



**Navigation optimists pressed forward with the City of Muskogee, but fledgling shipping schemes were no match for the railroads. It was not until 1939, when the Corps issued General Orders #3 and #4 creating the Tulsa District, that the odds began to shift toward success for water resource development in the Tulsa region.**

## **THE CITY**

### **OF MUSKOGEE.**

In 1908 another steamboat, the *City of Muskogee*, followed the same route. But the little boomlet in navigation was short-lived. It ran aground on a river clogged with sand and gravel that held no competition for dropping railway rates.<sup>21</sup>

Downstream, in the Little Rock and Pine Bluff areas, navigation promoters tried repeatedly to fan the fires of river travel. But little progress on water resources issues occurred in the region until the early 1920s. That was when Tulsa banker E. Fred Johnson persuaded Graham to devote his energies to promoting water resources.

Over the first 50 years of this century, numerous civic improvement associations either adopted or formed around the idea of water development. Most were centered along the Arkansas River and were named by some combination of the following: Arkansas, Basin, Improvement, River, Development, Association, or Committee. Many were affiliated with the Tulsa Commercial Club or its eventual successor, the Metropolitan Tulsa Chamber of Commerce.

Meanwhile, to the south, the Denison, Texas, Chamber of Commerce was pressing for construction of a "diversion dam" at Baer's Ferry, six miles northwest of Denison. It was to become the site of the future Denison Dam on the Red River, but not before a fight which extended over generations, from the Southwest to Washington and back again.

It took the 1936 Flood Control Act (which Kerr called the Magna Carta for the upstream tributaries of the Mississippi)<sup>22</sup> with its Oklahoma projects, to produce the long-sought Tulsa District office.

It was General Orders No. 3 and No. 4 that did it. The first was issued by the Chief of Engineers, by authority of the Secretary of War, on May 4, 1939. It established the Tulsa District, effective July 1, 1939. Then General Orders No. 4, on May 17, 1939, amended the original to clearly define the new District's boundaries.

Clearly, much had been done. A stage to play out the scenes of major redefinition of this land's character was set. The greatest work remained ahead.