

Chapter 11

Boomers and Sooners



In this chapter:

- ❖ *The federal government will begin the dismantling of the Indian Nations and allotting land to every individual.*
- ❖ *The Boomer Movement will provoke the sale and opening of The Unassigned Lands.*
- ❖ *The western plains and the Panhandle will be organized as Oklahoma Territory, and the reservations will be broken up and given to settlers through land runs and lotteries.*

Section 1: Dissolving the Indian Nations

INDIAN LAND FOR SALE

GET A HOME
OF
YOUR OWN
EASY PAYMENTS



PERFECT TITLE
POSSESSION
WITHIN
THIRTY DAYS

This is a historical poster with a background of the American flag. The title 'INDIAN LAND FOR SALE' is at the top. On the left, the text reads 'GET A HOME OF YOUR OWN EASY PAYMENTS'. In the center is a black and white portrait of a Native American man. On the right, the text reads 'PERFECT TITLE POSSESSION WITHIN THIRTY DAYS'.

Many people believed it was in the Indians' best interest to give tribal-held lands to individuals.

In 1887, Congress passed the Dawes Severalty Act.

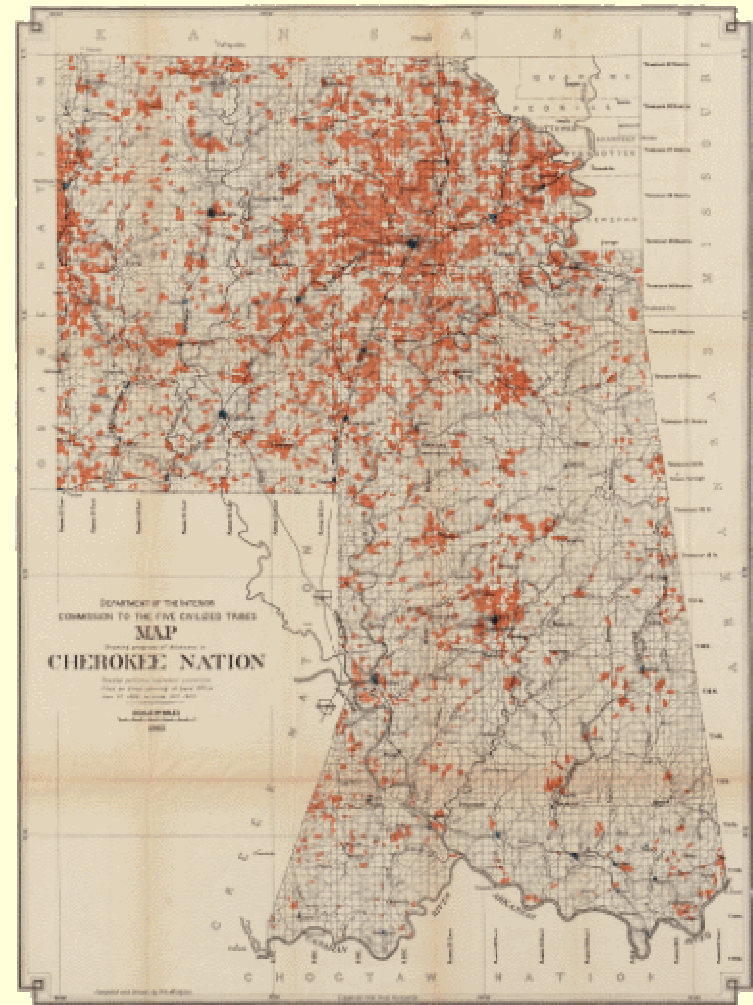
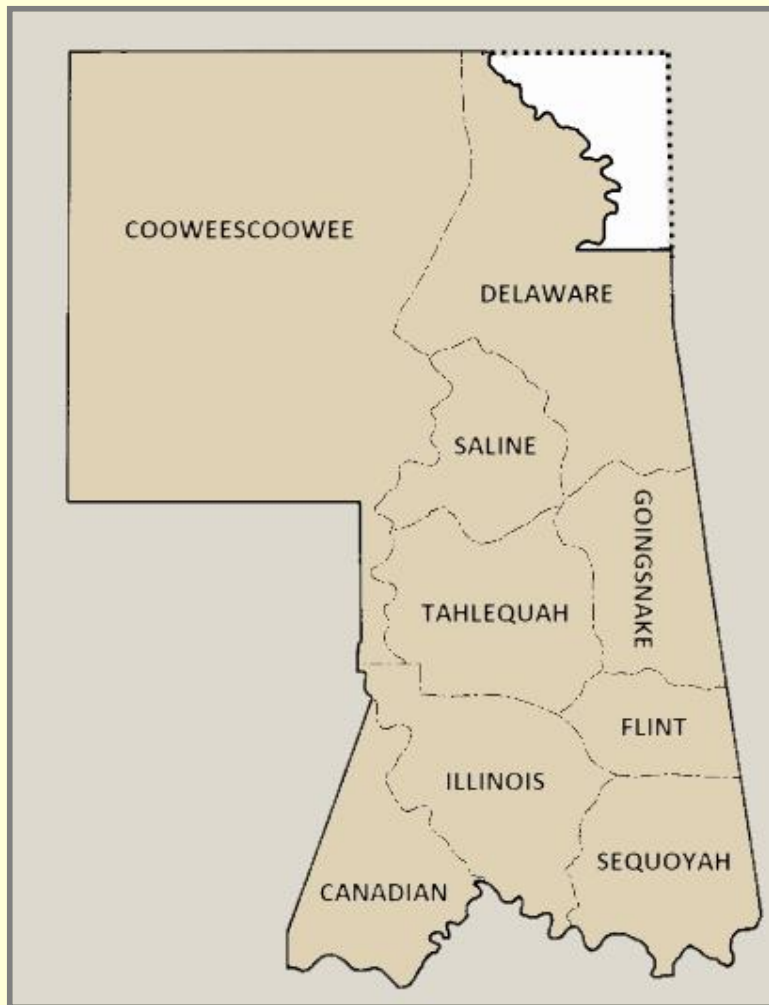
It dissolved tribal ownership, and instead gave allotments to each individual Indian.

It was sponsored by Massachusetts Senator Henry Dawes and was sometimes called the General Allotment Act.



*Tribal ownership of land was called commonality.
Individual ownership was called severalty.*

*The Dawes Act originally applied only to the reservations,
but later was amended to include the Five Civilized Tribes.*



The Dawes Commission began to compile tribal rolls and make land assignments.

Although the tribes objected at first, they later accepted the allotments.

RESDENCE: Seneca TOWN Seneca CARD NO. 203
 POST OFFICE: Seneca Falls, N.Y. SEMINOLE NATION. SEMINOLE ROLL. FIELD NO. 293
 (Not including Probation.)

Dawes Roll No.	NAME	Relation-ship to Person Listed	AGE	SEX	BLOOD	TRIBAL ENROLLMENT		TRIBAL ENROLLMENT OF PARENTS							
						Year	Band	Year	Band	Name of Father	Year	Band	Name of Mother	Year	Band
1007	Larney, John		35	M	Full	1897	Choctaw	227	Sila Larney	1897	Choctaw	Choctaw	Choctaw	Choctaw	Choctaw
1008	" " , Lucy	wife	47	F	"	1897	"	227	Pacua Choctaw	1897	Choctaw	Choctaw	Choctaw	Choctaw	Choctaw
1009	" " , Solomon	son	10	M	"	1897	"	227	No 1						
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No 1 Dead April 11 1900 Proof filed Land Office Notified May 31 1905

**In 1898, Charles Curtis,
a Kansas Congressman,
drafted a bill
to increase funding
for Indian education.
But after many revisions,
The Curtis Act
actually abolished all
remaining tribal rights.**



