

McDONALD, WILLIAM

INTERVIEW

#12570

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W. T. Holland,  
Investigator,  
Dec. 31, 1937.

An Interview With William McDonald,  
Iowa Hotel, North Main, Tulsa.  
An Old Timer.

As my name indicates, I am of Scotch ancestry; my father, Alexander McDonald, was a Highlander, while my mother, Jane White McDonald, was from the south of Scotland. One a Highlander and the other a Lowlander, both natives of Scotland.

My parents came over to the United States and settled in Pennsylvania and my father, being a miner by trade, found plenty to do in the coal mines of that state.

I was born in Pittsburg, December 19, 1862. When a young man I followed the mining business but later on took up railroading, working for the Chicago and Northwestern Railway for about fifteen years, before coming into the Territory.

I first hit the Territory on January 19, 1896, at Strout, near where Stilwell now is. I came in here to work for the Kansas City and Southern railroad and worked for years for them. At first I was with a construction crew, later had charge of crews out here and have run engine, and was engineer or flagman. In the early day railroading was easier than

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now, and more varied. A man worked when needed and while we worked regularly, still our bosses were not so exacting: Wages ranged from \$1.00 for common labor to \$2.50 to \$3.00. per week.

The country where we worked near Stilwell was inhabited principally by Indians and there were not many white families out in the country, however, Stilwell was a pretty good town.

I saw and observed the Indians in their everyday life. They were new to me, but most of the Cherokees lived and acted like white people.

I noted that lots of families buried their dead in their own yards. Sometimes, two or three families would use the same graveyard, but forty years ago, their dead were buried in family burial yards.

I did not mix with the outlaws; however, there were plenty of them in the Indian Territory from 1896 on. I was at Fort Smith in March, 1896, and witnessed the execution of "Cherokee Bill". I heard a lot about Judge Parker, but fortunately, was never before him. I never met him, but knew a lot of Deputy United States Marshals. They were active in Adair County, and needed to be, for a lot of outlaws and

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fugitives from other states hid out in the Territory.

In 1898 I was married to Nora Cantrell of Redland.

I helped in the construction of the Midland Valley railway and after the road was finished, served them for years, retiring in 1930.