William Butler, Tulsa '75: A History of Tulsa (Tulsa: The Metropolitan Tulsa Chamber of Commerce, 1975), 190.
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CHAPTER IV

HOW TO BUILD A TOWN

The future of any community relies on its geographic location and proximity to natural resources. But it is a popular misconception that the petroleum industry built Tulsa. For three years after the Glenn Pool strike, the neighboring towns of Muskogee, Bartlesville, and Stroud battled with Tulsa for the honor of being the center of oil activity in Oklahoma. A mad desire for industrial development infected the citizens of those communities just as it had the nation, and it mixed with the old "boom or bust" frontier spirit, so much a part of western society even into the 20th century. While the oil boom did not create that philosophy, it had, in the minds of the people, reaffirmed its validity. The vision of their town as an industrial center drove Tulsans to a flurry of "boostering" activities far exceeding anything their neighbors could produce, and this brought the oil industry to Tulsa. Thus people, not oil, created Tulsa.

"Boosterism," a campaign to promote the social, economic and cultural properties of a community for the purpose of enticing settlers and industry, affected urban centers throughout the American West. But nowhere was it stronger than in the small hamlet of Tulsa in Indian Territory. It overrode all other civic considerations and dominated the spirit of the Tulsans as nothing else was capable of doing. Between 1900 and 1910, the local population growth exceeded 450 percent, a large

increase, especially when one considers that the population of the entire trans-Mississippi West grew by only seventy-eight percent during the same period.¹ Without boosterism as the guiding philosophy, such development would have been impossible.

This fulminating population placed an ever-increasing demand on the city government for basic civic services, and within a short time Tulsans realized that the local government was ill-equipped to meet the needs of the community and to accept total responsibility for promoting its interests. To meet this challenge, the role of promoter fell on local businessmen who took extra-governmental responsibility for the general prosperity of the community. In March of 1901 a small cadre of civic-minded business leaders founded the Tulsa Commercial Club; its purpose was

To organize and direct such movements as shall be deemed to be for the best interests of the city of Tulsa....
To help to secure for the city such manufactories as may from time to time desire to locate at this place....²

Under the leadership of men like George W. Mowbray, the first president of the club, and James Hall, "the father of modern Tulsa," the club influenced landowners to donate right-of-ways for incoming railroads and to pay thousands of dollars as bonuses to corporations.³ It is difficult not to overstate the role of the Commercial Club and its progeny, the Chamber of Commerce, played in developing the city's industrial base. It can safely be said that not even the city government contributed more than the Commercial Club to economic growth during the early years of the 20th century.

The boosters did have their problems. In 1905 the wells around Bartlesville, north of Tulsa, produced more oil, while Muskogee to the

southeast boasted a larger population and the territorial government. To the southwest, Cushing's citizens proved so accommodating to oilmen operating in the Cushing field that even the Tulsa Daily World grudgingly admitted that the little hamlet bordered on becoming the "queen of the oil fields."⁴ Most residents of the Indian Territory believed that Tulsans suffered from delusions of grandeur, and they delighted in deriding Tulsans' attempts to attract attention.⁵

Ridicule only made Tulsans more recalcitrant and strengthened their resolve. Determined to overcome the initial advantage of other towns, the collective minds of the Commercial Club membership spawned myriad schemes. They paid \$5,000 to the St. Louis Star for a feature page illustrating Tulsa's modernistic side.⁶ Any visiting dignitary received red carpet treatment, which usually consisted of beef barbecued over an open gas well, a Chautauqua-style lecture, and a medley of patriotic songs performed by the Commercial Club band.⁷ While such activities served to impress visitors, local publishing firms contracted for various booklets designed to educate locals about the wide range of attractions offered by their town.⁸ Done on expensive paper and securely bound, the contents varied from vapid statistics on agricultural output to bombastic praise. Advertisements for pamphlets, such as Facts About Tulsa: A Coming Metropolis, prepared by the Commercial Club, appeared in local newspapers and sold for a nominal price at the Union Station depot.⁹ The first known history of Tulsa, printed in 1903, included numerous facts supported by supplementary research, but nonetheless concluded, "One may well exclaim, how sublimely the Great Father of the pale and ruddy race has made this spot for the abode of his children."¹⁰ The written word continued as the major instrument for

"boostering" throughout the town's early history. In 1915 the Chamber of Commerce carried on the tradition by publishing a magazine entitled Tulsa Spirit, which featured stories about Tulsa's business progress and cultural enrichment.

Such efforts rewarded Tulsans with considerable success as long as their schemes stayed within the realm of realism. However, the bounds of reality often extended into the ridiculous, as if the club members enjoyed some plans for their sheer audacity, not their feasibility. In 1907 the club boldly invited the leadership of the Democratic Party to hold the national convention in Tulsa. On behalf of the townspeople, they promised a bonus of \$100,000 and a new auditorium specially constructed for the party of Andrew Jackson and William J. Bryan. Unfortunately the Democratic Central Committee decided that Baltimore was better equipped to accommodate delegates from across the nation.¹² Undaunted, the town's leadership saw the negative response as more a loss for the Democratic Party than for Tulsa, and intensified their efforts by urging locals to "write friends, tell them of wonderful Tulsa."¹³ Never at a loss for a novel gimmick, the Commercial Club advanced its cause by authorizing the Paragon Feature Film Company to make a three-reel movie about Tulsa and the surrounding oil fields. The final agreement stipulated that the movie producers would receive \$1,000, while the Commercial Club would reap any revenue above the \$1,000 fee.¹⁴ Little wonder the Oklahoma City Times praised the community for "making the greatest advertising efforts in the history of the state."¹⁵

Undoubtedly the most ingenious contrivances which brought national publicity were the three booster excursions by railroad in 1903, 1905,

and 1907. Organized by the Commercial Club, these featured pure excitement and public relations value. The first booster train traveled to St. Louis in connection with the Indian Territory Day celebration. The boosters rented three special coaches attached to a regular train. The party consisted of seventy-five men and a hurriedly organized "Indian" band of fifteen pieces directed by Ray Funk, a first-class barber but a third-rate leader.¹⁶ Much to the amazement of all aboard, the "Indian band" which did not have a single Indian, performed brilliantly and proved to be a major attraction. When onlookers asked why their skins were so pale, Funk retorted that the musicians were "civilized Indians and were brought along to demonstrate how far the Indian citizenship of the territory had progressed...."¹⁷ Such harmless deceit won considerable notoriety for Tulsa. However, one moment of unexpected embarrassment came when Clyde Lynch, the tour organizer, prevailed on the representatives from Arkansas to loan the small band a few apples, peaches, plums, and grapes for the fruit displays. The result was that Tulsa won a blue ribbon. When the local papers, ignorant of what had transpired, heralded Tulsa as "the prize fruit growing center of the promising Indian Territory," Arkansans fumed.¹⁸

The second excursion taken by the club in 1905 ranked as an unmatched achievement in civic publicity. Composed of 100 of the town's leading citizens, the train embarked on March 13, for Pacific, Missouri, the first stop along a 2,000-mile route throughout the Midwest and Northwest.¹⁹ Hailing it as a benefit "for every property owner in town," wives and children worked throughout the night of the twelfth decorating it with banners and streamers. The train not only carried representatives from the Commercial Club, but also a baggage car equipped

with a printing press so that an employee of the Tulsa Daily Democrat could print pamphlets and fliers describing the wonders of Tulsa to be given to the welcoming crowds at every stop. More interested in attracting crowds than talking business with civic leaders of other communities, the boosters tried to create a carnival atmosphere where they stopped. A twenty-five-piece band presented lively, patriotic marches while a gangling young cowboy named Will Rogers amazed audiences with his fancy rope tricks.²¹

The trip was not without hazard. One evening while the travelers banqueted in Terre Haute, Indiana, owners of a local brewery, to show how much they enjoyed having the Tulsans, filled the baggage coach with cases of beer. Enough was loaded so that every Tulsan could drink three beers daily during the remainder of the trip. However, a majority of thirsty Tulsans preferred to drink it all as quickly as possible, causing much dissension among the group, not to mention intoxication. Clyde Lynch, organizer of the trip, formed a committee of trusted friends consisting of himself, Emmett Smiley, Mel Baird and R. T. Epperson; stealing into the baggage car while the other passengers slept in alcoholic stupor, they threw the contents, case by case, onto the Indiana countryside.²² There is no record of what transpired on board the train the next morning when the passengers discovered the loss of their beer but all members of that infamous committee returned home safely.

In Chicago the Tulsans had a more serious encounter. The sides of the Pullman cars were covered with banners proudly proclaiming the purpose of the trip, but depot officials of the windy city took a dim view of cluttering a railroad car. As the boosters prepared to leave,

officials ordered the signs removed. The Tulsans defiantly refused and contended that they had paid for the railroad's services plus the right to decorate within reason. Fearing that the situation might lead to open hostilities, a unit of the Chicago police arrived on the scene to mediate the dispute. In response, the Indian Territory band climbed to the top of the train and proceeded to play a concert, much to the enjoyment of the crowd. Such a large audience gathered along tracks that service was blocked. Finally, out of desperation, the railroad officials compromised. If the Tulsans would remove the banners until the train left Chicago they could put them back on again; as one official disgustedly remarked, "Run this train to hell and back if you want to." As the train pulled slowly out of the station, the crowd cheered.²³ Obviously, the minor incident had not darkened the favorable impression the Tulsans had made on Chicago's leadership.

Many big city newspapers poked fun at the traveling band of men from the Indian Territory, but the Tulsans took it in stride. After all, they wanted publicity, and they got it. Several newspapers, however, reacted more soberly: "Down in Tulsa," said the editor of the St. Louis Post-Despatch, "they have a theory that whatever helps the town helps the citizens. It's a pretty good theory, too. It makes nations as well as cities great."²⁴ In an editorial dated March 22 the editors of the Chicago Inter-Ocean wrote "Keep your eye on Tulsa, we will."²⁵

The third trip was even more elaborately organized. Longer than preceding trips, the sixteen-day venture covered more than 2500 miles: from Tulsa to St. Louis, north to Chicago, east to New York City, and on to the nation's capital, reaching fifteen states and the District of Columbia. The specially commissioned train consisted of three Pullman

sleeping cars, one chair coach containing exhibits from Tulsa and Tulsa's trade territory, and one baggage car which had a printing press to publish pamphlets for distribution and daily news reports wired back to Tulsa.²⁶

At every stop, local dignitaries greeted the band and lavishly entertained them from the time the train pulled into town until it departed. Representatives of commercial clubs, city officials, uniformed bands, and state dignitaries came from all areas of the nation to greet the train.²⁷ In Washington, D. C., President Theodore Roosevelt tendered a public reception for the boosters and a joint session of Congress gave them a standing ovation in appreciation of their ingenuity and progressiveness.²⁸ The governor of New York welcomed the party at Union Station. State and local officials paraded them as guests down Fifth Avenue past thousands of cheering New Yorkers. Not to be outdone, Chicagoans stopped the wires of the Chicago Board of Trade for the only time in history while the Commercial Club band performed the most popular songs of the day.²⁹

No doubt these booster excursions attracted newcomers. Robert T. Daniel, a multi-millionaire real estate developer from Miami, Florida, came to Tulsa to build the ten-story Daniel building and the modern Tulsa Hotel because he read news accounts of the expedition of 1905. Had it not been for this trip, the Tulsa Daily World would not have not have been founded by George Bayne, a successful mine operator in Joplin, Missouri. The enthusiasm of the Tulsa boosters so impressed him that he decided to see what they were bragging about. Within a matter of days after arriving, he began investing in utilities and in September of 1905 helped Eugene Lorton finance that daily Republican

newspaper. Even the Tulsa public school system benefited from the trips. Chicagoan H. O. McClure, enticed by the disturbance at the railroad station, moved to Tulsa in 1906, established the McClure Hardware Company and invented the "unit school system." Thousands of others joined these three men, and by 1910 Tulsa was the industrial center of northeastern Oklahoma.³⁰

The community leadership understood, however, that if Tulsa was to remain the center of the feverish activity in the Mid-continent Field, the first business target had to be the railroads, for only with a modern transportation system could they hope to accommodate the demands of national commercial interests. Unfortunately, the Frisco was Tulsa's lone railway, so the Chamber of Commerce began urgently seeking another.³¹

The aroused sense of urgency coincided with plans of the owners of the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railroad Company. In 1902 surveyors for the M.K. & T., intending to connect with the main line running from Parsons, Kansas, to Oklahoma City, began working at Wybark, a small community north of Muskogee. The secondary line intersected the Frisco track seven miles east of Tulsa. Alerted by Katy engineers, Tulsa's leaders knew that if the railroad bypassed the town it meant death for the struggling community.³² An emergency meeting of the Chamber of Commerce was held, and the membership chose a committee of Dr. S. G. Kennedy, W. F. Jones, M. J. Romine, and T. E. Smiley to meet with Katy engineers and try to persuade them to run their survey through Tulsa.³³ Following the usual practice, the committee brought the engineers to Tulsa within a matter of days. The Chamber held a banquet in their honor. Such "friendly persuasion" impressed the guests, and they

pledged that they would survey a feasible line that would intersect Tulsa. True to their word, they surveyed the line. Unfortunately, they did it against the wishes of their superiors and were fired for their insubordination.³⁴

While the unfortunate fate of the engineers did not go unnoticed, the Chamber refused to let that be the final word. A new committee dispatched by the Chamber, composed of Dr. Kennedy, George W. Mowbray, Sr., and Joe Price of St. Louis, went to meet the president of the M. K. & T. The three emissaries, sitting in chairs forming a semi-circle, faced the heads of the railroad behind a huge mahogany desk and presented their most powerful argument for a Tulsa line. Over the last twenty years, they pointed out, the Frisco had done more business than the company could handle, and once oil began flowing into Tulsa from Red Fork, the railroad business would be a bonanza. Tulsa was already feeling the first influx of people and these were not just oil prospectors but also potential store owners and real estate agents, bankers, and consumers for goods the Katy could haul. Next the Katy's chief engineer from Yale testified that according to the unauthorized survey, a line to Tulsa could be constructed more cheaply than the one originally considered because of the grade.³⁵

If the Katy officials would reconsider, Mowbray interrupted, he and four Tulsa businessmen would serve as trustees for a \$12,000 bonus and furnish the right-of-way, a proposition worth \$15,000.³⁶ Bonuses were naturally expected by all railroad companies and major businesses as part of any deal, but this one was more generous than the Katy owners had reason to expect from such a small community. After short deliberation, the two parties signed an agreement whereby the Katy engineer,

W. H. Hendren, took charge of extending the line from Wybark to Osage Junction by way of Tulsa.³⁷

Tulsans were elated at their success, but the year 1903 saw increased tensions and competition with nearby towns when the two Red Fork strikes startled the Indian Territory. Closer to Red Fork than its rivals, Tulsa heard the news first. Two railroad lines were not enough to corner the oil business, and when news reached town that Charles N. Haskell, the principal promoter of the Midland Valley Railroad Company, intended to construct a track from Muskogee to Arkansas City by way of Sapulpa and Red Fork and thereby establish the Midland Valley as the major carrier of petroleum, the Chamber of Commerce reacted with despatch.³⁸ Fearful that their time and energies might go unrewarded if Sapulpa and not Tulsa received the track, a group of businessmen went to Muskogee to interview Haskell. After lengthy negotiations, he agreed to survey a route to Tulsa. Fortunately the results showed that a railroad could be built along the surveyed line at lower cost than a route through Sapulpa. If that was not enough incentive, the citizens of Tulsa once more dug deeply into their pockets, and the citizen's committee promised the future governor a \$15,000 bonus if he diverted the track to Tulsa.³⁹ Haskell accepted the generous offer. Competition between the three railroads later became so fierce that within two years Tulsa warehouses received drawbacks from the Midland Valley which, over the years, more than compensated for the initial bonus.⁴⁰ Thus by 1903 Tulsa had three railroad lines from which it was able to stake its claim as the center of the oil industry.

In 1906 this intense rivalry brought another railroad to Tulsa. For several years Tulsans unsuccessfully had solicited the Santa Fe, but

the Glenn Pool strike of Galbreath and Chesley made the Santa Fe owners decide to take a second look. At the height of the rush for oil on Ida Glenn's farm, James Dunn, chief engineer for the Santa Fe, appeared in Tulsa. Known in railroad circles as a shrewd businessman, he had extracted an agreement from the Midland Valley that the Santa Fe could use its tracks and depot if Dunn decided to recommend a line to his superiors. The hustle and bustle in the streets convinced him that it would be to the company's advantage to lay its own track. Within twenty-four hours he told the Chamber of Commerce that the Santa Fe would come if the civic leaders could guarantee a bonus of \$12,000. The advantages of having a fourth major railroad were obvious. Visions of freight yards with oil tankers lined end-to-end as far as the eye could see ran through their heads, not to mention the hundreds of people daily coming and going, taking mental pictures of Tulsa with them wherever they traveled. With the Santa Fe making regular stops, Tulsa could dominate the petroleum industry. Local leaders quickly accepted Dunn's proposal, and the first Santa Fe train pulled into the station in September of 1905.⁴¹ The Santa Fe extension represented a milestone in the history of the city. Without railroads, all the efforts of even the most energetic booster would have been in vain. The presence of extensive first-rate transportation tied Tulsa to the oil fields, making it the major distributing point for petroleum throughout the Southwest.

Additional ties to the nation were forged when Robert H. Hall, the son of Harry C. Hall, established the first telephone exchange in 1903.⁴² Although he began with less than 100 subscribers, the invention so revolutionized the communications industry that everyone knew it was only a matter of time before telephones would spread through the

town. Hall operated the office until 1906 when he sold his enterprise to the Indian Territory Telephone Company of Vinita. The city contracted with the firm for a period of twenty years and published the first directory in 1906.⁴³ Early telephone business rates were, by today's standards, astonishingly low. Under the agreement, monthly rates could not exceed \$1.50 for residential phones and \$2.50 for business hookups.⁴⁴ The Bell Telephone and Telegraph System arrived in Tulsa in 1912 and bought the holdings of the Indian Territory Company through one of the national firm's subsidiaries, Southwestern Bell. In 1912, Tulsa had 2,000 stations; in 1921 that number had grown to 18,000, an increase of such magnitude that the company created the Tulsa district in October of 1920. The first general manager for Southwestern Bell was John M. Nobler.⁴⁵

The original inhabitants of the community were Indians and ranchers, but the notoriety created by oil discoveries and advertising campaigns enticed a different type of settler to Tulsa. A new breed of Westerner arrived in town after the oil discoveries, one whose geographic origins were the Midwest and whose social roots were solidly middle class. Although old Confederate states contiguous to Oklahoma--Texas and Missouri--contributed to the local population, approximately half of the men who held positions of leadership in the Chamber of Commerce and city government had left families in Illinois, Ohio, and Pennsylvania to make their homes in the city.⁴⁶ Endowed with the Midwestern philosophy of thrift and hard work inherited from their New England grandfathers, they changed the cultural life of the city until it no longer resembled other population centers in the American Southwest, but was more like a small city characteristic of Ohio which had

been somehow uprooted and transported to the Indian Territory. Harry Campbell, who wrote most of the petition for incorporation, was born in Hamilton, Illinois.⁴⁷ James M. Gillette, real estate agent and stockholder and director in the Tulsa National Bank, came from Missouri.⁴⁸

Due to the influence of these newly arrived middle-class, small businessmen and professionals, Tulsa by the end of the first decade of the 20th century was undergoing a metamorphosis. The agrarian society had dramatically given way to one characterized by white collar workers. The oil industry attracted large numbers of real estate brokers and business managers and employed men trained in geology, engineering, law, accounting, and economics.⁴⁹ The more industrialized the petroleum industry became, the more Tulsans relied on professional men for leadership. By 1905 one-third of the membership of the Chamber of Commerce practiced law or medicine.⁵⁰ Tulsa was the new frontier, a place where a man could apply his talents and training with relative assurance that his economic and social prestige would ascend from the social level in which he had been reared. Like the frontiers before it, Tulsa attracted bold young men seeking their fortunes, and their success as businessmen and civic leaders indicated that the American dream had become reality for many.⁵¹

The new leaders surpassed the old ranchers not only in technical skills but also in levels of education. More than half the members of the Chamber of Commerce had at least some college education.⁵² Leonard M. Poe, director of the First National Bank, was a law school graduate and had served for a time as the town judge.⁵⁴ Such a background instilled in these men a deep respect for education and reinforced the American ideal that education leads to spiraling social advancement.

Citizens opened the first public school two years after the town was incorporated and elected the first school board in 1898. It was temporarily housed where the Cosden Building sets until 1916 when contractors erected the beautiful Tudor Gothic building. For decades Central High School stood as the center of learning for the community.⁵⁵ Its first senior class graduated one boy and three girls in 1906, but the total enrollment was 1,100.⁵⁶ Crowded conditions forced a school bond election of \$25,000 for two additional grade schools; this was approved by an overwhelming vote.⁵⁷ In 1908 Tulsans appropriated another \$150,000 for three new schools in West Tulsa: Lincoln, Washington, and Irving. That same year, school faculty and parents organized the Parent-Teacher Association.⁵⁸ The town continued to act with celerity. In the next ten years more than \$750,000 was funded by the public to finance seven new schools: Clinton, Horace Mann, Kendall, Osage, River-view, Sequoyah, and Dunbar, and to remodel the established three. The former were designed under the innovative "unit system" devised by H. O. McClure, who served on the school board until 1922. To utilize real estate more effectively, the city purchased whole blocks of land for each school and designed a plan so that each building formed a square, with a courtyard in the center.⁵⁹ The community emphasis on proper educational facilities made the Tulsa school system famous in national educational circles and helped present the town as progressive in its thinking.

The community's preoccupation with developing a modern educational system logically extended to a belief that the community also needed a first-rate institution of higher learning. Young adults could obtain college training without having to travel to some distant place from which they might never return, and the school would also attract people

living throughout the state. Locals postulated that perhaps after sampling all that Tulsa had to offer, students might decide to take up residence after graduation.

The membership of the Commercial Club immediately took the lead in searching for educators who might be inclined to move to Tulsa. After months of conscientious investigation, Kendall College located in Muskogee became the prime target. The Commercial Club elected James Hall as chairman of a temporary committee empowered to approach the administration of the Muskogee school. As usual, the club prepared to make a substantial offer to the board of trustees. More than \$100,000 had been raised by the Commercial Club by selling chances on town lots at \$300 each.⁶⁰ The city used the money to buy tracts of prairie land on the east side of town. In addition to a site set aside for the school, Hall promised the educators an endowment of \$250,000 and thirty acres of free land which the administration could use as it deemed necessary.⁶¹ Such inducements the Kendall officials were unable to refuse, and the agreement was signed in 1907.⁶²

Within a few years the name of the school was changed by the Board of Trustees from Henry Kendall College to Tulsa University, and the citizens displayed their loyalty to the school by pledging \$200,000 for a permanent endowment.⁶³ By 1920, the institution rivaled the land grant college in Stillwater and the University of Oklahoma in Norman as a seat of higher learning in the state.

