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Wesley O. Moore, Supervisor
Pioneer History, S-149

March 9, 1937

Worker
E. Holland

Interview: Victor I. Shurtleff
1911 West Cameron St.
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Mr. Shurtleff was born on a farm near Genoa, Illinois, on March 1st,

His father was Charles Shurtleff, a native of Canada, being born in
near 1825. He died and was buried in DeKalb County, Missouri, December 31st,

His mother was Sarah (Scott) Shurtleff of the State of New York.
She was born in the year 1833 and died in 1908.

Mr. Shurtleff was married to Anna Williams of Paris, Illinois, in

In the fall of 1888, I came into Oklahoma Territory from Missouri,
my people lived and rented a 40 acre tract of land on Big Caney River,
half way between Caney, Kansas and Bartlesville, Oklahoma. This land
was very bottom land and I thought would be good corn land. This land was con-
trolled by Charley Barnett, a white man who had married an Indian woman of the
Crows tribe and was connected with the tribe thru this marriage. This was
the land was allotted to the Indians and while it was held in common
by the tribes as a whole and they had authority to lease it. So, I leased or
rented this 40 acres for one year at \$2.00 per acre, paying him \$40.00 down
and balance within six months. The next spring, or the spring of 1889, we,
myself and I, bundled our belongings in a covered wagon and headed for our new
home in the new territory.

There was a double log house on the place, that is a log house with
a porch and a shed room to the rear of one of the rooms, making three rooms in

The roof was of boards, rived out on the place. The chimney was of stone. Plaster in the walls were daubed with mud. However, we got along well and very comfortable in our new home.

People are prone to feel sorry for the pioneer people, but it isn't necessary, for we had a good time socially and had plenty to eat and wonderful crops, especially corn. There was a lot of game of every sort. After I got settled, I asked an Indian about the game in the vicinity. He told me the next morning he was going out and kill him a buck. So, when he was only talking, I thought nothing more of it until up in the morning the next day, I saw the Indian passing with a big buck he had just killed. It was found it easy enough to supplement our meat stock with fresh game almost everywhere as there were turkeys, prairie chickens, quail, and in season, wild geese by the hundreds. There were also fur bearing animals such as mink, beaver, etc. after along Cane River. I trapped some in the early days and this helped pay incidental expenses, which were very few as about the only expenses we had was rent as there were no taxes to pay. I owned my team and wagon and what furniture and few farming implements I brought with me and \$100.00 in cash, constituted my capital.

Bartlesville, named for Jake Bartles, was a small village having three farms owned by Bartles and there were a blacksmith shop, post, office, etc. Bartles married a daughter of Chief ^{Journeyake} ~~Johnnie-Cake~~ and was prominent in the affairs of this section.

Contrary to general opinion, life was peaceful, rarely ever any disturbance at all, altho there were only a few white settlers in this part of the country. Once in a while we would see the U. S. Marshal or one of his deputies, out in the country hunting for some one, usually a white who was, or had been, selling whiskey to the Indians.

We left this particular location and moved to the northwest of this location, which was in the Cherokee Nation. Our new lease was over in the Osage country and nearer Canby, Kansas, but still on the Canby River. This bottom land was planted and cultivated in corn. The upper lands were used for grazing purposes. I might add, that we never thought of a drought in those early days, just a good crop every year and we didn't begin to have these dry years until 1906 or '07. Social life was enjoyed by all. We had dances and I remember how the young boys would come in and be met by someone who would relieve them of their money, which would be deposited on the dining room table until after the dance and they would check out. We rarely ever had any disturbance at these dances more than one occasion. Bob, Grat and Emmit Dalton could be at these dances just as it was before they turned outlaw. They, at that time, were well thought of and Emmit was peace officers at one time. But they weren't getting rich enough and began their career of crime by stealing horses, and went from there to banks and big time crime. I also knew Bill Doolin.

