

WILLIAM.

INTERVIEW.

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Dawson

Coal--Cherokee Nation

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Field Worker

Interview: William Lynch

TOWN SITE

The town site of Dawson was on an eighty acre tract of land owned by Don Hagler, Cora Matheny and William Lynch and was purchased from John Bullette. The title was carried in the name of Don Hagler, the other two parties acting as silent partners. This was in the year 1904. These same three parties built the first building in Dawson, which was a stone building of three rooms and was used as a store building and this building is still standing.

The town was named after Wilburn Dawson. (The writer will endeavor to learn something of the life of Wilburn Dawson and will send it in at a later date. My reason for not getting at this interview was that it was getting late in the evening and Mr. Lynch had to go home and I had already spent the entire afternoon with him.)

Dawson always remained a small town due to its being so close to the City of Tulsa.

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William Lynch

PIT STRIP COAL MINES  
NEAR DAWSON, OKLAHOMA

Mr. P. G. Hefflefinger of Cherokee Indian blood discovered the first coal to be discovered in Tulsa County. This was found near Collinsville. This coal was never produced in commercial quantities but was more of a community affair, just the people around in this vicinity used it for their own consumption. This coal was discovered in 1877, Mr. Hefflefinger moving there from Vinita in 1876. In 1882 while still living in Collinsville, he discovered the coal field at Dawson. He, with John Bullette a Delaware Indian, secured from the Cherokee Nation through the Federal Government, a lease on this land for mining purposes. They were to pay the Cherokee Nation eight cents per ton for the coal mined, they in turn, made a lease to J. P. Goomis who resided in Tulsa to mine this coal, they to receive twenty five cents per ton for this lease. In 1884 Mr. Hefflefinger with his family moved to Tulsa, residing here until 1893 at which time, he moved to what is now Dawson, Oklahoma. Mr. Goomis started operating this property in 1883 and continued to operate it until 1888 at which time he surrendered his lease back to Mr. Hefflefinger. In the same year, Mr. Hefflefinger made another sub-lease to the Landrum Coal Company, carrying the same terms as the lease made to Mr. Goomis, this latter company commenced operations immediately and they shipped coal to distant points by railroad, this being the first traffic of this kind. These operations lasted until 1894 at which time they were abandoned. In about 1890, Mr. Hefflefinger leased some other holdings that he had in this same vicinity to the McBride Coal Company, at the same rental that he had leased

to the other parties. This company operated until about 1907 at which time they abandoned operations, surrendering their lease back to Mr. Hefflefinger.

In 1896 Mr. William Lynch secured an interest in the leases held by Hefflefinger and Bullette and in 1900 he secured all of the Hefflefinger and Bullette interest. He continued to operate under the old Cherokee lease until the time of the allotment, which he thinks was about 1903. At that time he proceeded to acquire the leases on this property from the allottees and to purchase when possible. In addition to the leases and purchases he made the Hefflefinger and Lynch families allotted on considerable of this land. Mr. Lynch continued to operate these coal mines until 1915, at which time he leased his entire holdings to the New State Coal Company. This company operated until 1917, at which time they surrendered their lease back to Mr. Lynch. In this same year Mr. Lynch made a lease to the Levall Coal Company who started to mining with a steam shovel. This company operated until 1936, at which time they abandoned all activities.

The early mining done on the above property was done by horses and scraper as the coal was only about four feet deep. They could mine by this method about twenty to fifty tons of coal per day but in the later days of this coal field and during the operations carried on by the Levall Coal Co., the coal mines had drifted towards some hill and the coal was deeper and that necessitated mining with a steam shovel as the coal at this time was about forty to fifty feet deep, but even at that depth with the use of the steam shovel they could mine around two thousand tons per day.

The lease that was made by the Cherokee Nation to Mr. Hefflefinger is now in the possession of the Historical Society at Oklahoma City. It is the only lease of its kind ever made.