Surprisingly, the zeal for a first-rate school system did not include a library. Educators knew that without one, the education of local children remained incomplete and the system inadequate. The first to take up the cause for a proper book depository was Mrs.

J. D. Seaman in 1905. Unfortunately, months of diligent efforts and considerable verbal support failed to raise the needed money.⁶⁴ However, in 1910 the Tulsa Women's Club took up Mrs. Seaman's work. It made little more progress than Mrs. Seaman, but managed to get the issue placed on a ballot. Already laboring under a heavy tax burden to build public facilities for the mushrooming population, Tulsans affirmed their opposition to a library by voting down the referendum.⁶⁵ By 1913, with rivers of oil revenue coming into the town, the new Tulsa Library Association managed to raise enough money to organize a Central Public Library. Hardly suitable for the growing needs of the community in 1913, the association prevailed on the Carnegie Foundation for a donation of \$55,000.⁶⁶ This helped to improve the facilities and paid a salary to Walter Ahlum, Tulsa's first trained librarian.⁶⁷

By 1910 Oklahomans had revised their view of Tulsa's leaders as quixotic men clamoring for a fame which would never be theirs. On the contrary, their influence spread quickly from the city limits in all directions, exerting economic and political power throughout the state. In 1895 Harry Campbell, called Judge although he never held judicial office, arrived in Tulsa from Hamilton, Illinois, by way of Pawnee, Oklahoma, driving a team of mules and carrying a one-book law library. His practice suffered for a few years until he received a modicum of fame drafting the petition of incorporation for the community. His sense of civic responsibility never waned, and he remained active and influential in the state Democratic Party until his death in 1950. A man who had seemingly unlimited energy and ambition, he participated in the spectacular projects of the Chamber of Commerce and served as a director of the Oklahoma Historical Society for twenty-five years.⁶⁸

Attorney James Hall once praised him by saying, "If I should die I would trust Harry Campbell with my whole estate, feeling that he would wind it up to the best interests of my family."⁶⁹

Joining Campbell was his close professional and personal friend, Judge L. M. Poe, who came to Tulsa from Pawnee, Oklahoma, the same year as Campbell. He served one term as Tulsa's second mayor and as state district judge after Oklahoma entered the Union. A booster from the time he arrived, he worked hard as a member of the Chamber of Commerce and at his occupation as chief council of the First National Bank after he stepped down from the bench.⁷⁰

Tulsa's leading physician was Dr. Fred S. Clinton of Red Fork fame. One of the few leading businessmen native to the Indian Territory, he was born near Okmulgee on April 15, 1874.⁷¹ His father, a farmer-rancher most of his life, died when Fred was fourteen, leaving a widow and four children. Like most of the men who composed Tulsa's leadership, Fred grew up in a rural area, but as he entered adulthood his ambitions turned him from a farmer's life to the professional occupation of medicine.

Fred attended college at Young Harris College, Georgia, where he completed his undergraduate training and lost his bachelor status to Jane Heard, the daughter of a prominent businessman from Elburton, Georgia. Clinton entered the Kansas City, Missouri, College of Pharmacy and Allied Sciences and received his degree in 1896. He completed his professional training at the Kansas City University Medical College one year later.⁷²

He returned to Red Fork in 1897 and formed an extremely successful partnership with Dr. J. C. W. Bland. He quickly became known throughout

the Indian Territory for his competency when a severe small-pox epidemic raged over the area. By 1905 he was helping to build Tulsa's first permanent hospital and nurses' training school, and in 1915 he was the prime mover in the drive to construct the ultra-modern Oklahoma Hospital. Although his practice placed strenuous demands on him, he still found time to represent the Indian Territory in the National Red Cross and serve a term as president of the Indian Territory Medical Association.⁷³ For these and other accomplishments, his professional colleagues around the United States honored him in the 1926 edition of Who's Who in American Medicine.⁷⁴ He actively participated in the activities of the Chamber of Commerce and went on all three booster trips. He also received considerable notice for his deep interest in local history, and he contributed numerous articles to the journal of the Oklahoma State Historical Society, the Chronicles of Oklahoma.

A town with a cadre of leaders such as this grew as if blessed with a destiny far greater than its origins would indicate. As early as 1906 the city government had annexed land between Avenue M, Osage, Elgin and Archer avenues--what today is called North Tulsa.⁷⁵ It soon became apparent to the city commissioners that some uniform code for laying out additions to the city was sorely needed. When the territorial engineers re-surveyed the townsite, the city proposed a referendum outlining the steps to be taken in adding new areas to the community. A city engineer platted the land, and his produce was approved by the mayor and council. All streets came under the same regulations, depending on whether they were to be in a residential or business district.⁷⁶ The public also passed ordinances regulating the naming and numbering of houses and streets. Main Street, running north

and south, divided the city into east and west sections, while Lawton, extending perpendicular to Main, divided the town into north and south. To bring order to the house numbering system, all residences on the west side of a street received even numbers, and those on the east side odd numbers.⁷⁷ Such laws brought a rational method for planning city development, and the farsightedness of the early city governments served the city in good stead in years to come.

The Chamber of Commerce had devised a rational development plan by the second decade of the century. By that time the population had grown sufficiently to allow some discretion in choosing what type of industry best suited the needs of the community. During the previous ten to fifteen years the emphasis was on obtaining whatever was available; now the citizenry passed laws prohibiting mining, oil prospecting, and drilling for natural gas within the city limits.⁷⁸ Despite the impression that anyone was welcome in Tulsa, such was not the case.⁷⁹ City officials hoped to keep as much industry as possible south of the Arkansas River, and if that were not always possible the city engineer surveyed new sites. The Chamber contracted with publishing companies for special literature praising the advantages of moving to Tulsa and sent such propaganda to prospective companies. The membership of the Chamber and officials within city government became interested, and an investigating team inspected the plant outlay and commercial records. If both sides found the situation agreeable, negotiations began immediately. Naturally these businesses were no different from the railroads; plenty of bonus money must be in supply, for the men of the Chamber knew that when all other considerations were equal, the town which won the firm was the one with the largest monetary bribe.⁸⁰

Armed with knowledge of advantageous sites and suitable money, the Chamber and the city government coordinated their efforts in business-like fashion. The Hurbert J. Hurrle Window Glass Company came because it received a five-year guarantee of three cent natural gas for fuel and a \$5,000 bonus; the Queen Bee Stove Company and the Robinson Packer and Machine Company obtained preferred locations and \$5,000 each to start.⁸¹ Because members of the Chamber were businessmen, they well understood what it took to bring new firms to a community, and the town was consistently blessed with men willing to contribute freely of their time and money on behalf of the city. By the end of World War I, the city government could proudly state that in the year 1919 a total of \$9,473,443 in building permits had been granted by the city. In fact, June of that year saw the largest growth rate of any month in the history of the town, as more than \$2,219,000 in permits were issued to prospective businesses.⁸² The federal government estimated that the city spent \$1,000,000 per month on improving downtown buildings that year.

The single greatest impediment to community development during the first decades of the 20th century was the extraordinarily poor water supply system. Although Tulsa sat on the banks of the swiftly flowing Arkansas River, the community used it as a sewage dump, and sacks of garbage, human waste, and dead animals did not give the water a pleasing sight or taste. In fact, the water was so bad that Tulsa imported bottled water for drinking and washing, not exactly a modern method in a growing community.⁸³ In 1908 the city government established a Department of City Waterworks composed of three commissioners and a superintendent paid \$1,500 a year.⁸⁴ At the same time, the city floated

a bond issue of \$125,000 for a new water system contract let to George G. Bayne, the first editor of the future Tulsa Daily World newspaper.⁸⁵ Bayne drilled three deep wells adjacent to the Arkansas River and pumped water through his privately owned pipeline, but the wells proved insufficient to meet the ever-increasing demand. Over the next three years the commissioners added five new wells dug on the George J. Murphy acreage, but they also were neither enough nor at times usable, as the water came from the Arkansas River.⁸⁶ Although the government spent thousands of dollars trying to build improvements, the system remained inadequate. As city officials continued to fail in their task, criticism mounted. The Chamber of Commerce began taking an active role in trying to find a better method. These leaders knew full well that a number of businesses had been lost because of the water problem.⁸⁷ But plans were interrupted by United States entry into the Great War.

After the war the city's leadership again began looking for new sources of supply. Within a few months they set their sights on Lake Spavinaw, fifty miles northeast of the city. While this lake was smaller than most surrounding lakes in northeastern Oklahoma, the city engineers determined it could supply more than enough water for current and projected future business and residential needs in the community. Mayor Charles H. Hubbard, wholeheartedly supported by the Tulsa Chamber of Commerce, called for a bond election to be held July 10, 1919. Paid advertising in favor of the bond issue appeared in all local newspapers, and the Chamber of Commerce initiated an "educational campaign," as it had for numerous past civic projects. While a sizable minority opposed the plan, the final vote was 2,340 in favor and 1,522 opposed.⁸⁸ The city committed itself to financing \$5,000,000 in bonds at five percent

annual interest to construct a series of pipelines and a water processing plant with sufficient capacity for the city's needs.⁸⁹

The city leadership knew that the \$5,000,000 was only the beginning, and that new bonds eventually would have to be issued. That problem proved not to be as difficult as they had supposed, as the city approved a new set of bonds totaling \$6,800,000 in November of 1921.⁹⁰ The stumbling block came from an unexpected source--the Supreme Court of Oklahoma. The Tulsa City Charter stipulated that any water source must be within a five-mile radius of the city limits, and the Supreme Court ruled the bond election violated the charter.⁹¹ Mayor Hubbard and a small cadre of Tulsans began intensive inquiries into what could be done to remedy the constitutional problem. After a careful study of the situation, Governor James B. Robertson agreed to a proposed amendment to the city charter authorizing the city to secure water from any distance. As an afterthought the mayor added to the referendum a proposal establishing a "water board" and a Water Commissioner empowered to manage monetary outlays for the Spavinaw program.⁹² The proposed amendment passed in January of 1922, and by April of that year the expenditure of \$1,000,000 had paid for opening construction of the dam.⁹³ City engineers erected a pumping and filtration station northeast of the city at Mohawk Park Lakes to pump water to a high pressure reservoir on Reservoir Hill.⁹⁴ The project reached fruition in 1925 when the first water flowed into Tulsa, ending the problem as a political issue.

While the city government furnished water, other utilities such as natural gas and electricity came from private companies under contract with the city. The former was supplied by the Osage Natural Gas Company in an agreement reached with the city in March of 1904; although the

name of the company was later changed by its owners, the arrangement continued undisturbed for two decades.⁹⁵ The harmonious association was marred only by a brief dispute in 1905 when the citizenry felt twenty-five cents per thousand cubic feet was an excessive rate. Popular discontent reached sufficient levels that Robert Galbreath and Frank Chesley, of Glenn Pool fame, founded the People's Gas Company and offered an alternative contract to the city officials at twenty cents per thousand cubic feet.⁹⁶

Free enterprise thus brought competition. On December 1, 1906, Osage and Oklahoma Gas Company officials announced a reduction in the rate to fifteen cents. The markdown was too much for the People's Gas Company; although the Osage Company later raised its rate to sixteen cents. Chesley and Galbreath were forced to sell to their competitors. Cheaper rates remained, however, for the Oklahoma Natural Gas Company won a contract from the city in 1909.⁹⁷ Within six years, the two companies were supplying all of the natural gas used by the city at a rate of twenty and one-half cents per thousand cubic feet.⁹⁸

The city's working relationship with the Tulsa Commercial Bridge Company, which supplied electricity, was even more harmonious. The year 1904 saw a contract let for electricity with a rate determined by watts and usage. The industrial rate ran \$7.50 for all-night circuits, while an arc light up to 12,000 circuits for private consumers ran \$5.50.⁹⁹ After nine years of quality service, the Tulsa corporation sold out to Public Service Company.¹⁰⁰ All light and power came from electricity and natural gas, and acquisition of both was never a major problem.

The relationship between the city government and the parties responsible for building and operating the street railway system was not

so pleasant. Eager to have a public transportation system, city officials awarded the first franchise to eighteen locals who worked diligently to uphold their end of the contract, but who were unfortunately ignorant of how to construct a railway. To rescue the operation and their financial status, these Tulsans sold the operation to Charles H. Bosler, a streetcar man from Dayton, Ohio, for \$5,000.¹⁰¹ At first the city council was reluctant to award another contract, especially to someone who did not live in Tulsa, but so much time and money had been spent to get the project underway that they eventually acquiesced and reached a bargain requiring Bosler to begin laying track within sixty days.¹⁰² The Ohioan met the sixty-day requirement by laying two rails near First Street, and an electric streetcar made its first run along East First in May of 1907.¹⁰³ All sides remained satisfied until new settlers opened the Lynch-Forsythe addition on the east side of Tulsa. In return for service to the new section, Bosler was paid an additional \$10,000 and guaranteed fifteen percent of all revenue received from the sale of lots. However, when residents paid the agreed amount, the railway was not completed, and remained unfinished for several years. Meanwhile other citizens began expressing bitter feelings against the Tulsa Street Car Company, as it was called, because of lax scheduling and inferior equipment which was in constant need of repair.¹⁰⁴ The rapidly mounting war between the city commissioners and Bosler mushroomed into a heated confrontation. The commissioners charged the Tulsa Street Car Company with reneging on the contract, while Bosler uttered vituperative statements about the commissioners' unreasonable demands for immediate expansion of the track. The atmosphere remained filled with antagonism and mistrust until 1929 when

Bosler sold the franchise to the United Service Company, thus ending the verbal battle, but not unfortunately Tulsa's quest for adequate mass transit.¹⁰⁵

Nor were other civic problems easily solved, especially those of a political nature. Like many cities of the so-called Progressive Era, which lasted roughly from 1900 to 1920, Tulsa experienced political ups and downs. Tulsa was a highly partisan town. Whenever the Republicans and Democrats agreed upon a common goal, such as the Spavinaw Water Project, government was highly efficient. But all too often, the two parties worked at odds, thus hampering development and suggesting that the people had lost control of their government.

The political discontent was not without justification. Over the years the "open town" question overshadowed all other issues. Although both Republican and Democratic office holders in every election spoke of the virtues of a closed town, and while the members of the Chamber of Commerce decried the loss of potential new industries because entrepreneurs feared lawlessness, city officials made only weak attempts to crack down on brothels, crooked gamblers, and prostitutes.¹⁰⁶ Those who worked behind the scenes to keep the saloons and gambling halls in operation argued that Tulsa had a long history of lawlessness dating to the days of the cowhand, and that oilmen expected the same recreational facilities.¹⁰⁷ If Tulsa was to hold the oil industry, they explained, it had to remain open. Removed from their loved ones back home, many oilmen reverted to a quasi-animalistic state of mind, free of social restrictions. Thus when respectable newcomers arrived on the scene, they found, as did John A. Oliphant, one of Tulsa's first police chiefs, that:

...there were a good many men--oil prospectors for the most part--living rather careless domestic lives.... They had formed misalliances hwere, and the number of house keepers, cooks, and laundresses they had were amazing.... The conduct of these men and their women friends was growing flagrantly bold.¹⁰⁸

In such a social climate it was no wonder that Tulsa businessmen hesitated to close the saloons and gambling halls so characteristic of boom towns of former era. Moralistic articles in the Tulsa Daily World alarming the citizens that "Tulsa's amazing reign of vice puts to shame the rotten days of ancient Rome" voiced what honest citizens believed to be happening to their city, and aggravated their feelings of helplessness.¹⁰⁹

The government's failure to eradicate vice came from two sources. The first was the continual shifting of political sands owing to the continual influx of settlers during the first two decades of the 20th century.¹¹⁰ As great numbers of people entered the city from all strata of society and geographical regions, it became increasingly difficult for the leadership of either party to find a solid base of support. Thus while the voice of the clean-town faction rang loudly enough seemingly to be coming from the majority of throats, there was ample evidence that political power rested with those who wished to keep the town open. L. J. Martin, a Democratic mayor from 1910 to 1912, discovered this reality when he left office virtually friendless because he personally led raids on gambling houses.¹¹¹ Certainly no politician wanted to venture forth in an honest attempt to clean up the town if that was to be his reward.

Secondly, the outcry against violence failed to stir a major movement to organize citizen's groups dedicated to fighting immorality.

Local temperance meetings conspicuously drew scant attendance and financial support.¹¹² Without concentrated pressure for reform, the citizenry was unable to close many of the local saloons and end lawlessness until the mid-twenties.

The major cause of government ineffectiveness was the caucus system under which both political parties operated until statehood. The process of electing city officials began at the ward level in February of even-numbered years. There the rank and file chose delegates to the county convention where the party nominated candidates for public office.¹¹³ Reformers charged that the system was undemocratic because the party's nominee did not always reflect public opinion; to this the political leaders rejoined that ward meetings were open to the public, and instead of prohibiting mass participation the system promoted it. Political machines were not inherently evil, officials of both parties argued. In cases where the political tides were difficult to determine, they were essential in bringing political stability to the city. With statehood only a short time away, political leaders looked favorably on the likes of Tammany Hall in New York City because of the efficiency with which it conducted business.¹¹⁴

The door to more responsive government opened in 1908 when the new constitution of the state of Oklahoma required all cities of more than 2,000 population to frame new city charters.¹¹⁵ Immediately a bipartisan movement to rewrite the Tulsa charter began, and on February 4, 1908, a special election was held in each ward to elect two representatives to a charter convention charged with revising the old charter and submitting a new one to the people. The resulting new charter represented the reform influence of the Progressive Era. It

made utility rates subject to regulation by the city government in the belief that private corporations would over-charge if left unregulated.¹¹⁶ To make the government more responsive to public opinion, the charter drafters included the right of the initiative and referendum by which the people could legislate their own laws without the aid of the city government.¹¹⁷ However, the most innovative aspect of the charter was the provision of a mayor-commission form of government, with all forced to run as at-large candidates.¹¹⁸ Galveston, Texas, was the first city to try the commission form of government, and its popularity had spread to other cities in the nation. The new charter came before the people in a special election held on July 3, 1908; it passed by a vote of 992 for and 636 against. Governor Charles N. Haskell signed it on January 7, 1909, making Tulsa the first city in the state to operate under the commission system.¹¹⁹

The new charter intensified the battle between the two major parties which had begun before statehood. The Democrats branded their arch rivals as the puppets of the railroads, insurance companies, and large corporations "who used the people's money to keep the Republican Party in power."¹²⁰ The Republicans, in kind, felt no compunction to tread lightly on Democratic toes. The Grand Old Party accused the opposition of being the party of Irresponsibility and Bryan, a loose coalition of political opportunists who thrived on confusing the voters with nonsensical rhetoric. To the followers of Lincoln and Teddy Roosevelt, the heritage of a city run by Democrats was Tammany Hall and all the corruption that machine politics brought.¹²¹

In the race for political power, the Democrats got off to an early lead with help from an unexpected source--Republican President Theodore

Roosevelt. When the members of the state constitutional convention presented the draft of the proposed state constitution in Washington, D. C., the president vociferously opposed its ratification, even threatening to veto it. The Democrats, naturally, attacked the Republicans as the party that not only tried to keep Oklahoma out of the Union, but also as the party of suppression of community control.¹²² The stigma haunted the Republicans for more than twenty years. Democrats won the vast majority of city elections, except in 1908 when the Republicans joined with maverick Democrats to support John O. Mitchell, a former Democratic mayor, who defeated William P. More.¹²³ The Democrats returned to power in 1910, electing L. J. Martin, a member of the Commercial Club and longtime Tulsa booster, over nonpartisan candidate H. O. McClure, a Republican businessman.¹²⁴ The Republicans did not win another election until 1916 when the Democrats suffered from a cloud of corruption in the Frank Wooden administration. A special audit of the city's records showed funds had been irregularly and illegally spent for political gain. Republicans, running on a law and order platform, soundly defeated the opposition in spring elections.¹²⁵

Although political competition remained fierce, political factions, parties, and interest groups shared the ultimate goal of community development. Men dedicated to boosterism moved in and out of government service, bringing with them a perspective of city government characteristic of Midwestern middleclass philosophy. The modern businessmen had replaced Indians, cattlemen, and even the first oil prospectors as the legitimate heirs of pioneers who had settled the American West. The early sojourners of the 1880s and 1890s hardly recognized the Tulsa they had helped found, but they readily understood the ethics of new

society. Oil and the technology brought with it had reshaped the landscape and made the local economic system more complex, but the goals of new Tulsans differed little, if at all, from those of the first settlers.

FOOTNOTES

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⁴Tulsa Chamber of Commerce, M.D.M., December 29, 1912, 4.

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⁶Tulsa Chamber of Commerce, M.D.M., January 10, and February 22, 1913.

⁷Tulsa Daily Democrat, May 26, 1905, 3; July 7, 1905, 1.

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¹⁰Philip Dickerson, M.A., History of Tulsa, I.T.: Her Natural Advantages of Location, Climate, Fertile Soil, Etc., A Railroad Center of the Creek, Cherokee, and Osage Nations (Tulsa, 1903), 13.

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- ²⁵ Tulsa Daily Democrat, "Special Edition," March 21, 1905, 1, in Tulsa Chamber of Commerce, M.D.M., March 23, 1905.
- ²⁶ Douglas, The History of Tulsa, I, 93.
- ²⁷ Ibid., 194.
- ²⁸ Ibid., 197. Ahlum, "The Romance of Tulsa," 1.
- ²⁹ Douglas, The History of Tulsa, I, 197.
- ³⁰ Tulsa Daily World, March 8, 1952, 10.
- ³¹ Douglas, The History of Tulsa, I, 170.
- ³² Hall, The Beginning of Tulsa, 62.
- ³³ Ibid.
- ³⁴ Ibid., 63. Douglas, The History of Tulsa, I, 170.
- ³⁵ Hall, The Beginning of Tulsa, 64.
- ³⁶ A copy of the contract between the city of Tulsa and the Missouri, Kansas and Oklahoma Railway Company is in Douglas, The History of Tulsa, I, 173.
- ³⁷ Hall, The Beginning of Tulsa, 64.
- ³⁸ Ibid.
- ³⁹ Ibid. McClintock, "Tulsa--A Story of Achievement," 11.
- ⁴⁰ Cherokee Messenger, March 3, 1905, 2.
- ⁴¹ Hall, The Beginning of Tulsa, 64.
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- ⁴⁶Reid Holland, "Urban Frontier Leadership," (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Oklahoma State University, 1971), 26.
- ⁴⁷Charles Evans, "Harry Campbell," Chronicles of Oklahoma, XXVIII (Autumn, 1950), 377.
- ⁴⁸Hall, The Beginning of Tulsa, 66.
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- ⁵¹Ibid., 33.
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- ⁵⁶Manuel of Administration, Central High School (Tulsa, 1927), 28. McClintock, "Tulsa--A Story of Achievement," 19.
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- ⁸⁰ Tulsa Chamber of Commerce, M.D.M., March 10, 1916.
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CHAPTER V

CONFLICT AND CONSENSUS OF VALUES

On the eve of President Woodrow Wilson's second inauguration, Tulsans, like their fellow citizens around the nation, exuded confidence in capitalism and democracy which had taken the United States from a small, insignificant confederation of English colonies to a nation of international prestige and power. Americans finally completed the "manifest destiny" of the nation, and stood before the world as the product of Western democracy and free enterprise. Americans or Europeans espousing other philosophies were viewed as enemies of the United States, and many citizens believed that any means necessary to repel alien notions were justified. The American people entered the First World War as if it was a crusade, or, as Wilson phrased it, "to make the world safe for democracy." No community believed those words more than Tulsa.

