

A HISTORY OF THE "EMPIRE OF GREER"

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To My Mother

Katie E. Barnett

An Old Greer County Pioneer

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James A. Barnett

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INTRODUCTION

The Empire of Greer, a fertile region of important commercial centers and progressive communities, has a history peculiar to itself. No other American territory has the same romantic record of discovery, exploration, settlement, and jurisdictional conflict.¹

Located in the southwestern corner of Oklahoma, this territory contains about 1,500,000 acres, the extreme length being ninety miles and the average width nearly seventy miles. Greer County lies between the two forks of the Red River; it is bounded on the north by the North Fork, and on the south by the Prairie Dog Town Fork, since declared to be the main stream. The one hundredth meridian forms the western boundary, while the union of the two forks of the Red River constitutes the eastern point of the area. The territory so embraced contains over 2,000 square miles. Greer County then embraced the present counties of Greer, Jackson, Harmon, and that portion of Beckham County lying south of the North Fork of Red River.²

That portion of American History peculiar to Greer County begins with the Louisiana Purchase of 1803 and later includes the boundary treaty of 1821 between the United States and Spain. From that time until the Supreme Court

¹ The Mangum Daily Star, Oct. 13, 1938.

² Emma Estill Harbour, Greer County, in Chronicles of Oklahoma, XII, p. 145.

of the United States decided on March 16, 1896, that Greer County belonged to the United States as a part of Oklahoma Territory and was not included within the jurisdictional limits of the State of Texas, there were numerous incidents and official actions which affected only Greer County and which made its history unique.³

During the ninety-three-year period which elapsed between the Louisiana Purchase date and the historic Supreme Court decision of 1896, Greer County, while in fact a part of the Indian Territory as a portion of the Louisiana Purchase, was claimed by Spain, the United Mexican States, the Republic of Texas, and the State of Texas. As de facto a portion of Texas, it seceded from the United States and went under the flag of the Confederacy.⁴

As a legal portion of the Indian Territory, it was once ceded by the United States government to the Choctaw Indians and later to the Choctaw and Chickasaw Indians jointly. Forty-five years later, the Choctaw and Chickasaw Indian nations ceded the territory back to the United States.

During the ninety-three years which intervened between the Louisiana Purchase and the final determination of Greer County's jurisdictional status, a controversy existed between the United States and Mexico, the Republic of Texas,

³ Grant Foreman, The Daily Oklahoman, Nov. 25, 1934.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ The Mangum Daily Star, June, 1932.

and the State of Texas over the boundary between the United States and the above-mentioned states. Numerous treaties and conventions were entered into and several efforts were made to settle the controversy by arbitration. Several surveys were made, in some of which grave errors occurred.⁶

During the time the jurisdictional controversy existed, Greer County was created and later organized as a county of the State of Texas, and carried on a de facto government under the jurisdiction of Texas for almost ten years.⁷

Greer County was for many years the grazing ground of great buffalo herds and a hunting ground for the plains Indians, especially the Wichitas, Comanches, and Kiowas, who lived on the western prairies and believed this to be their land.⁸

After the Civil War the cattlemen of Texas began to seek new ranges for their stock, and by 1880 they had located on the grazing land of Greer County. Ranchmen took a great amount of land, and beef contractors kept their herds here. In Texas the Day Land and Cattle Company bought up land certificates issued by the state to veterans of the Texas War of Independence (1836), and for these certificates on March 28, 1884, there was allotted to the company 144,640

⁶ J. O. Tuton, Personal Interview with, Mangum, Oklahoma Feb. 5, 1938.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Harbour, op. cit., p. 145.

acres of land in Greer County. Under the act of March 15, 1881, a suit was instituted against the company to cancel the patents on the ground that the land in Greer County was not public domain.⁹ In 1884 the Federal government took cognizance of the presence of the ranchmen and herders, and President Arthur issued a proclamation warning them against trespassing. In 1885 troops were sent out from Fort Sill to expel the intruders from Greer County. Lieutenant C. J. Crane reported the presence of not more than ten families and 60,000 head of cattle belonging to seven or eight firms, requiring the services of as many as one hundred men.¹⁰

For the next four years settlers came to the county from all parts of the United States but mostly from Texas. In 1888 the government of the United States again warned against trespassing. The settlers paid no attention to the proclamation, for they felt that the Texas authorities would protect them. Greer County was created as a county of Texas on February 8, 1860. The legislature of Texas on February 25, 1879, had appropriated money for schools even though ownership was disputed by the United States.¹¹

The controversy concerning the status of Greer County was carried on between the Federal government and Texas for

⁹ 68 Texas Reports, Day Company v. The State, pp. 528, 529.

¹⁰ Supreme Court of the United States v. The State of Texas, I, p. 151.

¹¹ Sayles' Early Laws of Texas, Article 2886.

many years.¹² Both Texas and the United States claimed title to the area in dispute under the terms of the treaty of February 22, 1819, between Spain and the United States.¹³

Testimony in the Greer County case, which is known as *United States v. Texas*, was taken in 1894. The case was argued before the Supreme Court on October 23, 24, and 25, 1895, and the decision was handed down five months later (March 16, 1896).¹⁴ By this decision the south fork of Red River was declared the boundary line and Greer County became a part of Oklahoma.¹⁵

¹² Compiled Oklahoma Statutes, 1921, I, p. 49.

¹³ 8 Statutes at Large, pp. 252, 254, 256.

¹⁴ J. B. Thoburn, History of Oklahoma, II, pp. 559-560.

A HISTORY OF THE "EMPIRE OF GREER"

CHAPTER I. EARLY HISTORY

First Inhabitants

Greer County was once inhabited by prehistoric races, of which modern historians and scientists know but little.

Flint implements and weapons with the distinguishing trade mark of the Paleolithic man picked up at various points in Greer County seem to indicate that many centuries ago, even before the first history was written, these people roamed the prairies of what later became Greer County.

Remoteness of these Paleolithic artifacts is determined by the crudeness of their construction. Nodules of flint were broken by crude methods of hammering with other stones, and from the slivers obtained by breaking the larger stones crudely shaped arrowheads, spear-points, hatchets, hammers, and other weapons were fashioned by slow and laborious processes.¹

The much newer Neolithic artifacts, also found in Greer County, were manufactured by improved processes, including grinding, to perfect smoothness of hammers and war clubs, and the shaping of arrowheads, spear-points, drills, and numerous other weapons and tools with artistry and precision.²

¹ Tuton, op. cit.

² The Mangum Daily Star, Oct. 13, 1937.

Elephants and other huge animals once had their homes in this region. Occasionally a tusk, a tooth, or a giant bone is found in a sandbed or gravel pit in Greer county to reaffirm the fact that giant animals once roamed the hills and prairies of this region. Several years ago, two well preserved elephant tusks were found in a sandpit a mile east of Mangu. They were presented to the department of paleontology at the University of Oklahoma. Numerous other pieces of tusks and teeth and fragments of elephant bone have been found in the county. The most important of such discoveries was made at the site of an ancient spring a few miles northwest of Eldorado, where excavators representing the University of Oklahoma uncovered the skeletons of thirty elephants.³

The history of the elephant and the Paleolithic man is written only in the bones and artifacts that are occasionally found. The first inhabitants of whom there is written record were the buffalo and the American Indian.

The first Indians in this section of whom there is a written history were the people whom the Spaniards called the Jumanas and who called themselves the Kidi-ki-tashe, who were sometimes known as the Pawnee-Picts, and in later years became known as the Wichitas. They had well established settlements, engaged in farming and trading,⁴ and were

³ The Mangum Daily Star, June 2, 1932.

⁴ Grant Foreman, Adventures on Red River, p. 142.

among the most intelligent of Indian tribes.

The Querechos, the Wuerecjo, the Tejas, and numerous other tribes grazed, hunted, and fought in this section four hundred years ago.⁵

A century ago Greer County and adjacent territory was used by the Wichitas, Keechis, Comanches, Kiowas, Lipans, and a few other tribes, the Comanches being the chief tribe which grazed and hunted there. They frequently stayed in this section for long periods of time.

The Wichitas probably were the only Indians who had established settlements in this section for any long period of time, for they spent several centuries in and near Greer County. They engaged in farming, and some relics of their agricultural ventures are found occasionally in eastern Greer County and across North Fork River in Kiowa County, where their great villages were located.

The Indians' method of preserving their history is to hand it down by word of mouth. The history of the Wichita Indian village in what is now known as Devil's Canyon is of importance to Greer County history because the Wichitas farmed and hunted in what later became Greer County.⁶

The great village at the mouth of Devil's Canyon was called Kidi-ki-tashe. The mountains in which the village

⁵ Tuton, op. cit.

⁶ The Mangum Daily Star, October 13, 1937.

was located were known by the Indians as Kates-ho-ko-tuck, while the river (North Fork) on whose banks the village was located and across which the Indians passed to hunt and farm in Greer County was called Kah-hets-sodias.⁷

Ta-Wak-O-Nee Jim, a chief of the Wichitas fifty years ago, was familiar with the history of his people. Here is the history of the Wichita village as he related it:

There were two villages near the river Kah-het-sodias. The two villages that I speak of - it has been five hundred years ago or a little over since that village was established that I know of. I know it from history. You white people have the history of what happened in the past. That is the way we have it now. As I was told by old men and women, and that is the history today yet. This refers to both villages.

The mountain lies on the east and west, so that the villages were on the east and west side both, and on the level we had crops planted around the mountain all the way to the river. That is the way the situation was. We raised sweet corn and pumpkins, watermelons, tobacco, and young squashes - beans on our cultivated land. I will give you an account of that village and the way we used to live as it was told to me. The people used to dig out the ground, if they wanted, about three feet or five feet or four feet, however they want to. The houses like this room, if they wanted the room that big or a little smaller they always put the posts on each corner and then one in the center and one on the opposite way in the same way; set big cedar posts all the way around as support. When he gets that built he puts a big cedar log that will lay across from one post to another, and from that make a house. After we set those heavy cedar posts we put other small timber around it to make it stout. After that is done, we put dirt all around it, and in the center there is a hole to let the smoke go out. We built these houses as a protection from the enemies, as a protection against other Indians that we were not friendly with. Sometimes the Indians would come and

⁷ Ibid.

try to surround us, and we would put our children in there to protect them. The houses we built in those old villages were a protection. There may be white men today who will say that was a cave, but it was not a cave. That was the old protection of ours when the Indians were fighting Indians. That is the old village of ours that some white people when they see it might call it a cave, but it was not a cave. The cave in the mountains nobody made. It was made by Almighty God. The villages were made by our own hands, but the cave was made by Almighty God. When there was a fight between the other Indians and ourselves, when our people were wounded seriously, they went away to these tepees we had built; they - so seriously they died inside these tepees, and there is no doubt today the bones are left there yet in those tepees.

Sometimes would come a disease among the people, speaking of our people, bad, disease, such as smallpox - the most dangerous in the world - would come among them and Indians would get the smallpox, and, on account of the danger of death, the Indians would take their people in those caves that the Almighty God made and leave them there and there they would die. Those are the bones that are in those caves. There is another object that the white people might find in that old village. If he sees it and finds it he might think it was a well for some Mexicans that lived in that village; but it is not a well. Sometimes it is about that big - seven feet; or sometimes a person will stand up and hold up in his hand and yet it will be over his head. The mouth of the surface was a small hole and down inside it was quite a room, the side of a cistern. I have hands to work with as I told you. When we planted those corn and things, in the summer, when the corn is ripe, we harvest and gather the crop, and in the fall, when buffaloes are plenty and we wanted to go and hunt buffalo, we would put the shelled corn in our sacks or other things that was necessary for winter use - we would put that inside of that place we called a cistern. When we had put as much as we wanted to put in there for winter, then we would cover it up so that if any person went there it could not be found. What the white people saw about those caves and those villages - they are villages and we have made ourselves, and those holes that the white people call cisterns that is the holes we made that I have spoken of. The tongue I am speaking with and the brains I have - I want you to know what it is the truth. I want you to know what the white people say about that being a Spanish or Mexican village, it is not. It was the Kidi-ki-tashe village, and God Almighty knows it.

There is another article that was found in that

village - earthly ware - which the white people think the Mexicans or the Spanish made that; but it is not. The hands of our tribe made that. That earthly ware I am speaking of that we used to make, we used to get dirt that always sticks fast and then we would get a lime or something like an oyster shell from around the rivers and then we would mix these four things together, and after that we would make whatever we wanted to, a pan or a plate or an axe, or a bucket to cook with. I have told you that we also planted tobacco and raised it and used it to smoke. We made stone or clay pipes of our own; sometimes we got stone just fit to make a pipe. We would take that stone and then get another stone, a hard stone, and sharpen it and then cut what the little boys used to make a pop-gun for a handle for the pipe to let the smoke come out - elder stem. There is no doubt that the white people had found a pipe that is genuine stone. Another object that they might find in those old villages among the timbers they may be found a stump that they might say looked funny to them; how we used to cut the trees down. The Kidi-ki-tashe used to make those clays for an axe, and when they would go and chop down the trees they would not chop at one side and then go on the other side and chop it on the other side, but they always chopped around and around it, so that it would be right in the center; that is the way we used to cut with those clay axes, and not on the two opposite sides as the white people do. What I have told you now, as I have said before, it has been about five hundred years or more that they chopped that way. What I am going to say now is of the present time about the axe. After so long there was time when the Kidi-ki-tashe went to travel and visit their brothers where the Mexicans live; when they went there and got to the place where the Mexicans live; and way beyond, and bought an axe and a gun and came back - this is maybe about three hundred years ago or more; maybe now at the present likely, there is a white people that found that stump in that forest that is cut like a Mexican that would cut with an axe - the Kidi-ki-tashe cut that tree after they received the axe from the Mexicans. Some of those stumps are there maybe yet. Not the Spaniards or Mexicans cut them trees, but the Kidi-ki-tashe what lived there did.

Maybe you have found a solid rock that is circular, round. In the center there is a hole like. Maybe there is another stone, about so long - some long and some short (Measuring about eight inches on his arm first and saying some short and some long). Maybe you have found those rocks, and, likely, maybe you say the Mexicans used it, not the Kidi-ki-tashe,

but the Kidi-ki-tashe used that for some purpose. When a gun is spoiled and cannot be used for any purpose for to benefit him any more, can't mend them, they will get the strong young men among our people and they go and get that rock and another rock and set around it and stand the gun on that rock, and then one man will pound it first and then another until they get the iron, until a man gets tired. When one man gets tired another will start. When it goes around - when their own part - suits them - there is another thing they used it for among the Kidi-ki-tashe; after the gun is spoiled, when they made that iron for another thing; they would use that iron for to make those spears; that is what they used to make on those big rocks.

Also a knife, when it is worthless and can't be used anymore, they will do the same work. Men get around it and one man will get hold of the handle and lay the blade of the knife on the rock and one man will pound it away and then they will use those pieces as spears. No doubt there are some irons on the ground that look like scissors, but the Kidi-ki-tashe made those things and not the Spanish or Mexicans. There is another stone maybe you have seen - that place; another rock about that long - two feet long and ten or twelve inches wide, twelve inches wide - and another one about eight inches long. These rocks are a kind of hollow. At that time those Kidi-ki-tashe used to use that for the purpose of grinding their corn to make flour like what you have your mill for. They would get on their knees and get their other stone and push it forward and then grind the corn in this little hollow; that is the way the Kidi-ki-tashe used to make their corn for their bread.

Also, maybe you have found a chicken like we have here among those villages and those mountains. You think these Kidi-ki-tashe did not have any chickens like that, and that it was chickens that the Mexicans and Spaniards had put there, but it is not so, because long time ago, as I have said, when I went away over yonder where we want to visit the Mexicans, we brought the chickens and bring them there; then, when we left there to go to someplace other, we left the chickens there and they got so wild so they could fly; and that was not the Mexicans or the Spaniards; that chickens belonged to the Kidi-ki-tashe.⁸

⁸ Ta-Wak-O-Nee Jim, Testimony of, U. S. v. Texas, I, pp. 633-644.

The site of Kidi-ki-tashe, the ancient village of the Wichitas, is easily located at the mouth of Devil's Canyon. Many metate rocks, arrowheads, spear-heads, beads, tomahawks, pipes, and other relics of the Wichitas have been found there. Mr. and Mrs. Lee Winters, whose farm covers the old village site, have gathered a large collection of Indian relics.

Unquestionably, the Kidi-ki-tashe, or Wichitas, did their hunting in Greer County, for the level prairies west of the Kah-hets-sodias (North Fork of Red River) was good hunting territory and the most easily accessible of any buffalo hunting grounds.⁹

Since the Indian village lay only a few hundred yards from Greer County, it is certain that the Mexican priests, soldiers, and traders who visited the Indians traversed Greer County and probably camped in it at times.¹⁰ The Spanish probably remained in the Wichita mountains for more than a century.¹¹

Brevel, a French Creole trader from Louisiana, visited the Wichita mountains in company with the Caddo Indians in 1760. He reported that the Spaniards were engaged in mining operations in the Wichita mountains at that time. Spanish

⁹ A. B. Thomas, Spanish Explorations in Oklahoma, p. 42.

¹⁰ Grant Foreman, Red River and Spanish Boundaries, Chronicles of Oklahoma, II, September, 1924.

¹¹ Ibid.

priests also still remained and maintained missions among the Indians in that region during this period.¹²

In Devil's Canyon, there are some rocks placed like the foundation stones of a house, and it is believed that they were the foundation stones of a Spanish mission. The stones, according to the late N. J. McElroy, who saw them in 1868, and Lee Winters, who saw them about forty years ago, are now in the same position they were in when first discovered by these witnesses.¹³

A tree which still stands on the banks of the creek which runs through Devil's Canyon bears marks, unquestionably made by carving, of two Spanish sombreros, and a log nearby has a "climbing turtle" carved on it. There is a tradition among the older Comanche Indians that the carving was done by Spaniards or Mexicans.¹⁴

There is some evidence, based on the testimony of some of the first white men to visit this section, that the Spaniards established a road from Natchitoches, Louisiana, to Santa Fe, New Mexico, which ran along the North Fork of Red River.¹⁵ Simon N. Cockrell testified in 1893, when he was ninety-three years old, that he was in Greer County in

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Lee Winters, Personal Interview with, Lonewolf, Oklahoma, March 14, 1938.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ G. W. Briggs, Personal Interview with, Granite, Oklahoma, August 10, 1937.

1833 and that he saw an old road which he was told ran from Natchitoches to Santa Fe.¹⁶ The venerable old man, who was a soldier in General Sam Houston's army in 1836, testified that he saw Spanish miners in the Wichita mountains and a Spanish sheep ranch on the west side of North Fork River, in what later became Greer County.

I am tolerably well acquainted with a part of Red River and first came to know it in 1833. (In mentioning Red River he referred to the North Fork of that stream.) We struck it, I suppose, a very short distance below the mouth of the river some call Prairie Dog River and some call Dog River. We built a fort. I was with Allen Coffee and Silas Colville and French. We got there in May. We remained there from that time until February, 1836, that is, I did. I then left the others there and went to General Houston's army.

There was twenty-five of us at first, but only seven stayed, as the balance went back with the wagons. There was a trader that travelled up as far as the Kiowa village at that time, and there he cached everything and found that he could go no further, and one of his men carried us to the cache and we opened it and found the alcohol and traps ruined - beaver traps they were. His name (the guide to the cache) was William Bean.¹⁷

Doubtless Mr. Cockrell was mistaken as to the tribe of Indians whose village he visited. It must have been the Wichita village he saw instead of a Kiowa village.¹⁸ The village was in

a canyon or gulch, whatever you may call it, with water in it and a cave all around from one end to

¹⁶ Simon Cockrell, Testimony of, United States v. Texas, II, pp. 1347-1356.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Tuton, op. cit.

to the other, which was their village when they were in it.

The road continued on up the river past that pretty valley, which went to Santa Fe, they said to Nacogdoches and Nacitosh.

Mr. Cockrell testified that he hunted up North Fork River, which he called Red River, from May, 1833, to February, 1836, for meat to feed the men. He described the country and the people he saw.

It was generally tolerably level, but very brushy, with right smart water at the foot of the hills, going into lakes in several places for the first ten miles, and then there were several small creeks come in - come out of the ridges and went into Red River - and the land became narrow between the river and the ridges, and at the distance of somewhere there were people living called Spaniards. They were miners by profession.

On the opposite side above there, probably five miles, there was a sheep ranch. I was there since, and the chimneys had all fallen down. This road that ran up the river to Santa Fe ran right up by the village, but when I was back again they were all gone; no one was there. The valley on the northeast side of the river was very beautiful and stretches out from a mile to a mile and a quarter, but the banks on the other side of the river was so high that I could not see any valley for the banks and the brush.

It was said to be in the Wichita mountains where the Spaniards were mining.¹⁹

Treaties

In 1763 the territory of Louisiana was transferred from France to Spain by the Treaty of Paris, and in 1800 it was restored to France. In 1803 it was acquired by the

¹⁹ Cockrell, op. cit.

United States; but the treaty made in Paris in 1803²⁰ simply stated that France ceded the Province of Louisiana with the same extent of territory that was in the possession of Spain when she ceded it to France. Texas was not included in the purchase; and the boundary lines between Jefferson's Louisiana Purchase and Texas, then a province of Spain, is the present boundary line between Texas and Oklahoma. In the course of negotiations after Louisiana was purchased from France, the Americans expressed the desire that the boundary line be definitely and accurately described. Napoleon and his advisers took up this point, and Napoleon is reported to have said, "If an obscurity does not already exist, it would, perhaps, be a good policy to put one there."²¹ Napoleon's suggestion was carried out quite successfully, if we may judge from the number of obscurities that have come to light. The Greer County case is a good illustration.

Plans made by France and the United States to survey the boundary line between Louisiana and the western territory were not carried out; but after the Congress of Vienna and the retrocession to Spain, the United States made another effort to have this line drawn definitely.²²

As Spain laid claim to this territory, the United States

²⁰ T. M. Marshall, History of the Western Boundary of the Louisiana Purchase, p. 8.

²¹ Ibid., p. 18.

