

Relic of Days When Only Outlaws and Indians Roamed Tulsa-Osage Counties Is Hillside Mission, Near Skiatook

An old palatial structure, built in 1886, that stands on a hillside, five miles north of Skiatook, two large acres in this building, and a complete burial ground in which are buried noted Cherokee Indian characters and the relatives of white pioneers, is one of the most interesting of all the long struggles of the white man in his attempt to educate and civilize the red man.

History of the Abbotts.
The history of the "Mission," as the establishment is popularly known, is not complete without personal mention of S. M. Abbott, superintendent of Hillside mission.

Abbott came to Oklahoma in 1880, settled on a farm on Tiger creek, about 10 miles north of Skiatook, or five miles north of the mission. Here he farmed and became engaged in the cattle business. He got on well with the Indians, and eventually inherited this tract from his father, whose experience with Indians is remarkable.

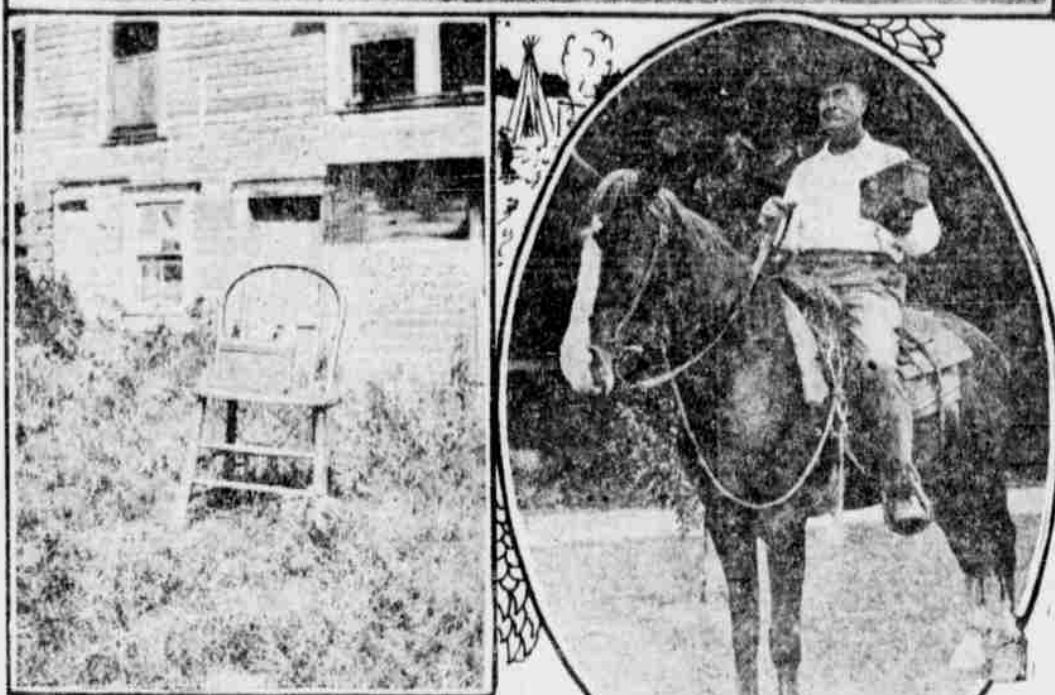
When seven years of age the older Abbott was the pet of an old Delaware Indian doctor. The Abbotts then lived in Pennsylvania. This particular doctor made a specialty of removing cancers. He became the boy's pal and when the Indians decided to move farther west, the boy expressed the wish to accompany the tribe. He was taken from the old medicine man's premises, however, that the doctor must accompany him. His last home should be with the tribe. This was agreed to by the Delaware.

After seven years with the Indians, the boy longed to see his parents and the old home. True to his promise, the Indian accompanied him, not to his home, but a point within sight of his home, because he feared the words of an old medicine man who for years had thought that her son had been murdered by the Indians. The boy went to school, but soon quit. He longed for Indian association. He became an Indian trader, and with his "carry-all" pulled by four horses he traded goods to the Indians for furs. He was well known among the Indians, and spoke four different Indian languages.