During Wilson's first term the primary enemy of democracy lived south of the Rio Grande as the president of Mexico, Victoriana Huerta. President Wilson refused to recognize the Huerta government because the old revolutionary had achieved power by assassinating his predecessor, Venustiano Carranza, and for this President Wilson decided he should be punished with economic embargoes and diplomatic and military harassment. The situation became so acerbic that the Congress passed the National Defense Act on June 3, 1916, enlarging the regular army by integrating National Guard units into the active military.

Tulsans patriotically answered the call to arms. Responding to a telegram from Colonel Roy Hoffman of the First Oklahoma Infantry, Alva J. Niles, former Adjutant General of the Oklahoma National Guard, a veteran of the Spanish-American War, and a prominent Tulsa banker, inducted forty-five men into the military.¹ Within a week after this first meeting, volunteers filled the town's quota of sixty-five men, and newly formed Company C began training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. They embarked from Fort Sill on July 19, 1916, and arrived in Brownsville, Texas, two days later. Trained as an ambulance unit, they remained on the Rio Grande for six and one-half months under the leadership of General John Pershing. The unit ended its tour of duty on March 1, 1917, and returned to Fort Sill, where the men were discharged from the army.²

During the spring of 1917, tensions subsided between the United States and Mexico, but flared between Washington and the Central Powers of Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Turkey. Submarine attacks forced President Wilson to ask Congress for a declaration of war on April 2, 1917. Thirty days after Congress approved the war message, the men of Company C reorganized as part of the 42nd Infantry, 36th Division, of the Oklahoma National Guard.³ Dr. Hector G. Lareau took command of the ambulance company in August and, after a six-month delay, led his troops to Ft. Sam Houston, Texas, where they trained. In March the company returned to Tulsa.⁴ The 42nd departed for Europe on October 18, from Hoboken, New Jersey, on the U.S.S. President Lincoln, formerly a freighter in the German merchant marine.⁵

The trip proved uneventful, and they arrived safely at St. Nazaire, Loire Inferieure, France, on October 31, 1917.⁶ In February of 1918

they were headquartered at a small farm house known as Maison de Brigade on the road between Luneville and St. Clement, part of the Baccarat sector of the front. During heavy fighting, Lloyd C. Beach became the first Tulsan wounded in the war. Two other Tulsans, Herbert B. Baber and Berford Pyle, rushed him to the Company hospital, saved his life and earned letters of commendation for themselves.⁷

In late spring Company C joined the 4th French Army at Champagne, where the Allied command expected the German army to push toward Paris. There from the fourteenth to the eighteenth of July, they faced ghastly fighting. The Tulsa Ambulance Company carried more than 2,205 men to hospitals during the engagement. Military reports described the engagement as so fierce that the flash from exploding shells produced sufficient light for men ten miles behind the lines to read newspapers, and thunder of such magnitude that it echoed in Paris, more than 100 miles away.⁸ Disengagement from Champagne gave little time to regroup. On July 24 Tulsans were again in the thick of war at Chateau-Thierry, a battle fought intermittently until August 6.⁹

After the succession of such heavy engagements, the Tulsans rested at Rozieres and Remois for two weeks before joining the 165th Infantry at Haumont in the war sector northwest of Toul. A long-dreaded German offensive began soon thereafter, and the company entered the life-and-death struggle at the Battles of Verdun and Meuse-Argonne. Company C transported 5,460 men to the back lines during the struggle until November 11, 1918, when the German army in disarray and full retreat surrendered.¹⁰ Tulsans served as part of the occupying force until April 17, 1919, when they boarded the Mt. Vernon and sailed for home. They arrived in New York on April 25, and at 8:00 P.M. on May 16 paraded

down Main Street in Tulsa to the Convention Hall. Five thousand people jammed the streets, cheering with joy as their conquering heroes returned.¹¹

Tulsans participated in other military units during the war. Tulsa citizens and other men of northeastern Oklahoma counties organized the 358th Infantry as part of the 179th Brigade of the famous 90th Division. This infantry fought in the most decisive battles of the war before returning home on June 12, 1918.¹² Tulsa University contributed men to the Tulsa Chamber of Commerce effort to organize D Company, 2nd Battalion, of the 111th Engineers. The company won undying fame during the St. Mihiel offensive of September, 1918 in the Argonne forest, by constructing bridges and roads for the Allied armies.¹³

Tulsans who remained home during the war showed no less enthusiasm for the national effort. As early as April of 1916 the Chamber of Commerce mailed a resolution to the Congress of the United States urging legislators to appropriate whatever funds were needed for preparedness.¹⁴ Once war began, locals immediately organized a Tulsa Council of National Defense and elected as its president J. Burr Gibbons, the general manager of the Hofstra Manufacturing Company and national director of the Navy League of the United States.¹⁵ The Council of National Defense divided into two units. Members of the Investigation Department vigilantly ferreted out draft evaders, deserters, and Liberty Bond slackers, while the Legal Advisory Committee investigated cases of "military slackers" and protected families of soldiers from financial problems.¹⁶ The membership took their job seriously. By the end of the war the Investigation Department had found eighty-four cases of disloyalty, caught twelve deserters, and made twenty Liberty Bond

slackers "see the light."¹⁷

Support for the war at home involved more than extra-legal citizens' groups. It required supplying manpower for local military units held in reserve. Under the leadership of L. J. F. Rooney, the Tulsa County Home Guard, as it was named, contained approximately 600 male volunteers responsible for "combatting duplicity and treachery at home..." by protecting oil fields and airports, and maintaining a force at the detention camp where hundreds of impressed "idlers" worked in war factories.¹⁸ Most of the "undesirables" were suspected members of labor unions, especially extremist groups such as the International Workers of the World.¹⁹ Members of the Home Guard carried firearms and trained at the Tulsa Rifle Club. They considered their work serious, believing themselves to be the last line of defense if the Central Powers invaded the United States, or if "revolutionary forces" attempted to take advantage of the nation's weakened position.

Tulsa's home guard units proved brutally efficient in their endeavors, and Tulsa received national acclaim as one of the nation's most "patriotic cities." The men of the Tulsa County Council of Defense also sponsored "victory choruses" or community sings. Beginning at 7:30 every Saturday night, the city police stopped public traffic in the downtown area, while local and national dignitaries gave nationalistic speeches for the war effort and against anti-Americanism. Children distributed hundreds of thousands of pamphlets containing "Liberty Songs," and Tulsans crowded onto Main Street raising their voices in patriotic fervor.²⁰

At such occasions the Council of Defense sold Liberty Loans Bonds, issued by the federal government to help finance the war. Each town in

the nation received a quota, the size depending upon the population of the community. During the first national drive federal officials set Tulsa's quota at \$3,566,700. The Chamber of Commerce joined with the Council of Defense in promoting the first drive and they succeeded in collecting more than \$5,000,000. More than half of these sales were to citizens purchasing bonds of low denominations, but several large firms, such as the Cosden Oil Company, brought as much as \$500,000.²¹ The second drive began much slower. As wartime inflated prices attacked the pocketbooks of average citizens, people became reluctant to spend. It seemed for a while that the town would fall short of its goal until once again the Chamber of Commerce came to the rescue. Ralph Woods, a local businessman, parked a truck containing a large roulette wheel on Main Street and sold chances at \$150 each. After members of the Council of Defense sold fifty or one hundred chances they raffled the bonds to persons holding the lucky number.²² This proved a huge success. By the end of the war, Tulsans had contributed \$34,888,510, more than twenty percent of all war securities sold in the state, and the most sold per capita of all towns in the nation.²³

The intense support for the war had its darker side. The war aroused strong hatred and distrust of people and political ideas which did not seem to coincide with "pure Americanism." Tulsa citizens were quick to condemn persons of foreign stock who retained sympathetic feelings for their country of birth, especially if this was Germany. Strong editorials denouncing all types of "un-American" activities appeared almost daily in the major newspapers, fueling the flames of political hatred.²⁴ Commenting on the British Government's infringement of civil liberties, the Tulsa Daily World stated, "Mob law is

deplorable at any time, but in the fever or heat of a desperate war we cannot expect people to listen to reason."²⁵

Such attitudes spawned a climate of political suppression in Oklahoma. As observed in its operations, the Tulsa County Home Guard interpreted anything short of full support for the war effort as potential treason. Editors of the Tulsa Daily Democrat condemned pacifists for harboring pro-German sentiment, while those working for the Tulsa Daily World stated, "...we are slow to condemn American people of any sort as traitors, but there are many who are giving aid and comfort to our enemies under the plea of liberty of conscience and freedom of speech."²⁶ Counteraction against this type of perceived subterfuge became an all-consuming passion for numerous citizens' groups. Hoping to prevent pacifists and unionizers from influencing locals, the Chamber of Commerce passed by a large majority vote a resolution creating a General Censor Board to "pass on and recommend or disapprove the various subscription papers being circulated with this community."²⁷ Believing that the fate of their nation was at stake, Tulsans stood firm in the belief that the old system was under heavy assault at home and abroad and that if individualism and free enterprise were to survive, citizens must be vigilant.

During the war the anti-foreign attitude targeted labor unionizers as the most dangerous enemies of the economic and social system. To the business community unions exemplified "organized oppression" of free laboring men, not instruments by which the individual expressed dissatisfaction to the employer.²⁸ A few months prior to the outbreak of the war, various workers attempted to unionize clerks and stock boys employed in Tulsa department stores. Declaring that they stood for the

right of labor to advance through initiative and not collectivization, the members of the Chamber of Commerce staged a well-organized offensive against the closed shop forces and temporarily blocked the labor organizers.²⁹ Business leaders noted that the union movement's leaders came predominately from European stock, proving that the union movement equalled "Bolshevism," a notion which intensified antagonisms between employer and employee.

Ironically, unionizers caused many of their own problems. By refusing to denounce the most radical union operating in the Mid-Continent oil fields--the International Workers of the World--they were stigmatized as "fellow travelers" of the Communist Party. The I.W.W. aroused more fear and hatred in the business community than any other union. When the I.W.W. openly denounced the American entry into the war as "imperialism," it undermined the efforts of patriotic union organizers. Tulsans demanded that government begin "making Tulsa a bad location for I.W.W.'s and other labor agitators belonging to the dangerous element in any community."³⁰ As the war progressed, Tulsans associated the I.W.W. in particular and labor unions in general with enemies in Europe, especially the leaders of the newly founded Soviet Union. Locals, convinced that labor agitation encouraged national social unrest, saw divergent elements of society as anti-American. Indians, negroes, I.W.W., and other union members were outlaw mobs, and as such subject to attack by "well-meaning citizens."³¹ This anti-foreign and anti-union attitude came to a head in January of 1920 when United States Attorney-General A. Mitchell Palmer ordered mass arrests of labor leaders and destruction of union meeting halls throughout the nation. Tulsans supported the action and praised Palmer as a protector of liberty.³²

The Attorney General's action did not squelch the union movement nationally or in Tulsa. Six months after the government crackdown, local labor leaders in Tulsa attempted to organize hotel and restaurant employees, while plumbers threatened a strike unless local contractors recognized their right to bargain collectively. A large cadre of businessmen quickly founded a Citizens Committee for the Open Shop and won enthusiastic support from the Chamber of Commerce.³³ Businessmen intransigently halted all construction until the closed shop forces relented.³⁴ The threat frightened workers just as the Open Shop Organization gambled it would, and late in October a sufficient number of plumbers went back on the job to break the strike.³⁵ It was a brilliant victory for the open shop forces, and in a community very dependent on blue collar oil field workers the closed shop movement was suppressed for several years. The spring of 1921 saw the Chamber of Commerce proudly counting the open shop system in seventeen printing shops and seven sheet metal shops, and supported by 400 carpenters and 300 building contractors.³⁶

Victory over the closed shop forces had its price. The conflict justified individuals who violently enforced their own brand of social values and preyed on victims of the labor-management dispute. Tulsa was in many ways still a frontier community, and for a segment of society vigilante law and order remained a way of life, a way to settle disputes, a measure of one's manhood. The city police department, either by design or lack of manpower, ignored bootleggers, gamblers, and cutthroats.³⁷ By late 1920, lawlessness had increased beyond all—endurance.

On August 22, 1920, two men and a woman kidnapped Homer Nida, a

taxi cab driver, stole his money, then took him to Red Fork where they shot him in the stomach while he begged for his life. Nida lived until the following morning, long enough to tell his story. Within hours after his death, the police arrested three known criminals, Marie Harmon, Roy Belton, and Raymond Sharp. Marie confessed their guilt two days later. That night a mob stormed the city jail, seized Belton, and hanged him.³⁸ Stopping short of endorsing the mob action, Tulsans nevertheless confidently believed the hanging would deter other criminals. The Tulsa World observed, "An incident like that which occurred Saturday night does take place in a community where law enforcement is a fact and justice both speedy and certain."³⁹ Governor James B. Robertson convened a grand jury which, after months of testimony, adjourned without indicting any officials, although it condemned the mob for taking the law into its hands.⁴⁰

Men with sounder heads attempted to prevail over those relying on violence to bring law and order. In April of 1920 a handful of citizens organized a committee of one hundred, similar to the citizens band which had uncovered the Wooden political scandals five years earlier.⁴¹ The new committee chose Herbert D. Mason as chairman, and immediately set out to investigate the police department's seeming inability to stem the growing tide of lawlessness. Before these well-meaning citizens could act, however, Tulsa reaped the harvest of electing "recreant and inefficient officials."⁴²

During the violent days of its early history, Tulsa was the scene of racial prejudice. Oklahomans in general bemoaned the arrival of ex-slaves and black tenant farmers from Confederate states during the last two decades of the 19th century.⁴³ The first black people in Tulsa

settled along First Street between Madison and Lansing avenues.⁴⁴ By 1905 their numbers were sufficient for the city council to sell them a strip of land on Greenwood Avenue beginning at Archer Street. Gradually a few blacks acquired enough capital to open small shops; the first was Owen W. Gulley, a grocer, and the second, Thomas Gentry, invested in real estate.⁴⁵ By 1910 other entrepreneurs had joined this embryonic black capitalism in Tulsa, making large profits from small initial investments.

By the time Tulsans had written a new charter under the guidelines of the state government, whites began worrying about the political power blacks might exercise in city matters. Tulsa was the first Oklahoma town to include Jim Crow laws in its charter, as well as the Grandfather Clause, preventing segments of the black population from voting. This was conscientiously enforced by city officials.⁴⁶ The question of black power overshadowed other issues in the national and local elections of 1912. Both political parties tried to "out race" the other in a desperate attempt to attract voters at the price of racial tranquility. Accounts of Negro crime, murder, and brutality appeared on a daily basis in the local press. Democrats promised that if voters supported the party of the South, "Tulsa shall not be dominated by niggers as it will be with the Republican party in control."⁴⁷ Tulsans speculated openly about enacting quotas for population. When three Negro families moved from Muskogee, the Tulsa Daily Democrat warned, "Tulsa appears now to be in danger of losing its prestige [sic] as the 'whitest' town in Oklahoma."⁴⁸

Tulsans' fear of black political power was shared by other communities in Oklahoma and the South. On June 26, 1912, whites in Broken

Bow attacked the black section of that town, and when the battle was over 200 men of both races lay dead or seriously injured.⁴⁹ Five years later, riots broke out in St. Louis, Missouri, and Houston, Texas, and in 1919 one occurred in Chicago. People stood in bewilderment while homes disintegrated into ashes and American citizens killed one another; the nation appeared on the verge of a second civil war, but this time the feud was not between Northern and Southern states, but between whites and blacks.

What whites feared was a growing sense of racial pride slowly developing from experiences of black soldiers during the First World War. Blacks improved economically because the military depleted manpower for war industries; jobs normally held by whites were given to blacks. In Europe black soldiers found the military practiced rigid segregation, both in intermingling with enlisted men and horizontally moving into the officer corps. Yet black soldiers fought just as bravely for their country as did whites. Once the war ended, returning blacks experienced a new feeling of self-esteem incompatible with second-class citizenship which evolved into a demand that whites recognize blacks as patriots and Americans with all the privileges and obligations inherent in first-class citizenship.⁵⁰ The more reluctant the blacks became at returning to political disenfranchisement, social alienation, and economic deprivation, the more determined the whites were to prevent change. In Tulsa, feelings of racial distrust and hatred blended with the ever-present lawlessness and produced an unstable social chemistry awaiting ignition.

On June 1, 1921, the Tulsa Tribune published a short three paragraph article entitled, "Police Nab Negro for Attacking Girl in an

Elevator."⁵¹ The Negro was Dick Rowland, nineteen years old. Sarah Page, who operated an elevator at the Drexel building and attended a local business college, charged that Rowland attempted to assault her while she transported him in the elevator to the third floor. Within hours after the evening newspaper hit the streets, the long-feared violence exploded.

At seven-thirty that night, Chief of Police John A. Gustafson received a report from City Sheriff William M. McCullough that a rowdy band of whites and a larger group of blacks were gathering outside the county jail where McCullough held Rowland. Gustafson and his deputies had heard rumors of a possible lynching, but believed them to be idle talk.⁵² Sheriff McCullough, not as confident, decided to stay at the jail that night. He ordered his white deputies to run the building's elevator to the top floor and to station themselves inside the jail.⁵³ Meanwhile he sent his black deputy, Barner Clever, outside to disperse the growing mob of excited blacks, while the sheriff walked from the jail across the street to the crowd the whites. As both men left the building, they were met with jeers and catcalls from both groups. However, each man successfully dispersed the crowd.⁵⁴ Sheriff McCullough then returned to the jail where he met a Tulsa World reporter carrying a copy of a telegram from Mayor Thaddeus D. Evans to Governor Robertson, requesting help.⁵⁵

The mayor's decision came too late. Sometime between eight-thirty and nine o'clock, an anonymous caller phoned a theater in the black community and spread word that whites were going to lynch Rowland.⁵⁶ At ten-thirty a crowd of black Tulsans, twice the size of the first, gathered at First and Cincinnati ready for an apparent invasion of the

business district. They collided with an even larger force of armed whites. Sporadic firing between the mobs became incessant as whites, determined to drive the blacks back into the Negro section of town, climbed into automobiles and onto trucks.⁵⁷ They joined with the local National Guard unit under the command of Colonel Leo J. F. Rooney, who intended to use his troops to separate the warring factions. He was unsuccessful. Each side clamored for arms, and by daybreak virtually every store and shop carrying firearms and ammunition had been vandalized.⁵⁸ Gunshots, sounding like loud fireworks, broke the still of the night as the race war began.

The heaviest fighting took place between midnight and dawn on June 1. The black mob made its first stand at Archer Street and Cincinnati Avenue, north of the Frisco track, while a smaller contingent dug in along Sixth Street and Main on the south side of Standpipe Hill.⁵⁹ Snipers, fighting independent of the mob, climbed to the top of frame buildings north of the track and opened fire on advancing whites. In order to rout the snipers, several white veterans of President Wilson's war to "make the world safe for democracy" scrambled the heights of neighboring buildings and threw lighted oil-soaked rags onto the roofs shielding the ambushers. The gusting wind carried the flames, spreading them from one building to the next until large portions of the black community were ablaze. Major fires burned throughout the night and the following day, while smaller fires spasmodically erupted as late as Thursday evening.⁶⁰

White patrols came under withering fire from blacks along Standpipe Hill. The advancing force marched in military formation up the hill until the fire became so concentrated that they had to retreat. However,

inforcements in the form of the local National Guard arrived shortly carrying two machine guns. The defenders attempted to withdraw, only to be caught by the opening rounds of the machine guns from two sides of the hill and rifle fire from the left and right. The guardsmen relentlessly peppered shots into the trapped fugitives for three hours until the blacks, huddled behind trees and shrubs hoisted a white handkerchief. The guardsmen rushed in, disarming the frightened vanquished. Ambulances arrived on the scene, and carried away fifty lifeless bodies, mostly those of young men, women, and children.⁶¹

The last sizable regiment of blacks occupied the newly constructed Mt. Zion Baptist Church. Whites attempted several assaults against the entrenchments, but they were driven back under a hail of bullets. Finished with the "battle of Standpipe Hill," National Guardsmen positioned their machine guns and opened fire, while civilians crawled on the ground until they were close enough to set fire to the church. The wooden structure virtually exploded into four walls of flames threatening to incinerate persons within. As blacks rushed from the flaming building, whites opened fire with pistols and machine guns, killing three men. The remainder of the force, fell to the ground and surrendered.⁶² The last major engagement of the Tulsa race riot was over.

