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PIONEERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CARTER COUNTY

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PIONEERS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CARTER COUNTY

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## PREFACE

An attempt has been made in this brief study to contribute a short history of the development of Carter County, Oklahoma through the lives of six outstanding pioneers of the county.

Five of the six men are residing in Ardmore, Oklahoma at the present time, and I have had the privilege of listening to the realistic reminiscences of these pioneers.

Walter Hardy who arrived in Carter County in 1887 just one week before the birth of Ardmore is today a leading physician of Southern Oklahoma.

Michael Gorman came to Ardmore in 1890 and for many years was an outstanding leader in the field of finance.

John Hoyle Carlock, while in the employment of the Dawes Commission, was sent to the Indian Territory in 1897.

George Wesley Coffman first taught in Carter County in 1900, and since that date he has been an active participant in the educational development of the county.

Charles Christian Weith, a minister of unusual ability, assumed the leadership of the upright faction against the outlawry in Carter County from 1900 until the time of his death in 1937.

Wirt Franklin is unquestionably the pioneer in the development of the petroleum industry in Carter County, and because of his efficient leadership many fortunes have been made in the county.



Generous assistance was given by John F. Easley, editor of The Daily Ardmoreite, who extended me the privilege of research in all files dating from 1893 to the present writing.

I wish, especially, to thank Doctor Thomas Harrison Reynolds, Professor and Head of the Department of History of the Oklahoma Agricultural and Mechanical College, who has given valuable suggestions and advice.

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Marjorie C. Goodnight

## Pioneers in the Development of Carter County

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## CHAPTER I

## WALTER HARDY

In Green County, Arkansas on April 11, 1870 was born to Reuben and Amanda (Kolb) Hardy a son who was christened Walter. While Walter, their first child, was still an infant, Mr. and Mrs. Reuben Hardy left Arkansas and travelled by wagon to Montague County in northern Texas. This couple was in search of virgin soil when they came to Texas.

Walter attended the public schools of Bowie, Texas for several years and was graduated from the Bowie High School in 1886.<sup>1</sup> Following his graduation, Walter went to Sherman, Texas where he enrolled in the Mahan Business College. He pursued his commercial course for six months before returning to his home in Bowie.

In the meantime, Reuben Hardy had come to Ardmore, Indian Territory in search of a good location for a general merchandise store. Reuben decided to settle in Ardmore and soon became established in his place of business on the present corner of Main and Caddo Streets.

Walter, a young boy of seventeen, was accompanied by John Bailey on the trip from Bowie, Texas to Ardmore, Indian Territory. The two came for the purpose of bringing the family's stock to the new location. The overland trip from Bowie to Ardmore was not a pleasant experience as the only

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<sup>1</sup> Reminiscences of Walter Hardy, February 11, 1939.



people the boys met were copper-skinned Indians astride their ponies significantly carrying their Winchesters at their sides. Driving a bunch of mules, Hardy and John Bailey pulled into town about five o'clock on the afternoon of July 21, 1887, a week before the date that marks Ardmore's birth.<sup>2</sup>

In recounting the journey into the Indian Territory Hardy recalls, "We came through Healdton and Hewitt and after that we did not pass a house until we reached the old Gibson home which is three miles west of Ardmore on the present location of the Tom Champion farm. Lone Grove had only a post office and one store."<sup>3</sup>

As Hardy and Bailey entered the small town of Ardmore, they were thoroughly frightened. They could hear the firing of guns, and naturally presumed they were running into a pitched battle between the whites and the Indians. The newcomers, however, soon discovered that the bullets were not the fire of battle but were the characteristic native outburst celebrating the arrival of triplets at the home of Doctor Gilliam and Mrs. Gilliam, his Indian wife, who lived at Dresden, a small settlement near Berwyn. The firing was continued for two days, and word was conveyed to the government officials who sent a party of the militia from Tishomingo, the capital of the Chickasaw Nation, to quell the supposed battle.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The Daily Ardmoreite, Ardmore, Oklahoma, XLIV, No. 228, July 21, 1937

<sup>3</sup> Reminiscences of Walter Hardy, February 11, 1939.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

The trouble between the whites and the Indians kept everyone tense as one could not tell when something might flare up.

"Within six months after I arrived in Ardmore, the strife had grown to such an extent that William M. Guy, the territorial governor, sent word to Washington that the Indians were being killed out and troops were needed. In fact, this report was false for there had been no battles nor bloodshed",<sup>5</sup> Hardy recalls. However, troops were actually sent from Fort Sill and they camped on the Douglas farm south of Ardmore for several weeks.

When Hardy arrived in Ardmore, the only stores in the town were Frensley Brothers' General Merchandise and a blacksmith shop operated by Carnahan. The only houses were the Douglas residence, south of town, and the I. S. Ranch. The Santa Fe Railroad was already established as far north as Ardmore and a box car served as the town's first depot. John O'Mealey, who is now living in San Antonio, Texas, was the railroad agent in 1887. Another pioneer, "Uncle Bob" Scales, was the first pumper for the railroad. Shortly after Hardy's arrival in Ardmore the Santa Fe Company extended its road north through the Arbuckle Mountains.

Hardy had been in Ardmore only a few days when his father leased a lot at the corner of Main and B Streets, where the Tivoli Theater is now located, and planned to establish a homestead.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

In November, 1888, Reuben Hardy returned to Bowie, Texas to vote in the presidential election that placed Cleveland in the Presidency of the United States. When he returned to Ardmore, his family accompanied him and the members of the Hardy family soon became leaders in the pioneering of the new land.

In the meantime, the newborn triplets in the Gilliam home had become the center of much attention and many people had visited them in Dresden. Young Hardy became interested in the births and he relates, "Right then I decided I wanted to become a doctor."<sup>6</sup> As a result, in 1890, in company with J. A. Bivens, another well known Ardmoreite and relative of Hardy's, he attended the Missouri Medical College in St. Louis, Missouri, where he was graduated in 1893, the first year that the three year system of medical training was inaugurated at the college.

Upon graduation in 1893, Doctor Walter Hardy immediately returned to Ardmore to practice. His first office was in the rear of a small bank building that was located between the blacksmith shop on the corner of Caddo and Main and the Santa Fe Depot.

In the year following the beginning of his practice in Ardmore, the young doctor was married to Miss Jane Heald, the daughter of Hobart Heald, a prominent Indian of the Chicksaw Nation. Heald's land was located thirty miles west of Ardmore

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<sup>6</sup> The Daily Ardmoreite, Ardmore, Oklahoma, XLIV, No. 228, July 21, 1937.



in the present Carter County and the town of Healdton, Oklahoma bears his name. Three children, Vinnie, Reuben, and Milton, were born to this couple.

The present Carter County was an agricultural district and Ardmore was the center of the trade in all Southern Oklahoma. Farmers within a radius of fifty miles brought their cotton to market in Ardmore. " In 1894 Ardmore was the largest inland cotton market in the world", Hardy recalls.

Ardmore had progressed rapidly from 1887 to 1895 when its first major tragedy occurred. In 1895 approximately eighty buildings in the business district were destroyed by a fire that originated on East Main Street. John O'Mealey, the city's first fire chief,<sup>7</sup> called for his twenty-five volunteer firemen, but the equipment was so inadequate that practically all of Main Street was consumed and the town was left in total ruin.

Immediately after the big fire, realizing the necessity for more protection, Ardmore bought its first "steamer", which cost \$1800. Within the next few years Ardmore's fire department grew from one to five paid men, and in a short while, Ardmore had more than \$15,000 invested in fire equipment.

All the buildings, at the time of the fire, were small frame buildings. The business men, however, imbued with the

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<sup>7</sup> Roy M. Johnson, Oklahoma History South of the Canadian, I, p. 439, 1925.

true pioneering spirit, wasted no time in the reconstruction of their town, and soon, native stone and brick buildings replaced the old ones.

Parker, a jeweler of Ardmore, built the first stone business house in 1895, and part of this building still stands on the south side of Main Street between Mill and Washington. C. L. Anderson built one of the first brick buildings in the new Ardmore. Michael Gorman's building at the corner of Main and Washington Streets was constructed in 1897.<sup>8</sup>

Because of its location east of the railroads, the "Old Iron Store", a general merchandise, owned and operated by Munzesheimer and Zuckerman, escaped the destruction of the fire of 1895.

Sam and Dave Daube, brothers and Jews of German birth, had come to Ardmore, Indian Territory from Bowie, Texas and were employed by Munzesheimer of the merchandise business. Soon, the Daube brothers owned a merchandise business of their own. As their capital increased in later years, these brothers became interested in the cattle and oil industries. Throughout the county these two men are well known and highly respected for their many philanthropic deeds. Indeed, even today, as in 1895, they are considered among Carter County's outstanding citizens.

Although the fire of 1895 destroyed much property, no lives were lost and Doctor Hardy contends that the tragedy proved to be a great blessing, as the new Ardmore was much

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<sup>8</sup> Reminiscences of Walter Hardy, February 11, 1939.

superior to the old.

Even though the fire of 1895 destroyed all the property of the young doctor, Hardy was financially able to continue his medical studies that year.

Doctor Hardy, eager to keep abreast of the newest developments in the medical science, attended Mayo's Clinic in 1897 and each year since 1897 he has returned to the clinic for further research and study. He has also attended the New York Polyclinic, the Chicago Polyclinic, and the New Orleans Polyclinic.<sup>9</sup>

This pioneering physician, feeling keenly that Ardmore's principal need was a hospital, joined Doctor J. C. McNees in forming a partnership and the two doctors established the first hospital in Carter County in 1899. In fact, this hospital was the first to be established between Fort Worth, Texas and Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.<sup>10</sup> This first hospital was located on the corner of East Main and Caddo Streets. It was indeed a crude affair in comparison with modern sanitariums, but the Hardy-McNees Hospital had an important place in the early history of all Southern Oklahoma as it was the means of saving many lives.

Doctor Hardy, a young man of determined purpose and ambition, became a leader in the medical fraternity. He served as president of the Chickasaw Medical Association from 1904

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<sup>9</sup> D. C. Gideon, History of Indian Territory, I, p. 574, 1901.

<sup>10</sup> The Daily Ardmoreite, Ardmore, Oklahoma, XLIV, No. 228, July 21, 1937.



until Oklahoma was admitted into the Union in 1907. Serving in this capacity, Doctor Hardy personally gave examinations to doctors who wished to practice medicine in the Chickasaw Nation. Many doctors, one of whom is Doctor Easterwood of Ardmore, hold diplomas issued to them by Doctor Hardy before statehood.

Hardy has been a member of the Northwestern Texas Medical Association and of the Americal College of Surgeons for<sup>11</sup> many years.

Hardy not only kept abreast of the developments in the medical science, but he was constantly alert to progress in all fields. The "Holderman", as his first motor vehicle was called, was the first automobile to be used by a doctor in this section of Oklahoma. He purchased the machine in 1908 and thus replaced his "horse and buggy" mode of transportation.

After the death of his wife in 1908, Doctor Hardy seemed to give even more of his time to the study and practice of medicine. In 1909, during a tour of six months, Doctor Hardy attended lectures in the outstanding medical colleges of Europe. He studied in England, Scotland, France, and Germany.<sup>12</sup> Witnessing the most modern and the best equipped hospitals in Europe, Hardy was keely aware of the inadequacy of the crude facilities in Ardmore. When he returned from his European study tour, he was definitely determined to better medical conditions in his home town.

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<sup>11</sup> Certificates of Medical Associations.

<sup>12</sup> Reminiscences of Walter Hardy, February 11, 1939.

Thus, in the following year, 1910, Hardy built the first unit of the Hardy Sanitarium,<sup>13</sup> the leading hospital of Southern Oklahoma. Hardy was truly a leader in the medical progress of Ardmore, and citizens from all Southern Oklahoma have benefited greatly from the constant efforts of this pioneer.

In 1911, Doctor Walter Hardy was united in marriage to Doctor Nancy Reirdon, a graduate in medicine. Mrs. Hardy was born in the continent of Australia, but she received her medical training in Nashville, Tennessee. Doctor Hardy, in paying tribute to her, said, "The Hardy Sanitarium would not be what it is today without her help."<sup>14</sup>

Doctor Hardy established the first airplane ambulance service in the entire state. He started his service in 1913, shortly after the discovery of oil in the Healdton field, to meet the need for rapid transport from the hazardous oil field to the hospital. Oil field accidents were very prevalent in the early days of the "boom development." However, this service was abandoned when better equipped planes, privately owned, seemed to fulfill the same need. While this plane ambulance service was in operation, eighty-six persons,<sup>15</sup> in need of hospitalization, were brought from the oil fields.

Ardmore's population grew rapidly after the discovery of oil in Carter County, and soon there was a need for a larger hospital. The second unit was completed the first of

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> The Daily Ardmoreite, Ardmore, Okla., XLIV, No. 228, July 21, 1937.

