

CRAWFORD SEMINARY POST OFFICE

By George H. Shirk*

Recent research has revealed the possibility that a new name may be added to the list of Indian Territory post offices that once were in operation in the area now comprising Oklahoma. Several months ago David L. Jarrett of New York, a philatelist much interested in covers and postmarks of the various territories, mentioned to me that he had a cover postmarked "Crawford Seminary, Quapaw Nation" that he thought to be from Indian Territory yet the post office was not included on any published list.¹ Commenting that even though Post Office Department records showed the office to be in Missouri, he believed in fact, it was located west of Missouri in Indian Territory.

Crawford Seminary was a well known Methodist education institution among the Quapaws.² It was established in 1843 and named for T. Hartley Crawford, Superintendent of Indian Affairs. The school opened on March 27 of that year with nine students and was operated on the "manual-labor plan." Its first location was in present Ottawa County on the east bank of Spring River approximately two miles south of the Kansas line and five miles west of Missouri. The exact location of the original site has been given as in the Southwest Quarter of Section 22-T29N-R24E.³

To afford a "better situation" in April, 1848, the school moved five miles upstream from the first location, and for 1848 the school's average attendance was twenty-four pupils, with only six of them girls. The new site was "perhaps" in present Cherokee County, Kansas.⁴ However, no one had ever noted that it was also the location of a post office.

After receipt of the Jarrett inquiry, I checked an 1854 *Gazetteer of the United States* which listed all post offices as of May 31, 1851, and found an office named Crawford Seminary located in "Quapaw County," Missouri.⁵ The same listing appeared in 1856 *Post Office Directory*.⁶ Interest quickly

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¹ George H. Shirk, "First Post Offices Within the Boundaries of Oklahoma," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXVI, No. 2 (Summer, 1948), p. 179.

² Carolyn Thomas Foreman, "Education Among the Quapaws, 1829-1875," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXV, No. 1 (Spring, 1947), p. 15.

³ E. H. Kelley, "The Trail in Ottawa County," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXXI, No. 3 (Autumn, 1953), p. 329.

⁴ Louise Barry, *The Beginning of the West* (Topeka, Kansas State Historical Society, 1972), p. 742.

⁵ John Hayward, *A Gazetteer of the United States of America* (Hartford: Case, Tiffany and Company, 1854), p. 826.

⁶ D. D. T. Leach, *Post Office Directory* (New York, n.p., 1856), p. 101.

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heightened when it was recognized that there was no county named Quapaw in all of Missouri. Where then was the post office of Crawford Seminary located? If the location of the Crawford Seminary post office was actually one and the same as the educational institution of the same name, and if the location of the school at the time the post office was established were south of the Kansas line, we must add another name to our list of Indian Territory offices.

Uncertainty heightened when I noted that Bob Baughman, the authority on Kansas post offices, placed the location of the office near and east of present Baxter Springs, Kansas.⁷

While in Washington, D.C. in January, 1976, time permitted for me to search the records of the Post Office Department now in the National Archives. Although there are detailed records in this post office, whether its location was north or south of the present Oklahoma-Kansas boundary is not answered.

The original orders of the Postmaster General were consulted and it was found that on August 22, 1848, a post office of that name was established with Samuel G. Patterson as postmaster. Reverend Patterson was the founder and superintendent of the Seminary, which circumstance confirms that the post office and the school were at the same place. The location in the order was given as "Quapaw Country." There is indeed a difference between "county" and "country." With that circumstance as the clue, the detailed records then maintained of the post office route contractors help confirm the location.

The postmaster appointment records reflect that the post office of Crawford Seminary had a number of different postmasters:

<i>Postmaster</i>	<i>Date of Appointment</i>
Samuel G. Patterson	August 22, 1848
William A. Morrow	July 6, 1852
Jay L. French	October 29, 1853
Andrew I. Dorn	August 25, 1857
Miss Henrietta A. Mandell	October 12, 1857
James Killebrew	July 4, 1861
Herbert F. Sheldon	August 7, 1862

The institution closed in mid-February, 1852, as Reverend Patterson "left the Indian county without making any arrangements for a successor."⁸ This date closely coincides with the appointment of a new postmaster to succeed Patterson.

Although it would be clear that the office was not in operation from the

⁷ Robert W. Baughman, *Kansas Post Offices* (Topeka, n.p., 1961), pp. 31, 156.

⁸ Barry, *The Beginning of the West*, p. 1065.

Listed unless otherwise designated. Right-hand col. not subject to duties in Department.