**Pressure mounted to open the two million acres
in the heart of Indian Territory to white settlers.**



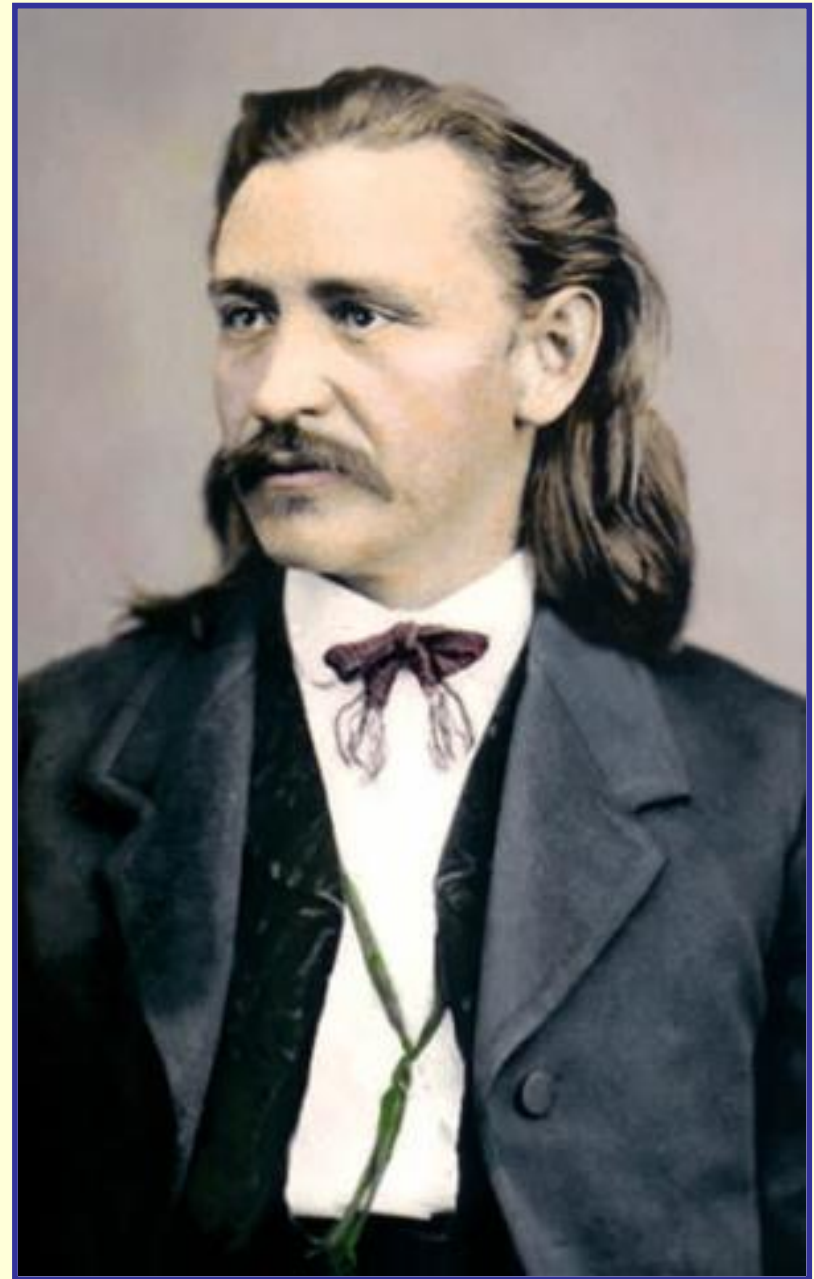


The
“Unassigned Lands”
included all or parts of
present-day
Kingfisher, Logan,
Payne, Canadian,
Oklahoma, and
Cleveland Counties.

**Cherokee businessman
Elias C. Boudinot
openly promoted the
unoccupied lands
for settlement.**

*He argued that the tribes would not
be able to keep the lands,
and should sell them
rather than give them away.*

**Boudinot helped
inspire a new
political movement.**



The Boomers were people who took part in the settlement “explosion” that started in 1879.

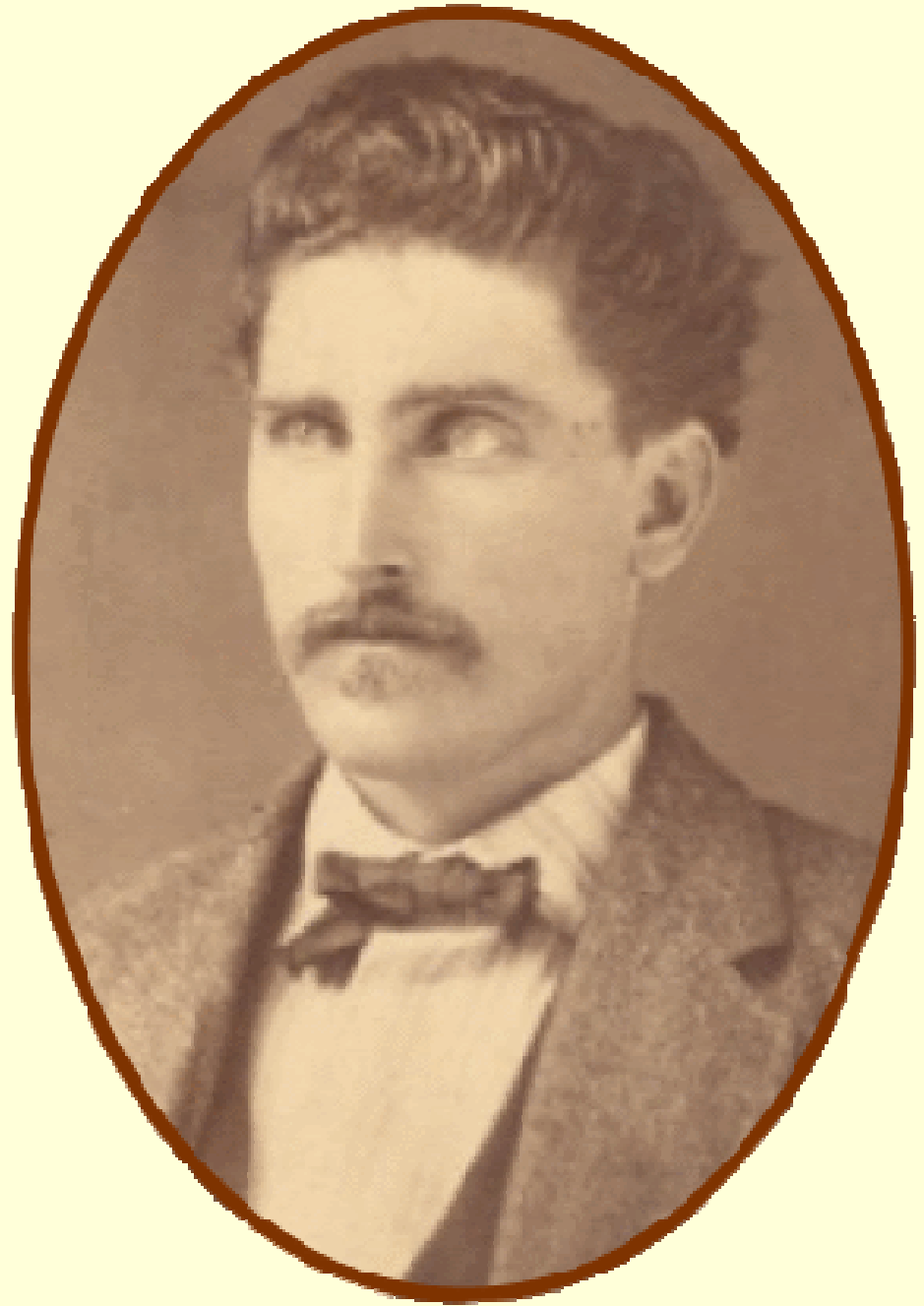
An attempt that year failed, and soldiers escorted them back to Kansas.



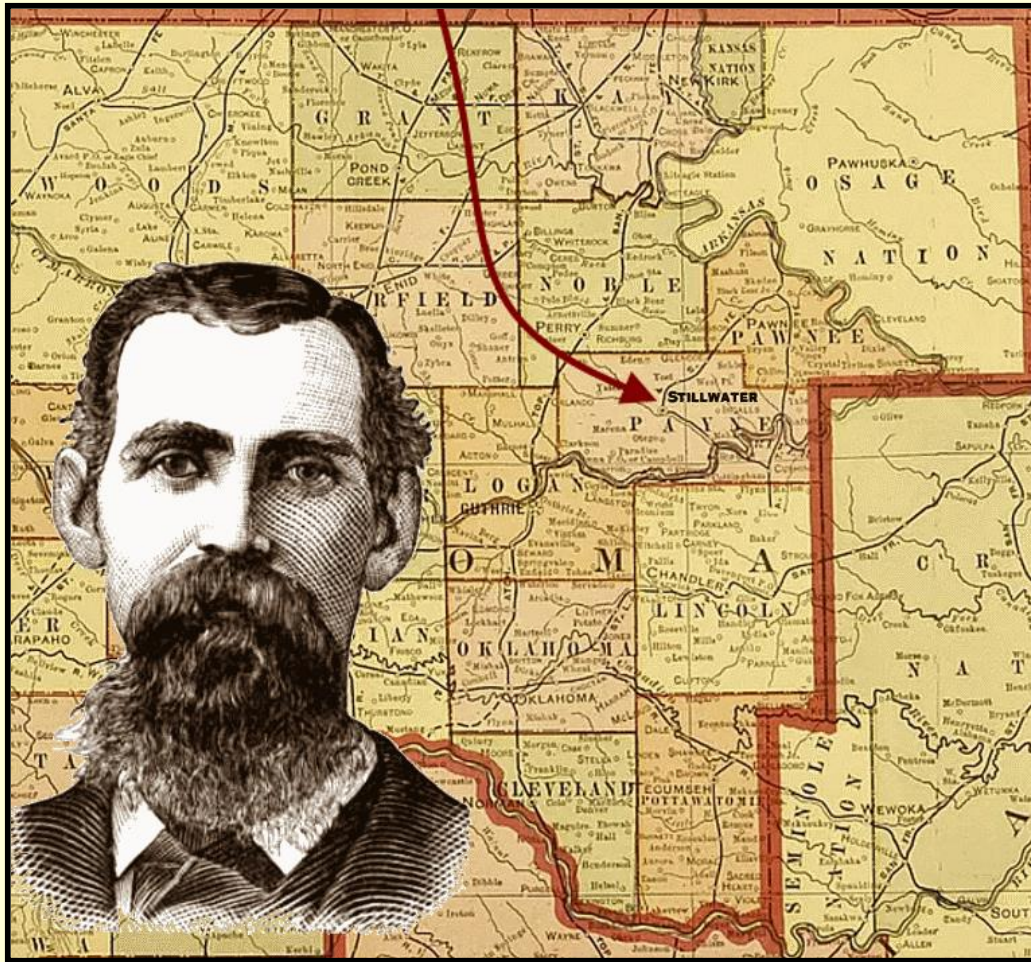
**The Boomer Movement
was headed by
David Payne,
a Kansas pioneer.**

*He led several attempts
to establish camps in
the Unassigned Lands.*

*The homesteaders were always
caught by U.S. troops
and taken out of Indian Territory.*



William Couch took over leadership of the movement in 1884 when Payne died unexpectedly.



**He led 400 men,
women, and
children to
the site of
present-day
Stillwater.**

*Army troops surrounded them,
cut off their supplies, and forced
them to go back to Kansas.*

Realizing that settlement was inevitable, the tribes sold the Unassigned Lands.

They were paid a total of \$2.25 million dollars.



**The Springer Amendment, which opened the lands,
was added to the annual Indian Appropriation Act.**



**The outgoing president,
Grover Cleveland,
signed the bill into law.**

*Anyone eligible under the Homestead Act
would be allowed to enter the area
at noon on Monday, April 22, 1889.*

The new president, Benjamin Harrison, decided the territory would be opened with a land run.

