

Three Rivers Historian

Spring 2014

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We've Always Waved Ol' Glory

In the early summer of 1898, the possibility of war was the topic of conversation on the streets of Muskogee. Patriotic fervor was running high, and



most folks were wearing red, white and blue ribbons on their lapels. The United States had been attacked in the form of the sinking of the *USS Maine* in a Cuban harbor. A swift response to this attack was being urged on every side and was much discussed by Muskogee citizens.

Then one day, a notice appeared on the front door to the post office, standing out starkly from the notice of lost pets and items for sale. Men were being sought for enlistment in the First U.S. Volunteer Cavalry and a recruiting officer would soon arrive in Muskogee. Two troops would be enlisted from Indian Territory as well as troops from Oklahoma, Arizona and New Mexico Territories.

Captain Allyn K. Capron arrived in Muskogee shortly after the notice went up. A recruiting office was hastily set up in a vacated building and a long line of volunteers formed at the door. Men over 60 who had seen action in the Civil War and boys too young to go were among the willing.

Captain Capron weeded through the many applicants and chose the best that he felt Indian Territory had to offer. Many of the recruits were from Muskogee, but Vinita, Pryor, McAlester and other area towns also contributed soldiers to the cause. Captain Capron declared he had never seen such good material for soldiers and he would gladly serve as their commander.

Among the new recruits was a young Choctaw man named Milo Hendricks. He was attending Henry Kendall College with plans to graduate in 1901. He was a popular and well-known fellow for he participated in athletics at the college and sang with the Kendall Quartette. His college sweetheart was Suky Starr, a granddaughter of notorious Cherokee Tom Starr. Hendricks had a bright future ahead of him, one that he would put on hold while he served his country in Cuba.

Muskogee citizens were determined to support the troops and give them a good sendoff. Dozens of suppers and rallies were held in their honor. An impromptu banquet was held at the fairgrounds, with tables loaded with food, stirring speeches given by dignitaries and music provided by a band and local glee club.

continued on page 13

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Paul Henry Carr: Checotah's Hero

Paul Henry Carr was born in Checotah, Oklahoma on February 13, 1924 and died October 25, 1944, in the Battle off Samar in Leyte Gulf. While Paul was growing up, his family made their living by sharecropping in the Webbers Falls area.

He attended school in Checotah and graduated after receiving honorable mention as an All-State Senior center on the football team. His letter jacket is being restored and

will be displayed in the exhibit being updated and to be installed at the Katy Depot Center in Checotah. Paul loved to play the guitar and torment his eight sisters.

The Battle off Samar has been considered one of the largest naval battles in history. The purpose was for the Allied troops, naval, ground and air, to free the Philippines from Japanese control. The American ships in that area were inadequately equipped to take the onslaught of the larger Japanese vessels headed their way.

There were several destroyer escorts and other "light" ships, which gained them the name "tin cans." The book and movie, "The Last Stand of the Tin Can Sailors" was written and dedicated to these ships and the courageous men who manned them. Statistics tell us that during the entire Battle off Samar, there were 12,500 deaths.



Paul Carr was a Gunners Mate 3rd Class on the *USS Samuel B. Roberts*, under the leadership of Commander Robert Copeland. During the last hours before the battle, Copeland announced over the public address system on the ship, “This will be a fight against overwhelming odds, from which survival cannot be expected. We will do what damage we can.”

During the relentless shelling, Carr’s gun mount lost electrical power, however, Carr and his crew manually operated the 5” gun firing 324 rounds of the 325 rounds available, but the mount overheated and exploded, killing or mortally wounding the crew.

A member of the repair party, entering the gun mount found the gun captain, Carr, who was mortally wounded, torn open from the neck to the groin, still trying to manually load the last 54-pound projectile.

This is only one example of the unfathomable courage of our US sailors. Because of his devotion to duty and his courage during this battle, the Navy posthumously awarded him the Silver Star and commissioned a guided missile frigate bearing his name. The keel of the *USS Paul Henry Carr* was laid March 26, 1982. It was christened February 26, 1983, commissioned July 27, 1985 and decommissioned March 13, 2013.

During its twenty-eight years of service, the *USS Carr* was involved in operations in the Persian Gulf and antisubmarine exercises. It rescued several stranded ships, participated in Operation Enduring Freedom and on two separate occasions intercepted “drug” ships, confiscating cocaine with a total street value of over \$50 million dollars.

