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Interview with Frank Henry  
Pawnee, Okla.

Field Worker: Goldie Turner,  
April 20, 1937.

Born 1866, Illinois.

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I first came to Oklahoma in 1885, just to be in the "wild west." I visited several Government Agencies, trading posts, and Indian camps, but didn't stay long in any place. I followed the old Sac and Fox trail which ran south from Arkansas City through the Ponca and Otoe Agencies, then angled southeast to the Pawnee Agency, then south again to the Sac and Fox Agency. I stayed down here about six months, then went back to Arkansas City and a year or so later joined up with the Santa Fe railroad company when they started building their road north from Guthrie. The road reached Pawnee in 1900. There was a big celebration and barbecue in Pawnee on the day the first train came to celebrate that event and the passage of the Free Homes Bill.

I was an engineer on the first passenger train that came to Pawnee. By 1902, the road was finished to Ralston and started south from Esau Junction towards Maramec and later finished to Cushing. Maramec lake and Yost lakes were built when the railroad went through by making the dams of the dumps when the grades were built. The company had had so much trouble getting water from wells that whenever a suitable place was found, a lake was built. There is another lake about seven miles south of Cushing.

When the railroad reached Ralston there was nothing there but a trading post. There was no wagon bridge across the Arkansas river then, but a year or so later a ferry boat was located north and west of the present wagon bridge. On the day the first passenger train went to Ralston, the people of Pawnee turned out in a body and went there on the train to celebrate the event.

When I first came to Pawnee many of the Pawnee Indians lived in mud lodges, each band to itself. When visiting tribes or bands came they would hold their ceremonial dances and give gifts of ponies,

money and trinkets to the visitors.

The Rice hotel, first run by Mr. Rice and later by Jim Davis, was on the east side of Black Bear creek and north of the Santa Fe tracks. It was a two story frame building. The Sac and Fox trail went past it and all travelers stopping at the Agency stayed here. The first building north of the hotel was a little frame house and was the home of Mr. Bishop, a white man, who had come here with the Indians and was agent, storekeeper, and farmer at different times at the Agency. The little frame building now used as a barn just north of the Indian mission is a part of the original store run by Mr. Bishop. The store was in about the same place the barn is now.

There was a store run by Nicholson and Oats on the south east corner of what is now a wheat field and across the road west of the Agency hospital. This was the store where Mr. Vandervoort worked. The Agency office building was a little farther west than it now is but the superintendent's home has always been in the same building that it now is, although it has had additions from time to time.

North of the store run by Nicholson and Cats was a small log house, which in early days was used as a council house by the Indians. It was later used as a home for the Jim Murie family (Indian) and a couple of years ago it was sold to Pawnee Bill and moved to his Old Indian Trading Post, west of Pawnee.

The early day county fairs were all held at Blackburn. Through the efforts of Rodney Spinning, the piece of land now known as the Pawnee Fair Grounds, but which was originally a part of the government reservation, was made an amusement park. A race track was laid out and barns built for the race horses which were kept there. Mr. Spinning kept several race horses there as did several other men of the town. Nearly all celebrations were held out there and horse racing would be the big event of the day. There was always a great deal of betting on the horses too.

I married one of the Rice girls, who was an Indian, and <sup>we</sup> lived together thirty seven years, until her death.

#### COMMENTS.

This story seems to refute a number of things related to me by Mrs. E. M. Clark, but from the material that I have gathered it seems that this is a more correct story.