

## NORTH FORK TOWN

By Carolyn Thomas Foreman

North Fork Town was a well known settlement in the Indian Territory before the building of the Missouri, Kansas & Texas Railroad in 1872. A number of prominent men made the place their home; it was the seat of one of the most useful missions among the Creeks; the mercantile establishments there were well stocked and prosperous.

Among the Creeks who emigrated in 1829 to the West was John Davis, a full-blood who had been a pupil of the Reverend Lee Compere. When a boy Davis was taken prisoner in the War of 1812, and reared by a white man. Educated at Union Mission after coming to the Indian Territory, he was appointed as a missionary by the Baptist Board in 1830. After Davis was ordained October 20, 1833, he assisted the Reverend David Rollin in establishing schools; his preaching was said to have been productive of much good. He frequently acted as interpreter, and he worked at Shawnee Mission with Johnston Lykins in the preparation of Creek books.

Jotham Meeker noted the arrival of Davis and the Reverend Sampson Burch, a Choctaw from Red River, at Shawanoe on May 2, 1835. They had come at the invitation of Lykins to print some matter on the new system originated there by Meeker. They remained at the mission about three months; Davis compiled a school book in Creek and translated into that language the *Gospel of John*. On May 5 Meeker, assisted by Davis, began forming the Creek alphabet; four days later Davis took his manuscript to the press and on the eleventh Meeker and Davis revised it. Meeker rode to Westport on June 5 to get materials to bind Davis's books.

Type setting was started July 10 and on August 12 the *Gospel of John* was off the press.<sup>1</sup>

"By John Davis and Johnston Lykins, 1000 copies, 6 forms, 'making a book of 192 pages.' Bound by Meeker, *Meeker Journal*, August 12 and 22, 1835." (*Ibid.*, pp. 144-45).

The two Indian brethren were furnished with a small wagon to transport their books to their respective nations. Davis on arriving

<sup>1</sup>"Creek First Book" By John Davis. 32 pages, 2 forms and cover. *Meeker Journal*, May 26 and (covers) July 20, 1835. The edition was 1000 copies (*Baptist Missionary Magazine*, Vol. 15, 1835, p. 453.)" This book is No. 33 in *Jotham Meeker, Pioneer Printer of Kansas*, by Douglas C. McMurtrie and Albert H. Allen, Chicago, 1930, p. 141. There is a copy of the gospel translated by Davis in the New York Public Library and the English translation reads: "This/ Word Good/ John / wrote / and / That Word / John Davis, Johnathan [sic] Lyken / Together / Muskoke Language — wrote in.

at North Fork had the mortification to find the introduction of his books opposed by a missionary of another denomination in his immediate neighborhood. "Mr. Davis, however, succeeded so far as to make an experiment, which fully satisfied him and others interested that the utility of the system, should it be fairly tried, would far exceed their first anticipations."<sup>2</sup>

*The Baptist Missionary Magazine*, August, 1839, contains a letter from John Davis from North Fork Town dated March 12, 1839, in which he said that he had been requested to attend the council which was to be held January 15. Accompanied by some of his friends he appeared there "with the determination of urging our agent to give us a school at North Fork" which he promised to do. Smallpox had been raging since August, 1838, and had caused many deaths. Davis married a pious Creek woman in 1831 and settled permanently among his people. After the death of Mrs. Davis his niece cared for him and his children until she died.<sup>3</sup>

Davis remarried before 1839, but the woman, who was not religious, gave him no encouragement and his work appeared to suffer in later years.<sup>4</sup>

North Fork Town, named for the north branch of the Canadian River, became a dense settlement of Creeks after the emigration of 1836. The place was crossed by two thoroughfares, the Texas Road running north and south, and a road from Fort Smith which ran on the south side of the Arkansas, crossed the Canadian near its mouth, passed through North Fork Town and continued westward to the mouth of Little River. These two roads brought great activity to the village and at an early date several trading houses were established there.<sup>5</sup>

Supplies for the traders were brought up the Arkansas River, unloaded near the site of the pump station of the present Muskogee, and freighted west over a well traveled road to North Fork Town.<sup>6</sup>

An interesting and influential character at North Fork Town was Joseph Islands. Owing to the unfortunate attitude of the

<sup>2</sup> Isaac McCoy, *History of Baptist Indian Missions* (Washington, New York, 1840), pp. 486-87.

<sup>3</sup> James Constantine Pilling, *Bibliography of the Muskogean Languages* (Washington, 1889), p. 28; William Gammell, *A History of American Baptist Missions* (Boston, 1851), pp. 328-29; McCoy, *op cit.*, pp. 425-26.

<sup>4</sup> E. C. Routh, *The Story of Oklahoma Baptists* (Oklahoma City, 1932), p. 28. Davis died about 1840, survived by two daughters, one of whom, Susan, became the wife of John McIntosh. According to the Rev. J. S. Murrow Davis translated part of *Mathew* into the Creek language. He was buried at North Fork Town but the place of his grave is unknown (*The Indian Missionary*, December, 1884, p. 3, col. 2).

<sup>5</sup> Grant Foreman, *Down the Texas Road* (Norman, 1936), pp. 41, 42; Foreman (ed.), *A Traveler in Indian Territory* (Cedar Rapids, 1930), p. 109, note 60.

<sup>6</sup> Grant Foreman, *Muskogee, the Biography of an Oklahoma Town* (Norman, 1943), p. 13.

Creeks concerning the Christian religion no missionaries were admitted to the nation for many years, but an old Negro named "Billy" taught the precepts of the faith to a young Indian named Joseph Islands in 1842 and the two men commenced work which was continued by white missionaries. Many of the slaves belonging to the Creeks were whipped to the point of death if they were discovered going to religious meetings, but there is no record of any one repudiating his faith. One case was that of a woman who had been given fifty lashes on her bare back for asserting her belief in Christ; she washed her wounds in a spring near North Fork Town, and then walked ten miles to hear Joseph Islands preach.

Islands left his home and occupied a small log cabin so his house could be used for a place to worship. He declined an offer of fifty dollars from the American Indian Missionary Association for his services, fearing that the gift would prejudice the Indians against him. For several years he was pastor of the North Fork church, and he continued his work although threatened by the Indians.<sup>7</sup>

Colonel Ethan Allen Hitchcock visited North Fork on Sunday, January 30, 1842, in company with John Hill. The men rode horseback forty miles from the home of Hill, who had a branch store at North Fork in charge of a man of the name of Chapman.

In 1885 a man came from Missouri to the former site of North Fork looking for the grave of his father. He related that his family had been traveling on the Kansas-Texas trail when his father, Aaron Chapman, died in 1815 and was buried there.<sup>8</sup> Colonel Hitchcock wrote of the thermometer standing at 78°, summer heat. He met Dr. Burt, whom he had last seen in the Cherokee Nation; he learned that the doctor had been a school teacher in the Creek Nation, but lost his position when Colonel Richard M. Johnson was given the principal part of the Creek educational fund for his Choctaw Academy in Scott County, Kentucky.

Colonel Hitchcock wrote that Saturday evening a part of Mr. Chapman's house was used by a party of Creeks, half-breeds and Negroes for a service of prayer and Creek hymns sung to Creek music. "It was rather more plaintive than solemn; after that several hymns in English were sung to Methodist or Baptist tunes; words very simple and apparently made by themselves; 'Farewell Father,' with a chorus and then 'Farewell Mother' and so on sister, brother, preacher, 'I am bound to go on,' was about all I could hear of one hymn."<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> H. S. Halbert and T. H. Ball, *The Creek War of 1813 and 1814* (Chicago and Montgomery, 1895), 304; Routh, *op. cit.*, pp. 35, 50, 64, 65.

<sup>8</sup> OHS, *Indian-Pioneer History*, interview with John H. Hubble, C. E. Foley, and Lizzie Gibson, Eufaula, Oklahoma, vol. 30, pp. 39-41.

<sup>9</sup> Grant Foreman, *A Traveler in Indian Territory* (Cedar Rapids, Iowa, 1930), p. 109. From North Fork on December 30, 1845, John Hill sent an order to Messrs. Henry and Cunningham at Van Buren, Arkansas, asking them to ship him a box of candles for his store. Hill died at North Fork on January 21, 1846.

A "Grand Council" called by the Creeks was held in May, 1842, on Deep Fork River in the vicinity of North Fork Town. It was attended by representatives of both Upper and Lower Creeks, Choctaws, Chickasaws, Caddoes, Seminoles, Delawares, Shawnees, Quapaws, Senecas, Osages, Pawnees, Kickapoos, Wichitas, Kichais, Piankashaws, Tawakonis, and "Isterhutkeys," or white men. The Creeks were the hosts and supplied food for 2,500 persons encamped in a space two miles in circumference. The plot was filled with fires, tents and other temporary shelters. The prairies and woods for three or four miles were crowded by horses hobbled and feeding on the lush grass. Good order and friendly feeling prevailed, but the proceedings were interminable owing to the need of translating the speeches into many languages.

The principle object of the council was the adoption of rules of conduct for the common good and all of the red men entered into the spirit of the meeting and took home with them many new and novel impressions that were to aid them in living neighbor to the recently arrived Indians.

The most important personage present was General Zachary Taylor, who went to the meeting from Fort Smith by way of Fort Gibson. He was greatly pleased with the initiative of the Indians and remained two days. He made a speech and took occasion to inquire of white captives among the Comanches in Texas. Word of this matter was transmitted by Secretary of State Daniel Webster through the War Department and resulted in the following years in the restoration of a number of white children who were carried to Fort Gibson and restored to their families by the officers. This meeting raised the Creek Nation in importance among the wild tribes.<sup>10</sup>

Confidence in the missionaries at an early day was forfeited by the "gross misconduct on the part of persons appointed as missionaries." Persecutions were revived later on as will be seen from a letter, written (evidently by an Indian) at North Fork Town February 11, 1845, and addressed to the Rev. William H. Goode.<sup>11</sup>

"I this day feel it my ..... to write a few lines by Bro. Smedley, to inform you that persecution lately Broke out in the Town of North Fork, and one of our Baptist Bro., named Jesse, was Caught at his Residence and Received fifty lashes on his naked back. The same evening when we appointed to hold meeting at Bro. D-[avis]'s old place, one of our Exhorters named Moses when he was Coming down to our appointed meeting he was taken by his cruel friends and they made him stood between two trees and his arms were extended and his legs stretched, too much like the Crucifixion of our Savior and they gave him fifty. This is not all, one of our old native women on account of being the first Convert in the Oke-ti-oc-na Town received the Same. Bro. Peter Harrison

<sup>10</sup> Grant Foreman, *A History of Oklahoma* (Norman, 1942).

