

SS 36

1-DAY CARDS

Border Towns--Caney, Kansas

Caney, Kansas

Johnson, Cussy Foot

Oil

Bartlesville

Liefer

Crime--Oil Towns

Saloons--Oklahoma State

County Seat Rights--Bristow--Capulpa

Drumright

Gambling Houses--Oil Towns

Tulsa

Whizbang

Cooper

Leasing-- sage allotments

sages

Field Worker: W. T. Holland,
Indian Pioneer History

P. 1.

Interview with Jack Dillon,
3d & Viaduct,
Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Born March 25, 1887
in Pennsylvania.

I was born in Pennsylvania on March 25, 1887, and my first and practically all of my work has been connected with the oil business. I began at a early age working in the oil fields of Pennsylvania and naturally came west with the discovery of oil. First, I came to Kansas, then later to Spindle Top field in Texas down near Beaumont, and soon after that I came to Oklahoma.

I worked, as I have said, first in Pennsylvania at various jobs, from tool pusher to work in refineries. There have been lots of changes in the oil business, both in production and refineries. I remember, while working in a refinery at Philadelphia, we had a pool where gasoline was allowed to run, where we burned it (as it, at that time, ^{it} we had no value, nor use but was just a by-product of no value to us). Later on, however, a man invented a burner, where gasoline was used in cooking stoves, but first it was used for lighting purposes in lamps such as were once used in halls and around carnivals. Naptha was another by-product of very little value. However, some of it was sold to farmers who used it for lights.

The Standard Oil Company manufactureds drum, which could be used to make gas from this naptha. The farmers would buy this

P.2.

naptha, place it in this drum which had a pipe in the center, and by adding water and stone, and rotating the drum, they could generate gas enough to light their houses. Worked something like the modern gas plant. It was in 1879 when I worked for the Refinery.

I worked in the tank fields in Kansas near Caney. This was along about 1896. Caney at that time was a rough place, was headquarters for bootleggers, who did a prosperous business, both in Kansas, which has always been dry, or supposed to be, and to the people and Indians of Oklahoma.

The Tillam family were the chief operators at Caney. They operated a saloon, gambling, and sporting houses and in this way, about run the town.

The place was wide open and wild. So many killings that I don't remember the detail of many, never gave them much thought they were so frequent. This Tillam bunch worked with the town marshal, or he with them. The marshal, that is city marshal, was one (Lupey). He would arrest people under any pretext or none and put them in jail, then he would sell them liquor which he got from the Tillam saloon. This went from bad to worse until a man came in, a U. S. Marshal, named or called Pussy Foot Johnson. He went right after this gang and those not killed were landed in Federal prison. Only one of that gang is now living, and he is in

Leavenworth prison. Johnson was later a well-known temperance worker.

My work in the Territory was building storage tanks and I went from place to place where sent by my company, and of course, saw all the rough element that usually make up a frontier town, and I indulged some in playing poker, and drank some. I remember one time a party of us were playing poker at Bartlesville, for a quart of liquor, had it setting in the middle of the table, when in walked a deputy U. S. Marshal and arrested us. We were carried to Muskogee and put in jail. We were kept there forty days when we were released without trial. I don't know why we weren't tried, never did find out but was glad to get out.

They didn't pay any attention to gambling, but didn't want you to use liquor on the side.

I next was sent to the Glenpool oil field southeast of Tulsa, and near Weifer, which at that time was a thriving town. I have been in a lot of towns in Oklahoma, but I think Weifer was the toughest spot I was ever in. This was in ¹⁹⁰⁷ 1897. This town, or the rough part of it, was run by a man called Tex. who was the saloon keeper and of course ran a gambling place and sporting houses in connection. He was credited with many a killing, and probably was due the credit, for I know we found six bodies in a tank we cut up in 1913. This tank was built in 1906. It was said other bodies were found in other tanks by other workmen but I know about the six bodies for I cut up this tank. Tex was finally caught up with, but

got out of it by paying another man a big sum to plead guilty of the crime he was charged with, so he got out of it.

