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INDEX CARDS:

Tulsa-1892
Early Hotel
Indians-Osages
George Perryman
Water Supply
Social Activities
Politics
Sac and Fox Opening
Cherokee Strip Opening

BIOGRAPHY FORM
WORKS PROGRESS ADMINISTRATION
Indian-Pioneer History Project for Oklahoma

Field Worker's name Marjorie Forward

This report made on (date) July 21 1937

1. Name Mrs. H.C. Calhoun

2. Post Office Address Tulsa

3. Residence address (or location) 734 South Denver

4. DATE OF BIRTH: Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

5. Place of birth Wisconsin

6. Name of Father _____ Place of birth _____

Other information about father _____

7. Name of Mother _____ Place of birth _____

Other information about mother _____

Notes or complete narrative by the field worker dealing with the life and story of the person interviewed. Refer to Manual for suggested subjects and questions. Continue on blank sheets if necessary and attach firmly to this form. Number of sheets attached 12.

Mary D. Dorward
Interviewer
July 20, 1937

TULSA IN THE GAY NINETIES.
Interview with Mrs. H. C. Calhoun
734 S. Denver, Tulsa, Oklahoma

Mr. Calhoun, our son, Fred, and I came to Tulsa from Idaho in 1892, on a visit to my uncle who had a ranch near Tulsa. He had come into possession of a hotel which he had taken on a debt. He didn't have time to operate a hotel in addition to his work on the ranch, and knew nothing about that kind of business anyhow, so he persuaded us to stay and operate it for him. We knew nothing about hotel business either, but Tulsa seemed a fairly busy town then and we were willing to try it so we stayed and I have been here ever since.

The hotel was a square, two-story frame building called the St. Elmo, and stood on the north side of and facing the Frisco tracks at the corner of Main Street. I have a picture of the hotel taken when we owned it. We always had plenty of business for there were a great many transients. Tulsa was even then a busy town.

Our first Thanksgiving was one I shall always remember. A great lot of Osages with their squaws and papooses came in to the hotel for dinner. I was frightened for I didn't know anything about Indians then.

There were two tables full of them and they were harmless enough. The squaws were wearing aprons and after they had all finished eating the squaws gathered up all the food left on the tables in their aprons and carried it off with them.

PRICES

When we first came to Tulsa prices were just about double what they were other places. I remember going to J.M. Hall's store for calico and paying ten cents a yard for what I had always gotten for five cents a yard. When Tate Brady opened his store he put prices down to what they were other places.

Fresh milk at any price was always hard to get, and then it was of poor quality. Eggs were sometimes ten cents a dozen. Chickens were cheap and we could usually get good fryers for fifteen cents apiece. I contracted with a farmer to supply fresh country butter for the hotel at twenty-five cents a pound the year around and we always had good butter at the hotel.

George Perryman once swindled a cowboy forty dollars. At that time George owned the lot at the north east corner of

second and Main Streets where the Musick Drug Store now is. He offered that lot to the cowboy in settlement of the debt but the cowboy refused it. He took two ponies instead.

Billy Mann owned the lot at the northeast corner of Fourth and Boston, where the Kennedy building now stands. He went to Brady's store for a pair of hip boots, offering the lot in payment. Brady let him have the boots but refused to take the lot, putting the sale on his books instead.

Ordinarily when cattlemen brought their cattle to Tulsa for shipment they simply forded the Arkansas River if they happened to come from that direction. But once a Mr. Woodley brought a herd when the river was too high to ford. He tried to bargain with the Frisco to take them over the bridge, but the railroad officials wanted as much as to ship them to Kansas City. Woodley said, "Well, if I have to give it all to the Frisco I may as well lose them in the river," so he swam them across. He had five thousand head and never lost a one.

WATER SUPPLY

Good drinking water was difficult to get in those

days. There was a spring out on Eleventh Street on Dr. Hawley's place which furnished water for many citizens. The hotel supply came from our own private well and often it would have a film of oil on it.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

When we first came to Tulsa I was too busy trying to run the hotel to take part in any of the social life of the town, or even to go to church. But if word got around among the young people that there was to be a party any place they would all come. Our waitresses were all from the young people of the town and we sometimes let them have a few of their friends in for a good time.

One New Year's we told them they could have a few in for a watch party and I prepared refreshments for the number invited. Word got around about it and when time came for the party they began coming, more and more, from everywhere till we had the parlors full, the office full, and the stairway filled. The refreshments wouldn't begin to serve everyone so I simply brought in what I had prepared, set it down and told them to help themselves as far as it would go.

But lack of refreshments never stopped them for a minute. Once about five o'clock they decided to have a party. The Perrymans, who had a young daughter among the young folks, said they could come to the Perryman home, but they made no provision for refreshments. However, they had a great quantity of freshly baked bread within easy reach, while on the floor was a large basket of onions. When the party was over the bread and onions had completely disappeared.

The first social club organized in Tulsa was the Thimble club. I don't remember the year it was started but it was organized by Mrs. Cook, wife of Dr. W. Albert Cook. The first card club was a five-hundred club organized in November, 1908.

