



A Visit to the Cherokee Nation
by W. J. Lemke

When Alvin Seamster, Benton County historian, recently discovered the graves of Major Ridge and Gen. Stand Watie, as reported in FLASHBACK, in the Polson Cemetery near Southwest City, Missouri, I wrote Mr. Seamster that I would like to visit the graves of these noted Cherokees.

So on November 11, I picked up the Mayor at Bentonville and we drove northwest, stopping at the Mt. Pleasant church and cemetery where Mr. Seamster's parents and other early settlers are buried, and at historic Maysville where the main street is the state line. At Southwest City we stopped to photograph the marker erected by the Culture Club on the spot where the corners of Arkansas, Oklahoma and Missouri meet.

A mile west of Southwest City is the Polson burying ground, where sleep many Polsons, Washbournes, Blackburns, and other pioneer families -- either Cherokee or related to the Cherokees by marriage. Here is the government marker to "The Ridge, Major, Morgan's Cherokee Regiment, War of 1812", who was assassinated on that bloody June day in 1839 when John Ridge and Elias Boudinot also died. Here is the handsome monument erected by the UDC over the grave of Stand Watie, the only Cherokee general in the Confederate armies. Both Major Ridge and Stand Watie had many connections with the early history of Washington County.

While I was copying the inscription on Stand Watie's tombstone, there was a sudden shout from my companion. He had discovered the graves of J. W. Washbourne and wife (Susan Ridge). As recently as the August 1955 issue of FLASHBACK (Vol. V, No. 5) I stated that the burial place of J. W. Washbourne, son of the famous Cephas Washburn, was unknown. Well, here it was -- in the Polson Cemetery near Southwest City, Mo.

J. W. Washbourne was a prominent figure in the business and social life of Fayetteville in the 1840's and 1850's. It was he who built the 2-story front part of the Reed house on West Dickson street that was recently torn down to make room for a shopping center. And it was he who married Susan Ridge, one of the Cherokee girls who attended Miss Sawyer's Fayetteville Female Seminary.

Among the many members of the Washbourne family buried in the Polson graveyard are the following:

J. W. Washbourne, died Dec. 27, 1871, aged 52 years; and his wife Susan C., died Aug. 22, 1871, aged 42 years.

Aeneas Washbourne, infant son of J. W. and Susan Washbourne, died Aug. 1, 1871.

Percy H. Washbourne, born Feb. 6, 1848; died May 14, 1924; and his wife Cynthia A., born Sept. 2, 1853; died Apr. 19, 1915.

Children of Percy and Cynthia Washbourne buried here are:
James W. Washbourne (born Oct. 5, 1872; died Oct. 28, 1893)
W. W. Washbourne (born Dec. 18, 1876; died Jan. 19, 1916)
Elroy W. Washbourne (born 1880; died 1881)
Ada Eolen Washbourne (born 1882; died 1883)
Charley Washbourne (born and died 1887)
Percy (Jack) Washbourne (died Aug. 7, 1941, aged 50 yrs 6 mos 17 days)
Lula R. Washbourne (born and died 1893)

Other Washbournes in this old cemetery are:
Annie Washbourne (died Oct. 14, 1874; aged 24 years)
A. Washbourne (died July 2, 1952, aged 66 yrs 3 mos 28 days)
Jay Washbourne (1880-1940)
Carrie Washbourne (died Aug. 7, 1955, aged 85 yrs 5 mos 10 days)
Claude L. Washbourne (born August 1859; died March 1917)
Martha M. Washbourne (1866-1919)
Ed N. Washbourne (born Jan. 20, 1869; died Apr. 13, 1925)
Rollin Ridge Washbourne (1892-1939)
Noble P. Washbourne (SFC OMC World War I), born Sept. 30, 1888;
died Nov. 29, 1953

There are perhaps a dozen children's graves (without dates) in the Washbourne section of the cemetery, among them the following:

Infant of Ed Washbourne
Infant of Stearl Blackburn
Infant of Joe-Clyde Tye
Ridge W. Francis -- Lee C. Francis -- Ruth Francis

Because of the prominence of the early Blackburn family, I am listing some of the older members of this family who are buried in the Polson Cemetery at Southwest City:

Washington W. Blackburn (born Jan. 5, 1831; died Mar. 18, 1881) and his wife Milley Ann (born Apr. 29, 1832; died Aug. 3, 1908)
Washington W. Blackburn Jr. (born Apr. 7, 1865; "Killed by a team" on Sept. 11, 1880)
Mary Grimes (1809-1881)

There are some 40 or 50 Polsons buried here. As was reported in No. 6 of our Bulletin Series ("Early Colleges and Academies"), David Polson married Flora Ridge, one of the Cherokee girls who were enrolled in the Fayetteville Female Seminary. The relationship of other early Washington County families with the pioneer Cherokee families is beyond the scope of our study.

