

CHAPTER XIII

EARLY OFFICERS

1. Early Officers of County
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It is interesting to know who were the first officers of Crawford county. The secretary of state's report gives the honor of being the first clerk of the county to Henry Bradford who served from 1821 to 1823. The first sheriff was Jack Mills, who died while in office and was succeeded by Mark Bean, who served until 1825.

Judge Turner in his "Historical Sketch of Crawford County" gives those honors to George C. Pickett as first clerk and James Wilson as first sheriff. The obituary notice of James Wilson also speaks of him as first sheriff. The official list gives George C. Pickett as second clerk and serving from 1823 to 1833. James Wilson is given as third sheriff serving from 1825 to 1832. The first tax list is not signed by a sheriff, if so the question would be easily settled.

It may have been that there was so little to do in their respective offices that they engaged in some other business and Messrs. Pickett and Wilson were the first to give their entire time to the office.

The first coroner was J. C. Sumner who served from 1823 to 1827. His home was on the south side of the river in the vicinity of Crawford court house as he was assistant postmaster there in 1828.

The first surveyor, Alfred Oliver, served from 1825 to 1832 and then was succeeded by John Harrell.

The first judge was Robert Sinclair who was elected in the latter part of 1829 and served until 1833. He seems to have also represented Crawford county in the Council of the Seventh and Eighth Territorial legislature. There is no resignation from the judgeship given, so he must

have held both offices at the same time. He died at Little Rock on the 9th of November, 1833, while a member of the legislature.

The county had no treasurer elected until Arkansas became a state in 1836, when William Hull was elected and served two years. Previous to this the sheriff had acted in that capacity.

The two men who were honored by their fellow citizens more often than any other were Mr. Alexander McLean who served twenty-three years consecutively as clerk and Mr. Augustus J. Ward whose term of office altogether was twenty-four years as treasurer.

We find the following in the Arkansas Gazette of February 23rd, 1830: "The election in Crawford county resulted in the following being elected: Robert Sinclair, county judge; George C. Pickett, clerk of circuit court; James Wilson, sheriff; William Hall, coroner; Alfred Oliver, county surveyor; Bennett H. Martin, colonel commandant.

Justices of the peace elected on the 7th of November, 1829:

Upper Township—Matthew Moore, James Shadoin.

Big Creek Township—John C. Sumner, George C. Pickett.

Lee's Creek Township—William Black, James Williams.

Richland Township—David H. Carder, Ira Smoote, John Aaron.

Mulberry Township—Thomas Moore Jr., Thomas Moore Sr., James Galbreath.

Horsehead Township—Elijah Wallace, Thomas Fulcher.

Tomlinson Township—Drury Harrington, John Hannon, Josiah Hart.

Lower Township—Thomas Hixon, Charles Wolf, Gilbert Marshall, John Moore.

Crawford county was a year old when the second Territorial legislature was held but she does not seem to be represented until the third which was held from October 6th to the 31st, 1823, when she was represented

by John McLean in the council and by John Hicks in the house of representatives.

In the first state legislature Crawford and Scott were represented in the senate by R. S. C. Brown, and in the house of representatives by John Drennen, John Lauter and A. Morton.

In the first constitutional convention January 4th to 13th, 1836, she was represented by James Woodson Bates, John Drennen and R. S. C. Brown.

If you wish to learn more in regard to the other officers the writer would refer you to any Arkansas secretary of state's report.

When the census of 1825 was taken there were 2,073 persons living in the county, of that number, only 496 were males over 21 years of age.

The census of 1829 gives 2,788 persons in the county, and then in 1830 the southern part of the county was formed into Pope county.

Biographical Sketches of the Early Officers of Crawford County

It is very hard to obtain information in regard to the early officers of this county. No mention has been found of Henry Bradford, except that he was the first clerk of Crawford county, or of Jack Mills, credited in the Secretary of State's report as the first sheriff, except that he died while in office and was succeeded by Mark Bean, who must have been a member of the Bean family that came from Tennessee and settled on Big Mulberry. In all probability he moved with others to Lovely Purchase or county, as mention is made of salt works at the residences of Mark Bean and his brother in Lovely county.

During the Fifth Territorial legislature which met in 1828 and the Sixth which met in 1829, he was the member from Crawford county in the house of representatives.

We must remember that most of the officers at this time lived near Crawford Court House, which at that time was located in a different part, of what is now Franklin county.

There is no date to tell when George C. Pickett became a resident of Crawford but it must have been soon after its organization as he was the second clerk serving from 1823 to 1833.

