

PAYNE, HENRY CLAY

INTERVIEW

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W. T. Holland, Field Worker  
Indian-Pioneer History  
September 17, 1937

An interview with Henry C. Payne,  
An Old Timer.

I first came into the Territory in 1876 when just a youngster, having been born in Lawrence County, Kansas, September 4, 1860. My first trip into the Territory was to work as a cowhand; this I did for about a year.

I really came here to stay in 1881, coming first to Curl Creek in Nowata County northwest of Nowata where I rented land and farmed that year. Then in 1882 I went to Old Claremore, which was seven miles northwest of the present town of Claremore. The old town was a stage stop on the stage line that ran from Caney, Kansas, to Fort Gibson and Fort Smith.

Geo. and John Bullett, Delaware Indians of about one-fourth blood, were merchants at Old Claremore but with the coming of the Frisco Railway Old Claremore was abandoned by the Bulletts who moved their store to Claremore. They were among the first, if not the first, merchants in Claremore. They went to Claremore in February, 1882, then later on in the same year, when the Frisco reached Tulsa, one brother opened a store at Tulsa,

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the other remaining with the store at Claremore.

It was in August, 1882, that they opened their store at Tulsa. The store was opened in the first frame store building erected in Tulsa.

Jeff Archer had a store but it was in a tent at that time. They hauled the lumber from Catoosa to build the house which was erected at what is now the southwest corner of First and Boulder streets in Tulsa. Some of us placed a metal marker there a few years ago.

Jeff Archer, the Bullett Bros., Merchants; Aunt Jane Owens who kept the hotel and Coof Childers were about all the citizens of Tulsa in the early part of 1882.

In 1891 I settled on land northeast of Tulsa not very far from the present city limits and still own about four hundred and eighty acres which I have farmed for over forty-five years.

I settled on this land under a sale contract with an Indian. This land was in his control or ownership.

I paid this Indian a stipulated amount and later, on my claim to the land, was recognized by the Dawes Commission.

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There was a law, or ruling, then that undisputed occupation for ever twelve months entitled a person to ownership of the property on which he was settled.

I got the land, and on May 3, 1887, I married Rosy Coody, a Cherokee maiden. I had to go to Kansas to get people, twelve or more, to sign a petition to allow us to be married. Then I came back and had to secure the signature of the same number of people here. With these two petitions and \$10.00 in money, I obtained a marriage license from the clerk of the district.

The Reverend Mr. Hayworth performed the ceremony at my home. He was one of the first Presbyterian preachers in Tulsa. I farmed and grazed cattle for over forty years. I never handled very many cattle but did general farming. Some of the big cattlemen I knew in and about Tulsa in 1880 and 1890 were Bill Halsell, Shanghai Pierce, Bill Noble, Tom Wagoner, Dock Bailey and Green Yeargen.

Josiah Perryman, a Creek Indian, had the post office on South Peoria Street and about where Forty-Fifth Street is now.

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Later on he and Aza Reed moved the post office to Tulsa proper. This was in 1882. Then later the post office was moved to the store of H. C. and J. M. Hall on Main Street. I worked on the Bullett ranch in 1885 and 1886.

The first mill here was a sawmill. Later a grist mill was added to its equipment and later on Jay Forsythe added a flour mill and elevator. This was sold out and a meat packing plant took over the property and operated for a while. Then an electric plant took over the property and now the Public Service Company occupies the place on West First Street where once stood the sawmill of early Tulsa days.

Bill Beber operated the mill and elevator for sometime. He acted as my banker too, as he loaned me money occasionally without a note. No notes were given then for a short term, but of course for a long period a note was usually given. When I had extra funds on hand I would leave the money with Baber.

A number of merchants acted as depositories for their customers' surplus funds and then in turn extended credit when the cash of their customers was exhausted.

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Living was simple, pleasant and easy then. Character was the basis of credit. I knew all the old timers, whites and Indians, their business and habits.