THE PROCLAMATION ISSUED

***OKLAHOMA TO BE OPENED
FOR SETTLEMENT APRIL 22.***

**The President Sends Forth The Fiat
And The Interior Department
Organizes Two Land Districts With
Offices At King Fisher's Station
And Guthrie.**

Washington, March 27 - [Special] The proclamation opening Oklahoma to settlement within 30 days was signed by the President to-day. Western senators and members of Congress say that its issue will serve as a sort of safety valve for the excited conditions now existing on the borders of the promised land.



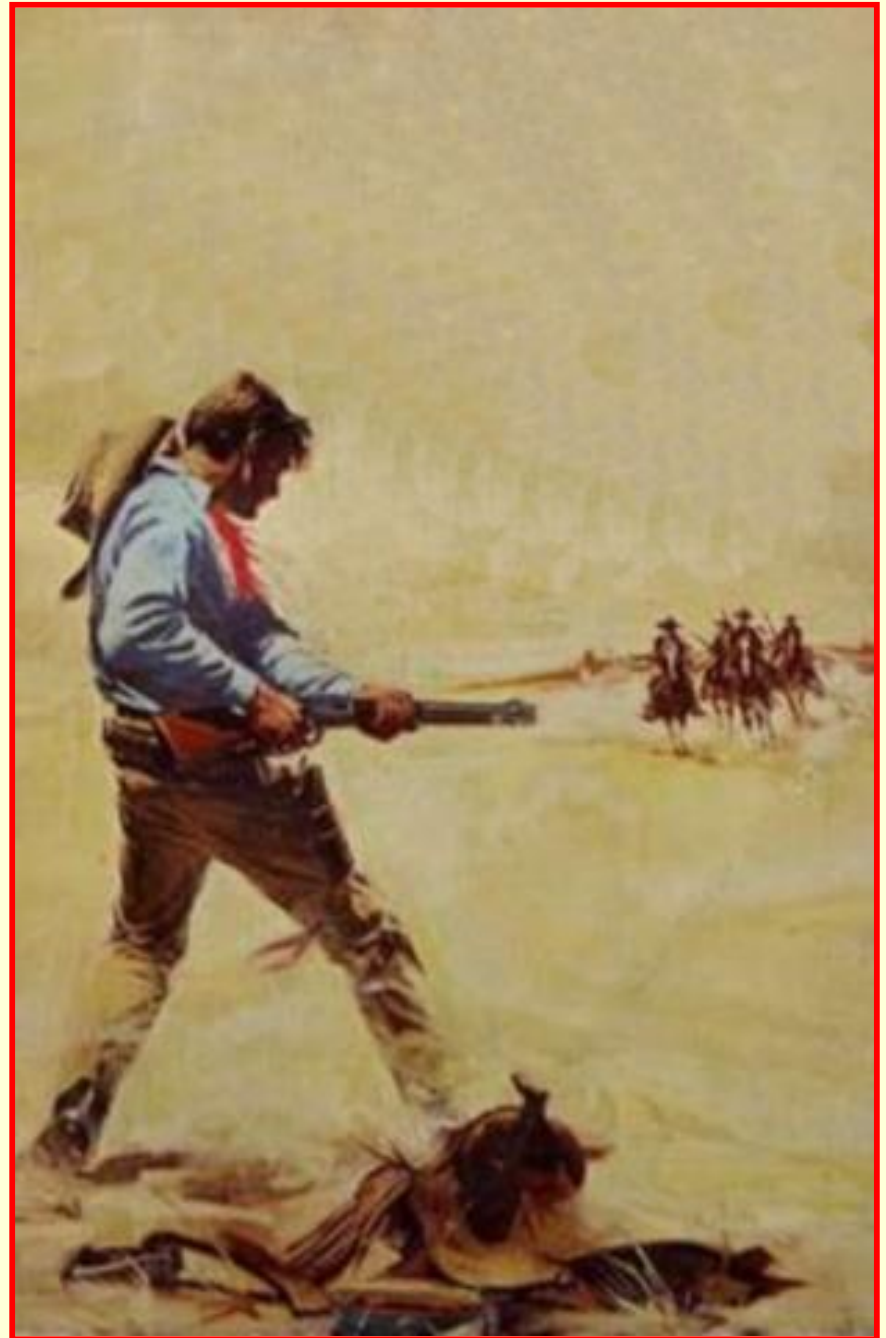
The event became known as “Harrison’s Horse Race.”



**Almost immediately,
“Sooners” moved in.
A Sooner was someone
who illegally settled
on the land
in order to own it.**

*Patrolling troops removed
hundreds of these squatters
between March and April.*

Finally, the day arrived.

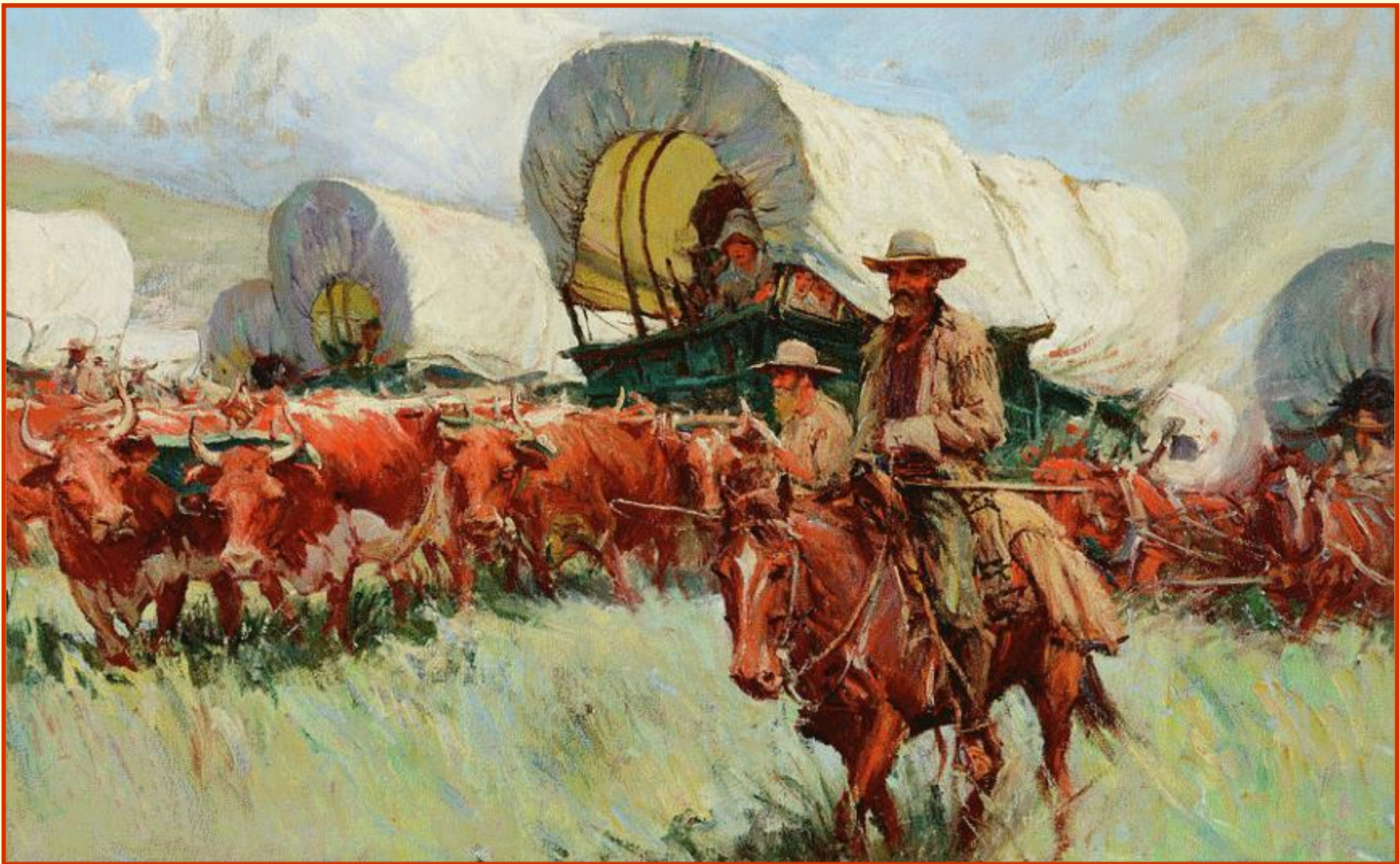


People were up early on the morning of April 22.

Estimates of the number who made the Run vary between 50,000 and 100,000.



Settlers in their prairie schooners, or covered wagons, waited on the banks of the South Canadian River.



At noon, the signal was given, and the race was on.

By sundown, all of the two million acres had been claimed.