The latter part of its service was spent in good will missions throughout the world, including Spain, Costa Rica and Russia, just to mention a few.

—*Paulette Lorsbach*

Paul Henry Carr Memorial

On July 4, 1989, a statue of Paul Carr was unveiled at the Katy Depot Center in Checotah by a survivor from the *USS Samuel B. Roberts*. Subsequently, a small display on Carr's life was installed in the depot. In order to maintain the display and inspire patriotism, the Carr family formed a not-for-profit foundation to fund this project.

The exhibit is designed to describe how the Carr family as sharecroppers lived, showing some of the tools they used for farming, the household "appliances" available for ironing their clothing, separating milk to make their own butter, etc.

The exhibit also tells the story of the Battle of Leyte Gulf, which includes a touch screen television with information not only for that battle, but for many of the major events of World War II.

★★★
★ Governor George Nigh declared ★
★ February 26, 1983 to be Paul Hen-★
★ ry Carr Day in Oklahoma. ★
★ ★★

Governor George Nigh declared February 26, 1983 to be Paul Henry Carr Day. Paul Carr was one of the thousands of heroes who have served our country, given their lives or endured mental and physical battle scars for the rest of their lives.

The stories that emerge tell of unparalleled heroism during the Battle off Samar, ground battles all over Europe, and the hideous treatment of our prisoners of war. The scenarios portray the enormity of the service of our military personnel, as they continued to serve our country over the decades in countries and dangerous situations all over the world.

The Paul Henry Carr Memorial Foundation extends a warm welcome for the dedication of the updated exhibit at the Katy Depot Center in Checotah on June 7, 2014 at 10:00 a.m. For more information or to make a monetary contribution, please contact Nancy Milam, president 918-459-0853, Mike Rush, executive director 405-833-0780 or Paulette Lorschbach 918-687-8887.

Major Jack Davis, War Hero

Davis Field south of Muskogee is named for Major Jack C. Davis. He was a fighter at heart. This character trait emerged following his graduation from Central High School in 1931.

After spending a year in junior college, Jack wanted to leave school. He found that the Great Depression dried up most employment opportunities. With few job openings available, he joined the United States Marine Corps and served four years.

Following his discharge, he attended the Chicago Academy of Fine Arts briefly. But war clouds were billowing in Europe.



Support the Paul Henry Carr Memorial Foundation

Your support of the Carr Memorial is needed.

To make a monetary contribution in honor of this Oklahoma hero, please contact:

Nancy Milam, President 918-459-0853

Mike Rush, Executive Director 405-833-0780

Paulette Lorsbach 918-687-8887

Jack re-entered the military by joining the US Army early in 1940. He chose to become a pilot and passed both required entrance examinations. He then completed his primary flight training at Glendale, California. Next he received advanced flight training at Randolph and Kelly Fields outside of San Antonio, Texas.

During this period he came back to Muskogee and married Catherine Clonts on August 28, 1940. He was 27 years old. Five weeks later he was commissioned at Kelly Field. He received further training in Orlando, Florida, at the Fighter Command School.

He sailed across the Atlantic for his first tour of combat in the summer of 1942. He was assigned to temporary duty with the British to fill the latter's shortage of pilots. Davis flew the twin-engine British Beaufort fighter.

He nicknamed this fighter the "Muskogee Rebel" after his father's southern heritage and his home town. In his seven months of combat he shot down one German plane.

During this period he was in command of fighters who fought at night over England and the English Channel. The Germans attacked at night because they found daylight raids too costly in lost aircraft and crew.

Captain Davis also escorted bombers to targets in France and Germany in daylight raids. He served with the British, while still in the American Eighth Army Air Force, from September, 1942 through the following March.

He was promoted to Major on April 1 and returned to the States. Following his return he was assigned to the Material Command of the US Army. Stationed in Washington, D.C., he worked to improve new fighter planes. Sixteen months of ironing out bugs was all he could stand. Determined to return to combat, Major Davis requested reassignment to a unit going overseas.

Jack Davis shipped from the United States with the first squadron of A-26's sent to the Pacific Theater. The A-26 Invader was a twin-engine plane that had only one pilot. It entered combat in January, 1945. Major Davis participated in the first A-26 bombing of Kyushu Island, Japan, in early July.

