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Field Worker: Maurice R. Anderson
March 23, 1937

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BIOGRAPHY OF: Mr. Robert G. Flanagan
Pauls Valley, Oklahoma

BORN: October 28, 1862 in
Tennessee

PARENTS: T. G. Flanagan, Tenn.
Nancy Bolling, Tenn.

I came to the Indian Territory in 1879. I was a young man, seventeen years old. I came from Caddo, to Pauls Valley on the stage coach. It cost me ten dollars to ride from Caddo to Pauls Valley. The stage was drawn by four horses and the driver sat on top of the coach.

Pauls Valley was a wild-looking place. Smith Paul owned or leased nearly all of the valley. He was a big cattle dealer. I went to work for him helping with the cattle as soon as I got here. We drove cattle and hogs from Pauls Valley to Rush Springs on a regular cattle and hog trail, called the Northwestern Trail. At Rush Springs this trail joined the Chisholm Trail and we drove over the Chisholm Trail to Kansas City, Missouri. There were times when there would be eight to ten cowboys on the drive and we drove as many as two thousand head of cattle at one time. Mr. Pauls' ability to stop a stampede of the cattle was marvelous and he always went with us on the drives.

In those days lots of people thought Mr. Paul was a tough man; he was in a way, but I have seen him stop his horse and pick up a rabbit that the cattle had stepped on

and pet it and then turn it loose. Mr. Paul was a fine man but if anyone was making trouble he did not hesitate to take his part in the affair. I have known him to carry thirty to forty thousand dollars in a sack tied to his saddle lots of times when he was making cattle deals. All the area from Pauls valley around the Washita River and across by Beef Creek (now Maysville) past Garvin Springs, through to the Washita river; west of Wynnewood and around the river to Pauls valley was called "The Smith Pauls Reservation."

There was a band of Indians and Mexicans, settled on the Washita River southeast of Pauls Valley. The cowboys spoke of it as the Mexican Rendezvous. There was a log shack and several tents at this place. I never was there but I have heard people talk about these Mexicans and Indians. They said that Smith Paul was the leader of the band, but they were careful never to make that statement in Mr. Paul's presence. In the talk I heard about the band, it appeared that they were bringing gold sand in here on burros and washing it out in the river. I saw Mr. Paul buy one thousand head of cattle at one time and he paid for them in gold coins.

I have seen the time when this river bottom land around Pauls valley yielded from one hundred to one hundred and fifty bushels of corn per acre. The prairie land around Pauls Valley yielded fifty to sixty bushels of corn an acre. It was no trouble at all to make money when I came to this valley.

I have helped bury lots of men in the old Pauls Valley Cemetery, who died "with their boots on" and no one knew them or knew where they came from. About a mile northwest of where Pauls Valley is now, there was a log house that was a saloon and gambling place. I believe Smith Paul owned this place, anyway that was the general impression. About a mile or two west of this saloon was a creek next to the river known as "Dead Man's Hollow". This was where most of those men whom I helped bury were killed. It was dangerous to go into the saloon and gambling den, get drunk and flash your money around. If you did, it was just the same as suicide. Mexicans, Indians, and cowboys made the saloon their regular "hang-out".

I never drank much nor gambled either but I have been there several times and witnessed shooting and killing scrapes. Once a cowboy from the Williams ranch twenty miles west of Pauls Valley got into an argument with three Mexicans over a card game. He was about my age, wore a large white hat, high-heeled boots, and two pistols. It seemed that these three men were trying to cheat him out of his winnings in the game. He jumped up, kicked the table over and began shooting with both guns. When the smoke cleared away, there were three dead Mexicans on the floor. I don't know what they did with the dead men but I couldn't help admiring the way that young chap handled his guns.

I paid five dollars for a permit at Caddo to live

the Indian Territory to a Choctaw Indian Militia. I ¹⁷⁷
stayed at Pauls Valley about three years, then I went
to Rush Springs. Rush Springs was a rough place then.
I stayed around there a short while then got a job help-
ing drive a bunch of steers to Kansas City, Missouri.
When we arrived in Kansas City, I sold my horse and sad-
dle to a man at the stockyards for sixty dollars, then
I left for Colorado where I stayed several years. That
did not suit me, so I went back to Tennessee where my
father and mother lived. I lived there until 1907 and
came back to Pauls Valley where I have lived since.

There surely had been a great change at Pauls Val-
ley. Where I had herded cattle and seen droves of wild
turkeys and grass waist-high, I now saw brick buildings,
fine residences, and beautiful lawns and flower gardens.

THE END
