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HISTORY OF NOWATA COUNTY

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HISTORY OF NOWATA COUNTY

BY

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1925

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## PREFACE

This thesis is written for a Master's Degree at the request of Dr. Thomas Harrison Reynolds, Head of the History Department, and Dr. John Charles Meurman, Department of Rural Education, both of the Agricultural and Mechanical College, Stillwater, Oklahoma. It is the result of many conferences with various people of the county, some of them old people who have been in the section for half a century or more. Apparently there has not been very much written concerning Nowata County. Of course, there is plenty of information on the early comers, the Cherokees and the Delawares, and plenty of history on them, but most of this material has been gathered from the people living in the county. The author has attempted to cover in this thesis the political, social, economical, educational, and natural aspects of the county.

Grateful acknowledgment is made to Dr. Thomas Harrison Reynolds for his valuable suggestions, information, and criticism on this work. Acknowledgments are also made to Miss Lois Ellen Gill, commerce teacher of Lenapah High School, who has taken this material in shorthand; and to Miss Vera Drake, English and home economics teacher of Lenapah High School, for reading and critizing the manuscript.

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Location of Nowata County

## CHAPTER I

## LOCATION AND EARLY HISTORY

Nowata County is located in the northeastern part of Oklahoma. It is bounded on the north by Kansas, on the east by Craig County, on the south by Rogers County, and on the west by Washington County. It is just a little south of the geographical center of the United States. This means that it is about the same distance from New Orleans as it is from Chicago; from Boston as it is from Los Angeles; from the mouth of the Rio Grande in Texas as it is from Duluth, Minnesota; and about the same distance from the eastern coast of Maine as it is from Seattle, Washington. It contains more than five hundred square miles of land. Nearly all of this is good quality and capable of producing the crops generally grown in this section.

Oklahoma seemed to be a wonderful hunting ground for the earliest people as well as for the later ones. Buffalo, elk, deer, antelope, panther, wolf, and bears were plentiful as well as many smaller animals such as raccoon, o'possum, rabbits, muskrat, beaver, otter, mink, and prairie dog.<sup>1</sup> Birds of many species were also found in this section. The principal game birds were the wild turkey, prairie chicken, and quail which were found in vast quantities.<sup>2</sup> The wild pigeon used to be here in the millions. Flocks large enough to almost darken

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<sup>1</sup>Charles N. Gould, *Surveys and Travels through Oklahoma*, p. 94

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 88

the sun could be seen many days during the year. Often they broke the branches from the trees when they lighted at night.

Oklahoma was also rich in plant life in this region. Strawberries, blackberries, dewberries, and huckleberries attracted many animals and birds in the early summer. In the fall they fed upon acorns, pecans, walnuts, and hickory nuts that grew in Eastern Oklahoma.<sup>3</sup> Wild plums, grapes, persimmons, and other wild fruits were abundant in this section. Outside of the forest region, heavy grass grew on all of the land. Many trails were made by the wild animals through this grass and underbrush to the watering places along the streams.<sup>4</sup> These trails afterwards became paths for the pioneers and early settlers of the region.

There are many evidences in this section to show that it was inhabited by a pre-historic people of the Indian race long before the coming of the Five Civilized Tribes. The most numerous of these pre-historic people were probably the Earth House people who inhabited this section five or six centuries ago. The remains of their dwellings are scattered over a large part of Eastern Oklahoma and Western Arkansas. The Earth House people cultivated the soil as is shown by the stone hoes and other tools found near their dwelling sites. They also had pottery and seemed to be skilled in the art of making it.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 78

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 12

<sup>5</sup>Muriel H. Wright, Story of Oklahoma, p. 7.



Another pre-historic race that inhabited this section was the Cave and Ledge People. They made their homes in caves, projecting rocks, or ledges along the bluffs of the rivers. Many traces of their homes are found in the northeastern part of Oklahoma. They lived largely by fishing and hunting. Many signs of muscle shells and bones of animals are found near their camping places.<sup>6</sup>

The earliest trappers or hunters coming into the section found it inhabited by the Quapaw Indians. They were very generous and helped these early explorers, trappers, and traders in securing food and other necessities of life. They lived in villages sometimes surrounded by stone walls for protection. Their long dome-roofed houses were often occupied by several families. They tilled the soil and were skilled in making pottery.<sup>7</sup>

In the northeastern part of Oklahoma in what is now Nowata County the Osages lived. These Indians were friendly to strangers who came to their villages for fur trading purposes. They took great pride in feeding the visitors that came to them. Apparently the more the visitor ate, the better they liked him. Often they took him from house to house in order to show their hospitality. If he refused to eat, it was an offense and they considered him an enemy. They were an agricultural people. The women grew corn and

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 8

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 15

a number of vegetable crops; the men were strong warriors and great hunters.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 16

## CHAPTER II

## INDIAN TRIBES REPRESENTED IN NOWATA COUNTY

In this chapter will be briefly discussed the Indian tribes that are represented in Nowata County at the present time; namely, the Cherokees, Delawares, Osages, and Shawnees.

When De. Soto made his expedition from Florida through the southern states to the Mississippi, he found the Cherokees were at that time living in log houses and growing crops. They were probably further advanced than any other Indian tribe north of Mexico. The Cherokees were a branch of the Iroquois Indians that had apparently strayed from New York many generations ago and settled in the hill country of Western North Carolina, Western Virginia, Northwestern South Carolina, Eastern Tennessee, Northern Georgia, and Northern Alabama.<sup>1</sup>

As early as 1802 some of the Cherokees had begun to realize that the white men were incroaching upon their rights and that sooner or later they would have to move to new lands or take up the white man's civilization. So a group visited President Jefferson in 1808 and asked that he send an exploring party to locate new lands to which they might move. Jefferson did this, but before any Indians were moved a new president was elected and the War of 1812 broke out.<sup>2</sup> Nothing was done until 1817. At this time about one-third of the

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<sup>1</sup>Hugh T. Cunningham, History of the Cherokees, p. 291

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 299

Cherokee nation moved to Arkansas. They had been there only a short time when they realized that the white man was still pressing in upon them. In 1828 this group of Cherokee West secured Northeastern Oklahoma, of which Nowata County is at present a part. This territory was not very different from parts of their lands in Georgia and the East. They began immediately to build homes and fence small fields to grow corn and other crops. They allowed their hogs, cattle, and horses to graze on the open range.<sup>3</sup>

During the period that the Cherokee West was getting located in Oklahoma, their kindred, the Cherokees of the East, were making rapid progress towards civilization. Missionaries had come into the section, established schools, and taught the people many ways of civilization. One of their own tribe, Sequoyah, invented the alphabet, and in a remarkably short time the majority of the Indians could read and write. The people of Georgia were becoming more and more eager to rid the state of Georgia of the Indians. About this time Jackson was elected president. He was a western man and an Indian fighter, and favored the removal of the Indians by force if necessary. Also, gold was discovered in some of the Cherokee lands and this caused a great rush of prospectors into the country, who tore down their fences, destroyed their property, and made it very unpleasant for them. To add to the burden, Georgia passed some very strenuous laws against the

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<sup>3</sup>Dale and Rader, Readings in Oklahoma History, p. 148.

