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Effie S. Jackson,  
Journalist,  
March 4, 1938.

An Interview with Dan Patton,  
511 Mayo Bldg., Tulsa, Okla.  
Oklahoma surveyor of original  
Tulsa townsite,  
Later Mayor of Tulsa, 1928-30.

EARLY TOWNSITE SURVEYS.  
(Tulsa in particular).

My brother, J Gus Patton, was an early Territorial civil engineer. He was in the company of the United States Geological Survey in the early '90's. I joined him in Tulsa in 1900. We were from Arkansas. My father, R. H. Patton, born in Tennessee in 1849, moved to Arkansas in 1857. He has lived in Sebastian County, Arkansas, for seventy-seven years and has not moved more than six miles in that period of time. He was well known as "Squire" Patton. My mother, Mary Catherine McClure, was born in Huntington, Arkansas, 1857. My brother Gus was born in 1876. I was born in 1895.

So you see I was only fifteen when I joined my brother in the surveying game in the Indian Territory. He was an engineer, I was a member of his crew. The plan of conducting townsite surveys in those Territorial days

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was as follows: a group of people, usually leading citizens, petitioned the United States Townsite Commission located at Muskogee for a townsite. It might be only a village where ten or twenty acres would be set aside, or it might be six hundred and forty acres, all depending upon what the "City Fathers" felt would be the future size of the town.

A grand rush to get these government surveys was made before allocation of land to the Indians so that townsites would thus be protected. My brother and I assisted in forty three townsite surveys throughout the land of the Five Civilized Tribes. Some are hamlets today, some have ceased to be, and a small townsite in its day, Tulsa, has become the largest of all those we surveyed. I recall the first surveys I helped with more easily than the rest.

I remember my first work was in Wapanucka, a small place where there was an Indian Male Academy (Choctaw), the most important building in that part of the country. Then Lehigh, Talihina, Coalgate, Checotah, Eufaula, Antlers, Sulphur, Bennington, Summerfield, LeFlore, Oak

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Lodge, Cartersville, Pauls Valley, Wynnewood, Erin Springs, Tulsa, Red Fork, Kelleyville, Bixby, Catoosa, Oologah, Big Cabin, etc. After the townsite commission granted the survey the next step was up to the supervising engineer to designate the order of surveys. The pay was good for those days; \$150.00 per month to engineers in charge graduated down to \$50.00 for beginners. Bear in mind \$50.00 in those days would go farther than \$100.00 today.

As to the original survey of Tulsa townsite, 1901. It was a village then of about fourteen hundred. My brother, J. Gus Patton, led the survey. He is now chief civil engineer of the Indian Territory Illuminating Co. of Oklahoma City. Other members of the crew besides myself were R. Earl Miller, now living in Los Angeles; J. Losson Spear, Civil Engineer now living at Miami and A. Zur Eddleman, living at Muskogee. This group was brought to Tulsa by the Indian Territory Townsite Commission and on August 11, 1901, the work of laying out the boundaries of Tulsa began and was completed by December 10, 1901.

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We began our survey using the Frisco Railroad as our base line; the entire survey embraces about six hundred and fifty acres. The task of naming the streets fell to my brother. Tulsa already had its Main Street and since nearly every town has one we decided to let it remain. It was then decided to name streets in the style still used, streets parallel to Main Street to be named for Eastern cities east of Main Street and Western cities west of Main Street. Numbered streets running east and west on the south side of town.

We first tried the number system north of the Frisco tracks but discovered that it was so confusing that it was decided to adopt names in alphabetical order. As north side development took place and it was slow due to the railway crossing and hilly nature of that part of town; the people were inclined to honor some of their pioneers, so such names as Archer and Brady were given to streets. Another reason for slow development of the North side was that but a small part lay within the Creek Nation. Tulsa business men wanted to keep within the environs of the Creek Nation because of their liberal laws toward the whites.

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The streets of the downtown area are not on a line with the compass because Frisco engineers who made the initial survey ran the east and west streets parallel to the railway track. When the government made its townsite survey the original survey was approved because the existing buildings had been constructed in accordance with this railway plan. This accounts for the streets zig-zagging where the "old town" ends. Tulsa proper, the major part of the present city, is laid out according to the compass.

Another matter that needs clearing up is the narrowness of east Third Street from Cincinnati Avenue to the Midland Valley tracks. It has been said that the narrowness of this street and the jog at Third and Cincinnati was due to the desire of Al Friend to save his apple orchard. His argument was that his orchard was more important than a wide street; there were plenty of wide streets. As it happened I remember there was an apple orchard in that locality, but it was not the reason.

Bill Lynch's home was the reason. It was on the southeast corner of Third and Cincinnati; to have put an

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eighty foot width street east on Third from Cincinnati would have compelled Lynch to move his home. So sufficient footage was left to save it. In a way this bottled up east Third and no doubt later influenced Tulsa's growth south on Main Street instead of east on Third toward the Midland Valley which would have been the natural route.