<sup>15</sup> Reminiscences of Walter Hardy, February 11, 1939.

September, 1915. This unit had been fully equipped only a few days when the most terrible tragedy in the entire history of Ardmore occurred on the afternoon of September 27, 1915 at two-thirty o'clock. A tank car of high gravity gasoline exploded in the Santa Fe yards. Doctor Hardy, in recalling the great suffering and mental shock caused by the explosion said, "Forty-six lives were lost immediately and literally <sup>16</sup> hundreds suffered from mental shock."

During the World War Doctor Walter Hardy was appointed to serve as a member of the Exemption Board of Carter <sup>17</sup> County. The other members of this committee were John L. Galt and John H. Carlock. Hardy served very efficiently in this capacity until March, 1919 at which time he was given an honorable dismissal by the provost marshal, E. H. Crowder, of the War Department of the United States.

In 1920, long before the city of Ardmore could boast of its modern radio broadcasting station, Doctor Hardy went to New Orleans, Louisiana and obtained a permit number for his 2500 watt broadcasting station in order that he might legally operate. Thus, Ardmore's first radio broadcasting station was operated in the west wing of the Hardy Sanitarium.

Much good was derived from this small station. Hardy recalls that many educational, scientific, and inspirational addresses were received throughout Southern Oklahoma by means

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> The Daily Ardmoreite, Ardmore, Oklahoma, XXVI, No. 103, January 20, 1919.



of this small plant. C. W. Richards, the superintendent of public schools in Ardmore from 1911 to 1925, often used the radio as a means of communication with the citizens. Doctors, lawyers, merchants, and ministers were called upon to present information to citizens of Southern Oklahoma.

Walter Hardy is a member of the First Methodist Church of Ardmore, Oklahoma, and has been affiliated with the Masonic fraternity for many years. He is also a member of the Rotary Club, an active civic organization.

Although Doctor Hardy has been too absorbed in his services to humanity to be an active participant in many civic organizations, he is a citizen of unusual civic pride. Twice, in contests sponsored by the Daily Ardmoreite, Doctor Walter Hardy has been named the most outstanding citizen of Ardmore.

Doctor Hardy enjoys outdoor life and is particularly fond of horseback riding. He is a very conspicuous figure in all of the many horse shows sponsored by the city.

Doctor Walter Hardy has always been known for his generosity in giving freely of his services without regard for pay. In many cases, he has not only supplied medical aid but he has also assisted needy families in buying necessary medicines and food for the patients. Money has never been an important item to him as all that he has made above his immediate expenses he has given away to those in need.

Doctor Hardy has driven more hours and worked more days and nights without rest to relieve suffering than any man who has ever practiced medicine in Southern Oklahoma. Because he is constantly devoting his time to the relief of

suffering humanity, Doctor Walter Hardy has won an eternal place in the heart of Southern Oklahoma.

## CHAPTER II

## MICHAEL GORMAN

In a small log cabin, built on a farm of one hundred and sixty acres which the government had given them as a homestead in the southern part of Minnesota, lived David and Johannah Gorman. In November, 1862, a son, Michael Gorman, was born to this couple.

Michael had a normal childhood and performed the duties of the farm in very much the same manner as did the other boys of the country. He built log fences, drove teams of oxen, and assisted his father with the general farm work.

Michael was the oldest of eleven children, five boys and six girls. He, with his brothers and sisters, walked four miles to school where they studied the three R's--Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic.

When young Michael was only fourteen years of age, the Gorman family left Minnesota and traveled by train to the state of Texas. They settled on a black land farm located on the present site of the Texas State fair grounds in Dallas, Texas.

Michael attended an academy in Dallas and was graduated<sup>1</sup> from Grove's College in the same city. In Pleasant View, a small village near Dallas, there was a Baptist school where

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<sup>1</sup> Reminiscences of Michael Gorman, February 7, 1939.



Gorman taught for two years. Previous school masters had not been received very kindly and Gorman's father attempted to discourage him by saying, "Why! son, you can't teach that school. You won't last till noon". But Gorman was determined to teach as the salary was very attractive. He received a monthly income of seventy-five dollars, an "exorbitant" sum for the rural school teachers in 1883, for a term of nine months. However, after teaching his third year at a different location and at a much reduced salary, Gorman decided there would not be much "financial future in the teaching profession".

He went back to Dallas, Texas and found employment in a furniture store. A year later he bought his own furniture business which he operated until 1890.

Gorman planned to move to San Antonio, Texas. He went from Dallas to Fort Worth to make train connections, and while in the latter city, he met a friend who told him of Ardmore, Indian Territory. Michael Gorman changed his itinerary immediately and came north instead of going to south Texas.

When Gorman reached Ardmore, his destination, he found a new territory that was developing rapidly. In describing the country, the wild game, the wild flowers, and the fertile soil he recalls, "It was a mighty good place to live". Ardmore, the seat of the present Carter County, was then Ardmore<sup>2</sup> of Pickens County, Indian Territory. Of course, as the town

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<sup>2</sup> Roy M. Johnson, Oklahoma History South of the Canadian, I, p. 438, 1925.

was then in its infancy, Gorman found "muddy streets, wooden buildings, the old public well, and livestock roaming at will".

In 1890, when Gorman arrived in Ardmore, there was a large coal mine operating about five miles southeast of town. This coal activity induced many families to locate in Ardmore. There was a railroad branch that made daily trips to the mine and much of this coal, which was a low quality of bituminous, was consumed in Ardmore. However, within a few years the mine was closed, the railroad was torn up, and the mine was abandoned. It was not a paying venture.<sup>3</sup>

The energetic young Gorman soon established himself in the furniture and undertaking business in this new territory that proved to be his permanent home.

In 1890 Gorman returned to Dallas, Texas and was united in marriage to Miss Mary Daly of that city. Accompanied by his wife, he resumed his business in the Indian Territory.

Once, while Gorman was engaged in the furniture and undertaking business, a woman, wearing a large sun bonnet pulled far over her face, came into his store to purchase camping supplies. When she had made her purchase, she handed Gorman's clerk, George Ryan, a bill which Ryan thought to be an unsigned National Bank note. Immediately Gorman took the note to Charles Anderson, the first banker in Ardmore, who verified Ryan's belief.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Roy M. Johnson, Oklahoma History South of the Canadian, I, p. 462, 1925.

<sup>4</sup> Reminiscences of Michael Gorman, February 7, 1939.

When the woman left Gorman's place of business, she was joined by a man and another woman. Deputy Lindsay and Deputy W. B. Freeman became suspicious and trained the group. These officers found three gallons of whiskey in the man's possession and arrested the man and his two companions.

The officers of Ardmore had known that a band of thieves had centered their headquarters about twenty-five or thirty miles west of Ardmore, and this section had been watched closely since the big bank robbery at Longview, Texas. The officers knew where Wallace, the arrested man, lived and, while Wallace and the two women, who gave their names as Mrs. Brown and Miss Pruitt, were detained in Ardmore, the deputies formed a posse of fearless officers among whom were Los Hart, J. H. Leatherman, C. R. Dent, J. M. Reynolds, D. E. Booker, W. H. Glover, and E. W. Roberts.<sup>5</sup> The group of officers set out at night and reached the Wallace house at eight o'clock the next morning. The officers closed in upon the hide-out just as a man sprang through the rear window. This individual was none other than Bill Dalton of the notorious Dalton gang. Paying no attention to Hart's command to surrender the fugitive ducked his head and made a dash for some nearby timber. Hart gave Dalton another opportunity to surrender, but the bank robber's reply was a quick reach for his own gun. Just at that moment Los Hart fired and killed Bill Dalton instantly, June 8, 1894.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The Daily Ardmoreite, Ardmore, Oklahoma, I, No. 189, June 9, 1894.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. I, No. 189.



Dalton's body was brought to Ardmore in an open wagon. Appollos and Gorman did the embalming, keeping the body two or three weeks for identification. Mrs. Brown, one of the Ardmore visitors, proved to be Mrs. Bill Dalton.

Rewards for Dalton, the desperado who had staged robberies from Kansas to California, totaled twenty-five thousand dollars. This amount was divided among the officers who aided in his death, and "Los Hart, the officer who actually fired the shot, won for himself a permanent place of honor in the annals of the west."<sup>7</sup>

Gorman's undertaking establishment was destroyed by fire in 1894, and as he carried no insurance, he suffered a great loss. He, then, was employed by Sam Noland who operated a furniture business in Ardmore, Indian Territory. While Gorman was associated with Noland, Captain J. S. Hammer, an old union soldier who was then a United States marshal, appointed him federal jailer.<sup>8</sup> Gorman served in this capacity for four years.

At this time the jail was nothing more than a low frame building surrounded by a high picket fence. It was located in the middle of the block on the north side of Main Street between what is now A and B Streets. While Gorman was the federal jailer, the jail was moved to the corner of B and Main Street at the present location of the Thompson Cafe. The court house was also located on this corner.

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<sup>7</sup> The Daily Ardmoreite, Ardmore, Oklahoma, XLIV, No. 228, July 21, 1937.

<sup>8</sup> Reminiscences of Michael Gorman, February 7, 1939.

In the four years that Gorman served as jailer there was not one escape nor one death. Once, while Gorman was out of town, a riot occurred over the food supply. Gorman handled not only the criminals but the drug addicts and the insane as well, all of whom found lodging in the jail.

Gorman resigned his position as jailer when he and Joe Berkshire formed a partnership and entered the fire insurance business in 1898. It was while Gorman was engaged in this work that he began making farm and city loans. He inspected the lands and approved the loans for the insurance companies. He boasts of the fact that there was never a default nor a foreclosure in any of his dealings with loans.

On April 16, 1898 an order was handed down by Judge Townsend of the federal district court decreeing that the town of Ardmore be incorporated as a city of second class,<sup>9</sup> and at the election held in July, the following city officials were elected: John L. Galt, mayor; C. P. Van Denberg, A. J. Wolverton, W. T. Gardner, Mike Gorman, A. M. Burch, aldermen; Jack Scanlon, treasurer; W. M. Green, assessor and collector; J. C. Graham, city attorney. The other officials who were appointed by the mayor and his councilmen were Dave Best, recorder; John S. O'Mealey, chief of the fire department; A. S. Pulliam, city marshal; and J. W. M. Harper, street commissioner.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Carter County Court House Record, April 16, 1898, Court Journal No. 10, p. 466.

<sup>10</sup> Roy M. Johnson, Oklahoma History South of the Canadian, I, p. 439, 1925.

Because there were many difficult problems to be solved by this first council, and the financial resources of Ardmore were so limited, Gorman and some other officials accepted no financial remuneration for their service to the small town.

On December 14, 1899 Ardmore was incorporated as a city of the first class,<sup>11</sup> being under the mayor and aldermanic form of government until January 7, 1909 when it changed to the commission form of government.<sup>12</sup> The commission managerial type of city government is now being used in Ardmore.

After serving the city as alderman for five years, Gorman resigned his position as he had changed his residential address from C Street Southeast to G Street Southwest.

In the meantime, Gorman had continued in the insurance business, but when he decided to enter the field of finance in 1909, he and his partner sold their insurance business to Homer Hinkle and Mark Kirkpatrick. After Hinkle's death the business was operated as Hinkle and Wilson and today this same company is owned and operated by L. T. Love.

Gorman entered the banking field where he became associated with the Bankers' National Bank of Ardmore in 1909. Other banks of the city at this time were The First National Bank and the City National Bank. The Bankers' National Bank was reorganized and the new title became the Guaranty State Bank.

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<sup>11</sup> Carter County Court House Record, Court Journal No. 12, p. 332, December 14, 1899.

<sup>12</sup> Carter County Court House Record, Charter of the City of Ardmore, Filed with the Register of Deeds, Sept. 22, 1908.



Although Mike Gorman was vitally interested in banking, he, nevertheless, had his individual interests aside from his true vocation. He especially liked to hunt, and he had become very familiar with the land throughout the entire county. This knowledge of the county made him an exceptionally good trader of property.

In 1910 an old man, whom pioneers remember as Palmer, wandered back to Ardmore after an absence of some twenty years. Palmer told that he had drilled a well back in 1888<sup>13</sup> and that he had "struck oil". Unable to find the old well and distressed over his situation, the old oil prospector approached Mike Gorman who was very familiar with the land in Carter County and showed him a map he had made of the region in which the old well was drilled. Gorman agreed to accompany Palmer to the old location. They drove "in a buggy" to the vicinity west of Ardmore in search of the hidden treasure. About sundown the two came upon a small cabin and asked the occupants if they might spend the night. The next morning Gorman and his peculiar old companion met two men who were riding horseback. The two riders were questioned about the old well and one of the men remembered that a well had been drilled for water but instead of water a "tarry substance"<sup>14</sup> had come from the well.

