

COE, Wm. O.

INTERVIEW

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Mr. Grant Foreman, Director  
Interview  
April 16, 1937

Interview with Wm. O. Coe  
Braniff Building  
Oklahoma City, Okla.

My grandfather, Benjamin Franklin Coe, made the run of April 22, 1889, the day of the official opening, by departing from Wichita, Kansas. He had previously served four years in the United States army in the Indian country and participated in the Indian wars, being honorably discharged therefrom in 1867. When he had reached the Canadian River at a point immediately north of what is now the town of Yukon, he came to the encampment of a man by the name of Gill, and discovered that he was acquainted with Gill and had served in the same outfit in the army. He stayed at Gill's camp that night and during their conversation learned that Gill was a sooner, having come over and staked the homestead on the north bank of the Canadian River some five or six days prior to the official opening, and also learned that a man by the name of Garrison, who was at that time a resident of the Creek nation, was also a sooner and had staked a homestead immediately adjoining Mr. Gill's claim. Gill suggested to my

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grandfather that since Garrison was a sooner and did not feel very confident that he could hold his claim, it would be a good idea to see whether a trade could be made with him. The upshot of the matter was that grandfather made a deal with Mr. Garrison whereby grandfather staked a claim on the land therefore claimed by Garrison, and Garrison abandoned all his claims. This proved to be a very fertile piece of land, and grandfather was able to prove up his claim and receive a homestead patent within two years, being allowed two years' credit on account of his service in the United States army. He built a one-room log cabin on the homestead right near the bank of the river, and on July 27, 1889, his family arrived at Oklahoma City from near Brunswick, Missouri, by train. They were met by my grandfather and made the rest of the journey from Oklahoma City to the homestead by wagon. Benjamin Franklin Coe was elected first Justice of the Peace of the township wherein the homestead was located, and at intermittent times taught school in that vicinity.