

PARNELL, Z. O.

INTERVIEW

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Mary D. Dorward, Field Worker
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Z. O. PARNELL

A biographic sketch

From a personal interview with the subject

Z. O. Parnell, born in 1860, near Coffeyville, Kansas, began coming over the border into Indian Territory in the early seventies.

CHEROKEE STRIP CATTLEMAN'S ASSOCIATION

An association of the cattlemen was organized about 1860. Prominent among the organizers were George Miller, founder of the 101 ranch, Major Gunn, Hewins and Titus, whose skeleton ranch was on Skeleton Creek, and the Standard Oil company ranch. These ranches were all in the vicinity of McAlester.

Land was leased from the Cherokee at from three to five cents per acre per year. It would be leased in forty, fifty, or sixty square mile tracts, each with a fence on the tract. Sometimes a ranch would be leased and then sub-leased to Texas cattlemen. Jake Guthrie, a Cherokee rancher, so sub-leased a thirty mile tract and he retired from active ranching.

The old Turkey Track ranch operated by the Baginaw

Cattle Company of Muskegon, Michigan, was a thirty square mile tract in the Sac-Fox reservation extending north and south between the Cimarron and Deep Fork rivers, and from the Creek Nation west to the ninety-seventh meridian.

SQUATTER SETTLEMENTS

Near Stillwater along Stillwater Creek and Black Bear River were several squatter settlements of Payne's Boomers. They were driven out by U.S. soldiers, their houses burned, and other improvements destroyed.

AGRICULTURAL FAIRS

The only fairs I recall were those held at Anita in the early nineties. These were not so much agricultural fairs as they were stock shows with horse races. I do not recall that there were any prizes offered.

TRADING POSTS

Licensed trading posts at the Sac and Fox agency were conducted, one by Chief Neokuk of the Sac and Fox, the other by a man named Charles. The agency, now no longer in existence, was about twenty miles south of Chandler.

About thirty miles west of Oklahoma City at Darlington near El Reno was a licensed trading post.

PAYMENTS

The Osages have always had annuities which before the war amounted to about four hundred dollars per head.

Creeks and Cherokees had money on deposit in Washington,

one season when crops were poor John F. Brown, chief of the Seminoles, went to Washington and obtained money to buy corn for the Seminoles. The corn was distributed from the Seminole agency at Muskogee.

MISSIONS

There was once a mission at Muskogee, about ten miles west of Oklahoma, and one at Seminole called the "Muskogee Mission" (Makusukey).

INDIAN TRAILS

The Whisholm trail started from Texas, crossed the Red river
 at Minesville, went north to near Oklaoma City, where, just
 west of the city, it forked. One fork crossed the Cimarron
 river about a half mile southeast of the
 city, the other fork about eight or nine miles west.

The Coffeyville trail, antedating the Whisholm
 trail, was used in the early eighties. It crossed the Red
 river into the Territory, went north through Stonefall,
 through Okmalgee, crossed the Arkansas river at Childer's
 ferry, the old Sealata mission near Leonard, passed the old
 Indian arrow store (no longer in existence), through Quata
 Minesville.

The old Miskey trail was not a cattle trail but a
 migrant trail from southern Kansas and Missouri down into
 Texas. It led from Joplin, Missouri, or Coffeyville, Kan-
 sas, to Vinita, Red Fork where it divided, one branch going
 to Texas, the other following the Cimarron or Red fork of
 the Arkansas.

(Mr. Parnell is going to trace these trails in greater
 detail. When completed I shall send it in.)