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<sup>13</sup> C. W. Tomlinson, Oil and Gas Geology of Carter County, Oklahoma Geological Survey, Bulletin 40-Z, Norman, Oklahoma, September, 1928.

<sup>14</sup> Reminiscences of Michael Gorman, February 7, 1939.

After Gorman and Palmer located the well, they rushed back to Ardmore and awakened W. I. Cruce to tell him their exciting experience. Cruce had previously made a deal with a white man who had married an Indian woman to go with them to Tishomingo, the land office of the Chickasaw Nation. Under the inter-married surplus ruling, the white man could lease from the Chickasaw Nation the land Gorman and Cruce desired and then, he could make a deed to Gorman and Cruce.

Gorman later talked to Roy Johnson who had already become interested in the possibility of discovering oil in the western part of Carter County. Roy Johnson, Edward Galt, and Wirt Franklin, other business men of Ardmore, finally persuaded J. M. Critchlow of Titusville, Pennsylvania to drill a test well and on August 13, 1913 oil was discovered<sup>15</sup> some thirty miles west of Ardmore. There was much excitement throughout the entire state and soon the oil field had attracted many people. Healdton, an old town of the Chickasaw Nation, seemed to grow up over night. The town of Wilson, Oklahoma had its origin with the beginning of the new field. Carter County was destined to have one of the largest fields of the entire southwestern part of the United States.

Mike Gorman continued in the banking field and witnessed the reorganization of the Guaranty State Bank which became the<sup>16</sup> American National Bank November 23, 1921. This bank was

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<sup>15</sup> C. W. Tomlinson, Oil and Gas Geology of Carter County, Oklahoma Geological Survey, Bulletin 40-Z, Norman, Oklahoma, September, 1928, p. 37.

<sup>16</sup> Roy M. Johnson, Oklahoma History South of the Canadian, I, p. 445, 1925.

again reorganized and operated as the American Bank and Trust Company until 1932 when it met with failure. However, the bank later paid one hundred per cent to its depositors.

Michael Gorman, better known as "Uncle Mike Gorman", has a stimulating philosophy of life. His advice to the youth of the land is to follow the principles of thrift as he feels that thrift is the secret of most successful lives. Mr. Gorman is considered one of the most alert, enthusiastic, and optimistic of all the citizens of Carter County.



## CHAPTER III

## JOHN BOYLE CARLOCK

In the small village of Carlock, Tennessee was born John Hoyle Carlock on May 30, 1873. He was one of the third generations of Carlocks in this section of Tennessee. The village of his birth bears the name of John Carlock's grandfather, James Caleb Carlock, a well known pioneer of the region.

John Hoyle Carlock was one of four brothers whose mother was an invalid. John and his brothers, Thomas, James, and George Carlock attended the common schools of Carlock, Tennessee for several years.

When Carlock was nineteen years of age, he taught school for a term of three months in a little two room school near his home. He had received no special training for the teaching profession as he had attended only the public schools of Carlock, Tennessee. The enrollment of this school was about seventy-five. Carlock received a monthly salary of twenty-five dollars. While he was employed as school master, Carlock lived in the home of a country merchant and paid six dollars a month for board and room. He recalls that he purchased a suit of "good clothes" for six dollars while he was teaching.

John entered Grant University at Athens, Tennessee when he was twenty-one years of age and continued to pursue his studies at this higher institution of learning for two years.

In the year 1894 Tom and Jim Carlock, the two older brothers, moved from their native state of Tennessee and settled on a farm near Paris, Texas. In 1896, eager to come "out west" and join his brothers who had preceded him into the western territory, John Carlock moved from Tennessee to Texas and shortly thereafter migrated to the Indian Territory.

In 1897 young Carlock became associated with the United States Survey in the Indian Territory.<sup>1</sup> The Dawes Commission was then engaged in the surveying of the territory which was to be divided among the Indians. Carlock continued as an agent of the Dawes Commission until 1905 when the work of the allotment of lands to the Indians was virtually completed and the committee was disbanded. The remaining work was carried out by the Secretary of the Interior.

In 1905 John Hoyle Carlock was united in marriage to Miss Cora Wheeler, the beautiful young daughter of Monroe Wheeler of Ardmore, Indian Territory. Mr. and Mrs. John H. Carlock made Ardmore their permanent home and they have contributed much to the political, economic, and moral development of Carter County.

After resigning his position with the Dawes Commission in 1905, Carlock entered the real estate business. For many years W. Lawrence Cruce and Lee Cruce, the second governor of Oklahoma,<sup>2</sup> were his business partners. Carlock has witnessed

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<sup>1</sup> Reminiscences of John Hoyle Carlock, January 27, 1939.

<sup>2</sup> Joseph B. Thoburn, Standard History of Oklahoma, II, p. 868, 1916.

many changes from the Indian Territory Days to the present statehood days. He has aided in the pioneering of his county; he has participated in its development from a very simple to a very complex mode of living.

After the organization of the state of Oklahoma in 1907, there was quite a large demand for land, and of course, the prospective purchasers desired to see the land. The chief means of transportation in the county was the horse and buggy. Carlock and his partners took the land seekers to all corners of the county. In contrasting the mode of travel in the year 1907 with that of the present day, Mr. Carlock recalls, "If we went to the extreme northern of western part of the county, it was necessary to spend the night and return to Ardmore the next day. Today, in our automobiles we can cover the same territory in two hours."<sup>3</sup>

Knowing Carlock to be one of the outstanding honest citizens of Ardmore, the officials of the Santa Fe Railroad Company appointed him to serve as mediator between the Ardmoreites and the representatives of the railroad company at a critical time in the history of the city.

About two-twenty o'clock on the afternoon of September 27, 1915 Ardmore, Oklahoma experienced the most terrible disaster of its entire history. A tank car containing about two hundred-fifty barrels of high gravity gasoline which was standing on a railroad track in the Santa Fe yards became ignited. The result was an explosion that came near

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<sup>3</sup> Reminiscences of John Hoyle Carlock, January 27, 1939.



wiping the city of Ardmore entirely off the map.

The union passenger station was located three hundred feet northwest of the tank which held the potent liquid, but no one was fatally injured at this point. Forty-six persons were killed and several hundred suffered from injury and shock throughout the entire city. The property damage was great.

At this time J. M. Hoard, acting mayor of Ardmore, with a committee of Ardmoreites, conferred with the representatives of the Santa Fe Railroad Company to name a claims adjuster. John Carlock, who was engaged in real estate business in Ardmore, was appointed to this position of adjuster of claims. Carlock, honest and sincere, assisted his fellow-citizens, but he also dealt fairly with the railroad company. Nearly one million dollars were paid in claims filed by Ardmore citizens against the Santa Fe Railroad Company.<sup>4</sup>

Carlock continued in the real estate business until he was appointed chairman of the exemption board of Carter County during the time of the World War. Other members of this board were Doctor Walter Hardy, an outstanding physician of Ardmore, and John L. Galt, the city's first mayor.<sup>5</sup> All three members were held in the very highest respect by

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<sup>4</sup> Reminiscences of John Hoyle Carlock, January 27, 1939.

<sup>5</sup> Roy M. Johnson, Oklahoma History South of the Canadian, I, p. 439, 1925.

the majority of citizens. The exemption board had the largest enrollment of any board in the entire state of Oklahoma.

Carlock continued in this capacity until the close of the war.

Always eager to do his "bit" for his country, state, and nation, Carlock refused to accept the salary of \$3700 presented to him by the federal government of the United States.<sup>6</sup> This willingness to serve his community and his government with no selfish motive in view is indicative of the true character of this upright citizen.

Thus, Carter County, under such efficient leaders as John Hoyle Carlock and Judge J. Robert Gilliam, chairman of the Carter County Council of Defense, did its part toward winning the great war. A concise statement of the various war campaigns of Carter County is here submitted:<sup>7</sup>

Furnished approximately 2800 men for army, navy, and marine corps service.

Furnished 1200 for semi-military service in government plants.

Exceeded every war work quota but one after the county became well organized--Failed in only two campaigns before organization was completed.

First Red Cross Campaign, quota, \$28,000; paid in \$25,000.

First Liberty Loan Campaign, quota \$310,000; subscribed \$385,000.

Second Liberty Loan Campaign, quota, \$810,000; subscribed

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<sup>6</sup> Reminiscences of John Hoyle Carlock, January 27, 1939.

<sup>7</sup> The Daily Ardmoreite, Ardmore, Oklahoma, XXVI, No. 84, January 1, 1919.

\$900,000.

Fourth Liberty Loan Campaign, quota \$830,609; subscribed \$1,176,000.

First Y. M. C. A. Campaign, quota \$12,000; subscribed \$8,000.

Second Y. M. C. A. Campaign, quota \$42,000; subscribed \$36,000.

Christmas Red Cross Campaign (1917), quota \$6,336; subscribed \$10,150.

May 1918, Red Cross Campaign, quota \$40,000; subscribed \$85,000.

War Savings Stamps Campaign, quota \$507, 620, all of which was pledged.

While Mr. John Carlock was serving his country so efficiently during the World War, his wife, Mrs. Carlock, was attracting much attention for her splendid work as chairman of the Red Cross canteen hut committee. Mrs. Carlock was recognized as one of Ardmore's most valuable workers during the war. She was credited with the erection of the Red Cross Hut of Ardmore which was considered one of the best to be found between Kansas City, Missouri, and Galveston, Texas.<sup>8</sup> Because of Ardmore's location and the schedule of trains, the canteen hut was kept open longer hours than most of the other huts of the state.

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<sup>8</sup> The Daily Ardmoreite, Ardmore, Oklahoma, XXV, No. 140, February 22, 1918.



At the close of the World War Charles Carter, a representative from Carter County, asked John Carlock to serve as postmaster in the Ardmore office. Carlock accepted this appointment and served very efficiently for a period of ten months until a regular postmaster could be selected. When Carlock accepted the representative's appointment as postmaster in 1919, Ardmore was without any rural free mail delivery.<sup>9</sup> Realizing the benefits of such service to Ardmore and the surrounding territory, Carlock put forth much effort to procure rural free delivery of mails. No other city the size of Ardmore in the whole United States was without this service. The city had no more detrimental advertisement than the fact that there was not a single free delivery mail route. Carlock realized that when the routes were established, the federal authorities would insist upon keeping the roads in the best possible condition.

In the year of 1919 three members of the Democratic Party announced their candidacy for the senatorial race from the district which consists of Carter, Love, and Murray Counties. The campaign was beginning to take on much political color when the three candidates called upon Mr. Carlock<sup>10</sup> and implored him to become the senatorial candidate. Recognizing the magnetic personality of Carlock, all three of the men promised to withdraw from the race. Under these

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<sup>9</sup> The Daily Ardmoreite, Ardmore, Oklahoma, XXVI, No. 103, January 20, 1919.

<sup>10</sup> The Daily Ardmoreite, Ardmore, Oklahoma, XXVII, No. 48, December 4, 1919.

circumstances, Carlock agreed to announce his candidacy for senator from district eighteen. In view of the fact that the citizens in general believed in Mr. Carlock and his ability to execute the duties of the office, he was elected to the Oklahoma State Senate with no opposition either in the Democratic Primaries or in the general election in November. Carlock was the successor to Senator Fred Tucker in the eighty assembly of the Oklahoma Senate.

The people of this district made no mistake when they elected John Carlock to represent them. Carlock took his duties seriously and he exerted every effort to merit the honor which an admiring and trusting constituency bestowed upon him. He was recognized as one of the strong men of the senate, and when the presiding officer of the eighth session of the Oklahoma Senate announced his appointments, Senator Carlock was named upon the following committees: Oil and Gas; Appropriations, Banks and Banking; Fees and Salaries; Mines and Manufacturing; Roads and Highways.<sup>11</sup>

The "Senator from Carter" was named chairman of the Oil and Gas Committee which was of paramount importance to the interests of this section of Oklahoma as oil had been discovered in the Healdton field only a few years previously.

Senator Jim Draughan also represented this district in the eighth general assembly of the Oklahoma Senate.

Mr. Carlock served in both the eighth and ninth sessions of the Oklahoma Senate. At the end of his second year of

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<sup>11</sup> The Daily Ardmoreite, Ardmore, Oklahoma, XXVI, No. 256, July 15, 1919.

service to his state in this capacity, he was unanimously selected by his colleagues as the chairman of the Appropriations Commission. This election revealed the great confidence that his co-workers had in the "Senator from Carter", and true to their trust, he served with outstanding proficiency.

Carlock recalls the many interesting contacts he made while he was a member of the Oklahoma Legislature. He became acquainted with leaders throughout the state, and several lasting friendships had their beginning during his senatorial term, dating from 1919 to 1923.