Cherokees. A treaty was then made and the Cherokees were finally moved by force along the trail of tears to Northeastern Oklahoma.<sup>4</sup>

#### DELAWARE INDIANS

When Lord Delaware landed in this country, he was met by a band of Indians called Lenni Lenape (meaning "original or first people"). Since that time they have been called Delawares. The Delaware Indians, of which there are several in Nowata County, are a remnant of the once powerful eastern tribe which inhabited portions of Delaware, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. In colonial days they probably numbered fifty thousand people.<sup>5</sup>

As early as 1616 they sold part of their lands to the Dutch and later traded other lands to the Swedes and William Penn. It was the Delaware Indians that made the famous treaty with William Penn under the Old Elm Tree which was never sworn to and was never broken.<sup>6</sup>

In 1789 they acquired lands in reach of the upper Sandusky River in Ohio. While living in this territory, they often wandered to the south in search of game and many Indian battles were fought between them and the Cherokees that lived in the southern Appalachian Mountains. Later on, they made a treaty with the Cherokees in which both tribes were permitted

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 173

<sup>5</sup>Mrs. E. B. Lawson, Before Oklahoma, Tulsa Tribune, Dec. 1930, p. 13

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

to continue their hunting expeditions in Kentucky and other mutual hunting grounds.<sup>7</sup>

In 1812 the Delawares left their Ohio territory and migrated to Indiana, and there joined the Shawnees. They took part in the noted battle of Tippicanoe in the War of 1812. In 1818 they surrendered their lands east of the Mississippi River and came to Missouri, settling on White River near the present city of Springfield. They soon formed a treaty with a group of the Cherokees and made war on the Osages, who then occupied the northeastern part of Oklahoma.<sup>8</sup>

Soon they became dissatisfied with their Missouri home and could not agree among themselves as to where to migrate. They disposed of their possessions there, some of them going to Kansas, others to the Indian Territory in what is now Oklahoma. The group that went to Kansas made a treaty with the Cherokee Indians in 1867 in which they were allowed to settle in the Cherokee Nation and have all the rights and privileges that the Cherokees enjoyed at that time. They were allowed one hundred and sixty acres of land in this new territory for each man, woman, and child who desired to come to Oklahoma. They were to make their selections anywhere in the Cherokee Nation east of the ninety-sixth meridian, which is the western boundary line of what is now Washington County.<sup>9</sup>

By far the majority of these Delaware Indians settled

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> John B. Benedict, Muskogee and Northeastern Oklahoma, p. 295.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 216

in what is now Nowata County.<sup>10</sup> Their chief at that time, Reverend Charles Journeycake, settled in Nowata County near the present town of Alluwe. Many of the outstanding people of Nowata County are descendants of Chief Journeycake and other Delaware Indians.<sup>11</sup>

#### OSAGE INDIANS

The earliest record of the Osage Indians is that of Father Marquette, a French explorer, who found them near the Osage River in Missouri. At the time of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 the Osages were scattered over parts of Missouri, Arkansas, Kansas, and Oklahoma. They are estimated at between forty-five hundred and five thousand people at that time. They were a peaceful tribe of Indians, as far as white men were concerned, but were very warlike on neighboring tribes. They were friendly with the French who hunted, trapped, and bought furs from them.<sup>12</sup>

When the Cherokee West moved into Arkansas, the Osages got a group of warriors together and attacked them, burning their homes, and driving off their cattle. On one such occasion Chief Tooantuh (Spring Frog) of the Western Cherokees called his braves together in the days of the strawberry moon and made war on the Osages. The final battle, that of Claremore Mounds, in what is at present Rogers County, was a hard

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<sup>10</sup>Mrs. E. B. Lawson, op. cit., p. 20

<sup>11</sup>Lawson, op. cit., p. 20

<sup>12</sup>George H. Wright, Before Oklahoma, Tulsa Tribune, Dec. 1930.

fought one. The Cherokees with their modern rifles were about to get the better of the Osages who had to use old muskets and bows and arrows. The Cherokees were forced to retreat and in their retreat they passed through what is now Nowata County.<sup>13</sup>

Following the Louisiana Purchase at the suggestions of Louis and Clark, who were at that time passing through Missouri, Peter Choteau was commissioned or requested to make a treaty with the Osage Indians. In this treaty they gave up much of their lands in Missouri and Arkansas on condition that they were to be protected by the United States government. As a result of this treaty, the government built a fort and maintained troops for the protection of the Osage Indians. Signing this treaty was Chief White Hair, of Pawhuska, the great, great, great grandfather of the late vice-president, Charles Curtis. Pawhuska was one of the most influential chiefs the Osages ever had. Other important chiefs were Big Foot and Claremore.<sup>14</sup>

Following the Civil War, in accordance with the treaties made between the government and the Cherokee Indians in which friendly tribes might be moved into their territory, a treaty was made for the Osages securing a tract of land consisting of about a million and one-half acres in what is now Osage

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<sup>13</sup>Rachel Caroline Eaton, Battle of Claremore Mounds, Chronicles of Oklahoma, Dec. 1930, Vol. VII, p. 375

<sup>14</sup>Wright, op. cit., p. 14



County. The osages sold their Kansas lands to the government and paid for this land and had more than eight million dollars left, which was in the government treasury at five per cent interest. The interest was used to maintain the Osage agency and a small annuity was paid to each member of the tribe every year. The Osages moved from their Kansas homes in 1871 and 1872. They settled at Silver Lake near Bartlesville. Later it was found that their location was on Cherokee lands and the agency was moved to Pawhuska, which became the capital of the Osage Nation and is now the county seat of Osage County, the largest county in Oklahoma.<sup>15</sup>

In 1879 the first oil well was completed just a little west of Bartlesville in the Osage reservation. This well averaged a flow of twenty barrels per day. The oil industry grew rapidly following this. Within a few years the Osage Indians were the richest nation or tribe of people per capita in the world. There are a few Osage Indians and their descendants in Nowata County.<sup>16</sup>

#### SHAWNEE INDIANS

The earliest record we have on the Shawnee Indians is when they were living in small bands in the basin of the Cumberland River in Kentucky and Tennessee. They were near neighbors to the Cherokees and were on friendly terms with them.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Wright, op. cit., p. 14

<sup>16</sup>Benedict, op. cit., 248

<sup>17</sup>Lawson, op. cit., p. 20

About 1689 they left this territory and went into Pennsylvania. One-half of these warriors were Shawnees. By the middle of the 18th century they were involved in wars with the colonists, and during the Revolutionary War they rendered some assistance to the British in opposing the Americans. By the close of the war, they were driven from Pennsylvania and settled in Ohio along the Miami River.<sup>18</sup>

A few years later they were forced to leave Ohio and many of them crossed the Mississippi River and settled in Missouri and Kansas. They remained in Kansas until about 1855 when they came to the Indian Territory. The town of Bluejacket in the northern part of Craig County became the home of this group of Shawnees. Charles Bluejacket was their chief. In 1869 the remaining Shawnees outside of Oklahoma were given a reservation in Ottawa County. There were about one hundred and sixty members of this group and they have since remained on or near this reservation.<sup>19</sup>

The Shawnee Indians differ noticeably from other Indian tribes in that they were not so closely bound together by tribal ties. They wandered from place to place in bands and were never united upon one reservation. Their power and influence as a tribe, as a result, is not so great as many other Indian tribes. A number of Shawnee Indian, especially descendants of Bluejacket, or the group that came with him, are found in Nowata County.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Lawson, op. cit., p. 20

<sup>19</sup>Benedict, op. cit., p. 669

<sup>20</sup>Benedict, op. cit., p. 670

## CHAPTER III

## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT OF NOWATA COUNTY

The most important factor in the development of any territory or range is the people. In this chapter a brief description will be given of the important families that have settled in Nowata County and helped develop it into its present condition.

