

**ORA VERALYN
EDDLEMAN
REED
1881-1968**



**WRITER
EXTRAORDINAIRE**

The year 1894 was a milestone for Muskogee. The Dawes Commission administered enrollment of Five Civilized Tribes members, oil wells were drilled on the east side, a fire razed the downtown, and Henry Kendall College and Greenhill Cemetery were established.

At the same time, David and Mary Daugherty Eddleman relocated from Denton, Texas with their nine children, including George, Myrta and Ora Veralyn, born in 1881. She traced her Cherokee heritage through her mother's side of the family, but she also expressed pride in her father and her two uncles for their service to the Confederacy.

In 1897, David and Mary, along with her cousin Charles Daugherty, bought the three-month-old newspaper Muskogee Morning Times. It became the first daily paper in Indian Territory to contract to receive Associated Press wire copy. They placed the publication under the management of George and Charles. Myrta was the business manager and Ora, a student at Henry Kendall College, worked as the society editor and city news reporter, managed the Associated Press stories, and proofread the paper. This became a major job and excellent experience for a young reporter.

In 1898, Myrta and Ora established "Twin Territories: The Indian Magazine of Oklahoma," a monthly literary magazine. Ora became the editor and chief fiction writer, using the pseudonym Mignon Schreiber, meaning Little Writer. The petite, thin woman also became one of the founders – and only female member – of the Indian Territory Press Association.

Proud of her Cherokee ancestry, she wrote articles to help dispel myths about their culture and to preserve Cherokee lore and legends. Articles featured American Indian history, including biographies of prominent Indian leaders. She solicited pieces from other American Indian authors, including noted Creek poet Alexander Posey and Cherokee Joshua Ross.

In April 1904, Ora married Kansas City journalist Charles Reed. By the next year, she was the Indian Department editor in "Sturm's Statehood Magazine." With a circulation of ten thousand, it provided a voice for many writers in the area and promoted the towns of the new state. But soon Charles Reed's oil-exploration business began to move the family from place to place.

By 1924, the Reeds were living in Casper, Wyoming. When a friend launched the state's first radio station, Ora offered to host a half-hour talk show, filled with commentaries on how to achieve contentment in everyday life. The "Sunshine Lady" answered listeners' calls and letters. The show was wildly successful until the couple moved to Tulsa in 1932. She continued writing for various publications until she died at age 87 in 1968.

Ora Eddleman Reed is remembered for recording American Indian history at the turn of the twentieth century. This was a time of great transition in Indian Territory, and her fiction work often found its themes, characters, and tensions in the coming together of cultures. She wrote of white people who arrived starting in the late 1880s as well as the Indian people who were struggling to make sense of this new world.