

SEAY, ELMER E.

INTERVIEW

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282

Carl R. Sherwood
Interviewer
September 3, 1937

7409

283

Interview with
Elmer E. Seay
1928 Elmeda St.
Muskogee

I was born June 15, 1873 at Warrington, Missouri.

I came to Muskogee in 1889 at the age of sixteen years, and boarded at Aunt Betty Kirks home which was at that time where the Railway Exchange building now stands. Later I boarded at what was known as the Kentucky Hotel which was on the corner of Cherokee Street and Okmulgee Avenue where Carl Bates' filling station now stands. I went to school at the W. C. T. U. building. I have forgotten the teacher's name at that time but I am sure one of the teachers was Miss Linnie Carroway. One of my school mates was Edward Fry.

My first employment was working in the Maddin Planing Mill which was a frame building just south of the Y. M. C. A. building on north Main Street.

The Missouri Kansas and Texas Railroad made a lake or large pond which supplied the Railroad with water. A man by the name of Scotty built and operated a small steam boat on this lake, and would make two round trips

- 2 -

around the lake for five cents. This lake was full of fish, such as, yellow cat, perch, and crappie. Later I went to work for John Sanders who was a carpenter for C. W. Turner. We built the first Opera House which was known as the Turner Opera House and was located on Main street and was destroyed by fire in 1897. I worked for Sanders and Turner for about twenty years.

In 1897 I married Miss Matilda Lewis and to this union were born six children as follows: Major, Cecil, Mary, Johnnie and two infants deceased. I lost my wife in 1910.

In 1911 I married Miss Victoria Schoonover of Cherokee descent, and to this union were born ten children as follows: Edgar, Willard, Dorothy, Virle, Thelma, James, Victoria, Anita, Bennie and Arthur.

In 1889 I owned and operated a livery stable and wagon yard on Cherokee Street from Broadway south to the Kentucky Hotel.

In 1897 I helped John Sanders build a negro school on top of Agency Hill. The material was furnished by Bug Hawkins. Later we built a negro church about four

- 3 -

miles east of Fort Gibson. This material was furnished by C. W. Turner.

My Father Joseph Seay fought in the Civil War and is living today at the Old Soldiers Home at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. My father, Joseph Seay, in the early part of September, was ordered out with General McNeil's expedition from Springfield, Missouri, under Colonel Harrison, First Arkansas Cavalry, of three hundred men, including a section of Stark's First Arkansas Battery, into McDonald County, Missouri, and Benton County, Arkansas, to break up and disperse Confederate detachments under Colonels Coffee and Hunter of Missouri, and Captain Buck Brown of Arkansas, operating in those counties and the eastern part of the Cherokee Nation. On moving to Pineville he received information that the enemy were gathering at Elk Mills, and near there drove in the confederate pickets upon the main force in line in a dense thicket a mile west of Enterprise and commenced shelling the reserve in town. After some fight between the forces the Confederates retreated south without much damage.