

NULL, O. E. et al. INTERVIEW 9199

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LEGEND & STORY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

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Field worker's name Linnaeus B. RanckThis report made on (date) November 1 19371. This legend was O. E. Null- O. A. Black, O. E. Enfield
secured from (name) _____Address Arnett, Oklahoma.This person is (male or female) White, Negro, Indian,

If Indian, give tribe _____

2. Origin and history of legend or story Old Day County3. Write out the legend or story as completely as possible. Use blank
sheets and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets
attached 5

Linnaeus B. Ranck
Investigator
November 1, 1937

Interview with O. E. Null, O. A. Black,
and O. E. Enfield, Arnett, Oklahoma.

SOME HISTORY OF OLD DAY COUNTY

O. E.-Null, O. A. Black, and O. E. Enfield who gave the following facts in an interview are early day residents of old Day County, about which they told.

By presidential proclamation, as we know, the Cheyenne and Arapaho country was opened to white settlement April 19, 1892. By the same authority old Day County, a part of it, was established. However, it was not designated as "Day County" in the proclamation, instead it was named as "County E".

However a man by the name of Day was employed to build the County's first courthouse in Ioland, of course, the first county seat and the first town in the county, too. It was a very small, unpretentious structure to be sure. This man Day who built it prevailed upon the then county commissioners of the county to rename the county after him and they did. The story is still current with the first settlers of Day County yet surviving in this country that Day promised to give the commissioners for the benefit of the new county \$100 in cash for so honoring him. There is no record, however, that he ever delivered his part of the agreement.

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When the Cheyenne and Arapaho country opened and Day County was established there was not a trace of a town in the county. The question therefore arises as to why the proclamation opening the country to settlement and defining the boundaries of "County 2" designated Iolanda as the county seat, and for that matter designated the exact location where it should be established. The early settlers explain it this way:

Where Ioland was founded as the first county seat and the first town in the county there is a little valley in the bottoms of the South Canadian river comprising about a quarter of a section of land. Since the country had all been previously surveyed and the findings and field notes of the survey had become of official record it is thought the authorities decided that the general topography of the county advised placing the first county seat at the point where Ioland was located and built up immediately following the opening. It does not appear that any early-day settlers of old Day County can tell us now it happened that the first county seat and town in the county was Ioland.

The first officials for Day County were appointed, some of them were:

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Board of County Commissioners: John Reed, J. N. Webb, and Chas. Blackstone, Chairman.

Sheriff.....Semer Mason.

County Attorney.....W. H. Bristol.

County Clerk.....Curtley.

County Treasurer.....R. B. Ransom.

County Supt. of Schools..... Clara Black.

County Surveyor..... Adams.

County Assessor.....E. H. Bristol.

At first general election after the opening Day County voted on a new set of county officers and elected the following:

Probate Judge.....Robert Alcorn.

Sheriff.....R. L. Ramsey.

County Attorney & Supt. of Schools.....Shannon McCray.

County Clerk.....H. I. Walck.

County Treasurer.....H. E. Downing.

County Surveyor.....E. D. Walck.

The fall of 1892 the first school in Day County was organized and established at Ioland through the leadership of one Arthur Black who had settled in the county near Ioland. This same Arthur Black still lives in this section, now a resident of Ellis County. The first school was designated District No. 1 and included all of Day County.

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The old town of Ioland was never more than a mere village. It had the county seat abruptly and illegally taken from it November 13, 1893, and relocated at Grand. Most of the county officials at that time were from the section of the county nearer Grand and are said to have favored the moving. It is said, too, that the County Commissioners ordered the county seat moved to Grand, the reason being given that the water at Ioland was bad. Thereafter the town declined and nothing remains of it today.

Famous men in Oklahoma history sojourned at old Ioland in the early day. While it was still the county seat of Day County, the distinguished Judge Burford held court there at intervals. On one occasion when stopping there on his circuit he learned soon after arriving in the evening there were no matters to come before his court at that particular term. He retired early at Ioland's only lodging place, intending to journey on the following morning. Early in the night the sheriff of the county happened to recall that court had not been formally opened and closed and accordingly went to the bedroom of Judge Burford, reminding him of this lest the Judge might depart in the morning without observing this old custom

and legal formality. It is said the Judge was in bed but sitting up in bed he then and there ordered the sheriff to open and close court in due form and the sheriff did. The eloquent voice of the illustrious Temple Houston was heard in the rude little court house at old Ioland before the county seat was transplanted to Grand.

The first newspaper ever published in Day County, The Day County Tribune, set up shop at Ioland just a short time after the Cheyenne and Arapaho country opened for settlement. When the county seat was taken to Grand it immediately followed. Frank Smith, who edited and published this first newspaper, and his father Harry Smith, were still living just a year or two ago in the vicinity of Arapaho it is thought.

Old Day County, as a subdivision of Oklahoma Territory, was doomed, however. The greatest drawback and impediment to its continued existence was the turbulent South Canadian River coursing from west to east through the very center of it. For days sometimes weeks at a time the river could not be forded. The county never got a railroad and its topography and geographical location was such as nearly to preclude the possibility of its ever getting one. The South Canadian River, however, was a natural and logical boundary line to separate two counties which it does today.