

CHARLES TAYLOR GORTON

VIOLA DELL MOORE GORTON

By Mrs. William H. Creel

Charley Gorton was born to Edward and Mary Taylor Gorton at Colorado Springs, Colorado, on May 7, 1859. He could tell many interesting tales of driving cattle, with his brother George, from Texas across the Indian Territory to a railhead in Kansas.

He was one of the ninth generation of Gortons in the United States. His ancestor Samuel Gorton of Gorton England now incorporated in the city of Manchester landed at Boston, Massachusetts, in March 1636, with his wife Mary.

Charley Gorton met Viola Dell Moore, born February 1, 1864, in Harper, Kansas, where she was teaching school and married her December 12, 1888, and brought her to Purcell as a bride to await the opening of the Oklahoma Territory. He and his young wife had made several visits in the vicinity of Norman before the opening so that he had the quarter section tract well in mind while he held his horse in check on the South side of the Canadian River waiting for the signal to announce the race had started. They built their home on the corner of what is now Jenkins Avenue and Boyd Street. One can still see the two cedars that stood on either side of the front door. Many other trees still living on the campus were planted by Mr. Gorton. A Sassafras tree planted between the Engineering building and Boyd is particularly interesting.

The Legislature of the Territory of Oklahoma approved an act on December 19, 1890, to establish a state university. Tom Wagoner, a member of the Legislature contended Norman was the best site for the new state university and he withheld his vote for the location of the capital until they voted to locate the university in Norman. A commission of three men from the Legislature with the help of D. L. Larsh, J. D. Maguire and Dan Marquart, Norman business men, chose twenty acres of Charley Gorton's corn field for the site. With Norman's best interests at heart the Gortons were happy to sell twenty

acres of their land to start the University. They sold the twenty acres for \$2,000 to be raised by local subscription. Of course, they were not so happy about having to sell the rest of their home place to the growing university. By 1892 twenty more acres were needed, by 1908 the whole hundred and sixty acres were acquired with a trade in of the home of the first Oklahoma University President, David Boyd. This home was located on University Boulevard about a block from the campus. This remained the home of the Gortons until 1927 when the University bought the house back to use as a practice teaching house for Home Economics. In the meantime the house had been turned around and moved back to face Park Drive leaving two lots vacant on the Boulevard.

The Gortons were very active in the South Methodist Church. Mrs. Gorton played the piano or sang alto in the choir, where ever they needed her most.

Mrs. Gorton's mother and father, Seth Marion Moore and Mattie King Moore, followed their daughter to Norman in the latter months of 1889. Seth Moore, more popularly known as "Dad" Moore, was fourth generation of his family since the American Revolution. His ancestor, Rev. John Foster I, was a private in Capt. Peter Mantz Company of Maryland and a Capt. under Col. Sam Finley 1st Regiment of the Mounted Volunteers in the War of 1812. Rev. John Foster I preached in the Methodist Church for thirty five years when he wasn't at war! The Moores lived on the northeast corner of the University Boulevard and West Main Street. Mrs. Moore was a member of one of the first social clubs in Norman, the "Coterie." Dad Moore had an ice cream parlor just west of the D. L. Larsh office on West Main, it was called "The Green Frog." He was a member of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows and received many honors from them.

The Gortons had five children born on the old homestead. Mrs. Wright, a local midwife, assisted in all.

Leo H. Gorton, born September 19, 1889, died April, 1963. Married Mattie Lee Tucker, now living in Tulsa. They had two adopted children, Jerry, now living in Seattle, and Gloria Gorton Landes, Tulsa.

Vera D. Gorton, born August 7, 1891. Married Glenn Clark. Both living in Ponca City, Oklahoma. They had two daughters, Betty Lou who married James A. Embry, and lives in Houston, Texas. Jean who married Everett Berry and lives in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

Harold Gorton, born April 10, 1893, died May 10, 1905.

Clover Gorton, born January 4, 1896, living in Memphis. Married Walter L. Berry, son of R. C. Berry, another Cleveland County Pioneer. He died December 4, 1961. They have two sons, Walter Gorton Berry now living in California, Charles Taylor Berry of Memphis, Tennessee.

Fred Gorton, born September 4, 1898, died December 15, 1898.

Mr. Gorton became cattle inspector for Oklahoma Territory when they moved from the farm. He moved his family to Snyder, Oklahoma, where they were living in 1905 when the terrible cyclone that almost wiped out the town, killed Harold. They then moved to Lawton.

Wilma Grace Gorton, born in Lawton, June 6, 1906. Married William Hunt Creel. They have been living in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, since their marriage. They have two sons, William Gorton Creel, Bartlesville, and Donald Hunt Creel, Titusville, Pennsylvania.

The Gortons moved back to their residence on the Boulevard in Norman about 1908.

Mr. Gorton was a member of the Masonic Lodge in Norman.

During practically all of his adult life Mr. Gorton's primary interest was cattle. At various times he worked on cattle drives, managed ranches, owned and operated his own farms, served as cattle inspector and was active in the Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association.

Charles Taylor Gorton died in 1925, and Mrs. Gorton died in 1940.