Putnam County.				St. Francis County.			
Arcadia	James T. Holman	\$10.00	\$0.00	Big River Mills	William Goff	140.00	\$0.75
Chariton Mills	Thomas Hargrave	5.00	6.00	Cherryville (s. h.)	John C. Pown	120.00	\$75.00
Cherryville	Thomas T. Hargrave	40.00	6.00	East	John G. Scott	1.00	5.00
Cherryville	Philly Johnson	5.00	6.00	Kilbuck	Robert K. Smith	35.00	7.00
H. John	H. Keith Johnson	50.00	52.00	North Spring	Edward Hill	35.00	5.00
Johnsville	David B. Thacker	5.00	15.00				
West Liberty	Joseph Harlow	5.00	—				
Waverly	Benjamin Mcgregor	—	—				
Quapaw County.				St. Genevieve County.			
Crawford Seminary	May L. French	14.00	5.00	Aron	George W. Griffin	50.00	14.00
Ralls County.				St. Louis County.			
Cherryville	Thomas H. S. Coombs	10.00	6.00	Albion	John T. Brown	44.00	55.00
Cherryville	James Mackel	14.00	1.00	Ballwin	Robert A. Walton	30.00	6.10
Cherryville	James Brown	20.00	10.00	Brown	James Hoffman	100.00	21.00
Cherryville	Harmon F. Hahoy	47.00	35.00	Bridgeton	Joseph H. Carroll	27.00	35.00
Cherryville (s. h.)	Samuel Smith	100.00	95.00	Buckman	James A. Connelley	10.00	6.00
Cherryville	William Foreman	10.00	6.00	Cherryville	John Foster	90.00	90.00
Cherryville	Daniel R. Kershfield	12.00	—	Cherryville	Martha Lyons	20.00	2.00
Cherryville	John Brown	4.00	5.00	Cherryville	Washington Lee	15.00	5.00
Cherryville	R. J. O. Tompkins	—	—	Cherryville	Frank Adams	30.00	35.00
Randolph County.				St. Louis County.			
Cherryville	Terry Bradley	50.00	50.00	Cherryville	John G. Pown	20.00	2.00
Cherryville	Franklin Davis	60.00	32.00	Cherryville	James T. Vanhooker	14.00	5.00
Cherryville	John H. French	5.00	2.00	Cherryville	Daniel Adams	31.00	47.00
Cherryville	William Weyland	10.00	20.00	Cherryville	James Adams	50.00	35.00
Cherryville	Emden Wade	10.00	15.00	Cherryville	Charles W. Saylor	3.00	5.00
Ray County.				St. Louis County.			
Cherryville	Edgar H. Maudslow	70.00	50.00	Cherryville	Green Harmon	50.00	50.00
Cherryville	Clayton Jones	50.00	30.00	Cherryville	William F. Berry	75.00	60.00
Cherryville	John C. Tolle	50.00	30.00	Cherryville	Henry Eck	5.00	5.00
Cherryville	George A. Mason	30.00	15.00	Cherryville	William Adams	20.00	42.00
Cherryville	William Orr	11.00	5.00	Cherryville	David H. Armstrong	50.00	50.00
Cherryville	William Seligman	14.00	—	Cherryville	Osiah S. Parkin	30.00	5.00
Cherryville (s. h.)	Daniel Bradstreet	500.00	100.00	Cherryville	George Dineen	31.00	5.00
Cherryville	John Brown	100.00	1.00				
Reynolds County.				St. Louis County.			
Cherryville	Henry S. Leggett	4.00	5.00	Cherryville	Samuel J. Harvey	500.00	500.00
Cherryville	James Conover	14.00	30.00	Cherryville	Thomas Ferry	40.00	50.00
Cherryville	Marshall Parks	10.00	10.00	Cherryville	Samuel Nor	14.00	6.00
Cherryville	Thomas Barrow	10.00	—	Cherryville	Samuel E. Powell	75.00	61.00
Cherryville	Henry Steger	10.00	4.00	Cherryville	John Brown	30.00	5.00
Ripley County.				St. Louis County.			
Cherryville (s. h.)	Joseph Thompson	27.75	10.00	Cherryville	Thos. S. Murray	40.00	37.00
Cherryville	Paul W. Switzer	5.00	1.00	Cherryville	David H. Jones	1.00	4.00
Cherryville	William Lary	5.00	1.00	Cherryville	Charles Q. Lewis	1.00	3.00
Cherryville	John F. Harris	7.00	9.00	Cherryville	Michael Flynn	50.00	50.00
Cherryville	John Pender	1.00	—	Cherryville	Franklin Harrison	175.00	140.00
Cherryville	James Baker	5.00	3.00	Cherryville	James Jones	50.00	6.00
Cherryville	William Coleman	4.00	—	Cherryville	Thomas F. Morris	40.00	3.00
St. Charles County.				St. Louis County.			
Cherryville	Daniel Beary	50.00	50.00	Cherryville	Patrick E. Maginn	—	—
Cherryville	Sam A. Taylor	14.00	45.00				
Cherryville	Thomas H. Edgely	50.00	50.00	St. Louis County.			
Cherryville	Joseph Kump	50.00	47.00	Cherryville	Math W. Hartwig	15.00	4.00
Cherryville	William King	20.00	15.00	Cherryville	L. W. Gault	10.00	7.00
Cherryville	William A. Kahler	51.00	45.00	Cherryville	John D. Dandridge	—	—
Cherryville	George H. Walker	17.00	5.00	Cherryville (s. h.)	John M. W. Underhill	100.00	110.00
Cherryville	James Taylor	15.00	15.00	Cherryville	William V. Ripley	5.00	1.00
Cherryville	Wm. M. Currey	51.00	50.00				
Cherryville	Francis Drown	50.00	50.00	Stoddard County.			
St. Clair County.				Stoddard County.			
Cherryville	William L. Overstreet	—	—	Cherryville	Maryann Taylor	4.00	1.00
Cherryville	Alvan Miller	—	—	Cherryville	Andrew Dixon	10.00	6.00
Cherryville	H. O. Westbrook	10.00	10.00	Cherryville	John A. Childers	50.00	50.00
Cherryville	Kellogg Hanks	5.00	1.00	Cherryville	Robert A. Bryant	30.00	30.00
Cherryville	John Reed	10.00	6.00	Cherryville	John C. Collins	11.00	14.00
Cherryville	Charles H. Foster	107.00	100.00	Cherryville	Joseph Miller	15.00	3.00
Cherryville	August Baker	5.00	—	Cherryville	James H. Cook	61.00	50.00
Cherryville	John Stearns	—	—	Cherryville	William Trach	30.00	15.00
St. Charles County.				Stoddard County.			
Cherryville	William L. Overstreet	—	—	Cherryville (s. h.)	Felix O. Allen	50.00	50.00
Cherryville	Alvan Miller	—	—	Cherryville	Frank C. Adams	20.00	15.00
Cherryville	H. O. Westbrook	10.00	10.00	Cherryville	Charles H. Jones	10.00	1.00
Cherryville	Kellogg Hanks	5.00	1.00	Cherryville	Samuel J. Ward	5.00	5.00
Cherryville	John Reed	10.00	6.00	Cherryville	Samuel K. McWhorter	—	—
Cherryville	Charles H. Foster	107.00	100.00	Stoddard County.			
Cherryville	August Baker	5.00	—	Cherryville	James Parkin	4.00	6.00
Cherryville	John Stearns	—	—				

