

PHOTOGRAPHER HARRY CLARENCE WATTON. FROM LANCASTER TO FAME IN OKLAHOMA



From "A STANDARD HISTORY OF OKLAHOMA" By JOSEPH B. THOBURN, 1916

The acknowledged leadership among Oklahoma photographers belongs to H. C. Watton of Oklahoma City. Mr. Watton is not in the class of the ordinary maker of pictures, but has a mechanical and artistic genius in that field which sets him above the majority of men of that vocation. The work that comes from his studio in the Terminal Arcade Building represents the highest standards, and to say that it is a Watton photograph is to speak the last word of praise in respect to the artistic finish.

For ten years Mr. Watton has been established in his profession at Oklahoma City. He is a native of Illinois, born at Shelbyville in Shelby County, April 15, 1872. His father, Granville D. Watton, was born in Ohio, and was of English ancestry, the grandfather, Fielden Watton, having spent most of his life as an Ohio farmer. Granville D. Watton was reared and educated and married in Ohio and by occupation was a contractor and also a teacher in schools. He is still living, being now retired at the age of seventy-five, with his home in Shelbyville, Illinois. He moved from Ohio to Illinois, about 1863. His wife's maiden name was Emeline Wineland, who was born in Ohio, and is now seventy five years of age. Her father was a native of Ohio and of German stock. Mr. H. C. Watton is the fourth son and fifth child in a family of nine living children.

His early boyhood was spent in his native county, and he acquired an education in the common schools. At the age of seventeen, about 1888, he started to learn the photographic art at Shelbyville, Illinois. After serving an apprenticeship of one year, he had as much skill and knowledge of the trade as his preceptor, and after that for four years he was a regular journeyman photographer, working at his trade in many different localities. For a time he was under Fritz Guerin, the noted photographer of St. Louis. For twelve years Mr. Watton was in business at Lancaster, Wisconsin.

From there He came to Oklahoma City and established his studio in 1905. While there were other photographers in the city at the time, and there had been many before him, he is now the oldest photographer in point of continuous business in Oklahoma City.

It is only necessary to speak of some of the honors won by Mr. Watton in the profession of photography to indicate his attainments and standing. He was the winner of the following trophies: 1909, Angelo Trophy; 1909, Silver Loving Cup; 1910, Angelo Trophy; 1912, Silver Loving Cup; 1914, Angelo Trophy; 1914, Wollensack Loving Cup; and of the following medals: 1907, Genre Medal F; 1909, Genre Medal F; 1910, Genre Medal S; 1912, Genre Medal F; 1914, Genre Medal F; 1914, Best Baby, Diploma. All these trophies and medals were won by exhibitions of his art in competition with that of the best photographers in the country. During his professional career Mr. Watton has photographed many notable men. Among them might be mentioned the late Elbert Hubbard, who was a victim on the ill fated Lusitania; C. T. Daly, the noted playwright; Augusta Cottlow, the noted pianist; and many others.

In 1895 Mr. Watton married Miss May Helen Nathan. They are the parents of two charming daughters: Frances is now attending Knox College at Galesburg, Illinois; and Helen Maria is still at home.

Mr. Watton is well known in Oklahoma City affairs. In politics he is a democrat. During his residence at Lancaster, Wisconsin, he was a member of the city council and did much in a local political way. Through his profession he has acquired a well deserved success and prosperity and for twenty six years has been a competent photographer. He has witnessed a great many changes in his art during that time. His studio is now acknowledged as the largest and best equipped in the State of Oklahoma, and his patronage is not confined to people in and in the immediate vicinity of Oklahoma City, but comes from all over the state and from many parts of Northwest Texas.