In those early days a man often held more than one office at the same time, as it was in the case of Mr. Pickett, as he was postmaster at Crawford court house in 1827 and justice of the peace of Big Creek township in 1829. This township was on the south side of the river.

In November or December he was married at the Choctaw agency to Miss Catherine McClellan, daughter of the late Major William McClellan, of the Choctaw agency on the Arkansas.

In 1838 he was once appointed to receive subscriptions for the Fayetteville and Van Buren Turnpike.

He was also in business in Van Buren under the firm name of Pickett and Gregg.

His home was a little over a mile northeast of Van Buren. It was a two-story frame house and stood where the William Flippin home is now. It remained in the family until about 1867 when it was bought by Leonard Southmayd. It is very probable that Pickett Hill derived its name from being a part of the Pickett homestead.

Mr. Pickett died Oct. 18, 1855 and was buried in Fairview Cemetery in the Pickett lot, but there is no stone to mark his grave.

General John Nicks was probably first stationed at Fort Gibson some time prior to 1824 as on August 13 of that year he was married by Rev. W. T. Vaill of the Osage Mission to Miss Sarah Price Perkin, daughter of Elisha Perkin of Bedford county, Virginia.

When Lovely county was opened for settlement he with so many others moved into that country as he is spoken of as being there in 1828. Judge Brown was a remarkable man in many respects, while his education was limited he had a great deal of good common sense. His eccentricities were many and novel. He was regarded as an honorable and upright man holding the confidence and esteem of the people that they were always

glad to honor him as is shown by the different offices he held.

He represented Crawford and Scott counties in the Senate of the first state legislature. In 1837 he was appointed by the governor to be judge of the Sixth Judicial Circuit but declined the honor.

The following is a notice of his marriage: "By Rev. Alvin Mussett on Wednesday the 26th utl, at the residence of Mrs. Eliza C. McClellan." When the Real Estate Bank was established at Van Buren in 1840 he was made one of the directors. Also in that same year the legislature elected him judge of what was then known as the Seventh circuit in which position he served the people for six years with little knowledge of law as a science but great honesty of purpose. While Judge he always called himself "My Honor" either on or off the bench; many amusing anecdotes are told of him while judge.

In 1846 he asked the people to send him to the lower house of the legislature which they did. In 1847 President Polk appointed him Indian agent to the Cherokees which duties he honestly and conscientiously performed. He was removed in 1849 and was succeeded by William Butler of South Carolina. He was interested in the Dwight and Van Buren turnpike company in 1838 and was Major General of the first division of Arkansas Militia in 1838. No record of his death has been found.

List of County Officers from the Formation of the County

Realizing that often much research work has to be done before early history can be obtained, that a secretary of state's report is not always at hand containing the list of county officers and much other state history, the different officers are herewith given:

County Judges

There seems to have been no judge until 1830 when Robert Sinclair became judge and served until 1833 when he was succeeded by James Woodson Bates who served one year; no one appears for 1834-1835. In 1835 James Woodson Bates again became judge and served until 1840 when he was succeeded by R. S. Gibson who served until 1842. Previous to 1836 the term was only one year but

after statehood then the term of office was two years. 1842 until 1844 no name is given. R. P. Pryor served from 1844 to 1846, when another break appears. In 1848 R. P. Pryor is again elected and served four years or until 1852. 1852 to 1854 N. A. Pryor who was succeeded by G. I. Clark, who resigned August 1855 and D. C. Collins took charge of the office but was succeeded by R. C. Hattaway who served until November 1856. At this time the year seems to have begun the first of November. 1856 to 1858 J. W. Sangster, who was followed by W. B. Robinson, who served from 1858 until 1860, then J. A. Wright until 1862 when he was succeeded by R. C. Hattaway, who served until 1864; he was succeeded by James Sangster who served the two years or until 1866 when J. W. Sangster was elected and served until 1868. 1868 until 1872 Joseph Harrell was judge, then another break occurs and in 1874 D. H. Creekmore was elected and served until 1876. He was followed by J. C. Chastain who served the county for two years. In 1878 Mr. Ben Dechard was elected and served until 1880. He was followed by H. B. Hale who served one term 1880 to '82; 1882 to 1884 J. W. Matlock and 1884 to 1886, W. T. Morgan. In 1886 H. B. Hale was again elected and served one term. In 1888 J. W. Littlejohn was elected and served two terms or until 1892; in 1892 Wesley Hinson was elected but resigned during his term of office and J. E. Smith was appointed to fill the unexpired term. In 1894 he was elected judge and served until 1896. J. W. Cain served the county as judge until 1900 when A. T. Cross was elected and served until 1904 when he was succeeded by J. W. Fry who served until 1908. Mr. E. D. Cochrane served until 1912 when he was succeeded by C. A. Starbird who served the county until 1919. John L. Smith was then elected and served until 1923, when he was succeeded by R. S. Wilson.

