

HALL, J. M. (Mrs.)

SECOND INTERVIEW

#12087

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Effie S. Jackson  
Journalist.  
November 3, 1937.

An interview with Mrs. J. M. Hall,  
1801 Admiral Blvd. Tulsa, Oklahoma.

My experiences cover a half century of Tulsa history. I have seen my husband, J. M. Hall, and his brother, H. C. Hall, found a city, become its first citizens, head its first railroad construction, mark off its first streets and own its first store. My husband became Tulsa's pioneer postmaster and founder of the first church organization. He organized the first school, assisted in organizing the Commercial Club in 1902 and was president of that organization in 1904. He had a continuous membership in the Chamber of Commerce and was made a life member in 1932. He was an Elder in the First Presbyterian Church for fifty years and was superintendent of the Sunday School for thirty-three years. He was Superintendent Emeritus of the Sunday School at the time of his death in 1935. As a pioneer teacher in the year 1887, and later as the wife of J. M. Hall, and now as his widow, I view a half century of Tulsa's history.

The question is often asked- "Why did J. M. Hall come to Tulsa (Tulsey Town)" I think that question is

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best answered in this little story which I found in his files. It seems to be sort of a memorandum or may be an extract from a letter, dated 1927. It gives the story in his own words.

"If it had not been for the contractors of the Frisco Railroad in 1882, who built the railroad from Vinita to the Arkansas River, my brother H. C. Hall being one of them, I probably would never have come to Tulsa and no Tulsa would be known. Having had considerable experience in the mercantile business, they wanted me to take charge of the store that supplied the men with goods, feed and equipment that was needed while working on the road. One of my brother's duties was to see that the payrolls were made out by sub-contractors as well as their payrolls, and to pay same. One time he was sick and I had to take his place. It was time to pay the men. I went to Oswego, Kansas, and got the money from C. M. Condon Banking Company Mr. Condon

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being one of the contractors. I returned on the Katy railroad to Vinita, made connection with the construction train which ran to Claremore, which was as far as the track was laid at the time. I expected a team to meet me at Claremore from the Verdigris River, where we had a store. The man failed to come. I was standing on the steps of the caboose, the sun going down, and no place to sleep. I was wondering what to do. Three men came by, one of them drunk, and he spoke to me, and wanted to fight, starting to come into the caboose. I told the men who were sober to take him away- "If you allow that man to come up the steps I will hurt him." I told the conductor I had a lot of money to pay off the men that were at work on the railroad, and no place to stay and I wanted to stay with him. He told me to lie down on the seat or bench in the corner of the caboose. He pulled his cot out to my side and one of the brakemen near my feet. The next morning the man with the team and buggy from the store at the Verdigris River met me. I arrived at the store, got everything ready to start early the next morning

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paying off the men.

" Charley West and I drove by the sub-contractors' camps of the Frisco near what is now known as Madison street. It was about noon the latter part of July, 1882. I knew that Chance Owens who had been supplying the men beef had moved from the Verdigris River to the Arkansas River near where the railroad would cross the river. By the way, Chance Owens and I are the only men now living in Tulsa who were here at the beginning of the town. The last camp we paid was on the north side. We drove through the brush and woods to the boarding tent. We got our dinner, gambling tents all around in the woods and as we were coming out I said to West "Suppose some of the gamblers would come out of the brush and take our money away from us? What explanation could we make to the company?"

" After paying all the men we had \$3,000 in cash left. We were glad to get back on the line where men were at work. No house-or persons living at Tulsa, prairie east, timber west to the Arkansas River.

" A short time after this we moved our tent to Tulsa and located on the north side of the Frisco

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Track on the Frisco right-of-way near the present depot. The track was not graded to the Arkansas River at this time. I slept on the cot in my tent and one morning when I returned from my breakfast found a United States Marshal in my tent. He had made a complete search for whiskey. None could be found.

" I have lived in Tulsa about 45 years. Mrs. Hall has lived here 40 years. We raised our children here. Most of our loved ones and friends, which are many live here. We both expect to die in Tulsa. More than half our lives have been spent here."