## THE CHOUTEAUS

One of the outstanding families, if not the most outstanding family, in the history of the Louisiana Territory is that of the Chouteaus. Rene Auguste Chouteau came to New Orleans about 1718. Auguste Chouteau, his son, was born in New Orleans probably in 1749. When still a youth, Auguste came to St. Louis and there at the age of fourteen supervised the felling of the trees, the clearing of the land, and starting of the trading post which later became St. Louis in 1763. He, with other members of the family, established the St. Louis Fur Company and built up a vast line of trading posts throughout the entire Indian country as far west as the 100th meridian or the western line of the French possessions. He had a lot of ability as a pioneer builder, as a trader with the Indians, and as a diplomat in handling Indians and Indian problems and situations. He was a leader in all of the important moves in the early pioneering development of Missouri and the Southwest.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The Chouteaus, Harrette Johnson Westbrook, Chronicles of Oklahoma, Vol. XI, June 1933, p. 786

His son, Pierre Chouteau, attended West Point Military Academy where he graduated and became a lieutenant and served only a short while in the army. He came back to the Louisiana territory where he married an Osage Indian and became renowned for his trade and work with the Indians. He established a trading post at Fort Gibson, Oklahoma, and built a feudal mansion at Saline Creek near Salina in Mayes County, which was visited by many noted people of that day, including Washington Irving, Sam Houston, and others.<sup>2</sup>

Pierre Chouteau was probably the greatest merchant of the Chouteau dynasty. His son, Frederick, established a trading post among the Kaw Indians in Kansas. He is the father of Lola Chouteau, who was born in 1849 in Johnson County, Kansas. In 1871 Lola Chouteau, with a number of his neighbors and friends, moved into the Indian Territory and settled on his present home in Nowata County two miles east of Lenapah. Since that time he has been engaged in agricultural and stock raising pursuits. He has a number of children and grandchildren that have helped make Nowata County what it is today.<sup>3</sup>

The Chouteau Fur Trading Company of St. Louis and its successors are the largest in the world. They knew how to handle the Indians, secure their trade, and develop various business enterprises. These include steamboat navigation on the Mississippi and Missouri Rivers. Pierre Chouteau

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 793

<sup>3</sup> John D. Benedict, Muskogee and Northeastern Oklahoma, Vol. II, p. 156

established the first iron mines in Missouri, and was instrumental in getting the first railroad built through the section. They have helped in practically every way in building the Southwest.<sup>4</sup> The names of the Chouteaus of Nowata County are as follows:

In 1871 there came from Johnson County, Kansas, to Nowata County, Charles Chouteau, Emily Chouteau, Julia Chouteau, Randolph Wells, Jim Elliott and Henry Shufeldt. The bluejackets, Baughertys and Whites came too, but they stayed in Craig County.

Charles Chouteau married Ada Dodge who came to Kansas in 1875 from Nova Scotia. There were four children, Charles P. Chouteau, Mary F. Chouteau, Webster, Kate Chouteau, and Arthur D. Chouteau.

Emily Chouteau married Jim Elliott and there were six children, Emma Elliott Beatty, Mamie Elliott Cumpston, Edmond F. Elliott, Dora Elliott Irwin, Lyda Elliott Webster, and Frank Elliott.

Julia Chouteau married Randolph Wells and there were seven children, James Wells, Fred Wells, Ida Wells Rowley, Edgar Wells, Emma Wells, Adam Wells, and Jack Wells.

Ed Chouteau married Maria Daley and there were four children, Edmond F. Chouteau, Fannie Chouteau, Cyprian Chouteau and Karl Chouteau.

Charles P. Chouteau married Mattie Cloud and there were four children, Woodrow, Wynona, Jess, and Frank.

Edmond F. Chouteau married Clarice Billingslea and there were six children, Cyprian, Jim, Ruth, Martha, Ben, and John.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Lola Choteau, Lenapah, Age 87, Interview March 1936.

<sup>5</sup> Kathrine Choteau, Family records.

## THE CAMPBELLS

Another very important generation of people that helped develop Nowata County are the Campbells. James Campbell came to America from Ireland in the latter part of the eighteenth century and settled in Frederick County, Virginia.<sup>6</sup> There Robert M. Campbell was born in 1809. Later he moved to Ohio where he married Margaret Lockhart. He returned to Frederick County, Virginia, where he established a home and reared a family of seven sons and four daughters. Most of his attention was given to agricultural pursuits, but he was also very active and a prominent member of the Presbyterian Church and contributed in a large measure to the up-building and advancement of his community.<sup>7</sup>

One of his sons, Josiah L. Campbell, born in Frederick County in 1834, practiced medicine, served in the army under General Robert E. Lee, and later served several terms as a member of the legislature of the state of Virginia. In his old age he spent his winters in Nowata, Oklahoma, in the Indian Territory, and his summers in the mountains of West Virginia.

Herbert C. Campbell, another of the same family, who was a doctor and surgeon, graduated from medical school in Baltimore, and moved to Nowata.

John Edward Campbell, another of the same family,

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<sup>6</sup>Benedict, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 384

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 387

attended the Winchester Academy, Virginia, taught school in Virginia and Missouri, and moved to Kansas in 1870 where he staked a claim and became a real pioneer of the west.<sup>8</sup> A few years later he came to the Osage country and became a clerk in a store in Pawhuska. Later he entered business in Pawhuska. From there he came to Lightening Creek in Nowata County in 1880. He got the name Lightening Creek changed to Alluwe which means "better quality". He established himself in Alluwe in the mercantile and cattle business. A few years later when the railroad came through Nowata County he established the first mercantile store in Nowata, which town later became the county seat of Nowata County. At the time that he built this store, there was only one other building being constructed at Nowata, the depot. He was also instrumental in organizing the first bank that was established in Nowata, and became vice-president of it. Later, when it was made a national bank, he became president. He has been a very valuable man in Nowata County in financial as well as business circles. He had time for much community improvement work, and took great interest in his fraternities, church, and community. In 1878 he married Miss Emeline Journeycake, a beautiful Delaware Indian girl whose father was the renowned and distinguished Reverend Charles Journeycake, last chief of the Delaware tribe.<sup>10</sup> He had two children that lived.

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<sup>8</sup>

Ibid., p. 388

<sup>9</sup>

Mitchell, Chief Journeycake, p. 7

<sup>10</sup>

Ibid., p. 83

His daughter, Roberta Emma Journeycake, is a well known musician and artist. She is the present president of the American Federation of Women's Clubs and lives in Tulsa. She married Eugene B. Lawson, who was instrumental in getting Nowata County recognized and getting the first government court in Nowata.<sup>11</sup>

Herbert Lockhart Campbell, son of John Edward Campbell, who has been prominent in financial and business circles of Nowata County, is at present president of the First National Bank at Nowata as well as president of the First National Bank in Coffeyville, Kansas.

#### THE ARMSTRONGS

Another important early day family of Nowata County that has had much to do with the development of the agricultural, livestock, and mercantile industries is that of Henry Armstrong. He was born at Spavinaw, in Mayes County, in 1846. His father was a Canadian with French blood; his mother was part Delaware Indian.

When he was ten years old, his parents left the Indian Territory and settled on the Delaware Indian reservation in Kansas. There he attended the Delaware Indian Mission School. He enlisted in the Union army and fought for more than two years in the Civil War and was wounded.

After the war he married Miss Lucy Jane Journeycake, the daughter of Chief Charles Journeycake. The next few years were spent on a farm in Kansas where he made good as a pioneer

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<sup>11</sup> Benedict, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 434



farmer. He came with the Delaware Indians in 1868 and settled at Goodys Bluff on the Verdigris River in Nowata County. There he established a trading post and became engaged in the mercantile business. Later he had stores at Nowata, Vinita, and Chelsea. He established the first post office in Nowata County at Lightening Creek, and was the first postmaster at Goodys Bluff. His first wife died in 1882 leaving five children. Four of them married and settled in Nowata County, one moved to New York.<sup>12</sup>

His second marriage was to Miss Annie Journeycake, sister of the first wife. He had three children by this marriage, but only one lived to maturity. She married Charley Reinherdt and settled in the Armstrong community east of Nowata. Mr. Armstrong, as well as his family, has taken an active interest in all the moves for the betterment of the people of Nowata County.<sup>13</sup>

#### THE JOURNEYCAKES

Reverend Charles Journeycake was born on the Sandusky River in Ohio in the territory that had been given to the Delaware Indians when they were moved from New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware. His mother was a Delaware Indian, highly educated in a missionary school. She also knew thoroughly the Indian dialects and ways of the Indians. On many occasions she served interested parties, including government agents, as an interpreter for the Indians.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 541

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 543

<sup>14</sup> Mrs. E. B. Lawson, Rev. Chas. Journeycake, Tulsa Tribune, December 5, 1930.

