

## NECROLOGY

## THOMAS LIVINGSTON GIBSON

1881 - 1960

Reverence and tribute is richly deserved to the memory of a man who has passed on to a greater reward: Honorable Thomas L. Gibson, formerly Justice of the Supreme Court of Oklahoma. Those of us who served on the Court with him for four years learned to love and respect him as a man enjoying the fruits of a full, active, complete and noble life well lived. This sketch in *The Chronicles* can only evaluate briefly the marks that his life and character left to make Oklahoma a better state.

Justice Gibson was born of a prominent and aristocratic family in Stanton, Tennessee, on September 3, 1881. He had three brothers; Nathan Adams Gibson, Joe S. Gibson and James Knox Gibson; and two sisters, Mrs. W. H. White (the only survivor of the family) and Mrs. W. E. Nash. His brother, Nathan Adams Gibson of Muskogee and Tulsa, as a lawyer and advocate in Indian Territory and Oklahoma had no superior.

Justice Gibson married Nell Buzzard on July 12, 1910. Of this marriage, two children were born: Thomas L. Gibson, Jr., now an official with the Oklahoma Gas & Electric Company, Oklahoma City; and a daughter, Mary S., married to Harold M. Magruder, an official with the Southwestern Bell Telephone Company, Oklahoma City. Mary is employed by the Trust Department of the Liberty National Bank & Trust Company, Oklahoma City.

Justice Gibson graduated from the University of Tennessee. After trying his hand at teaching Latin in a boys' school and in the banking business with his father in Stanton, he came to Oklahoma City to study law in the office of his brother, Nathan. He was admitted to practice before the Oklahoma Bar in 1910, and was a member of the law firm of Gibson, Maxey, Holleman & Gibson at Muskogee and at Tulsa. In 1934, he was elected to the Oklahoma Supreme Court, and served eighteen years. He was Chief Justice of the Court in 1946 and 1947. He died July 10, 1960, and the burial was in Green Hill Cemetery at Muskogee, Oklahoma.

Judge Gibson served one term as mayor of Muskogee. He was a member of St. Paul's Methodist Church and the Rotary Club of Muskogee, and of the Men's Dinner Club in Oklahoma City. He was honorary member of Phi Delta Phi law fraternity at the University of Oklahoma, and a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon social fraternity at the University of Tennessee.

His associates cherish the memory of Justice Gibson as a fellow member of the Supreme Court of the State. He was hard working, efficient, kindly, always ready to listen to the views of and to reason with his fellow justices. He always had a love and understanding of his fellow men. His opinions were sound and logical, and he has left an indelible imprint on the structural laws of this State as are reflected by the opinions of the Supreme Court during his eighteen years of service on this Court.

In demeanor he was relaxed. He never found time to worry about the future but went about the tasks of the moment with a quiet philosophy of first things come first.



THOMAS LIVINGSTON GIBSON

He was modest and sincere, with abiding faith in the good of humanity, always considerate and thoughtful of others, and he was a firm believer in good government. He so lived that all might reflect on him in the words of the Poet:

"His life was gentle; and the elements  
So mixed in him that Nature might stand up  
And say to all the World, 'This was a man!'"

—Orel Busby

Former Justice of the State  
Supreme Court

Ada, Oklahoma

### JAMES BROOKES WRIGHT

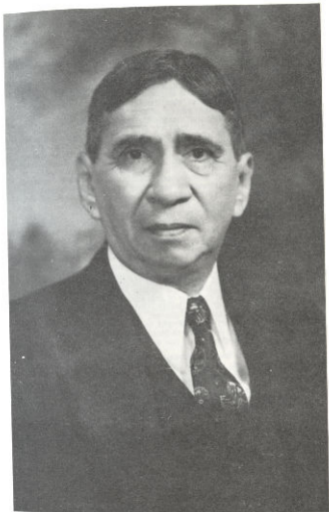
1878 - 1963

The home of James Brookes Wright had always been within the limits of the old Choctaw Nation of Southeastern Oklahoma. He was the youngest and last living of the sons and daughters of the late Reverend Allen Wright and his wife, Harriet (née Mitchell) Wright, and was born in the family home at Old Boggy Depot, Choctaw Nation, on December 28, 1878. He died at the age of eighty-six years, on August 5, 1963, at St. Mary's Hospital, McAlester, as the result of a recent fall and broken hip. Funeral services were held the morning of August 8, in the First Presbyterian Church of McAlester, with Dr. Lawrence W. Johnson, Pastor, officiating. Burial with committal services were in the Wright family burial ground in the Old Boggy Depot Cemetery, Atoka County.

