

INDEX CARDS

Miami.

Jintown

Agencies--Quapaw

## CITY'S NAME CAME WITH EARLY MAIL

By Herbert F. Dixon

When some of Miami's early settlers walked into the palatial new federal building to get the first mail service through bright modern fixtures set in marble paneling, they recalled the early day mail service of 1890 and the story of how this city got its name.

Miami at first was located where North Miami now stands. There lived in that vicinity four farmers whose first names were Jim. Jim Palmer, whose old farm is now the Midway dairy, Jim Porter, Jim Newman and Jim Moore.

There was a racetrack there, where fast horses could be tried any time, and frequently there were holiday gatherings and real races on the track.

## KNOWN AS "JIMTOWN"

The community was known as "Jimtown" because of the four Jims, and was a widely known and popular stopping place for travelers going between the rail head at Baxter Springs, Kas., and Vinita, and points southwest. The town of Miami did not then exist.

But there was mail for the families of Jimtown and other scattered ranches in what is now Ottawa county, and a distribution point closer than Baxter Springs was needed.

So it was that in 1890 J. L. V. Summers, then Quapaw Indian agent located two and one-half miles west of Seneca, made an agreement with Palmer at Jintown to drive across the prairie to Baxter Springs for the mail twice a week. Summers was then the sole representative of the government in this area and made the mail arrangements.

#### QUEST FOR NAME BEGAN

"We should have a name for the new postoffice here," Summers told Palmer, and the two of them began thinking of what the new mail distribution point should be called. They never seriously considered Jintown as a name, although that was generally used to designate the community in which Palmer lived.

Finally Summers suggested that the new town be named "Miami" in honor of Jim Palmer's wife, who is one of the few surviving members of the Miami tribe of Indians. As Indian agent, Summers was anxious to have as many of the Indian tribal names as possible preserved as townsite names.

#### SO MIAMI CAME INTO BEING

and so Miami came to be, and Jim Palmer began making twice-a-week trips to Baxter Springs for mail in a two-wheeled rig.

p.3

He was handed the "Miami" mail sack on the first trip by Colonel March at Baxter Springs, postmaster there for years in the early days. Ranchers went to Palmer's house for their mail.

But still Miami was three miles north of its present site and stayed there for more than a year.

Finally a townsite company was organized with Col. D. C. Lykins as president, and the work of promoting a town where Miami now stands on the banks of the Neosho river was begun. First lots were sold in 1891.

O. J. Nichols, superintendent of the townsite company, began receiving lots of mail from prospective buyers and he drove out to Jim Palmer's house twice a week to get the mail.

#### LASTING MEMORIAL TO TRIBE

The situation finally became such that the townsite company and its members were receiving about 95 percent of the mail and Nichols one day offered to relieve Palmer of his twice-a-week trip and go to Baxter Springs for the mail himself. Palmer agreed, although there was never any formal order for change in mail custodians, and Nichols began going for the mail, taking it to the townsite, where ranchers came for the mail.

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