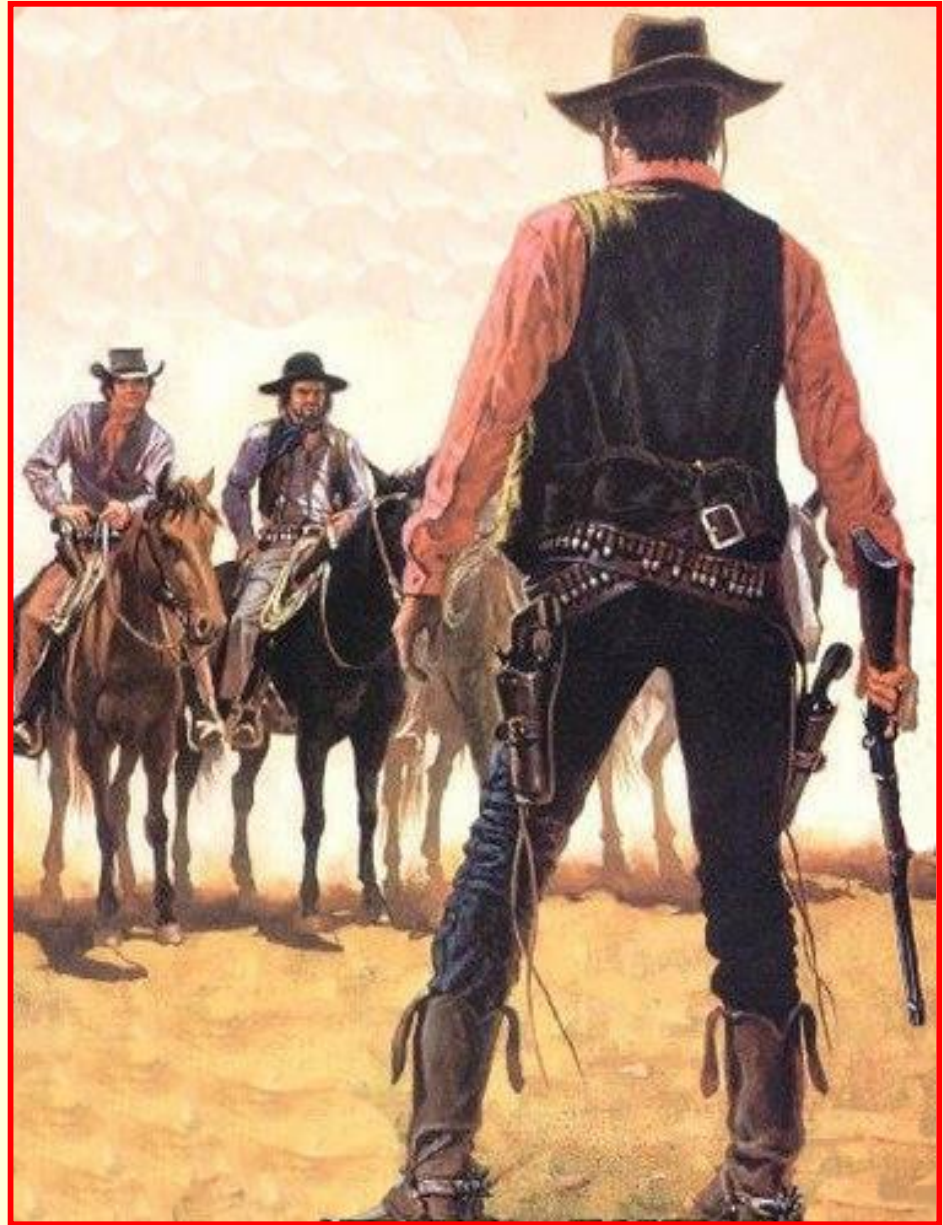




**Surveyors had
previously left
an inscribed
cornerstone
on each
quarter section
of land.**

*Claimants had to
find the stone
and file the land description
at a federal office
in Guthrie or Kingfisher.*

*There were often
disputes over
who filed first
for a particular
section of land.
Some cases were
settled in court,
while others were
settled with fists
– or guns.*



Oklahoma City was “Born Grown.”
It had a population of 12,000 on its first day.
Other First Day cities were Guthrie, Edmond,
Moore, Norman, Kingfisher, and Stillwater.



In Guthrie, a man set up a private latrine on Cottonwood Creek and charged 10¢ per use.