During the year 1922 the senate was in session nearly nine months as the senators acted as judges in the impeachment case of the Governor, J. C. Walton.<sup>12</sup>

Carter County experienced a crisis in the fight between the lawless element and the upright faction over the liquor problem. John H. Carlock, a gentleman of honor and high morals, was one of a committee of five to call upon Governor J. B. A. Robertson concerning this condition in the county. The Governor cooperated and the result was the ousting of Buck Garrett, the sheriff, who was replaced by Ewing London<sup>13</sup> in 1922.

At the close of his senatorial term, Carlock made a public announcement that he would never again be a candidate for a public office and to this date he has kept his promise. However, the political life was very fascinating to Carlock

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<sup>12</sup> Reminiscences of John Hoyle Carlock, January 27, 1939.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.



and he has often felt a keen desire to re-enter the field.

After retiring from the Oklahoma Senate, John H. Carlock continued to serve his county and state in any movement in which he felt he could further the progress of good government. John Carlock was appointed a member of the Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma,<sup>14</sup> a post he held from 1925 to 1932.

Doctor W. B. Bizzell, President of the University of Oklahoma, appreciated Carlock's services as a member of the Board of Regents and wrote, "I write to tell you how much I regret that your long and helpful service as a member of the Board of Regents is soon to end. As you know, I have come to lean very heavily upon you and I am going to miss your wise counsel and encouragement greatly. You probably will never get credit for all the good things you have done for the University. Unfortunately, the public does not know very much about matters of this kind."

John Hoyle Carlock, Junior, the only son of J. H. Carlock, was graduated from the University of Oklahoma while his father served as a regent of the board. The younger Carlock took his Doctor of Medicine degree from Tulane University and has now established himself as a practicing physician in Ardmore, Oklahoma.

Even though Carlock has never sought public office but once in his entire life, he has always been sensitive to the

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<sup>14</sup> Zoe A. Tilghman, "The Significance of the University Inaugural", Harlow's Weekly, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, XXVIII, No. 7, February 13, 1926.

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political situations of his county and state. He feels that every true citizen should be well informed regarding the conditions of his country and that one should at all times exercise his franchise privilege. He was sincere in this belief when he said, "I have always been active in politics and feel it to be the duty of every citizen to be so."<sup>15</sup> Carlock proved his belief when he acted as chairman of the Citizens' Committee in what was called the Fire Bell Campaign. It was due largely to the efficient and sincere leadership of its chairman that this committee was successful in defeating at the polls many "unsound" measures initiated by William (Bill) Murray.<sup>16</sup>

During the present administration we have seen the rise of new methods of solution which have been applied to governmental problems.

John Carlock was elected chairman of the Public Works Commission though he had no knowledge of this until after the election. Senator Thomas P. Gore and Senator Elmer Thomas recommended John Carlock, Ardmore business man, for appointment as Public Works Administrator for Oklahoma. Commenting upon the Carlock recommendation, Senator Gore said, "Mr. Carlock is very well qualified for this important position, is known throughout Oklahoma, and has the confidence generally of the whole state."<sup>17</sup> After he had served in this chairman ship for one year, he was made director of

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<sup>16</sup> The Daily Ardmoreite, Ardmore, Oklahoma, XL, No. 205, June 23, 1933.

<sup>17</sup> The Tulsa Daily World, Tulsa, Oklahoma, June 25, 1933.

the Federal Housing Association of Oklahoma.

In 1937 Carlock resigned his position as director of the Federal Housing Association and he is now engaged in banking, stock raising, and farming in Carter County. Carlock serves as chairman of the board of directors of The Exchange National Bank of Ardmore, Oklahoma. He owns and operates several farms throughout the county where he supervises stock-raising.

Although John Carlock has always led an active business life, he has also given much of his time to the moral development of his community. He has acted as chairman of the Board of Stewards of the First Methodist Church of Ardmore for fifteen years; he has been a loyal teacher of the Men's Bible Class of his church over a period of many years, and he now serves the church in this capacity.

For many years the First Methodist Church was located on the corner of Broadway and B. Street Northwest. When the old building was no longer adequate for the needs of the congregation, the present edifice was erected on the corner of Main and E Street Northwest. John Carlock was made chairman of the building committee and the costliest church of all Southern Oklahoma was built under his supervision. The approximate cost was \$300,000.

Carlock has been a member of the Masonic Order for thirty-six years. Carlock's hobby is golf. He is an active participant in the Rotary Club and other civic organizations in Ardmore. His interests are so varied and his contacts are so far reaching that he has the distinction of being one of



the most popular leaders ever produced in Carter County,  
Oklahoma.

## CHAPTER IV

## GEORGE WESLEY COFFMAN

George Wesley Coffman, one of seventeen children, is of Dutch-English descent. He was born in 1873 on a seven hundred acre cotton plantation in Alabama. At the early age of six years, he, with his parents, moved to a small farm in Shole Creek, a border town of Tennessee, where the family lived for many years.

When George Coffman was about seventeen years of age, his father became an invalid and all the responsibilities of the farm were assumed by the four oldest sons. Even though educational opportunities were extremely limited in this very small rural community, these brothers did attend school from one to three months annually.

Though his father discouraged his leaving the farm, young George, desiring an education, made arrangements by which he could attend a boarding school taught by Herbert Walker and his sister, Miss Dezzie Walker. The next year Herbert Walker and his assistant, W. D. Davidson, taught in a parochial school in Pulaski, Tennessee which Coffman attended.

In the meantime Coffman's oldest brother, who had begun the study of law, encouraged his brother, George, to do likewise. George Coffman admired a brilliant young lawyer of Pulaski very much and decided to enter his office to learn what he could of that profession. About the second time he went there to study he was met at the door by the lawyer who

was entirely too playful with a revolver because of his intoxicated condition. Young George was frightened out of the building never to continue with the study of law.

In the days of Coffman's youth, back in Tennessee, many physicians attended lecture courses for a period of five or six months and then were eligible to practice medicine. There was a county health physician who invited George to read medicine with him. In spite of the fact that Mr. Coffman declined the invitation, he felt for many years that he had made a major mistake.

Instead of attending the lecture courses with the county doctor, he chose to enter Abernathy Brothers' School for Boys for the next few months. He next attended Giles College in Pulaski; the course prescribed by this college was equivalent to the present day high school work.

Mr. Coffman did not prepare himself to become a teacher but circumstances forced him into his first term of teaching. His eldest brother who had been assisting him with his education met with financial disappointment and George was thrown on his own resources. Because of the friendship with the eldest Coffman brother, the county superintendent "gave" George W. Coffman a certificate permitting him to teach in the county. The certificate was granted to him in 1895, and he taught his first school which was called Mud-Bottom in 1896. He received a monthly salary of \$22.50 for his services.<sup>1</sup> After teaching two "successful terms"

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<sup>1</sup>

Contract, Issued in Giles County, Tennessee, 1895.



at Mud-Bottom, Coffman went to Minnow Ford, Tennessee where he taught four months annually for a period of four years.

One of Mr. Coffman's brothers had moved to Oklahoma while George was getting his first experience as a school teacher. The brother lived on a farm about one mile west and one-half mile south of the present Elmore City in Garvin County, Oklahoma. He had four sons who were in great need of "some schooling" so he sent for his young brother, George, to come "out to Oklahoma" and begin a subscription school. Each pupil paid a monthly tuition of \$1.25. He gathered eighty pupils together and for his first school house he used an old log cabin that had previously been a home. Everything ran smoothly with the newly created school for about two and one-half months. One afternoon when school was dismissed, the sixty-five pupils present that day went happily home, but the following morning only six reappeared. A small pox epidemic had been rumored and the school was discontinued for the rest of the term.

An Indian agent "checked Coffman out of the Elmore City Schools" and sent him to Enterprise in Carter County where he remained for two years. He received a salary of thirty-five dollars a month and free board. Coffman who was gradually progressing in his teaching career moved to Brock, a small school district about eight miles southwest of Ardmore, the seat of Carter County. The school at Brock was a subscription school, also. In the meantime, his mother had come from Pulaski, Tennessee to visit her sons in Oklahoma. When she wished to return home, she requested her son,

George, to accompany her. He did return to his old home town in Tennessee and remained a little over a year, finding employment in a dry goods store.

Hearing of Coffman's outstanding work while he was in Brock, the residents of Cheek, a small district twenty miles from Ardmore, wrote to the school master and offered him the "exorbitant" salary of fifty dollars a month. Coffman gave this offer much meditation. "Should he leave his Tennessee home again?" was his main consideration. He had by this time grown very fond of the teaching field. He felt, too, that he would like to make Oklahoma his permanent home. So in 1904, when George Wesley Coffman was married to Miss Mary Etta Tacker of Tennessee, the bridegroom accompanied by his bride came back to Carter County and accepted the school at Cheek. From that date, Mr. and Mrs. George W. Coffman have been recognized as outstanding Christian leaders in the communities in which they have lived.

In 1905 Coffman was appointed as teacher of the Brock school in the Chickasaw Nation. His certificate to teach was granted by the Department of Interior from the government office at Tishomingo, Indian Territory.<sup>2</sup> The government provided a term of eight months that year for the Brock school.

The two room school at Sullivan, located between Newport and Deese north of Lone Grove, employed Mr. Coffman for the school term in 1906.

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<sup>2</sup> Contract (certificate) Tishomingo, Indian Territory, 1905.

Hearing of the vacancy in the school at Orr, in Love County, Coffman applied and secured the position which paid a monthly salary of \$67.50 which was more than he had ever received to that date. In recalling the contents of the physiology texts of the early 1900's, Coffman observed that these texts discussed fully the effects of intoxicants. At this period in our history many groups were striving to make the use of all intoxicating liquors illegal. Of course, the result of this national movement was the passage of the eighteenth amendment.

Coffman, an honest Christian who had always been opposed to liquor, discussed with his pupils, as he followed the text in physiology, the detrimental effects of intoxicants. Two of his pupils, almost as large in size as their teacher, pretending to think that the school master was directing his remarks against the actions of their older brothers, resented his honest efforts to instruct and hurried home to misconstrue purposefully the teacher's lectures. Within a few days George Coffman was warned by a friend that the "whiskey group" was determined to "get him".<sup>3</sup>

Coffman was not alarmed over the threat, but his friend brought him a gun in order that he might have some means of self protection if the group should carry out their threat. One evening, as Mr. Coffman was returning from the post office, two of the members of this rough faction approached him. As they were intoxicated at this moment, he told them he wanted

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<sup>3</sup> Reminiscences of George W. Coffman, Ardmore, Oklahoma, January 16, 1939.



no dealings with them. During the quarrel which ensued, Coffman was forced to knock one man to the ground. He then started home to get his gun. Mrs. Coffman, convinced that the men were lawless, persuaded her husband to remain at home that night. The group continued to make trouble for the school teacher until the end of the school term.

Mr. Coffman, always a peace loving and gentle individual, moved out of the community to accept a more desirable position at Province, a village nine miles east of Ardmore, where he remained for the next two years. Here he received an eighty dollar monthly remuneration. He came to Ardmore, his present home, in 1911.

Coffman taught several years in the rural schools of Carter County before he applied for a teaching position in Ardmore. Mrs. Mary Niblack, Superintendent of Public<sup>4</sup> Instruction in Carter County from 1908 to 1912, once said of Mr. Coffman, "He is one of the best and most desirable teachers we have ever had in Carter County. His influence is very helpful to all."

Coffman gradually climbed in his profession in prominence and efficiency. C. W. Richards, the superintendent of Ardmore city schools, employed Coffman as principal of Jefferson school at the monthly salary of \$80.00 for a term of nine months.

Jefferson School is one of the four elementary schools of Ardmore, Oklahoma. This school is located at E and Carter

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<sup>4</sup> Court House Record, Office of the County Superintendent, (1908-1912).

Street Southeast. The other elementary schools are Lincoln of Southwest Ardmore, Franklin of Northwest Ardmore, and Washington of the Northeast part of the city.

Jefferson School was a brick building of eight rooms when Coffman was elected to its principalship. It was while Coffman was principal of Jefferson School that the enrollment of that section of the city grew until the eight rooms could no longer accommodate the group. In 1914 the building was enlarged to twelve rooms, and at the present writing the most modern commodious building is being erected under his personal supervision.

This growth of population was not peculiar to Jefferson School, however. The entire city of Ardmore was growing rapidly as oil had been discovered in the Healdton field thirty miles west of Ardmore in 1913.<sup>5</sup> Ardmore's population increased from 8,000 to 20,000 between the years 1913 to 1920.<sup>6</sup>

Not having an adequate building, the high school classes were held in the Carnegie Library, but in the year following Coffman's arrival in Ardmore, the high school building was erected at its present site on the corner of North Washington and Second Avenue Northwest.

