

HOWELL, THOMAS BELL

INTERVIEW

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HOWELL, THOMAS BELL. INTERVIEW.

Form A-(S-149)

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BIOGRAPHY FORM  
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Carl H. Mayfield

This report made on (date) July 17, 1937

1. Name Thomas Bell Howell

2. Post Office Address Gaymon, Oklahoma.

3. Residence address (or location) \_\_\_\_\_

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month June Day 7 Year 1869

5. Place of birth Middleton, Tennessee

6. Name of Father W. R. Howell. Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Other information about father \_\_\_\_\_

7. Name of Mother \_\_\_\_\_ Place of birth \_\_\_\_\_

Other information about mother \_\_\_\_\_

Notes or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story of the person interviewed. Refer to Manual for suggested subjects and questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 5.

An Interview with Mr. T. B. Howell, Guymon, Oklahoma.

By - Carl H. Mayfield, Field Worker.

July 17, 1937.

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Mr. Howell moved to No Man's Land in December, 1903, from Seymour, Texas. He came by Altus and was a week in crossing from the southeast corner to the northwest corner of old Greer County. He filed on a claim twelve miles north of Guymon.

During the winter and spring months of 1904 he gathered bones on the prairies from his place to within eight or ten miles of where Elkhart, Kansas, is now located. He was late getting home on several occasions and to keep from getting lost in a new country he put up a tower in his yard so his wife could hang a lantern on it at night. He could see it for several miles. One night he saw a light and started toward it. The mules kept trying to go to the left. When he came to a one wire fence he realized that he had spotted the wrong light. He had traveled about six miles northeast of his claim to a place near where Mouser, Texas, is now located.

He received seven dollars per ton for the bones and some times it would take him a week to get a ton. At that

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time. I spent two years at Atoka and sold out to Dr. Folsom, then moved to Pauls Valley, where I began the practice of medicine.

In 1876, I moved to my present location, three miles west and one mile north of Davis. Here, I established a good medical practice, sometimes riding as far as Healdton to see a patient. I would go on horseback, usually riding down one day and coming back the next.

My mother moved four miles west of the present town of Davis while I was attending school in Baltimore. She settled on the old Moncrief place, which is now owned by a Mr. Smith. My first wife was Lizzie Grant, a daughter of Tom Grant. Tom Grant later married my sister.

The first store around Davis was called the Washita store and was owned and operated by Matt Wolfe. Apparently he wanted to own the whole place and did not want anyone else to own property there, so Sam Davis went down to the present town of Davis and established a home and began operating a store.

Early settlers in this country were the Gardners, Brad Camp, Sam Garvin, Tom Grant, Mitchells, Wantlings, Kimberlins and Joe Myers. The Kimberlins and Wantlings

the herd and thought he was riding a good horse, but he could not crowd the stallion fast enough to make him break a single foot. The last he heard of this stallion he was above the Point Rock Ranch on the Cimarron River and later in Colorado where a Mexican shot him too low in the neck to crease him but the horse was never worth anything after that.

Lot Heaton, the foreman on the Anchor Dee Ranch, told Mr. Howell in town one day that he heard the "nesters" were going to fence the range, burn the grass, dog the cattle and run the cowmen out of the country. Mr. Howell replied; "I can only speak for myself, but I have a two wire fence around my place, which was all I could afford. I also have a fire guard plowed around it. And if any cattle break into my field I will put them out, but if they show fight and I have to kill any of them I will be man enough to bring you the hides". Mr. Heaton saw he was a square shooter and told him if he needed any wire or post to go down to the Ten Ranch and get them.

Mr. Howell raised a good crop that year, especially

watermelons and a few pie melons. He told the ranch hands to help themselves whenever they wanted a melon but he did not want them to tear up the vines. On the east end of the field he had some extra good pie melons. One of them was about the size of a ten gallon cream can. One day he missed this big melon and later found it out in the pasture with four knife blades broken off inside it. On Saturday he brought a wagon load of melons to town and Lot Heaton walked up to the load and asked if these were the kind that broke knife blades. Mr. Howell laughed because he knew then who had gotten the big melon and learned that Mr. Heaton had a new four blade knife costing about two dollars and that he had broken all of the blades trying to open the melon.

That spring Mr. Howell used a walking plow to mark off the road from Guymon north of the Kansas line, which was one of the first in what is now Texas County. He sold his first maize for a dollar a hundred at Optima, Texas, which was about ten miles southeast of his claim. The roads were easier to travel over at that time.

In the spring of 1907, Mr. Howell went down to the Ten Ranch to see Harry Clark on some business matters. Mr. Clark was peeling the hides off of some old cows that had died. He would skin the legs and by ripping the critter down the belly he could tie the cows feet to a tree. He was using a big saddle horse called "Possum" to peel the hide. Old "Possum" was one of the best all-round cow horses in the country at that time.

Mr. Howell raised his best crop in 1910 and sold his maize for a dollar, but sold some of it for sixty cents a hundred weight.

In 1913, Mr. Howell served as clerk for a group of successful farmers in establishing the Eula Christian Church, fourteen miles north and one mile west of Guymon. The Reverend Mr. Haddock of Erick was the first minister.

Several years later Mr. Howell imported one of the first herds of Guernsey cattle into this section of Oklahoma. He retired from the farm in 1932. He has always been a faithful worker for the church which he helped to build for the community.

INDEX CARDS:

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