

EARLY DRUG STORES IN OKLAHOMA.*

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When was the first drug store established in Oklahoma? That question has not been answered. Oklahoma was settled in relatively small sections at a time and has been under the flags of a number of governments at various periods. It is not the purpose of this paper to review the history of the state, but some facts will be of interest.

Coronado, in 1540, together with thirty horsemen traveled through Oklahoma into Kansas and then returned through the panhandle to Texas. To the east, De Soto had sailed from Cuba and explored Alabama, Mississippi, Arkansas and possibly Missouri and eastern Kansas. This gave the Spanish claim to all of what is now Oklahoma (1).

The French came to this territory after Sieur de Bienville founded New Orleans in 1718. From that point, traders came into eastern Oklahoma and some probably went up Red River and across the plains of the western part of the state (2).

Oklahoma became a part of the United States as the result of the Louisiana Purchase, April 30, 1803 (3). Soon after this date President Jefferson sent several exploring parties into the acquired lands and some of them visited Oklahoma. Z. M. Pike and James B. Wilkinson, twenty-three soldiers and some Osage and Pawnee Indian chiefs, who had been to see the President, started from New Orleans in July 1804. They traveled to the Arkansas River where Wilkinson became ill. He and five men started back home, crossing that part of Oklahoma along the river (4).

Thomas Nuttall, the botanist, visited Oklahoma in 1819 with a party of soldiers who had been sent to remove some white families that had settled in what is now Choctaw County. He reported finding, in addition to the many plants, a salt works. This was on a trip up the Arkansas River to Glenn's trading house, near the mouth of the Verdigris River (5). Jacob Fowler described Bean's salt works, located on the Illinois River in 1821. The salt was obtained by evaporating the water from a salt well in huge kettles (6).

Fort Gibson was established in Oklahoma in 1824. Washington Irving visited there in 1832 and traveled through central Oklahoma with the rangers; his experiences are described in his "A Tour of the Prairies."

The Cherokee Indians, living in Georgia, made a treaty in 1817 to move west to Arkansas, between the Arkansas River and White River. They agreed to move on further west, in 1828, to seven million acres of land in Oklahoma. Many of them did not leave Georgia until 1838 when they were rounded up and brought to the Oklahoma lands. This is one of the forced removals of the Indians that is well known for the many hardships (7).

Practically all of Oklahoma had been explored by 1835, but there were few towns. The first mission was established in 1820, but records of the first drug store are missing.

Tahlequah was established as the Capital of the Cherokee Nation in 1839 (8). Walter Evans, who had married a Cherokee, opened a drug store there in 1870.

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The store was sold to a man by the name of Pendleton, who disposed of it to Poke Carter in 1888. Both of the latter had Cherokee wives. The store has been in the same location since its opening and in the same building since 1887. A Mr. Crew bought a part interest in it in 1896 and his brother bought the other from Carter six years later. They installed walnut fixtures in 1890, bringing them from Georgia to Fort Smith, Arkansas, by train and then by wagon to Tahlequah. The store is still owned by the Crews (9).

Early General Merchandise stores had drug departments. This is evidenced by an advertisement appearing in *The Cherokee Advocate*, a newspaper published in Tahlequah. The one in the issue of July 28, 1880, read, in part, as follows: "J. Thompson, Dealer in General Merchandise, Tahlequah, C. N.—A Full Stock of Drugs Always Kept on Hand." The first advertisement of a drug store in Tahlequah was found in this same paper in 1882. This read "Tahlequah Drug Store. Always on hand a full line of Drugs, Fancy Groceries and Toilet Articles. Physicians' Prescriptions Carefully Compounded at any hour, day or night. An Experienced Druggist always present" (10).

A drug store was in existence in Vinita, Cherokee Nation, in 1877. An advertisement in *The Cherokee Advocate* showed that it was owned by J. T. Cunningham and J. R. Trott, M.D. It was known as the "J. T. Cunningham and Co., Vinita, Drug Store." The same advertisement carried the information that they had enlarged their Drug Establishment and that they carried Stationery, Cigars, Fancy Candy, Tobacco, Window Glass, Putty, Paints, Perfumes, etc., also Patent Medicines and that prescriptions were filled (11).

