

Robert L. Owen Was 89 Saturday

Thomas P. Gore, Also
Blind, With Him at Lunch

WASHINGTON, Feb. 3—(P)—Blind Robert L. Owen, Oklahoma, oldest living former senator, returned to the capitol today to celebrate his eighty-ninth birthday.

At Owen's side at a luncheon sat his Oklahoma colleague of the 60th Congress, Thomas P. Gore, who also is blind.

Owen and Gore became Soonerland's first United States senators when the one-time Indian territory was admitted to statehood in 1907.

Both are still active.

Owen, physically straight and mentally sharp, sat down and discussed world affairs.

"The only real enemy of the human race is ignorance," he said, adding that this world war is "revolution to abolish illiteracy."

Owen is author of a phonetic global alphabet which he has sent to world leaders, including Premier Stalin, and he contemplates publishing it in more than 30 languages so that "all men can learn one language and understand each other."

Speakers praised Owen for "leaving his fingerprints on all significant legislation of his time," particularly the federal reserve act.

But nobody thought to cut the birthday cake.

WEATHER

Oklahoma — Cloudy drizzle changing to rain Sunday; warmer, increasing wind Sunday.

*Front Page
and Evening News*

Former Senator Owen Observes 89th Birthday

WASHINGTON, Feb. 3—(P)—Robert L. Owen, one of Oklahoma's first senators, celebrates his 89th birthday today and he has big plans for the future.

"I expect to teach the people of the whole world my global alphabet in the next two years," Owen told a reporter.

Now blind, the still active former senator and Washington attorney is devoting virtually all his time to promoting his new alphabet, although he still is counsel for some Oklahoma Indian tribes.

The Oklahoma congressional delegation will give a birthday luncheon in his honor at the capitol.

"My health is perfect," he said. "I don't see how I could feel any better."

Born in Lynchburg, Va., in 1856, Owen practiced law in Indian Territory, became Indian agent for the Five Civilized Tribes in 1885, organized a bank at Muskogee and became its president in 1890. When Oklahoma was admitted to the union in 1907, Owen was elected U. S. senator and served until 1925. He then opened a law office in Washington.

OKLAHOMA'S PIONEER SENATORS

The 89th birthday anniversary, February 5, 1945, of ex-senator Robert L. Owen of Oklahoma was fittingly observed by the Oklahoma delegation in Washington. The second guest of honor was the honorable ex-senator Thomas P. Gore of Oklahoma. The incident recalled a bit of Oklahoma history. Senators Owen and Gore were elected by the Oklahoma state legislature on December 10, 1907, and were sworn in as members of the United States senate on December 16, 1907. They were the first United States senators to represent the state.

Senator Owen was co-author with Senator Carter Glass of the Federal Reserve act which has weathered the financial storms of change, even though badly administered at times. Senator Gore rendered equally valuable service with his voice and vote against monopolistic control and for the promotion of agriculture.

These two pioneer senators were able men imbued only with a burning desire to serve the public. They were not only able speakers to command the attention of the public and the senate, but progressive thinkers as well. They loved the constitution, our traditions, and our institutions of civil liberty. They sponsored tax reductions and, with Jefferson, believed that a wise government was one frugally administered. They opposed and voted against extravagant appropriations and all appropriations for political purposes. They were sentinels upon the ramparts of the republic, guarding the public interests.

They were self-made men. They came up the hard way through sacrifice and hard labor. They were graduates of what some would term the "old school", firmly believing in the biblical admonition that "in the sweat of thy face only shalt thou eat bread." They believed and defended our system of private enterprise with its open door and invitation to all to enter and work out their own destiny. They believed in protecting this great field of human activity from predatory interests and grasping monopolies, leaving a field of free competition and equality of opportunity and deserved reward.

They were sturdy men and statesmen representing the pioneer element and development which laid the foundations for one of the greatest states in the union. These are but a few of the qualifying fundamentals of Oklahoma's pioneer sentinels which forty years of intervening history now ranks with the great.