He was not a desk pilot. By the end of the month, Major Davis was part of the 500th Squadron of the 345th Bombardment Group. While the 500th was stationed on Ie Shima (after July 25), Major Davis was flying the B-25 Mitchell medium attack bomber.

Because Gen. Douglas McArthur was a proponent of low-level bombing, the Mitchell was used to attack Japanese shipping. Two B-25's simultaneously attacks a warship or merchantman vessel. The higher plane strafed the vessel to prevent return fire. The lower B-25 flew just above the water on a bombing run. Its bombs would skip across the ocean's surface into the side of the ship.

Even though the second of the American nuclear bombs exploded over Nagasaki on August 9, the war continued without letup. On August 12, B-25's sunk or damaged several small Japanese merchant vessels in the Sea of Japan near Kyushu Island.

Of the 24-plane formation that went out that day, two Mitchells did not return. Major Davis' plane was one of the two. Forty-eight hours later, Japan surrendered.

The VFW plaque in the Davis Field office was presented in 1948. It attests to the high regard Muskogee citizens reserved for Major Jack Davis. During the ceremonies, he was referred to as a "hero."

— *Wally Waits*

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- Quarters and Halves
- Morgan, Peace, Trade and Seated Dollars



Misc.

- Maps
- Pre-Statehood Cancelled Bank Checks
- Paperwork & artifacts of the Cherokee, Choctaw and Creek Nations

“Old Rough and Ready” Earned Experience On the Western Frontier of the Three Forks

General Zachary Taylor was appointed commander at Fort Gibson in 1841. The fort’s long-standing problem with diseases had prompted some to call for the abandonment of Fort Gibson, but the troubles brewing in Texas in the late 1830s had stirred up rumors of tribal unrest.

Mexico was promising Indians in Texas and Indian Territory money and land if they would side with Mexico against the Americans seeking Texas independence. Fort Gibson was seen as vital to keeping the tribes from entering into the fray.

By the time General Zachary Taylor assumed command at Fort Gibson, he had gained a reputation as an Indian fighter with nearly 40 years of service in the military at posts all along the western frontier.

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★ *Under Taylor’s command at Fort Gibson,* ★ Though his military
★ *peace was, for the most part, successfully* ★ service often re-
★ *maintained among the Indians.* ★ quired him to battle
★ ★ Indians, he also
★ ★ protected them
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★ from invading set-

tlers. Taylor believed the best way to keep peace between Indians and the American settler was to maintain a strong military presence. He brought this view to Fort Gibson and under his command there, peace was, for the most part, successfully maintained.

In 1844 Taylor was ordered to Fort Jessup, Louisiana as tensions were mounting between Mexico and the United States over disputed land along the southern border. He was ordered to have his command ready to move toward Mexico as the annexation of Texas proceeded. In January, 1846, Taylor advanced toward the Rio Grande with a force of 6,000 men.

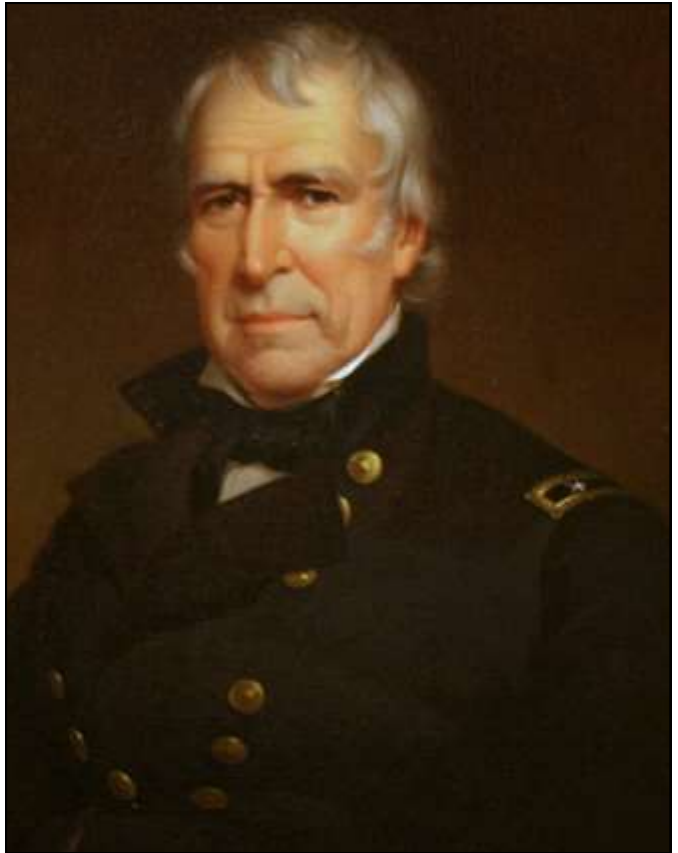
After winning two decisive encounters , Taylor triumphed