²² Ibid., p. 66.

had to make several proposals to Spain before they came to an understanding. John Quincy Adams took up the task and carried it to a successful conclusion. After much diplomatic correspondence between the Spanish minister, Don Louis De Onis, and the American Secretary of State, John Quincy Adams, and after many proposals and rejections were made by both countries,²³ the negotiations were closed in 1818. They were resumed on February 11, 1819. The Spanish minister urged Adams to accept the Arkansas River instead of the Red River as the boundary.²⁴ In reply Adams made his last proposition²⁵ to the Spanish minister, which ultimately resulted in ratification of a treaty on February 19, 1821. Moreover, by Treaty of Aquala, in 1821, Mexico was recognized by Spain as an independent state.²⁶

Both Texas and the United States based their claim to the area in dispute under the terms of the treaty of February 22, 1819, ratified February 19, 1821, between Spain and the United States, so it is necessary to understand the boundary as agreed upon by Adams and De Onis:

The boundary line between the two countries west of the Mississippi shall begin in the Gulf of Mexico at the mouth of the river Sabine, in the sea; con-

²³ Annals of Congress, 15 Congress, 2 Session (1817-18), pp. 1819-1900.

²⁴ Ibid., pp. 2111-2112.

²⁵ Ibid., 16 Congress, 2 Session, pp. 2120, 2121, 2123.

²⁶ El Reno Democrat, April 5, 1894.

tinuing north along the western bank of that river to the thirty-second degree of latitude; thence by a line due north to the degree of latitude where it strikes the Rio Roxo westward to the degree of longitude one hundred west from London and twenty-three from Washington; then crossing the said Red River and running thence by a line due north to the river Arkansas; the Arkansas to its source in latitude forty-two degrees north, and thence by that parallel to the South Sea. The whole being as laid down in the Melish map.²⁷ But if the source of the Arkansas River shall be found to fall north or south of the latitude forty-two degrees, then the line shall run from the said source due south or north, as the case may be, till it meets the said parallel of latitude of forty-two degrees; thence along the said parallel to the South Sea.²⁸

The treaty also provided:

To fix this line with more precision and to place the land marks which shall designate exactly the limits of both nations, each of the contracting parties shall appoint a commissioner and a surveyor.

This was never done, although the treaty provided that such an appointment should be made within one year.

Mexico having won her independence from Spain in 1821, the United States of America and the United Mexican States,²⁹

²⁷ Map of the United States, published at Philadelphia, improved to the first of January, 1818. This map erroneously placed the one-hundredth meridian of longitude about one hundred miles east of where it has since been astronomically located and made the Red River appear to rise in the Snow mountains just north-east of Santa Fe, about ninety miles north and considerably west of the actual source of the North Fork of the Red River and to traverse a country not traversed by any such stream west of the confluence of the stream now known as the North Fork and the South Fork of Red River. Supreme Court Reporter, XVI, p. 741.

²⁸ Hunter Miller, Treaties and Other International Acts of the United States of America, III, Arts. 3 and 5.

²⁹ William M. Malloy, Treaties, Conventions, International Acts, Protocols, and Agreements between the United States of America and Other Powers, pp. 1082-1084.

by treaty, agreed to the boundary line of the treaty of 1819. The ministers from the two countries met with instructions to make a treaty of limits as soon as possible. When J. R. Poinsett, United States minister, was in Mexico, the subject was approached, and it was decided to enter into a treaty of commerce in addition to the treaty regarding boundaries. The negotiations moved very slowly until about January, 1828, when Poinsett reported that matters had begun to move more satisfactorily.

The Mexicans were quite disturbed over the aspirations of the United States to acquire Texas. One of the conditions of the treaty was that Mexico would insist on the validity of the treaty of 1819. It was then arranged by Poinsett that the treaty on commercial relations should be separate from that regarding the boundary question. The treaty was completed and duly ratified by the Mexican government, but it did not reach the Senate in time to be ratified. The matter was therefore left over to the Jackson administration. Jackson appointed Anthony Butler to succeed Poinsett, and Butler made a proposal to Mexico to buy Texas, but the Mexican officials were not ready to sell, and Butler thought they could only be brought around to sell by bribery. He aroused their suspicions, and they asked that he be removed. However, the treaty that Poinsett had made was ratified in 1832.

In the year of 1835 Texas seceded from Mexico and set up the Republic of Texas; and in December, 1836, an act of the Texas Congress provided that "civic and political juris-

diction of the Republic should be as defined in the treaty between the United States and Spain in 1821."³⁰

In 1838 the United States made a treaty with Texas ratifying the boundary of the two countries, and on April 25, 1838, engineers representing Texas and the United States were appointed to make a boundary survey. It was to begin at the mouth of the Sabine River in the Gulf of Mexico and run to the Red River. The remainder of the line was left to be run at a time to be agreed upon by the two governments. This was unfortunate, for it might have been possible to have avoided friction that afterwards arose if the line had been run to the one-hundredth meridian as stated in the treaty of 1819.³¹

EXPLORATIONS

Historical records show that at least seven French and seven Spanish expeditions traversed this country in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. Traders

³⁰ It was agreed in this treaty that the boundary line should start at a point on the Red River where the one-hundredth meridian crossed that stream and thence due north to thirty-six degrees and thirty minutes north latitude, according to the Melish Map, which of course made the boundary ninety miles east of where it is at present. This was the last reference made in any treaty to the Melish map. Had Texas claimed the meridian made by Melish, it would eliminate the Red River dispute entirely, as there is only one Red River at the point where the one-hundredth meridian crossed that stream. Malloy, op. cit. pp. 1082-1084.

³¹ John M. Swisher, Title of Greer County, pp. 5, 12.

and trappers were responsible for the early trails and explorations to a great extent. One old Spanish trail that was made before the time of the Louisiana Purchase, extended from Santa Fe to Nachitoches on the Red River, in what is now the State of Louisiana. Leaving the former old French town, acquired by the Spanish in 1762, the trail went north to the Red River near the site of the present town of Denison, Texas; thence it followed the river upstream to the mouth of North Fork where the trail crossed the South Fork, known as Prairie Dog Town River, or Nachitoches; thence along the North Fork to its source. It thus coursed the north side of the disputed area to Santa Fe.³²

It is probable that Coronado crossed Greer County in 1540. It is evident that his route lay across the western part of the state.³³

The Old Spanish Trail crossed the Red River into Tillman County. The wheels of the old Spanish carts cut so deeply into the sandy turf that in 1833, when Simon N. Cockrell went to the Greer country to establish a trading post, he easily followed the old ruts south to the Brazos River.³⁴

The old Greer country was a convenient course for the

³² Foreman, op. cit. (Red River . . .), pp. 11, 302.

³³ Shepherd's Atlas, pp. 190-191.

³⁴ Grant Foreman, Early Trails in Oklahoma, Chronicles of Oklahoma, pp. 100, 101, 111.

early Spanish trade that was carried on with Santa Fe during the time that De Mezières was Lieutenant-Governor of Natchitoches, Louisiana.³⁵

A few relics of Spanish origin have been found in Greer County. To say that they were lost by Coronado's men would be far-fetched, but doubtless they were lost by Spaniards at some time many years - probably centuries - ago. In 1893, the late I. E. Cowan plowed up a pair of ancient Spanish ring bridle bits on his homestead southwest of Mangum. About the same time the late Joe C. Thompson found an old Spanish saddle-horn on his claim west of Mangum. In 1935, a pair of old bridle bits was found by Lem H. Title on the west slope of Headquarter Mountain, west of Granite. These relics are on display in the Old Greer County Museum in Mangum. Other Spanish relics have been reported found in Greer County at various times.³⁶

At the time of the Louisiana Purchase little was known by the people of the United States about the country that they had acquired.³⁷ Upon acquisition of the territory, Jefferson immediately sent exploring parties into the new country to get all available information concerning it. In 1806 Zebulon Montgomery Pike was sent out with instructions

³⁵ Thomas, op. cit., p. 92.

³⁶ The Mangum Daily Star, September, 1937.

³⁷ Foreman, op. cit., (Red River . . .), pp. 11, 298.

to explore the Arkansas River and the Red River, giving special attention to the latter. He gained considerable information about the country but did not explore the source of the Red River. He went into the Rio Grande valley thinking it the Red River, and on his map of 1810 he made the mistake of showing it to rise in the Snow Mountains.³⁸

Because the Red River was a part of the boundary indicated in the treaty of 1819 there was another effort made to determine its source in 1820 (The treaty was not ratified until 1821.). Major Stephen H. Long was directed by Secretary of War Calhoun to explore the Arkansas River and the Red River. He failed also, in that he descended the Canadian River, thinking it the Red.³⁹

The ill-fated Ryan and Alexander expedition of 1847 or 1848 attempted to travel up the North Fork of the Red River on their way to California. The party consisted of emigrants and traders from Clarksville. They had traveled no further than sixty or seventy miles up the North Fork when they were attacked by Indians. Many of the party were killed, and the remainder made their way back to Texas.⁴⁰

The first exploration of Red River to its source was made by Dixon Durant, an Indian who had come over the "Trail

³⁸ Rupert N. Richardson and Carl Coke Rister, The Greater Southwest, pp. 114-117.

³⁹ T. M. Marshall, op. cit., p. 15.

⁴⁰ Grant Foreman, The Daily Oklahoman, November 25, 1934.

of Tears" and settled in southeastern Indian Territory north of Red River (now Bryan County).

During his youth he fished in Red River. One spring, 1850 or 1851, the wanderlust seized him, and he decided to go and see where the river came from. Starting early in April he followed the south fork of the stream and about the last of July reached the headwaters, in the foothills of the big mountains (Rockies). He started back and after a toilsome journey beset with dangers, especially from Indians, reached home in October.⁴¹

In 1852 Captain R. B. Marcy, assisted by Captain George B. McClellan, explored the upper Red River and gave the first accurate information about the region. The two principal branches of the river were each nearly two hundred miles long. The North Fork had its source in the mountains near Santa Fe, and the South Fork in the Llano Estacado, about seventy-five miles farther south.⁴² The expedition crossed the Red River below the mouth of the Big Wichita and proceeded up the north side of the river until they reached the North Fork below the mouth of Otter Creek. They remained there several days while Captain McClellan made observations and calculations. He established the point of intersection of the one-hundredth meridian with Red River, which point he

⁴¹ B. L. Phipps, "Exploration of Red River," in Chronicles of Oklahoma, VII, pp. 180-182.

⁴² The Comanche name for the North Fork of Red River was "Mo-beeth Hono." (Sidney Clark, Oklahoma Magazine, 11, p.48).

located about six miles below the junction of Prairie Dog Town River. Apparently considering the North Fork as Red River, he followed it to its source. He then took a southern direction until he reached the South Fork, which he called Prairie Dog Town River, or De-che-ah-que Ho-no; this he reported as the principal stream, and he called it Red River on his map.⁴³ Marcy gave a glowing description of the country, and his report was published by order of Congress.⁴⁴

Boundary Controversy

There was one serious mistake on the map prepared by Marcy and McClellan. They located the one-hundredth meridian one degree too far east.⁴⁵

In 1857 surveyors, Jones and Brown, were directed by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs to run the one-hundredth meridian, which was to be the eastern boundary of the Texas Panhandle and the western boundary of the Choctaw and Chickasaw country. They located the one-hundredth meridian some eighty miles west of the junction of the two forks, which left over two thousand square miles between the meridian and the forks. In their reports, letters, and maps to the

⁴³ U. S. v. Texas, United States Supreme Court Reports, CLVII, p. 896.

⁴⁴ Thoburn and Wright, Oklahoma, A History of the State and Its People, II, p. 558.

⁴⁵ Marcy's Report, Map of the Country between Frontier of Arkansas and New Mexico, 1852.

government, they called Prairie Dog Town River the main branch of the Red River and the South Fork of the Red River. They thus decided that the South Fork was the larger and more important of the two streams.⁴⁶

The Jones and Brown survey proved unsatisfactory to Texas. In order to get a definite decision Governor E. M. Pease of Texas in 1854 had the Texas delegation in Washington ask for a joint commission to run the boundary line between the United States and Texas. Congress passed the act of June 5, 1858, authorizing the President in conjunction with the State of Texas to run and mark a boundary line.⁴⁷

Jacob Thompson, Secretary of the Interior, directed John Clark, Commissioner for the United States, to begin the survey on the Rio Grande, run the line of the boundary as defined by the thirty-second parallel of latitude, trace it to 36 degrees and 30 minutes north latitude, and then run the one-hundredth meridian as far as the Red River.⁴⁸

By beginning at the Rio Grande, Thompson thought they could use the survey made by Jones and Brown with slight verifications of the joint commission, thus saving time and expense, and he insisted that "for all purposes appertaining to the interest of the citizens of Texas along and adjacent

⁴⁶ U. S. v. Texas, United States Supreme Court Records, CLXII, p. 896.

⁴⁷ 11 United States Statutes at Large, p. 310.

⁴⁸ Senate Executive Document, No. 70, 47 Congress, 1 session, pp. 264-265.

to the proposed boundary, Jones' and Brown's survey must prove sufficient and satisfactory."⁴⁹ Governor Houston instructed the commissioners appointed by him to insist on the North Fork and the main Rio Roxo or Red River as the true boundary line as described in the treaty of 1819. Besides this, the Texas and Federal governments had difficulty in deciding on the datum on which the survey should begin.

The commissioners could not agree. Russell reported that very little attention was paid him and that he surveyed one-hundredth meridian to the North Fork or main prong of the Red River⁵⁰ and placed a monument on the north bank of the river where the one-hundredth meridian crosses it. They were eighteen months on the survey and separated without making a joint report.⁵¹

In assertion of this claim, the legislature of the State of Texas created a county of the region embraced between the Red River, the North Fork, and the one-hundredth meridian, and named it Greer, in honor of John A. Greer, one-time Lieutenant-Governor of Texas. But, though it was thus dignified by name and bounds, it was destined to remain for a score of years a part of the wilderness of the Great Plains, the grazing ground of buffalo herds and the hunting

⁴⁹ John M. Swisher, op. cit., p. 5.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 6.

⁵¹ Senate Executive Document, No. 70, 47 Congress, 1 Session, pp. 264-265.

range of untamed Comanches and Kiowas.⁵²

The boundary question was thought to have been settled by the Supreme Court decision of 1896 designating the south bank of Red River as the dividing line between Oklahoma and Texas, but within less than a quarter of a century another question arose over the south bank. In this case Oklahoma was the plaintiff, Texas the defendant. This case was before the Supreme Court of the United States in 1920 and 1921. The object was to establish the boundary of Oklahoma and Texas on the Red River. It was of more than ordinary interest because of extensive property holdings. It is estimated that the entire cost of the case was \$500,000. In 1918 when the Burkburnett oil field opened and wells began to dot the river valley, the question as to ownership of the river bed came before the courts. It was necessary to determine what was the south bank. It was decided that the "cut bank" on the right bank "southern" is the northern line of Texas. By the "cut bank" is meant, generally, that point at which vegetation ceases.⁵³

The Supreme Court of the United States held in October, 1926, that the Greer County decision of 1896 did not determine the Jones and Brown line as the true one-hundredth meridian. The Court designated Samuel S. Gannett, geodetic and astronomic engineer, to serve as commissioner in super-

⁵² U. S. Statutes at Large, op. cit., XXIII, pp. 385-386.

⁵³ M. L. Wardell, in Chronicles of Oklahoma, V.

vising the location of the true meridian. Mr. Gannett made the survey in 1927, 1928, and 1929 by means of astronomic triangulation. E. L. McNair, chief of the field party, did the instrument work for the survey of the meridian.

The one-hundredth meridian as established by the Gannett party is 4,040 feet east of the Jones and Brown line at the south end and 880 feet east of that line at the north end. The area of the strip of land between the two lines is approximately 28,500 acres, or 44.6 square miles.

The boundary dispute between Texas and Oklahoma still remains to plague the one hundred and fifty ownerships of land in this strip secured by purchase of school lands, or as homesteads from the United States government.⁵⁴

Indian Grants

Greer County was a part of the domain ceded to the United States by the Quapaws in 1818. The treaty of Doak's landing in Mississippi in 1820, negotiated by Andrew Jackson as the representative of President Monroe, was made with the Choctaws, represented by Pushmataha and other chiefs. By agreement, the Choctaws ceded their lands in Mississippi in exchange for the western part of the territory secured from the Quapaws in 1818. Greer County was definitely a part of this tract.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ The Mangum Daily Star, October 13, 1937.

⁵⁵ Victor E. Harlow, Oklahoma, pp. 85-87.

Another treaty negotiated by John C. Calhoun with the Choctaws in 1825 definitely established their western boundary at the one-hundredth meridian. They were bounded on the South by Red River and on the north by the South Canadian. The Choctaw Nation held this claim until 1866 when they ceded all their claims west of the ninety-eighth meridian to the United States government.⁵⁶

Many Choctaws believe that a settlement for the country included in old Greer County, Texas, has never been made to them by the government for four reasons, namely, (1) the region between the North Fork and the main channel of the Red River was not considered as part of the "leased district" under the Treaty of 1866, since at that time it was supposed to be included within the boundaries of Texas, and had been recently named as a county in that state; (2) this region, known as Greer County, Texas, was never included as a part of any Indian reservation, a specific provision with regard to the lands included in the "leased district" under the Choctaw-Chickasaw treaty of 1866, but, on the other hand, the country was sold to settlers as other public lands under the rules and regulations of the Government Land Office, after the Supreme Court decision, without any consideration being allowed the Choctaw people in whom the title to these lands rested; (3) the fact that the country within the boundaries of old Greer County, Texas, was for many years in

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 205.

litigation before the United States Supreme Court would indicate that the question of its title under government patent had never been fully settled; (4) no further settlement of the Greer County claim of the Choctaws has ever been presented to Congress, except an attempt to include it as a part of the "leased district" to which it clearly cannot be attached, since old Greer County and the "leased district" have each had an entirely separate and distinct history, although both were a part of the Choctaw country from the description of its boundaries given in the patent to the Choctaw Nation from the United States government.⁵⁷

Following the decision of the United States Supreme Court, which awarded Greer County to the United States, the Choctaw and Chickasaw Nations sent a memorial to Congress claiming this land under the patent⁵⁸ of 1842, which, by the treaty of 1837, gave them the land to the source of the Canadian River.⁵⁹ They were at this time pressing claim to the land not occupied by their allotments in the area which was leased by the United States government in 1855 and which they ceded in 1866,⁶⁰ declaring that the cession had been in

⁵⁷ Thoburn and Wright, op. cit., p. 855.

⁵⁸ Ibid., pp. 11, 855.

⁵⁹ The Act of 1820 (as shown by the minutes of the Indian Commissioners) showed the boundary limits to extend from the Arkansas River, where the Cherokee line began, south to the Red River and west to the source of the Arkansas. Ibid.

⁶⁰ Choctaw et al v. United States, op. cit., pp. 12-13.

trust and not in fee simple. They requested Congress to permit them to annex this area to the Wichita lands for which they were suing in the courts.

They were not successful in obtaining their request, and until today a large number of Choctaws and Chickasaws believe they have never received a just settlement for the land. However, the claim has never been brought before Congress again.⁶¹

In spite of the Indian claims to their lands, the white people of Greer County were not worried about them as such claims were always settled by the government in favor of a settler. The matter received no attention in any of the local papers.⁶²

⁶¹ Thoburn and Wright, op. cit., pp. 11, 855.

⁶² Senate Executive Documents, No. 214, 54 Congress, 1 Session, pp. 1-21.

CHAPTER II. DEVELOPMENT OF GREER

Organization of County

When Texas came into the Union in 1845, she reserved her public lands. Accordingly, in 1860, the territory between the North Fork of the Red River, explored by Marcy, and the South Fork, or Prairie Dog Town Fork, was formed into a county formally known as Greer County, Texas, and was officially organized as a county in 1886, under the laws of the State of Texas. It continued to be an organized county exercising all the rights, duties, powers, and privileges of the State of Texas until the court decree of March 16, 1896.¹ The Supreme Court upheld the contention of the United States that the boundary fixed by the treaty of 1819 with Spain had followed the South Fork of the Red River since this fork kept the same general direction as the Red River below the junction of the forks. The counsel for the State of Texas contended that, historically, the ^{NORTH} South Fork was the more important and that the United States had passively acknowledged the claims of Texas in view of the fact that Texas had occupied the disputed territory since 1860.²

During the 302-day period in which Mangum was recognized by the Post Office Department as being located in Greer

¹ United States v. Texas, 160 U. S., p. 1.

² Ibid., 31 Statutes, 731, Ch. 75, 56 Congress, 2 Session.

County, Texas, residents of the area organized a county government, selected a county seat, elected county officers, and established a de facto government that was to last for almost ten years.

The act of 1858 provided that seventy-five bona fide citizens of any unorganized county might present a petition to the "Chief Justice" of an adjoining county, or the nearest organized county, asking for the organization of the unorganized county in which they resided, and that it then should be the duty of the "Chief Justice" to order an election in the unorganized county for the election of county officers.

Wheeler County adjoined Greer County and also was the nearest organized county. Also, it was the county to which Greer County was attached for judicial purposes in 1881. In fact, Greer County was an election precinct of Wheeler County in 1884.³ An excerpt from the minutes of the Commissioners Court of Wheeler County, August 14, 1882, was as follows:

In accordance with an Act of the 17 Legislature of the State of Texas making each unorganized county a voting precinct and further that it shall be the duty of the Commissioners Court of the County to which said unorganized county is attached for judicial purposes to designate one place in each of said unorganized counties at which all elections shall be held and to appoint some suitable person in each of said unorganized counties to serve as presiding officer at elections held in said unorganized county.

³ The Mangum Daily Star, Oct. 13, 1937.

It is ordered by the court that all orders heretofore issued by the Commissioners Court of Wheeler Co. establishing voting precincts in the unorganized counties attached to Wheeler Co. be and the same is hereby annulled.

