

TALLON, M. A.

INTERVIEW

#7676A

100

---

Nannie Lee Burns,  
Interviewer,  
September 28, 1937.

An Interview with M. A. Tallon,  
Afton, Oklahoma.

I was born in a dugout in Mitchell County,  
Kansas.

Like many other lads of my day, I wanted to  
better my condition and also see the world, so I  
started working from one place to another, each  
time getting farther from home. I came to Afton in  
1887, and hired to J. F. LaBoyteau, who had opened  
a livery barn.

So many people who came here would go on to  
Miami that it set me wondering why they went. So  
I made a trip to Miami to see the town and, if  
possible, to find out the reason for their moving.  
In those days Miami did not have a railroad, and if  
you reached that city you had to drive either from  
Baxter Springs, Kansas, or from here. I found that  
Miami had cafes. We did not, and it gave me an  
idea. I would start one here in Afton.

THE FIRST CAFE.

I secured a small building and provided myself  
with a gasoline stove and started in business. I

2

made the trip to Neosho, Missouri, and arranged to have twenty-five pounds of steak sent me from there each day, and bought my soda pop from there, fifty cases at a time. My steak came each day on the 11:13 passenger train.

The train did not change its schedule for twenty years.

Ice and gasoline I bought from Vinita and would drive for it. Ice I bought in large quantities, and would pack it here to keep it. I bought gasoline by the five-gallon can.

Once I went down for gasoline and they filled my can with coal oil, and I did not know it until I wanted to use it. Then I had to build a fire in an old wood cook stove instead. I made twenty gallons of ice cream each day. I did all of my own work at first.

#### BANKING.

We had no banks here in those days. G. W. Beck had a large safe, and when we had a little money or papers to safeguard, we would take them to him to be placed in his safe and he would take care of them for us.