<sup>11</sup> William H. Goode, *Outposts of Zion* (Cincinnati, 1863), p. 143.

threatened to be whipped, because he is the first on the Arkansas side. . . ."

On June 15, 1846, President James K. Polk transmitted a message to the Senate from Secretary of War W. L. Marcy communicating a report of Lieutenant J. W. Abert on an Expedition led by him on the upper Arkansas and through the country of the Comanche Indians in the autumn of 1845.

Lieutenant Abert wrote on October 18:<sup>12</sup>

"The country today . . . consisted of level prairies and timber-land, generally rolling and stony. After a march of 26 miles, we crossed the north fork of the Canadian, and encamped at a point about 2¼ miles from its mouth. We forded the river without difficulty, and found it from one to two feet in depth; the banks from 40 to 50 feet high, and overgrown with large timber, among which the button-wood stood conspicuous. All the waters of the plain lying between the Canadian and the Arkansas flow into this river, by the way of its two principal forks, which all around here agree to unite about five miles above this place.

"On the western side of the river we found a flourishing village, and the country around well settled, chiefly by Indians, who cultivate small patches of corn. We succeeded in getting an old cornfield to encamp in, and procured corn and fodder from an Indian who resided near us. This man had many questions to ask with reference to the dangers we had passed, and appeared horrified at the wild Indians, as he called them, eating their meat raw, gave us a piece of bread made of corn-meal and sweet potatoes, which we found exceedings agreeable.

"We saw great numbers of blacks, wearing shawl-turbans, which seem well suited to their pseudo-Moorish characters."

A Baptist church was organized at North Fork Town by Sidney Dyer and in 1848 Agent James Logan reported on September 11 that two schools were in operation at the settlement on the North Fork, in the Canadian District, one in charge of Americus L. Hay, a Baptist missionary, and the other in charge of the Methodists. Two manual labor schools were being constructed, "the mechanics and workmen engaged on them being regularly and busily employed . . . but owing to the distance from navigation and the difficulty of obtaining supplies, no exact calculation can be made as to the time they will be finished and ready for operation."<sup>13</sup>

David B. Whitlow, who was born at Gates' Court House, North Carolina, on December 23, 1826, eventually settled in North Fork Town after having lived in Virginia, Ohio and Illinois. In 1844 he removed to Arkansas and the following year to the Cherokee Nation where he embarked in the cooperage business and made fifteen hundred salt barrels for Lewis Ross, whose home was at the Grand Saline near the largest salt spring in the nation. Later he engaged in clerking and, by economy he was able to start in business for

<sup>12</sup> U. S. Senate Document 438, twenty-ninth Congress, first session, p. 71.

<sup>13</sup> Report Commissioner Indian affairs, 1849, p. 520.

himself at Old Town, North Fork, until he moved to Eufaula with other citizens.<sup>14</sup>

*The Indian Advocate*, Louisville, Kentucky, January, 1848, printed a letter from Americus L. Hay, written December 17, 1847, from the Choctaw Agency, saying that he was leaving in a few hours for North Fork where Brother Islands was waiting for him. He related that they had no schools in the Creek Nation and they were in need of clothing for the children of that tribe.

On the arrival of Hay he learned that Islands was at the bedside of his brother William, fifteen miles distant. Hay wrote to the *Indian Advocate* from the Creek Agency, January 14, 1848, that a large number of people came to see him at North Fork with whom he talked through an interpreter.<sup>15</sup> He reported that Islands had been preaching at the North Fork church, which had then 160 members. At that time Brother Islands was very ill and it was feared he might not recover.

The death of the Reverend Joseph Islands was reported in *The Indian Advocate*, April, 1848. His Creek name was Cho-so-gee and he died at North Fork Town March 8, 1848. His brother William died December 18, 1847.<sup>16</sup>

Missionary Hay wrote to Agent Logan from North Fork July 26, 1848, that a day school had been started in January with thirty pupils and they could take care of 100 children if they could be boarded. Hay declared a day school was not adequate, as the children needed to be taught farming, simple trades and house keeping. The Baptist school at North Fork made use of *Ray's Arithmetic*, *Eclectic Readers*, *Olney's Geography*.

On September 8, 1848, Presiding Elder T. B. Ruble of Muskegee District reported to Logan from Asbury Manual Labor School,<sup>17</sup> that the Creek people were then in favor of education and he saw no reason why they might not soon rank foremost of the Indian tribes in general improvement. "The Creek has a pliable, expansive mind. He is teachable; his habits, though of long standing, give way before the light of truth."

<sup>14</sup> D. C. Gideon, *Indian Territory*, . . . . (New York and Chicago, 1901), pp. 594-95.

<sup>15</sup> Hay baptized Chilly McIntosh in 1848.

<sup>16</sup> When the Indian-Pioneer survey was made for the *Oklahoma Historical Society* Lizzie Ireland of Stidham, Oklahoma, reported that her people returned to North Fork Town after the Civil War. Dr. Buckner was their pastor. After the M. K. & T. Railroad was finished all the citizens of the old town moved to what became Eufaula (Vol. 85, p. 483).

<sup>17</sup> The original Asbury Mission was at Fort Mitchell, near Columbus, Georgia. It was discontinued in 1830.—Horace Jewell, *History of Methodism in Arkansas* (Little Rock, 1892), p. 391.

The Creek Nation had been an integral part of the Cherokee district but the last session of the Indian Mission Conference made it a separate charge and divided it into three mission stations. T. B. Ruble was appointed to it and also made superintendent of the proposed Asbury school. His appointment was made in November, but he did not succeed in getting a site, a farm and the necessary buildings until January, 1849. The site was less than a mile from the North Fork, and within five miles of its junction with the Canadian River.

Improvements bought from a widow who had owned the location, consisted of about thirty acres of cultivated land under a good fence, a comfortable log house, about twenty feet square with a porch in front, smoke house, kitchen, stables and "a tolerable supply of fruit trees."

A contract was let in February to Webster and Reed, of Fort Smith, for the stone and brick work and in April a contract was made with J. J. Denny, Louisville, Kentucky, to furnish materials and do the carpenter work. The foundation was finished and the corner stone laid July 19 when many of the prominent Creeks attended the ceremony.

The brick building was 110 feet long by 34 feet wide, three stories high, with a wide porch in front. There were twenty-one rooms in addition to the halls. A day school had been taught by the Reverend W. A. Cobb for a month during the summer but it was suspended, as the house was a temporary affair large enough to accommodate only a few boys. Asbury Mission opened in 1850 with 100 students. The Methodist Conference assigned the Rev. W. D. Collins to North Fork Mission.

Asbury Mission was located one and a half miles northeast of the town and Fishertown was on the opposite side of North Fork River near the crossing of that stream.<sup>18</sup>

Mrs. Mary Lewis Herrod, daughter of John and Louisa Kernele Lewis, was one of the most prominent citizens of the Creek Nation during the Indian Territory days. Born in the early 40's, she taught school at North Fork Town in the late 50's where she married Goliah Herrod, a full blood Creek. He had attended school in Kentucky and was graduated from a Baptist college at Danville in that state. On Herrod's return to the Indian country he acted as interpreter for Dr. Buckner; he enlisted in the Confederate Army for the duration of the war and at the close he settled at North Fork, where he died shortly after.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Authority of Mrs. Clarence W. Turner, Muskogee, Oklahoma, April 2, 1933. Mrs. Turner also stated that Goliah and Mary Herrod owned farms in the vicinity of North Fork Town.

<sup>19</sup> OHS, *Indian-Pioneer History*, Vol. 12, pp. 132-33.

Prosperity was brought to several sections of the Indian Territory by the Gold Rush of 1849. Trains and camps extended across the prairies for miles and many companies traveled the Gregg road from Van Buren on the north side of the Arkansas,<sup>20</sup> by way of Webbers Falls, to North Fork Town. The Washington City Company and the Empire Company went by that route and praised it highly. It was predicted that this road from Webbers Falls to North Fork Town or Fort Gibson would become more popular than any other. That information was brought by L. W. Baldwin to the *Arkansas State Democrat* from Chapman's Stand at North Fork Town. The Knickerbocker Company crossed the Canadian River on a ferryboat and camped at North Fork Town where "the Indians had good houses and gardens and whiskey." At the town they traded with Catlett J. Atkins of Alabama, who had a large store and a good stock of goods.

George K. Pattison of the Havilah Mining Company of New York, wrote an interesting journal of his trip to California, in which he said that after crossing the Canadian his party arrived at North Fork Town where a Creek Indian ball game and a Baptist quarterly camp or woods meeting were going on. He described the Indians and Negroes with their tents surrounding a brush arbor where they sat on puncheons and listened to sermons preached by the Rev. Americus L. Hay and the Rev. H. F. Buckner who came from the Creek Agency on the Arkansas River. Services were conducted in English and Creek.<sup>21</sup>

In 1850 Dr. Ward Howard Bailey moved to North Fork Town from the little village of Enterprise, Arkansas, a few miles from Fort Smith on the Indian Territory line. Dr. Bailey, a native of New York City, and his wife Laura Hawley Bailey were the parents of a son, Benjamin Hawley Bailey, born in their white oak log house at Enterprise on June 5, 1839.

Dr. Bailey's brother, Doctor Joseph Bailey, who was an army surgeon stationed at Fort Gibson, persuaded his young brother to come west after he finished his medical course; at North Fork Town he engaged in the practice of his profession until the beginning of the Civil War in 1861. Being a northern man in a southern country was a most trying position at the start of hostilities and Dr. Bailey received numerous threatening letters from persons who looked upon him as an enemy.

Doctor Bailey was advised by his friends, for his personal safety, to return to the North; he followed their advice by returning to his boyhood home for the duration of the war. Mrs. Bailey, with the

<sup>20</sup> Grant Foreman, *Down the Texas Road* (Norman, 1936), p. 42.

<sup>21</sup> Grant Foreman, *Marcy and the Gold Seekers* (Norman, 1939), pp. 24, 39, 190.



younger children, moved to Fort Smith, where she supported herself and family by keeping boarders.<sup>22</sup>

An interesting and valuable citizen of North Fork Town was the Reverend Sugar T. George, who was born in 1832 in the old Creek Nation in Alabama; he was a slave of an Indian woman named Susie Canard, later known as Mrs. Susie Herrod. George moved from Alabama to a place named Marshalltown and lived there until he was twenty-one. From there he removed to North Fork where he remained until the Civil War when he joined the Union forces as an orderly guard. He served three years and was in the fight at Cabin Creek. After his return home he engaged in farming and cattle raising.