It is therefore ordered by the Court that the following named place is hereby designated and constituted as the place for holding the elections in each of the following named unorganized counties and that the following Gentlemen act as presiding officers of the elections in their respective counties:

Greer County

Election to be held at McNulty & Popes Head Ranch with J. B. Pope as Presiding officer.⁴

Thus, the first election ever held in Greer County was held in 1884 at the ranch headquarters of McNulty and Pope. This firm operated a ranch on the south side of Elm River northwest of the present town of Reed. The McNulty and Pope brand was Y CROSS Y, but the ranch usually was known as the Y Cross, and the small stream, near their headquarters, came to be known as Y Cross Creek, a name it still bears.⁵

The settlers of Greer County were not satisfied to be merely a voting precinct in Wheeler County and to journey to Mobeetie to transact legal business. Steps were taken to organize a county government under the act of 1858. The following action was taken by the Commissioners Court at Wheeler County on June 10, 1886.⁶

Be it remembered that on this the 19th day of June, A. D. 1886, there was begun and holden a Call Term of

⁴ Minutes of the Commissioners Court, Wheeler County, Aug. 14, 1882.

⁵ Briggs, op. cit.

⁶ The Mangum Daily Star, Oct. 13, 1937.

the Commissioners Court of Wheeler County, for the transaction of general business, the following officers and members of the court being present.

Emmanuel Dubbs, Co. Judge, Presiding.

Mathew Clar, Com. Precinct No. 1, Present.

W. W. Anderson, Com. Precinct No. 2, Present.

M. C. Hughes, Com. Precinct No. 3, Present.

Henry Fry, Com. Precinct No. 4, Present.

R. C. Fitch, Dep't. Sheriff and N. F. Locke, Clerk in attendance.

This day came on to be heard the petition of H. C. Sweet and one hundred and sixty-two other Citizens and qualified voters residing in the unorganized County of Greer, expressing a desire to organize said County.

The Court after hearing the evidence and argument of Counsel, and being fully advised in the premises is of the opinion that the same should be granted:

It is therefore ordered by the Court that an election be held on Saturday, July 10th, 1886, at the several voting precincts hereinafter designated in said county in accordance with existing laws; for the election of the following officers for said Greer County, viz, One County Judge, One County & District Clerk, One Surveyor, One Assessor, One Treasurer, One Commissioner for each of the four Precincts, One Justice of the Peace for each of the four Precincts, one Constable for each of the four Precincts, and also for County Seat of said County, and that due returns of Said County be divided into four Election Precincts as follows to-wit:

Precinct No. 1 at Mangum, John R. Crouch, Presiding Officer; Bounded on the N by Elm or true Salt Fork, E by Red River, S by a line from the trail crossing due West on the E line of Precinct No. 2 and North to Salt Fork or Elm.

Precinct No. 3, at Ikard Springs, H. G. Daniels, Presiding Officer. Bounded on W. Day Land & Cattle Company E fence line, N & E by Red River, S by Elm or true Salt Fork.

Precinct No. 2 at H-Y Headquarters, N. G. Lane,

Presiding Officer. Bounded on the N by Red River, E by East line of Day Land & Cattle Company pasture fence, S & W by county line.

Precinct No. 4 at Frazier, John McClarin, Presiding Officer. Bounded on W by Precinct No. 2, S. by Prairie Dog River, E by Red river, N by Precinct No. 1.

And it is further ordered that the temporary County Seat shall be at Mangum.⁷

The minutes give the name of only one signer of the petition asking for the organization of Greer County - Henry C. Sweet. The original petition could not be located in the official records of Wheeler County.

The election was duly held on Saturday, July 10, 1886, and on July 14 a special meeting was held by the Commissioners Court of Wheeler County for the purpose of canvassing the returns of the election and declaring the results. Minutes of that meeting follow:

Be it remembered that on this "14" day of July A.D. 1886 There was begun and holden a Call term of the Commissioners Court of Wheeler County. The following officers and members of the court being present.

Hon. Emanuel Dubbs, Presiding.

Mathew Clark, Com. Precinct No. 1, Present.

M. C. Hughes, Com. Precinct No. 3, Present.

G. W. Arrington, Sheriff & N. F. Locke, Clerk in attendance.

When the following proceedings were had.

Now at this time came on to be examined the Election returns of Greer County after the Official Count,

⁷ Minutes of Commissioners Court, Wheeler County, Texas,
June 10, 1886.

the returns were ordered to be recorded in a Book kept for that purpose, and certificates of Election issued to each Elected Officer.⁸

Page 1, Volume I, of the Record of Elections of Wheeler County shows the "Return of County Election held in Greer County, Texas, on the 10th day of July A. D. 1886."⁹

The returns show that no election was held in Precinct No. 2 of Greer County, the Northwest portion of the county, in which an election was to have been held at the H-Y ranch headquarters, with N. G. Lane as presiding officer.¹⁰

Frank H. Sweet of Los Angeles knows exactly why no election was held in Precinct No. 2 and has a graphic recollection of the circumstances.

My father gave me a bunch of tickets with road instructions to find the H-Y headquarters, on the ninth of July, 1886. The H-Y ranch was the place in Precinct No. 2 to hold the election the next day, July 10.

Another young man joined me on the trip. We got a late start and failed to locate the big ranch dugout before it got dark. We hobbled our horses and slept on our saddle blankets that night and renewed our search as soon as we could see in the morning.

We soon found the object of our search, but there was no one at the big dugout except the ranch cook.

We waited at the ranch all day, and no one came. The ranch boss, being opposed to the organization and settlement of Greer County, had seen to it that his boys had business elsewhere to attend to.

Many of the cow-hands were favorable to our plans for settlement and had signed our petition for organi-

⁸ Minutes of Commissioners Court, Wheeler County, Texas July 14, 1886.

⁹ Record of Elections, Wheeler County, Texas, I, p. 1.

¹⁰ Ibid.

zation, which required 50 signatures in the county.

I returned from the H-Y ranch with the tickets not voted. I have kept them in an old iron safe these fifty-one years past.¹¹

One of the tickets returned from the H-Y ranch by Mr. Sweet was recently given by him to the Old Greer County Historical Society and has been added to the collection of rare historical relics in the society's museum in Mangum.¹²

The ballots were printed on slips of cheap paper three and one-half inches wide and twelve inches long. The election was held under the laws of Texas, and certain privileges were granted voters then that are not accorded them under the modern election systems. There were no squares in which to stamp the familiar "X." Instead, the voters used a pencil and struck out the names of candidates for whom they did not wish to vote. Voters also could write in the names of persons for whom they wanted to vote although their names did not appear on the ballots. In fact, names of some of those elected at the first election on July 10, 1886, did not appear at all on the printed ballots.¹³

Returns by precincts for the various candidates for county officers were shown as follows:

County Judge. F. B. Duke received 24 votes in Precinct 1 and 5 votes in Precinct 3, a total of 29 votes. He was elected by a majority of 12 votes.

¹¹ Frank H. Sweet, letter to Mangum Daily Star, Oct. 13, 1937.

¹² The Mangum Daily Star, Oct. 13, 1937.

¹³ Ibid.

James Shropshire received 8 votes in Precinct 1 and 9 votes in Precinct 4, a total of 17.

County Clerk. J. R. Crouch received 13 votes in Precinct 1, one vote in Precinct 3, and one vote in Precinct 4, a total of 15. W. P. Johnson received 5 votes in Precinct 1 and 3 in Precinct 4, a total of 8. Lewis Smith received 12 votes in Precinct 1 and 8 votes in Precinct 4, a total of 20 votes. He was elected by a majority of 5 votes over J. R. Crouch.

County Attorney. C. E. Meredith received 5 votes in Precinct 1, a total of 5 votes, and was elected by a majority of 2 votes. H. A. Houghes received 2 votes in Precinct 1, a total of 2 votes. E. G. Patton received 3 votes in Precinct 1, a total of 3.

Sheriff. W. T. Williamson received 12 votes in Precinct 1 and 2 in Precinct 4, a total of 14. L. T. Kitzmiller received 7 votes in Precinct 3, a total of 7. D. E. Youkon received 12 votes in Precinct 1, one in Precinct 3, and 4 in Precinct 4, a total of 17. He was elected by a majority of 3. N. J. Powers received 2 votes in Precinct 4, a total of 2.

Surveyor. H. C. Sweet received 12 votes in Precinct 1, 5 in Precinct 3, and 2 in Precinct 4, a total of 19. J. W. Anderson received 19 votes in Precinct 1 and 7 in Precinct 4, a total of 26. He was elected by a majority of 7.

Assessor. D. M. Paulk received 2 votes in Precinct 1, 2 in Precinct 3, and 4 in Precinct 4, a total of 8. W. B. Hart received 16 votes in Precinct 1, 3 in Precinct 3, and 5 in Precinct 4, a total of 24. He was elected by a majority of 16, although the returns placed his majority at 17. H. Mathewson received 7 votes in Precinct 1, a total of 7.

Treasurer. J. M. Berryman received 23 votes in Precinct 1, 5 in Precinct 3, and 2 in Precinct 4, leading the ticket with a total of 30 votes, and a majority of 17 over his closest opponent. Joe White received 13 votes in Precinct 1, a total of 13. W. F. Yeckley received 7 votes in Precinct 4, a total of 7.

Commissioner Precinct No. 1. E. R. Spencer received 9 votes, J. W. Rose 12, and G. M. Williamson 5, Rose being elected by a margin of 3 votes.

Commissioner Precinct No. 3. H. G. Daniel was unanimously elected with a total of 5 votes.

Commissioner Precinct No. 4. John McLaren was

unanimously elected with a total of 9 votes.

Constable Precinct No. 1. G. W. McDougle was unanimously elected with a total of 2 votes.

Constable Precinct No. 3. Sam'l Carter was elected with 1 vote.

In the election of a County Seat, Mangum and Frazer were the opposing candidates. Mangum received 26 votes in Precinct No. 1, a total of 26 votes, and won by a majority of 11. Frazer received 6 votes in Precinct 1 and 9 in Precinct 4, a total of 15 votes.¹⁴

The government of Greer County did not begin functioning until July 21, 1886.¹⁵ A meeting of the Commissioners Court of Wheeler County was held on that day, and in the minutes of the session appears the following:

Now comes the Bond of F. B. Duke, County Judge of Greer County, Texas, for approval, the same is hereby approved, and the Clerk ordered to administer the oath of office, which was accordingly done.

The first session of the Commissioners Court of Greer County was held on Tuesday, July 29, 1886. Minutes of that session, which marked the organization of Greer County, follow:

Be it remembered that on the 29th day of July, 1886, there was begun and holden at the town of Mangum, a special term of the Commissioners Court of said County. Present and presiding Hon. F. B. Duke, County Judge, J. W. Rose qualified as Commissioner of Precinct No. One. H. G. Daniel qualified as Commissioner of Precinct No. Three. J. McClearen qualified as Commissioner of Precinct No. 4, L. A. Smith Clerk. Whereupon the following proceedings were had, to wit.

J. H. Kiser appointed as Commissioner of Prct. No.

¹⁴ Record of Elections, Wheeler County, Texas, July 10, 1886.

¹⁵ The Mangum Daily Star, Oct. 13, 1937.

2. J. W. Rose of Precinct No. 1, H. G. Daniel of Precinct No. 3, J. McClearen of Precinct No. 4 was duly elected by July 10th 1886 but failed to get certificates to the office of Justice of their respective precincts, are duly appointed by the Commissioners Court. It is now ordered by the Judge that the court adjourn until tomorrow term. Read and approved.¹⁶

Early Government and Courts

During the ten years beginning with organization of the county, July 6, 1886, extending through a six-year suit before the United States Supreme Court, and ending with its decision, March 16, 1896, which decreed Greer County not to be in Texas, Greer maintained county government without levying real estate tax, all money necessary for support of county government being raised by personal tax alone. Cattle formed the bulk of wealth, aside from land, and cattle tax furnished nearly all the money raised in support of county government. Some land holders sought to pay real estate tax to strengthen land titles, but the county refused to accept the money.¹⁷

Despite the lack of title, residents of Greer County bought and sold land in the county, and the county clerk recorded numerous warranty deeds and other conveyances of land. This condition existed for several years, during which time many settlers came into the county. The county

¹⁶ Minutes of Commissioners Court, Wheeler County, Texas, July 21, 1886.

¹⁷ Alvin Rucker, "A Famous Lawsuit," The Daily Oklahoman, Aug. 23, 1931.

government continued to function, and the State of Texas recognized Greer County as one of its regularly organized counties.¹⁸

District court terms were held at Mangum on the first Mondays of March and September, and continued in session for four weeks.¹⁹

There was an interval of about two months in which no state law was in force in Greer County, due to the fact that William C. Renfrow, Governor of Oklahoma Territory, did not immediately appoint officials for Greer County. Such, however, was the law-abiding nature of its citizens that not a crime was committed in the county during the seven-months interval when the county was without government.²⁰

A large number of the citizens met in mass meeting at Mangum and seriously discussed the idea of migrating to west Texas, where free land was still available.²¹ Dennis T. Flynn, Oklahoma Congressional delegate, introduced in Congress a bill which allowed Greer County homesteaders to purchase an additional quarter-section of land for \$1.25 an acre, and in the end Congress relieved the homesteaders of paying that amount for the additional quarter-section.

¹⁸ The Mangum Daily Star, Oct. 13, 1937.

¹⁹ Laws of the State of Texas, 1887, Ch. 98.

²⁰ Mrs. Ashley Wilson, Personal Interview with, Mangum, Oklahoma, Aug. 29, 1937.

²¹ G. W. Briggs, op. cit.

Governor Renfrow reappointed most of the Greer County officials to serve until the next general election.²² The jail record at Mangum shows that during eight years, ending May 12, 1896, the county jail, which stood nearly a block east of the present courthouse and jail,²³ contained only fourteen prisoners. Lawyers and others then having business in Guthrie were forced to drive overland to Vernon, Texas, and go from there to Fort Worth by railroad and then north to reach Guthrie.²⁴

Following the Supreme Court decision, a Congressional act of May 4, 1896, declared that portion of the Territory of Oklahoma formerly known as Greer County, Texas, to be established as Greer County, Oklahoma, with Mangum as the county seat.²⁵ The county officials then serving were to hold office as county officials in the Territory of Oklahoma until the next territorial election, or the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November, 1896. These officials were to enforce the laws applicable to counties in Oklahoma.²⁶

The judicial proceedings of the several courts and

²² The Mangum Daily Star, Oct. 13, 1937.

²³ E. W. Reeves, Personal Interview with, Mangum, Oklahoma, Aug. 6, 1937.

²⁴ G. W. Boyd, Personal Interview with, Mangum, Oklahoma, Aug. 5, 1937.

²⁵ 29 Statutes, 113, Ch. 155, 54 Congress, 1 Session, 1896.

²⁶ Loc. cit.

officers of Greer County, Texas, were to have the same binding force as if such courts and officers had been legally authorized courts and officers of the United States or of the Territory of Oklahoma. All suits pending on March 16, 1896, were to be entered upon the dockets of Oklahoma courts having jurisdiction in like cases, and the procedure employed was to be the same as if the cases had been brought in Oklahoma courts.²⁷ All judgments rendered by the courts of Greer County, Texas, civil or criminal, prior to March 16, 1896, were to have the same binding force as if Greer County had legally formed a part of the territory of the State of Texas up to that date, and then been lawfully ceded by Texas to the United States with a reservation and ratification of all existing rights and liabilities.²⁸

On March 16, 1896, President Cleveland by proclamation withdrew the lands of Greer County from disposition under the public land laws of the United States. He declared these lands to be in a state of reservation until the order of withdrawal should be revoked, and warned all persons against entering them with a view to occupying them under the public land laws during the existence of such an order.²⁹

The President's order was meant to protect those who

²⁷ Loc. cit.

²⁸ 29 Statutes, 114, sec. 4.

²⁹ Ibid., 878, Proclamation No. 11, March 16, 1896, Greer County.

had settled upon such lands prior to December 30, 1887, and against outsiders until Congress should consider their claims for relief. No doubt these settlers had acted in good faith, believing that the land belonged to Texas and was subject to its jurisdiction. President Cleveland also desired to hold these lands intact until their status should be determined. He desired this in view of the fact that the Choctaw Nation had not been extinguished by treaty with the United States in their cession of 1866.³⁰

The anxiety of the occupants of these lands was in a measure relieved by the Congressional act of January 18, 1897.³¹ This act protected all occupants of lands in Greer County on March 16, 1896, who were qualified under the homestead laws of the United States. It entitled each person to continue occupation of land and to make improvements not to exceed 160 acres, in recognition of homestead right. Six months from January 18, 1897, was the time given in which to initiate claim. The title could be perfected under the provisions of the homestead law, upon the payment of land office fees, at the expiration of five years from the date of entry, with credit recognized for all time during which the claimant had continuously been a resident, prior to March 16, 1896. Additional relief was extended to such claimant in

³⁰ 29 Statutes, 878; 28 Statutes, 898, Act of March 2, 1895; 30 Statutes, 513, Act of June 28, 1898; 31 Statutes, 680, Act of June 6, 1900.

³¹ 29 Statutes, 490, 54 Congress, Act of Jan. 18, 1897.

that he was privileged to purchase at one dollar an acre, in five equal annual payments, an additional quarter-section of land of which he was in actual possession on March 16, 1896. Cultivation or improvement prior to this date was deemed to constitute possession.

When the head of any family in Greer County failed to avail himself of his right to a homestead or to additional land within the six months allowed, an additional three months was given in which any member of the family over the age of twenty-one could accept the right which had been thus forfeited.³² In case of the death of a settler who actually established residence and made improvements on land in Greer County prior to March 16, 1896, the entry was to be recognized as being made at the time the residence was established.³³

These old settlers of Greer County were given till January 1, 1897, to remove all crops and improvements on any land not included in their entries under United States homestead law. After relief had been afforded to old settlers, all unoccupied lands in Greer County were opened to homestead entry.³⁴ In town-site entries preference rights were extended to all persons who had made improvements on town lots prior to March 16, 1896.³⁵ Sections 16 and 36 in Greer

³² 29 Statutes, 490, Sec. 1.

³³ R. S., Secs. 2291, 2292, p. 420.

³⁴ Ibid., Sec. 5.

³⁵ 29 Statutes, 490, Secs. 6, 7.

County were set apart for school purposes as provided in laws relating to Oklahoma. Sections 13 and 33 in each township were reserved for such purposes as the legislature of the future State of Oklahoma should direct. Provision was likewise made for selection of indemnity land as provided by law.³⁶ Lands that were being used for churches, cemeteries, and schools, not to exceed two acres in each case, were to be patented to the authorities in charge.³⁷

To protect and promote the landed interests of settlers during the period of political fusion of Greer County with the Territory of Oklahoma, a federal land office was established at Mangum. Laws authorizing the commutations of homesteads in Oklahoma were extended to Greer County.³⁸ On March 1, 1899, Congress extended the preference rights clause of the Act of 1897 concerning preemption of quarter-section and purchased quarter to include all persons who had purchased lands in Greer County from the State of Texas. This was to be applied provided no adverse rights had become attached, even though previous to this time such settlers had received the benefit of the homestead laws of the United States.³⁹

³⁶ Ibid., Sec. 3; R. S., Secs. 2387-2389, p. 437.

³⁷ Ibid., Sec. 4, p. 491.

³⁸ Act of January 18, 1897, giving preference rights to old settlers of Greer County. 29 Statutes, 490, Sec. 2.

³⁹ 30 Statutes, 966, Chap. 328.

The Supreme Court Decision

Beginning of the end of Greer County, Texas, was on May 2, 1890, when the Organic Act creating Oklahoma Territory was introduced in Congress.⁴⁰ A provision of the act directed the United States Attorney General to institute suit in the United States Supreme Court to determine whether Greer County was in Texas, the act providing that Texas should retain jurisdiction over the area until the case was decided.⁴¹ The suit was filed October 27, 1890. The record fills 1,400 printed pages of United States Supreme Court reports.⁴² As a large majority of Greer County citizens were from Texas, they preferred to remain a part of Texas, but their opposition to being transferred to Oklahoma Territory was based principally upon the land loss they would suffer by such a transfer. Under the Texas statutes each settler was entitled to homestead four sections of land. Under the Oklahoma Territorial laws each settler would be entitled to homestead only one quarter-section of land, a loss of three quarter-sections to each homesteader.⁴³

The case was before the court for several years, and noted lawyers came to the county to take depositions and to

⁴⁰ Compiled Oklahoma Statutes, 1921, I, p. 49.

⁴¹ United States Statutes, V. R. 725, No. 29.

⁴² Grant Foreman, "Greer County," The Daily Oklahoman, Nov. 25, 1934.

⁴³ Wilson, op. cit.

gain information concerning it. They made a special study of the North Fork and the South Fork of the Red River and of old trails.⁴⁴ Evidence in the case consisted largely of historical data and recollections from the oldest pioneers, and included documents of the earliest explorations, maps, treaties concerning the nations which had been interested in the Louisiana Purchase, and other papers. The investigation caused a most thorough searching of Mexican, Texas, Spanish, French, and United States archives.⁴⁵ Some of the evidence taken by the joint boundary commission appointed in 1885 by the President of the United States and the Governor of Texas,⁴⁶ with Colonel Mansfield as chairman,⁴⁷ was used in the federal case.⁴⁸ Depositions were taken in the Supreme Court case at Washington, St. Louis, Kansas City, Austin, San Antonio, Fort Worth, Dallas, Wichita Falls, El Reno, Navajoe, Mangum, and various other places during a period of three or four years.⁴⁹

In 1818 a man named Melish made a map of the United States in which he established the one-hundredth meridian

⁴⁴ Supreme Court Reporter, XVI, pp. 725-754.

⁴⁵ Harbour, op. cit., pp. 152-153.

⁴⁶ Foreman, op. cit., pp. 301-303.

⁴⁷ Supreme Court of the United States v. the State of Texas, pp. 107-109.

⁴⁸ House Executive Documents, No. 21, 54 Congress, 1 Session, p. 59.