Charles studied for the ministry. At the age of thirty nine he became chief of the Wolf gang which is probably the strongest of the three divisions of Delaware Indians. Later he was made chief of the entire Delaware Indian tribes. When the treaty was made by the government in 1867 allowing them to come into the Indian Territory and take land among the Cherokees, Chief Journeycake led his band of some four hundred Delaware Indians into Nowata County. He settled on Lightning Creek in the southeastern part of Nowata County which was later changed to Alluwe by his son-in-law, John B. Campbell. There he built and became pastor of the first Baptist Church which was established in this section of the Indian country. His life, his dealings with his people, his sincerity, and his good family has had more influence upon the development of Nowata County than any other man that entered it.<sup>15</sup>

#### DALTON GANG

The early people that settled and that influenced the social, political, and economical development of Nowata County have not all been like the ones that have just been discussed; namely, the Chouteaus, Campbells, Journeycakes, and Armstrongs. Nowata County, being a boundary line county between Kansas and the Indian Territory, saw fully its share or more of the outlaws of the early days of the section.

Coffeyville, Kansas, which was a thriving little city in the early nineties, was just three miles from the county line. Many criminals in and about this town had hide-outs

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<sup>15</sup>  
Ibid., p. 10

over in Nowata County. South Coffeyville, which is just within the northern boundary line of Nowata County, was famous for its crime and outlaws. A number of outlaws can be mentioned such as the Jarretts, Connors, Cherokee Bill, and the Dalton gang.

Much trouble along the boundary line was due to laws preventing the grazing of cattle in the Indian Nation. Cattle along the boundary line strayed over on the Oklahoma side, as well as many people deliberately grazing their cattle within the bounds of the Indian Territory when grass was short elsewhere. This caused friction and hard feeling and often crime. Old timers tell of a number of occasions when the cattle were shot because they were over here. Then cattle rustlers from the Osage Nation, which was only eleven miles from the western boundary of the line, caused a lot of grief and outlawry.<sup>16</sup>

A number of people are still living in and around Lenapah that were here in 1890 and claimed to have seen the Dalton brothers ride over the prairies going nowhere and coming from nowhere in particular, and interested in nothing apparently. No serious crimes were committed by them in this section. However, since they were so near, having been reared close to Coffeyville, Kansas, a review of their career would be in order.

Louis Dlaton, the father of the Dalton boys, came from Kentucky to Missouri where he married Adeline Younger, who was a cousin of the outlaw Younger boys. He came to near

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<sup>16</sup>George Patchett, Lenapah, Okla., Age 67, Interview Mar.1936.

Coffeyville, settled on a farm, and there the famous Dalton boys grew up. Fred Dalton was a deputy United States marshall in the Indian Territory and had a good record. Bill Dlaton, when he became a man, moved to California, entered politics there, and made a respected citizen of that state. Bob Dalton, before he was twenty-one, was appointed deputy United States marshall and served the United States courts in Wichita, Kansas, and Fort Smith, Arkansas, as well as in the Osage Indian country. He turned into an outlaw and was probably the "brains" of the gang.<sup>17</sup>

The first important crime committed by the Dalton boys was that of horse stealing. They stole a herd of horses in the Indian Territory and drove them into Kansas and sold them. With the proceeds, Grat and Emmett went to California and there attempted to rob a train. The train authorities fought them and a man was killed by the Dalton boys. Grat was captured, tried, and convicted, but escaped as he was being removed from the county jail to the penitentiary. He was later joined by his brother, Emmett, and they came to the Indian Nation, dodging the law.

The Southern Pacific Railroad Company put out a standing reward of \$6000 for them, which made them much hunted. Following this, they organized their gang, recruiting Bill Doolin, Dick Broadwell, Bill Powers, and Black Face Charley Bryant. These men had been cowboys on a number of ranches in the Indian Nation and knew all the important hide-outs for outlaws.

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<sup>17</sup> C. J. Wrightsman, "Hell on the Border", Tulsa Tribune, December 24, 1930.

The next important crime was a raid on a colony of missourians at Orlando. They took several horses in this raid and were followed by a posse of men. They killed William Thompson and W. C. Starmer from ambush in this raid. Then they held up and robbed the Sante Fe Express train at Red Rock in the Cherokee Strip country. They killed the telegraph operator in this act. The next crime of importance was that of robbing the express train on the Katy railroad at Adair, in Mayes county. This train was heavily guarded and a severe gun battle followed the robbery in which several people were killed.

Then Bob conceived a plan that he thought would overshadow anything that had ever been done by the James boys or Younger boys, famous outlaws of the section; that of robbing both the First National Bank and the Condon National Bank of Coffeyville simultaneously. They rode up through the hills of eastern Nowata County, crossed the state line into Kansas, and camped for the night a few miles east of Coffeyville with plans to ride into Coffeyville the next morning about the time the banks would open and do the robbery. That night Bill Doclin's horse wrenched his foot some way and the next morning when they resumed the journey the horse was limping. He slowed up, planning to get another horse and told them he would be into Coffeyville not more than fifteen minutes later than they were. He failed to show up and the attempted robbery was performed by five of them. Three went into one bank and two into the

other. The Dalton boys were disguised. As they walked up the street in Coffeyville a merchant noticed that these men were disguised and watched them, saw them enter the banks, and put out the alarm that the banks were being robbed. The city marshall, the citizens, cow punchers, and farmers that had come into town that morning hustled out their Winchesters and shot guns, and a severe battle took place. The gang succeeded in getting the money, but only one got out of town and he was found dead by the side of the road just a little outside of the city limits. All of them were killed except Emmett and he received a number of bullet wounds.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 10

## CHAPTER IV

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Nowata County contains more than five hundred square miles. Practically all of this land is either good agricultural land or good grazing land. The Verdigris River goes through the center of the county on its southward course from Kansas. Along this river are some of the finest bottom lands in Oklahoma. In places the bottoms are two or three miles wide. It is rich alluvial soil and will grow any crop that thrives in this section of the country. West of the river the land is largely prairie. Much of it is fertile while some is not so good. East of the river there is some good limestone prairie as well as some broken and hilly land but it all produces luxuriant grass and is a fine grazing country. Corn, wheat, oats, hay, and vegetables are the most important crops in the county. However, along the river and creek bottoms some good cotton is grown.

For many years the farmers have been growing good crops on most of the land, but recently the soil on many farms is showing signs of depletion. In other words, the continuous cropping is taking the best of the plant food from the soil and it is not producing as it did some years ago. One of the biggest problems facing the farmers of Nowata County is that of conserving and maintaining the soil fertility. At present, much interest is being taken in this work. Many farmers are having their land surveyed and are practicing

terracing. This work is largely under the supervision of the county agent or the C. C. C. Camp which is located at Nowata in this county. Others are taking more interest in growing legumes, cover crops, utilizing farm manure, and practicing crop rotation, which will help conserve the fertility of the soil as well as produce better crops.