The National Guard next turned to restoring law and order. Troops herded refugees into encampments at the fair grounds, the National Guard Armory, and the Convention Center where the Red Cross and other volunteers supplied food, shelter, and medical attention.⁶³ Newspaper reporters on the scene estimated that more than 3,000 men, women, and children milled in fear inside the encampments while their homes burned

and crazed whites looted their possessions. National Guardsmen, determined to halt vandalism, arrested twenty-three men at bayonet point.⁶⁴ Governor Robertson dramatically declared martial law and Adjutant General Charles F. Barrett of the Oklahoma National Guard took control of the city government on the morning of June 2. That same day, Mayor Evans and Police Commissioner M. Adkison issued a statement ordering all those who took up arms back to their homes.⁶⁵

"Little Africa," as Tulsans called the black community, lay in ruins. Thirty-five city blocks had been looted systematically by enraged whites; some of the vandals were "special police commissioners," deputized during the night by police officials.⁶⁶ The burned area lay twelve blocks wide and two miles long between North Boston and Madison avenues and extended from Archer Street northward past Pine. North Greenwood Avenue, the major street of the district, stood smoldering in the warm summer heat, ravaged by war as if invaded by some alien force.⁶⁷ Inhabitants stumbled over the charred buildings and stood grieving by what had once been their homes. On the evening of June 2, while Governor Robertson was jussively requesting that District Judge Valjean Biddison order a grand jury investigation, Barney Clever, the black deputy sheriff who had tried in vain to stop the violence twenty-four hours earlier, sat in his chair inside the county court house and openly wept. During the riot he fought his way home and evacuated a handful of valuables. When he returned the next morning, his house was gone, burned to the ground, and all his possessions had been looted by the mob.⁶⁸ Tulsa real estate companies estimated the value of destroyed property at \$2,500,000.⁶⁹ The loss of lives was harder to estimate, but staggering. Newspaper and police reports show from 30 to 500 deaths,

and hundreds suffered injuries sufficient to require hospitalization.⁷⁰

Much to their credit, responsible citizens immediately began repairing the damage done to the community. President Alva J. Niles called the Chamber of Commerce to a special meeting on June 3. After speeches by General Barrett and other local officials advising the Chamber on what authorities needed, the membership elected an executive committee of ten headed by former Mayor Loyal J. Martin.⁷¹ During the next two weeks the committee guided relief programs and petitioned private national and local organizations and ad hoc citizens committees for help.

Responsibility for organizing the first relief programs was assumed by churches. Within two days after the riot, members of the Boston Avenue Methodist Church offered the basement of their church as a center for the wounded. The church also provided food for refugees until they were able to return to work and their homes. Other churches began drives to collect bedding and clothes for those who had lost everything. Such efforts continued until professional organizations could begin functioning.⁷²

Early on the morning of June 2, the local chapter of the American Red Cross responded to a call by Mayor Evans to "establish headquarters for all relief work...."⁷³ With a promise from the Public Welfare Board that it would provide any financing the Red Cross might need, volunteers opened a general headquarters at the Y.M.C.A. at Fourth Street and Cincinnati Avenue, and selected the First Baptist Church as the central receiving station for all relief donations. Dr. Paul R. Brown took charge of the Red Cross hospital at the old Cinnabar Hospital on North Main Street.⁷⁴

While churches and the professionals of the American Red Cross proceeded with an all-out effort to ease the post-riot problem, private citizens responded with equal vigor. The Tulsa Tribune began a drive for clothes, food, and volunteers, and pleaded with citizens to show compassion for those who "will return, not to their homes they had Tuesday afternoon, but to heaps of ashes."⁷⁵ The Rotary Club supplied sandwiches and water to approximately 2,000 refugees at the Convention Hall.⁷⁶ The riot brought members of both races closer together.

Almost as quickly as locals began aiding the refugees, they started looking for the villains responsible for the tragedy. The Tulsa Tribune claimed, "Uprising has long been in process of planning." Describing the white mob that had gathered outside the jail as "largely a curious, good natured crowd," the editors blamed the "bad element of nigger-town."⁷⁷ Claiming to have "reliable information" from the local officials, the Tribune reported that the police possessed information that certain Negroes were taking up arms against whites but failed to investigate the rumors.⁷⁸ The Tulsa police department ventured the theory that the I.W.W. had been stirring racial unrest and that the Tulsa Star, a local black newspaper, must be held partially responsible for preaching "so-called equality."⁷⁹

On June 25 the grand jury under Judge Valjean Biddison handed down its report. The members of the jury cited the presence of an armed mob of black citizens around the jail as the immediate cause of the riot. "There was no mob spirit among the whites.... The [white] assembly was quiet until the arrival of armed negroes...." But the root causes went much deeper, the jurors reported. Principally, there had been for some time in Tulsa

...agitation among the negroes for equal rights, social equality, and their ability to demand the same. We are glad to exonerate the great majority of the colored people who neither had knowledge of nor part in either the agitation or the accumulation of arms....⁸⁰

The report went on to note that "law violations have not been confined to the colored district, but that the 'choc' joints and 'houses of prostitution' and 'bootlegging' are more or less common in the city."⁸¹

The grand jury recommended that "indiscriminate mingling of white and colored people in dance halls and other places of amusement be positively prohibited..." as the best avenue to avoiding another disturbance.⁸² Racial hatred, rising black self-esteem, and lawlessness had combined, and the result was racial war and widespread destruction. On June 15, 1921, Dick Rowland was released by Tulsa officials when Sarah Page declined to prosecute, and the city of Tulsa officially dismissed all charges against him on September 28, 1921.⁸³

The grand jury prophetically warned Tulsans that the lawlessness must be stopped or vigilante actions by private citizens, frustrated by the ineptness of local law enforcement officials, would inevitably continue. Soon there were floggings and public "tarrings" by hooded men who claimed to be defenders of law and order. Just when the Honorable Order of the Ku Klux Klan first appeared in Tulsa is unclear. Dr. Caleb Ridley, a Baptist preacher, formerly arrested for public drunkenness in Atlanta, Georgia, held the first known Klan meeting in Convention Hall on August 10, 1921, and by September the local chapter boasted a membership of some 1,500.⁸⁴ At first the self-appointed public defenders directed their illegal attacks against suspected criminals the local authorities could not, or would not, prosecute. Working at night, the Klan abducted its victims, transported them out to the countryside,

stripped them naked, and flogged them with bull whips.⁸⁵ While most Tulsans rejected the tactics of the Klan, as long as the offenders operated out of sight Tulsans allowed the attacks. Then on April 1, 1922, in the middle of the day an estimated 1,700 men in white hoods and flowing robes paraded down Main Street and startled pedestrians. The crowd stood in awe as the formation led by three large men on horseback passed by; the middle man carried an American flag. From time to time individual onlookers cheered and applauded, but the vast majority simply stood in silence.⁸⁶ Floggings and tarrings continued during the summer months, but on August 14, 1923, Tulsans reaped the reward for their neglect: Governor John C. Walton declared martial law in Tulsa. ✓

The drastic and unexpected action from the governor's office came in response to a daylight flogging of Nate Hantaman, a boarding house operator. Hantaman had been taken into custody by the Tulsa Police Department for questioning about possible drug trafficking and then released. As he walked down the block from the police station, two assailants dragged him into a car and drove him to the outskirts of town. There they stripped and flogged him before leaving him naked and bleeding in a deserted field. Hantaman painfully crawled to a nearby road and flagged down a passing traveler who took him to the nearest hospital. On hearing of the brazen attack, Mrs. Hantaman telephoned the governor's office, reported the incident, and charged the Klan with assault and the Tulsa Police Department with complicity. The governor publicly announced that if Hantaman's assailants were not apprehended within three days, he would declare martial law; the police did not arrest a suspect, and Governor Walton followed through with his threat.⁸⁷ ✓

That afternoon, a contingent of National Guardsmen under the command of General Baird H. Markham took control of the offices of the Tulsa County Sheriff and the city police commissioner. Within hours General Markham issued a declaration establishing a military court charged with investigating allegations of conspiracy between local law officials and the attackers.⁸⁸

Although citizens were shocked by the declaration of martial law, Governor Walton drew strong support from different segments of the community. Recognizing that Governor Walton's attack against crime in the city was in reality an investigation of Klan activities, the Tulsa Daily World, long an opponent of the secret organization, stated, "As between the Invisible Empire... and the governor, the World frankly admits that its choice is with Governor Walton."⁸⁹ Nationally, the American press also sided with the Governor. McAlister Coleman, commentator for The Nation, bluntly stated, "...the Governor has acted with laudable courage."⁹⁰

With such wide public support, Walton felt he would not lose his war against the Klan. On August 31 he admonished the community for not, in his view, cooperating with the military court and tightened control over the community by sending 200 more troops and suspending the writ of habeas corpus.⁹¹ In their weekly meeting on Friday, September 1, the Chamber of Commerce membership decided that although they doubted the charges against the city officials they would abide by the proclamation but work to persuade the governor to lift martial law if Tulsans promised to clean their own house.⁹² By September 15 the tide of public opinion began turning against the governor into a wave of sufficient size to force him out of the state capital. On October 23 the Oklahoma

House of Representatives impeached Governor Walton, and on November 19 the Senate upheld eleven counts against the governor, subsequently removing him from office.

Governor Walton was found guilty of committing impeachable offenses by the state legislature, yet excerpts from the transcript of the military court in Tulsa forcefully illustrated that the Klan frequently practiced terrorism against citizens of the community. The military court indicted four Tulsa men for the flogging of Hantaman, all confessed membership in the Klan.⁹³ Nor was the Hantaman flogging an isolated incident. In 1922 Klansmen attacked James Smitherman, a Tulsa man known in his community as a "honest soul," tied him to a tree, and whipped him before amputating his right ear for attempting to register black voters.⁹⁴ Such revelations opened the community's eyes to the fact that Klan members were no better citizens than the criminal element they purported to oppose. In municipal elections that year Republicans tried to convince voters that Mayor Herman F. Newblock quietly had supported the local chapter of the Klan. The charges proved false and Newblock won reelection, but the vote was much closer than Democrats had expected.⁹⁵ When the Grand Old Party nominated a Klansman, William B. Weston, for mayor in 1926, the consistently Republican Tulsa Daily World remained silent except to say, "...his [Weston's] Klan connection and sympathy are anathema to our beliefs."⁹⁶ With his opponent publically identified as the Klan candidate, Democrat Newblock easily won reelection. After this election the Klan in Tulsa and throughout Oklahoma began a steady decline in power, from which it never recovered.

Unfortunately for the Democrats, other candidates of Newblock's

party were not as successful. Beginning in 1916 and ending in 1928, no party dominated the political scene. The Democrats won four of the seven races for mayor, but the Republicans carried every presidential election except 1916 when the town voted heavily for President Woodrow Wilson.⁹⁷ That year Tulsans voted a split ticket. Laboring under the cloud of scandal from the Frank Wooden administration, Republicans led by James H. Simmons trounced their hapless foes.⁹⁸

During the next four years, the two major parties traded victories. In 1918 Charles H. Hubbard, an oil driller and staunch Democrat, upset Mayor Simmons' bid for reelection only to lose to Republican Thaddeus D. Evans, a native Iowan in the farm loan business in 1920. That year women voted for the first time in a national election and gave Governor Warren G. Harding a decisive margin of victory in the city--and also elected the first woman to local public office: Mrs. Frank Seaman as city auditor.⁹⁹

The race riot destroyed Mayor Evans' chances for reelection in 1922 and opened the political door for a man who led Tulsa politics for the next six years, Herman F. Newblock. Born in Arkansas, he had moved to Cleveland, Oklahoma, while still young and had served as sheriff before relocating in Tulsa in 1908. He quickly entered politics, succeeding in becoming sheriff of Tulsa County for six years while dealing in real estate as a sideline. He served as a city commissioner under Democratic Mayor Hubbard and Republican Evans, and in 1922 he attained the top spot on the Democratic ticket.¹⁰⁰

Longtime Tulsa politicians picked Newblock as the favorite to win, but the Republicans gave a surprisingly strong challenge. Realizing that Evans could not win reelection, the Republicans nominated John R. Hadley,

a Tulsa lawyer and oil executive. A native of Indiana, he had come to Oklahoma in 1912 and moved to Tulsa shortly thereafter. He quickly became a major figure in the local Republican Party, serving on the State Central Committee and as a delegate to the Republican National Convention in 1916.¹⁰¹ His only serious drawback was that he had not stood for an elective office, and Newblock adopted that as his major attack. Describing himself as a "conservative, deliberate and steady city planner," he depicted Hadley as a good, honest man, not capable of leading a city still growing economically and culturally.¹⁰² The Republicans failed to find serious fault with Newblock and relied on emphasizing Hadley's longtime support of the Spavinaw project, a weak issue as Newblock had also worked for the program.¹⁰³ The Republican strategy proved ineffective, for the Democrats swept every major city office. Three Democrats received more votes than the new mayor.¹⁰⁴

Mayor Newblock proved politically astute, managing to weather the storm created by the Ku Klux Klan, Governor Walton, and a strong victory for Republican President Calvin Coolidge, to win again in 1924.¹⁰⁵ Two years later the Republicans abdicated any chance of winning by nominating William B. Weston. The Democratic Party prospered under Newblock's leadership. In 1926 the Tulsa Tribune happily noted that there were 27,648 registered voters in the city, of whom 16,983 were Democrats.¹⁰⁶

Newblock's downfall came in 1928 when the fourth-term issue and Al Smith's candidacy for president ended the "Newblock era." The Republicans picked a strong candidate for the mayor's race that year, Dan W. Patton, the man who had laid out the original Tulsa townsite. The old surveyor hammered home the theme of "democracy, not Ring Rule," and when the election board tallied the final vote it was Herman Newblock's "last

hurrah." Patton defeated the incumbent by 2,600 votes, while other Republican candidates swept the city offices.¹⁰⁷ Al Smith lost Tulsa by better than a two to one majority; 1928 was not a Democratic year.

The presidential race did produce one interesting sidenote; the traditionally Republican Tulsa Daily World and the predictably Democratic Tulsa Tribune switched sides in the contest. Jenkin Lloyd Jones, the new owner of the Tulsa Daily Democrat, quickly changed its name to the less partisan title Tulsa Tribune. Lloyd called himself a Democrat, but partisan comments rarely appeared in the paper. He consistently supported political candidates of both major parties, choosing the man espousing views similar to his, and prided himself on backing those whom he thought were the best candidates in local elections. He disliked Al Smith because the New Yorker smacked of Tammany Hall, the ruling political machine in New York City.¹⁰⁸ Loyal Tulsa Democrats charged the editor with harboring anti-Catholic sentiment. Jones angrily retorted that if Smith supporters were going to screene "anti-catholicism at those who sincerely disagreed with the Governor's proposals, then Smith was the bigot."¹⁰⁹ On the other hand, the editorials of the Tribune pictured Herbert Hoover as "the true progressive... against government ownership [of property] when it is an end and not a means.... But only to equalize prosperity among all classes...."¹⁰⁰

Editors of the Tulsa Daily World found much of the Smith platform to their liking. Smith, the "wet" candidate, favored ending prohibition, "not to open new saloons," the World wrote, "but to take the alcohol from the criminal element." The stand proved Smith a courageous man willing to stand on principle and not take a position simply to win votes.¹¹¹ Al Smith may have been brave, but he was not the favorite of

Tulsa; Hoover defeated the "Happy Warrior" by better than a two to one majority.

Herbert Hoover carried the vote in Tulsa because the people saw him as Jenkin Jones saw him, a "true progressive," and Tulsans knew the meaning of the word. Through the political and social turmoil after the First World War until Governor Walton's conviction in 1923, the spirit of progress never waned. Instead, by the beginning of the 1920s Tulsans interpreted the word as an end and not the means to that end. In the International Blue Book of 1921, Clarence B. Douglas announced:

Tulsa wants 100,000 population in 1922, more good families, more industrial plants, more inter-urban lines, more good farmers for rich agricultural lands, more good stock raisers, more good dairymen, more good gardeners and truck farmers, more good orchardists, more wholesale houses, more department stores, more distributing houses for this trade territory, more railroad commercial agents....¹¹²

In other words, Tulsans wanted more of everything they already had. Except for the population, they achieved their goals by the end of the decade.

In 1922 William K. Warren founded one of the major petroleum and natural gas companies, the Warren Company. Pioneering in the development and construction of liquid petroleum gas and natural gasoline barges for both inland and seagoing commerce, the Warren Company dealt exclusively in natural gasoline on a high volume basis. Warren bought gasoline during periods of surplus and stored it in huge tanks until demand rose to profitable levels. By 1930 the Warren Company had grown into one of the largest wholesale companies in the United States, and W. K. Warren led the business community in Tulsa.¹¹³

By the halfway point in the decade construction was going on everywhere. In 1925 builders finished the Tulsa Club Building, a ten-story

office building. Not far away, the two Mayo brothers, John D. and Cass A., completed their five-year project, the Mayo Hotel, at Fifth Street and Cheyenne Avenue. The Mayos legitimately advertised it as the "finest hotel between the Mississippi River and the West Coast."¹¹⁴ Two years after the Mayo opened for business, the board of directors of the National Bank of Tulsa and oilman Waite Phillips announced within months of each other that they were beginning work on new buildings. Both were opened in 1929. The Philtower stood twenty-three stories high and housed the offices of numerous businesses, while the new National Bank climbed skyward twenty-seven stories.¹¹⁵ At the same time Tulsa was growing up, it was also growing out. After several years of debate between the citizens of Tulsa and Red Fork, the city annexed the old rival in the fall of 1927.¹¹⁶ The decade of the twenties saw Tulsa take on the shape of a modern city.

The transportation system continued developing throughout the decade. During the latter part of the 19th century, towns needed railroads to entice commerce; by the 1920s commerce demanded more modern travel. The city, in a perpetual state of road construction and repair, rebuilt old dirt and stone streets to accommodate the increasing number of automobiles. In the year 1920 alone, Tulsans spent \$3,000,000 for paving 110,243 square yards of street, and by the end of the decade traffic was so heavy that the city installed the first electric signals in the downtown area.¹¹⁷ Passenger service to and from other communities increased beyond all dreams. In 1927 so many travelers came to Tulsa by rail that the city voted \$1,250,000 in bonds to build a new union station.¹¹⁸

However, the single greatest boom in transportation came to Tulsa

on wings. Primarily used as carnival and circus attractions since Orville and Wilbur Wright had launched the first successful flight of a motor-driven airplane on December 17, 1903, by the beginning of the First World War persons close to the airline business convincingly argued that air travel was the wave of the future. Tulsans were determined to be in on the ground floor of the industry, and in 1917 the Tulsa Chamber of Commerce formed an "aviation land site committee" for the purpose of buying property for constructing an airport.¹¹⁹ Within two years the city had its first airfield, owned and operated by Duncan A. McIntyre. A seasoned veteran of the barnstorming circuit, McIntyre had dreamed of operating an airfield; his opportunity came in Tulsa. Located four miles east of town, the McIntyre Airport by 1919 was the second largest commercial airfield in the United States and the only one with runways lighted for night flights and long enough for all two-passenger planes.¹²⁰ The McIntyre field earned national acclaim in July of 1919 with the first air shipment of goods over an interstate route (from Tulsa to a factory in Kansas City, Missouri).¹²¹ The historic flight caught the attention of the federal government, and in August Henry M. Hickam, Director of the National Air Service in Washington, D. C., added Tulsa as a regular stop for all transcontinental mail and military flights.¹²² The airplane age arrived that year in Oklahoma.

After the promising start air travel in Tulsa slowed during the next seven years. A report submitted by William Holden, chairman of the Aviation Committee, informed the Chamber of Commerce that Tulsa needed a "great public airport," and that if the city was to stay abreast the air travel industry "a St. Louis air connection is a must."¹²³ The warning received reinforcement from Major C. H.

Biddlecombe of the United States Army. While meeting with the Chamber of Commerce, Major Biddlecombe stressed that if Tulsa could secure a place on a projected Pan-American air route linking the two Americas, the city would become a center for the airline industry in the Southwest.¹²⁴

The Chamber began immediately formulating a plan to develop a new airfield. A special Chamber airport committee under the chairmanship of C. H. Terwilliger accepted the responsibility of raising funds for the purchase of land.¹²⁵ Not satisfied with working strictly within the Chamber of Commerce, William G. Skelly, Waite Phillips, Harry Rogers, Omar K. Benedict and Cyrus S. Avery organized the Tulsa Airport Corporation and promised to purchase a tract of land suitable for a major airfield if the city guaranteed to reimburse the corporation. They selected a site just south of present day Mohawk Park and immediately began construction.¹²⁶ The first runways were little more than "earthen strips carved out of a wheat field," covered with chat to harden the surface, but Tulsans invited national flying dignitaries to the three-day festivities opening Tulsa International Airport on July 3-6, 1928.¹²⁷

In addition to building the Tulsa International Airport, Tulsans took further steps that year to ensure their position within the aviation industry. Within months after the airfield opened, William "Bill" Skelly organized the Spartan Aircraft Company and opened a school of aeronautics to train pilots and aircraft mechanics making Tulsa the center for training programs in the southwest.¹²⁸

Tulsa, the child of the oil industry, became the unchallenged leader of that industry in the early 1920s. Executives from all parts of the world traveled to northeastern Oklahoma for training in the

latest techniques of producing and marketing petroleum. Tulsans celebrated their achievement in 1923 by holding the International Petroleum Exposition; this followed the age-old commercial practice of fairs, trade shows, and commercial exhibitors. The first oil exposition had been held in Dallas, Texas, in 1921. The show attracted such a large number of spectators that Tulsa lawyer Earl Sneed advised the Chamber of Commerce that a petroleum congress, exposition, or carnival should be held in "the recognized center of the oil industry,...."¹²⁹

The Chamber immediately went to work on Sneed's proposal. An ad hoc committee headed by H. O. McClure polled local businessmen and oil executives and found them receptive to the project.¹³⁰ On hearing McClure's report, a select group of businessmen organized a corporation known as the International Petroleum Exposition, Incorporated. Guided by a board of eleven directors, the corporation undertook the responsibility of planning and organizing the exposition. The officers on the first board of directors were Lewis B. Jackson, J. M. Hayner, William A. Vandever, William Holden, and James J. McGraw.¹³¹

Activities for the exposition began on October 2, 1923, and leaders of the petroleum industry discussed the major problems faced by the industry and possible solutions to the problems. The gathering possessed an international flavor because foreign representatives and speakers appeared on the program.¹³² The exposition opened with the coronation of a "King Petroleum," portrayed by a local senior citizen who reigned over the week-long festivities.¹³³ Understanding that the success of the exposition rested not on how many leaders of the oil community attended but on the attendance of the general public, the directors organized a parade of colorfully decorated floats, high school bands, and

military drill teams. Throughout the seven days a carnival of acts from as far as the Paris Follies joined with Finks Comedy Circus, the Six Belfords, and headliners from Hollywood to provide entertainment for hundreds of thousands of people from all sections of the United States.¹³⁴ A beauty pageant culminated the festivities, crowning a young Tulsa girl as Miss Queen Petroleum. The extravaganza proved to be a huge success, and the exposition became an annual event thereafter.

