

FREDRIKSEN, N. P.

INTERVIEW

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W. T. Holland,
Interviewer,
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An Interview with Mr. N. P. Frederiksen,

"An Old Timer"

I'm an old man and came a long way to get to the territory. I can't say that I planned to come to this particular section when I left my home in Denmark; however I knew of this western country and the great opportunities it offered, through two cousins of mine, who had already come to the United States. Being interested in raising and dealing in livestock, I could see I would have a much larger field here in which to operate.

I was born in Denmark on July 20, 1857. My parents and their parents were farmers. I was educated in the public schools of that country, and am a graduate of the University of Denmark at Copenhagen. It seems in the early days that the Irish, English and Scotch were preferred as emigrants, as they could secure passage much cheaper. I had an

FREDERIKSEN, N. P. INTERVIEW 6964

- 2 -

English friend, so I embarked from England and took advantage of cheap passage costing us only \$16.00 for the trip which lasted twenty-seven days.

Our ship was a combination steamer and sailing vessel, and the only drawback was that they landed us at Quebec- I had to pay my railroad fare to New York City, so it cost more than the \$16.00 to get me to my destination. And while you might think the fare was very little, and it was, the cost of food was very little also as more than one-half of the passengers were so seasick that they consumed very little food.

On the way over I met a young lady, one of the emigrants from Denmark, whom I later married.

I came over in 1889, landing in Canada on the third of May. My cousin worked for the Meadow Brook Dairy Company in Nebraska, so I went out there. Having brought some money with me, I began dealing in livestock, cattle, hogs and horses. That is, after I learned to speak English which took about one and one-half years.

FREDERIKSEN, N. P. INTERVIEW 6964.

- 3 -

I bought, sold and traded in livestock in Nebraska until hearing about Oklahoma and the run into the Cherokee Strip. So I came down awhile before the time for the run, and decided on Alva, a proposed town, as the place I would head for on the day of the "run". I went back into Kansas, stopping at Kiowa, and made this my starting point. I was pretty well prepared for the run, as I had a spirited race horse I had saved for this occasion. I drove him to a sulky. (a two-wheeled cart)

When we were drawn up on the Kansas line, near Kiowa, an amusing incident happened. All kinds and types of people and outfits were there, covered wagons, prairie schooners, buggies, carts, people on horseback, afoot, etc. Among the crowd was a negro, crazy with drink, walking up and down. We were all keyed up to a high pitch and wanting to go. A few minutes before the appointed time, this

FREDERIKSEN, N. P. INTERVIEW 6964.

- 4 -

negro decided he would relieve the situation, so fired his pistol into the air. A stampede started. The soldiers tried to stop them but they were few and we were many, and of course they wouldn't shoot into the crowd. So away we went. I had a fast horse and knew where I wanted to go. I was the first to reach Alva. As I drove in, I looked back and saw the smoke of the train that left about the time I did. I had beaten it to Alva.

I had a hard time convincing the Federal Agents that I wasn't a "Sooner", but they were finally satisfied. I staked out four plots and filed claim. I staked out four although I wasn't allowed but one. My idea was, by having more than one, I could select the best location.

Alva, of course, was non-existent then, and I was the first to stake a claim there.

FREDRIKSEN, N. P. INTERVIEW 0964

- 2 -

I built a residence and a large feed and trading barn as I intended to deal in stock. I bought, sold and traded horses and ran what was called a wagon yard. I had a good business there for several years. I stayed there nine years. Livery business was a part of my activities. I hired out horses and buggies to young men to take their girls out driving, and too, I had a good trade driving the drummers about the county. I kept good horses and buggies, and got \$3.50 per day for driving a drummer through the country. I usually drove two horses to a buggy on these trips. I had two or three drivers who helped me. One day I was driving a drummer to a neighboring town off the railroad. He sold Banner buggies, and on this trip got at me to buy some of them. That suited me, but the man was drinking some. I didn't jump at the deal; however, he insisted on selling me the buggies and offered them to me at \$35.00 each. I had been

FREDERIKSEN, N. P. INTERVIEW 6964

- 6 -

paying \$85.00 retail price. I told him I would take one-half dozen. He sold me one hundred buggy whips, the twenty-five cent variety, at seven cents each. I made money on that trip. I bought lots of buggies. I would use them until I got the shine off then sell them to the farmers and buy new ones, as I always kept attractive rigs for my customers.

At one time I was offered \$50,000.00 for my business and buildings. I had, at that time, five residences and my livery barn. I didn't sell, then, but later sold for a greatly reduced price from that previous bid. I had kept up a correspondence with my girl's friend I had met on the boat coming over; so in 1896 I wrote her to come to Alva and we would get married. I married a Danish girl, although I hadn't known her until I met her on the boat. She was Dora Hanson, and she is now living and still my wife.

FREDERIKENS, N. P. INTERVIEW 6964

- 7 -

In 1902 I came to Sand Springs and entered the same business, running a livery stable and dealing in livestock. I conducted this business at Sand Springs nine years, or until 1911. I could then see this business failing, as automobiles began to be used. I sold out and came to Tulsa proper.

I worked in a grocery at fourth and Peoria Avenue for about eleven years. At that time there was a cornfield across the street from the store. All the territory from there east to where Tulsa University now is was open grazing, except a few cornfields. I grazed cattle and horses out there free. When I came here there were only three blocks of paved streets and that was first street from Main east three blocks. That was paved with brick. Between the time I left Alva in 1902 and located in Sand Springs, I took my wife and three children on a visit to the old country. We were

FREDERIKENS, N. P. INTERVIEW 6964

- 8 -

away nine months.

One thing I neglected to do, which was a mistake, was to become naturalized. I was never naturalized and never voted.