

PHARISS, J. E. - INTERVIEW.

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Mead, Jasper H.-Investigator.  
Indian Pioneer History-S-149.  
March 28, 1938.

Interview with J. E. Phariss,  
Rt.2, Verden, Oklahoma.

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My father is W. A. Phariss who was born in Texas, seventy years ago. He is still living. Mother was Nettie Hover, also born in Texas. She is still living at the age of sixty-eight.

I was born January 28, 1895, in Texas, forty-three years ago. I came with my parents to the Indian Territory and the first place we landed was at Duncan, a very small place with no pavement and not even plank sidewalks. There were just two, maybe three small stores, a blacksmith shop and post office. We used to tie our horses to blackjacks where Duncan's main street is now.

The soil around Duncan is sandy, rather rough with lots of blackjacks and post caks. Most of the country, however, was what you would call open country and free range; fences were a very rare thing.

The town of Duncan was named for W. M. Duncan who ran a small general merchandise store on Cow Creek about four or five miles east of where the present town of Duncan is now.

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The main water supply around Duncan, forty years ago, came from dug wells and creeks; the creek water being used mostly for stock water.

The Rock Island Railroad came through Duncan in about 1893 and went into Fort Worth, Texas, about 1896. After this road was completed from the south to the north, it did away with the Chisholm trail which followed the railroad had practically all the way from Red River to Kansas City, with the exception of a few small variations.

The only officers were United States Marshals working under the Arkansas law. The ones I knew were Tom and Earnest Lilley and Ben Owsley. These men only looked for real criminals. It was safer for a man to live and get by then than it is today.

All the men folk, forty years ago, wore their big hats and pistols, and those who didn't have a buggy team had a saddle horse, and a good one.

There was plenty of wild game around Duncan such as deer, turkeys, antelopes and prairie chickens. There were also wild Indian ponies.

What little farming was done, was on a small scale. Sometimes the crops were eaten up by wild game.

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I have lived around Chickasha for twenty years and am  
a farmer by trade.