Since the depression has been on, many farmers are realizing that they must either give farming up altogether or change their methods. In other words, they are realizing that it is no longer as profitable to farm as it was twenty-five years ago, but are now farming to make a living and in doing so many are making money. In this changed type of farming many are practicing more diversified methods. Dairy-<sup>1</sup>ing is becoming more and more important. Better markets are available; trucks pass over every good road in the county each morning. A better grade of milk is being produced and sold to the local cream buyers. Many are interested in securing and keeping better producing cows. These practices are not only giving them much better returns, but in the long run will help to rebuild their depleted soil. Special interest is being taken in growing foods for cattle that was not practiced a few years ago. Many people are striving to produce better tame grass pastures. Where limestone is available or in the river and creek bottoms farmers are successfully growing alfalfa.

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<sup>1</sup>James Salisbury, County Agent, Nowata, Oklahoma, Interview



In addition to the recent growth in the dairy industry the farmers are realizing that poultry is worth more and more on the farm. Many household bills are being paid with eggs and poultry that are being marketed in the section. Practically every farm is now keeping sufficient hogs for home meat and a few for the market. In parts of the county, especially the eastern part, sheep are attaining quite a bit of attention. The farmers are realizing that a few sheep kept will enhance the farm income with very little additional expense. Greater interest is also being taken in gardens. Most of the farms in the section are attempting now to grow an abundant supply of vegetables for table use during the season as well as a sufficient supply to can for winter use. There are a number of canning clubs in the county that are emphasizing the important and the necessity of a good supply of canned food and vegetables.<sup>2</sup> Nowata County has a full time county agent and a full time home demonstration agent. Much good work among the farmers is being done by these public servants and most of the people appreciate their work very much.

Another important problem that the farmer is facing in Nowata County is that of the land being owned by outside corporations and companies. Several years ago when the oil business was booming, a lot of land was bought by outside investors and has been held for their royalties and income from oil and gas. In many instances the buildings have been allowed to run down or deteriorate, so the tenant farmer

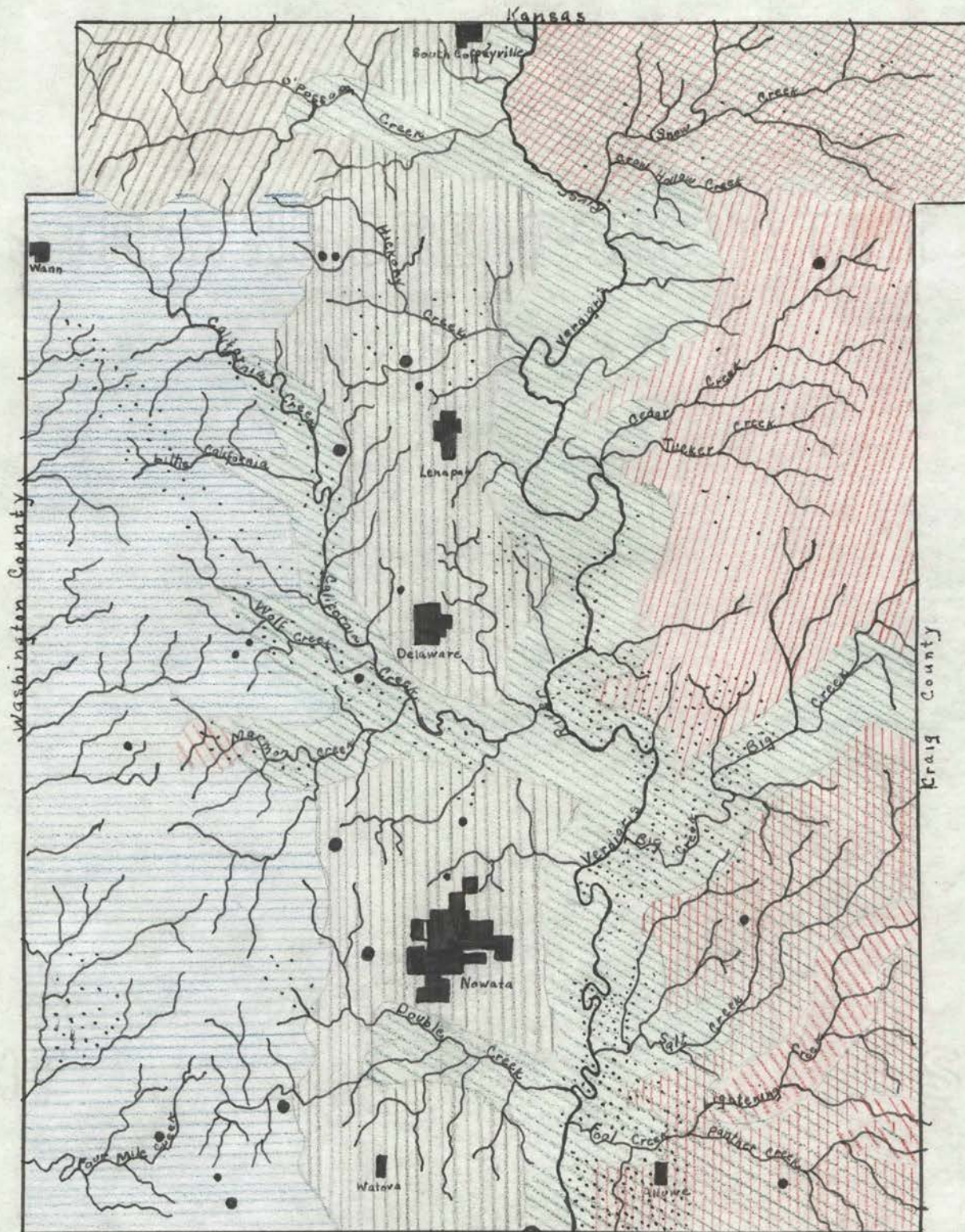
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<sup>2</sup>Gertrude Hove, Home Demonstration Agent, Nowata, Oklahoma  
Interview

does not have the good houses for homes that he had a few years ago. This lack of interest in the improvement of the premises has also had its effect. In many cases the farmer has lost hope. He has lost the ambition that he had a few years ago. He feels that farming no longer is profitable and is farming merely for an existence. If a better attitude toward general farm improvement and more interest in the local and community affairs such as churches and school could be built it would improve the condition considerably, especially if the farmer would make an effort to buy his land and own his home.

Practically every part of the county is served by county, township, or state highways that are available for the farmers to get their produce to the market. Coffeyville, Kansas, and Nowata, Bartlesville, Vinita, and other surrounding towns furnish good local markets. Two railroads and an interurban line cross the county and furnish people facilities to more distant markets.

The most important agricultural industry in the county at the present is livestock. Nowata County, from the earliest day, has been noted for its well-watered pasture regions. There are still a number of ranches in the county that have large herds of fine white-faced cattle. In most cases these ranches are making good in the cattle business. Practically every farmer in the county keeps some beef cattle that give him a nice return each year from the beef cattle markets of Kansas City, Tulsa, Joplin, and Parsons.



- |                                 |                   |                       |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Sandy-Hilly-BlackJack           | Black Limestone   | Timber-Hilly-Gravelly |
| Prairie Grassland Thin-Gravelly | Valley-Sandy Loam | Mixed Limestone       |
| Level Tight Blackland           | Oil and Gas       | Coal                  |
- Ponds and Lakes

# Nowata County

## CHAPTER V

## INDUSTRY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Probably no section of Oklahoma has a greater variety of natural resources than Nowata County. Along the Verdigris River valley there has been, until recently, good marketable timber for lumber purposes. Many of the early settlers of Nowata County were able to derive considerable revenue from the sale of this timber. Grasses of various kinds are grown abundantly in the county on either side of the river. The winters are short and mild which makes it possible for the cattle to roam for a living throughout almost the entire year.

