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Field Worker: Goldie Turner,
June 1, 1937.

Interview with May Hussey
Jenks, Oklahoma.

William Benbow Hussey was born at Belleville, Indiana, in 1839. Came to Oklahoma in 1893. Died in 1910.

My father was a surveyor. He was in the race and took a claim close to Cleveland but it was contested and he lost it.

When Cleveland was made into a townsite, my father surveyed it and plotted it. For some time the town had two names. The post office was established by the name of Herbert, for it was a part of this farm that was made into the townsite and Mr. Herbert was the first postmaster. The name of the town was then called Cleveland for the President and both names were used for some time. Later Herbert was dropped and the town remained Cleveland.

I came here in 1894 and often helped my father to survey. I would carry the flag stick and other needed things for him. He surveyed the right of way for the Frisco

Railroad from Tulsa to Enid. Of course, I didn't help in that survey for father had to stay in camp and I couldn't.

One time when we were surveying in the country it was found that the field notes for two townships had been left out. They were Valley township and the one joining Valley on the west. We had to go to Pawhuska for them. We had to go in a canvas covered buggy and had to ford the Arkansas River. The river was up some and the water kept coming higher and higher in the buggy. Finally when it nearly reached the buggy seat, I climbed to the top of the seat, put the survey papers beside me to keep them dry and we kept going. When we had reached the middle of the stream, a friend of ours, who was going to Hominy and who had driven ahead of us to show us the crossing, stopped his horses, looked back and seeing me perched on the back of the seat, called back to me and said, "Miss May, I think you had better get out and come over to my buggy for it is taller than that one." I fairly screamed with mirth, but managed to reply that I believed it would be better for me to stay where I was. We reached the other side in safety and went on.

I had another amusing incident happen to me in early days too. One day in the spring I had gone out to the corn field to see how near roasting ears were ready to eat. A man rode up and asked me the nearest way to the crossing on the river. I told him, thinking he was a cowboy from the Osage country. He then asked me if I had seen a bunch of men on horses anywhere around. I said I had not. He then asked me if I knew who he was. I replied that I didn't, and he said, "I am Bob Dalton." I replied that I was May Hussey and he rode away. Later, a posse of men rode in the yard and asked if we had seen anyone riding out that way alone. I told them that I had and repeated my conversation with Dalton. The posse then told me that he was an outlaw wanted by the officers. I had never heard of him before and hadn't thought to be afraid.

I began to teach school in 1894. I taught my first school in Oklahoma in Toad Hollow close to Hallett. School was held in a tent at first and the seats were split logs on pegs. The tent would blow down in every hard wind. The men in the district built a frame building and when they got the floor partly laid I moved in.

Some of the parents made seats for their children. Some used the benches and some of the little ones sat on the edge of the unfinished floor. They sometimes fell off on to the ground a foot or two below and would say they fell in the cellar. The school lasted three months and I got \$25 dollars a month and paid in warrants. When that school was finished, teachers were so scarce that I consented to teach at Stony Point west of Cleveland. I taught there three months. It was the first school in that neighborhood. When that was finished I went to Prairie View about seven or eight miles west of Stony Point for three months. I taught all three schools in the same year. I had taught three schools in South Dakota before coming to Oklahoma, so since I was an experienced teacher my services were in demand. There were not many teachers at that time. When I finished the term at Prairie View I went back for a second term at Stony Point and then back to Prairie View again. We couldn't always get our warrants cashed and if we did, would have to discount them. When I taught at Stony Point I discounted my warrants to cash them.

Later when teaching in the Pawnee schools I bought them back and with some my sister had, my sister and I traded them for a farm west of Cleveland.

COMMENTS.

Miss Hussey taught almost continuously in the Pawnee county schools for a number of years. She was the first woman County Superintendent of Public Instruction in the county and held this office two terms. She taught until only a few years ago.