George was elected to the first House of Warriors and served eight successive years. He was town king for twenty-two years and was also a judge and prosecuting attorney in the nation. His wife was Bettie Rentie, sister of Warrior, Solomon, Morris, John, Picket, Millie and Rachel Rentie. He was married only once and had no children. George was ordained to the ministry at Fort Smith in the First Baptist Church in 1868, having been converted in 1856 by the Rev. Joseph Island. George prospered and his home was appraised at \$10,000.<sup>23</sup>

A citizen of North Fork Town in May, 1849, wrote of the activities of the village:

"For several weeks this place has had companies preparing for California. Here the Indians are orderly, have farms, and the companies fully prepare themselves for the long route. Generally the Californians have arrived here in wagons, and find it to their advantage to supply themselves with mules or ponies. More than a hundred wagons have been bought by the Creek Indians from them. The Indians have been greatly benefitted by the exchange, as well as the companies. . . . Those coming this way act very unwisely to purchase wagons or even horses; here they can be purchased at a lower price and can make a better travel than horses that have subsisted on grain. The Comanche Indians, the most hostile, have been here lately and held a talk with the chiefs. The Seminole and Creek chiefs have advised them not to interrupt the emigrants."

Many of the travelers going down the Texas Road halted at North Fork Town to buy supplies while they decided whether to turn west or continue south to join Marey's road, or go on to Fort Washita and over the El Paso route. A party of Mormons under the leadership of Bishop George Miller arrived at North Fork on December 12, 1849. They were travelers over the Texas Road from Texas to Illinois. Miller, a carpenter, found plenty of work in

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<sup>22</sup> OHS. *Indian-Pioneer History*, "Life and Experiences of an Indian Territory Man, Benjamin Hawley Bailey," by his son, Rowland S. Bailey of Muskogee, Oklahoma. Vol. 51, pp. 59-60.

<sup>23</sup> *The Baptist College Journal*, September 1, 1899, p. 2, col. 3.

the little town and from the high wages his company prospered so that they could buy all the provisions they required for themselves and their animals for the remainder of the journey to Illinois. They left the place on July 22, 1850. This was the same party of Mormons that stopped at Tahlequah January 9, 1847, on their way to Texas where the Bishop went to visit his son. Artisans being in great demand there they remained long enough to build three brick buildings before continuing on to Texas in December.<sup>24</sup>

Enterprising white and Indian traders made expeditions to the Comanche country to trade with the red men for their horses and mules, which they brought back to North Fork to sell to the emigrants going to California. These tough little animals could travel indefinitely on the pasturage along the route.

The Knickerbocker Company of gold seekers traveled through North Fork Town as reported by the Reverend Ira M. Allen on April 3, 1849, who wrote from the northeast corner of the present Pittsburg County, Oklahoma, that they planned they would ferry the Canadian and continue to the settlement and then west to Little River.

A party of prospective miners from Helena, Arkansas, left home in early March, traveling aboard the steamboat *Oella* to Fort Smith; from there they departed by road led by Captain Dorsey, who commanded sixty-eight men. A member of the party, A. C. Russel, later editor of the New Orleans *Evening Journal*, wrote a letter on April 17 from Little River which appeared in *The Southern Shield* (Helena), June 2, 1849, in which he reported that in "Less than two days after breaking camp on the Canadian [North Fork Town], the Indianians, numbering twenty-two men, and Remington's mess (five) withdrew from the company and determined to pack."

A member of the same party wrote a series of letters which were printed in *The Concordia Intelligencer* (Vidalia Parish, Louisiana) from March 3 to November 24, 1849. From Fort Gibson the delegation followed the Texas Road forty-five miles to unite with their company at North Fork Town, where the writer saw three flourishing houses which were doing business with the Creeks as well as tribes from the faraway prairies. Their encampment was made up of seventeen tents, seventy-five men and 140 or 150 horses and mules. All of the wagons were overloaded with articles which were not necessary and the men discarded extra clothing and many dainties which they had bought at Fort Smith and to which the Indians fell heir.

They finished their reorganization at North Fork and departed April 8, behind twenty-two persons from Kentucky. In *The*

<sup>24</sup> *Annual Publications of Southern California*, X, Part 3, p. 154; *Marcy and the Gold Seekers*, *op. cit.*, pp. 162-64.

*Arkansas State Democrat*, May 18, 1849, a correspondent fresh from North Fork Town stated that all of the emigrants who left Little Rock on April 18 had passed North Fork by the thirtieth. The Empire and Washington City companies had passed several days previous to that date and they were all in high spirits and praised the road on the north side of the river to Webbers Falls and to North Fork Town.<sup>25</sup>

John M. Jarner was superintendent of Asbury school in 1851 when he sent his account of the mission to Hon. Luke Lea, commissioner of Indian affairs. Owing to a number of circumstances the report was not favorable; measles had attacked half of the pupils who could not attend to their duties. A national school was opened in the vicinity which took fifteen of the most promising students from Asbury. Mr. Jarner reported:

"While contending with difficulty after difficulty, and the *low juggling* of one man, whose name I need not mention, there came a wind-storm, which, in its ravages . . . shook our house to its foundation, causing the walls to crack from top to bottom in several places. This alarmed the inmates of the institution. The teacher would quit, the people would have their children away. I would not (it was unsafe) remain any longer with my family in the cracking house; hence, on the 28th May our school broke up in great confusion, never, I judge, to commence again. . . ."

Joseph M. Perryman, who was born near Muskogee in 1833, studied for the Presbyterian ministry at Coweta Mission in 1853. After his service in the Civil War he was ordained for the ministry at Wapanucka Academy, after which he returned to his own country and organized a Presbyterian church at North Fork Town. Perryman held many high offices in the Creek Nation and in 1883 was elected chief, and president of the board of education in 1890.<sup>26</sup>

Frederick B. Severs, who became one of the wealthiest men in the Creek Nation and one of the few adopted citizens, taught school at Asbury Mission for two years before his brother-in-law, Hardeman Shields, engaged his services in his trading establishment at Shieldsville, near the Creek capital town of Okmulgee. Severs remained there until he entered the Confederate service in 1861.

Before the Civil War Edward Butler and his wife, Elizabeth Belle Reeder Butler, made their home at North Fork Town. Mrs. Butler was of Scotch-Irish descent and was born in the old mining town of Granby, Missouri, about thirty-five miles southeast of Joplin. When she was seven or eight years old her parents moved to Butler, Bates County, Missouri, where Elizabeth was educated. Mr. Butler and his wife were the parents of several children; their son, Manley ("Mannie") Garrett Butler, was born at Honey Springs, on Elk Creek, August 7, 1860. He received his middle name from William

<sup>25</sup> Foreman, *ibid.*, pp. 39, 165, 173-4, 178, 181.

<sup>26</sup> H. F. & E. S. O'Beirne, *The Indian Territory* (Saint Louis, 1892), pp. 120-21.

H. Garrett who served as Creek agent for many years and was greatly loved by the Indians because of his consideration and kindness to them.

Mr. Butler owned a store in North Fork Town, but when the Civil War came on he abandoned his business to assist Stand Watie and Colonel McIntosh to recruit 5,000 troops for the Confederate army. He took his family to Honey Springs, Creek Nation, where his cousin, Mrs. Delilah Drew, lived.<sup>27</sup>

Mrs. Drew was a good nurse and Mr. Butler felt safe in leaving his family in her care, particularly as his wife was expecting a baby. This child, Tookah Butler, was born on the ranch belonging to her father near Honey Springs, and when a very young child she was taken by her parents to Red River where they refueged during the war.

On their return north after the conflict the Butler family settled at North Fork Town on the government road where two other children were born. The birthday of Robert E. Butler was July 24, 1866, and his sister was Sarah.<sup>28</sup>

The tiny settlement of North Fork was about half way between the two forks of the Canadian River. According to Mr. Manny Butler, there were five or six families in the place, not over fifty people, all living along the Texas Road. Joseph McDonald Coodey was an early settler and Coodey's Creek south of Muskogee was named for his family. Coodey was a Cherokee and his first wife was a white woman, Mary Rebecca Harris (né Thornberry), a sister of G. W. Stidham's wife, whom he married in Washington in 1855 or 1856.<sup>29</sup> Coodey's wife came west to visit her sister Mrs. Stidham and she and Coodey were married. Coodey's second wife was Mary Muskogee Hardridge, a half-blood Creek.<sup>30</sup> They were married in 1867 shortly after he returned from Texas where his first wife died. At "Old Town," as North Fork Town was called, their daughter

<sup>27</sup> Mrs. William Drew, or "Aunt Lila" as she was called by the family, was a daughter of Chief William McIntosh and a sister of Colonel D. N. McIntosh. Mrs. Drew was the mother of the late Susan McIntosh Rogers of Muskogee.—Carolyn Thomas Foreman, "A Creek Pioneer," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXI, No. 3 (September, 1943), pp. 271-79.

<sup>28</sup> Robert E. Butler married Carrie L. Lindsey, January 31, 1893, at Chouteau, Indian Territory. John Wesley Sanders, a native of North Carolina, married Mrs. Sarah Butler Porter in 1886. Mrs. Sanders died April 20, 1900, at her home near Muskogee, leaving four children, Edna C., Lizzie, Maud and Millard. Tookah Butler was married to Clarence W. Turner, a native of Cleveland, Ohio, in 1884. They made their home in Muskogee where Mr. Turner was a prominent merchant. Three children were born of this union—Tookah Turner Bagg, Clarence and Marion.—Grant Foreman, "Clarence W. Turner," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. X, No. 1 (March, 1932), pp. 18-20.

<sup>29</sup> H. F. and E. S. O'Beirne, *op. cit.*, p. 185.

<sup>30</sup> Carolyn Thomas Foreman, "The Coodey Family of Indian Territory," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXV, No. 4 (Winter, 1947), p. 325.

Flora Coodey was born on February 4, 1869. She became the wife of Richard Young Audd, who was born in Kentucky June 6, 1854.<sup>31</sup>

Another white man at North Fork Town was D. B. Whitlow, who married a Creek woman. He was the owner of a store in the village. George W. Stidham, a prominent man of the Creek Nation, made his home at the town, where he owned a store which was separated from Coodey's place by a fence; there was a road between Edward Butler's store and Stidham's property. On the east was a drug store of Doctor A. Patterson, the postmaster and a brother of J. A. Patterson, president of the Patterson Mercantile Company of Muskogee. After the death of Mr. Butler his widow married Dr. Patterson and they had two sons, Philip Ogden Patterson and James Aurelius Patterson, the younger boy being named for his uncle.

Below the above mentioned stores was a bakery and confectionery store kept by William Bertram, a Dutchman, who sold supplies to travelers passing on the Texas Road. Joining Bertram's on the east was a store owned by Gray Eagle Scales, a white man. He had a niece who lived with him and later a nephew joined them. His name was Tom Scales and he fell in love with his cousin Emma and they were married, much to the chagrin of their uncle. Tom's brother, George Scales, lived with his uncle until his death, when the young man moved to Calvin. Tom Scales lived at Wetumpka, but he maintained a business at Holdenville as well as in his home town.