despite overwhelming odds in a battle against the Mexican general Santa Anna at Buena Vista. His command had defeated a Mexican force of 20,000, and Zachary Taylor – nicknamed Old Rough and Ready – became a national hero.

Taylor had never expressed any political preferences or ambitions, but following his victory in Mexico, organizations formed quickly to nominate him for President. He was elected in 1848.

In February 1850 President Taylor held a conference with southern leaders who were threatening secession. He told them that if it became necessary to preserve the United States, he personally would lead the military and he would hang anyone "taken in rebellion against the Union." He never wavered from this position and talk of secession quieted while Taylor remained in office.

In July 1850, Taylor contracted a stomach ailment that may



President Zachary Taylor in military uniform

have been cholera. He died on July 9, and more than 100,000 people lined the funeral route to view their hero. His untimely death lessened his lasting impact on national politics and meant he would be unable to play a further role in preventing the Civil War.

President Taylor lived only briefly at the Three Forks of Oklahoma, but his “rough and ready” philosophy made an impact on America for peace. From living among the Five Civilized Tribes of the western frontier to residing in the White House in Washington he was a soldier who knew an unwavering strength was a great peacemaker.

Your Ad Here

To help us cover printing costs, The Historian is offering this ad space to museum members. We will be pleased to help promote your business, special upcoming event or cause. Contact the museum at 918-686-6624 or Historian editor Jonita Mullins at 918-682-0312 for more information on placing an ad. Our rates are quite reasonable and The Historian reaches all museum members and visitors. Let’s work together to promote your business and ours!



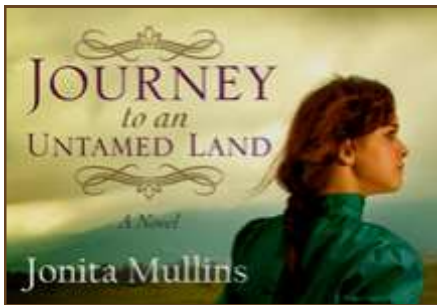
Young ladies of the town handed out flowers and mothers made sure all the young men had a New Testament to carry with them into battle.

Finally it was time to embark on their mission. The recruits of Troops L and M met at the Katy Depot and it seemed like all of Muskogee turned out to see them off. Before the volunteers loaded onto the train that would carry them to San Antonio, they formed a long line, raised their right hands and pledged to defend their country with courage and honor.

The Spanish-American War was a quick victory for the United States and the troops from Muskogee were in the thick of its few battles, having gained the nickname of the Rough Riders. Indian Territory distinguished itself by having the only troops without a single desertion during this brief war.

Within a few months the soldiers were returning home, many sick from malaria and other fevers contracted in the tropical climate. Milo Hendricks did not return home. He was killed at the battle for San Juan Hill. He was not the first, nor the last of Oklahoma's veterans to give all for love of country. We have always waved ol' glory around here.

— *Jonita Mullins*



Read the story of the first schoolteacher to journey westward and teach among the Osages in Indian Territory. Experience life on the frontier with this teacher's story.

Available now at the
Whistlestop Gift Shop!

Upcoming Events at Three Rivers Museum

History Explorers in Pursuit of Cherokee Bill

Saturday, April 26

9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Bus tour leaves from Three Rivers Museum . Seating is limited to 36. Reservations are required.

Railroad Day

Saturday, May 3

10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Young and old alike will enjoy model train layouts and railroad exhibits throughout the museum, and a guided tour of the 1940's era switch engine with a view from the engineer's perspective. Admission is free.

Historic Homes & Buildings Tour

Saturday, June 7

10:00 a.m. to 4:p.m.

