

McSEAWN, G. W.

INTERVIEW

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Nettie Cain, Investigator
September 22, 1937

Interview with G. W. McShawn.

G. W. McShawn, Holdenville, a white man, was born in Texas in 1857 and came to the Indian Territory settling near the present site of Holdenville, October 8, 1895.

The first trip from Oklahoma City to McAlester over the Choctaw Railroad was on Sunday, October 7, 1895. The train was a mixed train carrying one coach for passengers. And one Monday morning Mr. McShawn left McAlester and came to what was then Holden. When he arrived there were no buildings of any kind there.

However, he discovered that the lots had been surveyed and staked off for a townsite. He then talked to some men who were working on the railroad and asked them who owned the land where the townsite was staked off and was told that Frank Jacobs, the father of John Jacobs, owned the land. He then asked them where Mr. Jacobs lived and was told he lived three miles north so Mr. McShawn started off.

Mr. McShawn finally found Mr. Jacobs and bought seven lots from him. He paid \$75.00 for one corner lot and for six others he paid \$35.00 each.

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Mr. Jacobs wanted the new little city called Echo; but a man named Holden living just west of the town was trying to have a townsite established so McShawn thought it best to name the town Holden.

Mr. McShawn built a building putting in some groceries, hardware and lumber and wrote to the freight agent at McAlester asking that his freight be billed to G. W. McShawn, Holden. The agent wrote him that they had no such place as Holden on the line but finally Mr. McShawn made the McAlester agent understand that Holden was a new town.

Soon after Mr. McShawn came to Holden, G. B. Roderick moved his store from Fentress. Fentress was just five miles southeast of Holden. Charley Allen was a clerk for G. B. Roderick and was appointed first postmaster.

The post office department named the little city Holdenville as there was another small place named Holder and a post office had already been established there and the names Holder and Holden were so much alike that there would always be danger of getting the mail mixed.

Allen served a short time being succeeded by Mrs. G. B. Roderick and a short time later Roderick himself was appointed postmaster.

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M. P. Embach and Dick Allen came first with G. B. Rod-erick's stock and camped with the stock. However, that night Jack Devalt arrived and camped on their claim. Devalt remained in town as laundry-man until one day he killed a workman and that deed ended his liberty and business in the laundry.

McShawn later established an undertaker's business.

The highest priced casket sold for \$20.00 and he had some which cost only \$12.50 apiece.

In the Spring of 1896, Dr. Lowe established a drugstore and did a good business. He sold out that Fall to Harry Evans.

D. N. Kelker and Loyd Thomas had the first General Merchandise stores.

Mrs. Mat Embach cooked the first dinner for the men working on the grading of the right-of-way.

After she had the dinner all cooked and on the table ready to serve under a tent, a strong puff of wind came and blew the tent down spilling most of the food on the ground and leaving the men with very little for their dinner. Mrs. Embach was very much embarrassed. She had worked very hard preparing the meal.

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The ~~gray~~man in Holdenville was a man named Thomas who later sold out to one of the Allen boys. John Marks was also one of the pioneer merchants but he soon sold out to M. M. Smith.

The first white child born in Holdenville was Miss Nan Williams now Mrs. Kelly. She was born on January 8, 1896, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jim Williams.

Jim Williams was the first carpenter and although he had a hard time he remained in Holdenville.

Dr. H. C. Way was among the early arrivals in Holdenville; he came in July, 1896.

A Miss Roberts was the first school teacher in Holdenville.

The Northern Methodists built the first church. Next the Southern Methodist built a church and then the Baptist denomination built a church.

Mr. McShawn and Frank Meadows built the Baptist Church and among the first pastors were the Reverend Mr. Clark and the Reverend Mr. Kirdondall. The Reverend Mr. Krunk was the first preacher here and he was a Northern Methodist preacher.

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The old North Church building is now being used by the Church of Christ but has been moved from its former location.

I. N. Singleton was the first newspaperman. The first newspaper was called "The Times." Mr. Singelton ordered an apronful of type and a Gorden press and started his paper. The first home of the paper was in the Undertaking Parlor and in September, 1896, "The Times" moved into a new building especially built for the newspaper. The first employees on "The Times" were Gene Williams, Courtney Allen, Mrs. T. E. Neal and G. H. Harding.

A. W. (Jim) and Walter Scott were prominent men. They built the Scott Hotel in Holdenville.

Dr. Buckner was the first peace officer or United States Marshal.

F. A. Broughton, Monroe Morgan and H. T. Barlow were pioneer blacksmiths.

Jack and Jim Brittian were stone cutters.

Mrs. Thomas Acton had Holdenville's first millinery shop.

In 1898, the town was incorporated with D. J. Red, as mayor.