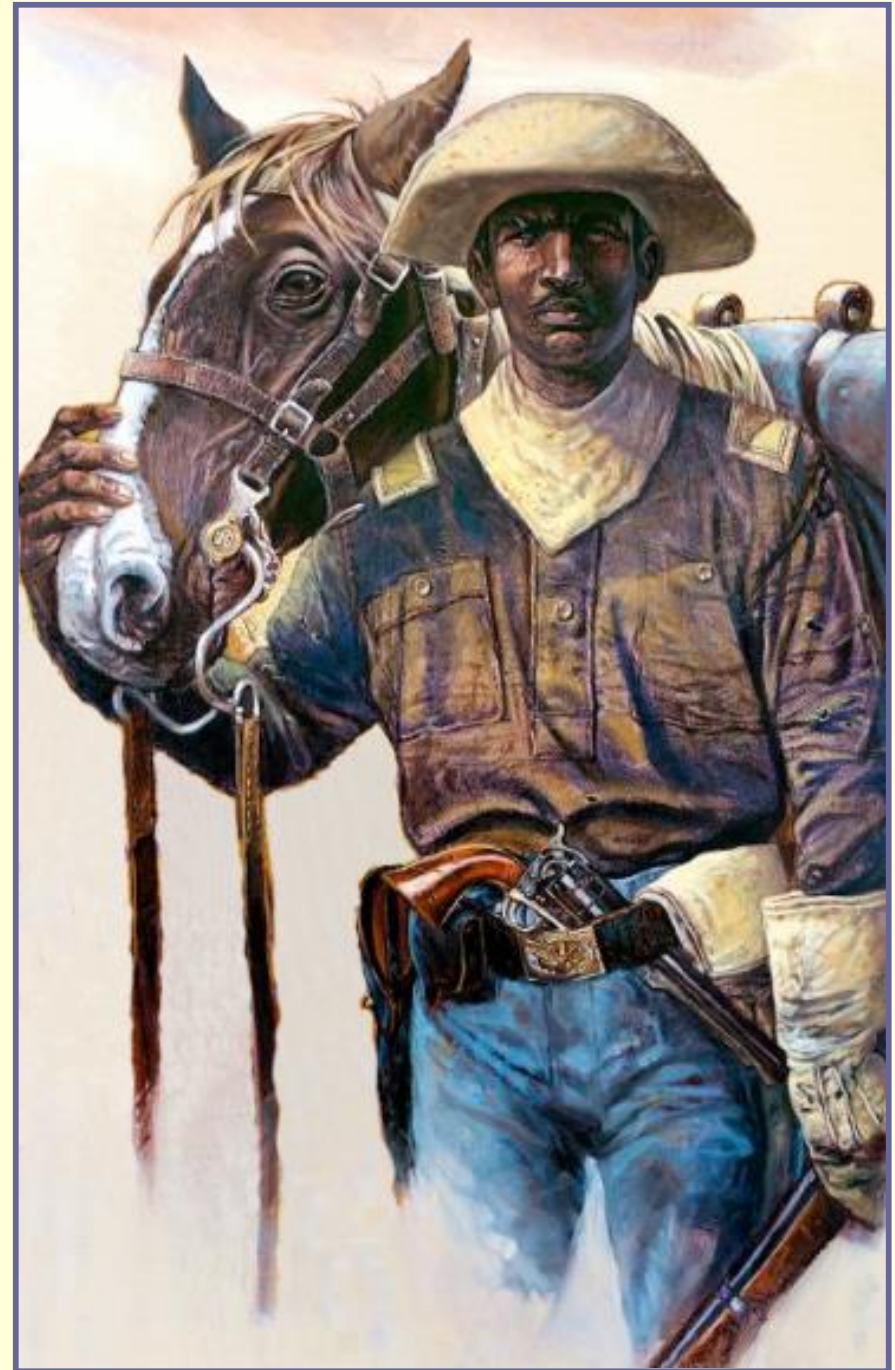




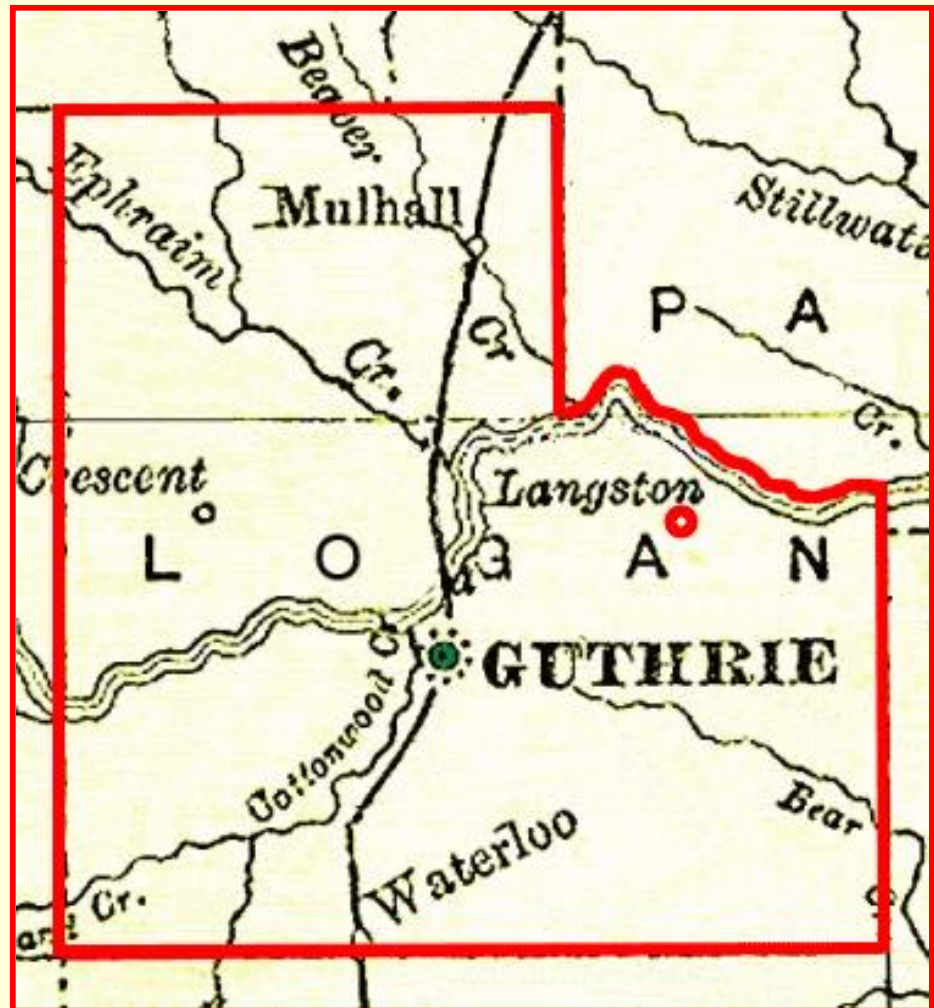
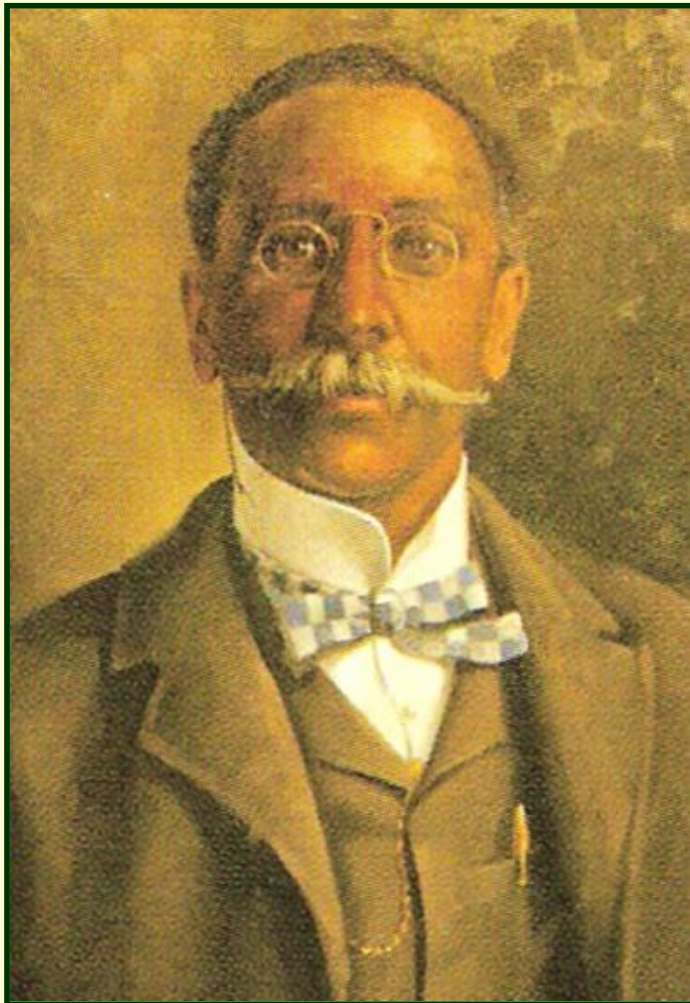
*Three men
with only \$8.31
between them
opened
The Bank of Guthrie
using an old
pot-bellied stove
as their vault.*

**Nearly a thousand
African Americans
made the
1889 Land Run,
and many others
came to the Territory
soon afterward.**

*They hoped to escape the prejudice
they had found in the
South and Midwest.*



Edward McCabe, the state auditor of Kansas,
established the town of Langston east of Guthrie.
He was also the founder of Langston University.



TAFT

FASTEST GROWING COLORED COMMUNITY IN
OKLAHOMA

Surrounded by Unexcelled
Farming Lands

Pronounced by Geological Experts to Lie Directly in
the Path of the
FAMOUS OIL BELT
OF EASTERN OKLAHOMA

TAFT

Has a Territory of Nearly Fifty Square Miles to Draw
From and Is Bound to Be an Important
Trade Center

**There Has Never Been Any
Race Trouble at Taft**

*McCabe published
The Langston Herald
newspaper
and promoted
the creation of
an all-black state.*

*West of the Cross Timbers, there were few trees,
and hauling in lumber was too costly.
Some farmers lived temporarily in dugouts.*

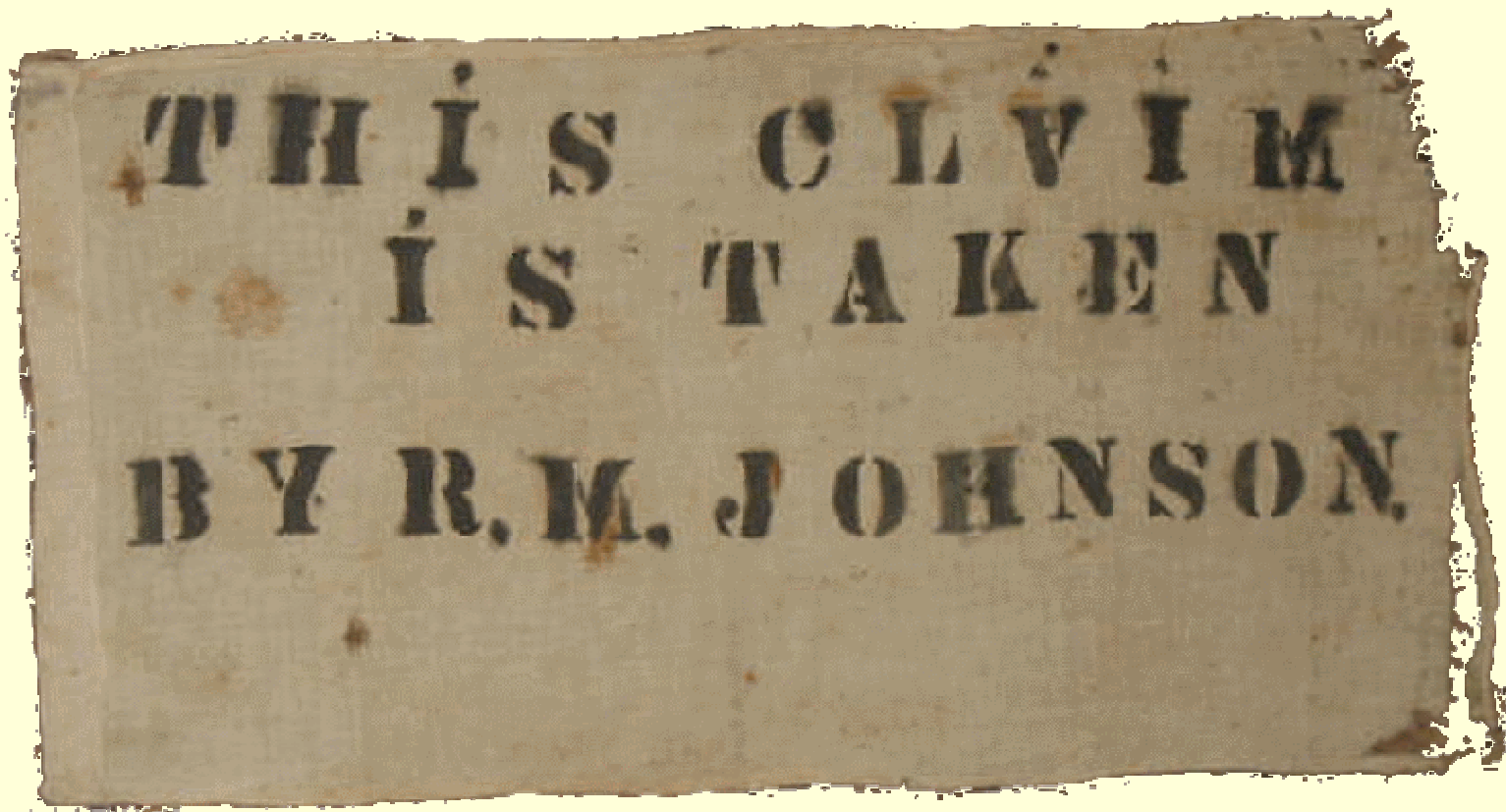


“Sodbusters” built their houses from plowing up the prairie grass and stacking the strips for walls.