On one trading tour the elder Abbott fell in with a tribe that had considerable gold. S. M. Abbott has a little tin in his pocket in which he says his father carried his money and on this particular trip he returned with the trunk full of gold. The trunk is nine inches long, four inches wide, and one inch deep.

Deed Signed by Monroe.
Today, in this same little worn tin box, Abbott has a deed to a revolutionary soldier by the name of Boynton for 160 acres of land in Illinois for service rendered in the war for independence. This deed is on sure real-estate paper and the signature of James Monroe, then president of the United States, is clear even unto this day. People did not give abstracts in those days, but transferred all the prior deeds to the new owner. When the elder Abbott purchased the land from Boynton, this historical deed came into his possession and has been in the archives of the Abbott family for over one hundred years. There is doubtless not another similar deed in this state, possibly not one in the whole southwest. It is recently treasured by Abbott and is kept securely in the little historical tin trunk. President Monroe signed this document with his own hand. There were very few assistants to the president in those days, and the quantity of executive business was very small as compared with that of today—there were no railroads and strikes.

As was said, this deed was signed by President Monroe's own hand. It is a deed to a former revolutionary



The above is a picture of Hillside Friends school in the year 1906-07. In this group of pupils are many who still live around Skiatook and in eastern Oklahoma. The principal is D. W. Lawrence. The school dates back to the early eighties when the school was founded by the Friends of Philadelphia to convert and educate the Indians.

S. M. Abbott and his famous horse, "Lightning," Abbott is 72 years old but he still rides the saddle in which he has spent the most of his life. Coming to Oklahoma in 1880, he knows the real pioneer hardships of the early settlers. In his left hand can be seen a miniature tin trunk. This trunk has been in the Abbott family for over one hundred years. In it is a deed signed by President Monroe himself and bears the date of 1818. The deed is to 160 acres of land in Illinois, given by the government to army captain Boynton in return for his military service.

The above is a view of the Old Hillside mission. The lumber in this historic structure was freighted from Coffeyville, Kan., in the early eighties, four years before Tulsa was even dreamed of. This building, with the four acres upon which it stands, was formerly a school and mission, established by the Friends Society of Philadelphia. This society purchased the land from the government in the days prior to the war in which Lincoln served as a lieutenant in the Black Hawk war—the war in which Lincoln served as a private, in which he smelled powder and in which he testily remarked that he fought, bled and died for his country. Abbott also has a bullet moulder that was carried by the Indians. This moulder is a remarkable Indian relic. It is

foundry have at last found their way into the heart of buffalo, beasts of the forest, more other Indian or white man? These relics are treasured by Abbott and are kept by him in an old desk in one of the mummy rooms in the oldest section of that ancient, rocky structure, the shrine of many pilgrims today known as "Hillside Mission."

Abbott's father knew Black Hawk, the proud chief of the Black Hawks

missionary had conferred upon him the vision in the minds of the Indians, that the first steamboat, "The Little Jack Traveller," came up the river. The Indians saw it breathe forth smoke and fire, and heard it whistle. To them, this was the very devil against which the missionary had warned them. A great hush followed. The Indians accompanied and returned a long time afterwards very cautiously.

Indian Skin for Razor Strip.
Selmon Abbott, the soldier fought in the War of 1812. He was born in 1791. In this war the feeling was indeed very bitter against the Indians. Harrison was famous for his son him to the White House. Abbott added a quota of scalps to his belt. In this battle a major by the name of Hackett, who had suffered much at the hands of the Indians, committed a atrocious deed. He was attacked by an Indian who fought with a spear and a knife in his hand. He killed the Indian. He then took his knife and cut a strip of hide off the Indian's back and sent it to his wife with a message to her to use it as a razor strip. He stated that he never saw anything like it for putting an edge on a razor.