Tour some of Muskogee's beautiful historic buildings.

Coffee House Night

Saturday, June 14

7:00 p.m.

The Vintage Wildflowers will perform on the museum's back dock. Bring your lawn chairs and tents if you wish.

Refreshments will be served.

Working Women of WWI

Most Americans know that "Rosie the Riveter" worked during the Second World War. Less well known is the story of the mothers of these workers. This story is about the women



who took on work during the First World War to free men for another war effort.

Women have always worked outside of the home in such occupations as store clerks, school-teachers and nurses or mid-wives. Women did not normally work in many other occupations until a need arose. Just as the Civil War forced many women into heavy farm work because husbands, sons and fathers

were in military service, Rosie's mother moved into similar jobs during World War I.

This war brought America to its feet. Doughboys were the GIs of the First World War. Over one million doughboys shipped from American ports for service in France by the war's end. More than twice as many went overseas in military service while America fielded a military force of nearly five million men. Months earlier, these soldiers were working on farms and in factories.

To fill the shoes and boots of servicemen, women began working in non-traditional jobs. One example is Miss Jennie

Weatherford who became the first woman automobile mechanic in Muskogee. She worked at the Muskogee Garage. She wore "bloomers" while she worked and reportedly "left her facial powder at home" in March 1918.

Just as Miss Weatherford worked as a grease monkey, the federal government promoted hiring women. Government altered

★★★ its policy so that
★ women became
★ *The federal government promoted hiring* ★ eligible for jobs as
★ *women, even altering its policy so that wom-* ★ rural mail carriers
★ *en became eligible for jobs* ★ in 1918. It was the
★ *as rural mail carriers.* ★ first time since
★★★
1911 that women could apply for these jobs. The Post Office held the first examination for them on April 27.

Miss Stella Pierce of Braggs was the first woman in Oklahoma to pass the examination. She received her appointment as a mail carrier for a rural route in late July. Born about 1900, she was the daughter of Mrs. Charles Pierce. Soon after the end of the war, she became a stenographer with a hardware firm in Muskogee.

Even the railroads employed women in traditional male occupations. Railroads played a major role in shipping of men and material during the war. The US Army focused its recruitment on railroad men for active service. In filling their boots, the local newspaper reported that women worked in railroad roundhouses and in the railroad blacksmith shops.

Before the First World War, women rarely worked in these railroad departments. Supervisors reported the work performed by women to be satisfactory after the war ended.

Despite their successful work record, returning soldiers replaced many women workers. The balance of women working
continued on page 19

Call for Articles

The Three Rivers Historian welcomes articles about the history of the Three Forks region of Oklahoma covering Cherokee, Mayes, McIntosh, Muskogee, Okmulgee, Sequoyah, and Wagoner Counties.

Please submit articles of 750 to 3,000 words in length to The Historian, 220 Elgin Ave., Muskogee, OK 74401 or by e-mail to 3riversmuseum@sbcglobal.net.

From Our Archives



This collection of both World War I and World War II era military memorabilia was donated to Three Rivers Museum by Paul H. Kapp.

The museum has received numerous donations of military items including uniforms, buttons, ribbons, patches and

medals from all branches of service.

We Need Your Support

Last year, Three Rivers Museum took possession of the Oak Grove Schoolhouse after it was moved from its historic location near Wybark in Wagoner County. This African-American, one-room school was donated to the museum by Mark and Mitzi Bowser.

Museum staff and volunteers will restore the school and develop a teaching curriculum for students.

This effort will require funds above the normal costs associated with the museum and donations are needed.

Visit 3riversmuseum.com to learn more about making a donation to the Oak Grove School Restoration. For a minimum gift of \$50, you will receive a commemorative brick to be placed in a walkway to the school. Your gift is tax deductible.



Sadler Arts Academy students help with cleanup around the Oak Grove School.



The exterior of the building will require paint, new windows, a porch and steps.

outside of home returned to pre-war levels until daughters named "Rosie" were called to serve during the next World War of the 1940s.

Here is a ditty that chronicled these changing times:

Women for the railroads,
Women for the farms,
Women for the duties
of bouncer and gendarme.
Baggage smashing women,
Trucks to load and shove,
There'll be women soon for everything,
Except a girl to love.

— *Wally Waits*



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several old postcards for sale.

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