

EDWIN WILLIAMS, ENGINEER

An Account of the First Steam Saw-Mill Installed and Operated in Western Oklahoma

EDITORIAL FOREWORD

Hubert E. Collins, of Utica, New York, the writer of the following article, spent a couple of years in the old Indian Territory—now Oklahoma—in his early youth, nearly fifty years ago. He has been a life member of the Oklahoma Historical Society for a number of years past. His book, entitled "War Path and Cattle Trail," which is reminiscent of what a mere lad saw on the old Chisholm Trail in those days, was written since he became a member of the Society. He has an unusual interest in the matters concerning which he writes for the reason that he has had unusual opportunities to gather information relative to the same. He has other papers of equal pertinence and interest in the course of preparation.¹—J. B. T.

The Chisholm Cattle Trail had seen three of its twenty-odd years' life of romance, when a strange cavalcade started southward against the whelming tide of trailing cattle herds from Texas, at the southern edge of the only railhead at Abilene, Kansas, one day early in the summer of 1870. Leading the van was a heavily-framed freight wagon, of the Conestoga type, the platform, or bottom of its bed, piled high with a saw-mill engine and its accessories. Next following was a wagon of still heavier frame and running gears, to which there was lashed a locomotive type steam-boiler, of fifty horse-power capacity. Behind these, there came three other freight wagons which were laden with a circular saw outfit, including ratchet frame, tools and appurtenances.

¹A sketch of Hubert E. Collins, writer of the article concerning Edwin F. Williams and the installation and operation of the saw-mill at the Cheyenne and Arapaho Agency, at Darlington, will be published in a future issue of *Chronicles of Oklahoma*.

Then, not least in importance came several more wagons bearing food for the men and grain for the teams sufficient to last through the 250-mile journey to the valley of the North Canadian River, where the buildings of the Indian agency for the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes were to be erected.

The first wagon was hauled by a team of six large army mules, while twelve animals of the same type tugged at the traces by which they were hitched to the second wagon and each of the rest of the wagons in the train was drawn by a four-mule team. All of the teams were driven by experienced "mule-skinners," several of whom had seen service in military transportation trains during the great war which had ended only five years before and all were seasoned freighters on the overland trails of the Plains. The drivers of the first two wagons each rode the wheel mule on the near side and guided their teams with jerk-lines. Each of the other drivers was on the wagon seat and drove with four-in-hand lines. Each load was covered with white canvas tops and, all together, the vehicles made up a "covered wagon" freighting train of the old West.

In direct charge of this train and its men, was a laughing, slender young man of twenty-three. Serving as guides and riding "at point" at the head of the train were two typical frontiersmen, each of whom was then famous—and now even more so in the lore of the old West—California Joe² and Buckskin Joe³. The occasion was a notable one, even in

²California Joe was the frontier sobriquet of Joseph Griffiths, who was well known as civilian scout and guide who was often employed by military commanders. He was one of the most trusted scouts with the Washita Expedition, under Generals Sheridan and Custer, in 1868-9.

³"Buckskin Joe" was the frontier sobriquet of Joseph S. Works, who was born in Grant County, Wisconsin, February 14, 1847. In 1861, when but a few months past fourteen years old, he enlisted in Company B, of the 9th Iowa Infantry. At the end of eleven months, he was discharged because of physical disability, the long marches, exposure and severity of the service having proven too much for his immature physique, so he was sent home, supposedly to die. But he was nursed back to health and strength and, in 1863, he re-enlisted in Troop K, of the 9th Iowa Cavalry, with which he served until mustered out of the service, February 10, 1866, with the rank of corporal. Of his career as a scout, during the years of his early manhood, not much seems to have been recorded, though it is believed that he saw much of the frontier life of that period. That part of his life and activities which is of most interest in Oklahoma relates to the part which he played in Texas in the Oklahoma "Boomer" movement, in 1884-5-6-7-8. Originally becoming interested because Captain D. L. Payne was an ex-Union soldier, he tried to get in touch with Captain

Abilene, where unusual events were not infrequent. The leading citizens of the community, headed by Mayor Joseph G. McCoy⁴—the man who had dreamed the dream of the cattle trail and then, with his resourceful energy, had made it become a reality—were up bright and early, to see the train depart at sunrise. With this group, also, fastidiously dressed and “toggled out regardless,” with his long wavy hair sweeping his shoulders, was the marshal of Abilene—the redoubtable “Wild Bill” Hickok⁵—who had taken a liking to the quiet, unassuming young man who had been directing the loading of the outfit on the wagons. And so this freight-train, with yells and oaths from the drivers and with cheers from the people of the little frontier town, started off with a showing of speed. Men and mules were on parade. Even the twelve-mule team, with the big boiler in tow, broke into a trot, which was paced by the other teams, raising a

Couch, after Payne's death but did not succeed. However, about the time that the Payne-Couch “Boomer” movement went to pieces, he began to organize a “Boomer” movement of his own, in Texas, finally planting a “colony” in old Greer County, at Navajo, in 1887. Continuing his agitation for the opening of the Oklahoma country to settlement, he gained the co-operation of several railroad companies and of the Kansas City Commercial Club, which gave him considerable prominence throughout 1888 and also an insight into townsite promoting which he turned to good account. At the opening of Oklahoma, in 1889, he took great interest in the town of Union City, in Canadian County for a time but it failed to develop as he had expected it to do. He did not use his homestead right as he hoped some day to take up a homestead in the Cache Creek Valley, in the Fort Sill country. In 1893 and 1894, he was in the Chickasaw Nation for a time, trying to help build towns at Duncan, Comanche, Marlow and Ryan, where he clashed with some of the Chickasaw inter-married citizens, yet stoutly protested that he had opposed the best interests of the Indian people of that tribe as a whole. Though intensely active and not influential in his agitation for the opening and settlement of Oklahoma, he never became a citizen of the state or territory.

⁴Joseph G. McCoy was born at Springfield, Illinois, on December 20, 1837. Not much is known of his early life. He became a cattle feeder. At the close of the Civil War, beef was scarce and high in price in the North and the East. Texas ranges were overstocked but Texas cattle could not be driven north and east because of the epidemic of cattle disease which always followed each herd. McCoy finally planned a cattle trail from the central and western ranges of Texas to the first railway across the plains of Kansas—west of the settlements. It was regarded as a wild dream yet such was his resourcefulness and energy that he made his dream come true and the overland cattle trails of the ensuing quarter of a century form the theme of an important and picturesque phase of Great Plains history. At the opening of Oklahoma, in 1889, he settled at Reno City and, in the first political campaign of the new territory, in 1890, he was nominated by the Democratic party for delegate to Congress. He continued to be connected with the live stock industry throughout his life. His death occurred in Kansas City, October 19, 1915.

⁵“Wild Bill,” nom de guerre of James Butler Hickok, an erratic fron-

great cloud of dust from the bare surface of the trail. The scouts and guides carried rifle, six-shooter and knife and each "mule-skinner" had his Winchester in a scabbard on top of his load. Even the young man who was directing the enterprise held his rifle on his lap as he rode on the seat of the lead wagon.

Out across the valley lands and over the channel of the Smoky Hill River went the train and then on southward along the valley of Turkey Creek, but there was no more travel at a trot, for it soon became a long, hard, steady pull for all of the teams. There was a brief stop at mid-day, for lunch and to give the mules a ration of grain. Then, resuming the advance, there was a gradual climb from the creek bottoms to the rolling prairie uplands which spread out mile after mile before them. It was a long, hot afternoon drive, for they would not go into camp until the train came to water, which would be at the North Fork of the Cottonwood, near its intersection by the Santa Fe Trail.⁶ Because of that long, high divide between the Smoky Hill drainage area and that of the Cottonwood, this first day's drive was

tier character, born in La Salle County, Illinois, in 1837. Indifferent to education, he received by meagre schooling but was an inveterate hunter from early boyhood and he was more interested in guns than anything else. In 1855, he went to Kansas, in quest of adventure. There, he joined James H. Lane's partizan "Red Legs" in which he became quite active in the pro-slavery-free-state struggle. Tall, thin and aggressive, he was nicknamed "Shanghai Bill." Later he became a stage driver between St. Joseph, Mo., and Denver. The cognomen "Will Bill" was bestowed upon him after the "McCandless affair," in which he killed several men, professedly in self defense, though there have always been grave doubts as to the truthfulness thereof. During the Civil War, he was on scouting duty with Kansas troops in Arkansas, Missouri and Kansas. After the war, he drifted back to the frontier. He was city marshal of Hays City in its wildest days, for a season, following which he was on the stage, in the East, for a time. Then he served as city marshal of Abilene in its heyday as the end of the Texas cattle trail, returning thence to the stage again. Always a gambler he drifted back to that line in a professional way. He was generally regarded as a ruthless killer. He was assassinated by a fellow gambler, at Deadwood, South Dakota, in 1876.

⁶The crossing of the Cottonwood was one of the noted camping places on the Santa Fe Trail. That storied highway of the Plains ceased to be used for freighting east of that point after the Kansas Pacific Railway line had been put into operation as far west as Abilene—simultaneously with the establishment of the Texas-Abilene cattle trail. During the '70s there was a noted establishment for the breeding of Shorthorn cattle maintained near the old crossing—Durham Park, better known as Crane's Ranch. The village of Durham, in the northwestern part of Marion County, Kansas, is located near the crossing.

likely to be the longest of the whole trip, hence, the most tiresome to both men and teams.

As the men gathered about the "chuck wagon" for a rather belated evening meal, it was noticeable that they all spoke to the young leader. The scouts and guides assumed an air of social equality, that was born of long years on the plains, and addressed him in a hail-fellow,-well-met manner as "Ed," but the teamsters and mule-skinner all used the formal handle of "Mister Williams" in addressing him. This man was Edwin F. Williams,⁷ a young ex-Union soldier, machinist and engineer. He had begun his training in a blacksmith shop and that was followed by several years' work as a machinist. Recently, he had been appointed Government engineer at the Cheyenne and Arapaho Indian Agency and thus started to the scene of this appointment. He had taken charge of the machinery where it was to be unloaded at the nearest railway station and was overseeing its transportation thence to its destination, where he was to be responsible for its erection and operation. On the trail, the party presented a picturesque appearance. Moreover, its coming was regarded by westerners as being significant because it meant the first permanent sign of civilization in a region over which the Indians of the untamed tribes of the Plains had roamed at will since time immemorial.

⁷Edwin Farmer Williams was born at Zanesville, Ohio, February 3, 1847, the eighth and youngest child of Dr. Dearman and Mary (Farmer) Williams. The parents were members of the Society of Friends (Orthodox), in which faith all of their children were reared. The family moved west and settled in Muscatine, Iowa, in 1855, where the subject of this sketch received his common school education. He saw active service as a soldier in the Federal Army during the last year of the Civil War, though he was barely past eighteen at the close of that conflict. With the return of peace, he became a blacksmith's apprentice for two years, subsequently serving as a stationary engineer and later in a machine shop in Cincinnati. After the close of his service with the saw-mill at Darlington and a year of mechanical work with the mines at Central City, Colorado, he returned to Boonesboro, Iowa, where he completed a course in the high school. He then entered the University of Iowa to still further qualify himself for the profession of mechanical engineering. When his funds were exhausted, he returned to the mines in Colorado. There, he invented the friction clutch for safety device on mine hoists, which he had on display at the Centennial Exposition at Philadelphia, in 1876. This invention was perfected but through a flaw in his contract, he received no royalties after the first few were manufactured. Thereafter, he turned his attention to steam engine design, specializing in compound engines of the vertical type, which was his life work. The end of his life came July 28th, 1914. His remains were laid to rest in Lakeside Cemetery, overlooking the site of Commodore Perry's famous naval victory in 1813.

The train did not make such an early start the second day as it had on the first day and then it halted early in the afternoon, on the South Branch of the Cottonwood, where it went into camp for the rest of the day, in order to give the mules a chance to graze and rest. Deer, antelope, an occasional elk, wolves, coyotes and other wild animals were numerous. There were numerous wild turkeys and myriads of prairie chickens. Buffalo bones, scattered here and there, were mute reminders that the buffalo had not been ranging so far east during the past four or five years.

An early start was made on the third day and there was a longer drive to the headwaters of a small tributary of Sand Creek, near where the town of Newton was located and built, the next year.⁸ Late in the afternoon of the fourth day, the train halted and went into camp, at the mouth of the Little Arkansas River and adjoining the small frontier hamlet of Wichita.⁹ This was the place where the trail herds from Texas forded the Arkansas River. Crossing that stream, with the water at ordinary stages, by a herd of range cattle was not regarded as a matter of much moment. However that may have been, even though the "June rise" from the Rocky Mountains had not arrived, yet, with the channel largely filled by shifting sands, the fording of such a stream with great heavy freighting wagons, loaded with engine, boiler, saw-mill machinery, tools, accessories, etc., and with feed, grain and other supplies, might prove to be a very serious undertaking. Yet, after much doubling of

⁸When the line of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad reached the site of Newton, in June, 1871, that town immediately superceded Abilene as the primary range cattle market and shipping point, an advantage which it held for but a single season. A branch road having been opened to Wichita in the autumn of the same year, the overland cattle trade from Texas made that place its terminus for several years thereafter.

⁹Wichita held the overland cattle trade from 1872 to 1875, inclusive, and it held the freighting trade for the western part of the Indian Territory for nearly five years after that. From 1876 to 1880, the overland cattle trade went to Dodge City, over the Texas Cattle Trail, across the western part of the Territory. In the spring of 1880, the Santa Fe Railroad Company constructed its line to Caldwell, near the state line, whereupon a large part of the Texas cattle trade swung back to the eastern route and followed the Chisholm Trail to the state line at Caldwell once more. Thereafter, Caldwell held its place as a cattle market and shipping place until after the opening of Oklahoma, in 1889. The westward extension of homestead settlements closed the trail from Texas to Dodge City, in 1884, after which Caldwell was the chief cattle market on the southern Kansas border, with minor markets at Hunnewell, Kiowa and Englewood.

teams and numerous return trips, much anxiety and, incidentally, much in the way of profane expletives by some of the mule-skinners, the task was completed and a short drive was made to a place where there was good pasture and there the train went into camp for the night.

The day after crossing the Arkansas, the journey took the train to the valley of the Ninnescah River, which, being another sandy-bedded stream of doubtful depth to solid footings, there was another halt, more doubling of teams and it was crossed before going into camp. At this point, the train laid over in camp all of the following day, affording the teams a much needed rest and a chance to graze to repletion. Early on the eighth day, the train pushed on and, in the middle of the afternoon, reached the Chikaskia River. There, as at the Ninnescah, teams were doubled again and the stream was crossed before going into camp.

On the ninth day, shortly after crossing Bluff Creek, the train met teeming herds of buffalo, the feeding migration being on at the time. With these buffalo herds there were also large bands of elk and antelope. Wild turkeys were numerous, while quail and prairie chickens were flushed every mile of the way. Night voices about the camps included the hoarse howls of wolves, the querulous cry of the coyotes and the occasional hoot or screech of some of the various species of owls. The boundary between Kansas and the Indian Territory had been crossed during that day and the camp that night was on Pond Creek, near the site of the present village of Jefferson.

Early in the forenoon of the tenth day, the train arrived at the north bank of the Nescatunga River, now better known as the Salt Fork of the Arkansas. It was a larger stream than any that had been crossed since leaving the Arkansas. As the train stopped to prepare to double teams for the crossing, a large trail herd of cattle from Texas entered the stream from the other side. After the last of the cattle had emerged from the water, the foreman of the outfit rode up and informed them that the crossing would be perfectly safe if the train would follow the trail through the river where the cattle had trampled the sand so that it would be solid. Taking advantage of this tip, teams were doubled only on the first two wagons, so the crossing was effected

much more expeditiously than had been expected. That night the train was encamped at the Skeleton Crossing,¹⁰ near the site of North Enid. A trail herd was bedded down for the night nearby, while the camp of the drovers was a near neighbor of their own, an hour being spent in visiting before the tired men of each camp turned in for the night.

The next day the train proceeded on its way southward. At this stage of its journey, it was passing from three to six trail herds each day, while the dust of still others could be seen in the distance. The train went into camp on Turkey Creek, near the site upon which Hennessey was built, twenty years afterward. During the next forenoon, the Texas cattle trail parted from the Chisholm Trail, proper, swinging off toward the southeast. A mile or two beyond, the train arrived at the north bank of the Cimarron River. Here were met the first Indians—a small band of Cheyenne braves, who were quite curious as to the significance of this latest invasion of their country. The Cimarron River, with its sandy channel, was regarded as being more treacherous than any of the streams that had already been crossed, as it was also larger and wider than any of the others except the Arkansas. By doubling teams and using due precautions as to speed, however, a safe crossing was effected and the train camped for the night at the Kingfisher Creek crossing. That evening, the camp was visited by another band of Indians. During the course of their confab, with the scouts and guides acting as interpreters and talking mostly in the sign language, they learned that the young man who was in charge of the train was a kinsman of Tosimeeah, who was their friend and tribal agent. Thereafter, they proved their friendship in every possible way, for, though their new Government agent, Brinton Darlington, had been with them only a year, he had won their confidence, respect and affectionate regard.¹¹

¹⁰Skeleton crossing, on the Chisholm Trail, was on the property that is now included in the farm of the State School for the Feeble Minded, north of Enid. Skeleton Ranch, at that point, became a stage station on the Chisholm Trail after 1874.

¹¹Brinton Darlington was born at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, in December, 1804, with a birthright membership in the Society of Friends, in which faith he was reared. Part of his early life was spent at Salem, Ohio, whence he migrated to the western frontier in Iowa, in 1838, being the pioneer of Quaker settlements at Salem, Muscatine and West Branch, among whose people he was always regarded as a leader. He followed the business of a merchant, having a general store which enjoyed an extensive

The end of the drive for the thirteenth day found the train at the site of the new Cheyenne and Arapaho agency, in the valley of the North Canadian River. As yet it was but a camp. The arrival of the saw-mill outfit was hailed with demonstrations of gladness by the Agency employes, since it gave promise of the erection of buildings in the not distant future. In addition to the tented camp of the Agency employes, there were hundreds of tepees scattered in groups, up and down the valley and these were occupied by several thousand Indians who were members of the affiliated Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes. Each group or village of tepees was occupied by a band consisting of warriors and their families who were followers of a leading chief. Up and down the valley, which the Cheyenne called the Honeo (Wolf), these villages extended as far as the eye could see,

trade. He never held any public office until he was appointed to the position of Government agent for the Cheyenne and Arapaho Indian tribes, in 1869, shortly after the beginning of the Grant Administration. The appointment was unsolicited. It found him on the verge of old age and called him from a comfortable home and congenial surroundings and associations to go forth to spend the remaining years of his life in the wilderness of the Southern Plains where, in the midst of hardships and privations and in personal contact with many of the wildest and most intractable people of the native American race, he was to seek to inculcate in their minds and hearts at least a measure of regard for the spirit of peace and the habits of industry. He received and accepted the appointment as nothing less than a commandment of Divine Will and immediately arranged his affairs in preparation for the assumption of the duties and responsibilities of his new position. He took over the Agency, which was located temporarily at Camp Supply, whither most of the people of the two tribes were assembled in camp, with the understanding that a permanent site for the same should be selected and developed in the near future. He was directed to locate the Agency at or near the intersection of the North Canadian River by the Ninety-eighth Meridian, which was done in the spring of 1870. The first interest of the Indians in their new agent was aroused in a peculiar way. Just before coming to take up his new work he had secured a set of artificial teeth, the plate of which did not fit properly; because of this it was frequently removed and deposited in a cup of water. Then, when some of the Indian braves came to see him, he would hastily replace the plate in his mouth, in order to converse with them through the medium of an interpreter. So they called him *Tos-i-meah*, which in the Cheyenne tongue meant "One who takes out his teeth." But, regardless of his removable teeth, he became known to all of them as one who invariably "spoke with a straight tongue" by which they meant that his every word was true, and they found advice was always wise and that he was indeed what he claimed to be, their faithful friend. His duties were efficiently performed, even when his health was failing. But he had no thought of abandoning his post—he stayed until the end, his death occurring May 12, 1872. He was not mourned alone by his friends and associates of the Agency, for hardened, stony-hearted red warriors, who inured to scenes of cruelty and death, gave every evidence of deep sorrow at his untimely taking off.

while similar groups could be seen in the valley on the other side of the river.

Parties of restless nomads from distant points rode up on their fiery ponies, with feathers flying, buffalo-hide shields clattering against encased bows and arrow quivers. As they sat on their steeds, which never stood still, with their heels, the bucks drummed an incessant tattoo on the animals' ribs. These Indians were of the fiercest fighters on the Plains and, for the first time, they had been confined to a reservation less than a year and a half before. They were far from being subdued in spirit, in fact, four years later, hundreds of them went out on the war-path and, two years after that several scores of Cheyenne warriors helped to annihilate Yellow Hair (General Custer) and his followers, away in the North. In the midst of such surroundings lived the little handful of Agency employes, who earnestly strove to do the bidding of their Quaker agent, Brinton Darlington. There were no soldiers near to guard them. The nearest garrisoned military post was at Fort Sill, distant over eighty miles south and west. The only protection afforded to the Agency and its employes was the presence and moral influence of the gentle-spirited Quaker agent, Brinton Darlington. He had met all of the warlike leaders and had secured their promise to accompany him to the site which had been selected for the location of the new Agency and "sit down" in peace. They named him their Tosimeeah, gave him full allegiance and with it the sacred promise to protect him and his relatives.

The boiler, the engine and the saw-mill were unloaded and set up in the open, being mounted on skids that were hewn out from cottonwood logs secured from the wooded edge of the river and the first lumber was sawed out while the machinery still remained without a shelter. Of course, it was scarcely to be expected that experienced and skilled woodsmen could be found in that remote western wilderness. Accordingly, recourse was had to the hiring of scouts, teamsters, cowboys or anyone else who was seeking employment. It is stated on good authority that one man had drifted down to the new Agency from Fort Dodge, where he had been discharged from the service in the Army. He had been an army officer during the Civil War and had re-

mained in the army after the close of that conflict. With the reduction of the strength of the army a few years later, he was mustered out and discharged. The gamblers soon had the last of his pay. He drifted to the Agency, where he sought and secured employment as a saw-mill hand from the twenty-three-year old boy who was operating the plant—a pathetic instance of the spirit of prodigality which was all too prevalent on the frontier of that day. But he made good and became foreman of the gang that got out the first logs for the mill.

Most of the timber along the river was cottonwood and elm, neither of which was especially suitable for lumber-making purposes, the wood of each being comparatively soft and very susceptible to warping. The only other timber in that part of the country was the blackjack and post-oak, growths of which covered extensive areas, several miles north and northwest of the Agency. Most of the blackjack trees were too small for saw timber, in addition to which the lumber would not have been as durable or otherwise as desirable as that of the post-oak. The latter, being a species of white-oak, produces lumber of fair quality, good durability and that is comparatively easy to work. While it is seldom of more than moderate size, it was practically the only tree that was available for the manufacture of lumber.

As soon as the delivery of logs was begun, steam was gotten up in the big boiler and then followed the hum and whir and high-keyed song of the circular saw, as it cut each log successively into rough planks. From the material thus prepared, buildings to house the Agency employes were soon under construction—“wooden tepees,” the Indians called such structures. Practically all of the building material was thus produced, windows and panelled doors excepted. All door and window frames were gotten out right on the ground. Most of the houses thus built were occupied until the Agency at that point was discontinued, nearly forty years later. The young engineer was in his element; he carefully attended to every detail. One of the first houses erected became the home of his brother, John F. Williams,¹² who was the agency

¹²John Farmer Williams was born at Salem, Ohio, August 17, 1831, of Quaker parents. He was educated in the public schools of his native state. In his young manhood, he moved to Muscatine, Iowa, where he learned the blacksmith trade. He engaged in the business for himself at

blacksmith, with whom he was to live, as he was still a single man. Of course, a building for the housing of the saw-mill and its engine and boiler was also one of the first structures erected. The operation of the saw-mill went on steadily for several years, as many buildings—residences, shops, warehouses, school buildings, stables, sheds and other structures, some of them of large size, were needed at the Agency, which thus became a notable settlement in the wilderness.

The operation of this saw-mill under such conditions was not without a measure of excitement at times. Indeed, there were occasions when it was difficult to keep the services of a sufficient force of competent helpers. When Doctor Holloway, the Agency physician, arrived to assume his duties, he was accompanied by his family, including his son Frank, who had reached the stature of a man. The Holloway family occupied one of the newly built houses. Frank, who was a bright, healthy, energetic young man, sought and secured employment at the saw-mill. He was of an unrestrained disposition and lacking in the element of patience. He was unable, seemingly, to correctly gauge the character, disposition, thoughts and traits of the wild Indians about him. As the working of the saw-mill was a strange curiosity to them, no day's work was without its audience of silent, watchful, red warriors, in paint and feathers. They sometimes clogged the working space but they were always willing to move out of the way if requested. As they neither spoke nor understood English, it was necessary to go about making such a request with signs and with a large measure

that place. He was the only one of the four Williams brothers who did not go into the army during the Civil War. In this he made an agreement with the married brothers to aid his father in caring for the families of those who did go. He continued in the blacksmithing business at Muscatine until 1870, when his uncle, Brinton Darlington, offered him a position as blacksmith of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Agency, in the Indian Territory. He accepted the offer and took up his work when the new agency was established and organized. Although his rating as an agency blacksmith was never changed, he served as United States Commissioner at times. He soon won the friendship of the Indians, who named him Tun-hun, which was by interpretation "The Pounder." In time he became known as one of the most fluent sign talkers in the whole Plains region. He frequently accompanied delegations of Cheyenne and Arapaho Indians to Washington as an interpreter and, for many years, he served as the agency "beef issue" clerk. His service at the Darlington Agency continued over a period of more than fifteen years, after which he retired from active life and settled at Lawrence, Kansas, where he died on March 2, 1892.

of patience also. Frank Holloway, lacking in this latter quality, got into serious trouble one day. Finding a warrior in his way, on the skidway, he first tripped and pushed the unintentional offender down on his back and threw him out of the door, accompanying the act with a curse and a scowl. The warrior was not hurt except in his proud spirit. He arose from the ground with eyes blazing murder. Had Frank realized and understood the significance of that look, he might have been on his guard. As he stepped from the door of his father's home at the Agency, that evening, the offended warrior met him and shot him down, to death. All of the white people at the Agency were compelled to assemble with Agent Darlington for protection until the excitement died down. So the young engineer was short one helper at the saw-mill.

There was another helper, in the person of a young cowboy, who rode into camp one day. He secured employment at the saw-mill but seemed anxious to keep out of sight. He proved to be a zealous and capable workman and had evidently been educated far beyond the mental status of the average cow-puncher or saw-mill worker. It was noticed that he furtively watched every stranger who rode up. One day, about a week after his arrival, four men rode up and peered into the saw-mill building. They noted his presence there and he saw them. Without a word to anyone, he slipped out, went to the corral, saddled his pony and rode away, not to return until he was brought in by the Indians, wounded almost to death with a large caliber bullet through his head. He had been found forty miles away, by a spring in a draw. He regained consciousness, was nursed back to life and health and again rode away, never to return. Before his departure, he explained what had happened to him. He had gone to sleep, rolled in his blanket at the end of the day when he had left the Agency saw-mill so unceremoniously and he remembered no more until he had regained consciousness after having been found by the Indians and brought back to the Agency.

There was an interesting sequel to this last incident: Thirty years afterward, Edward F. Williams, mechanical engineer, who as a young man had set up and operated the steam saw-mill at the Cheyenne and Arapaho Agency, met

the head of a big manufacturing enterprise in Connecticut, who told of having spent part of his youth in the West. He told of having gotten into bad company, having been induced to join a band of horse thieves. He knew that he must leave them if he expected to get out of the country alive. He finally succeeded in breaking away from them, made his way to the Cheyenne and Arapaho Agency, where he found employment at the saw-mill. The members of the gang followed him and located him. He knew what to expect. He tried to make his get-away, went to sleep the first night on the trail and awoke back in the Agency, badly wounded. He showed the scars on his head in proof of his story. He knew the gang had followed him, shot him and left him for dead. He said he had afterward reached home, where Williams met him. The latter revealed himself as the one-time employer of the prosperous business man who had thus related the thrilling incident in his early life. They talked it over and each kept the mutual secret. Both are now dead.

There were times when operations had need to be suspended in the saw-mill while the few white people at the Agency laid low and watched from behind barricades as blood-thirsty warriors demanded revenge from the only white people within reach for wrongs which had been inflicted upon the red people by other white people. More than once was the screech of the saw silenced as it gave place to resounding war-cries and savage epithets.

One time, a soldier helper, with the engine frame for a rest, took a pot shot at an Indian on the river bank, almost a mile away, just to see how close he could come to the mark. He succeeded in hitting the man and taking off a heel. Again there was rest from work while, with all on guard, the Indians investigated the possibility of the shot having come from the mill. The young engineer in charge of the saw-mill finally succeeded in convincing the braves that the shot must have come from some other direction.