C. W. Richards who served Ardmore as the city superintendent of schools for fourteen years (1911-1925) was considered an outstanding educator of the entire state. He

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<sup>5</sup> C. W. Tomlinson, Oil and Gas Geology of Carter County, Oklahoma Geological Survey, Bulletin 40-Z, Norman, Oklahoma, September, 1928, p. 37.

<sup>6</sup> Bulletin, Chamber of Commerce Reports, Ardmore, Okla., 1928, p. 8.

was quick to see the excellent teaching qualities of Mr. Coffman and increased his salary from \$80.00 to \$105.00 monthly.

After completing his sixth year as principal of Jefferson School, Coffman aspired to the office of County Superintendent of Public Instruction in Carter County. Coffman was highly respected by all who knew him and having served thirteen years in various districts of Carter County, he was well qualified for this county position to which he was<sup>7</sup> elected in 1918 by an overwhelming majority. In this public office the remuneration was \$116.23 monthly for twelve months of the year.

At the time George W. Coffman served as county superintendent there were one and two room school houses. Healdton and Wilson had larger schools as these towns had grown rapidly from 1913, the year of the discovery of oil.

The World War was being fought while Coffman held this superintendency and everything was in turmoil. He recalls "teachers were in great demand and many teachers who could produce only third grade certificates were employed at<sup>8</sup> \$150.00 monthly." Much of Coffman's time was spent in organizing governmental drives, such as bonds and Red Cross drives that were handled through the office of the county superintendent.

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<sup>7</sup> Carter County Court House Record, Office of County Superintendent, Ardmore, Oklahoma, 1918.

<sup>8</sup> Reminiscences of Mr. G. W. Coffman, Ardmore, Okla., Jan. 17, 1939.



Mr. Coffman's reelection to a second term of two years proved that the people of Carter County had great confidence in his ability in this capacity. He did many worthwhile things while he was superintendent. The Carter County Spelling Bee, organized while he was a rural teacher, became most outstanding while he was superintendent. Boys and girls from every corner of the county would assemble at the Carter County Court House at regular intervals for these enjoyable events. Coffman recalls, "sometimes we would spell all day and way into the night; and all had fun. G. P. Selvidge,<sup>9</sup> also an educator, helped me pronounce."

Since Mr. Coffman had been a teacher of rural districts for many years, he was efficient in his assistance to younger and less experienced teachers. His criticisms were constructive and everyone appreciated the willing spirit in which he did his work.

While Coffman was County Superintendent of Public Instruction (Elect), he was honored by an invitation to address the body of state teachers at the Oklahoma Educational Association which met in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, in 1918.<sup>10</sup>

Coffman served only one year and three months of his second term as county superintendent before he tendered his resignation to the County Commissioners. He resigned in order that he might again assume the principalship of Jefferson

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> The Daily Ardmoreite, Ardmore, Oklahoma, XXV, No. 140, February 22, 1918.

School where he has remained to the present day.

After teaching some thirty years, Mr. Coffman received his Bachelor of Arts Degree from Southeastern State Teachers College of Durant, Oklahoma, in the summer of 1930. Desiring to keep informed as to the new teaching methods, Coffman has attended either the summer or regular session at this college<sup>11</sup> for twenty-three consecutive years.

The School Masters' Club, which was organized in 1933 by Mr. J. J. Godbey, then Superintendent of Ardmore City Schools (1925-1935), is at present an active organization of which Mr. Coffman is a member. This outstanding school man has served many terms as the president of Carter County Teachers Association.

The people of all Carter County and, especially those of the southeast section of Ardmore, love and respect Coffman for his untiring service to them. Since his arrival in Ardmore, he has always been a conspicuous participant in all worthwhile movements for the betterment of Ardmore and Southern Oklahoma.

His home is located one block from Jefferson School and only two blocks from the Emmanuel Baptist Church of which he is a very active member. He has served that congregation in many different capacities. For some twenty years he has been Chairman of the Board of Deacons. He has also served as Superintendent of the Sunday School, as Choir Director, and as a teacher of the Men's Bible Class.

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<sup>11</sup> The Daily Oklahoman, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, July 22, 1930.

With all his varied duties Mr. Coffman finds time for interest and service in civic problems. He takes delight in supervising the work of a Boy Scout troop and a Cub organization.

Today, at the age of sixty-six, George Wesley Coffman still maintains his leadership in school circles of Carter County and his moral influence over the citizenship of his ward. He has seen much progress in both the educational theories and practices of this county. He has served in the Ardmore Public Schools under four different administrations. If it were possible to summarize the whole character of this noble school man, George Wesley Coffman, into one thought, the word "loyalty" could best be applied. His principal objective is to be loyal to the school administration and to the people he so conscientiously serves.



## CHAPTER V

## CHARLES CHRISTIAN WEITH

From Valparaiso, Indiana came Doctor Charles Christian Weith who was destined to become one of the most colorful figures of Carter County, located in the Southern part of the state of Oklahoma. This long tiresome journey was made so that Weith might be present at the opening of the Cherokee<sup>1</sup> Strip.

Accompanied by many others, Weith, an excellent rider, dashed into Oklahoma to find the Sooners already here. He and his companions crossed most of the Texas Panhandle where they made the historic race into the territory. He was at what is now Enid, Oklahoma the day that city was born, and the pistol shot which proclaimed the opening of the Cherokee Strip always remained fresh in his mind.

Charles Christian Weith, born in Wurtemberg, Germany, in 1859 came to the United States with his parents at the age of nine years.<sup>2</sup> Three years later he was left an orphan by the death of both parents. He worked on a farm until he was twenty years of age. Weith attended school in a little red school house in rural Indiana. Later, he attended the city schools of Cincinnati, Ohio for a period of a year, but he

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<sup>1</sup> The Daily Oklahoman, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, July 1, 1928. The Cherokee Strip was opened in 1893.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., May 27, 1934.

was actually self-taught. He always said and believed that no one is educated until he learns to think. He had no confidence in the old adage, "One can't teach an old dog new tricks".

Although Charles Christian Weith never had the opportunity to graduate from any institution of higher learning, he studied continuously and was admitted by examinations to three professions. He was a member of the bar, both of Kansas and Oklahoma. He practiced only a short time, and boasted that he never defended a criminal. Weith felt that this experience in law was always helpful to him in his ministerial career as it helped to make him capable of seeing both sides of a question.

Weith actually taught school a total of thirteen years in three states. Reverend C. C. Weith admitted he resisted the ministry as long as was possible, but in his latter years, looking back, he could see he was being led into the ministerial field in spite of himself. He felt for many years that he should preach but he did not want to follow that profession. "It looks as though I drifted into the ministry but I know now that I was being led into it," he observed.<sup>3</sup>

Shortly after his arrival in Oklahoma, Doctor Weith became principal of the Chickasha Academy. There were no public schools in Chickasha at the time. In 1897, while he was principal of this Academy, he was called upon by an elder of the church he was attending, to substitute for the pastor.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., May 27, 1934.

He had been studying for the ministry but had not definitely decided to enter the field. He accepted the elder's invitation, however, and while he was substituting for the pastor, he became thoroughly convinced that he wanted to devote his entire life to the work of the ministry. In 1898 he became the stated supply of the Presbyterian Church at Jefferson where he served that congregation for a period of two years.

In 1898 he married Miss Nellie Rogers of Kansas who was always a great inspiration to him in his chosen profession.

In 1899 a member of his congregation at Jefferson said of his sermon, "It was the best sermon I had heard in the Strip".<sup>4</sup>

On February 21, 1900, Doctor Charles Christian Weith received a letter from the Ardmore Presbyterian Church asking him "to arrange a week day trip to Ardmore". He arrived in Ardmore February 26, 1900 and Doctor Redfield met Doctor Weith. Weith "lodged" at the Redfield's home that night.

While Weith was in Ardmore, he preached in the evening to a small audience. Weith called upon a few of the leaders of the Presbyterian Church among whom were Doctor and Mrs. Bogie, Mrs. Morgan, Mrs. McLaughlin, and Mr. and Mrs. Sam Noble. At this time the Presbyterian Church of Ardmore, Oklahoma, a very small struggling mission church, had only a membership of fifty-one loyal souls. This mission had been started by the board of home missions prior to 1896. The

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<sup>4</sup> Charles Christian Weith's Diary; the Diary consists of fifty volumes and dates from 1898 to his death in 1937, II, 1899.



congregation was considering two other candidates when Weith was invited to visit and preach.

On March 1, 1900, Weith "settled with the Ardmore group for \$15.00 and started home".<sup>5</sup> Before many days had passed the chosen minister received a letter from Redfield of the Ardmore Presbyterian Church announcing his call to that small town in Southern Indian Territory which had a population of 6,000. Weith arrived in Ardmore the last day of March and on April 1, 1900 he preached his first sermon in his new location.<sup>6</sup> That same week, April 6, 1900, Mrs. Weith and Karl, the only child of the Weith family, came to Ardmore and the three were soon to bury their roots deep into the soil of the new territory and leave a vegetation rich in its contribution. Indeed, Charles Christian Weith was very prominent and played an important role in the pioneering of Ardmore. He shared with others the building of an agricultural town of 6,000 in 1900 to a city of 20,000 population in 1918. Weith, with others, watched the small town change from the simple to the complex mode of living.

Ardmore, the county seat of Carter County, from the time of its first birthday until 1913 was dependent upon cattle and cotton for its economic development, but in the year 1913 oil was discovered in Carter County which boomed Ardmore's population to a new height for the next few years. Along with this growth in population came the increased lawlessness

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., II, 1900.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., III, April 1, 1900.

that is always present around any "boom town".

Reverend Charles Christian Weith was a person of outstanding moral character and he possessed an over abundance of determination. The town was growing so rapidly that the citizens of the earlier days realized the importance of attempting to "clean up" the town for the sake of those who made their permanent homes in Ardmore. Reverend Weith helped to organize the ministerial association of Ardmore and he was an active leader in the fight to make Carter County a better place in which to live. Reverend Gray, Masters, and Lewis, other ministers of Ardmore, "took up the matter of open saloons, liquor stores, and other places of vice." These four men organized their work so that the evidence presented to the citizenship of the town would expose the whole affair. Lewis, the Methodist minister, disguised as a farmer, purchased whiskey and Johnson, a Baptist preacher, assisted Lewis in the investigation. Other goods were bought by a detective in the employ of the ministerial alliance as evidence. Each bottle was labelled with the date of purchase and the name of the man from whom it was purchased.<sup>7</sup> At one time during the fight for a cleaner county, Doctor Weith had enough whiskey in his attic to send him to jail for life.

The sheriff, realizing that the preachers were determined to carry their evidence to the citizens of the town, ordered "lids down". However, the churchmen went again after the sheriff's order and bought more liquor.

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., XVI, June 16, 1913.

In one of his sermons on vice, Doctor Weith displayed a bottle of the whiskey bought at "Terry's" to prove that the town was still selling intoxicating drinks even after the orders issued from the sheriff's office.

On June 22, 1913 there was a mass meeting at the Methodist Church. Affidavits were read and the liquor was displayed to prove that if preachers were able to find the places that were selling whiskey, the officers certainly could. This action stirred the memberships of the various churches.

The pastors next sent a statement to the press concerning their position in regard to the liquor question. Gray and Weith interviewed Bleakmore, a city official, and supplied him with a copy of their affidavits and the names of the witnesses.

On June 24, 1913 a public meeting was held in the auditorium of the Baptist Church where "I. R. Mason made a foolish speech in behalf of Mayor Roberts and Reverend C. R. Gray skinned him alive. Mayor Roberts made a puerile defense and everybody pitied him for his imbecility and incompetence."<sup>8</sup> At this meeting a committee was appointed to call upon Booker, the police officer, Garret, the sheriff, and the City Commissioners. Only a temporary agreement was reached at this time, however, but the upright faction of the city continued the struggle for several years which finally resulted in the ousting of the county sheriff.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., XVI, June 24, 1913.



Although Doctor C. C. Weith was a fighter when he was convinced of the need of a war, he was also a man of the utmost kindness and gentleness as is best shown in his tenderness toward his wife who was an invalid for many years before her death. Nellie Rogers Weith died of tuberculosis in 1913, but as evidence of her husband's truly deep religious nature, he wrote concerning her death, "You are also with me for soul can communicate with soul even though one has left the body".<sup>9</sup>

When Doctor C. C. Weith first came to Ardmore, the little Presbyterian Church was on the west end of the block where the present high school building now stands. Three years later in 1907 when the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and The First Presbyterian Church united, the little frame structure was moved to its present site on the corner of West Broadway and C Street Northwest. In 1916 the present handsome edifice was erected. On the lot adjoining the church was built the little white manse where Doctor C. C. Weith made his home for thirty-five years.

