

### The Stranger.

One frigid winter day while a typical prairie blizzard was raging over the Territory, a stranger who was too weak to sit erect in his saddle, rode up to the Butler farm home. Helped from his horse and guided into the house he was put to bed suffering from a severe case of "double pneumonia." With good neighbors assisting in every way possible Mrs. Butler nursed him back to health. Without telling his name, or being able to reward his benefactors, without knowing where he had come from or where he was going, we children watched him mount his mustang and ride down the lane and turn westward on the road that entered Indian Territory across the Canadian at Purcell.

### Prairie Fire

Indian Summer days were merging into Autumn. Following a growing season in which the corn had developed well there had been weeks of no moisture and vegetation was dry as tinder. A rider had reported that the smoke clouds which were filling the air and traveling on a northeastward blowing wind had been originated over near the river south of and east of Lexington. Children had been burning brush and a high wind had caused the unexpected. All adult members of the family were alerted and drafted to fight fire. The children were directed to remain at home, while the women were all provided with water containers and burlap or tow sacks. The hired man helper hitched the team of horses to the turning plow and raced them to the edge of the cornfield adjoining the east west roadway. He continued to race them as fast as he could and hold the handles of the turning plow as he turned furrows to serve as a fire guard. His efforts were of little help because the wind carried burning grass across the road to ignite the field grass. After fighting all day with the tow sacks and pails of water the women folks trudged home, a disheveled, smoke blackened, exhausted group of women. Too tired to eat supper, they had saved the corn in the field.

### Territorial School Days

Spring Hill, the District School building had been built in the west end of the District, instead of near the center as provided by law. Children on the east side had to walk two and one half miles to school. Feeling the injustice of this situation, Mrs. Butler, in defiance of the powers which had brought it about, contacted every family in the district and explained the law and called attention to the unfairness. The annual school meeting brought necessary steps to have the building relocated near the center of the community. We attended Sunday School and religious services at Spring Hill School house.

### Cattle Rustlers

When Mrs. Butler could find no trace of some thirty head of branded cattle which she had put out to pasture across the Canadian in Indian Territory, she hardly knew who to turn to for assistance. Fraternalism as exemplified in pioneer life solved her problem. Freemasonry was then a great force in the Territory. Members of the Fraternity were alerted and thru their efforts it was determined that her cattle had been stolen and driven to Fort Sill and sold to be slaughtered for beef rations. With no other effort on her part than journeying to Federal Court at Paris, Texas, for

to German families as needed and generally gave of her time and services in the war effort. She invested in the fund for building The American Legion Hospital. She was christened in the Lutheran Church, but later joined the Methodist Church, South.

My sister and I joined the Methodist Church, South, soon after moving to Norman.

Mrs. Butler was a charter member of the Lexington Eastern Star and a member of the White Shrine in Norman. She passed away July 12, 1946, and was buried by the side of her husband, J. C. Butler, in Hillside Cemetery at Purcell.

- - -

John Green Butler was a student at Oklahoma University at the time of his father's death. He returned to Texas and later married Laura Suggs. He returned with his family to Norman in 1911. Connected with the First National Bank he was instrumental in bringing a tent Chautauqua to Norman, at the University Campus in the summer of 1911. He died in Norman, March 25, 1912. Their children are Mrs. John Murchison (Gertrude, deceased), San Antonio, Texas; Mrs. John Hunt (Ruth), Fairfield, Iowa; and Mrs. J. H. Dallas (Marie), Iowa City, Iowa.

Bess married John F. Sargent, M.D., in 1917. Their four children are Mrs. Lois Collins, Mrs. Alice Pettigrew, Mrs. Edna Dodd, and Mrs. Annabet McKee.

Anna married Henry Grady Ryan, World War I Veteran, and professional educator, 1922. Their children are Henry Grady Ryan II, M. D., Nancy Craig, M. D., Mrs. Beth Rankin, B. A., M. A., Librarian and John Butler Ryan, D.D.S.

## THE BUTLER STORY

*By Anna Butler Ryan*

The John Calvin Butler family history in Cleveland County, Oklahoma Territory, really began in Mason County, Texas. Charley Smith, the deputy U. S. marshall who fired the shot, at high noon, which signaled the opening run of April 22, 1889, from Purcell, Indian Territory, had served as deputy to Mr. Butler for a part of the twelve years that Mr. Butler was sheriff and tax collector of Mason County, Texas. Deputy U. S. Marshall Smith, who later married Mrs. Butler's sister, was influential in bringing Mr. Butler to Oklahoma Territory in 1893. The family then consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Butler and a small daughter, Bessie, a son, John Greer Butler, and Mrs. Butler's grandmother, Elizabeth Kissner Haldeman. James Wright and a daughter, Myrtle, remained in Texas. The Butler family settled on a 320 acre farm located five miles east of Lexington. This half section of land had been allocated to Mary Sanderson, a Pottawatomie Indian, as a headright, and was purchased from her. The document which transferred ownership of the land to Mr. Butler is still in the possession of the writer who still owns and operates the south half of the farmstead.

