

**THE COMMERCIAL CENTER Of the Largest Agricultural District
Tributary to any Town in Indian Territory – Facts About Fort Towson
and Her Promise of Great and Speedy Industrial Development**

The Fort Towson Enterprise August 11, 1905 – Transcribed & contributed by Ron Henson

Fort Towson is perhaps the oldest and yet one of the newest towns in Indian Territory. It derived its name from old Fort Towson which was built by the government in the early 30s when the Indians were removed to this country, and which was one of the most prominent if not the strongest fortifications on the western frontier.

The new town was incorporated in December, 1903, and the first election held on January 29, 1904. Until its incorporation but little improvement had been made, when a wave of progress struck the hamlet and its handiwork is now in evidence as substantial brick business houses and modern dwellings are being constructed and the plans and specifications are ready for many other business houses which will take the place of the quaint old structures that are valuable in the busy business world only as mementos of frontier life in Indian Territory.

However, nature has been wondrous kind to Fort Towson. She has treated her like a favorite child. In addition to giving her springs whose waters have wonderful curative properties, clear, sparkling, palatable and refreshing she has lavished almost every other imaginable advantage upon her. She has placed her pet in the midst of scenery both diversified and beautiful – where bubbling springs burst forth from timer-shrouded hills and their rippling well nigh forms a chorus, at once supremely enchanting. Then Dame Nature has located her at an ideal altitude, and has provided her with a climate and temperature of the most enjoyable character; pure bracing air, environments that add to her general health; and a soil of limestone formation that makes her drainage perfect and free from stagnant pools that breed mosquitoes and malaria so prevalent in a temperate zone. Both of these forerunners of impaired health are unknown quantities in Fort Towson and it is a pleasure to say that evidence abounds on every hand to demonstrate that here is one of the favored spots where those who seek health may enjoy the most nearly universal solvent in nature – pure waters. Doctors of the highest standing and laymen of unquestioned integrity have pronounced the various springs in and adjacent to Fort Towson as remarkable in their curative powers, yet these statements alone are not expected to carry conviction. The skeptical may come and drink of the “fountain of youth” and then draw their own conclusions. It is free as sunshine, just as nature gave it to us, and there is no sanitarium or bath house graft to pull at your purse strings. It will be strange, however, in course of time if many hotels are not constructed and a health resort, as well as a business center developed here.

Aside from the many springs, pure freestone water is found here at a depth of 73 feet after passing through a solid limestone formation, in a number of places nearly 60 feet thick. The whole townsite of Fort Towson rests on a limestone foundation, a deposit of shell formation, perhaps the largest yet discovered. One may find here thousands of shells of all descriptions which when disintegrated make a very rich soil and valuable fertilizer.

As to the geographical location of Fort Towson, it is situated in the southern part of the Choctaw Nation, Indian Territory about 50 miles west of the Arkansas line on a branch of the Frisco railroad and 5 miles north of the Texas line and Red river; and lies between Little river, 18 miles east and Kiamichi river, 4 miles west. Its legitimate territory covers a vast area of fine agricultural and timber land, which comprises over 40 square miles, with only one-tenth of the available agricultural land in cultivation. All through this immense body of land are living streams that never go dry because they are fed by hundreds of springs which nature has provided for this garden spot. It is truly a wonderful country, one which the homeseeker must see to appreciate and to learn of its real commercial value when time shall have developed its resources. And that time is not far distant. There is perhaps no better watered country, where crops are as nearly certain anywhere under the canopy of heaven, aside from the irrigated country.

In a country teeming with so many interesting features, it is hard to submit to the homeseeker a detailed and accurate description of its varied soils and timbers, its acreage, and what might be produced here by practical farmers who know the value of good soil and how to cultivate it and diversify their crops.

Adjacent to Fort Towson and inside of her legitimate territory is one stretch of bottom land along the Kiamichi river 35 miles long and 1 mile wide; along Red river is another body of bottom land about the same size; then there are 50 sections of black prairie land near town; several thousand acres of bottom land across Red river in Texas; 28 sections of pine and 50 sections of hardwood close by. About six miles north of Fort Towson is a stretch of red and black sandy loam prairie, as fine as a crow ever flew over, which extends on 7 miles to the north to another timber belt at the foot of Seven Devils mountains and is about 22 miles wide, east and west, from Little River to Kiamichi River. This land has a clay subsoil and with proper treatment will produce almost anything raised in a semi-tropical climate. Every foot of the land mentioned above is tributary to Fort Towson, and when fully developed will add to the town's present population several thousand people and industries galore.

Beginning at the foot of Seven Devils mountains is an almost inexhaustible supply of pine timber which will of course be utilized as the country develops and pour an immense amount of wealth into Fort Towson. After this land is cleared it is safe to predict it will, or much of it that is too

rough for farms, be planted in orchards and vineyards. Along this line it has been demonstrated in the past few years that commercial peach orchards in proper hands are a safe proposition here and the famous Elberta peach which thrives in this climate outranks the same sort of fruit produced on the overestimated California soil. This is a true condition and not a theory and investigation will prove this statement authentic.

Cotton will easily average a bale to the acre on the uplands here; corn from 50 bushels up, and oats and all other small grains do well, grass grows luxuriantly here and because of short and mild winters stock may graze the year round.

Altogether there is no better country on earth than that which lies tributary to Fort Towson and it must certainly appeal to the man behind the plow in the frigid north who may purchase land here for less than one-half that which he must pay for inferior land where he lives.

It may be truly said that Fort Towson's industrial development has just begun. New life is being infused into her commercial avenues every day, but the town needs the advent of capital to push it to the front. With capital behind it factories will come, brick blocks will be constructed and a new regime will be established in one of the newest and yet one of the oldest towns in Indian Territory.