County Clerks

The first clerk of Crawford county was William Bradford who served from 1821 to '23. He was succeeded by George C. Pickett who served from 1823 to 1833. There was a change in the time of the election and the officers

must have held over as the dates skip from 1827 to 1830. Alexander McLean served from 1833 to 1856, the first three terms was only of one year's duration, after that a term was two years. Mr. McLean was in office longer than any other county officer. At the time of his death in 1859 he was clerk of the Western District Court of the United States. He was succeeded by I. W. Talkington who served two terms or until 1860. Mr. E. A. Scott then became clerk and served until 1868. He was succeeded by George Devilbliss. He resigned in 1870 and Mr. J. A. Lockhart served from August 1870 until 1874 when Mr. E. A. Scott was again elected and served until 1878. Mr. Jonathan Neal then became clerk and served one term. In 1886 Benjamine Deckerd was elected and served two terms. In 1890 H. S. Lewers was elected and served until 1894. He was succeeded by L. W. Black who served until 1898. E. D. Cochrane then served until 1902. He was succeeded by R. B. Winfrey who served until 1906. In 1906 W. V. Boatright was elected and served two terms until 1910 when C. M. Wofford became clerk and served until 1914. In 1914 Wallace Oliver became clerk and served until 1919 when Charles Steele was elected and served until 1921 when J. C. Smalley became clerk and served until 1925 when Hugh Pope became clerk for the coming two years.

Circuit Clerks

The work of the clerk's office becoming so heavy in 1890 a circuit clerk was elected. The first person to hold this office was P. D. Scott who served from 1890 to 1894. W. C. Bostick served from 1894 to 1898. He was succeeded by W. P. Sadler who was in office until 1902. D. W. Moore, Jr. then became the circuit clerk and served until sometime during his second term of office when he resigned and Reynolds Quesenbury was appointed and served until the expiration of that term when he was elected and served until 1910 and was succeeded by Mr. Arthur Hays who served the two terms. He was followed by C. M. Bledsoe who served two terms or until 1919 when he was succeeded by Wallace Oliver who was clerk until 1923 when Mr. W. A. Bushmiaer was elected.

County Sheriffs

The first county sheriff to be appointed was Jack Mills in 1821 who died during office and was succeeded by Mark Beane who filled out the unexpired term. He was then elected and served two years, until 1825. James Wilson became sheriff in 1825 and served until 1832, when he was succeeded by J. H. Brown who served two terms of one year each until 1834. Then R. S. C. Brown served one year, 1835. W. P. Moore served from 1835 to '36. When Arkansas became a state the terms became two years again. Jesse Miller was the first state sheriff and served until 1838. He was followed by J. M. Randolph who was sheriff until 1840; then Eli Bell held the office until 1846 when John Carnall had charge of the office until 1850. S. F. Cottrell was in office six years or until 1856 when he was succeeded by J. M. Brown who served two terms from 1856 to 1860. S. F. Cottrell was again elected and held office from 1860 to 1862 being succeeded by Martin Thomas, who was in office one term. William Sills became sheriff in 1864 and James Allison and E. G. Whitesides held the office respectively from February 1866. Did William Sills die or resign? In 1866 E. G. Whitesides became sheriff and served until 1868 when he was succeeded by W. S. Anderson who was sheriff for one term, 1868 to 1872, when he was succeeded by J. P. Grady who served until 1874, then J. F. Winfrey until 1878. W. L. Taylor was sheriff from 1878 until 1880 when he was succeeded by J. S. H. Houck. Again in 1882 W. L. Taylor held the office for four years until 1886. In 1886 James D. Hawkins took charge of the office serving two terms until 1890, then captain John Steward served until 1894. George R. Wood was sheriff from 1894 until 1896 when he was succeeded by W. B. Pape who was in office until 1898. He was followed by J. H. Branson, who held the office for one term, 1898 to 1900. J. H. Pitcock was the next sheriff and held office from 1900 to 1904 when he was succeeded by W. H. Garrett, who died while in office and D. W. Moore, Jr., was appointed to complete the term. Hugh Miller served from 1906 to 1908 when he was succeeded by Samuel Russell who served one term, 1908 to

1910. Ed Winfrey followed Russell serving only one term 1910 to 1912. J. L. Peters served from 1912 to 1914. J. H. Branson served two terms 1914 to 1919. He was followed by C. M. Bledsoe for two terms, 1919 to 1923. A. D. Maxey was next elected to two terms as sheriff.