Church was held in a log school house daubed with mud in the winter and in the summer services were held under a brush arbor. The school taught by Mrs. Elizabeth Stidham Ross was used for a church for white people and Indians and east of the home of William Nero was a school house for Negro children which was used for a church for the colored citizens.

William Nero stood well in the community and he had a good home. It was a long building running north and south, with a porch the entire length on the west side. There were five or six large rooms; originally it was a log house with a clapboard roof, but later it was covered with siding. The north room was toward the highway and there was a large chimney on the north side of the room. Nero ran a store across the trail north of his home. He had a wife and eight or ten children.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Oklahoma Historical Society, *Indian-Pioneer History*. Statement of Mrs. Flora Coodey Audd, Vol. 12, pp. 514-520.

<sup>32</sup> "Billy Nero, an old and highly respected Negro, who had lived at North Fork Town many years, died September 12, 1872" (*Tri-Weekly Fort Smith Herald*, September 19, 1872, p. 3, col. 5). The William Nero Cemetery was located in the vicinity of Nero's store and he and his wife were buried there (OHS, *Indian Pioneer History*, Foreman Collection, vol. 30, pp. 39-51). According to Creek records William Nero had a blacksmith shop in North Fork Town in November, 1869, and June, 1875. As Nero died in 1872 the license for another man of the same name may have been issued to a son of "Billy Nero" (OHS, Indian Archives Division, No. 24695 and No. 24730).

The Texas Road crossed the Arkansas near the mouth of the Verdigris; the crossing was opposite the old Nevins ferry and it ran west through North Fork Town. John Smith had a grist mill on Mill Creek about ten or twelve miles up from North Fork Town, on the north bank of the Canadian River; it was an old French burr mill and he had a circle saw also. Mill Creek was east of Little River; it was nearly half way from Eufaula to Little River and the mill was just above where Mill Creek emptied into the Canadian.

Mr. Butler knew a full-blood Creek Indian who lived at North Fork Town; he wore his hair in a queue like a Chinaman. He and his son, Sanger Beaver, were both good cobblers; their home was on Okfuskee Mountain between North Fork Town and the South Canadian. Sanger Beaver was a religious fanatic; his one thought was religion and he finally lost his mind and died in a few days.

Okfuskee Mountain was south of North Fork Town, between the town and the South Canadian River. All of the Indians who lived on the mountain belonged to Okfuskee Town and that was how the mountain got its name.

Mr. Butler related that he spoke Cherokee, Creek and a little Choctaw. His father always talked to him in Cherokee and he was in school with Cherokee children, so he spoke that language better than he did English. He learned Creek at North Fork Town before going to school in the Creek country. Next he attended grammar school in Atlanta, Georgia, for four years and soon after his return home his mother died. After that he was sent by the nation to the East Tennessee University.

The merchants at North Fork Town got their freight by steamboat from Fort Smith and Little Rock to Nevins's landing on the Arkansas. When the water was so low that the boats could not run the merchants sent teams for their supplies. People passing through North Fork Town were on their way to Mexico or California; they traveled in covered wagons drawn by horses or mules. Ox teams were considered too slow, but Mr. Butler saw cows yoked up and they stepped right along, but a steer was too slow. "A steer would travel for half an hour in the shade of one tree." The emigrants always had a dog running along under the wagon, and sometimes one tied to the hind axle. He said there was always a tar bucket under the rear axle fastened to the coupling pole. He saw great loads of hay hauled by oxen, sometimes as many as ten to a wagon. They stretched the wagon as long as possible and loaded on hay until it would hold no more, then they put a pole across the top and tied one end to the front and the other to the rear axle.

When the axles on the old wagons became dry the noise they made could be heard half a mile, then it was time to stop and put on more tar. Sometimes a squeaking wagon would pass through at

night and awaken every one in town. People traveled in large parties for protection and they stopped at Honey Springs where there was a camping place.

William Nero had a stage stand about fifty feet west of his store where he furnished feed for the horses. The stage stopped only long enough to change to fresh horses. They used six or eight horses to each stage and the drivers used whips with a long lash and they became so expert that they could knock a fly off the lead horse. The stage dashed through North Fork Town at a gallop. They carried four, six and sometimes ten passengers and there was a place at the back of the vehicle to carry the baggage. There was a boot up in front on which the driver sat. There was room beside the driver for two passengers, besides the mail and express. The stage was hung on Concord patent springs.

There was a toll bridge over Elk Creek northeast of Checotah which was owned by Delilah Drew. Mr. Butler said.<sup>33</sup>

"Lots of times the people didn't want to pay toll charges and she would lock the bridge at night so they couldn't get across without her knowing it. They had to pay extra at night. She would dig ditches so they couldn't get down to the river and ford it. . . . Aunt Lillah was the first woman I ever saw that dipped snuff. She acquired that habit down in Texas."

In response to a touching appeal of Joseph Islands before his death in 1848, Henry Frieland Buckner came to the Creek Nation as a missionary; he was obliged to secure a permit from the government and the Creek Council to preach and the Indians debated for three days before deciding to allow the minister to remain. Buckner and his wife, Lucy Ann Dogan Buckner, landed on the banks of the Verdigris River on March 7, 1849, and they worked among the red men until the breaking out of the Civil War, when they went to Texas and from there to Georgia, where he worked in behalf of the Indians. The Buckners returned to Indian Territory in June and he wrote from North Fork Town on July 28, 1870:

"I arrived only three days ago. The place is rotted. We stopped in a school house as it was the only vacant house. The Indians were glad to welcome us back. . . . I am the only Baptist missionary in the nation and the first to return. There is but one missionary of any denomination except myself, a Presbyterian. The Methodists are rebuilding a mission, but the superintendent lives in Arkansas."

When Buckner called for help young Joseph Samuel Murrow, having been ordained at Macon, Georgia, September 16, 1857, set out for the West. He stopped in Mississippi to marry Miss Elizabeth

<sup>33</sup> This interview with Mr. Butler took place September 6, 1935, in the home of Grant Foreman and was reported in shorthand by Mrs. Charles M. Whaley.

Some reminiscences of Manley Butler who was familiar with North Fork Town in the 1860's appears in OHS, *Indian-Pioneer History*, "Interview with Manley Butler, Muskogee, Oklahoma," (WPA Project), Vol. 17, pp. 486-90.

Tatom and he and his bride traveled by boat to Fort Smith; they arrived at North Fork Town December 10, 1857, after five weeks of travel, and settled in a log cabin. The following August 18, 1858, his wife died. Murrow remarried October 27, 1859; his second wife was Miss Clara Burns, a missionary to the Choctaws. In 1860 Murrow removed to the Seminole Nation and from there to Texas. After the war he and his family settled among the Choctaws where he lived until September 18, 1929.<sup>34</sup>

On January 21, 1853, the Rev. H. F. Buckner wrote to *The Indian Advocate* that since Brother S. Wallace had resolved to leave the Creek Nation, he had moved to North Fork Town to take charge of the mission buildings, "and also because it is a more destitute place than the Creek agency." The minister found it painful to leave his friends on the Arkansas, but he hoped to see them often:

"I never knew before how much I loved the Indians; and, indeed, I did not know how much I was beloved.

"Before going to North Fork I consulted the church, and obtained the unanimous vote of both members and citizens who were present. . . . Our cause is not as prosperous here as it is on the Arkansas, owing to a combination of causes. . . . Brother and Sister Wallace have suffered much from affliction, and after having served the Board faithfully for three years, feel constrained to leave. . . . I now expect to be left to fill the breach, as the only Baptist Missionary in the Creek Nation. . . . If the Board would grant me an interpreter, subject to my command, I would traverse, as far as possible, this entire nation. . . . The Lord has, without doubt, given this vineyard to the Baptists; but unless they cultivate it, he will surely give it to other husbandmen."

A public examination was held at Asbury on July 21, 1853, when the school closed. The teaching had been done by two young women and the examination showed how efficient their instruction had been. Such pupils as were able performed some manual labor, such as chopping wood, attending to the stock; the girls sewed, washed, swept and assisted in the dining room and kitchen.

The farm was well supplied with teams, stock and tools; the garden supplied vegetables, and there was a good crop of corn and potatoes.

The secretary of the Methodist Episcopal Church South, the Reverend Doctor E. W. Schon visited the school and he reported to the Board concerning affairs there.<sup>35</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Alice Hurley Mackey, "Father Murrow; Civil War Period," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XII, No. 1 (March, 1934), pp. 56, 57; Routh, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-45.

<sup>35</sup> The Reverend Mr. Schon was a prominent clergyman of Nashville, Tennessee. Schon Chapel, Park Hill, Cherokee Nation, was named in his honor. His church, the Methodist Episcopal, frequently sent him to the Indian country in the interest of that denomination.—Carolyn Thomas Foreman, *Park Hill* (Muskogee, 1948), p. 100.



A post office was established at North Fork Town on August 4, 1853, but the name of the place was changed to Micco, meaning "chief" in the Creek language. The trader, Catlett J. Atkins, was appointed postmaster.

*The Indian Advocate*, August, 1853, published a letter from Buckner written at North Fork on July 21, in which he appeared very sanguine concerning conditions in his congregation. At their meetings there was nothing to protect the congregation except a brush arbor and their canvas tents. Sixteen tents were occupied by families from a distance. This was most pleasing to the missionary as there had been some disaffection since the death of the Reverend Joseph Islands. About fifteen or twenty moved up for prayer, after which three were immersed in a neighboring stream. The following is an excerpt from this letter:

"On the 15th, 16th, and 17th inst. I preached at the Muskokee church, on Arkansas, 45 or 50 miles north from this place. An entertainment was given during the whole time by Gen. Roly McIntosh, . . . principal chief of the Creek Nation. A more sumptuous entertainment I never saw in my life. I think it must have cost the Gen. \$500. There were from 800 to 1000 people all the time. . . . During this meeting I was so exhausted by excitement, loss of sleep and exercise, that I could scarcely stand up on the last day. In going and returning, the prairie flies were so bad that we were compelled to travel by night. . . . However, I feel amply compensated for all my toil on this occasion. . . .

"I could not avoid contrasting the difference in the appearance of the congregation with what it was four years ago. Then there were not more than four sun-bonnets to be seen in a congregation of that size; now there is not a congregation in any country town in Kentucky that can excell this one in neatness of dress and good order. . . . The principal and second chief were in attendance all the time. . . . Nothing of a disorderly nature . . . occurred during the whole time, save that one drunk Indian came on Sunday, but he was soon taken by the 'light horse' and 'put in strings' until he became sober."

