

SAND SPRINGS CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL MUSEUM

Connecting the Past, Present and Future

The story of Sand Springs and its founder, Charles Page

Charles Page was born in 1860 to a farm family in Arnott, Wisconsin. He was one of eight children. Charles was ten years old when he left school to drive a freight wagon when his father became too ill to work. He also caught rabbits, dressed them, and sold each for a dime. After saving \$100, he bought and sold cattle for a profit. His father died when he was eleven, creating tremendous hardship for the family, and left a permanent imprint on Page. He wanted to help those that had suffered similar experiences. The resume of jobs he held to help support his family include cook, general store clerk, railroad call boy, brakeman, fireman, special agent, and Pinkerton detective.

He married his first wife, Lucille (Lucy) in 1880. She had one son whom Page adopted. They moved to Washington State, and he worked for the Northern Pacific Railroad. He became a hotel owner and commodities trader. He also searched for gold in Canada, making some money but lost all of his savings in the Panic of 1892. In 1900 he moved his family to Colorado Springs, where he engaged in real estate development, power plants, and oil well drilling operations. He still continued to send support money to his mother. He moved his family to Oklahoma City in 1901, then to Tulsa in 1903. He purchased land that would be the location of the Children's Home and also the beginning of the town of Sand Springs.

Page began an independent drilling operation. Early strikes in Taneha, Glenpool, Chandler, and Seminole became the basis of his wealth. In 1905 he struck it big, making his first million dollars. His wife, Lucy, died that same year.

Charles Page, entrepreneur and oilman, sent Capt. Brinton F. Breeding of the Salvation Army to look at land he purchased west of Tulsa in 1906. Page hired Breeding to oversee work that would transform the rolling, vacant land into a haven for children that had lost their parents and also for widows and their children. Page sent nineteen orphaned children to Breeding to provide a home for them on his land near the "sandy springs" that flowed freely with cool, clear water. He married his second wife, Lucile, in 1910, and they adopted a daughter, Mary.

Page did not call the kids orphans. He always call them his "kids." These kids were the first step in realizing Charles Page's dream to establish a children's home and a widows' colony.