

PHILLIPS, WARFIELD. INTERVIEW

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W. T. Holland
Interviewer.
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Interview with Warfield Phillips
1506 W. Archer St.
Tulsa, Oklahoma.

In 1891 some two hundred families came in wagons to Tulsa and vicinity. These people had been misinformed as to the date of the Run into the Cherokee Strip, thinking it was 1891 instead of 1893. As they were here, they had to stay, or did stay. They lived almost any way, in tents, wagons and improvised shelters. Most of them settled along the banks of the Arkansas river, and eked out a living by hunting, trapping, fishing, and working at any odd jobs which they could get. Some brought cows and chickens with them, and of course had their teams. .

The main source of revenue for most of them was cutting wood, and selling it in Tulsa.

Game was plentiful and eggs were five cents a dozen. After all, they made out pretty good. Most of them made the Run and staked claims when the Strip was finally opened.

I worked in Jeff Archer's store for about six years. He had a big store, 148 X 35 feet, and full of

merchandise; it was a frame building located on Main just north of 15th Street. He handled farming implements, binders, mowers, plows, light hardware and groceries. His stock ran from \$20,000 to \$30,000. Most of his trade was by credit and I have sold as much as \$1,000 worth of goods and not take in more than \$5.00 in cash. Most all bills were due and payable in harvest time when the debtors sold their wheat; the balance was paid when they shipped out their cattle.

I was working there in 1893 when Mr. Archer was killed, or fatally wounded, by an explosion. This was caused by a drunken Indian who shot into a keg of powder. Andrew Perryman, son of the Creek Chief, Legus Perryman, was the Indian. He came in and bought some cartridges for his pistol, which he shot off according to habit; the ^{shot} happened to hit the powder. It exploded and in turn exploded another keg, killing Perryman and fatally wounding Mr. Archer who lived thirty days. Perryman died on the spot. I happened to be out of the building at the time, having gone over to the railroad. The explosion blew out the south side of the store and the roof. The latter fell down and rested on some

shelving. Perryman was blown up on the balcony, where we had the offices.

After Mr. Archer's death, George Mobray, his wife's father, was appointed administrator and conducted the business for some time afterward. I took an inventory of the stock at that time and it amounted to \$30,000.

Other merchants at that time were Bob Bynum and J. M. Hall.

One of the first banks here was located on what is now the northwest corner of First Street and Main. It was owned by L. W. Marr and R. Trimble. They were real estate operators, and the heirs of Mr. Trimble now own the west half of the block between Main and Boulder, and Second and Third Streets. This was a National Bank with ^a \$25,000 capital and known as the City National Bank. J. M. Hall acted as cashier for some time. The bank ran for about four years, when it was sold or merged with another bank.

I quit the store about 1893 and began to contract as a builder. I constructed the Lyric building at the southeast corner of First and Main for R. E.

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Lynch in the Fall of 1893 and Spring of 1894. This was a two story building 50 x 110 feet with a basement. The contract price for the building complete was \$1850.00.

Nine Irishmen came into Tulsa about the time I started this building. All were stone cutters and masons. They asked for jobs, so I hired all nine, paying them about \$1.00 per day for their work. I advanced them \$3.50 each; \$3.00 for a week's board and fifty cents for tobacco.

The best carpenters cost only \$2.00 a day. I got the stone at a quarry at Flat Rock (now Dawson), I got it quarried and hauled to Tulsa for thirty cents a perch (16 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ feet).

Bill Halsell financed the building for Mr. Lynch. There were two stores on the first floor and an Opera House on the second floor. Road shows, wagon shows, boxing and wrestling matches constituted the entertainments, and sometimes they were wild and woolly.

The Lyric was the loafing place for about forty cow hands from the Crane and Larimer Ranch, north of Tulsa. They would come in from the side camp, a few

miles north of Tulsa, and while they did no harm they had good times.

This ranch was the largest near here during the nineties. They had, or grazed, the lower forty miles of Osage County. In other words, their ranch ran from Tulsa north forty miles, and west to the Arkansas River and constituted about half of the Osage Reservation. They usually grazed out about 60,000 head of cattle each year. All were the Texas Long Horn variety, and were all shipped in, mostly by rail.

It was a sight during the round-ups. Bill Halsell and other ranchers would have their hands in the round up, as Halsell had cattle scattered all over the Osage country. One of their side camps was on Delaware Creek and another in the Six Shooter Ranch. I owned the Six Shooter Ranch of six hundred acres for several years. I sold it only two years ago.

Tulsa's first major fire occurred in 1897. The fire started in the dry goods house of Gillett and spread until every building in the block was destroyed but the Lyric. This block, covered with frame business houses, extended from Main to Boston, and from first to Second

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Street. With the use of a force pump in Mr. Archer's store and a two inch hose, we saved the Lyric building. The Bucket Brigade helped, carrying water to the roof; but all failed to save any other houses.

After this, I was in the contracting business in Tulsa and served several years in various city offices. I was head of the raiding squad of police in Tulsa for four years, during and after the World War; also Superintendent of Parks for a term. During that term I built the Newblock, Tracy, and Howard Parks. The roadways in Mohawk Park were built in 1926 and '27.

Bill Burgess, full blood Creek, was a police raider of the Indians in the early days. He also collected money on permits from the whites, and in addition smashed all the whiskey he could find.