

# THOMAS MCAFEE BIXBY

Photographer, Postmaster, Insurance Agent, Newspaper Editor

Born: March 10, 1865 in Linn Co., IA

Died: 1929 in Lawton, OK

Thomas McAfee Bixby, son of Emory I. Bixby and Lydia R. (Bardwell) Bixby, was born in or around Marion, Linn Co., Iowa on March 10, 1865. His father was a Civil War veteran and his mother was the daughter of a pioneer physician in Linn Co., Iowa. Thomas grew up in Iowa and was married to Margaret Row in Linn Co., Iowa around 1885. Bixby was perhaps exposed to photography and the newspaper publishing business by his uncle, Jesse Bixby, who was the editor of the *Marion Register* in Marion, Iowa. Thomas and Margaret Bixby came to Kansas around 1890 where he built the "Bixby" building and established a photography studio on Broadway in Herington, KS. It is believed that Bixby had his photography studio upstairs and A.J. Carruth had his jewelry business in the lower level of the Bixby Building. He later expanded his photography business to a studio in Abilene, tending to the Abilene studio every Friday. In 1892, Bixby served as Lyon Township Treasurer and in 1893 he ran for Dickinson County Clerk on a Democratic ticket. He served as Herington Postmaster until resigning in 1897. As early as 1899, Thomas Bixby was also serving as an insurance agent in Herington. Bixby apparently left Herington between 1900 and 1902 and moved to Oklahoma where he went into business with his brother William W. Bixby. William was a lawyer and together they formed the partnership Bixby & Bixby at 226 Ave. C. in Lawton, Oklahoma engaging in the business of Law, Real Estate, Loans, and Insurance. Thomas Bixby also worked for the *Lawton State Democrat* newspaper in Lawton, OK. In February of 1905, T.M. Bixby and J. Roy Williams became part co-owners of the *Lawton State Democrat* and in 1907, the *Lawton State Democrat* merged with the *Lawton Constitution* forming the *Lawton Constitution-Democrat* with J. Roy Williams and Thomas M. Bixby as the editors and publishers. By 1911, Thomas Bixby and Charles Wilson were publishing a free afternoon paper *The Hornet* in Lawton. Bixby later became chairman of the County Election Board in Lawton, OK.



Thomas and Margaret Bixby were the parents of three children: Helen, Dorothy, and one child who died in infancy. Thomas M. Bixby died in 1929 in Lawton, Oklahoma and Margaret Bixby died in 1841. Both are buried in Highland Cemetery, Lawton, Oklahoma.