Probably the most important industry and resource is that of oil. Nowata County is in what is known as the shallow oil field that extends from near Delaware in the center of the county to east of Claremore in Rogers County. Oil is found from one hundred and fifty to seven hundred feet. The first producing well in Nowata County was "brought in" in the Coodys Bluff-Alluwe field in 1904. The first marketing was rather difficult as the oil had to be hauled in wagons to the railroad. A few years later, with the laying of pipe lines, the oil industry began to boom and many new producing wells were brought in around Coodys Bluff, Childers, and Delaware.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Charles N. Gould, State Geological Survey, 1908

In 1906 the famous Hog Shooter oil field was discovered which reaches into the western part of Nowata County and covers a large part of Washington County. Many of these wells have been producing steadily for fifteen or twenty years.<sup>2</sup>

Several individuals and private concerns own and operate oil wells and refineries in Nowata County, but there are four major producing companies operating in the county; namely, the Prairie Sinclair, Harmon-Whitehill, Delaware Consolidated, and Forest Petroleum. Due to better prices much interest is being taken in the oil industry. A number of new wells have been drilled and several old ones have been cleaned out and put to pumping and the future oil industry of Nowata County still looks promising to many people.<sup>3</sup>

In addition to oil there is an abundance of natural gas in the county. Practically every farm home, city home, and industry uses gas for fuel. A number of gas companies are operating in the county and large quantities are carried out through pipe lines to Coffeyville, Kansas, and other industrial centers.<sup>4</sup>

Nowata County has an abundance of coal, especially in the southeastern part. It lies near the surface of the earth in what is called the strip mines. Much coal is mined each year and trucked and sold on local markets. There is

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Charles N. Gould, *Travels Through Oklahoma*, 1930, p. 135

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 136

an abundance of limestone and sandstone in the county, most of which is of splendid building quality.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 148

CHAPTER VI  
POLITICAL HISTORY

OKLAHOMA  
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The section, of which Nowata County is a part, is in the northwest corner of the old Cherokee Nation, some one hundred miles from its capital at Tahlequah. The people living in this section were influenced more by neighboring towns of Kansas than by those of the Cherokee Nation. Coffeyville, Kansas, a thriving trading and industrial center of some three thousand population in 1890,<sup>1</sup> was the center of trade and other business enterprises of this section at that time. Most of the provisions, supplies, and other things that the farmers and traders needed were bought in Coffeyville and freighted over the old Texas trail which passed down through the center of Nowata County, ferried the Verdigris River at Coodys Bluff, passed on through Claremore, and continued south to Texas.<sup>2</sup>

Very little industry of any type or anything except farming and ranching was carried on in the section prior to 1889 when the development of the county began. At this time the St. Louis and Iron Mountain Railroad was built through the county from Coffeyville, Kansas, to Ft. Smith, Arkansas. It seemed to be the policy of the railroad company to establish a station about every six miles across

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<sup>1</sup> Twelfth Census, U. S. Printing Office, Washington, D. C.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. W. E. Roberts, Nowata, Oklahoma, Interview.

OKLAHOMA  
AGRICULTURE & MECHANICAL COLLEGE  
LIBRARY  
JUL 17 1937

the county. These stations were Elliott, Lenapah, Delaware, Nowata, and Watova.<sup>3</sup> With these towns as a center, the business and industrial history of the county largely developed before its organization into a county in 1907, at statehood.

The most important center of population in the county is Nowata, the county seat. It is located in the south central part of the county on the Missouri Pacific Railroad, twenty-five miles from Coffeyville, thirty-three miles from Vinita, thirty miles from Claremore, fifty miles from Tulsa, and twenty-one miles from Bartlesville. It is in a beautiful section of country. The land is slightly rolling; it is near the Verdigris River, which furnishes the town with an abundant supply of water as well as being used for fishing, swimming, and other recreational purposes. It is in the center of a good farming section, as well as being the headquarters for the oil and gas industries that comprise all the southeastern part of the county.<sup>4</sup>

When the depot was built by the Iron Mountain Railroad in 1889, it was named Noweata, a Delaware Indian word meaning "come here" or "welcome". The railroad men misspelled this word, calling it "Nowata" and officials in Washington got it this way so it gradually became "Nowata" instead of the original "Noweata".<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>John D. Benedict, Muskogee and Northeastern Oklahoma, Vol. I, p. 635

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 639

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 643



After the erection of the depot, Mr. J. E. Campbell built the first business house which was a general store. Mr. Carey built the first hotel building. Both of these buildings were destroyed by fire and were replaced by brick structures which are still standing and are used.<sup>6</sup>

In 1892 the Cherokee Nation laid out the town site of Nowata, one mile square. Later this was reduced to three hundred and twenty acres by the federal government. After the town was incorporated in 1892, the Cherokee Nation actioned off the lots. Little interest was taken at first in the bidding on these and of course the town developed very slowly until the discovery of oil in the Alluwe field in 1904.<sup>7</sup>

Mr. L. T. Kinkade was elected first mayor of the town and served in this capacity for about three years. He resigned and Dr. Sudderth, who still lives in Nowata and is a prominent citizen, was appointed to fill his place. He was succeeded by Fred Metzner who served as the last mayor of the Cherokee incorporation. In 1898 the town was incorporated under the federal government and the laws of Arkansas were extended to govern this territory. Mr. Ben Scoville was elected mayor under the new organization.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 643

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 644

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 647

Two municipal governments existed in the town for some time with many conflicts arising, some of them ending with serious results. For some time the Cherokee regime was maintained by some lawless people. Jonathan Fulson, a Choctaw Indian who had been city marshall under the Cherokee Nation, became very lawless and reckless. He would ride the streets and sidewalks shooting off his revolver and resisting all arrests. In order to put a halt to this state of affairs, the city government, under the federal authorities, secured the services of Mr. Goodell, an outsider. The rowdies of the town determined to get ride of him so conditions became almost unbearable. Finally Goodell had to kill Fulson and his brother in order to quiet the situation.<sup>9</sup>

The first post office was established at Nowata by the United States government in April, 1890. Fred Metzner was requested to move his office from California Creek to Nowata where he became the first postmaster.

The city of Nowata owed her sudden and continual development largely to the oil fields of the surrounding territory. Following the opening of the Alluwe field in 1904, the Coody's Bluff and Childers field in 1906, and the Hog Shooter and Delaware fields shortly afterwards, Nowata became the center of this oil industry. People from many parts of the country came to Nowata and settled.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 648

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 651

For some time after the incorporation of the city of Nowata there was no provision for public taxation to support schools under the Cherokee set-up. However, the Nowata people built a school house and opened the first term in 1892. Mr. Keith of Coffeyville, Kansas, was the first teacher of this subscription school and Miss Grace Phillips was the first teacher for the Cherokees. Later, as the town grew, an addition was made to the building and Mr. J. A. Burns, who is a prominent citizen of Nowata at present, became the first superintendent of schools. The present grade school building was erected in 1919 and the high school building in 1918. Further information in regard to the schools will be given in the chapter on education.<sup>11</sup>

From the founding of the town the people of Nowata took considerable interest in churches. At the first auction sale a number of lots were purchased for church purposes. Mr. L. T. Kinkade bid for the lot where the Baptist Church now stands. An old frame building was erected on this lot and used by all the denominations for some time. In 1919 this first Nowata church was torn down and replaced by a splendid new brick church building. J. E. Campbell bid for the lots where the Presbyterian Church is located. That building together with the manse was erected in 1908. The Methodist site was bought and donated to the Methodist people by the Martin brothers. The first church was built

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<sup>11</sup>J. A. Burns, Nowata, Oklahoma, Interview.

in 1901 in which federated Methodist and Presbyterians held services. The present new church was erected in 1910. The Catholic Church was built in 1919; the Christian Church in 1911; and the Episcopal Church in 1912. These buildings are better than the average church buildings for a city of this size. Much interest is taken at present in church and Sunday School work by the people of Nowata and surrounding communities. The average Sunday School attendance in all the churches runs between twelve and fifteen hundred each Sunday. Church attendance is around one thousand each Sunday.