EPIDEMICS

There was once an epidemic of smallpox but I do not recall that there were any lives lost. Dr. Kimmons was staying with us at the time and he showed us the outfit he wore when visiting the pest house. He looked like an Eskimo.

Outbreaks of typhoid were frequent. There were never

any nurses in town and the doctors had to depend on the women of the town to sit up with and care for the patients. Once Mrs. Pruitt and I went to sit up with a family that lived in back of a blacksmith shop. Two children were victims, lying in one bed together. One of them had died that morning and was still there in bed with the other sick child when we got there at night. The death had not even been reported.

POLITICS

We think of Tulsa as always having been Democratic, but once at a city election it went Republican. It was pretty generally known that it had gone Republican when suddenly the firebell rang. All started for the fire except Tate Brady, who said he would stay and watch the ballot box. Well, they found that it was a false alarm. There wasn't any fire but when they returned they found the town had gone Democratic.

GAME

Game was plentiful in those days. People used to come clear from New York to hunt in the Territory. One

Thanks giving my husband fixed up a display window of game in his store. He had wild turkeys, quail, squirrels, deer, and wild geese and ducks. I still have a picture of it.

STOMP DANCES

At the stomp dances the Indians would dance all night. Individuals might tire and drop out for a while, but the dancing never entirely stopped. There was always someone to carry on. They used turtle shells with stones inside to make them rattle. They danced inside a large circle and no white person was allowed inside the circle. Once a white girl ventured too close and lost a new hat inside the circle. That was the last she ever saw of the new hat.

MAKING THE RUN

My brother made the run once but I forget when it was. He secured and proved a claim near Chandler. That was before my husband and I came to the Territory. When the Strip was opened for settlement many of those preparing to make the run passed through Tulsa. There was every kind of old rattletrap wagon, most of them

looking as if they wouldn't even get there, much less make the run. There were all sorts of things painted on them. One such inscription read:

In God we trusted

In Kansas we busted

Now let 'er rip

For the Cherokee Strip.

One passing through before the run had on it;

Oklahoma or bust.

On returning the same wagon bore on the other side;

Busted, by thunder.

OUTLAWS

We often had outlaws as guests at the hotel. Bill Dalton was there just after the Coffeyville holdup in which several of his brothers were killed. Emmet Dalton served a term in the federal prison for his part in that raid but was pardoned several years later by the President. He named his son after the President who pardoned him but I forget which President it was.

Henry Starr's mother, Mrs. Walker, lived just three

doors west of us, two doors beyond the Brady store, and Henry was often there, even when officers were looking for him.

Cherokee Bill's cousin, Mat Adams, worked at the hotel. She used to hate the officers and would say that if she could know which they were she would put something in their coffee. Cherokee Bill would practice shooting at a target on a tree while riding at full speed.

At one time when officers were looking for the Cook gang they wanted some tobacco. They didn't of course dare to come into town but came as close as they thought safe, expecting to find someone from whom they might get the tobacco. They met an elderly couple who were returning from town, stopped them and demanded the tobacco. Finding they had none the outlaws began shooting at the feet of the old people just to make them dance.

We often entertained officers of the law also, and the U.S. marshals always ate with their guns across their knees. They wouldn't be separated from them even long enough to eat. Heck Thomas used to stay with us often when he was marshal.

PETTY THIEVERY

Tulsa was a great town for people always to be picking up everything loose. Tate Brady once had gotten in a shipment of Gold Medal flour. He said, "It costs a lot to get that flour down here but it's going to sell," and he placed several sacks on display outside at the entrance to the store. After a while he saw several Indians pass the store, one at a time, each carrying a sack of Gold Medal flour. Brady remarked, "They should have bought that from me," but that night when he went to bring in his flour there was none to bring in.

My husband had a store, too, at one time. He once had a crate of oranges on the floor when an Indian squaw came in. She was wearing a blanket drawn rather loosely around her hips, and we noticed she kept busy with her hands fumbling at the blanket. After she had gone we noticed the crate of oranges almost empty.

MISCELLANEOUS

Shanghai Pearce, a Texas cattleman and millionaire, used to stop with us often. We had a small cottage

annex with two rooms, which was used as a sample room by traveling salesmen. Shanghai always slept out there because he snored so loud no one else could sleep near him. He had an enormous voice and could easily be heard a block away.

Oak Lawn cemetery on South Peoria (between 8th and 11th Streets) used to be my husband's cow pasture.

Indians used to be rather proud of serving time in the penitentiary. I remember once Billy Bruner was around shaking hands with everybody and said, "I'm just getting home from the penitentiary." I don't recall what he had been sent up for.

Mrs. Calhoun has several interesting old photographs:

(a) Of the Hotel St. Elmo.

(b) A class of the school at the southeast corner of 4th and Boston, when her son Ed was in school there and the Misses Anna and Mary Thompson were the teachers.

(c) The old flour mill at Cheyenne and the Frisco tracks where the People's Ice Company now is. There was

then a pond there, which was frozen over solidly enough to support several skaters who appear in the picture.

(d) A small picnic party at Sand Springs before it had been converted into a park.