In a letter to *The Indian Advocate* from North Fork Town, dated October 10, 1853, Buckner wrote:

"The field is widening and lengthening every day. Three years ago we were not allowed to preach in Broken Arrow, now we have a flourishing church of about fifty members, and a house of worship. Two years ago we were not allowed to preach in Tuckabachee, now we have two little flourishing churches there: one sixty members and the other about forty.

"Last night I visited Tuckabachee in company with Gen. Chilly McIntosh. We found a large congregation assembled under a brush arbor to whom Brother McIntosh preached. . . . We left the brethren singing and praying at a late hour, and spent the night very pleasantly, under the hospitable roof of Billy Harjo, a chief of the 'Upper Creeks.' This chief is not a member of the church. . . . but now he attends preaching regularly and is engaged in having a Baptist meeting-house erected near his own residence. . . .

"Brother 'Blacksmith Jack' and Chilly McIntosh preached funeral sermons after which Brother Buckner took up a collection of four dollars."

After a baptizing at a stream " . . . the whole congregation partook of a plentiful dinner, which the brethren had prepared on the previous day. . . ."<sup>36</sup>

The first letter from Mr. Buckner in 1854 was printed in *The Indian Advocate* in the February issue. He wrote of baptizing James and David Yarjah, grandsons of the Big Warrior,<sup>37</sup> of Red-Stick-War notoriety. He reported James as a studious and talented young man who had spent five years at school. He was the son of Yajah, a chief in Tuckabachee. Preaching took place in the new church, but it was inadequate to hold the great crowd of people present:

"Such a congregation in the woods, in the midst of winter, would have made a beautiful sketch for an amateur painter—a cloud of Indians, dressed in their old-fashioned native consumes—many having been attracted to meeting for the first time, in all their native wildness and simplicity—some standing, some sitting on the grass or reclining against trees, some in the tops of saplings; and one youth in front, and near to me, stood leaning upon the top of his bow, with spearheaded arrows in his hands. . . ."

Asbury Mission was crowded in 1854. At the beginning of the term one hundred and twelve children were admitted, although the stipulated number was eighty. Some of them ran away, a habit quite common in Indian schools as the children were unaccustomed to discipline at home; frequently the parents kept their children at home to help with the work, or they wished to display to their friends the progress made by them in school.

When the mission was started many large boys and girls were admitted, but it was soon found that some of them were unmanageable and with little inclination to study, so they were gradually eliminated and those retained who were making progress. Among those doing well were Priscilla Harrison, Nancy Berryhill, Mila Bosan, Polly Monack, Louisa English, Elizabeth Johnson. Of the lads, Charles West, James Yargee, Richard Fisher, Eli Danly, Caddo Wadsworth. Some of the students had married.

Miss R. J. Crawford and Miss M. I. Ish were the principal teachers and they had oversight of the girls out of school. The usual branches were taught. One hundred and fifty copies of the Bible and Testaments were sold and distributed through the school that year.

The farm was in good condition and with the aid of two young men the boys raised sixty acres of corn which yielded a fair crop

<sup>36</sup> *The Indian Advocate*, December, 1853.

<sup>37</sup> Big Warrior, or Tustinuggee Thlucco, principal chief of the Creek Indians, remained the friend of the whites although Tecumseh attempted to persuade him to join him against them. The Shawnee, in disgust, told Big Warrior, "your blood is white. You have taken my red sticks and my talk, but you do not mean to fight" (Pickett, *History of Alabama*, [Birmingham, 1900], p. 514).

in spite of a severe drouth. Superintendent Ruble thought the school was gaining ground in spite of much opposition and that it stood high in the estimation of the Indians and friends of improvement. "We see no good ground to doubt the success of the manual-labor plan, for most certainly it is the one best calculated to meet the immediate wants of the Indians.

In 1858 Asbury was still under the care of Mr. Ruble and the school was being taught by W. C. Munson and his daughter. The ages of the pupils were from eight to sixteen years and the usual branches were taught. In addition considerable time was given to vocal and instrumental music, "the latter on the melodeon only." Some of the boys "declaim well on the stage."

About seventy-five acres were cultivated in corn, oats, millet, potatoes, turnips, and they were experimenting with Chinese sugar cane, which grew very well there. The boys helped with the farm work and in addition they ground nearly all of the meal on steel mills for the school, for which they were paid ten cents per bushel.

Mr. Buckner, after a visit to Louisville, resumed his work among the Creeks. He wrote of the "Fourth of July Festival" where he was the Chaplain. The celebration was arranged entirely by the Indians "and conducted in a manner that would have done credit to the most civilized people on earth. . . . So far as good order in large assemblies is an index of attainments in civilization, the Creek Indians will triumphantly bear off the palm from any nation of my acquaintance and it is high time that historians were setting them down where they belong—at the head of all civilized tribes."

About two thousand persons were present and partook of roast beef, boiled hams, mutton, turkeys, chickens, bread, coffee and sweetmeats in profusion after the meeting.<sup>38</sup>

A Masonic lodge was organized at North Fork on November 9, 1855. The charter was granted to George W. Stidham and William H. Whitefield and John Barrville. These men rode horseback to Little Rock, Arkansas, to the Grand Lodge to secure the charter; the journey and return required five days. Stidham became Worshipful Master, Whitefield Senior Warden and Barrville was Junior Warden. In later years this lodge was removed to Standpipe Hill in Muskogee and it was called Muskogee Lodge No. 90; subsequently it became Masonic Lodge No. 1 at Eufaula, Oklahoma.<sup>39</sup>

Citizens along the Texas Road witnessed a pageant of absorbing interest early in December, 1855, when the Second United States Cavalry, recently created by Congress, marched from Jefferson Bar-

<sup>38</sup> *The Indian Advocate*, January, 1855.

<sup>39</sup> OHS. *Indian-Pioneer History*, authority of Mr. Charlie Shields of Eufaula, a long-time Mason, from old records in his possession, Vol. 69, pp. 289-90.

racks on the way to Texas to fight the Indians. The officers of that regiment were destined to become celebrated in the later history of the army: George H. Thomas, Albert Sidney Johnston, Robert E. Lee, Earl Van Dorn, Edmund Kirby Smith, William J. Hardee, Fitzhugh Lee, John B. Hood and Theodore O'Hara. Ten troops, numbering 750 men with 800 horses and twenty-five wagons drawn by 650 mules stretched out in a line several miles long, slowly crossing the prairies and hills to Honey Springs and North Fork Town, where they camped, and journeyed south to Fort Washita; they arrived at Fort Belknap, Texas, on December 27.<sup>40</sup>

J. W. Stephens, a mixed Creek and Negro, was born near the present Eufaula about 1858. In an interview he said that North Fork Town had a population of about three hundred; it was a favorite meeting place for the transaction of tribal affairs. One important business establishment there was a store and a shop where repairs were made on wagons. There was an inn but most of the travelers camped and cooked their own food.<sup>41</sup>

John Collins cared for the emigrants who preferred to eat at his place rather than to camp. New Blackhawk ran a store and George Delair was a blacksmith at North Fork Town, according to Mrs. Sarah Odeon, a half-blood Creek Indian of Muskogee.<sup>42</sup>

According to Leona Owens of Eufaula, her father, John Ingram, came to the Indian Territory from Texas when he was about fifteen years old. He and his family traveled up the Kansas and Texas Trail and located at North Fork Town where there were only a few people living there.

George W. Stidham and Charles Smith owned a trading post and Nero was also in business at that time. Mr. Smith's wife was a sister of Washington Grayson. When John Ingram returned from the Civil War he married Mrs. Dick Ross and they made their home at the old town as long as it existed; after which they and their baby removed to Eufaula.<sup>43</sup>

In October, 1855, Bishop George F. Pierce described his visit to Asbury Mission where the Indian Mission Conference was held. He thought the country between Tahlequah and North Fork Town the most picturesque he had ever seen and he was pleased with the hearty welcome he received "from the white man and the Indian."

The clergyman noted with interest Chimney Mountain  
 ". . . . which seemed to preside over the prairie and to watch every passer-by. For twenty miles or more it is seemingly about you; you cannot escape it. . . . you feel haunted and then attracted; and when at

<sup>40</sup> Grant Foreman, *Down the Texas Road* (Norman, 1936), pp. 37-38.

<sup>41</sup> OHS. *Indian-Pioneer History*, Vol. 68, p. 119.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 81, pp. 240-42. Dean Collins moved to Eufaula and was the first barber there as his father had been at North Fork Town.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. 38, p. 436.

last some rival mound, aided by distance, hides it from your vision, you feel as if you had looked for the last time on some old familiar landmark, or had bidden a friend farewell."

The Bishop wrote that it would be well for the skeptical about evangelizing the Indians to attend a conference among them:<sup>44</sup>

"The place, the school, the Conference, each and all make an interesting paragraph in the current history of this aboriginal race. But a generation gone they were heathens; now they have flourishing academies, houses of religious worship, the apparel and the manners of civilization. . . . the white man's book, his gospel, and his preacher.

". . . . here is a large three-story brick building—a schoolhouse—with superintendent, teachers, male and female, and the Annual Conference assembled within its walls! The bell rings and we all descend to the dining-hall; the boys sit at one table, a teacher at the head; the girls at another, the guests at a third. All in order; no rushing and jamming; and now every one at his place awaits in silence the invocation of a blessing upon the bounteous board.

". . . . Chilli McIntosh informed me that the Creeks had increased *two thousand in five years!* . . . . The desire to learn the English language is almost universal among them. . . . Nothing special occurred during the session save the admission into the travelling connection of James McHenry—better known in Georgia and Alabama as 'Jim Henry'—the hero of the Creek war in 1856. The Hon has become a lamb—the *brave* a preacher . . . . the Bible and hymn-book fill the hands that once grasped the torch and tomahawk. The bold, valiant savage, who spread consternation among the peaceful settlements on either side of the Chattahoochee, now travels a circuit. . . .

". . . . the Indian preachers wished to hold a 'council' with me and requested me to designate an hour for the interview. . . .

"In the midst of our talk, *Chilli McIntosh*—well known in Georgia. . . . came in. The son of an old chief himself a chief, the Indians all rose, in respect to the man and his title. They called him *General* . . . . McIntosh. . . . Though not an old man, he is now very gray; has a mild, gentle face, more expressive of humor than of boldness, and looks as if he would like a joke better than a fight. In conversation he is entertaining, quick-witted, and ready at any time for a little fun. . . . I asked him various questions about his people, the country, the soil, and the prospects of the Nation. He says it is a much better country than the one they left. . . . They could not be induced to return. . . ."