⁴⁹ The Mangum Daily Star, July 21, 1932.

ninety miles east of the present one-hundredth meridian. An official exhibit of the Melish map was used in the United States Supreme Court when the case was heard, though both sides knew the map was incorrect.⁵⁰

The United States' claims were as follows: (1) that the Treaty of 1819 itself provided for the fixing of the boundary line with more precision; (2) that Texas had accepted the true meridian in 1850 as the basis of the western boundary; (3) that the Red River, or the Rio Roxo, in the Treaty of 1819 is described as running westward to the one-hundredth meridian, and that as Prairie Dog Town River rises nearer Santa Fe, is more like the description, and is wider, deeper, and longer, it must be taken as the main stream rather than North Fork, which runs in a north and northwesterly direction; (4) that the inclusion of Greer County as one of the counties named in the Act of Congress in 1879 in creating the northern judicial district in Texas merely placed the territory in that district for purposes of a judicial nature and was not intended to express the purpose of the United States as surrendering its jurisdiction over the disputed area; and (6) that the designation of post offices in Greer County, Texas, was done by the petition of the people living in that district and that the act was passed by the postal department before it knew that the towns were located in the disputed

⁵⁰ Supreme Court of the United States v. State of Texas, I, p. 108.

territory.⁵¹

Texas' claims were as follows: (1) that the dispute was settled by the treaties on February 22, 1819, January 12, 1828, and April 25, 1838 (for she believed the Melish map was the basis of the claims of the two contracting parties in these treaties, which were recognized by both parties as binding when they were made); (2) that according to Swisher Marcy had indicated North Fork was the main stream of Red River, because he called the South Fork Kecheaque Hono, or Prairie Dog Town River; (3) that the United States had recognized Texas' rights in 1843 by the reimbursement of Texas for disarmament of Snively's troops, in 1879 by the legislature's creating the judicial district of Texas, and in 1886 by the establishment of two post offices in Greer County, Texas;⁵² (4) that Texas extended her institutions, her people and her education into Greer County;⁵³ (5) that there is running water in the South Fork only a portion of the year, while the North Fork has running water the year around; (6) that the old Spanish trail ran up the North Fork, which was always considered both by the Mexicans and the Indians as

⁵¹ House Executive Documents, No. 21, 50 Congress, 1 Session, pp. 59-60.

⁵² Supreme Court of the United States v. the State of Texas, I, p. 108.

⁵³ United States Statutes at Large, 29 Congress, 2 Session, p. 168; House Executive Documents, 28 Congress, 2 Session, pp. 12, 107, 110.

the main stream and that they called the south fork Prairie Dog Creek.⁵⁴

Several Indians were examined at Fort Sill and Anadarko in the Comanche country. As they could not speak a word of English, it was necessary to employ an interpreter. The Indians proved to be most valuable witnesses for the United States. Ta-wak-o-nee Jim, a Wichita chief, was placed on the stand. His testimony strengthened the case of the United States, but it was largely of an historic nature and as such it will prove a valuable addition to the history and traditions of the Indians of the plains.⁵⁵

The United States placed on the witness stand also a Kiowa Indian named Chaddle Konkie. He was the judge of their tribe, or as he expressed it, he "who straightens out their crooked paths." A great many questions were put as to whether or not he understood the nature of an oath, but he proved to be about as well informed upon a man's responsibility to the Great Spirit as any of the orthodox theologians. Chaddle Konkie swore that the Kiowa and Comanche Indians have always called the South Fork of Red River "Pa-pau-edle," or "big sandy river without water." He produced a map that he had drawn himself, and it was permitted to be filed in evidence. Upon this map Owl Creek was designated by the

⁵⁴ The Mangum Daily Star, Oct. 13, 1937.

⁵⁵ United States v. State of Texas (from the El Reno Democrat, April 5, 1894.

picture of a turkey. The witness pointed out and named creeks and mountains on the map. He made prairie dog houses on his map along Pease River, Texas, and said that the Indians had called that river Prairie Dog River for a hundred winters. This was a fatal blow to Texas' claims, as she claimed that the South Fork of Red River was Prairie Dog Creek and the North Fork was the river proper.⁵⁶

The last witness that testified in behalf of the United States was S. E. Stilwell, a police judge in the city of El Reno, whose deposition was taken before N. B. Wass, United States Commissioner for the second judicial district of Oklahoma. He proved to be one of the best witnesses the United States had yet placed upon the stand. The Judge went out on the frontier in 1863 when he was but thirteen years old and was employed as interpreter, guide, scout, and United States marshall until Oklahoma was opened to settlement. He was thoroughly familiar with all of the rivers, creeks, mountains, and old trails in this section in controversy.⁵⁷

Judge Stilwell's testimony strengthened every material allegation made by the United States in this case. In reply to a question by the counsel for the State of Texas as to whether there was an old trail made before that led down the North Fork of Red River, Judge Stilwell said, "I know no trail

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

from Santa Fe to Texas except the old Santa Fe and San Antonio route." The witness testified that he had never seen an old trail leading up the North Fork of Red River, but that he himself had laid out a trail for General Custer up that way in 1869.⁵⁸

The United States was represented at the hearing by Judson Harmon, Attorney General; Holmes Conrad, Solicitor-General; and Edgar Allan, special Assistant Attorney General. The State of Texas was represented by George Clark, M. M. Crane, A. H. Garland, H. J. May, Charles A. Culbertson, and George R. Freeman, all distinguished attorneys living in Texas at that time. Various other attorneys appeared in the case while it was pending, including William Howard Taft, who as Solicitor-General of the United States during the earlier part of the litigation prepared and submitted some of the pleadings.

Members of the high tribunal who heard the argument and considered the case were Chief Justice Melville Weston Fuller, Associate Justices Stephen Johnson Field, John Marshall Harlan, Horace Gray, David Josiah Brewer, Henry Billings Brown, George Shires Jr., and Edward Douglas White. There was one vacancy on the court at the time, Justice Howell Edmonds Jackson having died August 8, 1895, and his successor, Rufus W. Peckham, not having qualified until January 6, 1896, which was too late for him to participate in

⁵⁸ Ibid.

the Greer County case.⁵⁹

The decision of the court was written by Associate Justice John Marshall Harlan, whose brother, Judge James Harlan, had been a resident of Greer County, living at Navajoe. Justice Harlan's opinion in the Greer County case was approved by the court and was handed down as the decision of the court on March 16, 1896. In these few words the jurisdiction of Greer County was changed:

Adjudged that Greer County is not included within the State of Texas, but is subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the United States.⁶⁰

News of the historic action of the court reached Mangum late the afternoon of March 16, 1896 - the day the decision was handed down. There was no telegraph or telephone line leading to Mangum. Communication so far as Mangum was concerned at that time was limited to the mail brought from Quanah, or by word received from traveler or courier. A telegram was sent from Washington to Quanah, announcing the decision.⁶¹ W. R. Baumgardner, who still lives in Mangum, was carrier of the United States mail from Quanah to Mangum. He received word of the decision at Quanah and brought it to Mangum, arriving just before sundown.⁶²

⁵⁹ United States Supreme Court Reports, CLXII, pp. 1-90.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ G. W. Briggs, Personal Interview with, Granite, Oklahoma, Aug. 10, 1937.

⁶² Thoburn and Wright, op. cit., p. 560.

As it became known about Mangum that the case had been decided in favor of the United States, the opinion was expressed by someone that Greer County was now without law.⁶³ Some cowboys who were in town, and doubtless had been preparing themselves for such an occasion by imbibing freely of the spirits that cheer, started whooping, firing their pistols, and otherwise letting it be known that they liked living in a land that had no law.

District court was in session in Mangum, with Judge G. A. Brown of Vernon, judge of the Nineteenth Judicial District of Texas, presiding. On March 16 the attention of the court had been occupied with trial of the case of D. M. Osborne and Company v. S. C. Vanleer. Judge Brown immediately adjourned court sine die, having found himself suddenly removed from his jurisdiction and from his own state.⁶⁴

The government of Greer County, Texas, ceased to exist. However, the county was not long without a law enforcement agency, for Sheriff S. H. Tittle was commissioned a deputy United States marshal and continued to preserve order.

Historic Towns

Mangum

One of the 783 Texans who participated in the Battle of San Jacinto, April 21, 1836, was Captain A. S. Mangum. After

⁶³ The Mangum Star, July 15, 1935.

⁶⁴ G. W. Briggs, op. cit.

passage of the Act of 1881, Captain Mangum made application for and received a certificate entitling him to land as a reward for his services in the Texas Revolution.

Captain Mangum, who lived in Travis County, made an agreement with Henry C. Sweet to locate and survey the lands and to plat a townsite. Mr. Sweet returned to Greer County in the fall of 1883, accompanied by his friend John R. Crouch. Mr. Sweet and Mr. Crouch followed the Mobeetie Trail into Greer County until they arrived at the present site of Mangum. The trail crossed the present court house square.⁶⁵

In coming up the trail from Doan's Crossing, the site of the present city of Mangum was the first place Mr. Sweet and Mr. Crouch saw that was located near a river, was high enough from the river to be out of reach of any possible flood, and offered natural drainage facilities. Also it was near Draw Springs, which would provide fresh water.⁶⁶

The Mangum grant was surveyed and duly recorded as "Survey No. 156, on the waters of the Frazier," the name by which Salt Fork was then known. Governor Ireland and Commissioner W. C. Walsh of the General Land Office issued a patent to Mr. Mangum to the lands located by Mr. Sweet. The patent was dated December 10, 1885, and after the organization of Greer County was recorded October 21, 1886.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Wilson, op. cit.

⁶⁶ John R. Crouch Jr., Personal Interview with, Altus, Oklahoma, Aug. 3, 1937.

⁶⁷ Swisher, op. cit., p. 16.

After locating the Mangum grant and probably other grants in Greer County in the fall of 1883, Mr. Sweet and Mr. Crouch returned to their homes in Dallas County.

The next spring they started to Greer County with their families to establish their homes on the Mangum grant and to lay out and begin a town.⁶⁸ On April 18, 1884, Mr. Sweet, and his family, crossed Red River into Greer County. His family consisted of his wife, a daughter, Lucy (now Mrs. A. R. Wilson of Mangum), and a son, Frank (now in California). With Mr. Sweet came his friend John R. Crouch, Mrs. Crouch, and three of their children, Anna-Belle, Lula V. (now Mrs. L. A. Johnson of Mangum), and John R. Crouch Jr., (now of Altus). They were the first persons to enter Greer County for the purpose of establishing homes under the authority granted them under the laws of Texas.

There were numerous cowboys in Greer County when the Sweet and Crouch families arrived and at least one settler, John R. Richerson, who had started farming near the mouth of Big Turkey Creek, southwest of the present site of Sayre, but merely as a squatter and without legal authority.⁶⁹

Mr. Sweet had implicit faith in the patents issued by the State of Texas and encouraged as many veterans as possible to locate their grant lands in Greer County. He arranged to

⁶⁸ Wilson, op. cit.

⁶⁹ Mrs. L. A. Johnson, Personal Interview with, Mangum, Oklahoma, Aug. 8, 1937.

locate and survey many of these grants and received interests in the grants in payment for his work. In that way he acquired patents to about 1,200 acres of land and locative interest in some 20,000 acres more. The latter was land on which he located "Confederate scrip" and never received patents. Mr. Sweet also encouraged settlers to come to Greer County to engage in farming or to become residents of the town he was starting. He surveyed, platted, and named the town of Mangum on the Mangum land grant. He planned at first to name it Lanham, for S. W. T. Lanham, then a member of Congress and later governor of Texas. However, Captain A. S. Mangum died soon after the work of platting the town-site was started, and Mr. Sweet decided to name the town for him.⁷⁰

The original plat of the town of Mangum, as prepared by Mr. Sweet, shows eight streets, which appear to have been named for members of Mr. Sweet's family. The street now known as Jefferson was originally named "Minnie;" the street now called Lincoln was first named "Lucy;" the street now Oklahoma Avenue was named "Henry;" Pennsylvania Avenue was named "Willie;" Carolina Avenue was named "Louis;" other street names chosen were "Mary," "Anna," and "Robert."

The heirs of Captain Mangum, his children Robert Y. Mangum, Wiley P. Mangum, and Mary A. Mangum, met at Sherman, Texas, on July 19, 1886, and deeded all the odd-numbered

⁷⁰ Wilson, op. cit.

blocks in the townsite to Mr. Sweet. This deed was recorded October 22, 1886, after the organization of Greer County.⁷¹

The Sweet and Crouch families made the trip to Greer County in two covered wagons. Arriving at the Mangum land grant, they set up tents in which they lived for some time before building dugouts which they used as family homes. Their homes were located in the edge of the breaks of the southwest corner of the present city of Mangum. Their furniture had been shipped by train to Wichita Falls, where it remained in storage for about a year while the families were waiting to see if they would be permitted to remain in Greer County.

Finally, believing the families would be permitted to remain, Mr. Sweet hauled logs from Sand Station and built the first house at the Mangum townsite. Later, he hauled lumber from Wichita Falls to build a box house. Mr. Sweet opened a small store, from which he sold merchandise to the cowboys and to Indians who came across North Fork River to buy supplies. The Indians called the store "Sweet," while to the cowboys it was known as "Tin City," because Mr. Sweet had used rolled-out tin from tin cans to provide strips to cover the cracks in his store building and to keep out the cold blasts of winter winds.⁷²

⁷⁰ Wilson, op. cit.

⁷¹ Joe L. Sweet, Personal Interview with, Mangum, Oklahoma, Aug. 17, 1938.

Mr. Crouch established a hotel, which was first located in the tent home of the Crouch family but later in a building known as the Hotel de Crouch, destined to become the social center of Greer County.

J. R. Curry soon followed the Sweet and Crouch families and established Mangum's second store. Soon other families began arriving and within a few months after the advent of the Sweet and Crouch families there was a thriving community at Mangum.

Henry C. Sweet was the founder of Mangum, the surveyor of the land grant upon which the town was located, the owner of the first store, and for sixteen years the leading citizen of Mangum and Greer County.⁷³

Navajoe

In 1886 the town of Navajoe was started by H. P. Dale and Joe Works, nicknamed "Buckskin Joe." Located sixteen miles east of Frazer, about twelve miles south of the Navajoe crossing on the North Fork of the Red River, it was at the base of a high mountain, with magnificent scenery, fine water, timber on the streams, and a rich soil.⁷⁴ Joe Works, leader of a Texas-Oklahoma colony of over four hundred families, selected Navajoe as a place to establish the colony, and worked hard for a few years to develop the enter-

⁷³ The Mangum Daily Star, Oct. 13, 1937.

⁷⁴ Briggs, op. cit.

prise.

He was assisted in colonizing the town by the Denver and Santa Fe railroad and by the towns of Kansas City, Fort Worth, and Vernon, Texas.⁷⁵ The Texas officials, having approved the colony, began a survey, and planned for the sale of the land. The colonists objected and petitioned the officials to let each of them take 160 acres of land under the United States survey, but Texas refused. They then appealed to President Cleveland and Commissioner Sparks to prevent the agents' selling the land. President Cleveland issued a proclamation denying Texas the right to sell the land, and the colony system was merged into the Texas boom.

Buckskin Joe advertised his colony on the streets of Fort Worth and other towns. For three years following 1887 ten thousand copies of the Emigrant Guide were sent over the country.⁷⁶ Buckskin Joe boasted in his paper that the country was organized with five thousand people, eleven thousand dollars worth of county buildings, school houses, and churches. He had trouble with the cattlemen who had leased land for pasture. He found his city fenced in and insufficient room left for a townsite. The proclamation, "The leases are void and of no force and effect," was a great relief to him and the colonists.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Buckskin Joe's Emigrant Guide, July 10, 1887.

⁷⁶ Ibid., March, 1888.

⁷⁷ Briggs, op. cit.

The town lots were donated to members of the colony under these conditions. Members had to become actual settlers of Greer County on or before January 1, 1889, or else erect buildings of lumber, stone, or brick, not less than sixteen feet square, on the lot before that time. On July 10, 1887, there were fifty families who were entitled to lots under these conditions.⁷⁸

The Kiowa and Comanche Indians and some gold seekers out of the Wichita Mountains came into Navajoe to trade. Card sharks and gamblers managed to relieve the visitors of their money when it was possible to entice them into games of chance.⁷⁹

The Emigrant Guide for August, 1888, contained advertisements of four Navajoe business concerns, Acres and Dale, groceries and ranch supplies; Redding and Cranford, drugs and medicines; J. W. Bennight and Company, groceries and ranch supplies; and Hotel Navajoe, Buckskin Joe's home and headquarters for the colony.⁸⁰

But Navajoe, which had such an auspicious beginning, lost Buckskin Joe, who passed on to promote Comanche townsite in what is now Stephens County, Oklahoma, and after some fifteen years of existence as an important trading center, Navajoe was missed by the railroad, which the Navajoe choir

⁷⁸ Buckskin Joe's Emigrant Guide, March, 1888.

⁷⁹ Briggs, op. cit.

⁸⁰ Buckskin Joe's Emigrant Guide, August, 1888.

on July 4, 1888, had "wanted for more than a year." Most of the Navajoe business establishments moved to Headrick, the town established on the Frisco railroad, which was built in 1902. Today Navajoe is only a memory, except for its large cemetery in which are buried many of the brave colonists who came to Greer County at the invitation of Buckskin Joe in 1887 and 1888.⁸¹

Altus

Frazer, with its luxuriant grass and surrounding acres of fertile land, was one of the earliest and most thriving towns. It was located twenty-five miles northwest of Doan's Crossing on Red River, twenty-two and one-half miles southeast of Mangum, and forty miles northeast of Quanah.

John McClearen had bought land certificates amounting to one thousand one hundred acres of land at this location and sent his sons-in-law, J. B. Walker and P. H. Nolt, to Frazer in 1884 to build a one-room log cabin on the land which they planned to homestead. They then returned to Texas for their families. Mr. McClearen and his family came in 1885, bringing with them cows for the three families. The community consisted of a log cabin, a dugout, and two tents. The nearer neighbors were at Doan's Crossing, at Mangum, and a family near the Wichita Mountains.⁸²

⁸¹ The Mangum Daily Star, Oct. 13, 1937.

⁸² Altus Times Democrat, June 2, 1935.

Mrs. Jennie A. Holt was named postmistress and opened the office on July 1, 1885, in the residence of her father, John McClearen, two and one-half miles west of the present town of Altus. This residence was known far and wide as "Buttermilk Station," a name bestowed on it by the grateful cowboys who partook unsparingly of buttermilk at the hands of the nester's accommodating wife. McClearen, in order to secure the post office, carried the mail free for three months, making three trips a week to Doan's, a distance of twenty-five miles.⁸³ Salt Fork of the Red River was known as "the Waters of the Frazer," and as the new post office was located on this stream, the government designated it as Frazer.

Farming was begun in 1886 by McClearen, but the year was dry, and the results were discouraging. Someone had set the dry grass on fire near the mountains, and the fire roared across the prairies, driving cattle in front of it and burning rapidly toward the settlement. In order to hold the march of the fire, cowboys shot cattle, skinned them on the spot, and dragged the fresh sides of meat across the grass in an effort to halt the blaze. Wet sacks were also used to beat at the flames, and furrows were plowed about the settlement to save it from destruction.⁸⁴

Frazer developed rapidly and apparently was destined to

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

become a leading town in that section of Greer County.⁸⁵ However, in the spring of 1891 heavy rains fell on the watershed of the Salt Fork. The stream overflowed its banks into Bitter Creek and inundated the settlement. The smaller stream was more than one-half mile wide at the townsite. Frantic families moved out as quickly as possible, merchants transported their goods to higher ground. The high waters forced them farther eastward, and they decided to move on into Altus, where they remained. Frazer was abandoned.

Frank Trimble, C. C. Hightower, J. R. McMahan, M. M. Kimberlin, Mrs. Southerland, W. M. Lawson, and Hardy Trimble formed a company and purchased a new townsite. They purchased 320 acres of land from Sam Neal. It was located on the northeast corner of the Jackson County court house square. The southeast quarter of the town was purchased later. Lots were designated and each person who formerly had owned lots in Frazer was given an equal amount of property on the new location. The new town was named Altus, a suggestion made by W. R. Bacum.⁸⁶

Other citizens who moved from Frazer to Altus and assisted in building the town were the Richardsons, the Harrolds, and the Braddocks, who moved a month later than the first group. The first building was a frame structure brought by oxen to the present site of the C. R. Anthony store.

⁸⁵ The Mangum Daily Star, Oct. 13, 1938.

⁸⁶ Mrs. J. M. Walker, Personal Interview with, Altus, Oklahoma, Aug. 8, 1937.

At the time of the second purchase of land for the future city the citizens began to realize the need for a post office and obtained one. Bacum was appointed postmaster. The town was surveyed and incorporated the same year under Texas laws.

By March 22, 1900, Altus had become a thriving, progressive city with five general merchandise stores, four grocery stores, a hardware, drug store, bank, harness shop, wagon yard, two barber shops, a hotel, a boarding house, a shoe shop, a jewelry store, two millinery shops, two newspapers, a public school, a private school, a church building, and four church organizations.⁸⁷

Eldorado

Eldorado, "the land of gold," received its name about 1891 with the establishment of a post office operated by a Mr. Brown. A general mercantile store and a wagon yard made the settlement permanent.

Eldorado has an altitude of 1280 feet. A sandy creek runs about one-fourth mile southwest of the town; Red River is seven miles south, and the gypsite beds are one-half mile north. There is abundant rock, sand, and gravel for all building construction.