By the end of the twenties, Tulsa had matured into a modern city. In 1928 alone the population increased by 20,000 people who extended the residential area to the north and northwest until Tulsa covered 17.51 square miles. The city issued \$12,696,672 in building permits that year, and installed 3,000 electricity meters in new homes.¹³⁵ The Tulsa Daily World sold 25,893 papers in Tulsa every day and circulated 58,375 more statewide.¹³⁶ But new people made it less volatile and mercurial, the personality of a young ambitious adult. Significantly, by 1930 the town slogan no longer was "Tulsa Spirit," but "The Magic Empire."¹³⁷

FOOTNOTES

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- ²⁹Ibid., March 17, 1916.
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- ³⁶Ibid., March 4, 1921.
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- ³⁹Tulsa Daily World, August 26, 1920, 5.
- ⁴⁰McClintock, "Tulsa--A Story of Achievement," 103.
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- ⁴³Daily Oklahoman, January 13, 1894, 3.
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CHAPTER VI

DEPRESSION YEARS

The shock of the stock market crash did not reach Tulsa for two years. During the months between October of 1929 and the winter of 1931, ranchers, dry goods salesmen, retail store managers and oilfield workers continued their daily lives, thankful that they lived in the Great Plains area of the United States and not along the Eastern seaboard where the economy had faltered and men were without work. Tulsans boasted of living in the fastest-growing and the richest-per-capita city in the world.¹ There were few signs of an approaching depression in Tulsa in 1930; oilmen and bankers had a worried look on their faces, but as yet everyone who wanted a job had one. The amazing commercial success story now thirty years old instilled in Tulsans a confidence that their community would not suffer from the economic collapse. In the winter and spring of 1930, the citizens passed two bond issues totaling \$6,880,000; the first appropriated funds for major street improvements, more sewers, new parks and playgrounds, additions to the five fire stations, and two new municipal hospitals; the second approved the city government's request to buy tracts of land for a future airport.² The people sensed confidence in the air. There would be no depression in Tulsa!

The economic climate may have been sunny and warm, but a storm was brewing in the distance. Despite its colossal achievements in the first

three decades of the 20th century, Tulsa's continued progress depended on an unstable set of economic factors. The city was the unchallenged oil center of the American Southwest and the major wholesale outlet for South American and Latin American oil, but substantial opportunities for developing other industries went largely ignored.³ Tulsa was a one-industry town, an unhealthy situation in good times, disastrous in bad. Compounding the potential danger was the volatile nature of the oil industry. A highly speculative business, it was subject to a series of profitable booms separated by declines.⁴ During periods of prolific oil production oilmen regularly invested in other local industries. Expansion therefore took place in other industries during declines in the oil sector of the economy. Thus the economic expansion of the 1920s in Tulsa was a series of offsetting alternating booms.

This unusual economic situation offered a type of economic safety valve for investors and workers. The working class of Tulsa consisted primarily of unskilled and semiskilled oilfield labor. Such workers easily switched from job to job, and alternate employment was usually available when oil production slumped. Boom periods, however, attracted large numbers of the unemployed, especially farmers, and by 1930 had expanded the labor force beyond the number of available jobs. The safety valve began to falter. The discovery of new pools in Seminole, Oklahoma City, and East Texas drove the price of oil to one cent per barrel.⁵ In the winter of that year, Tulsa's economy collapsed. Early relief efforts came from private foundations such as the American Red Cross and the Community Fund; the former's response was naturally limited by the purpose of the Red Cross, but volunteers operated as if a natural disaster had struck the community. They led drives for food and provided free

medical facilities for the sick. The Community Fund established soup lines and "rest houses" for men and their families left destitute by the sudden financial crash. Unfortunately the Community Fund relied on private donations for support which, although given freely in spirit, came slowly. By the late summer of 1932, Mayor Newblock inaugurated a policy designed to augment declining contributions to charitable organizations. He urged city employees, county employees, and owners and employees of local business firms to contribute a fixed percentage of their salaries to help finance the distribution of food to the needy.⁶ The mayor's plan had little success as the depression worsened and engulfed those to whom Newblock appealed for aid.

Leaders prepared for the disaster by studying what other cities had tried in order to stem the tide, and as early as fall of 1931 a movement was underway to organize a comprehensive and effectual program for the town and its surrounding area. Tulsa leaders turned to Charles C. Day, who had helped design such a plan for Oklahoma City. Speaking before the Chamber of Commerce, Day advised Tulsans to create one agency responsible for clearing all relief activities by private charities, churches, and governmental departments. But whatever plan the community leaders implemented, Day emphasized, businessmen must take the leading role; if they refused, "...we certainly will go under the dole and then the businessmen who did not act will squawk to high heaven."⁷

Day's words found a receptive audience. The Chamber of Commerce elected a fact-finding committee chaired by Alfred L. Farmer to survey employment conditions in Tulsa and the operations of public and private charitable organizations, and to make recommendations as to what the Chamber of Commerce could do to help facilitate relief operations.⁸

During the next thirty days the committee issued a questionnaire to all city agencies doing charity work, inquiring into the agency's operations and how these could be improved. The Farmer committee also investigated the record of the Better Business Bureau, the City Solicitations Committee, and the Community Fund, while programs in other communities were carefully studied for useful information.⁹

The committee's recommendations stressed that previous relief efforts had been extremely inefficient because of duplication. Success or failure of the relief program in Tulsa depended on how cooperative the federal, state, county, and city administrations were. To ensure such cooperation, the committee recommended that city officials establish a Central Committee of Five to direct and oversee county agencies and programs so that duplication of effort either in work relief or direct relief could be eliminated.¹⁰ The report went on to say that, while the committee members understand the recommendation was controversial and open to opposition from relief agencies fearing their autonomy would be destroyed by such a system, the committee believed the emergency circumstances required such an extraordinary body.¹¹ The fact-finding committee suggested that, if the Chamber of Commerce and the county and city government officials agreed, one representative each from the Community Fund, the Chamber of Commerce, the city administration, and the county commissioners should compose the committee and that these would select a fifth member at large.¹² When Farmer finished his report and answered several dozen questions as to the necessity of having a central coordinating committee, William Skelly and H. O. McClure praised the fact-finding committee for its work, and after a full and

open discussion the board of directors of the Chamber of Commerce un-
animously adopted the recommendation.¹³

Just how much bargaining went into persuading the relief agencies to accept the proposal is not known, but the Chamber of Commerce proponents for the coordinating committee won the day. By October 16 five Tulsans--H. O. McClure, president of the Tulsa Industrial Finance Corporation and the representative of the Chamber of Commerce, Harry Schwartz, president of the Tulsa Labor Council from the county commissioners, Ernest Cornelius, president of the Oklahoma Steel Castings Company from the Community Fund, Major John Leavell, president of the Leavell Coal Company and delegate of the city administration, and municipal judge G. Edward Warren, the member at large--took control of the city's charitable agencies.¹⁴

The Central Emergency Committee of Five immediately went to work. The committee announced its intention to appraise all agencies doing relief work and require inefficient agencies to discontinue operations. The Committee of Five also ordered the Community Fund to prevent any duplication of effort and told the Social Service Bureau to review all cases approved by other agencies before the applicant could receive relief. McClure demanded that charity be confined to the aged, the infirm, and families without adult male members. In order to ensure fair distribution of combined relief through charity and employment, the central committee combined the unemployment registration lists of the county government and the names of relief applicants registered with the Social Service Bureau.¹⁵ Once these primary operations were accomplished, the Committee of Five completed its consolidation of power.

After one week of existence the Committee of Five reacted to public pressure and set forth a detailed plan to end panhandling within the city. Hundreds of men and women, unable to find work of any sort, resorted to begging or selling apples, oranges, and rages in the streets and door-to-door. During the spring months of 1930, before the depression hit fully in Tulsa, citizens fortunate enough to have work took pity on the wretched creatures and hired them to rake leaves, mow lawns, or perform other household chores in return for food. But as the economic situation worsened and the ranks of the panhandlers expanded, they became a public menace and received a less-than-cordial greeting. The committee partially alleviated the problem by establishing community rooming houses for transients. The committee also authorized the city's first overnight home for Negro men.¹⁶ The program, however, proved unfeasible in the depression, and panhandling continued throughout the thirties.

The old fact-finding committee report recommended that "...the committee of five give earnest consideration to the suggested means of providing revenue as well as to any other suggestions that may be advanced, and arrange to make effective the means agreed upon with the least possible delay."¹⁷ In hopes of fulfilling this mandate, the Committee of Five called on "responsible citizens" to submit comprehensive relief plans. Response was widespread; the committee received more than 100 suggestions ranging from broad philosophical essays to detailed, comprehensive schemes. The proposals, although varying, fell into two major categories: first, those calling for a make-work program; and, second, direct relief to lessen the financial burden of relief agencies. Michael C. Hale, a Tulsa hardware dealer, proposed an

agrarian-flavored plan whereby the city would lay out \$40,000 to purchase food at wholesale prices. The committee could oversee the distribution of foodstuff, rationing daily requirements of two pounds of potatoes, one pound of sweet potatoes, one loaf of whole wheat bread, one pound of corn meal, one pound of salt pork, one-third pound of beans or peas, one quart of skim milk, one-fourth pint of sorghum, and one-fourth pound of lard. This daily diet was adequate for a family of four, and at depressed farm prices the city for \$40,000 could buy sufficient food to feed an estimated 2,500 families.¹⁸ All the foodstuff could be obtained through the Federal Farm Board from farmers in the vicinity, thus improving the condition of local farmers. Hale offered to donate a mill and corn sheller for the work, thereby saving the cost of regularly milled flour and meal.¹⁹

Two additional plans, one called the "Grain Plan," the other the "Antle Plan," introduced by Tulsa cattleman, Arthur F. Antle, agreed with Hale except they included a make-work program. The "Grain Plan" suggested that the city purchase wheat from farmers in western Oklahoma, ship it to local mills to be ground into flour, and sell it at a central commissary for a nominal price. The city could procure meat by buying and slaughtering fat hogs under current prices which were so low that farmers killed them rather than sell.²⁰ The Antle Plan called for the city to develop a cooperative farm where unemployed men might work to provide food for their families. Tulsa could buy an eighty-acre tract of land just outside the city, construct a canning factory, and distribute the food to those who worked on the farm.²¹ While the Committee of Five did not adopt any of these plans, it did contribute to the eventual program established to handle relief work the following winter.

Mayor George L. Watkins also worked on a plan to finance a make-work program, and in September of 1931 he announced his proposal. In 1929, he began, the Supreme Court of Oklahoma had invalidated county levies totalling \$900,000. The city treasurer's office had impounded the funds until such time as they could be returned to the taxpayers. The mayor suggested that, instead of reimbursing the citizenry, the city use the funds for a public works program.²² In the long run the program would mean more to Tulsans than a return of their tax money, for:

The job of taking care of the relief and unemployment problem in Tulsa will be two or three times as great as last winter.... I believe that \$250,000 will be needed for a work program and that we can get it from this refund.²³

Mayor Watkins urged that a reservoir which would be needed within the next two years be immediately constructed in Mohawk Park and that park and playground improvements be made in the same manner.²⁴

The mayor's plan drew direct attack from private citizens, corporations, the federal government, and the Committee of Five. Robert Letcher McKee, president of the Tulsa Taxpayers Association, the group of citizens which led the fight in 1929 against the levy, pointed out that taxpayers had expended thousands of their own dollars against the levy and should not be asked to make the same sacrifice as those who had not contributed to the cause.²⁵ Representatives of the Public Service Company reminded the mayor that, while the company favored a make-work program instead of a dole, the government should return the revenue from the illegal tax and allow the individual taxpayer to contribute what portion of his refund he could afford, else the project would place a heavy economic burden on certain segments of the community while others would benefit without making an equal sacrifice.²⁶ Individual

citizens, representing only themselves, felt disposed to criticize the "Mohawk Plan." Why must the "common man" bear the tax, one irate citizen wrote, when, "...oil companies for example who have never built a thing here but have made millions out of Oklahoma's soil as non-resident landlords pay nothing."²⁷ Another citizen argued that the make-work program provided only for families with male heads. "What about the women who are heads of families, or the orphaned children," he asked. The city must take responsibility for those unable to participate in any make-work program.²⁸

The federal government offered its arguments against the measure. M. C. Williams, southwest regional director for President Herbert Hoover's unemployment committee, advised the city to forego consideration of a make-work system because "the worker knows it is just a guise for charity and those who really want to work for whatever they receive resent such a make-shift."²⁹ However, the political winds had shifted against President Hoover and his policies. A. F. Sweeney, representing Governor Bill Murray's office, remarked that federal authorities were just "passing the buck" with their suggestions, and that men like Williams were just "fifth wheels," out of touch with the severity of the depression.³⁰

Even the Committee of Five joined in the assault against the plan. Its major fault, they argued, was the lack of money for the Mohawk project. A special subcommittee on make-work programs predicted that the city would need more than \$1,000,000 in payroll funds for a twenty-week work relief program, and the impounded funds totaled only \$900,000.³¹ The sub-committee recommended that the city ask the County Excise Board for a readjustment of the city water department's budget to save the

\$100,000 needed for the Mohawk Park Project.³² The County Excise Board agreed to the suggestion, and the city began operations in October of 1932.³³

With the make-work programs safely underway, the Committee of Five turned its attention to meeting the needs of those incapable of participating in the Mohawk project. Drawing from the proposals to the committee, John Leavell suggested opening a commissary to operate as a clearing house for meat, grain, vegetables, bedding, clothing, and furniture.³⁴ Anticipating arguments by store owners that the commissary unfairly compete with private businesses, Leavell emphasized that its operations should end when the depression had passed, but the crisis situation demanded a drastic short-term policy.³⁵ The committee members further promised that all agricultural goods would be ordered from farmers in the Tulsa market area, and that the Committee of Five would make all purchases in cash.³⁶ The committee would supervise all commercial transactions by the commissary, from buying tons of wheat for the local mill to selling children's shoes.

The experience of World War I had taught the commissioners that any distribution of food and clothing required a ration plan. Leavell included a provision that relief recipients must buy through special ration schemes developed by the committee. This would ensure two things: lower unit cost on goods, and proper nourishment for indigent persons. Leavell projected--and he was proven correct--that the average cost of a weekly food ration would be forty-two cents.³⁷ The sample ration he placed before the committee contained 2,800 calories, more than the Massachusetts Institute of Technology had previously determined ample for a normal male.³⁸ The expected assaults from local

businessmen had little influence on the committee, and they unanimously adopted the idea.

Once the commissary opened for business, it drew the attention of national and international leaders. At the invitation of Governor Gifford Pinchot of Pennsylvania, Mayor Leavell testified before a committee in the Pennsylvania legislature and briefed the heads of the governor's cabinet. His confident demeanor and sound answers to interrogation proved so persuasive that the state incorporated his idea into its relief program.³⁹ Meanwhile, letters of inquiry from twelve nations and two cities in the Union of South Africa arrived in Tulsa, asking for comprehensive explanations as to the operations of the clearing house.⁴⁰

Although Tulsa received wide recognition for its innovative efforts at relief, the Committee of Five and the city government were continually plagued by inadequate finances. There was no federal or state economic aid to Tulsa until January of 1932. Governor "Alfalfa Bill" Murray, a Democrat, was not in favor of "excessive government assistance," fearing that the result would be a welfare state.⁴¹ President Herbert Hoover chose to ignore the depression until January of 1932 when he signed the Reconstruction Finance Corporation; this loaned millions for relief to banks, insurance companies, and railroad companies, but gave only nominal assistance to city relief efforts.

The winter of 1932 found Tulsans more in need of economic assistance from other government levels than in the previous year. When the Mohawk project began, Mayor Watkins established a central file of all unemployed persons in the city to which every approved relief agency was given access.⁴² That file by February of 1932 contained 11,675 names and was growing daily.⁴³ Unless help from other sources arrived soon,

the unemployment rate would rise to thirty-eight per cent of the population.

In May the city authorities hit upon an idea for obtaining assistance from the Reconstruction Finance Corporation. A total of \$1,300,000 in bonds from a referendum in 1930 remained unsold, and the mayor decided to sell the bonds to the RFC, the revenue to be used to finance the new faltering Mohawk project.⁴⁴ Unfortunately Robert W. Kelso, the regional representative of the RFC, gave only nominal support to the idea, and the RFC authorities in Washington responded that as the proposal was highly unusual a great deal of discussion was necessary.⁴⁵

Frustrated because "the more correspondence we had with them, the farther away they [federal officials] got from the object in mind," the city turned to the state and requested part of the \$500,000 for relief available to Oklahoma through the RFC.⁴⁶ This avenue of approach proved more successful. In late October Tulsa received \$146,000 for projects including the Mohawk Park, water line extensions, and clearing timber for a new golf course in the park.⁴⁷ More than 1,000 heads of families went to work in shifts of 500; each man earned \$2.40 per day for three eight-hour days each week. Governor Murray allowed the National Guard to organize a kitchen to prepare and feed these men on the job.⁴⁸

Federal aid, however, was insufficient to solve the city's major problems. The too-little, too-late aid only embittered Tulsans. They tired of President Hoover's platitudinous lectures on the work ethic; Franklin D. Roosevelt offered them a New Deal, and as the unemployment total in Tulsa County reached 13,000, they decided to accept the offer.⁴⁹

The impending disaster for the Republicans was foretold in city elections in April of 1932. Herman F. Newblock, in a dramatic political resurrection, won the Democratic Party primary over incumbent Mayor George Watkins.⁵⁰ His opposition came from two fronts: a third-party candidate, Charles W. Grimes, and Republican Dan Patton, Newblock's nemesis in the city elections four years previously.⁵¹ Grimes ran on the issue of cutting city taxes, a sound strategy in a normal election, but one Newblock effectively countered by showing that the taxes would pay for relief programs in the city; Patton, it seemed, did not have an issue. The voters showed which they preferred--lower taxes or work projects--by electing Newblock by 4,000 votes over Grimes and 9,000 votes over Patton. In what Jenkin Lloyd Jones classified as "a scare for the Democrats," they nevertheless won every local office except sheriff, where Charles Price escaped the political avalanche.⁵²

The presidential election was just as dramatic in Tulsa as throughout the nation. The editors of the Tulsa Daily World came out in support of Roosevelt in April, but the Tulsa Tribune under Jenkin Jones found little in his favor.⁵³ Roosevelt, in Jones' opinion, was the long arm of Tammany Hall reaching out to choke the life from American democracy, a politician short on leadership ability and long on "waffling."⁵⁴ Under the Hoover administration, however, "The people of Oklahoma have received direct benefits of \$125,292,945 in various programs."⁵⁵ President Hoover's steady hand had held the storm-tossed ship-of-state on the course set by the founding fathers, and he deserved a show of confidence from the American people.

Early Tulsa returns gave the president a slim lead. But when the election ended, Tulsans had overcome their fear of Tammany Hall, so

evident in the previous presidential election, and voted for F.D.R. by a margin of 22,787 to 15,933. The rout did not stop at the top of the ticket; Tulsa County went for the Democratic candidate in every statewide race except for Corporation Commissioner, where ex-governor Walton was attempting to come back.⁵⁶ The despondent editor of the Tribune, searching for the silver lining in the black political cloud over the nation, predicted that Roosevelt's election would, in the long run, benefit the country. After four years of Roosevelt leadership:

The people of the southern and western states, who in the unreasoning fury of their economic plite [sic] were led to vote for F.D.R., will never again endorse a party program mapped by corrupt Chicago and New York machine politicians and the liquor interests.⁵⁷

Eugene Lorton, owner of the Tulsa Daily World, continued to support the New Deal, and Roosevelt appointed him to an International Joint Committee on Finance in 1933, a post he faithfully filled until he deserted the New Deal five years later.⁵⁸

True to his campaign promises, President Roosevelt acted quickly and decisively. In May of 1933 the president signed the Federal Emergency Relief Administration Act. The FERA made direct grants to state and local governments to get public projects underway; where necessary the agency made direct grants to the needy. In the two years of its existence the FERA disbursed \$4 billion for relief purposes, three-fourths from federal and one-fourth from local funds. Tulsans spent their share of the revenue to build the Central Fire Station and to finance continued work on the Mohawk Park project.⁵⁹

In January of 1935 President Roosevelt and Congress replaced the FERA with a more comprehensive system of public works program, the Works Progress Administration, and appropriated \$4,880 million for

housing, reforestation, relief loans and grants, public health, education, and rural electrification. Unlike the Reconstruction Finance Corporation bureaucrats of the Hoover administration, WPA officials eagerly--if unconstitutionally--invested federal and state funds in local make-works projects; within three months after WPA money reached Tulsa, federal officials approved twenty-seven proposals for relief in the city.⁶⁰ Tulsa received its first benefits from the new agency in August 1, 1935, in the amount of \$2,606,494. Over the next nine months, city officials spent \$432,964.63 in federal money for such diverse projects as repairing sanitary mains in residential districts of White City, Beverly Hills, and Mark Twain; new drainage pipes for Harvard Avenue; and paving along Quanah Avenue and the West Tulsa Trafficway.⁶¹ The relief was a boon to Tulsa, and when no money was available for direct funding, Harry Hopkins, the first head of the WPA, lent money at a nominal interest rate. Tulsa took advantage of the opportunity by borrowing \$12,500 and constructing, with WPA labor, the Tulsa Public Health Building at Eighth Street and Peoria Avenue.⁶² Coupled with \$184,230 in city tax revenues spent for civic improvements, the incoming funds provided work for 8,000 Tulsans previously unemployed and gave the local economy a lift.⁶³

The city's economy made significant, steady gains from June through November, 1935. Retail sales jumped 3.5 per cent, and the city let \$131,705 in building contracts in October, the biggest total since 1929.⁶⁴ The Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933, New Deal legislation to raise farm prices by limiting farm production, worked just as Secretary of Agriculture Henry Wallace had hoped it would. Tulsa area farmers purchased livestock at a record rate at the Tulsa

Stockyards in October of 1935 as 1,000 head of cattle passed through the pens, and hogs sold for \$9.10 each, the highest price for swine in fifteen years.⁶⁵ The air filled with the smell of rising prosperity.

Tulsans repaid President Roosevelt and the Democratic Party by returning Democratic majorities in city, state and national offices in 1934 and 1936. Mayor Newblock, his hunger for public service finally satisfied, declined to run for a fifth term in 1934, and threw his valuable support to Thomas A. Penney, a pioneer druggist. Penney and the Democratic slate, cognizant of the president's popularity, established themselves as the "local agents for the general recovery movement being led by F.D. R." Republicans could not hope to win against Roosevelt and lost all city races by a two-to-one majority.⁶⁶ Two years later Tulsans overwhelmingly voted for Roosevelt as the "man who saved the nation" in a record turnout of 70,000 people. The president received 40,948 votes to Alf Landon's 28,294, while local Democrats returned to power in city elections.⁶⁷

From his record popularity in 1936, the President suffered his first major political reverse in 1937 by attempting to balance the federal budget and cutting appropriations for WPA programs. Despite the administration's "priming the pump," the nation continued to suffer economic recession. In Tulsa the list of unemployed climbed from 3,886 in January of 1936 to 6,064 by November, 1937, approximately four per cent of Oklahoma's total.⁶⁸ A few federal programs remained; the Federal Writers' Project, for example, paid a small cadre of Oklahoma educators to write a history of Oklahoma and one of Tulsa, but these were too specialized to employ many people.