On our return from Southwest City, Mayor Seamster and I stopped at the Maysville Cemetery, one of the oldest in Benton County. It dates back to R. Weaver (born 1800; died Apr. 23, 1840) and probably earlier. It contains many pioneer Benton County names. Some names that also appear in Washington County history are:

Jane Reed (born Jan. 1, 1780; died Feb. 20, 1851)
Jane Wakefield (born in S. Carolina Mar. 6, 1807; died Sept. 4, 1859)
Z. M. Whinery (born March 1, 1818; died May 30, 1879) and wife Sarah (born June 29, 1808; died Aug. 18, 1883)
David H. Leeper (born Feb. 10, 1812; died Oct. 23, 1883)
W. A. Alexander (died Apr. 15, 1857, aged 47 yrs 26 days) and Mary Alexander (died Jan. 31, 1862, aged 54 yrs 4 mos 4 days)

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An interesting name in the Maysville Cemetery is that of Edward Payson, son of Dr. Clement and Lucy J. Hayden, who died Mar. 1, 1870, at the age of 9. It doesn't require much speculation to guess where this lad got his given name.

We slowed down when we passed the old Dickson Cemetery $\frac{1}{2}$ mile west of Bentonville. This graveyard is overgrown with brush and many of the tombstones have fallen. Mr. Seamster had already secured the gravestone inscriptions on an earlier visit. He gave me a copy of his list and I am publishing it here, for the record and because of the kinship of these early Benton County Dicksons with the Washington County branch of the family. This old cemetery has not been used since 1882.

Old Dickson Cemetery, $\frac{1}{2}$ mile west of Bentonville

Robert Dickson (born Sept. 1, 1773; died Feb. 5, 1849)
Joseph, son of Robert Dickson and grandson of Gen. Joseph Dickson; died Oct. 24, 1845; married Mary Hare in Tennessee May 30, 1821; born to them 6 daughters and 5 sons.
Mary, wife of Joseph Dickson (born Apr. 8, 1803; died Mar. 11, 1869); "a faithful member of the CP Church".
Samuel Woods (born Nov. 4, 1799; died Sept. 23, 1871)
Dysart Woods (born Jan. 21, 1806; died Mar. 8, 1882)
Sarah, wife of Dysart Woods (born Feb. 18, 1810; died June 12, 1859)
Phineas H. Woods (born Dec. 8, 1833; died Mar. 18, 1860)
Mary A. Burns, wife of T. P. Burns (b. Oct. 18, 1806; d. Mar. 17, 1870)
Robert L. Burns (born Oct. 17, 1832; died Nov. 30, 1860)
Rebecca E. Wooden (born Dec. 5, 1824; died Nov. 17, 1868)
M. B. Kirby (no date)
Infant son of D & S Woods (born and died February 1839)
Infant of D & S Woods (born and died Mar. 9, 1852)

On our arrival in Bentonville, I spent a pleasant hour inspecting Mr. Seamster's collection of historical relics, antiques and memorabilia. He has what is probably the largest collection of Confederate money in this section of the state. There are thousands of documents and letters of a century ago. His collection of old guns contains weapons used in the battles of Fayetteville, Pea Ridge, and Prairie Grove. He has many old Benton County photographs, rare old books, pioneer household articles and furniture, and family heirlooms. He plans, when his term as Mayor expires, to catalog and index this material and write a series of articles about it.

Shorts from Goodspeed's History

John B. Steele was a merchant at Springdale and VanWinkle Mills in the 1860's. In 1868 he was married to Mary VanWinkle. In 1880 he opened the VanWinkle Hotel in Fayetteville, which he managed for two years. He was mayor of Rogers in 1885.

James T. Craig brought a stock of goods from Fort Gibson to Cane Hill in 1848 and opened a store. He sold out in 1850 to make the Gold Rush. In 1851 he had a store at Cincinnati. From 1852 to 1861 he had a store in Bentonville, returned to Cane Hill after the war, but resumed his store-keeping at Bentonville in 1871.

CARROLL COUNTY'S NEW QUARTERLY

The first issue of the Carroll County Historical Quarterly was published Nov. 17 by the Carroll County Historical Society. Editor of the new periodical is Boyd W. Johnson. President of the Carroll County Society is Coy Logan of Berryville. In the first issue of this new quarterly, an article by Rue Griffith entitled "Some Early History of the Rule School and Community", is outstanding. For the next issue the editor promises a reprint of an early history of Carroll County that appeared in the Carroll County Advocate of Sept. 23, 1876.

SEAMSTER IN FORD TIMES

The December issue of FORD TIMES carries a letter from Alvin Seamster of Bentonville, member of the WCHS, and a picture of a \$100 bill from Mayor Semaster's collection of Confederate money. Purpose was to show the picture of Lucy Holcombe Pickens whose likeness appears on many Confederate banknotes.