In 1887 Mr. Goar, the first white man to settle between Mangum and Quanah, Texas, settled at Gyp Springs. Mr. Goar's

⁸⁷ Leger News, April 5, 1901.

first home cost seventy-five cents in money, as native materials were used. Others soon followed the example of Mr. Goar. R. M. Thorp built and operated a general mercantile store near the Eldorado townsite several years before Eldorado became a town. Although the population increased, the inhabitants numbered less than four hundred when the Frisco railroad came through the settlement in 1903. The people were not searching for the yellow dust, but came to make permanent homes. Stores and dwellings were erected, and religious worship and educational advantages were soon offered.⁸⁸

In 1902 a townsite was laid off on the J. B. Jackson farm. Lots were sold, and people began making preparations to move to the present site of Eldorado. Two additions were made, the Jones addition in 1903, and the B. F. Smith addition in 1906. The first building in the town was that of Wynn and Thorp, the first grocer was J. L. Ellison, and the first residence was the Summers' home.⁸⁹

In 1902 the South Methodist Episcopal church was built with A. A. Collins as pastor, and in 1903 the First Baptist church was built, with J. E. Williams as pastor. With the coming of the railroad, Eldorado began to grow, soon attaining near her present population of one thousand. A new hotel, a new two-story frame school house, a corner drug store, and a

⁸⁸ Cage Beach, Personal Interview with, Eldorado, Oklahoma, July 5, 1937.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

bank were erected. By July, 1903, it was impossible to find a quarter-section of land that had not been filed upon.⁹⁰ Root, of Chicago, vice-president of the United States Gypsum Company, came to Eldorado and purchased the plot of ground now used to secure the raw material gypsite.⁹¹

One of the most interesting events listed in the calendar of 1903 was the big barbeque and old settlers' reunion on June 25 and 26. Fifteen head of cattle and twenty sheep were killed for the occasion. A. R. Garrett, Mangum lawyer, spoke on the history of Greer to an audience of seven thousand, who came from a long distance to take part in the celebration.⁹²

The Oklahoma City and Western railroad became the Frisco in 1904. During this year plans were made to incorporate the town, the most enthusiastic laborer in this work being James Edwin Kelly, who had been published and proprietor of the Eldorado Courier for two years. Early in the year the town was incorporated with J. W. Talbott, R. M. Thorp, S. B. Edwards, and Virgie Wilson as the first officers. In 1905 the Presbyterians erected a church. The Farmers State Bank under the management of R. J. Robinson and Mason Howell was built in this year.

⁹⁰ Mrs. M. W. Abernathy, Personal Interview with, Altus, Oklahoma, Jan. 6, 1938.

⁹¹ Leger News, June 4, 1903.

⁹² Wilkins Garrett, Personal Interview with, Mangum, Oklahoma, Sept. 26, 1937.

In 1906 another decided increase was made in the population when excursionist home seekers visited Eldorado and a number of them established homes. The Eldorado plant of the United States Gypsum Company was built in 1907 and 1908 and has been in operation since that time. In the beginning it was a two-kettle mill, but later it was doubled in size, giving the plant an annual capacity of more than 50,000 tons. The fact that Eldorado was located near the gypsum beds caused a decided growth of the town. Old wooden buildings were replaced with others of brick or native stone.⁹³

Olustee

Olustee is the outgrowth of a group of smaller settlements, all of which had post offices. Settlers started building their homes as early as 1888; however, there were a few ranches near Olustee before that time, the most famous of these being the Cross S ranch, owned by L. Z. Eddleman and his two brothers. They first had their camps on Turkey Creek, about 1881, but in 1884 or 1885 they moved to Boggy Creek, five and one-half miles south of what is now Olustee. At one time they had twenty-one sections in their ranch. Each year the ranchers made the northern drive to New Kiowa, Kansas, to the shipping pens there. Then, as more settlers began coming to Greer County in 1886, the brothers drove their cattle farther west.

⁹³ R. M. Thorp, Personal Interview with, Altus, Oklahoma, Nov. 5, 1937.

All of the early day homes were dugouts, and even churches, schools, and post offices were under ground; however, in the summer church was often held out of doors, under arbors, and in camp meetings.

Antelope, prairie chicken and wild turkeys were plentiful near the present site of Olustee when the first settlers arrived. It was because of the many turkeys that roosted in trees along the banks of the creek that Turkey Creek received its present name.⁹⁴

Winters during the latter eighties and the nineties were most severe, and hardships were encountered by all, as the vast prairies were covered with ice and snow, killing many cattle, wild turkey, antelope, and prairie chickens. Many chickens and calves were also killed by the coyotes which quite frequently came up into the front yards of the settlers.

When the settlers did start building their homes above ground, all lumber had to be hauled from Vernon or Chillicothe, Texas. Sometimes the men of the family would go to one of these places to get the lumber and come back the next day, only to find the Red River had risen. It was often two or three weeks before they could get back to their families.

In 1891 and 1892 a flood and a tornado occurred, killing

⁹⁴ Mrs. O. J. Sipes, Personal Interview with, Olustee, Oklahoma, March 1, 1938.

several people and many head of cattle. All of the crops in those two years were ruined. Such hardships were too much to be endured; many became discouraged and returned to their former homes. The population, which had increased from 1888 to 1891, decreased considerably until 1896, when again many wagons filled with members of entire families and all their earthly possessions crossed Red River to establish in the new country.

Post offices in the early days were managed as a part of the household or farm. Mail was brought from Chillicothe through Willowvale to Aaron, with trips being made three times each week, weather permitting. It was not infrequent, however, for flood waters to delay the star route for two or three weeks at a time.⁹⁵

The Willowvale post office was established in 1889 by E. G. Walcott, in a dugout. In 1900 it was discontinued and the mail was sent to Olustee. The Olustee post office had been originally established three miles west of town by Harve Ragon in the early nineties, but it was moved to Olustee when a general store and a gin were built. In 1900 the Christa post office was started by William Christa, and in 1902 the mail was sent to Olustee. In 1904 the Creta post office (then called Era) was discontinued and the mail sent to Olustee, as was the mail of the Victory post office in 1906.

⁹⁵ C. W. Edwards, Personal Interview with, Olustee, Oklahoma, Aug. 7, 1937.

Harve Ragon was the first postmaster for Olustee, and Mr. Willeford was postmaster from 1903 to 1918.

Olustee was originally founded in 1898 when T. I. Truscott built a cotton gin and started a general store, calling it Klondike. Three miles west was a post office called Klondike, also, but as there was a post office with a similar name in Texas, the Postoffice Department suggested the name Olustee when the post office was moved the site of the present town. Olustee is of Indian origin and means "Ocean Pond."

In 1900 there were twenty-seven persons in Olustee. There was one gin, owned by McClellan and Truscott, the Ragon General store, and the post office.⁹⁶

Dr. T. H. Hardin owned the site of Olustee and resided there even before the town was started. The first houses were built by Jim Dickey, Mr. Bloker, and Doctor Hardin. The year 1903 was eventful in that the Frisco Railroad was put through Olustee and the first newspaper, The Olustee Outlook, was published by Mr. J. H. Buck. After the railroad was put through the town, it grew rapidly, and in the same year, 1903, the townsite was laid out. In 1904 Olustee was incorporated. The first officers governing the town were E. G. Walcott, J. W. Edwards, J. M. Norton, and J. W. Rylander, who was justice of the peace. E. G. Walcott owned the general store, which

⁹⁶ Ibid.

is the only firm started in early days that is still in business. J. W. Edwards was the first president of the National Bank.

In 1907 Olustee was a prosperous little town of 1500. The residents had every intention of having it designated as the seat of Jackson County and of securing a Methodist state college in the town. The Rev. W. A. Dickey, a Methodist minister, staked off lots and a college campus southwest of the present town, and many lots were sold. Although much time and work were put in on an effort to locate the Methodist college in Olustee, it never materialized.

In an election held the same year, after the designation of Jackson as a county, Altus received the largest number of votes and became the official seat of the county.⁹⁷

Granite

Granite, located at the foot of Headquarters Mountain, eight miles east and five miles north of Mangum, has beautiful trees, good land, and good water to make it attractive. Granite was the home of the cattlemen in the eighties. S. H. Tittle and George W. Briggs established themselves near Granite in 1881 and have been identified with the growth of the town for fifty-five years. When Greer County, Texas, became a part of the Indian Territory, Briggs was permitted to buy a quarter-section for a dollar an acre and also to keep

⁹⁷ T. P. Thrash, Personal Interview with, Olustee, Oklahoma, Jan. 25, 1938.

the quarter on which he had constructed a dugout in 1881; Tittle held land about one mile north of the present site of Granite, in a cove of Headquarters Mountain.⁹⁸

The town was located on land owned by K. C. Cox, who platted and sold lots in 1900. With the coming of the Rock Island railroad the same year, it grew to its present size in a period of a few months. Granite was the terminus of the Rock Island for a year and a half before it was built on to Mangum, and during this time the railroad deposited supplies here for a large part of the county, and they were freighted to other points. Another thing that caused immediate growth was that many people came to Granite to wait for the opening of the Kiowa-Comanche reservation. This gave them a chance to look the reservation over before they settled there.⁹⁹

In the earliest days of Granite a drug store and fifteen saloons were established, a large number of the saloons being in tents. In 1901 business boomed with the establishment of a hardware, drygoods, and grocery store, a meat market, a lumber yard, and a bakery. Because of lack of proper fire protection Granite lost six business houses by fire in July, 1906. The water supply from the new city well was inexhaustible, but it was inadequate protection because of lack of fire fighting equipment.

Along with these, other developments were need. In 1905

⁹⁸ Briggs, op. cit.

⁹⁹ S. H. Tittle, Personal Interview with, Granite, Oklahoma, Aug. 6, 1937.

a Woodmans band was organized, and every member of the band was required to be a member of the M. W. O. A. Concerning the skating rink opened in 1906, the Granite Enterprise commented, "This is a leveler; the lion and the lamb lie down together."¹⁰⁰

Lawless Element

Greer County in the days of settlement was not infested with the grosser class of adventurers. Among the sturdy pioneers who sought out new homes in this great land of the open range and fertile soil were few who sought to plunder and kill and live upon the earnings of their fellows. Several crimes were committed, however, that stand out in the memory of the people of that early day because of their brutality or the mystery enshrouding them.¹⁰¹

The saloon played an important part in the early criminal history of the county. About 1901 when the land office was conducting its greatest business and the Rock Island lines were opening up the country, saloons experienced a decided boom. At one time Mangum had fifteen saloons, although this number had been reduced to six at the time of statehood.¹⁰²

Saloons passed from Mangum and Greer County at the advent of statehood, November 16, 1907. A once flourishing

¹⁰⁰ The Granite Enterprise, June 10, 1904.

¹⁰¹ Abernathy, op. cit.,

¹⁰² Thoburn and Wright, op. cit., XI, p. 926.

business was ended at midnight of that day, when the six saloons at Mangum closed their doors for the last time. Prohibition for a period of twenty-one years was made a part of the Enabling Act. Later, by vote of the people in a state-wide special election, permanent prohibition was adopted.¹⁰³

Greer County's first killing after advent of the cattlemen occurred March 16, 1881, when Martinas, Mexican cook for the Rockingchair outfit, was killed by Noah Ellis. It was the first day of the spring roundup for the Rockingchair bunch, which always began its roundups on March 16. Being in good humor and wishing a little fun, Ellis poked fun at the Mexican. It made Martinas mad, and he ran at the cowboy with a knife. Ellis shot him dead. The killing occurred at Salt Fork River near the mouth of Wild Horse Creek, south of the present site of Vinson. Cowboys with the outfit thought it was Jim Ellis, brother to Noah, who killed the cook, but Noah was tried for murder and acquitted. He died later in New Mexico. Jim Ellis was killed by Bud Anderson, a cowboy employed by the O. M. outfit, a short distance north of Francis, Now Vinson. Anderson was at the time under an alias, his true name being Moore.¹⁰⁴

The first recorded murder within the County of Greer was that of Jack Sullivan, who was killed in a drunken brawl

¹⁰³ Tittle, op. cit.

¹⁰⁴ The Mangum Daily Star, June 20, 1937.

during a Christmas celebration. The murderer was clearly guilty of the crime and within a short time a Texas ranger came to arrest him. He resisted arrest and was killed by the ranger. Both slain men were interred in the cemetery created at the time for Mrs. Settles, who had died of cholera. The ranger was tried for the murder but was acquitted at Mobeetie, Texas.¹⁰⁵

Deputy Sheriff Lige Reeves believes the most brutal murder ever committed in Greer County was that of the two prospectors killed on Cave Creek for their possessions. Jim Morris, J. M. Moss, and Will Roberts had worked together at a brickyard in Vernon. After several months of intimate companionship there, the three men decided to cross over into Greer County and locate homesteads. They came to Mangum in a wagon and spent a night there, then drove west to Cave Creek and camped near the home of Billy Murphy, an early-day settler. On the morning of April 14, 1890, Moss and Morris walked up Salt Fork River to hunt wild turkeys, leaving Roberts, who was not feeling well, to remain in the wagon.

It is not recorded whether the two saw any turkeys or not. But a shot rang out in the stillness of the spring morning. A bullet from Morris' .32. calibre rifle passed through the head of his companion.¹⁰⁶ Morris concealed Moss's body in a hole he dug in the sand under the root of a

¹⁰⁵ Mangum Star, 1916, Official Court Records.

¹⁰⁶ Reeves, op. cit.

cottonwood tree on the banks of the Salt Fork. Roberts was lying on the spring seat of the wagon when Morris returned. Morris fired a bullet through Roberts' head and dumped his body over the seat into the back of the wagon, then drove about half a mile from the scene of the murder, dug a hole in the sand under a thicket, and covered the body of his former friend with a thin layer of earth.

Late in the afternoon a son of Billy Murphy was driving up the milk cows when he found Roberts' hat with a bullet hole in it. There was blood, as well as a portion of the murdered man's brains, in the hat.¹⁰⁷ Billy Murphy notified Sheriff S. H. Tittle that he suspected a murder had been committed near his home. Sheriff Tittle organized a posse and went to the Murphy home, following the trail of the wagon. L. J. (George) Edwards, pioneer Greer County ranchman, a member of the posse, found the body of Moss under the cottonwood tree. Later the posse found the body of Roberts.

J. R. Byers, pioneer deputy under Sheriff Tittle, trailed the prospectors' wagon into Vernon and located Morris. In company with a Vernon officer, he placed Morris under arrest and returned him to Mangum.

Morris was placed in a little calaboose on the southwest corner of the public square in Mangum, his leg shackled to a bar. A mob spirit was engendered because of the brutal murder, but Sheriff Tittle protected his prisoner from the Mob,

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

and Morris was placed on trial for his life.

The bodies of Moss and Roberts were buried in Riverside cemetery, and old timers today point out the little stone slaps that mark their final resting places.

Morris was granted a change of venue to Quanah, where he was tried for the murder. A new jail was being built in Quanah, and Morris was kept in a second-story office room. Constable Bob Downs of Quanah was placed as guard over him.¹⁰⁸

One evening Constable Downs went to supper, leaving Morris alone. The prisoner unlocked his shackles with a pen point and freed himself. As the Constable returned, Morris ran against him and knocked him down the stairs. Sheriff Tittle was notified of the escape of his prisoner and hurried to Quanah to lead a posse of officers, Texas rangers, and citizens in another man hunt.

Two boys, 16 or 17 years old, were hunting along the Pease River when they saw a man asleep under a mesquite bush. Having heard of the escape of Morris and suspecting that the sleeping man might be the much-wanted fugitive, the youths cautiously approached him and covered him with their guns before awakening him. They marched him to their home, hitched a team to a wagon, forced the man to get in, and hauled him to Quanah.

Sheriff Gibson had offered a reward of one hundred and fifty dollars for the arrest of Morris, and he was surprised

¹⁰⁸ S. H. Tittle, op. cit.

that the two youths had captured and delivered the man for whom dozens of officers were searching, for the prisoner of the youths was indeed Jim Morris.¹⁰⁹

Two young men came into Greer County in 1898 and located on a farm they had rented jointly from M. L. Ealum on Salt Fork River just west of Altus. Norman Newman and Johnnie White were the young tenant farmers. They worked together in a partnership of growing and harvesting a crop in Greer County. White had a wagon and four horses, which he put into the partnership arrangement. Newman worked with him and was to receive a share of the profits from the agricultural venture. The crop was grown and harvested - it was a bountiful harvest - and the products were hauled to market at Quanah. The last load of the year's crop, a load of shelled corn, was hauled to Quanah in December, 1898.

Newman returned from the trip, with White's wagon and four horses. White did not return and Newman told his neighbors, who enquired, that he had bought White's teams and wagon and his interest in the partnership and White had returned to his former home farther south in Texas. Newman remained at the farm for a few days, then went to Cheyenne, where he had relatives.¹¹⁰

George Hensley, later to become sheriff of Jackson County, and Constable Aaron were neighbors of the two young

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ The Mangum Daily Star, Nov. 16, 1932.

tenant farmers. They suspected something was wrong - they did not like Newman's conduct and had doubts about the truth of his story.

Quietly Hensley and Aaron started an investigation. They followed the road of the two young men to Quanah looking into all water holes and likely hiding places along the route. Lige Reeves and Bob Snipes, freighting from Quanah to Mangum, were camped on Groesbeck Creek this side of Quanah, when they saw two men looking in the water holes along the creek. Reeves joined the men and enquired if they were looking for a "bogged calf." The volunteer investigators told him of their suspicions and of their investigation.

Reeves advised the Altus men that although he was without experience as an officer or detective, he believed if White had been killed the body might be found at the farm of the partners. Hensley and Aaron took the tip from the young freighter and returned to the Ealum farm. As they entered the gate to the farm they noticed wagon tracks leading off from the road. The tracks were especially noticeable where they crossed heaps of dirt from salamander holes.¹¹¹

Following the wagon tracks, Hensley and Aaron went to a well, partly filled with new dirt. Securing a spade, they started digging. With the second spadeful of dirt, they shoveled out the hand of a man. The body of White was re-

¹¹¹ George Hensley, Personal Interview with, Altus, Oklahoma, Aug. 19, 1937.

moved from the well and the sheriff at Mangum notified. Sheriff Overton, learning that Newman was at Cheyenne, hurried there and found him at a poker game. He returned him to Mangum and delivered him to Sheriff Blalock, who had succeeded to that office.

Newman soon escaped from jail, traveled to Roger Mills County, and then made his way to Dona Ana County, New Mexico. Pat Garrett, the famous sheriff, attempted to arrest the fugitive, who resisted. Garrett killed Newman and shipped his body to Quanah by train. Claud Blalock brought the body to Mangum in a wagon, and it was interred in Riverside cemetery.¹¹²

It was on Monday morning, May 27, 1907, that Tom Bailey, a young man living on a farm-ranch of his father's near the head of Haystack creek, went to the dugout home of a neighbor, J. J. Duffy - "the Irish hermit" - and discovered one of the most brutal and gruesome murders in the history of Greer County.

Young Bailey had gone after some cattle that had strayed onto the Duffy claim. His little collie dog was with him. The young man saw his dog sniffing about a little dugout used as a chicken house, or crib. When the dog barked and refused to leave the spot, Bailey went to investigate.

The little dugout had been piled full of mesquite brush,

¹¹² Claud Blalock, Personal Interview with, Mangum, Oklahoma, Oct. 12, 1937.

rubbish, and dirt. But the dog was digging his way among the rubbish and brush and soon uncovered a human arm. Bailey quickly uncovered other portions of the body of a man.

Young Bailey had found the body of J. J. Duffy, a homesteader who had drifted into Greer County from Nebraska about the beginning of the century and had filed on a claim and established a hermit home.¹¹³

Neighbors were notified. Sheriff Jasper Nelson was called. They buried the decomposed body of the Irish recluse in the Delhi cemetery that afternoon. Sheriff Nelson and his force and County Attorney C. M. Thacker started an extensive investigation.

Duffy had lived much to himself upon his homestead. He took none of his neighbors into his confidence. He would leave his homestead and remain away for weeks at a time. Some of his neighbors suspected that he gambled when away from his claim; some thought he had a comfortable fortune, which in those days might not have exceeded a few hundred dollars.

Because of his habits, considerable time had elapsed from the time of his murder until his body was found. Even a greater length of time could have elapsed had not Tom Bailey's dog made the discovery on the Monday morning.

Sheriff Nelson, his chief deputy Gove C. Moore, and other officers devoted their time and efforts to a solution

¹¹³ Tuton, op. cit.

of the mysterious murder of Duffy.¹¹⁴ They learned that Duffy had executed a deed to his homestead to Claud E. Walkup, a young man who lived with his parents only a mile or so from the Duffy claim. They learned also that J. Monroe Pumphrey had some connection with the execution of the deed and that Walkup and Pumphrey were known to have been more intimate with Duffy than had other neighbors. All of the evidence, taken together, pointed toward the two young men.

Walkup and Pumphrey disappeared. Sheriff Nelson and his deputies started a search for them that extended into other states and territories. Claud Walkup was arrested at DeQueen, Arkansas, and returned to Mangum by Deputy Sheriff Moore. En route to Mangum he was confined in the Chickasha jail one night and there made a confession of the murder of Duffy. He went into considerable detail about the killing, claiming that the fatal shot was fired by Pumphrey.

Monroe Pumphrey was arrested at Melrose, New Mexico, and returned by Sheriff Nelson. En route to Mangum he also made a confession, giving details of the killing exactly as related by Walkup, except that he claimed Walkup fired the fatal shot.

Claud Walkup and Monroe Pumphrey were held without bail in the Greer County jail for several months. Then came statehood and the division of the "grand old empire of Greer." The murder of Duffy occurred just across the line of what was

¹¹⁴ Reeves, op. cit.

to become at statehood the County of Beckham. At statehood the case of Territory of Oklahoma v. Claud Walkup and Monroe Pumphrey became the State of Oklahoma v. Walkup and Pumphrey and was transferred from the district court of Greer County to the district court of Beckham County.

Walkup and Pumphrey renounced their confessions. Testimony was introduced by the defense to impeach the evidence given by some of the state witnesses. Walkup was granted a severance and tried alone. The jury returned a verdict of "not guilty." County Attorney Smith then agreed to dismissal of the charge against Pumphrey, so he was never tried. A great feeling of resentment was aroused because of the result of the trial.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ The Mangum Daily Star, Oct. 13, 1937.

CHAPTER III. ECONOMIC PROGRESS

Cattle Trails

The early development of Greer was definitely affected by the trails which crossed the land en route to the other parts of the interior of North America.¹ These three trails bore the names Fort Sill-Fort Elliott, Mobeetie, and the Western. All crossed the Red River at or near Doan's Crossing before spreading out in various directions.

In 1868 a military road connecting Fort Sill and Fort Elliott was established which passed through Greer from northeast to southwest. A stage line was operated over the trail between the two posts with a stage stand at Comanche Springs, five miles north of Granite. From Comanche Springs the trail crossed the North Fork and ran across the northern part of Greer County.

The Mobeetie trail was established in 1879. It ran from Gainsville to Wichita Falls, Texas, following the river to Doan's Crossing and up to Mobeetie. This road had a stage stand in Greer County on the Salt Fork between Altus and Mangum, and another to the south of Station Creek, from which the creek took its name.²

Perhaps the greatest rival of the Chisholm Trail was the

¹ Grant Foreman, Red River and the Spanish Boundaries, in Chronicles of Oklahoma, XI, pp. 302-303.