Doctor Weith, one of the most courageous leaders of all Oklahoma, his adopted state, waged relentless war against all forces of evil as he saw them. Fearlessly he stood through the tumult when the lawless element was fighting to maintain its control in Carter County. It was Doctor C. C. Weith who took the responsibility of declaring a strong stand against the evil forces and it was toward him that the law-

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., XVI, November 23, 1913.

less group directed its enmity.

When two "bootleggers" in Wilson, Oklahoma were killed December 16, 1921 during a raid, C. G. Sims, a police officer<sup>10</sup> of Ardmore was found dead in a field near Wilson. C. G. Sims was not a Carter County officer and was not on official duty in Wilson. Sims' murder was shrouded in mystery. J. A. Gilliam and several others were arrested by Buck Garrett, the sheriff.

Mrs. C. G. Sims, widow of the murdered peace officer, requested Doctor C. C. Weith to officiate at the funeral which was held at the First Presbyterian Church of Ardmore, December 17, 1921. Doctor Davidson of the First Baptist Church assisted Doctor Weith at the funeral. An immense group of members from the Order of the Masonic Lodge attended the last rites of C. G. Sims who was a member of their organization. At the funeral Doctor Weith made "some remarks that were startling to all". After the services a number of arrests were made and Ardmore "was stirred to the depths". Many wild rumors were afloat such as: Doctor C. C. Weith and other outstanding masons were to be arrested.

Fearful for the safety of Doctor Weith, the A. C. Straehleys asked their minister to remain over night with them, but Weith declined, saying, "I do not want to be put into the<sup>11</sup> attitude of a man who is running."

He returned to the Presbyterian manse, but Mr. A. C. Straehley brought Doctor Weith a Smith-Wesson revolver to be

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., XXIV, December 16, 1921.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., XXIV, December 17, 1921.

used if necessary for his protection against this lawless group. F. S. Gates and Mr. Burton called on Doctor Weith to talk over the serious situation.

December 19, 1921 additional men were arrested and held without a right to see friends or lawyers. This day of tenseness was felt by all Ardmoreites. At two o'clock in the afternoon hundreds of men congregated at the Masonic Hall to discuss this dangerous situation. On a motion made by Weith, a committee of fifty members was selected to go to see the governor of the state about the conditions of Carter County. Doctor Weith was a member of this committee. At this meeting, he received many sincere expressions of approval and support of his stand at the funeral of C. G. Sims.

After the afternoon meeting at the Masonic Hall was adjourned, Doctor Weith went to the post office and it was at this time that he received an anonymous letter in which his life was threatened. It read, "Mr. Rev. Weith, if you value your life you will leave town at once." That evening the members of the committee who were to call on the Governor, reassembled at the Masonic Hall to wait until the hour for the train.

The next morning December 20, 1921, the Ardmore delegation met at the Lee Huckins Hotel in Oklahoma City and went in a body by street car to the State Capitol. The Assistant Attorney-General, Fulton, and Russell Brown first interviewed the troupe and then they were shown into a large reception hall to see the Governor, J. B. A. Robertson. "The conference which lasted practically all morning proved very satis-



factory as Governor Robertson assured them in a very courteous manner of his cooperation and help."<sup>12</sup> The Ardmoreites left Oklahoma City at twelve-forty in the afternoon and reached their home town at five o'clock.

While the committee called upon the Governor, J. A. Gilliam made a statement concerning the murder of C. G. Sims and he and five others were released from the Carter County jail on bond. The town was in a state of suppressed excitement over new rumors concerning the arrest of Doctor C. C. Weith, who was the courageous leader of the religious faction of the town. Weith knew he was justified in the staunch stand for right and he actually enjoyed the battle according to his account recorded in his Diary:

"I have been a leading factor in it and I have rather enjoyed the battle as it was in a worthy cause. Though somewhat risky,--just enough to make it exhilarating."<sup>13</sup>

Russell Brown, acting for the Attorney-General, released all the remaining prisoners on bond on the morning of December 21, 1921. It was an exciting and dramatic scene when those who had been arrested were released and were united with their wives and loved ones.

Attorney General Freeling began the preliminary hearings of the several masons arrested for the Wilson affair on Thursday, December 22, 1921. During this trial the brother of the murdered man charged Ray Bede with shooting Carroll. Mrs.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., XXIV, December 20, 1921.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., XXIV, December 20, 1921.

Bede who was in the courtroom screamed a denial. The Wilson Gazette, December 30, 1921, published a sensational confession made by Walter Carroll concerning the fight December 16, in which three men were killed.

January 17, 1933 Judge Oldfield of Oklahoma City presided at the opening of the trial to oust Buck Garrett, Sheriff of Carter County. Assistant Attorney-General Fulton represented the state in this trial and he was assisted by Russell Brown. January 18, Judge Oldfield suspended Sheriff Garrett and appointed Ewing London to act in that capacity during the trial.

Doctor C. C. Weith had two conferences with London, the newly appointed sheriff, to help in the selection of deputies. Doctor Weith, leader of the worthwhile element of Carter County, rejoiced at the removal of Garrett. The trial of Sheriff Garrett attracted the attention of all citizens of Southern Oklahoma. During the "ouster" trial Weith returned the revolver to A. C. Straehley who had loaned it to him when his life was threatened because of his active part in the affair.

The case was finished on the evening of February 16, 1922 and was submitted to the jury. The following day the jury reached a verdict of "guilty" and Judge Old field ousted Buck Garrett from office. "There was general rejoicing in most every corner of the county. It seems too good to be true after all these years of effort, but victory came at last and right prevails."<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., XXV, February 17, 1922.

Many citizens from Wilson, Oklahoma came to Ardmore, the county seat, and assembled with interested Ardmoreites at the Convention Hall to help get London reappointed. About forty women left the Convention Hall and went in a body to the Carter County Court House where they waited upon the commissioners. The Commissioners decided not to make the appointment until March 6, 1922.

After most of the people had left the Court House, a shooting affray occurred between London's deputies and some of Buck Garrett's ousted group of deputies.<sup>15</sup> Skeet Martin shot Elmer Cowles but not fatally as the wound was in the leg.

Through the entire fight to rid Carter County of its lawless officers, Doctor C. C. Weith never once wavered from the constructive building of his county. His calm but very determined position in this matter was ever a source of encouragement to others who also desired a more wholesome community in which to live, but who had less initiative than did their Christian leader.

Needless to say, Doctor Weith was regarded as a permanent part of the community after his victory in this matter. He quietly resumed his duties as minister and served his people well. From 1930 to 1934 thinking that a younger man could be of more assistance to the Presbyterian Church and to Ardmore, Doctor Weith repeatedly tendered his resignation, but his congregation flatly refused to accept it. The greatness of

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<sup>15</sup> The Daily Ardmoreite, Ardmore, Oklahoma, XXIX, No. 42, February 17, 1922.



his character was shown when he proposed to reduce his own salary. Knowing that the finances of the church would not permit him to stay on his present salary and also have an assistant to relieve him of some of his pastoral duties which his apparently robust body was no longer able to carry on, he consented to remain only if the church would permit him to reduce his own salary one-half. The other half was to be used to pay an assistant.

Doctor Weith was elected moderator of the Oklahoma Synod on two occasions, an honor that seldom comes to one man twice in a lifetime. He served in the capacity in 1904 and again in 1924.<sup>16</sup> Nationally, he stood high in a list of the thirty outstanding ministers of the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

Doctor Weith was a self-instructed student. "Without preparation I would fail utterly," he said. He kept an outline of every sermon he ever preached.

Masonry claimed much of Weith's attention. He was a thirty-third degree Mason and was prominent in the Masonic Fraternity of Oklahoma.

Weith was an exceptionally strong man physically. Golf was his hobby. He played a good game and was on the course both early and late in all seasons.

His long life as a minister strengthened his faith in humanity. He was an optimist in his view of the Church of

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<sup>16</sup> The Daily Oklahoman, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, May 27, 1934.

the future. Discussing the modern church, Doctor Weith once said, "Everywhere there is evidence of more real charity and kindness being shown today than there ever was. Reviewing my ministry in Ardmore, I find that there is more church loyalty today than any time in the past."<sup>17</sup>

Doctor C. C. Weith held a unique position in Ardmore where his life has at some time and in some manner touched almost every life in the city. "More than 150 ministers have come and gone in the long procession of pastors here since Doctor Weith came to Ardmore, but he remained until his death in 1937."<sup>18</sup>

His last days were very peaceful. Gradually, his body ceased to function properly, and the end came. So passed one of the "noblest works of God", but his influence will long be felt in all civic and religious groups of Ardmore. Charles Christian Weith was more than a pastor of the First Presbyterian Church; he was a spiritual leader of an entire city.

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., May 27, 1934.

<sup>18</sup> The Daily Ardmoreite, Ardmore, Oklahoma, XLIV, No. 182, May 27, 1937.

## CHAPTER VI

## WIRT FRANKLIN

Wirt Franklin, a descendant of colonial stock in both the paternal and maternal lines, is a representative of the sterling old family of which Benjamin Franklin was a distinguished member. The original progenitors of this Franklin family in America came from England in the seventeenth century and settled in the state of Virginia.<sup>1</sup>

William H. Franklin, the paternal grandfather of Wirt Franklin, was a prominent lawyer in McDonough County, Illinois and was a member of the state militia during the Black Hawk War. William Blake Hudgins, Wirt Franklin's maternal grandfather, served as a soldier in the Seminole Indian War. Hudgins, a native of Kentucky, was a pioneer in Missouri and became a prosperous agriculturist and stock grower.

It was at the home of his maternal grandfather in Richmond, Missouri, that a son, christened Wirt, was born to John Henry and Irene Hudgins Franklin on March 22, 1883.

John Henry Franklin, who had received excellent educational advantages, had been admitted to the bar in his native state but was practicing law in Junction City, Kansas at the time of the son's birth. When Wirt was only four years of age, his family moved to Russell, Kansas where his father soon

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph B. Thoburn, Standard History of Oklahoma, III, p. 1210, 1916.



established himself as a prominent lawyer and an influential citizen.

Wirt Franklin's initial trip to Washington, D. C. was made at the early age of six, but in later years he became a familiar figure in the nation's capital as well as a powerful influence in legislation pertaining to the oil industry.

During the administration of President Harrison, Mr. John H. Franklin served four years as deputy auditor of the fiscal department of the United States War Department.<sup>2</sup>

After his term of office had expired the Franklin family returned to Toluca, Illinois, where Mr. Franklin continued in his profession until 1895 at which time he, accompanied by his family, moved to Lacon, Illinois.

In 1900, at the age of seventeen, Wirt Franklin was graduated from the high school of Lacon. Following his high school graduation, Wirt returned to the city of Washington, D. C. where he pursued the study of law in Columbian University, now known as George Washington University.

Young Wirt, eager for adventure in the west, left the university and came to Muskogee, Indian Territory in February, 1902, where he had secured an appointment as stenographer with the Dawes' Commission.<sup>3</sup>

On a short return trip to Lacon, Illinois, Mr. Franklin was married to Miss Mary Cecile Collyer August 5, 1902. Accompanied by his young bride, Franklin returned to his posi-

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 1211.

<sup>3</sup> Reminiscences of Wirt Franklin, February 24, 1939.

tion with the Commission to the Five Civilized Tribes in Muskogee, Indian Territory.

It was not long before Mr. Franklin, through his outstanding ability, received a promotion and became a law clerk with the Commission. He later had charge of the preparation of the Choctaw and Chickasaw Indian rolls.

In the meantime Wirt Franklin had continued the study of law on his own initiative. When he resigned his position from the Dawes' Commission in October, 1905, Franklin formed a partnership with Samuel A. Apple and engaged in the practice of law at Muskogee, Indian Territory. This partnership alliance continued until June, 1906, when the law business of the two offices was consolidated at Ardmore, Indian Territory.

On January 24, 1907 Mr. Franklin was admitted to the bar in the United States Court for the Southern District, Indian Territory.<sup>4</sup>

Devoting his special attention to "Indian citizenship cases presented before the Department of the Interior and before the Indian Committees in Congress and to land contests in the land offices of the Dawes' Commission", Wirt Franklin<sup>5</sup> built up a substantial law practice in Ardmore.

In 1908, Franklin, planning to make Ardmore his permanent home, desired to purchase some property in Carter County. By means of "horse and buggy" he made a trip to the western

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<sup>4</sup> Reminiscences of Wirt Franklin, February 24, 1939.

<sup>5</sup> Joseph B. Thoburn, Standard History of Oklahoma, III, p. 1211, 1916.

part of the county to view the land. At that time J. E. Williams, now of Ardmore, was operating a small bank in the community of Cornish. Franklin told Williams of his mission and Williams immediately gave Franklin the name of a farmer who had a tract of land which he wished to sell.