PIONEERS DISCUSS OVERLAND MAIL

The Sebastian County chapter, Arkansas Pioneers, devoted its November program to the Butterfield Overland Mail, whose centennial will be observed in 1958. The Southwest American reports the Fort Smith meeting as follows:

"Reminiscences of the Butterfield stagecoach days highlighted the luncheon meeting of Sebastian County chapter, Arkansas Pioneers, at the home of Mrs. Ruth Moss Carroll. Mrs. D.D. Taylor, program chairman, read old newspaper stories about the overland route, about the coach service (mail and passenger), and about the social and business life of the era. Afterwards several of the Pioneers repeated stories about the old Butterfield trail, the Overland Mail ball, and other historic events that had come down through their families."

STEELE'S CAMDEN EXPEDITION 1864

The Pulaski County Historical Society (Little Rock) has begun publication of a Bulletin Series. The first number in the Series is titled "Forty Days of Disaster", being an account of Gen. Steele's expedition into south Arkansas March 23 to May 3, 1864. The author is J.H. Atkinson, history professor in Little Rock Junior College.

This Bulletin will be of great service to students of Civil War history. It uses reports of both Union and Confederate officers and covers three important engagements -- Poison Spring, Marks' Mill, and Jenkins Ferry. The author's "Notes" are of particular interest, since he visited the battle sites and is thus able to add information not elsewhere available.

Washington County troops were in the Confederate army that drove Steele back from Camden to Little Rock. Capt. Wythe Walker of Fayetteville was mortally wounded at Jenkins Ferry and died several days later at Tulip, Ark. His father, Judge David Walker, was with him when he died. The father was Judge of the Military Court in Price's army and held the rank of Colonel. He wrote two letters from Tulip to his family (then refugeeing in Texas) in which he told of his son's wound and condition. These letters are among some fifty of Judge Walker's personal and official letters that will be published soon by the WCHS under the title "The Walker Letters." These letters have been made available to us by Judge David Walker's great-grandson, Wythe Walker of New York City.

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Buttram's Chapel Cont.

TAYLOR, Leta D		1922		1973
BOILER, Billie J. "Jodie"	Jun 21, 1943		Feb 21, 1973	
CALLIS, W. R. "Bud" ssw B	Dec 18, 1899		Feb 11, 1965	
Bess May md Nov 7, 1920	Jun 26, 1902		-	
BONE, Duly L. Ark Pvt	Aug 25, 1892		Dec 30, 1967	
Co E 8 BN WWI				
Beatrice ssw D	May 4, 1903		-	1973
ISLEY, Joseph Carl Ark Pvt	1892			
US ARMY WWI				
Pearl NELSON	1896			-
SMITH, C. C. FHM	1885			1969
PITTS, David M. Ark	Jun 15, 1922		Apr 2, 1973	
BKR 2 USN WWII				
LARAMORE, Daryl	Aug 23, 1940		Oct 4, 1965	

CEMETERY of BENTON COUNTY ARKANSAS
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OLD DICKSON CEMETERY

Located 1/2 mile west of Bentonville on South side road 1 block
Published in Benton County Pioneer, May 1961. This is copy.

BURNS, Mary A. w T R F.	Oct 18, 1806	Mar 17, 1870
Robert L.	Oct 17, 1832	Nov 30, 1860
DICKSON, Joseph s Robert and	-	Oct 24, 1845
gs of Sen. Joseph		
Mary HARE w Joseph	Apr 8, 1803	Mar 11, 1869
md in Tenn May 30, 1821		
Had 6 dau & 5 sons		
Robert	Sep 1, 1773	Feb 5, 1849
KIRBY, M. B.	n d	
WOODEN, Rebecca L.	Dec 5, 1824	Nov 17, 1868
WOOD, Dysart	Jan 21, 1806	Jun 12, 1859
Sarah w Dysart	Feb 18, 1810	Jun 15, 1859
Inf s of D & S	Feb - , 1839	b & d
Inf s of D & S	Mar 9, 1852	b & d
Samuel	Nov 4, 1799	Sep 23, 1871
Phineas H.	Dec 8, 1833	Mar 18, 1860

Alvin Augustine Seamster March 1, 1891 to Sept 29, 1974
married Aug 1, 1912 in Benton County to Ella Lorinda Huls
buried Bentonville with wife final grave # 490 132 54
1954 - First Permanent President of Benton County Historical Society
1957 - Historian in BCHS
mid 1950s - Mayor of Bentonville

(Brother of Lee Seamster 1888-1960, also mayor Bentonville 1921-23
and was Chancery Judge 1925, Chief Justice Ark Supreme Court 1955-57)