J. Brookes Wright was of Choctaw Indian descent through his father, the Reverend Allen Wright, Principal Chief of the Choctaw Nation (1866-1879), the well known scholar of the Choctaws and their leader in public affairs of the Nation who suggested the State's name, Oklahoma for the Indian Territory, in 1866. His mother, Mrs. Harriet Newell (née Mitchell) Wright was from Dayton, Ohio, the daughter of James Henry Mitchell, graduate of Yale University (Connecticut), and a lineal descendant of Elder William Brewster, the 4th signer of the "Mayflower Compact." Mr. Wright took special interest in American and Indian history, enjoying his membership and fellowship in the Oklahoma Society of Mayflower Descendants, in which organization he served as Elder for several terms.

Mrs. Harriet Mitchell came as a Presbyterian missionary to the Choctaws in the Indian Territory in 1855, and here met and married Allen Wright, graduate of Union College, Schenectady, New York, and of Union Theological Seminary, New York City. Their youngest son, James Brookes had talent for writing, and among the few of his published works recently is a tribute to his mother, "Harriet Mitchell Wright, Missionary to the Choctaws," and another to his father, "Governor Allen Wright of the Choctaws," each printed in pamphlet form.

After the pre-Civil War, family home at Old Boggy Depot burned a few years ago, Mr. Wright was the originator and worked with zeal and enthusiasm for the establishment of the Boggy Depot State Park (Recreational Area) in Atoka County, donating an acreage from the Wright family homestead and part of this once noted "town" in Oklahoma history to the State for park purposes. He also worked to perpetuate the Old Boggy Depot Cemetery where are found the graves



**JAMES BROOKES WRIGHT**

of some of Oklahoma's illustrious pioneers, near the State Park, by deeding the land tract of the cemetery to the Oklahoma Historical Society, through the co-operation of his two older sisters, Mrs. Mary Wallace and Mrs. Clara E. Richards and the Wilson Grove Cemetery Association in the community.

James Brookes attended the Choctaw Armstrong Academy when he was a boy, and later was in the preparatory department of Austin College, Sherman, Texas, and in Mooney Preparatory School, Franklin, Tennessee, before entering Lehigh University at Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, where he majored in civil engineering. After leaving college, he was with the survey crew of the United States Geological Survey (1886-1897) carrying on the survey of the Choctaw Nation for the allotment of land in severalty among the Choctaws.

Mr. Wright made his home at Wapanucka in 1903 (present Johnston County) where he served as a land surveyor and later, as County Surveyor for Johnston County after statehood. At different times during the years, he was connected with local banks—Vice-President (and Director) of the Ash Flat Valley Bank at Olney; Assistant Cashier of the First State Bank at Clarita, and Cashier of the First National Bank of Wapanucka. He was elected ruling elder of the Wapanucka Presbyterian Church (U.S.) in 1908, and never changed his membership from this church throughout his lifetime. He was a member of the Masonic Lodge for fifty-five years. He served actively for a long period on the Board of the Goodland Indian Orphan School at Goodland, Oklahoma, when his beloved and lifelong friend, the Reverend Ebenezer Hotchkin, was also a member of this Board. Mr. Wright brought his family and made his home in McAlester in 1926 where he served as Chief Clerk in the United States Indian Office until his retirement.

Mr. Wright was united in marriage at Harley Institute near Tishomingo with Miss Bease B. Hancock, a teacher in this Chickasaw school, on November 9, 1906. The children of this marriage are Lucia Elizabeth (Mrs. Harry Whitlow of Fort Smith, Arkansas); Newell Eliphaz Wright (Levelland, Texas); and Harriet Ales (Mrs. Charles O'Leary of Kansas City, Missouri). Mr. Wright is survived by his wife of the home in McAlester and his three children besides eleven grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

His brother, the late Dr. Frank Hall Wright, well known as an evangelist and singer, once said in tribute to his youngest brother, "The word that best describes Brookes is integrity." James Brookes Wright was a gentle, soft-spoken man -- one who was loved and respected by many friends; one who gave his best efforts throughout his long life of service, in his enthusiasm and interest for the betterment of the Choctaws and the development of Oklahoma as a great State.

—Muriel E. Wright

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma