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HOME OF JOHN F. BROWN

Wewoka, July 28

Back a short distance from the heavily traveled highway, two miles and a half of Sasakwa, in a beautiful grove of trees, stands the old mansion of Governor Brown, now fast slipping away into decay, but serving as a relic of bygone historical days of Oklahoma when the red men played their dramatic role in the annals of the state.

The large crowds of people, brought here by the recent oil development, who daily pass on the highway, note the magnificent structure and wonder at its presence there, but few know that it is the old mansion of the governor and fewer still know that the old chieftain himself, lies sleeping but a few feet from his door.

HOUSE HOLDS ROMANTIC AIR

Occupying a site on one of the most pictures-

que hills in this section of the country and surrounded by giant elm, catalpa and huckleberry trees, the historic two-story house with its sixteen spacious rooms and large porches seems to have retained a bit of the spirit of the old tribal ruler and bears a sentinel, watchful appearance over the surrounding valley lands.

The old house, a portion of which is said to be over fifty years of age and except for being in a delapidated condition, is as it was left nearly ten years ago on the death of the governor, is still occupied by his Indian widow, Mrs. Sarah Cully Brown, and other members of his family. It is interesting to know that every stick of the lumber in the old mansion was freighted from Muskogee at the time the house was built, coming a distance of 100 miles.

NOTED GUESTS ONCE ENTERTAINED

One cannot restrain a feeling of awe as he passes along the wide cement sidewalk leading to the expansive veranda and enters the large living room, where so often in days gone by the governor has conversed with prominent men and received his guests; and as the visitor walks over the deeply plush rug, gay with rich colors, he wonders what

noted people have been entertained in the room.

Perhaps the most interesting relic in the room is the old-fashioned fireplace, where, above the ~~mantel~~ on both sides of the large mirror are three shelves on which are kept three pairs of beautiful vases, which the chief on the various eves of his weddings, presented to his three Indian brides.

FAMILY BURIED NEARBY

Leaving the house and going out a few paces from the door, is the old family burying ground, beautifully situated in a grove of trees which cast an air of tranquility over the noted plot of ground, and which contains no less than twenty-five graves, all of which are those of Indians with the exception of two, these belonging to white people, whom the governor ^tour of generosity, allowed to be buried in his private cemetery.

Many of the graves are covered with brick or concrete slabs, ranging from two to three feet in thickness as one reads the names on the markers and slabs, note is taken that several of the living children of the Indian chief have been given the names of their brothers and sisters who are dead.

LIES IN SIMPLE GRAVE

The immense slab covering the grave of Governor Brown is the most elaborate of all and in its simple, modest inscription bearing only the following necessary facts: "John F. Brown, Chief of the Seminole Nation, Oct. 23, 1843-Oct. 2, 1919, a Servant to His Country," somehow brings out the grand dignified air of the Seminole chieftain, whose philosophy was to live only for others.

One cannot view the old piece of splendid architecture where the governor once resided without recalling to mind a bit of the life of the celebrated Indian chief and the important part he played in the making of Oklahoma history and looking for traces of his work achieved in the thirty years he served as chief or governor of the Seminole tribe.

It was just across the road from the old mansion that the first postoffice and trading point of Sasakwa was established with Governor Brown as postmaster, a position he held for about twenty-five years, and the town of Sasakwa which he founded in 1904, is located on forty acres of land which was in his original allotment.

FIRE RAZES OLD BUILDING

The first building, the remains of the native

rock which is still to be seen on Sasakwa Main street, was a store founded by him and which was destroyed by fire a few months ago.

It was also through his influence at the national capital that the Wewoka townsite was established, the first townsite of any legal standing in the Seminole country. Here it was also that the governor built the first store in the town which was erected on the site now occupied by the Billington lumber yard.

But a half-mile east of the Brown home may be seen the Spring Baptist church, where the chief was pastor for about thirty-five years, and where his nine surviving children are members.

TWO INDIAN SCHOOLS ERECTED

It was through his efforts that two great schools for the Seminole Indian children were built, namely south of Wewoka where the Indian girls of the tribe were educated and which was destroyed by fire only a few months ago, and Mikusukey mission located four miles southwest of Seminole, where the boys of the tribe were instructed.

The Seminole chief labored endlessly and tirelessly during his entire lifetime with his people,

putting into operation a system of leases for agricultural purposes in the Seminole Nation and requiring improvements on the Indian lands. He instilled in his tribe high morals and virtues and taught them the importance of work and such confidence in his honesty did he inspire in his people that they delivered into the hands of the Seminole officials the tribal funds for disbursement, this being the only instance of the kind known among the Indian tribes.

TRUSTED BY WHITE BROTHERS

Not only was Governor Brown known among his own people for his ability and integrity, but also with officials of the United States government, standing high in all of the big councils. He spent from three to six months yearly in the national capital, and it was here that he met and became a personal friend of Theodore Roosevelt.

But in reminiscing over important facts of the beloved old chieftain, one cannot overlook the important work accomplished by the governor's sister, Mrs. Alice B. Davis, who is now 76 years old, and who lives in Wewoka.

Mrs. Davis, who in spite of her age, appears in court at Wewoka frequently, serving in the capacity of an interpreter in litigations involving the oil lands of the Seminoles and keeping a complete record of the births, deaths and marriages among her people.

SPEAKS THREE LANGUAGES

Mrs. Davis, who is one of the most interesting as well as best educated women in Oklahoma, speaking fluently three languages and keeping well posted on all important subjects of the day, is the mother of eleven children, seven of whom are living and are prominent personages of the state.

The aged woman talks with enthusiasm and interest on any subject, yet when asked a question concerning the Seminole tribe, the kindly eyes are lighted with a fire of love and pride, which readily discloses the fact, that one has touched on the subject nearest and dearest to her heart, and the person is fairly entranced as she unfolds in her unassuming, unselfish way bits of history connected with her people.

ONCE HELD CHIEF'S OFFICE

One would never suspect from the modest,

friendly air of the little woman that she had served as chief of the Seminole race, an honor never before granted to a woman of any of the Indian tribes, and that she was a member of the Tiger clan from which every chief, with the exception of two, have been drawn in the history of the Seminoles, but this privilege was not given her because of connections with the clan, but because of her well known ability and efficiency relating to matters of the tribe.

One is not surprised, as he notes the strong character expressed in the distinguished woman's face when she explains why she would not sign papers during the second period of her chieftainship, calling for the transfer of Emehaka Mission to an individual, for, as she declares, the rights of her people come first in every matter and no deed shall ever be signed by her which shall not be for the benefit of the Seminoles. It was through this act that the office was taken from her.

It is after a close study of Mrs. Davis and her high ideals and principles, that one better understands her brother, Governor Brown, and notes how easy it would have been for him to have used his office to acquire wealth. However, his one and only aim was to serve his people faith-

fully, efficiently and honestly, and it was for this reason that he died a poor man.

Once more we view the imposing structure known as the Governor Brown mansion, a splendor of bygone historical days, located on the last remaining forty acres of the allotment of the Seminole chieftain, and which from its stately position on the hill sights oil derricks looming up but a few miles in the distance, symbols of a new industry steadily coming this way -- and as we look, we wonder what the fate of the noted house will be.