Shortly after noon Williams accompanied Franklin to the farm and during the inspection Franklin asked about the water supply. Immediately, the owner, feeling that the sale would not materialize, very apologetically answered that the water was none too good but that there were similar wells on all adjoining farms. At Franklin's request to see the water, the owner lowered a bucket into the old well and, as the bucket was raised, a black sticky substance was clinging visibly to the outside. As was his custom, the farmer strained the water through a thin cloth that resembled cheesecloth. About one pint of "tarry substance" was separated from the water. Upon drinking the sample, Franklin detected a slight taste of kerosene. The farmer explained that he and his family had been consuming the water for many years and it had not injured them. In fact, they had become so accustomed to the taste that it was no longer noticed. The owner, of course, thought that his prospective purchaser had lost interest in the land. However, Wirt Franklin was determined to buy the farm. Soon, he bought another tract nearby, and by 1912 he owned four hundred sixty acres in the western part of Carter County.

In 1912 a peculiar old character, whom Ardmoreites remember as Palmer, returned after an absence of twenty-four



years. Palmer, an oil prospector, had formerly drilled a well of approximately four hundred feet in the western part of Carter County, but at this early date the well was not a commercial venture.<sup>6</sup> When he arrived in Ardmore again in 1912, his talk of oil in the county attracted the attention of Wirt Franklin who for the last four years had owned land in this section. Two other young business men of Ardmore were becoming especially interested in the oil possibilities of Carter County.

On March 22, 1912 at a surprise party, given in the Franklin home by Mrs. Franklin in honor of her husband's birthday, Roy Johnson and Edward Galt approached Mr. Franklin upon the subject. The three decided to merge their efforts, and collectively, they bought a block of leases. By means of a very attractive offer, the trio persuaded J. M. Critchlow of Titusville, Pennsylvania to drill a test well on the land belonging to Mr. Franklin in the N. E. 1/4 Sec. 8, T. 4 S, R. 3 W.<sup>7</sup>

The oil syndicate of Pennsylvania which Mr. Critchlow represented had formed two companies, the Ralston Oil Company that worked in the northern part of the state, and the Red River Oil Company that confined its activities to Southern Oklahoma. However, early in 1912, Mr. Critchlow had drilled a wildcat well in Love County and his next venture was the test well on the Franklin farm in Carter County. The well

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<sup>6</sup> C. W. Tomlinson, Oil and Gas Geology of Carter County, Okla. Geological Survey, Bulletin 40-Z, Norman, Oklahoma, 1928.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p. 37.

was completed by August, 1913 at a depth of nine hundred and twenty feet. The location is on the southwest side of the pool, and had it been drilled one fourth of a mile farther southwest, the pool would have been missed entirely.<sup>8</sup>

The initial production of the well was not large, being estimated at twenty-five barrels a day, but the news of the discovery of oil in Carter County created great excitement. Crowds from Ardmore, twenty-miles east of the field, and from Waurika, twenty-five miles west, watched with keen interest the drilling of the second well by the Red River Oil Company. This second well was drilled on land belonging to Mary McClure, and it came in with a production of three hundred barrels daily. Some of the later wells of the Healdton field were reported to have had an initial production of four thousand to five thousand seven hundred barrels a day.

Wirt Franklin, "finding it expedient to lay aside his law practice", pioneered the oil industry in Carter County and scores of citizens made fortunes after the initial well was drilled on his farm in 1913. Thus, the Healdton field, which lies on the west border of Carter County about twenty-five miles north of the Red River which forms the southern boundary of the state of Oklahoma, had its origin.

By November, 1914 there were approximately two hundred seventy-five producing wells in the field.<sup>9</sup> In the mean-

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<sup>8</sup> Franklin K. Lane, Contributions to Economic Geology, Department of the Interior, Bulletin 621, Washington D. C., 1915.

<sup>9</sup> C. W. Tomlinson, Op. Cit., p. 37.

time pipe line companies entered the field to care for the great production. The Magnolia Pipe Line Company, the first pipe line in the Healdton field, extended a branch from Bowie, Texas to the new production, but the output was so great that the line was unable to handle all of the crude oil. Some operators placed their "black gold" in earthen reservoirs but this proved very unsatisfactory as the oil deteriorated. Others used steel storage tanks. During a thunder storm in 1914, several of these steel tanks were struck by lightning and a great quantity of the petroleum was destroyed.

The Ringling Railroad, a short branch road, was built from Ardmore, the county seat, to the new towns of Wilson and Ringling situated respectively southeast and south of the field.<sup>10</sup>

As a result of the discovery of oil in the western part of Carter County, several oil towns sprang up immediately. Wilson, a little to the southeast of the field, and Ringling, not far away, were two new oil towns. Healdton, an old settlement, grew rapidly. Wirt, an oil town west of Healdton, took its name from Wirt Franklin, the leader in the oil industry of Carter County, Oklahoma. However, many of the men engaged in the development of the Healdton field moved their families to Ardmore as the usual lawless element became conspicuous in the field. Consequently, Ardmore's population of 8,618 soared<sup>11</sup> to 14,000 within a few months after the great discovery.

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<sup>10</sup> Franklin K. Lane, Op. Cit.

<sup>11</sup> Chamber of Commerce Report, Ardmore, Oklahoma, 1929.



In June, 1914 there was over production and great waste in both the Healdton field and the field at Cushing, Oklahoma. There was also discrimination by the pipe lines between the producers in the taking of oil. Due to these conditions, which were harmful to the oil industry, the five oil and gas associations in Oklahoma organized and sought state legislation to prevent waste, to promote conservation of oil and gas, and to prevent discrimination in the purchase of oil and the taking of oil from a pool or a common source of supply.

Each of the five Oklahoma oil and gas associations named two representatives to a temporary organization which was known as the Advisory Board. The representatives of the Ardmore Oil Producers' Association, one of the five associations of the state, were Wirt Franklin and Edward Galt. Mr. Franklin was elected to represent the association before the state legislature and to lead a campaign for a law of conservation. Wirt Franklin, E. H. Moore, now of Tulsa, and C. B. Dutton, an attorney for the Bureau of Mines in Washington, D. C., were<sup>12</sup> the three men appointed to draft the conservation law.

Because of Mr. Franklin's efforts the first conservation law ever to be enacted in any state was passed by the Oklahoma legislature during the administration of Governor Robert L. Williams. It was under this law that proration and con-<sup>13</sup>servation were first enforced. The law remained on the statute books until the new oil code, under the National Re-

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<sup>12</sup> Reminiscences of Wirt Franklin, February 24, 1939.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

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covery Act, was formulated.

Two years after the discovery of oil in the Healdton field the Fox field in Carter County was discovered. Many companies were organized. Wirt Franklin and his associates, Samuel Apple, Edward Galt, and Roy Johnson, formed the Crystal Oil Company which was sold in 1916 for three million dollars.<sup>15</sup> During this same period in the history of Carter County, the Apple-Franklin Oil Company was organized. However, Wirt Franklin disposed of his interests in this company shortly after its organization, and he operated independently for ten years.

Although Wirt Franklin had attracted national attention by pioneering the oil industry in Carter County, he still performed the duties and privileges of a good citizen in his own community. During the World War, Mr. Franklin served as a very efficient chairman of the Liberty Loan Committee in his county. After the complete organization of the committee under his managership, Carter County met all its quotas in the Liberty Loan campaigns.

Along with these many duties Franklin continued as a leader in the oil industry in Carter County. When the Cameron Refining Company was organized in 1917, with John M. Cameron as president, the incorporators were Wirt Franklin, P. C. Dings, Roy M. Johnson, Ossian Cameron, and Edward Galt.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> This code was formulated in 1933.

<sup>15</sup> Reminiscences of Wirt Franklin, February 24, 1939.

<sup>16</sup> Reminiscences of Wirt Franklin, February 24, 1939.

As many markets were closed the producers in all the oil producing sections of the United States suffered greatly during the World War, and the fields of Carter County were no exception. The oil "slump" was evident as the production was retarded and the prices of crude oil were low. However, in 1917, the main part of the field was fully developed.<sup>17</sup>

The Wirt Franklin Petroleum Corporation was formed in 1927 with Wirt Franklin serving as its president during the corporation's entire existence.

In the decade, 1919 to 1929, much foreign oil was imported to the United States from Mexico and Venezuela. The importation of this foreign oil proved very detrimental to the oil industry of the United States. Because of the labor conditions in both Mexico and Venezuela, the foreign oil could be bought much cheaper than the domestic oil could be produced.

There was "much propaganda" circulated regarding the fear that oil reserves of the United States would soon be exhausted and that the people of the United States might find themselves at the mercy of some foreign power. Under this "false policy" it was advocated to save the supply within our own borders and to import foreign crude oil. Franklin recalls "some of the officials of the federal government were honestly convinced that the propaganda was true and President Coolidge, by executive decree ordered the Federal Oil Conservation Board which continued into the administration of

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<sup>17</sup> C. W. Tomlinson, Op. Cit., p. 38.



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President Hoover." Hoover called an oil Conservation Congress to meet June 10, 1929 at Colorado Springs, Colorado. The meeting was called through the chairman, M. L. Requa.

Wirt Franklin, along with several other Ardmoreites, attended the Conservation Congress in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Secretary of the Interior, Wilbur, addressed the congress on the conservation of oil and gas in the United States. While attending this special congress, Wirt Franklin of Ardmore, Oklahoma in a frank discussion of the plights of the independent producers argued, "Our safety lies in full development at all times. This is the Oil Age. Some day oil may be replaced just as coal has been. The trouble with the oil industry is not over production but over importation. This "so-called" conservation is only subterfuge".<sup>19</sup>

Immediately after his address at the congress, the independent oil operators attending the conference rallied around Wirt Franklin, and it was at this time that the Independent Petroleum Association of America was organized. The independent operators elected Wirt Franklin, the producer, the refiner, the marketer, and the head of his own ten million dollar Oklahoma corporation, as their first president.<sup>20</sup>

Under Franklin's enthusiastic and efficient leadership this new organization grew rapidly. When the association was only ten weeks old, more than one thousand independent

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<sup>18</sup> Reminiscences of Wirt Franklin, February 24, 1939.

<sup>19</sup> The Beacon, Wichita, Kansas, September 17, 1931.

<sup>20</sup> Independent Petroleum Association of America, Monthly, April, 1930.

operators had become members. "Born at Colorado Springs, fathered by the growing recognition that the independents had to have some means of expression, and mothered by the dissatisfaction of the independents with the trend of the so called conservation program fostered by Mark L. Requa, the Independent Petroleum Association of America has been heartily accepted in ten of the nineteen producing states of the union and has been rejected by none", Franklin declared in a meeting<sup>21</sup> in Kansas.

The two immediate major objectives of the Independent Petroleum Association of America were to procure a tariff on crude oil and to revoke the executive order Number 338 which threatened oil development in the Rocky Mountain states with ruin.<sup>22</sup>

During his presidency Wirt Franklin led the forces of the petroleum industry in the United States in the effort to secure an adequate tariff on imported crude petroleum and the products thereof. Franklin travelled to the nation's capital in 1930 to represent the Independent Petroleum Association of America in seeking the protective tariff on foreign petroleum and its by-products.

When Franklin was called before the senate lobby committee, he fearlessly stated, "When on January 28, 1930 the independent oil producers, refiners, and marketers met in convention at Tulsa, Oklahoma, for the purpose of seeking a remedy

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<sup>21</sup> Sunday Times-Democrat, Okmulgee, Oklahoma, Times, XI, No. 204, Democrat, XXIX, No. 204, August 25, 1930

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

to the conditions of ruin with which the immediate future confronts them, and there decided by unanimous action of some 1500 delegates assembled from the various oil producing states, that our hope of redress lay in presenting the merits of our cause to the Congress of the United States, the only power on earth which could relieve our distressful condition, we were of the opinion that the Bill of Rights and the Constitution of the United States were still effective and might be relied upon, at least, to the extent of allowing us the right and privilege of petitioning Congress for a redress of our wrongs. The domestic industry has grown to such proportions and its purchases of materials and supplies are of such magnitude that anything which tends to destroy that industry will injure and seriously affect not only the oil producing states, but the entire country including the farmers and landowners who, as owners of royalty interests, receive one-<sup>23</sup> eighth of the entire production of oil."

Although the independent oil producers met with failure in 1930, Franklin continued to lead the fight against foreign oil in every session of Congress from 1930 to 1932. His unceasing efforts culminated in partial success by the enactment as a part of the Revenue Bill of 1932 of a tax of twenty-one cents a barrel on imported fuel, crude and gas oil, and all other liquid derivatives of crude petroleum except gasoline or other motor fuel and lubricating oil. There

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<sup>23</sup> Western World, Fort Worth, Texas, X, No. 4, p. 1, March 29, 1930.



was also a tax of two and one-half cents per gallon on imported gasoline and a tax of one cent per pound on paraffin<sup>24</sup> or petroleum wax. This effort also resulted in the limitations of foreign imports to approximately four and one-half per cent of the domestic production or about 108,000 barrels per day, which was approximately one-third of the former imports.

