

STICKLER, VERA BLAND

INTERVIEW

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Effie S. Jackson,
Journalist,
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An Interview With Vera Bland Stickler,
1735 East 31st Street, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

DR. J. C. W. BLAND.

My father, Dr. J. C. Bland, was born in Centerville, Iowa, November 7th, 1859. He finished high school there and completed his work in medicine at Washington University, St. Louis, in 1883. A young medical student he made for the territory in the "Boomer" days; in fact, he often told his experience with Captain William Couch in 1884. A camp of two hundred "boomers" was formed at the present town of Stillwater. A company of colored soldiers under Lieutenant Day was dispatched to put them out. He gave them orders to move out on Christmas day. The "boomers" paid no attention to the negro officer. They proceeded to make themselves comfortable for the winter in their dugouts. For their convenience they took forest trees and spent the rest of the winter putting the first wagon bridge across the Stillwater Creek.

The bridge was put to a different use than they had planned. Colonel Hatch with three hundred soldiers from Fort Reno came to send them back to their Kansas lines. February 2nd 1884, found them wading the snow back to Kansas.

In 1885 Mr. Bland returned to the territory, this time to the growing little town of Red Fork. The railroad had been extended to Red Fork. A farming and stock country surrounded it-heavy corn crops found buyers from distant cattle ranches and hauls of grain for fifty miles were often made. The Red Fork stock yards were enlarged and received pen-loads of cattle from Texas seeking a shipping point. Trails from the south and west led to this shipping point for St. Louis. My father felt that this place had a future.

In 1887, my father married Sue Davis, daughter of W. T. Davis. They were married at the home of Dr. H. P. Newlon on the east side of Main Street, between First and Second Streets. Dr. Newlon was Tulsa's first druggist and doctor. My father had one of the largest cattle ranches in Red Fork district. He also specialized in good breed horses and fancy race horses. In the early days when horse racing was the chief Tulsa recreation my father always had racing entrants. I think perhaps people remember more about his horses than they do about his work as a physician.

The life of a pioneer doctor was difficult. Claremore, Muskogee, and Okmulgee were the centers, except for the

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Indian Agency. Calls for help usually were brought by horseback and answered by the doctor either on horseback or buggy over a distance of fifty to seventy-five miles. Their faith in their home remedies often helped the sick until the doctor got there.

The Indian Territory Medical Association was formed, later becoming the Oklahoma Medical Association. It secured a board of medical examiners in four of the five civilized tribes of the Indian Territory. Dr. Callahan, Muskogee; Dr. Rucker, Eufaula, and Dr. Bland formed the Board for the Creek Nation. Dr. Bland organized a Board of Health in Tulsa and was its first president.

My father and mother lived on South Main Street where ~~Renberg's store is today, between Third and Fourth Streets~~ but that was too far from town. My father had to be away from home so much that my mother was afraid of the wild Indians and drinking cowboys so she fixed up a bedroom in the back of a drug store down in town near the Frisco tracks. Tulsa had a population of about two hundred at that time. That is where I was born, in the Tulsey Town, near the Frisco tracks in 1888.