The relapse threatened the economic foundations of the city. With

the number of unemployed growing, small firms were hard-pressed to meet mortgage payments, and had to close their doors. Tulsa businessmen, faced with prospects of a new depression, organized the Tulsa Industrial Corporation, a finance company to loan money to small businesses to help them keep their doors open during the hard times. While resources were limited, the TIC prevented disaster.⁶⁹ The city government managed to meet its obligations by cutting public services and levying \$2,008,217 in new taxes. The WPA helped when it could. Though funds were no longer abundant, in April of 1938 officials appropriated \$1,500,000 for further relief, and by October the city's bond indebtedness had decreased from a high in 1932 of \$17,429,407 to \$13,445,508, a miraculous feat.⁷⁰

The recession fell heaviest on blue collar wage earners and the black population. Despite the tragedy of the race riot, the black population by 1938 had increased fifteen per cent.⁷¹ Tulsans made a concerted effort to lower racial tensions and the black worker in the city enjoyed pay rates higher than in any other city in the South or Southwest, earning ten to twenty dollars a week as household servants, porters, and janitors. The depression of the thirties was ruinous to businessmen and skilled white laborers, but blacks holding unskilled jobs suffered even more.⁷² Living conditions in the black community, never good, deteriorated, and social unrest rose. In a report to the Chamber of Commerce in July of 1938, Dr. John D. Fenaloyesen, Chairman of the Committee on Public Health and Sanitation, warned that if the city did not provide a health inspector for the black community, collect the garbage, and inaugurate a general clean-up campaign, the city faced a possible second "uprising."⁷³ Officials averted the crisis by

diverting portions of the remaining WPA funds to improving conditions to a degree which made life in the community tolerable.

Tulsa oil field workers presented authorities a more difficult problem. President Roosevelt knew the depression was a fertile ground for labor unrest, and national leaders had narrowly averted massive labor strikes on two occasions during his first term. By 1938, however, the government no longer was able to stem the tide of labor agitation; strikes flared throughout the nation, and the Mid-continent strike was one of the longest in history. Conditions of the depression made it impossible for oil companies to meet their payrolls, and company executives were forced to fire a sizable number of their workers and reduce the wages of those they retained. The pressures of job uncertainty created an atmosphere of distrust between the company and its employees, and eventually led the field workers to demand establishment of arbitration machinery for labor disputes, higher wages, and a more codified seniority system.⁷⁴ When management refused to discuss grievances and blamed the tensions on "outside agitators," the oilfield workers struck on Thursday afternoon, December 22, 1938.⁷⁵ The workers formed picket lines outside the gates of oil refineries until the Oklahoma National Guard reached the scene. The Guardsmen ordered the strikers to move three blocks away from the plant entrance, and there for the next sixty-five weeks workers armed with wooden signs painted with the demands of organized labor marched in picket lines thirty yards long for twenty-four hours daily.⁷⁶

The first week of the strike passed uneventfully; then an unidentified labor saboteur dynamited a pipeline near Kiefer, Oklahoma; the union leadership denied any complicity, but tensions between workers

and townspeople grew bitter. Residents harassed children of oilfield workers, and fights between workers and company supporters broke out in the downtown area.⁷⁷ Governor Ernest W. Marland dispatched his secretary Rowe Cook to preside over the arbitration conferences at the Mayo Hotel. J. C. Denton, vice-president and general counsel and spokesman for the Mid-Continent Petroleum Corporation, announced that all striking workers were fired from their jobs and that the company was hiring new employees. Shocked and disheartened by the drastic measure, Jack Hays, president of the Tulsa local of Oil Workers International and primary negotiator for the union, announced the strike as a battleground in the national struggle between oil companies and laborers, and he concluded that the pickets would block any move by the company to hire scab labor.⁷⁸ Workers, management, and spectators prepared for a long and bitter feud.

Strikers, now without incomes, fell back on their union for support. Community dining rooms at union halls served free hot meals, and families pooled their resources for food, clothing, and other necessities. Everyday representatives of both parties met and negotiated until March 22, 1939, when the two sides reached a tentative settlement. The field workers agreed to end the strike; management promised no reprisals against employees who had struck, and if labor showed its good faith, said the Mid-Continent officials, an arbitration board for settling future problems would be established. Neither side declared the agreement a victory, but at least men could return to work and the company could start producing refined oil.⁷⁹

Tulsans found little to celebrate, either in the end of the strike or in the local economy, for indications of recovery were mixed.

Unemployment declined by eleven per cent during 1939 and the first six months of 1940, the crowds of eager customers filled the department stores along Main Street.⁸⁰ The local Sears store broke the company's national record for monthly sales in March of 1940, and the total payroll for all retail distributors reached \$9,244,000, the highest aggregate figure in ten years.⁸¹ Yet the signs of reviving economic health were tempered somewhat by a lagging agricultural market. Farmers and ranchers saw the number of cattle pass through the Tulsa Stockyard's sale ring decline to half that of 1935, the peak year since the depression hit, and the price of hogs descended to \$5.15.⁸² The seriousness of the economic stagnation was compounded by the fact that 1,600 men still worked on WPA jobs, and by January of the new decade total funds on hand amounted to less than \$1,000.⁸³ Despite the lofty promises of federal do-gooders and bureaucrats, the local economy depended on federal assistance as much then as it had when FDR first entered the White House.

Few people realized the extent of this dependency until Beverly Gouldilock, assistant director for the state WPA, announced to the Chamber of Commerce that after July 15, 1940, federally funded WPA programs would end by order of the president.⁸⁴ The announcement sent shudders through the community. Men, working sixteen hours each day just to earn enough to buy a few ounces of meat and four pounds of potatoes each week, after the cut-off date found themselves destitute. Once again the jobless sat on park benches with elbows on their knees and stared at passersby. The depression was nine years old in Tulsa, and for some people, it seemed like a lifetime.

The city government reacted to the recession as if officials had lost any belief that they could solve or even ease the crisis. The notion that the government could spend the nation out of the depression was rapidly losing followers. Mayor Penney had won reelection in 1938 on a platform of cutting city taxes, and nothing moved him or the city commissioners from this pledge.⁸⁵ The dip in the economy did not end the solid support for local Democratic officials two years later, but Tulsans no longer saw FDR as their savior and the New Deal as holy scripture. Charles H. Veale defeated Republican Lee Pollack for mayor in 1940, but that election was held in April before the federal government announced the end of the WPA; had the Democrats been forced to run with the president in November, the outcome might have been different.⁸⁶ By the time of the fall campaign, the once friendly Tulsa Daily World blasted the president for his aspiration for a third term, and Eugene Lorton published editorials against the policy he once had helped formulate. "The New Deal must be stopped," he said.⁸⁷ The nation may not have agreed but Tulsans turned out in record numbers and gave Wendell Willkie a 7,000-vote majority.⁸⁸ Local Republicans had something to cheer about for the first time in twelve years.

The repudiation of the New Deal was a fruitless reaction against local conditions, and community leaders found they could do little that was beneficial. The County Commissioners revived the old food stamp program used in 1933 for low income groups, unemployed WPA workers, the physically handicapped, and the aged. But city officials refused to appropriate sufficient funds for its survival beyond six months, and state law prohibited county commissioners from raising money through private donations.⁸⁹ County Commissioner Lincoln Salle managed to fund

the program by begging a reluctant Chamber of Commerce for a small stipend and borrowing \$25,000 from the State Welfare Commission, a loan repayable in ninety days.⁹⁰ The food stamp program was hardly worth the effort necessary to get it off the ground; it was a band-aid over a gunshot wound.

Government, both federal and local, did attempt to solve the expanding crisis in housing. As the depression moved into high gear in the early thirties, bankrupt and sand-blown farmers turned to urban centers for job opportunities, a move which increased the depression in Tulsa. There they found no jobs--and also no place to live. The problem had become so acute by 1935 that the Public Works Administration allotted \$2,000,000 to Tulsa for construction of low cost housing.⁹¹ The homes built were one-story family units of four rooms: a bedroom, bathroom, kitchen, and living-room. The project, unfortunately, suffered from insufficient funding, and construction could not keep pace with demand.

The federal government replaced the PWA programs with the Federal Home Administration in 1940, and soon outlined plans to finance homes costing less than \$2,500. The new agency proved more efficient and more responsive to needs of the city; although Tulsans were skeptical of new federal programs, Wade Whiteside, Co-chairman of the Civic Engineering Department, campaigned hard for FHA money and worked to convince local officials that if Tulsa was to be a business and industrial center "we must build homes for people who earn approximately \$1,750 a year."⁹² Clyde C. Ingle, president of the Real Estate Board of Tulsa, reinforced Whiteside's message in his report to the Chamber of Commerce in July. "The housing problem has reached a crisis stage," said Ingle. "Only 1.9

percent of the residential buildings in Tulsa are vacant," and the single largest complaint from people leaving the city was the lack of housing. Fortunately construction was moving, and he reported that 304 low-cost homes were under construction and 177 new ones were ready for sale.⁹³ The housing situation improved, but the problem remained unsolved until American entry in the Second World War.

Tulsans began discussing the possibility of war as early as the summer of 1940. Should the United States enter the conflict already burning in Europe, Tulsans wanted to expand their ability to attract war industries by improving their air transport facilities. The argument was not whether Tulsa should expand, but whether improving the runways and hanger capacity of the Municipal Airport would be sufficient.⁹⁴ The majority opinion was expressed by Russell Hunt of the Chamber of Commerce Aviation Committee. Using the automobile industry as an example of what had occurred after World War I, Hunt declared that air travel would be greater after the war than during, and that those cities with modern air travel facilities would have an industrial jump ahead of those that lagged behind in the field.⁹⁵

Proof for what Hunt maintained came in a report the Aviation Committee presented to the Chamber and the city officials. The report noted that air freight had doubled in the last fifteen years and that, with American industry gearing to aid the allied powers, air cargo was increasing. "The Municipal Airport, even after its current expansion is completed, will be congested by the air traffic," the report concluded.⁹⁶ Support for building a new airfield came from a variety of sources. Gill Robb Wilson, president of the National Aeronautics Association, wrote to the Chamber in September of 1941, "It is my studied

judgment that Tulsa should take steps to acquire the land for a second major air port...."⁹⁷ Hunt also received support from Lt. Col. Lucius D. Clay, assistant to the Administrator of the Civil Aeronautics Administration. The Chamber of Commerce asked representatives of the Civil Aeronautics Administration to study the need for a second airfield in Tulsa. The final report declared that, "The Civil Aeronautics Administration is of the view that an additional airport in Tulsa would be of immediate value to the city...."⁹⁸ Lt. Col. Clay went on to say that all appropriations for aid were ear-marked for approved sites, and that Tulsans should follow through with their plans and apply for funding the following year.⁹⁹

Those opposing a new airport rallied behind Mayor Veale, arguing that construction of a new field was too expensive and wasteful. The logical recourse was to expand the facilities at Municipal Field, extend the length of the runways, and build additional hangers, to make the airport one of the finest in the world.¹⁰⁰ The voices of newspaper boys calling out the news of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor drowned out the words of the anti-airport faction. Thirty-nine days after Pearl Harbor, Tulsans swept up in the national trauma and sense of urgency, voted a \$100,000 bond issue for acquiring one section of land for a new airport and expanding the facilities at the Municipal Airport.¹⁰¹ The ten-year struggle against the depression was forgotten; Tulsans prepared for war.

FOOTNOTES

- ¹Tulsa Daily World, October 5, 1930, 53.
- ²City Ordinance No. 3750, June 23, 1930. "How Tulsa Will Expend \$6,230,000 to Carry Out Its City Commissioner's Recommendations," The American City, XLII (April, 1930), 16.
- ³Tulsa Chamber of Commerce, Industrial Survey of Tulsa (Tulsa: Chamber of Commerce, 1929), 88.
- ⁴The analysis is based upon data in United States Department of Commerce, Industrial Employment Survey Bulletin (Washington, D. C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1921-1930), Vols. I-IX. This bulletin reports the industrial activity of each state and major industrial center. A survey of the oil industry during the 1920's indicates boom and bust periods for Tulsa.
- ⁵Tulsa Daily World, December 20, 1930, Sec. C, 3.
- ⁶Ibid., September 1, 1932, 3.
- ⁷Tulsa Tribune, September 14, 1931, 4. Tulsa Chamber of Commerce, M.D.M., September 13, 1931.
- ⁸Tulsa Spirit, September 21, 1931, 8.
- ⁹"Report of the Fact-Finding Committee," in Tulsa Chamber of Commerce, October, 1931, 2.
- ¹⁰Ibid., 1.
- ¹¹Ibid., 2.
- ¹²Ibid., 3.
- ¹³Tulsa Chamber of Commerce, M.D.M., October 4, 1931.
- ¹⁴Tulsa Spirit, October 16, 1931, 6.
- ¹⁵Central Emergency Committee of Five, 1, in Tulsa Chamber of Commerce, M.D.M., October 25, 1931.
- ¹⁶Tulsa Tribune, December 8, 1931, 2.
- ¹⁷"Report of the Fact-Finding Committee," 3.

- 18 Central Emergency Committee of Five, Relief Plans Under Consideration, "The Hale Plan," 1.
- 19 Ibid., 2.
- 20 Ibid.; Relief Plans Under Consideration, "The Grain Plan," 1.
- 21 Relief Plans Under Consideration, "The Antile Plan," 1.
- 22 Relief Plans Under Consideration, "The Mayor's Plan," 1.
- 23 Tulsa Tribune, September 18, 1931, 2.
- 24 "The Mayor's Plan," 2.
- 25 Tulsa Tribune, October 1, 1931, 4.
- 26 Ibid.
- 27 Ibid.
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 Tulsa Daily World, October 5, 1931, 2.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Central Emergency Committee of Five, "Report of the Subcommittee on Make-Work," 2.
- 32 Ibid., 1.
- 33 Tulsa Tribune, October 26, 1932, 1.
- 34 Special Report to the Central Emergency Committee of Five, "The Leavell Commissary Plan," 2.
- 35 Ibid.
- 36 Ibid.
- 37 Ibid., 5.
- 38 Harlow's Weekly, November 12, 1931, 8.
- 39 Tulsa Tribune, September 15, 1932, 4. Arthur Dunham, Pennsylvania and Unemployment Relief," Social Service Review, VIII (June, 1934), 246-288.
- 40 Harlow's Weekly, January 19, 1932, 9.
- 41 William H. Murray, Essays on Forms of Government from Theocracy to Foolocracy (Atoka, Oklahoma: Indian Citizen Democrat, 1942), 16.

- ⁴²Tulsa Spirit, September 21, 1931, 10.
- ⁴³Tulsa Tribune, February 26, 1932, 2.
- ⁴⁴Ibid., May 15, 1932.
- ⁴⁵Tulsa Daily World, October 4, 1932, 2.
- ⁴⁶Tulsa Tribune, October 18, 1932, 1.
- ⁴⁷Ibid., October 26, 1932, 1.
- ⁴⁸Ibid., November 23, 1932, 13. Tulsa Daily World, October 30, 1932, 2.
- ⁴⁹Tulsa Tribune, November 23, 1932, 13.
- ⁵⁰Tulsa Daily World, March 17, 1932, 1.
- ⁵¹Tulsa Tribune, March 31, 1932, 14.
- ⁵²Ibid., April 2, 1932, 14; April 6, 1932, 1.
- ⁵³Tulsa Daily World, April 1, 1932, 6.
- ⁵⁴Tulsa Tribune, October 23, 1932, Sec. B-8; November 1, 1932, 14.
- ⁵⁵Ibid., November 4, 1932, 22.
- ⁵⁶Ibid., November 9, 1932, 4. Tulsa Daily World, November 10, 1932, 2.
- ⁵⁷Tulsa Tribune, November 9, 1932, 23.
- ⁵⁸Tulsa Daily World, November 6, 1940, 6.
- ⁵⁹Ibid., October 12, 1934, 1.
- ⁶⁰Ibid., October 18, 1935, 4.
- ⁶¹City of Tulsa, Oklahoma. Engineering Department, Annual Reports of the Engineering Department of the City of Tulsa, Oklahoma to the Honorable City Commission, For the Fiscal Year, May 1, 1935 through May 1, 1936 (Tulsa: Municipal Building, 1936), 1.
- ⁶²Tulsa Daily World, October 2, 1935, 1.
- ⁶³City of Tulsa, Oklahoma. Annual Report of the Engineering Department For Fiscal Year May 1, 1935 through May 1, 1936, 2.
- ⁶⁴Tulsa Daily World, October 30, 1935, 2.
- ⁶⁵Ibid., October 15, 1935, 14.

- ⁶⁶ Ibid., April 4, 1934, 1.
- ⁶⁷ Ibid., November 5, 1936, 1.
- ⁶⁸ Ibid., April 6, 1938, 1.
- ⁶⁹ Tulsa Chamber of Commerce, M.D.M., February 1, 1938.
- ⁷⁰ City of Tulsa, Oklahoma, City Auditor's Monthly Report for April, 1938 (Tulsa: Municipal Building, 1938), 2. City Auditor's Monthly Report for October, 1938 (Tulsa: Municipal Building, 1938), 22.
- ⁷¹ United States Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, Sixteenth Census of the United States, Population (Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1931), 937.
- ⁷² Francis Dominic Burke, "A Survey of the Negro Community of Tulsa, Oklahoma" (Unpublished M. A. Thesis, University of Oklahoma, 1936), 54.
- ⁷³ Report to the Tulsa Chamber of Commerce by Dr. John D. Fenalog- sen, Chairman of the Committee on Public Health and Sanitation, M.D.M., July 12, 1938.
- ⁷⁴ Tulsa Daily World, December 26, 1938, 2.
- ⁷⁵ Ibid., December 22, 1938, 1.
- ⁷⁶ Ibid., December 25, 1938, 3.
- ⁷⁷ Ibid., January 8, 1939, 2.
- ⁷⁸ Ibid., January 6, 1939, 1.
- ⁷⁹ Ibid., March 22, 1939, 1.
- ⁸⁰ Tulsa Chamber of Commerce, M.D.M., July 2, 1940.
- ⁸¹ Tulsa Tribune, March 1, 1940, 17. "Retail Trade in the Metro- politan District of Tulsa, Oklahoma," United States Department of Com- merce. Sixteenth Census of the United States, Retail Trade (Washing- ton, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1940), 764.
- ⁸² Tulsa Tribune, March 3, 1940, 15.
- ⁸³ City of Tulsa, Oklahoma, City Auditor's Monthly Report for January, 1940 (Tulsa: Municipal Building, 1940), 2.
- ⁸⁴ Tulsa Chamber of Commerce, M.D.M., June 6, 1939.
- ⁸⁵ Tulsa Daily World, April 8, 1939, 1.

- ⁸⁶ Ibid., April 3, 1940, 1.
- ⁸⁷ Ibid., November 5, 1940, 1.
- ⁸⁸ Ibid., November 7, 1940, 1.
- ⁸⁹ Tulsa Chamber of Commerce, M.D.M., January 23, 1940.
- ⁹⁰ Ibid., February 20, 1940; March 26, 1940.
- ⁹¹ Tulsa Tribune, May 27, 1935, 1.
- ⁹² Tulsa Chamber of Commerce, M.D.M., January 23, 1940.
- ⁹³ Ibid., July 9, 1940.
- ⁹⁴ Ibid.
- ⁹⁵ Ibid., October 14, 1941.
- ⁹⁶ "Report of the Aviation Committee," in Tulsa Chamber of Commerce, M.D.M., October 14, 1944.
- ⁹⁷ Gill Robb Wilson to Russell F. Hunt, Tulsa Chamber of Commerce, M.D.M., October 14, 1941.
- ⁹⁸ Lt. Col. Lucius D. Clay to Russell Hunt, Tulsa Chamber of Commerce, M.D.M., October 14, 1941.
- ⁹⁹ "Report of the Aviation Committee," in Tulsa Chamber of Commerce, M.D.M., July 22, 1941.
- ¹⁰⁰ Tulsa Chamber of Commerce, M.D.M., October 14, 1941.
- ¹⁰¹ City Ordinance No. 4658, January 14, 1942.

CHAPTER VII

CHALLENGE AND VICTORY: THE SECOND WORLD WAR TO THE SIXTIES

The era beginning with the Second World War and ending with the election of John F. Kennedy as president of the United States was filled with challenges from outside the nation and from within. Winning a war, handling inflation, overcoming economic stagnation, and paying the high price for modernization faced Tulsa and the nation during those years. Tulsans supported the war effort against Hitler, Tojo, and Mussolini as they had supported the First World War. Japanese bombs falling on Pearl Harbor challenged the American people's resolve and, in doing so, revived their sense of destiny and purpose. Oklahoma supplied 144,533 men and women to the front lines of the war, in addition to 60,000 enlistments in the Naval Reserve and 7,500 in the Marine Corps; of these, more than 6,000 came from Tulsa.¹

Armistice Day in 1942, celebrating the anniversary of the end of the First World War, had a special meaning for the community. It signified renewed patriotism, and the city's planned activities illustrated the community's determination to win the war. Floats of all shapes and sizes led by a rider on horseback carrying a large American flag, paraded before a crowd of 10,000 men, women and children and opened the day's festivities. That afternoon and evening, farmers, bankers, housewives, high school students, and veterans of the Great

War crowded into the fairgrounds and approvingly inspected military displays of rifles, uniforms, and artillery.²

Affirming the will to win the war took many forms. Men, women, and children staged annual aluminum drives for the troops overseas; the first on July 6, 1941, netted more than 40,000 pounds.³ The major civic activity was, however, the inevitable war bond campaign, necessary for financing the war effort. In the first drive Lenard M. Grant, chairman of the Tulsa County War Bond Campaign, sent bond pledge cards to public and private schools where teachers distributed them among students who took the cards home to their parents. Adults purchased war bonds by signing the pledge cards and taking them to neighborhood voting places. Once parents pledged, they received a decal for proud display on the front door of their houses. After the drive ended, Grant paid high school students to go door-to-door soliciting from those families not displaying the sticker.⁴ The strategy proved highly effective, for there was a social stigma against anyone without the decal adorning his door. Grant led six drives during the war. The most successful was in May of 1942 when the bond committee collected pledges totaling \$7,864,024. The 1944 campaign netted \$1,000,000 in one day.⁵ The generosity was even more impressive when one recalls that inflated wartime prices for necessities devalued family income.

Tulsans also faced the problem--a scarcity of consumer goods. American soldiers on active duty in Europe and Asia needed sugar, rubber, coffee, fruit, vegetables, and gasoline, and those who remained at home sacrificed. The federal government, as it had during the depression for people on relief, instituted a rationing program for consumer goods based on issuing food stamps. The stamps came in series, and

each was exchanged for a designated item and quantity. Customers purchased fruits and vegetables in five-pound crates or packages with stamps A-8 through Z-8, or coupon A-13 was exchanged for four gallons of gasoline.⁶ Tulsans used saccharin as a substitute for sugar and nylon in place of rubber, and every housewife saved old grease in the skillet for the next meal. The system placed a hardship on people, but repayment came with the knowledge of doing one's part for the war.

