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Interview with
Hal W. Griffin

Jerome M. Emmons,
Field worker
5/ 31/ 37.

Mr. Griffin moved from Kansas City to Shawnee where he resided about a year and a half, before moving to Okmulgee in 1900.

EARLY OKMULGEE

In 1900, the business section of Okmulgee was composed of tents and frame buildings. Wells were Okmulgee's source of water. At this time, the Indians, here for Council meetings, camped on the creek and loafed in town. The railroads had agents who were urging people to come to the Territory.

1901, when the Government laid out the townsite, settlers were allowed one business and one homesite lot. No one, at that time, was allowed to hold property, that is, lots as an investment.

The Durkee Coal Co. of Kansas City wanted to put Okmulgee on the east side of the railroad tracks, but tho they spent a lot of money they failed. It seemed that they couldn't pull the people away from the old Creek Council House, where they had gathered for so long.

"MISSIONS"

There were 55 pupils at the Creek Orphan Asylum northeast of town. Johnson Tiger, son of Moty Tiger, was the Superintendent when I came here. I am not familiar with any other Missions.

"MERCHANDISING"

In 1902 I completed my stables on the corner east of the Federal Building to house horses used in my drayage business. I met the first train into Okmulgee. The first Frisco agent sat in my cab and sold tickets for several months before the depot was built. My brother and I built cottages east of the block where the stable stood, across the street; also some on the same side of the street.

We bought twenty acres from Sam Haynes for an addition in which my home is still located. We completed 6 cottages on it in October, 1902. Later we donated land for an implement factory with offices to be built on the north side.

However, the street, Griffin, was condemned and closed and the offices put on the south side of the property. Formerly, we had managed the Capitol Hotel, which was headquarters for the Kennifac Construction Co., then building the Ozark & Cherokee Central R. R. Dexter and Son, of Shawnee, had the

right-of-way. Dexter died and the railroad stopped here, the 'Frisco officials taking over the tracks from here east.

I think I purchased the first trucks in town, about 1916 or '17. I made money with the horses, but haven't had much luck with the trucks.

"COURTS AND JAILS".

White Courts were held in the Council House for some time after 1907. Justice of Peace courts were held in various stores. Leo Bennett, Deputy U.S. Marshal, from Muskogee, took lawbreakers to the Council House for trial. If necessary, they were shackled and guarded in one of the rooms until tried.

The first jail building, I remember, was on north Central Street and consisted of a one room stone building, locked from the outside, about

10 by 10.