Nowata is ahead of the average city of its size in homes owned by the occupants, and most of them are free from mortgage. The people of Nowata take considerable interest and pride in their improvements and up-keep of the city. It has many miles of paved streets, good sidewalks, and a municipally owned water plant which furnishes an abundant supply of water for homes and industries at a low rate. It has a well equipped fire department and a sanitary sewer system.

The city has an unusually strong bank. It serves the people of the city and the surrounding community in financial ways. It is headed by Herbert C. Campbell, who is also president of the First National Bank in Coffeyville. His father was the founder and for many years president of this bank. Nowata has a building and loan association, three good hotels, machine shops, lumber yards, grain elevators, garages, filling stations, an ice plant, radium

bath house, numerous stores, and one of the best daily papers in this section for a city of this size. It is headquarters for several gasoline companies and pipe line companies.

Nowata's industrial advantages are probably not surpassed by any other little city in the section. It has an abundant supply of natural gas, has coal near, plenty of water, oil, and other resources that should be inviting to companies and people interested in establishing industries in a city of this size. The population is 3, 531.

It has a commission form of government which is very efficient in the management of the city. Figures reveal that it is operated at less cost than many other similar cities of this section. Recently W. W. Warner has been elected city manager. He has been in the oil business and located in the city for a number of years and is probably one of the most outstanding citizens in social work in Nowata. For a number of years he has been interested in the boy scout movement and the welfare of the young people of the city. An organization that should be mentioned in which he is vitally interested is known as "Save a Boy" organization. Most of the business men belong to this organization and much interest is taken in the welfare and training of the young people of the city.

From the beginning the people of Nowata have been very much interested in music and art. It is outstanding in its musical talent and instruction. Nowata students

usually win most of the fine arts contests of the district in this section of the state. Much credit should be given to the early organizations along this line. Mrs. E. B. Lawson deserves much credit for building up interest in music as does Mrs. J. Wood Glass and Mrs. T. R. McSpadden. There are a number of other organizations and groups that deserve mention that are doing splendid work to help improve the city of Nowata. Its citizenship consists of a progressive group of men and women who have come from all parts of the United States, mostly of the younger class. It has very few foreigners and only fifteen per cent is colored population. In addition to W. W. Warner who has been mentioned, other public spirited people of Nowata that deserve much credit are R. W. Benjamin, John G. Beck, Roy E. Cobb, Roy Simpson, and J. C. Norton.

Much interest at the present time is being shown in highway constructions through the county. The United States Highway No. 60 organization is headed by a president and a secretary, both of Nowata, and it is expected that it will be paved through Nowata County in the near future, as well as United States Highway No. 169. Contracts are already made for paving sections of the highway through the county. These new highways together with the two railroads, the Missouri-Pacific and the Missouri Kansas and Texas, and the Union Traction Electric Railroad from Parsons, Kansas, to Nowata, are valuable assets to the transportation and communication service.

## DELAWARE

Another town of the county that deserves mentioning is Delaware which is located five miles north of Nowata on the Missouri-Pacific Railroad, the Union Traction Electric Railroad, and United States Highway No. 169. It is in the center of an important oil and natural gas field as well as a shipping point for a number of prosperous farmers that live in the surrounding neighborhood. It has electric lights, a water system, several good general stores, and one of the best hardware stores and lumber yards in the section. It has a splendid school system with a good high school department with eleven teachers in the system. It maintains two good churches, Sunday Schools, and two civic clubs. Much interest is taken in the welfare, improvement, and betterment of the town. It is located only a short distance from the Verdigris River and is a good shipping point for many successful farmers that live near it. It has a population of five hundred and twenty-six.<sup>12</sup>

## LENAPAH

Lenapah is probably the next town of importance in the county. It is located on United States Highway No. 169, the Missouri-Pacific Railroad, and the Union Traction Electric Railroad. It is six miles north of Delaware and twelve miles south of Coffeyville, Kansas. It has good general stores, a hardware and lumberyard, filling stations, garage,

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<sup>12</sup>Benedict, op. cit., p. 651

city hall, churches, and other public buildings. The population is three hundred and thirty-six. Lenapah is surrounded by probably the best farming community in the county. It has more than its share of natural gas as well as some oil. The gas is piped to the town which furnishes fuel for homes, schools, and churches. It has the name of being the largest shipping point on the Missouri-Pacific Railroad between Kansas City and Fort Smith, Arkansas. Fine fields of grain are produced along the Verdigris River valley which is near Lenapah. There are excellent fields of hay west of Lenapah and some large ranches east of the river that ship from Lenapah.<sup>13</sup> Recently there has been constructed at a cost of more than \$10,000 new stockyards just south of Lenapah, which indicates that the railroad thinks that Lenapah will continue to be the leading stock shipping point as well as hay and grain shipping point in the section. Lenapah is at the center of the largest consolidated school system in the state of Oklahoma. This district covers more than one hundred square miles of territory and is served by ten district owned and operated school busses which transport more than three hundred children to and from school daily. It has two modern school buildings, good teaching equipment, a splendid high school course with vocational home economics, commerce, agriculture, and the regular academic subjects. There are seventeen teachers in the system.

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 652



## WANN

Wann is located on the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railroad extending from Parsons, Kansas, to Oklahoma City. It supports three churches, two good general stores, and has a grade and high school system employing eight teachers. The population is one hundred and sixty eight.<sup>14</sup>

## ALLUWE

There are several little inland towns in Nowata County, but Alluwe is by far the most important. One of the earliest discoveries of oil was made in this section and the oil industry is largely responsible for the development of this town. It is located in the southeastern part of the county near the Verdigris River on United States Highway No. 60. It is a good rural trading point. It has two good general stores, three churches, and an excellent school system for this size town. It has a fully accredited high school course with ten teachers in the system. The population is six hundred and nineteen.<sup>15</sup>

Politically, Nowata County is evenly divided. Two of the county commissioners are Republicans, the rest are Democrats. Very little interest is taken in party politics in the county races for office, but the man or the individual is the outstanding thing. This gives them a chance

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., p. 632

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 655

to get much better officials. Nowata County has an unusually good set of county officials for a small county. At the last election in both primary and in November, five county officers were unopposed. At the present time candidates are filing for the various offices but there seems to be several present officials who will be unopposed again both in the primary and general elections. This of course indicates splendid quality officials.

## CHAPTER VII

## EDUCATION

Nowata is one of the leading northeastern Oklahoma counties in education. The rural, consolidated, and town school systems are above the average for rural counties of this section. But to understand the history of education in Nowata County it will be necessary to go back to the origin of education with the Cherokee Indians that settled and established the first schools in the county.