² Briggs, op. cit.

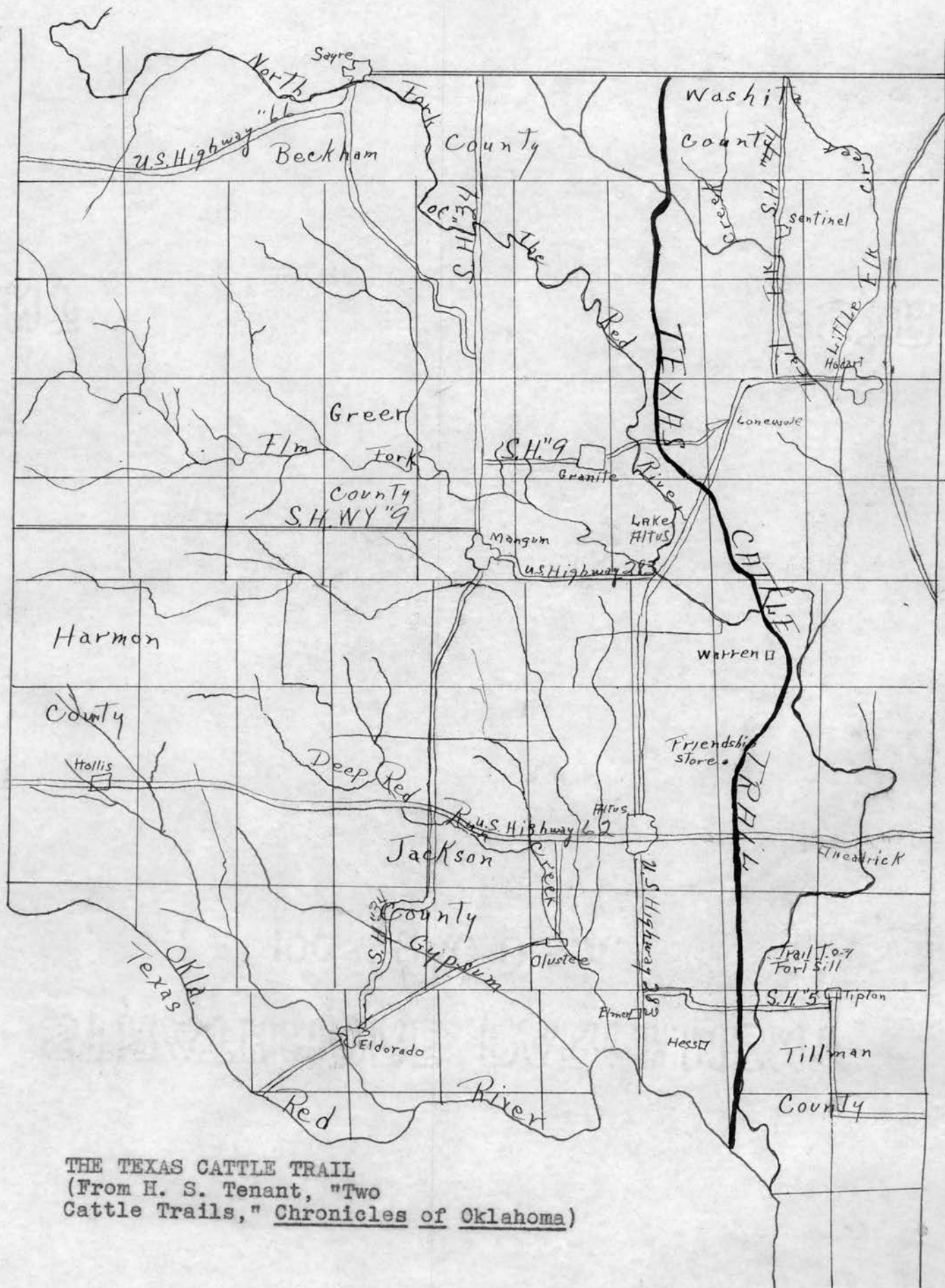
trail in the western part of the state that carried cattle to the Indian reservations and ranges far to the north. It was perhaps the best known and longest used.³ After the traffic shifted to Dodge City, and after 1880, much of the driving was diverted to this western trail.⁴

The old Western trail was a transcontinental cow path beginning at Paso Grande, Texas, at the point where the Rio Grande flows into the Gulf of Mexico. Its route threaded northward across the state into the Indian Territory, and Kansas, then diagonally to the southwest corner of Nebraska, on to the northeast corner of Wyoming and into Montana, crossing the Yellowstone River at Frenchman's Ford, across the Missouri River at Fort Benton, and northwest to the Blackfoot agency. The trail crossed the Red River into the Indian country at Doan's Crossing, north of Pease River. It swung slightly northwest through old Greer County, and crossed the Salt Fork near the western boundary of the state. After crossing the North Fork, the trail turned back slightly northeast, crossing the Washita near the present location of Cheyenne in Roger Mills County, veered northward to Camp Supply on the Canadian River, ran due north through Harper County, and crossed where the river bows out into Kansas.⁵

³ E. E. Dale, Range Cattle Industry, p. 64.

⁴ H. E. Collins, Warpath and Cattle Trails, p. 272.

⁵ E. E. Dale, Ranching on the Cheyenne-Arapaho Reservation, in Chronicles of Oklahoma, VI, p. 35.



THE TEXAS CATTLE TRAIL
(From H. S. Tenant, "Two
Cattle Trails," Chronicles of Oklahoma)

The first herd of cattle was driven up the trail in 1874 by Maxwell and Morris. They started at Buffalo Gap, Texas, came by Albany, Fort Griffin, Throckmorton, Seymour, Vernon, which was then called Eagle Flat, and to the crossing later known as Doan's Crossing.⁶

^{CORWIN} Carwin F. Doan located and established a post on the south bank of Red River in 1877. In 1881 the trail reached the peak of production. In this year three hundred thousand cattle were driven by it to shipping points in Kansas.⁷

In the year 1882 Andy Adams, driving a herd of cattle to the Blackfoot agency, encountered many difficulties and dangers common to all trail followers which he describes quite minutely.⁸ The crossing of the Red River was the bane of every herd driver. This river took as toll the lives of more trail men than any other river forded between Texas and the northern destination. In less than two years five graves attested this disregard for human life.⁹ The Red River, however, on the drive described by Andy Adams proved an easy crossing. The chief apprehension lay with the warlike tribes of the Apaches, Kiowas, and Comanches, whose reservations they were to cross. Previous drovers had experienced trouble, and they had been warned to swing the drive

⁶ Briggs, op. cit.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ The Log of a Cowboy, p. 120, ff.

⁹ Andy Adams, Cattle Brands, p. 121.

westward through the Panhandle of Texas to avoid the camp. Also, the commander at Fort Sill had been notified and stood ready to aid the drovers. The Indians made their usual demand for a few cattle to permit the droves to pass peacefully through in lieu of the buffalo that had disappeared with the coming of the white man. Three beeves were given to the wives and children of the tribes. News of a large encampment of Indians two or three days ahead on the trail caused the herders to swing westward to an easy crossing on the Red Fork, in order to avoid the toll of beeves expected by the Indians. The swing was successfully managed, but rain and lost horses hampered progress and entailed much lost time. The Salt Fork went out of banks, and though the cattle swam safely across, it was necessary to make a raft for the wagons. Continued rain added to the disagreeable experience. The aim was to drift back to the main trail. A count of the cattle showed an addition of twenty head gathered along the way - perhaps strays from some previous herd stampeded. Ten days after leaving the trail, the drivers found themselves back on the main line and crossed the North Fork late that evening.¹⁰

Ranching

Ranchmen who had been operating in Texas were finding that good range was becoming scarce in south, central, and

¹⁰ Adams, op. cit., p. 120, ff.

southwest Texas, and they wanted to locate more or less permanent ranges for their cattle in an unsettled territory.¹¹ Greer County was the most inviting area they could locate. Because it was impossible to obtain title to lands in Greer County at that time, the cattlemen moved in, in most instances, without any arrangements with state or federal government.¹²

Hanie and Handy came into Greer County in the early spring of 1880. They were the first cattlemen to use the lands of Greer County as their range. Their "ranch" included the western portion of Greer County and large tracts in Wheeler and Collingsworth Counties.¹³

Hanie and Handy and their associates believed that Greer County was a portion of the Indian Territory and that the State of Texas had no legal claim to it. They chose the western portion of the county as their range so they would be near the one-hundredth meridian and could easily move their outfit across the line in event federal authorities protested too strenuously against their occupying a part of the Indian Territory.¹⁴

Another fact which contributed to their decision to locate on the west side of the county was that Indians - Kiowas and Comanches to the east and Cheyennes to the north -

¹¹ E. E. Dale, Personal Interview with, Norman, Oklahoma, July 20, 1937.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Tittle, op. cit.

¹⁴ Ibid.

would not be so likely to attack them on the west side of the county as on the east side adjoining the reservations of the tribesmen.

Mat Murphy owned about three thousand head of cattle, branded with a "flying E," which ranged with the Hanie and Handy cattle. Hanie and Handy used the "HAY" brand. S. H. Tittle came into Greer County with the Hanie and Handy outfit, of which he was foreman.

John Powers came into Greer County in 1880 with six thousand head and ranged with Hanie and Handy. Powers' cattle arrived in two herds, the first in the spring and the last during the fall of 1880. These cattle were moved from the Double Mountain Fork of the Brazos.¹⁵

The Hanie-Handy-Powers-Murphy outfit had headquarters at Jaybuckle Springs, north of Reed, and line camps at Vinson, at the state line directly west of Vinson, and on Elm River at what has long been known as the H BAR Y headquarters. Summer headquarters were maintained on Big Turkey Creek, west of the present site of Sayre, and on Deer Creek.¹⁶

Ikard and Harrold brought between sixty and seventy thousand head of cattle into Greer County in October or November, 1880, and established a vast ranch which covered more than half of Greer County.

They first established headquarters in "the Cove," about

¹⁵ Boyd, op. cit.

¹⁶ Ibid.

one-half mile northeast of the present home of S. H. Tittle near Granite. Headquarter Mountain, at the base of which the town of Granite was later built, derived its name from the fact that the location of the Ikard and Harrold headquarters was there.¹⁷

Ikard and Harrold established line camps along North Fork River, one being located at Comanche Springs, five miles northeast of Granite; one, known as the Heart camp, on the river east of Settle Mountain; one east of Navajoe; and one in the forks of Red River and North Fork. Above Comanche Springs the next camp was located opposite the present ranch house of B. B. Van Vacter; the next at the mouth of Deep Creek, due east of the present site of Sayre (This camp was on the north side of North Fork and was used also as the main camp of the Standard Cattle Company, which had two thousand head of cattle in the Cheyenne reservation); next at the mouth of Big Turkey Creek.¹⁸

A line of camps then extended north and south across Greer County. One was located at the Jester cave; the next below Jaybuckle Springs on a farm now owned by J. L. Gilliland; the next on Salt Fork; the next on Turkey Creek; the next on Sandy Creek, and the last on Red River.¹⁹

At about the same time L. Z. Eddleman moved a herd of

¹⁷ The Mangum Daily Star, Oct. 13, 1938.

¹⁸ Briggs, op. cit.

¹⁹ Tuton, op. cit.

cattle into the south portion of Greer County. He established headquarters on Red River at Nine Mile Spring and ranged west to the mouth of Boggy Creek. J. H. Drury had a horse range from the mouth of Boggy west about the present Eldorado-Quanah bridge on State Highway 34. Ikard and Harrold tried to keep their cattle off the Drury and Eddleman ranges, but some of their cattle drifted across North Fork into the Cheyenne-Arapaho reservation.²⁰

The Standard Cattle Company, which had vast herds in the country north of North Fork River, made arrangements with Ikard and Harrold to winter twenty thousand head of their cattle in Greer County through the winter of 1884. George W. Briggs and B. F. Simpson counted the cattle into Greer County, living for three months under a cottonwood tree at the mouth of Little Turkey Creek on North Fork while the cattle were being driven by.²¹

Ikard and Harrold sold out to the Francklyn Land and Cattle Company in 1885, receiving twenty-two dollars a head for the cattle. About fourteen hundred head of cattle and six hundred horses were turned back by the Francklyn company because they were crippled or otherwise unmarketable. These cattle and horses were driven to the Texas Panhandle and turned over to the White Deer ranch.²²

²⁰ Sipes, op. cit.

²¹ Briggs, op. cit.

²² Boyd, op. cit.

It required a whole year to round up, cut out, and otherwise close the deal between Ikard and Harrold and the Francklyn Land and Cattle Company. The latter company closed out the Greer County cattle as fast as they could round them up, cut them out, and start them in herds on the trail for Dodge City. Fourteen herds of Francklyn cattle were on the trail between Greer County and Dodge City at one time.

Sale of the Ikard and Harrold cattle to the Francklyn company was probably the largest transaction ever made in Greer County. It was referred to at that time as "a million dollar deal."²³

Following the removal of the Francklyn company from Greer County, Pumphrey and Olive moved in from the vicinity of San Antonio. Jack Laughlin was manager of the group, which was known as the T. E. outfit. T. E. headquarters was established four miles southeast of Granite on what is now known as the Maxwell farm. Five or six dugouts were built and used as headquarters until 1887, when a frame house was built, which still stand and is used as a farm home, although in recent years it has been moved from the river bottoms because of the danger of its being swept away by a North Fork flood.²⁴

The last of the T. E. cattle were driven out in 1889.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Briggs, op. cit.

George W. Briggs was in charge of the trail herds when the T. E. outfit closed out, the herds being driven to Honeywell, Kansas, for delivery to go on range on the Arkansas River.²⁵

Hanie and Handy and John Powers sold their cattle in 1884 to the Day Land and Cattle Company, composed of J. W. (Doc) Day, the Maddox brothers, and John W. Powers, who took stock in the company in payment for his three thousand head of cattle.²⁶ The Day company paid thirty-six dollars for cows and calves and eighteen dollars for yearlings, buying six to seven thousand head from Hanie and Handy and three thousand head from Powers. The company used the H BAR Y brand.²⁷

The Day company had acquired 144,640 acres of land in Greer County by purchasing veterans' certificates. Each of these consisted of 1280 acres of land given by the State of Texas to surviving veterans of the Texas Revolution, signers of the Declaration of Texas' Independence, and widows of those who fell at the Dawson massacre. After receiving a patent to the land, the owner could dispose of it in any way he desired.²⁸ This grant act had been passed by the Texas legislature in 1881. Veterans or their widows eligible for

²⁵ The Mangum Daily Star, Oct. 13, 1937.

²⁶ Tittle, op. cit.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Day Land and Cattle Company v. the State of Texas, The Southwestern Reporter, iv, (1865-6), p. 312.

land grants had reached advanced ages and were usually desirous of selling their land.

The Supreme Court of Texas ruled in June, 1887, that grant certificates could not be located in Greer County because these lands had been set aside by an act of February 25, 1879, for education purposes and payment of the state debt.²⁹

The Day Land and Cattle Company began closing out its Greer County cattle about the time of the Supreme Court decision. It required several years to liquidate the ranch, the last cattle being driven about 1894. After the Supreme Court decision, the Day company continued to use the Greer County range, as Mr. Anderson explained, "as a tenant at the will of the United States."³⁰

A large herd of cattle owned by Mrs. John Saul of Jones County, Texas, was moved into Greer County about the same time Pumphrey and Olive moved in. The Beaumont Land and Cattle Company also moved a big herd of steers into Greer County and used the range on the east side of the county, together with Pumphrey and Olive and Mrs. Saul. Several other cattlemen used the same range in what seems to have been a cooperative range agreement. T. H. (Bar W) Wilson of Spanish Fort, Texas, had four or five thousand head on this range.³¹

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Tittle, op. cit.

³¹ Wilson, op. cit.

A fence was built from above the mouth of Fish Creek down Salt Fork to a point where the Mangum cemetery is now located, then due east to North Fork. These outfits began closing out about 1889 and finished in two or three years.³²

Another early cattle outfit of Greer County was the T Cross outfit, of which Mr. Kimberlin of Sherman, Texas, was the owner and T. J. Peniston was manager. This outfit, consisting of about three thousand head, had arrived in 1881 and ranged along Salt Fork west of the mouth of Fish Creek and south of the headwaters of Turkey Creek. The T Cross outfit remained in the county eight or ten years. Among the T Cross cowboys were the late Joe C. Thompson and his brother, John Thompson; John Gault, Bob Brown, and Bill Hughes, who ran cattle with the group.³³

W. B., Sam, and Joe White, of Brady, Texas, turned loose a herd of their O M cattle of the Diamond F range on Buck Creek during a snowstorm in December 1880. The cattle mixed with the J BUCKLE and H A Y cattle and were left on their range for two or three years. Later the O M cattle were driven to a range which ran from Salt Fork to Red River west of the T Cross range. The O M and T Cross outfits went together during the winters, staying in the county ten or eleven years.³⁴

³² Ibid.

³³ John Gault, Personal Interview with, Mangum, Oklahoma, Aug. 19, 1937.

³⁴ Tittle, op. cit.

Some of the cowboys of the O M outfit were Sam and Joe White, two of the owners; Jim Ellis, who was killed in Greer County; Bud Anderson, who killed Ellis; Tom Wilson; Fox Chambers; Tom Devers; Jack Pigford, and others.³⁵

Other early Greer County cattlement included Luther Clark, now an honored citizen of Quanah, Texas; John Ledbetter and W. B. Tullis, who ran the Z V ranch in what is now the Ladessa community; George W. Boyd, who established a ranch at the northwest corner of Greer County, with headquarters at the mouth of Timber Creek five miles east of the present town of Sayre; and George W. Briggs, who bought four hundred and fifty head of cattle in Cooke County, Texas, in 1884 and started a little ranch at Comanche Springs. Various other small outfits, which would be considered large ranches now, were established in Greer County and remained for various periods of time.³⁶

Railroads

As the county grew, citizens of Greer County began to realize railroads were necessary for proper development. The nearest market was at Quanah, forty miles away. The following of mere trails and the fording of streams was a hazardous journey.³⁷

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Tuton, op. cit.

³⁷ G. B. Townshend, Personal Interview with, Mangum, Oklahoma, April 18, 1937.

A mass meeting of the citizens of Mangum and vicinity and all others interested was called in 1898 for the purpose of securing a railroad for the section.³⁸ The Chicago and Rock Island was built to parallel the Santa Fe from north to south, the distance between the two lines being about thirty-five miles at the nearest point. The line had started construction from Chickasha westward, but its terminus was unknown to the people of Greer County at this time.³⁹

The citizens of Mangum sent a committee to Topeka, Kansas, early in 1900 to see what could be done about getting the Rock Island to build its line to Mangum. The committee was cordially received and heard, and an investigation was promised. Vice-President Parker was to come to Mangum in a few days and look over the proposed route. As a whole, the prospects for a railroad at Mangum seemed promising.⁴⁰

Mangum citizens devoted untiring efforts in trying to obtain consent of railroad officials to extend the line westward.⁴¹ A. R. Garrett and James Scarborough visited the Texas counties of Hardeman, Childress, Ford, Cottle, Collingsworth, and possible others with the idea of creating sentiment for the railroad. They hoped to get promises of patronage

³⁸ The Mangum Star, Feb. 17, 1898.

³⁹ Ibid., Feb. 14, 1900.

⁴⁰ House Executive Documents, 51 Congress, 2 Session, XII (2841), p. 96, Report of Leo Bennett, Union Agent, for 1890.

⁴¹ Townshend, op. cit.

from the cattlemen of that section. Mangum could offer unparalleled advantages to cattle shippers in the way of excellent routes for driving and holding grounds when they reached Mangum.⁴²

G. W. Boyd and J. E. Carroll were selected to go to Chicago and present a plea to officials of the Rock Island for extension of the line on into Mangum. On returning, they stated that Mangum could rest assured it would get the road. The inducements were too great, they said. Benefits to the road contained in the proposition were too numerous to be lightly passed by even this great railway system. They confidently believed that they had only to bide their time and all would be well in the end.⁴³

The chief engineer of the Rock Island system and the general superintendent came out over the proposed line in Greer County as far as Elm River in April, 1900. About that time, however, the Rock Island surveyed its line across North Fork into Greer County, and the town of Granite was started. Post offices at Quartz and Mount Walsh were consolidated with the newly created Granite office, and it became definitely known that a town would be established there.⁴⁴ On June 29, 1900, a telegram was received by J. C. Gilliland from H. A. Parker accepting a proposition made by Mangum which in-

⁴² The Mangum Star, Feb. 23, 1900.

⁴³ The Mangum Star, April 4, 1900.

⁴⁴ The Mangum Star, April 18, 1900.

cluded the donation of a right-of-way, depot, and yardage sites, etc., and stating that the line would be extended to that point. The first passenger train over the Rock Island reached Mangum at 6:00 p.m. Sunday, September 2, 1900.⁴⁵

Thus Greer County was given its first railroad. Two years later the Choctaw line was built and the towns of Erick and Sayre were founded. About the same time the Frisco built across the south side of Greer County, and the towns of Headrick, Olustee, and Eldorado were started. Altus became Leger. The Orient railroad, which was already negotiating for a line across Greer County in 1900, completed its line across Greer County in 1907. The Wichita Falls and Northwestern built two lines across Greer County, with one completed to Mangum about November 10, 1909. This resulted in the beginning of Hester and Brinkman in Greer County. The line from Altus to Hollis was constructed in 1910 and resulted in establishment of the town of Gould.⁴⁶

Resources

Although Greer County was primarily a cattle country, the agricultural resources were developed in a remarkable way between 1884 and 1907. The first crops were wheat and corn. Small patches of land were broken and a few fences erected to protect the crops. Each year the acreage was

⁴⁵ The Mangum Star, July 4, 1900.