In the report of Lieutenant Edward F. Beale of his survey of a wagon road from Fort Smith to the Colorado River in 1858, he wrote of encamping at North Fork Town, "an insignificant village" on November 2. While there he learned that the price of corn had advanced from two bits to a dollar a bushel, owing to a short crop and the fact that a government train and its quartermaster's drafts were on the road. He left the town "which had nothing inviting in its appearance, . . . . encamped about half a mile beyond it."<sup>45</sup>

<sup>44</sup> George G. Smith, *The Life and Times of George Foster Pierce* . . . . (Nashville, Tennessee, 1888), pp. 223-229. Bishop Pierce left North Fork on October 15 in company with the Reverend Mr. McAlister and Brother Ewing for the Choctaw Agency at Scullyville (*ibid.*, pp. 232-33).

<sup>45</sup> Grant Foreman, "Survey of a Wagon Road from Fort Smith to the Colorado River," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. 12, No. 1 (March, 1934), pp. 74, 79.

The Reverend Mr. Murrow reported to the *Mississippi Baptist* October 30, 1858, that the United States overland mail route from St. Louis to California passed through North Fork. The first stage from California passed with four passengers two weeks previously. The mail was transported monthly.

Traffic through North Fork Town, or Micco, was greatly increased because of the Gold Rush to Denver in 1858-59. Residents of the place reported hundreds of emigrants and thousands of cattle from Texas passing through on the way to the El Dorado of Colorado.<sup>46</sup>

Under date of April 22, 1859, Missionary Murrow wrote to the *Arkansas Baptist*: "We met yesterday six trains of wagons, besides at least 1,000 head of cattle in different droves on their way to Pike's Peak gold region. . . . in high spirits . . . . most of them from Texas, a great many however from Arkansas are continually passing this road."<sup>47</sup>

J. S. Murrow, Micco, Creek Nation, May 12, 1859, wrote to Brother Watson, for the *Arkansas Baptist*:

"The coming payment is creating quite a sensation out here just now, nor will the excitement be over until after the payment, nor even then for some time. Many of the Indians are neglecting their farms looking forward to the money they expect to get at the payment for support. Many are selling their 'Head-rights' and merchants are buying these head rights even before it is known that the money will be paid out per capita. Merchants have laid in large stocks for the approaching money campaign. Everything has gone up. Flour had gone up from four to five dollars per sack to eight and ten dollars.

"Some of the old chiefs want a part at least, of the money coming on now to be invested in good state stocks. They argue that it is the last money that will be received except from annuities, and it had best be invested and the interest used from year to year in improvements, school funds, etc. Others again are anxious for it all to be paid out now, and then they say the people will have to work. . . ."

On June 30, 1859, Reverend Murrow wrote to the *Arkansas Baptist* from Micco:<sup>48</sup>

Our usually quiet little town is just at this time in considerable excitement and commotion. Light horsemen are parading the streets, guns, pistols and dirk knives are in great demand, and quite a large army of some fifty warriors are assembled about ten miles above here and altogether things look a little scary. The cause of the tumult arises from the killing of a Cherokee Indian by a Creek father and son named Carr." The Cherokees threatened that if the murderers were not delivered they would go over and kill Moty Kanard, principal Chief of the Lower District, Tuck-a-batchie Micco, ex-chief of the Upper District, General Chilly McIntosh, Opothle Yahola and J. M. C. Smith. Creek authorities inaugurated a movement to hold an "International Council of Nations" at

<sup>46</sup> Grant Foreman, *Down the Texas Road* (Norman, 1936), p. 42.

<sup>47</sup> Grant Foreman, *Marcy and the Gold Seekers* (Norman, 1939), p. 104, n. 27.

<sup>48</sup> Grant Foreman, *Advancing the Frontier* (Norman, 1933), p. 236.

North Fork (Asbury) Mission in 1859, "with the avowed purpose of framing and adopting a code of International Laws, to be regarded and adhered to by the nations participating in such General Council of Nations, as the law governing the intercourse policy towards each other and between them."

The Reverend Thomas Bertholf became a missionary teacher at Asbury Mission in 1859, but at the beginning of the war he and his wife, Nancy Keys Bertholf, went south and remained near the mouth of the Washita River until the end of the war when they returned to North Fork mission, where Mr. Bertholf died July 28, 1867, greatly revered and regretted by his many friends among the Cherokees and Creeks.<sup>49</sup>

J. S. Murrow wrote to the *South Western Baptist*, June 22, 1859 :

" . . . Here are circuses, shows, theatres, gamblers, jockeys, traders, and even dentists and artists,—all intent upon getting the Indians' money, and they will succeed to a very great extent. This is a fine country, Bro. Buckner has at this time a beautiful small pasture of Hungarian timothy and Herds grass. D. N. McIntosh has a fine pasture of clover and blue grass, Chinese sugar cane grows as finely as it could possibly on its native soil. Vegetables of all kinds grow most luxuriantly. Sister Buckner has as fine a garden, I suppose, as any country in the United States,—peas, beans, squaches, onions, lettuce, cabbage, radishes, asparagus, beets, carrots, cucumbers, okra, parsnips, peppers, tomatoes, turnips, &c. &c.—Melons of all kinds are plentiful in summer. Berries are found in quantities growing wild, nor is the orchard wanting,—the finest apples, peaches, pears, cherries, plums &c; pecan nuts, hickory nuts, walnuts &c. all lie upon the ground in the forests nearly all winter."

The first and second chiefs were elected once every four years:<sup>50</sup>

"In this district, the Lower, Moty Kanard, former second chief, was elected by a very large majority to the office of principal chief. Uncle Moty is a deacon in the Baptist church at this place, and is a good man and a Christian. He is the tallest man in the nation, nearly seven feet high. Jacob Derisau was elected to the office of second chief. . . .

"Within ten days the last 'big payment' comes off when \$225,000 will be scattered broadcast over the nation. Sharpers however, are here in shoals, and it will not be a great while before money will be as scarce as ever again. . . .

"Six loaded wagons bound for New Mexico passed through this town Saturday last, driving through Beale's Route. This is bound to be the route when it is opened. The 35th parallel, up the north side of the Canadian, is the best and shortest route to New Mexico, California, etc. Plenty of corn this way, fine water, abundance of wood and fine grass."<sup>51</sup>

<sup>49</sup> H. F. & E. S. O'Beirne, *The Indian Territory*, Saint Louis, 1892, p. 458. Mr. Bertholf had served as superintendent of Asbury in 1864 and continued in the position in 1865. In 1866 he was assistant superintendent of the school.—Charles R. Freeman, "Rev. Thomas Bertholf," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XI, No. 4 (December, 1933) pp. 1022-23.

<sup>50</sup> Murrow, Micco, June 28, 1859.

<sup>51</sup> J. S. Murrow, Micco, Creek Nation, to Bro. Watson, "for the *Arkansas Baptist*," July 26, 1859.

"It has been proposed, and indeed the 'Broken Days' have been sent out for a 'general grand peace council' of all the neighboring Indian tribes to be held and assembled at this town, North Fork, on the 8th or 9th of November next. The object is once more to smoke together the pipe of peace and bury still deeper the tomahawk. In other words, to renew their pledge of peace and friendship and amend their international laws.—If this can be effected it will result in much good. Existing feuds can perhaps be amicably settled. . . ."<sup>52</sup>

" . . . The natives are fast changing their old manners and customs. There are not half so many buckskin leggings, shawls and moccasins worn now as there were five years ago. Their houses are better and their farms larger and cleaner; they raise stock in abundance and take great delight in it. The Indian women are excellent cooks, but unfortunately are not always as clean as they might be."<sup>53</sup>

" . . . Crops are fine. The new Chinese sugar cane is being raised. The Creeks have no mills but cut the stalks into small pieces, "throw them into their sof-ky mortars and pound them into mummy. They then put the mass in sacks and squeeze the juice out as well as they are able, then boil it down into syrup. The process is very tedious. Syrup or molasses they call ne-ha-chum-puh or sweet grease.

"Emigrants to and from Texas are continually passing through this nation. Fifty or sixty and even more wagons pass daily. Large flocks of sheep are always passing. It is almost incredible the number of sheep that have passed this place during the past month. Perhaps 50,000 would not be an underestimate. Texas is said to be a fine stock country."<sup>54</sup>

#### On Monday the 7th:

" . . . the whole town in confusion and commotion, owing to the excitement caused by the meeting of the grand peace council of the five neighboring tribes, then holding its meeting about a mile from the town. . . .

"The objects of the council, are to form an intertribal league or compact, to agree upon international laws, settle many old disputes or claims, and constitute more friendly and intimate relations between the several tribes. Several of the most intelligent and prominent men in each nation were present. . . . Ho-po-eth-le-yo-ho-lo, in an opening speech before the council, after referring in an eloquent and forcible manner to the ancient 'glory' of the red men, their numbers, territory and power, and after expatiating for some time upon their ways, and bewailing their present condition, he illustrated their present condition thus:

"At the mouth of the Chattahoochie, there is a small Island. Once it was very large; the waters have been gradually washing it away until now it is very small. Soon it will be all gone. The people will ask where is the island? and will be answered, the waters have washed it away and now it is overflown. Our condition is now like that of the little island. Once we were a large people and owned a great country. The white people like the waters of the river have washed us away until we are now very small. We can almost shoot an arrow over the little country we now possess and yet the whites want to rob us of a portion of this. Let

<sup>52</sup> J. S. Murrow to Bro. Watson, "for the *Arkansas Baptist*," Micco, Creek Nation, September 23, 1859.

<sup>53</sup> J. S. Murrow to Bro. Lyon. "For the *Baptist Messenger*," Micco, Creek Nation, west of Arkansas, October 15, 1859.

<sup>54</sup> Murrow to editor of the *Mississippi Baptist*. Micco, Oct. 20, 1859.



us not agree to this brethren. Let us build a strong bank around our island, that the waters may not overflow us."<sup>55</sup>

On January 3, 1860, Brother Murrow moved from North Fork to a station at Little River in the Creek Nation. From his new home he wrote on February 10, 1860: "Bro. Robert G. Atkins, a merchant at North Fork, born in Louisiana, raised in Alabama, died recently. I boarded with Bro. Atkins for six months and loved him dearly." He sent a letter to Brother Boykin at Rehoboth Station on May 11, 1860, saying that he had visited North Fork the previous week and welcomed to the Creek Nation and its missionary labors Brother J. A. Preston and his wife.

Albert Pike was sent by the Confederate government to negotiate treaties with the Five Civilized Tribes and on July 10, 1861, he signed a treaty with members of the Creek tribe, although strongly opposed by Opothleyahola, who made a fiery speech opposing his nation leaving the Union. Pike was greatly assisted in his work by the influential McIntosh family.<sup>56</sup>

The General Council of the Creek Nation assembled at North Fork Town at the instance of the Commissioner of the Confederate States, Captain Albert Pike, to hear his proposition for a treaty of alliance and friendship. As a result of the meeting the following persons were appointed as a committee to negotiate the treaty, viz:

Motty Kanard, Chilly McIntosh, Louis McIntosh, George W. Stidham, D. N. McIntosh, Samuel Checote, Thomas C. Carr, Echo Harjo, George Brinton, George Walker, John G. Smith, Ja. M. C. Smith, Cowassart Fixeco, Joseph Cornells, Timothy Barnette.