Another early drug store of the Indian Territory was established by Charles Hokey, January 7, 1888, in Krebs. Mr. Hokey came to the Indian Territory from Missouri in 1876 and worked in the coal mines. He was issued a permit for his drug store by the Choctaw Nation, this yearly permit costing him ten dollars (\$10.00). H. H. Hokey, his 16-year old son, started to work in the store in 1890. He acquired it in 1908. The store is advertised as "Hokey's Drug Store. The Oldest Drug Store in Oklahoma; Since 1888" (12).

The Cherokee treaty established what was known as the Neutral Strip. There was a drug store in Benton County, town of Benton (now Beaver County and the town does not exist) in 1888. This is shown by an advertisement in the Benton County Banner, Friday, August 3, 1888. It read "B. D. Fowler, Proprietor of Post-Office Store, Keeps constantly on hand a full line of DRUGS and Patent Medicines. A choice line of TOBACCOS in connection with stock" (13).

After much agitation by the so-called "Boomers," the Oklahoma Lands were opened for settlement by the white men. The Congress passed this act as a rider to the Indian Appropriation Bill. President Harrison issued the Proclamation on March 23, 1889, that these lands would be open for settlement on April 22, 1889. This was the first of the famous "Runs" for land in the settlement of Oklahoma. It is estimated that from 30,000 to 40,000 people came into Oklahoma on that day (14).

With this vast throng of people came a number of druggists. One of these was C. P. Wickmiller. He had previously been in Oklahoma, having made his earlier trip as the photographer of the Captain David L. Payne's expedition, February 1883. In this expedition there were 133 prairie schooners, over 500 men and three

women. He was finally removed from the territory by soldiers, but when he heard of the President's Proclamation, he made preparations to return.

He hired two teams and borrowed a yoke of oxen from his father-in-law. Fixtures and supplies were loaded on and he started. He arrived on time and staked the lot that has been the location of the Wickmiller Drug Store ever since. That same afternoon he put up his tent, propped up his sign "Drug Store" and did business on the day of the opening.

Mr. Wickmiller was born in Prussia in July 1858 and came to the United States at the age of five. He attended public school, at the age of six, in Scranton, Pennsylvania, and finished the course. Geography was especially interesting to him and caused him to start traveling at an early age. He is now seventy-seven years old and has been in all of the states and in fifteen foreign countries.

He registered as an Assistant Pharmacist in Kansas in 1885 and as a Pharmacist in 1886. His certificate as Registered Pharmacist in Oklahoma is number four-



Half-tone on left shows the first drug store in Chandler, Okla., started by A. D. Wright, September 22, 1891. Mr. Wright is the second man from the right, hand on tent pole. The building on the right, later, replaced the tent.

teen. He has served as president of the State Pharmaceutical Association and as secretary of the Board of Pharmacy.

Mr. Wickmiller has also taken active interest in the civic affairs of the town and the state he has helped to build. He was second mayor of his town; also, chairman of the finance committee that started the first public school and he hired the first teacher. He is a past Grand Commander of Knights Templar of Oklahoma. His collection of relics, especially Indian, and curios is one of the best private collections in the country (15).

Another of the "Runs" was the opening of the Sac and Fox territory. A. D. Wright made this run and established a drug store on September 22, 1891. He was among the early arrivals and staked a good location. He erected his tent, erected his sign and was ready for business (see picture). Mr. Wright had been in partnership in a drug store in Guthrie, Oklahoma, since late in 1889. The pictures give the development of the Wright Drug Store. He is still in business at the same location. Mr. Wright was born in Beekman, N. Y., February 9, 1863; his father was an undertaker and carriage maker. He graduated from the public schools of Beek-

man and from the Wilbraham Academy located in Massachusetts, in 1883. He came to Oklahoma in 1889 (16).

The present Greer County, Oklahoma, was a part of what is known as "Old Greer County." It was originally claimed by Texas and was organized as a County by that State in 1886. This was grass land country and part of the "Cattle Country." This land was awarded to Oklahoma by a decision of the Supreme Court, March 10, 1896 (17). The town site of Mangum, Greer County, Texas, was laid out by H. C. Sweet in 1884 (18). Dr. R. C. Hannah, a physician from Texas, came there in September 1887 and opened a drug store under the name of R. C. Hannah and Co.; his partner was Dr. H. M. Ferguson. The fixtures and supplies were freighted, overland by wagon, from Quanah, Texas. An advertisement in *The Mangum Star*, in 1898, gave the information that they were "Dealers in Drugs, Stationery, Staple and Fancy Groceries, Oils, Paints, Varnishes, Books, and Fancy Toilet Articles." A news item in the same paper read "R. C. Hannah and Co. have just put up and sold several nice buggies," and another "R. C. Hannah and Co. are now handling the celebrated Brown wagon. They have had a new supply to just arrive" (19). The picture shows some of the stock in about 1915.