Post Office Directory entry which places Crawford Seminary in Quapaw County, Missouri

departure of Reverend Patterson until the date of the appointment of Morrow, postal department records give no clear indication that the office did not maintain continual operation until the order of the Postmaster General discontinuing the office on December 29, 1863. The fact that the office was discontinued in 1863 is an interesting circumstance, for if the office were in Indian Territory, this would be the only example of an order of the Post-

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master General discontinuing an Indian Territory post office during the war years, as no such orders were entered from 1861 until the blanket orders of June and July, 1866 discontinuing a number of antebellum offices.⁹ On the other hand, if the office were in Kansas, the area remained under northern control, thus permitting a Federal post office to continue in operation throughout the period until December, 1863.

The contractor route records for the four year contract period 1846-1850 contain the entry "Crawford Seminary, Quapaw Country." The office was supplied by route "12 miles and back once a week" from Grand Falls, Missouri. Formal contract for the route was signed on January 23, 1849 with Christian Hurst at an annual remuneration of "net proceeds limited to \$40 per year." On April 20, 1849 an entry was made on the route record that "P. M. Crawford Seminary reports that service began December 18, 1848." Thus, although the office was established by the Postmaster General the preceding August, it was not until December that actual service was instituted.

The similar record book for the contract period 1850-1854 shows Crawford Seminary to be located on Route 4975. Service, as before, was from Grand Falls on a route again entered as "12 miles and back once a week." On September 3, 1850 contract was signed with Chrispen Hurst at "net proceeds limited to \$48 per year from July 1, 1850." Whether Chrispen and Christian were in fact one and the same must remain an uncertainty, but in all events the inflation of the times is reflected in the increase from \$40.00 to \$48.00 annually for the same service.