The religious life was not neglected. As we had a local preacher as well as the traveling preacher or circuit rider, meetings were held in the school house in winter time, and all times except "protracted meeting time" when brush would be constructed and meetings held under them. The preachers and teachers were very important factors in the development of this new country. The schools, at that early day, in our community, were what was known as subscription schools. That is, the people of the community paid the teacher for his or her services at the rate of \$1.00 per pupil per month. This constituted the only pay received by the teacher, as there was no public money for this purpose. The school house was of plank or clayboard construction, covered with boards and heated with a wood heater. The seats were not so comfortable as are the seats of today. I never heard of any complaints.

I lived in this Osage country until 1892 when I leased 1600 acres

we left this particular location and moved to the northwest of this location, which was in the Cherokee Nation. Our new lease was over in the Osage country and nearer Caney, Kansas, but still on the Caney River. This bottom land was planted and cultivated in corn. The upper lands were used for grazing purposes. I might add, that we never thought of a drought in those early days, just good crops every year and we didn't begin to have these dry years until 1900-1907. Social life was enjoyed by all. We had dances and I remember how the hard boys would come in and be met by someone who would relieve them of their money which would be deposited on the dining room table until after the dance and they would check out. We rarely ever had any disturbance at these dances. On more than one occasion, Bob, Grat and Samit Walton would be at these dances just as they were before they turned outlaw. They, at that time, were well thought of and Samit was peace officers at one time. But they weren't getting rich enough and began their career of crime by stealing horses, and went from there to banks and big time crime. I also knew Bill Coolin.

The religious life was not neglected. As we had a local preacher as well as the traveling preacher or circuit rider, meetings were held in the school in winter time, and all times except "protracted meeting time" when brush would be constructed and meetings held under them. The preachers and teachers were very important factors in the development of this new country. The schools, at that early day, in our community, were what was known as subscription schools. That is, the people of the community paid the teacher for his or her services at the rate of 1.00 per pupil per month. This constituted the only pay received by the teacher, as there was no public money for this purpose. The school house was of plank or clapboard construction, covered with boards and heated by a wood heater. The seats were not so comfortable as are the seats of today. I never heard of any complaints.

I lived in this Osage country until 1892 when I leased 1600 acres

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east of Tulsa, Oklahoma on Bird Creek and lived on this land until 1899 when I moved into Tulsa proper. On this 1600 acre tract, I used a tractor in addition to my team and did pretty well with this lease. I also, during this period, had a thresher and threshed wheat throughout the county, in addition to my other work.

When I came to Tulsa in 1899, there were only a few stores. J. J. Hall had a store, as well as Bob Lyman, W. C. Calhoun and Jeff Archer. Archer was killed by a drunken Indian. W. C. Calhoun owned and operated the first store located on North Main Street, just north of the railroad. The Northern Baptists had a church at what is now Main and Brady streets and the Presbyterians had a church and mission where the hill tower now stands and where later on a high school was built. I was on the School Board of Tulsa in the years 1909 and 1910, and was president of the Board two years of this time. During these years, the board proposed a \$30,000.00 bond issue and it was voted by the town and the building was put up. Mrs. J. J. Hall and Mrs. Lillian Lindsay were the early and very efficient teachers.

During the years 1908, 1909, 1910 and 1911, I was in partnership with Stonebreaker in the cattle business. We leased land in the Cerge country and grazed cattle. We leased, or had leased, during this time, from 30,000 to 40,000 acres of land along the Delaware River or creek and we grazed as high as 100 head of cattle at one time. We would buy these cattle in Texas and a lot of them would come down near the coast. They were of the long horn type. We, of course, would take the cattle thru and graze them a year and sell them. We paid anywhere from \$10.00 to \$20.00 per head for 3 year old steers. Of course, we raised quite a few ourselves. This ranch was located 7 or 8 miles west of Sperry, Oklahoma. From the year 1912 to 1917, I operated alone on a lease of between 5,000 to 10,000 acres on Shell Creek, northwest of Tulsa. In all, I have opened up and around 100,000 acres of Oklahoma land.

of course, I knew practically everybody of that time. Several have
on. but a host are still living, tho getting more or less feeble but in the
of their lives have seen a great state grow from the great prairies and
big posts become great cities, trails become railroads or concrete highways
where cattle once grazed, oil gushes and pumps are busy.