Conditions Against Schools.
In the early days of the pioneer civilization, before the Indian allotment policy was adopted by the government there was little incentive to build churches and school houses, as the white people were very few. The Indian country was too poor to build its own schools, and there were not many white children in the land. Hence, the only practical plan was to establish a school for the Indian children, convert and educate them. It took religious zeal to generate enthusiasm that would cause people in Pennsylvania to contribute money with which to found a mission in the Indian territory. But an instance of such enthusiasm for an instance of this kind was manifested by the Friends Society of Philadelphia and resulted in the founding of Hillside Mission. This old landmark is a testimony to the religious zeal and educational ideas of the successors of William Penn, who got on with the Indians and treated them kindly in the region of the city of brotherly love. This good fellowship of colonial days was reproduced in the early eighties at the old Hillside Mission.

About Superintendent Abbott.
Superintendent S. M. Abbott of Hillside cemetery, has been connected with the cemetery for many years. He is of the fast disappearing early day type—a pioneer in whose mind are recorded events within the memory of few men now living. He knew the men who built the first primitive huts of logs from the forest, who hauled lumber for later buildings from Coffeyville, Kan. He saw the mission grow in the wilderness until it developed into the massive structure that by its very size today tells of its power and its influence for good in those early days. He also saw the mission decline, seemingly strange, with the coming of civilization that it fostered. He saw the creation of school districts and the construction of school buildings from public taxation. He heard Lincoln debate with Douglas and saw some resemblance between "Honest Abe" and John Murdock, the pioneer founder of Hillside Mission.

Abbott, who saw the mission at its

ception under the trees near Bird creek north of Skiatook, who saw the mission in its log huts on the same spot and who saw it moved to the site of the big hill, tells a story that reads like a chapter in the history of the pioneers who invaded the old pioneer northwest with broad axes and flint rock rifles. It relates the coming of John Murdock sent out by the Friends Society of Philadelphia, in these interesting words:

"In the year 1881," he begins, "a man by the name of John Murdock, a traveling missionary, was sent here from the Friends Society of Philadelphia. Like William Penn, he held a few meetings in the grove and immediately had considerable success. There were scarcely any white people at that time but all the mixed bloods and most of the full-blooded Indians understood and talked some English."

Builds Backwoods Church.
"Murdock proposed to build a permanent church. The few who gathered to hear him acquiesced in the proposal to erect a house of worship. The forest was the only source of building material and he shouldered his bow and arrow and marched like a hero into the primitive forest, followed closely by his faithful, right-hand followers. They felled the trees and Murdock hewed the logs. A

fine set was soon hewed, ready to haul out and raise. This they did in a very short time. Then they felled a huge oak, rived clap-boards and covered the church. In this time they mixed sand and plastered the cracks with the mixture. After a time they split pinecones and made a door and laid a floor.

Time and Sand Chink Cracks.
"This structure answered well for the summer time, but as winter drew near those devoted worshippers found it necessary to chink the cracks. A log-rolling was held, and in the log a kiln of time was burned. With this time they mixed sand and plastered the cracks with the mixture. This building was raised on what is known as the Vance place on Bird creek, near where Andy Danville has lived for some time."

"When the church was completed, the Friends, under Murdock's leadership, proceeded to build a parsonage. They erected it in much the same way as they had the church, but did not build it alongside the church as is done so often today, but located it close to where Henry Doshazer now lives; in fact, about half way between where Doshazer's house and here now stand."

Murdock made a fair showing of converts, mostly children. He made out a report and sent it to the association at Philadelphia, with a request for funds with which to build a better school building. The funds were promptly sent.

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Freight Lumber From Coffeyville.
"In the spring of 1884, Murdock called together the following faithful followers: William Lloyd, Bill Cannon, Bill Stevens and a man by the name of Gallinger. They hauled lumber from Coffeyville, Kan., this being the nearest railroad point where lumber could be secured. It took five days to make the trip and sometimes when Casey river was high it took two weeks or more before they could ford the stream."

The present site of Hillside Mission was selected for the school. The south side of the mission was built. A substantial frame church house was also constructed about 80 feet west of the present house. Monuments were not so bad on this high location and moreover they could be screened out of the frame building, while they swarmed through the cracks of the log houses.

White People Come.
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