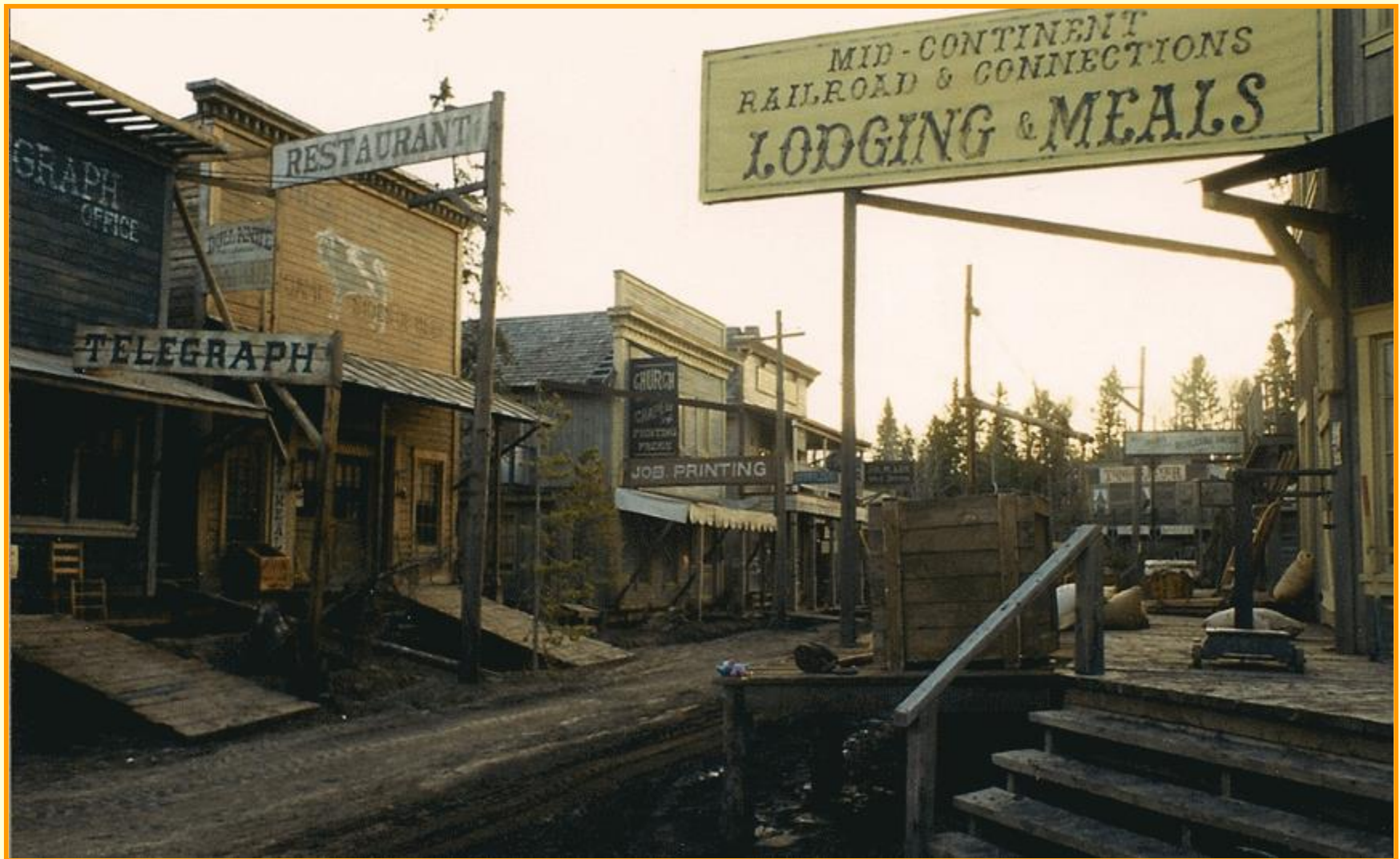


*"There was nothing but land...
not a country at all,
but the material out of which countries are made."*

from "My Antonia," by Willa Cather



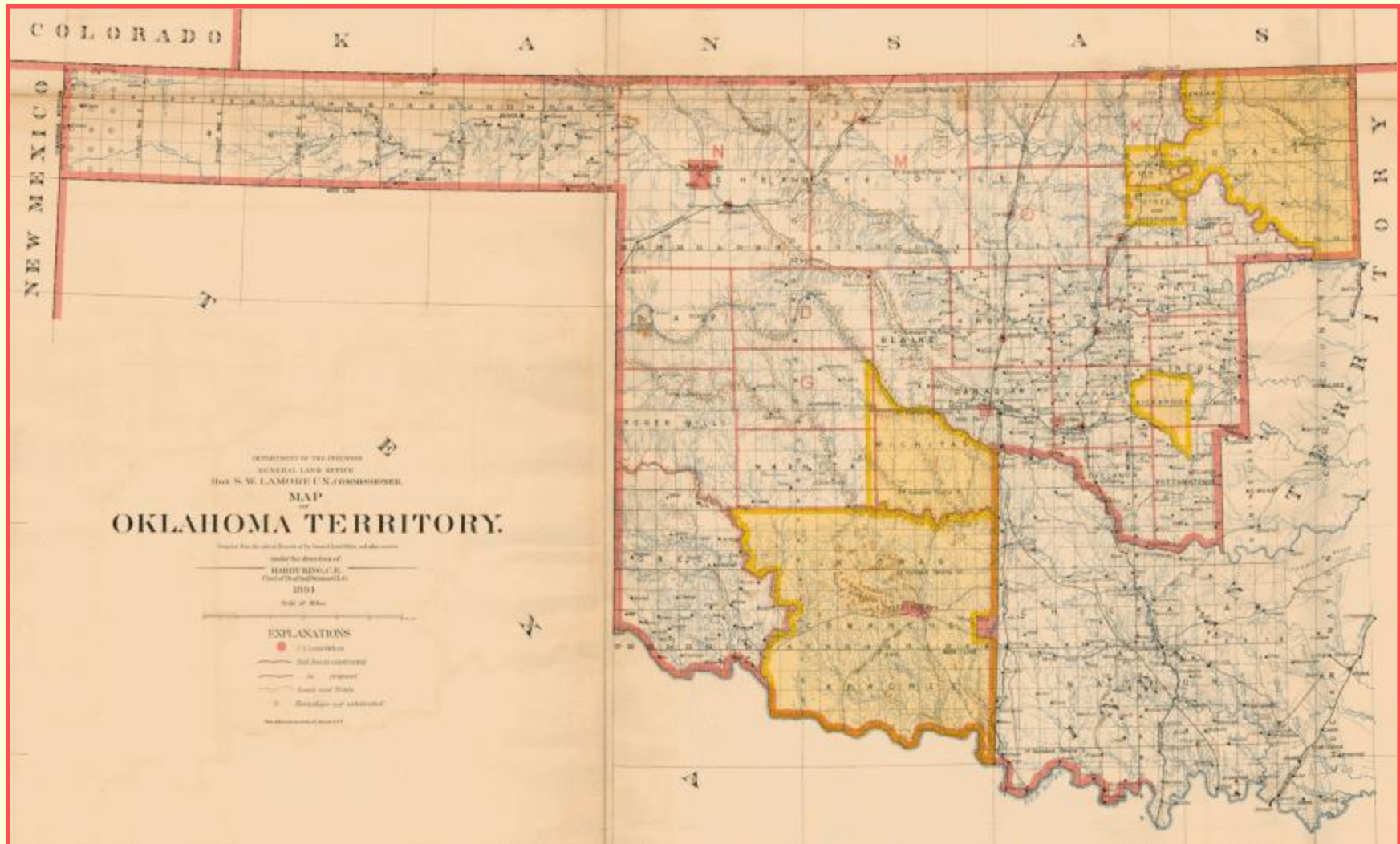
Section 2: Organizing Oklahoma Territory



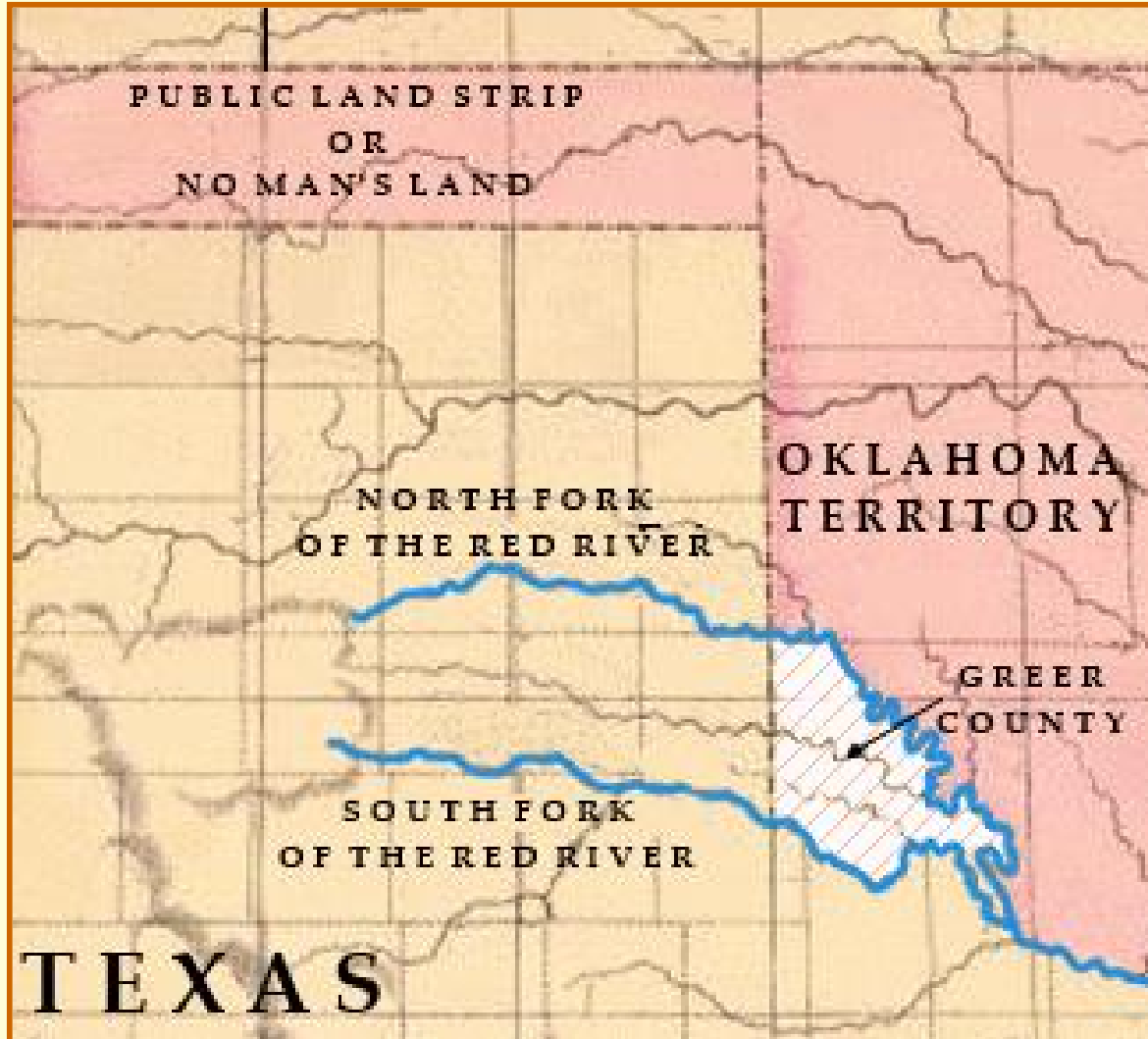
In May 1889, citizens met in Guthrie to ask the U.S. Congress to form a territorial administration.



**In 1890, Congress passed The Organic Act,
joining the western lands and the Panhandle
to create Oklahoma Territory.**



The Organic Act also determined ownership of Greer County, which had been claimed by Texas.



