



WE·WO·KA



Wewoka is one of the oldest cities of the state. Historical above all others except Ft. Gibson and Ft. Sill. The city itself was founded in 1866 by one Elijah J Brown, a white man who was selected by the Federal Government to bring the refugee Seminoles back from LeRoy, Kansas, where they had found refuge during the strife in the home land.

There is to be found in Wewoka, the first postmaster's commissioner ever issued to a post master at this place. The commission recites that on the 13th day of May 1867, Elijah T. Brown, was appointed postmaster at WE-WO-KA, Seminole Nation, State of ARKANSAS. This ancient document was found hanging on the wall of the office of C Guy Cutlip, local attorney.

The word, Wewoka, means in the Seminole or Creek language, "Barking Waters." Because of some tiny falls on Wewoka Creek just north of the city where the bridge now spans the stream on the Wewoka-Tulsa highway rippling over the rocks the town derived its name, "Barking Waters."

In those days immediately subsequent to the Civil War Wewoka became a remount station between those two far flung pioneer army posts, Ft. Gibson and Ft. Sill. Soon afterwards a government agency was established at this place and troop headquarters established.

Here during those days the ill fated George Custer was stationed, to be known among the older Seminoles as "The Yellow Hair." The intrepid Phil Sheridan was also stationed here for a time, and long prior to these days Washington Irving stopped on his return to Ft. Gibson from what he thought was an inspection of the "Prairie."

Soon after the Civil War Wewoka was adopted by the Seminoles as the seat of Government. A capitol building and council house was erected. Later a townsite was opened (for the benefit of the Indians only) and by proper management this townsite was later opened to the whites. The title was perfected by Act of Congress, and a lot drawing took place in November, 1902, which gave to each of those holding a chance either two residence lots or one business lot. The chance taken was on the location of the property. Chances were sold all over the world: in China, England, South Africa and many in Canada.

The old Capitol building which so long served the Seminoles became United States Government court house during those days when the government held court at Wewoka before statehood, and subsequent to statehood, the old building served as a courthouse for Seminole County. It was in this old building that the Seminole made their laws, and there, too, they executed them. The trials took place before the Council and upon conviction, the convicted was either seated at the foot of the "Execution Tree" and shot to death or tied to the Whipping tree and whipped according to the sentence of the court.

The old Execution Tree stands in the historical rooms of the state historical society in Oklahoma City at the Capitol Building. The bullet marks may still be seen and one can almost image the blood stains still remaining.

The whipping tree stands on the court house grounds at the southwest corner of the present county court house. Here, during the days the Seminoles held forth in law making and law executing, the culprit had his hands and feet tied together, the hands tied over the lower branch of the now old tree (the great branch stretching out toward the southward today) and between the feet was placed a rale or pole. The whipping was done by a Lighthorseman, and the groans and the cries of the victim could be heard for many blocks.

The treasurer of the Seminoles was in Wewoka in the old Wewoka Trading Company building that burned down in November 1925. During the days of the Seminole government the Federal government shipped the bullion and species, gold, silver and paper money direct to A. J. Brown, Seminole National Treasurer at Wewoka, and he paid the funds directly to the tribesmen. It was an inspiring sight to see the wagon drawn by the Seminole Nation's swiftest horses and guarded by five or six Lighthorsemen, with ready carbines in their hands, meet the shipments of money, and see the horses dash at breakneck speed from the little old depot to the waiting vaults of the old Trading Company Building. That old building was located at the spot where the Cutlip building now stands.

The Wewoka Trading Company was one of the pioneer business concerns of the Indian Territory. It was established by John F. Brown, Andrew J. Brown and Courtland L. Long in the eighties and rose in importance until it was rated as one of the greatest commercial undertakings of the southwest, valued by Bradstreet & Dunn at a million dollars one time and the big store carried everything to be wished from a knitting needle to a threshing machine. This company made its own paper money, called by the Seminoles "Choka Sodka." The paper was prepared in Canada and signed by C. L. Long, secretary and John F. Brown or A. J. Brown as President or Vice President. It was redeemable in goods at the big store of the company.

During the Constitutional conventional Seminole County was carved out of the old Seminole Nation and three miles of the Creek Nation, running from the North Canadian River south along the east side of the county to three miles south of Wewoka. The old Creek-Seminole National line was the very eastern line of what is known as Muskogee Avenue located just behind the Farmers National Bank and the present court house. All east of that line was the Creek Nation. All west, the Seminole.

In March 1923, oil was discovered a mile and half southeast of the then town of Wewoka. A new era came to the town. What had been a small country town commenced its development into a city, and that progress has never ceased up to the writing of this article. B. H. Smith, now of Philadelphia was the one who first really discovered oil in this county, although as far back as 1901 drilling machinery was operating on the townsite of Wewoka in quest for the black gold. In July 1907, oil was discovered in the 1200 foot horizon and produced in vast quantities. But no other wells produced. The Wewoka Trading Company was offered a half million dollars for their holdings in that early day and refused it. In December, 1925, the Magnolia Petroleum Company in a well two miles due south of town first discovered oil in the Wilcox sand. This gave rise to development in other portions of the county, and to that well is attributable at this time, perhaps, the great Seminole Oil Fields, with its millions, upon millions of flowing wealth.

HISTORY OF "THE WEWOKA SWITCH"

Volume 1 Number 1



SORGHUM DAY, OCTOBER 25, 1997



Wewoka, Oklahoma

In the late 1880's and early in 1890's the Oklahoma, Choctaw & Gulf Railroad laid their first area siding, or switching point, in Wewoka, at that time a good size trading post and settlement.