The first schools for the Cherokee Indians were established in Georgia, Tennessee, and North Carolina at the beginning of the 19th century by the Presbyterian, Moravian, and Baptist missionaries. At first religious teaching received more emphasis than academic instruction, although schools were furnished with free tuition for the Indians in connection with each mission point. Not very much interest was taken at first, but by patient, earnest, persevering effort these early missionaries to the Indians were successful in their work.<sup>1</sup>

When the Cherokees were moved by the United States government to this section of Oklahoma, many of the missionary teachers and religious workers came with them. Prior to 1840 probably all the education and religious work carried on among the Indians was done by missionaries of the various denominations and financed by missionary

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<sup>1</sup>Benedict, Muskogee and Northeastern Oklahoma, Vol. I  
p. 259

teachers and religious workers came with them. Prior to 1840 probably all the education and religious work carried on among the Indians was done by missionaries of the various denominations and financed by missionary societies.<sup>2</sup> As the work progressed the council of the Cherokee Nation began to realize the good results of these missionary schools and finally were induced to make appropriations of funds to aid the missionaries in carrying on their benevolent undertakings. Of course, these appropriations were limited at first but gradually increased from year to year, and in time the council appropriated fund to construct many new buildings and to assist in various ways in improving their educational system. Rapid progress was made in the educational work from that time until the out-break of the Civil War.<sup>3</sup> With the coming of the war, schools were closed, many of the buildings were destroyed or badly mutilated, and nearly all the missionary workers were compelled to leave the territory. Those who sympathized with the south went to Arkansas or Texas, but most were opposed to slave holding and went to the northern states. After the war was over, some of the old missionaries returned to the territory and took up the task of rebuilding the schools which the ravages of war had destroyed.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 260

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 261

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 264

A number of important institutions were established which have had lasting effect on many individuals of this section of the old Indian nation. The Cherokee Nation, as time went on, became more and more interested in education as they established a male and a female seminary near Tahlequah. These two schools were supplied with very competent instructors and accomplished excellent educational results. Many intelligent old Cherokee men and women recall many pleasant incidents of their training in these old seminaries. Both schools were well patronized and well managed until the outbreak of the Civil War when they were compelled to close. During the war the buildings were occupied at various times by soldiers, first by the Confederates then by the northern soldiers, and of course they were somewhat mutilated and damaged. After the war they were repaired and reopened to Cherokee pupils and for the next several years made rapid educational progress.<sup>5</sup>

During the summer of 1919 when the Cherokees were winding up their financial affairs, the female seminary and its grounds were sold to the state and became the Northeastern State Teachers College. The male seminary, after more than half a century of existence, was destroyed by fire and its site sold for farming purposes. During almost the entire time of existence the two seminaries maintained first class high school courses with some college work

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 268

and have among the graduates some of the most prominent citizens of this section of the state.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to these two schools, the Cherokee maintained a number of small boarding schools. One was near Tahlequah for the colored children, another was an cephan's home and school near Salina in Mayes County, as well as a number of day schools over their entire territory.<sup>7</sup>

At the beginning of statehood in 1907 there were a good many rural schools in Nowata County; some of the teachers were employed by the Cherokee Nation, others by the United States government. In some places they also maintained subscription schools; that is, the teacher would teach and charge a tuition rate and his salary came from this tuition rate. There are no records for the first two years after statehood since the court house burned in Nowata in January, 1919; but since that time we have a rather definite record of the educational activities of the county in the county superintendent's office in the court house in Nowata. There were at that time some twenty five hundred white children enumerated in the county and nearly five hundred colored children taught by fifty white teachers and twelve colored teachers. The average annual salary in 1919 was \$50.75 a month.<sup>8</sup> The salary at the present time is double that.

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 271

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 271

<sup>8</sup> Records, County Superintendent, Nowata.

Gradual progress was made for the first ten years after statehood in education but there was nothing outstanding. About 1918 a move in many sections of the country was started towards consolidation and the people of the Lenapah community began to hold a number of meetings to discuss the importance of consolidation of the territory surrounding the village of Lenapah. In 1919 the first consolidation in the county was established at Lenapah.<sup>9</sup> About the same time a consolidated district was established at Wann in the northwestern part of the county. For the next two or three years following the consolidation of the school at Lenapah much additional territory was added until by 1922 it was the largest consolidated district in the county and state, containing more than a hundred square miles. It is still the largest one in territory in the state of Oklahoma. Delaware, Childers, and Alluwe also consolidated while the move was on. About the same time the Nowata city system annexed a couple of outlying districts to their territory. This consolidation movement was made under the supervision of county superintendent E. A. Bell. Of course, along with these consolidations good high schools were established and they are still maintained. At the present time the education in the county is making some noted improvement. A number of schools have been placed recently on the elementary accredited list, and a number of improvements are being

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 1

made in buildings, equipment, and other things that help make schools better. Much credit is due County Superintendent James M. Staten for this present progress. He is broad minded, thoroughly experienced, and educated for the rural schools--the type of man that instills and inspires his teachers to do the best, and they in turn are making great progress with the pupils of Nowata County as a whole.

The Nowata City schools are of course by far the largest in the county with thirty-five teachers. They are rather outstanding in many educational features. Lenapah is second with an enumeration of over five hundred, with Delaware and Alluwe close to that number. All the schools of the county give the regular academic course. Nowata is strong on music and offers courses in shop work and commerce. Lenapah is strong on vocational work and offers vocational home economics and is working for a vocational agricultural department at the present. They have had it in the past. It, too, has a good commerce department as well as offering general agriculture. The high schools of the county cooperate and work together well through the athletics and fine arts conference. The superintendents have an organization that meets monthly and discusses the various school problems of their particular community and the county as a whole. Much good is accomplished in these meetings as well as causing a better understanding of the school men both professionally and socially. Under



the present plans Nowata County is looking forward to taking its place as one of the outstanding counties in education in the state.

## CHAPTER VIII

## OUTLOOK

The progress of Nowata County in the future depends largely upon the people, as does every other section of the country. Nowata County is fortunate in many ways in having a class of people that is above the average of this section of the country. Most of the people are white, with some Indian blood, but very few are foreigners. They are energetic, ambitious, and are rather progressive for a rural section of the state.

The most valuable resource of the county, of course, is the soil, and the future progress of the county depends largely on the conservation of the soil. Much interest is being taken at the present in various methods that will help save the soil and increase its fertility. Depleted soils have been put in pasture; the eroded soils are being terraced and more and more farmers are taking up crop rotation.

Of course it is impossible to even guess at what the oil industry of the county will be in the future, but it is known that there is an abundant supply of natural gas, coal, and stone that will last for many decades. With all this there ought to be some industries established in the county that would bring much wealth to it.

In addition to the schools, the county has a number of good churches and in some sections these are well

patronized and are doing a splendid social and spiritual work. Schools, churches, and other organizations are making efforts to help train leaders for the various rural communities. If these institutions continue to improve and develop leaders, of course the county will continue to make progress and become one of the outstanding rural counties in northeastern Oklahoma.

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## III. Interviews

Akright, Frank (He was county clerk for several years and is well informed on the political affairs of the county.)

Babb, Clay (He has been in the county fifty-five years and county surveyer four years.)

Burns, J. A. (Mr. Burns served as superintendent of schools at Nowata a good many years. He gave valuable information on early education in the county.)

Choteau, Catherine (Choteau family records.)

Choteau, Lola (Age 87. Settled in Nowata County in 1871 with the Delaware Indians.)

Hove, Gertrude. (Home Demonstrator, Nowata County)

McGinnis, Glen (He was a pioneer of the county and was present when the banks were robbed in Coffeyville by the Dalton gang.)

Patchell, George W. (Age 67. He has lived in Nowata County for forty years.)

Roberts, Mrs. W. E. Nowata, Oklahoma (Her father operated the ferry across the Verdigris River on the old Texas trail. She gave me valuable information about pioneer transportation.)

Rawley, William (He came to Nowata County in 1876 and has lived in the Lenapah community ever since.)

Salisbury, James County Agent of Nowata County  
(He gave valuable information on the agriculture of the county.)

Staten, James M. County Superintendent of Schools  
(Information on the present educational situation of the county.)

Sudderth, J. P. (He was practicing physician in the county a number of years and knows the county thoroughly.)

Waters, W. C. (He has been practicing physician in the county since 1904.)

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