

JACKSON, EFFIE S.

TULSA PIONEERS

#6873

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Effie S. Jackson  
Interviewer  
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### Tulsa Pioneers

A record of "firsts" that Sherman Grant Pender has, is of interest. These are clippings 34 years old from the Tulsa Democrat, which was a weekly at that time, with D. C. Jesse, as editor.

J. M. Hall, in his book, "The Beginning of Tulsa" has his "firsts" so the comparison is of interest. D. O. Gilliss is a son of the Antwyne Gilliss mentioned in the following clippings, though he spelled his father's name "Antonine."

"Tulsa's oldest inhabitant (in 1903), is Antwyne Gilliss, who was born at Kaskaska, Illinois, on July 25, 1821. He is, therefore, nearly 82 years of age. As has been stated elsewhere, Mr. Gilliss came to Tulsa May 1st, 1882, and has since resided here. He and his wife are believed to be the only persons who have resided here continuously since that time."

It corroborates the statement made by D. O. Gilliss, that they were the first white family to settle in Tulsa.

"The first person residing within the limits or immediate vicinity of the town was an Indian and his

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family, named Ha-che-ya-ho-la, town chief of the Lo-cha-po-ka town of Creeks. He settled near the old cemetery in 1836. A thrifty walnut now marks the spot where his cabin stood, nearly 70 years ago. After some years he changed his location to a point south and west of Main Street, on the southern border of town near an Indian graveyard. During his residence at this place the old man kept a wide road cleared from his home to the Busk ground some distance south. On the next hill south, another chief lived and it is presumed that from this circumstance more than any other the Busk grounds owe their location. Ha-che-ya-ho-la died from smallpox about 1850 and was buried near his cabin. His grave with others of his family form the oldest landmark of Tulsa.

The next family to locate were the parents of Ex-Governor L. C. Perryman, who were on the ground at an early day. It is believed that the Governor is the oldest native resident of the town..

The earliest white family to permanently locate

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was Antwyne Gilliss, who came in advance of the Frisco Railroad. On the first day of May, he and his family camped under a blackjack tree near where W. E. Jones now lives. The tree is said to be still standing.

In a few months Mr. Gilliss erected a log house on the hill near the negro school. It still stands, although out of the city limits.

The first residence within the town proper is the one now owned and occupied by Wm. J. Trimble, president of the City National Bank. It was erected by the late Robert Childes in the early summer of 1882. It is therefore the oldest landmark within the city limits. It has since been enlarged. The next one was on the lot now owned by Sam P. Brooks in the west part of town. It was once the residence of a man who ruled the Creek Nation, with wisdom and equity, Legus C. Perryman. The next residence of any consequence was built by Edward Crowell in 1883. He had erected a barn the year before, which was used as a temporary dwelling. Crowell also erected the first blacksmith shop. It was on the ground where J. M.

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Hill & Company's store now stands and was afterwards used as a ware room by them. Crowell and Joe Denbo were early blacksmiths.

Other early comers were W. P. Sinnett and his sons, of Sinnett, and E. T. Staffenbeen, who landed here on the first day of June, 1882.

John Thomas and Joe Moore were among the first. Of all those who preceded the advent of the locomotive a few months, probably E. T. Staffenbeen, Joe Moore and the Gilliss family and Ed Crowell are all who are residents of the town now. Twenty-one years have made wonderful changes in the looks of a country and the personality of its people.

In the spring of 1882 Tulsa had but one store. It was located on the ground now occupied by the Reneau block, and run by Perryman and Read. At that time the post office was located down the Arkansas River four miles in the farm house of Geo. B. Perryman. His brother, Josiah W. Perryman, was postmaster and W. F. Jones, his deputy.

The next business house here was in the old

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cottonwood shack recently removed from the north-east corner of First Street and Boulder Avenue.

It was owned by George Bullette, who also occupied the rear end for a residence. This building was erected in July, 1882.

On completion of the railroad, H. C. Hall & Company and also Matt Archer came and began business. At the time, J. M. Hall lived on the ground now occupied by the Brady brick. The little house was afterwards moved up on the hill and is said to form part of Mr. Hall's Main Street residence.

The first drug store was owned by Dr. Newlon and stood on the ground now occupied by F. E. Turner's Store.

The first livery stable was owned by G. B. Perryman and conducted by Isaac Rogers.

