

Notice of Copyright

Published and unpublished materials may be protected by Copyright Law (Title 17, U.S. Code). Any copies of published and unpublished materials provided by the Western History Collections are for research, scholarship, and study purposes only.

Use of certain published materials and manuscripts is restricted by law, by reason of their origin, or by donor agreement. For the protection of its holdings, the Western History Collections also reserves the right to restrict the use of unprocessed materials, or books and documents of exceptional value and fragility. Use of any material is subject to the approval of the Curator.

Citing Resources from the Western History Collections

For citations in published or unpublished papers, this repository should be listed as the Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

An example of a proper citation:

Oklahoma Federation of Labor Collection, M452, Box 5, Folder 2. Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma.

INDEX CARDS

Jimtown
Fords--Red River
Ferries--Red River
Border Towns--Marysville, Texas
Marysville, Texas
Cotton Gins--Chickasaw Nation
Comanches
Comanches--Texas Raids
Indian Fights--Comanche-Chickasaw
Wealthy Indians--Chickasaw
Gaines Family
Farming--Chickasaw Nation
Trails
Fords--Canadian River
Camp Arbuckle
Marcy, R. B.

Field Worker: Don Whistler

208

BIOGRAPHY OF: Will Brown
 316 E. Eufaula St.,
 Norman, Oklahoma

BORN 1868 in Missouri

PARENTS Father, J. T., Brown

In 1876 when I was eight years old my parents decided to move from Missouri to Texas. We traveled south to Van Buren, Arkansas where we crossed the river on a ferry boat. It was on the ferry boat that we almost had a very serious accident.

The ferry was rather a large one for those times, having an engine in the center and places for teams and wagons too in each side of the boat. We were the last wagon on the boat and had pulled in on the left side. There was a gate on the end of the ferry but for some reason it had not been closed. My father and I were out of the wagon while my mother and the rest of the children had remained in the wagon. Just then the man started the engine and some steam blew out in the face of one of the old mares and she began to jump around and back up.

My father grabbed the wheel and began yelling at the horses. As the boat had already left the shore, there was great danger of the wagon rolling off the back.

end of the ferry into the water. Some negroes on the ferry helped and the horses were finally stopped, but not before they had pushed the back of the wagon to within six inches of the end of the ferry.

We went on down into Texas through Fort Smith, Stringtown, and Caddo to Montague County, Texas. We lived there three years and then moved over across Red River into the Chickasaw Nation to a place called Jim Town (Jintown was about four miles east of the present town of Leon, in Love County). Jintown was not much of a place in those days. No postoffice and no cotton gin. The nearest postoffice was Marysville, Texas, and the man who had the postoffice had one box to put all the mail in that belonged to the people at Jintown. When one person went to Marysville they brought back the mail for everybody.

When we first moved to Jintown we had to haul our cotton across Red River. At first we had to ford the river and could haul only a wagon box full of cotton, which was half a bale. There were bins at the gin where we could put the first load while we went back for the rest of it. If the gin was rushed, we would put the last half in the

bin and wait our turn for ginning. Later there was a ferry across Red River.

The cotton gin at Marysville was run by oxen power. There was a great wooden wheel about thirty feet across, lying almost flat; it was tilted just a little. The oxen were placed on the wheel in such a manner as to walk up the incline, and as they walked, the wheel moved under their feet. There was a stationary bar placed across behind them so that if they stopped walking the wheel carried them back against the bar and they were made to go on.

This big wheel turned by the oxen furnished the power to turn two gin stands. The cotton was carried from the wagons in baskets and placed on a table or shelf from which the man who fed the machine spread it and raked it into the gin stands by hand. The cotton lint was thrown directly into a rather large room. From there, men carried it in their arms and placed it in the press. A great wooden screw was used to compress the cotton into a bale. The screw was a round pole with the wooden threads cut in it. Sometimes a piece of the thread would break off and it would be necessary to stop and repair it.

From the top of this screw a pole projected out and down, so that the two were somewhat like an inverted V. A horse was hitched to the end of the pole and driven around and around to turn the screw. The screw did not move up and down. The nut was loose and moved up and down as the screw turned, and was attached to the block that pressed the cotton. A bale of cotton in those days was about the same size that we make them now.

The first cotton gin at Jimtown was built in 1879 (?) It was run by a regular steam engine and boiler.