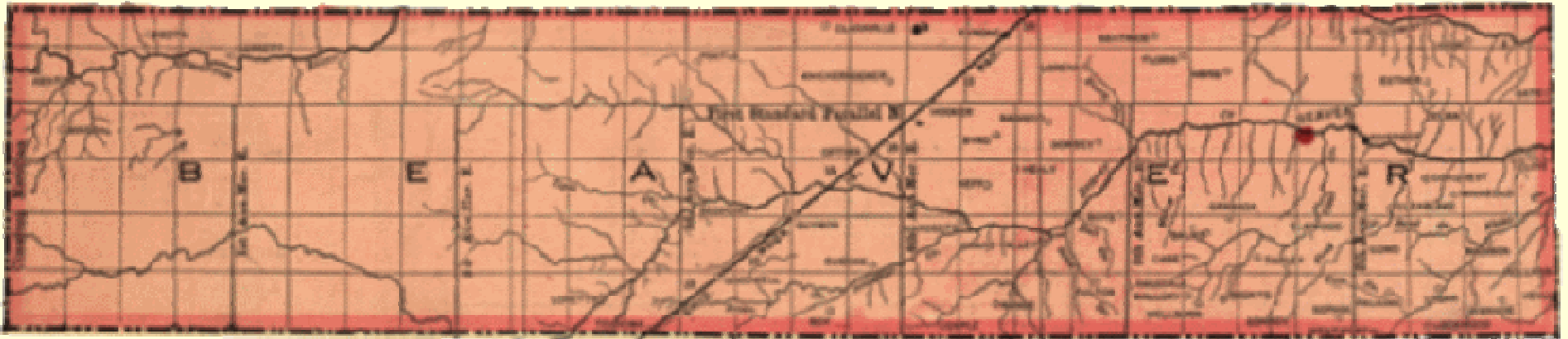
*Texas argued
the North Fork of
the Red River
was the boundary.*

*The U.S. Supreme Court
disagreed,
setting the deeper
South Fork,
or Main Branch,
as the actual border.*

Squatters also tried to establish Cimarron Territory.

The Panhandle was originally called "No Man's Land" or The Public Land Strip.

*But due to its small population,
it was attached to Oklahoma Territory in 1890.*



The entire area was called Beaver County until statehood, when it was divided into three counties: Beaver on the east end, Texas in the center, and Cimarron on the west end.

**George W. Steele
of Indiana
was appointed
as the first
territorial governor.**

*The Republican president,
Benjamin Harrison,
disappointed the
mostly-Democratic settlers
when he chose a
major contributor
to his campaign.*



Geo W Steele



Locals thought Steele was a “carpetbagger,” taking advantage of the opportunity for his own profit.

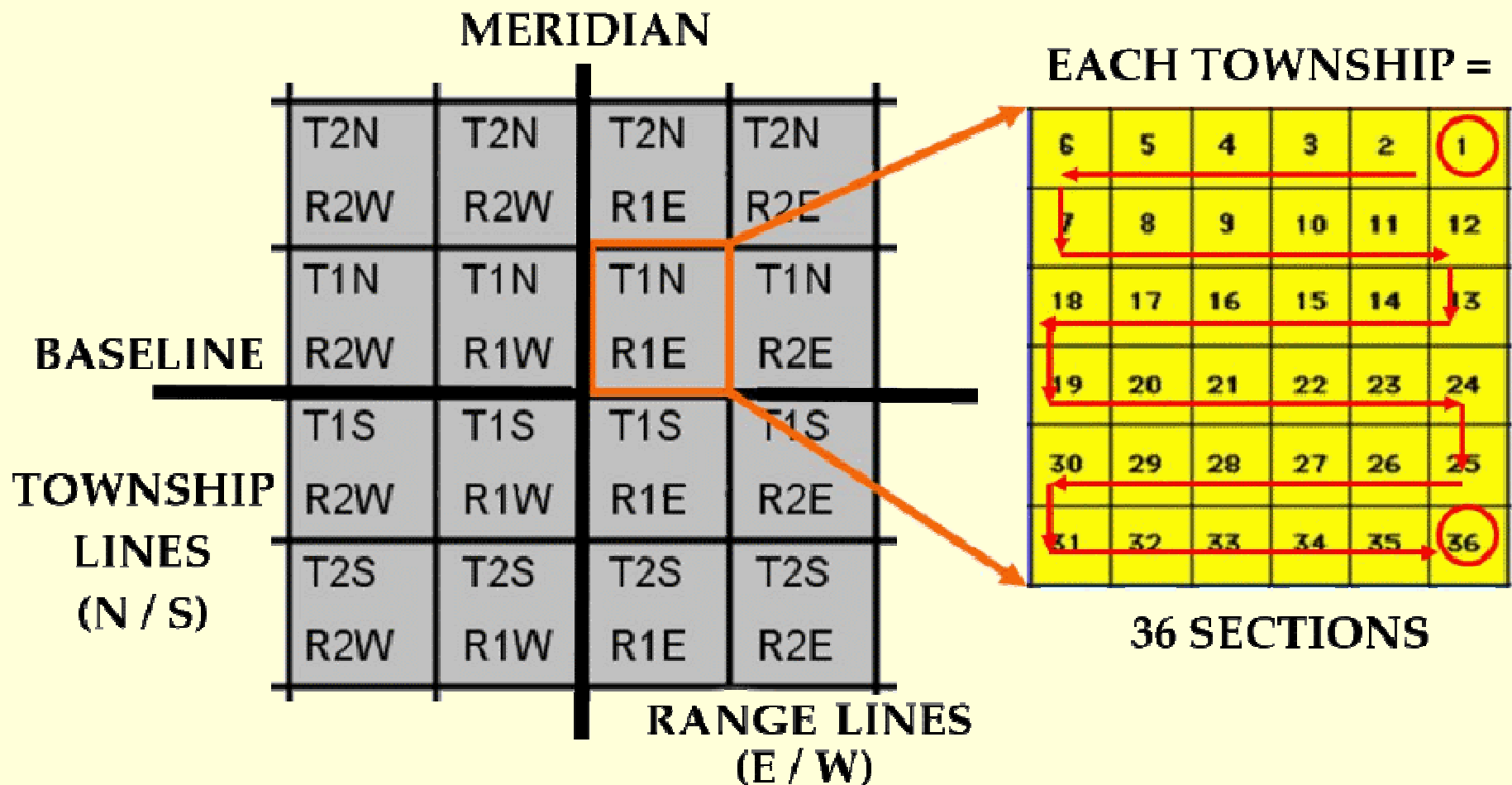
Although Steele was a retired Army officer and known for his administrative skills, he was regarded as a “northern” outsider.

Stereotypical carpetbaggers.

Townships were set up by the Territorial Legislature as the basis for a public school system.

Townships had been created from the Baseline / Indian Meridian grid.

Two sections of each township were reserved for public schools.



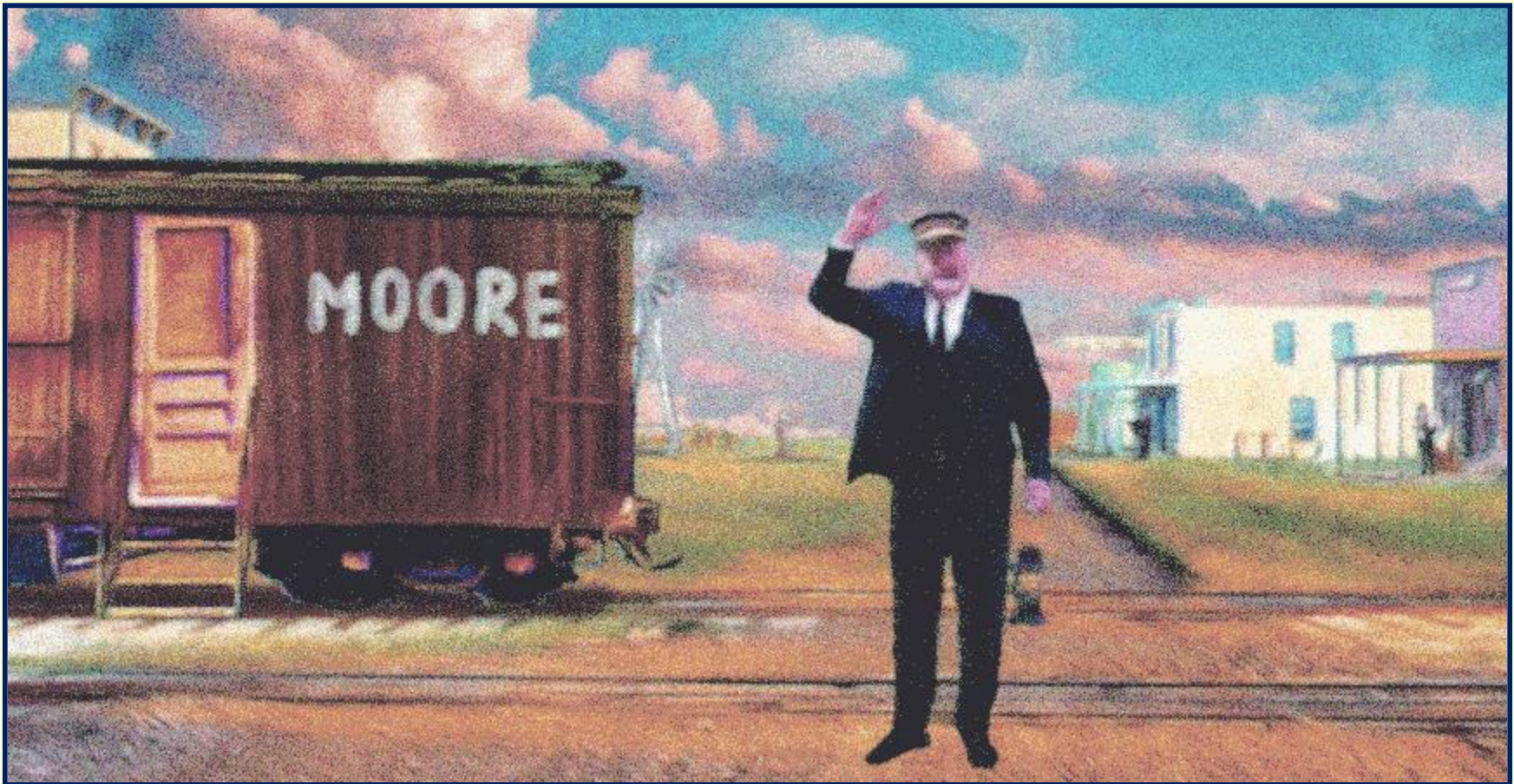
*Heavily-populated townships had four schools:
two primary (grades 1-8) and two secondary (9-12).*

Smaller communities had one-room schools with multiple grades.



