

FIELD WORKER: Maurice R. Anderson

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Biography of W. W. Howerton  
Pauls Valley, Oklahoma

Mr. W. E. Howerton, now assistant city clerk of Pauls Valley, Oklahoma, (1937), came to the locality now known as Garvin county in 1899.

During the same year of his arrival to this country, Mr. Howerton remembers that the first mortgage issued in Indian Territory was a cattle mortgage given by Rag Jennings.

In 1895, Mr. Howerton recalls that a militia, composed of Chickasaw and Choctaw Indians, came through the country to collect a fee of \$5.00 from those operating any kind of business. The spokesman of the militia was Dick McGlish. Upon failure to pay the demanded fee, members of the militia would take the individual across Red river. The militia, according to Mr. Howerton, would come into a community and make camp. They would work in a vicinity about twenty miles circumscribing the camp. After completing their work in one community they would break camp and move to another location. Part of the militia would take those individuals, who failed to pay the fee across the Red river. After accomplishing their task, the members of the militia returned to their company. Mr. Howerton lived by a family who had been taken across the river and had returned. Some were successful in returning before the members of the militia had ample time to rejoin their company.

The first killing in this locality that Mr. Howerton remembers was in 1899. Kid Williams killed Bill Luke over gambling. Mr. Howerton

and five men held an inquest for Bill Lake, although they had no authority to do so only as citizens. One of the five men that helped Mr. Howerton was Frank Childs, now deceased. The next killing was in 1903. Jack Huffman shot and killed Grant Bell over a drunken quarrel. The next morning Huffman knew he had killed someone. He asked his son-in-law to bring him to Foster, as he lived six miles from the town. They started to town in a buggy, and had a shotgun sitting at their feet leaning up against the dash board. His son-in-law stopped to open a gate, while he was out of the buggy, the team started up and the gun fell, discharged and killed Jack Huffman. These were the only three men killed while Mr. Howerton was there.

Mr. Howerton believes the Cherokee Town-Wynnewood is the white man's oldest burial ground in the county.

Mr. Howerton was postmaster at Foster, Oklahoma, in 1898. He owned a grocery store, and the post office was in the back of the store. He said the mail was brought to Foster from Pauls Valley in a buggy. He has witnessed several gun battles between whitemen while he was postmaster.

He and his brother intended to make the Run, but due to an accident a few days before the set time he was unable to do so.

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