

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
OF DR. R. O PRIDEAUX

March 29, 1929

The Leader is indebted to Woodward & Tiernan Printing Co., of St. Louis, Missouri, publishers of the history of the cattle industry of Texas, published in 1895, for the biographical sketch of Dr. R. O. Prideaux, who recently died in this city: Graham, Texas.

Dr. R. O. Prideaux was born in Somersetshire, England, February 29, 1844. His father, Josiah Prideaux, was a physician and a native of the same shire. He was born in 1800 and was educated in one of the best schools in London; but finding his profession overcrowded in European countries he decided to emigrate to the New World. Havana, Cuba, was the location first chosen, but after one year's experience of life in that land of perpetual summer, he came to the United States, landing in New Orleans in 1856. Traveling by steamboat up the Mississippi, he reached St. Louis, from thence making his way to Morris, Illinois, where he established an excellent practice and continued to reside until his death in 1882.

Our subject, R. O. Prideaux, had commenced attendance at the English schools before his father gave way to that wandering spirit which induced him to seek a permanent resident abroad, but his education was principally gained in Morris, Illinois. Selecting the profession in which his father had gained distinction, he became a student at Ann Arbor, Michigan, and afterwards at the Electric Medical Institute, Cincinnati. Seeking, after his graduation, a promising point where he might commence the practice of medicine, he traveled by wagon through

Missouri and Kansas to the Osage Mission, where he remained for a year and was very successful in a professional way. Then he moved to Osage City, and later assisted in locating the town of Chanute, Kansas, where he remained until May, 1874. He then turned toward Texas with the intention of finding within its limits the location of his future home. He had grown hopeless of a future for Kansas more promising than bankruptcy, because of the large school district, township, and State municipal indebtedness which made the taxes enormously heavy.

Dr. Prideaux had first visited Texas in the winter of 1871-2, traveling by wagon, and had passed at Boggy Depot, the end of the Missouri, Kansas & Texas Railroad, which was then building southward. He passed into Texas over Red River at Rock Crossing and journeyed on through Sherman, Pilot Point, Denton, Fort Worth and Cleburne, crossing the Brazos at Kimball, and proceeding by way of Brownwood, Colorado, and Post. At Brownwood (which then included a store, a log hotel and a palisaded pen to protect the horses of residents and travelers from Indians), he was detained three days by a snowstorm. The latter part of this trip was made on horseback in company with some cowmen who were visiting county seats to look up brand records, and ascertained who had sold cattle recently and if any of their own stock had been sold by unauthorized persons. Being pleased with what he had seen of the State, he moved there in 1874 and settled on the head of the Trinity River, Archer County. He intended that this should prove a permanent location, for he married during the year and felt that the possession of a family should act as a restraining influence to prevent further wanderings. He was then the first white settler in the county, and when others followed, was active in pressing its organization and the establishment of a county

seat. He has since been continually occupied with the cares of some office, and as Justice of the Peace, County Commissioner and County Judge, his acts have ever met with the approbation of his fellow citizens and won him their confidence and esteem.

Dr. Prideaux commenced in the cattle business upon his location in Archer County with a herd of about forty head, purchasing others from time to time, until he had secured a fairly good start. Risking nothing in speculations, he has conducted his business on a safe and profitable basis, and the net returns, tho never remarkably large, are certain. His property is the result of industry and business application, has been won honestly and is consequently well deserved. His home is near Farmer, where he has a ranch of 4000 acres and controls an additional tract of 2,500 acres, which he leases for grazing purposes.

Dr. Prideaux was married in 1873 to Miss Sophia Johnson, who was born in Sweden, in 1854. They are the parents of nine children. All of them except the eldest were born in Archer County, and to Miss May Prideaux belongs the honor of being the first white child born within its limits.

Dr. Prideaux is a strong believer in the need and efficacy of a thorough education, and has always exerted himself toward making the school system of his county as perfect as possible. He was instrumental in establishing the first school in Archer County, while it was yet attached to Clay for judicial purposes, and contributed largely to its support.

He has been an active worker in every undertaking calculated to advance the interest of his section, and the State of Texas has no citizen more thoroughly impregnated with the true spirit of

progressiveness. He has never practiced medicine in Texas, but is ever ready to render assistance in cases where no other physician is obtainable, and in this respect, as in all others, he is prompt and willing to respond to the call of those who are in need of his family help. He was a man universally respected and esteemed, and in social as in political life was one of the most popular members of his community.