A township called Verbeck was on the AT&SF Railroad just south of Oklahoma City.

A railroad employee named Al Moore lived in a railcar there, but had difficulty receiving his mail. He painted his last name on the boxcar, and people gradually began think it was the town's name.

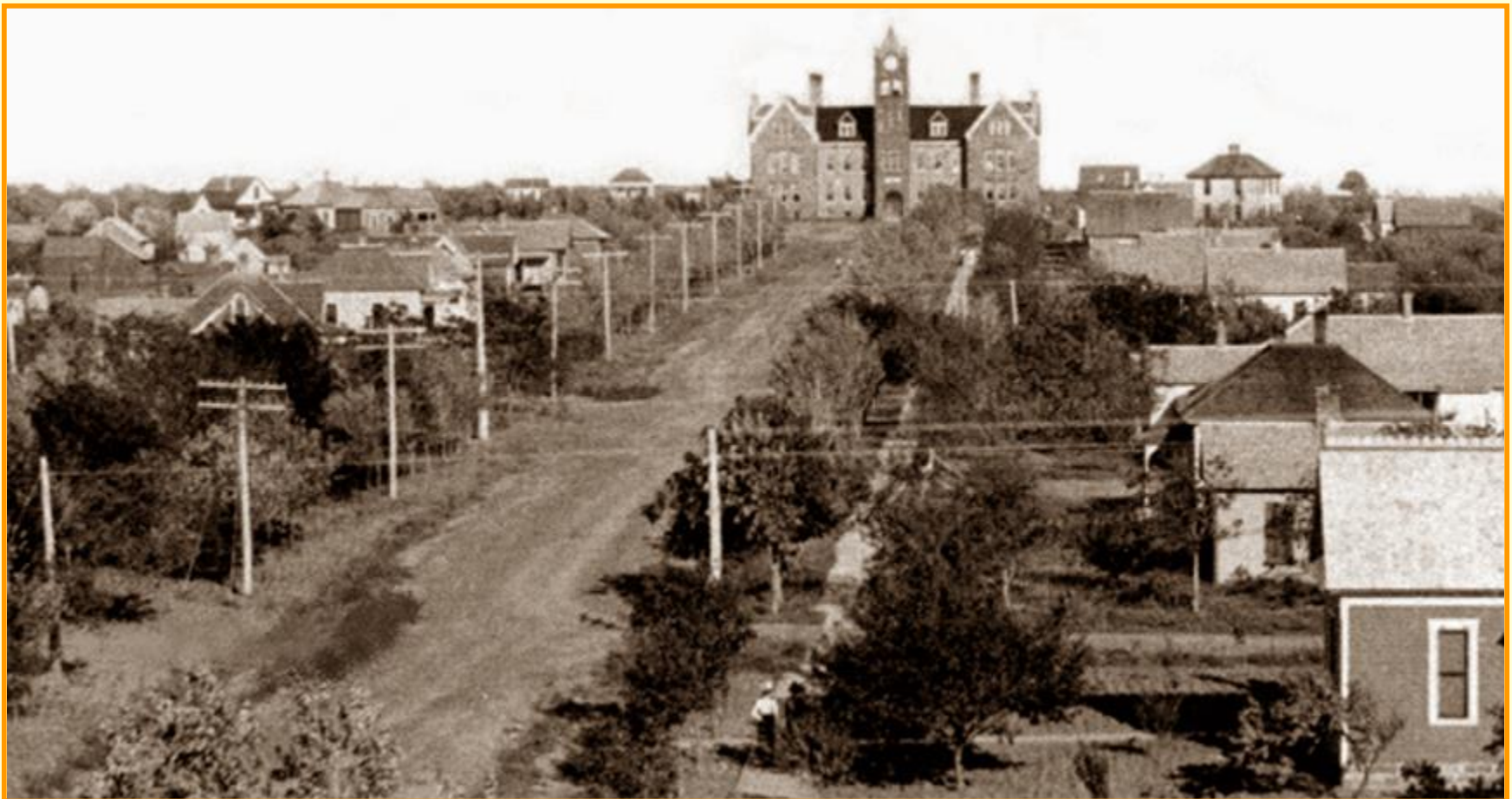


Verbeck became the City of Moore in 1893.



**The first Legislative session also established
a teacher training institution in Edmond
called the Territorial Normal School.**

It would later become the University of Central Oklahoma.



**They also established a liberal arts college
and a vocational training college.**



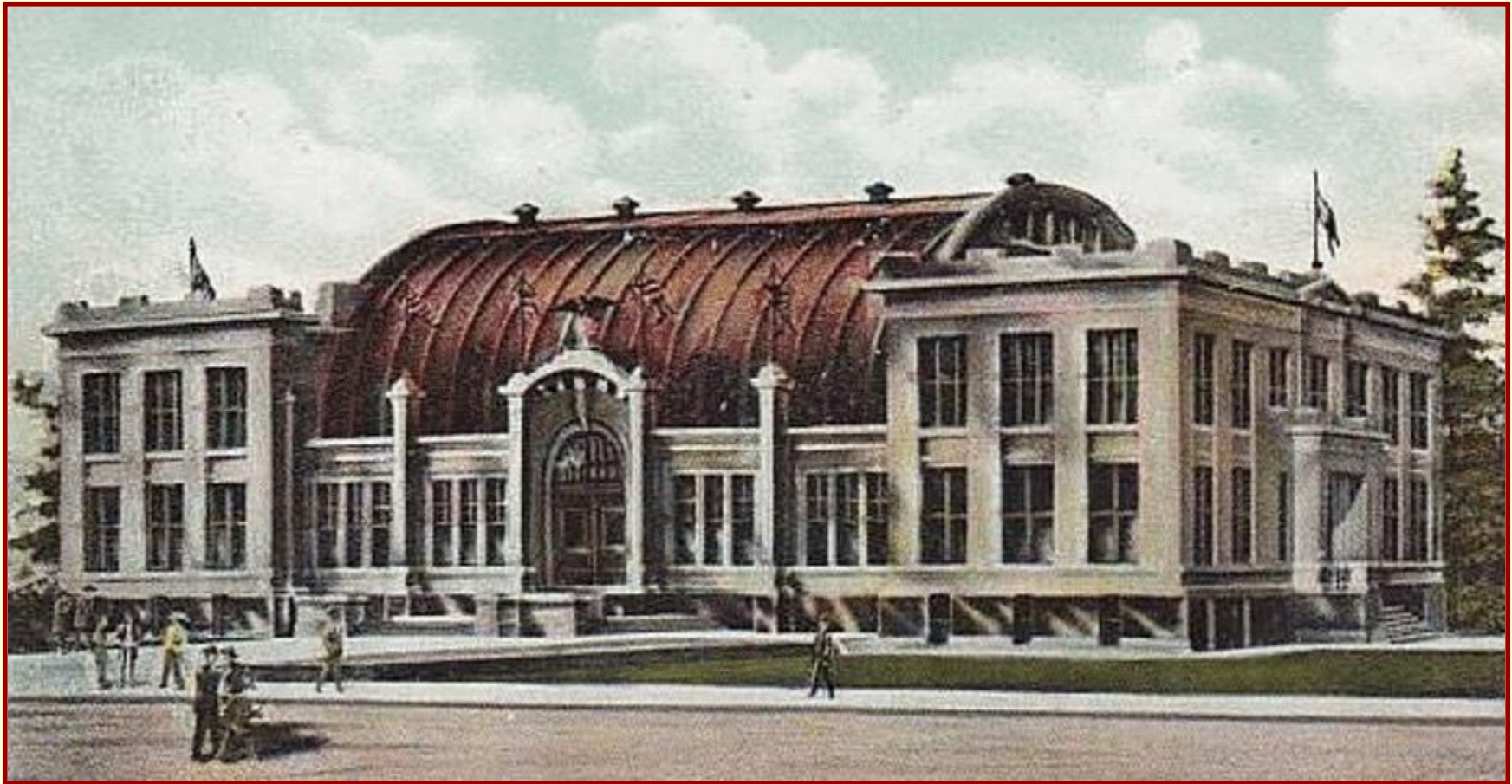
**The Norman Territorial University would become
the University of Oklahoma.**

**The school in Stillwater was originally called
Oklahoma Agricultural & Mechanical College.**

In 1957, the name was changed to Oklahoma State University.

Politicians wrangled over locating the capital. Governor Steele chose the city of Guthrie.

The Territorial Legislature met in Guthrie's Convention Hall.



Oklahoma Territory had nine governors in the 17 years before statehood.

In 1890, the Jerome Commission began negotiations with the reservation tribes to buy their surplus lands.



**The reservations
were dissolved, and
former Michigan Governor
David Jerome opened
more than 15 million acres
to homesteaders.**

**- with the exception of the Osage Reservation -
were allotted and the surpluses sold.**



*A Chicago Daily Tribune editorial said:
“Oklahoma will be knocking at the door
of the Union before we are aware of it.”*

