

# Colorful pioneers - Fixico, Peacock

By JOE A. FOSTER  
HISTORIAN

Here's a couple of early day social characters that tend to get one or two paragraphs of copy each time history is written concerning the Okmulgee area. Not too much copy; just enough to whet our appetite. The two we have in mind are "Col." Peacock and Katie Fixico.

Col. Peacock was referred to as "Okmulgee's most colorful and most fascinating citizen" and, without a doubt, he easily earned the title which he carried to his grave.

John Lee Peacock was born in New York, adventured around the West in the wake of General Custer before moving to Illinois and getting into politics. Friendship with "Uncle Joe" Cannon got him his "Colonel" title. Peacock was a direct descendant of a wealthy English family, and he turned the estate to a brother.

In 1901, Col. Peacock was sent to Muskogee as a justice Department representative. In 1902, he opened the first term of federal court ever held in Okmulgee. Over the years he kept an office in the Creek Nation Council House, serving the judicial system many years. Success in Okmulgee's oil boom of the '20s brought him wealth. But it wasn't money that made him noteworthy in oil-rich Okmulgee.

Col. Peacock had always loved lodge work and before his death, he had joined nearly a score of fraternal organizations. Almost every photograph made of him in his adult life shows him in the uniform of one of them, resplendent with medals, insignias ... and glittering sword.

In Illinois, he married Mary Robeson and she proved to be the perfect companion for the nearly 50 years they were married. A beautiful woman, she was always seen in glamorous clothes from Paris, London, and around the world.

They made a striking couple, but not until the "Col." died, at 78 in 1933, five years after Mrs. Peacock, did Okmulgee realize just how colorful a couple they really were.

Their home, at 304 N. 9th was found to be filled, top to bottom, in closets and chests with a bewildering cache of items, stored away for the future and never used.

Hundreds of photographs of the (childless) couple showed him in various lodge uniforms, her in a variety of elegant costumes. Wholesale lots of dresses, suits, hats, jewelry and lingerie were uncovered, still in tissue wrappings and never worn.

The "Col." may have been something of a before-his-time survivalist, food, cleaning supplies, tools, hardware, spare parts for every mechanical

device they owned were stored in quantity, still wrapped and labeled.

They had only owned one car, and the house held unopened boxes of every spare part it could ever have needed ... and stacks of spare tires.

There were thousands of old magazines, newspapers, letters from many famous men. There were guns, swords, pistols and hundreds of boxes of ammunition and spare parts.

There was even a brand new buggy ... sets of china and silver, still in the boxes ... and a large chest filled with hand-embroidered linens.

Those who came first to the home, said Pioneer Okla Spears, "never stopped talking about it."

The other memorable colorful character we are presently concerned with was...Katie Fixico, a female of the Creek Tribe who like many others of the Creek, Cherokee, and Osage Tribes became millionaires overnight due to the discovery of oil on their property.

Katie was born in the Creek Nation, Indian Territory, February, 10, 1894. Her father, Cussetah and her mother, Warney, died before she was three years of age, sometime during the smallpox epidemic. Her only other relative was a brother, Benoche, who died three years later in 1899 leaving the 160 acres of allotted land in trust until she became of age. The land was barren and it appeared that nothing could be grown on it. It was located near Cushing before the great oil boom jolted that town to its feet.

A guardian was appointed for Katie to administer over those 160 barren acres and she was to grow up a ward of the Creek Nation. Because she was an unwanted orphan and spent most of her earlier years first with one family and then another, she was uneducated, she could neither read nor write. She spoke few words of English. It is not known if she spent any time in the Creek Orphans Home or not. It was not likely that she did.

In 1912 one of the richest oil booms in history erupted in Katie's back yard. Katie's "barren land" contained oil of almost uncalculatable value. Suddenly, she had more friends than she knew what to do with! Everyone seemed to be bidding for her attention.

Early in 1916, Katie purchased \$133,379 worth of bonds under the direction of her guardian, E. W. Kimbley for the construction of Okmulgee County's new Courthouse. Kimbley remained her legal guardian until 1923 when V.V. Morgan, an Okmulgee attorney, was appointed to guardianship.

Meanwhile Katie had married an Indian named Sam Marsey. It has been stated by a grandson

that Katie had been raped once and the product of that event was a son born on the following Easter Sunday. She named the child, the first of several, Easter Sunday.

She lost her first husband one night after he started home from a drinking party quite intoxicated, fell upon the railroad tracks and was decapitated by an oncoming train. She was to remarry many times before her death.

Her estate was handled, off and on, by guardians as they proved her incompetent one year and incompetent the next for most of the rest of her life.

In 1925 Katie became of age and her guardian was discharged and she began to get acquainted with the courts of law. At this time her income was about \$300.00 a day and going up all the time. At that time Samuel J. Checote, Principal Chief of the Creeks and a missionary to the Indians of the Tribe, induced the courts to declare her incompetent and appoint him as her guardian. This was done, however the County Judge, Mark L. Bozarth, appointed E.W. Kimbley, as her guardian instead of Checote.

She once had three servants to maintain a four-room house. Then she purchased a \$50,000.00 brick mansion, south of Okmulgee (later becoming a swank restaurant) and continuing to carry the name of "The Southern Mansion". Later she owned not less than twelve homes in and around Okmulgee, fully fur-

nished with furniture and servants working full time in each home. She kept a complete wardrobe in each of these fabulous homes, and if she became tired or bored living in one of the homes, she would simply move into one of the other homes. It was said that she sometimes held large parties to which she would invite people from all over the country, and if her guests decided to leave before the mandatory three weeks were up she would shoot the tires out on their automobiles. Not just one or two but all four of the tires were flattened... and she would later buy new tires for her guests. New changes of clothes and other needs were also taken care of to keep the party alive.

Katie was a very generous person with a big heart; but she was also, at times, very gullible. She would sometimes buy whole truckloads of pies and cakes for church gatherings - or have a dozen hogs butchered for the picnics of different local societies owned several Rolls Royce and Pierce Arrow automobiles and when she ran "out of gas" or something else seemed to go wrong she would discard that auto for another.

She once told her maid to drive a nail into an \$1,500.00 grand piano, to hang a clothesline through the parlor of one of her homes. On another occasion, Katie bought \$300.00 worth of ribbons at a Five and Dime store for a dance. Her shell dance costume was said to be worth a fortune



KATIE FIXICO

Her second husband was John Daniel, another Creek Indian who fathered her second child, whom she nicknamed "Humdinger."

A complete parade of legal guardians manager her fortune. Once five guardians were called to court to account for \$300,000.00 that had mysteriously disappeared. Another time a complaint was filed in her

behalf charging that one of her attorneys had charged her \$ 37,500.00 for only 30 minutes work-time.

Katie died of a kidney infection on February 17, 1940, and her funeral was one of the largest in Oklahoma's history. She was buried in Okmulgee Cemetery, on Highway 75, south of the city.

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