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Field Worker: Harry M. Dreyer  
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BIOGRAPHY OF John Claypool  
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

BORN Claypool, Kentucky

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Mr. John Claypool was born in Claypool, Kentucky in 1869. The town was named after his grandfather. He moved from Kentucky to Texas, when a young man. It was near what is now Bonham, Texas.

He first came to Oklahoma in 1892, and started a cattle ranch at Albany, Oklahoma, an inland town east of Waurika. He remained in Oklahoma for about six years, grazing his cattle over the state. He then returned to Bonham, Texas, to a ranch there. He came back to Oklahoma in 1900 and remained here up to this time and now operates a service station at 19th and Portland Ave., Oklahoma City. During his cattle operations in pioneer days he brought into Oklahoma as many as 15,000 head of cattle from Texas. He would start with a herd of cattle from Waurika in the spring of the year and proceed northward through Madill, Ardmore, and then over into Greer county, and usually sold his cattle at Claypool or Ringling. He first grazed around Idabel, Durant, Hugo, Tishmingo, Sulphur, and on north of Anadarko, and sold there. But after the territory became rapidly settled by the Chickasaws, the cattle men moved westward for the larger ranges for their cattle.

He recalls that in early days when railroad companies first layed out towns and sold lots in order to move rapidly settle the country. He states that they (cattlemen) have on several occasions loaded

Indians on trains by train loads and taken them out to where their allotments were, letting them off near Durant. This was to get leases on their homesteads, which was for 1 year at a time, usually at their own price which was scarcely nothing. They would lease the surplus land within the nation for five years at a time, in order to hold for grazing purposes. Later on he made it a business to keep in touch with Indians to buy the land from those that were eligible to sell, after some of the Indians died and the property fell to their heirs. It was a profitable business and he managed to keep surplus land leased until it was later settled. The last of his operations in cattle business was around Ringling and Claypool, when Hamond and Ringling put a short stretch of Railroad in there, that included the town of Wilson. The town of Claypool was named in honor of Mr. Claypool.

He recalls the time when the Chisholm trail was closed by Indians and they refused to let the cattlemen pass. The cattlemen wished to find out the reason why, so Barefoot, an old stockman, came up from across Texas line, to see the Indians in regard to it, and the Indians stated that two Indians, (Comanches) women that were washing on the creek were killed by a white man. The Comanche chief stated they wanted the slayer brought to them. He was later found in Kansas and was brought back to Oklahoma and turned over to the Comanches. This ended the trouble with them.

He, also, remembers when he and his companion were grazing a herd of cattle; that Comanches came up and wanted a beef. They pretended as if they could not understand them. The Indians began circling in front of the cattle. His companion rode up to the chief, who was leader

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and ran his colt six into his bare ribs and told him he would kill him, if they did not leave the cattle alone. Mr. Claypool said to his partner that they better give them one, so they cut a steer out of the herd and drove it off to one side, and the Indians drove about a quarter of a mile keeping the animal encircled by their ponies. They killed it and began cutting it up. First drinking the blood, and they would take intestines in long pieces and eat it raw.

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