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# BALLAD OF A COUNTY SEAT

By Pat Kourt

Politics causes decline, or it increases fame.  
It can build towns' budgets. . .or mar a good name.

In east Washita County, folks think of an early day  
When those on the west side wanted politics THEIR way.

The county seat was a prize that many sought to win;  
A series of court battles didn't bring it to an end.

Appeal to block the vote was the county attorney's goal.  
But his son delayed the papers (the way the story's told).

The injunction filed in federal court was just a bit too late,  
So citizens of Cloud Chief decided the young man's fate.

He was tarred, feathered, and "rode" out on a rail,  
With his embarrassed father close upon his trail.

After some delay, a vote proved Cordell had won.  
Some claimed, though, an illegal act had been done!

Resists of seat removal occurred now and then;  
Finally, with more struggle, the move was settled again.

Or so everyone thought.

In nineteen hundred and four, Congress had its first say —  
"We think supporting Cloud Chief is the only right way."

As the case was reopened, townspeople felt just great;  
The courthouse was theirs as the law seemed to relate!

But a long trip to Washington by three concerned men  
Got a special bill passed to give Cordell the win!

The precious bill was copied and displayed to be shared  
As proof of a victory to those who had cared.

In nineteen hundred and nine, the frame courthouse burned;  
The bill signed by Roosevelt was gone — it was learned.

Thus ended the skirmishings for one county seat.  
One site is now a ghost town; the other is complete.

Politics causes decline, or it increases fame.  
It can build towns' budgets. . .or mar a good name. ■

*PAT KOURT supervises the library and teaches Creative Writing at Thomas High School. She has been a loyal WESTVIEW supporter since 1981, the first year of publication.*