Realizing the great value to the entire state of Oklahoma of Mr. Franklin's results in the long fight against foreign oil, his fellow citizens in both Carter County and the state of Oklahoma honored him and paid high tribute to one who had fought diligently against legislation which he believed to be unjust.

Mr. Franklin was a delegate to the Republican National Convention and a member of the Resolutions Committee in that convention in 1932. Determined to see the oil industry of America progress, he led a strenuous fight at this convention, which was held in Chicago, Illinois, and he did formulate a plank in the Republican Platform which read, "We favor the extension of the general Republican principle of tariff protection to our natural resource industries, including the products of our farms, forests, mines, and oil wells, with the compensatory duties on the manufactured and refined products thereof."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Revenue Bill of 1932.

<sup>25</sup> Republican Party Platform of 1932.

In 1932 Mr. Franklin was the Republican candidate for the United States Senator in Oklahoma, but he was defeated in the Democratic landslide of that year.<sup>26</sup>

Representing the petroleum industry, Mr. Franklin finally won his enemies and became the choice of both the major and independent oil companies as the first chairman of the Planning and Coordination Committee under the petroleum code of 1933. This committee, working in Washington, D. C., formulated policies for the oil industry under the National Recovery Act petroleum code.<sup>27</sup>

After a long term of strenuous struggle in behalf of the independent oil industry of America, Wirt Franklin resigned from the presidency of the Independent Petroleum Association of America in November, 1935.<sup>28</sup> Although he continued to work diligently in the association, he retired to recuperate from a slight break in his health.

Mr. Franklin was a delegate to the Republican National Convention which was held in Cleveland, Ohio in June, 1936.

In 1937 Mr. Franklin disposed of his interests in the Wirt Franklin Petroleum Corporation. The Wirt Franklin Refinery, northeast of Ardmore that had not been operated for two years, was purchased by Hansen<sup>29</sup> who retained the name Franklin, as the name is very prominent throughout the entire

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<sup>26</sup> The Daily Oklahoman, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, November 1, 1936.

<sup>27</sup> Chicago Daily Tribune, Chicago, Illinois, November 30, 1937.

<sup>28</sup> East Texas, Monthly, November, 1935, p. 7.

<sup>29</sup> Reminiscences of Wirt Franklin, February 24, 1939.

Southwest, and today the plant is known as the Ben Franklin Refining Company of Ardmore, Oklahoma.

Wirt Franklin's innumerable deeds of kindness and thoughtfulness distinguish him as one of the most generous of all Oklahomans. His philanthropic interests that have touched many lives are typical of this great leader's true character. Carter County can well praise the worth work, sincere efforts, and valuable achievements of Wirt Franklin.

Mr. Franklin is a member of the First Presbyterian Church of Ardmore. However, many religious organizations in the city have received financial assistance from him.

Mr. Franklin, who has been an active participant in many civic organizations of Ardmore, was a charter member of the Lions Club and served as the first president of that organization. Golf and fishing are his hobbies.

Although Mr. Franklin has spent much time in both the Oklahoma state capital and in Washington, D. C., he has always maintained his residence in Ardmore, Oklahoma. His attractive home is located just east of the Dornick Hills Country Club. At the present time his father, John Henry Franklin, his sister, Mrs. Mabel Ocker, and two adopted daughters reside with him.

Oil wells and refineries are not the big things about Wirt Franklin. People who know him know that the material wealth of this man is not his greatest asset. "His fighting spirit, his high calibre as a citizen, and his loyalty to his home state, his home town and the things that he believes are right would have made Mr. Franklin a big man regardless of



what industry or profession might have turned his hand.

The nation needs more men like Wirt Franklin", <sup>30</sup> a man who has character, courage, strength, and eternal optimism.

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<sup>30</sup> The Daily Ardmoreite, Ardmore, Oklahoma, XXIX, No. 117, March 12, 1932.

## CHAPTER VII

## CONCLUSIONS

The history of Carter County reflects the development of its individual citizens. Each of the six about whom this study is concerned has contributed definitely to the constructive growth of the county. The six pioneers are Walter Hardy, Michael Gorman, John H. Carlock, George W. Coffman, Charles Christian Weith, and Wirt Franklin.

As the lives of these six pioneers are reviewed, many outstanding events in the history of the county are revealed.

When Walter Hardy arrived in Ardmore, Indian Territory in 1887, a few whites had established their homes in the Chickasaw Nation. At this time Ardmore was located in Pickens County, Indian Territory and there was no post office in the village. Lone Grove, Oklahoma, a small community eight miles west of Ardmore, had a post office in 1887.

The capitol of the Chickasaw Nation was located at Tishomingo, Indian Territory. The territorial governor, William M. Guy, became so alarmed at the strife between the Indians and the whites that he sent word to Washington that the Indians were being exterminated. Troops which headquartered for several weeks at the Douglas Ranch south of Ardmore, were sent from Fort Sill at Guy's request.

By 1887 the Santa Fe Railroad company had extended its line as far north as Ardmore, a name that was given by an

employee of the railroad company who had lived in Ardmore, Pennsylvania.

The first white settlers in Ardmore followed an agricultural, rural existence as much of the land was very productive. Cotton was the principal product of this section and the farmers within a radius of fifty miles brought the cotton to market in Ardmore which, in 1894, was the largest inland cotton market of the entire world.

Many criminals sought refuge in the Indian Territory between the Arbuckle Mountains and the Red River. Following a bank robbery at Longview, Texas, Bill Dalton of the famous Dalton gang was in a hideout some twenty miles northwest of Ardmore when he was killed and brought to Ardmore by Los Hart, an officer who shared in the reward of \$25,000.

In the territorial days a federal jail which was nothing more than a low frame building surrounded by a picket fence was located in Ardmore on Main Street between A and B Streets. Captain J. S. Hammer appointed Michael Gorman as jailer.

The small town of Ardmore progressed rapidly from 1887 to 1895 when its first tragedy occurred. In 1895, eighty buildings, practically all of Ardmore's business district, were destroyed by fire. No lives were lost, however, and many pioneers contend that the "tragedy" proved to be a blessing as the new Ardmore was much superior to the old. The first brick and stone buildings were erected following the fire.

On April 16, 1898 an order was handed down by Judge Hosea Townsend of the federal district court decreeing that the town



of Ardmore be incorporated as a city of second class. The first group of city officials consisted of John L. Galt, mayor; C. P. Van Denberg, A. J. Wolverton, W. T. Gardner, Mike Gorman, A. M. Burch, aldermen; Jack Scanlon, treasurer; W. M. Green, assessor and collector; J. C. Graham, city attorney.

On December 14, 1899 Ardmore was incorporated as a city of first class being under the mayor and aldermanic form of government.

The Hardy-McNees Hospital had its origin in 1899 when Doctor Walter Hardy and Doctor J. C. McNees, realizing Ardmore's great need for such service, formed a partnership. This institution was the first hospital between Oklahoma City, Oklahoma and Fort Worth, Texas.

Several agents in the employment of the Dawes Commission established their homes in Ardmore and remained as permanent citizens even after 1905 when the allotment of land in the Indian Territory was virtually completed. John H. Carlock, an agent of this commission, maintained his residence in Ardmore, and he has contributed much to the moral and political progress of the county.

When Oklahoma became a state in 1907, a portion of Pickens County, Indian Territory was renamed Carter County in honor of Ben Carter, a prominent Indian of the Chickasaw Nation. Ardmore became the seat of the new Carter County, Oklahoma.

In 1909 Ardmore's aldermanic form of government was changed to the commission form of government.

Cattle and cotton had been the chief means of livelihood in Carter County until the discovery of oil in the Healdton field which is thirty miles west of Ardmore, the county seat.

Wirt Franklin, who had been in Ardmore since statehood, had purchased some land in the western part of the county. Franklin and his companions, Roy M. Johnson and Edward Galt, convinced of the petroleum possibilities of southern Oklahoma, persuaded J. M. Critchlow of Titusville, Pennsylvania to drill a test well on Franklin's farm. Oil was discovered on August 13, 1913 when the well had been drilled to a depth of only 920 feet. Although the daily production of this initial well was only twenty-five barrels, much excitement prevailed throughout the entire state. Because of the oil discovery, many fortunes have been made in Carter County.

Realizing the hazardous conditions of the early oil fields and need for immediate hospitalization, Doctor Walter Hardy established the first airplane ambulance service in the entire state.

In 1914 there was an over production and great waste in both the Healdton field and the field at Cushing, Oklahoma. Because of these conditions which were harmful to the oil industry, the five oil and gas associations in Oklahoma organized and sought state legislation to promote conservation of oil and gas and to prevent discrimination in the purchase of oil by the pipe lines. Wirt Franklin, E. H. Moore, now of Tulsa, and C. B. Dutton, an attorney for the Bureau of Mines, in Washington, D. C. were the three men appointed to

draft the conservation law. Because of Mr. Franklin's efforts, the first conservation law ever to be enacted in any state was passed by the Oklahoma legislature during the administration of Governor Robert L. Williams. It was under this law that proration and conservation were first enforced. The law remained on the statute books until the new oil code was formulated under the National Recovery Act.

On the afternoon of September 27, 1915, Ardmore's second tragedy occurred when a tank of high gravity gasoline exploded in the Santa Fe yards. Forty-six lives were lost immediately and literally hundreds suffered from mental shock. The second unit of the present Hardy Sanitarium had been completely equipped only a few days before the explosion and hospitalization was available to all. Doctor Hardy's service to Ardmore has been immeasurable.

Carter County, under the efficient leadership of J. R. Gilliam, Chairman of the Council of Defense, contributed its part in the winning of the World War. Many citizens constantly gave of their time and effort and Carter County met every quota after the county was completely organized.

John H. Carlock, Walter Hardy, and John L. Galt served as members of the local exemption board, while Wirt Franklin was chairman of the Liberty Loans committee. Many of the war drives and campaigns were organized through the office of the County Superintendent of Public Instruction. George W. Coffman, who was County Superintendent of Public Instruction during the World War, supervised the sixty-two districts of the county.



Coffman resigned his position as superintendent of county schools to accept the principalship of Jefferson School, an elementary school of Ardmore. Other elementary schools were Franklin, Washington, and Lincoln. The high school was located at its present site.

When John H. Carlock accepted his appointment as postmaster of the Ardmore office, Ardmore had no rural free delivery of mail. Realizing the advantages of such service to both Ardmore and the surrounding territory, Carlock exerted such efforts as to secure this federal service.

Long before Ardmore could boast of her modern broadcasting station, Doctor Walter Hardy travelled to New Orleans, Louisiana and secured a permit number for his 2500 watt broadcasting station. Thus, Ardmore's first broadcasting radio station was operated in the Hardy Sanitarium.

Since the discovery of oil in Carter County, the usual lawless element had become conspicuous, a fact which the pioneers and permanent citizens deeply resented. Doctor Charles Christian Weith, who had always stood firmly on moral issues, assumed the leadership against this rough faction in a bitter struggle in 1921. Weith, accompanied by a large committee of Ardmoreites, went to Oklahoma City and called on the governor, J. B. A. Robertson, for assistance in their fight against vice and the governor pledged his cooperation. The result of the fight was the ousting of Buck Garrett, the county sheriff. Ewing London was appointed to this vacancy by the county commissioners in March, 1922.

In June, 1929 when President Hoover called a Conservation Congress, Wirt Franklin, a citizen of Carter County, attended that meeting which was held in Colorado Springs, Colorado. It was at this meeting when the independent operators rallied round Wirt Franklin that the Independent Petroleum Association of America was organized with Franklin as its first president. During his presidency, Franklin's principal efforts in Washington, D. C. were toward seeking the protective tariff on foreign petroleum. He met with partial success by the enactment of a tax of twenty-one cents a barrel on imported fuel as part of the Revenue Bill of 1932.

Again, in 1932, Franklin of Carter County gained national recognition in formulating a plank in the Republican Party platform of 1932 which favored the extension of the general Republican principle of tariff protection to natural resources. Franklin has not only been a pioneer in the development of the oil industry of Carter County, but he has led national fights in the United States Senate to gain protection against foreign oil.

Pioneers of determined, constructive purpose are necessary in the building of every frontier. It is through such men that advancement and progress become visible. It is through these six hardy pioneer citizens and many others that a small village in the Indian Territory before the beginning of the twentieth century has weathered the storms of crude beginnings, boom developments, lawless periods, and deeper tragedy to become a city of 16,000 population and the trade center of not only Carter County but of all Southern Oklahoma.

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