Support for the war effort also came in the form of a business philosophy that what was good for the nation was good for Tulsa. Leaders in every American city launched a feverish quest for defense contracts for local firms and new war industries to stimulate the local economy. The Tulsa Chamber of Commerce supported President Roosevelt's idea of an arsenal for democracy and dispatched a resolution to the Congress of the United States requesting that the government cut back on "non-defense spending," and instead appropriate funds for tanks, airplanes, and salaries for servicemen.⁷

Efforts on the part of Mayor Veale and the Chamber of Commerce in promoting Tulsa led to the establishment of a Military Affairs Committee, chaired by A. Roy Wiley. Charged with responsibility for bringing defense-related industries and military personnel to Tulsa, the Wiley committee succeeded in its early endeavors. It acquired a recruiting station under the Selective Service Act, and, although young men of the city did not rush to its doors, the station proved important after the United States entered the war.⁸ The committee also extracted an agreement from Governor Leon "Red" Phillips for a hospital unit of the Oklahoma National Guard, provided, he said, the city guaranteed "suitable facilities." The city lived up to its end of the bargain when

the Fair Grounds Board donated one of its buildings, and the Chamber of Commerce underwrote the remodeling at the price of \$300 for lumber and hardware necessary for shelves and closets.⁹

The early successes, however, led to overconfidence, and civic leaders almost lost an additional National Guard unit. Wiley, in a report to the Chamber early in July of 1940, quoted the governor as saying that the Tulsa armory was a fine place for an aviation unit, and that as soon as Oklahoma received word from Washington, D. C., the governor would dispatch the unit to Tulsa.¹⁰ In anticipation of another military unit, the City Commission placed a bond issue before the people to raise \$400,000 to improve the fair grounds and Municipal Airport. The referendum passed, but the governor misinterpreted the action as an attempt to place unwarranted pressure on him, and he quickly expressed to the president of the Chamber, Victor F. Barnett, his displeasure, threatening to leave the city "high and dry."¹¹ The incident slowed plans for the unit until after the United States entered war.

However, this small affair in no way deterred the city's leadership from campaigning for defense-related industries. They noted with deepening concern that among the forty-eight states Oklahoma ranked fifteenth in per capita income, twentieth in population, but fortieth in federal funds for defense purposes. That unpleasant knowledge spurred the Chamber of Commerce to action; it voted to send a representative to Washington, D. C. "to investigate how we can promote the advantages of selecting our city for defense industries."¹² During the first six months of the war, Russell Rhodes, secretary to the Chamber, made three trips to the capital in search of defense contracts. Rhodes used Tulsa's supposed invulnerability from attack, the availability of labor,

and the proximity of the oil fields as a lure.¹³ The latter, ironically, proved at times detrimental to his efforts. Officials in the War Department informed him that "the oil industry had been so well managed that they doubted if it would be necessary for the federal government to aid or encourage gasoline manufacturers."¹⁴ His numerous attempts to persuade the federal government to locate a munitions plant in Tulsa failed; and he was unable to get an agreement for a synthetic rubber plant.¹⁵

He discovered the major deterrent to his efforts was Tulsa's lack of adequate housing for incoming families. The shortage was especially acute for small furnished apartments and three-room frame houses for lower income families.¹⁶ The federal government estimated that before any major defense industry could come to Tulsa the city would need to construct 4,000 to 5,000 new homes of an intermediate price range. Government officials announced their willingness to build half those needed if local construction firms built the remainder. After the war, if workers left the community, the homes could be turned over to black residents, thus helping solve the chronic housing problem in the black neighborhood.¹⁷ The war, of course, placed construction materials in short supply, but the Chamber managed to underwrite several housing projects, and the city commissioners temporarily waived a number of the Building Code Regulations "which may interfere with the processing of the construction."¹⁸ Within the first year of the war, the Federal Housing Administration constructed what became known as "war apartments," consisting of two-story dormitory-like dwellings. Single persons lived in one or two-room apartments, and married couples resided in those of three or four rooms.¹⁹ While the new buildings somewhat

alleviated the demand, their number fell far short of what Tulsa needed, and the housing problem remained throughout the war and even during the next fifteen years.

Other Midwestern cities coveted the defense contracts the federal government gave to cities on the East and West coasts. Understanding that numbers often mean strength, Tulsa, Kansas City, Fort Worth, Omaha, and Dallas joined together in a Midwest Defense Conference and sent representatives to Washington, D. C. to lobby for federal defense contracts.²⁰ Cooperation with the MDC paid handsome dividends for Tulsa. One lobbyist wired Victor Barnett, President of the Chamber of Commerce, that he had heard from a reliable source that the War Department would build a branch plant for Consolidated Aircraft Company in Tulsa.²¹ The Chamber's members heard the news with wide grins and back-slapping. An airplane factory meant \$11,000,000 in public construction, a total exceeding any previous yearly volume in Tulsa's history.²²

The cheers quickly turned to frowns. Within two weeks, President Barnett informed the directors that the Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce was fighting the decision and trying to bring Consolidated to Fort Worth. Director John Dunkin jumped to his feet and furiously exclaimed, "Oklahoma has lost every cock-eyed project so far.... We must devote our entire effort in the next few days towards bringing this industry here...."²³ The directors quickly organized a special committee of Waite Phillips, Otis McClintock, Victor F. Barnett, Russell Rhodes, L. W. Grant, Sam Clammer, John Rogers, Elmo Thompson, and John D. Mayo, who went to Washington to confer with War Department officials, while William G. Skelly flew to San Diego to meet with executives of Consolidated Aircraft Corporation.²⁴ While in Washington the committee met

with Congressman Westly Disney, who told them, "Don't be alarmed over anything that may appear to be bad news."²⁵ The representatives received the same assurances that same day from Col. William H. Harrison, a ranking official in the War Department, and he later telephoned President Barnett and emphasized that the Chamber should, "sit tight and don't lose your nerve."²⁶

Thus reassured, Rhodes flew from Washington to San Diego to help Bill Skelly with Consolidated officials. They met with James Fleet, president of Consolidated, on December 15, 1940, and Rhodes informed him of the conversations held with governmental officials. Skelly asked Fleet why he objected to Tulsa, and the president replied that Consolidated specialized in seaplanes, and Fort Worth had a lake suitable for operating, while Tulsa was void of a major lake.²⁷ The two Tulsans returned home the following day, concerned with Fleet's recalcitrant attitude but convinced that the government would hold to its pledge. On December 25, 1940, the War Department announced that Tulsa had been designated the site for an aircraft assembly plant.²⁸ But Consolidated officials also won a victory: on January 7, 1941, War Department officials announced that The Douglas Aircraft Company, not Consolidated, had agreed to relocate in Tulsa.²⁹ Last minute efforts on the part of the Chamber and tenacity had won the day. After the Douglas plant opened its assembly line and the Spartan School of Aeronautics began training American and British pilots, Tulsa became a center for the aircraft industry for the remainder of the war and for the next two decades.

Early in the drive for new industry, various members of the Chamber expressed concern over bringing in businesses that would die or

move once the war ended. Director Oras A. Shaw believed that "defense programs will level off and Oklahoma will return to our normal course."³⁰ In agreement, Russell Rhodes reported that non-defense industries found labor in short supply because workers earned higher pay in war industries, "but the war will not last forever and Tulsa must start now to fortify against the letdown."³¹

The city had the mechanism to research future industrial potential and to plan for commercial development--the "Post-Emergency Planning Board." Founded two weeks before the bombing of Pearl Harbor, Mayor Veale, his staff and the directors of the Chamber organized the board "to study and investigate...trends of social, economic and political changes...in order to devise a better economy and lessen the impact of post-emergency changes."³² The board, chaired by Clyde King, divided into two sub-committees, one to research current productivity and manpower within the Tulsa industrial area, and the second to draw up recommendations for the Chamber and the city commissioners on how Tulsa should prepare for the end of a wartime economy. The investigation sub-committee submitted a questionnaire to major firms asking about plans for employing returning veterans, future training programs for skilled workers, and securing jobs for current employees.³³ After the sub-committee members collected the data, they turned it over to the planning committee and, in a cooperative effort, the entire committee wrote a report discussing the findings and recommending alternative plans the city government, Chamber of Commerce, and private businesses could adopt which would ease the shift from a war to peacetime economy.

The board members reported an optimistic assessment of the community's chances of weathering the transition. The men discovered that

eighty-six percent of all the business firms in Tulsa produced items not necessarily connected with war, and thus their marketability would remain relatively the same after the war as during; in certain instances, as in agriculture, the committee predicted that prices would rise.³⁴ Results of the survey indicated that citizens had a positive outlook about the post-war economy. More than 7,000 families expected to buy an automobile after the war, promising estimated sales for local car dealers as high as \$6,309,900, while 2,938 families planned to build new homes within two years after the war. The committee concluded that the construction industry could reasonably expect a gross income of approximately \$13,645,000.³⁵ Charles C. Clark, director of the War Housing Center, a bureau of the city government, noted that according to his investigations demand for houses would rise after the war, and seventy-five percent of the wartime demand for housing came from people not employed in an industry dependent upon the war.³⁶

There was, as city officials knew, a darker side to the bright predictions; an increase in demand for consumer goods meant inflation after the war ended. As early as mid-summer of 1946, retail stores reported heavy buying; grocers predicted the price of meat would increase thirteen to twenty cents a pound after the war, and rent for homes already was rising at a rate varying between twenty-five to one-hundred percent.³⁷ Real estate owners argued that repair costs had doubled from 1941 to 1946; thus the rent increases were justified.³⁸ Ascending rent rates combined with the chronic shortage of houses made the economic future doubtful.

The federal government returned to aid in meeting the housing problem as it had at the beginning of the war. The Federal Housing

Administration promised to build one hundred houses at federal expense and sell them at \$7,500 each, and construct an additional sixty for rental.³⁹ Local construction firms, not wanting to be left out of the profits, reported to the Public Service Corporation in November of 1946 that if federal money kept coming contractors could build houses at the rate of ten per day.⁴⁰ While that particular piece of economic news fell on welcome ears, by June of 1951 the Daily Oklahoman reported Tulsa still had a massive housing shortage.⁴¹

The Chamber of Commerce asked President Truman to lift wartime price controls in the belief that profits needed to catch up with supply.⁴² The president's advisors argued the same line, and he abolished most price controls. Tulsans felt the effects immediately; coffee prices doubled from five to ten cents per pound, while retail sales climbed twenty-two percent during the first nine months of 1946.⁴³ People experienced the worst inflationary spiral in the 20th century.

The spiraling prices were bad, but they were only one aspect of the serious economic problem after the war. Beginning in January of 1945, Tulsa businessmen found themselves short of manpower which drove up hourly wages to \$1.19 until smaller firms could not match the pay scale of larger companies.⁴⁴ The business community blamed the federal government for the problem and complained that federal wage controls and production inducements to war-related industries handicapped businesses engaged in non-war production.⁴⁵ City officials predicted that after the war returning servicemen would reduce the inflation of wages, and they proved correct. But at the end of the decade, annual family income in Tulsa reached \$4,530, a figure much higher than the national average.⁴⁶

The high wages increased business overhead and frightened away prospective new industries; and when visiting entrepreneurs commented that Tulsa lacked a sufficient water supply to sustain extensive industrial development, city commissioners and business leaders began looking for ways to acquire more water.⁴⁷ The community's daily consumption of water rose from 25,000,000 to 30,000,000 gallons during the first year of the war as new industry and employees moved into the community.⁴⁸ Officials at the City Water Department estimated the city must increase its reserve water supply by forty percent by the end of the decade if current levels were to be maintained, and they recommended that the city engineers add six feet to the Mohawk Dam, thereby increasing the lake's storage capacity by 8,000,000 gallons.⁴⁹ Mayor Olney Flynn, with the advice of the city commissioners, placed a referendum before the people for \$3,000,000 in bonds for extending and remodeling the dams at Spavinaw and Mohawk lakes and the water mains leading into the city; the issue carried by a margin of 9,146 to 1,311.⁵⁰ Once additional water came to the city, old and new companies began expanding, and by 1949 Mid-Continent Petroleum finished a 45,000-barrel capacity plant and the Texas Company from Galveston established a new 21,000-barrel refinery in West Tulsa, south of the Arkansas River.⁵¹

The accelerated growth extended throughout the decade of the 1950s. Significantly, students at Tulsa Webster High School helped the city commemorate forty-five years of economic advancement by presenting and installing a plaque on Highway 66 near the site of old No. 1 at Red Fork.⁵² Despite the threat of war in Korea in 1950, Tulsans purchased new and used automobiles at a record rate, and building contractors erected downtown business offices so rapidly that their total value

equaled one-fifth of all the construction in the state.⁵³ In 1956 the Gulf Oil Company acquired the Warren Petroleum Company, founded by William K. Warren, and occupied the modern Gulf-Western Building on South Boulder.⁵⁴ Each year brought more commercial power and population. Forty shopping centers developed during the decade, a phenomenon unmatched by any city of comparable size in the United States.⁵⁵ The activities and accomplishments of the Chamber of Commerce reached a new high as Tulsa's industrial and commercial base grew at a rate not experienced since the oil boom days; to commemorate its success, the Chamber moved to its current home in the Chamber of Commerce Building on Boston, on March 21, 1952.⁵⁶

Tulsa's growing commercial power received an important boost from international airlines. Before the end of the Second World War, Tulsa added Braniff Airways and American Airlines to the number of companies providing service to major cities in the United States, Latin America, and Europe.⁵⁷ Local airlines also prospered during the war and after. In January of 1945, Mid-Continent Airlines received a contract from New Orleans, approved by the federal government, for a non-stop flight between the oil capital and the Mardi Gras city.⁵⁸ Tulsans levied a series of taxes on themselves over the next fifteen years--\$350,000 for land and equipment for an auxiliary airport in 1954, and \$4,200,000 for a new terminal building at Tulsa Municipal, which replaced the original structure built in 1928.⁵⁹

This financial success within the business community trickled down to others in the community. As already noted, by the end of the 1940s family income in Tulsa was among the highest in the nation, and even the education system received a big uplift during the two decades.

In June of 1942 Jenkin Lloyd Jones reported to the Chamber of Commerce that teachers' salaries had not risen from a base pay of \$1,530 since the height of the depression in 1935, but Department of Labor statistics indicated the cost of living had increased by twenty percent during that time; thus Tulsa's teachers made \$146 a year less than at the low of the depression.⁶⁰ But financial strain on the city because of the war prevented a wage increase until 1948 when the Tulsa school board raised the base pay to \$2,400 for men and \$2,200 for women; a master's degree entitled an educator to an additional \$200 annually, and the board ruled that after four years' experience a teacher could receive an additional \$300 annually. High school and junior high principals received \$5,400, while principals of elementary schools got \$5,200.⁶¹ Obviously the members of the school board believed the wage increases provided sufficient incentives for promising teachers.

A significant number of educators earned extra pay by teaching in night school, an innovative idea first conceived by the school board in 1949 for the purpose of "improvement, advancement, recreation and enjoyment of the student, and to help adults earn graduation certificates."⁶² It also helped administrators lobby for more state appropriations. Evening classes brought new students to school and made the steps toward earning a high school diploma easier for men and women who had learned that the diploma might not make them smarter, but certainly increased the size of monthly paychecks. By the late spring of 1949 the school census was up from the fall of 1948 by 1,802; the vast majority of these students came from adult enrollment.⁶³ This figure continued to climb during the next five years. Statistics for the academic year 1953-1954 showed Tulsa Central High School with an enrollment

of 3,015, Tulsa Rogers with 2,015, Webster with 727 students, and Booker T. Washington, the black high school, with 524.⁶⁴ The school population grew along with increased teachers' and administrators' wages to a base pay of \$3,154 for men and \$2,970 for women, with principals earning from \$4,770 to \$6,450.⁶⁵ These figures still did not equal the national averages for educators in public schools.

Higher education, however, boomed both during and after the war. Tulsa University officials opened a college of law, specializing in real estate and petroleum law.⁶⁶ Two years later administrators noted the fiftieth anniversary of the school with a fund drive for \$5,000,000 to pay for eleven new buildings over the next ten years. The endeavor was successful. Contractors built and dignitaries dedicated Lottie Jane Hall, John Mabee Hall, Phillips Hall, and the Wesley Center.⁶⁷ Simultaneous to the improvements at old Kendall College, a rival school, Oral Roberts opened its doors in 1947 in another section of town. Twelve years later the Oral Roberts Association moved the school to its present location where it became a religious and education center for young Christian men and women throughout the world as well as an architectural extravaganza.⁶⁸

While the money spent on education soared, culture followed close behind. In 1939 Mr. and Mrs. Waite Phillips donated their mansion to the city as a museum and art center. Surrounded by twenty-three acres of land, the Philbrook Art Center quickly became a mecca for connoisseurs and tourists from all over the Southwest and the nation.⁶⁹ Three years later, the Thomas Gilcrease Foundation became part of the cultural scene. Founded by Thomas Gilcrease, a Creek oilman, banker, and world traveler, its purpose was "to maintain an art gallery, museum and

library devoted to the permanent preservation...of the artistic, cultural and historical records of the American Indian."⁷⁰ Gilcrease sold the museum and its contents to the city in 1955 for a total of \$2,250,000, an extremely low price.⁷¹ During the first years of ownership, city officials found the cost of upkeep of the Gilcrease higher than anticipated, but Tulsans freely spent their money for its preservation and continued development. In their drive to be the cultural center of Oklahoma, Tulsans paid for the construction of the Tulsa Civic Center which housed the offices of city government, county government, the Tulsa Library, and the Auditorium where the Tulsa Symphony, traveling ballet companies, and entertainers could perform before enthusiastic audiences.⁷² By the end of the twenty years following the Second World War, Tulsans had made their city the cultural center of the state and of high rank in the Southwest.

Unfortunately not every Tulsan shared in the general prosperity of the post-war year. Black citizens remained impoverished as they had for forty years. Charles Border, chairman of a temporary committee of the Chamber of Commerce, noted in a report to Chamber members in February of 1940 that the city must produce a program for improving conditions in the black section of town. His report recommended that the government build Federal Housing Administration dwellings and rent them for \$15 per month; the city housing inspectors should condemn the worst homes and delapidated buildings; and the Health Department should enforce sanitary requirements already on the statute books. The Border report, well researched and documented, painted such a dismal picture of the depressed black community that a number of responsible city and business officials proposed that the old section be completely

abandoned and the city develop a new community for its black citizens.⁷³

The problem stemmed from poverty in the black community and a lack of proper educational facilities. A year before the United States entered the Second World War, the unemployment rate among blacks stood at 11.3 percent, a figure higher than within the white community, but not much worse than in the late twenties.⁷⁴ The vast majority of blacks did not have skills; thus they faced being the last persons hired for a job and the first ones fired. War industries hired blacks, and a few firms such as Douglas Aircraft employed them in skilled positions, but other employers believed that black people performed better in jobs requiring no special skill. Even the city government, which continually searched for ways to improve life in the Negro section, employed only seventy-seven blacks among 864 city workers; one black man held an executive position, seventeen worked for the police department, and the remainder served as street sweepers and garbage collectors.

Much of the blame for the poor economic conditions fell on the citizens of the black community. Investigators from the National Urban League found more diversity of business than in any city in the United States of comparable size.⁷⁶ Standard businesses within the typical black community were barber shops, grocery stores, cafes, cleaners, and mortuaries. Tulsa possessed a significant number of black real estate agencies, furniture stores, and building contractors. The investigators concluded that few skilled black workers could find better-paying jobs in the white community, and that black businessmen distrusted other blacks; this lack of unity within the community retarded economic growth and community development.⁷⁷ Successful black

businessmen disassociated themselves from their poorer neighbors and preferred to think of themselves as better than the masses of shiftless "niggers."

Living conditions in the community were so wretched that one city official called it "a blighted area...."⁷⁸ Less than one-third of the homes had indoor toilets, and only one-fourth included indoor baths. The majority of the families lived a communal existence in dilapidated apartment houses; two families often shared a two-room apartment and shared a toilet in a hallway with others on the same floor, and they paid from sixteen to twenty-five dollars per month in rent.⁷⁹ Poverty bred crime. Black people composed ten percent of the Tulsa population, yet they committed thirty-three percent of all crimes in the city; the most frequent offenses were loitering, public drunkenness, and carrying a concealed weapon.⁸⁰ City officials knew conditions bordered on the unlivable, but although a few programs were discussed community leaders stressed the need to cut spending at all levels of government unless the entire city would benefit.

Republican power ascended in the two decades following the depression. Republican candidates carried the city in three presidential elections from 1948 through 1956, and won five of the nine local elections. Mayor Veale won reelection for the Democratic Party in 1942 against Charles R. Niven, a Republican businessman, by alligning his campaign with President Roosevelt's efforts to win the war.⁸¹ Roosevelt's popularity made a sudden recovery after the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, and Democratic candidates willfully pledged their full allegiance to country, God, Tulsa, and Franklin Roosevelt--in that order.