I remember an interesting election at Kiefer, I think in ¹⁹⁰⁷ ~~1897~~ or maybe ¹⁹⁰⁸ ~~1898~~, at least right after statehood. Bristow and Sapulpa were both trying to get the county seat or court house of Creek County. We, of Kiefer, favored Sapulpa of course, but the citizens or some of them furnished free whisky and lunch for the voters of Kiefer, and we all voted just as long as we could stand up. It was reported that about 5000 votes were polled for Sapulpa at Kiefer and the population was only 3000 at that time. So, a full vote was gotten out that day.

Later on, I was sent to Drumright to build tanks near there. Of course, all these "boom" towns were wide open, but Drumright had a distinction all its own. It was known as the high-jacking town. They operated day and night and never seemed to be molested. A few of us were playing poker there, one night, and had all the money on the table, when in came a couple of "highjackers" and held us up. We later caught them and carried them over to the Justice of Peace and reported the case.

Well, the Justice of Peace turned the high-jacker loose and fined each of us \$25.00 and costs for gambling.

The Justice of Peace said we didn't have any case, as the money on the table could not be claimed or the claim proved by either of us. Or in other words, the money on the table was anybody's

who wanted to take it up. I suppose this was the reason high-jacking was such a good business.

Along about this time--1898 to 1900, Red Fork was larger than Tulsa and Kiefer larger than either.

When I came to Tulsa, they had a box car for a railroad depot. There were very few permanent buildings here then. One, which is still standing is the Lyric building at First and Main. There was a general store, drug store, and banking business all in this building. I was building tanks for the Standard Oil Company in this territory and came to Tulsa, proper, in 1904. Brady had a hotel here, and at that time they had plank sidewalks when they had any.

I worked at building tanks until 1907 and during my life, up until 1907 I had helped build 5100 tanks. I remember Glenpool produced from 5000 to 3000 barrels of oil per day, and oil sold at from .20¢ to .25¢ per gallon.

The first refinery built in Oklahoma was the "Uncle Sam" refinery in West Tulsa. This was built in 1905 but never refined one gallon of oil. The promoter was a man by the name of Rivers. He used the mail in his promoting, selling stock at .05¢ per share, but not selling less than \$10.00 to anyone. He made a lot of statements he couldn't live up to, or didn't intend to, when made. One was, that his business was to be larger than the Standard Oil.

Anyhow, Postal Inspectors got on his trail and he ended his career at Leavenworth. He promoted a similar prospect at Cherryvale, Kansas about the same time. I am positive the Uncle Sam Refinery was the first in the state. After the arrest of Rivers, the property was liquidated, being sold to the Mid-Continent Company which now is one of the largest independent refineries to be found anywhere.

I, of course, covered a large part of the north and northeastern part of the state and saw and was in a lot of "Boom" towns, some of which still exist and some are only a memory. Whizbang about three miles north of Shidler and "Cooper" between Shidler and Kaw City were two of these towns.

The buildings in these boom towns were frequently only a plank front built along the street, joining each other and back of these fronts would be a tent. With the coming of statehood came law and order. Churches and schools appeared and the "boomers" disappeared. Order was gradually restored and the rough element went their way or reformed.

Of course, in the early days, mule teams were used instead of trucks. I've seen one man load a boiler on a wagon. He would turn the wagon up on its side, put chains around the boiler, hitch his team to it and roll it on the wagon. He would then "boom" or chain it to the wagon, then with the same team would

pull the wagon up on its wheels, and then he was ready to go. I tried to and did lead a fairly decent life. However, doing oil field work I was of necessity thrown with this rough element, and became familiar with this side of life in the early days.

Other phases of the development of the state is not as familiar to me as the oil business, as this was my only work, but in my shifts from place to place, I know of conditions as regards to law and order.

I do recall one "Hale," who was known as the "King of the Usages," and operated a ranch near Fairfax. He married a full blood Usage woman, and through the death of many headrights, relatives, he acquired a large holding of land, and this with the land he leased constituted one of the largest holdings in the state outside the 101 ranch. The many deaths of his relatives created some suspicion and finally he was convicted and sent to the penitentiary. The government sent in two men, special agents, who came in as tramps, and got jobs on Hale's ranch, and worked a year or a year and a half when Hale was arrested. And they said he was certainly surprised when he recognized these two hands, as they testified against him. They were then shaved and well-groomed and didn't look like the tramps he had hired.