North Fork Town (or Micco) served as a base for supplies for the Southern forces during their operations in the north and provisions were held there.

The former followers of Opothle Yohola during the war returned from Kansas headed by Ok-tar-har-sars Harjo and settled on Greenleaf Creek south of Fort Gibson. In the summer of 1867 cholera broke out among them and a large number of them died. The disease spread to Fort Gibson, Honey Springs, and North Fork Town where there were many deaths.<sup>57</sup>

Asbury Mission was badly used during the Civil War. All of the outbuildings were burned and everything movable was carried away from the school building. The mission was sufficiently restored by 1869 so that school could be resumed, but in July it was totally destroyed by fire. The Creeks out of their meager funds donated ten thousand dollars toward reconstruction the following

<sup>55</sup> J. S. Murrow, Micco, Nov. 10, 1859, to Bro. Warren. "For the Index."

<sup>56</sup> Charles R. Freeman, "The Battle of Honey Springs," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (June, 1935), p. 154.

<sup>57</sup> Grant Foreman, *A History of Oklahoma* (Norman, 1942), p. 146.

year. "The people of this North Fork settlement returned after the war to the sites of their old homes to find complete devastation of everything they had left behind. . . ."<sup>58</sup>

The Drew family had fled to Texas at the beginning of the Civil War; Susannah and her aunt Rebecca McIntosh returned to the Indian Territory in 1866, traveling up the Texas Road, crossing Red River at Crowder's Ferry and the Canadian at North Fork Town. They hired some Cherokee men to build a hewed log house for them to be used as a ranch house. They returned to Texas in November and in 1867 Susannah brought her mother, Delilah McIntosh Drew, and their Negroes back to the Territory.

After the death of his wife, Sarah Ann Adair, William Penn Adair on December 8, 1868, married Miss Drew at her home on North Fork River. Thereafter much of her life was spent in Washington, D. C., where her husband represented his nation in many important affairs until his death in the capital on October 21, 1880.<sup>59</sup>

On February 11, 1869, the citizens of North Fork District met in council in North Fork Town and, among other resolutions, decided that John A. Richards should be ordered out of the Creek Nation for preaching Mormonism without permission. Richards was one of the Elders of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints who died in the missionary field.<sup>60</sup>

"[He] was born in England or Ireland in 1826 . . . . emigrated to the Rocky Mountains during the early years of the Utah's settlement and at the general conference of the Church held in April 1855, he was called, with four other Elders, to labor among the natives inhabiting the Indian Territory. On the way to their destination they were joined by four Elders from St. Louis, Missouri, and all arrived in the Territory in the fall of the same year. The mission opened up encouragingly and in a short time a branch of the Church was organized on Grand River in the Cherokee Nation.

"Elder Richard's wife having died in Utah, he married a Cherokee lady named Manhui, thus becoming a citizen of the nation. The lady being a widow and owning a large plantation and about sixteen slaves, convenient and permanent headquarters were established for the Elders.

"In the spring of 1859, all the Elders laboring in the Indian Territory, returned to their homes, excepting John A. Richards and one or two other Elders who died later in the field. When the war of the Rebellion broke out, the Indian Territory shared its horrors, and the branch of the Church was broken up and the members scattered.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 73, 75, 145-46.

<sup>59</sup> Susannah Drew Adair Rogers died at Muskogee April 4, 1939, at the age of ninety-five.—Carolina Thomas Foreman, "A Creek Pioneer, Notes Concerning 'Aunt Sue' Rogers and her family," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXI, No. 3 (September, 1943), pp. 271, 274, 276, 279.

<sup>60</sup> From a copy of material on file in the Historian's office, Genealogical Society of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

"When peace was again restored between the North and the South, and the Indians had returned to their country, Elders Richards turned his attention to the cultivation of a farm, and when Elders Matthew W. Dalton and John Hubbard were sent to the Indian Territory to labor as missionaries in 1877, they found Brother Richards a regular Cherokee in his customs and ways. After a short mission by these Utah Elders, they returned leaving him alone in the field. His Cherokee wife (a high class woman who was very kind to the Elders) died, and he afterwards married a Choctaw woman, and Brother Richards thus became a member of the Choctaw Nation. This wife also died, after which he returned to the Cherokees with his only son by the Cherokee woman, for whom he provided a liberal education, both in English and Cherokee, with a view to making him an efficient Latter Saint Missionary; but the young man died just before the advent of President Andrew Kimball into the mission in 1887. . . . After this Elder Richards did some missionary work with Elder Kimball, but he was occupied mostly on his farm.

"The Elders often endeavored to induce him to return to Utah to spend his remaining days with his daughter, who resided in Cache County, but for some time he would not entertain the idea.

"He was then advancing in years, being upwards of sixty years old. During the summer of 1889 he mingled with the Indians in all their feasts, festivities and political labors by which he probably exerted and exposed himself too much. In the Spring of 1889 he also met with a serious accident. His wagon overturned while crossing a stream, inflicting upon him such injuries that he never fully recovered. He died 21 Sept. 1889 and was buried the following day near his ranch on the Verdiges [sic] river in Western Cherokee Nation. Among all his acquaintances, whites and Indians, Brother Richards was held in the highest esteem, and the Elders who had shared his hospitality will never forget him."

J. H. Beadle, western correspondent of the *Cincinnati Commercial*, was advised to travel through the west to overcome attacks of asthma; he was in the Indian Territory when the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad was being constructed south of Muskogee and he visited North Fork Town where he heard of a fight in which a white man had been mortally wounded by railroad followers.

According to *The Laws of the Muskogee Nation*, compiled by L. C. Perryman in 1869, the principal chief was empowered to appoint a board of trustees for Asbury Manual Labor School on the North Fork River. It was the duty of these men to see that clothing be obtained for the orphans at the school, to keep an account of it and present it annually to the National Council.

No students were to be admitted to the school under the age of thirteen; until they had learned the rudiments of the five rules of arithmetic; had learned to read in English easy words of three syllables.

The Reverend John Harrell, a native of Perquimans County, North Carolina, performed prodigious labors in the Indian Territory.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>61</sup>R. L. Williams, "Rev. John Harrell," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XI, No. 1 (March, 1933), pp. 743-45.

He was licensed to preach in 1823 when only seventeen years of age and he was forty-four when he was transferred to the Indian Mission Conference in 1850. He was in charge of several Indian mission schools before being assigned as superintendent of Asbury in 1870-71; the buildings had been burned but under the efficient management of Mr. Harrell they were rebuilt. After serving as Presiding Elder of Creek and Cherokee districts he was returned to Asbury in 1876 as superintendent and he and his wife were there when she died on November 20, 1876, about a month before his own death. They were buried near the graves of Reverend Thomas Bertholf and his wife in the little North Fork burying ground near the present highway, and the neglect of the place does not indicate that their long and faithful work for the Indians is remembered.

Articles of Agreement were entered into between John Harrell, superintendent of the Indian Mission Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church South, in behalf of the missions of the church, of the first part, and Pleasant Porter, Chilly McIntosh, Joseph M. Perryman, George W. Stidham, and James McHenry, trustees empowered by the Muskogee Nation to act for the second part.<sup>62</sup>

The Board of Foreign Missions agreed to take charge of the Asbury School buildings, farm and other property connected thereto—all located near North Fork Town; to furnish a competent superintendent and suitable teachers, and to receive, clothe, feed, take care of and educate at the school eighty students, male and female. This contract was later amended to admit only boys. The lads were to remain in the school at least four regular sessions of ten months each, unless dismissed for disability or bad conduct. They were to be furnished with medical attendance, books and stationery, and were to be instructed in agriculture and mechanical arts.

The trustees agreed for the nation that for the service payment at the rate of seventy dollars a year was to be made for each student, the aggregate amount was not to exceed \$5,600 in any one year. The agreement was signed by the trustees on September 29, 1869.

In March, 1871, the Council approved a bill granting William F. McIntosh the right to build a toll bridge on the public road leading from North Fork Town to Fort Gibson, on Big Elk Creek. The act was to continue in force for fifteen years. If McIntosh built a substantial bridge and kept it in good repair he was entitled to seventy-five cents for every vehicle drawn by more than four animals; for each conveyance drawn by one or two animals and driver, twenty-five cents; for one man and horse, ten cents; "for each animal in every drove of cattle, horses, hogs or sheep, one cent per head." It was also enacted that no person should be privileged to establish

<sup>62</sup> *Constitution and Laws of the Muskogee Nation* (Muskogee, Indian Territory, 1890), p. 51.

a bridge or make a public road within half a mile on either side of the McIntosh bridge.<sup>63</sup>

On March 12, 1872, the *Fort Smith Herald* reported that the track of the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad was laid to North Fork River and the bridge across the stream would be finished that week. "This road will not touch North Fork Town, it will pass about three miles west of it, and cross the Canadian River at or near Scalesburgh, in the Choctaw Nation." Mrs. Delilah Drew made a claim against the railroad for passing through her farm at North Fork, burning rails \$75.00, corn \$1500.00, four hundred bushels of apples \$400.00<sup>64</sup>

The construction of the first railroad through the Indian Territory brought many new citizens to places along the right of way. From Kansas William Gage Fryer and his wife Elizabeth, who had removed from Illinois, drove in a wagon with their children in 1872 to the Indian country where Fryer, a skilled mechanic, was sure of all the work he could do. A daughter, Minnie, who was a small child at the time, related that her father built the station at Gibson Station before going to North Fork Town where he took charge of a saw mill and sawed lumber for all of the buildings in that part of the country. While living there he boarded with a full-blood Indian woman known as Aunt Polly. There were only two stores, a post office and half a dozen houses when Mr. Fryer arrived.<sup>65</sup>

The merchants abandoned the site of North Fork Town in 1873 when the railroad passed the village by several miles and moved their stores to Eufaula.<sup>66</sup> Micco postoffice was abandoned April 21, 1873.

Buck Rogers of Checotah in an interview stated that the site of Eufaula was selected by George W. Stidham, Captain Sam Grayson, G. E. Scales, D. B. Whitlow, and Joseph McDonald Coodey. These men paid one thousand dollars to R. S. Stevens, manager of

<sup>63</sup> *Constitution and Laws of the Muskogee Nation as Compiled by L. C. Perryman* (Muskogee, 1890), pp. 83, 89.

