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Effie S. Jackson,
Indian-Pioneer History S-149,
-22-37.

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EARLY DAY TULSA

Interview with ARTHUR
BYNUM, 1345 S. Troost

Tulsa in 1885, was a little struggling settlement, hardly large enough to be called a village. A few scattered frame shacks housed the early business on Main St., which was a wide road that raveled out at both ends, overpowered by the vast expanse of country the Osage hills on the north and woods and river bottoms on the south.

Boston was less a street than Main, being only a wagon road ~~to~~ one side and the rest in grass, weeds and dog fennel. The Presbyterian Mission, a little square frame building, with a couple on top at 4th and Boston. All the ground from 4th to 6th and from Main to CInn. went with it.

The stock yards for a little while were located about where the Frisco freight yards are now and the cattle were driven past the little mission and then allowed to drift into the four big pastures between Tulsa and Muskogee. In 1888, the mission grounds were fenced.

Also, the cattle pens were moved out on Lewis Ave., and a lane built as far as the Creek Line, being about 500 yards wide at the end. Often, the cattle cars were so crowded that the cattle were injured or smothered and when turned into the chutes would fall over and die or be trampled to death. To the cattlemen it was so much money falling over; to others, with an eye to business, it was opportunity; the carcasses were skinned and left for the

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elements to consider and the fence was hung with drying cowhides. These tragedies in cowdom left many orphan calves which were always given away. A cattle train was immediately besieged by small boys, (embryo cattlemen) who took them and raised them and with the money derived from their sale bought saddles or some other prize dear to the hearts of the frontier small boy. Later, when the cattle were turned into the Usage, a chute was built near what is today north Elwood and a lane built to the Usage line. THE lane at the line was about 200 yards wide.

Bob Bynum, who moved to Tulsa in 1886, and established a general store on the southwest corner of First and Main, had first come to Tulsa on a visit in 1885 from Indianola. He made the trip in a wagon with his family, camping at night wherever they happened to be. The only difficulty of the trip was crossing the Canadian. The river was up and a drove of cattle just ahead. The cattle swam across but the Bynums followed the chuck wagon down the river to find a shallow place to ford. Although they came in a wagon, they went back in a "trap". It was a one seated vehicle with an extra seat that folded under and could be set up.

The new home was built on 2nd and Main and in addition to the business of running a store, they cared for 50 head of cattle and raised 75 head of hogs on the place in the fall of '88 and the following spring. There being no banks as yet, the merchants acted as bankers and naturally the stores became meeting places to pass the time. There was also a good well of water at the back of the store. The tin cup attached took on a permanent reddish tint from the Jamaica ginger that was consumed in quantities at that time.

Bill Burgess was the "law." There was just about as much trouble keeping whiskey out then as later. He used to meet the train and if a box looked suspicious he'd open it. If it was a jug, he'd pull the cork. If it smelled suspicious, he'd break it right there on the track. Sometimes, it came in in kegs. They were put on the freight platform and at some opportune time the owners would come down, plug them and drain them.

On the third 50 feet, south from the corner of First and Main, on the west side, was a furniture store, run by a man by the name of Trutman. He made coffins of walnut and sold them for \$15.00. The old fellow lived in the back of the store and it is said that many a cold night, he sought a warm bed in a coffin.

Indians as far west as the Sac and Fox Agency came to Tulsa to trade. They set up their teepees just west of Elwood and just north of the Frisco tracks and would generally stay a week or two. Later, there was a graded half mile race track there.

It was a busy sight just before the opening of old Okla. People passed through almost like caravans and this boomed business. They were camped up and down the river. Many of them ran their wagons across the river on the railroad bridge by hand and swam their horses across.

One New Year's Eve, as the usual celebration of shooting the New Year in was in progress, the Daltons, at that time U. S. Marshals, joined in the fun. Instead of shooting up, one of them swung his gun around and a shot struck the front of the Bynum store, pierced some canned goods and went through the back wall. The Daltons broke a horse for the young Bynums to ride.

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Besides picnics on Bird Creek, the main amusements were singing schools. ~~Geo. Henry led the singing schools.~~ Geo. Henry led the singing schools in the Methodist Church that stood on the north side at the corner of Main and Brady. A tuning fork was used to set the pitch. They were events always well attended. A small band of twelve pieces was organized and band practice was also an event. They had their fun playing 4th of July celebrations in "full uniform" which consisted of white cotton gloves. They were also known to serenade wedding parties at a crucial moment in the hopes of "treat". Of course it worked. The occasional visit of a fortune teller, the kind that went into a trance, was a matter of concern, especially to the girls who flocked to her room in the St. Elmo Hotel.

Mr. Bynum was the second mayor of Tulsa and served in 1899.