



An Interview with Mr. James Lane Hartzell, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

By - W. T. Holland - Interviewer.

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My father, Phillip Hartzell, and mother came West in the early days from Pennsylvania where they were born. My father was a schoolmate of James Lane, later General James Lane of the Union Army during the Civil War. They, during their young manhood, attended college at Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. James Lane, too, came West, and it was in Kansas where he served in the Union Army during the Civil War. My father was a 2nd Lieutenant in the Union Army.

I was born in Kansas, Brown County, October 4th, 1856.

In 1878 Bill and Bob Spencer of Driftwood, Kansas, near where we lived, and who were saw mill men, got a contract to saw lumber for the Government in Oklahoma Territory. They had been engaged in government work in Kansas and were ordered to move into the Territory. I being young, about 21, and anxious for travel and thrilling experiences, decided I would make the trip with them and try cutting timber for awhile. I was a rock and brick mason by trade, however, and made this trip just for adventures sake. Their mill outfit, a portable affair, of course, was prepared for the trip.

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They had eight yoke of oxen, and had in all five wagons. One carried a white family who were to be the cooks for the outfit. There were eight men in our outfit. We left Driftwood, Kansas, in the Spring of 1878 and were five weeks on the trail. We came in over the Santa Fe Trail the most of the way. Our journey was slow, necessarily, as we were heavily loaded, and, too, oxen do not travel very fast.

After we got into the Territory we were more or less concerned about the Indians, and had discussed the possibility of an attack. We had two boys from Iowa in our outfit, Bill Riley and Bill Maike; these two were beginning to be more than concerned, just plain "scared", and while we talked about a possible "brush" with the Indians, still we didn't really expect such a thing to happen. The leaders, however, had made an inventory of the arms in the outfit, and just what should be done in the event we saw hostile Indians.

One day while driving along the Santa Fe Trail in the Cheyenne country, we saw a band of Indians coming

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toward us as fast as their ponies would bring them. We immediately circled our wagons and made hurried plans to protect ourselves. The Indians had come close enough to begin firing, and we too had unlimbered our guns, which consisted of 11 rifles and about 10 six-shooters, and began to return the fire, when we heard firing from another direction. We, of course, thought we were in for a desperate fight with two bands of Indians, but soon found that these were cowboys, about twenty-five of them; seeing our predicament, had come to our rescue. They soon chased the Indians back to the timber, and we were saved from what might have been serious consequences. These cowhands were working on a round-up in that section and just happened to be on that part of the trail.

One amusing incident in connection with this was that Riley and Maiké, the two Iowa boys, tried to get into the fire box of the boiler, but the door was too small, and while we all were frightened, of course, still these two boys were sure their scalps would soon be decorating the belts of some Cheyenne Indians.

We saw thousands of cattle along this trail during

our five weeks trip.

We finally reached our destination which was on the Washita River about fifty miles north of Fort Sill. Here we set the mill and established our camp.

We were to cut and saw timber for the Indians, and for use at Fort Sill, and, too, we cut "ship timbers" for the Government, or they reserved the ship timber for Government use. Ship timber consisted of 8X10 inches by 20-feet long, or longer. All one-inch and 2X4 lumber was house lumber for the Indians. The timber cut was mostly white oak and there was quite a lot of it along the Washita River at that time.

*Canadian*  
Munford Johnson had a store and post office on the ~~Washita~~ not so very far from us, and it was here we obtained our supplies and received and sent out our mail. His store was on the trail from Kansas and the freighters made regular trips as did the stages.

Another man and I cut all the timber which was hauled by the ox teams. It was during this time that the noted Comanche Chief, Geronimo, was in the custody of the Army. He had some liberties, however, and I used to see him at

Rainy Mountain occasionally. He would always be under the guard of two or more deputy United States Marshals. This Chief had caused a lot of trouble. He led war parties into Texas as well as made raids in the Territory. When I saw him he had seven scalps on his belt, six with black hair and one with red hair.

In 1879 I helped to put up the stone work on the Indian school building at Rainy Mountain. Gus Boden was the contractor. This building was built of granite stone, quarried and worked there on the ground. The building was 70X40 feet and two stories high. It was built for the Comanche and Kiowa Indians. This was why Chief Geronimo would visit us. He was a Comanche.

They cleared up quite an area near the school, and when I left there, there were 400 cords of mesquite wood cut and corded on the school grounds.