<sup>64</sup> National Archives, Creek H. 183, I 268 Hoag to Comr. & numerous other papers about claim of Delilah Drew.

<sup>65</sup> OHS. Vol. 3, p. 481, *Indian-Pioneer History*. William Gage Fryer constructed the Council House at Okmulgee which is still standing in good condition and a notable landmark in Oklahoma. His sons George and John, and his daughter Mrs. Minnie Fryer Finnigan, have been citizens of Muskogee for many years.

<sup>66</sup> "Watt Grayson late in 1873 lived near North Fork in the Creek Nation. He was known to have a considerable sum of money, and a gang of robbers took him out of his home, put a rope around his neck, pulled him up six times before he weakened and told them the money was buried under the hearth in the house. They took the money, about \$30,000 in gold and silver coin, and got away with it. Jim Reed was one of the robbers, but the money was taken by old Tom Starr and was divided later. Reed found he was being trailed and went to Texas. He was on the way back to the Cherokee Nation when he was killed."—A. W. Neville, *The Red River Valley Then and Now*, Paris, Texas, 1948, p. 51.

the Missouri, Kansas and Texas Railroad, to locate the station on the site of the present Eufaula instead of at Fifetown across the river.<sup>67</sup>

The Asbury Mission remained at its old home, and the twentieth session of the Indian Mission Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church was held there, beginning October 22, 1874, with Bishop H. H. Kavanaugh presiding.

In 1881 the National Council of the Muskogee Nation enacted a law that the trustees of Asbury Manual Labor School were empowered to consider the plan of buying and converting the building then occupied by the school into a Female Academy; they were to report their findings at the next session of the Council. The act was approved October 31, 1881. The next month the Council passed an act giving the trustees and superintendents of the manual labor school power to make rules and regulations regarding the visiting of pupils by their parents and friends. The act was approved November 2, 1881.

Asbury burned on September 24, 1881, and George W. Stidham offered his residence as a home for the children and missionaries.<sup>68</sup>

After Tullahassee and Asbury Mission Manual Labor schools burned in 1881 the National Council ruled that until other provision was made for the pupils who were deprived of school privileges, the Levering Manual Labor School should accommodate ten boys and ten girls over and above the number contracted for by the Muskogee Nation with the Baptist Board, at the same price *per capita* as those contracted for were accommodated. This act was approved October 8, 1881.

Among the interesting students who attended North Fork Mission in 1876 was Peter Ewing. The lad's father was Daniel Roberts, but the teacher, Mr. Ewing, could not understand when the boy told him and said "I will give you my own name," so Peter carried it during his long and useful life.

On March 15, 1888, the Eufaula *Indian Journal* announced that on Saturday, March the 17th, the remaining property of Old Asbury Manual Labor Mission would be sold; this consisted of "molasses, mill, mower, stoves, &c., &c.," the announcement was signed by Roley McIntosh who invited everybody to attend the sale.

In his later years the Reverend Mr. Buckner and his wife lived at Eufaula and near his home is his grave with the monument inscribed: "My husband Rev. H. F. Buckner, D. D., December 18, 1818—

<sup>67</sup> OHS. *Indian-Pioneer History*, Foreman Collection, Vol. 52, pp. 428-33.

<sup>68</sup> "Notes and Documents," data from Grant Foreman, *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. 24, No. 3 (Autumn, 1946), p. 365.

December 3, 1882, a missionary among the Creek Indians for 33 years from Pulaski Co., Ky. . . ."

Near the once thriving village is a small cemetery, in which rest the remains of the Reverend John Harrell who was superintendent of Asbury Mission.<sup>69</sup> Beside him are the mortal remains of his devoted wife.

The coming of the railroad brought a most undesirable class of people to the Indian Territory and a large number of officers were required to maintain peace. That this part of the country had gained a bad name is shown by the following letter:<sup>70</sup>

"Shawnee town, Ind. Terty  
April 20, 1875

"Mr. Richardson  
Friend

"We the Chiefs and headmen of Absentee Band Shawnee Indians are very desirous of a good & full representation at the Grand Council which will assemble at Okmulgee . . . in May. We want our friends from the plains & from your locality all to come that can come. Do us the kindness to try and have your different Tribes send Delegates to this meeting. The Cherokees & Choctaws depend on the Troubles out in your country to keep the people in your locality away so that they can remove the place of meeting to either Fort Gibson, Muskokee or North Fork Town—either of these places is objectionable to us—They are overflowing with whiskey—lewd Women & Gamblers—We know you for a gentleman & a friend to sobriety & good order & feel satisfied you will help us. . . .

"We are your friends

John Esparnia Chief

Joe Ellis 2nd "

Sam Charley—Sampson—Wild Cat—John Deer—  
Long Gibson Bob Deer & other Herdmen."

A Creek-Neighborhood school was maintained at North Fork Town with the following teachers: Doc Sherwood was paid \$160 for his work to June 30, 1868. On February 3, 1869, he received \$200 for five months teaching. From March 13, 1869, to August 23,

<sup>69</sup> The site of North Fork Town is about 1½ miles east of Eufaula, in McIntosh County, and the site of Asbury Mission, about 2 miles northeast of Eufaula. The site of North Fork Town was visited by the late Reverend J. Y. Bryce and party in July, 1930. All that was left marking the site of the old town was a cemetery or burial ground in a grove of huge trees, in a cotton field. The oldest grave in this cemetery was that of Wm. Chapman, born Feb. 11, 1785, and died Sept. 30, 1845. The grave was originally inclosed by a low stone wall, and entirely covered by a large sandstone slab bearing the inscription that ended with these words: "Being a long and tried friend of the Creek Nation." The graves of the Reverend John Harrell and wife are over a mile northwest of the site of North Fork Town, and about ½ mile west of the site of Asbury Mission. (J. Y. Bryce, "Temporary Markers of Historic Points," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. VIII, No. 3 [September, 1930], pp. 287-88; also, Muriel H. Wright, "Some Historic Sites in Southern and Southeastern Oklahoma," in photograph album of photos taken 1930 and notes on history of sites, in Oklahoma Historical Society Library.)—Ed.

<sup>70</sup> Oklahoma Historical Society, Indian Archives Division, *Kiowa-Indian Councils*. About 1845 a division of the Shawnee separated from the rest of the tribe, then in Kansas, and removed to Indian Territory; thereafter they were known as *Absentee Shawnees*.

1871, eight warrants were issued to Mrs. Elizabeth S. Ross and Lizzie S. Ross for services in teaching at North Fork Town. W. H. Woodman received two warrants, totalling \$100, on November 25, 1871. Four warrants were issued to Millie McIntosh on December 1, 1871, which amounted to \$100. Warrants dated February 16, 1872 and January 15, 1873, were paid to Mr. E. S. Ingram and his wife Elizabeth Ingram for their services in teaching at the "Old Town". She taught the second quarter of 1874-75; the third quarter of 1874-75 and the fourth quarter. At that time Naharthloco Harjo, Ethosmicco, Captain Dorsey and Hotichee Herrod were the trustees. A warrant in favor of Thomas Harvison, dated November 1, 1873, for \$25 was issued November 1, 1873, for the first quarter.<sup>71</sup>

The site of old North Fork Town is comprised within sixteen acres near the forks of the North and South Canadian rivers. This land was owned by George Barnett, Creek Indian. "Old Town" was burned during the Civil War by General [?] John Garrett of the Confederate army and it was never rebuilt.<sup>72</sup> There is not a trace left of the village except two dug wells which were used when the site was occupied. The wells were walled with rock and were covered over with rocks; the water is still good and is used by people living on the land. At present there are two small rent houses on this historic soil and an old log house stands in the vicinity which was used as a hospital during the Civil War. The old Texas Trail is still visible. "It ran across Rocky Ford, about one mile east of North Fork Town, turned to the left at this place and ran through the town and across the South Canadian River."

The land occupied by the "Old Town" was later planted in pecan trees and cotton. Across the road on the north is an old soldiers' burial ground. The graves have been worn down and plowed over so that they cannot be seen. "There were people buried in this burial ground at Old Town as far back as 1815, mostly negroes." Aaron Chapman was the sole white person interred there.<sup>73</sup>

OHS. *Indian Pioneer History*, Foreman Collection, Interview with John H. Hubble, C. E. Foley and Lizzie Gibson, Eufaula, Oklahoma, vol. 30, pp. 39-41. Mr. C. E. Foley, a prominent and successful business man and banker died in Eufaula February 26, 1944 (*Muskogee Daily Phoenix*, February 26, 1944). In the 1895 census in the North Fork Town there were 1029 colored citizens (*Acts and Resolutions of the Creek National Council of the Sessions of May, June, October, November and December, 1895*, Muskogee, 1896, p. 14). (The Oklahoma Historical Society erected an historical marker for North Fork Town, 1949-50, on Highway No. 69 north of Eufaula.—Ed.)

<sup>71</sup> OHS. Indian Archives, *Creek Schools, Neighborhood*, numbers 38002-38007.

<sup>72</sup> W. C. Quantrill, the notorious guerilla leader, reporting to Gen. Sterling Price from Camp on Canadian, October 13, 1863, mentioned a *Captain Garrett* in his command.—*The War of the Rebellion*: . . . Official Records (Washington, 1888), Series I—Volume XXII, Part one, p. 700).

<sup>73</sup> (The grave stone bore the name "Wm. Chapman," as stated in 69 fn., above.—Ed.)



A tragedy occurred in the vicinity of the former North Fork Town on May 27, 1908, when the Creek poet Alexander Posey was drowned in the North Canadian River. It was not until July 20 that his body was found embedded in the sand at a point near Sand Rock, nine miles south of Eufaula.

He was laid to rest in Green Hill Cemetery, Muskogee, July 23, 1908. Services were read at the grave by the Reverend A. N. Hall of the First Baptist Church in Muskogee and his monument is engraved with a stanza from one of his most beautiful poems:<sup>74</sup>

“When death has shut the blue sky out from me,  
                                     Sweet Daffodil,  
 And years roll on without my memory,  
 Thou’lt reach thy tender fingers down to mine of clay,  
                                     A true friend still,  
 Although I’ll never know thee till the Judgment Day.”

This stanza is also engraved on the bronze tablet erected to Posey’s memory in the Muskogee Public Library by the Indian Women’s Club.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>74</sup>The Oklahoma Historical Society and State Highway Department have erected an Historical Marker (1950-51) to the memory of Alexander Posey, indicating the site of the home where he was born about four miles south of the location of the marker: on State Highway No. 9 about five miles west of the City of Eufaula, in McIntosh County.—Ed.

<sup>75</sup>*Muskogee Times-Democrat*, July 20, 1908, p. 1, col. 2; *Muskogee Daily-Phoenix*, July 23, 1908, p. 1, col. 5.