Frank Moore was the first blacksmith. The first deaths were those of a man named Collier and his daughter, Mrs. Jourdan. They lived in a tent near where George Koch now does and died from exposure while

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suffering from the measles. Their deaths occurred in July, 1882, and their graves were the first ever made in the old city cemetery. They were attended during sickness and after death by Elizabeth Gillias and Julia A. Sinnett.

The first sermon known to have been preached here was delivered by Rev. Samuel Robinson, a Presbyterian minister, then principal of Tullahasse Mission, in the summer of 1882. The first Methodist preacher's name was Bowden.

The first Sunday School was organized in Mrs. Slater's tent near where the Frisco section house stands, in 1883.

The first hotel was erected in the winter of '82-83 by Chauncy A. Owen, on the ground where the St. Elmo now stands, of which it is now a part.

The first doctor was named Booker. The first man with a medical diploma was Dr. J. C. Bland, in 1885. As late as 1895 the town could boast of but three graduate physicians.

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As nearly as can now be ascertained the first marriages here were those of J. W. Archer and Miss Florence Etter, and E. F. Moore and Miss Hattie Gilliss, which were solemnized together in September, 1883. At that time, no one having authority to perform the ceremony lived in Tulsa, so parties were compelled to resort to the residence of Rev. T. W. Perryman near Broken Arrow, about twenty miles from here.

Other early marriages were: W. J. Mann and Sarah E. Crowell, in the early autumn of 1885. After which A. D. Orcutt and Adeline Hodge were married a little later in the same year. So far as is known the marriages of the next year were: E. T. Stafflebeem and Nanie Lenox; Frank Sinett and Josie Briley; and George H. McElroy and Joannie Hodge.

The first birth is believed to be that of Johnie Sorrell in August, 1883. The second, Willie Crowell May 13th, 1884. (This child came to his death at the age of three by choking on a grain of coffee). The

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third was Charley Moore August 16th, 1884, and the fourth, Ida May Gilliss January 1st, 1885; after this such events became quite common and ceased to attract public attention.

The first mill was started in 1890. It was only a saw and corn mill at first but was afterwards turned into a roller flouring mill. It continued to run as such until 1901 when the machinery was removed and converted into the Tulsa Cotton Gin.

The first bank was organized in July, 1895, as the Tulsa Banking Company, capital \$10,000 with B. F. Colley president, and C. W. Brown cashier. In February, 1899, it was merged into the First National Bank, capital \$25,000. This has since been increased to double that amount.

In that early day the people were a jovial, liberty-loving set, and embraced the earliest opportunity to manifest their patriotism. This was done on July 4th, 1883, when they had a picnic and rousing demonstrations. The music was furnished by a band from

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Springfield, Missouri. The band and Goddess of Liberty\* and other notables were drawn through the town on a wagon behind sixteen yoke of oxen. Part of the day was spent in horse racing and such sports. No photographer had yet located here but his place was supplied by a traveling artist from Fayetteville, Arkansas, who took a number of negatives from which some highly prized pictures are still in existence.

The first school at Tulsa was established as a mission in the spring of 1885. The teachers were Mrs. Wm. Haworth and Miss Ida Stephens, both served without pay. That autumn, Rev. Wm. P. Haworth organized the Presbyterian Church under the auspices of the Home Mission Board of the Presbyterian Church of New York, which then assumed charge of the school and paid the teachers for their services ever afterwards. The school continued from that spring morning until it was finally merged into the present free public school system. Miss Stephens, now Mrs. O. H. Ha-

\*Mrs. Jaanita Hall Scott-Goddess of Liberty (daughter of J. M. Hall). Picture shown in paper as such.

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worth, stated that when work was begun times were stirring and many desperate characters were to be seen almost daily. Some of the boys who attended her school have since become noted for their reckless deeds, a number have become bad men. She continued to teach next year in connection with Mrs. S. J. Stonecipher, of Oswego, Kansas, until July 11th, 1886, when she married O. H. Haworth. The school was first located in one large room on the hill, where the high school now stands.

The teachers following Mesdames Haworth and Stonecipher were: Miss Jennie Springfield, now Mrs. J. M. Hall; Miss Effie Chambers, since a Missionary to Ezroom, Turkey; Miss Bettie Stringfield, now Mrs. A. H. Poge, Mrs. L. W. Lindsey,\* Miss Alice Stringfield; Miss Ella Nichols; Miss Fannie Docking; a Miss Corbett, from New York; Misses Annie, Carrie, Lue, and Grace Thompson, were all sisters; George C. Beidleman; and J. H. Deitz.

\*Mrs. Lilah D. Lindsey.