County Treasurers

The county had no treasurer until Arkansas became a state in 1836, prior to that time the sheriff had charge of all the county money.

William Hull was the first treasurer serving from 1836 until 1838, he was succeeded by D. P. Collins who served one term. D. L. Looney served from 1840 until 1842, he was succeeded by W. Duval who served one term of office until 1844. V R. Heard was the next treasurer serving one term, then came A. J. Ward who served continually from 1846 until 1860, he was succeeded by George Austin who served two terms of four years, his term ending in 1864 when William L. Meadows held the office for one term, when A. J. Ward was elected and served from 1866 to '68. E. Coleman took charge of the office and served for one year. Whether he died or resigned is not known but he was succeeded by J. S. Shannon who served until 1872, when he was succeeded by M. Kimes who held the office for one term of two years. A. J. Ward again became treasurer and served from 1874 until 1882, making altogether 24 years that he served the county that his fellowmen had confidence in his honesty. In 1882 Mr. Benjamin L. Orrick was elected treasurer and served two terms of two years each, 1882 to '86. W. T. England followed Mr. Orrick and also held the office for two terms, 1886 to 1890 when Mr. D. S. Hollis served until 1892. That year W. A. McCord took charge of the office but dying while in office J. B. Payne was appointed to fill the unexpired term. J. R. Branson was the next treasurer and held the office from 1894 until 1898 when he was succeeded by T. B. Swearingen who was in office two terms; then G. S. Grammar from 1902 until 1906. He was succeeded by E. W. Winfrey for four years, then J. D. Kagy served from 1910 to 1914. He was followed by T. N. McAllister

who held office from 1914 to 1919. Next was Emmett Mayfield who held office from 1919 to 1923. Hugh Miller became treasurer in January 1923.

Coroner

J. C. Summer, the first coroner, was appointed in 1823 and served until 1827 after which Elihu Joy served one term, then D. A. Williams from 1832 until 1835. His first term was for only one year, the other two of two years each. Isaac Shannon was the next coroner holding office from 1835 to '36, one year. The above gentlemen were appointed but after Arkansas became a state the office was filled by election and the term was for two years. Thomas Hazen was first to be elected and served from 1836 to 1838. He was followed by D. I. Looney from 1838 to 1840, then Moses Kahoe for one term 1840 to 1842. He was succeeded by T. A. Booking from 1842 to 1844; then came G. W. Hawkins for one term. He was followed by H.W. Bell from 1846 to 1848; then T. J. Powers filled the office from 1848 to 1850, when D. Dickson became coroner serving one term from 1850 to 1852; then G. R. Bell served two terms from 1852 to 1856. W. I. K. Meadows was the next to serve from 1856 to 1858. He was followed by J. Bentley for two years, 1858 to 1860. Joel Dyer was the next coroner from 1860 to 1862 when William Stovall was elected and served from 1862 to 1864. No one must have served the next two years that is blank; then William Stovall was again elected and served until 1868. He was succeeded by Calvin Phelps for two terms from 1868 until 1872. He was succeeded by J. S. Rainwater, who served from 1872 to 1874. The office was next filled by J. J. Hinson Sr., from 1874 to 1876. H. C. Hayman was the next coroner serving from 1876 until 1878. The next was A. C. Turman serving from 1878 to 1880. From 1880 Sargeant Pernot filled the office and was succeeded by W. W. Brodie from 1882 to 1884, when H. B. Manes filled the office. The next two were J. P. Mack and Jack Williamson, colored, from 1886 until 1890. L. W. Poplin was next, followed by G. R. Michael who served from 1892 to 1894. From 1894 to '96 there was no coroner when Dr. Giles

Lucas was elected and served from 1896 to 1898. He was succeeded by J. L. Dement who served two years being succeeded by Thomas Tribble who held one term, 1900 to 1902. In 1902 Ira Higgs was elected but did not qualify and J. H. McKenney was appointed to serve in his place. In 1904 he was succeeded by T. A. Kuhn, who held the office for one term. From 1906 to 1908 the office was filled by W. L. Shield, the next two years there seems to have been no coroner; in 1910 Ira Higgs took charge of the office and served two terms from 1910 to 1914. H. R. Hollenbeck was the next and served until October, 1917 when S. D. Kirkland was appointed to fill out the unexpired term. He was then elected and served from 1919 to 1925 when Dr. Harry Savery became coroner.

