



LEGEND & STORY FORM  
 WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION  
 Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

409

Field worker's name Linnaeus B. Ranck.

This report made on (date) November 2, 1937

1. This ~~legend~~ <sup>story</sup> was secured from (name) O. E. Null, Arnett, Oklahoma, O. A. Black, Arnett,

Address Oklahoma, and W. E. Wright, Gage, Oklahoma.

This person is (male or female) White, Negro, Indian,

IF Indian, give tribe \_\_\_\_\_

2. Origin and history of legend or story History of old Grand, Day  
County, Oklahoma Territory.

3. Write out the legend or story as completely as possible. Use blank sheets and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 7

Linnaeus B. Ranck,  
Investigator  
November 2, 1937

Interview with O. E. Null, Arnett, Okla, O. A. Black  
Arnett, Okla. W. E. Wright, Gage, Oklahoma.

History of old Grand De Facto County  
seat of old Day County.

O. E. Null, O. A. Black, W. E. Wright, who gave the following facts about Grand, are early day residents of old Day County of which Grand was the county seat for fourteen years. They stated:

In the long ago towns came and went in Oklahoma's history and so with old Grand. It is doubtful, however, whether any had a history as unique as Grand's. It was the metropolis of old Day County which passed into history as a county subdivision of Oklahoma with the coming of statehood. Likely without parallel in Oklahoma history Grand stood as the de facto County seat of Day County from November 13, 1893, till statehood for Oklahoma November 16, 1907, a period of 14 years and 3 days.

The Walcks, quite a family of them, lived in Higgins, Texas, and vicinity at the time the Cheyenne-Arapaho country opened. They entered afterward and settled on the north side of the South Canadian River in the vicinity of Turkey Creek. The father, Adam Walck, "squatted" on a quarter section of land located in the Canadian River bottoms just

east of Turkey Creek's mouth. His claim had a large and beautiful grove of giant oak and persimmon trees; spreading elm trees; walnut, hackberry and cedars. In the midst of this dense growth of native timber and near the fringe of hills adjacent to the river bottoms a gushing spring of pure water rushes out of a gentle swell in the land and trickles along on its way to the Canadian River. Here in this enchanting little woodland and valley near the center of old Day County was an ideal spot to found a new town, thought the early settlers, and why not the county seat too?

For the first few years of its history Day County had comparatively few settlers, but there were more in the section where old Adam Walck and his family had located than over Ioland way; or in any other one particular quarter of the county. A year after the country was opened for settlement the majority of the county's officials, two of whom were sons of Adam Walck, had established residences in that section of the county where the Walcks had pre-empted lands. Anyway, Day County should have another town and it was decided that no other location for it was so ideally suitable as the little valley in and adjacent to the beautiful grove and sparkling

spring on old Adam Walck's homestead. Mr. Walck therefore "floated" to another 40 acre tract adjoining his original entry and thus vacated the 40 having the grove and spring of water. It then became public domain again and in time the townsite for the new town.

There is conflict among the oldtimers concerning the steps in establishing the townsite of old Grand and how title was had and established to the townsite lands, town lots, etc.

The old pioneers and first settlers say that the landscape and surroundings of the townsite were so beautiful to those early settlers that they all were actuated by its impelling suggestion of grandeur to name the new town "Grand".

Industriously they set to work to build a town. Up Northwest in the edge of the Texas Panhandle, about 15 miles Northwest of the present site of Shattuck, Oklahoma, Dave Wright and his boys had been operating a steam powered sawmill. He was induced to move his machinery to the vicinity of the new townsite and saw out building lumber from the native timber abounding in that section. He moved his outfit to the confluence of Turkey Creek and the Canadian River and began sawing lumber for the settlers of that part of Day County. Wright cut out the lumber that went into the

first building to be constructed on the Grand townsite, a dwelling for Shannon McCray, the first elected attorney of old Day County. It was made of native cottonwood lumber largely, in those days called "rawhide lumber" by the early settlers.

The implication is plain that considerable premeditation went on before the actual moving of the county seat from Ioland to Grand. At any rate, the overt act occurred on November 13, 1893. On that day and date the county seat was "stolen" from Ioland and hustled away to the new town of Grand some thirty miles west and up the South Canadian River. All the county officials and county records came overland on saddle horses, in "buckboards", etc. that day. A tent was made ready in the grove of timber to receive them that evening. And thus, then and there old Day County's seat of de facto county government was established, first housed in a tent, and destined to survive throughout 14 years of time.

The charge still persists amongst a number of old timers that H. I. (Hi) Walck, then a young man and county clerk of the County, was the "ringleader" in the county seat "stealing". If this was true, it was very likely true also that Mr. Walck had

much aid and encouragement from numerous others in such a bold highhanded act. It was wholly without warrant of law and constituted authority; but the county seat being thus transplanted from Ioland to Grand was not without its compensating benefits to the people. They were spared the expense and probable bitterness of a county seat election and for the county at large Grand was much the more suitable location for the county seat.

No time was lost by the promoters of Grand once they had the county seat. The county officials too lent support in an official manner toward boosting the new town. Within a few days the County Commissioners had plans completed for a frame courthouse building at Grand and advertised for bids to build it, same to be received November 25, 1893, just 12 days after the the county seat had so abruptly been taken from Ioland. The official draft of the plans for the new courthouse at Grand specified a building 20 by 32 feet. However, O. E. Null, now a resident of Arnett, and who landed at old Grand February 16, 1894, says the building put up was 32 by 32 feet, as best he remembers. The discrepancy matters little, however. It was made of native cottonwood ("rawhide") lumber from the sawmill of Uncle Dave Wright; and according to Mr. Null it was completed

and officially occupied before the close of the year 1893.

The first jail to be provided for Grand was part dug-out and built near the residence of the county sheriff. It was small and crude, indeed. Firmly set side by side in the ground around the bottom of the excavation were heavy cedar logs and over them a roof was constructed in such fashion and of such strength as was felt sufficient to keep safely confined ordinary offenders of that day and time. The door of this jail "den" was made of cedar tree trunks, too, and made fast by a heavy chain and lock. This rude, den-like affair served as Grand's only jail facilities for several years. Incidentally too the late fall of about 1894 or '95 Judge McAtee who, by the way was one of Oklahoma Territory's first supreme court Justices, was holding a term of district court in Grand and commissioned young O. E. Null and one Frank Sanford special officers to take a pair of Day County murderers to the Pond Creek, Oklahoma Territory, jail for safe keeping. One of the offenders was a cowman who had killed a settler; the other was a settler who had killed a cowman--quite a peculiar coincidence, indeed. Mr. Null and Mr. Sanford removed the offenders from the dugout jail about 4 A. M. and hustled them out of



Grand quietly and under cover of darkness, taking the road to Higgins, Texas, as they left Grand and after several miles out they turned off the road to the right and followed a shallow canyon north and out on the prairie country, thus eluding a band of desperate pursuers bent on rescuing the cowman from the officers and killing the settler in their charge. The special officers, Null and Sanford, with their prisoners hustled right on to Gage, then only a stopping point on the Santa Fe with a box-car depot, and boarded the eastbound train. In those days the cowmen in this country were supreme, their word was law, and if felt necessary they were much inclined to make their word law even to the point of employing a Winchester or "45" Colts to enforce their dicta. Those who pursued the official party out of Grand went on to Higgins, Texas, believing the officers with their prisoners would board the eastbound train there since at that time there was no road or travel between Grand and Gage. Mr. Null believes to this day that his clever ruse surely saved bloodshed on that risky occasion and likely his own life.