A number of illustrations accompanied the article, showing periods of development. The illustration shows Mr. Wright's store in Chandler, 1915.

Dr. Hannah died in 1917 and his son, C. C. Hannah, conducted the store for about six months, when it was sold and the son went to the war. The store was reopened, in the same location, in 1933, and is being operated by C. C. Hannah.

The story of early drug stores in Oklahoma is slowly being unfolded. It is hoped that more information may be supplied from time to time.

REFERENCES.

- (1) Buchanan and Dale, "A History of Oklahoma" (1924), Chapter I.
- (2) *Ibid.*, pages 32, 33.
- (3) *Ibid.*, page 50.

- (4) Buchanan and Dale, "A History of Oklahoma" (1924), Chapter IV.
- (5) *Ibid.*, page 64.
- (6) *Ibid.*, page 65.
- (7) *Ibid.*, pages 93, 106.
- (8) Emmet Starr, "History of the Cherokee Nation" (1921), page 123.
- (9) Private information from Jess Crew, son of one of the present owners. (Not confirmed by Newspaper.)
- (10) *The Cherokee Advocate*, Tahlequah, C. N., Vol. 7, May 12, 1882.
- (11) *Ibid.*, Vol. 12, July 27, 1877.
- (12) Private communication from H. H. Hokey, Krebs, Oklahoma; also *The Daily Oklahoman*, October 13, 1929.
- (13) Reproduction in *The Daily Oklahoman*, Nov. 5, 1933.
- (14) Buchanan and Dale, *loc. cit.*, Chapter XI.
- (15) Unpublished Autobiography of C. P. Wickmiller; also Proceedings Oklahoma Pharmaceutical Association, 17, 63 (1905-1906).
- (16) Private communication from Mr. A. D. Wright, Chandler, Oklahoma.
- (17) Buchanan and Dale, *loc. cit.*, page 220.
- (18) Information furnished in conversation with C. C. Hannah, Mangum, Oklahoma.
- (19) *The Mangum Star*, Vol. 10 (January 28, 1898).

MOSES MAIMONIDES—PHYSICIAN AND AUTHOR OF MEDICAL WORKS.*

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Moses Maimonides, the Hispano-Jewish philosopher, theologian, physician and astronomer, is known as Rabbi Moses ben Maimon, and (Rabbi M.b.M.) hence Rambam, often called the Second Moses and known under other names with various honorary titles. He was born in Cordova, Spain, on March 30, 1135, died in Egypt on December 13, 1204, and was buried in Tiberias, Palestine. This year marks the octocentennial of the birth of this most interesting character who is regarded as the greatest of Medieval Jewish writers, thinkers and scholars. His fame as a distinguished, and the most rational, physician of the Middle Ages was, however, overshadowed by his famous reputation as a philosopher and Talmudist.

Maimonides never attempted to employ either the Rabbinate or his scholarly attainments as a means of livelihood. Nothing in all that Maimonides ever wrote, either in his early or later days, exceeds in vehemence his denunciation of those who lived for gain by serving the Synagogue or Jewry with their learning. The teacher, the scholar, the Rabbi, like the Mishnaic sages of old, must live, he argued, by the toil of their hands, just as the layman in Jewish life, and they must not trade their holy knowledge for gain. Let it be said in all fairness that, though this may have been possible before the 14th and during the 13th and earlier centuries, changes later in Jewish life made it impossible for the teacher or Rabbi to perform the many onerous and exacting duties demanded of him, requiring as they did undivided devotion and absorbing his whole mind and heart and all of his time, unless some revenue was derived therefrom to enable him and his family to live. But the fact, nevertheless, remains that Maimonides, who by 1177 was recognized as the official head (Nagid) and Chief Rabbi of the Cairo Jews, and, in fact, of the Jewish community of

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