At the end of three years, Edwin F. Williams resigned his position at the Agency and went to Central City, Colorado, where he became interested in the mechanical engineering of mining equipment. Though destined to have a distinguished career as a mechanical engineer and as an inventor, the Indian Territory was to know him no more. While

he was living and working at the Agency the gentle spirited old Quaker agent, Brinton Darlington (who had founded and developed the Agency and who was a kinsman of the young engineer) passed away, mourned not alone by the Agency staff and his white friends but also by all of the Indians who had come under his personal influence. After his death, though in conformity with the custom of the Society of Friends of which he had been a faithful member, no monument was erected at his grave in the Agency cemetery, yet as a tribute of honor and respect to his memory, the Agency community or settlement was named Darlington.

The year after Edwin F. Williams left the Darlington Agency, most of the Cheyenne leaders and warriors left the reservation and went on the war-path. When they were ready to start, they rode to the Agency in a body and informed the agent, John D. Miles, that they were going—that they would not harm anyone about the Agency but that they were going out to make war on the buffalo hunters, which they did, beginning with the attack on Adobe Walls, on the Canadian River, in the Texas Panhandle, on June 27, 1874. As the result of a winter campaign, the last of the hostile members of the Cheyenne, Comanche and Kiowa tribes surrendered in less than a year. Then, in 1875, a new military post, which was named Fort Reno, was established across the river from Darlington.

With the extension of the Atchison, Topeka & Santa Fe Railroad Company's line, westward from Emporia to Newton, in 1871, the first branch line which was projected by that system, was built to Wichita, in the autumn of that year. This brought the railroad nearly 100 miles closer to Darlington than when the engine, boiler and saw-mill outfit had been freighted from Abilene to the Agency, only a year and a half previously. However, 160 miles was still a long distance to freight lumber for the building of the new fort on the south bank of the North Canadian River. So it was decided that the sleepers, sills, joists, studding, rafters and other dimension lumber for the erection of the buildings of the new post across the river from Darlington should be sawed out of native trees, and that the rest of the lumber should be freighted down the Chisholm Trail, from the end of the railroad, at Wichita.

As the result of the logging and lumbering operations of the Agency saw-mill at Darlington, it was difficult to find desirable logs within easy hauling distance of the mill. The nearest and most available timber that was suitable for logging and sawing seemed to be at Council Grove. This tract, which was roughly about three and a half miles square, contained numerous post-oak and western white-oak trees which were of fair size, with good, clear boles and sound wood. However, since Council Grove was distant from the site of the new Fort, it was manifestly too far to haul logs to a saw-mill, so it was decided to move the saw-mill to the logs, instead. (The first, or temporary buildings at the new post had been built of small logs, set vertically in rows, in trenches, which were filled and tamped, the interstices between the logs being plastered with clay, such buildings serving until permanent structures could be erected.)

William Darlington,¹³ who was a cousin of Edwin F. Williams, and who was an experienced engineer and mechanic, was placed in charge of the removal and reinstallation of the engine, boiler and saw-mill and he directed its operation thereafter. The plant was set up just north of "Dead Man's Crossing," now better known as the West Tenth Street Bridge, about half a mile below the Oklahoma City Water-works dam, in Council Grove Township, west of Oklahoma City. There, most of the best post-oak and white-oak timber in the Council Grove area was sawed up into the heavier grades of lumber to be hauled to Fort Reno. Council Grove was later set aside as a wood reserve to supply Fort Reno with fuel and fence posts and, as such, it was reserved from settlement when Oklahoma was opened to homesteaders, in 1889. Its lands were not thrown open for sale until in December, 1899.¹⁴

The story of Darlington, which is ended, has never been written. What it might have been to Oklahoma and what it is are two very different things. Its part in the early history of the commonwealth of Oklahoma is all but lost. Its sentiments and traditions and legendary lore are fast

¹³William Darlington was a son of Agent Brinton Darlington. His connection with the Cheyenne and Arapaho Agency continued long after the death of his father. More extended notice of his service will appear in a subsequent installment of this series of papers relating to the Darlington Agency, its activities, life and employes.

being forgotten. So, too, are the martial glories of Fort Reno. It is a remount station, to furnish horses for cavalry and field artillery, with motorization fast replacing the horse as a factor in modern warfare. But such places are deserving of remembrance in history for the sake of their associations and because of the part they once held and performed in the taming of the wilderness.

—HUBERT E. COLLINS.