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INTERVIEW WITH OSCAR JEFFERS.

FIELD WORKER MARY JANE STOCKTON.

Oscar Jeffers, for forty years a continuous resident of what is now Rogers county, Oklahoma, is one resident of the county who made the "run" into original Oklahoma and secured a claim in 1889.

Mr. Jeffers is a stern, matter-of-fact business man who hesitates to talk about himself, but the following information was secured in a hasty interview on May 17, 1937:

He is a native of Missouri; born in the Missouri and Kaw river bottoms, now a part of Kansas City, in 1864 - while the Great Civil War was in progress and misery stalked on every hand.

Mr. Jeffers "drifted" from Missouri over into Kansas and down into Oklahoma Territory - inspected the county in company with Captain Couch before the opening; - was a "Sooner" but went back into the States and when the opening finally came was eligible to get a claim, which he did - a good one, so he says. While holding down this claim and trying to "get on his feet" he married,.

In due time he sold the claim and went from there to Bartlesville - the old town on the east bank of Caney river,

where he and his wife remained for a time, later moving to a farm on the Verdigris, but a few miles from the present town of Inola, in which community he has lived ever since.

He first engaged in the saw mill business and manufactured much of the lumber used by pioneers in building homes in and around Inola. When the town, then a mere whistling station on the Iron Mountain Railway, was "laid out" by the Dawes Commission under treaty with the Creek Nation of Indians, he secured several choice lots and built houses on them, cutting them at his own mill, located at the mouth of Pea Creek, on the Verdigris river, a few miles south of the village. He erected a nice frame house of four or five rooms for a family home and here his wife kept boarders, here their three children; Clarence, Ruby and Oscar, Jr., were born, and here the wife and mother died about twenty years ago.

Mr. Jeffers erected several other residence houses, some of which he still owns, and the City's first brick hotel, which he still owns; the upper floor being used as a hotel, the lower for mercantile purposes, having been occupied for seventeen years by Henry Clay Magruder, who does business under the name of Inola Mercantile Company.

Mr. Jeffers also owns several farms near Inola, purchasing them from the original allottees, one being the old "Abe Kernal farm", near what is now known as Deiterlie School Property. Mr. Jeffers also owns valuable business property as well as at least one residence in Claremore, but elects to maintain his residence in Inola.

Since the founding of his home town (Inola) he has owned blacksmith shops, drug stores, general mercantile establishments, second-hand stores, saw mills and cotton gins. Much of this has been disposed of in recent years.

After a few years of loneliness Mr. Jeffers remarried, the second wife being also a native of Missouri who came to Rogers county as a teacher in the public school. Mrs. Jeffers is an accomplished woman who has many friends. She is now serving as postmaster at Inola, while Mr. Jeffers is a member of the Board of Trustees, his son, Clarence, has been twice elected City Clerk and for more than a dozen years the daughter, Ruby, has been a teacher in the public schools of Inola.

Oscar Jeffers is truly a pioneer of the State of

Oklahoma and of Rogers county.

Inola township, including the Town of Inola, was formerly a part of the Muskogee, or Creek Nation and the balance of Rogers county was a part of Cooweescoowee District, Cherokee Nation. The border line between the Nations of the Creek and Cherokee Indians was located about half a mile north of Inola and was formerly marked by a "Hoss-high, bull-strong and pig-tight" wire fence, which extended from a point between Wagoner and Choteau on the east to the Verdigris river on the west. Mr. Jeffers has lived, at all times, south of this line and in the Creek Nation. He was well acquainted with Napoleon Bonapart Childres, James R. Gregory, Legus Perryman and other prominent members of the Creek tribe.

When Inola was first established a young man named W. W. Hubbard, native of Alabama, opened a small store on the south side of the Iron Mountain track, so Mr. Jeffers says, and established a post office- was first postmaster- later operated a large mercantile store, took unto himself a wife, became the father of two girls and one boy, erected a brick building and acquired several farms in the community.

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Mr. Hubbard died about 1927 but his widow, nee Millie Fine, native of Van Buren, Arkansas, still lives in Inola.

Mr. Jeffers well remembers the "Stomp Dances" of the Creek Indians during tribal days and talks interestly also about the long-horn cattle days at Inola. He says that place, formerly called "the station," in contradistinction to Claremore, which was referred to as "town," was one of the heaviest, if not really the largest, cattle and hay shipping points of the Iron Mountain, now called Missouri-Pacific, railroad between Fort Smith, Arkansas, and Coffeyville, Kansas. Thousands of head of long horn cattle were shipped in every spring from Texas, unloaded for pasturage and shipped out to market in the fall of the year. Inola was located in a large pasture which extended from the Creek-Cherokee line north of Inola, to the Verdigris river on the south and west. Clarence Turner, of Muskogee, had the pasture leased for several years and he, in turn, "took in" cattle from Texas for pasturing at so much per head.

Speaking of prairie hay Mr. Jeffers says thousands of acres of hay land in the Cherokee Nation were mown each year and most of the product shipped to market; several buyers

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usually being stationed at Inola and hundreds of "hay crew" men were employed and cars of hay shipped out every day. This hay was hauled from the meadows in wagons, which were met at the "Line Gate" by Cherokee revenue collectors, who collected a stated amount for each ton of hay shipped out. He has often seen as many as forty or fifty wagons standing in line to be unloaded into cars for shipment.

Speaking of cattle he says so many were brought into Inola for shipment that they sometimes broke windows out of the homes with their horns.

Near Inola, so he says, is the remains of a typical "ghost town" - first called Bull Creek, later Creek City; where extensive coal mines, or rather "strip pits", were operated. The Davis & Jones company of Muskogee and Wagoner had the coal rights leased from the Creek Nation and anywhere from twenty to a hundred men were employed, some operating scrapers, or slips, with teams, others transporting or loading the coal into cars. "Creek City" was normally a town, a typical shanty town, of about 200 to 300 population. A commissary or "Company Store" was

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conducted and all workers were paid off at the store. Most of their earnings had been charged up to them for family supplies furnished and the balance was paid in "scrip" (usually called "Bull Creek Money") that was good for merchandise sold by the company.

Gid Graham, later State Representative and still later State Senator from Rogers county, was employed for a year or two as manager of the store and mines at Bull creek and the Iron Mountain Railroad maintained a loading rack for convenience of the coal company. Upon the allotment of lands and expiration of National Leases, the company went out of business, mines were abandoned, the houses torn down and removed until now no traces of the town are to be seen. It is certainly a "ghost town".