

SHURTLEFF, VICTOR I. INTERVIEW #6250

118

SHURTLEFF, VICTOR I. INTERVIEW. 6250

Mary D. Dorward  
Field Worker  
June 16, 1937\*

Interview with Victor I. Shurtleff  
1911 West Cameron, Tulsa, Oklahoma

Mr. Shurtleff was a rancher and farmer who at one time had a forty thousand acre ranch near Bird Creek Falls, about ten miles northeast of Tulsa. For working his ranch, he had a steam tractor with which he plowed, disked, harrowed, and planted his grain all in one operation. He first attached five plows to the tractor then four disks, then three harrows, then the two drills which dropped the grain. When he had been over the ground once his crop was in. The operation used the equivalent of forty horse-power. So unusual was it that people from Tulsa would come out to his ranch and line up along the fence to watch the performance. The agent for the tractor sold a number of them on the strength of Mr. Shurtleff's demonstration.

Mr. Shurtleff had the first modern self-feeder, wind-blower threshing machine in the community and his first job after acquiring it was to thresh out 4,000 acres of wheat from Robert I. Owen at his ranch near Caney, Kansas.

SHURTLEFF, VICTOR I. INTERVIEW. 6250

-2-

Mr. Shurtleff came to the Territory about 1889 or 1890 with only \$100.00 and a little pony team. At the end of his first year he had cleared 2,000 besides paying for good teams. The land was fertile, yielding sometimes seventy-five bushels of corn to the acre, and there was neither rent nor taxes to be paid. But the disastrous drought of 1911 ruined him. He lost \$40,000 in one year. Feed had to be bought for the cattle and then the price of beef dropped. That was the first real drought in this country.

Walnut timber was quite plentiful along Bird Creek in those days. Mr. Shurtleff once built a barn entirely of walnut, even to the shingles, which he made himself. He had his own little saw-mill and also a mill in which he ground not only his own corn but that of his neighbors, as well.