⁴⁶ The Greer County Monitor, Sept. 6, 1900.

increased. Crops were excellent in 1888 and 1891, but the drouth of 1890 drove some of the farmers from their homes to seek work. After several months they returned to face the obstacles incidental to pioneer life and the poor seasons that followed.⁴⁷ There were poor crops or total failures due to drouth in 1892 to 1894, while in 1895 a three-day sand storm literally blew the wheat and oats out of the ground by the roots.⁴⁸ The people were not accustomed to expensive living, but the five lean years would have caused real suffering had it not been that wheat, kafir corn, and milo maize were plentiful, so bread was not lacking. With bread, buttermilk, and vegetables the settlers did not go hungry.⁴⁹

Because of these conditions land was of little value before 1900.⁵⁰ Because of the drouth, wheat farming was abandoned to some extent, and the people learned that they could raise cotton, which would stand drouth better than wheat or corn. By 1900 the farmers were raising wheat, corn,

⁴⁷ Dora Ann Stewart, The Government and Development of Oklahoma Territory, p. 629.

⁴⁸ The Mangum Daily Star, July, 1935.

⁴⁹ Stewart, op. cit., p 629.

⁵⁰ The Chickasha Express tells this story. "Bill Jones returned from Greer yesterday. He said a man who owned three hundred twenty acres of Greer County land had had a proposition from a Kansas man to trade forty acres for a wagon and team. The landed proprietor accepted the offer and the two struck off to town to draw up the papers. There it was discovered that the Kansan could neither read nor write, so the landed proprietor unloaded the whole three hundred twenty acres on him and is proud of the job."

oats, hay, small grains, and cotton, which had become one of the leading crops.⁵¹ The cotton industry developed so fast that in this year W. H. Maupin, who had built a gin in Altus, advertised for one hundred teams to haul cotton seed to Mangum.⁵² Wheat and other crops were also the greatest in the history of the county. By 1900 there had been fifty-five thousand fruit trees planted. The soil was found particularly suitable to the growth of grapes, also; large vineyards had been set out, and the production was thirty-four hundred pounds in 1900.⁵³

Gins were built all over the county; thirty-eight were operating in 1902. The aggregate output of the gins until October was 11,798 bales, with an average of 520 pounds, although only one-third of the crop was marketed at the time. The estimate for the year was forty thousand bales with a valuation of \$1,600,000. Cotton seemed to have a decided advantage, for it could be ginned and marketed at home.⁵⁴

After the railroads came into the county more products were raised, because they could be marketed with less ex-

⁵¹ Census of Agriculture, 1900. See Table I.

⁵² The Altus News, Sept. 30, 1900.

⁵³ Census of Agriculture, 1900.

⁵⁴ The Altus News, Oct. 25, 1902. This estimate was made by Jack T. Pryce, acting for the special census bureau for Greer County. In 1905 the price of cotton had gone down to five cents, and a new agricultural program was advocated. It included more corn, kafir, alfalfa, sorghum, potatoes, poultry, and cheese.

pense. The price of land increased four or five times in a short period of time due, to some extent, to agricultural resources.

A large part of the population of Greer was not accustomed to a wet climate, but the drouths blasting the crops made them realize that a water supply was necessary in farming. Private irrigation to farms was supplied with home-made water-wheels and pumps. Greer asked the government for the construction of a storage system. By 1906 the reclamation service of the United States had experimented and made preliminary surveys for Greer County. The result was the Navajoe project,⁵⁵ whose dam site was on the North Fork of the Red River between Greer County and Kiowa County. The project as planned was one of the largest in the United States. It was not contemplated to irrigate an arid region but to prevent, by a sufficient supply of moisture during the spring and early summer, the blasting of a crop brought almost to fruition. At the time of statehood a pumping station was being operated by the government on the North Fork of Red River. The normal development of Oklahoma seemed to require this project's being carried to completion.⁵⁶

In addition to agricultural products, Greer County has a variety of mineral resources. Salt wells and springs are found on Elm River some twenty miles northwest of Mangum and

⁵⁵ Stewart, op. cit., p. 647.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 647.

also in paying quantities south of Hollis, where it is being handled on a commercial basis.⁵⁷

The Wichita Mountains, which extend into Greer County, and several other regions of the county were extensively prospected by miners for many years.⁵⁸ Simon Cockrell reported seeing Spanish miners in the Wichitas in 1833.⁵⁹ There was an influx of gold seekers to this locality following 1849.⁶⁰ Navajoe was headquarters for miners following its establishment in 1886.⁶¹

Greer County began to realize the value of the granite industry with the coming of the railroads. The Wichita Mountains near Granite hold practically an inexhaustible supply, while the Headquarters Mountain contains millions of cubic feet within itself. About 1902 the first experiment was made to determine the value of this stone for monuments and building purposes, and by 1906 a sum of fully \$150,000 was invested in quarrying and polishing plants.⁶² This stone, in red, pink, gray, and brown, is finding a wide market over the United States.⁶³

⁵⁷ Townshend, op. cit.

⁵⁸ The Mangum Daily Star, Oct. 13, 1938.

⁵⁹ United States v. State of Texas, p. 633.

⁶⁰ Alvin Rucker, in The Daily Oklahoman, Aug. 16, 1931.

⁶¹ Briggs, op. cit.

⁶² Stewart, op. cit., p. 645.

⁶³ Tittle, op. cit.

Gypsum deposits occupy the greater part of western Greer County. In 1905 the supply was estimated at fifty-three billion tons, almost twice as much as that of any other county in Oklahoma.⁶⁴

Greer County made exceedingly rapid progress during the period from 1886 to 1906. Industry, towns, railroads, and homes were established. At statehood the county was ready to assume her share of the responsibilities of a democratic form of government.⁶⁵

Frontier Tales

Early settlers of Greer County were inclined to fear that Indians might attack them almost any time. They obtained rifles of large caliber for use in guarding their homes against possible attacks, using the same guns for killing deer, antelope, wild turkey, wolves, and other animals which were numerous in the section.

Every precaution was exercised to protect women and children against possible Indian raids. However, it was necessary for the men to be away from home sometimes, and then the women and children would spend sleepless nights. The most fearful times for the settlers were in 1890 and 1891, when the entire middle West was menaced by the most formidable Indian uprising that has ever occurred in the United States.

⁶⁴ Charles N. Gould, in the Granite Enterprise, May 11, 1905.

⁶⁵ Boyd, op. cit.

Indian wars hitherto had been confined to certain localities by the prompt concentration of troops and were speedily subdued, but in this instance the uprising was among the leading and most warlike tribes, who roamed over thousands of square miles.⁶⁶

The Sioux Indians in the Dakotas left their reservation and began to attack the white settlements. They were led by Sitting Bull, a medicine man who used the ghost dance to incite the red men in their depredations. News of these outrages filtered into Greer County, causing consternation. The belief spread like wildfire over a vast section of country that thousands of Indians might attack white settlements without warning at any time and kill many men, women, and children.

Cowboys and settlers began immediately to clean and oil their guns and prepare for action. A "home guard" company was organized at Mangum. Thirty or forty men were enlisted who agreed to hold themselves ready to go at a moment's notice to defend the settlers of Greer County. However, regular drill periods soon lapsed, and the home guard was soon a thing of the past.

Another incident soon occurred to cause grave apprehension among the settlers. Bob Poline, a Kiowa sub-chief, was killed in Greer County on August 29, 1891, by Jake Booher,

⁶⁶ The Mangum Daily Star, Oct. 13, 1937.

19-year-old cowboy employed by N. J. McElroy on his small ranch near the old trail crossing north of Warren.⁶⁷ Poline had visited the McElroy place the day before and demanded two steers, which he claimed belonged to him, but which really belonged to Bill Mann and were in the McElroy pasture. When Mr. McElroy refused to let the Indian have the steers, the latter had ridden away in great anger. On August 29 Poline returned to the McElroy place. Mr. McElroy and his cousin, Booher, were putting up prairie hay about three hundred yards northwest of Mr. McElroy's home when Poline rode up and again demanded the steers.

An argument started between Poline and Booher, while Mr. McElroy talked to Poline in the Comanche language, which both understood well, in an effort to avoid serious trouble. Poline accused young Booher of stealing the steers.

"No white man can call me a thief," Booher told Poline, "and I'm not going to take it off an Indian."

"Go ahead, shoot," Poline exclaimed. "Me shoot. Your bullet hit me like this (motioning) and bounce back like that and kill you."

Both men pulled their pistols. Poline moved his pistol very slowly in a semicircle to point it at young Booher. Booher's gun went off, and Poline dropped dead.

Mr. McElroy sent the boy to Mangum immediately, and young Booher surrendered to Sheriff S. H. Tittle and was

⁶⁷ Wilson, op. cit.

placed in jail. A group of Kiowas went for the body of the slain sub-chief, throwing it across a horse for the trip back to the Kiowa Nation. Poline was buried two and one-half miles east of Mr. McElroy's place.⁶⁸

When it became known in Mangum and over Greer County that the Kiowa sub-chief had been killed, the citizens feared that the Kiowas, with their allies, would attack the settlers. A group of twenty men led by Sheriff Tittle started for the Kiowa camp to talk with the Indians. When the horsemen reached North Fork River, they found that the Indian camp had been moved eastward across the river. Sheriff Tittle, Mr. McElroy, and two cowboys went to Little Bow's camp on Elk Creek, while the other members of the group remained on the west side of the river in Greer County.

The four emissaries of peace were given a friendly reception at the camp of Chief Little Bow, although there was a large crowd present, all the Kiowa braves apparently being gathered there. Sheriff Tittle, speaking through McElroy as interpreter, told Chief Little Bow that the boy who killed Poline was in jail in Mangum and would be tried on a charge of murder in the White Man's court.

Chief Little Bow and his braves seemed satisfied. They explained that Poline was a "bad Indian" and had given the other Indians considerable trouble. They did not seem to

⁶⁸ Briggs, op. cit.

regret his death to any great extent.⁶⁹

Another man journeyed to the Kiowa camp as soon as he heard of the killing of Poline. He was George W. Briggs, who rode alone from his ranch at Comanche Springs to see the Indians, with whom he had long been on friendly terms. Poline had been employed by Mr. Briggs as a "horse wrangler" in 1880 and 1881. Mr. Briggs found that the Indians seemed glad that Poline had been killed. They explained that Poline had killed two Indians and was a "bad man."⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Tittle, op. cit.

⁷⁰ Briggs, op. cit.

CHAPTER IV. EDUCATIONAL AND POLITICAL DEVELOPMENT

Schools

The first school established in Greer County was a subscription school operated at Mangum by Professor John R. Nigh, a venerable and scholarly man, then 84 years of age.

Professor Nigh's school was taught in a dugout near the breaks at the southwest corner of Mangum. There were thirteen pupils of that first school in the fall of 1887. Seven of those pupils of fifty years ago held a reunion in Mangum in June, 1937.¹ Those present at the golden anniversary celebration of the Class of 1887 were Mrs. Lula Crouch Johnson of Mangum, John R. Crouch of Altus, Lo Fletcher of Weatherford, Smith Pierson of Borger, Mrs. Coanthe Pierson Cullins of Mangum, Mrs. Nona Byers Baumgardner of Mangum, and Louis Crabtree of Mangum.²

The first free public schools in Greer County were organized in 1888, the State of Texas having allocated funds to Greer County for educational purposes. The first such school to begin its term was the Headquarters Mountain school, located in the vicinity of the present town of Granite. The late A. R. Garrett was the teacher of the first free public school in what later became the State of Oklahoma.³

¹ Wilson, op. cit.

² Mrs. L. A. Johnson, Personal Interview with, Mangum, Oklahoma, Aug. 8, 1937.

³ Garrett, op. cit.

Some of the schools of the county, names of the teachers, and monthly salaries paid the teachers were as follows:

Mangum, A. R. Garrett, \$40.00; Spring Creek, John D. Evans, \$40.00; Headquarters Mountain, J. L. Dickson, \$40.00; Frazer, J. R. McMahan, \$50.00; Navajoe Mountain, E. R. Fletcher, \$40.00; Turkey Creek, J. W. Patterson, \$33.00; Big Turkey Creek, L. D. Davis, \$45.00; Quartz City, F. R. Nigh, \$40.00; Hackberry, A. N. Head, \$35.00; Fairview, Henry Watkins, \$40.00; Headquarters Mountain School No. 3, C. V. Northcutt, \$50.00; East Navajoe Mountain, H. A. Denton, \$100.00 for term; Plew Valley, Mollie Adams, \$35.00; Elm River, W. W. Peyton, \$34.09; Pleasant Point, \$35.00; Goar, Benjamin W. Tompson, \$25.00; Mount Zion, J. S. Mayfield, \$10.00 for a term.⁴

And idea of the progress made by the schools and the method of financing them may be gained from a statement made December 15, 1892, by Jarrett Todd, County Judge and ex-officio County Superintendent of Schools.

There are 66 school districts besides the school communities. Sometimes they organize two or more communities in the district for school purposes. I think there are nearly 60 public school buildings in the county. There are 2,250 scholars enrolled in the public schools. There are about 50 or 60 public school teachers in the county.⁵

The first schools in Geer County were free in everything except financial problems. The people established schools

⁴ The Mangum Daily Star, Oct. 13, 1937.

⁵ Ibid.

where they pleased, selected the teachers they wanted, used any textbooks, and operated the schools as long as they wanted to pay for them. Assessment and collection of taxes were handled entirely within the organized school district, if, indeed, there was an organized district. Most of the first schools were operated on a subscription plan in an unorganized school territory.⁶

There was no domination of the schools on the part of the State of Texas or even in later years by the Territory of Oklahoma. During the entire time that Greer County was a part of Texas, there was not a county superintendent. The county judge acted on all school problems, such as recognizing the organization of school districts and issuing certificates or licenses to teachers. The first county judge in Greer County left no record of his education activities. The second, a Confederate soldier and former school teacher, was the well-known Jarret Todd. He was interested in public education, and it was during his term as county judge, which began about 1889 that school districts Nos. 1, 2, and 3 were organized. These districts were, respectively, Mangum, Altus, and Mountain Home (Granite). Judge Todd encouraged the organization of other districts that would guarantee free schools for at least three months during the year. He thought teachers' salaries should be paid by the taxpayers and should be at least twenty dollars per month. The old

⁶ The Mangum Daily Star, Oct. 13, 1937. Dr. Haskell Pruett, Personal Interview with, Stillwater, Oklahoma.

cancelled checks of the school districts treasury of the nineties indicate that the salary was fairly well standardized at that figure.⁷

The pioneer teachers came from everywhere. Some of them had excellent backgrounds of training and experience. One of the earlier teachers was a graduate of the University of Georgia. Another was a graduate of Vanderbilt University who came to the West with her brother, also a graduate of Vanderbilt. Another well-known teacher had taught in the University of Virginia. However, some of the pioneer teachers had more ambitions than they had educational information and training; some could do long division but could not work the problems in ratio and proportion, while square root was entirely beyond their academic training.⁸

The numerous deserted dugouts scattered over the rolling prairies offered ideal places for conducting schools. There is no record of a single bond issue voted for the construction of a school house in Greer County, Texas. Many of the smaller towns had their first subscription schools in dugouts. The one at Reed was located back of the lot now occupied by the post office. The one between Blair and Martha has long since been destroyed. At the time Greer County became a part of the Territory of Oklahoma, Mangum had a two-

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

room box school house.⁹

Textbooks were selected by the teachers; however, the child was usually taught to read in whatever book he brought to school, whether it was an old McGuffey reader, the Bible, or a horse doctor book. There was no such thing as a graded school during these earlier years. Children studied reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, and sometimes history or geography, just as they and their teachers chose for them to study. There was, therefore, no promotion from one grade to another. Educational achievement was determined by ability to spell certain words or to perform certain operations in arithmetic.¹⁰

The educational influences in the pioneer days were certainly not confined to the schools, which operated for approximately three months during the year. There were numerous travelers to and from and through the territory who conveyed news and information. There were many socializing influences, such as literary societies, picnics, singing conventions, fishing trips, and numerous other occasions on which people assembled and discussed current problems in language brought from all sections of the country.

At the time Old Greer County became a part of Oklahoma¹¹ there was only one Democrat who had qualified with a first

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Wilson, op. cit.

¹¹ Ibid.

grade certificate to be eligible to become the county superintendent. That was K. C. Cox. It was during his administration, from 1897 to 1899, that the first county-wide graduation exercises were held for the five students in the county who completed the elementary grades. This exercise was held at Mountain Home.¹²

In 1899 K. C. Cox was defeated by C. W. Edwards, who was candidate for county superintendent on the Populist ticket. During Edwards' administration the particular function of schools was to serve as a social center for community activities. In 1901 Anna Laura Moore was elected county superintendent. During the following four years the schools of the county were well organized into more than a hundred districts. There was a great increase in school population, and many schools were becoming graded. The county was so large that there was a special educational paper printed for the teachers and school boards of the county. The two other county superintendents who served in Old Greer County were J. E. Taylor and George W. Sims.¹³

Churches

Pioneers in settling various portions of America always saw fit to establish religious meeting places. So it was with the early settlers of Greer County. They were too few

¹² Johnson, op. cit.

¹³ C. W. Edwards, Personal Interview with, Clustee, Oklahoma, Aug. 2, 1937.

and too poor to establish regular churches with a full-time pastor, but they were anxious to have religious worship and met for that purpose at every opportunity.¹⁴

No written records are preserved to tell us of those early meetings held in dugouts and shacks where the people sat on make-shift seats and listened to the gospel as propounded by one of their own members or by some itinerant minister who had come into the community. When the word was spread that services were to be held, people came from the most remote sections, bringing their lunches with them and remaining the entire day.¹⁵

Sunday Schools began to be organized in the more settled communities and proved to be a social center as well as a place to study the Scriptures. Revivals were usually held the latter part of July and August after the crops were laid by. The people generally came in wagons to the meetings, bringing their entire families.¹⁶

The first Protestant church in Greer County and which later proved to be the first in Oklahoma Territory was organized at Navajoe. On August 7, 1887, several members of this settlement and those adjacent to the Navajoe mountains met under the shade of some elm trees on Navajoe Creek just west of the mountains and about one-half mile south of the

¹⁴ Wilson, op. cit.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ J. H. McCuiston, Personal Interview with, Hollis, Oklahoma, July 30, 1937.

town for religious services.¹⁷

The Rev. T. B. Duncan preached a sermon to the little congregation, using Matthew 16:18 as his text. At the conclusion of his sermon he made a call for members of a church which was to be organized and the following persons presented themselves for membership: T. B. Duncan, Mrs. E. M. Cunningham, Mrs. M. J. Weaver, John Cox, Mrs. Mattie Cox, J. S. Parker, Mrs. Sarah Parker, O. M. Desham, Mrs. P. E. Desham, R. L. Desham, B. D. Desham, W. J. Etter, J. M. Shropshire, and Mrs. Ruth Shropshire. All fourteen applicants for membership presented letters from Baptist churches "of like faith and order," or were allowed sufficient time to procure them. Mrs. M. J. Weaver, who now lives at Altus, is the only surviving charter member of the Navajoe Baptist church.

Logs were hauled from the Indian country on Otter Creek and flattened by hewing with axes to make seats for the church congregation. The logs were supported by rocks and stumps. However, in the fall of 1888 a box school house was built at Navajoe, and the little Baptist congregation was given permission to use it. The Rev. T. F. Medlin was called by the church as its first pastor. He was paid a salary of fifty dollars per year.

On April 26, 1890, R. J. Morgan and his wife joined the church, and in June, 1892, he was ordained to preach. In 1893 he was called to the pastorate at Navajoe. Another

¹⁷ Mrs. M. J. Weaver, Personal Interview with, Altus, Oklahoma, Aug. 22, 1937.

minister of those pioneer days who was converted at a service held at Navajoe was J. W. Solomon, who was ordained in April, 1894, and preached his first sermon in that church, his subject being, "The One Great Thing Needed."

The Navajoe Baptist church passed out of existence on April 26, 1902, when the church organization was moved to the new town of Headrick and its name changed to Headrick Baptist church.¹⁸

The Baptist church became strong immediately following the organization of Greer County. It also became interested in the sponsoring of the church among the Kiowa Indians under the direction of G. E. Hicks.¹⁹ It held the first Sunday School convention for Greer County in May, 1900. These conventions met often, for the interest was carried on in a most remarkable manner. The second Sunday School convention printed its programs for the one-day convention on May 16, showing that every minute of the meeting had been prepared and planned for with utmost care. People came from all over the county, and most of them remained until the next morning.²⁰

The First Baptist Church in Altus was organized in 1892. Services were conducted in a wooden building which stood where the present church now stands.²¹

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Altus Times Democrat, May 31, 1936.

²⁰ Altus News, May 20, 1900.

²¹ Abernathy, op. cit.

The Baptists were also the first religious organization to hold regular services in Mangum. A meeting was held in the W. S. Pierson dugout in 1887 with the sermons delivered by a minister by the name of Duncan. An old wooden building was used by four denominations in Mangum for several years to hold their church services. The Methodists used the building on the first Sunday of the month, the Baptists the second, the Christians the third, and the Presbyterians the fourth. This method was continued until about 1900, when each denomination erected a church building and began to function each Sunday.²²

The First Methodist Episcopal Church of Altus was organized in 1888 by the cowboy preacher, J. T. Hosmer, in the dugout home of Mr. and Mrs. F. S. C. Bryce. Sunday School and church were held each Sunday in their home, which was called Bryce Chapel. Their first church building was erected in 1900 at a cost of two thousand dollars.²³

The Church of Christ at Altus was permanently organized in 1902, after several previous attempts. The first congregation, consisting of twelve members, met for a time in the school building, under the pastorship of Jim Humphrey. Interest began to wane at this time, and it was not until 1904 that the church secured its own building and became

²² Johnson, op. cit.

²³ Mrs. W. C. Jarbowe, Personal Interview with, Altus, Oklahoma, March 20, 1938.

definitely established.²⁴

The Presbyterians of Altus had two churches, one under the Social Reform group, with J. R. Mellin as pastor, and the other, called the First Presbyterian, under the direction of J. M. Burrow. The Social Reform group functioned for only a few years, most of the members later uniting with the First Presbyterian church under the auspices of the Southern Presbyterian Board. This church had had its beginning with a small group of religious followers who gathered together each Sunday to worship and to study the Bible.²⁵

Newspapers

Many newspapers were established in the "Empire of Greer" between 1887 and 1907, every town having one or more. Some were short lived, having been long forgotten even by pioneer residents of the communities in which they were published; others were published for several years.