Deputy U. S. Marshall Smith, was also influential in having Mr. Butler commissioned as a deputy U. S. Marshall, however the official document commissioning Mr. Butler did not arrive until a few days after his death. Plans which Mr. Butler had made with his friends and neighbors to become a candidate for the Territorial Legislature were also terminated by the accident causing his death.

Mr. Butler's tragic death was accidental. On March 6th, 1895, he and a hired helper, Ira Deland, were hauling loose straw. While going down a steep sided creek bank the straw on which he was riding shifted forward throwing Mr. Butler from the wagon onto one of the large mules which was pulling the load. As he fell toward the ground the frightened animal kicked him into a position under the wagon where both front and rear wheels rolled over and crushed his chest. The end came on March 9th. His remains were interred, with Masonic rites, in Hillside Cemetery at Purcell, March 10th, 1895. Mr. Butler was a native of Shelby County, Tennessee.

The young widow, Alice E. Butler, her two small daughters, (Anna was born October 26, 1894), and her grandmother continued to live on the farm for the next eight years. The move to Norman was made in January, 1903.

Alice E. Butler, the oldest child of John George and Elizabeth Eggenberger (now Eckenberger), was born and educated in the then modern city of Basil, Switzerland. She came with her family to the United States in 1883 and settled in Texas. At the time of her marriage to J. C. Butler she was nurse and traveling companion to Miss Eleanor Brackenridge of San Antonio, Texas.

After coming to Lexington, Oklahoma Territory, Mrs. Butler was an angel of mercy to all who needed her ministrations as nurse and midwife. She never accepted pay for her services.

the purpose of identifying her brand on the hides, Mrs. Butler was reimbursed for her cattle in full, the rustlers were sent to prison, and Territorial justice was satisfied.

### Reminiscences

A. Our childhood lives were influenced in many ways out of school. Friendships made were deep and lasting. Reverend Gaddis of Wanette, often made journeys into the farm homes with gospel message in scripture and song. Memory lingers of the evening when he took me up on his knees, read the Bible and sang the song "Beautiful Beckoning Hands."

B. Mrs. Butler and her two little daughters were going to Purcell in the buggy, a four wheeled, one seated vehicle, drawn by two horses. They were crossing the Canadian River sands at a spot near where the present massive bridge stands. While approaching the west bank of the river the horses and buggy dropped abruptly down into a formation of saturated quicksand. The water was over the horses' backs and up in the buggy. Sister and I climbed up onto the seat. The struggle of the horses was short and furious before they got footing and pulled the buggy out. No help was near, and Mrs. Butler was prayerfully thankful that she and her family had been spared from joining the many others whom the Canadian had claimed in its floods and quicksands. She liked to speculate as to whether it was divine providence or just a coincidence that gave some compensation for her horror in the quicksand incident when she and her two children, in the buggy, were first to cross the new Canadian toll bridge.

C. Adjusting to pioneer farm life was not easy for Mrs. Butler. Being required to do heavy farm work and caring for live stock was often discouraging for a woman, more especially when the hired men helpers decided to quit during a prairie blizzard. She was always a good provider for her family, and by diligent effort and careful management in the sale of her live stock was able to pay cash for the irregular shaped block 56 of the original townsite of Norman. The 25 mile move to Norman was made in covered wagons on January 2, 1903. Mrs. Butler's principal objective was "The best possible educational opportunity for my children."

Without the formal nurse's training enjoyed by young women of this generation, Mrs. Butler joined with Dr. C. S. Bobo for such services as her experiences in practical nursing afforded. Dr. Bobo recommended her as amply able "to handle any average case requiring her care." Her first case in Norman included the welcoming of Elveta Minter into the family and caring for mother and child for a fortnight. Nurses' wages were one dollar per day. Success rewarded the efforts of the Bobo-Butler team in pulling Mrs. Daisy Lindsay thru a seven weeks siege of Typhoid. With Dr. Capshaw she assisted in removing a bullet from near the heart of a Mr. Brakebill who had been struck by a ricocheting ball in a street brawl at Blanchard. She journeyed with Dr. Bobo to assist in caring for Sheriff Bill Abbott who had been shot in the abdomen at close range. Many of Norman's first families were her clients when nursing service was needed. Her sympathetic attitude and her understanding of people in distress more than compensated for her lack of technical training and the demand for her services as a nurse continued as long as she was able to continue working. During World War I she performed many and varied duties for the Red Cross, served as interpreter