

OKLAHOMA  
TERRITORY

## TERRITORIAL TALES

Bits of  
History  
Before  
Statehood

INDIAN  
TERRITORY

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# Delaware Indian Adopted New Life

Quite a number of Indians who were moved to Oklahoma by the government did all they could to adopt the white man's ways. One such individual was Arthur Armstrong, of French and Delaware Indian descent, who came to the Delaware reservation in northeastern Oklahoma in the latter part of the 19th century.

Armstrong, whose Indian name was Sikalace, was described as a man of "strong mind, who has lived a godly, righteous and Christian life, and has been the forerunner of progress in educational and religious affairs" in what later became Washington County.

Armstrong's allotment of 160 acres was divided as the city of Bartlesville developed, with 130 acres of it being plotted into city lots, not far from the county courthouse. He also had 500 acres of land on Curl Creek, about 16 miles away.

On this land the first oil well in the vicinity was put down and others added later. Shortly after statehood, Armstrong was receiving \$403 per month from nine wells and as a veteran of the Union Army during the Civil War he also received \$22 per month pension.

About the time Armstrong was converted to Christianity he built a little cabin on the banks of the Caney Creek and named it Union Church, making it the first church on the site of Bartlesville. In this primitive edifice a clergyman of any denomination was given welcome and the privilege of conducting services. The building also was utilized as the first schoolhouse in the community.

In early days it was recorded that Armstrong would ride horseback along old Indian trails to Nowata, about 40 miles away, to attend church and listen to the preaching of Chief Johnnycake.