However, the presidential election of 1940 proved that Tulsa could vote against FDR and the New Deal and not suffer the plagues of Egypt, and a growing number of citizens believed that even if the locusts had come, that was preferable to "inviting further restrictions of our liberties."⁸² The local election of 1940 illustrated a fear that Roosevelt and the Democrats were ending the two party system. That year the Republicans nominated Olney F. Flynn, a longtime resident and owner of the Flynn Oil Company, to challenge Mayor Veale in his attempt for a third consecutive term.⁸³ The latter, aware of the sentiment against the president, nevertheless misjudged its strength and followed his usual political tactic of mouthing the wonders of the New Deal and the success of the president's war strategy. Unfortunately for Veale, his fellow Tulsans found little relationship between American soldiers advancing on Rome and running the city government; Flynn defeated Veale by 5,000 votes and led a Republican sweep of all city offices.⁸⁴

Mayor Flynn, an ambitious man, left his newly won position to run against Democrat, Roy Turner, an Oklahoma cattleman, for governor of Oklahoma in the off-year election of 1946, and gave his support in the mayor's race to Lee Price, a Tulsa businessman and a longtime Republican. Price faced Patrick Mallory, a local attorney and World War II veteran.⁸⁵ The Democratic challenger attracted thousands of supporters because of his years of fighting overseas, but Tulsans, in a heavy turnout, chose Price and the entire GOP slate.⁸⁶

The election of 1948 was, by all standards of politics, one of the most unusual and exciting in American history, and Tulsans had a similar campaign in the local elections that year. Thomas Dewey, the Republican candidate for president, outpolled President Harry S. Truman in Tulsa,

just as the pollsters predicted.⁸⁷ But the local Republican Party found itself bitterly divided over the so-called "Cochrane Plan" to build a super-expressway around the city at a cost to the taxpayers of \$6,650,000. Mayor Price defeated his primary opposition and faced Roy Lundy, a Tulsa businessman since 1910, in the general election.⁸⁸ The Democrats opposed the Cochrane program and questioned the wisdom of destroying fifty homes on land the city hoped to use for the highway.⁸⁹ Mayor Price gave his solid support to the plan and proclaimed, "I will go up or I will go down on this expressway plan."⁹⁰

Other Republicans were not so willing to make the same judgment. Finance Commissioner John M. Hall, the Republican, considered by political experts to have the best chance of reelection, neither publicly opposed nor supported the mayor, preferring to keep his own counsel on the matter.⁹¹ Joseph R. McGraw, the Republican nominee for city police chief, openly split with the mayor over the issue, and feelings became so heated between the two men that Price strategists ordered McGraw out of a GOP strategy session and threatened to withdraw their support from his campaign.⁹²

Lundy and the Democrats gleefully attacked the divided opposition. The challenger contended that the new highway would mean higher taxes, and that the Republican administration was deliberately not spending \$2,100 in bonds for roads from a referendum in 1945 in order to make the street problem more acute than it actually was at that time.⁹³ When the political dust cleared, Tulsans marched to the polls in record numbers and cast 33,707 votes; Lundy received 17,755 of those and the other Democrats won victories, except for Street Commissioner; George H. Stoner, the Republican incumbent, won in a close race.⁹⁴

President Truman's economic policies and United Nations intervention in Korea dominated the Tulsa and national political scene for the next five years. Tulsans paid heavily in inflated prices and wages; every time prices rose they resented the president more. They nonetheless willingly fought North Korean aggression. The president activated the Tulsa Marine Corps Reserve unit of 262 men and officers, and Company B, 20th Infantry, composed of men from the northeastern corner of Oklahoma, to leave for South Korea on August 1, 1950.⁹⁵ Once again, Americans fought "to make the world safe for democracy."

The war went badly at first for United Nations troops, composed mostly of Americans, but when the tide slowly turned General Douglas MacArthur became once again a national hero. Then an open rift between President Truman and his general over the question of bombing Chinese airfields and cities deteriorated until the president dismissed MacArthur. Though Generals George C. Marshall, then Secretary of State, and Omar Bradley agreed with the president, many Americans cried out in protest.

Tulsans followed suit and denounced the president and his action. Letters from citizens in support and sympathy for the de-throned commander flooded the editors' desks at the two major Tulsa newspapers.⁹⁶ Public disbelief quickly turned into vitriolic attacks against President Truman. Jenkin Lloyd Jones wrote, "Every true American citizen should rise up in outrage and in indignation to demand that Truman be impeached."⁹⁷ The day after the editorial appeared, Republicans, smelling political blood, held a public meeting and passed a resolution calling for the president's removal.⁹⁸ The campaign died almost as quickly as it began, but in the national elections of 1952, Tulsans

blamed the Democrats for poor handling of the war and voted two to one for ex-general Dwight D. Eisenhower for President of the United States.⁹⁹

Neither 1950, 1952, nor 1954 were good years for the political party of Andrew Jackson and Franklin Roosevelt. Harley Van Cleave, an oil executive and political novice, surprisingly upset Mayor Lundy in the primary but then lost the general election of 1950 to Republican George Stoner, the popular three-term Street Commissioner.¹⁰⁰ History repeated itself in the next city race, but reversed sides for the primary. Charles M. Warren, a former municipal judge, defeated Mayor Stoner and the old Republican "war horse" Dan Patton, while Van Cleave outcampaigned his party rival, ex-mayor Lundy.¹⁰¹ The Democratic ticket received heavy support from local chapters of the American Federation of Labor and the Congress of Industrial Organizations. Workers volunteered their children for door-to-door canvassing and organized rallies for the party.¹⁰² The general election had few fireworks, but brought Tulsans to the polls in record numbers, and they voted heavily for the entire Republican ticket.¹⁰³ The GOP candidates made it look easy in 1954 when L. C. Clark, a retired hardware dealer, defeated John W. McCune, an attorney, in an election distinctive from the preceding only because Elizabeth Stowell Anderson became the first woman since 1920 to win the position of city auditor.¹⁰⁴

The election of 1956 proved just the opposite. Mayor Clark defeated primary opposition and joined George E. Norvell, a county judge, in one of the hottest political years in Tulsa's history.¹⁰⁵ Two issues overshadowed all others--the need for higher city taxes and retention of a civil service system for city employees. Both candidates

opposed the latter issue and supported retention of the city civil service; thus the battlelines appeared after Norvell carried the Democrats to victory, their first since 1948, by some 10,000 votes and overcame an Eisenhower landslide burying Adlai Stevenson for a second time in four years.¹⁰⁶

If the Democrats looked forward to a "honeymoon period" in city government, they were quickly disappointed when city commissioners Jay Jones, Patrick McGuire, and Fay Young voted to submit a referendum to repeal the city's civil servant law.¹⁰⁷ Mayor Norvell, angry with this, vetoed the measure and bitterly denounced the action as an attempt to destroy "...assurances to a body of well-trained, alert public servants...."¹⁰⁸ The League of Women Voters, a non-partisan organization of politically active women, quickly came to the aid of the mayor. In a letter to the city commission, Alma Elder, president of the League, equated government with business and stressed that the merit system provided "superior organization."¹⁰⁹ The Tulsa Business and Professional Women's Club, Inc., joined the pro-merit system forces and decried repeal as terrible: "...our organization felt it important for progressive and well operated government...."¹¹⁰ Within a week after the Mayor's veto, the discussion degenerated into personal attack. H. A. Norberg, chairman of the Civil Service Board, accused Police Commissioner Jones of using the spoils system in his appointment of two men as policemen while passing over thirteen men who had better scores on qualifying examinations.¹¹¹ Commissioner Jones retorted that he was a misunderstood man trying to save the merit system and not abolish it. "What we must have," he argued, "and what I want is an amendment to the city charter."¹¹² By this time tempers had begun to cool and Mayor

Norvell agreed to place the referendum before the people asking that the city merit system be included in the city charter. The public overwhelmingly approved.¹¹³

The affair brought statewide publicity to Tulsa and to Mayor Norvell, prompting him to run for lieutenant governor of the state. The door was thus opened for political novices, James L. Maxwell, owner of the Maxwell Flower House and victor over John McCune in the Democratic Party primary, and Jack Hadley, vice-president of the Midwestern Instrument Company.¹¹⁴ The election began and ended on a friendly note, and both men conducted a clean campaign devoid of backbiting and misconceptions. The major issue was changing the structure of city government from the city commission system to a strong mayor-council system, supported by both candidates.¹¹⁵ Maxwell and the Democratic slate won the day, making him at thirty-one years of age the youngest man ever elected mayor of Tulsa.¹¹⁶

The Maxwell election symbolized the end of an era and the beginning of a new one for Tulsans. They had, in the span of one generation, grown from a ranching village to the oil capital of the world with commercial ties by highway, railroad, and airway with every major city in the United States and foreign countries in Latin America, Western Europe, and East Asia, and politicians and business leaders were already discussing the possibility of joining the city to the world by water.

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CHAPTER VIII

THE MODERN CITY

The spectacular commercial development Tulsans experienced during the fifteen years following the Second World War accelerated from 1960 to the mid-1970's. The office space added downtown by 1965 totalled more than 2,250,000 square feet, double the total existing in 1950, and the total business investment in construction and modernization in downtown totalled \$67,000,000.¹ The city attracted new industry at a record rate. Rockwell International Company established a Tulsa division in April of 1962 within a city block of the Tulsa International Airport. Rockwell manufactured the structures for the world's largest commercial jet transports and components for the Apollo and Saturn rockets.² That same year North American Aviation bought a section of the Douglas plant complex and employed 100 Tulsans.³ By 1965 city government officials estimated that one-fourth of the nation's population resided within 500 miles of Tulsa, an area stretching from New Orleans, north to St. Louis, west to Denver, and south to Houston.⁴

The most striking characteristic of the Tulsa industrial growth was the lessening of dependency on the petroleum industry. In 1960, 21,081 people worked for oil companies; within the next fifteen years several oil companies moved their headquarters to Houston, Texas, but Tulsa suffered no dramatic damage.⁵ Midway through the decade of the sixties, Tulsa claimed 812 diversified manufacturing industries which

employed 30,000 people with an annual payroll in excess of \$153,000,000. There were forty businesses employing 100 men and women each, twenty-six firms with at least 200 workers each, and five concerns hired in excess of 1,000 Tulsans each.⁶ Tulsa's economic fortunes, like those of the nation, were inextricably tied to the war in Vietnam and President Lyndon Johnson's "guns and butter" economic policy. The local economy inflated during the late sixties and early seventies, then entered a recession of shorter duration and milder intensity than in other metropolitan centers around the country. By 1975 forecasters were predicting a recovery.⁷

One of the major reasons why Tulsa weathered the withdrawal of the major oil firm headquarters was the completion of the Arkansas River Navigation System and the opening of the Port of Catoosa in June of 1971. The dedication ceremonies ended more than half a century of planning and fulfilled a dream held by Senators John McClellan of Arkansas and Robert S. Kerr of Oklahoma. The crusade for an inland waterway up the Arkansas River began in 1909 when Assistant United States Engineer William Parkin surveyed the river and found that navigation was feasible. He proposed construction of four locks--at Tulsa, Muskogee, Ft. Smith and Little Rock--at a cost he estimated at \$2,000,000.⁸

Interest spread within the business community of northeastern Oklahoma. In December, 1911, two years after Parkin publicly announced his findings, the Tulsa Chamber of Commerce sent a delegate to the National Rivers and Harbours Congress; this was composed of officials of the Department of the Interior and private citizens representing numerous cities affected by commerce on major North American rivers.⁹ Two weeks after the convention, Tulsans discovered an unexpected champion

for the waterway when Champ Clark, Speaker of the House of Representatives and leading contender for the Democratic presidential nomination, spoke in Tulsa. Clark won the hearts of the overflow crowd by pledging his support for improving the navigability of the river.¹⁰

Citizens of small rural communities joined in the quest for a federal project when the river overflowed its banks three times in five years after the First World War. Army engineers seconded the Oklahomans, but not until the great flood of the Mississippi River in 1927, which took the lives of fifteen people and destroyed millions of dollars of property, did Congress and President Calvin Coolidge sign into law the River and Harbor Act of 1927, which authorized a preliminary examination and survey of the Arkansas and the Red rivers for potential development.¹¹

In July of that year, 350 delegates, including Congressmen, officials of the War and Agricultural Departments, and private citizens from a dozen states conferred in Tulsa and organized the Arkansas River Flood Control Association, electing Clarence B. Douglas as president.¹² The organization was short-lived, and in 1929 it evolved into the Arkansas River Association; the delegates decided on Little Rock, Arkansas, as the home base and commissioned Douglas to take up permanent residence in Washington.¹³ Also in 1929, Tulsa joined the Mississippi Valley Association, comprising virtually the same membership as the Arkansas River Association; it expanded its influence into the deep South.¹⁴

The Mississippi Valley Association contracted with engineer Theodore Bent of New Orleans for a study of the navigation possibilities and estimated costs of a program to facilitate commerce on the Arkansas

River. Bent reported his findings in January of 1931 at a conference in St. Louis. He estimated that to ship goods down the river was tied directly to Tulsa's economic progress. Houston was rapidly becoming a major seaport, and there was growing concern that the Texas community would soon outstrip all other commercial centers throughout the Southwest.¹⁶ The last Congress before the outbreak of the Second World War stressed the need for a comprehensive plan for flood control along the Arkansas River.¹⁷ The war halted further investigations. While American soldiers fought the Japanese in Asia and Germans in Europe, the Arkansas River waterway movement found its leader: Robert S. Kerr. As governor of Oklahoma from 1943 to 1947, Kerr dedicated his efforts to end the disastrous floods of the river which plagued farmers and shopkeepers in northeastern Oklahoma and to develop cheap competitive transportation on the state's waterways. Governor Kerr authorized a state governmental study describing the great advantages of opening the river to commercial navigation. Kerr prophesied shipment of 419,000 tons of wheat annually via the Arkansas River at an annual savings to the consumer of \$1,270,000.¹⁸ He also predicted that more than fifty percent of the oil produced in the Southwest would be shipped down the river, and the rate per ton of gas from Tulsa to Little Rock, Arkansas, would drop from the \$5.20 charged by railroads to \$.99 on the river system.¹⁹ Kerr submitted his statement, ended his term as governor, and won a seat in the United States Senate. By the end of World War II, the quest for a waterway became an obsession with many Tulsans. "This town," said Glade Kirkpatrick, chairman of the Waterways Committee of the Chamber of Commerce, "cannot live and continue to grow without this [Arkansas River] development."²⁰

Tulsans began exerting additional political pressure on Congress through the Mississippi Valley Association, and finally, on July 24, 1946, the government authorized the development of the Arkansas River and tributaries for navigation, flood control and hydroelectric power at an expense of \$1.2 billion.²¹ Senator Kerr won a seat on the Senate Rivers and Harbors Subcommittee, a position from which he guided the project to its completion. He successfully surmounted potential road-blocks during the Kennedy administration by assisting the young president with other legislative programs in return for protection for the river program. After the Senator's untimely death on New Year's Day in 1963, Senator Mike Monroney and Representative Carl Albert carried on the fight, and when in January of 1964 President Lyndon Johnson proposed a \$84,000,000 cut in the program's budget they convinced him to change his mind.²²

On December 30, 1970, the Corps of Engineers' workboats Sallisaw and Arkoma sailed up the water, signifying completion of the work. The first incoming cargo ship arrived on January 21, 1971, and carried newsprint for the Tulsa Daily World and Tribune to the Port of Catoosa.²³ Soon tons of wheat from the Oklahoma Panhandle, beef from Texas, and petroleum flowed down the river and tied Tulsans to the international community by an efficient commercial highway.

The opening of the port at Catoosa diluted the general prosperity of the community. Annual family incomes of Tulsans exceeded the national average, while only sixteen percent of Tulsa's population earned less than \$3,000 per year, compared to nineteen percent nationwide.²⁴ Forty-three cents out of every dollar went for food and housing, and Tulsans spent twelve cents per dollar for transportation.²⁵ Retail

sales during the sixties climbed rapidly as Tulsans achieved an ever-expanding standard of living. The year 1963 saw automobile sales jump twenty-one percent, food at twenty percent, and all retail stores reported an increase in total sales averaging fifteen percent over the previous year.²⁶ The Great Society years saw Tulsa society become highly affluent.

However, statistics on housing were misleading. The historic problem of inadequate housing continued if at a less critical level. Under the Housing Act of 1961, the federal government granted \$136,275 to Tulsa for building low-cost homes.²⁷ City investigators found that the lower the family income, the higher percentage of that income was spent for shelter. Those making less than \$3,000 annually paid out one-third of their income for rent or in house payments, while individuals earning \$10,000 and up spent ten percent or less for housing.²⁸ Such figures indicated a widening gap between economic classes, a condition public officials at every level of government worked to abate.

The civil rights movement and the impact of Great Society programs created a social climate where local government made strong efforts to improve the quality of living for the less fortunate in Tulsa, and under the direction of the City Commission, the City Demonstration Agency investigated social, economic, and political problems of the poor and suggested governmental programs to alleviate the poverty under which almost one-fourth of the city's population lived.

Striving to close the economic gap between the lower and middle income groups, officials of the Demonstration Agency pinpointed a need for improved educational opportunities, especially related to job-related training programs for the less fortunate.²⁹ The median

education level for black households was 11.2 years, compared to 12.3 for the total population. The Demonstration Agency recommended that the city establish a junior college where students could continue their education at less expense than attending private schools such as Tulsa University and Oral Roberts.³⁰ Ninety-two percent of household heads in the black community never received occupational training; thus they filled unskilled positions which paid less than skilled jobs.³¹ The Tulsa Urban League attempted to deal with the problem by providing employment with on-the-job training, but the program lacked sufficient funding and the opportunities were limited.³² While such attempts failed to breakdown social and economic barriers, the Civil Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965 led to the end of de jure discrimination in Tulsa under the public accommodations ordinance passed at the end of the decade.³³

Concern for the "other Tulsan" revived public interest in beautifying dilapidated areas of the town, especially downtown, which had grown dated through the years and had developed at such a rapid rate that beauty lost out to expediency. The Tulsa Urban Renewal Authority, funded by federal and state governments, led the beautification programs. During 1960, the city cleared seventy-eight acres of land near the downtown area for expressways at a cost of \$20,000,000.³⁴ Buildings standing since the oil boom days gave way to a Public Center located between 4th and 6th streets and Denver and Houston avenues, along with high-rise apartments and a new shopping center.³⁵ Urban Renewal officials proposed landscaped plazas, small parks, and a Civic Center Plaza extending for twenty blocks.³⁶ Not all the agency's recommendations were carried out, but the city won the American City Award for

citizen participation programs in 1974.³⁷

Urban renewal also meant meeting the problem of urban transit and mass transportation in Tulsa. By the mid-1960s, Tulsa ranked second in the nation in automobiles per capita, exceeded only by Los Angeles, and traffic congestion was rapidly becoming a major problem.³⁸ The city spent \$5,000,000 in 1960 alone for street repairs, and two years later constructed fiftythree miles of new pavement, expended \$1,464,854 for a new expressway, and added six miles of sidewalks to the downtown area.³⁹ Yet even with the emphasis on speeding traffic flow into and out of the city, streets and highways remain overcrowded.

The Tulsa education system fared better than the transit situation. In response to the City Demonstration Agency and its recommendations for a junior college, the Chamber of Commerce initiated a series of studies on the need for a public school of higher education. Reminiscent of the days when railroads first came to town, the Chamber campaigned for private donations for the college and lobbied in the state capital for the right to construct the college. In May of 1968 Governor Dewey Bartlett, himself from Tulsa, signed Senate Bill 493 creating Tulsa Junior College. In April the following year the State Board of Regents adopted the resolution, and the doors of the school opened to 2,800 in September of 1970.⁴⁰

With the city, state, and federal governments establishing policies which increased the responsibility and power of the political system until it assumed the role of social engineer, citizens began taking more interest in the political system. Tulsa remained Republican in national elections and Democratic in local affairs. The city voted for Richard Nixon three times in four presidential elections, and for

Senator Barry Goldwater against President Lyndon Johnson.⁴¹ Yet Democrat James Maxwell defeated mayoral nominees from the Republican Party in four consecutive elections between 1958 and 1964.⁴² The mayor bested his primary challengers in 1966 and ran for his fifth term, but the fifth term itself that year became the issue of the campaign and James M. Hewgley, an oil executive, won by 5,000 votes.⁴³ Republicans have remained in power since the Hewgley-Maxwell election with the current mayor, Robert LaFortune, who first won in 1970.⁴⁴ He leads a modern city, one that is the product of the Western tradition. Unlike many urban centers, Tulsa maintains its optimism and a sense of manifest destiny. Progress is still the goal.

The office buildings and cultural centers of the modern Tulsa tower over the rolling hills of northeastern Oklahoma, monuments to the men and women who pioneered the state during the past one hundred years. Two generations of Creeks transported their culture and agricultural society from the southeastern states of Alabama and Georgia to the banks of the Arkansas River and founded a small settlement free, they thought, from the onslaught of white civilization. Instead, their community became the fulcrum for ranching and farming industries which in turn led to a dilution of their life-style as land-hungry white Americans came there. From the end of the Civil War until the turn of the 20th century, cattlemen drove herds across the Creek Nation and continued northward into Kansas and Missouri. The sandstone hills covered with lush bluestem and switch grass sprouting under pecan, black walnut, and cottonwood trees proved an inviting climate which the transients found irresistible. After years of political conflict, when the more traditional Creeks fought against white encroachment, Tulsa town evolved

into a ranching community, then an oil center, and finally into a modern city.

Historians of the American West from Frederick Jackson Turner to Walter Prescott Webb have written of the distinctive individualism of the American settler and perpetuated the notion that he suffered some claustrophobic revulsion to communal living. As long as Americans saw the vast expanse of land as a place where they could escape from the social confinements of civilization, and instead pursue their destiny while marching to the beat of some internal drummer, such peculiar individuals had no need to protest their frustrations against society by fomenting social and political unrest. Thus the cheap land west of the Mississippi River served as a "safety valve" for releasing political pressure.

This widely accepted depiction of the westward movement, with the exception of the Creek Indians, is the antithesis of the fundamental characteristic of Tulsa's founders. The cattlemen tied themselves to the Creek Nation as quickly as possible with railroad tracks as they searched for faster, more efficient means to ship their agricultural products to the Midwest, the Atlantic seaboard, and the Southern states. The 20th century found Tulsans building new streets and highways to facilitate the increasing commercial traffic brought by the petroleum industry; and when aviation pioneers foretold the mercantilistic future of the airplane, Tulsans spent millions of dollars constructing airport facilities and luring major airlines to the city. The Arkansas River Navigation System was another result of their quest for modern transportation to and from their city and completed the bonds on land, in the air, and by water.

The concept of the "rugged individual" ranks high as a societal value in the Tulsa collective mind; businessmen take pride in their endeavors in private enterprise and bemoan what they perceive as government encroachment on the private sector of the economy. Yet they founded the Commercial Club, and later the Chamber of Commerce, to attract new industry. When the depression of the 1930s hit the community, the local leadership welcomed federal programs and turned their backs to them only when they believed the government's efforts were not working. Thirty years later, when President Lyndon Johnson announced his quest for the Great Society, Tulsans spent millions of dollars in federal aid for urban renewal projects, and they felt no remorse for the millions spent on the Arkansas River Navigation System. Local officials now find the demands citizens make on their local government beyond the fiscal means of the city, and they must rely on a growing amount of federal funds or resort to levying heavier city taxes, a proposition feared by most politicians.

This collective effort also inspired diverse groups interested in importing culture from other sections of the United States and the world. Far from escaping society, Tulsans encouraged the growth of symphonic music, quality education, thespian arts, painting, and sculpture by the world-renowned artists and educators. The Gilcrease Museum and Library and the Philbrook Art Center illustrate their hunger for learning and knowledge, while the modern William's Cultural Center proudly carries on a cultural tradition begun by the founding members of the Hyeckka Club.

The men and women who settled in Tulsa during the past seventy-five years came from Midwestern and Southern states, and they brought

with them a belief in the benefits of modern technology and science. They profoundly espoused the work ethic, and they coalesced in a community environment which symbolizes the American West of the 20th century.

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