Surveyors

There was no surveyor in the county until 1825 when Alfred Oliver was appointed and served two terms. Whether the terms were longer at this time or a change in the time of holding office as he served from 1825 until 1832. John Harrell was the next in office serving seven terms, from 1832 until 1836, the terms were of one year duration. The other three terms were of two years each, he serving ten years. John Carnall was the next surveyor and served two terms or until 1846. D. Dickson then followed with terms, 1846 to 1850. He was succeeded by E. G. Cador for one term; then D. Dickson again, who served from 1852 to 1854. R. C. Hattaway then held office from 1854 to 1856. Then D. Dickson for two terms from 1856 to 1860. He was followed by H. Bushong, who served from 1860 until 1862. He was succeeded by R. Allen, who served until 1864. Then James Bushong was elected to serve from 1864 to 1866, but resigned sometime during the term. Then R. Allen served again from 1866 to 1868. George Kilgore served until sometime in 1871 when he was succeeded by M. Kelleher who served out the unexpired term. J. S. Chastain served one term from 1872 to 1874; D. Dickson was the next surveyor and served seven terms or from 1874 until 1888. H. B. Hale was the next surveyor, serving one term, then from 1890 until 1892

A. J. Rife held the office. W. R. Burns was the next in office serving three terms from 1892 to 1898. He was followed by J. S. Slaven who held office from 1898 until 1910. The next two terms C. D. Painter was in office. From 1914 to 1916 there was no county surveyor. W. R. Bell went into office in 1916 and served until January 1917 when C. F. Snyder was appointed to fill the unexpired term. From 1919 until 1923, the county had no surveyor. In 1923 C. F. Snyder again became county surveyor.

Assessors

The county had no assessor until 1862 when D. Dickson was elected to the office and served one term. He was succeeded by Hiram Brodie who served from 1864 until 1868. He was succeeded by M. W. Warden who held office from 1869 until March 1871, when he was succeeded by T. G. Singleton who completed the term. He was succeeded by George Gross who served from 1872 until 1878, then J. B. Vinsant, (should it be I. instead of J?) who served from 1878 to 1882. He was followed by J. Q. West for two terms. From 1886 until 1890 the office was held by R. B. Winfrey who was succeeded by C. O. Adams for one term. E. T. Reed held the office from 1892 until 1894, when he was succeeded by W. A. Bushmiaer for one term from 1894 to 1896, who was followed by W. H. Peters who served from 1896 to 1900; then W. A. Cole filled the office for two terms until 1904. He was succeeded by H. G. Miller from 1904 until 1906. E. C. Mayfield served from 1906 until 1910 when he was succeeded by G. W. Fine for two terms. Ed Deffenbaugh held office from 1914 to 1919; he was followed by R. R. Vaught for one term. In 1921 Carl Boatright became assessor and served until 1925 when Ed Deffenbaugh went into office.

County Superintendents

In 1910 a county superintendent was elected and T. F. Wasson filled the office for three terms resigning during his third term when W. H. Shaffer was appointed and served until 1921 when J. P. Bingham became county superintendent.

County Officers Since 1923

A list of the constitutional officers of Crawford county since the compilation of the above lists was arranged by Henry Batchelor, county clerk, according to the records in the county clerk's office. The list follows:

Sheriff: J. Branson, 1923-1927; A. D. Maxey, 1927-1931; W. A. Bushmiaer, Jr., 1931-1935; Fred Long, 1935-1939; Fred Patton, 1939-1943; A. D. Maxey, 1943-1945; Ed Sloan, 1945-1949; L. C. Moore, 1949-1951.

County Judge: R. S. Wilson, 1923-1927; George Stockard, 1927-1929; J. C. Smalley, 1929-1937; E. B. Ward, 1937-1943; S. M. Denniston, 1943-1951.

County Clerk: Hugh Pope, 1925-1929; J. J. Simmons, 1929-1933; W. C. Hunter, 1933-1937; T. L. Delzell, 1937-1941; Norman Cox, 1941-1947; Henry Batchelor, 1947-1951.

Circuit Clerk: W. A. Bushmiaer, 1925-1931; W. H. Burrough, 1931-1935; Homer Mitchell, 1935-1939; John Burrough, 1939-1949; Robert Hendron, 1949-1951.

Assessor: Ed Deffenbaugh, 1924-1928; Fred Patton, 1928-1932; Tom Meek, 1932-1936; Ed Sloan, 1936-1940; Percy Bradley, 1940-1944; C. E. Bushmiaer, 1944-1950.

Treasurer: Hugh Miller, 1923-1934; Virgil Marvin, 1934-1940; Ray Robinson, 1940-1944; Ed Deffenbaugh, 1944-1950.

The county records are not complete and there is no record of those who served as coroner, surveyor and superintendent since 1923.