

Before the Indian Territory was surveyed and section lines established, the main road out of Murphy to the River followed the foot of the hills west and north until about even with the ferry. Then the road went west for about a mile down to the river. Another road wound up east and south over the hills toward Peggs, with a fork going up Spring Creek to Locust Grove. When the roads were being located on the newly staked section lines Mr. Layton recalls the first little bridges constructed. They were of all log construction. Uprights were sunk into the ground to solid footing, stringers and cross braces notched to fit, and the cross planking was of split logs notched to fit on the stringers. Abutments were anchored and held in place with rock riprap. No power machinery had come into use then and all of the road work was done with horse power, slip scraper and by hand.

On this day driving thru Murphy Community the half dozen houses scattered about belie the fact that here was once a busy little town. No stores exist anymore, the railroad was removed several years ago, and an air of sadness seems to hover about. In passing, when the railroad first came thru it was known as the Missouri, Oklahoma & Gulf, but was shortly changed to Kansas, Oklahoma and Gulf. The high railroad pill that carried the rails thru the town still remain somewhat as a monument to a happier day. Ora remembers the construction days of the railroad too. He was a strong young fellow and worked on up the line in the building and laying of the tracks. There was another section of the construction coming from the north at the same time. The two crews met and finished the construction in the center of the little town of Strang. It was a day of celebration, as one of the railroad officials got off the inaugural passenger train, a spike was removed from the track and a gold spike driven in its place. After speeches and best wishes, and "you guys never had it so good," the railroad was dedicated to the great progress of the country. As the train pulled away, officials stood on the rear platform with hands raised as if to bless the Indians with something tantamount to "you need another hole in your head." Perhaps some unspoken thoughts were in retaliation to the fact that the railroad official bent the golden spike when he was driving it.

In later years Mr. Layton worked as a section hand on the railroad. He recalls that day in May, 1920 when the town of Peggs was blown away. The section foreman took all but Layton and another man to help in the rescue and relief of the stricken community.

He tells of a time when he had taken a wagon load of corn to the elevator at Chouteau. While there a prairie fire came from the south and many men worked hard to save the elevator and the town, using wet gunny sacks to fight the blaze. A Mr. Snodgrass, who run the elevator, had the only car in the town at that time, and to save it men pushed and hali carried it to safety. He remembers it was a bright red car with wheels that stood four feet high, and had little rubber tires. As was the bane of car owners in those early days, the car would not start when needed. During those days quite a bit of cotton was raised along Grand River and when it was gathered they hauled it to the gin at Chouteau, which was run by Glen Adkins. Another time when he was over at Chouteau, he was visiting with others at the depot waiting to see the train come thru. In those days the mail trains did not stop but grabbed the mail sack as it went by. Incoming mail would be thrown off the train as it came by the depot. A short distance down the track was a standard where the postmaster would hang the sack of outgoing mail. Then, Fess Pollard was Postmaster, and they enjoyed seeing him hurrying to get the mail pouch on the standard. Fess had a peg leg and made quite a racket trying to run, when he was a little late.