

### **Notice of Copyright**

Published and unpublished materials may be protected by Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S. Code). Any copies of published and unpublished materials provided by the Western History Collections are for research, scholarship, and study purposes only.

Use of certain published materials and manuscripts is restricted by law, by reason of their origin, or by donor agreement. For the protection of its holdings, the Western History Collections also reserves the right to restrict the use of unprocessed materials, or books and documents of exceptional value and fragility. Use of any material is subject to the approval of the Curator.

### **Citing Resources from the Western History Collections**

For citations in published or unpublished papers, this repository should be listed as the Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

An example of a proper citation:

Oklahoma Federation of Labor Collection, M452, Box 5, Folder 2. Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

BRYANT, JOHN

INTERVIEW

#12667

425

BRYANT, JOHN.

INTERVIEW.

12667.

W. T. Holland,  
Investigator,  
Jan. 13, 1938.

An Interview With John Bryant,  
Red Fork, or Sapulpa Rd., 33d Ave.  
and Southwest Ave., Tulsa, Okla.

When a boy of seventeen, I decided that my fortune lay farther west. I was then in Missouri, where I was born in 1869. I had heard of the wide open spaces, of Indians, wild game, great herds of cattle, all of which appealed to me, and I came to Indian Territory in 1886. I traveled in style, for that day, as I came on a train. I'll admit we didn't make very much speed, as our train was a mixed train, carrying freight and passengers too. We took most all day in making the trip from Vinita to Tulsa.

The station at Tulsa then was a box car. Tulsa was the terminal then, and a Y was provided in which to turn the trains. The train spent the night in Tulsa, leaving for Vinita in the morning. I spent the first two or three days in Tulsa out at Aunt Jane Owens' hotel. She was a Creek Indian and ran a hotel on Main Street, near the railroad. I recall that she had a hog pen across where Main Street now crosses the railroad.

Then, I don't suppose there were more than thirty-five houses of any kind in Tulsa. Charlie Robertson ran a black-

BRYANT, JOHN.

INTERVIEW.

12667.

-2-

smith shop at a place which is now on First and Boulder.

Bob Bynum, Bob Lynch and J. M. Hall were the merchants.

In coming to Tulsa from Vinita, I do not remember seeing any plowed ground; it was all open prairie. I soon got a job riding herd for Judge Moore, a Creek Indian. He operated northwest of Tulsa and ran from two to three thousand head of longhorned cattle. All was open range then, or practically all.

Judge Moore and George Bullett did do some farming in addition to their cattle business. The Bullett place was northeast of Tulsa and the old ranch house now stands at Norfolk and East Haskell Avenue in Tulsa. I worked a couple of years for Mr. Bullett, also an Indian. About 1888 I bought a cottonwood house from Mr. Bullett and moved it to a four acre tract of land which was where the Katy Depot now stands on North Main. I later sold this land for \$20.00; \$5.00 per acre.

Upon my arrival, I had to buy a permit to work. This I secured from Judge Moore, the Creek judge for whom I worked. The judge was to the Creek Indians what a chief was to the Cherokees.

BRYANT, JOHN.

INTERVIEW.

12667.

-3-

There were practically no fences here then, and the railroad had a single wire for their telegraph line.

This was during the time when a six gun was about all the law we had. Practically everybody carried a gun or two. However, I found that a person who attended solely to his own business and didn't talk too much, got along O. K., but a liar or a thief was not shown much consideration. First offenders got off light, but were advised to look out thereafter.

I have helped to brand cattle right where the Tulsa County Courthouse now stands at 6th and Boulder. There was a peach orchard there then. That territory belonged to George Perryman then, and he later built a fine home at that location, his widow, years later, selling the site for \$60,000.00, after Tulsa had grown out there and that site was wanted as a location for the courthouse.

I received \$1.50 per day and my grub. I rode the range, drove the chuck wagon, helped in the roundup and branding, and did just anything that needed to be done.

I made the "Strip" run and filed on a claim near Jennings. I went back to Missouri and was married in 1890 to Lillie

BRYANT, JOHN.

INTERVIEW.

12667.

-4-

Rathhomer. We immediately returned and then lived near Stillwater. In 1898 I bought a place in Red Fork, where I now live. I worked quite a long time for Dr. Charles Clinton, on a ranch. His ranch was southeast of Red Fork, on Deep Fork and Duck Creek, down near Beggs, in what is now Okmulgee County. He operated pretty extensively there; hauled lots of cattle.

#### FIRST OIL WELL.

I was working for Dr. Clinton, in 1901, when he and Dr. J. W. C. Bland drilled the first oil well in the Red Fork field. I hauled the boiler and other material necessary for this operation. Thirty years ago I drilled a well on my own premises. My well is still producing, I got over a barrel of oil from it yesterday and for thirty years I have been getting oil and gas I need from this same well. I have had it piped into my home all this time. The original well of Drs. Bland and Clinton is still on the pump.

I bought my home place from Dr. Bland's wife, who was an Indian woman.