Following the expiration in 1854 of the contract period the Crawford Seminary post office was served by Contract Route Number 8973. An agreement was entered into April 29, 1854 with Madison Ritchie with his remuneration shown as "\$150 xxx." The entry is uncertain unless the symbols are intended to mean per annum. Route 8973 connected Neosho with Crawford Seminary with intermediate stops at Cedar Creek and Grand Falls. The mileage was shown as eight miles to Cedar Creek from Neosho, nine additional miles to Grand Falls and ten miles from Grand Falls to Crawford Seminary. Service left Neosho each Thursday at 9:00 a.m. and arrived at Crawford Seminary at 6:00 p.m. on the same day; and departed Crawford Seminary the next morning at 9:00 a.m. and returned to Neosho at 6:00 p.m. on Friday.

Cedar Creek, then located in Newton County, is no longer a town although a Cedar Creek cemetery and a Cedar Creek school survive. It was

⁹ Shirk, "First Post Offices Within the Boundaries of Oklahoma," *The Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XXVI, p. 236.

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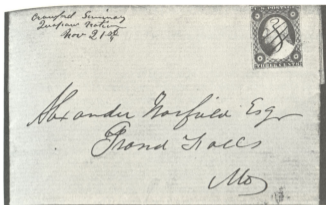
located in Section 21-T26N-R32W; and to that location on a modern map, the mileage from Neosho is correct. Grand Falls, also in Newton County and which likewise has disappeared as a town, was in Section 28-T27N-R33W, on the road between Joplin and Racine, and four miles east and two miles north of the northeast corner of Oklahoma.¹⁰ Using a modern map the distance of nine miles from Cedar Creek to Grand Falls as shown on Route 8973 is valid. Even more important however, and a fact that tends to confirm the actual location of the post office to be the same as the school is that the east bank of Spring River and measuring from either the original or the second site of the Seminary is in fact ten miles west of Grand Falls.

When post office routes in Kansas were advertised for bid it was determined to establish a route serving Crawford Seminary from the north. Route 15241 was established from Fort Scott, Kansas, sixty miles in length to Crawford Seminary, which location in the advertisement was shown as "Quapaw Nation, Mo." Bidders were required to "state the distance and propose a schedule." The successful bidder was Alfred Hornbeck and contract with him was signed October 10, 1855, at an annual remuneration of \$648. The approved schedule provided for departure from Fort Scott on each Saturday at 6:00 a.m. arriving at Crawford Seminary on Sunday by 2:00 p.m.; departure the same day at 3:00 p.m.; and returning to Fort Scott Tuesday by 10:00 a.m. There is no indication in the records of Route 15241 how long it continued in operation.

When the Missouri contracts were again up for bidding the route from Neosho to Crawford Seminary was designated as Number 10613. Contract was signed on April 24, 1858 with John H. Price for an annual remuneration of \$146. The route again was by way of Cedar Creek and Grand Falls, and the mileage shown between each office is the same as earlier Route 8973. The only other entry in connection with Route 10613 is under date of April 21, 1859, showing the contract was "transferred to Stephen D. Sutton of Neosho, Mo. from 1st April 1859." Across the top of the page for this route is the entry "discontinued by order of December 21, 1861."

Unless there was continued service from Fort Scott, on which the records are silent, it appears that formal contract service to and from the Crawford Seminary post office did not continue beyond December, 1861. Whether or not during the two year period subsequent thereto until the date of the formal order of the Postmaster General the office in fact continued, with the postmaster securing local contract service is uncertain, but as Sheldon was appointed postmaster in August, 1862, the presumption would be that the office was then in operation.

¹⁰ James L. Wilson to George H. Shirk, February 13, 1976, author's personal collection.



Letter mailed from Crawford Seminary, Quapaw Nation in present-day Oklahoma (From the collection of David L. Jarrett)

In the early 1850s the Postmaster General retired the then existing master Record of Postmaster Appointments, and opened a new and fresh register for the State of Missouri. All of the then existing offices were entered alphabetically by county in the new volume. It was of great interest to me to note in its proper alphabetical place appeared a page with the heading "Quapaw Country," although all of the other pages were headed by a county name. Crawford Seminary was the only post office under the heading. Inexplicably, someone subsequently with a heavy pen marked through the "r" of the word with several strokes, making it appear as though the word were intended to be "county."

Unfortunately, the uncertainty remains. The distance of sixty miles from Fort Scott is too far, considering the meanders of the road, to pin-point the location of Crawford Seminary; and even more exasperating, both sites, one in Indian Territory and the other in Kansas, are on an arc the same distance from Grand Falls. It is my own conclusion however, that the post office was more probably north of the Indian Territory boundary.

Notwithstanding the valiant effort on the part of some unknown clerk in Washington to create another county in Missouri and thus move a post office established to serve the Quapaw Nation across the line into Missouri, now 125 years later the uncertainty created by his complete ignorance of geography remains. We yet are unable to know with certainty that the Crawford Seminary post office, existing from 1848 until 1863, was located in what is now Oklahoma.