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CALLAWAY, MALCOLM M.

INTERVIEW

4591

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Merrill A. Nelson, Interviewer
June 22, 1937.

Interview with Malcolm M. Callaway.
919 W. Randolph Street, Enid.
August 9, 1848, Washfield, Missouri.
Father-Robert Callaway
Mother-Iola Trowsley

Sixty four years ago I came through Indian Territory. My wife and I were sick and we hoped to regain our health in this new country. We were afraid of Indians as we took the trail toward Dallas but had no trouble with the Indians. We did pass close to one or two of their towns. We were more afraid of white men. The country was so barren of people that seldom did we see anyone except in these few towns.

It was said that sometimes the officers would put whiskey in the wagons, then search for it and finally when they found it would take the wagon. So we tied the canvas on the sides close to the wagon, so no one could slip a flask under it.

When we came to the Arkansas River there was not a single bridge from Missouri to Texas, I was afraid to cross. I saw an old white man near the crossing, I

CALLAWAY, MALCOLM M.

INTERVIEW. 4591

2

agreed with him for a dollar to guide us across. It was fortunate that I did this for the trail he took across had many crooks and turns in it and he said that if I had attempted to cross by myself, I would have got in water at least to the top of the wagon bed.

I was living in Kansas at the time of the opening of the Cherokee Strip. I brought thirty to forty saddle horses to Caldwell, Kansas, where I sold them all to persons who intended to make the run. I received from sixty to eighty dollars for each one of these horses.

I made the run and secured a claim three miles east of Pond Creek, but when I went to look up the corners I found it was a school quarter, so I did not want to fool with it but relinquished it. I had galloped nearly all the way down there and being a horse buyer, I naturally had a fast horse. I had no trouble on the run myself but I saw others whose horses had given out. My oldest son and my nephew also made the run. Charlie, my oldest son, staked. We had a contest and left. The nephew did not keep his claim. Four weeks after the run my son bought

CALLAWAY, MALCOLM M.

INTERVIEW.

4591

3

a man off a place three miles and a half west for two hundred dollars. The place was improved and sold for eight hundred dollars. Thirty-five years later this place brought sixteen thousand dollars.

As I had sold hundreds of horses in Wichita, when I saw that I had failed to get a claim I came to Enid where I built a horse shed near the Long-Bell Lumber Company. Later I built brick horse barns upon this property. These buildings are still standing though used for other purposes.

I always kept from two to three hundred head of horses in the barns. I sold about ten thousand head to the government during the war. About a year after I made this sale I decided to quit business. I said, "You see these horses that we just sold for two hundred and fifty dollars within a year they will not bring any more than one hundred and fifty." People thought I was not wise to sell, but the man who bought these

CALLAWAY, MALCOLM M.

INTERVIEW. 4591

4

horses found them worth one hundred and fifty dollars a piece in about eight months, and remembered what I had said. I had handled mules and horses so long I knew what the market would do. I had driven from Marshfield to Little Rock for horses even before I moved to Texas.

I was on the Board of County Commissioners of Garfield County. In 1890 there was a move on foot to construct a new courthouse. Two of the commissioners wanted to vote bonds. I said: "There are two of you, republicans and one of me, a democrat. However, if you vote bonds, I will fight you to a finish. What we should do is to vote a two mill levy on the whole county." We did this and in four years had the building paid for. They asked me to serve again but I refused.

At the end of our term of office the county did not owe a penny. At one time, they were twenty thousand dollars ahead. They have never been out of debt since.

The courthouse square was muddy and unpaved with poor side walks. I hired a company to pave this and put

CALLAWAY, MALCOLM M.

INTERVIEW.

4591.

5

side walks around the square. "What is your bill?" I asked. "Twenty-three thousand dollars? How much discount will you give?" "Nothing", they said. "The money is out at seven per cent for ten years." "Then I will give you nothing," I replied. Soon they came back and said: "We have thought it over and are willing to give a discount of five per cent for cash." "I will see what I can do," I answered. I went to all the banks and found that altogether we could get the money. The amount of the discount was \$1150.00.

I was in business in Enid seventeen years. At the time of the war, O. J. Fleming, the banker (now deceased), came to me and said: "You must not draw any more money. Everybody is drawing to buy government bonds and it will break me."

I asked him how much I was short. He said, "One hundred and forty-five thousand dollars." "I will have it in thirty-six hours," I said.

The next day I received a check for one hundred and

CALLAWAY, MALCOLM M.

INTERVIEW.

4591.

6

fifty thousand dollars for horses sold for war purposes. He was surely tickled when I produced the money.

During the Civil War about eight thousand troops belonging to the force of the Confederate Commander, Marmaduke, came to our farm. They burned our fences and took thirty-five head of hogs, two yoke of oxen, and three thousand bushels of grain, two stacks of hay and seventeen mules and horses. My father was a Federal man. They arrested him but Marmaduke ordered him turned loose. We were completely cleaned out. This was in the winter, in January of 1863 or 1864. It was about the time the battle of Springfield was fought. After the battle, the Confederates started south.

I have a few mementos of pioneer days. One is an old melodeon which appears to be made of cherry, an old walnut secretary with secret drawers behind the regular drawers. We have an old cord bedstead in the attic.