Merchants, traders and businessmen for a radius of some 25 to 35 miles ordered their goods and supplies shipped via railroad to the nearest siding. In this area, the Wewoka Switch. They then drove in wagons to accept delivery of these items.

In the early 1920's oil was discovered southeast of Wewoka and virtually overnight this small city became a teeming, busy, crowded oil field supplies, parts, pipe, casing, drilling rigs and other oil field equipment flooded this local siding. Adding to the confusion, every merchant's stock orders were doubled, tripled and quadrupled to meet the needs of the local residents. The population jumped from 2,500 to over 12, 000 in a few short months.



Lost freight bills, inadequate telephone service, small railroad facilities, and other factors added to this congestion. Everyone was rushed, pushed and confused. Thousands of freight shipments designated elsewhere, thought to be lost in transit, were found hidden in the "Wewoka Switch. Upon being questioned about late or unreceived orders, the merchants' standard reply, (and excuse), was "Yes, I have it but it's in the Wewoka Switch." Meaning, of course, that they had been unable, for some reason, to pick up the delivery and were caught in a "tight spot."

So common became this situation that Rock Island Railroad Company adopted a policy of searching for all "lost in transit" merchandise on the Wewoka Switch before searching elsewhere. They prepared a rubber stamps stating "Search Wewoka Switch" for all lost shipments.

The expression, "I'm caught in the Wewoka Switch" grew to mean and imply that one suddenly found himself in a bind, a trying, dangerous situation. The expression became standard with oil field workers and promoters alike.

In later years these oil men, drillers, roughnecks and workers, moving on to bigger and newer oil discoveries, carried the expression, "I'm caught in the Wewoka Switch", to all parts of the world, where its use has become universal.

Compliments of Ed & Hazel Turk



Why the American flag is folded 13 times

Author Unknown

Have you ever wondered why the flag of the United States of America is folded 13 times when it is lowered or when it is folded and handed to the widow at the burial of a veteran? Here is the meaning of each of those folds and what it means to you.

- ★ The 'first fold' of our flag is a symbol of life.
- ★ The 'second fold' is a symbol of our belief in eternal life.
- ★ The 'third fold' is made in honor and remembrance of the veterans departing our ranks who gave a portion of their lives for the defense of our country to attain peace throughout the world.
- ★ The 'fourth fold' represents our weaker nature, for as American citizens trusting in God, it is to Him we turn in times of peace as well as in time of war for His divine guidance.
- ★ The 'fifth fold' is a tribute to our country, for in the words of Stephen Decatur, "Our Country, in dealing with other countries may she always be right; but it is still our country, right or wrong."
- ★ The 'sixth fold' is for where our hearts lie. It is with our heart that we pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States Of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all.
- ★ The 'seventh fold' is a tribute to our Armed Forces, for it is through the Armed Forces that we protect our country and our flag against all her enemies, whether they be found within or without the boundaries of our republic.
- ★ The 'eighth fold' is a tribute to the one who entered into the valley of the shadow of death, that we might see the light of day, and to honor mother, for whom it flies on Mother's Day.
- ★ The 'ninth fold' is a tribute to womanhood; for it has been through their faith, their love, loyalty and devotion that the character of the men and women who have made this country great has been molded.
- ★ The 'tenth fold' is a tribute to the father, for he, too, has given his sons and daughters for the defense of our country since they were first born.
- ★ The 'eleventh fold', in the eyes of a Hebrew citizen represents the lower portion of the seal of King David and King Solomon, and glorifies in their eyes, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- ★ The 'twelfth fold', in the eyes of a Christian citizen, represents an emblem of eternity and glorifies, in their eyes, God the Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit.

When the flag is completely folded, the stars are uppermost reminding us of our nation's motto, "In God We Trust".

After the flag is completely folded and tucked in, it takes on the appearance of a cocked hat, ever reminding us of the soldiers who served under General George Washington, and the sailors and marines who served under Captain John Paul Jones, who were followed by their comrades and shipmates in the Armed Forces of the United States, preserving for us the rights, privileges, and freedoms we enjoy today.

The next time you see a flag ceremony honoring someone that has served our country, either in the Armed Forces or in our civilian services such as the Police Force or Fire Department, keep in mind all the important reasons behind each and every movement. They have paid the ultimate sacrifice for all of us by honoring our flag and our Country.

Submitted by Carl & Leatha Duncan

Poem for Sgt Clyde Delton Blount,
19th Inf Rgt KIA

Two Pictures On The Mantle

In Goodness He Lived, In Love He Died.

His Life Was Craved, But God Denied.

Rest In Peace My Son, For Soon We Will Be Coming Home.

Two Darling Pictures On The Mantle, We Took Of Him As A Child.

They Stand There As Two Lonely Darlings, Adding Tears To Our Smiles.

He Would Have Been Home By Springtime, But God Called Him Home To The Fold.

Two Darling Pictures On The Mantle, Worth More Than A World Full Of Gold.

Two Darling Pictures On The Mantle, Each Line On His Face Has A Story To Tell.

Of A Boy Who Gave His Life For His Family, And His Country As Well.

His Darling Face Is Dear To Remember, A Treasure To Behold.

Two Darling Pictures On The Mantle, Worth More Than A World Full Of Gold.

Sergeant Clyde Delton Blount
Our Beloved Son Was Killed In Action
June 2, 1951 In North Korea At The Age
Of Nineteen
Poem Written By His Mother Elva Etta
Blount