Just a few years before we moved to Jimtown, the Comanches made their last raid into that part of the country. I think it was in February of 1872 that nearly two hundred of them came down Mud Creek in what is now Stephens and Jefferson County and crossed the Red River into Texas, swinging down toward Denton. They were on a horse-stealing expedition and were gathering up horses as they went. The white people had sighted them coming and had sent riders on ahead to warn the settlements. At one place a man had heard the news and had sent his two boys out to bring in his horses. The boys had found the herd and were riding on the old "bell" mare, followed by the rest of the herd, when eight or nine Comanches

tried to stop them. They kept right on running and the Indians fired on them with arrows. One arrow struck the boy riding behind in the back and killed him. His brother held him on the horse until they reached home. When the Indians saw that they had killed the boy, they gave up the chase. That boy was the only person killed during the whole raid.

As the Comanches progressed south and east they found things were getting hotter for them and they turned north and recrossed the Red River at Gains Crossing and headed up Walnut Bayor (now called Walnut Creek) until they reached a place called Battle Spring Prairie. (Battle Spring Prairie is between Oswalt and Cheek in Love County). At this point they evidently thought they were far enough away to be safe and stoped and went into camp.

An Indian by the name of Col. Gaines, a fullblood Chickasaw, for whom Gainesville, Texas was named, had a big farm on the north side of Red River and was working about fifty negroes. Gaines and these negroes set out in pursuit of the Comanches and found them encamped at

Battle Springs Prairie. The loose horses were grazing on the prairie and the Indians had camped back in the timber. Gaines and his men slipped around and rode in between the loose horses and the Indian camp and began to shoot and holler. The Indians frightened by the unexpected attack retreated off to the northwest and Gaines and his men drove the horses home.

In those days there was a cattle trail that we called the Arbuckle Trail. The main crossing on the Red River was near the present town of Courtney in Jefferson County. There was one branch that crossed the Red River at Gaines Crossing and then swung off toward the northwest until it joined the main trail. The main trail led up past old Healdton and Hennepin, then swung off to the east to go around the east end of the Table Mountains and crossed Rush Creek below Purdy. It went by Whitehead Hill and crossed the South Canadian River near Rosedale at a place called Arbuckle Crossing.

I was told that the reason they called it Arbuckle Crossing was because Gen. Arbuckle crossed the South

Canadian at that point. He went into camp in a big grove of trees on the south side of the river and was about to establish his fort at this place but didn't like the location and so he moved south to here the fort was actually established.

(Field worker's note: Camp Arbuckle was established on the right bank and one mile from Canadian River about four miles north of Byars on the right of the south bank of the North Canadian River. On August 22, 1850 by Company D, Fifth Infantry, Captain R. B. Marcy, four officers and forty-eight men to from Indians, travelers enroute to California. Store houses and huts were erected so that by December 1, the command were all under roof but the War Department did not approve the site and ordered it removed south near Washita River. On April 17, 1851, Camp was struck and command was moved to a point on Wild Horse Creek).

The man who owned the cotton gin at Jintown put in a new cotton gin and sold the old one to a man at Purdy (on Rush Creek, twelve miles south of Maysville). My father got the job helping him move the gin in January, 1882. They put the machinery on four wagons

and a fifth wagon carried supplies. My father hauled the boiler on his wagon. They used the cattle trail I have just described for a road. It was about a hundred yards wide but not any too smooth and most of the time in crossing the creeks they would have to work down the banks. They used shovels to cut down the banks so they could get the wagons down and up. They had reached Wild Horse Creek and had stopped to work down the bank when one of the men saw something running through the timber. He thought at first it might be a deer, but it turned out to be some Indian children running back to their camp, which was not far away. Soon some of the men came over to talk to them. One of the Indians had been to Carlisle and could speak good English. The party of Indians were Sac and Foxes and they were down in that part of the country on a hunting expedition. Afterwards some of the women brought fresh venison and wanted to trade it for hog meat. They did not want to talk English at first, but soon explained they wanted the hog meat to get the grease.

We always had plenty of hog meat in those days. We let the pigs run loose until they were big enough to kill and then shut them up for about four weeks and feed them all the corn they could eat. We always killed about ten hogs for our own use. We had an old fashioned smoke house where we cured the meat, and after it was cured we packed it down in shelled corn, oats or straw. Taken care of in that manner it would stay sweet and keep a long time. When we sold dressed hogs we received five cents a pound, that was the standard price for years. A hog on foot was worth four cents a pound.

On March 2, 1885, my father, J. Z. Brown, bought the cotton gin at Jintown and ran it for sixteen years. I was a partner with my father in the operation of that gin.

-**-***