Only three newspapers established in Greer County prior to statehood are still in existence under their original names - The Mangum Star, The Granite Enterprise, and The Eldorado Courier, the first being the oldest newspaper in western Oklahoma.²⁶

The first publication to bear a Greer County date line

²⁴ Mrs. J. R. McMahan, Personal Interview with, Altus, Oklahoma, March 15, 1938.

²⁵ Mrs. J. B. Walker, Personal Interview with, Altus, Oklahoma, Feb. 12, 1938.

²⁶ Mrs. Grant Foreman, Oklahoma Imprints, p. 354.

was Buckskin Joe's Emigrant Guide, published at Navajoe. A monthly publication, it could not properly be termed a newspaper, as it was intended to be what its name indicated, an emigrant guide designed to promote the Navajoe colony. It was first published at Queen City, Texas, while the Navajoe colony was being organized, and it was not until the third issue that the paper bore the Navajoe date line. This was in September 1887.²⁷

The Mangum Star, the first publication in Greer County intended to be a newspaper, was established on October 13, 1887. Its first issue was printed on an ancient George Washington hand press.²⁸ Major A. M. Dawson, a newspaper man of varied experience and considerable ability, established the Star. He moved the plant of the Vernon Lariat to Mangum from Vernon, Texas, and set it up in a one-and-a-half-story building which occupied the present site of the Greer Funeral Home.²⁹

George W. Briggs dropped into the Star office to see what was going on and was there when the first copy of the first issue came off the press. He picked it up, looked it over, stuffed it into a pocket, paid Major Dawson a dollar for a year's subscription, and thus became the Star's first subscriber.³⁰

²⁷ The Mangum Daily Star, Oct. 13, 1937.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Briggs, op. cit.

Major Dawson published the Star from October 13, 1887, until sometime during the year 1890. He became discouraged with the prospects for the growth and development of Mangum and decided to suspend the newspaper and move the plant to another field. Twenty-two citizens of Mangum, feeling that the town needed a newspaper, purchased the Major's business. This syndicate employed John Boynton to operate the newspaper. In 1891 Boynton severed connections with the paper and several issues were missed before the plant was taken over by Charles M. Thacker and G. H. Eubank, two young Mangum lawyers. The next owners were G. B. Townshend and James W. Scarborough, the former becoming sole owner in 1896.³¹

The first daily newspaper issued in the "Empire of Greer" was published by Mr. Townshend on July 20, 1899, but was not a permanent one. The first linotype machine was bought by him in Brooklyn, New York, in 1904 and put into operation immediately. The Star's linotype machine was the first in western Oklahoma.³²

Rufus C. Echols, J. E. Taylor, and Alfred H. Taylor were connected with the paper. In 1909 a stock company bought out the Taylors for \$15,000, the company being composed of G. W. Boyd, T. P. Clay, J. E. Taylor, G. B. Townshend, and Giles W. Farris. Herbert Wileman was made editor.³³

³¹ Mrs. Foreman, op. cit., p. 354.

³² Ibid.

³³ Boyd, op. cit.

A disastrous fire in 1916 destroyed the building and fixtures belonging to the Star. The paper was published in Oklahoma City for several weeks. Dr. Fowler Border then purchased the company's assets and became its owner. Elmer V. Jesse became editor of the Star and served in that capacity for thirteen years. He in turn was succeeded by Eugene C. Pulliam, Davis O. Vandivier, Paul Porter, and then L. J. Miner, present publisher and owner.³⁴

Six other newspapers and periodicals were published at Mangum at various times. The Greer Weekly Sun was established in 1896 by E. E. McCollister, who moved the plant of the Collingsworth County Echo, which he had been publishing at Wellington, to Mangum to establish the Sun. The Greer County Monitor and the Sun were purchased by the late H. L. Crittenden on April 6, 1901. Mr. Crittenden consolidated the two papers as the Mangum Sun-Monitor. Mr. Crittenden was an experienced newsman and published a creditable paper. After the death of Mr. Crittenden, the Sun-Monitor was sold to the Star Publishing Company and the name changed to Greer County Democrat. As such, it was published until the plant was destroyed by fire in August, 1916.³⁵

The Mangum Mirror, a semi-weekly newspaper, was established March 20, 1917, by J. W. Ryder. School and Farm was the name

³⁴ Dr. Fowler Border, Personal Interview with, Mangum, Oklahoma, Jan. 22, 1938.

³⁵ Mrs. Foreman, op. cit., p. 355.

of a monthly publication established in 1906 by J. E. Taylor. Mrs. Laura Moore Julian, county superintendent of Greer, was the editor. C. W. Edwards, D. D. Tilley, and C. C. Lee were corresponding editors. Mrs. Julian resigned her editorship on April 20, 1906. In May Mr. Taylor sold the publication to Wyndom C. Marble, who continued the paper until December 21, 1906, when he suspended it because it was not profitable.³⁶

The Socialist Antidote, a monthly publication designed to wipe the Socialist party off the face of the earth, was established by Logan Stone on November 15, 1915. The paper was printed in the plant of the Star, but it survived only two months.³⁷

The second oldest newspaper in the old "Dominion of Greer" is the Granite Enterprise, which was first issued in May, 1900, by James W. Scarborough. Mr. Scarborough has been a practicing physician for many years and is now employed at a state hospital at Terrell, Texas. He stayed at Granite only a few months and in November, 1900, sold the paper to Judge J. W. Ryder. Judge Ryder sold out in December, 1900, to P. M. Brinton.³⁸ James E. Kelly and James T. Buck established the Granite Herald in 1901, and on June 12 of that year they purchased the Enterprise from Brinton. The

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ The Mangum Daily Star, Oct. 13, 1937.

³⁸ Mrs. Foreman, op. cit., p. 320.

two subscription lists were added together to make 1,225 readers. However, Kelly and Buck decided to continue publication of the older paper instead of the Herald. J. W. Ryder was once more managing editor of the Enterprise in March, 1902. He was succeeded by W. H. Kettell on November 26, 1903, and Kettell in turn gave way to P. R. Goldron on August 4, 1904. The new owner changed the politics of the paper back to Democratic. Floyd Kirby, an able newspaperman, joined the staff as local editor on November 3, 1904.³⁹

J. Wiley Smith was editor and publisher of the Enterprise in 1906. In February, 1907, Floyd Kirby again became local editor of the paper. J. W. Ryder again became managing editor on June 6, 1907, and Charles A. Sessions was made city editor. There was no further change in the management until after statehood. C. E. Hill purchased the paper in 1909 and has remained at the helm ever since. He is now the dean of Greer County newsmen.⁴⁰

The Eldorado Courier, only other newspaper in the old "Dominion of Greer" which has been continuously published since its establishment prior to statehood, was founded in 1902 and acquired Eldorado's first newspaper, The Light, established in 1901. James Edwin Kelly bought the Courier in 1903, having first been connected with Mangum newspapers and later employed by G. B. Townshend to operate the Altus

³⁹ Ibid., p. 338.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 339.

Plaindealer in 1896. Later Kelly bought the Plaindealer and at one time was also half-owner of the Granite Enterprise. Kelly sold the Courier to L. G. Miller on February 24, 1905.⁴¹ For a time John Riley Thacker, a capable newspaper man of rare intellect, was publisher of the Courier. For the past several years it has been published by S. A. Cook, who has made the Courier a splendid paper.⁴²

The second newspaper established in Greer County was the Greer County News, established at Frazer on May 16, 1890, by C. P. Stubbs and F. B. Bulls. Frazer was located in the Bitter Creek bottoms two and one-half miles west of the present site of Altus. The paper was moved to Altus when that town was started and was published there for several years. When it was discontinued, the plant was moved to Eldorado.⁴³

The Altus Plaindealer was established in 1896 or 1897 by G. B. Townshend, then publisher of The Mangum Star, who acquired a small plant and set it up at Altus. J. R. Daniel went to Altus to run the paper but stayed with the job only a short time and was succeeded by James E. Kelly. The Plaindealer remained in existence for several years.⁴⁴

The Altus Times was established in 1900, edited and

⁴¹ The Mangum Daily Star, Oct. 13, 1937.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ McMahan, op. cit.

⁴⁴ Mrs. Foreman, op. cit., p. 350.

published by Van Meter and Shepard. The Times passed out of existence with its consolidation with the younger Democrat, to form the present Times Democrat.⁴⁵

Statehood

Greer County had been generally settled by 1901 and the county government well established. A great lot of business was transacted by the various county officials. The old combination jail and courthouse had long been outgrown, and larger quarters were required for county offices. Rooms and offices were rented in buildings of Mangum for use by county officials.⁴⁶ Plans for a courthouse to be built at the cost of \$30,000 and to be paid for with twenty-year bonds were advanced by J. H. Simpson in March, 1901.⁴⁷

A disastrous fire swept Mangum on December 9, 1901, destroying many county records.⁴⁸

A group of Mangum business men planned to build a courthouse, but difficulties arose, and the plan was never started.⁴⁹ On March 8, 1902, the county commissioners of Greer County did accept plans for building a courthouse on the rental plan. Again there were protestations from the

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 351.

⁴⁶ The Mangum Star, March 28, 1901.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Greer County Records, Minutes of the Board of County Commissioners, March 8, 1902.

⁴⁹ The Mangum Star, March 16, 1902.

eastern part of the county, but they were ignored. However, the territorial legislature did not come to the assistance of the county in their building program, so it was abandoned.⁵⁰

In 1903 an effort was made to secure a courthouse by a bond issue. Again Altus opposed the issue. The people feared that they would have to pay a part of the indebtedness of the County of Greer, even though the county was divided. In order to refute this idea, sixteen lawyers in Mangum handed down the opinion that should there be county division the new counties carved out of Greer could not be forced to pay any part of the indebtedness for the courthouse at Mangum.⁵¹ It was hoped that this opinion might increase the number of votes for the building of the courthouse.

Three thousand nine hundred and forty qualified electors signed the petition calling for a special election to vote the bonds. The election was called for May 16, 1903.⁵² The people of Mangum and the west side of the county worked for the courthouse, but there was strong opposition. Altus warned the voters for the last time before the election,

Taxpayers of Greer County, who live in humble dwellings, dugouts, and small houses and who toil early and late to make a living for your wives and children and are deprived of the necessities of life, rarely see a luxury, are you willing to make your burden heavier to advance the price of property in another part of the county? Decide May 16, 1903.⁵³

⁵⁰ Leger News, March 15, 1902.

⁵¹ Ibid., April 16, 1903.

⁵² Ibid., May 8, 1903.

⁵³ Ibid., May 21, 1903.

There was a total vote cast of 5,369, a majority of 1253 being opposed to the building of the courthouse.⁵⁴

A rental plan for acquiring a courthouse was devised by Judge Irving in 1905. Protests were made, but the plan was approved and Greer County at last was to have a courthouse, erected on the public square.⁵⁵

The people from the eastern part of the county had lost their fight, but their attitude was indicated by a statement in the Altus News which declared that both the commissioners and contractors violated the law, first, with the deeding of the land owned by the county to the contractors; second, by the assumption of the entire indebtedness by the county at the time construction was begun; and third, when the contractors refused to give bond for the faithful fulfilling of the contract.

The building was to be completed in 1906, but the contractors attempted to secure the payment before the completion of the building. Because of this, A. R. Garrett filed an order, issued by Judge Irwin, restraining the commissioners from paying for the building until it was completed and delivered to the county. The courthouse was completed in 1907, and after statehood the bitter feeling that was aroused during its construction was apparently forgotten.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Ibid., May 21, 1903.

⁵⁵ The Mangum Star, Aug. 10, 1905.

⁵⁶ Altus News, July 24, 1906.

Several political parties were represented in Greer County before statehood. They were the Democrats, the Republicans, the Populists, the Socialists, and the Prohibitionists. The first-mentioned was the strongest of the group, due largely to the fact that most of the settlers had come from Texas. The first Democratic convention was called by George Briggs in 1889. Some Democrats at this time became interested in the Populist party, which became strong enough to elect several of the county officers, among whom were County Superintendent C. W. Edwards of Olustee, the sheriff, and all the county commissioners except Briggs. The movement was short-lived, for in 1900 the Democrats won a complete victory.⁵⁷

Since 1896 statehood had been uppermost in the minds of the settlers, and by 1902 every Republican platform was declaring for immediate statehood. On June 25, 1902, the motion for immediate consideration of the bill for statehood was called before the Territorial senate, the bill having already passed the house, but the Republican members of the committee, contrary to their platform promises, refused to allow the bill to come to a vote. This action aroused the ire of the Democrats, and Jim Quay declared:

Two years have passed since the adjournment of the convention and the deliverance of these solemn promises to the people of the United States and we have already failed to redeem our promises for immediate statehood.

⁵⁷ Altus News, Nov. 15, 1900.

The denunciation of the Republican party for failure to press the issue of statehood was one of the strong points in the Democratic platform from 1900 until statehood. A favorite statement was:

We denounce the failure of the Republican party to carry out its pledges to grant statehood to the territories of Arizona, New Mexico, and Oklahoma.

They also published in the papers of Greer County what they considered the reason for the Republicans' failure to obtain statehood.

Statehood vs. Salary Grabbing

Statehood vs Salary Grabbing. It would lose them the following fat salaries; seven members of the supreme court who draw twenty-eight thousand dollars a year, seven clerks and their deputies who draw fifty thousand dollars a year, the Governor, Secretary, Treasurer, Auditor, Superintendent of the board of education, Live Stock Board, Board of Examiners, School Land Board, Bank examiner, Adjutant General and other Territorial officers are drawing about a hundred thousand dollars a year, including educational institution salaries amounting to one hundred seventy-five thousand dollars. In addition there is the insane asylum graft amounting to thirty-five thousand dollars a year and the printing grafts of forty-five thousand dollars a year. Will a Republican delegate take this out of the hands of his people and give it to the people?⁵⁸

The county offices in Greer were usually filled with Democrats. In 1902 the Republicans decided they would be more successful if they adopted the Citizen's Ticket, since the word Republican was not acceptable to a large number of the citizens of Greer. The Democrats were caustic in their remarks concerning the change. With one exception, the en-

⁵⁸ Leger News, July 31, 1902.

tire group of county officials in 1902 were Democrats.⁵⁹ In 1904 the Citizen's Ticket idea was abandoned by the Republicans, who had found the name of little benefit. The Populist party came back with a full ticket that year, and on August 11, 1904, a People's Party was called to order by J. W. Berry of Mangum. Resolutions were:

Be it resolved that the People's Party of Greer County, Oklahoma at Mangum, Oklahoma this 6th day of August, 1904 do reaffirm the basic truths of the Territorial Platform, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. We condemn the extravagance of the present county administration, demand the auditing of books and a reason for high taxes, promise the strictest economy, and recommend the depositing of county funds in the bank that will pay the highest rate of interest on the daily balance.⁶⁰

The newspapers gave much space to the political campaign in 1904, though no specific charges were brought out against either party. A Republican group in Mangum declared that their party would fill all the offices at this election, but the Altus News retorted that should the other counties be as strongly Democratic as Greer, the Republicans would not elect one constable. Greer went completely Democratic in the election with a plurality of about two thousand in most instances. The Democratic executive committee met at Mangum on June 28, 1906, and declared that an election would be held only in case the bill for statehood did not pass. They were eager for it to pass but feared that it would

⁵⁹ Ibid., Nov. 6, 1902.

⁶⁰ Ibid., Aug. 18, 1904.

be defeated again.⁶¹

The bill for statehood passed, and Oklahoma was permitted to prepare a constitution. With the adoption of the Enabling Act, the people of Greer County met in various towns and nominated delegates to the Constitutional Convention.

The main question was the division of Greer County into three counties. Since the beginning of the courthouse fight in Greer, sentiment had become stronger concerning this issue. When the delegates were elected to the Constitutional Convention, county divisions were considered the most important issue. Although it is not generally conceded that Greer was too large to remain as one county, at the time of the Constitutional Convention no one in Mangum would admit that the making of Greer into three counties was anything more than rank injustice to the people of Mangum.⁶²

Most of the communities other than Mangum were determined to have county division. When the Constitutional Convention met at Guthrie November 20, 1906, a delegation of men was sent from each town to locate the county boundary lines correctly. A larger group attended from Mangum, and they worked for their cause. Personal interviews were held with every delegate of the Constitutional Convention, and placards bearing the words, "Greer cannot be divided," were

⁶¹ Altus News, June 28, 1906.

⁶² The Mangum Daily Star, Nov. 16, 1932.

distributed. The Star and the Sun-Monitor used their papers to create sentiment against division. Copies of these were used at the convention. Statements such as "God made Greer by bounding it by the Red Rivers" blazed from the headlines of the Mangum Star after division of the county had first been proposed at the convention. And following this the papers waged a fight in the editorials on what the Sun-Monitor termed "the bloody butchery of Grand Old Greer." Because the papers expressed the sentiment of Mangum, they should have been a help.⁶³

Altus and Mangum employed the best legal talent available to work for and against the division of the county. The delegation from Altus was represented by C. C. Hightower, M. E. Kizziar, W. C. Jarbowe, and others. They aided in electing William H. Murray as President of the Convention and thus formed a political combine that aided their cause greatly. The contest caused bitter feeling between the two towns and their delegates.⁶⁴

Regardless of efforts to prevent division, the work went forward. The report of the committee on the county boundaries was filed with the convention late Friday, January 12, 1907. J. R. McMahan of Altus drew the county lines dividing Greer as it is today. The lines were accepted by the committee.⁶⁵

⁶³ Ibid., Nov. 16, 1932.

⁶⁴ McMahan, op. cit.

⁶⁵ Jarbowe, op. cit.

There was to be no action until the Democratic caucus, which met January 14, 1907, reached a decision. The report provided that the county seat fixed by the convention should stand unless changed by an election to be called when twenty-five per cent of the voters of the county had petitioned the Governor of the Territory to call an election. The election could not be called until six months after the ratification of the convention. The county seats of the new counties as established by the Constitutional Convention were Beckham County, Sayre; Greer County, Mangum; and Jackson County, Altus.⁶⁶ Mangum decided on the last attempt to stop the division. In this, Adams and Frost were leaders in the activities of securing an injunction against the Constitutional Convention to prevent the division of Greer County February 28, 1907. The Supreme Court at Guthrie refused to take jurisdiction unless a separate vote was taken on the matter.⁶⁷

On March 23, 1907, the Mangum representatives filed a similar action before Judge B. J. Burford. Attorneys for Mangum were Charles H. Eagin, A. R. Garret, and A. M. Stewart of Mangum, and Horace Speed of Guthrie. The petition alleged that

the convention has disregarded the law in tampering with the county lines, established by an Act of Congress, by means of an illegal and unwarranted assumption of authority in no wise delegated or

⁶⁶ Altus News, Jan. 17, 1907.

⁶⁷ The Mangum Daily Star, June 6, 1932.

possessed by the convention, and by the flagrant usurpation of purely legislative power and functions, wholly foreign to the purposes for which it was called.⁶⁸

When A. M. Stewart returned to Mangum he said he thought the decision would be reversed by the Supreme Court in June. The court sustained the decision, and statehood was assured by a telegram from Guthrie on June 27, 1907, advising the people of Altus that the Supreme Court had handed down an opinion by a vote of five to two on the injunction suits. This virtually destroyed obstructionists by declaring the Supreme Court of Oklahoma had no jurisdiction over the division of the counties, and by a vote of four to three the court decided that the election ordinances were valid.⁶⁹

Despite the fight made by the Star and Sun-Monitor, on September 17, 1907, Greer County cast a majority of 1557 votes for adoption of the constitution, a majority of 1218 for prohibition, and a majority of 1142 for Haskell.

Mangum only gave Haskell a majority of twenty-nine of a possible seven hundred votes - several hundred Democrats not voting. About 3,500 votes were polled in Greer County.⁷⁰

With the adoption of the constitution, nothing remained before the division of the "Empire of Greer" except the time that intervened before President Theodore Roosevelt issued the statehood proclamation on November 16, 1907. Old Greer

⁶⁸ The Mangum Daily Star, July 21, 1932.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ibid., Sept. 19, 1907.

County was divided. Soon after the president approved the Constitution of the State of Oklahoma.

With the adoption of the Constitution, the old County of Greer was a thing of the past, and the new counties of Greer, Harmon, Jackson, and Beckham (a part of which was old Greer) were ready to take part in the government of the new state for which they had worked so long.⁷¹

⁷¹ Ibid., Oct. 13, 1938.

CONCLUSION

Eighty-six years ago the country between the forks of Red River was a faraway land, as mysterious and menacing as the interior of Africa. Red River was virtually unknown.

Many attempts had been made to explore this virgin territory, but none was successful. Adventurous Frenchmen had in the early days found the lower reaches of the river. Later Americans who tried their hand either were forced back by Spaniards or lost their course and had to return. Lieutenant Zebulon Pike, for instance, was arrested by the Spanish on the Rio Grande, which he took to be the Red River. Colonel Long, too, missed his river, for he followed the Canadian six hundred miles before realizing it was not the Red.

It was in 1852 that the country was explored. Captain Marcy reached the branches of the Red River and found that it divided into two prongs of equal size, with the country well watered, covered with a short, nutritious grass, and, as that summer was a rainy one, fairly cool, even in the day-time.

"The "Empire of Greer" was truly a princely domain. Its one and one-half million acres of virgin grass land was an outlet for roaming Indians, a veritable paradise for early white hunters who came to the region, a prime grazing land for cattle, and a rich soil for the farmers.

The life of the pioneers was difficult but attractive.

A true spirit of fellowship prevailed among them, and it was indeed unusual to find one who failed to lend a hand when others needed it.

Because the treaty with Spain in 1819 had fixed the boundary of Louisiana as the Red River, all land south of it being in Texas, a great amount of litigation ensued over which fork was the main one, a question finally settled in 1896 by the Supreme Court, which fixed the south branch as the true Red River, thus giving "Old Greer County" to Oklahoma. From it, three counties and part of a fourth were formed.

So, as the "Empire of Greer" ceased to exist, its history ended, and then began the separate histories of Jackson, Harmon, Beckham, and Greer Counties.

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